Chapter 6
Interfaces between Family and Corporate Life
6.1. Interfaces: An Analysis

After describing the context of family in corporate setting in the previous chapter, one thing is very clear that in all the families (except the 20 families) both husband and wife go to work daily during weekdays and come to their house late in evening. They spend most of their day time in their respective workplaces which are, in the present case, MNCs involved in IT sector and placed in Gurgaon, a satellite town in NCR. In the office they have to follow office norms and have to limit their behaviours within the boundaries. Their precincts inside the companies make them feel the real sense of the way things are going inside the organization i.e. corporate culture. Majority of their time has been spent in the environment where they work, enjoy, experience the sharing and finally they live with it. After fulfilling the work requirements in office, in the evening they come back to the same familiar environment which they have been observing since their birth. They relax in their family setting, spend time with their loved ones and try to fulfill the responsibility as being a part of an institution named family.

Although work activities and household activities overlap for both the members of family, it is instructive to elaborate the interface between the two within the family settings. Such an analysis would help us see, with fresh eyes, what transpires daily between family values and corporate culture and between work routine and family comfort.

All the families of present study, I would say, are the professionals who represent the emerging elite segment of the society and have their own ideology. They belong to the broader category of middle class urban families. They have not been subjected to abject poverty but are involved in solving the riddle of gathering urban amenities. In my
opinion, they form the ‘cream of the crop middle class’ of the present Indian society which exists in the era of globalization.

The fundamental conditions of all the families are almost similar where they have to face role strain between different roles as being a son, a husband, a professional, a social person and most importantly as a dreamer and careerist. In an effort to meet the demands of modern living, these professional people who are now very calculative, are steadily withdrawing themselves from their collective social life, from their traditional kinship network and to a great extent from their ‘social desires’. Here, ‘social desires’ are referred to those wishes of a person which he thinks to fulfill in order to bring more repute to his family as being an active member of society. For example these desires include giving more money to charity or building some school in the memory of his forefathers, etc.

One of the respondents told me that his family gives funds to the ‘Ramlila’ of their locality every year and he wants to contribute it in order to follow his family traditions. But due to limited resources and work pressure of the company, he is presently unable to pursue his desire. While another informant wants to open a primary school in the memory of his late father but the same problem arises. He says that, he would have to work hard and focus on his career in order to follow his dream. Here, one can notice the notion of traditional family values which have been rooted deeply into their mindsets due to which they still seem to be associated with their family and its customs.

Role strain is something which puzzles a person in every type of setting; during work and during leisure. A person has to be on top of things with giving his best performances even in the worse conditions irrespective of his personal problems. My respondents told me that a single carelessness might create stumbling blocks in his smooth career and can ruin their future plans. So even though they are stressed due to any reason, they are supposed to achieve the given targets within the time limit. Apart from all these pressures at the work place, when a person comes home, again he finds himself in the centre of web of family expectations which he is supposed to accomplish. During my whole fieldwork, all the families I came across seemed to be, as if, going through some stress. Later at the end, after some formal talks they revealed their
problems. These were many but the most important thing that came out of whole discussion was related to the demands which generally come from the side of their parental families. Most of the time these are associated with their language, the hassles of attending functions of extended relatives or maintaining the traditional social ties of the families. In the real sense of words, they don’t have so much of time to contribute in all these activities and always try to make their parents understand their predicament. And at times, it stresses the string between the two but this is the issue which, as they say, cannot be ‘resolved’.

Here, one thing that needed attention is that on the one hand these people do not want to contribute their time to the above said demands of their parents and on the other they are not interested in solving this puzzle. It implies that these people are still adhered to their family traditions in some or the other sense. Though they seem to be fully coloured into the corporate culture of MNCs from outside, they do not want to leave the embodied traditional values at the cost of their profession. For example, one of the respondent explained the issue and said that in such situations where there are different expectations from all the sides, the best way to get out of the situation remains escaping from the situations because such type of situations are unavoidable in family set up. He further added and told that in such a situation he generally makes an excuse by saying that there is a lot of work pressure at office and he might be called to office even on Saturday and Sunday.

