

Ideological Beliefs About Family Practices: Contemporary Perspectives Among North Indian Families

Preeti G. Suppal

Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, USA

Jaipaul L. Roopnarine

Syracuse University, Syracuse, USA

Trace Buesig and Alan Bennett

Northwest Missouri State University, Maryville, USA

Ninety-two dual-wage and 103 single-wage Indian families with a preschool-age child residing in extended and nuclear households provided assessments regarding their beliefs about the division of household chores, financial responsibilities, childcare, and filial obligations. Analysis focused on possible differences in belief structures that may be attributed to the gender of the parent, family structural living arrangement, and maternal employment outside of the home. Husbands and wives did not differ in ideological beliefs on any of the components assessed, but differences did emerge as a function of family structural arrangements and whether or not the wife worked outside of the home. Data are discussed in terms of possible changes in ideological beliefs about family functions and practices and the broader socio-cultural factors operating within Indian society.

Quatre-vingt douze familles indiennes à double salaire et cent trois familles à salaire unique avec un enfant en âge préscolaire vivant dans des foyers étendus ou nucléaires, fournirent des estimations concernant leurs opinions sur la division des tâches ménagères, des responsabilités financières, des soins de l'enfant et des obligations filiales. L'analyse était basée sur les différences possibles dans les croyances selon le sexe du parent, l'arrangement structural de la vie familiale et l'emploi maternel hors du foyer. Maris et femmes ne diffèrent pas dans leurs croyances concernant les éléments évalués, mais les différences émergèrent à propos de la fonction des arrangements de la structure familiale et si la femme travaillait hors du foyer ou pas. Les données sont discutées en termes de possibles changements dans les croyances idéologiques concernant les fonctions et pratiques familiales, ainsi que les facteurs socioculturels plus larges opérant dans la société indienne.

INTRODUCTION

Over the last two decades there has been increasing interest in the possible influence of urbanization, increasing industrialization, and the influx of Western ideologies on the social and structural organization of the Indian family (Roopnarine & Hossain, 1992). Of particular concern to some researchers is whether the Indian family is gradually moving toward a nuclear structure, especially

in urban areas (see Augustine, 1982; Conklin, 1975; Kolenda, 1987). Others (e.g. Ramu, 1987; Roopnarine et al., 1992; Shukla, 1987) have assessed parental roles and responsibilities associated with dual-earner and single-earner lifestyles. A much ignored issue is whether ideological beliefs about the roles and responsibilities of men and women are changing in the urban centres of India where, allegedly, most of the familial social and structural reorganization

may be occurring. A primary goal of the present study was to examine Indian parents' beliefs regarding childcare, division of household chores, and financial and filial responsibilities/obligations in single-earner and dual-earner couples who live in nuclear and extended households in New Delhi, India.

With regard to Indian families, there is a need to examine changes in ideological beliefs about childcare responsibility and the division of household roles in different family structural arrangements as possible indicators of flexibility in adaptation to a modern and increasingly literate urban culture. An analysis of Indian men's and women's ideological beliefs, therefore, may provide insights into the "societal culture" (Lightfoot & Valsiner, 1992), and could be informative about how parents who have departed from the traditional single-earner extended household arrangement view relationships and roles within a family and community as they relate to structural and social organization, and specific obligations. Urban India reflects a greater diversity of ideological belief structures regarding gender roles, many of which are deeply rooted in religious and family traditions. Further, as has been delineated by several psychologists (Goodnow & Collins, 1990; McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 1985; Sigel, 1985; Wertsch, Minick, & Arns, 1984), adults' belief systems are driving forces behind the cognitive structuring of certain actions and practices in parenting and spousal roles. For example, research has demonstrated links between parental beliefs and child outcomes (McGillicuddy-De Lisi, 1985) and between acculturation and beliefs about child development (Gutierrez & Sameroff, 1990). Potentially, then, changes in the structure and role functions in families in urban areas in India may be in conflict with traditional belief systems, since urban families have been described as making accommodative shifts toward modern life (see Roopnarine & Hossain, 1992). Such shifts and their implications for family social organization have been documented in other cultures (Palacios, 1992).

