

Globalisation impact on institution of family in india sociology essay



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The term ‘ globalisation’ is a buzzword emerged in the 1990s and refers to a trend and process of variety of political, economic and socio-cultural consequences, resulting from technological changes that are currently transforming the world. Many commentators however focus upon economic aspects of globalisation. Sociologists feel that though the economic content of globalisation cannot be neglected but its socio-cultural dimensions also requires emphasis. Sociologists argue that globalisation refers to both the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole.[1]In this paper, I made an attempt to discuss the sociological nuances of the globalisation by using family in India as the basis.

Family – Meaning and Definition

Family is the vital primary group of all forms of human groups. The word ‘ family’ has been derived from Roman term ‘ famulus’ which means ‘ servant’. According to Mac Iver, ‘ family is a group defined by a sex relationship sufficiently precise and enduring to provide for the procreation and upbringing of children.’[2]Parker and Anderson defines family as a ‘

Socially organised unit of people related to each other by kinship, marital and legal ties.[3]For Arnold and Green, it is an institutionalized social group charged with duty of population replacement. American Bureau of Census defined ' family as a group of two or more persons related by blood, marriage or adoptions and residing together.'[4]Such persons are considered as members of one family.

Family being a primary social group came into existence in order to satisfy the need for protection, sexual urge and economic desires. It is not of a sudden origin but evolved from times and passed through certain stages. Mating relationship, form of marriage, system of nomenclature, common habitation, economic provision to satisfy needs, emotional basis, universality, limited in size, influential group and as an instrument of social regulation are considered as salient features of family.

Family in India

Most striking feature of Indian family system is the existence of joint family system. In a joint family not only parents and children but their brothers and sisters also live in the common household. Sometimes it may include ascendants and collaterals up to many generations. The joint family in India exhibits certain features like largeness in size, owning of joint property, sharing of common residence, practising of common religion and mutual rights and obligations.

Globalisation and Family

Today, globalisation is a buzzword which everyone talks of as per his or her need. The term ' globalisation' acquired a contextual meaning and projected

as a powerful process of growth that has potential of all round development of human beings. The different aspects of globalisation – economic, political, social and cultural have important implications for human life, including the family life. In a globalised world, the economy is supposed to be characterized by open, liberal, free market and free trade with few or no regulatory barriers. Therefore, all the developing countries are in a race to increase their share in world trade. Greater mobility takes place in economic capital and materials, when trade and business of a country increases. However, this factum of mobility is not confined to economic capital but also extend to human capital which leads to change in values and culture. Changes in human values and institutions (including the family) occurs when there is scope for greater mobility of people and more interactions among people of different cultures. The role of mass media and communication technology cannot be ignored in changing the socio – cultural values. The world is shrinking to a global village and its people are becoming closer and closer. Thus globalisation has a profound influence on all walks of human life including personal and family life.

In this paper, I have attempted to explore the consequences of globalisation on the institution of family in India. This paper will deal with the fast changing modern families in the urban centers of India. In the past few decades, industrialization, urbanization, globalisation and rapid growth of information technology have produced myriad challenges and made a powerful impact on different segments of societies everywhere. Since globalisation has not only economic aspect but also social cultural and

political implications, any of its outcome has to be assessed in terms of how it is influencing the relationships and cultural life in a society.

Impact of Globalisation of Indian Family system

Traditionally, in India, the basic unit of society was not individual but the joint family. Ever since independence, Indian Society has undergone and continues to undergo great change in every walk of life. By enacting number of laws an attempt is made to change social, working and living conditions of people. The impact of globalisation on Indian family can be viewed in two different ways. Some argues that in the era of economic restructuring the institution of family is emerging as a much stronger institution than ever before; others argue that family is becoming progressively weak due to globalisation and individualism is growing up. Peadar Kirby, who refers family as a social asset opines that far from being able to protect vulnerable people against risk, families themselves are experiencing considerable stress and requires assistance.[5]

Increasing mobility of younger generation in search of new employment and educational opportunities allegedly weakened the family relations. The family bondings and ties started loosening due to physical distance as it rendered impracticable for members of family to come together as often as earlier. This affected the earlier idealized notion of ' family' as the caring and nurturing unit for children, the sick and elderly.

