
UNIT 7 CHANGING FAMILY STRUCTURE

Structure

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7.0 OBJECTIVES

In this Unit, we shall discuss the changing family patterns in India. After going through this unit, you should be able to:

- describe a family;
- discuss its various types;
- explain the factors responsible for change in the family system;
- examine the changes in the traditional joint family system; and
- analyse the changes in the rural and urban family system in India.

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous Units of this Block, we introduced you the various dimensions of social demography, migration and urbanisation in India. In this Unit, we shall discuss the changing family structure in India. This Unit begins with a short discussion on the definition and types of the family. Industrialisation, urbanisation and modernisation are the important social forces affecting the traditional family structure in India. We discuss these factors briefly and

describe a perspective to understand the change in the family structure in Section 7.3. In Section 7.4, we discuss the change taking place in the traditional joint family system in India. The change in the rural family and the impact of the breakdown of the rural joint family are discussed in this Section. Change in the urban family system and its various facets are examined in section 7.6

7.2 FAMILY : DEFINITION AND TYPES

In Unit No. 6. Block 2 of ESO-02, we discussed in detail the institution of the family in India. There we discussed the continuum between the nuclear and the joint family. In this Unit, we shall discuss the form and direction of changes in the family system in India. To begin with, let us study the definition and types of family.

7.2.1 Definition

Ordinarily, a family, particularly an elementary family, can be defined as a social group consisting of father, mother and their children. But in view of the variety as found in the constituents of a family, this definition is rather inadequate. Bohannan (1963), in his definition of the family, emphasised the functional as well as the structural roles of family. According to him, “a family, contains people who are linked by sexual and affinal relationships as well as those linked by descent who are linked by secondary relationships, that is, by chains of primary relationships”.

Box 1. Characteristics of Family

For a comprehensive understanding of what the family stands for today, William J. Goode (1989) suggests the following characteristics:

- a) At least two adult persons of opposite sex reside together.
- b) They engage in some kind of division of labour i.e., they both do not perform exactly the same tasks.
- c) They engage in many types of economic and social exchanges, i.e., they do things for one another.
- d) They share many things in common, such as food, sex, residence, and both goods and social activities.
- e) The adults have parental relations with their children, as their children have filial relations with them; the parents have some authority over their children and both share with one another, while also assuming some obligation for protection, cooperation, and nurturance.
- f) There are sibling relations among the children themselves, with a range of obligations to share, protect, and help one another.

Individuals are likely to create various kinds of relations with each other but, if their continuing social relations exhibit some or all of the role patterns noted here, in all probability they would be viewed as the family.

7.2.2 Types of Family

On the basis of the composition of the family, three distinct types of family organisation emerge.

a) **Nuclear Family**

The most basic among the families is called natal or nuclear or elementary, or simple family, which consists of a married man and woman and their offspring. In specific cases, sometimes one or more additional persons are found to reside with them. Over a period of time, the structure of a family changes. Often additional members, viz., an aged parent or parents or unmarried brother or sisters may come to live with the members of a nuclear family. It may lead to the development of varieties of nuclear families. While discussing the nature of the joint family in India, Pauline Kolenda (1987) has discussed additions/modifications in the nuclear family structure. She gives the following compositional categories :

- i) **Nuclear family** refers to a couple with or without children.
- ii) **Supplemented nuclear family** indicates a nuclear family plus one or more unmarried, separated, or widowed relatives of the parents other than their unmarried children.
- iii) **Sub nuclear family** is identified as a fragment of a former nuclear family, for instance, a widow/widower with his/her unmarried children or siblings (unmarried) or widowed or separated or divorced) living together.
- iv) **Single person household**
- v) **Supplemented sub nuclear family** refers to a group of relatives, members of a formerly complete nuclear family along with some other unmarried, divorced or widowed relatives who were not member of the nuclear family. For instance, a widow and her unmarried children may be living together with her widowed mother-in-law.

