

Chapter One

CHAPTER - I

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since the time immemorial, it has been observed that there exists a constant and consistent rift between the younger and older generations. This has variously been termed as the inter-generational conflict, generation gap, and difference or distance which has been widen by the younger as well as older ones and vice-a-versa. It is said that these conflicts occur along sex lines in family, that is, between fathers and sons, and mothers and daughters.

Rapid advances in science and technology has brought about such rapid changes in the world in the last six decades that it becomes difficult to comprehend them in reasonable proportion. One outcome felt by the world community in general is the erosion of beliefs and values which were primarily reared upon intellectual foundation laid by religion. This has its consequences which have become more apparent in recent times as the state task over some of the ritual functions of religion.

Due to advancement of medical science, the longevity of live increased, as constasted with the earlier period, when average span of human life was so short that gerontocracy could not thwart the aspirations of young. It is nowadays, not an, uncommon observation that there are three generations living in a family. This is the direct outcome of improved health services.

It is human nature to hold what one feels, belongs to him. He is not prepared to share, unless forced otherwise. These seems to be the crux of the problem of inter-generational conflict. It is the one who wears the shoe knows where it pinches, is an apt proverb in the context of this conflict.

In view of the changes and development stated in the preceding lines, it can be seen that the problem of generation gap has assumed greater significance in present times. There have been a number of studies on student unrest and student activism on campuses of various universities starting from Sorbonne to California and from Tokyo to London.

The study aims at examining the phenomenon of inter-generational differences with regard to Indian value system with a view to discovering some of the factors responsible for these differences.

1.1 MEANING AND DEFINITION OF GENERATION GAP :

The phenomenon of inter-generational differences had been known since emergence of mankind. Inter-generational differences is understood as 'difference', 'gap' 'distance', divergence, 'variation', 'contrast', non-uniformity', 'multiformity' or conflict of values between adult and adolescent generations. It is assumed that conflicts occur in families mainly along sex line, that is

"Generation Gap" - the word has been constantly used by people for a long period of time, in various ways, since civilization. Father sees a gap between himself and his son, while grand father sees the same gap between him and the son. In every age since the dawn of mankind, some kind of gap has existed between the generations, with modern civilization, it is felt to have widened further, creating the problems as to how this widened gap be bridged.

The conflict between the old and young, father and the son, teacher and the taught, authority and the youth that seems to characterise the contemporary world. This conflict is most apparent in countries like the U.S.A. France, the U.K., India, Japan and other democracies where public expression of resentment against the authority and the power is less thought with danger.

Inter-generational conflict, "is a product of the socio-cultural process that goes on in society. The

"The socio-cultural process in turn works through social and cultural institutions. Inter-generational conflict is a dependent variable on the socio cultural process. If the socio-cultural process changes, the quality and content of inter-generational conflict also change".

---M.C. Sekher---

It is argued that inter-generational conflict is a characteristic of a dynamic and developing society in

which new ideas emerge and make a 'profound impact on the very structure of society. In the west, for example, new ideas arose and conflicted with established ones. In such a situation the younger generation is provoked to represent a new approach to social problems and to offer new solutions to them.

One view is that the inter-generational conflict could be wholly explained in terms of class conflict.

What was specific to the contemporary times was the awareness of its dimensions due to its eruption in a volcanic form. As far as India was concerned, it was said, the problem was one of the recent and urban origin. It should be seen in the context of specific Indian conditions rather than as merely part of a universal contemporary phenomenon.

1.2. INTER-GENERATION CONFLICT : A THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE:

Inter-generational conflict is inherent in the organisation of handing over and taking over of social roles and responsibilities between generations. We tend with love and care, our sons and heirs in the anticipation that they will accomplish our incomplete work, whereas they also become our impatient and sometimes, ruthless supplements. Over revered forefather whom we considered as models and after whom we pattern our lives are also perceived by us as tyrants who cling to their authority

and power with tenacity. In Freudian terms, the emotions of jealousy and hatred which this situation is very likely to generate are very strong and deep rooted below the surface of ordinary consciousness and that a part of respect and love we profess and in reality feel for our father and sons is compensation for these wicked and undesirable emotions. Viewed this way, tension and antipathy that is found between generations constitute a part of inevitable lot of humanity.

