METHOD
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The study was descriptive-qualitative in nature.

Some key terms used consistently in the study are as follows:

Caste: Caste in India refers to the social or familial community group into which a person is born. According to the Varna theory, four hierarchical caste groups namely, *brahmin*, *kshatriya*, *vaishya* and *shudra* existed in the Vedic Indian social system. Forms of the same with some variations still exist in Indian society today. Sharma (2002) discusses caste as "a family of heterogeneous names and concepts (Rajput, Koli, Kshatriya, *varna*, Harijan, Scheduled Caste, Brahman, non-Brahman, Mahar etc.), with which at any one time, many practices may be associated (ritual exclusion, endogamy, the formation of welfare associations (p 74))". She states that although Indian social science literature indicates a lot of continuity in practices held in the name of caste, it is a form of identification that may shift over time with plenty of scope for invention and rejection of tradition. Many socialization practices are caste specific and caste also forms an important category through which individuals derive their social identities. Two specific caste groups were chosen for the study, namely Maharashtrian Brahmins and Marathas (*Kshatriya-warriors*). The caste groups have been referred to as ‘Brahmins’ and ‘non-Brahmins’ throughout the study.

Hypothetical Scenarios: Hypothetical scenarios can be defined as fictional or fabricated situations about issues under investigation (social-moral reasoning, here). The scenarios are derived from and sensitive to real-life experiences and socio-cultural contexts. The ‘hypothetical’ scenarios are formed as close to reality as possible to ensure ecological validity and such that the respondent is able to assume the hypothetical events as “likely to occur” in real life. The scenarios for the present study...
pose social-moral dilemmas that focus on the reasoning process, decisions and justifications for choosing one alternative over many others available to resolve the dilemma. The respondent faces a dilemma or has difficulty in resolving the issue because more than one solution seems equally compelling or has competitive pros and cons.

**Sample Design**

The sample group consisted of 120 individuals across two generations (parents and children) from the Maharashtrian community of Baroda city. It comprised Brahmins and non-Brahmins (Maratha) from high and low socio economic groups respectively. To maintain homogeneity, the sample was so selected that Brahmins belonged to high socio economic status group while the non-Brahmins belonged to a comparatively lower socio economic status group.

The sample included a set of parents (mother and father) and one of their young adult children from each family. In all, 20 Brahmin families and 20 non-Brahmin families from each caste and socio economic group were selected. Within each group of 20 families, 10 families with young adult boys and 10 families with young adult girls were selected. Refer figure 3 for a pictorial depiction.
Sample Selection

The sample was selected purposively and the snowball technique was used to identify the respondents.

Criteria for Sample Selection

The criteria used to select the sample were as follows:

Socio Economic Class and Caste: All subjects from the Maharashtrian Brahmin caste were selected from a relatively high socio economic status group with monthly incomes above Rs. 15,000 per month. As against this, subjects from the Maharashtrian non-Brahmin or Maratha caste group were selected from lower socio economic status groups with incomes less than Rs. 10,000 per month.

Generation and Age: Families with unmarried, young adult children between the ages of 17 to 24 years were selected. Both parents, between the ages of 35 to 55 years, and only one of their young adult children who met the age criteria were included in
the sample. Ordinal position and the number of children per family was not a
selection criterion.

**Gender:** Equal representation of gender in both generations, parents and children,
was ensured for which both mothers and fathers (as parent respondents) were included
in the sample. Among children, 20 girls and 20 boys were included.

**Tool Construction**

The tool for the study included four hypothetical scenarios each of which posed a
social-moral dilemma to the respondents. For each scenario, some predefined as well
as spontaneous probes were administered to adequately capture every aspect of the
reasoning process. The hypothetical scenarios were constructed based on an
exhaustive and interdisciplinary review of literature for the study. The scenarios were
field tested on a sample of 30 respondents as part of another small scale research
study (Kulkarni & Kapadia, 2006). Results and insightful experiences from the study
were incorporated into the present research.

Hypothetical scenarios essentially anchored on to issues about the family or the social
context, and care was taken to ensure that they were culturally and ecologically valid.
For example, being aware and sensitive to the fact that extended households with
some elderly members are still a norm in the Indian context or knowing about the rites
and rituals followed by certain communities. Three out of four scenarios were based
on themes related to family decision-making processes concerning parent-child and
spousal relationships. One scenario was about helping an injured stranger on one’s
way to an important appointment (Refer Appendix B for detailed hypothetical
scenarios and probe questions).