Within the Indian context, ideology has been characterized as being markedly androcentric and authoritarian (Dhruvarajan, 1990). The basic tenets of an androcentric ideology are: the wife occupies a subordinate and subservient role relative to the husband; the wife's status in the husband's family is marginal until she bears children; and financial decisions are made by men. Although Dhruvarajan's (1990) characterization

is based on the ideologies of a south Indian village, it seems to reflect the patriarchal nature of interpersonal relationships endemic to other regions of India (Chekki, 1988). This is largely so because the patriarchal nature of Indian society is steeped in historical injunctions laid out in the *Laws of Manu* and other Sanskrit texts such as the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, *Upanishads*, and *Puranas*. The legends, myths, and moral fables in these sacred texts are translated into the vernacular of different regions and frequently retold in the form of didactic tales, edifying poems, and in skits by village elders, grandparents, and priests. Messages emanating from these tales and poems highlight traditional male-female role dichotomy, complete loyalty to husband, filial obligation, respect accorded to men and older members of the society, and the interdependent nature of the community based on customs of caste and class (Kakar, 1981). They also point to penalties that may accrue due to failure to adhere to traditional beliefs. In short, the social values and beliefs exemplified in the old texts have demarcated cultural, societal, and religious norms for the people of India for centuries and most of the population appear to hold on to them.

Recent research (e.g. Ramu, 1987; Roopnarine et al., 1990, 1992; Roopnarine, Lu, & Ahmeduz-zaman, 1989) has confirmed that the responsibility for childcare still rests primarily with the mother; she is responsible for bathing/cleaning, dressing, feeding/nursing, and generally caring for the child. For the most part, men assume an ancillary role in childcare (Ramu, 1987). Again this may be so because of the emphasis placed on "mother" goddesses (e.g. *Durga*, *Kali*, *Lakshmi*, *Saraswati*) and the glorification of Indian motherhood (Kakar, 1981), and because of Indian men's reluctance to embrace caregiving. Relatedly, women perform almost all the household tasks pertaining to cooking, cleaning, sweeping, and washing. Not surprisingly, in numerous traditional Indian households men would have rarely crossed the threshold of the *rasoi* (kitchen) in their lifetime (Shukla, 1987). The emphasis for men is on providing for the family financially. Failure to do so results in considerable dishonour to the man as well as his family. Surveys conducted on educated middle-class Indians reveal (Rao & Rao, 1988, p. 115) that "supporting family members and being the head of the family" are the chief roles expected of men.

Inextricably tied to the patriarchal organization of Indian families is the notion of filial loyalty. In

Indian families men are viewed within the framework of *Shravan Kumar*, a devoted son who cares for his ageing parents (Kakar, 1981; Parmar, 1987). In other words, there is strong allegiance of men to their father's family, strong ties between brothers, and the eldest son is frequently responsible for his aged or retired parents. It is the son who carries forward his father's name as well as honour and position in society, and who is called upon to fulfil religious sacraments. Women are expected to display complete loyalty (*pativrata*) to their husbands. On marriage, a woman transfers her loyalty to her husband's family and her honour (*izzat*) from there on is interwoven with that of her husband and his family.

Taking into consideration that the division of household responsibilities and childcare has been shown to have implications for the personal well-being and mental health of women (Yogev & Brett, 1985; Ross, Mirowsky, & Huber, 1983), the possible connection between ideological beliefs and behavioural action (Sigel, 1985) as they relate to roles and responsibilities and the socialization of other members of the society, and acknowledging the greater acceptance of maternal employment and smaller family units in the urban areas of India, the present study sought to assess whether ideological beliefs regarding childcare, household work, and financial and filial responsibilities differed by the gender of the parent, by whether the wife is employed outside of the home or not, and by whether husbands and wives lived in nuclear or extended households.

METHODS

Subjects

The sample for the present study comprised of 195 husband-wife pairs with a preschool-age child. The families resided in Old Delhi (University area), West Delhi (Karol Bagh, Pusa Institute, Patel Nagar), South Delhi (Chankyapuri, Sarojini Nagar, Lajpat Nagar), South-West Delhi (Vasant Vihar), East Delhi (Nizammudin, Jangpura, Ashram), and Central Delhi (Pandara Road), India. Of these, 92 were dual-wage families in which both husband and wife worked full-time outside of the home. Among the dual-wage families, 50 lived in extended households and 42 lived in nuclear units. The mean age of fathers in dual-wage extended households was 34.3 years ($SD = 3.6$ years) and

for mothers 30.6 years ($SD = 3.2$ years). Over 94% of mothers and fathers in dual-wage extended families possessed a Bachelor's degree. On average fathers were employed for about 8 years ($SD = 3.96$) and mothers about 6.1 years ($SD = 2.18$). The average monthly income of dual-wage fathers was 4900 rupees (approximately \$160) and for mothers 3200 rupees (approximately \$108). The husbands and wives were married an average of 6.1 years ($SD = 2.18$).

