

CHAPTER - I

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FAMILY AND KINSHIP IN CONCEPTUAL CONTEXT

Family occupies a central position in the institutional fabric of society. Almost everyone is both born into a family and founds one of his own. Family never operates in isolation. It is an integral part of the broader social network, within which it influences and is influenced by religious, educational, economic and political institutions.

To understand fully the significance of the dynamics of family structure, families must be studied in societal context. Sociology of family studies the family as a sub-system in the total social structure. Family sociologists have also noted that society is a structure made up of families, and that the peculiarities of a given society can be described by outlining its family relations. Sociologists are interested in family because it is an important acculturating medium through which norms, values and sentiments of the wider society are articulated and expressed.

The family can be understood as a system of social relationships based on distinctions of age and sex in which each individual member occupies a particular position or status that governs the individual's behaviour towards other members of the family, and vize versa. Just as individuals make their transitions in and out of a variety of family and work roles over their lives, their families too are constantly reorganised and restructured as they gain and lose members

as the age configurations within them undergo constant change. In reality, a household that is nuclear at one point in time can be extended shortly thereafter and resume again a nuclear form at a later date.

Definition of Family

A standard definition of family defines it as a 'Co-residual group', which consists of two or more individuals of opposite sex, with or without offsprings, and which lives apart from other kin.¹

The term, nuclear family, refers simply to a group of at least two adults of opposite sex, living in a socially approved sex relationship, with their own or adopted children.²

Rosser and Harris who after reviewing the previous literature define the 'extended family' as any persistent kinship grouping of persons related by descent, marriage or adoption, which is wider than the elementary family, in that it characteristically spans three generations from grand parents to grand children.³

Given above are some of the definitions of the family. But it is something which cannot be defined. As everything is changing in the family, so too is the corporate body which one conceives as a family. It also undergoes changes both latitudinal and longitudinal,

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1. Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences, vol. V, The Macmillan Co., The Free Press, p. 303.
 2. Gerald R. Leslie, The Family in Social Context, Oxford University Press, London, 1973, p. 13.
 3. C. Rosser and C.C. Harris, The Family and Social Changes, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965, p. 32.

i.e the concept of family changes from culture to culture in the same period, and again even in the same culture it changes from time to time.

The Conceptual Framework

A review of the conceptual framework on family is most essential as the family is dynamic and adapting itself to the external conditions of changes in physical and social environment.

The systematic study carried out by the Western scholars on family has produced a variety of approaches. They have approached family through four ways. They are: (1) The institutional; (2) The Structural-functional; (3) Interactional and (4) Developmental. Each of the above conceptual approaches is strengthened by a group of scholars with significant empirical evidences.

The Institutional Approach

The institutional approach compares marriage and family behaviour in different societies and traces historical developments. This framework has principally focussed on

- (1) descriptive-comparative studies of various family systems;
- (2) study of old, current, changing and new functions of the family;
- (3) Causes of changes in the family institution;
- (4) analysis of the internal working and changing relations within the family; and
- (5) predictions as to the future state of the family institution based on the analysis of trends and contemporary societal changes.

An example of such analysis was provided by Zimmerman in describing in turn, Greek, Roman and early Western life.⁴ He made a typology of family as atomistic, domestic and trustee families. Zimmerman also related these families to some other characteristics of the society, especially to its power and influence on the world scene.

J. Koenig and E. Bayer⁵ who sought a conceptual clarification of this approach write: "Gradually this approach began to be replaced by others, particularly by structural-functionalism or by studies utilizing a social-psychological approach. The decline of the approach is not the result of inherent shortcomings of institutional studies, but rather the consequence of a trend among sociologists to shift over to functionalism and behaviouralism to deal specifically with problems which engage their interest such as personality formation, family roles, family life cycles, and so on.

Interactional Approach

Interactionist is interested in the family as a unity of persons acting in habits and sentiments. This approach strives to interpret family phenomena in terms of internal process. These processes consist of role-playing, status relations, communication problems and socialization processes etc. The unique character of this approach is that it is based on the action of family members and is not concerned with the external factors.

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4. C. Zimmerman, Family and Civilization, Harper Se Row, New York, 1947.
 5. Daniel J. Koenig and Alan E. Bayer, "The Institutional Frame of Reference in Family Study", in F. Ivan Nye and Felix M. Berardo (Ed), Emerging Conceptual Frameworks in Family Analysis, The Macmillan Co., New York, 1966.

