

Study of the Reasons Regarding Why People Choose to Reside in Paying Guest Households.

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Abstract

Family is a universal institution which is simple to understand but has many connotations. It includes people with blood relations, culture, kinship, household, its social implications and importance and much more. This term has witnessed many changes through the ages from joint family to nuclear and extended family and today, to 'non-family'. Household, on the other hand is a different concept which includes both residential and non-residential units depending upon its types. It has various types like, simple, complex, single-person, non-family and many more. This paper will focus on the 'non-family households', in which people live either alone or with those people or roommates who are unknown to them. The concept of non-family household has gained quite a lot of attention in the form of 'paying guest households' (popularly known as – P.Gs). The concept of paying guests has become very popular in the form of alternate household in a new place or an income generating activity. There are various reasons as to why people prefer this household, such as – independence, non-availability of hostel, pocket-friendly accommodation, etc. This paper will focus on the reasons regarding why people prefer to reside in paying guest households.

Key Words: *Paying Guest, Household, Non-family household, Family, Accommodation.*

Introduction

Family is a simple word yet has many connotations, being a universal institution across the globe. Family may be broadly defined as a unit of two or more persons united by marriage, blood, adoption, or consensus, in general constituting a single household, interacting and communicating with each other (Desai, 1994)^[2]. The term "family" on one hand refers to the genealogical models, without any definite indication of the activities or functions of the person composing a model and on the other hand to social groups having certain activities or functions without any definite indication of the persons comprising the group (Shah, 1972:3)^[10]. Zimmerman in his book '*The Western Family System*' states, the family is an institution which unites two human needs: *generic disjunctive nature* and *culture*. It is not inherent in the nature but in the combination of nature and the civilization process. This conception of family enables us to understand many sociological problems not clear beforehand (Patel, 2005:57)^[8].

In the broadest sense, *family is a group of people who have intimate social relationships and have a history together* (Leeder, 2004:25)^[6]. Joseph MT (Hindustan Times, 2013)^[3] had said that, “the concept of family in urban India is being redefined with globalization and Westernization”. Radhika Chopra (Hindustan Times, 2013)^[3] said that “Overall, there is a liberalization of the stringent notions associated with the term ‘normal family. Part of this phenomenon is impelled by new ideas of autonomy, which means not just having a job or a financial portfolio but a household. For the purpose of this feature, it is generally only the urban households being examined, but the change is being felt across the country. Three in five households in India are now nuclear, with 63% of households being nuclear in urban areas and 59% in rural. The National Family Health Survey defined nuclear household as consisting of a married couple or a man or a woman living alone or with unmarried children, with or without unrelated individuals (Hindustan Times, 2013)^[3]”.

Objective

This study was designed with a view to examine the reasons for which people choose to reside in paying guest households

Research Methodology

The study was conducted in Chandigarh since it accommodates a very large number of paying guest households for both boys and girls. Primary data were collected from various sectors of Chandigarh (especially those next to educational institutes or colleges) with a large number of paying guest households. 30 girls and 30 boys residing in paying guest households were purposively selected according to their availability and were personally interviewed. The girls were interviewed at their PG accommodation but not the boys due to security reasons. An Interview Schedule was used to elicit information on relevant issues. Only unmarried girls and boys were interviewed. Further, not more than five girls/boys were interviewed from one paying guest household. These respondents were chosen from various sectors i.e. representing different types of houses. The Interview Schedule included both closed as well as open ended questions. Wherever possible, group discussions were used to dig out correct and frank responses of the respondents. Interviews were conducted at the place as per convenience and willingness of the respondents. These data were then coded, tabulated and analyzed in order to draw generalizations and inferences.

Family to Household

Shah while discussing the changing dimensions of family has referred to household as a distinct category. He explained about the household pattern in relation to other structures in society such as caste, kinship, rural and urban communities (Shah, 1973:5)^[10]. Therefore, in his view, the “*household*” is a residential and domestic unit composed of one more persons living under the same roof and eating food cooked in a single kitchen (p.8). A ‘household’ is a group of people who are responsible for their basic and continuing reproduction needs, like food, clothing and shelter and who put together different kinds of income to meet those needs (Leeder 2004:27)^[6] (Wallerstein & Smith 1991:228)^[11].