7 Traditionalist society does not provide room for real individual^(s) choice and hence no inter-generational conflicts are possible in it. In such society, it is the function of the elder to prefer and initiate the younger for the way of life which has been handed down from generation to generation. Transition from traditional or authoritarian society to an open and permissive society is most likely to cause great social stress and strain. In such a situation, it is likely that the very concept of authority is rejected and absolute individual freedom proclaimed. A rational social order creates conditions in which each individual can pursue his interest, which promotes, directly or indirectly group welfare. No individual will perceive moral norms pertaining to such an order as restrains or restrictions. Not all radical social movements can be said to be inter-generational conflict inspite of the fact that many young^(s) men and

women must have been in the forefront of such movement. In recent times, the youngsters have come together to win recognition for and exercise their rights as such, that we may call this inter-generation conflict. The social role of a youngster expects him to grow under the tutelage of an elder so that he can play with responsibility the social role which is either reserved for him or which he finds for himself. Growing under tutelage of a senior person is bound to involve psychological strain on both sides as the senior may not like to hand over the responsibility to the youngster or the youngster may be very eager to snatch the responsibility.

The young rebel in their adolescence, because they feel that they are different from their parents in many ways. They are aware that their parents want everything to have their own way. Their increasing size, strength and knowledge regarding the outside world compel them to feel irritated. They have sometimes to succumb their authority. Their parents use their authority in an arbitrary way.

Talking on Inter-generation Conflict - A theoretical perspective, M.P. Rege says, "But action forces a choice. Meaningful human action is possible only within a social framework sustained by institution which embody certain human goals and arrange for their sustained pursuit. To reject the need for such a framework is to

reject the need for coherent human action. But the dream of a society in the state of nature dies hard.

It is no more a distinct entity with its own individuality, history and tradition flowing through successive generations and uniting them. The father is no longer the head of the family. His role of bread winner is shared by the mother and increasingly taken over by the state. Adolescent and even children are treated with a difference which was once reserved for adults.

The Indian situation is quite different. Before our contact with the West ours was a society closely akin to the tribal society. The caste was our ~~trouble~~. The individual lived, moved, and had his being within the caste and the joint family which formed the ultimate element in the caste. There was no conception of the individual. He had no freedom to choose his own mode of living. The British suddenly pushed us from the medieveal age into the modern age. The higher casts came in intellectual contact with liberal values which were to be made the foundation of our national independence and political institutions and goals. Also, every citizen was under an administration which, though alien, did enshrine liberal norms like equality before the law".

He winds up with this words, "There is really no gap between generations in India. There is only a gap between talking and thinking and thinking and doing".

1.3. THE NATURE OF INTER-GENERATION GAP:

Though the gap between the generation has existed in every age, the phenomenon that is witnessed today is a little different. The problem had never been experienced on such a ubiquitous magnitude. What generally was manifested on a familial level is now a kind of universal social experience.

According to Shah 1971, "In his *Man and Crisis*', Ortega y point out that not all contemporaries are coevals. Contemporaries are those who 'live at the same time, in the same atmosphere --in the same world', whereas only those are coevals who belong to the same generation. And for Ortega, belonging to the same generation means being of the same age and having 'some vital contact' with one another. Leaving aside those below 15, who are yet to enter life, and those above sixty who are outside the mainstream of life, there are at any time three generations living in the same society. Each has its own perspective on life, its own attitude to the tasks that the business of living implies. This simultaneous presence of three generations provides the 'essential anachronism' of history, thanks to which history 'moves, changes, wheels and flows'. If all of us who are contemporaries were coevals, history, according to Ortega, would be stopped, in a state of paralysis, petrified, having only one face, with no possibility of radical innovation'."

Ortega's discussion is, of course, with reference to western society and would need some modification if one were to apply his theory to Indian society. However, its central thesis that Inter-generational conflict is inherent in human society regardless of its political or economic structure, the stage of development it has reached, or the values which inform it/functioning appears unexceptionable to me. The myth of Oedipus as well as the story of Aurangzeb's rise to power, examples from two altogether disparate cultures, illustrates the same type of conflict. Nor is it altogether an accident that the founders, and particularly the early followers, of religions like Christianity and Islam were comparatively young men. Jesus was thirtytwo when he was crucified, and among Muhammad's early followers were many sons and younger brothers of the richest men of Quaraysh. A similar statement would be true of Marxism and its variants like Maoism, or aberrations represented by Fidel Castro, Che Guevara and the Red Guards.

Inter-generational conflict is a very subtle and phenomenon. It is as difficult to specify an area in which conflict is overt and sharp as to specify another in which it is wholly absent. The older generation is not starkly regressive and totally impervious to changes in ethos any more than the younger generation is out-and-out revolutionary and completely uprooted from the traditional moorings.