The investigator’s insights as a native of Baroda city and member of the Hindu,
Maharashtrian community also helped devise the tool in the respondents’ language.
Marathi: Both English and Marathi versions of the tool were given to two fluent speakers of both languages to ensure that there were no discrepancies in comprehension of the hypothetical dilemmas due to translation. Some minor but necessary changes were made to the tool accordingly.

Pilot Tests

As mentioned earlier, the hypothetical scenarios were field tested as part of a small scale research with 30 respondents from different age groups and socio-economic backgrounds. The experiences and insights derived from this study about validity and social-moral reasoning processes were incorporated into the final set of hypothetical scenarios and probe questions used for the present study. After reflecting on some methodological issues in the previous research, changes made in the present study were as follows:

- In the previous research, the hypothetical scenarios were field tested on individuals between the ages of 14 to 70 years. The investigators found that the hypothetical scenarios were not understood completely or resolved 'realistically' by children below 15 years of age. Younger adolescents could not relate to the scenarios as social-moral dilemmas and tended to find immediate and 'stereotypical' solutions to them instead of engaging in a social-moral argument with the investigator. They found it difficult to identify or understand some issues within a dilemma or significant influences of the socio-cultural context within which the scenario was situated. Thus, instead of adolescents, young adults were included as part of the sample for this research. The investigator also felt that intergenerational comparisons would be facilitated with such a sample composition and a more accurate estimate of social change could be arrived at through the study. Thus the sample for the present study included young adult
children who were on the brink of fulfilling significant developmental tasks of adulthood like the choice of a career, marriage or other familial and professional responsibilities. In the same vein, middle-aged parents in the sample would have already accomplished these developmental tasks roughly two decades ago and would now be in charge of major familial and professional responsibilities, especially those concerning their children.

- For the first hypothetical scenario about helping an injured person, in the previous study, it was found that the respondent’s occupation influenced his/her assumptions about the nature of the important appointment. Thus, if people were unemployed or in occupations with flexible timeframes and comparatively less responsibility (like housewives, students, clerks or rickshaw drivers), they easily mentioned delaying the appointment and helping the injured person. For the present study, in order to make the dilemma more challenging, the significance of the appointment was described in accordance to the respondent’s occupation. For example, if the respondent was a student, the appointment was described as an extremely important final exam which would have repercussions on the person’s future. Similarly, with respondents who were housewives, the appointment was described as an urgent bank visit necessary to meet an unavoidable economic need in the family.

- A majority of the subjects reasoned about behaviors depending on the social-familial roles they were asked to assume as part of the dilemma (reasoning from the son’s perspective or as a daughter-in-law). Therefore, for this study, probes were framed such that respondents reason from the point of view of all roles or actors in the dilemma. For example, if the dilemma included a couple and a father-in-law, they were asked what the husband, wife and the father-in-law should do.
The investigator expected that this dimension of the dilemmas would give information about how different roles, their respective responsibilities and authorities were perceived in the Indian family context.

- A new hypothetical scenario about death rituals and funeral rites was introduced in the tool to include aspects related to divinity and non-rational beliefs like the existence of a soul, rebirth or after life. This scenario was about the societal expectation from a son to perform the Hindu death rites for the deceased father (religious-cultural practice) pitted against an equally compelling desire expressed by the son to donate the father’s dead body for medical research (which would be useful to society at large). The scenario was so constructed to explore concepts of *kartavya* and *dharma* (duty, interpersonal responsibility) towards a deceased parent vis-à-vis a personal wish to do something beneficial for society.

- Parts of the previous study were presented by the investigator at different international academic forums in the year 2004-2005 (Chicago ethnography conference, University of Illinois, Chicago, Discussion group on personhood and psyche in South Asia, University of Chicago, USA). The previous research included direct questions about respondents’ understanding of the concepts of *karma* and *dharma* prior to the hypothetical scenarios. Many experts in the audience at these forums observed that posing direct questions about these concepts followed by hypothetical scenarios would increase chances of respondents referring to these concepts much more than they actually do in their real lives. To avoid this bias, the present study included only hypothetical scenarios leaving scope for respondents to objectively refer, if at all, to the concepts in their moral reasoning or justifications. Direct questions about the concepts of *karma* and *dharma* were excluded from the final interview schedule.
Procedure of Data Collection

