

FAMILY SYSTEM

Family: Concept and Forms

Family, as a reproductive or a biological unit, consists of a man and a woman having a socially approved sexual relationship and whatever offspring (natural or adopted) they might have. As a social unit, a family is referred to as "a group of persons of both sexes, related by marriage, blood or adoption, performing roles based on age, sex and relationship, and socially distinguished as making up a single household or a subhousehold". Aileen Ross' definition of family includes physical, social and psychological elements of family life. According to her (1961:31), family is "a group of people usually related as some particular type of kindred, who may live in one household and whose unity resides in patterning of rights and duties, sentiments and authority". She, thus, makes distinction between four sub-structures of family: (i) ecological sub-structure, i.e., spatial arrangement of family members and their households, or how relatives live geographically close to each other. In simple words, this refers to the size of the household and type of the family; (ii) sub-structure of rights and duties, i.e., division of labour within the household; (iii) sub-structure of power and authority, i.e., control over the action of members; and (iv) sub-structure of sentiments, i.e., relationship between different sets of members, say, between husband and wife, parents and children, and siblings and siblings, etc.

Different scholars have given different forms of family. K.P. Chatterjee (1961:75) has given three types of family: *simple* (man, wife, and unmarried children), *compound* (two simple families, say, ego, his wife and unmarried children, and ego's parents and unmarried brothers and sisters), and *composite* (i.e., lineal and collateral joint families). On the basis of authority, families have been classified as husband-dominant, wife-dominant, equalitarian, and autonomic families. Burgess and Locke (1963:26) have classified them as *institutional* and *companionship* families on the basis of the behaviour of the individual members. In the former family, the behaviour of the members is controlled by mores and public opinion, while in the latter family, behaviour arises from mutual affection and consensus. On the basis of kinship ties, families are classified as *conjugal* (priority given to marital ties) and *consanguine* (priority given to blood ties). Zimmerman (1947:20) has classified them as *trustee* (where members have to conform to family norms and they have no individual rights), *atomistic* (in which conventional mores lose their significance and each member can make his own choice) and *domestic* (which is an intermediate type between trustee and atomistic). I have introduced the concept of *fissioned* family which in structure and functioning is a nuclear family, separated from the parental family.

Joint Family: Nature, Types and Characteristics

The concept of joint family has varied with different scholars. While Irawati Karve regards 'co-residentiality' as important in jointness, Harold Gould, I.P. Desai, S.C. Dube, B.S. Cohn, and Pauline Kolenda do not regard coresidentiality and commensality as essential ingredients of jointness. F.G. Bailey and T.N. Madan give importance to *joint ownership of property*, irrespective of the type of residence and commensality. I.P. Desai gives importance to fulfilment of obligations towards kin, even if residence is separate and there is no common ownership of property. According to Irawati Karve (1953:21), the traditional ancient Indian family (Vedic and Epic periods) was joint in terms of residence, property, and functions. She has given five characteristics of joint family: common residence, common kitchen, common property, common family worship, and some kinship relationship. On this basis, she defines joint family as "a group of people who generally live under one roof, eat food cooked at one hearth, hold property in common, participate in common family worship, and are related to each other as some particular type of kindred". The word 'common' or 'joint property' here (according to the Hindu Succession Act, 1956) means that all the living male and female members up to three generations have a share in the paternal property.

According to I.P. Desai (1956:140), co-residence and common kitchen are not as important dimensions of joint family as intra-family relationships are. He thinks that when two families having kinship relationship are living separately but function under one common authority, it will be a joint family. He calls it *functional joint family*. He calls a *traditional joint family* as one which consists of three or more generations. He calls two-generation family as a *marginal joint family*. Ramakrishna Mukherjee (1962:352-98) while giving five types of relations—conjugal, parental-filial, inter-sibling, lineal and affinal—has maintained that a joint family is a co-resident and commensal kin-group which consists of one or more of the first three types of relations and either lineal and/or affinal relations among the members.

While I.P. Desai has given five types of family—nuclear, functionally joint, functionally and substantially (in terms of property) joint, marginally joint, and traditional joint, K.M. Kapadia (1959:74) has given five types of family: nuclear (husband, wife and unmarried children), nuclear with married sons (what I.P. Desai calls Marginal Joint and Aileen Ross calls small joint family), lineal joint, collateral joint, and nuclear family with a dependant (widowed sister, etc.) Aileen Ross (1966:34) has given four types of families: large joint, small joint, nuclear, and nuclear with dependants.

