

Martha Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach:

A Rethinking on Self, Responsibility and Gender Justice in Family

Abstract

Vast feminist literature has emerged in the past few decades where various political, social and cultural institutions/ideologies have been reexamined through a critical feminist lens thereby unraveling the patriarchal assumptions underlying these structures. This paper focuses on a feminist critique of the institution of family as a site of gender justice and thereby unfolds its patriarchal underpinnings and sources of injustice. It specifically emphasizes on notions of self and responsibility within family, constructed and internalized through shared moral understandings amongst members in terms of roles and responsibilities vis-a-vis each other and of themselves. Further, it explores the scope of Martha Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach as an analytical tool to question the gendered moral understandings of self and responsibility in family. The Capabilities approach along with a list of basic capabilities as a necessary condition for true realization of gender justice, proposed by her, is further contextualized to redefine these ideas (self and responsibility) in the institution of family.

Keywords: *Self, Responsibility, Family, Women and Justice*

There is by now a vast amount of critical feminist literature existing that questions the ethical and philosophical foundations of various normative theories in different discourses of social sciences like development, social justice, inequality, freedom or social policy. The ethical foundations of these theories generally constitute a reflective and normative framework on what is the ideal way to live life, the moral virtues its manifests and produces and lastly how they get reinforced and sustained, shared as moral understandings in a society. These shared moral understandings entail certain fixed conceptions of self, relationships and values, expressed and organized in some form around highly differentiated social/moral positions, through which individuals understand who they are and where they are by knowing what are they responsible for in various social relationships (Walker 1998).

Various political, social and cultural institutions /ideologies /theories have been reexamined through a critical feminist lens thereby unfolding patriarchal assumptions underlying these shared moral understandings and conceptions (Anderson 1999; Friedman 2000; Okin 1989; Young 1990). This paper focuses on feminist critique of the institution of family as a site of gender injustice and discrimination and thereby questions the underlying patriarchal assumptions reinforced through shared moral understandings that members have in terms of roles and responsibilities vis-vis each other and of themselves.

The first human interaction, relationship and association of an individual take place in his/her family. This association continues for the rest of her life, manifested and transformed through various relationships. Family as an institution has existed in various forms due to diversity in terms of numbers, traditions, sexualities, and lineage. However, in legal sense, family as an institution has a specific identity, legitimized by the state where a set of people are related to each other in a specific way (Menon 2012). The dominant and most accepted form in

India (and elsewhere) is a patriarchal, patrilineal and heterosexual family. The paper has raised questions with reference to this dominant and prevalent form of the institution.

The paper questions its benign image unfolding the dynamics of power relationship between its members, nature of distribution of resources and the intricate web of emotions and feelings that overwhelm it. Due to the image of its embeddings in mutual altruism and the public-private divide, family as an analytical site of gender justice came as a later development in social sciences. Some earlier thinkers like Mary Wollstonecraft and F. Engels touched upon it, but their conceptions were limited. It was with the emergence of second wave feminist literature which established that gender oppression emanates and get reinforced in the institution of family because it is here that the formative moral and psychological development of an individual takes place (Okin 1989). Family plays an important role the construction of masculinity/feminity through which men and women form conceptions of themselves, each other and their relationships.

The second objective of this paper is to explore the scope of Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach in revealing the gendered moral understandings of 'self' and 'responsibility' in 'Family' by her concept of 'human nature' and 'adaptive preferences' and the way they get redefined in her theory as a necessary condition for true realization of gender justice. With reference to the above discussion, it seeks to address the issue of 'gender justice in family' and also touch upon the feminist critique of moral philosophy in her proposed theory. Justice, for Nussbaum is the ability to 'live life in truly human way' rooted in Aristotelian tradition, that she develops in the form of ten capabilities to be made possible for all human beings in all societies as a minimum criteria of social justice. Secondly the realization of these capabilities is argued for each and every human being as 'end' in all spheres of human life The concept of

'human being' and the list of ten capabilities within a liberal framework suggested by her, holds relevance for the kind of injustice faced by women in 'family' (Nussbaum 2000). Though her universalistic position¹ is being widely debated over due to different kinds of family structures and interpersonal relationships in different social contexts, however her arguments in favour of an uncompromising stand for gender justice, makes her theory interesting and worth consideration.

I examine the following aspects of this debate in this paper, divided into four sections: first, I discuss the assumptions underlying the idea and institution of family and its consequences; second, Family as a site of gender injustice; the third section is an analysis of the politics of self and responsibility in family, and fourth, I take up how Nussbaum's perspective and contribution on these issues in her theory.

I begin with a critique of the socially constructed patriarchal roots of authoritarian shared distribution of 'responsibility' in family which emanates from patriarchal moral understandings that require women to perceive themselves as bearers of a particular self-ordained to fulfill certain responsibilities, in various interpersonal relationships that exist in family (Friedman 2002; Meyers 2004). It is through 'internalization' of the 'given self' and fulfillment of these 'responsibilities' that they express themselves and in turn retain their identity and recognition in interpersonal and social relationships. For example a woman gets recognition from society and recognizes her own identity of a woman only when she becomes a caregiver as a mother or wife. This socially constructed and psychologically sustained self and responsibility is a prominent

¹For a full discussion of her defense of universalism refer to her articles "In Defense of Universal Values" in *Women and Human Development*, and "Social Justice and Universalism: In Defense of an Aristotelian Account of Human Functioning".

source of gender injustice in family. I intend to bring out this complexity and its implication on women, in this study. This would be followed by Nussbaum's critical analysis of the issue and her arguments in favour of capabilities approach as a normative proposition for gender justice in family.

I

It is an irony that from the perception of 'justice' as a *prima facie* virtue by Plato² to its being the first principle of social institution by Rawls (1971), its potentiality, for long, was limited by political philosophers, by turning it blind to some important issues, groups and institutions from its preview. This limitation not only damaged the sanctity of the concept (justice) but also created and perpetuated some more subtle sources of injustice at a deeper level in social structures and relationships with time.

Family is one such foundational social institution, which was exempted from the paradigm of justice discourse, its foundations being claimed in high moral virtues of love and care. Due to this long drawn neglect, injustice against women in family came to be accepted as a 'norm', 'natural' and in some cases argued as 'necessary' (Bloom 1987) for a stable society. This adversely affected the well being of not only women but the moral development of children as well, along with losing faith in the sanctity of marriage and family.

