Female Cultural and Gender roles in the East African Indian Diaspora

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Contents

1. Introduction

> The formation of cultural identities and values is a relational process – formed, reformed and transformed with reference to the cultures and cultural discourses around them. It is an understanding which recognises that particular identities only acquire relevance or meaning in particular social spaces and in relation to difference; that complex power relations operate constructing some identities as 'normal' while others are deemed deviant, 'other' or even threatening. (Morrice 2017)

As a third-culture individual, growing up in the UK, India, and Kenya, I have had a childhood of mixed cultures but have never felt fully aligned with any point of origin. Thus, I have always wondered what I am to pass on to my potential future children, and how the contexts in which I may raise them would affect their identity. This question led to this thesis on female cultural roles and identity in the Indian Diaspora of East Africa.

Many diasporas have a tendency towards conservatism to conserve the culture of the homeland. I seek to explore the extent to which this applies to the women of this diaspora, as well as the variations between generations and communities. I propose that the Indian diaspora of East Africa remains rather conservative, ascribing women the role of maintaining heteronormative family values and Indian culture. But that the extent to which women have agency outside of historical patriarchal model, in deciding how to conduct their lives and deciding what is passed down, has increased with each generation. Finally, we see sort of halfway of recognising ancestral ties and culture but choosing a more blended identity and value system.

To delve into these questions, the term 'diaspora' needs to be examined. It is extremely nuanced and complex; evoking questions of belonging, 'double-consciousness', notions of 'homeland', citizenship, nationality, transnationalism and far more. For the purposes of my research, it is best defined as a phenomenon wherein people of a particular community and/or nationality venture abroad, forming their own unique culture and identity in a new host land.

The Indian Diaspora is very large and widespread. It is large in the 'Western world', such as the USA, Canada, and the UK, as well as in East and South Africa, and other areas such as Mauritius. There are also prominent Indian Diasporic communities in the Caribbean and Middle East. Though to varying degrees, these vast and diverse communities still have common ties and have the tag of 'Indian'. The notions of homeland and transnationalism are particularly important in understanding this.

Macpherson and Hickman (2016, pg.35) explain that transnationalism does not entail diplomatic relations, but 'daily activities' of communities that maintain social, economic and political ties with their points of origin defined and new homes. Transnationalism practices can be practical, monetary, and political, but also simple cultural practices done in daily life. They make new social spaces and international connections which transcend national boundaries.

This idea can help one to understand the embeddedness of the Indian identity and how Diaspora is a community, and that this is both done intentionally and unintentionally. Similar to how the famous works of Benedict Anderson (2006) discuss a nation as an imagined community, diaspora is arguably imagined. Numerous Indian diaspora communities have less in common with other Indian diaspora communities than one would a fellow national, and yet are united in this strong sense of 'Indianness', not only maintained but also created and adapted through transnationalism. It is a uniting force that is made tangible through transnationalism practices and community engagement.

> There are multiple India's that are reproduced, normalised, and mobilised by the diaspora and by the nation(s) they inhabit. These representations of India are claimed to unite communities around cultural practices and also to impose hegemonic beliefs and values. (Hedge, Sarma & Sahoo 2018, pg. 2)

The notions of transnationalism and 'Indianness' are important in this thesis due to the large role women have to preserve the above mentioned 'hegemonic beliefs and values'. Schrover and Yeo (2010) emphasise the importance of gender in the homeland. 'Home', has various connotations integral to identity such as ethnicity and religion. Further, 'home' is a very domestic concept, and domesticity is generally a feminine domain. The 'home' for diaspora, both physical place of dwelling, and homeland, are thus, very centred, around women. Public appearance of the correct female representations of 'home' are integral to the community's self-esteem. It is posited that this is due to the fragility of men's status in the diaspora, when the host society environment is less stable and predictable. Women, on the other hand, are somewhat immortalised in the home and should not become 'too modern'. (Schrover and Yeo 2010) The perception of becoming 'too modern' reflects the common trend of diasporas remaining conservative and traditional, often while the homeland evolves. Being minorities in foreign lands often seeking comfort in ideas of home, there is a drive to preserve tradition, creating an added pressure for women.

It is important to note, that while this role was often imposed upon women, that sometimes it is something in which women take pride and solace. In numerous cases, men migrate a few years or months prior to the women. The arrival of women and starting families is generally when a community becomes a diaspora. While there is external pressure, many women joining husbands are horrified to see the lack of cultural preservation and then take it upon themselves to rectify it.

There are cases where diaspora evolves and more freedom for women is obtained. At times, women need to work while men are away or to help make ends meet. Though, women are often still expected to do more domestic upkeep than men while also working. Women also actively fight for more agency, in public spaces or on a familial level. This leads to a gradual change in mentalities. Younger generations obtain more access to education and live through progression of gender equality. It is a common myth that women of diaspora are passive, but many women of diaspora were and are involved in political resistance movements, by directly protesting or by housing and feeding political refugees.

These dimensions of womanhood were researched with extensive literature on the subjects concerned, as well as first-hand research done through interviews, where participants answered the same set of questions with the categories as follows: Family and Background, Integration in host nation, Gender and Culture, Connection to India and Marriage and Family.[1] The questions are aimed specifically at my research questions, delving into the extent of segregation with the native black population and the white population, the roles of female family members in the home, gendered traditions they followed/were forced to follow, expectations of marriage, conceptions of intermarriage and differences they noticed with traditions and values in India.

The interviews were semi-structured. While the questions were all the same, the interview format was free for the interviewees to interpret certain questions as they felt. Certain points of interest that came up were expanded upon to delve deeper into personal perspectives and experiences. This is useful because certain notions such as blended identities merit detail.

[1] See Appendix 1 (pg. 24) for Interview Questions

Though complex ideas and detail can make interpretation and organisation of data difficult, this sort of qualitative data is key to answering the research questions of this thesis, giving the literature and diaspora theories applied more substance.

The interviewees were found through family, friends and business contacts and approached through email or text message. Interviewees recommended other women willing to participate in the research, resulting in a mix of 16 women[2] from the Indian Diaspora of East Africa, mostly from Kenya, some from Tanzania and Uganda, as well as one from Rwanda and one from Burundi. These women were of mixed religious heritage some Hindu, some Muslim and one Jain. The interviewees were also of different age groups. They were largely from affluent families and backgrounds, reflecting that this diaspora is largely a trading diaspora. Their families all hailed from Gujarat, many from Kutch.

