THE WESTERN EDUCATED HINDU WOMAN

RAMA MEHTA

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1970 Rama Mehta

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FOREWORD

I FIRST MET Mrs. Rama Mehta at Harvard in the spring semester of 1965. I had just returned from a seven months' sojourn in India and she was nearing the end of her appointment at the Radcliffe Institute for Independent Study. From our very first conversation in the reception room of the Institute I sensed the presence of a highly intelligent, vigorous and perceptive person, but one who felt insufficiently secure in her talents. In the succeeding weeks we met, not as frequently as I could have wished, but often enough for me to realise that Mrs. Mehta had rare capacities and that her interviews with fellow convent-educated Indian women were of unparalleled depth, confidence, and sensitivity. The more systematic "social science" interviews that exist in the literature seemed either trivial or down-right false by comparison to Mrs. Mehta's data. Furthermore, she had taped materials to corroborate or correct her own very considerable intuitions. It would be indiscreet to make comparisons. But the quality of Mrs. Mehta's enquiries was clearly distinguished. The problem she faced was to communicate her insights and her data in a fashion that had neither the fictive qualities of a novelist nor the pedantic jargon of a social scientist. Mrs. Mehta had tackled that problem with her customary energy and skill. My suggestions could be only incidental to, and supportive of, her own capacities.

During the winter of 1966, Mrs. Mehta was again at Harvard for her second year's appointment at the Radcliffe Institute. With the present manuscript largely completed, our conversations centered on new enquiries to which she might profitably turn her very considerable talents and her creative insights. Whatever Mrs. Mehta's decision will be, I have every confidence in the outcome.

In sum, Mrs. Mehta is one of those highly intelligent women that India has produced throughout her history. The present generation of such talented women who are married to leaders of the nation and who are bearing the strain of mediating between their husbands, their families and their children in a rapidly changing society are burdened, perhaps, in an unprecedented fashion. It is for these women that Mrs. Mehta speaks in this volume.

In the last decade we have seen the deleterious results of a widening gap between the have and have-not nations, as well as between the rich and the poor. It would be equally harmful to allow a comparable gap to develop between women and their fathers, husbands and sons or, for that matter, between the aspirations of educated women and their hopes of realising them.

I consider it a privilege to have learnt so much from Mrs. Mehta about that remarkable group of educated Indian women. I can only hope that they will grow in numbers, in personal assurance, and in influence. Women are, after all, half of the world's population.

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INTRODUCTION

THE PURPOSE OF this inquiry is to find out to what extent traditional customs and values are still operative in Indian society. For over two hundred years India was under Western domination. Many important segments, if not the whole fabric, of Indian society came under its direct or indirect impact. The traditional pattern of society which has existed in India virtually unchanged for centuries has not been essentially altered by foreign political domination, for the overwhelming majority lived in rural India. None the less this contact effectively changed the attitudes of the élite of the country.

The cultural heritage of India was passed from generation to generation through the help of women. When women lose touch with a tradition embodied in the way of life and lose faith in it due to alien influences, a threat is presented to the survival of traditional values. This could endanger the cohesion and stability of society unless something equally valid replaces the old. The women of India, for the most part, though uneducated, and often even illiterate, were brought up in a severe and rigid tradition bound by sanctions and invisible penalties which made them adhere with deliberate care to what their elders had passed on to them. The constant reaffirmation of the faith of their forefathers, though not necessarily an intellectual commitment, flowed from a sense of emotional and moral ob-

ligation to the caste-community, which in turn strengthened group mores. Hindu tradition, bound up with domestic rituals and customs, was held together mainly by women. This provided the basis of family and community life. The impact of alien influences on them could greatly undermine their faith in traditional norms and values.

The following inquiry is based on interviews with fifty western-educated élite Hindu women. It tries to see the influence of Western education on them, in what spheres it was effective and whether its impact resulted in merely a superficial imitation of Western ways of living or whether it went deeper and changed the traditional value system and led to an assimilation of Western ways and thought.

These interviews were conducted in India and in the United States of America. The sample group comprised of Hindu women from different castes and from different provinces in India, with a B.A. or an M.A. degree from an Indian university and primary and secondary school education in a Christian Mission School where English was the medium of instruction. A second criterion was the age of the respondents. They were between the ages of twenty and twenty-five in 1947, and were all married. The parents of the respondents belonged to the army and the Civil Services. Individuals in these professions were under the maximum influence of the British, and earned salaries ranging from 550 to 3,500 rupees per month. The year 1947 has been taken as the cut-off line because it was the year in which British rule in India ended. The sample, like the scope of the inquiry, is selective and seeks to assess the impact of influences, both modern and traditional, on the respondents during their formative years in pre-independent India.

Each of the respondents was given an open-ended questionnaire to fill out as fully as possible. The respondents were told that they could write as much as they wished with regard to any of the questions. Most of the respondents, initially, were reluctant to participate if they were required only to answer the questionnaire and looked upon this procedure of finding out their attitude as wholly inadequate and even naive. Once they were assured that a depth interview would follow, the women were prepared to accept the questionnaire. They said that their initial hesitation was owing to the questionnaire method because

however fully answered, it would not do justice to what they had to say. The few respondents on whom this initial procedure was tested proved satisfactory. Once fairly certain that the combined method would work, the questionnaire was sent to the women a day or two before the interview to give them time to write at length if they so desired. Twenty-one of the respondents had not filled the questionnaire when interviewed because they wanted to talk as they wrote; they were fearful that their attitudes would not be correctly understood if they did not point out the various nuances themselves. Fifteen of the respondents filled out the questionnaire before the interview but kept it with them during the intensive interview to be sure I was getting their point of view correctly especially on controversial topics. It was noticed that what they wrote often contradicted what they stated at the interview. When the discrepancies were pointed out to the respondents, they held that this was inevitable as the topics were such that one could not give a positive or a negative answer, especially on subjects like divorce, caste and marriage. For this reason fourteen of the respondents were not prepared to fill in that part of the questionnaire on which their views were ambivalent and expressed their views only at the time of the depth interview. The views expressed at the time of the interview and not what they wrote in the questionnaire have been taken to represent their attitudes. The respondents themselves unanimously agreed that it should be so.

As will be seen in the chapters that analyze the views of the respondents, this proved to be a useful technique and demonstrated that a questionnaire alone without a follow-up interview in depth would have been inadequate in such an inquiry. In fact, drawing conclusions from the questionnaires alone could have given a false picture of changing attitudes and the final conclusions could have been misleading. The questionnaire was, however, useful as it served to focus attention on the area of concern and put a restraint on the respondents. The interviews were conducted in English and were taped and varied in length from three to six hours. Twenty-five of them were held in the United States. All of the women interviewed in the United States were temporary residents, having lived there for 2 to 3 years. They had come with their families because of their husbands' professions. The other twenty-five took

place in India, thus guarding against the possibility that those questioned in the United States might have been influenced by their stay abroad. From the results, it was evident that the respondents outside India were more vehement on questions such as divorce, care of the aged, and the upbringing of children, than those interviewed in India. Their stay abroad had not changed their basic attitudes towards traditionalism versus modernity.

The study also examines the background of the respondents' parents most of whom came from tradition-centered homes. Professional necessity brought their parents in direct and indirect contact with British life and thought. Since most of the parents retained their faith in the Hindu way of life and its value system, their children, the respondents, felt the impact of two different cultures in their childhood. Consequently, this study also analyses the impact of two different value systems, and of two different ways of living, both of which were operating on the respondents simultaneously. Since the respondents later established nuclear families of their own, the study further attempts to see what traditional values were retained and passed on to the younger generation, the first-born in Independent India.

In order to see the change from traditional to modern values as embedded in a way of life, it is necessary to give at the outset a broad and highly general description of the Hindu cultural framework in which traditional life was set. No attempt has been made in these chapters to provide an exhaustive account of Indian society or its institutions.

1

THE CASTE

CASTE IS AN institution which is inextricably related to the Hindu social structure. To put it simply, it is the denominational group into which the Hindu enters at birth.

The four major castes or Varnas are the Brahmins (priests), the Kshatriyas (rulers and warriors), the Vaisyas (businessmen and farmers), and the Sudras (servants or menials). A fifth class (Panchamas), known as outcasts or untouchables, were outside the caste structure and were treated as such.

The first three castes are supposed to be of pure Aryan blood and are called "twice born." All members must go through the initiation process ceremony (the sacred thread ceremony) which is symbolic of rebirth. This privilege is denied to the Sudra, who is therefore called "once born".

This original classification of society into four major groups, based on the division of labour, did not remain intact for long. Through the years castes became subdivided into closed groups known as sub-castes or Jati. Each sub-caste, though derived from one of the four major castes (Varna), was unique, a rigid grouping within which its members conducted their social life.

The sub-caste mores governed a member's actions, both public and private. From birth the individual found himself in a social milieu from which only a violation of caste rules, not personal success or failure, could remove him. Indeed the status of a

person depended not so much on his wealth as on the traditional importance of his caste.

Caste, as also sub-castes, has a protocol of precedence, with the Brahmins at the head of the hierarchy. The Brahmin has through many centuries enjoyed a special status whereby all other castes revere its members. Hindus consider it the highest form of sin to treat a Brahmin with disrespect. The precedence of the four castes is in the order given above and cannot be changed in any way. Although no man can raise his caste to a higher status, he can by his actions rise or fall within his sub-caste. Just as a man may lose his position in the sub-caste, so also a sub-caste may lose its position in society. Adopting professions thought by other castes to be degrading or giving up traditional taboos are often instrumental in reducing status. By the same token, adopting practices associated with higher castes or "sanskritization" may lead to a higher status. It is therefore not uncommon to find a sub-caste which received great respect at one time no longer commanding the same esteem. This made for sub-caste mobility with its peer groups alert to any fall in the standards of behavior within the sub-caste.

Each sub-caste has its own dietary restrictions; meat and liquor may be permitted by one sub-caste yet forbidden by another though both may belong to the same caste. There are also rules governing which sub-castes may dine together. Theoretically no man may eat with a member of a lower caste. Each sub-caste has worked out a definite pattern of acceptability. Its members know with which sub-castes they may have social intercourse, and at what levels.

Behind this type of restriction is the concept of pollution and purity. In brief, pollution, though it has differed widely in time and place, may result from various forms of contact through food and drink or the physical touch of another. One form of pollution, defiling through touch, is most evident in the attitude of caste Hindus toward outcasts.

Purity is preserved by the faithful performance of domestic sacraments, daily devotions and by avoiding any breach of caste rules in matters such as food, marriage, or social intercourse.

Each sub-caste had, and to some extent still has, privileges as well as restrictions. The Brahmins and the Sudras were espe-

cially notable in this regard. The former, for instance, were at one time exempt from capital punishment and their lands were assessed at a lower rate. The Sudras, on the other hand, were not considered worthy to recite or even hear the Vedas. Today no caste is singled out for special consideration except where government has thought necessary, as in the case of the fifth class, Panchamans or outcasts, to give them special privileges so that they do not have to meet competition for which they are not ready due to their under-privileged position for so long.

In spite of the general indifference of the government to the caste of a man, the ingrained sentiments toward caste still continue. This is especially so in areas where people are still bound together by known ties and feel secure within them, and are afraid to violate what are considered religious injunctions.

The sub-caste into which a person was born determined to a great extent the profession he might follow. Generally a sub-caste considered some professions its hereditary preserves. To step outside the "caste profession", even to a more lucrative post, was considered wrong. Just as a caste did not permit its members certain types of work, so also it did not welcome outside intrusion on its customary professions.

The sub-caste regulated not only an individual's public life but also his private life. It strictly forbade marriage outside the sub-caste. The principle of endogamy is fundamental to caste society. There are a few exceptions permitted to the rule of endogamy by which a man can take a wife from a lower caste, but the ideal marriage is one that is contracted within the sub-caste.

The moral and customary rules of a sub-caste are enforced by a caste-council or Panchayat. This body of men keeps a close watch on the actions of its members. The council hears complaints and decrees suitable punishment for any breach of caste rules. The punishments depend on the kind of offence and can be any of the following: (1) Outcasting the offender temporarily or permanently; (2) Fines; (3) Feasts to be given to caste men as a mark of apology; (4) Corporal punishment. To be ostracized by the group in a village economy had very serious repercussions on the individual. It left him and his family isolated, often making it impossible for him to survive if he did not make the necessary amends. Though caste is divisive,

it held people together and made them respect law and order even if it made them unaware of their responsibility to society as a whole. Since each sub-caste, depending on its size, had its own council, it follows that there is great diversity in the moral standards and customs that were enforced. The offence and the offender were viewed through the mores of the sub-caste.

Traditionally it is felt that the caste system has been established by divine ordinance and must be respected and perpetuated. The Bhagvad Gita asks the faithful to perform caste duties which take precedence over all other obligations and states further that perfection is only attained by the man who follows with devotion the duties of his caste. Observance of caste rules, therefore, is equivalent to one's Dharma (religious or moral duty). It is because of this emphasis that the caste system became closely tied with the Hindu religious beliefs of Karma (action) and transmigration of souls. According to the doctrine of Karma, a man's birth in a particular caste was the result of his good or bad Karma in a former life. Only by performing caste duties with devotion could one hope to rise in the hierarchy in the next birth.

There is no doubt that a caste-structured society encourages in its members group loyalties and responsibilities. Members are more aware of their caste than of the larger community. But in a country where care of the aged, the disabled, and the sick is lacking, reliance on a unit larger than the family is the best insurance against adversity. A widowed girl or an orphan child become objects not of public charity but the personal concern of the caste. An uncared for orphan is considered a blemish on the caste rather than on society as a whole. The moral standards applied to such situations do not flow from a sense of impersonal justice but from the idea of right conduct toward the unfortunate in one's own caste.

Caste has also played a significant role in preserving the cultural and traditional integrity of India especially during periods of political upheaval and foreign invasion. Due to education and communications in modern times, caste, viewed traditionally as a basis of differentiation between people and groups of people, is not so rigidly adhered to by certain sections of people; besides, many of its injunctions are impossible to maintain in large

cities. There is greater economic mobility today than there was in former times and it is gradually increasing. The possibility in India today of breaking through man-made restrictions placed on an individual has made inroads into caste supremacy. People, especially those who are able to rise in the social ladder through economic gains, have the choice to break through caste barriers if they should so desire. There is an increasing emphasis on class groupings in cities and towns rather than on caste exclusiveness.

2

THE HINDU JOINT FAMILY

THE PRACTICE WHEREBY a group of people directly traceable to a common male ancestor lived together was called the joint family system. The system derived its strength from tradition and custom, claimed to originate far back in history. The sanction for this system was derived not only from religion but from a variety of sociological factors.

In the Hindu joint family the eldest male member was the head and his younger brothers and their sons with their wives and children shared the common ancestral home. Ideally, ancestral property was shared by all its members, each member bringing to it what he earned and receiving from it what he needed or rather what the head of the family thought appropriate for him. The compulsions to preserve its unity were such that professions which took members away from the ancestral home were discouraged and it was considered unfilial to accept even a lucrative job that required living away from the family abode.

As a unit the joint family supported servants and poor relations. The servants not only gave assistance in the running of the house and the upbringing of the children, but also played an important part as the transmitters of family customs and traditions to the young brides who came ignorant of family traditions and ways. In such a family unit the members were bound together by unwritten laws of decorum where age, not

necessarily combined with wisdom or earning capacity, conferred authority and received undisputed respect. Younger sons paid deference first to their father, then to their paternal uncles and then to the eldest brother. The men set the rules of this hierarchical order and accepted the obligations and the discipline that such a family unit placed on them.

If the eldest male member was the undisputed master of the family, his wife was the undisputed head of the female members of the family and their children. It became the responsibility of the eldest woman in the family to see that the other female members followed the tradition of the family, worshipped the family gods, and offered prayers for the dead of the family. Every woman in the joint family was encouraged to feel as a mother to all the children and cousins were brought up as if they were brothers and sisters.

The living members of the family were considered the trustees of the home which belonged to the ancestors, and they preserved it for the future members of the family. The sacred rites binding together the living and the dead made the members of the family more conscious of their trusteeship. To be worthy of the family name and not to disgrace either its living or its dead members was of supreme importance.

The concept of the individual as subordinate to the unit was impressed on all members of the joint family. From infancy sons were consciously influenced to accept the burdens of the family and to submit to the dictates of fathers or uncles in order to meet the obligations to the family without trying to assert their own right. The occupational continuity of the joint family was thus maintained and very often this resulted in diversion of talent into channels unsuited to the individual. These and other sacrifices were considered necessary if the joint family unit was to continue and provide for its non-contributing members and their dependents, and if the individuals were to benefit emotionally from being members of a large unit. For women, life under such a system called for self-control, reserve and modesty, acceptance of male authority and respect for the female hierarchy. It was a woman's duty to see that the gods were properly worshipped with the due ceremonial rituals, family charity maintained, auspicious days observed and feasts given on appropriate occasions. Further it was her duty to

maintain inter-family relationships, discharge her responsibilities to the members of her husband's extended family and render assistance required of her on such occasions as birth, marriage and death. It was in the faithful discharge of these duties that family unity, prosperity and respectability were ensured in the eyes of the caste-community.

The joint family system helped to keep the cultural and religious traditions of India intact and at the same time provided security to needy individuals. This system was a stabilizing force especially during political and social upheavals. But it also discouraged individual initiative and promoted dependency. Men who were brought up under such a family system often lost the capacity to act and think for themselves; they followed the dictates of their elders wihout question. When removed from the family unit, they often found it difficult to accept adult responsibility.

The effective establishment of British Administration over India tended to erode the discipline and structure of the Hindu joint family system. The British brought with them their own ideas of family life and, above all, their own form of government. In order to administer India effectively they needed educated Indians. They therefore introduced a system of education which did not demand change of customs but in fact resulted in that. New job opportunities were opened through education, and were available to men of talent irrespective of caste or family status. British rule also introduced new values which conflicted with those of the joint family. In order to succeed in the new society, the individual was required to be self-reliant and capable of taking decisions without reference to superiors. Though the separation from the family unit was painful and against tradition, it became inevitable. Recruitment into service under the British meant prestige which even the family recognized. But this often meant leaving the ancestral home. The all-India basis of the civil service led to transfer of officials from one town to another and even from one state to another. This combined with the gradual transformation from a purely rural or a feudal order to one with elements of capitalism, leading in turn to progressive urbanization, resulted in social mobility. This development weakened the organic discipline of the joint family and the authority of the head of the

family over its constituent members.

Notwithstanding all these disintegrating influences which have resulted in the dispersal of the members of the family, the new nuclear family also tends to become a joint family in imitation of the original system. Its rules of decorum and management of the household finances are not as rigid as in the conventional joint family. There is greater freedom for the individual and he is not required to lose his identity in that of the family. The 'new family' generally holds together the married sons, daughters-in-law and the grand-children and does not automatically split into separate nuclear families at the time of the marriage of the male members of the succeeding generation. In the conventional joint family, all the brothers and their wives lived together. In the 'new family', married brothers need not share the same home. The break takes place when, at the time of marriage, a son establishes his own nuclear family but continues to be responsible for his parents and unmarried brothers and sisters who may share his home. In the 'new family' the emotional bonds are recognized as more exclusive to one's own children. But the 'new family', like the old one, is expected to provide social security and sustenance to its members which now do not include all relations.

To foster these family sentiments, modern secular society also lends its support. It approves of those who discharge their obligations to the family and frowns on those who do not accept their filial responsibility. Although modernization, industrialization and new concepts and values have shaken the joint family system, the modern home still has many of the same psychological factors that once bound family members together. But to what extent this emotional bond can continue as the aspirations of men and women change and they set new goals for themselves is to be seen. The old family unit was sustained not only through mutual need of one another but also through the discipline that traditional upbringing imposed on individuals. The analysis of the fifty modern women will perhaps throw light on what the new goals and expectations are and what kind of discipline is being given to the younger generation and whether this fosters sentiment for family members and tolerance for near and distant relatives.

3

THE HINDU WOMAN

THE POSITION OF women has varied in different periods of Indian history. There is recorded evidence to show that the Hindu woman was not always without rights, nor constantly in subjection. There is, however, greater evidence to show that the contrary was true; for many centuries her position continued to be one in which she did not have either legal or social rights to make her independent of the family into which she was born or married.

Indian women were the main support of the Hindu joint family system. Though this was a strict patriarchy where the man's wishes were supreme, it was the woman who held the many members together. Yet it was natural to find women in such a family organization having no rights of their own. The whole foundation of the joint family depended on the submissiveness of its members, men as well as women, to the head of the family. In this type of family unit a woman had to remain flexible and self-controlled. Her family, knowing that a woman's happiness lay in her capacity to adjust and look upon her husband as her guide, moulded her in that frame of mind from early childhood. A woman was expected to hold no independent views nor demand more freedom than her husband thought fit to give her. This frame of mind was not difficult to achieve as marriage took place when the mind was still immature and

capable of imbibing new ideas.

Marriage for the Hindu woman was not an option; she was married by her parents as part of their religious obligation. It was a sacred duty that every parent was anxious to perform as soon as possible. In fact, parents held their daughters only in trust for their future husbands, and once the girls were married, their responsibilities if not their concern ended. After marriage a woman became a member of another family and had to adjust to new ways if she wanted to be loved and respected. She was not expected to return permanently to her parental home even in case of need. She had no choice but to accept a polygamous basis of marriage, a custom that was allowed though rarely practised in ordinary homes, whereby she could be set aside for one or more co-wives.

Male dominance in the family as also in society led to the growth of customs which further ensured the woman's continued dependence on men. Due to social and economic reasons she was unable to assert herself beyond certain limits.

With the exception of marriage, she was denied the right to participate in religious ceremonies in which Vedic texts were used. There was no period set aside for her intellectual growth as in the case of boys who were symbolically initiated into studentship by the sacred thread ceremony. For girls, marriage assumed the same importance as the sacred thread ceremony for the boys as it was also a rebirth into a new life.

Marriage was considered primarily as a complex of obligations, religious and moral on the one hand, social and economic on the other. Marriage under Hindu orthodoxy was not a matter of free selection between two individuals; rather it was an alliance negotiated between two families. It was an indissoluble sacrament, blessed by religious Vedic rites in which the individuals most concerned were not consulted. Parents tried to minimize the risks by seeking the advice of astrologers who consulted the horoscopes of both potential marriage partners. Only if their horoscopes tallied on essentials did the parents proceed with other details. The law-givers insisted that a marriage should be contracted within the same sub-caste; it could not be with someone of the same Gotra (having common descent), thus prohibiting marriage between two persons related to each other within certain well-defined

cognate and agnate relationships.

Once these essential considerations were met, the girl's parents assessed the economic, social and moral standing of the boy's family. Since the prospective husband was often too young to be judged on his own merit, it was his family that was the main consideration. In arranged marriages a family was eager to unite with another family of equal or higher status. In a country where wealth and education are limited to the few, it was natural for the parents of the girl to meet great competition for eligible boys in their community. There was correspondingly less pressure on the part of the boy's family who could be more exacting in their choice of a daughter-in-law. The moral obligation to marry their children brought with it in some provinces in India the dowry system.

Dowry is what the girl's family is prepared to give to the boy's family in cash or in kind. Where there were more girls than boys in a family, this naturally meant great anxiety for the parents. Since marriage was considered essential for every girl, parents naturally tried to meet the demands of dowry if that meant ensuring a good marriage. A boy's family naturally looked for the best possible combination of beauty, wealth and status in their selection. Parents of girls often had to borrow large sums of money to meet the dowry, but this sacrifice was acceptable for the sake of their child's happiness. This noble consideration led to indebtedness resulting in great economic hardship. Hence where the dowry system existed, bearing male children was an advantage.

Marriage for Hindu orthodoxy was not only for the duration of the husband's life, but was a partnership that extended even after his death. Widows were consequently forbidden by social custom to remarry. This was particularly unjust when so often the widow was a child or a very young woman. It was not for the widow to choose how she wanted to live. She was expected to remain faithful and find happiness in the memory of her dead husband. A widow continued to be the responsibility of her husband's family in which she was often considered an inauspicious symbol and thus excluded from festive occasions. A widow's happiness therefore depended on how enlightened the family was. If widowed it was thought to be a woman's Karma that had brought upon her this calamity which she had to bear in

the light of her religious Dharma. On these religious principles was based the concept of Pativrata.

Pativrata, the complete devotion of the woman to her husband, alive or dead, seeing in him her god and her ultimate salvation, was the highest religious Dharma. Her reward came in inner satisfaction and in life hereafter. She was brought up with this ideal from birth and had no way of challenging its validity. So great was the hold of this concept on women that social reformers could not, by legislation alone, make widow remarriage a success. Orthodox Hindu society also did not favor any deviation from this moral code. In spite of social changes Pativrata continues to be the dominant attitude of women toward marriage in large sections of Hindu society.

Just as Pativrata was the moral code, the Purdha system was part of the feminine code of modesty. High caste women in some parts of India were segregated from men and their social life was confined to the home or to the company of other women. Even in parts of India where Purdha was not practiced, well-born women were still discouraged from being with men or treating them as equals, with the exception of parts of South India. To be reserved in the presence of men was part of the traditional feminine etiquette. Women were encouraged by their peer groups to remain within the confines of the house and were taught domestic crafts. Liberal education was denied them not by law or religion but because of social prejudice against it. Their role demanded of them a different kind of training to which, it was thought, formal education presented a challenge. Practices such as early marriage, dowry, Purdha and joint family were effective in keeping women from going to schools and colleges. Families feared that educated women would threaten the harmony of family life. To maintain unity it was essential that women did not have personal ambitions and goals; they were expected to find their fulfilment in the family, not outside it.

In spite of the many barriers placed in the way of women's formal education, Hindu women were not completely illiterate or uneducated. From an early age they were involved with various aspects of religion and they were given a solid foundation in domestic rituals. They were poised, cultivated in manner, and deeply respected by society. Even with all the restric-

tions placed on the traditional Hindu woman, she enjoyed a very high status both in the home and outside. She was referred to as a goddess, considered the power behind men and the most stable force in the home, and her influence was considerable.

The social barriers that prevented women from taking advantage of education and participation in outside activities began to lift with the start of this century. The attention of social reformers all over India was directed toward the position of women and they endeavored to abolish the myth regarding their inferiority or their need to be subordinate to men. Men like Gandhi sought the help of women in the fight for freedom—a call that was answered by all sections of society. He championed their rights and through every available means tried to re-educate society. Gradually in the cities the age of marriage began to rise and as a result girls were sent to schools and even to colleges. Families within the orbit of British influence were the first to break through the traditional bonds. Daughters of such families were given education though they were still brought up with the Hindu ideals.

Modern Indian legislation also helped in establishing the position of women and freeing them from economic dependence on men. The Hindu Code Bill of 1954-55 made Hindu marriage monogamous, permitted divorce, and made women equal partners with men in inheritance of property. It also legislated against dowry. How many of these rights can be exercised by women in present day India is another matter, but that they exist is of the greatest importance

These introductory chapters have sought to describe the basic framework of the Hindu value system. In the following chapters we will see, on the basis of the fifty interviews, whether the old framework is intact, and if not, what has happened to the disciplines that it dictated.

4

THE BACKGROUND OF THE RESPONDENTS' PARENTS

BECAUSE OF PROFESSIONAL obligations, the fathers of twenty-eight of the respondents left their ancestral homes. The mothers continued to live with their in-laws for a period varying from five to eight years after which they joined their husbands. The parents of the respondents were the first in their families to leave the joint family and establish homes with a nuclear basis. Parents of the twenty-eight women were, however, within easy reach of their husbands' family home and frequent contact was possible with their in-laws, and caste-community members.

Both parents of fifteen other respondents had lived in the ancestral home for periods ranging from five to eight years after marriage, but when for professional reasons the husbands had to leave their birth place, their wives accompanied their husbands and established a home of their own. In these fifteen cases, they had left both their home state and linguistic area. The ancestral home was not within easy reach and the separation from the extended family was, after a period of time, complete. The ties had been maintained as long as the husbands were alive, but once they had died, the contact diminished; most of the children of these fifteen parents by the time they were in their teens had practically no sentiment for their

respective caste-community members.

The mothers of the remaining seven respondents had continued to live with their in-laws although their husbands worked elsewhere. They paid frequent visits to their husbands who were located at distances varying from two hundred to five hundred miles. Only when one or both of the parents-in-law were dead, the mothers of the respondents came to live with their husbands, with the remaining parent-in-law accompanying them. The seven respondents had consequently lived with their grandparents for the first eight to twelve years of their lives. They visited their fathers several times during the year but never for a period longer than three months at a stretch after they were school-going.

The mothers of thirty-two respondents had been married before they were twelve years old. The other eighteen had been married between the ages of twelve to fourteen. Though married, none of the respondents' parents had gone to live with their in-laws until they had reached maturity. Most of the mothers of the respondents did not know their date of birth.

The mothers of thirty-five of the respondents had not more than five to six years of education, most of which had been limited to learning to read and write the regional language and to do simple arithmetic. This instruction had been given to them in the house while they were still young by male teachers. Their reading was confined mostly to simple books. Education for girls in most orthodox families at this time was haphazard with no attention paid to formal education. This was not for any economic reason, but simply because education was not considered an asset for marriage. These thirty-five women were, however, proficient in such domestic crafts as cooking, sewing and embroidery.

Of the remaining fifteen mothers, eight had continued their studies after marriage without any formal goal and seven of the fifteen had taken the school-leaving examination and then studied college subjects on their own without taking degrees. All these women continued their studies while still with their parents after marriage. But once they went to live with their in-laws, they had to give up studying as they were required to learn to share household responsibilities. Most of the fifty mothers had helped with the cooking and supervized the work of

servants. They got up at five in the morning and, along with the elder women of the family, started the day's work. In most of these homes, despite ample domestic help, the cooking was usually done by the women of the family or under their strict supervision. In such an atmosphere the question of asking permission to continue with one's studies did not arise. The respondents gathered from their mothers that life for them was not easy in many cases in spite of economic abundance. The elders in the family were strict with them and constantly emphasized the duties of a married woman not only in the sphere of household management but within the whole spectrum of inter-personal relationship within the caste-community. They were told how important it was that they discharge caste-community obligations in the proper manner. They learnt the customs and traditions of their caste through rigorous indoctrination and through participation.

These fifteen mothers had started studying only when they were in their own nuclear homes where they were relatively free. In almost all these cases, the incentive to continue with their studies was given by their husbands. This encouragement was given not so much because the men wanted educated companions, but because they felt that with some education their women would be better equipped to cope with their new life, which was less protective than what they were used to.

Most of the fifty respondents' mothers were anxious to learn to speak English so that they would not be embarrassed when in contact with English and educated Indian women. In order to achieve this female tutors were engaged for short periods for thirty-two of the women. Once the basic knowledge of English had been imparted, these lessons had been terminated. Thereafter, husbands and children corrected their spoken English. The respondents said that their fathers were not embarrassed because their mothers lacked sophistication and spoke faulty English in a British-influenced society. There was a deep admiration in the minds of the respondents for this attitude on the part of their fathers and they attributed it to the great sense of responsibility and concern that men felt for women who had been displaced from their environment. Besides there was considerable pride that their womenfolk kept their own standards of behavior.

In spite of coming from traditional backgrounds, twenty of the respondents' mothers had taken to playing club games such as tennis, cards, etc. All but ten of their mothers attended mixed parties after five to eight years of living in their new environment. Initially they found going out with their husbands not only distasteful but contrary to their ideas of feminine modesty. It was only after many years that they accepted these mixed gatherings without a sense of extreme embarrassment. However, it must be pointed out that even when they accompanied their husbands, there was little or no communication with other men. In mixed gatherings women were shown great deference by men who never treated them as equals and always referred to them as sisters or mothers depending on their age.

The knowledge of English of most of the respondents' mothers was limited to speaking, and that with varying degrees of fluency. The language spoken at home was the vernacular and English was not the medium of communication between the children and parents. After being in mission schools, the respondents started speaking English with their brothers and sisters, but continued to use the vernacular with their parents, especially with their mothers.

The fathers of all the respondents were highly educated and fully proficient in English. Twenty-three of the respondents' fathers had spent from three to seven years in England and all of them had been abroad sometime during their professional training. In spite of this foreign training, most of the fathers were Hindu-centered and did not wish certain Western ideas to enter their own homes. Though they understood and appreciated Western values, they were not prepared to make any radical changes in their way of life or to inculcate these values in their wives and children. It was the adherence by male members of the family to Hindu ideas that allowed the respondents' mothers to continue confidently in their traditional pattern of life. It is of interest to note that fifteen of the respondents' fathers were practicing Hindus and followed most of the domestic rituals of Hinduism, continued with the traditional modes of worship, and wore symbols such as the sacred thread throughout their lives. Those of them who were vegetarians by conviction remained so throughout their lives.

In spite of the reluctance of most parents to bring Western

values into their homes, the fathers permitted both their male and female children to go to English schools. This was because, in the 1920's and 1930's, the best education available was in the mission schools. Though the fathers had no particular interest in the education of their daughters beyond having them know English and obtain some of the external polish of mission-bred children, they were interested in their sons' education and wanted them to qualify for prestigious professions, such as Civil Service, armed forces, medicine and law.

Among those respondents whose fathers increasingly adopted Western attitudes, the mothers steadfastly kept up their Hindu way of life in the home. They did not give up their convictions in essentials though they accommodated the superficial demands of their society.

5

ATMOSPHERE OF THE NUCLEAR HOME

A DESCRIPTION OF the atmosphere of the nuclear homes in which respondents grew up is necessary in order to see that, although the basis of the home was different to the joint family, it continued very much on traditional lines. The exposure of the men to Western ideas did not essentially alter their Indian way of life and the professional adjustments were as far as possible kept separate from their personal lives. This integrity was maintained primarily because the mothers of the respondents were steeped in the Hindu way of life and committed to its values; besides they were not asked to make major adjustments in order to be in tune with anglicized society.

Most of the respondents' mothers were practicing Hindus for all the years of their lives, which meant that they conducted their daily routine which was based on Hindu practices even in their nuclear homes. They adhered to restrictions and perpetuated injunctions that they had learned as part of their earlier training. It was, however, impossible to keep up with all rituals or to follow all injunctions; certain changes had to be made due to environmental changes. For example, it was not practical to maintain the specified period of isolation associated with menstrual uncleanliness with the same degree of strictness. Rules concerning food pollution and its preparation were equally difficult to continue. Orthodox Hindus were careful with whom

they shared their food. One could be polluted by eating with certain castes. Similarly the injunction that a Brahmin or a caste Hindu do the cooking was important. Those of the lower castes were not allowed to enter the kitchen or touch the utensils. These considerations were important for those who thought that by infringing these rules laid down by Hindu orthodoxy they were betraying religious principles. The injunction that one should only eat with the right caste was no longer possible to observe in the more modern and diffused environment. It was also no longer feasible to ensure that the cook of your host belonged to the proper caste. These considerations were given up by most of the respondents' mothers once they took part in an inter-caste social life.

The majority of the respondents' mothers paid deference to Brahmins throughout their lives irrespective of the individual's merit, though the respondents said that for many of their mothers after some years this was more psychological than in actual evidence. They gradually lost some of their dependence on Brahmins to direct their lives except on important religious functions. In their parents' homes religious days were observed with due ceremony, and fasts kept on such days as the full moon, Siva Ratri, Janamashtami and other auspicious days. Most of the respondents' mothers had faith in astrology and performed ceremonies to reduce the unfavourable influences of the planets on the lives of their husbands and children. The cow was especially sacred among all other animals and was treated with special care and attention.

The major birth and after-birth ceremonies had been performed and the appropriate feasts given to the caste-community on such occasions. In spite of being away from the ancestral home, the mothers of most of the respondents sought the advice of their in-laws in major decisions and were guided by it. They were in constant touch with elders of their family and did not feel, because of their separate households, that they were free to do as they pleased. They continued to feel that they were a part of a family unit much larger than their immediate family and thus participated as much as possible in important family and extended family events especially at the time of death or marriage in their caste-community. It was important for them that they were respected by their caste-community. For the

respondents' mothers it was only in that milieu that they sought approval and appreciation. Their social life in the new society was regarded as temporary; what had permanence for them was the position they held in the caste-community. Though this feeling remained with their mothers, they did begin to identify themselves with their husbands' career prospects which required greater interest in the standards of the new society. In spite of their lack of education the respondents' mothers, through observation and imitation, did try and incorporate some western forms in their homes, without basically compromising their Indianness. There was, however, no self-consciousness in continuing with traditional etiquette as well. The majority of the respondents' mothers covered their heads with the sari in public and kept in the background if there were men present. None of the fifty respondents' mothers referred to their husbands by name, but referred to them in the third person. They did not enter into public discussions with their husbands nor did they treat them as equals. All manifestations of both discord and affection were kept strictly hidden from the children in whose presence a formal relationship based on respect for the head of the family was maintained. Children were brought up to be deferential toward parents, particularly the father, and not encouraged to contradict or argue with their elders. The modern concept of children and parents being companions was not even considered. The authority of parents not only to guide but to enforce their views was the discipline of the home.

Most of the respondents felt that they were treated differently from their brothers. The difference was subtle; it was in small things that it was in evidence. There was greater indulgence shown to boys and their demands for things were more readily met. The feeling that their brothers were favored was also conveyed to the respondents by terms of endearment used by their mothers. "Boys are like jewels of a family." "You are our wealth; everything depends on you." "It is to you we will look in our old age." The respondents were also brought up to respect their older brothers and to indulge the younger ones. The difference between them and their brothers was most acutely felt with regard to education. In fact, many of the respondents knew their parents felt that the money spent on their education was a waste, especially for higher studies. This was not, the res-

pondents explained, a matter of grudging them education or anything else, but was related to how their parents viewed girls in contrast to boys. It was always emphasized that the girl would ultimately leave the family. She was only a temporary member of her parents' home whereas the boys were not. They would be required to bear the responsibility of the family and carry the family name. The logic behind this reasoning seemed justified. Formal higher education in any case was not considered the best training for girls who were later to manage a home. So naturally there was reluctance to spend on it. The parents feared that this type of education might in fact make the girls self-opinionated and rigid in their attitudes, not having the necessary flexibility for adjustment when married. Throughout their lives they were reminded of their feminine roles and the qualities necessary to bring domestic happiness. Though sending them to college was a decision taken by the parents and thought in general to be good, there was considerable doubt in the parents' minds about the results. Most of the respondents recalled how their mothers would talk to them about their own childhood and how strictly they had been brought up, the qualities that were important to make a marriage successful, and that married life was not always easy. The respondents were made aware that marriage required a set of values and a discipline that was not necessarily imparted through college education. Frequently their mothers even doubted the wisdom of letting them go on to college studies instead of getting them married as so many of their cousins had been. Marriage was the only goal put before the respondents, and to prepare the respondents for that was the primary responsibility of their mothers.