In the Indian context, it is easy to find all these types of family. However, in terms of societal norms and values, these types relate to the joint family system (cf. ESO-02, Unit 6)

Nuclear families are often combined, like atoms in a molecule, into larger aggregates. Although such families are generally referred to as composite forms of family, on the basis of their structural characteristics they can be differentiated into two distinct types; like i) polygamous family and ii) family.

b) **Polygamous Family**

A polygamous family ordinarily consists of two or more nuclear families conjoined by plural marriage. These types of families are statistically very few in number in general. There are basically two types of polygamous family based on the forms of marriage, viz., polygyny, i.e., one husband with more than one wife at a time, and polyandry, i.e., one wife with more than one husband at the same time.

c) **Extended Family**

An extended family consists of two or more nuclear families affiliated through the extension of parent-child relationship and relationship of married siblings. The former can be designated as a vertically extended family, whereas the latter would be referred to as a horizontally extended family. In a typical patriarchal extended family, there lives an elderly person with his son and

wife and their unmarried children. You may be interested to know what constitutes the jointness in the joint family. Usually, the jointness is depicted in a number of factors, viz., commensality (eating together from the same kitchen), common residence, joint ownership of property, cooperation and common sentiments, common ritual bonds, etc. You may also be interested to know who constitute the joint family. It is the kin relationships. Hence Pauline Kolenda (1987) points out the following types of the joint family in India:

- i) **Collateral Joint Family** comprises two or more married couples between whom there is a sibling bond.
- ii) **Supplemented Collateral Joint Family** is a collateral joint family along with unmarried, divorced and widowed relatives.
- iii) **Lineal Joint Family** consists of two couples, between whom there is a lineal link, like between a parent and her married sons or between a parent and his married daughter.
- iv) **Supplemented Lineal Joint Family** is a lineal joint family together with unmarried, divorced or widowed relatives, who do not belong to either of the lineally linked nuclear families.
- v) **Lineal Collateral Joint Family** consists of three or more couples linked lineally and collaterally. For example, a family consisting of the parents and their two or more married sons together with unmarried children of the couples.
- vi) **Supplemented Lineal – Collateral Joint Family** consists of the members of a lineal collateral joint family plus unmarried, widowed, separated relatives who belong to none of the nuclear families (lineally and collaterally linked), for example, the father's widowed sister or brother or an unmarried nephew of the father.

This discussion should have given you a broad picture of the existing family structure in India. In this Unit, we shall discuss the changing family structure. Before we introduce ourselves to this discussion, let us know the social factors that affect the family structure. In the following section, we shall discuss these factors. Before that you must complete this 'check your progress' exercise.