The conclusion, regarding the discussion, I draw after talking to all my respondents is that these people think that their parents do not understand their problems in the way they do because they never have been under such type of circumstances where they have to work hard throughout the week. The parents have spent their whole life working in organizations very different from today’s MNCs. But the situation in MNCs is very much different as they are profit making organizations. One can remain as a part of that organization unless and until, he or she produces at least twice of his/her salary for the company. Otherwise that employee would have been thrown out of the company without a second thought. In this ultra competitive world, finding a new job of same level is just like finding a needle in the pile of straw. These people also mention that though right now there is a boom in IT service sector especially in India but if once
anyone gets a stamp of being expelled from any company, his market value slides down. So in order to maintain their position and for going higher in the company hierarchy, they have to show their performances and outputs. So there is a drastic change in the two situations. And due to this makeover shift, their parents have not been accustomed yet with this type of corporate lifestyle. These people think that their parents are still stuck to the previous mindset and their acts are driven by those traditional values where they give more values to their customs and traditions. The parents always want that their children should also follow the same foot prints and when these people who are considered as professionals do not obey their parents, conflict arises. In fact, this type of disagreement produces role strain in the minds of these professionals. Their two types of statuses demand different roles which they, in present setting, have not been able to perform.

The study has revealed that role strain plays a major role in changing the orientation of a person who faces it. In this type of state of affairs, one thinks of possible solutions to come out of it and finally he thinks of his own family and gives preference to his career over his traditions. Gradually his orientation turns towards his future and he tries to involve completely into work to get higher on the ladder of success in order to earn more money for his family comfort. In this process, he unknowingly, partially withdraws himself from social and other gatherings related to his parental family.

Consequences of this type of move taken by the families working in corporate houses can be seen on a broader canvas. Their attitude of withdrawal from the family congregations, directly affects their family ties. This notion led them away from their extended family members along with secondary and tertiary kins. This also weakens their relations with those people to whom their parents have maintained the terms yet. Moreover, they hardly get time to interact with those cousins with whom they have grown up.\(^1\) One factor that controls their behaviour in this regard is the profession of the concerning person. I observed during my field work that these people generally take interest in maintaining the relations with those of their relatives or cousins who either

\(^1\) All the respondents of the present study have been brought up in joint families. A Hindu Joint family consists of many generations living under one roof, all income goes to a common pool and all the property is held jointly.
already have established themselves in the IT sector or are presently involved in their studies and planning to enter in the same in near future. Accordingly they feel more comfortable in the company of people having same taste and are occupied in the same sector. And as a corollary, they wish to spend their time with their friends rather than attending family gatherings or going to the relatives for get together.

There are many other factors apart from the above conferred role strain. Another important dimension of interface between family and corporate culture which came out during my research is the setting of family. As I have mentioned earlier that in all my respondent’s families, except one, both husband and wife work. They enter into their flat almost at the same time in the late evening. Though, only husband and wife constitute these families, there is no one who stays home when both of them are out for work. So when they come after the exhaustive work of whole day, the home which is traditionally considered as a place for relaxation does not give them the type of comfort they want. They have to do all the household work themselves. Most of the families hire maid workers but majority of the time these maids show irregularity. Hence, all the work including preparation of meals, cleaning of house, getting vegetables, domestic grocery and other stuff of daily use, and additional kitchen work come on their shoulders. Here tendency of male dominance surfaces out and all those works are supposed to be done by the women of house.\(^2\) Since she also comes with full of weariness and is generally unwilling to do all those works, sometimes situation goes out of control. But most of the times, their mutual understanding handles the state of affairs and they order their dinner from outside or go out for dinner themselves. Occasionally, situation becomes worse when any one of the husband or wife is been yelled at office by their seniors or becomes unsatisfied with their perks or turns out to be short tempered due to any other reason. Then, in this condition when they come home and expect to relax or spend some time in peace, situation does not allow them to do so due to lack of human resource at home. It stimulates the burning fire and rises up the

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\(^2\) All these families follow the patriarchal pattern which is a form of family organization in which the father plays a dominant while woman of the household performs all the domestic works related to day to day life.
mercury. Consequently, they burst up with their aggravation on their partner because they, only two, constitute the family.

