THE AGED AND THEIR FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

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THE AGED AND THEIR FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

III.1 INTRODUCTION

Family relationship for the old is of crucial importance and one which has extreme influence on the elderly member's relationship with non-family individuals and organizations.¹ Family relations are seen as enhancing and hence suited to sustaining the individual throughout the life cycle.

Studies reveal that presence of strong family ties serves to buffer the stress of isolation and deprivation and the way in which support of the family and social system can be mobilized to reduce or eliminate both risks.²

However, lately, there has been a general feeling that in the modern industrial world, the family is undergoing change in structure and function. This chapter attempts at understanding the importance of the family for the elderly and map the changes taking place. It also tries to look into the gender differences in perception of the effect of retirement on the family life of the aged.

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III.2 THE FAMILY AND ITS IMPORTANCE

The family occupies a unique position in human society. In general, an individual is born in the family, brought up in the family, grows old in the family and in normal course dies in the family. It serves as a link for the individual between the past and the future. Family relationships stay with a person throughout his life, even if he rejects them. Intensity and continuity are the main characteristics of the family relationship and characterize this group from all others, "of all the organizations, large or small, which the society unfolds, "observes MacIver and Page." none transcends the family in the intensity of its sociological significance. It influences the whole society in innumerable ways and its changes reverberate through the whole social structure."4

The family is the first and most important socializing institution, where shelter and security are to be found when facing difficulties in life .... It is found in all societies and at all times, in various forms, structure and compositions. The family ... is a living social institution affected by socio-economic factors as well as by transformations that shape the social environment in which it functions.

The family is also an emotional network and greater the involvement of members in various forms of inter dependence, routine and otherwise, the more likely it is that they lead a better life.5 It is a primary social institution in which

there is interaction between all members. It is the only network which provides
the intimate human interaction and empathetic reciprocal response on the
emotional level, conditions critical to a survival, the sustenance of mental and
physical health and a more meaningful existence.\textsuperscript{6}

However, the concept of family is not easy to define. It has no standard
and unambiguous meaning from one culture to another. In traditional terms the
family is defined by Murdock as:\textsuperscript{7}

\begin{quote}
A group characterised by common residence, economic
cooperation and reproduction. It includes members of both
sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved
sexual relationship, and one or more of their children of
their own or adopted by the sexually cohabiting adults.
\end{quote}

While Giddens\textsuperscript{8} defines family as a group of persons directly linked by
kin connections, the adult members of which assume responsibility for caring
for the children. With the social formation over time the above definition has
extended to incorporate new forms of a family unit. However, as an institution,
the family is the basic unit of association in societies and an extensive set of
rules and procedures has been developed to define both the relationship
between the family and the community in which it lives and the relationship
among the members of the family.\textsuperscript{9}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{6} Lowenthal, M.F., and Haven, C., "Interaction and Adaption : Intimacy as a Clinical Variable"
\textsuperscript{7} Murdock, G.P., Social Structure, New York : MacMillan, 1949 p.17
\end{flushleft}
Three intermingled and overlapping relationships are commonly used, however, to designate the individuals constituting a family - consanguinity, marriage and common residence. The extent to which any one of these factors influence and defines the family relationship varies from one culture to another.

As Cowgill points out:

that the status of older people vis-a-vis their grown children varies widely around the world. This ranges all the way from an authoritarian or domineering relationship toward their children to a complete reversal of role, resulting in abject dependence of the parents on their children.10

While the nature of the authority and power relationships varies among its members, the family remains a key mechanism for nurturing, for distributing, and redistributing economic resources for dealing with and protecting family members from a variety of economic insecurities - disability, widowhood and unemployment and for providing basic shelter and the dominant living environment. It has been and remains, critical in the provision of support when people become old and threatened by economic deprivation, disability and social isolation.11

Older people are traditionally viewed as an integral part of the family, with major roles and responsibilities which accords them high prestige and esteem for carrying out those roles. They act as advisers and decision makers playing an important role in the functioning of this institution. The wisdom and

experience acquired by the aged is passed on to the offspring and they help in the socialization of the new generation. Social values, cultural norms and family traditions are learnt by the younger generation more from the elderly than from other members. While other members of the family may depend on the services rendered by the aged to the family, they also depend upon other members to a great extent for fulfilment of all their needs - physical, social or emotional, with advancing age. In fact family roles and relations are fundamental factors affecting the daily life of the aged populations. It provides a meaningful social role, one of the needs of later old age in the period after the cessation of economic occupational activity.

According to Riley, families are the main source of affection, emotional support and assistance for the elderly. As years pass by and in case of emergencies elderly life cycle changes. Biological ageing, retirement, loss of social contacts or gradual decline in physical and psychological abilities, all call for adaptation. The specific family composition in which people find themselves can stimulate or slow down such adaptations, as can contacts with siblings. Family ties have been also shown to be the last social stronghold to which the elderly adhere to in times of need. Infact affectionate and supportive functions of the family are a central factor for improving the quality of life of the aged in contemporary societies. The family as a social institution exists and

functions through the inter-related roles and relationships of its members. In this study the family life of the elderly population (respondents) is of prime importance because the universe of study comprises of the retired middle class people who have generally been associated with governmental / semi-governmental organisations which calls for compulsory retirement at a fixed age. The financial criteria might be another important aspect of their problem but since pension in some kind is there for many after retirement along with Gratuity and Provident Fund it makes the situation not so alarming. Health is also a problem area. Often problems in mental health starts telling on the physical health. It is here where family roles and relationships comes into play being fundamental issues affecting the daily life of the aged population.

As the individual grows old, he experiences a gradual decline in his capacity to perform certain roles, which remain for a considerable time his distinctive privilege in the family. Their social world contracts and participation declines. During the process of role change and adjustment in the family, the greatest demand is put on the individual when they retire from the role of bread winners and cease to be the main economic supporters of the family. Accordingly, with their loss of social roles and group memberships, their social participation is diverted from formal to informal areas and reduced from more to fewer associates. The associations that they do have are central in informal groups specially the family. Also with more free time and absence of readily available opportunities to keep themselves engaged elsewhere, they turn to the family for filling up such gaps in their life and seek mutual readjustment of expectations and behaviour. The extent to which they and the family members are able to
achieve adjustment in interpersonal relations is reflected in the dynamic character of the family.

However before proceeding with a field response, it is important to take a look at the ongoing debate on the changing family structure.

III.3 CONCEPTUAL DEBATES ON THE CHANGING FAMILY STRUCTURE

The general family structure in India for the upper caste in the past tended to be that of the extended family. It was considered one of the basic features of the Indian social structure though a great deal of variation actually existed across castes and regions.

In simple societies the family as a unit carried out the basic productive tasks, with no clear cut distribution between work and home, which were integrated in the total life of culture and people. The extended family being the usual family structure in these societies gave security, response and recognition to its elderly members for their valuable contribution to the cultural aspects of life as well as for their skills. The aged in the traditional societies were supposed to enjoy unparalleled sense of honour, legitimate authority in the family or community, had decision making responsibilities in the economic and political activities of the family and were treated as repositories of experience and wisdom. The reason for this were many. One, the predominant oral tradition of knowledge in most agricultural societies, with advanced age, one enjoyed near monopoly on skills and knowledge necessary in agricultural activities such as tilling, sowing, rotation of crops, irrigation, preservation of fertility of soil etc. The performance of religious or social rituals too was carried on by the oral
traditional of the community mediated by the older members of the community. Demographically, due to a very high death rate in the traditional societies, life expectancy was low and fewer members attained the status of the aged in the community, and those who did were looked upon with reverence.

Two, the family system, with its extended structure had a large measure of stability due to low rate of migration and the imperatives of the family mode of work required in agriculture and trade. The joint holding of property reinforced the extended family norms.

Three, the rate and extent of urbanisation in most traditional societies being low, the extreme polarities of rural urban relationships which characterise modern societies did not exist. Moreover the stage of development was largely in harmony with the rural society: both being based on caste, jajmani relationships and moral communitarian legitimacy of authority. Finally, the traditional society in which the family provided care for the dependents, including the aged, was mediated or even controlled by the community. It was the pre-eminent source of moral sanctions over the family and the individual. It imposed norms about the care of the aged, the women, the children with unmitigated collective force. That often it means repressive measures for women is matter that should not be glossed over. The caste and village panchayats were some of the institutional mechanism through which moral power of the community was exercised. So in most traditional societies the aged were well adjusted and the edge for this adjustment was provided by the family system.16 In times

of crisis, the individual could always fall back on the family.

Murdock writes of the extended family as consisting of two or more nuclear families affiliated through an extension of the parent-child relationship rather than of the husband-wife relationship. It embraces an old man, his wife, his unmarried children, his married sons, wives and children. Thus, three generations may live under a single roof.17

The extended family refers to a group of people, related by kinship, where more than two generations are living either within the same dwelling or very close to each other usually forming a single household.18 As Smart and Smart observes, in an extended family the emphasis is on parent-child bonds and the relationships between siblings, especially brothers. The nuclear family is defined as a unit consisting of two adults living together in a household with their own or adopted children. Nuclear family is sometimes called conjugal family in which the husband-wife relationship is seen as of primary importance.19

Bell and Vogel20 regard the extended family as any grouping related by descent - marriage or adoption that is broader than the nuclear family. While nuclear family is a structural unit composed, as an ideal type, of a man and woman joined in a socially recognized union along with their children.