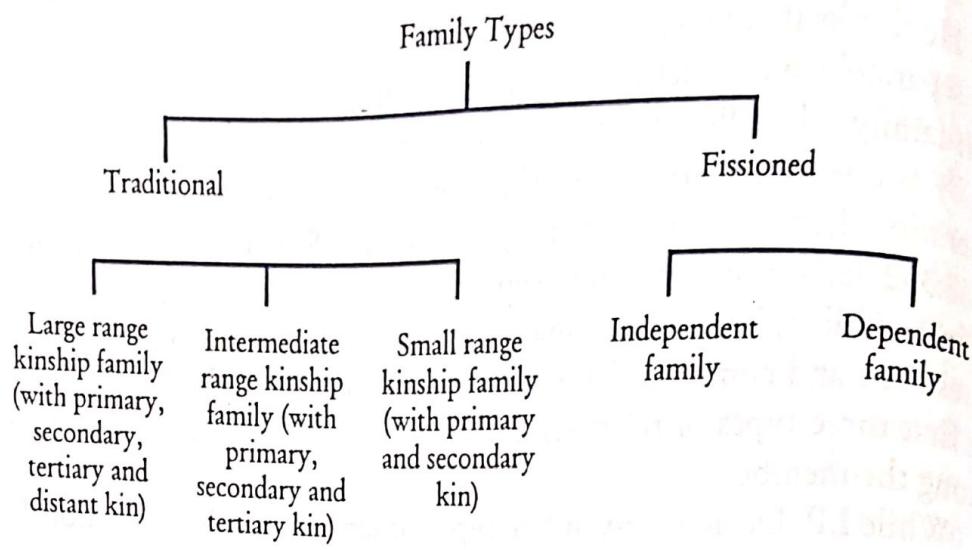
Taking all these types of families together as given by different scholars, a joint family may be defined as ‘a multiplicity of geneologically related nuclear families, joint in residence and commensal relations and functioning under one authority’. M.S. Gore (1968:6-7) has said that a joint family should be viewed as “a family of co-parceners and their dependants” instead of viewing it as a multiplicity of nuclear families. He holds that in a nuclear family, the emphasis is on conjugal relationship while in a joint family, emphasis is on filial and fraternal relationships. According to Gore, joint family is of three types: *filial* joint family (parents and their married sons with their offspring), *fraternal* joint family (two married brothers and their children) and filial and fraternal (combined) joint family.

I consider a nuclear family which has separated from father's or married brother's family, as a *fissioned* family. This fissioned family can be totally independent or dependent on some other nuclear family related through some type of kinship. On the other hand, I classify the joint families in terms of types of kin (primary, secondary, tertiary and distant) involved. Thus, I propose five family types as given in Diagram 1.

The characteristics of joint family may be described as below:

1. It has an authoritarian structure, i.e., power to make decisions lies in

Diagram 1



the hands of the head of the family (patriarch). Contrary to the *authoritarian* family, in a *democratic* family, the authority is vested in one or more individuals on the basis of competence and ability.

2. *It has familialistic organisation*, i.e., individual's interests are subordinated to the interests of the family as a whole, or the goals of the family are the goals of the individual members.
3. *Status of members is determined by their age and relationship*. The status of a man is higher than his wife; in two generations, the status of a person in the higher generation is higher than the status of a person in the lower generation; in the same generation, the status of a person of higher age is higher than the status of a person of lower age; and the status of a woman is determined by the status of her husband in the family.
4. *The filial and fraternal relationship gets preference over conjugal relationship*, i.e., husband-wife relationship is subordinated to father-son or brother-brother relationship.
5. *The family functions on the ideal of joint responsibility*. If a father takes loan to marry his daughter, it is also the responsibility of his sons to repay the loan.
6. *All members get equal attention*. A poor brother's son will be admitted to the same school (even if costly) as rich brother's son.
7. *The authority in the family (between men and men, men and women, and women and women) is determined on the principle of seniority*. Though the eldest male (or female) may delegate the authority to someone else yet even this delegation is based on the principle of seniority, which limits the scope for the emergence of individualism.

