

Women in Durban, South Africa: Family and Marriage as Anchorage for Change

Anand Singh and Nadene Harisunker¹

*Anthropology, University of KwaZulu-Natal, ¹Department of Anthropology,
Howard College Campus, King George v Avenue, Durban, 4000, South Africa
E-mail: singhan@ukzn.ac.za*

KEYWORDS Marriage. Family. Women. Indian Diaspora. South Africa. Social Change

ABSTRACT This paper is an attempt to capture the socio-cultural changes that have occurred among Hindu women whose ancestral roots are from the Hindi speaking areas of North India, now settled in Durban, on the east coast of South Africa. Data was gathered from interviews with 40 women, whose ages ranged from 20 to 84 years, essentially representing three generations. Our interest lay in comparing and contrasting the educational levels, values and practices to which the women subscribed. The purpose was to demonstrate how increased exposure to education reflected at least two fundamental issues in the study of women in the South African segment of the Indian Diaspora viz. conflictual situations of coexistence in subservience to family values together with a concomitant rise in individualism; and the need for a multidimensional model to assess change and continuity among people who are products of conservative value systems operating in a fast changing world which nonetheless remains interwoven with their domestic lifestyles.