Changing Family Institution in India

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ABSTRACT

Indian society and culture have become more stable because of the family. A significant changing trends have been seen in the institution of family. Change is significant, until it destroy the value, culture & social milieu. There are changes in the pattern of marriage, structure of family, patriarchal society, role of women. The study is based on various rounds of NFHS survey, IOM report and various research papers which provide data regarding changing trends of Indian family system. So, there is need to understand the change occurring in social, cultural and economic system.

Key Words : Family, Structure, Change, Society
JEL- J12, O1

INTRODUCTION

Families in India:

Family is the most significant primary group in society. It is a group of people who are related through marriage, blood, adoption and form one household. They interact and communicate with one another in their respective social roles as husband, wife, father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, thereby fostering a shared culture.

Indian society and culture have in fact become more stable because of the family. India's economy is predominately agrarian, and vast majority of people lived in rural areas. Families dominated the agricultural and economic sectors. The traditional Indian family structure was multigenerational, patriarchal, patrilineal, and patrilocal with rigorous age and gender-based rules governing roles, obligations, control, and resource allocation. The eldest male family member held complete power. Instead of emphasizing individualism, traditional Indian culture had a strong feeling of familism, which served as the foundation for its deep sense of unity and identity (Mohan, 2020 and Malviya, 2021, Dhanaraj and Mahambare, 2018 and Kashyap, 2004). In India, families

were in charge of organising marriages, which had a strong focus on both social and economic factors. They were intended to strengthen familial ties, foster inter-village contacts, and preserve family ancestry and were conducted among two families instead of two individuals. They had early consummation and were primarily endogamous (Khan and Shahbaz, 2018, Bianchi, 2014 and Goswami and Singh, 2012).

Changing Family Structure:

Change is the law of nature and social change describes the adjustments that people make to their daily routines. It does not address every development taking place in society. The word "social change" should be used in a limited sense to refer to changes in the area of social connections. Any component of social processes, patterns, relationships, or organisation will change as a result of social change. The structural and normative framework of society is changing as a result.

The social system is always evolving. The impact of the changes that have been occurring in our society's economic, political, social, and cultural sectors are now felt by the Indian family. The ways that goods are produced, distributed, and consumed have significantly

changed in the economic sphere. Process of industrialisation, urbanisation and commercialisation has significantly impacted the family. Migration to urban regions, the expansion of slums, the shift from caste-based and hereditary jobs to new employment patterns made possible by technology advancements, the fierce battle for survival in the marketplace, and many other economic factors have had an effect on families (Sammaiah, 2021, Pradhan, 2011, Singh, 2010 and Sonawat, 2001).

Marriage and the institution of family won't stay the same too. Although people may aspire for reliability, societies may give the impression of permanence, and the pursuit of certainty may go on unabatedly, society is an ever-changing phenomenon that grows, degrades, renews, and adapts to changing conditions while also undergoing significant changes over the course of time.

Family Size:

In the nation as a whole, especially among Hindus, the principles of the joint family are widely respected. The joint family system in India is, however, going through a structural transition as a result of modernisation, industrialisation, and urbanisation. After a son marries, or with the addition of a daughter-in-law, a nuclear family evolves into a joint family (Sammaiah, 2021, Kashyap, 2004, The programme on the family 2003 and Sonawat, 2001). Modern societies have a wide variety of families, from the most conventional extended families with tight, gender-based sex roles to modern dual types of occupations based on liberal, equitable gender norms and to adults cohabitating couples without marriage, migration of male members, work participation of women, separation of couples, shifting from rural areas to urban areas for better standard of living etc. (Gopalakrishan, 2021 and Imran, Alam, Khattak, Jawad, Khan, 2020). So, this paper is an attempt to assess the changing trends in Indian family system.

According to NFHS-5 more over half of families (58.2 %) had a nuclear structure, whereas less than half (41.8%) belonged to joint families as compared to NFHS-3 and NFHS-4. In year 2005-06 there were more nuclear families (Table 1).

Family Composition:

The main reasons behind nuclear families are depend upon the no. of members in a family. Most of the population prefers less no. of members in their families.

According to NFHS-5 maximum no. of families (23.1%) had only four members in their families or 17.6 per cent had 5 members in their families as compared to NFHS-3 and NFHS-4. Mean family size was 4.8 in 2005-06, 4.6 in 2015-16 and 4.4 in 2019-21.

