Chapter 1

Introduction
Diverge economic forces in the 1990s from socialist flexibility to capitalist transition make the family a space of interaction more important than ever. The information age may have challenged the notion of patriarchy within the family as Castells (1997) insists but related capitalists dynamics have made family, reformed or not, more economically essential for majority of the people. They need multiple income from multiple sources, with multiple fall back positions; the family provides synthesis to this.

Contemporary economic developments are not eroding the value of the family, rather in many places; the family seems to be of increasing economic significance (Wheelock and Maurissen, 1997).

A new point of departure has been observed in India after the economic reforms in 1990s. The changes faced by India, in this scenario, can be understood in the context of globalization.

In early 1990s, India liberalized its economy for foreign companies and entered into a new era of globalization. Soon, globalization spread through the means of multinational companies all over India who initiated their set ups in state of art architectures. Repercussion of all these measures came out in the form of emergence of service sector, the third revolutionary requirement of development. The aura of globalization took over almost all walks of Indian life and people. Concomitantly, the establishment of Multi-National Companies (MNCs) gave employment to large section of population. For example, courier sector alone provided employment to people three times higher than the hundred year old Indian Postal Department.

These MNCs not only created an ample amount of employment opportunities but also prepared a ground for other sectors to grow. As many private educational institutes of engineering, management and computer applications were opened. They started educating people especially middle class and also fulfilled the demand of skilled human
resources for multinationals. Easy and cheaper availability of human resources attracted top most companies of the world particularly of software market and process outsourcing of business, knowledge and law. The establishment of world-class companies brought corporate environment with working conditions, which gave rise to ‘corporate culture’ in India.

On the other hand, the kind of job security, provided by the educational institutes due to easy availability of employment in MNCs, attracted a major section of population. Most of these people belonged to small towns and of were from middle class background. Getting employment in multinationals was new for these people as they were habitual of working in PSUs, which were non profit companies. Moreover, the kind of culture they faced inside the companies was totally different from traditional culture. The employees felt this type of inconsistency between environment at workplace and at home. Almost all those countries that followed the path of globalization encountered this kind of problem and India was not an exception.

After marriage, these people come up with their own family of procreation. In this family, initially there are only two members, husband and wife, working in MNCs as IT professionals. Though it fulfills one dimension of Murdock’s (1949) definition of family but others like economic dependency and reproduction (in the initial phases) are invisible. However, many of the times, their engagement in the corporate world and their careerist attitude also lead them to stay apart in different geographical locations. This again defies the stake of common residence.

In this backdrop, there has been an attempt to discuss the interaction of Indian family in corporate setting.

It is clear that in the opening decade of twenty first century, the world has entered into a period of profound transformation (Skolnick & Skolnick, 2001). Forces of globalization and advance mode of communication are diluting the boundaries of societies. This new divergence of the world is also permeating into the daily life of the people and academics as well. Theories are struggling to maintain their identity into this new changing world.

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Corporate culture has been defined as a unifying theme of any organization or company where competition, lack of time and shared values take the lead with full of professionalism (based on my M.Phil. work, 2008).
Anthropology is witnessing new challenges in terms of theory, concepts and practice. As Carsten (2004), in the light of technological interventions into clinical and genetic aspects of families, tries to differentiate between “natural” and “cultural” nuances of kinship, a central theme of anthropological analysis, tries to place what is new in the field of kinship in the context of what is more familiar. And Bryceson and Vuorela (2002) talk about new emerging form of family i.e. “transnational family” that lives some or most of the time separated from each other, even across national borders.

Newly emerging social demography, work conditions, virtual networking and availability of information are changing the urban context at a fast rate. India, in 21st century, is experiencing a multidimensional condition in terms of its development and demography. On one hand India is struggling hard to maintain its economic growth rate to climb the ladder of development pathway at global level, while on the other various population domains of the country are showing various rates of growth and are at different levels of stages of development in evolutionist’s terminology (In order to have a better understanding of the changes witnessed by India since 1990 has been tried to show through a diagrammatical representation as Fig. 1.1).

Currently, around 150 million people in India belong to the middle class which is expected to grow by 65% in next 3-4 years.² The growth of middle class households and trends of rural-urban migration clearly indicate the demographic growth of cities. Moreover, a number of class B towns are emerging as growth centers and becoming a pull factor for both Multi-National Companies and professional workforce. The reason for this inclination towards new work life and movement of human resource can be traced back to the decade of early 90s of last century when India opted for the policies of privatization and liberalization along with globalization. Within a span of one and a half decade, technological advances, organizational innovations and new ways of thinking have transformed the social context of the country. The impact of these changes in surroundings can be felt at the level of life, culture and family of people.

