

India tradition of joint family system sociology essay



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Indians are known for family-oriented culture. The family values play a very important role in their social life. A very important responsibility of family is the transmission of beliefs, traditions and core values.

India has a strong tradition of joint family system, in which members of multiple patrilineal related generations stay together and may or may not be linked with possession of joint family property (Ghosh & Basu, 2008). Married women usually live with their husbands' families, with retaining bonds with their natal families. They live under same roof, working, worshiping, eating, and cooperating together in social and economic activities.

Under this structure, there are clear lines of hierarchy and authority. And great respects should be shown to the members who are at higher position in the hierarchy. In general, elders rank above juniors, and among people of similar age; males outrank females. And traditionally, the oldest male member, which is usually the grandfather in the family, is the head in this family unit. And he has the authority over the whole family, especially in terms of big decision making and discipline creation. However, in some cases, grandmother also has certain authority over the younger females in the family (" Essay on the concept of joint family system in India", n. d.).

With the economy development and urbanization, traditional large families face difficulties to adapt to modern rapid and flexible life style. More and more traditional joint families have split into nuclear families, in which a couple live with their unmarried children, as a reaction to a variety of conditions, including the requirement for some members to move from village to city, or from one city to another to obtain the advantage of

employment opportunities. And this trend has been increasing under the impact of westernization and secularization.

However, the relative ties are still strongly connected to each other within kinships and loyalty to family is still a deeply imbibed principle from family members.

When facing with crucial decision and emergencies, seeking family agreement and support are still their first consideration. Numerous prominent Indian families, such as the Tatas, Birlas, and Sarabhais, retain joint family arrangements even today and they work together to control some of the country`s largest financial empires (“ Indian family structure, indian society”, n. d.).

Indian Family Structure – Indian families

Some family types bear special mention because of their unique qualities. In the sub-Himalayan region of Uttar Pradesh, polygyny is commonly practiced. There, among Hindus, a simple polygynous family is composed of a man, his two wives, and their unmarried children. Various other family types occur there, including the supplemented subpolygynous household—a woman whose husband lives elsewhere (perhaps with his other wife), her children, plus other adult relatives. Polygyny is also practiced in other parts of India by a tiny minority of the population, especially in families in which the first wife has not been able to bear children. Among the Buddhist people of the mountainous Ladakh District of Jammu and Kashmir, who have cultural ties to Tibet, fraternal polyandry is practiced, and a household may include a set of brothers with their common wife or wives. This family type, in which

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brothers also share land, is almost certainly linked to the extreme scarcity of cultivable land in the Himalayan region, because it discourages fragmentation of holdings.

The peoples of the northeastern hill areas are known for their matriliney, tracing descent and inheritance in the female line rather than the male line. One of the largest of these groups, the Khasis—an ethnic or tribal people in the state of Meghalaya—are divided into matrilineal clans; the youngest daughter receives almost all of the inheritance including the house. A Khasi husband goes to live in his wife's house. Khasis, many of whom have become Christian, have the highest literacy rate in India, and Khasi women maintain notable authority in the family and community.

Perhaps the best known of India's unusual family types is the traditional Nayar taravad , or great house. The Nayars are a cluster of castes in Kerala. High-ranking and prosperous, the Nayars maintained matrilineal households in which sisters and brothers and their children were the permanent residents. After an official pre-puberty marriage, each woman received a series of visiting husbands in her room in the taravad at night. Her children were all legitimate members of the taravad . Property, matrilineally inherited, was managed by the eldest brother of the senior woman. This system, the focus of much anthropological interest, has been disintegrating in the twentieth century, and in the 1990s probably fewer than 5 percent of the Nayars live in matrilineal taravads . Like the Khasis, Nayar women are known for being well-educated and powerful within the family.

Malabar rite Christians, an ancient community in Kerala, adopted many practices of their powerful Nayar neighbors, including naming their sons for matrilineal forebears. Their kinship system, however, is patrilineal. Kerala Christians have a very high literacy rate, as do most Indian Christian groups.

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Family-building strategies in urban India: converging demographic trends in two culturally distinct communities

Contemporary South Asia

Vol. 17, No. 2, June 2009, 141-158

Since the early 1950s, India's population is characterized by a persistent trend of a masculine sex ratio⁴. In recent census enumerations, this trend has been especially noticeable in sex ratios at birth and in the child population (0-6 years old). Several studies on inter-regional variation in the overall sex ratio and child sex ratio report stronger masculine sex ratios in the north Indian states of Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh than in the south Indian states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu⁵.

The widely discussed 'divide' between north and south also relates to gender relations, status of women, and the kinship systems. Traditionally, the south Indian kinship system has been described as bilateral, with women having some rights of inheritance and flexibility of residence after marriage.

