CHAPTER I

Introduction

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. Concept of Generation

Ever since antiquity, the concept of generation has been held in a biological and consequently in a genealogical sense, of regular descent of a group of organisms from a progenitor. But since the early nineteenth century there has developed a social and historical concept of generations as comprising the structure not only of societies but also of history itself. Nevertheless, attempts to formulate a sociological theory of generations in the biological sense of kinship descent have been unproductive because the temporal continuity of births makes impossible any determination of 'Social' generations so long as 'generation' is understood in a purely biological sense. Therefore there arises a necessity to arrive at a social and historical interpretation of the generation concept.

Historically, Auguste Comte, the founder of modern Sociology, considered the duration of human life a decisive element in determining the velocity of human evolution and therefore the passing of one generation to another. Comte did not deal with the phenomenon of individual or simply familial life but with social life based on "the unanimous adhesion of certain fundamental notions". John Stuart Mill obtained the concept of social generations from Comte and added further
refinements of considerable interest.

After this philosophical beginning of the theory of generations, the theory received further development at the hands of statisticians and historians. Some of the contributors to this theory are French economist Antoine Augustin Cournot, Giuseppe Ferrari the Italian historian-politician, Wilhelm Dilthey the German historian, the historian Leopold Von Ranke and his disciple Ottokar Loreny and so on.

In varying degrees the studies of generations have left in obscurity the questions of what generations are, why they exist, how long they last, what their scope is and how they are determined. Ortega Gasset's theory of human life answers most of these questions. According to Ortega, all purely biological and genealogical consideration of human life is insufficient, since human life does not consist in its psycho-physical structures alone but in what man does with them. Human life is a drama with character, plot and scenery i.e. the world and this world is primarily a mass of social interpretations of reality: beliefs, ideas, customs, estimations etc. These have a life independent of our individual wills: like laws, they stand 'in force' and we cannot avoid meeting them and having to deal with them. "Thus, a generation is a human variation; every generation manifests a certain vital attitude. Generations are born one after another, each encountering the forms of the previous one." Marias Tuilian ...

... 1963 (Encyclopedia of Social Sciences PP 99).

A distinction must also be made between the 'Contemporary' i.e. those who live in the same time and 'Coeval' i.e. those who
are of the same age and are by turns, young, mature and old together. Having defined the concept of generation, Ortega went on to consider the problem of applying it to history. Here, he made use of the age old division of human life into five "ages" viz. childhood, youth, initiation or early manhood, dominance or maturity and old age. If the complete life span of an individual is set at 75 years, the 'ages' or generations of the life-span can be regarded as equal periods of 15 years each.

Generations are not small groups of illustrious men; the latter are only the representative men of a generation that comprises innumerable anonymous men born within a certain 'zone of dates'. If a society is studied from the point of view of generation, it appears to be joined in groups or strata of coevals, each of whom occupies a definite position by virtue of his experiences, his pretensions and finally his social level, since stratification is universal. The generational perspective introduces discontinuity and articulation in place of an amorphous and confused whole. From a historical point of view - inseparable from Sociology because society is intrinsically historical - a date 'unfolds' itself in several dates that correspond to the different generations. In each date there are four major human strata or generations, coexistent in interaction with precise and unsubstitutable functions:

(a) Survivors of a previous epoch who indicate the origins of the present situation, i.e. men 'of another time' who remain in this one;
(b) Those in power in all areas, whose pretensions generally coincide with the actual state of the world;

(c) The 'opposition' or active generation that has not yet triumphed and fights with the previous generation for the transfer of power and the realization of its own innovations; and

(d) The young who have new pretensions and look forward to a 'downfall' of the status quo. A historical epoch is therefore defined by a principle or form of life that differentiates it from the previous one and affects the totality of a society. It is a process by which an innovation that begins by being individual goes on to permeate a minority and finally becomes dominant throughout entire society, so that it is the form that individuals encounter as the prevailing way of life. Such a process requires the intervention of at least four successive generations or about sixty years according to Julian Maries.

Man's most important symbol is his language and through this language he defines reality. Youth is a language category applied to one segment of society by another segment with identifiable results, including the creation of social roles, attributes and meanings for those to whom it is applied. S. N. Eisenstadt in his article "Archetypal Patterns of Youth"
(Truzzi Ed. Youth and Sociology 1972 pp 15) summarizes much of the evidence related to one of the central problems of sociology: how societies insure their own continuity. He focuses on the character of youth’s movement from socially defined non-responsible roles into socially defined adult-roles. Eisenstadt shows that youth are not simply biological or chronological but are also social and cultural: they are intimately related to the division of labour, the process of identity formation, and the attribution of primordial qualities like strength, vigour, powers etc.

Because the family provides the basic socializing unit in all societies, the fit between familial roles and social roles is critical. In societies where kinship provides neither the role criterion for assigning full social status nor the basis for organizing major social functions, other bases have been developed. Where differentiated political, economic and religious structures exist, kinship no longer holds sway. Youth cultures tend to develop in that type of complex, non-kinship based society. The tendency toward the development of a transitional stage to ease the induction process is more likely according to Eisenstadt where rapid modernization, urbanisation, migration and mobility are present. He seems to be concerned with the image attributed to youth by their elders.