The respondents said that even as children they were carefully supervized and that contact with any males other than brothers, uncles, and first cousins was almost non-existent. After the age of ten or eleven they were not allowed to go out except when accompanied by a female servant. No male servant was permitted to do their personal work and they were rebuked, even punished, if they were caught talking to male servants in the house without good reason. They were not encouraged to play with their brothers' friends and not allowed to go with them to visit their male friends. The consciousness that they

were girls was brought to bear on the respondents by this kind of segregation and by the constant repetition that they were girls and hence had to be careful of men. The idea of female chastity and purity was also put before them and every story told to them during their childhood seemed to the respondents to underline this point. "These stories were quite boring and repetitive in their theme".

Because the parents were no longer living in the caste-community, they were doubly careful that nothing the children, particularly the girls, did should reflect on their reputation. The standards of the caste-community were still respected and followed as far as possible. They were not desirous of letting their girls acquire Western sophistication and become one with the anglicized group in which they lived. In fact, every precaution possible was taken to avoid this. The model put before the respondents was the traditional woman rather than the emerging modern woman. There was fear that the semi-Western environment in which the parents lived could give 'new ideas' to their children. Because of this, the respondents were never allowed to forget that they were Indians and not Europeans. In order to ensure that their children, male and female, were not carried away by new standards, greater discipline and vigilance was enforced. As young girls they were not allowed to take part in plays that had mixed casts or attend mixed parties, though these were common features of the British influenced society.

Due to the lack, in some households, of trusted family servants and the absence of female relatives, the supervision of the girls fell entirely upon their mothers. For this reason the respondents felt that after they had finished their first university degree their parents were eager to get them married. It seemed to the respondents that having a grown up unmarried girl in the house was a source of anxiety, if not a burden, to their parents.

The respondents, especially those who had aunts and cousins frequently visiting them, said that the home provided enough distractions so they did not miss going out. This was also because the respondents' mothers were not engaged or interested in activities outside the family. The fact that the mothers were home-centered made all the difference, the respondents report-

ed. This, they said, moulded their own attitudes to family life. "The house was never empty; there was always someone there." The children never felt that while they were required to stay in and amuse themselves their mothers were out having a good time. This, as they reflected back on their childhood, made them feel important and cared for in a very special way. The dedication of the mothers to their children's welfare made the greatest impression on the respondents, even though there was no understanding of their specific problems and no room for discussion of the same. They were not preached to about ethics, but saw a definite ethical code in practice which they accepted without challenge as it was integrated into life itself.

In spite of being very carefully protected from Western influences, many of the respondents did feel the impact of their environment and felt unduly restricted. In school they were taught to treat the opposite sex as equals whereas their home training was contrary to this. This created conflict for the respondents who were not sure how to behave with men. The other and more serious consequence was that in school the respondents were allowed and encouraged to express their point of view even when it differed from the instructor's. The majority of the parents did not recognize this consequence of Westernized education. They continued to enforce a pattern of conduct which ignored this fact, causing some feeling of rebellion in their children. They insisted that age be respected and that it was discourteous to argue with older people. This form of respect for parental authority applied equally to boys and girls. Neither felt free to discuss or argue with their parents or with others of that age group and this subservience to age was resented by many of the respondents, once they were grown up and had views of their own.

Though the majority of the respondents had been brought up with their parents who were professionally required to be at ease with their Westernized colleagues, their homes still were patterned on Indian ways, such as eating from Thalis, sitting on the floor in preference to using Western style furniture in their private rooms. The change was gradual and not a result of losing one's identity because of Western impact. It was this rootedness on the part of the respondents' parents that contributed at least in the earlier years of their life to a sense of

cultural identity. This was undermined and challenged as we will see later.

The interview scheduled was directed to ascertain from the fifty respondents their attitudes to education, Hinduism, caste, marriage, male-female relationship, dowry and divorce. While enquiring about the respondents' views on these topics, their own background and conditions in their parental homes have also been recorded. This gives an idea of what kind of influence moulded their attitudes and how effective it was in determining the respondents' views in later life.

In grouping the responses of the fifty respondents minor deviations have not been taken into account. The groupings indicate major breaks. It has not been possible to assess an individual respondent's attitudes across all topics; for example, a respondent who may have been traditional in one area of enquiry may have been modern in another. In order to assess the respondents' views, each topic has been dealt with exclusively and the groupings indicate how the fifty women view a particular topic. There is no attempt made to see the degree of modernity and traditionalism in each individual across the board. Therefore, it is not possible to say if a group was consistently modern or traditional. There was a great deal of fluctuation in their views, of which the respondents were aware and they made no effort to try and gloss over the fact that whereas they were traditional in certain things, they were modern in others and vice-versa.

The second half of the study focusses directly on the respondents' upbringing of their children in these areas that are discussed above. Here again, the views of the respondents are seen in major breaks. Views have been ascertained from the respondents on their general attitude to the upbringing of their children, child and parent relationship, education, religious education, expectations from children, recreation for children, old and new attitudes. Here again, it is difficult to assess what the respondents feel with regard to traditionalism versus modernity and the upbringing of their children. In this section, as in the above, each topic is dealt with exclusively and the breaks in opinions are pertinent only to that topic.

6

EXPECTATIONS FROM EDUCATION

Why the Respondents went to Mission Schools

ALL THE FIFTY respondents, who were college-educated, stated that their parents had had no definite expectations from their education. Most of them felt that they had been educated primarily because their parents were unable to create the traditional atmosphere in which they could enforce the old discipline. The majority of the parents were almost, it seemed, forced to follow a pattern, the value and consequences of which they were not quite sure about. They were left with no real alternative, as to fall back entirely on orthodox standards was no longer feasible. The fact that a certain break had been made with old standards made it almost impossible to ignore new trends, especially in education, to which no real objection could be taken. The mothers of the respondents had had very little systematic education; most of them could not see the kind of fulfilment it could bring. Though all of them realized its usefulness in the new society, they themselves felt the lack of education, especially in their later years, when they became more divorced from the large family unit and had more time to themselves. But still most of the respondents were made to believe, all through their childhood and adolescence, that for all women the greatest fulfilment lay in being married and 'serving others'. The 'other' was always the family, immediate or extended. The

respondents said that their mothers did not see themselves as individuals with a right to self-expression outside the family, but this changed for many of them after exposure to the outside world. There were however no outward manifestations of this change, nor any indication that life within the family was confining. The respondents felt that had their parents remained in their traditional background, perhaps they would not have been educated beyond the elementary level. This was largely because their parents did not see higher education as adding to their marriage-worthiness.

Therefore, for the respondents, higher education came their way accidentally, arising out of displacement from an orthodox environment to a relatively modern one. There was no conviction on the part of the parents that modern education prepared one for married life. Knowledge was something they respected but generally kept at a distance for girls. It was for men to take it seriously, as they were the future bread-winners. To study for the joy of learning was not quite the same thing as preparing to earn a livelihood.

There were a number of factors that operated together to give an impetus to the education of young women. The environment into which the parents of these fifty respondents had moved was British influenced, and its status symbols had to be adopted if one wished to establish oneself. English was the language in which the educated conversed; its knowledge conferred prestige. In this society early marriage was frowned upon and the rise in the marriage age for a girl allowed time for study. New ideas were making an impact on this élite. The respondents felt that had their fathers not opposed early marriage, which was still the practice in their caste-community, they would have had to conform to the traditionally conceived upbringing of girls in spite of being in the new environment.

It was primarily due to their fathers that the respondents had been sent to British mission schools. Their fathers were keenly aware that without the knowledge of English their children could not create a place for themselves in the new society. It was not easy for them to convey to grandparents and relatives the importance of English. Most of their cousins were kept at home and sent to orthodox schools where the medium was the vernacular. Therefore the steps taken by the respondents' pa-

rents to give their daughters a Western education were considered quite revolutionary.

The fathers of the respondents who belonged to the armed forces, the Indian Civil Service and other élite services, were apt to be transferred frequently and were often posted to places where there were no proper schools. This made it difficult for the children to have a continuous education. It was also difficult to make satisfactory arrangements to educate them in the home; besides, living in remote areas often meant being without reliable family servants, and to leave girls to ordinary servants was not considered proper. The absence of relatives living permanently with the family made this problem more acute. Anxiety about satisfactory supervision of female children, the respondents said, made mission boarding schools attractive. Mission schools had a good reputation and the strict code of behavior which segregated boys and girls in these schools appealed to the respondents' parents because it did not violate accepted conventions of Hindu society. The social élite that made up the class of civil servants to which their parents belonged looked upon Western schools as a status symbol. Thus the combination of several factors made mission school education the most attractive proposition at this period.

Attitude of Parents to Education

In spite of the bold decision on the part of the parents to give girls modern education, most of the respondents did not feel that their education was directed or that any tangible results were expected from it. They did not think that there was a professional goal, only that "in the changed circumstances, it is right to educate girls". The majority of the women said that very little continued interest was shown by their parents toward their performance in school. "As long as I kept up with the class, it was all right." "Even if I failed no one really felt bad, nor was I scolded. Everyone was proud that I spoke English and the rest did not matter." These women felt that had interest been taken in their studies they might have exerted themselves more. Competition between other girls, rather than any standards of excellence imposed by their parents, stimulated them. Some of the women pointed out that their studies were not taken into account when planning holidays. The necessity of extra coach-

ing, for example, was not as important as a visit to grandparents. The absence of interest on the part of their parents had been one of the main causes of anxiety in the respondents at this period. As it was they were not at ease with their Anglo-Indian playmates and not to be good in studies only added to their humiliation. Many of the respondents wanted to do well just in order to feel superior and thus minimise their sense of inadequacy.

The fact that all the respondents went on to college was again not part of a plan but an accident. They continued their education because there was really no alternative except marriage. Since marriage at the age of fifteen or sixteen was not an acceptable alternative to their fathers, the logical thing was to send them to college. Also, the small family unit of their parents did not have the same means to keep the adolescent occupied as in a large family. The respondents saw that cousins and aunts of their age kept completely busy within the home. The kind of responsibility placed on young girls was intended gradually to make them competent in domestic responsibilities, and this type of activity was not possible in their homes. Even the respondents' mothers found difficulty in occupying themselves once the children were grown up. "When I was your age, there were so many obligations to be rendered to other families that we didn't have a moment of rest". "What can a girl do in a home that isn't full of relatives?". "We at your age made pickles and papads: servants were not entrusted to do these things." were typical comments the respondents heard from their mothers. The large majority of the respondents felt they were sent to college to bide time till marriage rather than to acquire proficiency in a particular discipline. Marriage enquiries started once they were seventeen or eighteen and this quest was more important in the parents' eyes than how and what they did in college. The choice of subjects was left to the respondents. Many of them reported that they had taken a certain subject because a friend was taking it or because it seemed glamorous. Only a few had taken courses in which they thought they had interest. These few women had had considerable difficulty in convincing their parents to accept their choice if the intended course was long and rigorous. The parents wanted them to study humanities as this was felt to be easier than to pursue courses in science.

The respondents who wanted to take such courses said that had there not been a girls' college offering these subjects, they would have had to change their subjects as their parents would not have agreed to their joining a co-educational college at that age.

The fact that some of these respondents, at the end of their college studies, were professionally equipped to work was due more to chance than to plan. Many of the others who spent the same number of years studying felt that with guidance they, too, would have acquired professional competence. As it was, many of them had taken subjects that did not promise an economic return. Reflecting back and in view of the present need for specialized training, the respondents regretted the fact that they had done an M.A. It would have been easier to find work if they were doctors, lawyers etc. There were others who did not go beyond the Bachelor's degree because their parents felt they should learn domestic crafts till they got married. This break in their education was thought to be unfortunate as they felt unqualified to do any work.

The large majority of the fifty respondents said that their parents did not consider economic independence through education as a worthy goal. Nor had these women seen themselves as future working women. In fact, their peer groups in society and the family emphasized the economic dependence of women on men. It was considered contrary to the feminine role for a woman to seek economic independence. Education was looked upon as an embellishment—an attribute to charm, and generally useful to have.

There was, however, a very small minority of women who said that their parents were interested in their studies and did think of education in terms of giving girls a sense of security. These women were urged to finish their advanced degrees. But even for them, had a suitable man been found, they said their parents would not have waited until their training was finished. Still these women were encouraged to do their best within the framework. There was a growing awareness that girls brought up with Western ideas were different to those girls who remained within the orthodox environment. There was no definite expression of this by the parents nor did they change their basic attitude towards the upbringing of their girls. But they did feel

that with a good degree they would be in some vague sense more sure of themselves. "You never know what is ahead of you; it is better to be prepared for the worst." "The times are changing. You girls are not going to have as easy a time as we had. We entered marriage with no ideas of our own, but you have been brought up differently." These were typical comments of their mothers.

The majority of the fifty respondents did not see themselves as career women because at that time for girls from good families to work was frowned upon, and because the orthodox and affluent in Hindu society equated work with necessity and female immodesty, and hence did not allow their girls to work before marriage. Though this segment of society did not want their daughters to be career women, they respected women leaders, who were engaged in social reform and the freedom struggle. They were inspired by Mahatma Gandhi who championed the rights of women. In spite of admiring women who were in the forefront of public life, the respondents' parents did not want their children to break with what was considered respectable. They thought giving an education was being modern enough but to go further and allow girls to get ideas of their independence was to court disaster. The respondents' parents did not even take into consideration the changes in expectations which may have resulted from years of higher education and exposure to new standards. This incapacity or unwillingness to see the respondents in a different light from their traditionally brought up cousins made it possible for their parents to enforce old standards of behavior with conviction.

About one-third of the respondents would have liked to work, not necessarily for money, while waiting to get married. They were not allowed except to help out in social welfare activity, and that too if it was run by women. They had found this kind of work wholly unsatisfactory. The respondents reported that the period after their studies and before their marriage, which varied from one to four years, was demoralizing. They had the feeling of being let down by their parents who, they felt, chose not to understand their needs and desires. Their days were filled with such domestic distractions as visiting friends, learning to cook, or taking art lessons, all of which gave them little satisfaction, as it was all done to kill time. This period of waiting for mar-

riage, the respondents reported, was the most difficult.

From the responses of this one-third of the fifty women, it was evident that their peer group attitude had changed, which was reflected by them too. They no longer looked upon the traditional Hindu woman as their model. They did not deny that marriage was essential, but wanted to combine it with something else, not knowing exactly what. They were attracted by women like Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Sarojini Naidu and others like them, who had combined family life with work. They wanted to follow in their footsteps but were unable at this time to be more concrete. Besides, they had neither the wish nor the courage to contradict their parents. This, the respondents said, was due to the essentially sound logic of getting married before doing work. "It was not so much that I wanted to work, but that I was bored doing nothing." There was no desperate desire to get a job "except one can't spend all one's times reading novels or visiting friends."

This sense of restlessness before marriage and need for some kind of expression other than domestic pastimes was not felt by the remaining two-thirds of the respondents. One of them put it this way: "I was so conditioned that quite frankly I was not frustrated because I did not use my education. In fact, I enjoyed reading for pleasure rather than having to read". Another respondent said, "My attention was directed to marriage and education was only secondary in the scheme of things." "I never thought of education in terms of working until much later in life."

What the Respondents had done with their Education

As we have seen, most of the respondents had been educated without a set plan. We shall now consider to what use the respondents put their education and what benefits they derived from being educated.

After the first six years of marriage eighteen of the fifty women began to feel dissatisfied with the obligations placed on them by family members. In this group, the majority held a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science degree and were not professionally qualified. But after six years these women said that they resented the fact that they had no time to read and pursue their hobbies seriously. They wanted to take part in some form

that with a good degree they would be in some vague sense more sure of themselves. "You never know what is ahead of you; it is better to be prepared for the worst." "The times are changing. You girls are not going to have as easy a time as we had. We entered marriage with no ideas of our own, but you have been brought up differently." These were typical comments of their mothers.

The majority of the fifty respondents did not see themselves as career women because at that time for girls from good families to work was frowned upon, and because the orthodox and affluent in Hindu society equated work with necessity and female immodesty, and hence did not allow their girls to work before marriage. Though this segment of society did not want their daughters to be career women, they respected women leaders, who were engaged in social reform and the freedom struggle. They were inspired by Mahatma Gandhi who championed the rights of women. In spite of admiring women who were in the forefront of public life, the respondents' parents did not want their children to break with what was considered respectable. They thought giving an education was being modern enough but to go further and allow girls to get ideas of their independence was to court disaster. The respondents' parents did not even take into consideration the changes in expectations which may have resulted from years of higher education and exposure to new standards. This incapacity or unwillingness to see the respondents in a different light from their traditionally brought up cousins made it possible for their parents to enforce old standards of behavior with conviction.

About one-third of the respondents would have liked to work, not necessarily for money, while waiting to get married. They were not allowed except to help out in social welfare activity, and that too if it was run by women. They had found this kind of work wholly unsatisfactory. The respondents reported that the period after their studies and before their marriage, which varied from one to four years, was demoralizing. They had the feeling of being let down by their parents who, they felt, chose not to understand their needs and desires. Their days were filled with such domestic distractions as visiting friends, learning to cook, or taking art lessons, all of which gave them little satisfaction, as it was all done to kill time. This period of waiting for mar-

riage, the respondents reported, was the most difficult.

From the responses of this one-third of the fifty women, it was evident that their peer group attitude had changed, which was reflected by them too. They no longer looked upon the traditional Hindu woman as their model. They did not deny that marriage was essential, but wanted to combine it with something else, not knowing exactly what. They were attracted by women like Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Sarojini Naidu and others like them, who had combined family life with work. They wanted to follow in their footsteps but were unable at this time to be more concrete. Besides, they had neither the wish nor the courage to contradict their parents. This, the respondents said, was due to the essentially sound logic of getting married before doing work. "It was not so much that I wanted to work, but that I was bored doing nothing." There was no desperate desire to get a job "except one can't spend all one's times reading novels or visiting friends."

This sense of restlessness before marriage and need for some kind of expression other than domestic pastimes was not felt by the remaining two-thirds of the respondents. One of them put it this way: "I was so conditioned that quite frankly I was not frustrated because I did not use my education. In fact, I enjoyed reading for pleasure rather than having to read". Another respondent said, "My attention was directed to marriage and education was only secondary in the scheme of things." "I never thought of education in terms of working until much later in life."

What the Respondents had done with their Education

As we have seen, most of the respondents had been educated without a set plan. We shall now consider to what use the respondents put their education and what benefits they derived from being educated.

After the first six years of marriage eighteen of the fifty women began to feel dissatisfied with the obligations placed on them by family members. In this group, the majority held a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science degree and were not professionally qualified. But after six years these women said that they resented the fact that they had no time to read and pursue their hobbies seriously. They wanted to take part in some form

of welfare work so that they were not entirely confined to the house. But the pressure of visiting relatives and domestic obligations prevented them from giving their time regularly. Their husbands did not view their dissatisfaction with sympathy. They were against women who felt that relatives were an imposition or that domestic work needed to be combined with some other outlet. They were proud to have educated wives who were able to perform traditional duties. They were basically opposed to women finding satisfaction outside the family.

These men were wholly against their wives trying to achieve economic independence even if it was necessary, and they would not have permitted them to hold a paid job. Even full-time volunteer work would have been discouraged. These eighteen women said that they respected their husbands' views although they did find the family confining. As one woman put it: "Working was not important enough for me to go against my husband's wishes." "After marriage one cannot do as one wants; working is not an important enough issue to create tensions."

This group was emotionally inclined to remain subordinate to the wishes of their husbands. "I prefer to be dependent on my husband than to run things my way." The restrictions placed on these eighteen women did not seem to create severe dissatisfaction because they were not particularly motivated to work. It was really more to have a little distraction than anything else. In fact their attitude toward the modern career woman was critical. They were firmly of the opinion that education must not become a threat to family harmony or reduce the woman's dependence on her husband. They upheld the traditional view that once a woman was married she no longer had a right to self-fulfilment outside the family unless it was with the approval of her husband. "I am afraid too many educated women feel that they have to be dogmatic to be considered modern. If this trend continues, women will be the losers." "There are many different ways to use one's education. I don't see how a typist is using her education better than I am just because she goes to an office and I stay at home." "Today every modern woman thinks running a home, looking after children, is a little *infra dig.* She thinks being a working woman adds glamour to her. This is completely false. Working alone does not make you an intellectual or bring satisfaction. One has to think before

following what is considered the fashion."

Most of the eighteen women had had no difficulty in getting their husbands' approval to do part-time volunteer work, but they had found it unsatisfactory and had discontinued it. They felt that their time was not being put to good use. They did not have the qualities of leadership necessary to improve voluntary services. There was no sense of moral duty to help the needy nor any guilt that they were not more intimately involved in the social problems of this country. "If one can adequately fulfil one's duty towards one's family then one need not feel wanting". "There are many ways of helping others in one's daily life. One should first see that those who depend on you such as servants and their families are looked after, rather than go out and do good." Education had enriched their lives, but had not made them more sensitive to their obligations as a privileged minority. They sought to justify their reluctance to join social welfare agencies, saying they found the agencies did not really use their time constructively. These eighteen women were doing what they could strictly within the family framework. Education as such was not used either for economic gain or in the context of society.

These women enjoyed the possibility of understanding national and international issues. Their participation was limited to social exchanges and did not result in a desire to be personally involved. For instance, although they held strong opinions on such subjects as birth control and were aware that in this field there was need and scope for women like themselves, they failed to act. "I can't go out and work in the villages. It isn't practical." "There is no planning, no place, for those who want to do serious social work. I don't want just to show people I am working." They were unable to specify what they meant by "serious social work".

These women did not see it as their responsibility to change an existing pattern if they found it unsatisfactory and felt little conflict within themselves that they were not contributing to society. On the contrary, they were satisfied with their lives and enjoyed being part of an international group. Though many gave their husbands' attitude to work as the main reason for their not working, this did not carry conviction. They made remarks such as "If I really want to do social work,

I am sure no one would object."

Education for these eighteen women had primarily meant a greater enjoyment out of life. Most of them had new ideas on how to decorate their homes. They were eager to know more about the world, especially the new trends regarding child psychology. They were aware, if not in depth at least superficially about current problems. These eighteen women felt more at home with Western-educated Indian women than with those who had had an education with an orthodox bias. "Those of my friends who have been to mission schools share the same interests as I have." The Western approach to everyday living, if not in the major domains of their personal life, did make this minority feel somewhat alienated from those Indian women who had been differently educated. This minority felt in some ways superior and more enlightened because it could relate to non-Indian people and issues.

In spite of being indifferent to the current problems of their society, these women did join voluntary organizations in times of crisis and helped in fund-raising for charitable purposes. They organized tours and balls to raise money. They were interested in the cultural life of the city and promoted activities that helped enrich it. They were alive to what was happening around them and eager to learn from other people.

Another group of fifteen women said that education had implanted in them seeds of dissatisfaction which came to the surface only after some years of marriage. Early in their married life they enjoyed reading, but they had read without any definite focus; in the beginning they were also satisfied with following events from a distance. Most of the fifteen women said they did not know how to put their education to use, in spite of wanting to use it constructively. In this quest, they were not helped by their husbands or encouraged by their families. Although these women felt that because of their education their children were better brought up, this was not adequate use of their training. "I found the preoccupations with trivial domestic worries more and more irritating." "Bringing up children doesn't require education, it is a matter of common sense."

After seven to nine years these women stated that they were tired of simply being intelligent hostesses. Their husbands were proud that their wives were interested in current problems.

They encouraged them to keep up these interests, but this did not diminish the women's yearning for greater involvement. The desire to engage their time in something beyond domesticity did not come from a sense of moral obligation to serve. It was primarily because the social pastimes of cards and coffee parties became increasingly dull. The fact that other educated women who were working did not consider them as equals hurt their pride. They were especially impressed by women who successfully combined family life with work. Most of them envied women who earned independent incomes. Their working friends seemed to lead fuller lives and yet there was no neglect of their homes.

Five of the fifteen women had found interesting volunteer work which they took seriously. These women met no opposition from their husbands, although they gave a great deal of their time to work. It was accepted because they were engaged in social welfare work and were not paid for their services. Their husbands were opposed to certain types of work, and wished to know with whom and for whom they worked. These five women agreed with their husbands that they should not seek paid employment, primarily because they did not need money and also because voluntary work carried prestige. "I would only work for voluntary agencies where I know there is lack of trained personnel. Not only does one meet nice people in such work, but one also feels really needed."

Ten of the remaining fifteen respondents did not want to do volunteer work. They too did not need to work for money. These women had worked in an unpaid capacity but had found it intellectually and emotionally unsatisfying. This they said was because the work entrusted to them was not challenging and stimulating. They were not prepared to give their time even for pressing social problems without having authority to make necessary changes in an existing plan. The work that carried such authority was very often salaried. In order to obtain such a position they would have to go through the regular channels of recruitment and meet the set requirements. For many of the women this was not practical, due to their husbands' professions and also because they were over-age for regular government employment. As a result they had not found work in fields in which their interest or training lay. Since these

women viewed themselves as adequately qualified, they were not prepared to accept paid work which carried low-level responsibility. Such work would have meant that their colleagues would not be from the same cultural or intellectual milieu as they. Since the salaries were not attractive in themselves, there was no inducement to take work below their expectations. "I want to work, but with a congenial set of people with whom I can have an intellectual exchange." "My need to work is not because I don't know what to do with my time, but because I want to be engaged in interesting problems." "Work is fulfilling only when it carries responsibility. The other attraction would be if one received a good salary; if neither of these were there, I certainly would not work. I have better ways of using my time."

It was evident that these ten women sought gainful employment: "I want to see if I can earn." "Just to know it is money you have earned gives it special worth." When they realized that their education could not be used to get the kind of work they wanted, most of them had taken up hobbies with a commercial potential. Some were making dolls and puppets or growing special plants and vegetables. There were those who had opened boutiques and sold sarees and handicrafts. Others employed craftsmen to execute their designs in textile printing, ceramics, and woodcarving. The finished products were placed in shops to be sold. "Since my things began to sell, I feel another women." "Since I took my hobby seriously, I feel I am using my education." By these means of expression they removed the sources of their earlier discontent. Some of these women had a substantial turnover and were assessed separately for income-tax. They were proud of their efforts and judged their success in terms of sales.

Since marriage combined with work had been more satisfactory, they were in favour of the modern trend which encouraged women to combine the two. "There are now so many educated women in our society that a college degree no longer makes you unique; what makes the difference is when you use your education profitably." "I would even want to hide the fact that I was educated if I were not using it in a way that brought some tangible results." These ten women got more satisfaction from earning than they would have from in-

tellectual pursuits, which did not bring material returns.

Though most of these women were not making use of their academic training, they felt that it was because of that training that they were able to succeed in what they were doing. Education made it easier for them to learn new skills and implement ideas to meet modern needs. These women did not regret that they were not engaged in strictly intellectual pursuits. "Frankly I have forgotten my economics and am not really interested in filling the gap in my knowledge." "The education I had was too general to equip me for any special profession. I have no regrets in not continuing with history."

Though these fifteen women needed to use their time in other than social and domestic activities, they still took a partially traditional view of themselves. They were of the opinion that women did have a right to self-expression and need not always get approval from their husbands, unlike the former group of eighteen women. But these fifteen women did feel that once married one should not take issue on non-essential matters. If there were differences of opinion on essentials then the woman should not give in without making her point clear. They did not accept that female subordination at any cost was a virtue. In fact they believed that differences of opinion were healthy in a marriage partnership as long as the woman did not assume rights that were not in harmony with her marriage responsibilities. They fully recognized the modern dilemma of women not being wholly satisfied with domesticity. But they were of the opinion that this dilemma could not only be resolved if women did not think it their prerogative to assert themselves or to be insubordinate unnecessarily. They wanted to achieve their rights of self-expression through persuasion rather than fighting for them. Male dominance was still considered right and necessary in a family. "If working is so important for a woman, then she should not marry. Once she is married, she must not act as if she were the most important member of the family." "Educated women must not forget that their primary duty is towards their husband and children; everything else must be subordinate to their needs." "A family where the man is not the dominant figure whose word is respected is not a happy unit. In such a unit, the children and the woman feel insecure."

The remaining seventeen women stated that they needed in-

tellectual fulfilment in order to be happy in marriage. Where there was insufficient training it had been supplemented by study after marriage. Thus six women had gone on to do research work and three others had taken specialized training in psychotherapy and allied fields. Many of the seventeen women did not work immediately after marriage. They did not feel that working was the only way to keep oneself intellectually alive. Four of these women found, early in their married life, that they would have little or no opportunity to be regularly employed because of their husbands' professions. This had caused extreme disappointment but they had channelized their energies and were able to redirect their interests into fields that did not necessarily require an office environment. They became freelance journalists and did other work such as interior decoration.

This group of seventeen women felt, with the rest of the respondents, that education had enhanced their self-confidence, had given them a feeling of their intrinsic worth. But in this group there was the greatest indication that because of education they were no longer prepared to be dominated by their husbands, irrespective of the issue. To work, they thought, was a legitimate demand as long as it did not violate norms of decency. The fact that they had degrees was not the only reason for this confidence. These women attributed their greater sense of self-reliance to their mission school training. This training, they said, had made the difference between them and many other women with equal college education. They admitted that this education had also inculcated defiance and reduced their capacity to be tolerant and submissive. They viewed themselves as individuals who had every right to self-fulfilment. Domestic happiness for them would not have been possible if they were required to mould their lives entirely by what their husbands considered proper. These women, unlike the other two groups, considered themselves equal to men and sought recognition of themselves as individuals. They were ambitious and prepared to strive to achieve their goal. This seemed to them perfectly compatible with their husbands being the dominant figures with unchallenged authority in the household. Their need to work, and if necessary even to assert themselves for it, did not make them feel that they were less feminine than those who claimed not to contradict their husbands. "I just don't think all this sur-

face submissiveness to be found in educated girls is real. It is to show how self-effacing they are when in fact they are no different to us who are honest about ourselves."

Of these seventeen women, five were doing full-time work and had done so at the first possible opportunity after marriage. These women had had some difficulty in convincing their husbands that professional life need not necessarily mean neglect of the home or of the children. "It is difficult for me to judge whether my husband gave in to my demands because he felt he would not succeed in changing my mind, or whether he genuinely believed that women can combine work with family life."

Seven women were unable to do full-time work because their husbands objected to both parents being absent from the home. 'A home with the woman absent all day is not a home." "My husband said he did not want me as exhausted at the end of the day as he was." Some of these women had no difficulty in finding interesting part-time work because of the type of training they had to offer. Some were medical doctors, others qualified teachers.

In the case of these seven women, there was no indication that they would not have taken up volunteer work had such work carried definite responsibility. "My only objection to volunteer work is that often the head of such an organization is some non-professional, and to work under such direction becomes difficult and at times even impossible." "Social work is still in the hands of socialites and that gives it the wrong color. Anyone who can't find work goes into this, making those who are serious doubt the usefulness of their endeavor."

The remaining five women had careers which carried equal responsibility to their husbands' careers. Unlike the former group of five women who held full-time jobs, these women belonged to all-India services and were subject to independent transfer. These women said that instead of meeting opposition from their husbands, it was due to encouragement from them that they had accepted permanent employment. One of the respondents said: "My husband is proud that I am doing a man's job; he would not want me to be just an efficient hostess." "My husband is so used to seeing me as a career woman that if I gave it up he would think something was wrong." "I don't

know if I am fooling myself when I say that my husband likes me to work. It is possible that he knows I would make an issue if he objected to my work."

These seventeen women said that whether someone worked for money or not was a matter for each individual to decide. But they advocated that all educated women should work regardless of their economic or social status. They felt that no woman had a legitimate right to go on to higher education if she was not prepared to use it in some productive way. "I feel educated women have a special responsibility to society." These women favored paid work to voluntary or honorary work. In their minds such work did have an amateur tinge. For them the fact that they were paid workers was tantamount to being equally treated as any other man. They were not convinced that real responsibility could be vested in one unless one were paid. They were against the present trend of giving responsible work to untrained people, especially women who had high social standing. "The days are over when women who because they are rich or because their husbands are in high positions can deliver the goods."

Although most of the fifty respondents had not reaped the full benefits from their academic training, it had given all of them an increased sense of self-confidence. Most of them felt more able to deal with adversity, and did not feel as helpless as orthodox women when placed in difficult situations, such as being alone when their husbands were serving in non-family stations. Education had prepared them to perform non-traditional roles such as driving, traveling alone, and managing family finances.

In spite of the reluctance of many of the women to use their education as a means of establishing their economic independence, there was in the majority of them the awareness that they could earn if the need arose. This, in fact, was seen as the greatest benefit of higher education. Thus their self-reliance, both real and potential, added to their dignity as women.

7

HINDU RITUALS AND PRACTICES

TWENTY-EIGHT OF THE respondents from the total of fifty interviewed had spent from seven to nine years, from the ages of six to fifteen, in English-medium mission schools. Thus in their formative years they were in Christian schools and environment, coming home only for three months of their annual vacation. Because of this long absence from home, these respondents said that they were not involved with family religious rituals and practices. They knew, however, that their parents, particularly their mothers, followed a definite daily routine which was different from the practices of those belonging to other religions. Since these respondents were home only for a short period they were not required to follow the orthodox routine of the household. For example, they were told that one should bathe before going into the prayer room, that one must not smell the flowers offered to the deity, but if they failed to do so, they were excused. It was made out that even God forgave them these lapses. These respondents saw their mothers rigorously following such rules precisely in order not to offend the presiding deity of the house, like starting the day with the necessary offerings to the family god and at each meal setting aside food to be given later to cows or pariah dogs. Besides these observable details there were a great many rituals and symbols that were in use to keep the body and spirit clean. Since the women

as children were not asked to follow or even participate in this discipline unless they wanted to, they grew up ignorant of Hindu ritualistic worship and its significance. The greatest loss was not knowledge about symbols, but the "loss of feeling" for this kind of worship. Most of these twenty-eight respondents said that they grew up with no emotional involvement in the traditional Hindu form of worship. A few of the twenty-eight women; due to their interest in Hinduism and a sense of enquiry during their college years, had tried to understand the meaning of certain symbols and why they were important. But knowledge alone, these women stated, did not bring with it the necessary emotional feeling without which it was not possible to worship on ritualistic lines. One respondent expressed the views held by most that since rituals in themselves had no significance it was faith in them that made them sacred. This faith they did not have and therefore it was impossible to be emotionally involved. "Knowledge of symbols is not essential if one believes in them. Even after I knew why water had to be offered to a god, it made no real difference to me." "My mother also did not know the real significance of rituals except for her it was essential to perform them."

The twenty-eight respondents attributed to their mission schooling their ignorance of and also their lack of feeling toward traditional forms of worship. In their own homes they worshipped Hindu gods but without any specified rituals. The rituals, if any, were personally created by them and had no bearing on traditional practice. Twenty-four of these twenty-eight women had no interest in acquiring knowledge about Hindu rituals and consequently knew nothing about them. These women were satisfied to follow the priest on important occasions and did as they were instructed without really being concerned about the significance. Whereas all the twenty-eight respondents felt that their ignorance as well as lack of feeling for Hindu religious practices was due to their schooling, for twelve of these twenty-eight respondents there was another reason for this feeling of alienation. These twelve women said that the environment both in school and at home was not "especially orthodox". Their parents' social life increasingly became involved with people who were trying to adopt or imitate British ways. By this they meant that as young adults even Indian

families they met were trying to become a part of the new anglicized élite and were thus often embarrassed to be taken as traditionally oriented. These families, to a large extent, had gradually lost touch with their caste-community members and given up many of their semi-religious obligations, making it easier for them to live within their "new society". The respondents however went on to point out that in spite of their parents gradually losing their traditional base, they had not lost respect or feeling for Hindu practices and values.

The culture that was emerging because of the contact between Indians and the British often resulted in what has come to be known as "Anglo-Indian" culture. This is a term used to denote a culture with no real foundations or values stemming from either the West or the East. It is a feeble amalgam of the two. This word is often used in a derogatory sense even now in India for people who have lost their essential Indian bearings and are poor imitators of the West. These twelve women said that their formative years were spent in this Anglo-Indian environment, thus enforcing their alienation from the Hindu way of life. "We grew up as neither fish nor fowl." "Had it not been for my mother who essentially remained herself, I would have grown up with a most terrible complex, but her basic confidence in being an Indian made us children have pride in ourselves." "Though my mother did not know the English language and was awkward in the company of British people, she carried herself with dignity and was not embarrassed because she felt they were foreigners. This made a strong impact on me." All the women felt that it was from their mothers that they got the pride of being a Hindu and, above all, of being an Indian. It was quite clear that the more confident of the parents was the mother in these homes.

Because of the protracted absence from home, the twenty-eight women did not have the orthodox attitude to what was considered clean and unclean. Though they saw that their mothers psychologically and other relations actually, distinguished between those with whom one might or might not eat, they were personally not affected by this attitude because they had grown up in an environment that did not make this distinction. They mingled with people irrespective of caste or religion. Furthermore, they had no objection to employing a cook from

any caste as long as he was a good cook. There were, however, sixteen of the twenty-eight women who did admit that they would not knowingly employ a Harijan as a cook. They went on to explain, not very convincingly, that this was not so much from their own bias as from regard for relations who would not eat in their homes if there was a Harijan cook. The traditional attitude toward caste superiority was lacking in all these twenty-eight respondents; they had no sympathy with the orthodox stand that inter-caste association led to differing forms of contamination. The only exception to this was made by eighteen of the respondents in the case of marriage and this was not due to any feeling against inter-caste marriages. (This will be dealt with later.)