The idea of developmental process of household is cyclical in that each household evolves as a certain type, expands through a regular sequence of phases and is dissolved and replaced by one or more households of the original type (Shah 1972:84)^[10]. Thus, ‘family life’ and with it ‘householding’ based upon use of tools, language, cooking and a sexual division of labor is said to be as old as mankind (Saradamoni 1992:51)^[9].

Paying Guest Household as a Type of 'Non Family Household'

According to Chant and McIlwaine (2009)^[11] a '*Non-Family Household*' is a household which consists of a householder living alone or with non relatives only like roommates or unmarried partner, that is, members unrelated by blood/marriage living together. This type of household has emerged as a very prominent form in Indian cities and towns in the form of paying guest accommodation, in which a number of individuals share a household without having any kinship relation. Chandigarh, a modern planned city, which is the Capital of Punjab and Haryana, is inhabited by a large chunk of young population living as paying guests. Such households are shared by young boys and girls (mostly separately), who are mostly students, though at times are working at different places. These households have emerged as an important alternative to traditional family system, with a distinct kind of freedom and independence, irrespective of gender and other attributes.

There has been a sharp increase, over the years in the trend of paying guest (PG) culture, as year after year, a number of students keep flocking to the city to get admissions into various educational institutes. In the past decade many educational institutions, coaching centers and ILETS institutes, have come up in city resulting in mushrooming of (PG) culture (Hindustan Times, 2014)^[4]. PGs are most common in educational hub cities. Despite the availability of working women’s hostels, etc. people prefer to stay in PGs due to more freedom and independence. A PG accommodation comes with a host of dos and don’ts, which often annoys students. But there is little to choose from. Not to forget that, PGs have more of its critics than its backers.

The PG trend is catching up in Sectors 8, 11, 15, 19, 21, 22, 27, 35, 36, 44, 45 (Burai). Most of the eminent educational institutes, including PEC (Punjab Engineering College), Govt. Colleges and English teaching institutes and other coaching centers are located near these areas. The rent generally depends on the Sector (Kamboj, 2009)^[5]. One of the major reasons for the increasing PGs is lack of hostel facilities in educational institutes. Now a days married couples also prefer to live in PG than in a rental accommodation due to economic viability. Also, people who work here but live in other states also prefer PGs. Building owners in the city are, at present, running PGs by adopting "the method of the tenant-landlord rent deed"

According to an estimate of the UT Estate Office, there are more than 500 PG accommodations in the city, of which only 14 are registered (Nagarkoti, 2013)^[7]. After obtaining a legal opinion from the UT Legal Remembrancer, the UT Administration has communicated the definition of a paying guest to the Estate Office "A *paying guest* is a person such as a student of any class/course or an employee, government or private, or a professional, who is allowed to use a part of a residential premises, either individually or jointly, by its owner or occupier for shelter, with or without food, for a certain period of time, on a payment basis or otherwise, but not allowed to run his/her kitchen (as the common kitchen for all paying guests in the same premises is run by its owner or occupier like in school or college hostels). A paying guest does not mean a tenant or a sub-tenant in a hotel, dharamshala, inn or a similar premises and he/she can be asked to leave the residential premises by its owner or occupier at any time without giving a notice" (Nagarkoti, 2013)^[7].

Interpretation of Data

The following data were collected from 60 respondents (30 male and 30 female) who were unmarried and living as paying guests at Chandigarh. The respondents were interviewed personally. An Interview Schedule which had both open and close ended questions was used for data collection which was specially designed keeping in view the objectives of the study. Wherever possible, group discussions were also used to dig out correct and frank responses of the respondents. After the collection of data, a code design was prepared which helped in the preparation of the tables. To gather deeper information about the people living as PGs (paying guests), the respondents were studied under 4 categories- students; those who were going for coaching classes; those who were doing internship; those who were working. One thing that is very prominent in this study was that the people who are living in Chandigarh as paying guests are not just from Chandigarh alone but from various other states. Also, they represent different socio-economic backgrounds and were living where the place was suitable to their pockets (and standards, for some). Before going into the details of the study, it is meaningful to gain familiarity with the respondents by looking at their socio-economic profile consisting of the following variables.