18. Giddens, opp.cit. p....
A.M. Shah\textsuperscript{21} talks of households of two types: 'Simple' and 'complex'. The former in his analysis represents nuclear family and the latter represents a joint family. Simple households were defined as those which consisted of whole or part of the parental family, while complex households were defined as those which consisted of two or more parental or part of the parental families.

However, it has been stressed upon that recent decades have witnessed the gradual change in joint family along with changes in values due to the force of industrialisation, urbanization and modernization. Shah however differs in this formulation.

The term industrialization point to a mode of technology, a form of organisation - a factory system, a type of economy - a particular kind of relationship between work and worker. The concept of urbanization includes a diversity of more concrete social processes such as a direction of population movement and a reordering of institutional interchanges. It may refer to a shift in attitude and values. While modernization is considered essentially as a process of change from a traditional order to certain types of technology and associated forms of social structure, norms, value orientations and motivations. Industrialization and urbanization, no doubt form an integral part of such a modernization of traditional societies. And since all these forces are correlated - it is presumed that with a higher degree of industrialization, the incidence of the joint family diminishes.\textsuperscript{22} Also modernization is supposed to undermine the

status of older people by making their experience and attachment to tradition appear out moded and irrelevant to technological progress thus generating a feeling of redundancy amongst them and complicating adjustment in the new set-up.

So, the central theme of this debate would be the changing family structure due to the forces of industrialization, urbanization and modernization. And the changes in the functions of the family with their effect on the elderly population.

A number of sociological and anthropological literature of past few decades have frequently talked about the death of the extended family and its replacement by an unstable and loose knit nuclear family.

The advocates of this viewpoint suggest that with increasing industrialization family structure is altered from a consanguinous type to an essentially conjugal type. This classical position contends that the extended family, with its emphasis on ascription, particularism and diffuseness, places undue restraint on the mobile labour force demanded by an industrialized economy and interferes with efficient functioning. In terms of structure and function the family under the impetus of industrialization and urbanization is comparatively small, has fewer functions and is relatively isolated. The socio-economic factors tending to weaken the family form include out migration (demand for mobile orientation), small size of urban housing units, precluding common residence of more than two generations, and the increasing tendency

of the women to join the labour force. These changes often have a net effect of marginalizing the ageing, that is removing them from the mainstream of development. Weakening their traditional sources of material support and eliminating purposeful social and economic roles.\textsuperscript{25}

P.A. Sorokin predicted the then future development of the nuclear family as follows.\textsuperscript{26}

The family as a sacred union of husband and wife, or parents and children, will continue and decrease until any profound difference between socially sanctioned marriages and illicit sex relationships disappears. Children will be separated earlier and earlier from parents. The main socio-cultural function of family will further decrease, until it becomes a mere incidental cohabitation of male and female, while the home will become a mere place for sex relationships.

Talcott Parsons furthers the implications of this view for the elderly - The effect of emancipation, upon marriage and occupational independence of children from their families of orientation, is the depletion of that family until the older couple is finally left alone. This situation is in strong contrast to kinship systems in which membership in a kinship unit is continuous throughout the life cycle.

Commenting on the effect of changes in the family in the modern industrial society on the elderly, Ernest W. Burgess wrote:

The full force of these shifts has fallen heaviest on the older person. He can no longer count as a matter of right and of moral and legal obligation on economic support by his children. He is less and less likely, if widowed, to be offered a home by a son or daughter. If ill, particularly with a chronic ailment, his children are more and more disposed to shift his care to a hospital rather than to provide a bed in their home. If lonely, he must more and more look elsewhere than to his descendants to provide companionship and sociability. In short, he must seek elsewhere for the satisfaction of his needs - financial, health and social. The older person, like those in all age groups in modern society, must rely less upon the family for fulfilment of his desires.

He had a rather negative view of the result of these changes. He says that:

Modern economic trends have brought losses as well as gains to all age groups in the population. But the full impact of their adverse effects has been experienced by the ageing. Let us recapitulate the series of blows which struck them one after another. First, they lost their economic independence. They were demoted from the status of employer to that of employee. Their place of work was no longer the home but the factory or office. Second, in increasing numbers they had to give up rural residence for urban living. Third they were now forced to retire from work by the decision of the employer rather than of their own free will as in the past. Fourth, they lost their former favoured position in the extended family. No longer were the grand father and the grand mother. The centre of the absorbing social life of their descendants but often became unwanted hangers-on, taking part - by sufferance in the activities of their children and grandchildren. Fifth, deprived of the society of their family and having lost...

associates on the job and other friends by death or departure to other communities, they found themselves cursed instead of blessed by leisure time in abundance and little or nothing to do with it. In short, the retired older man and his wife are imprisoned in a role less role. They have no vital function to perform such as they had in rural society. This is doubly true of the husband, because a woman as long as she is physically able retains the role and satisfaction of home maker. Nor are they offered a ceremonial role by society to make up in part for their lost functional role. This role less role is thrust by society upon the older person at retirement and to a greater or lesser degree, he has accepted it or become resigned to it.

Social theorists such as Linton\textsuperscript{28}, Wirth\textsuperscript{29} support this position theory. Parsons goes on to suggest that the isolated nuclear family system consisting of husband and wife is ideally suited to the demands of occupational and geographical mobility which are inherent in modern industrial society. Major obligations, interactions and nurturance behaviour occur within the nuclear family while bonds exist between the nuclear family and other consanguineous relatives and affinals of the kin group, these lack significance for the maintenance of the individual conjugal family.\textsuperscript{30}

W. Goode\textsuperscript{31} presents a general discussion of the congruity between an industrialized economy and the conjugal family. The extended family with its standards of ascription, particularism and diffusenes, is ideally not permitted to interfere with the efficient functioning of a modern enterprise. Because of its

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emphasis on performance such system requires mobility. The conjugal family system is neolocal and its kinship network is not strong, there are fewer barriers than other kinship systems in geographical mobility. In these ways nuclear family system “fits” the needs of industrialism. Elders no longer control the major new economic or political opportunities, so that family authority slips from the hands of such family leaders. Moreover, industrialization is likely to undermine gradually the traditional system of family control and exchange.

However, it is important to note that Goode does not casually relate the conjugal family and the modern industrial system. He speaks of the independence of the two sets of variables, the familial and industrial, as well as the presence of some “disharmonies” between the two.\(^{32}\)

In a sample survey conducted in Nagpur district, Driver\(^ {33}\) found that in cities as compared to towns and in towns as compared to villages the joint families were prevalent in a lesser degree. Since industrialization and urbanization are generally co-related, it may be presumed that with a higher degree of industrialization the incidence of the joint family diminishes.

Epstein assets that the conversion from subsistence to a cash economy had led to the breakdown of complex households among the Mysore peasants she studied. This was bound to happen, for ‘economic development will almost invariably result in the breaking up of joint family ties’.\(^ {34}\)

\(^{34}\) Madan T.N., opp.cit., p.427.
A. Ross, while studying the pattern of change in middle and upper class families in an urban area concluded that the trend of family form in India today is towards a break away from the traditional joint family form into nuclear family units. Distant relatives are less important to the present generation than they were to the older generations. They tend to see them less often and have less affection and feelings of responsibility for them. Also, the son residing in urban areas has become more spatially separated from all relatives and consequently less under their influence and control.

Similarly many other social theorists also argue that industrialization leads to isolation and atomization of the nuclear family system through the attenuation of extra familial kin network and also that the nuclear family is ideally suited to the pattern of occupational and geographical mobility so characteristics of modern industrial urban society.

In fact what these theorists advocate can be summarized in the following tabular manner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Change</th>
<th>Intervening Structures</th>
<th>Units of change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Industrialization</td>
<td>occupational types</td>
<td>Number of family members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Urbanization</td>
<td>place of residence</td>
<td>role relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Social value orientations and norms</td>
<td>size of residence</td>
<td>familial functions and types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Differentiation and expansion of other institutional functions</td>
<td>system of stratification</td>
<td>extent and types of kinship ties</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, lately this position has been stringently criticised. Many researchers have questioned this, putting up contrary arguments to this pessimistic school of thought. They have tried to demonstrate that in modern industrial urban societies the isolated nuclear family is a fiction and not a fact since many families maintain widespread extra familial ties.

