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**Exploring The Impact of The Media on The Arranged Marriage and Dowry System
in Goa, India.**

By

Lisa Ann Hickman

Bachelor of Arts, Goa University, 2003

THESIS

Submitted to the department of Psychology
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Masters of Arts degree
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ABSTRACT

Indian women have been experiencing the arranged marriage and dowry system for centuries. The main objective of this study was to explore how television and cinematic programming impact these traditional and contextual issues. I used a phenomenological-hermeneutic research methodology, with a feminist pragmatist epistemology. I conducted a total of six personal interviews with Hindu women from Goa, India. Three participants were married in the 1980s while the other three were married after 2000. Five themes emerged from the interviews that shed some light at the issue under exploration: a) media exposure between childhood and marriage; b) love vs. arranged marriage c) exposure to the dowry system; d) current media exposure of couple; e) nature of interactions with in-laws. Findings indicate drastic differences in media exposure between the two cohorts, which may indicate the differences in how women re-work traditions like the arranged marriage, dowry system and, family interactions. However, regardless of the minor differences between cohorts there appears to be a general acceptance of traditional roles and values across generations. These traditions and values may be deeply entrenched in the community, and possibly reinforced by the patriarchal nature of the media. Furthermore, these values and traditions do not seem easily altered by the few progressive depictions of women in the media. Findings indicate a general belief that the media erodes Indian culture, a belief that is protective and necessary to forestall the perceived problems of the west.

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CHAPTER 1: AN INTRODUCTION TO MY RESEARCH

Writing a Masters thesis in Community Psychology offered me the unique and exciting opportunity to select an issue of interest and explore it, while utilizing the research skills that I developed and honed during my time in the community psychology program at Wilfrid Laurier University. I chose to explore the impact of the media on the arranged marriage and dowry system in Goa, India. For the purpose of this thesis I refer to the term 'media' as the television and cinematic programming viewed in India. Particular emphasis was placed on the influences of American programming. An exploration was conducted on the shifts in media content in India over several decades. In addition, the impacts of different levels of exposure to television and cinema over two generations of women in Goa. It was beyond the capacity of this thesis to investigate the broader scope of media in the country.

My position in the research is unique as Goa is my homeland, where I spent a decade of my life prior to immigrating to Canada three years ago. I possess knowledge that has been developed from subjective experience and close observation over the years I resided in Goa and the numerous times that I have returned since I left. Through personal interactions, I formed bonds with numerous women in Goa over the years, participated in their lives and have had the privilege of sharing in narrations of their personal experiences, in an informal manner. Many of these women, who chose to relate their stories with me, spoke to the roles they assumed in their homes and in society at large, a concept that is of particular interest in this thesis. . In pondering on the roles women assume and the traditions they participate in, I could not help but wonder how the phenomenon of globalization impacts these roles and traditions. The reviewed literature which will be discussed, strongly suggests that globalization has impacted these and other domains like the media, fashion, economy in

India, especially in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Derne, 2002; Griffin, Viswanath & Schwartz, 1994; Malhotra & Rogers, 2000). I personally experienced this phenomenon in my country.

As a child growing up in India, it was a rare and substantial treat when I was presented with a Cadbury chocolate bar or a bottle of Coca Cola; after all they were foreign and expensive. By my teens these little treats had lost their appeal and uniqueness, because along with numerous other foreign products they lined almost every store one set foot in. Furthermore, these 'foreign' products cost the same, sometimes less than the Indian equivalent. The infusion of foreign goods in the Indian market was so abrupt and drastic that people could not differentiate between Indian and foreign products. Indian companies would be overtaken by large western multi-nationals and the majority of Indian citizens would remain unaware of the occurrence. I must confess that I myself remained ignorant to the fact that products like Pantene shampoo and Lux soap are western brands, until I came to Canada.

In addition to foreign products on the Indian market, the media in the country also changed drastically. From two channels on television in the 1980's there were suddenly ten by the early 1990's and that number has increased to over a hundred today – a large percentage of these being American channels airing American programs that portray western culture in exaggerated form (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Griffin et.al., 1994; Rustogi, Hensel, & Burgers, 1996). Western culture, with regards to clothing and dietary predilections for example, would inadvertently and irrationally be emulated. To put it in a nutshell, India has been affected by the phenomenon of 'globalization' (Derne, 2002; Griffin et al., 1994; Malhotra & Rogers, 2000). I found myself interested in exploring how the

impacts of globalization have affected the status of women in India over a number of decades.

Thirty years ago, the majority of women in India faced powerful oppression. They were considered second-class citizens unworthy of much education and denied prestigious positions within the work-force and voice in matters of importance both within and outside the home. Women were expected to follow direction meted out by the men of their society without much question (Menon-Sen & Kumar, 2001). Women were passed from their father's home to their husband's home where their role was limited to domestic activity; they were expected to dress and act according to prevailing patriarchal tradition and norms; for the most part women possessed little or no economic freedom (Mukherjee, 2004; Rastogi & Therly, 2006 ; Menon-Sen & Kumar, 2001). Women were usually strictly monitored by the men of their households, being allowed to spend money only when it was determined appropriate by their husbands, a convention which also extended to women who worked for an income (Rastogi & Therly, 2006). Similar restrictions applied to entertainment and social activity (Derne, 1994). Today, women experience greater educational, employment, and entertainment opportunities but *have* they shed the oppressive and sometimes violent chains that the women before them were bound by?

This is what I sought to explore in my thesis with particular focus on the impact of exposure to television and cinema in India on traditional practices of the arranged marriage and dowry system. My research question asks, "what is the impact of the media on experiences with the arranged marriage and dowry system?" A review of the literature suggests that the nature and exposure to television and cinema in India changed drastically between the 1950's and 2007 (Bhatt, 1994; Indian Television Dot Com Pvt Ltd, 2006;

Rajagopal, 2001). Therefore, it is safe to say that women in India who were married in the 1980's experienced media differently from those who were married between 2000 to 2007. In my research, I explore the possibility that their varied exposure to the media influenced how women experienced the arranged marriage and dowry system in Goa, India. I chose six women to participate in my study. Three of these women were married in the 1980s and comprise cohort one. The remaining three women were married between 2000 and 2007 and comprise cohort two. Through personal interviews I collected data on the experiences these women had with the arranged marriage system and dowry system. Particular emphasis was given to their reported exposure to television and cinema; how these have changed over time; and, if they believe the media had any impact on how they experienced the arranged marriage and dowry system.

My thesis has a community psychology focus; the research explores at women's experience in a cultural context with attention to socio-economic and cultural factors. Furthermore the research looked social justice issues in India through the interaction of Indian culture and gender from women's perspective.

I contend that my research is congruent with community psychology values and perspectives, that I had the opportunity to explore over the course of my masters. Two of these perspectives that are particularly evident in the research are that of *empowerment* and *respect for diversity*. The process was likely empowering for the participants of the study, whose voices and stories were given tremendous value, something not often done in India. Furthermore, with thousands of Indian immigrants coming to Canada each year, learning about facets of the Indian culture could certainly foster a sense of empowerment among Canadian readers helping them relate to and understand these immigrants. In addition,

understanding the culture of Indian immigrants, its history and Indian women's opinion on their patriarchal culture (sometimes dispelling misconceptions) can foster a respect for diversity between the two cultures. I believe that the findings from the study in addition to the existing literature promote these values.

Before sharing my findings, I briefly discuss the nature of Indian society and the general but basic presence of globalization in India to begin laying the foundation for my research. However, before discussing these issues I would like to speak to my standpoint and epistemology in the research.

CHAPTER 2: POSITIONING MYSELF IN THE RESEARCH

As a woman who grew up in India, I constantly witnessed the oppression of women in numerous domains. The right to make personal choices regarding the direction and quality of our lives were ignored through the imposition of extremely powerful norms based on patriarchal ideology. I have always wondered what consequences a blending of Indian and western ideologies could exert on these issues, either directly or indirectly. One area where such a blend has occurred is in television and cinema but a review of the literature, which will be discussed subsequently, suggests that the consequences for women *may* not have been altogether positive, which is something I sought to explore (Derne, 2003; Scrase, 2003). I would have to support a theory that suggests Indian culture absorbs from the west only what complements and promotes existing patriarchal ideology. Is it possible that concepts which challenge a status-quo that afford men the power to dominate and oppress women, are rejected by Indian society's men (Appadurai, 1996) – essentially the decision makers, who I assume would resist changes that could cause them to lose the power that they currently possess? This is a question that I explore via my thesis.

Over the years I have witnessed friends and acquaintances fall victim to expected norms of behavior that are the result of an Indian-western patriarchal ideology. I use the phrase 'Indian-western patriarchal ideology' as I believe that women in India today often find themselves subject to the Indian patriarchal culture in combination with western patriarchal ideology. One event that had a profound impact on me occurred in my third year of University in Goa. I watched a close friend of mine (I will refer to her as Nisha) "slog" her way through seven years of medical school. I witnessed her sacrifices: the social events that she missed, the physical and mental stress she endured and the effort she exerted with a

massive work-load all to make herself an excellent doctor. I regarded her accomplishments with pride and awe, positive that she would prove to be an exceptional medical practitioner. After she graduated with honors and worked tirelessly as a gynecologist for about a year, her family 'arranged' her marriage to an accountant from her home town. Three months into the marriage she quit the career that she had sacrificed so much for and felt so passionately about to work instead as a bank clerk. I was dually appalled and intrigued by her reasons and I asked her to share the rationale behind her choices. What she said disturbed and startled me. She claimed she had no choice! Her family only put her through medical school to increase her prospects for marriage; after marriage her husband's family decided that it was not appropriate for a woman to remain in a position of greater prestige, where she would secure better wages than her husband. It was important, however, that she still bring home an income. Nisha was therefore forced to work at a job with less prestige than her husband's and was also expected to take care of the home regardless of fatigue or stress resultant from working a full time job. Finally, despite the fact that she worked hard for her income, her husband decided how and when it would be spent claiming it was his privilege as head of the household.

As she related her story I kept thinking to myself that had I been in her position I would have rebelled and not tolerated any of it. Unfortunately, it is not that cut and dry in many Indian communities, unless one does not mind being ostracized from society (Rastogi & Therly, 2006; Teja, 1993). My friend belonged to just such a community – on the surface it appeared to the world like she was “allowed” an education and career in addition to a number of freedoms. Her life beneath the surface tells a different tale – many of her freedoms are restricted by norms of society. She is expected to conform to patriarchal

traditions much like women thirty years ago did, only she is doing it while holding down a full-time job (not of her choosing). Furthermore, Nisha does not benefit from the salary that she earns.

I personally know numerous women in Goa who have faced challenges similar to Nisha. With particular reference to India, the literature suggests that such experiences are not exclusive to Goan women, but to women all over India (Chaudhuri, 2004; Johnson & Johnson, 2001). I have been fortunate enough to grow up in a family environment which always encouraged me to assert myself, form strong opinions, develop and make informed choices; still, resisting patriarchal norms imposed upon me from other members of society has been a challenge and often the cause of great distress. I narrated Nisha's particular story here because it is the effect of the media on similar experiences that I seek to explore in my thesis. In particular I focused on the arranged marriage and dowry system. While my thesis only seeks to explore one aspect of this patriarchal culture I believe it is important to begin by painting a broader picture to create a context for western readers who are unfamiliar with the Indian traditions, which I do in the following section.

Given my unique position and the acquired knowledge I possess on the issue I chose to study, I believe it was prudent to approach my research with a disciplined critical subjectivity. I positioned myself in the research and reviewed the literature from such a perspective, writing in the first person. In addition, I believe it imperative that I recognize and share my belief that the knowledge I possess on the issue potentially influenced my approach to this thesis; this makes it unrealistic to claim that the literature has been reviewed from a completely unbiased perspective. I selected a feminist standpoint perspective to my research as articulated by Uma Narayan (1989) and Susan Heckman (1997). As these

scholars and others point out, only the voice of the oppressed—in this case Goan women—can truly narrate the vignettes of their personal experience and expose social conditions. It is my hope that the women of Goa who participated in the research felt free to utilize my thesis as a vehicle to narrate their experiences. The epistemic privilege that I possess through my personal connections with the participating community informed my entire process and approach to the research (Narayan, 1989).

Female scholars place themselves in a position of advantage to acquire knowledge when they participate in assisting women achieve voice which is then represented in larger communities (Heckman, 1997). Through my thesis process, I took the opportunity to place myself in such a privileged position, representing the women of Goa, here in Canada, with their permission and participation. This not only contributes to existing academic literature on the issue, but could serve as a tool for women in Canada to expand their personal knowledge on Goan communities; furthermore, Indian immigrants, particularly Goans, can augment their knowledge on the dynamics within communities in their homeland. With the large flow of Indian immigrants coming into Canada each year as reported by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2006), I believe that it is important to share knowledge between the two nations and it is my goal to contribute to this flow, to a small extent via my thesis.

To emulate an approach taken by Shahanaz Khan (2005) in her work on the effects of the Zina Ordinance in Pakistan and her endeavors for social change, I positioned myself in the present research as a ‘native informant’ who sought to speak about the traditional Indian issues of the arranged marriage and dowry system in India while remaining cautious not to misrepresent these cultural issues or encourage stereotyping about Indian culture in the west. As Spivak (1990, 1999) and Khan (2001, 2005) note, a critique of patriarchy in

the third world can lead to the reinforcement of negative gender stereotypes regarding these cultures. Although I may not be able to completely avoid such consequences, I strove to minimize stereotyping and the misuse of my thesis by providing readers with a clear intent of the purpose of my research and by positioning myself within the thesis process and the text. In addition, the position I assumed as a 'native informant' presented several potential challenges as outlined by Khan (2005) and Spivak (1990, 1995, 1999).

In her writings Khan (2005) outlined the potential conflicts that confront the native informant who is invited by western academia to speak on issues of oppression in developing nations, but who is considered an outsider by activists and academics from the country where she conducts the research. Given the fact that I am a Goan woman living in the west, conducting research with a Goan community located in Goa, India, the question that arises is whether as an expatriate researcher I would be recognized as a member of the Goan community or be viewed as an 'outsider' conducting foreign research that is presumptuous and unwelcome in the community and/or Indian feminist movement (Khan, 2005; Spivak, 1990). In regard to this issue, I believe that the potential challenge did *not* present itself in my research. I base this assumption both on my knowledge of the participating community as well as conversations with pioneers in the community as well as activists and academics related to this project, from Goa. All information gathered indicated powerful support from the community as well as non-governmental organizations and women's movements in Goa. This could be attributed to several factors, one being that I was a member of several social activist movements in the state until 2004. I also wrote a weekly column in Goa's leading newspaper that dealt with social issues, making mine a familiar name in the state. Furthermore, the extended visits home since my departure and continued

participation in various social and feminist movements have assisted in maintaining that familiarity. Finally, the Goan community, a sub-group with whom I worked, is a close-knit one where people are familiar with each other either directly or indirectly; this I believe generated some trust between myself and the participants.

The second question that arises is whether I will be regarded as a serious researcher when I seek to conduct research for western academia while speaking from the perspective of a third world feminist, to reiterate - one that is neither white nor male. As Spivak (1990) points out, non-white female researchers may be participants in a patriarchal Eurocentric academic system that could potentially choose to hear what suits it and disregard the rest, rendered from an underlying belief that our voices do not truly belong in the first world. This is a potential challenge that I foresaw but had no clear solution for except to assert my ability and position as a researcher trained in the first world and uniquely positioned in the third world.

My thesis primarily seeks to contribute to knowledge on the impacts of the media on the arranged marriage and dowry system in Goa, via the voices of a small group of middle class Hindu women. In this endeavor, I contend that telling the stories of the women - albeit a small group - supersedes the potential risks of the research. I believe that I have had a unique opportunity as a western researcher and third-world feminist to examine a rather unique issue. If I allowed fear of possible consequences to obstruct my research, I would have been relinquishing a significant role that I play both in academia as well as in the feminist movement in Goa.

In my research I do not claim to possess expert knowledge on third world culture nor do I want to 'change' social norms in Goa to which I am not subject, being an expatriate

researcher and feminist. My intention was simply to offer my thesis as a vehicle for middle class Hindu women in Goa to inform western academia and feminist movements of the effects of the media on the arranged marriage and dowry system in their community, from their lived perspectives. Like women who represent different cultures worldwide, Indian women have been oppressed by the patriarchal nature of their culture and traditions (Chaudhuri, 2004; Johnson & Johnson, 2001). Within this culture stands the arranged marriage and dowry system, which, according to existing literature, sometimes victimizes Indian women (Arnold, Choe & Roy, 1998; Umar, 1998; Rastogi & Therly, 2006). Via my thesis I present the nature of these traditional and contextual issues through an exploration of the literature. Furthermore, I explore the nature of globalization in developing nations from a feminist perspective with particular emphasis on the impact of the media. Through the vignettes of lived experiences of my participants I shed some light on how these traditions have changed over two generations of women in Goa, as impacted by the media.

I assumed a feminist, pragmatic, epistemological perspective to gather information on my thesis question from female representatives of a Hindu community in Goa (Reybold, 2002). My unique position as a female member of the community, possessing valuable knowledge, experience and sensitivity for the culture, helped me relate, empathize, and, I believe, communicate with the women I interviewed. It is unreasonable to assume that a researcher can be completely objective. We therefore use our connections with those around us to inform and shape our epistemology (Thayer-Bacon, 1998). Nevertheless, I cautioned myself against what Uma Narayan (1989) refers to as double-vision whereby a researcher could fail to see the true nature of the issue under exploration because of powerful presuppositions. Given my personal feelings and opinions regarding the impact of the media

on the status of women in India, the reviewed literature, and my personal connections to the women in Goa, I attempted to remain critically aware of my presuppositions prior to and during my research. On this basis I began the process of understanding the impact of the media on the status of women in Goa. As Marjorie Pryse (1998) suggests, female scholars have the responsibility to understand how various patriarchal societies operate in a rapidly globalizing world so that we can explore issues surrounding women's rights and survival within such a system. I concur with this perspective and assumed such a responsibility in my thesis. In the following section I review the literature that relates to the impacts of the media on the arranged marriage and dowry system in India and begin to lay a foundation for the research.

CHAPTER 3: AN EXPLORATION OF THE LITERATURE

An Introduction

In this thesis I explore certain facets of patriarchal culture in Goa and how one facet of globalization impacts it. More specifically I sought to study how the media impacts the arranged marriage and dowry system in India. When I refer to 'media' I refer to television and cinema in India with some emphasis on the influences of American programming and advertising on Indian programming. I use the term 'American' vs. 'western' because American programming, particularly Hollywood is the dominating western influence in India (Cunningham, Jacka, & Sinclair, 1996). This influence is a consequence of globalization, a concept I discuss in a general manner prior to discussing the impacts of the media on traditional issues in India, as outlined by existing literature,.

The present epoch is propelling everyone into a global order and consequently transforming our way of life. Globalization is a phenomenon that affects a variety of issues, some of them related to communities, traditions, families, political ideology, and the environment world-over (Giddens, 2000; Singer, 2004; Steger, 2003). Anthony Giddens (1990) defined globalization as 'the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa' (p. 64). As a result of globalization, the west is intricately connected to eastern countries like India and China and exerts a dominant influence on the cultures of these countries (John, 1996). Traditions and cultures can be reinvented so suddenly that people remain unaware of the change and lose sight of the point of origin of the traditions (Giddens, 1990). Scholte regards globalization as 'the process of spreading various objects and experiences to people at all corners of the earth' (2000: 16). As Giddens

(2000) so aptly put it, “it has come from nowhere to being almost everywhere” (p. 25). Is this change a boon or bane? That question is not something we can answer in any simple terms for no one ‘fully’ comprehends the phenomenon that is globalization. However, scholars contend with some degree of certainty that the western side of the globe is no longer isolated from the east due to shared media and communication technologies (Giddens, 2000; Singer, 2002; Steger, 2003). The spread of television is offered as an example of such a process (Steger, 2003). This is of particular relevance to this research in which I studied the impact of the media on the traditional Indian issues of arranged marriage and dowry systems.

Feminists regard the processes of globalization as being negative for women but see the need to embrace a definition of globalization as ‘both the creator of social and economic situations that are largely harmful to earth wide projects of justice, peace and sustainable use of the environment and not entirely successful in controlling the lives of people around the world’ (Heald, 2004: 119). This is a particularly significant and empowering definition because it recognises that globalization exerts an impact on systems and lives but that it is not omnipotent. In addition, feminists suggest that we might want to hold our applause for the processes that bring the different corners of the world together and pause before we label it ‘development’ with a positive tone (Aguilar & Lacsamana, 2004; Miles, 1996; Shiva, 1989). One feminist perspective states that, “globalization processes are shaped by power games under circumstances in which women as well as other subordinated groups have fewer resources and less power” (Lenz, 2003: 1).

Development may have served to imprison women the world over in new and unique ways (Aguilar & Lacsamana, 2004; Miles, 1996; Momsen & Kinnaird, 1993; Shiva, 1989).

Women all over the world find themselves participating in development in a one-sided manner. Women bear the costs and burdens of development (to inhumane proportions) but find themselves excluded from the process when the time arrives to reap the benefits. For instance, while women work long hours often on hard labor, their access to economic, health and educational resources has worsened in the last two decades (Chaudhuri, 2004; Momsen & Kinnaid, 1993; Shiva, 1989). As Miles (1996) points out, development cannot be considered a positive or just force as long as the needs and potential of half the world's population are ignored and regarded as secondary. Furthermore, in the light of dowry abuse and killings, domestic violence, rape and other such atrocities, development cannot be deemed a champion of democracy. After all, women face dictatorships—often violent ones—within the confines of their own homes. Modernization according to feminists, works in opposition with the core aspects of the feminine principle (Miles, 1996; Rowbotham & Linkogle, 2001; Shiva, 1989). Shiva (1989) describes the feminine principle as a non-violent, non-gendered and holistic ideology that promotes the concept of wealth creation by the enhancement of life and diversity. The feminine principle challenges patriarchy by nurturing diversity and not assigning women a subordinate role to men. Instead, it promotes the ideology that women are active participants in development whose contributions are just as significant as those of men, albeit different. Such an ideology supports the notion that women deserve an equal share of benefits.

