

## **RESULTS**

The present chapter gives descriptive answers on a range of topics that form the theoretical basis of the present study. (Refer Figure 1 for the theoretical framework).

The results are arranged according to the study objectives to provide a logical sequencing of topics, essential for maintaining the scientific approach. Such an approach also helps to conduct a discussion as per the research questions and draw out conclusions.

### ***Outline of Present Chapter***

#### ***Section One: Background of Sample***

- A Profile of Five Villages.
- Distribution of Sample by Gender, Marital Status, Age and Residence.
- Family Characteristics of Women.
- Family Characteristics of Men.
- Personal Characteristics of Women.
- Personal Characteristics of Men.
- Health Information by Women.
- Health Information by Men.
- Residence of Children.

#### ***Section Two: Impact of International Migration of Children***

- International Migration of Children
- Reasons for Their Migration.
- Reciprocal Communication with Migrated Children.
- Reciprocal Social Support Network at Community Level.

### ***Section Three: Perceptions on Life Situations***

- Has Our Status Changed Due to Our Children's International Migration?
- How is Life for Elders Abroad?
- "To Migrate or not to Migrate".

### ***Section Four: Life Course Review and More***

- Ah! Those Memorable Events and Profound Experiences
- Some of our Feelings About:
  - Life Course Events
  - Present Life Situation
  - Completion of Children's Responsibilities
  - Children's International Migration
  - Loneliness
- Life Satisfactions and Concerns
- Few Expectations for the Future
- Our Concept of Old Age.

## ***Section One: Background of Sample***

### ***Outline of Section***

- A Profile of Five Villages.
- Distribution of Sample by Gender, Marital Status, Age and Residence.
- Family Characteristics of Women.
- Family Characteristics of Men.
- Personal Characteristics of Women.
- Personal Characteristics of Men.
- Health Information by Women.
- Health Information by Men.
- Residence of Children.

This chapter first describes the village community and then provides details on select characteristics of the sample to build a background about them in their surroundings.

### ***A Profile of Five Villages***

As per the first objective, a profile of all the five villages has been compiled. This gives an idea of how different these villages are from the others in India, mainly due to the impact of international migration. The rural setting almost has the urban ambiance.

These five villages are in Kheda and Anand districts of central Gujarat, India. They may be termed as developed and farsighted villages according to Indian standards,

as they have good telecom networks and trade with the outside world especially by the NRI population in all the villages. Table 4 gives an idea of the basics.

Table 4  
Some Facts About the Villages

Village	Area covered	Population size	% Non-resident Indians
Alindra	750 sq. meters*	3,753	40 %
Dharmaj	358,4000 sq. meters	10,788	40 %
Kāramsad	16,970,000 sq. meters	28,970	45 %
Mehlav	1,583,000 sq. meters	10,485	40 %
Sojitra	14,340,000 sq. meters	16,750	40 %

\*Note: Area figures are from old Panchayat records Update not available

All the five villages are steeped in history, with Dharmaj being the oldest village, dating back to 1,5000 years. Archeological finds, royal lineage, births of the famous religions leader called Shastri Maharaj in Mehlav and two prominent freedom fighters of India in Karamsad, as well as participation of the people in the Indian freedom struggle during the British Raj (people from Dharmaj have even gone to jail), give these villages a special mention in history.

Each village has seen years of human endeavour and perseverance for improving the lot of the people with Karamsad topping the list, vis-à-vis the pioneering contributions of Sardar Patel and Vithalbhai Patel in educational and developmental activities, and; free social welfare services such as medical treatment and funeral arrangements, till date.

Dharmaj and Alindra have a steady flow of monetary contributions from the NRIs for community development activities.

***Geographic Profile.*** Alindra and Dharmaj, along with Sojitra, represent fairly well paved lanes with closely packed houses that look like semi-concrete jungles in the midst of sylvan surroundings. Mehlay is more rustic with a good representation of huts and old ways of living. It also has a huge and colourful arched entrance gate, a typical feature of many Indian villages. Dharmaj on the other hand, has an approach road with a flowered road divider. On the outskirts of the villages, lie green fields abounding in crops of tobacco, rice, millet or other seasonal or cash crops. The fields are offset by kilometers of green avenues comprising the national highway.

The villages have opened their windows globally, through telecommunications e.g. Mehlay has innumerable telecom connections and Karamsad has a telephone exchange. Sojitra is the only village set directly by the National highway. All others are connected through approach roads. Trucks, tractors, fancy cars, cycles and buses are a common feature on these roads. Rail links too, connect the villages. A notable feature is that the children and adults of Karamsad built their own Railway station, single handedly in about 20 days! The village also boasts of a modern bus station with a waiting room and an office. Each village has one or the other characteristic such as a pond, huge elevated water tanks, and pumps or tube wells, clock towers, and open, loosely covered drains, running along the lanes. Old temples, heritage houses and monuments and temples vie for attention with modern water tanks, NRI bungalows and rows of commercial buildings.

***Social Structure.*** Sixty percent of the people (Patidars, Shahs and Baniyas) who own lands, agricultural fields and trades, live in self contained concrete houses and spacious bungalows surrounded by lush gardens in most cases. They may or may not live in joint families. Among these are the NRIs whose usual destinations are North America, United Kingdom, Africa and Middle – East, in that order. The less affluent usually migrate to Africa before seeking a permanent residence in North America, at the behest of the second generation.

Ten percent of the population belongs to the service class who own brick houses with utility places for doing household and farming chores. They live together in joint families. Last, 30 % with modest means from daily wages live in small hutments alongside their cattle. They are out earning their livelihood for most of the day or night into their twilight years. There are mahila mandals and religious groups, which provide opportunity for women to socialize.

***Trade and Commerce.*** The villages have a well established trade and commerce system, typified by the presence of Nationalized, Co-operative and Overseas banks, post offices, milk co-operatives and collection centers, plastics, readymade garments, cable wires and mechanical parts –industries. Fertilizers, pesticides and agricultural produce are sold in stores. Alindra boasts of additional facilities i.e. flour, rice and oil mills and a lemon storehouse.

***Social and Community Organizations.*** Community and marriage halls, as well as small cinema theatres dot the villages. Dharmaj has a huge amusement park run on nominal charges. Alindra has a youth group called Angels (run along the lines of the Chicago Angels) to do cleanliness drives. Sojitra has the Lions and the Leo clubs. In

addition, Sojitra has a shadow of the history of the British and the Gaekwad (both former rulers) on their culture. A notable feature here is the annual festival of 32 puppets (Batris Putli) performing every year by a troupe from Rajasthan.

***Educational Institutions.*** There are preschools, primary and secondary schools run by the government and non-government agencies both in English and Gujarati mediums. Most of the girls stop their education after high school because they have to commute to nearby Anand and Vidyanagar colleges.

***Health Facilities.*** Government run Public Health Centres or hospitals, and a few privately owned dispensaries are available. Chronic and terminal cases are referred to big cities of Gujarat namely, Ahmedabad, Vadodara and Anand.

***Religious Places.*** Every village abounds in Hindu, Jain and Swaminarayan temples. There are mosques too. People from all walks of life assemble for morning and evening prayers.

***Other Agencies***

- A Gram Panchayat is the administrative organization of each village run under a Vahivatdar or officer.
- Charitable trusts look after the educational, health and general economic needs of the poor, through selection or by identified facts.
- Typical are some of the integrated parts of the villages such as vegetable markets and vendors, police station, PCO and STD booths, hair salons, grocery and other household and feminine accessories (especially gold and silver ornaments), stores.
- Public libraries are housed usually in the school premises.
- The crematorium and cemetery are generally found outside the villages.

***Old Age Home.*** Dharmaj has an *Old Age Home* spread over 2-3 buildings. The main building has a quiet ambience with modern facilities and amenities. Elders can stay in suites, single rooms or dormitories with or without caretakers. The usual charges are Rs. 900 p.m.

***A Note on the Non-Resident Indians***

The NRIs constitute approximately 40 % of the village population. The affluent Patels and the Shahs or sometimes the Brahmins have one or more members living abroad.

Some of their characteristics are:

- They usually have luxurious bungalows or houses with self contained gates or boundary walls. There are colour gardens and ornate gates. Their lifestyle is partly westernized as they use all sorts of electronic and timesaving gadgets except for a washing machine. Their drawing room walls are adorned with photographs of family members living abroad and mementoes of visits abroad.
- Some of the villages hire luxury buses to ferry their children to colleges to nearby Anand and Vidyanagar towns.
- They keep in touch with people abroad.
- People seek them out for advice on migration, visa and investment issues.
- They demonstrate a more flexible and changed attitude.
- They own modern and sleek vehicles for family use.



- They contribute funds for charity and village development work. Notable projects are paved roads, closed drainages, corpus of educational funds and infrastructure for maintenance of temples and historical monuments and upgradation of the co-operative sector.

See photographs about NRIs after Table 5.

### ***Reasons for International Migration***

- Better financial prospects for young men with the goal of securing a better future in North America or the United Kingdom. The means employed are, going as blood relatives or marrying a citizen of the said country.
- Better prospects of marriage for young women and settling down in richer surroundings.
- Better prospects of government and social security funds for older men and women.
- Better standard of living for all family members, be it abroad or in India.

A gender wise comparison shows that there are differences in the lifestyle of older women and men as shown in Table 5.

Table 5

## A Day in the Life of the Elders

Timings	Women	Men
5.00 a.m. to 9.00 a.m.	Rise and do morning ablutions. Prayers at home or at the temple. Tea and household chores.	Rise and do morning ablutions. Prayers at the temple. Tea and reading newspaper.
9.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon	Take care of grand children. Chat with neighbours. Supervise hired help. Cook for family. Do household chores.	Chatting and gossiping with friends at village square or with neighbours. Go for jobs e.g. supervision on farms or other work.
12.00 noon to 1.00 p.m.	Lunch with family. Wash up and clean the kitchen.	Come back for lunch.
1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.	Rest and nap/sleep. Indulge in light chitchat with family and neighbours.	Rest and nap before going off to work. Sleep if not working.
4.00 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.	Tea	Tea
4.30 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.	Chat with neighbours. Prayer at temple. Take care of grand children. Watch television. Help prepare dinner.	Gossip at Village Square or at temple. Prayer at temple. Release with neighbours.
8.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m.	Dinner with family or by self if they continue to watch television. Wash up and clean the kitchen. Chat with family/neighbours.	Back for dinner with family. Chat with family/neighbours.
10.00 p.m. to 1.00 a.m.	Sleep	Continue chatting. Hold discussions on village activities. Sleep.

**Women.** Table 5 shows that they are busy with the household chores and childcare responsibilities for most of the day. Due to the advent of television, their



2



4



6



1



3



5

See Page 45 for Captions

### ***List of Photographs***

1. We have invested in the infrastructure of our village.
2. We can now reach out and touch our children abroad, when we feel like it !
3. My son (60 years old) has built this farm house for us. You are always welcome here.
4. Our culture is precious to us. Sigh! Modernization has started creeping in.
5. “I went to Africa when I was this high! My children did not come back here with us.”
6. “Did you know Ramanbhai and the others will set up a computer center for our children over there?”

dinnertime has slipped to 9 p.m., which in turn delays their bedtime. Some of the women prefer to cook for themselves and finish by 8 p.m. ready for some rest, gossip or bedtime. Temple visits are the daily outings, both in the mornings and evenings. This gives them respite from work and helps to bond with other women, providing support and the latest gossip or news from outside.

The time from 1- 4 p.m. is used as rest or siesta time and they will not forego it for anything. Morning and evening chats with neighbours and relatives also take up their time. They talk to their friends who may live away, at least once a week, many times using the telephone.

**Men.** The retired men spend most of their time outdoors, mostly indulging in gossip at the village square, market places and other regular hangouts. Temple visits score second best in their lives. The men share their experience and ponder on the issues thrown up by the media. They chit chat with people from all walks of life. The men come home for lunch and sleep for about four hours before going back to chatting from evening till dinnertime. They talk with their relatives and friends on a daily basis. This includes telephone contact. Many NRI men, along with the younger men, meet after 10 p.m. to hold constructive discussions on village development activities.