Describing Indian family structure in terms of the predominance of one type or the other ('joint'/'nuclear') fails to capture the complexity of the data and results in confusion. For instance, a household composed of a man, his wife and a widowed parent might be classed by some as a nuclear family (supplemented), and by others as a joint family (depleted), skewing interpretation of the data accordingly.37

Ever since 1911, successive Census Commissioners have written about the 'growing tendency' of the 'disintegration of joint family', a dense fog has enveloped studies of the family in India. To drive home his point, the Census Commissioner E.A. Gait, drew attention to the fact that the average number of persons in the household in India at 4.9 was much the same as in European Countries.38 The 1951 Census Commissioner wrote:

Such a large proportion of small households (33 percent in rural areas and 38 percent in urban countries) is a prima facie indication that families do not continue to be 'joint' according to the traditional custom of the country and the habit of breaking away from the joint family and setting households is quite strong.39

The conclusion is not however as obvious as it has been quoted. Confusion exists between the concept of family and the household. A basic distinction needs to be drawn in India between the family and the household. Most discussions about family in India, whether of its structure or of change affecting it, are in fact about households. It is on this that the census enumerators focus on.

The household may be structurally similar to the family, or it may be different. This has led to the household itself being designated as joint or nuclear family. To avoid this confusion, Shah has suggested that households should be characterized as 'simple' or 'complex'. Complexity or its absence being strictly defined in terms of the structure of kinship composition. A further distinction that must be made in this regard is between complexity and largeness, between simplicity and smallness.40

Apart from the confusion between the family and the household, it is also important to see what are the data on size overtime, and what light do they throw on household types. Differences in household size over time and as between rural and urban areas do not warrant any assured conclusion regarding the decline in the incidence of large households. Moreover, a mere breakdown of households into larger or small, or into complex or simple, by itself provides only a partial explanation. As Shah point out, must be supplemented by data on what percentage of the total population lives in what types of household.41

40. Ibid, p.419.
41. Ibid, p.429.
Madan says, regarding the relationship of size to structure this is dubious and hard to establish considering that the average size of households in India is around five. A kin group of five could turn out to be a simple household consisting of a couple and their three unmarried children, or a complex household composed of a man, his wife, son, daughter-in-law and grand-child. Other possibilities also exist.\textsuperscript{42} Besides size and structure, there is the functional aspect which must be taken into consideration, when talking of the changes.

The most widely used typology of family forms is that developed by Pauline Kolenda, who distinguished the following eleven family types: nuclear; supplemented nuclear; subnuclear; single person; supplemented subnuclear; collateral joint; supplemented collateral joint; lineal joint; supplemented lineal joint; lineal-collateral joint; and supplemented lineal-collateral joint. Her studies indicate that there are no simple positive correlations that holds good throughout South Asia between high caste status or land ownership and a high frequency of joint families, though such correlations may often be found in individual communities.\textsuperscript{43}

An examination of the materials on India clearly shows that the nature of changes taking place is complex and hasty conclusions must not be drawn, on the basis of a partial examination of the data, stressing size and structure to the exclusion of functional aspects. Besides size and structure, there is a functional aspect which must be taken into consideration when talking of changes.

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid, p.430.
On the basis of investigations made by I.P. Desai\textsuperscript{44} in Mahuva, a town in Gujarat, he concluded that while the residential nuclearity break up residential jointness, it is not the result of a change in the norm of jointness. He observed a greater degree of jointness among business and agricultural castes than those following other occupations. Significantly enough, common ownership of property was found to be an important factor in maintaining jointness. Neither the sentiment nor the norm of jointness becomes weak due to migration. What is more striking is the fact that even when there is no jointness of property or jointness of residence. It is maintained by the recognition of mutual kinship obligations and expectations, and the joint family ideology still remains quite strong.

Shah\textsuperscript{45} reports from his research that complex households are perhaps more characteristic of town dwelling upper castes than of the rural population. Whether rural migrants come from simple or complex households, it seems that the fact of migration itself or of occupational change, does not result in any drastic change in kind of residential kin group in which they live and in the relationships that they maintain with other relatives.

According to Kapadia\textsuperscript{46}, if a residential unit of two generations shares with another nuclear joint family, with which it has ties of kinship, all or some rights and obligations shared by the members of the joint family, then it is joint family functionally. According to him even in those cases where the property is

\textsuperscript{44} Desai, I.P., \textit{Some Aspects of Family in Mahuwa}, Bombay : Asia Publication House, 1964
\textsuperscript{45} Shah, A.M., opp.cit., p.100.
divided and the income of the members of families is not pooled - the constituent families maintain their connections through mutual co-operation and rights and obligations other than those of property. Members of these constituent families meet on various occasions such as the marriage feast etc.

Kapadia's study⁴⁷, which was conducted in 1955-56 so as to see the comparative change of urban and rural families, showed that in rural community the proportion of joint families is almost the same as that of nuclear families. Higher castes have predominantly joint family while the lower castes show a greater incidence of nuclear family. Also that the joint family is predominant not only among the agricultural castes but also among the functional castes like gold-smith, potter, carpenter etc., while in urban areas there are more joint families than nuclear families. However, in the villages within the radius of 7 to 8 km from the town, the family pattern closely resembles the rural pattern. But, unlike other villages, in these villages, the functional castes shows a gradual increase of nuclear families.

In an important empirical study of the family life of white collar first generation city dwellers in a new residential locality in a north Indian city, S. Vatuk⁴⁸ concluded that - change along the lines predicted has so far been minimal; and that such incipient changes as could be detected were not necessarily linked with urbanization as such, but were concomitant of the rise of a mobile salaried middle class.

Vatuk found that the rural urban ties remained strong and communication between kin vigorous, even over long distances. Neo local urban households are very often supplemented by elderly dependent relatives, or younger patrikin seeking education and employment in city. Through some modifications/change of the emphatic patrilineality of the traditional north Indian family system was seen, but it was relatively limited. Even now, despite the prominence of the idea of 'love marriages', marital choice is seldom 'free', divorce and remarriage are still not common; elderly parents often reside with their married sons.

While studying the impact of urbanization on kinship, S. Vatuk⁴⁹ maintains that her data do not support assumptions about the radical change in the traditional Indian family system. According to her infact the changes in kinship organisation in middle class neighbourhoods .... do not result primarily from their being city neighbourhoods, but rather from an underlying chain of forces which begins with education and permits occupational mobility, consequent geographical mobility and neo-local residence patterns. Urban residence is intermediate in the casual chain leading towards changed kinship organisation.

The question which may prove more fruitful are not whether the joint family is being displaced by the nuclear family, but whether participants in joint as well as nuclear families show any changes in their role perception and in the acceptance of obligations. The findings indicate that brothers even after a division of joint family, accept the obligation to help one another's families in need and these obligations continue to be accepted in urban nuclear households.

In an earlier study Gore, also had suggested that education and entry into new occupations and professions, rather than urban residence itself, produce a lack of satisfaction with old style living in complex households. Households which maintain their traditional calling as businessmen uphold joint family living in behaviour, role perception and attitudes.

Similarly there are many other studies which do not agree to the concept of isolated nuclear family. One cannot underestimate the fact that joint family in India is undergoing a number of significant structural changes due to the process of modernisation. Yet despite the prevalence of a large number of residentially nuclear families, empirical evidence suggests that Indian values and attitudes are still in favour of joint family.

Evidence from Karimpur in western U.P., first studied in 1925, then again in 1968, 1975 and 1984, provides concrete data on the structures of rural households one time. It shows that joint families were much less common than thought and have increased over time. Here, joint family was indeed the ideal, but the demographic realities of the early 20th century prevented its attainment by most families. In Karimpur, during the 1920s, the most common family types were sub-nuclear (a fragment of a former nuclear family. This includes a widow or widower living with their unmarried children, or unmarried, separated, divorced, or widowed siblings living together) and supplemented nuclear (nuclear plus one or more unmarried, separated or widowed relatives of parents.) By the 1960s, the most common family types were nuclear (married couple

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with or without unmarried children) and joint (at least two married couples related lineally or collaterally, with or without children and other relatives)

In Karimpur families have become larger over time and this is particularly evident among the richer landed groups and the higher castes. The toll of death and disease in the early 20th century, for adults and children alike, contributed to a significant number of subnuclear families and other 'fragmented' family structures. Now the percentage of both 'nuclear' and of 'joint' have risen.

The poor and landless have shifted away from agriculture. As they economically diversify, nuclear families became more rational. The landed are following a dual strategy for economic survival, participating at a higher level in agriculture and diversifying through the process of educating selected sons for outside employment. In these families, the regular income of an employed male combined with the security of land and the need for two or more adult males to farm successfully makes joint families desirable and possible. Moreover, the political advantage of a large family, especially ones with under employed adult males who can offer patronage, remains a critical factor in family composition strategies. The Karimpur evidence that modernization leads to an increase in joint families calls for a revision on certain stands.