Feminist thinkers have highlighted some false assumptions underlying the notion of family, responsible for its neglect in justice discourse. I am discussing three such assumptions here:

²Plato's apprehensions about the institution of 'family' were for different reasons. His concept of justice cannot be accused of gender discrimination.

1. 'Family is Beyond Justice'

In traditional western political thought, two great thinkers Jean-Jacques Rousseau and David Hume voiced this opinion that family is beyond the considerations of justice. The underlying assumption was that public realm is pervaded with power conflict of vested interests which makes 'justice' an important consideration. On the other hand, family is based on emotions of love, sacrifice and complete harmony of interests. As Rousseau's famous quote goes – the father of a family, '...in order to act right ...has only to consult his heart' (see Thorne and Yalon 1992). Since the chances of women being threatened in family was considered absent under the protection of their fathers, husbands and sons, denial of her right to participate in the public sphere or represent her family was legitimized. Hume, on the other hand, in same voice, regarded family as a space of 'enlarged affection' in which individuals are motivated by mutual altruism and concern in relationships, that makes justice unnecessary, hence useless in family. Any element of exploitation to women was, hence justified in the name of sacrifice and love, and considered to be natural traits of women (Okin 1997).

In Modern Western political philosophy, two influential thinkers Michael Sandel in 'Liberalism and Limits of Justice' and Allan Bloom in 'The Closeness of American Mind' make the same claim in two different ways. Michael Sandel gives a very elated status to the institution of family for justice requires two contingencies: first scarcity of resources and secondly conflict of interests, both of which are absent in family. Family according to him is a space of close-knit relationships based on love and unity of interests (Okin 1987). I also suppose that part of this assumption is that in case of conflict, noble virtues of sacrifice and love take over to harmonize the interests. However we can't stop here. We need to go further to find out who makes the sacrifice mostly and at what cost? But the problem with this

perspective is that these questions ought not to be asked in the context of family as they reflect selfishness, not a feature of family. Sandel in this light, strongly objects to Rawls' claim of justice being a 'primary moral virtue of social institution and propose it to be a 'remedial virtue' (Sandel 1982).

Second thinker in this tradition is Alan Bloom (1987) who takes a rather different stand says that family is beyond justice in the sense that the asymmetrical relationship between husband and wife and the gender hierarchy is 'natural' and hence 'necessary'. He does acknowledge the presence of gender structured traditional division of labour in family, however justifies it through biological essentialism. According to him, it is 'nature' that has determined the role and place of women in society. The natural process of reproduction, lactation, and menstruation suggest that women should stay at home and take responsibility of child rearing. This naturally limits and justifies this limit to participate in public sphere and hence her claim to civil and political rights, needed in the public realm. He further makes an irrational argument that man cannot be expected to share the responsibility of child rearing because they are naturally selfish. Rather than suggesting a change in the attitude of men, he actually legitimizes it by arguing its being 'natural' and 'necessary', and thus to be accepted by both men and women- at whatever cost. As Okin rightly puts it 'Even if he were right (that, which I very strongly doubt, since when did we shape public policy around people's faults' (1987).

Looking broadly, at the common link in all these viewpoints, one could see an elevated picture of the family, based on higher nobler values of love, care and sacrifice, making issues of justice unnecessary and irrelevant. Members are assumed to be in complete unity of common interests, which makes the issue of just distribution of resources/entitlements, a non-issue in the context of family.

2. *'Family is apolitical/non political'*

One of the most widely agreed and misplaced assumptions about family is its 'apolitical' or 'non-political' nature and hence its being outside the domain of justice. This could be traced to the public-private dichotomy dominant in western philosophical tradition and social sciences. This contrast between the rational/political/modern/cultural/autonomous man in public realm and the irrational /emotional /traditional /natural/dependent female in the private realm has been the foundation of discourses in social sciences. Following this, family is an institution in private realm and justice is an issue of public realm, hence separating the two. The public-private divide has been attacked from various perspectives in feminist literature, one of its arguments being the emphasis to analyze family from justice perspective (Wollstonecraft in Elster 2001; Okin 1994, 1997; Pateman 1988). Unfortunately this dichotomy has continued in implicit form till as late as Rawls. In spite of recognizing it as a basic structure of society, he refrains from interference in the internal functioning of the institution and justifies traditional division of labour if it is voluntary (Rawls 1993) which leaves loose ends for any real justice. His notion of the Head of the family representing the family in formulating the principles of justice automatically excludes women as they are rarely the 'head of the family' (Okin 1994). This divide in social, political, psychological and academic spheres has been responsible for much of gender oppression and underdevelopment. Since women have been considered the essential subjects of the private realm, issue of justice, a concept in public realm was not even considered worth the discussion in political philosophy and policy making.

Another related idea is its separation from the affairs of the state directly which amounts to its being 'apolitical'. Feminist thinkers like McKinnon and Nussbaum have dealt with this issue at length. These thinkers have argued that family is an

artifact of the state (Nussbaum 2000). It is through the state that family gets recognition and through its laws that important issues like the gender relationships, terms of marriage, parenthood, property rights of women, divorce and child adoption get defined and institutionalized. Hence it is a fallacy to assume that family is beyond the state as it gets legitimacy by state that makes it very much a part of public realm and a political institution. Socialist and radical thinkers consider 'state' as a site of institutionalization of patriarchal construction of gender and some see the state and patriarchy as hand in glove, to sustain the subordinate status of women (McKinnon 1982).

3. *Family is natural*

Another false assumption about family is its naturalized existence linked closely to biological essentialism in males/females. This gets furthered in the naturalization of the gender specific roles and responsibilities of men as 'protectors' and 'providers' and women as 'care-givers' and 'homemakers'.

Hence any alteration in the traditional division of labor would be an intervention in nature, disturbing its balance in terms of social stability here. This is similar to Bloom's argument presented before. However the difference here is that Bloom at least recognizes the unjust nature of family relations. Thinkers of this opinion hold it as natural and benevolent premised in 'care' and 'affection' as opposed to concerns of justice in public realm (as discussed above).

