Chapter 4

An Empirical Study of Aging in Delhi in the era of Globalisation
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AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF AGING IN DELHI IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION

The process of aging incorporates within itself two opposing polarities of development and decline. Just when and at what age the developmental phase stops and the decline of the body sets in is understood differently in different culture (Tilak, 1990:51). The principal idea and the understanding of aging in Indian tradition is conceptually and implicitly tied to the imagery of the ‘wheel of life’, the idea that human life is encompassed within the cyclical rhythm of expansion and decline (ibid:52).

This chapter is based on the empirical study and attempts to understand the changes taking place in the realm of the society and family for the elderly due to the process of globalization. It also tries to understand the changing social network, changed world view and perception of the elderly in global world.

In the traditional Indian value system the authority of the elders and sanctity of tradition were both supported in opposition to the rationality and the right of individual conscience. The traditional value supports the authority of elders and up holds the sanctity of tradition. The general plan of life thought in the Vedas divided a man’s life into four stages: Brahamcharya (Students life); Grahstha (Married life); Vanaprastha (life of retirement); and Sanyasa (the life of renunciation). The system, however, discourages individuality, initiative and enterprise and tends to act as a drag on social and economic progress (Gangrade, 1999:37).

The world is changing at a rapid pace, and the extent and impact of change have various dimensions and implications that go beyond geographic and cultural boundaries. Aging occurs within a social context ranging from the micro-scale of the family to the macro-scale of the whole society or culture or increasingly of a globalised world (Estes et al., 2004; as cited from Victor, 2005:5). The term `ageism' has been coined by gerontologists
to describe pejorative images of older people. Ageism may be defined as systematic stereotyping and discrimination against people because they are of a particular age (Bytheway, 1997, as cited from Victor, 2005:134).

The study of aging try to understand the social context which defines aging and try to understand the experience of older people within society and how this is shaped by major structural factors for example class, gender and ethnicity. The meaning and impact of the constraints operating upon the older adult are highly dependent upon the social environment in which the individual encounters them. It is now evident that aging is not a homogeneous experience which affects every individual within the same society in a monolithic fashion. All ‘old people’ are not alike and pre-old-age characteristics such as class and gender continue to exert a strong influence across the life-course.

Every society has its own conception of aging and age groupings. Through the process of socialisation, the society ensures the transmission of social and cultural values from one generation to the next and enables its members to acquire necessary skills, values, norms etc. As the individual moves from one age-grade to the next he acquires new roles in accordance with the prevailing practices (Bhatia, 1983;5).

Aging is a universal phenomenon and every object in the earth undergoes the process of aging. In the human society, aging was considered as a social phenomenon rather than physiological, as aging is always understood in the background of social milieu. Being sixty years old today is different from what it was being sixty years old a century back. In earlier times, aging as a social problem did not preoccupy the society. The few who lived over sixty years were considered as the repositories of wisdom and sole authorities to the family and the community. The notions of vānapṛasta and sanyāsa were the social mechanisms that encouraged the aged to move away from the management of everyday concerns. The joint family easily accommodated the old and the disabled. The economy that was organized around agriculture provided the role differentiation in the community, which offered a respectful space for the older generation. This situation changed by the intervention of modern institutions in the everyday affairs of human life. A deeper understanding of aging in the present day society needs the review of aging as a process.
at the individual level and at the societal level (Nair, 2014:379). As Hurlock (1981, as cited from Alam and Husain, 1997:99) has indicated that the last stage in the life span is frequently subdivided into early old age, which extends from age sixty to age seventy, and advanced old age which begin at seventy and extends to the end of life.

Aging can no longer be viewed just as a ‘national’ problem but the one that affects transnational agencies and communities (Powell and Khan, 2013). Most of the studies on elderly have been conducted in the Western countries, because initially the problem of aging had been recognized in the western countries. Globalization and Westernization has changed the worldly outlook of people and aging is now having more implications to the individual and society as this process has now taken a new socio-economic dimension (Nair, 2014:379).

There has been a common perception that in the global world, the family as an institution undergoing changes in its structure and function. This chapter attempts at understanding the significance of family for the elderly and tries to understand how their role and status is affected by the process of globalisation. It also tries to look into the changing gender relationship and its effect on the life of the aged.

Modernization of societies is accompanied by a demographic transition which results in the aging of populations. Yet, modernization also results in a lowered status for older people. The salient aspects of modernization which produce this effect are held to be: (1) the application of modern technology in the fields of health and economics, (2) urbanization and (3) education. Each of these factors sets in motion a chain reaction which tends to undermine the status of the aged. However, there are some signs that this trend is being reversed in the most modernized societies (Cowgill, 1974).

Appadurai sees modernity as the practice of imagining where you would like to be. Following Emile Durkheim, anthropologists view collective representations as objective social realities and facts (Powell, 2005 as cited in Jason L Powell & Steel, 2011:74)). Appadurai proposes that due to relatively recent changes founded on technological changes, imagination has become such social fact, and that this leads to a “plurality of
imagined worlds.” (Appadurai, 1996 as cited in Jason L Powell and Steel, 2011:74)) He argues that imagination has become part of everyday, ordinary life for ordinary people, instead of being the sole domain of the privileged and powerful. Ordinary people can and do imagine themselves in different circumstances and different places, due to the increased rates of migration and the technologies that transmit images of other lifestyles and other places. He emphasizes that these lifestyles and places are not fantasy, but are more properly imagined than fantasized (Jason L Powell and Steel, 2011:74).

This imagination is taking place on an individual scale, but the collective imagination of a group of people that begin to feel and imagine things together is pivotal. As groups share collective imagination, they create new social realities. (Appadurai, 1996, as cited in Jason L Powell and Steel, 2011:77). Globalization has changed the face of India to a great extent in terms of development. Absence of a population policy and lack of effective communication on family planning/family welfare schemes during the pre-independent days saw an increased birth rate on the one hand and on the other side medical and technological development saw the decrease in the mortality rate and the increased life span. Simultaneously India initiated its developmental process resulting in the demographic transitions (Nair, 2014:380).

One of the dilemmas of modern societies is that, while sociological processes have fostered a devaluation of old people, demographic processes have led to increasing numbers and proportions of aged in their populations. Thus, such societies have larger proportions of older people than ever before, while at the same time older people have less value and utility to those societies. These counter trends give rise to the further anomaly that societies whose relative affluence permits them to provide the greatest comfort and security to their aged members instead deprive them of useful roles and consign high proportions of them to relative poverty (Galbraith, 1958, as cited in Cowgill, 1974).

The continuing population growth in India during the past 50 years has been accompanied by a marked increase in the number of persons aged 60 and above. The
simultaneous urbanisation and the spread of individualism have led to a widespread concern about the living conditions of the aged population (Visaria, 2001).

From 1990’s onwards the world is in the grip of globalisation which changed the attitude of people from dependency to independence. The worst affected population category was the aged as they became ambivalent when their support systems were removed or replaced by their own kin’s. The elderly were forced to move from center to periphery (Nair, 2014:382).

In India the elderly have been traditionally assigned a place of honour and respect as exemplified by religion, social values and norms, and the social and economic organization of society. Religious text and writing enjoyed upon the sons to look after their old parents; failure to do so was considered a serious demerit and earned social opprobrium (Bhatia, 1983).

4.1. SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF MIDDLE CLASS

In Beteille’s opinion, middle class values in India are difficult to characterize because they are still in the process of formation and have still not acquired a stable form. As such, they are marked by deep and pervasive antinomies meaning contradictions oppositions and tensions inherent in a set of norms and values. Today’s world appears to be peculiarly dynamic, a world which is in the process of constant change and transformation.

According to Marshall Berman, to live in a modern world is to live in ‘a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish (Berman, 1988,). Essentially modernity signifies the destruction of past forms of life, values and identities combined with the production of new ones. One of the major outcomes of this has been the emergence of ‘consumer culture’ or ‘consumerism’ whereby culture is constructed through consumption, not just production. Consumer culture is bound up with central values, practices and institutions that define modernity, such as choice, individualism and market relations. It is important to note here that the consumption is regarded as necessary not for the prestige value that is attached to such a
lifestyle. Commenting on this middle class culture, M.N. Srinivas notes that middle class parents, instead of patriotically encouraging their children who have settled abroad to return to the country, now want them to stay there and are even proud of their new status as non-resident Indians. Apart from this the Secularization of the middle class has been accompanied by a stress on secular criteria for judging success (Jha, 2014).

In Indian society, middle class is highly significant owing to its educated and skilled members. Middle class is too diverse in terms of incomes, status, vocations, skills and educational qualifications that is difficult to designate into one single class. The present century changes in terms science and technology, managerial revolution in the conduct of business and industry, rise of state planning, growing sex equality, entry of women into professions that were regarded exclusive preserves of men, rapid spread of higher and technical education, emergence of a high degree of specialization affecting all professions and various walks of life that had led to multiplication of specialists and service personnel of all types. The social structure’s predominant ideology is maintained by the middle class who does a balancing act for the society.