Burgess⁶ made a major theoretical contribution to this approach. He conceived family as a unity of interacting personalities. He defines family as "a group of persons united by ties of marriages, blood or adoption; constituting a single household; interacting and communicating with each other in their respective roles and creating and maintaining a common culture."⁷

His study highlights the dynamic relationships between interactive patterns of husband and wife, parents and children in terms of needs, behaviour patterns and adjustment processes. He arrives at the conclusion that the structure of family is in a state of transition from that of institution to that of a voluntary group. The main interest of the voluntary group form of family is to develop the individual personality of the members or to satisfy individual needs, whereas the traditional family worked for the common interest of family members.

The Structural-Functional Approach

Functionalists view family basically in terms of the functions it performs. They hold that family exists because of certain functions it has to perform depending on the level of development of the environment or social system around. They see changes in the family system as both cause and effect of changes in other institutional structures. This approach sees family as a social system with

6. E.W. Burgess, "The Family as a Unity of Interacting Personalities", The Family, vol. 7, 1926, pp. 3-9, and also see E.W. Burgess and H.J. Locke, The Family from Institution to Companianship, New York, American Book Company, 1945.

7. E.W. Burgess (1926) op. cit., p. 7.

component parts bound together through interaction and interdependence McIntyre⁸ emphasized three major areas of functions in this approach:

- (1) the relationships between the family and broader social units: that is, on the role that the family plays in the socialization of new members of society;
- (2) the relationships between the family and sub-systems: that is relationships between the family and the economy, between the family and the polity, and between the family and the community;
- (3) the relationships between the family and personality.

The institutional approach is distinguished from the functional approach, nevertheless, since the unit of analysis in the former is the institution, while in the latter it is the social system.

The Developmental Approach

The developmental approach views the family as having a life cycle through which members travel from infancy to old age. It views the family in its changing composition and roles from marriage to death.

Every family undergoes a process of growth and dissolution that begins with marriage and ends with the death of the spouses, and its place in society is taken by another unit of the same kind. In course of the cycle of family development, relations between

8. Jennie McIntyre, "The Structure-Functional Approach to Family", in I. Nye and F. Berardo (Ed.) op. cit., pp. 52-77.

family members are subject to change and adjustment. Each phase obliges the family members to assume new statuses and roles. The roles of husband and wife, obviously change as children are born, mature and leave the home. Essentially this framework looks at the changes in the internal functioning of the family, but the participation of family members in school in community organizations, and in recreational activities outside the home obviously shifts with the change in the family life cycle.

Blood and Wolfe(1960)⁹ have constructed longitudinal family change by means of cross-sectional data. That is, they sampled families at various stages of the family life cycle and presented their findings to give a picture of change throughout the family career. They used family life cycle stage to explain variation in the value of parenthood, satisfaction with companionship and love of spouse, and the tenor of husband-wife interaction.

Family in Indian Context

Several studies come on family in India. A variety of approaches has been found in them. Indian researchers have redefined the concept 'Family' under the changing circumstances and tried to give a working definition of the modified family system.

Traditionally, the degree of jointness was determined on the basis of the size of the family, common residence, common sharing

9. Robert O. Blood and D.M. Wolfe, Husbands and Wives, Free Press of Clencoe Inc., New York, 1960.

of kitchen, worship and property etc. Karve¹⁰ defines joint family as "a group of people who generally live under one roof, who eat food cooked in one kitchen, who hold property in common, participate in common family worship and are related to one another as some particular type of kindred". Scholars like Bailey(1960)¹¹ and Madan (1966)¹² regarded joint ownership of property as the index of jointness.

Kolenda(1968)¹³, Gould(1968)¹⁴ and S. Vatuk(1972)¹⁵ considered common sharing of food and co-residence as essential ingredients of jointness. They viewed the family as a household group where members eat food cooked from the same hearth. These scholars elucidated various typologies of households. They stressed that the number of elementary households should not be taken as evidence of the break up of the joint family, because this is to be seen only as a stage in the developmental cycle of the family.

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10. I. Karve, Kinship Organisation in India, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1965, p. 8.
 11. F.G. Bailey, "The Joint Family In India: A Framework for Discussion", The Economic Weekly, XII, (8), 1960.
 12. T.N. Madan, Family and Kinship: A Study of the Pandits of Rural Kashmir, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1965.
 13. P.M. Kolenda, "Region, Caste and Family Structure: A Comparative Study of the Indian Joint Family", in M. Singer and B. Cohn (Ed.) Structure and Change in Indian Society, Aldine Publishing Company, Chicago, 1968, pp. 339-396.
 14. H. Gould, "Time Dimension and Structural Change in an Indian Kinship System", in M. Singer and B. Cohn (Ed.) op. cit., pp. 413-322.
 15. S. Vatuk, Kinship and Urbanization: White Collar Migrants in North India, University of California Press, London, 1972.