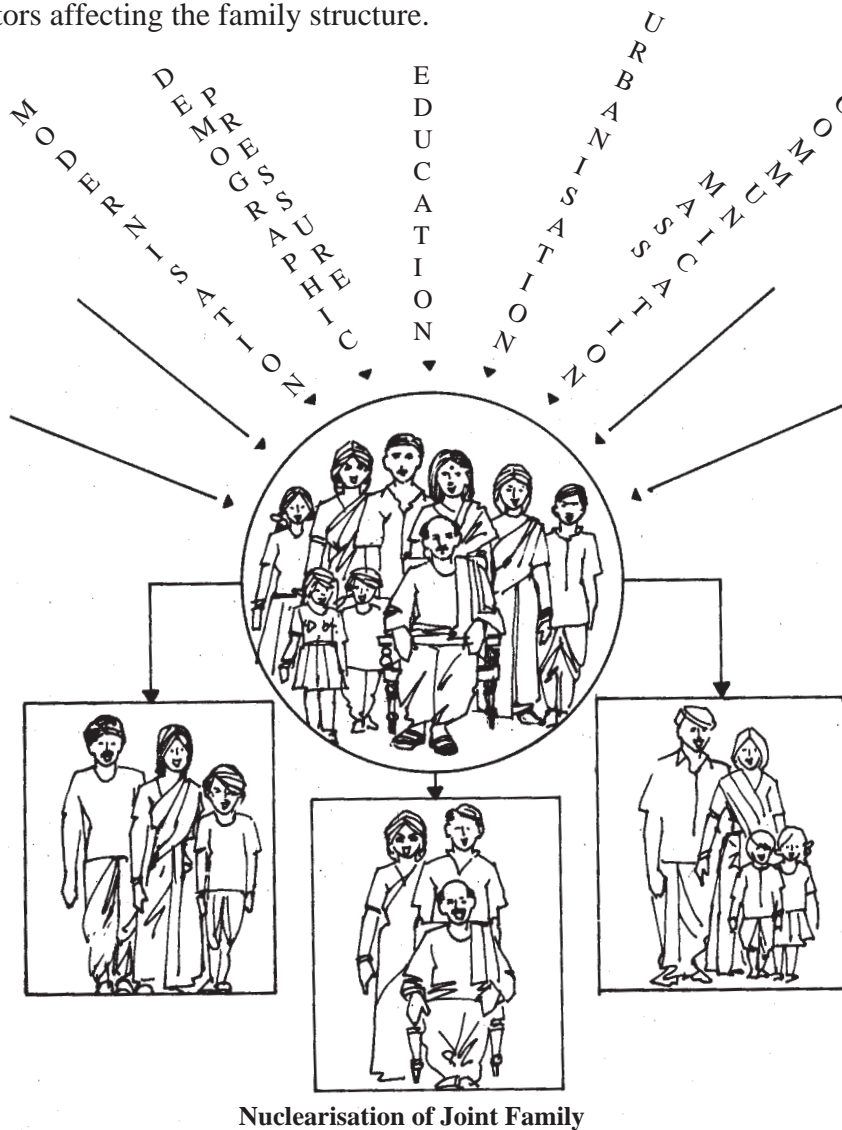
Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Which one of the following is not a characteristic of the family?
 - a) At least two adult persons of opposite sex reside together.
 - b) These persons engage in some kind of division of labour.
 - c) They engage in many types of economic and social exchanges.
 - d) None of the above.
- 2) In a polyandrous family there.....
 - a) is a wife with more than one husband at the same time.
 - b) is a husband with more than one wife at the same time.
 - c) is one husband and one wife at the same time.
 - d) is a married couple without children.

- 3) An extended family can be
- a) only vertically extended.
 - b) only horizontally extended.
 - c) both vertically and horizontally extended
 - d) none of the above.

7.3 SOCIAL PROCESSES AFFECTING FAMILY STRUCTURE

A host of inter-related factors, viz., economic, educational, legal and demographic like population growth, migration and urbanisation, etc., have been affecting the structure of the family in India. We shall take care of these factors while discussing the changes, in the following sections. Here, let us discuss the broad processes of industrialisation, urbanisation and modernisation as factors affecting the family structure.



7.3.1 Industrialisation

There are innumerable published accounts demonstrating that changes have taken place in the structure of the family due to exposures to the forces of industrialisation. Nuclearisation of the family is considered as the outcome of its impact. Such an interpretation presupposes existence of non-nuclear family

structure in such societies. Empirical evidence sometimes does not support this position. Further, industrial establishments have their own requirements of human groups for their efficient functioning. As a result, people are migrating to industrial areas, and various kinds of family units have been formed adding extra-ordinary variety to the overall situation. It is, nevertheless, important to note down in this context that despite definite visible trends in the changing structure of the family due to industrialisation, it is not yet possible to establish any one-to-one relationship.

7.3.2 Urbanisation

In most of the discussions on impact of urbanisation on the family structure, one specific observation is fairly common: that, due to the influence of urbanisation, the joint family structure is under severe stress, and in many cases it has developed a tendency toward nuclearisation. When there is no disagreement on the authenticity of such a tendency, the traditional ideal joint family was perhaps not the exclusive type before such influence came into existence. Nevertheless, various accounts demonstrate how both nuclear and joint structures have evolved innumerable varieties due to the influence of urbanisation.

7.3.3 Modernisation

Both industrialisation and urbanisation are considered as the major contributing factors toward modernisation. In fact, modernisation as a social-psychological attribute can be in operation independent of industrialisation and urbanisation.