Changing Pattern of Family

Is joint family structure being nuclearised? My contention is that "jointness of family in India is not disappearing and that stage can never be envisaged when the joint family will be lost in the mental horizon of the people; only the 'cutting off' point of jointness is changing. Instead of large joint families, we will have only locally functioning effective small joint families of two generations or so. At the same time, a nuclear fissioned family (of husband, wife and unmarried children) will not be totally independent but will be functionally dependent on (i.e., remain joint with) some primary kin like father or brother, etc. This is evident from various empirical studies conducted by various scholars in different parts of the country. We will analyse change in jointness at two levels: structural and interactional.

Structural Changes

We cite six empirical studies conducted in last four decades by scholars like I.P. Desai, K.M. Kapadia, Aileen Ross, M.S. Gore, A.M. Shah and Sachchidananda.

Desai (1964:41) studied urban families (in Mahuwa in Gujarat) in 1955 and found that: (i) nuclearity is increasing and jointness is decreasing; (ii) spirit of individualism is not growing, as about half of the households are joint with other households; and (iii) the radius of kinship relations within the circle of jointness is becoming smaller. The joint relations are mostly confined to parents-children, siblings, and uncles-nephews, i.e., lineal relationship is found between father, son and grandson, and the collateral relationship is found between a man and his brothers and uncles.

Kapadia (1956:112) studied rural and urban families (18% urban and 82% rural) in Gujarat (Navasari town and its 15 surrounding villages) in 1955. His main conclusions were: (1) In the rural community, the proportion of joint families is almost the same as that of the nuclear families. (2) Viewed in terms of castes, in villages, higher castes have predominantly joint family while lower castes show a greater incidence of nuclear family. (3) In the urban community, there are more joint families than nuclear families. (4) In the 'impact' villages (i.e., villages within the radius of 7 to 8 km from a town), the family pattern closely resembles the rural pattern and has no correspondence with the urban pattern. (5) Taking all areas (rural, urban and impact) together, it may be held that joint family structure is not being nuclearised. (6) The difference in the rural and the urban family patterns is the result of modification of the caste pattern by economic factors.

Ross (1961:303) studied only Hindu families in an urban setting (Bengaluru in Karnataka state) in 1957. She found that: (1) The trend of family form is towards a breakaway from the traditional joint family form into nuclear family units. (2) The small joint family is now the most typical form of family life. (3) A growing number of people now spend at least part of their lives in single family units. (4) Living in several types of family during life-time seems so widespread that we can talk of a cycle of family types as being the normal sequence for city-dwellers. (5) Distant relatives are less important to the present generation than they were to their parents and grand-parents. (6) City-dweller son has become more spatially separated from all relatives.

Shah studied families in one village in Gujarat between 1955 and 1958. Classifying families as *simple* (consisting of whole or part of the parental family) and *complex* (consisting of two or more parental families), he found that one-third families were complex and two-third were simple, indicating the breakdown of joint family system in rural India.

Gore studied families in an urban (Delhi), rural, and fringe areas (of Rohtak and Hissar districts in Haryana) in 1960 and found that two types of families: one, husband, wife and unmarried children, and two, husband, wife, unmarried and married sons-dominated over all others.

Sachchidananda (1977) studied families in 30 villages in one district (Shahabad) in Bihar and found that: (1) One-fourth families were nuclear and three-fourth were joint, indicating predominance of traditional families. (2) There were more nuclear families in upper castes than in middle and lower castes. (3) Nuclearity tends to rise with the level of education.

Kolenda (1968) used data from 26 studies conducted between the 1950s and 1970s and found that: (1) Majority of the families are nuclear. (2) There are regional differences in the proportions of joint families. There are higher proportions of joint families in Gangetic plain than in Central India or Eastern India (including West Bengal). (3) The joint family is more characteristic of upper and landowning castes than of lower and landless castes. (4) Caste is more closely related to the size and the proportion of joint families.

Ram Ahuja studied families in 1976 in an urban area and in 1988 in rural areas during his two research projects (on 'Drug Abuse Among College Students' and 'Rights of Women') in Rajasthan. Both studies pointed out that though the number of nuclear families is growing yet it does not indicate the disappearance of joint family system.

