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Erosion of Traditional Family Structure: A Barrier or Catalyst of Social Change

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ABSTRACT

Change is the natural occurrence; everything changes and takes new forms, whether it is culture, family structures, values, traditions. Traditional family structure once considered as a bedrock of the society has undergone significant transformation in recent decades. From traditional families characterised by hetero-sexual married couple with biological children to diverse family forms ranging from single parent household and blended families to same-sex partnerships and cohabiting couples, challenging the traditional conception of what family should be. Family being the cornerstone of society, changing values in it brings about changes in variety of areas of life. As we often say that law and society should change with changing times and needs of its people, there are conflicting perceptions among scholars, authors, social reformers and people regarding erosion of traditional family structures. On one hand, decline of traditional family norms is seen as contributing to various social problems like economic inequality, social fragmentation and general sense of social disintegration. While others see this shift as a driver of social transformation, promoting greater inclusivity, improved gender equality, individual freedom, and adaptation to modern realities. A lot has been said & done theoretically but is there same perception amongst those who belong to such family structures? To examine these paradoxes, this empirical research aims to explore the competing perspectives of people on erosion of traditional family structure: as a barrier or a catalyst of progressive social change. This research further aims to analyse how this erosion alters the social structures due to various factors.

Keywords: law and social transformation, socio-legal, family structures, social change, social determinant of law, sociology.

I. INTRODUCTION

The family has been a foundational institution of society in most parts of the world, particularly in India. The law's response to the decline of traditional family structures, such as extended families, can either slow down or support social change. In some cases, laws are still based on older family models, like favouring inheritance for close relatives or married couples. This can make it harder for non-traditional families, such as single parents or cohabiting partners, to

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gain the same rights. In this way, the law can act as a barrier to recognizing new family forms. On the other hand, allowing adoption by non-traditional families, and supporting reproductive rights show how laws can change to include diverse family models. These legal changes not only reflect shifts in society but also push further progress by giving equal rights and recognition to different types of families.

As traditional family roles are redefined, women are no longer confined to homemaker or caregiver roles and have more freedom to make decisions about their lives. Legal reforms, like the right to divorce, equitable property division, and protection against domestic violence, have empowered women to leave oppressive situations and gain financial independence. This evolution of family structures, supported by law, has been a catalyst for women's growing autonomy, enabling them to play a more active role in shaping their lives and contributing to social transformation.

A. Significance of the study

The family has always been a foundational institution of society, particularly in India. The importance of family as a cornerstone of society is seen not just in older times but even today. But, the forms of family are very diverse in today's age, which ultimately leads to erosion of traditional family structures. Due to the dual perspective that exists on diminishing social values because of changes in family structures, it is noteworthy to study and examine the perception of people coming from various family structure as to erosion of traditional families acts as a barrier or driver of social change. Such analysis will help in altering social structures either by reducing social exclusion or by future prospects of preserving older values.

B. Research Hypotheses

1. The Erosion of Traditional Family Structures will lead to increased claims of women autonomy and choices in the society.
2. The Diversification of family structures acts as a catalyst of Social Transformation.
3. It is believed that court-led conflict resolution in modern families is better than elder-led conflict resolution of traditional families.

C. Literature Review

Irawati Karve in her book **Kinship organization in India**² emphasizes that the breakdown of joint families can lead to the erosion of support systems, particularly for the elderly and children. The weakening of family bonds may also result in a loss of social cohesion, leading

² Irawati Karve, *Kinship Organization in India*, 85-88, (2nd ed, 1998).

to a fragmented society where individuals struggle to find their identity and support outside the family unit. She further points out that there could be numerous reasons to support newer forms of family but the essence of older family values and structures will always outweigh the diversification.

The author here, raises concerns over changing dimensions of older values of family and points out that no matter how far we go, we should always gather back to the roots where we actually belong. Although her work speaks at large about traditional families, it failed to consider potential benefits of diversification.

Ronald Fletcher in his book **Making of sociology**³ rightly points out that, old societies were despotic, women were depicted as a source of evil and had to remain institutionally subordinated to men. He further cited **Hobhouse** by stating that, broad pattern of change in modern societies, which is the root change of all the particular institutions taken separately, can be called as 'double movement' because as the tightened social fabric seems diminishing, newer threads get attached along. Much improved status of gender equality can be reflected through this change in structures.

The author supports the diverse family structures by stating that the gender roles in families are now redefined due to changes or alterations in family forms. The difference of opinion can be seen in both the authors. One sees the changing values as a boon and the other see it as a bane.

