CHAPTER 1, II

THE FAMILY

Certain radical changes in the structure of society and its principal institutions become imperative in the new climate of independence in a country after its prolonged servitude. In India also, the electric impact of Western culture, coupled with the newly achieved freedom of behaviour, was bound to produce great agitation, suffering and agony in the life of the people. The period of transition is always fraught with pre-natal pangs, but unfortunately, in India, the period of transition - the period of indecision, uncertainty and insecurity - has stretched long and wide like a monster's jaws. The task of achieving equanimity of mind and building up of new values has not yet been completed. The new criss-cross gusts and blasts of wind are raging in conflicting directions and in this chaotic situation human life becomes a struggle and a quest.

The post-Independence age in Indian has been characterized by many problems. Inflation of education, Industrialisation and Urbanisation, extension of unemployment, poverty and frustration, impact of Western ways of life, growth of democratic, humanitarian, individualistic ideals, mounting economic strain and stress, socio-psychological
tensions and consequent propagation of separatist, egocentric tendencies, parochial, Epicurean and mistaken and misplaced Existentialist pretensions and poses, intolerant and cranky considerations of 'self-before-society' invited by the general lawlessness in the atmosphere culminating in the spell of Beatles, Beatniks, Pop music, strip shows and nudist societies, Hollywood films and lurid novels - all these have, directly or indirectly, contributed towards the decline of the traditional family ideal in our country. How can an author remain impervious to the claims of a rapidly changing social order? Indo-Anglians, within the compass of their theories and views, beliefs and biases, have registered their reactions in their separate ways - traditional, modern, compromising. The general consensus seems to be to acknowledge the slowly but steadily receding sway of the cumbrous family unit. The front-liners among those who have dealt with this aspect of Indian life are - R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Kamala Markandaya, Prawer Jhabvala, Mascarenhas, Attia Hosain and Shakuntala Shrinagesh.

The joint family is an important social institution of India. It gives socio-economic stability and security to all its members, if it is headed by a man of catholicity and sanity. It is a relic of the collective form of social living. The props of the joint family lend support,
strength and solidarity to its members. There is no 'I' but 'We'. It tenaciously retains its character. A living is never difficult in it, though life may be. Like a banyan tree, it offers its soothing shade to all, even to the agonised orphans who otherwise would have wandered away from human love. It is essentially patriarchal in its origin and character. The conventional concept of the joint family is that the head of the family is assertive, authoritative, high-handed and keeps all the members in their right place and together. Westernised people do not approve of this pattern of family life, because it seems to deprive them of privacy and individuality.

Indo-Anglian writers thus examine the advantages and disadvantages of this ancient Indian social institution. Their attitude is nostalgic or critical. The spirit of post-Independence times discourages the joint family system and has awakened in all the desire to be self-dependent to lead their lives in their own way. This social order is vanishing fast owing to the individualistic claims of modern society.

The joint family sometimes affords protection to idlers, wastrels and arty and careless people who do not have to worry about the maintenance of themselves and their own family. In R. K. Narayan's *Mr. Sampath*, Srinivas's elder brother asks him to do something for making his wife and son happy. Of course, the elder brother continues to look after the entire family without
making any distinction. The joint family is now a burden to the bread-earner and dampens the desire of the hangers-on and habitual idlers to earn their bread. Anita Desai suggests how the arty, intellectual, independent-minded educated young members feel that their development is jeopardized by the excessive claims of the joint family system. Even adolescents are ready to come up with a complaint against it any moment, Nikhil, in Voices in the City, tells Amla: 'It is a bad system, this joint family, it makes it very hard for me to study and pass exams.' Certain members used to living in a joint family find it difficult to look after their own family. They find domestic duties irksome and nostalgically remember how they were free from these worries in the joint family. Srinivas, in Narayan's Mr. Sampath, finds himself 'violating some principle or the other of domestic duty' when he is in charge of his wife and son. Mrs. Jhabvala reveals how the elders watch, guard, guide, help and control the young and their wisdom and experience are highly useful to them. Viddy, in The Nature of Passion, realizes the benefits of the joint family when Om assures him that the problem of the bill did not matter and it is not only his but their problem. The heads of the joint families have imbibed the new spirit of the post-Independence era, as Nagarajan points out through Koni's
analysis of Gangadhar Suri's family-attitude. Suri thinks it far better to allow the younger generation to have its own way and retain its affections than to exercise authority and alienate them. This is quite against orthodox notions of the Hindu joint family. Despite our desire or claim for modernity, some persons in India are not willing to let the joint family system die. Kusum, in Jhabvala's Get Ready for Battle, tells Gulzarilal that it is not easy to do away with the joint family system. "Our girls are used to living in the joint family and to have many people about them and an older woman to direct them. This is how things are done in our country..." Orphans in large families are mothered by great aunts. Raja Rao brings out in his rare perceptive manner this significant aspect of life in the joint family pattern: "... for an orphan in a real household is never an orphan". According to Attia Hosain, this pattern of family life never finds the approval of the Westernized. To them, it appears to be handicapped by 'entanglements, unreasoning restrictions, unreasonable demands and lack of privacy'. Westernized Hamid, in Sunlight on a Broken Column, does not like to live in his family. One of the drawbacks of the joint family system is absence of privacy in it, which makes sex-fulfilment an impossibility. The honeymoon is unknown - except to the Westernized and wealthy few - so,
despite frequent sex-acts, there is hardly any physical acquaintance. The sex-act, like the call of nature, is brief and brutal - this causes many perversions. Khushwant Singh, in *I shall not hear the nightingale*, makes a penetrating analysis of sex-life in the Indian family: "Unfulfilled sexual impulses result in an obsession with sex and in many perversions which result from frustration: sadism, masochism and most common of all, exhibitionism."