Ramakrishna Mukherjee studied family in West Bengal in 1960-61. He found (1975: 5-50) that: (1) Size is not an indicator of nuclear or joint structure of family. His own survey of 4,120 family units gave 4.50 and

4.83 as the average size of a nuclear and a joint family respectively. (2) Size of joint family is not large because the 'root couple' does not remain alive beyond 75 years or so. The husband and wife become 'parents' for the first time when the man is in the age group of 25-29 and the woman in that of 20-24. They become 'grandparents' for the first time when the man is in the age group of 45-49 and his wife in that of 40-44. They become 'great grandparents' for the first time when the man in the 'root couple' is in the age group of 75-79 and his wife in that of 70-74, and their first son in the age group of 25-29 becomes a 'parent' for the first time with his wife in the age group of 20-24. The expansion of collateral relationship in a family is between two 'distant' cousins. Subsequently, the joint families expand within a limited generational extension. (3) In his analysis of studies on families (44,657) made in 30 villages and towns in 15 states in India by 18 scholars (like S.C. Dube, M.S.A. Rao, Kolenda, I.P. Desai, Kapadia, Irawati Karve, Kulkarni, T.N. Madan, Driver, Sovani, Mukherjee, Bose, Srivastava, etc.) Mukherjee found that the percentage of nuclear to total families ranged from 35 to 63 (*Ibid*:38). This points out the central tendency in Indian society to pursue the joint family organisation (*Ibid*:46). (4) The joint family is successively shaking off the collateral relations beyond grandparents' generation.

Taking all studies on structural changes in family together, we conclude:

- (1) The number of fissioned families is increasing but even living separately, they fulfil their traditional obligations towards their parental families.
- (2) There is more jointness in traditional (rural) communities and more nuclearity in communities exposed to forces of industrialisation, urbanisation and westernisation.
- (3) The size of the (traditional) joint family has become smaller.
- (4) So long the old cultural values persist among people, the functional type of joint family will be sustained in our society.
- (5) Changes from 'traditional' to 'transitional' family include trends toward new-local residence, functional jointness, equality of individuals, equal status for women, increasing opportunity to individual members to achieve their aspirations and the weakening of family norms.

What are the set of values which nurtured, stabilised and sustained the joint family organisation and the values which are now breaking the joint family in India? The important values which sustained joint family structure are: (1) Filial devotion of sons. (2) Lack of economic viability of some brothers, i.e., their inability to support their children economically.

(3) Lack of a state-organised system of social security for the old-age men and women. (4) A material incentive for organising the size of labour unit since it constituted the major share of the capital required for production of goods and services and people had to depend on family labour.

The factors which are now breaking the joint family are: (1) Differential earnings of brothers generating tensions in the family, as unit of production and service today is predominantly an individual. Up to a point, the values the members inculcate may enable them to subside tension by mutual adjustment and compromise but brothers separate when they focus on the conjugal units. (2) The death of the 'root couple' who holds economic power, and inability, incompetence and self-interest of sons and their wives to take up the role of 'parental couple'. (3) Incentive of depending on family labour is disappearing with the emergence of a cash nexus. (4) System of social security, savings and extended earning opportunities of the people are leading to nuclearisation of joint family structures.

Interactional Changes

The changes in intra-family relations may be examined at three levels: husband-wife relations, parental-filial relations, and relations between daughter-in-law and parents-in-law.

The relations between *husband and wife* in Indian family have been reviewed by Goode (1963), Kapadia (1966), Gore (1968) and Murray Straus (1969). These studies indicate change in (a) power allocation in decision-making, (b) emancipation of wife, and (c) closeness.

In traditional family, wife had no voice in family decision-making. But in contemporary family, in budgeting the family expenditure, in disciplining the children, in purchasing goods and giving gifts, the wife now credits herself as equal in power role. Though husband continues to play the *instrumental* role and wife the *expressive* role, yet both often talk things over and consult each other in the process of arriving at a decision. This also does not mean that husband-dominant family is changing into wife-dominant or equalitarian family. The assumption of economic role and the education of wife have made wives potential equals. The source of power has shifted from 'culture' to 'resource', where 'resource' is 'anything that one partner may make available to the other helping the latter satisfy his/her needs or attain his/her goals'. As such, the balance of power will be on the side of that partner who contributes greater resources to the marriage. Murray Straus' study (1975:141) on 'husband to wife power score' also supported the hypothesis based on 'resource theory' rather than the 'cultural values theory'. He found that the