4.2 Family life and elderly

The traditional societies usually accord a respectable and honored place to the old who, because of their years of experience, were regarded the repository of the knowledge and wisdom of the community. The old people were often the dominant member of the family, wielded considerable political power in the community and to perform some form of light labour. However, these traditional societies are now undergoing rapid changes because of modernization, industrialization and urbanization and are adopting the western culture and philosophy, particularly that of the American Society (Dhillon, 1992:34).

Family is the most cherished social institution in India and the most vital non-formal social security for the elderly (Central Statistical Organization, 2006). In traditional terms the family is defined by Murdock (1949) in his book Social Structure ‘A group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. It includes
members of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more of their children of their own or adopted by the sexually cohabiting adults.’

Anthony Giddens (1989) defines family as a ‘group of persons directly linked by kin connections, the adult members of which assume responsibility for caring for the children.’ With the social formation over time the above definition has extended to incorporate new forms of a family unit.

Elders are traditionally considered as an important part of the family, with special status, roles and responsibilities which grant them high prestige and esteem for performing those roles. They were considered as advisers and decision makers playing an important role in the functioning of family. The knowledge, wisdom and experience acquired by the elderly are passed on to the young and they help in the socialization of the next generation. Social values, cultural norms and family traditions are learnt by the younger generation more from the elderly than from other members. Contrary to this, the elderly in the developed countries are taken care by the state and are given a special status.

The elderly in the Indian traditional societies were given unparalleled sense of honour, legitimate authority in the family and society, had decision making responsibilities in the social, economic and political affairs of the family and were considered as storehouse of experience, knowledge and wisdom. This was because of many reasons. First, the main oral tradition of knowledge in most agricultural societies, as age increases, one enjoyed domination on skills and knowledge required in agricultural activities, which was the base of economy.

Looking from the demographic point of view, in the traditional societies because of very high death rate, life expectancy was very low and less number attained the status of the old in the family and society, and those who were attend the old age were looked upon with love and respect. Second, the family as an institution was more stable even in its extended form due to less migration and the family required a combined mode for the function of agriculture and other mode of income. The property was jointly held and
controlled by elder most person of the family, which further reinforce the norms of extended family. Third, the rate and extent of urbanization in most traditional societies was very slow. Moreover the development was more or less in harmony with the rural society. Finally, the traditional society, family was the care provider for the dependents, including the aged, were mediated or most of the times even controlled by the community and society.

In early Vedic society demographic, social and cultural factors combined to permit limited differentiation of the lifespan, which tended to be relatively short. Accordingly, the distinction between childhood and parenthood and gainful work generally stretched over the lifespan, whatever its duration (Tilak, 1990:20). The Upanishads recommend a life of meditation and contemplation of the great truths in the later years of one’s life, but they do not emphasize withdrawal from the mundane pursuits of a house-holder’s life (ibid. :22).

In the developing countries where the globalization is in the process and the change is in transition all segments of population are in a dilemma as to their present and the future status. The children, the youth, the women and the old are undergoing a change in terms of their lifestyle, world outlook and the relationships in the society. When the children and the youth are able to adapt to these changes, the old are in an anomic mind confusing them and this is having a great impact on their immediate society. The consequence of this social phenomenon is that in the developing countries globalization made the elderly people to move to periphery becoming a marginal underclass (Nair, 2014:381).

The concept of aging had a new meaning at this time. The elderly who were the pillars of traditional social system were slowly removed and they became appendix in the family. The intergenerational support has drastically changed due to the new economic scenario. (Martin, 1990). The elderly today has become a dependent category of society. Though the elderly of yesteryears were dependent psychologically they did not feel they were dependent whereas today they are forced to become a dependent category (Nair, 2014:382).
India, the family has been the traditional social institution for the support and care of the elderly. Caring of the elderly by family members, especially children and grand-children, has been a practice down the ages. In ancient India, aged persons had a vital role to play in the family and in society. They also enjoyed social security against infirmities, losses and had the privilege of being cared for by the younger generations (Irudaya Rajan and Kumar, 2003:75).

**4.3 Socio-cultural and economic profile of the respondents**

The well-being of the elderly depends largely on certain socio-economic conditions of the elderly. Education is an import determinant of the status of an individual. There is a very high correlation between education levels and the health and economic status of the older generation.

After 35 years of the establishment of the colony most of them have crossed the age of 60 which implies that every household have one or two retired persons. They have registered Senior Citizen Forum with 550 senior citizens registered. Out of total registered members of the forum 55 per cent is female and 45 per cent is male. Most of them fall within the purview of Government’s income protection scheme. All the retired persons living in this cosmopolitan colony hail from different parts of India; mainly migrants from Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, West Bengal and from Southern India, and have imbibed a cosmopolitan culture and have learned to respect each other’s independence and socio-religious and cultural way of life. They are all educated and enjoy intellectual interaction, reading and socializing. Religion was firmly avoided by the seniors while responding to the questionnaire. It was felt by them that religion is not relevant in contemporary times; they belong to the same category of aged or elderly.

**4.5.1. Age profile of respondents**

The sample of the present study as reflects from figure 4.1, consisted of 220 elderly out of which 136 were male and 84 females. The male consists of 62 per cent and female were 38 per cent. There were 6 female respondent of below 60 year of age. 48 respondents between the age group of 61 to 70 years in which the 12 were male and 36
were female. 129 respondents were between 71-80 years in which the 42 per cent are the male and 17 per cent were females. 35 respondents were between 81-90 years of age in which the male respondent were 14 per cent of total sample and female consists of only 2 per cent. And in highest age slab which was between 91 to 100 male and female participation was equal with one-one respondent.

**Figure 4.1: Age distribution**

![Age distribution of the respondents](image)

Source- Field work Data

### 4.5.1. Educational status

The educational status shown in figure 4.2, of the respondents shows that a higher proportion among the elders were graduates and post graduates. To be exact in the category for below 10th standard both were on equal per cent with 1.81per cent. And for 10th standard female outnumbered male with 9 per cent and 5.45per cent. From the total respondents 42 per cent were graduates that consist of 31 per cent male and 11 per cent
of female respondents. And for the post graduates 16.38 per cent and 12.72 per cent were male and female respectively. The trend continued for the above post graduates male outnumber the female and were 3.63 per cent and 1.81 per cent respectively.

**Figure 4.2: Educational Status**

As discussed by the Khan (1997) in his research on elderly in Metropolis, educational and economic conditions obtained in the family have, directly or indirectly, a great deal of relevance. It is not too difficult to argue that the elderly in an educated family are likely to have to themselves a better understanding and that in a family group having necessary economic resources.
4.5.1. Family structure

One way of defining what constitutes a family is by the characteristics of the individuals living within it. Some would argue that the term ‘family’ could be applied only to a heterosexual married couples with children — the stereotypical ‘nuclear’ family. Others would include single parents, cohabiting or gay couples within the term ‘family’. Another way to define ‘family’ is by the number of generations included within it. A ‘typical’ nuclear family would constitute of two generations: parent(s) and children. The linking together of several nuclear groups by an extension of parent-child relationships, such as a married couple, their married offspring and grandchildren living together, produces the second major family type, the extended family. This is sometimes also known as a three-generational family or joint family, although examples of up to five generations living together have been enumerated. Like community care the term ‘family’ is one which remains constant but the precise meaning of which is fluid and is constantly subject to reinterpretation and definition. De facto the term ‘family’ has become virtually synonymous with the concept of the nuclear family (Victor, 2005:162).

The 'support given to the elderly' and 'taking care of the elderly' are two different concepts. While support of the elderly is defined as providing financial assistance (pensions and social security), care of the elderly is defined as extending emotional support, which can be provided only by family members or by those persons with whom the elderly live. Although the nature of support and care are defined differently, both are essential for the well-being of the elderly. The study of living arrangements thus assumes great significance in our attempt to assess the status of the elderly in society (Irudaya Rajan and Kumar, 2003:75).

In this study the respondent are from the urban middle class group. It is evident from the study (figure no. 4.3.) that, from the sample size of 220 elderly, no family had more than 5 members living together, 50.45 per cent of the elderly are living in joint family with 3-5 members, 40 per cent of the older people were living with spouse only and 5.90 per cent were living alone. It can be inferred that children continue to be a major source of support for elderly (Sokolovsky, 2001).
Among other things, to older people the family makes for the basic support-system (Hansoon and others, 1990, as cited from Khan, 1997). The nuclear family groups are rather too person-centred to favour the situation of the elderly. In varying degrees, this adds to the complexities of the social situation (Ramanamha and Bambawale, 1986 as cited from Khan, 1997).