Traditional families have a special code of behaviour. They aim at social reputation and scrupulously eschew anything derogatory to their names. Their members respect family traditions and their elders and festivities and are averse to change. The renegades flout these time-honoured ways of life and yet do not wish to forgo the ancestral legacy. In spite of his preference for traditional family life, R. K. Narayan presents both sides of the case. Ancient traditional families have to keep up their reputation for social respectability. There should be no trace even of cheapening or vulgarisation. As R. K. Narayan points out, even the names of their members should be supporting the general notion of their sensibility and sobriety. Raju, in *The Guide*, comments on the incompatibility of the name of Rosie as one coming of a traditional dancer family. A classical dancer must call herself 'something that is poetic and appealing'. Old-timers in conservative families are very fond of festive
ceremonies and rituals affording opportunity to their craving for the grand and spectacular. Social esteem sometimes ranks higher than even family affection. Krishnan, in B. Rajan's *The Dark Dancer*, feels that his parents' pleasure of seeing him a day earlier does not offset the loss of ceremony and that he matters less than 'the festivities he was supposed to occasion'.

People born and brought up in traditional families should adore their family traditions and their elders and should never forget the family prestige and greatness. Aunt Abida, in *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, asks Laila to show respect even to Uncle Mohsin, who is crude and rude, in the name of their ancient, noble family. R. K. Narayan subtly shows how youngmen, who pride themselves on being very liberal-minded, forget readily that if they flout family traditions, they should not avail themselves of the family legacy. Raju's maternal uncle, in *The Guide*, sarcastically refers to the inconsistency of scapegraces like Raju 'who had no respect for family traditions and yet tried to enjoy their ancestors' hard earned wealth'.

Most Indians are generally averse and impervious to social change which implies agitation and tension and philosophically put up even with inconveniences, discomforts and inadequacies. R. K. Narayan, in *The Vendor of Sweets*, shows how in the 'regime' of Jagan's father no change is
possible in the house. "Everything in this home had the sanctity of usage, which was the reason why no improvement was possible." Family tradition and a general fatalistic attitude of resignation contribute towards reluctance for change. *Status quo* is precisely the social situation for many an Indian.

The bonds of blood are strong and permanent and assert themselves on gay or grievous occasions. Even unpleasant relations become bearable in critical situations. R. K. Narayan, Shrinagesh, Mulk Raj Anand and Anand Lall examine these relationships from different angles. Shrinagesh, in *The Little Black Box*, points out that life means a number of bonds - 'these little gossamer threads which bind men to each other'. Unless these are snapped, life is endless. There is no mortality. One such bond, Sarala says, is her love for her niece Nimi. She cannot die before severing herself from it. Only sometimes, estrangement is permanent in respect of family-relationships, otherwise, as Shrinagesh shows, even undesirable, unbearable relatives are a great solace in crisis. Familiarity is established even between relatives meeting after years of distances and estrangement. That is why Sarala does not feel it strange to be with Nimi, who is 'better for her than twenty strangers'. R. K. Narayan reveals how people forget or eschew their paro-
chial family-feuds on funereal and festive occasions. The one demands compassion and the philosophic calm in the presence of death and the bereaved naturally turn to their flesh and blood rather than to outsiders. The other inspires one to be swelling and swaggering or catholic and expansive with a desire to show off pride of joy or share it. Margayya, in *The Financial Expert*, feels that they must not let down ties of blood. He and his wife call on his brother early in the morning with a request and invitation to bless Balu voyaging out on his Scholastic venture. On critical occasions, members of the family have to get together to tide over an unbearable event. Margayya's brother takes up the situation in hand and asks the strangers to leave, when Balu is said to be dead. He says, "..... This is the time when the family has to be together". This indicates that the ties of blood are inseparable. Certain family relationships grow or revive under the shadow of a crisis. As soon as it is lifted up, the cleft becomes clearly visible again. Balu's home-coming shatters the hopes of the two families living together in manageable co-operation. They have to fall apart. Now there is no crisis, so the helpers of the family have to go. The novelist expresses it thus - "It was a relationship essentially thriving on a crisis". The villain of death sometimes affords comic relief in the form of a family reunion in the drama
of life. Unfortunately, a funeral is a rendezvous for several family-branches. Margayya's brother, true to his family loyalty, is playing the busybody when Balu is reported dead. Even under such stress of crushing grief, in subconscious layers of persons' consciences is lurking a joy of at least having regained the love of a close relation long-estranged - R. K. Narayan has beautifully caught this subtle psychological reaction. Young persons, carried away by love, easy life or difference in ideologies, sometimes separate from their families, but the pull of the family compels them to return to the nest, sooner or later. In Mulk Raj Anand's The Road, Lachman honestly confesses the crime of burning the Chamars' huts and despite Thakur Singh's implicit threats to cut off his engagement with Rukmini, he declares boldly. "I am going where my family is". Some septuagenarians, with hollows in their cheeks and souls, would practise only a theatrical kind of love for their relatives. In the drama of Self, family love, to them, is only a side-show, a farcical interlude. Anand Lall makes a casual study of a section of feudal society in decline. Ram Nath, in The House at Adampur, wallows in the mire of lecherous thoughts of dividing his time between Gita and Ranu, instead of bothering about these relatives, 'a bunch of over-fed, greedy people'. He made an 'historical' decision not to 'give another moment to the affairs of the family'.