The answers of interviewees were analysed to see to what extent they matched the theories and ideas explored in this introduction. The interviewees, while a diverse pool, are of course only a small portion of the female Indian population in East Africa. Due to interviewees introducing me to their personal contacts, there is a possibility of similar opinions in certain groups of participants not reflective of the diaspora. Further, individual experiences are unique and while there are definite reflections of overall patterns and theories, there are equally numerous variations and anomalies, inevitable in research that is very personal and detailed.

Interviews were conducted over zoom and recorded with the participant's consent. The interviewees notes and recordings were examined to determine commonalities and gain some basic quantitative data, such as answers to simple 'yes' or 'no' questions. Interview answers on family background were used for further context. Answers were then sorted into categories according to the themes of each chapter.

Following this introduction, there will be a background chapter to give historical and social context to the diaspora in question. Chapters 3 and 4 will discuss conservatism and modernity, delving into the experiences of interviewees that fall into these categories and the societal trends they demonstrate. These include women's personal ideas of womanhood, family expectations, gendered traditions, married life, and intermarriage. Finally, the main findings will be summarised and examined next to the research questions and hypotheses, as detailed in the second paragraph of the introduction.

[2] See Appendix 2 (pg. 25) for Interviewee List

2. Indians in East Africa

"I think to this day Indians are always seeking better opportunities." – Nani Ben (57)

As covered in the introduction, though extremely wide-spread and varied, the global Indian Diaspora maintains a sense of 'Indianness', through both ancestral ties forming identity, as well as more practical transnationalism, seeking better opportunities and economic activity is one such practical facet of Indian Diaspora transnationalism. This is also seen in East African Indians. Understanding the history of this diaspora will aid in shedding light onto the attitudes around women in this region's Indian population.

While international migration, travel and trade are not unfamiliar to the pre-colonial era of the Indian Subcontinent, the colonial era migration is more central to this paper. Early colonial subject immigrants were indentured, many of whom travelled in the wake of the abolition of slavery. Examples are the Caribbean, Mauritius, and South Africa. Mauritius having an Indian-descendant majority population, and South Africa being one of the largest Indian Diasporas in Africa. The Indians in East Africa have also often been in Africa for generations, though in numerous cases for fewer generations than the aforementioned. Former indentured communities are often referred to as 'old diaspora', migrating in the mid and late nineteenth century. Diasporas such as those in the Western world are often seen to have settled in the mid-twentieth century, this could perhaps be considered the 'new'. The diaspora of East Africa migrated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, somewhat in between the old and the new.

> In a handful of works that traced the political activities of this community, Indians were either portrayed as victims of the postcolonial state or faulted for not having done enough to integrate themselves into the new nations. As either insular, exploitative capitalists or racial minorities, Indians appeared within a largely nationalist framework that ignored their diasporic affiliations to their Indian homeland. Meanwhile, scholarship defined East Africa territorially and racially, relegating the history of Indians in East Africa to a footnote. (Hegde, Sarma, and Sahoo 2017, pg. 62)

The Indians in East Africa tend to fall into the perception of insular, exploitative capitalists. This perception has greatly affected numerous Indian communities in the region. The element of Indians in East Africa not integrating has largely to do with affluence and colonial regime. Though many West Indians (particularly Gujaratis) came to East Africa out of poverty and necessity, many were skilled, some even already capable businessmen back in India. Many of the factors causing unrest in the era of their migration were devastating droughts and a few earthquakes, particularly the Kutch region. Aziza, an interviewee, mentioned how Aga Khan, pioneering figure in the Ismaili Muslim community[3], encouraged Ismailis to venture to East Africa for opportunities. Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims of various sub-communities in North-Western India migrated to East Africa looking for better opportunities.

Though facing tumultuous and long boat journeys, many came with work opportunities easily accessible, on the British construction of railways in the region, and the running of shops and businesses around it. Many also climbed to higher positions of administration and industry, a few interviewees mention remembering their mothers graciously entertaining rich and important, often politically connected, guests of high standing. These men were often, but not always, white.

[3] A Shia Islamic sub-sect

While not 'equal' to the British, Indians were given preferential treatment and opportunities, creating an elite minority. For many Africans, Indians were a symbol of oppression and injustice. The extent of segregation and affluence allowed for communities to retain their culture, stay divided, even among other Indians, in their beliefs and values, and increase the pressure of 'proper' appearance for women. Later generations did start to form a separate East African identity, but many remain heavily connected to India to this day.

On the other hand, former indenture communities often have Indians not connected to India and rejecting their connection to it. Or simply having lost touch with it. Spending a long time away from their homes without much connection to them, as well as being of lower status, meant they integrated further among themselves and with locals. These communities were often a part of independence struggles, especially in the case of South African Indians. Kondapi (1951) discussed the Natal Indian Congress persuading the Natal administration to "admit Indians as a permanent part of the population."

In contrast, Indians in Uganda were expelled in 1972 with only 90 days' notice, prior to which even many Indians who had been in Uganda for decades were not allowed to be full citizens. This community has sometimes been referred to as the 'Jews of Africa', a direct parallel to the elite, commercial Jewish minorities. Indians living in Rwanda in the twentieth century were not granted citizenship even if born there. Kenyan Indians, though very established and increasingly integrated, only saw official recognition of being of Indian heritage as a Kenyan national when they were named Kenya's 44th tribe in 2017.

My interviewees mostly identified with their East African nations while still maintaining their connection to India in their capacity. Zhulobia comically refers to herself as an 'A.B.C.D', meaning 'African born confused desi'[4].

Interestingly, in many cases the allegiance of their African nation does not come from local cultural influence, from integration with the local population or due to a strong political allegiance, but due to time and physicality, experiences, homes, and memories, often with their fellow community members. An example of this is seen in Herbert's work (2012) discussing how expelled Ugandans remembered picnic spots, homes, and business, but not local peoples and customs. Though, around half did mention they enjoyed the warmth of the locals and the younger generations do mix with other communities more and more.

In some cases, people did become involved with politics and independence movements, but not without some tensions remaining. Activist Zarina, an interviewee, mentions that she wanted to be a part of liberation movements but was often side-lined due to her privileged background and gender.

It is also worth noting that Indians in East Africa also have ample connections to the Western world, having family, assets, and colonial era ties, which also create a third dimension of identity, which was discussed by interviewees in many manners, be it younger generations of women being 'too westernised' or be it they themselves also feeling allegiance to the UK or Canada due to having lived or studied there.