Desai(1964)¹⁶ and Kapadia(1958)¹⁷ highlighted the conceptions of mutual obligations and strong family sentiments as the main components of the jointness. Desai argues that the household structure was not the measure of jointness; it was rather the joining of persons by the rights and duties which arise on several key occasions in the individuals' life cycle such as birth, marriage and death. Desai in his study of family in Mahuva discusses jointness in relation to property, kin group, education, stay in urban area, caste and religious groups etc. In his various writings he noted that the concept of nuclear family is not an Indian concept as it was borrowed from the West.

M.S. Gore¹⁸ tried to delineate jointness in terms of degree of inter-relationships and role perception of family members besides joint living. He states that the important question in understanding family is not only whether the joint family is being replaced by the nuclear family, but in addition whether members of joint as well as nuclear households have begun to show a change of attitudes in the direction of those characteristics of nuclear family. He states that the changes in attitudes of family members are likely to bring changes in family composition. Gore defined the Indian joint family as having

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16. I.P. Desai, Some Aspects of Family in Mahuva: A Sociological Study of Jointness in a Small Town, Asla Publishing House, Bombay, 1964.
 17. K.M. Kapadia, Marriage and Family in India, Oxford Univ. Press, Bombay, 1955 and also in "Changing Patterns of Hindu Marriage and Family", Sociological Bulletin, vol. IV, September 1955, pp. 161-192.
 18. M.S. Gore, Urbanisation and Family Change, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1968.

common residence, common property, common kitchen, and a system of mutual obligations between different units of the family. According to him the joint family is not merely a particular type of household, but it is a definite system of relationships. It is characterised by sentiments that bind the different members and by the role definition its members try to live upto. He also empirically confirmed the patterns of joint family living in behaviour, role perceptions and attitudes, although urban residence and education were inducing changes.

B.R. Agarwala¹⁹ conceived the joint family not in terms of joint living but based on the importance of concentration of power, co-operation in economic assignments and in the reciprocal familial role relationships. According to him, the members of joint family are under the authority of the elders in matters of family and religion, joint investment of capital, joint enjoyment of profits, and of incurring birth, marriage and death expenses from the joint funds. He feels that it is not essential for members of a joint family to live in one place and eat in a common kitchen. He feels that even when members of an extended family network do not live in the same household, they may share a common budget and follow the advice of the same family leader. He gives another example: for management of business a brother may stay in Calcutta, the father may stay in Delhi, a cousin may stay in Madras and the grand father at the native place, and

19. B.R. Agarwala, "Caste and Joint Family in a Mobile Commercial Community" in Symposium on Caste and Joint Family, Sociological Bulletin, vol. IV, no.2, Sep. 1955, pp. 138-45.

they manage the affairs allotted to them. For him the essence of the joint family is their common way of living.

Conception of Kinship

Kinship is one of the most important principles of social grouping in human society and is often referred as a bigger unit than family. The family is visible but the thread of kinship that weaves the entire social fabric together is often invisible. It is the kinship system that relates person to person in a society in a systematic way; it also organises them into a group and controls their conduct and behaviour toward each other in various contexts of life. In a way each individual is a kin to many others. It can be said that kinship begins with the family and is extended through the family.

A kinship system is a way of ordering a society, or segments of a society, on the principle of consanguinal or fictive kin relationships. This system can be analysed in terms of roles and expected role behaviour, as well as in terms of kin groups and expected behaviour by members of these concrete units.²⁰

Evans Pritchard²¹ noted that a man's behaviour towards kin is built up in the family organisation into which he is born and in

20. Mary Shepardson and B. Hammond, The Navajo Mountain Community : Social Organisation and Kinship Terminology, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1970, p. 66.

21. Evans Pritchard, "The Study of Kinship in Primitive Societies", Man, November 1929, no. 148, pp. 190-194.

which he grows up. Malinowski²² says that kinship begins within the family and always rests on the family. According to R. Brown²³ kinship is a veritable institution in most simple societies, for it is the regulator of behaviour in innumerable situations. R. Firth²⁴ calls it 'the rod on which one leans throughout life'.

Kinship system represents an organisation of social relationships, derived from ties of birth and marriage, pertaining to individual's place in society, their origins, and their destinies. Viewed from this perspective, kinship is a cultural entity which knits the individual families into a network.²⁵

Changes in Kinship

Some modification of traditional kinship behaviour has been made necessary in all societies by the changing conditions of life. While kin role behaviour is slightly altered in some communities, in some others it undergoes a complete change. An interest in urban kinship relations has arisen among family sociologists in recent years. There is a high degree of concensus among the Western scholars, especially in terms of their research findings on the nature and extent of kinship interactions, forms of exchange, and the effects of certain specifying variables such as social class, occupation, urbanization on kinship.