 índo-Anglian novelists show that the unity and
sanctity of the family ought to be preserved at all
costs. There is nothing more gratifying than the family
unity to the elders. If there is mutual affection,
nothing could compare with it. It would bring a solution
to any problem. In The Nature of Passion, Jhabvala
depicts Lalaji's happiness at seeing Om and Viddy working
together with genuine brotherly affection and love. It
is the success of the head of the family, if other
members live up to expectations and bring joy and glory
to the family.  
It is good that members of a family, as
individuals, should understand each other. But the unity
of the family is to be nourished and nurtured holily.
Attia Hossain shows this in Sunlight on a Broken Column,
when Kamal makes this point clear to Saleem: 'I don't
want the family to split up. There is too much of it in
the air now-a-days. I want us to remain united'.  
It is true that the sanctity of the family is to be protected
against the assaults of immorality. We should cleanse
our own minds and lives and also those of others around
us to extend the region of godliness. In Jhabvala's The
Householder, Prem, a family man, complains to the Principal
against the indiscipline of some boys in the class and
emphatically expresses his views on College disci-pline
and family honour and his duties as a householder.  
Mrs. Jhabvala illustrates, in Get Ready for Battle, that
family secrets cannot be bandied about among outsiders.
Kusum, with her characteristic astuteness, prevails upon Sarala Devi to let Tara go, because she does not think the presence of any outsider necessary when family matters are being discussed. What an irony that Kusum conveniently forgets that she is herself precisely an outsider in Sarala's family! Malgonkar exposes how some aristocratic men unashamedly keep mistresses and do not feel any scruples about it. They make a new pattern of life 'with its separate compartments for sex and family life'. Abhay, in The Princes, despite his comparatively liberal outlook as a Prince, does not hesitate to have Zarina as his mistress. This mainly reflects the spirit in pre-Independence times. In these post-Independence times, people have grown quite aware of their social status and rights. It is no longer easy for men to lord over women and to defile the sanctity of the family. Kudos to Gandhiji who has invested Indian womanhood with new glory and independence.

The honour of the family must be preserved at all costs. All sorts of jobs cannot be accepted by respectable people. Even the poor would not allow their family name to be sullied. It is more precious than any worldly property. No sacrifice is too great for maintaining family honour. It is beyond compromise and, to some, it is dearer than their children even. This is how the
Indo-Anglian novelist expresses the sense of family honour that most Indians feel. He satirises the excessive, hypocritical and theatrical attitude to this.

Family honour is beyond compromise and even famished-but proud-families refuse to be prostrated under the crushing load of debts and wants. Meera's grandfather, in Bhattacharya's *A Goddess Named Gold*, goes out of his village in search of shelter but refuses the Seth's help. Grandmother also is with him. He says: "Homeless wretches, we still have our honour." 28 Attia Hosain also indicates that soiling the family's honour is a cardinal sin. Abida, in *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, rebukes Laila that she has put herself above her duty to her family. Abida loves Laila, but she loves family honour more. She accuses Laila ruthlessly. "You have let your family's name be bandied about by scandal-mongers. You have soiled its honour on their vulgar tongues." 29 Loss of family honour is a serious thing. Parents do not forgive even their dear children for letting them down: the moment is filled with illogical and corrosive hatred. They curse, dis-inherit or disown them. Margayya, in *The Financial Expert*, is greatly disappointed to know that Balu could not pass his S.S.L.C. Examination and incurred public disgrace. He says he can-not tolerate a son who brings such disgraces on the family. Later, his continued absence also does not soften Margayya, who
continues to rave: "He is not my son." To people of an older generation there is no greater unhappiness than loss of family name and prestige. Even economic loss can be put up with, but, in no case, should family reputation be allowed to be soiled. Ravi's aged father, in Mr. Sampath by R. K. Narayan, is not worried about the loss of his son's service as about how he has lost his service: "Whatever happens to us we want to preserve a good name in the society." He does not want Ravi to serve in a film studio and asks Srinivas not to put notions into Ravi's head about his natural gift in art. The family honour, he says, is vastly more important than any shady job like the one in the studio. This excessive and exaggerated concern for family name belongs to the pre-Independence times. The moment of a girl's parting, after her wedding, from her father's family is a tender and touching scene in Indian family life. Parents would exhort the young girl to preserve their family honour by treading the difficult path of virtue. Rashmi's father's exhortation to her, in Veena Paintal's Serenity in Storm, illustrates the point. The sense of hospitality cannot be extinguished by financial difficulties or inconvenient guests. Ladies of the family also forget all rancour and sense of insult at having to serve guests highly inferior to them in status. Lakshmi, in Rajan's Too Long in the West, does not like the candidates for Nalini's hand but
treated them generously by preparing an elaborate meal. Even poor rural families would not brook their members' illegal activities - it would be a blot on their family honour. Young persons might revolt against the standards - patience and endurance - of such peasant families and yet they accept these very standards when set by their lovers' families. Markandaya brings out this ironic situation, in A Handful of Rice, when Ravi, against his family standards, accepts those because of his love for Nalini.

The strength of the whole family's character is sometimes tested, when there is a conflict between love for a close relative, threatened with capital punishment and sense of duty and morality. Each member would then reveal his character in the expression of reaction to the crime committed by the relative. Sher Singh, in I shall not hear the nightingale, was arrested as a terrorist. Buta Singh was worried about his career and name. Sabhrai, a little confused over legal implications, sought refuge in religion. Beena wanted Sher to come back whatever the cost. Buta Singh's attitude is selfish, Sabhrai's ethical and Beena's truly sisterly. This demarcation of the emotional level of a family is skilfully delineated. The edge of self-condemnation on account of one's degradation, is sharpened, especially when one belongs to a family of valiant fighters for national freedom. Kajoli, in Bhattacharya's So Many Hungers, deplored her present social degradation and nostalgically remembered her father, brother and husband whose spirit was not broken despite sufferings in jail-house.
participate in the war of national independence indicates the magnetic impact of Gandhian thought on the average Indian family. Malgonkar shows that sometimes members of a family who have no self-respect pounce upon a long-neglected member of the family, if he has had some laudable achievement. Gopal Chandidar, in *A Bend in the Ganges*, is pestered by his relatives with sudden attention, because he has won the Military Cross, a Major's rank and Directorship of a British firm. Ironically enough, some persons remember their family honour precisely when they are about to lose it. When Jagan, in R. K. Narayan's *The Vendor of Sweets*, finds that Mali and Grace, though unmarried, has been living as man and wife, he remarks that such a thing was not heard of in their family. He feels that he can no longer live in his house − 'unsullied for generations' − but now incorrigibly blackened by the young persons. As the time of such family break-ups, social prestige works as a check. Parents do not drive away their children themselves. They only find out backdoors and live in isolation.