Here, I would like to mention a case of one of the respondent. He used to call his mother to his house and make her stay for around fifteen days each time. He says that whenever his mother comes and stays with them, problems resolve ‘automatically’ and things come back to move smoothly on the track. Here, there is a need to decipher the meaning behind the word ‘automatically’. In my opinion, this term, in this regard, signifies the presence of other family members who act as an instrument of absorbing such conflicts. In simple words, whenever his mother stays with them, she stays at the flat all the time. Her presence in the house regularizes all the household work even though they are done by maid. And when both husband and wife come from their work place, they find everything well placed and deliciously cooked dinner at table waiting for them. It, in real sense, provides them true feeling of leisure which they actually wish for from their family and home. Presence of his mother at home shuns the unwanted strain or tension. This type of support which is provided by an outside member to the nuclear family would be one of the very important dimensions of family to be explored.

One of the repercussions of this sort of milieu of work and family life can be seen in their views regarding having children. One of the major functions of family is said to reproduce and come up with new progeny. Though, these people crave for having children but they differ from their parents in respect of time of having them. They think that they are not established enough at a good place yet in real sense of matter.

It has already been discussed that both the members of family work in MNCs and their orientation is inclined towards their career. So at this point of time when they are trying hard to attain a better position both in company’s hierarchy and society, children may cause obstacle for them. In this perception, all the families which come under research showed almost the same ideology. They, in present circumstances, want to give priority to their line of business over children. Their point of view is that they do not want to compromise with the upbringing of their children. Currently they do not have so much of time to devote to their newborns, so they don’t want them now. One respondent told me that presently they are going through the phase of struggle in their career. They
neither own a house nor have enough savings for future. And it is quite possible to shift to another city or abroad if a better opportunity comes. So right now they are looking for better career options to avail rather than prospects of extending their family.

Hence, it is evident that this new tendency, regarding having children, is taking shape among the families of young professionals working in MNCs. Despite the fact that this pattern is gradually emerging, they never deny the concept of having offspring. The only restrain is of the time. All the way through the study, the pressure at work place, wish to go high in the hierarchy and dream of spending a lavish life with full of modern amenities seems to be the main reason behind the new pattern of ideology. All the families want to have children and to extend their progeny but after at least 7-8 years of their marriage when they hope they would be well established. By that time, they would be able to take care of their offspring properly along with providing him all the facilities. Moreover, they also raise one important point that, by that time both husband and wife would come to know each other in a better way, as at present they hardly devote quality time to their spouses. Most of the time, they remain busy with official work and arranging household commodities. So by the end of 5-6 years, their understanding would be at a healthier level and it would help them to socialize their children in a better manner.

From the above discussion, one should not draw any conclusion that these families are absolutely going away or neglecting the family as being a part of corporate work environment.

On the contrary, It is found that in their religious practices, these families still try to preserve their faiths and beliefs. Their endeavour regarding the religion seems to follow the foot prints of their parental family. They try to follow the same type of religious performances and practices with which they have been socialized from their childhood. Going to the temples on regular basis and compulsorily on festive occasions show their tendency towards religious conviction. This type of attitude demonstrates that having devotion in religion have nothing much to do with the profession. Now among the families of this category, religion is considered as belief which is kept apart from rationale.
It is found that all the families involved in the study believe in one or two particular Hindu God or Goddess which has already been a part of their family traditions for generations. This young generation as well is giving the impression to continue it in their best possible manner. They have set up a small temple at one corner of their house; they treat the things related to the temple as sacred and to an extent follow the taboos related to them as not to touch them with footwear, etc. During the course of my fieldwork, I found that they hardly decide the essential rituals, which ones are essential is decided by their parents. When one of the respondents moved to his new house, first time after marriage, all the rituals related to entering a new house (Grah Pravesh) were performed by a priest.

The discussion from different point of views, shows the pattern which these family members are following in order to maintain harmony in their family life and working life.

6.2. Interfaces: Dimensions and Components

On the basis of the above discussion along with the information from the respondents, the whole notion of interface has been divided into following subheadings for further analysis in order to provide a better understanding of their views.