With growing concern over the issue of the aging of population, recent findings regarding living arrangements in south Asian countries indicate that there is at the most only a modest trend towards reduced co-residence between elderly parents and their children [Knodel and Debavalya1997]. Children continue to be an important source of support in other ways as well. However, to the extent to which the elderly live with their
married sons or daughters, considerable differences are apparent (Irudaya Rajan and Kumar, 2003:77).

The study findings suggest that even under fast changing social conditions, traditional living arrangement of residing with children continue to exist (Vatux, 1982). Living arrangements of elderly are not uniform. It differs significantly by many factors including martial status, number of children, age, health status, financial resources, family size and the availability of social support (Panda, 1997; Schafer, 1999).

Though co-residence is an important criterion for the well-being of the elderly, it may not always ensure a healthy relationship between successive generations. The economic, emotional, and social support from the younger generation may be provided even without co-residence. However, given the level of socio-economic development and the absence of an institutional support system for the elderly in the country, it is unlikely that such support may be provided by a majority of the children to their parents. Similarly, co-residence does not always indicate flow of support from the younger to the older generation; co-residence may also imply child-care or help in household chores by the elderly (Chan 1997; Irudaya Rajan et al. 1999, as cited from Irudaya Rajan and Kumar, 2003:75)

Residences for elders are in fact a strikingly new phenomenon emerging rapidly in India’s middle-class cosmopolitan centers, replacing for those who live in them the more conventional multigenerational co-residential family that many have long viewed as central to a proper way of aging and society in India (Lamb, 2009:2).

A study by Kumar (1996) has compared the living arrangements of the elderly in two Indian states, namely, Kerala and Uttar Pradesh, and found that an overwhelming majority of the elderly in both states live with their offspring. The study also showed that the traditional value system of taking care of the elderly by the family and younger generations continues to persist in the country though demographic transition and cultural norms appear to be the same in the two demographically divergent states (as cited from, Irudaya Rajan and Kumar, 2003:77).
As evident from the study of Gangrade (1988:28) undertaken in 1975 at the University of Delhi, the actual composition of the household is reduced in size as the younger member leave the village for towns and cities to seek additional schooling, training or jobs. The degree of jointness will depend not upon the actual members represented in the household, but upon the extent to which the bonds of affection, dependence and responsibility are retained by those who have moved away from the home. As it is contended that even after these young people have married and established their own homes elsewhere, many still retain ties with their family’s home and enterprise and thus remain a part of the original joint family.

The majority of older Indians, however, still live with adult children in multigenerational homes—an arrangement long widely considered to be the most “normal” and “proper” form of aging and family in India. And the majority is not part of the burgeoning urban middle class (of English- speaking, email-using, refrigerator-purchasing, world-traveling, financially comfortable persons), among whom contemporary alternatives to joint family living such as old age homes are most on the rise. Nonetheless, the middle class has a very palpable, influential presence in India’s urban centers and India’s public culture, as do middle-class discourses surrounding new modes of aging (Lamb, 2009:3).

4.5.1. Occupational details of the respondents

For the present context, educational and economic conditions obtaining in the family have directly or indirectly, great deal of relevance. It is not too difficult to argue that the elderly in an educated family are likely to have to themselves a better understanding, and that in a family group having necessary economic wherewithal, they would face fewer economic problems (Khan, 1997,:112).

In the table 4.1 the past and present occupation of the older adults has been highlighted. It was observed from the course of study that majority of the male respondent are now retired from the service sector which consists of 60 per cent were male and 20 per cent were female. 2.27 per cent male and 1.81 per cent female were involved in business and still continue to do so even after their superannuation. 13 per cent female were fulltime
home maker in their previous occupation and after the age of 60 years the per centage increased by 33.18. other then service and business 3.63 per cent female were employed in freelancing and other ways of employment, but after the age of retirement they are not continuing the same instead the retired 1.36 per cent male joined these kinds of freelancing source of income.

Table 4.1: Occupation details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Past occupation</th>
<th>Present Occupation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>Home Maker</td>
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<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source- Field work Data

During 1980’s and 1990’s the developing countries showed higher participation of elderly in the work force which is gradually declining due to changing social scenario (Nair, 2014).
Figure 4.4: Earlier and present occupation

![Chart illustrating earlier and present occupation](chart.png)

Source: Field work Data

4.5.1. Monthly income

As it is reflecting from the figure 4.5 from the field data, the respondents are from the upper middle class, 20.45 per cent of the male and 14.54 per cent female were getting the pension between 21 thousand and 30 thousands. 18.18 per cent male and 14.54 per cent female get the pension ranges from 31 to 40 thousand. In the category of 41 thousand and 50 thousand dominated by the male elderly with 2.27 per cent and for the category of above 51 thousand males are in leading with 10.45 per cent and female are with 1.81 per cent. 12.27 per cent female are engaged in home as Home Maker even after retiring from the work. 4.54 per cent male and 1 per cent female have not disclosed their income and mentioned they feel not to share with any one because of their personal reasons. As reflects from the empirical data, all the elderly are not contributing to the dependency-ratio is underlined by the proportion of those who continue to be engaged in
economically gainful work. Interestingly most of the elderly continue to do what they were doing prior to their superannuation.

**Figure 4.5: Income profiles of respondents**

The same has been reflected from the study of the Khan, Agarwal and Mishra, (1997:97). The continuity theory also express that the elderly should continue the routine of their past life with some required and necessary changes according to their need and capability.

It is often been asserted that the aged with sound financial position are able to maintain their in the family and the society with greater ease. Money is a greater power in their hands to make the youngsters pay adequate respect and attention to the elderly (Bhatia, 1983:61). It has been asserted that the aged with adequate financial position are able to maintain their status in the family and in the society as well. No wonder, the money
power in the hand of the aged makes the younger generation pay due respect and adequate attention to them (Kumar, 1995).

### 4.4 Changing Roles of Social Institutions

The process through which structural changes appear in the social system is that of differentiation of roles. Differentiation of roles leads to structural differentiation. And structural differentiation follows the process of functional specialization (Singh, 1999:175). Modern institutions differ from all preceding forms of social order in respect of their dynamism, the degree to which they undercut traditional habits and customs, and their global impact. However, these are not only extensional transformations: modernity radically alters the nature of day to day social life and affects the most personal aspects of our experience (Giddens, 1991:1).

Family is the basic and universal social structure of human society. It fulfils needs and performs functions which are indispensable for the continuity, integration and change in the social system. The forms and functions of the family have undergone adaptive changes with changes in the technological and economic superstructure of society (Singh, 1999:174). Goode describes family as a unique institution. He points out that it is the only institution, other than religion, which is formally developed in all societies. Family duties are the direct responsibility of everyone in the society, which rare exception. Almost no family role responsibility can be delegated to others, as more specialized obligations can be in a work situation’. Continuing his observations, Goode says that ‘Participation in the family activities has a further interesting quality that though it is not backed by the formal punishments, supporting many other kinds of obligations, almost everyone takes part nonetheless (as cited from Bhatia,1983:85-86).

Recent trends in sociology of the family indicates a shift from the discussion of evolution and types of family to its relationship with other institutions of society, the intra-family relationship, the changing forms of the family and the various functions that the institution performs both for the individual and the society (Bhatia, 1983:85). The new family culture accepts only the immediate members as members of the family and
all the others are considered as members outside the family. The main reason for this is that economic recession and the economic orientation of the families which force them to keep the needs of the elderly at peripheral (Nair, 2014).

As a consequence, the traditional values and institutions are in the process of erosion and adaptation, resulting in the weakening of intergenerational ties that were the hallmark of the traditional family (Bhat and Dhruvarajan, 2009). Besides, there are various other forces that also affect the change process more forcefully. These include increasing entry of women into workforce, growing individualism, migration of younger to other cities and abroad, acute paucity of accommodation in urban areas, disintegrating joint family and acceptance of small family norms etc.

Over the years, changes have been taking place in the socio-economic and demographic dimensions. Changes such as reduction in the number of children a couple has, higher life expectancy, greater involvement of younger women, who have been the chief caretakers of the elderly, in economic activities outside the home, physical separation of parents and adult children due to urbanization and age, selective rural to urban area migration, spread of western culture and lifestyle, and growing individualism, among other factors have had their impact on the traditional family system. Gradually, Indian society is moving away from the joint family to the nuclear family system. These changes have profound implications for the support and care of the elderly (Irudaya Rajan & Kumar, 2003:75).

In Maharashtra, 19 Old Age Homes were studied by Dandekar (1996). He found that the main reason for the aged moving into old age home was the lack of proper care for them within the family set-up. Increase in life expectancy leads in an increase of graying population making it a social concern to the contemporary society. Commercialized agriculture and market oriented economy provided fewer roles to the aged. The break-up of joint family into nuclear family made it incapable to accommodate the old due to the pressures created by the demands of a modern urban and industrialized lifestyle. Accommodating and providing greater recognition for the distinctive interests and needs of the old was difficult in this situation. Emergence of old age homes thus became an
alternate arrangement for the care of the elderly. And the availability of the home nurses was of increasing importance in this situation.