Family happiness is like a talisman against all malice, rancour and injustice of the world. It is a panacea for all the ills of life. It is the touchstone of life. The texture of family love is tender, subtle and exclusive. If a single yarn or filament seems to be snapping apart, the whole pattern is shattered. Indo-Anglian novelists have drawn charming pictures of simple, family happiness. They have also shown how the new spirit awakened by the post-Independence changes in the
country now enable man to battle against superstitions and even traditional beliefs of religion. This is indicative of new values in life advanced by scientific approach. Their attitude is not always idealistic. They expose the drastic impact of jealousy, apathy, poverty, and immorality on the harmony of family life.

Contented and happy family life could easily be a great emotional aid in weathering the storms in life. Kamala Markandaya draws, in *A Silence of Desire*, a very beautiful picture of a happy middle-class family, before the mental eye of its head, wending his weary way homeward in the evening. "There was the thought of a well-cooked meal, his wife's welcome, the children, his home to spur him on" - such tranquilly happy thoughts fill Dandekar's mind. The ugly shadow of jealousy or suspicion would darken this bright prospect of a family gathering in the evening. If a single member drifts - even psychologically and, gradually also actually, - apart, the whole rhythm is broken. First, Sarojini and then Dandekar and ultimately their children drift away from and not to the family. Family happiness is the touchstone of life. This appears to be particularly true to those who have not had any family life worth the name or those who have once had and now lost it. Others' happy family life or their own sweet past memories of family bliss cause in them a nostalgic regret, for this divine conferment upon humanity.
Brijmohan, an elderly confirmed bachelor, in Jhabvala’s Get Ready for Battle, appreciates Kusum’s past happy family life and says that family happiness is a wonderful thing. Kusum endorses his views and remarks that the warmth of family love is a divine blessing. Khushwant Singh shows that innocent, tender and spontaneously humorous jokes acquire proverbial currency in families and help to ease tense situations. In, I shall not here the nightingale by Khushwant Singh, Sabhrai’s observant, indulgent, tender wifely eyes catch the perch of a stingy piece of vegetable on Buta Singh’s walrus moustache. The joke is circulated in whispers by Sabhrai to Shunno and also to Beena who obligingly tells the offended, tickled victim: "Mama says there is a bulbul on the bough." Such iridescent jokes betoken the bliss of tender family life. Kamala Markandaya shows how the usual family comforts and love behind it are taken for granted by men, but once they lose these, they realise the magnitude of that loss. These small gifts of life are not to be ignored. Dandekar, in A Silence of Desire, realises this to his chagrin. "He had hardly realised before the extent to which he derived his well-being from the regular evening meal, surrounded by his family, at the end of the day’s work." He has lost all this, because Sarojini is turning more and more to the Swamy. He goes on having frequent assignations — also, therefore, economic hard-
Markandays, in *Possession*, suggests how true family love is roomy and can warmly accommodate even the returning prodigal. Val's mother tells Anasuya that she is impatient to see her son before she dies and assures her of a family welcome to Val. She is sure her brothers' wives would even find out a bride for him. Markandaya underlines the fact that the happiness of a family largely depends upon the housewife. She should apply her full mind and heart to her task of building a family of sterling worth. If she is present only as an eggshell, the family begins to degenerate. Dandekar understands this regretfully and complains to his officer about the Swamy's hold on Sarojini. "..... but I want to exist, to exist for her. I want my world back, my children happy, my floors swept" - and more than that because - "My wife is part of me now." No price is too high for recapturing one's lost happiness. At times, one may bargain one's soul for it. Dandekar tells the Swamy's dwarf that he fights for the treasured possessions. "But I fought also for other things - my wife, myself, my children....."

The Swamy's departure means restoration of the long-lost happiness. Dandekar is very eager to give to his children the cheerful tidings of their mother's spiritual homecoming. Poverty in a large family amounts to perpetual penance in life. They are allowed to exist, as it were, on sufferance. Parents feel acclimatized in an atmosphere of pain, but their pain is multiplied to see the flowers
of their flesh, mostly unnourished, always undernourished and sometimes even fading away. Markandaya shows that the slender resources are stretched to the maximum extent of elasticity to give as much as possible to the first born. In *Nectar in a Sieve*, Rukamani, therefore, thinks:

"In our sort of family, it is as well to be the first born."[^1]

[^1]: To an average Indian, his duty to his family is of paramount importance. If he can satisfactorily discharge it, he feels a man fulfilled, but if he fails in it, he feels a wretched man. Suffering and self-sacrificing for the nation is not everybody's destiny. There are many wants, handicaps, hurdles and frustrations in life. A breadwinner is committed to his family. He cannot afford to serve his country in his own way. His spirit is restless but also helpless like a caged bird. In *So Many Hungers*, Prakash, who has to maintain his mother and widowed sister with her children, cannot court imprisonment in the fight for freedom. Translating his patriotic sentiment into action means family-starvation. He has to fight with himself. This is also a sort of self-sacrifice. Jhabvala points out how, to men of family, the curse of unemployment or inadequate employment is unbearable. They desperately struggle to improve their status. Family responsibilities sometimes arouse their manhood. They accept the challenge and go out in quest
of adventurous opportunities. This awareness of family conscience is a remarkable contribution to ennoblement of life. Bal, in *A Backward Place*, tells Sudhir about his plan to go away in search of attractive avenues of earning. "And no one will ever dare to say to me again," and his eyes blaze dangerously - "that I can't support my own family. No one shall ever insult me like that again." Shakuntala Shrinagesh stresses how duties and rights go together, but sometimes heads or elders of families advance their rights as such without discharging their duties, or still worse, despite their being responsible for the family break-ups. Raj's behaviour, as Sarala, in *The Little Black Box*, points out, supports this point. Markandaya indicates that the family is wrecked if the head or the housewife is indifferent to its weal. Children pick up their clue and begin to wander outside. The price of family character is constant vigilance. Dandekar, in *A Silence of Desire*, helplessly witnesses the family happiness spilling away. Ramabai sees no harm in going to the Milk Bar in unknown company, since Sarojini, neglecting her duties, is also going to meet someone unknown. Jhabvala shows that idealists are a trouble to others in the family and also to themselves. Though they have to survive in the concrete world, these sublimated lotus-eaters prefer to live in the Utopian land of ideas. They cannot maintain useful contacts and
do not cash in on past sacrifices. Idealist Ram Nath, in *Esmond in India*, is in a bad plight when he has to seek a bride for his son, because he has lost touch with his family, friends and others. Har Dayal is a living contrast to him.53

Indo-Anglian novelists show how ancestral property is generally considered sacred in India. The property should nohow go out of one's family is the firm belief of an average Indian. It is now difficult for the feudal families to preserve their property on account of the new spirit of changing times. If elders foster love of money in their children, they come to regard them as mere sources of getting money. The economic condition of the family cannot be ignored - all members must put their shoulders to the wheel.