- Household living
- Interpersonal relations
- Economics of Family
- Religious practices

6.2.1. Household Living

The house is a place where husband, wife, and their socially immature children spend most of their time of day-to-day life. In India, where extended and joint families are common phenomena, the house contains various other members of the family. But in case of present study, all families are nuclear and have no children at present. They call this grouping of husband and wife as ‘family’ or ‘parivar’ and the dwelling building where they stay as ‘house’ or sometimes just ‘flat’. In present case, few tangible features like rooms, one kitchen, lobby, bathroom and balcony in some cases, identify the house.
Each and every family under study possess all the electronic gadgets of day-to-day need like refrigerator, television, DVD player, microwave oven, washing machine, telephone, cell phones, personal computers and others. They compulsorily have at least one four wheeler and one two-wheeler is been added at times. They generally park them in the parking place of the society and pay a monthly rental for the same.

Those houses which have a balcony, maintain a small terrace garden. They usually plant small, decorative, and ornamental plants like money plant, Christmas tree, palm, etc. in flowerpots. One remarkable thing that I noticed in all the families was the plant of *tulsi*. It is considered as a holy plant but one of my respondents gave me a different explanation. He told me that this plant works as air freshener and due to its medicinal value; they use its leaves for different purposes. Then again, another respondent who is a doctor suggests gargling with boiling water of *tulsi* leaves to her patients for sore throat, and it is also regarded as a natural mouth freshener. Generally, husbands water the plants on weekends while in case of one respondent he does it daily after his worship in the morning. Here one can observe the value of traditional beliefs in the milieu of aesthetics. Though these terrace gardens are just maintained merely for decorative purposes, yet in this pattern of modern settings they sustain some of their traditions.

Among all of my sample families, both husband and wife are working except one. So, due to their accountability towards their respective organizations, they have to leave house latest by 9:30 in the morning, depending upon their office timings and time consumed in travelling. Hence, women of the family get up early and have to prepare breakfast for both herself and her husband. They do get ready early and try to prepare breakfast themselves, although some families have hired maids for the same purpose. When asked in this regard, their answer was that it is their duty to take care of their husband and cooking is a household job, which should always be performed by the woman of the house.

During all the weekdays, both the family members spend a routine life in which they are scheduled to leave house in the morning and generally come back late in the evening. One housewife is an exception who spends time at home. After completing all her household works, she prefers to read novels and watch tele-serials. In rest of the
cases, the return timing varies, but generally women return earlier than men if working in different organizations, otherwise both come together. A general trend that has been observed is that both husband and wife, in all cases, prefer to have dinner together. It becomes a rare event, when anyone of them does it alone. One respondent told me that he views the dinner table as a place where he reunites with his wife and then their usually extended dinner time provides them a good place to share talks of the day. Most of the times, both husband and wife have some pending official work with them, which they complete after dinner before going to sleep. But whenever they don’t have any office work lying with them, they prefer a night walk, which generally ends up on ice-cream stall or at a coffee shop. They normally go to sleep at around 12 in the night and again the same mechanized routine starts from the very next morning.

At the weekends, things seem to be very different and vary from family to family. Generally it is their leisure time which they spend leisurely unless they have some plans for outing. Weekends usually involve shopping, house settings, cleaning regime, visit to friends and relatives, movies, hair cutting, washing clothes and at times, parties. They call weekends as a time of reinventing when they gain their lost energy and repair their contacts with parents and fill the lacuna of their lives before the next weekday, full of workload, arrives and life comes on the same routine track.

6.2.2. Interpersonal Relations

Apart from biologically fixed common features, there are certain roles, which a family is expected to carry on in any part of the world. The husband and wife who are father and mother of their children, while the later being siblings to each other, perform all these important roles. The factors, which play a role in interpersonal relations, are based on the ideas, the age of the person involved, the family size and a number of other factors. Such relations are not of the same type and degree in different communities because of various historical factors. In the families of my study, the relations are considered mainly at the level of nuclear family: between husband and wife, between their parental families and to some extent beyond this level.\(^3\)

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\(^3\) In all the sample families, they do not have any child at this point of time.
6.2.2.1. Husband-Wife Relations

Husband and wife are the main actors on whose harmonious relationship, the stability of the family primarily depends. They have to therefore consider this reality and play a key role in all facets concerning the permanence of the family. In the families of my study, husbands do not play any dominant role in domestic activities for the simple reason of his being the husband just opposite to the traditional patriarchal families. Here, they do provide the required support and maintenance to his wife and parents but their support is that of a facilitator’s nature. They always discuss almost all types of matters with their wives and then take any decision irrespective of whom it is concerned with.