Therefore, family being a natural entity, women as natural beings are capable and responsible for taking care and loving her family members, closely associated to her reproductive role and home-making. The long natural processes of pregnancy, child birth, child-rearing and menstruation of women were used to argue the private realm of family as her natural space and her role as 'mother' as the recognition of her womanhood. These naturalized images produced of the female sex, her

reproductive and child-rearing roles attached to high moral virtues of care and affection, naturally limited to the private realm of 'family' had adverse implications on the well-being of women, her non-familial aspirations, her participation in the political sphere, employment opportunities and her own perception of 'self' as an independent entity separate from men attempts to expose the various explicit and implicit sources of injustice against women in 'family', followed by its consequences.

II: Family as the Site of Gender Injustice

Sources of gender injustice get produced and reinforced in the institution of family is gradually being recognized and argued in the social and academic world. One of the earliest instances of gender neglect or oppression takes place in the family when she is born (if not victimized by female foeticide and infanticide) and continues for the rest of her life in changing roles of daughters, wives or mother. The form of gender injustice in family is also most fundamental, as it is during the formative years in 'family' that men and women develop a sense of wrong and right, taking deep roots in their character.

However what goes into this oppression or what actually is the root cause of this oppression is a contested issue. Some blame it on biological differences, some on economic dependency of women and some on the psychology of domination. In this section, within limits I am exploring different perspectives that have been argued to explain gender injustice in family. For conceptual clarity, I have taken two themes:

- Politics of Public and Private
- Politics of 'Self' and 'Responsibility'

1. The Politics of Public and Private

One of the most widely agreed critique by the feminists has been

of the public-private dichotomy or spatial politics (Pateman 1987), as a culturally constructed continuum, which gives rise to and perpetuates different patterns of male power and control. Many feminists have used this distinction as a metaphor to express the limitation placed on women by having to operate within the restrictions of private realm. The adverse implications have not only been in terms of division of sphere of physical activity but also in creation of psychological boundaries between men and women on ideas of what is expected of them, who they are and what are they responsible for i.e. moral understandings (discussed above with reference to Walker). The persistent dichotomies like justice and care; mind and body, culture and nature, reason and emotion, production and reproduction, family and public places are all manifestations of this dichotomy.³ Women's confinement to the private realm, unequal wages at work, poor literacy rate, domestic violence, placement in low status jobs and very close to our discussion, neglect of family as an analytical site of justice in social sciences, could all be traced to the public-private distinction. The idea gets best reflected in the words of Ruskin Bond's during a lecture in Manchester town Hall, 1864 'of Queen's', '...the home was where women should stay, for only man could be the doer, the creator, the discoverer; in contrast women are passive, self-effacing, pious and graceful' (Millett 1969). He uses the metaphor of flowers for women and their garden bound by walls for 'home' – as their natural space. As Millett remarked, "...his metaphor of the 'garden' indicates both supposed naturalness of women's natural beauty and the boundaries of their existence (Millett 1969). There are three ways in which the politics of public and private has been discussed:

³For a detailed discussion of these dichotomies refer Genevieve Lloyd .1984. *The Man of Reason: 'Male' and 'Female' in Western Philosophy*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. And S. Ortner. 1974. 'Is Female to male as Nature is to Culture?' in Rosaldo (ed) 'Women Culture and Society'. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Division of Labor: This pertains to the traditional division of labor in terms of activities specific to the family and political/economic arrangements, divided between men and women (Zeretsky 1976). This division gets exemplified as reproduction-production; non-production-production; non-work (home)-work, essentially associated to women and men respectively. This traditional division of physical labour has had three main consequences, adversely affecting women's lives.

First, women in the family came to be perceived only as consumers as their reproductive role and non-waged work were not considered productive. This relegated her status as caretakers in family against men as breadwinners (Britton and Maynard 1984). Secondly, there has been a complete neglect of evaluation of the cost-value analysis of work done by women at home by standards of justice, as it is not considered economically productive. It is ironical that kind of work done by a house- wife or a mother is considered as a labour of love and affection, whereas a domestic servant is paid for the same work. A third implication has been the absence/low women's participation in activities of the public arena like employment, voting, decision-making, policy-making of a country, participation in public-forums and education, factors which actually left behind women in every aspect of well-being and development. Citizenship rights came as late as nineteenth century for women in many countries. With few women being able to get employment, they face injustice in form of unequal wages, low positions as compared to men and even sexual exploitation at workplace, indicating that they are not taken seriously as an employee (HDR 1995).

Fourth implication has been the non-recognition of the informal labor done by women in family, and its justification by projecting this work as a natural obligation/responsibility to be fulfilled by women. Her 'household' work for long wasn't acknowledged as a contribution to nation's economy

considered 'invisible' (Datta 2002; Joseph 1997). Thus the question of exploitation never arose with reference to household work, naturally associated with women.

Spatial Politics: Another apparent conception of the public-private divide is the division in terms of access to physical spaces in society – streets, schools, parliament, parks, courtyard etc-between men and women. Hence conventionally as we may see, women are expected to stay at 'home' and feel uncomfortable, conscious and out of place in public sphere. Dominique Poggi and Monique Coormaert made an interesting analysis of the city being off limits to women (Poggi and Coormaert 1974). They point out how public spaces like parks, streets, riversides of cities-are available to women only exercise discretion because in public sphere women run the risk of being molested, hustled or raped. The underlying assumption is that these 'spaces' in public domain do not belong naturally to women hence it involves risk. Further it also necessitated the idea that women need company of men to feel secure and protected in the public domain. Thus a single woman walking on the road is more vulnerable to eve-teasing and molestation as she is expected to be in company of some male and the fact she is not, reflects her abnormal life and even her immoral character. With some contextual differences according to societies, this is generally an all-pervasive notion. These limitations in terms of 'space' have constrained her options to participate in economic and political activities of her society. With naturalism attached to this division of spaces, the division clutches the flourishing of aspirations in women who want to move beyond 'home', constraints her association with other people and groups and deprives her of opportunities to know her potentiality in public roles.