**Sample**

Table 6

Distribution of Sample by Gender, Marital Status, Age and Residence (N=20)

Gender		Women				Men				
Marital Status Age groups Age in years	Married		Widows		Total  n=11	Married		Widows		Total  n=9
	Y	O	Y	O		Y	O	Y	O	
	55-69+	70-84	55-69+	70-84		55-69	70-84	55-69	70-84	
Villages										
A	-	1	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	3
D	-	-	-	2	2	1	1	-	-	2
K	3	1	-	3	7	-	-	1	1	2
M	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
S	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	1
Total	3	3	-	5	11	4	1	1	3	9

Note a Y = Younger; O = Older, b A = Alindra, D = Dharmaj, K = Karamsad, M = Mehlay , S = Sojitra

Table 6 shows the distribution of sample of the present study. Some of the notable interpretations are as follows.

**Residence**

- More women (7) are from Karamsad village out of a total of 11.
- One-third men (3) out of 9 hail from village Alindra.
- The highest combined number (9) of men and women is from village Karamsad.
- The least combined number (1 women and 1 man = 2) is from village Sojitra.

### ***Age-wise comparison***

#### ***Women***

- Equal number (3 + 3) comprises the younger and the older married group, respectively.
- All the widows (5) are from the older group and none from the younger.
- There are more married women (6) as compared to the widows (5).

#### ***Men***

- There are 4 younger married men and just one older married man.
- There is just one younger widower and 3 older ones.
- There are more married men than widowers.

### ***Gender analysis***

There are more:

- Women (11) than men (9)
- Married women (6) than married men (5)
- Widows (5) than widowers (4)

### ***Family Characteristics***

The monthly income (Table 7) of 4 married women falls in the bracket of Rs. 1,000 – 5,000, 1 woman is in the Rs. 10,000+ range and Sarlaben could not say what the figure was. 2 younger and 3 older married women live with their spouses, and 1 younger woman lives with her husband and her girls (Leelaben)

Three widows have income in the bracket of Rs. 1,000 – 5,000 and 2 women in the Rs. 10,000+. The income of all (married and widowed) comes from the spouse's

savings or pensions from own work and from the children residing abroad, especially for the widows.

2 women live with sons and their wives, 1 woman (Kirtiben) with a 95 year old mother-in-law and 2 women live with sons, daughters-in-law and grand-children.

All the married women have a television, telephone and a fridge. Two older women (Sarlaben and Lataben), and Meenaben from the younger group owned radios. No one has a washing machine or a VCR. Leenaben and Lataben (YG) and Laxmiben (OG) do not have a telephone.

All the widows have a television, telephone and a fridge, and; one each has a radio (Jassiben) and a washing machine (Meenaben).



Table 7

Family Characteristics of Women (N=11)

Marital Status Categories	Married		Widows		Total
	Young n=3	Old n=3	Young n=0	Old n=5	
Total income in Rs./month					
Rs.1000 –5000	2	2	-	3	7
Rs. 5001-10,000	-	-	-	-	-
Rs 10,001+	-	1	-	2	3
Do not know	1	-	-	-	1
Household Composition					
Type One*	-	-	-	-	-
“ Two	2	3	-	-	5
“ Three	1	-	-	2	3
“ Four	-	-	-	1	1
“ Five	-	-	-	2	2
Household Appliances					
Radio	2	1	-	1	4
Television	3	3	-	5	11
Telephone	1	1	-	5	7
Fridge	3	3	-	5	11
Washing machine	-	-	-	1	1
VCR	-	-	-	-	-

Note \*Household Composition

One = Lives alone

Two = Lives with spouse

Three = Lives with younger generation

Four = Lives with older generation (one generation)

Five = Lives with 3-4 generation household

a Due to multiple responses in the section on household appliances, the total exceeds 11 responses

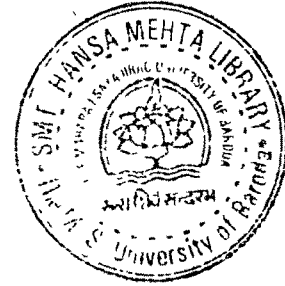


Table 8

Family Characteristics of Men (N= 9)

Marital Status Categories	Married		Widower		Total
	Young n=3	Old n=3	Young n=1	Old n=3	
Total income in Rs./month					
Rs.1000-5000	2	1	-	1	4
Rs. 5001-10,000	1	-	-	1	2
Rs. 10,001+	1	-	1	1	3
Do not know	-	-	-	-	-
Household Composition					
Type One	-	-	-	1	1
“ Two	2	-	-	-	2
“ Three	1	-	-	1	2
“ Four	1	-	1	-	2
“ Five	-	1	-	1	2
Household Appliances					
Radio	2	1	1	3	7
Television	4	1	1	3	9
Telephone	4	1	1	3	9
Fridge	4	1	1	3	9
Washing machine	-	-	-	1	1
VCR	2	-	1	2	5

Note \*Household types

One	=	Lives alone
Two	=	Lives with spouse
Three	=	Lives with younger generation
Four	=	Lives with older generation (one generation)
Five	=	Lives with 3-4 generation household

Table 8 shows the monthly income of 3 married men inside the range of Rs. 1,000 – 5,000 per month. 1 man is in the next bracket of Rs. 5,000 – 10,000+ and 1 man has more than Rs. 10,000 per month. The latter is Vithalbhai whose State pension from the British Government and the amount sent from his four sons comprise his income of about Rs. 35,000 per month. Others get their income from pensions or farm related work (own work).

Two younger men live with spouses and 1 each, with a younger generation (Jassubhai lives with wife, son and daughter-in-law) and the older generation i.e Manubhai lives with his wife and a 90-year-old mother. Vinubhai (OG) lives in the three or more generation household with a wife, widowed daughter and grand daughters.

The younger widower (Jeetubhai) lives with an 88-year-old mother. Among the older widowers, Vithalbhai lives alone, Nanubhai, with the son, daughter-in-law and 2 grand children, and; Motibhai lives with an adopted daughter, her husband, daughter-in-law and the grand daughter.

All men (married and widowed) have a television, telephone and a fridge. 2 younger married men do not have radios, 2 younger and 1 older married men do not have a VCR each. Only Manubhai (OG Widower) has a washing machine.

**Personal Characteristics**

Table 9

Personal Characteristics of Women (N=11)

Marital Status Categories	Married				Widows				Total 11							
	Young n=3		Old n=3		Young n=0		Old n=5									
Birth Place																
Village	1		2		-		5		8							
Town/City	2		1		-		-		3							
Qualification																
Schooling 1-7 yrs.	-		2		-		5		7							
8-11 yrs.	3		1		-		-		4							
Graduation	-		-		-		-		-							
Post-Graduation	-		-		-		1		1							
Additional Skills	-		-		-		1		1							
Present Work																
Hours Per Week	Yes			No	Yes			No	Yes			No	Yes			No
	1	2	3	N	1	2	3	N	1	2	3	N	1	2	3	N
Remunerative	-	-	-	-3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Non-remunerative	-	2	1	-	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	4
Family	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community	1			-	2	1							1	1	3	
Note a Non remunerative work / week b Remunerative work / week c Present work category has multiple responses																
1 = 1 - 10				1 = 1 - 25												
2 = 10+ - 20				2 = 26 - 50												
3 = 20+ - 30				3 = 51 +												
N=Not applicable																

**Married Women.** Table 9 shows that three married women were born in villages of Gujarat and 2 women in cities of Gujarat and 1 in Maharashtra. As far as schooling goes, 3 younger women (Leenaben, Sarlaben & Lataben) and one older woman (Laxmiben) studied up to SSC (11 years). Lataben and 2 older women (Kavitaben & Meenaben) have had two years of college education.

None of the 6 women do any remunerative work. All of them do work for the family such as cooking, washing, clothes and other household chores. The hours range between 5 to 15 hours. Leenaben (YG) is the only one who does 'social work' at the temple for about 5 hours per week. Lataben puts in about 1 to 2 hours per week as and when necessary.

**Widows.** All the 5 widows (OG) were born in the villages of Gujarat and had schooling up to primary years.

No one does any remunerative work. Kirtiben and Ritaben (14 hours) who work very hard every week consider that they work for the family. Leelaben works in the community for 16 hours as a member of the Mahila Mandal and Jeeviben works as a trustee on the boards of the library for women play center for children, and a hospital as well as the President of the local wing of the Lion's club.

### Personal Characteristics of Men (N=9)

**Married men** According to Table 10, 3 married men were born in the villages of Gujarat and 2 in a town and a city of Gujarat, respectively. As far as their qualifications go, Somabhai (YG) has studied up to primary school and Vinubhai (OG), Manubhai and Jagdishbhai (YG) have studied up to old SSC (11 years). Manubhai is a postgraduate in M.Ed. as well Jasubhai has additional qualifications of a PTC (teacher training)

diploma, and, Manubhai has had additional training in mechanical engineering in USA for two years.

Two men do remunerative work, i.e. Somabhai (YG) doing construction supervision for 42 hours per week and Vinubhai taking tuition classes of young children for 40 hours per week. Jasubhai, Manubhai and Somabhai do social work in the community, such as guiding people for getting their pensions, working as vice-president or being a member of school, bank and hospital boards and running a youth group. Their inputs range from 14 to 20 hours per week.

**Widowers.** All of them were born in the villages of Gujarat. Jeetubhai (YG) and Vithalbhai (OG) studied up to old SSC (11 years). Motibhai (OG) has done graduation (BA) and Nanubhai (OG) is a postgraduate in MA with an additional qualification in law (read skills). Two widowers (Motibhai teaching children for 48 hours and Nanubhai doing supervision of farming work for 25 hours) do work for remuneration.

Regarding non-remunerative work per week, all 4 men did community work as follows:

- Jeetubhai (YG) social work in education for 14 hours.
- Vithalbhai (OG) member of Karamsad Patel Samaj working for 3 hours.
- Nanubhai (OG) as need arises – for 4 hours.
- Motibhai (OG) member of Vikas Mandal Trust, primary school and farming trusts for 35 hours.

### ***Gender Analysis***

#### ***Residence***

- More women (7) are from Karamsad village out of a total of 11.
- One-third men (3) out of 9 hail from village Alindra.

- The highest combined number (9) of men and women is from village Karamsad.
- The least combined number (1 women and 1 man = 2) is from village Sojitra.

#### *Age wise*

##### *Women*

- Equal number (3 + 3) comprises the younger and older married group, respectively.
- All the widows (5) are from the older group and none from the younger.
- There are more married women ( $n = 6$ ) compared to widows ( $n = 5$ ).

##### *Men*

- There are 4 younger married men and just one older married man.
- There is just one younger widower and 3 older ones.
- There are more married men than widowers.

#### *Gender wise*

There are more:

- Women (11) than men (9)
- Married women (6) than married men (5)
- Widows (5) than widowers (4)



**Health**

Table 11

Health Information of Women (N=11)

Marital Status Categories	Married		Widows		Total
	Young n = 3	Old n = 3	Young n = 0	Old n = 5	11
Health Status					
Good/Excellent	2	-	-	3	5
All right for age	1	2	-	1	4
Only fair	-	1	-	-	1
Poor	-	-	-	1	1
Serious Health Problems					
Yes	-	2	-	3	5
No	3	1	-	2	6
Conditions Limiting Activity					
Yes	-	2	-	4	6
No	3	1	-	1	5
Access to Medical Treatment					
Yes	3	3	-	5	11
No	-	-	-	-	-
Can Afford Medical Treatment					
Yes	3	3	-	5	11
No	-	-	-	-	-

**Married Women.** Table 11 reveals that all the 6 married women considered their health was good for their age except Kavtaben who found it ‘fair’. She, along with Meenaben both from (OG), felt they had serious health problems, which they termed as ‘gas’, heart related (Meenaben having suffered three heart attacks) and, aches and pains in the body. They also had additional problems such as being ‘hard of hearing’

(Kavitaben), and pain in the joints (Meenaben) that restricted their mobility and limited their activities.

**Widows.** Three widows said that their health was in good condition. Kirtiben found it to be poor. She, along with Leelaben and Ritaben (all from OG) felt that they had serious health problems such as ‘arthritis, blood pressure, pain in joints and immobility’. Kirtiben, Leelaben and Ritaben, perceived mobility and acidity related problems that restricted their activities.

