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# AGEING & SOCIETY

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# GRANDPARENTS-GRANDCHILDREN RELATIONSHIP IN A RURAL COMMUNITY

R.HemaLakshmi\*  
R.Maruthakutti\*\*

## ABSTRACT

This paper examines the mutual contributions, relationships and the joint activities between grandparents and grand children. Data were collected by interview method using interview schedule from 104 young adults in the age group of 13-24 in Annamalaiputhur village of Tirunelveli district. Analysis shows that the grandparents contribute to their grandchildren mostly in terms of problem solving, advice and guidance, giving money and material help. Few of the grandchildren said that there was no contribution from their grandparents because of illness and disability. Most of the Grandchildren involve in such activities with their grandparents as watching television, cooking, discussion and shopping. The relationship between grandparents and grandchildren is mostly found to be affectionate. Affection is high when the grandchildren are young. It is also noteworthy that intimacy with grandparents is more among the granddaughters compared to the grandsons. Thus age and gender play a major role in the nature of relationship between grandparents and grandchildren.

**Key Words:** Grandparents, grandchildren, grandparental contribution, intergenerational relationship, joint activities.

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## INTRODUCTION

It is obvious that the elderly people have lot of life experiences. Along with such experiences they transfer their tradition to the next generations. Even after retirement, they continue to be great contributors in the family. In India traditionally the elderly were treated with great respect because it is part of our value system. However, now it is changing gradually. The relationship between grandparents and grand children has gone down because of new modern value system, taking on of western culture, and the changes in the family system.

Now the family system has undergone serious threats in rural areas. Joint family system is decreasing. There is no suitable care and support given to the elderly nowadays. Younger generation is migrating to other places due to education, occupation and marriage, which creates the gap between them and their family members. The relationship between grandparents with their grandchildren in particular has changed. They do not know the importance of the elder members in their family. Nowadays children have no time to talk and play with their grandparents. Joint engagement between the grandparents and grandchildren is the bridge to connect the generations. It also helps to transfer the traditions from one generation to another generation. It increases the intensity of the relationship among grandparents and the grandchildren.

Many of the elderly people think of old age as a burden to them, because they are not able to do work like when they were young. Many think that the elderly cannot contribute to their family because of decreasing ability to do work. However, they contribute to the family in many ways like taking care of grandchildren and pets, cleaning, shopping, and providing advice and emotional comfort. Familial conflicts are often buffered by the elderly in the family. Their knowledge of tradition and wisdom gained over years can be very valuable to the younger generation, albeit not recognized. Global

