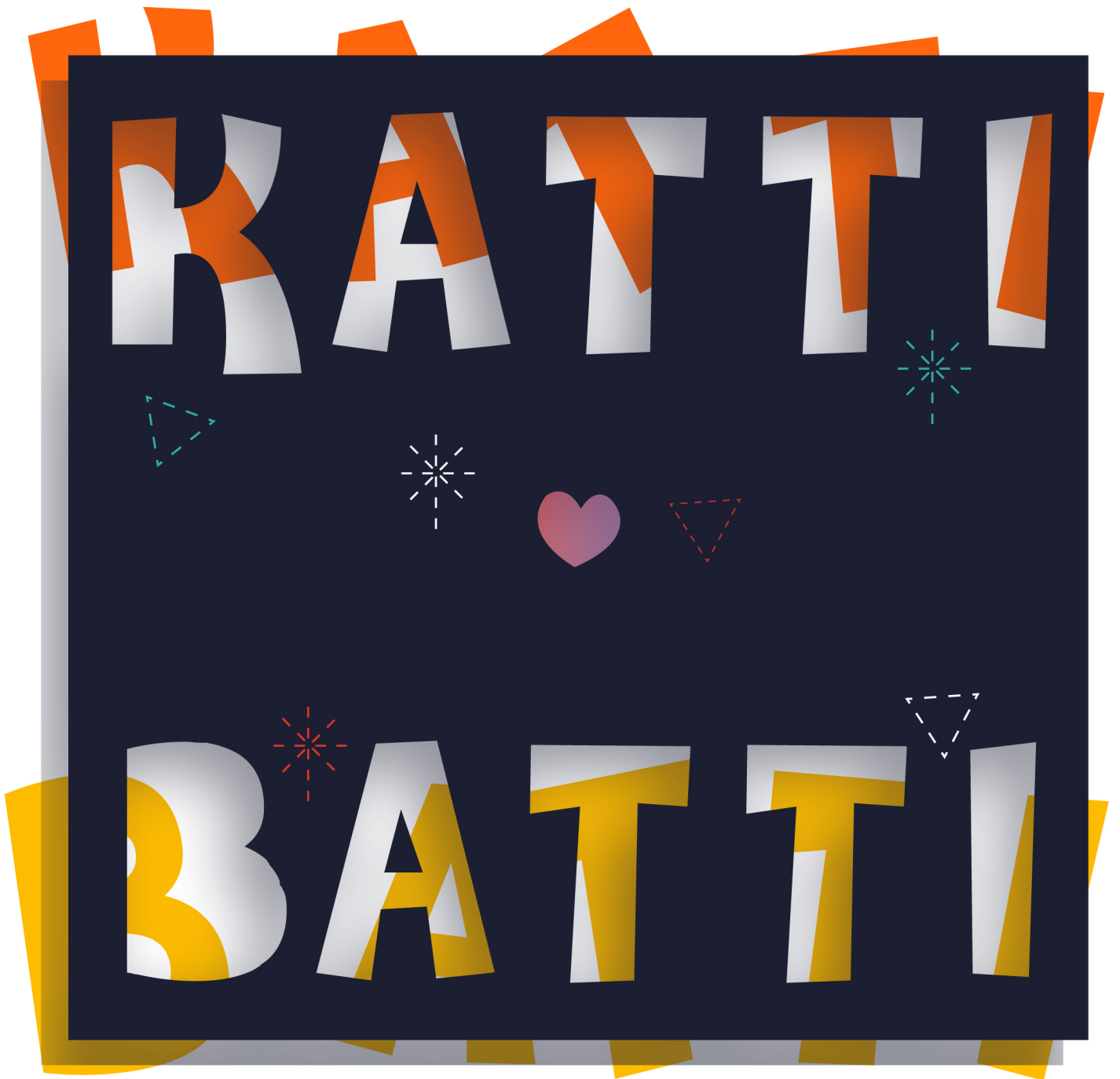


A Digital Tool for Young Adolescents to Transgress the Limitations of Gender Socialization through Empathy & Friendship



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Master of Industrial Design- 2021  
Rhode Island School of Design

## Katti·Batti

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A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree  
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This work, in its very essence, is collaborative. It would not have been possible without the gracious support of so many people. Their immense belief in me and my work empowered me to operate in such a complex problem space.

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**No Culture Must  
Be Bigger Than  
Basic Human  
Rights**

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# Speaking- ing to the 13- year- old me...

This is a work of heart. An earnest ache. Deep down.

It originates in the deep regret of being a product of sexism. In the profound realization of my privilege as a male-identifying person in contemporary Indian society. In the acute sense of missed opportunity, when I look at myself and others around me, who are defined by their genders rather than their hearts and minds.

This work is about speaking to the naive, hopeful, and constantly socializing thirteen-year-old me. Speaking about the vanity of looking at one another from the limiting, all-pervasive gendered lenses. Speaking about discovering the joy of experiencing fulfilling relationships with self and others by defying the engulfing, discriminatory gender lenses. And what better way to do so than speaking through the universal emotion of friendship.

Conditioned, forced, suppressing, limiting gender norm conformity is the target. Empathy, Acceptance, Respect, Care and Friendship are the weapons of choice.



# Abstract

The genesis of this project lies in the personal experiences that led me to believe that the culturally learned and perceived gender roles, norms, and expectations limit a person's health, educational, professional, economic, and social abilities.

The work began by finding the evidence connecting the learned, perceived gender roles, norms, and allied cultural expectations to the ability to think freely. The research revealed the limiting effects of gender roles and norms on self-identity, personal belief systems, and a place's culture. The study further led to uncovering of the link between limiting personal belief systems and cultural environment to the lack of openness of a person to receive new knowledge and ideas. This lack of openness was then identified to impair an individual's decision-making ability, which ultimately negatively affects the ability to self-actualize.

Gender Socialization was identified as a fundamental process that leads to the exposure, development, adoption, and conformity to the limiting gender roles, norms, stereotypes, and expectations.

Research and expert consultations led to identifying continuous consciousness-raising about gender socialization and stereotype conformity as an efficacious strategy to break the gendered lenses. The early adolescence (12-15 yr.) age group was identified as a window of opportunity to mitigate the effects of gender socialization because of the physical, cognitive, and behavioral changes that occur at this age.

In response to this opportunity, initial concept development, prototyping, and testing of a digital tool intended to evoke thought on the topic were accomplished. The tool is designed with an intention to make a complex subject matter accessible and relatable to young adolescents. The goal is to help them reflect on their own biases and gradually become aware of the effects of gender socialization on their choices and decision-making. The emotions of friendship and empathy are used as vehicles to highlight the significance of breaking deeply gendered outlooks.



An illustration of a man with a beard and a yellow t-shirt sitting on a chair in a workshop. He is holding a pen and a notebook. The workshop is filled with various tools and objects: a computer monitor, a desk, a stack of books, a mug, a vase with flowers, a clock, gears, a lightbulb, a calendar, a stack of papers, a small robot, and a plant. The background is dark blue with various icons and objects floating around.

# Design; My Tool for Self Expres- sion ...

I chose Industrial Design to be liberated. To break free from the constraints set by the metrics of the education system and the society I lived in. To break away from the mental shackles that took root due to these constraints. To pursue a line of work that just doesn't remain a "line" but becomes circle, triangle, formless, less form, absent, if I will. I felt I could afford to break those shackles through Design. I wanted to nurture my suppressed abstractions, intuitions, will, and voice. To value my thoughts and sensibilities more than the "norms." To question these norms.

Engineering, technology, and machines are all nice. I love them. They enable us. Most of us. However, my training as an engineer did not fully enable the emotional side of my being. I am trusting Design to be my enabler; to empower me to harness the power of empathy. To help me discover the joy of knowing people to bring joyful experiences to their lives through my work.

This faith in Design stems from my experiences at my first job at a design studio. I vividly remember being completely thrilled to volunteer to sit through the designerly user research meetings for my first assignment at the studio as an engineer. The task was to design a collapsible helmet for motorbike riders. I was already thinking about a “solution” even before the meeting. But the designers in the room had other plans. They spoke about ways to understand the people involved in the problem space to clearly understand their needs. I was confused. On my turn, I shared potential ways of solving the problem. But, I was stumped on being asked to share my initial judgments and approach to unpacking the problem and the need instead. Never before had I thought about the people and the need. Neither had I questioned the problems presented to me. I always was given the mandate to make a thing and I made it. But here, I was being encouraged to use my own judgment and to question. I froze.

That little moment taught me a few things about myself. The thought that struck me the most was, ‘what if I was solving the wrong problems all my life or the right ones wrongly?’

Then onwards, I tagged along with the designers who spoke to many people and understood their habits, constraints, likes, and dislikes closely. All this felt quite alien at first but so fascinating nonetheless. Slowly I discovered the magic of understanding people. I could see the connection between human behavior and its obvious and non-obvious effects on everything around us. It’s impact on the perceived notion of “problems” themselves. I realized that working with the people was far better than working for them. This is where Design got to me. More such experiences opened me up to endless possibilities with Design Thinking. The possibility of exploiting my untapped intuition and voice was one of them. Gradually, I learned various ways to engage with people and draw meaningful insights from them. Above all, it was simply so rewarding to know people and be able to feel what they do, even for a moment. They enriched me with their stories, happiness, vulnerabilities, kindness, and intelligence. There on, I put my complete trust in the Design Process. The process itself became a testbed for my abstractions, intuitions, and judgments, making me a better designer and a more empathetic person. These experiences reshaped my design sensibilities and my being, for good.

These experiences brought me to RISD. If I pointed out the most important thing RISD gave me, it would be my voice and the confidence to express it.

The journey at graduate school has been very personal and inward. I started to realize what matters to me the most, and that Design is not just about creating objects, but about creating change. A tool to express deepest desires, concerns, vulnerabilities and fancies. When practiced with empathy, it could be a tool for activism too. A medium to change hearts and minds. That is what I have set out to do. To simply express my anguish about the issues related to suppressing gender norms and uncover ways of confronting them through my thesis work. A topic that was close to my heart but I never really knew how to work on it with all its complexity, scale, and significance. I was afraid. But RISD gave me the tools and the confidence to take it up. I am trusting Design once again to be my enabler.

Here I am, once a rigid, un-empathetic engineer (nothing against engineering or engineers!), now humbly hoping to change hearts and minds on the topic of gender. I don’t know how far I will go, or whether my work shall change anything. But I am ready for the uncertainty, complexity, scale, and challenges that come with it. I am ready to fail and then stand up again and work, as many times as needed. I am not here to claim a solution but to look for ways to facilitate an action space collectively. With the hopes to someday let us all see the vanity of our limiting gendered lenses for one another and the hurdles it creates for us as people to explore life to its fullest.

I understand that this topic is bigger than me; than any one person. I don’t entirely understand the space, I don’t claim to. But I have committed myself to be a humble student and a dedicated facilitator. I look forward to your thoughts, suggestions, and guidance on this one. If you are interested, let us connect and embark on a journey of discovery with a hope to change hearts and minds along the way.



01

# I Wish I Knew...

When I started knowing my mother as a person, this phrase “I wish I knew..” had a fairly frequent occurrence in our conversations. She used to love listening to what I had learned at school. She was enthused to look at my work. When she was younger, she was interested in music, wanted to be in the army or be a nurse. She loved to learn, ride a bike, hang out with friends, just like any teenager. However, she was married off as soon as she turned 18. “Everything happened so quickly, I had seen him just once before agreeing, I was very confused and scared, I believed that is the only choice I had” she said. Tending to the husband and adjusting to the culture of the new household became her focus. After all, she had to prove herself valuable to the new household. Education took a backseat. Gradually she dropped out of college, to focus on me. She had me at 19. I became the center of her universe and it was only the family life that mattered. She had transitioned into the “ideal” housewife who could cook, clean, and care. Now she was ready to live her life for and through her children.

Cut to today, she has lived this life in the family bubble for three decades now, leaving her dreams and desires way behind. Hence, the phrase; “I wish I had known better”. During one of our conversations she confessed that she felt inadequate in front of her children, husband, family, and society. She said she never felt she could be what she wanted because growing up, the only thing that mattered to her family was whether she could cook and clean. As a young girl, that is all she was ever conditioned for.

This struck me hard. Why did this happen to her? Why was she denied the opportunity to learn or even dream? Why did marriage, family, and the household take precedence over everything? Was she even asked what her dreams were? What made her accept the life of dependence and mundanity? I began actively looking towards women around me to know their life experiences. I did see a lot of them. Dependent and relegated to the household they said, living the same

life day in day out. I spoke to a few close ones, young and old, most of them mentioned feeling inadequate or relegated in some way or the other.

I turned my attention to my father to know his side. He said, "I didn't know any better either. I just did what I was told and taught. That was the way the world worked back then and that was what was expected of a boy my age. I may have done many things differently, only if I knew better" I quickly realized the similarities in their life experiences. On probing further about his personal, professional, and social decisions, I realized the kind of conditioning he too had gone through in his younger days. I totally realized my privilege of being able to better consider the decisions and possibilities in my life. I am earnestly grateful to my parents who imbibed that sense of freedom in me and for a happier childhood. This is not to say that my perspectives and approach to life have been free from gender bias and stereotypes. In fact, these intimate conversations led me to look inside and reflect on my own decisions and the effect my gender experience may have had on them. I also realized my privilege compared to some of my peers, especially girls and the fact that I myself in many ways have projected my gendered outlook on others.

Realizing the profound possibility of our gendered lenses affecting the freedom of thought, perspectives and choices in life inspired me to probe further. I felt the need to investigate how the conditioning of young minds to conform to rigid gender stereotypes and expectations may affect their personal, professional, and social lives. This made me have intimate conversations with my friends, both, male and female-identifying. Unsurprisingly, almost all of us agreed that a lot of our decisions were based on our perceived gender identities and the expectations of our community that stem from these identities. I saw us slyly but firmly dictated and defined by the gender roles and norms of our communities.

A few questions stuck with me;

- How exactly do the perceived roles and norms affect our ability to think freely?
- How do they affect our perception of self?
- What role do they play in our decision-making and ultimately the ability to self-actualize?

For years, these questions have bothered me. I looked for opportunities to find answers for them ever since and I believe this is my chance to begin doing so. My time at RISD and the tools it provided me to deal with complexity instilled confidence in me to pursue this topic as my thesis project. I decided to dive in. Scared but excited!

The next step now was to carry out research to understand how limiting, inflexible culturally-constructed concepts of gender can impact self-actualization; the scale and intensity of this impact, and the contemporary landscape of opinions on the matter.

# 02

# Hunting for Evidence

Profound conversations with family and friends hinted that our gender lenses i.e. the tendency to define a person or self, usually based on narrow and delimiting stereotypes, deeply affect our outlook and decisions in life. With this in mind, I dove into literature review to find evidence for it. The intention was two-fold;

- a. To build an understanding of the rigid and limiting outcomes of conditioned conformity to the traditional gender roles, norms and stereotypes and find evidence that connects these negative outcomes of gender stereotyping to one's ability to self-actualize, if any.
- b. To build a knowledge base that shall help me form my position, a hypothesis within the landscape of the issue and pursue user research to confirm, deny or modify the hypothesis.

All this, to answer the following research questions (RQs);

**RQ1.** What is the relationship between learned gender roles self-identity, and our perception of our own capabilities?

**RQ2.** In what ways do learned gender roles and norms affect our ability to think freely and openness for new ideas?

**RQ3.** Do the learned gender roles and norms limit our personal and collective decision-making and the ability to self-actualize?



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs [4]

## 2.1 Learning from Literature

I began by understanding a few important definitions and concepts first.

### A. Self-Actualization

- To realize fully one's potential- Merriam Webster dictionary [1]

The term was coined by Kurt Goldstein, a German Neurologist, and Psychiatrist in 1939. However, a substantial contribution to the idea of self-actualization was made by Abraham Maslow, an American Psychologist, through his *Hierarchy of Needs Theory* (1943) for self-actualization (visualized in the adjacent illustration). Maslow's theory talks about human motivations. It attempts to encompass a range of human motivators, called 'needs' that should be fulfilled in order for an individual to ultimately self-actualize [2]. The range of basic human needs the theory covers is widely studied and accepted. However, the actual hierarchy of needs mentioned in theory is often called into question. However, Maslow's theory is still widely used for many practical purposes. Hence, the needs mentioned in the theory have been used as basic requirements for an individual's self-actualization.

Maslow's theory presents *five levels of human needs*.

The first level is **physiological needs**. The theory mentions air, water, food, shelter, clothing, warmth, and rest to be some of the most basic needs to be fulfilled for a person to survive and think of any further levels of needs [3].

Once the physiological needs are fulfilled, the subsequent level of motivators or needs is related to **safety**. The need for safety relates to both physical and emotional security. It includes a layer of financial safety as well [3].

The next level of needs is about **love or a sense of belonging**. This level enters the social realm. It speaks about the need for relationships, affiliating, and being a part of a group. It involves friendship, trust, intimacy, affection, acceptance, care, etc. [3].

The fourth level needs are about **esteem**. They include the need to feel self-worth, accomplishment, and respect. Esteem needs have two categories: (i) personal esteem (dignity, achievement, mastery, independence) and (ii) the desire

for respect from others (status, prestige). Maslow indicates that more significance to the need for respect or reputation is given in adolescence [3].

The fifth level in Maslow's hierarchy alludes to the **self-actualization** needs. It relates to needs for realizing one's potential, self-fulfillment, and personal growth. This level of needs could be expressed economically, academically, athletically, or creatively [3]

After understanding the basics of self-actualization, the next step was to establish the definitions of sex, gender, and allied concepts.

