

One Day National Conference on

**FAMILIES IN TRANSITION: THE
SOCIOLOGUOF INDIAN HOUSEHOLDS IN
CONTEMPORARY TIMES**

Editors

Dr. M. Kousalyadevi

Dr. R. Kavitha



MIND READING
Publications

Madurai

Title: One Day National Conference on
Families in Transition: The Sociologuof Indian Households
in Contemporary Times

Editor's Name: Dr. M. Kousalyadevi
Dr R. Kavitha

Published by: Mind Reading Publications
Madurai - 625 011

Publisher's Address: Mind Reading Publications
1068, HIG, TNHB Colony,
Madurai - 625 011
Tamil Nadu, India

Edition Details (I,II,III): I

ISBN: 978-93-92150-24-1

Month & Year: March, 2025

Copyright @ Dr. M. Kousalyadevi
Dr R. Kavitha

Pages: 146

Price: ₹ 445.00

CONTENTS

S. No.	Title	Page No.
1.	Marriage as Performance in Families in Transition: Gender, Power, and Psychological Breakdown in Gillian Flynn's <i>Gone Girl</i> <i>Ms. S. Vasha Varthini & Dr. Rathika R.G</i>	1
2.	A Conceptual Review of Mental Health Outcomes: Emotional Isolation in Adolescence <i>Arulkumar S & Mukilan M K</i>	7
3.	A Study on Dowry Practices and Domestic Violence in Coimbatore District <i>Ms. P. Suganya & Dr. R. Murugeswari</i>	16
4.	Adolescent Mental Health and Emotional Isolation: A Psychosocial Study <i>Dr. S.V. Harshini & Ms. A. Kalaipriya</i>	23
5.	Vulnerability, Care, and Emotional Well Being in Families Family Care of the Elderly: Abuse, Neglect, and Abandonment <i>Ms. Santhi C.B</i>	30
6.	Structural Transitions in Indian Families Rise and Implication of Nuclear Families <i>Mrs. M. Gomathi</i>	34
7.	Digital Disconnection - Exploring Communication Gaps in Modern Families <i>Dr. S.V. Harshini & Ms. K. Kaviya</i>	39
8.	Mobile Usage, Mental Health Dynamics, and Family Support Structure Among Gen Z in Tamil Nadu <i>Dr. M. Akilanayaki</i>	45
9.	Smartphones, Screens, and Social Distance: Digitalization and Family Bonds in India <i>Dr. V. Gowtham Raaj & Dr. T. Kanimozhi</i>	55
10.	An Empirical Study of Empathy and Cultural Diversity in Early Childhood Curriculum Development <i>Dr. M. P. Prathiba & Dr. B. Sheela</i>	62
11.	Exploring Work-Life Balance Strategies Among Working Women: A Qualitative Study <i>Dr. V. Sudha & Dr. S. Balamurugan</i>	70
12.	Families in Transition: Structural Changes, Gender Dynamics and Emotional Well-Being in Contemporary Indian Households <i>Dr. G. Akilandeswari & Dr. K. Priyatharsini</i>	74
13.	Family Transitions and Social Risks in India: The Role of Pradhan Mantri Jan Suraksha Schemes <i>Dr. S. Kaleeswari</i>	78

FAMILIES IN TRANSITION: STRUCTURAL CHANGES, GENDER DYNAMICS AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING IN CONTEMPORARY INDIAN HOUSEHOLDS

Dr. G. Akilandeswari

*Associate Professor and Head,
Department of Commerce (Finance), NGM College, Pollachi*

Dr. K. Priyatharsini

*Assistant professor,
Sakthi Institute of Information and Management Studies, Pollachi, India.*

Abstract

Indian families have undergone significant transformations over the past few decades due to rapid urbanization, economic restructuring, technological advancement, and shifting social values. The traditional joint family system is increasingly giving way to nuclear and single-parent households, altering patterns of care, authority and emotional support. These changes have profound implications for gender relations, intergenerational bonding and mental well-being. This paper examines the sociological dimensions of family transition in contemporary India, focusing on structural changes, gender and power dynamics and issues of vulnerability and emotional well-being among children and the elderly. Using secondary data from census reports, national surveys and existing sociological literature, the study highlights emerging challenges such as elder neglect, work-family conflict, domestic violence and adolescent mental health concerns. The paper argues that while family transitions reflect social progress and individual autonomy, they also demand responsive legal frameworks, inclusive policies and community-based support systems to ensure family welfare and social cohesion.

Keywords: *Indian families, family transition, nuclearization, gender dynamics, emotional well-being, social change*

Introduction

The family has long been regarded as the cornerstone of Indian society, functioning as a primary unit of socialization, economic cooperation, and emotional support. Traditionally characterized by joint family arrangements, hierarchical authority and clearly defined gender roles, Indian families were deeply embedded within cultural, religious and kinship networks. However, in contemporary times, these structures are undergoing rapid transformation due to modernization, globalization, and socio-economic mobility.