Namrata Daniel in her article **Family, State & Everyday Violence in Indian Society**⁴ rightly points out that, the decline of patriarchal family norms has facilitated greater gender equality and empowerment, particularly for women who now have more autonomy in choosing their life paths. The shift towards nuclear families has also been associated with greater freedom and individualism, allowing people to break free from rigid social expectations. But Indian societies today are still not able to digest this change which has taken place over the decades.

The author here, ticks green the erosion of traditional family structure as catalyst instead of barrier of social transformation. As it alters the social institutions in a way leading to social inclusivity but she further raises a concern that there are miles to go, before people really accept this change and newer forms of families. Although the concern raised by author is right but since this change has occurred through a period of time, people also require some period of

³ Ronald Fletcher, *Making of Sociology*, 120-125, (3rd ed, 2011).

⁴ Namrata Daniel, *Family, State & Everyday violence*, IJIL 2021 Available at: <https://www.scconline.com/searchresults/family-and-violence-namrata.pdf> last seen on 13/08/2024.

time to accept the change.

Dan A. Chekki in his article **Family Values and Family Change**⁵ has given a very different outlook from all the authors mentioned above, he points out while talking about single parent households, jumping into a new family form is not always a choice but the circumstances which led to this shift. Keeping away all the virtues of modernization aside, it is not easy to survive new forms of family for some. Leading to economic inequality, constant social exclusion which not only harms the overall growth but also the mental health of many.

The author here travels beyond the pre-conceived general notions of good & bad and rightly points out that actuality of the diverse family forms which are not always are garden of roses but thorns to many.

From the above literature, the similarities and differences of opinions can be seen between the authors. Most of the authors have considered diverse families as a catalyst of social change while others consider it as leading to social fragmentation. The research gaps lay in two things mainly, first is that still there is non-acceptance of diversified family forms in India so it becomes important to analyse. And second, potential of diverse family forms to alter social structures to what extent can be achieved.

D. Objectives

1. To understand how traditional family structures have eroded over the years.
2. To examine the factors which led to change in family institutions.
3. To collect data to examine whether erosion of traditional family structure is a hindrance or a driver of social transformation by analysing the public perception on it.
4. To look into the authoritative literature and judgements.
5. To alter the social structures by analysing the potential benefits of diversification of family structures.

E. Scope & Limitations

The scope of this paper is to determine the impact of diminishing traditional family forms on social transformation. It aims to understand and examine the public perception about the same. It is limited to the family forms in India. no foreign social institution has been compared. Since the study is an empirical one, the limitation would be chief dependency upon the responses

⁵ Dan A Chekki, *Family Values and Family Change*, Available at CHEKKI, DAN A. "Family Values and Family Change." *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, vol. 27, no. 2, 1996, pp. 409–13. JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41602465>. Accessed 15 Aug. 2024.

received from the respondents.

F. Research Methodology

Researcher is conducting an Empirical Research. however, it is rooted in doctrinal research as well. Empirical Research refers to systematically collected data to analyse, study or describe a legal phenomenon. Researcher is conducting Empirical Research because it becomes important to understand public perception regarding erosion of traditional family structures and to know how it will alter social structures. Since public perception is to be analysed the method undertaken is a qualitative one which deals with feelings, ideas, opinions of people.

G. Tools of Data Collection

The data collection is the process of gathering, measuring and analysing accurate data from a variety of relevant sources to find answers to research problems or questions. The tool used in present research to collect the data is Questionnaire. It will be a combination both open-ended and close-ended questions. Since the sample size is little large, Research decided to opt for questionnaire as a method of data collection which makes it easier to map larger population.

H. Sampling Population & Technique

The target population is the entire group about which the researcher wants to draw conclusions about. The sample frame is the group of individuals that can be selected from the target population which would represent the entire population, with the help of technique used in this study The target population in the present research would be particularly, 15 individuals belonging to different family forms and 15 individuals belonging to traditional family forms. Thus, leading towards non probability, purposive sampling technique in which sample frame is selected purposively because it has characteristics which the researcher requires in the sample. Sample size is 30.

II. SHIFT FROM TRADITIONAL FAMILIES TO MODERN FAIMLY STRUCTURES

The evolution of family structures in India has been shaped by a blend of cultural traditions, socioeconomic changes, and legal reforms. Historically, the joint family system was predominant, especially in rural areas. This system included multiple generations living together, often governed by a patriarchal figure who made decisions for the family. The joint family offered social security and economic stability, particularly in agrarian societies where land ownership and collective labour were essential. Women, however, were typically

relegated to domestic roles, with little autonomy in family or social matters⁶.

