

Family Head: Traits and Responsibility

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Family is not an important thing. It's everything.— Michael J.

Universal peace sounds ridiculous to head of an average family. Kin Hubbard

Abstract: *Family heads are the managers of their families. Majority of them are facing with problems of managing of families. They live in dissatisfaction and contribute little for welfare of community. There are certain desirable traits to lead the family but many of them lack in respect these qualities like, live by example, establishing ideal family climate, honesty and positive attitude to move ahead leading to breakage of family bonds. Many family heads fail to perform right family roles like moral building of family members, looking to health and hygiene, preserving of family norm and properties leading to problems of separation and cohesiveness. The dissatisfaction of family head is much more than satisfaction. Absence of human value in family life is of greater importance to live in a healthy climate to contribute to society.*

Keywords: Family head, Live by example, establishing family norm, family climate, moral building

1. Introduction

We live in family irrespective of caste, religion and other considerations. Family is basic to our community, culture and living. Our happiness, prosperity and achievement in life are directly or indirectly is influenced by our family norm. The families may be small medium or big but reveals our belongingness and we feel proud of it. Over the time the size, shape, structure, composition and status have changed but major functions remain same. Till we are adult our parent and family assume responsibility for our growth and development. Therefore family is a part of our life and living. Everybody loves a good and peaceful family. But at present many of the families are in grip of conflicts and essence of good family is lost. Joint family system which was basic to our living is now replaced by single family system. Joint family system had certain advantages which are not available in single family system. The single family system stands on certain merits but loses the benefits of joint living. Even we form singly family system we have to live with parents may be of small in size.

In rural areas because of singly family system the residential houses and land for cultivation are getting fragmented causing an obstacle for commercial farming. Because of low income, scarcity of resources and absence of good understanding, the family conflicts in rural areas have become very common. The problems of litigation for a piece of land, resource distribution, income sharing etc have added to the lot killing family happiness.

For disturbed family life the head of the family is commonly blamed because of partiality, unawareness and inefficiency. Probably there is need to learn as how to manage a family for wellbeing of the family members adding to prosperity of the society. Keeping these considerations in view, a study was conducted in rural villages of Odisha with overall objectives to analyze desirable traits and responsibility of family heads along with their self perception.

Specific objectives

- 1) To examine selected demographic features of the sample family heads
- 2) To study the perception of the sample about desirable traits of family head and gap if any in their role performance
- 3) To determine the duties and responsibilities of the family heads in their daily activities and find out problems if any
- 4) To ascertain reasons of conflicts in the families covered under study to find way out

2. Review of Literature

Family heads are the managers of their families. They should have skill and ability to lead the family. But in many cases the family heads feel frustrated because of the mismanagement of the families against their will and objections. Many of the authors have worked in this field of family conflicts.

According to Schmidtgall, King, Zarski, & Cooper, (2000) family conflict is defined as any conflict that occurs within a family. This could include conflicts between husbands and wives, children, siblings, grandparents, and extended families. These conflicts vary immensely and can include conflicts such as death of a family member, illness of family member such as cancer or other life threatening disease, financial hardship, and transitions such as career transition or relocating to a new area. Other conflicts include addition of new family members, children having issues in school, and other disagreements between household members.

Fabricius & Luecken (2007). describe various family conflicts can cause tremendous stressors such as anxiety, long term health effects such as high blood pressure, suppression of the immune system, premature aging, increase the risks of mental illnesses such as anxiety and depression. There are two conflicts that are inter-related i. e. These conflicts are divorce and infidelity. These conflicts are known to cause higher levels of stress, behavioural

problems in children, and may lead to mental health problems such as depression and anxiety. Allen & Baucom, 2004 stated that infidelity can be interpreted in many different ways. It is defined as having sexual encounters with someone outside a monogamous relationship. It is also known as extra-dyadic involvement (EDI)

Platt, Nalbone, Casanova, & Wetchler, (2008) are in opinion that the familial conflicts include divorce, absent parents, parental infidelity, inter-parental conflict, and other various family problems One of the primary causes of family conflict is divorce. Such conflicts find root in dissatisfaction between husband and wife leading to even separation and divorce. Researchers have shown that spousal infidelity leads to about 50% of divorces.

Thorson, 2009 observed that family conflicts are caused by infidelities in the relationship, which may cause interpersonal struggles for children of the families. Similar findings are also reported by Lansford, (2009). Research has shown that children’s knowledge of an extra-marital affair of parents causes changes in their communication behaviour. of children. In this case family heads are found to be responsible for mismanagement of family life.

