

CONTEXT – When and where was the source produced? Why was it created? What was it trying to achieve? Can we consider this to be a reliable (trustworthy) source?

UNLOCKING THE SOURCE

Hindu attitudes towards the claim that “Traditional gender roles in the family are no longer relevant in society today” are varied and shaped by both scripture and modern practice.

Traditionally, Hinduism has emphasised clearly defined roles within the family, influenced by Varnashramadharma. The Laws of Manu describe the ideal wife as obedient to her husband, dedicated to household duties, and responsible for raising children, while men were expected to provide, protect, and lead in religious matters. The Ramayana often reinforces these ideals, presenting Sita as the devoted and self-sacrificing wife.

However, many modern Hindus argue that these roles no longer reflect contemporary society. Hindu reformers such as Swami Vivekananda highlighted the spiritual equality of men and women, pointing to the Upanishadic idea that Atman (soul) is beyond gender. Texts like the Bhagavad Gita emphasise performing one’s dharma according to personal qualities (guna) rather than rigid social expectations, which can support more flexible roles in modern families.

Some Hindus reinterpret figures like Sita and Parvati not as submissive, but as strong and independent, balancing household responsibilities with power and devotion. Feminist Hindus argue that clinging to traditional roles can perpetuate inequality, while others see value in preserving them for stability and continuity.

Overall, Hindu perspectives range from upholding traditional models to embracing equality, with many stressing that dharma evolves with time and context.

[Dr Joshua Andrews, Eastern Religions Lecturer at Bangor University, 2025]

LIMITATIONS – What viewpoint does it reflect? What might be left out? Whose perspective isn’t represented?

SUMMARY – What is the source saying? What is its key argument, claim, or teaching?

EVALUATION – How useful is it for understanding the issue or question in the assessment? What can we learn from it?

COMPARISON – How does this compare to other ethical and religious teachings that you have studied?

CONTEXT – When and where was the source produced? Why was it created? What was it trying to achieve? Can we consider this to be a reliable (trustworthy) source?

UNLOCKING THE SOURCE

Islamic attitudes towards the claim that “Traditional gender roles in the family are no longer relevant in society today” are diverse, reflecting both scriptural teachings and cultural practice.

The Qur’an emphasises equality in spiritual worth: “Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous” (49:13). Both men and women are accountable for their deeds, and both are promised reward for faith and good actions (33:35). This provides a basis for rejecting rigid, unequal gender roles. However, the Qur’an also sets out differentiated responsibilities in the family. For example, men are described as “protectors and maintainers of women” (4:34), traditionally interpreted as the husband being the financial provider, while women often took primary responsibility for household and childcare duties.

Some Muslims hold that these roles remain relevant, arguing they provide harmony and balance within the family, with each gender fulfilling complementary duties. The example of the Prophet Muhammad’s family life is sometimes used to support this, as he both worked and took part in household tasks, showing partnership as well as leadership.

Others, particularly reformist and feminist Muslims, argue that cultural practices have exaggerated gender divisions. They stress that Islam’s principles of justice (adl) and mutual consultation (shura) allow men and women to share responsibilities equally. In many Muslim societies today, women pursue education, work outside the home, and play leading community roles.

Overall, while some Muslims continue to affirm traditional roles, many believe they are not binding and that Islam’s core values support more equal family relationships today.

[Rachel Healand-Sloan, Operations Manager at the National Centre of Religious Education for Wales, 2025]

LIMITATIONS – What viewpoint does it reflect? What might be left out? Whose perspective isn’t represented?

SUMMARY – What is the source saying? What is its key argument, claim, or teaching?

EVALUATION – How useful is it for understanding the issue or question in the assessment? What can we learn from it?

COMPARISON – How does this compare to other ethical and religious teachings that you have studied?

CONTEXT – When and where was the source produced? Why was it created? What was it trying to achieve? Can we consider this to be a reliable (trustworthy) source?

UNLOCKING THE SOURCE

Buddhist attitudes towards the claim that “Traditional gender roles in the family are no longer relevant in society today” vary across schools and cultures.

In early Buddhist texts, such as the Pali Canon, the Buddha taught that men and women are equally capable of achieving enlightenment, since all beings have anatta (no fixed self) and nibbana transcends gender. This provides a foundation for rejecting rigid gender roles as ultimately illusory. For instance, the Therigatha records the spiritual insights of early Buddhist nuns, showing women could live beyond domestic roles.