Over time, as India industrialized and urbanization spread, the traditional joint family system began to decline. The migration of younger generations to cities for work and education led to the rise of nuclear family households made up of just parents and children. The nuclear family model provided more independence for individual family units and was better suited to the demands of urban life, where space and resources were often limited. This shift also reflected changing socio-economic patterns, where economic contributions by both men and women became more critical in sustaining family life. The rise of dual-income households, particularly in urban areas, significantly altered family dynamics. As more women entered the workforce, traditional gender roles began to shift. Women gained greater financial independence, which in turn gave them more power in household decision-making. This growing role of women in the economy challenged the traditional male-dominated family structure.⁷ Legal reforms played a crucial role in empowering women and altering family structures. Laws concerning marriage, divorce, and inheritance were reformed to reflect the changing status of women in society. For instance, the Hindu Succession Act of 1956 gave women equal inheritance rights, marking a significant step toward gender equality in the family. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, further safeguarded women's rights within the family, helping them escape abusive environments. These reforms helped shift family power dynamics, ensuring women had more legal standing and protection.

However, the decline of the joint family system and the rise of nuclear families also brought challenges, particularly for the elderly and those who traditionally relied on the extended family for support. In joint families, elderly parents often had a guaranteed place and role within the family, but with nuclear families, many older individuals found themselves isolated or reliant on external support systems. This shift has raised questions about care for the elderly in an increasingly fragmented family structure.

At the same time, non-traditional family forms have emerged and gained more social acceptance. Single-parent households, live-in relationships, and same-sex partnerships are becoming more common, especially in urban areas. While legal recognition for some of these family forms, like live-in relationships, is still evolving, social norms are gradually adjusting to accommodate more diverse ways of organizing family life. The Indian judiciary has also

⁶ Namrata Daniel, *FAMILY, STATE AND EVERYDAY VIOLENCE IN INDIAN SOCIETY* SJR 2020 Available at: <https://www.scconline.com/Namrata-daniel8458/> last accessed on 08 Oct 2024.

⁷ Velayudhan, Meera. "Changing Roles and Women's Narratives." *Social Scientist*, vol. 22, no. 1/2, 1994, pp. 64–79.

JSTOR, available at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/3517852>. Accessed 9 Oct. 2024.

played a proactive role in acknowledging the rights of individuals in non-traditional families, providing legal protection in cases of inheritance, child custody, and domestic partnerships.

Despite these shifts, patriarchal norms still persist in many parts of Indian society. In rural areas, joint families continue to function in much the same way they have for centuries, with the eldest male often holding significant control over family decisions. Even in nuclear families, traditional gender expectations persist, with women often expected to balance work and household responsibilities. The influence of globalization and exposure to Western lifestyles has further influenced Indian family structures.⁸ Young people, particularly in urban areas, are increasingly opting for delayed marriage or choosing not to marry at all, focusing instead on career and personal development. This trend has led to a rise in smaller, childless nuclear families or individuals living alone, which marks a significant departure from the traditional family-oriented culture that has long defined Indian society.

To sum it up, family structures in India have evolved from the traditional, patriarchal joint family system to more flexible, diverse forms, reflecting broader social, economic, and legal changes. While nuclear families are now more common in urban areas, traditional values still shape family life, particularly in rural settings. The growing independence of women, coupled with legal reforms, has contributed to these shifts, but challenges related to gender roles, elder care, and the recognition of non-traditional families remain significant issues that will continue to influence family dynamics in India.

III. FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR EROSION OF TRADITIONAL FAMILY STRUCTURES

One of the most significant factors contributing to the erosion of traditional family structures in India is urbanization. As cities expanded and offered better employment opportunities, younger generations began migrating from rural areas to urban centres. This migration often resulted in the formation of nuclear families, as living in densely populated cities made maintaining a large, extended household impractical. Urban living conditions, along with the rising costs of housing and living expenses, have fostered a preference for smaller family units, leading to a decline in the traditional joint family model. The economic landscape of India has undergone substantial changes, particularly with the rise of the service sector and industrialization. The shift from agrarian economies to urban employment has altered the economic roles within families⁹. As individuals, especially young men and women, become

⁸ Kamat, A. R. "Women's Education and Social Change in India." *Social Scientist*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1976, pp. 3–27. JSTOR, available at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/3516600>. Accessed 9 Oct. 2024.

⁹ Singh, J. P. "Nuclearisation of Household and Family in Urban India." *Sociological Bulletin*, vol. 52, no. 1, 2003, pp. 53–70. JSTOR, available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23620301>. Accessed 9 Oct. 2024.

financially independent through careers, the collective economic model of the joint family has diminished in relevance. This economic independence encourages the formation of nuclear families, where members prioritize their own careers and lifestyles over traditional family obligations. The empowerment of women through education and workforce participation has significantly reshaped family dynamics in India. Historically, women were primarily responsible for domestic duties within the joint family system and often lacked decision-making power. However, with increased access to education and professional opportunities, women are now contributing economically to their households. This newfound financial independence enables women to assert their rights and seek more equitable family dynamics, leading to the emergence of nuclear families where both partners share responsibilities and decision-making.

