

**Family and its Changing Perceptions Amongst South Asian Muslims Living  
in London Since 1960**

**By**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The present study deals with the changing perceptions about family as a social unit amongst South Asian Muslims living in London since 1960. It begins with a discussion of the background of South Asian Muslims and the history of Muslims immigrants in Britain in the early years of 1960. The ideal structure of the family as the basic unit of human society in the Islamic notion is also explained in the light of these changing perceptions.

A qualitative method has been selected for this study. Three families and nine participants were interviewed for this research. Three participants were selected from each family as the representing members of three different generations. The study explores the relationships between individuals of the three generations. The research also found that the primary reason behind the differences of opinions is cultural, for the Islamic point of view most of them agree on family gnomes. There is a gap found in generations, this gap extended gradually and there is a big gap between first and third generation.

The key finding of the research is that there is a gap in the relationship amongst the three generations due to the differences of opinions and perceptions. The differences are not only an outcome but reflect the growing cultural distancing of the East and the West. There is a cultural evolution found in the South Asian Muslims, which has affected the third generation of immigrant families most vastly. As a result, a new culture is emerging in Britain, which could be called the 'British Muslim Culture', which is diverse in nature and contains traces of both Eastern and Western cultures.

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## **Dedications**

To my late mother Mrs Mubarak Zaidi who struggled all her life for women's education in Pakistan.

To my late father Mr Masood Zaidi who was educated in the UK and lived in London from 1960 -67 and instilled in me the value of education.

To my uncle Dr. Mahmood –A- Zaidi who inspires me to go higher in education.

To my wife and children who are my great inspiration and their support was invaluable throughout this research.

## **DECLARATION**

I declare that the work in this thesis is carried out in accordance with the regulation of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of this thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University

Signed

Date 18<sup>th</sup> August 2016

## GLOSSARY

<i>Aqad or nikkah</i>	= Marriage Contract
<i>Biradari</i>	= Clan / Tribe
<i>Fard</i>	= Single Person
<i>Hajj</i>	= Pilgrimage in Makah to perform this prayers.
<i>Hijab</i>	= Head Scarf
<i>Haram</i>	= Prohibited in Islam
<i>Izzat</i>	= Respect
<i>Mehrams</i>	= Marriage is not allowed between them
<i>Sunnah</i>	= Procedure according to Muhammad PBUH
<i>Sehri</i>	= Meal before starting the Fast
<i>Iftar</i>	= Meal at the time of breaking Fast

## **CHAPTER 1: Context of the Research**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This study investigates how the first generation of Muslims in London perceived family and whether that perception holds any validity, or differs substantially, amongst the second and third generations today. Chapter one has three sections; Background, research methodology and introduction of chapters. The first section provides background and introduction to the thesis, whereas the second section will discuss aims and objectives, research questions, context, methodology, procedures for sampling, data collection, and ethics. The third section will introduce the study.

The study of previous literature about the south Asian migrants; their social issues amongst generations revealed the topic. I am also from the same background therefore it increased my interest and curiosity to find out the relationships among the generations. Further, it was easy for me to collect the data from them.

The background of research will conceptualize the reader about the participants and their environment of this study. The first chapter then moves on to the research methodology and the research methods. The researcher selects interpretivism as the philosophical ground, which is dependent on human behaviours. This philosophy characterizes how an individual interprets the social world. The researcher also adopts an inductive method due to its capacity to build a theory. This section describes the choices of research methods and the time scale required to carry out this research. Research methods carry the plan and design for conducting interviews and collecting data. The researcher has also taken account of the ethical along with juridical considerations. Nine interviews were conducted for this research within three families; the first family belonged to Pakistani-British lineage, the second family originated from Bangladesh and the third family had migrated from India. Three members were selected from each family, one from each of the three generations, for interview.

## **1.2 Background**

The research covers the age group of the three generations from 18 to 90 years living in London. The mass migration to Britain of India, Pakistanis that includes former East Pakistanis (Bangladeshis) had their origin. In this research the first generation of Muslims are those who have arrived in 1960s. They arrived to fill the post War labour market in the UK. Their first generations had migrated into Britain, in their mature ages from Pakistan, Bangladesh, or India. The second generation of Pakistanis and Indians were still in their childhood and hadn't attained maturity yet, whereas the second generation of Bangladeshis were born in England. All of the third generation was born in England. The first generation of each migrated family encountered problems in finding compatible partners for their children in the UK. Thus, they brought their children's spouses from the counties of origins in order to secure their culture in the West. Hence, their spouses were quite mature, when they migrated; therefore they followed the culture of the first generation. This led to a conflict of thoughts between their children and their spouses; as well as their parents. Consequently, the second generation gradually drifted from their elders, in their thoughts and opinions. The first generation was stranger in London. They spent a lot of time integrating into the British society. Their financial problems overshadowed all of their other issues related to living in a new society. Their own culture and financial issues prevented them from fitting into the British society. The second generation was less involved with problems that prevented the first generation from blending into the society. The second generations were still quite young when they arrived in London so they didn't face much difficulty integrating into the society. They were educated in British Schools, which helped them in integrating in the British culture. However, the second generation was still influenced by the South Asian cultural influence through their interaction with their parents and other relatives but having been exposed to the local British culture, they were able to exhibit traces of both of these cultures. The third generation was deep into the British culture and celebrated their traditions. For example, the first generation had never celebrated bonfire or Pancake Day. The second generation celebrated these events only in schools and offices. The third generation enjoyed such parties at homes as well as in their society.

Although born into a Muslim household, the first generation of South Asians Muslims cannot be considered as devout practicing Muslims. As this study explored through the interview of the first generation in Bangladeshi family, the grandmother did not wear the Islamic head dress, *hijab*, whereas the third generation of her family, her granddaughter chose to observe the *hijab* at her own will. Most of the first generations are confused between Islam and culture; they just want to protect their customs, rituals, and culture, rather than Islam.

As explained above, nine people of three different Muslim families were interviewed. Amongst all the generations of the participants, the researcher found a communication gap in their thoughts and opinions, regarding family life, but not in their faith.

The economic factors immensely affected the first generation. They were unable to handle adequately the tremendous financial pressures of living in London and the broader culture changes sweeping across England, Europe and indeed the rest of the world affected their beliefs, morals, and ethics. Men working in fields and women who were previously busy in household chores were drawn from their homes to the factories. This drastic change shattered men's control over their families, including Muslim families.

“In the 1960s, the institutional structures of cultural traditionalism started to crumble in Britain: the ending of the worst excesses of moral censorship (notably after the 1960 trial of Lady Chatterley's Lover and the ending in 1968 of the Lord Chamberlain's control over British theatre); the legalisation of abortion (1967) and homosexuality (1967), and the granting of easier divorce (1969); the emergence of the women's liberation movement, especially from 1968; the flourishing of youth culture centred on popular music (especially after the emergence of the Beatles in late (1962) and incorporating a range of cultural pursuits and identities (ranging from the widespread use of drugs to the fashion revolution) and the appearance of student rebellion (notably between 1968 and the early 1970.” (Brown 2001)

The women were out of homes for work, whereas the children had a higher demand in the industry than men, as they were easy to manipulate and control. They advertised vacancies outside their industry for women and children to work with tools, wheels, and machines. The evolution of women's status marked the beginning of a new era; it represented the distinct rise in women's social status. They were not dependent on men for their subsistence; they worked hard and struggled to achieve an equal status in society as well as for gaining the same wages as men, in the industry. As a result, the whole structure of the society revolutionized the world; the industrialized women imitated men in their manners, clothing and jobs.

South Asians were encountering an entirely contrasted culture in London compared to the one they were brought-up in. They assumed that their faith is losing its control in their hearts, just as the British society was moving away from Christianity. The role of religion was weakening in the society in the name of women liberation. The development of legislations in family matters, such as the legalisation of abortion (1967) and homosexuality (1967), and the granting of easier divorce (1969); were the driving force in the development of the current psyche of South Asians Muslims. The South Asian Muslims' first generation was deeply concerned due to the prevailing cultural change in the 1960s; therefore they became more protective of their faith and culture to secure their families from the harmful cultural elements of the western society.

This contrasting culture forced South Asian Muslims to protect their culture in London. The first generations of South Asians Muslims were largely confused between their cultural and religious values. Their confusion heightened when the popular cultural shift of 1960s replaced their family standards with the new values derived from the popular and widely celebrated culture. They were unable to distinguish between the religious obligations and cultural responsibilities of a Muslim family within a society.

### **1.2.1 Concept of Family among South Asian Muslims in London**

Marriage is the cornerstone of the family system in Islam. Islam provides a comprehensive framework for all matters of life from birth to death. The first and the most basic institution for every mankind where they learn about life is their home and undoubtedly play an

important role in people's life. It develops an individual's ability to learn and understand the big world around him/her. The family thus provides a foundation to the mankind for all of its socio-economic and cultural upbringing whereby parents, as the pillars of the family, selflessly serve, develop, nurture and educate the future generations to become productive members of the society. According to Al-ati, "The term family will be used to designate a special kind of structure whose principles are related to one another through blood ties and/or marital relationships, and whose relatedness is of such a nature as to entail (mutual expectations) that are prescribed by religion, reinforced by law, and internalized by the individual (AL-Ati, 1995, p.31).

Largely in a Muslim family, a father provides the social and economic security to his family, which motivates him to dedicate himself towards his responsibilities as being the head of the family. Similarly the role of a woman is to entirely devote herself to her family; she is the centre of entire household. Marriage, from an Islamic perspective, is not only for the continuation of the human race; it is a source of increasing the sense of responsibility in both spouses and develops the motivation to sacrifice for the sake of their family.

The Quran states that "and among His signs is this, that He created for you wives from among yourself, that you may find repose in them, and He has put between you affection and mercy. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who reflect."(Ar-Rum 30 : 21). Similarly in one place Muhammad (Peace be upon him) said:

"Marriage is part of my *sunnah*, whoever runs away from my path is not from amongst us." (Ibn Majah)

The above Hadith implies that marriage has been divinely created to start a family life on earth. In the Islamic code, a proper word for marriage in Arabic is *Aqad* or *Nikkah* meaning a proper social marriage contract. Although, divorce is allowed in Islam if marriage fails, but it is the most despised by God. Remarriage is not only allowed but also encouraged in Islam. It is not humiliating to marry a widow or divorced women, it is actually considered sacred in the

society. “This is a natural result of the fact that the mutual expectations of the family members are not established only by familial relationship, but also by the membership in a larger social system which derives from a common religious brotherhood.”(AL-Ati, 1995, p.33)

The structure of the family system in Islam is divided into three groups. The first group consists of the spouses (husband and wife), children, parents, grandparents, grandchildren and servants. The servants / helpers who live with the family are regarded as family members; they are fed, clothed, and treated respectfully like other family members. (However, this is non-existent in South Asian Muslims in the UK). The second group consists of immediate relatives who are allowed to move freely into the family without restrictions. They are the *mehrams*: marriages are forbidden amongst them. They are the father's sisters and brothers, mother's sisters and brothers, brother's daughters and sons, sister's daughters and sons, mother in law, father in law, wife's children (from previous marriage), husband children (from previous marriage), son's wife, stepmother and stepfather. The third group consists of all other relations not mentioned above. Marriages are allowed with the third group and they are also required to observe by the *hijab*.

A man, as a head of the family leads a Muslim family. Normally, the eldest member of the family takes this place; in this case it could be any one, man or woman. The man takes care of all socio-economic needs of the family. Similarly, the women are responsible for the internal matters of the family and they take care of home management, and internal needs of the family. This forms a balanced way to maintain the rights and the responsibilities within the family. The Quran Says:

“Men are those who support the women, since God has given some persons advantages over others, and because they spend their wealth (on them). ” (An-Nisaa 4: 34)

“Women have the same (rights in relation to husband) as is expected in all decency from them; while man stands a step above them, God is mighty wise. ” (Al-Baqara 2: 228)

God has assigned man as a head of the family. There is equality between both of the spouses in terms of their rights, whereas in case of responsibilities, the men have an additional one, which is to manage and lead the family.

The establishment of family has one main reason, which is the survival of the human race. Nature has developed two different sexes; they are distinctive in their psychology and physiology and paired to one another. The procreation and reproduction demands a proper structured institution for all types of growth. A family in Islam is a cradle of human culture and civilisation. Marriage is supposed to be a firm and long lasting relationship, effective with love and kindness. The husband and wife are expected to maintain a sustained life together and perform their responsibilities in the society.

About one third of the teachings of the Quran are related to the family and its proper regulations. A proper Islamic family provides full rights and obligations to everyone in the family from the youngest child to the eldest member. This leads to the attitudes and behaviours, from individuals within an ideal Muslim society. A marriage provides protection to the couple in the society; this partnership produces love, sympathy, mutual confidence, mercy, sacrifice, consolation and support to the whole family. It especially supports the development of the character of children during their upbringing phase. Characteristics such as self-sacrifice, love, sympathy, tolerance and self-confidence are infused in their personality. This is a full time job that can only be completed within the family and all family members contribute towards it. The prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) said that the home is the best place in the world, and Quran says:

“And (One) of his signs is that He created for you, of yourself, spouses, so that you may console yourself with them (and find rest and tranquillity in them). He has set between you love and mercy.” (Ar-Rum 30 : 21).

In Islam, husband has been assigned to provide maintenance for the family even if his wife is rich. After spending on himself and his family, the man has responsibility of spending his money on other family members especially towards his parents, and then other relatives; the

law of inheritance in the Quran helps to set priorities amongst the relations. There are a lot of rights of uncles and aunties from both mother's and father's side, orphans in the family are a priority from God to merge them into the family and treat them like your own children. Similarly, the old members of a family; parents and grandparents are treated with kindness, honour and respect. The prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said "When God endows you with prosperity spend first on yourself and your family. "

Islam guides humans according to their nature, and in respect of the social role of family, Islam approves of polygamy in some cases, to avoid the consequences of forced monogamy (which is largely the case amongst South Asian Muslims) as moral, physical, emotional, social conditions may lead the man towards the disaster of sin. There may be an accumulated social situation where if the number of women increases compared to men, then polygamy is the only way to protect the family system and society. There were many occasions in the past when such a situation arose after the war. Similarly, in order to support orphans along with their mothers, marriage is the best way to provide them with love and kindness within a family in a respectable manner.

In **conclusion**, marriage is to be a cause for developing cohesion between different groups of society .It is not only the partnership of two individuals; it is the merging of two societies. The Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) said: "Matrimonial alliances (between two families or tribes) increase friendship more than anything else. " (Mishkat)

Islam teaches us to stay as a family unit, where grandparents, parents and children live together with love and care for each other. In such a family system there is respect for elders and love for young ones. Such families help the society towards a better cultural and social life. This is by and large, the expectation of the first generation of South Asian Muslims living in London from the younger generations.

## **1.3 Research Methodology**

### **1.3.1 Research philosophy**

In this section, the researcher describes the methodology employed to produce the relevant data for this research. The investigator also outlines the reasons for choosing a semi-structured interview as a method of data collection.

Methodological choices are referred to as philosophical choices whereas philosophy means different 'ways of seeing the world' (Cohen, 2007). For the real world research, social scientists prefer the interpretative ground for their research. "The epistemological and ontological orientation of the study with Interpretivism as its basis, stress upon understanding how individuals interpret their social world whereas constructionism and social phenomena are produced through interaction of social actors and is constantly shifting" (Bryman, 2004).

Interpretative grounds are used when the nature of reality is socially constructed and where the goals of research are based upon understanding and the focus of the research is specifically on a group or matter. Such study is relative to time, culture, context and values. Interpretivism is "Associated with the philosophical position of idealism and is used to group together diverse approaches, including social constructionism, phenomenology and hermeneutics; approaches that reject the objectivist view that meaning resides within the world independently of consciousness" (Collins, 2010, p.38).

A researcher can be surprised in such a study due to the contrasting interpretations of the participants, because all of them have different perceptions and point of view over a single issue. "As the researchers, we need to be aware of the philosophical commitments we make through our choice of research strategy since this has a significant impact not only on what we do but on our understanding of what it is that we are investigating". (Johnson and Clark 2006). Thus, the researcher used Interpretivism methodology as the grounds of this study which is entirely dependent on human behaviours. The researcher surprised twice during this study for contrast opinion and different angle of view during interviews on same issue. Which is discussed in details in data and analysis chapter.

### **1.3.2 Research Questions**

1. How do the migrant generations since 1960 of South Asian Muslims in London define family?
2. What factors are responsible for the changing perceptions of family amongst South Asian Muslim families?

### **1.3.3 Research Objectives**

1. To examine the definitions, descriptions, and perceptions of family in Britain by the first, second and third generations of South Asian Muslims living in London.
2. To examine the factors responsible for the changing perceptions, if any, in South Asian Muslim families.

### **1.3.4 Aims of the Research:**

This study investigates how the first generation of Muslims in London perceived family and whether that perception holds any validity, or differs substantially, amongst the second and third generations today. This study explores the reasons and factors behind the generational gap, if any, amongst the members of the Muslim families. This study is essentially concerned with the religious and cultural practices in order to narrow down the focus of the research. The time limit within which this study must be completed, does not allow exploration beyond these two factors.

### **1.3.5 Research Methods**

In the real world research where humans are involved in discussions about their behaviours, there are two approaches for the study; inductive and deductive. Inductive approach of research is more conducive to developing a new theory. The researcher has adopted an inductive approach for this treatise because of its relevance to subject matter and aim of this research, which deals with cultural impact experienced by generations of South Asian Muslims following their migrating to Europe. This subject is quite new and there is a

particular dearth of suitable research on this subject from this specific angle. By adopting inductive approach, therefore, the researcher hopes that the study may lead to developing a new theory. Inductive research “involves a search for patterns from observation and the development of explanations – theories – for those patterns through series of hypotheses” (Bernard, 2011, p.7). This research approach supports open-ended qualitative analysis, which the present researcher has adopted.

In the real world research where the humans are involved in discussion about their behaviours, qualitative data is more appropriate to evaluate the thoughts, perceptions and values, where the participants are intricately and directly involved with the research subject. In keeping with the approbation of the larger qualitative researchers’ fraternity, the researcher uses qualitative data. Easterby-Smith *et al* (2008) concurs that the “researchers in this tradition are more likely to work with qualitative data and to use a variety of methods to collect these data in order to establish different views of phenomena.” (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2008). The inductive approach to research provides supportive features in developing a theory by focusing and understanding dynamics, robustness, emergence, resilience, focus on individual behavior and constructing alternative futures. In other words, inductive approach does not test any pre-determined theories in a study. This ethnographic study is based on learning from the real world experiences whereby resemblance, comparison, regularities and differences make up the basis of analysis. “A qualitative approach is also suitable for a study and is preferred over a quantitative one when little or no prior research has been conducted within an area.” (Creswell, 2003). Therefore, a qualitative approach is deemed more appropriate given the above context.

There are three choices for research methods; the mono method, mixed methods, and multi methods. In the mono method, the researcher can adopt only one method, either qualitative or quantitative whereas in the mixed methods, the researcher can blend both, qualitative and quantitative methods. Typically, in a mixed methods research model, the investigator splits the participants into two groups and then applies a suitable method on each group. In the case of multi methods research, the researcher uses both methods on every participant. This means

that each participant is involved in research twice; once in the qualitative interview and again in the quantitative data collection through close-ended questionnaires.

The present research employs the mono method which is a qualitative research method and entails detailed semi-structured interviews to investigate a real life agenda. Through interpersonal interactions (interviews), the appropriate knowledge and personal experience will be gathered from the research subjects (Limb 2001). The semi-structured interviews with nine participants from three different families, representing three generations from each family, will hopefully reveal their perceptions of South Asian Muslim families. Social world can only be understood from the standpoint of those who are part of the event being investigated (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Hence, in order to develop a high level of understanding of generational differences in their perceptions of the research subject, the researcher selects three families residing in the UK, and further selects three members from each of the three generations. The first of these generations entered into the United Kingdom in the early 1960s with the latest born in the UK in late 90s. In order to maintain high quality of data and to encourage rich personal experiences, a threshold age limit of 18 years was imposed upon the participants. The age limit of 18 years also complied with the University's Research Ethics guidelines. In qualitative research methods, the researcher collects the data in the narrative form before undertaking analysis. This research is a detailed study of the subject at hand comprising of key steps such as proper planning, designing of research questionnaires, piloting, testing, re-adjustment of the interview questionnaire, practical problems in data collections, transcription, and conversion of data in thematic write-ups – and therefore can be considered as a longitudinal study.

### **1.3.6 Design and planning of research**

As described earlier in this chapter, the ground philosophy of this research is interpretative; in this case, an interpretation of participants of a particular subject. In such studies, the researcher collects the data by qualitative research methods through semi-structured interviews with the participants. The present research is an exploratory research because “an exploratory study may not have an as rigorous methodology as used in conclusive studies, and sample sizes may be smaller but it helps to conduct an exploratory study as methodically as

possible, if it is going to be used for major decisions about the way we are going to conduct our next study” (Nargundkar, 2003, p.41).

The first questionnaire for the open-ended interviews was designed for a pilot study. “The typical qualitative strategy for this type of design, and a mini questionnaire to summaries and to aid the validity of the study.” (Bryman, 2004).

The first two interviews of pilot study were with a family, resident in East London. The duration of these interviews was three hours. This pilot interview highlighted the potential improvements than can be made for the actual research to be conducted more efficiently. For instance, it revealed that the interview questions were far too complex and required additional time and explanation for the participants to provide an accurate account of what was being asked. In addition, the questions were too broad and often deflected attention of the participants from the subject under investigation. An example of this was a simple question ‘what is your perception of family?’ The participant began by informing the researcher about his family and where he is from, he spoke about his parents and grand parents' perception and the culture they were taught in South Asia. The researcher made notes on it and used different questions to ensure the point is clear.

After completing the pilot interviews, the questionnaire was reviewed and re-adjusted with the help of the supervisor. Furthermore, another sub-questionnaire was designed solely for the benefit of the researcher to keep track of topics already covered as the interview progressed. In case a subject was not sufficiently discussed, the researcher could use the sub-questionnaire and ask an appropriate question to obtain the relevant data from the participant. The main questionnaire and sub-questionnaires are attached in the appendix.

### **1.3.7 The Data**

After piloting and re-adjustment of interview questionnaires and sub-questionnaires, the main phase of data collection began. Unfortunately, one of the participants of the first generation passed away before his formal interview. Therefore, the researcher started his primary

research with other families while looked for a new third family. It took approximately 6 months to complete the data collection phase of this research. The researcher had to visit each family three times, to cover all three generations according to their appointments and schedules.

Three families were selected for this study. Family one belongs to Pakistan, the second family belongs to Bangladesh and the third Family migrated from India. Three interviews were conducted in each of the family; one each from the first, second and third generation. Following the ethical policy of the university, all the names of the interviewees in this research are anonymised and instead, fictional names are used to protect their identity. First of all, the Pakistani family was interviewed. From the first generation in this family, Mr. Jamil came to Britain in 1967 at the age of 22. He is originally from Punjab, Pakistan, where he used to work in different companies as a boiler and heating technician. From the second generation of this family is Mrs Uzma who is 45 years old and a housewife. From the third generation of this family is Ms Aleezeh who is 20 years old a student by occupation. From the first generation of the Bangladeshi family is Salamama who came to the UK in 1965. She is a housewife and 68 years of age. From the second generation of this family is Mr Kalam. He was born in the UK 48 years ago and works as a security officer in a shopping Mall. From the third generation of this family is Shiza, who is 19 years old and studying at a University.

