FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND INTERPERSONAL BEHAVIOUR: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF DUAL CAREER AND SINGLE CAREER FAMILIES

VEENA RANI AND PREETAM KHANDELWAL

In this exploratory study, an attempt is made to identify and examine the perception of family environment and the nature of interpersonal need structure of family members in 20 dual- and 20 single-career families. Four members of each family were tested: father, mother, son and daughter. The data was collected by means of Moos’ Family Environment Scale and Shutz's Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation - Behaviour. It was found that dual-career family environment lay significantly more emphasis on cultural and recreational pursuits, independence, and organization compared to single-career families. Moreover, the daughters from the two types of families do not perceive differential family environments, as compared to other family members. Mothers from dual-career as compared to single-career families, express significantly higher control and want less control in interpersonal relationships. Females score significantly lower on expressed control and higher on wanted control, as compared to males. The implications of the findings with reference to the socialisation of children in Indian families are discussed.

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The "dual-career marriage" is a new prototype that reflects the increasing educational and career aspirations of women. A dual-career couple may be conceptualised as two persons engaged in a life-style in which each individual pursues a separate career, along with a committed love relationship. The term 'career' designates those types of jobs which require a high degree of commitment and which have a continuous developmental character (Rapoport and Rapoport, 1971). According to Aldous (1982), the term "Dual-earner" is broad enough to include two-job couples as well as two-career couples. The latter group is limited to families in which both spouses have occupations requiring special training, and the occupations entail a regular sequence of related jobs in a hierarchy of prestige through which persons move.

The fact that dual-career arrangement is still highly unusual provides elements of both strain and satisfaction (Sekaran, 1985). Among women, housework is associated with an increased likelihood of household strain, which, in turn, is associated with depressive symptoms (Golding, 1990). Gunter and Gunter (1990), examined the relationship of gender and sex-role orientation to the domestic division of labour. While women performed more tasks than men, androgynous and feminine-oriented individuals performed more than masculine-oriented individuals. Androgynous individuals also experienced the least conflict over domestic tasks. Women's motivation to perform these tasks was based on their belief that it was their responsibility or that the tasks would not get done otherwise.

Women are entering the labour force in ever increasing numbers. A significant proportion of these women are wives and mothers whose employed status demands a radical change in their pattern, activities, commitments and responsibilities. Inevitably, this transformation of women's roles introduces strain into the family structure, requiring reassessment of family environment and a reevaluation of social and personal identities. Research on dual-career families has been important for understanding how some contemporary couples are integrating work and family and the consequences of this integration.
Though many married women work, and their numbers are increasing, the tendency is still for women to subordinate their own career aspirations to those of their husbands, and defer their own involvements in the world of work until they have attended to the conventional requirements of child-bearing and child-rearing. Aleem and Khandelwal (1989) reported that a significant difference exists between the job involvement of men and women, men being more involved in their jobs. According to Burris (1991), professional/managerial mothers were found to give work a higher priority in their lives. Conversely, working class women tended to give their families the highest priority, and family concerns were more likely to intrude upon work than work upon family, largely due to structural disadvantages, such as, inadequate child care and inflexible work schedules.

Burke and Weir (1976) studied the personality structures of 189 pairs of married men and women from single-career and two-career families using the Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation-Behaviour. Results indicated that working wives wanted less inclusion, control, and affection and they expressed less inclusion and affection than did the non-working wives. Husbands of working wives were characterised as less assertive and less concerned with power and authority than husbands of non-working wives. Overall, members of dual-career families were more self-reliant and self-sufficient.

There are a number of elements of social change at work which suggest that men and women will increasingly want to alter the conventional family arrangements. However, given the fact that the whole fabric of contemporary society is woven with the conventional patterns implicit, it is not possible for more than only a small portion of those who would ideally want a dual-career family to actually work. It is difficult for women to rise into positions of senior responsibility once they have dropped out for a substantial period, however unprejudiced the work environment may be and however competent the women may be. Whatever ambition she may have had prior to child-bearing is often clamped down in the experience of infant care, and there are a few with sufficient resilience to overcome not only the strains of re-entry into the competitive world of work, but the extra effort required to make up for lost time and missed information (Rapoport and Rapoport, 1971).