This is in stark contrast to the patrilineal, patrilocal, and exogamous kinship system in the north (Dyson and Moore 1983; Kishor 1993).

Some studies suggest that desire for a small family size in India is associated with a decline in preference for sons and in balancing of the sex ratio among children in the family (Bhat and Zavier 2003; Saluja 2005). A recent analysis of the National Family Health Survey II data suggests that a majority of married couples in Kerala and Punjab want a sex-balanced family and that a decline in the desired family size is associated with a weakened preference for sons in India.

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The nuclear family

The extended family

Dynamics of the family

Parental roles

For Indian women, giving birth to a child is a socio-religious obligation, adding accomplishment and fulfillment to their social roles. And after 30 years old is considered old to give birth to the first child. Besides of breast-feeding their children, traditionally, the mothers usually put great effort on taking care of the food and eating aspect of their children.

With female literacy growing to 54% in the 2001 census, more and more women are taking part in work force (need reference).

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Marriage and courtship

<http://www.chillibreeze.com/articles/tips-for-the-visitor.asp>

It is amazing to see how often well-educated, independent professionals have to consult their parents before accepting a job offer or traveling abroad. At the core of Indian culture lies an innate respect for parents and other elders in the family, and usually no major decision is taken without consulting them. Parents often live with their married children, typically with a son. There is really no concept of a grown-up son or daughter ' moving out of the house' unless it is the result of circumstances like a job in a different city.

The arranged marriage is another practice that illustrates the importance Indians place on the family. A majority of marriages in India are arranged by families and several people are involved in the decision-making process. As popular belief goes, a marriage tied with many knots will not come undone. This is in complete contrast to the American culture where only two people tie the knot and experience has indeed shown us that it can be undone more easily. The divorce rate in America is much higher than in India.

American culture can sometimes appear to be too rebellious and independent, with children growing apart from their parents as they grow older. At other times Indian culture can seem too dependent on other people's opinions and subject to unnecessary involvement from relatives, near and far. There are positives and negatives in both cultures. However it is important for foreign businessmen visiting India, especially those who are new, to remember that in general, important decisions are not made

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individually but as a family. This may not be apparent on a daily basis but will surface in critical situations.

—end

Female/male roles (changing or static?)

http://www.indianchild.com/culture%20_1.htm

Certain families observe a matriarchal concept i. e. the groom resides in the house of the bride or also follows a tradition as per the bride's ancestors. Generally India is patriarchal in the sense the children get the surname of the father and the wife changes her surname to follow that of the husbands. It is also a tradition in certain families that the wife changes her maiden name but again this concept is also changing. Indian families are very accommodating and willing to accept change. It is a concept to observe the karva chauth or the raksha bandhan with great aplomb. There is an occasion for gifting and seeking the blessings of elders. It is important to respect and hold certain family traditions which are unique in terms of cooking, rituals and beliefs. Families give a lot of importance to lighting the diya in the evening and also each person in family has a habit of doing the puja in his own way.

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Education

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Education is divided into preprimary, primary, middle (or intermediate), secondary (or high school), and higher levels. Primary school includes children of ages six to eleven, organized into classes one through five. Middle school pupils aged eleven through fourteen are organized into classes six through eight, and high school students ages fourteen through seventeen are enrolled in classes nine through twelve. Higher education includes technical schools, colleges, and universities.

-end

—Summarized from (Cheney, Ruzzi, & Muralidharan, 2005)

Historically, Hindu education was tailored to the needs of Brahmin boys. Together with the colonial rule under British from 1700s until 1947, the education system was geared to preserve the position of the more privileged classes, permitting an avenue of upward mobility only to those with resources. Even today, the vast majority of students with high school education come from high-level castes and middle-to-upper class families in urban area. Due to the historical barrier and previous education focus on tertiary education, more than 1/3 Indian citizens (42% of adults) is illiterate, with 25% males and 46% females, according to 2001 Census (need original data search).

-Summarized from (Cheney, Ruzzi, & Muralidharan, 2005)

From: A Profile of the Indian Education system (in education folder) cited in above text as (Cheney, Ruzzi, & Muralidharan, 2005)

National center on education and the Economy, 2006

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India has the second largest education system in the world (after China). Experts estimate that 32% of its current population is under the age of 15. Males in India complete just 2.9 years of schooling on average, females just 1.8 years. The quality of instruction varies widely, depending on the region of the country and whether one is enrolled in a State-supported public school or a fee-based private school.