These twenty-eight respondents were not observing the period of uncleanliness associated with the menstrual cycle. During this period of four days their mothers gave up household work, ate from different plates and refrained from touching anyone. Some of the respondents had been required to follow this during adolescence, but most of the women said their mothers did not insist that they keep this period rigidly, except that they were not permitted to enter the kitchen or the room set aside for worship. In spite of being told that this was a time when one did not enter the temple or worship, eighteen of the women did not feel they were being irreligious by doing so; the remaining ten did. None of the fifty respondents observed the period of menstrual uncleanliness in their own homes. Twelve of the eighteen women did not even feel obliged to tell others to whom this was still important when they had their menstrual periods. Orthodoxy demanded that this information be given because personal contact with someone during that period was a form of pollution for the other. One said, "I really can't take all this seriously and so avoid complications with my relatives by keeping quiet."

For a Hindu it is considered part of one's earthly duty (Dharma) to go on pilgrimage and if possible to cover all the major centres, among which are Kanyakumari, Badrinath, Dwarka and Rameshwaram. It is believed by Hindus that one not only accumulates merit but also atones for wrongs by paying homage to these religious centres. The majority of the women said that to go on pilgrimage to as many such holy

centres as possible was one of the most cherished desires of their mothers and in some cases even of their fathers. "My mother is a semi-invalid now and should not travel, but at the mention of Dwarka, Banaras or Hardwar she is ready to set out, knowing she may be risking her life." The twenty-eight respondents recognized the importance of these religious places but wanted to visit them for either their historic or scenic value. As children some of the respondents recalled their resentment at being taken on pilgrimages because, as one of them said, "From morning to evening it was one long ceremony." Another said, "It was so uncomfortable living in dharamshalas (places where pilgrims usually stay) and eating the food from the temple." "I would have preferred being with my friends during the holidays instead of going from one shrine to another." Because of their lack of faith they had no sentiment as adults for pilgrimage and disliked the elaborate rituals performed at the time of such visits. Some of them instead of finding the Ganges holy were disgusted at the filth that floated on the sacred river, and were afraid to drink the holy water they once saw their parents drink with such deep conviction of its sanctity. "I drank the water of the Ganges as a child because I thought I would fail my exams." Another said, "I felt something awful would happen if I did not do what the priest asked me to do." But for none of these twenty-eight respondents had these childhood or adolescent fears continued into adult life. They no longer feared retribution because of their indifference. Further, they distrusted priests and pandas (special men who help pilgrims perform rituals). These twenty-eight women did not share their parents respect for these men. In fact, they were of the opinion that most of them lived on the ignorance of the innocent. Far from being "other worldly", they felt the priests loved money and that praying was a profession with them. They did not pay special deference to Brahmins nor did they give charity to them as Brahmins. "Why give to these men? There are enough orthodox Hindus who already support them." "I just cannot see Brahmins with an aura of special sanctity; in fact seeing them pampered and feared in my childhood, I don't intend to be exploited by them." On auspicious occasions in their own homes all twenty-eight women did engage a Brahmin to conduct ceremonies and did carry out their bidding, but they did

not feed Brahmins as a means of either gaining merit or atoning for sins. All these respondents recognized them as the proper caste to preside over religious ceremonies. A typical response was: "Being in mission schools for so long, the influence of my parents with regard to Brahmins did not really impress itself on me, but that they are the ones to perform auspicious ceremonies certainly remains with me."

These twenty-eight respondents did not regularly go to temples. This was because they had no understanding or feeling for ritualistic worship. However, most of these twenty-eight women did go, when possible, for "Darshan" (blessing of the Sacred Image) on occasions such as the New Year, Diwali, Ganesh Chaturthi. This they did mostly for the sake of their growing children so that they would realize the significance of such days. But they did not feel remiss if it was not convenient; going to the temple had lost its imperative.

Although there was no feeling of *not* being Hindus because they did not feel for or accept traditional religious practices, there was in the great majority of the twenty-eight respondents a feeling of being alienated from their religious heritage. They said that the vacuum created was because they did not know enough about their religion, not only its ritualistic aspects but also its philosophical basis. One of these women expressed herself in these terms: "I wish we had been thoroughly exposed to every aspect of Hinduism, its metaphysics as also its peculiar manifestations, grown up to love and respect our gods and goddesses. I would have liked to know the Hindu religious literature. Then to have rejected some aspects of Hindu traditional worship would have been a voluntary act, made through knowledge and not through ignorance as it is now." "I wish my parents had taken special care about instructing me in Hinduism to offset my Christian background. As it is now I have no knowledge of either Christian or Hindu doctrines." "Now I am a Hindu because of my birth, but frankly, I know nothing of my religion." "One cannot hope to have real confidence in oneself if one does not know one's own religion. Just being born a Hindu is not sufficient."

In spite of feeling strongly about their lack of knowledge about Hinduism, the blame of which they put entirely on their upbringing, twenty-two of the twenty-eight women were not

bridging this gulf of ignorance. All twenty-eight women felt inadequate to bring life and meaning to Hinduism for their children. All the women said their children celebrated Hindu festivals with more spirit than they themselves had. Thus their children were better acquainted with Indian mythology.

It is of interest that the children of all these respondents went to English-medium schools and most of them attended mission schools like their mothers had. The children were no more exposed to Hinduism as a religion in their school environment than their mothers been. These respondents were aware that this lack of knowledge was a contributing factor to their lack of self-confidence. Yet none of these respondents did anything specific to fill the vacuum. It is understandable that because of the respondents' own alienation from ritualistic worship, this aspect could not be passed on to the second generation. But the philosophy of Hinduism could have been more systematically imparted if an effort was made. This did not seem to be the case. The excuse that they were ignorant and hence did not instruct their children was not convincing. This indifference stemmed more from the fact that these respondents were sufficiently removed from their religious heritage not to care. The desire that their children should not be as ignorant as they were was no more than a fond hope. As educated women, had they really wanted to study the Hindu religion, nothing could have prevented them from doing so. This also substantiates the point that they were no longer concerned with the problem except as a theoretical proposition.

Out of the twenty-eight women, twenty-two had been vegetarians all during childhood. Their parents were strict vegetarians and in some cases did not even eat onions. Of these twenty-two women, twelve had started eating meat after marriage while ten of them continued to be vegetarians even though their husbands ate meat. Six women had started eating meat while in school though they did not eat it in their parents' homes. Among those who ate meat, beef was strictly forbidden. They said their aversion to eating beef was not related to considering the cow sacred. In fact, these twenty-eight women did not feel anything "special" about the cow having a greater right to live than any other animal. But the majority of them admitted that their attitude toward cows was not rational as they did

feel sentimental about the cow and could not treat its meat on par with any other meat. "I have no logical reasons to support my attitude toward the cow except I have been brought up to feel differently toward it." This did not mean that these respondents in any way worshipped the cow or gave it importance as a sacred animal. The respect for it was confined to not killing the cow for the purpose of eating the meat.

Religious Ceremonies

Among these twenty-eight respondents, nineteen had not performed the traditional ceremonies for their children at the time of birth or during periods of their growth. They did not share with their parents' generation the belief that these ceremonies ensured health and prosperity for their children. They did not tie amulets or put charms on their children to ward off the evil spirit. They had had horoscopes cast primarily because their in-laws had insisted. In many instances the confinement was in the home of their in-laws and horoscopes were made as a matter of course. These women did not consult the horoscope to find out what the child's future held nor did they encourage their in-laws to send the yearly forecast for themselves or their children. Since they were not perpared to take the necessary steps to minimize the effects of the stars, they did not want to know the forecasts.

These nineteen women said that since they had no faith in birth and growth ceremonies, they did not perform them. They also maintained that in the caste-community domestic events of semi-religious importance were the concern of the caste-community and not just of the immediate family. When one was a part of such a society, one was expected to entertain on these occasions. This personal interest by a body of people in individual families with similar customs was not to be found in cities. In a multi-caste society, families were not necessarily bound together by common religious customs and therefore domestic celebrations did not call forth the same interest. These nineteen women felt that had they been living in their own caste-communities, then even loss of faith in semi-religious ceremonies would not have prevented them from performing them, because not to participate in the existing social mores would have meant alienating oneself from others. Since rejec-

tion of these ceremonies was not a matter of principle, there would have been no conflict had they been part of a society where such celebrations were important to observe.

The nine remaining respondents had performed the important ceremonies connected with birth and growth of a child. This was not only because these women were in close touch with in-laws to whom the ceremonies meant a great deal. Left to themselves they would have still observed them, if only symbolically. For them the performance of these ceremonies had meaning in and of itself. These women were, like the other respondents, living in a multi-caste society where they were not bound by their caste-community mores. Therefore they were not doing this to impress anyone. They pointed out that the usual elaborate feasting did not accompany the Sacred Thread and other such important ceremonies but the necessary religious rituals took place. This they would have done regardless of where they were living. They agreed with the other nineteen women that there was not the same sense of participation in domestic religious ceremonies with friends who came from a secular and a multi-caste society. Since each caste and family placed its own particular emphasis on ceremonies, it was pointless to get outsiders involved in something which had individual meaning and was not shared by others. Since religious festivities were not like social get-togethers, it seemed out of place to give customary feasts on such occasions.

Whereas there was considerable difference among these twenty-eight women with regard to ceremonial rites, all of them did abide by the rituals specified at the time of death. All had willingly performed the after-death rites for their deceased in-laws, who included not only parents-in-law, but also uncles and aunts on either side of their families. This was not necessarily because they believed in or even knew the significance of these rites, but primarily because they did not want to deviate from traditional practices as far as the older generation was concerned. Since they had little in their own backgrounds to guide them, they were guided by elders in the family. Most of these twenty-eight respondents did not follow the customary feeding of the caste-community and the giving of appropriate clothing to relatives, both of which are part of the after-death rituals. They were content with what the priests

considered appropriate with regard to funeral rites. Since they no longer sought caste-community approval nor were involved with the extended family, all the after-death customs were not carried out. This had, in many cases, brought censure from the caste as they had felt that the dead had not been adequately honoured. Those respondents who remained a part of a closely knit family unit which still had its base in the caste-community, did follow the after-death customs with the attention their extended family members expected. One of them put it in these words: "Though we lead a life which is not caste-centered, still our associations are such that I do not want people to say that because of an educated daughter-in-law the family traditions are not respected." Though the after-death customs of the sub-caste had not been followed by the majority of the twenty-eight respondents, all twenty-eight of the women were prepared to spend money on funeral rites as directed by the priest in spite of thinking that this expenditure was a waste. This was their way of showing deference to the older living members of the family and to the dead. Among the twenty-eight respondents, eighteen had lost one or both parents-in-law. In these cases the husbands had shaved their heads and the women wore the mourning colors for the specified period. The ashes of the dead had been immersed with proper rituals in one of the sacred rivers. The "Sharad" (anniversary of the dead when offerings are made for them) was observed by only eight women. The first Sharad was celebrated with due attention to details, but thereafter they said they observed the period only when reminded. "We kept the death anniversary as a specially solemn day, but according to the Georgian Calendar." Since none of the twenty-eight respondents consulted the Panchang (a book which indicates the cycles according to the Lunar calendar) they also did not know, unless told, when a particular Sharad fell.

Among these twenty-eight women there was only a minority who felt the need to get back to the deeper spirit of Hinduism. They were not satisfied with being only religious-minded but needed to identify themselves more personally with Hinduism. Due to this, they went to hear religious discourses in the Rama Krishna missions and attended religious lectures by learned men. Some of them followed a guru and his teachings. They also

found attending readings from the Ramayana and the Gita very satisfying. This is significant as these respondents did not fully understand the text due to insufficient knowledge of the vernacular. "I like to hear the Ramayana sung. It stirs something so deep within me." This minority felt a deep need to touch the sources of their faith and not just for the religious spirit. The majority did not feel this deep urge for closer identification.

Still another reason that these twenty-eight women gave for their lack of feeling for Hinduism was that they were not fluent in their vernacular, nor did they know Sanskrit. They had not read the popular sacred texts as growing children nor had they been read to them as part of their religious education. What they had learned of the mythological past was from relations and old family servants. They were familiar with the story of the Epics without knowing the details. Even as adults they had not read the popular sacred texts, due only in part to their ignorance of the vernacular but mainly to the general loss of interest in the subject. Most of them had read abridged versions of the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Gita in English. The Gita was the most popular and best understood of the religious texts by the respondents. Another reason for the ignorance of these mission-educated women with regard to Hindu religion and its cultural significance was that in mission schools they were not taught any religion systematically except Christianity. It was at that time compulsory for every child, irrespective of his own personal faith, to attend church and take scripture classes. Mission schools during the British period did not include the study of Indian culture and heritage in the curriculum.

The remaining twenty-two of the fifty respondents had spent from two to five years in a mission boarding school. This, for the majority of the women, was between the ages of ten and twelve. Those who had had more than four years at a boarding school did not have them at a stretch. These twenty-two women had been day scholars for the most part of their school life. They, like the other twenty-eight respondents, came from nuclear families and were not part of a joint family unit. But most of these twenty-two respondents' parents were in closer touch with their relatives than the parents of other group. Thus these women grew up in the old Hindu family atmosphere wherein

they were exposed to Hindu norms of life. In spite of this intimate exposure to the Hindu way of life, only ten of the twenty-two women were fully knowledgeable about the meaning and significance of Hindu rituals and symbols. The parental homes of all twenty-two respondents were run on orthodox lines; Western influences had not been allowed to change the domestic pattern despite the fact that professionally their parents were obliged to meet anglicized Indians. Since their family included relations and others of the caste-community, a much greater discipline was imposed in the family, so that minimum concessions were made in order to adapt to the secular society of which they were a part. These twenty-two women were sent to mission schools only because there were no good vernacular schools and because it was a status symbol to speak English. Though Western-type education had been permitted to all these women, they were required to abide by the orthodox rules governing the daily routine of their homes. The degree of orthodoxy differed in these homes. However, all the twenty-two women, especially after the ages of eleven or twelve, were expected to participate in the celebration of auspicious days. The exposure to domestic routine was continuous though as children they went to mission school from nine to four o'clock. In school, these women were also required to take scripture classes and attend religious services that fell during school hours.

Ten of these twenty-two women said that their home influence was so strong that it completely overshadowed the 'Christian influence' in their lives. It was amply clear to them that they were sent to school to learn and that the religion taught there was of no consequence. No one in their parental homes, especially the women, even considered or cared about the differences in the two religious systems. The respondents participated in Christian festivals; they were conscious of the deeper religious meaning because this was impressed on them by the school, but after years of such participation they had no special feeling for Christian festivals. They did then, and do now, look upon Christmas as a time to give extra parties, or Easter as a time to buy Easter eggs for the children. These ten did not feel the same way toward Hindu religious festivals. Even though some of them in their own nuclear homes did not celebrate the major festivals for their religious sig-

nificance, none the less there was a deep feeling for the spirit of the auspicious day. "As a child there was always some auspicious day to be celebrated about which every one was excited." As children these women were involved in the preparations for a festival. Relations talked of the meaning, servants told mythological stories and everyone was aware why the day was sacred. "With my sister I decorated the room for Janamashtami and loved the little Krishna". The significance of religious rituals and symbols was also reinforced through various direct and indirect ways. The knowledge thus gained did not necessarily concern classical and metaphysical concepts of Hinduism. These were at best expressed through the worship of the personal god and were subordinate to that worship. "Everything that was done in the house seemed to me to have a religious basis. Even when my mother gave left over food from our plates to sweepers, she was convinced she was being religious." Through observation, these ten women had not only knowledge of Hindu practices, but a feeling for them which they never lost. This is not to say that these women wanted to recreate the same pattern in their own homes. We shall return to this point later.

These ten women had no formal instruction regarding Hinduism and no one took time to explain the real significance of rituals. The meaning flowed from observation and no one questioned the why of it. Very often even the prayers that were recited daily were not fully understood by their mothers, especially if they were Sanskrit verses learned by heart. "From the servants up everyone was immersed in the spirit of their faith. There was nothing complicated in their beliefs. It was simple conviction that you abided by certain rules, refrained from eating on certain days or eating certain foods, gave offerings to the deity in sickness and health, accepted the verdict of god with resignation." These ten women knew the appropriate rituals and offerings for different days. Furthermore, they had regularly heard verses from sacred texts and knew devotional hymns and could for many years recite verses from such texts as the Bhagvad Gita, the Ramayana and other religious books. They knew these by heart as children and had forgotten many of these verses only after they married. As unmarried girls they 'were kept in practice'. "There always seemed to be some worship

going on when we had to sing devotional songs. It isn't the same now in our home". "In our childhood a religious day was not a day of prayer and contemplation but a day of rejoicing. Everyone got special food and we dressed up in our best. It was really a form of entertainment with song and dance."

Like the other group of twenty-eight respondents, these ten women were fluent only in the spoken vernacular and did not have sufficient command of an Indian language to read or write at a higher level. The language in which they felt most at home when reading, writing and speaking was English. But unlike the former group of twenty-eight women, their insufficient command of the vernacular did not become an obstacle in knowing or reading religious texts. They had not read the texts in the original but in simple vernacular translations. It was, therefore, not a greater fluency in the vernacular but it was their home environment that made for the difference. It is important to point out that only seven women of the total sample of fifty were really competent in the vernacular with a fairly good understanding of Sanskrit. Their understanding of religious texts was sophisticated primarily because they were interested as adults in learning about Hinduism. Having a good foundation in a regional language they enjoyed reading religious literature. Because of their knowledge of Hinduism, it did not mean that they believed or propitiated the gods in the manner laid down. The combination of having been initiated into the sacredness of Hindu texts along with a command of an Indian language made these respondents capable of a greater understanding of their religion. Consequently they had respect born out of knowledge for their religion and the confidence to reject what they had felt was outdated. These women did not hold degrees in philosophy but in subjects like economics and English. "You can't imagine what beauty there is in our religious literature. I feel sorry for anyone who does not know it. The religious message is only a part of the text; it is fascinating reading, revealing the good and bad in life in most sophisticated terms. Sometimes you forget you are reading a religious book: it is like reading a first-class novel."

The parental environment of these ten women was, as mentioned before, touched to the minimum by Western influence. This had an effect on the social life of the respondents. Their

peer groups were not other Anglicized Indians but the Indian élite who kept their orthodox conventions. This did not mean that these women met only Hindus; they recalled very warm friendships between their fathers and Muslim families as well as having social contact with the English, but they did not change their way of life to accommodate 'outsiders'. Because of the cultural integrity of their homes, these ten women had less of a cultural shock due to British influences than the other respondents. This had its own drawbacks, especially when the respondents were young women. This aspect is dealt with later. The fact that the home environment was kept intact in spite of the alien social environment helped these women to feel more self-assured. They did not grow up as neither fish nor fowl. Further, it minimized the mission school influence, at least when they were young. Its impact came to the surface much later.

The other twelve women of this group of twenty-two also had a traditional atmosphere in their parental homes, but their reactions and impressions of their childhood influences were markedly different. It is not easy to pinpoint this difference in the context of their upbringing. All one can do is state it and let their responses speak for themselves. These twelve women said that they were definitely brought up in "the orthodox atmosphere". Religious days were kept with the appropriate rites. The respondents after the age of twelve were encouraged to keep fasts, especially those meant for unmarried girls. They grew up very much, as one of them put it, "amidst the smell of burning incense". As young women of fourteen and fifteen, they were often asked to take the lead in domestic ceremonies, particularly if their mothers were in their menstrual period. This had given these twelve women the basic knowledge of how to worship. They knew what foods were offered when and to which gods. They also knew what was offensive to the gods and the times they had to be worshipped (this does not cover all the gods but refers only to the deity worshipped in their homes). But among the twelve women, many felt that being in a school from nine to four o'clock and twice a week until six o'clock (for games) did dilute the religious impact of the home. "Since we could not be present for many festivals, our presence or absence did not matter." Though they were required to par-

ticipate in important festivals, even if that meant missing school, still the fact that they were in English schools was enough for them to be treated as embellishments rather than essentials to the daily household routine. Their mothers used to say: "How much can you control them once they go to foreign schools." "They don't seem to understand what is clean and what is not." This kind of remark was constantly heard by these women. It amused them and at the same time gave them the feeling that they could get away with a great deal. Their ignorance and lack of conformity was tolerated as a concession to their kind of schooling. This made them inattentive to details and led them to concentrate on the pleasure aspect. "It was such a lot of fun preparing the sweets and savories for different religious festivals." Besides taking rituals lightly, though having knowledge about them, the impact of school environment differed. For the first ten women, the home influence was so strong that it didn't leave room for other influences to operate, especially during their formative years. This was not the case for the remaining twelve women. They could not understand why certain injunctions lost their validity outside the Hindu setting. One of the examples given by many was of the menstrual period (four days) observed as unclean where one did not touch anyone or enter a place of worship. This was enforced in their homes yet in school they not only mixed freely but went to chapel. This was not considered wrong by their mothers. This inherent contradiction in what was in one context clean and in another unclean, confused the respondents to the point that they did not take many of the ritualistic injunctions impressed on them seriously.

The fact that what these respondents did in school was no concern to their mothers made them not only unhappy but created many conflicts in them. These were related to differences between Hinduism and Christianity. "In school they made fun of our many-headed gods and called us idol-worshippers, but at home no one bothered about such comments. To the family they meant nothing as they basically did not respect those who made such remarks. But I began to feel ashamed of my religion." Since the fact of being in mission school made their mothers treat their breach of customs with indulgence, these twelve women stated that they did not know what reli-

gious injunctions to take seriously. They were regarded by Christian teachers and playmates as belonging to an inferior religion with barbarian practices. There were many subtle ways that made the respondents feel that their religion was not as worthy of respect as Christianity. Caste and treatment of Harijans were cited as examples to show the respondents the unworthiness of their religion.

The arguments put forth by the teachers carried weight and seemed logical. This made the respondents even more embarrassed and ashamed. They had no answers to give in reply. Their parents, when told of their predicament, dismissed it as part of the humiliation one suffered because of foreign domination. This did not seem convincing and did not in any way remove the doubts in their minds. This conflict was not confined to the twelve women only but was in varying degrees the experience of all the fifty respondents. The following remark illustrates how some of the twelve women reacted: "I heard the Ramayana and other Kathas (stories) in the home and in school stories from the Bible, but they both conveyed a different message. It seemed to us school always contradicted what we heard and saw at home."

These twenty-two women as against the other twenty-eight of the total of fifty respondents were on the whole more imbued with the spirit of Hinduism. They were more knowledgeable, but what was even more significant was that these twenty-two women had great feeling for traditional forms of worship and practices, even though they did not follow the same discipline in their own nuclear homes. They were not, in spite of mission and western influences, alienated from emotional attachment to Hindu values and ways. This made it easier for them to relate to their more orthodox family members and others of their background. These twenty-two women, in spite of British influences all through their childhood—and adolescence—felt less threatened and consequently more secure in themselves than the other twenty-eight women. They were not unnecessarily touchy about criticism of Hinduism and were able to see its strength and weaknesses. They didn't have the same feeling of being "cheated" of some part of their religious heritage. This early exposure and involvement with the religious atmosphere had a bearing on how these twenty-two

women brought up their children.

Thirteen of the twenty-two women endeavored to keep all the important fasts. They still dedicated the first fruit of the season, or anything that was new, to the deity before serving it to the family. They celebrated occasions such as Janamashtami, Shiva Ratri, Ganesh Chathurthi as religious days. These days were not kept strictly according to accepted custom but the essential rituals were performed. They went to the temple on these special days if at all possible, with offerings of fruit, flowers and money. Nine of the remaining twenty-two women said that they had continued with many of the domestic rituals associated with such days as Janamashtami, but had gradually given them up as their own homes no longer reflected the 'Hindu religious spirit'. This meant that not only their husbands but other female members of the family such as sisters and aunts-in-law had ceased to have any feeling for such occasions. "To be the only one in the family for whom special food is cooked is not only inconvenient but the desire to follow a pattern given up by others of the family lessens with time." "It is very difficult to continue something which needs others to participate." These nine women, however, kept the fasts they felt strongly about. These fasts were usually connected either with ensuring long life for husbands, such as Karwa Chawth, or the welfare of the children.

Sixteen of the twenty-two women had performed the most important rites connected with birth and growth of a child. The usual feasting associated with such ceremonies was often omitted due to the absence of caste-community members or other sympathetic people. "Somewhere I do feel that the child is especially blessed if I follow what my elders taught me to do." The other six women had not performed these ceremonies because of their husbands' indifference. These women felt a sense of wrong in giving up such practices. They continued to feel that there was great merit in these ceremonies and that their husbands were giving up something that had intrinsic value. But they did not have sufficient motivation to do something in which their husbands had no interest. "I feel strongly about my husband's indifference to Hindu customs, but I can do nothing about it." Another respondent said: "To tell you frankly, I have always regretted the fact that I did not perform

the Sacred Thread Ceremony for my boys. I only hope they don't suffer from the lack of appropriate blessings." "This trend in educated Indians to give up our old customs is wrong; it is going to weaken our personalites because we really don't believe in any other customs either. We go on drifting, following what is considered to be modern."

The death and after-death rites were carried out when necessary by all twenty-two women. Like the other group of twenty-eight women, the after-death customs depended on their links with the extended family. Where such links existed, traditional practices were adhered to. It is perhaps necessary to point out here that the lavishness with which these after-death ceremonies as also connected rituals are performed has diminished due to increased cost of living and other factors, even in the traditionally centred families. The difference really lay in that when the responsibility fell on the respondents to take the lead in doing what was required on such ceremonial occasions, ten respondents of the twenty-two were knowledgeable enough to do so. They did not have to depend entirely on guidance from other people. The other twelve of the twenty-two women knew essentially what was required. Moreover, they were not emotionally alienated from traditional practices. Hence when their participation was necessary, there was no self-consciousness. But the twenty-eight respondents could not have done the honors without someone in the family telling them what was required. Many of the group of twenty-eight respondents said that they did not feel they could follow some of the traditional customs connected with death without an extreme sense of embarrassment. The example frequently cited was the one of joining in communal crying at the time of death. None of the fifty respondents was in favor of this custom, but for the respondents in the group of twenty-eight to cry loudly in a special way, joining the group of family mourners, was extremely difficult if not impossible. The others felt no embarrassment although they thought the practice was not worth continuing. This difference was present also in such orthodox customs as touching the feet of elders or covering their heads.

For ten of the twenty-two women, keeping the Sharad, the death anniversary of their in-laws, for at least a few years was not a matter of being reminded on this day. For only a small

minority was this day associated with sanctity, and the feeling that ignoring it would bring some ill-luck to their own immediate family. The other twelve kept the day but without feeding Brahmins after the first Sharad.

The majority of these twenty-two women said they did not believe in astrological forecasts but in fact they did listen to advice when given on this basis. If a trusted family astrologer told them to fast on a particular day as a means of minimizing the effects of a bad phase, or asked them to wear a special stone or metal, they did. All of these twenty-two women had had horoscope cast for their children. At least fourteen had done so without any family pressure. Some of them said it was because horoscopes may be required by other families at the time of the children's marriage. Furthermore, some of these women fed birds, gave to the Brahmins, and ate once a day because the astrologer said it would bring greater peace of mind to them. When celebrating a marriage or engagement, building a a house, or moving into a new house, they did consult the Panchang and chose the day and time considered right. They did not, however, go to the extent of finding the right time and day for minor things such as travelling. The acceptance of astrology was based not so much on personal conviction as on conditioning. As one of them put it: "I am not prepared to take the risk of going against advice. Too much is involved. Besides what one does is quite innocuous and no harm can come of it even if good doesn't result. . . ." Another respondent put it like this: "I can't ignore something the importance of which has been ingrained in me throughout my life." "It is wrong to have all your actions governed by astrologers but if one is sensible about such guidance, it is all to the good. After all, there is something in this, though not all that is claimed."

This feeling of not being able to disassociate themselves from ingrained attitudes was also evident in their approach to Brahmins. These twenty-two women agreed with the group of twenty-eight that it was irrational to distinguish between people because of their birth. But they could not help the sentiment they had for this caste. Most of them did not go to the extent of giving charity only to Brahmins nor did most of them believe in feeding Brahmins as a means of acquiring merit. But if a Brahmin came to their door begging for alms he was not turn-

ed away. Along with giving charity to the needy, a minority set aside something for special occasions, such as if a child had done specially well in an examination or recovered from a serious illness, or if unexpected promotion was given to their husbands. None of them could openly rebuff or be indifferent to priests. The fear of being cursed by Brahmins was ever present and they did not want to incur their displeasure. This was not to say that these women had blind faith in all Brahmins or respected each one. They were aware that many were charlatans but still they did not want to intimidate such men. When they were in temples or in centres of pilgrimage, they hoped to be left alone to follow their own worship. But if followed by an insistent panda, they gave in and did as they were told. "I can never forget the stories of the Brahmins' curses my aunts and maid-servants told me." "I have courage to contradict almost anyone but the priests."

The desire to go on pilgrimage was not as strong as in their parents' generation. Thirteen of the twenty-two women had gone to some of the pilgrim centres because of their religious significance. They wanted to go to others not because of their historic importance but because they considered them holy. They did not think that going on a pilgrimage wiped away their sins or that it helped them accumulate virtue for life hereafter. "Something deep deep down in me wants to go to Banaras and bathe in the Ganges." These women, like the other twenty-eight respondents, felt that pandas and priests did try to exploit pilgrims. They did not defend or feel any reverence for these men because of the function they performed. But as one of them said: "What can you do? They are there and the only thing to do is to choose the best among them." "They are really the worst pests in the world." Nine of the remaining twenty-two women had little desire to go on pilgrimage, but they felt that this desire in the minds of Hindus was healthy and hoped it would remain. One of them said: "I just find the confusion in these centres deplorable. None the less there is something good and wonderful." "Though I find many things wrong in these places they are our health-giving centres that keep the country essentially vital."

It must be pointed out that the deference, respect, and fear that Brahmins evoked in these twenty-two women was strictly

limited to those Brahmins who were priests or to men who lived as ascetics. This feeling did not carry over into interpersonal contacts. There was no sense of Brahmins in this context being superior. Among these twenty-two respondents, thirteen women did not employ Harijans except as sweepers. They said they would have no objection but they had never had a Harijan cook nor did they really contemplate having one if they knew his caste. "I don't think I would mind but I really don't know. Besides I don't see why one has to employ a Harijan cook just to prove oneself." Nine women said they didn't think they would mind employing a Harijan as a cook, but did ask for the caste of the cook when engaging one. They too had never had a cook from either the Sudras or Harijans.

Though these twenty-two women adhered to many of the forms of Hindu worship, customs and practices, and though they had both knowledge and feeling for them, they felt that their children would not grow up with the same feeling and certainly not with the same knowledge. The reason was that these women had been part of a large family unit as children where the Hindu atmosphere reinforced a way of life. These women said that they could not remember a feast or entertainment which was not connected with some religious ceremony. Their social life as children was bound up with auspicious days where everyone of the family had a part to play. It was all part of the 'whole atmosphere'. Servants, family relations and caste-community members were all involved. This atmosphere was lacking in their nuclear homes where there was neither the same contact with relations nor the presence of old family servants. According to the large majority of the fifty respondents, the greatest preserver of traditional and customary religious practices was the joint family spirit, even if it was not a real joint family. These respondents felt that where the joint family sentiment was absent, it was almost impossible to transmit the feeling and faith for rituals and symbols. Knowledge of rituals alone was not enough to integrate them into a way of life. This was strongly supported by those respondents who had acquired knowledge about traditional religious rituals. These women said that in spite of knowing the significance of many rituals and their importance it was no longer possible to incorporate them into the daily routine of their lives. These women were fully aware

that this integration was necessary if children were to get the feel of their religion. The nuclear basis of the family was isolating and not conducive to the old discipline.

Those women who had an emotional empathy for rituals and did follow them also felt that their children were not being steeped in the atmosphere of Hindu belief. This, the fifty respondents maintained, could only be done if the home reflected the spirit of religion. Individual worship, as was the case in many of their own homes, was not enough. It did not permeate the atmosphere. In the parental homes of most of the women, worship was not confined to the altar but was the centre around which the household routine revolved. Everything that was done or not done was related to that centre. If the sweeper class was considered unworthy of contact, it was because such contact violated a religious belief. If certain foods were eaten and not others, it was because they were not sanctioned by religion. Similarly ceremonies and festivals were all interwoven with a pattern of life which had its sanction from what was considered to be the religious Dharma (duty) of the family. This was no longer the basis of their own families. Religious custom and practice were not the legitimizing factor for family activity. Hence their children were not exposed to the spirit of the traditional atmosphere of Hinduism. Religious activities were signalled out as different and hence they appeared manipulated.

Besides the fact that these fifty women's homes were not religiously centred, these women said that the kind of atmosphere they were brought up in needed more than just one or two people to create. In a large but not necessarily a joint family there were many supportive relationships which helped to create the right atmosphere. These relationships made for an activity within the home which had a kind of persuasion and influence that was especially lacking in nuclear families. This isolation was further aggravated if one was living in a multi-caste society.

In spite of being drawn by the emotional appeal of Hinduism, for the majority of the fifty women the basic concepts of Hindu thought such as Dharma, Karma, and Moksha were not operative principles. These women knew what they stood for, but they did not live by them or even try to do so. For most of the women the only reality was the present and the only life they

were concerned with was the one they had. Their actions were governed by the foreseeable future and were not seen in the context of life hereafter. There was no attempt to negate the reality of the phenomenal world as maya (illusion). There was an active pursuit to gain material prosperity in this life. In fact, these women were proud of being success-motivated and stated: "What's wrong in trying to be ambitious for oneself?" There was admiration only for those men who had actually demonstrated detachment and sacrifice in their lives. They admired men like Vinobha Bhave and Gandhi, but did not respect people who talked of renunciation and detachment while living the life of a householder. Nor did they believe those who stated that Indians lived by these principles. "It is just hypocritical to say we are more spiritual than other people. We are all human. The sooner we give up this illusion the better."

The attitude with regard to the value of retaining rituals and symbols of Hindu worship was very interesting. The majority of the fifty respondents felt that since Hinduism was not based on dogma but left it to individuals to work out the best path, it was necessary that traditional rituals be maintained and means found to make these rituals and symbols meaningful for that segment of society that was alienated from the 'Hindu way of life'. They felt that there was danger to the survival of dynamic Hinduism if one completely set aside the ritualistic aspect. This could only be done when something new could replace the old. They maintained that the feeling of oneness among Hindus coming from different parts of India was based on the fact that Hindus understood each other through their religion. It was not the high philosophical basis of Hinduism but its popular manifestations that gave one a sense of belonging to one another. In spite of the differences between Hindus, this gave them a common platform of understanding. Hinduism, they went on to explain, was the basis of Hindu culture and should not be lost. Sculpture and art had immortalized Hindu religious symbols. There was, in the majority of the fifty respondents, evidence of the revival of Hinduism not only as a religion but as a force to cement Hindus together. They thought that religions like Islam and Christianity were better equipped than Hinduism to remain as unifying forces for their believers because of their definite dogma and discipline. The women further felt that in

modern India a religion like Islam with well defined rules which were applicable to all Muslims was a more dynamic force than Hinduism. "Modern Hindus seem to have no stake in their religion, unlike the modern Muslims." They were, therefore, in favor of revitalizing the traditional symbols and rituals until something new could replace them. "The common man will never understand metaphysics; he needs rituals." The women said that "revival of Hinduism should not try to exploit orthodox concepts of caste pollution or caste difference in order to further political aims. But at the same time as modern Indians they must be taught their religion so that they too might feel a pride in it. There are too many of us who feel it is modern to decry our practices and take pride in doing so. This is a deplorable trend."

For themselves they felt they were free from the invisible threats and punishment implicit in many old customs because of their semi-Western upbringing. They were less inhibited to act than their parents' generation precisely because they no longer felt restricted to act within the confines of customs. But this was not enough. Something more positive was needed so that all modern Hindus might feel and act as one.

8

CASTE

THE IDEA OF pollution and purity through caste was completely absent in these fifty respondents. Neither were they following the caste mores or its customs in order to maintain caste sanctity for themselves. Where there was identity with the caste, it was more an emotional bias than a commitment to the institution with its sanctions as to how one should conduct one's daily life. None of the fifty women wanted to perpetuate caste on the old basis, making each caste rigid and impenetrable with rules which could not be broken with impunity. There was no feeling that individuals of one caste or its sub-castes were superior or inferior to those of another. Where there was preference to remain within the caste fold for purposes of marriage or for other personal reasons, it was due to reasons other than the belief in intrinsic caste superiority.

All fifty respondents were only vaguely aware of the customs and practices of their sub-caste and even this vague awareness was, it seemed, mainly from a desire not to appear wholly ignorant of something they felt they should know about. They neither knew the distinctive features of their sub-caste nor were they quite certain what made it an exclusive unit. Most of the respondents did not know with which other sub-castes they were permitted social contact. This information was derived from others if, as at time of marriage, this

was a consideration to either party.

Before examining the respondents' attitudes toward caste and its wider implications, it is necessary to mention that twenty-two of the fifty women had married within caste though not within the strict confines of the sub-caste. A Brahmin girl was married to a Brahmin man, but not necessarily one belonging to the same Brahmin sub-caste. These twenty-two women were married to men from their provinces of origin and within their linguistic area. Eighteen women were married strictly within the sub-caste, while the remaining ten were married across both caste and provincial lines.