2. Parent-Youth Conflict: Variables

Kingsley Davis, in his article "The Sociology of Parent-Youth Conflict (1972) tries to analyze the features of modern societies which give rise to one of the extremest examples of endemically filial friction in human history. Making use of a set of
constants and variables — constants are the universal factors in parent-youth relation, the variables being the factors which differ from one society to another. Though one's attention in explaining parent-youth relations of a given milieu is focused on the variables, one cannot comprehend the action of the variables without also understanding the constants because they constitute the structural-functional basis of the family as a part of society.

The first variable in Parent-Youth Conflict according to Davis' analysis is the rate of social change. In contrast to most societies, extremely rapid social change in U.S.A. tends to increase parent-youth conflict because within a fast-changing social order the time-interval between generations which is only a mere moment as far as the social system is concerned becomes historically significant by creating a hiatus between one generation and the next. Inevitably, under such a condition youth is reared in a milieu different from that of the parents; therefore the parents become old fashioned. Youth rebellions and clashes occur which within the closely confined circle of the family generate tension.

Davis empirically proves this by taking immigrant families and societies soon after a revolution. Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany are examples here. The second variable Davis gives is the Birth-cycle, decelerating socialization and parent-child differences: Rapid change would have no power to produce conflict but for two factors (1) the family's duration and (2) the decelerating rate of socialization. Rapid social
change produces conflict because it adds an extrinsic variable to the intrinsic differences between parents and children. Not only are the parent and child, at any given moment, in different stages of development, but the content which the parent acquired at the stage where the child now is, was a different content from that which the child is now acquiring. Since the parent is supposed to socialize the child, he tends to apply the erstwhile but now inappropriate content. He makes this mistake and cannot remedy it, because due to the personality of growth, this basic orientation was formed by the experiences of his own childhood. He cannot modernize his point of view because he is the product of those experiences. Davis demonstrates this phenomenon by the following diagram:

**Old Cultural Content Acquired at Each Stage of Life**

\[ A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C \rightarrow D \rightarrow E \rightarrow F \]

\[ \text{Parent} \]

(Birth Cycle)\[--------------------------\]

Conflict

\[ \text{Child} \]

\[ A' \rightarrow B' \rightarrow C' \rightarrow D' \rightarrow E' \]

**New Cultural Content at Each Stage.**

The father can change in superficial ways, such as learning a new tune, but he cannot change the initial modes of thinking upon which his subsequent social experience has been built. To change the basic conceptions by which he has learned to
judge the rightness and reality of all specific situations would be to render subsequent experience meaningless, to make an empty caricature of what had been his life.

Though astronomical time constitutes the basic point of disparity in the birth-cycle gap between parents and offspring, the actual differences are physiological, psychological and sociological, all of which are important while explaining parent-youth and therefore adolescent-adult conflict.

Physiological differences: Though the disparity in chronological age remains constant throughout life, the precise physiological differences between parents and offspring vary radically from one period to another. For example, the organic contrasts between parent and infant are different from those between parent and adolescent. At the time of adolescence the contrast is between an organism which is just reaching its full powers and one which is just losing them. The physiological need of the father is for security and conservation because as the super abundance of energy diminishes, the organism seems to hoard what remains.

But most societies try to avoid such clashes between young and old by using sociological position as a neutralizing agent. They assign definite and separate positions to persons of different ages, eliminating competition between them for the same position. Expected behaviour of old and young is made complementary rather than identical, the performance of co-operative functions is accomplished by different but
mutually related activities suited to disparate organic needs of each, with no coercion to behave in a manner unsuited to one's organic age. In modern times, most positions are theoretically based on accomplishment rather than age, inter-age competition arises, superior organic propensities lead to a high evaluation of youth, a disproportionate lack of opportunity for youth manifests itself, and consequently, arrogance and frustration appear in the young, fear and envy in the old.

Psychological Differences: Adult realism versus youthful idealism. Though both youth and aged claim to see the truth, the old are more conservatively realistic than the young, because on the one hand they take utopian ideals less seriously and on the other hand they take what may be called operating ideals, if not more seriously, at least more for granted. Thus, middle-aged people conveniently forget the poetic ideals of a new social order which they had cherished when young. In their place, they put simply the working ideals current in society. There is a persistent tendency for the ideology of a person as he grows older to gravitate more and more towards the status quo ideology. The reality of an ideal for him is defined in terms of how many people accept it rather than how completely it is mirrored in actual behaviour. The young are idealists partly because they take working ideals literally and partly because they acquire ideals not fully operative in the social organization. Those in authority over children are obligated as a requirement of their status to inculcate ideals as a part of the official culture given to the new generation.
The children are receptive because they have little social experience because experience is kept from them. So, the young have ideals which soar to the sky. This unlimited idealism of youth becomes complicated by the fact that young people have a keen reasoning capacity. They soon learn that the ideals they have been taught to cherish are not so in fact. This results in mental conflict because the young person has not learnt that ideals may be of use without being true and consistent. As a solution youth is likely to take action designed to remove inconsistencies or force actual conduct into line with ideals, such action assuming one of many typical adolescent forms, from religious withdrawal to the militant support of some utopian scheme.