The study shows that inter-generational conflict is muted because there is considerable adjustment and adaptation on the part of both the generations. Both are in a stage of transition and so is the relation of one to the other. It is conceivable that with continued and proper socialization - at a faster rate of the older generation - the disharmony may reach the vanishing point. What is, however, more likely to ~~happen~~ happen is that two somewhat different value frameworks for the two generations will continue to co-exist. It cannot be otherwise in a dynamic society.

Generations of philosophers were content to define man as a animal, heavily accenting the rational. Konard Lorenz, the highly respected naturalist, said somewhat enigmatically, 'man is an animal, but he is, essentially more than an animal. The simple truth seems to be that while man is no angel, neither is he an animal. He is in a class by himself. He certainly is not an ape who suddenly got smart. He is a unique being, a 'Human' being, with inherent powers to know and to love.

Man is not well defined by fragmenting him into his various functions. He is said to have a spiritual life, a physical life, a social life and a sexual life, yet he really has one single human life of many dimensions or aspects. Man's problem cannot be neatly isolated or localised. Whatever ails him, ails the whole person that

heirs. Professional religious life, as it has been, is a good example of the concentration on one dimension of man to the detriment of the whole person. The intense effort to spiritualise him did, in fact dehumanise him. To grow spiritually, man must grow humanly, personally, no more of a person, a better person. The holier the person the more truly human must he be. Spiritual imbalance makes people less human, whereas true holiness finds them, saner, healthier, better developed, more knowing and above all, more loving people.

The more impressive, though one-dimensional, are man's material achievements, the less satisfied, seems with his overall life, the more doubtful about his personal roles and identity. Despite his relative comfort, he still wants where he came from and where he is going. He wants to know his relationship to whoever, or whatever, started it all. He knows that he lives and dies but he wants a reasonable explanation for doing so. He is best with doubts about himself, his roles, the meaning of his personal life. Man may accept or reject it, but he needs a role, an identity, a purpose of his own. In these he can really live; he is whole.

History amply indicates that education of itself has never enabled man to act well, to be happy. Certainly the problems of educated man are more complex than those of simple people. Regardless of the number of solutions

it provides for physical, spiritual, economic or social problems, learning hardly touches the problem of man himself.

Sir Bernard Lovell said so well, "Each new scientific discovery of man makes it clear how much further he is from where he thought he was. Currently, man discovers problems faster than he can identify them let alone solve them. He is like the man patching an old inner tube - as soon as one hole is patched, another blows open.

The gap between the two generations' attitude has always existed, but it has many dimensions in the present time when the world is fast changing in its social, cultural and economic aspects. In every age since the dawn of human civilization, some kind of gap has existed between the generations. The father has often felt that the generation of his son is not as good as people were in the good old days. The younger generation is regarded as easy going, less honest, less intelligent, not as brave and straight forward as people used to be. The mother-in-law has often complained of disrespect for the age and lack of modesty^{ty} in the behaviour and manner of the daughter-in-law. And when it comes to dress and fashion, the younger generation has always been considered as outrageous and shocking. The father has always regarded the era of the younger generation as the

'kaliyug' the 'iron age' which is replete with sin and evil. Little does he remember that in his younger days he was himself looked down by his own father in the same derogatory light. For every generation the generation to come represents the kaliyug, and what is by gone belongs to the 'good old days'.

A variety of terms have been coined by the elder generation to express the problem of attitude difference. Like "student unrest", "youth unrest" indiscipline among youth etc. But the real problem perhaps is the lack of ability to find a bridge between the two generation. The progress of social growth being slower than the non-social growth, finding a satisfactory answer to the problems in some aspects. Once the assessment of the complexity and intensity of the problem has been made the solution thereof would become possible.

The older generation finds it difficult to change rapidly to keep pace with the changing world whereas the younger generation has an inherent tendency to assimilate the change. It is thus not only the older generation which finds itself out of time with present day world but it is also the younger generation which is out of step with tradition. But since the authority is not mutually shared by the two generation there is a clash between the generation.

Earlier the youth had to depend on the parents for decisions about their occupation, marriage and other areas of life. Now the maturation span of growing child has decreased. Youth feel mature enough much and therefore confident to decide about matters of his life. The influence of industrially developed communities thoughts and culture has affected the values and norms in our society. The youth of today is more affected by the western influences. They want to experiment themselves or try out themselves and gain confidence. But some of these behaviours are disapproved by parents. When teenagers are not provided reasonable opportunity to try themselves out, they become rebellion, or show non-conformity to the social order, values and discipline. This naturally leads to conflict between the two generation. Previously youngsters had difference of opinion but rarely did they speak out or expressed overtly and simply disagreed. Today youth rather feels entitled to protest, which is not at an individual but at mass dimension.