The opinions of the fifty respondents on caste and marriage were divided as follows: Eighteen women would prefer their children to marry within caste lines and as close to their sub-caste as possible. These were the same eighteen women who had been married within their sub-caste. Their first choice would be to look for eligible girls or boys within their own sub-caste community. The reason given by these eighteen women for such marriages was that, according to them, they were the most successful. Since they were proud to belong to their caste, a family marriage, preferably within the sub-caste but at least within the caste, was especially desirable. It is a matter of interest that the majority of these eighteen women were either Brahmins or Kshatriyas. Eight were Rajputs (Kshatriyas) and they were definitely in favor of marriage within Rajput families. The eighteen women hastened to add that their preference to contract marriages within the caste was not because they considered caste as the only measure of an individual's worth, or that they felt one caste was necessarily superior to another. In spite of their explanation, it was clear that these eighteen women did feel a special pride in belonging to their caste even though their social life was not only within its confines. They indicated that marriages contracted between people with similar backgrounds greatly helped in marriage stability. In this they included not only family but caste background as well. Here it is necessary to point out that the constant emphasis on stability in marriage was due to the fact that these respondents were afraid of divorce taking place in their family. This was because among their friends many young couples had divorced or were thinking of divorcing. The

reason for keeping to one's caste and even more so to one's sub-caste was thus to ensure stability in marriage. The reasoning was that if one was part of a society in which these things would be condemned outright it would act as a mutual deterrent on the couple. In modern secular society it was felt that the same constraints did not exist. One was free to act as one wanted. The same group pressures it was argued did not exist in an impersonal society which they characterized as modern secular. "I am not ashamed to say that I want a daughter-in-law from the caste, because only such a girl would respect family ties extending beyond the immediate family." "A girl from the caste has a definite point of reference. She knows what is expected of her. It is not important to know caste rituals but to have the flexibility to follow what you are told. With an outsider there is always a risk." "Marriage is a personal thing and not a sociological phenomenon. Why should one break with caste altogether? There are good and bad points about caste. Personally, as far as marriage goes, I think within-caste marriages are the most stable, especially these days."

Some of these eighteen women would have even gone below their own family status to get a daughter-in-law from the same sub-caste. With regard to their daughters, they would not have done so unless the boy's personal career prospects were especially bright. Twenty-one respondents did not feel strongly about marriage within the caste. It is important to mention that when these twenty-one respondents said that they had no strong feelings about sub-caste marriages, they really meant marriages between the first three high castes, though some of the respondents were reluctant to state this categorically. However it was clearly evident from their responses that they as parents would not choose a bridegroom from either the Sudra or the untouchables, however bright the boy's personal prospects may be. A bride however beautiful would also not have been acceptable. If, however, either the boy or girl should make such a choice, the respondents would not take drastic measures such as disinheriting or cutting off relations with their children. The responses will indicate the kind of subtle difference made in spite of the respondents' stated approval of inter-caste marriages:

"I have no real objection to my children marrying anyone as

long as they are happy. But the family background counts for a lot. This not only includes the boy's educational qualification and career prospects but his family. For a happy marriage it is important that family backgrounds are similar. A boy who has risen in the social ladder by merit is not as self-assured as someone who comes from a well established family even if it is not rich."

The probe question whether this background was equally important in all cases irrespective of caste was not directly answered. Though there were statements such as "To think only caste Hindus are uncomfortable when they marry into lower castes is false. The lower castes are just as reluctant to marry high caste Hindus."

"Frankly these questions are not relevant to the issue. It is one thing to have no objections to inter-caste marriage but when as a parent one is doing the selection one of course is not going to be guided by one's principles but by the interests of the children." "Someone from the lower caste is bound to have complexes at least for some time. Why then should one risk one's children's happiness?" Another typical response was "would you marry your daughter to a scheduled caste or a Sudra just because he was in a good service?" This was one way of conveying that there was no point in continuing with this kind of detailed scrutiny. These respondents as far as marriage was concerned could not view all the four castes as equal. They were further unable to accept the contradiction in their stated attitude of impartiality. Within this limitation for these twenty-one respondents, it was more important that both they and their in-laws spoke the same Indian language and came from the same province. They were against inter-provincial marriages. They felt that there were sufficient customary differences between provinces of India which would make adjustment difficult. This difference when added to the problem posed by a different language made inter-provincial marriages most unattractive and even risky. The common language in such marriages is often English. One of the respondents expressed the view which was shared by the rest: "A girl who can speak to my family only in English can never really feel 'one' with the family; she remains a foreigner." "Language is a great bond even if one may not be proficient in it. One can never really

feel at home with someone who does not speak one's own language."

These women looked for eligible girls and boys within their provincial and linguistic areas. It appeared that in assessing family backgrounds caste did play an important part. A boy from a family that had risen socially and had means, even though he did not belong to a high caste, would have been considered. If the boy had good prospects but belonged to a family of neither means nor a high caste, he was not as eligible as a boy with not as attractive personal prospects, moderate family means, but a high caste.

Eleven women had no objection to inter-caste or inter-provincial marriages. They considered primarily the career prospects of the boy, his character, and his cultural and social background rather than the family's caste or economic standing. "A girl's life is linked with her husband, not with his family. These considerations were valid when there was a joint family. Today what is important is that the boy and girl share common interests." "A boy's family cannot give his wife the life she wants; it is only he who can do that. The boy's character and career are of prime importance."

Twenty-six of the respondents' parents had continued to maintain close touch with their extended families, especially on the husband's side, in spite of moving out of the ancestral home and being away at distances of two hundred to eight hundred miles. The children of these parents had grown up close to the extended family and members of the caste-community. This had given them psychological security derived from a feeling of belonging to a larger unit than their own immediate family. Their parents were so firmly rooted in their caste-community that they could renew contacts even after a lapse of a year or two without feeling aliens. These twenty-six women said that they had received not only emotional comfort from their parents' rootedness but had an added sense of confidence from the fact that they were a part of a society which was proud of its values. This was especially significant for them as they did not, either as children in school or in adolescence, feel completely at home or confident in their anglicized environment. They were not sure of themselves as Indians, nor did they feel they were accepted by the Westernized social group. Most of the women

felt diffident, even a little ashamed of being Indian during this period. They were, however, not as disturbed by this lack of acceptance and often criticism because to their parents, especially for their mothers, what counted was the opinion of the caste-community. Because of this attitude on the part of the parents the respondents were able to ignore the slighting remarks made by their playmates because they were Indians. They also came to disregard the society in which they grew up and even disrespected their peers. Psychologically, they felt sure of their place in their orthodox caste-community and did not feel they had to prove themselves in any way. This sense of belonging and ease was present although fifteen of the twenty-six women felt an increasing difficulty in establishing contact with cousins and others of the caste-community. This was partly because their frame of reference was different and partly because their interests and amusements were gradually moving away from those who had had an entirely orthodox orientation. Also for these fifteen women, as they grew up, language had become an increasing barrier to communication. They were unable to speak the vernacular fluently; English was the only language in which they were fluent while their cousins and others spoke little or no English. Thus their attachment to caste ties was not based on mutual interests but rather on the unquestioned affection they had received, and more than that on the fact that this tradition-bound society did not directly feel the impact of British influence. Hence its members were not torn between two different ways of life and opposing ideas. They jealously held on to their values and practiced them without inhibition or embarrassment. The responses indicated that had it not been for this intimate exposure to the orthodox society, they may have grown up with little or no confidence in themselves. Because of this, they did not feel completely rootless. This contact with a group of related people also gave the respondents a feeling that their problems as well as their welfare were the concern of more than just their own immediate family. Thus it was necessary for them to live up to the expectations placed on them by this larger group and not only prove their worth in their own British-influenced society. This was another way of finding stability at a period when so much of what was Indian was under attack. The attitudes in British-influenced society were markedly

different. "No one bothered about you except in terms of your father's status," said one of them. "In this society, people were not interested in your personal problems." "I don't know what it was, but I was always self-conscious with English people. They made me feel small. Though many things separated me from my relatives, I always felt comfortable among them." "In this society, you felt proud of being an Indian. There were people of worth who upheld Indian traditions and did not throw doubt on everything."

Besides getting emotional comfort and confidence from the extended family and the caste-community, these twenty-six women felt that caste support helped in meeting personal obligations such as marriage, education and in getting employment. They cited examples to illustrate this. Many of the respondents' fathers had been educated with the help of uncles, once or even twice removed. Some had received fellowships from the caste charities. Had these not been available, some of the respondents' fathers may not have had higher education. The caste took special pride in bright boys of their community and helped them in many ways. This interest did not terminate with just giving money; it continued into adult life. The respondents related how much easier it was to find employment if someone took personal interest. This interest in one another was based on the concept of mutual help to be found in caste bound societies. "It is not difficult to approach someone on a personal basis when there are common ties and the feeling of mutual responsibility. Within a caste group there are invisible ties that make for a sense of security. This feeling is quite different to what one has among friends."

Some of the women gave instances of how much easier it was to meet personal problems if one had good relations with caste members. Times of both joy and sorrow were shared by the family. Each one in the caste knew it was his duty to help at such times. There was no sense of undue obligation because of this interest. The respondents cited this help as one of the greatest advantages of caste affiliations. "I remember so many people helped my parents to find suitable men for my sisters and me." "It was almost like our marriages were the responsibility not only of my parents but of the community."

Ten of the twenty-six women had been married within caste

but not within their sub-caste. They had all maintained close touch with their husbands' families but not with extended members. Their parents-in-law had themselves moved away from the ancestral home and place of birth and had lost touch with distant relations. But the respondents kept close ties with family friends (based on caste associations of their in-laws) and did maintain an open house for those who were not necessarily their own friends, but were friends of the family. The ties of family solidarity were laid down not so much by them as by the members of their husbands' families. In these cases it was clear that the husbands also felt keenly about such relationships and thus the women were drawn into a large unit without having to take the lead in cementing ties between members of the family. Left to themselves they would not have been as sensitive to these obligations. In this group of ten women the emphasis was more on close family members than on caste affiliations. They were not in touch with the caste-community to the same extent as their own parents but did accept, under persuasion of parents or parents-in-law, obligations to members of the caste. As far as it was possible, they attended marriages and funerals of close caste members. These ten women had been fortunate, they said, to have had family members come to live with them; thus their children had grown up with close ties with aunts, uncles and cousins. This they felt taught their children to be more tolerant and understanding of people of different age groups. They also learnt to share their feelings of love with relatives. This reduced what the respondents said was an unhealthy concentration on just two people.

Six, other than these ten, of the twenty-six respondents had been married on strict sub-caste lines. They felt a certain strength because of the ties that such a marriage brought. They had freedom of action and were not required by this identification to live entirely by caste mores. This combination was 'perfect' according to them. However, they could not have tolerated interference in their way of life by caste elders. "It is always nice to go home (ancestral) because the welcome is genuine and the people don't ask for anything. Everyone has known the family for generations and that gives you a sense of belonging which I don't have in Delhi after fifteen years."

These six women were against seeking or giving help on the

basis of caste affiliation, but they felt that they and their husbands could share personal problems at various levels more easily with someone belonging to their own caste-group than with someone they knew equally well in their 'mixed society'. "There is greater sympathy between people who have the same grass roots." "I feel greater affection for those who have known my family for generations and who speak my language. These people will not only give lip sympathy but will help to resolve one's difficulties."

These six women maintained their sub-caste obligations by attending marriages and funerals and other caste-community functions as far as possible. They also kept up extended family ties and felt the richer for doing so. "In the beginning of my married life, I felt oppressed with my husband's relatives but gradually I realized that they gave me a lovely feeling of warmth. This feeling I do not have from my friends made in the rounds of parties."

Five of the remaining twenty-six women would have liked to maintain caste-community ties but had not been able to do so because their husbands had lost touch with such affiliations. Besides they were in professions which took them far from their province of origin. Over the years these women had lost touch with 'old family connections' and could not re-establish the contact. At least four of these six women had been married across caste and provincial lines making it even more difficult for them to identify themselves with their husbands' caste-community. There was a feeling in these women that they were also not accepted and treated as outsiders by both their own and their husbands' caste members. Not having a group of related people on whom they could rely, they felt 'alone' in the world. This was especially so when they needed help in matters relating to their husbands' career prospects or employment for their children.

"Looking around me, I am of the opinion that those families who have a community to back them up are more secure." "There is something very enviable in seeing people who have a group they consider their own. They have a richer life than we who really have no one behind us." These women did not derive the same kind of confidence from their friends, though a great deal of pleasure.

"As a young couple one did not feel the lack of support. But as our responsibilities increase, we certainly feel that had we support from a body of related people, our problems would not seem so great. There is no question that in India caste support is a major factor in getting on whether it be to political gains or just ordinary success."

The stand that these five women took is particularly interesting as it shows that caste associations cannot be renewed at will just to serve one's own selfish ends. Since these women's husbands had already moved away from such affiliations, it was no longer possible to build them except through careful cultivation. This was not possible not only because of professional reasons but due to a change in mentality. This was the result of several factors. The respondents, like their husbands, had been brought up in the secular atmosphere Western society. They both had had mission school education and had lost respect for some aspects of Hindu institutions. These respondents intellectually felt that had they been more caste centred, their husbands would have been more successful in their careers. They failed to see that emotionally they no longer were capable of fulfilling caste obligations which required shared sentiments for the institution. In order to carry conviction to others, it was necessary that one really felt sympathetic rather than had a rational approach to caste associations.

These women considered their first obligation was to take care of extended family members and aid them when possible. They gave examples of how caste support had served a useful function during Partition. Because of a sense of obligation to one another, each one had made it his business to see his 'people' re-established. Because of this strong feeling of solidarity, refugees were able to start life again. The well-to-do in each caste-community, the respondents said, felt it as a moral duty to help others. This in the long run had helped the country as a whole. The respondents contended that had it not been for this personalized help, government alone could not have settled the refugees. "Today you see the same destitute people happy with their little businesses. The money so often came from joint effort from the caste."

These five women did not maintain extended family ties. The main reason for this indifference seemed to be the economic

and intellectual barrier between them and their distant relatives.

The remaining five women of the twenty-six had very strong feelings toward caste-community associations. This was clearly due to the special circumstances in which the Partition of India (1947) had placed them. "Had we not had the full support of our caste-community, we would never have found our bearings." "It was after we lost everything and had to start again that I realized how important it is to maintain relationships with a group of people who are yours because they belong to your community."

These five women kept up as far as possible with their caste obligations even though they did not limit their life to this group alone. Nor were they restricted by caste mores. They gave money to caste charity trusts in preference to other similar trusts. Their families were known to discharge caste obligations and were given special attention and honor by the caste.

For the majority of the twenty-six women, caste was a body of known contacts, established by their parents or parents-in-law, which they had inherited. They did not live within subcaste mores nor did they abide by caste rules. Their attachment to the caste-community was an emotional and at times even a sentimental one. They experienced none of the drawbacks of a caste-structured society. Being the élite of their caste, it was to them that people looked for support. Thus their position gave them freedom of action which allowed them latitude not possible to those who live strictly within caste mores and are dependent on the caste for economic and social reasons. For them caste affiliations were more a psychological sense of security than a way to discharge a moral obligation as part of their religious duties. Such connections were viewed either from the pragmatic standpoint or for pleasure but were not the outcome of necessity or commitment to the institution.

The remaining twenty-four of the fifty respondents because of a combination of factors maintained little contact with members of their caste or extended family. In the case of most of these women, their parents had lost this contact. Due to their parents' protracted absence from their ancestral homes, these respondents had grown up with feelings for only 'close' relatives. All the fifty women had been brought up in the British-influenced society where the impact of caste groupings was

minimal. The difference in their attitude was to a great extent determined by their upbringing. Where parents had got alienated from traditional ways, the impact of education was more acutely felt. In such an environment there was nothing in the home to check the influences that the respondents imbibed in mission schools. In spite of feeling 'uncomfortable' in the anglicized society, there was no other society they could look to.

Of these twenty-four respondents, sixteen had had very little exposure during their childhood to caste groupings. They had not really experienced the joys of sharing a life with people who were supposed to be their's because of certain bonds. These contacts were limited to an annual or bi-annual visit to the place of their parents' homes, that too for brief periods. During these short visits they were aware that the family included many who were not 'really' family, but this did not mean very much to them. Caste loyalty and preferences had been gradually lost by their fathers; hence they were not brought up to recognize these differences. Even for their mothers, after the death of their parents-in-law, the desire to continue caste association had diminished. Exposure to another society in which lay their future was satisfactory, if not perfect. This society also made demands that had to be met if one was to be a success. The adjustment was at first painful for the respondents' mothers who had no real interest in the Westernized society. But neither was it possible to maintain their caste associations unaided by their husbands. The kind of interest that such bonds acquired was related to a certain mental and emotional attitude which had been lost principally by the fathers of the respondents. For these sixteen respondents, emotional support from caste members with whom the bond was based only on common custom and practice was not at all satisfying. These women had even in adolescence not found this kind of association satisfying, around which their grandparents' lives revolved and for a considerable time even their own mothers'. They recognized that in India such caste support was often necessary and did help in solving many personal problems. But for themselves they were no longer capable of forming associations based entirely on caste empathy. They were too intellectually and emotionally alienated from this aspect of traditional India to use it as a

prop even after recognizing its usefulness. Having been brought up in a society where mutual interests and personal likes and dislikes operated, they felt unable to keep up ties that called for interest through caste identification.

These sixteen women had, however, very warm memories of aunts and uncles who had stayed with their parents for long periods during their childhood. They were for maintaining such relationships as far as possible, but felt that even these close ties were only worthwhile when there was a basis of real shared interest between people. As children they greatly benefited from such relationships, but as they grew up they found a distance which was not bridged by affection alone. In these women it was clear that their mission school education rather than their higher education had created a barrier against those who did not have a similar background. The respondents recognized this though they were not able to specify the difference. They found the world of ideas far more interesting than being with people who gave them only a sense of warmth. "I don't think I could sustain an interest in a relation beyond a certain point. I would fulfill my obligations but no more." "Relatives are relatives but because of that I certainly cannot spend my time with them."

These sixteen women after their marriage had maintained relationships with their immediate in-laws but not with extended members of their family. They preferred the nuclear basis of their family life to the 'open house' for all relations. "I just couldn't stand having my cousins-in-law staying with me, let alone a caste member. I wouldn't know what to do with them." They were further not interested in the small world atmosphere of their in-laws. As long as parents-in-law were living, contact based on respect was present, but after they were dead the contact with relatives had also diminished. This was primarily due to the fact that these women did not find living within the related group of the family satisfying emotionally or intellectually. They preferred the challenge of modern life to that of caste-community living, where they would have had a superior status by virtue of their husbands' positions and their own education. The reason given for not wanting to keep up with this kind of inbred social activity was that their interests were varied and did not find scope for expression in the small world atmosphere. They needed a wider canvas to express themselves

and to meet people who were challenging. These women had no feeling of loss because they had completely moved away from that consideration. They were more demanding for themselves and not satisfied with 'just' fulfilling a traditional role. Nor was there the same commitment to blood ties in their generation as was to be found in the previous one. "Each one is now more for himself and not for the submerging of the self," said one of them. In modern India these women felt that to try to keep up the old value system attached to 'family ties' was unrealistic and did not achieve anything positive. "Once the feeling for such associations has gone, one cannot build on it just because of deference for the past." "We have been conditioned differently, we have lost the sentiment for some facets of our traditions, we cannot go back on a pattern that moulded us in our childhood."

The eight remaining women of this group of twenty-four respondents had strong feelings about the extended family relations and caste association only after marriage. They had been married into families that kept up with caste-community obligations. These women themselves were married to men who were in prestigious positions and economically well-to-do. They had, through choice, kept up with their husbands' extended family and caste ties and found this most rewarding. There was no compulsion from their husbands who in some cases were too busy to care about this as long as correct behavior was maintained toward the community. They said that after their marriage they had for the first time experienced the joy of being part of a family in which there was place for both close and distant relations. They had found this emotionally satisfying and it did not matter if such relationships were not intellectually stimulating. These women found the love, warmth and the mutual sense of dependence far more satisfying than their friendships made in their 'mixed society.' These women said that friendships that were formed as part of their inter-caste social life were not as dependable nor as rewarding. "Modern women don't have time for you, they are out to express themselves and create an impression. They are too busy to care for you, much less for your problems." These women felt that in the cities life was becoming more and more complex and impersonal. Individual suffering and loneliness was on the increase

in the cities. This was according to them due to the break in the old basis of caste-community life. They were in favor of this basis continuing as it was an emotional insurance. "In this setting one did not have to stand on formality nor be anything 'special'. The fact of being related was enough to make demands and to be accepted". They also enjoyed the social activities which were centred around caste-cum-family celebrations of festivals and domestic rituals. These respondents said that this kind of social life was meaningful as it was not a mere rendering of obligation to one another but had a deeper basis. Beside the social aspect, these women indicated that with the support they received from an identifiable group they were better able to meet the problems of modern India. There was a feeling in them of being lost in the city in spite of friends. In a closely-knit caste group with the same language, they also received approval and recognition more easily. In a mixed inter-caste society they said one had to be someone important to belong, know the right people, and be sophisticated in a Western sense which placed all kinds of strains, not the least of which was economic. False standards were being constantly introduced making it difficult to keep up. These elements in the modern secular society prevented them from forming meaningful relationships on which they could rely. Some of these women were doing welfare work and were engaged in family planning, conducting handicraft classes, and doing other useful work for members of their own caste-community. Thus these educated women were in a sense leaders of their caste group. It was clear through their responses that they found the competition in a secular society greater and hence to find an ego-satisfying role more difficult. In a caste group their education was at a premium and they were looked upon as leaders and felt wanted. There is no doubt that the standards of modern secular society are higher and more exacting. There are many more highly qualified women in modern society and so, instead of meeting the challenge, these eight women preferred to go back to a group less demanding in its expectations even though more limited. These women stated that their choice was a deliberate one. After they had been married, they had the possibility of choosing between a social life which was based on professional contacts and one based on caste group identity.

They had found the latter more rewarding.

Though there were differences among the fifty respondents in the extent and kind of involvement with the sub-caste and extended family ties, majority of them looked to caste as an emotional support rather than as the traditionally viewed social unit in which one conducts one's entire life as an extension of one's religious 'Dharma'. All the women were against the caste system as a rigid, inflexible unit which they said could no longer survive, nor was it desirable that it should. Aspects such as ritualistic pollution and purity were dying a natural death in modern India and they presented no problem for those who wanted to break these rules. In fact, in the cities and towns there was little evidence to show that people cared about these matters. However, many of the fifty women saw caste as a cementing rather than as a fragmenting unit in society. The beneficial role it could play for them was to make the individuals feel more 'wanted and cared for. This, they felt, was not possible to the same extent in a society which did not break into smaller units with definite demarcating lines. In a caste-structured society individuals also felt more responsible for one another. According to the majority, in India this kind of individual concern was necessary so that the stings of poverty were diluted and each shared the burden of the other. Besides this, the large majority of Indians were brought up in an ethical code which made it easier for them to see people as people only if they 'belonged' in some way personally to them. This made groups more concerned and responsible for their members thus reducing neglect. This enhanced concern for one another and was a useful aspect of caste and should not be destroyed. But the fifty respondents were against caste being used as a means of political or professional gain. Though this was one of the main reasons given for wanting to continue with caste association, this discrepancy between action and principles was evident even to the respondents. But they justified their stand by saying that individuals are always going to seek their own ends, hence society and its leaders should first do away with partisan feelings before asking individuals to reform. They were highly critical of recent trends. According to them, in spite of the government's policy to ignore a man's caste in selection of personnel, the real test of the 'casteless' society would be when people

in power truly ignored this kind of affiliation. They felt this was not yet fully in evidence. They maintained that today's leaders were influenced by caste considerations and such affiliations went a long way to enhance one's future. "At least they have more sympathy for those who belong to their caste." Although all government recruitment officially was without regard to caste or creed, this alone was not sufficient to make people feel confident that merit was being used as the only standard of judgment. They felt that this period of transition was crucial as there was a growing number, even though still a minority, who were impartial and sufficiently alienated from the caste mentality to function without such bias. But if considerations like caste played an increasing role in promotions and employment, then this Western-educated alienated minority would be the only sufferers as they would be out of the mainstream of Indian thinking. Such people who no longer exploited caste could then very easily reassociate themselves with caste, as a means of furthering their own ends. If this happened, it would be a retrograde step and could undermine India's progress. The women who had completely lost their identity with caste groups stated that they did feel less secure about the future than those who had maintained a foothold in their caste. They did see people with such a base getting more advantages than those who stood for the principle of impersonal criteria of merit. All fifty women were against caste being used as a means for gaining advantage. Though for many it was precisely this aspect that gave them confidence to meet personal problems especially in a complex modern society which India was gradually becoming, all favored a just, impersonal system of assessing the individual.

Caste was not the only impediment to impartial selection; these women pointed out that provincialism was also emerging as a threat. They saw the exploitation of provincialism on the increase. This was usually but not always linked with caste. They felt as strongly about provincial identity being exploited as about caste and gave examples to show what they meant. Often a Bengali head of an organization preferred Bengalis on his staff just as a Tamilian chose Tamilians in preference to others. If such a trend went unchecked, they felt the only section which would be isolated would be that section of society that truly felt Indian first and everything else second. This group

would then be at a disadvantage in every way. Such a minority would be less and less effective in administering the country on an impartial basis and the confidence of the people would be shattered. There were indications that this alienated minority felt itself already at a disadvantage and was not being as effective as it might have been. Thus the entire group was wholly in favor of eradicating all such considerations as caste, creed, or provincialism in the realm of public activity. Such preferences should be limited to the personal sphere. There was lack of consistency in what the respondents felt to be an ideal and how they patterned their own lives. The ideal was to realize an India in which no partisan loyalties played a part, where each individual was brought up to see himself as an Indian first. But the majority also thought caste as a unit of personal affiliation added strength to the individual and as such it had a place in modern India.

9

RELATIVES

THE GREAT MAJORITY of respondents reported that the primary interest of their mothers was directed towards relatives and maintenance of caste contacts. A minority said this interest was shared even by their fathers. They recalled that for many years after their parents had left the ancestral home, it was still the 'real' home for them. They discharged their obligations toward family members with meticulous care. These respondents felt that the emotional center for their mothers was among relatives and their new contacts and new way of life did not change this focus. Much of the loneliness of their mothers' lives was lessened in the new environment by this rootedness. They did not feel abandoned in this environment because they knew people back home cared for them with undiminished interest. This did not mean that this emotional bond was without complication. The respondents stated that one reason for family disagreement and unpleasantness sprang from this preoccupation with relatives.

The well-placed and well-to-do members of a family were expected to carry the burden of dependent relatives. It seemed that relatives were never satisfied with what was done for them. There was continuous pressure on the respondents' parents to give more financial help. These monetary demands, the respondents said, were considered exaggerated and resented by their

mothers. The extent, however, to which their families accepted financial responsibility for the extended family rested on the decision of their fathers. The pressures put by relatives were given by the respondents as one of the main causes of friction between their parents. The mothers tried to reduce the financial commitment and were unhappy when they failed to persuade their husbands. The basis of conflict was never the principle of accepting such obligations, but the extent to which they should be met.

The reluctance of the mothers to share their husbands' income with his relatives did not prevent them from constantly emphasizing the moral duty of such responsibility to their own children. The parents expected their sons to sympathize with extended family problems and help if possible. But the problems of the immediate family were to be fully shared. It was emphasized to the respondents that this duty had to be accepted even if it meant individual hardship and financial strain. This was seen as a moral commitment, a religious obligation and one of the noblest forms of concern.

Although none of the respondents were completely raised in a joint family, most of their parents still enforced the forms of respect that prevailed in such a unit. Many of the respondents used the same name for their mothers as for their paternal uncles' wives and, in keeping with the joint family tradition, made little outward distinction between their fathers and their paternal uncles. Cousins were to be considered as brothers and sisters. Some of those respondents who had lived for many years with their grandparents were in fact closer to an uncle or an aunt at least while they were young than to their own parents. Regardless of the distance that separated the respondents from the extended family, most of them were brought up to regard all relatives with special interest, although most of them had this special feeling only for their close relatives.

In spite of being influenced by their parents to accept a moral responsibility for relatives, most of the respondents detected with time that their fathers were losing interest in the large related group within which they no longer lived. Some respondents felt that their fathers discharged these obligations from a sense of duty rather than from real feeling. In fact, many of the respondents were aware that for their fathers many of these

ties were often embarrassing. This often resulted from their inability to help them find jobs or get their grievances rectified. Due to the fact that the respondents' parents belonged to the prestigious services the demands on them by less well-placed relatives were constant. They were unable to accept the limitation within which help could be given. This resulted in misunderstanding, made for bitterness and was a deterrent to closer friendship with relatives who were economically hard pressed. One of the main reasons for the respondents' fathers to move away from this 'related group' center was intellectual alienation. They no longer found such contacts interesting. They were well integrated in their 'new society' and found it both emotionally and intellectually satisfying. For them, unlike the mothers, it was not something simply to be endured. Though there was no intellectual rift as far as most of the respondents' mothers were concerned, still a certain distance crept in primarily because they no longer wanted to share the economic responsibility of distant relatives. But for them this interrelated group brought the greatest emotional fulfilment. They were really only at home within the caste-community. In spite of many outward symbols of being well-adjusted to their new environment, the great majority of the respondents' mothers did not really find anything but superficial emotional satisfaction with people in their society.

The majority of the respondents said that though they were brought up to regard the family in its larger connotation as the unit which should command their first loyalty, this sentiment did not necessarily take root. The growing disparity between them and other members of the family made such contacts less than perfect. None the less the impact of such conditioning did leave a strong impression on the respondents. The great gap that was created with time appeared to be from a better economic standard which brought with it other advantages such as education and a better standard of living with different emphasis. In spite of having been brought up to feel a special responsibility for extended family members, most of the respondents said that they had entered marriage without having any feeling for such obligations. There was also no sense of a moral lapse because the welfare of distant relatives was of little concern to them. These women felt that after they had adequately provided for their children, their primary responsibility was

towards their husbands' immediate relatives such as brothers and sisters. In none of the respondents was there difference of opinion that their children were not equated with nephews and nieces. There was not even the pretence to try and show that brothers- and sisters-in-law's children were like their own. The old form of, if not feeling but at least outward showing that there was no difference was also absent. Differences between respondents lay in how they viewed their responsibility towards close relatives such as nephews and nieces. sisters- and brothers-in-law.

Twenty-one of the women accepted responsibility for their parents-in-law and their husbands' unmarried brothers and sisters. As long as their husbands considered it their duty to help the brothers and sisters financially or otherwise, these women would willingly bear the strain, if any. "I can't say I love spending on educating my brother-in-law but I know I must. It is right." "The money my husband earns is his and it is for him to decide how he wants to use it. I have no right to object if he helps his relatives."

There was no question in the minds of these twenty-one women that their parents-in-law had a right to live with them permanently. However, none of them was prepared to give up the management of the household or the financial control. These women would have been extremely unhappy had they to live as if supported by their in-laws in their own homes. This had been a problem for some of them. They had gone through a period of extreme unpleasantness with their husbands in order to maintain their right to be mistresses of the home after the in-laws came to live with them. This had created conflicts for their husbands who wanted to please their parents and show them the respect they expected. They were accused of being selfish and under the domination of their wives. But they also understood that it was difficult to expect educated girls to be dominated. "It took several years of very tactful handling to make my husband see my point of view." "It was all right in the beginning of my marriage to have someone to guide me, but then I wanted to run things my way. I felt utterly hemmed in till I got the right to spend as I liked for the home."

These twenty-one women were ready to show all due respect to their in-laws such as covering their heads in their presence

or touching their feet if so required without being completely subordinate to them. They felt it was essential for their happiness to safeguard their right to act without having to seek prior approval from their in-laws; because of this attitude, many of their in-laws were dissatisfied. The husbands did not want to hurt their parents, but at the same time realized that to ask their wives to play the traditional role of daughters-in-law would be unrealistic specially on a long term basis. They tried to be the peace-makers by asking both sides to be tolerant. "I felt sorry for my husband who was tired of hearing complaints from both sides, each being valid, but unable to reduce the tension." "After a great deal of reassurance that no insult was meant in working or having a life of one's own, did a kind of harmony come. Though I had my own life, I took great pains to see that my mother-in-law also had some distractions."

The parents-in-law of seven of the twenty-one women had gone to live with another son after a time, precisely because they felt better cared for in their homes. All twenty-one women said that the extent to which they could ignore the demands of their in-laws depended on the cooperation and understanding of their husbands. But they were also determined in their stand not to give in beyond a point. This naturally led to conflict often unresolved and was one of the main reasons for disharmony in the home. The husbands too were not ready to give in to their wives on all scores. "To have parents with you permanently is a strain but they cannot be neglected also. This is one of the dilemmas of modern life. We want the extra comfort that is not possible if you have even your dearest one live with you. Yet if one sent them away, one could never live in peace with one's conscience." "I now have a wonderful understanding with my mother-in-law. It took time, but it was worth it. One has to work at this or else family life can become one great nightmare." The question of adjustment to older people in the home presented a grave problem where either of the parents-in-law became invalids and needed constant attention. This was provided by engaging extra servants in many cases but at this point the women were required by their husbands to reduce their outside activities. This was not always welcome and had created resentment in the respondents and resulted in considerable strain.

The in-laws did not approve of the respondents working or having a social life that took them out frequently. This was resented specially for those activities that did not include their husbands such as playing bridge, going out for morning coffee, etc. The respondents felt that one of the main reasons for their dissatisfaction was that they were criticized by their contemporaries for having daughters-in-law who went out to public places unaccompanied by their husbands. The other reason was that their mothers-in-law felt alone as they had no friends of their age, especially in cities.

These twenty-one respondents were willing to share on their terms even limited accommodations with their in-laws. Personal inconvenience such as having their children share rooms with them or the desire for greater privacy would not have deterred them from having their closest in-laws with them for an indefinite period. In fact, they felt a home that had close relatives was blessed, if one had amicable relations. This understanding without which it was better to be alone, was indispensable. The influence and love of grandparents was thought to be irreplaceable. These respondents had no objection to their in-laws sharing an equal responsibility in bringing up their children: "When two people love a child equally, differences regarding what is good for him can be easily resolved." "All the fuss that is made about children today is a great deal of nonsense. They can never be harmed by too much love."

These twenty-one women did not feel that the presence of parents-in-law was an encroachment on their personal lives. Other than their unwillingness to give over the management of their homes or to be restricted in what they considered their legitimate activities, these twenty-one women were emotionally prepared to share their physical resources with close relatives. They did not grudge supporting brothers- and sisters-in-law till they were established in life. However, they did not think it necessary to spend lavishly on such occasions as marriages and did not. This attitude did not please their in-laws who thought it was more moral to reduce one's standard of living in order to meet family obligations adequately. The greatest disagreement came when parents-in-law wanted to carry out old customs so that other relatives would think well of them, but which cost a great deal and were really within the means of the

respondents nor were they interested in getting a good name in the community. The respondents felt that the kind of extravagance seen at traditional marriages was not possible. "Such ostentation is vulgar." As long as their in-laws could afford such display, it was not for the respondents to object. To ask them for financial help so that extra lighting and feasting could be made possible, they thought was unreasonable. The extent to which they would cut down on extras, they said, would depend on the demands of the other party. If it meant a good marriage for their sisters-in-law, they would not have been allowed to reduce the cost by their husbands. In spite of putting down certain marriage expenses as vulgar extravagance, it was quite clear from the responses that these very things they would have gladly done for their own children. It was really a reluctance to spend their money on relatives however close.

The majority of these twenty-one women would not refuse accommodation to near relatives such as cousins once removed for a reasonable period of a week to a month, while uncles, aunts, nephews and nieces could stay for much longer but not make their homes their base. "I would not be able to refuse a relative, but neither could I keep him for an indefinite period. This kind of hospitality is no longer possible in modern times." "With the kind of accommodation one has, I'm afraid I could only keep those who were very closely related to me and for whom we as a family were responsible."

The majority of these women and their husbands had spent their annual leave visiting either in-laws or their own parents. This they considered a pleasurable duty. They did not think a holiday so spent was wasted nor did they have any particular sense of going on a holiday with just their immediate family. "After all, parents want to see their children. If we went off on our own, when would they see us?" "I would feel guilty even if I wanted to go with my husband on a holiday during his yearly leave." "To be free of all household work is great, better than any other holiday."

In general the attitude of this group of twenty-one women showed that they still regarded family obligations as a duty that had to be met. They would have preferred a life free of such responsibilities but were not wholly intolerant of pressures that required adjustment on their part. However, they were

not prepared to submerge their lives in serving either the legitimate or illegitimate demands of their in-laws. They had a definite idea of their own identity and wanted that expressed. This did not altogether make them reject the demands made on them for adjusting their lives to suit the convenience of near relatives.

The other group of eighteen respondents had entered marriage with a desire to become members of their husbands' families. They had found this integration emotionally challenging and at the same time it had given them a sense of importance. They did not see marriage as a union to the exclusion of their husbands' near relatives. These respondents found the company of sisters- and brothers-in-law emotionally very satisfying; they enjoyed playing the role of an elder and liked the kind of atmosphere that such associations created. There were tensions and unpleasantness but this was accepted as part of a human situation.

These eighteen women said that they would like to be the dominant force in running their own homes if their in-laws became permanent members of their household but they would not make an issue of it. In a home, management was always shared specially where family members were a permanent part of it. This for the respondents presented no problem at all. In fact, if there was not a sense of real participation by in-laws in running the house, the respondents would have put it to indifference to their welfare. But they were not prepared to hand over the control of the finances to parents-in-law. If this was required of them, there would have been real conflict and an uncompromising stand taken. Their attitude was that no one was justified in making demands that were out of date and expect to be obeyed. To try and recreate the old order was not only impossible but also not desirable. There had to be a compromise made so that the new and old values could exist side by side. This, the respondents felt, was indispensable to real harmony. They were not in favor of keeping up a form which did not meet the needs of a changed mentality. This, they said, was applicable not only to them but to men as well. If the older generation was offended even then they would not give in to certain demands. "I would hate to ask permission before buying anything." "It would make life impossible if my in-laws

had control over expenditure." "I don't really care who orders the food or engages the servants. I don't particularly like doing this anyway. But I would have to be in control of the money." A few of these eighteen women were financially dependent on their in-laws at least for the first years of their marriage. Their husbands had given their salaries to the parents as a mark of respect. The women found this most difficult to accept but this did not change the pattern immediately. There was in these educated women a great deal of tolerance and an acceptance of difficulties. There was no effort made to gloss over certain basic differences that were the direct result of interference by their in-laws in their personal lives with their husbands. These were not dismissed and there was a realization that marriage harmony could be impaired by such interference. "There was very little I could do to change my husband's attitude except be patient. No marriage is perfect at all times." "Marriage makes you see the other side of the coin and makes you realize that one cannot have one's own way in all things."