While the germ of this contrast between youthful idealism and adult realism may spring from the universal logic of personality development, it receives a peculiar exaggeration in modern times. Social change, complexity and specialization segregate ideals from fact and throw together in compatible ideologies while at the same time providing the intellectual tools for discerning logical inconsistencies and empirical errors. The highly elaborated burden of culture correlated with the complicated system of achieved vertical mobility, necessitates long years of formal education which separate youth from adulthood, theory from practice, school from life. As far as the youth's reformist zeal or cynical negativism produces conflict, the peculiar conditions in modern culture are responsible.
Sociological differences: These can be broadly brought under the following heads:

1. Parental Authority
2. Conflicting Norms
3. Little explicit institutionalization of steps in Parental authority
4. Concentration within the small family
5. Open competition for socio-economic position
6. Sex tension

The parent and child find themselves enmeshed in different social contexts and possessed of different outlooks. The much publicized critical attitude of youths toward established ways is partly a matter of being on the outside looking in. The established ways' under criticism are usually institutions like property, marriage, profession which the adolescent has not yet entered. There is not only a difference in position but there is also mutually different positions. Some of these differences relating to the birth-cycle and constituting part of the family structure are universal. This is particularly true of the super and subordination summed up in the term parental authority. Since sociological differences are inherent in a family organization they are potentially capable of producing conflict but like biological differences they do not in themselves produce such conflict. They may, in fact sometimes help to avoid such conflict.

Then what gives rise to conflict? Davis says that it
is the "Power situation". The strategic position in which a parent is placed with reference to the new born child, the parent gets considerable authority. Charged by the social group with the responsibility of controlling and training the child in conformity with the moves and thereby insuring the maintenance of the cultural structure, the parent, to fulfill his duties must have the privileges as well as the obligations of authority and the community guarantees both.

Parental authority, apart from its socializing function, is exercised within a primary group. It is bearable because the child does not know anything outside the family, it implies identification and mostly because it is not always one-sided.

Secondly parental authority involves a change and readjustment. Age is a unique basis for social stratification. It implies that stratification is temporary. This results in a kind of ambivalence. On the one hand the young person is moving into the social organization. His personality is expanding and his future is before him, in what the older person is leaving behind. The older person has a future before him only in the sense that the offspring represents it. This results in a disparity of interest - the young placing his thoughts upon a future which does not include the parent once the stage of dependence is passed, the old person placing his hopes vicariously upon the young. This situation is avoided in many societies by a system of respect for the aged and also an imaginary projection of life beyond the grave. The role of the aged becomes a tragic one in the absence of such
religio-ancestral systems.

The old and the young possess conflicting norms because social change has given them a different social content. There is a loss of mutual identification. Since he is supposed to dominate, the parent will not try and 'catch up' with the young. Apart from this, even within the generation, there is confusion. For instance, because of the conflicting goals parents become inconsistent and confused in their own minds about socializing their children. The acceptance of parental attitudes is less complete than it was formerly. In modern societies education of the youth is largely in the hands of specialized agencies who give the young advanced ideas and widen the intellectual gap between parent and child. Apart from this there is no explicit institutionalization of parental authority in modern societies. We have progressed from the extreme of permanent parental authority but not yet reached the other extreme of complete emancipation. The adolescent's sociological exit from his family via education, work, marriage and change of residence, is fraught with potential conflicts of interests which can be neutralized by only a definite system of institutional controls. Parents have a vital stake in what their children do. When the offspring acquire independence, the parents will be free of many obligations and they can relinquish authority. Because their own status is identified with that of their offspring they want to see that their children behave properly and are tempted to hold on to authority and decision making. This conflict of interest because both parent and children are
fighting for 'power' results in a struggle. Another factor that adds to the conflict situation is the paradoxical combination of concentration and dispersion within the family. Being small, the family unit gives rise to a 'one-feeling' and since all the pursuits take place outside the family and homes, it gives rise to dispersion of activities. Margaret Mead in "Social Organization of Manua" says that in a familistic society where there are several adult male and female relatives within the effective kinship group to whom the child turns for affection, and many members of the younger generation in whom the parents have a parental interest, there appears to be less intensity of emotion for any particular kinsman and consequently less chance for severe conflict. If conflict does arise between two relatives, it may be handled by shifting mutual rights and obligations to another relatives. But our family being a tiny closed unit, at least in the urban areas, a great deal of family sentiment is directed toward a few individuals who are so important to the emotional life that complexes develop easily. "This emotional intensity and situational instability increase both the probability and severity of conflict", Davis Kingsley.