Differences and tensions between the generations are inter-relatable in every non-static and developing society. The change which the society is undergoing generates its own tensions and conflicts. The older generation clings to its own norms and system of change. The younger generation with their education and greater exposure to what is taking place in other more developed countries, becomes the carriers of change.

The phenomenon of intergenerational differences in India, is a complex one and it would be naive to reduce it to the operation of a single factor. It can best be looked upon as the outcome of the many changes that have taken place in the Indian society during the years since Independence. Mrs. Suma Chitnis (1969), however, regards "the decline of parental authority and parental influence in the value orientation of children" as a major factor underlying the conflict. The family in modern India is fast giving up its vital role in inculcating the attitudes and values in children. The family has always been the main agency for socialization. But it is fast giving up this role and seems to be receding into the background and is relegating that socializing functions to the more formal agencies of education, and to the cinema and the peer groups. The parental model is no longer emulated. The growing child looks for the guiding cues for their ideas and behaviour in the 'heroes' of the world of film and sports and other situation.

1.4. CAUSES OF INTER-GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

The style of life, habits, patterns of behaviour, modernization, industrialisation, norms and values of the older generation are felt as inadequate and irrelevant to the aspiration and expectancies of the newer generation. The fact that the role of the parents and the elders does not appear to be relevant to the younger generation, is

an important contributory factor in the inter-generational gap and the alienation of the youth.

The youth in every era has regarded the old as out of date, old fashioned, conservative and lacking in understanding. The son complains that his father cannot "understand" him. On the other side, the older generation has felt the young as lacking in respect and radical in outlook which is bound to mismanage the affairs of the world. The changes due to advance of science and technology have confounded the world and almost all social culture and economic belief and standards are considerably influenced.

In this context the gap between the older and the younger generation has become vast and the problem created by it have baffled all concerned. Today, we find less common ground between the ideas and the ideals of older and younger generation.

As Gangarde (1969) has put it, "Such a conflict between the younger and older generation has perhaps always existed, but it has become more conspicuous in recent times. For the simple reason that the developing as well as developed countries are moving today at a much faster rate than in the past. Rapid change in modern civilization tends to accentuate parent-youth conflict. For within a fast changing social order the time interval

between generation create a hiatus between one generation and the next".

It is quite obvious that impact of science and technology and impact of mass media and industrialization have played a major role in creating generation gap. What was once oral communication in a static society through audio-visual methods. What was once sacred knowledge and which could only be obtained in a sacralized relationship of teacher and student is obtained in the mass society through the printed book, Cinema, T.V., Newspaper or Radio. Much of the inter-generational conflict is due to the persistence of the earlier symbolic values in the changed situation.

One major cause of inter-generational conflict is the crisis of values in youth. The phenomenon is much too complex, and it would be simplistic to reduce the cause of the crisis to any single factor. It seems to be more reasonable to look upon it as the outcome of the many major changes that have taken place in the Indian society during the last two decades. Influence and hold of parents is more important factor value orientation in children.

Parental function of the inculcation of norms and values among children calls for considerable tact and understanding and, above all, a ready adjustment to the

changes in society. The need for adaptation and adjustment to the shifting demands of society becomes particularly acute in modern society with its rapid pace of change. Similarly, the need for adjustment is marked when a major event like a war, a rebellion or a religious upheaval alters the texture of a society conspicuously. Paradoxically enough, in such periods, when the stresses and strains on the parental function are many, the differences between the generations widen; for, when the pace of change increases, inter-generational gap relative to a specific period of time is considerably greater than during the same period of time when the pace of change is less rapid.

Serious disagreement in certain areas between two generation may develop conflict or gap between generations. For example, disagreement between children and parents on the score of dress and diet. It is observed that in certain conservative families serious crisis may create because of friendship with opposite sex. Friendship of boys with girls or friendship of girls with boys may absolutely disapproved by their, parents,

Leisure activities and smoking are yet other sources of disagreement. Keeping late hours at night for reading, getting up late in the morning and in general not conforming to the time discipline of the home can give rise to serious conflicts between students and their parents,

particularly the father.