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22. B. Malinowski, "Kinship", Man, vol. 30, no. 1930, pp. 19-29.
 23. R. Brown, Structure and Function in Primitive Society, Cohen & West Ltd., Carterlane, London, 1971.
 24. R. Firth, Two Studies of Kinship in London, Athlone Press, London, 1957.
 25. Bernard Farber, Kinship and Class: A Mid Western Study, Basic Books Inc., Publishers, New York, 1971.

Detailed case studies of changing kinship systems have shown that:

1. The changes tend to be gradual, from one system to another, through a series of divergencies and consistencies.
2. Complete changes from one type of system to another can only be made where there is a model for the new system within the nuclear family, by inter-marriages and the consequent bicultural socialisation.
3. Diffusion of kinship systems between adjacent peoples is rare and slow except in conditions described in (2) above, or where there is mass adoption.
4. Systematic changes in kinship tend to occur over long periods under continued pressure from external conditions, especially economic changes. The latter tend to change living arrangements and other aspects of socio-economic organization which, in turn, effect basic changes in the structural roles.

Adams²⁶ has summarized three new directions of urban kinship studies. They are:

- (1) 'Specification', that is, study of variations in the kinship system between different socio-economic strata and different ethnic groups, and of the effects of social mobility, residential location, migration;
- (2) 'System inter-relations', that is, the inter-relations between the kinship system and other social systems or institutions, such as friendship, the economic structure, and the welfare system; and

26. B.N. Adams, "Isolation, Function and Beyond: American Kinship in the 1960s", Journal of Marriage and the Family, 32(1970), pp. 575-597.

(3) Comparison among different modern societies.

Berardo²⁷ stresses the need for research on individuals' association with kin and the ways in which kin ties affect individuals and families". He says that all over the world, 'the research on the role of extended family has shifted from descriptive studies towards explanatory analyses of patterns of kinship relations in the last few decades. He adds that there is no break-down of kinship system in any society and that it is highly flexible and continues to exist in various forms corresponding to the changes in the society. He writes: "the kinship system appears to be highly adaptive to societal changes and there is no break-down in kinship systems as a whole"²⁸.

Scholars like Yamamuro²⁹ and Morioka³⁰ have made significant efforts to study the functioning of urban kinship system of developed countries. They have placed most emphasis upon individual attitudes towards kinship relations, and the development of mutual assistance between parents and children. Moreover, they have tried to analyse the frequency of human contacts among kinship relations, and link them to the degree of relationship and order of genealogy, and compare blood relations in these respects.

27. Felix M. Berardo, "Family Research and Theory: Emergent Topics in the 1970s and Prospects for the 1980s", Journal of Marriage and the Family, 32(1970), pp. 575-597.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 253.

29. S. Yamamuro, "Nuclear Family Theory Critically Reviewed", Japanese Sociological Review, no. 15-1, 1964, pp. 2-13.

30. K. Morioka, "A Study of the Separated Kin-Network in USA", Monthly Report of Domestic Judge, no. 16-1, 1964, pp. 1-57.

The findings resulting from these analyses can be outlined as follows:

- (1) Direct kinship among the nuclear family not only conforms but also contributes to the life of urban industrial society;
- (2) Kinship relations tend to shape the paternal line, although they retain a fundamentally bi-lineal structure;
- (3) The affinal relatives are becoming more important;
- (4) Kinship relations shift from the prescribed and imperative type to the individually selective type;
- (5) Besides decreasing in extent, the degree of recognition of kinship relationships is influenced by the accessibility of residence.

In a critical review of research findings on family and kinship systems, M.B. Sussman and L. Burchinal³¹ hold the position that the urban family can be viewed as a 'modified extended system'. This system consists of nuclear families that are bound together by filial ties into a kinship network. Sussman's empirical studies also present evidences of a relatively high degree of continuity and significance of urban middle-class kinship.

Influence of Occupation on Family and Kinship

Occupation influences family and kinship both directly and indirectly. It is an important part of social structure to which kinship

31. M.B. Sussman and L. Burchinal, "Kin Family Network" in Marvin B. Sussman (Ed.) Source Book on Marriage and the Family. Miffion and Co., Houghton, New York, 1968.

systems adapt themselves. Changes in occupation alters family's economy which in turn affects familial relationship. A man who has risen to a high occupational level may become reluctant to share all his income with the larger family.