My family's example is how my great-grandfather lost his arm in a mining accident in Zanzibar, working for the British. As a compensation of sorts, his family and descendants were given British Citizenship rights. My grandfather migrated to East Africa for economic prospects, after being raised in Kutch and educated in Rajkot, Gujarat. My grandmother and six-month old mother joined him some years later. They did indeed find some success. However, when my grandfather was killed by a drunk driver, my grandmother, wanting a fresh start, took my 18-year-old mother and her siblings to settle in the UK. My mother later chose

[4] 'Desi' is a term meaning 'Indian'

to partially raise my brother and I in India as well, to connect with our roots, as well as for commercial opportunities. This goes to show the identity of this diaspora is very diverse.

> Those who have left their places of birth to make homes in other parts of the world are familiar with the question 'Where do you come from?' and respond in innumerable, well-rehearsed ways. The past and the present are social constructs that are contested by those with different identities, experiences, genealogies, and histories (Agnew 2006. pg. 3)

The East African Indian community is often acclaimed as one of economic success, both an internal and external narrative. This is also fed by the fact that unsuccessful migrants, returned to India. Herzig (2010) discusses that Asian economic power has been overall increasing since 1945, with urban property share of Indians remaining above 70% since, with little fluctuation. Joanna Herbert (2012) mentions that people who she interviewed excitedly discussed how brave, adventurous, and resilient their ancestors who emigrated from India were.

My interviewees greatly looked up to their female ancestors, from their mothers to their great-grandmothers, discussing their resilience and adaptability, but in a slightly different manner to that of male ancestors. Women often came later, facing the tough journey with their young children and no support, and many did not have a choice but to follow their husbands. Interviewees admired their female ancestors for having gone through all the difficulties of migration, as well as other general challenges women have such as domestic responsibilities and motherhood, all in a foreign land.

Another noteworthy point is that integration with the local community was often mentioned by interviewees through business. Some mention their fathers' having black business associates and their families come over to visit for instance. They discussed how though there was, and sometimes still is, resentment, especially during and just after the colonial period. The Indian diaspora does mix with the 'locals'. However, this is either in a friendship or business capacity. Customs, home life and religions don't really mix. Though only a very general idea with exceptions, it seems both sides think of each other as 'different' to the point where it seems they do not greatly compare themselves to or learn from one another.

Women's experience also differed according to the sizes of the communities. This would affect factors such as image and social life. Interviewees who had lived in multiple East African nations discussed differences. Many saw Kenya as more modern than Tanzania, though the reasons for this were not very specified other than Kenya being cosmopolitan. This led to perceptions of Kenyan women of all ethnicities being freer. The interviewees from Burundi and Rwanda discussed having a very small community. In one sense, they found this sad. But the interviewee from Bujumbura also mentioned finding Kenya to be colder, while being in Burundi was very warm and welcoming. This also goes to show that while the Indian community in East African shares numerous commonalities as whole, there are some perceived and genuine variations that could affect one's diasporic experience. For example, the interviewee raised in Rwanda, not even being permitted to be a citizen, now resides in Kenya and feels more connected to it, especially due to the fact that she grew up in a very different, colonial era Kigali.

Though I have discussed the lack of integration and relative isolation of the Indian Diaspora, there are some interesting, not always obvious points of cultures melting together. Prominent ways in which Indians of East Africa have connections with the local environment is through language and food, both of which are once again feminine responsibilities to pass on. Indian food in East Africa sometimes uses local spices and ingredients, and tastes have changed and developed living away from India for so long.

In terms of language, all interviewees were at least trilingual. All spoke English from education and spoke Hindi largely due to Bollywood. Most interviewees spoke Swahili, due to it being the lingua franca of the region, some were also taught it in school. In one sense, their language connection with India is strong and authentic in that most of my interviewees were Kutchi, and speak a more distinct dialect of Kutchi-Gujarati than present in Kutch today, as Kutch has mixed more with the rest of Gujarat and evolved differently. On the other hand, Swahili words have made it into Kutchi-Gujarati vocabulary in East Africa. Having a mother raised in Kenya from childhood, I found myself saying words in India I thought were Gujarati but were Swahili. An example is ‘matunda’, meaning ‘fruit’ in Swahili, but which the Indians of East Africa use to mean ‘passion fruit’.

This chapter has covered the commercial colonial era history of migration and the relatively low degrees of integration with locals of East Africa, resulting in an elite minority which increases pressure of upholding image on women, but also leads to a narrative of pride and success among Indians, backed by large degrees of economic success. With this context and history, one can more easily understand and see connections to both conservatism tendencies and more modern values explored in the coming chapters.

3. Tradition and Conservatism

> "Maintain your reputation, dress and act in a certain way. At the end of the day, we are women, so we have to do the housework, the cooking… We always sacrifice our lives. It may be 2021 but you're still a woman and have to do these things because who else is going to do it."
> - Zhulobia Dalla (61)

Many people share different definitions of 'tradition' and 'culture' and have difficulties agreeing on their conceptualisations and boundaries. A useful concept to do so is seen in *The Invention of Tradition* (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1992) where it is explained that traditions often believed to be old, are often newer than one may think. Arguably, all traditions and cultural ways are invented, this could be in a formal, institutionalised, intentional manner, or in a more abstract, natural way over a certain period. Traditions are generally invented to serve a purpose, this could be spreading an agenda, a longing for something, a connection to others or a form of maintaining order and stability. Traditions and culture are dynamic and change according to the times and exposure to new cultures and conditions.

In diaspora, certain traditions are brought from the homeland, and often new ones are invented or adapted. This reflects yearning for homeland in some instances, and a desire to forge a new blended identity in others. While culture is often thought to make people, it is ultimately people who make culture and traditions. One could also say it is a bit of both. This is important because in diasporic conservatism observed in the interviewees, there is often a heavy emphasis on very specific things that are not absolute markers of religion or ethnicity, such as how one styles one's hair. One interviewee said, "I remember when I cut my hair without permission, my father didn't speak to me for a week".

Other examples include where one goes during one's menstrual cycle, or how one dresses upon marriage. These things may seem rather trivial to many, but are practices taken very seriously. Interviewees were often shaped by these as imposed by elders. These represent certain values, of what is considered 'proper', 'Indian', 'Hindu', 'Ismaili' or 'Feminine' and by extension what is considered moral. These values are expressed via invented traditions and are part of what maintains the diasporic identity.