With the passage of time, through exposures to the forces of modernisation, family structure underwent multiple changes almost leading to an endless variety. There are instances too, where family structure has become simpler due to its impact. There are also contrary instances indicating consequent complexity in family structure.

7.3.4 Change in the Family Structure : A Perspective

One of the important features of the family studies in India has been concerned with the question of whether the joint family system is disintegrating, and a new nuclear type of family pattern is emerging. "It seems almost unrealistic", Augustine points out, "that we think of a dichotomy between the joint and nuclear family. This is especially true given the rapidity of social change, which has swept our country." In the context of industrialisation, urbanisation and social change, it is very difficult to think of a dichotomy between the joint and the nuclear family in India. In the present contexts, these typologies are not mutually exclusive. Social change is an inevitable social process, which can be defined as observable transformations in social relationships. This transformation is most evident in the family system. However, because of structures of our traditionality, these transformations are not easily observable (Augustine 1982:2).

Against this backdrop, to understand the dimensions of changes taking place in Indian family system, the concept of transitionality may be used. This concept, according to Augustine, has two dimensions : retrospective and prospective. The retrospective dimension implies the traditional past of our family and social system, while the prospective one denotes the direction in

which change is taking place in our family system. Transitionality is thus an attempt to discern the crux of the emergent forms of family (Augustine 1982:3).

Keeping in mind this perspective, we shall examine the emerging trends of change in the family system in contemporary India. However, at the outset, we are to make it explicit that, within the given space, it would not be possible for us to document the changes individually taking place in the family system of various castes or ethnic groups spread over diversified socio-cultural regions of this country. Hence for your broad understanding, we shall concentrate on three broad areas of our enquiry : change in the traditional extended family, rural family and urban family. Let us begin with change in the traditional extended family. Before that complete this activity.

Activity 1

Try to know the past 40 years' history of your family from some elderly member. It may have undergone significant changes over the years. List down the factors responsible for changes in your family. Write a note on these changes of about 2 pages. If possible, discuss your findings with the Counsellor and the students at your Study Centre. You should find it sociologically interesting.

7.4 CHANGE IN THE JOINT FAMILY SYSTEM

The extended family in India is known as joint family. The ideals of the joint family are highly valued throughout the country, especially among the Hindus. However, studies conducted in several parts of the country show that the joint family system in India is undergoing a process of structural transformation due to the process of modernisation, industrialisation and urbanisation. But the fact remains that the values and attitudes of the Indian society have favoured the joint family tradition for centuries, and these are still favoured. Many scholars have viewed the transformation in the joint family system in terms of the concept of the family cycle.

A nuclear family develops into a joint family after the marriage of a son; that is with the coming in of a daughter-in-law. Hence the process of fission and fusion take place in the family system due to various reasons. In most parts of India, where patriarchal families exist, sons are expected to stay together with the parents till the siblings of the family are married. After this they tend to separate. Thus the process of fission takes place, and the joint family is broken into relatively smaller number of units - sometimes into nuclear units. Nicholas, on the basis of his study in rural West Bengal, concludes that if a joint family between a father and his married sons divides, a joint family among brothers rarely survives. The father seems to be the keystone of the joint family structure. Despite the solidarity among the male siblings, after the father's death, many forces tend to break the joint family into separate hearths, even though at times the property may be held in common (Cf. Ishwaran, 1982 : 8).

I.P. Desai, in his famous work, *Some Aspects of Family in Mahuva* (1964), points out that in Gujarat 'a residentially nuclear group is embedded in social, cultural and other non-social environments, which are not the same as those in the societies of the West'. He defines the structure of a family in terms of one's orientation to action. When action is oriented towards the husband, wife and children, the family can be categorised as a nuclear unit; and when the action is oriented towards a wider group, it is defined as a joint family. To

him, through the nuclear family does exist in India, it is, however, not the prevalent pattern. In his sampling, only 7% of the households considered nuclear family as desirable, while around 60% considered jointness as desirable.