#### **B. Sex**

Sex refers to the biological characteristics that define humans as female or male - World Health Organization (WHO) [5]

#### **C. Gender**

Gender refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls, and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviors, and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl, or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time - WHO [6]

#### **D. Difference between Sex and Gender**

Gender interacts with but is different from sex, which refers to the different biological and physiological characteristics of females, males, and intersex persons, such as chromosomes, hormones, and reproductive organs. Gender and sex are related to but are different from gender identity. Gender identity refers to a person's deeply felt, internal, and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond to the person's physiology or designated sex at birth - WHO [6]

#### **E. Gender Roles**

Refers to what males and females are expected to do (in the household, community, and workplace) in a given society- WHO [7]

#### **F. Gender Norms**

Refer to beliefs about women and men, boys and girls that are passed from generation to generation through the process of socialization. They change over

time and differ in different cultures and populations.

Gender norms lead to inequality if they reinforce:

- a) Mistreatment of one group or sex over the other;
- b) Differences in power and opportunities - WHO [7]

The aforementioned definitions are fundamental to the understanding of the topic of gender and the issues that stem from it in the context of this work. They act as basic assumptions. They also form the basis of further research and knowledge building.

Moving forward, the term socialization, nestled in the definition of gender norms, caught attention. On further exploration, it turned out to be a critical idea within the galaxy of concepts in the domain of social issues. *Socialization* is the process by which individuals learn to identify themselves and behave in a way that is socially and culturally acceptable. It is the internalization of societal roles, norms, and customs in an attempt to integrate oneself into the community. It shapes a substantial part of an individual's idea of self.

A major subset of the process of Socialization is Gender Socialization. Neetu and others define **Gender Socialization as "a process by which individuals develop, refine and learn to 'do' gender by internalizing gender norms and roles as they interact with key agents of socialization, such as their family, social networks and other social institutions"** [8]. Individuals use this learning to develop their identities, beliefs and attitudes [9]. These learned and imbibed beliefs then mold their behaviors, affecting their personal, professional, and social lives.

Gender Socialization is a lifelong process that begins at birth, is reinforced during adolescence, and continues throughout life [10]. It affects the very mindset of individuals [8]. Once enough mindsets, ideas, and beliefs are molded and mutually agreed upon, the culture of a place begins to take shape. Cultures, on account of the significant negative consequences they present for non-conformance to the socially accepted norms, condition people to conform. It is this felt need for conformity that molds identities that subscribe to rigid and prohibitive stereotypes. Such limiting beliefs, in combination with patriarchal mindsets and power imbalance in many cultures lead to impaired sense of identity and self-abilities that deeply affect all genders. However, women and other genders have historically suffered way more.

Crespi [11] goes one step ahead and claims that the process of just socialization itself is entirely gendered. Gender socialization plays a pivotal role in our relationships making them completely gendered interactions. These interactions with very close people like the immediate family, inherently dictates our attitudes and behaviors. Parents/guardians are believed to be the most profound and prolonged source of gender socialization in an individual's life. Gradually, the process of socialization become multi-source as it is reinforced through peers/friends, acquaintances, teachers, religious leaders, politicians, media, etc. [8]. Such a multi-directional, constant barrage of gendered ideas at structural (institutional, political, socio-economic, civic systems, global media, religion) and social (family, peers, social circles, teachers, local media) levels mold an individual's sense of self, shaping their attitude, behavior, beliefs, and skills in life [8].

It is pertinent to mention that the effects of gender socialization on an individual are subject to variation based on their individual, social, structural, and environmental contexts. However, the literature patently suggests that the gender socialization usually perpetuates rigid and restrictive gender stereotypes that substantially delimit an individual's sense of self and subsequently the perceived self-abilities. *This answers RQ1 that sought to discover the existence of the negative influence of gender roles and norms on one's identity and perceived capabilities.*

Further, Savolainen [8] mentions that socio-cultural norms and expectations can form some of the most significant barriers to the way individuals seek and utilize information and ideas. Savolainen chooses to define 'barriers' as "obstacles hindering, delaying or preventing access to information" [12]. The definition of the socio-cultural elements within the **socio-cultural barriers** is described as "a set of values, norms, roles, language, symbols, customs, moral and religious beliefs, taboos, perceptions, and preferences acquired by people as members of society" [13, 14]. These barriers are internally as well as externally sourced, i.e., they come from within an individual depending on their mental makeup/identity and also from the systems, constraints, and ideas imposed on them by the cultural environment. Further, Wilson [15], in the *Model of Information Behavior*, also mentions an individual's psychology, beliefs, and perceived role in society as some of the intervening factors in defining an individual's information/knowledge interaction behavior.

Socio-cultural barriers in conjunction with individual mental makeup and perceived role in the social context appear to affect people's interaction with

new ideas and knowledge by controlling their perceived choices and constraints. These barriers seem to be firmly rooted in the cultural ethos of a community. These works provide a substantial reason to believe the profound influence social context and culture can have in shaping a person's ability to access and process new information and ideas. Given the influence of gender roles, norms, identity and expectations on social environments and culture, it can be safely assumed that gender socialization can profoundly restrict an individual's openness to new ideas and the ability to think freely. *This answered RQ2, which sought to look for evidence to connect individuals' openness to ideas to learned gender roles and norms*

A study by Pavai and others suggests that the decision-making skills of individuals are deeply related to the ability to self-actualize. The study mentions self-esteem as one of the significant influencers on decision-making [16]. Another factor that affects decision-making is self-efficacy. Ordun and Akun, in their study, mention the significance of self-efficacy in individuals to motivate themselves even in underwhelming environments to achieve positive results [17]. Their accepted definition of *self-efficacy* is 'a belief in one's mental, motivational, emotional, and behavioral resources to put required effort to execute a certain task and demand'. They also relate self-efficacy to openness to new ideas and hence better decision-making. Secondly, Ordun and Akun relate emotional intelligence to decision-making. They describe *emotional intelligence* as the ability of an individual to 'accept the role of emotions, recognizing and reconciling with one's and others' emotions, empathizing, and achieving harmony of emotion and mind'. Bhadouria [18] further mentions the sub-elements of emotional intelligence; self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Emotional intelligence helps analyze and regulate impulsive emotions supporting rational decision-making. Ordun and Akun also found a strong correlation between emotional intelligence and self-actualization.

It clearly appears that **attributes of self-identity like self-esteem, self-awareness, self-efficacy, self-regulation, and emotional intelligence are strongly connected to decision making**. The answers to RQ1 and RQ 2 patently show the negative influence of culturally perpetuated gender norms, roles, and expectations on one's identity. In conclusion, it feels safe to assume that the process of gender socialization that thrusts suppressive norms, and roles, limits self-identity, decision-making ability and ultimately the self-actualization ability. *This answers RQ3, which sought to connect decision-making ability to self-actualization*



Hence, it seems quite possible to conclude that gender socialization could be seen as a pivotal factor that can shape an individual's identity and perceived capabilities, present barriers to information and ideas, and shape cultures to ultimately limit their decision-making skills. Hence **the process of gender socialization appears to closely affect the potential for self-actualization in an individual**. This piqued the interest in learning about the mechanics of the process of Gender Socialization.

Sandra Bem believes gender socialization happens through the process of gender schematic processing. Bem proposes the Gender Schema Theory (GST) that builds on the Psychoanalytic, Social Learning, and Cognitive Developmental theories. There is some empirical evidence to the mechanics of the process of gender socialization proposed by the GST. **GST defines a schema as a cognitive structure, a network of associations that organizes and guides an individual's perception** [19]. A schema, Bem mentions, is a mental structure that allows an individual to organize and ascribe meaning to a vast array of incoming information, making information processing easier. Schematic information processing relates to the readiness of an individual to categorize information with a preference for a particular dimension of information more than others. Bem believes the dimension of gender takes precedence over many other categories for two reasons, a. Most social contexts and cultures connect a wide range of attributes, behaviors, concepts, and categories to the construct of gender. b. the social context ascribes the idea of gender to a broad functional significance. That is, a substantial number of significant social institutions, norms, and taboos differentiate between persons, behaviors, and attributes based on gender.

Gender-schematic processing thus involves the spontaneous sorting of attributes and behaviors into masculine and feminine categories. In summary, GST proposes individual perception as a process in which the interaction between incoming information and an individual's pre-existing schema (or set of ideas) determines what is perceived. Specifically, the theory proposes that gender socialization results, in part, from the absorption of the concept of self into a pre-existing and ever-growing gender schema. As children learn the contents of their society's gender schema, they learn which attributes are linked with their sex and, hence, with themselves. GST thus attempts to provide a basis to the mechanics of the process of Gender Socialization. Gender schema, hence, appears to be a critical aspect that affects people's perceptions and the ability to self-actualize.

A substantial amount of literature [8, 9, 16] opines that **early adolescence (ages 10-15) is a critical transition phase when significant physical, emotional, cognitive, behavioral and social changes occur and is a crucial time in the process of gender socialization**. Gender identities, roles, norms, expectations, beliefs, and attitudes cultivated since early childhood further strengthen at this age. A study by Global Early Adolescent Study (GEAS) [20] found that girls and boys between ages 10–14 begin firmly recognizing changes in their own and others' gender attitudes and expectations for acceptable behaviors, professions, clothing, and roles based on gender. The study further elaborates that the social networks of an individual at this age begin having increasingly more influence on their attitudes, behaviors, and interactions. Parents remain a vital catalyst in the gender socialization process through verbal and non-verbal cues and behaviors through a substantial period of an individual's life. However, peer relationships begin having an increasing effect on an adolescent's worldview, expectations, and identity. Schools then become a significant avenue for gender socialization where a confluence of relationships with peers and teachers creates potent situations for gender-influenced social interactions. Peer acceptance becomes increasingly important as individuals seek to find emotional support in peers who are going through similar physical and psychological changes.

Another factor the study mentions that reinforces gender-based expectations at this stage of life is media. The depiction of genders in media like books, films, advertisements, and social media further augment the gendered outlook of a young individual. In summary, an influx of all these factors; parenting, peer relationships, school, and media come together to solidify the gender identity, roles, and norms in individuals in early adolescence, rendering this age to be a window of opportunity to challenge the negative effects of the process of gender socialization.

Moving forward, the various real-world outcomes of the process of gender socialization were studied. The outcomes that follow the limitations put on the self-identity, perceived capabilities, openness to new ideas and decision-making of people from all genders, especially in the adolescent age group. The following section covers some of the significant outcomes.



## 2.2 The Real-World Outcomes of Gender Socialization

Neetu and others [8] mention that the process of gender socialization leads to gender-based inequalities at the structural/systemic level that affect all genders. A complex interplay of processes at the social and individual level, strongly influenced by the elements at the structural level, produces and fosters gendered identities, roles, and norms. They report that major hurdles in the educational, workforce and socio-political participation of individuals irrespective of gender have been observed the world over. However, females and other genders have been reported to suffer more from such inequities. Practices such as gender-related violence and child marriage have their roots in the deep-rooted and suppressive gender-based differences in individual attitudes, beliefs and behaviors. Patriarchal mindsets in many societies further exacerbate the differences through blatant power imbalance among genders and also within different masculinities as well. This power granted to or taken by males is often weaponized against other genders in direct and indirect ways that not only affects the decision-making abilities, social, health and financial autonomies of other genders but presents a clear threat to their physical safety as well. All these factors when combined with cultural pressure to conform to gender norms, greatly reduce the agency for many for self-actualization.

As mentioned earlier, adolescents (10-19 yr.) are quite responsive to the influences prevalent in their social environment. Further stimulation is added by biological changes and the expansion of social networks and importance placed on belonging and social acceptance by this age group [9]. Subsequently, adolescents generally face a lot of pressure to conform to the existing masculine and feminine identities, which are often built and perceived as opposites to each other. For example, many cultures tie the notions of manhood to heterosexual behavior where sex is viewed as vital to demonstrating power, prestige, and affirming male identity and status among peers [21]. Impressionable young males are encouraged to brag about their sexual exploits. This results in them feeling the pressure to have heterosexual sexual experiences. On the contrary, femininity is linked to qualities like chastity and naivety about matters of sexual pleasure. This renders talking about sex, contraceptive methods, or taking the initiative or acknowledging sexual experience 'unfeminine.'

These mechanics within and between genders and the resulting identities re-inforce existing gender norms and inequalities, potentially fostering the sexual

objectification of girls and women, male dominance, and inequitable heterosexual relationships and decision-making, sexual control, dominance, and intimate partner violence.

In some parts of the world, adolescent girls are forced to drop out of school to help out at home. Further, they are married off before turning 18. Such practices lead to unwanted pregnancy or intimate partner violence, or unsafe sexual encounters, leaving them at significant health risk [22].

On the other hand, adolescent boys and young men have been observed to be more prone to dying of violence, automobile accidents, and substance abuse [23]. Some contexts compel the boys to prove manhood through aggressive initiation practices or are forced to join armed groups and gangs [24].

Norms and expectations around perceived gender-appropriate behaviors and the social, cultural pressure to conform to them shape such outcomes. The fear of social consequences of breaking these expectations forces conformance. Apart from all the aforementioned outcomes, suppression of one's true self, desires, and wants is a significant outcome on a personal level. Further, personal and collective perceived limitations on information, ideas, social/emotional/intellectual capability, and ultimately the ability to self-actualize are some of the profound outcomes of Gender Socialization that become precursors to many of the outcomes mentioned earlier.

It is only pertinent to acknowledge as even the literature suggests that female-identifying people and other genders face more problems due to gender inequalities than male-identifying people in almost all spheres of life. The patriarchal, sexist systems and mindsets further augment the issues stemming from gender socialization and vice versa. However, this work will not actively pursue understanding those aspects profoundly. I believe that patriarchy, sexism, and misogyny must be handled sensitively and with respectful depth. Hence, I proceed forward with a deep sense of acknowledgment of these issues and their role in gender socialization and limiting self-actualization.

The following section attempts to encompass the outcomes of gender socialization specific to the Indian context. I chose to set my work in this context because I feel I understand the structural, social, and personal dynamics better than any other context.

## 2.3 How does India Feel the Heat?

India is placed at 131 out of 189 countries in 2021 on the gender inequality index as per the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) [25].

India is uniquely placed in the landscape of global gender inequality because of the relatively higher significance afforded by the family, including the extended family and social networks [26]. Its diverse and age-old customs, traditions, and belief systems further place the hierarchical family system, culture, and belief systems in a much more influencing position to develop a gendered outlook among children than many other contexts.

Chowdhury and Patnaik [26] attempted to understand the effect of gender socialization in Indian families. One of their first findings was to confirm that fewer female youth in the country enjoy the same privileges as male youth. Females and males both confirmed gender-preferential practices in the household as common events. These practices included preference given to sons in education, profession, and mobility. Such preferential treatment for sons in families goes to extreme lengths leading to larger social issues like female infanticide. Statistics report that **India sees the highest number of female infanticides in the world** [27]. One of the biggest reason attributed to this statistic is the practice of patrilineality and dowry in India [28]. The son-preference behavior stems from these practices as females are considered a burden to the family [26]. A popular phrase in many communities in India, "*Beti toh paraya dhan hoti hai*" (girls are other people's treasure), is a testament to the dislike for having daughters.

Further, Chowdhury and Patnaik found that males were more likely to identify gender-discriminatory practices than females, which suggests that there was a lack of awareness among females about their disadvantages in the family settings. It was also found that young females faced greater barriers to independent decision-making in day-to-day life. Females were also reported to face greater friction in accessing money [26].

Another insight from the study was the diminished ability of the male youth to express their opinion to elders or confront others. This observation is related to the restrictions put on men that discourage them from expressing their emotions. A study by Liang and George strongly connects this suppression to multiple levels of depression among Indian men later in their lives [29]. They further

*"We are looking for fair, slim and cultured girl."*

**"BETI TOH PARAYA DHAN HOTI HAI"**

*"Hum-mara ladka Engineer*

*hai, aapki ladki k liye usko US bhejne ka karcha aapko uthana padega."*

**"Ghar k kaam beti k or ghar k bahar k kaam ladke k."**

*"Ladki akele der tak ghar k bahar nahi rehti hai."*

**"LADKE ROTE NAHI"**

*"Ladka ho kr naach gaane karega?"*

**"KYA MAIN SHADI K BAAD JOB KR SAKTI HU?"**

*"Beti ghar k kaam sikhlo nahi to sasural wale kya kahege ki ma ne kuch sikhaya nahi."*

*"Jada padh kr kya karegi shadi k liye ladka milna mushkil ho jayega."*

connect the continued silent suffering of men for years to the culturally accepted ideas of masculinity and the rigid beliefs around the toughness of the male kind.

More females than males subscribed to gender-egalitarian attitudes, the study reported. This observation is intriguing in light of the finding that a greater proportion of males than females identified gender-discriminatory practices within households. This suggests that though males generally recognize that females are less privileged than males, they do not see this as a problem. This behavior could be attributed to the patriarchal structure of Indian families. The financial power and hence the decision-making ability usually rests with the males in the household which is marred by gender bias.

Another important finding of this study is the confirmation of the link between gender socialization and the mental health of the youth. It says that young people who experience beatings and violence from parents experience more mental health problems than those who did not. Moreover, the traits observed in Indian families around restrictions on youth mobility and expressing themselves to others also saw an increase in the mental health of both genders. This affects emotion regulation and emotional intelligence among youngsters, which proves to be a barrier to self-actualization.

The higher the level of household gender discriminatory practices, the lower the number of mental health problems for the males, completely opposite to the experiences of the females. The setting of the household emerges as a critical setting in which gender inequality becomes insinuated in the fabric of social life, with severe influences on mental health and overall well-being. The effects are even more prominent in the Indian context because of the very high significance associated with collective living and family values. This leads to the genders not being able to completely explore the innate, natural identity of self and fulfilling relationships with one another.