Feminists like Vandana Shiva (1989) and Angela Miles (1996) believe that development may simply be an extension of wealth accumulation for powerful western nations which exists on a foundation of western patriarchal ideology. The very maintenance of such an ideology depends on the subjugation and exploitation of women. With the

consequence of exploitation of women, development is regarded as being tantamount to mal-development, (Shiva, 1989). Feminists like Miles (1996), Momsen and Kinnaird (1993) and Shiva (1989) describe mal-development as a 'negative' kind of development from the perspective of women, because it is a process that is based on western capitalist profits with little regard given to the consequential challenges and impediment of rights endured by women. Globalization is characterized by western domination which prominent feminists believe is resulting in the imposition of extremely patriarchal ideology on women that in turn results in endemic waves of violence towards them (Hammer, 2003; Miles, 1996; Shiva, 1989).

Development as it is generally practiced has further imprisoned and oppressed women on multiple levels via numerous channels (Hammer, 2003; Miles, 1996; Rowbotham & Linkogle, 2001; Shiva, 1989). This oppression occurs because development is based on modern western patriarchal views, an ideology which reduces women to passive objects and resources in wealth accumulation (Miles, 1994; Momsen & Kinnaird, 1993; Shiva, 1989). Since women are only regarded as resources, this type of ideology purports that women are not entitled to any of the benefits of development (Momsen & Kinnaird, 1993; Shiva, 1989). Feminists contend that the ideology upon which development has been built is disruptive to the harmony between men and women in nature. It places men above women and results in the subjugation of the feminine principle, evidenced through the violent acts against women (Aguilar & Lacsamana, 2004; Miles, 1994; Shiva, 1989). Women in developing nations are particularly victimized as a western patriarchal economic ideology is imposed on them in already patriarchal and oppressive cultures (Aguilar & Lacsamana, 2004; Momsen & Kinnaird, 1993; Shiva, 1989). The chief areas in which the subordination of women

manifests itself in developing nations, particularly in South Asia, are literacy, work participation, fertility, men to women population ratios and rights around sexuality (Momsen & Kinnaid, 1993). I concur with the feminist perspectives on development and explore these in my thesis, which explores a facet of ‘development’ on patriarchal traditions in India. The nature of the media on the feminist movement is of particular interest.

According to feminists like Brooks (1997) and Faludi (1992), the media itself is a patriarchal institution that seeks to reinforce and encourage a hegemony that favors men. According to Faludi (1992), the media expresses ‘anti-feminist’ positions and is designed to undermine the goals, perspectives and achievements of the feminist movement. Studies that will be discussed later in the document reinforce this perspective via significant findings that portray the objectification and subjugation of women in the media. My research assumed a narrower view and more specific approach to these issues, which I outline in the next section.

The Status of Women in India

India is a nation like many others whose culture is steeped with patriarchal ideology (Johnson & Johnson, 2001; Karlekar, 2004). Before we examine the effects of media on the status of women in India, I would like to explore the basic nature of the status of women in India. The nation is a large and diverse one with population numbers above the billion mark. Women experience varied degrees of oppression in various domains. Given the magnitude of oppression, I believe that it would not do Indian women justice to attempt to cover the entire issue. I have therefore chosen one main area of focus for the purposes of this thesis – arranged marriages and the dowry system. In this thesis I will provide background

information of these key cultural and contextual issues. Furthermore, I will examine the impact and interaction of the western media on these traditional issues.

The arranged marriage and dowry systems which this thesis seeks to explore are not novel challenges of concern to the Indian feminist movement. This vibrant and dynamic movement has concerned itself with these and other oppressive patriarchal traditions and laws for decades. The Indian feminist movement fights a never-ending battle for the emancipation of women in the country from various forms of oppression within and outside the home, by the government and by men (Bhasin & Khan, 1986). In its endeavors the movement does not aspire for women to emulate men or masculinity but rather discover equality in the celebration of their own femininity (Chaudhuri, 2004). Indian feminist Kumari Jayawardena defines feminism as “embracing movements for equality within the current system and significant struggles that have attempted to change the system” (1986: 2). In her speech at the inauguration of the All-India Women's Conference Building Complex in 1980 ex-prime minister of India, Indira Gandhi, spoke to the spirit of the Indian feminist movement when she said, “to be liberated, a woman must feel free to be herself, not in rivalry to man but in the context of her own capacity and her personality.” Later in the same speech she also stated that “Indian women are traditionally conservative but they also have the genius of synthesis, to adapt and absorb.”

The Indian feminist movement has made significant strides in creating awareness about issues like dowry, rape and female foeticide – female fetus selective abortions (Luthra, 1999). However, in its endeavors the movement has met its fair share of challenges, the most significant being that the media tends to cover sensational stories while ignoring the broader social issues (Luthra, 1999). Furthermore, the media in India, like media

everywhere, is inclined to depict feminists as radical, non-traditional, family-destroyers – a depiction which serves to diminish support for the movement (Bhasin & Khan, 1986).

While the media does not further the causes of the Indian feminist movement, a contradiction presents itself by way of Indian laws. Theoretically, the Indian Constitution is one of the most progressive in the world. It was the first in the world to offer women the right to vote and ensures that men and women in the country receive equal rights. Indian law guarantees women the right to work in any chosen field with pay comparable to men; the constitution promises to renounce practices derogatory and dangerous to women (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2006; MacKinnon, 2006). The laws suggest that women are equal members of society. Another body of evidence collected from government statistical documents, reports from non governmental organizations and United Nation reports on the country however, paint quite a different picture.

Statistics drawn from the National Crime Records Bureau (2003), an Indian governmental organization chiefly responsible for the collection, collation and publication of data regarding crime in the country suggest that, an alarmingly large proportion of Indian women are reported victims of violent crimes each year. These crimes include but are not limited to rape, molestation, and domestic abuse. Menon-Sen & Kumar (2001) noted that most Indian women have no control over their bodies; no freedom to decide if and when they will bear children. The average woman bears her first child before the age of twenty two. At least one rape occurs every thirty four minutes and that an Indian woman is killed every ninety three minutes. The most alarming statistic is that there are approximately twenty to twenty-five million women missing in the country. The term ‘reported’ needs to be emphasized and underlined as these numbers only provide a glimmer of the ‘actual’

magnitude of these violent crimes in India; most cases remain unreported due to the patriarchal bias in law and justice that discourages reports of crime against women (Johnson & Johnson, 2001; Rastogi & Therly, 2006). These numbers have increased significantly from those recorded in 1990 and 1995 respectively, indicating a rise of approximately 35% since 1990. There is no evidence to determine whether the increase in frequency represents a greater incidence of crime, reporting of crime, or both. Coincidentally, the early nineties also represent the period when the surge of globalization, more specifically the global media, began to make its way into India (Malhotra & Rogers, 2000). Could the increased occurrence of crime against women in India and aspects of globalization in the country possibly be related to each other? A connection appears to exist between globalization, the values it propagates, and the heightened oppression of women, which I shall examine shortly. First, I would like to explore the findings from a study conducted with Indian men that examines the status of women in the country.

In 1986 and 1987 Steve Derne interviewed 49 upper caste and upper middle caste Hindu men from Banaras, India. He explored their opinions regarding the restrictions on women both inside and outside the home as well as the arranged marriage system. Findings from these interviews suggest that it is considered an honor for a family to have their daughter married into a suitable family of equal or higher socio-economic status. In order to increase such prospects it is imperative that the girl's interaction with men outside her family be restricted. Furthermore, a bride is deemed appropriate if she displays qualities of shyness and modesty. Girls are therefore conditioned to develop these qualities from a young age. They are taught that it is inappropriate to question male authority and exhibit pride, confidence and personal opinions. After marriage similar restrictions apply: according

to Derne's interviewees, husbands believe that they need to restrict their wives' activities outside the home to protect the family honor. When it is deemed entirely necessary or beneficial to the family, a woman may be permitted to leave the house although she might be assigned a chaperon. Restrictions on a wife may also be loosened if it would satisfy her husband's desire. Several of the men Derne interviewed accepted the fact that their dominance is maintained by subjugating and controlling women.

Derne also contended that limiting women to the home restricts their mental activity and forestalls them from questioning male authority. Aside from restrictions outside the home, the interviewed men believed that the interaction of women with their husbands should be restricted. The men held the opinion that women should not question anything their husbands say or do; furthermore, husbands should pay little heed to their wife's opinions and needs. It was generally believed that a wife's influence could be disruptive and that she could lead her husband astray, if he was not careful, preventing him from fulfilling his duties. These studies by Derne, suggest that the discussed norms are deep-seated and provide justification for the various systems of oppression imposed upon some women in India.

For centuries Indian women have been victims of relentless oppression and persecution which is a consequence of the patriarchal society to which they belong (Johnson & Johnson, 2001; Karlekar, 2004). They endure subjugation manifested through practices such as forced marriages, dowry, rape and abuse, to name a few. Many of the practices and systems of subjugation have been rooted in traditional Indian ideology and date back to the ancient and sacred 'Vedic' (literally means providing knowledge) scriptures (Agarwal, 1999). While this significant literature speaks to the general nature of a patriarchal society I

would like to describe in more depth the specific issue of arranged marriages and the dowry system in India, an issue of focus in this research.

Arranged Marriages and the Dowry System

Most marriages in India are arranged. The term 'arranged' refers to the process by which life partners are chosen by the parents of the potential bride and groom or by other elders in their community (Nanda, 1992; Teja, 1993). Over ninety percent of women in India have their marriages arranged and even those who choose their own partners must first obtain permission before marrying (Teja, 1993). The couple has little opportunity to socialize before their wedding and barely know each other at the nuptial ceremony. Because the marriage is arranged by both the man and woman's parents, one might argue that if disadvantageous, it should be equally so for both men and women. This, however, is not the case. Young men are afforded more freedom to decline the marriage or back-out of the 'arrangement'. In most cases the new bride moves to her husband's home, usually with his parents and her personal freedoms are restricted – sometimes almost completely (Arnold, Choe, & Roy, 1998; Derne, 1994, 1998; Nanda, 1992). A process related to the arranged marriage system that further demonstrates the inequality of men and women is the practice of dowry.

The 'dowry' system dates back to ancient Hindu marriage rites or 'Kanyadan', which quite literally describes the act of giving a virgin bride to the groom on a propitious day (Natarajan, 1995). In medieval times a lower caste-girl was allowed to marry a man of superior social and economic status, although the reverse was not permitted. Such a marriage was considered fortuitous and improved the socio-economic status of the bride's family. Naturally, the girls' family would covet such an arrangement and be willing to pay

the price to ensure its completion by delivering the dowry (Rastogi & Therly, 2006; Umar, 1998). The practice of dowry involves the bride's family presenting the groom and his family with gifts in the form of cash, gold, and other valuables (Goody & Tambiah, 1973; Johnson & Johnson, 2001). Originally, the dowry was not very significant and was merely intended as a token of good will (Nadagouda, Krishnaswamy, & Aruna, 1992). Over centuries this practice shifted from representing a gift from the bride to a price paid to the groom for marrying and assuming the burden of a wife (Rastogi & Therly, 2006). Until about the 1980's women were barely represented in the work-force. Given this fact, the dowry system was considered a method of compensation for the groom who would assume the economic responsibility of providing for his new bride (Natarajan, 1995).

Despite its religious origins, the dowry system resembles a market transaction. One would assume that the magnitude of this practice would decline with women's increased participation in the global market economy (which contributes to their increased earning capacity) and, the Indian anti-dowry laws that were enacted in 1961 (Agnihotri, 2003; Ghansham, 2002; Srinivasan & Lee, 2004). However, the dowry system has grown in alarming proportions in the last decade. Since the early nineties the dowry began to involve a significant transfer of wealth from the bride's to groom's family (Nadagouda et al., 1992; Natarajan, 1995). Although intended to be a single occurrence at the time of marriage, the practice has in recent times become a continuous one with the groom and his family often demanding a steady stream of gifts and cash from the girl's family. Non-compliance with these demands results in the girl being returned to her natal home, a humiliating and dishonoring occurrence for her family: Abuse and mistreatment of the bride - and in extreme cases, her murder - can result (Umar, 1998).

Mudita Rastogi and Paul Therly (2006) outline the major contributors to the maintenance and perpetuation of the dowry system in India. The first factor described is socio-cultural. Since a family's honor depends upon their daughter marrying into a family of equivalent or higher status, the girl's family is prepared to pay a significant dowry, even if it incurs bankruptcy for them. Many families are aware of the possible abuse that might befall their daughters but would rather risk such a situation than risk being degraded in their communities. Women are persuaded by their own families to stoically endure abuse and are sometimes threatened with being disowned and ostracized from society should they not comply. Cultural norms expect that all women should emulate the qualities of Sita, a perfect woman depicted in Hindu mythology (Rastogi et al., 2006). Some of these qualities include purity, modesty and complete faithfulness to her husband. It is a perpetuated belief that these feminine qualities should not falter despite rejection and abuse by her husband or other men in the family. Such a norm provides husbands and other men in a woman's family immunity to do as they like without fear of retribution. Finally, Rastogi and Therly discovered the economic factor. Because so many women in India remain illiterate and lack training for marketable skills they are completely dependent on their husbands for financial support. Husbands can use this unfortunate circumstance of their wives as a pretext to demand a continuous flow of cash and gifts from the girl's family, claiming that they need these to support their wives. Upper class women are encouraged to obtain a higher education, but this is often done to increase their prospects for a good match. After marriage they might be restricted to the sphere of home (as was my friend Nisha) and/or their income may be controlled by their husbands. Again, unquestioning compliance is expected.

Reports written by Goan Non Governmental Organizations (NGO's) indicate that the

status of Goan women is similar to their peers in the rest of the country (Sangath, 2000).

Other than these there does not seem to be much research on Goan women, rendering this study unique and important. Over the following section I would like to briefly describe Goa and its unique characteristics to you.

Goa, the Smallest State in the Country

Goa, the land of sun, sea and sand is the smallest state in India. This little state attracts over two million tourists a year. Over 500,000 of these tourists come from North America, Europe and Australia (Indian Tourism Statistics, 2004). The fact that the Portuguese ruled Goa from 1510 to 1961 makes the little state unique from the rest of the country with a culture and tradition of its own. However, one cannot ignore the fact that Goa had been part of India, geographically and politically, for forty five years, with significant migrations of communities and cultures across its border. Goa was primarily a Catholic state but with the large incidence of migrations in the last couple of decades, especially from the neighboring, largely Hindu states of Maharashtra and Karnataka, the Christian population of Goa is no longer a majority, with Hindu's comprising 65% of the population (Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2006). For the current research though, I will only be interviewing Hindu women who were raised in the state. I chose Hindu women to participate in this study as Hinduism is currently the dominant religion in Goa.

A History of Television and Cinema in India

Television is a concept that infiltrated India slowly with the first television program being aired in India's capital, Delhi in 1959. Subsequent television stations were only established in major cities after 1972 (Bhatt, 1994; Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1984). The audiences for television in India remained small until the late 1980's and broadcasted channels were limited to 'Doordarshan', the single Indian broadcasting station (Bhatt, 1994; Rajagopal, 2001). Reforms brought about in the government facilitated by Indian Prime Minister Rao opened up avenues for 'cable' or 'satellite' television in India, both for Indian and international broadcasters (Bhatt, 1994; Indian Television Dot Com Pvt Ltd, 2006). The audience for television saw a sudden spike with approximately 400 million viewers nation-wide in the 1990's. Television became the dominant power in communicating and circulating information, ideologies and norms; the masses regarded television as their resource for information and news, especially given the fact that the majority of Indian citizens remained illiterate rendering the print media useless to them (Bhatt, 1994; Rajagopal, 2001). Existing literature strongly indicates that the influence exerted by the media on Indian ideology is powerful (Bhatt, 1994; Rajagopal, 2001; Brown & Cody, 1991)

Alongside Indian television lies Indian cinema. Introduced in 1896, cinema in India has seen such tremendous growth that India currently has the largest film industry in the world. Bollywood (India's primary film industry) produces more films per year than any other film industry in the world (Cunningham, Jacka, Sinclair, 1996; Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1984; Nowell-Smith, 1996; Thoraval, 2000). From the 1990's films produced in India were slowly influenced by film industries from other nations,

with the most dominating influence coming from Hollywood. Indian film exerts its influences on social, political and traditional issues in India (Cunningham, Jacka, Sinclair, 1996; Nowell-Smith, 1996; Rajagopal, 2001; Thoraval, 2000). Given this fact, it becomes imperative to examine the nature of the global media and in particular the plethora of information that transports itself from the United States of America to other nations, in this particular case India (Bagdikian, 2006; Cunningham, Jacka, Sinclair, 1996; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Steger, 2003)

American Media Influences on Indian Television and Cinema

To a large extent the flow of culture and information between different corners of the globe is facilitated by the powerful forces of the media (Steger, 2003). Commercial media floods people with information via numerous television channels, radio, the internet and the print media, therefore becoming the chief agent of information dissemination (Swinnen & McCluskey, 2006). Given that the United States of America - the current superpower of the world - holds the media monopoly, there exists an uneven flow of information between the U.S and developing countries and its effects are not benign (Bagdikian, 2006; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Steger, 2003). It should be noted that when considering the plethora of information that is transported by the media we cannot assume that it simply represents the opinions and culture of people residing in the west. It is the opinion of scholars that the western media is primarily controlled by an elite patriarchal group that decides on topics and issues of programming based on values of greed and wealth creation (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). These values are founded on what Shiva (1989) refers to as a “western patriarchal economic vision” (p. 2). This economic vision is based on the exploitation of nature, women

(both western and non-western) and developing countries (Herman & Chomsky, 1988, Shiva, 1989). American media acts as an agent of large corporations to promote consumerist values, and western wealth accumulation. However, many of the products, services and ideologies are advertised without much regard given to the potential interaction of these with the socio-economic factors in developing nations. This then often results in unfortunate consequences for unwitting communities in developing nations (Arnett, 2002; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Steger, 2003).

Along with the plethora of information that the media transports on a daily basis comes propaganda for a system of beliefs, attitudes and opinions that are founded on the previously mentioned western patriarchal economic view (Giddens, 2000; Miles, 1996; Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Shiva, 1989; Steger, 2003). As earlier noted, development is characterized by capitalist gains which are based on the exploitation of women (Miles, 1996; Shiva, 1989). The media is no exception, objectifying women to sell consumer goods and programming (Rudman & Verdi, 1993; Reichert, 2002). Decades of research indicate that images portrayed in the media influence the thought processes that determine the formation of attitudes and beliefs on various subjects and in this case, attitudes towards women (Lovdal, 1989; MacKay & Covell, 1997; Milburn, Carney & Ramirez, 2001). Extensive research on the media suggest that the underlying themes of a majority of the programming aired on television today somehow objectify women, portraying their roles as secondary to men. Television programs and commercials reinforce stereotypical gender roles. Such an approach fails to challenge the dynamics of a global cultural hegemony which favors men (Courtney & Lockertz, 1971; Lovdal, 1989; Milburn et al., 2001).

The manner in which women are portrayed in the media has remained stable over three decades (Bartsch, Burnett, Diller, & Williams, 2000; Cejka & Eagly, 1999). Despite the fact that women now represent forty six percent of the work-force in North America, they are still portrayed in a restrictive manner, such as being primarily homemakers, unintelligent, submissive and likely to be holding low status jobs with a continued dependence on men (Bartsch et. al., 2000; Cejka & Eagly, 1999; U.S Department of Labor, 2006). Sexual images and notions of women are exploited in order to sell products and programs; their intelligence and opinions are deemphasized with almost a complete focus on their bodies. Men on the other hand are portrayed as being independent, knowledgeable and authoritative. When using male characters to sell products an emphasis is primarily placed on their expertise rather than their bodies (Bartsch et. al., 2000; Lovdal, 1989).

It should be noted that female characters are used to sell primarily domestic products, indirectly promoting the notion that women belong at home and are responsible for domestic tasks. In 1989 Lovdal coded 230 commercials according to product nature – specifically whether the product was domestic (cleaning supplies, home remedies, foods etc.) or non-domestic (cars, cameras, stereos etc.). He also noted the gender of the product representatives in the advertisements. After an analysis of the data, Lovdal found that females were grossly underrepresented in the non-domestic product advertisements, only appearing twenty eight percent of the time in contrast with the seventy two percent for males. The notion that males are more credible on issues outside the home was suggested as the possible explanation for the gap in numbers. More than ten years later Bartsch et.al., (2000) replicated Lovdal’s study to determine if any significant changes had occurred over the ten year period. The results indicated that not much had changed over the decade with

women still only being represented in non-domestic advertisements thirty percent of the time.

The nature of the media is of significant importance when one considers the influence it exerts on society at large. Studies have evidenced a positive relationship between viewing of television shows and advertisements with the acceptance, maintenance and even propagation of stereotypical gender roles as the norm (Signorielli, 1989; Volgy & Schwarz; 1980). In a study conducted in the late eighties on the relationship between television viewing and the promotion of conventional and sexist perspectives of the role of women in society, Nancy Signorielli (1989) found a direct relationship between television viewing and the maintenance of the status quo. Furthermore, she discovered that the more television individuals were exposed to, the more traditional and stereotypical their views were likely to be. Such evidence indicates that the media is evidently not representative of the present era and continues to engender conventional notions regarding women's role in society; it exerts a powerful influence in maintaining a status quo that is restrictive to women (Signorielli, 1989; Volgy & Schwarz; 1980). What happens then when this same media is transported to developing nations of extreme patriarchy, where women are still immensely oppressed and have little control over their lives?

The American media in India, for the majority of the population, essentially introduced concepts of 'different' lifestyles (Derne, 2002). With the rapid growth of cable television in India during the 1990's, the masses in India were perpetually being deluged with Western culture (Malhotra & Rogers, 2000). With twenty English channels and the globalization of cinema, the Indian population experienced an influx of advertisements, movies and music that are based on western lifestyles and primarily intended for western

populations (Griffin, Viswanath, & Schwartz, 1994; Malhotra & Rogers, 2000; Rustogi, Hensel, & Burgers, 1996). Such programming and the variety of channels differed greatly from 'Doordarshan' (Bhatt, 1994). The sudden change in programming caused fear of losing Indian culture to western ideologies; this in turn led to a rise of Indian nationalism and one consequence of this rise was a demand that the women in the country return to roles that are traditional and passive (Malhotra & Rogers, 2000). For the Hindu nationalists, 'good women' were synonymous with 'traditional' and 'subservient' roles, while those who diverge from traditional norms warrant punishment.