According to Singh (1999:125), traditional joint family not only functioned as agency of procreation and socialization of new members for the society, but also perform duties in other sphere such occupation, education, leisure and recreation, etc. Which have now been taken over by specialized agencies.

The concept of aging had a new meaning at this time. The elderly who were the pillars of traditional social system were slowly removed and they became appendix in the family. The intergenerational support has drastically changed due to the new economic scenario (Martin, 1990, cited from Nair, 2014). The elderly today has become a dependent category of society. Though the elderly of yesteryears were dependent psychologically they did not feel they were dependent whereas today they are forced to become a dependent category (Nair, 2014).

During the last quarter of the twentieth century across Europe, the notion of the family as an institution also began to lose its hold, as marriages became increasingly varied and vulnerable and newer forms of relationship began to appear (communal living, gay relationships and so on). More emphasis was placed on affection as the root of primary relationships, it being argued by some that marriages broke up because people were unwilling to put up with relationships where love had died (Bond et al., 2007). One of the dilemmas of modern societies is that, while sociological processes have fostered a devaluation of old people, demographic processes have led to increasing numbers and proportions of aged in their populations. Thus, such societies have larger proportions of older people than ever before, while at the same time older people have less value and utility to those societies. These counter trends give rise to the further anomaly that societies whose relative affluence permits them to provide the greatest comfort and security to their aged members instead deprive them of useful roles and consign high pro-portions of them to relative poverty. (John Kenneth Galbraith, The Affluent Society (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1958, p. 338, cited from Cowgill, 1974). The
institutionalized nature of the family has, until recently, been emphasized, and often described by a set of relationships with accepted, sanctioned and normatively reinforced patterns of behavior. The importance of institutional care, especially for the poor and destitute aged, is recognized even at the policy level. At present most of the institutional care in the form of Old Age Homes (OAH) is provided through voluntary organizations. There are 1,018 Old Age Homes in India today, in which 118 homes are exclusively for women (HelpAge India 1998 cited from Joshi, 2011).

Ramamurti (1969) found better adjustment for those aged subject who were better educated, had were better income, those spouses were living and those who were living in joint families (as cited from Sinha, 1989:14). However, with the rapid changes in the social scenario and the emerging prevalence of nuclear family set-ups in recent years, elderly population are experiencing various insecurities with respect to emotional, physical and financial insecurity. However, in recent time the situation is getting attention with respect to policy makers, government authorities and voluntary organizations which have resulted in various schemes/programs and support mechanisms for the elderly population. The concept of social security implies that the state is responsible for ensuring a minimum standard of material welfare to all its citizens (Bharati, 2013).

In India, the government’s concern for the old and the aging of the population as a priority began with India’s participation in the World Assembly Conference in Vienna in 1982, where India adopted the United Nations International Plan of Action on Aging. This plan focused on the government’s role in adopting programs aimed at providing care and protection to the old, while synchronizing these with the changing socio-economic conditions of the society. Following participation at the World Conference, the Government, by way of stressing its intentions for the welfare of the old, began to recognize the old as a social category that needs specialized attention (Shankardass, 2004 as cited from Bharati, 2013).
4.4.1 Legislating Parental Care:

In December 2007 the Indian Parliament, seeking to enforce family care of the elderly as a legal obligation, passed a bill titled the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Bill of 2007. Under the law, children may be fined 5,000 rupees and jailed for up to three months if found guilty of neglecting parents. Relatives other than children are also obligated to support childless senior citizens (any citizen of India aged sixty or older) if they stand to inherit property from their aged kin. The Bill gives parents powers to disinherit errant children and other kin from their property. Furthermore, it calls upon (though it does not require) state governments to establish old age homes in every district, to take care of indigent older persons with no kin able to provide support. The Bill also proposes to provide better medical facilities for senior citizens, by calling upon government hospitals to set aside sufficient beds for the elderly, and it asks that state governments establish suitable mechanisms for protecting the life and property of older persons who are economically self-sufficient and living alone voluntarily or involuntarily. At the heart of the Bill is the stipulation that adult children have not only the moral but also the legal obligation to care for their elderly kin. The premise is that children in Indian society have always been morally obligated to support their aged parents, but that due to the decline of the joint family system in contemporary times, children are now frequently failing to fulfill these obligations. Moral systems must now be backed by legal systems; thus the need for a parental maintenance law. Under “Need for the Legislation,” the opening remarks for the Bill specify:

Following the global attention and in view of the increasing need for intervention in area of old age welfare, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India adopted ‘National Policy on Older Persons’ in January, 1999. The policy provides broad guidelines to State Governments for taking action for welfare of older persons in a proactive manner by devising their own policies and plans of action (Bharati, 2013).

When asked, are you aware about Parents and Senior Citizen Maintenance Act 2007 of Govt. of India?
As reflects from figure 4.6., 47.27 per cent of the elderly were aware about the new policy implemented to tackle the change of contemporary times. 27 per cent were not aware about the same, and 27.27 per cent have no idea what this is all about.

Informants agreed to the relevance of Maintenance Act, shown in figure 4.7, they all agreed for relevance of this in contemporary times and one of the respondents (a 76 years old elderly retired from IT department staying with 75 years old spouse physically active and maintaining good health, having 2 sons but both are staying elsewhere in Delhi, and not maintaining good communication) emphasized, “We should go to the court if our children are not taking care of us. But it is difficult to deal with all these legal process for the already frustrated elderly. This is all because of education of women, they are working with male and marring late which leads to adjustment issues of elderly”.

Source- Field work Data
Figure 4.7: Relevance of Maintenance Act, 2007

Source: Field work Data

4.5 Changing role and status of elderly

Family and friends constitute an important component of the social context within which we experience aging. Overall, levels of contact between older people and their family/friends remain high and older people are embedded within extensive social networks (Victor, 2005). In traditional societies, the role and status of the aged was not confined only to the social rituals and ceremonies; they also participated in the management of affairs of the family and the community. To a large extent this was reinforced by their rights over the ownership of the means of production (Sharma and Dak, 1987:8). But in contemporary times, the decision making and consultatory role was exclusively the discretion of the bread winner before retiring from the job. However, after retirement decision making is now more divided between husband and wife. It is transferred from consanguous to conjugal family playing an important role. Rapidly
changing family circumstances like the emergence of nuclear family, absence of traditional care takers and the absence of traditional support systems changed the elderly in their status and lifestyle (Nair, 2014). They also enjoyed social security against infirmities, losses and had the privilege of being cared for by the younger generations. They were accorded a high status as decision-makers in the joint family system (Irudaya Rajan and Kumar, 2003:75).

As Sinha (1989:93) in his conclusion rightly emphasized, the ‘Retired aged’ person because of their weakness limitations, are expected to display more ‘avoidance mode’, and the ‘middle aged’ subjects because of their stamina, youth and strength are likely to display more ‘approach modes’.

4.5.1. Decisions taken

Historically, the joint family system has been considered characteristic of Indian life, under this system as many as three generations living together at any time in the same dwelling. It is a kind of patriarchal organization where the elder male member controlled all economic and social affairs. The senior female member exercised authority in matter of household management, and often wielded considerable influence in general matters as well. The earnings of the family members flowed into a common pool from which drawings were made to meet the needs of all as regulated by the family head (Gangrade, 1999:37).

From the point of view of authority, the family still continues to be the most important institution for enforcement of discipline and its authority remains strong. ‘Boys and young man are likely to come into contact with new situations. They are able to get away from supervision of parents’ (Singh, 1999:183). In this empirical study, the respondent had to mention the name of the person who decides about these important life cycle events.

As reflects from the figure 4.8, for the education of the child the 36 per cent responded that the decisions was taken the parents, and 34 per cent said it was decided by the child themselves, 16 per cent said it was joint decision by parents and children. And regarding
the issue of carrier the 39 per cent decision was taken by the child themselves which was followed by 29 per cent parent decided about the carrier of the child and 13 per cent said it was jointly decided by both parent and child.

When it comes to the decision regarding the marriage 38 per cent times it was decided by the child, which was followed by the 16 per cent decision was taken by the parents, and 23 per cent the decision was taken jointly by parent and child. In marriage, kinship has been replaced by courtship. Formerly marriage also involved diffused sets of relationships, now it is highly specific- a relationship between two individuals who choose to enter into this form of relationship (Singh, 1999:126).