On the part of wives, I found them all without a single exception, not only obedient to their husband but they share their joys as well as sorrows, comforts and discomforts all through the life. And at times when they are not agreed with what their husband is doing, they do come up with their views. Many a times, husband remains answerless on their logic and gives proper regard to their opinion. As one of the respondents says that he always consults his wife before taking any decision and gives logic behind it that women can think well and luck do favour them most of the times. It was seen that though husband takes all-important decisions in consultation with his wife, he does not interfere with the matter of buying domestic things where wife enjoys her full autonomy.

In short, I can say that combined participation of wife and husband together is a common scene in the entire household and beyond activities ranging from investment of money, purchasing for the house, and visit to the relatives, financial help to their kins, shifting to another organization and even buying of vegetables too.

6.2.2.2. Relations with Parental Family

Procreation as a basic attribute of family ensures its survival and continuity from one generation to another. Therefore children occupy a place of pride in the family and indeed cement bond between father and mother. Their behaviour towards parents is always of respect and obedience and likewise, parents also reciprocate the love, warmth
and affection to their children regardless of sex. But when children become young and get married, their relation with their parents does not remain the same, as now there is addition of one more person in their family. They form a new family of procreation and sometimes start staying away from the groom’s paternal house. In present case, all the families stay away from the husband’s paternal house but still they consider themselves as a part of that family. Whenever they visit the husband’s parents house, wife cooks food herself and she is treated in the same way as a member of family.

One of the respondents revealed that he visits his hometown in Ramnagar every second weekend as his mother lives there alone. His wife also likes to visit her mother-in-law and in his words “enjoys her motherly care with traditional local tips for almost everything”. She cooks food there herself and does not let her(mother) work, while the respondent gets all the household stuff for 15 days and does all works of market as his father is no more alive. He told me that he gives some amount of money to her mother monthly with the consent of his wife, and most of the times he brings his mother along with him to Gurgaon.

All the families told me that they give much attention to their families and try to visit home whenever they get sufficient time. Moreover, on asking about giving the financial help to their parents, all showed their serious concern and said that they don’t have any problem in it. I found respondents who bear all educational expenses of their younger sister and brother.

### 6.2.2.3. Relations beyond Nuclear Family Level

These types of relations include the terms, which are maintained with the extended kith and kins. In the present case, all the families are residing out of their native places and thus, there are very few relatives who stay in NCR. Among all the families, exists close relationship between brother and sister but it is in between only real ones.

One of the respondents’ niece visits him frequently who studies in JNU and now she has become a good friend of his wife. Both of them share the same interest and often go for outings when he remains busy in office. Though she is his (respondent’s) niece, he considers her like her sister, as there is a small age gap between them and now she gives
an interesting company to his wife too. Here, one can observe that how proximity develops between the people of same age group. They tend to spend more time with the ones who are of their age group apart from their friends because they share almost similar approach towards life aligning with the modern thoughts.

On the other hand, another respondent family prefers to go for parties with friends, most of the time with their office colleagues or like to check out the shopping malls for looking the latest stuff both in accessories and electronic gadgets. On asking regarding their other relatives who are residing in NCR, the same answer came from both the sides i.e. it is the responsibility of their parents to maintain those relations and they would join them if it is mandatory or if there is any kind of function or marriage taking place.

It has been experienced in almost all the cases that these types of two member nuclear families maintain not so close relations with their extended relatives unless they are of same age group. Moreover, the relation with cousins also depends upon the fact that what kind of relationship they were having before marriage.