The impacts of the global media are not only experienced directly but appear to impinge on Indian media as well. Despite attempts at resistance to influences from Hollywood, film makers in Bollywood (the Indian Hollywood) acknowledge having regularly emulated scripts, wardrobe themes and choreography from Hollywood blockbusters (Derne, 1999; Nayar, 1997). Bollywood relies on the uniformity offered by the west to contend with the numerous and rather variable cultural and linguistic sects within the nation. However, Bollywood is selective in choosing which facets of American culture are assimilated into Hindi movies, while maintaining 'traditional' Indianness with regard to female roles. Between depictions of sex and violence (imbibed from Hollywood) and portrayals of helpless, dependent women who are submissive to the whims of men, it appears that Bollywood represents the worst of both worlds. Sex-role stereotypes are reinforced, male domination is eroticized, and an association between sex and violence is encouraged (Derne, 1999). Producing approximately four hundred films a year, Bollywood attracts a weekly audience of over thirty five million, most of whom are rural, uneducated migrants. Cinema halls are male-dominated with approximately ninety percent

representation from young and unmarried men. Despite the fact that a significant number of concepts portrayed in Bollywood films are essentially 'western' (which most viewers are not aware of), much credence is attached to information presented in these movies as they are considered inherently Indian.

Sex as a topic of discussion is taboo in India (Sharma & Vanjani, 1993); however, as research suggests, this in no way quashes young Indian men's curiosity regarding sexuality - if anything, fascination with the subject is only augmented (Derne, 1999). In the absence of legitimate sources of information, the media and particularly Bollywood movies are considered the primary resource for education on the subject. The principal message regarding women conveyed through Hindi movies and television changed in the 1990's. From being demure housewives, women were increasingly portrayed as vacuous sex objects, nothing more than commodities that exist solely for male pleasure (Malhotra & Rogers, 2000). Such portrayals are constructed in patriarchal and nationalist interests; they help males rationalize the 'actual' mistreatment of women and the use of force to ensure submission and even affection. Rape is an integral element of scripts, the absence of which is often detrimental to the film (Derne, 1999; Nayar, 1997). Movies regularly depict 'strong' 'forceful' heroes, whose patterns of force and harassment toward the heroine only assist in charming her, securing her everlasting affections therefore legitimizing violence and force in intimate, 'consensual' relationships. Some researchers assert that this has a direct impact on the increased incidence of marital rape and domestic violence in India (Derne, 1999; Srivastva & Agarwal, 2004).

Female sexuality is condemned in Hindi film, portrayed as causing much disruption in society. Displays of such a nature cause men to be suspicious of any woman who desires

sex. Derne's interviewees were of the opinion that women who marry for love can never remain faithful to their husbands. The majority of Indian men it appears, partake in the general notion that if left unchecked, women's sexuality can get out of hand. This can apparently be controlled through the arranged marriage system, aggressive control by 'wise', 'superior' men and joint family pressure in a system that is oppressive to women (Derne, 1999; Johnson & Johnson, 2001; Karlekar, 2004).

Indian film not only encourages men's oppression of women but women's oppression of women as well (Derne, 1999). Women are: 1) reinforced in their own traditional roles of passivity and subjugation; and 2) are led to believe that men are sometimes justified in their punishment of the 'deviant vamps', and therefore offer little support to victims of rape, molestation and other forms of aggression. These women victims are believed to have acted in a manner that warranted the violence exerted against them, an issue that is discussed more fully in the next section.

The Media and the Nature of Aggression towards Women in India

Derne's (2002) research with Indian film-going men suggests that men often find themselves attracted to media depictions of violence and sex, that both exacerbate the male fantasy for dominance over women, and act as the cornerstone of their masculine identity. Men are particularly attracted to female characters who are cast as 'sex objects' in subordinate roles (Derne, 2003). Interestingly enough, as men find themselves increasingly attracted to media depictions of 'authoritative' masculinity and increased options for 'their' own sexual pleasure, they concurrently ignore and even deliberately move away from any media depictions of new possibilities for female roles and sexual relations, thereby

emphasizing the existing gender hierarchy (Appadurai, 1996). Any form of media depiction that promotes women's independence or challenges their 'traditional' roles is strongly frowned upon. Moreover, the attraction to cosmopolitan lifestyles engenders a heightened anxiety among men regarding their own sense of 'Indianness' and a disruption of the inherent value of their own culture. To handle their anxiety, traditional orthodoxies regarding the women in the country are embraced and celebrated (Derne, 2002). Men identify their Indianness and compensate for their acceptance of western aspects of modernity by their 'claimed' attraction to the 'traditional' Indian woman. In an attempt to maintain the 'Indian' culture, men not only limit the choices for women, they also tend to oppress them further. It is expected that the women of Indian society should offer unquestioning compliance with 'traditional roles' of obedience, prayer and servitude. Furthermore, Indian males attempt to restrict women to the private sphere of home as much as possible.

In interviews with Indian men, Derne uncovered the common notion that women are not permitted to be independent or assertive as this could potentially lead to myriad problems for Indian society at large. Men fearing that women may, like themselves, be attracted to western culture, resort to increased violence. These acts of violence are viewed as being a preventive measure to keep women from getting 'out of hand' and 'westernized', thus neglecting their housework and child caring duties. Furthermore, independence of women was considered a threat to women's implicit devotion to their men-folk. The great majority of Derne's interviewees, in their critique of western culture, shared the sentiment that numerous social problems like divorce are caused by women with too much freedom who wrongly assume equality with men. Furthermore, these problematic issues can be

forestalled from infecting the Indian culture by keeping women in line by, quite literally, ruling them with an iron rod, constantly reminding them of their inferior status (Derne, 1994).

Indian men identify strongly with violent masculine figures portrayed in media (Derne, 2002, 2003). Hollywood actors like Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger as well as Bollywood actors like Hritik Roshan, Bobby Deol and Sunil Shetty are idolized because their roles represent men of immense strength, possessing the ability to fight. The movies are considered realistic and exciting and violence is regarded as being an integral aspect to masculinity and heroism. As the literature demonstrates, violence in the media may constitute increased aggression in viewers (Dunand, Berkowitz, & Leyens, 1984; Sebastian, Parke, Berkowitz, & West, 1978). An aggressive personality is quite simply a desirable trait. Little distinction is made between positive and negative depictions of violence and consequently women become the favorite targets of 'masculine' aggression (Derne, 2003). Another related issue is female sexuality.

The Media and Depictions of Female Sexuality

As mentioned previously, men are attracted to media portrayals of western and 'westernized' women as 'objects of sex'. They find themselves titillated by glamorous representations of 'sexual' behavior. Western clothing on women, from pants to bikinis, are cause for excitement especially considering that these are quite novel within the context of Indian culture (Derne, 2002; Scrase, 2003). However, this kind of attire is considered integrally western and immodest, with little place in Indian culture. The more exposure men have to transnational media, the more firmly they categorize and polarize women as either

indecently dressed, promiscuous, dirty sluts, who drink and are overly forward, or traditionally attired, demure, passive ‘good’ women (Derne, 2002). The prior kind of woman deserves no respect and in fact should be punished for her disgraceful behavior (Nayak, Byrne, Martin, & Abraham, 2003). Over the last decade the ever increasing depictions of women in what are considered ‘salacious’ roles (Srivastva & Agarwal, 2004) only nurtures this notion in men and encourages a disrespect for women, generating further aggression toward them. Women in general and ‘westernized’ women in particular are targets for molestation, rape and eve-teasing - a method of exerting control over women and an expression of misogyny, that is rooted in 2500 year old epic tale of princess Draupadi’s^[1] public sexual humiliation (Rajan, 2001). Statistics from the National Crime Records Bureau of India (2004) support a potentially positive relationship between the incidence of these crimes and sexual portrayal of women in trans-national media.

A related issue that emerges from the impact of transnational media on the oppression of women in India is the rather contradictory expectations of female sexuality (Derne, 1999; 2002). As Indian men find themselves increasingly exposed to western concepts of sex and gratification they redefine their own requirements for sexual satisfaction. Women are expected to espouse the celebrated, traditional values of passivity and submission while concurrently embracing ‘western’ sexiness to satisfy their men. At the same time women are punished for complying in such a manner. This ‘punishment’ is connected to the dissonance induced by the earlier established distinction between the ‘evil vamp’ and the ‘good traditional woman’. We are quite simply dealing with a double edged sword --- on the one hand women are punished for not being traditional and on the other hand are expected to be western and satisfy their husband’s sexual fantasies – for which they

are also punished. It should be noted that positive aspects of female sexuality in terms of pleasure and choice are actively ignored; men choose to exclusively celebrate depictions that encourage the notion supporting the construction of female sexuality solely for male pleasure (Derne, 1999; Nayar, 1997).

The Media and Consumerism

Advertisements that essentially boost consumerism and ‘different’, ‘exciting’ or quite simply ‘western’ lifestyles line the streets of India. As Szescko (1985) argues, the one-way information flow from the west to third world countries imposes an exogenous culture on the people of those nations by reconstructing needs.

It appears that influences from the global media and market engender consumerism and greed – ‘get what you can, however you can’ (Agnihotri, 2003; Derne, 2003; Srinivasan & Lee, 2004). The inundation of such consumerist western values may be linked to an increased demand for dowry in recent years. Grooms and their families expect exorbitant dowries irrespective of the bride’s qualifications and earning capacity. In addition and quite ironically, the amount of the dowry is determined by the groom’s profession and status in society with doctors, lawyers and engineers drawing the largest dowries (professionals who technically need it the least) (Natarajan, 1995). To reiterate a previous point, although the exchange of dowry is supposed to be a single occurrence taking place during the wedding ceremony, it appears that this is in fact not true. Husbands and in-laws of the bride often demand a fairly continuous supply of ‘gifts’ from the girl’s family (Agnihotri, 2003). The bride’s family in turn incurs heavy debt and sometimes exhaust their entire life savings to comply with the demands of the man’s family (Rastogi & Therly, 2006) The groom’s

continued dissatisfaction with the dowry and/or unfulfilled demands leads to the humiliation, harassment and abuse of the bride. The girl's family's continual failure to comply with demands often (too often) leads to her rather sudden and unexplainable death, popularly referred to as 'dowry deaths' or 'bride burning' (Natarajan, 1995; Johnson & Johnson, 2001; Srinivasan & Lee, 2004). Setting the bride ablaze, hanging and poisoning are the common methods employed; conversely, sometimes the extreme abuse drives the bride to suicide, which also constitutes 'dowry death'. The death of the bride leads to remarriage and a second dowry and can therefore be utilized as a vehicle of wealth accumulation. The acts of abuse are usually carried out by female members of the groom's family, a rather dismal situation, that of women partaking in the oppression of members of their own gender. Most of these women have themselves been victims of dowry-related violence, yet they carry on and participate in this rather cruel practice. As with other violent crimes against women, dowry deaths have also seen a rapid increase between the mid- eighties, early nineties and ever since the age of globalization in India (National Crime Records Bureau, 2003).

Positive Depictions of Women in the Media

While the breadth of the literature points to a negative portrayal of women in the media, there is some evidence that supports the more positive depiction of women. As Mcmillin (2002) points out there are increased representations of women in roles like talk-show hosts, news readers and reporters and as voices of authority in matters of importance. Such media roles promote values of female leadership and independence. Bollywood movies are also increasingly portraying women in strong heroine roles, which digress from

common stereotypes (The Hindu Business Line, 2004). Dasgupta (1996) notes that though Indian movies remain patriarchal, there is some evidence that supports an awareness of women's rights portrayed in films. While there is little academic evidence of the effects that positive media depictions of women have on the Indian culture and traditions, it is important to remain cognizant of the potential impacts – ones that could be desirable. Considering the evidence that supports the negative impacts of the media on the status of women it is not unreasonable to consider the possible positive impacts that facets of the media could exert on Indian culture and women's experience.

Thoughts on the Literature

The literature suggests that concepts portrayed on television or in movies which challenge the cultural hegemony (one that strongly favors men) are rejected and condemned. Conversely, those that render support for arrangements that favor women in 'subservient' and 'traditional' roles are adopted. Women have little opportunity to contribute opinions towards altering the status-quo in their favor and when the opportunity does arise their opinions and voices are likely to be rejected (Menon-Sen & Kumar, 2001; Rastogi & Therly, 2006). Considering this fact it seems a logical possibility that the nature of oppression will increase or at the very least remain static; after all it is not often that those with power will relinquish it voluntarily.

As noted in the literature, some Indian men are attracted to western depictions of strong and powerful heroes, cosmopolitan lifestyles and women as sex objects. Such influential media portrayals may be responsible for the increased violence and harassment of women. A mental conflict within Indian males caused by guilt for having betrayed Indian

virtues may lead to the intensified subjugation of women and a demand for their unquestioning compliance with Indian values of servitude, prayer, obedience and modesty. Demands are made for sexual gratification like those portrayed in the media; unfortunately, compliance by women is accompanied by their loss of honor and subsequent punishment.

Advertisements and the increasing number of 'American' products on the Indian market engender consumerism, a mind-set that the middle and lower classes cannot afford to harbor. Such attitudes seem to be occurring at the same time as demands for high dowries increase, which in turn put women's families into debt. Non-compliance leads to abuse and even murder of the brides. It is possible that the two may be related.

It is important to note also, that the media could potentially positively impact the status of women in India. Positive depictions of women in the media - even if limited - do encourage and support the female voice, women's rights and a notion of female independence and intelligence. This message is significant and its possible influence should not be disregarded.

A review of the literature suggests that there have been numerous studies conducted on the nature of oppression of women in India and the nature and impact of the western media in the United States of America. Scholars have written books on globalization from various perspectives, examining the phenomenon of globalization at various depths. However there is a dearth of information on the impact of the western media on the women's experience and transitions in traditional arranged marriage and dowry practices in India, except for the studies having been conducted by Steve Derne. Furthermore, these studies have been conducted from the Indian male perspective and/or represent quantitative research. The nature of the existing research in this area renders which focuses on the impact

of the media on Goan women's experiences with the arranged marriage and dowry system unique and significant. Moreover this thesis is the first academic research of its kind and is important because it explored the issues from a feminist-phenomenological perspective.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Prior to conducting research in India, I went through a rigorous ethics process at Wilfrid Laurier University. The manner in which I sought to conduct the research was reviewed carefully to ensure the confidentiality and safety of my participants. I was advised to provide my participants with resources for counseling support (refer to APPENDIX C). In addition I was reminded to provide participants with extensive information on the nature and purpose of the study and issues surrounding consent (refer to APPENDICES B & D). The goals of my research and a feminist pragmatist epistemology lent credence to a choice of a feminist hermeneutic-phenomenological methodology (Ferguson, 2000; Reybold, 2002). This research is feminist as it utilizes feminist definitions of the globalization and the media (refer to pages 14 & 17). Furthermore, it explores women's perspective on possible gender inequalities in India. In addition, I chose this methodology as I believed it would give me an insight into the issue from the perspective of the lived experience of Hindu women in Goa within the cultural context that it occurs. Given that the process and method is just as crucial to the research as the intent, I briefly explore my methodology of choice, how it works and why it applies to my current research, in the subsequent section.

Phenomenology – Where it came from and Why it works

Phenomenology is linked with the early work of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). According to Husserl, phenomenology analyzes the objective content of conscious experience; he emphasized that all scientific knowledge relies on people's inner evidence (Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, 2003; Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology pertains to the naïve comprehensibility of personal lived and conscious experiences (Burch, 2002;

Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003; Patton, 2002). It is a scientific methodology that requires a comprehensive description which assists a researcher in elucidating the phenomenon under study (Moustakas, 1994). A phenomenological approach to my research offered me a powerful tool for uncovering the comprehensive and descriptive truth of an experience as it occurred in someone's personal and extremely private consciousness (Howard, 1982). Drawing upon such a perspective, the present study examined Goan women's phenomenological experience of the impact of the media on the arranged marriage and dowry system in Goa, India.

The chosen phenomenological approach allowed me to search for meaning in women's lived experience, unobstructed by pre-conceived concepts and theoretical notions (Kendler, 2005). I believe that the naïve accounts of experiences - and reactions to them as shared by my participants - served as effective instruments in increasing my understanding of women's experience with the arranged marriage and dowry system; and, how the presence of the media may have influenced these traditional issues. It should be noted that the meaning of first-hand experience was of particular relevance.

The present research was devoted to taking the first step to shedding some light on these issues, and how they are impacted on by the media. This study was not designed to measure the oppression of women but rather to increase understanding of these issues. Through this study, women in Goa had an opportunity to utilize personal vocabulary to speak of their experiences. They had an opportunity to speak individually and in private, within the context of the research interview, of their personal experiences with and as a result of the media.

Hermeneutic Inquiry in the Present Research Context

Hermeneutics as a methodology complements phenomenology by providing a theoretical and contextual framework for understanding accounts of lived experience (Patton, 2005; Robertson-Malt, 1999). The purpose of hermeneutics is to interpret an experience within the conditions that it occurred as well as those circumstances under which it is being interpreted (Patton, 2005; Robertson-Malt, 1999; Wilson & Hutchinson, 2007). Hermeneutic research asks such questions as 'What are the conditions under which a human act took place?' (Patton, 1990, p.113). Used in collaboration, a hermeneutic-phenomenological approach helps transform the subjective language of a personal lived experience into a more explicit one in the academic context, without altering the content it was meant to convey (Robertson-Malt, 1999). In using this approach I as a researcher was able to create an interpretive contextual area within which my participants were offered an opportunity to speak of their personal vignettes. This approach presented particular relevance in the present research as I sought to examine the impact of the media on women's experience of the arranged marriage and dowry system in India.

Research Goals and Objectives

The primary goal of the present research was to 'learn' about how exposure to television and cinema influence Indian women's experiences of the arranged marriage and dowry system in Goa. In addition, I sought to learn about the nature of the arranged marriage and dowry system in Goa; the shifts in television and cinema content over several decades; the changes in level of exposure; the manner in which television and cinema are regarded with reference to Indian traditions and values; and, the possible effects of the

media on tradition. Since most of the related research on these issues was conducted with Indian males, I was curious to explore these issues from Indian women's perspectives and experiences.

The Research Question

My main research question asks 'what is the impact of varied exposure to television and cinema on women's experiences with the arranged marriage and dowry system in Goa?

Participants

My research was conducted on a relatively homogenous sample of six Goan women. I divided the participants into two cohorts. The first cohort comprised of women who were married between the years of 1980-1985. The second group consisted of women who were married between 2000 and 2007. The participants in the second cohort were no older than twenty eight years of age. I included this criterion to ensure that their childhood and teen years corresponded to the period when satellite television came to India, to differentiate them from the first cohort. All the participants belonged to the Hindu religion, had been born and raised in Goa and identified themselves as belonging to the middle class. It was a requirement that all the participants be either enrolled or graduated from a university. Finally, all the participants possessed cable television in their homes and viewed movies in theatres at least once every 3 months.

The Recruitment Process

In order to lay the foundation for my study I made contact with the following two colleges in Goa: Carmel College for Women and Chowgule College, under the Goa University. I spoke to the principals and my former psychology teachers from each college, giving them a description of my research, its goals and the positive role it could potentially play. I sought permission to promote my research among women staff and students in their institutions via flyers and word of mouth. In addition, I promised to ensure complete confidentiality and respect for potential participants. Contact was also established with NGO's requesting permission to post my flyers in their offices.

The flyers provided preliminary information about the research and explained that I was looking for women to share their stories within the privacy of a personal interview (see APPENDIX A). The criteria for participants were also listed. The response from interested participants was instant and enthusiastic.

I hired two research assistants (RA's) who have an academic background in Psychology/Social Work to help me lay a foundation for my research before I left Canada for Goa. These two crucial members of my research process were debriefed on the details of my thesis. I provided them with extensive requests to follow the ethical requirements of the academic research process. Sensitivity, patience, warmth and attention to detail when dealing with the participants were aspects that I particularly emphasized. Confidentiality and anonymity of the women who participated was an issue underscored and punctuated. The two research assistants were paid \$15 (Rs.600) for their invaluable assistance. They assisted with my study by photocopying flyers and distributing these to the colleges and NGO's. Interested participants contacted us with their preferred means of contact. My RA's

screened the interested participants, retaining only the information of those women who fulfilled all the criteria of the study. With the assistance of both RA's, I collected the names and contact information of the final six women who participated in my study.

My research assistants clarified details of the study and consent form with the chosen participants. Participants were then requested to sign the consent forms before they were interviewed. Those who required time to read the consent form and consider their participation more carefully were allowed to keep the consent form and get back to us in two days. I personally called the participants in order to go over the consent form again and set up a convenient time for the interview. Participants were given an Rs.400 honorarium which amounts to \$10.

Selecting a Method for Data Collection

I chose to conduct personal semi-standardized interviews with each participant. As a researcher who sought to explore the emotional and cognitive nature of women's lived experience in relation to the impacts of the media on the arranged marriage and dowry system, a semi-standardized interview approach seemed most adequate (Berg, 2004). Such an approach allowed me to explore key issues of interest to my research while offering me the flexibility and discretion to explore certain issues in greater depth. Using this method I was able to ask questions that emerged in the interview process as significant to the research (Patton, 2002). I also believe that a selection of such an approach was congruent with a hermeneutic-phenomenological methodology. I traveled to India for two weeks in February to conduct the interviews. Before I expand on my interview procedures I would like to discuss the significant issue of participant protection and ethical matters.

Protecting the Participants

As I was interacting with women in India, it was imperative that I remained aware and sensitive to their social situation. Being interviewed for academic studies was a particularly new concept to my participants. Another consideration that I had to remain mindful of is that some women participating in the research came from conservative homes. As a researcher it was my responsibility to anticipate potential risks for my participants (Langford, 2000). The field assistants and I considered the following issues:

1. Is it safe for the participant's family to know about the study?
2. If it is not safe, then what are the risks the participant potentially faces should the family find out?
3. What precautions can I take as a researcher to protect the identity of my participants?