**Figure 4.8: Decisions taken**

![Decision Graph](source)

Deciding about the purchase of new house or car 18 per cent decision was taken by child and 16 per cent it was joint decision by child and parents and only 12 per cent said it was
decided by parents only and 3.63 per cent is decided by grandchild. Adding more to this the 7.27 per cent said the decision was taken by the person who was purchasing the asset. Decisions regarding the budget of the house are done by 22 per cent of child, 16 per cent by parents, 15 per cent by the respondents self, 17 per cent it is decided by jointly and 3 per cent it is decided by the grandparents. And decisions regarding the family holiday are jointly taken by 37 per cent respondents, 20 per cent it is decided by child, 18 per cent it is decided by parents, 5.45 per cent decision is taken by grandchild and only 3.63 per cent it is decided by the respondent self.

In mate selection, the principal of personal choice, especially in urban families, is today increasingly reconciled with parent’s approval (ibid;184). The authoritarian pattern of the Hindu family leaves very few areas of choice and decision to the younger generation. Most decisions are taken without reference to the young members of the family. This creates friction in the family and often leads to discontent and strained relationships between parents and their children. The parents want to choose the spouse for their children in consultation with the latter (Gangrade, 1988:30).

This is contrary to the statement raised by Singh (1999; 183) that, some strains in the authority pattern of the family do arise on account of the younger generation’s urge for freedom, but ‘on the whole there is not yet evidence, among urban middle class families, that even when they (younger generation) live as separate units, the control of the elders completely disappears; however, there is evidence that the elder generation no longer dominates the younger to the same degree or in the same way.’

The Dak and Sharma (1987) study indicated that the headship in the households used to be transferred to the next eldest member after a certain age was attained. An examination of intra-family relations of the urban elderly by Shah (1993) found that satisfactory intra-family relations were somewhat higher among widows than widowers and somewhat lower among those living in joint families compared with those living in nuclear families(Iruḍaya Rajan and Kumar, 2003:76)
The elderly, particularly the females, played a valuable role in the socialization of young children and in transforming social and cultural heritage, their experience in facing exigencies of crisis situations-economic, social, physical was eagerly sought. Limited geographical mobility and the family unit system of production in agriculture and allied sectors ensured common residence and an active network of social ties between the different members. The Indian social system was an integrated in the true sense-socially, psychologically, economically and culturally (Sharma and Dak, 1987). But with increasing reliability on medical science the age old tradition of grand parenting has also been altered. Now the parents rely on doctors then their mothers or mother-in-law’s suggestions. The problem is more acute in urban-industrial societies where the old are expected to make room for younger ones and to play “roleless role”. They are virtually reprimanded for performing roles that were once performed as a matter of course during their young age (Dak and Sharma, 1987:43). According to the Minna Field (1968), ‘the rapid changes of the industrial civilization have made the knowledge and skill of the aged less applicable or relevant to the changed conditions in which youngsters live. Some of the inculcated values of family solidarity are being broken down and the older person thus loses his original position as the venerated head, as the authority and as the leader (as cited from Bhatia, 1983:87).

As reflected from the empirical study also, the elderly role and status has changed from the head of the family to care taker of the family. Some responses from the respondents were (a 68 years female widow staying in her owned house with her son and daughter in law) “both are (Son and Daughter in law) are working and I have two grand children, I have to work more compare to my younger age. Sometimes I feel very lonely and frustrated. My son and daughter in law are busy in their jobs and I have to take care of the home, child and maid. I can’t take rest when I feel tired; I have to adjust according to everyone’s routine”.

Another response were (a 71 year old elderly staying in their house with his spouse aged 65 years and their only son is staying in next street in walking distance), “we have done our job now we also need peace and relief from taking care of the house. Now I have
handed over everything to them they should take care of everything. They just inform about their decision, we were not supposed to do this when we were in our young age. But now the youngsters are not bothered about anything. They are busy in their own life and we are at home to take care of the house and child.”

This is frequently contrasted with high prestige, power, authority and security enjoyed by the aged in the traditional village society (Davis and Coombs 1950; Moore 1950; Smith 1950; Harlan 1964, as cited from Dak and Sharma, 1987:43). As Singh (1999) in his book Modernization of Indian Tradition, the process through which structural appear in the social system is that of differentiation of roles. Differentiation of roles leads to structural difference. And finally bring about the structural change in the social system. In the process of structural change, transformations in macro-structures have a tendency to spill over the micro-social structure (Singh, 1999:161).

Kattakayam (2002:239) professed that the status is determined by age, gender, marital status, education, economic background, etc. It is observed that the aged living in the families with their husbands or wives having their own income have a higher status in the families than widows or widowers have no income. Those who own property have a higher status in the families. This is because their kin know very well that the property owned by aged will be inherited by them.

4.5.2. Changing Gender Relationship its impact on aged

Contemporary public anxieties, however, seem to center even more on the figure of the old person than on the woman. This shift has transpired as middle-class women are entering the professional workforce at a dramatic rate, taking a pivotal place in the public sphere. In fact, some current discourses represent contemporary Indian women not merely as maintainers of “Indian family values,” but also as significant producers of India’s new global economic success (Lamb, 2009:50). For the increasing number of middle aged women who are entering the labour force, the responsibility of day to day parental care or support can be even more difficult. These women may be attempting to offer supportive services to parents while, at the same time, holding down full time jobs. Being overburdened with demands made by their jobs, their spouse, and their children they may be less able to deal with the demands made by their parents (Kumar, 1995).
Increasing participation of women outside the home implies that they can spend less time for taking care of the older members specially those who require constant care (Sharma and Dak, 1987).

As Lamb (2009) discuss, changing gender mores form another critical dimension of contemporary middle-class culture with an impact on aging and family life. Compared to those a generation earlier, urban middle-class women are more highly educated, older at marriage, and entering the workforce in the hundreds of thousands (Radhakrishnan 2006; Lamb, 2009:49-50)). Such well-educated, professional women have significantly more agency in the family than had their mothers and mothers-in-law, creating an environment—as both older and younger persons, both women and men, concur—in which many women are simultaneously less inclined to and less able to co-reside with and care for their parents-in-law (Lamb, 2009:49-50).

In Aileen Ross’s study of the upper and middle class urban families in Banglore, Ross finds that with the increasing strain of new types of activities in urban context many traditional forms of family role expectations are changing; children now often tend to be more independent on certain issues; traditionally division of labour between man and wife breaks down in an urban nuclear family as has to share some work which was traditionally the duty of the wife. In such families the wife because the most important agent around whom the whole family activities revolves; she is consulted and shared in all important family decision (Singh, 1999:183).

The widespread belief now, in fact, is that most older persons among the middle and upper classes in cities like Kolkata have children (often all of them) living abroad—resulting for these persons in very novel ways of organizing life in old age. The fact that so many women are entering the local and international work force also has an impact: many believe that working women are not only less able but also less inclined to care for their elders—especially their husbands’ kin—in the home (Lamb, 2009:5).

In Indian cultural context, the dyadic relationship for the most part is either between the elderly spouses (husband and wife) or between the elderly and their daughter-in-law (Jamuna, 1997a, 1997b, as cited from Liebig and Rajan, 2003). A host of factors seems to affect the care giver relationships, such as health status of dyad members, time spent
in caring, effort and human resource costs, economic costs, health maintenance and disability management measures, institutional care facilities, caregiver-care receiver interperception, and the type of interaction between them, as care giving proceeds (Jamuna, 1992, 1995 as cited from Liebig and Rajan, 2003).

As the roles of women are shifting, anxieties over maintaining “core Indian values” in the home are placed increasingly onto old people and intergenerational relations. So, a cluster of events and processes have come together to foster a new kind of urban middle-class society conducive to novel ways of organizing aging and anxieties over such transitions. Some children, following career paths, have moved far from parents, across the nation or world. Some younger women are asserting preferences not to co-reside with their husband’s parents. (Lamb, 2009:50-51).

When discussed with the respondent, who is care giver in the family, when you are not well?

**Figure 4.9: Care giver in the family**

![Bar Chart](chart.png)

Source- Field work Data
Figure 4.9 shows that the role of care giver is provided by the spouse by 49 per cent of the respondents. And the son plays the role of care giver by 46.81 per cent contrary to the traditional view of the daughter in law as main care provider in the family, with the increased female participation in work force. Daughter comes in the third place 34.5 per cent, it emphases the traditional idea of the elders that they don’t want to take help from the daughters.

The principal of personal choice, especially in urban families, wife’s freedom in middle class homes to work outside in office and schools operates within the traditional framework of the husband’s approval and sometimes the approval of the husband’s or even wife’s parents. Such reconciliations are, however, not without tension which is an inalienable aspect of social change. In spite of these changes, the traditional world view of the joint family still prevails (Singh, 1999:184).

4.5.3. Social relationship in later life

Over-population and over-organization have produced the modern metropolis, with its cussed hurry, its fragmented ends its palsied hearts and its cut-throat competition. In a society so mechanized and brutalized, wholesome human life informed by a benign mosaic of personal relationships, has become almost impossible (Hoskot, 1988: 119).