### 6.2.3. Economics of Family

Family performs many functions, one of which is very clearly economic; it is considered as one of the fundamental dimensions of family. Traditionally women are housekeepers and men provide the home and the money to run it. Before independence, in agrarian societies, family was the unit of production where whole family used to involve in agriculture, which was the main source of income. After onset of industrialization and then globalization, family faced a lot of changes with respect to economic concerns. Now, some of the most distinguishing characteristics of the present families are deeply rooted in economic concerns like economic roles and redistribution of responsibility of household tasks between spouses. Family has become a unit of consumption as most of the people are involved in service sector rather than working in the fields.

In the families involved in the present study, both husband and wife are earning except one where wife is non working. As both husband and wife work in the same sector and at the same level, their income is almost equal. So, here the question of wife’s economic
dependence on her husband nullifies itself. I found great variation among all the families regarding the economic activity but the common thing was their mutual understanding. Whatever they used to decide, it was with their mutual consent.

In the case of the family where woman is a housewife and only husband earns, he revealed to me the fact that he gives half of this salary in the hand of his wife on the same day he gets it. Now it is wife’s responsibility to spend money wisely for the whole month that includes all household expenses along with all the bills and rent. Since he bears all the education fees of his younger sister too, he has to send some money home but now he does it through internet and directly transfers money to his sister’s account. Rest of the money he keeps with himself for his day-to-day expenses. One thing that the same respondent told me in the absence of his wife was that he has arranged life insurance for his wife and himself and that was without her knowing it. So he also pays the instalments to the insurance company.

One family which is well settled now and their earnings collectively touch to six number figures is planning to buy a new flat. As husband is a technology freak man, he buys at least one new gadget almost every month and always keeps an up-to-date mobile phone. Generally his wife saves all her money while his salary is being used for the entire household and other rent related expenditures. Whenever he buys anything costly like new car or home theatre then he takes out some money from his wife’s savings. They told me that they are saving money to buy their own flat and after that they would think of having any children.

One family, where wife is a doctor, shares a different ideology regarding the economic understanding. Just after their marriage one year ago, they decided by their mutual understanding that all the household related expenses including all rents would be borne by wife and husband would handle rest of them like outings, visits to parents and other expensive items. Nearly the same type of mutual economic cooperation trend came out after talking to another family. The only point of difference is that the husband has maintained a separate fund for his library in which his wife also contributes monthly from her salary.
The story with the fourth family is different. Husband’s mother stays alone in Ramnagar and he along with his wife visits her on every second weekend without a fail. As his father is no more now, so whenever he goes there he purchases all the groceries as well as pays all the bills and takes care of the facilities. His wife gives her full support through getting domestic things. Her main concern remains the kitchen and health related things of her mother-in-law. She takes her to the doctor and bears all the expenses herself. Otherwise for their monthly budget in the Gurgaon’s flat, she takes the responsibility for all the disbursements.

In case of fifth respondent family, they have made a common pool for the everyday outlays. In this pool, both of them contribute according to their capacities but there is not any fixed amount to put in. As they are still in the process of setting their flat and are into buying the household things, they go for it together and choose things on the spot. Husband told me that paying for those things had never been an issue between them. As wife is still in her struggling phase, most of the time he pays unless she forces to pay by herself.

Though pattern of economic behaviour is different in different families but one thing seems to be very clear here i.e. the dominance of husband over the economic issues is going down. Now husband does not enjoy monopoly on economic matter rather he takes most of the decisions with the consent of his wife. This kind of attitude might be due to the reason that now both husband and wife have become independent in monetary terms. This can be a point of departure for changing patterns of economic behaviours in family that might have come with the onset of MNCs in India.

6.2.4. Religious Practices

In India, there are religious, regional, cultural, social, and educational variations in structural and functional patterns of family life. People not only identify themselves with a particular religion but also affiliate themselves with a specific geographical region or state too. Religion specifies the form of worship and guides their day-to-day behaviour. Majority of Hindu families believe in a multitude of Gods and Goddess that are an integral aspect of Hindu mythology. It is said that the ideal Hindu lifestyle is influenced by the teachings in the Upanishads, Vedas, Bhagavadgita, Ramayana, and
Mahabharata. These scriptures stress the importance of work, knowledge, sacrifice, and service to others and finally, the renunciation of worldly goods in later life.