In order to protect the identity of my participants I had to ensure that their names were excluded from any related documents. In some cases it was necessary to obtain verbal consent instead of a signature. Before conducting the interviews I laid out a plan for safety designed for each participant based on their particular situation which was determined after preliminary conversations with the participants. I also requested that participants consider any personal risks before consenting to participate in the research. As it turned out none of the women believed that they would potentially face seriously negative physical or mental consequences resultant of participation in this study.

I conferred with each participant over the telephone as to the best way to proceed with the interview. During this telephone conversation we decided upon a time that was convenient for the interview as well as their personal required level of discretion. The interviews were conducted in the private and comfortable atmosphere of my apartment in Goa. Participants had the option of being personally shuttled back and forth from the

apartment and their chosen location. Some participants chose this option while others met me directly at the apartment.

To ensure that my participants were protected from emotional discomfort and embarrassment, I repeatedly emphasized that participation was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the interview at any point in the discussion without repercussions or questions. This point was emphasized both during the preliminary telephone conversation and upon commencement of the interview. All participants were assured of complete anonymity.

In order to protect participants from potential psychological stress consequent of participation in the research, I provided them with contact information of a reputed counselor Kavita Borker at Chowgule College. Kavita is a good personal friend and an excellent counselor; she was enthusiastic to assist me in my project. Participants could and can still contact Kavita for a confidential counseling/support session related to their participation in this study at their own discretion and free of cost.

I have chosen to use direct quotes from participants and therefore attained permission to do so from participants during the interview. However, as it would have been imprudent to risk calling and exposing participants who belong to conservative homes and have kept their participation a secret, I did not verify the data I had collected during the interviews on another day (i.e., conduct member checks). I discuss the interview process in further detail in the ensuing section.

The Interview Process

The interview method of data collection as outlined in Patton (2002), allowed me to enter the participants' world. I gained information and insight through these women's perspectives of their experience regarding the media and its impact on the arranged marriage and dowry system in Goa. I conducted six qualitative in-depth semi-standardized interviews. The interview questions and approach to the interview was focused on eliciting pertinent information through participants' narrations of their personal experiences (refer to APPENDIX A). Interviewees were encouraged to narrate vignettes of their personal experiences and share opinions and information in as much depth that their subjective comfort levels would allow. While the interviews were focused on the participants' responses the nature of the interviews was conversational, one where I engaged in self-disclosure (Oakley, 1981). Each interview ran for about forty five to sixty minutes depending on the participant. Via my interview questions and the invaluable disclosures of my participants, I was able to learn my participants' terminology and derive an understanding of the complexities of their personal experience. As outlined in the literature, I worded and formatted the language I used in a manner that was understandable to the participants (Berg, 2004; Patton, 2002). This was particularly crucial considering the likelihood that English is not the first language of my participants; it was essential to me that my participants fully understood the questions asked of them so that they could openly and truthfully respond to them. Within the context of the actual interviews, language was not a barrier as all my participants were fluent in English and were enthusiastic to share their experiences with me. Guided by the literature, open-ended questions were employed rather than dichotomous questions, which allowed for detailed descriptions of personal experience,

although my participants did occasionally need to be subtly brought back on track when a digression occurred (Moustakas, 1994; Kavle, 1996). Close-ended questions may curb participants' free expression about personal experiences. It was my goal that questions in the interview would elucidate and be singular, embracing one concept at a time to avoid confusion and vagueness about what is being asked. I believe that this goal was accomplished to a satisfactory degree.

“The outcome of an interview depends on the knowledge, sensitivity, and empathy of the interviewer” (Kvale, 1996, p.106). In order to employ these concepts within the interview process, I spent approximately ten minutes at the beginning of the interview engaging the participant in casual conversation, unrelated to the research. Each interview commenced with neutral questions that elicited basic information about the participant and their lives. As Ann Oakley stated, “the goal of finding out about people is best achieved when the relationship of interviewer and interviewee is non-hierarchical and when the interviewer is prepared to invest his or her own personal identity in the relationship”, (1981: 41). During the interviews I participated and interacted with the women through self-disclosure when appropriate; an attempt was made to relate to the participants by describing my personal connection to Goa (Oakley, 1981). This I believe, was a crucial step as it served as an ice-breaker, assisting participants to relax and get comfortable with me (Kavle, 1996). As outlined by Kvale (1996) non verbal behavior such as eye contact and body language was employed and this, I believe, if used appropriately by the researcher, can serve to ameliorate participants' discomfort.

In keeping with the guidelines present in the literature, I kept an interview guide with me during each interview to ensure the focus, intent and quality of the interview (Berg,

2004). Responses were written down in point form as my participants were speaking, using abbreviations and subjective shortcuts. I requested permission to record the interview with the additional choice to have me note down their responses during the interview, should they be uncomfortable with taping. None of my participants chose this option; some stated that being taped was intimidating for them. In addition, some of the participants were concerned that their confidentiality would be violated if the interviews were recorded. I understood their anxiety regarding this issue; given the fact that participation in western academic research is a novel concept, women may be uncomfortable and self-conscious during the interview. The awareness that what they are saying may be heard by academics in Canada may have caused discomfort around their language proficiency. Furthermore, the possible fear of being judged by academics in a western country could have obstructed natural and comfortable responses to questions. In respecting their choice, I recorded the data manually during the interview.

The nature of the interviews was semi-structured and allowed for scheduled questions as well as unscheduled probes that helped me obtain elaboration or clarification on a response of particular interest. All efforts were made to ensure that participants did not feel rushed or that the interview resemble a quiz. As suggested in the literature, I attempted to accomplish this by using an appropriate tone of voice as well as non-verbal cues (Berg, 2004, Kavle, 1996; Patton, 2002). Such an approach also helped me establish rapport.

“Rapport is a stance vis-a-vis the person being interviewed. Neutrality is a stance vis-a-vis the content of what that person says” (Patton, 2002: 365). To establish rapport during the interviews, I had to remain alert to my reactions to participant responses and this proved to be a challenge. While it was necessary that I remain engaged, interested and

compassionate, I had to caution against powerful emotional responses to narrations that could shape subsequent responses. It should be noted that this was not easy for me because of my existing knowledge and experience with the issues in question. While maintaining good rapport with participants, I put my best effort forward to maintain neutrality to their responses (Berg, 2005; Patton, 2002). Essentially, I wanted to caution against the Hawthorne effect wherein participants would respond in a manner that they deemed appropriate and desirable to me in lieu of their natural responses (Stevenson, Britten, Barry, Barber, Bradley, 2000).

Once I had conducted two interviews I sent the transcripts to my supervisor here in Canada. I also called her a number of times and she assisted me in refining the interview guide for subsequent interviews. I also analyzed the data from the first interviews for significant information. This allowed for a further exploration of issues not anticipated. Once I returned to Canada, a more thorough analysis was conducted.

Analysis of the Interview Data

In recognizing my own personal beliefs and knowledge on the issues at hand as a Goan woman who now lives in Canada, I approached the analysis of my data with a critical subjectivity. Throughout the process I maintained a research journal and noted down my feelings and emotions related to the arranged marriage system and dowry system in India (Hycner, 1985). Once I made myself aware of these I began my analysis. In my interpretation of the data I did not look for reinforcement of any preformed notions of the issues but instead interpreted the data from an open approach. I separated the six interviews into two different data sets; one representing the women who were married in the 1980's and

the other representing women who were married between 2000 and 2007. I analyzed these two data sets to examine the commonalities and contrasts that emerged from experiences of women representing two different generations. The data was analyzed, noted and filed manually.

The first step I took in the process was to attempt to enter the respective participant's world. When analyzing the data I sought to regard it through the lens of the interviewee's worldview rather than my own (Hycner, 1985; Moustakas, 1994). As Keen states, 'we want not to see this event as an example of this or that theory that we have, we want to see it as a phenomenon in its own right, with its own meaning and structure', (1975: 38). The next stage in the process was identifying meaning units where segments from the transcript that contain meaning, both within the context and by themselves were noted (Kirby & Mckenna, 1989).

I read the transcripts repeatedly and in detail to determine the participant's meaning. Attention was paid to words, phrases and sentences while maintaining an attitude of openness to the phenomenon in this study. The meaning units essentially constituted any words, phrases or sentences that carried a coherent meaning. During this stage in the analysis, I condensed my participant's responses while utilizing each participant's literal words to the greatest extent possible. Once this was done I could apply my research question.

Applying my research questions to the meaning units was done to explore whether the units shed light on the phenomenon under question, in any way. If they did, the units were recorded as relevant to the research. Those that were deemed irrelevant for the moment were added to a satellite folder. In addition, those units which appeared redundant to those

already listed were also included in the satellite folder. This is important as the number of times a participant repeats something might itself indicate that it holds significant meaning for her which I wanted to be careful not to miss.

The next step in the process was combining units of relevant meaning and identifying prevalent themes. I re-examined the units to determine if any of them clustered together by virtue of a common meaning or significance. I also clustered units according to which interview group they belonged to, in order to enable a comparison of women who married in the eighties and women who married in the last seven years. I then looked for central themes within and across the clusters that characterize them.

My final task in the analysis of data was to determine the common themes running through the interviews collectively and note which ones were common to all the interviews while which others represented a few. This also allowed for me to determine the similarities and contrasts between the women in each group and thus set up a cultural context for their experiences. Once I established the general themes as well as the more specific yet significant ones, I applied them to the context of my research questions. I analyzed each theme individually, within and across the two cohorts to determine commonalities and differences. Five main themes emerged from the interview data, they were: were a) media exposure between childhood and marriage; b) love vs. arranged marriage c) exposure to the dowry system; d) current media exposure of couple; e) nature of interactions with in-laws. These themes will be discussed more comprehensively in the following section.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS FROM THE STUDY

Participants from this study shared a great deal of information about their personal lives, rendering each vignette valuable and unique. Before analyzing the themes, I would like to reiterate on the backdrop of the study as well as the nature of the participants. I conducted the interviews in Goa, India – the smallest state in the country on the west coast of India. As with the rest of the country, Goa had some television and cinema exposure for decades but truly felt the presence of the media in the nineties. The women I interviewed spent most of their lives in Goa and it was the site that witnessed their childhoods, weddings, marriages and so much more. These women, through their accounts helped me gain a picture of the media context in Goa over the decades and place the experiences they had with the arranged marriage and dowry system within this context.

Two groups of women were interviewed; three were married between 1980 and 1987 and the other three were married between 2000 and 2007. The emergent themes therefore represent women who experienced the traditional and contextual issues of the arranged marriage and dowry system at different time periods. The different periods make for an interesting contrast between the groups of women around some of the themes that will be introduced. In reporting the findings I quote the participants, allowing their particular voices and language to be heard. Since many of the terms and phrases utilized in the participants' language refers to Indian concepts that are unknown to many western readers, I insert interpretations of these within brackets. It should be noted that no real names will be indicated in the document. They will all be replaced by pseudonyms. To reiterate, the five themes that emerged from the data were a) media exposure between childhood and marriage; b) love vs. arranged marriage c) exposure to the dowry system; d) current media

exposure of couple; e) nature of interactions with in-laws. Before discussing the themes, I have presented a word table to introduce some basic characteristics of the two cohorts and the pseudonyms of the participants in each.

Table 1.

Participant Cohorts

Pseudonyms	Love/Arranged marriage	Dowry or trousseau
Participants married in the 1980s (cohort 1)		
Lila	Love and arranged marriage	Dowry
Sunita	Arranged marriage	Dowry
Maya	Arranged marriage	Dowry
Participants married between 2000-2007 (cohort 2)		
Nitu	Love marriage	Neither
Geeta	Love marriage	Trousseau
Tara	Arranged marriage	Trousseau

Note. Dowry refers to the cash and goods that the brides' family gives the groom and his family, as a condition of the marriage (Rastogi & Therly, 2006). Trousseau (as defined by participants) are the possessions the bride brings to her husband's home and include appliances, electronics, jewellery and clothes. A dowry is possessed by the grooms' family while a trousseau remains (at least partly) in a brides' possession.

Themes

A) Media Exposure From Childhood Until Early Marriage

Cohort 1

All three interview participants who were married in the 1980's reported that they had no

exposure to television growing up and that their exposure to cinema was minimal during their childhoods. Two of the women stated that they only occasionally visited the “cinema”.

To quote Sunita:

We lived in a small village outside Panjim (Goa’s capital) where there were beautiful fields and Old Portuguese houses. We had not ever heard what a television was in that time. Sometimes my bhai (brother) would take all six of my brothers and sisters and myself to the city to watch a film and this was a big treat for us because we were not allowed to go often.

Sunita went on to explain:

My grandparents and father were very strict. They did not believe that children from a good family should be roaming on the streets and running around like hooligans. They felt that children should keep quiet, listen to the elders and do our school and house work. My grandmother and mother were always teaching me and my sisters to stitch, cook, clean, iron and pray so that we would be considered good well bred girls for marriage and bring our family luck.

When asked to comment on the nature of the films she did watch Sunita said:

The old gold ones with lots of singing and dancing.

When Lila was asked a similar question she said,

Oh you know – the classic ones where there was not as much sex and violence as today. There was a plenty of clean music and dance with the subtle love story of course.

Both Sunita and Lila reported that all the “films” they watched were in Konkani and Marathi (Goa’s official languages) with the occasional Hindi movie. None of the participants in this group ever watched English movies growing up. Lila said:

There were not any English films and we could not speak English anyways.

The third participant in this group, Maya shared that although she never had a television at home before her marriage a neighbor did get a black and white television set in the early

eighties and that she would visit the neighbor's house frequently to watch "Doordarshan" (India's sole broadcasting station at the time) channels while sitting on the floor with a group of other people from the neighborhood. Laughing she related:

I remember watching the *Ramayana* serial (Hindi serial) with at least twelve other people on Sunday.

Maya also shared that she was presented with her own television set once she was married. Looking back she said:

We watched the same shows; only thing is that we did not have to sit on neighbor's floor to watch. Instead, our neighbors came to sit on our floor and watch. Those were the days before cable television and so many channels no (*sic*). If it rained heavily or a crow got caught in our antenna we would not get even those three channels.

Through their stories, I learned that Lila and Sunita were only exposed to television in the eighties and their reports on the nature of television were similar to Maya's.

All three participants reported an increased exposure to television in the eighties, after they were married, although this was limited to "Desi" (Indian) channels. The participants in this group also reported that their exposure to television programs and movies aired on television, both Indian and western, increased in the nineties with the coming of cable television as well as the progressively increasing number of channels. With regard to this Sunita noted:

Suddenly there were so many programs on T.V. There were so many different types of shows in different languages also (*sic*). We had different different (*sic*) news shows and serials. Even cricket was shown on more than only one channel.

Actual visits to the theatres did not increase for any of the participants in this group. Maya shared:

You know very well how the cinemas in Goa are. Now we have the INOX

but in those days there was (*sic*) not many cinema halls that decent families could visit.

Cohort 2

The women who were married between 2000 and 2007 also reported only a small exposure to television and cinema in their childhood. Nitu shared that her family got their first television set when she was approximately eight or nine years old. When requested to share what kinds of programs she watched she said:

Shows like *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* mainly, some Hindi serials and news when Papa was home in the evening. Oh, how could I forget *Tom and Jerry*.

Geeta, another participant shared:

I clearly remember watching a show called *Little Robot* when I was about seven years old. It was the only TV show Aai (mother) would allow me watch. Now that I think about it, that show was so lame but I loved it.

The third of the younger group of participants Tara, reported that her family watched “Hindi serials” on “Doordarshan” and thanks to her brothers, Tara watched numerous *He-Man* and *GI-Jo* shows growing up. When asked to share their experiences with Cinema when they were children Geeta said that she and her family enjoyed the Bollywood movies, especially the ones with “Amitabh Bachan” or “Dimple Kapadia”. She said:

For special occasions papa would take us all for a movie. We would buy snacks and go to this small dirty theatre, but we loved it.

Tara and Nitu also sometimes watched Bollywood movies in the tiny Goan theatres. When asked if she watched any other kinds genre of films when she was young Tara said:

This one time when we were visiting my mausi (maternal aunt) in Bombay, Mama took us and our cousins for the *Sound of Music*. That movie has been my all time favorite since that day.

All three younger participants indicated that they could not recall many English movies

aired in Goa during their childhood.

Tara, Geeta and Nitu, through their accounts suggested a transition in television and cinema as they got older. According to these women the number of channels kept increasing along with the quantity and variety of the programming. Tara told me:

Once we got cable T.V. we got all the channels yar (Indian slang term used for emphasis). We got all the STAR channels and the ZEE channels. We even got HBO, TNT, The Cartoon Network which I used to watch for *Scooby doo*. I mean we got all sorts of serials and programs. There was something for anybody.

There was an increase in western programming and a simultaneous increase in Indian broadcasting stations and Indian produced programs. When asked which programs she preferred Nitu related:

By the time I was a teenager there were many options on T.V and I watched all kinds of different things. As you can imagine I liked the comedies. My sister and I loved to sit with popcorn and chocolate and watch shows like the *Cosby Show* and *Three's company*. We also liked movies like the *Mask*, *Dumb and Dumber*, *American Pie* and those (*sic*). Sometimes our friends would come over for a sleepover and watch with us. It was great fun.

In response to the same question, thinking back to her teens and early twenties Tara said:

My sister and myself like to watch those Hindi serials like *Astitva...ek prem kahani* and *Kahani Ghar Ghar Kii*, Hindi movies as well as lots of English programs and movies. Mai (mother) also liked to watch with us sometimes but my Pai (father) would not watch these kinds of programs, he liked sports and news programs like those on NDTV.

According to these participants the face of cinema in Goa also changed in the nineties with an increased showing of Bollywood movies and more frequent English films. In this regard Geeta shared:

The few theatres we had in Goa were showing more and more films. We got to see the popular movies. They even showed some Hollywood films only thing is they were aired in Goa a good year or so after they were shown in other parts of India. My friends would see a movie in Bombay and we would

have to wait many months to see the same film on a scratched screen with rats and bugs in the cinema hall.

While Tara and Nitu's responses were similar, Nitu added that a large and "classy" theatre called the INOX was built in Goa's capital, Panaji in 2004 for the 35th Film Festival; this theatre shows the latest Hollywood and Bollywood movies and is a hit among the Goan people.

B) *Love vs. Arranged Marriage*

Cohort 1

Sunita, Lila and Maya who were married in the 1980's all had arranged marriages. In all three situations it was the elder relatives/family that "fixed" up the match with the grooms family. Sunita and Lila related not having a say in the choice of their groom. Sunita accepted her family's choice, and when I asked her how she felt about the arrangement she related:

I was obviously very nervous but not shocked. This is the way all my aunts and elder sisters were married. I did not expect any different.

When asked whether she wished for anything different Sunita shared:

Of course. I do agree that elders are better able to choose marriage partners. Young people choose based on all the wrong things sometimes but I would have at least liked to meet Nithin before the engagement and talk to him a little. Even during our engagement there were so many old aunties and uncles around that we did not get to talk much at all.

Sunita is of the belief that love is something that grows rather than just happens; she believes that "young people" do not possess a clear enough grasp of "real life" to make accurate decisions regarding their life partners and risk doing so based on romanticized notions of love that they hear about from their peers or gather from the media. To quote Sunita:

Love does not simply happen by choosing someone against your family's wishes and running around trees or simply sleeping around. Many things have to match like sun-signs, social and financial class and family background.

On the issue of the arranged marriage system, Lila related that she was not happy with the arrangement made for her and feels that she was pressured into the marriage.

She shared her personal experience:

My father died when I was only thirteen. My uncle from my dad's side helped my mother take care of us. When I became eighteen and finished college they decided that it would be better for the family if I, as the eldest daughter, got married. In those times it was considered bad luck if a girl was not married before her father died. Because of this they were worried that my sister and I would not get suitable matches. As soon as a proposal offer came they readily accepted. My relatives all put a lot of guilt on me saying that if I did not marry the state of my family would be even worse and that my sister could not marry (*sic*). They said that we had bad karma and that this was God's wish. I did not want to let my family down so I agreed but I never wanted to get married so young.

Lila shared that she followed through with the marriage with a lot of reservations and discomfort. In sharing her experiences with the arranged marriage, Lila also shared that her first marriage failed after a year of emotional and physical abuse by her husband and his family. Thinking back she shared:

He was a stupid donkey of a man. He did not treat me with respect and neither did his family. They felt that they had done me a big favor by the marriage always reminding me about the troubles and bad luck my family had. Sunil always wanted his way and had a bad temper. In the bedroom he would be rough and uncaring of me. I just knew that he had other women when he traveled or went out over the night. After two months into the marriage he started to hit me. After a year of emotional and physical torture I went back to my mother's house. My relatives blamed me but at least my family supported me. I filed for divorce.

Following her ordeal, Lila got her masters and became a lecturer at a College where she fell in love with her current husband, Ravi. Despite the different religions Lila married

Ravi who she described as being “a caring wonderful man.” Lila’s relatives supported her second marriage and were “relieved” that she as a divorcee could find another husband.

When asked if they were allowed any interactions with their future husband before the wedding both Lila (with regard to her first marriage) and Sunita related that any interaction was minimal and supervised. Sunita, as previously mentioned shared that she would have like to speak with her prospective a little more. Lila expressed distaste for her chosen groom when she said:

I was not allowed to talk to him much by the elders but when I did, I did not like him and found him very rude. He never asked my opinions and always put what I said down (*sic*) by telling me he was better educated and had great knowledge. He was very proud of his good looks, money and brains and always liked to boast about them.

The third participant in this group, Maya shared that her marriage was also arranged but that she was allowed to meet the prospective grooms and share her opinions on them with her family. When the man who would later be her husband was chosen Maya, on the groom’s insistence, was allowed to speak with him over the telephone and accompany him to events in public several times prior to the actual marriage celebration. She described the experience:

Normally my parents would have never allowed me to go out with a man and be seen by others. Even speaking to boys was not permitted in my house. I was never allowed to have male friends when I was growing up. Girls from good families were not allowed (*sic*) because it would spoil their name. But since the marriage was already arranged and the groom himself asked to take me out, they allowed me to go. Plus his parents did not raise any fuss. I was happy because at least then I did not feel like I was marrying a stranger.

During the interview Maya also commented on the arranged marriage system saying:

This is how things are done in our community and I see nothing wrong in that, but I was happy to have some freedoms and choices at least.