The conservatism seen in this chapter was far more universally applicable than expected. Certain traditions were interesting to discuss, but ultimately, fear and ideas of feminine virtue seemed very much in line with other cultures as well. This could be down to colonialism and globalisation, as one interviewee expressed finding some values she was raised with somewhat Victorian; things such not to smile or show your teeth (especially in front of boys) or 'sitting properly', 'being seen and not heard'. Many other interviewees mentioned strict guidelines of being a girl or woman, which they mention finding arbitrary. This universalism also likely shows a universal desire to continue family lines, proper images and traditions, to be remembered and preserved.

Arashi Dua's (2018) article discussing initial settlement of East African women in India shows this. It is written that Africa was seen as a hostile environment for women and they thus were often confined to the home and burdened with a cultural legacy to continue in a completely new place. One can imagine that the yearning for home and seeing the men who migrated before them losing culture drove them to actively partake in this. Yet, migration to East Africa often not being their choice and experiencing pressure to preserve to culture within patriarchal models would make it a difficult task as well.

The patriarchal mould is taken from the homeland, wherein women live with their husband's family. Michel (2015, pg. 246-7) describes that this has advantages in that household chores are split (between women) and childcare is communal. But daughters-in-law are forced to "adopt a submissive and respectful attitude" towards their mother-in-law. She is "exempt from material duties, her work is to transmit tradition, educate and advise her daughters-in-law on domestic and educational matters".

While Dua (2018) and Michel (2015) give more historical perspectives, it seems that these sentiments persist contemporarily as well, even if not living in a joint family, though many participants did. Women seem to accept their roles within patriarchal models and are very aware of the burdens and sacrifices their womanhood entails.

The quote that opened the chapter came from Zhulobia, a 5th generation East African Indian currently living in Tanzania. She reflects what can often be seen in general society, that there is an increasing awareness and talk of change regarding the women's freedom to work. Yet, this increasing awareness often results in women doing the same degree of domestic upkeep while also working, an odd blend of the conservative and progressive, but ultimately still an unfair burden and more labour.

While many women historically were 'wives and dependants', more women enter the family businesses, or make their own careers. The image of South Asian women outside the community can also reinforce conservatism tendencies, South Asian women are assumed to be exotic and more subservient than domestic, less educated than 'western' women (Hegde, Sarma, Sahoo, & Kumar 2017, pg. 218). This is often owed to the idea of female transnational migrants following men as victims. Though in many cases true to an extent, the negation of women's agency and a repressive image of them can be detrimental and reinforce victimhood. They are placed in a 'family role' rather than a 'market role'. While they tend to have both (Charsley and Shaw 2006).

Work was important to all interviewees except one, who was a housewife. Some did have to struggle to work, with Chetal, aged 47, mentioning "I found out my father-in-law had connections with my boss and made sure I wasn't promoted." Zhulobia discussed how she was a part of the family business, which she then took over from her husband upon his death, all while doing the activities of a mother and 'good daughter-in-law', and all with certain mannerisms and grace which she was expected to maintain as a woman.

Zhulobia reflects this duality of conservatism and progressiveness in the way she discussed her children as well. She came from a family of six sisters and also had only daughters, despite pressures for her to have a son. She then taught her daughters a woman's lot in life as described in the chapter's opening quote, while at the same time encouraging career ambition and freedom. Fortunately, her daughters "are very lucky" in that their husbands generally do housework while her daughters focus on careers, but she is unsure how this dynamic will change if she gets grandchildren.

Marriage was described as an important part of the community by every interviewee, and many were mothers. Questions were asked about marriage, but I did not expect the extent to which participants themselves would muse on and expand upon this topic, it clearly reflecting their values, fears, and ideas of womanhood. It also reflects community relations:

> The importance of marriage alliances is apparent, and therefore it becomes clear why parents who rely on these networks encourage community marriages. (Herzig 2010)

Numerous women who said they felt little to no gendered pressures of looking and acting a certain way in youth, said this changed when they got married. Chetal said that she was expected to wear sarees, cook more, clean more and entertain guests. She also mentioned that having and driving her own car was often a point of discussion as she could "go anywhere and do what she wanted and nobody would know". Some also mentioned marriage limited their opportunities to work or study as they wanted, that they had to please everyone but themselves. One interviewee said, "In East Africa, Indian women did everything in hiding".

As Chetal and a few others expanded upon, appearance is clearly important. Wilson (2019) discussed this in depth, using the prominent subheading 'Dress and diasporic strategy'. The article discusses not only how dress showed the appearance of 'still being Indian' and maintaining communal favour. But also, how recreating old patterns in garments, wearing garments made by people of one's community or ethnicity and wearing handed-down sarees are all examples of wanting to have and show a connection to heritage, and were an "embodied memory which linked individuals back to families and their traditional occupations in the subcontinent". Appearance of married women has added significance, such as the jewellery they wear being both marker and storage of wealth. Married women thus represent communal success and virtue even more than single women. These pressures seem to be less today, but still are present. While not necessarily a constant, women often did mention the need to dress up in Indian attire for occasions to maintain image but also enjoying it to feel connected to their ancestors and expressing themselves.

Every interviewee except the one in my generation, described either an implicit or explicit pressure to marry within the community, or as close to such as possible. Two said they were told "No blacks. No Muslims". While the rest discussed that they always knew they'd have to be married by a certain age and that, though it was never discussed, the spouse should be of the same religion and ethnicity. This reflects a desire to keep heritage alive through women marrying 'properly'. Interviewees mentioned men also having pressures, but that they were not as strong or early as they were for women. Women also often discussed pressure to have sons to 'carry on the name'. For those who were divorced or had married outside of the community, they mentioned that they faced a lot more discrimination than their male counterparts who had done the same, and posited it was due to the idea of losing a sort of feminine virtue.

The youngest interviewee of my generation said she hadn't "yet" experienced this pressure. But interestingly she herself mentioned a desire to marry within the community. Her exact words were "I don't know if I could marry someone who doesn't know what Kurkure is", mentioning a famous Indian snack. The sentiment was not often fuelled by malicious racism, though the lines can blur at times, but out of concern for difficulties it brings. Generally, the older the interviewee, the more segregated their upbringing. Intermarriage is becoming more and more common. Yet, even in a gradually more accepting environment, intercultural/interracial marriages are known to have more hurdles. Chetal and a few others honestly explained that they would prefer their children to marry in the community to avoid difficulty, communal gossip and scrutiny, and to preserve tradition and identity, even if they had witnessed a few successful intermarriages. They said that seeing close friends marry out of the community means that they understood the difficulties it came with. Thus, it seems this conservative idea, while possibly more hateful in the past, comes from desires of preservation, a recurring theme.