All the women (married and widowed) had access to medical treatment in their community and could afford it. Leenaben was nostalgic in remembering that medical treatment used to be free, before her husband retired.

Table 12

Health Information of Men (N=9)

Marital Status Categories	Married		Widows		Total
	Young n = 4	Old n= 1	Young n = 1	Old n = 3	
Health Status					
Good/Excellent	4	1	1	2	8
All right for age	-	-	-	1	1
Only fair	-	-	-	-	-
Poor	-	-	-	-	-
Serious Health Problems					
Yes	-	1	1	2	4
No	4	-	-	1	5
Conditions Limiting Activity					
Yes	-	-	-	1	1
No	4	1	1	2	8
Access to Medical Treatment					
Yes	4	1	1	3	9
No	-	-	-	-	-
Can Afford Medical Treatment					
Yes	4	1	1	3	9
No	-	-	-	-	-

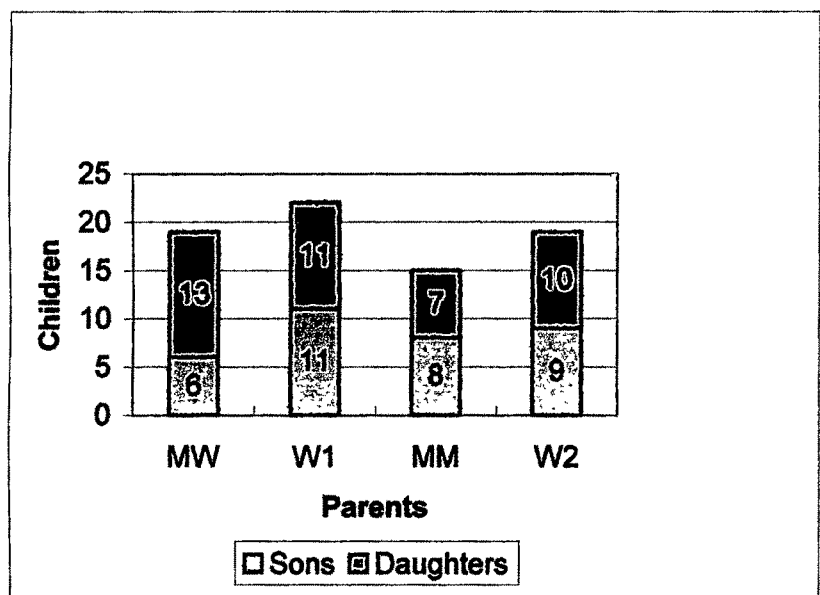
**Married Men.** Table 12 shows that 5 married men found their health to be in excellent condition and all right for their age. Yet, the older man (Vinubhai) perceived he had serious 'heart' problems such as pain in the joints, which restricted his activity.

**Widowers.** Out of 4 widowers, 3 perceived that they had excellent health, which was all right for their age. Despite this, 3 of them felt that they had serious health problems (Jeetubhai YG had undergone a by pass surgery, Nanubhai OG had diabetes and Motibhai had blood pressure. The latter was the only one who felt his problem restricted his activity as he had many fainting spells.

All of them (married and widowed) had access to medical treatment in their community, and could afford the same

***Residence of Children***

Figure 2 shows that amongst all the 20 respondents, there are 74 children. Of these, there are 41 daughters and 33 sons.



Note: MW=Married Women, W1= Widows; MM = Married Men; W2= Widowers

Figure 2. Gender wise Distribution of Children by Marital status of Parents

Table 13

Gender wise Comparison of Respondents' Children by Residence (N=20)

Marital Status	MW n=6		W1 n=5		MM n=5		W2 n=4	
Children's Residence	Ds	Ss	Ds	Ss	Ds	Ss	Ds	Ss
India	6	-	9	5	2	5	2	2
Abroad	7	5	2	6	5	3	8	7
Total	13	5	11	11	7	8	10	9

Note a Ds=Daughters (n= 41), Ss = Sons n= 32), Children (N= 73)  
b MW=Married Women, W1= Widows, MM = Married Men, W2 = Widowers

Table 13 shows that out of 74 children, amongst all the 20 respondents, 22 daughters and 21 sons live abroad, and; 19 daughters and 12 sons live in India.

**Married women.** They have daughters and 5 sons amongst them. Sarlaben and Lataben (YG), and Meenaben (OG), have all their children living abroad. Lataben’s daughter is an only child. Whereas, Kavitaben who has all 3 daughter, has 2 daughters abroad and one outside Gujarat, leaving no child near her.

**Widows.** They have 11 daughters and 11 sons amongst them. Kirtiben and Jassiben have 2 daughters each, in India, but all their sons live abroad.

**Married men.** Manubhai’s children all live abroad. All the others have a son living in India.

**Widowers.** Vithalbhai’s 5 children, all live abroad. Motibhai has just one daughter in India.

## ***Section Two: Impact of International Migration of Children***

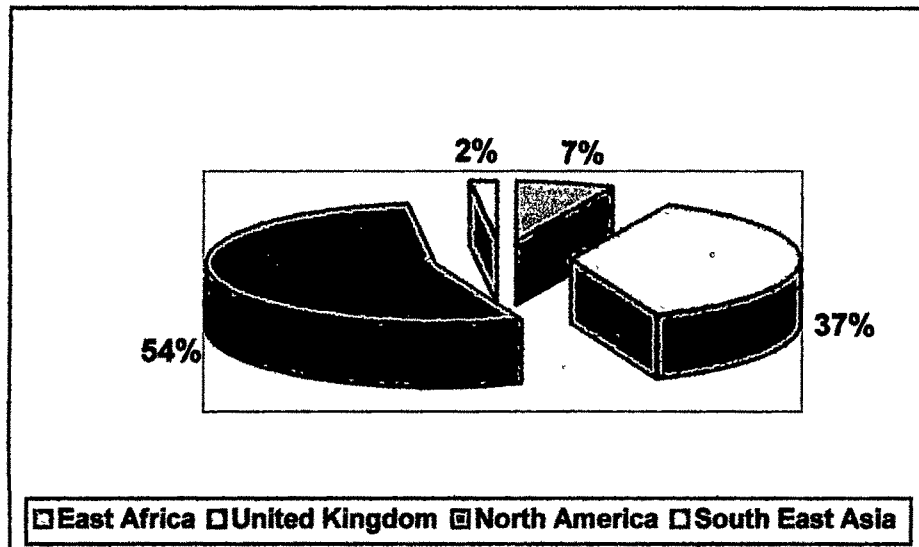
### ***Outline of Section***

- International Migration of Children.
- Reasons for their Migration.
- Reciprocal Communication with Migrated Children.
- Reciprocal Social Support Network at Community Level.

What are the reasons for children's migration abroad? This question and other issues of communication and support system of the elders in the present chapter.

The children of the present sample ranged between 23-54 years. They had migrated abroad at different periods of their parents' lives. This section deals with the direct impact such migration may have had on the latter's' lives in terms of reciprocal communication abroad, reciprocal social support network and change in status at local level.

### ***International Migration of Children***



Note: a N=20 Women (11), Men (9). Children (43)

Figure 3. Country wise Distribution of Respondents' Children

### ***Children's Residence Abroad***

Figure 3 shows the distribution of children (N = 43), staying abroad. Most of the children stay in North America (54 %), many stay in the United Kingdom (37 %), few stay in East Africa (7 %), and the least stay in South –East Asia (2 %).

Table 14

Reasons for Children’s Migration Abroad (N=20)

Reasons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Find lucrative jobs.</li><li>• Find prospective grooms/brides.</li><li>• Join the marriage partner.</li><li>• Join other family members.</li><li>• Augment the financial resources in India, in part or in whole.</li><li>• Avail of sponsorships from prospective employers or helpful relatives.</li><li>• Enjoy a better quality of life.</li><li>• Go first to Africa before relocating in North America.</li><li>• Go as tourist before settling abroad.</li></ul>

The responses given in Table 14 were computed from the collective responses of respondents, both women and men, regarding their migrated children (N=43). These were the reasons why their children had gone abroad. Similar responses have been accommodated into a single statement.

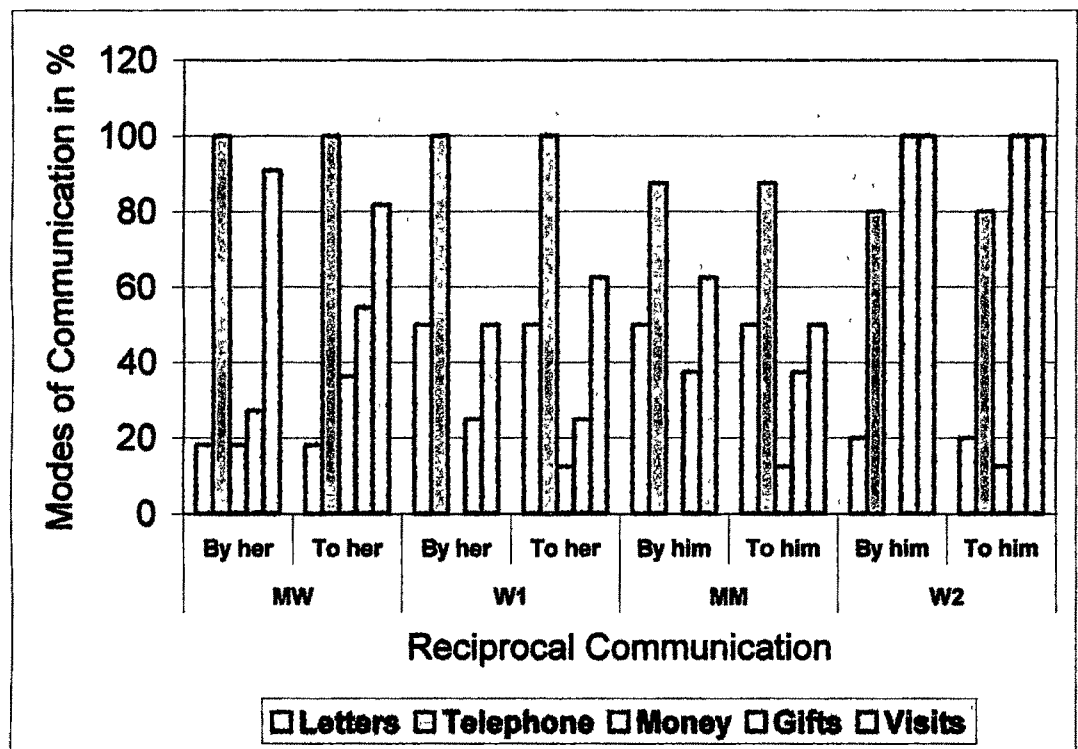
*Reciprocal Communication with Migrated Children*

Long distances separate the parents and children who live abroad. They maintain communications by different modes. Respondents were asked if and how they kept in touch with their children. The types of contacts considered were letters, phone calls, sending and receiving money and gifts, and, visiting. Analysis was done to find out the reciprocal modes as well as the most preferred types of communication, by gender and marital status of parents. Adding up all the daughters and sons of each parent arrived at the numbers of daughters and sons.



**Modes of Communication**

All the respondents (11 women and 9 men) kept in touch with their children using the given modes of communication (see Figure 4).



Note: MW = Married women; W1 = Widows MM = Married Men, W2 = Widowers

a. The children reciprocated differentially under each mode of communication, as did the respondents

b. First, the numbers of sons and daughters sending and receiving modes of communication from respondents was computed separately for each mode, which had two columns of 'By' and 'From' respondents. Each cell gave the number of contacts. The average was calculated for the 'By' and 'From' column of each mode and converted into percentages. This gave the extent of comparative use of the different modes of communication used by parents and their children (Reciprocal).

Figure 4. Modes of Communication with Migrated Children

**Telephone.** The telephone seems to be the most preferred method used for communication by women and men with their children. All of them, except Nanubhai (W1) use this method. He prefers to exchange letters with his daughter and two sons.

**Letters.** This method is not very popular. However, Figure 4 shows that slightly more daughters prefer this mode than do the sons. Out of the four groups, married women and widowers seem to prefer it the least i.e. 18 % and 20 % respectively. Whereas, 50 % of the widows and the married men prefer letters.