In more important areas such as choice of courses and careers and colleges etc., disagreements are likely to be sharp. Disagreement tended to be pronounced in respect of caste norms, e.g., restriction on diet, mixing freely with people irrespective of caste, friendship across the caste barrier etc.

Control over purse and time, is yet another area of disagreement into conflict in some cases.

Ideologies and values constitute another source of disagreement as well as conflict. Notion of equality, social justice, liberalism, dignity and worth of the individual, freedom of thought and action and social interaction, etc., have been some of the sore points in the relationship between students and their parents. Thus whenever parents insisted that their sons and daughters should stick to the traditional inequalities and inequities, they provoked strong resentment amongst students. Students did not like the customary distance between various castes and communities. They refused to share the prejudices of their parents in respect of diet, choice of education and career, choice life partner, etc.

It is well known that in the Indian family the father plays a central role and he can be very domineering. This is not palatable to sons and daughters who want to

exercise their own mind and judgement in various matters.

The study noted conflicts arising from the different concepts of family pattern, the nuclear versus the joint family. In some cases the parents insisted that their eldest son or daughter take up the entire responsibility of upbringing and education of the younger siblings even if it necessiated sacrifice of one's career. This was not acceptable to some of the students.

Religious beliefs and performance of rituals such as daily workhip have been another sources of disagreements and conflicts between parents and their sons and daughters. The traditional concept of morality, largely negative in its content and character, poses a serious problem.

It is seen that younger generation of today, comparatively become more rebellion. One main reason is that, interference in their freedom, by their parents and grand parents, or teachers. They want complete, freedom in their choice of friendship between sexes, dress, music, and choice of life partner, social interaction, etc. Any kind of interference cannot be tolerable by them. Attitudes of younger generation quite different than second or third generations. And in such situation for the old generation it is very difficult to adjust themselves. And this maladjustment turn into conflict or

Another source of inter-generational conflict is the lack of correspondence between the adult generation preaches and practices and between what it promises and fulfils.

Increasing gap in respect of knowledge and skills between generations is bound to fan disagreement and conflict.

A major source of conflict is the changing attitudes of the younger generation to sex and religion. It was noted that with technological advancement, the younger generation would have to adjust itself continuously to the changing social conditions.

1.5. IS THE GAP MORE IDEOLOGICAL THAN GENERATIONAL :

Despite the popularity of the idea of an unprecedented conflict between the generation, there is some evidence that refutes the idea. Quite clearly, whether one perceived a generation gap depends on the specific issues one is talking about (Bengston, Furlong, and Laufer, 1974). If the issue is whether there is a fundamental lack of articulation between the generations, then the answer is decisively no (Adelson, 1970, p.35). In contrast to the notion that there is an extensive degree of alienation between parents and their children, Adelson concludes that there are few signs of serious conflict between adolescents in the United States and their

parents. Douvan and Adelson (1966) studied 3000 young people, ages 12 to 18, from all regions of the United States and all socioeconomic levels and found that usually the relationships between youth and their parents were amiable. So did Bengston (1971), who collected data from more than 500 students enrolled in three southern-California colleges. About 80% of the students reported generally close and friendly relationships with their parents: 79% felt somewhat close or very close; 81% regarded communication as good; and 78% felt their parents understood them all or most of the time.

Lubell (1968) asked 350 White students and more than 100 Black students at 28 campuses in 14 states to compare themselves with their parents. Interview questions concerned upbringing, drug use, premarital sex, religious beliefs, career choices, economic thinking, and attitudes towards the draft, war, and politics. Lubell reports that only about 10% of the students he interviewed were in serious discord with their parents, and in most of these cases there was a long history of family tension. Similar findings by K. Cross (1968) indicate a striking similarity between the opinions of students and their perceptions of their parents' opinions. Adelson (1970) examined the areas of politics and values and found further arguments that the gap is ideological rather than generational.

An analysis of the 1968 U.S. election was made by the University of Michigan's Survey Research Centre. It was based on 1600 interviews with a representative national sample of voters. Outside the southern part of the U.S., George Wallace drew proportionately more votes from younger voters than from older voters. This fact contrasts with the tendency to identify the young with leftist ideology and militancy. The radical activists are for the most part children of radical or liberal parents (Starr, 1974).

In connection with the issue of values, Fortune magazine polled a representative sample of 18 to 24-year-olds in the U.S., dividing them into a noncollege group (vocationally oriented) and so-called "forerunner" group (students interested in education for self-discovery and majoring in humanities and social sciences). The "forerunners" were liberal politically, less traditional in values, and less enchanted with business careers. But no generation gap was revealed.