Socialization Process: The structural perpetuation of the public-private divide has led to identification of the public and the private with male and female consciousness respectively. This entails division of emotions, responsibilities, values, obligations

and perspectives and identities which eventually define and gets defined through the dynamics of relationship between men and women in the family. A prevalent perception is of associating the private realm of family with personal and intimate relationships based on love, care, security, emotional well being, to be carried out by their natural dwellers that is women. On the other hand, the public is associated with impersonal and detached relationships based on rationality, competition, justice and power politics, involving its natural dwellers that is men. It is through the endorsement of these relationships and responsibilities attached to the two public and private that men and women acquire perceptions of their 'selves' and 'others' (Chodrow 1995; Goffman 1980, 1987; Mead in Jackson 2005). The division has been severely attacked from various angles by the feminists, to expose its implicit and explicit patriarchal indoctrination. The critique that emerged is that the divide is a creation of deeply rooted patriarchy. The 'personal' in family is political, as it gets defined/recognized by the state laws and political institutions in public sphere. Therefore, it makes it obligatory for the state to interfere in the family and redefine relationships on the basis of justice (Nussbaum 2000). Men and women through different relationships in the family are engaged in sexual politics (Millett 1969) where one exercises power, authority and domination over the other. Foreman sees femininity, with its emphasis on living through personal relations, as a product of the public-private split (Foreman 1977), created to relegate women to the sphere of emotionality where they 'cannot escape the intimate oppression of being foils for men' (Barrett 1980).

In spite of diversity of perspectives, at times contradicting each other on the public-private dichotomy, Susan Moller Okin draws three common lines of critique which give them a common base (Okin 1997). First, all perspectives defend the fallacy of this divide and claim that 'personal is the political' (Pateman 1982). This is in recognition of the presence of more

subtle form of power politics that colour the relationship between men and women in family, in all forms. It is through this complex game of power that men dominate women in a manner not so explicit. Secondly, Family considered as a 'personal or private realm' is a constitution/construction of the state in public realm. The institution has its legitimate basis in state, which gives recognition to the relationship of wife with her husband, mother with her children and the conditions of the legitimation. It is the state -based laws which empower or disempower women in family on issues of property acquisition, domestic violence, divorce laws, post -divorce status, health, education etc (Nussbaum 2000a). However the persistent backwardness of women in society and abuse in family, led to a consensus that state is also a patriarchal structure, equally responsible and party to gender injustice. State institutionalizes and legitimizes sexual politics (Mc Kinnon 1982) to sustain the male gender hierarchy in and outside family. Thirdly, the division of activities, location and consciousness between men and women in family is a product of gendered parenting (Cahill 1987) influencing relationships, identities and values. It is a product of unjust social and political arrangements in society and has no groundings in biological differences between men and women. The patriarchal construction of gendered consciousness emanates from the traditional division of labour, which gets transcended in 'space' and 'consciousness'.

2. The Politics of Self and Responsibility in the Family

As briefly touched upon earlier, one of the implications of traditional sexual division of labour in family, is the division of consciousness as a result of socialization, in which women, primarily concerned with the care/nurturing activities at home conceive their own 'selves' in terms of agents existing to serve men through different roles and eternally subordinate to them.

The idea of 'who they are' (Self) and 'for what they are' (Responsibility) according to their own perception, are issues that constitute the base of injustice in family. I am discussing two perspectives here to analyze this statement

- 1) The Moral perspective by M. Walker
- 2) The Sociological Perspective by A. Brittan and Mary Maynard

Before I begin to elaborate on these, I wish to state that there are two similarities in these perspectives. First both conceive the 'Self' as a product of a process –moral or social .It is not an abstract entity lying outside the paraphernalia of human processes but a 'situated' entity which get its 'forms' and 'feature' as a result of engagement with different forces/processes of human life. It is also not absolute in the sense that it undergoes transformation incessantly, gets define and redefined through its diverse conciliatory and antagonistic interactions with its 'own self' and other 'selves' (Mead in Jackson 2005; Goffman 1987; Cahill 1987).

Secondly, both the perspectives do not claim a monolithic universal theorizing. They do acknowledge the relevance of inter-societal differences and inter-subjectivity in the conception of identity, responsibilities and forms of family. They agree on the point that there could be several other variables for the determination of 'self ' and our shared moral understandings like class, race, religion, personal circumstances, gender being just on of them.

Thirdly, these perspectives converge on the consequences of power relationship between the self, responsibilities and gender in family elaborated later.

(1) The Moral Philosophical Perspective

Margaret Urban Walker's perspective is based on the premise that notions of 'self' and 'responsibility' constitute intrinsic

elements of moral life, which in turn, is situated and produced in our social knowledge and experience. She perceives the concept of morality as 'a shared understanding on issues of who we are, what we are and it is through these shared understandings that the human agency or 'the male self' and the 'female self' are defined. In other words, it constitutes a family of practices based on our shared perceptions on what is to be valued by making people accountable to each other for it (Walker 1998). What is expected of the 'self', reflects a set of responsibilities expressed in the interpersonal relationships that the 'self' engages in, which when consistently practiced, reproduces, reinforces and sustains the 'embodied self' as a man or woman. As Walker puts it, morality exist in practices of 'responsibility'⁴ that implement commonly shared understandings about who gets to do what, to whom and who is supposed to do what and for whom. Through these practices, individuals learn themselves as bearers of particular identities/actors in various relationships that are embedded in certain moral values. Exploring further, she invokes the work of Robert Goodin, 'Protecting the vulnerable' (1985) who argues for a responsibility ethic based on the principle that 'we are responsible for protecting those vulnerable to our actions and choices.' According to him, unjust social arrangements create and exacerbate vulnerabilities, which necessitates responsibilities. Guided by this thought, he argues that thus it is the primary responsibility of women to care of children in the family as children are most vulnerable to the actions and choices made by their mothers. Walker intervenes at this point, criticizing the distribution of 'responsibilities' as authoritarian in three ways:

First, the idea that these moral understandings are 'shared' does not mean that it is based on the consent of all moral agents,

⁴I do realize the limitation of this paper in not discussing other discourses on 'responsibility' especially masculinity discourse.

reflecting the aspirations of all. This is one of the strongest critiques by feminist ethics that the normative account of 'who we are and what we are' have been determined by men for themselves and women as well. Hence these normative accounts of how to conceive selfhood, relationships, identities and values failed to reflect the aspirations of women. This also shows the fallacy in the distribution of responsibilities and of the conceived self. The self then acquired by women is not her true 'self' but a gendered, authoritarian social construction. Same is true of the responsibilities which are more like 'forced upon obligations' on women, that they have come to accept as given. It is defined by men for them, through which they identify themselves as 'women'. They retain this identity expressed in the authoritarian distribution of responsibilities in family, which they are supposed to perform to confirm their identity of a woman in their own eyes and in eyes of others (Walker 1998). For example, motherhood and child-rearing have been considered intrinsic to identity of womanhood. Secondly, its authoritarian nature is reflected in the nature of consequences that a woman bears if she fails to live up to the responsibility expected of her. For example, as mentioned before, a woman is held responsible for a failed marriage no matter how unbearable the circumstances for her. This is one of the reasons why women suffer for so long in an abusive marriage before they break because it is socially projected as their own failure as a wife with little onus on the husband. She is blamed and ridiculed not only by society but also by her own family. Inadequate laws on divorce and unequal 'exit' options (Okin 1987) for women from abusive marriage reflect this assumption underlying the political institutions of our society as well.