In dual-career marriages, the assumptions behind the husband's and wife's work and family commitments, and the rules for organising patterns to implement them must, to be workable, become explicit. The husband's central position in the family is eroded and with it, his former dominance and power. However, women, by and large, continue to follow their traditional priorities of fitting their employment schedules to their family responsibilities, rather than the reverse, as men do. The career of the wife is generally given less weightage than that of her husband. In the choice of geographical residence, wives gave up permanent jobs with no secure new job offer at hand when their husbands changed employment. Even in the home, where couples may genuinely seek to move away from such sex-role stereotypes, Rapoport and Rapoport (1978) report that it is the wife who must remember about things that have to be done in the home, even though they may have negotiated an agreement to share responsibilities. The husband simply forgets once he has left the house, wiping his mind clean of domestic concerns because he has been programmed by society to shift his attention to external concerns.

Indian Perspective

Ramu (1989) has described the structural conditions in India that have historically combined to promote the dependence of women upon men and others. Women enjoyed a position on par with men in the Vedic period (2500 to 1500 B.C.), and in fact, the Rig Veda extols the virtues of women as being greater than those of men. Nevertheless, the decline in the actual status of women, and a
corresponding consolidation of patriarchal authority, began during the post-Vedic period (1500 B.C. to 500 A.D.). The husband's moral and domestic domination over his wife was unquestionable in the Shastras and this continues, albeit, in modified forms.

It was due to the efforts of social reformers in the nineteenth century that, serious efforts were made to give women an honourable position in society. One of the reasons why legal changes have been ineffective is that, many women consider it improper to seek legal redress when their rights are violated and they remain unconvinced of the propriety of using them.

Historically, women have not had equal opportunities for education. It was believed that education leading to occupational commitment would be detrimental to domestic obligations of women, which were (and continue to be) highly valued. Khandelwal (1987) and Aleem and Khandelwal (1989) found education to be positively related to job involvement. Nevertheless, there is need to raise female status, which is possible through their greater involvement in more modern occupations which would provide them with greater economic freedom. This could be achieved by promoting higher levels of formal and vocational education (Hari, 1991). The present state of affairs is rather unfortunate, since in India the female literacy rate has always been much lower when compared to males; in 1991 it was 63.9 per cent for males and 39.4 per cent for females (The Hindustan Times, 1991).

The social milieu in India is not conducive to the dual-career family to emerge along the patterns that the Rapoorts and others have outlined for the Western social context. Instead, Indian dual-career families have to function in the midst of the pushes and pulls of traditional and modern values and practices. And this poses a dilemma for couples, especially wives, in dual-career families. However, as discussed earlier, as the participation of women in work force increases, it may indeed influence the family environment and interpersonal behaviour at home.

Objectives of the Study

Keeping in view the paucity of research in this area in the Indian context, the present study was an exploratory one. More specifically, our aims were:

(a) to study the nature of differences and similarities in family environment of dual- and single-career families

(b) to explore the nature of differences and similarities in expressed and desired interpersonal behaviour of dual- and single-career families

(c) to examine the differences, if any, in expressed and desired interpersonal behaviour among different family members, namely, father, mother, son and daughter, in dual- and single-career families.

Method

Sample

The sample comprised of 40 families: 20 dual-career families (DCF) and 20 single-career families (SCF), chosen by means of non-random purposive sampling technique. The former were those in which both heads of household pursued careers, and at the same time, maintained a family life together, while the latter were those, where the father was pursuing a career and the mother was a homemaker.
All the subjects were residents of Delhi and belonged to the middle or upper-middle income groups. The main criteria of their selection was to include those families in which there was at least one son and one daughter, aged 17 to 26 years, and that these children were unmarried. Four members of each family were tested: father, mother, son and daughter (mean age 52.8, 47.5, 21.4 and 20.6 years respectively). The mean duration of marriage of the parents was 25.6 years. Nearly all the subjects were college educated.

Instruments

1. Family Environment Scale (FES):
The FES, developed by Moos and Moos (1986), comprises ten subscales (with 9 statements in each scale) that measure the social environmental characteristics of all types of families. The ‘Real Form’ (Form R) of this scale was used, which measures people's perceptions of their conjugal or nuclear family environments. The subjects were to indicate which of the statements are true of their family and which are false. The intercorrelations indicate that the subscales measure distinct, though somewhat related aspects of family social environments. The test-retest reliabilities varied from .68 to .86, with an eight week interval between testings.