Families are in continuous process of change. According to Dandekar (1996), Society is undergoing rapid transformation under the impact of industrialization, urbanization, technical change, education and globalization. These changes have notable implications on the status and support of elderly in the family. The transition from extended-family-based society to nuclear-family-based society is thus in essence an example of structural change, since this involves systematic change in role structure through process of differentiation (Singh, 1999:174). Forces of modernization, technological changes and mobility have introduced changes in the life style and value of the people which have adversely affected the traditional respect and an attitude of empathy and care for the aged (Singh, 1997: 47).
Transition from joint to nuclear families also alters the nature of affection and sentiments in inter-personal relationship of family members. Love for one’s own children, affective bonds between husband and wife become more particularized and become intense, and bonds uniting collateral relatives tend to be weakened, thus altering the very structure of traditional joint family sentiments (Singh, 1999:184). An aged person in a family may be more comfortable and find it more satisfying to interact with particular member (Khan, 1997:123). When enquired about, who is the closest person in your life with whom you share everything freely.

**Figure 4.10: Closest Person**

In the matter of interpersonal figure 4.10 shows, relationship within family for 58.18 per cent respondent said spouse is the closest person is their life. Next to spouse daughter is the closest person with 31.36 per cent respondents followed by son with 24 per cent. 9.54 per cent feel closer to their siblings and 9 per cent feel friends are the closed with whom
they use to share everything. Grandchild is preferred by 5.45 per cent respondent. 7.72 per cent respondent preferred other, which included sister-in-law, neighbor, niece or nephew. Son-in-law was not selected by any respondent.

As from the studies of Khan (1997), in the locality of Delhi, emphasizes that elderly love their grandchildren most. Then comes the sons and daughters followed by spouse and son in law and daughter in law. Spouse comes at third place (Khan, 1997:123). But contrary to this, the reflections form the empirical data of the urban middle class of Delhi, spouse is the closet person for elderly followed daughter then son then siblings and then the friends. Grand children come in the last. Kattakayam’s (2002:241) comparative study of elderly care by families also emphasized that for the interpersonal relationship the closed person is spouse and it is followed by eldest son and their grandchildren and then the daughters. The choice is based on care giving, especially the money. One of the respondents said that “We can’t share everything with son-in-law. He should be keep aside from family affair”.

Marriage is important because of its intrinsic value and the links it provides to social networks and activities. A marriage relationship can provide companionship, intimacy, affection and a sense of belonging, and provide evidence to the wider world of social competence. All these are lost upon widowhood. This is, perhaps, one of the key transitions that accompanies later life and is highly stressful. Upon widowhood not only is the relationship with the spouse lost but also all sorts of other factors change including relationships with family and friends, the domestic division of labour, and the identity, sense of personal worth and financial circumstances. Widowhood has strong negative consequences as it is linked with high rates of mortality, morbidity and self-reported ill health (Victor, 2004:193).

4.5.4. Retirement as a social process

Thus far, we have largely been concerned with retirement as a macro-economic concept. However, (early) retirement can be approached from the perspective of the individual as well as from the societal level. For those who have been active in the labour market,
retirement and the changes in the social context of people's lives that it brings is an important social process. Sociologists define certain events such as weddings or starting work as rites of passage. These are events which alter the status of the individual in the eyes of society and bring about changes in social role and the broader social context within which we are all located. Retirement, like entry into the labour market, is very clearly an important rite of passage and a clear marker of a significant social transition but only for that segment of the population for whom it is relevant.

4.5.6. Proximity of married children

Urbanization has been associated with shortage of housing accommodation in cities and high rentals, which acts as severe constrain on the joint family system (Singh, 1997: 47). Shanas (1979, cited from Victor, 2005:163) proposed the primacy of the family for older people as the focus of their social world and as the primary and favoured source of support, both emotional and instrumental. Proponents of disengagement theory proposed that family relationships were more important for older people because of their loss (or disengagement) from other social spheres such as employment. More recently, notions such as 'successful' aging continue to propose the centrality of social relationships and participation in maintaining, and potentially enhancing, quality of life in old age (Victor, 2005:163).

As observed from the Field work Data 50.45 per cent married children are staying with the elderly and 7 per cent children are staying in the same street/Locality or colony. And 36.36 per cent children are staying in the same city but elsewhere in Delhi were maintaining the modified extended family household with at least one of the children staying near by the city or within the city or at short distance, requiring overnight journey. 21.36 per cent children are staying in elsewhere in India. And 24 per cent married children are staying in abroad.

We continue to be surprised and amazed as each new generation of social researchers rediscovers 'the family' and its importance in the lives of older people and vice versa. Following on from this is another popular image of the family as making little, or no,
contribution towards the care of older people (and a more implicit but related idea that older people do not contribute to the well-being of other family members (Victor, 2005:235).

Figure 4.11: Proximity of Children

As empirical and figure 4.11 from data reflects, older people wish to live in their own homes within the community even though some people may move to be with children. How far people wish to remain integrated and involved with the people and place in which they live is very much an individual decision although technological development may allow for greater accessibility and assistive living. It is only a small proportion of older people who decide to live within age-segregated housing communities and at present this decision is made by only certain people (Croucher *et al.*, 2006; as cited from Bond, 2007). In the main, people wish to live in settings that are familiar in some way and which say something about their own identity and the society in which they live (Bond, Sheila, Dittmann-Kohli, & J.Westerhof, 2007).
Married children stay away from their old parents, mainly forced by economic necessities. Under the circumstances the elderly are left alone and as such they feel isolated and life becomes dull. At times, in spite of them staying together in towns and cities the impassable gap remains, as there may be little communication between generations (Mukherjee, 1989, as cited from Devi and Bagga 2006:14).

a. **Time spent with children:** When asked how much time your children spent with you?

Figure 4.12 shows, on every day basis the 53 per cent respondent said that their children meet them face to face, 30.45 per cent had interaction with them on phone and only 5 per cent interact with children on internet every day. On weekly basis the maximum of interaction is on phone with 22 per cent followed by 19 per cent interaction by face to face weekly and 6.36 per cent respondent stay in touch with their children on internet. Once in month 10 per cent respondent stay in touch face to face with their children, 6 per cent can talk to them on phone once in month and 4.54 per cent can keep touch on internet at least once in a month with their children.

**Figure 4.12: Mode of interaction with children**

![Mode of interaction with children](chart.png)

Source- Field work Data

In general there seems to be a virtual consensus that greater contact with children is strongly related with higher morale (Townsend, 1958). Overall pattern shows a strong
relationship between seeing about children and having a sense of well being for the aged. Having sustained, vital interaction with children creates a group embedded and possible emotional solidarity which differs significantly from relations based on intermittent material aid or ritualistic social contact. Relations to children are by far the most emotionally charged area of life. It is fraught with anxiety, subject to distortion and denial, about which the aged constantly try to reassure themselves. As the continuity theory also puts forward that the individual actively attempt to maintain continuity of the self over time, as our conceptions of our self over time, as our conceptions of our self are increasingly tested as we age (Willon, 2007:149).

It is contended that even after these young people have married and established their own homes elsewhere, many still retain ties with their family’s home and enterprise and thus remain a part of the original joint family. Familism is an –ism in all societies; parents assist their children to get started as adults in all walks of life. Family obligation in India are honoured above all other obligation (Gangrade, 1988:28).

**Figure 4.13: Mode of interaction with grandchildren**

![Mode of interaction with grandchildren](image)
b. Time spent with grand children

When asked how much time your grand children spent with you?

As reflects from figure 4.15, respondent said their interaction with grand children is not very frequent. 27 per cent respondent are interaction with grandchildren on everyday face to face and 11.36 per cent are in touch on phone on daily basis and only 2.27 per cent can keep in touch on internet on every day basis.

Maximum of 25.45 per cent of grandchildren are in touch with their grandparents on phone, followed by 11 per cent on internet on and 9 per cent on face to face on weekly basis. Once in a month 11.36 per cent grandchildren are in touch through internet, Skype is specified by two respondents. Maximum of 20.45 per cent grandchildren contacts their grandparents on phone in a month. Only 7.72 per cent had face to face interaction in one month.

Devi and Bagga (2006:14) emphasized the old are no more able to guide their grandchildren as the life style has undergone drastic changes. The school curriculum has undergone a radical change and the school children do not have spare time to spend with their grand-parents.

To conceptualize old age as an undifferentiated experience is both naive and unhelpful. We all bring to the experience of old age access to various resources material, health and social and these are strongly influenced by our experiences prior to ‘old age’. Indeed, with the development of the ideas of the ‘successful aging’ (Rowe and Kahn, 1999; as cited from Victor, 2005:5) the importance of the social context for the shaping of the experience of old age has assumed greater prominence (Victor, 2005:5).