According to the Hindu ideology, a person’s life consists of four stages that correspond with the human life-cycle stages. The first stage is the Brahmacharya ashram (apprenticeship)—this is the period of discipline and education. The second stage is the Grihastha ashram (household and family), devoted to marriage, parenthood, household and establishment of a family. Stage three is the Vanaprastha ashram (gradual retreat) and is characterized by a gradual retreat and loosening of social, emotional, and material bonds. Finally, the goal of the fourth and final stage, the Sanyasa ashram (renouncement), is to seek solitude, indulge in meditation, prepare for death, and strive for salvation and wisdom.

Most households have a place for prayer or room that is considered the most sacred place in the house. Traditionally they pray, fast, and worship their deity at least once a day, especially on holy days and days of festivities. Moreover, as part of the religious activities, people take regular morning baths, recite and chant certain mantras, light incense, prepare specific food items, offer flowers to the deities, and worship ancestors. These things are the general patterns which are supposed to be followed by most of the north Indian families. Here, I am giving empirical account of the present families regarding their religious behaviours and practices.

I have already mentioned that all the families have planted *tulsi* in their houses for the same or the other reason. Moreover, I found a place in every household where they have placed idols and photographs of different Hindu Gods and Goddesses. One strange thing that I noticed in one of the respondents’ flat was the photograph of Jesus Christ, one of Guru Gobind Saheb along with Sai Baba. This created curiosity in my mind and then I asked about the reasons behind it. Then, he revealed that though he is a follower of Hinduism but he does not defy other religions and at times he goes to Church and Gurudwaras too, while his wife keeps faith in Sai Baba since her childhood. She and her family visits to Shirdi, a place which is famous for Sai Baba. This type of tendency could be due to the respondent’s reading habit as I found epics and great books of many
religions in his personal library and he himself accepted that reading about different religions has been his main area of interest.

On the other hand, one can find pictures of Hindu Gods all round the flat of another family. Before entering into his flat, I noticed *Shubh Laabh* written at both the sides of their main entrance. There was a small temple in one corner of their lobby where he and his wife worship daily and light some incense and one ‘diya’. Husband’s perception regarding his religious behaviour is that during his socialization he is taught to devote some time from his daily routine to the prayer. He believes that it gives him mental relaxation and stability comes into his thoughts.

Both husband and wife of another respondent family consider them religious and go to nearby temple on every Sunday. Wife keeps fast during ‘NavRatri’ and other festive occasions. She takes advice from her mother-in-law and sometimes from her mother too and believes to carry forward the related customs. They also have set up a place in one of their rooms where they keep all ‘sacred’ things and these sacred things, according to them, are holy books, pictures and idols of Gods and Goddesses and some utensils that are not supposed to be used for any other domestic purpose.

Another family where wife is a doctor also has a small temple at one corner of their lobby and *tulsi* in their balcony. Wife told me that before going to clinic, she offers water to the *tulsi* and prays for few minutes before temple. She does it daily without fail and lit a diya on every Tuesday. She also tells that her husband is not so religious and does things casually. I observed that she wears some kind of locket in her neck. On asking her about it, she revealed that it is given by her mother at the time of her marriage for her happy married life and her mother gave a same kind of locket to her husband too but soon after marriage he refused to wear that. In this respect, husband told me that religion is all about beliefs; some matter and some do not and his notion falls in between.

Conversely, another respondent seems to be very religious and believes in all spiritual things. He supports his ideology and says that it might be due to his upbringing that

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4 A religious phrase that denotes holiness, happiness and prosperity.
took place in a hilly region where people keep a deep faith in those religious things. He also keeps faith in one of the local deity of his native place named ‘Garjiya Devi’. Whenever he and his wife go to Ramnagar, they visit that temple too for sure. According to the wife, that temple is in between the forests and so they have a picnic along side. He does pray in front of the temple which they have placed in their kitchen.

The sixth respondent family, where spouses are recently married, are still in the process of setting their house. I found things were scattered in the whole flat. They have bought a small temple for their flat but have not decided its place. They went on a pilgrimage soon after their marriage to Vaishno Devi near Jammu. And with mutual consent they have decided to go there at least once in a year and have placed one of its holy pictures on the corner table on temporary basis.

