

THE SHIFT FROM “SACRED” TO “SECULAR” FAMILY: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE ELDERLY

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ABSTRACT

Because of increase in urbanization, the family structure has already undergone change and in cities like Jammu, there are mostly nuclear families, the going away of children for taking up jobs and settling outside Jammu has led to a new change in the family structure namely “the split-family”- the set of parents left in the native city and children (almost always the sons) and their families in other cities. Thus, this study becomes significant as it focuses on the emerging problems in the society ranging from change in the family to increase in the gerontological problems and also looking at their possible issues that emerged during the course of the given study.

KEYWORDS: *Gerontology, Nuclear Family, Split Family, Urbanization.*

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INTRODUCTION

In the Indian social setting, the term joint family is used in the sense of vertically extended family or/ and horizontally extended family. It has been considered one of the main pillars supporting the Hindu society. It constitutes the very bed rock of Hindu society. But with the industrialization, urbanization and the modernizing force of contemporary society, the need of joint family was felt less and less. The joint family failed to maintain its original form and began to disintegrate showing the signs of decay. Breaking down of joint family does not mean its disappearance, it simply denotes that in many a case jointness is tending towards nuclearity and the number of households is gradually coming down.

A large number of researches have been done on the structure of the family and the changes that it is undergoing in present scenario. The given review of literature highlights some of the significant work done by various authors as related to the family, reasons for the change and its effect on the elderly.

GLOBALISATION

Globalization is a process that has multiple implications on various spheres like economic, political, human, cultural, and environmental. The changes in the economic sphere have led to a significant impact on the traditional family system. With the adoption of open markets it has brought greater mobility of young generation to the cities for trade, thus providing them greater opportunities.

Anthony Giddens (1990) defines Globalization as “intensification of worldwide social relationships, which link distant places in such a way that local happening is shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa”.

On one hand, globalization has brought wide opportunities for the youth to raise their standard of living; it has also led to the fragmentation of age old traditional family system. Not only people are migrating only to areas but it is equally on rise in urban areas as well. As per the statistics, the number of 60+ in India will increase to 100 million in 2013 and 198 million in 2030. Also, the existing norms in India does not provide any exclusive state, health or social security to the elderly left behind which makes them even more susceptible to these unprecedented changes.

K. Saradmoni in his study has talked about globalization and its consequent impact on India. The disintegration of traditional family ties is the foremost outcome that globalization has on India. The younger generation migrates from villages to cities thus leaving the elderly behind. He also highlights the marginalization of older generations, specifically, the women. This leads to the breaking up of joint family system into smaller units, that is, nuclear families.

MODERNIZATION

Modernization implies some typical forms of changes in the social structure of societies. These changes in the systems of social relationships contribute to the growth and institutionalization of new roles and group structures based on modernization. This process cumulatively leads to the structural modernization of society. Modernization as a form of cultural response, involves attributes which are basically universalistic and evolutionary; they are pan humanistic, trans ethnic and non-ideological. It symbolizes a rational attitude towards issues, and their evaluation from a universalistic and not particularistic view point; when it involves an emotional response to problems, orientation is emphatic and not constructive; modernization is rooted in the scientific world-view; it has deeper and positive association with levels of diffusion of scientific knowledge, technological skill and technological resources in a particular society.

Modernization in India started mainly with the western contact, especially through establishment of the British rule. Initially, the contact led to the growth of a modernizing sub-culture or Little tradition of Westernization, especially during the seventeenth century in Bengal, Madras, Bombay, where a small number interpreters, traders emerged who were slowly being socialized to western ways; subsequently there also emerged sects which emphasized assimilation of Western cultural norms and Western modes of learning (e.g. Brahma Samaj, Prathna Samaj etc...). These movements on one hand and the consolidation of the British power towards the middle of the nineteenth on the other finally led to the institution of a modernizing Great Tradition. Its components were: a universalistic legal system, expansion of Western form of education, urbanization and industrialization, spread of new means of communication and transport and social reforms. The following statement was given in the report of the Education Commission 1964–66, appointed by the Government of India: “the most powerful tool in the process of modernization is education based on science and technology.

Donald Cowgill and **Lowell Holmes** (1972) developed a theory of modernization which is related to ageing and old age. According to them are factory locations in urban areas magnets to young workers. The process of urbanization leaves older family members behind in rural areas, undermining the traditional extended family and the prominent position of older members within them. The new family in modernizing societies is the nuclear family and both social and spatial distances are increased between the young and the old, changing intergenerational relations. Modernization theorists viewed upward mobility of the young as being accompanied by downward mobility among the elders in their families.

Yogender Singh (1973) argues that “Modernization in India started mainly with the western contact, especially with the British rule. This contact had a special historicity which brought out many far-reaching changes in culture and social structure in Indian society.” Western culture presented before the Indians a new type of family comprising of the

spouses and the children. This new ideal of family life became more and more favored than the joint family living. The concepts of love, equality, freedom and close associations between the spouses of which were prevalent in the western type of life became for the Indians who were crushed under the sense of sacrifice, responsibilities and devotion, devoid of love and affection.

