



5414A Sociological Study Of The Emerging Changes In The Long-Age Joint Family System In India

Dr. Namita Vajpayee Research Scholar, Govt. Senior Secondary School, Rojada, Distt. Chittorgarh, Rajasthan.

Abstract

Family is the greatest and most effective agency of socialization of the individual. It is only through the family that the children are brought closer to the various types of socio-cultural and family values that result into the personality development, socio-cultural awareness and successful community life. India is the home of the joint family system and it has been enjoying a successful existence since times immemorial. A joint family is constituted by the physical presence and living together of the members of the three generations. A socially approved family system, the joint family system in India has always provided a healthy socio-cultural and religious environment to the people that helped them live in perfect harmony with one another. On the contrary, a nuclear family is constituted by the husband and the wife, and their children. With the introduction of the family planning system and other population-density issues, the magnitude of the families is becoming less and less to the extent that the various types of kinsmen that would once play a dominant role in the regulation of the family system and in keeping the family members disciplined have started being extinct horribly. The joint family system is confined now with its changed patterns only to the Indian villages. Once a set of family members with a rigid hierarchy of status and role, the modern joint family system has set aside the interference of others in the family. The worst thing has been caused by the social media and the use of smart phones that have limited even the members of the joint family to a world which is all full of illusion and which is far from reality. At present, the joint family system of India is passing through hard times and witnesses such changes in several fields as cannot be said to be good for it. The research paper, designed on the use of the personal observations of the emerging changes in the Indian family system, particularly in the joint family system as well as on the secondary data collected from the reliable sources, is a piece of qualitative descriptive research. The findings of the reveal that the joint family system in India is going away from its root-values and is suffering from the several horrible changes that might prove a curse to the family system. The study suggests to develop a strong faith in the joint family system and in the revival of the joint family values for the sake of the real enjoyment of life in terms of happiness, personality development and community life and discipline.

Keywords: Sociological, Study, Emerging, Changes, Nuclear, Joint-family, Future

INTRODUCTION

Widely speaking, a joint family is a family which witnesses the physical presence, living together and constant mutual interaction and understanding of the members of the three generations. Some of the eminent sociologists associated with the concept of joint family

have attempted to define joint family in their words. To Iravati Karve, a joint family is a group of people who generally live under one roof, who eat food cooked at one hearth, who hold property in common and who participate in common worship and are related to each other as some particular type of kindred; to I.P. Desai, it is a household with a greater generation depth than individual family and the members of which are related to one another by property, income and mutual rights and obligation.

Davis believes a joint family to be a family consisting of a common male ancestor, female offspring not yet married, and women brought into the group by marriage; to Jolly, it is a large family with the living together of not only parents and children, brothers and step-brothers on the common property, but sometimes also of ascendants and collaterals up to many generations, while Henry takes a Hindu joint family as a group constituted of known ancestors and adopted sons and relatives related to these sons through marriage.

Salient Features of Joint Family

A typical joint family is characterized by several distinct features some of which are listed as under-

1. Large Size

A typical joint family in the Indian society is large with parents, children, grand children and other near kinsmen along with their women. In other words, it is a group of which several basic families live together at one and the same time.

2. Joint Property

A joint family is a cooperative institution with joint property. The head of the family manages the property of the family like a trusty for the material and spiritual welfare of the family members.

3. Common Residence

Literally, all the members of a joint family share a common roof to live under it, same food cooked in a common kitchen and the same type of clothes, but They may also live in separate houses in close proximity to one another.

4. Co-operative Organization

Cooperation is the very basis of the joint family which essentially demands the spirit of cooperation of all the members with one another to maintain the organization and structure of the joint family.

5. Common Religion

The members of the joint family observe a common religion with the similar faith and modes of worship of certain deities, performance of the same religious rites and duties, joint celebration of the festivals and social functions, joint accountability for participating in social and cultural ceremonies and joint sharing of the family burden.

6. A Productive Unit

As the roots of joint family are found in rural agricultural families, it is unanimously believed to be a productive unit which ensures the common working, sowing and harvesting of the crops of the members at one and the same field.

7. Mutual Rights and Obligations

Except the head of the family, all the other members of the joint family have the same and similar rights and obligations. It is best seen in the family obligations observed by the female members of the joint family who work in the kitchen, do laundry work, look after the children and perform other duties in perfect mutual understanding and perfect harmony helping one another.