middle-class husbands have a higher 'effective power' (+) score than the working class husbands. It indicated that compared to middle-class families, working class families are more role-segregated or 'autonomic', i.e., working class families have less joint husband-wife activity of all types. It also means that in middle class families, both husband and wife take more active part than do working class families in attempting to direct the behaviour of the family group toward solution of the problem. Straus's study thus indicated that both nuclearity and low socio-economic status are associated with reduction in the husband's power.

Emphasising 'resources' factor does not mean that 'culture' (what Max Weber has called 'traditional authority') has lost its importance. In fact, both factors are important today in 'conjugal bonds'. It may thus be averred that though an average Indian family is husband-dominant yet the *ideological* source of power of women is giving place to a *pragmatic* one.

The change in conjugal bonds is also evident from the increasing emancipation of wife. In urban areas, wife going with husband for social visits, taking food with husband or even before he does, going together to restaurants and movies, etc.—indicate increasing 'companion' role of wife. Husband no longer regards his wife as inferior to him or devoid of reasoning but consults her and trusts her with serious matters. As regards *closeness* of man to his wife and mother, man, particularly the educated one, is now equally close to both (Gore, 1968:180).

The relations between *parents and children* may be assessed in terms of holding authority, freedom of discussing problems, opposition of parents by children, and modes of imposing penalty. In traditional family, while power and authority was totally vested in the patriarch and he was virtually all powerful who decided everything about education, occupation, marriage and the career of children in the family (Kathleen Gough, Cf: McKim Marriott, 1955:44 and Ruth Anshen, 1949:94), in contemporary family—not only in nuclear but also in joint family—the grandfather has lost his authority. The authority has shifted from patriarch to parents who consult their children on all important issues before taking any decisions about them. Ross (1961:93) also maintains that grand-parents are no longer as influential as they were earlier. Gore (1968:138) also found that it is now parents who take decisions about schooling, occupation and marriage of their children. Children have also started discussing their problems with parents. They even oppose their parents. Kapadia (1966:323) and Margaret Cormack (1969) also found that children today enjoy more freedom. Some legislative measures have also given powers to children to demand their rights. Perhaps, it is because of all this that parents do not use old methods of punishing their children.

They use economic and psychological methods (denying money, scolding, restricting freedom, reasoning) more than the physical methods (beating). In spite of these changes in relations between parents and children, the children do not think only of their rights and privileges but also of the welfare of parents and siblings. They respect and fear their elders.

The relations between daughter-in-law and parents-in-law have also undergone change. However, this change is not so significant in daughter-in-law and mother-in-law (DIL-MIL) relations as in daughter-in-law and father-in-law (DIL-FIL) relations. The educated DIL does not observe *purdah* from her FIL and discusses not only the family problems but also the social and even the political issues.

Taking all three types of relations (husband-wife, parents-children, and DIL-PIL) together, it may be said: (1) Younger generation now claims more individuality. (2) Consanguineous relationship does not have primacy over conjugal relationship. (3) Along with 'culture' and 'ideological' factor, the 'resource' factor also affects relations.

Future of Indian Family

Stresses and Adoption

Are the arguments against the joint family system appropriate and relevant? Are the values of people really changing? Is there any evidence of a qualitative change in the value system of the people which will lead to complete nuclearisation of the joint family structures? If no, why are earlier values losing their influence in the contemporary period? What is the future of the Indian family?

The perspective on family in India is usually developed on the conceptual scale of 'tradition to modernity' by undertaking either opinion-surveys of youths or general public belonging to different forms of family structure, or making socio-economic surveys of people of different castes and classes in the rural and the urban areas. Do the studies that have been made so far on Indian family indicate some direction of change in future?