Lastly, from the first generation of the Indian family is Mr Shams who came to Britain in 1964. Through his career, he worked with several companies as a cashier and admin assistant up to his retirement. He is 75 years old now. From the second generation of this family is Mrs Saima, who is a housewife and 49 years old. From the third generation of this family is Mr Mubeen, who works in a company as a computer support technician and he is 22 years old.

The researcher did not find any problems when meeting the first generation they were always on time as they were retired and had a plenty of free time.

After collecting the data, it was organized through sorting, encoding and grouping in patterns. Then the data was analysed through comparisons of the statements among the three generations. In result the theme came up. The data and analysis chapter is written in the thematic format, which was derived from the interviews.

In this study, all ethical considerations were observed based on the University's research Ethics guidelines. Each participant was an adult and it had been explained to them that their actual names would not be mentioned in the thesis. "The person will be informed before the interview that his name will not be used in the report and it will be removed later" (Wisker 2001). The researcher acquired the consent of the participants prior to conducting interviews as part ethical research practice. The interviewees were therefore informed beforehand of the general purpose of the research study and that the interview was not compulsory, "which is defined as an informed approval" (Kvale, 1996).

#### **1.4 Organization Of Chapters**

The present study deals with the perception of family, as a basic unit of human society, amongst three generations of South Asian Muslims who have been residing in London since 1960. Before examining the results of the primary research, there are some preliminary chapters that explain the background of this study. The subsequent chapter provides perspectives on the notion of family in general; as well as in Islamic context. It covers substantial ground with regards to the influence on the sub-continental Muslims who migrated to the United Kingdom. This chapter has some strong statements based on literature reviews.

Introduction of first chapter is discussed in the beginning of this chapter so the brief introductions of coming chapters are as under.

In the second chapter, the discussion is restricted to the literature review. The first section of Literature review discusses about Muslims in Britain. Their history is discussed in general, but with a focus on the history of South Asian Muslims in Britain. This section summarises the demography of Muslims in Britain compared to the ones who migrated from South Asia into the UK, particularly to London. This demography of Muslims is based on the census 2011. The literature review chapter comprises of the analyses and debates based on the content of the preceding chapters which the researcher uses to create a conceptual framework for the study. The thesis is concerned with the experiences of migrant families and their cultures of origin and the ensuing cultural encounters and transactions they experience from

the time of their arrival in the United Kingdom. It is obvious that there are differences amongst the South Asian Muslims with regard to their educational, professional and economic backgrounds but the emphasis of the present study transcends these nuances to consider Muslims as one common community. The present research aims to investigate the extent to which the changing attitude within the second generation of South Asian Muslims has precipitated to the third generation and in particular how is it viewed by both of their older generations.

As discussed earlier, family in Islamic worldview provides a fundamental unit of social, emotional, economic and above all a moral framework as comprehensively described by Ahmed (1981). Three families, which are focus of this research, broadly fall under the classical extended family banner as their family values are derived from Islamic family value. Therefore, Ahmed's (1981) classification of Family from an Islamic perspective is the key framework against which the family structure within this research will be compared and studied.

The third chapter analyses the results of the data. This chapter is divided into five sub-sections.

1- Perception of family: In this section, the discussion is based upon the perception of family. Every participant has his or her own comprehension of family. The views on family vary within the first, second and third generation. The research has established diversity in the perception of family amongst the participants in accordance to their cultural backgrounds and their living environment.

2- Generational Gap: This section investigates the generational gap. Each participant recognized that there is a gap amongst the three generations, whereas each participant has his/her own ways of interpreting the causes behind the generational gap. The generational gap is in form of thoughts and differences of opinions between generations. This gap was found in literature review amongst the first and second generation however, the present research found this gap in the third generation of South Asian Muslims in extended form. A detailed discussion is provided and analysed in this chapter from first second and third generation.

3- Role of Islam in Muslim Families: This section examines the concept of family as the primary unit of human society from Islamic perspective. As all the family members are Muslims and subscribe to the Islamic family values, this section explores the role of Islamic values within their family lives. They may belong to the Islamic faith, but to what extent do they practice its teaching in their daily life? How the teachings and practices of Islam influence in the perception of family of the participants? This becomes the core question that this thesis attempts to address.

4- Cultural influence: This section describes the external cultural influences of the host country on Muslim families. Does cultural encounter play a significant role in the difference of perception within the South Asian Muslim families? The thesis also probes into this crucial question.

5-Role of technology: The focus of this section is on the rapid changes in technology and its impact on the everyday lives of these South Asians Muslims families. A detailed debate has been conducted on both the positive and negative impacts of technology on family life.

The fourth and final chapter consists of the conclusion and recommendations. In this chapter the researcher concludes this study. This conclusion, based on the analysis of primary and secondary data, suggests that new culture is evolved in the society that is called British Muslim culture. It is also an identity of young British Muslims that they are British and practicing Muslims.

## **Chapter 2 : Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter of literature review is based on principal of social science. Therefore all of the authors, books and literature, which were selected to include this study, are based of social sciences. The perception of South Asian Muslims in Britain is based on a combination of religion, ethnicity, culture, and social background. The personal identity of an individual Muslim can be separate from his/her collective identity due to the varying cultural and social influences. Eriksen (1993) agrees with Benoist that and states that “the identity oscillate between the poles of disconnected singularity and globalising unity”. (Benoist, 1977: 1 5)

### **2.2 Literature Review**

The Human social behaviour is constructed through our perceptions, which in turn are a reflection of our internal thoughts. However, one may argue that our personal identities are more dependent upon the different roles we perform as part of social interactions (Scott and Marshall, (2005). With regards to social behaviour, Durkheim and Hall (1984) say that as we advance in the evolutionary scale, the ties which bind the individual to his family, to his native soil, to traditions which the past has given to him, to collective group usages, become loose. He adds that as intelligence becomes richer, activity more varied, in order for morality to remain constant, that is to say, in order for the individual to remain attached to the group with a force equal to that of yesterday, the ties which bind him to it must become stronger and more numerous (Durkheim and Halls, 1984/1893 : 400-401). The tie that binds an individual to his/her family, native soil and to the traditions, are the key issue for an understanding of families who moved away from their soil and tradition. Before, we explore the relevant literature and the existing gaps in research; it is useful to provide a backdrop of the present state of the institution of family in the UK. In addition, a look into the Islamic aspect of the Family and its structure is essential to compare and contrast it with the western notion of family as it exists today.

### **2.2.1 The Institution of Family in the West**

The family, as an institution, is going through a constant change. The idea of an extended family is fast shrinking although it is still the most common type of family structure. According to the Office of National Statistics in 2014, there were 18.6 million families in the UK. Due to various factors a 'Cohabiting' family, where a man and women may have children but they do not wish to enter into marriage vows, is becoming more popular. Between 2004 to 2014 the cohabiting family grew by 29.7%. <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/family-demography/families-and-households/>. The concept of nuclear family continues to hold its ground, however, families are increasingly defined in terms of 'blended families' where stepfamilies merge as a new family. Other types of families include 'Gay or lesbian' family where the members of the same sex live and raise children together and 'Lone parent' family where a child or children is/are raised by either by mother or in some cases by father.

Family and Youth Concern (1996) made it clear that different types of family background did make an impact on children's well-being. This report stresses the importance of marriage institution in upholding the family structure and argues that children who were living in lone parent or step-parent homes tended to do worse in terms of their health, education and employment and involvement in criminal justice systems as well as many other indicators. Most worryingly, it became clear that having been brought up in such households increased the likelihood that these young people would fail to form a stable relationships in their turn, thus perpetuation the cycle of deprivation (1996:21).

The report also expressed concerns on dwindling number of marriages and more divorces, with an increasing instance of co habitation or living alone. A fifth of nations children live in lone parent families. Given the speed at which all of this accelerated in 1980 it is not inconceivable that the family based on marriage could be a minority format within our lifetimes (Family and Youth Concern, 1996:20). Ahmed (1981) had already previously highlighted such concerns and maintained that humanity is going through a cultural crisis whereby the institution of family which forms the very foundations of contemporary society –

is being threatened and that the symptoms of this crisis indicate that the Institution of family in America and Western Europe in particular are waking and disintegrating (1981:7).

### **2.3 Muslims in Britain**

Britain is well known for its diverse culture due to the variety of people from different geographical, religious and cultural backgrounds. Although Muslims in Britain belong to one religious group, their background can differ on the basis of their geographical location. Muslims in Britain arrived from different countries such as East Africa, Somalia, Bosnia, Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh. Majority of Muslims migrated to Britain predominantly due to economical reasons as they wished to improve their own and their future generations' financial and social well-being.

A large number of Muslims migrated and settled in Britain after the Second World War. However, history shows that traces of Islam were found in Britain prior to the Second World War. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, the relationships between Britain and Islamic countries became friendlier as the Ottoman Sultan agreed to help the Queen against the Spanish armada. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, John Nelson became the first ever recorded English man to convert to Islam. The first English translation (version) of the Holy Quran was written in 1649 by Alexander Ross.

At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century majority of Muslims, primarily from Pakistan and India, came to Britain to work for the East Indian Company. Most of these immigrants settled in various parts of the United Kingdom such as Liverpool, London and Cardiff. Similarly, in 1873 people from Sylhet, Bangladesh also came to work in Britain as Suez Canal opened in 1869 and most of these Muslim immigrants came to Britain to work on ships and ports. They formed the earliest Muslim establishment in Britain. The first ever recorded mosque in the UK dates back to 1889 and was built in Cardiff.

#### **2.3.1 Immigration**

Muslims in Britain form nearly 4.8% of the total population. British-born Muslims have a minor share in this 4.8% of the Muslim population. Muslims that have migrated to Britain

from different geographical locations cover 53% of the total population of Muslims living in Britain (Census, 2011).

A large number of immigrants from Pakistan came to Britain due to the construction of the Mangla Dam in the 1960s. The immigrants used to live in communal houses as this provided them with a place to settle down. The generation of these Muslim immigrants who were born and raised in Britain have built strong and stable relationships with other communities. In the 1960s, the number of immigrants increased due to the Commonwealth Immigration Act. This Act prevented automatic entry to commonwealth citizens except for those who had a work permit. Therefore people rushed to come to Britain before their entry became even harder. Later in 1971, immigration laws put an end to single men immigration. Similarly, a large number of Muslim immigrants came to Britain from African countries like Uganda when their president expelled Asians. Most of these Asian were allowed to settle in Britain. All Muslims hold the same religious base and beliefs, but their practice of Islam may differ. For example, there is a difference in the act of praying between Shia Muslims and Sunni Muslims. However, their religious beliefs and principles help the Muslim communities to find an identity and to some extent a common bond. The Muslim communities in Britain came from different parts of the world; therefore they hold diverse cultures and traditions. Despite of their differences, they have been able to share and celebrate culture.

### **2.3.2 UK Muslim population**

Today in Britain, there is a huge gap in how a Muslim perceives another Muslim and how non-Muslims perceive Muslims. A report by University of Essex published in *The Guardian* shows that Muslims are more British than the rest of British people. This report concludes that the Muslims show more belonging to Britain as compared to other British citizen.

Some of the major findings of this Report are as below:

- Nearly 83 per cent Muslims feel proud to be British, which is slightly more than other British.

- 77 per cent Muslims identify themselves as British, whereas only 50 per cent of other British identify themselves as British.
- Nearly 86.5 per cent Muslims believe they belong to Britain which is nearly the same as other British citizens.
- When it comes to living and sharing culture with a diverse community, 82 per cent Muslims want to live in a diverse community. While on the other hand, nearly 63 per cent of non-Muslims in Britain want to live in a diverse community.
- This research shows that nearly 90 per cent of Pakistani Muslims show a strong sense of belonging to Britain while on the other hand 84 per cent of other non-Muslims show a strong belonging to Britain.

The Muslim population has increased to nearly 80% in 2011 compared to their population back in 2001 (2011 Census). According to the 2001 Census, the population of Muslims in Britain was nearly 1.5 million, which was almost 3 per cent of the total population at that time. Whilst according to the 2011 Census, the Muslims population has increased up to 2.7 million, which is now nearly 4.8 per cent of the total population in Britain.

### **2.3.3 Muslims in London (Demographic Detail)**

According to a UK census (2011), there are approximately 2.7 million Muslims in the UK that is about 4.8 % of the total population. The 2011 Census shows that 37.4 per cent Muslims lives in London (Approx. one million) which is equivalent to 12.4 per cent of the total population of London. It is difficult to state an exact figure for the number of mosques in the UK as the majority of mosques are not purpose-built and rather include several rented and borrowed rooms or halls. According to the Place of Worship Registration Act in 1855, every place that is used for worship should be registered. Similarly according to the Marriage Act, 1949, the place for marriage should also be registered as a place of worship before it can be certified for marriage purposes. Currently, there are 836 buildings that are registered as the places of worship for Muslims, throughout England and Wales. Out of these 836 buildings, only 159 are registered for marriages (*Places of Worship in England and Wales*, Siobhan McAndrew).

### **2.3.4 Racial Diversity**

The Muslims living in Britain are from different ethnical backgrounds. One of the main and the largest ethnic groups in Britain consists of Asian people. The 2011 census shows that every 12<sup>th</sup> Muslim in Britain belongs to a white ethnic group. The diversity in ethnic groups is increasing day by day as Muslims from other regions are also coming to settle in the UK. There is also a large number of Muslims who came to Britain from Somalia. Due to no specific category for Somali Muslims in the census, it's difficult to tell the right number of Somali Muslims in Britain. According to an estimated figure By MCB, there are nearly 250,000 Somali Muslims living in Britain.

### **2.3.5 Geographical Distribution**

In Britain, nearly 76% of Muslims live in London, North West, West Midlands and The Humber and Yorkshire. 12.4% of the total Muslim population in Britain are living in London. There is a 35% increase in the population of Muslims in London, which is an increase of 405,000 people since the 2001 census. On the other hand, Bradford is another major region where a large number of British Muslims reside (24.7%). Similarly, there are 35 Local Authority Districts where the Muslim population is above 10% of the total local population. Among 10 LADs with highest Muslim population, the London Borough of Tower Hamlets has the highest percentage of the Muslim population which stands at 34.5%. Among the others are Newham which has a Muslim population of 32% whereas Blackburn with Darwin has 27%. There are a total of 8,570 wards in England and Wales, within that there are nearly 70 wards where Muslim population is 40% or more.

### **2.3.6 Age Profile**

There is a larger proportion of Muslims aged 15 or younger in Britain in comparison to the overall population of Britain. On the other end of the spectrum, the proportion of people aged 65 years or above is also critically lower amongst Muslim population as compared to the overall population in the UK. Within the Muslim population, 33% of people are aged 5-15 years old or less while on the other hand, only 17.2 % of the total population are aged 15 years or less. Amongst Muslim population, people who are aged 65 years or above are only

4% of their population in comparison to the total population of Britain where they 16% of the people aged 65 years or above.

When we compare Muslim population to that of non-Muslims in the UK, we can see a clear increase in numbers at all age levels, between figures in the 2001 census and the 2011 census. According to the 2011 census, there are 47.7% of Muslims that fall within the 25- 64 age group, which is an increase of 3.4 % since the 2001 census. On the other hand, 15.3% of Muslims fall within the 16- 24 age group, which shows a 2.9% decrease since the 2001 census.

### **2.3.7 South Asian Muslims**

South Asian countries like Pakistan, India and Bangladesh have a large population of Muslims. Islam was introduced into South Asia by Arabs. Most of the South Asian Muslims are descendants of Hindus; those that accepted Islam as their Religion during the Middle Ages, however, a large number of Muslims from Persia and Central Asia also arrived in South Asia later on. That is why Islam in South Asia is perceived differently due to the variety of cultures. Muslims in South Asia don't speak Arabic, but they are taught to read Quran from a young age as it is written in Arabic. In South Asia, Muslims speak different languages such as Urdu, Hindi and Bengali. In terms of religious practices, Muslims in South Asia are not different from those in Arab countries such as Iraq or Syria. South Asia is a multi-religious, multi-cultural region where Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Christians live together within a community. Everyone in the community follows their own religion but at the same time they plays their part in the cultural and social aspects of the society.

Britain. Muslims in Western societies are now an integral part of their countries of residence. They come from diverse backgrounds and are organized in various communities with different legal and socio-economic status (Anwar, 2008:135). With regard to exploring the cultural and traditional bonds of Muslim families in the UK, many researchers such as Humayun Ansari, Tahir Abbas and Muhammad Anwar have written about the lives of South Asian Muslims in Britain. The corpus of their literature explains the history of South Asian Muslims, their migration to Britain, their culture and life style in. There is a very little research in this area of family and even lesser that explore the generational views of their

families. There is a substantial lack of research within the area of family perception and family structure amongst Muslims in the UK of South Asian descent in the UK. This study, therefore, aims to show how the first generation migrant experiences of up-rootedness is central to their nostalgic connection with what they left behind and what they were facing in a new cultural climate and aims to fill the gap in the existing research.

## **2.4 Concept of Family in Islam**

While parallels should be drawn between wider western and British Muslim culture in terms of importance of marriage institution, particularly the third generation, it can be safely concluded that marriage institution, and hence, the importance of a nuclear family is very much celebrated amongst the Muslims. This is due to the family structure in Islam, which is considered to be a key element in the social and spiritual well being of the individual as well as the society.

Islam considers family as a fundamental unit of a society. The nurture and upbringing of children in family largely reflects the wider society. An Islamic family system promotes strong family bond and a close relationship between different generations. It believes families living under one roof or in a close proximity will not only support each other in times of need but also younger generation will learn basic values within their family. According to (Doi, 1984) the attachment of family plays a significant role in Islam, as family builds the foundation of a strong society.

For Ahmed (1981), the family is divinely inspired and ordained institution. It was not evolved through human experimentation involving a process of trial and error spread over time. The human race of product of this institution and not the other way round (Ahmed, 1981:14).

The institution of family plays a very important role in Muslim Society. It is a basic unit of that society and organised in such a way that it operates as society in miniature. About one third of *ahkam* (legal injunctions of Quran) relate to the family and its proper regulation. The

network of rights and obligations that provides the basis of the family life aims at producing those attitudes and behaviour patterns that Islam wants to foster in the individual and society (Ahmed, 1981:16).

Pointing to the importance of nucleus family, Ahmed (1981) believes that the function of child bearing remains incomplete with its more crucial part of child rearing and upbringing. – their education, orientation, character building and gradual initiation into religion and culture. It is because of this aspect that family care becomes a full time job. No other institution or even a number of institutions can take care of this function (Ahmed, 1981:21). The institution of the family is also an important part of Islamic system of socio-economic security. The rights do not relate merely to moral, cultural and ideological aspects; they include the economic and social rights of the family members (Ahmed, 1981:23).

Islam makes faith and religion the basis of the entire human society and mainspring for the network of its relationship – including family. The Islamic concept of nationhood is not based on race language, colour, territory or politico-economic affinity. The Islamic community is a fraternity of faith – anyone who believes in the Islamic religion and ideology is an inalienable part of this nation – whatever his race, colour, language or place of birth (Ahmed, 1981:12). Ahmed argues that Islamic culture cannot be understood if some of its parts are studied in isolation, or in the perspectives of cultures based on foundations diametrically different to its own. Therefore, the Islamic Institution of family should also be studied in the perspective of Islamic outlook and on life and the ethos of Islamic culture (Ahmed, 1981:13).

Further highlighting the major functions of Family from an Islamic perspective, Ahmed (1981) describes the all embracing significance of the institution of family. He argues that the family provides for the reproduction and continuation of the human race. It acts as the protector of the morals of the individual and society. It creates a congenial context for the spiritual and emotional fulfillment of the spouses, as also of the other members of the family and promotes, love, compassion and tranquility in the society (Ahmed, 1981:27). It initiates the new generations into culture, tradition and further evolution of their civilisation. It is then sheet-anchor of a system of socio-economic security. It sharpens the motivation of man and

strengthens incentives for effort of social progress. It is a cradle of civilisation and bridge that enables the new generations to move into society. It is the link joins past with the present and with the future in such a way that social transition and change takes place through a healthy and stable process. Thus it is on one hand, the means adopted for regulation relations between the sexes and providing the mechanism by which the relation of a child to the community is determined and on the other, it is a basic unit of society integrating its members within and enabling them to play their ideological and cultural role in the world (both now and in the future) (Ahmed, 1981:27). Therefore, it can be argued that If this institution is weakened or destroyed, the future of the entire culture and civilisation will be threatened.

Ahmed's (1981) classification of Family from an Islamic perspective is the key framework against which the family structure within this research will be compared and studied. Three families which are focus of this research, broadly fall under the classical extended family banner. Their family values are derived from Islamic family values. In this system 'marriage' forms a central part of connection between families. It not only defines relationship and inheritance but also establishes hierarchy and demands respect for the elders and love and care for the younger members within the family. Family in Islamic worldview provides a fundamental unit of social, emotional, economic and above all a moral framework as comprehensively described by Ahmed (1981).

## **2.5 South Asian Muslim Families in the UK**

While this research focuses mainly on South Asian Muslims in the UK, it is important to note that Muslims are not monolith group acting uniformly on all fronts. For instance, Tatari and Shaykhutdinov (2014) have empirically shown that even among Pakistani Muslims, there are different strands of Islam and regional solidarities (Tatari and Shaykhutdinov, 2014:22). They argue that the diversity among the Muslims in the UK is one of the factors that have hindered the formation of a strong British Muslim block. Yet, for second- and third-generation British Asians, their Muslim identity is more salient than their ethnic or regional affiliations (Tatari and Shaykhutdinov, 2014:23). Citing Evidence from the Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities in Britain, they concluded that religious affiliation of one's family is the most

important source of self-identity among Britons of South Asian origin (Tatari and Shaykhutdinov, 2014: 27).

The South Asian Muslims place a great emphasis on the family structure, but it doesn't mean that the individual identities are not important. Therefore each family member has their own rights and identities as described by Hammudah Abd Al Ati.

Family members are entitled to their rights. The Quran also gives importance to individual identity as it states that "every individual whose lineal identity is known must be identified accordingly" (Abd Al Ati, 1977).

Every individual in a Muslim family has various roles and rights, which provides them with different identities. For example, a woman can have an identity of a mother, a wife and a daughter; each identity offers her different rights as well as requires her to play a different role within the family. Islam promotes marriage and considers it important base of the family structure. The family structure of Muslims normally consists of two, three or more generations living together as a single-family unit (Anwar, 1994). The combined living structure of a Muslim family helps them in gaining stability, moral support, financial support and much more. Joint family system can arguably reduce the generational gap due to better understanding between the family members.

South Asian Muslims live in a joint family system as part of their culture; therefore there is an expectation that there should be no a generation gap between the young or old family members. The first generations that migrated to Britain from South Asian countries spent their childhood in a close family network without any notions of generational gap. The South Asian Muslims who arrived in British shores were neither highly educated nor skilled; they faced a cultural shock when they arrived in Britain.