These eighteen women would have gone further than the twenty-one women to meet the demands of their parents-in-law. They were prepared to listen and act on advice given in order to please even if this was not in conformity with their own ideas. This was done mainly by those respondents who saw their in-laws infrequently and saw no reason to go against their wishes during a brief visit. Many of the compromises that these respondents were ready to make did not basically go against their own pattern of life because of their temporary nature. But there was evidence to indicate that the great majority of these eighteen respondents liked the emotional bond between them and their closest in-laws and were prepared to make the necessary adjustments required to have an older generation share a home on a permanent basis. They did this not only from a sense of duty but need as well. They derived the greatest satisfaction from being amidst people who were related through blood ties. "I would not like to see money wasted, but a certain amount of waste has to be tolerated if one wants to avoid friction."

These eighteen women not only accepted the responsibility of establishing younger brothers- and sisters-in-law, but they said this brought them a great deal of emotional satisfaction.

They felt the investment of money was more than repaid by the affection and gratitude that it brought them. Also this had its reward for them and their children in their having relatives who would regard them as "very special". "Modern Indians think that spending on a drink party for friends is not a waste, but money spent on one's own people is never forgotten." Some of them said that they would not mind reducing their own personal expenses, such as buying clothes and jewellery, to meet the extra financial burden, but they would not willingly have spent less on their children's education for the sake of close relatives.

These eighteen respondents were happiest when they had a close relative or relatives staying with them. They did not find this an intrusion in their own family life. This was not the case with the other group of twenty-one respondents who seemed to fulfil a call of duty, something they really could not avoid with impunity. The eighteen respondents also felt that traditional attitudes toward children were not necessarily harmful, or that modern approaches were necessarily wise. They had, in fact, come to the conclusion that the presence of relatives acted as a great deterrent for children to follow modern trends which were harmful. This group, along with the other group of twenty-one women, valued the influences that an older generation brought to their children.

In this group there was more attention given to extended family relations, not because they necessarily felt an obligation towards them, but because this pleased their in-laws. "Personally I would rather not have my house cluttered with distant relatves, but sometimes it can't be avoided." "It is a nuisance to have people staying with you with whom there is no common interest. But in refusing such hospitality too many people would be offended."

This group, it seemed, did not subordinate itself to parents-in-law entirely because of their husbands' wishes. They enjoyed playing the role of traditional daughters-in-law. But there was also no evidence that these women were dominated by their mothers-in-law or that they would have submitted to that. There was also no indication in this group of passively accepting any kind of treatment thought proper by their in-laws: on the contrary, there was a high sense of personal dignity, and, where

this was ignored, there would have been conflict. When they had accepted traditional deference shown by their husbands to parents, they understood that this was not done to undermine their dignity.

These eighteen women accepted some of the traditional aspects of behavior voluntarily and not because it was imposed on them. They were just as conscious of being educated as the other twenty-one women, but this did not make them want to rebel against all forms of traditional behavior governing relatives. "My mother-in-law never forgets that I am educated, and she appreciates my attitude because she had not expected it of an educated girl." "Because I am able to accommodate my in-laws in spite of my education, I am all the more admired and feel I owe it to my education to behave in a manner which is not offensive to my elders." "Personally I don't think being educated has anything to do with following one's traditions. It is not education that spoils one but false ideas about what an educated girl should be like."

All eighteen felt that their in-laws were a great emotional support. This included sisters- and brothers-in-law. They liked to have someone who cared for them and on whom they could completely depend. They could go to their own parents' homes or on a short trip without being anxious about the children. "Servants can't be trusted these days. It's only when you have someone of the family that you can leave the home." When members of this and the first group took up regular or even part-time work, the presence of in-laws with them became almost indispensable specially if there were young children. To some, it was a decisive factor in accepting or rejecting regular work. These eighteen women were in favor of continuing with the old family bonds they had witnessed in their parental homes. They saw no real conflict if one was tolerant and recognized the value of such relationship. They were of the opinion that close relatives were not unreasonable if one had the right sentiment towards them. The difficulty really arose when women thought such relationship was an intrusion in their lives. According to these respondents, if the right sentiment existed, the older generation would be willing to accommodate as they were not unaware of the changes in mentality of the younger generation.

The remaining eleven of the fifty respondents took the position that the emphasis placed on accommodating to the convenience of parents-in-law was highly exaggerated in India. They felt strongly about maintaining a healthy balance regarding this aspect of Indian domestic life. They were of the opinion that there was a false sense of duty among Indians. They felt that it was necessary to see things clearly and not confuse sentimentality with duty. According to them, it was right to be responsible for one's obligations but that did not mean that one did not have a right to look after oneself. It was not less moral to be aware of one's own needs. Hence they felt that they had a right to make a life of their own, without being restricted in any way by the physical presence of in-laws. This did not mean, they stated, that they would show disrespect in any way to their elders. They were prepared to accept financial responsibility where there was need but again that was qualified. These women felt that to indulge parents in their whims at the cost of one's own family was unnecessary. They were prepared only to give financial help when it was a matter of need for essentials. The same reasoning governed other aspects of help. They were entirely opposed to accepting liabilities that were the outcome of trying to maintain prestige in the caste-community or other false standards. They were against making drastic changes in their routine in order to accommodate in-laws. It was difficult for them specially in the present condition of having limited accommodation and fewer servants to really welcome in-laws as permanent members of their household. Most of them would have made necessary changes if it was absolutely unavoidable but not because they needed emotional comfort. They did not want to give up their way of life and its comforts for the sake of relatives. In fact, they felt that the presence of relatives did make inroads in their privacy and this was not acceptable to them for an indefinite period. If there was ample accommodation and if there was no interference in their lives with their husbands and children, then to have in-laws staying with them was wholly acceptable. In maintaining this attitude, these respondents did not feel that they were being morally derelict in any way. They attributed to this emotional dependence on older people the lack of self-reliance in Hindus. To be constantly under the shadow of people even

your dearest ones was considered unhealthy and undesirable. These women felt that the inability to separate real duty from sentimentality resulted in dwarfing personalities and this they would not submit to, if possible. They reserved the right to decide what was best for them and their children, and were particularly against interference in the children's upbringing. They claimed that allowing the older generation, by virtue of its age, to have the right to do as it pleased with children was wrong. "Why should one let a child be spoiled by its grandparents just because of fear of displeasing them?" "Once you share responsibility with grandparents regarding children, there is no way of controlling them. It is better to be honest from the very beginning." "Grandparents' love is wonderful but that does not mean they should have a free hand in doing as they like."

These women cherished their freedom and were not prepared to limit their activities. They would have done this only when there was real necessity to do so. They did not need this kind of emotional support to be happy. They were desirous of living alone and capable of managing their own affairs. "I know I am not the favorite daughter-in-law, but I couldn't be otherwise." These eleven respondents knew that their attitude caused pain to their in-laws, but even so, they did not feel they could change. A few among them said they had a very warm relationship with their parents-in-law because they understood the respondents' point of view and accepted it.

All eleven women accepted the responsibility of giving financial help to the younger unmarried brothers- and sisters-in-law. This did not mean that such relatives could stay with them for an indefinite period. The length of a visit was a matter of their own personal convenience and the availability of space; the reluctance was not based on economic considerations but purely on convenience. They would not be prepared to give up their bedrooms and those of their children to make room except on a temporary basis. "I would not want any relative, no matter how close, to stay with me in a modern flat. It just wouldn't work." "The conditions of life today are not what they were thirty years ago. To try and think they are is utterly stupid."

Further these women did not feel any hesitation in making their views known to their in-laws, even on delicate matters such as traditional customs and the consequent expenditure

involved. For this group, the perfect home was one in which parents and children lived by themselves with the least amount of interference from relatives, and at the same time maintaining warm ties with relatives.

Interviews of all fifty respondents revealed, in varying degrees, that the position of the mother-in-law in their families had greatly changed. In traditional India, for example, the position of a mother-in-law was unassailable. She was the dominant influence and power in the home. She was to be served and not to serve her daughters-in-law. The idea of using her as a convenience in the domestic routine was not considered. The interviews reveal that the mother-in-law's authority to determine the pattern of life for her daughter-in-law had considerably lessened. This change has had its disruptive aspects but not to the extent one would have thought considering the pattern of life of the respondents. The majority of the respondents were still committed to a family life that had room for near relatives. These women were leading a life that was not entirely family centred. They had an idea of self-expression and had interests in outside activities. But it was also clear that the majority had not moved away from the sentiment of family life which was traditional. The effort to adjust and accommodate was the principal indication of this. But harmony between generations was achieved only when in-laws were able to accommodate themselves to the views of their daughters-in-law, but there was also effort on the part of the respondents. It seems that because of this flexibility in the older and younger generations the traditional family warmth and unity has so far continued. This has been most successful in homes where the daughters-in-law have also needed the affection of parents and not viewed them as intruders.

10

MARRIAGE

ALL OF THE FIFTY respondents had been married between the ages of nineteen and twenty-five. Sixteen of them were married after their under-graduate degree (B.A. or B.SC.) and twenty others after in M.A. or M.SC. Six women had started with M.A. program, but had not finished because of their marriage. Eight women had received professional training beyond the master's degree in such fields as education, medicine or science before they were married.

The marriages of forty-two of the respondents had been arranged but even in this method the range of differences was great. Their parents selected prospective husbands whose families were evaluated as to status, both social, economic, and moral standing. Though none of the forty-two women had objected to arranged marriages, they were affected in different ways by the process.

Eighteen women said that they felt humiliated when seen or rejected by prospective husbands. In spite of the parents' attempt to keep such meetings as casual as possible, the women were always aware of the purpose. On such occasions they felt ill at ease, self-conscious, and embarrassed. From the questions asked to them, they felt as though they were on exhibition and had to perform well. They resented being appraised; it offended their vanity. The feeling of hurt pride was accentuated when a

proposed marriage alliance did not materialize. This was taken by the respondents as a personal failure and made them feel guilty of causing disappointment to their parents. The respondents said that their parents never showed any disappointment; in fact they went out of their way to safeguard the respondents' feelings. This was done in many different ways—from maligning the boy's family to discovering new facts which had escaped them when they first proposed marriage. But even this did not remove the sense of failure and inadequacy. Although there was no personal involvement with the boy or his family, still there was considerable emotional strain. Finally six of these eighteen had married men they had never met or rather did not remember meeting them. The entire negotiations were done by the families concerned and photographs exchanged.

Twelve women of this group of forty-two did not have any special feelings about the process of selection in an arranged marriage. These women said they had been well prepared by their parents and others to see the failure of a proposed union as a possibility for either side. It was not just the privilege of the boy to say no; girls also had the same right. A few of these twelve women had in fact rejected a boy considered eligible by their parents. "I just didn't like his face. Besides he asked me such silly questions." "I did not want to marry a businessman and didn't, though I saw several. My parents finally understood that it was no use trying."

These twelve women saw selection and approval in arranged marriages as a two-way process. They, therefore, were not overanxious at the time of being 'seen'. One of them said: "I did not even take such meetings seriously. So often it was between families that were well-known to me that I did not realize that I was being judged." Another said: "I remember being looked over from the time I was thirteen and I was quite used to marriage being discussed. I found it all very amusing and, in a way, even exciting." "I can't see why any girl should feel embarrassed if she is seen. After all, how else can one arrange a marriage?" For these women there was little emotional strain or loss of pride.

The other twelve women of the forty-two said that they had accepted what went with an arranged marriage as they saw no alternative. "If I had been in love or had objected to my parents

making the selection, I might have had strong feelings about my marriage being arranged." These twelve women felt that if the parents were careful, the girls need not feel let down if a marriage proposal did not succeed. They did not feel that they were at all involved in the preliminary stages of the negotiations. To them it was a matter to be settled between families. And this did remove personal anxiety with regard to marriage. The respondents said this made them carefree as they knew that their future was with those who loved them. They did not mind seeing boys as they also reserved the right to refuse at least in theory. "My parents would never have married me until I had given my consent." "It was really their headache to find someone I liked."

The remaining eight women who did not have arranged marriages had not demanded marriage by choice. It so happened that the boys they liked were approved by their parents. Five of these eight women were not quite sure what they would have done had there been opposition.

Three women had had some difficulty in persuading their parents to accept their choice. They said that had their parents not ultimately agreed to their marriage to the men they liked, they would not have insisted. Under no circumstances would they have gone against the wishes of their parents or hurt them.

It was possible for these eight women to select their future husbands because of the more liberal attitude of their parents to marriage. Even before the respondents had reached a marriageable age, their parents had lost contact with their caste-community. They were established in the British-influenced society. They had integrated with the social élite and were part of an inter-caste society. This did not mean that the parents had entirely abandoned old values or accepted the anglicized way of looking at things. However, they had moved away from traditional attitudes in many respects and they were regarded by traditionalists as modern. These families were not modern enough to be absorbed in the cultural pattern of the British and not traditional enough to be accepted by orthodox Indians. They were part of the 'modern-traditional' society. But in matters such as marriage, even modern families preferred the traditionally oriented, though educated, woman. Therefore, these eight respondents were not allowed to go out alone with men

or attend young people's parties unchaperoned. The parents were sufficiently displaced, both intellectually and emotionally, from their caste-community that they would not have tried to arrange marriages within the known group. If left to the parents to find a suitable man they would have arranged marriages for their girls on class rather than caste lines. They were fully conscious that their daughters had had an upbringing which did not prepare them for a life in an orthodox family. In spite of keeping traditional restrictions and keeping their girls from trying to imitate modern ways, they were sufficiently modern to be misfits in an orthodox environment. Their caste members would also have been reluctant to have girls from such families as they presented a potential threat to their way of life.

In the case of the three women who had difficulty in persuading their parents to approve their choices, it was precisely because the men came from traditionally based families. These families did not have Western educated members who would be able to understand or appreciate the respondents. This in the long run, the parents thought, would pose problems for their children. The respondents were reminded that "marriage is not simply a matter of happiness between two people, but between two families".

The parents of the forty-two women who had arranged marriages also belonged to the modern-traditional society. The difference between them and the other eight families was actually the extent to which each needed and sought caste approval. This need was emotional or psychological, not economic. Even among the forty-two families there were subtle differences in how they were acted upon and reacted to caste-community pressures. A minority of the forty-two families had through the years maintained close relations with the extended family. They were still sensitive to the opinions of caste members and felt obliged to remain within caste mores in certain personal matters. They had kept close ties with their caste-community and desired that marriages should be within the subcaste. They failed to take into account that though they were still emotionally attached to such sentiments, their children were quite indifferent to these considerations. Some of the respondents reported that this generation gap of what was important to them and their parents did result in some initial diffi-

culties in their own marriages. They did not find any satisfaction in fulfilling extended family obligation nor had interest in people because they belonged to the same community. In spite of being protected from alien influences the respondents had changed and this, they felt, was not sufficiently taken into account at the time of marriage. These respondents felt isolated from friends and unduly restricted from doing what others in their social group were allowed. The reasons offered by their parents—that this was done so that the girls would still be approved by their caste for marriage—did not seem justified or even valid. It is this group that lived in one society but with standards that belonged to another society in which the children felt most displaced. Throughout their professional lives, the families of this minority felt that they were temporary members of the society in which they lived. Once they had retired from their service they wanted to return to their caste-community where their roots truly lay.

The minority of the forty-two respondents' parents, though not entirely in harmony with the anglicized society, did not think of themselves as simply temporary members. Without compromising their values, they did allow their children to participate in certain social activities. They were more careful than the group of eight about how their children behaved. For example, they did not allow their girls to use cosmetics, do ballroom dancing, or mix with men. They were not completely removed from Indian sentiments, but their social life was among those Indians who were gradually turning Western in their outlook. It was not possible entirely to escape the impact of an alien way of life. This way of life was now being gradually adopted by Indians themselves with considerable pride. Because such families had not completely lost their identity there was considerable doubt in their minds as to what was right and wrong. But with regard to marriage their views were more traditional than modern. They approved of the modest in contrast to the self-assured modern girl and dissuaded their daughters from imitating the latter. As one of the respondents put it: "Every time I expressed my views there was a gentle rebuke; a good Hindu woman was not supposed to have views of her own. All this was really to keep up appearances; my parents knew that I was no longer really submissive. This game of being one thing

and pretending to be another was amusing." Though the majority of the forty-two respondents' parents had not lost contact with their extended family members, they were not particularly sensitive to caste opinions. They realized that marriage within the strict caste fold would perhaps mean going below their social and economic status. This was not acceptable to them. However, the respondents stated that their parents' first choice invariably was a boy from the sub-caste who belonged to a good government service. Failing this the second choice fell on boys from the same caste if not the same sub-caste. The ambiguous position of these alienated families posed problems in the marriage of their children. Though the majority of the parents valued their contact with their caste-community, they were sufficiently removed from its fold not to confine their choice to it. They, therefore, sought marriages with families that had the same base as their own and they put greater emphasis on the boy's career than on his sub-caste. The primary emphasis was on the boy's professional potential and the kind of life that went with it. They therefore looked favourably upon boys from good families across sub-caste and sometimes even caste lines. Though the preference was for sons-in-law from the same caste, there was in this group a very small minority who were married into castes other than their own. Whether caste or inter-caste, all marriages were arranged by the parents. Were a girl to indicate a preference for a particular boy, her view would not be considered if the boy and his family did not meet with the approval of her parents.

There was another significant difference between the majority group of forty-two families and the other eight families. The former group was prepared to accept sons-in-law, but not daughters-in-law, from other sub-castes. For their own sons, the members of that group were strongly in favor of marriage within their own sub-caste.

We have seen that all fifty of the respondents had been exposed to new ideas and had had, in varying degrees, some contact with men. They were aware that in some countries love was a pre-condition for marriage. They had friends who had married on that basis. Considering their background and age at the time of marriage, why did these educated women not try to modify the system of arranged marriages? The majority

of the fifty women had accepted their parents' decision regarding marriage because no other alternative seemed possible. They had been brought up to leave important decisions to their parents. They were not reared to take responsibility for their actions and the right of their parents to marry them was part of their whole upbringing. The fact that being educated with Western ideals and being exposed to a Western way of life did not undermine the authority of parents to enforce old values on the respondents is worth exploring. As has been stated before the parents of the respondents were traditionally oriented. They had been schooled in orthodox Hindu ideals. These principles were not basically shaken because of their contact with the British. Great care had been taken to keep alien influences away from the respondents; this was not only a negative step but reinforced by their own conviction of what was right and wrong. The respondents from earliest childhood had been conditioned to feel a special dignity in being separated from men. They were told that men did not basically respect women with whom they could be free and frivolous. This kind of freedom was associated only with women of loose morals. Because of this ingrained prejudice, they did not want to imitate those with greater freedom. In fact, they felt superior to them; any violation of this standard was tantamount to loss of self-esteem. The integrity of certain social norms was possible because of the parents' steadfast belief in them. It was not mere preaching that kept the women from denying the old but the rationale behind what was practiced. Arranged marriages were part of a philosophy of life and not just a convention that was in vogue. Marriage was seen by the parents as inevitable for all women. There was no room for romance in it except in thought.

All fifty women were aware of romance and adventure in love marriages, but they were equally aware of another kind of love. From the lives of their parents, they had witnessed a love which, though not romantic, was real and fulfilling. They had unconsciously, without being able to reason about it, accepted this kind of love in marriage. They saw marriage in terms of a fuller life, not necessarily one in which there was excitement and passion. They were made aware that love was the fruit of selfless devotion to the man one married. They saw that marriage tested a woman's finer qualities and that it was not

a union in which happiness was easily achieved or the only goal. It was the importance placed on marriage as an institution that made them accept the judgment of their parents. "What do you know of life to be sure what kind of man will make you happy?" "The qualities that endure are not visible on the surface; you are too young to distinguish between what is real and what is false." The romantic kind of love they had read about did not have a place in this pattern of life.

The respondents were also brought up to see marriage as an economic and emotional security for a woman. "I was reminded time and again that love could easily evaporate if it were not linked with a congenial way of life." "In marriage it is important to see not only how the boy looks, but what he earns." "Marriage is not a game between two people in which one of them can walk out. Money and security make life easier for a woman."

Though there was no serious conflict between the respondents and their parents regarding the institution of arranged marriages, there were differences of opinion in regard to the way the marriages were contracted. Some of them had had painful discussions about these methods. The respondents often felt that their sensitivity was not understood by their parents. One of the women put it: "For them it was making a fuss over something that was no concern of ours." Besides being placed in a position of being 'approved', the respondents had a more serious doubt about themselves. They realized that they were no longer as dependent on men and submissive to their authority as the earlier generation. These women saw themselves as individuals with views of their own. Basically they did not accept the idea that woman was the weaker sex though they enjoyed being treated as such. They did not put the same emphasis as their mothers did on self-sacrifice and self-effacement, in spite of being reared to value these qualities. In spite of having more confidence in themselves they were basically afraid to contradict what was thought best for them. The great majority lacked courage to express themselves and did see in marriage the only real security for themselves.

In retrospect the large majority of the women thought marriage by arrangement had been satisfactory for them, and they defended the system as the best way to ensure marriage sta-

bility. They did feel certain modifications were necessary within the system of arranged marriages. The reasons given for continuing the practice were that at a young impressionable age it was impossible for a girl to judge what was best for her in terms of a lifetime. A young girl would naturally be drawn by such superficial qualities as charm and physical attraction. To expect her to realize that these were not the most important things in marriage was unrealistic. Further these women said that the family into which one married contributed a great deal to the happiness of the marriage. It was not possible for young people to judge a family, much less its individual members. These considerations could be properly evaluated only by older people who knew what a life partnership involved. Besides these practical considerations, happiness was not the same thing as gratification and it was impossible for young people to see the future in these terms. For the young the present alone had importance and therefore to entrust them with the most important decision of their lives was not wise.

To the question whether the respondents themselves would like to arrange the marriages of their children, the answers of the fifty women were divided three ways. Twenty-four women strongly favored arranged marriages over any other system of marriage. They continued to believe, as their parents had, that young people were not capable of distinguishing between passion and enduring qualities. They thought mutual attraction to be sufficient and that it was not necessary that two people be in love before being married. In fact, they did not think there was any substantial difference between two people just knowing one other and a closer friendship. According to them, marriage was unlike all other associations and needed discipline and commitment. They favored girls entering marriage innocently and they were against giving their daughters the freedom to have male companionship. Their attitude toward marriage was basically the same as that of their own parents. As one of them put it: "Who knows my child better than I do? I know her strengths and weaknesses. I understand her needs and the kind of person who will make her happy." Another respondent said: "Parents are the only people in the world who are really concerned about their children's happiness; they will take every little detail into consideration to ensure their happiness." These twenty-four

women were not in favor of 'showing' girls in the obvious way that their parents had. It was easier for them because it was no longer considered immodest for girls and boys to meet. The girls were given many more opportunities to meet men although the meetings were still within a domestic setting. They did not favor the idea of permitting girls and boys to go out alone before they were engaged. In this group, eight women had married their daughters on this basis.

Sixteen other respondents also felt that arranged marriages were the most stable and they tried to influence their children in this direction. Aware, however, that modern children had many more opportunities than they had received, they did not rule out the likelihood of their children making a marriage of their own choice. They were prepared for this possibility without encouraging in any way freedom between the sexes.

The ten remaining respondents were not quite certain that arranged marriages were suited to modern girls. These girls were not only educated but led a much freer life than their mothers had. The family influences that conditioned the respondents to accept arranged marriages were neither the same nor as strong as in the past. Thus these ten women did not think that a modern girl's happiness was necessarily better ensured by an arranged marriage.

11

MALE-FEMALE RELATIONS

A LARGE MAJORITY of the respondents had not had a systematic sex education. In spite of this, most of them said that by the age of ten to twelve they knew how a child was born because confinement usually took place in the home. The atmosphere in which they grew up made them conscious of sex differentiation from early childhood. In fact there was little about sex that older women were not prepared to discuss in front of children, as such matters were considered an integral part of life. However, though the importance of sex was constantly stressed, the full facts were not made clear which created an air of mystery.

The respondents said that the predominant anxiety of their parents and relatives was to keep girls pure and chaste, and to achieve this was their primary concern. That the female body was sacred and had to be protected from men was conveyed to the respondents in every possible way. In order that chastity may not in any way be violated, there was strict supervision over the respondents and the danger to them from men was often exaggerated to include all men, even near relatives. Further, they were told mythological stories about the power of the virgin and the curse that fell on those who were not pure in body and mind. This kind of conditioning, the respondents reported, gave them a special feeling about being women. Even as young girls they felt they were precious commodities, which

made them precocious. Even uncles and other male relatives were not permitted to show their affection in any physical manner. This emphasis on sex differences made many of the respondents unnecessarily conscious of and curious about sex at an age when they were not ready for it. The artificial barriers created by their parents between the sexes resulted in making most of the respondents self-conscious and awkward in the company of men. They grew up with the feeling that to be free and natural with men was immoral. The respondents looked to male cousins of the same age, or even younger, as protectors, rather than as companions. The respondents were not allowed to go out with friends of their brothers, and after a certain age not even with male relatives. The kind of decorum that was expected of them was clearly defined and any departure from it was reprimanded.

Twenty-four of the respondents went to girls' colleges and had no male companions. They only knew family friends who were treated as family members. They were addressed as uncles or as elder brothers. There were no male acquaintances with whom a casual friendship could be established. The consequence of this was that these twenty-four women were not at ease talking with men when they began to go out to mixed parties with their parents. This timidity and self-consciousness persisted even after marriage and was approved of and appreciated by their husbands. However, these twenty-four women did not feel uneasy dealing with men in a business situation, such as seeking admission to a school for their children, going to the bank, or dealing with men in the day-to-day routine of running the house. Their early conditioning however did make them feel that male friendships were not in keeping with feminine modesty. In fact there was evidence in their reaction to the present trend of having male friends as being something not right, if not downright immoral. "There can be no real friendship between men and women without complications". "There is something basically vulgar in seeing women laughing and joking with men. The modest distance that Indian women kept from men lends both charm and dignity to the sexes."

To the question whether they felt unduly restricted in their adolescence in respect to meeting people, the women stated that there was no such feeling as the environment in which

they were brought up did not really include the possibility of mixed social gatherings; hence there was no real awareness that they were missing something. The fact that British social mores approved such a social life did affect their thinking but did not make them rebellious. This was primarily due to the strict code of behavior in which the respondents had been brought up.

The remaining sixteen respondents had a similar upbringing but had had a greater opportunity to be with men because they attended co-educational universities. This, however, did not alter their relationships with men. They stated that they were excessively coy with male students. They were attracted to boys, but that they could become friends was not envisaged. The respondents said that due to their early conditioning they could not see an 'innocent' relationship between men and women. Besides there was a lurking sense of shame in the respondents for even desiring male companionship. This was the result of the general atmosphere that surrounded boys and girls, making normal exchange between them almost impossible. Contact with boys for these sixteen women was limited to the confines of the campus and would not have been tolerated by their parents had it gone beyond this limit.

These sixteen women did, however, feel the impact of Western influences in their adolescence. The exposure to a freer life resulted in some dissatisfaction. But they also understood their parents' dilemma who were trying to ensure the respondents' reputations which they did not want tarnished. Hindu society was highly critical of those girls who imitated Western ways. They separated Western education from Western ways; while accepting the former they rejected the latter. The respondents were aware that many of their friends were characterized as fast or cheap because they did have more freedom. They did not want to be regarded as such; hence the restrictions placed on them did not seem unreasonable or unjustified. In fact the respondents reported considerable pride in not being thought of as cheap. The reason that the majority of the respondents gave for no real conflict between them and their parents was the integrity in the pattern enforced. There was conviction in what was imposed on the children. This made the respondents respect the philosophy underlying their parents' actions even though it was not always easy, especially after their studies were over. "To

sit at home when one's friends were having a good time was not easy. There was nothing very much to do at home". "After all reason doesn't determine one's feelings and when you knew there were parties to which I could not go it made me often depressed."

It was only after marriage that these sixteen women felt free to talk to men who were not family friends. They were not awkward or self-conscious though a certain distance was always kept which prevented any friendship which was not supported by their husbands. They did not think it was right for women to treat men as companions and thus treat them as equals. When encouraged to do ballroom dancing by their husbands they did and enjoyed it. But it was their husbands who really set the pace for mixed social occasions.

"I am firmly convinced that women should not have men friends who are not primarily friends of the husband. This is the cause of so many problems in the family today. The old view that women should not be familiar with men is basically sound. This does not in any way take away from a woman's freedom but adds to her charm and dignity".

The ten remaining women had had a less rigid upbringing than the others. These women said their parents did allow them to go to mixed parties and received boys in their homes from families known to them.

These ten women stated that in spite of having a fairly liberal atmosphere in their homes the general attitude of Indian society inhibited normal exchange between men and women. They reported that they never really felt free to make friends because they knew such friendships were frowned upon by their society. Among these women those who had gone abroad for further study stated that it was only in the more open Western atmosphere that they could make friends with men without having a feeling of guilt. In India they felt restricted in spite of their parents' approval. Men in India were also self-conscious with unmarried women, making normal exchange most difficult.

These ten women after marriage no longer upheld the traditional reserve between the sexes. Most of them had male friends among their working colleagues with whom they were at ease and whom they invited to their homes. They did not restrict their contacts to those of their husbands. Nor did they think

going out alone with their male colleagues for dinner was wrong. They were of the opinion that by meeting men no loss of feminine dignity was involved. It was how one conducted oneself that mattered. The fact that women were now working alongside with men inevitably meant greater contact with them. Therefore what was essential was that women knew how to conduct themselves with poise and self-confidence rather than keep away from them.

The majority of the fifty respondents felt their parents' attitude toward male-female relationships was basically sound. They said that partial segregation of the sexes had added to their self-esteem. They were in favor of keeping that pattern for their children; whether they could was another matter. The majority of respondents felt that the kind of pride that was instilled into them by virtue of being born women was a factor in keeping them away from temptation. This kind of upbringing made girls responsible in their actions, and they did not succumb to youthful desires because in doing so they would be letting themselves down. The respondents were of the opinion that children should be instructed on sex on a moral basis; then alone would a girl know what was right conduct. They did not think that it was necessary to confuse fidelity with fear of men. The distrust of men was overdone by their parents' generation and this resulted in an unhealthy repression of normal desires. The respondents were fully aware that in modern India segregation of the sexes was no longer possible; hence the only way to tackle the problem was to make children more aware of biological needs. But all the respondents disapproved of the Western attitude towards freedom between the sexes which according to them led to sexual excesses and was fundamentally destructive.

12

ATTITUDE TOWARD FRIENDSHIP

IN ORTHODOX TRADITIONAL Hindu society, friendship outside the caste-community was rare. Women in particular had little opportunity to meet people outside a known and approved group. Friendship between people who shared common interests but not necessarily common problems was considered unrewarding. Most of the respondents' mothers were unable to free themselves of this attitude in their new environment, and consequently they were lonely. They preferred to share their thoughts with family maid-servants rather than seek friends within their inter-caste society. Where there was no common family reference, it was difficult for the respondents' mothers to find meaning in a friendship. This inability to relate to people, the respondents said, made them feel that their mothers were always waiting to return 'home'.

Stress was placed on 'family friends'. These were connections that were handed down from one generation to another. Without questioning the basis or needing to revitalize the friendship on a personal level, one accepted the connection and rendered special treatment to such contacts. The respondents were brought up to respect this group of friends who, in turn, treated them as daughters of their own households. It was impressed on the respondents that such friendships were serious commitments. One did not drop or make friends just because one no longer

found them interesting. Once a person was included in the circle of the family and considered a friend, then he and his children were members of the household. It was in these groups that the respondents were urged to find companionship.

In contrast, friendship based on mutual attraction and interests were not thought worthwhile. "When you are in need, it is those who are related to you who will come to your help." "Blood is thicker than water." "What good is it to have a friend if you can't call on him for help?"

In their teens, most of the respondents found friends more interesting than relatives. However, once married, eight of the respondents' closest friendships were with relatives. They did not feel the same warmth or trust for friends made outside the family. "I don't know whether it is due to my earlier conditioning or what it is, but I certainly find friendships made between relatives more satisfying than those with other people." These eight women were so preoccupied with relatives that they had little time to seek friendships outside. "I just feel more at home with my sister-in-law. I need not stand on any formality with my cousin, and that's what I am not able to do to the same extent with just a friend."

Twenty other respondents had friends outside the family circle, but found such contacts unsatisfactory unless they had a strong emotional basis. This group found it difficult to sustain a friendship which was based on shared interests but which did not include a personal involvement. "If I can't talk about my personal problems with a friend, then I lose interest in a person. After a time there is nothing to discuss." "To continue a friendship on an impersonal basis is a great strain for me, and means nothing." "Only those friendships have meaning for me in which there is an intimate personal exchange. I want the feeling that I can impose and be imposed on by a friend. My need is not to exchange new ideas only, but to share my problems. For me an impersonal friendship is a contradiction in terms."

The desire to share common interests only was not an urgent need, and as one of the women put it, "There is no dearth of people with whom you can talk politics or economics. Such people are not difficult to find, but you can't call them friends." For these women, the essential ingredient of friendship was emotional rather than intellectual. If the two were combined

in one person, so much the better. But this combination was rare and most of these women found the greatest satisfaction with people with whom they could discuss their personal problems, talk about people and generally feel at home. This kind of friendship these twenty-one respondents found difficult to make with Western women or with women in modern Indian society. Most of these women sought relatives or those they could treat as relatives to befriend them.

Many of the twenty women had lived in Western countries, including the United States, and found it very difficult to make friends by their definition. "Even after three years in the United States, seeing the same people again and again, we never seemed to get closer. There was always a distance; people were afraid to get involved. I never felt free to impose on them, and after a time it became a barren exchange." "I made no friends in the States, but made many very good acquaintances. I found I gave very little of myself, because those I met kept away from things that really count—it was always a superficial exchange even of ideas. And on this basis, I found carrying on a friendship extremely exhausting and a waste of time!" "As I look back on the time I spent in the West, I feel I made no friends that really meant something to me. We were always sharing interesting situations and anecdotes, but never anything that really mattered. Everyone was careful, almost afraid, to enter into discussions on controversial issues other than politics." "The West has its own ideas of what constitutes friendship and I am afraid that these are so different from my ideas that I am unable to keep up the exchange beyond a certain point. My Western friends are interesting but not satisfying."

Fourteen other respondents did not reject those with whom they did not share an intimate bond. They considered people with whom they shared common interests as friends. The women did not seek an emotional interaction, and in fact avoided close personal contacts. They, unlike the group of twenty women, were not impatient with a friendship that did not have an emotional potential. In their experience, a quick exchange of personal problems was certain to lead to complications. For them, an impersonal basis of friendship was perfectly adequate, as long as there was confidence and trust. "I prefer to have my friends keep clear of my personal life. I don't want

confidences of another's life as I don't want to share mine." "Friends to whom you can entrust the intimate details of your life are rare, and it takes a long time to build such a friendship. I am content with friends with whom I share common ideas."

These women were afraid of the kind of friendships that the former group of twenty sought. One of them said, "We Indians are apt to exchange confidences far too soon, and this results in unpleasantness and gossip rather than anything solid and enduring."

These women found friends among their colleagues who were highly satisfying, and did not have to look to relatives to fill a gap for companionship. For this group also, the protracted formality of Western friendship was tiresome. They were prepared for its impersonal basis, but what they found tiring was that even on this basis there was a lack of true exchange. "Among my Western friends, I find there is reluctance to discuss such personal concepts as honesty and friendship." "There is a convention in the West that forbids talking about ideas on a deep level. This makes an intellectual exchange impossible." "I never really knew how my Western friends felt on things that matter. There was a constant effort to keep conversation centered on issues that were safe. This exasperated me."

The remaining eight formed a rather amorphous group, in which the desire for friends was minimal. "My family fulfils my need for human contact—beyond that everyone I meet is a friend."

In general, the respondents were able to form close friendships with people outside their families on the basis of trust and warm personal understanding. But it was clear that these relationships were not based on just shared interests but stemmed from long family association. There was a rejection by the majority of friendship as something really worthwhile unless combined with a sentiment which permitted free exchange of views as also an absence of formality. The respondents were less confined in their personal contacts but the same psychological need as in the previous generation seemed to be present. The desire to be on terms of such familiarity that they could make demands that were made only on relatives by their parents was still the basis of personal relationships.

13

WIDOW REMARRIAGE

WIDOW REMARRIAGE WAS mainly discussed as a social problem. There were only a few respondents who volunteered to give it personal consideration but it was not gone into any depth due to the delicacy of the question. All fifty women were in favor of widow remarriage, and felt all strictures attached to a widow by orthodox Hindu society were completely unjustified. They rejected all the ethical and moral arguments advanced by conservative Hindus against widow remarriage, and supported every move that would free widows from orthodox pressures.

Some of the respondents were careful, however, to point out that their support of widow remarriage did not mean that they no longer believed in the religious sanctity attached to marriage. They found the discipline implicit in traditional religious teachings worthy of emulation. According to them, the ideal of lifelong commitment to one's husband even after his death was not to be confused with social inequalities between men and women. The discipline implicit in the ideal of Pativrata was something noble and good in itself. But this did not mean that those widows who wished to remarry should be looked down upon. There was deep admiration for those women who because of their faith and love preferred to live a single life. But no moral arguments should be used to enforce this discipline; it should be a voluntary act. According to all the

respondents a widow had every right to decide in what her greatest fulfilment lay.

None of the respondents looked upon a widow as an inauspicious symbol. In spite of stating that they were against considering a widow as unfit for conducting auspicious ceremonies most of the respondents did in fact treat her as such. They did not object when a widow was not permitted to put the red *kumkum* mark on them or their children, nor did they protest when a widow was not included in certain religious ceremonies in their homes. This discrepancy between belief and practice was smoothed over by putting the blame on the elders of the family. However, there was still doubt left whether they themselves were free of the fear that going against this injunction may result in some mishap. This was most evident in the probe question whether they would have their daughters anointed by a widow at the time of their marriage. Though the replies were consistent with their stand of having no prejudice it appeared that it was more from a desire to be intellectually consistent than from being really free of the sentiment that widows should not participate in religious or semi-religious ceremonies and if they did so then the recipient of such blessings may be harmed. They were wholly against the practice of enforced perpetual mourning on a widow. They were entirely against the practice of widows shaving their hair, or not putting on glass bangles and having to be always in mourning colours. But all the respondents agreed that widow remarriage in India today presented great problems. It was not enough to accept this on principle. It was not a theoretical proposition but dealt with human lives. Society would have to radically change its attitude before women could challenge accepted norms. Until such time, it was unwise to ask widows to break with a known structure, namely the family and the caste-community mores. This unit provided security for those who were not economically independent. Without condoning the prejudices of the caste-community, the respondents felt that to remain within its protection was far better than to break with it without the confidence of finding acceptance elsewhere. It was wrong to encourage a woman to give up known forms of security without providing her with an alternative. If such a thing were done, widows could be exploited by unscrupulous elements in society.