**Money.** This is the least preferred mode of communication. Figure 4 shows that only one married woman Sarlaben (MW) reciprocated for sending money for household expenses, with her daughter. It is the sons who send more than daughters. Figure 4 shows that the married women have this transaction with their children in more numbers (18 % by them and 36 % from children).

Apart from household expenses, medical bills of elders are also settled with the money sent by the children. The daughters receive money as per the Indian culture.

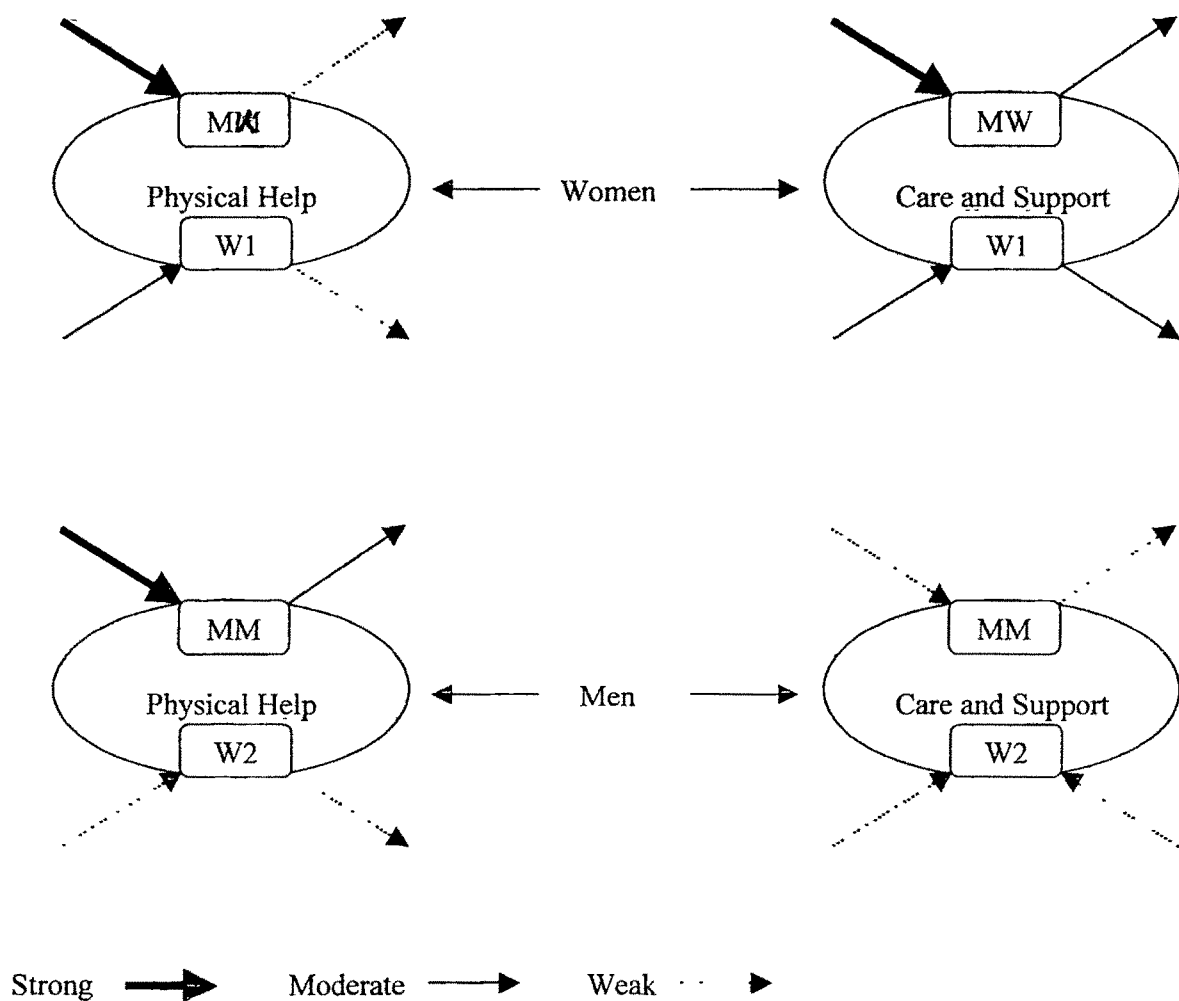
**Gifts.** Many parents and children prefer exchanging gifts in a reciprocal manner. Widowers show this at 100 % (see Figure 4). Also, more married women (55 %) send gifts, compared to receiving them (27 %). The gifts received by parents are electronic items like watches and time saving gadgets, pants, saris, dry fruits, chocolates and readymade garments. The children receive gifts such as spices or “masalas”, saris, gold ornaments, Indian sweets and dry snacks and incense sticks.

**Visits.** Reciprocal visits by parents and children are also very popular. The parents usually go after every alternate year or once in 3-4 years. Whereas, children visit

less frequently. Leenaben, from the married women, is the only one who has no visits exchanged with her only daughter in the United States. This could be because her daughter had migrated since only 10 months.

### ***Reciprocal support network***

The support network is defined as all those people involved with an elderly person in a significant way, in providing companionship, emotional support, instrumental help, advice, physical care, or; receiving any of the same. Part I deals with the physical help which includes activities such as household chores or going out with the person. Part II includes emotional care and support, which entails giving advice, care and so on. Figures 5 shows a general reciprocal social support network and Figure 6 presents the reciprocal networking with individuals. The idea is to find out what type of support the whole category of sample has available to them, in the absence of their migrated children.



Note a MW=Married Women W1= Widows MM = Married Men W2= Widowers  
b Figures 4 and 5 show the informal network of the respondents. There are two parts. Part I has the Physical Help behaviours, and Part II has the Care and Support behaviours. The frequencies of all the behaviours provided or received from the respondents to all the individuals in the network, were recorded. These frequencies were averaged out giving the extent of the behaviours from and to each person by the respondents. Means were computed and ranked showing which individual received and gave to what extent, each of the behaviours. A decision on the strength of the behaviours as 'strong, moderate and weak' was made by grouping the ranks separately for Part I and Part II.

Figure 5. Types of Networks of Respondents .

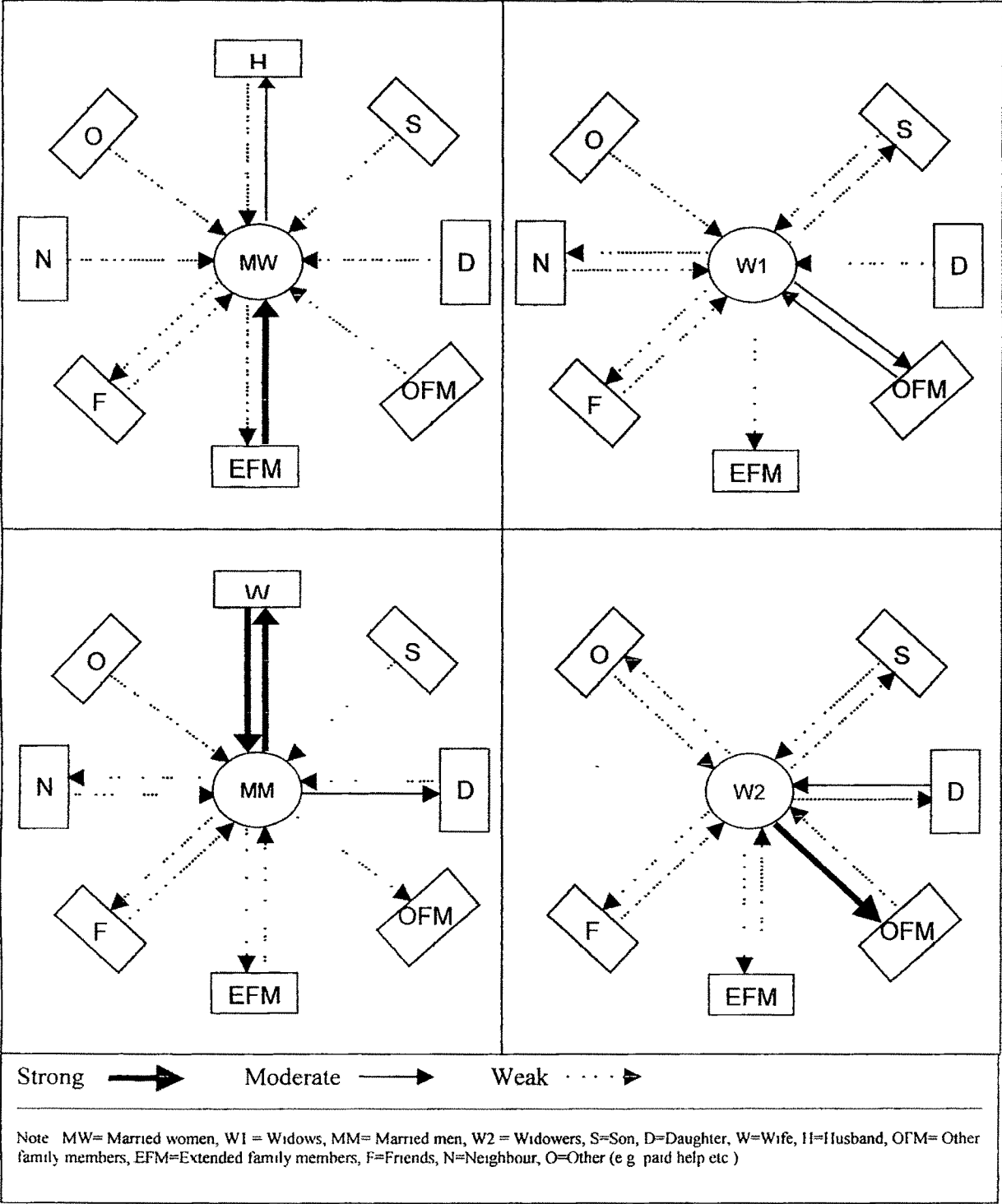


Figure 6 Types of Reciprocal Social Support Behaviours between Respondents and Other Individuals.

## **Married women**

**Physical help.** The women received help in various situations and reciprocated accordingly. They were accompanied to a hospital mainly by husband, daughter-in-law, niece or nephew, and sometimes by an aunt or a friend. They reciprocated with everyone and included other family members when offering help.

When it came to borrowing tools or money, buying food, cooking, washing clothes and helping in household chores, the daughter-in-law helped the most, followed by paid help. Whereas, the husband helped in buying food sometimes, followed by paid help and the daughter. The women in turn, provided help to daughter-in-law, husbands, sons, niece or nephew and grandchildren in that order.

**Care and support.** During illness, the women were cared for by all the members mentioned above, except the husband. But, the former included husbands along with all the said members for providing care. The women received advice mainly from the son or daughter and rarely from the daughter-in-law. They did not offer such advice to anyone.

The women talked to when unhappy and confided in mainly friends, and in rare cases, in a nephew or a niece. Whereas, they shared their problems in a reciprocal manner with friends, husband or sometimes with a sister or a nephew.

## **Widows**

**Physical help.** The women preferred to receive help for hospital visits from their son, daughter-in-law or a friend in a reciprocal manner. They also offered help to their mother-in-law, all other family members and sometimes to a friend.

As far as borrowing money, buying food, cooking, washing clothes and helping in household chores are concerned; the women solely relied on the daughter-in-law and in some cases, on paid help or a neighbour. They helped all these people (except paid help) as well as their grandchildren.

**Care and support.** The women confided in their sons, daughters or a friend, in a reciprocal manner. Their sons and daughter-in-law cared for them during illness, for which the women reciprocated. In addition, they helped all other family members. They turned to the son and the daughter-in-law for advice on money but did not offer it to anyone.

When the women were unhappy, they talked to, confided in and shared their problems with friends and sometimes with grandsons, mainly in a reciprocal manner. But, with daughter-in-law, they just shared problems.

### ***Married men***

**Physical help.** The men received help when going for hospital visits, from male members ranging from the son, the brother, to paid help. In turn, they gave help to the wife, mother, brother, friend or any one who needed it. Friends and neighbours borrowed food or tools from them, which got reciprocated. The paid help bought food for them. The men bought it for grandsons. Cooking, washing clothes and helping in household chores were mostly done by wife, paid help (washing clothes) and sometimes by daughter. In turn the men reciprocated this type of help mostly with wife and sometimes with daughter.