The second generation of British Muslims arrived in Britain with their parents. They were largely aware of their parents' culture and customs however, their outlook of their own

culture as well as the immediate culture that they lived in, has gradually changed. They went through British education system where racism was experienced by most of them. In 1963, the local parents in Slough demanded that the children from South Asia should be educated separately from the whole community. Children of migrant community in schools also a faced a new challenge with regard to a conflict between their personal and family belief system vis a vis the values and beliefs taught and promoted at school. Ally's dissertation (1971) suggests that the educational ethos at school were different from children's parents' ethos of religiously based and unquestioning beliefs of their religion. The schools were geared towards an atmosphere of 'healthy scepticism about all claims of finality and to familiarise the pupil with great intellectual, moral, religious literacy and other achievements of the human spirit...'. The ultimate purpose was 'to humanize rather than merely socialise him' [a child] (Ally, 1971:30). Although Ally's thesis examines the educational aspects of the South Asian migrant communities, it nonetheless provides a window what the families, and particularly the Muslims families, were going through the emotional, cultural and religious turmoil. This second generation which was educated in the UK, therefore grew up in a mixed-cultural environment where they learned about other cultures.

## **2.6 Research on the Muslim Family Practices in the UK**

Dosanji and Guham's (1996) earlier ground breaking works *Child-Rearing in Ethnic Minorities* and 'Child rearing practices of two generations of Punjabis: Development of personality and Independence.' published in *Children and Society* is a valuable contribution. The work of Harriet Becher's (2008) *Family Practices in South Asian Muslim Families: Parenting in Multi-Faith Britain* is another significant contribution of about South Asians, but more specifically Muslim families in the UK. Becher (2008) reports findings from a research study exploring family practices (Morgan 1996) in South Asian Muslim families in Britain (2008:4). Although Becher (2008) researched parenting belief systems and everyday family practices from the perspectives of mothers, fathers and children, it does provide a comprehensive of account of the life of South Asian Muslim families. Becher paid a particular attention to the role of religion in family life; for example, its influence on ideas

about family roles and obligations, as well as its impact on everyday family routines and rituals (2008:4). It also aimed to examine the process of seeking help for family problems, and explore the formal and informal support systems that are available to South Asian Muslim families in Britain today (Becher, 2008:4). Becher (2008) has provided a comprehensive picture of Muslim family life in the UK and highlighted that despite commonalities, South Asian Muslim families were diverse in terms of origin and settlement, marital history and household structure, education, economic status and religious and cultural affiliations, reflecting a variety of South Asian Muslim population in the UK (2008:26). She also found that in terms of family structure, South Asian Muslim Families encompass distinctive features including extended family context and locally embedded community; children involvement in extra curricular Islamic education; use of multiple languages; issues of poor mental and physical health; and a relatively high proportion of workless household when compared to white British families (2008:26). These findings, although not surprising, may play a potential part in how “connected” Muslim families feel to their newly adopted country.

Becher (2008) also explored inter-generational tensions between Muslim families and reported that several family members referred to well established expectations of conflict between first generation immigrants and their second generation children. She argues that it is difficult for first generation parents who immigrated to the UK to protect their children from assimilating what they see as threatening aspects of British culture. Parents adopted various strategies to counter such threats but they recognised that it might prove difficult. For some there was a resigned recognition that their children would probably be different from them (Becher, 2008:39). From the children’s perspective, the experience of being in a different world from their parents, as “skilled cultural navigators” (Ballard, 1994:31) between different spheres, was a theme that emerged fairly often in her research (Becher, 2008:39). Becher (2008) observed that it was usually the first generation parent who was keener on maintaining, ‘traditional’ practices, though this was not universally the case (2008:40)

She further noted the significance of ‘keeping tradition’ within the South Asian culture, narratives of which she believed were closely intertwined with religious beliefs and values.

Notion of respecting elders and the necessity of marrying someone from one's own religion also came up in the discussion especially with children of what it meant to be Muslims (Becher, 2008:42).

Her research also takes the religious aspects at the centre of its study and builds upon those researches conducted over the years and focuses on three generations and their 'perceptions' of family. Becher's (2008) research finds that the religious factors in the family is strongly present and when she compared the Muslim families vis a vis Christian families through data analysis, she noted the pervasive nature of Islam within South Asian family culture and observed that Islamic value system is relatively more salient to parenting (2008: 29). She states that 'the vast majority of the Muslim parents in the questionnaire study saw their own religious views as important in bringing up their children – indeed more than eight in ten (84 per cent) saw them as 'very important', while a further 11 per cent felt they were 'fairly important' (Becher, 2008:29). She also highlighted that parents' attitude seemed to look for answers for everything in religion i.e. Islam and make decision on that basis. For South Asian Muslim families, religion is perceived to be especially useful in offering a moral framework for making decisions, although there was also a counter narrative at play which emphasised moderation and not being too strict (Becher, 2008: 52).

With regards to the extent to which religious family practices permeated family practices Becher (2008) drew parallels between her research and Dollahite and Mark (2004) that highly religious families may work to sanctify the family by living religion at home, and confirms their contentions that much of religions power lies in sacred familial processes that take place out of public view (Becher, 2008: 177). She found that the negotiation of tradition and change was lived out through daily activities and interactions as well as through family relationships and the connections that families forged outside the household. Keeping tradition was especially emphasised in certain areas; notably the enduring importance of respect, both in showing it (for one's elders and family hierarchy) and in eliciting it (to maintain family reputation) (Becher, 2008: 178). In this respect Shaw (2000) and Hussain and O'Brian (2001) have shown extensively the role played by the notion of 'respect' (izzat).

## **2.7 Muslim Youth and their Search for Identity**

The dilemma that South Asian Muslim families face today, particularly the third generation Muslims, is not only linked with religious but social identity ( Becher, 2008:15). Discussion on the subject of social identity of the Muslim youth is important in the context of this research as it may be an area of difference of perceptions and ideas between older and younger generations. As we will see later, Muslim Youth's search for their identity is inevitably linked with some of conflicts that are experienced across generations with Muslim families in the UK.

Castelli and Trevathan (2005) believe that the Young Muslims' search for their identity is not unique to them. They argue that the young English Muslims, in this global community, face the same experiences as other young people in English society and a contemporary, coherent Islam seeks to find spirituality and a language that speaks to this (Castelli and Trevathan (2005:124).

How to be Muslim and English, or Jewish and English or Anglican, Catholic, agnostic, or atheist, in a twenty- first-century England is a challenge whose consequences reach beyond the religious education lesson, and beyond the school as a whole, to a larger English society that is faced with questions of identity from young Muslims, Jews, Anglicans, Catholic, agnostics and atheists in their search for their place in today's England (Castelli and Trevathan, 2005: 124). The discourse that arises in this common search is a creative, critical dialogue with a larger English society in which not only is the nature of spiritual development at issue, but also the nature of English education and the nature of English society itself. Highlighting some of potential challenges in terms of raising children in a Muslim household, Castelli and Trevathan (2005) contend that Young Muslims hear and participate in 'the prevailing patterns of reasoning and content of argument' of contemporary English society and are necessarily influenced by these (2005:125). They argue that the values of materialism, consumerism and individualism are paraded before Muslim children, as they are before all children in western society. The choice for the Muslim community, when raising their children in this context, is either to try and isolate their children from contemporary influences, and success in this is not assured, or to listen to their children's experiences,

understand and respect these experiences and, through dialogue, to explore a Muslim spirituality that responds to them (Castelli and Trevathan, 2005:125).

With regards to the search for their identity, Basit (2009) provided evidence that a number of young Muslims perceived affiliation to their religion as the most significant aspect of their identity (2009:173). A large proportion of them perceive their identity in terms of their ethnicity or religion. For many Muslim young people, their religious identity is paramount and they view religion as a code of conduct, which enables them to judge the parameters in which to operate.

Their religious identity is also in constant interaction with their ethnic identity, as religious norms become part of the cultural mores (Basit, 2009:739). Werbner (2002), for example, writing about British Pakistanis, argues that being a Muslim is not the final ontological truth for them, as it remains in tension with an equally compelling orientation towards a South Asian popular and highly cultural aesthetic. Basit (2009) argues that in the current climate in the West, where the term 'Muslim' is covertly seen as synonymous with 'terrorist', this is a bold assertion. Yet, viewing themselves as Muslims first enables them to live their lives in a certain way, which they feel is consistent with being good citizens as well as good Muslims (Basit, 2009:173).

Zeitlyn (2014) through her research among British Bangladeshi Muslims found that Islam was seen by the British Bangladeshi families as a meta-narrative or constant point of reference with which to evaluate all other practices, objects or events. British Bangladeshi children and parents presented the role of Islam in their lives as an uncomplicated distinction between *halal* and *haram* (2014:204). Zeitlyn (2014) argues that for Muslims morality and religion are not distinct from one another as Islam presents a moral order through the Qur'an, Hadith (the deeds and sayings of Muhammad) and ideas of *halal* and *haram* (Halstead, 2007; Siddiqui, 1997) (Zeitlyn, 2014: 204).

## **2.8 Muslim Youth's Identity and the Generational Gap**

The generational gap can be defined as a difference in attitudes between people of different generations, leading to a lack of understanding. As part of their identity formation Muslim

youth are also seeking to depart from the cultural norms held dear by their parents and in so doing, may be contributing to the perpetuity of the generational gap. Haw (2011) points out that the Muslim youth are rejecting some of their parents' 'traditional' values while choosing to re-assert certain Islamic religious values. As their identities are being shaped through a process of 'resistance' to negative social constructions of Muslims and Islam, filtered through a mass media that fails to recognise the diversity of Muslim communities (Haw, 2011: 576).

Basit (2009) highlights the factors that can adversely affect the sense of Muslim Youth's belonging and in turn exacerbate generation gap within their own families. He maintains that the perceptions of stereotyping, racism and harassment prevent some from feeling like British citizens at specific points in time, thus damaging their sense of belonging (2009:739). This is particularly true in the aftermath of terrorist attacks in the West, which have resulted in generating negative sentiments not just about Muslims but other minority ethnic groups too. In spite of such experiences, many minority ethnic young citizens are positive about their multiple identities and citizenship, which comprise links with Britain, their country of origin, their religion and so forth (Basit, 2009:739).

Haw (2011) in particular associates the notion of 'in betweenness' with the wider change amongst the Muslim youth in search and formation of their British identity. He talks about the importance of 'in betweenness' for several reasons as below:

"In terms of tracing this 'changing same', the notion of 'in betweenness' was important, first, because 'in-between' the intervening years of the research the participants have actively re-constructed and re-evaluated their identities in response to wider social changes in Britain, the place of their birth. Second, because their identities have been shaped by their 'in-between' positioning in relationship to the traditions they inherited from their parents who grew up in Mirpur and the relationship of those traditions and religious beliefs with British culture and identity. Third, because their 'in betweenness' has created spaces in which their agency is now being expressed and which is influential on the continuing construction of not only their own identities but also their parents and their children. Lastly, because they are the embodiment of an 'in-between' generation shift and the perceptions they have of themselves

and those around them will change over time. My construction of them as an ‘in-between’ generation and the changing nature”. (Haw, 2011:573)

Haw (2011) traces the aspects of their ‘in-betweenness’ from one where their identities were being shaped by the homeland of their parents and their new host culture to those currently constructing them now as becoming ‘more Muslim’ while they simultaneously exercise their personal freedom to explore what being Muslim in this changing context means. Additionally, as this ‘in-between’ generation’s ties with their parents’ traditional views and their connections with the culture of Mirpur have weakened, religion then as now operated as a constant connective thread even when there was little understanding (Haw, 2011:573).

Haw’s (2011) conclusion point to the various reasons for the widening generational gap within Muslim families, particularly, those associated with the ‘in between’ generations’ search of their own identity and place in social circles that they frequent. Haw (2011) concludes that while this ‘in-between’ generation were encouraged by their parents to live with their respectful notions of British society, their children were growing up with the contradictions between their parents views of ‘Britishness’ and what they actually encountered at school, in the workplace, and the media (Haw, 2011: 575). He further notes that they also experienced the rise of a globalised youth culture and a 24-hour mass media and broadcast culture. Consequently, in a very short space of time they experienced changes within their own communities in terms of a broadening of attitudes to education, work, marriage, the role of women, and a heightened social sense of their difference, particularly so since 9/11 and 7/7. Increasingly they were constructed by others as ‘Muslim’ and as becoming ‘more Muslim’, and in reacting to this they were now constructing emergent identities based less on their parents’ traditional notions of British tolerance and fairness, and more on a sense of belonging to a society which was more obviously critical of its Muslim minority (Haw, 2011:575).

Lewis (2005) associated the differences in political ideology and practices between various generations of Muslims as a possible of cause of generational gap. He paints a disturbing

picture of political such practices amongst Muslims in the UK where family association and favoritism is help above the party agendas and favors may be exchanged in return for vote banks. He found that wherever individuals stood out against such practices, they could find themselves at the receiving end of violence and intimidation (Lewis, 2005: 359). As such, local democracy was corrupted and the generational gap between elders and disillusioned young British-born Pakistanis was widening in the process (Lewis, 2005: 359).

The younger generation is seeking to make clear divisions between culture and religion in a positive break away from the closely entwined cultural and religious interpretations of Islam observed by their parents at a time when a mutually engaging cultural literacy in terms of intercultural dialogue seems to be more clearly away forward (Haw, 2011:578). However, it remains to be seen how the identity formation process of young British Muslims is seen and observed by the immediate family members, both by the first and second generation, with their own contextualized understanding of identity as well as the demands that are placed on the youth by the older generation with regards to the preservation of cultural, religious and familial values. As such the current research can play a crucial role in unfolding some of these family dynamics and their impact on the family as well as wider implications for the future Muslim generations.

Another important aspect that may potentially contribute to the generational gap is understanding and usage of new technology. The increasing impact of technology on family is also noted by (Marker I, Blumer C. et al 2014) suggests that there is an increase in on-line activities between people such as dating. The research highlights the stress that it creates in a family. A traditional family will naturally find such mode of engagement threatening. Stevenson's (2011) research emphasises a greater need to recognise that some families use this as better means of understanding the education system and the technology play a significant role in lifting the family to a different level engagement. However it highlights a further need for research to examine what impact it has on a family, particularly on children's education on the one hand and on the other, how the policy makers could benefit from such researches. Their research findings also highlight the impact of technology, particularly on the third generation of Muslim children (Basit:1997:15). An aim of this research, therefore, is

also to look at the effect of new technology within the different generations of South Asian Muslims in the UK.

## **2.9 Differences in attitude among first and second generation Muslim individuals**

While South Asian Muslim families were trying to navigate their ways into British society, the society itself was going through a huge upheaval and faced with many socio-economic challenges. Most of them are unfairly deprived compared with other communities. For example, their high unemployment rates, lower income and bad housing conditions, which are common among Muslims in Western Europe, could contribute to differential ill health compared with others. (Anwar, 2008:135). So the early generations had to contend with a lot more issues than the latter. The first generation Muslims migrated at a mature age, therefore it was hard for them to adopt the ways of the British society and culture. On the other hand, the second and third generation Muslims were well-adapted into the British society and culture. “This was the pattern early in the immigration and settlement experience of South Asian Muslims, but these social divisions are no less pronounced today – largely as a function of pernicious structural and cultural racism as well as increasingly competitive labour, education, housing and health markets” (Brown 2000; Modood et al., 1997; Strategy Unit, 2003). Therefore the differences that exist between progressive generations must be seen in the light of early settlement history.

It is noteworthy that first-generation parents did not feel as concerned about sending their sons to school as they did about their daughters. Parents allowed sons unlimited freedom while curtailing the activities of their daughters (Ijaz and Abbas, 2010:319). The older generations’ expectations of their children differed based on gender of their child and hence a different way of upbringing and differential treatment as Ballard (1987) has pointed out. Ballard (1987) has addressed the issue of differential treatment of young men and young women amongst South Asian Muslim families, suggesting that it can be explained in terms of the concept of honour or shame (*izzat*), which is exclusively associated with women; ‘to sustain male *izzat*, wives, sisters, and daughters must be seen to behave with seemly modesty,

secluding themselves from the world of men. The ideas of shame thus reinforce the formal hierarchy of relationships within the family' (Ballard 1987:186). The concept of *izzat* has also been discussed by Becher (2008) and linked with the varied perceptions amongst the family members.

Sheikh (2011) has discussed the Muslim women's anxiety about the criticism they get from their families and others in their community for not wearing an "appropriate" dress. He maintains that religion and culture are often mixed up in such matters (Sheikh, 2011:53). Talking about the arranged marriage and its impact on women, Sheikh (2011) opines that marriage, albeit to a stranger, does not put up any direct obstacles to learning for women in these communities. Rather, it is the uncertainty of their future, as it is tied to their as yet unfamiliar future husband's social and professional decisions (2011:54). Sheikh (2011) adds that the notions of family values and reputation that the female members of the family are expected to defend place a greater emphasis on the young women's cooking and sewing skills, and willingness to stay at home – at the cost of their academic achievements, courses and institutions (2011:54).

However, Ijaz and Abass (2010) on the other hand present a sharp contrast to the opinion held by Ballard (1987) and Sheikh (2011) on the matter of differential treatment among the South Asian Muslim families. In particular they found that second-generation parents did not make this distinction based on gender. They seemed equally worried about sending their sons to schools but in a qualitatively different way (2010: 320). While the notion of sexual modesty was still associated with young women, parents also feared that their boys might become 'morally corrupted' and end up in the 'wrong company' (implying criminal activities such as drugs). These parents resented the 'double standards' of their culture that treats young men differently from young women. It was surprising to note that they did not derive the justification for the equality between sexes from the Western liberal discourse. In fact, they referred to the equality granted by Islam (Ijaz and Abbas, 201:320).

Ijaz and Abbas (2010) also presented analysis of attitude of both first and second generation towards education of girls and boys. They found that the second generations maintained some

aspects of their parent's perspectives towards their daughter's education, such as apprehensions regarding mixed education and Westernisation. There was also, to a certain extent, a desire to restrain or protect women's sexuality before marriage (2010: 323). This aspect of their attitude may be linked back to the concept of *izzat* as several other researchers have found.

With regard to the differentiation between religion and culture and acquiring correct Islamic knowledge, Ijaz and Abbas (2010) claim that the second generations presented a sharp contrast to the first generations. They were not only more knowledgeable about Islam but more practicing in comparison with the first generations. This was linked to an Islamisation process, based on inter-generational adaptation at one level and the desire to return to a literal form of Islam on the other, largely because of inherent limitations in relation to both. They had studied the Qur'an in greater detail and, as one woman declared, 'tried to be better Muslims'. It was interesting to note that these people clearly distinguished between culture and religion, according greater value to the latter. During the interviews, due to their knowledge of Islam, they were more likely to refer to religion by adding 'this is in the Qur'an' or 'this is Sunnah'. They were more critical of their culture, reproaching it for creating 'double standards' for men and women (Ijaz and Abbas, 2010: 323).

Concurring with Ijaz and Abbas (2010), Zeitlyn (2014) similarly found that British Bangladeshis seek to instill in their children, through activities such as Qu'ran classes, a new form of Islamic morality. Cultural capital is acquired now among British Bangladeshis through knowledge of the 'correct' Islamic rules and practices. In contrast to their grandparents' generation, many young British Bangladeshis have a thorough understanding of the Qu'ran. They have achieved this through literacy in both English and Arabic and long hours of study in Qu'ran classes (Zeitlyn, 2014: 206).

## **2.10 Conclusion**

The study of previous literature reveals that there is a gap in perceptions of family life among the first and second generations. Therefore, the third generation (who are adult now) will be the participants for this study. The current research aims to investigate the change of attitude or behaviours from the second generation to the third generation and in particular how their older generations perceived that change of their younger generations. As discussed earlier, family in Islamic worldview provides a fundamental unit of social, emotional, economic and above all a moral framework as comprehensively described by Ahmed (1981). Three families, which are focus of this research, broadly fall under the classical extended family banner as their family values are derived from Islamic family values. Therefore, Ahmed's (1981) classification of Family from an Islamic perspective is the key framework against which the family structure within this research will be compared and studied.

## **CHAPTER 3: Data Analysis**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter contains the data, which were collected from the nine participants of three families. This data is categorized in five sections which creates the theme of this primary research. This theme is based on the common factors of the changing perception between the generations described by the participants. This theme is also abstracted from the literature review and based on the main questionnaire attached in the appendix. This grouped data theme is based on Perception of Family, generation gap, role of Islam, cultural influence and role of technology. The data analyzed through obtaining the theme after sorting, encoding and grouping the data. The Detail debate is recorded and analyzed as under.

### **3.2 Perception of Family**

Family is a social institution consisting of members who are joined together within the confinement of a house bound together by their feelings of love and care towards one another. The origin of the family structure is as obscure as the history of man himself, but as far as the history recorded goes, it has witnessed the ancient institution family throughout the ages in every part of the world. Perhaps the psychological need to maintain one's name through personal properties and children laid the basis for family. From the tiniest animal to the giant mammals that roamed the planet earth, we can clearly witness the natural instinct to preserve and protect their family amongst the species. In the religious traditions we find that the expulsion of Adam and Eve set in motion the cause of a human family on this earth as they are reported to be the first couple according to the Holy Scriptures of various religions. A family is the most natural and spontaneous social institution, resting directly on native dispositions, not merely to mate but to rear children and advance the cause of human survival. The desire for off-spring and the tendency to care sedulously for children can certainly be counted among the causes for the beginning of this institution. The powerful impulse of parental care raised a central and dominating institution - the family. The origin and significance of the family stems from the inevitable helplessness of the child at birth. A

family is the first social contact for the child through which he learns allegiance and his moral development which consists of learning loyalty among other traits.

Family has played a great role in social organizations. Although there are thousands of devious influences that are encountered through social interactions but through family, these influences can also be converted into some measures of support and good will. Humans participate in the continuously developing social order built over a hundred of generations of trial and error, accumulated knowledge, and transmitted wealth.

During the interviews with different people from the sub-continent, the researcher posed questions to individuals with the intention to elicit varied viewpoints about the institution of family and the changes that have taken place whilst they have been residing in England. The researcher tried to inquire whether the institution of family has become stagnant, has remained the same over the years or has undergone any changes.

The researcher began the interview with a simple question:

*What is your perception of family?*

And one of the interviewees from the first generation responded:

“Obviously, Family constitutes of two individuals, mum and dad, along with their Children, but when we lived back in our native country, Pakistan, we considered some close relatives as family too. For instance, grandparents, maternal grandparents are also included in the family; however, it is quite rare. It would only happen when someone is living in a joint family system, besides if my memory serves me correctly, my aunt used to live next door to us, so she could visit us anytime, without any hassle. Similarly, I also witnessed that people had close relationship with their distant relatives. Moreover, I would say that even neighbours were seen as our relatives. They would come around our homes and we would drop by their homes. Doors were always open for any relatives, neighbours and friends, as a matter of

fact; we had no concept of keeping the doors closed. We have our doors closed here; we lock the doors before we go anywhere. Over there, whoever wishes to come in may come in; eat, drink and leave when they wish to".(Jamil)

It is very important to keep the background of this interviewee in mind. Mr Jamil is seventy years old and came to England around forty-eight years ago. Therefore, the culture he was alluding to, from his own perception, is around 50 years old. He used to live in a joint family system. The aunties (Sisters of his father) of Mr Jamil lived on the same street whereas his uncles (brother of Father) lived together in the same large house. His family had separate living quarters within the same house where kitchen, reception room, large front patio and main door is shared by all family members. This is the common practice in Pakistan that front door which is situated well beyond the front patio at the very beginning of the precinct of the house always remains open. A curtain is hung over this door to maintain privacy and prevent people from taking a peek inside unnecessarily. Most of the patrilocal families have the same culture as described by Mr Jamil. However, after 50 years this culture is fading away in Pakistan in urban areas whereas in the rural area this culture continues to persist as described above.