R. K. Narayan shows that family property, a sacred trust, cannot be frittered away according to individual whims. In *Mr. Sampath*, Srinivas's brother writes to him: "You will understand that ancestral property is after all a sacred trust, and not loose money meant for the fanciful expenditure of the individual; it really belongs to our children and their children."54 Attia Hosain also suggests that to men of an older generation family property is the external sacred symbol of these values 'to which the family owned dutiful sacrificial obedience'. Baba Jan, in *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, is sorry to see his son Hamid joining the Civil Service instead of looking after the family estate.55
Fortified by the conventional belief that money should not generally get out of family, as Shrinagesh describes, even some undeserving, evil relatives feel assured that money should and would automatically come to them sometime or the other. Raj, in *The Little Block Box*, asks Sarala if money remains in the family. He suggests that their father would not have liked it to go to outsiders - Sarala, however, displays the new awakening, freed of convention and taboos and tells Raj that she may be leaving it to the hospital and thus 'putting the money to a better use'. This is the proof of the new spirit of the age. Anand Lall shows how families of feudal lords find that the dry leaves of their selfish interests are likely to fall dead due to the wild winds of the newborn freedom of the country. By proffering bribes of larger shares to the tenants and ryots, they hope to prolong their hold. Dewan Ram Nath, in *The House at Adampur*, purposely tells the largish family assembly that if they refuse to understand the spirit of the times they will blow up their estates and be left standing on the ashes.

Sometimes wealthy parents themselves plant in their children's minds insane love of wealth and pamper them by spending excessively on them to win love. Ironically enough, children also come to regard them as
mere money-machines. In R. K. Narayan's *The Vendor of Sweets*, Jagan, bereft of family love, bitterly compares the demands of money: the beggar's and his son's. His sad comment is: "At least this fellow spoke better than Mali in similar circumstances, who didn't want him if he did not claim to be a wealthy father." Shrinagesh points out how money has been the root cause of the dissolution of many a family. Sarala's sisters Sharada, Malini and their brother Raj: their relationship is - 'a symbol of the canker, that has eaten into all our hearts'. They all condemn Sarala, because she has the key of the little, black box, the symbol of money, legacy. "That is the thing that has taken possession of us, the horror, the nightmare, the evil. Our family has got money in its brain." The young educated persons feel that the monster of humdrum life of the businessmen would devour them. They want to tear themselves away from it, but the lure of gold is irresistible and ultimately they have to give in to the pull of family life. Viddy, in Jhabvala's *The Nature of Passion*, is afraid that if he joins his father's business, he will be another Om Prakash, a money-earning, enjoying nonentity. Economic independence is the only escape - as shown by Chandra Prakash. The problem faced by a large family today is very complex. Parents
have to allow their young children to go outside for jobs. Family happiness depends upon the co-operation, self-sacrifice and spirit of service of all its members. Nandini, in the novel of that name by Nirody, is a slip of a girl and yet she rises to the occasion and substantiates the faith of her father.

The role of woman in family life is of vital significance. Women writers of fiction, who have come to the fore-front after Independence, perceptively analyse the position and problems of woman in today's India. They indicate how woman now is also a bread-winner in certain families. Besides being a monetary prop, she is also a spiritual guide and mentor and is esteemed as the leader in some families.

The post-Independence phase in Indian social life has been marked by catholicity and liberalism. New social reforms and values are being established. Raja Rao shows how the proverbial concept of the step-mother as cruel is also undergoing change. She, exuding divine affection, is not now deprived of the filial love of her step-children. Women can even be elevated as heads of families, patriarchal in their origin. Rama, in The Serpent and the Rope, warmly responds to the family welcome, acknowledged resemblance between him and the Little Mother and affectionately and cheerfully transfers
his headship of the family to the Little Mother.62

An average Indian family has so far always been averse to the idea of its women going out to earn. Traditionally speaking, it would reflect adversely on the competence of man and imperil the prestige of the family. In recent years, there has been a radical transformation of social values consequent upon political and legal changes after Independence. Growing unemployment, economic tension, female independence, education, competence and confidence, male progressiveness and catholicity are some of the factors which have allowed woman to go out to earn. Of course, still there is some hesitancy and tentativeness about such decisions. In Jhabvala's A Backward Place, Bal at first resents Judy's going out for service, but soon starts lavishing panegyrics on the independent role of woman in today's India — man's companion and equal.63 The post-war generation has been nourished on the sense of freedom. Emancipation of woman and assertion of her privileges and womanly status are the gifts of the post-Independence era in India. Life in cities is marked by revolt against tyranny and campaign for human freedom. This spirit has not spread much in far-flung villages. Occasionally, even a labourer's wife would answer her supercilious husband back and threaten him that she would not brook
any dictation from him. Estrelina, in *Sorrowing Lies My Land* by Mascarenhas, tells her husband fearlessly, "The children are more mine than yours, remember, and I shall do with them as I think best." Of course, Estrelina is a virago, but such a spirit is pre-eminently the product of the New Age of Freedom.