Approximately 35.39 per cent of Indians now reside in urban settings (Impact and policy research institute IMPRI 2022). It was estimated that by 2025, 46 per cent more people will live in metropolitan settings (UN 2014). According to NFHS-3, 4 and 5, a household with one member only has been considered as family and percentage came out as 5.2, 4.1 and 4.8 per cent accordingly. It is the personal choice of the individual to live alone or not. But now they consider themselves as a family (Table 2).
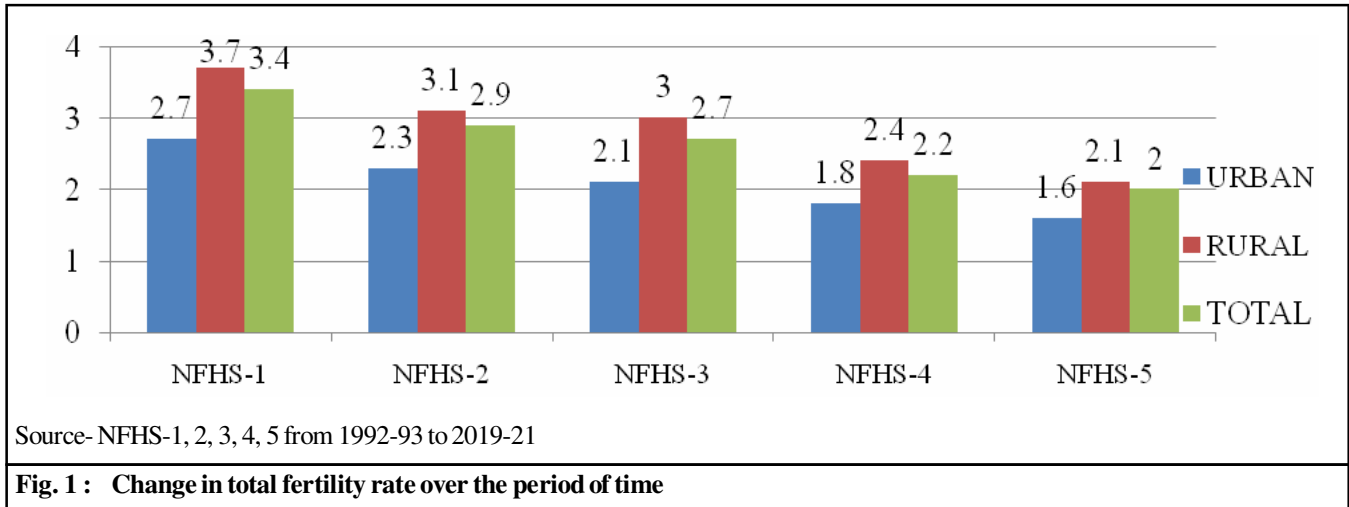
Table 2 : No. of usual members in family			
No. of usual members in family	NFHS- 3	NFHS- 4	NFHS- 5
1	5.2	4.1	4.8
2	10.9	11.5	13.6
3	14.0	15.8	16.7
4	20.4	23.3	23.1
5	18.1	18.3	17.6
6	12.6	12.1	11.3
7	7.5	6.4	5.7
8	4.5	3.5	3.0
9 or more	6.8	4.9	4.0
Mean family size	4.8	4.6	4.4

Source- NFHS- 3 to 5, from 2005-06 to 2019-21

Low Fertility Rate:

The average number of children that would be born to each woman over her lifetime is known as the Total Fertility Rate (TFR).

The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) in India has significantly decreased over time, as shown in Fig. 1. The TFR decreased from 3.4 children in 1992-1993 to 2.0 children in 2019–21. Decrease of 1.4 children has been observed during this period. For rural women it was 3.7 (1992–1993) which reduced to 2.1 in 2019–21, whereas in urban area it decreased from 2.7 in 1992–

Table 1 : Disintegration of joint families			
Household Structure	NFHS- 3 (in percentage)	NFHS- 4 (in percentage)	NFHS- 5 (in percentage)
Nuclear	60.5	57.9	58.2
Joint	39.5	42.1	41.8

Source- NFHS- 3 to 5, from 2005-06 to 2019-21

Source- NFHS-1, 2, 3, 4, 5 from 1992-93 to 2019-21

Fig. 1 : **Change in total fertility rate over the period of time**

1993 to 1.6 in 2019–21. So, TFR has been constantly decreasing irrespective of rural or urban setting. The NFHS-5 highlighted that five states *i.e.* Bihar (2.98), Meghalaya (2.91), Uttar Pradesh (2.35), Jharkhand (2.21) and Manipur (2.17) have not yet reached the level of fertility at which a population exactly replaces itself from one generation to the next *i.e.* 2.1.

Low female reproduction rates are a contributing factor to families having fewer members. Reduction in fertility rates were mainly responsible for the decline in the average yearly rate of population increase. A smaller family size is an unavoidable result of falling fertility rates and rising age at first birth in the majority of the world's nations (Anne Morse, 2022, Atake and Ali, 2019 and Dhanraj and Mahambare, 2017). A total fertility rate of 2.1 children per woman assures a population that is largely steady, assuming no net migration and constant mortality (NFHS-5).

Fertility, along with mortality and migration, is a factor in population increase that reflects both the causes and the impacts of societal and economic change. Postponed family formation, childbearing, and decreased desired family sizes are some of the factors that have contributed to the remarkable reduction in birth rates over the previous few decades (OECD, 2022). The average age at marriage has been growing, which may also be related to a shift in what people want from marriage and their partners (Chakravorty *et al.,* 2021, Thornton *et al.,* 2012, UNICEF, 2011 and Pradhan, 2011). There are two important study strands that explain the patterns of marriage age in this area. The first set of arguments focuses on economic development and educational expansion, and they contend that when these factors increase, enrollment in schools and colleges also rises, which in turn tends to delay marriage (Bajracharya and Amin, 2012, Jayakody *et al.,* 2008, Jones and Yeung, 2014, Nobles and Buttenheim, 2008). In the second group of justifications, it is emphasised that shifting cultural customs and standards are to blame for the later marriage age (Ghimire and Axinn, 2006, Malhotra and Tsui, 1996).