**Care and support.** The men confided in wife, friend and son. They received confidence from the neighbour, wife, mother, daughter and friend. Care during illness was reciprocated with wife and mother. The son only gave care. They gave advice to friends, daughter or brother and received it from friend, son or the bank manager. When unhappy, they talked to wife and neighbour. But, the wife and son talked to the men. Last, the men shared their problems with wife, friend and 'god'. In turn, the wife, mother, daughter and friend shared their problems.

### ***Widowers***

**Physical help.** Out of 4 only 2 men said that the grandson and friend helped them with the visit to hospital, respectively. In turn, the men offered help to anyone who needed it, including family, friends and paid help.

Only one man borrowed money or food from the friends. No one reciprocated. When asked about shopping for food, the men said that sometimes the paid help and or the daughter shopped. But, they themselves shopped for all family members and at other times for the daughter who lives away. Analysis shows that cooking, washing clothes and helping in household chores were being done by the mother, paid help (especially washing clothes), daughter-in-law or daughter. They reciprocated this help with the daughter-in-law.

**Care and support.** The men were cared for during illness by the son, brother or family members and friends. The men in turn reciprocated with them (except the son). In addition, they included the grandchildren and sometimes the daughter.



Once in a while the men sought advice on money matters from others such as bank managers, but offered advice to friends, brother and son. The men also reciprocated in confiding matters with son, brother or friends and sometimes talked to the paid help when feeling unhappy. On rare occasions the sons did share problems, which was reciprocated by the men. They also shared with friends infrequently.

Figure 5 shows the support system available to the respondents through their local network. An average of all the support behaviours by all the individuals toward the respondents gave the type of network i.e. strong, moderate or weak. Similarly the average of all the behaviours of the respondent to individual members was assessed. The range for types of network was decided after looking at all the comparative figures.

### ***Highlights***

- Married women have strong support from others both in physical and emotional care.
- Married men have a strong support system as well.
- All the women have weak, sending support behaviours in 'physical help'.
- Widowers have weak support system both in sending and receiving behaviours.

### ***Section Three: Perceptions on Life Situations***

#### ***Outline of Section***

- Has Our Status Changed Due to Our Children's International Migration?
- How is Life for Elders Abroad?
- "To Migrate or not to Migrate".

The respondents have traversed the journey of life with its ups and downs. Effort was made to find out their perceptions regarding elders in different situations of international migration (see boxes 1, 2 and 3).

#### **Box 1**

<b>"Has our status changed due to the children's migration abroad?"</b>
---

The above question was posed to the respondents and their answers were analyzed by gender and marital status. Table 18 shows these at a glance. The perceived change in status comprises situations in daily life wherein 'newer' feelings and behaviours are perceived as a direct result of their children's migration. Of course these perceptions may also be influenced by their own exposure abroad.

The responses of the sample were categorized in 'fully, partially and 'neither' categories to find out the extent of change felt after their children's migration abroad. Table 18 shows these at a glance. The detailed analysis is presented below by marital status of women and men.

Table 15

Perception of Change in Status after Children's Migration Abroad by Gender and Marital Status (N= 19)

Marital Status Extent of Change	MW (n = 6)	W1 (n= 5)	MM (n =4)	W2 (n = 4)
Fully	2	2	3	1
Partially	1	-	-	1
Neither	3	3	1	2
Total 19	6	5	4	4

Note MW = Married women, W1 = Widows, MM = Married men, W2 = Widowers

a The range of responses between fully and neither in Table 16 were computed from their replies, on being asked if they had felt a change in status due to the children's migration

### ***Married women***

Data in Table 15 shows that out of the 3 married women from the younger group, only one; and, all the 3 older married women perceived changes, both fully and partially, after their children's migration abroad. Leenaben saw some change when people began approaching her to inquire about visa formalities for prospective migrants, and, when the friends of her migrated daughter dropped in for visits. Jasuben said that after his migration, her son sent money from USA for meeting medical and other bills. He also wanted her to look after the father's health. She could not visit her daughter who was in USA, as one was not supposed to "eat" at a daughter's place. Jasuben had retained a house in Africa as a back up support in case her son abandoned the parents.

In Meenaben's case, her migrant daughter in USA shared the responsibility of bringing up an orphaned nephew from India who was just a few months old. She looked

after him for 3 years whereupon Meenaben's older son then adopted the three-year-old child in USA. In this way the 'better off' migrated children shared Meenaben's additional responsibilities. On the downside, the women felt sad and lonely, especially when their "new" daughter-in-law or their only daughter left to join their husbands, leaving them 'alone and depressed' which is reflected in Kavita's words "motama motu dukh", that cannot be alleviated by mere phone calls and sporadic visits by them, to India. She elaborated further that when her brother had married off her third and last daughter left in India, she had felt all alone "besi rahiye kaayi evu gamtu nahi, chain na pade. Jya bhoomi pukarti hoye tyaa jaay ne?" She had assuaged her morose feelings by going regularly to the temple to indulge in some activity or the other. The visits by her migrated daughter's friends also had helped as they had come most regularly. The older women also felt that they had an opportunity to migrate or visit an international 'new and exciting' country. Some of the reasons were, confinement of the daughter-in-law or touring abroad.

### ***Widows***

The five women on the whole, expressed mixed feelings when asked about a change in their status. Jeeviben had expressed a feeling of pride when people used to say "chokrana paisa che, saru che" as her son earned good money abroad. She also narrated that many neighbours had borrowed money from her. One lady borrowed Rs. 3,000 and perpetually asked for loans, once they were repaid. Yet another lady had to repay Rs. 5,000. Jeeviben also paid small donations for community welfare work as she could "afford" it. The women felt that when their sons visited India, many people were eager

to meet them. All, except Jeeviben had an opportunity to go abroad either for their daughter or daughter-in-law's confinement or for sight seeing. She appeared very matter of fact when she said, "my Gandhian husband had always refused to go abroad and so I never went. One has to come back anyways after a good glimpse of high rise buildings akin to the ones shown on the television."

On the darker side, Ritaben expressed that "I sent my elder son 14 years back, to earn. He has not come back since "gayo e gayo". He went on his own, where his fiancée joined him. They have a son and a daughter". Leelaben said sadly, that her younger daughter had been abroad for sometime when her father died. The daughter was told not to come for the father's funeral because it had proved to be very difficult. She had come only recently, after a lapse of a few years.

The women also had financial worries. Kirtiben said "darekh chokra chokri jaay etle dukh to thaay". I sent my son to earn. Otherwise who will feed us? Today our daughter needs money and tomorrow my daughter-in-law will need it. If there is no money "chhootha, chhedaa api dey che atyare".

### ***Married men***

All the men except Vinubhai said that there was a change in status due to their children's migration. "Samajni andar chokro chokri pardesh jaaye to tamaru maan vadhej. Children are all set say the village folk so what is there to worry about now?" As a result the village folk sought advice about going abroad and discussed financial and marriage prospects of their children.

There was a change in their lifestyle due to more inflow of money and their wider experience, from exposure abroad, which was recognized by the people. The latter approached them for donations and contributions to village institutions and development activities. On top of everything, their other sons received marriage proposals. Somabhai felt "chokrathi 100 % izzat malavaa laagi". He and Manubhai then plunged into village development work, organized activities for social causes such as mass marriages, tree plantation and cleanliness drives, as well as thought about the future activities for the elders e.g. a club "jema logo avine bese, saanjhna ane ek bijane dukh ni vato kare".

### ***Widowers***

On the whole they did not see any real change in their status because they always had been preoccupied with 'self elevation activities' (Nanubhai) and "village development work" (Vithalbhai)

However data analysis of these showed that Vithalbhai had gained as follows:

- When his sons left for UK, he could expand his grocery business and make yearly visits there from India. People in the village sought his advice for visa and airport formalities.

- His pension of 250 pounds and the money sent by his children enabled him to look after his own as well as the financial needs of his two servants and their children. It further helped him to undergo a very expensive heart surgery in India rather than a “free” one in the UK.
- However, he lamented that first, he was away from his children, and now they had migrated and “I miss them”.

Motibhai felt he had broadened his views and had started valuing education. He introduced computer education for the village children and collected donations for school activities. He edits and dispatches a monthly news bulletin on village “jeevan” and dispatches them to UK, USA and big cities of India to NRIs. In addition, he brings in new cottage industries and helps finance the poor. Jeetubhai on the other hand, had incurred large debts when he had sent his sons abroad. It took him many years to repay all his debts and therefore today “all of them are better off than I am!” However, he felt that his family status had always been “good” because of the children’s education, his two daughters’ nature and his own ‘good’ behaviour.

Box 2

*“How is life for elders abroad?”*

This question was posed to the respondents. Table 15 gives the picture for women and men by their marital status.

Table 16

Perceived Situation of Elders Living Abroad by Respondents (N=20)

Marital status Perceptions	MW (n = 6)	W1 (n = 5)	MM (n = 5)	W2 (n = 4)
Positive	43	17	71	63
Negative	57	83	29	37

Note MW = Married women, W1 = Widows, MM = Married men, W2 = Widowers  
a All figures are given in percentages b All the positive and negative statements reflecting their perceptions were identified by content analysis Each set of perceptions was added up and converted to percentages

*Married women*

Table 16 shows that the married women had mixed reactions to the elders' situation abroad (43 % positive and 57 % negative). Analysis showed that they perceived the elders had financial security, were happier and lived a peaceful existence according to Leenaben. Meenaben also saw the elders as self-reliant and respected because they brought in a Government pension worth Rs. 8 to 10,000 per month in Indian rupees. Lataben opined another positive point that, the old people got an opportunity to mingle socially and had group outings with peers from their own community, without indulging in any gossip or "ninda" about each other as all of them lived busy lives. However, the downside about staying abroad was that the elders were confined to the house, that the weather was constantly very cold and there was dependence on the children according to the lamentations of Leenaben and Leelaben. Therefore, one got to know very few people, especially the neighbours. Meenaben's words summed it up with "tyaan to chaar diwaaroma purayine rehvanu". The old provide baby-sitting service i.e. "sadhen", she continued, as "they love their children and grand children". Despite this, there was no recognition given to the elders, said Sarlaben. Leenaben said that "one of the greatest



fears lurking in the minds of elders is the fear of the daughter-in-law, “especially as she can influence her family to rise up against the parents-in-law” (Sarlaben).

Laxmibedn expanded on this. “When I was in the USA, I heard that a particular daughter-in-law literally kicked out her mother-in-law. Before that, the former would always beat up the latter and sing and dance in parody of the hapless lady. The daughters-in-law also keep the food out of reach and lock up the in-laws, leaving them to gaze longingly out of the widows. These daughters-in-law switch on the heaters in summer and air-

conditioners in the winter! The old women cannot operate the system to shut them off!”

Sarlaben scoffed about life abroad by relating a real life incident. “pardeshni vaatej java do ne”. She narrated an incident wherein a boy from their village had abandoned his parents by the wayside. No cajoling by his friend (who had found them) could make him change his mind. Therefore the friend had to take care of the parents before they were sent back to India. So, if the old do not have a family or government pension they are asked to leave “tarat planema besaadi de”.

### ***Widows***

The widows have painted a dismal picture of the elderly abroad. The reactions span from mild to harsh ones (17% positive and 83% negative). According to Jeeviben, the elders are not considered as ‘family’ by the daughters-in-law and allowed to stay only because of financial benefits from the government. “Pardeshma dosione paisa maatej lai jaay che” are her comments.

Ritaben also painted a gloomy picture when she said that the old parents are often ill treated or abandoned by the wayside, in temples or gardens, to be rescued by friends, police or strangers; and sent back to India. She elaborated further with, “I have heard

these stories. The son abandons her by leaving her at some temple on the pretext of “bhajan-kirtan-vaartaa-kathaa”.

The old have to stay at home, work and take care of children, all day long, said the widows. Kirtiben highlighted their plight by saying “Bechara rade che”. They feel lonely throughout the day as the daughter-in-law sees everyone off (including herself) to work, with their meals. She locks the mother-in-law for safety reasons. The old lady’s health conditions are known only on the return of the family. On the whole, she looks forward to going out (Jeeviben) but “has to wait to be taken out”.

