

**Working Paper  
19**

**Inter Generational Relations  
and Decision-making  
among the Elderly:  
A Study in Gujarat**

**Renu Tyagi,  
Tattwamasi Paltasingh**  
December 2015



**Sardar Patel Institute  
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# **Inter-Generational Relations and Decision-making among the Elderly : A Study in Gujarat**

**RenuTyagi<sup>1</sup>, Tattwamasi Paltasingh<sup>2</sup>**

## **Abstract**

Intergenerational relations make an important part of our social identity involving mutual reliance, appreciation and accountability among family members. In contemporary Indian scenario, the process of industrialization and urbanization has influenced the family size, its types and living arrangements etc. This trend has further made an impact on relations between the generations influencing the lives of family members. This drift is evidenced more in developing countries that include India. Various factors influencing intergeneration relationships in family in the context of Gujarat has been studied. The paper further reflects the significance of various factors which can determine the strength of relationships between elderly and their family members. The study has also identified the role of elderly and their involvement in decision making in family issues. The paper has been concluded stretching the relevance of active and healthy interaction for better intergenerational bonding in family.

**Keywords:** Family, Intergenerational Relations, Decision-making, Elderly, Gujarat

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## **1. Introduction**

The ethical, individual, and collective dimensions of human life are embedded in a value system that compliments the elderly for their vast experience & wisdom. Traditionally, there has been respect and strong values attached to care for the elderly by their families in India (Paltasingh & Tyagi, 2012). About 38.5% of the world's 60-plus population is projected to live in China and India by 2050 (Chatterji et al, 2008). In India, 40% of older people live below the poverty line and 33% are only marginally above the line (Hanspal & Chadha, 2006). In view of the demographic and economic transition, intergenerational relationship plays an important role at society and community level. There are many evidences from the Indian research about the mutual help among generation where both younger and older generations support and influence each other (Tabuchi & Miura, 2015). The support from elders in child rearing, companionship of mother in laws and facility of sharing household chores are some of the advantages of joint family (Latha & Sridevi, 2014). About thirty per cent of Indian families live in multigenerational households in urban areas as compared to more than sixty per cent living in the rural areas (ILC, 2012). Socio-cultural backgrounds influence the multigenerational co-residence to a great extent. Traditional values and institutions are in the process of erosion, resulting in the weakening of intergenerational ties and influencing the family structure (Bhat and Dhruvarajan, 2009). In India the modernization involving urbanization, industrialization and women's work participation etc. have been reported to be affecting traditional familial supports (Gupta, Rowe & Pillai, 2009) and the family structure. Changing family structure has made an impact on marriage system, age at marriage, division of labour in the family, competitiveness and relations in the family (Manocha, 2003) resulting in more and more small size families.

The present paper is prepared with an aim to study intergenerational relationships and factors influencing these relationships with focus on elderly. First section of the paper deliberates the diverse relationships between generations and role of elderly highlighting their involvement in decision making in family issues. Based on the

empirical findings the next section of the paper discusses various socio-economic factors influencing these relationships. Last section of the paper concludes with some alternate mechanism for healthier & supportive inter-generations relations.

## **2. Understanding Generations**

Intergenerational relationships can be described by some important characteristics like respect, accountability, mutuality among its family members. Typically the elders or grandparents of the family share their wisdom and are valued for their role in continuing the values and culture in younger generation. As the younger generation experiences different life events (occupation, marriage, parenthood), they develop more respect for elderly in family. Some of the indicators of the respect by younger generation include looking for advice from parents and grandparents, meeting grandparents, curiosity about parents' and grandparents' lives, and appreciating relationships with other members of family. There are various socio-economic and psychological aspects which have an important bearing on the intergenerational relations. Education, marriage, values, lifestyle, career and behavior are some of the factors which influence these relationships. Some of determinant variables for change and disappointment in intergenerational relations have been identified as the class, gender, values, change in beliefs and socio-economic transformations (Lane, 2003).