This idea of family reveals that parents, children and close relatives that were left behind at his native place were housed in the same place. He didn't restrict himself in defining the boundaries of a family; he added that people who had any affinity with his family were considered a part of it. In the sub-continent, people tend to count those people among their family with whom they have lived a long part of their lives, such as their neighbours, their distant relatives whom they have counted on to seek solace in their grievances and with whom they have shared moments of happiness in their lives. In modern societies; close kin rarely live together, although they assemble for ceremonial occasions such as funerals or weddings. A family, embedded in a wider network of relatives or kin, is the fundamental social unit in all societies. In modern societies, a family tends to isolate themselves from all, but the closet kin. In a modern family system, many people don't even know the names of their second

cousins or distant relatives. Furthermore, even close relatives only gather for a few ceremonial occasions, such as thanksgiving or funerals. In olden days, there used to be larger families due to grandparents, aunts and uncles, all living under the same roof, hence the interviewee referred to everyone as family whom he had seen around his childhood home.

The researcher asked the same question to another interviewee of the second generation and she thus responded:

“I suppose, family consists of the husband wife and children. They live together and support one another. They like to stay together, as blood relations tie them together. Sometimes they are compelled to live with each other and sometimes they truly love each other to make a home. These two could be the possible reasons for it (family).” (Uzma)

The background of Mrs Uzma is that she came to England 22 years ago after marriage with Mr. Amir Jamil, Son of Mr. Jamil from Pakistan. Due to this migration, she had to leave behind all her family her mother, father, sisters, brothers, in Pakistan. She has three children 20, 18 and 16 years old. She lives in London with her in-laws as small patrilocal family. She desires that blood relations within her immediate family should keep close ties because she misses such relationships and closeness with her own siblings back in Pakistan. She is doing her best to keep her family together and playing an important bridging role between first and third generation within her own family. She is making every effort to prevent any fragmentation of her family due to petty differences as this is the only family that she has in this country. Unlike Mr Jamil, she was unable to recall all the details of the traditional family structure and togetherness of a large family back in Pakistan as she left them a long time ago. She mentioned, however, that back home in Pakistan her family consisted of her grandparents, parents as well as aunts and uncles who were considered to be an integral part of the family structure. She also said that she considered her cousins to be part of her family too due to the emotional bonds that existed between them.

Take this statement for instance, to begin with, this interviewee extends his circle of family and makes it more flexible. Not only does he take for granted those people in family who

biologically belong to his family but he also embraces other people who have emotional association with him and count them in the fold of his family. That is not an isolated phenomenon in the East. They treat even their guests with immense respect when they call upon them at their home. The question about the length of their stay is essentially a taboo in many eastern societies and would normally never be discussed as it is considered to bring shame or embarrassment to the hosts. They guest stay at the home of their hosts as long as they please. In many cases a lengthy stay is happily arranged and agreed upon by the family, for example for the purpose of studying away in a university or medical treatment in a major hospital. It is a sort of convention and they feel themselves at home. The phrase looks so literal, it seems to have come out of their real life experiences.

When the same question was asked to the third generation, the answer was:

“I believe that a family is parents and children living together. It consists of all members showing respect to one another and always being there for each other, no matter how hard the circumstances. Parents should always support their Children, whether it’s financial support or emotional support.”(Aleezeh)

The background of Ms Aleezeh is that she is she is twenty years old, born in London and studying at a local University. She also went to school in London and has visited Pakistan twice in her life for couple of months at each occasion. She has a diverse circle of friends that belong to different ethnicities and religions. She lives with her family with whom she has a great emotional bond as she has been through some hard times financially and emotionally along with her family. Therefore, she can relate to the importance of family.

“A family is parents and their children. We come from Pakistan where joint family system is considered good, unlike in this country. All family members should support and take care of each other” ( Aleezeh )

After a moment of reflection, she provided me with her answer. She tried to take everything into account before expressing her opinion about the family. As we had been scrutinizing all this while the accounts that we heard from the interviewees as to what family stands for them. Similarly, she drew a boundary around the people whom she considered as a part of a family. The very basic thing that we hear time and again is, “a family comes into being when parents and their children dwell under the same roof.” Let’s try to see this statement from a few different aspects. This looks absolutely so simple, almost a universal truth, but she didn’t stop there, she added further, when she said, all family members should support and take care of each other. This brings in the idea of being together with love, compassion and respect towards each other because each individual carries his/her own being. She appears to think in her own unique way as the others do, she creates a different milieu around herself whose aroma could be smelt by other family members. The statement leads us to believe that we should not exist like an island, totally unrelated, rather we should pay heed to other people’s needs whom we share a roof with. With this statement, the interviewee tends to encompass the whole ground of family related matters as she alludes to the subtle undercurrent of love that runs among the family member and connects and holds them in a bondage of emotional well-being. If we examine this statement closely, we will stumble upon the fundamental building blocks of a family - that is love. Without due consideration for others, we can’t create a space wherein people find themselves living, playing, praying and meditating together. They will be always getting at each other’s nerves, nagging, pulling each other’s legs and never sitting silently and pulling each other through their ordeal. They will always manage to find excuses to quarrel and fight with each other. Major family dramas will erupt from minuscule issues and disputes will be rife amongst the family over matters of little consequence. In the East, this distinction is kept between a home and a house. A house is a place made up with bricks but a home is a space where one is given a total freedom to be oneself, to share one’s happiness with other fellow beings, to feel the pulse of one’s existence and the heartbeat of their partner. Ostensibly both have the same appearance but house is more like a corpse without the feeling of home. This is because when the home spirit disappears, it gives a fallacy to a mind that behind a façade the same festive spirit is functioning that joins the people together.

I believe that a family is parents and children living together. It consists of all members showing respect to one another and always being there for each other, no matter how hard the circumstances. Parents should always support their Children, whether its financial support or emotional support. The same echo of love, compassion and respect rings through this statement. This thread seems to run through every utterance made by various people and endorses the fact, which is apparently invisible but can be felt strongly by each individual in the family. The strands which weave the fabric of our homes are these basic human emotions hence the interviewee presupposes its importance and perhaps opens unto us the doors to inquire and seek the source of love so that we can find more occasions in our lives to rejoice alone as well as together with the family. The first part of the statement is slightly overused but the other part calls for our attention. It makes a point to be respectful to each other, it doesn't mean that we should merely respect our elders rather there is much more to read between the lines. It invites the reader to focus on each individual's private space which shouldn't be transgressed or violated lest he or she should begin to feel a sense of intrusion into their private life/space. Always being there to each other implies family assistance that one gets while faced with adverse situations in life. It draws our attention to focus not only on monetary help but emotional aid that helps us emerge stronger after a trial or tribulation.

This response reflects the traditional view of family institution. Therefore, a serious reader might skip it while taking it as give. For that reason, the researcher had set about asking questions from a different angle to ferret out the interviewee's inner thoughts which they may have found difficult to articulate. In that regard, the next question that the researcher asked was:

*Do you think that the family structure is the same in your family from the previous to the next generations?*

One interviewee from the first generation answered as below:

“It has changed greatly. Nowadays, no one has enough time to sit and talk to

each other. In this country, the joint family system is very bad. Normally, people don't even get time to see each other very often; it's very rare that they all sit together for a meal. For example, in Ramadan the traditions is that all of the family members sit together to have *sehri* and *iftar* but it does not happen in this country. Many a time different family members tend to open their fast at work or with others. ”(Jamil)

Again Mr Jamil is attempting to make a correlation with the family he left forty-eight years ago. Forty-eight years ago where Mr Jamil lived, it was joint family where all of them used to sit together daily in evenings in the front patio or in common living rooms. They used to discuss their routines and share tales about how their day went. It was a standard practice that everyone from the joint family would sit together to share their experiences whereby elders would give advice to the younger family members about how to handle various routine matters. It was also a form of entertainment around those times as the television transmission had not started in Pakistan yet. We are not discussing the technology impact on family it will be discuss in end of this chapter. Furthermore, at the house of Mr Jamil in Pakistan there was a common kitchen where one big meal would be served to everyone on daily basis and that meant that everyone would sit together in the evening for a meal. This person who had a habit of having meal with family on daily basis is now appear to be reminiscing those days because his current family members are not accustomed to sitting together for a meal even in the holy month of Ramadan. Even today in Pakistan it is common practice that all family will regularly break fast together throughout the month of Ramadan

Replying to the same question, another interviewee from the second generation of same family said:

“Yes, there have been a couple of changes. For instance, the time I spent in Pakistan, it was a different culture and then I moved here, where I have encountered a different culture. Our Children were educated in a different

environment, secondly, our parents are from a different culture, although, we try to adhere to those values, but still there are some differences.” (Uzma)

Mrs Uzma belongs to the middle generation and she came to England 22 years ago. Therefore, she can understand the culture the first generation holds dear to them as she is from the same background. Simultaneously, she is dealing with the generation which was born in England so she can clearly see the difference between the both and her statement appears to justify this difference with the reason that their children were being educated in a different environment and as such they absorb more of the cultural at school and after school while socialising with their peers. She also talked about her struggle to keep hold of her own culture, customs and values that she grew up with and while at the same time trying to adapt British culture - a culture that her children identify with more closely.

When asked the same question, a family member from the third generation of the same family responded:

“No, not really, the past generations were a lot stricter and old-fashioned, but luckily today's Muslim generation is far more modest.” (Aleezeh)

This interviewee is pointing towards the discrepancies that seem to be a natural outcome of the changing morals, disintegrating old sanctions under totally different conditions which exercised powerful influences on the destiny of their younger generations. Supporting this view further, another interviewee from a different family stated more or less the same thing.

This is from the first generation that ethnically belongs to India:

“Yes, there has been a change. People had more attachment in those times, however, in our generation, we are more independent. Our joint family system is gradually disintegrating.”(Shams)

This interviewee also feels that the family structure has altered in the past few years as families are now less dependent on each other and hence less attached to one another. He fears that the foundation of the joint family system is slowly collapsing and may not be seen at all in the future. In the east, people are more concerned in preserving their age-old values although the new technology has brought along additional challenges and has a significant impact on such preservation efforts by the older generation. They lean back on their old, tried and tested ideas to derive support in getting rid of these new complex problems. They don't find themselves in a space wherein they could handle the issues that are constantly arising or could devise any strategy to counter the negative impact of technology, sciences and a completely new concept of looking at things in a new light. They have already been aware of the warmth that faith gives, the zest of life brought about by a bond of trust built over the ages. These phenomena only occur when one submits oneself to existence, the ardor of love that can be witnessed in a glow of their being. However, the new modes of life are pressing them upon from all sides, leaving them stranded with no idea of what to do and from where to begin with. They feel the need to get themselves in-tune with the explosion of knowledge in all directions. It dawns upon them that they have to devise new ways and strategies lest they should be left behind by the rest of the world in its eagerness to make a hastened progress. They see the urgency for a vision which allows them to get ahead in physical progress. They have already proved their mettle in the culture, civilization and matter. The yearnings to explore the inner world are on the verge of making a complete roundabout and turn his focus on the outer world. The East seems to be coming out of his deep meditative state into the cyclone of activities to eradicate its chronic poverty.

Lastly, Its worthwhile bringing out yet another point into consideration, the hard struggle people made to cling to those dying values which thus far had been so fulfilling to them. They left no stone unturned to keep a tightened grip on them. The social changes were creeping into the ways of the society and transforming it but the people continued to live in their hitherto fictional and illusory old world which didn't seem to bear any resemblance to their changed surroundings. The reality stared them in their faces but people clung on to their past and

couldn't resist the urge to rejuvenate their old bullock-cart ways.

Another statement by an interviewee from the first generation from Bangladesh reinforces the idea of change which overtook them being in England. She declares:

“The generation that preceded us didn't undergo any change; however, our next generation has experienced some changes. They don't follow their oriental traditions anymore. They do so many different things on their own.”  
(Salamama)

The same reverberation can be heard in this statement. She seems to be concerned about the younger generations not following their traditions any more, which to her means that they are losing their culture. She is also troubled by the independence of the younger generation as the previous generations were more dependent on their elders' customs and traditions. A rule of life states that everyone is caught in the current of change and the more someone resists, the more they are entangled into it. The younger generation of these South Asian Muslim families exhibit a similar pattern; the more the elder generations attempt to hold on to their cultural values, the more resistance they encounter from the younger generations.

Further, the researcher questioned the interviewees on their religious practices:

*How often does your family go to mosque for prayers and Quran lessons?*

An interviewee responded:

“Our elders try to keep us together. If we have to observe prayer, we all assemble and perform it. I try to implement things on my own when I am out. I usually go to the mosque on Friday to read my prayers whereas in other days, I don't find time to take out from my work.” (Kalam)

This quotation underlies a vital problem the South Asian families are facing. They believe that if they fail to protect their family from the influences that could drive them away from their cultural path, it would result in abasement and degradation of the original tradition that they hold dear. Therefore, instead of educating and guiding them, most of the parents adopt strict behaviours towards them, forcing them to stay within the boundaries that had accustomed to in their youth which in turn leads the younger generation to rebel against their adults. They compel them to conform to certain patterns of their culture and when someone breaks away from that established order, they feel hurt, anguished and aggrieved. Their problem of conditioning their children in such a way has been fuelled by their concerns for their children to deviate from the age-long tradition. Therefore, living in an alien culture in a land far away has exacerbated this concern as there is high likelihood of that happening and hence they lay a special emphasis on adhering to the rituals. Secondly, their concerns for keeping their identity intact makes their efforts, in a way, justified. The researcher received a similar answer to the same question by another interviewee. She said:

“We don't get time to go to the mosque for prayers, even Friday ones as we are all at work or at school. I remember going to the mosque to learn to read the Quran when I was younger, but that was a long time ago.” (Aleezeh)

Whereas the third generation from India replied:

“We try to go to the mosque five times a day. I try my utmost to attend the prayers in the mosque.” (Mubeen)

Here, there is a fear of his family culture in the response of this interviewee,

“I try my utmost to attend the prayers in the mosque.”

If the same interviewee was in South Asia, he wouldn't use the word utmost. He wouldn't even think about it because it would be an essential part of his lifestyle so he wouldn't fret over it. Having uprooted from his native place, he has taken it upon himself to adhere to his customs and values so that they don't get ignored.

Over the past two centuries or so, there has been a major change in the family patterns on a global scale, involving the general collapse of the earlier extended family system and its replacement by the new nuclear system. In all industrialized countries, a small and isolated nuclear family is rapidly becoming, or has already become, the norm. Similarly in the developing countries, the extended families are facing disintegration as industrialization advances. As a result, neo-local residences have rapidly replaced patrilocal or matrilocal residences; the idea of polygamy has steadily given way to the idea of monogamy, patriarchal families have become more egalitarian; kinship almost everywhere is less important in social life, and people have come to see marriage more in terms of personal goals and less as an economic arrangement or kinship alliance. This transformation is, of course a general trend, not a hard and fast rule. With a very few exception in form of Indian families, the extended family system was never been dominant in the United States or Canada, even in the days when there were agricultural societies. The nuclear families were fairly common in preindustrial Europe, and some extended families are still to be found in even the most advanced industrial societies. In some parts of the world, the emergence of the nuclear family preceded and probably facilitated industrialization. In the others, the two processes took place more or less simultaneously and yet in the rest industrialization seems to have provoked the later collapse of the extended family. Nevertheless, the overall pattern is unmistakable in industrialized societies; traditional family forms have given way to others that are better suited to the changed conditions of social and economic life.

A family usually serves as a self-contained productive unit in which tasks can be divided amongst the members to ensure the optimum economic cooperation in agriculture, hunting, craftwork, or other means of subsistence. Because every able-bodied member is an economic asset, large families are highly desirable. The extended family also provides many social and personal advantages to its members. If one of them is ill, someone else may take his or her place. If a family member dies, the surviving members are close at hand to give emotional support to the bereaved. The elderly usually have an honourable and respectable role in the extended family and spend their older years in the close company and care of their family.

In an urban environment, there are typical modern industrial societies in which an extended family may become dysfunctional. Life in an industrial society requires geographic mobility; workers must go to their jobs. They can't do so, if kinship obligations tie them to a particular area and prevent prolonged separations from relatives. An industrial society offers a wide range of economic opportunities and an opportunity for people to change their society status. Socially, mobile people can be used for education purposes, personal interests and other life experiences; some members of a family that are traditional and static can not avail such advantages, due to the difference in their financial status. The bonds of common interests between the relatives - who in the extended family would all live more or less the same lives - are therefore loosened and even shattered.

In an urban environment, formal, non-kin organizations, such as corporations, schools, hospitals, governments, welfares, agencies, day-care centres, and media undertake many of the roles that were once the prerogative of the family. As the extended family has less to offer now, people seek a new foundation for married life - close companionship with a single spouse and a deepened appreciation of their children as individuals rather than as productive assets.

Regarding this family I discover a mirrored point of view, according to this

“Family is biggest obstacle is in individual growth. This concept born due to the parents perceived that their children's are their private property. The theory they practice on women and men are different; as for man can remain without losing being a father where else for a woman has to sacrifice to become a mother. All kind of problems occur due to family being a foundation such as, Mental illnesses and social problems which can lead to bottom of nation. All of the above is said by Interviewee of third generation.” (Shiza)

According to her opinion the family is a prison; Parents want to keep control of the children. She suggests that the third generation considers family akin to a prison where children have to grow within its pre-determined bounds. This happens due to the utopian ideas of first generations about an ideal model of a perfect family which to this generation has outlived its values. That is why family has to understand that the race and religion play an important part in shaping a child within a family. Such a Muslim family will bring up their child according to their own notions of a perfect family. This can create limitations for the youngsters to go beyond the cultural barriers and in many cases they may not even realise their actions and knowledge of Islam is not streamlined with the teachings of their religion. She further said that in the South Asian community every parent wants their children to become a doctor or engineer. This ambition of parents is hammered into the child's mind even before they start their nurseries. Each time a child shows weak academic performance and perhaps dis-interest towards a certain subject in the school which is linked with the ambitions of the parents, the child is treated in a manner which damages his/her self-esteem and makes them feel like a failure. Often, children's best results in the other subjects like art, history, etc. is entirely glossed over by the parents and due encouragement is not provided. If every parent would want their child to become president of the country, how many children would actually achieve such an ambition? Hence, it is matters like this that affect the positive development of a child and become a hurdle in the growth of the child within the family.

The background of Shiza is that she was born in the United Kingdom in 1995. She lives with her parents and grandparents. Her parents and grandparents belong to Bangladesh. Her statement showed us a completely different picture through her own perception of her family. If we contrast between the beginning and end of her statement, we can conclude that she was not encouraged in her studies or some area of studies within her family as she mentioned that the family is the biggest obstacle in a child's individual growth. Secondly she feels that she encountered gender based discrimination within which can clearly be derived from her statement that the older generations, regardless of their theoretical notion of a family, treat girls and boys very distinctly in the family in practice i.e they give male offspring more importance than the female ones. Which she finds perplexing as she notices that women in her

family like her mother; sacrifice more in comparison to the men. Due to the diversity of religions, cultures and races, which she encounters in her school or college, she perceives life with her own family like a prison where you have no rights of freedom. She also raised questions about the level of knowledge of Islam within the family. If I analyse this statement in the light of her father Kalam's response when asked if he would allow his children to marry outside the *baradari* and race, her contention about the level of knowledge of Islam within her family becomes very clear. Mr Kalam's response was measured and well thought out, he said that he could consider it provided that the person proposing to my children is a Muslims, however, he would still give preference to someone from his own Bangali community. The marriage within the *baradari* or own tribe is due to cultural reasons and has nothing to do with Islam. To elaborate it more, we will analyse another question posed to her father immediately following the above question. I asked him, " How would you define the liberalism of your family members, regarding religious matters or issues?". He said:

"First we try to understand the other's opinion then make an attempt to convince him. Our Youngsters sometimes flare up but our grownups show their maturity and put up with their attitude."(Kalam)

He says that their youngsters sometime flare up, meaning a huge difference of opinion is found within the family where the elders of this family showed more maturity in their behaviour but imposed their decisions onto the youngsters which leads to the younger generation's perception of family home being like a prison. It also engenders the idea of family being an obstacle in child's individual growth because their treatment of children and disregard for their opinion makes them feel like they are the private property of their parents.

All over the world, a human child is the most helpless entity. It can't sustain long if it isn't given a proper care hence the parents are supposed to stand like a china wall between their Children and all the possible hazards that any child can be exposed to. The UK is no exception. This is a natural process, just as child needs its parents to attend to all its needs such feeding, cleaning, protecting it from the weather elements and illness, parents needs to feel the sense of satisfaction and achievement by having the children after marriage. A mere

consummation doesn't give married partners a sense of completeness, the real satisfaction is achieved when a child is born in the family. It is common knowledge that a mother and child bond is strengthened through the process of breastfeeding and this practice is not a mere exercise to satisfy a child's hunger. The child brings foliage, a glory to a marriage which would otherwise remain arid and a juiceless affair. This parent and child bonding is natural love and sacrifice of parents for their children are unquestionable whereas parents expect, in return, respect and love from their children. Having said that, parents should try to give some of the control away and allow them freedom of choice in their careers and in selection of their spouses.

### **3.3 Generational Gap**

Generation gap is generally considered as something odd, unsettling and a kind of uncomfortable phenomenon for many. People usually don't take easily to anything which they either can't comprehend or feel that it is beyond their comprehension. Generation gap falls into similar kind of category. This topic is mostly discussed amongst the people of older generation with great vehemence which I suppose comes naturally to them albeit with tinge of blissful ignorance to the realities. Life is not static, it is as dynamic as it can possibly be imagined and doesn't follow our rules, ideas and desires. It moves along without any pre-determined plans, pre-arranged things or charted maps. It often moves people out of their own insurmountable impulse to reach the new heights of achievements but human beings don't seem to be capable of curbing their own inhibitions and move out of the rut of following the self made grooves of traditions. Therefore, they come to conflict with life when it doesn't fall in line with their own plans and ambitions. Their narrow views about how they expect the life to behave, encapsulate their entire existence. However, the gravitational pull of reality is constantly there to hurl them back on the earth with a great thud appropriately proportionate their ignorance. Man through his endeavor and experiences has fully realized that his knowledge is very limited – just like a small beam of light showing a little path ahead and beyond that path it is complete darkness. Whatsoever the man knows and howsoever he knows it, he can never really become all knowledgeable. Nature, universe and the potential to learn new knowledge that has to offer is far greater than the man's capacity so tiny that to

claim to conceive or to develop knowledge of everything –past, present and future- seems to be utterly foolish. The more the man learned, the more he became aware that the knowledge that was deemed cutting edge, has become obsolete today - bordering on ignorance even. What about today's knowledge? Perhaps tomorrow this too will become ignorance. Truth is so slippery in its nature that what was supposed to be the truth yesterday is nothing but ashes of memory. New people will keep becoming the vanguard of their era to herald the newly discovered facts and realities of their time. Older people can't really understand what it means to be contemporary unless they keep up with the inexorable march. This is where the generational gap stems from.