Significantly, elements of jointness were found among all religious groups. Their greater degree was available among the business and the agricultural castes. It is important to note that property was an important factor behind the jointness. Kapadia also found that though most families are nuclear, they are actually 'joint' in operation. These families maintain their connections through mutual cooperation and rights and obligations other than those of property. To him, not the common hearth, but mutual ties, obligations and rights, etc., have been the major elements of jointness in the contemporary functionally joint family in India (Kapadia 1959 : 250).

In his study of a village in South India, Ishwaran (1982) found that 43.76% nuclear (elementary) families and 56.24% were extended (joint) families. The villagers attach a wealth of meaning to the term 'jointness' and in their opinion one either belongs to the joint family or depends upon the extended kin. In fact, the isolated independent elementary family does not exist for them, and indeed its actual existence is largely superficial due to heavy reliance upon the extended kin group. The extended family is the ideal family, reinforced by religious, social, economic and other ideological forces. He concludes that even though the nuclear families are on the increase, perhaps because of the greater geographical and social mobility found in a society being modernised, these families cannot live in isolation without active cooperation and contact with the extended kin (Ishwaran 1982 : 20)

There is no denying the fact that the trend of modernisation has been dominant in India. However, the physical separation does not speak for the departure from the spirit of jointness of the family structure. The sense of effective cooperation in need, and obligation to each other, have remained prevalent among the family members in spite of being separated from the erstwhile joint family. Hence, we are required to understand not only the manifestation of nuclearisation of the family structure in India, but also the latent spirit of cooperation and prevalence of common values and sentiments among the family members. The extent of cooperation and the prevalence of common values and sentiments may vary in the rural and urban areas. We shall discuss the patterns of change in the rural and urban family structure, separately, in the following sections.

Check Your Progress 2

- i) Write a note, in about six lines, on the fission in the traditional joint family system in India.

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ii) How can you define the structure of a family in terms of one’s orientation towards action. Answer in about five lines.

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7.5 CHANGE IN THE RURAL FAMILY SYSTEM

Scholars have identified the joint family as typical of rural India. These families are exposed to various forces, viz., land reforms, education, mass media, new technology, new development strategies, urbanisation, industrialisation, modernisation, and so on. These above-mentioned forces are found to exercise tremendous influence on the contemporary family systems in rural India. Let us examine these forces in detail.

7.5.1 Factors Responsible for Change

There are various factors affecting the family structure in rural India. We shall discuss some of these factors here.

i) Land Reforms

Earlier, the members of the joint family normally lived together due to common ancestral property, which was vast in size. Land reforms imposed ceiling restriction on the landholdings. In many cases, the heads of the family resorted to theoretical partition of the family by dividing the land among the sons in order to avoid the law of the land ceiling. During their life-time the sons live under his tutelage, if he was powerful; otherwise, sons gradually began to live separately during their parents life-time. Thus the theoretical partition hastens formal partition, and sows the seeds for separate living (Lakshminarayana, 1982 : 44). Again, in many cases, real partition has taken place in the joint family, immediately after the implementation of the land ceiling laws.

ii) Education and Gainful Employment

Education, industrialisation and urbanisation have opened the scope for gainful employment to the villagers outside the village. Initially, a few members of the joint family move to the city for education. After successful completion of education, most of them join service or opt for other avenues of employment in the urban areas. They get married and start living with their wives and children. Gradually, such separate units become the nuclear families. However, the members of these nuclear units keep on cooperating with the other members of their natal family on most occasions.

iii) Economic Difficulties in Rural Areas

The rural development strategies in India, aimed to eradicate poverty and unemployment, enhance a higher standard of life and economic development with social justice to the rural people. However, in reality these have generated

regional imbalances, sharpened class inequality, and have adversely economic and social life of the lower strata of the rural people. In the backward areas, people face enormous hardship to earn a livelihood. Hence, people of these areas are pushed to migrate to the urban areas. This migration has affected the family structure. Initially men alone migrate. Then they bring their family and gradually become residentially separated from their natal home.

