

Family matters

Will the great Indian family become a myth or an extinct entity? The Indian family system has upheld Indian culture. But now, the value system has changed and with it the structure and nature of the family too.

The book 'The Great Indian Families : New Roles, Old responsibilities' by Gitanjali Prasad dwells upon these emerging new roles and responsibilities of the middle-class Indian family. The author has written on the family for over twenty years and done research on the subject as a Press Fellow at Cambridge University and a study supported by Dorabji Tata Trust.

Speaking to *Metrolife* she said, "I have documented and analysed the changes in urban middle class and presented a strong argument for better work-

life balance." The book examines the new economic-order and the evolving middle class with their new set of values and priorities, which are more individual-centric.

Oxford Bookstore and Penguin Books India organised a panel discussion with Deirdre O Reilly, the manager (Operations Control/ Consultant), Air Deccan, Rohini Nilekani of Akshara Foundation and Aditi De, writer and journalist.

The author initiated the discussion and emphasised that the real culprit for the deteriorating family ties was pressures at the workplace. Long hours in the office was taking its toll on this social set-up. With most mothers and grandmothers in the family work, children are neglected. The expectations from both men and women

are increasing. They have to be supermen and superwomen to keep up with the increasing demands.

Rohini Nilekani released the book and said that she found the book very insightful. But she didn't believe that the Indian family system was breaking down and cited the celebration of Rakshabandhan as an example.

O Reilly opined that people had to move to different cities for work, leaving their families behind which resulted in fractured family life.

The family is the social-support system which has to be preserved and saved. And the last line of the book 'the future is in our hands', says it all.



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From left: Rohini Nilekani, Deirdre O Reilly and Gitanjali Prasad.