The influence of globalization and exposure to Western values has also impacted family structures in India. As Indian society becomes increasingly interconnected with global trends, younger generations are adopting more liberal attitudes toward family and relationships. The acceptance of diverse family structures, such as single-parent households, live-in relationships, and same-sex partnerships, reflects a shift away from traditional norms. This growing acceptance signifies a cultural transition toward recognizing individual choices and rights within the family context.

Advancements in technology, particularly in communication, have facilitated the decline of joint family structures in India. With the rise of mobile phones and internet connectivity, family members can maintain relationships even when living apart. This ease of communication allows younger generations to pursue opportunities in different cities or countries while staying connected to the families. As a result, the need for cohabitation within large families has diminished, promoting a shift toward nuclear family arrangements.

Changing social norms regarding marriage and family life have significantly contributed to the erosion of traditional family structures. Younger generations in India are increasingly opting for love marriages rather than arranged marriages, leading to different family dynamics. Additionally, the societal pressure to conform to the joint family system has decreased, allowing individuals to embrace nuclear families as a modern and practical option. This shift reflects a broader change in attitudes toward individual autonomy and personal fulfilment.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

Description of sample: the research has selected the method of purposive sampling for data collection. The target population selected is primarily people from traditional family structures

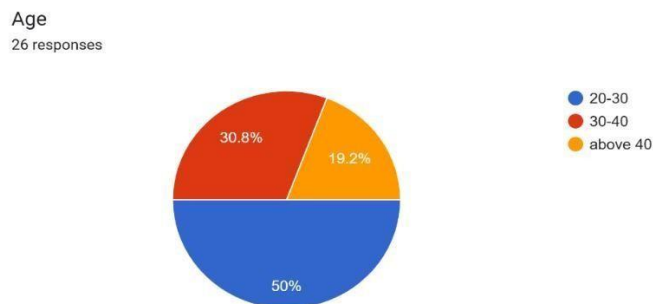
as well as people who are now part of newer family forms. Between the age group 20 to 55. The predetermined sampling size was 30. However, the research was able to get 26 responses which would further be used for analysis.

Age:

20-30 age group= 13 Respondents

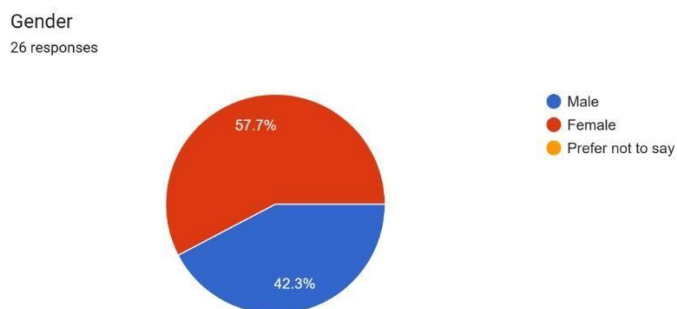
30-40 age group= 8 Respondents

Above 40= 5

**Gender:**

Female= 15 Respondents

Male= 11 Respondents

**Family Structure:**

Traditional Family= 9 Respondents

Nuclear Family= 12 Respondents

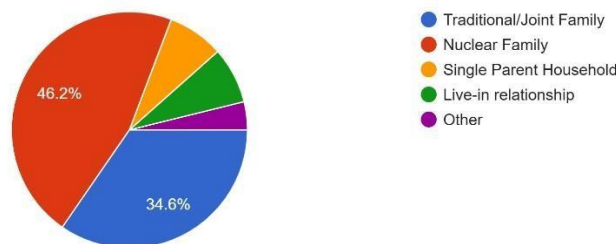
Single Parent Household= 2 Respondents

Live-in Relationship= 2 Respondents

Other= 1

Which family structure do you belong to?

26 responses



• Analysis and Interpretation of Data Collected:

The questionnaire was designed as to gather the opinions of the respondents about erosion of traditional family structures and whether or not it acts as catalyst of social transformation. The crux of the research was provided in an easy language through the questionnaire so as to guide the respondents with an aim to impart basic knowledge about research. The complete questionnaire is annexed at the end of research work. The detailed analysis is discussed hereafter:

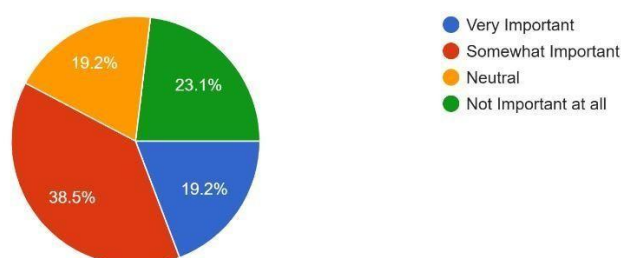
A. Quantitative Analysis

The unit of measurement for analysis is fixed as ‘percent’

Question I: How important do you think traditional family structures are in maintaining social values?