Rasheed, Rasheed, & Marley, (2011) stated that many theories such as structural/functional theory emerged, describing families as a social institution and asserting that social order needed to be followed for a cohesive and supportive environment. At times families struggle with a multitude of problems and distinctive issues such as mental health and physical health problems that may cause dysfunction these various family conflicts can cause tremendous stressors such as anxiety, long term on family members which stand as barrier to achievement in life.

Fish, Pavkov, Wetchler, & Bercik, (2012) argued that it is more likely that children who experience a family conflict such as divorce will become divorced as adults. Family problems have effect on the generation who in adulthood imbibe the same ideas. Family conflicts may lead to health problem and risky behaviours in young adults. Children due to a family conflict such as divorce, imprisonment, or death may be more likely to experience parental separation, which may lead to health compromising and risk behaviours.

According to Ben-Ami & Baker, (2012) the family conflicts arising out of parental infidelity leads to misunderstanding, less warmth, less sensitivity and less parental involvement in bringing out the children. The family attachment is broken. It is important to know what interventions work best to treat individuals who have experienced family conflict and to be knowledgeable about what interventions are rooted in attachment theory.

This possibility is similar to the likelihood that an individual from a divorced family will more likely divorce in their own relationship as indicated by Fish, Pavkov, Wetchler, & Bercik, (2012).

3. Methodology

The study was conducted taking 120 family heads from the Khorda block of Odisha who were selected by adopting snow ball techniques to respond the questions contained in the interview schedules. The selection of sample was done on the criteria like (i) must be over age of 50 years, (ii) having married sons and (iii) living jointly with grand children may be one or more. The sample family heads were interviewed at their places and convince. The data were statistically analyzed applying simple statistical measures.

Sample of the study

Nature of sample	Sample number	Percentage
1. Families with one son and daughter in-law without grand child	36	30.00
2. Families with two married sons with one grand child	30	25.00
3. Families with two married sons with two or more grand children	54	45.00
Total	120	100.00

4. Results

The study was conducted to ascertain the desirable traits, duties, responsibilities of family heads along with reasons of family conflicts and their managerial abilities to have insight of real living style of rural families. As every year the families are divided and properties mainly cultivated holdings are fragmented the economic status of the families are faced with the problems of development.

Table 1: Socio-economic profile. The study included few socio-economic variables for analysis.

S. No	Socio-economic profile	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Age		
	(i) 50 years	60	50.00
	(ii) 51-70 yeas	40	33.33
	(iii) 71 years	20	16.67
	Total	120	100.00
2	Education		
	(i) Illiterate	8	6.67
	(ii) Primary	24	20.00
	(iii) Middle School	60	50.00
	(iv) High School	28	23.33
	Total	120	100.00
3	Caste		
	(i) SC	12	10.00
	(ii) ST	8	6.67
	(iii) OBC	60	50.00
	Others	40	33.33
	Total	120	100.00
4	Major Occupation		
	(i) Farming	51	42.50
	(ii) Wage Earning	40	33.33
	(iii) Service	12	10.00
	(iv) Business	17	14.17
	Total	120	100.00
5	Family size		
	(i) Four	10	8.33
	(ii) 5-6	92	76.67
	(iii) 7 and more	18	15.00
	Total	120	100.00
6	Family type		

	(i) Joint	35	29.17
	(ii) Single	85	70.83
	Total	120	100.00
7	Monthly income		
	(i) Up to Rs 5000.00	70	58.33
	(ii) 5001 to 10,000.00	26	21.67
	(iii) 1 Above 10,000.00	22	18.33
	Total	120	100.00

5. Positive attitude	1.92	36.00	IV
6. Sense of humour	2.10	30.00	IX
7. Gentleness	2.05	31.67	VII
8. Involvement	2.31	23.00	XII
9. Compassion	2.08	30.67	VIII
10. Self control	1.97	34.67	V
11. Live by example	1.32	56.00	I
12. Establish of family norm	1.42	52.67	II

Demographic profile is indicative of sample representation from all segments of the village communities. The sample contains family heads above 50 years up to 70 year, educational level starting from illiteracy up to High School, castes of all categories like SC,ST,OBC and others, and with occupations of farming, wage earning, service and small business at rural areas. The sample families live in both joint families and single families with monthly income ranging from 5000 to above 10000.

Thus the sample represents almost all important segments of rural community and suitable to respond to the questions relating head of the families and their experiences and problems.