Merits of Joint Family System

Every system has both the merits and the demerits of its own. The same applies to the joint family system in India. Some of the merits of the joint family system include-economic progress with a guarantee of bare subsistence, food and shelter to all its members; division of labour under which the whole of the work of the family is divided among all its members in accordance with their age, gender, abilities, capabilities etc.; security of economy and expenditure through the consumption of things in large quality securing the economic prices; opportunity to all the members for leisure with specific works to the members of the family; Social identity through unity of the members and their collective working with social insurance to the old, sick, incapacitated, widows etc.; fostering of social virtues such like sacrifice, affection, co-operation, spirit of selflessness, broad-mindedness among its members; avoidance of fragmentation of holdings; socialism which allows both the capable and the incapable to be treated alike with hardly any difference between them.

Demerits of Joint Family

The demerits of the joint family system includes- idleness among some of the members when the whole work is done by others in the family smoothly; improper personality development of the members because of pressure of the elders on them what to do and what not to do, and with no freedom to enjoy life in one's own way; litigation issues raised by some of the members of the family in order to get share from the family property; family disputes and quarrels that often disturb the peace of the family and that often make the family members quarrelsome; lack of privacy to the members, particularly to the husbands and the wives in the family due to lack of number of rooms and family traditions; lack of recreation and uncontrolled procreation which often results into the birth of tens of children. The worst demerit of the joint family system which is not favoured by most of the people at present, and particularly, by the young men and young women is that it does not allow them to enjoy their life in their own way, and that it forces them to keep limited to the customs and traditions (even if they are obsolete) prevailing in the family for a long time.

Emerging Changes in the Joint Family System

Change in Hierarchy

Hierarchy is the first and foremost feature of the joint hindu family system in India which has helped maintain the spirit of dignity among the elders and the youngers for a long time. Now under the impact of circumstances, this hierarchy in the joint family system has lost its existence and importance. The youngers are no longer ready to pay due respect to their elders in the family. The hierarchy would keep the things in order and the work of the family would be done in a judicious and approved way.

Loss of Faith in the Powers of the Head of the Family

The joint family system in India recognized the worth and importance of the head of the family who would be at liberty to manage the internal and external affairs of the family in his own way. His decisions would be acceptable to all in the family. It is his vision only that would direct him to get the works done in a way that all the members of the family got united. Now the things are changed. The concept of the head of the family has become obsolete and no one in the family has faith in the powers of the head of the family.

Non-readiness to live in the joint family

The youth's inclination to materialism, luxuries and love for the urban modes of living and working have had an adverse impact on the mentality of the people. Running after money, name and fame, now with the exception of few, no one is ready to live in the joint family and to observe rigidly the customs and traditions of the family.

Individualism

Westernization and urbanization have forced the Indian people to live for themselves and not for others as it would be the case in the past. They have an utter discard for the joint family system because, as they believe, the joint family does not allow them to live for themselves and to make a holistic development of the personality. It is their idea that the joint family system forces them to live within the four walls of the house, make sacrifice of their life even for those in the family who live on the crust of others and who are idle and do not want to do any work.

Awareness to the legal rights

The independence of India and the Constitution of India brought about a revolutionary change in the approach and working of all the citizens of India. It opened vistas for education and career, and it allowed the individuals to avail themselves of the various rights in order to be self depend and in order to build up their career. It also narrowed the ditch of casteism and gender inequality. Now the joint families in India are not blind to the rights that have been guaranteed to them by the Constitution of India. Their linkage to books has made them aware with their rights. Hence, they are no longer ready to allow anyone in the family to infringe their legal and civil rights.

Awareness to the Personality Development

Personality development has become one of the most considerable issue to the modern joint family members. Each one is eager and willing to make the personality development and to join the main stream of education and career. For them career is primary and the other things are secondary. For the sake of career and personality development they are ready to go to any extent. Previously, the girls and the women in the joint family system would be allowed to keep themselves confined to the four walls of the house and not to move outside, but now it is not so and they have crossed the threshold of the families for the sake of their education, career and personality development.

Awareness of the Female Members to their Self

The twenty-first century has brought about several blessings to the girls and the women. The reservation policy which links them to education at all levels and job opportunities both in the private and the public sectors has changed their ill-destiny and has allowed them to prove their potential in any field they please. The result is that today probably there is no filed of employment which is untouched by the girls and the women and which does not reveal the flying colours of achievement and success of the girls and the women.

Causes of the Changes in the Joint Family System

1. Industrialization

The joint family system is most suited to agricultural families. India today is on the way to industrialization. With the establishment of new factories in urban areas workers from the villages move to the cities which breaks the joint family.