Violating the gender norms, like performing household tasks inside the home, was associated with more mental health problems for young males, whereas young females who performed chores outside the home reported more mental health problems. Add to this the rigorous policing of the gender boundaries in Indian society, and it is clear that engaging in gender-inconsistent behavior leads to mental health problems for both male and female youth. These issues are direct results of gender conditioning and socialization and have a significant

impact on diverging destinies of both genders. The other genders are not even a discussion in most households.

Many factors come together to perpetuate gender norms in the country. The layers of religion, caste, sub-castes, language, socio-economic and environmental elements further add complexity to issues of gender. However, the literature and my personal experiences compel me to work in the Indian context, even with all its intricacies.

Though mindsets are changing in the country, the change is slow and concentrated. For efforts to work, they have to be multi-directional, fast, and sweeping. I move on to build the hypothesis based on all the research above. In closing let's look at one more somber statistic.

According to a survey by Nielsen [30], Indian women are the most stressed in the world today. **87% of the Indian women in the survey reported that they felt stressed all the time due to familial, social, workplace pressures.**

## 2.4 The Hypothesis

The literature helped me discover the critical influence gender socialization has on individuals' sense of identity and sense of self. If a country's culturally- and socially-enforced gender roles are too rigid/binary/limiting/constricting, or if the risk of transgression is too severe, this can profoundly impact individuals'—men, women, and non-binary/genderfluid individuals—ability to self-actualize

The literature revealed the existence of a strong limiting potential of gender socialization on self-actualization. An understanding of the mechanics of the gender socialization process was also built. With this knowledge, a hypothesis was developed shown on the next spread.

The attempt here is to encompass and connect all the relevant factors identified to significantly support suppressing gender socialization to limit an individual's capability to self-actualize. The overarching intention is to convey that the process of gender socialization develops the gender schema of an individual, which then builds up an individual's belief system. The belief system is seen here as

an extension of the schema. The belief system of the individual and that of the others in the community come together to form the culture of a place. This culture profoundly shapes collective and individual decision-making; and with this shaping-power comes the ability to severely limit love (relationships), esteem (identity), and self-actualization needs.

The hypothesis is an attempt to say the following things;

### 1. *Gender Socialization*

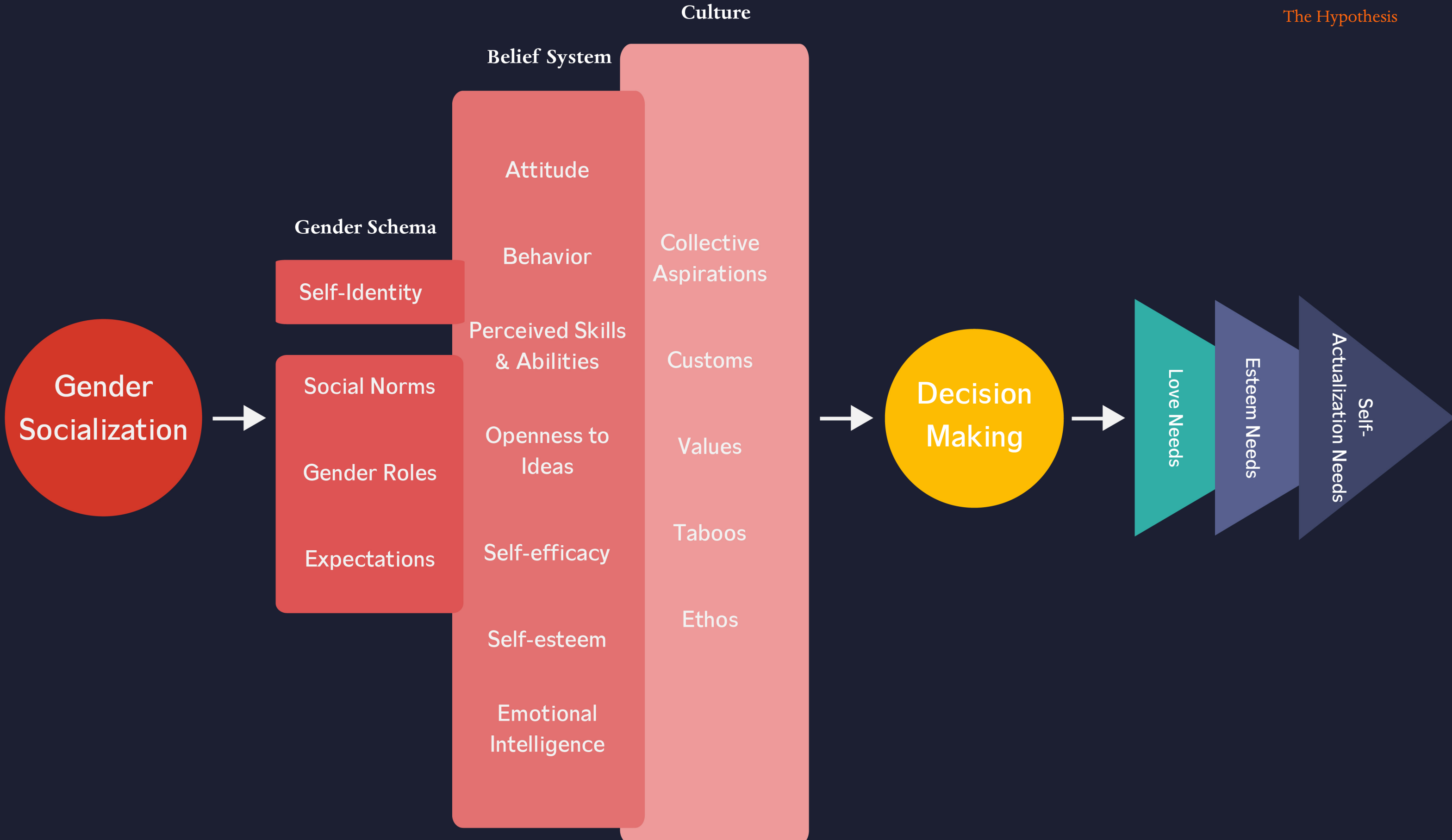
As mentioned earlier, gender socialization is a key process that hampers an individual's ability to self-actualize. The belief here is that it leads to an individual building a gender schema to guide their further information processing and develop a gendered outlook.

### 2. *Gender Schema*

The literature reveals that gender socialization happens through a gender schema, a cognitive structure, a network of associations that helps segregate incoming information and guide perception. A schema is formed out of the elements that inform gender socialization. These elements are Self-Identity, Social Gender Norms, Gender Roles, and Societal and Self Expectations. The Gender Schema Theory itself informs the reason behind including this particular set of elements. The theory mentions that an individual attempts to mold and merge their identity with three factors that provide them with societal definitions of gender roles and norms. Once this happens, the individual creates a network of ideas and beliefs that lead to the formation of expectations of a certain kind of behavior from self which is usually modeled on societal expectations.

### 3. *Belief System*

It is concluded here that as an individual's gender schema evolves with age and starts building the individual's belief system. The literature helped conclude that the belief system could comprise of an individual's attitude that results in certain behaviors. These beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors create the perceived personal skills and abilities that influence their openness to new ideas and information. All these elements affect the belief of an individual in their mental, motivational, emotional, and behavioral resources to accomplish a task or demand, i.e., self-efficacy.



Lastly, all these factors affect self-esteem, motivation, empathy, social skills, and emotional regulation to affect emotional intelligence.

#### 4. Culture

The belief system is further assumed to influence culture and the social environment of an individual. The elements that contribute to culture are identified as the collective 'ideal' aspirations, customs, values, taboos, and emotional ethos. Culture exists at multiple levels. It is familial, local community based, larger social structure-based, religion-based, etc.

#### 5. Decision-Making

It is considered to be a critical process in the journey of self-actualization. Decisions are taken by an individual based on all the preceding factors; Schema, Belief System, and Culture. These factors can present significant challenges to self actualization if marred by gender biases and stereotypes. In that case, decision making becomes ill-informed and limited. Such unholistic decision making may hinder fulfillment of love, self-esteem, and self-actualization needs.

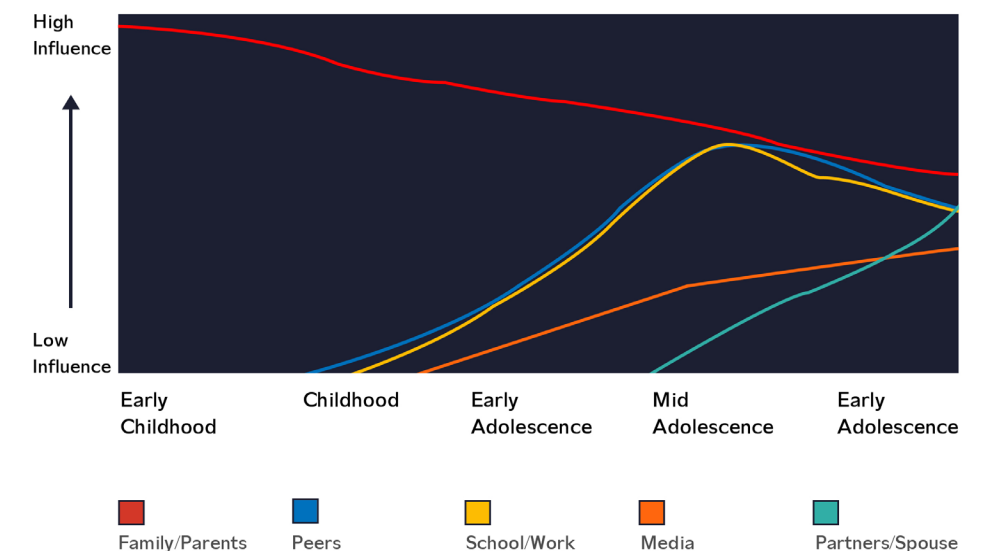
#### 6. Needs

Limitations on emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and decision-making imposed by gender-based roles and norms can negatively impact individual relationships due to the increased likelihood of bad judgments. This may impede the attainment of the love needs (fulfilling relationships) of an individual due to constrained, biased and restrictive outlook. Having self-esteem, motivation, and confidence dictated by limiting, biased gender roles, norms and taboos may impede the attainment of esteem needs as well. All this ultimately leads to limiting an individual's ability to self-actualize.

After establishing the hypothesis, the next step was to understand the stakeholder ecosystem.

## 2.5 The Stakeholders

The literature mentions the following people or entities as major stakeholders in the process of gender socialization;



### 1. Parents/Family

Family, especially parents, are the most prominent source of information and ideas for the children. [7]. The physical closeness and the emotional proximity help children pick up habits, language, observed roles, understood norms, and general expectations associated with the perceived gender the children think they belong to. The influence of parents and the family, especially spouses in later years, remains prominent in a person's life [8].

### 2. Peers

Peers start to substantially influence adolescents, especially in early adolescents (11-15 yr.). This is an age where hormonal, cognitive, and behavioral changes lead to increased emphasis on social lives. Peers at this age become a source of emotional support due to relatable physical and psychological changes [9]. Peer acceptance begins playing an important role as adolescents spend increasing time with them and attempt to figure out their place in their expanding social networks.

A valuing system (determining the worthiness of ideas and things) is also observed to develop in this age. This also makes this age critical in gender socialization. [8]

### 3. *School/Work*

Teachers and the allied staff at schools have a position of authority that closely influences the gender socialization process [8]. Many ideas are imbibed from the teacher, and their behaviors are closely observed by the students. Work has the ability to influence the behaviors of teenagers and young adults as they newly join the workforce. The gendered nature of opportunities for growth and segregation of tasks can foster gender roles and norms.

### 4. *Media*

Media, global and local, provides multiple ways of gender programming [8]. It offers avenues to experience other gender identities and learn about roles, norms, and expectations. Gender-based perceptions may get legitimacy from the information provided through the media. Issues around body image have been associated with exposure to media by some studies. Its ability to disseminate information among large populations repeatedly, over a long time at a low cost, makes it a significant player in gender socialization. Media starts becoming a major factor in early adolescence and continues to remain so later as well.

The long-winded journey of **desk research helped me discover the evidence for the existence and the nature of the connection between gender socialization and self-actualization**. It also helped me understand the outcomes of gender socialization and norm conformity in a global and Indian contexts. A hypothesis was built based on this knowledge that assisted further research and problem identification. The nexus of various stakeholders was also revealed to understand various human contributors to the process of gender socialization.

A few things became evident. **Gender Socialization is a process worth looking at for potential interventions**. Further, the research revealed the significance of working with adolescents, especially during **early adolescence** (10-15 yr.), as most researchers identified it as a window in an individual's life where gender socialization could take root and condition a person for a life long gendered outlook to ultimately hamper their decision making and self-actualization

capabilities. With this understanding, the user research phase began with an aim to grasp the on-ground perspectives of the people from my community.



# 03

# Understanding People

The next step after establishing the hypothesis was reaching out to the people in my community and learn about their experiences with gender roles, norms and belief systems in their own specific cultural contexts.

The intention of the user research phase was twofold;

- a. *To check whether the hypothesis based on the literature resonates with the lived the realities and experiences of the people.*
- b. *To identify the motivators behind their behaviors to understand whether they align with the hypothesis.*

One of the major goals of the hypothesis was to summarize research so that I could ask relevant questions of the user research participants in order to obtain meaningful insights. Hence, after modeling my questions around the hypothesis, I spoke to two sets of people. The first set was parents. I realized that speaking to parents was important because of their prominent and prolonged role in the process of gender socialization.

The second set of people were adolescents from the ages of 14-19. The literature identifies adolescence (10-19 yr.) as an important age group. This is the time where the process of gender socialization intensifies. However, at the same time, the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral changes maintain a certain malleability that may help in mitigating the process of gender socialization through interventions. Hence, they naturally became the second user group.

I chose remote interviews via audio or video calls as the modality for asking questions. Due to pandemic-related and long-distance limitations, I chose to interview acquaintances for my first round of questions. However, to avoid bias as much as possible, attempts were made to keep the participation of close friends and relatives to a minimum.

All the participants were provided with complete information about the context and the study's intention without mentioning any conclusions or potentially biasing statements.

They were also informed about their right to leave the interview at any point they feel like. The following two sections cover the interviews and insights with both sets of people, the adults, and the adolescents.

### 3.1 Speaking with the Parents

Twelve adults were interviewed in total, all of them with children aged from 13 to 21 yr.

An anecdotal approach was used to have the discussion around the sensitive topic of gender. I shared my own experiences growing up to help them with the questions I wanted to ask. However, attempts were made to avoid any words, phrases, or contexts that may introduce bias.

Following is the demographic data and Insights from the interviews;

#### Total Participants- 12

Age- 25-30 - 1;  
30-40- 4;  
40-50- 3;  
50-60- 3;  
70-80- 1

Gender- Female- 6;  
Male- 6;  
Others- 0;

Education- Grade 10 or below- 3;  
Grade 12 or below- 3;  
Undergraduate- 5  
Postgraduate- 1

Children- 2 on avg. - Males- 60%, Females- 40% (ages between 13 to 21 yr.)

#### Insights: Males

##### a. Gender Norms and Roles-

- i. Aware of the concept of gender-related norms and roles- 100%
- ii. Gender-based segregation of tasks and roles is quite old and is a part of our families and culture- 100%
- iii. Girls should be educated, but they must learn the housework too- 84 %
- iv. Boys and girls have different mentalities, physical needs, and capabilities hence should have different roles- 67%

##### b. Belief System-

- i. Boys need to be stronger to support the family, should portray positive emotions- 84%
- ii. It's fine for girls to be sensitive, adds to their girliness- 84%
- iii. It's inappropriate for my daughters to sit among men if guests come over or my sons to sit among women- 100%
- iv. Would encourage sons to be a little more aggressive if they are shy- 84%
- v. Children should care about our happiness while choosing their education, careers, and partners- education- 84%, careers-67%, partners- 84%
- vi. Would never allow daughter to be with friends overnight if the group has boys- 84%
- vii. Girls are the honor of the house- 84%
- viii. Men must be able to keep their families under control- 50%

##### c. Culture

- i. Culturally accepted gender roles and norms may be getting older, but their essence will always make sense- 84%
- ii. Social acceptance of our and our children's behavior is of utmost importance- 100%
- iii. Depression never has and will never occur in our family - 67%
- iv. Girls should be more adjusting in nature as they have to go their in-laws after marriage- 84%
- v. Boys can't wear a skirt- 100%

- vi. Culture and traditions must be followed no matter what people individually want- 67%

#### Motivators

- Cultural acceptance
- Protection of women and children in the house
- Control over children's decisions
- Family status

#### Insights: Females

##### a. Gender Norms and Roles-

- i. Aware of gender-related norms and roles- 100%
- ii. Gender-based segregation of tasks and roles is quite old and is a part of our families and culture- 100%
- iii. Girls should be educated, but they must learn the housework too- 84 %
- iv. Boys and girls have different mentalities, physical needs, and capabilities hence should have different roles- 84%

##### b. Belief System-

- i. Boys need to be stronger to support the family, should portray positive emotions- 67%
- ii. Its fine for girls to be sensitive, adds to their girliness- 84%
- iii. It's inappropriate for my daughters to sit among men if guests come over or my sons to sit among women- 84%
- iv. Would encourage sons to be a little more aggressive if they are shy- 67%
- v. Children should care about our happiness while choosing their education, careers, and partners- education- 67%, careers-50%, partners- 84%
- vi. Would never allow daughter to be with friends overnight if the group has boys- 84%
- vii. Girls are the honor of the house- 84%
- viii. Taking care of the household is the most significant responsibility of girls- 34%