Thirdly, she points out that the distribution not only aims to produce outcomes but reproduce the specific shared understandings and locked identities through unjust social arrangements like 'family' so that the male dominance is

sustained and unchallenged. They are 'chartered' in a way to '...to keep afloat a system of mutual expectations and self' (Walker 1998).

The notion of responsibility in family is based on authoritative allocation of values (phrase used by Easton for 'power'), according to Walker (1998) is a) *manipulative* as the internalization of the 'self' and 'responsibility' by women does not involve direct coercion, b) *regulatory* as it reproduces and reinforces the sustenance of gendered 'identities', 'relationships' and 'values' in 'family' c) *definitive* in articulating and defining the human agency, relationships and values.

She also points out two limitations in Goodin's 'Responsibility Ethic' for women. First, he does not take into account the vulnerability of women vis-a-vis men in the institution of 'family' in different roles as a wife, as a mother and as a daughter. Feminist theory has explored various kinds of deeply institutionalized vulnerabilities that women face in marriage related to their care-giving role, motherhood, economic dependency, sexuality and 'exit' options (Okin 1987; Held 1997; Ruddick 1989; Gilligan 1987; Chodorow 1981;). Secondly about the obligation of 'responsibility towards the vulnerable' she points out that distribution of responsibilities is in itself a part of social arrangement, which as discussed before, could be 'authoritative' and 'unjust', creating more vulnerability (Walker 1998)⁵. The point could be very well connected to the responsibility of women as care-givers in 'family' which leave them vulnerable in terms of economic dependence on their husbands for their own survival hence limited options to break away from a bad marriage.

Walker's analysis is an articulate exposition of the power dynamics between 'self', 'responsibility' and 'gender' mediating

⁵For a detailed discussion on vulnerabilities for women in marriage refer chapter 7 in Okin 1989.

through our 'shared moral understandings' in the institution of 'family'. Her insistence on the need to critically examine the 'geography of responsibilities' in 'family' to comprehend who is held responsible for what and to whom, on what conditions, which authority distributes it and at what criteria (Walker 1998) are issues that are pertinent for a serious thinking on gender justice in 'family'.

(2) *The Sociological Perspective:*

This perspective suggested by A Brittan and M. Maynard, delves on the interconnections between gender oppression and socialization in 'family' that involves a close analysis of the self and responsibility. According to them, it is through the process of 'socialization' (a universal force which remorselessly shapes human personality and conduct) that bisexual human beings acquire their identity of masculinity and femininity. The acquisition of gender is a process of 'internalization' of the 'expectations and role scripts' associated with masculinity and femininity, as human beings grow and develop in their environment (Britton and Maynard 1984; Cahill 1987; Goffman 1987). To be a man or a woman thus implies a long process of indoctrination that transforms them into socially constructed gendered beings. They explain this through a prevalent identification of motherhood and womanhood. For a woman the whole process of socialization is seen as a preparation of marriage and motherhood which begins from a different treatment of a girl child at home, witnessing her mother's subordination to her father in family to the extent of physical abuse in some instances, followed by her association with other social institutions and norms. Socialization takes place through an entire gamut of social-political institutions/structures and conventions (agents of socialization), which confront the individual with an element of force to comply to the gender stereotypes. This requires passivity of the subject in an oppressive relationship between the 'socialized and socializers'.

Their main argument is that it is not the gender, which is coercive in it, but it is oppression that mediates through gender, what is mediated is an ideology of masculinity produced and reinforced as a common sense, as naturalized, as a lived experience, as a conscious and as a collective force. It is this deeply *structured masculinity* that gets mediated and internalized through socialization that make women believe and conciliate to the injustice they face in 'family'. They probe into the works of Freud and Lacan to explain the relationship between 'self' and 'responsibility' in family. The psychoanalytical account of socialization by Freud assumes a sequence of developmental stages till the age of five, by which all pre-prerequisites of male and female gender are internalized as a 'self' through Oedipus situation. The 'self' of a 'man' emerges as a strong masculine superego and of a woman as a repressed passive 'self' reflecting the demotion of clitoral sensitivity (Freud 1977). For a woman to reach sexual maturity, she must abandon her bisexuality and develop a truncated form of sexual identity suitable for motherhood and marriage. Hence for a woman her 'self' gets epitomized in her role of child rearing and care as her 'natural' responsibilities. Brittan and Maynard critique this assumption, by arguing that there are no intrinsic responsibilities of men and women by definition but, historically specific, relative, acquired, learnt and undergo transformations. Jacques Lacan's theory conceives gender as a historically specific form of internalized ideological discourse, that is as an autonomous symbolic representation of the sexual division of labor. The discourse is adulterated Family, being one of the first and most crucial sites of socialization in Freud and Lacan's analysis, a woman's 'self' is produced and reproduced captivated in gender-specific responsibilities, primarily causing and sustaining her oppression.

III: Implications

I have discussed family as a source of gender injustice from

various perspectives, the unjustness of this social arrangement have three implications on women: first, gender injustice in family leads to injustice in the political and economic realms in public sphere and vice-versa. This forms a vicious cycle in which women are victimized with limited options to escape the process. It is in this cycle itself that the patriarchy is mediated. Some could argue that the essentiality of women as care-givers in family, gets reflected in the public sphere as there are less job opportunities for women, they are paid low wages as compared to men for same hours of work, they are exempted from holding higher posts and have limited options of political participation (HDR 1995; Joseph 1997). On the other hand, her inaccessibility to education and political participation limits her own understandings of the rights she could exercise, confidence to dissent or resist and understand her own exploitation. Hence deprivation in one acerbates deprivation in other or deprivation in one could be seen as the factor for deprivation in the other.