The intergenerational relationships includes some changes which are structured by circumstances that elevate the social dependency of older parents and the economic dependency of adult children, initiating both positive and negative influences in their relationships (Hogerbrugge & Silverstein, 2014). There are social, historical, familial, and individual circumstances which influence intergenerational relations producing behaviors ranging from loving and supportive to indifferent and abusive (Kemp, 2007). Parent's relationship with both the grandparents is one of the key factors influencing quality of grandparent–grandchild relationship (Dunifon & Bajracharya, 2012). Increasing knowledge gap between generations, particularly in urban areas shapes the intergeneration interactions to a great extent. Younger



generation is gaining easily available and accessible information & knowledge due to advancement of technologies especially the digital world. However, elderly do not have easy access to such information. In the present day context youths and children have become more enthusiastic on learning new, fast and practical ways of leading their lives. This has resulted in creating knowledge or information gap between the generations.

### ***2.1 Elderly and Family***

In family, good inter-generational relationships are established in the early years during parenthood, education and marriage which can be continued to later years. The elderly members of family share their experiences and grow positive relationships with their spouse, children, daughter-in-law, grandchildren and others. The grandparent–adult -grandchild relationship is a source of both support and strain to each generation and these relationships shows great variation (Moorman & Stokes, 2014). The grandparent–grandchild relationship is considered to be most intense before the grandchildren have reached adolescence and after that, the relationship may continue to be personally meaningful and significant (Kemp, 2007; Geurt et al, 2009). Intergenerational support may not be assumed to be one sided always with a belief that once a person grows old, he or she becomes only a recipient of care and support from the young. The intergenerational transfers, either material or non-material, flow either way. In modern Indian society, with both the parents in jobs, grandparents play an important role in caring for grandchildren. In cities, the school going children are loaded with various education pursuits and exposed to various technological devices, hence they hardly find time for quality interaction with grandparents, even if they are living with them. In addition to this, fulfilling the professional demands and family needs, adult parents give little scope for quality interaction with their elderly parents. Elderly members are confronted with a number of challenges including multiple chronic conditions, inequality of opportunity for employment; inadequate income; lack of suitable health services; changing familystructures and inter-generational relations (Paltasingh &Tyagi, 2014).

Stereotyped attitudes, assumption about elderly being non-productive and inadequate media coverage for the old age are some other issues for healthy intergeneration relationships.

### ***2.2 Involvement of Elderly in Decision Making***

The intergenerational exchange includes various types of activities and support, including financial, emotional and social. Issues like parents' involvement in taking major decisions including job changes, marriage or purchase of land or house or any property regulate the positive intergenerational relationship (Jamuna, 2007). Loss of the decision-making power is experienced more by those who have given up their property to younger family members and have no control over the sources of income. Empirical findings have identified that loss of status and decision-making power is felt more by elderly women than men (SivaRaju, 2011). Though a majority of the younger generation view the elderly as a socio-economic burden, advantages of having an elderly person at home for care in times of sickness, advice in family matters, education and all-round development of the family are also recognised by younger generation (Khan and Raikwar, 2010). However, it has been found that most of the important decisions in family are taken by young without consulting their elderly parents. Elderly complain that due to power shifting from elderly to young adults, due attention is not reciprocated from younger generation. The likelihood of perceiving ageing as a problem is found higher among those who do not have frequent contacts with relatives and friends, being forced to handle depression on their own. This likelihood is also higher among those elderly who have lost their status as head of the household and also those who are not involved in decision making of family issues (Bansal and Chadha, 2003). The present study has been carried out to understand the relevance of relationship between generations and role of elderly in family concerns.