Cohort 2

Among the participants married between 2000 and 2007, Geeta and Nitu fell in love with and chose their own grooms. Geeta shared that she dated Raj, a classmate for a year in secret and only informed her parents of the relationship once he asked to marry her. She explained that despite the fact that she chose her husband it was imperative that her family gave their blessing to the marriage. As she related, her family made inquiries into the groom's family and approved the match which brought Geeta tremendous joy and excitement. In sharing the experience she said:

Mama, Papa, myself and my bhai (brother) went to meet Raj's family. We met them at their home. My Papa and Raj's father discussed many family and wedding issues. They liked each other and my Mama liked the family also (*sic*). After the meeting both our families gave their blessings for our wedding. After all, why say no when Raj's family is good and he is doing well with a good future. Also he is of the same religion. I was so happy when they gave their consent. I was quite tense to think that I would have to marry someone else if they were to say no.

When I asked Geeta how she would have handled the situation had they not approved she said that she would have broken up with Raj. As she put it:

First of all I would have to break up with Raj and, I don't think I could love anyone else or live without him. Another problem is that I was already 23. By this age girls should be married in my community. Because of this my family would have wished to fix a match (*sic*) for me and I would not be able to hurt them by always saying no. I cannot do anything to disappoint my family and make them upset, after all they are the ones who gave me life right. Thank God that did not happen.

Geeta did express relief that this did not happen because in addition to the heartbreak that would have ensued she would not have known how to explain the fact that she lost

her virginity with Raj to a husband from an arranged match. She said:

If that had to happen, I do not know what I would have done and how I could show my face to my family again with the shame I would have brought them.

I asked Geeta to share her reasoning behind taking such a risk with losing her virginity before gaining an assurance from her family that she could marry him, she related that the risk was not too large as her family had not already made any commitments to another man's family and as Raj was a man from her religion who was well qualified and came from a good family and it was unlikely that the marriage proposal would be denied by her family. Geeta also shared that she lost her virginity as a consequence of her "love" for Raj. In describing her choice she said:

I know that having sex before marriage is a sin in the eyes of God and if anyone were to find out it would have been bad for me. But I really loved Raj very much and he wanted sex so how could I say no? Anyways I knew that he would not tell anyone about it. I was somewhat scared that if I had to marry someone else that I would be in trouble because I would not be a virgin but I felt that the chances of my family allowing me to marry Raj were good.

Participant Nitu, dated her future her husband (Rohan) for close to two years before they decided to get married with their parents blessing. Gaining her parents and in-laws' blessing was also important for Nitu to go through with the wedding, although she related that she would never have been able to accept an arranged marriage even in the event of her not being able to marry Rohan. She explained:

I could never ever have just married someone I did not know or care very much about, yuck, I do not even know how people can do that. I mean imagine doing it with a perfect stranger – can you think of anything worse?

Nitu explained that her family is "open minded" and would never pressure her into an arranged marriage even if they disapproved of her choice. Nitu's family completely

approved of Rohan and blessed the union. Nitu explained that she could not wait to marry Rohan and “finally live with him.”

Tara shared that her marriage was arranged to a second cousin (Raul) who she vaguely remembered from childhood. As the cousin and his family resided in Dubai when the proposal arrived, both families exchanged e-mails and photographs via the internet. When the boy and his family visited India, the two families and prospective couple met several times exchanging pertinent information. Before anything was finalized the couple kept each others company and conversed via telephone frequently which according to Tara was, “a lot of fun”. She said:

Raul bought me gifts and took me to so many nice restaurants and for parties with his friends. We would go to the beach and enjoy dinners at the shacks there – you know how lovely it is. I never had a boyfriend before and it was so nice to hold his hand and hold him around the waist on the bike and stuff. I mean you know how nice romance is right?

Before he returned to Dubai, Raul asked Tara if she would marry him and she happily accepted. Tara expressed that she was happy with the arrangement, to quote her:

My parents may have chosen Raul for me but they knew best. I even fell in love with him before he went home. That itself shows that they know me well.

Tara told me that she was never tempted to choose her own husband and had accepted from a young age that her parents would do so. She said:

I know my parents want only my happiness and would never choose a loser guy for me (*sic*).

C) Experience with the dowry system

Cohort 1

The women in who were married in the 1980s and personally experienced the arranged marriage system also all reported having experienced the dowry system. Sunita's in-laws requested Rs.75,000 in cash and Rs.25,000 in gold and jewellery. While Sunita felt that this was a rather large sum for the time period however, she believes that it was more reasonable than amounts requested by other prospective families interested in arranging a marriage with her. Sunita also shared that her family considered the amount a warranted investment in her future with a good husband and family. When I asked Sunita how she felt about the custom she offered explanations that it is tradition and part of her culture and provided the groom's side does not take advantage of the bride and her family financially, the custom is acceptable. Reflecting on the practice Sunita shared:

This is our custom so we must do it. Anyway it is better to pay a dowry and secure a good husband who has a good career and good habits than to complain about the amount and then get a groom who will make you suffer. But sometimes boy's families take advantage and then it is very bad (*sic*), especially if the girls family is not rich or has many daughters that they must get married. On top of the dowry girl's families must pay for the wedding and give gifts to the in-laws and this sometimes makes them bankrupt which is sad.

The dowry demanded by Lila's in-laws was approximately two lakhs (currently CAD 5300) not including the gold, jewels and clothes presented to the in-laws and brought by the bride when she moved into her new home. The requested dowry was large as the groom was a doctor from a reputed family. As the sum was rather hefty and as Lila had lost her father, her family had to look towards relatives working in Saudi Arabia to assist with delivering the dowry. Lila remembered being upset at the amount of expense her family had to incur

and in addition expressed disdain with the practice of dowry in general when she said:

I hate the custom of dowry. As though we cannot be married on our own merit (*sic*). I mean the fact that women have to pay to get someone to marry them is pretty demeaning. Why should the girl's family go through so much financial strain for a marriage and the boys' family do nothing. It is very unfair. See my case (*sic*), we paid so much for one year of a bad relationship. Where would men be without us women. We are their mothers, the ones that have their children. To have sons you need to have a woman. As women we suffer, but should not.

When I requested Lila to elaborate on what she meant by "As women we suffer" she noted:

We undergo the labor of children. Women have to pay dowries. They are the ones who get raped, abused and teased on the roads. We get harassed in buses and trains and cannot go out alone in the night. I have two daughters and always fear for their safety. I always ask my neighbor's sons or my nephews to go out with my daughters in the night if they have to go somewhere but I wish I did not have to.

In relation to the dowry system, Maya's new in-laws requested that her family buy the couple a new Fiat car and give them Rs. 25,000 cash. Maya reported that it was also expected that as a new bride she should come to her husband's home with gold and new silk saris (traditional garment worn by Indian women). Maya believed that a marriage is one of the biggest occasions in life so expenses are warranted. She also felt that since the car and Rs. 25,000 were for her new life that it was more than justified and her parents' duty to her.

To quote Maya:

It was my parents duty to settle me in life. Paying a dowry and giving me gifts for my marriage shows me their love and well wishes. If you don't pay a good dowry you won't get a good husband and this is very important. After all, women need good security in life, no? I did not want to end up in a bad state because I could not get a match. In the end it was all for the best only.

Cohort 2

Among the younger participants in the group, who were married between 2000 and 2007, Nitu's and Geeta's in-laws did not request a dowry as the marriages were love

marriages. In both women's experience, they reported that their future husbands refused talk of a dowry. Geeta did express that although she did not pay a dowry, the expenses of the wedding ran very high. She explained:

In our community, the girl's family must pay for the wedding so it was quite costly for us. We had more than 1500 guests on that day so you can imagine the costs. Anyway a marriage is such a big function in a family and it does not happen too much. No doubt we had to spend a lot of money but that is the custom in our community. Plus I know that Raj will spend money to take care of me when we are married. He is such a good guy that he won't even hesitate to give my family some money if I ask him. Why simply take tension on these things.

In addition to the actual wedding Geeta shared that her family had to spend on the poojas (religious celebration) and other functions that occur in preparation for the wedding celebration. It is customary for the bride's family to present the groom's family with lavish gifts, food and "mitai" (Indian sweetmeats) which for Geeta's wedding were elaborate and expensive. In regard to this traditional issue Nitu shared that she had no experience with the dowry system for her marriage. Nitu expressed great disapproval for the practice in general and appalled at the thought of even hypothetically partaking in the practice. When asked if she had any experience with the dowry system Nitu said:

Hell no. I would never pay a man to marry me. If anything they should pay us I think. Why are they special and so great that we need to pay to marry them? I really do not like the custom and think it should be stopped.

When I asked her how the expenses of the wedding were handled she said:

Both our families paid equally and Rohan paid for our honeymoon. It is traditionally the girl's family's responsibility to pay for the wedding but ours was a love marriage and we believe in being equal so it was equal. Rohan would die before he took that kind of money for me because some silly custom says he should. I mean come on, he has a brain which is not something I can say about some other people out there.

Tara's in-laws did not ask for a dowry either and Tara explained that this was due to

both the fact that they were relatives and furthermore they worked in Dubai and did not need the money. While there was no exchange of dowry Tara was sent to her new home with a large trousseau as requested by her mother-in-law. Tara shared her experience with me when she said:

My mother-in-law called mai many times to discuss the wedding plans you know. In those times she asked mai what was in my trousseau and then gave mai a list of things that should be included. Every time she called she added something new.

According to Tara the trousseau included many new household appliances, new saris and salwars and a lot of gold and diamond jewellery. When requested to share how she felt about this Tara said:

I was bugged yar. After all they were the ones in Dubai earning so much cash. I think they only should have bought the new appliances and things. Also gold is better and less costly in Dubai so why ask us to provide so much. But what can you do. It's better to shut your mouth and accept these things rather than fight with everybody.

In addition to the trousseau Tara related that the burden of expenses for the wedding also fell upon her family's shoulders.

D) *Early years of marriage and nature of interaction with in-laws*

Cohort 1

Once the participants who were married in the 1980's shared their experiences with the arranged marriage and dowry system, I asked them to narrate their experiences as a new bride, both with their husbands and in-laws. Sunita noted that the beginning of her marriage was an adjustment and that she needed to spend a lot of time, while homesick, learning about her new husband and his family. Sunita related that her husband taught her English

and supported her in becoming a Konkani teacher. She told me:

My husband is good unless he is angry. If angry he will not talk to me or return home till late at night so in the start of my marriage I learned what makes him angry and tried to keep away from that.

When requested to elaborate on the triggers for his anger she said:

He is a traditional man who is quite stubborn. When he believes something or thinks something he does not like you to disagree with him. He also likes his food to be cooked a certain way and likes his meals to be ready for him when he comes home. I do not fault him for this after all his mother always did these things for him. But I learned what he needed and I try to do it so that he remains happy. I am lucky to have a man who provides for me and cares about me. This is my destiny and I should thank the Gods for blessing me in this life.

Upon relating her experiences with her in-laws she shared that her husband's parents lived with his older brother. In describing her father-in-law she said:

He was a very strict man and I was scared of him. He was a type who never wanted to hear a woman's voice unless he said it was okay. He felt it was our duty to take care of the duties at home. In fact he did not like it that my husband was teaching me English and wanted me to be a teacher.

Sunita's relationship with her father-in-law was limited as he passed away two years into her marriage. Sunita's mother-in-law was also a very conservative woman who had firm beliefs in how a woman should dress and behave. While she was strict and insisted on making decisions for her daughter-in-law, Sunita said that she was a kind woman who never berated her in public and offered her praise when she did something well and for this Sunita expressed gratitude. She said:

She was traditional and strict because she is holy and believes in doing things properly to get God's blessings. She was not very different from my own mother and grandmother. At least when I did what she asked she was good to me. She never hit me or scolded me if there were outside people. It was my duty to take care of her and listen to her advice to show God thanks.

As previously noted Lila had a very difficult year of marriage with her first husband.

Both he and his family treated Lila with no respect and according to her, “like a servant.” To quote Lila:

They never let me forget what a huge favor they had done for me and my family with the marriage. They always spoke very badly about my family and the problems we had and would tell guests that they got a very bad deal and that the dowry was not enough for what they had to put up with.

Not far into the marriage Lila’s husband started to physically abuse her in addition to the emotional abuse which led her to leave him after a year. Lila shared that unlike her first marriage, the interactions and experiences that she had and continues to have in her second marriage have been “pleasant” and “positive”. Lila said,

All my years of marriage with Ravi have been wonderful. We get along great. He cares about my needs and feelings, treats me like an equal and is so kind. We talk about everything, go out together and best of all have two wonderful wonderful daughters. It is nothing like my last marriage.

Lila’s new in-laws were very accepting and kind to her and according to Lila:

Other than the usual gossip and kit kitty that happens in every family, they are lovely people.

Maya also shared her experiences in this regard and according to her, the experiences and interactions have not been good with her husband and in-laws. After her marriage Maya and her new husband lived with his parents in their family home. Maya related that she was given no privacy and no choices in the home. She was expected take care of the household tasks without any question. Maya told me that when she tried to stand up to her mother-in-law she was slapped and instructed to keep her mouth shut and remember her place. When asked to elaborate on how this made her feel Maya said:

I was very upsetted (sic) and angry to be treated this way. Always being told what to do and what to wear. I could never go out without telling my mother-

in-law where I was going and then if I returned late there would be trouble.

When asked how her husband treated her and how he reacted to her being treated

this way by his parents Maya said:

He always always (sic) supported his mother. He himself never slapped me or something but even if she did it in front of him he would not say anything. When I complained and asked him to support me he told me that it is better to just not fight and be kind to his old mother. He said that when she was not looking that I could have more freedom and that upsetting his mother would only bring tension into the house. I was very upset when he did not support me. Before marriage he made sure that we could speak on the phone and even meet a few times and this made me think that he was strong and good. But then after marriage his true colors came out and I saw that he is controlled by his mother very much. Anyway, what can I do, this is my fate and at least I must thank God that it is not too bad.

Cohort 2

Geeta, Tara and Nitu also shared their experiences with their respective husbands and in-laws. After her wedding, Geeta moved into her in-laws home with Raj. Geeta related that Raj is always kind to her and believes that they are equal but that it is often a challenge to put this belief into practice or even fully enjoy a romance given the fact that her in-laws are conservative in their beliefs. In sharing her story Geeta told me:

My mother-in-law is very old fashioned. She does not let Raj help me in the house. She is a nice lady but she always criticizes me and tells me what a good girl her own daughter is. She always wants me to wear sari, cook and clean. I cannot wear sleeveless salwars or jean when she is there. Whenever she says anything to me, no one says anything against her, even my Raj. He always says that she is old fashioned so I should adjust so that she is not upset. When we go on holidays or my in-laws go out of station I really enjoy my time with Raj.

Geeta related that the constraints placed on her by her mother-in-law was often

stressful and that she wished that Raj would support her more. She said:

I know that there are difficulties in any family but I am not a troublesome type. I am not an unruly person with no values. Its just that I am more open

minded than my mother-in-law and think differently than her on many topics. Raj also thinks like me but he will never tell his mother that so she thinks he is also conservative. I don't know why he cannot say anything to her. If she only knew that we had sex before marriage, she would die.

Tara described her experiences as a new bride and explained being scared, especially of her "wedding night". She said:

I was so nervous and did not know what to do. I have read about sex and heard about it from my married friends and on tv shows and all. I was always curious to know what it was like but when the time came I was too nervous to enjoy. Raul was gentle and kind but I was shaking and when we did it, it hurt more than I thought. After that I kept running to the toilet. It actually hurt for almost a week and Raul wanted to do it many times a day.

Tara went on to share that she did not wish to engage in sex as frequently as she was asked to but did not object for fear of insulting her new groom and failing in her duties as a wife. When asked to elaborate on the term duty she explained that it is a woman's duty to God to be a "pure" virgin and satisfy her man's sexual needs. I was curious as to how Tara had developed such beliefs and she told me that she had been taught her "morals" by her female relatives and friends from a young age. As Tara put it:

They are wise and have experience in these things. Some women enjoy sex. What we see on tv and read about in Mills and Boons books are not real. They are there to add masala (exaggeration) to the story.

Mirroring Tara's convictions, many of the participants also expressed a belief that women are not meant to enjoy sex and that it is solely for reproduction and keeping the man happy. On the other hand men have different needs that warrants them enjoying sex and losing their virginity before marriage.

Tara's interactions with both her husband and in-laws have been limited as they all returned to Dubai not long after the wedding. Tara moved into the new apartment that Raul bought before he left only to discover a lonely life. After about six months Tara decided to

close up the apartment and return to her parents' home. Since their wedding in 2005, Tara has only seen Raul twice. While she awaits his visits and enjoys her time with him, she also told me that she is quite disappointed with their interactions, she said:

I wanted to spend some time alone with Raul. It was the first time he came back from Dubai and I wanted to get to know him and be romantic and newly wed but he always wanted to go out with his friends and keep meeting people. Every night he wanted to go out and party never just sit and talk.

Upon her attempts to communicate her feelings with Raul, he flew into a temper which silenced Tara who did not wish to insult or upset her husband which according to her would display ingratitude for the money he spent on her. Just as with her husband, Tara rarely met her in-laws but clearly recalls the one visit they made to Goa when she told me:

When they were down they always took me around with them. One day I did get into a fight with my sasumai (mother-in-law). She and sasupai (father-in-law) were having a dinner party and they asked me to help them with the preparations but I already had important plans. It was my best friend Jasmines Rose^[2] ceremony and I promised to be there. My sasumai did not understand at all that this was one of the biggest day of Jasmines life and I had to be there. She shouted at me in front of everybody and said that I was the daughter in law of the house and that my loyalty was with my husband's family not some friend. She complained to Raul who called me from Dubai and told me I must comply with his mother's wishes as he wished her to be happy and not fall sick from tension. In the end I had to miss the Rose ceremony and still feel bad till today about it.

Tara explained that she was very upset about the happenings but felt that if she objected further, the consequences would be harsher. She also said:

My husband's mother liked to make all the decisions for me and she did not like me to question her. She would tell me how to dress, even what bangles to wear and she wanted me to do whatever she said. When I told Rohan he said that it would be better for all if I just agreed with what she said. He told me that she did not even live in India so I could be free when she was not there.

Tara shared that her in-laws would often call from Dubai and ask her to run errands for them

in Goa, even if it meant taking time off from work and in this regard Tara related feeling trapped:

If I say this is a problem they tell me to quit my job as Raul is doing well in Dubai and will provide for me. Just think how bored I will be. But anyway I will have to quit when I have children.

Curious, I inquired why she would need to give up her job when she had children and she told me:

It is the wife's job to take care of the children and the home. Raul and his family as well as my own (*sic*) believe that I should stay at home and not be gallivanting around when I have children. They believe that my job is a past-time till that happens.

Tara personally feels that it is her duty to care for her children but she does not regard her job as being a "past-time".

On the same issue Nitu shared that she and her husband Rohan moved into their own apartment after their wedding. Nitu related that Rohan's parents did express a preference that the new couple live with them, but both Nitu and Rohan declined. As Nitu related:

Rohan's parents are wonderful but living with them would be too close for comfort you know. Even people who get along can tear each other's hair out if they see so much of each other, besides I like to do things my way and don't want interference even if it is meant for my own good.

Nitu described her relationship with Rohan as being "healthy" and "strong". She said:

We have our lover spats like any other couple over who gets to pick the movie or holiday spot but that is nothing. But other than that we are so perfect I think. We are equal partners in everything from doing house work to making big decisions. I cannot remember one time when one of us decided to make a big choice without consulting the other.

Nitu also values her relationship with her in-laws and says that they love her in return. She described the relationship:

Rohan's mother is a good friend to me. We chat on the phone and go

shopping and even though she disapproves of my way of dressing sometimes we get along very well.

When I asked Nitu to explain “way of dressing” she said:

You know clothes like jeans, t-shirts and other foreign type of clothes.

E. Participant perspectives on current television and movies on Indian traditions.

Cohort 1

All three participants who were married in the 1980’s shared the opinion that the present media in India is eroding the Indian culture and promoting undesirable values. Sunita, Lila and Maya believe that many problems young people face in India today are caused by the media. When asked to elaborate on her definition of “immoral lifestyles”

Sunita said:

Sex with many people before marriage, sometimes even with those of the same gender, drinking, smoking, gambling and such like that.

Sunita commented that she watches shows like *The Oprah Winfrey Show* and channels like BBC which teach her about social problems in the west. When asked to share her opinion on these western problems Sunita said:

I think that many problems of (*sic*) the west happen because young people are going mad and being allowed to. They have no respect for anyone or any rules and simply want to fight. They want to fight with elders, with teachers, with God, with the police, with everyone. Then in the end you have confusion. You have divorce, you have drug addicts, you have children killing other children, you have teenage girls having babies all the time. Even the adult people do not have discipline. Some do, but many don’t.

She went on to differentiate Indian culture by saying:

We don’t have these problems. You tell me when you have heard of a child in India shooting other children in school. You tell me when you have heard

of 10 and 11 year old boys in India taking drugs. I am a teacher and I am telling you that children in India are still children. Indian youth is also becoming more and more unruly and we are also having problems like divorce nowadays, especially in big cities like Mumbai. Why Mumbai even here in Goa we see young boys getting drunk and young boys and girls having sex at a young age before marriage but we are nowhere near the problems of the west.

Sunita is also of the opinion that Indian culture is slowly changing for the worse as a result of the diminishing practice of living in joint families in addition to the fact that both partners in marriages are working, therefore being unable to monitor what their children watch on television.

As a woman, mother and lecturer Lila believes that while a lot of television programs and movies erode value systems in India that there are conversely women figures on the media and programs that facilitate the liberation of women. According to Lila:

Women like Aurundati Roy send a good message, that women can be strong and intelligent and do a job as well as a man. Sometimes the media shows and talks about women's issues. Shows that my daughters watch like *Friends* show that women and men are equal and important. There are shows like *SVU*, *The Practice* even that show about the school, Boston something show that women are equal to men and that abuse and disrespect for women is bad. These kinds of messages help women. But movies and shows like *Sex and the City* take it too far and cause problems for society.

