

Appendix III

THE JOINT FAMILY

In the main analysis, any discussion of the family was made with the qualification that statistical figures about the incidence of joint and nuclear families could not be used as they are to indicate two different types of families. The two types were in fact found in the data, and showed a distinct correlation to such social factors as caste and occupation. But an attempt was made to keep in mind that these two types are not necessarily exclusive of each other and that they may in fact represent two stages through which families (not necessarily all of them) pass. This caution is very important in view of the fact that a statistical statement can be misinterpreted to indicate a social change, or a lack of it. If there are more nuclear than joint families on a simple count, then it is presumed that the joint family is breaking up. The underlying assumption is that, traditionally, every Hindu family is a joint family. Such an assumption is encouraged by the derivation of social facts from a study of Hindu law, for in Hindu law the normal family is the joint family. The law provided for the partition of the joint property and thence of the family into its nuclear constituents, but the understanding was that each such unit would grow again to full strength as a new joint family, and the law would apply to it.

In actual fact, it is doubtful if in Hindu society, at any time there were only joint families. The raison d'être of the joint family is largely economic. It is where either land or a lucrative and potentially expanding trade is inherited that the family tends to hang together as long as it can. It breaks up only under the sheer pressure of too many people of too many generations. The joint family was of course the normative type, and even if it was not held together by economic necessity, it would be favoured. Married sons would go on living with the father, separating only after he died. But a normative type is more likely to be found among the higher status groups than the lower, as Raymond Smith has shown in his work on "The Negro Family in British Guiana". The lower castes in both town and village would be less likely to show as full a development of the joint family as higher castes. Castes following a traditional specialised craft may encourage the existence of joint families. But among labourers and untouchable castes, the tendencies to fission would not be inhibited. In the absence of data, it is not possible to state with certainty that nuclear families were more prevalent than joint families at certain social levels, but there must always have been a proportion of nuclear families in the traditional society.

There is another more powerful reason to suppose that a certain number of families were nuclear even in the distant past. Every family in all societies goes through a cycle of development. This has been amply demonstrated by Raymond

Smith for the British Guiana Negroes, and by the collection of essays edited by Jack Goody in "The Developmental Cycle of Domestic Groups". What appear to be distinct types of families at a given moment are actually the respective forms that each family takes at various stages of its career. This idea was put forward by F.G.Bailey in connection with the analysis of the Hindu joint family in a brief article, in which he provides a "framework for discussion". He would study the joint family at three levels. At the first level, the structural form of the family must be considered. At this level, a statistical count of the various forms of the family in a society can be taken. No family, however, is a static structure. It comes into being, grows and then splits up, leading to the formation of new families. The cycle, or pattern of development may be constant, as in a stable society. This Bailey calls "repetitive equilibrium". In a changing society, the repetitive cycle may give way to a different kind of cycle and consequently to a different structural form. This kind of transition would be social change.

Raymond Smith, in his research, found that, at the first of the levels(as defined by Bailey), there were two types of families, one with male heads of households, the other with female. Suspecting that these were not mutually exclusive types, and not able to collect data on the past forms of each family because of the uncertain memory of illiterate villagers, he resorted to the ingenious technique of arranging his strictly synchronic data on a time scale according to

the age of the heads of the households. This showed very clearly that young heads of households were men, and older heads were women. The former had a simple nuclear form, and developed later into an extended family where daughters stayed on with their children under the dominion of the mother till they could set up their own homes with their husbands.

Smith's method will be applied to part of the present data, with the reservation that Gujarati society in Baroda, as we have seen, is going through far greater changes than the villages in British Guiana were. The other reservation is that no general conclusions about the joint family can be drawn. It is hoped, however, to throw light on the joint family in three Gujarati castes in the sample, and, further, to try out a method of analysis that may be a useful corrective to purely statistical research in this field.

We have already seen that our joint families are of two types - according to whether they are joint in the student's own generation or in the father's generation. The latter may be further divided according to whether the joint property is intact or has been partitioned. The former type rarely shares in outside property.

Only the Gujarati Brahmins, Baniyas, and Patidars are considered here as the other Gujarati castes are too numerous and not well represented in the sample. Maharashtrians are also excluded, not because they do not have the joint family institution, but because the present analysis is of an experimental nature. Only the family is analysed, unrelated to

other social factors. Correlations with social concomitants, such as occupational changes, education and so on would make possible an assessment of how much of the cyclical process is actually social change. But this lies beyond the scope of the present analysis and the data will be regarded as giving a simple cycle of development.

In the following figures, fathers include also father's brothers where these are mentioned as guardians of the student. Mothers, and other relatives, if they are the guardians, are excluded. The first table combines data for the three castes in the sample, the Brahmins, the Banias and the Patidars.