The question of future of family in India is concerned with two aspects: one, what is the future of joint family, and two, what is the future of family as an institution? As regards the first question, it has already been pointed out (in earlier pages) that joint family will never be completely nuclearised in our society. The two structures (joint and nuclear) will continue to survive. Only the nature of jointness will change from residential to functional one and the size of joint family will shrink to two or three generations. As regards the future of family (as an institu-

tion), it may be discussed in terms of four factors (which are not mutually exclusive) affecting the family: (a) *technological revolution*: access to such conveniences as electricity, piped water in homes, intricate home appliances like gas and fridge, telephone, buses and other vehicles have all changed common man's living and raised his standard of life. Effects of the industrial-technological changes on family are quite evident, like those of productive function, abandonment of self-sufficiency in family economy, occupational and population mobility, weakening of kinship ties, and so forth; (b) *population revolution*: shift from agriculture to manufacturing and service, migration from rural to urban areas, decrease in birth and death rates, increase in average expectation of life and availability of elderly persons in family, replacement of early marriages by post-puberty and late marriages, etc., have created problems of readjustment, changes in power structure, desire for smaller families and so on; (c) *democratic revolution*: ideals of democracy have filtered down to the level of family living. Demand of rights by women, emancipation of children from patriarch's authority, willingness to approach decision-making through democratic process, and change from familism to individualism may be described as important trends in family; and (d) *secular revolution*: there is a shift away from religious values to rational values. Change in wife's attitude towards husband, demand for divorce on maladjustment, children's reluctance to support parents in old age, elimination of family worship—are all the result of rational thinking and deviation from moral and religious norms.

Succinctly stated, we find several dominant trends in Indian family in the last few decades. These are: (1) Increasing importance of nuclear family. (2) Transference of some functions (e.g., educational, recreational, protective, etc.) to some other institutions. (3) Fundamental change in family age structure, i.e., proportionately fewer children to care for and proportionately more elderly persons surviving. This has created the necessity of transferring support function from the family to the state and to private insurance companies. This has affected the family power structure too. (4) Freedom to women due to their education and increasing economic independence. (5) Declining reliance of children upon family controls. (6) Changing values of youth. Though they have respect for and fear of parents yet they want parental 'support' for achieving their individual interests. (7) Liberalisation of attitudes and practices towards sex (8) Change from pre-puberty to post-puberty marriages. (9) Decreasing family size. These characteristics of the present-day Indian family point out change in structure and family ties.

These family trends are ongoing processes. They have not come to a

stop. Nevertheless, it is possible to get a fair idea of what the family will be like in the future, say in the next 25 to 30 years. Following Harold Christensen (1975:410), we envisage the following possible changes in Indian family in the first quarter of the twenty-first century:

- (1) The family will continue to exist. It will not be replaced by state-controlled systems of reproduction and child bearing.
- (2) Its stability will depend more on interpersonal bonds than on social pressures from outside or upon kinship loyalty.
- (3) It will more depend upon community support and services.
- (4) With medical advances, the family will have greater control over its biological processes (of separating sexual from reproductive function, controlling sickness and death, and determining sex of the offspring).
- (5) Remarriage and divorce rates will be high.
- (6) Parents and grand parents will continue to support their children and grandchildren even after their retirement.
- (7) Woman's position of power within the family will further improve with increase in gainful employment.
- (8) Viewed generally, the family will not be equalitarian but will remain husband-dominant family.

Functionalist and Marxist Perspectives

The future of family can be perceived with two perspectives: functionalist and Marxist. Functionalists perceive family as an important 'organ' in the 'body' of society. They are concerned with the functions that the family performs—sexual, reproductive, socialising or educational, and economic. The first two functions indicate that family is useful biologically while other functions point out that it is useful socially and culturally too. Can other institutions take over the functions of the family? It is argued that even when other institutions perform the functions of the family, they only 'help' the family in these functions and not that they 'deprive or relieve' family from performing them. Family's functions have been modified in recent years. The family gives 'something' to and gets 'something' from other sub-systems. Family's role is primary.