TABLE 1. Age of Respondents

| Age (in Years) | Girls | Boys | Total (%) |
|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|------------------|
| 15-18 | 0 | 6 | 6 (10%) |
| 19-24 | 25 | 20 | 45 (75%) |
| 24-27 | 4 | 3 | 7 (11%) |
| Above 27 | 1 | 1 | 2 (3%) |
| Total | 30 | 30 | 60 (100%) |

Age plays an important role in shaping our thinking and perspectives about the world in which we live. Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondents on the basis of age. In this, the lowest proportion of respondents, i.e. 3% were those who were above the age of 27 years. The girl from this category was doing her M.Phil. while, the boy was doing an internship at a private firm. Out of 60 respondents, 45, i.e. 75% were in the age group of 19-24 years, who were either doing their Masters (post-graduation) or internship or job.

TABLE 2. Educational Qualification of Respondents

| Educational Qualification | Girls | Boys | Total (%) |
|----------------------------------|--------------|-------------|------------------|
| 11th - 12 th | 1 | 0 | 1 (1%) |
| Graduate | 16 | 27 | 43 (71%) |
| Post-Graduate | 12 | 3 | 15 (25%) |
| M.Phil. | 1 | 0 | 1 (1%) |
| Total | 30 | 30 | 60 (100%) |

Table 2 shows the educational qualification of the respondents. Out of the 60 respondents only one girl was pursuing secondary education and one girl was pursuing her M.Phil. at Panjab University. Most of the respondents, i.e. 71% were either pursuing or had completed their graduation. 25% of the respondents were either pursuing or had done their post-graduation, out of whom there were more girls as compared to boys. On the whole, Table 2.2 shows that those living as paying guests were fairly educated and were either doing or had completed their secondary education.

TABLE 3. State to Which the Respondents Belonged

| States | Girls | Boys | Total (%) |
|------------------|--------------|-------------|------------------|
| Ladakh | 1 | 0 | 1 (1%) |
| Jammu & Kashmir | 1 | 1 | 2 (3%) |
| Himachal Pradesh | 3 | 7 | 10 (16%) |
| Uttarakhand | 1 | 2 | 3 (5%) |
| Chandigarh | 1 | 3 | 4 (6%) |
| Punjab | 17 | 7 | 24 (40%) |
| Haryana | 5 | 4 | 9 (15%) |
| Delhi | 0 | 1 | 1 (1%) |
| Uttar Pradesh | 1 | 1 | 2 (3%) |
| Bihar | 0 | 2 | 2 (3%) |
| Jharkhand | 0 | 1 | 1 (1%) |
| Rajasthan | 0 | 1 | 1 (1%) |
| Total | 30 | 30 | 60 (100%) |

India is a diverse country and this diversity is clearly shown by its diverse states. The growing culture of paying guests is another proof of this, as, Chandigarh which is becoming an educational hub has become a paying guest hub also, where students from various states come for education, jobs, etc. Table 3 shows the states to which the respondents belonged. There was just one girl who was from Ladakh and two respondents were from Jammu & Kashmir. There were only 6% of the respondents who belonged to Chandigarh. Most of the respondents were from Punjab (40%), Himachal Pradesh (16%) and Haryana (15%). The remaining respondents were from various other states such as Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, some were even from Bihar, Jharkhand and Rajasthan. 65% of the respondents however were from the neighbouring states of Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh.

TABLE 4. Present Status of Respondents

| Present Status | Girls | Boys | Total (%) |
|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|------------------|
| Student | 20 | 18 | 38 (63%) |
| Working | 2 | 9 | 11 (18%) |
| Intern | 7 | 0 | 7 (11%) |
| Applied for Job | 0 | 1 | 1 (1%) |
| Receiving Coaching | 1 | 2 | 3 (5%) |
| Total | 30 | 30 | 60 (100%) |

There are many reasons why people live as paying guest, such as - for studies, job, internship, coaching, etc. Many of these people try to look out for the PG accommodations close to their institute or workplace. Table 4 shows the present status of the respondents who are living as paying guests. 63% of the respondents were students, out of whom girls were slightly higher in proportion. 18% of the respondents were working in Chandigarh. There were 7 respondents who were doing internship and 3 respondents were receiving coaching. Out of 60 respondents, only one boy had applied for a job after quitting his previous job. This shows that, most of the respondents who were living in PG accommodation were students.