A sample of items from Family Environment Scale would read as follows:

- Family members really help and support one another.
- We tell each other about our personal problems.
- Family members often criticise each other.
- We feel it is important to be the best at whatever we do.
- We are not really encouraged to speak up for ourselves in our family.
- We are not that interested in cultural activities.
- Family members are not very involved in recreational activities outside work or school.
- We do not say prayers in our family.
- We are generally very neat and orderly.
- Everyone has an equal say in family decisions.

2. Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation-Behaviour (FIRO-B):
FIRO-B is a measure of the degree to which an individual expresses behaviour toward others or wants them to express behaviour toward him in each of the three areas: inclusion, control and affection. There are a total of 54 items in this test, with 9 items in each of the six scales. The reproduceability of all scales is very high (.94) and consistent over all samples. The mean test-retest reliability coefficient is .76, with an interval of one week. The instrument has been used widely for research and training in India.

A sample of items from FIRO-B would read as follows:

- **Expressed inclusion**: I join social groups.
- **Wanted inclusion**: I like people to invite me to join in their activities.
- **Expressed control**: I try to have other people do things the way I want them done.
- **Wanted control**: I let other people strongly influence my actions.
- **Expressed affection**: I try to have close relationships with people.
- **Wanted affection**: I like people to act close and personal with me.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FES Subscales</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th></th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th></th>
<th>Sons</th>
<th></th>
<th>Daughters</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>DCF</td>
<td>SCF</td>
<td>M  SD</td>
<td>M  SD</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>DCF</td>
<td>SCF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesion</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.5 1.3</td>
<td>7.8 1.3</td>
<td>7.8 1.2</td>
<td>7.6 1.1</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>7.6 0.9</td>
<td>6.8 1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressiveness</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.2 1.3</td>
<td>4.9 1.6</td>
<td>5.4 1.5</td>
<td>4.3 1.7</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>4.4 1.7</td>
<td>4.7 1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
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<td>3.0 1.6</td>
<td>2.0 1.2</td>
<td>2.8 1.4</td>
<td>2.6 1.6</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>2.2 1.3</td>
<td>3.4 1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.8 1.2</td>
<td>5.9 1.2</td>
<td>6.2 1.3</td>
<td>4.9 1.9</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>6.2 1.8</td>
<td>5.2 2.1</td>
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<td>Achievement Orientation</td>
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<td>6.5 1.8</td>
<td>6.7 1.4</td>
<td>7.1 1.7</td>
<td>6.5 1.5</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>6.5 1.6</td>
<td>6.9 1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual-Cultural Orientation</td>
<td>6.7 1.4</td>
<td>5.8 1.3</td>
<td>5.9 1.3</td>
<td>6.2 1.3</td>
<td>4.9 0.5</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>6.2 1.2</td>
<td>4.0 1.9</td>
</tr>
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<td>Active-Recreational Orientation</td>
<td>4.9 1.7</td>
<td>3.5 2.0</td>
<td>5.0 2.0</td>
<td>4.4 1.8</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.9 1.9</td>
<td>3.0 2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral-Religious Emphasis</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.6 1.9</td>
<td>6.4 1.8</td>
<td>6.0 2.1</td>
<td>5.6 2.0</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>4.8 2.3</td>
<td>5.1 2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.3 1.6</td>
<td>6.6 1.9</td>
<td>6.7 1.4</td>
<td>6.0 1.5</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>6.7 1.6</td>
<td>5.1 2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.3 1.9</td>
<td>4.0 2.1</td>
<td>5.0 1.6</td>
<td>4.6 1.9</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>3.5 1.8</td>
<td>4.8 2.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = Significant, p < .05
Procedure

Subjects were contacted at their residence and a non-threatening atmosphere was established. It was made clear that the information was required for only research purposes. For the FES, the test items were typed in a re-usable booklet and the separate answer-sheets were given along, in which the provisions were made to mark 'true' or 'false'. In the case of FIRO-B scale, the items were printed on the answer sheet itself and the alternate responses for each item were provided.

Results and Discussion

Although the social status of a family is largely determined by the occupation of the father, the working mother is often more important in determining what the home climate will be. The effect of her occupation comes mainly from the readjustments it causes in the family's accustomed pattern of living (dual-career families, still being in minority). One of the objectives of the study was to determine the nature of differences and similarities in family environment of dual- and single-career families.