Many other studies suggest that the joint family form was less common in rural areas in the past than is generally supposed. Also that the prevalence

of joint families may in fact be increasing rather than declining. A.M. Shah has also suggested that joint families may have been more prevalent in traditional urban, rather than rural areas. This stands in contradiction to the so called view of the decline of the traditional Indian joint family.\[53\]

Lambert did a study of factory workers in Poona.\[54\] He writes -

In much of the discussion of the impact of industrialisation on countries such as India, the most common assumption seems to be that one of the earliest influences of industrialism upon the traditional society is the disorganisation of the traditional family. Many of the changes predicted are qualitative changes not easily subject to measurement, but in so far as enumeratives data are indicative of change in the factory population in Poona population.

Singer\[55\] writes about industrial leaders in Madras city -

While there have been striking changes within three generations in residential, occupation, educational and social mobility, as well as in patterns of ritual observances, the changes have not transformed the traditional joint family structure into isolated nuclear families. On the contrary, the urban and industrial members of a family maintain numerous ties and obligations with the members of the family who have remained in the ancestral village or have moved elsewhere. And within the urban and industrial setting, modified joint family organisation is emerging.

So, what is most important is not that nuclearization of the family has taken place to some extent but its functions have changed. Even if the extended

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family is formed loosely, in one way or the other, the content may change. Even if co-residence and commensality continues, the role definition, decision making process may change.

However changes have certainly taken place and can be identified under the following headings:

**Demographic** - over a few decades, we have seen falling rates of fertility and mortality, a reduction in family size, age at marriage and a number of children born to each family. These trends produce a change in age distribution within the family.

**Technological** - The structure of employment has changed, with increasing numbers of women joining the work force. A general increase in mid-life options has had implications for women's family roles.

**Legal** - New legislation regulating marriage and divorce have affected the structure and composition of the family. It has increased the proportion of families which are divided, reconstituted and otherwise unconventional in nature.

**Ideological** - In popular culture, changing ideologies of marriage and parenthood have introduced new value conflicts into family life.

**Economic** - Rising levels of affluence and the introduction of state welfare provision have allowed the operation of choice in family relationships. Ties between elderly parents and their adult children are increasingly governed by sentiment rather than obligations.
Despite these changes the integrational bonds are close. Extended family at present may be in modified form and that family ties are activated in times of need.\textsuperscript{56}

According to Litwak\textsuperscript{57} a high proportion of geographically mobile individuals do have extended ties, although to what extent these ties are maintained is undetermined. He suggests that rather than acting as a barrier to mobility in modern industrialised society, the extended family may actually encourage geographical separation. The family structure that results is what he terms a “modified extended family” - a group of nuclear families bound together by affectional ties and by choice. Geographical propinquity, involvement of the family in the occupational placement and advancement of its members, direct intervention into the process of achieving social status by members of nuclear family units and a rigid hierarchical authority structure are unrequired and largely absent. It functions indirectly rather than directly to facilitate the achievement and mobility drives of component families and individual members. Its tasks complement those of other social systems.

\section*{III.4 RESPONDENTS, THEIR FAMILIES AND THEIR VIEWS}

In this section I seek to record the structure of the families of my respondents, the existential experience of their everyday lives, and their views. I made the

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distinction to argue that often interesting gaps emerge between how they live and what they consider as desirable norms to live by.

III.4.a Family Structure

In this study the respondents belong to the service section of the middle class. 80 percent of them were living in a nuclear family comprising of the husband and wife, unmarried children if any while 20 percent were living in the extended family of husband, wife, married sons, daughters in law, grand-children, widowed mother, father.

Family Structure of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>% of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kerckhoff\textsuperscript{58} suggests the use of proximity and help exchanges as principal components of a structured kin network and goes on to suggest - three measures of functionality.

"Nuclear Isolated Family" where member units are in close proximity but have no or very few contacts.

"Modified Extended Family" where families are spatially dispersed but have high scores on contacts, interaction and exchanges.

“Extended Family” - where units are residentially propinquitous and high in functionality.

On the basis of this criteria, almost 70 percent of the respondents in this study belonged to the category of modified extended family while twenty percent were of the extended family set up and the rest were living in nuclear isolated family. However it was not by choice that they were staying alone and isolated but because of certain compulsions - childlessness, death of an only son and unhealthy relationship with kin.

III.4.b Their idea of joint family and its changing pattern

On enquiring about what they felt about the system of joint family and the changing pattern - there was a general agreement amongst all the respondents that the family structure and composition is undergoing change. Many of them felt that though the joint family set up is the best for all purpose but along with it a positive mental attitude is very important amongst the member units. One of the responses was -

This is inevitable with decentralisation of job opportunities and spread of communication. But it should not mean that the relations amongst the family members cannot be congenial - if the member rises above petty self interest, has a generous attitude and values family ties, there can still be a homogeneous family, though not residentially joint.

Other responses were:

Although people still hold the ideal of traditional joint family living, the exigencies of modern conditions lead them to places and put stress on members of joint family living under a common roof. But this residential separation does not imply that they wish to severe ties with their relatives.
And again:

Living in the extended family system is no guarantee that adequate care is being provided .... values have changed, joint living may sound good but it may not be so rosy ; living independently does not mean that one's care needs are not being met by family members.

Still another read as -

As a result of education, economic independence and changing value system the younger generation may be in friction with the older generation; there may be conflicts regarding trifle things like methods of cooking or menu preparation between the daughter-in-law and mother-in-law. So it is intact better to maintain nuclear set ups and try to be in close geographical proximity if possible.

Some other responses which stressed on the maintenance of independent household were:

Well, I feel if it is better to have an independent household. I prefer the idea of spending weekends together with children and have a healthy relationship rather than stay together and have ill feelings towards each other.

Yet another response was:

Yes, joint family is a thing of past. Now the attitudes of the younger generation has changed. I live an independent life with my wife; my pension is enough to give the two of us respectable living. We live as per our wish with no compulsion to adjust on every small thing.

Still another -

See, I feel that it is not the quantity but the quality of time spend together that really matters.
Another read as:

Whatever may be said... there exists generation gap.
And to avoid the friction and have peace of mind, it is better to be in a nuclear setup.

One thing is clear that though the respondents like the ideals of joint living but in the different new environment prefer the extended modified family concept.

So, meaningful family linkages do not require living in same household but do require a net work involving productive exchanges of reciprocal benefits for all family members. Complete intimacy expressed though continuous face to face interaction may not be the most desirable arrangement. Contact at relationship and discrete times may be preferable and more preservative of the net work. Rosenmaryn and Kocheis59 have referred to this desire of the elderly to live close to relatives but not with them as “intimacy at a distance”.

Infact, this seems to be the preferable kind of living arrangement both by the old and the young, unless there is a radical decline in standard of living, which might neccessiate some doubling up in housing. Most elderly wish to remain independent as long as possible.

Moreover it was seen that larger number of those surviving old age in this study are able to maintain independent homes because of increasing retirement benefits - pension, provident fund and gratuity, even though it might not be much to maintain a very good standard of living. Many (40 percent)

have even given the extra space/rooms in their house for rent. At the same
time larger number of young adults are also able to maintain their own
residences, at least partly because they can do so economically. Both these
tendencies may reflect new attitudes favouring individualism. It can also be
viewed as a reflection of an economic demand for privacy and autonomy.

According to Pampel60 housing changes are probably both a response
to altered tastes as well as causes of such behaviour. Such changes in tastes
tended to be widespread rather than limited to urban residents or to those
highly educated. The spread of alternative life styles may also have increased
desires for privacy and for living alone.

So it can be seen that most older people wish to retain autonomous
lifestyles so long as possible by remaining in their own homes. But the increased
desire to live independently does not mean that living with children does not
occur anywhere in significant degrees.

Living with a child however usually occurs when an elderly parent is
regarded as relatively helpless - largely limited in degrees of daily functioning
and of advanced age. Along with this deteriorating health, increasing infirmity
or death of a spouse are very few cases in this study, as reasons for enhanced
inter-generational sharing of household. According to Lopata61, the sharing of
a household by elderly people and their children is more likely to reflect a crisis

60. Pampel, F.C., "Changes in the Propensity to live alone: Evidence from Consecutive
situation than a preference. There can be an unwillingness to extend permanent help. One thing to be noted here is that even when sharing becomes a compulsion, the respondents do not consider leaving their home. Instead they prefer children coming over and staying with them. This might be due to the need to satisfy the longing for the status of 'provider' and also to maintain respect and prestige.

III.4.c. Frequency of Visits

In general there seems to be a virtual consensus that greater contact with children is strongly related with higher morale. Overall pattern shows a strong relationship between seeing about children and having a sense of well being for the aged. Having sustained, vital interaction with children creates a group embeddedness and possible emotional solidarity which differs significantly from relations based on intermittent material aid or ritualistic social contact. Relations to children are by far the most emotionally charged area of life. It is fraught with anxiety, subject to distortion and denial, about which the aged constantly try to reassure themselves. This might point out to the emotional dependency in later years. However, it has been pointed out that emotional dependence is essentially independent of structural discriminates including declining competence and social participation. Moreover, the frequency of visits does not decide the quality of relationship.


