ever being an architect and is constantly stressed by her overbearing in laws. She is however, determined that her daughters will have the chance to make their own choices about their own futures.

This of course is one of the more happy stories. There are countless others where intelligent, capable and talented women have had to squash their real selves to become ideal wives or mothers, that too without being appreciated or respected. They love their spouses and children but deep down there is that heap of regret and wistfulness for a life where they are treated as individuals and in which they find out what they are capable of. I wonder how many parents out there are filled with remorse for not allowing their daughters to pursue their dreams. I wonder how many parents are ripped with shame and regret for handing their children to strangers to be abused or even killed. I suspect there are many.

Thankfully things are changing though not nearly fast enough. With greater education and employment opportunities girls and women are seen less of a burden and more of a support both financially and emotionally for parents. As partial or sole breadwinners of the household, they are treated with greater respect and are valued a lot more.

Most of the people I know who have daughters are quite happy with only a daughter or daughters. They give their girls the best of everything material and non-material. Most of all they give them their unconditional love, support and the confidence that they are just as capable as their male counterparts to be whatever they want to be. So it's not just singing or dancing lessons our young girls are taking but courses in self defence or foreign languages. None of these parents hanker for sons but are proud of the fact that they have daughters. The best part is that it's not just the mothers who are so supportive but doting fathers who have managed to discard all their chauvinism behind when it comes to their daughters - a definite victory for women's emancipation!