##### c. Culture

- i. Culturally accepted gender roles and norms may be getting older, but their essence will always make sense- 84%
- ii. Social acceptance of our and our children's behavior is of utmost importance- 100%
- iii. Depression never has and will never occur in our family - 84%
- iv. Girls should be more adjusting in nature as they have to go their in-laws after marriage- 100%
- v. Boys can't wear a skirt- 100%
- vi. Culture and traditions must be followed no matter what people individually want- 67%
- vii. Girls must be married by the age of 25- 34%
- viii. It's only at 75 that I feel comfortable asking for things for myself- 16%
- ix. Insufficient freedom to take own decisions- 16%
- x. It's harder to reach the top- 16%

#### Motivators

- Cultural and familial acceptance,
- Conformance to family values and expectations
- Control over children's decisions

“We must know how to control the household” - Raghu, 55

“All of us have set roles culturally, no harm in following the culture”  
- Shalini, 44

### 3.2 Speaking with the Adolescents

8 adolescents were interviewed in total. An anecdotal approach was used to discuss the sensitive topic of gender. I shared my own experiences growing up to help them with the questions I wanted to ask. However, attempts were made to avoid any words, phrases, or contexts that may introduce biases. Permissions were taken from their parents or guardians before speaking with the children. Following is the demographic data and Insights from the interviews;

**Total Participants- 8**

**Age- 14 yr. - 1;**  
15 yr.- 2;  
16 yr.- 1;  
17 yr.-2;  
19 yr. 2

**Gender- Females- 4;**  
Males- 4;  
Others- 0;

**Education- Grade 10 or below- 3;**  
Grade 12 or below- 3;  
Undergraduate- 1;

**Insights: Boys (4)**

*a. Gender Norms and Roles-*

- i. Aware of the idea of gender inequality- 100%
- ii. Gender issues are important- 75 %
- iii. Information about the easily available- 25%
- iv. Information about gender roles, norms, and their effect is required- 75%
- v. Gender-based segregation of tasks and roles exists in families- 100%
- vi. Boys must work outside of the house and girls inside the house- 75 %

*b. Belief System-*

- i. Boys need to be stronger to support the family, should portray positive emotions- 100 %
- ii. Its fine for girls to be sensitive, adds to their girliness- 100%
- iii. Biological differences should decide roles, expectations of people- 75%

- iv. Would cook in the house after you marry- 50%
- v. What will decide your career path- Passion- 75%, Parents- 75%, Gender- 50%, Friends- 50%
- vi. Will do something against the will of your parents and family- 25%
- vii. What decides dressing choice- trends- 75%, friends-75%, parents- 50%

*c. Culture*

- i. The community believes girls and boys are equal- 25%
- ii. Will change education choice if the family does not approve- 75%
- iii. Girls should be more adjusting in nature as they have to go their in-laws after marriage- 50%
- iv. Boys can't wear a skirt- 100%
- v. Culture and traditions must be followed no matter what people individually want- 50%

**Motivators**

- **Conformance with parents and family**
- **Acceptance by the social circles**
- **Peers acceptance**

**Insights: Girls (4)**

*a. Gender Norms and Roles-*

- i. Aware of the idea of gender inequality- 100%
- ii. Gender issues are important- 100%
- iii. Information about gender issues easily available- 50%
- iv. Information about gender roles, norms, and their effect is required- 100%
- v. Gender-based segregation of tasks and roles exists in the families- 75%
- vi. Boys must work outside of the house and girls inside the house- 25 %

b. *Belief System-*

- i. Boys need to be stronger to support the family, should portray positive emotions- 50 %
- ii. Its fine for girls to be sensitive, adds to their girliness- 50%
- iii. Biological differences should decide roles, expectations of people- 25%
- iv. Would cook in the house after you marry- 75%
- v. What will decide your career path- Passion- 75%, Parents- 100%, Gender- 25%, Friends- 50%
- vi. Will do something against the will of your parents and family- 0%
- vii. What decides dressing choice- trends- 100%, friends-75%, parents- 100%

c. *Culture*

- i. The community believes girls and boys are equal- 50%
- ii. Will change education choice if the family does not approve- 100%
- iii. Girls should be more adjusting in nature as they have to go their in-laws after marriage- 50%
- iv. Boys can't wear a skirt- 100%
- v. Culture and traditions must be followed no matter what people individually want- 50%

**Motivators**

- Cultural acceptance,
- Conformance to family values and expectations
- Hope to break stereotypes
- Peer acceptance

“I am a boy, I walk, talk, work like one” - Rahul, 16

“I stay within my limits, family must be happy” - Jaya, 15

**Overall Insights;**

These interviews were a great learning experience! They made me realize the difference in the inherent psyche of the people identifying with different genders and at different ages. Most importantly, the existence of gender-based biases was clearly detected among the majority of the participants that encouraged me to continue working further on the subject.

The adult males were observed to believe their role in the household to be that of a protector and provider, in alignment with observations of so many studies. They all indicated, through the narratives, examples, and responses they gave that they strongly believed in disciplining their children to follow gender norms, in order to maintain or improve the financial and social status of the family. The sense of “right behavior” indicated in these conversations was strongly connected to established cultural norms around gender identity

Adult females indicated their willingness and desire to conform to the family values, especially depending upon their educational background and time spent in the husband's family. Disciplining and controlling children's decision-making was also observed in them; however, they were slightly more lenient towards sons, unlike fathers when it came to conformance to roles and norms.

Adolescent boys and girls indicated a belief in almost complete conformance to the family values. Secondly, friends and social acceptance could be seen to be important to them. The girls were observed to be dismissive of gender-based questions as most of them believed gender-based hurdles wouldn't stop them from achieving what they want.

With this knowledge, a tough decision had to be made. Working with both adults and adolescents felt very important. However, given the probability of molding young people's thoughts, their relative willingness to accept new ideas and simply the joy of speaking with them **made me decide to work with the youngsters**. I saw it as a way to speak to a 13 yr. old me, who I wish had known a thing or two about the subject.

One significant realization that occurred was the need to speak with even younger adolescents to test how young I can catch them and still make a meaningful impact. With this, I moved on to the next step, speaking with the experts.

### 3.3 Speaking with the Experts;

Among the numerous people I spoke with regarding this topic, the most significant mark was left by Mr. Harish Sadani, and his team at the Non-Government Organization called Men Against Violence and Abuse (MAVA).

MAVA was established in 1993 to work towards creating a movement with an intention to explore the role of men as 'partners' and 'stakeholders.' Their goals are to address gender issues through cultural advocacy, direct intervention, and youth education initiatives.

Their modus-operandi is to collaborate with local colleges, universities, women's groups, grassroots community-based organizations, and individual health activists, our 700 plus youth mentors working in nine districts of Maharashtra to reach out to young men to spread the message of respecting women and treating them with dignity. I was glad to receive the gracious support of MAVA in understanding the subject, accessing relevant materials, and, most importantly, user groups and experts.

**Mr. Sadani is one of the founding members of MAVA and is a Honorary Secretary and Chief Functionary. Following are the insights produced after our discussions.**

- There is a profound need to work with young adolescents aged 12-15 yr.
- Not many have worked with men. But men are a part of the problem.
- It is important to make men realize that fulfilling relationships are at stake. Making that happen is a challenge. Who would want to give up power?

- Identifying the aspects of women's lives that are controlled by men via gender-based roles and norms under the guise of culture is necessary to begin visualizing the landscape of outcomes stepping from gender inequality and patriarchy.
- Encouraging men to undo their privilege is challenging on the field
- All this information needs to be made accessible in layman's language, that is one of our major jobs
- Indian society is patriarchal, patrilineal, and patrilocal, which further exacerbates gender-based discrimination, violence, inequity, and produces disadvantages for both sexes, but women and nonbinary people in particular.
- School is one of the most important spaces for any intervention.
- Visual media has worked wonders.
- Continuous engagement is the key.

After insightful conversations with MAVA, discussions were held with

**Dr. Nandini Diwan, a Psychologist with 40 years of experience in the field and activism with issues around gender injustice. Following were the insights developed based on this discussion;**

- Consciousness-raising is the very first step in activism in this domain. It is a deep-rooted and ever-present issue that constantly influences people on a daily basis, ever so subtly. That makes it quite sticky and challenging.
- The consciousness-raising needs to happen consistently. Continuous engagement becomes the key.
- Providing context and situations that evoke thoughts and conversations is an important tool.
- Getting people thinking and curious consistently has the potential to create behavioral change.
- Providing just enough context and sufficient time to form thoughts is important.
- Creating self-awareness, that is, awareness about what kind of thoughts one subscribes to, helps begin the cycle of thought.

The understanding developed till this point is summarized below;

1. Gender Socialization (which is unescapable), in a culture where gender constructs are unequal, hegemonic, binary, patriarchal and rigid, will produce a society where gender-based suppression and inequality is the norm. Rigid gender socialization, and conformity to the suppressive, oppressive ideas imbibed through it seems to be at the core of negative influences of the process of gender socialization. Identifying as a boy or girl, or even embracing cultural ideas of womanhood/manhood may not always be limiting, not to everyone, however, when these ideas are driven by rigid, unequal, stereotypical and suppressive ideas then it presents substantial challenges in informed decision making and self-actualization. Hence, it was decided to work on the idea of conformity to limiting gender norms and roles perpetuated through the process of gender socialization.
2. Adolescence was identified as an important period where the process of gender socialization and conformity to rigid ideas begins firming its roots. However, given the hormonal, cognitive, and behavioral changes in adolescents, it is also a window of opportunity for intervention working against gender socialization. Hence this age group was chosen.

In the following chapter, the landscape of the process of gender socialization in relation to adolescents is visualized to ultimately define a problem space and then filter down to a problem statement.

# 04

# The Problem Space

No doubt that the process of gender socialization is a complex subject. It was completely understood that a few months of research is not nearly sufficient to grasp it completely. This work doesn't claim to have developed the deepest and multi-directional, multi-contextual understanding of the subject matter. However, the deep and insightful work that has been done by people from various fields has helped build a sufficient preliminary understanding. Enough to make informed assumptions and judgements. Enough to make some design decisions. This chapter is an encapsulation of that knowledge and its utility to further the decision-making process.

One framework that was found quite comprehensive and useful in understanding the space of gender socialization was the Multi-Level Framework of Influences Impacting Gender Socialization Processes During Adolescence by UNICEF. In many ways, it encapsulates the knowledge and the understanding that has been built during this study.

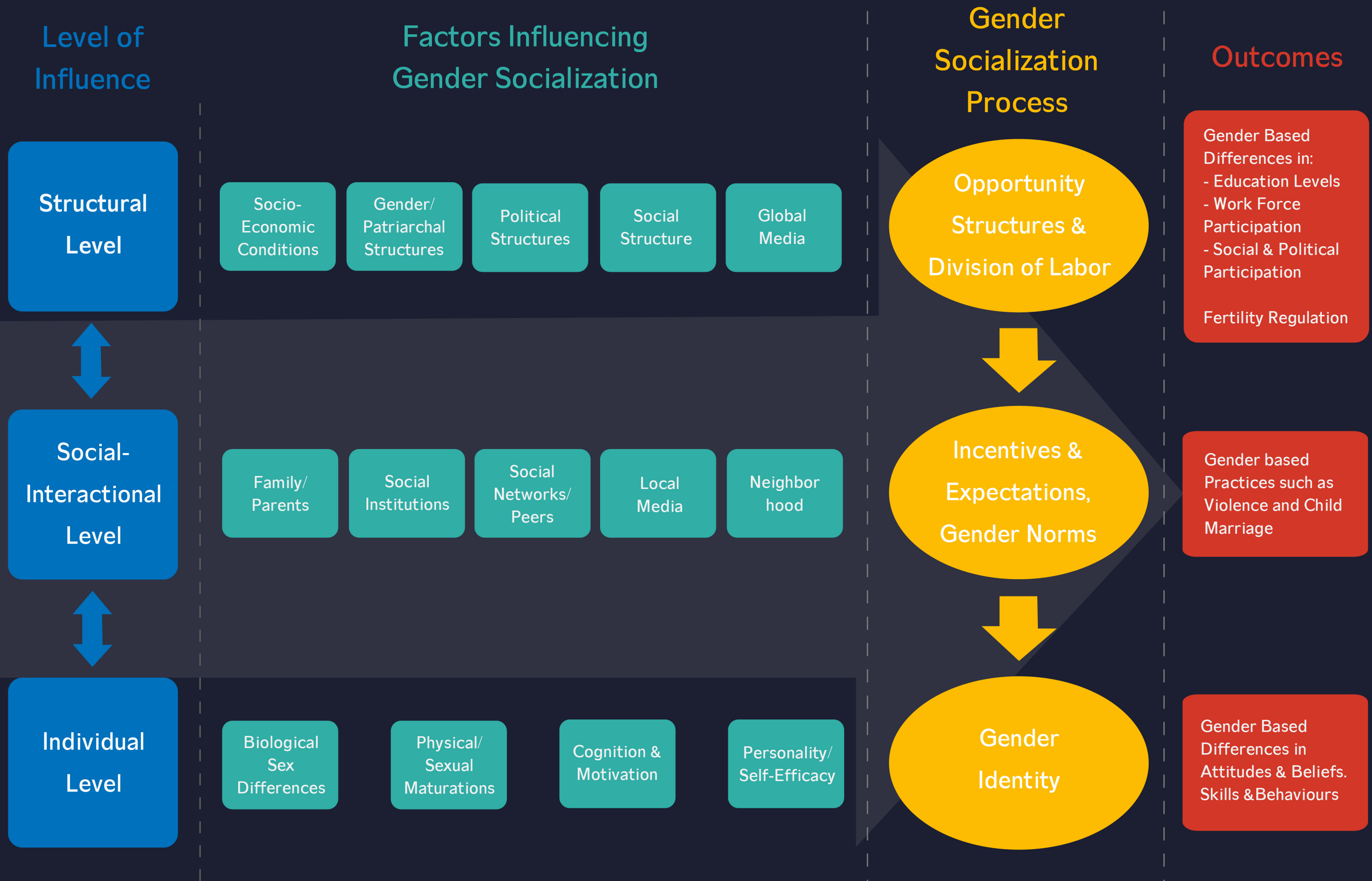
The framework talks about the multiple societal levels and significant factors within those levels that influence the process of gender socialization and its

outcomes. The levels are; Individual, Social-Interactional, and Structural. The framework then connects various factors at these levels to the role they play in shaping the gender socialization process and finally mentions the outcomes of these complex interactions.

The **structural level** mentions the general societal values and practices, political structures, socio-economic conditions, global media, and information sources that have a broader influence at a societal level. These factors govern the gendered distribution of resources and the impact of relative status and power on an individual's personal circumstances and life chances. The factors at this level also impose constraints on individual behavior. There are multiple factors that interact and influence each other, and they closely impact the individual opportunity structures and the nature of the gender socialization process [8].

The **social-interactional level** consists of the environments where individuals live their daily lives and learn the gender norms, roles, and practices within their communities through everyday interactions with people and institutions. The key sources for gender socialization for adolescents include the family and





Level of Influence

Factors Influencing Gender Socialization

Gender Socialization Process

Outcomes

Structural Level

Socio-Economic Conditions

Gender/Patriarchal Structures

Political Structures

Social Structure

Global Media

Opportunity Structures & Division of Labor

Gender Based Differences in:  
- Education Levels  
- Work Force Participation  
- Social & Political Participation  
Fertility Regulation

Social-Interactive Level

Family/Parents

Social Institutions

Social Networks/Peers

Local Media

Neighborhood

Incentives & Expectations, Gender Norms

Gender based Practices such as Violence and Child Marriage

Individual Level

Biological Sex Differences

Physical/Sexual Maturations

Cognition & Motivation

Personality/Self-Efficacy

Gender Identity

Gender Based Differences in Attitudes & Beliefs, Skills & Behaviours

parents, schools, religious bodies, social networks like peer groups, local media, and the community. Everyday interactions with these sources familiarize individuals with the benefits and risks involved with specific behaviors. Every day, with repetition, individuals learn the differences in expectations, values, preferences, and skills related to gender, and adapt their behavior to ultimately form their gender identity [8].

At the **individual level**, personal differences and contexts affect the gender socialization experiences of adolescents. At this level, analysis of information and cues from the surroundings about gendered behaviors, their internalization, and formation of gender identity differ from person to person based on their unique contexts, cognitive and motivational processes, physical and sexual maturation, and personality. Lastly, biological sex differences also influence the gender-based role differentiation.

Finally, the outcomes of the gender socialization process are mentioned in the last column. They include; gender-based differences at the structural level like education/workforce/socio-political participation and fertility regulation; practices such as gender-based violence, child marriage, etc., at the social-interactional level and differences in individual attitudes, beliefs, skills, behaviors, etc., based on gender.

These different levels, interplay, and subsequent outcomes provide a comprehensive look at the landscape of gender socialization that leads to conformity to norms that usually result in inequitable outcomes. Even though this is a systemic issue and there are many interventions that are implemented at that level, the brainstorming sessions with the NGO and others working in the domain, resulted in a feeling that there is a need for a system that would speak to an individual. A need to grab individual attention was felt as subjects like these may not receive a lot of direct, active, enough attention when interventions are implemented at larger scales, especially in case of young adolescents. It was desired to catch them young and provide them with personal, relatable tools but with the ability to create systemic ripples by making them think and care about the subject matter proactively. Here onwards the project firmly moved in the direction of working at the individual level, but with an eye on structural and social interactions.