Singh provided a comprehensive sociological study of the processes and impact of modernization in Contemporary India. Modernization demands large scale geographical mobility and thus the individual families go their own way ignoring traditional extended kinship bonds.

URBANISATION

Urbanization and industrialization are often considered as twin forces of change and both these factors influence each other. Urbanization occurs due to industrialization and vice versa. With the high rate of urbanization the composition of laborer forces changes considerably. The percentage of workers depended on agriculture comes down and more and more people run to cities and towns in search of jobs. The urban centers also provide people with various amenities of life concerning transport and communication, sanitation and health, education and employment etc. people are tempted with the lure of urban civilization and there is rural to urban type of migration. Since an extended family or joint family cannot always be maintained in the towns or cities, due to high cost of urban living and problem of accommodations, people afford to live in the nuclear type of families.

M.S. Gore (1968) in his study “Urbanization and family Change” examines the nature and extent of change in family relationships among the Aggarwals, a business community of Delhi under the possible impact of industrialization and urbanization. Gore comes to the conclusion that though we cannot talk of a rural fringe urban continuum in family behavior or attitudes, no significant differences are evident in the data. Gore asserts that the Aggarwals case still largely conforms the pattern of joint family behavior, role precipitation and attitudes, but within this overall pattern, a certain measure of change can be associated with the urban residence and education.

Forces of Change: The Role of Industrialization and Urbanization

Lineage, among the other factors like economic and social status, access to power has always been an important parameter in determining the social status of an individual. Even the position in the lineage was a key determining factor of one’s social status in the society. With the introduction of industrialization in pre- industrial Korean society, the younger generation was exposed to ample opportunities for which they no longer required their family position or their fortunes. But it was based entirely on their personal achievement and their qualifications.

Despite being self sufficient and being able to fend for themselves, the ageing population still need the sons to support them as required in the traditional set up of agrarian society.

There is also an immense difference in the set up of rural and urban life, thereby curtailing the centrality around sons in urban areas. Also, the women are the most affected here in rural areas. The villagers are more tied to their lineages but the urban areas are dominated by the bureaucratic structures and the industrial set up of buildings and complexes. This also in turn leads to the lowered pressure on the youngsters fulfilling the familial duties. Women here are the active participants in the churches and temples.

Eventually, this is leading to the greater gender parity in inheritance, as with the advent of industrialization, the sons are moving out of the houses to the urban areas leaving the scope of married daughters living nearby parents. This can also be seen in the responses to the national survey questionnaires about the changes in social norms conducted in 1991 and 2000 respectively. While in the former year, the number of husband's brothers and their order was the main criterion to know about the status but the latter then shifted to the total number of siblings including the sisters. This is a significant shift in the value of daughters which is further uplifted with the female education and employment.

Nairn Araba Apt and **Margaret Gricco** (2008) in their paper on urbanization discussed about the rapid urbanization and living arrangement of older persons in Africa. According to them, in Africa, ageing is a crisis that is just beginning to reveal its shape; at present it is a family crisis. In demographic terms, the proportion of African population aged 65 and over stands at 3.1% (United Nations, 1999).

In this comprehensive study, they discussed the whole process of urbanization and its consequences on the structure of family in Africa in general and the living arrangement of the older persons in Ghana in particular. In their concluding remarks, they advocated certain recommendations also to uplift the living standards of elderly in Ghana.

Jitendra K Trivedi, Himanshu Sareen, and Mohan (2008) discussed the forces of the modern world like urbanization and industrialization and its effect on the traditional ties of family structure. As per their study, by 2020, the total population of elderly will increase by 67% against the current percentage of 58% as in 1990. In addition, the number of elderly will increase by 200% in developing countries in comparison to the developed world at 68%.

Chuks (2007) asserts that today, urbanization and modernization are said to be weakening the family support base and making older people more vulnerable. "As the young people grow up, their inability to find means of subsistence in the rural setting force them to move in urban centers, so increasingly the elderly people are left on their own. Secondly, young people feel that elderly people are old and do not know modern things, so they are abandoned. They no more go to them for advice," he said. Chucks said issues such as lack of adequate social protection and health care are heightening the plight of the elderly.

Ather M Taqui, Ahmed Itrat, Waris Qidwai and Zeeshan Qadri ascertained the relation between urbanization and the elderly. In an extensive study of 400 elderly aged 65 and above was conducted in Karachi, an urban city in Pakistan. The lives of elderly in Pakistan majorly revolve around their children and grand children for not only their emotional needs but also physical, social as well as financial requirements. The data incurred from the study showed serious signs of concern as the prevalence of depression was found to be 19.8%. It was also drawn from the study that the nuclear families were 4.3 times likely to undergo depression than the families that are joint in nature.