How important do you think traditional family structures are in maintaining social values?

26 responses



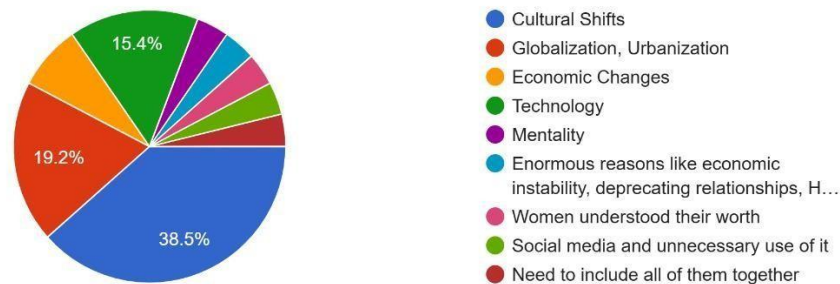
10 respondents out of 26 believe that traditional family structures are somewhat important, 6 respondents believe it is not important at all whereas, 5 respondents believe it as very important, 5 respondents neutral about it. It is clearly states that, 38.5% people i.e. majority of people believe that traditional family structures are only somewhat important. 23.1% people believe it to be not important at all. And only 19.2% people believe it to be very important and 19.2% are neutral about it.

This indicates the shift we're travelling towards. Giving traditional families a moderate importance not like older times where it was of utmost importance.

Question II: What do you think are the main factors contributing to changing family structures?

10 Respondents believe that it is the cultural shift which contributes to the changing family structure, 5 believe that it is globalization, 4 respondents believe it is technology and 2 respondents believe economic changes. While some respondents have varied views on factors: mentality, higher education and job opportunities available only in cities, women understood their worth, social media, and one of the respondents wants to include them all together.

What do you think are the main factors contributing to changing family structures?
26 responses



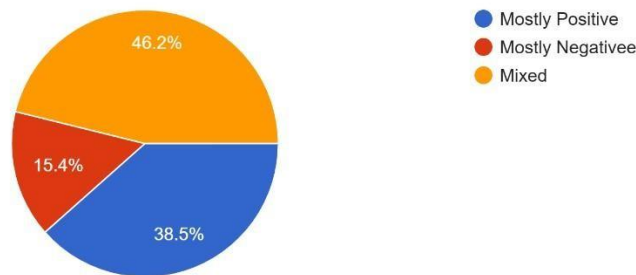
As it is clearly seen that 38.5% respondents believe it is only the cultural shifts which is major contributing factor for changing family structures and 19.2% respondents believe it to be globalization and 15.4% believe technology this are major contributors. However, the varied views should also be highlighted indeed women understood their worth as also the factors. This highlights the autonomy of women.

Question III: Do you think these changes have had a positive or negative impact on society? 12 Respondents said that these changes have had mixed impacts whereas 10 respondents said there is positive impact and only 4 respondents believe that it has negative impact.

As 46.2% believe that there would be mixed impacts probably believe in modernity while also upholding the traditional roots. This is the appropriate shift we should move towards. As, 38.5% respondents said that there is a positive impact which indicates that people are accepting the diversified family forms much now. And its 15.2% respondents to strictly adhere to traditional family values.

Do you think these changes have had a positive or negative impact on society?

26 responses

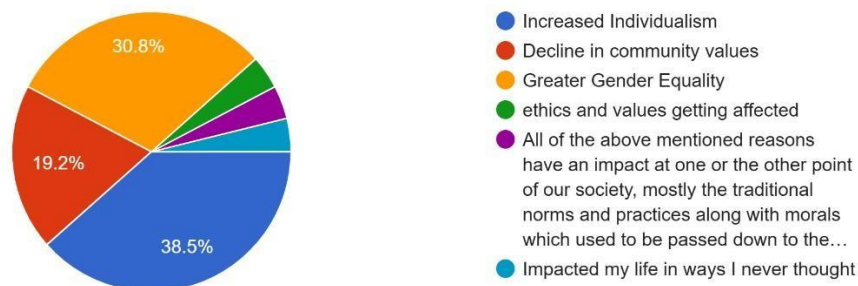


Question IV: In what ways do you think changing family structures have impacted social norms and behaviours?