Family by Age of Head of Household for all Castes

Age of Head	Nuclear		Joint (i)		Joint (ii)		Total
	Father	Brother	Father	Brother	Father	Brother	
35 and less	3	5	7	4	-	17	36
36 to 40	33	-	10	-	2	1	3
41 to 45	34	-	19	-	13	-	66
46 to 50	28	-	6	-	13	-	47
51 to 55	17	-	4	-	12	-	33
56 and above	12	-	2	-	16	-	30
Total	127	5	48	4	56	18	258

* Joint (i) is the family joint in the father's generation, while (ii) is joint in the student's generation.

Most of the heads of households of 35 years and less are brothers of the students. These brothers are most of them married, heading a household consisting of all the brothers. In some cases, the brothers are living with some other relatives in a joint family arrangement, while some are not married and head a nuclear family. It may be assumed that a brother is regarded as head of the household only when the father is dead. Of the fathers who belong to this age group, very few head a nuclear family, more of them residing with their relatives.

In the next age group of 36 to 40 years, there is an almost total absence of brothers as heads. As nuclear families predominate in this group, it may be concluded that at this age a man is most likely to head his own nuclear family, though a fair number of these fathers live with their parents or brothers or both. Only two of these relatively young fathers have married sons and these are staying with them. Nuclear families also predominate in the 41 to 45 age group and in the 46 to 50 age group. They diminish appreciably in the 51 to 55 age group, and in the oldest category of 56 years and above, are replaced in importance by families where the father is living with his married sons.

Families joint in the father's generation are most common in the 41 to 45 age group and secondarily in the 36 to 40 age group. In the older groups, they show a steady decrease in numbers as the age of the head increases. At the same time, the number of heads of families who live with their married

sons shows a slight increase with the age of the head. From this we may deduce that a man with young sons of his own is quite likely to be living with his own parents and brothers. But where the sons are grown-up and married he is less likely to be living with any of his kin. The separation from his own family is finally made when his own sons marry and a new joint family comes into being. There are very few instances in the present material of a family where the married brothers of the head as well as his married sons live together, and most of these are to be found among the agricultural Patidars.

The picture of the family that emerges from the above figures is that of a young man, married and caring for his younger brothers if the father is dead, and occasionally living with his father's relatives. As he grows older, he separates to form a new family with his wife and children. These children grow up and marry and the sons go on living with him, constituting a joint family. Sometimes these sons separate after a few years, and sometimes they continue to live with the parents until their own children get married when they again separate. The likelihood is that they separate before the children are actually married.

The number of nuclear families is large : over one half of the total number. It is possible that some of these are not merely a stage in the development of the joint family but are self-perpetuating. They never develop into a joint family. On the other hand, as the number of joint families is not inconsiderable, it is likely that most families pass

through a stage of jointness though this may be only atrophied and never developing to the full form of the joint family.

Simple statistics show a variation in the incidence of the two types of families in the different castes. Thus Patidars have the most joint families and Baniyas the least. The cycle of development is also likely to vary. We first consider the Brahmins.

Age of Head	Nuclear		Joint (i)		Joint (ii)		Total
	Father	Brother	Father	Brother	Father	Brother	
35 and less	-	2	2	1	-	1	6
36 to 40	6	-	1	-	1	-	8
41 to 45	9	-	6	-	3	-	18
46 to 50	12	-	1	-	1	-	14
51 to 55	5	-	-	-	6	-	11
56 and above	5	-	1	-	6	-	12
Total	37	2	11	1	17	1	69

Well over a half of the Brahmin families are nuclear. Some of these may be perpetual nuclear families. The developmental pattern, as shown in the figures for joint families are similar to the general pattern. The tendency to live with his relatives diminishes after the father reaches the age of 45. Even before his children are old enough to marry, he separates to form a nuclear family, and in the 46 to 50 age group, there are hardly any joint families at all, while the incidence of nuclear families is quite high. After the

age of 50 again, the head is living with his married sons, although some of these older families are nuclear, which would mean that married sons have separated.

The pattern for the Banias is rather different. There are more nuclear families than in the case of the Brahmins. The percentage of nuclear families among Brahmins is 56.5 whereas for the Bania it is 62.7

Age of Head	Nuclear		Joint (i)		Joint (ii)		Total
	Father	Brother	Father	Brother	Father	Brother	
35 and less	2	2	4	-	-	7	15
36 to 40	21	-	2	-	1	-	24
41 to 45	18	-	5	-	3	-	26
46 to 50	10	-	1	-	6	-	17
51 to 55	6	-	2	-	4	-	12
56 and above	5	-	-	-	3	-	8
Total	62	2	14	-	17	7	102

Not only are there more nuclear families among Banias but also they definitely occur more often among the younger age groups. Very of the younger fathers are living with their relatives. In accordance with the general pattern these numbers living with relatives further diminish as the age of the head increases. Also, relatively fewer of the older families develop into a joint family where the grown sons are now married and still living with the family. In no

age group does the number of joint families exceed the number of nuclear families. This would point to a situation of social change, for the Banias are a high Hindu caste and their extensive trading activities in the past have been conducive to the maintaining of a joint family. In the same survey, it was found that the Bania students in the sample came from a rapidly changing sector of the caste and that they were giving up trade in favour of jobs - a process that required education of some sort or other. In the case of the Bania caste we seem to have a rather special situation and the above findings may apply only to a section of the Banias and not to all. But the change is a clear one.