### **3. Methodology**

In Gujarat, elderly population constitutes 8.3 percent of total population including 7.6 percent elderly males and 9.0 percent elderly females (Census, 2011). However,

the percentage share of elderly population in 2001 was 7 percent only. The decadal change indicates a noticeable increase in the elderly population. In the state, financial dependency among elderly population is higher for women (77 percent in rural and 78 percent in urban areas) than elderly men (35 percent in rural and 36 percent in urban areas). Literacy rate of elderly females is 24 percent which is found to be considerably lower than their male counterparts (57 percent). As per living arrangements, 5.7 percent of elderly are living alone, 13.7 percent live with their spouse, 44.2 percent live with spouse and other members and 34.1 percent live with their children (GoI, 2011). The present study is conducted in Ahmedabad district of Gujarat. Ahmedabad is the largest city in Gujarat and the city has accommodated 10 old age homes. Ahmedabad being an urbanized city, the population comprises of diverse characteristics and family structures. There has been an attempt to study the intergenerational relations and role of elderly in decision making process in city of Ahmedabad.

The broad objective of the study is to explore nature and extent of engagement of elderly men and women (from varied backgrounds) in decision making issues in the family. The study explores their role in different family matters like property issues, grandchildren's education, their career and participation in family rituals. The study has broadly examined the relevance of relationships between different generations based on the objectives mentioned below.

### ***Objectives***

1. To study inter-generational relations with respect to family type, education and economic status.
2. To examine the support extended by elderly.
3. To study the relevance of interaction between generations in family.

### ***3.1 Sampling***

A total of 80 elderly (69 from family setting and 11 from old age homes) were selected for the present study. Elderly from family setting includes 32 women and 37 men. Out of 2 old age homes, 04 women and 07 men were selected (Table 1).

**Table 1: Sample Details**

Elderly from Family Setting (N)			Elderly from Old Age Homes (N)			Total (N)		
Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
32	37	69	04	07	11	36	44	80

In present study, main reason of shifting to old age homes were found to be the family members' inability to provide care and food to them followed by loss of spouse. In earlier studies from different part of the country, main reason for aged moving into old age home was found to be lack of proper care for them within the family set-up (Dandekar, 1996; Sreevals and Nair, 2001). The scope of this study is restricted to elderly from those families living in Ahmedabad in which at least one of the grand parents were alive and the family with adolescent children. Purposive sampling technique is used to select homes where people with different generations are residing together. The data for elderly from family setting was collected from the areas namely Ambli, Bopal, Ghuma, Thaltej & Jai Ambey Nagar in Ahmedabad. Elderly from two old age homes namely 'Suvarna Vridhrashram' located in Ambli and 'Shri Maganlal Trikamlal Trust Vridhrashram' located in Ashram Road were included for present study. All elderly from both the settings were personally interviewed. Prior permission was obtained from concerned authorities. The purpose of the study was explained and consent of each subject was taken prior to data collection.

### ***3.2 Tools for Data Collection***

Interview Schedule and Questionnaire were used for collecting the data. Elderly staying in families and inmates from 02 old age homes located in Ahmedabad were personally interviewed. Both quantitative and qualitative method was used to study factors influencing intergenerational relationships in family. Quantitative technique was used to calculate frequencies, percentages and chi square test. Closed and open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire. Tabulation and data analysis was carried out using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

### ***3.3. Demographic Profile of the Elderly***

The demographic profile of elderly includes different aspects namely age group, gender, marital status, type of family set up and their educational level. The elderly were classified in three different age groups i.e. 60-70 years, 71-80 years and 81 years and above. Most of the sample elderly belonged to 60-70 years age group for both elderly men and elderly women. More than 22 percent belonged to 71-80 years age group. As per the marital status of the elderly, the percentage of the widows is quite high as compared to widower which reaffirms the feminization of ageing (Chakrabarti 2009). This could be due to reasons like age difference in marriage and that widower's remarriage is more prevalent unlike the widow's remarriage. The educational level of elderly women is found to be relatively low as compared to the elderly men. The percentage of illiterate elderly women (11.25 percent) is higher than the illiterate elderly men (2.5 percent). Percentage of graduate elderly men is very high (20 percent) unlike elderly women (2 percent). None of the elderly women is found to be post-graduate or technically qualified unlike elderly men. More than 68 percent elderly belonged to Joint family set up and more than one third of the population (31.25 %) belonged to nuclear families. Purposively more elderly from joint family set up were taken considering the objectives of the study (Table 2).