Secondly, one of the adverse implications of the politics of 'self', 'responsibility' and 'gender' in family that kept women's subjugation unchallenged is 'Adaptive Preferences' (Nussbaum 2000) or 'false consciousness' (Crocker 1992). She evaluates herself through a sexist, androcentric and masculinist 'lens' which she internalizes as she is subject to gendered parenting (Brittan and Maynard 1984) or 'authoritarian sharing of responsibilities' (Walker 1998). This results in adaptive preferences (Nussbaum 2000; 2003), preferences that not in sync with the true nature of an individual but have been maneuvered and manipulated to suit the interests of those who maneuver it. In the context of women, many women in India never question their own preference of leaving their jobs after marriage to take care of the house even if they were doing really well in academics. Many women especially from poor families put up with physical abuse by their husbands without resistance. In most parts of the world, their husbands, who get away with it,

have raped women at some point of their lives.⁶ The reason for their passive acceptance is their deeply entrenched belief that 'that is how things are and have been' or 'it is a woman's fate'. Based on my own observation, there are some who even 'miss' the ill treatment by their husbands, considering it to be an abnormal situation. They would show complete disinterest in education or their own health care arguing these are not the issues meant for them. These examples are severe cases of 'adaptive preferences'⁷ based on ill-informed and poorly-cultivated desires in spite of their claim to be happy. This could be result of forced biological reductionism, cultural determinism or psychological conditioning.

Thirdly the politics of private-divide has resulted in a rigid care-justice dichotomy, replicating the traditional sexual division of labour. The relegation of 'care' as an exclusive feature of the personal sphere of family and as an exclusive moral obligation of women, not only made women suffer but also demeaned the value of 'care' in society. Many traditional and modern theories of justice have failed to address the importance of care, as they are based on equal, moral and rational nature of man with little acknowledgement of the physically and mentally disabled who need care more than justice (Okin 1987). Going by Goodin's 'Responsibility Ethic' of 'responsibility towards the vulnerable', it is important to realize that this responsibility should not be limited to women towards her children but should be expanded to make all citizens in public sphere responsible to the vulnerable groups in society: the poor, the old, the physically challenged, destitute women, homeless children and so on. This is an important condition for any decent society. Many feminist thinkers like Kittay (1997), Ruddick (1989), Tronto (1993), Okin

⁶For a deeper study and interpretation of physical violence against women refer to Nussbaum 2005.

⁷For a detailed discussion on 'adaptive preferences' refer chapter 2 in Nussbaum 2000.

(1997), Ruiz (2005), Noddings (1984) Nussbaum (2005) has extensively attacked devaluation of 'care' in public realm and women as care-takers. Carol Gilligan's breakthrough hypothesis of 'Ethics of care vs. Ethics of Justice' made a significant contribution in making women's equally viable and relevant 'Care' perspective based on obligations and affection (Gilligan 1982), visible as against the ethics of justice of men. Since then, feminist thinkers are grappling with the idea of how to combine the two perspectives theoretically and practically in private and public spheres. Martha Nussbaum's capabilities approach is a plausible attempt in this direction (arguments in the next section).

IV: An Overview of Martha Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach

In this section an attempt has been made to explore Martha Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach as an ethical framework that reconstructs ideas of self and responsibility for women in the institution of family, thereby addressing concerns raised in the context of gender injustice.

Nussbaum's theorizing on matters of gender justice emanates from a deeper concern for human dignity and bodily integrity of a woman, in 'family' that are 'typically ignored urgent issues of justice' (Nussbaum 2000). Hence apart from dealing with the traditional issues of distribution of resources and opportunities in justice, she reflects deeply on the nature of human being, the way it has been conceived and the fallacy of the conception. She also gives lot of emphasis on the scrutiny of 'family' based on principles of justice (another neglected issue), as it is in 'family' that the most subtle and grave violations of gender justice takes place. In light of the main theme of this paper, her theory envisages a life of human dignity for women as human beings before they become daughters or wives or mothers.

The Capability perspective, suggested by her aims to ensure that each and every individual has the capability to function 'in a truly human way' as measured by an Aristotelian inspired substantive account of human flourishing. In her own words her idea is to arrive at '... basic social minimum ...that focuses on human capabilities, that is, what people are actually able to do and to be – in a way informed by an intuitive idea of a life that is worthy of a dignity of a human being' (Nussbaum 2000). Secondly, she endorses a concrete list of capabilities, which she argues should be made intrinsic part of 'each and every person' in this world by virtue of being a human being. This point is a pertinent claim for women who have been always considered as 'means' in different roles, to serve patriarchal ends, especially in family. Thirdly, she considers the list as a minimum threshold for social justice in all societies, below which the injustice inflicted, needs recognition and intervention.

Fourthly, her theory is highly normative and evaluative with its central idea being a moral claim that only certain human abilities should be developed by distinguishing between those capabilities worthy of promotion and those which should not be encouraged (e.g. capabilities for cruelty or aggression) (Nussbaum 2000). The central human functional capabilities according to her are life; bodily health; bodily integrity; senses, imagination and thought; emotions; practical reason; affiliation; other species; play; control over one's environment-political and material.⁸ The list, according to her, is composed of 'separate and indispensable components', reflecting Aristotle's insistence on the incommensurable and plural goods (Nussbaum 2000). Fifthly, as she puts it, 'the list remains open ended and humble. It can always be contested and remade ... indeed a part of the idea of the list is its multiple realization, its members can be

⁸Though Nussbaum has revised the list time and again, the latest version is available in chapter 2 Agarwal et al.

more concretely specified in accordance with local beliefs and customs' (Nussbaum 2000a). Sixth, another important dimension of her approach is the emphasis on capability, not functioning as the appropriate political goal. What is ultimately important is that people have the freedoms or valuable opportunities (capabilities) to lead the kind of lives they want to lead, to do what they want to do and be the person they want to be. Thus, her approach is a theory within the liberal philosophy, arguably of a critical strand emphasizing 'choice as good' but it is not neo liberal as it necessitates material and institutional conditions for the 'choice' to be actually exercised and it is duty of political action to provide these to all citizens (Nussbaum 2000).

The paper argues in defense of Capabilities Approach as a plausible normative framework, concretized in form of ten capabilities, which if pursued could ensure an equally dignified life for women in 'family', without dispensing with her emotions of care and sacrifice for her loved ones. This is because Nussbaum's achievement lies in not just glorifying emotions, but dignifying them also through their recognition in the public realm. Her second important achievement lies in the proposition to ensure full moral development of children especially the female girl child through proper educational and health opportunities without burdening her with a preconceived masculinist notion of responsibility. There is a strong emphasis on 'moral autonomy' in terms of realizing one's real 'self' and 'worth' as an independent 'subject'. In practical sense it means the capability and freedom to make choices in life and determine one's own destiny.