#### 4.1 Problem Statement

*“The process of Gender Socialization and the pressure to conform to the ideas perpetuated by it, molds the identities of adolescent individuals and fosters the development of a gender schema in their minds. This schema consists of socially, culturally accepted, and expected gender norms, roles, and behaviors that are often suppressive and limiting. The conformity to these rigid norms, behaviors, and expectations often undermines the natural self, likes, dislikes, and emotional, intellectual, social capabilities due to the stereotypes and taboos they perpetuate. This schema forms the basis for stereotype-influenced personal belief systems, which form cultures with skewed gendered lenses. Such belief systems and cultures operate together to limit the openness to new ideas and perspectives in individuals of all genders to hinder the potential for informed decision-making. Such limiting decision-making ultimately affects the self-actualizing abilities of individuals, especially adolescents. The outcomes of such a stereotypical gendered outlook lead to profound gender-based inequalities and injustices. This work intends to confront the process of gender socialization in adolescents to mitigate its negative effects at an individual level by raising their consciousness, access, and engagement with the process and its consequences in an age-appropriate manner. The ultimate goal is to help the adolescents be conscious about the gender-related stereotypes that may already have formed or may form in their psyche to help them avoid making decisions influenced by suppressive belief systems and cultural norms.”*

## 4.2 Learning from Precedents

The next step after establishing the problem statement was to analyze the relevant precedent analysis to understand the approach of people all over the world. Following are some of the successful initiatives worldwide that work on gender socialization.

### 1. Parivartan, India:

This is a program initiated by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW). The Parivartan program aims to reduce gender-based violence by working with men and boys through India's popular sport of cricket. The program ran from 2008 to 2012 [31].

#### *Modality-*

The program engages coaches (in Mumbai) as positive role models and trains them to deliver messages to their male athletes about the importance of respecting women and understanding that violence never equals strength [31].

#### *Goals-*

- Raise awareness about abusive and disrespectful behavior
- Promote gender-equitable and non-violent attitudes and
- Teach skills to speak up and intervene to confront disrespectful behavior [31].

#### *Outcomes-*

- Attitudinal and behavioral shifts were observed in the young males trained [31]

### 2. GEMS, India:

Stands for Gender Equality Movement in Schools by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) in collaboration with the Committee of Resource Organizations for Literacy (CORO) and Tata Institute for Social Sciences (TISS). It focuses on engaging young adolescents in the age group of 12-14 yr in schools to challenge traditional gender attitudes and norms, such as those around the roles and responsibilities

of women and men, to influence the way children understand, experience, and use gender power dynamics. The program that began in 2008 continued till 2014 [32].

#### *Modality-*

It introduced a curriculum in schools that included 24 classroom sessions on gender, violence and bodily changes, relationships, emotions, communication, and conflict resolution. The program used extra-curricular activities, role-playing, and games. The program engaged adolescents when they entered grade six and worked with them until grade eight. The program was implemented as an independent project initially and later layered within the school curriculum [32].

#### *Goals*

- To engage young adolescents on issues of gender and violence and bring attitudinal change to support equitable norms.
- To break perceptions around appropriate roles for women, men, girls, and boys [32].

#### *Outcomes*

- Improved awareness about stereotypes around gender roles and norms and the inequity stemming from them.
- Attitudinal and behavioral changes to support a higher age at marriage for girls, greater male involvement in household work, increased opposition to gender discrimination, and improved reactions to violence [32].

### 3. CHOICES, Nepal:

Is a curriculum-based pilot program initiated by the international NGO Save The Children and Georgetown University's Institute for Reproductive Health (IRH) that focuses on participatory activities and innovative evaluation techniques to empower adolescents from 10 to 14 yr. to challenge the gender norms of their society and make changes in their own lives in the direction of gender equity. It is a three-month program implemented in the child clubs of Nepal [33].

#### *Modality-*

The pilot program of CHOICES implemented their curriculum at child clubs in the Siraha district of Nepal, a region of the high prevalence of practices like early marriage, early childbearing, and dowry. The in-person, participatory activities included guided discussions, participant-driven discussions, guided visioning of scenarios, scenario reading, fictional letter reading, stating and celebrating the changes in behaviors by the participants, photo voicing (participants clicking pictures of practices that have gender bias connotations), and pledging a bond of protection for one another [33].

#### *Goals-*

- Challenge existing gender norms and biases and the behaviors stemming from them through discussions and participatory activities to nudge the young adolescents towards more equitable behavior.
- To enable young adolescents to recognize and reflect on gender inequities
- To enable the young adolescent to explore their feelings about gender bias, practice gender-equitable behavior, and engage in discussions about gender norms in all-boy, all-girl, and mixed groups [33].

#### *Outcomes-*

- Young adolescent participants reported realizing the commonness of the existence of gender disparity around them and feeling that it is unfair.
- Boys, girls, and parents all reported small changes in the behaviors of both genders towards equity.
- Evaluation tasks conducted like structured interviews, like pile sorts, responding to an advice column, time-task distribution with siblings, and photo voicing reported statistically significant differences in participants' understanding of gender roles and behaviors [33].

#### **4. GREAT, Uganda:**

Stands for Gender Roles, Equality and Transformation. A project by Georgetown University's Institute of Reproductive Health, Save the Children, and Pathfinder International, with local partners Straight Talk Foundation and the Concerned Parents Association. The project was organized to reduce gender-based violence and improve family planning and reproductive health outcomes among adolescents and their communities from 2010 to 2019 in Northern Uganda [34].

#### *Modality-*

The program employed participatory activities like critical reflection and dialogue, correct misinformation, and support collective action to encourage healthier and more equitable norms. The program consisted of a community action cycle by community leaders to promote and sustain change, a 50-episode radio drama called Oteka, linkages to family planning and reproductive health services through the community health workers, and a toolkit consisting of Radio discussion guide, activity cards, dramas, community engagement game and a coming of age flipbook [34].

#### *Goals-*

- Foster discussion and critical reflection among adolescents and adults about gender norms and gender equity.
- Correct misinformation and foster collective change.
- Change expectations for appropriate behavior
- Guiding principles to achieve goals- transforming social norms; focus on opportunities in life course transitions; engaging all levels of the ecological framework; using a relational approach that includes women, men, girls, and boys; engaging existing groups to build trust and foster a foundation for sustainable change [34].

#### *Outcomes-*

- Improved attitudes and behaviors among participants regarding family planning, gender equity, and partner communication.
- Greater couple communication and shared decision-making, increased family planning use,

- Greater likelihood of seeking help in case of gender-based violence,
- Reduced likelihood of reacting violently to a partner, and
- Less acceptance of patriarchal norms around gender roles and gender-based violence [34].

#### 5. **Sexto Sentido, Nicaragua:**

A edutainment program started to increase women's and young people's ability to take control over their own lives and participate in all levels of society from 2001-2005 [35].

##### *Modality*

- A multi-media / multi-method strategy called 'Somos diferencias, Somos iguales' (We're different, we're equal) aimed at Nicaraguan youth. The strategy combines "edutainment" programs, social mobilization, and local capacity-building. Sexto Sentido, a 'social soap' which is broadcast weekly on national commercial television, as well as cable stations;
- Sexto Sentido Radio, a nightly youth call-in talk radio broadcast live and simultaneously on 6 commercial radio stations;
- Community-based activities, including: cast visits to schools, youth leadership training camps, and information, education, and communication materials;
- Coordination with journalists and media outlets;
- Coordination with a variety of organized youth and women's groups, including youth leaders in other Central American countries
- Ongoing monitoring and operations research. [35]

##### *Goals*

- Promotes change in the overall socio-cultural context in which young people make decisions and negotiate their identities, relationships, and sexuality.
- To equip people with the capacity to make informed choices about their lives and the abilities that allow them to participate in the debates that affect their lives, promoting discussion of social

norms to challenge them."

- To encourage individual behavior change, interpersonal communication, social support, and collective action [35].

##### *Outcomes*

- Significant reduction of stigmatizing and gender-inequitable attitudes,
- Increase in knowledge and use of HIV-related services,
- A significant increase in interpersonal communication about HIV prevention and sexual behavior.
- Promoting community-based dialogue on key topics,
- Strengthening youth leadership,
- Fostering alliances between organizations [35].

#### 6. **Teens Rising Together:**

An online learning experience for middle and high school students, designed to be engaging and flexible and connect young people around the world to one another by the Girl Rising, an NGO [36]

##### *Modality*

- Online tool, available for free after initial registration
- Meant for teachers to share the link for the tool with their students
- Uses scenario-question-information mode

##### *Goal*

- Encourage students to think about important political, cultural, economic, geographical, and gender issues.
- Engage them in meaningful conversations about their roles as global citizens and their responsibilities to their communities.
- Accompanying Teacher's Guide in creating awareness about the education of girls
- Global community-building activity
- Offer opportunities to learning for those students who are interested to know more about girls education

*Outcomes*

- N/A

**7. Lulu's Journey:**

An interactive storytelling based app by Lulu Labs, Denmark to teach girls about menstruation [37]

*Modality-*

- Digital devices
- Storytelling
- Visual Learning (Videos, illustrations, animations)
- Voice-overs

*Goal-*

- To speak about taboo topics to make information around them accessible

*Outcome-*

- N/A

The relevant interventions found were quite insightful and had their contextual impacts. However, no intervention was found to have deeply entered the digital realm to reach out to the adolescents at their homes and help them identify the significance of learning about gender-related issues. No digital repository or ecosystem of information was found that would facilitate access to informational resources on the topic for long-term engagement. Hence, a need for a digital platform that would first create awareness about the importance of learning about gender socialization and its outcomes and then take the adolescents to an informational resource to further engage with the topic, all the while satisfying their engagement needs, was felt.

In order to begin defining an action space, it was necessary to define the target audience as clearly as possible. The following section does the same. It also encapsulates the audience motivator and the motivators of this work to combine them both to achieve the goals of the audiences as well as the project.

### 4.3 Defining the Target Audience

The knowledge built through literature review, user research, speaking with the experts, precedent analysis, and the constraints around access due to the pandemic situation, provided enough information to narrow down to a specific target audience. This section covers the audience demographics, motivators, and expectations. It also brings the intended motivators and outcomes of this work into the fold.

*Demographics*

**Age Group-** 12-15 yr.- early adolescence

**Genders-** Female and Male

**Location-** Urban India

**Language Spoken-** English

**Access to-** Smart devices with internet connectivity.

To further understand this demographic, a round of user research was conducted.

#### 4.3.1. Speaking to the Target Audience

**Insights: Boys 4, Girls 7**

*a. Gender Norms and Roles-*

- i. Aware of the idea of gender inequality- 100%
- ii. Gender issues are important- 75 %
- iii. Information about the easily available- 25%
- iv. Information about gender roles, norms, and their effect is required- 75%
- v. Gender-based segregation of tasks and roles exists in families- 100%
- vi. Boys must work outside of the house and girls inside the house- 75 %

b. **Belief System-**

- i. Boys need to be stronger to support the family, should portray positive emotions- 100 %
- ii. Its fine for girls to be sensitive, adds to their girliness- 100%
- iii. Biological differences should decide roles, expectations of people- 75%
- iv. Would cook in the house after you marry- 50%
- v. What will decide your career path- Passion- 75%, Parents- 75%, Gender- 50%, Friends- 50%
- vi. Will do something against the will of your parents and family- 25%
- vii. What decides dressing choice- trends- 75%, friends-75%, parents- 50%

c. **Culture**

- i. The community believes girls and boys are equal- 25%
- ii. Will change education choice if the family does not approve- 75%
- iii. Girls should be more adjusting in nature as they have to go their in-laws after marriage- 50%
- iv. Boys can't wear a skirt- 100%
- v. Culture and traditions must be followed no matter what people individually want 50%

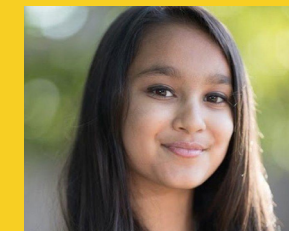
**Insights**

- Cultural acceptance,
- Conformance to family values and expectations
- Hope to break stereotypes
- Peer acceptance

**Audience Motivators**

1. Make deeper friendships with peers for emotional support.
2. Learn about acceptance, respect, and equality in friendships to have a level playing field
3. Learning what kind of a friend they are to others for better acceptance

### 4.3.2 Personas



**About**

Name- Bhoomi  
Age- 14 yr.  
Gender- Female  
Grade- 9th  
Languages- Hindi, English

**Wants & Needs**

- To prepare for IIT entrance exam
- Access to internet to study
- Play Tennis
- Chatting with friends

**Motivations**

- Support of friend companionship
- Achieving educational goals
- Stress relief through gaming, chatting, watching fun videos

**Frustrations**

- School, private coaching rush
- Less time with friends and family
- Pandemic Boredom
- Outside safety concern at nights

**Personality**

- Tech Savvy
- Digital Device Access
- Internet Use
- Video Content



**About**

Name- Aryan  
Age- 13 yr.  
Gender- Male  
Grade- 8th  
Languages- Gujrathi, English

**Wants & Needs**

- Finish schoolwork on time
- Access to internet to study
- Play games on the phone
- To gain weight

**Motivations**

- To make stronger friendships
- Acceptance by peer sport groups
- chatting, watching fun videos
- Growing confidence

**Frustrations**

- Inability to physically hang-out with friends
- Teasing by peers because he is short and thin
- Low confidence in social settings

**Personality**

- Tech Savvy
- Digital Device Access
- Internet Use
- Video Content



4. Easy entertainment through videos for respite from routine
5. Connectivity with friends
6. Fulfilling educational and extra-curricular duties
7. Caring for parents and making them happy

#### *Audience Expectations*

1. Learning about factors that influence the process of making deeper friendships
2. Access to information around building meaningful relationships
3. Acceptance, respect, and care among friends
4. Ability to analyze self-behavior to be a better friend
5. Educational and fun

#### *Engaging Modalities reported by Users*

1. Short Videos- 5-10 min
2. Images
3. Conversations/ Chats
4. Games

#### **Motivators of this work**

1. Help adolescents identify the gender biases they may already have
2. Help them realize that gender socialization constantly happens around them and affects their identities and behavior with others to ultimately influence their decision making
3. Help them get informed about the various people and entities involved in the process of Gender Socialization
4. Develop the ability to spot gender socializing interactions around them
5. Help them question such interactions
6. Help them realize the importance of equitable relationships
7. Provide resources on the topic

#### **Expected Outcomes**

1. Awareness about personal gender stereotypes and biases, if any.
2. Ability to spot gender socializing interactions.

3. Ability to question gender norms and ideas
4. Reshape their gender schema, belief system to enable better decisions.

The next section speaks about my position in the problem space and the approach that I developed to create an action space based on all my learnings to this point.

#### **4.4 My Position**

This section describes my personal position as a designer and the ethos of this work. Further, it will attempt to encapsulate all the knowledge and its analysis into an approach to developing an action space moving into the design phase. I come to this topic from a very humble approach. I understand that I may not have very profound knowledge of the topic, but I feel comfortable enough with what I know after my literature review, user research, and learning about ground realities from experts. This knowledge helped me understand the true complexity of the subject matter. The multiple layers, deeply ingrained nature, psychological, sociological, and cultural nuances make this topic quite tough and challenging to work within, especially as a designer. I do not know whether I am capable of handling the complexity of this problem space; however, I have an honest, earnest desire within me to work in this area.

As a male-identifying person from India, with the privilege to study at a school like RISD and simply being a male in a patriarchal society, I most sincerely acknowledge that I am a product of a sexist environment. I have reaped the benefits of this sexism in the most direct and subtle ways through various visible and invisible channels. It is this realization that ignited the desire in me to work in this space. I believe that my role is to make sincere efforts to understand the problem space the best I can, make informed judgments in collaboration with the people and experts. I see myself more as a student of the system of this problem space and a facilitator of the positive actions within. That is because there are people far more experienced, knowledgeable, and dedicated than me to this space. My earnest wish is to learn and work with them to try and mitigate the barriers in self-actualization for all of us simply as a fellow human beings.



My understanding till date makes me believe that sweeping, multi-directional, and continuously engaging interventions are needed in the space of gender-related issues. I believe that the process of gender socialization and the subsequent conformity to the limiting, suppressing ideas it perpetuates is at the very root of most gender-related issues, and intervening here will give a good chance for envisaging a profound change in the hearts and minds of people.

Further, keeping in mind the effects the process of gender socialization has on adolescents and the window of opportunity afforded due to the hormonal, psychological, and behavioral changes made me firm up my resolve to work with young adolescents (12-15 yr.).

The desire of this age group to engage with digital platforms and the accessibility (both personal and group-based) and flexibility such platforms offer in terms of usage of multiple media and interactions with the information, made the need for working in a digital space quite evident. The next step was then to define an approach to designing a digital space that could satisfy the motivators of the audience and well the intention of this work. The following section covers that decision-making.

# 05

# Katti Batti

## 5.1 Approach

This section speaks about the overall direction of action space/intervention. It begins by describing the comprehensive approach of the intervention decided based on the knowledge developed. Next, it attempts to segregate the desired goals of the project into long-term and short-term goals. It also mentions the desired outcomes that are sought through this work to achieve the short-term goals. Modality to achieve the desired results is then discussed to form the basis for executing a prototype.

### *Overall Direction*

**The first and the most crucial step of working within a complex social issue like this was identified as consciousness-raising.** As per the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, it is defined as “an increasing of concerned awareness especially of some social or political issue”.

In the context of this project, consciousness-raising means improving the awareness of the target audience about the influences and outcomes of the process of gender socialization on them. It is to bring the conversations about gender roles, norms, and stereotypes to the target audience through various media and allow them to absorb the topic and form their opinions about it.

It was realized that for any change to happen, it was important for the audiences to feel the need to think about an issue actively. To help them form their ideas around the topic by helping them relate to various situations and scenarios that lead to adverse outcomes for us as individuals and a community. Only when the audiences are sufficiently activated and motivated for a long time can behavioral changes begin to happen. Hence, consciousness-raising was chosen to be the central direction of this work. To be specific, consciousness-raising about the ill effects of gender roles, norms, expectations, and stereotypes on adolescents’ decision-making.

The next step was to establish the central theme of the intervention, which would encompass the various aspects about which consciousness-raising needs to happen.