**Table 2: Demographic Profile of the sample elderly**

Variables	Women		Men		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
<b>Age (in Years)</b>						
60-70	27	33.75	29	36.25	56	70
71-80	05	6.25	13	16.25	18	22.5
81 & above	04	5.0	02	2.5	06	7.5
Total	36	45.0	44	55.0	80	100
<b>Marital Status</b>						
Unmarried	0	-	01	1.25	01	1.25
Married	16	20	36	45.0	52	65.0
Widow/Widower	19	23.75	07	8.75	26	32.5
Divorced	01	1.25		-	01	1.25
<b>Education</b>						
Illiterate	09	11.25	02	2.5	11	13.75
Literate	09	11.25	04	5.0	13	16.25
Primary	08	10.0	04	5.0	12	15.0
Higher sec	05	6.25	02	2.5	07	8.75
Senior Sec	03	3.75	07	8.75	10	12.50
Graduate	02	2.5	16	20.0	18	22.50
Post Graduate	0	-	06	7.5	06	7.50
Technical	0	-	03	3.75	03	3.75
<b>Type of Family</b>						
Nuclear	08	10.0	17	21.25	25	31.25
Joint	28	35.0	27	33.75	55	68.75

#### 4. Major Findings and Discussion

Transformation in the family has influenced the intergenerational relationships and lives of each generation including children, adult parents and grandparents. Mutual support to family members is very important in providing emotional support and care to elderly, (Shankar et al, 2003). Elderly with their vast experience and wisdom may play an important role in various family issues. However, with changing family structure and intergenerational relationship, involvement of elderly in different family issues is also changing. There are many factors responsible for elderly involvement in various family issues. Different factors considered in the present

study are educational level of elderly, income of elderly, support action of elderly in family and type of family set up to which the elderly member belong. Involvement of elderly members in decision making in family matters is studied by cross tabulation of these factors with four parameters viz consulting elderly for property sale or purchase in the family, consulting them for their grandchildren career and grandchildren education and consulting elderly to participate in family rituals of relatives. Table 3 to Table 6 present result for factors influencing the decision making power of elderly in the family.

#### ***4.1 Educational Level of Elderly and their Involvement in Family Issues***

As agents of socialization, grandparents are important and contribute towards cognitive, moral and socio-affective development of their grandchildren which creates close relationship between generations. In Indian culture, it is generally found that advice; education, affectionate relationships and care are taught by grandparents. Education provides a developing role for older people as mentors to transmit knowledge and help improve achievement and self-esteem of the younger generation. In present study, educational level of elderly is found to influence their role in decisions making in family like property issues, career and education of grandchildren, and participation in family rituals (Table 3).

**Table 3: Educational Level of Elderly and their involvement in Decision Making**

Educational Level	Property Issues		Career of Grandchildren		Education of Grandchildren		Participation in family Rituals	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Illiterate	9(11.2)	2(2.5)	1(1.25)	10(12.5)	1(1.25)	10(12.5)	9(11.2)	2(2.5)
Literate	7(8.8)	6(7.5)	3(3.8)	10(12.5)	4(5.0)	9(11.2)	7(8.8)	6(7.5)
Primary	7(8.8)	5(6.2)	3(3.8)	9(11.2)	3(3.8)	9(11.2)	8(10.0)	4(5.0)
High Sec	6(7.5)	1(1.25)	5(6.2)	2(2.5)	5(6.2)	2(2.5)	6(7.5)	1(1.2)
Sr.Sec	8(10.0)	2(2.5)	3(3.8)	7(8.8)	2(2.5)	8(10.0)	7(8.8)	3(3.8)
Graduate	15(18.8)	3(3.8)	10(12.5)	8(10.0)	9(11.2)	9(11.2)	13(16.2)	5(6.2)
Post Graduate	6(7.5)	0(0)	4(5.0)	2(2.5)	5(6.2)	1(1.2)	6(7.5)	0(0)
Technical	3(3.8)	0(0)	3(3.8)	0(0)	2(2.5)	1(1.2)	3(3.8)	0(0)

A sizable percentage of elderly with educational level up to graduation and above have higher role in decision making process (Table 3). Good education among elderly in urban areas, have direct association with intergenerational relationships (Thang and Mehta, 2012) and good quality of life (Mudey et al, 2011). Sonar et.al (2007), in their study at Gulbarga district of Karnataka, found that a significant proportion of elderly have good intergenerational relationship with their children and grandchildren. They found that elderly, who are educated and have some source of income, are found to have good relations with younger generation.