10 respondents said that it has led to increased individualism, 8 believe that it also led to greater gender equality, 5 respondents believe that it has declined community values. Whereas varied views of respondents include, ethics and values getting affected, all of the options mentioned above and 1 respondent said it impacted his life in ways he never thought it would which reflects positive change.

In what ways do you think changing family structures have impacted social norms and behaviors?

26 responses



As 38.5% clearly indicate the increased individualism that comes along with diverse families. As the role of women is also redefined in these families 30.4% people believe that it promotes greater gender equality. 19.2% respondents who still belong to traditional family structures say that it declines community values. This indicates the importance of individualism amidst shifting family forms.

Question V: Do you think all the people who belong to traditional families stay in such form due to choice or the circumstances in their lives?

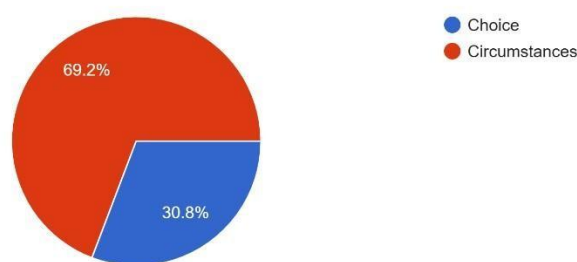
18 Respondents say that it is the circumstances in their life that leads them to live in a traditional

family it could be their parents and other factors which holds them in that family form. Whereas, 8 respondents believe that it is an individual choice which leads them to a particular family form.

As it is clearly indicated that 69.2% says that circumstances hold them back, it reflects the social stigmas that people still have. Whereas, 30.8% believe that it's the choice of a person and he/she can always move towards new family form if needed.

Do you think all the people who belong to traditional families stay in such form due to choice or the circumstances in their lives?

26 responses

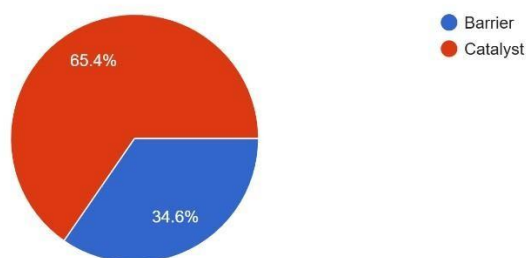


Question VI: Do you believe that the erosion of traditional family structures is more of a barrier or a catalyst of social change?

17 respondents says that erosion of traditional family structure acts a catalyst of social change whereas 9 respondents say it is barrier of social change.

Do you believe that the erosion of traditional family structures is more of a barrier or a catalyst of social change?

26 responses



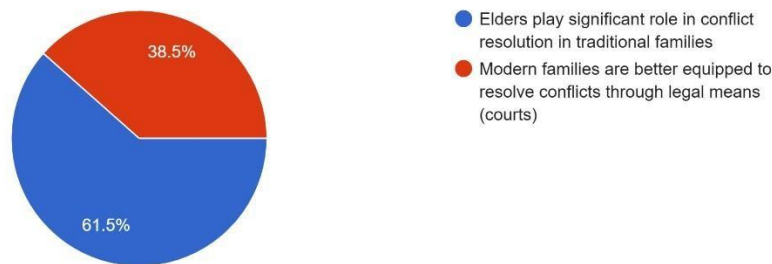
As 65.4% respondents believe that changing family forms is a catalyst of social change it clearly indicates that traditional family values are declining although it also indicates that, 34.6% respondents still cling to traditional family values.

Question VII: How do you perceive the role of elders in conflict resolution within traditional families compared to modern families?

16 respondents says that elders play significant role in conflict resolution in traditional families whereas 10 respondents believe that modern families are better equipped to resolve conflicts through legal means i.e. courts.

How do you perceive the role of elders in conflict resolution within traditional families compared to modern families?

26 responses



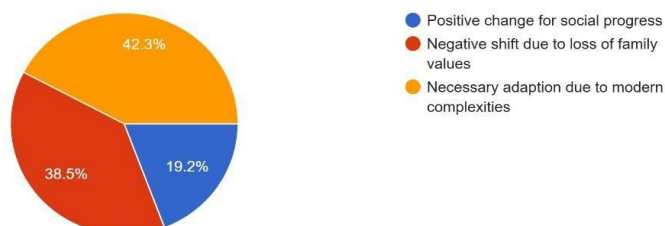
This indicates a conflicting situation as the 61.5% respondents still believe elder led conflict resolution is far better than court-led conflict resolution and only 38.5% respondents believe that modern mechanism or court-led conflict resolutions are better. This sparks in the conflicting claims where on one hand we see a positive shift towards diverse family forms. On the other hand, role of courts is still seen to be little limited.