² According to National Council for Applied Economic Research’s (NCAER) Center report (2011), India by 2015-16would be a country of 53.3 million middle class households, translating into 267 million people falling in the category up 67 percent from the current levels. NCAER considers that a family with an annual income between Rs. 3.4 lakh to Rs. 17 lakh (at 2009-10 price levels) falls in the middle class category.
Perhaps today, in India, family is facing the same, or even more complex, challenges as American family faced during late 1970s, marked with the decrease of the solo-breadwinner family and increase of the dual-earner family (Barnett, 1999).

This functional change in roles of the members of a family not only challenged the classical notion of family put forth by Murdock (1949) but also put the study of family into the centre of anthropology again. The discussion has moved much forward from the 1960s-70s debate of nuclear vs. joint family. The social fabric of India is changing in the light of globalization which is diluting the technological boundaries along with the cultural boundaries; acculturation is becoming unending in true sense. Demographic changes along with the change in occupation and nature of work is redirecting the aim of a family and its effects are clearly visible on the structure as well as function of Indian family. Changing dimensions at work place influenced with the western corporate culture and new work ethics produced new challenges in front of family. To facilitate and maintain its integrity and existence, family is looking for new ways of adaptation in order to face these challenges both at social and professional level.

However, the phenomenon of changing in the nature of family is not new. Anthropologists and sociologists have continuously been talking about the transformation in family at different point of time and in different social situations. In fact, family became focus of study after the industrial revolution in the western societies during late nineteenth century. It was the time when family was in the process of becoming a unit of consumption rather than a unit of production, as it was before. In anthropology, family has always been viewed intertwined with the other institution like kinship and marriage. Both these institutions play a very important role in terms of defining the rules and behaviours regarding the relationships which ultimately influence the role of family members. Anthropologists are continuously arguing, different from sociologists, that family should be understood within the broader framework of kinship where descent and alliance are the central principles. They primarily engage themselves in studying the ethnological patterns of family. The study of patterns has always helped anthropologists to explore new dimensions of the same institution in different contexts.
1.1. An Overview of Thesis

The whole thesis has been divided majorly into seven chapters. Thesis starts with the declaration, followed by acknowledgements, list of contents, list of tables, figures and list of photographs. Further, at the end of all the seven chapters, a comprehensive list of bibliography has been given followed by appendix which is a copy of interview schedule used for data collection and finally in the last photographs showing the MNCs and household of the family has been kept.

First chapter is introduction which introduces the topic. Background of the research along with the emerging work environment in India has been discussed in the chapter. This chapter also brings to the light the relevance of the study in contemporary anthropological context.

Second chapter is Review of Literature. This chapter deals with the existing literature available related to the research. Family as a concept along with a brief history on
family studies in India has been discussed. Further it defines the concept of corporate culture and its definitions. In order to have a better understanding of the topic various studies related with work-life balance have also been discussed. Since there is a deficiency of literature on the families working in corporate houses in India, a case study of the American society has also been put forth. Changing dimensions of family in work environment has also been described taking eldercare as one of the factor for it.

Third chapter is Methodology. It is one of the important chapters of the thesis. The basic framework of the research has been conceptualized in this chapter along with the concept of family. Corporate setting which is the basic context of the research has also been discussed here. In addition to it, this chapter deals with the various research tools, techniques, methods and methodology of anthropology used in preparing the thesis. Further, selection of topic, selection of organization, respondent families has also been talked about. Finally, objectives of the research have been described.

Fourth chapter is Physical Setting. Here, profile of Gurgaon which is the area of fieldwork, has been outlined in order to know the locality of the fieldwork. Demographic indicators, physiological characters and emergence of modern Gurgaon has also been discussed in brief.

Fifth chapter of the thesis is Family in corporate setting. This chapter is based on the data collected through fieldwork. Firstly, corporate setting has been conceptualized and its various components along with work culture of the MNCs under study have been discussed in detail. Perspective of the employees of MNCs regarding the culture of organization has been mentioned. This chapter also highlights the analysis of quantitative data dealing with various constituents of family. The quantitative data have been substantiated with the help of qualitative data. Qualitative data has been discussed in the form of six case studies and an attempt has been made to illustrate an ethnographic picture of family life.

Sixth chapter is Interfaces between Family and Corporate Life. This chapter is mainly analysis of the whole thesis where various dimensions and components of family life in corporate setting has been discussed in detail. Later, the whole discussion has been
divided into four factors identified during the course of fieldwork. Interpersonal relation of family has been highlighted to give an insight into the family life. In the end, basic components of family have been examined in the contemporary context and dynamism in the concept of family has been put forth.

Seventh chapter is Summary and Conclusion. This chapter summarizes the whole thesis and findings of the research have been discussed in the perspective of existing family studies.