Data was collected over a period of six months from August 2005 to January 2006. During the pilot study, it was found that many respondents were reluctant or expressed discomfort in signing the form of informed consent. As the study was about hypothetical dilemmas and posed only minimum risk of confidentiality to the respondents, it was best thought to have verbal informed consents from the respondents. The investigator assured them of the confidentiality of their responses and the use of interview data only for academic purposes. In most cases, part of the informed consent was taken on the telephone while the investigator briefed the families about the research and confirmed their willingness to participate in the study. After the respondents agreed to participate in the study, mutually convenient meeting times were set up and the investigator visited the respondents' homes for the interviews. Again at the time of the visit, before starting the interview, the investigator talked to each respondent individually about their informed consent (Refer Appendix B for the narration of informed consent).

Data included socio-demographic background information about the respondents followed by an indepth interview. Indepth interviews were conducted individually with each respondent in the family. As far as possible the respondent and the investigator were alone in a room to conduct the interview. The investigator also urged the respondents not to share the scenarios or probe questions with other family members or snowball references in order to get spontaneous and objective views from everyone. To reduce chances of family members discussing the hypothetical scenarios, the investigator scheduled visits to the respondents’ homes at times when all three interviews could be conducted in one visit.
All interviews were conducted in Marathi and were transcribed verbatim. After primary transcription, the interviews were translated into English and some Marathi phrases or local terms were retained in parenthesis. Two interviews translated into English along with their Marathi versions were given to local experts and fluent speakers of both Marathi and English to ascertain that there were no discrepancies or change in meaning due to translation. Necessary changes were made in the translation process and consistency was maintained for all the interviews.

**Issues of Validity**

A major issue haunting qualitative researchers is that of validity. Unlike quantitative methods, the detailed nature and narrative informality of the qualitative interview make it imperative for the investigator to validate the tools as well the data at each step of the data gathering process. Although in the present study the scenarios were field tested with a reasonable sample size, care was taken to ensure whether each respondent had understood the hypothetical scenarios as the investigator envisioned. The investigator used a standard pattern of narrating the scenarios with the same amount of information and sequence of events within each scenario with every respondent. In cases where the investigator felt the respondents had not understood a scenario or were confused about some aspect, that particular scenario or a part of it was explained again with some elaboration and confirming whether the respondent had understood the scenario this time.

In a study of this nature, the investigator had to be sensitive and alert to the respondents’ answers and thinking-reasoning processes. Thus the interview process was as engaging, reflective and participative for the investigator as it was for the respondent. The investigator had to be alert throughout the interviews to ensure if all aspects of the reasoning process were covered and supported with appropriate
justifications for each scenario. The investigator's aim was to make the respondent reason from a point in the scenario where two or more equally compelling resolutions were available. Subsequently, the reasons for choosing one resolution over others were also gathered.

Wherever translation from Marathi to English was necessary, care was taken to ensure that there were no discrepancies or loss of meaning. Wherever possible local terms and Marathi phrases were retained in the transcripts to explain or qualify specific concepts (examples: proverbs, references to rites and rituals, and terms like kartravya, jawabdar used to explain obligations at different life stages, duties or interpersonal responsibilities).

During the interviews, it was found that all the respondents could easily relate to the hypothetical scenarios as events or episodes which may occur in everyday life. This adds to the cultural and ecological validity of the scenarios. At times the respondents took it for granted that the investigator would know the justifications for some of their decisions as the related behavior or thought seemed like the most 'natural and right' thing to do in the Indian cultural context, for example, taking care of elderly parents.

In all cases, the investigator asked respondents to support their decisions with justifications to fulfill the objective of knowing the mundane, culturally rooted thinking process that binds together the mentality and practice framework of morality in the Indian context. This point can be better explained with this excerpt from an interview with a Brahmin man aged 44 reasoning about his decision to go to the city while his father wants him to stay back in the village to look after agricultural property.
“So as a son you will ..?
I would have gone to the city
Why?
For the same reason, so that I should have better development (pudhe māha changa
devolopment vah va) What if I will not be able to progress or do well in the village? But in
any case, I will take my parents with me
Why is it important to take the parents with you?
(pauses) They are my parents!! I must do this much for them isn’t it natural?
(swabhavik ae na?)
Yes, they are your parents.....so why is it important for you to do this for them?
So that they don’t feel alone suppose I go there alone and become very busy in studies
or in my job or anything then at least when I come back home in the evening then I can
meet them and care for them it is my duty (kartavya) to take care of them if they just
feel good looking at my face at the end of the day then it is (well worth it) Then for all
this I would take them with me "
(Brahmin Man)