In my view, following aspects of Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach makes her theory unique in its treatment of the issue of gender justice in family:

1. *The 'Self' in Nussbaum's theory:*

In previous sections I discussed how male and female identities are products of gendered social construction embedded with sexist perceptions of responsibilities, relationships and values, mediated through moral philosophy or socialization. Family is one of the first and most influential sites where this construction takes place. Nussbaum theorizes this as 'adaptive preferences' (Nussbaum 2000). The self gets redefined in her theory in the following ways:

First, Nussbaum is very critical of the Kantian notion of person as 'equal, moral, rational, objective, unemotional, free beings' most commonly a 'male', underlying the traditional theories of justice. It is exclusionary and discriminatory. She draws attention to the fact that life is full of contingencies and not all individuals fall into this category especially women and physically/mentally challenged.

She proposes to change the political conception of person in Kant as 'equal and independent' to Aristotelian conception of person⁹ as both 'capable and needy' (Nussbaum 2000, 2002) as Marx puts it 'in need of a rich plurality of life activities' (Marx in Nussbaum 2000). This conception touches human life the way it is for those in 'need' and some who are 'capable': the powerful and the powerless. Inspired by Aristotelian thought- it sees human beings from the first as animal beings whose lives are characterized by profound neediness as well as by dignity. It is a powerful point to include women in the discourse as 'subjects' and acknowledge their subdued status in society and family, a neglected issue in justice discourse.

Secondly, her argument to treat each individual as 'end', worthy of a life that entails human dignity, is a very relevant issue for

⁹For a detailed discussion of her Aristotelian stand refer Nussbaum 1993. For a detailed discussion on the scope of state's action (U.S and India) in the realization of the Capability Ethic, refer Nussbaum 2002.

women. Women in 'family' are recognized in different roles like 'mother' or 'homemaker' or 'a wife', which they perceive as their real identities. Her 'self' has an instrumental value to serve men. Nussbaum argues that all these roles come into picture only after her she is recognized as an independent entity' and given equal opportunity to acquire the capabilities given by her. That is a minimum threshold for all individuals in order to live a just life, irrespective of the roles and responsibilities.

Thirdly, she believes that each individual has some 'innate capabilities' like capability to eat or drink and some basic capabilities like capability to love or care or study. It is only through suitable external conditions and opportunities that the innate and basic capabilities flourish as 'combined' capabilities. This point is an important check on 'gendered parenting' that is responsible for creating conservative gender identities. Nussbaum is persuasive that the girl child should be given adequate opportunities to for the development of the innate and basic capabilities in her, which means no discrimination in access to education, good health and other basic resources (Nussbaum 2002; 2004). This is an important condition for a girl child to realize her individual integrity and 'real' self. If 'true self' is not attainable, at least the search for it should not be trammled.

Fourthly, her conception of 'self' reconciles the idea of adaptive preferences, of false consciousness, which women come to form as a consequence of poorly-cultivated desires or ill-informed desires. The fact that she endorses these capabilities for each and every person as a minimum threshold, entails a gradual transformation in the psychology of men through these capabilities and therefore in the asymmetrical relationships between man and women in family.

Lastly, all capabilities in the list especially value of 'bodily integrity' and 'emotions', could play a very positive role in a woman's life to protect her from sexual abuse and violation of bodily integrity.

Hence capability ethic according to her, endorses the value of 'care' provided in such a way that the capability for self-respect of the receiver is not injured and also in such a way that the caregiver (women in most cases) is not exploited and discriminated against on account of performing that role (Nussbaum 2000).

2. *'Responsibility in Nussbaum's Theory: Resolving the care-justice Dichotomy*

A general consensus among feminist thinkers is that 'care and justice' are complementary and thus have suggested that ethics of care be supplemented by ethics of justice in private realm and ethics of justice in public to be supplemented with ethics of care in public realm (Gilligan 1982; Fraser 1998; Ruiz 2006). One of the other achievements of Nussbaum's theory is her proposal of a concrete list of capabilities that incorporates both justice and care as essential to social justice. This becomes evident in following points:

First she advances the emotions of love, imagination and care as central political and social goals to elevate the status of 'care' in society considering that all human beings at some point of time are in need of care as children and in old age and some are in perpetual need like the physically and mentally disabled. Thus 'care' is not a value of contingency but a need at all stages of human life (Nussbaum 2000, 2004, 2005). It needs to be valued and recognized not only in the private realm of family but should become the basis of political and social institutions to support the dependent. In envisaging love/care as primary political and social goals, Nussbaum not only protects the self-respect of women in 'family' but also elevates the status of 'care' in society by making it everyone's responsibility.

Secondly, she dissolves the dichotomy by opening 'family' to public scrutiny based on acquisition of the capabilities, by each member in family.

Thirdly, keeping in view the acceptance of 'love' and 'imagination' as moral abilities and social goals, Nussbaum suggests reform in the existing structure of 'family' based on asymmetrical public-private divide in political, social and psychological terms. There is a need to redefine masculinist identities, relationship and values in family in terms of these capabilities, to be actively pursued. Nussbaum's theory dissolves all the boundaries between public-private, to ensure equal participation of women in public sphere.

Lastly, according to her, two capabilities play 'an architectic' role in human life, namely, 'Practical Reason and Affiliation' since the two purportedly 'organize and suffuse all the other capabilities, making their pursuit truly human' (Nussbaum 2000). These two capabilities could be interpreted in terms of 'justice based on reason' and 'care based on affiliation' respectively, both playing an important role in making other capabilities a possibility. This reflects her deep belief in the importance of both 'justice and care' in 'family' for gender justice.