Leelaben perceived that the old should be self-sacrificing individuals, when she gave a personal account to illustrate this point. She of course thought she was “adjusting to the time table of the son-in-law” (see Vignette 1).

*Leelaben, “I got up after my son-in-law left for work around 7 am and had tea with my daughter, before she left by 8 30 am. Then, I did my morning pooja and went to the car park to read my religious books, till late afternoon. Sometimes I sewed on the machine. When the couple had their holidays, I let them be on their own. I went to the temple or the park and spent as much time as possible on my own. I washed my own clothes as I do not like the washing machine and did most of my work” She summed up her adjustment by saying “Rahni-karni fer hovi joyye”.*

Vignette 1. “How I Adjusted at My Daughter’s Place”.

### **Married men**

The reactions of the married men showed that, 71 % had positive and 29% had negative reactions.

Somabhai and Vinubhai felt that the lifestyle abroad was very good due to pension at 65 years of age and there were 'VIP' facilities. "It means that the parents do not have to depend financially on children". Also, "there is an option of staying in an Old Age Home if children will not keep them. Every kind of facility, care and cleanliness, fresh food and quality milk are provided there", according to Jassubhai. Another positive aspect for elders was opined by Vinubhai that, "the food is cheaper, environment is good and jobs are available for people like us, in case we are interested". Somabhai felt that due to a good lifestyle and government facilities one was not dependent on children. One also had opportunities to mingle socially with newly arrived elders from India and soak in the latest news from there. "When I arrived in Africa, I was invited along with other newcomers for lunches, dinners and picnics, as well as to celebrate the various festivals".

The other side to living abroad was perceived by Manubhai, when he said that "parents are dependent on their children, especially on the daughter-in-law, when you go out. One has to turn a blind eye when children adopt a 'foreign lifestyle' of eating non-vegetarian food and living an open and free lifestyle. Neighbours did not care for you either".

### ***Widowers***

The widowers had 60% positive and 40% negative reactions. According to Motibhai the elders living in the west were better educated and lived independently. They had financial security and government medical aid (Jeetubhai) and on top of that, “the Old Age Homes provide better care than, some of the families”.

Only Vithalbhai seemed to have adjusted to the foreign setting, because he did not perceive any problems for the older people. However, he said that not knowing the English language often proved to be a barrier in daily interactions outside the home.

There are some negative perceptions seen, when some of them said that the elders “feel nostalgic and neglected and spend their time baby-sitting the grand children. Due to the influence of the western culture, bonding is not encouraged between grand parents and grand children. In Nanubhai’s words, “children are busy with their own lives, jobs and families and do not find time to accompany parents on outings, even when the cold weather holds up”.

Box 3

***“To Migrate or Not to Migrate”: Situational Analysis of Vignettes.***

The respondents were asked to help make decisions for the older people’s care, migration and living arrangements, depicted in the two vignettes, for Situations I and II (See question 10 of Tool 3 in Appendix II). .

- The first vignette deals with an older married couple from an Indian village. They are helpless and unable to look after themselves. Their only son lives abroad and the daughter lives some kilometers away from them (Table 16).

- The second vignette deals with an older widower, whose two sons live abroad. His older unmarried sister, who is poorly in health, keeps house for both. Their brother lives in the next village (Table 17).

Table 17

Perceptions About International Migration of Elders - I (N=20)

Marital Status Decisions for Older Couple	MW (n = 6)		W1 (n = 5)		MM (n = 5)		W2 (n = 4)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Join Son in UK	4	66	4	80	1	20	2	50
Remain in India								
With daughter	1	17	-	-	2	40	1	25
On one's own	1	17	1	20	2	40	1	25
Decision Making by								
Couple	3	50	5	100	3	60	3	75
Son	1	17	-	-	1	20	1	25
Daughter	-	-	-	-	1	20	1	25
Children	2	23	-	-	-	-	-	-
Care of the Couple by								
Son	2	33	4	80	2	40	2	50
Daughter	1	17	-	-	2	40	-	-
Children	1	17	1	20	-	-	-	-
Hired help	2	33	-	-	-	-	-	-
Old age home	-	-	-	-	1	20	-	-
Self	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	50

Note MW = Married women, W1 = Widows, MM = Married men, W2 = Widowers

### Women

In the first situation (Vignette 1) as shown in Table 17, most women (married 67 % and widows 80 %) wanted the married couple to join the son in UK. Most of them also felt that the couple should make this decision. (100 % widows). Care of the couple was to be entrusted to the son or the children, said the women, and except for 33 % married women, who opted for 'hired help'.

## Men

Many men (married 40 % and 50 % widowers) wanted the couple to go to UK and join the son. Most of the men wanted the decision to be made mutually by the couple (married 60 % and widowers 75 %). As far as care of the couple is concerned, the married men included sons (40 %), daughter (40 %) and Old Age Home (20 %), whereas, the widowers cited son (50 %) and self (50 %).

Table 18

Perceptions About International Migration of Elders – II (N=20)

Marital Status Decisions for Older Couple	MW (n = 6)		W1 (n = 5)		MM (n= 5)		W2 (n = 4)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Join son in UK	-	-	-	-	1	20	2	50
Stay on in India	6	100	5	100	3	60	2	50
With brother	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Both responsibility of								
Son	3	50	4	80	2	40	1	25
Brother	3	50	1	30	1	20	-	-
Other	-	-	-	-	1	20	-	-
Not specified	-	-	-	-	1	20	-	-

Note a No = Number b Note MW = Married women, W 1 = Widows, MM = Married men, W 2 = Widowers

## Women

In Table 18 (Vignette 2), all the women (100 %) wanted the sibling couple to stay on in India. They felt the son especially or the brother had the main responsibility of looking after the couple.

## Men

Most men (married 60 % and widowers 50 %) wanted the couple to stay together in India and one married man said the couple should stay with the other brother.

Table 19

## Reasons for Selecting Caretakers of Elders (N=20)

Caretakers and Reasons		Respondents
Son		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hindu dharma says it is the son's responsibility to look after the parents. Due to unavoidable circumstances if he can't look after them, he can send regular remittance.</li> </ul>		All categories
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One is not comfortable staying at the daughter's place.</li> </ul>		MW
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a British national, the son will get benefits from the government.</li> </ul>		W2
Daughter		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A daughter is soft hearted and caring. The son just performs his duty as an heir.</li> </ul>		MM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daughter will be happy to take care of parents after a long detachment.</li> </ul>		MM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>She can visit or call the parents to her home. Or, she can help recruit hired help if the couple wants to stay on their own.</li> </ul>		MM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A son needs to be reminded of his duty, so daughter is preferred.</li> </ul>		MW W2
Brother		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As per the Hindu dharma, the brother is the 'caretaker' of the sister. If he can't afford, he should provide financial help.</li> </ul>		MM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Because the couple has been staying together all along. If necessary, the son can pay for the hired help to make both their lives easier.</li> </ul>		MW W1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no other alternative for the sister like marriage for instance.</li> </ul>		MM
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Life in the UK is too busy for the son to look after old parents. The son can only send financial help and pay for the hired help. He can pay visits too.</li> </ul>		MM
On one's own		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The couple should stay on their own till the time they are able to do their household chores. If hired help is unaffordable they can ask son for remittance.</li> </ul>		All

Note MW = Married women W 1 = Widows, MM = Married men, W 2 = Widowers

Regarding the couple's responsibility, 40 % married men opted for the son and 75 % widowers said that the couple should be responsible for themselves.

### ***Reasons***

Reasons for opting for the above caretakers of the older persons are summed up in Table 19, by marital status.



## ***Section Four: Life Course Review and More***

### ***Outline of Section***

- Ah! Those memorable events and profound experiences
- Some of our Feelings About:
  - Life Course Events
  - Present Life Situation
  - Completion of Children's Responsibilities
  - Children's International Migration
  - Loneliness
- Life Satisfaction and Concerns
- Few Expectations for the Future
- Our Concept of Old Age.

The present section deals with the review of life events of the respondents gathered by their oral histories. The respondents gave an account of major events during their life course, which included births, marriages, deaths, major trauma and life satisfactions. Feelings about life events and the future were also expressed.

On the whole, the women, especially the widows (OG) found it quite difficult to recall their past life. Some felt it was too mundane and that there was nothing to recall. Few women were reticent as, in Lataben's words "memory less thai jaay". For most of the women, life really began when they arrived as new brides in the joint family. It needed a lot of cajoling and subsequent visits to get information out of them. Sometimes, a relative would help jog their minds.

The men were hard to pin down as they remained outdoors for one or the other reason when they were sought for the interviews. But, once the interviews started, most of them answered in great detail, all in one sitting. Their responses are given below.

### ***Ah! Those Memorable Events and Profound Experiences***

#### ***Married Women***

##### ***Childhood Events***

The women mostly had been competitive as children, excelling at school, sports and extra-curricular activities. However, in keeping with the times of sheltering girls because as Laxmiben's mother had said "girls are innocent and gullible", some careers had been aborted before they took off. Laxmiben's request to participate in an "All India Radio" talent contest had been turned down; where she felt she could have easily won.

Thus, even though the women had participated in local singing or drama competitions, their parents had been very strict because as Sarlaben said "kayi aghu pachu thavaj na de". None of the women seemed to have liked doing housework. The women were married at an average of 20 years to the 'first' boy recommended by the family priest or a relative. The older women among these felt that they were from rich families brought into poorer surroundings of a village. In Laxmiben's words "bahu esh thi rahela, kaam karela nahi ... ane ahiya parnine aavya". She and her migrated brother had declined her marriage proposal but to no avail. She said her father had been a rich silk merchant and her mother had been friendly with Kamala Nehru during the latter's illness at Bombay.

Most of the incidents recalled had focus on other people in the women's lives, and, revolved around the following.

- Helping their daughters or sisters-in-law cope with their husband's deaths by providing them solace and support. Ritaben said "ben, satvat to aapvoo pade".
- Finding a lost grandchild while the whole family had gone shopping at Vadodara, a city in Gujarat (Jeeviben).
- Keeping a night vigil while her son fought a life and death battle, after a terrible motorbike accident in her own village. Jeeviben recalled how anxious she had been, alone with her infant grandson, supported by neighbours.
- Going to the cinema and preparing savouries for the family on special occasions e.g. "dudhpaak, purees, shreekhand, sheera and lapsi".

### *Sufferings*

- Kirtiben and Laxmiben both recalled their experiences of hard labour and sufferings at the hands of their in-laws, with the mother-in-law being the villain of the piece. The arduous tasks they did both in and out of the house are presented in Vignette 2.

*Laxmiben, "I had to grind grains, pound masala, tolerate fumes from the stove, milk the buffaloes, care for younger brothers and sisters-in-law . . . it went on and on, the poverty . . ."*

*Kirtiben added, "not to forget the "lippan" i.e. plastering cow dung on the floor . . . which did not allow me to go out marketing or dropping children off to school"*

Vignette 2. The Arduous Tasks of Daughters-in-Law of Yore.

Laxmiben further explained her woes about being expected to come back from her maternal house, always laden with gifts from “needles to soaps and saris”, or suffer taunts. But now a days it is the mother-in-law who has to swallow everything “haahu dhekara khaay” she opined.

Further, Laxmiben had to give away all her personal saris and jewellery brought as dowry, for the sister-in-law’s marriage. She become very passive though, when she said “I stuck it out with the in-laws because they helped me to adjust, learn and grow as a home maker. We have to let go, so no need to leave the house.

Sarlaben gleefully recalled how she had told her new husband about her ex-boy friend whom her parents had rejected as husband material. The husband had then laughingly wanted to know why she had not eloped .... and her simple reply had been .... “it was not done!”

### ***Our Long Stay Abroad***

Some of the women expressed a few sentiments regarding their long stay abroad. Most of them had gone upon getting married, to join their husbands. The journeys were in ships that took about three months to reach their destinations. Thus, despite having a good quality of life, some of them were constrained to visit India in tragic circumstances. Their experiences are summed up as follows:

- Meenaben’s long stay at Nairobi had exposed her to a different life style. It helped her to develop self – awareness, self- respect and self-discipline and helped in broadening her view of life. The neighbours now gave her a lot of respect and the older women turned to her to solve their family problems. Meenaben also looked after the financial needs of her servants.