Other perspective on family is Marxist. The Marxists adopt a structural perspective on the family and gender relations. They explain male dominance in family in a historical context. Their hypothesis is that in the nomadic stage of man's social development, men performed only the 'launching' function; there was no exclusive sexual possessiveness nor did any private property exist. Gradually, the male sphere of activity became more specialised and along with hunting they also took up cattle-breeding, mining and trade. As men acquired greater control over women.

property, they sought means to ensure that it stayed with them and passed on to their children. For this, they wanted to be sure who their offspring were. Thus, free sexual relations had to be replaced by monogamy. Family became male-dominated and patriarchal. The division of labour was gendered and females were subordinated. Women's oppression is thus a problem of history rather than of biology. Marxists, in this way, talk of the influence of class on family life, specially on socialisation. They see gendered division of labour as *socially constructed*, which is contrary to functionalists' *naturalistic* approach. Feminist Marxists thus recognise that sex, reproduction, socialisation and economic function 'need' to occur but not necessary in ways that 'exploit' female labour and leave them powerless. They (pluralist-feminist Marxists) thus believe that family will continue to survive in future but there will be changes (including individual freedom, political voice to women, etc.). This approach is political and has the emancipation of women at its heart. In other words, family will not break up; it will only adapt itself.

Inter-Generational Conflict and Youth Unrest

Youth, as a distinct social category, is largely a modern phenomenon. This stage in life is the outcome of the long and ever expanding period between childhood/adolescence, and work. Earlier, the child took to his family work at an early stage but now with work specialisation and required skill, he has to wait for several years before he finds work. The early modern industrial economy first required a literate and a disciplined labour supply but now it requires a skilled worker. Specialised education was, thus, imparted to meet this demand and modern youth is largely a by-product of it. Just as proletariat is the product of the factory system, so modern youth is partly the product of the education system. At first, education was mainly an upper and middle class privilege but now even the lower class (including SC, ST, OBC) person has a universal and a legal right to get education. All youths thus have now developed a shared interest. S.N. Eisenstadt observes that it is in the informal peer groups that intra-generational interaction is most free to flourish. In much the same way as universal education, though to a lesser extent, work in industry and service in office have also provided a basis of collective experience and identity to young men. Sometimes, the young people turn against dominant norms and adopt culturally deviant lifestyles. The young group, generated largely within the educational context, reflects the influence of sub-class, gender and individuality. Thus emerged the youth culture (and culture) after the 1950s. The political independence and democratic values further gave youth the opportunity to ask for more rights. They devel-

oped new values and started opposing those persons whom they considered barriers in achieving their goals and aspirations. All this led to inter-generational conflicts, like conflicts between parents and children in family, between students and teachers in educational institutions, and between young and old employees in offices. Between the 1950s and 1990s, the media and the general public also seemed obsessed with youth.

What motivated the youth to come in conflict with and oppose older generation people were factors like influence of western culture, values picked up from commercial means of entertainment, increased leisure, greater affluence, and power of parents. Western culture changed their values based on individualism and equality; commercial recreation made them realise the importance of violence and threat of violence in achieving their goals, 'part-time' education provided them increased leisure and time to do things which busy life would not have permitted them to do; and parental affluence and power provided them power to influence. All this created a distinct culture leading to unrest and inter-generation conflict.

But could we say that youth in India oppose their parents and elders in the same way as in other societies? Has Indian culture lost its moorings? While it is true that surveys point out change in relations between parents and children in India, these studies also show that children respect their parents, are generally fairly satisfied with life, and want important decisions about their education, marriage, etc., to be taken by the parents. In traditional family, the patriarch was all powerful. It was considered bad manners for the youngsters to argue with or talk back to their seniors. They were not to question the orders or deeds of the elders. Even those children who moved away to distant cities were theoretically still members of the family and, therefore, under the control of the patriarch, although he could not supervise their day-to-day affairs.

In 1961, M.S. Gore in his study on family, asked his respondents as to who made major decisions regarding schooling, occupation, and the choice of bride/groom for children in the family? He found (1968:138) that in a very large number of cases, the children were not free to take their own decisions. He maintained that only a small number of children took the matter into their own hands. Margaret Cormack (1969) found in her study that more than half (55%) of her total respondents (500) from colleges sometimes opposed their parents, a few (6%) often opposed them, and one-third (33%) never opposed them. I.P. Desai (1953) in his study of high school students in Poone found severe strain on parent-ward relationship. As many as 168 respondents in his survey reported that they had wished at times to leave home. Of these, 117 students also gave rea-

sons for it. About 64 per cent wanted to separate because of the authoritarian, humiliating, unfair, and unjust behaviour of their parents, 19 per cent because of the uncongenial atmosphere in the family and strain arising from it, 10 per cent due to quarrels in the family, and remaining 7 per cent for some other reasons. The causes of conflicts between the younger and the older generations were: (1) Feeling among the youngsters that elders try to impose their authoritarian, unfair and unjust behaviour upon them. (2) Growing belief among young children that they are more culturally advanced than their parents. (3) Children's feeling that their individualism is curbed due to temperamental strictness on the part of the elders. (4) Expectations of the younger members as to the way in which their needs should be served are not fulfilled. (5) Difference in attitudes to social customs and religious beliefs.