2. Extension of communications and transport

As we saw above difficulties of communication and travel in ancient times compelled all the members of the family to live together and carry on the family occupation in agriculture and trade jointly.

Today when the means of communication and transport have been extended it is no longer necessary for men to stay with the family and carry on the family occupation. Now they go to the city and take up any other occupation or even living in the village adopt some other trade and when they adopt a trade different from the family trade, they establish a new home.

3. Decline of agriculture and village trades

The joint family system in India flourished in the days of yore when agriculture and trade in the villages were in a sound position. Today with the establishment of factories the commodities produced by the village craftsmen cannot compete in quality or price with those produced in factories with the result that the village industries suffer loss and after some time close down.

With the closing down of the village industry the workers move to the city. Further, more and more land is being acquired by the Government for setting up big public undertakings, creating new sectors for habitation and providing public amenities.

The population in the villages is growing at a faster rate than in the urban areas. Thus the pressure on land is high and not only the workers but land holders also are compelled to go to the city to find job there.

Owing to the onrush of people from the villages to the cities the Hindu joint family system breaks down. Besides the decline of agriculture and trade there are other causes as well which induce people to move to the city.

In the villages there are fewer facilities for entertainment and recreation, less opportunities for employment for the educated and inadequate opportunities for the education of children. A gentleman so called finds little attraction to stay on in the village.

4. Impact of the Westernization

India today has been greatly influenced in her social outlook by western thought and ideology. Our modern laws relating to marriage and divorce have been enacted on western pattern. Our education is entirely foreign in outlook and approach.

We have begun to look at the family as a partnership and not as a sacrament. Our views especially of the young men and women on sex and family relations have undergone a change. The influence of individualism has made deep inroads in the Indian outlook.

5. New Social Legislation

The joint family system in India has been very much influenced by the new social legislations consisting of the Civil Marriage Act (1872), Hindu Marriage Act, (1955), and Hindu Succession Act (1956). The Civil Marriage Act enabled the adult boys and girls to marry against the wishes of their parents.

The Hindu Marriage Act enabled the women to seek divorce under certain conditions. The Hindu Succession Act gave the right of equal inheritance to women. All these acts have influenced the solidarity of the joint family and relationships between brothers and sisters, parents and children and husbands and wives.

K. S. Sambasivan writes. "Industrialization has contributed much to family disorganisation. In its result most of the important ties that bind all family members together in an agricultural society began to loosen. Again, the worker unaccustomed to the work life in the factory also becomes disorganised and in such a condition is not able to enjoy the richness of the family. This condition affects his emotions also, leading him to seek pleasure through unnatural forces like alcohol, prostitution etc. Factory occupation has made members of the same family economically independent. The joint family, so common in India, is gradually disappearing."

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study and review the studies on the joint family system made in India and abroad
2. To explore the various emerging changes in the joint family system

3. To discuss the various fields of change in the Indian joint family system
4. To explore the causes of the emerging changes
5. To emphasize the positive and the negative effects of the changes in the joint family system

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Afifa Khalid, et. al. (2021), in their jointly made study 'Joint Family or Nuclear Family: The Youth's Perspective', serves youth's perspective of the joint family and the nuclear family and the various factors that constitute this perspective. The study finds that the younger generation prefers nuclear family system for the sake of privacy, freedom, family disputes and undue stress.

Swastika Chakravorty, et. al (2021), in their study 'Family Demography in India: Emerging Patterns and Its Challenges', considering family an important unit of human development, find that several changes in the institution of family and households in terms of demographic, social, and economic context are occurring. Several factors are responsible for these changes and each of these factors have shaken the roots of the ancient Hindu joint family system.

Mukesh Ahuja 2018 conducted a study on Changing Family Structures and Dynamics in Urban India. In this study the author examines the dynamic shifts in family structures within urban India, exploring the evolution from traditional joint family systems to the prevalence of nuclear families. Drawing upon socio-economic, cultural, and demographic factors, the study delves into the historical transitions, current trends, driving forces, challenges, and future projections of urban family dynamics. It scrutinizes the impact on social relationships, governmental interventions, and the implications for policy frameworks. By amalgamating quantitative trends and qualitative insights, this research underscores the multifaceted influences steering the transformation of familial units within the urban Indian landscape. Keywords: Urban India, family structures, nuclear families, joint families, socio-economic factors, cultural shifts, intergenerational dynamics, governmental policies, social relationships, demographic changes, urbanization, future projections.

