

EPILOGUE

The researcher got married soon after she had started to work on the present study. Her husband though supportive and appreciative of her educational achievements and future aspirations, held on to deeply rooted gender roles wherein he expected her to perform the stereotypical roles of a wife. These expectations were extended to include those of his parents, younger brother and sister. Within few months after marriage, she realized that anchoring on to her educational and career aspirations would involve a subtle struggle. Initially, in a new family, new city with no friends, she felt vulnerable. She illustrated her helplessness in a verse that she wrote:

*I want to fly like a free bird,
but I realize that my wings are He.
I want to be one of the best authors,
but my words and thoughts are He.
I want to travel the prosperous road on this earth,
but I understand that my 'manzil', my destination is He.
I want to know, 'Who am I?'
and I realize that I am His reflection. Am I?
('He' in the above verse depicts her husband.)*

Her present study was supported well by her in-laws and husband. Seemingly the education of daughter-in-law was a *status-quo* but the associated career aspirations were dismissed as insignificant. Having the inclinations, ambition and potential, the researcher continued with the present research and made her way to work with an NGO. In spite of

the fundamental clash between her aspirations and the expectations of the family, she continued with her employment and her struggle to maintain her identity, framed to a great extent by her values of independence and self-realization. Frequently, she was reminded to have failed in the expectations of the duties of a daughter-in-law. Her two worlds were completely different-at work, her colleagues recognized and appreciated her competencies; while at home, she was considered incompetent towards her familial roles. Nevertheless, she is determined that she would not sway her niche designed by the dreams of her mother and her own struggle to be a professional. She may have to negotiate and re-define and crystallize her new roles that will also encompass her role of a professional. It may require lot of hard work, strong will and time to convince the family about her new roles. She hopes and prays that she is able to accomplish this and that best things happen in her life!!!