

Intergenerational Relationship between Grandchildren and Grandparents – An overview

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ABSTRACT

Indian culture is known for its age-old traditions and beliefs in joint family system. With the rapid growth of the Indian economy, there have been considerable changes in the lifestyle of younger generations. Geographical relocations for work and better opportunities have forced the younger generations to break away from their families and live away from home. This brings a huge change in eating habits, style of living, perspectives and communication patterns. Due to this, the child in the family lacks to know the past histories and traditional values of the family, it also creates gap between grandchildren and grandparents. They have less emotional intimate relationship with their grandparents. Thus, the purpose of the study is to know the intergenerational relationship between grandchildren and grandparents in the current scenario.

1. Introduction

Grandparents can play many important roles in children's lives. They can be loving companions, caregivers, mentors, historians and sources of various other forms of support. In some cases, they also can become surrogate parents (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2004). It is universally known fact that in a family, there exist a unique and special bond between grandparents and grandchildren. Grandparent has a significant role in the lives of their families. So, in many cultures, it is the grandparents who first come to mind, when intergenerational support is considered Chaudhary (2001).

Grandparents acknowledge several benefits when raising their grandchildren. These include a sense of purpose, a second chance in life, an opportunity to nurture family relationships, a chance to continue family histories, and receiving love and companionship (Langosch, 2012).

Griggs et al. (2009) noted that grandparental involvement could be described as being on a continuum- on one hand there is no contact and on the other hand, they may have full parental responsibilities and rights. Grandparents those who involved in their grandchildren's lives often provide emotional support to their grandchildren. Furthermore, since they are often not figures of authority, greater leniency may exist on the part of the grandparents (Ruiz & Silverstein, 2007; Tan et al., 2010). Grandparents also provide support structures for the grandchildren when their families are undergoing transitions such as parental separation and divorce (Griggs et al., 2009). Emotional closeness with grandparents alleviates depressive symptoms for grandchildren (Ruiz & Silverstein, 2007) and with the rise of teenage pregnancy; grandparents play a huge role in the upbringing of their grandchildren (Ferguson et al., 2008; Smith, 2005). These studies all reiterate that the different roles grandparents take as child careers, financial and social supports lead to emotional closeness with their grandchildren.

On the other hand, with the rapid growth of the Indian economy, there have been considerable changes in the lifestyle of younger generations. Geographical relocations for work and better opportunities have forced the younger generations to break away from their families and live away from home. Due to this reason, grandchildren have less contact with their grandparents and the emotional bondage is getting reduced. Thus, the purpose of the study is to know the intergenerational relationship between grandchildren and grandparents in the current scenario.

2. Review of Literature

The involvement of grandparents in taking care of the grandchildren is influenced by the age of both grandparents and grandchildren, but also by the number of grandchildren, and the number of children that the grandparents have had: grandparents are more involved in caring for grandchildren if they are younger and the grandchildren are smaller, if the children's parents are actively involved in their professional life and if they have a larger number of grandchildren, but not if they, as parents, had a large number of children (Coall, Hilbrand, & Hertwig, 2014).

The influence of grandparent-grandchild relationships are: the age of the grandchildren, for example, the teenage period is associated with decreasing closeness between grandparents and grandchild, this is often related to the grandson's need for independence, the need for diversification of social relations, and other events that occurred in the life of grandparents, but grandparents who reported an unchanged relationship during their grandchildren's teenage period were those who made an effort to engage in their grandchildren's life sometimes adapting to the new possibilities of communication (Bangerter & Waldron, 2014).

Grandparents who live far away from their grandchildren, they often perceive discomfort, frustration and disappointment

regarding the relationship they manage to establish with grandchildren, but also disappointment and regret because they perceive an emotional and cultural distance between them and their grandchildren (Sigad & Eisikovits, 2013).

With all the major social changes from today the importance that grandparents give to their grandchildren seems to be unchanged. For a large percentage of people, being a grandparent has a special importance and value, as well as the involvement in the grandchildren's life. Being a grandparent is equally important for both the wealthy and the poor or for those who have a successful professional life or not, or for those who are educated or not (Mahne & Motel-Klingebiel, 2012).

Acting as a grandparent is associated with multiple benefits for grandchildren, it is associated with the grandchildren's well-being, with improved behavior and less aggressive behaviors (Goodman, 2008; Sheridan et al., 2011).

The intergenerational exchange includes various types of activities and support, including financial, emotional and social. Simple issues like should the parents be consulted in job

changes, marriage or purchase of land or house or any property- do determine the warmth of intergenerational relationship (Jamuna, 2007).

3. Objectives

1. To assess the demographic profile of the respondents.
2. To find out the level of intergenerational relationship between grandchildren and grandparents
3. To assess the intergenerational relationship between grandchildren and grandparents

4. Methodology

The study is descriptive in nature. 107 parents were selected for the study. Purposive sampling method is used for collecting data. Tools used for data collection is based on review of literature. The statistical tools used are percentage, average, standard deviation and chi-square. The tests of significance have been carried out with the level of significance fixed at 0.05.

5. Analysis and Interpretation

Table No: 1
Demographic profile of the Respondents in terms of Age, Gender, Family members, Family type

S. No	Variables	Category	Percent	Mean	SD
1.	Age	Upto 34 years	15.9	2.03	.590
		35 to 45 years	65.4		
		46 Years and above	18.7		
2.	Gender	Male	43.0	1.57	.497
		Female	57.0		
3.	Family type	Joint Family	41.1	1.59	.494
		Nuclear Family	58.9		
4.	Family Members	Upto 3 Members	27.1	1.94	.698
		4 to 5 Members	51.4		
		6 Members and above	21.5		

- Majority of the respondents are in the age group of 35 to 45 years
- More than half of the respondents are female
- More than half of the respondents are from nuclear family
- More than half of the respondents have 4 to 5 members in the family

Table No: 3
Chi Square test

Independent Variables	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Age	.107
Gender	.634
Family Type	.041
Family Members	.079

Table No: 2
Level of Intergenerational Relationship between Grandchildren and Grandparents

Intergenerational Relationship between Grandchildren and Grandparents	Percent
Low	10.3
Moderate	73.8
High	15.9
Total	100.0

The above table shows that the intergenerational relationship between grandchildren and grandparents are at moderate level.

As observed from the above table age, gender and family members have no significant difference while family type has significant difference in the intergenerational relationship between grandchildren and grandparents.

6. Conclusion

The finding of the study shows that the intergenerational relationship between grandchildren and grandparent are at moderate level. The chi- square result shows that family type has significant difference. Family type plays a vital in the relationship between grandchildren and grandparents. From the study it is understood that the joint families give way to positive bondage between grandchildren and grandparents. Thus the Joint family system should come into existence for the well being of the children, family and society.

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