#### ***4.2 Financial Status of Elderly & their Involvement in Family***

Economic independent status of elderly might reduce the financial burden on the family with respect to their care. There are number of aged people who are economically independent and support a number of dependents. Contributory role of elderly in financial terms also infuses their importance to family as their contribution enhances their chance of participation in household decision matters.

In present study, income range of the elderly is found to have a significant influence



on their involvement in decision making (i.e. property issues,  $\chi^2 = 23.85$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; grandchildren career  $\chi^2 = 12.47$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ; grandchildren education  $\chi^2 = 22.83$ ;  $p < 0.001$  and participation in family rituals  $\chi^2 = 19.71$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) at home. The elderly without any financial resources are not being involved with any decision making in family issues (Table 4).

**Table 4: Economic Status of Elderly and their involvement in Decision Making**

Income Range (Per Month)	Property Issues		Career of Grandchildren		Education of Grandchildren		Participation in family Rituals	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
< Rs. 10000	16(20.0)	5(6.2)	5 (6.2)	16(20.0)	5(6.2)	16(20.0)	17(21.2)	4 (5.0)
Rs.10001-20000	17 (21.2)	3(3.8)	11(13.8)	9(11.2)	11(13.8)	9(11.2)	16(20.0)	4(5.0)
Rs.20001-30000	11(13.8)	4(5.0)	5(6.2)	10(12.5)	2(2.5)	13(16.2)	11(13.8)	4(5.0)
Rs.30001-40000	5(6.2)	0(0)	4(5.0)	1(1.2)	5(6.2)	0(0)	5(6.2)	0(0)
Rs.40001-50000	7(8.8)	1(1.2)	5(6.2)	3(3.8)	5(6.2)	3(3.8)	6(7.5)	2(2.5)
> Rs 50001	5(6.2)	0(0)	2(2.5)	3(3.8)	3(3.8)	2(2.5)	4(5.0)	1(1.2)
Nil	0(0)	6(7.5)	0(0)	6(0)	0(0)	6(7.5)	0(0)	6(7.5)
$\chi^2_{(6DF)}$	23.85 ***		12.47 *		22.83 ***		19.71 **	

Significance Level \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

The study has revealed that the elderly with adequate financial resources get respect by younger generation and they are actively involved with decision making process at home. The financial independence is found to be associated with good quality of life in old age (Kumar and Majumdar, 2014). In some instances where elderly do not have any financial provisions, younger generations neglect them and fail to provide them care (Yadav, 2004).

#### ***4.3 Support Actions of Elderly & their Role in Family Issues***

In Indian context, retired men and women have different roles to play. Old age is considered to be the time to give other the richness of life and share their worldly wisdom with their children and grandchildren. Developing connections with a younger generation helps older adults to feel a greater sense of fulfillment and it

becomes advantageous for both the generations. It helps elderly transfer whatever they have achieved emotionally and socially in their entire life. This way their children gets multiple perspectives on reality which makes them socially adjusted in better way. During younger days of grandchild, grandparents' main roles are helping with his or her care, developing play behaviors, and encouraging them emotionally, thus contributing to their overall development. In present study, the support extended by elderly to family members is found to have a significant influence on all types of decision making (i.e. property issues,  $\chi^2 = 27.49$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; grandchildren career  $\chi^2 = 16.34$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ; grandchildren education  $\chi^2 = 16.68$ ,  $p < 0.01$  and participation in family rituals  $\chi^2 = 17.51$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) at home. The support extended by them at home includes providing money, goods, gifts, all the three (i.e. goods, gift & education) or both (i.e. goods & money) or all these including assistance in household chores to children or grandchildren (Table 5).