In the present day achievement oriented societies the emphasis is on individual initiative and vertical mobility results in the adolescent taking a decision on his future occupation. He has to choose from a panorama of occupations which are fraught with uncertainties and competition. The youth being idealistic is unaware of the facts. The parents
too are not very clear about these. They try to evaluate future possibilities differently, a clash results. The necessity of choice at adolescence extends beyond the occupational field to practically every phase of life and the parents have an interest in all these decisions. According to Margaret Mead in Coming of Age in Samoa, a culture in which more of the choices of life were settled before hand by ascription, where the possibilities were fewer and the responsibilities of choice less urgent, would have much less parent-youth conflict.

"If ours were a simple rural-stable society, mainly familistic, the emancipation from parental authority being gradual and marked by definite institutionalized steps, with no great postponement of marriage, sex taboo or open competition for status, parents and youth would not be in conflict. Hence, the presence of parent-youth conflict in our civilization is, one more specific manifestation of the incompatibility between an urban-industrial mobile social system and familiar type of reproductive institutions." (Davis Kingsley in "Reproductive Institutions and the Pressure for Population", E. S. R. July 1937. 29:289-306).

3. **Why is this a generation gap?**

"In my younger days, I used to blame the older generation for the trouble they got us into.

Now, here I am in the older generation and trouble is still with us . . . .

Mike Mansfield.
In every age since the dawn of mankind, some kind of gap has existed between generations. The father has often felt that the generation of his son is not as good as people were in the good old days. The younger generation is regarded as easy-going, less honest, not as brave and straight-forward as people used to be. As far as dress and hair styles are concerned, the younger generation has always been considered outrageous and shocking. Literature has been full of themes of intergenerational gap. William Shakespeare in A Midsummer Night's dream (Act I Scene 1) brings this out in the conversation between Hermia and Theseus. The Greek poet's Oedipus myth is another example. Hindu mythology also has many illustrations of the younger generation rebelling against the older one. Prahlad against his father, Krishna against his uncle Kamsa are two instances. Coming to History, Mughal history has so many sons rebelling against their fathers that Durganand Sinha calls it a 'Mughal Syndrome' (Sinha Durganand 1972). Radcliffe Brown called this parent-youth conflict a 'Disjunction between proximate generations,' Margaret Mead called it, 'Era Gap'. Others have discussed it as communication gap, education gap, attitude gap and so on. But why does this happen?

The youth of every era has regarded the old as out-of-date, old-fashioned, conservative and lacking in understanding. (On the contrary, the older generation has felt the young as lacking in understanding.) On the contrary, the older generation has felt the young as lacking in respect and radical in outlook.
"Such a conflict between younger and older generations, has perhaps always existed, but it has become more conspicuous in recent times for the simple reason that the society in the developing countries is moving today at a faster rate than in the past," says Sinha K. Durganand 1971. Rapid change in modern civilization accentuates parent-youth conflict because within a fast changing social order the time-interval between generations creates a hiatus between one generation and the next.

To the young the old appear to be in control everywhere in politics, arts, in universities and in Government. The old predominate everywhere. The young are unable to accept the traditional pattern which laid down the milestones of man's life viz, the years of a student, of a householder, of an elder and of a sanyasi; a pattern of living in which discipline and giving up of power and securities were integral.

"The old feel that their children and grandchildren are separated from them by a yawning gulf of knowledge, technology, of new sexual moralities. They also see seeming indiscipline, violence, vulgarity, chaos and disintegration" ... ... (Jayakar Pupul ... , 1973). Incapable of a dialogue, too rigid for compassionate probing and listening, the older generation sees in itself an image of stability and seeks to control, to demand obedience in order to maintain status quo. They do not want to cut the umbilical chord and due to their own inadequacies, their hold becomes desperate.

But why does this happen? Is old age necessary? Are
the young young? The body grows old, cells deteriorate and
death is one certainty. Should the mind follow the same
pattern? Growing old is the closing in of the senses - when
seeing, hearing and feeling diminish and the mind established
in its groove continually repeats itself; a state in which
action is based on backward looking movement ... the looking
to memory, to the past experience for the solution of living
problems. Growing old is the incapacity to draw the past into
the perspective light of the present. On the other hand ... the young are young as far as the years that lie ahead for the
body are concerned. So long as they look backwards, do not
question the structure and roots of the cruel, ruthless
society of which they are members of, so long as they are
satisfied to take over what the old have, the young are not
young at all. The distance that separates them is the distance
in time, not a dimensional distance of mind, heart or energy.

4. History of Intergenerational Conflict

Conflict between adult and adolescent is not new at
all. What is new perhaps is the dimension it has reached
today. Frank Musgrove (1964) says that it has existed since
the time adolescent was invented probably around the time
James Watt invented the steam Engine in 1765. The architect
of the adolescent was Rousseau (1762) after which time, the
society has been faced with two problems. Firstly, how and
where to accommodate the adolescent in the social structure
and secondly as to how to make his behaviour conform to
specifications. For the last two centuries societies all
over the world have been involved with the problem of defining and clarifying the concept of precocity.