Bott's intensive study of a small number of English urban families suggests that ties among kin are likely to be stronger if they are able to help one another occupationally.³² In class terms, families with close-knit networks are likely to be working-class, but not all working-class families have close-networks. In the territorial context, she says that a family's network will become more loose-knit if some of its members move away physically or socially.

Millward³³ has examined a further aspect of the interaction between kin relationship and work behaviour: that of the different arrangements by which mainly working class young women contribute to family income in the period between leaving school and getting married. He used the domestic arrangements by which workers contribute to family income to explain changes in family life and behaviour at work.

32. E. Bott, Family and Social Network, Tavistock, 1971

33. N. Millward, "Family Status and Behaviour at Work", Sociological Review, July 1968.

S. Koyano³⁴ in collaboration with sociologists and psychologists made a detailed analysis of the relationship among community, occupational status and family activities. For this purpose, sample surveys were conducted in four Japanese communities which varied in size from 293 residents to over one million. The major economic pursuits of the sample population ranged from agricultural to industrial sector.

The findings suggested that considerable change had taken place among the urban families particularly in their patterns such as type, job succession and familial behaviour etc. and less so among the rural families. The patterns of participation in informal family activities such as indoor games, outdoor pleasure and discussion etc. were different among communities and occupational groups. The office workers tended to join more positively in such activities than proprietors. Labourers, in general, came about in between these two occupational groups. He noted that 'My Home' consciousness became gradually popular among the urbanites in the last few decades in Japan.

E. Litwak³⁵ carefully examined the relationship between occupational mobility and extended family relations. He suggests that the occupational or geographical mobility of individuals does not hinder family cohesion. The demands of upward occupational mobility made

34. S. Koyano, "Changing Family Behaviour in Four Japanese Communities", Journal of Marriage and the Family, XXVL-2, May 1964, pp. 149-159.

35. Eugene Litwak, "Occupational Mobility and Extended Family Cohesion", American Sociological Review, 25(1960, pp. 9-21.

the American family to undergo a functional adaptation, which he termed as 'modified extended family'. This modified family pattern, according to him, maintained very good filial ties among kin and members of the family. His findings also suggests that those who report frequent visiting with kin tend to have more occupational resources.

T. Parsons³⁶ has noted that in primitive communities or societies displaying extended kinship systems, the motivational components of occupational and family role units are somewhat homologous. But in modern industrialized societies, Parsons writes, this homology, is lost and a subsequent segregation of family roles from occupational roles becomes essential for the proper functioning of both.

Present Study

The present study is about the Saurashtrians, the oldest as well as the largest of the immigrant communities settled in Tamil Nadu during the Nayak's rule.³⁷ Traditionally they were specialised in silk-weaving. They may be considered as a semi-Brahmanised, urban-based migrant community speaking a language known as 'Saurashtri',³⁸ a mixture of Tamil, Telegu, Gujarati etc. The chief Saurashtran

36. T. Parsons and R.F. Bales, Family, Socialization and Interaction Process, The Free Press, 1955, pp. 155-156.

37. The history of their migration is discussed in detail in the following chapters.

38. The 'Saurashtri' language exists only at the spoken level. Very recently, some of the educated members of the community have taken keen interest in developing a script for the language. However, for all the practical purposes related to education and employment, they use Tamil as their mother tongue.

settlements of Tamil Nadu have been identified as centres of textile manufacturing. The early historians saw the community as an enthusiastic, zealous as well as an enterprising one.

In the process of migration, they also acquired a unique culture which they believe is superior and better. They were characterised by a certain amount of rigidity in the system ranging from elaborate rituals for marriage, birth, death and other occasions of day-to-day life to meticulous norms governing social interactions and associations. This migrant community reputed for weaving gradually became an important trading community in Tamil Nadu.

This community provides rich materials for the study of continuity and change. The growth of the Madurai city as an important religious and commercial centre enabled them to modernise their tradition. Over the years the Saurashtrians have grown not only in population, but have also shown a high degree of mobility in educational and occupational fields. As a result, there have been changes in their family and kinship patterns which were previously closely associated with their traditional occupation of weaving.