#### *Overall Theme*

It was realized that gender stereotypes and conformity fostered by the process of gender socialization affect all three spheres of life, namely, personal life, relationships, and professional life. As the research suggests, gender stereotypes have the ability to fundamentally influence these aspects of an individual's life. Relationships and social interactions especially have the ability to profoundly affect personal and professional life. User research and discussions with the experts also emphasized this observation. Hence, it was decided to base the intervention around starting conversations around relationships in daily life. However, one relationship, the universal emotion of friendship, emerged to be the most significant motivator for the audiences.

#### *The Trojan Horse*

The audiences reported a certain disconnect with gender-related issues. It wasn't something they thought actively, not something they encountered in conversations at home or school frequently. They claimed to have a basic exposure to the ideas around gender inequality through various sources like media, friends, school, and parents. However, ultimately it wasn't something they constantly thought or felt reletability about.

The aspects of their lives that the audiences mentioned mattered the most to them were their friends, school work, and parents. It was interesting to note that the literature also indicated the significance of peer groups and friendship during adolescence. The literature mentions acceptance and emotional support from peers is what adolescents seek. Insights from user research pointed out the need for peer emotional support and the comfort of friendship. The adolescents sought their friends to play with and take their minds off school to do refreshing activities together. Seeking to make deeper and long-lasting friendships were

reported to be very important for adolescents. Making new friends was also reported to be of significant importance.

- This helped realize the potential of using friendship as a vehicle to talk about the sensitive but inaccessible issues stemming from the gendered lenses of society. The friendship began to present itself as a trojan horse that could be used to attract adolescents to the issue of gender socialization and make it more personal and relatable. Hence, it was decided **to stoke conversations around gender roles, norms, and their effects on relationships via friendship.**

The next step was to identify the goals of the consciousness-raising effort. This was an interesting phase where clear distinctions between short and long-term goals need to be established. This step becomes crucial to define the design goals and requirements.

#### *Short Term Goals*

Enable the target audience to

- Realize the existing biases in themselves
- Realize the stereotypes fostered by various people and entities in their lives
- To empathize with people and their situations to realize the effects of gender stereotypes and conformity fostered by gender socialization.
- To realize the need for acceptance, respect, and care to have fulfilling relationships.

#### *Long Term Goals*

Enable the target audience to

- Spot and react to gender-biased behaviors and interactions
- Have an informed opinion about gender-based issues.
- Have the awareness not to let the suppressing gender norms and role expectations restrict their decision-making.

### *Desired Outcomes based on short term goals*

The target audience must have

- Improved awareness about own leanings and understanding about gender biases
- An improved awareness about gender roles, norms, and their effects on relationships and personal and professional lives.
- Understanding of the significance of learning more about gender-related issues.

### *Entry Point*

- School Curriculum
- After School Programs
- NGO Toolkits, Websites for initial, continuous contact efforts

### *Modality- An Online Tool*

Digital spaces were reported to be the most exciting and safe by the adolescent audience. The current global conditions have also moved most interactions online and improved access to digital technologies. Digital platforms afford various modes of communication like videos, images, illustrations, animations with diverse interactions, adding to the engagement value. Moreover, the audiences overwhelmingly reported their use of YouTube for education as well as entertainment. Hence, it was decided to **design a digital intervention and enliven it by using visual media and especially YouTube.**

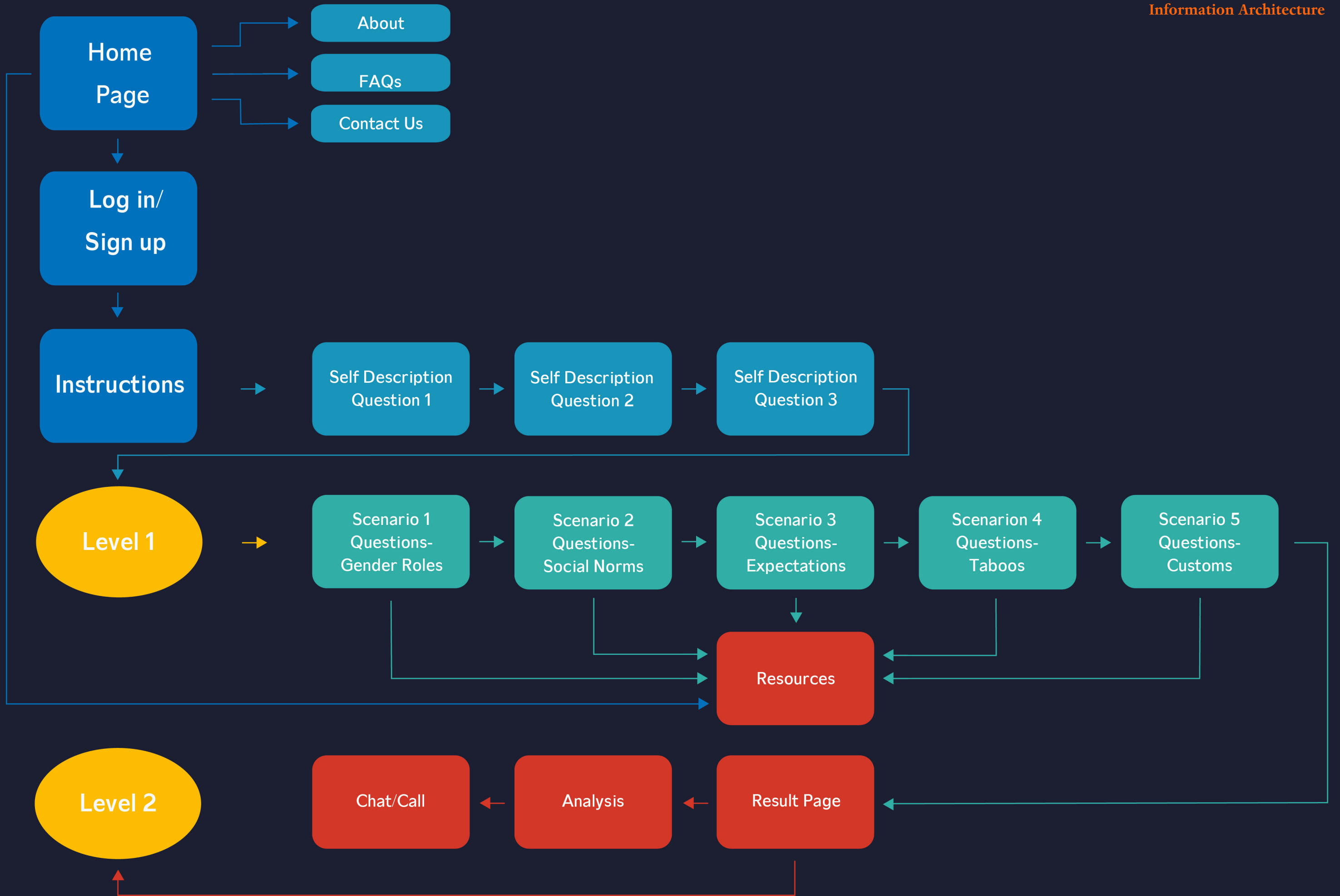
Precedent analysis and discussions with the NGO team, psychologist/activist, and designers led to the conclusion that consciousness-raising could be better achieved by using the scenario-question-choices modality. It was decided to use this mode to establish relatable scenarios via visual media like YouTube videos, images etc. Then for the audiences to relate to the situation, they would be asked to imagine the characters in the scenario to be their friends, and the context is further elaborated based on their friendship. Next, a question or a series of

questions are asked in this scenario, to cover multiple angles of a scenario, asking the audience to advise or help the friend through the situation.

### *Content for the Online Tool*

It was decided that for the first iteration of the digital intervention, the scenario-question-choices modality will be used. However, based on a discussion with Dr. Nandini Diwan, Psychologist/Activist, it was decided to adopt her tool Self Description Tool for a small part of this work. This tool allows participants first to get familiar with their thoughts and feelings. Questions about describing their qualities and then about what qualities they want to have. The third question is about the ideal qualities for world peace. These questions are intended to help the audience reflect on their ideals and aspirations and whether their feelings align with qualities they feel are important for peace. The hope here is that these questions kickstart self-empathy and analysis process.

**Then the audience gets into the scenarios curated based on the elements of gender schema and culture sections of the hypothesis: social norms, gender roles, expectations, customs, values, taboos, and collective community ethos.** For initial testing purposes, a few YouTube videos were curated. Advertisements, movie clips, biographical videos were carefully chosen to reflect the elements of gender schema and culture mentioned above. One or several questions then would be asked for the audiences to make a choice between traditionally/culturally acceptable norms and roles against choices favoring the natural instincts and emotions of the characters in the scenarios. Some choices would also be designed to present difficult situations where outcomes of any choice may not be entirely favorable but only relatively favorable.



The goal of these questions is to help the audiences to think about situations where the characters feel trapped in their circumstances with little choice.

Once the audiences navigate through the multimedia-based scenarios, they get a cumulative score based on the following criteria.

1. Acceptance, respect, and care of the characters' natural emotions- 3 points
2. Selecting a relatively less favorable choice for the character- 2 points
3. Selecting a choice where the audience display indifference for the character- 1 point
4. Supporting limiting gender roles, norms, biases, and expectations- 0 points.

#### The Name- Katti Batti

**Katti means unfriending, and Batti means Friending.** It is a popular, innocent phrase used by children in India to express their feelings about their friends. If someone is upset, they are 'Katti' with you. If they are happy, they are 'Batti'. This phrase is deeply contextual and close to Indian children, especially in the central and northern parts of the country. Since this tool is about accepting, respecting, and caring friends, one would be Batti with such a person, and if they are not, then Katti is the first thing they would get. Hence, it was decided to adopt the name.

After identifying the audience and our motivators, and expected outcomes an information architecture was sketched.

## 5.2 Information Architecture

Once the approach and content was established information architecture was built as shown in the preceding spread.

## 5.3 Content and UI Prototyping

### Content Prototyping

After freezing upon the content theme, relevant content was created based on the elements in the gender schema and the culture categories of the hypothesis. The elements like social norms, gender roles, expectations, customs, values, taboos, and collective community ethos were used to base the scenarios, questions, and choices.

**Katti-Batti- Friendship Toolkit Content Testing**

Thank you everyone for being a part of this project. Your previous inputs guided us to develop an online Tool called Katti-Batti. We are trying to develop Katti-Batti into a tool that will help you discover what kind of a friend you are.

The content of this tool/website will be similar to what is presented in this questionnaire. Your responses will help us make it better.

Feel free to reach out to us on WhatsApp or call at 7977679686 for further queries and clarifications.

Email \*

Valid email

This form is collecting emails. [Change settings](#)

Section 2 of 12

**Hello! We are Katti-Batti**

Katti-Batti is an online tool that will help you discover how good a friend you are.

Batti means to become friends and Katti means to unfriend.

We believe that friendship is universal and healthy friendships are the basis of any fulfilling relationship!

We believe that good friends try to understand the true feeling of each other.

Acceptance and respect is the name of the game...

Answer a few questions. If you score more than 6 or more out of 10, you will earn a Batti! or else a Katti! Worry not! just be yourself and use your best judgement to help the people in the questions below.

Initially, a Google Form was used to simulate the online tool for quick and accessible testing. Secondly, prototyping softwares like Figma and Adobe XD did not allow embedding videos in the mock-up. Following screenshots from the Google Form replicate the content of the online toolkit.

### 1. Introduction

- This part mentions what the tool is about, its intention, assumptions, and method of navigation.

## 2. Describe Yourself- Details

- A section is asking basic details.

### Describe Yourself

Description (optional)

---

Q1. What is your Name? \*

Short answer text

---

Q2. What is your age? \*

Short answer text

---

Q3. What gender do you identify with? \*

Female

Male

Transgender

Prefer not to say

None of the above

Other...

## 3. Describe Yourself- Main Question 1

- This question serves a dual purpose, to help the audience reflect upon themselves and help them warm up. This question has qualities both traditionally, stereotypically 'Masculine' and 'Feminine'. It is supposed to begin a slight conflict in the audience about what they think they are versus what they feel they should be.
- This question is adopted from an advocacy tool developed by Dr. Nandini Diwan, Retired Associate professor, and Head, Department of Psychology, D. G. Ruparel College, Mumbai; with due permission.

04. Select TOP SIX adjectives you think that describe you the best. \*

Confident

Clever

Sensitive

Emotional

Strong

Caring

High Self-Esteem

Risk taker

Competitive

Decision taker

Ambitious

Aware of own rights

Loyal

Honest

Don't use harsh language

Helpful

Kind

Respectful for everyone

Affectionate

Polite

Can take stand against wrong

#### 4. Describe Yourself- Main Question 2

- This question is meant to further ease the audience into the tool but at the same time think further about what qualities and emotions matter in relationships.

05. Select TOP SIX adjectives you want to be. \*

- Confident
- Clever
- Sensitive
- Emotional
- Strong
- Caring
- High Self-Esteem
- Risk taker
- Competitive
- Decision taker
- Ambitious
- Aware of own rights
- Loyal
- Honest
- Don't use harsh language
- Helpful
- Kind
- Respectful for everyone
- Affectionate
- Polite
- Can take stand against wrong

#### 5. Describe Yourself- Main Question 3

- This question is meant to help the audience think about the larger perspective of world peace to recognize the importance of achieving the balance of both kinds of qualities, with the scales tipping slightly towards traditionally 'feminine' qualities.

06. What do you think are the TOP Six qualities you think humans should have to have world peace?

Checkboxes

- Confident
- Clever
- Sensitive
- Emotional
- Strong
- Caring
- High Self-Esteem
- Risk taker
- Competitive
- Decision taker
- Ambitious
- Aware of own rights
- Loyal
- Honest
- Don't use harsh language
- Helpful
- Kind
- Respectful for everyone
- Affectionate
- Polite
- Can take stand against wrong
- Add option or [add "Other"](#)



## 6. Scenario-Questions-Choices-1: Gender Roles

- The questions now venture into the various scenarios that are relatable to the Indian audience.
- These questions are intended to help the audience visualize a character's life through a video that could be an advertisement, movie clip, real-life pictures, memes, etc., usually from popular culture. The idea is to help the audience empathize with the characters. In this scenario, the video linked to this scenario is from an Indian advertisement where a mother asks only her daughter to learn kitchen work and not the son.
- Following the media, context is a short written context that further helps to set a question up with the connotations of gender-related issues. In this scenario, the context molds the gist of the ad to a situation that asks the audience to imagine the girl character in the video to be their friend, who doesn't enjoy kitchen work.
- There could be one or multiple questions on the same scenario to cover multiple dimensions of the issue. In this scenario, two questions are asked, to advise the character as a friend (question 1) and to imagine the role reversal of the parents and whether they would be fine if that happened in their lives (question 2).
- The choices or options provided to these questions are supposed to evoke thought on the issue. Various methods of inputting the choices are explored like multiple choice answers, ranking, sliders, etc.
- The choices are based on the three pillars of friendship introduced initially, i.e., acceptance/respect/care. The other options portray indifference or conformity to traditional, suppressing gender roles, norms, expectations, taboos, values, etc.
- The choices which portray acceptance of the personal wishes of the characters by the audience are scored the highest, and the ones which portray either indifference or conformity to traditional stereotypes are scored progressively lesser. For example, in question 1, option c gets 3 points, option a gets 1 point, and all other alternatives get a 0.
- A lot more work is needed on curating and molding the content, scenarios, contexts, and choices. Further, some focussed research is also needed to develop a systematic grading scale. However, to test the concept quickly, a rough, intuitive marking scheme was adopted.

- After the audience picks an answer, links to resources on gender roles open for further information and awareness.

### Scenario 1: Sneha's Household

Description (optional)

Play the following video to get a peek into Sneha's household. Sneha and Ronak are siblings. Sneha and Ronak used to come to play badminton with you in the park. She is an amazing badminton player, fast and agile! However lately you don't see her a lot on the playground as her mother thinks she should learn kitchen chores. Only Ronak comes to play now.



Q1. Sneha confides in you that she doesn't want her play time reduced and she doesn't enjoy kitchen work much. What will be your advice to her if she asks for it? \*

- I would ask her to listen to her mother because we must listen to our parents no matter what.
- I would say that I agree with her mother, girls must know kitchen work.
- I would encourage her to discuss the problem with her mother and express her true feelings.
- I would ask her to finish her kitchen work quickly so that she can play more.

Q2. Imagine your household. In the video, what if the roles of the father and mother were reversed, if the father was cooking and the mother was watching TV. What would your reaction be? \*

- Would be fine      1      2      3      4      5      Would be weird
-

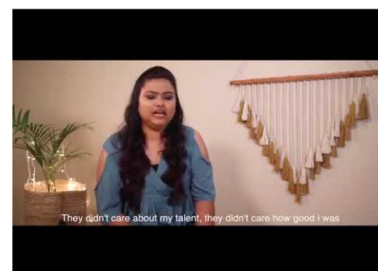
## 7. Scenario-Questions-Choices-2: Gender Expectations

- Scenario-context-choices designed to evoke thought about the gendered nature of expectations from people.
- For question 1, option 1 among choices receives 0 points, option 2 receives 1 point, and option 3 receives 3 points.

### Scenario 2: Shruti the Dancer..

Description (optional)

Shruti is a professional dancer. She shares her experience about a dance audition with you. She was told that she was rejected because she was "healthy". The dance company told her that they were looking for a fairer, slimmer girl.



Q1. Shruti is upset. In distress, she is seeking advice for her further auditions. What would you say? \*

- I will encourage her to lose weight and try again.
- I will let her decide how she would like to handle this situation, I will support her in whatever she decides
- I will encourage her to be herself. She is an amazing dancer, all she should focus is her dance.

Q2. "Slim and fair girls are ideal" \*

- Yes
- No

- For question 2, option 'Yes' get 0 points, and 'No' gets 3 points.

