

# **Giving voice to the agency of *homemakers* within indigenous business communities: A microstoria**

Jitesh Mohnot <sup>1</sup> and Sankalp Pratap <sup>2</sup>

## **Abstract**

Extant scholarship on indigenous business communities of India explicates their core values, systems and operating principles that enables them to perform on an ongoing basis. In doing so, they limit the role of women, their skills and labor, to the household only and not viewing in anyway interacting with what businessmen do in the bazaar. However, our ethnographic inquiry of an indigenous business community in a postcolonial society revealed that homemakers play an ongoing crucial role within the framework of vernacular capitalism. Our microstoria provides an antenarrative to the dominant patriarchal view, through the stories of *Marwari homemakers*, whose daily labor within the household space characterized by their skill set were found to be harmonious to and facilitative of key commercial principles of Marwari business community in India. We show how the homemakers' daily labor goes into the making of the family life that is in tandem with the indigenous commercial values and strategies of Marwaris such as frugality, immunity against volatility and intelligence gathering. Towards this, we also highlight the girl-child rearing practices of Marwaris that genders them into womanhood, inculcating long-held inter-generational logics of the community. Our microstoria, through analysis, provides voice to the agency of homemakers within the context of vernacular capitalism by highlighting their overlooked contribution in keeping the wheels of capital rolling.

**Keywords:** Decoloniality, Vernacular Capitalism, Homemakers, Indigenous Business Communities, Microstoria, Marwaris

---

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, O P Jindal Global University, Sonipat, India | jiteshmohnot@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup> Associate Professor, Indian Institute of Technology Jodhpur, India | pratap.sankalp@gmail.com