Coding the Interviews
The justifications in the interviews were coded using the “Big Three” ethics of
morality (autonomy, community and divinity) coding manual (Jensen, 1996) See
Appendix D for the coding manual. The coding manual was developed with data from
the Indian context (Shweder et al 1997) For each hypothetical scenario in the
interview, the respondents gave some decisions and justifications supporting these
decisions to resolve the dilemma. All social-moral explanations and responses, mainly
to the ‘why’ questions in the interview, were considered as justifications. All these
responses were coded for the ethics of autonomy, community and divinity as per the
definitions given in the coding manual. The ethics are defined on the basis of three
different self-conceptualizations and each response was matched against the three
self-conceptualizations and then assigned the appropriate ethic. The definitions of the
three ethics (Jensen, 1996) are as follows.
**Ethic of Autonomy:** Moral discourse within the ethic of autonomy defines the person as an autonomous individual who is free to make choices, with few limits. Justifications within this ethic center on an individual's rights, needs, feelings, and well-being. What restricts a person's behavior is mainly a prohibition on inflicting harm to oneself and others, and encroaching upon the rights of other people. The ethic also includes a concern with equality.

**Ethic of Community:** Moral discourse within the ethic of community describes the person in terms of her membership in groups such as the family, the community, or the nation. Persons are described as acting in terms of their social roles such as mother, scout leader, or American. The view is that our roles bind us together in intricate relations of differing obligations. The ethic also includes a concern with promoting the welfare, goals, needs, and interests of social groups.

**Ethic of Divinity:** Moral discourse within the ethic of divinity envisions the person as a spiritual entity. A person's behaviors are to be in accordance with the guidelines rendered by a given spiritual or natural order. Thus the person avoids degradation and comes closer to moral purity.

Within each ethic, there are a number of sub codes with their definitions so that responses can be coded not only for the ethic but also for the type of moral concepts within each ethic. For example, in the code book the sub code of virtues was present under each ethic, but the definition of virtues within each ethic differed greatly. Virtues under the ethic of autonomy signified aspects related to individuality, freedom or respecting another's choice but were not concerned with a person's social role. On the other hand, virtues under the ethic of community pertained to a person's familial and communal role and thus signified 'community virtues'. Similarly, virtues under the ethic of divinity pertained to an individual's status as a human being or a
transcendental being and also referred to traditions that have a divine basis

Justifications giving same information in one hypothetical scenario were not coded again, but if in a response, two different virtues were mentioned (for example, honesty and love) at different points of time while discussing the same hypothetical scenario, then the sub code of virtues was allotted twice.

In all, the three ethics encompassed 47 sub codes wherein the ethic of autonomy had 16 sub codes, the ethic of community had 14 and divinity had 17 sub codes. The sub codes were assigned based on the definitions given within each ethic. The number of sub codes within each ethic made the coding process challenging. In some responses, components of two or more sub codes overlapped. For example, under the ethic of autonomy, the sub code of fairness and rights often overlapped in the third hypothetical scenario about gender roles in the family. In such cases, the sub code which best described the response and came most close to explaining it was assigned.

So here, if the respondent mentioned that the daughter-in-law should be allowed to work because she is talented and has secured the job based on her capacities then the response was coded as fairness. But if the respondent mentioned that the son and the daughter-in-law should be treated equally or about the daughter-in-law’s right (adhikara) as a person to rightfully get the rewards for her efforts, defying any discrimination, then the response was coded as rights. Interestingly, the interviews showed a similar pattern of overlaps in sub codes because of which consistency in coding was easily maintained. Familiarity with the code book and practice in coding the interviews reduced this problem substantially.

The scope of some sub codes had to be broadened to accommodate unique aspects of the hypothetical scenarios for the present study. For example, in the third hypothetical scenario about gender roles, the sub code of customary and traditional authority...
was applied to include gender norms in the Indian cultural context. The coding manual does not define this sub code from the point of view of gender roles but has a broad definition that includes many customary practices and traditions (incest taboo, remarriage or other socially derived customs and practices). But as most responses for this scenario justified or questioned the gender based division of work in the Indian society, this sub code was referred to from the point of view of customary and traditional authority for gender norms. Before beginning the coding process, the investigator was ready to create new sub codes if some responses did not fit the existing coding scheme. But, as the coding process progressed it was found that all responses could be easily accommodated within the sub codes given in the coding manual. This also draws attention to the applicability of the coding manual to a variety of moral discourses.