In the dual-wage nuclear families, the mean age of fathers was 35.1 years ($SD = 4.0$) and that of mothers was 31.97 years ($SD = 3.3$). Ninety-nine percent of mothers and 98% of fathers had an undergraduate degree. The average monthly income of husbands in dual-wage nuclear families was 4800 rupees (\$160) and for wives was 3000 rupees (\$100) per month. Men were employed for an average of 9.5 years ($SD = 5.3$) and women 7.6 years ($SD = 5.0$). The mean number of years husbands and wives were married was 6.6 ($SD = 2.6$).

Among single-wage families, 51 lived in nuclear households and 52 lived in extended households. In single-wage nuclear families, the mean age of husbands was 35.2 years ($SD = 4.3$), and that of wives 29.8 years ($SD = 3.6$). Ninety-five percent of women and 99% of men had a Bachelor's degree. The mean monthly income for husbands in single-wage nuclear households was 4800 rupees (\$160). They were employed for an average of 9 years ($SD = 5.9$). The average number of years husbands and wives were married was 6.7 ($SD = 2.2$).

In single-wage extended households, the mean age of husbands was 34.4 years ($SD = 4.2$) and wives 31.9 years ($SD = 4.2$). Ninety-three percent of the mothers and 95% of the fathers had an undergraduate degree. The mean monthly income of husbands in single-wage extended families was 5000 rupees (\$165), and the mean number of years they were employed was 8.6 years ($SD = 5.9$). In a number of these families there was often another earning member apart from the husband. It was usually the husband's father or brother. The mean number of years husbands and wives were married was 6.4 ($SD = 2.4$).

All families were required to complete an item that requested information on age, gender, occupation, household composition, educational level, and so on. Families had to meet specific requirements regarding education, income, educational

attainment, age of child, and family structure. Nuclear families consisted of husbands and wives and their immediate offspring living in a separate dwelling from any other blood relative. Families comprising of the husband, wife, their children, and any additional relative from the husband's or wife's side who were living in the same household were categorized as extended.

Taken together, husbands were employed in government agencies as civil servants, teachers, secretaries, accountants, doctors, lawyers, engineers, architects, and in their own businesses. Wives were employed as doctors, lawyers, engineers, architects, social workers, teachers, executives, and accountants. Although a lucrative profession, doctors and lawyers in India do not earn as much as do their peers in the USA. Often, Indian families in these professions are categorized as middle- or upper-middle class.

Husbands' and wives' responses obtained from the demographic questionnaire revealed that a majority of the sample (75%) were married via an arranged marriage in which the parents selected a suitable match for their adult child. In all these cases husbands and wives willingly consented to this form of marriage. In 2.5% of the sample, the marriages were arranged without the parents' permission or consent and in 2.5% of cases men and women chose their own spouse.

Data gathered from the questionnaire also indicated that most women (51.2%) worked outside of the home because of their desire to do so and 29.8% worked outside of the home to utilize their educational training.

We chose urban husband-wife pairs who were educated and economically stable because we reasoned that they are the ones who are more likely to come into contact with Western ideologies and who are at the heart of the economic changes occurring in India. In the absence of severe economic hardship, and given their educational and social status, they are more likely to experiment with modes of functioning that diverge from those inherent in the traditional family structure.

Child Characteristics

As noted earlier, couples were chosen if they had a preschool-age child. There were 23 boys and 27 girls in single-wage nuclear families; 22 boys and 31 girls in single-wage extended families; 13 boys and 29 girls in dual-wage nuclear families; and 16 boys and 31 girls in dual-wage

extended families. Of these, approximately 83% of the sample consisted of first-borns. Thus there were few families with second-born or third-born children.

Seventy-one percent of the children spent all day in a preschool or daycare, 10.5% went to daycare or preschool for half of the day, and 16% did not attend any form of preschool or daycare. Twenty-four percent of the children from extended homes did not attend any form of preschool, whereas only 8.15% of children from nuclear homes did not attend any form of preschool or daycare. The disparity can be explained by the fact that other members in extended families took care of children in their parents' absence. Maternal employment status did not seem to affect the child's enrolment in preschool or daycare.