Economic independence through education would give women the confidence even to defy a conservative society. But without means of supporting themselves, to defy even irrational injunctions is neither possible nor desirable. The respondents were of the opinion that too many reforms were instituted without the necessary supportive measures to make them viable. There was great danger in uprooting both values and institutions before the time was ripe. This resulted in giving women false illusions of their capabilities. If this happened to widows, it could shake a whole segment of society and bring nothing but suffering. Things were changing, though slowly; there was not the same prejudice against widows in secular society as in orthodox society. They could establish a life for themselves and be accepted without undue attention. In this atmosphere alone was widow remarriage possible. The problem of widow remarriage, it was felt, should not be dealt with as an isolated problem; it was intimately connected with the whole fabric of society. As that fabric changed its complexion so also the position of widows would improve.

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ADOPTION

THE FIFTY RESPONDENTS made it quite clear that for them adoption was only of hypothetical concern. As a practice, they favored the adoption of children in a marriage without issue. In fact they greatly admired the capacity of Western families to adopt children and thus fill a need for parental love. The respondents recognized that through adoption orphans in India could find a home. However, the great majority of the respondents felt that they were emotionally incapable of adopting a child, and if they had to for pressing personal reasons, then it would have to be someone from the family. This would to some extent lessen the artificiality of adoption. For most of the respondents an adopted child would always remain a substitute; he would be the symbol which constantly reminded them of their inability to fill the vacuum in their lives. "I would rather bear my disappointment than substitute another's child." "Adopting a child is the easy but superficial solution for a childless couple." Rather than adopt, they would prefer to fill the emotional gap by engaging in charitable work or religious contemplation. "If it is destined that I am not to know the love of a child, then it is better to rise above that deep suffering than try to run away from it." One sees in these and similar responses the impact of the Hindu concept of predestination and Karma.

If they did not have children of their own, the respondents

said, they could easily channelize that feeling towards nephews and nieces. They all felt that for them there would be no need to go to an adopting agency because within the family one could always find someone who needed a better home. Even if this did not necessarily mean a legal right over the child, it did give an emotional satisfaction which was the greater need. All respondents stated that they would much rather will their property and personal assets to a family member than to a strange child. There existed also a strong mental barrier against giving one's family name to someone who initially had no right to it. Underlying this feeling was the sentiment that only through a blood link could the family name and property be appropriately passed on. Some of the respondents did indicate that they could perhaps contemplate adopting a child, but only after their own children had grown up and from the fullness of the experience of motherhood, never from the sense of being childless. There was strong feeling that adoption was tantamount to admitting a weakness in themselves.

Many of the respondents, especially those who had lived in the United States, had witnessed the deep love and satisfaction that parents derived from adopted children. This, however, had not changed their basic attitude. They thought the reluctance in India to legally adopt someone outside the family was closely related to the structure of the family. In the West, according to the respondents, there was not the same intimate link between family members—there was not the same kind of sharing of children as in an Indian family. This sharing, which allowed an aunt and uncle to be responsible for their brother's children, gave the feeling of being a 'part parent' to another's child. Thus within the family there were children who could fill the gap of a childless couple. "As it is, I feel my brother's child is my own."

There were no other than personal reasons given against adoption; in fact most of the respondents felt that their incapacity indicated how selfish they were. They also felt that Indians should become more open to this form of making a family. They were not unaware that only through a legal adoption could there be any sense of belonging. There was a great wrench in the makeshift arrangements as a child could be taken away any time by its real parents, causing emotional stress to the

child as well as to the temporary parents. In spite of being rational about the merits of adoption and seeing in it great virtue, they were unable to accept it as a means of filling a void if the necessity arose for themselves.

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ATTITUDE TOWARD DOWRY

THE FIFTY RESPONDENTS unanimously opposed the dowry system as traditionally practiced. They recognized, however, that dowry was closely linked with the system of arranged marriage. As long as parents considered economic security as one of the most important elements of a good marriage, it followed that the bargaining position of an eligible boy's family would remain strong. The Anti-Dowry Legislation of 1961 could not alone wipe out dowry at any level of society. A few of the respondents had, at the time of the marriage of their daughters, yielded to requests made by their future in-laws, which in the interview they were reluctant to acknowledge as dowry. Though it was never overtly expressed, it was quite clear to the respondents that the boy's parents would have looked elsewhere had these requests not been satisfactorily met. They had rationalized their actions by saying that it was only natural that parents give whatever they could to a daughter who was about to leave home. At least seven respondents had had the personal experience of seeing their own almost completed marriage negotiations broken at the last minute because their families did not want to meet the dowry demands and they knew the humiliation and hardship such a custom could bring. Though they condemned the entire system, they realized it could not be completely ignored even in modern India. All the respondents stated

that as a matter of principle they would not ask for a dowry at the time of their sons' marriages. But twenty-seven respondents were willing to acquiesce to the system if, by doing so, they could ensure a good marriage for their daughters. As long as eligible young men with good jobs were few, and parents assumed the responsibility of arranging marriages for their children, the eradication of dowry or its equivalent would be difficult. "One has to judge between people who are only after money and those who are following a traditional pattern. If I detected that my daughter was marrying into a family that was not above material considerations, I would not meet any requests." "There are perfectly respectable families who want a dowry but not in terms of making it an issue. One has to play this by ear and distinguish between those who are exploiting the fact they have an eligible boy and those who are following traditional practices."

The respondents were convinced that the system would die out only when the social climate would allow greater freedom for young men and women to have a voice in their own destiny (This did not mean that they favored such a change as will be seen in their attitude towards marriage). Until such time, the twenty-seven respondents would not oppose the system solely as a matter of principle, for they did not think they had a right to do so if it jeopardized the future happiness of their children, in which they played the most important part by making the selection of the marriage partner.

The twenty-seven respondents made a distinction regarding the kinds of demands made by the parents of the boy at the time of the marriage negotiations. Most of them were not prepared to give a large sum of money to future in-laws. They were willing to comply with the demand of an expensive trousseau including such items as a car, and the customary gifts for the in-laws. "It depends how someone approaches the question of dowry. If there is a suggestion that money is the most important consideration in the proposed marriage, then I would be suspicious. But if a family wants to revive certain old customs, no longer thought necessary by me, then I would be more sympathetic." "However you look at it marriage is an expensive affair in India. It is not a single event but a series of events, all of which cost money." There was evidence in this group of

twenty-seven women that they would go even beyond their economic means if that meant getting a good boy. In this group the majority were those women who felt that caste marriages were preferable to inter-caste marriages. This naturally limited their choice and also they were subject to the existing caste-community mores. Though these twenty-seven women were in principle against the dowry system, they were not prepared to reject it for themselves or be pioneers in the field. "Too much is at stake for me to go against accepted custom."

Eleven other respondents dismissed the problem saying that their children would perhaps marry according to their own choice, not necessarily because they favored that system but because their children were growing up in a different environment. In such a marriage the wishes of the in-laws could be disregarded without fear of consequences. Parents on either side were more reasonable in matters related to marriage gifts and ceremonies when the marriage was not an arranged one. These eleven women were strongly opposed to the idea of spending more than one could afford on a marriage. "I am giving my daughters a good education. I cannot also give them a lavish trousseau." "These days one has to make a choice between a big dowry and a good education for girls. The two together are impossible. Personally I think education is the best dowry that a parent can give her daughter." These parents were quite confident that their daughters would not suffer if a dowry was not given them. They knew that for most families to contract a marriage with their children would confer prestige. There was also no real anxiety in these respondents that their children should marry within the caste. This also lessened the pressure of a dowry as such.

The remaining twelve respondents were not prepared to meet demands that seemed to be in fact a dowry, however concealed they may have been. They would rather reject an eligible boy than comply with demands which seemed unreasonable. They refused to exceed the normal marriage festivities and the usual exchange of gifts with in-laws. Whatever else they gave their daughters would be at their discretion and in no way dictated by the boy's family. They regarded conditions set by future in-laws as an affront to their dignity. In fact, a family that discussed material considerations as a prelude to a mar-

riage negotiation was not a family into which they would wish their daughters to marry.

The twelve women were confident that in taking this unorthodox attitude toward an established custom, they were in no way compromising the future happiness of their daughters. They realized that their social and economic position in society permitted them to take this bold stand. "The family that thinks of dowry is certainly not a family that I could respect." "There are many families like my own who dislike the mention of such words as dowry. Every parent gives what he can to his daughter; there is no need to discuss finances." "The word dowry makes me see red. It is only in a family with similar ideas as ours that my children could be happy."

All the fifty women were against the dowry system though the majority was not prepared to disregard it for personal reasons. They all felt that the demands for dowry were on the increase, at all levels of society. Legislation alone, they felt, could not change this; the only effective weapon was a more educated public opinion. As long as there were comparatively few men in good jobs, and there was preference for marriage within one's caste, the dowry system would continue. These women gave examples from their own extended families to show how new expectations were emerging in modern India and how difficult it was to find suitable boys within the caste. The boys preferred to marry girls who were educated and, among them, preferred those who spoke good English. These boys' parents were no longer satisfied with the customary gifts but wanted articles like refrigerators, radiograms, etc. Thus education alone was not eradicating the system but on the contrary was adding to the burden. The middle-class family today in order to ensure a good marriage had not only to provide education but a good dowry. This was felt as a great financial burden for certain segments of society.

The respondents agreed that once inter-caste and inter-provincial marriages increased, the dowry system would perhaps lose its importance, since in such marriages individual selection would play a greater role. The respondents realized this, but the majority was not prepared to change radically the system of arranged marriages, nor allow their children the freedom of choice.

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DIVORCE

THE FIFTY RESPONDENTS had been indoctrinated to enter marriage with the firm conviction that marriage was an indissoluble union, to continue even after the husband's death. Happiness and unhappiness were, for the traditional Hindu, predestined. Thus the respondents said that their parents rarely discussed practical ways of dealing with an impossible domestic situation. Instead, the virtues of courage, forebearance and patience were stressed, and these qualities were to help one in smoothing over marital difficulties. A woman who escaped from her marriage responsibilities due to stress was considered pleasure-seeking and of weak character. The estimable woman was the one who accepted, even endured, suffering. To break a marriage was not the Dharma of a Hindu woman. To separate from one's husband was to admit weakness in oneself. This was the philosophy on which the respondents had been brought up.

Further, the respondents were told that the pursuit of individual happiness was not the highest goal of life. An individual who failed to see marriage as a sacrament was condemned spiritually. But if one sacrificed individual happiness with grace for the sake of the family it was a spiritual act. The failure of a marriage was a blemish on the character of the woman and on her family. Thus the environment in which the respondents grew up put on women the greater

responsibility for making a home.

For the respondents' mothers there was no legal provision for divorce. The right of divorce was granted after the Hindu Code Bill of 1954-55, with retrospective effect. Prior to that time no divorce was permitted in a Hindu marriage performed under Hindu Vedic rites. Before the Hindu Code Bill divorce was possible only if one was married under the Special Marriage Act of 1921.

That women could claim as a right to leave a husband was not envisaged by the respondents' mothers. That men left their wives or married again was unfortunate but understandable. No logical explanations were necessary when faith was in question. This was the only position a woman of their parents' generation could take; this was understood by the respondents and it was because of it that they were so conditioned. But all the fifty respondents were in favor of the Hindu Code Bill and thought a woman should have the right to divorce. The responses will show whether they themselves were emotionally capable of divorce and under what circumstances.

Twenty-one respondents did not think they could initiate the legal proceedings for a divorce. This would have been tantamount to being guilty of breaking a religious vow. If placed in an unhappy domestic situation, they would prefer to return to their parents, to their in-laws, or to live in a separate house till such time as things improved. This separation would take place after extreme and continued provocation. They were emotionally incapable, they said, of finally terminating what was for them a religious undertaking. The inability to remarry gave them greater strength to handle possible difficulties and fortified their commitment to marriage. Their attitude to marriage, the respondents said, was not based on reason but was the direct result of their early conditioning. These women were highly critical of divorces based on such grounds as incompatibility of temperament or mental cruelty. Many of these twenty-one respondents could only see mental cruelty in specific terms such as infidelity but not in terms of emotional alienation. The provocations they considered sufficiently grave to be the basis of any divorce for women were continued infidelity, brutality, habitual drinking or gambling. Had their own husbands been guilty of such acts, they would have left their homes tempo-

rarily, but always with doors open. They were prepared to return to their husbands if the situation improved without feeling loss of self-respect or dignity. In fact they regarded a woman who could make such an effort on behalf of the institution of marriage, while at the same time undergoing grave personal distress, as a person of decidedly superior qualities.

These women recognized their attitude toward divorce as not rational or without contradiction. They claimed it stemmed neither from fear of being condemned by their caste-community nor because they felt economically dependent on their husbands. They truly believed in the principles of wifely devotion, and considered marriage as a sacrament which divorce and remarriage violated. "Everyone makes mistakes and if one walked out because of human failings it would be destructive". "There is loss of dignity if one breaks a marriage, and more than that, only those women with real character can endure suffering."

Nineteen other women saw divorce as an honorable way of terminating a bad marriage. This was the only course which they thought was fair and just to both partners. But they too believed that divorce was justified only under serious and irremediable circumstances; continued brutality, infidelity, excessive drinking and gambling were seen as legitimate grounds for breaking a marriage. However, incompatibility of temperament was considered too superficial and vague to be a valid reason. "I just don't understand what the word 'incompatibility' means. Of course it takes time to understand one's husband, but that's what makes a marriage interesting." These women felt it was largely their responsibility to see that elements of friction were reduced in a marriage. The idea of personal happiness was so closely linked with the family, not just immediate but extended, that because of personal differences, major or minor, with their husbands they could not break up a marriage. They did not think that after marriage, personal fulfilment for a woman in a career or having her own life was justified if this was not approved of by the husband. It was for the woman to make the major adjustments in a marriage even if it meant giving up pleasures that were important to her. The husband's needs and desires were of prime importance. This group, like the former, felt a woman who divorced lost in moral stature.

Besides, the source of happiness in marriage was not derived

only from the husband; this relationship was important but one among many others. Relatives, friends, and a way of life created by the head of the family were also sources of happiness. Breaking a marriage would therefore mean the loss of all these other important connections. These women felt that in the West the husband was the only source of emotional support. There were no other real supportive relationships to help reduce marital strain. It was to the husband alone that the Western woman looked for her happiness, whereas the respondents shared their emotional life with relatives and this helped to diffuse and absorb the common stresses in marriage. Therefore only a major misdemeanor on the part of the husband would be the cause of a break in the family. "I receive so much love from my husband's relatives that to do something that would alienate me from them would be a personal disaster." "Marriage for me is a way of life and not just a concentration on one individual." "Because I know I am capable of earning my livelihood, it makes me feel that what I sacrifice for the sake of my family is through choice, not because I have no alternative but to subordinate myself."

According to these nineteen women, the right to a legal separation made a woman more sure of herself and gave her the confidence that she was at least partially able to shape her own destiny. They were conscious of this new power which had been denied to their mothers. They realized, however, that with it came a responsibility which required mature judgment, and a freedom which could easily be abused. Such abuse, they said, was often found in the Western woman's approach to divorce. They felt that increased divorce in the West was often due to the inability of women to subordinate their individual need for self-expression to that of their husbands. For a stable marriage the respondents felt that a woman had to have the ability to put her needs second to the man. An equally important difference lay in the attitude towards remarriage. Because the Western woman could emotionally accept remarriage, it was easier for her to divorce and seek happiness with another man. For these respondents, remarriage was emotionally almost impossible. This was another factor in making women more tolerant and patient with imperfection. "Marriage is not an experiment in happiness that you can break off and start again."

These women attached no stigma to women who divorced on legitimate grounds. The main difference, and a significant one, was that if faced with the necessity of divorce, these nineteen women could take the first step, unlike the former group, to whom divorce was not ethically acceptable. These nineteen women did not have any religious compunction once they were convinced that marriage could not be continued with dignity. In such a situation these women would not seek a separation only and take shelter with relatives in order to safeguard either their or their families' name. They did not view the husband as someone above all moral standards who could with impunity treat a woman according to his whims; there was ample indication in the former group of viewing a husband as someone who did have such rights. At the same time these nineteen women expected a higher moral standard from women and considered the traditional qualities of self-sacrifice and self-effacement worthy of emulation. They knew that generally the divorced woman could not look to Hindu society, especially to their caste-community, for sympathy, but they did not regard this as necessarily a bad thing. There was a strong feeling in this as in the former group that individual actions were in part dictated by the standards of society. A society that was permissive was not as stable as one that had high standards, even if they were conservative and out of tune with what was considered modern. These respondents were in favor of society keeping its traditional Hindu standards, and frowned on those who viewed their responsibilities to the family only through personal happiness. This kind of check on individual standards was absolutely necessary or else each individual would seek his or her own personal gratification to the ultimate detriment of the individual. This, the respondents went on to explain, was not the same thing as ostracizing women alone for trying to find a solution to an unhappy marriage. "I hope we continue to be afraid of going against certain moral standards set by society because of the censure that such actions would bring." "It is natural for every individual to seek pleasure, there is nothing to admire in that. But when someone can forget personal pleasure for a higher goal, then such a person is worthy of admiration."

The remaining ten women were not quite certain of the circumstances under which they considered divorce to be justified.

They agreed that the woman had to be the more flexible partner in marriage, but also felt that the responsibility for the success of a marriage rested equally with the husband. They were not so sure that only extreme and continued provocation would result in their seeking divorce. They clearly recognized that in present-day India it was quite possible for a man and wife to become estranged or even for one of them to fall in love with someone else. In such an eventuality divorce was right. Such occurrences were regarded as "human" and brought far more sympathy and understanding from these ten women than from the other two groups. At the same time, they were not in accord with the Western attitude toward divorce. In the West, they thought, people often resorted to divorce on such superficial grounds as incompatibility of temperament and interests. A spiritual or intellectual difference as the basis of incompatibility was not accepted, possibly not even undersood, even by this most modern group of women.

These ten women thought divorce was legitimate once the woman felt her dignity and self-respect were in question. If this happened a marriage lost its meaning, and to terminate it was the most honest and a better solution than the mere maintenance of appearances. They admired women who showed the courage to defy the conventional attitudes of society toward divorce. As long as the children did not suffer, they did not condemn those who sought personal happiness. In fact, in their eyes such a woman was no less worthy than one who bore the suffering of an unhappy marriage with grace.

These women regarded remarriage as a choice which, if exercised, was moral. They saw a special sanctity in marriage, but one which divorce and remarriage did not necessarily violate.

All the fifty respondents fully supported the right of a woman to divorce. Even those women who did not think they could bring themselves to use the right did not therefore condemn the divorced woman. All the respondents thought divorce gave a greater challenge to marriage than when there was no honorable escape from it. This right, they realized, could be exercised only by those women who were able to establish themselves economically, and were not dependent upon caste-community support. In present-day India this group of potentially independent women is very small. None the less, the fact that

today every woman knows she does not have to suffer marital humiliation is of profound psychological importance.

Part II

Attitudes on the upbringing of children

INTRODUCTION

ALL THE RESPONDENTS had had a Western education, but at the same time their parental homes reflected a way of life based on Hindu tradition. In spite of the contact with British life and attitudes, the respondents' parents had rigidly enforced the principles in which they themselves had been brought up. The respondents were discouraged from overt imitation of British customs. This had been possible in the domestic realm due to lack of direct contact with the alien value system. The alienation from the traditional attitudes, ways and values was a gradual and an imperceptive process which was only fully realized as the respondents established their own homes and had the responsibility of bringing up children. Western education combined with environmental influences had left its indelible mark on the respondents. In spite of their early conditioning and, in many cases, continued faith in the principles underlying the Indian way of life, it was still difficult for them to establish homes with a predominantly Hindu atmosphere. Most of their husbands belonged to the social and economic élite of India, and were thus part of the emerging Westernized society. Their professions brought them in touch with a society in which there was less commitment to orthodox Hindu injunctions. Their upbringing, in many cases similar to that of the respondents, made them more at ease with Westernized Indians. Intellectually

they were divorced from narrow loyalties, and were drawn to like-minded people who were attracted by the challenges of modern India. The men were alienated from their past perhaps even to a greater extent than their wives, and thus the nuclear family did not have the same strength to keep intact old values; support from their more orthodox family members was no longer possible as there was a greater distance from them in their generation than in that of their parents. Since the respondents were not really well-grounded in their own cultural heritage, they felt incapable of creating an atmosphere in which traditional values were reflected. The general upheaval of the times, a greater measure of freedom of action and the advent of new opportunities made the problem of restricting children to the orthodox code of behavior even more difficult. The respondents were aware of the grave danger that their children might be completely cut off from traditional values. This was much more likely in the present generation than in their own due to their parents' background. The respondents' generation lacked the knowledge and the faith to impart effective instructors to their children. Though they had been sheltered from an alien way of life and thus grown up with pride in the Hindu value system, they no longer felt they could protect their children from certain modern trends which the respondents considered bad. They also felt that their children were even more alienated from the Hindu value system and all that went with it than they themselves. The degree to which they had been alienated from their roots came to the forefront when they had families of their own. The respondents' education in British mission schools with no systematic exposure to the fundamentals of their own culture made them ineffective to guard their children from influences that they considered detrimental to their development. These new influences were characterized as "modern", stemming from the West, and they posed a threat to old Hindu values which the respondents considered worth retaining. The threat of being swept away by Western values seemed greater than when India was under foreign rule. The principal reason was that the parents themselves were not sure of their heritage and how to make it real for their children. Even though many of the respondents were not part of the anglicized society, their children were exposed to its standards. Thus even families who

were more Hindu than Western-centered were not free from this threat. The enquiry now focuses attention on what Western values and what traditional attitudes were incorporated in the upbringing of their children. This section examines the extent to which traditional attitudes still dominate the thinking of these fifty educated women and the steps they took to instill the old values in the younger generation. The aspirations and expectations of the new generation are seen through the eyes of the respondents. How successful the respondents have been in instilling traditional values in their children must remain a matter of conjecture. We can only examine the trends, and see in what direction they point. The respondents are a part of the economic and social élite of the country, and the influence of this minority on other peripheral social groups is profound. The extent to which this higher economic and social group adopts Western values may well determine the pattern of other groups who want to rise in the social hierarchy. If this assimilation is facilitated by adopting the ways of behavior of a higher social group, then the direction that this minority takes is of very great importance. The transition from an orthodox conservative value system to a more modern one is always fraught with doubt and confusion: the responses will perhaps provide some insight into the attitudes of women living in this period of transition and the dilemma they are faced with and how they resolve the problem of conflicting values.

All the fifty respondents felt that in the Western-influenced younger generation there was an abuse of freedom amounting to vulgarity and irresponsibility. This was due to the imitation of what was considered to be in vogue in America. The values of American youth were attractive because they permitted behavior that was non-conformist. The main source of information about America was through American movies and magazines, which unfortunately portrayed an irresponsible use of freedom. The affluent young equated being modern with high living, and were not concerned with the more dynamic and creative aspects of American life. The respondents used Western values to really mean American values and no distinction was made by them between the West and America. The term West in the text is equated with America unless otherwise indicated. All the respondents felt that the modern Indian youth were im-

pressed with the individualism of the West and showed their rebellion by imitating only those aspects of the West that allowed them to be more pleasure-seeking and less disciplined. The emphasis placed on young people in America had given India's younger generation an exaggerated sense of their importance. The respondents said that this process of imitating American values was undermining character and was unsuited to the Indian way of life. They were wholly against the American way of life and thinking coming to India. They believed that this group of young people was the most unfocused and uprooted of all groups in India. The reason for their being so was that they had been brought up in neither the Western or the Eastern traditions, and had no real source of confidence or pride. All the fifty women were aware that children of those who had an upbringing such as theirs were the most affected. This Westernized modern group, the respondents felt, was to be avoided as far as possible and the majority discouraged their own children from being a part of such a group.

Though there was a consensus of opinion that the present Western-influenced youth of India were not reflecting qualities that were worthy of emulation, the respondents were divided as to how they would deal with the problem.

Thirty-eight of the respondents were against giving freedom of action to their children. They were convinced that children needed to be supervised by elders and taught to respect authority. The earliest signs of rebellion against parental discipline were immediately dealt with. The respondents were wholly against giving in to the children's wishes for more freedom especially in certain things. This pattern of behavior was established from earliest childhood and maintained through adolescence. The thirty-eight women did not encourage individualism or place importance on self-expression which seemed to them only self-indulgence, for example, smoking, drinking, and frequenting restaurants for pleasure. In order to minimize the effects of the Western segment of society on their children, they discouraged, even forbade, friendships with boys and girls who were prone to such indulgence. They encouraged friendships with Indian-oriented Hindu or Muslim families who were, they felt, more conservative, stable, and integrated with the Indian spirit. There was more understanding in the Indian-

oriented children of the struggle ahead, and more sympathy for their parents' problems. They were brought up to be responsible members of a family. They were more realistic and serious, and the respondents wanted these qualities ingrained in their own children. They tried both directly and indirectly to influence their children to see life as a struggle rather than a period to enjoy oneself.

The thirty-eight women were unrelenting in their attitudes towards discipline, notwithstanding the demands of their children. "I would be failing as a mother if I allowed my children to think life was made to give them pleasure. Life is a struggle and this has to be made clear, especially when the children do not feel the presence of that struggle in their own families." Though these thirty-eight women maintained the traditional pattern of behavior in which the authority of parents was paramount, they were not as authoritarian as their own parents had been. They did not view their children as equals, nor did they encourage them to think they were. There was careful supervision in matters relating to where and with whom their children spent their leisure. No fixed allowances were granted to children for which they were not accountable to their parents. "I think it is wrong for a child to have money of his own. It makes him insensitive to the family." The traditional forms of respect for the old were continued; for example, the children were required to refer to their older brothers and sisters in terms of respect. This was done by adding the suffix of respect after their names, such as Ji, Bhai, Didi.

The responses of these thirty-eight women indicated that they were in favor of bringing up their children within the decorum and discipline that was sanctioned by Indian values. They were confident that such an upbringing was in the best interest of the child even to meet the challenge of modern life. "I am convinced that the upbringing of children on traditional lines is the best; it has a sanction and authority which Western values lack for our children and for us." "If only we were more established in our own past, the problem of educating the young would not arise. The dilemma we face today is due to our lack of commitment to our heritage. Those of us who were brought up to think on Western lines must distinguish what is relevant for us as Indians and not be carried away by Western values

which are relevant in their own context." "The responsibility of what happens to the children is our's; we cannot be swayed by modern trends in all domains. There are new values that must be inculcated in the young so that they can face modern conditions, but we must endeavor to see that the best in our tradition is combined with the best in the West."

The group of thirty-eight women was disillusioned with Western values as seen and understood by Indians and it was felt that if steps were not taken to check their spread serious disruption would result among the young. In their minds the solution for the emerging generation in India lay in adapting and modifying the traditional pattern to suit modern conditions. But what positive steps were being taken to stem the spread of Western attitudes in the young was not quite clear from the responses. There was an intellectual realization that the kind of discipline implicit in the Indian attitude towards life was best for the young, but what actual modifications based on the old were in use was not clear.

The remaining twelve women agreed in principle with the other thirty-eight women that what was predicated of the Western-influenced youth in India was accurate. However, they felt that since the orthodox, conservative era had passed, it was unrealistic to try and recreate an atmosphere in which the old values would be reflected. They believed that any such attempt would be false and not carry conviction. One could serve the best interests of the children, they felt, by encouraging them to be more self-reliant and less dependent on the older generation. They did not think it was wrong in principle to give freedom of choice to the young. This, they pointed out, did not mean freedom in the American sense of the word. These women were highly critical of the behavior of the American youth and their parents. They favored more freedom than they themselves had experienced, but opposed adopting the pattern of the West as their own. There was evidence to show that these twelve women were inclined to discover new values and to integrate them into a way of life which made the young neither Western nor Indian in the traditional sense. They thought it was right that their children grow up to be self-assertive, questioning, and thinking individuals, even if this meant that they did not conform to traditionally accepted norms of behavior. There was a strong

feeling in this group that the era in which traditional discipline and attitudes were valid was over and any attempt to confine children to that pattern was wrong. What was the larger framework in which they brought up children was not defined. It was neither the Eastern pattern nor the Western. They had given up some practices like insisting on the traditional decorum between elder and younger children. They called each other by their first names without the added suffix of respect. Children were not inhibited from expressing their opinions in front of elders. This was done within limits and with due respect for age, but without the young being made to feel that they were speaking out of turn. These women recognized their children as individuals having certain rights which had to be respected. The respondents were aware that their children were being brought up without a model in front of them. They were not fully in favor of Western attitudes but equally not able to enforce old Indian forms. This presented problems as the children were not quite sure what was really expected of them, making them easy victims of whatever was in fashion. The twelve women felt that because there was not enough thought given to the formulation of what were modern values, the young were not able to find their bearings in the context of modern India. They therefore naturally turned to the West, and mainly to America, for direction. This, the women thought, was unfortunate, as being modern should not necessarily mean adopting American values or ways. The vacuum in this period could only be filled if attention was directed to discovering a new framework with its own form so that the young found their bearings in relationship to their new responsibilities. These women had not discovered the right balance between the old and new and were therefore guided more by what were Western attitudes. They felt that there was a vitality and a spirit of adventure in the Western youth which was worth emulating. The twelve respondents therefore gave every encouragement to their children, especially to their boys, to explore new avenues of self-expression. "I think there is no special virtue in conforming to an old pattern; it leads to mental and spiritual stagnation. There should be confidence in us that we can bring our children up as modern Indians rather than Indians who are looking to the West for guidance." "The old values and atti-

tudes served a great purpose, but they are no longer useful. Modern conditions require another kind of vision and inspiration and this is challenging. The young must not be stifled because parents are afraid of the new. It is easier to follow a known path than an unfamiliar one."

These women were afraid that their children could be misled by the new trends that were in vogue and were essentially harmful, but they saw no way of curbing their children as their associates were similarly influenced. The respondents should not be in favor of restricting children as to who their friends were as long as they were not of bad character. To try and separate children from their friends because they were not Indian oriented was not considered either desirable or practical. The attitude of these twelve mothers was that the old value system and attitudes based on it were for certain segments of society no longer alive. To try and force children to mould themselves on a pattern that is not followed by their parents is to make children rebel.

The majority of the fifty respondents who had gradually lost touch with their roots were in no position to make the values they still respected carry conviction to the next generation. The basic difference between the respondents lay in that whereas a minority had given up trying to enforce a way of life they themselves were removed from, the majority tried to instill a discipline that was not necessarily bound up with their own way of life. This distinction will be made clearer as one proceeds with the enquiry. "Children can only learn from making mistakes; parents can't protect them from life. It is one thing to guide children and another to control them."

Though all fifty respondents referred in general terms to their children, it was clear that all of them made a distinction between girls and boys. In the following paragraphs we shall confine our attention to the former.

Values Imparted to Girls

There was general agreement among the respondents that the traditional qualities associated with Indian women had intrinsic value. Such qualities as self-effacement, modesty, reserve, and self-sacrifice were regarded by all fifty respondents as worthy of instilling in their girls. The difference lay in how

they thought a woman should view herself as an individual and her attitude toward men.

The same thirty-eight respondents said that on purely pragmatic grounds, they encouraged their daughters to view men as superiors rather than as equals. They tried to mould their daughters to be gentle and accommodating to the needs of others, especially to those of men. This was not to make them unaware of their legitimate rights but to make them capable of distinguishing between what was important and what was not. These women conditioned their daughters to look to marriage for their emotional and economic security.

The Western concept of a woman seeing herself as an equal to a man was completely rejected. These respondents perpetuated the psychological frame of mind in which women considered themselves the weaker sex without in any way restricting the intellectual growth of their daughters. They were not as strict or rigid as their own parents had been in confining their girls to purely feminine pastimes. But there was a marked difference in the kind of behavior they expected from their sons and from their daughters. There was no question in the respondents' minds that girls needed more protection, less freedom, and a different kind of discipline from boys. There was no desire to make their daughters completely subservient to men, but at the same time a girl should not appear domineering. The role of women was clearly defined as one of serving family interests above all. Self-expression after marriage was to be determined by her husband. These respondents enforced a discipline which they knew to be sometimes contrary to the wishes of their daughters, but this did not alter their basic position. The respondents were aware that their daughters were influenced by the liberal attitude taken by other parents, and resented not being allowed to participate in activities of their group. "The young have to be protected from pressures from within their group. This is not difficult if one is consistent in one's views. Children are intelligent and if one explains to them the reasons for certain restrictions they will cooperate and not be defiant." "It is after knowing different value systems and attitudes that I have decided what is best for my daughters. Personally, I see no real happiness for a girl who has lost her sense of dignity *vis-a-vis* men. There is a force in being a women which has to

be consciously nurtured and developed. The feeling that seems to have come from the West, that woman has to assert her rights, is quite contrary to her psychological needs. A woman's greatest satisfaction lies in accepting the fact that men and women have different roles. There is no need for women to try to compete with men. This quality is destructive and should not be encouraged. The emphasis on self-fulfilment, which seems to be the modern craze, is utterly ridiculous. One can't blame the young for being attracted to what seems new and exciting. Parents have the responsibility to direct the young and in this duty they must never fail." "When I heard parents in America complaining about their children I was surprised. If parents let themselves be guided by their children, what can you expect? I hope Indian parents who are anxious to be modern give careful thought at least to the upbringing of their children and do not blindly follow the American way."

Most of these women reported that, as far as they could tell, their daughters were not overtly unhappy because they were allowed less freedom than others in their age groups. The respondents were careful not to appear irrational and dogmatic about their views. It was more by persuasion and example that they tried to curb youthful enthusiasm in certain spheres. "As long as parents, especially mothers, are guided by the principles they preach, there is little danger of the younger generation becoming a law unto itself. The days are over when simply by parental authority one can enforce discipline. One has to convince the young, be reasonable, and above all, demonstrate by example what one enforces."

To the second group of twelve women it was clear that since modern India was rapidly changing, young women must have a different orientation from what had ordinarily been considered appropriate for an Indian woman. They did not bring their daughters up to feel subordinate to men, or unequal to them. They encouraged their girls to assume responsibility for their actions and thus develop self-confidence. The Hindu feminine ideal was felt no longer to have validity in a modern setting; in fact, if stressed, it could handicap a girl in adjusting to modern conditions. "There is no doubt in my mind that girls need to be bold today, since they cannot be kept protected in the way my generation was. It is in their interest that parents make them

fully competent to manage their own affairs." "Once you accept the principle of equal opportunity for girls and boys, it is absurd to create artificial barriers."

Besides it was felt that one could not go against the spirit of the times. The fact that girls were brought up in an atmosphere where old restrictions were no longer enforced had consequences that could not be ignored. These respondents, though not in favor of some of the 'new ways' of behavior, were at the same time aware that they could only advise and not impose their will on their girls. The responses of this group as well as those of the others indicated that there was considerable anxiety on the part of the parents regarding their girls. The majority of the women did impose their standards irrespective of the wishes of the girls. But all the respondents reported that the younger generation was not as willing to be under parental authority as they had been. This was more evident in those families who had created for themselves what may be called a Western atmosphere.

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MARRIAGE

ALL THE RESPONDENTS influenced their girls to see in marriage their greatest fulfilment. This was done even though the parents as well as girls saw an alternative to it in a career. All the fifty women considered it their obligation to see their daughters married, though not necessarily through an arranged marriage. Daughters were brought up to consider marriage as a sacrament for which the sacrifice of personal ambition should not be too great.

The same thirty-eight respondents tried to instill in their daughters a feeling of submissiveness to male authority in order to promote marital happiness. The education of their daughters and their exposure to Western concepts had not changed the respondents' emphasis on marriage as an institution rather than a contractual union between two people. In the minds of these thirty-eight women, a career was never seen as an alternative to marriage. Their daughters were dissuaded from even thinking in terms of a career before marriage. Education was seen as an important complement to marriage. "I know in the West young people are entrusted with the responsibility of deciding what they want to do. I think this is wrong and an unfair burden to put on young people. They have no experience on which to base their judgment. They will naturally choose what seems to them most attractive at the moment." "What are parents for if

they don't accept responsibility for the long-term happiness of their children? To ask a girl if she wants to get married or not is ridiculous. How does she know? She hasn't been married before, and so cannot make a decision."

Virginity was given a religious basis and the slightest familiarity with men was equated with loss of personal dignity. But the same rigid kind of protection that the respondents had experienced was not enforced. For example, their daughters were not sent only to girls' colleges or asked not to participate in mixed college activities such as attending social gatherings or taking part in dramas. There was no longer the same fear that a girl's reputation would be compromised if she mixed freely with boys. But their daughters were brought up to keep a distance from men and not to let a working relationship develop into friendship. There was no encouragement given to the girls to go out with boys for fun. College associates were not entertained in their homes unless they came from approved families. There was no question of their girls going out with boys to restaurants or to parties with friends made in college but not known to their parents. The respondents stressed the dangers of being with men and the consequent loss of self-respect if a boy should be familiar. This group did emphasize the dangers of being frivolous and the consequent loss of dignity but did not prevent girls from making their social life once they were adults. They were free to be with male friends in groups. This included going to dances and having parties without any screening by the parents. These respondents felt that having brought up their girls in a free and liberal atmosphere it was wrong to keep them from exercising their right to make friends. This freedom had its limits which will be examined later.

The views of the remaining twelve women were not so dogmatic. They hoped their daughters would think of marriage as a primary goal. But as one of them put it: "I cannot insist that my daughter be married; I am bringing her up to decide for herself what is best, and therefore I have to be prepared if she chooses a profession over marriage." "Most girls want to be married; the question really is whether parents have a right to insist on it. I don't think girls who are brought up to see themselves as individuals can be forced to do what they don't want to do." "Every modern mother must be prepared to face the

fact that her daughter may not fit the mould that seems perfect to parents."