Respondents who were working or doing internship: Respondents who were working or doing internship were mostly in the private firms at the IT Park (Chandigarh). A few male respondents were either in the banking sector or were working in shops. Those who were interns (including both girls and boys) were doing their internship in private companies at IT Park (Chandigarh). It is important to note that the largest proportion of our respondents happened to be students enrolled in various city colleges or institutes.

TABLE 5. Nature of Accommodation: Independent / Shared

| Nature of accommodation | Girls | Boys | Total (%) |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-------------|------------------|
| Independent | 6 | 4 | 10 (16%) |
| Shared | 24 | 26 | 50 (83%) |
| Total | 30 | 30 | 60 (100%) |

Privacy is one thing that many people prefer to have even when it comes to living alone. Table 5 shows about the nature of accommodation of the respondents, i.e. independent or shared. In this, only a few respondents (16%) were living in independent room in their PG accommodation, out of which girls were more than the boys. 83% of the respondents were living in a shared accommodation. Shared accommodation was more preferred by the respondents as it meant paying less charges for the PG accommodation, as compared to an independent accommodation.

TABLE 6. Charges paid by Respondents on PG Accommodation (p.m.)

| Charges (in Rupees) | Girls | Boys | Total (%) |
|--------------------------------|--------------|-------------|------------------|
| Less than 3000 | 0 | 1 | 1 (1%) |
| 3000-4000 | 14 | 9 | 23 (38%) |
| 4000-5000 | 4 | 9 | 13 (21%) |
| 5000-6000 | 4 | 7 | 11 (18%) |
| 6000-7000 | 6 | 1 | 7 (11%) |
| 7000-8000 | 0 | 3 | 3 (5%) |
| 8000-9000 | 2 | 0 | 2 (3%) |
| Total | 30 | 30 | 60 (100%) |

The charges paid for the PG accommodation is one of the ways to know about the socio-economic condition of the respondents because the type of PG accommodation that the respondents select, depends on the money that they can pay for it, along with the proximity of the institute or workplace from the PG accommodation. But, sometimes proximity or the location of the PG accommodation can make that PG accommodation an expensive place to live. Table 6 shows the charges that are paid by the respondents per month. 38% of the respondents were paying Rs.3000-4000 (p.m.), among whom there were a higher number of girls, followed by the respondents who paid Rs.4000-5000 and Rs.5000-6000 in which there were higher number of boys than girls. Interestingly, nearly half of the girls were paying between Rs. 3000-4000 per month, while a higher proportion among boys were paying more than Rs. 4000 per month. On the whole, there is not much variation between boys and girls in terms of expenditure on the accommodation.

Food is one thing that every person needs in order to stay fit and healthy. It is the most important thing that a person needs when residing away from home. 71% of the respondents were living in those PG accommodations where the food was not included in the charges and this was seen more among girls than boys. Only 28% of the respondents were living in those PG accommodations where the food was included in the charges in which boys were more than girls.

TABLE 7. Alternative Accommodation Options Available to Respondents

| Alternative Accommodation | Girls | Boys | Total (%) |
|----------------------------------|--------------|-------------|------------------|
| Hostel | 7 | 11 | 18 (30%) |
| Relatives | 7 | 3 | 10 (16%) |
| PG Accommodation | 0 | 2 | 2 (3%) |
| None | 11 | 13 | 24 (40%) |
| Hostel + Relatives | 5 | 1 | 6 (10%) |
| Total | 30 | 30 | 60 (100%) |

It is not always that PG accommodation is preferred by all when they live away from home. But sometimes when no other option is available, they generally choose for PG accommodation. Table 7 shows the alternative accommodation options of the respondents other than their current PG accommodation. 40% of the respondents (11 girls and 13 boys) had no other option but to live in their current PG accommodation. There were 30% respondents, who had the option of hostel, i.e. they were either waiting for hostel accommodation to be provided or they had the option of hostel but they preferred to live in a PG accommodation. However, 6% of the respondents (5 girls and 1 boy) had the option of relatives and PG accommodation, both. It is significant to note that at least 67% girls had the option of studying in hostel or living with relatives but they had chosen to stay as paying guests. Boys too were opting for PG accommodation.