- Sarlaben had to stay back in India for her children's education. When she went abroad, among other things, her traditionalist view did not allow her to have even a morsel of food at her daughter's place even in far off USA. She and her husband have retained some property in Tanzania, as a contingency plan in case their son abandoned them in the future. In any case, the people there were too poor to buy the property from them.
- Lataben and Meenaben could not attend their parents' funerals as they had settled in Africa and it was too difficult to leave everything and travel for so long. So, they both lamented that they did not have a last glimpse of their parents. The former had not even stayed with her father before her marriage as she was brought up at her maternal place, in the city.
- The women preferred to stay in Africa rather than relocate with their children in USA.

### ***Widows***

#### ***Childhood Events***

It appears that, life had been 'simple living', mostly doing chores within the four walls at home. Schooling took a back seat. There were occasional outings with friends to nearby villages and for attending marriages. One or two memorable incidents involved in some way their brothers, with themselves being passive observers. The only playful indulgences were indoor games both at home and at school such as 'playing cards, hide and seek and 'kuka' i.e. game of 5 cubes or stones that were tossed and gathered in the palms, in a sequence.

They got married at a mean age of 21.2 years. Their marriages were fixed during the ‘first’ meeting with the prospective groom and his family, whether they liked it or not. Otherwise, said Leelaben, “a girl was likely to be shunned if her proposal got rejected”. Distant relatives or marriage functions helped to identify the matches.

The women said that they were happy to be better looking than their husbands, and had been found suitable as wives; that, they had entered a house of peace, and; had husbands without any bad habits.

### *Those were the Days !*

- Leelaben recalled how her marriage had to be shifted from 10 am. To 12 midnight, due to the rains. She also wanted it to go on record that she had gone on a honeymoon to a religious place called ‘Ambaji’.
- Jeeviben recalled that on her wedding day, there were 28 chaotic wedding processions in the village.
- Lataben recalled that during the gold control days, there were surreptitious visits to the goldsmith’s store for making gold ornaments for her wedding.
- Other incidents recalled were about their deliveries, fetal deaths and miscarriages, trauma of accidental deaths of young relatives, support provided by maternal family and birth of grand children. For example, Leenaben had been happy at the birth of a grandson in an, ‘all daughters family’ and had distributed sweets called ‘pendas’, which are given at the birth of boys, “chokrine babo aavyo etle khushino prasang kehvaay ney ? To khushina penda vehechyaa hataa.... paanch kilo”. Whereas, Sarlaben had distributed

pēndas at the birth of a daughter because “sons belong to their wives  
“baairana thaay ane maabaapni laagni na thaay”.

- Some women recalled how the major decisions were made by the husband or the son such as selling a house or getting registered for a pilgrimage .... the women were passive observers.
- Others recalled the marriages of their children and described in detail the ‘pithi chorai and graha shanti’ ceremonies.

### *Some Sadness*

- Serving the mothers-in-law and husbands (in that order) seemed to preoccupy the women’s married lives. They thought of it as their duty and would go to great lengths and physical strain to care, nurse and look after them personally, despite the latter being bedridden. Jeeviben recalled how her husband had the of his brother’s ashes brought to India, for the sake of his mother, who had wanted the funeral to be held in India.
- Leelaben juggled home and work as a nurse as well as nursed her ailing, bedridden husband for three long years. She called this period as the worst crisis “evi bimari koyi dushmanne pan na aape!” She had to sponge, feed and care for him daily before going for her job right till the day he died. She sighed deeply and admitted to feeling relaxed now, “pan have free thayaa thodak”. “I can spare some time for myself now!”

### *Dared to be Different*

- Jeeviben loved sports and even participated in village games right up to the age of 60 plus and won many prizes till just a few years back. She recently

celebrated her “shraddha (death rituals) in advance, along with that of her deceased husband’s, in order to avoid future expenses for her sons. She even gave away two ‘tola’ of gold to each of her four daughters.

### ***Married Men***

The men narrated in great detail about their mischievous escapades. These are summed up as follows:

#### ***Childhood Events***

##### ***School related***

- Such as copying in a test and being made an example of.
- Putting a firecracker in the ‘bidi’ smoked by an arrogant servant.
- Fixing up laboratory experiments to inveigle a day off from school in order to have time for the cricket commentary on radio.
- Leaving school due to lack of interest.
- Playing hide and seek with police and their cavalcades during the British rule, after spoiling their plans.

##### ***Family related***

- Deaths of parents, one after the other, at age 10, and, later grandmother’s refusal to let him work in the city, followed by harassment by relatives for property.

#### ***Early Marriage***

The men were married at an average age of 20 years. They were all literally forced to marry the girl selected by the family. Sometimes, the father-in-law to be, checked



them out at the hostel where they were boarders and at other times hid crucial details about the bride to be's real age for example. Thus, when Manubhai completed the formalities of admitting his wife to a college, he discovered that she was one and a half years older to him! "Evi khabar padta manma padel dhrasko ajoo yaad che!" was how he summed up. The girls had not minded if the grooms had limited salaries.

Vinubhai led quite an unhappy married life as his wife's brother had harassed them and tormented his wife constantly, taunting and passing ill comments. Jasubhai recalled the journey by train with his new wife, wherein she had lost her purse and 'mangalsutra' because she had insisted, "I will keep it as it is my money". Jasubhai said that both had been very happy and engrossed, "Anand ane umang maa waato karta, uteri gayaa". Jasubhai also recalled his attendance in 1996 at an Indian funeral in a UK church, which was a blend of the east and the west. Further, he appended that on that day, due to exposure to the extreme cold, his wife had developed a severe pain in one eye. He narrated that he had cured his wife with a 50 paise Indian tablet called "stopache" which he had brought over from India to UK. He felt triumphant that he had scored over specialists of UK who could not cure his wife of the severe pain despite all the tests and screenings she underwent!

### ***Incidents***

Jasubhai talked about his daughter who had divorced her first husband, remarried and now was a widow since 1984. She lived with him. He further recalled how he had switched roles with his wife since the last 10 years, and how he now took care of her

during her asthmatic attacks. He found it difficult to maintain a family after his retirement in 1983. It was only recently that he had bought a fridge.

Today, he disliked the yearly dance festival of garba, as it was played to recorded tunes instead to the tunes of real singers! Manubhai traced his life as a schoolteacher at three places in Gujarat before going on to Africa, till he finally landed in the USA with a green card in 1972. He recalled how he had to come back for a year to settle his daughter into married life. He said that in his absence, his daughter used to help out in cooking at the neighbour's house and had fallen in love with the son of the family. Subsequently, she had come back to India, from the USA after obtaining her own green card and taken husband and in-laws back to USA.

Manubhai returned to India in 1987 for good. He constructed a fabulous farmhouse and has up to now lived a smooth yet a hectic life of retirement. He established a youth group called Angels, along the lines of the Chicago based Angels group; and, holds memberships in many organizations and communities for village development work. He is held in great respect in the village as an able leader.

### ***Widowers***

#### ***Childhood Events***

The men recounted very vividly their childhood in great detail. Out of 4 men, 2 were very mischievous, 1 was under the umbrella of piety and inner strength, and 1 was good at studies and extra curricular activities. Since their life events are varied, their cases are given separately.

- Vithalbhai was a mischievous lad up to 20 years of age. The incidents he recalled were, the accidents with machineries, beating up children and reading

other people's orchards, for mangoes, tamarind and berries. He also said that it was a set norm to be beaten up by his father, rightly or wrongly because all misdemeanors were alluded to him. For this reason, he stayed away from teachers. He has studied up to matriculation.

- Nanubhai said that he was believed to be attached to the divine power of goddess Shakti, since his birth. He narrated an example of being rescued from up a tree (which was his rare prank) and a tragedy. Tragedy struck when he, and his nephew (2 years older to him) were returning from a funeral. As, 16 and 18 year olds, they thought of bathing in the river, fully clothed. Both of them did not know how to swim. Nanubhai had clung to a log and drifted too far out, whereupon his nephew had tried hard to rescue him, but died in the attempt. Some villagers standing away interpreted their cries for help as playfulness. Till date he feels very guilty and says "Hoon temnu roon kya have nahi chukvi shaku!"

When Nanubhai was 12 years old, he came under the influence of Pandit Ravi Shankar Maharaj, a spiritual leader, who preached the Gandhian principle of buying khadi (home made cloth), as the money would go back to the people.

From the Maharaj, Nanubhai also picked up other religious inclinations.

### ***Early Youth***

The average age of marriage was 16.22 years. All of them traced their lives in great detail and, on the whole, narrated hardships, profound tragedies as well as the normal course their lives took.

The responses are summed up below:



- Participation in the rallies during India's freedom struggle in 1942, by Vithalbhai and Motibhai. The former also remembered beating up a white man in Nairobi, who called him a "bloody Indian".
- Marrying girls selected by the family. Vithalbhai had to marry a British passport holder, which he felt was a compromise, "Thoduto 'let go' karavu pade che".
- Fighting for social concerns of their families. Nanubhai helped his cousin marry a boy who was more suitable than the one chosen for her by the family. He took it up as a challenge for his somewhat disabled cousin.
- Motibhai helped his wife study further after marriage.

### ***Sad Experiences***

- Vithalbhai and Nanubhai narrated the details of the deaths of their wives. Both had had to hold back their grief due to circumstances. Vithalbhai's wife had died in London and, they had to keep the body at home for four days till the cremation could be held at the church. The family had to go about their daily business. No food came from the neighbours as per the Indian tradition. Whereas, Nanubhai's ailing wife had died on the New Year's Day. He stalled declaring her death and funeral preparations till late evening, so as not to spoil the visitors' festive spirits. His wife's body had lain in a separate room, and everyone had presumed that she was too ill to be disturbed! No one suspected her death, as she had been in and out of hospital and needed perpetual bed rest.

### ***Tender Care***

- Before her death, Vithalbhai had nursed his sick wife when she was hospitalized in order to repay her for the care she had bestowed on him all through their married life.

### ***Oh! To be Poor!***

- Jeetubhai narrated about his poor financial status. He had amassed a lot of debts and had spent many years in repaying them. The money had been borrowed to settle his children in 'good married life' abroad.

### ***Some of Our Feelings***

It is very important to look at feelings and concerns after the life review by older persons, as it helps to gauge their sense of well-being and satisfaction, in perspective.

Tables 20 to 27 deal with the respondents' feelings, satisfactions and concerns. Since all the tables are self-explanatory and round off their feelings, satisfaction and concerns, general interpretation, are made for individual tables.

### ***Life Course Events***

Table 20

Feelings About Life Course Events by Marital Status (N=19)

Marital status Feelings	MW (n = 6)	W1 (n = 5)	MM (n = 4)	W2 (n = 4)
Satisfied	1	1	2	2
Dissatisfied	-	-	1	1
Neutral	5	4	1	1

Note MW = Married women, W1 = Widows, MM = Married men, W2 = Widowers

**Married women.** According to Table 20, out of the 6 women, Meenaben (OG) was the only one who was satisfied with the way her life had chartered its course. All the others felt neutral.

**Widows.** Out of the 5 women, Jassiben (OG) was satisfied with her life so far. The other 4 felt neutral.

**Married men.** Out of 4 men, 2 were satisfied with their life course events. Vinubhai (OG) was the only one dissatisfied. Whereas, Jassubhai (YG) appeared neutral.

**Widowers.** Out of 4 men, 2 were satisfied. Nanubhai (OG) was neutral and Jeetubhai (YG) was dissatisfied.

**Present Situation**

Table 21  
Feelings About Present Situation in Life by Marital Status (N =19)

Marital Status Feelings	MW (n = 6)	W1 (n = 5)	MM (n= 4)	W2 (n = 4)
Happy	1	1	3	2
Unhappy	2	-	1	1
Neutral	3	4	-	1

Note MW = Married women, W 1 = Widows, MM = Married men, W 2 = Widowers

**Married women.** Leenaben (YG) who has four daughters was the only woman to be happy about the present situation in life. Sarlaben (YG) felt unhappy about it. The other 4 women felt neutral (Table 21).