Another striking impact is a gradual change took place in the family structure from joint / extended families to nuclear family pattern. The small or nuclear families almost all have replaced the joint family. One can hardly found any

joint family in the urban India. The traditional authority structure i. e. head of the family i. e. father / grandfather/karta started loosing his authority to the bread winner of the family. Even within the nuclear family one can witness the changing marital roles and distributions of power. Total subordination of women to men and strict disciplinarian / hitlarian role of father towards children are also changing. Younger generation, particularly those with higher education and jobs, are no longer believe in total surrender of their individual interests to family interest. The individualism is increasing even within the family structure. The increasing costs of education, health services and new job opportunities opened up for the women outside the house once again brought the role of family into question.

Change is a social phenomenon and no society can remain static. Society changes according to time, wishes and needs of its subjects. Speed and extent of change differs from Society to society. Currently, India is one of the rapidly changing societies and appears to be in forefront to follow and adopt western styles of family life. The role of family which earlier used to occupy ziant size in a man's life now started shrinking. In view of increasing materialism, consumerism, younger generations are leading entirely a different way of life. In the process of finding their partners / mates, younger generations are depending mostly on internet marriage sites like ' Shadi. com, Bharat Matrimony.' Family involvement in finding a groom / bride is reduced to nominal. Apart from regular festivals, new occasion like ' Valentine's day', ' Mothers day', Father's day' are emerging. Weekend parties, kitty parties, visiting pubs and discos almost became a very natural

thing. More and more job opportunities created through BPOs, KPOs and Call Centers have facilitated this freedom of enjoyment.

The ever increasing higher education and job opportunities opened up due to globalisation have largely influenced the Indian families particularly in urban metros. Going to America / London / Australia either for higher studies or for employment became a norm. It is also not uncommon for a boy or girl who went to abroad (either for higher studies or for job) to marry a foreigner and settle down there. Even most of married men and women are going to foreign countries by leaving their spouses, parents and kids in India. This has contributed to a fundamental change in the nation of ' ideal traditional joint family concept. Not only a structural but also functional transformation of family system took place. Marriages are no more made in heaven but on internet. Married men and women are staying separately at far off places on account of their jobs which are providing lucrative pay packets and financial security. Apart from this, single living, single parents (person who had children beyond wed lock) and living together without any formal marriage are also found in the society. Not only the conjugal relationships but also the parent – children relationships has also undergone a tremendous change. In most of the working – couple families, parents are not able to devote time to meet and interact with their children. Working in night-shifts became a norm in BPO, KPO and call centre jobs. By the time parents reach their homes, children are either fast asleep or already left for their schools. Behavioural problems are cropping-up among the children due to lack of interaction and proper guidance by parents. It is often said that as we send out children to crèches they in turn send us to old age homes.

The pattern of change that took place in family dining is also worth observing. Neither children nor parents are interested in having traditional break-fast items like Idli/Dosa/Chapatti/Roti/Parantha on account of paucity of time. Most of the children are interested in having junk foods like pizzas, burgers, chips, wafers and snacks. The change in eating habits are making the younger generation prone to obesity and other health problems. At one point of time, eating outside was considered as a taboo which now became a regular practice. Most of the urban families hang out at restaurants and fast food centers like pizza Hut, Mc Donalds, KFC, atleast once a week. Having dinner while watching Television or chatting on computer became a very common thing in most of the households.

The institution of family is undergoing dramatic change in India. In Southern States like Kerala, Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, it is a common feature that families send their son or daughter to foreign countries for advanced studies as a mode of investment. Once the boy / girl completes their studies and gets job, they start sending money to their homes in India which is often used in education or career development of siblings or relatives with these remittances of money, family in India also enjoys a spacious house, luxury cars and heavy bank balances.

Conclusion

Benefeld once pointed out that ' most depressing aspect of globalisation theory is that human beings are on the whole ignored.[6]Globalisation transformed man as materialistic and self-centered. Economic risks generate various forms of social risks such as unemployment and poverty and

financial crisis. Despite of increase in material wealth and living standards,
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life is becoming a daily struggle due to high competition. Family who earlier used to take care of its vulnerable members is no more in a position to serve. Advantage of family and its values as prevailing in India can not be ignored. At the same time, acceptance or rejection of traditional values of hierarchy depends on the experiences shared by each family.