Rousseau defined the adolescent but evaded the problem of his location in society by passing him on to the tutor. He said that the first twelve years of life could be abandoned to negative education. For Rousseau, puberty was second birth when man really enters upon life; from then on no human passion was a stranger to him. Only after this period education gained importance though in many cases it was terminated just then. The tailor, the publisher, social reformer and educator came to Rousseau's assistance; they began in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to cater for a specific age group of 'young persons' who were neither adults nor children. Instead of wearing adult-like clothes, young people at the end of nineteenth century had the distinction of wearing uniforms - including long trousers which in fact anticipated the adult fashion in future! In the field of literature, school stories like Tom Brown 1856, Little by Little 1863, the Boys' Own Paper 1879 etc., addressed themselves to and helped to create a specifically adolescent world. Further, the factory acts of 1833 and 1847 distinguished the age group 13 - 19 years as needing protection from full rigours of the adult world and restricted their hours of work. Social legislation and changing social conventions, according to Musgrove (1964) 'made' the adolescent. Areas of experience and knowledge were now designated adult, from which the less-than-adult had to be shielded. For example birth and
death. The young were now kept away from the room in which
confinement or death occurred. Since the houses were built
that way, this was possible. In the later part of the
eighteenth century adolescence was not only redefined as a
distinct phase of life, but socially reclassified. Till then
little distinction was made between older children and
adolescents; they sat together in schools and were subjected
to similar discipline. They wore the same type of dress,
played the same games and read the same books. The upper
class young were socially and often geographically remote
from their elders; the elaboration of domestic architecture
made it possible to seclude them from the orbit of adult
affairs, in the children's room. "As they grew up, though,
they were more often found in the servant's quarters. Many
tutors and governesses who supervised the lives of the young
have bitterly testified as to how they were treated as menials
and relegated to the servant hall. The wives of peasants
suckled the infants of the upper class families while the
servants could even have sex relationships with older children"
Husgrove (Frank ... 1964 pp 35).

At this time the parent-child meetings become formal
and of exceedingly short durations. Having invented the
adolescent, society has been forced with the problem of
justifying his existence. Some of the rationalizations are
done in the following terms:

(1) Social and economic ... The need for longer
preparation for adulthood as societies
become complex.

(2) Biological and Evolutionary ...
Attainments, skills and attributes appearing generally in younger people even before the existing theories expected them to appear had to be explained away.

In order to satisfy this need, the social institution of public school came into being in mid-nineteenth century England. While it segregated the young from the major concerns of the adult world, it conferred a status on the members. This enabled an adjustment into the social order, relatively free from friction, resentment and hostility. Differences between the young and old generations reflect and represent the ever-moving cycle of time and progress. Complete uniformity would suggest stagnation and even decay.

In India, the traditional Indian society and culture provided inbuilt mechanisms for the resolution of these differences. Some traditional attributes of society which helped in preventing the differences between generations are:

(1) Ashrama Schema: The gradual movement from one stage to another stage provide little opportunities for clash and conflict. By the time the son reached maturity and craved for authority, his father had stepped down and entered Vanaprastha.
(2) **Joint family**: In the traditional joint family, at one time three generations lived under the same roof. The eldest male member had all the authority. The joint family took the place of national insurance, guaranteed basic sustenance to all members.

(3) **The caste system**: Caste divisions were considered divinely ordained and hierarchically graded. Occupation was decided by the caste. By prescribing a way of life, the caste system reduced the possibilities of individual deviation and the chances of strain caused by familial differences.

(4) **The Economic System**: The main occupation being agricultural, son inherited the occupation from father. Family was united as an economic unit.

(5) **The institution of marriage**: Caste endogamy and arranged marriages minimized the chances for differences.

(6) **The Political institution** and (7) **The value System**: The authority of elders and sanctity of tradition were very important and 'opposed' rationality and individuality. "Parents are Gods" according to scriptures. "Thus the respect and reverence for parental authority was so embedded in the young minds that they could not think of differing from them. The Hindu value system helps the continuance of the joint family by minimizing speculation in the matters of religions practice. The criterion for ritual correctness is to be found not in reason but in the records of past practices."
This reduces the possibility of differences between members of the family" . . . Gangrade K. D. 1975.

Thus, in traditional Indian society all the important things like social status, occupational and interpersonal relationship were prescribed for the individual. The factors which brought a change in traditional society and sharpened the intergenerational differences are (1) Industrialization (2) urbanization (3) Education (4) Mass media of communication (5) Impact of British Rule (6) Effects of anti-colonial rule (7) Pre-independence older generation and post independence younger generation and finally the demographic factor (8) Postponement of age at marriage which has created "unmarried young adults."

In America: Friedenberg Z. E. says that the idea as to what separates us from the young is something so passive that it may justly be called 'a generation gap' - a middle age ideology which aims at allaying the anxiety rather than to clarify the bases of intergenerational conflict. "Both young and old seem to be trapped in a false view of what is actually a profound 'conflict of interest' in the American Society" Friedenberg Z. E. . . . 1969. What appears to be a consequence of a mere cultural lag in responding to a new social and political maturity in the young with distressing but unintended repressive consequences is rather the expression of what has become 'genuine class Conflict' between a dominant and exploitative older generation and youth who are slowly becoming more aware of what is happening to them as demands
on them are escalated according to Friedenberg. He calls the teenagers "second-class citizens".