Table 1 shows the significance of 'Family Environment Scale' scores for each of the family members. The results indicate that there are no significant differences among members in dual- and single-career families, with respect to Cohesion and Expressiveness. Cohesion refers to the degree of commitment, help, and support family members provide for one another; while expressiveness is the extent to which family members are encouraged to act openly and to express their feelings directly.

Conflict may be defined as the amount of openly expressed anger, aggression and differences of opinion among family members. Conflict is perceived differently by different family members. Results from Table 1 shows that fathers, interestingly, perceive conflict to be significantly higher in DCF than SCF, while sons on the other hand, perceive conflict to be lower in DCF than SCF (p<.05). Such conflicting results suggest that, perhaps, the fathers in DCF may be having difficulty in making readjustments to the accustomed pattern of living that they are used to as a result of their socialisation process, and this may be reflected in increased expression of aggression or anger. The sons being socialised from the beginning in the dual-career family setup may be more equipped to manage the conflict, if any, and hence, perceive lower conflict than sons in the SCF. Previous research (Houseknecht and Macke, 1981) also indicates that it is not employment status perse that is important in determining marital adjustment of conflict in the family, but rather the extent to which family experiences accommodate the wife's (mother's) employment. Having a supportive and understanding husband seems to be a major factor.

Independence is the extent to which family members are assertive, self-sufficient and make their own decisions. From Table 1, it may be seen that mothers perceive independence to be higher in DCF than SCF; while fathers, sons and daughters perceive similar independence in the two types of families. It seems that women, who have adopted a life-style contrary to a traditional one perceive less of conventionality in their life. The results about fathers are not surprising, since the socialisation pattern of males places much emphasis on the development of independence and assertiveness and hence, the perception of independence may not differ among fathers from both types of families. Achievement Orientation, that is, the extent to which activities are cast into an achievement-oriented or competitive framework, was not found to differ among the two types of families. However, there is a significant difference between DCF and SCF on Intellectual-Cultural Orientation, as perceived by fathers, mothers and sons, but not by daughters. Traditional sex-role socialisation trains men to be more active and participate in social, political, intellectual or cultural activities, while women are
Table 2

SHOWING SIGNIFICANCE OF 'FIRO-B' SCORES AND RELATIVE STRENGTH OF EXPRESSED VERSUS WANTED BEHAVIORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIRO-B Scales</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
<th></th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th></th>
<th>Sons</th>
<th></th>
<th>Daughters</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DCF</td>
<td>SCF</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>DCF</td>
<td>SCF</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>DCF</td>
<td>SCF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressed Inclusion</td>
<td>4.5 2.1</td>
<td>3.2 2.0</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>5.0 2.2</td>
<td>4.8 2.0</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>4.3 2.0</td>
<td>3.8 1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted Inclusion</td>
<td>2.4 2.5</td>
<td>2.6 3.7</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>3.3 3.4</td>
<td>3.5 3.3</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>4.1 3.3</td>
<td>3.5 3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressed Control</td>
<td>5.2 2.2</td>
<td>3.9 2.9</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>3.2 2.2</td>
<td>2.0 2.1</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>5.0 2.4</td>
<td>4.3 2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted Control</td>
<td>1.8 1.4</td>
<td>1.7 2.1</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>1.7 1.6</td>
<td>3.4 2.1</td>
<td>-2.81**</td>
<td>1.1 0.8</td>
<td>1.5 1.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expressed Affection</td>
<td>4.7 2.1</td>
<td>3.1 2.2</td>
<td>2.35*</td>
<td>3.7 2.4</td>
<td>3.8 2.7</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>2.4 1.7</td>
<td>2.6 1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wanted Affection</td>
<td>3.6 2.7</td>
<td>3.4 2.5</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>3.1 3.1</td>
<td>4.7 3.2</td>
<td>-1.57</td>
<td>3.8 2.3</td>
<td>3.3 2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Sum</td>
<td>22.2 10.4</td>
<td>17.9 11.3</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>20.0 12.9</td>
<td>22.1 11.3</td>
<td>-0.54</td>
<td>20.6 9.3</td>
<td>18.8 7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion (e-w)</td>
<td>2.1 1.8</td>
<td>0.6 2.7</td>
<td>2.06*</td>
<td>1.7 2.4</td>
<td>1.3 2.7</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.2 2.6</td>
<td>0.3 2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control (e-w)</td>
<td>3.4 2.0</td>
<td>2.2 3.6</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>1.5 2.6</td>
<td>-1.4 3.0</td>
<td>3.14**</td>
<td>3.9 2.7</td>
<td>2.8 3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affection (e-w)</td>
<td>1.1 1.7</td>
<td>-0.3 1.9</td>
<td>2.40*</td>
<td>0.6 2.7</td>
<td>-0.9 2.7</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>-1.4 2.3</td>
<td>-0.6 2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Difference</td>
<td>6.6 3.2</td>
<td>2.5 4.4</td>
<td>3.34**</td>
<td>3.8 4.5</td>
<td>-1.0 4.1</td>
<td>3.46**</td>
<td>2.7 4.3</td>
<td>2.5 4.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = Significant, p < .05
** = Significant, p < .01
encouraged to participate in household jobs and take interest in domestic activities — the early training is for a role that has little to do with the uniqueness of the individual. But since mothers from DCF are employed and are connected to the world outside the home, they may also be likely to participate in such activities. Active-Recreational Orientation is the extent of participation in social and recreational activities. It was perceived to be higher in DCF than SCF, and significantly so by fathers (p<.05). Ballmer and Cozby (1981) found that wives returning to college saw their family environment as more oriented toward independence and cultural and recreational pursuits, than did a group of homemakers. Our findings are consistent with these results. No significant difference was found between DCF and SCF on Moral-Religious Emphasis.