Reliability

Twenty percent of the data (24 interviews) from both caste groups were coded simultaneously by one independent coder and the investigator. The coding manual for ethics of autonomy, community and divinity (Jensen, 1996) was explained and guidelines for coding the interviews were clarified to the independent coder (Refer Appendix D). A total of 253 justifications across 24 interviews were commonly coded. Cohen’s Kappa was calculated for these interviews and an agreement of 96% was reached (Cohen’s Kappa 0.96). Refer Appendix E for details of reliability calculations.

Plan of Analysis

The nature of the data lent itself to extensive qualitative analysis and some supporting statistical procedures were also used. The data was disaggregated on the basis of caste groups and gender.
**Statistical Analysis**

After coding all the interviews, a summary table was made for each interview to determine the number of times each ethic was used per respondent. Ranges were calculated for each ethic using the maximum and minimum frequency of ethic use to distribute the respondents into high, moderate or low ethic users. The classifications of high, low and moderate use were obtained from within the data. The classifications were made for ease in understanding the distribution of respondents as well as to cull out patterns of ethic use. The ethic of autonomy had three divisions in which high, moderate and low users were classified as follows: less than eight frequencies, between eight and 13 frequencies, and more than 13 frequencies. Similarly, the ethic of divinity had three divisions of less than three frequencies, between three and four frequencies, and more than four frequencies. The ethic of divinity was used least frequently resulting in such a close fitting classification. The ethic of community had only two divisions of less than 10 and more than 15 frequencies. This happened because all respondents used the ethics either more than 15 times or less than 10 times across the four hypothetical scenarios.

Using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), frequencies and percentages were calculated for the sample and its sub groups. Contingency cross-tabulations were obtained for use of each ethic vis-a-vis caste groups and gender of the respondents. Chi-squares were computed to find out if the variables of caste and gender were significantly associated with ethic use.

**Qualitative Analysis**

The data was analyzed qualitatively to know the factors considered by respondents to resolve each scenario and the justifications for prioritizing some factors over others. Decision modeling (Miles & Huberman, 1994) was used to analyze the decision and reasoning process followed for each scenario by each respondent. Prominent models...
of decision making used by respondents to resolve the scenarios were culled and similarities and differences in the decisions, factors considered and justifications used (three ethics) were highlighted.

With the help of data reduction charts, conceptually clustered matrices (Miles & Huberman, 1994) were prepared to know the decisions and factors considered for resolving each dilemma. Table 1 presents a summary of the plan of analysis.
Table 1  *Summary of the Plan of Analysis (N−120)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of analysis</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Data was disaggregated according to caste, gender and generation with identification codes to each respondent</td>
<td>• Organized data sets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Coding the Justifications according to the guidelines and sub codes given in &quot;Big Three&quot; Ethics code book (Jensen, 1996)</td>
<td>• Confidentiality of respondents</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Using SPSS</td>
<td>• Ease in data entry in SPSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⇒ Frequencies and Percentages</td>
<td>• Coded interviews with frequencies and summary tables of ethics and sub codes used per respondent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⇒ Calculating the Range (within sample)</td>
<td>• Pattern of ethic use (responses)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>⇒ Chi-Squares</td>
<td>• Distribution of respondents according to range of ethic use (high, moderate, low)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Decision Modeling (Miles &amp; Huberman, 1994)</td>
<td>• Significance of association between background variables (caste and gender) and ethic use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Level 1  Within case models of decision making for each hypothetical scenario</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Level 2  Collapsed decision models for Brahmin and non-Brahmin data sets</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Level 3 Types of decisions (respondents) and factors considered for each decision (multiple responses) were calculated</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of Analysis</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Conceptually Clustered Matrices</td>
<td>• Diagrams to show factors considered/prioritized in decision making</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Miles &amp; Huberman, 1994)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Description of justifications and Ethics used to support decisions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Percentage of ethic use (responses) for each hypothetical scenario</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Understand the custom complex (mentality-practice framework)</td>
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