According to Adelson's argument, there has been too much generalization from a narrow segment of the young to the entire younger generation. Adelson finds that a relatively small proportion of the young are in severe conflict with the values of their parents. He sees more evidence for describing what is happening as an ideological conflict that cuts across generational lines. The polarization is the result not of age but of

differing ideologies. Adelson's findings tend to support the findings of similarities between the values of student activists and the values of their parents. The evidence does not completely shatter the notion of an unprecedented generation gap, but it does indicate that the conflict between children and their own parents is not as sharp as is popularly believed. The gap certainly exists, but it cannot be attributed entirely to conflict between the generations.

How may we resolve these differing opinions? Thomas (1974) after a careful analysis of these and other studies, notes that those observers, such as Roszak, Slater, Reich, and Mead, who argue that a youth culture is emerging focus on values. They say that a generation gap exists because of difference in values, ~~_____~~
~~_____~~ Sociologist Philip Slater, who believes today's youth have formed a new culture, states :

"There are an almost infinite number of polarities by means of which one can differentiate between the two cultures. The old culture, when forced to choose, tends to give preference to property rights over personal rights, technological requirements over human needs, competition over cooperation, violence over sexuality, concentration over distribution, the producer over consumer, means over ends, secrecy over openness, social forms over personal expression,

striving over gratification. Oedipus lover over communal love, and so on. The new counter-culture tends to reverse all these priorities (1970, p. 100).

Note that these are basic, broad values. In contrast, those researchers and observers who conclude there is little evidence for a generation gap rely on a more specific level, that of attitudes. For example, Yankelovich (1974) conducted a survey for CBS News that surveyed young adults and their parents on what are called "cleavage issues". These are ones on which there is public controversy -- for example, sex, drugs, and politics. Yankelovich asked about opinions and beliefs; on all but a small minority of the questions there was striking similarity in the responses of parents and their offspring (Thomas, 1974).

If Thomas's analysis is correct, and there seems to be no reason to doubt, the question then becomes, Which is more important, value or opinions and beliefs? Responses to that question could generate another controversy, but we ourselves place emphasis on the values. It is from this emphasis that many of our attitudes stem. A generational difference does not appear to be developing. Confusion on the part of middle-aged parents trying to understand their college-aged youth will probably increase in the next decade; in fact, Roszak predicts that the

counter-culture will reach its peak when the present generation of 11 - and 12 year olds reach their 20s about the year 1984. "Future shock" is thus increasing.

1.6. CONFLICT BETWEEN GENERATIONS :

Writers have, for many years, commented on the conflict of generations, the cause of which have been variously defined. Much of the conflict apparently derives from the process of cultural change, which may even overshadow cross-cultural differences. That is, the gap between age groups is often greater than that existing between cultures; for example among Americans.

Friedenberg sees the conflict as originating with adults. Their hostility, he asserts, derives from their anxiety about adolescents. Many of them are frightened or enraged by teen-agers' spontaneity. They also fear aging, and find youth's youthfulness an affront. They fail to realise that those who love youth stay young and the longest. Another cause of conflict is prolonged education which often creates an equally long dependency in youth. Parents project onto the youth they support their dreams, expectations and rules. Some parents pressure their children to enter a prestigious college, and to choose high status occupations. Another aspect of the conflict is the parents who sees his child's main task as performing will. If the youth fights back, a psychological impass

is reached. At other times, a gap exists because adults simply fail to fulfill their role as exemplars and counselors of youth. Having lost their social and ethical bearings, they provide nothing the youth can cling to. Hence, the youth suffers a confusion of goals, and lacks a clear program for reaching them.

The generations conflict has assumed special modifications in recent times. For one thing, schooling has become prolonged, and parents find themselves confronted, not with set of individuals to be trained for adulthood, but with small social systems. There teen groups present a united front to the overtures made by the adult society. Moreover, the massing together of large numbers in high schools and colleges has produced an atmosphere in which the legitimacy of adult authority has been called into question.

Most discussions of the generations conflict has applied, at least implicitly, to males; and certainly the matter affects the sexes differently. For boys, says Bettelheim, conflict is more crucial. Young man expect to displace their elders and to take their place in running their country's affairs. In days when vigor and strength were essential in a head of household, it was accepted as natural that a young man, at his physical peak, should take over. Now-a-days when experience counts more than brute strength, the young man can no longer count on his elders to move over, and sometimes must challenge them

with force..