In all societies young people enter the social system in subordinate roles while older people run things. Even in technically primitive cultures where the young have the advantage of possessing physical strength, this seems to be true. An inherent basis for such a conflict is in the fact that the old dominate the young and the young wish to replace them. This is so because factors that have traditionally mitigated general conflict have become feeble or inoperative. The family where affectual ties between generations are formed plays a decreasing role in the lives of its members and certainly in the socialization of the young. The father of the Victorian era or the head of the traditional rural household was often a tyrant and more or less was accepted as much by his children. He left all he could transfer to his sons by inheritance. His relationship to his sons was not purely competitive but complementary to a certain extent because it was the sons who would carry on his work when his own powers failed. The proper attitude of father and son - both authority and underlying tenderness took account of this mutual and unequal dependency. So long as the society changed slowly, elders knew more than the young; they were wiser; their authority was based on real superiority in the subtle techniques of living.

In an open, bureaucratic society sanctions against nepotism and attrition of property through inheritance taxes
decreases the utility of each generation to the other. On the one hand, young cannot succeed, on the other the old lack the confidence that the young will care for their material possessions. Youth is a discriminated - against minority. It is excluded from economic opportunity and is exploited by being forced to supply its services at a fraction of their market value. Youth has been defined as a social role by factors like compulsory school attendance, the juvenile court system and selective service system which operate as age-graded constraints. The adolescents' supposed inadequacies like his alleged instability, lack of realism and his celebrated identity crisis justified his exclusion from responsible statuses and extended disengagement from the central institution of society. "Legislation ostensibly intended to protect him in fact segregated, belittled and enfeebled him. Schooling created what it was intended to cure" . . . Coleman James 1962.

5. The Sociology of Generation Gap

Sociologists have argued that the function of generations was integrative and it bound the young to the society. When a significant proportion of the young were clearly failing to be bound by society, functionalist sociology had no explanation because the conflict situation was proving anything but integrative.

In sociological as well as popular writing the term generation gap, has become a familiar one. Frequency of usage however does not imply consensus on its connotation.
It is the difference in the value priorities between the two generations that receives the greatest amount of attention in sociological analysis. In almost all societies parents are the primary agents of socialization. Their codes of conduct are internalized by the children. Yet, there comes a time when parental authority is questioned and parental values replaced or at least their priorities rearranged. "The factors that are responsible for the change are many; of them the peer group influence is predominant. Hence the differences in viewpoint get subsumed under the label of intergenerational conflict." ... Davis Kingsley 1940.

The word 'Conflict' carries a negative connotation. Since conflict can upset status quo, it should also be considered a predictor of change. Conflict and change operate as a two-way system and therefore conflict of a certain type can be very adaptive for progress. De Coufle has pointed out that one development of contemporary Sociology has been the recognition of the importance of intergenerational conflict in addition to classical notions of class conflict. The break down of society by age group adds a new dimension to the study of attitudinal and institutional changes in a developing society.

"A society which has pledged itself to modernization, technological development and increased prosperity has to reckon with the problem of looking ahead into future and preparing its young men and women to face unforeseen problems with a measure of confidence and high degree of competence."
Damle Y. B. ... 1971. In a traditional society there are always solutions to problems. The existing tradition has something to offer whether the problems pertain to area of thought, action or social interaction. Existing social structure has always imposed constraints on cognitive activity and guided patterns of interaction and social processes, according to Damle. Modernization is a concerted effort by a society to emancipate itself from any kind of determinancy. It includes many elements like inculcation of rationality, the scientific spirit, secularism, acceptance of values of equality, social justice and so on. So, in such a society the parent is placed in a predicament of trying to transmit old content no longer suited to the offspring's needs in a changed world. Thus, a constant and a variable produce parent-youth Conflict. To avoid this predicament, modern society has relegated this responsibility to the institution of Education. Even here, the intergenerational conflict persists because the teachers belong to a different generation and in the eyes of youth, they possess all the qualities (or faults!) of their parents.

The gap between generations has existed in every stage but the phenomenon that is witnessed today is slightly different. The problem had never been experienced on such an ubiquitous magnitude. What generally manifested on a familial level is now a kind of universal social experience. It no longer remains a matter between parents and their children. Differences and gaps now have permeated the society
as a whole and is being manifested in different levels of life experience like tension between student and teacher, youth against administration, and youth deriding the ways and outlook of the older generation. In olden days this conflict was only 'felt' and seldom expressed. The youth of olden times might have failed to co-operate with the elders when they resented their ways. At the most they might have run away from home. The differences were rarely expressed overtly or protested. While the youth of olden times simply disagreed, today's youth feel that they are entitled to protest. This protest is no more on individual level. It has assumed an organized, mass dimension. "Readiness to protest and rebel against the same maladies in an organized way marks off the contemporary generation gap" . . . Durganand Sinha . . . 1972.

