How Indians View Gender Roles in Families and Society

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Who we are: A nonprofit ‘fact tank’ that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping the world. We are nonpartisan and nonadvocacy, meaning we do not take policy positions or make recommendations.

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What we do: Generate a foundation of facts to enrich public dialogue and support sound decision-making. We conduct public opinion polling, demographic research, content analysis and data-driven social science research.

Find our data: www.pewresearch.org/indiasurvey
Nearly 30,000 interviews conducted nationally with population 18+
Fieldwork conducted November 2019 to March 2020 (before the first wave of COVID-19)
Interviews conducted in 17 Indian languages
Kashmir Valley, Sikkim and Manipur were not accessible
Interview lasted 45 minutes on average
Most Indians see women, men as equally good political leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women and men make equally good political leaders</th>
<th>Women make better political leaders than men</th>
<th>Men make better political leaders than women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Don’t know/Refused responses not shown.
Source: Survey conducted Nov. 17, 2019-March 23, 2020, among adults in India.
Indians overwhelmingly agree with the notion that wives should obey husbands

% of Indian adults who agree/disagree with the following statements

- A wife must always obey her husband
  - **NET: 87%**
    - Completely agree: 64%
    - Mostly agree: 24%

- When there are few jobs, men should have more rights to a job than women
  - **NET: 80%**
    - Complete agree: 56%

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 17, 2019-March 23, 2020, among adults in India.
Nearly three-quarters of adults in India say both men and women should make financial decisions in a family.

% of Indian adults who say that in a family, __ should be primarily responsible for ...

- making decisions about expenses
  - Both men and women: 73%
  - Men: 20%
  - Women: 6%

- taking care of children
  - Both men and women: 62%
  - Men: 34%
  - Women: 34%

- earning money
  - Both men and women: 54%
  - Men: 43%
  - Women: 2%

Note: Depends/Other/Don’t know/Refused responses not shown.
Source: Survey conducted Nov. 17, 2019-March 23, 2020, among adults in India.
In India, nearly two-thirds of adults say sons should handle their parents’ last rites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sons and daughters should have equal rights</th>
<th>Sons should have a greater right</th>
<th>Daughters should have a greater right</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>64%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% of Indian adults who say that in a family, ____ should have the primary responsibility ...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Both sons and daughters</th>
<th>Sons</th>
<th>Daughters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>... to care for parents as they age</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... for a parent’s last rites or burial rituals</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Daughters-in-law/Sons-in-law/Other/Neither/Depends/Don’t know/Refused responses not shown. Muslims and Christians were asked about “burial rituals,” all other respondents were asked about “last rites.”

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 17, 2019-March 23, 2020, among adults in India.
Nearly all Indians say it is very important to have sons and daughters

% of Indian adults who say it is very important for a family to have at least one ...

- Son: 94%
- Daughter: 90%

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 17, 2019-March 23, 2020, among adults in India.
Four-in-ten Indians say it is acceptable to balance gender makeup of family via modern methods

% of Indian adults who say it is ___ to get a checkup using modern methods to balance the number of girls and boys in the family

NET acceptable  | Completely acceptable | Somewhat acceptable | Somewhat unacceptable | Completely unacceptable | NET unacceptable
---|---|---|---|---|---
40% | 26% | 14% | 11% | 42% | 53%

Note: Don’t know/Refused responses not shown.
Source: Survey conducted Nov. 17, 2019-March 23, 2020, among adults in India.
Small differences between Indian men and women on gender attitudes

% of Indian adults who say...

- Men in a family should be primarily responsible for making decisions about expenses: Women 19%, Men 21%
- Men generally make better political leaders than women: Women 21%, Men 29%
- Sons should have the primary responsibility to care for parents as they age: Women 37%, Men 40%
- Men in a family should be primarily responsible for earning money: Women 42%, Men 45%
- Sons should have the primary responsibility for a parent’s last rites or burial rituals: Women 62%, Men 64%
- When there are few jobs, men should have more rights to a job than women: Women 77%, Men 82%
- A wife must always obey her husband: Women 86%, Men 89%

Note: Differences by gender are statistically significant. Muslims and Christians were asked about “burial rituals,” all other respondents were asked about “last rites.”

Source: Survey conducted Nov. 17, 2019-March 23, 2020, among adults in India.
Indians with a college degree less likely to hold traditional views

% of Indian adults who say...

Note: Differences by education level are statistically significant. Muslims and Christians were asked about “burial rituals,” all other respondents were asked about “last rites.”
Source: Survey conducted Nov. 17, 2019-March 23, 2020, among adults in India.
Sikhs often least likely to hold traditional views toward gender roles

% of Indian adults who say that...

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<tr>
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<th>Sons should have the primary responsibility for a parent’s last rites</th>
<th>Men in a family should be primarily responsible for earning money</th>
<th>Women in a family should be primarily responsible for taking care of children</th>
<th>Sons should have the primary responsibility to care for parents as they age</th>
<th>Sons should have a greater right to inheritance from parents</th>
<th>Men in a family should be primarily responsible for making decisions about expenses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jains</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindus</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhists</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christians</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikhs</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Darker shades represent higher values. Muslims and Christians were asked about “burial rituals,” all other respondents were asked about “last rites.”
Source: Survey conducted Nov. 17, 2019-March 23, 2020, among adults in India.
Most Indians strongly support equal rights for women, in line with global public opinion

% of adults who say it is very important for women to have the same rights as men

Source: 2019 Global Attitudes Survey (34 countries); 2015 Global Attitudes Survey (13 countries and territories: Burkina Faso, Chile, Ghana, Jordan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Palestinian Territories, Peru, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, Venezuela, Vietnam).
Four-in-ten Indians say marriage with traditional gender roles is more satisfying

% of adults who say a marriage is more satisfying if the husband provides for the family and the wife takes care of the house and children

Note: Respondents were asked, “What kind of marriage do you think is the more satisfying way of life? One where the husband provides for the family and the wife takes care of the house and children OR One where the husband and wife both have jobs and together take care of the house and children?” The two options were randomized.