The girl's situation is somewhat different, since biology brings an end to the mother's role of child-bearing and, as a consequence, child rearing. If the daughter's perception of her own role is the same there is no essential conflict. Her mother has been prepared by nature to move over.

In the first selection. Errost Smith examines the nature and causes the conflict between generations as related to American youth culture. Specifically, he attributes the conflict to such factors as questions of authority, problems of status, role and cultural discontinuity. Smith simply assumes that a generation conflict exists and constitutes an important aspect of adolescence. The selection by Bealer, Willits, and Maida suggests that the generations conflict has been grossly exaggerated. Actually, youth, reflects, rather than contradicts, the standard of the larger society. In sum, the issue is not yet resolved.

In modern urban society, there is a serious cultural discontinuity between generations. Because of the biological birth cycle, vertical mobility, and rapid social change, adults are out of touch with youth. This discontinuity in structure and in the transmission of culture is illustrated to some extent by a comparison of the different transitional phases of the process of

socialization. With the gradual maturation of youth, a radical reversal of roles takes place between adults and youths. As youths mature and assume adult roles, they are passing through a major period of movements into full adult status-roles; whereas parents, as they grow older

. Thus rapid social change, in addition to the time interval between generations, creates the discontinuity between youths and adults (Davis, 1944, pp, 523-524). Parent youth life cycles in America are at different levels of development and, except at the infant level, are potentially subject to conflict. Even without rapid social change, the differences between youth and adult cultures might perpetuate the discontinuity. Person points out that the conflict of generations begins with the latency period when children turn from parents to peer groups and no longer trust their parents, but feel hostile to them (Pearson, 1958, p. 90).

Another important conflict point between generations centers on the exaggerated sex taboos pressed on youth by parents.

1.7. GENERATION GAP OVER VIEW:

What we know today as the "generation gap" may be simply the result of the twentieth century exaggeration of this separation of youths and their elders. Because children and adolescents have been placed in a world apart,

they have filled that world with symbols, vocabulary, attitudes and actions that are often incomprehensible to adults.

Stereotypes that ignore the pluralism of American society have been created about both adults ("the silent majority") and adolescents ("hippies"). The activism of a few students (who generally acted in accordance with their parents' values) and of the sensationalized counter-culture that developed in the country's elite colleges and universities have often been taken to represent the views and actions of all young people. Adult opposition to the counter-culture is also taken for granted. Adolescence have indicated, the generation gap has been both overstated and oversold by the mass media, by bewildered parents, and by the community.

It is true, that parents and their adolescent children frequently disagree that each often feels that the other simply doesn't understand. Frustration over choices of friends, clothes, hair styles, use of the family car or telephone, family responsibilities, attitudes toward parents, grades, study habits, drugs, drinking, smoking, sex, and staying out of trouble may arise. Parents may try to give an adolescent the benefit of experience only to have the adolescent angrily reject it with a plea to "let me live my own life". In most cases, however, the problems are momentary and minor;

the gap between generations appears to be, in most cases a crack rather than a chasm. Conflict between the generations is nothing new. Consider the statement "Our Youths today loves luxury". They have bad manners, contempt for authority, disrespect for older people. Children now-a-days are tyrants. They contradict their parents, gobble their food, and tyrannise their teachers". That statement was uttered by Socrates, in the fifth century before Christ. But so much is currently being said about the generation gap that it seems appropriate to examine the notion in this discussion of social change.

Many adults feel certain that today's alienated youngsters are not just the modern equivalent of the goldfish-- swallowing students of the 1930s. But there is a question as to how serious the alienation really is. Is there really a generation gap? Roszak (1969) and M. Mead (1970) say yes. Adelson (1970) says no. P. Slater (1970) says yes, but he also says that there is, in fact, too much conformity to obsolete parental values. We shall now turn to an examination of some of these contrasting interpretations of the phenomenon commonly labelled the generation gap, before seeking some resolution of the controversy.

1. The rise of a counterculture. Roszak (1969) argues that the revolt of the young is serious, important and redemptive. According to Roszak, the young today are forming a culture so radically unaffiliated with

the mainstream of our society that to many people it scarcely appears to be a culture at all. The source of their revolt is the dehumanization brought about by Western technological civilization. Roszak defines technocracy as the social form in which an industrial society reaches the peak of its organizational integration. In a technocracy, nothing is any longer small or simple or readily apparent to the nontechnical person. The scale and intricacy of all human activities transcend the competence of the amateur citizen and demand the attention of specially trained technical-bureaucratic organization of economic and political life on one side, while on the other side is the counterculture - the radical - anarchic, romantic-religious, protest-withdrawal tendencies of the young.