Urbanization, increased educational attainment, women's participation in the workforce, and the proliferation of digital technologies have significantly altered family life. The shift from agrarian to industrial and service-based economies has reduced dependence on extended kinship systems, resulting in the growth of nuclear families and independent living arrangements. These changes, while offering greater autonomy and flexibility, have also introduced new challenges related to emotional well-being, care responsibilities and social security.

This paper seeks to analyze the sociology of Indian households in transition by examining structural changes, evolving gender relations and emerging vulnerabilities within families. It emphasizes the need for a balanced understanding that recognizes both the opportunities and risks associated with family transformation in contemporary India.

Structural Transitions in Indian Families

From Joint to Nuclear Families

One of the most visible changes in Indian family structure is the gradual decline of the joint family system. Industrialization and urban migration have encouraged smaller family units, particularly in metropolitan and semi-urban areas. According to census and National Family Health Survey (NFHS) data, nuclear families now dominate urban India, while rural areas are also witnessing similar trends.

The nuclear family offers privacy, independence, and mobility; however, it often lacks the built-in support mechanisms of the joint family. Childcare, elder care and household responsibilities are concentrated within fewer individuals, increasing emotional and physical stress, particularly for working couples.

Rural-Urban Dynamics and Migration

Rural-to-urban migration has fragmented families spatially, with younger members relocating for education and employment while older parents remain in villages or small towns. This separation has weakened intergenerational bonds and reduced traditional caregiving practices. Remittances may provide financial support, but emotional distance and reduced daily interaction contribute to loneliness and insecurity among the elderly.

Digitalization and Family Interaction

Digital technologies have transformed communication patterns within families. While social media and video calls help maintain long-distance relationships, excessive screen time and digital dependency have reduced face-to-face interactions within households. The digital divide between generations further intensifies communication gaps, often marginalizing elderly family members.

Gender, Power, and Family Conflict

Changing Gender Roles

Women's increasing participation in higher education and paid employment has reshaped gender relations within Indian families. Traditional norms that confined women to domestic roles are gradually being challenged, leading to greater financial independence and decision-making power for women. However, this transition has also resulted in a "double burden," where women are expected to manage professional responsibilities alongside household duties. The lack of equitable division of domestic labor often leads to stress, marital conflict and work-life imbalance.

Domestic Violence and Power Imbalances

Despite legal protections, domestic violence remains a critical issue in Indian families. Power imbalances rooted in patriarchy, economic dependency and social stigma prevent many women from reporting abuse. Family transitions sometimes intensify conflict, particularly when traditional authority structures are challenged by changing gender roles.

Vulnerability, Care, and Emotional Well-being Elderly Care and Neglect

The erosion of joint family systems has significantly impacted elder care. With fewer family members available to provide daily support, many elderly individuals experience neglect, isolation, and economic insecurity. Old-age homes and institutional care are increasing, but they cannot fully substitute familial emotional support.

Children and Adolescent Mental Health

Family instability, academic pressure, and reduced parental time have contributed to rising mental health concerns among children and adolescents. Anxiety, depression and behavioral issues are increasingly reported, particularly in urban households. The absence of extended family support exacerbates these challenges.

Emotional Well-being and Family Bonds

Emotional well-being within families depends on communication, empathy, and shared responsibilities. Contemporary families often struggle to balance economic demands with emotional needs, resulting in weakened family bonds. Strengthening emotional literacy and supportive environments is crucial for healthy family functioning.

Law, Policy, and Family Welfare Legal Frameworks and Gaps

India has enacted several laws to protect family welfare, including the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005) and the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act (2007). While these laws provide essential safeguards, implementation gaps and limited awareness reduce their effectiveness.

Policy Interventions

Government initiatives such as Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), National Mental Health Programme, and social security schemes for the elderly aim to address family vulnerabilities. However, fragmented delivery and lack of community engagement limit their impact.

Role of Community and Educational Institutions

Community organizations, educational institutions, and civil society play a vital role in promoting family welfare through awareness programmes, counseling services and support

networks. Universities and colleges can contribute by encouraging family studies, mental health awareness and gender sensitization.

Conclusion

Indian families are undergoing profound transitions shaped by socio-economic, cultural, and technological forces. While these changes reflect modernization and individual empowerment, they also present significant challenges related to care, emotional well-being and social cohesion. The decline of joint families, evolving gender roles and increasing vulnerabilities among children and the elderly demand comprehensive policy responses and community support mechanisms.

This paper emphasizes the need for a holistic approach that integrates legal safeguards, inclusive policies, and social awareness to strengthen families in contemporary India. By adapting to change while preserving core values of care and solidarity, Indian families can continue to serve as resilient institutions in a rapidly transforming society.

References

1. Census of India. (2011). Household and family composition in India. Government of India.
2. Giddens, A. (2013). Sociology (7th ed.). Polity Press.
3. Government of India. (2005). Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act. Ministry of Law and Justice.
4. Government of India. (2007). Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
5. National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5). (2021). India report. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
6. Patel, T. (2019). The family in India: Structure and practices. Oxford University Press.
7. Uberoi, P. (2016). Family, kinship, and marriage in India. *Indian Journal of Sociology*, 47(2), 215–230.