The study is limited to the Saurashtrians living in Madurai City. The reasons for selecting Madurai are varied. The Saurashtrians appear in greatest number in Madurai.³⁹ Here the Saurashtrians are

39. According to the Census of 1961, the Saurashtrians in Tamil Nadu numbered 1,55,392, of which 79,972 were registered as inhabitants of Madurai. This figure is said to be much lesser than the real strength of the community. The Madurai Saurashtra Sabha claims that one third of Madurai city population (roughly estimated as 1,50,000) belongs to the community and numbering more than three lakh people at the state level.

engaged in a variety of occupations. Apart from these, most of the Saurashtran caste associations, educational institutions, professional associations and co-operative societies are very active in this place. Moreover, the Madurai City is both a citadel of orthodoxy and an arena of modernization. The concentration of major temples presents a traditional outlook to the city, while the growing industries and educational institutions reflect the secular characteristics.

Scope, Importance and Objectives of the Study

Firstly, it may be said here that in general research interest in family and kinship structure is declining particularly among younger sociologists and social anthropologists. This may be partly because of their dissatisfaction with Indian sociology which they find inadequate for a proper analysis of social reality.⁴⁰ According to Leela Dube,⁴¹ the younger generation in Indian Sociology seems to be unwilling to go through rigorous conceptual and methodological training in the area of family and kinship studies. To fill up the gap, the present study uses an empirical approach to provide an exhaustive analysis of inter-relationship between family and social system.

Secondly, many of the studies in India in general, and Tamil Nadu in particular have concentrated on agricultural communities. Although the artisan communities contribute much to the national

40. Ramakrishna Mukherjee, "Trends in Indian Sociology", Current Sociology, 25(3), 1977, p. 95.

41. Leela Dube, "Sociology of kinship : A Trend Report" in ICSSR, A Survey of Research in Sociology and Social Anthropology, vol. II, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1974, p. 327.

economy, yet they have been neglected by scholars for various reasons. Therefore, it is desirable to make a comprehensive study of a traditional weaving community which once identified itself with Brahmins and which at present has entered into a competitive relationship with the agricultural and business communities of Tamil Nadu.

The question may be asked as to why the Saurashtrians were selected as a subject of enquiry. Even after passing of several generations, the Saurashtrians are still identified as an ethnic group in Madurai. Besides retaining their language and culture, many of them have become affluent through business and education. Despite the Saurashtrians long history in Tamil Nadu, the specific features of their immigration, their family system, and their interactional relations are not understood properly. While the textiles woven by the Saurashtrians are extensively known, very little is known about the community. Urgent research on this community is in order because the City of Madurai and the Saurashtrians are now under the constant pressures of change.

The study has mainly focussed on the family and kinship system of this migrant community. Till now, very little systematic research has been done on the migrant communities' family and kinship. Hence, this community in Madurai provides a good opportunity to study family under conditions of societal changes. On the whole, this study tries to show to what extent the Saurashtrians modified their life in the new environment in terms of family patterns, occupational mobility and value orientation.

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The purpose of the present research work is to explore some changing aspects of family, kinship and occupational structure. For a proper analysis, the family has been classified into three types viz. nuclear, semi-extended and joint families. In order to find out the association of individuals with their relatives, the kin group of respondents is also classified into agnatic, affinal and tertiary relatives. The weavers, traders and salaried professionals are taken as three major occupational units in this study. Another important aspect of the study is to explore the structural, interactional and attitudinal dimensions of change.

This study aims at providing specific information about the community under study, as well as add to our understanding about the significance of family and kinship in urban Indian situation. A major portion of this study is heavily based on the data collected from the field. This is probably the first field work based on sociological study of Saurashtrians in Madurai. The study has also taken into consideration a few historical studies in order to trace the migration of the community, which provide some clues about the social and cultural life of the community. This information, to some extent, is helpful in finding out what the present changes are.

In the light of existing information on the immigrant community and based on the researcher's theoretical understanding on family and kinship, certain hypotheses have been formulated by the researcher before conducting an empirical enquiry on the Saurashtran community.

They are as follows:

1. The changes in the external conditions of human life, with accompanying changes in human interests in occupation, education etc. would alter the functioning of primary social institutions like family and kinship.
2. It is assumed here that the structure of the Saurashtran community is maintained by its inherited values and norms. A deviation from these binding norms and values brings the Saurashtrians closer to the indigenous caste groups. It is proposed here that even an orthodox immigrant community can respond creatively to the new challenges and adapt itself to the changes.
3. For the Saurashtrians, the urban occupations and professions have traditionally constituted the reference groups and even now their world-view is moulded by the urban orientation. Their socio-political choices also considerably reflect the urban bias.

Objectives of the Study

More precisely the study is focussed on the following points:

1. Internal adaptations of this community to meet external challenges within a traditional normative framework.
2. To examine the family and kinship network of 'Saurashtran community in Madurai and the transformations which have occurred in them in response to several exogenous factors operating outside the family like access to modern education, urban occupations etc.