A difficulty in Roszak's interpretation of the rise of the counterculture, however, is that he sees it as a revolution of the repressed against the system that represses them. But, in fact, the revolt of the young occurs not among those who are most oppressed or repressed, nor among those who bear the greatest responsibility to the technocracy. The counterculture is, in fact, a sub-culture of middle-class White youth. Indeed, the counterculture includes really only that minority of the young who

are so securely in the technocratic society that they can afford to demand something more of life than security, affluence, and the prospect of political power. The counterculture arises, then, not because the young today are more repressed but because they are so little repressed that they can raise their sights, as Keniston has stated.

2. Towards a prefigurative culture? Another view of the generation gap is embodied in anthropological terms by Margaret Mead, who sees a deep, new unprecedented, worldwide gulf between the young and the old, who has been studying patterns of child rearing across cultures for many years, expects that the future will radically depart from the present. Within the two decades from 1940 to 1960, events occurred irrevocably altered our relationships to other people and to the natural world. Mead sees the events and discoveries of this time as bringing about a drastic irreversible divisions between the generations. She states : "Even very recently, the elders could say: 'You know, I have been young and you have never been old'. But today's young people can reply : 'You never have been young in the world I am young in, and you never can be" (1970, p. 63).

Mead's standpoint also differs from research findings on the similarities between the values of student activists and those of their parents. But her

emphasis is on the speed and dimensions of change in the modern world. She distinguishes three different kinds of culture: postfigurative culture, in which children learn primarily from their forebears; cofigurative culture, in which both children and adults learn from their peers; and prefigurative culture, in which adults learn from their children. Mead sees a prefigurative culture developing, in which the child will have to serve as scout; the child will pose the questions, and it will be the task of his or her elders to teach the child "how to learn" rather than "what to learn". The older generation - those born before 1940 - is "strangely isolated", according to Mead. It has witnessed such massive and rapid change that it cannot communicate its experience to its successors. Meanwhile, the young are "at home" in this time. Satellites are familiar in their skies. They have never known a time when war did not threaten annihilation. When they are given the facts, they can understand immediately that continued population of the air and water and soil will soon make the planet uninhabitable. Like the first generation born in a new country, they only halfway comprehend their parents' talk about the past. Mead's views are reminiscent of I. Child's (1943) descriptions of the dilemma of second-generation, Italians in a New England Community. They were

"marginal people", experiencing strong pulls between Italian and being American and finding themselves unable to belong to either group.

Mead optimistically believes that the gap between the generations can be taken as a guide to the future. Although this guide is somewhat vague, she thinks it is possible to change into a prefigurative culture consciously, delightedly, and industriously, rearing unknown children for an unknown world. The nature of the direct participation of the young of which Mead speaks may be inferred from this comment by a participant (then a college senior) in a panel discussion of the generation gap:

"Starting in the late 50's you made a demand from us. You said expand your mind and think We've got to fight the Russians because there's a technological race on. We capitulated and we expanded our minds. Now you've got a lot of people who can think; you've got a lot of people who have been through a system who have learned how to think. Now we're saying we want to use this knowledge with experience. You're saying just as old as you mentally, and if you give us time, and if you give us the room to experiment, to use this knowledge, you could have beautiful thing (quoted in Religious Education, 1970, 65, 104).

Additional support for the idea of an unprecedented generation gap is given by those who examine current art forms. The music, art, theatre, and literature of youth

provide clues to the themes of alienation (Reinchart, 1969; Friedenberg, 1969).

1.8 THE PRESENT PROBLEM AND ITS OBJECTIVES:

The researcher in the preceeding pages has attempted to clarify the important concepts used in this study, viz. Attitudes, values, beliefs, generation gap. For the present investigation the effect of the generation gap have been examined in context of some demographical variables.

The present investigation aims at studying the impact of generation gap, sex of the respondent and also the area of resilience on some social attitudes and beliefs.

To be more specific, the investigator has kept in mind the following objectives for his research work.

- i) To study the effect of generation gap on different social attitudes.
- ii) To study the sex differences in social attitudes, if any.
- iii) To study the input of residence of the respondent on social attitudes.
- iv) To study the interaction effect of all the independent variables on dependent variable.
- v) To offer some suggestions based on these findings.

Before describing actually the methodology and results of the present study, it is fair, first to review some of the relevant studies undertaken by others in this connection.

The next Chapter is devoted to such review.