**Table 5: Support extended by Elderly & their Involvement in Decision Making**

Support Extended by Elderly	Property Issues		Career of Grandchildren		Education of Grandchildren		Participation in family Rituals	
	Yes N (%)	No N (%)	Yes N (%)	No N (%)	Yes N (%)	No N (%)	Yes N (%)	No N (%)
1. Money	5(6.2)	0(0)	2(2.5)	3(3.8)	1(1.2)	4(5.0)	5(6.2)	0(0)
2. Goods	3(3.8)	0(0)	0(0)	3(3.8)	0(0)	3(3.8)	3(3.8)	0(0)
3. Gifts	6(7.5)	2(2.5)	3(3.8)	5(6.2)	3(3.8)	5(6.2)	6(7.5)	2(2.5)
4. Goods, Gift & Edn.	9(11.2)	1(1.2)	5(6.2)	5(6.2)	6(7.5)	4(5.0)	8(10.0)	2(2.5)
5. Goods & Money	2(2.5)	1(1.2)	1(1.2)	2(2.5)	1(1.2)	2(2.5)	2(2.5)	1(1.2)
6. All the above	27(33.8)	1(1.2)	18(22.5)	10(12.5)	17(21.2)	11(13.8)	25(31.2)	3(3.8)
7. Nil	9(11.2)	14(17.5)	3(3.8)	20(25.0)	3(3.8)	20(25.0)	10(12.5)	13(16.2)
$\chi^2$ (6 Df)	27.49***		16.34**		16.68**		17.51**	

Significance Level \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

The intergenerational relationships are found to be influenced by social resources (Becker and Steinbach, 2012) and financial assistance by the elderly (Kumar and Majumdar, 2014). Family relationship and social support helps to achieve good quality of life among elderly.

#### 4.4 Type of Family set up and Elderly role in Family Issues

Indian society is “collectivistic” which promotes interdependence and co-operation, taking family as focal point of this social structure. Indian joint families are considered to be strong, stable, close, resilient and enduring with focus on family integrity and family unity at expense of individuality, freedom of choice, privacy and personal space (Mulatti, 1995). In present study, type of family set up the elderly belonged, is found to have a significant influence on involvement of elderly in decision making at home (i.e. property issues,  $\chi^2 = 21.90, p < 0.001$ ; grandchildren career  $\chi^2 = 7.38, p < 0.05$ ; grandchildren education  $\chi^2 = 8.78, p < 0.05$  and participation in family rituals  $\chi^2 = 21.85, p < 0.001$ ). More number of elderly from nuclear family is not being involved in decision making in family issues than their joint families counterparts (Table 6).

**Table 6: Type of family and involvement of Elderly in Decision Making**

Type of family	Property Issues		Career of Grandchildren		Education of Grandchildren		Participation in family Rituals	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Nuclear	14(17.5)	11(13.2)	5(6.2)	20(25.0)	4(5.0)	21(26.2)	12(15.0)	13(16.3)
Joint	47(58.8)	8(10)	27(33.8)	28(35.0)	27(33.8)	28(35.0)	47(58.8)	8(10.0)
$\chi^2_{(2DF)}$	21.90***		7.38*		8.78*		21.85***	

Significance Level \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

It indicates that intergenerational interactions are significantly influenced due to type of family set up. One of the impacts of changing family structure is creation of more and more nuclear families. With limited income, a tendency to support a nuclear family is gaining momentum. This trend adversely influences the old practice of caring and sharing among grandparents and grandchildren (Manocha, 2003).