As a consequence of the global demographics of aging, the changing societies of the post millennium are being confronted with quite profound issues relating to illness and health care, access to housing and economic resources including pension provision. The past several years has witnessed an unprecedented stretching of the human life span. This aging of the global population is without parallel in human history. Aging is also a
positive outcome of combined health, social and economic advancements and that should not be forgotten. Yet, if demographic trends continue to escalate by 2050 the number of older people globally will exceed the number of young for the first time since formal records began (Bengston and Lowenstein 2004). This raises profound questions of the power of nation states in the context of global aging, and raising further global questions of distribution of power and scarcity of resources to an aging population. (Dutta, 2012)

Clearly contemporary older people are both socially engaged with the wider community and embedded within a network of family and friendship relations. Research has, however, consistently shown that it is not quantity of relationships that is important but the nature of the relationship. For older people a feeling of ‘social support’ is positively correlated with both physical and mental health. Those older people without such relationships report poorer physical and mental health and poor quality of life.

Many outside agencies are coming to take care of the elderly which changes the patterns of dependency among the old. The main difference between elderly of older days and today is that elderly of today consciously becoming a marginal person. One can even argue that the effect of globalization on elderly is derecognition of them by the family. An Asian perspective agrees that

“The position of the elderly has been under-mined by such factors as changing values, growing individualism, smaller numbers of children, the migration of the young to cities in search of employment, housing shortages in urban areas, the increasing participation of women in the labor market, and the devaluation of the knowledge and experience of the elderly” (United Nations, 1986, para.33 as cited from Nair, 2014).

The growing numbers of elderly in the world, far from representing a precious store of wisdom, are often perceived as a constraint upon the freedom and development of the young. It is not that large numbers of older people are abandoned or institutionalized. The myth of a more caring past persists, even though it has been rare for elderly parents to live with their families. The distance between people, which some observe today, is only partly spatial. It also psycho- logical, since the destinies of individuals diverge more
obviously than they did when most people worked in the staple industry of a single town and expected their children to do likewise (Seabrook, 2003:2)

Elderly were considered as a social phenomenon in India till the early 1980’s. But now they are looked as an economic phenomenon as the society is moving from humanistic (social) to materialistic (economic). This shift in paradigm in the approach of elderly is changing the elderly as a commodity. This process has taken place in a cumulative manner that even the elderly themselves feel the change in the attitude of people towards them. Population aging and change in the family structure are serious problems in the developing countries. The nations are not ready to give up the traditions nor are they fully modernized in the approach. The decrease in the fertility rate and the changing roles of women made the society to look elderly in a different dimension (Nair, 2014).

4.5.6. Their expectation from the family

Some argue that kin relationships are essentially ‘moral’ in nature (we help our family because they are our family with no thought of personal gain) while others argue that kin relationships are simply based upon economic and material interests of the individuals concerned (Finch and Mason, 1993, Cited from Victor, 2005:187).

On the question of your expectation from family, Responses of the elderly were, 54 per cent said they must be polite and submissive, respectable to all. Younger generation should learn to be patience. 4.09 per cent respondent said they should take care of us, as we have crossed the age of 70. 15 per cent elderly said they don’t have any expectation from the younger generation of family members.13.18 per cent said they should visit us more frequently and spend time with us. One of the respondents said,

“कच्चे बहुत सुहाबने, गद्दर बहुत सिञ्हाई, दो फल ऐसे कौन से, जो पाकत ही कढ़वाय”. This suggests that life is like a fruit which is full of joy in childhood, sweet in young age and bitter in old age.

Social change witnessed by India in the last decade show that many social categories has transformed into economic and political categories. Elderly cannot change themselves into a political category or an economic category as they are not an organized group.
There are two points to be noted here, in the first instance the materialistic world in which they live today is alienating them. Life satisfaction and alienation among the aged are important concepts, as these have far reaching implications and can give us an overall view of the larger populations aging successfully or not in our society.

More recently still the characteristics of late modernity have led to and will increasingly lead to changes in personal relationships as a consequence of growing individuality, the speed of social change, the flexibility of identities, the growth of consumerism and the proliferation of consumer markets. However, the impact on marriage and friendship and other close relationships has not been theorized or tested empirically to any great extent. One of the main sets of ideas comes from Giddens (1991, 1992, cited from Bond, Sheila, Dittmann-Kohli and J.Westerhof, 2007).

4.5.6. Frequency of visits: When asked about the frequency of the visit of their children if they are residing elsewhere, their responses were-

Figure 4.14: Frequency of visits to children
As figure 4.14 shows, the respondents were very open and said that 40.45 per cent of children visit them just to meet them, 11 per cent of the children visit for some help and 27.27 per cent children visit elderly parents for both the reasons, 11.36 per cent children visit them for other purpose and 8.63 per cent did not respond on this question and 2.27 said their children never visit them.

In a study conducted by Kattakayam (2002) it was seen that elderly men feel more alienated than the elderly women; the elderly women are active in the kitchen and feel wanted by the family. Although the degree of isolation may vary, with urbanization and nuclear families on the rise, elderly women living in metropolitan cities are more likely to feel socially alienated than their rural counterparts (Jamuna, 2003). India Today (2013) reports that the alienation that comes from urban living, which strangely enough also includes people living in close proximity to each other (in the apartment/flat system), has a lot to do with the risks in modern living. This alienation affects the elderly a lot. After the children leave the nest, which they do in large numbers in middle class urban India, the parents are left to fend for themselves. The emotional vacuum is very hard to fill. The loneliness becomes worse under the threat of being robbed or murdered. In such situations the neighborhood fails in its duty by not being on guard or vigilant enough (Nair, 2014). As Lamb (2009) discuss, if another option is now available, some elders conclude that they may actually prefer to live separately from their children to keep relations easier while still hopefully visiting and remaining emotionally close. One of the key reasons more people live outside of the conventional joint family today is also, simply, that they can afford to, the establishing of separate residences and the “outsourcing” of elder care from the family to, for instance, old age homes requires economic resources that earlier generations even among the fairly well-off middle classes did not readily possess (Lamb, 2009:51).
Visit to children’s place:

When asked about, how frequently you visit your children’s place as reflects in figure 5.15; 4.09 per cent of the elderly respondent visit their children on daily basis, 9.54 per cent parents make it weekly, 12.72 per cent of the elderly visit their children once in a months, maximum of 21.81 per cent visit their children occasionally. 15.45 per cent of the respondent did not responded to the question and 7.72 per cent mentioned they never visited their children’s place, the respondent who were in more than 80 years old they were reluctant to visit their children’s place. Some of them due to health reason and few of them said they don’t feel comfortable.

Who has developed the concept of the ‘pure relationship’, which he sees as a feature of high modernity, one which involves mutual disclosure, is entered into for its own sake, and continues only ‘in so far as it is thought by both parties to deliver enough satisfaction for each individual to stay within it’ (Giddens, 1992, p. 58 cited from Bond, Sheila, Dittmann-Kohli, and J.Westerhof, 2007).

Figure 4.15: Visit to children place
As reflected from the field data the frequency of the visit to children’s place is fair enough and both are maintain good contacts. Some of the respondents flaunt about their visit to their children and their children staying in USA or CANADA, they earn good amount of money and maintain a good life.

4.5.6. How family members approach you

When the family member come from outside, how do they approach you? As reflected from the field data and figure 4.16, the 220 elderly respondents from the urban middle class about the response from the spouse when they come for the 30.45 per cent they come and wish them, 27.27 per cent sit and talk to them, 25.45 per cent share problems with them and 17 per cent respondent said their spouse come for some help. When it comes to son 46 per cent respondent said their son come and wish them, 47.27 per cent sit and talk to them, 30.45 per cent said they share problems with them and only 16 per cent said they come for some help. And 42 per cent respondent replied their daughter come and wish them, maximum of 55 per cent elderly said that their daughter sit and talk to them, 34.5 per cent said their daughter share problems with them, 20.45 respondent said that their daughter come for some help. When asked about the daughter in law they shared that 49.54 per cent they come and wish them. And for the 34.5 per cent respondent said they share problem with them only 9.54 per cent daughter in law come for some help. Coming next to how does their son in law approach elderly, 38.18 per cent said they come and wish them, 27 per cent respondent said that when they sit and talk to them, 12.27 per cent said their son in law share problems with them, and only 3.63 per cent respondent said their son in law come for some help.
Talking about the intergenerational relationships, 49 per cent respondent said their grandchildren come and wish them, 22.27 manage to sit and talk to them, 12.27 per cent said they share problems with them and 9 per cent come for the some help. The web of relationships in the family is as intricate as it is important, particularly to the older people. Indeed, most of it is influenced by the ethos prevailing in society but, at the ground level, it may vary from family to family (Khan, 1997:123).