In elaboration on these "problems for society" Lila said:

You know, drinking, the big club scene, teenage sex and then teenage pregnancy, the big disrespect for authority and rules. Even our Bollywood movies like that one *Aetbaar* shows our girls that its great to rebel against your parents, dress in a slutty way, chase the bad boys and that everything will work out like a fairytale.

Sunita, Lila and Maya all believe that the media is so ever-present in Indian society today, unlike when they were young, that it does exert significant influence on the culture and norms of society. Furthermore, these women believe that the media sets up and portrays

impossible attitudes and scenarios for life which many – especially the youth try to emulate, to their detriment. As Lila put it:

I think that their influence is very bad. These roles are played by beautiful actresses and actors who are popular and appear to have it all. The youth today love to imitate models and film stars like Aishwariya Rai, Hrithik Roshan, John Abraham and others like them. By imitating actors, boys think that singing to girls on the street and chasing them in bad boy ways will make them cool and loved by girls. Girls think that dressing in a sexy way gets them good attention like the heroines in the movies. Young people like to believe in fairytales and exciting romances and adventures. The problem is that they cannot see the difference between real life and tv drama.

Maya felt similarly when she shared:

I have recently seen Hindi movies about women having affairs, about divorce and about women with loose morals. For example that movie '*Andazz*' is about love triangles between four different people and about a girl that (*sic*) run after a man who does not love her and tries to make her love him by being sexy and wearing sexy clothes and dancing in a sexy way for him. That movie '*Koj Mere Dil Mein Hai*' is copied from *My Best Friends Wedding* where a girl chases after another woman's fiancé and tries her best to stop the wedding in any way. Movies like *Zamanaat* are so common which show love between very rich and very poor and show the couple living happily ever after. What kind of morals do these kind of movies teach. These movies show that these things are normal, can work and are a (*sic*) exciting adventure. In real life it can never work. A girl who chases after boys and acts cheap in her clothes and behavior can never be respected. She will be considered loose, only meant for a good time but not to marry. Can you imagine the scandal her family will face. And when can a marriage between a rich girl and a taxi driver ever happen? It not possible in our culture where there is so much of differences between the rich and poor. Divorce and love affairs work in America and England and even among our rich and famous people but it cannot work in the life of ordinary people.”

Sunita believes that the lifestyles advertised via popular television and cinema are more acceptable in the west but have no place in Indian society. She said:

So many things today show women having sex with many men, drinking, smoking, swearing and wearing whatever they want. This is all okay for women in America who are not traditional and where the culture accepts such things and considers them to be normal. In India we are traditional. A woman cannot do these things without spoiling her name and the name of her

family.

Cohort 1

While the participants who were married between 2000 and 2007 also exhibited beliefs that the media exerts an influence on social norms but did not portray strong feelings that these influences are negative. All three women in this group related that the media today advertises exaggerated versions of lifestyles that cannot work, if blindly imitated. Geeta said:

The shows on tv, shows you all kinds of different things that are just for entertaining us. No doubt it is fun to watch but it is not realistic at all. I mean take Bollywood movies these days. Come on, which couples dress in matching clothes and go dancing around trees on some hill in the rain. Even take the fight scenes, as though any man can fight eight or ten other men and not even get hurt a little bit. It is not even possible with the strongest person and anyway no one would be so stupid to try it unless he is mad.

Tara also shared on the issue saying:

Of course the T.V shows have an affect on fashions and music we listen to and stuff. Were you still in Goa when that silly net-t-shirt fashion came after that Hindi movie? You remember how all the college guys were suddenly wearing those t-shirts. It was so gross because some guys just did not have the body type for that kind of shirt. See, so the media does influence things but I don't think that it is too bad. I mean if girls imitated the dresses of the actresses, they would be chased and raped on the roads by disgusting guys.

Nitu noted:

No doubt TV shows and movies make it seem cool to club a lot and get drunk and stuff. I don't think it is too bad to do thinks things within limits and the media is not forcing you to go wild. I mean we don't imitate cartoons so why simply imitate shows. I think the people who just follow their peers and are so influenced by the media are bad anyway or just dumb monkeys with no common sense.

However, the interview data indicates that these women value the information they obtain from the media with regard to women's roles. Nitu shared:

Take Olivia on *SVU*, she is as good as the male detectives. *Sex and the City* all the four women are very successful and independent and when a man gives them trouble they tell them where to go shove it. Even shows like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Charmed* are about women who are strong both mentally and physically. I like that. Kick some male ass I say. You know one time I was in Margao market and some ghanty guy (road-side romeo) was following me around trying to flirt and ask me for a date and simply harass me. He even tried to hold me. He was a really creepy guy. I remember wishing I was like Buffy so that I could give him a good sound beating.

Geeta related that while she is greatly entertained by television shows and Bollywood movies, she does not believe that she is greatly “controlled” by them. She said,

Just because I watch a movie about a woman dressing like a slut and running away with some guy does not mean that I will do it. See when I wanted to marry Raj, I asked my parents for their blessing and help. I did not simply go to some temple in secret and do that. But I do know some girls that are like that.

Geeta believes that women and society can take the positive messages from the media and ignore the rest. She said:

We learn a lot from T.V that we would not otherwise know. I mean there are no proper libraries in Goa even. There are lots of news and documentary channels and even stuff like the history channel and *National Geographic* are really educational. BBC has some good shows also. I think that people should use their own brains and watch the good stuff and improve their mind instead of simply spoiling their nature by taking only what is bad. Everything has good and bad but God gave us brains to choose the good.

Tara, Geeta and Nitu all like roles by women in the media that depict strength and intelligence; they believe that such portrayals encourage women to assert themselves and fight for their rights. Tara said:

Like with my job thing, it would be nice if I could enjoy having a job and having children. I know that having children comes first but I like my job also and wish that Raul would allow me to do both things. See, maybe watching television that shows how well woman can do both will help to change his mind although it will never change my in-laws minds. They are simply too stubborn in these issues.

Nitu also shared:

Not all female characters on tv are bad. There are news reporters, scientists, writers. There are shows like *The Practice* and *Chicago Hope* which show that women are brilliant lawyers and doctors. Even that show *Dr. Quinn Medicine Woman* not only shows a woman in the role of doctor but it shows her as the only doctor in a town and the show even happens in the olden times. If people only watched these shows maybe their attitude to women would change at least a little bit. I really wish that would happen.

I asked the participants to reflect on the impact the media may have had on their experiences of the arranged marriage and dowry systems as well as the nature of their marriages. In this regard, Maya, Sunita and Lila believed that it was unlikely that television and cinema had any impacts on their experiences of the arranged marriage and dowry system. The women noted that it would not have even been a consideration given the fact that the elders in their families had no exposure to the mentioned mediums when the decisions regarding their marriages and negotiations of dowry occurred. Sunita said:

I myself did not see tv till I was twenties so it's not like my parents and grandparents even knew what TV is till they were quite old. I only got a tv after I was married so it could not have influenced anything before that. Even after getting a tv we did not watch many things.

Sunita shared that her in-laws do not approve of many shows. She noted:

My mother-in-law do not like many shows and get angry when my sister-in-law tries to watch English channels and shows. Whenever I visit her there I don't even put on the TV – why simply give her tension. She gets damn irritated if she sees her grandchildren behaving in very modern ways and says that they are getting spoilt. But she is old fashioned so what can we do.

Sunita also mentioned that her husband watches a lot of news and sports channels but is not easily influenced by tv and movies

He is a strong minded man and watching tv or movies will not change his mind on how he wants to do things. He likes tradition and always gets

irritated when he hears about someone getting divorced or sleeping around and says that such things will spoil India. One time we went for our neighbor's son's wedding. The boy was very nice but he was marrying a Christian girl for love and my husband commented that they would land in problems. He said that matches must be fixed with one of the same religion and according to religious star signs and birth dates to make sure there is compatibility.

Lila described her ex in-laws attitudes to the media:

They would curse the television shows and not even accept the goof things. They believed that the traditions of our customs are sacred and would not accept anything that was against them. They would not accept that times have changed since they were young and that some adjustments need to be made. As for my ex husband he was just spoilt. I am sure that he got some good ideas on how to behave badly from the media like having affairs and drinking and of course some ways to treat me like dirt.

With regard to her current marriage Lila said:

My husband and I are both college lecturers and like to take the media with a pinch of salt. While there is some good information on tv, we try and teach our two girls to think for themselves and not use the media as a moral guru in anyway. My in-laws are pretty open minded too but that may be because they spent so much time in Nairobi. They are pretty strict with our kids about ratings on movies and do not let them watch anything with too much sex and violence but they do like our kids to watch shows that are educational.

The younger participants noted that their parents open-mindedness regarding their marriages and experience with the dowry system could possibly be related to their viewing of television and movies. Tara said:

My parents watch tv and movies and see that times are changing and this helps them understand that girls need more freedom these days. That's why I could go out so often with Raul.

Tara could not really comment on the impacts of television and the media on the nature of her marriage since she has spent minimal time with her husband and in-laws since the wedding.

Nitu believes that certain shows and types of movies have definitely played a

role on how she and Rohan approach their marriage. She said:

When you see and read about how much happier couples are when they treat each other as equals and communicate then it inspires you to do the same. Also when you see reports of dowry deaths and abuse and when you see shows and serials about how bad life can be you really appreciate what you have and really try to make it work.

Geeta expressed a similar view and also believes that education and extensive reading has contributed to “open-minded” perspectives harbored by Raj and herself.

However she did note that the rules of the house are determined by her conservative in-laws who do not like many television shows or movies. She said:

They want to watch the black and white Hindi and Marathi movies and at other times keep the tv off.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

When I began this thesis it was my goal to contribute to the existing literature on the impacts of the media on the status of women in India. A particular focus was the arranged marriage and dowry system in Goa. There is a dearth of research in these areas and especially little on Goa. The findings I reported indicate that the endeavors of this project were meaningful and provide a better understanding of the impacts of the media on the arranged marriage and dowry system in Goa. The following section is devoted to discussing the findings from the research, how they relate to my research question, and how they tie in with the existing literature. The participants' experiences of the television and cinematic programming in Goa over the last five decades will be discussed to set up a context within which reported accounts of the arranged marriage and dowry system occurred.

Shifts in Media Content and Exposure in Goa

According to participants who were married in the 1980's, exposure to television and cinema in Goa was minimal and in black and white up until the mid 1980's and even then television exposure was limited to 'Doordarshan', the single Indian television channel. Cable television was introduced in Goa in the 1990's commencing with a few channels belonging to the STAR network which aired both Indian and American programming. This information is congruent with the literature that speaks to the history of television in India (Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, 1984; Rajagopal, 2001). Findings in support of the literature indicated that in the late 1990's exposure to satellite television grew tremendously as satellite television expanded networks and channels, by this point there were over sixty channels on satellite television (Bhatt, 1994). A large number of these

comprised of American channels and networks including HBO, ESPN, TNT and the Hallmark channel, in addition to a number of western news and educational channels. The number of films aired in India also saw a spike in the 1990's with Bollywood becoming the world's leader in quantity of films produced each year (Tejaswini, 2004). There was a simultaneous increase in the number of Hollywood movies being aired in Goan theatres.

In addition to an increase in the quantity of television and cinematic programming, the nature and quality of media portrayals in the country also experienced modification. From depicting women in traditional roles, women in Indian film over the last two decades have been increasingly depicted as sex objects and 'westernized' with negative connotations. In accordance with western ideals for beauty, the body image of women depicted in Indian media also changed from full-figured to 'skinny' and 'Barbie-doll-like'. American programs depicted women as assertive and sexual. Regardless of whether programs depicted women as 'traditional' and 'good', or 'sexual' and 'assertive', women in the media (both Indian and American) were usually portrayed in roles of subordination to men which offers support to the literature (Lovdal, 1989; Malhotra & Rogers, 2000; Milburn et al. 2001). It appears that the media remains mainly patriarchal, promoting tradition with a 'modern face', where even women who "appear" to be progressive in dress and action are often ultimately portrayed as embracing tradition or, being punished for *not* doing so. The depictions of modernity in dress and action do not necessarily represent progressiveness when oppressive traditions and ideology are valued.

Along with the negative depictions in the media come pro-social programs like the soap opera '*Hum Log*' that are believed to promote women's status and encourage women's rights in India, which appear to have exerted the desired influence to some extent; these

suggestions support the findings from the study conducted by Brown & Cody, (1991) of the effects of *'Hum Log'*. Furthermore, shows like *'Friends'* and *'Boston Public'* that depict women in roles equal to men are also aired on Indian satellite television. Women news readers and reporters like Arundathi Roy set an example that women's voices can carry credibility and value in matters of public opinion.

As noted in the literature, the face of media in India changed dramatically between the 1960's and 2007. It therefore makes sense that the women who were married in the 1980's and those married between 2000 and 2007 experienced television and cinema quite differently. The participants in the group of women married in the 1980's were able to share pertinent information on the dynamics of television and cinematic broadcasting in Goa over the last five decades. These participants did not grow up with television. They were only introduced to the medium in the 1980's and experienced it in black and white with only 'Doordarshan' channels. Only after marriage and well into adulthood did they experience satellite television. Exposure to films was rare, limited to a couple of times a year if at all. The movies were Indian productions aired in Indian languages. One of the participants, Sunita, described the movies as portraying little sex and violence, plenty of song and dance and subtle love plots. By the late 1990's the exposure to films—both Hollywood and Bollywood productions—increased, although it should be noted that the women married in the 1980's expressed a preference for the Indian productions. On the other hand, women from the second group were exposed to television and 'Doodarshan' channels from late childhood and then satellite television and an increasing number of both Hollywood and Bollywood films by their teens. No particular preference emerged from this cohort.

The varied experiences of the media by participants who were married in the 1980's and

those married between 2000 and 2007 may help explain the expressed diversity in opinion regarding the media. A clear note of disapproval on the impact of the media on Indian culture and tradition emerged from the voices of the first generation of women. The media was described as eroding Indian culture, promoting “immoral lifestyles” and “problems for society”. There was concern that the younger generations are being led to believe in “fairytales and exciting romances and adventures” which were reviewed as being unrealistic and incongruent with Indian traditions. Furthermore, related behavior if emulated from the media can bring shame upon the family. The disgrace of a woman could render her subject to severe social criticism and unworthy of marriage into a good home, therefore ruining her life. As indicated in the literature, qualities of modesty, chastity and obedience are regarded as being desirable in “good” Indian wives. Therefore, imitation of behavior that contradicts these virtues is condemned and reduces a woman’s prospects for marriage.

Media Influences on Indian Culture

Most of the participant’s concerns were directed at women in society; it seems that the consequences for females diverging from tradition are more severe than for a male which is a notion that supports what has already been suggested in the literature (Karlekar; 2004; Nanda, 1992). While premarital sex and love affairs with numerous partners, the extensive use of alcohol or nicotine, or divorce initiated by a man are frowned upon, they do not affect his marriage prospects or elicit social punishment for either himself or his family. Such ideology indicates a continuing gendered bias in favor of men within social norms.

The three older participants alluded to a belief that the current portrayals in the media have a better fit with western culture, one that is “not traditional” and supposedly

accepts promiscuity, love marriages, divorce and practices like “drinking” and “smoking” by its women. There was support for television programs that portray intelligent, successful women who stand on equal ground with men in their careers. Television characters like “Olivia” from shows such as ‘*SVU*’ (*Law and Order – Special Victims Unit*) were mentioned. A clear and strong preference was exhibited for media portrayals of characters like “Olivia” who works hard at her career and fights for justice over the characters depicted in shows like ‘*Sex and the City*’ (a Hollywood produced serial) or movies like ‘*Andazz*’ and ‘*Zamanaat*’ (Bollywood movies). It is believed that the characters from ‘*Sex in the City*’ portray poor values and although they may depict independent career women, they lead lifestyles that prioritize and glorify “having a good time” by engaging in regular, casual sex; getting stumbling drunk; dressing in revealing clothing and regarding men as expendable. Movies like ‘*Andazz*’ and ‘*Zamanaat*’ are developed along story lines that idealize forbidden love along with rebellious and sexualized women. An opinion seemingly exists among the women from the older generation of participants that such shows and movies do not communicate desirable messages to their audiences, particularly the younger more vulnerable generation.

The first group of participants caution against the negative affects of the ever present media by remaining mindful of and reinforcing Indian values of respect for elders in the community and family appears to exist. In addition, adherence to rules laid out by parents and teachers, and the maintenance of boundaries with regard to clothing and habits are also valued. These suggestions support the research that suggests media exposure often fortifies convictions in the merit of traditional values and customs (Derne, 1999, 2000; Malhotra & Rogers, 2000; Rajagopal, 2001). In considering these findings, another issue of importance

that emerged was the notion that Indian culture and values are protective. Although participants indicated that the traditions they participate in sometimes appear unfair to women and are challenging, they pay off by preventing the ills faced by western society from destroying overall quality of life. Knowledge on the *ills* of western society is gathered from viewing American news channels like CNN and shows like 'Oprah Winfrey'. In redeveloping an awareness of these it appears that the challenges posed by Indian norms are regarded as inevitable and necessary in preserving what is a deemed a culture with values.

The voices of the participants married between 2000 and 2007 also indicated a belief that the media *can* exert negative influences on the values of Goan culture. However, the language utilized by the three participants in this group led me to infer that the belief in the negative impacts of the media was not as powerful as the opinions indicated by the older participants. One particular opinion that appeared common to all the voices in the younger cohort is that the negative impacts of the media can be controlled by remaining mindful that the portrayals on television and cinema do not represent reality and are only meant for entertainment. Remaining cognizant of family values and feelings when making important decisions regarding life choices like marriage and habits regarding social interactions and attire could also prevent one from going "wild". Participants pointed out that they made prudent choices regarding their life decisions, requested their families' blessings and advice on issues of marriage, and behaved in a modest fashion, therefore protecting their families and selves from embarrassment. They reminded me of the fact that these choices were made despite regular viewing of television programs and movies that depict popular actresses rebelling against rules, culture and values in numerous domains. In addition, a merit to certain media portrayals was also indicated; the ability and necessity of people to absorb

only positive messages while ignoring the rest was emphasized.

An appreciation for women who could assert physical strength, sexuality and intelligence over men was communicated in the interviews. Acquiring such qualities is considered an asset in combating issues like eve-teasing. Television characters like “Buffy” from the popular show ‘Buffy the Vampire Slayer’ were considered exciting and desirable due to the character’s ability to physically defend themselves against men. The findings indicate participants’ hesitation in rebelling against tradition combined with a desire to be independent and aggressive in certain circumstances. A portrayal of such characters is considered important in encouraging women to assert themselves and fight for rights within their home and in society, although a challenge in moving from intention to practice was also noted and related to media portrayals. Participants commented that most Bollywood narratives depict women who rebel against tradition ultimately “see the error of their ways” and embrace tradition and religion; or, are gravely punished. Participants expressed a belief that such Bollywood depictions (although exaggerated) represent the reality in the nature of Indian society. This suggests that the respondents are reworking the ideal of a submissive Indian woman to one who is independent only in a manner that still allows submissiveness to family and society.

One piece of information that emerged from a participant in the younger group which is quite contradictory to that obtained from the others was powerful support for shows such as *‘Sex and the City’*. Contrary to the earlier mentioned opinions came the belief that characters depicted in the show are independent and never submit to the whims of men which are characteristics that might be worth developing.

There appears to be less resistance to the media and fewer concerns regarding its

negative impact among the younger generation. In addition, there is no indicated need to significantly reinforce Indian culture and traditions in daily life so long as an awareness of values and morals is maintained. Furthermore, a value is placed on the positive messages in the media and the desirable change it could potentially facilitate over the long run which was not quite as evident among older participants. It is possible that these differences between the two cohorts stems from different levels of exposure to television and cinema from childhood. The media has very much been a part of the lives of the participants of the second cohort since childhood. They possibly did not feel the presence of the media suddenly or powerfully and do not regard its influence as being particularly potent – effects that are possibly felt by the first cohort.

While there are evidently some contrasts between the participants that represent different generations and experiences of the media, one factor that appears to be common to all the participants is that they are intrinsically engaged with the values and culture to which they belong. Disparities may appear in opinions on the eroding nature of the media as well as its positive impacts; however, all the participants referred back to traditional Indian family values and norms as the guides to behaviors and making decisions. This indicates that the participants who potentially represent a larger community are deeply infused with the culture to which they belong. Such notions are congruent with the literature that indicates an exposure to non-traditional lifestyles in the media amongst Indian viewers contributes to fortifying the conviction in the merits of Indian culture and traditions (Derne, 1999, 2000; Malhotra & Rogers, 2000; Rajagopal, 2001). The reviewed literature chiefly represents the voices of Indian men on the impacts of the media on Indian tradition. It could be contended that the male opinion carries a bias and represents a voice resistant to altering

the status quo in the country, one which favors men as the dominant influence (Derne, 1999, 2000; Malhotra & Rogers, 2000). Some male participants from related studies conducted in India believe that the preservation of traditions and values in the country depend on maintaining the traditional roles of women in society. This pretext often presents a defense for the employment of violence in imposing the expected roles on women (Derne, 1999; Malhotra & Rogers, 2000; Rastogi & Therly, 2006). Some male participants from past research absorb messages that promote male dominance over women from the media. Furthermore, they believe that media portrayals which could potentially encourage assertiveness, independence and sexual freedom in women are a negative influence and need to be resisted; it is just such a notion that gave rise to Hindu fundamentalism in India (Malhotra & Rogers, 2000; Rajagopal, 2001). The opinions of the female participants in my study indicate congruence with those of the men in the country. They believe that adherence to Indian traditions is imperative to leading a moral life. However, the women I spoke with believe that the maintenance of Indian tradition can be achieved without the use of violence. They believe that an appeal to one's morals, intelligence, and sense of responsibility is sufficient to achieve these goals. Like some of the males interviewed in other studies, a number of women I spoke with also believe that the media erodes morals and sense of responsibility in society, blurring the lines between right and wrong and therefore endangering Indian culture.

