

# The Transformation of Family Structure in India – A Study

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*Abstract: In India family is such an institution which control the social norms and regulations, it is the oldest social institution in India as well as World. Family is the smallest unit of any society, which is the fundamental structure on which the total structure of the civilization of mankind is built. India is a country where cultures are versatile among the societies hence there exist different family pattern in India. In the last few decades due to the rapid increasing features of globalization, industrialization, modern education, westernization etc. have gained momentum; which directly and indirectly effects the Indian society and the pattern of traditional family structure are impacted. Presently the family composition has also changed which causes a shift of family structure from joint to nuclear family; as a consequence the concepts of family, marriage and other social phenomenon has also turned to a new cover. Family relations are also impacted as the pattern of marriage has also impacted due to the changing social environment. In the present day love marriages, live-in relationship, homosexuality, increasing divorce rate etc have increases which impacted the traditional family structure. In this paper I try to discuss about the changes that are attracting attention in the family structures and to examine the various factors responsible for these changes.*

**Key Words:** Family, Joint Family, Nuclear Family

## I. INTRODUCTION

As a foundational institution of society family has an important component in every single society existing in the world. As India has versatile cultures the types of family vary in internal organization in its degree of autonomy and in sanctions and taboos by which it is protected and perpetuated. Over the years the structure of family in India have undergone significant transformations which reflects the intricate interplay between traditional values, modernity, socio-economic factors and cultural shifts. Such transformation is emblematic of the broader structural transformations occurring within Indian society,

influenced by urbanization, globalization, educational attainment, changing gender roles, and advancements in technology.

The word family has its origin in the Latin word ‘familia’ derived from ‘famulus’ which means ‘servant’. Familia must have been refer to use all the slaves and servants living under the roof, including the entire house holds; that is the master, his wife children and servants living under his control.

## II. MAJOR FUNCTIONS OF FAMILY

### 2.1 Physical Function

- Family is a safe structure for the members which provide a comfortable environment necessary to growth, development and rest.
- It helps to channeling a sexual outlets by defining the norms with whom one care mate and who are only out of bound in the terms of incest taboo.
- It provide a loyal father for a woman’s children and a loyal mother for a men’s children.
- It established the relation of decent and offspring.

### 2.2 Social Function

- It gives the social position to the members.
- It control the norms, regulations, beliefs of the social system.
- It Includes knowledge; transmitting beliefs, values, attitudes and coping mechanisms; providing feedback and guiding problem – solving.

### 2.3 Economic Function-

- Work as a social group which is responsible for satisfying the basic needs of its member like food, cloth and shelter.
- All the members of the family co-operate and divide the work among the family members.

- All the members have the equal share of the family property.

### III. DIFFERENT FAMILY STRUCTURE IN INDIA

The traditional family type in India was joint family but due to the rapid growth of modernization the traditional family structure of India has drastically converted to nuclear family. According to the census report 2011 in India the percentage of joint family is only 20% and nuclear family is 70% which clearly depicts the transformation of the family structure.

### IV. CHANGES THAT HAVE OCCURRED IN FAMILY STRUCTURE IN INDIA

- There occur a virtual disappearance of traditional joint family system and increasing nuclearization of families.
- Traditionally the Indian families are patriarchal family which means the head of the household is the oldest male member of the family; but eventually a rise in proportion of female headed households can be seen in India though still it patriarchal in nature.
- Traditionally in India Marriage was considered sacrosanct and for lifetime. The selection of mate was mostly the prerogative of parents and elders. The age of marriage was early with prevalence of instances of child marriages. Due to the modernization effect this scenario is totally changed, presently the rate of separation and divorce is increases; the system of arrange marriage is decline and mate selection by individuals themselves. The average age of marriage is increase with decrease in instances of child marriage.
- Previously the Kinship ties were stronger and decisions were mainly taken by household's head; but presently there is a shrinking of kinship ties and decisions are taken by continuous consultations between children and parents on familial matters.
- The acceptance of girl child is increased even the fertility rate is also drastically dropped. Females are more concern about their carrier along with to maintain the family bond.

- Previously the roles for female members were restricted with limited education and confinement to household work and childcare activities. Now the participation of women in education increase in their role in economic activities outside household and decision making within household.