However, in many traditional Buddhist societies, cultural expectations reinforced gender divisions. In Theravāda countries such as Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Myanmar, men were encouraged to spend time as monks, even temporarily, as part of their duty to gain merit for their families. Women, by contrast, were expected to focus on domestic responsibilities and supporting the Sangha through household work and offerings. Although the Buddha founded the Bhikkhuni Sangha (order of nuns), the garudhammas (extra rules for nuns) reveal the persistence of patriarchal norms in early Indian society.

However, some Buddhists may argue that traditional family roles are no longer relevant. Engaged Buddhists stress compassion (karuna) and equality in all relationships, advocating shared responsibilities in the household. Western Buddhists, influenced by feminism, highlight that clinging to fixed roles contradicts the teaching of impermanence (anicca).

Overall, while Buddhism’s core teachings encourage transcending rigid roles, interpretations differ between conservative traditions and reformist movements seeking gender equality.

[Dr Joshua Andrews, Eastern Religions Lecturer at Bangor University, 2025]

LIMITATIONS – What viewpoint does it reflect? What might be left out? Whose perspective isn’t represented?

SUMMARY – What is the source saying? What is its key argument, claim, or teaching?

EVALUATION – How useful is it for understanding the issue or question in the assessment? What can we learn from it?

COMPARISON – How does this compare to other ethical and religious teachings that you have studied?

CONTEXT – When and where was the source produced? Why was it created? What was it trying to achieve? Can we consider this to be a reliable (trustworthy) source?

UNLOCKING THE SOURCE

Jewish attitudes towards the claim that “Traditional gender roles in the family are no longer relevant in society today” differ widely across denominations. In traditional Judaism, gender roles in the family were clearly defined. The Torah and later rabbinic writings emphasised the husband as responsible for providing, protecting, and leading religious observance, while the wife was primarily responsible for raising children, keeping a kosher home, and lighting Shabbat candles. The Tenakh presents women such as Sarah, Rebecca, and Leah as central to family life, while the Talmud often reinforces expectations of women’s domestic responsibilities. In Orthodox Judaism today, many continue to uphold these roles, arguing that they provide structure, stability, and continuity with halakhah (Jewish law).

However, other branches of Judaism interpret gender roles differently. Reform and Liberal Judaism emphasise equality, arguing that men and women should share family and religious duties. Many Reform families, for example, encourage both parents to work outside the home and to share domestic and childcare responsibilities. Some also reinterpret traditional rituals, allowing women to read from the Torah or become rabbis, as expressions of family and community equality.

Feminist Jewish thinkers argue that clinging to traditional roles can perpetuate inequality, while others stress that Jewish values of tzedek (justice) and b’tzelem Elohim (being created in the image of God) call for flexibility and fairness in family life.

Overall, Jewish attitudes range from affirming traditional roles as timeless to seeing them as outdated, with many communities adapting to contemporary expectations of equality.

[Dr Gareth Evans-Jones, Philosophy and Religion Lecturer at Bangor University, 2025]

LIMITATIONS – What viewpoint does it reflect? What might be left out? Whose perspective isn’t represented?

SUMMARY – What is the source saying? What is its key argument, claim, or teaching?

EVALUATION – How useful is it for understanding the issue or question in the assessment? What can we learn from it?

COMPARISON – How does this compare to other ethical and religious teachings that you have studied?

CONTEXT – When and where was the source produced? Why was it created? What was it trying to achieve? Can we consider this to be a reliable (trustworthy) source?

UNLOCKING THE SOURCE

Sikh attitudes towards the claim that “Traditional gender roles in the family are no longer relevant in society today” are shaped by the strong emphasis on equality found in Sikh scripture and history.

The Guru Granth Sahib repeatedly affirms the spiritual equality of women and men, with Guru Nanak declaring, “Why call her inferior, from whom kings are born?” This directly challenges any belief that women’s roles should be confined to the household. The Sikh Gurus encouraged women to participate fully in religious life, contribute to decision-making in the sangat (community), and take part in seva (selfless service). Sikh history records women such as Mai Bhago, who led soldiers in battle, as role models of strength and leadership. Despite this, cultural traditions within Punjabi society sometimes reinforced more traditional family roles, where women were expected to focus on raising children and managing the household while men worked outside. These expectations were cultural rather than scriptural.

In modern Sikhism, many argue that such roles are no longer relevant. Women today lead kirtan, serve on gurdwara committees, and pursue careers alongside men. Feminist Sikhs emphasise that clinging to old gender roles risks undermining the Gurus’ vision of equality.

Overall, Sikh teachings strongly support equality and reject restrictive gender roles, but cultural practices have sometimes created tension with these ideals.