Table 8. Extra Income of Respondents

| Extra Income | Girls | Boys | Total (%) |
|---------------------|--------------|-------------|------------------|
| Extra Income | 0 | 0 | 0 (0%) |
| No Extra Income | 30 | 30 | 60 (100%) |
| Total | 30 | 30 | 60 (100%) |

Many people do not want to put financial pressure on their parents to pay for their accommodation, thus, they choose to work somewhere in order to earn some extra money, do savings of it and even send some money to their parents as well. This question was asked even to those respondents who were doing internship or job, in order to know, if they were working anywhere to earn extra money (such as doing part-time jobs, taking tuitions, etc.). However, in this study there was not a single respondent who had extra income.

TABLE 9. Advantages of Staying as Paying Guests

| Advantages | Girls | Boys | Total (%) |
|--|--------------|-------------|------------------|
| Independence | 6 | 15 | 21 (35%) |
| Freedom + Independence + Friends + Night Out | 6 | 2 | 8 (13%) |
| More Study Time + Do All Work On Your Own (Time & Expenses Management) | 3 | 5 | 8 (13%) |
| Know Yourself & Be Responsible | 4 | 2 | 6 (10%) |
| Easy To Commute Daily | 1 | 0 | 1 (1%) |
| Freedom + Security | 2 | 0 | 2 (3%) |
| Maintenance Borne By Owner | 0 | 1 | 1 (1%) |
| Gain New Experiences (by being independent) | 3 | 1 | 4 (6%) |
| No Advantage | 4 | 4 | 8 (13%) |
| Total | 30 | 30 | 60 (100%) |

Despite the problems, there are many advantages of living in a PG accommodation. Table 9 shows the advantages of living in a PG accommodation. Independence was the most common response, i.e. by 35% of the respondents. Next, was freedom along with independence, friends and night outs which was told by 13% of the respondents. Few respondents (3 girls and 5 boys) said that getting more time to study and doing all work by self are the advantages of staying at PG accommodation. Almost 13% of the respondents said that there was no advantage of staying at PG accommodation, as for them it just meant, to stay in a place till the time they were studying or working in that city.

Conclusion

To conclude, both girls and boys - most of whom were in the age group of 19-24 years - were either doing their Masters (post-graduation) or internship or job. Most of the respondents were either pursuing or had completed their graduation. Also, many of them were from the neighbouring states of Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh. The largest proportion of the respondents were students who were enrolled in various city colleges or institutes. Interestingly, there was not much difference between girls and boys in terms of expenditure

on the accommodation and in the inclusion of food in the charges of accommodation. None of the respondents had the source for extra income generation and nearly half of the respondents did not do any saving.

It was noticed that the lifestyle that the respondents had was to some extent, a lifestyle which they wanted but could not have it when they were living with their parents at home. But this lifestyle is a 'copied version' of what all they see on media or see in their daily lives or through the influence of the people around them where they live.

Suggestions by the Respondents to other Paying Guests, in general: When the respondents were asked that whether they would like to give any suggestions to the paying guests (in general), the respondents said that, the paying guest should neither misuse their freedom nor should they break the trust of their parents rather they should be responsible. They should save money, which they could do by either choosing their PGs wisely or by opting for hostel over a PG accommodation. They should be cooperative and adjusting rather than selfish and disturbing. They should maintain cleanliness by treating the PG accommodation as their second home and try to create a homely environment in it. In order to feel stress free and happy they should regularly visit home and also follow the rules of the owners. They should utilise the time in the PG accommodation by studying more which can be further improved if they live in a room that does not have too many paying guests in it, in order to avoid any 'groupism'. Therefore, they should *live and let live.s*

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