Since specialization in every walk of life is a growing trend and that the total perspective of life is lacking in its proportion, a new phenomenon is arising that we know as the generational gap. In this situation, each individual seems to know his or her own role but blissfully unaware about the overall theme of this ongoing drama – that is life. Our progress in science, technology and other branches of knowledge has led to formation of a dividing line amongst the three generations. During the pre-industrialization days, this issue was could have been less visible for certain reasons; one of those could be the rural life style. In rural areas, people were given a certain role by their society and the subsequent generations of that person were expected to continue to perform that role. For instance, if a person was a son of a carpenter; he was supposed to follow in the footsteps of his father. He had clarity, a certain shape, he had definite boundary around himself, however modern men are supposed to start from scratch, they have to gauge their capabilities, and they have to create their own path looking into their propensities. They live in vagueness and they are a paragon of individualism. All of these factors have also gradually contributed to the widening of the generational gap.

These differences in the disposition of men can fall into the realms of the generational gap as they set people apart from each other. During the interviews, the researcher asked for their opinions, and one of the interviewees responded:

*What do you understand by the generation gap?*

“I think, a gap is created in generation owing to the developments in science or through the inexorable progress of time thus the gap comes in between the old and new generation.” (Jamil)

That is the simplest and common view prevalent in the masses. They attribute this generation gap to the growth of knowledge and the explosion of a new mechanism in almost every walk of life. In the past most people worked the same or similar standard professions throughout generations, however, with the advent of new technology and the emancipation of women, many new things arose, which the previous generation couldn't keep up with. This also contributed to the generation gap.

“Our second generation does understand our thoughts and feelings, but the third generation definitely doesn't. They don't have enough time to talk to us, as they have school and then they need time off to enjoy themselves. We don't like to disturb them, as we don't want to upset or annoy them. Yes, definitely, because our grandchildren are being brought up in the UK culture, and over here there are many different faiths and cultures, which our Children are seeing. No there is no gender discrimination in our family. Islam does not permit this.” (Jamil)

Let's try to analyze this statement with the psychological aspects that could possibly have influenced the circumstances that determined the whole situation. They say good questions carry in their wake good answers. When the researcher further inquired about the generation gap, interviewees gave the following responses to the question below:

*Do you think that there is a generation gap within your family?*

“Yes, there is.” (Kalam)

*Do you think that your previous or next generations understand your thoughts?*

“There is a difference in their thoughts; hence they have detached from us with regards to their practical cares. Everyone is entrenched in their pattern of thinking that leads them to believe that what he or she thinks is correct, be it me or my children or my parents. We all tend to believe that we are right on our own.” (Kalam)

The interviewee is acknowledging the existence of the generation gap and he explains that it is due to their work, as their financial and economic pattern of life is quite different from their parents or grandparents. He said, “they have detached from us with regards to their practical cares”. In the cycle of men’s endeavour, the struggle for their livelihood takes up enormous amount of their time and effort. It determines a lot of their habits, thinking process and the social circles that they interact with. Their lives are dotted with frequent hardship and catastrophes, hence they are more modest. The next interviewee is from the second generation and when she was asked about it, she put forth a couple of things.

*Do you think that there is a generation gap within your family?*

“No, I don’t think so.” (Saima)

*Do you think that your previous or next generations understand your thoughts?*

“I think, our present generation gets things right. They make judicious decisions and take good steps. They understand things better than our previous generations.” (Saima)

This is the exceptional opinion that disturbs all of the generalization about many different issues. This interviewee does not feel that there is any generation gap in her family. In her statement, it is evident that she can’t see any gap arising between her and her family but soon after her refutation, she concedes the fact that her present generation is quicker at analysing situations, reaching appropriate decisions and seizing the opportunities. This response leads to the inference that there exists a chasm between the two generations that allows one to

reinterpret the current circumstances according to their growing knowledge and in so doing, precludes the ingrained ideas of the previous generation, which is burdened with its old knowledge and is unable to comprehend the advancing technology and knowledge. “They make judicious decisions and take good steps.” This statement reflects discretion and the initiative taken by their younger generation and shows their adaptability within their environment. “They understand things better than our last generations.” Again, it refers to the undercurrents of the generation gap lying beneath the calm surface of routine.

Another interviewee of the second generation replied:

*What do you understand by the generation gap?*

“I think, the gap between our vision and their thoughts is the generation gap. They take into account everything; they consider the things that are beyond our imagination.”(Uzma)

*Do you think that there is a generation gap within your family?*

“I think there is a wider gap between me and my parents whereas there is a small generational gap between my parents and my grandparents. The reason being that they used to marry at an early age hence there used to be only about 20 to 21 years gap amongst them, but the gap in our coming generation is increasing. There are some differences of opinions. They talk through their own experience while we look at the present things and make our decisions. There is a generation gap when it comes to my grandparents but with my parent there isn't as much.”(Uzma)

It is obvious from here statement that she perceives and acknowledges a difference of opinion within her family. She compares herself with her younger generation; she is convinced that her younger generation is quite keen in their observation and makes sound decisions. She

thinks early marriages don't cause a lot of gap, rather the postponement of marriage leads to the formation of the generation gap. Then she talked about the difference of opinion in her home, she feels that the gap between her and her grandparents is wider than the gap between her and her own parents. That lady managed to pin down at least one reason for the generation gap and witnessed it in its fullness. When the same question was asked to the third generation her response was somewhat in contrast:

“Generation Gap is one of the main issues in South Asian Muslim families, because different generations have different views and opinions, therefore they are unable to understand our views and problems, which is why it's pointless to talk to them.”(Aleezeh)

*Do you think that there is a generation gap within your family?*

“Yes, because everyone are of different points of views. It is very difficult for today's generation to get along with the older generation, such as our grandparents due to their extreme views regarding Islam”. (Aleezeh)

Generation gap is one of the main issues in south Asian Muslim families, because different generations have different views and opinions therefore they are unable to understand our views and problems, which is why it is pointless to talk to them. It does make sense to some extent that because of difference in everyone's point of view, it can be very difficult for today's generation to get along with the older generation,

“such as our grandparents due to their extreme views regarding Islam. No, they don't understand us because they have been brought up in a different environment to us, so their thoughts and feelings are very different compared to us. Yes there is a cultural difference as every generation has been brought up in difference cultures.” (Aleezeh)

Let's try to delve a little deeper into this statement with a view to analyse its correlation with

the real-life situations. Truth has a penchant of bringing immense insight to those who make endeavors to seek it. “Generation gap is one of the main issues in South Asian Muslim families”. There is much to see through this statement. Here to jump unto conclusion will become a hindrance to make a discovery of the real substance. This statement has many implications, be it Muslim, Hindu or Christen, the religion is irrelevant in this context. You may or may not be able to change the label but the reality camouflaged behind these words will rear its head time and again. When we distort the meanings of holy books and try to contort them according to our personal desire and whims to suit our own hidden agendas and purpose, things do go berserk. Families with any religious or cultural adjective attached to them tend to exploit their children sometimes. They impose their ideas and ideals on them. They try to shape them according to their own wishes, perhaps with all good intentions but they don’t see that every child is born with their own potential and possibilities. The child sometimes yields to the social pressures and sometimes resists them. If the child happens to be courageous enough, he breaks away from the society and tries to follow his own inner voice which helps him pave his own path. However, here a division comes into the play because a father can’t see what his child is pursuing and a child can’t go against his own intrinsic longings which goad him to actualize his dreams. He is possessed by a mad passion whereas father knows through his wisdom that he may risk his life, he may put everything at a stake in a pursuit of his dreams. At this juncture, all the doors of negotiation seem to shut down because they both lack vision to put this strife to an end.

It is very difficult for today's generation to get along with the older generation, such as our grandparents due to their extreme views regarding Islam. This is strange situation, religious teachings have a tendency to bring two factions or individuals together, they should not become a reason for them to be estranged. Irrespective of any religion, we find people who can go to any length to prove their point. They become so egotistical to prove what they think to be right and what they propound to be the only truth that they exclude every possibility of seeing the truth in other person’s arguments. When they strike up a conversation with any person, they don’t hear what the other person is trying to say, instead they come to the discussion solely to refute others as result of which the gap either persists or creeps in anew. They hold far-fetched and outlandish ideas which the younger generation can’t agree with.

Now when it comes to religion, this fanatical attitude aggravates the situation. They become rigid and adamant. Rather than bringing rational and sound arguments to the conversations, they force the others to believe in what they think to be true. As they get older, this situation gets worse because they lack good arguments to convince their young Children and find themselves at a loss to vindicate their version of the truth or the cause that they commit themselves to.

“Generation gap is continuously increasing; due to our children growing up in this culture. The generation gap between grandparents and grandchildren is due to the cultural development.” (Jamil)

Let’s try to approach this problem with a few questions which are relevant to this issue. These questions and the answers thereof may perhaps offer us a stepping stone to find viable solutions to our problems. Why do grown-up people look upon generational gap as if it were something inimical? Why do they come upon the new generations with all their hammers and chisels to put them right? What factors are involved in accentuating this gap further? Do the young generation need to show maturity towards their elders when it comes to things which grown-up can’t understand unless they experience the same things?

We will start with deliberating upon the statement that one of the interviewees made which mirrors the contemporary situation depicting the general generational gap as illustrated earlier. He reiterates the facts that need a bit of explanation. Why is the gap between the first and the second generation so imperceptible? How did it become so noticeable with one more generation that the person from the first generation felt the urge to highlight is? We find a very sympathetic answer by the interviewee himself. He says:

“The third generation is so occupied in their daily routines that it does not allow them to interact with their grandparents more regularly”. (Shams)

On the surface of it, this answer looks very valid but if you go a bit deeper into it, you will find that the third generation has succeeded in getting out of the domineering grip of the past, the whole patriarchy which thrusts everything down their Children’ throats. They are more

averse of the grown-ups because their ideals are not compatible with their ambitions and desires. They don't have enough time to talk to us, as they have school and then they need time off to enjoy themselves. We don't like to disturb them, as we don't want to upset or annoy them. This statement needs to be penetrated more deeply for it proposes a very fragile argument to contend with. Why has it become so necessary to let the things be as they are, why did they fail to create a friendly vibe around themselves which possesses such an hypnotic power that could flock the children around them? Partly on account of grown-ups and partly on account of younger generation, this gap is becoming too wide. Both of these generations share the responsibility in further widening it. Off course, as time glided by, it has left indelible imprints on the shores of our world, transpiring something good as well as equally aiding the emergence of rather less palatable ideas and issues. Our progeny should be able to hold on their own and be themselves but when they rebel against their fathers as it happens while the time takes its course and children of yesterday become the adolescents of today, they should pay due regard to the feelings of their fathers since they have come from them. Just as the young should be considerate to their parents, parents should also give them sufficient freedom to make their choices and provide them with confidence and comfort to grow into responsible adults. So just as the rights are assigned to both parties, responsibility also rests with the both.

“If I look back at the things, I feel, there were more gaps between my father, and me however, that rift is abating. Our progeny has grown in more intimacy with us. Earlier, We couldn't conceive the idea that my father would come back home and we could utter anything in his presence and I had never seen my dad and mom together anywhere whereas here relations are more open.” (Shams)

This interviewee acknowledges the fact that the distance existed during families earlier during their era, is coming to an end but he could not adequately shed light on the reasons of its cessation. Something that has held sway over such a long period of time, has started dissolving or perhaps has petered out completely. The ascendancy of the patriarchy lost its

roots and things began to take a turn for better. The breakdown, in its wake, brought a breakthrough in human relationships. The father slipped out of the old skin of his overbearing role and moved into the direction of friendly relationship. Before the disintegration of patriarchy, children used to be more close to their uncles. They would be there confidants, they would share their private things with them, confide their secrets to them instead of their dads.

“Earlier, We couldn’t conceive the idea that my father would come back home and we could utter anything in his presence and I had never seen my dad and mom together anywhere.” (Kalam)

This statement needs to be looked into from different angles. The account he gave of his dad’s presence, has reverberations in almost all of the cultures. The whole society would think along those lines as somewhere during their life, people would have had such experiences regardless of what culture they belong to. We could feel the ardor of awe through this interviewee’s words, a strained silence reigning in the house, a kind of fear pervades in the atmosphere just as the arrival of the father back home becomes imminent. Everything would go upside down, Children would stop their activities and sit in a silence without any display of clumsiness or chaos but with the passage of time, these traditions and feelings gave way. There were few things during those times that reek of man’s irrational domination. In order to teach civility and propriety, children need to be controlled by parents, but the practice to subjugate the women and treat her like one’s own property, reducing them into a subhuman state is an act of appalling cruelty by men. The influx of industry and wealth brought this age to its termination and gave birth to a new era. The new epoch weeded out those woolly ideas and put an end to all past customs without much resistance. There is a saying, “old habit die-hard” so it took a little while for the man to adjust his attitude with the changing times.

*So do you feel that since you have been here, it has bridged that gap between generations or do you feel that it is happening due to the influence of the British culture or this phenomenon is completely ubiquitous?*

“I think, it is taking place everywhere. It had already started to take shape there but in our generation that gap has been healed very quickly.” (Uzma)

It is very significant to note that people all around the world were embroiled in this unhealthy division, which was the natural outcome of this whimsical patriarchy. By the time it loosened its grip on the people, the society had already suffered too much at their hands. The gap is finally getting shelved by the next generation which behaves more sensibly and doesn't prove to be relentless again. They, unlike their parents, showed more leniencies towards their Children. Gradually, their views about the womenfolk underwent great metamorphosis and the woman now has come to be looked upon very differently.

*Who do you think understands you most, the previous generation or the next generation or the generation next to this one?*

“I think, my immediate generation has more understanding towards me and hopefully, our coming generations will follow the suite. The gap that is healed has provided more opportunities.” (Uzma)

*your younger generation understands you more, May I make this judgment?*

“yes, they do however they keep their own thoughts as well.” (Uzma)

Every individual will blossom into their own unique way provided s/he is given good opportunities to be independent and eventually hold on their own in life. This world will look bizarre if each person fits exactly into the mould of the old generation. Although it would make the world very symmetrical but on the other hand it would certainly not remain natural anymore. This interviewee almost seems to be making an invocation that this tradition should perpetuate and their progeny may not settled down owing to the fear their fathers. One thing in this statement is worth writing in golden letters that the older generation doesn't hold in abhorrence the coexistence of one's own private notion of being according to one's time and hence results in better appreciation of older generation by their offs rings. It denotes the possibility of convergence from either generation because now they can interact freely without any inhibitions, incredulity or mistrust. Maintaining their individuality and personal

and private space, neither will the grown-up have to keep Children at bay nor will the younger generation feel themselves alienated because they encounter a different reality of the same shared world

### **3.4 Role of Islam in Muslim families**

The family system lays a special emphasis on the human relationships. Family in Islam has a central place as it nurses the culture and passes on education and fosters a child's talent through inculcation of morals and proper training. The teachings of Islam emphasise the importance of the value of family through a natural interpretation of family that appeals to the human nature. The responsibilities of a fond guardian towards their children are very well described in the Quran. Similarly the duties of a child are defined as well, it explains at length the obligation laid down by the religion for the husband towards his wife and at the same time it enjoins the women to fulfil their task with sincerity. Motherhood carries a great significance in Islam, the woman pregnant with a child is seen with great reverence and she is even allowed to miss the necessary duties of religion, which are not supposed to be missed otherwise. Being a father is a great honour and holds an immense responsibility towards one's family. He is responsible for taking care of all their physical as well as emotional needs and provide for their future until they attain economic and emotional maturity. Though children are not given any hard and fast duties, they are still expected to respect and obey their elders and learn from them. They are supposed to stay silent and are expected not to utter even a single word if their parents become unhappy with them or disliked any of their actions. This is aimed at inculcating a sense of respect and reverence for their parents. Their regard of the grown-ups has become almost a part of culture thus we can make an inference that Islam strongly encourages its followers to stay together and is like a thread binding the family members together. It doesn't neglect the basic rights of the members of the family and lays special insistence on their fulfilment. It demands its followers to live peacefully and not to create divisions amongst themselves.

*Do you think there is any gender discrimination within your family?*

“In our family, boys achieve their independence as soon as they hit their puberty, but we get our girls married at that age and this custom is still ongoing.”(Shams)

*Do you think your family is following the Islamic family system?*

“Veil is observed strictly in our family, Even my sister-in-law makes it incumbent upon herself to observe veil with us. We do adhere to all the Islamic values that are fundamental.” (Shams)

This answer was from an interviewee who belongs to the first generation. It shows the devotion of people amongst the various age groups towards their religion. They cling hard to their customs and don't ignore them at all. They may not get any monetary benefit from it but they find a sense of fulfilment when they perform their religious rituals. To the Muslims around the globe, Islam is a beacon of guidance as it gives the moral code that allows them to struggle for their economic and social rights within the restraint ordained by the religion. Therefore, to engender a sense of morality amongst the family members and help them maintain moral boundaries can be considered amongst the reasons behind the necessity of religion in any society. Institutions in any society are inherently conservative. Patterns of social behaviour become institutionalized, or securely established only when they have been reinforced by customs and traditions to the point where they are accepted almost without any question. People tend to resent and resist any attack on the institution they know. (Imagine, for example, the likely response in Pakistan to a serious attempt to abolish the family, to end compulsory schooling, to replace existing mosques with new cults, or to apply communist principles to the economy) This resistance to change is often functional, because it can ensure social stability, but in times of social conflicts or rapid changes, a slow response may be dysfunctional if the old forms have become outmoded, ineffectual, or even oppressive. All institutions have arisen over time as people develop social responses to the particular needs of their society. In Asian societies, religion is an important institution directly affecting the lives of the majority of the population who participate in various religious activities. Three out of

four Pakistanis report that they discuss religion frequently. National television networks devote an average of twenty-four hours a week to religious coverage of Islam, and events like the Eid-ul-Adha, Muharram or other religious programs and an event like Ramadan may attract as many as 100 million viewers. The religious section of South Asian newspapers is typically longer than the section on economics and sports and is by far the most popular part of the paper. In fact, it is the only section that millions of Pakistanis ever read. Clearly religion is not a trivial aspect of Indo-Pak people's lives.

Like any other institution, religion serves various social functions. It provides organized leisure activities in a society; it offers opportunities for spiritual exercise; it provides its famous saints, role models whose successes, skills and determination are held up for emulation. One reason Americans view sports so favourably is that it embodies some highly regarded values: perseverance, discipline, forgiveness, compassion and love.

An Interviewee was asked:

*How often does your family go to the mosque for prayers and other Quran lessons?*

“Our elders try to keep us together. If we have to observe prayer, we all assemble and perform it. I try on my own to implement things when I am out. I usually go to mosque on Friday to say my prayers whereas on the other days, I am unable to take time out of work”. (Mubeen)

This interviewee tries to fulfil his duties towards his religion. He does his utmost to observe the basic demands so as to propitiate his God. He makes time for religion even if he is engrossed in some activity. He believes in preaching of the good and refraining from the bad and often attempts to dissuade his fellow-beings from what he perceives to be wrong. He participates extensively in his community activities, organizations, charities, Friday prayer and other religious congregations. When it comes to training a child, Islam offers the parents the most educative method to raise them according to sound principles of its doctrine.

Therefore, the Muslims' child-rearing practices are chiefly concerned with teaching principles of behaviour and helping children to decide for themselves how to act in accordance with those principles. They tend to focus on teaching children to obey the rules and stay out of trouble.

British-Muslims are in minority and are a self-conscious group with a strong sense of unity. They tend to feel a strong affinity with one another and Islam gives them a sense of common identity which is often so strong that differences within the group become submerged into a common loyalty to the people.

*Do you think your family will allow youngsters to marry out of 'baradari', out of culture or tribe, if yes, state why and if not give a reason?*

“After a long pause.. He replied yes we could consider if they are Muslim but we prefer to our Bangali community.” (Kalam)

By choice or necessity, members of a minority group generally marry within their own group. Nevertheless this interviewee from the second generation nods in affirmation and doesn't see any trouble in getting his daughter married out of his culture, yet there are many people who don't think the same as him. The researcher further asked him a couple of questions to elicit his response about the tolerance level of his family with regards to religious matters.

*How would you define the liberalism of your family members, regarding religious matters or issues?*

“First we try to understand the other's opinion then make an attempt to convince him. Our Youngsters sometimes flare up but our grownups show their maturity and put up with their attitude.”(Kalam)

Islam never objects or denounces an individual as an apostate just because his understanding contradicts Islamic doctrines, but encourages its followers to interpret Islam's doctrine in light of true reason and syllogism, rather than adapting its meaning according to one's own whims and petty desires. It deplors desires that appear clothed in reasoning but create schism amongst Muslims. In the Muslim world, there are a good range of scholars, philosophers, mystics and scientists, exploring the world and attempting to conquer it rather than fearing the worldly unknowns. In the Quran, there are a lot of verses inspiring its readers to seek the treasures of the earth and the mysteries of the sky, however in some families when a child deviates from the usual path of his ancestors, they often charge him with apostasy and obstruct themselves from understanding his point of view and start persecuting him which results in an outrageous rebellion. Therefore a child grows more stubborn in his ideas. Sometimes, children are more aligned with reality than adults, they are more adjusted with the current circumstances, but the elders, being entrenched in their ideas, don't see their viewpoint and debar every possibility of understanding and bridging the gap. In this case, the elders display great discretion and size up the situation quickly; they don't react in resentment or anger but instead attempt to calm down the situation by listening to the youngsters and then explaining to them where they went wrong.

*In your family group discussions, are all family members allowed to have a difference of opinion?*

“We share our opinion overtly and we are allowed to have opinion no matter how different it may happen to be. There is no difficulty in manifesting one's opinion in our family. It is another matter whether they accept it or not, but they do listen.”(Uzma)

Another interviewee gave this answer. In her family, everybody is privileged and elated to have his or her own opinion. This is not something which is commonly observed in conservative families where the usual tendency is to curb other people's opinion. However in this particular family, they give each individual his or her own freedom of thinking and

assume it to be of a higher value. “We share our opinion overtly.” This statement reflects the respect for everybody’s opinion and marks the end of fear in the individual. “We are allowed to have opinion no matter how different it may happen to be.” If children are refused the right to their opinion, they are likely to undergo mental weaknesses, with a notable adverse impact on the level of their confidence. “There is no difficulty in manifesting one’s opinion in our family. It is another matter whether they accept it or not but they do listen.” This statement reinforces the same theme. It again enhances and highlights their maturity in understanding the psychology of the youth. They disapprove every modus operandi that doesn’t allow integrity to the individual and looks harmful to their growth.

*How often does your family sit together and discuss family and other issues?*

“We often sit together, especially, when we have to make any important decision so we take everyone’s advice. We discuss all the important things together.” (Aleezeh)

Islam persuades its followers to pay a particular heed to the pros and cons of every matter before a final decision is reached. It encourages them to ask everyone’s opinion, consult those in the know and win their trust before making any major or minor decision in life, not only to weigh up the weigh up the potential consequences as an individual but also any repercussions for the family as a whole. “We discuss all the important things together.” This statement implies joint family discussions and consultation which is an indicative of the family unity and ultimately instils a sense of self worth in all family members.

*How do you describe the attitude of your elders or Youngsters regarding family matters?*

“Our elders assume a more sober and polite attitude towards family matters than our Youngsters. In comparison to elders, our younger generation takes on air of conceit.” (Mubeen )

The attitudes of grown-ups towards the problems that confront them need to correspond to the maturity of their age as they will set a trend for the younger generation to follow. Therefore, it is necessary for them to respond to such issues adequately with a great display of moral values that could spur the youth to take initiative. Family matters need special kind of treatment. Elder members of the family must show prudence in resolving family matters amicably in a way that it reflects their valuable practical experience. More so, because the youth owing to their inexperience, may not come up with good ideas and hence they may take a naive view of the issues at hand. A great Muslim saint once said, "I like the sagacity of the grown-up than the vigour of the youth. It's quite obvious that the passion of the young is blind unless it is yoked with wisdom."