Though most (80 percent) of the respondents stay away from children but still (70 percent) were maintaining the modified extended family household with at least one of the children staying near to the town or within the town or at short distance, requiring overnight journey. Though the visit of children to their parents in these families varies but on an average it may be at least 4 to 5 times a year vacations and festive seasons are the favourite time for such visits. However, the frequency of parents visiting their children was less. Though parents with children settled abroad pay a long visit of 6 months once in two years or so. One thing which was noticeable in the field was that the respondents were not very happy with the idea of travelling and moreover with the idea of leaving their ‘home’. In fact they wanted the children to increase their frequency of visits. There were some exceptional cases. One of the respondents and his wife were not at all interested in any children visiting them. Talking to his son and daughter-in-law it was revealed that:

Every time, when we are here to pay a visit, the first thing he enquires is when are you people returing home? This time I’d come to see my mother-in-law who is almost bed ridden, and I had decided to stay with her for at least a month and got the reservations done accordingly. But look, now they don’t want us to stay more than a week saying they will manage and we need not worry ... What can I do ........

What I felt was that may be these sought of persons prefer secluded life and do not like the interference of any one in regular routine even, be it children.

In the interview schedule, there was a section on the size of the family with a sub section on number of children break up for those residing together and those staying away. It was found that almost 72 percent of the respondents
had between three to four children, while almost 10 percent were larger families of more than four children. The rest were small families with one or two children.

However, though a few took pride in their children's achievement but complained of their children's being busy and low frequency of visits.

My son is brilliant and very mature. Right since childhood he was of independent nature. He got selected in one of the top most universities in the United States; did his Masters in Business administration from there. Now, he is placed highly... We feel proud of him. But yes, at times we do miss him... he is too busy to visit us regularly. It has been almost six years since he last visited India. Though we do visit him once a year. There too he gets little time to spend with us.

So, we can see that the decline in fertility has resulted in the reduction of the overall family size and the number of kin. There are relatively fewer children today to take care of the parents or on whom parents can depend in old age. It also means that there are fewer adult children to share in the care and support of ageing parents. Even these few children who are theoretically available are increasingly likely to have competing commitments. Sustained decline in family size and rising labour force participation of women foretell increasing strains on typical capacity of families to cope with the needs of the elderly members.64

III.4.d. Relationship of the aged with their children

In sociological accounts of ageing, intimate relationships are seen as synonymous with primary group ties, small group size, frequency of interaction

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and a long history of association conditions in which primary relations develop. Primary relationships are informal, personal and subject to negotiation. They meet a number of needs for personal support, for sociability, for physical and emotional intimacy and for stimulation.

The capacity to make, maintain or replace intimate relationships is important. In the literature of social gerontology. It is commonly assumed that sources of intimacy become attenuated through the life span to the detriment of the ageing individual’s health, capacity for social involvement, and general well-being. It is in connection to this that this study also tried to take a look at the kind of relationship shared between the elderly parents and their adult children.

Bengston et.al. offer a conceptual framework for the analysis of intergenerational relations in terms of three variables: association, affection and consensus Association, the behavioural dimension, is measured by the amount and type of interaction between family members. Affection, the emotional dimension, includes feelings of warmth and liking between family members. Consensus, finally, is the cognitive or intellectual component, consisting of the extent of agreement or disagreement in attitudes and expectations.

As have been seen there is considerable contact between the respondents and their adult children except in a few cases thus showing that the association exists. However, the number of contacts alone are obviously

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not sufficient to indicate other aspects of importance. They do not tell whether the contacts are short, long, friendly, hostile, warm, sharp, supporting and enriching or a mere formality. So it was important to enquire about the nature and intimacy of these contacts i.e. the variables of affection and consensus.

Also before proceeding on with field data and the responses of the respondents, it is important to look at the four basic prestige generating components as isolated by Press and McKool.67

(i) **Advisory**, as manifest in seeking out and obtaining advice from older people as well as the degree to which it is needed.

(ii) **Contributory**, as apparent in older people participating in and contributing to social activities.

(iii) **Control**, as seen in the influence on individual exerts over others through a monopoly over resources and supernatural sanctions.

(iv) **Residual**, as evidenced in the retention of prestige through association with former statuses and competencies.

In general, the relations of the respondents with their family members was stated to be satisfactory. However after retirement twenty percent of them did observe change in their relations with relatives and children as they visit less frequently and care less than they used to do before retirement.

III.4.d.i  Decision Making

The decision making and advisory role was solely the discretion of the bread winner before retirement. However, after retirement decision making is now more fused between husband and wife - a shift from consanguinous to conjugal family playing a major role.

Nuclear family tends to develop independent personality type focussing more on achievement, independent individualism. The personality traits development in the nuclear family are being regarded as instrumental in the rise of industrial urban life.

In this study, the decision making power did not encompass for grown up children for almost all the respondents. The adult children generally did not consult their parents for decision making and it is more of a conveying their own decisions. Some of the interesting responses which make the picture clear are :-

The younger generation tends to be achievement oriented, interested in self rather than collectivity, and assertive of individual rights. They think they are the best judge.

Another comment reads as :

They don’t even bother to discuss with us, about talking of taking decisions. Husband and wife decide amongst themselves and only inform us of their decision.

Yet another :

They think they are more rational, smart and well educated and hence can think for themselves. What I feel is that as soon as a person retires he should take a back seat
and accept a passive role if he wants to maintain even a little bit of respect.

Other expressed how limited their decision making was:

No, I don't decide on anything except for my wife and myself. My children come and inform us about their choice and we passively agree. After all what is the use of showing annoyance, dissent, except for troubling yourself and disturbing the peace within the family."

Some expressed what they saw as duality in their children views:

What is the use of taking decisions for children who, I think, feel more competent to do so. But let me tell you where parents are resourceful and have contacts with influential people, the same children act like a tamed pet. It is all a matter of time and luck and resources of course.

This points to a decline in authority and decision making power of the eldest member of the extended, kin network specially after retirement. It may be due to the changes such as the increase in legal, civic and educational rights of sons and daughters, lessening control over the choice of mates for children and above all economic independence and neo-local residential patterns of youngsters and occupational heterogeneity.

The occupational change from father to son and with the involvement of both in the formal, monetized economy, there is no common property base for reinforcing the filial tie and obligations. Moreover the importance of achievement in present society means that the family and kinship group have less to offer to their members. Occupational differentiation and differential vertical mobility reduce the homogenity of outlook among themselves. And where different occupational statuses and income do not confirm to relative statuses within the family system, exercise of familial authority becomes difficult.
For example in the field one of the respondents had retired from service of State Govt. (promoted from Class II to Class I before retirement). One of his sons is a clerk in bank while the younger one has been selected for the IAS two years back and does not reside in the same house. According to the respondent due to the difference in statuses between him and his son, the latter is looked up for any decision to be made in the family though he is youngest of all the members.

III.4.d.ii  *Advisory Role*

Most of them (80 percent) said that they gave advice only when asked for as most of the time their 'concern' was taken without much seriousness.

One of the response was:

> See you put in so much of effort and pain to think about them and give them your advice on various things, after all they are my own children; but what you get in return is humiliation, they turn deaf ears and act as if they know the in and out of everything and need no advise.

Many shared their humiliating experience

> It is very painful to see your own children not paying heed to your advice just because now they are independent and you are dependent and old.

Another read as:

> What are you talking of advise, we are just informed of the decisions already taken by them. We are considered out dated brains.
Yet another:-

When I was young and in job. I couldn’t think of taking any step before the proper consultation of my parents. After all their experience did count and that gave wisdom to them. But now I can’t even think of advising beyond a certain limit for my own children.

One of the responses which makes the picture clear.

I advise only when it is specially sought for otherwise they are free to do what they think is right.

Others were:

Once your children become independent economically, get married, have children, you should yourself withdraw from the role of advising and directing, if you want the respect to remain intact.

Still another read as:

They consider advice from friends and peer groups more valuable and rational than ours

Some show the limitation of advisory role of elderly as:

Delayed age at marriage, an increase in educational level own choice of life partners, less reliance on family resources have resulted in a kind of equal treatments. So why should I be given the power to decide and advice, when they think they are best at it.

III.4.d.iii Degree of agreement in conversation

Traditionally, the dominant themes of cultural values in India were characterised by hierarchy, holism, continuity and trancendence. However there has been

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a change now with the introjection of the value of equality in place of hierarchy of individualism in place of continuity and of techno-scientific rationalism in place of principle of transcendence. Since the values and concept of living has changed the strong authoritative control of certain times seems to be almost out dated as revealed in this study.

On enquiring about the degree of agreement in conversation, the respondents (75 percent) felt that before retirement while conversing the children agreed most of the times and even in face of any doubts, kept silent. However now after retirement the scenario has changed with discussions and conversations generally resulting in arguments most of the time with children. Compromise is made more often in small things like watching T.V. channels, visiting places, in day to day activities after retirement.

This response shows the clear picture

Just because we are old, one is expected to compromise on every, small issue by arguing that see you are more mature, he is a kid and so on ..... As if once you grow old you are expected to become senseless, interestless or act as a Saint.