Procedure and Scales

Prior to distribution of the questionnaire, 10 families and a research consultant from DANIDA (Danish International Development Agency, New Delhi) were asked to fill out the questionnaires and comment on the face validity and cultural appropriateness of the items. Based on their suggestions, minor changes were incorporated in the scales. The questionnaire was also translated into Hindi by a professional English-to-Hindi translator working at the National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD) in New Delhi. Subsequently, two other people, a research scholar at NIPCCD and a preschool teacher, were asked to convert the items from Hindi to English in order to ensure that no shift in meaning had occurred.

Families who met the criteria for selection were identified and recruited mainly through their children's preschool programmes in the city of New Delhi. Other families were contacted through government offices (e.g. NIPCCD, Indian Agricultural Research Institute [IARI], and Indian Institute of Technology [IIT]) and by word of mouth. Each family was provided with a cover letter briefly describing the purpose of the study and two copies of the questionnaires. The cover letter indicated that the study's main goal was to tap into "how husbands and wives view their roles within their families." Each child whose parent participated in the study was given an educational book. Books were also donated to preschools from which children were selected.

Three hundred and fifteen parents returned the completed questionnaires. Of these, 120 forms were discarded as they contained incomplete or missing data; questionnaires from 195 families were used. Parents were given a choice to complete the questionnaire in Hindi or English. Twenty of these were completed in Hindi; the rest were done in English. Although it is not clear to us why so many questionnaires were returned with incomplete information, we suspect that this may be due in part to the notion that social science research of this nature is not a common practice in India. Nonetheless, because of the diverse areas of the city of New Delhi sampled, our participants are likely to represent the urban educated husband-wife pairs we attempted to include in our study.

Description of the Family Ideology Scale (FIS)

The Family Ideology Scale was developed to assess the ideological beliefs of Indian mothers and fathers regarding specific roles and responsibilities. The questions on the scale are based on existing notions of the roles of men and women, husbands and wives, and sons and daughters in Indian society. The scale is a measure of a person's orientation vis-à-vis a democratic or authoritarian perspective of individual and family relations. The format of this scale was patterned after the *Traditional Family Ideology Scale* developed by Levinson and Huffman (1955). However, the scale used in the current study is markedly different in the content sampled.

This Likert-type scale contains 16 items which are scored from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. The psychological constructs measured by the scale are the attitudes of men and women towards (a) *childrearing* (e.g. "Fathers should be primarily responsible for disciplining children"); (2) *division of household chores* (e.g. "It is all right for husbands to cook, wash dishes, or clean the house"); (3) *financial responsibilities* (e.g. "It is the primary duty of the man to financially support and take care of the family"); (4) *filial obligations* (e.g. "It is the son's duty to look after his parents in their old age"). Each construct is made up of four items. A score on the lower end of the continuum would indicate that a person is more inclined to have a democratic orientation whereas a high score would indicate that a person has a tendency toward a traditional and authoritarian ideological orientation.

RESULTS

Reliability and Interrelationships Between Components

As noted earlier, several professionals in India examined the scale to determine its face and cultural validity. From their assessments and our perusal of the literature on general Indian cultural beliefs and practices, we decided that the scale was appropriate for use in the Indian context. Moreover, the questionnaire items were general enough so as not to cause confusion among participants.

Before we conducted any analysis on the four components of the scale, we assessed whether it showed good internal consistency. Split-half reliability estimates were conducted for the entire scale. The Spearman-Brown coefficient for the entire scale was 0.73. The different components on the scale also showed good internal consistency: Spearman-Brown coefficients were as follows: childcare, $r = 0.87$; division of household chores, $r = 0.89$; financial responsibilities, $r = 0.82$; and filial obligations $r = 0.85$. Further, because we were interested in determining how different components of the scale hang together, Pearson correlations were computed to determine the interrelationships among the four components for each subgroup separately. Coefficients ranged as follows: for wives in dual-earner nuclear families, from $r = 0.26$ to $r = 0.60$; for wives in single-earner nuclear families, from $r = 0.22$ to $r = 0.43$; for wives in dual-earner extended families, from $r = 0.33$ to $r = 0.63$; for wives in single-earner extended families, from $r = 0.38$ to $r = 0.59$; for husbands in dual-earner nuclear families, from $r = 0.33$ to $r = 0.62$; for husbands in single-earner nuclear families, from $r = 0.29$ to $r = 0.57$; for husbands in dual-earner extended families, from $r = 0.23$ to $r = 0.46$; and for husbands in single-earner extended families, from $r = 0.38$ to $r = 0.59$.