*What's your view on the role of Islam in strengthening a family system?*

"I think, Islam plays a fundamental role in keeping the family together but the onslaught of European culture is colossal therefore we fail to imbue Islamic culture in our family. Our Children don't go to any Islamic school, but they move about in market places, they are integrated into this society and they encounter a totally different milieu altogether." (Kalam)

An interviewee from the second generation thus responded when he was asked about the role of Islam in consolidating a family system. He affirmed the role of Islam in joining people together and keeping them within the bound of its edicts. On the other hand, he feels distressed when he finds his children under the influence of the European culture, which is diametrically opposed to that of his own. His culture has different values, moral standards, traditions, which he feels necessary to be adopted by his children. However, his Children were raised in a different society which doesn't carry the same customs. Thus, there arises a difficulty as the parents demand that their children fit into the social and economic pattern which is more familiar to the older generation. Children on the other hand, don't have any inkling of the past of their elders and the only culture and customs they are largely familiar with have grown up within is British. Therefore, we see tendencies of rebellion amongst the

younger generation against their parents. “The onslaught of European culture is colossal therefore we fail to imbue Islamic culture in our family.” Their concern is becoming acute as they are unable to completely enforce their own values and find it difficult to cope with the situation. “Islam plays a fundamental role in keeping the family together.” They resort to the Islamic teachings which provide them with a common ground to ensure that they stay together in harmony.

All of the family members should follow the teachings of Islam. Our religion teaches us that there should not be any discrimination nor any injustice with any family member and everyone should be humble with one another and show respect to everyone in their interactions.

There are many things that are taken for granted until they disappear from our lives. For instance, if you were sitting in a room and all the air from that particular room was sucked out instantly, it would perhaps be the first time for you to realize the significance of fresh air. Hence, anything which we become over-familiarized with tends to lose its importance to us. Similarly, people who once lived in South Asian countries had the tendency to pay less attention to their traditions and customs while they were back in their country of origin. However, when they migrated abroad, they encountered the identity crisis and became more conscious of their religion, culture and traditions. The teachings of Islam, their religion in this case, provided them with support and comfort to fall back on and reinvigorated their thoughts to deal with the issues cropping up from settling into a new culture. They leaned back on their tradition to seek support and to identify themselves with it. They held on to their culture since they were at a loss to figure out this problem of identity. They took it upon themselves to abide by their cultural norms which they re-discovered in a foreign land. The idea of following the Islam in its true spirit may not have struck them before with such force when they were at their homelands but now it would have a deep impact on their soul and stir a new yearning to find out the true meaning of their lives. The honesty of their intentions, the sincerity of their desires and the zest of their actions can be seen in the glow of their being. Now all of them try their best to follow the Islamic Family system.

I will elaborate each statement. They look so simple but they are impregnated with immense insights into life. Why don't they just try? Why do they have to try their best to follow the Islamic family system? Why does this struggle exist? They owe their identity to their tradition therefore they are clinging hard to it. They have to explore, acquire, profess their identity and remember who they are. They can't grope in the dark any longer. They have to search for the earth beneath their feet. They don't feel grounded anymore hence a great urge arises to create a definite boundary around themselves. If they are within the boundaries of our faith, then there should not be any problem. I know that in the past many people were strictly against marrying their children out of *baradari* as they were not very well educated. But now that they are better educated, they understand that marrying within *baradari* is perhaps not the best of ideas as far as the physical health and genetic well being of their off-springs is concerned.

People tend to have very outlandish and far-fetched ideas about faith. Faith suggests a state wherein a person submits totally to his or her God and carries a great trust in God. Perhaps a Great Russian novelist had a glimpse of such a man when he makes this comment, "Happy is the person who doesn't care whether it is summer or winter." A man of faith relishes every season whether it is summer or winter, he never complains and these are the traits of such a person. Now when you suggest matches for your children, do you ask the boy if he has an implicit faith in God? May be not! However, there are a few things that are ascertained beforehand whether the boy is well-educated, in a good profession and earns a comfortable living. If matches were sought on the basis of religious adherence, i.e. upon ensuring that the spouses remain within the boundaries of faith, only sages would be able to qualify this test.

Idiocy knows no limits. There was a time when people had never thought of marrying their son and daughter outside the confinements of their *baradari*. No one could persuade them that marrying out of their *baradari* isn't illegitimate or illogical and the only way they knew was to find spouses for their children within their own immediate family. Only history knows where this convention originates from. Only recently when their children went out of their

locality and mingled with other people, they felt compelled to marry them off because their children took fancy to other people as well. The reason as to why they started to marry outside their immediate family may be that medical science suggests that it is not very wise to marry with your first cousins. Another reason found in their statement is that they are more aware of the ways of world and therefore, they are no longer reluctant to marry outside our family. These trends are quite positive. They show a rise in people awareness. Ignorance has no beginning but it has an end whereas awareness has a beginning but it has no end. Once you have crossed that boundary, it is a point of no return; you can't go back. Such trends are infectious; they tend to grow more and more. Such awareness has simplified everybody's life. People are supposed to ponder upon each single issue likewise perhaps more doors will open for them.

“Islam plays an important role in providing a strong family structure, as it informs the parents about their roles in a family as well as the role of the children. This holds the family together, as it teaches us to respect one another. I believe that Islam is the only religion that teaches such values to its followers. Due to Islamic teachings, we all hold a high level of respect for each other regardless of the fact that we all have different views.”  
(Slamama)

I will try to explain the first part of this statement with help of a parable found in the holy Quran. It states that Abraham a.s. (the messenger of God) had a vision about sacrificing his son Ismael. He recounts his dream to his son. Upon hearing the dream, Ismael responds in such a way which may appear quite naive to the modern man. He says, I am ready to be sacrificed on the behest of God. My point in narrating this parable is that religion combines its followers into the beautiful harmony of a family. It instills sense of responsibility and draws out love for each other. In the aforementioned parable, the father didn't exhort his son to make sacrifice; the son himself takes an initiative. It isn't just a story of obedience or the submission to the will of God, rather it draws our attention to the overflowing love exhibited by the son. This is because obedience is more like a duty and duty may seem to be a

cumbersome chore like act. We don't love our parents because it is our duty to take care of them; we care them out of our sheer love for them. If religion hadn't inculcated such values, man would have reduced their relations to mere bargaining of the marketplace. Religion has given us basis to erect the edifice of our family homes with enriching emotions.

Here I am reminded of a novel "the Mother" by Maxim Gorky. The story unfolds the complex relationship of a mother and a son. The son becomes a political activist of a labor party in Russia. He renounces his religion and strives to achieve his ends. His mother is a catholic Christian and sticks to her religious views. He never tries to convert her on his principles and shows respect to her God, in spite of his diametrically opposed standpoint. The mother helps her and pours her heart out to him.

I have broached these two stories in order to show how religion and literature around the world pave the way for the foundations of the family. It isn't just a game of chance that we see the institution of family to remain intact even after the emergence of industrialization. Religion has contributed much to hold this institution together; we come across a lot of precepts, tenets and utterances about the significance of family in all religious texts. Islam has explained in detail what each individual in a family is supposed to do. It has enumerated to its followers the commands that they are obliged to follow if they wish to achieve the good pleasure of God. It always reminds them that if they follow its tenets with its spirit, they will never run the risk of being misguided and left to the mercy of turbulence of the circumstance.

"I believe that Islam is the only religion that teaches such values to its followers." It is crass ignorance on the part of this interviewee or perhaps the prejudices have blinded him to the teachings of the other religions since they contain copious examples in their holy books about the significance of the family. "Due to Islamic teachings, we all hold a high level of respect for each other regardless of the fact that we all have different views." Islam gives especial stress in its ideology as to how a Muslim ought to behave. It exhorts its followers to be kind, sympathetic and loving to each other. They should be upright in their dealings, give priority to their promises, and never be unjust in their measures during trade or transactions. They should

hold each other's families in respect. They should observe a proper sense of propriety when they to meet their elders. Elders are decreed to be considerate to their youngsters. Muslims always look at their past, particularly at the examples of the righteous who passed before them, to seek knowledge of how to be up right their religion. Islam has always been their source of knowledge. Their family structures, their laws, their culture is guided by their holy book and the meritorious character of their Prophet. They follow the footsteps of the virtuous people gone by. They shun the contact of the modern world since it offers allurements to the decadent life style. The Islamic family structure doesn't correspond with the whole of the modern existence that focuses on immediate gratification and promotes superficial hedonistic life style driven by the desires of material possession.

This interviewee conceded that his family still emulates the Islamic family structure.

Researcher: *What do you think your family following the Islamic Family system?*

“We try to be a good Muslim but we may not fulfill all of its criteria.”  
(Mubeen)

The ideals set forth by the religion look very difficult to achieve to the modern men. They can't seem to refrain from many recreational activities and temptations that the religion forbids its followers. They easily give in to mere empty and shallow amusements. Eat, live and be merry has become their whole philosophy of life. They can live by the bread alone since they feel disgusted with the whole subject of soul. They can't even raise themselves above the allurements of this pompous world, let alone adopt an austere lifestyle. This interviewee appears to be repentant. He shows a scruple of conscience on account of lagging behind in his religious obligations imposed upon him by God. His earnest efforts to discharge his religious obligations hold manifestation in his remark. He strives to be a good Muslim but encumbered with other world duties, he finds it difficult to keep abreast. Muslims are supposed to offer five times prayers, fast in Ramadan, give charity to the poor, go the city of Makkah to perform hajj if they can afford it. These are their basic duties and we can't debar

the possibility that there are times when one can't perform them owing to various reasons best known to the person. Nonetheless, if anyone feels contrite, God says, I am the most compassionate and the most forgiving. If one repents bitterly on one's misdeeds and mends his ways for the better thereafter, he will be crowned with forgiveness by God. Knowledge of ignorance itself heralds the end of it. Similarly if a realization of the enormity of one's wrong doings dawns upon oneself, he can take steps to redress them.

*What are the things wherein you outdo the others or you don't happen to see them in other families?*

“By the grace of God, there is an Islamic milieu around us, our women observe veil keenly, they don't mingle and mix with strangers, and similarly, I expect that my daughter in-law should imitate them. Veneration and reverence are paramount considerations in our family; our children never talk to us loudly. The way we behave to our parents just as our children learn to behave from us, though there is some space to argue.” (Shams)

The Islamic tradition is passed on from one generation to the other. People have been conforming to it for ages and adhere to their Prophet's way of life. People try to create immaculate, pristine family environment in order to develop their children's moral character. From the religious standpoint, it is necessary that Muslim women should observe the veil, keep distance from un related decadent men and preserve their chastity. Adultery is the outrageous transgression either by a man or woman. Quran and the messenger of God both have condemned such people who commit these sins therefore God issued the decree that men should control, regulate or restrain their carnal desires.

### **3.5 Cultural influences**

History has witnessed birth and demise of many cultures and civilizations. These changes also happened to the South Asian British Muslims' families in the emerging culture in the UK. Culture is the total way of life of a society; by learning one's culture, the human becomes a fully social being something that differentiates them from other animals.

Without culture transmitted from the past, each new generation would always have to go back to the drawing board to “re-solve” the most preliminary problems to preserve their existence. They would be obliged to re-devise a family system, to re-invent a language, to re-discover fire, to re-create a wheel and so on. The human energy would have to be engaged in remaking things; it would lose the permanency and would have to trace back the stages that it would, hitherto, had stepped on to reach their contemporary culture.

These statements by the interviewees indicate the phenomenon of emerging culture and in its wake, the changes that have taken place.

*What is your opinion about the role of emerging culture in the family system in the UK?*

“This emerging culture has undermined our family system. This culture doesn’t allow our younger generation to respect our old generation hence I conclude that it has deteriorated it.” (Salamama)

This interviewee clearly bemoans the rising of a new culture and deplores the ensuing degeneration of a family structure. She condemns the new culture as it gives the youth far too much latitude and prevents them from understanding the moral values that demand the observance of its civility. All these things make her believe that this emerging culture has ruined the younger generation.

*How do you describe the attitude of your elders or youngsters regarding family matters?*

“I receive more cooperation from my elders than my youngsters. I have to maintain a gap between me and my youngsters but I can be friendly with my elders.”(Uzma)

This interviewee belongs to the second generation; hence she is suspended in the middle of the two estranged generations who can’t see any affinity between themselves. She finds the

spirit of cooperation more in the elders than the youngsters in family matters. Youngsters tend to ignore the grim matters, which require sincerity of wishes, honesty of thoughts and enthusiasm for action in order to be sorted out. They are absorbed either in their studies or in some petty amusement in an attempt to forget the weight of the educational tasks that are laid down upon them.

*How often does your family sit together and discuss family and other issues?*

“It rarely happens. Our hectic routines don’t let us get together. My schedule is quite persistent. My parents in law have other activities and children are busy in their education. We don’t find much time to sit together and discuss things. Besides, this cultural influence is beyond the scope of being manipulated. It can’t be controlled.”(Uzma)

Generally, living is mainly the pursuit of food, clothes and shelter. People are consumed in seeking the fulfilments of their physical needs whilst placing their mental and spiritual needs in abeyance. This interviewee is unable to make time for her family due to being under unrelenting work pressure and her parents keep themselves busy in other activities. Children are mostly busy in their education, consequently they can’t make time to see each other, thereby they are totally unaware of each other’s problems.

When the same question was asked to the third generation the response was:

“The main issue within Muslim families is the cultural difference between family members. The eldest generation such as our grandparents have been brought up in a Pakistani environment, whereas our parents have been brought up in a mixed environment. On the other hand, we have been brought up in a British culture, so we are British Muslims, not Pakistani Muslims. Our elders fail to understand this difference in upbringing. They are always trying to enforce Pakistani culture upon us, but that culture is of no use to us. Our

British culture fits in better within today's society. I believe that our elders need to be able to differentiate between Pakistani culture and Islam. They tend to mix the two up, which causes a lot of difference of opinion. So, until they understand the differences in our cultural upbringing, our family bonds will not be strengthened.” (Aleezeh)

This cultural influence is beyond being manipulated, it can't simply be controlled. The Men, having achieved their cultural norms, struggle to preserve it through social unity. South Asian British Muslims are spread throughout England and the onslaught of different cultural milieu has disrupted their thinking and succeeded in making varying impressions on them. This vulnerability of human beings made way for an emerging culture. In previous ages, men used to live in an isolated way; hence they weren't swept away by the rising of different cultures whereas now each culture is struggling hard to retain its originality. When people of several countries mingle and merge with one another, they go through a phase of mutation. The old values are hardly adequate; the conservative and fanatic attitude is unable to serve its purpose anymore. They are to be studied afresh. This new phenomenon is arising almost everywhere around the world. The mobility of people's work and trade has allowed them to explore the world to gain experience and knowledge on a large scale. Consequently, a new amalgamated culture emerged that instilled tolerance in men and gave them a chance to dissolve their unreasonable enmity and grow in unity and brotherhood. Just as there are certain positive things with the emergence of this culture, a few negative outcomes are also a by product of this process. It has undermined the foundations of the old culture, which was a great source of inspiration for its adherents. This rising culture is posing new challenges to the old world and perplexing the already confused men to face a world that demands fresh vision and outlook to solve its riddles and problems. Old philosophies and ideas are proving insufficient to deal with the complex economy, the ever-impending dangers of atomic wars, and appalling problems of our over-crowded cities and colossal problems that come with it. Cultures were born in the pre-industrialist age so the learned responses gained in those ages cannot help in dealing with the challenges met in the current daily lives.

*There are several other cultures in London from all over the world, do you think, they have caused any influence on your culture?*

“I think it has broken down our culture. I personally feel that human beings crave for freedom; however Islamic teachings restrain us whereas this emerging culture allows us this freedom. On one hand, we take pride to be Muslims but on the other hand, we want our freedom as well. When Islam enjoins us to do certain things, we retreat ourselves, and then our reservations come in.”(Shams)

The strict puritanical ethics had reigned all over the world till the dawn of the industrial era. This morality was based on the super-natural sanctions and was superseded by the natural explanations of facts by scientists. This new culture had created an epicurean view of morality. People don't fear their wrongdoings, they are only cautious. Greed, acquisition of power through underhand means, jealousy, competition, and ambitions were held in abhorrence. Monks and ascetics would meditate on cleansing themselves from the dirt of corporeal and mundane affairs. Sexual relationships were confined within the marriage to preserve a healthy motherhood. Now, people have adopted a precept of Epicurus; live, eat and be merry. They don't take care of moral conducts; instead they judge these as contemptible actions. Again, the interviewee lodged a disintegrating complaint. They were taught to revere certain things whereas now they see them so rarely that a silent misery penetrates their hearts. The culture of the South Asian Muslim elder generation holds so much importance to them that when they witness it losing its hold on their children, it causes them to blame the British culture. Human beings crave for freedom; however, Islamic teachings restrain us within certain boundaries, whereas this emerging culture affords us this freedom. Human beings have chaotic desires, they are naturally rebellious. They dislike being ruled by anyone. The more careless their state is, the more free they feel. Religions have sanctioned certain factors that are deemed destructive by them. Religion stresses the idea of love, brotherhood, and compassion, restrains the carnal desire, forbids the wrongdoings and emphasizes the need to

eliminate violence. This interviewee gives us a clear reference to the anarchic nature of human beings and their longing for a free reign, without having to be conscious of their actions. However, religion foresees the consequences that will entail complexities. On one hand, they take pride in being Muslims, but on the other, they want their unbridled freedom as well. The above interviewee is making a reference to South Asian Muslims who lack moral strength but wish to earn a good repute without having to perform charity and good works as required by Islam. When Islam enjoins them to do certain things, they retreat and tep back allowing doubts to creep into their mind. Religion demands a total surrender; it is prerequisite of any religion to follow it to its letter and spirit. Unless total submission can take place, one can live only on the periphery and will never touch the core, the essence of its teachings. These people take part in worship and prayers; nonetheless they commit violence, cherish violent thoughts, and lead a bestial existence which is never in tune with the religion's true teachings.

*Do you think there is a difference in the lifestyle of your elders and youngsters in the family, if yes please explain?*

“I think it isn't the same. The youngsters are more busy and steep in so many affairs. Our elders are more content, they are perhaps less ambitious. They have a more relax, leisurely lifestyle while our younger generation wants to fill itself with a lot of stuff, hence they need to make more efforts.”

(Saima)

Migration always leaves permanent imprints on the minds of people who seek a new place of refuge. If there are huge discrepancies between the place they used to inhabit and the place they moved to, the differences are permanently imprinted on their lives. They are forced to fall back onto the culture where they have made their abode so they attempt to retain their lifestyles, their habits, their manners, their ethics, and their religion. However, changes are gradually creeping over them as they are also exerting their influence on the other people. So it is more or less a reciprocal process.

Grownups are less impressionable than their young. Children's minds are pliable, they get impressed with new knowledge and methods and therefore adopt them rapidly. Their elders on the other hand remain rigid in their behaviour. The first generation of South Asian British Muslims, upon arriving in the UK must have recoiled into their cultures. They must have realised that the British culture is poles apart from their own. It must have taken them some time to accustom themselves with the new culture. Life in England is quite dissimilar to the life in Indo-Pak, but their later generations didn't suffer this rift. As a result, they were able to absorb this culture, language, life-style with ease and didn't feel any unacknowledged setbacks, which their elders faced upon arrival.

"I think, it isn't the same." There seems to be some differences between the elderly and younger generations here. "They are more busy and steep in so many affairs." The younger generation is engrossed in their countless affairs, such as their economic participation in the market-place, their educational activities, and their mobility of work never allows them a sigh of relief. They are always absorbed in the constant flow of labour and drudgery. "Our elders were more content, they were perhaps less ambitious." The People of the first generations had fewer expectations which caused less frustration in their lives and the people of the second and third generations were engaged in fulfilling numerous desires therefore they were more restless and unsatisfied than their elders.

"They have a more relax, leisurely lifestyle while our younger generation wants to fill itself with a lot of stuff hence they need to make more efforts." This interviewee is referring to the feverish ambition of our young generation to get ahead of everyone and accumulate a lot of material possessions. They are used to gaining what they desire, whereas the previous generations were content with whatever they had.

The migrant communities since the arrival of various Muslim ethnicities in the United Kingdom have brought their cultural affinities and the family law, which they have in most cases sought to keep intact from the western/European influences. Family in most Muslim

communities (especially patriarchal structure) defines not only personal relationships but also constitutes a larger part of an individual's identity. Furthermore, it binds and facilitates economic (business) and hence political relationships among people in an immigrant community. Here we are concerned with the south Asian communities in which these family relations form and validate cultural associations. Since family politically, economically and culturally is the most primitive social structure (by the way of its precedence as the most fundamental distinctive unit socially), the 'culture' in the large part in the South Asian immigrant communities could be defined in terms of positions held by the patriarch on matters of sexuality, equality, marriage, morality, religion and even attitudes towards the use (and perception towards ) technology (certain migrant families consider viewing of the television or using the internet as *haram* i.e prohibited) and science. Therefore, one could make a case that culture as a phenomenon is synonymous with the family and it would not be far-fetched. This intimation with family has been observed to be overly indulged in an alien culture in which all of the migrants find themselves placed in. This perception of the culture of the country, which they have arrived in, as being 'alien' is justified on existential grounds. But they do not justify segregation, which is rather caused by the issues around politics and policy. However, here it would be imperative to note that the conception of family –being the most primitive form of social structure- are central when individuals from migrant communities find themselves attempting to articulate the points of differences and similarities in comparing and contrasting their culture with that of their host country. Often 'family' is the point of departure in the attempts of conceptualization of the host/alien culture. From this view it is most essential to understand the dynamics of family in migrant communities. These views form the aesthetic or moral judgements of the individual of the migrant communities as to whether they are dismissive, contemptuous or permissive and conducive to the host culture.

It has been noted during the surveys conducted in these communities that most people are reluctant to let go of their deeply ingrained prejudices and are more comfortable in the cultural cask that they have inherited from the previous generation. This indicates further the arguments from both camps (liberals/conservatives) that integration has failed in the United

Kingdom. Although to trace its reasons is not the intention of this thesis and indeed is beyond its scope, it is observed from what has been accumulated in interviews that the participants from the third generation of British Muslims are eager to assimilate and support it.

Lets look at the study data to delineate various perceptions of the participants about the British Culture.

*What do you think your family would allow younger generation to marry out of baradari, if yes state why and if not give the reasons.*

“Yes, there is no such objection to marrying out of *baradari*, out of culture. In fact, I was wedded out of my family and all my brothers and sisters got married out of *baradari*.” (Uzma)

Once can notice from the language employed in the interview that it affirms what was said about culture being synonymous with family and the words ‘culture’ and ‘family’ are often employed interchangeably. This permissive attitude is typical of the second generation of the Muslims immigrants who are more open to social cohesion and incorporation with other cultures in the UK. In opposition to more conservative strands of Muslims immigrants, they assert that the way to progress could only be achieved through integration. Following is an instance of such voices of opposition to assimilation in Muslims migrant communities due to cultural differences.