III.4.e. Quality of Family Relationships

The quality of family relationships in old age may be solely dependent on the more intimate family interaction. Earlier patterns of reciprocal exchanges and especially affectional relationships, were the prime determinants of the quality of relationships in old age.69

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69. Sussman, M.B., opp.cit. p 221
For those aged persons who have had substantial involvement in kin family networks over the life span even segmented in relation to time and non-propinquitous because of occupational and social mobility there is a "pull" factor to restore and reinforce such ties in later years. Such persons may have more options in their exchanges. They may be wanted for themselves, the services they can potentially perform. But for those with a poor record of kin network activities there may be a "push" factor to reconstitute close family relationships. With fewer options, the older person, in turning to the family members, especially children become more dependent and committed to the exchange, relationships. As it leaves them with fewer options.70

Almost (74.28 percent) of the respondents in this study belonged to the category of pull factor but there were also withdrawn cases of respondents who had always lived a social secluded life and even more with just one or two children sized family. After retirement they found it very difficult to mix around with relatives naturally. Even with children it became more of a push factor and a step towards reconstituting relationships.

In this study reciprocity and exchange pattern were evidenced between adult children and their old parents.

III.4.e.i Reciprocity in relationships with children & exchange theory

Individuals in exchanges which result in unequal rewards are said to be in a power relationship - these are dependence, compliance, subordination on

one part and independence, command and super-ordination on the other. Social interaction is a continuous process of losing or gaining power credits or resources for use in subsequent transactions.

As Dowd\textsuperscript{71} indicates - the problems of elderly are essentially problems of decreasing power resources, money, approval, esteem or respect and compliance. Esteem and compliance are the most often used credits in exchange relationships among aged. Esteem is a short lived commodity because of the decreasing utility of expressing past achievements repeatedly in the face of group needs. Under "normal" conditions of social exchange where individual amassed, distributed, and lost credits in social exchanges, compliance was often a resource. For elderly person, however, it becomes an unidirectional process, used because there are few and still fewer resources. The pressures on the elderly persons to comply are exerted by societal norms and reflected in the super ordinate postures of institutions and organizations and in the increasing dependency of the elderly on the family.\textsuperscript{72}

In this study the flow of help between generations are highly dynamic and both young and old within the family can be 'receivers' and 'providers'. So the flow of help and assistance is not unidirectional. Rather they demonstrate reciprocal care arrangements within the family, a viable kin network involving mutual patterns of assistance. Small services are rendered reciprocally by each generation which may be in the form of house work, shopping, baby sitting, home repairs and the like.

\textsuperscript{71} Dowd, J.J., \textit{Ageing as Exchange : A Preface to Theory}, Southern California : Deptt. of Sociology, 1974
\textsuperscript{72} Sussman, M.B., opp.cit., p.219.
Before talking about the field and the kind of reciprocity between the respondents and their children, it would be appropriate to take a look at the Exchange theory in brief, which provides a viable explanation of primary group relationships. Filial responsibilities characterised as prescriptive, care and financial duties, those required by custom or personal attitude provide boundaries and conditions for interaction based on profit, cost, reward punishment, "developmental stake" equation.  

A perspective which is particularly consonant with emphasis on dynamic, situational transactional aspects of behaviour is found in social exchange theory. It illustrates the processes by which societies allocate roles and resources and in the interaction among individuals. Its impact on sociology and social psychology is principally through the work of Homans, Blau and Newcomb.

What an individual values, how he calculates costs in relation to reward, the decision rules he employs, the standards against which he values interaction all have a decidedly social component. These social components may be embodied in the normative expectations of social groups and transmitted both formally and informally to group members.

Exchange relationships may be predominantly calculative, individualistic, competitive encounters. But this need not be necessarily so. Anthropologists who have studied the exchange of gifts have repeatedly noted that such exchanges are intended to enhance social integration and emphasize the

interests of collectivities rather than individuals. Potlatch, as described by Boas, is the staging of a feast and display and destruction of property amongst native Americans for the benefit of a rival group. This group is, through its participation, obliged to reply. Similarly Kula is a form of ritual exchange practised between trading partners in Trobriand Islands. This also establishes the relations of dependency. In each example, then, carefully patterned, reciprocal networks of indebtedness are created and maintained as a form of social organization described by Mauss as a 'gift relationship'. The exchange of goods or services is an activity which extends over time binding succeeding generations of individuals and kin groups in networks of exchange.

So social exchange theory seems to have particular relevance for a number of important issues in the social scientific study of ageing, and a social exchange perspective is already at least implicit in some instances for example studies of inter-generational relationships, kinship network and the like within societies. Social exchange theory concentrates on observed expectations about fair exchange in order to account for behavior which persists inspite of the appearance to an outside observer that the behaviour is unrewarding those may be psychic rewards. Social exchange theory would also lead us to expect that individuals seek those situations in which rewarding outcomes are most likely to be experienced. The observed fit among personal needs, values and environmental opportunities for satisfying those needs and for achieving valued outcomes predicts satisfaction. Then, it can be expected that whenever possible,
individuals seek out situations in which they expect a maximum fit. However, rewards for members in interaction may be unequal and that individuals stay in the group because the relationship provide some reward despite the uneven exchange and are perceived to be more satisfactory than other alternatives. This may be the "tension line", an invisible boundary of acceptable dyadic and group relationships.

Norms of reciprocity are widely observed. An individual may be guided by altruistic as well as egoistic sentiments. He may use a variety of reference groups in assessing the equity, the fairness, of the outcome of social exchanges, thus highlighting both the situational structuring of options and resources which constrain interaction and the tendency of participants to maximize their values in such a way that a fair outcome results. Exchange relationships are inevitably affected by and affect power relationship in groups. Social contacts exist between age cohorts for a specific work or as general as understandings about the bases of affection and respect between generations.

Another important proposition of this theory is distributive justice. It guides individual presentations of self and interaction and is also behaviour expectations. Those children who provide affection, attention, association, care and services to elderly members are expected to receive more then the legal share of any inheritance. It is an expression of distributive justice.

Of the respondents, nearly three fourth of them, felt that children can be “counted on” when in distress. This attitude lessens the pervasive pathological concern of “being a burden” to children. A viable kin network involving mutual patterns of assistance, was maintained, though the aged are independent of regular monetary aid from their children. Despite all this mutual help and exchange the excess burden is always on the elderly due to the living patterns. Like they have to manage the payment of bills, shopping etc. because for every small thing children cannot be called home.

In fact 70 percent of the respondents felt that they were being of more help to their children even in their old age rather than their adult children helping them at times. Some of these responses can make a clear picture -

Both my son and daughter-in-law are working. The stay in joint household. They hardly get time for home. In fact, I keep running around paying bills, shopping etc. and my wife minds the kitchen and the maid and lads . By the time they are home, they are so tired that you can't even discuss problems with them .... May be they think they are obliging us by putting up in the same household.

Another comment read as

My children stay abroad. Whenever my daughter or daughter-in-law is expecting we are sent the tickets before hand. Both of us go on a six months visa and when we come back their in laws go for another six months period. You see, there baby sitters are frightfully expensive. Moreover where can one expect homely care by paying. So we are kind of sophisticated baby sitters in the form of grand father and grand mother.
Yet another:

It's so selfish of them that as soon as the children start growing old, there attitude change and talks of returning back start - indicating it is time to pack your bags and return home.

Others expressed themselves as:

We were not even consulted before being sent the tickets, if we could like to come over or not.

Some felt that:

You take care, give your time, energy, love, after all they are your children, still you can hear comments of dissatisfaction. It pains a lot; But what to do .... after all we are parents.

The pain can be seen in some response:

You see it is right that all children can fall back on parents in times of crisis but shouldn't they realise our needs, after all, their parents are also old, sick and not so fit physically to perform such tedious tasks.

Yet another one was:

Even now when my children need monetary help they look up to me.

This shows that the ageing parents are now playing an increasing important role in child minding when the young couple is at work. The rise in women's participation in the labour force is like the ageing society, a worldwide phenomenon. The mothers of the 1940s were likely to see motherhood as a full-time job and as their children were of paramount importance. Today, children are less likely to be the pivot on which family life turns. It is recognised that parents have developmental needs too and that a woman's need for fulfilment
might be met by paid employment. The difficulty in employing and affording reliable help necessitates greater reliance on ageing parents to co-reside though temporarily and provide necessary help and support to grand children. However, this kind of help though provided readily was not cherished by most (74.28 percent) of the respondents.

One of the response was:

I don't mind parents helping their children in child rearing. However, children should not burden them with every small work. If the daughter-in-law/ daughter is working she should shoulder the responsibility together with the elderly rather than leaving the entire child rearing on them. After all it requires a lot of energy and the elderly have done their share. Helping is one thing and entire responsibility is another thing.

They felt that only the ideology of taking care of one's own familial responsibility persists among the younger generation. It is more in theory than in practise - “They remember their rights in practise and their duties only in theory”.