Question VIII: Do you believe the shift from elder-led resolution to court-led resolution in diversified family structure is:

11 respondents believe that shift towards court-led dispute resolution is a necessary adaption due to modern complexities. Where 10 respondents are seen to have contradicting opinion on this, as they consider it as negative shift due to loss of family values. 5 respondents are seen to have similar opinion to former respondents as they consider it as positive change for social progress.

Do you believe the shift from elder-led resolution to court-led resolution in diversified family structure is:

26 responses



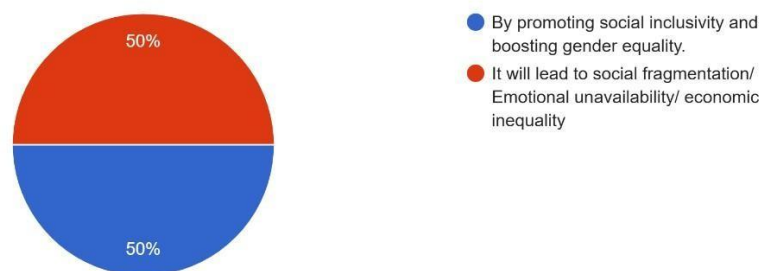
This clearly indicates that although majority of respondents in previous question responded

that elder-led family resolution is better, here 42.3% respondents whether they like it or not considers it as necessary adaption due to modern complexities. Whereas, 38.5% consider it as negative shift due to loss in family values.

Question IX: How do you think diverse family forms will alter social structures?

13 respondents believe that it will change social structures by promoting social inclusivity and boosting gender equality. However, 13 respondents also believe that it will lead to social fragmentation/emotional unavailability and economic inequality.

How do you think diverse family forms will alter social structures?
26 responses

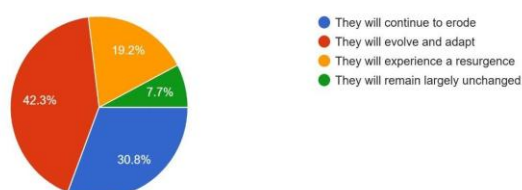


This indicates that where on one hand 50% respondents says that it will alter social structure by promoting social inclusivity, on the other hand 50% still believe that it will lead to social fragmentation. This reflects that there is still non acceptance towards newer family forms by half of the people may be due to various social stigmas.

Question X: In your opinion, what is the future of traditional family structures in modern society?

42.3% respondents i.e. 11 respondents thinks that the family structures will evolve and adapt. 8 respondents i.e. 30.8% respondents that traditional families will continue to erode. Whereas 19.2% respondents think that it will experience resurgence. And only 7.7% respondents think that structures will largely remain unchanged. This indicates that majority of respondents believe that traditional families evolve and adapt with the changing times in the society.

In your opinion, what is the future of traditional family structures in modern society?
26 responses



V. FINAL DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

- 38.5% respondents believe that traditional family structures are somewhat important in maintaining social values and 23.1% believe it to be not important at all. This indicates the shift towards diverse family not accepted in its entirety but surely leading there.
- While discussing the main contributors for changing family structure 38.5% respondents believe that it is cultural shift which led to this change, 19.2% think that it is globalization whereas 15.4% believe it to be technology and only 7.7% believe it to be economic changes. This indicates that majorly erosion of traditional families is due to cultural shifts.
- 46.2% respondents believe that changing family forms will have mixed impact both positive and negative whereas 38.5% believe that it will have positive impact and only 15.4% believed that it will have negative impact. This indicates people are still sceptical about the diverse family forms.
- While discussing how changing family forms impacted social norms and behaviour 38.5% respondents believed that it impacted in increased individualism and a significant number of respondents 30.8% also believed that it promoted gender equality whereas 19.2% believed it impacts as declining community values. It can be seen that by promoting gender equality it redefined roles of women in the society.
- 69.2% respondents believes that people stay in traditional family forms due to circumstances in their life whereas only 30.8% respondents believe that it is personal choice. This indicates how deeply the prejudices and social stigmas are ingrained in a society.
- The area which forms the main component of research when asked whether erosion acts a barrier or catalyst of social transformation, 65.4% respondents believed that it acts as a catalyst whereas 34.6% still see it as a barrier. This indicates positive shift to a lot of extent.
- While comparing elder-led conflict resolution to court-led family resolutions it is noteworthy to see that still 61.5% respondents believe in elder-led conflict resolution which means people might not want to go to courts for minor inconvenience.
- Although 61.5% believed in elder-led dispute resolution, 42.3% have suggested court-led conflict resolution as a necessary adaption due to modern complexities.
- While discussing how the diverse family forms will alter social structures, 50% respondents believes that it will promote social inclusivity and gender equality. whereas

other 50% believed that it will lead to social fragmentation, economic inequality and emotional unavailability. This indicates a lot has been done and a lot is needed to be done.