B.V. Shah's study (1964) of 200 students of Baroda university showed that children did not want complete freedom of selecting their partners but wanted selection jointly by parents and children. About two-third students (66.5%) wanted to select their brides in consultation with their parents, one-third (32.5%) wanted to give more importance to their own choice, and only 1 per cent wanted selection exclusively by parents' choice. Margaret Cormack also found that 65 per cent of her respondents (students from different universities) wanted that marriages should be arranged by parents with the consent of their children, in 3 per cent by parents without children's consent and in 32 per cent cases by their own choice. Vimal Shah (1975) in his study of 281 Hindu graduate students (boys and girls) of different castes of Gujarat University found that 92 per cent girls and 66 per cent boys believed in arranged marriage. This points out young persons' adherence to and slight deviation from the traditional norms.

Some legislative measures have also created disruptive relations between parents and children. Parents no longer can deprive their children of a share in the paternal property. The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 enjoins that the property of a male Hindu dying intestate shall devolve upon his specified heirs. On the other hand, there are cases where children file legal cases against their parents on property issues, criticise them (parents) for neglecting them because of which they take to alcoholism, drug abuse, etc. and suffer from feeling of insecurity. Decline in parental authority is also reported. The charge is that family is failing to act as effective agency of social control. But the same charge is also made against the schools and the police. The causes of juvenile delinquency, youth crime, drug abuse, etc., must, therefore, be sought in wider society rather than in integration conflicts or in the failure of family. Here, we can only

hold that the more permissive and democratic ideals of the last few decades reduce the credibility of physical punishment as means of maintaining control both within the family and within society. It is difficult to imagine a widespread reversion to more traditional forms of discipline within the family without some comparable broader change in society.

MARRIAGE SYSTEM

Hindu Marriage: Concept, Types and Mate Selection

Marriage is perceived by sociologists as a system of roles of a man and woman whose union has been given social sanction as husband and wife. The equilibrium of the system requires adjustment between the two partners so that the role enactment of one (partner) corresponds to the role expectations of the other (Robert O' Blood, 1960:189).

Indologists look upon Hindu marriage as a *samskara*, having three objects of *dharma* (fulfilment of religious duties), *rati* (sex gratification), and *praja* (procreation). Marriage performed for *dharma* was called *dharmik* marriage, while one performed for sexual pleasure was regarded as *adharma* marriage. Marriage was considered sacred because of several reasons: (i) *dharma* was the highest aim of marriage; (ii) performance of marriage ceremony included certain rites (like *havan*, *kanyadan*, *panigrahana*, *saptapadi*, etc.) which were considered sacred; (iii) rites were performed before sacred god *Agni* by reciting *mantras* from sacred scriptures *Vedas* by a sacred Brahmin; (iv) union (between man and woman) was considered indissoluble and irrevocable; and (v) emphasis was on chastity of the woman and faithfulness of the man. Even today, the sanctity of the marriage is recognised by Hindus in spite of the fact that marriage is performed for companionship and not for performing duties, and whenever found a failure, it is dissolved by divorce. Mutual fidelity and devotion to partner are still considered to be the essence of marriage. Kapadia (1966) has said: "Hindu marriage continues to be a sacrament; only it is raised to an ethical plane."

In simple words, marriage in Hindu culture is a spiritual union between a man and a woman for spiritual realisation. Hindu culture also recognises (besides the above-mentioned *Brahma* marriage) seven other forms of marriage with lesser and lower ideals. The four of these marriages—*Gandharva* (entering into sex before getting the social sanction of society), *Asura* (eloping with a woman), *Rakshasya* (forcibly abducting a woman from her home) and *Paisacha* (man molesting a girl when she is asleep or intoxicated or in a state of unbalanced mind)—had such a low ideal that they were termed as *Adharmik* marriages. The remaining three