Feuer says that the gap as such is old. What is new is that the present day youth is not ready to accept and put up with the disparity. It is articulate and vocal about its differences, holds processions and mass meetings and would like to have its own way in moulding its affairs. To this extent the present era can be called 'The age of Protest', according to Feuer. He says "The new generation has been radicalized because it is reaching out to implement the values which parents only professed" . . . (Feuer 1969). The American youth positing a moral vacuum, try to step in as redeemers. The youth in U.S.A. have found modern material values connected with advanced scientific and technologically
advanced society repugnant. As a reaction against the moves of affluent society it has generated a Bohemianism and non-conformity. The Rajinishis of Poona are a good example. They are a set of unshaven, quaintly dressed band of young men and women seeking new experiences in Eastern religious practices.

In India the frequent agitations of students, violent political demonstrations and student unrest which have become a characteristic of modern life have been attributed to this widening gap between adults and adolescents. These actions are the reflections and expressions of the ever widening gap between student-teacher, youth and aged, parent-children etc. They are in fact acting out this hostility against their father.

Youth-adult conflict is not restricted to urban areas only. Even rural areas have been experiencing this. One must agree that it is more organized in the urban areas. In the rural areas it may at best cause intra-family strain. In urban areas, the exposure to mass media of communication has intensified the gap and magnified the differences in attitudes, approaches and values. When the disharmony is felt more acutely, the best possible manner to express it is to do so in an organized manner. The Yuva-Congress, Yuva-Janata and Young-Turks are the youth in political parties who are trying to make their presence felt.

Youth have been exposed to a rapid force of changes
in more than one field. In the field of education, this group feels most. Youth has imbibed new values, has its own sub-culture too. Comparing the youth of India and U.S.A. Shills (Edward 1969) and Altbach say that both look alike as far as their culture is considered. But if one looks at their agitations, the differences is obvious. In U.S.A. the student revolt is anti-establishment while in India it is anti-academic.

Every non-static society and specially one which is developing at a fast rate will find that the tensions and differences between generations are inevitable. The change generates its own tensions and conflicts. The older generation clings to its own norms and system of values which are challenged. The younger generation becomes the carrier of the change due to their education and exposure to affairs of the world and the improved means of communication which has made the world a small place. The gap is magnified by the pace of social change which is deliberately introduced in India. "It not only encompasses the economic processes like investment, taxation, mobilisation of funds but also changes in population, health, education, vocational and professional training, general civic culture, improvement in administration and self-government, land-reform, protection of depressed classes and so on. The stress and strain produced by this all-round change is widespread and the distance between generations as a result of such changes is far greater than what would have occured in the course of normal growth. In
the course of the great awakening, aspirations, interests and ideals have been exploding in discrete sections of societies that are culturally and economically ill-prepared to assimilate them systematically. One effect of the inverted and telescoped historical sequence of social and economic development in the countries of the region is that people in the various layers of society have very different kinds of outlook toward their world. Indeed, most individuals, apart from those entirely isolated by backwardness and stagnation, labour within themselves sharply conflicting valuations" . . . Myrdal (Gunnar . . . 1968).

This is equally true of individuals belonging to different generations living in India today. The knowledge of the strength of organization has made the youth in India integrate itself to wrest power from elders who have till now been guiding, unquestioned and unchallenged. Young have become a super citizen whom the law is unable to touch. In a strange way youth has tasted power and will not want to stop till it wrests as much as is possible from its elders. The present agitation in Assam by students could not have put life into such disorder if it was not aware of its power.

This study makes an attempt to find the areas of conflict between adolescents and adults. What do the parents and teachers feel about the adolescents regarding their general behaviour, occupational career, choice of courses, sexual awareness and so on, whether the conflict increases or
decreases depending upon the socio-economic-educational backgrounds of parents. In the conflict between generations is an universal factor, have the parents, since they have passed the stage tried to bridge the gap in some way? are some of the questions that arise in the mind. An attempt has been made to answer some of these questions with an empirical study of adolescent students, their parents and teachers.

6. Theoretical Framework

Within sociological theory, the sociology of generations is rapidly developing into an important area. In the past, society and culture were assumed to be structured either by classes or class strata, status groupings, collectively shared values. Around such themes have emerged horizontal theories of Stratification propounded by Karl Marx and Mills, vertical theories of stratification given by Weber and Lenski, social stratification theories focusing on the increasing division of labour in society put forth by Durkheim and Merton. "It was not until 1960s and 1970s that American Sociologists in general and political sociologists in particular focused their attention on social and political implications or power arrangements within the age strata in society, especially those age strata which experience similar social location, life style and weltanschangen" . . . Braumgart Richard G. . . . 1974. The theory of generations argues that as new forms of social differentiation emerge in History, specially
those which evolved from the industrial revolution, the new structural forms have in effect separated age strata from one another rather than united them. As a result, society has been unable to utilize and incorporate the various age strata on an equal basis within the existing social class, status, organizational and power sectors. This has alienated both younger and older generations and made it increasingly problematic for them to find place within the social order which is dominated by the middle age group. Therefore sociology of generations has relevance both in the understanding of new forms of social organization as well as the study of social dynamics and change. While knowledge of generational waves and age cycles has been available within sociology — given by Mannheim, Pareto, Davis, Eisenstadt, Parsons, Erikson, Ryder and others, research on this problem with renewed interest has been a recent phenomenon Lubell in 1969, Feuer in 1969, Bengston 1970, Lambert 1971, Berger 1971, Bengston and Black in 1973, K. D. Gangrade in 1975 and so on.