While most women cited their female role models to be women of their family, community and gossip were often mentioned as a burden. Beyond family, some outwardly disliked other women of their community because of this and felt unsupported by the elder generations, while others did feel supported or were apathetic. However, almost all of them acknowledged

that there is competition and gossip, about who is the most educated, who marries who, who is the most pious, etc. The community has the power to both reinforce and lighten conservative practices.

In interpreting all the data and considering how to write this chapter, I ran into a problem; many of the interviewees seemed to be saying things that seemed contradictory. This highlights the complexity of perceived traditionalism and values. Zhulobia often mentions not having felt too many gendered pressures when growing up, of understanding and identifying with certain feminist values and describing Indian Tanzanian women as 'subservient'. Yet, she also seemed very resigned to having to do housework as a woman. I also had an interviewee express a view of how it is important to carry oneself "properly" as a woman yet was smoking as she said this. This was, and still isn't, considered an appropriate habit for a higher-class Indian woman in the diaspora.

Contradictions were prevalent in my research. This reflects another trend seen in almost every interviewee, setting oneself/one's family/one's community apart. Interviewees were keen to not be put under the umbrella of conservative East African Indians. Out of 16 interviewees, 12 explicitly mentioned they were less strict and more global. Words such as 'progressive' and 'liberal' were used, and many also gave examples of other friends or communities (also Indian) that were less free. Numerous Ismaili felt lucky they were not Hindu, for example. While others simply put it down to personal differences and luck with parents.

Perhaps due to my being of a younger generation, I found numerous people answering 'no' to whether their traditions were strict and whether they had to do gendered practices, still seemed to have strict and/or gendered traditions. Yet, they didn't seem to see or feel conservatism or strictness. This could be due to the relativity of it. Only seven considered their traditions and upbringings strict. I found some who said they didn't feel differences to male family members then went on to say that they did have to cook a little more, that they couldn't go out unescorted, or that they had pressure to get married and have children within the community. This made drawing quantitative results out of interviewees rather difficult as answers to specific yes or no questions didn't always seem to align with stories.

These dilemmas of perception in data analysis once again prove how difficult it is to prove what is progressive and what is traditional. It also leads one to ponder whether 'traditional' connotes 'conservative'. Having said this, strict traditions seem to be prevalent and, in some ways, contribute to Indians of East Africa having a sense of community. The desire to not be seen as 'conservative like others' shows a clear desire to make new conceptualisations of what it means to be 'modern' as an ethnic Indian of East Africa. As will be covered in the next chapter, ideas of traditions and the values they connote have thus adapted.

As mentioned, the diaspora in question is self-referential, simply considering communities and traditions of local origin to be so different, they can't be compared. Traditional gender dynamics in the area are often similar in that wives often go to live with husbands and that women are expected to have motherhood and domesticity as their priority. Other examples are a large emphasis on community, on performing piousness, as well as colourful and artistic ritual and celebration. But these values are expressed in different ritual and visual traditions, meaning the two 'types' of women are often not even compared. Or if they are, it does go beyond that they should not be like each other.

This chapter covered gendered conservative traditions and the pressures of marriage, linked to preserving family line and tradition. We also see a keen desire to not be considered conservative, yet to still be connected to tradition and heritage. These fears are brought to light when rebellion and modernity change the status quo, as will be seen in the next chapter.

4. Rebellion and Modernity

> "We are the last generation to listen to our parents, and we are also the first generation to listen to our children."
> - Sheida Jaffer, aged 68

Sheida puts modernity and change in a very interesting manner. Just as there was a need to discuss conceptualisation of tradition and culture in the previous chapter, there is a need to establish what 'modernity' is. While a very contested and at times abstract concept, for the sake of this thesis, my main observation was that modernity involved choice, mobility of women and access to information. Interviewees tended to use these markers when distinguishing themselves as more modern than others. It seems that there is a group that remains conservative while there is another that evolves in a globalised, cosmopolitan environment. Interviewees seem to navigate their identity through both these polarised groups to make their own path. Most mention being able to coexist with the more conservative to varying degrees, while a few also mention being largely cut off from their family and/or extended community.

Choice has many connotations but ultimately came down to being able to choose a spouse, choose to work and what career, how to dress, how much to partake in ritual etc. Mobility is not only in terms of women being able to travel alone or drive, but also in terms of the extent to which they could mix with friends of different communities, mix with boys and whether they travelled abroad for education. In this vein, there is a drastic difference seen in those of my grandparents' generation and that of my parents' generation. The latter tended to go to schools with children of many races and backgrounds. Some were allowed to have male friends and bring friends from other communities home. Many women of my parents' generation, while still expected to be married, ended up studying in the West as well. The post-independence era allowed for far more exposure to other cultures, which would help explain some of the deviation from strict tradition. The lesser degree of isolation seems to lessen conservative tendencies.

The rebellion discussed in this chapter shows rejection of patriarchal moulds and lack of agency, but also shows importance given to values that traditions represent, with the key difference being a choice in which traditions live on, how and when, and what the values behind certain traditions are. 'Rebellion', in literature and in interviews, seems to be both bold and conflictive but also at times "more discussive change", as said by one of my interviewees, Aparna Patel.

Zarina Patel, aged 81, living in Nairobi, was part of a political underground movement in the late 70s and described it as "one of the best times of her life", where she met like-minded people for the first time. As a youth, she did not interact very much with her own Bohra community and suffered much scrutiny for being outspoken, and later for being a divorcée. Her family were fairly liberal, allowed her to dress as she liked, travel to other parts of Africa and the UK and to play rugby, she always "had a choice". Her male ancestors are famous political activists in Kenya. These aspects possibly sowed the seeds of her feminist, racial and political activism. Stories such as hers dispel the myths of South Asian women, or women in general, as subservient followers. Numerous South Asian women have been in freedom struggles, be it through active protest, or orchestrating things and aiding behind the scenes. Zarina made sure to emphasize this as well, wishing more people to see the value and strength of women. She also expressed hope for the future, seeing more feminism and LGBTQ+ activism in today's youth.

Though rather segregated in her upbringing due to growing up in colonial Mombasa, still had more liberal tendencies in her family than in interviewees younger than her. Her story shows

that while the generational trajectories and tendencies I have mentioned do prove true overall, variations and expectations in research are inevitable. My sample is a very small one and each personal story is complex and different. Nonetheless, these types of deviation from the norm are exactly the sort of stories that show the rise of modernity and inciting of change.