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CHILD-PARENT RELATIONSHIP

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN most of the respondents and their fathers had been formal with acceptance of his authority axiomatic, and no feeling of equality between them. Parents as such, and fathers in particular, were respected and loved, but little or no familiarity was permitted. The majority of the respondents had grown up in an atmosphere filled with love and concern, but with little understanding or appreciation of them as separate personalities. Due to the well-defined barriers between them and their parents, the respondents had not felt free to discuss personal problems especially during their adolescence. They were regarded as awesome figures they respected and loved.

In contrast, the child-parent relationship that the respondents had established was much more relaxed. The same impenetrable barriers which prevented communication did not exist. Discussion between children and parents was encouraged, and the same rigid ritualistic formality was no longer observed. The respondents took an interest in the activities of their children and even shared their world of amusement. They were far more conscious of the needs of a growing child and felt it was their responsibility to provide stimulation so that the child's potential could develop. This greater awareness came from the adoption of Western attitudes to the child. When the children were

young, the respondents and their husbands had been concerned with problems not only of physical but also of psychological growth. The latter was wholly absent when they were children. Children's temperamental differences and problems that were not acute were considered normal and no attention was paid to a child as an individual. The respondents on the other hand were more conscious of each child's differences and showed understanding for their individual needs; they did not leave their children entirely in the care of servants or even relatives. During the early years children had a routine especially suited to them, unlike the respondents' own childhood when they were included in a routine suited to adults. Most of the respondents said that as small children they had been spoiled and indulged in the sense of having their demands for attention met with sweets and little gifts by way of appeasement. "I remember going out with my mother to visit relatives and having to amuse myself for hours while the grown-ups talked. If I grew impatient I was given candy and toys to distract me No one really bothered about me as long as I kept quiet. That my impatience was due to the adults' preoccupation with themselves was not recognized. There were no planned outings for children nor did our parents play with us. We found our playmates within the household. A great emphasis was put on behaving well and appearing clean and tidy before outsiders." "When we were young, it is true that our parents did not organize our leisure, but we had fun inventing our own pleasures. Today parents take the responsibility of creating a child's world of pleasure for him. We realize that a child can get bored and we do more for him. For example, I don't remember going to birthday parties. In fact, my own birthday was not an occasion celebrated with other children. My mother gave the servants and the cows sweets and fed the Brahmins. My aunts and elders gave me money which my mother kept, but there were no presents. Today a child's birthday is a big event and he is the centre of attention. A great deal of thought goes into finding a gift exactly suited to him." These responses indicate that the children of the respondents were not left just to grow up but were regarded with very special attention. All the respondents felt that the Western attitude toward pre-school children was better than the Indian as it recognized the need for discipline and guidance

from the earliest. Most of them spent money on appropriate books and toys as means to help in their development. The respondents were not denied anything in their childhood but also their energies were not channelized into constructive things like reading or painting. They were left to play as they felt like. The respondents maintained greater discipline over their children and did not spoil them by appeasing their every tantrum because they recognized that one day the child would enter an adult world and they tried to prepare him for that.

Although the respondents' husbands were involved in the children's upbringing, there was no lessening of respect for him and his authority was not easily to be challenged. Children were always required to observe some, if not all, of the forms of traditional respect. For example, the great majority of the respondents did not allow their young adults to smoke or drink in their fathers' presence. This show of deference was waived by a few parents once the sons were through college and by a few more when the sons were earning.

The child was free to discuss his problems, even encouraged to do so, but with due respect. Any discussion resulting in dissension had to be controlled and lack of restraint either in tone or in words was rebuked. Even though the respondents believed in a less formal relationship, the majority of them did not let children think that they were their equals and this distinction was maintained throughout life, although the parents' active control ended when the boys were established professionally and the girls married.

There was a general reluctance on the part of most of the respondents to give a child responsibilities that would develop feelings of independence. They felt that fixed allowances for children between the ages of eight and fifteen created separate units within the family. This encouraged a child to think he was not accountable to anyone as to how he spent his money as long as he kept within his allowance. They preferred to give money as it was needed, reserving their right to inquire how it was spent. This also avoided the danger of a child feeling he was forced to deny himself certain luxuries which he knew his family could well afford. "When children know that parents are lavish in their expenditures and indulge themselves, it seems unfair to tell a child to live on his pocket money. It is better

that he is taught how to spend money without placing artificial restraints." "The theory that pocket money helps a child to know the value of money is not true, at least in my experience. It makes a child unnecessarily envious of others who have more to spend. This feeling may lead him to get money by dishonest means. A child who knows he can always ask for what he wants feels more confident. He appreciates more what he gets and also understands better why he cannot have certain things. In this way he comes to identify with the problems of the family and to know the value of money."

The majority of the respondents' attitude toward fixed allowances was only one indication of their desire to keep children as closely identified with them as possible. Further, children were not encouraged to make choices of any importance on their own, even such as selecting subjects to be offered for their degrees. The parents not only dissuaded children but actively persuaded them as to what they considered best for them. This was based on the principle that at the age of sixteen or seventeen a child does not know what is in his best interest, and is attracted by what seems easy or glamorous. The parents maintained the right to keep directing the child throughout not merely by counselling him but by taking decisions on his behalf with little regard to his tastes and inclinations. This was done because of the parents' fear that if left to the child he may take a path that would not later bring him economic security. There was also an over-all sense of protecting the child from the world, and not holding him responsible for his actions. There was very little indication in the responses that parents required children to bear the consequences of their actions. There was indication to the contrary; a mistake made by a child was often excused and he was allowed to feel he was in the right. There was a gradual lessening of this attitude for boys by the age of eleven or twelve in non-essentials like going to school alone unaccompanied by a servant and joining other boys on excursions without adult supervision. The respondents sent children to school camps and allowed them to participate in competitive sports because it was felt that boys had to be strong and learn how to stand on their feet. But at the same time the child was never allowed to forget that his parents were always there to support and defend him.

It was quite clear that with some changes that were inevitable, the basic concept of child-parent relationship as practiced by the respondents was not dissimilar to the way the respondents had been brought up. Though the child was given greater attention and his needs, both psychological and physical, better cared for, the basic principles of a generation ago had not radically changed. The child was as protected as before and asked to keep his particular interests separate from what parents considered best for him. The parents did not become companions of their children to the extent that their authority could be set aside. The child was brought up to be self-reliant only in theory as the respondents in fact encouraged emotional dependence which was fortified by such things as not giving him a fixed allowance within which he had to find his amusements. The concept much admired by the respondents of making a child responsible and capable of standing on his feet was defeated by the respondents' attitude to the child's actions. The respondents' sense of protecting him in fact made the child sure that right or wrong his parents, especially the mother, would be on his side. In the large majority of the respondents there was no desire to lessen the complete reliance by the child on the parents. This was also the way the respondents had been brought up.

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EDUCATION

ALL THE RESPONDENTS considered education an indispensable asset for their children. Contrary to the conservative pattern this group gave first priority to educational expenses irrespective of the sex of the child. They no longer desired to accumulate wealth for their children at the cost of education. Education was seen as the prime instrument through which upward social mobility was possible. It was recognized that family status and wealth were no longer absolute guarantees for the continuing success of the children. There were only slight differences of opinion among the respondents when it came to proportioning limited resources. Thirty-three of the respondents were prepared to spend equal amounts of money on boys and girls as long as there were economic resources to permit that. Where such resources were limited, higher professional training for the boys was considered more important. A greater investment in their education was justified as they were breadwinners for a future family unit. Without the opportunity to study at the best available institutions boys could not meet the competition for good jobs. It was still through the son's success that family status was maintained. Sons were still looked to as the custodians of the family name and those on whom parents in their old age would depend, as well as brothers and sisters who were not established. Therefore no sacrifice was considered too great to give the

fullest possible opportunity to the boys. Their education was seen in terms of direct economic return in which the family had a right to share. Parents did not consider it right to use even an unmarried daughter's earnings for meeting family obligations nor did they look to her for support in their old age. The sentiment that parents should not stay with married girls as permanent members was still with the respondents. Therefore a daughter's economic prosperity did not directly benefit them. Since marriage was still the prime goal of parents for their girls her education was considered less important. This did not mean that money spent on a girl's education was thought to be a waste. On the contrary, education for girls was seen as one of the most effective means she had to meet unforeseen contingencies. "Education is the greatest bulwark today for a girl; without it she is helpless." This was a typical statement indicating that the respondents felt it was their duty to educate a girl so that she was not entirely dependent on her husband's family or support in case there were difficulties in marriage. Further, they were also aware that in present-day conditions girls might have to work after marriage to supplement family income. Therefore all the respondents felt that they were duty bound to provide their girls with the education they wanted.

Consequently they urged daughters to take their studies seriously and, even where there was no aptitude for academic work, they insisted that they acquire at least an undergraduate degree. They took pride in their daughters' academic careers, but there was not the same measure of anxiety as for the academic performance of their sons. These respondents did not view their girls as career women and were not disappointed if they did not continue after the basic minimum. The motivation for higher professional training, it seemed, had to come from the girls themselves. But once present, the respondents treated their demands on par with those of the boys with the distinction that if a choice had to be made between sending a girl or boy abroad for advanced training then it would be the boy who would be given preference. Education was not seen only as an embellishment or as simply a means for widening one's horizons. "Education is not a luxury; it is a necessity. It is not enough today to pursue culture. You can't do much with that. Studies must be directed toward getting a good training that has some

potential use." "I do not want my girl to waste time doing things that will not add up to something specific. A good degree is like a secret weapon that she can use whenever she wants. To stress culture is to be unrealistic. There is a lifetime ahead for children to cultivate their interests. They must first be equipped to face the problems of life." Education by these thirty-three respondents was seen as one of the greatest assets for both girls and boys.

The remaining seventeen respondents made no distinction in regard to educational expenses between sons and daughters as long as there was equal seriousness of purpose. This was from a sense of justice rather than from regarding the roles of their sons in a different light from that of the other group. "Even if one knows that a girl may not use her professional training, one cannot deny her the right to receive it. As long as she is serious and gets the desired results she must be allowed to continue her education."

Those respondents whose resources were limited did not allow their daughters to treat education lightly. If they found that the girls lacked perseverance in academic work and were interested only in pursuing it for fun, they would have terminated their studies and diverted them into becoming proficient in something that did gave them economic security and also was not as expensive as sending them to a good college. In the minds of these respondents, allowing girls to pursue an hobby such as learning music, dancing or painting was considered a waste of money. Education was seen in terms of getting a degree that could be used to find a job. The process of learning as a means of expanding one's mind was seen as a luxury not to be treated on par with 'serious studies'. If however a child was taking a regular course in fine arts at the end of which a degree was conferred, the respondents had no objection. These respondents like the former group felt that conditions in India were such that one could not afford to indulge children to find out what really interested them. They cautioned children to keep idealism separate from action. For example none of the fifty respondents would have felt happy if their male children had given two years or even a year of their time to something like the Peace Corps. The idea of serving was considered noble and there was great respect for those who joined

such organizations but the respondents discouraged their children from taking time off from studies. The main object of education was to get prepared for getting a good job. To achieve this primary goal the respondents were willing to send their sons abroad for further education to enhance their qualifications. Their daughters, on the other hand, would have had to demonstrate exceptional talent to merit such an opportunity. "Girls from well-to-do families are apt to equate having a good time with education and this cannot be encouraged. These days middle-class families cannot afford waste."

Many of the fifty respondents reported that they had great difficulty in convincing their daughters of the necessity for professional training. The girls were attracted by the opportunities of working in glamorous establishments. Jobs as receptionists in travel agencies and international organizations were easily available to girls of seventeen to twenty years of age in this economic strata who were well-groomed and fluent in English. Though the jobs had no future, the girls preferred them to the rigors of academic life. Earning money made them feel independent and modern. They did not fully realize that in India professional training was the only guarantee of a worthwhile career. This desire to earn was, the respondents felt, the direct result of their girls' identification with their Western counterparts and was more difficult to combat because the old prejudice against working women no longer prevailed. The great majority of the women were not in favor of their girls working for several reasons. The principal objection was that with just an undergraduate degree they would not be able to find work later on in life. The kind of work they took up was more out of fun and the excitement of earning. This was considered short-sighted. As long as they were unmarried the respondents would have preferred them to continue their studies at least upto an M.A. or its equivalent. The stress was on making girls capable of earning if they needed to do so. There was no objection to their not going on for further studies if they got married. Marriage still had first priority and was equated with economic security. The money earned was used for clothes or other luxuries and was not sufficient to permit them to live on their own. This element of conspicuous consumption was identified as a Western concept of getting the most fun out of life.

The younger affluent generation was most affected by this. "The way our children are acting, one would think life had guaranteed them a bed of roses for the future. They do not seem to realize that they are being protected from the harsh realities of life. Every step possible should be taken to impress on them that life is not meant to be exploited for pleasure alone." "The children are not to be blamed for the excesses. It is because parents are themselves motivated by pleasure these days and they too feel that life should be enjoyed to the fullest."

This attitude, the respondents pointed out, was also due in large measure to the existing Western atmosphere in Indian public schools. Children who did not go to such schools were reported to be less pleasure-seeking, and more motivated to serious pursuits. There was less conspicuous spending and greater effort made to take studies seriously rather than to imitate Western fashions in dress and behavior. The young affluent were getting more divorced from the realities of life in India and were looking to the West for direction. This was a sign of how uprooted they were and the blame was to be equally shared by schools and the home environment. Despite the dangers of public school education, the respondents preferred to send their children to these schools because they carried more status and turned out smart well-rounded students. The medium of instruction was English and this was considered essential for the future. None of the respondents sent their children to Hindu-medium schools; the risk was too great. Though it was felt that English could not really become a language through which Indians of the present day could function in India, still it was the language most favored. In fact the respondents reported that their children spoke only in English among themselves and were not fluent in the vernacular. This was regretted but still no steps were taken to replace English even in the home environment. The fear in the respondents was not that their children did not converse in the vernacular but that their English was fast deteriorating. The ambition of most of the respondents was to send their male children abroad for advanced training. Indian institutions still did not carry for them the same prestige as a good Western university. The desire to educate children abroad from the start or even for the undergraduate degree was absent. This was not only because

government regulations made it impossible to do so but because it was felt that a child should have its roots in India. Although the public schools were over-subscribed, there was still considerable criticism of the gradual Westernization in these schools. What the pattern should be and what was meant by Indianization was not at all clear. In fact the respondents admired the British kind of discipline they associated with English public schools and the kind of boys they produced. The real disappointment and anxiety it seemed was not so much that Indian youth was not becoming more Indianized but that it was not directed in any one culture. They did not really know Western forms of etiquette nor the Indians, thus they were awkward and lacking in self-confidence. The only positive suggestion made by the respondents was that greater emphasis must be laid in schools to teach Indian culture in depth rather than superficially. It was generally felt that the modern brashness found in the youth of India was because of Western influences. The respondents were in favor of boys and girls following Indian traditional etiquette and maintaining the old forms of respect for age and authority. They were not in favor of giving youth the right to feel equal to their elders. There was also a desire to perpetuate the ideals of living moderately, even with austerity. Character was envisaged as capacity to bear hardship and accept the verdict of fate.

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE MAJORITY OF the respondents were fully conscious that what little knowledge they had of Hindu practices was primarily due to the commitment of their parents to Hinduism. Despite their mission school education, they grew up with a feeling of respect for the basic tenets of Hinduism. They felt that their parents were more directed and confident people because they had a deep sense of identification with their culture. These respondents implied that they were relatively less directed because they were not truly grounded in any culture. To prevent the same type of void, all the respondents were in favor of providing a solid Indian cultural framework for their children. There was also a strong feeling that a child must be well grounded in his religion; without this basic foundation children were in danger of having no ethical principles to guide them. The respondents were particularly conscious that without a sound religious education, Hindu culture remains a mystery and cannot be understood.

Thirty-five of the respondents were definitely in favor of giving their children systematic religious instruction. They wanted the children exposed to Hindu rituals and taught religious texts. In spite of this desire, the majority of these respondents admitted that their children had not read books such as the Geeta or the Ramayana. Nor had the respondents read these books to them. They felt inadequate to create a meaning-

ful routine in which this religious instruction could be integrated. These respondents looked to schools to fill this gap, and consequently opposed the government policy that forbade schools from including specific religious instruction in their curricula. They saw no reason why a Hindu child should not be instructed in religion in public institutions. They felt guilty that because of their lack of knowledge and feeling for ritualistic worship, their children were denied what was an essential part of religion. It was not quite clear why these respondents did not assume responsibility for such instruction themselves, since they felt so strongly about it. Rituals are difficult to revitalize if one does not know or have faith in their significance, but there was no convincing reason given by these women why their children had not read religious texts or why Hindu philosophy had not been explained to them. Even though the respondents' knowledge of the vernacular was not adequate to read religious texts and understand the meaning, they could have read to their children from English translations. Besides their children's knowledge of an Indian language was sufficient to read Indian religious texts had emphasis and encouragement been given. If there was real concern on the part of the respondents, this gap at least could have been bridged. Further, if parents felt unable to take the responsibility for such instruction themselves, they had the means to engage competent tutors to explain the texts and make them meaningful. The fact that ritualistic aspects of worship were no longer a part of the respondents' psychological need was not sufficient for them to eschew responsibility for religious instruction to their children. To shift the major responsibility for religious instruction on schools was not a realistic or responsible evaluation of the problem.

These respondents said that within their own limitations, they did try, in a number of ways, to expose their children to certain aspects of Hinduism. They provided them with books on Indian mythology and took them to movies that were based on these stories. They encouraged their children to make friends with families who were Hindu- rather than Western-oriented, even if this meant going below their own social class. Such homes often followed a routine in which auspicious Hindu days were appropriately celebrated. Many of the respondents deliberately emphasized the religious and deeper significanc of such

festivals as Diwali and Dassera by taking the children to the temple or to friends' homes where the festival was properly celebrated. In the majority of the respondents' homes the Hindu religious routine, bound up with keeping fasts and celebrating anniversaries of gods, was no longer in evidence. The children were therefore not as involved in religion as their parents had been in their childhood. Their children grew up in an atmosphere which did not reflect a religious routine in which they could participate and imbibe a feeling for what was sacred to Hindus. This combined with the absence of formal religious instruction made them, the respondents stated, ignorant of their religion in a way that they were not. All the respondents recognized that what they did for their children was too haphazard and did not amount to very much. There was not the same feel in their children for Hindu beliefs, hence the respondents feared there would be no pride in their religious heritage. This was seen as a great loss. Whereas very little was done by the respondents towards their children's religious education there was a recognition that something should be done to make Hinduism alive for the young. These women were ready to give support to private institutions and people who were prepared to organize religious instruction for the young on a systematic basis. There was in these respondents a sense of failure with regard to their children but they also felt the problem this presented was not something that they as individuals could handle.

The situation for the other ten respondents differed from that of the thirty-five respondents because they celebrated auspicious days and kept the necessary fasts and observances. Their children were therefore to a greater extent aware of such days. But still there was not an atmosphere in which the children would automatically learn what their religion stood for. There was no effort made even by these women to read the religious texts to their children though they themselves read them regularly. This was not because the respondents were indifferent to whether the children read them or not but because it was felt that it was for the individual to decide which religious text he wanted to pursue. In these homes the children when young, were asked to memorize verse from the Geeta or its equivalent and were told mythological stories. These women hoped that with the kind of interest kindled in their children they would

themselves find joy in reading religious texts and get peace of mind. But there was no systematic explanation of such books which they thought was necessary and which only competent instructors could do, hence the schools pursue such studies without giving a religious aura to them. These women agreed with the first group that their children were not getting enough of a religious background. This, they claimed, resulted primarily because schools did not reinforce what children learned at home. This was especially true for those children who were in boarding schools. A protracted absence from home made them ignorant and even indifferent to religion.

The remaining five respondents recognized the importance of Hindu religious instruction. But since they had lost touch with Hinduism and did not really care that they were ignorant of its philosophy, it was impossible for them to create an atmosphere, especially for their children, in which Hindu practices were reflected. To try and do this for the benefit of children would be false, and eventually defeat the purpose. These women took no steps to instruct their children in Hinduism. Their attitude was marked by the stand they took regarding Hindu religious instruction. They felt that Hinduism was so diffused and since there was no one set of beliefs that could be imparted as practical guidelines it was inevitable that as a religion it would lose its force. The philosophic principles would have to be given priority in the study of Hindu religion. This could best be done by schools and was not possible within the home. These respondents made the distinction between Hinduism that was encased in the daily routine in which rules of purification and pollution, propitiation, and appeasement were paramount, and the metaphysical basis of Hinduism. The former was dead as far as Westernized modern Indians were concerned. Emphasis therefore should be put on trying to make the principles of Hinduism more widely known to children. It was an impossible task, the respondents felt, to try and pass on the orthodox elements of their religion as modern conditions of life no longer permitted their continuance. These parents were part of an entire society which had faith in new principles that moulded their mentality. Society had undergone change, hence many religious injunctions were no longer valid. It was necessary therefore to see Hinduism in the modern context and try to

make it dynamic by making it suit the changed environment. These women were convinced that the part of Hinduism that was bound up with a way of life could not be revived in the face of modern education and life. These women were therefore more concerned that ways be found to convey the basic principles of Hinduism to the younger generation. They found they were not able to do so and hence their children were ignorant of the religious texts except at the level of knowing the story of the Ramayana and Mahabharata and that too because they figured prominently in festivals. These women were concerned not so much with reviving Hinduism as giving the child a strong ethical foundation. This, they thought, was not sufficiently achieved in secular schools. They were not opposed to the secular nature of the schools, but to the lack of any formal ethical education. As it was, children were growing up with neither religious nor ethical instruction.

It seemed that what the great majority of the respondents regretted most was that the present educational system did not sufficiently emphasize the study of Indian culture. The attendant loss to the child was great. As parents, they would have been satisfied had schools included the rich religious literature of India, which could be studied for its literary value alone. They were prepared to accept the loss of Hindu rituals and practices for their children, but not the study of India's cultural past which was inextricably bound up with the study of religion. It was strongly felt that religious books like the Ramayana were social documents as well and there ought to be no self-consciousness that they were only sacred to Hindus. These were important for any Indian who wanted to know his cultural background. What sacredness one attached to it was the individual's faith in such texts. There was the same plea for the study of important books from other religions that were not wholly religious in their content.

All the respondents felt this was a problem that had to be resolved if the younger generation was not completely to lose its identity as Indians. They thought this problem could not be individually handled. They advocated that children's theatre, films and other cultural media focus their attention on this problem. "More authors should be commissioned to rewrite Indian religious stories so that they interest children." "There

is nothing that tells children of the glory of India; most books are dull and written for adults. The exploits of Krishna and Radha, the story of the Ramayana, could be made fascinating, so that children would want to read them, rather than be forced to do so." "There are millions of stories about our gods and goddesses which, if written and produced for children, would be interesting and instructive reading at the same time. Since there are only few books suited to children, reading about Indian history or its great men is like making them do their school work."

The crux of the problem was that the most of the respondents' children attended mission schools or public schools in which there was no formal Hindu religious instruction. They therefore were going through the same process of alienation as the respondents had, except it was further confounded due to their parents' ignorance. The central question was whether the policy of secularism in schools would not bring up another generation removed from the Hindu ethical value system.

They felt that for a child born in Independent India to be bereft of both the feeling and knowledge of its traditions revealed the lack of pride and direction in society.

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EXPECTATIONS FROM CHILDREN

ALL THE RESPONDENTS considered the maintenance of family solidarity and a sense of inter-dependence among its members to be vitally important. They expected from their children filial respect and acceptance of parental authority. They brought their children up in the psychological framework that would prepare them to take over family responsibility. Sons and their wives were considered the rightful inheritors of ancestral property. The majority of the respondents raised their children in an atmosphere in which these were not spoken demands but implied moral duties. "There is no formal indoctrination of children as to how they have to regard their parents. Everything in their home environment tells them wherein lies their future responsibility. It becomes a part of their being, not a barren display of concern for those who love them. When you are brought up in such an atmosphere, duty becomes a joy. You realize it is mutually nourishing and supportive."

The large majority of the respondents kept a very intimate contact with their children. They were not regarded as members of the family who had a right to maintain and preserve their individuality, sharing only what they thought fit with their parents. Individuality was never allowed to develop to the extent that harmony and inter-dependence of family members were destroyed. There were no curbs put on the child's develop-

ment but it was directed in such a way that he knew he was not a unique member of the family but one among others. The child grew up to recognize that others of the family had a right to expect him to be responsible for them. These respondents did not feel it was wrong to let children know that they too had obligations to parents, and that though they were important they could not think only of what gave them pleasure. This was done on the principle that each generation needed the other. The world of children was closely interwoven with that of adults, and neither was considered more important than the other. The majority of the respondents did not allow children to lead lives of their own or just with their age group. The old and young were not separated; thus the older generation could not be ignored. They were aware that there was a growing tendency in children to keep their world separate and consider the presence of older people amidst them as an unwelcome intrusion. This was a modern trend. In order to combat this, the respondents were particularly careful to have a social life in which there was mixing of generations, and in which the young did not feel cramped. They could do ballroom dancing and have their own groups but not be thrown always together just because it was the fashion to have exclusive young people's parties. The spread of the idea that children were happiest when adults were not present was what had come from the West. The respondents did not think this was the fault of the young but of the parents. It was due to their lack of direction that children's demands were met. It was natural for young people to do what others were doing. Besides in the majority of the respondents there was a very definite attitude to the young which did not inhibit them from saying no to what they thought was wrong. They did not feel that it was necessary to give even adult children the right to decide the pattern of their lives and that parents at all stages till the children were married had that right. The feelings expressed were that as long as children were part of a unit they were obliged to follow the discipline of that unit no matter how distasteful it was. The freedom of action came only when one was an earning member and not before, and that too when one had established a separate home. The separation of generations was slowly emerging in India; it was not something clear-cut that could be easily recognized and

dealt with. It was more like an incipient disease, slowly spreading and weakening the internal strength of the family as well as of society. The respondents were aware of the dangers, and hence took special care to foster feelings that would bind family members firmly together. The emotional demands and discipline that a joint family impressed on individuals were not present to the same extent in the nuclear family. Its basis was separatist and therefore fertile ground for individualism to flourish. The majority of the respondents tried, therefore, not to let the nuclear structure of the family create an unbridgeable chasm between parents and their children. They were opposed to the theory that any member of the family, young or old, had a right to live for what gave him maximum pleasure and satisfaction. They were bringing their children up to see themselves as part of a whole unit, in which no one had a greater right than another for self-expression or self-fulfilment. Just as parents made sacrifices for their children, so also children were expected to make sacrifices for their parents.

The values of self-reliance and independence were respected by the majority, if they did not violate the basic principles on which family solidarity was based. "The most unique and beautiful thing about a family is that each belongs to the other; there is no separation between parents and children; each contributes to the other what he can. It is like a circle: there is no beginning and no end. Parents take care of their children and the children of their parents. Each does his duty at the appropriate time. If this mutual dependence is corroded at any stage by any member of the family, then harmony is shattered causing unhappiness to all." "Children who are brought up to consider the needs of others are not deprived of freedom, or restricted in developing their potential. On the contrary, they are made more confident because they know they are supported by the family in their endeavor. They are never alone in the world." This type of response shows that at least as far as conditioning played a part in moulding a child's attitudes towards life, they were brought up to uphold the old values governing family responsibilities.

These respondents completely repudiated the underlying principles on which parent-child relationships were based in America. The emphasis laid on making the child the centre of

the family and building around him was considered wrong. This led the child to have, for no fault of his, an exaggerated sense of his own importance. Further it was felt that the stress on self-reliance and developing individuality from early childhood led the child away from the parents. This kind of upbringing placed on children when still young a burden that they were unable to carry. At the same time, children in America realized that parents expected them to find themselves and decide what they wanted to do without relying too much on parents. This resulted in making children look elsewhere than within the home for guidance and support during the years they needed it most. Those women who had lived in the United States and closely observed American family life were convinced that the Indian way of bringing up children was eminently worthy of preserving. They did not think it selfish or unfair to place demands on children and as adults to share family responsibilities, even if it meant sacrifice on their part. This, according to the respondents, made children feel emotionally needed and made them see a life in which there was equal room for the old and the young. If the young are made to see an inter-dependence between generations, this bridges the gulf between the generations and prevents separation through the irrational criterion of age. This separation based on age as found in America was the principal reason for emotional loneliness for both parents and children; both were poorer for it. The respondents felt that there was in America a tendency to cut short childhood in the fear that perhaps the child may become too dependent and hence unable to cope with life. This made children afraid to shew their emotion, especially after a certain age. Parents in their turn felt self-conscious if they felt emotionally dependent on children in their old age. Each one had to be emotionally self-sufficient in order to merit being called mature. The majority of the respondents had no doubt in their minds that to tell the child that his parents need his company and support was right. It made the child-parent relationship rich and this need of one another throughout life made the Indian family more integrated and was, according to the respondents, the main reason for family stability. There was a sense of continuation and the fear of getting old was greatly reduced. It gave children an added dimension than when they lived only for themselves and their fulfilment. The responses

indicated that the majority of the women did interfere in the choice of their sons' professions. There was a desire on their part to influence their male children to follow professions that did not involve prolonged separation from them. "There is too great an effort made in America to find oneself. This search for fulfilment is the root cause of alienating children from their families. Each begins to feel an intruder in the life of the other. Children's greatest need is to be able to depend on someone for emotional support throughout their lives. Parents alone can give that unqualified support. My children need me even after they are married, just as I need them. No home is complete without an intermingling of the young and old." "The great strength of Indian family life throughout the centuries has been the close emotional bond between children and their parents. This is not ended once the child is grown up and has his own family. The parents are never left out in the cold. I hope this basis of family life continues in India."

The opinions of the minority were rather ambiguous. They were not sure that parents had a right to expect their children to continue to share their lives once they established their own homes. On the other hand, they did not bring their children up to disregard family members to suit their convenience. These women did not use the same kind of subtle persuasions as the majority of the women to make their children feel that they owed a debt to the family into which they were born. Children were allowed to develop their attitudes naturally, and no obvious suggestions of continued family responsibility were brought to bear on them. It was felt by this minority that a child should not be encumbered by the needs, especially emotional, of an older generation. At the same time it was desirable that children if brought up with affection should feel a responsibility for their parents without having a sense of obligation towards them. They were not wholly in agreement with the point of view that the child's world was part of the adult world. Hence they did not insist that children confine their social life to theirs, recognizing at the same time that this trend of being only with one's own age group was not entirely wholesome. However there was a feeling that children could not be supervised all their lives and had to lead a life of their own. The freedom given by this group was more than that given by the

former group, but not on the same basis as in the West. This minority did not think that a child had a right to decide what was the best way to spend his leisure or allowances. The freedom was strictly within certain well-defined limits. These respondents were wholly against the type of discretion given to the young adults in America. They were also not in favor of giving the child the feeling that after a certain age he was responsible for his actions and that parents were only advisers. This minority was for keeping the traditional values of family solidarity but within that to give the child a sense of being free. According to these women there was undue pressure on children to keep the needs of parents in the forefront when they were grown up. This stunted growth and repressed natural desires for self-expression. This was considered an unjustified claim by parents on children. Parents could not treat children, it was felt, as property on which they had a claim all through life. There was a strong feeling in these respondents that Indian upbringing of children was unbalanced in this respect and had to change if the young were not to be frustrated. That children once married, with homes of their own, had a right to live without being unduly sensitive to the demands of parents was strongly advocated. "I believe that if a child has been given the right kind of love, he will never want to separate himself emotionally from his parents. But if he should feel his own family meets his emotional needs, he is not morally wrong."

To consciously stress family duty above self-advancement was considered wholly wrong by these women. They wanted to let their sons decide what constituted their duty towards the family rather than bring them up in the frame of mind which made them feel guilty if they pursued their own interests, even if it meant their leaving parents for considerable lengths of time. "It is not right to make children feel they are not free to do and go where their interests be, because that means separation. Parents can unwittingly deny them the joys of being young by injecting themselves into their lives."

These respondents felt that they would have done wrong by their children if they left on them the burden of their undischarged obligations. According to them, parents should try to live within their own means and not look for help from their sons except under extraordinary circumstances. They were

against the older generation taking it for granted that children were morally bound to share their income with them. This did not mean that they thought parents who were supported by their children were doing something wrong. But they opposed the principle by which sons were never morally free of filial duty. "I don't want my child to feel he owes me anything; all I want is his happiness and welfare. Parents should not put a chain around his throat that he cannot break."

This group did not identify itself with the American attitudes of parents towards children, though they felt some aspects of their upbringing of children were necessary to incorporate. But they rejected the idea that children had the right to defy parents, nor did they support the theory that parents could guide children only up to a certain age, and thereafter let them decide for themselves what they wanted to do. These women, as the others, were wholly against children being brought up with the idea that once they had homes of their own their parents had no place in them. This created the necessity of old people's homes in the West. Any child who allowed his parents to go to such an institution was regarded by all the respondents as immoral and utterly failing as a human being. The entire group of fifty women looked upon old people's homes as a great stigma on society. This to them was a measure of the self-centredness of youth which parents were instrumental in creating. An individual who was not prepared to accommodate his parents was considered completely selfish and unworthy. None of the respondents felt that any human being had a right to live just for his own glory and satisfaction. If this happened in India, society would become chaotic and lose its essential stability. "If children lack patience and concern for their own parents, how can they show these qualities for any other human being. To do charity is easy—it satisfies the ego—but to show real concern, which means being prepared to give up something, is to show real quality."

In spite of the respondents' expectations regarding their children, the majority of them were doubtful if their children would feel the same obligations as they did towards their parents. Despite parental conditioning, the respondents felt that the environmental influences were such that children were getting more self-centered. The traditional values were less res-

pected by the younger generation. They no longer feared criticism, as they were too removed from the larger family unit to feel sensitive to their opinions. The inescapable fact was that when society gets impersonal, maintenance of the same intimacy of the smaller identifiable group becomes more difficult. The respondents were fully aware of this, and had already detected that their grown-up children were less inclined to conform because of sentimental regard for family members, other than parents. Parents alone were regarded by them as having a right to guide children. "Even we who were brought up in British India were never allowed to forget that actions had to be weighed so that family sentiments were not hurt. These days children don't seem to care about what their relatives think about them. Those children who are sent to westernized Indian schools and brought up in a secular society do not think they are being irreverent when they show indifference to family feelings." (Family in this context is not used to signify the immediate family, but the extended family.) All the women were aware that it was no longer expedient to depend on children, however one may have brought them up. They were in favor of giving away their assets to children only after making adequate provisions for their old age and retirement. This was not only because children might be less willing to accommodate them in their homes but equally because they themselves were also less capable of accommodation. The respondents recognized that they were less willing to give up their ways; besides there was a greater awareness of their own individuality. The traditional selflessness and acceptance were reduced, and their ability to be tolerant and forgiving was less, so that harmony between generations was more difficult to maintain. Having become accustomed to greater freedom in their homes, they wondered whether they would, in the earlier years of their husbands' retirement (60-70), or while they were healthy, not prefer to live on their own. If their married sons lived with them, that would be no imposition; in fact that would be most welcome. But they would not like to be dependent on a daughter-in-law. By implication the respondents indicated that they would prefer to remain mistresses of their own homes rather than give up that position. This was because they as mothers-in-law would be demanding and would not tolerate being left just to take care

of grand-children. In this attitude there was an indication that a clash between generations was inevitable with the growth of individualism and interest that needed expression. Harmony was possible if one was able to give up one's own ways to meet the needs of the other. The respondents felt that they were psychologically less capable of doing this. "My daughter-in-law may not be all that I want her to be, but neither am I the ideal mother-in-law." "I am no longer capable of finding the same kind of satisfaction as my mother-in-law finds in grand-children. Her complete happiness lies in serving her children. I am more complicated—serving does not give me the same simple satisfaction."

It is significant that most of the respondents felt that the modern Western educated girl was the greatest threat to family solidarity. She was less attached to her husband's family, and saw her marriage primarily in terms of her own immediate family. It was because of her desire to establish a home in which she was the undisputed head that other family mebers did not feel wanted. She was not home-centered or willing to give up her independence for the sake of relatives or even in-laws. Modern Western educated girls were less tolerant, less flexible, less accommodating than girls who were educated but not Western influenced. There was, the respondents reported, a greater desire in the Western influenced girl to keep her husband's money for his own family, and less willingness to share even with immediate family members. Most of the respondents would have preferred daughters-in-law who were modern but not Western-oriented. According to them, education alone did not reduce compassion or increase self-centeredness; it was the home environment that was responsible. Thus they favored families that were Hindu-centered, in which there were traditional attitudes stressed and yet the benefits of education were not absent. There was an increasing fear of Western influences undermining traditional values and thus disrupting family life. "I can predict what kind of harmony a family is likely to have just by looking at a girl. You can be sure if she comes from a family that has a Western orientation that she is not going to continue the traditions of the family with grace. She will have to love her in-laws before they are welcome in her home." "Unfortunately, the Western-oriented girl is often better-groomed,

smarter, more articulate and more charming than a girl who is equally well-educated, but does not have the Western polish. Naturally, one is attracted by what appears more appealing. Men also seem to be taken up by the superficial charm of the Western-oriented girl. It is only when one lives with such a girl that one realizes one's mistakes, but then it is too late."

The respondents did not feel that the Western educated Indian boy was emotionally less capable of making the necessary adjustments and even sacrifices for the sake of the family. The rift between generations was not initiated by boys. They were not as desirous of breaking away from their parental homes, nor as unwilling to accept the responsibility for other members of the family. This was perhaps natural, as the boys were continuing a tie with which they were inextricably bound, whereas the daughters-in-law were outsiders.

In spite of the very real doubts expressed by the respondents regarding the continuity of the joint family sentiment, most of them still anticipated no grave rift between them and their sons. It was to their sons' homes that they would go if they were infirm or widowed. The family feeling was undergoing change, but still there was enough of the traditional in it to accommodate parents for any length of time. "Whatever the changes, whatever the adjustments necessary, it is my hope that I shall never be without the love and protection of my children It is to them that I would turn when in need."

The transition was clearly from total to partial dependence on children, tempered with greater recognition of the need for mutual respect and understanding between generations.