3. To understand the dynamics of adaptation among the weavers, traders and other sections within the community in the light of occupational mobility, contact with Tamils and family background.
4. To assess the ideological and attitudinal changes of the old and young generation towards value orientation connected with their social and occupational life.

Selection of Samples

The present study is an empirical study based on data collected from six wards of Madurai city. They are: (1) Mahal; (2) Khanpalayam; (3) South Krishnan Coil; (4) Chinnakadai; (5) Villapuram and (6) Krishnapuram Colony. These six wards are just like six neighbourhoods located adjacent to each other in the ecological setting of the city. Each of these six wards represents one of the three occupational units viz. weavers, traders and salaried professionals. Mahal and Khanpalayam are characterized by a considerable specialization in trading and most of the residents in these areas are rich and middle class merchants. These two neighbourhoods located at the inner zone of the city have sheltered many retail and wholesale shops, markets etc.

South Krishnan Coil and Chinnakadai are also highly urbanized. A noticeable feature is that a considerable number of Saurashtrians are engaged in white collar professions in these areas. The speciality

of villapuram and Krishnapuram Colony is that they are located at the urban fringe and they are exclusively occupied by the weavers. In Krishnapuram the weavers are working for the co-operative societies and they are somewhat better off, whereas the Villapuram weavers are mostly dependent upon the master-weavers.

Besides the occupational characteristics of the wards, ecology, density differentials and socio-economic status of the people were other considerations which motivated the selection of these six neighbourhoods. The members' list of the Madurai Saurashtra Sabha was the prime source for locating and recruiting the wards as well as the respondents. The Madurai Saurashtra Sabha for its election purpose divided all the Saurashtran settlements in Madurai into 20 wards. These wards are quite different from the electoral wards of the state government. The ward list provides information about the name of the Sabha member, age, house number, street and status of the membership etc.

The total number of houses figured in each ward and the number of Sabha members of the respective wards were calculated first. It was found in the list a total of 3,223 houses comprising 5,411 registered members in all the twenty wards, according to the 1983 list. In the pilot study it was found that the traders and weavers are densely represented in their neighbourhoods and the white collar employees are sparsely represented in their residential patterns.

Actual Ward No.	Name of the neighbourhood	Occupational speciality of neighbourhood	Total No. of houses	No. of enrolled members
<u>High Representation</u>				
3	Khanpalayam	Trading	326	479
10	Mahal	Trading	275	461
<u>Medium Representation</u>				
13	Villapuram	Weaving	233	333
20	Krishnapuram Colony	Weaving	196	303
<u>Low Representation</u>				
14	Chinnakadai	Salaried employees	148	305
17	South Krishnan Coil	Salaried employees	135	296

From the list of above six wards a sample of 300 respondents (fifty from each ward) were taken for the study using systematic random sampling technique (See Appendix for the sampling chart).

An interview schedule was developed for the purposes of interview and for the collection of data. To pre-test the schedule and to familiarise with the field, a pilot study was conducted by the researcher in the month of February 1985. A total of 30 households was contacted personally. During the pilot study a number of councillors, politicians, community leaders, academicians, merchants, journalists, etc and also several co-operative societies and the Saurashtra Sabha were contacted personally. The present researcher held informal discussions with them and clarified doubts which were

later found useful in formulating the schedule. The pre-testing of the schedule necessitated a number of changes both in the construction and working of a number of questions. A series of meetings with the supervisor also enabled the researcher to construct a precise interview schedule. Care was taken to induct relevant questions focussing on the present research and more attention was paid to the problems of change in the schedule. The final interview schedule consisted of five main parts which included personal data, family structure, kinship interaction, occupational and attitudinal changes. (See Appendix for the Interview Schedule Model).

The actual field work began in April 1985 and the information was obtained in two stages each with a duration of three months and the final data collection was over by October 1986. The interview was conducted in Tamil as the researcher and the informants are proficient in that language. On an average each interview lasted for two to two-and-half hours¹. Notes were taken in a separate diary facilitate recording of statements by the researcher after the termination of each interview.

The interview was mostly conducted at the homes of respondents. The traders and the weavers were found easily accessible at their homes as their work place forms a part of their residence. Yet many of the weavers and few traders attended me while working. Interviews with government officials, were conducted on weekends and during the holidays and preferably in the afternoons when the interuptions were at a minimum.

The data were coded in a standard eighty column code sheets, and fed into the computer for further analysis. The advice of a statistician enabled the researcher to complete the work much faster and without facing much difficulty. Efforts were made to interpret the data by making cross-tabulations and correlating appropriate variables.