Parvana Bhat and Maliha Batool (2018) conducted a study on Changing Family Structure in India. In this study the authors have found that the traditional family structure of Indian society was undergoing a rapid transformation. The older structure of the joint family is being replaced by simpler nuclear structures. From the cultural point of view, the area which comprises South Asia reflects much diversity. There are Kinship system which bind people together and finds Patrilineal and Matrilineal modes of decent in some areas. But in a country like India, the family as a unit cannot be studied in isolation from other social Institutions and its relation with wider kinship network which further related to other important units like property and Inheritance. India exhibits a strong family bound sharing close ties to the wider network of kinship and affinity but with the changing scenario, this strong bound weakened and take shape in the form of nuclear family than to a single parent or childless families are visible. In the past few years, the effect of globalization has further intensified the change in social and family structures in the world and India is also one of them. And there are many factors for the disintegration of the joint family like economic, educational,

legal, urbanization which contributes in separating the children from the elders. From this background, the present study highlights the various factors which contribute to the disintegration of Indian family structure.

Himani Bhasin 2016 conducted a study on Change in Family Structure in the Modern Times. In this study the author stated that due to the western impact over contemporary Indian social system, tremendous changes affected every walk of life. These changes have influenced the society not only overtly but also have provided alternatives to the existing values and ideas towards the different aspect of society and human behavior. But on the other hand, it is also equally true that Indian traditions are so deeply rooted that these alternatives have been succeeded in total transformation of the society. Culture is developed according to requirement of peoples of that region. They have always meant for good and made for good but affects adversely, only when taken in a wrong way. Indian youth if understands the importance of western culture, it is for sure that it is going to affect his/her behavior, outlook and character in a smarter and better way. We should adapt whatever can be adjusted with your culture and should modify the things, which can improve your culture. The youth have enhanced our standard of living. I think if a country is growing by adapting western culture, you won't say it has adversely affected. Many concepts like keeping the environment neat and clean, strong offence for eve teasing and bullying, equality between man and woman & boys and girls, appreciating the work of others, which have continuously been in their culture, if adopted by an Indian will going to widen our strengths. All cultures are good until your culture is good and flexible, and you do it and adapt it in a positive way. So I think Indian youth has some positive as well as some negative effect of western culture on u and your family according to their thinking and beliefs.

Rakesh K. Chadda and Koushik Sinha Deb (2013), in 'Indian family systems, collectivistic society and psychotherapy', observe that Indian society is collectivistic and promotes social cohesion and interdependence. The traditional Indian joint family, which follows the same principles of collectivism, has proved itself to be an excellent resource for the care of the mentally ill. However, the society is changing with one of the most significant alterations being the disintegration of the joint family and the rise of nuclear and extended family system.

Mayank Pradhan (2011), in his research article 'Changing family structure of India', reveal that the family as a social institution has been undergoing a tremendous change both in its structure and functions. In India, the family has been not only the center of social and economic life, but also the primary source of support for the family members. The 20th century Indian family structure undergoes changes as a result of increasing commercialization of the economy and the development of the infrastructure of the modern state. Fall in India's fertility rate, late bearing of the children by the couples, increased life expectancy are some of the facts associated with the changing family structure in India. Urbanization is the root cause of the changing family structure in India.

Reeta Sonawat (2001), in her study titled 'Understanding families in India: A reflection of societal changes', mentions the classification of the Indian families as patrilineal and matrilineal according to the lineage or descent by father or mother, and then, observes the family structure as the configuration of role, power, and status and relationships in the

family which depends upon the families socio-economic background, family pattern, and extent of urbanization. She also gives room to marriage practices that cover marriage patterns, selection of marriage partner, age at marriage, age at consummation of marriage, marriage rituals, financial exchanges and divorce. According to her, despite urbanization and industrialization in the contemporary Indian society, the family institution continues to play a central role in the lives of people.

WORKING HYPOTHESIS

1. Joint family system is a socially approved family system in India.
2. It is helpful in preserving the family, social, religious and cultural values.
3. Several changes are emerging in the joint family system.
4. Joint family system is on the verge of losing its existence.
5. The contemporary social scenario reflects the people's loss of faith in the joint family system.