Another example of this is of my mother (also an interviewee), raised in Kenya in a strict Swaminarayan[5] family, but with access to multi-faceted literature and education, who outwardly rebelled. When in her early 20s, she didn't show up to arranged marriage meetings after which her family simply gave up. In her teenage years, she refused to obey period taboos. Period taboo was seen in differing degrees in participants, but the general trend was the younger the participant, the less likely they were involved with it. Most resisted it to varying degrees, making efforts to not impose it on their children. My mother rebelled very controversially, she would touch people and things she wasn't supposed to, meaning she spread her 'impurity' and refused to use cloth to wash her blood to 'cleanse her sin'. My mother's refusal resulted in her mother buying sanitary napkins for her and later her younger sisters when they started menstruating.

Something I noticed was once a woman incited change, she had paved the way for other women to follow suit, whether she intended to or not. My mother and Zarina are two bold examples of more conflictive rebellion, but numerous other actively protested. Many interviewees did not intend to be inspirational but then took on the role, being someone, other ethnic Indian women identify with, and encouraging open discussion and expression for many South Asian women in East Africa.

This inciting of change indicates the strong sense of community in the East African Indian Diaspora. Even though Kenya has numerous Indians, many still consider it a relatively small community in that many people know each other. In Tanzania, Uganda and especially Burundi and Rwanda, the communities are smaller and often shrinking due to people settling in the West, meaning word gets around fast.

Nagar (2000) discusses how and why public acts of resistance and gossip are central, explaining that in choosing public spaces such as community prayer places and gatherings, one makes an explicit statement and deviates from the norm, not being a woman 'in line'.

Community gossip and public domain are also common themes in intermarriage. I observed the tendency of examples being strong in the case of intermarriage. Once one or two exemplary long-term inter-racial/inter-religious marriages were established, they became far less controversial. However, should the marriage not work out, which some participants cited, then the community reinforces conservative tendencies. Once again, it is key to note that the community has the power to forge progress, but also to stunt it. Nagar (2000) also discusses this, in that gossip can be an act of resistance and spread liberating words, but also a limiting force to maintain oppressive status quos.

Aziza Jaffer, aged 37, and her husband were the first Hindu-Ismaili marriage in Bujumbura's Indian community. She emphasised she was still an Ismaili, but actively participated with both communities. She tended to consider her case to be more in the 'discussive change' category than rebellion, which was the case for many interviewees, with only four explicitly calling themselves 'rebels'. She said she spoke to her in-laws about why it was unfair that women ate after the men at dinner, and changed the tradition, wanting to encourage the whole family having conversations. Michel (2015, pg. 247) also mentions this change occurring. This is in line with what Sheida said about listening to the younger generation.

[5] A Hindu sect

Her story showed a clear change in values and passing them on. She discussed how her current husband was her first love in her teens from whom she was then separated due to travelling abroad for studying. She told me she was then engaged to a Pakistani Ismaili, which was something both she and her parents wanted as faith and community was very important to them. Yet, Aziza's family, and later Aziza herself, realised he wasn't right for her, prompting her to realise how much "what is on the inside" matters.

> "I remember when they told me he wasn't right for me. I was upset, 'well what do you want? He's Ismaili and comes from a good family'. But ultimately they were right."

She said his personality and commitment to her was not enough, and that her first Hindu love, though of different faith, was far more there for her than her Ismaili ex-fiancé. She thinks parents sometimes see these things when children don't, attributing it as being blinded by love and having a narrow vision of her future, determined by faith and not character. She now wishes to pass down the importance of family and being what she considers to be a good person. She mentioned how partaking in religious Hindu activities was her way of respecting her husband's family customs, believing that ultimately, we all believe in the same god, that we all look to higher power but that we then express this in different ways. This is particularly noteworthy given her Muslim background, which does not allow imagery in worship.

Aparna Patel, 51, married a black Kikuyu[6]. She too expresses importance of values of what it is to be a kind and good member of society rather than religious ritual. Both mentioned being shunned by community and parents taking a while to come around. But in the end, they are both happy with their choices.

The initial scandal and novelty shock seems to wear off after a while. Both Aparna and Aziza also mentioned younger women who fell in love outside the community coming to them for guidance. Reflecting that contemporarily this is not fully normal or easy, but that the younger generation have more examples to look to, and more support.

There is a clear tendency of values reflecting fewer sexist ideas of morality and feminine purity the younger the generation. With this, there also comes choice rather compulsion to participate in religious ritual and partake in Indian manners of dressing. Appearance and certain specific traditions seem to be key to partake in it on occasion to understand heritage but are not being seen as markers of one's morality.

An interesting phenomenon I noticed was that at times elders seemed to retain conservative traditions but then choose not to pass these on to their children. For example, some women found that due to the way they'd been raised, they sometimes felt the need to tell their daughters to act in the restrictive manners that they had been compelled to, as that is what they were raised to believe was 'proper'. But since seeing these as sexist, they now hold their tongue. Another example is an interviewee, Urvi, whose aunt lived with her family in her childhood. "She always wore white and we never questioned why she wasn't married or why she was living with us". It was only when Urvi was older that she realised it was because her aunt had been widowed at an early age. Yet, her family had not instilled these practices, knowledge, and beliefs to the next generation.

This idea contrasts the idea of the older generation against the younger, a common narrative. Though often true, there are also numerous cases of the younger generation being supported by the previous to modernise. This also relates to people not wanting to be seen as regressive. This shows the clear desire to recognise and continue heritage while

[6] Major Kenyan tribe

simultaneously encouraging modernity. It shows there is an effort to not have tradition and modernity be opposing forces.

A key notion concerning modernity that I asked interviewees about was feminism. I was surprised to find most believed in feminist values of choice and women as equals but did not identify as feminists. Only two considered themselves feminists. This lack of identifying with the term has to do with what many felt was a sort of over-compensation in their experiences and perceptions of feminism.

> "We didn't have to go so far as to renounce everything about being women". - Mumtaz (66)

In most participants' vision of modernity, domesticity, motherhood, and heteronormative ideals of beauty were still things they held dear. An example put forward by Majhaila and Doğan (2019, pg. 71) discuss young Hindustani women wearing the *tika*, a red dot that used to mark whether a woman was married but is now often simply a marker of Indian Identity, as well as a trend seen in Bollywood. Thus, we see traditional elements are still common but adapted in meaning and practice. Tradition is embraced but whether one is married is not as significant and choice is encouraged. Work-life balances and women's agency within the familial domain are also sought after, yet traditional notions of family closeness were still important to interviewees, even to the childless and divorced interviewees.