Besides the interview schedule several other methods like observation, informal discussions, etc. were made use of to gain a better insight into the changing nature of the community under study. The researcher had witnessed some of the important functions like temple festival and Saurashtra Sabha election and also had the privilege of attending marriages of weaver as well as a trader families. These additional data have been incorporated into the text of this thesis at appropriate places.

Documents available with the Saurashtra Sabha, State Archives, and Census Bureau etc. were carefully studied for getting an idea about the demographic, economic, social and traditional background of the community. Prior to the fieldwork, secondary materials (books, articles, documents etc.) were located in different libraries of Delhi and read through by the researcher.

Problems, Biases and Limitations

Several difficulties were encountered in the course of the investigations. There were problems in getting the accurate demographic data of Saurashtrians in Tamil Nadu in general and Madurai in

particular. The researcher was informed by the present office-bearers of Saurashtra Sabha that a decade back the then office-bearers took some interest and started making a detailed survey of Madurai Saurashtran population. When the survey was in progress the next election was held and due to the lack of enthusiasm of the new office bearers, it was stopped. Even the authenticity of the census data may be questioned because many Saurashtrians had enrolled themselves as Tamils in the Census enumeration.

Next, since the research covered wider areas, it was important for the researcher to gain the confidence of the respondents. This difficulty was overcome by explaining the academic nature of the study. Regarding questions related to income, marital life and family problems, certain respondents had some reservations. However, information from such respondents was elicited through indirect questions and from direct observation and personal assumption. Often, the businessmen were found reluctant in imparting information about their business. They might have suspected that the researcher was a government agent. Of course, many of them were convinced after the researcher explained to them that their information would be treated as confidential. Many other troubles and doubts that arose in the field during the investigation were solved by referring them to the supervisor through postal correspondence. The researcher made a sustained effort to collect reliable, objective data on the Saurashtrians

A Personal Note On the Field Work

During the first phase of the field work Madurai was passing through hot weather. During that period the researcher could cover only one third of the selected samples. However, a pleasant weather prevailed during the second visit and this factor speeded up the researcher's efficiency in the field work. Reaching the field work area was not a problem as Madurai had very good transport facilities.

Many interviewees invariably asked the researcher his community, place of stay, education and the purpose of interview etc. A few educated respondents wanted to know the final outcome of the survey. The researcher found many of them as talkative. A few politically conscious respondents narrated a series of complaints against the ruling party, which often fell out of the purview of the research. Yet the researcher patiently listened to them and some times tried his level best to draw the attention of these respondents towards the subject of enquiry.

In Villapuram, an old widow who had nobody to take care of her, sought the help of the researcher to avail her old age pension. The researcher helped her in this matter and secured the pension for her.

As the Saurashtrians by nature are hospitable they often refreshed the researcher with their home made foods. The researcher readily accepted their offerings and this in a way gave him some idea about the food habits of the community. Some others even

extended their invitation to the researcher for family functions and marriage. The researcher, despite his tight schedule of time took part in some of these functions and made important observations.

As the researcher spent a good deal of time in Madurai, many Saurashtran youths became his own personal friends. A few of them are still maintaining regular correspondence with him.

The researcher did not forget to put 'Vibhudhi' (Sacred ash mark) on his forehead while approaching the respondents who practice orthodox Hinduism. A friendly approach, the command over in Tamil language were the additional factors which enabled the researcher to complete field work successfully.

The Chapter Scheme

The first Chapter analyses the definitions and concept of Family and Kinship. It also outlines the needs, objectives and tools of investigations of the present study.

Chapter two presents a detailed review of urban-oriented family and kinship studies of India. The results of such studies have been summarised with a view to understand the changing trend of Family and kinship in Indian Society.

Chapter three provides an understanding of Saurashtran migration and the historical development and changes in their social prestige, traditional occupation and internal organisation with suitable supportive evidences.

Chapter four analyses and explains the sequence of changes occurring in family and kinship spheres and relate them to education, occupation, family income etc.

Chapter five attempts to find out the conservative and the flexible character of Saurashtrians in their familial and social adaptations. An interactional approach has been adopted to find out changing family relation, authority and decision-making pattern and kinship contact. It also highlights whether the structural division of family has got functional significance.

Chapter six discusses the ideological and attitudinal change of Saurashtrians. It also traces the values, sentiments and attitudes of Saurashtrians towards family formation patterns.

The seventh Chapter provides the conclusion wherein the findings of different chapters have been finally summarised and some researchable areas are mentioned for further study.