To sum up, we may say that financial status of elderly, support extended by the elderly and type of family set up significantly influence the involvement of the elderly in family issues as also reported in earlier studies (Yadav, 2004; Kumar and Majumdar, 2014; Datta, 2015). Educational level of elderly also influences their involvement in family matters but not to a significant level. Present study revealed that a good percentage of the elderly used to spend their time watching television, reading newspaper and religious books, interacting with grand-children, worshiping, chatting with friends and helping in various household works etc. Majority of the elderly reported that they were respected as seniors in the family. Most of the elderly participants reported that they are dependent on their family members for their physical, emotional and financial needs. Most of the elderly are found to be satisfied with the kind of support they receive from their family members. However, some of them conveyed their dissatisfaction with the support received.

### **5. Alternate Mechanism for Stronger Inter-generational Relations**

The younger family members respect their lineage, and youngest persons are linked emotionally with their older generations. Younger generations take the responsibility of well-being of elderly parents which may differ depending on family set up as proximity matters and varies in reciprocations. The relationship can be maintained even with variation of geographical locations. For instance, meeting for short while and corresponding via telephone or e-mail are some of the ways in which younger generations fulfill their responsibility. The ongoing theory development in the field of intergenerational relationships may help in understanding and encouraging harmonious intergenerational relationships. The intergenerational theory explores how two generations are linked. Its focus is on understanding of combination of two people at different phases of development interacting with each other, involving others, in various situations and contexts. The intergenerational theory, considered as an 'emergent theory' helps in investigating intergenerational relationships in a changing world (Vandervan, 2011).

There exists knowledge and cultural gap between generations. It is wide enough

between children and parents, and expected to be wider between grandchildren and grandparents. Efforts have been evident in recent years for children to establish a good cross-generation relationship through intergenerational programmes (Epstein and Boisvert, 2006). Elderly often have interest in interacting with young people and children which has a therapeutic influence for older people. Therefore, increasing the communication and interaction opportunities between elderly and young people may help in bridging the inter generation gap (Chua et al, 2013). Such initiatives could be promoted by shared leisure time activities that can facilitate positive changes in intergenerational perceptions and linking different generations with each other. Storytelling is one of the most effective tools for imparting values among children. However, obligations of living in nuclear families have deprived children of the benefits of interesting and value-based stories (Mohajer, 2005). The practice of storytelling is felt to be revived as it promotes new ideas among the children and make the elderly feel to have a more meaningful life. The 'Grandparents day', observed in many schools every year aims to improve interactions between generations. The gap in information and knowledge between elderly and grandchildren may be bridged with many similar interaction activities in order to bring the generation closer.

## **6. Conclusion**

In present study, the factors i.e. education, kind of support extended, type of family set up and economic status of the elderly influence their involvement in decisions making in the family issues. Senior citizens' may play many active and productive roles in family and society. In this study, a positive impact of joint family system on engagement of elderly is noticed. Being involved in decision making keeps the elderly in family occupied with a sense of belongingness and happiness. In view of increasing ageing population and inadequate social security programmes for them, there is need to reinforce the importance of different role and activities, performed by the elderly members. It is necessary to develop more strong family system which fulfills needs of family to elderly care, as well as need for older adults to pass on

cultural values and traditions. Institutional care cannot be regarded as an alternate resort, as it is an appropriate form of care for those requiring support. The admission of an elderly person into institutional care should in no way be taken as an act of disregard for the elder (Gupta & Pillai, 2012). Elderly living in institutions can also be considered for decision making in important events at home, if they are willing to do so. However, culture of a family staying together to take care of the elder should be encouraged. The Senior Citizen Draft Policy 2011 and National Education Policy may be expanded to include family and family supports.

Older generation is the backbone of our society and younger are the future hope. Therefore, it is very important to understand the values and needs of both the generations. This paper discusses the relevance of such interaction. Grandparents have immense experience to guide and enlighten and the forthcoming generations have enormous ability and potential to work in building a healthier and happier society. There is a positive linkage between joint family set up and elderly engagement in family issues in this study. However, it is necessary to have a better understanding of the dynamics of such complex aspects of human relations which has scope for future research in social-gerontology. Further understanding of intergenerational relationships may help in tackling a wide range of emerging socio-cultural issues and to build a responsive society.

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