Despite the highly inefficient delivery of public services, high levels of teacher absenteeism and non-teaching activity, many Indian students remain motivated to succeed on the college entrance exams. The high level of competition for entry into the Indian Institutes of Technology, the Indian Institutes of Management and other top institutions is enough to spur millions of students to achieve at remarkably high levels, particularly in the areas of science and mathematics. Only 10% of the age cohort is actually enrolled in higher education. But in a country with such a large population, it amounts to 9 million students, resulting in 2.5 million new college graduates a year.

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1. The role of education in society

a. Primary education (quality, levels of development, etc.)

Summarized from (Cheney, Ruzzi, & Muralidharan, 2005)

The Indian school system follows the British structure. Primary school consists of grades 1-5 (ages 6-11) and middle school consists of grades 6-8 (ages 11-14). Primary school and middle school are compulsory. However, <https://assignbuster.com/india-tradition-of-joint-family-system-sociology-essay/>

researchers estimate that an average of 70% percent of children between the ages of 6 and 14 actually attend school (need to search source, Karthik Mualidharan's work).

Quality of state-run schools ranges from top-notch to abysmal. Private schools are, on the whole, better, but are charging high fees and are competitive to get admission. Mostly, they are choices of middle and higher class families. A recent phenomenon is the rising of low-cost private schools in both rural and urban India. Facilities and infrastructure are poorer, but they can offer smaller classes and greater teaching activity due to the lower salaries paid to the teachers and more teachers hired.

2 out of 5 first-grade students will not complete the primary cycles of 4 to 5 years (depending on the State) (need source, world bank).

Primary Stage (5 years)

The curriculum includes:

Grade 1 and 2

One language- the mother tongue/the regional language

Mathematics

Art of Healthy and Productive living

Grade 3 to 5

One language - the mother tongue/the regional language

Mathematics

Environmental studies

Art of Healthy and productive living

Upper Primary/Middle stage (3 years)

Grade 6-8

Three languages – the mother tongue/the regional language, Hindi and English

Mathematics

Science and Technology

Social Sciences

Work Education

Art Education (fine arts: visual and performing)

Health and Physical education

The issue is not a lack of demand, but the quality of supply. The main reason for students to drop out is because their public school experiences are often so poor that students can learn very little.

Girls get less chance to be supported in education. It is estimated that for every 100 girls that enroll in school in rural India, only one will make it to grade 12. Parents perceive returns to investment in educations of boys

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higher than that of girls. The PROBE study revealed that 98% of parents surveyed felt education was necessary for boys, and 89% of them felt it necessary for girls.

Secondary education

India has more than 100, 000 secondary and senior secondary schools serving 30 million students, with the average teacher to student ratio of 1: 34. The education in government schools continues to be free for grades 9 and above. But the majority of enrollment is in private schools whose fees vary considerably.

Secondary stage grades 9 and 10 (2 years)

Curriculum includes:

Three languages – mother tongue/regional language, Hindi, English (some schools offer as electives other languages such as Sanskrit, Chinese, Japanese, etc.)

Mathematics

Science and technology

Social sciences

Work education or pre-vocational education

Art education (fine art: visual and performing)

Physical and health education

—Summarized from (Cheney, Ruzzi, & Muralidharan, 2005)

b. Secondary education (quality, levels of development, etc.)

c. Higher education (quality, levels of development, etc.)

2. Literacy rates

Languages:

With 15 main languages and hundreds of other languages and dialects, India has more languages than any other country. With 30% primary tongue, Hindi is the national language. English is ubiquitous language, because of the historical colonization by British. Other main languages include Bengali, Gujarati, Paunjabi, Tamil and Telegu and Urdu.

In 1980s, about 4 to 5 % of the population were estimated to use English. In 1997, 1/3 of population in India had the ability to carry on a conversation in English. And it's estimated that there are 350 million English-speaking Indians in 2005 a8 (need data 2012).

Reference:

" Essay on the concept of joint family system in India", n. d. Retrieved Sep 19, 2012 from <http://www.preservearticles.com/201106027427/essay-on-the-concept-of-joint-family-system-in-india.html>

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“ Indian family structure, indian society”. n. d. Retrieved Sep 19, 2012 from http://www.indianetzone.com/38/indian_family_structure.htm

a8 David Crystal (honorary professor of linguistics at the Unileversity of Wales, Bangor) “ sub continent raises its voice.” Yale global online. Nov 30, 2004.

Political system

Political structure

<http://www.rogerdarlington.me.uk/Indianpoliticalsystem.html>

the Indian political system is a much more recent construct dating from India’s independence from Britain in 1947. The current constitution came into force on 26 November 1950 and advocates the trinity of justice, liberty and equality for all citizens.

India’s lower house, the Lok Sabha, is modelled on the British House of Commons, but its federal system of government borrows from the experience of the United States, Canada and Australia.

THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

The head of state in India is the President.

As members of an electoral college, around 4, 500 members of the national parliament and state legislators are eligible to vote in the election of the President.

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for the first time a woman now occupies the role of Presidency: Pratibha Patil who was formerly governor of the northern Indian state of Rajasthan.

Vice-President is elected by the members of an electoral college consisting of both houses of parliament. The Vice-President chairs the the upper house called the Rajya Sabh.

The head of the government is the Prime Minister who is appointed by the President on the nomination of the majority party in the lower house or Lok Sabha. Currently the Prime Minister is Manmohan Singh of the ruling United Progressive Alliance

Ministers are then appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Prime Minister and these ministers collectively comprise the Council of Ministers.

-pause

THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

<http://loksabha.nic.in/>

Lok Sabha is composed of representatives of the people chosen by direct election on the basis of the adult suffrage. The maximum strength of the House envisaged by the Constitution is 552, which is made up by election of upto 530 members to represent the States, upto 20 members to represent the Union Territories and not more than two members of the Anglo-Indian Community to be nominated by the Hon'ble President, if, in his/her opinion, that community is not adequately represented in the House. The total

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elective membership is distributed among the States in such a way that the ratio between the number of seats allotted to each State and the population of the State is, so far as practicable, the same for all States.

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Currently the size of the house is 545 - made up of 530 elected from the states, 13 elected from the territories, and two nominated from the Anglo-Indian community. By far the largest state representation is that of Uttar Pradesh with 80 members.

Each Lok Sabha is formed for a five year term, after which it is automatically dissolved, unless extended by a Proclamation of Emergency which may extend the term in one year increments.

The upper house in the Indian political system is the Rajya Sabha or Council of States.

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http://rajyasabha.nic.in/rsnew/council_state/council_state.asp

Article 80 of the Constitution lays down the maximum strength of Rajya Sabha as 250, out of which 12 members are nominated by the President and 238 are representatives of the States and of the two Union Territories. The present strength of Rajya Sabha, however, is 245, out of which 233 are representatives of the States and Union territories of Delhi and Puducherry

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and 12 are nominated by the President. The members nominated by the President are persons having special knowledge or practical experience in respect of such matters as literature, science, art and social service.

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Political parties

<http://www.rogerdarlington.me.uk/Indianpoliticalsystem.html>

In India, political parties are either a National Party or a State Party. To be considered a National Party, a political party has to be recognised in four or more states and to be either the ruling party or in the opposition in those states.

The original Congress Party espoused moderate socialism and a planned, mixed economy. However, its spin-off and successor, Congress (I) - 'I' in honour of Indira Gandhi - now supports deregulation, privatisation and foreign investment.

Over the years, India has evolved from a highly centralised state dominated by one political party to an increasingly fragmented nation, more and more influenced by regional parties and more and more governed locally by unstable multi-party alliances.

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The Indian Congress Party is the leading party in the Centre-Left political coalition called the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) which embraces a total of 16 parties.

The other major, but more recently-established, political party in India is the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Created in 1980, it represents itself as a champion of the socio-religious cultural values of the country's Hindu majority and advocates conservative social policies and strong national defence. The BJP, in alliance with several other parties, led the government between 1998-2004.

The Bharatiya Janata Party is the leading party in the Right-wing political coalition called the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). When it was originally founded in 1998, there were 13 parties in the coalition but currently there are eight.

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<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?frd/cstdy:@field%28DOCID+in0147%29>

At the beginning of the 1990s, political domination by the Congress (I) branch of the Indian National Congress (see Glossary) came to an end with the party's defeat in the 1989 general elections, and India began a period of intense multiparty political competition.

The Congress (I) political leadership had lost the mantle of moral integrity inherited from the Indian National Congress's role in the independence movement, and it was widely viewed as corrupt.

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The main alternative to the Congress (I), the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP-Indian People's Party), embarked on a campaign to reorganize the Indian electorate in an effort to create a Hindu nationalist majority coalition.

Simultaneously, such parties as the Janata Dal (People's Party), the Samajwadi Party (Socialist Party), and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP-Party of Society's Majority) attempted to ascend to power on the crest of an alliance of interests uniting Dalits (see Glossary), Backward Classes (see Glossary), Scheduled Tribes (see Glossary), and religious minorities.

The structure of India's federal-or union-system not only creates a strong central government with centralization of power.

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3. Stability of government

4. Special taxes

5. Role of local government

D. Legal system

1. Organization of the judiciary system

2. Code, common, socialist, or Islamic-law country?

3. Participation in patents, trademarks, and other conventions

4. Marketing Laws