Opinion of about happiness of family

Every person especially after 50 years of age has enough experience about family life in terms of happiness living pattern and ways of managing family. The opinion of sample about their family life was expressed as follows

Table 2: Degree of happiness in families

Degree of happiness	Frequency	Percentage
1. Very much happy	8	6.67
2. Happy	18	15.00
3. Average	61	50.83
4. Not happy	21	17.50
5. Not at all happy	12	10.00
Total	120	100.00

The own expressions of the samples reveal that only 6.67% are very happy in their families against 10% who are most unhappy. The majority rate their family life as average in scale where as 15 % expressed it as happy and 17.50% unhappy. On the whole the sample does not live a happy life.

Desirable Traits of family heads

The family heads are the leaders of their respective families. They should have ability to lead the family towards prosperity and well being. To have such qualities they need to know what exactly they ought to do in terms of the good deeds. Through review of literature and brain storming altogether 12 variables were identified and studied to ascertain the possession of these qualities. The response of the sample was recorded in a three point scale with assigned value of 3 2 and 1 for very much, much and little respectively of these qualities.

Table 3: Possession of desirable Traits of the family heads

Traits	Total score	Gap (%)	Rank
1. Honesty	1.67	44.33	III
2. Spirituality	2.13	29.00	XI
3. Clear communication	2,11	29.67	X
4. Inspiring	1.98	34.00	VI

The results are found to be interesting. The gap analysis reveals the extent of departure of the sample family heads from desirable traits considered important for effective family management.

- 1) **Live by example:** This is an ideal concept for meaningful living. Each family head if follows this guideline our society would be much better than the present. The result shows a gap up to 56% mean more than average family heads are not conscious of the ideal concept.
- 2) **Establishment of family norm:** Every family head wishes his family should have recognition in village community. Families should have certain beneficial norms to give status to the family. The result reveals a considerable gap (52.67%) in this context implying that family heads in villages are not conscious of this noble concept.
- 3) **Honesty:** The honesty is a noble quality of human being and is more in demand at present for better living. The honesty of parent influences children to move in right path. The findings reveal that there is gap of 44.33% with the sample family heads. It is obvious that family heads are unable to lead the family well as they deficient of such noble quality.
- 4) **Positive Attitude:** The gap on this account is up to 36%. Once the family heads are not positive the family conflict is bound to occur leading unhappiness in family.
- 5) **Self control:** This quality is impotent for everyone and more so in case of family heads. The gap is found to be 34.67% implying that family heads are unable to maintain peace in the family due to lack of self control. The situation goes beyond control when family heads fail to maintain this quality.
- 6) **Inspiring:** For wellbeing of the family the head should inspire the junior members in family to-do productive work. The gap is up to 34% means many of the sample lack in this respect.
- 7) **Gentleness:** This is one of the best human qualities that influence others in shortest period. The family heads have gap in this variable is up to 31.67%. The quality is necessary for family heads to gain recognition for family in the community.
- 8) **Compassion:** To feel for others make people great. The family heads should teach their children about value of compassion. The sample rate themselves having a gap up to 30.67%. Thus their contribution in making children gentle is very negligible.
- 9) **Sense of humour:** Family members need happy time. Every time strictness is not desirable. It is the family head who can make family members happy with humour as family members wish the head to be in good mood. But the gap in this respect is up to 30% which need to be reduced significantly.

- 10) **Clear Communication:** Clear communication among the members in a family has significance to keep members in right path. Clear communication eliminates doubts and misunderstanding leading to peaceful living. The gap in case of this variable is found to be 29.67%.
- 11) **Spirituality:** To enforce discipline and family norm it is essential that family head should believe in God irrespective of religion. The spirituality helps to enforce the family and cultural norms leading to more cohesiveness. The gap in this case is 29%.
- 12) **Involvement:** The family head to have everything in finger tip should be involved in all activities carried out to manage the family. These may be cooking, education of children, health problems of all members, occupational activities etc.. The result indicates a gap of 23% in this respect means involvement is up to 77%. This is so because the rural people are relatively poor than urban people and more conscious about proper use of money and resources.

Performance of duties and responsibilities

The family head is concerned with each and every activity of the family. Since he is the family head or manager, he has to perform or supervise all important duties and responsibilities. The study attempted to ascertain the satisfaction of family heads on this account of family activities. The satisfaction was measured in a three point scale like very much satisfied, much satisfied and not satisfied with assigned scores of 3 2 and 1 respectively.