The Patidars, traditionally a rural and an agricultural caste unlike the others, and the students of which caste are derived from rural agricultural families to a considerable extent, have a large number of joint families. Only 34.7 of Patidar families are nuclear. We may expect to find the joint family in a more crystallised form in this caste because of its continued agricultural moorings.

Age of head	Nuclear		Joint (i)		Joint (ii)		Total
	Father	Brother	Father	Brother	Father	Brother	
35 and less	1	2	1	3	-	9	16
36 to 40	6	-	7	-	-	-	13
41 to 45	7	-	8	-	7	-	22
46 to 50	6	-	4	-	6	-	16
51 to 55	6	-	2	-	2	-	10
56 and above	2	-	1	-	7	-	10
Total	28	2	23	3	22	9	87

There is little variation by age in the Patidar nuclear families, unlike the Banias. The variations in the joint families follow the pattern of the total sample. The younger the guardian the more likely it is that he is head of a household consisting of his brothers. After the age of 36, upto 45, he is found living with his relatives, and from 41 onwards, he may be living with married sons. As the age of the head increases, he lives less and less with his relatives and more and more his family expands to include married sons except for an inexplicable drop in the age group of 51 to 55 years.

Among Banias and Patidars, there is a fair number of families where the brother is head, unlike the Brahmins where this type of family is relatively absent.

We will now go on to consider the individual forms of the joint family. The family that is joint in the student's generation has a consistent structure of the father and his married sons living together. The only variant of this arises when the father is dead and one of the brothers becomes the head. Families joint in the father's generation however show a much greater variety in their composition. The number of these families is not large, but a study of their structure will give some idea of caste variations. Because the data is fairly consistent for each caste it may be taken tentatively as the general pattern for each caste.

Of the 30 Brahmin joint families, 12 are joint in the father's generation. Six of these have one or other or both

the paternal grandparents only and two have an unmarried father's brother only. Of the remaining four, one has the head's father and his married sons and three have the father's married sons as well as his father or both parents. These four alone may be classed as real joint families. The inclusion of an aged grandparent or of an unmarried uncle is actually like giving shelter to a social dependent and not real jointness. These may be considered as incomplete or atrophied joint families.

The Banias have the greatest deviation from the traditional family pattern in terms of numbers. But they show a better development of the joint family than the Brahmins. Of the thirty-eight joint families, only fourteen are joint in the father's generation. But none of these are the atrophied type found among the Brahmins, consisting of social dependents. Nor is there the residual type that we find among Patidars where the partitioning of property is followed by a breakup into smaller units that may not be nuclear. We have data on the internal structure of eleven of these families. Three of these families ^{include} married father's brothers only. Three include grandparents only. Four have both. One family consists of both married uncles and married brothers. Of these eleven families, therefore, only the three with grandparents may be considered as incomplete. The others show a high degree of jointness. They are better developed than Brahmin families in terms of jointness.

The joint family shows the greatest development among

the Patidars both in terms of numbers and the structure of individual families. Property especially plays a very clear role. There are fifty-seven ~~families joint in the father's generation~~, joint families of which twenty-six are joint in the father's generation. Of the twenty-four families for which data is available, seventeen are bound together by common property and seven have divided the property but some of the original members of the joint family are still living together and may be called a residual joint family.

Where the property has not been divided, there is a marked tendency for the joint family to hold together. Thus in eleven of the seventeen families the father's married brothers are living together, and nine of these have in addition one or other or both the grandparents. Four of these three-generation families also contain the student's married brothers. These may be regarded as the joint family at the height of its development. No Brahmin family included both married uncles and married brothers, and the one Bania family that did so had no grandparent. The other six families where property is still joint are of the incomplete type. Four have only grandparents and two of these state specifically that the married uncles in the one and married brothers in the other are separated. One family includes an unmarried uncle and one includes grandparents and married brothers.

In the case of seven families the property has been divided and the father's married brothers have in all these

cases separated. But a residual joint family has persisted with the continued inclusion of one or both grandparents. One of these families includes married brothers. Another is headed by a married brother and one is headed by an unmarried brother. But they are all the end result of a partitioning of property.

The comparison of the family structure in the three castes shows that there are very clear variations in each. This does not mean that there are family types for each caste but rather that there is a range of variations for all the castes with a tendency for one caste to vary in a particular direction.

A final point to note is that although from the point of the view of the student families have been classified into two types, in actual fact at all ages the joint family consists of a head of the household and his married sons with their children and as the children grow the tendency is to separate. If the student is an older child, his father will still be living with his father and brothers. If he is a younger child, his own brothers are married and the separation from the father's family has already been made. Rarely does a joint family include two generations of married men.