Sons from DCF perceived organisation to be significantly higher than sons from SCF (p<.05). Several researchers have reported high organisation in dual-career couples (Eiswirth et al., 1978; Ladewig and White, 1984; and Aleem and Khandelwal, 1989). High organisation may be a strategy for dealing with role overload. Greater organisation may be necessary also, because of lack of established structural guidelines for the non-traditional roles thought to occur in DCF. Control is the extent to which set rules and procedures are used to run family life. The results indicate no significant difference between the two types of families on control.

Another objective of this study was to examine the nature of differences and similarities in expressed and desired interpersonal behaviour or need structure of dual- and single-career families.

Table 2 shows the significance of 'FIRO-B' scores for each of the family members. Inclusion refers to the belongingness in a group situation — the need to establish and maintain a satisfactory interactive relation with others. The results indicate that members from DCF and SCF do not differ from each other on either expressed or wanted inclusion. The difference score on inclusion (e-w) says nothing about the amount of contact desired. High score indicates a preference for initiating inclusion behaviour rather than for receiving it. Low score means the opposite. It may be observed that fathers from DCF, as compared to SCF, indicate a preference for initiating inclusion behaviour rather than for receiving it; they wish to do the inviting much more than to be invited.

Control refers to the decision-making aspect of interpersonal relations — the need to establish and maintain satisfactory relations with others with respect to authority and power. Table 2 shows that members of DCF are more likely to express control in interpersonal relations, when compared to members of SCF. Moreover, while fathers from DCF do not differ from fathers in SCF with respect to wanted control, mothers from SCF scored significantly higher on wanted control than their counterparts (p<.01). The difference score on control (e-w), when high, indicates preference to give orders rather than to take them, while low score indicates preference to follow orders rather than to give them. It may be observed from results that mothers in DCF prefer to express control rather than for receiving it; they wish to do the inviting much more than to be invited.

Burke and Weir (1976) also found less wanted control among working wives than house-wives using FIRO-B. They also found that working wives expressed a higher need to control others than did non-working wives.

Table 3 shows interesting trends in expressed versus wanted control in both DCF and SCF. (Results on other scales of FIRO-B have not been reported as they were largely insignificant). Although mothers from DCF express significantly higher control and want less control from others as compared to mothers from SCF, it is still the fathers who express significantly higher control, and also want lower control in comparison to mothers in DCF, and of course, in SCF too. Similarly, sons also express
### Table 3