## 8. Scenario-Questions-Choices-3: Gender Norms

- Scenario designed to evoke thoughts on gender norms.
- All answer choices for this question deliberately have negative connotations for the audience to empathize with people who sometimes have to make difficult decisions, where positive outcomes may not be very apparent. Moreover, it was envisaged that such questions might make

the audience think harder about the choices and consequences. More work is needed to check the efficacy of such choices. More testing is needed for the same.

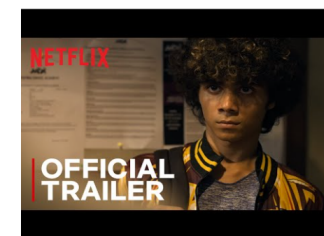
- Scoring such questions is tricky. Currently, for question 1, option 1 receives 0 for hard belief in gender expectations, option 2 receives 1 point for more ambiguity in the belief in expectations, option 3 (not seen here completely, it is, 'The fact that he will have to face embarrassment from some people in the society who think he is feminine. But on the other side are his dreams' )receives 3 points.

- For questions 2, option 1 receives 0 points, option 2 receives 0 points, option 3 receives 0 points, option 4 receives 1 point.

### Scenario 3: Nishu loves ballet

Description (optional)

The video below has the story of Nishu who discovers the dance form Ballet. He simply loves it. He wants to pursue it professionally. But his family is not happy with his choice. They feel its girly and won't pay him as much as a man should earn. Some in his social circle think so too. But Nishu really wants to learn it.



Q1. Nishu needs some friendly but firm advice about joining a ballet dance school. What do you think he should be most worried about? (Choose as many as you like)

- Ballet may not pay him enough. He won't be able to take care of his family once he is an adult man.
- Ballet is considered to be feminine. He may lose some respect among his friends and the society.
- The fact that he will have to face embarrassment from some people in the society who think he is feminine.

Q2. Why do you think Ballet and some other art forms like embroidery, sewing seem feminine

- Because they need grace and elegance or they are homely works.
- They are very intricate and delicate, so only women can do them
- Men are naturally bad at them.
- I am not very sure.


## 9. Scenario-Questions-Choices-4: Gender Stereotyping

- Scenario-context-choices designed to evoke thought about gender stereotypes.
- This scenario also has choices that don't completely resolve the issue and make the audience think more.
- For question 1, option 1 receives 2 points, option 2 receives 3 points, option 2 receives 2 points.
- For question 2, option 1 receives 0 points, option 2 receives 1 point, option 3 receives 3 points.

### Scenario 4: Boys Crying

Description (optional)

Look at the video below and share your thoughts.



Q1. If a close friend of yours breaks down and cries in public because something hurt them emotionally. Which of the following are you likely to do the most?

- If it's a girl let her cry her feelings out
- If its a boy let, him cry his feelings out
- Let the friend cry, will wait for them to stop on their own

Q2. Why do you think the boys in the video say that boys should never express or cry and be tough? Which of the following statement you agree the most with?

- Because boys are naturally mentally tougher than girls
- Because boys do not have the ability to express themselves
- Because the society doesn't expect the boys to cry


## 10. Scenario-Questions-Choices-5: Gender Expectations

- Scenario-context-choices designed to evoke thought about gender expectations
- This scenario also has choices that don't take aside to resolve the issue to engage the audience closely with the typical issue of women's career choices in India.
- For question 1, option 1 among the choices carries 0 points, option 2 carries 0 points, option 3 carries 0 points, option 4 carries 1 point.

### Scenario 5: Priyanka's junior college

Description (optional)

Watch the video below which shows the opinions of youngsters on professions for girls and boys. Priyanka has just cleared her 10 std. exam with flying colors! She scored well in Science and Mathematics. She loves science, making stuff and learning about machines. But she is planning to enroll for software related courses in the Junior College like most of the girls in her community. Even her family feels that software related education and employment is more suitable to the girls than hardware.



Q1.. Priyanka is confused as she is having second thoughts. She strongly feels like she would enjoy mechanical hardware related courses. If you were to convince her to stick to software courses, how will you do it?

- I would tell her about the physically demanding nature of the hardware courses for girls
- I would tell her about the bright financial opportunities after doing the software education
- I would tell her about the male dominated employment opportunities in hardware after graduation
- I would suggest her to take software as the major subject and hardware as a minor subject


## 11. Scenario-Questions-Choices-6: Gender Norms + Expectations

- Scenario-context-choices designed to evoke thought about gender norms as well as expectations.
- For question 1, option 1 carries 0 points, option 2 carries 0 points, option 3 carries 0 points, option 4 carries 3 points.

### Scenario 6: Khushboo's body

Description (optional)

Khushboo has shared her experiences about being called out for being slim in the following video.



Khushboo is agitated after her experience and seeks your friendly counsel, what would you say to her?

- I would say she is over-reacting, being slim is actually good, everyone wants to be skinny.
- She being upset for being called skinny is unfortunate, girls must be slim
- I would suggest her some healthy diets.
- I would tell her to not worry and look for ways together to see to it that this does not happen again.

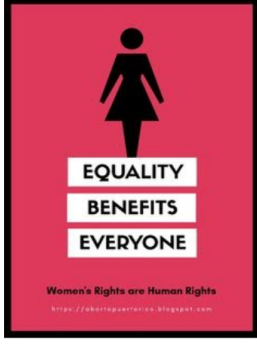
## 12. Scenario-Questions-Choices-7: Gender Role + Values

- Scenario-context-choices designed to evoke thought about gender roles and values/ mindsets around gender equality.
- For question 1, 'Yes' carries 3 points, 'No' carries 0 points, 'Not sure' carries 1 point.
- For question 2, option 1 carries 0 points, option 2 carries 3 points, option 3 carries 1 point.

### Scenario 7: Amar and You

Description (optional)

You and your friend Amar are travelling in a metro train. Amar sees the following poster and shares his thoughts with you on the same. He says if the poster on equality has an image of a girl and says women's rights are human rights, then what is in it for me in that case as a boy? I shouldn't worry much. In fact, some boys may think why should they share their benefits with girls?



Q1. Do you agree with the poster's content?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

Q2. What are your thoughts on Amar's comments?

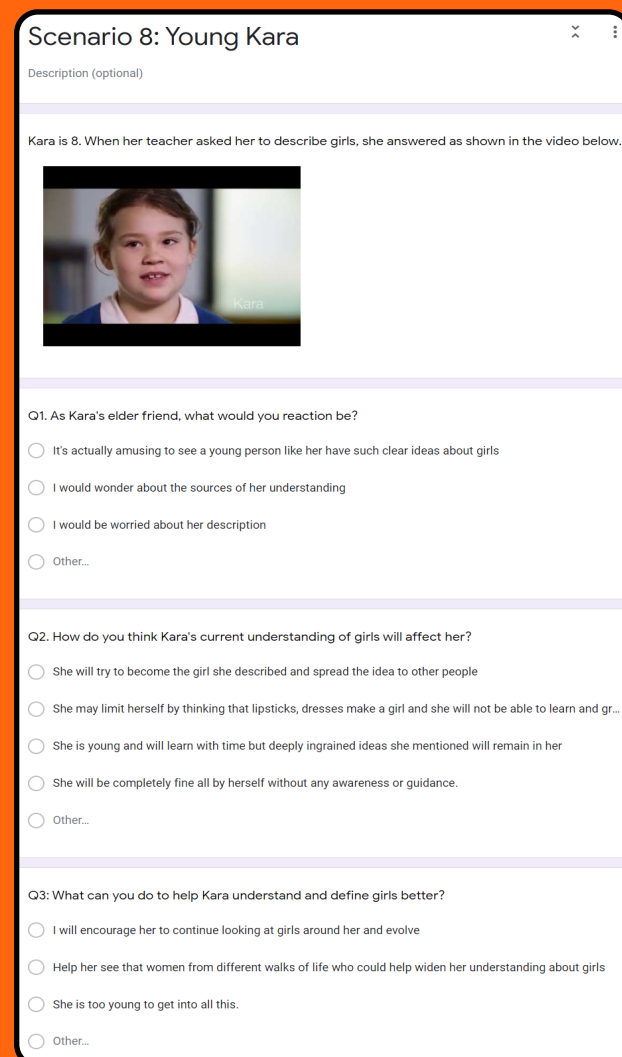
- Yes, I think it is a legitimate question. Its not for the boys to worry about equality.
- No, I would tell him that we live in a shared, connected world where half of us are girls. If one half is unhap...
- I will not comment I am not sure about this.

### 13. Scenario-Questions-Choices-8: Effects of Gender Socialization

- Scenario-context-choices designed to evoke thoughts on the process of Gender Socialization by making the adolescents think about how people younger than them may imbibe gender stereotypes.
- Question 1, is intended to make the audience think about the origins of gender stereotypes in young people and, through that thought, reflect on themselves. This question is not scored.

- Question 2 again is a self-reflection question options 1, 2 and 3 carry 3 points. Option 4 carries 0 points.
- For question 3, option 1 carries 1 point, option 2 carries 3 points, option 3 carries 0 points.

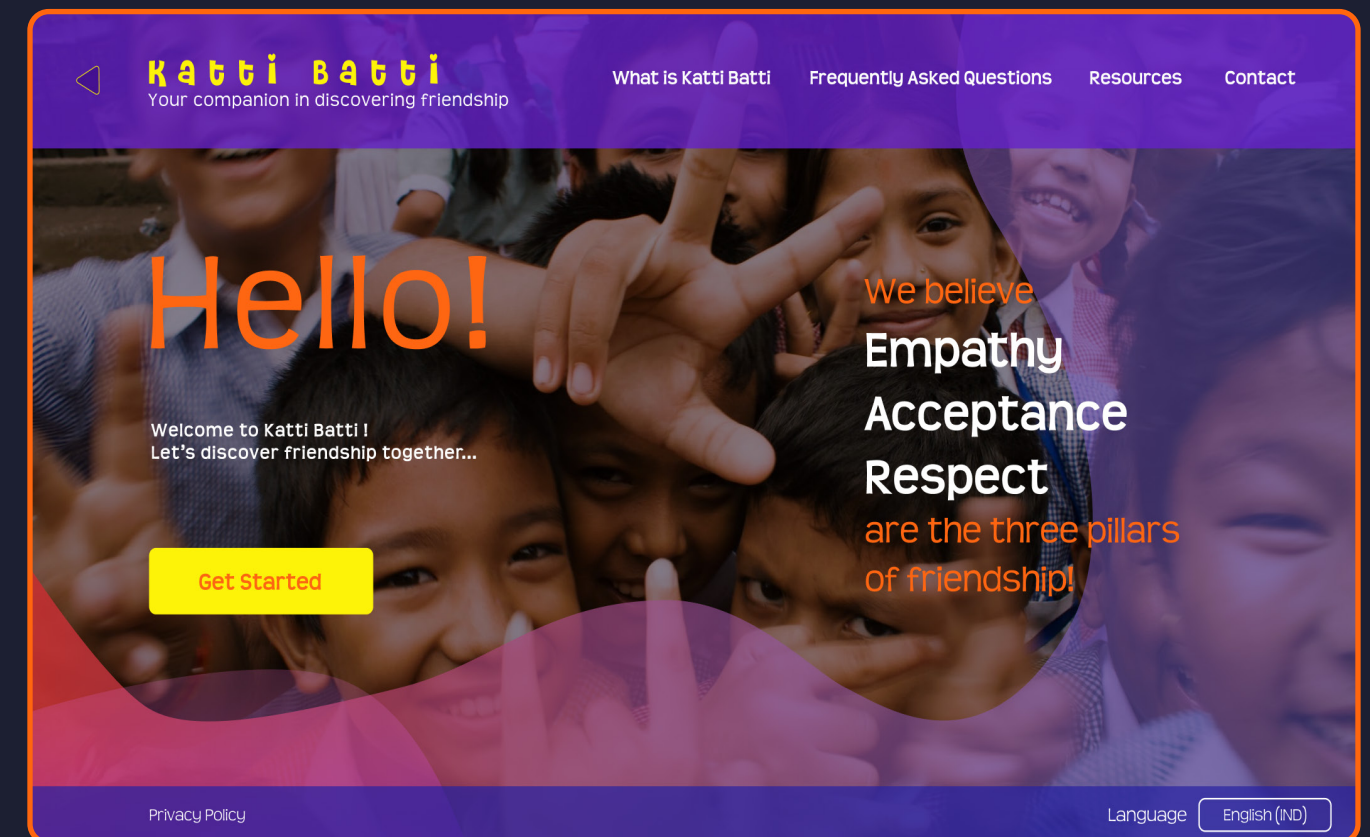
After developing this first round of scenarios-questions-choices tool, it was shared with the audience. Quite interesting feedback was received from them. Simultaneously, the UI of this online tool was being developed in Figma. The following section will capture the intention behind the UI for the tool.



### UI Prototyping

A diverse color palette with soft curve patterns and gradients was chosen after a few samples were presented to the target audience.

1. Home Page with essential features and the slogan.



2. Log In or Create Account to save progress if left midway

**Katti Batti**

Username

Password

OR **Create New Account**

**Log In**

[Forgot Password?](#)

3. Sign Up or Sign In with FB, Google, Instagram

**Katti Batti**

**Sign Up**

Username

Password

**Sign Up**

**Sign in With**

Facebook Id

Gmail Id

Instagram Id

OR **Sign In**

4. What is Katti Batti?

**Katti Batti**  
You companion in discovering friendship

## What is Katti Batti?

Katti Batti is a tool that lets you journey through various scenarios people find themselves in. Understand these situations and answer a few questions about them to help them through those situations to make friends with them.  
Katti-Batti will tell you whether those people put you in team Batti or team Katti based on your score which depends on the the choices you make in response to the questions. Analyze your scores to know how you can improve your friendship game..

Friendship is fun when we understand one another!  
Empathy, Acceptance, & Respect are the three pillars of a fulfilling friendship  
Let's see if you follow these pillars...

**Continue**

5. Instructions page

**Katti Batti**

## Instructions for the Game of Scenarios

**1**  
Katti-Batti is an online tool that will help you discover your strenghts and weaknesses as a friend

**2**  
Batti means to become friends and Katti means to unfriend.

Empathiz and their worry!

**Lets Play**

6. Describe Yourself- Question 1

K a t t i B a t t i
⏪ ⏩ ⏴ ⏵

### Describe yourself- 1

Select TOP SIX adjectives you think that describe you the best.

<input type="checkbox"/> Confident	<input type="checkbox"/> High Self Esteem	<input type="checkbox"/> Kind
<input type="checkbox"/> Clever	<input type="checkbox"/> Risk Taker	<input type="checkbox"/> Helpful
<input type="checkbox"/> Sensitive	<input type="checkbox"/> Competitive	<input type="checkbox"/> Affectionate
<input type="checkbox"/> Emotional	<input type="checkbox"/> Decision Taker	<input type="checkbox"/> Polite
<input type="checkbox"/> Strong	<input type="checkbox"/> Ambitious	<input type="checkbox"/> Loyal
<input type="checkbox"/> Caring	<input type="checkbox"/> Aware of own right	<input type="checkbox"/> Honest
<input type="checkbox"/> Can take stand against wrong	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't use harsh Language	<input type="checkbox"/> Respectful for everyone

**Next**

7. Describe Yourself- Question 2

K a t t i B a t t i
⏪ ⏩ ⏴ ⏵

### Describe yourself- 2

Select TOP SIX adjectives you want to be described as.

<input type="checkbox"/> Confident	<input type="checkbox"/> High Self Esteem	<input type="checkbox"/> Kind
<input type="checkbox"/> Clever	<input type="checkbox"/> Risk Taker	<input type="checkbox"/> Helpful
<input type="checkbox"/> Sensitive	<input type="checkbox"/> Competitive	<input type="checkbox"/> Affectionate
<input type="checkbox"/> Emotional	<input type="checkbox"/> Decision Taker	<input type="checkbox"/> Polite
<input type="checkbox"/> Strong	<input type="checkbox"/> Ambitious	<input type="checkbox"/> Loyal
<input type="checkbox"/> Caring	<input type="checkbox"/> Aware of own right	<input type="checkbox"/> Honest
<input type="checkbox"/> Can take stand against wrong	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't use harsh Language	<input type="checkbox"/> Respectful for everyone

**Next**

8. Describe Yourself- Question 3

K a t t i B a t t i
⏪ ⏩ ⏴ ⏵

### Describe yourself- 3

What do you think are the TOP SIX qualities all humans should have to have world peace?

<input type="checkbox"/> Confident	<input type="checkbox"/> High Self Esteem	<input type="checkbox"/> Kind
<input type="checkbox"/> Clever	<input type="checkbox"/> Risk Taker	<input type="checkbox"/> Helpful
<input type="checkbox"/> Sensitive	<input type="checkbox"/> Competitive	<input type="checkbox"/> Affectionate
<input type="checkbox"/> Emotional	<input type="checkbox"/> Decision Taker	<input type="checkbox"/> Polite
<input type="checkbox"/> Strong	<input type="checkbox"/> Ambitious	<input type="checkbox"/> Loyal
<input type="checkbox"/> Caring	<input type="checkbox"/> Aware of own right	<input type="checkbox"/> Honest
<input type="checkbox"/> Can take stand against wrong	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't use harsh Language	<input type="checkbox"/> Respect for everyone


**Next**

9. Scenario-Questions-Choices- 1, Question 1

K a t t i B a t t i
⏪ ⏩ ⏴ ⏵

### Scenario 1: Sneha's Household

Play the following video to get a peek into Sneha's household. Sneha and Ronak are siblings. They both used to come to play badminton with you in the park. Sneha is an amazing badminton player, fast and agile! However lately you don't see her a lot on the playground as her mother thinks she should learn kitchen chores. Only Ronak comes to play now.