iv) **Growing Individuals**

A high sense of individualism is also growing among section of the villagers. Penetration of the mass media (viz., the newspapers, the T.V., the radio), formal education, consumerist culture and market forces have helped individualism grow at a faster rate than ever. The rural people and the members of the rural joint family have started believing more in their individuality. In the past, the size of the family was relatively big. The kinship network was large and obligations were more. It was imperative that relatives were given shelter. Today, every individual strives to improve his/her standard of living and enhance his/her status in the community outside the purview of the family and the kinship. This is possible if the individual has lesser commitments and fewer obligations (Lakshminarayan 1982 : 46). This situation grows at a faster rate immediately after the marriage of the sons and coming of the daughters-in-law. Many times value conflicts between an educated individualistic daughter-in-law and old mother-in-law lead to the break down in the joint family system.

7.5.2 Impact of the Breakdown of the Joint Family

The transition in the rural family structure has certain significant impacts on the status and role of the family members. One impact is that of the diminishing authority of the patriarch of the joint family. In a joint family, traditionally, authority rests on the eldest male member of the family. Once the family splits into several units, new authority centres emerge there, with the respective eldest male member as the head of each nuclear unit. Authority is also challenged frequently by the educated and the individualistic young generations. Youngmen exposed to modern ideas of freedom and individualism show resentment to the traditional authority (Ibid.).

After the split in a joint family, women, who earlier had no say in the family affairs, also emerge as mistresses of the nuclear households with enormous responsibility. In this process of transition, the oldest woman also tend to lose their authority. Many of young women also challenge the dominating attitudes of the mothers-in-law. Similarly, many of the traditional mothers-in-law also face an uneasy situation due to growing disproportionate individualism among the daughters-in-law.

With the breakdown of the joint family system, the aged, widow, widower and other dependents in the family face severe problems. The joint family system provides security to these people. After the breakdown of this family system, they are left to themselves. In the rural area, the day care centres for the old or the children's home for the orphan are not available. Hence, their position becomes very critical. Many widows, widowers, children, and even old couple become beggars. Many leave for old people centres around pilgrim centres as the last resort of their social security and mental peace.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Describe the impact of land reforms on the joint family system in India. Use five lines to answer.

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- 2) What has been the impact of the mass media on the joint family?

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7.6 CHANGE IN URBAN FAMILY SYSTEM

Significant numbers of studies have been conducted on the urban family structure in India. T.K. Oommen (1982), after surveying all these studies, points out that most of these studies have been obsessed with a single question; Is the joint family in India breaking down and undergoing a process of nuclearisation due to urbanisation? A group of sociologists postulated this assumption that the joint family system is breaking down and the trend is toward the formation of nuclear units in the urban areas. While another group is of the opinion that joint family ethic and the kinship orientation still exist even after the residential separation.

7.6.1 Family in the Urban Setting

Scholars point out that industrial urbanisation has not brought disintegration in the joint family structure. Milton Singer (1968) studies the structure of the joint family among the Industrialists of Madras City. He finds that joint family system has not been a blockade for entrepreneurship development. Rather, it has facilitated and adapted to industrialisation. Orensten, in his study on the *Recent History of Extended Family in India* analyses the census data from 1811 to 1951. He finds that joint and large families in India are not disappearing by the processes of industrialisation and urbanisation. However, the prevalence of the joint family structure has not been of uniform one across society. Ramakrishna Mukherjee finds that (a) the joint family is over-represented in the trade and commerce sector of national economy and in the high and middle grade occupations; (b) nuclear family is over-represented in the rural rather than in the urban areas. Based on his study on the family structure in West Bengal, he concludes that the central tendency in the Indian society is to pursue the joint family organisation (cf. Oommen 1982: 60). Joint family sentiments

widely prevail over nuclearisation of family units in spite of residential separation, etc.