It is dangerous to be too sensitive. When sensitive and imaginative women are surrounded by heavy-headed and high-handed philistinism, their tragedy is inevitable. Monisha, in Anita Desai's *Voices in the City*, cannot get adjusted in her husband's family and constantly feels herself to be an outsider. Her intellectual insularity drives her to withdrawal and disengagement. Attia Hosain also shows that an unsuitable marriage in an unsuitable family would mean unbearable unhappiness. Sensitive and idealistic Abida, surrounded by desiccated and colourless women in her husband's home, in *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, presents a heart-rending picture of self-effacement and silent suffering on the altar of family honour. Monisha and Abida, essentially different in their temperaments but placed in similar predicaments, greet the same ominous fate—untimely death, suicide and suicide of a sort.

The simple and innocent are the blessed. To them, religion is the panacea for all the ills of life.
is the prop of the family in India. Her religiousness is the sheet-anchor in a spiritual crisis. The faith of her kindly light leads her people in the midst of the encircling gloom. She inculcates in her children respect for uprightness and plays the role of the family high-priest. If any of her flock strays away from the path of righteousness, she prays to God for forgiveness and enhances the measure of her stoical suffering. In Khushwant Singh's *I shall not hear the nightingale*, when Sher Singh's life is hanging on the thread of the Imperial Law's whim, Sabhrai surrenders herself completely to the Granth and the Guru. In Mascarenhas's *Sorrowing Lies My Land*, would constantly pray to God on behalf of her children - to forgive their sins and to make them good. She feels deeply agitated to find that her son Antonio had kissed Clara. Her God-fearing nature would not let her neglect her children's moral lapses.

Indian family life is crumbling because of two extreme and diametrically contradictory forces working in today's society. Orthodoxy demands that large joint families should continue to function as social units and that either patriarchs or matriarchs should wield their whips mercilessly to control the disintegrating elements. Modernity, under Western impact, demands that family interests be sacrificed on the altar of individual happiness. The family had never been flouted
so shamelessly as now owing to considerations of love and marriage with a person chosen by oneself but disapproved by the elders. Consequently, time-honoured family tenets are challenged by both generations. In the teeth of the opposition of his mother and maternal uncle, Raju, in R. K. Narayan's *The Guide*, puts a protecting arm around Rosie and assures her that she is going to be there; others who do not like it, are welcome to leave. Well, this would not have been possible in pre-Independence Indian society. If members of the family are opposed to one's love affair, one is likely to feel hostile to and estranged from them. They became 'the others'. In Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, Laila's love for Ameer is disapproved by Hamid and Saira, who consequently become 'the others', from Laila's viewpoint.

The older generation attached great importance to rich and influential families while considering the prospective life-partners for their children. The younger generation cannot understand this craze for money, power, influence and fame in such an intensely personal matter like marriage and, therefore, revolts against the tyrannical wishes of the elders. Well-to-do persons brought up in the bygone world insist on adequate family background while fixing up the marriages of their
children. Ironically enough, they are just indifferent to the personal merits or otherwise of the proposed brides or bridegrooms of their progeny. Mrs. Jhabvala, in To Whom She Will, makes this clear from the talk between Pandit Rai Bahadur Saxena and Amrita. A good family is the paramount consideration for a parental match-maker in Indian society. Radha thinks of families of ministers and business magnates, whereas Amrita is content with Hari, who, she thinks, loves her sincerely. Considerations—Whether the family is good, whether the prospective in-laws are tolerably accommodative—weigh pertinently on the minds of a would-be couple, especially the girl. Baba, in Santha Rama Rau's Remember the House, is rather cold in response to Hari's hinting at his proposal for marriage because she does not know his family well. Mother-in-law as a kill-joy has become proverbial. Hari assures Baba that she would find an unexacting mother-in-law in his gentle mother. The presence of a modern, city-loving girl in a traditional, proud family in a backward village is like a bull in a china shop. It would conflict with the Status quo. In Music for Mohini, Bhattacharya shows how Mohini, a mere girl, finds herself an alien in the Big House at Behula, tradition-ridden and taboo-infested. Rupture in the relations between father and would-be father-in-law is always an occurrence fatal to the young betrothed.
Loyalties are divided and whoever is defeated, the betrothed is doomed. Mala, in Anand's *The Road*, is worried about the possibility of the breaking off of the exchange betrothal alliances of the children of Dhooli Singh and Thakur Singh owing to their opposite stands regarding the Road. Malgonkar brings out that all the riches of the world would not enable even a prince to wipe out the family dishonour resultant from the runaway marriage of a close relative. If the glory of a family is great, its humiliation too is great. In The Princes, Abhay, though sympathetic to his mother, cannot pardon her for running away with Abdulla and thus leaving a permanent blot on their family name.

Cousins can marry in Muslim families. Probably the convention originated in the desire to keep maids and money in the family. When cousins are brought up with a view to getting them married, it is all right, but when they have been regarding each other specially as brother-sister, such a matrimonial alliance would be a sort of incest, because money would be the prime impulse behind it. Saira, in Attia Hosain’s *Sunlight on a Broken Column*, wishes Kemal to marry Laila whose property then cannot go outside the family! To Kemal it is incest, because he has always thought of Laila as a sister only.
Divorce in India has a very low social origin. It is considered to be a degradation, though legal or even moral. Low castes obtain divorce easily and so divorce has been vulgarised. Respectable families, therefore, react adversely to proposals of divorce. Of course, this attitude is now considered old-fashioned, reactionary. Brijmohan, in Jhabvala's Get Ready for Battle, says that a woman from their family cannot be easily divorced. Kusum, in her hypnotic way, silences him by retorting that he is old-fashioned in his approach to the problem.