METHODOLOGY

Designed chiefly on the secondary data in addition to the personal observation of the scholar, the study falls in the category of the qualitative-descriptive research as it aims at describing and interpreting the past, present and future of the joint family system in India. The Ph. D. Research thesis of the scholar forms the basis of the study. The other sources that provided the secondary data for the study include the books, research studies made by the scholars across the world, research papers on the subject published in the national and the international research journals etc. The scholar's own personal observation and her casual interactions and discussion with the people around on the changing joint family system served the primary data for the study. In order to keep up the scientific spirit of the work, no stone was left unturned in terms of the abiding by the process of social research. For the study, the following steps of social research suggested by the eminent social scientists, were observed and followed-

- Selection of the title of the study after a due consideration and brooding
- Determination of the objectives and research design suitable for the qualitative research
- Formulation of the working hypotheses
- Exploring the previously written and published literature on the selected theme and subject in the form of books, research theses, research papers and book chapters through the libraries and internet sites
- Non-participant observation in the surrounding communities
- Casual interaction with the people around on the theme of the study
- Application of personal observation, casual discussion and interaction with the people around to the secondary data
- Informal Content analysis
- Pointing out ethical considerations

- Drawing an inclusive conclusion

CONCLUSION

To conclude: The joint family system of India which for centuries promoted the people to live in unity with an unshakable faith in the family traditions and customs, is constantly changing. Both the types of families, namely, the nuclear family and the joint family have their own merits and demerits. Nuclear family, is the one where parents live with their kids. Whereas, in a joint family endless number of kins can live together. In a nuclear family, more privacy is there. However, in a joint family, things don't always remain a secret. In a nuclear family, resources are enjoyed well by less people. Whereas, in a joint family resources are to be shared. In a joint family, presence of elders make sure that young people in the house stick on the right trail.

Both in the urban and the rural space in India, the structure of the joint family system is changing horribly. The urban space reveals a trend which allows only the husband and the wife and their children to live together without the interference of the other kinsmen. On the other hand, the rural space produces a mixed scenario. First, there are still the joint families that are existing with the same implications and rigidity as earlier, but they are very few in number. Secondly, there are the joint families that are free from the authority of the head of the families; that have sub family groups living in the same compound with separate hearths to cook and with their own self-dependence in terms of income, expenditure and life style. Thirdly, there are the nuclear families that are found in the different parts of the villages and that reveal the presence only of the husband and the wife and their children.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

For the sake of strengthening the long prevailing and deeply rooted joint family system, it is essential to preserve it for the sake of linking the present and the future generations of man in the Indian society.

The contemporary India social scenario witnesses that the people all over India no longer seem to have any faith in the joint family system. There is an utmost need to develop in them a faith in the joint family system.

Urbanization, individualism, modernity and modernization, leaving the native roots for education and career, obsession for money and luxuries etc. are some of the causes of the change in the joint family system. It is the demand of time to realize the significance and importance of the joint family system for the real enjoyment of social and community life.

REFERENCES

1. Chadda, Rakesh K. and Koushik Sinha Deb, 'Indian family systems, collectivistic society and psychotherapy', *Indian J Psychiatry*. 2013 Jan; 55(Suppl 2): S299-S309.

doi: 10.4103/0019-5545.105555

2. Chakravorty, Swastika ; Goli, Srinivas and James, K. S., 'Family Demography in India: Emerging Patterns and Its Challenges', Sage Open, 2021.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211008178>
3. Himani Bhasin "Change in Family Structure in the Modern Times" The International Journal of Indian Psychology, Volume-3, Issue-4, No. 66, July-September, 2016, Pp: 124-137.
4. Khalid, Afifa; Khan, Aqsa Painda; Mangan, Sadia & Kumar, Sateesh, 'Joint Family or Nuclear Family: The Youth's Perspective', Asian Journal of Social Sciences and Management Studies, January, 2021. DOI:10.20448/journal.500.2021.81.1.6
5. Mukesh Ahuja "Changing Family Structures and Dynamics In Urban India", International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts, Volume-6, Issue-2, May-2018, Pp: 491-497.
6. Parvana Bhat and Maliha Batool "Changing Family Structure in India" Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research, Volume-5, Issue-12, 2018, Pp: 142-144.
7. Pradhan, Mayank, 'Changing family structure of India', 5. J. Humanities and Social Sciences. 2(2): April-June, 2011, 40-43.
8. Rajashekarappa, Dr M, 'Recent Changes in the Hindu Joint Family an Evolution Towards Modernity', International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research, International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research. IJFMR23045840
9. Sonawat, Reeta, 'Understanding families in India: A reflection of societal changes', Psicologia Teoria e Pesquisa 17(2), 2001. DOI:10.1590/S0102-37722001000200010