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ATTITUDE TO RECREATION FOR CHILDREN

THIRTY-EIGHT RESPONDENTS made a deliberate effort to keep children interested in home-oriented activities such as going on picnics with the family and family friends. These parents expected their adult children to accompany them on visits to relatives and friends. There was a growing interest in taking children to see dramas, cultural shows, and other such activities, but it was also intended to keep adult children from finding their own amusements. These parents disapproved of the growing tendency on the part of the affluent young to sit in restaurants or to go frequently to the movies. In spite of exercising great control, especially on boys, such as giving them no fixed allowances for which they were not accountable and severely reprimanding them for what were considered by the parents as frivolous pastimes, it was difficult to keep boys wholly home-centered. However, these respondents reported that as far as their girls were concerned, they were never allowed to go to public places of amusement unaccompanied by adults. Girls were encouraged to call their girl friends to their homes, and to visit them. Pastimes such as reading, listening to the radio and sewing were not only encouraged but often insisted upon. The need to be constantly amused or externally stimulated was

thoroughly disapproved of and no attention paid to such remarks as "I am bored". Though boredom in the very young was recognized, and suitable distractions provided, little attention was paid when adolescent girls complained of being bored, wanting to do what others in their social group were doing. "There is no reason why a girl can't stay at home without parents feeling they are not providing adequate distraction for her. The idea so often depicted in American magazines that parents are responsible for keeping their children occupied is nonsense. There is no harm if one is bored; in fact, it is good to have time to reflect. It is the parents' guilt that makes their children feel they are missing something if they are not out." "It is utterly wrong to bring children up with the idea that they have to get the most fun out of life. They must have resources within themselves to find happiness, and not depend on either people or events. The more they get used to finding pleasure from outside stimulation, the less capable they become of living with themselves. There is no end to amusements, and once this becomes a habit, it is like an addiction."

The main effort on the part of these respondents was to minimize the influence of those who were imitating Western amusements, such as doing modern dancing, going to mixed young people's parties, drinking and smoking. This type of life was considered unsuited for the young as it went against Indian moral standards. These thirty-eight women were wholly against giving into the demands of either their boys or girls for what they called "Western ways". The nuclear basis of the family and the absence of relatives sharing the same home did not, in the case of many of these thirty-eight women, make the home empty. The home was full of transient relatives and guests. This helped, they said, to keep children interested and prevented them from seeking company that was not compatible with their way of life. The respondents' own pattern of social life was not entirely based on Western concepts of pleasure. Hence it was easier for them to enforce a discipline that went against what their children's age group considered modern and fashionable. The greatest danger to their children was thought to be from the Western influenced young set. This trend was thought, by the great majority of the respondents, to be the biggest threat to the Indian value system and if left unchecked

would ultimately undermine it. These thirty-eight women were fully aware that for their children the kind of activities provided by them were not found as attractive as those that were sanctioned by the West. These respondents did not permit their girls to dance or take part in social activities that were out of keeping with that they considered proper. Their children neither gave nor attended mixed parties for only young adults. There was no objection to going to such parties if they included parents. The strictness was consciously imposed, so that the Westernized younger group did not induct their children because of lack of guidance and supervision by parents.

"If the home is full of life with people, when there is laughter and joy within one's own walls, then there is less danger of a child wanting to leave its warmth. It is so important that the family doesn't become isolated from other families; a constant flow of people generates life which even the young enjoy. It is a great misconception that young people like being only with the young. They enjoy themselves just as much with older people, but perhaps in another way. But whether they do enjoy themselves or not is not the point—it is good for them to be restrained and disciplined." "Once the girls are married, they can go out and do what they like, but certainly not while they are unmarried. This new concentration on enjoyment is the greatest illusion that has ever been put before the young. This has come from the West, and perhaps they can afford this, but we cannot let our young fall into this snare. There is no saturation point in this concept of fun. It leads one from one sensation to another, and ultimately destroys the person." "I know parents are worried today about their children leading lives that are vacant and centered around sensual pleasure, but they can't do otherwise when every Western movie they see tells them the joys of being young. Personally, I have no hesitation in telling my children that they can do so much and no more."

The kind of recreation provided by these thirty-eight women for children, other than allowing them to go to cultural shows, was not quite clear. This was because they did not see the need of special recreation for adolescents (15-20), or the necessity of organized activity. They felt that as long as children were given love and support they had no reason to complain. The same kind of amusements that they had been permitted were offered

to their children. The special occasions which provided distraction were marriages, religious festivals and visiting grandparents. There was no evidence that children of this age group were taken to visit places of historic importance, or had gone touring in India. If such trips were organized by schools or colleges, the respondents encouraged their children to participate.

The same kind of involvement with the young child's world (1-10) and his need for appropriate stimulation was not carried over to the next period of development. The parents were not concerned, it seemed, with finding alternatives to such activities as movies and ballroom dancing, of which they disapproved. Although the respondents felt that children, as indeed society, should not give up finding pleasure in predominantly Indian ways, there was no clear enunciation of what were Indian amusements, except being home-centered. The great emphasis, it seemed, was put on instilling a moral attitude in children rather than in discovering new ways to meet the threat posed by Western forms of amusement.

These thirty-eight respondents were much more tolerant as far as their sons were concerned. This was not because they approved of excesses, but because it was more difficult to supervise their activities. But the same influence and direction was brought to bear on them. The respondents did not buy motor-scooters or make expensive clothes for them; the family car was not used by the children for their own activities, although sons and daughters were taught to drive. There was no encouragement given by these parents to their children to keep up with the latest fashions in clothes.

It is clear from the responses of these thirty-eight women that they felt they had the absolute right to impose their standards of behavior on their adolescent children. This was done with the conviction that it was best for children to be kept under parental authority. There was evidence also of fear in the respondents that if children were not strictly brought up they would be easy victims to Western influences; this would make them incapable of finding long-term happiness as they would not be able to meet the hard competition in India which required sustained work. In fact, consciousness of the danger of future economic insecurity more than anything else made these parents more rigid and strict.

The remaining twelve respondents were not unaware of the dangers of adolescent amusement. They realized that going to restaurants and movies was bad, but their attitude was that preventing children from participating in what others in their group were doing was essentially wrong. They were not in favor of the Western excesses in the quest for finding amusement, but felt that it was wholly unfair to forbid children to enjoy themselves in modern ways.

These respondents did not approve of boys or girls smoking or drinking, but by the age of nineteen or twenty they were not as strict as the other thirty-eight respondents. Many of these twelve respondents themselves smoked and drank. They did not, therefore, feel they had a right to forbid their children from doing the same. Their children attended young people's mixed parties, and gave them in their homes.

These twelve respondents also deplored the modern Western trends and were in agreement with the other respondents that Western ideas of fun were leading the youth astray. This was particularly harmful because it gave false ideas of life to the young. All the respondents were of the opinion that the conditions in America and the values that were stressed in that culture supported a way of life that the young followed. In India neither the conditions nor the values could support the kind of excesses that were in evidence today, especially in the city-bred young. The difference between the two groups lay in how each tried to curb their children. The former group took up basically an Indian attitude towards children in which parents could not be openly challenged. This was not at the cost of being inaccessible to them, as was the pattern in the parental houses of the respondents. But the group of twelve respondents did not see how they could prevent their children from identifying themselves with what was considered being modern. This, the twelve respondents maintained, could not be isolated from the change that was in evidence in India due to various factors. To restrict children being Western in one sense and yet encouraging them to meet modern life was a contradiction in terms and would not carry conviction for the young. These respondents were clearly unable to provide amusements and recreations that were as interesting as dancing, going out to restaurants and movies for their children. They, therefore,

cautioned their children that falling into company that was not serious minded would ultimately lead to their own long-term failure. But beyond this they did not see what could be done to check Western influence. "Young people like dancing; they see their parents also enjoying modern amusements. It is not something you can shut your eyes to. Girls and boys brought up without all the restrictions of the traditional home are bound to explore new avenues, and one cannot put barriers at eighteen which were not there at six."

The two groups were consistent in their approach as to how children should view friendship between the sexes.

Thirty-eight respondents did not allow their girls to meet boys freely, nor did they give their approval to such companionship. They were opposed to boys and girls going out together unchaperoned. Their attitude was conservative and based on traditional standards of morality. They were convinced that if boys and girls were allowed freedom of companionship, then to expect that this remain platonic was unrealistic. The nature of sex was such, according to them, that if allowed to express itself in such terms as friendship, it was bound to get intimate. To avoid any such possibility, the thirty-eight respondents did not consider male-female companionship moral between young people. The concessions made by these respondents were that boys and girls could go to college restaurants and even meet later if work necessitated it, but beyond that there was no concession. "What modesty or pride is left in a woman who goes out with men for fun? How can she look after herself if she is allowed to be alone with men? She is not super-human, and why should one expect that of her? If she or anyone else is allowed to look at friendship between the sexes as no different than any other kind of friendship, then one must be prepared for every other complication." "To allow children to tell parents what is good for them is like letting a blind man lead you. After all, we know the danger inherent in a man-woman relationship. Either you don't care about chastity and purity, or you do. There is no other alternative. To rationalize it on any other ground is utterly hypocritical and false. The young are wholly innocent of the lurking dangers in what may appear at first as an innocent friendship; they have to be protected and not allowed to find out for themselves."

There was the greatest objection to the Western attitude to this aspect of life. Even the most modern group did not permit their girls to go out alone in the evening with a boy. There was no major difference with regard to the possible excesses resulting from freedom between the sexes. Neither group saw any virtue in such pleasures. In fact, all the respondents felt that it was unfair to young girls to expose them to this kind of stimulation. But whereas thirty-eight women patterned their actions on their conviction, the group of twelve permitted their ideas to remain to some extent unrelated to the restrictions they imposed on their girls.

Twelve of the respondents allowed their girls to have boy friends within strict limits. There was no question of having boys taking girls out alone or staying late at parties. In order to make it less tempting for girls and boys to go out secretly, these parents made young people of both sexes welcome in their homes and as far as possible tried to keep male-female friendship within the domestic environment. "I am not quite sure what is best. I know that when young people meet in colleges and at parties, friendship is a natural outcome. To prevent such friendships is not right; it only produces greater temptation. And yet to lift all barriers and let young people determine their own values regarding this is also not right." "Instead of turning a home into a monastery, it is better that modern forms of amusement are permitted. Let us not be blind to the fact that Westernization of youth is with us; there is no point in running away from it. New ways have to be found so that our children do not commit the excesses of their Western counterparts."

The attitude of the two groups toward clothes and cosmetics was consistent with their general attitude toward Western forms of recreation. Thirty-eight women did not permit their adolescent girls to wear clothes, either Western or Eastern, that accentuated the contours of the body. They did not allow them to go out in public wearing slacks, or the more modern Indian styles which are patterned on Western fashions. These they regarded as a cheap and vulgar form of exhibitionism. Those clothes that emphasized sex were condemned as immodest and unbecoming for unmarried girls. The respondents were convinced that to merit respect from society, girls had to dress in a manner that did not stress the sexual aspect. They restricted

the use of cosmetics, and prohibited their girls from following Western fashions, which in their minds destroyed the image of an Indian woman. "If a girl wants to be respected, she must dress and behave so that men realize that she is not out to get their attention. It seems to me that we are inconsistent when we divorce dress from the total behavior of a girl. She is asking for trouble if she goes out in public with tight-fitting clothes and heavy make-up. After all, any girl dressed in such a way in any country is going to attract attention. We can't blame boys for treating such girls with scant respect, or even going further. Girls get the respect they deserve. If one is vulgar in appearance, one is going to be taken as vulgar." "This new fad of concentrating on sex is about the worst thing that has happened in recent times in India. The new styles are the symbol of the great change that is taking place in our country. To treat this lightly is unintelligent. Clothes are the greatest indication of what you are and how you want others to look at you."

The remaining twelve respondents did not approve of the new styles but felt that they could not categorically impose their views on their adolescent girls. They preferred to advise them against wearing clothes that were considered immodest. They warned their daughters that heavy make-up and modern styles would attract the wrong kind of attention from men. After such caution, it was for the girls to decide. The respondents thought undue interference in trivial matters only helped to create tensions, and also to isolate children within their group. "There are so many more important things today that one has to deal with that to create a fuss about what girls put on is to shift emphasis from the essentials." "The problem is to isolate the good from the bad, not to treat everything modern as wrong. The modern Indian girl is very different from what she was. It is no good trying to insist on the old when new standards are emerging, and this encompasses new styles."

The entire group of fifty women was concerned with the problem of steering children out of the vicious circle of being Western modern, realizing at the same time that old standards of behavior were not always possible in modern India. There was a consensus that children today needed an outlet for their energies which was not sufficiently provided by Indian domestic life. This vacuum had to be filled more imaginatively for

children to give up imitating new trends seeping through the West. The old inhibitions and restrictions had lifted and parental authority was not sacrosanct for children brought up in modern homes. Besides it was felt that discipline and force could only be deterrents and would not really change the attitude of the young. This could only be done if Indian society was able to throw up a pattern of life which answered the needs of the young Indian and at the same time did not violate Indian standards of modesty, reticence and morality.

23

OLD AND NEW ATTITUDES

THE FIFTY RESPONDENTS were generally agreed that modern India needed people who were brought with new values in order that they could meet the challenge of a technological era. They therefore favored keeping traditional attitudes and values confined to the realm of inter-personal relationships and at the same time inculcating in their children new attitudes and values. We will now try and explore what were considered new and essential qualities for the young in modern India, and how the old and new were combined.

The respondents brought up their children to recognize dignity of labor. They were discouraged from depending on servants, or treating them as menials whom they could order at will. Servants had to be shown consideration and talked to with respect and restraint. Children were required to clean their own rooms and be prepared to do other household tasks. The increasing difficulty and cost of maintaining a large staff of servants necessitated this change and they found that because of the overall socio-economic change children were not resentful of doing work which they knew servants were supposed to do. The difficulty really was in homes where there were so many servants that children did not see why they had to work. The attitude towards work was related to an increased consciousness on the part of the respondents that a child should not get

used to an easy life. They realized that conditions were fast changing and children should be prepared for a hard life. Travel by public transport and in third-class railway carriages was one means of acquainting children with hardship and discomfort. The majority of the respondents insisted that their male children travel only by third even if they themselves were in the first. There was great emphasis put on simplicity. The respondents consciously tried to reduce the sense of status derived from the position of their parents. The respondents were aware that modern India was forging towards treating everyone as equals and that false sense of pride and prestige had very little place. There was a greater sense today in Indians, whatever their social status, of being as good as their neighbor. Therefore children were taught humility and to regard and receive everyone with courtesy and respect.

The common allegation, often true, that Indians are not aware of their duty as citizens was combated by the majority of the respondents. Children were taught to respect public property, and reprimanded if they threw litter onto the road or spoilt another's garden. They were brought up not only as responsible members of a family but of a community. The old attitude that you keep your personal property clean but that of another was not your responsibilty was no longer encouraged. This also included seeing other people as having equal rights as yourself. The children were taught to respect others and asked to follow rules framed to facilitate law and order such as to keep in queues, to abide by regulations in school and not think it smart to break rules. The respondents did not interfere nor try to lessen the punishment given by school authorities for breach of discipline. In the respondents there was increasing fear that if children were sheltered from the consequences of indiscipline they would get out of hand. There were indications from the respondents that they felt that greater restrictions on children should be placed by school and college authorities and that there was not enough of discipline in public institutions. This fear was the direct result of seeing the youth in India breaking conventions for no other reason than to get more freedom to indulge themselves. Though we have seen there was indulgence shown to children, it was more to reinforce emotional ties than to treat children as if they were above the law. In the homes also a

greater discipline was enforced precisely to counteract the trends towards demanding greater freedom of action. There was a real fear present in the minds of the respondents that if the child was bought up to see himself as the most important link in a family, he would grow up with this attitude which would destroy not only the interests of the larger family but bring suffering to himself. The kinds of examples seen in India from the West, such as the Hippies, made the respondents realize that if they did not keep a firm control on the children they could easily follow the Western youth, and this was thought disastrous in every way. "We must beware of Western values and attitudes and try to impress on the young that India has values that are worth exploring."

The children of the respondents were brought up to respect age. This was not only an attitude, but a central value in which a child was reared. It was considered one of the greatest privileges of youth to serve those who were aged. That life was made up of the young and the old so that each served the other was impressed on the young, starting from infancy. The family routine focused greater attention on the need of the older generation than on the younger. "The love and understanding that a child receives from older people naturally colors his attitude towards age. He comes to enjoy the things he can do for those no longer as agile as he is. Children feel important and needed. It is always sad when a family does not have someone of an older generation from whom children can learn the meaning of love and respect." "When I look around and see families that do not insist that children accommodate older relatives and friends, I feel how poor they are, but how much poorer their children are."

Good breeding was measured in terms of courteous and non-aggressive behavior toward others. This attitude towards age was combined with respect for authority. There was no doubt in the minds of the respondents that much that was in evidence in the behavior of the youth in India was the direct result of the breakdown in Indian values and ethics. This then was the basis of the respondents' attitude. They felt that Indian traditional respect for authority was eminently good and that this was only possible if there was respect for age. The lack of this in the West was given as one of the main reasons for indiscre-

tions committed by Western youth. This disregard for age was considered to be an entirely modern innovation even in Western countries, bringing with it havoc. "So many things that our parents took for granted have to be taught to children today. There is a general feeling that paying respect to older people is infradig for the modern young. If one let them have their way they would treat everyone as equals." "Children should be reticent before older people. They may express their opinions when appropriate, but should not think they have a right to be heard."

The respondents particularly emphasized the right of women to special consideration. Children were taught to regard other girls as sisters, and older women as mothers. The respondents were wholly against their male children treating girls as equals. The constant emphasis was that women were to be specially honored and respected. The Western concept of treating sex lightly was deplored. The ideal put before their children was that sex was something sacred and not to be abused for the sake of pleasure. The idea of treating girls as companions was dismissed. Women were always to be treated as separate and companionship with them was not possible or even honorable. The ideal of feminine chastity was stressed.

The large majority of the respondents took no steps to perpetuate caste distinctions in their children. There were no overt or covert suggestions made to impress the value of caste differentiations. The children were growing up in a caste-free atmosphere, and their awareness of caste as a social unit was academic. They were totally ignorant of what constituted their obligations towards their sub-caste, or the rules by which their subcastes were governed. They were free of caste sentiments, and had no feeling for caste-members or for the extended family. An allegiance to India as a nation had replaced the traditional caste-community orientation.

Traditional obligations to the caste were no longer considered necessary to pass on to the next generation. The respondents' children were thus wholly unaware of what was the appropriate exchange of customary gifts with members of the caste at such times as birth, death, and marriage. The same unobstrusive schooling that was possible in a family which lived within the boundaries of its caste-community was no longer possible in se-

cular households with a nuclear family base. The respondents themselves were removed from direct contact with members of their sub-caste. Hence caste as an institution consisting of a body of people who are entitled to receive first preference by an individual belonging to the same caste was no longer an operative consideration for their children. All the respondents considered this as good and emphasized that people were people irrespective of their caste or religion.

The majority of the respondents regarded their relatives as their greatest support. But at least thirty-five respondents stated that it was impossible to convince their children that blood ties are more meaningful than friendships. The children of the respondents had greater contact with friends than relatives, hence the same close bond between extended family members was not possible. Although the principle of extended family obligation still existed, children were indifferent to relatives with whom they did not have a personal contact. Children recognized only their parents as having authority to guide their lives. Uncles and aunts were treated with respect, but no longer as substitute parents. "I hope brothers and sisters grow up recognizing that they are each responsible for the welfare of the other. If I have been successful in conveying that to my children, then I am happy." "The family structure has changed, and with it certain sentiments have died. They cannot be kept alive just by trying. Children have to feel inter-dependent on extended family members to grow up with a sense of moral obligation towards them."

Although the authority of extended family members had greatly decreased, children were brought up to give relatives the highest priority with regard to respect and consideration. Though the family unit had, for most of the respondents, shrunk, and no longer had uncles and aunts as permanent members, children were aware that such relatives could at any time come and make a home with them, and they were brought up to continue this practice.

All the respondents agreed that their children would be less prepared to share the financial burden of supporting the extended family. There was regret that this aspect of family support was dying out, but the respondents thought this was an inevitable consequence of the nuclear basis of family life and new expectations. The respondents encouraged friendships and did

not influence children to keep close only to cousins; this was done after making it clear that whether or not there was companionship between relatives they still had preference over friends and had to be treated with special honor. This new trend of being able to cut across family and caste for interpersonal contacts was considered worth encouraging and was seen as the basis of modern India. The respondents stressed being Indian rather than coming from a particular province, though they themelves in many cases as has been seen earlier did align themselves with provincial and even caste loyalties.

In the respondents' attitudes toward their children's professional life there was considerable ambiguity. On the one hand, the respondents stated that they would not let their sentiments impede a child's career. On the other hand, it was clear that they did persuade a child to remain near them, even if this limited his prospects. Family members were not necessarily the models chosen for the children to follow. Grandparents were admired for their compassion and self-sacrifice and this was to be emulated by the children. But they were encouraged to integrate these qualities into a career patterned on men who had gained recognition through material success. A great emphasis was put on tangible success and security. The idealist and the thinker were respected, although a more pragmatic approach to life was what was put before the child. No longer was a child required to limit his choice of profession entirely for the sake of the family. There was less desire on the part of the respondents for the child to continue the traditions of the family, if in doing so he had to submerge his personality and his opportunities for success.

Success stories rather than idealistic stories were related. Men who had made good from small beginnings were admired; status was measured in terms of authority first and then in terms of money. Men such as Vinoba Bhave and Gandhi were deeply respected, but it was the successful administrators or industrialists who were held up as models.

Children who were at the top of their class and showed promise for the future were to be emulated, rather than those who excelled in sports or were of good character, if these were not combined with tangible achievement.

Children were no longer urged to follow their fathers' pro-

fession unless there was aptitude for it, though this was not the case where the respondents had a family business. Then children were pressured to join it, even though their interests may have been in another field. In spite of the increased success motivation, an attempt was made by the majority of the respondents to keep children in the same physical location. There was great reluctance to let children take even lucrative jobs if it meant going out of their province of residence for a prolonged period. For instance, for a North Indian to go to the South or vice versa was discouraged, but not altogether rejected.

A greater latitude was given to children in the selection of their professions. The emphasis was on a secure job with known status, but if a child should firmly indicate a preference outside the known categories, obstacles were not placed in his path as long as he was geared to economic security. There was little encouragement, however, to try new and unproven fields.

To achieve status was considered the greatest accomplishment. This was no longer measured by caste-community standards, but by the standards set by the élite in secular society. The respondents' expectations for their children were not limited by what caste members thought of as success. Their ambitions were to maximize the potential of their children in an inter-caste society, and to meet even international standards of excellence. They were therefore putting the highest standards of performance and achievement before their children, and were consciously making them competitive in attitude.

The influence of the respondents was to make children security minded and see life in terms of economic reality rather than in non-materialistic terms. Though the respondents extolled the virtues of non-attachment and the illusory nature of wealth, still it was towards material success that the respondents urged their children. It was clear from the responses that though there was great respect for renunciation and self-sacrifice, the goal set for their children was to treat success lightly only after it had been achieved. The traditional attitude towards success was no longer the guiding principle, though traditional values towards life were thought basically right. The respondents did not want material considerations to dominate the thinking of children to the exclusion of the family. Material prosperity was to be shared with the family and to use wealth only

for one's own pleasure was thought immoral. Children were thus nurtured to achieve success but not at the cost of being indifferent to family responsibilities. The individual's ambitions were not to be his only guiding principle but consideration for the family had to be included in any plan for the future. "I would prefer to have my son near me. Money is not all that important." "Success is not everything. One can follow a good profession without separating families."

24

VALUES OF THE EMERGING SOCIETY

THE ANALYSIS OF the responses of the fifty Western-educated women clearly shows that maintaining traditional values without the traditional way of life is almost impossible. The women expressed very real doubts that such a value system, though fundamentally sound, could survive in the face of modernization. For them the greatest loss is the inability to convey to succeeding generations the moral commitment underlying the Hindu value system. This is a problem for not only the Western-educated élite but for other modern segments of society as well. The generation interviewed here was brought up at the time when British influence was at its height. The responses show that adherence to the basic Hindu way of life, though not completely undermined, was severely shaken. Because of their rigid upbringing, these respondents were still committed to certain moral principles which Western education alone had not been able to destroy. They had been given little opportunity to voice their doubts and fears, even though the strength of extended family persuasion, which was one of the greatest barriers to the adoption of new and alien ways, was beginning to lose its power in the respondents' parents' generation. Its power is far more attenuated in the nuclear family, and succeeding generations will inevitably feel this impact. Efforts to continue certain moral family obligations are in increasing

danger of being repudiated by the younger generation. This is, as the respondents pointed out, because they are not quite sure how to combine traditional values with a modern way of life. This is a problem that was not faced by the respondents' parents' generation, even though they were in actual contact with a foreign value system, because the older generation was not trying to pattern its life on a modern basis. It was clear that they were a part of the British system of administration for purely economic reasons. The status they had acquired as a consequence of their position was maintained at two levels, one within the British-influenced society and the other in their orthodox caste-community. Considerable adjustment was required by Indians to keep the right balance so that neither society was offended. But the gradual assimilation of Western thought and ways made it difficult to keep up traditional family obligations. This weakening of the ties between those in Western society and their caste-community families had its full impact on the respondents' generation. Their education had made them ready to accept a way of life in which fewer orthodox principles had meaning. These fifty women are typical of many of their generation.

In the emergence of an Independent India, this Western-educated élite established a Western pattern of life. They were freed from some of the moral pressures of Hindu society. Their ignorance of orthodox norms made them insensitive to caste-community opinion; at the same time, they were uprooted from their past. The respondents were therefore not capable of establishing homes with a predominantly Hindu basis. Their alienation from Hinduism as a way of life combined with Western education resulted in their establishing homes in which there was the minimum evidence of Hindu practices. These homes were basically secular and traditional values were not woven into a pattern of life but were more an intellectual commitment.

The analysis of the responses, along with a more general observation of this Westernized group, shows that Western patterns of behavior are very much in evidence. In the majority of the respondents there was a sense of resignation, more than pride, in this process of Westernization. They were, as they put it, products of a historical era and could not change their

conditioning by an act of will. There were indications that whereas they had lost a great deal they had profited too. They were able to make the transition into the modern era more easily and with balance, which they thought was not the case with people who were plunged from the old framework into the new. However, these respondents were alarmed with the rapid spread of Western ideas in the élite groups. This was deprecated by the majority and they made a distinction between being modern and Western. The question is how to adopt the beneficial aspects of another culture without being infected by its injurious aspects. The conviction that Indian values in the domestic realm are worthy of continuing was clearly evident from the responses. There was no desire on the part of the respondents to sacrifice modern reforms so that a traditional image of women is continued; the discipline underlying the value system was to be maintained. The socio-economic changes that are inevitably eroding the long-established feminine role are not seen as a retrograde step. The middle class woman is admired and encouraged to use her education to help supplement family income. Inheritance laws have given Indian women new freedom and for the first time divorce has been legitimized by Hindu society. These are considered necessary rights, but how they are used determines whether one is Indian-modern or Indian-Western. If, for example, divorce is instituted because of extreme provocation it is accepted, but if the separation is for a lesser reason, a woman is condemned. The first is taken to be a modern response to unhappiness, the second is Western, in which there seems a lack of traditional discipline, indicating moral weakness. The respondents made a distinction between a girl who works but breaks with the traditional reticence and the one who works but is still modest. The former is considered Western and ought to be criticized. This criticism is not leveled by secular society, which is more impersonal and more permissive in its moral standards. It does not have the same religio-moral basis as orthodox society of judging individual actions. This trend of condoning moral laxity was pointed out by the majority of the respondents as the greatest weakness of a secular society. The moral foundations on which Hindu society was built not only stipulated moral standards but enforced them by social pressures. This was an attitude separate from what the individual felt about

right and wrong. The lack of any personal interest in individual behavior in secular society, as also no moral standards that are personal to it, made individuals who were part of it feel free to act without fear of being socially condemned. This was not the case in Hindu society which was divided into caste-communities which provided definite guidelines for individual behavior. The respondents were of the opinion that since Hindu traditional commitments were no longer the basis of secular society, the discipline implicit in such a system was weakening. The great majority of the respondents were of the opinion that secular public persuasion should be such that individuals breaking the Indian ethical code should suffer social ostracism. As it was, secular society was permissive and this made it easy for people to establish themselves irrespective of their character. The Western-educated élite is by and large secular-based and does not isolate its individual members if they violate traditional sentiments. Conservative society still holds to these sentiments, at the same time incorporating modern education and opportunities. This segment of society has a religio-moral basis and is not impersonal. Our inquiry is mainly related to secular society in which the respondents conducted their lives maintaining contact with the conservative, modern and even orthodox segments but not measuring themselves by conservative standards.

The respondents feared that if secular society continued to be the melting pot of all religious and ethical codes without its own value system, then the next generation would be even more removed from conservative segments of society which exercise moral restraint. It is the conservative section of Hindu society that keeps Indian traditions intact and maintains the moral discipline implicit in the Hindu value system. The respondents recognized that they were no longer able to convey traditional values, partly because of their own lack of conviction and partly because society had changed. The society in which the respondents lived judged individuals by different standards. The modern society has its own value system in which success is measured in terms of economic and social status rather than in terms of fulfilling religious obligations. Secular values emphasize individual initiative and confer prestige on the innovator. This requires an identity with society as a whole

rather than with its specific segments. Social mobility rather than traditional immobility is admired. Industriousness is valued because of its practical application to life. These standards require a new orientation and are often not compatible with the traditionally accepted values. The respondents were not able to reconstruct a domestic atmosphere in which the old and new values could be combined. The children were being educated on Western principles and this was not reinforced with any definite Indian orientation.

Due to the necessity to work either for economic reasons or for intellectual satisfaction, the role of women has undergone a drastic change. This break is seen as most important and with far-reaching consequences. The perplexing question is whether it is possible for the modern, educated Hindu girl to remain essentially committed to Hindu values while adopting a Western role in certain areas. The dilemma is how to take full advantage of modern opportunities without becoming Western in outlook. It was clear from the responses that Western attitudes and values in the domestic realm are not respected, nor is the Western concept of individualism felt to be worth emulating. Educated Indians seem to be prepared to merge traditional attitudes with modern needs, but they want to separate the modern from the Western. This may only be a confusion of terminology and perhaps there is no academic basis for making this distinction. None the less the difference exists in the minds of Indians and is therefore important. It shows that developing countries in the process of modernization want to maintain their way of life and want change but on the foundations of their cultural values. The views of these Western-educated women from the upper economic strata are significant as they indicate the kind of direction they want to take in guiding their children, even if they are not able to see their way clearly.

There seems to be a difference between the modern educated, but traditionally oriented, and the modern educated, but Western oriented woman. The former still adheres to the Hindu religious sanctions and is essentially guided by the principles of Dharma and Karma. She does not place her personal fulfilment as the primary goal in life. She is afraid of the invisible penalties and sees herself fulfiling her many roles as a woman without undue emphasis on individual happiness. The tradi-

tionally oriented woman appears more dependent on others and her education has not made her independent of caste-community support. This dependency results in sensitivity to society's opinion of her. In contrast, the Western oriented woman is not motivated by Hindu religious principles nor afraid of her caste-community. She is more concerned with her own fulfilment and the expression of her individuality. She is not afraid of invisible penalties, sees this life as the only one having meaning and is less capable of subordinating herself to extended family obligations. Her upbringing makes her more independent and self-reliant, and her self-expression is not unduly inhibited by the need for approval from society or the fear of its condemnation.

The respondents recognized this difference and felt that the problem for the Western oriented woman was greater when it came to synthesizing the old with the new. They felt that the secular-based nuclear family lacks the internal strength to perpetuate a Hindu value system. Such families are torn between secular values and the values of traditional society, and the two are difficult to reconcile. There was very little evidence of what positive steps were being taken to evolve a new discipline suited to modern needs. In this area there was passive frustration, and this élite had not found the answers but had only recognized the dangers. The nuclear family which is based in orthodox society is still part of traditional India. Nuclear units are tied together by a common ethical code which is in essence Hindu. Their interaction makes it possible to perpetuate tradition and to incorporate modern techniques. It is not the nuclear basis itself that is destructive, but when combined with secular standards, it loses strength as a transmitter of traditional values and hence cannot support traditional institutions.

The Western oriented woman is not fearful of breaking with established norms of behavior. She initiates change and can participate in such alien forms of amusement as ballroom dancing, smoking and drinking in the company of men, without feeling that modesty is violated. This Western group forms an enclave that has its own code of behavior which is at variance with even the modern Indian attitudes and is diametrically opposed to the orthodox. The respondents were, in varying degrees, part of this Western group but their responses show that, in spite of being part of this élite, they condemned its standards

of behavior. But the respondents had found no alternative to their way of life. The old was not possible, the new was not satisfactory. In spite of being critical of their society, they were not able to give an effective alternative. They tried to restrict their children from patterning themselves on Western group mores but were fully aware that mere caution and prevention would not result in children giving up what seemed attractive to them and was accepted by society. The question uppermost in the minds of Indians in this period of transition from a traditional to a modern society is whether traditional society will be absorbed, lose its uniqueness and succumb to a Western way of life, or whether it will succeed in maintaining a balance between the modern and the traditional. The responses indicate that for the second generation the impact of the West is great and presents an ever increasing threat. The youth of India are gradually drawing closer to Western youths in their attitudes and this is seen as a retrograde step. The concerted effort of the majority of the respondents was to try to keep their children within the traditional pattern with regard to marriage and family obligations. They were reconciled to the fact that their children had little feeling for certain basic Hindu concepts. The loss of customary ritual obligations and even religious observances was not considered serious, but the respondents felt that this created a vacuum which was filled with Western concepts. This group aspired to incorporate those modern attitudes that improved the economic potential of their children and to reject those that reduced Hindu domestic discipline. The threat to this discipline came from the Western enclave that had accepted an alien way of life, and whose influence was spreading to the modern segments of society. According to the respondents, this Western élite was not giving positive moral direction to the younger generation, and was a decadent group imitating and having none of the dynamism of the West. The respondents were content to emphasize the need to assure economic status and wanted their children to be motivated by this consideration. They were so uprooted that they did not identify themselves with any ethical code or culture, and standards of prosperity were their only yardstick of discrimination. They provided no real model for the young but the attractiveness of their more permissive code of behavior was difficult to combat. The respondents were

not against secular values; they were considered necessary and worthwhile, as they reflected moral strength in a different way. What the respondents wanted was that secular values should become the underpinning of a way of life that reflected new moral strength.

The respondents felt that family stability could no longer be taken for granted. Divorce, which was once regarded as reprehensible, is no longer seen in that light in secular society. This makes it easier for women to express their frustration in terms that are destructive to family unity. With moral sanctions gradually losing their deterrent power in this society, many of the old cohesive elements that bound a family together will fade. The endeavor of the respondents was to try to pass on the necessary commitment to regard the family as an institution placing far-reaching responsibility on the individual.

The analysis of the responses shows that the Western educated woman is more interested in events outside her immediate environment. She wants to relate to a wider canvas. This is important to her as an individual, and makes her less willing to be restricted by traditional obligations. This has resulted in a more selective hospitality. The Hindu concept that it was unethical to refuse anyone seeking shelter and food is no longer considered practical. That the home has become a place only for close friends and relatives is not entirely due to the increased cost of living and the lack of space; it is indicative of a change in attitude. Time spent in cultivating one's own interests and expanding horizons has replaced the former preoccupation with family and religious obligations. Leisure has a very definite place in the Western educated woman's routine. She gets little satisfaction from domestic preoccupation and needs to combine domestic life with an external interest. She has a new need for privacy, and rejects the old assumption that women's psychological needs are satisfied through service to others.

The Western educated woman has shifted from traditional patterns of spending. There is greater emphasis on conspicuous consumption. Money once spent on pilgrimages, propitiation feasts and ceremonies now goes into beautifying the home with art objects, cultivating the garden and other such expenses. Expenditure on luxuries is considered legitimate. There is an emphasis on the enjoyment of material goods that are not neces-

sarily investments for the future. The status symbol of this class has changed from how much wealth can be obviously seen in terms of property and jewellery to how much culture is reflected in the home. It is this class that purchases art works and supports new ventures in this field. Personal enrichment through travel and secular entertainment is evidenced to a greater degree. Hospitality is not offered only for the purpose of celebrating religious ceremonies, but is justified on purely hedonistic grounds.

Western secular education on which Indian education is based seems to result in lessening the individual's faith in traditional institutions such as caste, and Hindu religious obligations. Even the respondents' pride and faith in India's past achievements did not make them desirous of continuing that tradition in its old form. They were aware that the context in which this tradition flowered has changed. They wanted a new discipline that could be positively identified with secular values and would usher in a new Indian tradition which was unique and met Indian needs. Secular values in their minds were not necessarily inimical to traditional sentiments, but they felt that sufficient attention was not being paid either by families or by public institutions to the problem of synthesizing the old with the new. The result was that a vacuum had been created for those affected by modernization.

At the beginning of the enquiry, it was assumed that the traditions of India were continued from one generation to another because of the essential commitment that the women felt towards Hinduism and the institutions that such beliefs supported. The respondents, due to historical and other reasons, no longer are able to support ancient institutions with feeling and conviction. There is no question that Western education has given new ideals and new goals to women in which they find their fulfilment. The Western educated Hindu woman is no longer afraid of breaking with socio-religious obligations and thus is less dependent on caste-community opinions. The responses amply indicate this change; at the same time, they show that there was in these fifty women an intellectual commitment to the value-system. However, they were not desirous of going back to the kind of life that they had witnessed their mothers and grandmothers live. Since the children of these women were going to Christian mission or public schools, they

were also being brought up in a secular atmosphere but their parents are no longer committed to the traditional institutions even if they are committed to its value-system. It is too early to predict whether this generation will be able to establish new traditions which will merit being called Indian or whether they will become a segment that is more international than Hindu-oriented. It is quite clear from the responses of the respondents that to ask this generation to continue the traditions of their forefathers is not only unfair but wholly unrealistic.

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