*What do you think your family allows younger's to Marry with other race of Muslim or not in any case describe why.*

“No, we will flinch back from plunging into it. There are manifold reasons for it. Firstly, we believe in pan Islamism, Secondly, if we happen to find a good Muslim girl whether she belongs to any race, if her character and behavior is commendable, plus she has a pleasing countenance then we will not refuse her or rather there is a desire in our family to incorporate new people, and they bring their new foods, clothes and culture. Let me cite you

an instance of my nephew who got married with an Afghani girl who speaks Persian and thereupon a new family has entered in our home.” (Shams)

On the other hand, voices in support of cultural assimilation are noticeable, especially Muslims from the third generation of immigrants preferred to call themselves British Muslims as opposed to Pakistani Muslims or just Muslims. For them, their British identity is essential as to how they perceive and project themselves. Here it should be noted that the reasons for these might be loosening of the economical relationships as the third generation of the migrant communities have better career prospects and access to white collar jobs due to a university education which most of the third generation avail. They appeared to have been exorcised of their prejudices towards the host culture. It should be observed that for the third generation of migrants, the experience of the western culture is not that of the host but that of the Native. This ‘*nativisation*’ of the third generation Muslim migrants is often looked down upon by their ancestors who are the first generation migrants and have closer affinity with the south Asian culture.

“The main issue within Muslim families is the cultural difference between family members. The eldest generation such as our grandparents has been brought up in a Pakistani environment, whereas our parents have been brought up in a mixed environment. On the other hand, we have been brought up in a British culture, so we are British Muslims, not Pakistani Muslims. Our elders fail to understand this difference in upbringing. They are always trying to enforce Pakistani culture upon us, but that culture is of no use to us. Our British culture fits in better within today's society. I believe that our elders need to be able to differentiate between Pakistani culture and Islam. They tend to mix the two up, which causes a lot of difference in opinions. So, until they understand the difference in our cultural upbringing, our family bonds will not be strengthened” ( Aleezeh)

The language used to distinguish the two cultures in the U.K, the terms employed to denote these difference offer an evidence of the bias that Muslims have towards the U.K culture. The

south Asian migrants refer themselves as '*Desi*' which literally translates as 'local' from Punjabi/Hindi/Urdu , as opposed to '*Valaitee*' (*pronounced as Val-a-ee-tee*) which translates as '*foreign*' from Punjabi/Urdu/Hindi. An interesting point to note here is that these terms are employed among both the Hindus and Muslims, South Asians and they both recognize and own up to the use of these terms which shows that they implicitly recognize the similarities of their culture. This is ironic from the perspective of Pakistani South Asians since many Pakistani South Asians also profess that Pakistan was founded on the ideology of Two Nation Theory which explicitly draws distinctions between the two cultures namely the India (Hindu) and the Muslims culture. It is also interesting to note that the statements of these Muslims South Asian interviewees about their family structure are also very true for the Hindu/Indian South Asian. This is a point which the representatives of the Muslim South Asian communities have failed to account for and refuse to acknowledge. Coming back to the original point this distinction between *them, and us* between *Desi* and *Valaitee* are normalized.

Attitudes towards gender roles are often the bone of contention for the conservative (or first and second generation) Muslim South Asians. They perceive Local (British) women not to conform to what in their mind is the correct/appropriate form of behavior expected from/of these women. They see the overt participation of the women in work and an equal status to men in the household as degenerative. Interestingly these ideas are also accepted by the Muslim South Asian women, who shy away from any criticisms of this misogyny and sexism themselves and also oppose the progressive south Asian or local British feminist efforts to criticise and take action against the mistreatment of women . These views on the *correct* way are justified by religion and later solidified within the family structure via cultural motifs of '*izzat*' (*honour*). Honour is also an idea that is often cited in the negative by the south east Asian -men in particular- with relation to the *westerns men* (who are perceived as not possessing it), to voice their concerns about the waywardness of the British/English culture. In this case the locals are said to hold no *izzat* (honour) as they '*let their women to be scantily clad*' or '*let them free on the streets*'. But as a side note it must be observed that although

these views are given a justification in the name of religion, they are scarcely ever supported by any theological/religious justifications. The cultural mores of misogyny within the South Asian migrant communities are fed and nurtured in isolation from the larger cultural landscape of the U.K. Here, it is apparent that assimilation and integration are necessary to counter such cultural mores.

*Do you think there is any gender discrimination in your family?*

“In our family, boys achieve their independence no sooner do they hit puberty but we get our girls married and this custom has still been running.”  
(Shams)

It is apparent how independence and freedom is as seen specific domain of the males. The language employed clearly emphasizes independence as a male privilege. Also it should be noted that in referring to women of the household the interviewee used possessive pronoun our women which highlights the misogynistic attitude of the south Asian men who make a case of ownership over their women (women of the household).

Note: talk about generation gap, anti social behavior of the elder first generation migrants what is giving way to this etc.

“The elders are more focused on their prayers and religion and they are not very social either, whereas us, the younger generation, we like to go out a lot to meet up with our friends and enjoy our life, while we are still young.”  
(Shiza)

The factors responsible for the alienation of the first generation of south Asian men are twofold. Firstly, they were quite advanced in their age so they found it hard to cope with the challenges they encountered in the new surroundings. The anguish of being uprooted from their native soil and the prospect of settling down in the western culture was an uphill task for them. This excruciating experience of migration sundered them apart. Half of their lives pulled them back to the houses left deserted in their homelands and the rest of their lives were filled with apprehension of what was there in store for them in future so they couldn't adapt

themselves to a new society. Secondly, to overcome the alien surroundings, they managed to create a milieu where they could live conveniently isolated from the mainstream society. Their segregation led them to becoming more introvert.

The younger generation was more vulnerable to the influences of the society. Their minds were rather pliable hence they allowed their minds to be moved by stimuli languishing all around them. The specter of the new society wasn't haunting them. They managed to shape their lives according to the modern notions held by them so the question of being estranged from the society didn't even occur to them. Therein lies a marked difference between the both generations; they are the by-products of their culture.

*Do you feel that Islamic culture is the same all around the world so there shouldn't be any difficulty in taking on other people in your family?*

“This reason is inherent in our sub-consciousness, besides there is a kind of curiosity to probe into new people's culture, clothes and foods.” (Kalam)

*It indicates your inquisitiveness for the diversity of cultures, doesn't it?*

“We find the same roots in other people and the diversity of culture could be another reason.” (Kalam)

I would like to take you through the above statement as it is the index of certain ideas prevalent among all subcontinent people since they are under a delusion that every Muslim, irrespective of where they belong to, will have the same propensities as they do. They don't take their geographical, historical and cultural differences into account. This interviewee is inclined to arrive at such naive judgments because he couldn't weigh up with the strength of the other cultures and its far-reaching influences on its people lives. Muslims from every part of the world have constructed their own ideas about religion. They can't necessarily agree with our ideas. When we come across them, the language and cultural barriers looks insurmountable. The way a Muslim from Saudi Arabia dresses himself up is entirely different than let's say a Muslim from Pakistan. They put on certain style of turbans, a special garb quite peculiar to them whereas South Asian Muslims have on tunic and breeches. Even

Muslims in different parts of South Asia, for example Muslims from Baloch community have conspicuous bearings of their own culture which put them into a different category from a cultural point of view.

We can't preclude the possibility of a Muslim being affable to other Muslims who come from other parts of the world. In spite of their cultural differences, they can commune with one another without reservations since they share the same religion and uphold the same values emphasized by the religion. Sharing the same faith helps them open up to each other and paves the way to build a social bond with one another.

*How often does your family sit together and discuss the family and other issues?*

“Yes, we get together daily and particularly, my younger brother wait for the other family members to return then he has his meal. We often sit over meals and bring to discussion several different issues. Children tell different things that happen to them, especially to their mom.” ( Kalam)

*In your family group discussions, is everyone in the family allowed to have difference of opinion?*

“Yes, we do allow but frankly, we don't allow it that children have their own independent thoughts. We listen to them and bring it to discussion but we try to convince them about something that we deem better.” (Kalam)

*How do you define yours and your family's tolerance with regards to religious matters or issues?*

“My word is usually the law in my family with regard to religion nevertheless we have some discussions. If any younger boy happens to ask things that don't agree with our ideas then we try to convince him.” (Shams)

*How do you describe the attitude of your Elders or younger's regarding the family matters?*

“Our elders used to have a stern attitude. We didn’t venture to speak about anything before them. We scuttled back to our respective rooms whereas this has ceased to happen now.” (Mubeen)

*In your opinion, is there any difference in life style of elders and younger's in the family if yes please describe.*

“It used to exist a lot before but now there is not much.” ( Aleezeh)

This conversation is interspersed with various different issues, I would comment on each of them respectively. The first thing that comes to our notice immediately is the common family that takes place at this home. The people aren’t isolated from each other. They don’t lack communication which results in minimum discord in the family since they talk over the things that they find worthy of consideration. The grown-ups don’t put aside their responsibility to maintain better standards in their family and set good examples for their next generation who is in their formative years. The young children grow in trust with their elders and expect them to become a guiding force for them.

From the remarks made by this interviewee, we are led to believe that grown-ups don’t permit far too much latitude to their children lest they should begin to lose respect for them or can have audacity to misbehave in collective family settings. Though they don’t force their ideas upon them, they try to convince them with their own principles through proper reasoning. Although things are discussed in this family, yet the remark “my word is the law” reeks of authority. The last part of the conversation suggests generational gap and smacks of the overbearing attitude of the past that seemed to overshadow the present. The elders began to grow lenient gradually and underwent tremendous change.

This conversation contains explicit views and doesn’t involve any complication, we can sense that this family is fairly liberal in its thought since they allow its member to have their own opinions with things concerned to their corporeal issues. However, the religious matters are taken very seriously since the interviewee can’t allow his children to dabble with other sects/religions and consequently change his religious views. Their ideologies ostensibly look

distinct but deep down the differences are very superficial although each of them clings fast to his sect for varied reasons hence the interviewee is strict with his children. The last thing I would suggest to pay attention to is that they don't thrust anything down their children's throat. They become a guiding force in their children's life and seek to make things easy and convenient for them.

These answers were received upon posing the aforementioned questions. They sound quite permissive and liberal. We can't sense any coercion or pressure from any of the elders of the family to their children. This attitude is very rare. Stark differences can be seen through these statements between two generations. Grown-ups display great maturity and allow their progeny to display their real personality and in the process help them grow in confidence. They don't condemn their children on account of their immaturity as they are seasoned themselves. These statements don't carry any underlying motives, which needs to be uncovered so I conclude this part here.

### **3.6 Role of technology in family system**

It is important to establish the defining premise on which the current analysis, particularly related to technology stands before I enter into a new and kaleidoscopic role of technology that bears its influence on our generation since it coincides with the idea of progress. Our advances in technology have lead us to think that we human beings posses a high degree of intellect, awareness and passion whereas they blind us to the fact that the same traits can give way to violent and cruel acts when we are put under pressure and henceforth our true selfish personalities get exposed. Such is the case with the humanity. We have concocted medical cures for individuals on one hand and created hydrogen bombs on the other to destroy communities on global scale. The total sum of our progress lies in soaring high from the simple dagger to the atomic bombs but we are under an illusion that our lives are civilized and cultured. From this premise, we have to look whether our generation is capable enough to deal with the invasion of technology or falter in responding adequately to this challenge which has taken them from the scruff of their necks.

I am reminded of a famous Sufi story. Three disciples having learned their knowledge from their master set off to spread it. On the way, they come across a forest. While crossing it, they happen to see a carcass of a lion, the two disciples think to themselves that they should resurrect it but the other follower immediately climbs up a tree after warning them against doing so. The two disciples chants their incantations and the lion is restored back to life but no sooner does he become alive, he springs forward and catches hold of the two disciples and devours them.

This story is very significant in understanding the crisis brought about by the modern science which has taken the jinnee out of the bottle but doesn't know how to put it back. Looking at the role of the modern science, we feel compelled to say that the civilized man of today is a barbarian of the past ages camouflaged behind the veil of civilized centuries whereby under this facade the same old bestial and violent desires are still lurking. The greatest service to humanity will result only from cessation of all the war institutions, industrialization and experiments forever. However, we can't bypass the benefits we have availed all through the ages of science and technology. There is no denying that humanity, on the whole, has reached an apex in creating the means and devices but couldn't determine their ends and goals adequately. We have analyzed the constituent of the whole to find out how it functions but always fail to make the synthetic whole that assures to have life giving quality and possesses the meaning that we perpetually seek.

Technology has brought about a tremendous change in every aspect of life, be it cinema, industry or communicational devices. It has superseded a lot of technical devices and extricated man from the long drudgery of labour. Although, this advancement in technology has proved to be a great asset, it has become a cause of disruptions within the family. People are unaware of its true value, hence misuse it either intentionally or un intentionally. The researcher asked the interviewees for their views on the effects of technology on their family system. The first interviewee is from the first generation and responded to the following question as below:

*Do you think that the rapid change in technology is involved in breaking the family system, if yes, please describe its extent?*

“It has brought the family to the edge of its grave because children prefer playing games over talking to you. They avoid getting together with their family, even in social gatherings; they are glued to their mobile phones and we can’t detach them from it as we have to make them feel comfortable with this society so in a way, we can’t restrain it.” (Jamil)

With this flood of new technology, people began to feel fascinated towards them. Their enthusiasm shines through their eyes, it fades away day by day, but by the time, they get used to it, they are thrown again into the maelstrom of another new technology or gadget hence their excitement is renewed. A few people drop this fascination once they get acquainted with it, but as far as children are concerned, they are totally infatuated with the deluge of new technology that offers them numerous games to play and other amusements that keep them hooked onto it. Social networks like facebook and twitter have its own attraction. They allow them to connect with their friends and children get a kick out of browsing and serving internet all day long. However, they become oblivious to the fact that they are relishing these technologies on the expense of other invaluable aspects of their life. The institution of family has suffered considerably owing to the misuse of the social networking websites and other modern technology since the children remain aloof to their surroundings and keep only to themselves as if they were an isolated island. They don’t actively participate in their family affairs and let themselves be occupied in useless and frivolous activities that lead to isolation. Their self-enclosure in such continues to be a great cause of worry for their parents who understand the value of cooperation and interaction within the family. Their withdrawal from the main current of life and being content with the lifeless pool of invisible, fruitless interaction on social media is really alarming to their parents. These social networks are an addiction to them, they gain nothing out of it but they can’t help using it. “It has brought the family to the edge of its grave.” This interviewee holds the new technology responsible for the downfall and decadence of his family institution while he fails to see the positive things

attached with it. He insinuates that the new generation has not learnt to adapt itself with the positive use of this new technology, thereby, in his view this could be one of the cause of the degeneration. In addition, he forgot that there are other factors responsible for the deterioration of the family institution. “They avoid getting together with their family, even in social gatherings; they are glued to their mobile phones”. The renunciation of children from the outer life, barricading themselves within their rooms like an introverted person and keeping themselves engaged in their degenerative activities has made them antisocial and unbalanced. Their lack of interest in better activities has made the tripod of their lives out of balance. He is afraid that their obsession with the new technology will cost them in the long run. These children need to be taught the pros and cons of technology as it will allow them to make a better judgement of the true value of a device.

“We can’t detach them from it as we have to make them feel comfortable with this society so in a way, we can’t restrain it.” Parents play a vital role in holding back their children from detrimental effects of their social activities by showing them the simple consequences of their actions. The evident consequences, if highlighted appropriately, will prevent them from such activities and spur them towards healthier activities.

*Do you think that the satellite TV channels, internet, social media, video gaming and the use of mobile phones have any negative effect on the family structure or does it aid in joining a family?*

“Yes, it has its utility, but the irony is that my child uses it to ask me to come downstairs. There isn’t any concept of writing emails to relatives or cousins who live in far flung areas. It even induces a sort of physical inactivity. They use internet, browsing and surfing different websites where horror movies are available or cartoons or simply to listen to music. They hop from channel to channel. Our parents have cultural values of an Islamic world; however my children have no idea of Islamic values. My parents represent a true spirit of Islam and in comparison to my parents, I partially portray the

essence of Islamic teachings, then if you take into account my children, they are the least expedient of this religion. The influence of South Asian culture is getting thinner in our families and the impact of European culture is drastically becoming instrumental.” (Saima)

The elder generation would socialize and mingle with people but the younger generation tends to do something better only when they put aside their mobile phones and other gadgets as they are always in a deep communion with their friends. That has become their sheer joy and entertainment. The countless television channels broadcasting numerous things, the onslaught of social media, video gaming and mobile phones have brought the whole world under its control and have left no space for humans to mingle and mix with one another. The younger generation is quite vulnerable to the temptation that the world is offering them. They are working their way forward into the depths of frustration because their lifestyle includes factors that could destroy their character. In previous age, reading used to be a hobby of people; it would ensure the well-being of their body and mind. That generation produced great thinkers and revolutionaries. Our younger generation, however, loves to watch movies, which doesn't offer much positivity or productivity and consequently breeds a mediocre mentality. Previous generations used to work hard in their respective field and would breathe fresh air, but the younger generation is acquainted with a sedentary work style and tends to become overweight when they reach 26 and fall into so many vile illnesses which for the previous generations were unheard of. The previous generation was not callous about the feelings of their fellow beings, particularly their own elder generation; they were more considerate. If there was a death in their village, all people would commiserate with the bereaved family and similarly when it came to marriage ceremony of an orphan girl, they would all try to provide for her dowry. In contrast, although the present younger generation will be moved with share pain if they saw a physical harm being inflicted on another human being even if it was just a sore, they are unlikely to feel any sympathy with a child who is talented but can't afford go to school. They may contribute to charity and fund raising for the earthquake or flood victims but they will never give any thought to transforming the world through contribution of their time and talent, a world which is torn by vicious wars and

complex problems. A writer, Renan said, “we are living in a shadow of a shadow. What are people going to live in after us?”

The previous generation would look up to their elders, they would hold great esteem for them, and they had deeply felt veneration for their elders because they learned most of their knowledge and wisdom as well as information about life skills through them. The elders used to enlighten them about a number of problems that they could probably face in their coming life, thus it would create love and respect in their hearts, but in our generation this phenomenon is completely missing. The younger generation does not admire their elders as much because the information they provide to them can't help them in their lives as it is out-dated. They feel that the most of the information that they require is available on their finger tips – just a click away. The younger generation is living in a time, which is advancing with break-neck speed, hurling towards some unknown destination.

*Do you think the rapid change in technology is involved in breaking the family system, if yes, please describe its extent?*

“Our elder generation had more affinity with each other. They used to share everything they had but I think, technology has made a positive effect in bringing people closer. We haven't made an inordinate use of the technology, nevertheless the technology has made things easy. When we are travelling, when we are away, it becomes fruitful; however, there is no role of Facebook and Whatsapp when you are in a family gathering. Within a family, we use technology to communicate with each other and social networking helps in communication amongst other family members.” (Uzma)

This interviewee is from the second generation and gave us a good account of the contradictory thoughts that are buzzing in her younger generation and to her as well. She has witnessed a sort of calmness and equanimity in her elders and all the traits of a character that come from the morality founded in the agricultural age. Now, she and other human beings are

perplexed and overwhelmed by a great confusion for they don't know how to tackle this phase of transition which calls for a new morality based on the needs of the present day man. She seems enamoured with the old system of morality and goes berserk when she deals with the children who throw tantrums with their parents, give no values to their old customs and make mockery of their traditions. She finds them condemned in their extreme idea of freedom. She can feel the loss of the old morality but at the same time, she acknowledges the advances in technology. 'I think, technology has made a positive effect in bringing people closer'. The progress of technology has caused her to praise it, she sees no excuse for blaming it for the breakdown of the family system but she makes her point clear when she says. 'However, there is no role of Facebook and Whatsapp when you are in a family gathering.' She criticises the wrong and undue usage of technology and feels a need to bring in more awareness about the appropriate use of the technology. When another interviewee was asked the same question, he responded:

*Do you think that the rapid change in technology is involved in breaking the family system, if yes, please describe its extent?*

"It hasn't made any palpable impact on our grown-ups but I feel it has made impressions on our coming generations. At least, it didn't result in the breakdown of our family. Our children get in touch with each other on different social websites but it didn't bring on any bad effect." (Kalam)

This interviewee manifests a totally different facet of this issue and doesn't look torn with its consequences. Contrary to the view held by the previous interviewee, he feels that the advances in technology isn't necessarily accompanied with the downfall to his family; instead he finds grounds in technology bridging the gap and bringing people closer to each other. 'It hasn't made any palpable impact on our grown-ups.' Barring the grown-up, on whom this proverb aptly applies that old dogs take a lot of time to learn new tricks, the pliant minds of young generation are receptive in assimilating this new culture and knowledge therein. However, it has made impressions on the coming generations. The maelstrom of the western

culture and the technology exempted nobody from its influence. It not only leaves an imprint on their mind but also takes hold of their mind which ultimately helped them in integrating in this new environment. ‘Our children get in touch with each other on different social websites but it didn’t bring on any bad effect.’ This statement says more about pros of technology than its cons. The distances that could set people apart are now eliminated with the help of communication networks.

“The advancement in technology has some advantages and some disadvantages. Advantages: It is a good way of communication even with family members far away as I can use skype and facebook to contact people. The Internet and TV allow me to read the news and gain information about the world. Disadvantages: It is used too often by our children to the extent that it becomes an utter waste of their time. Everyone gets too busy with technology so they don't spend much time talking to each other.” (Uzma)

This statement doesn’t give a lopsided view. It presents both sides of the coin and allows us to see the utility and the futility of the new technology. As we are accustomed to comforts of the modern science, we make no bone about the technology becoming part and parcel of our existence. The distances bridged by the advent of Internet and its appurtenances can’t be sneered at since it is undoubtedly a remarkable achievement. People are more accessible, however far they may go, they are always within the communicable reach of the family members. The immigrants in U.K. can testify to the virtues of Skype and Facebook more than anyone else because they can take advantage of these communicate tools to stay close to the families that they left behind and hence not feel disconnected from the social milieu of the culture and time that there are accustomed to. Thanks to the technological advancement, the news and the latest happenings are broken to us sooner than later. Televisions are available in buses and trains and these are certainly the signs of time. However, advantages notwithstanding, there are also certain negative and detrimental effects that are inevitable part of the technological progress. These negative effects may be removed as we progress but for now they do present us with additional challenges within the family structure to deal with. For

instance, children become glued to the computer screens and hang on to them all the time. At times, it appears as if they have become computer maniacs or technology freaks for they are totally obsessed with their gadgets. They get a buzz from playing computer games and surfing on the internet. Most of their time is taken up with activities involving fictional characters or the people on the end that may not exist in reality. This is certainly a great cause of concern to their parents since it can cause them obesity and other disease resulting from sedentary work conditions with almost no physical activity even as simple as a walk in the park. They run the risk of undermining their eyesight and becoming corpulent by sitting constantly before their computer screens. It is obviously a waste of time and resources if we pour all our energies in playing games and talking to our friend on the net; it will certainly take its toll on our health. This misuse of the technology, time and other useful resources, in its extreme form, may result in the children becoming retarded imbeciles for we will have lost all our contact with books which makes for our intelligence.