The Gandhian influence and the impact of independence, enhanced by the East-West encounter, sharpened the clash between the older and younger generations, that is between tradition and modernity. Indo-Anglian novelists have depicted these sociological forces of authority and revolt. Ancient families have a duty to society at large, for humble people look at their social betters for leadership. Their actions which have the strongest stamp of social sanction, do not remain their private concern. They form the vanguard in the procession of social culture. Jayadev, in Music for Mohini, nourished on new concepts of social life, appeals to his adamant mother to eschew superstitions. Family love, a compelling and exclusive sentiment, sometimes misleads people to frenzied bouts of money-grabbing to secure better opportunities of life for their dear children.
who do not see eye to eye with them in this regard.
Their clash of ideals might head to family disruption.
Samarendra, in Bhattacharya's *So Many Hungers*, is
caught in this plight. His son Kunal and Rahoul do not
care to use his money and also do not accept the careers
chalked out by him. The new age charged by Gandhiji's
dynamic philosophy used to pose problems to heads of
families - especially, in pre-independence times.
Living in a family now means adjustments on the part of
newcomers, especially the incoming, educated, towny wife
for whom her mother-in-law - puritanical, orthodox and
proud of their family - always raises problems. Mohini,
in Bhattacharya's *Music for Mohini*, finds the adjustment
more difficult than she had imagined. Malgonkar
points out that Indians are proverbial worshippers of
tradition, convention, heritage (not only material) and
dynasty and some, owing to excessive fondness for the
dynasty, make virtue even out of vice. Prince Hiroji's
proud assertions about Bedars illustrate the point.

Anita Desai observes that the post-Independence
generation in India is angry and hungry. The young
feel dejected, desperate and somehow baulked of their
aspirations. They tend to become cynical and embittered.
Nirode, in *Voices in the City*, does not like anyone
(even his friends like Sonny) to refer to his family.
He wants to leave it alone and desires that his relatives
also should leave him alone. Frustration breeds withdrawal of man from society. He is led to care for his friends, relatives and family less and less. The burden of habitual frustration and deep seated melancholy of young men estranged from their families is not lightened by any family consideration of honour, help, money. Nirode voices his total estrangement in the presence of Amla in response to her suggestion to get money for his bookshop from their mother.

Aamir Ali describes how the friction between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, struggling for authority, would imperil the smooth running of a household. It is symbolical of tradition and revolt, rivalry between two generations. Vishnu, in Conflict, tells his brother Shanker about his decision to leave the house because of the quarrels between Babuli and their mother. Aamir Ali shows that when living together under the same roof becomes impossible, separation is advisable. Artificial togetherness is much worse than honest, prudent separation. Madan and Vishnu, in Conflict, a wise men who divide the family to avoid unbridgeable gulf between the women of the family.

Insularity is the Mephistophelean gift to the present age. There is always some difference between two generations, but the difference between the generation of the Gandhian era and that of post-Gandhian
era is extremely wide. The relationship is not marked by love and understanding, but is, more or less, of the nature of indifferent and nonchalant tolerance of the necessary and unavoidable evil. Parents cannot question their children in respect of their whereabouts or whatabouts. Living under the same roof is a sociological, economic must, but the strand of filial affection and piety is snapped off. Western education, which is a mystery to the old and uneducated, stands like an iron wall between them. They are like islands, far-flung from each other, surrounded by dark waters of misunderstanding and distrust. This post-Independence social situation in India is dealt with by Indo-Anglian novelists with psychological insight and understanding.

This theme of a generation-gap is analytically presented by R. K. Narayan in The Vendor of Sweets. The uneducated but rich Jagan is vitally interested in his son Mali's career. Both are cranky in their own ways. Though they live under one roof, they are in two different worlds. They do not even meet each other for an incredibly long time. Jhabvala also indicates the differences between the two generations in wealthy families. The elders find that their children are educated and arty young persons, almost strangers to them - except in material ways. The young are impatient and impudent and put up with their parents and elders condescendingly.
In The Nature of Passion, Viddy's general attitude to his elders and his advice to Nimmi illustrate the point. R. K. Narayan points out how unhappy family life drives a person away from life. A loveless home is a veritable hell. A widowed person, whose son does not understand, love or respect him, wishes to leave everything and become a hermit. Jagan, in The Vendor of Sweets, agrees with the bearded man that old people should vanish into the forest, leaving worldly affairs to their children. Nayantara Sahgal depicts the problem of England - returned, Anglicized, aristocratically educated, Indian. He is like a bough cut off from the family tree. His way of life has fallen in a different gear. Physically flung back to India, he cannot shed his foreign affiliations and affinities. Arjun Mitra, in This Time of Morning, with prolonged training in England, does not feel at home in his native land, in spite of his being attached to his family and Bengali food. Many aristocratic families do not appear to be much concerned with love or affection. They talk of political scandal and intellectual dissent and play games and converse when they are tired of anything, but there is no shade of love. Maya, in Anita Desai's Cry, the Peacock, feels caged in such a family as her husband's, where they incessantly but also hypocritically and superficially talk of intellectual problems.
Political agreements or differences would cement or sever family relationships. K. A. Abbas reveals that to cherish nationalist's, patriotic, self-effacing sentiments in a family of fanatic Muslims is fraught with peril. Anwar, in Inquiltab, finds that his uncle Amjad Ali, imperious and imperialistic, regards jail-going and mixing with Congressmen as family dis-honour. His effort is, therefore, to conceal his leanings from his rude and ruthless uncle. Atia Hosain also suggests, in Sunlight on a Broken Column, how politics would sometimes tear a family asunder. Hamid is feudal, Saleem is communal and Laila is liberal. Saleem and Nadira, both communal, are drawn to each other, married and are happy in their own limited way. Laila and Kemal both are nationalists and have genuine affection and regard for each other.

The modern age has witnessed the separatist tendency of the people, aroused by the democratic, socialistic, political structure and economic stress and inadequacy. Younger members of the household often wish to lead their lives freely and, therefore, their elders, forestalling strife and opposition of the younger generation, themselves propose to live separately. To them, such an arrangement is likely to maintain the spirit of family good will, if at all it is possible. To the young, it
means being liberal-minded, progressive and modern. The process of the disintegration of the family has started in the West much earlier than in the East. The West has restricted the concept of the family to brothers and sisters. Madeleine, in Raja Rao's The Serpent and the Rope, writes in her letter to Rama: "... for us any person other than a brother or a sister is an outsider, an enemy." Raja Rao cryptically hints at the difference between the Western and Eastern concepts of the family.

