

THE DISINTEGRATION OF NUCLEAR FAMILIES INTO NANO INDIVIDUAL LIFE - A NEW FEATURE IN URBAN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

India has been a country of joint families and clans for centuries. However, with the growth of urbanization and increase in economic growth, family size has started shrinking. The disintegration of joint families into nuclear families is a reality in big Indian cities and is affecting joint family set up in rural and semi-urban India though at a slow pace. This research paper explores the reasons behind the change and its impact on social and family life in urban India. As India has witnessed rapid development in all spheres of life during the last ten to fifteen years, resultantly there is significant migration to big urban cities in other countries due to the availability of jobs for highly qualified individuals, availability of education, and job opportunities for females, requirement of doing job/other productive activities by each eligible adult of the family due to the high living costs, increased financial and social independence of females, liberal social acceptance of diluted moral and social values/ greater social acceptance for changes.

Keywords: *Disintegration, Nuclear Families. Nano Individual life, Urban India*

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Introduction

The basic unit of the social structure in any society is family and as an institution it, ages more than religion or state. All societies whether large, small, primitive, ancient or modern have some form of family, it's really difficult to trace the starting point of family formation but it is very clear that family was, is and will be with us in some form or the other. The family is an integrated and functional part of society and hence a great area of interest for researchers and the pace of interest in this segment is continuously increasing among the researchers. The root cause of this interest is the outlasting change in form and structure of family in almost every society throughout the world and along with that its function also aligns and changes. We know that family as a social institution performs various functions. *Kingsley Davis* speaks of four main functions of the family reproduction, maintenance, placement and socialization. India, like most other less industrialized, traditional, eastern societies is a collectivist society that emphasizes family integrity, family loyalty, and family unity. *C. Harry Hui and Harry C. Triandis* (1986) defined collectivism, which is the opposite of individualism as, "a sense of harmony, interdependence and concern for others" (p. 244).

The family structures that were very common a century ago are not nearly as common today, families have been continuously disintegrating from old joint families to nuclear families and now further to nano structure, still many sociologists argue about the contemporary changes in family structure like. *Kolenda* in her study "*Regional Differences in Family Structure in India*" argues that industrialisation strengthens the joint family by providing an economic foundation for it, or by providing additional hands for a resurrected family firm, or by allowing kin to assist one another in the pursuit of upward mobility.

Milton Singer in his study "*The Indian Joint Family in Modern Industry*" explains that few aspects of modernisation may strengthen the joint family, and that the joint family is structurally and functionally

incompatible with the features of contemporary industry. According to some social scientists, a joint family has a life cycle. A family cycle defines how and in what direction various aspects of family life take shape.

It mostly refers to the fission process that occurs in the residential and compositional parts of family life. Whereas on the other hand few sociologists believe that the same causes that have weakened the extended family in West and North America would have a similar effect on the Indian joint family. They come to the conclusion that in India, the joint family is disintegrating and being replaced by the nuclear family (A.D. Ross, Ram Mehta, F.G. Bailey, Saroj Kapoor)

Family's structure in India

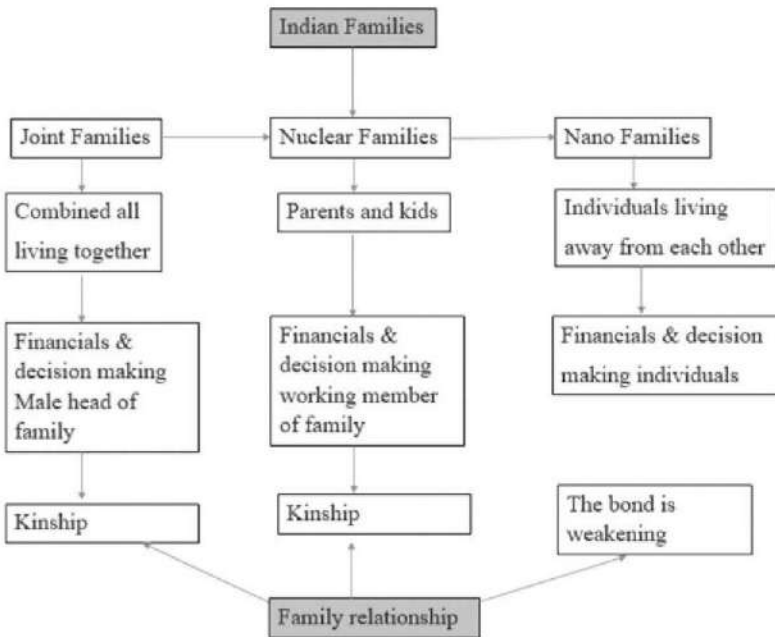
As our body consists of skeleton, muscles and several organs which helps our body to be in shape and function properly similarly a family too has both structure and function India has a robust patrilineal family system that allows family members to live in kinship groups. If we broadly classify Indian family on the basis of size then historically it can be observed that most of the families were joint and extended which later due to certain reason kept shrinking and several nuclear families were formed and now again due to modernization and many more factors such as urbanization, economic conditions, migration the families are further shrinking to nano structure.

There are several parameters on basis of which families can be classified and studies but we will be only focussing on the size or number of members in the family.