Something else interviewees of my parents' and grandparents' generation mentioned was access to information and the internet. They said that it is harder to control and shape your children as you want with all the diverse information they have, and that that was something they had to accept.

Women gaining agency and independence is done outside of the community, through new means impossible before. The internet is often a tool that increases freedom of women and younger people. There is no extended communal pressure, "so the women bloggers in our study may feel the need to engage in traditional practices in their offline lives, but their online identities emerge as areligious, liberal, politically engaged." (Sahoo and De Kruijf 2015, pg. 44). However, many take another path online and openly express their diasporic identity, having found a point of empowerment in being able to choose which parts of their culture they retain and express.

The last key notion to modernity is the connections to and perceptions of India. Most did not feel like they fully fit in there, always branded as the Non-resident Indian (NRI). As covered in Chapter 2, most did not identify as Indian, but as their East African nationality. Or as a sort of plural, global identity. While wishing in some areas to move away from tradition and the Indian identity, they are still linked to it heavily. They still look to the 'homeland' at times, be it out of curiosity or for a sort of inspiration.

Numerous participants found that India was surprisingly modern upon their visiting, at least in urban areas. This reflects the ideas of the diaspora remaining conservative to preserve identity while the homeland often evolves. Even in rural areas, they did often observe less conviction and meaning in ritual, that they were done 'more for the sake of it'. One or two participants in their 60s even went as far to say Indian women were too modern and westernised, not holding onto their heritage enough.

Regardless of their extent to which they found India modern or the extent to which they related to women there, most did enjoy India, if only as a tourist, and appreciated their roots. It seems the ethnic Indian women of East Africa hold onto their ancestral identity to an extent, which can be traced back to their ancestors who first migrated, wishing not to lose

tradition. But it has undeniably changed as their identity is less dependent on the homeland, and as they are exposed to more modern ideas of womanhood, agency, modernity, and freedom. To say that the Indian Diaspora of East Africa has fully modernised and no longer has any conservatism or repressive tendencies towards women would be incorrect. However, the key is that there is more open dialogue about it and more will to change.

This open dialogue is particularly prevalent in a recurring sensitive issue of marriage, where fears of lack of communal preservation are strong. However, there are now clear examples of making new blended identities and communal mixing that do not result in complete loss of tradition and culture. We also see that the values behind certain traditions and cultures adapt to pave a new path. Thus, women still have key roles in cultural preservation, but have more say in how this is done.

5. Conclusion

> We see many contradictions as women encounter and negotiate with multiple conflicting situations from the public and the private spheres of both the homeland and the host lands, in the process, shifting their perspectives from traditional to contemporary. (Pande 2018, pg. 10)

This detailed research proved useful in understanding the nuanced gendered pressure of culture conservation. The ability to speak to women not only of different ages, but ideas of life and womanhood, was extremely valuable. While the data is expansive and diverse, with much individual variation, there are some clear patterns and overall tendencies that can be seen. To be an Indian East African woman is undoubtedly a unique experience. It is a complex identity shaped by generational experience being both Indian and African, recent shifts in ideas of womanhood in the world, international travel, and family values. Nonetheless, the data also revealed to me a surprising number of very universal female experiences, and universal diasporic experiences.

One of the most striking things in this research was the extent to which interviewees wished to distinguish themselves, their families, or their communities as unique, more ‘progressive’ or ‘liberal’. Note that while wanting to set themselves apart, they are defining themselves in a manner that still revolves around their community and perceptions of it. This would at times result in women saying things that were contradictory. For example, saying they never felt gendered pressure but then mentioning a specific tradition they had to do as women. This could reflect that it isn’t something they even really consider. Indeed, some participants did not seem very used to talking about their perceptions of gender and identity as it was merely their reality and was something they rarely put into words. Though, on the other hand, many were willing and eager to share, pleased at my specific field of research. The desire to be modern and to modernise seemed to both hold back and accelerate progress for women’s freedom. This is because some may simply proclaim modernity in the name of this effort, rather than truly make it. But many also use their desire to make real change. Regardless, it seems that there was an overall image of East African Indians as conservative, an image seemingly shared by those in and out of the community.

It is noteworthy that there is often a strong tendency of over simplifying narratives of female diasporic identity. An example is the old vs the new, while often older generations were more oppressive, there are also instances of the older and younger generations collaborating to realise this vision of modernity.

Regarding the question of the extent to which Indian women of the East African Indian Diaspora were seen and treated as cultural receptacles, the interviewees and source material showed me this was very much the case, especially historically. This also confirms the idea of exaggerated emphasis on female identity and domesticity in the diaspora reflecting a yearning for homeland ideas and traditions. Contemporarily, nine interviewees saw India as modern, showing the diaspora as more conservative to conserve identity and distinguish oneself in the host society.

Though integration has increased through the generations, I found it striking how this diaspora was seemingly very self-contained. Despite an increased intermingling of ethnicities, there was still a standard of Indian womanhood for many. In terms of Muslim and Hindu distinguishments, there were surprisingly few. Despite the two seeing themselves as very different, their heteronormative values of feminine beauty, ‘proper’ conduct were not different in my research. This could also be due to the proclaimed progressiveness, as well as the fact that none of the Muslims, apart from one, strictly adhered to Sharia conduct or any sort of head covering.

The standards of being moral ‘good’ women is upheld in Indian community, often connected through gossip. This degree of isolation and self-reference is perplexing considering numerous women identified primarily with their East African nationality. Interviewees seldom discussed the host society and ideas of what African women were supposed to be, other than they were not supposed to be like them, even though this is in itself ambiguous. Few women pointed to colonial conduct, keeping the higher-class Indian women apart and ‘protected’ as being the cause of this divide.

The ambiguity can often be seen and felt by interviewees. Ideas of how to ‘sit properly’ and other ideas of feminine conduct were surprisingly vague, yet pervasive and powerful all the same. The word ‘vague’ is used as many expressed struggling to understand these things in youth and never really being given adequate reasoning beyond ‘that’s just not how things are’. This can also be seen in the idea that women need to be protected. In many instances it is true. But it also reflects a need to keep women separated from others, so her ideas and image are not polluted. As mentioned, this is particularly of note in higher-class women, for whom it is even more important to have a proper image to reflect status.

