

# Research paper on roles of women and men in chinese and indian society

[Countries](#), [India](#)



China and India are the two biggest single countries with highest population in the world. Like any other country in Asia, the two countries are characterized by the rich cultures that have been clearly defined over centuries of traditional allocation of roles by gender. The women and men in the two societies have been assigned defined roles that are similar in some aspects while in some parts, the roles are quite different. The two cultures have had conspicuous role allocations that historically are defined by scholars and thinkers alike. The main question of this essay is what are the roles of women and men in the Chinese and Indian societies?

### **Chinese gender allocation of roles**

The Chinese gender roles have been defined scholars who lived in centuries ago. Though the China is composed of hundreds of cultures, the thinking's of Confucius are widely adopted amongst the greater Chinese society.

Confucius defined the women roles into three main categories. Women are required to obey their fathers before marriage; they should obey their husbands in marriage and lastly their sons when their husbands are dead.

Filial piety is the root of virtue amongst the Chinese society with other moral and ethical virtues that were bestowed on men and women. Subsequent teachings and writings during the Ming dynasty were later to add more roles on women as compared to men. However, the foundation of gender roles amongst the two genders is based on teachings of Confucius.

The Chinese society views gender roles in terms of hierarchical pair of Yin and yang which means negative and positive respectively. The men were viewed to be strong while women were viewed as being weaker beings.

Confucius doctrines and imperial endorsement toughened the aspects of

women being the family caretaker while men were left to be the family bread-earners.

Modern Chinese culture has however moved from this line of thinking as more women take their role in education. However the traditional aspects still persist as more women are considered as caretakers and educators while men are given the generalised roles of being scientists and engineers. The transformation of the Chinese gender roles was perhaps more advanced by Chairman Mao Tse Tung who declared that men and women are all equal before the state. The women and men in this society for example receive the same pay for the same jobs they do.

## **Gender roles in Indian society**

India has a very distinct and different cultural role compared to china and the rest of Asian countries. Unlike the Chinese society, the women in India from ancient times to the have heard equal and even more important roles compared to china. These roles have been defined in various Indian religions and Hinduism being the most important religion, recognized women as the pillars of the society and religion. Several Indian gods are women and this shows how important women were valued in this society. An important aspect of women in the Indian culture is the bride price paying. The unique nature of this aspect of the Indian culture is that women are the ones who were required to pay bride price unlike other ancient and traditional Chinese culture, where men were required to pay bride price; the position of women in the Indian society was highly valued.

During the Vedic times, education amongst the cultures was equal availed to

all the genders. Religious activities and events also allowed women to participate fully alongside men. Unlike the Chinese culture where women were not allowed to participate in some religious activities, Hinduism allowed women to study Vedas and even participate in religious sacrifices.

Furthermore, women were allowed to be teachers of the Hindu Holy Scriptures.

During the classical Hinduism formulated regulations which defined and regulated the roles of women and men in the society especially in regard to the caste system. As long as a man got married and produced a son, he had fulfilled his societal duties. Interestingly, the Indian society before the British rule, men were allowed to be in relationships with each other. The British rule is credited to have destroyed this form of relationship by illegitimizing same sex relationships. Although Hinduism did not recognize this kind of relationships, their existence flourished according to British religious scholars in India.

## **Similarities in gender roles amongst the Chinese and Indian societies**

A common aspect of the roles of gender amongst the Chinese and Indian society was that only the male child were allowed to inherit his parents property upon the parents death. It is quite evident that society denied women a chance to enjoy the property that they work hard for. These practices are not only traditional but the modern Indian and Chinese society still does not allow women to inherit their parent's property. However modern practices that are slowly coming into effect like the writing of the will have gradually changed the society.

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Another similarity between the two societies is that the male gender was and is still given preference over the women gender in terms of religious roles.

The Chinese and Indian women were given roles in leading religious sacrifices. Buddhism is an example of a religion that allows men to be the sole keepers of the religion. As much as Indian women were given equal opportunities with men in terms of religious practices, the main religious aspects such as leading religious events is a male role.

Another commonality between the Indian and Chinese society is in the role of household chores. In both societies, household chores are exclusively done by women. Women in this societies are expected to give birth to heirs of the mans legacy, take care of the man and maintain the children or bring up the children in accordance to ethical, moral and religious rules laid down by the society. Men are expected by the society to provide for the family as a whole but in traditional times, it was women in both societies who bore the greatest responsibility of providing and maintaining the family as a unit. The Chinese and Indian men were also expected by society to have high moral and ethical values as they had the responsibility to protect and maintain the family or clan name.

### Conclusion

The Chinese and Indian allocation of roles is adapted from long traditions that have been passed from one generation to another over time. The two societies reflect the reality of gender roles in most Asian societies and their rapid transformation over a short period of time is a model for other societies worldwide. The differences and similarities in both societies have a central

significance in philosophical and sociological studies and gender mainstreaming in both cultures and others alike.

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