7.6.2 Direction of Change

T.K. Oommen is of the opinion that so far urban family has been viewed from within as a little society. To him, for a proper understanding, the urban family should be placed in a broad social context. For this purpose, the urban families are to be distinguished through the mode of earning a livelihood and sources of income, structure of authority, urban social milieu and social ecology and the emerging value patterns. He points out that the type of family postulated in the Indian Constitution is an egalitarian, conjugal and nuclear family. Besides the Constitutionality, the socio-ecological factors, like the settlement patterns, native cultural environments of the urban migrants, and associations to various occupational, political, ideological, cultural-recreational, economic groups influence and reorient the style and pattern of the urban familial life. He mentions that urban centres have been the melting pots of traditional and modern values. Individualism is growing at a significant speed in the urban areas. It admits freedom of individuals in the decision-making process in the family, choice of mates, acquisition and management of personal property, establishment of separate households after marriage, etc. Individualism is, however, against the spirit of the joint family and questions the established authority of the elder male. There may be contradictory emphasis on the value hierarchies and individualism. This is also likely to influence the urban family life. However, the influence of the above-mentioned factors may be of a diverse nature, based on the typology (metropolis, city, town, etc.) of the urban areas and the extent of industrialisation as well. Along with these, the traditional cultural patterns of the family also continue. To him, there are three broad categories of urban families on the basis of their income. These families have distinct socio-cultural and ecological milieu, patterns of familial authority and value. Forces of urbanisation have affected these families diversely. Let us examine these families.

- i) **Families of Proprietary Class.** Their basic resource is the family of capital. The elder males in the family have substantial authority, as they own and control property. These are mostly the joint-households. Socially, they are the local people or the old migrants from the same region and same cultural milieu. In these families, traditional hierarchies are accepted and individualism is incipient.
- ii) **Families of the Entrepreneurial-cum-Professional Category.** The basic resources of these families are capital and expertise/skill and their simultaneous investment for generating income. Small commercial/trade/industrial establishments owned and managed by the family, practitioners of professions, etc., belong to this category. The adult males have less authority. Though these families are joint in nature, there is a tendency of breaking up as adult sons marry. Socially, they are mostly the local and the old migrants. However, new migrants are also there. In these households, hierarchy and traditional authority is questioned and individualism is visible.
- iii) **Families of Service Category.** These families generate income exclusively through selling their expertise skill or labour power in the service sector. This category is again divided into three sub-categories.

- a) **Families in the service sector.** The major source of their income is professional/managerial or administrative expertise. In these families, the domination of the male and the old members are not sustained. Neolocal nuclear households are the dominant patterns. Socially, they are mostly the new migrants from diversified socio-cultural regions. In these families, hierarchy erodes and individualism is strong.
- b) **Families in the service sector.** The main source of their income is administrative skill and semi-professional expertise. There are decentralisation of authority because of women's contribution in the family income, retirement from work, dependency on sons or daughters, etc. These are neolocal households with dependent kins. Socially, they are a mixture of locals, old and new migrants and come substantially from various regions. Traditional authority and hierarchy are questioned, and individualism slowly emerges there.
- c) **The labour families in the service sector.** The only source of their income is the labour power. These are essentially the nuclear households. However, due to poverty, they share housing with kins. There have been the sharing and decentralisation of authority among the family members, based on the extent of their economic contribution. They are a mixture of locals, old and new migrants from same cultural regions. In these families, hierarchy breaks down with the growth of individualism.

An analysis of the changes in the above-mentioned families shows that the forces of change have diversely affected these families. The old migrants and the local people, who earn absolutely from their household investment, have accepted the traditional authority. Individualism has not penetrated there. The tendency toward nuclearisation is more among the new migrants and among the families in the servicing sector. Individualism has also grown because of diverse socio-economic conditions. T.K. Oommen, however, points out the possibility of overlapping between these types of urban families.

7.6.3 Some Emerging Trends

In the context of rapid technological transformation, economic development and social change, the pattern of family living has been diverse in urban India. Today, life has been much more complex both in the rural and in the urban areas than what it was few decades ago. In the urban areas, even in the rural areas as well, many couples are in gainful employment. These working couples are to depend on others for child care, etc., facilities. With the structural break down of the joint family, working couple face a lot of problem. For employment, many rural males come out of the village, leaving behind their wives and children in their natal homes. The rural migrants are not always welcome to the educated westernised urban family for a longer stay. Their stay many times creates tension among the family members. In the lower strata of the urban society, however, the rural migrants are largely accommodated. Many times, they become the members of these families also. The 1991 Census has revealed an important trend of the changing family pattern in India. Data suggested that though nuclearisation of the family has been the dominant phenomenon the extent of joint living is also increasing, especially in the urban areas. Experts point out that the increase in the joint living is mostly because of the migration

of the rural people to the urban areas, and their sharing of common shelter and hearth with other migrants from the same region.