III.4.e.ii Getting along with younger generation

Another aspect which was investigated in this study was how well the elderly get along with the younger generation. It has been argued that there is almost no evidence that the old have significantly different sets of beliefs than young people specifically as a result of ageing. Age group differences in

political-religious or any other values may reflect social change. They may be attributable to different beliefs and practices which prevail when people grow into adulthood in different periods. Such beliefs, crystallizing in early maturity, may well reflect basic values which are reasonably stable throughout adult life. But because of new social conditions and changes in the prevailing climate of belief from one period to the next, successive generations may internalize somewhat different sets of values.

Here, inter-generational differences may be stable through time and supply each generation through its life cycle. This is not evidence of basic changes because of ageing, but indicates social change as such.

The apparent differences between age groups at any given time are essentially a function of their different stages in the life cycle along with differential socialisation of successive generations in the culture. Presumably, the efforts and experience of a period stamp each generation in youth with distinctive patterns which they carry through life. These distinguish the generation from one another. 81

Each generation appears somewhat more liberal than preceding ones. But this trend is basically historical and is subject to reversal if social conditions change.

There was total agreement in the response that it was difficult at times to get along due to their way of thinking and doing things -

Due to generation gap there is a problem of adjustment, but in my childhood my parents did not face any problems. The question of arguing and not listening to, did not arise.

Another one reads as:

Most of the adjustment is expected to come from the side of the parents, if staying together. We are taken for granted ...

Yet another:

There is a great difference, between the elders and younger generations, in their life styles, view points etc. But if elders keep their mouths closed, the situation can be in control.

Some were very agitated with the result of change in norms and values.

One of the responses was:

Why is adjustment always expected from the older generation. Children should not think that their parents would join them in their new life style and ideologies. After all they have their own value system. Even the parents should not try to force their wishes on their children. It is useless.

For the participants in the intimate dramas of family life, all trying to achieve personal continuity in face of change, issues like family traditions and ‘our way of doing things’ can become the focus of intense emotion and personal conflict.

Children’s departures from family tradition can be a source of acute frustration for elderly parents. They often disagree strongly with current child rearing methods. They object to a supposed lack of constraint, an abundance of television too much of spending money, tolerance of answering back and sexual
permissiveness in adolescence. But the ambiguous role of grandparents, offers little scope for intervention. The autonomy and privacy in the conjugal family has increased granting more remote status for the grandparents.

One of the responses was:

I think, one should act as friends to their children when they reach their youth. But does that mean tolerating nonsense. It is important to draw a line, beyond which constraint should be exercised.

Another response reads as:

We are not able to digest the way my grandchildren answer back, get irritated on every small thing, dictate their terms and dress and behave in front of elders. But thinking of our helplessness, we feel it is better to keep quite than to interfere.

The problems of respondents get further complicated as the acceptance of support and services, materially, from one's children especially staying in their house, seems less and less right to them. This is not merely a question of accepting the legitimacy of the economic burden of supporting one's parents. Rather it is a question of attitudes which are involved.

Whatever may be the problem and difficulties in getting along with the younger generation, in times of trouble and for help, they generally turned to their children, particularly daughters. When daughters are not available, then help flowed from the sons and relatives. Most of the respondents (80 percent) felt that the 'caring' role these days often seem to be taken by the daughter rather than by the son and daughter-in-law. It is important to identify 'caring' as

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a distinct function different from 'providing'. Increasingly where elderly individuals have no resources of their own, the function of 'providing' material support sends to be assumed by the state like the developed countries, but the 'caring' function which requires individuation of the elderly person and meeting his/her emotional needs cannot be effectively met by a formal agency. With advancing years and growing helplessness, the need increases for someone who will listen to the grumblings and tolerate occasional temper outbursts and still keep the channels of care and communication functioning.83 This role is increasingly been taken care of by the daughter rather than sons. Shanas84 also found in her study that older people turned to their children, particularly daughter, for help in meeting their daily responsibilities.

III.5. GENDER DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTION OF RETIREMENT WITHIN THE FAMILY

Ageing is a gendered experience. In all societies and throughout life, males and females play different roles, receive different rewards and experience different realities. These gendered experiences culminate, but do not originate, in late life.85

It is generally suggested that men and women tend to experience retirement in different ways. In this chapter, though the main aim was to

understand the relationship of the retirees (respondents) with their family members. But to get an overall understanding of the family life it was important to look at the experience of their spouses - how did they perceive retirement; if they observed any change in their relationship with the respondents; relationship with the children. It was important to see women in old age, the extent to which their social position and experiences of later life parallel or differ from those, old men.

Studies suggest that work may often be a central interest for men and a key source of their self identity. It seldom is for women. The retirement transition is a less important event for women. Not only is parting from work regarded as less of a fundamental change but also women have the 'benefit' of continuity in their role as housewife or homemaker, which can now become full time.86

However, in this study most of the spouses of the respondent were not employed (non-working). Those who did take up employment were the mostly in part-time jobs, where the so called transition of retirement was not experienced. Often the shift from one job to the other (generally in schools) was due to husband's transfer, child bearing and child rearing and so on. Only (5.7 percent) of the spouses were in full time job in central school and Universities where again the worktime is not a 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. job. Some were doctors, for whom retirement had no meaning, as they were in private clinics. Even for them the retirement was not a period of crisis as they continued with the role of house-wives - taking care of domestic work.

One of the response was:

No, I don't see 'myself' facing any type of crisis after my retirement. In fact, now I feel less burdened. I keep busy with household work. I love company whether visitors or people I meet when I go for morning walk with my friends.

Another one was:

For me, it was not money for which I took up the job. In fact, my husband wanted me to work to keep myself busy. So where is the question of feeling bitter or bad about retirement. Moreover, my mother-in-law stays with us. So, now I can devote myself fully to take care of my home.

The different experiences of men and women regarding retirement must be seen in relation to trends in the division of labour in market as well as in the home. Women's paid working lives often feature discontinuities, such as breaks in employment for childbearing and rearing, and to care for relatives who fall ill or become disabled. 87

Gender division of labour, refuses to the fact that labour is divided according to certain assumptions about 'mens' work and 'women's work'. The gender division of labour is based upon gender divisions which, although socially constructed are frequently believed to be the outcome of the natural attributes and aptitudes of the sexes. 88

In all societies the gender division of labour allocates different sets of tasks to men and women. 'Sex' becomes transformed into 'gender' through

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87. Ibid, p 103.
socialization process by behaviours commonly associated with their sex for instance, women acquire skills related to domestic work, child bearing and rearing and nurturing family members while men are generally geared to take up other skills related to regulation and control. Women tend to be ascribed roles in the 'private domain' of the home and family and to be subordinated to men, whose interests dominate the 'public domain' of the work place and other social institutions.  

The socialization process is so pervasive that the assumption is often advanced that gender roles are not only seen as natural and normal but above all innate. The spouses tend to carry on as best they can the daily round of activities. The continuity in domestic and social activities and priorities represents continuity of a life times 'women's work' both within and outside the home.

Infact some of them expressed guilt at failing to fulfil her domestic chores, which is women's preoccupation as shown in this response:

I feel very bad and guilty when I fall sick - when I am not able to do my work, not even cooking and doing the bed. All the work load falls on him.

This shows the extent of the stereo typing of roles, one can rarely find a man feeling guilty at being unable to do his housework.

However, though the spouses did not experience much change in their work life (if any ) it was seen that for most of them retirement of husbands was

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90. Ibid, pp. 97-98.
also at least as much significant life event as for their husbands. Most of them could think of nothing pleasant about retirement. The problematic areas were reduction in income, a sudden change in status, power; decline in the standard of living in the absence of servants, and other comforts which they enjoyed earlier because of their husbands position. Almost all of them did agree with the view that retirements, specially for males is a period of crisis and transition.

Some of the responses were:

What ever said or done, it is definitely a period of transition. All of a sudden one is posed with so much of free time and nothing concrete to be done.

Another response was:

I think, the main problem is of the availability of so much of time and the decline in status. Though after retirement, he tries to keep himself busy sharing my domestic responsibilities, but is that enough. For a man 'work' is definitely very important.

Yet another:

Suddenly, when a person who has been busy all these years, finds that he has too much time at hand and nothing worthwhile to be done. Without any pursuit and activity time becomes meaningless life becomes aimless unless one can really utilise free time meaning fully.

While most of the them were bothered about the excess of free time with nothing concrete to be done, many expressed the problem of fall in the standard of living and of reduced income.

One of the response was:

There is certainly a fall in the standard of living, irrespective of savings. The way of life one gets used to
in the service years - servants, car, bungalow etc. is no longer a reality.

Another one was:

Most of them are still as capable to work on retirement, a person who has so far enjoyed power, prestige, status and comfort both at work place and at home, is suddenly required to adjust to the losses of income, living standard. where does one get a paid full time servant these days. These days everybody seems to be interested in government jobs.

An attempt was also made to understand how do the elderly couples readjust their lives and routines after retirement.