### V. IMPACT OF CHANGING FAMILY STRUCTURE

#### 5.1 Impact on Women

- It often resulted in greater autonomy and agency for women.
- It increased the dual responsibility for the women with more women joining in the workforce which impacts on the nuclear families to often rely on dual-income households, requiring women to juggle professional commitments with traditionally established household duties and caregiving responsibilities.
- The nature of authority of women in families have drastically changed which provides the women a better access to resources for pursuing higher education and skill development, leading to improved employment prospects and financial independence.

#### 5.2 Impact on Transgender-

With changing family nature, visibility and acceptance of transgenders are increasing, especially in urban societies. With recognition of transgender rights with the verdict of Supreme Court and Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019, they can expect better access to resources, education and healthcare in Indian society.

#### 5.3 Impact on Children

As the number of nuclear families are increased during the past years, children belong from the nuclear family often develop a strong sense of individual identity and autonomy, while in joint families, they develop a deeper connection to their extended family heritage and traditions. The Increasing rate of separation and divorce results single-parent household which impacts the welfare of the child. Children often lose connection with their cultural heritage in modern family systems.

## VI. LITERATURE REVIEW

The family structure is a complex and dynamic institution in India and for many decades, several studies have been made to understand this diversity and complexity about the Indian family structure. It has been cleared that the existence of a joint family was present from the primary stage in the traditional Indian society (Mandelbaum, 1959). Most of the micro level studies have identified that the joint family in India is one of the common features among the higher castes living in India (Gough, 1956; Kapadia, 1956; Caldwell et. al, 1988; Shah, 1968, 1996; Srivastava and Nauriyal, 1993). In his study Nimkoff (1959) has pointed out that in India the joint family system is traditionally most common among the elite, the higher castes and those with more prosperity and property. A district wise survey was made of selected states in India by Kolenda and Haddon (1987) which revealed that among the Hindu community the percentage of joint family is high than Christians. In 1984 Cadwell conducted a study Karnataka and showed that, the joint families are more common among those households which owned agricultural land etc.

Due to the rapid growth of modernization the Indian family structure transform towards In their paper Srivastava and Sasikumar have pointed out that the fertility rate of India has been fallen drastically. Presently couples have begun to bear children at a later age; the percentage of elderly population has also increased as the life expectancy has increased. According to them the due to the rapid urbanization the children are separating from elders and contributing disintegration of family-based support systems (Srivastava and Sasikumar 2003).

Though the joint family- an ancient Indian institution is the most widely desired residential unit the continuous and growing impact of urbanization and westernization has impacted its structure and it has undergoes some change in the late twentieth century due to variety of reasons, including the need for some members to move from village to city, or from one city to another for employment opportunities. As the 70% of the Indian family structure is nuclear the radical transformation of Indian society in to nuclear family is inevitable (Mayank Pradhan, 2011)

In 2009 Chitra Nair has published her work and pointed out that among the city women the nuclear families are mostly preferable. She conducted one

survey through matrimonial portal and find out that most of the working women (72%) has preferred nuclear family and want to be live in a nuclear family; as a woman, who holds a well-paying job, wanted to live in a separate house "to avoid complications later". She also pointed out that questions like caste and horoscope matches are also losing importance among the city's youth. In 2017 Suniti Bhagat was study in Patna and concluded in the urban areas the structure of joint family gradually decline in Patna.

## VII. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

- To find out the cause of transformation of family structure in India.
- Interpret the socio-cultural impact of such relations.
- To find out the shared rights and commitment among family members.
- The Impact of changing family pattern among the young generations in India.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

In the present day the concept of traditional family structure has been changed. The high divorce rate and remarriage in the present era leads to a tangled nuclear family leading to the creation of complex kinship relations also. Presently a blended family is coming up which comprises of networks which include previous divorced spouses and their new marriage partners and sometimes children from the previous marriages as well as multiple sets of grandparents and other similar relations also. Surrogate motherhood also create a different type of family besides adaptation. Due to homosexuality a different type of complexity arrived name lesbian and gay family. Live-in relation also create a complexity in kinship relations. Hence From the traditional joint family system to the increasing porobality of nuclear and non-traditional family arrangements, the landscape of Indian families has undergone significant transformations over the years.

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