In the process of structural transformation, the old structure of authority and value have been challenged. The growing individualism questions the legitimacy of the age old hierarchic authority. The old value system also changes significantly. However this system of transformation has minimised the importance of mutual respect, love and affection among the family members belonging to various generations. Penetration of consumerist culture has aggravated the situation further. In a situation of generation gap, many of the aged feel frustrated, dejected and neglected in society. Since the emotional bondage has been weakened; many young members feel a sense of identity crisis in the family. The lack of emotional support in the family often leads the youth to the path of alcoholism and drug addiction. The aspect of joint family sentiments, which has been so emphasised by the sociologists, has not been always operational and effective in the changing context of the society.

Check Your Progress 4

Tick Mark the correct answers

- i) According to Milton Singer, the joint family system
 - a) has not been a blockade for entrepreneurship development.
 - b) Has been a blockade for entrepreneurship development.
 - c) Is breaking down among the business community.
 - d) Is the dominant pattern among the servicing poor.
- ii) According to Ramakrishna Mukherjee the nuclear family is over represented in the
 - a) rural areas.
 - b) urban areas
 - c) both of these areas
 - d) none of these areas.
- iii) T.K. Oommen distinguishes urban families through
 - a) mode of earning and changing value pattern.
 - b) structure of authority
 - c) urban social milieu and social ecology.
 - d) all of the above.

7.7 LET US SUM UP

In this Unit, we have defined and discussed various types of family. We have also discussed various factors, viz., urbanisation, industrialisation and modernisation affecting family structure in India. Changes in the traditional joint family system are also explained. Families of the urban and rural India are affected diversely by the forces of development and change. We have discussed changes in the rural and urban families separately. Among the rural families, we discussed the factors responsible for the change, and the impact

of the breakdown of the joint family are also discussed. Lastly, the change in the urban family structure, the direction of its change and some emerging trends are also discussed.

7.8 KEY WORDS

Family Cycle	: It denotes that the elements of family life take shape in a certain direction. It relates essentially to the process of fission in the residential and compositional aspects of the family.
Neolocal Residence	: The custom for a married couple to reside apart from either spouse's parent or other relatives.
Patriarchal Family	: A family in which the eldest male is dominant.
Patrilocal	: The custom for a married couple to reside in the household or community of the husband's parents.
Polyandry	: A form of marriage in which a wife has more than one husband at the same time.
Polygamy	: Marriage involving more than one woman at the same time.
Polygyny	: A form of polygamy in which a husband has more than one wife at the same time.

7.9 FURTHER READINGS

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7.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- 1) d)
- 2) a)
- 3) d)

Check Your Progress 2

- i) In traditional patriarchal–patrilocal families in India, sons are expected to stay with the parents till the marriages of the siblings are over. The sons tend to separate after this. Hence, the process of fission takes place, and the joint family breaks down into relatively smaller units-sometimes into nuclear households.

- ii) According to I.P.Desai, when action is oriented towards husband, wife and children, the family can be categorised as a nuclear unit; and when the action is oriented towards wider group it is defined as joint family.

Check Your Progress 3

- 1) Land reforms put ceiling restriction on landholdings. In many cases, the heads of respective family made theoretical partition of the family to avoid the land ceiling. However, the sons gradually began to live separately hastening the formal partition.
- 2) Penetration of the mass media helped individualism grow at a faster rate in the rural areas. The rural people started believing more in their individuality. Today, the individual strives to improve his/her standard of living. It is possible if the individual has lesser commitments and fewer obligations.

Check Your Progress 4

- i) a)
- ii) a)
- iii) d)

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