M. N. Srinivas (Srinivas, 1993:936) also emphasized about this phenomenon ‘the foreign bug has bitten not only the young but older men and women. Middle aged Indian women now travel to the US or UK to oversee. Middle aged women love to talk to their relatives and friends about their stay abroad, the air conditioned houses and cars, the gadgetry, the glories of the American supermarket, and the conveniences and wealth
their offspring command. Back home, the middle class family has shrunk, elderly parents living by themselves and receiving dollar cheques from their offspring. Very soon it will not be untrue to define an urban middle class family as one which has at least one person earning abroad. As reflected from the study also 24 per cent respondents married children were staying abroad.

4.5.6. Who accompanies elderly in need

Who accompanies you when you go to - It is follows that to the elderly the most liked member in the family may not be necessarily the person who would be the responsive to their needs. As it is reflecting form the empirical data (figure 4.17) that for the visit to doctor 30.45 per cent son accompany them, then for 27.27 per cent the elderly go alone, 24 per cent elderly said the spouse accompany them for the visit to doctor, 11.36 per cent elderly said daughter in law goes with them, followed by 7 per cent said daughter and 5.45 accompanied by their Grandchild, Son in law comes in the last with 1.36 per cent.

Figure 4.17: Accompanied person

![Figure 4.17: Accompanied person](image-url)

Source- Field work Data
Figure 4.17 suggests that the payment of the bills 31.36 elderly go themselves, for the 18.63 per cent son help them, 11.36 elderly said their spouse go for the bill payments, maximum of respondent were female. Only 3.63 per cent take the help from daughter and 3.63 per cent they get the help from their association members or neighbour. Grandchild comes in last position with 1.81 per cent.

For the marketing the 37 per cent elderly goes by themselves, 16.36 per cent elderly said their spouse accompany them for the marketing. 10.90 and 10.45 respondents said their son and daughter in law accompany them respectively. 6 per cent elderly said they get the company of daughter, followed by 2.27 and 1.81 per cent accompanied by grandchild and servant respectively.

For the outing the 29.54 per cent elderly have the company of their spouse, 18 per cent go alone and 10.45 and 9 per cent said they get the company by daughter in law accompany them respectively, 8.18 per cent elderly said for outing they get the company of grandchild, 6 per cent said their daughter accompany them. 3.63 per cent gets the company of daughter, followed by 2.27 and 1.81 per cent accompanied by grandchild and servant respectively.

When asked who accompany them for out station for 30 per cent respondent their spouse accompany them. 16 per cent said they go alone. 9 per cent said they go with son, 5.45 per cent said their daughter accompany them. 5 per cent said they get the company of their friends, siblings, and other family members. 2.72 per cent elderly goes with son in law. Only 1.81 per cent grandchild accompany their grandparents for outings.

As it is reflecting from the empirical data son accompany them which is followed by spouse for most of times and then the daughter in law, and because of our traditional practice elderly do not want to involve their son in law in their family affairs. But they accompany them when required or needed. The respondent how are in their younger old age (below 70 years) prefer to alone or gets the company of spouse only. But old (above 70 years) need to someone to go with them, when they go to doctor or outside.
4.5.7. Changing Social relationships

Discussing about what they felt about the changing social relationships and the changing pattern in old age - all the respondents were of same opinion that the family structure and composition is experiencing change. Many of them felt that though the joint family system is the best for all purpose but along with it a positive mental attitude towards this is very important amongst the member of same is family.

Responses regarding the change - Majority of the respondents, 28 per cent elderly had the opinion that because of ailment, their social engagement and commitments drop. It affects most when you have to face the loss of spouse said by 18 per cent respondent. It leads to loneliness and depression. Relationships have become more commercial in this century conveyed by 12 per cent of the respondent. 16 per cent elderly said that there is no change in the relationships if they are financially independent, on the other hand 3.63 per cent had opinion that there is no change in relationship in old age. 7.27 per cent elderly agreed that after retirement they get time to socialize and enjoy the unfulfilled hobbies. 6.81 per cent respondent said that the relationship depends on the elderly themselves.

A 75 years elderly, retired from the service sector getting the handful of pension, staying in his own house with wife (aged 71 years and a retired teacher getting pension), having domestic helper for day to day work and two sons, one staying in same locality with his wife and son and another staying abroad with family) sais, “We as elderly still wants to stay in the joint family, when we were kids we have a huge family and staying with all our cousin brothers and sisters, but this is not possible in today’s world. They don’t want any disturbance in their lives, they prefer to stay alone and whenever they feel they come to meet us. This residential separation or distance does not imply that they don’t care us. They are very busy and we should understand this. Even we as parents feel that there is love and care even if they are coming occasionally’. Another, 78 years respondent living with (full time) servant said, ‘my only son is in USA and married to American girl, they use to call me and chat with me. But I feel lonely after wife’s death. She was great support for me. She convinced me for the marriage of our son, and he (son) was not hear
when we wanted him to be with us. May be the modern world has its impact on our younger generation. They are economically independent and living in their own world. And we should be living in our world; I am involved in community service and going to Satsang every Sunday. Try to keep myself busy by all means’. 68 years enthusiastic and very active respondent staying with wife, having one son and one daughter, both are married and settled in their independent house). ‘Today’s problems can’t be solved by yesterday’s thoughts. Our advice is not relevant in many cases. It’s difficult for us to understand the mindset of younger generation. We made them independent and strong to face the world but now the roots are missing. They don’t care about our own culture’.

Another respondent, a 69 years old retired professor of economics looks at changes that have taken place in relationships as; ‘Changes are in many fields, whether it is handling of the money, handling of the people and handling relationships. The way money is handled 50 years back is changed. The way investments were made 50 years back is changed drastically. Our father and grandfather never have thought about saving the money for their own old age. But now we have to save for ourselves’. A 76 years old business man still very active and healthy, staying with 70 years old wife, having one son and one daughter both are married and settled abroad, keeps visiting them occasionally, discussed, why elders were respected earlier, ‘earlier, even very small things like foods were prepared according to the likes of the elders, because the money will be given by the elderly only. What they use to get is not respect it was the buttering or fear. All were aligned to the power center. Now they have power, money is power. But now if elderly does not like maggi, no problem, others will eat, because they have money they don’t have to ask for it. They are independent, have power in their hand’. Another 70 years elderly, a migrant from the neighbouring state, now having own house and getting pension, said, even now who are not well off or any way dependent on their elders obey them at least gives an impression that they follow them. The children were made dependent on parents, who obeys the rules was praised and made examples for others on the other hand who were independent were not appreciated by the family and society. A 65 elderly years, (recently retired as education commissioner, staying with wife still working as teacher in nearby school. They have one son staying by the next street with
family, ‘We also need privacy, I am happy with my spouse and manage household chores according to my need and requirements. They don’t want any disturbance in their life, even we too are happy in this way only. They visits us whenever they feel like’. On changing relationships, a 64 years old female retired teacher, staying in own house with businessman husband, expressed her views; ‘Younger feel that elderly should serve them, take care of the child and house. Why should we? We are done with our duties, we don’t have strength to do all this, we also wants to rest and be happy. It’s better to stay in separate house. We are free to manage our route as we wish. And have a get together on weekends and enjoy life’.

When asked, how frequently your children appear in family functions as per your expectations-

**Figure 4.18: Visit of children in family functions**

![Visit of children in family functions](image)

Source- Field work Data

From the total of 220 urban middle class elderly, as shown in (figure 4.18) 34.5 per cent responded that their child always appear in family function. 36.36 per cent elderly
responded that mostly their children appear in family function. 20 per cent said that their children make it occasionally and 9 per cent of the respondent said their children never appeared in the family functions.

Social engagements and participation is suggested by Rowe and Kahn (1997) as one of the three key elements of `successful aging'. Irrespective of the acceptance of notion of successful aging this does serve to emphasize the importance of social participation for the well-being of older people (and indeed other age groups). The majority of older people are enmeshed in a complicated family network consisting of family, friends and neighbours. We have seen that where they are part of a kin network, older people demonstrate high rates of social contact, which seem to bring a large amount of satisfaction to them. Older people are also active in the wider social world and few conform to the stereotype of isolated and lonely lives (Victor, 2005:194).

As it has been observed from the respondent they like the system of the joint family but they prefer to stay in the extended family. As it has been discussed by Sarah Lamb in the book Aging and Indian Diaspora (2009), if another option is now available, some elders conclude that they may actually prefer to live separately from their children –to keep relations easier – while still hopefully visiting and remaining emotionally close. One of the key reasons more people live outside of the conventional joint family today is also, simple, that they can afford to (Lamb, 2009:51). Rising levels of economic prosperity and the provision of welfare benefits has served to loosen the economic ties within families. In contemporary western societies older people are not, generally, directly economically dependent upon younger members of their families, although there are obvious financial co-dependencies across the generations. All of these factors combine to influence the family context within which older people experience old age. However, such changes are not unique to older people and such experiences are influencing all of us (Victor, 2005:162).