Differences in Family Ideology by Gender of Parent, Maternal Employment Status, and Family Structure

A 2 (Husband, Wife) \times 2 (Maternal Employment Status) \times 2 (Family Structure: Nuclear, Extended) multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) using Wilks's Lambda criterion

DISCUSSION

computed on the means listed in Table 1 revealed a significant MANOVA main effect for maternal employment status [$F(4, 360) = 4.55, P = 0.0013$, Wilks's Lambda = 0.95]. There were significant maternal employment status univariate effects for childrearing [$F(1, 364) = 9.02, P = 0.01$], division of household chores [$F(1, 364) = 15.66, P = 0.0001$], financial responsibilities [$F(1, 364) = 4.60, P = 0.03$], and filial obligations [$F(1, 364) = 9.35, P = 0.002$]. In all cases, families in which wives were not employed outside of the home held more traditional beliefs regarding the assumption of these responsibilities than those in which wives were employed outside of the home. That is, single-wage families were more likely to rate childcare and domestic activities as the responsibility of women and filial and financial as the responsibility of men than were families in which both spouses worked outside of the home (see Table 1).

The MANOVA main effect for family structure was also significant [$F(4, 361) = 7.68, P = 0.0001$; Wilks's Lambda = 0.92]. The only significant univariate family structure effect showed that husbands and wives residing in an extended family structure were more likely to view filial obligations in traditional gender-differentiated terms than their counterparts in nuclear households [$F(1, 364) = 23.10, P = 0.0001$].

The MANOVA main effect for Husband/Wife was not significant and there were no significant interaction effects.

As noted earlier, India has been steadily transforming its economy into an industrialized one. Along with industrialization, there are hints that families in urban settings are opting to live in nuclear as opposed to extended households, often mimicking Western lifestyles (Roopnarine & Hossain, 1992). In addition, an increasing number of married women with young children are entering the paid labour force (see Swaminathan, 1985). The degree to which these factors influence ideological beliefs about the division of household responsibilities and filial obligations remains nebulous. Also, attempts at understanding changes in family structural and social organization in India are often confounded by issues that are tied to caste and social class, regional and linguistic differences, and religious and metaphysical belief systems that vary tremendously across the different regions of India (see Augustine, 1982; Conklin, 1975; Kakar, 1981; Kolenda, 1987; Ramu, 1987). In our attempt to address ideological beliefs among Indian families, we controlled for caste, socioeconomic differences, and regional differences that have plagued previous studies.

The analysis of parental responses on the family ideology scale revealed some interpretable findings. Foremost, there were no significant differences between men's and women's ideological orientations on issues relating to childcare,

TABLE 1
Means (Standard Deviations) for Responses on the Four Components for the Different Family Configurations

	Nuclear				Extended			
	Dual-Earner		Single-Earner		Dual-Earner		Single-Earner	
	W	H	W	H	W	H	W	H
Childcare Responsibility	9.30 (2.71)	9.09 (2.73)	10.24 (2.36)	10.04 (2.53)	9.72 (2.26)	9.55 (2.45)	10.14 (1.95)	10.25 (2.33)
Financial Responsibility	10.19 (2.30)	11.17 (2.37)	11.10 (2.42)	11.14 (3.11)	10.35 (2.51)	10.41 (2.17)	10.74 (2.26)	11.43 (2.50)
Filial Obligations	8.77 (2.35)	9.02 (2.28)	9.51 (2.34)	9.79 (2.34)	9.83 (2.28)	10.25 (2.24)	10.71 (2.16)	10.86 (2.29)
Household Chores	9.34 (2.56)	9.70 (2.73)	10.66 (2.72)	10.32 (2.93)	9.72 (2.79)	9.91 (3.16)	11.16 (2.35)	11.15 (2.87)

household chores, financial responsibilities, or filial obligations. Husbands and wives seem to view the respective roles of men and women in the Indian family quite similarly. Although we do not know if these beliefs vary significantly from those held at different time periods during this century, the data suggest that both genders seem quite aware of their respective role obligations along traditional lines. Whether they are strictly imposed and monitored in urban areas cannot be answered from these data.