**SHOWING SIGNIFICANCE OF ‘FIRO-B’ SCORES AMONG FAMILY MEMBERS ON CONTROL DIMENSION (t values)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Families</th>
<th>FIRO-B Scales</th>
<th>F-M</th>
<th>S-D</th>
<th>F-S</th>
<th>M-D</th>
<th>F-D</th>
<th>MS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dual-Career Families</strong></td>
<td><strong>Expressed Control</strong></td>
<td>2.84**</td>
<td>4.95**</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>2.38*</td>
<td>5.63**</td>
<td>-2.39*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Wanted Control</strong></td>
<td>0.21</td>
<td>-3.67**</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>-2.16*</td>
<td>-2.09*</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Single-Career Families</strong></td>
<td><strong>Expressed Control</strong></td>
<td>2.23*</td>
<td>4.07***</td>
<td>-0.48</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>2.75**</td>
<td>-3.29**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Wanted Control</strong></td>
<td>-2.46*</td>
<td>-1.84</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>-0.72</td>
<td>-1.50</td>
<td>2.89**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* F = Fathers  M = Mothers  S = Sons  D = Daughters
* * = Significant, p<.05
* * * = Significant, p<.01
predominant to the extent that sons scored significantly higher on expressed control and lower on wanted control in comparison to mothers.

Affection is based on the building of emotional ties with others, the need to be liked or loved. Fathers from DCF express significantly more affection in interpersonal relationships than fathers from SCF. In other words, fathers from DCF as compared to SCF, tend to establish deep personal relationships with others, want to get emotionally involved and interact closely, not satisfied with acquaintances. The difference score on affection (e-w) indicate a greater discrepancy between expressed and wanted affection among fathers of DCF than SCF. The former have a higher preference for initiating affection over receiving it, as compared to the latter.

The total sum on FIRO-B indicates the overall social interaction of an individual. As observed from Table 2, it is not significantly different between the two types of families — members in both DCF and SCF prefer similar desire for contact or interaction with people. But, it may be remembered that there may be individual differences with regard to desire for involvement and nature of social interaction. The total difference indicate the relative strength of overall giving versus receiving behaviours. A careful scrutiny of Table 2 shows that the difference between DCF and SCF with respect to the total difference score is highly significant for parents but not for children. Parents from DCF as compared to SCF, exhibit a stronger preference for taking the initiative in any social interaction in all the three areas, namely inclusion, control and affection.

Conclusions and Implications

The dual-career families of today are, in a sense, pioneers for families of tomorrow. They had no role models on whose patterns they could develop their own styles of life. In future, it may be that the proportions of dual-career families will increase. More women are pursuing further education; more are seeking part of their personal fulfillment in work; more may be incorporating into their informal marriage contracts the expectation that they will want to work; many men expect that their wives will want to work and may even see this as a desirable means of enhancing the quality of their relationship. On the other hand, many prefer, and will continue to prefer, a more conventional type of work-family structure. Most couples in the near future are likely to opt for mixtures of conventional and dual-career elements, depending on their circumstances, their personal desires and their relationships. To the extent that environmental changes facilitate the dual-career pattern, the costs of operating it are likely to diminish and the benefits to increase.

Although clear personality differences were found among family members of dual- and single-career families on the personality measure used in this study, and a few differences were found on perceived family environment too; a number of questions still remain unanswered. Do these differences reflect stable personality traits derived from early childhood experiences, or are they more a function of the availability of suitable role models during maturation, the subjects’ actual role-experiences, and/or the value placed on adaptation to social norms? Or is it in fact, a case of situational and personality variables interacting over time which result in the different need patterns observed in our findings? Perhaps longitudinal studies which give consideration to biographical data, role-experience factors and personality variables could increase our understanding of the differences found between members of dual- and single-career families and the effect of these differences on the selection of one or the other life style.

Though the family environment was perceived differently in some aspects by fathers, mothers and
sons in dual-career versus single-career families, it may be noticed that a significant finding was that, daughters in the two types of families did not perceive family environment to be significantly different. Likewise, expression of control in interpersonal orientation was significantly lower for the daughters as compared to the sons in both the families; while wanted control was significantly higher among daughters than sons in the dual-career setup. Similarly, members from the two types of families do not perceive any significant differences with respect to achievement orientation in families. Therefore, if daughters are not encouraged to express control in the family set-up, this may lead to unassertiveness in later life. Unless traits like independence and assertiveness are also incorporated into daughters’ perceptions in dual-career families, the few changes found among mothers, such as, lower wanted control and higher independence and cultural pursuits among dual-career families, shall not be transferred to the next generation. Besides, males seem to exert greater control and tend to dominate, as compared to females. The working status of women helps to reduce their wish to be dominated by others but makes little or no difference to potential control over the situation. However, caution should be exercised in generalising the findings obtained here due to the self-selection of the sample and its unknown representativeness. Further, studies need to be conducted with a larger sample using random sampling technique to arrive at more definite conclusions.

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