Gendered traditions upholding older values were observed in many participants, this generally tended to be stricter the older the participant. Examples of gendered traditions can be more universal, such as women generally being expected to do more housework, even when also working. But others are much more specific, such as a particular Hindu girl hairstyle, a long braid nourished with oil is the classic example that multiple participants mentioned. Though particular traditions were at times specific, they all seemed to embody the value of proper conduct and image, and these were maintained for preservation of identity. While traditions and rituals may be very specific to a particular community, the sentiment of fear of loss motivating these practices is a universal one.

This fear of loss was clear when participants spoke about marriage and raising children. Pressure of image and social conduct exacerbated for many upon marriage. Moreover, intermarriage is a source of conflict. However, as covered in chapter four, it is becoming more common, and the youth have examples to look to. Whereas previously, intermarriage was often not even conceived of, with all participants saying they were either explicitly told or knew there was an implicit expectation of them marrying within the community. This indicates the communal drive for preservation and fear of loss was present from a young age.

I noticed little differences in the patterns seen in stories from Hindus and Muslims and different regions of East Africa. However, many were pleased they were not from another community that they considered to be more backward. It seemed some interviewees thought it was other sub-communities, and not their community, that contributed towards diasporic conservatism. I found that variation in degrees of conservatism were more familial than communal. In certain cases, perceived causes can also become real if acted upon thusly. Some participants mentioned fear of loss of identity was also a perceived threat more than a real one but acting upon it nonetheless affects people.

Apart from one current first generation migrant to East Africa, many interviewees and their families had been in East Africa for generations. Over time, the newer generations came to feel more East African. My research seems to show that as diasporic identity develops, so does that of its women. Many identified less and less with India and thus started to skip some of the traditions and focus on the values they interpreted these traditions embodied. Numerous participants discussed the value of being a ‘good person’ and understanding the value of family. Thus, there is definite room to express through ancestral languages, Indian festivals, food, and suchlike, but it is not as essential. Equally, numerous interviewees who were forced to partake in traditions, often consciously made the effort to rid their daughters of oppressive ones such as period taboo, and to allow them to choose. Having said this, some also choose to become even more traditional than their parents, particularly in the West, as

an effort to reclaim identity in a social climate often more accepting of diversity of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This is seen particularly in Muslim youth, corresponding with a wider global movement.

Something the generation of my parents discussed in interviews was the sheer access to information and travel my generation has. Many described their children as still aware of their Indian roots, but increasingly possessing ‘global identities’. I personally can say I strongly identify with India, England, and Kenya, yet do not feel fully aligned with any, and that I definitely feel a freedom in choosing which capacity I wish to maintain tradition. The generational story and reflection of values in tradition show that ‘tradition’ need not have such a limited idea, but that it can be adapted. From my research, I have gathered that women are still very much cultural symbols all over the world but that now they have increasingly more power to shape tradition outside of the patriarchal model. So, the pressure aspect, while still very present, is lessened. The standards of women in terms of heteronormative beauty and motherhood do not seem to have changed too greatly. There are gendered pressures that do exist, and that also change form to an extent. This is seen in how women were once pressured to the confines of the home, but are now burdened with work, domesticity, and motherhood all at once.

With this in mind, the question of the future is intriguing. As covered, marriage is a key point due to the fact that it is key in preserving communal identity. Though, not fully normalised, intermarriage is becoming more acceptable. Further, many of my generation also travel to study and emigrate to Western nations, Thus, the East African aspect identity seems to be going through a shift. As was the case with initial migrants and their descendants, as diasporic identity adapted, so did the roles of women. And as the roles of women adapt and become more free, diasporic identity also changes. The two are undoubtedly intertwined.

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Appendix 1 - Interview Questions

Family and Background

- How, why, and when did your family go to East Africa?
- Did your family have the intention of staying as long as they did? Why? (Did this differ from how long you actually stayed there?)

Integration

- Did you grow up around other Indians? How much? (School, community etc)
- Did you have 'local' friends? Did you interact with the local population?
- What languages do you speak? (Local/ancestral etc)
- Do you consider yourself Kenyan/Ugandan/Tanzanian? Why/Why not?
- Did you feel a stark difference between your home environment and the outside world?

Gender and Culture

- How much did your family practice your religion or culture? Was it strict?
- What are some gendered traditions in which you partook? (E.g. dress, cooking, period taboo etc)
- How strictly were these enforced?
- Did you ever feel a pressure to look and act as a 'Hindu/Muslim/Woman'?
- Who were your female role models and what did you emulate from them? (e.g. family, teachers, Bollywood etc)
- What were your relationships like with women of your community?
- How does this compare to women outside of your community?
- Which traditions are the most important to you to preserve your culture?
- What is your experience with feminism?

Connection to India

- Have you been to India? If so, when, and how often?
- Did you feel different to the people (women) there? Did you feel like you could fit in?
- Were the traditions the same in India as the ones you followed in East Africa?

Marriage and Family

- Were you allowed to be around men? (friendships or dating) If so, was this limited to Indian men (either explicit or implied)?
- Did you consider non-Indians as significant others? Why/not?
- Did marriage and family play a large role in your community?
- What were the familial expectations of you?
- What is your opinion and experience with intermarriage? (between Indian communities as well as native/foreign communities)
- How would you say intermarriage is perceived in your community?

Appendix 2 - List of Interviewees

Kenya

- **Chetal Patel**
  Age: 47
  3rd generation
  Hindu

- **Aparna Patel**
  Age: 50
  3rd generation
  Hindu

- **Zarina Patel**
  Age: 85
  3rd generation
  Muslim (Bohra)

- **Sultana Malik**
  Age: 51
  3rd generation
  Muslim (Ismaili)

- **Urvi Shah**
  Age: 50
  4th generation
  Jain

- **Nirmal Hirani**
  Age: 51
  1st generation
  Hindu

Uganda

- **Nina Raval Patel (Nani ben)**
  Age: 57
  1st generation
  Hindu

- **Rahanjanlee Shukla**
  Age: 23
  4th generation
  Hindu

- **Mumtaz Kassam**
  Age: 66
  2nd generation
  Muslim (Nashri)

- **Charu Divecha**
  Age: 50
  1st generation
  Hindu

Rwanda

- **Sheida Jaffer**
  Age: 68
  5th generation
  Muslim (Ismalili)

Burundi

- **Aziza Jaffer Sharma**
  Age: 37
  5th generation
  Muslim (Ismaili)

Tanzania

- **Dialla Kassam**
  Age: 54
  3rd generation
  Muslim (Ismalili)

- **Zhulobia Dhala**
  Age: 61
  5th generation
  Muslim (Ismalili)