Despite the fact that husbands and wives did not differ significantly in their responses on the four components of the scale, the data show that the type of residence does influence a person's ideology. Notably, couples in extended households had higher scores on filial obligation items than those in nuclear households, perhaps suggesting more adherence to traditional beliefs on their part. This can be explained, to some degree, by two factors. First, in nuclear homes parental ideologies are less likely to be influenced by other members, as would be the case in extended households (which is often comprised of father, mother, children, and father's or mother's parents, and/or other relatives). In nuclear households, husbands and wives have relative freedom to develop and exercise their own opinions and ideologies, a formidable task in extended settings. Second, husbands and wives in nuclear homes have the ability to develop and enact more non-traditional ideologies, options which may not be available or exercised in the joint family situation. Researchers have documented the psychological consequence of residing in joint families on the development of individual personalities. Quite often, demands placed on the need for stability, integrity, cooperation, and conformity by extended members can severely impinge on the development of independent beliefs (Bisht & Sinha, 1981; Mines, 1988).

Perhaps the most striking findings of the study are those that deal with the impact of maternal employment status on ideological beliefs. Families in which the wife was not employed outside the home full-time had higher mean scores on all four components of the scale than did families in which the wife worked outside of the home. This was true irrespective of type of family residence (i.e. nuclear or extended residence). In some investigations of Indian families (e.g. Shukla, 1987) it was found that husbands and wives in dual-earner situations expressed more egalitarianism in the division of roles when compared with

those in single-wage households. But other work (Ramu, 1987) has failed to find differences in either perception or performance of the husband's role as a function of maternal employment status.

One plausible explanation for our findings regarding the influence of maternal employment status on family ideology could be interwoven in the perspective that family members are forced to change their orientations regarding gender roles as wives become more viable economic partners. Remember that most of the wives in our sample worked outside of the home because of a personal desire to do so and to utilize their educational training. Alternatively, in dual-wage households husbands may have been more amenable to their wives working outside the home to begin with. Research on Euro-American and European samples has emphasized the mediating effect of maternal employment in diminishing sex-role traditionalism and traditionalistic ideology (Baruch & Barnett, 1986; Hoffman, 1989). However, there have been minor changes, if any, in the assumption of household roles in societies organized around filial piety. Women in India continue to perform most household tasks irrespective of employment status. It is a domain of responsibility that is apparently most resistant to change among Indian families (Ramu, 1987).

Although this study serves to illustrate differences in family ideologies due to family structure and maternal employment status, which could be interpreted as indicative of shifts away from strictly traditional role perceptions, it is important to caution that situational pressures preventing direct expression of ideological convictions, inner conflicts which may inhibit action or prevent the formation of an integrated ideology, and contradictions and ambiguities in the ideology itself may have all influenced the data gathered (Levinson & Huffman, 1955; see also Sigel, 1985). Because Indian society continues to emphasize its kin and family affiliation, individual ideologies tend to be circumscribed by existing societal and familial situations. Moreover, the concept of autonomy is minimized among Indians (Mines, 1988). Actions are frequently performed for the welfare of the group or family rather than an individual. Consequently, individual ideologies are often reflective of group sentiments in India. It is also important to mention that we deliberately solicited the responses of middle- and upper-middle income families. All of the parents in our sample were well-educated and

thus do not represent a majority of the Indians who live in villages. Additional work is needed in order to gauge to what degree the ideologies of rural Indians differ from those of individuals in urban areas. Further investigations in this direction would strengthen our understanding of and provide valuable insights into the impact of the changing socio-political and economic organization of Indian society on spousal/family roles and the socialization of children.

CONCLUSION

Two distinct issues can be highlighted from these data. First, husbands and wives in extended households were more likely to view filial obligations along cultural lines than were those in nuclear households. This could be one reason why they currently reside in extended households; they are abiding by cultural practices that are historically entrenched (see Kakar, 1981). The second issue ties into the potential impact of maternal employment status on ideological beliefs regarding husband-wife roles. Clearly, families in which wives were not employed outside of the home had significantly higher scores on all four components of the scale used in this study than had those in which wives worked outside of the home. Even if this is signalling that ideologies regarding husband-wife roles may be changing a little, observational and survey data (e.g. Ramu, 1987; Roopnarine et al., 1990) indicate that the division of childcare and household labour remain largely bifurcated.

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