6.3. **Basic Components of Family: Contemporary Perspective**

As already mentioned in the review of literature about the concept of family, Murdock (1949) has defined some of the basic dimensions of family including common residence, reproduction and economic dependency. World as well as society has come a long way since 1949. The world is changing rapidly in terms of economic liberalizations, transnational movements, nature of organizations and most importantly the outlook of people towards world and India is not an exception to it. More precisely, after shift of economic policies during 1990s, India has been witnessing a transformation in almost all walks of life ranging from economic, political, religious, and technological to sociocultural. Gradually these changes have been penetrating the society in general and families in particular through the changing working conditions. In this contemporary context of transformation, it becomes important to look into the various changes through which Indian family has been going through.

Here, an attempt has been made to assess or examine the classical notion of Indian family in corporate setting through information collected during exercising interview schedule and personal interviews. The information has been collected on the three basic parameters of family i.e. common residence, economic dependency and reproduction. Further, as per respondents’ view, important components of the family life have been tried to identify.
As it is very clear from the Table 5.6 and Fig. 5.7 that 35% of the total respondents’ families, husband and wife live separately. This indicates that a considerable amount of families are there where there is no common residence. However, they do meet at regular intervals but as far as the permanent residence is concerned, it is different for both husband and wife.

As far as the economic dependency is concerned, it is again evident from Fig. 5.8 that in 90% of the respondent families both husband and wife are working. This fact clearly indicates that economic dependency within the family does not exists anymore at least in the case where both husband and wife are working. However, management over spending and division of funds are very much present.

Further, Table 5.5 and Fig. 5.6 point out that only 38% of the total sample families have one or more children. Although it does not imply that family does not want to have children but, to some extent it exposes the fact of having children late in their life or delaying tendency for reproducing children. Moreover, this trend can be seen in relation to the growing careerist approach between husband and wife.

In addition to the above said facts, when respondents were asked to identify the important parameters which are associated to family as per their own understanding, the following results were found as per Fig. 6.1.

![Fig. 6.1: Responses on Basic Components of Family](image-url)
Fig. 6.1 clearly indicates that the 82% of the respondents consider ‘mutual understanding’ as the most important component of the family against the conventional components. 72% respondents consider ‘emotional security’ as a very important factor of family. 68% respondents do not consider ‘economic dependency’ as a basic component of family anymore. However, ‘socialization of children’ and ‘reproduction’ are still considered as fundamental constituents of family. As far as ‘common residence’ is concerned, 48% respondents consider it as an important component while 24% respondents consider it as less important.

Further, when asked about the factors which make a family life good and comfortable, the responses received are shown in Fig. 6.2.

![Components of Good Family Life](image)

**Fig. 6.2: Responses on Components of Good Family Life**

It is evident from Fig. 6.2 that for 88% respondents ‘career’ in extremely important factor for making family life good. Adding to it, 69% respondents consider ‘emotional bonding’ as very important factor for the same. ‘Modern amenities’ has also been regarded as very important component as 51% respondents showed it as very important choice. However, ‘leisure life’ received a mixed response as only 17% respondents found it very important against 43% who found it less important factor for making a good family life. ‘Spending more time with family’ also emerged as one of the most popular choices as 64% respondents believed it as important factor.
Finally, when asked about the making their choices on the basis of their understanding and preferences in life; the picture was something as shown in Fig. 6.2.

![Fig. 6.3: Responses on Choices in Life](chart)

From the Fig. 6.3, it is apparent that 63% respondents find family as an important choice while 88% gives preference to career as extremely important factor against the fact that 24% respondents consider office as less important. Social recognition is important for 64% respondents while 56% respondent chose peace as important component.

The above discussion along with data based on choices and understating of respondents gives an idea about the perception of Indian family in contemporary context. Apart from all other factors, one thing is clearly evident that conventional dimensions of family are losing their importance to some extent as people are moving towards more professional world. In the contemporary corporate setting, the new patterns of family life are emerging as choices of people are getting more focused on career, leisure life with modern amenities and earnings. However, emotional bonding and mutual understanding have appeared to be the most important constituents of family in contemporary context of corporate setting.