Table 4: Satisfaction on performance of family functions

S. No	Family Functions	Average score	+/-than average
1	Education of children	2.09	+
2	Moral building of the members	1.73	-
3	Care of old parent	2.11	+
4	Care at illness	2.50	+
5	Hygiene and cleaning	1.99	-
6	Occupational activity	2.21	+
7	Marketing	2.39	+
8	Social relationship	2.08	+
9	Protecting interest of family members	2.19	-
10	Spending time with family members	2.02	+
11	Preserving family norm	1.88	-
12	Performing religious function	2.00	-
13	Participation in Community work	1.78	-
14	Identifying problem of family members	1.02	-
15	Protecting properties of the family	2.38	+
16	Contact with development agencies	1.93	-
	Average	2.02	

The table contains as much as 16 variables of duties and responsibilities of family heads. The sample family heads are satisfied in the matters of their performance relating education of children, care of old parents, care at illness of family members, occupational activities, marketing, maintaining of social relationship, spending time with family members, and protecting properties of families. On other hand their expression reveals dissatisfaction in the matter of moral building of family members, maintaining health and hygiene of the family, protecting interest of family members, preserving family norms, performing religious functions, participation in community work,

identifying problems of family members and keeping contact with development agencies.

On the whole sample family heads are unable to perform many of the family functions up to their satisfaction. In short the overall satisfaction of the sample is as follows.

Degree of satisfaction	Frequency	Percentage
1. Very much	37	30.83
2 Much	33	27.50
3. Little	50	41.67
Total	120	100.00

The majority of sample family heads are not satisfied with their performance relating to their family functions.

Table 5: Problems of Family Heads

S.No	Problems	Frequency	Percentage	rank
1	Tendency of dominance	44	36.67	VI
2	Use of money and resources	65	54.17	I
3	Selfishness	51	42.50	IV
4	External influence	38	31.67	VIII
5	Feeling of insecurity	22	18.33	X
6	Uncontrolled children	48	40.00	V
7	Desire for independent living	42	35.00	VII
8	Jealousness	61	50.83	II
9	Habit of living like parasite	28	23.33	IX
10	In law related conflict	55	45.83	III

The study has listed ten important problems as expressed by the sample to manage and keep family in line.

- 1) Use of money and resources: The family heads realize that family members do not make good use of money and resources which they earn in much difficulties. The person who earns money cannot see its misuse. Family members when are not conscious of this issue the family heads get irritated and that leads to unhappy situation in families.
- 2) Jealousness : When family is big every body looks at others in ways they lead life the jealousy erupts. Since the income being the central point the members feel jealous when one goes out of the way breaking financial boundary.
- 3) In-law related problems. This is very common in many of the families. After marriage the new comers ladies to the family find problems of adjustment as they come from differential background. Not being cooperative they feel to behave differently leading to family conflict. This becomes an issue in family for which family heads pass through difficult time.
- 4) Selfishness. The tendency of selfishness increases with growing of own children in a joint family system. The variable goes to such an extent the family splits and family heads simply becomes a spectator to the event without finding ways and means to keep family united.
- 5) Uncontrolled children: The children in some families become the centre of disturbance. The behaviour of children, affection of the parents and situation in combination put families in problem. This is one of the biggest problems of the family heads. It becomes acute with growing of children in age and activities.
- 6) Tendency of dominance. Some members in family exhibit dominance over others with and without social authority which leads to unhappiness in family.

- 7) Desire for independent living. With increase in income and growing of children some parents need separation for better and independent living. It is more so when wife and husband both earn and do not like to reside under one umbrella sharing of income.
 - 8) External Interference ; From in –law side or friend side people get input for separation and that leads to breakage of joint living under one leadership.
 - 9) Habit of living as parasite. Some earnable members of the family do not earn or earn little but demand equal status or more and prefer to live like a parasite. Such habit of individuals leads breakage of family bond.
 - 10) Feeling of insecurity: Sometimes family members out of insecurity of their existence pick up quarrelling to live separately. Such attitude also put family heads in problem causing disturbances in the family. The members with high income in the family prefer to live separately and thus family bounds are threatened.
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5. Conclusion

The study 'Family Heads: Traits and responsibility' Carried out in Khorda district of Odisha with a 120 randomized family heads lead to arrive at the following conclusions.

- 1) Family heads selected for the study were above 50 years of age with basketful of problems of various kinds irrespective of difference in socio-economic profile. Problems are independent of many social and economic variables as they are mostly man made.
- 2) The desirable traits of family heads are many. The family heads do not possess them as required and have maximum gap in respect of live by example, establishing of family norm, honesty, positivity, self control and as source of inspiration for family members.
- 3) In family role performance the sample family heads lack in respect of moral building of family members, looking into health status of the family, protecting interest and properties of family and preserving family norms in addition to participation in community work.
- 4) On the basis of role performance only 30.83% are satisfied against 41.67% who are little or not satisfied.
- 5) The major problems of family heads are found to be use of money and resources of family, jealousy among family members, in-law related conflicts, selfishness and uncontrolled growing children

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