Though the joint family is a vanishing phenomenon, the process of its disintegration will be necessarily tardy in our country. If the members of the family, after separation, live in the vicinity of each other and if there has been no ill-will while separating, the artificial well cannot hold good. In Jhabvala's A Backward Place, Mukund and Bal, despite his wife being English, stay like one close-knit joint family even after their formal separation. It is a great pity that in the name of industrialisation, our agrarian and rural civilisation is allowed to go to pieces. No one could stem the tide of sociological changes, since the new era means the dismantling of the old patterns of the family. Now often there are ruptures and rifts between brothers and sisters: one member of the family and the other. They are flung far away from one another, in anonymity and oblivion. One, however, yearns for a
large family gathering at the time of the wedding, especially the bridegroom. Ravi, in Markandaya’s *A Handful of Rice*, is glad that he has not completely cut off from the roots and that his father, at least, is fortunately there to give him respectable identity and status. Markandaya also shows how those brought up in the old traditions of the joint family system would not throw out even the sponging relatives on the street, unless they were downright treacherous persons. Apu, in *A Handful of Rice*, tolerates Puttama until the latter steals away the life-savings of the former. The new generation does not like these outdated beliefs as indicated by Ravi’s admission. Markandaya gives a touching picture of the bygone joint family, poor but not so in spirit. The joint family system is a gift of tradition and heredity. It is like 'a banyan tree taking its strength from the subsidiary roots'. A rich house would always be crowded with friends, relatives, visitors and hangers-on. But on account of woman — and property, too — the solidarity of the joint family is often seriously impaired. Malgonkar shows, in *A Bend in the Ganges*, how the family of the Talwars, hereditary landlords, established and reputed, is divided into the Big and Little Houses owing to Dada Talwar’s separation for his love for Aji, a young belle of lower caste. All efforts are made to mend the rift between the members
of the same family, but women have only one kind of life and live constantly in the same house and are, therefore, slow to forgive. They practise their own methods of ostracising the renegade woman, who is not allowed to worship the family gods and goddesses. The main branch of the family retains the right of maintaining the family shrine. Malgonkar reveals that such factors permanently bifurcate the Talwar family into two hostile houses. Excessive greed of money and quarrels of women are the predominant factors that have contributed largely to the disintegration of the joint family system. It is a sorrowful experience to see the members of the same family drifting away from one another. It becomes unbearable, when owing to one defaulter, the remaining members have to suffer the pangs of unjust, unnatural separation. Kesaro and Panchi, in The Old Woman and the Cow by Mulk Raj Anand, were on good terms but the greed of Molaram and the inability of Kesaro and Gauri to pull on together, drive Panchi to Rafique Chacha. Despicable charges are then levelled by them against each other. There is usually a desire in the minds of the younger generation, especially the women, to live separately. They have no love for their parents-in-law and talk about them contemptuously. Men have their own family obligations to discharge and often have to discourage their wives' separatist tendencies, In Anita Desai's Cry, the Peacock, Pom asks her husband Kailash
to leave their family and start living comfortably in a new flat. Kailash, however, prevails upon her to live with his parents.102

Rich, orthodox, unprogressive and lethargic families are out of context in the modern age. They simply cannot exist comfortably now in the days of the socialistic pattern of society based on the necessity and dignity of all-round universal human labour for a common goal. Asoke, in Tapati Mookerji’s Murder Needs a Staircase, confesses that traditional families have got to change with the changing times, otherwise they are bound to be demolished by the New Time-Spirit.103 Tapati Mookerji also suggests that there is no remedy for the malaise of a degenerated family torn by mutual distrust, hatred and sponginess. Destruction is its destiny. Asoke speaks about his own family ruthlessly: "Its roots are too deep in cancerous tissue to be pulled out easily, without killing the living organism - the family."104 This shows the modern detached and dispassionate attitude towards the crumbling sociological institutions. There is no hollow nostalgia for the decay of a rotten family.

The decline of a great family is saddening. The large house of a crowded family wears a depressing look of futility when all the members have left it on
account of one thing or another. The surviving, solitary member of such an ancient household is likely to be engulfed in abysmal dejection. Babush, in *Sorrowing Lies My Land* by Mascarenhas, wanders like a wingless bird through a large nest from which all other birds have flown to disheartening distances in and out of the world. Nostalgia rends his weakened heart—as is the case of Laila's lonely sojourn through the ancient house where she had spent her early life before her marriage with Ameer in Attia Hosain's *Sunlight on a Broken Column*. Babush largeheartedly analyses the new spirit of the era of transition which is responsible for their wretchedness which started with Antonio's running away with Lakshmi. "Sorrow had arisen out of the passing of an era, an era of good-will, love, affection, dignity and self-respect making place for a period of selfishness, intolerance, indignity and oppression."

Thus, Indo-Anglian fiction writers have examined the nature, scope and future of the family in its myriad facets. It must be noted that their attitude is, more or less, detached and dispassionate. Even those of the novelists—such as R. K. Narayan, for instance—who have a profound regard for Indian culture and tradition and its social institutions, also depict how the days of the sway of the cumbrous,
unwieldy joint families are gone for ever. Narayan, the high-priest of the family and religion, traces the slow but steady disintegration of the family in his novel The Vendor of Sweets. These novelists comment on the family and its traditions, ties, unity, sanctity, honour, happiness, property and responsibility. They also locate the position of woman in the average Indian family and analyse the impact of the factors of love and marriage. Woman, land and property may be regarded as the proverbial root-causes for separation, tussles, estrangement and even hostility, but woman is also represented as the socio-religious prop of the entire family. They try to resurvey the post-Independence social scene of generation-gap and present the extremes of the old fad for iron-handed authority and the new fad for senseless revolt. They discover the minute lines even of subtle differences and bring out the general factors of disintegration. They express their feeling that the large family has been disappearing from the Indian social scene, but the fundamental Indian family values are not likely to be fully wiped out. They are nostalgic, realistic and still optimistic.
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