In a similar study conducted by **Mason** (1992) was found that in Karachi also the joint family system is gradually eroding and it might lead to the increased number of elderly living alone, posing a threat to their physical and mental health including depression.

MIGRATION

Migration is not a new phenomenon, especially rural to urban and urban to urban. But the geriatric issues that have appeared in this modern era are a recent affair. This situation has arisen because earlier the joint family structure provided the security and other needs of the elderly but because of the increased nuclear families, a new phenomenon has come to light, that is the further breaking up of nuclear families leading to the concept of split-family. In such cases, elderly are

left alone. And in a society like India, where daughters are considered to be ‘praya dhan’, it becomes very difficult for the parents to be dependent on them even in their old age. But migration has led to some noteworthy structural changes in the age old family system.

Although the desirability of sons despite being away and unavailable at crucial junctures of their old age has not lowered as parents still believe daughters cannot replace sons. But the help and support rendered by the daughters and the ‘left behind’ status of parents have forced this generation of parents to rethink about the whole notion of son preference.

The various studies related to the different Factors like globalization, modernization, urbanization and migration show that these phenomena have spread in all the developing countries of the world like Africa, Ghana, Turkey, South Korea, Pakistan etc. these factors pose similar kind of opportunities and challenges in India as well. On one hand these processes are providing vast opportunities to the young generation, on the other, it is forcing the families to disintegrate which sidelines the aged people who are left behind and the sons migrate for better livelihood and future.

SAMPLE SIZE AND THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Thirty respondents were interviewed using interview schedule in Jammu city about the migration of their sons to different cities. The responses given by them showed the signs that the major driving force behind the movement of sons is directly or indirectly related to globalization, industrialization, urbanization and privatization. The given tables reflect the views of parents regarding the employment of their sons from which the analysis about the factors can be drawn.

Table 1: Place of Education of Sons

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Jammu	19	63.33
Outside Jammu	11	36.66
Total	30	100

The given table indicates that 63.33% (19 out of 30) of sons took their education from Jammu only, agreeing that the education provided in Jammu is satisfactory and can earn them good jobs whereas 36.66% (11 out of 30) took their education outside Jammu. According to them, to match to the candidates of other cities, they should take their degrees also from outside.

Table 2: Educational Qualification of Sons

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Graduate	8	26.66
Professional course	20	66.66
Higher studies	2	6.66
Total	30	100

The given table indicates that a significant number of sons i.e 66.66% (20 out of 30) who have moved to other cities possess professional degrees. The private sector majorly requires such manpower with skilled knowledge; therefore the young generation is attracted to other cities as there are not many companies in Jammu. 8 of the total respondent's i.e 26.66% informed that their sons are graduates and have moved to other cities because there are ample opportunities outside Jammu for those also who just graduates are, but in Jammu the completion is so tough that everyone can never be absorbed. The only option left for the sons is to move out. What is to be noticed is that only 6.66% (2 out of 30) have acquired higher education which clearly indicates that skilled labor is required in private companies and therefore the maximum number of sons who migrate have professional qualification.

Table 3: Occupation of Sons

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
White collar job	28	93.33
Business	2	6.66
Total	30	100

Out of the total 30 respondents whose sons have moved to other cities, 93.33% (28 out of 30) are into white collar jobs whereas only 6.66% (2 out of 30) are into some sort of business which clearly depicts that the maximum number of sons who have moved out are working in private sector.

Table 4: Reasons for the Migration of Sons

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Better employment	25	83.33
Improved work culture	1	3.33
Better standard of living	2	6.66
Any other	2	6.66
Total	30	100

When asked about the reasons that made sons to move out, the parents informed that 83.33% (25 out of 30) moved out for better employment, showing the influence of private sector that attract the young generation. 3.33% (1 out of 30) moved out because of improved work culture. 6.66% (2 out of 30) moved out because they believed that the standard of living is higher in other industrialized cities. An equal number of sons gave other reasons like they wanted to get rid of family problems, traditional values etc.

Table 5: Whether Sons were Employed in Jammu before Migrating

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	9	30
No	21	70
Total	30	100

When asked about the employment of the sons, 30% respondents informed that their sons were employed in Jammu before moving out but they left the job because of various reasons like the salary was low in comparison to their qualification, the incentives given were not satisfactory, work culture was not good. Others without applying for job straightaway moved out because of the lack of big and reputed companies.

Table 6: Comparative Earning Status of Sons in Jammu and Outside

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Less	0	0
More	9	100
Total	9	100

All the children who were employed in Jammu are earning more outside than what they were earning in Jammu or could they have earned if they had continued with their job in Jammu which clearly indicates why the sons are migrating to other industrialized cities.

CONCLUSION

The study clearly reflects that globalization is providing new vistas for earning which are not available in Jammu compelling the young generation to migrate leaving the elderly to fend for themselves. This is leading to another phenomenon that is the breakup of nuclear families also.

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