India is land of diversity and holds people of many religion and every religion has their own rules, regulations and beliefs of their social institutions although under *article 44 of Indian constitution* it is clearly stated that the state shall endeavour to secure a Uniform Civil Code for the citizens throughout the territory of India but still all the religion including Hindus, Muslims, Christians,

Sikhs, Jews, and Parsis, have their own set of laws regarding matters of personal relations and family practices such as marriage and divorce, adoption, maintenance, guardianship and custody of children, and inheritance and succession.

There are many different types of Indian families, and any generalizations about them are likely to be oversimplified. This is because Indian culture is very pluralistic. Traditional families are the oldest social institution that has survived throughout centuries and continues to play a dominant role in the lives of its individual members. Indian joint families are often considered to be strong, stable, close, and resilient, with a focus on family integrity, family loyalty, and family unity over individual freedom, choice, and privacy.



If we brief out the joint family structure in India it includes Grandparents, Parents, Uncle, Aunt and children residing at a common place in some cases they may not reside at same place but share some other traits which makes them joint family they have a common kitchen worship same deity and the expenses are covered by head of family with mutual cooperation.

A nuclear family is formed when son forms separate household in spite his parents are alive in this kind of family Parents live their kids now a new form of family (nano family) is emerging due to reasons like economic crisis, different job location of husband and wives and many more reasons.

Research method

We have used empirical research method on 100 Families to find out the reason and impact of family disintegration into nano families. Families were chosen at different locations so that we may get a good number of sample data that too with families at different economic and social level, few families were of modern mind set whereas few were still practicing traditional way of living.

We have observed these families very minutely by interacting with them through interviews, all the required consent has been taken from family members before starting the interview, we had few predefined questions and also space was left for questions which was framed after probing.

The direct interview method was used to interact with different family members with a set of question that was related to understanding the past and present types of household in which families are residing. All the members were interviewed individually as well as in group before starting the interview a proper rapport was build and the reason behind the research was told to the members so that we can get few authentic data and responses.

Questions were both closed as well as open ended so that we can gain some qualitative as well as quantitative data from them, we have tried to keep the questions easy and simple so that it would be easy for respondents to

understand and answer accordingly. We know interview is a very strong and powerful method of research when participants cannot be directly observed it has merits, as well as few demerits like the participants, might get biased while answering or they might open up and answer many things which would not be possible while observation. We have taken care of all these stuffs to design the question in a proper frame to get the accurate output related to the topic on which the work is being done.

All the ethical norms has been taken care and personal details of responded is not being disclosed and even we have assured respondents that there response will be only used for research purpose not for any other functions.

Outcome (Reasons and impact due to the change of family structure in India)

F. Le Play up to the early 1970s, held that industrialisation resulted in the disintegration of the family group into smaller units of nuclear families in west and as we know this is age of globalization and India is also part of global economy so it can't remain untouched In India in the twentieth century, the increasing commercialization of the economy and the building of modern state infrastructure brought about a dramatic change in the family structure. In particular, the previous few decades have seen significant changes in family life.

Different Job Locations

There are certain scenarios for a nuclear family which is further disintegrating like both the couples have different work location and reside in different cities and kids might stay with grandparents or in school hostels, other case may be kids are staying with either of their parents, when kids grow they move to different city to study further leaving there parents to stay alone. In all the above cases we can see the characteristics of a nuclear family is missing and hence a new type of family is emerging. Now this form of

family might be fulfilling their economic needs but heavily impacting the social needs of an individual or group.

Migration

We know major population live in rural areas and our economy has been largely dependent on agriculture but now the ratio of sectors in economy is changing and service sector is contributing a lot in the country's economy. The job availability is mostly found in urban areas metropolitan cities and hence working people have to move out of their houses away from their families.

Change in fertility rate

The fertility rate in India is decreasing, and couples are having children at a later age. At the same time, life expectancy has risen, resulting in an increase in the number of older individuals who require assistance. All of these developments are occurring in the backdrop of rising urbanisation, which is separating children from their elders and contributing to the breakdown of family-based support structures.

The main reason behind this change in fertility rate is that people are marrying at higher age compared to traditional period and delay in marriage is causing altering the fertility rate and less children are born which again leads to independent life of parents as they do not have common interest of upbringing their babies.

Modernization

In the name of modernization individuals are not following social norms of getting marriage and gradually it is becoming individual's choice rather than families choice to form a lifelong relation of marriage which acted as mortar of family and the most basic requirement to form a family is to get married and have kids so the base itself is being gradually disturbed forget about further disintegration into nano families.

Parent's attachment to their native place

Another big issues of disintegration of families is the attachment of parents they are not willing to move to new place during their old age and their children also have no option to stay back and live with them as job opportunities are not available everywhere

Conclusion

Family is a highly flexible social institution that is always changing. Several new versions of the modern family, or more accurately, the post-modern family, are emerging. We will keep observing some or the other changes in structure of family which will have both pros and cons but few things needs to be taken care of so that family exists as it is very fundamental social institution and plays a very significant role in building society, these new forms of family might be temporary in nature but are increasing number is alarming as if this continues many important function of family will face issues.

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