**Question 1.**

Sneha confides in you that she doesn't want her play time reduced and she doesn't enjoy kitchen work much. What will be your advice to her if she asks for it? (Check one choice below)

<input type="checkbox"/> I would ask her to listen to her mother because we must listen to our parents no matter what.	<input type="checkbox"/> I would encourage her to discuss the problem with her mother and express her true feelings.
<input type="checkbox"/> I would say that I agree with her mother, girls must know kitchen work.	<input type="checkbox"/> I would ask her to finish her kitchen work quickly so that she can play more.

**Next**

10. Scenario-Questions-Choices-1, Question 2

**KATTI BATTI**

### Scenario 1: Sneha's Household

Play the following video to get a peek into Sneha's household. Sneha and Ronak are siblings. Sneha and Ronak used to come to play badminton with you in the park. She is an amazing badminton player, fast and agile! However lately you don't see her a lot on the playground as her mother thinks she should learn kitchen chores. Only Ronak comes to play now.

**Question 2.**  
Imagine your household. In the video, what if the roles of the father and mother were reversed, if the father was cooking and the mother was watching TV, What would your reaction be?

Would be Fine Would be weird

**Next**

11. Scenario-Questions-Choices-1 Resources Page Prompt

**KATTI BATTI**

### Scenario 1: Sneha's Household

Play the following video to get a peek into Sneha's household. Sneha and Ronak are siblings. Sneha and Ronak used to come to play badminton with you in the park. She is an amazing badminton player, fast and agile! However lately you don't see her a lot on the playground as her mother thinks she should learn kitchen chores. Only Ronak comes to play now.

**Hey! We have a video and an article that may help understand why there are so many girls who face this, click below to access the cool resource**

**Know more!**

Would be Fine Would be weird

**Next**

12. Resources Page

**KATTI BATTI**

### Resources

UK Based Study: Human Brains

USA Based Study: How Girls are affected Gender Study

**Go Back to Quiz**

13. Scenario-Questions-Choices-2, Question 1

**KATTI BATTI**

### Scenario 2: Shruti the Dancer

Shruti is a professional dancer. She shares her experience about a dance audition with you. She was told that she was rejected because she was "healthy". The dance company told her that they were looking for a fairer, slimmer girl.

**Question 1.**  
Shruti is upset. In distress, she is seeking advice for her further auditions. What would you say?

I will let her decide how she would like to handle this situation, I will support her in whatever she decides.

I will encourage her to lose weight and try again.

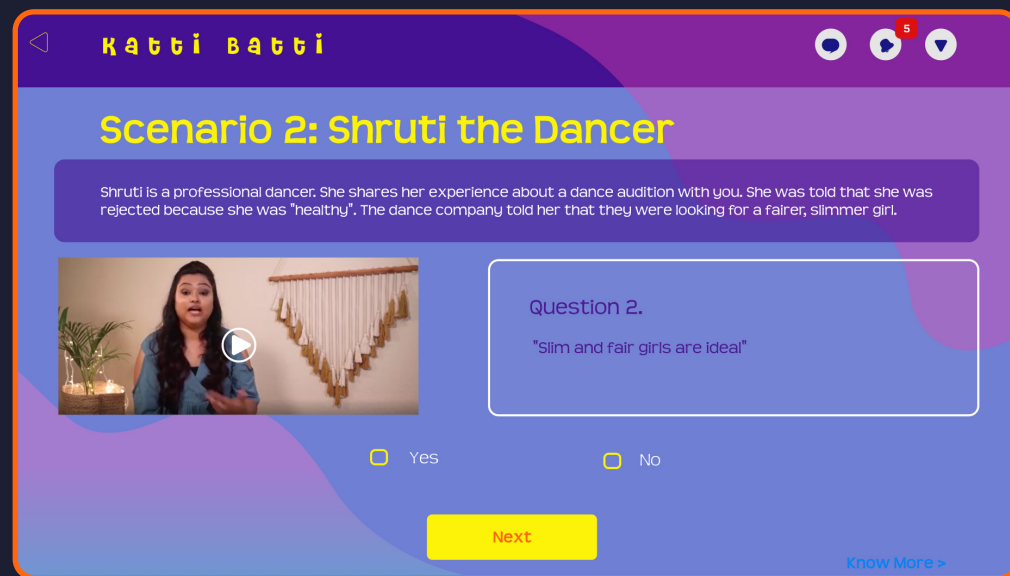
I will encourage her to be herself. She is an amazing dancer, all she should focus is her dance.

**Next**

[Know More >](#)

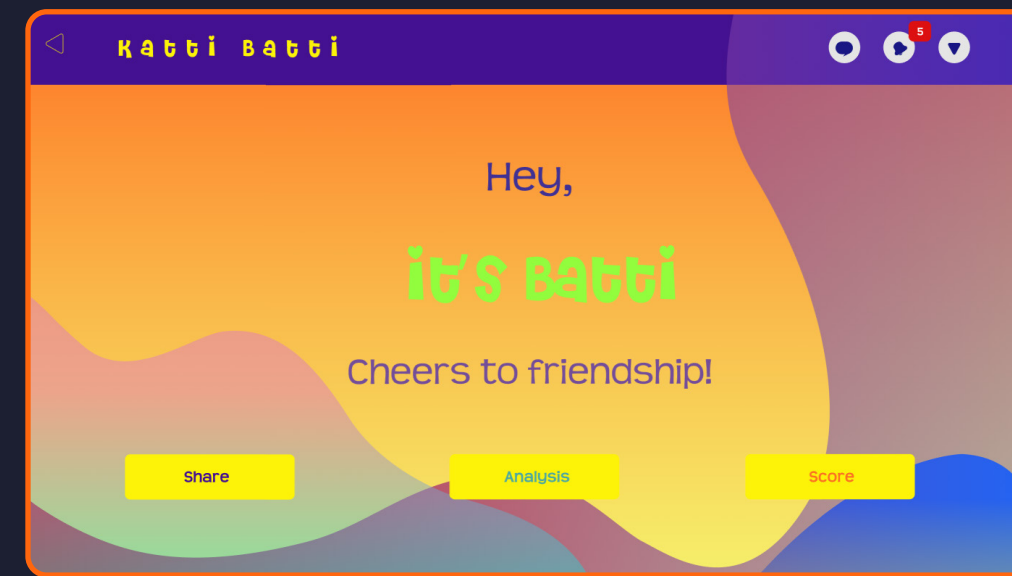


14. Scenario-Questions-Choices-2, Question 2



(Only two scenarios out of 8 shown here for brevity)

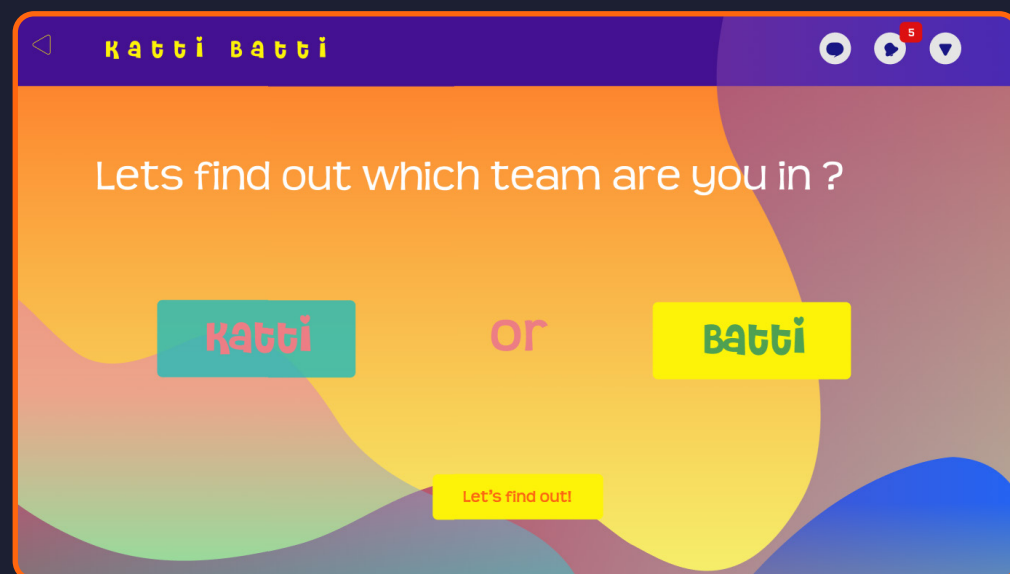
16. Quiz Result Page-1



Features to

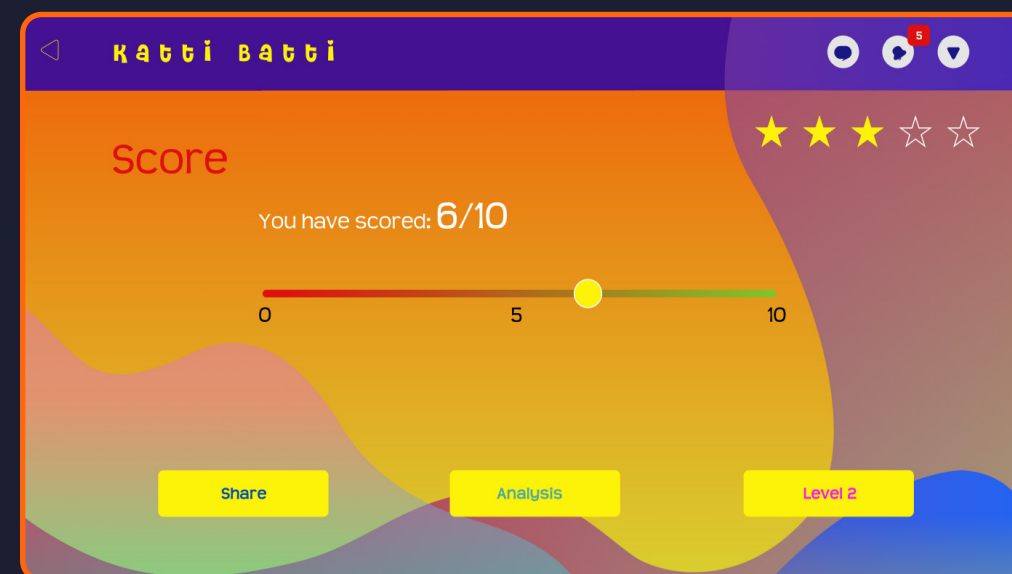
- Share the results with friends
- Analyze results
- Check actual score

15. Quiz Pre-Result Page



- After finishing about 8-10 scenario-questions-choices rounds
- Team Katti if the user scores less than 6/10
- Team Batti if the user scores more than 6/10

17. Quiz Result Page-2



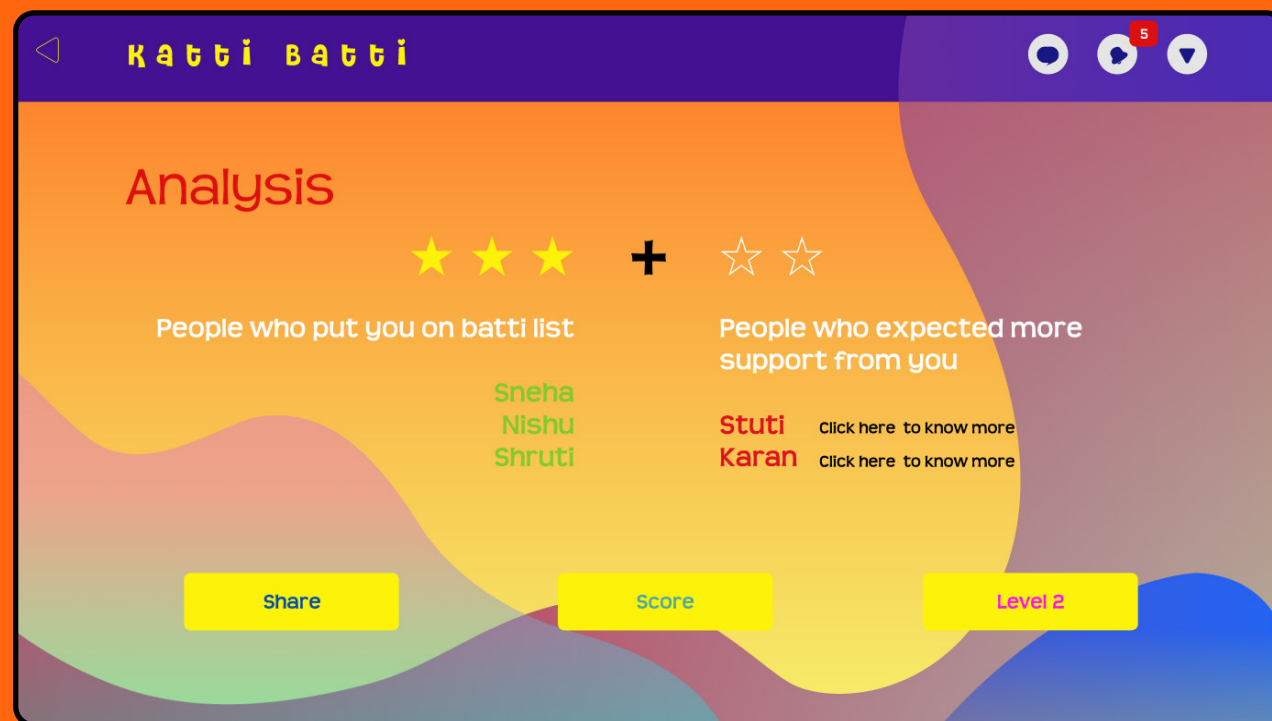
Features to

- Share the results with friends
- Analyze results
- Go to level two if you score more than 6/10 (intentionally easy to score)

## 18. Quiz Result Page- 3- Analysis

Feature to

- Learn how one scored on each scenario question by question with explanation (after clicking on “click here to know more”)



## 5.4 Testing with the Target Audience

**Age Group-** 12-15 yr.- early adolescence

**Genders-** Female-5 and Male- 4

**Location-** Online from Mumbai, Delhi, Kochi- India

**Language Spoken-** English

**Access to-** Smart devices with internet connectivity.

The content curated as shown in the prototype was tested with 9 young adolescents remotely via Google form as prototyping tools like Figma and XD did not allow videos to be embedded in the prototype easily. Eight scenarios were tested with this cohort based on various topics like gender roles, norms, body shaming, gender-based professional limitations, hurdles to boys crying, undermining educational abilities and opportunities based on gender, benefits of equality, and gender stereotypes. Following were the insights obtained from the testing.

The participants reported that

- Scenario-Questions-Choices structure with video-based context was engaging for them- 78%
- Questions made them reflect on the various gender-related issues- 100%
- The experience of going through the tool made them empathize with the situations of other- 67%
- Would love to learn more about friendship & gender issues- 67%
- Would be interested in a tool like this- 77%
- Choice options could be more diverse and clearer- 23%

The first round of testing, though with a small cohort, received a positive report in terms of its intentions to help participants reflect on issues and empathize with others. Comments regarding better crafting the choices were mentioned by a couple of participants for questions having only negative outcome choices, meaning they did have to ponder for a bit on the question as intended.

Some comments were made on the wording of a couple of questions. In the next iteration, the content will be rechecked for understanding, meaning, and connotations for a better participant experience.

Following are some of the quotes from the participants:

“I learned that we should always put ourselves in other people’s shoes because we never know what someone else is going through” - Srimoyee, 13

“I learned about new genders: non-binary, agender, gender-neutral, genderqueer, and gender-fluid. I also learned more about people and their experiences with gender discrimination” - Maanyata, 12

“I learned the importance of gender equality at the same time criticism could take place in any form, thin or fat. I also understood that the society’s mentality affects every individual” - Jashn, 12

## 5.5 Limitations and Future Work

### Limitations

This work has given me the immense pleasure and satisfaction of working on a topic close to my heart. However, given the remote nature of the work, some constraints came to the fore. Following are some of the constraints or limitations of this work.

#### 1. *Language, Socio-economic Backgrounds of User Research and Testing Participants-*

Having set the context of this work in India combined with the remote nature of the work and the pandemic situation led to obstacles in finding user research participants from the Maharashtra region, belonging to lower-middle to lower class economic background, as originally planned. Mr. Sadani of the NGO MAVA played a pivotal role in connecting with and organizing the participant cohort. However, the pandemic situation put limitations on his access as well, to the participants from only Maharashtra. Also, to make this study understandable to the western audiences, limitations were put on the criteria for participation. Young adolescents from urban regions like Mumbai, Delhi, and Kochi, belonging to middle-class backgrounds, who understand English were involved.

However, in the future, this work must be translated into Hindi or other regional languages, given the diversity in culture and mindsets of the people from different regions.

#### 2. *A limited number of User Research and User Testing Participants-*

12 participants in the first user interview round (with parents), 7 adolescent participants in the second round, 11 adolescents in the third, and 9 adolescents in the first user testing round could only be recruited due to the limitations mentioned in point 1.

#### 3. *Limited UI Testing-*

In the one and only User Testing round, only the content could be tested as the website prototyping tools (Figma & Adobe XD) did not allow embedding videos in the prototypes. Hence, the reaction to the UI of Katti Batti could not be recorded.

### Future Work

The next step for this project will be to test the UI and the modified content based on the first user testing round. After three more tests with the current test cohort, plans will be made to involve more participants from the different socio-economic groups and a couple of other languages to test the tool’s effectiveness in different conditions.

As mentioned earlier, the designer in this project is more of a facilitator. Connections will be made with content creators, designers, activists, and social workers to enrich the tool and make it more extensive when it comes to having a range of resources in various media forms.

Further, the actual launch feasibility of such a tool needs to be thoroughly checked with the experts in the domain. Technological and financial challenges will have to be understood in detail.

However, plans are on to put in efforts to help this project see the light of day in any form possible.

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