As mentioned by Brooks (1997) and Faludi (1992), the media is patriarchal in nature and leans towards depictions of women in roles subordinate to men. The patriarchal quality of the media is evidenced in both Hollywood and Bollywood productions. The findings obtained from my participants support such a notion. According to their accounts, the

subjugated status of women in the media is constantly portrayed. In Indian produced programs, depictions of women suffering through domestic and dowry abuse are glorified. Women characters are often represented as sexual beings that deserve no respect and a clear preference is established for “traditional”, “good” women. Furthermore, women are assigned roles that portray responsibility for childcare and household chores. In American productions women characters are often depicted as facing challenges like the inability to find a suitable mate, divorce and absence of family support. Such problems are attributed to the fact that these women are too assertive, independent and “feminist”. The characters are regarded to have no sense of responsibility or duty to their families which is considered to be of utmost importance to Indian people. An expression of such beliefs supports the literature that alludes to the fact that feminists in India are often considered radical trouble-makers (Bhasin & Khan, 1986; Luthra, 1999). It is just such ideology that has contributed to the obstacles that the Indian feminist movement has been met with over the years. Furthermore, the lack of support provided by the media for the movement’s endeavors does nothing to dispel negative notions but this does not appear to quell the zest of the movement.

The feminist movement in India recognizes the value placed on traditions in the country, but it also places conviction in the ability of Indian women to absorb information and employ reason when provided with fact. Banishing tradition is not the goal of the movement but instead to help create awareness so that these practices do not cause undue harm to women (Bhasin & Khan, 1986; Chaudhuri, 2004). While it is the goal of the movement to promote equality in diversity between India’s men and women there is awareness that certain ideologies which date back centuries cannot be altered overnight. However, comments made by the respondents suggest that they disapprove of the use of

violence and extreme enforcement of traditions. This indicates that the feminist movement in Goa may have succeeded in influencing the content on the media to some degree; this in turn possibly plays a role in educating the women of the state on the demerits of violence towards women and the unfair nature of some practices. One practice of this culture is represented by the arranged marriage system. Some interesting information emerged in reference to this issue.

Experiences with Marriage

As indicated in the literature, arranged marriages have existed for centuries in India and are a practice that continues today, such a view is also indicated in the literature (Nanda, 1992; Teja, 1993). This investigation suggests that experience and flexibility around personal choice regarding this issue might have changed over the last three or four decades as indicated by the findings of the study. The participants who were married in the 1980's all experienced arranged marriages with little freedom to voice their personal opinions on their future grooms. It was considered a necessary tradition for the elders in the families of both the bride and the groom to make the arrangements and arrive at important decisions regarding the marriage. If a bride showed reluctance she was pressured into the marriage after being convinced that it was her "duty" to comply with her family's wishes. Furthermore, a desirable marriage into a family of good standing continues to be considered fortuitous for the girl's family and increased the marriage prospects of any younger sisters if applicable, a concept referred to in the literature (Nanda, 1992; Rastogi & Therly, 2006; Teja, 1993). The participants expected and accepted the arranged marriage practice as an integral part of the culture. Support for the arranged marriage system was offered and many

shared that it occurs for the good of the new couple as they are too young to make decisions of such a magnitude on their own that could lead to their families' disgrace. Despite the fact that the participants came to accept the practice, the narrations of experience and language utilized by two women during the interviews indicated that they would have preferred opportunities to interact with their grooms before the wedding ceremony. One participant, Lila, even added that she would have preferred not to marry at all but was forced despite her desire to complete higher studies and wait until she was older. Lila's decision might have been influenced by norms and expectations of behavior which related back to the earlier point that women appear to be deeply embedded in their culture. Only one of the participants who were married between 2000 and 2007 experienced an arranged marriage. Although the other two women chose their own partners, the marriage was conditional on receiving the blessings and approval of both the bride and grooms families, similar to findings in the literature (Nanda, 1992; Teja, 1993).

Being a "good wife"

The participants indicated language of concern around the potential of "disappointing" or "upsetting" their families and related a willingness to avoid such consequences at any cost - including heartbreak to themselves - if such a situation had arisen. The literature speaks to just such an approach among some women in India (Nanda, 1992; Teja, 1993). Such a feeling of obligation to please and obey was also exhibited with the older participants. This attitude comes across as being quite powerful and influential and extended to husbands and in-laws as well. There seems to exist an underlying need and expectation to be a 'good wife' and this may involve tolerance of sexual discomfort,

submitting to whims of the husband and in-laws, sacrificing one's own desires and wishes, and enduring physical and emotional abuse. Even women who chose 'love' marriages were expected to comply with their in-laws' wishes; as requested by their husbands who did not wish to upset their parents, usually their mothers. Perhaps this emerges from the man's need to be a 'good son' within Indian culture. In this regard, two of the younger participants expressed some disappointment in the approach their husbands assumed but nonetheless accepted them. Participants reported that their husbands vocalized support for their independence but practiced these beliefs only when they were not being watched or directed by their parents. For instance one participant discovered that she could wear clothing of her choice and socialize as she pleased as long as her in-laws were out of town. Her husband requested her compliance with his mother's wishes, apparently to avoid conflict. The expression of such experiences across five participants' interviews suggested that some women in this Goan community may harbor beliefs that are intrinsically traditional: ones that dictate that 'good women' are obedient, modest, and demure and accept that their elders and husbands have the privilege of control, such views are congruent with those of some of the men interviewed by Derne (1999).

Concept of gratitude

Another concept that emerged is an expectation of gratitude for one's husband and his family for the privilege of marrying into the family and for the benefits such a union might bring the bride's family. Such an attitude appears to be even greater if the bride comes from a family of lower social standing or has experienced unfortunate events like the death of the father of girls before they are married, as was the case with Lila's first marriage. The

idea that the marriage was a “big favor” to her was constantly emphasized and underscored. This expectation of gratitude from the bride appears to justify the groom and his family in making unreasonable demands of her, controlling her choices and potentially abusing her. Comments by five of my respondents suggest the bride is frequently “grateful” and like other “good wives”, tolerates abuse. The one exception was Nitu.

Nitu had a love marriage in 2004. Although she would not have married Rohan without her family’s approval, Nitu did not support any notions that Rohan was doing her any favors with the marriage and therefore felt no need to be ‘grateful’. She also regarded herself an equal partner with Rohan. Furthermore, Nitu did not encourage interference from her in-laws and they respected her wishes.

Another specific experience that is of particular relevance is that of Lila, who was married in the 1980’s. Lila rebelled against popular convention and divorced her husband from the arranged marriage after enduring a year of physical and emotional abuse at the hands of her husband and his family. She then went on to marry a man of another religion with whom she had fallen in love. Despite the fact that she was a divorced woman—a status that is strongly frowned upon by society—her new husband and his family accepted Lila fully and did not criticize or shame her or attempt to exert control by assuming an attitude that she was indebted to them.

Such cases may represent the exception rather than the rule but potentially suggest that some women who experience love marriages may negotiate respect from their husbands and in-laws, devoid of expectations of gratitude and entitlement. This could be attributed to the groom’s increased sense of responsibility to a woman who he personally chose to be his wife. The question of interest is how television and cinema impact on the experiences of

marriage for these six women.

According to the participants, numerous popular Bollywood films revolve around stories of forbidden love and tawdry romantic encounters, with rebellion against tradition. It is believed that such cinematic lifestyles do not have a place in “real-life”. While it is sometimes considered acceptable to emulate fashion, music and dance from the media, it is not deemed appropriate (especially for women) to absorb and demonstrate behavior that is contrary to tradition with regards to marriage and respect for family.

While all the participants in this study referred back to tradition and conventional values when it came to their marriages, they do believe that the media can sometimes encourage some women to rebel against Indian culture. It gives them the notion that choosing their own partners based on love, wearing whatever they want, going to clubs and engaging in behavior like drinking and smoking is acceptable for women. The participants indicated a belief that the media often wrongly encourages “immoral” lifestyles by promoting the idea that women are entitled to do as they choose and that love and life will “magically” fall into place. The show *Sex and The City* was mentioned on numerous occasions in this regard and a number of the participants commented that women who emulate lifestyles like those of the characters on the show will simply be ruining their lives and abandoning their chance at a “happy” life. According to the participants, even desirable heroines like ‘Olivia’ from *Law and Order* or media icons like reporter Arundathi Roy and actress Sushmita Sen, who are revered for asserting their intelligence and ability, are conversely pitied for what they probably had to forfeit with regard to family and marriage in lieu of their careers. There appears to be a clear belief system with my participants regarding *what* one needs in to do in life to be considered a good Indian woman; grateful to God and

family; and, to be happy. These include getting married by one's mid twenties, being a devout and faithful wife, bearing children and being a good mother. Those people who do not live such a life are considered deprived.

Fate

In addition to the need to be a good wife and exhibit a sense of gratefulness, another factor that may contribute to some of my participants' acceptance to allow their husbands control over their sexual behavior, career choices and, other freedoms regarding expected behavior may be the belief that one's life is pre-determined by God and is a matter of fate or destiny. Many of my participants indicated that fate and God determine the lives that they are living, including any abuse or other difficulties; they also indicated a belief that their fate cannot be controlled or altered. Furthermore, there appears to be a fear that if they do not accept their lives and appreciate the *blessing* they have, they risk insulting God as well as their families and will deserve punishment.

Experiences with the Dowry system

The ancient practice of dowry is practiced in Goa, and can manifest itself in various ways. All of the participants who were married in the 1980s experienced the dowry system directly. The groom's family negotiated the amount and nature of the dowry with the bride's family as a condition of the marriage, a practice discussed in the literature (Rastogi & Therly, 2006; Srinivasan & Lee, 2004). Once an amount was settled upon, the bride's family made arrangements to hand over the dowry. In addition to the 'actual dowry', it is traditionally the girl's family's responsibility to finance the wedding function, reception and other events related to the wedding. It is also culturally expected that the girl's family will

present the new in-laws with lavish gifts. Although origins of the dowry system indicated that it was an exchange intended as a token of good will between the two families it has been modified to resemble a market transaction today (Nadagouda et al. 1992; Natarajan, 1995). The expense of weddings and dowries put a heavy financial strain on the girl's family and was the case with many of the participants who shared their experiences with me.

The younger participants did not receive demands for dowries and this may be due to the fact that two of the participants in this group had love marriages while the third married a relative. Despite the fact that there was no formal exchange of dowry between the two families, the girl's family was still expected to bear the financial costs of the wedding. Furthermore, the groom's family did request that the new bride be given a 'trousseau' or a collection of gifts for the wedding; this generally includes a large amount of jewelry, new clothes, and household appliances and in some cases cars. This practice appears to mirror the dowry system although there is some indication that a trousseau often goes to the newly wed couple for their use and not the groom's family. The fact that they may own and benefit directly from the trousseau possibly renders the practice more acceptable to some of the participants as indicated in the findings.

All the participants who experienced the dowry system expressed some disapproval for the practice, noting that it was unfair and caused a strain on their families' finances. One contrast that did emerge between participants representing the two different generations was a language of acceptance. Women from the older generation seemed more inclined to accept the practice of dowry as part of their culture. Although they were not altogether happy about the practice they seemed less apt to question or challenge it. The younger women utilized a more critical language when speaking about the dowry system and related practices. While

they accepted that the giving of a trousseau is better than the dowry since a trousseau benefits them directly, they still believe that the practice is a gendered one placing the woman's family at a disadvantage. Some desire for change was indicated.

Like before, there were two experiences that differed greatly – Nitu's experience and Lila's experience with her second marriage. Nitu expressed immense disapproval of the dowry practice as well as any practice that put an unfair financial burden on the bride's family. She condemned such practices swearing that nothing would compel her to participate in the practice of dowry. Nitu's and Rohan's families both paid for the wedding and related functions equally and Rohan financed the honeymoon.

Lila also did not have any experiences with the dowry system for her second marriage. The ceremony was a small and private one financed jointly by Lila and her new husband. Again, these instances could potentially be attributed to the attitudes and convictions of the women combined with the fact that the marriages were based on love.

Some inferences could potentially be drawn between the practice of dowry and related systems and the feeling of obligation from the bride and her family to the groom and his family. If the groom's family believes that they have done the bride a "favor" by the union, it stands to good reason that they may exhibit a sense of entitlement, by way of the dowry and related practices. It is possible that these affects have deep roots and may be firmly entrenched in the social norms and traditions in Goa, and the country more generally as indicated in the literature (Rastogi & Therly, 2006).

In their paper, Rastogi and Therly (2006) outlined socio-cultural factors in the maintenance of the dowry system in India where a families social status rests upon their daughter marrying into a family of equal or better standing, regardless of the dowry. There

appears to be some support for this literature in the findings. Some participants did comment that their husbands were chosen to bring their families honor. They reported that it was their duty to ensure that their families were not shamed in the community by marrying a man deemed suitable by the elders in their families.

The economic factor was also outlined by Rastogi and Therly (2006) to explain the preservation of the dowry system. The dowry system presents a process by which a man and his family can gain money and expensive goods financial and material easily and free of cost by merely marrying a woman that they choose and the findings support the literature. The dowry system continues today and seems to occur in one form or another irrespective of the groom's financial status. The practice ranges from simply relegating financial responsibility for the wedding to the woman's family to demands for extravagant dowries or trousseaus. It is not uncommon for the practice to resemble a market transaction as noted in the literature (Agnihotri, 2004; Srinivasan & Lee, 2004). Feminists like Shiva (1989) and Miles (1996) theorize that women are often used as a resource in the accumulation of wealth. In accordance with this literature, the findings present the possibility that the dowry system in India has moved from merely being a traditional practice to representing a means to accumulate wealth where women are regarded as the means to an end, but benefit nothing from the process.

Consumerism and the media

Through their narrations, the participants were able to share information on the practice of dowry and some of the ideologies that accompany it in Goa. They were also able to shed some light on how television and cinema affect the practice. Several of the

participants commented that 'imported' goods are highly valued and acquiring plenty of these is a status symbol. The constant use of foreign goods, from branded clothes to cars in Bollywood movies only increases the desire and appeal of these. It is quite common for the heroes and heroines of television to own Rolex watches, Mercedes cars, and be attired in everything from Nike to Ray Ban. Idols like Aishwariya Rai (India's most renowned international actress) and John Abraham (popular Indian supermodel) and Sachan Tendulkar (famous cricketer) have become spokespersons for popular brands like L'Oreal, Sony, Tanishque (major jewellery chain), and Phillips. Furthermore, the deluge of advertisements for foreign goods gives people an idea of what is available in the market and creates a need for these, essentially increasing consumerism. There exists an air of 'keeping up with the Joneses' and the possession of expensive and branded goods is regarded as an indicator of prosperity.

According to some participants, the dowry system offers a man's family a convenient and 'free' method of acquisition of goods and money (to buy products). Narrations from two generations of women suggest a transition in the dowry system over decades. Demands for mainly cash have been altered to include demands for consumer products and items such as cars and electronics as well, which are advertised in the media. This practice appears to exist even in 'love marriages' and is sometimes guised as being the presentation of a trousseau from the bride's family. Some participants displayed indignation at the practice, especially since they observed that their in-laws had no need for a dowry or trousseau and were taking advantage of their family. There appeared to be more acceptance of the exchange of goods when the bride believed that she directly benefited from it. Despite obvious disapproval of the practice, a number of women and their families participated nonetheless. There appeared

to be some feeling of resignation to the fact that the practice is part of a greater culture and that participating in it represents an investment in their futures. Some of the participants recognized that the practice of dowry or trousseau causes financial (sometimes severe) for their families but believe that this is warranted and even their right as the daughter of the home.

While there appear to be commonalities across the experiences of a diverse group of women with regard to the discussed issues, there is also a notable difference that appears to be related to the viewing of television and cinema. Couples who regard the media as a source of credible information on social issues like the status of women in India and around the world, various cultures and social norms appear to espouse attitudes a little more supportive of equality between spouses and a greater need for freedom in choices for women. Sometimes however, there is a gap between holding these beliefs and actually applying them in practice. Some men still expect their wives to comply and make sacrifices for their families, and women consent although neither partner necessarily believes in the fairness of the approach. There also appears to be a greater likelihood to want to challenge certain customs and traditions. The husband's expectations for submissiveness, attitudes of gratefulness and large dowries from their wives are also fewer when a greater willingness to explore arrangements that support the status of a woman as an equal partner is present. However, it should be noted that these approaches occurred within the love marriages and could be attributed to such as well as a relation with the media.

On the other hand, couples who regard the media as being a damaging influence to Indian culture tend to fortify their convictions in the Indian culture and values and do not entertain the possibilities of new arrangements. There is a greater acceptance of traditions

like the arranged marriage and dowry system as well as gender roles which primarily position women as obedient and demure homemakers. Similar attitudes have been documented in the literature (Derne, 2000, 2003; Malhotra & Rogers, 2000).

Post-marital Interactions with Spouse and In-laws

A related issue that I have briefly spoken about is the nature of interactions between the couple and between the woman and her in-laws. Many couples live in the man's home in a joint family system with his parents and occasionally his sibling and their families. This system of living seems to be less prevalent in current times than it was prior to the 1980's. The older participants all lived with their paternal grandparents before marriage with their grandfather assuming the role of patriarch. Norms, codes of conduct and practiced traditions were determined by the patriarch and unquestioning obedience was expected by the women and children of the family. After marriage these women often lived with their husband's parents and grandparents where again rules of the home were determined by the eldest male member. Elder women are in-charge of enforcing the needs and setting standards and expectations regarding household duties and codes of conduct for the women and children of the home so that no embarrassment comes to the family. Living outside of a joint family system appears to be more common among the younger generation although it does still occasionally occur.

For instance, Geeta did move in with her in-laws after she wedded Raj. The experience was challenging because despite the fact that Raj vocalized a belief in equality between spouses, he expected Geeta to comply with his mother's wishes, advising her to do what she chose in his mother's absence. When her mother-in-law was present however,

Geeta was expected to assume traditional roles of an Indian wife and support Raj's portrayal of being a traditional Indian husband, who is not expected to assist with household chores. Geeta experienced a sense of duty to her husband and complied with his wishes to avoid upsetting him. Similar experiences appear to be common to a number of participants and this possibly extends to other women in the community.

It should be noted that the bride is expected to comply with family norms whether or not the couple lives in a joint family system. Take for example Tara's experience: her husband and in-laws have lived in another country for most of her marriage since 2004. Despite the distance, Tara's in-laws expect her to run errands for them and comply with their every wish when they visit, even if it means she gives up her other obligations; furthermore, her husband assumes that she will comply. Raul (Tara's husband), although a gentle and kind man, does not appreciate Tara's opinions on the decisions he makes. Tara, afraid of appearing ungrateful for his kindness and the money he spends on her, does not feel comfortable asserting her opinions.

Sexual experiences and Indian culture

The discomfort with asserting personal opinions and desires appears to extend to sexual experiences as well. The interviews with the women indicated that they believe sex is not meant to be pleasurable for them but exists for the purpose of pleasing their husbands and reproducing. They believe that negotiating sex with their husbands will be an abandonment of their duties as 'good' wives and furthermore insult their partners. Furthermore, there appears to be an imperative that women remain virgins until their wedding as this is a "gift" that should be reserved for marriage alone. To engage in sexual

intercourse prior to marriage is considered a dishonor to one's family and to God. The breaking of the hymen and the subsequent bleeding is considered to be a sacred gift given by a new bride to her groom and the guarding of the hymen is crucial. Despite the fact that many of the interviewed women acknowledged the fact that the hymen can break from other activities, they nonetheless emphasized safeguarding it at any cost. Language and narrations of such a nature portray the possibility that virginity is a valued requirement for women to be considered "good" and that this does not necessarily extend to men who are believed to be different biologically and therefore have different needs. There is an indication that women who do not comply with such a notion do so secretly and experience fear of being exposed.

There is an indication that the traditions of arranged marriage and dowry have been modified over generations. For instance, the younger generation of women do appear to have more choice around choosing their life partners, the practice of dowry is more indirect and other related practices like the presentation of a 'trousseau' is practiced in its place, and, the system of joint families also seems to be diminishing. The stark fact that the media has been experienced so differently by the two generations of women *may* be a contributing factor to the indicated modifications in the culture. However, findings from the research suggest that Indian traditions and values are deeply entrenched in the community, and these values and traditions do not seem easily altered by progressive depictions of women in the media. On the other hand, images that promote traditional values and roles are more easily embraced. Despite minor differences there is a suggestion of general acceptance of gender roles across generations. Such an attitude appears to exist across experiences and might be deeply rooted in a belief system that suggests elders in the community are the best decision

makers, good Indian women need to obey and assume submissive roles in a marriage and with their in-laws, and women and men are not equal in a marriage. Furthermore, as mentioned before, there is a sense of entitlement and superiority exhibited by the groom and his family and a sense of obligation by the bride and her family may be rooted in these beliefs as well as one that contends the bride was done a 'favor' by the marriage. Such ideologies may also support the dowry and related practices. While the research generated some interesting and significant findings there are a number of limitations inherent in the study.

Limitations and Recommendations

The research focused solely on the influences of television and cinema on the arranged marriage and dowry system. It was beyond the scope of this thesis to examine other facets of the media such as the internet, print media, billboards etc. However, it cannot be ignored that all the various types of media operate together, not in a vacuum. Just as dynamic changes occurred within the television and cinema broadcasting industries, simultaneous changes occurred within other media industries as well. Furthermore, people are constantly exposed to various forms of media. It therefore stands to good reason that the information which emerged from the data could have been influenced by other types of media not explored here. The possibility that they were impacted by factors like education could also be a factor. Furthermore, the impacts of globalization that have been experienced in the little state of Goa are multi-faceted. That Goa was under the Portuguese rule till the mid 1960's is a tremendous factor which has not been considered in this thesis. Participants from the older generation spent their childhood and possibly teenage years in a state ruled by

a European regime and this could have significantly influenced their ideologies on the marriage, dowry and other traditional Indian systems. The fact that they had little exposure to western media in their younger years certainly does not provide an indication of how much influence they experienced from a western culture, especially since Goa likely experienced western influence during the Portuguese rule. It should be noted that the Portuguese rule was predominately Christian as was the population in the state at the time (Pearson, 1988). No exploration was conducted on the potentially powerful effects of another religion on the traditions and ideologies of Hinduism, which was a minority religion in Goa until the last decade (Newman, 1984; Pearson, 1988). The shift in balance between religions in the state with the sudden and large flow of Hindu migrants into Goa over the last decade could have also altered the manner in which Hindu communities in Goa regard their culture and differentiate themselves from other religions. Needless to say, this study was quite limited in its scope.