The last question of the Questionnaire is purely an open-ended. The valuable responses received on this one, are given as below.

Question XI: What do you think are main concerns or benefits of evolving family forms?

1. Emotional Stability: Changing family dynamics, like single-parent families or blended families, can sometimes lead to instability for children if not managed well.
2. aspect which can be considered as a positive impact of the evolving family forms can be the gender equality, a woman who is a part of the joint family often seen as a working hand in the domestic chores of the joint family, is now a woman who competes men in different sectors which demand high skills.
3. Redefined roles of women.
4. People who are in live in relation should be respected equally and should be included as a part of society.
5. Traditionalism in the form of traditional family structures should be protected at every cost. Never let the modernism override the roots.
6. A necessary shift where women become more aware of their value and worth in the society.
7. Although this change of family structures can be celebrated for number of reasons, it is okay till nuclear family (everything beyond that is just a mess).
8. Traditional family structures and values should be preserved at every cost.
9. When life structure changes it affects every area of your life, one aspect that tints every other is family. Although my wife leaving me was a hard knock, I am extremely lucky to have a daughter by my side forever.
10. We need the sympathisers of the society to stay away, I really don't feel guilty living alone but people feel guilty for me, this is sort of emotional burden they carry, no one asked them to carry. We need to get out of this stigma.

Question XII: Anything else you would like to add regarding your views on family structures and social change?

1. Flexibility and Resilience: Modern families are more adaptable, prioritizing emotional bonds over traditional roles. This flexibility allows for healthier relationships based on individual needs and mutual respect.

2. Things need to be kept as they are, if change is demanded, then as per changing time and mentality change is necessary.
3. Family structures seen mostly in the Indian Culture from the ancient times were joint families and nuclear families. There were immense morals, ethics, values, emotions, practices, tradition.

VI. CONCLUSION

From this Empirical Study, it becomes very evident that although the shift towards diverse family forms is positive. There are lots of conflicting opinions and perception of people regarding erosion of traditional family structures. On one hand people believe that diversification of family structures has led to increased individualism and promotes greater gender equality some still believe that it leads to social fragmentation and economic inequality.

A significant shift in redefining the roles of the women in the family and in the society. Many people still believe elder-led conflict resolution is far better than court-led dispute resolution. This indicates accepting modernity while being rooted in traditional family values, but it then limits the role and potential of courts in conflict resolution.

Hypotheses I & II the former talks about increased claims of women autonomy and greater gender equality whereas latter talks about diverse families as a catalyst of social change, from the collected data it is clear that both these **hypotheses are proved**.

But the **Hypotheses III** which assumed court-led conflict resolution are better is **disproved** as majority of respondents are in favour of elder-led conflict resolution.

The erosion of traditional family structures in India reflects the profound socio-economic, cultural, and legal transformations that the country has experienced over recent decades. The shift from the joint family system to nuclear families is largely driven by urbanization, economic development, the rise of women's education and workforce participation, and changing social norms surrounding marriage, gender roles, and family responsibilities.

While the nuclear family model provides greater independence and flexibility in urban settings, it also presents new challenges, particularly in the care of the elderly and the preservation of intergenerational bonds. The decline of joint families has diminished the traditional safety net that provided social and economic support to family members across generations. However, technological advancements and new forms of social networks have partially filled this gap, allowing families to maintain connections despite physical distances. Ultimately, the ongoing evolution of family structures in India reflects broader shifts in values, aspirations, and

lifestyles. As the country continues to modernize, family dynamics will likely continue to diversify, accommodating a wider range of living arrangements and relationships that better align with individual needs and societal progress. Understanding these trends is crucial for shaping policies and support systems that address the changing realities of family life in India today.¹⁰ the erosion of traditional family structures in India is a clear catalyst for social transformation, as supported by the majority of respondents in this research. The shift from joint families to nuclear setups has not only altered family dynamics but has also played a significant role in driving broader social changes. Factors such as urbanization, economic growth, women's increased autonomy, and evolving social norms have empowered individuals, particularly women, to assert their independence and make choices that challenge traditional gender roles and family hierarchies.

The erosion of traditional family structures in India is a key driver of social change, as most respondents in this research agree. The shift from joint families to nuclear setups has redefined the role of women, giving them more independence, decision-making power, and opportunities in education and work. This has led to more equal family roles and a greater sense of gender equality. Overall, the erosion of traditional family structures is a catalyst for transforming social roles and creating a more progressive society.

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