[Dr Joshua Andrews, Eastern Religions Lecturer at Bangor University, 2025]

LIMITATIONS – What viewpoint does it reflect? What might be left out? Whose perspective isn’t represented?

SUMMARY – What is the source saying? What is its key argument, claim, or teaching?

EVALUATION – How useful is it for understanding the issue or question in the assessment? What can we learn from it?

COMPARISON – How does this compare to other ethical and religious teachings that you have studied?

CONTEXT - When and where was the source produced? Why was it created? What was it trying to achieve? Can we consider this to be a reliable (trustworthy) source?

UNLOCKING THE SOURCE

Attitudes within the Church in Wales towards the claim that "Traditional gender roles in the family are no longer relevant in society today" reflect both biblical teaching and contemporary views on equality.

Traditionally, Christian family life was shaped by passages such as Ephesians 5:22-25, which speaks of wives submitting to their husbands and husbands loving their wives as Christ loved the Church. For centuries this was interpreted as endorsing complementary but unequal roles, with men as breadwinners and spiritual heads of the household and women as carers and nurturers. Some within the Church in Wales still value these roles, believing they provide stability and reflect God's design for family life.

However, the Church in Wales today strongly emphasises equality. It ordains women as priests and bishops, showing that leadership is not restricted by gender. Many within the Church interpret biblical texts in their historical context, arguing that the central message is mutual love and service rather than rigid hierarchy. Jesus' treatment of women in the Gospels, as disciples, witnesses and equals, also provides a model for partnership rather than subordination.

Therefore, many Anglicans in Wales see traditional gender roles in the family as outdated. Instead they stress shared responsibilities based on love, respect and individual gifts, reflecting broader Christian principles of justice and equality.

[Dr Gareth Evans-Jones, Philosophy and Religion Lecturer at Bangor University, 2025]

LIMITATIONS - What viewpoint does it reflect? What might be left out? Whose perspective isn't represented?

SUMMARY - What is the source saying? What is its key argument, claim, or teaching?

EVALUATION - How useful is it for understanding the issue or question in the assessment? What can we learn from it?

COMPARISON - How does this compare to other ethical and religious teachings that you have studied?

CONTEXT – When and where was the source produced? Why was it created? What was it trying to achieve? Can we consider this to be a reliable (trustworthy) source?

UNLOCKING THE SOURCE

Catholic attitudes towards the claim that “Traditional gender roles in the family are no longer relevant in society today” reflect both long-standing teachings and modern developments.

Traditionally, Catholic teaching placed strong emphasis on the family as the “domestic Church.” Men were often seen as heads of the household and providers, while women were expected to care for children and manage the home. Passages such as Ephesians 5:22–25, which speaks of wives submitting to their husbands and husbands loving their wives, were taken to support complementary but unequal roles. The Catholic Church has long upheld the importance of motherhood as a vocation, viewing the raising of children in the faith as a sacred duty.

However, Catholic teaching also stresses the equal dignity of men and women. The Catechism states that both are created in the image of God and share the same human dignity. The Second Vatican Council affirmed the importance of partnership in marriage, highlighting mutual love and respect rather than rigid hierarchy. Pope Francis has also spoken of the need for equality and cooperation between men and women in the family and wider society.

Many Catholics today believe that traditional gender roles are less relevant and that responsibilities in the family should be shared according to personal gifts and circumstances. Others continue to uphold traditional roles as valuable for stability and continuity.

Overall, Catholic attitudes range from affirming older models to embracing shared equality, with both views grounded in the Church’s wider teachings on love and dignity.

[Dr Gareth Evans-Jones, Philosophy and Religion Lecturer at Bangor University, 2025]

LIMITATIONS – What viewpoint does it reflect? What might be left out? Whose perspective isn’t represented?

SUMMARY – What is the source saying? What is its key argument, claim, or teaching?

EVALUATION – How useful is it for understanding the issue or question in the assessment? What can we learn from it?

COMPARISON – How does this compare to other ethical and religious teachings that you have studied?

CONTEXT - When and where was the source produced? Why was it created? What was it trying to achieve? Can we consider this to be a reliable (trustworthy) source?

UNLOCKING THE SOURCE

LIMITATIONS - What viewpoint does it reflect? What might be left out? Whose perspective isn't represented?

SUMMARY - What is the source saying? What is its key argument, claim, or teaching?

EVALUATION - How useful is it for understanding the issue or question in the assessment? What can we learn from it?

COMPARISON - How does this compare to other ethical and religious teachings that you have studied?