

Interviewee: Radhika Chavan (Kept her maiden name when she got married, despite cultural norm)

Interviewer: Rhea Jain

[Project explained, consent given] *So, I know I've talked to you briefly about the project we are doing. I thought you would be a great person to talk to because of some of your choices. How long have you and Dev been married?* Well, I think it will be 16 years next October. So quite some time. *Oh wow, that is a while. Did you guys get married in the U.S. or in India?* We had a pretty traditional wedding in India. You know, both our families are from Bombay so it was easier to have the wedding there. As you know it was the "girl next door" type situation. [laughs] *Yeah that's actually really cute. So when you got married did you change your name?* Well, no I did not. *Why not?* I had gone to McGill University with my maiden name, and started working with my maiden name. I felt my career was progressing quickly and I wanted to keep the name that I had been using. I had always been progressive, as was my mother. She was a huge influence in my life and always a huge feminist.

*So there were no cultural issues with the fact that you had not taken his name?* Well Bombay has always been metropolitan and I wouldn't say very progressive, but certainly more advanced than many other places in India. In Indian culture when a woman traditionally gets married she moves in with her husband's family and takes on his family name and his family identity. Dev and I were living in America and were not taking the most traditional route, but there was certainly some cultural tension. *So your families supported your choice? Or at least mostly supported it?* Yeah, my mother has a lot of feminist idealism and she supported my choice. I am not quite sure how his family reacted to it, but I'm sure they realized it was for my career. I know his mother gets a little uncomfortable with the topic, but when we gave the kids his last name I think it eased her worries a little. *Did you ever think of doing something else with the kids last names?* You mean hyphenating or something? I mean Indian last names are already so hard, I wouldn't burden my kids with two of them! [laughs] *That is totally fair. I bet most people could barely say one, let alone both. Did you do anything with your last name and the kids middle names?* Well middle names aren't the most common thing in Indian culture, so they don't have middle names.

*Yeah, I don't have a middle name either. But Tara has mom's maiden name as her middle name. Your mom is from Punjab, she probably has a pretty strong link to her maiden name. Yeah, yeah she does.* So yeah, it was mostly for professional reasons I guess. I mean I won't say I'm not a feminist, because I definitely align myself that way. Although I made that choice for my career, I think that in itself is feminist. But I guess that interpretation is up to you. *Actually, it's really about why you chose to do what you did. If you think it was for feminist reasoning, then that's what's important. I guess everyone will have a different interpretation of feminism.* Yeah, that is very true. *Well, is there anything else you would like to share with me?* Nope! That is pretty much my story. Thanks for considering me for this. *No problem! Thanks so much for sharing and helping me out. I really appreciate it. Can't wait to see you over winter break!* Yes! See you soon! Say hi to your mom for me. *I will! Bye! Bye.*