**Married men.** Out of the 4 men only Vinubhai (OG) was unhappy. All the others were happy.

**Widowers.** Two men were happy, Jeetubhai (YG) was unhappy and Nanubhai (OG) felt neutral, with the present situation.

*Completion of Children’s Responsibilities*

Table 22

Feelings About Completion of Children’s Responsibilities by Marital Status (N = 19)

Marital status Feelings	MW (n = 6)	W1 (n = 5)	MM (n = 4)	W2 (n = 4)
Satisfied	5	3	2	3
Dissatisfied	-	1	1	-
Neutral	1	1	1	1

Note MW = Married women, W1 = Widows, MM = Married men, W2 = Widowers

**Married women.** All of them except Leenaben (YG) were satisfied with the completion of responsibilities, towards their children (Table 22).

**Widows.** Ritaben was the only woman to be dissatisfied with the completion of her responsibility towards her children. Kirtiben (OG) was neutral, and the other 3 were satisfied.

**Married men.** Out of 4 men Veenubhai (OG) was not satisfied that he had completed his responsibilities towards his children. Jassubhai (YG) was neutral and the other 2 were satisfied.

**Widowers.** Jeetubhai (YG) was neutral about fulfilling his responsibilities whereas, all the other were satisfied.

***Children’s International Migration***

Table 23

Feelings About Children’s Migration Abroad by Marital Status (N = 19)

.Marital Status Feelings	MW (n = 6)	W1 (n = 5)	MM (n = 4)	W2 (n = 4)
Satisfied	4	2	4	2
Dissatisfied	-	1	-	-
Neutral	2	2	-	2

Note MW = Married women, W1 = Widows, MM = Married men, W2 = Widowers



**Married women.** Out of 6 women, Leenaben (YG) and Kavitaaben (OG) felt neutral towards the migration of their children abroad. The others were feeling satisfied (Table 23).

**Widows.** Out of 5 older women, Jassiben was dissatisfied, and Ritaben was neutral. The other 3 were satisfied about their children’s migration abroad.

**Married men.** All the 4 married men were satisfied about their children’s migration abroad.

**Widowers.** Two men were satisfied and Jeetubhai (YG) and Nanubhai (OG) were neutral about their children’s migration abroad.

### Loneliness

Table 24

Feelings of Loneliness by Marital Status (N = 20)

Marital Status Frequency	MW n = 6	W1 n = 5	MM n = 5	W2 n = 4
Always	1	1	-	1
Sometimes	1	-	2	2
Never	4	4	3	1

Number of Hours Alone at Home				
Never	1	1	2	1
1 – 3	2	3	1	1
3 – 6	2	1	1	-
6 – 9	-	-	-	-
9 +	1	-	1	2

Note MW = Married women, W 1 = Widows, MM = Married men, W 2 = Widowers

**Married women.** According to Table 24 none of the 3 younger women felt lonely even though 2 of them were alone at home between 1 – 6 hours per day. Out of the 3

older married women, 2 felt lonely. They were alone at home between 3 – 9 hours.

Kavitaben was alone at home, for more than 9 hours and always felt lonely.

**Widows.** Among the older widows, 4 of them never felt lonely even though they remained alone at home between 1 – 6 hours, except Jassiben, who was never alone.

Kirtiben was the only women who felt lonely quite often. She was alone at home between 1 – 3 hours per day.

**Married men.** All the 4 younger and 1 older married men never felt lonely.

Vinubhai (OG) was alone for more than 9 hours per day.

**Widowers.** Table 24 shows that Jeetubhai (YG) often felt lonely. He stays with his 88 years old mother and is never alone. Out of the 3 older men, Vinubhai and Motibhai were alone for 9+ hours at home, and contradicted themselves about feeling lonely. They admitted to feeling lonely in the oral history but not in the survey. Perhaps, they let their guard down and gave way to nostalgic emotions? On the other hand, Vithalbhai, who stays alone and is by himself, for 1-3 hours, said he never felt lonely.

### *Life Satisfactions and Concerns*

Table 25

Life Satisfactions and Concerns of Married Women (N = 6)

Satisfactions	Concerns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proud and satisfied to have settled the son and daughter abroad, despite all odds.</li> <li>• Daughter-in-law is amenable and cultured.</li> <li>• No problems at present.</li> <li>• No deed remains undone.</li> <li>• Proud of grandson.</li> <li>• Nursed an ailing husband.</li> <li>• Children are holding good jobs abroad.</li> <li>• Daughter is happily married, with a son, despite a love marriage.</li> <li>• Children are well settled and married in 'good' families and remain happy.</li> <li>• Everything is good for self.</li> <li>• Satisfied with the god given things whatever they may be.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who knows tomorrow the daughter-in-law may change for the worse.</li> <li>• Worries about the daughter.</li> <li>• Son works too hard for money.</li> <li>• Sad, tense and worried about husband, who has many diseases.</li> <li>• Uncertainty about tomorrow.</li> </ul>

**Married women.** Table 25 shows that the women's satisfactions are felt with respect to the happiness of their family members and doing service for them, despite the odds. Settling their children scores high on their list. They are also proud of fulfilling all duties and obligations and feel satisfied with their lot in life. Their worries are also for their children's especially sons, and husbands' welfare as well as the uncertainty of tomorrow.

Table 26

Life Satisfactions and Concerns of Widows (N = 5)

Satisfactions	Concerns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No regrets as fulfilled all responsibilities.</li><li>• All five children are living happy lives.</li><li>• Happy when the children feel happy.</li><li>• Happy as children have migrated for a good purpose.</li><li>• Sent son abroad to Africa/USA for a secure future and a foothold on foreign soil, so that others can follow.</li><li>• Son is now the provider after his father's death.</li><li>• Looking after sick husband and mother-in-law right up to their deaths.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The first son migrated at the cost of his studies.</li><li>• Repayment of huge loans.</li></ul>

**Widows.** Table 26 indicates that they have less number of satisfactions and concerns than the married women. Their satisfactions are similar to those of the married women. The happiness about the son taking over the father's mantle seems to please them the most. Their concern is mainly for the son's welfare as well as repayment of huge loans they have incurred.

Table 27

Life Satisfactions and Concerns of Married Men (N = 4)

Satisfaction	Concerns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Daughters are well settled.</li><li>• Good relations with children and daughter-in-law.</li><li>• Children are happy especially, when we see their happiness during visits abroad.</li><li>• Children share good relations with each other.</li><li>• Have led an active life and gained experience in farming.</li><li>• Compared to others in the village, have led a fuller, richer and better life in USA.</li><li>• Remained healthy so far.</li><li>• Have a staunch lady friend in Africa.</li><li>• Happy and satisfied with life.</li><li>• No-question of dissatisfaction as have got all that was deserved.</li><li>• Have a good wife and physical fitness at 61 years of age.</li><li>• Have had a normal, average and a full life.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• That the children stay united and not face any trouble in life.</li><li>• That the wife is medically unfit and cannot travel with him, among other things.</li></ul>

*Married men.* Table 27 shows that they feel satisfaction especially, with respect to the women/children of their families, as if fulfilling the role of the head of the family. Next, they are satisfied about their achievements and experiences in life. Their concerns are very nominal about their wives' well being and children's future.

Table 28

Life Satisfactions and Concerns of Widowers (N = 4)

Satisfactions	Concerns
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have good relations with sons.</li><li>• Children are united and have good relations with each other.</li><li>• Government of UK sends regular pension, which is augmented generously by the sons.</li><li>• Though alone, have no worries as the maid and her family helps out in times of need.</li><li>• Happy that the daughter is well settled.</li><li>• Have worked with honesty and sincerity throughout life.</li><li>• Have a peaceful family.</li><li>• Had a good stepmother who cared so much for the family.</li><li>• Took part in the freedom struggle against the British (then rulers).</li><li>• Though staying alone, there is reciprocation of visits with children in UK.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The loneliness felt by me should not weaken the resolve of the sons to stay united in UK as they would likely send the wives as my caretakers.</li><li>• Not fall ill despite having good paid help.</li><li>• Relatives should not snatch the property.</li><li>• What will happen to my divorcee daughter who has already suffered at the hands of the in-laws?</li><li>• Supervision of studies of three grand children in India, due to to which migrating abroad is out of question.</li><li>• Being lonely when ill.</li><li>• If there is remarriage, will the lady marry me for property?</li></ul>

**Widowers.** Table 28 shows that the concerns are almost as many as their satisfactions. They are satisfied about what life has to offer them, such as good relations with children and drawing regular pension. They are also happy about their past achievements about family life, settling the daughter in life and their freedom struggle against the British. Their concerns are about being lonely, falling sick and their property falling into wrong hands. Grand children’s studies also concern them, a lot.

*Few Expectations for the Future*

The respondents were asked to think of their future and whom they felt would stand by them and help. Their responses are categorized according to marital status (see Table 29). The responses are self-explanatory. Information within brackets denotes situation for which help is expected.

Table 29

Expectations for the Future by Gender and Marital Status (N = 19)

Married (n = 6)	Women	Widows (n = 5)
Husband		Son
God		Daughter-in-law
Nephew		Grandson
Daughter (for parents with only daughters)		Self (Pension)
Self (Pension)		Neighbours (Day to day problems)
Neighbours (Family problems)		Daughter (Emergency)
Niece		Paid help (Emergency)
Co-sister-in-law		
Hired help		
No expectation		
Married (n = 5)	Men	Widowers (n = 4)
No expectations		Paid help
Self		Leave to destiny
Daughter		God
Hired help		No one
Son (Emergency)		Son
Daughter-in-law “		Grand children
Daughter “		Paid help (Emergency)
Brother “		Give up living “
Neighbours “		

The responses from Table 29 indicate that the women expect help from the family. The married women also mention neighbours for help during ‘family problems’. Surprisingly, no one mentions friends.

Married men seem to depend on themselves, the family (excluding the wife) and the neighbours. The widowers hold a rather pessimistic view and mention son and grand children, after naming paid help and god, for future support.

**Concept of Old Age**

Table 30  
Concept of Old Age by Marital Status (N = 20)

Marital status Categories	MW (n = 6)	W1 (n = 5)	MM (n = 5)	W2 (n = 4)
Spiritually inclined	1	1	-	1
Developmental stage	1	3	4	2
Emotionally challenges	3	-	-	-
Stage commanding respect and dignity	1	-	-	-
Completion of all responsibility	-	-	1	-
Achievement and opportunity	-	1	-	1

Note MW = Married women, W1 = Widows, MM = Married men, W2 = Widowers

**Married women.** Table 30 shows that the married women perceived old age at 50 years which was characterized by health deterioration, inability to eat and work as well as by signs of indigestion and breathlessness. Further, old age was emotionally very challenging as the older women become dependent and helpless, are often harassed by daughters-in-law, and thus find solace in spiritual matters such as god; or, they trod the path of self-realization. Alternatively old age was seen as a stage of self-respect and dignity.



**Widows.** The widows saw it as the last stage of development at 60 years, which was troublesome, characterized by deteriorated health and mobility. One just waited for death and the abode of god!

Alternatively, it was seen as a stage of engrossing self in religious activities, as all responsibilities had been completed; thus leading a peaceful and satisfied life.

**Married men.** The married men perceived old age at 70 years and characterized it as a developmental stage which was ‘a natural process’, ‘unavoidable stage’ and ‘inevitable’ and; one had to accept this ‘fact gracefully’.

They also saw it as a stage where one can ‘spend time on oneself’ especially as there was less responsibility compared to previous years. It also had more social status at present. On the downside, they perceived old age when one became dependent on the previous generation for all kinds of support i.e. physical, mental, financial etc. One also could not walk properly and needed rest all the time.

The older men perceived it as a stage of deterioration and being bed ridden as “haath pag naa chale”.

**Widowers.** Perceived old age after 50 years of age or after retirement, characterized by changes in the body and physical inactivity requiring proper diet and monitoring of health. Alternatively, the older men felt that old age was a mental stage and the body functioned accordingly. One could “conquer pain and connect with one’s inner self through meditation and feel fit”

It was also perceived as a time of great opportunity, experience and achievement, and; a stage of guiding the younger generation.