3. *'Family as a site of Justice'*

Nussbaum discusses the institution of 'family' as a contradictory site of love, bonding and intimate relationships along with sexual abuse, domestic violence and discrimination at the same time. She begins with a criticism of the political approaches to family that project it as 'natural', oblivious to the cultural influences, as a 'private structure without acknowledging the role of laws and institutions that actually shape it and 'as a space for women's natural responsibilities of love and care' without recognizing of the forces of socialization (Nussbaum, 2000). Her perspective is based on the critique of 'family' understood in Rawls theory of justice. She raises three questions from his theory, indicating its fallacy of overlooking the implications of gender oppression in 'family' and the urgent

need of intervention (Nussbaum 2000). First, though Rawls agrees that 'family' is part of the basic structure, he denies any intervention in its 'internal functioning' (Rawls 1971; 1977) as it is voluntary like church or a university. She contends that family is not a voluntary institution directly for children born in it who are subjected to gendered parenting without their realization (Nussbaum 2000). It is not voluntary for women as well because she hardly has a choice of not entering this institution due to social pressures and very limited exit options from marriage. Looking at its pervasive influence in determining identities, relationships and values of men and women, it cannot be left to function on its own. Secondly she criticizes Rawls for not acknowledging the 'parochial character of the western nuclear family' (Nussbaum 2000a) and thus ignoring other forms of human affiliation like village families, women's collectives, joint families etc. She intends to reduce the dependence of women on the typical 'family' for emotional and financial support. Through the capability of 'affiliation', she valorizes the associational liberties of women so that they can draw support from other human associations and feel bonded. She cites the example of SEWA, an NGO in India supporting women from broken marriages, in which women feel the same bonding based on care and love among themselves, as they would in a family.

She also wants to break the myth that intimate relationships could only be formed in a typical heterosexual 'family' and gives importance to other forms of human associations. This would develop women's basic capability to 'associate with others' and form relationships, rather than being identified through only family relationships.

Thirdly, she criticizes Rawls' view of 'family' as given and its pre-political rights as an association to protect it from state action. She contests that 'family' is a political institution, created by the state itself which gives legitimacy to relationships,

defines rights and privileges of its members, terms of divorce, marriage and parental responsibility in a family. Therefore it is also the responsibility of the state to put constraints on the associational liberties in family in order to protect the integrity and well being of women and children. Family as a 'group association' has value in terms of what it does in promoting the capabilities of each of its members (Nussbaum 2000a). This means that deprivation of individual basic rights of women in the name of sustaining the familial bonding does not hold ground. Family as an independent group cannot have an independent standing and thus its public scrutiny is not a violation of its privacy. In the end the important question that needs to be asked is how is each individual faring in terms of capabilities, rather than arriving at any aggregative conceptions. Through this point, Nussbaum makes a convincing claim of valuing human dignity of each member of family, above any other concern.

4. *The Role of state:*

One of the features of Nussbaum's theory that makes it unique and convincing is the emphasis on its implementation by making it the philosophical basis of constitutional principles of state as a minimum threshold of social justice (Nussbaum 2000). An idea is real only when it is real in its consequence. All societies claim to believe in gender equality but experience teaches us otherwise. Hence Nussbaum's proposition of the capability development ethic in the form of ten capabilities is a plausible attempt to make justice accessible to all individuals by virtue of being human beings (Nussbaum 2000a). The fact that she argues in favor of 'capability to do' than on the actual functioning, reflects her concern for freedom of choice. For this, she envisages an active role of the state in keeping a check on the internal dynamics of asymmetrical relationship between man and woman in the family and providing adequate opportunities. Nussbaum's considers 'family' as purely political

institution constituted by the state and thus sees lot of potential in the state to restructure the 'family' in a way that gives women basic opportunities and freedom to develop a morally autonomous 'self', engaged in mutually interdependent relationships in family and other associations, determining her responsibilities as a free individual and forming her own conceptions of what to value in life. In terms of specific functions, the state could amend laws, make policies and create opportunities for promotion of the capabilities for each member of a family (Nussbaum 2000; 2002). With reference to women, anti-dowry laws, laws against sexual exploitation at work, against sex-determination of fetus, against child marriage in India has definitely helped in protecting women from violation of her personal dignity. On the other hand, government programmes like adult education for women, women empowerment projects, national literacy mission, mid-day meal schemes, inheritance rights, adoption rights have generated awareness and consciousness among women. The fact that we still don't have laws against marital rape in India does make many of them vulnerable in abusive marriage to sexual abuse and rape, which is a gross violation of her integrity. Relationship between parents has a deep influence on the moral development of children; therefore it needs to be based on mutual respect and needs state intervention in case of violation.

Second role of the state, according to Nussbaum, could be to support and protect other forms of associations and groupings that could also help in the fostering of individual capabilities. A third role suggested by her is to give women access to credit and economic self-sufficiency, along with education and leadership. This would give a woman equally viable exit options from a coercive marriage to sustain herself.

The role of state in family assumes its maximum viability with reference to the theme of this paper that is conception of 'self' and 'responsibility'. The 'girl child' in family needs equal

attention, protection, basic resources like education and nutrition and freedom from pre-conceived notions of gendered identities and responsibilities. It also entails encouraging the public perception that women are not secondary to men, deserve equal respect and have an identity beyond being mothers and wives. It would help in changing the course of gendered 'socialization' gradually, consequently changing male and female mindsets.

Broadly, Nussbaum envisages a developmental welfare state in protecting the dignity, integrity and well being of each individual located anywhere, by promoting the capabilities suggested by her, within limits set by the associational and personal liberties of individuals (Nussbaum 2000).

Conclusion

Martha Nussbaum's work has been critiqued from various perspectives like questioning the universality of the capabilities as imagined by her, and therefore its contextuality in different cultures, the exactness of the capabilities that juxtaposes democratic principle as argued by Amartya Sen and the limitations of a liberal framework to reinforce gender justice, in general.

However, her theory assumes unique significance when placed in the Indian context. The three main concerns in gender justice as argued in the contest of family, its legitimizing factors and approaches to eliminate them, when unfolded in the institution of 'family', become more sophisticated in the Indian case as they engage with strong notions of culture and tradition. The sources of gender injustice are implicit and have assumed legitimacy due to perceived justness of dogmatic norms and lack of any contrary sense deep injustice in society. This is also one of the factors for the sustenance of unjust arrangements in social, political, economic and cultural spheres. Hence it is a pertinent task to scrutinize the underlying concepts of justice/injustice

and to seek a confrontation between theory and practice. Nussbaum makes a commendable attempt by emphasizing on the necessity to build 'just' families which could produce individuals with a sense of justice and mutual respect.

The realization of these 'capabilities' both by men and women could eventually deconstruct the patriarchal images of 'feminine and masculine self and the associated notions of identities, responsibilities and values formed primarily in family. The reconstruction of self and responsibility based on the capabilities proposed by her, holds the potential of transforming family as a site of gender injustice to gender justice and hence a just society.

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