The generation argument suggests that as societies develop and become more complex and differentiated, it becomes difficult to organize and incorporate the non-essential age limits i.e. those age strata not actively involved with developing, coordinating and maintaining the social system into the centres of social, political, decision-making and power. Many theories have been suggested to analyse this phenomenon. Among these two models stand out —
(1) The functionalist model of generational conflict; and

(2) The generational unit model.

The functionalist model presented by Eisenstadt and Parsons argues that society operates as an inter-related and integrated social system; when institutional components fail to balance, alienation and rebellion are likely to occur. The generational unit model or historical consciousness model originally developed by Mannheim suggests that social change is rooted not in social equilibrium but in the emerging consciousness of youth movements within generations. Comparing these two models, it becomes clear that the generational unit model provides considerably more theoretical and empirical opportunities for investigation than the functionalist model. Generational units can be compared and tested while it is not possible to do so in the functionalist conflict model.

In generational analysis one typically obtains a cross-sectional sample at one time and asks how generations are different. In this procedure, different generations are characterized as coming from different cohorts and being of different ages. So long as one is focused at a descriptive level of analysis at one point of time, a cross-sectional sample is quite legitimate for generational analysis. Depending upon circumstances, it may be quite important to determine how generations differ now in order to understand inter-generational dynamics.
Recently Riegel (1972) pointed out the dialectical relationship between the changing individual in a changing society where the individual determines and sets limits for individual changes. Ryder, as early as 1965 has given weight to this idea. He says that each successive cohort serves as a cause and effect in the phases of revolutionary transformation. The dialectical relationship implied by a changing individual in a changing society may even be traced back to Karl Mannheim's essay in problems of generations . . . 1952.

Each biological generation (continuously emerging and therefore aging) comes into contact anew with the existent cultural heritage. Each new generation interprets reality without the years of commitment to a previous ideology and thereby transforms that reality. There is a continuous emergence of new generations and disappearance of older generations. This may not guarantee the transformation of social structures but it does serve as a vehicle for social change. Whether a given generation realizes its potentiality in effecting social change or creating a distinctive generation style depends upon the trigger action of specific events or acceleration in tempo of social and cultural transformation. Since a given historical event will have differential effects on persons of different ages and since new generations may participate in the recreation of society and its institutions, the dialectic between a changing individual interacting within a changing society is inevitable. This interaction between the individual and society consists of an interaction between
cause and effect, where each may serve as both cause and effect.

"The dialectical exercise is simple in the extreme, for it requires only that the analyst of society question everything that he sees and hears, examine phenomena fully and from every angle, seek and evaluate the contradiction of any proposition, and consider every category from the viewpoint of its non contents as well as its positive attributes. It requires us to look also for paradoxes as much as complementarity, for opposition as much as accommodation. It portrays a universe of dissonance underlying apparent order and seeks deeper orders beyond the dissonance. It urges the critical examination, in the light of ongoing social activity, of those common sense guide lines to behaviour and common sense interpretations of reality that lie at the core of our cultural systems." Murphy Robert F . . . 1971.

The dialectical theory enjoins us to querry the obvious and given truth of both our culture and science. The result of all this may fall far short of revelation and the discovery of general social laws, but it will at least impel us to ask new and fresh questions. The measure of a science lies as much in the questions it asks as in the answers it obtains.

In this exploratory study of intergeneration conflict or generational gap - the sample selected comprises of three groups - students, their parents and teachers. The adolescents between the ages 14 to 17 years and the two sets of adults
whom they come into close interaction with viz parents and teachers are the subject of the study. The adolescents are at such a period of life where their ideas and attitudes are in a state of transformation. (1) Physiologically also they are burning the bridges of childhood and launching on to adulthood. (2) Sociologically, there is an ambivalence in their status-roles - sometimes they are told that they are too young and certain other times they are told that they are grown up and should behave properly. (3) Due to the changes in educational pattern from the old 11+1+3 to the new 10+2+3, there is an atmosphere of uncertainty and change. Their generational conflict with teachers gets accentuated due to the fact that the teachers are no more sure of what they are to teach. The aim of the study is to find out where the conflict was more intense and how far the changing educational pattern affected this conflict. The study also tries to find out if at any level the parents and teachers had come to understand the predicament of the adolescents and try to help them out or in simpler words, if at any socio-economic-educational level, the parents were trying to bridge the generation gap and meet their adolescents half way or were they just waiting for that day when the adolescent becomes an adult when there would be peace all round.

The study has been conducted within the framework of the dialectical approach.