Another significant limitation of the study is the fact that the interviews with participants were not recorded. The fact that this approach was taken to protect the participants does not diminish the likelihood that some information was lost which would have added to the richness of the data. Furthermore, due to the logistics of the study and issues around confidentiality, it was imprudent to conduct member checks or a follow-up interview which also takes away from the depth and richness of the data. Furthermore, the fact that almost all the participants knew me either directly or indirectly could have inadvertently led to the Hawthorne effect ^[3] (Stevenson, Britten, Barry, Barber, Bradley, 2000). Some of the younger participants who considered themselves my peers could have potentially expressed exaggerated liberal ideologies on certain issues to impress me and

present themselves as being 'cool'. This is a likelihood given the fact that I am particularly liberal in my ideology and a woman who is living with and engaged to a man of a completely different culture, a fact many of my participants were aware of. Conversely, disapproval of my lifestyle may have informed some of the participants' responses.

While the current research certainly has its limitations I do believe that it does contribute some information on the impacts of the media on the arranged marriage and dowry system in Goa. Unlike research before it, this study is exploratory, focused on the opinions of women. The study uncovered the possibility that Indian culture and tradition is so deeply entrenched that the influences of the media do little to erode them. The women who were married in the 1980's accepted and participated in traditions of arranged marriage and dowry. Their exposure to television and cinema in the late 1980's and early 1990's did nothing to deter them from what they believed to be their duty as good Indian women. Findings indicated that the women who were married between 2000 and 2007 also referred to Indian values in issues of marriage, making family approval a requirement even when they chose their own partners. The practice of dowry presented itself in some form in two of the marriages in this cohort. Irrespective of when they were married almost all the participants expressed a sense of gratitude to their husbands and their families for the marriage and *whatever* gestures of goodwill they may have offered, however small. Being a 'good' wife by assuming a traditional role and an unquestioning voice within the marriage was another important factor articulated by some participants.

All the participants commented on the potential corrupting influences of the media on Indian culture, although the older cohort was more vehement in this belief. The women married after 2007 believe that the negative influence of the media can be resisted by

remaining cognizant of the Indian values. Furthermore, they believed that certain positive ideology can be garnered from the media, concepts like financial independence for women, freedom to make choices around dress and social activity (with decency and modesty), men's increasing participation with household duties were mentioned, and the concept of choosing to live in a nuclear family were mentioned.

The participants who were married in the 1980's were of the opinion that television and cinema had nothing to do with their marriages and experience with the dowry system as they had little or no exposure to such media until after their weddings. They commented that their roles and interactions with their husbands and in-laws after their wedding was usually determined by tradition and the rules of the family, and that the media played little role. The younger cohort of participants indicate that the media may have played some role in their parents' acceptance of their choice of partners, their freedom around dress and social activities, and their partners' articulated liberal beliefs, even though these ideologies were not always put into practice. Both groups of participants did comment that the media has increased consumerism which may play a role in the demands made for dowry or related practices like the giving of a trousseau.

Despite the fact that this study has only given rise to several *possibilities* and notions regarding the influence of the television and cinematic programming in India, I believe that it offers a good starting point for more similar research. With additional resources and time I believe that significantly more in-depth studies can be conducted on the subject. It would be interesting to study the impacts of the print media, radio and internet on the status of women in Goa, especially since people in India are constantly exposed to these in one form or another. Furthermore, unlike most states in India, Goa attracts hundreds of thousands of

foreign tourists each year and is certainly exposed to western culture from sources other than the media. I have been told that it is hard to live in a state as small as Goa and not have at least several interactions with visitors from other nations. If this is true, then these experiences may exert some influence on the ideologies and culture within Goa and would be worth exploring.

As previously mentioned, Goa remained under Portuguese rule from 1510-1961. Goa houses Portuguese architecture and city plans. Portuguese is a language still preferred by many families in the state and certain traditions including music, dance and dress indigenous to Portugal are still evident in Goa. I wonder how the predominately Euro-Christian culture of Portugal influenced and coalesced with Goan culture over time, even long before the media made its way into the state.

The long Portuguese rule is not the only factor that differentiates Goa from the rest of India. This state boasts of some of the highest literacy rates in the country as well as low levels of poverty, unemployment and violence. It is quite possible that these factors mediate how the media and other facets of globalization impact the culture of the state. It can be argued, for instance, that families with a history of education and careers absorb and regard traditions and information from media sources differently than those without these benefits. It would be interesting not only to explore these factors in subsequent research but to perhaps conduct comparative studies between Goa and other states in India, perhaps ones with less tourism and lower literacy rates.

The participants in my study strongly disapproved of the use of violence in the preservation of culture. I find it interesting that such opinions are expressed by women who have resided in a state with low levels of violence. Previous research indicates that some

men representing other states in India support the use of force against women. I would be interested to explore what the Goan men believe. Perhaps the use of violence or, lack of it is an ideology harbored by citizens of Goa and is not representative of the nation on a broader scale.

Another factor that distinguishes Goa from many other Indian states is the large number of its citizens that choose to work in Middle Eastern countries or for American and European cruise liners, putting them in addition contact with other world cultures. A first hand experience with other cultures may influence one's approach to their own culture. In addition, an exposure to more 'foreign' goods could possibly foster an attitude of consumerism which could play a role in the dowry system in Goa. This might make for an interesting investigation.

Goa does not possess a reputation for dowry killings or a high incidence of domestic abuse. This could be attributed to a stricter enforcement of laws in the state, the lack of reports filed by victims or merely because these atrocities do not occur with much frequency in the state. Whatever the cause, it would be beneficial and interesting to study the potential link between these factors and, explore the possibility that greater literacy and lower levels of poverty and unemployment contribute to a lower incidence of dowry and domestic related violence. Findings could potentially assist other states in reducing the occurrence of violence towards women.

As discussed, the smallest state in the country certainly offers plenty of avenues for further research that could generate interesting and useful information. I would like to personally continue research in the Goa sometime in the future and urge other academics, especially those in India to do the same.

Conclusion

Despite the above mentioned limitations of the research, I believe that this study is significant as it was the first one of its kind in India to explore the impact of the media on the arranged marriage and dowry system from the perspective of Goan women. Furthermore, my thesis contributes to the existing literature by suggesting that exposure to television and cinema in India promotes “tradition” with a “modern” face. As indicated in the findings, women of the younger generation may be reworking the ideal of a “good” Indian woman to one who is independent only in a manner that still allows submissiveness to family and society. For instance, women may be dressing in western attire, choosing their own partners and a trousseau over a dowry. However, they ultimately accept family control and tradition indicating an application of modern perspective on tradition rather than liberation in thought or experience.

Media exposure was discussed in this thesis as an aspect of globalization and ‘development’. As Shiva (1989) warned development without concern for the needs and benefits of women is tantamount to mal-development. Some feminists contend that the media is ultimately and universally patriarchal (Brooks, 1997; Faludi, 1992). I found that women’s exposure to media did not challenge or alter their experiences of gender roles and cultural traditions. Significantly, increased media exposure promotes an attitude of modernity to tradition without providing a critique of, or alternative to patriarchal norms. In this sense exposure to the media in both India and the west potentially revitalizes tradition and further entrenches gender roles. This speaks to the power of the dominant culture to recreate gender relations and identifies the challenge of women globally to extricate ourselves from patriarchal traditions.

As a native informant i.e., an Indian woman who now lives in Canada conducting thesis research in Goa, India, I have observed parallels with women's experiences between India and the West. While in India increased media exposure promotes tradition with a modern face this is not unlike women in Canada who also apply modern perspectives to gender roles rather than challenging the basic premises of patriarchal relations.

My findings also indicate that exposure to advertisements in the media possibly plays a role in the reworking of traditions, like the dowry system, so that it increasingly represents consumerist ideology more than cultural tradition. The acceptance of the practice of trousseau over the dowry may in itself represent consumerist ideology and a market transaction. Irrespective of whether the practice is called dowry or trousseau, the bottom line is that it still resembles a market transaction in which the woman's family provides expensive goods and cash as a condition of her marriage often placing the family under considerable financial strain. However, the fact that women in this study accept the practice of trousseau (which remains in their possession) may indicate not only a modern perspective on the dowry system, but also represents their consumerist principles. Perhaps a desire to possess consumer goods overrides the need to challenge a patriarchal practice.

In considering the possibilities raised by this research it would be valuable to further consider the function and impact of media, as a central facet of development and globalization, for both its liberatory and oppressive impact on women's struggle for equality and security.

Dissemination

I believe it imperative to share findings with Goan NGO's, the print media and local

women's groups. Through my thesis I am hoping to create awareness around the impacts of the media on the status of women in the Goa, as reported by a small sample of just such a group. As Marjorie Pryse (1998) points out, it is imperative for women to understand the dynamics of the patriarchal societies to which they belong. I believe that understanding, awareness and knowledge of the issues at hand are the cornerstones to potential action in the future. Due to its phenomenological nature, the information garnered from my research could possibly raise interest and dialogue in the Goan feminist community.

Upon completion of my thesis I plan to work towards a publication on the research and its findings in a women's journal. In collaboration with Dr. Terry Mitchell I would like to write a paper based on my research, therefore representing the voices of Goan women, in the west and in academia. Through an academic paper I hope to tell the stories of Goan women's experiences regarding the influence of the media on their status regarding arranged marriages and the dowry system. I plan to visit Goa in October 2007 and during this time will visit colleges, NGO's and women's centers where I will present my research and perhaps facilitate discussion regarding the findings.

Personal Experiences with the Process

When I chose to conduct a study in my homeland, I already had some knowledge and preconceived notions about the culture and traditions of India. In addition to these, I must confess to having harbored certain judgments regarding the status of women within this culture. I assumed that women were the victims of the Indian culture, being forced into oppression with practices like the arranged marriage and dowry system. My resulting indignation was directed at the men in India who I believed were abusing their power. Much

of the existing research on the culture in India as well as the media influence on it had been collected from men and male dominated sources, and this only compounded my beliefs.

I diverged from this research by studying the impact of the media on the arranged marriage and dowry system from women's perspectives. I assumed that if presented with a safe domain, women would criticize the traditions and culture that oppress and subjugate them. The findings from my interviews did not support my assumptions.

By speaking to six different women from Goa, representing two different generations I learned a great deal. Contrary to my presuppositions, my participants did not believe themselves to be victims of their culture. In fact they supported the traditions and practices of their community, stating that they had a protective purpose. While there was an expressed disdain of the extreme nature that some practices can assume – like dowry killings, domestic abuse and exorbitant demands for dowry, the practices themselves were not condemned by most of the women. In hearing these narrations, I came to a realization that the women in my country may be content with the nature of their culture, believing that it protects them from other ills. While there was an admission that the Indian traditions and values are sometimes challenging, given their patriarchal nature, there was a simultaneous opinion that the challenge is worth it. My participants pointed out that women in the west and Indian women who do not subscribe to Indian tradition and values often have their own issues to deal with like divorce, extended single-hood, alcoholism, and disrespect from their communities.

In the process of hearing and analyzing my participants' experiences and opinions I felt my assumptions shift and my judgments crumble. I learned of the possibility that traditions like the arranged marriage and dowry system do not necessarily victimize women; it may be the extreme manner in which they are sometimes practiced that oppresses women

in India. Given this possibility, it may prove to be quite useful to try and increase awareness of the dangers and disadvantages of enforcing traditional practices and values too harshly.

The research helped me come to a personal realization as well. I fell in love with and have chosen to marry a Caucasian Canadian man, who neither belongs to my culture nor religion. When my participants spoke about the value they place on parental approval for their marriages, I realized that I feel the same way. If my family had disapproved of Adam (my fiancé) I would have found it extremely hard to make a commitment to him, despite my feelings. Somehow this thought never occurred to me as it was always a given that my family would love Adam.

All in all, my thesis process was exciting, enjoyable and a wonderful learning experience, although it was challenging at times. The whirlwind trip back home to collect the data, the process of analysis and writing were tiring but at the end of the process I am extremely glad for having done it!

In addition, the opportunity to share women's experiences with the arranged marriage and dowry system was a very rewarding experience. Beginning to learn what a group of Goan women believe and feel about their traditions as well as exploring the impacts of television and media on these traditions really helped me begin to understand the issue better. The comparison of data between and across two groups of women who were married in different time periods enriched the data and helped me glean some interesting insights to the issue under study. I hope that I will be able to conduct more extensive research on these issues in the future.

Footnotes

1. Draupadi's disrobing is an epic story of an Indian princess who was gambled away by her brothers. In an attempt to humiliate Draupadi and her family, the men who *won* her tried to publicly disrobe Draupadi of her sari. However, Hindu lord Krishna saved her by making the sari that Draupadi was wearing never-ending, so that it could not be removed (Rajan, 2001).

2. The Rose is a ceremony that occurs one day before Christian Goan weddings, where coconut milk is poured over the bridal party. This is done to symbolize washing away all impurities before marriage.

3. Hawthorne effect (with particular reference to this study) occurs when participants in a study alter their responses to ones that they believe are desirable in the eye of the researcher (Stevenson, Britten, Barry, Barber, Bradley, 2000).

APPENDIX A

Interview Guide

1. What kind of television and movies did you watch as a child?
2. Did these change over the years? How?
3. What kind of movies and television do you like to watch now?
4. Can you describe how your husband was chosen?
5. Were you allowed any interaction with him before the wedding? What was the nature of this interaction?
6. Can you describe the role you played in the selection of your life partner.
7. How did you feel about the process?
8. What were your family's expectations of you during your wedding?
9. Would you please describe the period preceding the ceremony?
10. How did you and your family prepare for the wedding?
11. What was expected of you as the bride and your family for the wedding?
12. Could you please describe any personal experiences that you may have had with the dowry system?
13. How do you feel about the dowry system?
14. What was it like to be a new bride?
15. What were your first few years of married life like for you?
16. What were your interactions with your husband and in-laws like?
17. How do/did you feel about these?
18. Do you think the media influences Indian culture and tradition?
19. Do you think the media influences how people live their lives?
20. How do you think the media influences these things – is it positive or negative?
21. How do you feel about the media's impact?
22. Do you think that the television shows and movies you family watched had any impact on your marriage?
23. Do you think that the television shows and movies you family watched effected your experience with the dowry system?

APPENDIX B

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Memory for Advertisements
Principal investigator: Lisa Hickman
Thesis advisor: Dr. Terry Mitchell

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to explore women's perspectives on the impact of western media, if any, on the arranged marriage and dowry system in Goa. Lisa Hickman, who is the researcher on this project, is a graduate from the Goa University. She lived in Goa until 2004 and was a member of various social activist and feminist movements. Lisa also wrote a weekly column in the 'Herald'. Currently she is a Masters student at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. This study is being conducted for the purposes of Lisa's master's thesis in partial completion of her master's degree in community psychology.

INFORMATION

Lisa Hickman's study will explore the impact of western media on the arranged marriage and dowry system in Goa from women's lived experiences. Lisa will be speaking to approximately 8 to 10 women from Goa. You will be invited to participate in an interview with Lisa at a time of your choosing. Over the course of the interview you will be asked to share your personal experiences with the marriage and dowry system. You will be encouraged to speak on your own terms in your own vocabulary. The interview should run for approximately an hour although it could be longer depending on your interest. Furthermore, you are encouraged to ask questions and clarify doubts anytime during the process. Before the interview, you may be requested to consent to the session being recorded. If you feel at all uncomfortable with this process you are free to decline. In addition you will be asked for consent to allow Lisa to use direct quotes from your responses in her report, with all your identifying information removed. Again, you may choose to refuse.

RISKS

You could experience some emotional discomfort resulting from sharing personal experiences or from potentially unpleasant memories. Depending on your family situation you may experience some anxiety about speaking about these issues, and/or be concerned about the disapproval of your family. Following the interview you will be debriefed further about the study and provided with contact information for a respected counselor, Mrs Kavita Borker. She has been identified in your community to provide free, professional, confidential debriefing and support to anyone who may feel distressed following the interview process.

BENEFITS

You will have the opportunity of speaking about important personal issues in a confidential environment. You will also be contributing to an increased understanding of Goan women's experiences of arranged marriage and the dowry system and how these may be influenced by increasing exposure to western media. The findings will contribute to the ongoing work of the Goan feminist movement and may support further research on social policy and media analysis,

CONFIDENTIALITY

Information of your participation in this study will be kept completely confidential. There will be no physical evidence linking you to this study. All consents will be verbal. Should you agree to have your interview recorded you will have an opportunity to have the tape returned to you or witness its destruction as soon as the transcription is completed. All potentially identifying information will be removed from your responses in the interview. Your participation in this study will only be known to the identified research assistants, (Gina Hickman and Mithila Borker) and researcher (Lisa Hickman). The counselor (Mrs. Kavita Borker) will only know of your participation if you choose to use her services. The research assistants will have signed a confidentiality agreement. . All data will be personally transported to Canada by Lisa in the first week of March 2007. These will be placed in a locked lab which will only be accessible to authorized researchers. The data will be destroyed after seven years in accordance with the guidelines of the American Psychological Association.

COMPENSATION

For participating in this study you will receive Rs.400. If you withdraw from the study prior to its completion, you will still receive the Rs.400.

CONTACT

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, (or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study) you may contact the researcher, Lisa Hickman at the, at the Psychology Department, Wilfrid Laurier University, office N2075G and 001 (519) 888-9538 (in Canada); at 011 91 9422440760 (cell phone for the study, in India) between the 17th of February and the 3rd of March. You may also contact the research assistants, Gina Hickman at gina_hickman@yahoo.co.in or Mithila Borker at mborker@rediffmail.com. This project has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board at Wilfrid Laurier University. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Bill Marr, Chair,

University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, 001 (519) 884-0710, extension 2468.

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed your data will be destroyed. You have the right to omit any question(s)/procedure(s) you choose.

FEEDBACK AND PUBLICATION

Research findings may be presented to Non Governmental Organizations and women's groups in Goa as well as potential academic publications. Your personal information will remain anonymous.

You may contact the research assistants at your own discretion after May 31, 2007 for feedback and the findings of the study. In order to maintain your anonymity you will not be contacted after the interview.

CONSENT

I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I verbally agree to participate in this study.

Participant's name

Date

Investigator's signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX C

Debriefing Information: Project Summary

Thank you for participating in this study! Your contributions are very valuable. Please allow us to explain the study in further detail to you.

Feminists world over contend that the mechanics of globalization or development are based on a western patriarchal economic view that serves to imprison and oppress women in numerous ways (Aguilar & Lacsamana, 2004; Miles, 1996; Momsen & Kinnaird, 1993; Shiva, 1989). One facet of globalization that is of particular interest in this thesis is the media. Feminists consider the media to be a patriarchal institution that promotes a cultural hegemony that favors men and objectifies women often designating them as secondary (Brooks, 1997). Research on the media in the west has provided evidence in support of such a view (Lovdal, 1989; MacKay & Covell, 1997). Furthermore, research has also evidenced that the media does impact viewers' perceptions and opinions (Milburn, Carney & Ramirez, 2001). Given this information, it would be interesting to examine the impacts of the media when transposed into Indian culture, which remains primarily patriarchal; of particular interest is the impact of the media on the arranged marriage and dowry system in Goa, India. According to Indian scholars, the arranged marriage system refers to the process by which life partners are chosen by the parents of the potential bride and groom or by other elders in their community (Nanda, 1992; Teja, 1993). Studies by Indian feminists evidence that over 90% of women in India have their marriages arranged with very limited interactions with their future partners before the ceremony. Even those who choose their own partners have to first obtain permission before marrying (Teja, 1993). A related practice is that of dowry which involves the bride's family presenting the groom and his family with gifts in the form of cash, gold and other valuables (Goody and Tambiah, 1973; Johnson & Johnson, 2001). In recent decades the dowry—traditionally a one time occurrence—has become a continuous one that has attained alarming proportions of wealth for the family of the groom. The groom/in-laws' dissatisfaction with a dowry often leads to abuse and even murder of the woman. The current research seeks to explore the impacts of American media on these traditional issues in Goa, India. The research explores these issues from women's lived experiences and is interested in their stories and voice. It is here that you play an extremely important role to the research. In order to determine the impacts of the media, an interpretation will be drawn from accounts shared by women who were married between 1980-1985 and women who were married between 2000-2005 as the impacts of the global media were truly felt in India in the 90's (Chaudhuri, 2004). This study is unique as it is the first of its kind in Goa. Furthermore, it is interested in women's perspectives and the valuable knowledge that you possess. .

Your participation in this study will contribute to the increased understanding of Goan women's experiences. In addition, your participation in this study may contribute to the efforts of movements in Goa—and possibly India—which are constantly fighting for the emancipation of women. Your participation may have caused you some mental distress. Perhaps memories of unpleasant events regarding the issues have caused you discomfort or anxiety. These are natural, and should be temporary. However it is worth noting that if you

find yourself continuing to feel sad or distressed, Mrs. Kavita Borkar from Chowgule College, Margao offers counseling support services in this area if you wish to discuss your feelings about this study or its subject matter further please contact her at kavitaborkar@rediffmail.com. The service will be provided to you free of cost and your confidentiality will be assured.

If you have any questions regarding any part of this study or the results please feel free to contact Lisa Hickman at lisahickman@gmail.com

You may contact the research assistants, at your own discretion after May 31, 2007 for feedback or the findings from this study. Their contact information is as follows: Gina Hickman at gina_hickman@yahoo.co.in and Mithila Borker at mborker@rediffmail.com. In addition, the findings will also be available to you on line at my thesis supervisors' web site http://www.wlu.ca/homepage.php?grp_id=263&f_id=44

Thank you again for your participation!

Participate in Research!

Lisa Hickman, a former resident of Goa, student at the Goa University and columnist for the Herald is conducting a research study In Goa, India between February 17th and March 3rd.

Through her research she seeks to explore the arranged marriage and dowry system in Goa from women's lived experience. Your participation is **INVALUABLE!**

The research is open to women fulfilling the following preliminary criteria:

Married between 1980-1987 or between 2000-2007.

Born and raised in Goa

Possess cable television at home

Graduates or current students in a college or university.

If interested in participation or need additional information please contact Gina Hickman at gina_hickman@yahoo.co.in or 9422440760.

Participating women will be awarded Rs.400 for their invaluable contribution

Thank You!!!

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