“I don't think that the rapid advancement in technology is breaking the family system, instead I believe it helps us keep in touch with them no matter where we are in the world. The latest technology has made our lives so much more easier as we can just call up or use skype to contact our family rather than going to see them so frequently, which just wastes quite a lot of time. “ (Uzma)

“I believe all these tools help to support the family, for example everyone has mobile phones nowadays, so if we intend staying out late, we can let our parents know to not wait for us to get home, so they are not worried. Also, the TV and games help us bond too, so when we meet with our cousins or other relatives, we have something to do, instead of getting bored talking to each other.” (Aleezeh)

The disintegration of family unit can't just be assigned to the use of the modern technology. It can't be held responsible for it since it is nothing but an impassive device or medium for the transmission of our thoughts and speech. The people who are holding the reins of technology

in voicing their thoughts and ideas may bring about a radical transformation in the family but these impersonal tools of communication are not the reason of the downfall of our most cherished institution – that is family. I agree with this interviewee who feels that technology has brought us closer to each other. The distance that prevented us from forming any meaningful bonds due to the complexity of the long distance relationships has shriveled away thanks to the technology. Now people are just a click away from their parents or their family members. There is a proverb in English, “out of sight, out of mind”. Perhaps now we can stand this proverb on its head as things are reversed, now people are never out of sight by the virtue of technology. They can stay in contact with their friends and family members whenever they want. There were times when mother used to stay up late till all the family members come home. Now if anyone is going to be late, they can simply text or call home to put everyone at ease and prevent unnecessary worry. On television, there is abundance of programs featuring interesting things which cover the whole gamut of food, sports, news and the entertainment. There isn't a ghost of a chance of being bored with having all these facilities. You can easily find past and present episodes of your favorite drama series on YouTube and find the antidote to your boredom.

This interviewee is not looking for the thorns on the rose bush. He is not unnecessarily criticizing the technology rather he sees science as a dominant factor in determining the consolidation of the family structure.

Researcher: *Do you think satellite TV channels, Internet, Social Media, Video gaming, and use of mobile phone impacts the family structure negatively or brings them together?*

“I think... if we use technology prudently, it will benefit us.” (Shams)

This interviewee has hit the nail on the head and brought our attention back to making conscious efforts in using technology positively. The thing that we lack is prudence, if we incorporate prudence in our activities, every human action will become luminous and bring in its wake peace, love and harmony. Technology in itself is neither evil nor good. Its virtue or evil consists only in using it. If we make use of technology for the welfare of human race, it will be thought as good similarly if it is used for destructive purposes; it will be regarded as

evil. Satellite TV channels, Internet, social media, video gaming, and use of mobile phones are devoid of any inherent quality of being good or bad. Their characteristics are determined only by their use. Use them prudently, they will give you satisfaction or on the contrary, use them foolishly and they will bring you in their wake grief and gloom. I hold my trust in human wisdom and knowledge that they will win over the ignorance and cruelty.

### **3.7 Summary**

By analysing the development of the generation gap, a few causes seem to be vital in bringing about this phenomenon. The advancement of knowledge has outrun the old accumulated tradition of knowledge; modern colleges are creating more engineers, book-keepers and metallurgist than poets, orators and architects. The older generation feels out dated for they find themselves unable to keep abreast of these complex mechanisms, which surround the younger generation. The pre-industrial education does not allow them to fit into the groove of the society, hence the gap broadens. If the younger generation followed the same educational pattern as their elders did, the situation would be different. Secondly, in the transitional phase, a new era began. Men began to experiment new things in the economy that engendered a gap between the young and elder generations. The younger generation have very distinct preferences and ideas. Their sports, their realms in an economical field, their moral obligations are quite different from that of their past generations. This chapter also concludes that Islam is the binding force that keeps families together despite significant difference of opinion within the family members. We also found that the first generation wishes to hold on to their Asian culture whereas the third generation wants to celebrate the diverse British culture. Although the third generation does not wish to let go of their Islamic heritage and values, nonetheless, they want to be considered as a part of the dominant culture and society like anyone else on the street. Technology plays an important role, through the use of social media, in the development of ideas and thought process within the third generation and makes them inquisitive about the deeply held cultural beliefs by the parents. They research in all topics, question their parents openly, debate with their elders and make their own decisions. Having analyzed the data that was collected for this research, we now proceed to the final chapter which presents overall conclusions and recommendations for the future research.

## **CHAPTER 4: Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **4.1 Perception of Family**

It is observed and analysed that the perception of family is almost the same in first generations of Pakistan, Bangladesh and Indian Muslim families. They all support joint family system; it is due to their South Asian cultural background. The second generation holds a slightly different perception about Muslim families from their first generation; they describe their family system in a similar way to their parents. However, they do not support the extended family. This perception is because of their immigration; they do not have large families here. The perception of the third generation is clear about family, which is based on the first group of the Islamic family, immediate family members. They perceive that family only consists of a mother, father and their children, although they are living with their grandparents. The development of this perception is due to the generational gap between them and their grandparents. This directs the researcher to investigate further into this generational gap within the family.

### **4.2 Generational Gap**

The study revealed that there is a generational gap within the families in term of thoughts and perceptions about family. All participants agreed that there is a gap in his or her family except the middle generation. The participants of the second generation admit this and explain why there is a generation gap amongst three generations. After finding this gap the researcher was more intrigued to find out the reasons behind this gap.

### **4.3 Role of Islam in Muslim families**

Despite the generational gap within the family, it has been observed that all family members of the three generations of South Asian Muslims were living together in the same house. The investigation uncovers that the teachings of Islam firmly occupy the minds of Muslims from the sub-continent and dictate their attitudes. However, when they arrived in England they couldn't handle the situation. The contrast between the Eastern and Western culture separated

them from the British community. The next generation, though they were born in the sub-continent, managed to cover the gap between the cultures because when they landed here, they were quite susceptible to the changes. The third generation, who were born in England, easily adjusted to its environment though their parents' upbringing hindered them somewhat, thus, a generation gap was again formed. An interviewee regretfully stated that they hadn't quite grasped the Eastern culture of their grandparent's. This statement holds significant importance since religion plays an instrumental role in the formation of any culture. On one hand, it gives a representative character to a society and on the other hand, it helps to build the moral sense in people and regulates them in achieving their ambitions within the circle of ethics and according to the teachings of their respective religion. Due to these reasons, the South Asian Muslims kept themselves in their homes and continued practicing their faith. The South Asian Muslims held the Islamic faith but they were not observant Muslims, so they mixed up their customs, values and faith, under the veil of Islam. This led to the formation of the generation gap, when the second and third generation found contrast between their home culture and the culture they encountered in schools and offices.

#### **4.4 Cultural influence**

The main reason behind this generational gap amongst the South Asian Muslims was due to their encounter with the British culture. The culture the South Asians encountered in the 1960s was also in an evolutionary phase. Religion was losing its grip on the British society during that period. This encounter of contrasting cultures startled them, which led the South Asians to protect their customs, values, rituals, and faith behind the curtain of Islam. Gradually, old customs and values began to disintegrate and under these new surroundings; the cultural mode of life lost its grip on the young minds. They started turning into modern Muslims. The first generation mistook their customs for their beliefs, for instance in Islam, there is no prohibition in marrying outside one's community, but the elderly are adamant in clinging to their traditions. Now their children are interacting with a number of people of different identities, hence it's quite natural for them to mingle outside their community and marry. If a boy or a girl thinks slightly outside the scope of their family's views, he or she is

termed as heretic or their private ideas and notions are dismissed without any due consideration.

Every age has its own belief and demands which are sometimes ignored due to an immediate change in one's environment and surroundings. They lose their passion for living once they are unable to respond to the demands of an occasion. An interviewee phrased the above words predicting the possible situation. He can see the young mind under the merciless grip of an external stimuli beating upon them incessantly. They have undergone a change. It has affected their family system. On the whole, this world has undergone a remarkable change; as previously discussed in detail, the changing morals, and the emancipation of women after the industrial revolution resulted in expedition in the process of deterioration of family. First, the size of the family became limited and then its functions, in developed countries, were replaced by the State. The journey they embarked on from their original places into the UK has laden them with so many changes. The South Asian Muslims have been influenced a great deal since they left their birthplaces. It opened up so many new possibilities onto them. They became more familiar with the world with its great expanse and life itself with its complexities.

#### **4.5 Role of technology**

The Study has found that technology has made a great rift amongst all of the three generations. The older generation is always complaining about the immoral behaviour, rotten manners, and the self-absorbing activities of their younger generation. The younger generation were unable to get along with their parents considering their ideas were out dated; hence the distances grew and eventually affected the whole family. The first generation claimed that their descendant's teachings, trainings, and values based on morals don't exist anymore; thereby they conclude that the strength of their religion is losing its roots in their younger generation. According to their perception, one of the reasons for this is technology. They consider that the new generation is more involved with social media, smartphones and internet gaming and due to this, the generational gap has increased.

The new generation thinks that through technology they are more aligned with the present reality. They show great serenity in dealing with the problems and making their way forward to keep up the pace with the changes as they occur. They exhibit profound keenness and intellect in sorting out the matters which require intelligence and wisdom be it trade, politics, science or religion. They are a step ahead of their parents in following their traditions and at the same time, seeing the necessity of being free from the past. They come up with new ideas that could shape the world for the benefit of the whole humanity.

In the previous generation, the doctrine of Islam was of utmost importance while in the young generation, it hasn't been followed as strictly. The next generation is likely to be even more moderate as all of the generations are undergoing such a profound change that has affected their family system. The journey the first generation undertook from their original places to the UK has brought so many changes in their lives. Their religion is likely to lose its strength in the coming generations. The whole debate has shown a great comprehension of the historical changes and the influence of different cultures on British Muslims along with the ensuing results. The problems of generation gap have occupied them for a while and they attempted to trace out the factors responsible for the breakdown of their family system. The findings of this research suggest that there is an evolution in the South Asian Muslim culture which is giving way to a new and emerging culture – a British Muslim Culture.

When young people show their enthusiasm towards a problem, elders look at them with disillusioned smile. This acts as a great discouragement for the younger generation and may contribute towards the generation gap. Therefore, it is very important that elders of a family understand their role and relation towards their youngsters. The respect and love shown by the elders towards the young generation will help decrease the generation gap. Parents should encourage their children to play outdoor games rather than playing on their technological devices. When they play with other children, they will learn the idea of team work and individual responsibilities. These characteristics will contribute towards their upbringing and help raise better members of the society.

#### **4.6 Recommendations for future research**

In view of the facts cited above, the researcher found very diverse range of perceptions and opinions of South Asian Muslims living mainly in London. As the social demographics of living the capital of a country can be quite different from perhaps other cities, it is recommended that a similar research along these lines should be conducted in other cities like Birmingham, Manchester, Luton, Bradford, etc. with a bigger size of sampling. The interpretation of more participants may lead to new dimensions of the evolving culture of British Muslims amongst South Asian Muslims.

Comparison of family structure between the two ethnic groups of Muslims such as South Asian (Bengali, Punjabi, Mirpuri) to Kurdish, Somali or Turkish Muslim communities family structure will also be of immense value to this strand of research and will enable social scientists to gain a better understanding of the dynamic family structure amongst British Muslims from various cultural backgrounds and synthesise the common themes through such changes.

Another area of research that is highly recommended is a comparison between people who migrated during 60s with those who migrated during 90s, particularly analysing the perceptions of their respective children who grew up in the UK. Especially if they have migrated via another country e.g. Somalis first settled in Holland or Sweden then they arrived in England. Compared their young generations' views with people who arrived from Bosnia during 90s (a non-European migrant [Somalis] compared to European migrant [Bosnians] in England.

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## **Appendix A : INTERVIEWEES**

Aleezeh, (2014) : Perception of family in South Asian Muslims [ interview] 29 May 2014

Jamil, (2014) : Perception of family in South Asian Muslims [ interview] 29 May 2014

Kalam, (2014) : Perception of family in South Asian Muslims [ interview] 13 September 2014

Mubeen, (2014) : Perception of family in South Asian Muslims [ interview] 23 October 2014

Saima, (2014) : Perception of family in South Asian Muslims [ interview] 14 October 2014

Salamama, (2014) : Perception of family in South Asian Muslims [ interview] 13 September 2014

Shams, (2014) : Perception of family in South Asian Muslims [ interview] 12 October 2014

Shiza, (2014) : Perception of family in South Asian Muslims [ interview] 27 September 2014

Uzma, (2014) : Perception of family in South Asian Muslims [ interview] 25 May 2014

**Appendix B : A generational chart of the participants of this study.**

<b>Name [pseudo names]</b>	<b>Country of origin</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Generation</b>
Jamil	Pakistan	70	First
Uzma	Pakistan	45	Second
Aleezeh	British	20	Third
Salamama	Bangladesh	68	First
Kalam	Bangladesh	48	Second
Shiza	British	19	Third
Shams	India	75	First
Saima	India	49	Second
Mubeen	British	22	Third

## **Appendix C: Transcript of Interview with “Mrs. Uzma” a second generation Muslim**

*How would you define family ?*

I suppose, family is constituted with parents, children, wife and husband. They live together and support one another. They like to stay together ,moreover, blood relation ties them together. Sometimes they are compelled to live with each other and sometimes they love to make a abode at the same place. These two could be the possible reasons for it.

*What do you think that Muslim family structure is Same in your family for Last or next three generations?*

Yes, there occurred couple of changes. For instance, the time I spent in Pakistan, it was of a different culture and then we moved on here, here we have encountered a different culture. Our kids were educated in a different milieu secondly, Our parents hail from a different culture, although, we try to adhere to those values still there are some differences.

*How Often your family goes to mosque for prayers and Other Quran lessons?*

We go to mosque once in a week, especially to perform Friday prayer. We aren't much involved into these affair a lot.

*What is your opinion about the generational gap ?*

I think, the gap between our vision and their thoughts is the generation gap. They take into account everything; they consider the things that are beyond our imagination. After a pause.....

I think, a gap is created in generation owing to the developments in science or through the inexorable progress of time thus the gap comes in between the old and new generation.

*Do you think that there is a generation gap in your family?*

Yes, there is.

I think there is a wider gap between me and my parents whereas there is a small generational gap between my parents and my grandparents. The reason being that they used to marry at an early age hence there used to be only about 20 to 21 years gap amongst them, but the gap in our coming generation is increasing. There are some differences of opinions. They talk through their own experience while we look at the present things and make our decisions. There is a generation gap when it comes to my grandparents but with my parent there isn't as much.

*What do you think that your next or last generation understand your thoughts?*

There is a difference in their thoughts hence they are detached with us with regard to their practical cares. Everyone is entrenched in his pattern of thinking that leads him to believe that what he or she thinks is correct, be it me or my children or my parents. We all tend to believe that we are right on our own.

*Who do you think understands you most, the previous generation or the next generation or the generation next to this one?*

I think, my immediate generation has more understanding towards me and hopefully, our coming generations will follow the suite. The gap that is healed has provided more opportunities.

*your younger generation understands you more, May I make this judgment?*

yes, they do however they keep their own thoughts as well.

*What do you think is there a cultural difference in your next or previous generations?*

Yes, cultural differences have crept in due to the environment of Britain. Yes, they do exist. This cultural difference influences a lot.

*What do you think is there any gender discrimination in your family?*

It existed previously when there were my parents but then it softened in our generation and now it ceases. Now there isn't any discrimination but it used to exist.

*What do you think your family following the Islamic Family system?.*

We try to be a good Muslim but we may not fulfil it's criteria.

*What do you think your family allows younger's to Marry out of baradari , out of culture if yes state why and if not give the reasons?*

It would be arduous for me to consider it. If it were a Muslim family then I may take it into account. After a bit pause....

Yes, there is no such objection to marrying out of *baradari*, out of culture. In fact, I was wedded out of my family and all my brothers and sisters got married out of *baradari*.

*What do you think your family allows younger's to marry with other race [or ethnic groups] of Muslim or not in any case describe why?*

It is considerable but I wouldn't give it preferences.

*What's your view about Islam in strengthening a family system?*

I think, Islam plays a fundamental role in keeping the family together but the onslaught of European culture is colossal therefore we fail to imbue Islamic culture in our family. Our kids don't go to any Islamic school or they move about in market places, they are integrated into this society and they encounter a totally different milieu altogether.

*What is your opinion about the role of emerging culture in family system in UK ?*

This emerging culture has undermined our family system. This culture doesn't allow our younger generation to revere our old generation hence I conclude that It has deteriorated it.

*How often your family sit together and discuss the family and other issues?*

It rarely happens. Our hectic routines don't let us get together. My schedule is quite relentless. My parents in law have other activities and kids are busy in getting their education. We don't find much time to sit together and discuss things. Besides, this cultural influence is beyond the scope of being manipulated. It can't be controlled.

*In your family group discussions are all family members are allowed to have difference of opinion?.*

We share our opinion overtly and we are allowed to have opinion no matter how different it may happen to be. There is no difficulty in manifesting one's opinion in our family. It is another matter whether they accept it or not, but they do listen.

.....

Even if I don't agree with the different opinions of our next generation because they know they have freedom of thoughts and speech. We surely listen to them though it may oppose the idea of our culture or our religion.

*How do you describe the attitude of your Elders or younger's regarding the family matters?*

I receive more corporation my elders than my youngers. I have to maintain a gap between me and my youngers but I can be intimate with my elders.

*What do you think that rapid change in technology involve to break family system if yes how much it effect on family members and how?*

In my view, it has brought the family to edge of its grave because children prefer playing games to talking to you. They avoid getting together with their family, even in social gathering; they are glued to their hand phones and we can't detach them with it for we have to make them feel comfortable with this society so in a way, we can't restrain it.

*What do you think that satellite TV channels, internet, social media, video game, and use of mobile phone effect the family structure or support to brings together a family?*

The advancement in technology has some advantages and some disadvantages. Advantages: It is a good way of communication even with family members far away as I can use skype and facebook to contact people. The Internet and TV allow me to read the news and gain information about the world. Disadvantages: It is used too often by our children to the extent that it becomes an utter waste of their time. Everyone gets too busy with technology so they don't spend much time talking to each other.

It has its utility but the irony is that my child uses it to ask me to come downstairs. There isn't any concept of writing email to relatives or cousins who live in far flung areas. It even induces a sort of physical inactivity. They use internet browsing for surfing different websites where horror movies are available or some cartoon can be seen or they have to listen to music. They skip from channel to another channel. They don't deem it wrong as we have respected our elders just as they don't revere us. Our parents have cultural values of an Islamic world however my children have not any idea about Islamic values. My parents represent the true spirit of Islam and in comparison to my parents I partially depict the essence of Islamic teaching then if you take in my children, they are the least expedient of this religion. The influence of south Asian culture is getting slim in our families and the impact of European culture is drastically becoming instrumental.

*Do you think the rapid change in technology is involved in breaking the family system, if yes, please describe its extent?*

Our elder generation had more affinity with each other. They used to share everything they had but I think, technology has made a positive effect in bringing people closer. We haven't made an inordinate use of the technology, nevertheless the technology has made things easy. When we are travelling, when we are away, it becomes fruitful; however, there is no role of

Facebook and Whatsapp when you are in a family gathering. Within a family, we use technology to communicate with each other and social networking helps in communication amongst other family members.

I don't think that the rapid advancement in technology is breaking the family system, instead I believe it helps us keep in touch with them no matter where we are in the world. The latest technology has made our lives so much more easier as we can just call up or use skype to contact our family rather than going to see them so frequently, which just wastes quite a lot of time.

Researcher: there are several other cultures from all over the world, do you think, they have brought a negative influence in your culture?

I think, it has broken down our culture. I personally feel that human beings crave for freedom however Islamic teaching restrains us whereas this emerging culture allows us this freedom. On the one hand, we take pride to be Muslims but on the other hand, we want our freedom as well. When Islam enjoins us to do certain things, we retreat ourselves then our reservations comes in.

*How would you sum up ?*

In our previous generation, the doctrine of Islam was of paramount importance while in our generation, it hasn't seized us with its former strength. We are turning into be a modern Muslims. Next generation is likely to be more moderate. We have undergone a change. It has affected our family system. The journey we undertook from our aboriginal places to here has brought so many changes in us. Our religion is going to lose its form in the coming generations.

## APPENDIX D : Demographical charts of Muslims in Britain.

Table 3: Ethnicity of Muslim Population

Ethnic Group	Muslims				Muslim Population Change	
	2001	%	2011	%	2001-2011	%
<b>White</b>	<b>179,773</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>210,620</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>30,847</b>	<b>2.7</b>
British	63,042	4.1	77,272	2.9	14,230	1.2
Irish	890	0.1	1,914	0.1	1,024	0.1
Other White	115,841	7.5	131,434	4.9	15,593	1.3
<b>Mixed</b>	<b>64,262</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>102,582</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>38,320</b>	<b>3.3</b>
White and Black Caribbean	1,385	0.1	5,384	0.2	3,999	0.3
White and Black African	10,523	0.7	15,681	0.6	5,158	0.4
White and Asian	30,397	2.0	49,689	1.8	19,292	1.7
Other Mixed	21,957	1.4	31,828	1.2	9,871	0.9
<b>Asian</b>	<b>1,139,817</b>	<b>73.7</b>	<b>1,830,560</b>	<b>67.6</b>	<b>690,743</b>	<b>59.6</b>
Indian	131,662	8.5	197,161	7.3	65,499	5.6
Pakistani	657,680	42.5	1,028,459	38.0	370,779	32.0
Bangladeshi	259,710	16.8	402,428	14.9	142,718	12.3
Chinese	752	0.0	8,027	0.3	7,275	0.6
Other Asian	90,013	5.8	194,485	7.2	104,472	9.0
<b>All Black</b>	<b>106,345</b>	<b>6.9</b>	<b>272,015</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>165,670</b>	<b>14.3</b>
Black Caribbean	4,477	0.3	7,345	0.3	2,868	0.2
Black African	96,136	6.2	207,201	7.7	111,065	9.6
Other Black	5,732	0.4	57,469	2.1	51,737	4.5
<b>Other</b>	<b>56,429</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>290,289</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>233,860</b>	<b>20.2</b>
Arab	-	-	178,195	6.6	178,195	15.4
Any other ethnic group	56,429	3.6	112,094	4.1	55,665	4.8
<b>All</b>	<b>1,546,626</b>		<b>2,706,066</b>		<b>1,159,440</b>	

Source: Census 2001. ONS Table S104 & Census 2011. ONS Table DC220IEW.

Table 5: Muslim Population by Region

Region	All	Muslims	Muslims as % of All Population	Muslims as % of Overall Muslim Population
London	8,173,941	1,012,823	12.4	37.4
West Midlands	5,601,847	376,152	6.7	13.9
North West	7,052,177	356,458	5.1	13.2
Yorkshire and The Humber	5,283,733	326,050	6.2	12.0
South East	8,634,750	201,651	2.3	7.5
East	5,846,965	148,341	2.5	5.5
East Midlands	4,533,222	140,649	3.1	5.2
South West	5,288,935	51,228	1.0	1.9
North East	2,596,886	46,764	1.8	1.7
Wales	3,063,456	45,950	1.5	1.7

Source: Census 2011. ONS Table QS208EW

**Table 1: Religion in the 2011 Census**

Religion	Total Population	%
Christian	33,243,175	59.3
Muslim	2,706,066	4.8
Hindu	816,633	1.5
Sikh	423,158	0.8
Jewish	263,346	0.5
Buddhist	247,743	0.4
Any other religion	240,530	0.4
No religion	14,097,229	25.1
Religion not stated	4,038,032	7.2
All	56,075,912	100

Source: Census 2011. ONS Table KS209EW.<sup>1</sup>