Changes in the husband wife relationship have primarily centred on role changes at retirement. Such change was characterized by a shift away from instrumental, on the part of husbands to mutually expressive behaviour, usually brought about by a loosening of former sex roles in the division of labour in the household.91

Although men rarely help their wives in doing domestic work before retirement, after retirement some loosening of this rigid definition was reported. In general, husbands increased their participation in household activities which were generally male oriented like getting groceries, shopping, payment of bills etc.

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One of the responses was:

Most of the time, there is something or the other to be done some repair work, payment of bills; most of the time telephone is out of order. He has to go personally to fetch the line man. He takes care of all these activities.

Most of the spouses were happy with their husbands trying to shoulder the household responsibilities. However, an overindulgence in the so called 'domestic domain' was not welcome. The spouses showed some sort of annoyance at their husbands interference in the so called 'their' domain. They wanted it to be restricted to shopping, groceries, payment of bills and the running around works.

Some of the responses were:

I dislike the interference in my domestic chores especially the comments like - 'the room is not properly dusted; what should be cooked... etc. After all, I have grown old doing these things. I know my work very well.

Another one was:

Both of us do our work together specially like going for shopping, bank work etc. Even for the payment of electricity bill or getting a ticket. I go with him. these days they have separate line for ladies. That helps. But then, when it comes to the kitchen work - especially cooking. I prefer doing it on my own.

Yet another:

The problem is that there is plenty of time, nothing concrete to be done no regular routine so, at times he gets over indulgent in my affairs. Say what does he know of what vegetables to buy what to cook, how to cook? But still he does not hesitate in giving suggestions and critical analysis. That becomes more of a burden than the so called 'help'.

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This shows that women tend to draw some kind of satisfaction and identity from their domestic work. They feel it to be their 'power domain'. Any encroachment, seems to be a threat to their identity, authority, and control, attached to it. Not only this, the usual answer to the question "What do you do in your free time?" was

I don't get a moment to sit and rest you know, a woman's work is never done.

Household chores necessary to life will continue to be performed until infirmity prevents it. With increasing health problems they slow down the tempo of work, work shorter hours and at less arduous tasks but will not stop until they are physically incapable of working.92

Most of the spouses observed change in their husbands behaviour after retirement. The feeling ranged from - very interfering, critical, short tempered and at times very passive to being very helpful. No uniform pattern was noticed.

One of the response was:

He has become more helpful giving extra time to household work; but then I feel very bad seeing him to these work. In his service years he never even picked up a thing, everything was ready.

Another one was:

Well, I cannot outline precisely, what the change has been but certainly there has been a change; he has become very passive and leaves it on me to play an active role especially in family matters.

Some expressed negative changes:

He has become so critical of every small details - be it family, children, cooking or politics.

Yet another one was:

Yes, there has been a world of difference earlier he used to be so calm and quiet and understanding. He seemed to be least interested in small details. But now, it is a different story. He gets irritated so easily has become very short tempered.

However, a proper understanding of the life of the elderly is not possible without due attention to family relationships. Ageing has personal, family and socio-institutional dimensions that involve different generation. It is impossible to separate the well-being of their families or the status and support accorded to each generation in a society. Family relationships of the elderly are particularly important. Traditions of family unity and responsibility across the generations characterize traditional as well as modern societies. Within different societies these traditions are manifested in different ways, but in all societies the most support for all generations come from within the family unit.93

Almost all the elderly women accepted mutual flow of help. The details of the types of transfers between the adults and their parents were income support, accommodation support, personal care and child care of these childcare was almost all pervasive. Now a days in order to survive economically both the parents generally work outside the home. As more women are employed outside the home, the need to take care of the child at home falls on the aged parents or parent-in-laws.

However, it was seem that the flow of transfers is more on the adult children. They are more likely to receive help from their older parents than to give help. The elderly are the main providers of informal childcare. While a few of the aged receive help in the form of housework, care during illness. Those who have children staying in the same city had more active give and take relationship.

Adults receive more support from their parents when they are in their twenties and thirties - the age at which they are setting up their houses, in their reproductive lives. So, parental support is largely directed at helping their adult children set up a home and this reflects an extended launching phase that certainly continues well into adult hood.  

When talking of receiving help, daughters were more counted upon for this. Daughters were reported to be the main carers for their elderly parents. It has been suggested that besides more help, daughters also receive more help than sons at least in the area of childcare for their young children.

The mother daughter relationship is the basis of significant mutual exchange throughout the younger women's lifetime. The principle of reciprocity is fundamental in the caring role. The act of caring means caring about as well as caring for.

Studies have shown the importance of reciprocity of patterns of inter-generational attachment and particularly the role of women at different generations in maintaining family contacts.\textsuperscript{97}

When asked about the behaviour of adult children towards them after retirement, most of them said that though their children took good care of them in every way, the respect factor had decreased.

\begin{quote}
All my children are very well settled and take care of both of us. But I don't like if they argue with 'him' over small things. See, after all he is the father and has made them capable to stand on their own. He is old. so even if he says something, they can always bear that.
\end{quote}

Another one was:

\begin{quote}
We generally avoid interfering in their lives. If they want help in any form, we are ready to provide; but living in the same house and facing problems "the friction between married sons and father" is not worth it. I want my husband to lead a peaceful retired life. We have done so much for our children, but I am not ready for any disrespect shown to my husband.
\end{quote}

Yet another one was:

\begin{quote}
Yes, I understand at times he gets irritated with the children. I try to pacify him but I do not like my children answering back to him. So, what if he has retired? We are old. Could we ever think of behaving like this with our parents.
\end{quote}

Some experienced problems in adjusting with their daughter-in-law.

\begin{quote}
Sons change after marriage. Even if their wives misbehave with their parents they act as if they have not seen that.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{97} Townsend, P. opp.cit.p...
Yet another one was:

I cannot tolerate any young girl giving direction to the members in the house as to what is to be done.

So, for some of the aged women the more important problem was the disrespectful behaviour of married sons and the conflicting relationships with their daughter-in-laws.

Though also critical of their husbands behaviour at times, yet they could not take any criticism or disrespect shown to them by the children.

Despite these differences it was these aged women who tried to maintain the bonds with their children and acted as mediators, moderators and stabilisers of family relationships, trying to negate the friction between their husband and their children.

I try to make him understand that the children have grown up; are married with children, so not to get angry for small things to avoid confrontation on every small issue. I also tell my sons, that if he says something it is for their good.

Yet another:

Help works both the ways I understand. But if children made mistakes, should the parents also forget their duties and responsibilities? That is not right to make them understand their fault is important. But at the same time one needs to take care of them. After all, they are the ones on whom we can fall back if required in old age.

This shows that women are in a way socialised to take the main responsibility for maintaining interaction of families. It is they who keep relationships alive. They show better understanding and adjustment than males. They are more mature. The explanation lies in the process of socialisation,
where women are taught to adjust and accommodate to situations more than men. They try to evade unpleasant stressful situations.

So, it can be seen that though both the sexes tend to adjust to the post retirement period, but in different ways, with females at an advantage. The males tend to become more dependent emotionally on their wives. Despite the differences, it was observed that in old age both the partners tend to become more attached and devoted to each other. One of the response was:

' I think we are the best of companions, sharing every aspect of lives with minute details. I wonder what will happen to him, when I'm not around.

Another response was:

I cannot imagine life without him. We have had our shares of fight and love; but now we are so dependent on each other. I know children are there to take care of but I guess, nobody can give the company and contentment that a spouse can give.

Yet another:

You won't believe, retirement has brought us closer. Earlier we were too busy with our share of work and then worrying for the children. Now all of them are in their houses. We two are alone, to share every sorrow and happiness together.

The marital relationship in later life is potentially the greatest source of affection and companionship. Old men generally rely primarily on their wives to meet expression and instrumental needs. The devotion with which both husbands and wives accept the caring role for the spouses is truly incredible. This devotion is the product of half a lifetimes affection and mutuality. Marriage
creates a world of shared meaning and experience from which it is difficult to disengage. It provides material support, caregiving, most important a stable companionship, especially in later life. The permanent presence of the spouse which might evoke negative as much as positive affect, is nonetheless vital in creating a secure and predictable environment.\textsuperscript{98}

Blood and Wolfe\textsuperscript{99} found that during the child rearing years the marriage relationship is subordinate to the demands of children and husband and wives tend to grow apart. In as much as the frequency of marital interaction is reported to once again increase in post parental years, and particularly after retirement.

Other researches have found a steady decline in general marital satisfaction from the beginning of marriage and levelling off in satisfaction throughout the middle years, but improvement after the children leave home.\textsuperscript{100} Therefore, it can be said that in old age, companionship and being able to express true feelings are the most rewarding aspects of marital life.

\textsuperscript{98} Jerrome, opp.cit., pp.198-200.
\textsuperscript{99} Lowenthal and Robinson, opp.cit., p.434.
\textsuperscript{100} Ibid, pp.434-435.