Marriage Pattern :

Men and women are admitted to family life through the institution of marriage. When they are in a committed relationship, they are socially allowed to have children, which imply the right to sexual interaction. In Indian culture, families are in charge of organising marriages, which had a strong focus on both social and economic factors. They were designed to foster kinship bonds, inter-village relations, and the continuation of family lineage and were conducted between two families rather than two people (Agarwal, 2019). Urban educated youth are gradually moving away from the traditional perception of marriage as a sacred, a social responsibility, and for the continuation of the family. They view marriage as a union of love, companionship, and personal fulfillment. So, there found drastic change in the institute of marriage.

Live-in relationships are becoming popular among couples now days. For a variety of reasons, people choose live-in relationships over marriage. Before committing oneself to one another in marriage, couples frequently turn to live-in relationships as a measure of their compatibility. It gives them a better chance to comprehend one another and make wise decisions when entering into serious agreements like marriage. Due to rising levels of education, employment, middle-class economic

background, and urbanisation, inter-caste marriages have been progressively gaining acceptance in India (Chakravorty, Goli and James, 2021, Kahani Batta, 2017 and Bianchi, 2014). The pattern of the average age of marriage gradually moving up as a result of the proportion of young individuals who have never been married rising.

Selection of mate- Mate selection is the process of choosing a partner with whom to establish a long-term, relationship and a bond. In the past, parents were used to determine a match, but nowadays, young people choose their spouses by their own. The standards for choosing a spouse using matrimonial apps, such as Bharat Matrimony, Shaadi.com, etc., are now widely acknowledged by the community and parents (Chakravorty, Goli, and James, 2021, Singh and Mohan, 2019, Bhasin, 2016 and Brackett, 2016).

Increasing Divorce-India is experiencing an increase in divorce and separation. India has some of the lowest divorce rates in the world. Court data and records from the crime record department show that separation from rates have increased over the past ten years and it is more in urban areas. There are now significantly more couples divorcing amicably. In 2021, 787 of these claims were filed in family court, which is a five-year high (The Times of India, 2022). It shows that marriage is a failing institution or that individuals are not fully proves themselves to fulfill this commitment of marriage as the past generations did. Due to unhappy partnerships, people are definitely sacrificing their marriages, as evidenced by the high remarriage rate. In fact, if we rely on hard statistics and statistical research, it comes out that approximately 1% of all married couples in India dissolve their marriage in order to cease their joint family life. Divorce-related societal taboos can also be a concern in India. Family pressure in an arranged marriage is too much for the couples to handle. Even when parents know they made the wrong decision, many prefer to keep their kids married rather than come to terms with their error. Statistics indicate that more people from the lower working class and white collar classes are leaving unhappy coalitions. More women are filing applications for divorce—something that was unthinkable

in the 1970s and 1980s—is a notable result (Santosh and Khan, 2019 and Kakar and Kakar, 2016). As a result, there is a decrease in financial stability as well as an increase in stress, the burden of parenting, anxiety, sadness, and alcohol usage (Gogineni *et al.,* 2022, Deccan Herald, 2021 and Singh, 2010).

Role of women in family :

Women's traditional duties included taking care of the home. As a woman and mother, they were accountable for the smooth operation of the household, efficient financial management, caring for their aged in-laws, raising their kids, etc. Wives generally followed their husbands, who are the sole decision makers. In India today, women have received rights including equality, freedom of speech, and access to education. Women's circumstances have gradually changed in recent years. They have made steady progress in endeavours of employment and decision making. The advancement of women in every aspect of life has altered how society views them (Nishi, 2021, Thanavathi, 2018 and Agrawal and Joglekar, 2013).

Emerging female headed families- Yet another intriguing information about the alteration of the family's power structure. Most female household heads have their own homes and have paying jobs. Women are capable of managing their families' affairs when their husbands are not around due to a husband's death, separation, job move, or business commitment. The long-distance labour mobility of men is another significant factor in the establishment of such households. In the past, when the joint family structure was so prevalent, the phenomena of a female-headed household was very uncommon, therefore it now assumes relevance in Indian society.

According to Table 3, roughly seventeen per cent of households were headed by women, as reported by NFHS-5. Compared to urban regions, rural areas had a higher proportion of female-headed families as shown in table. Change is occurred from 2005-06 (14.4%) to 2019-21 (17.5%) in headship of families. Reason behind this change is due to improvement in literacy rate of women. Since the adoption of the National Policy on

Table 3 :Authority in the family									
Household headship	Urban (in percentage)			Rural (in percentage)			Total		
	NFHS-3	NFHS-4	NFHS-5	NFHS-3	NFHS-4	NFHS-5	NFHS-3	NFHS-4	NFHS-5
Male	86.8	85.9	82.9	85.1	85.1	82.4	85.6	85.4	82.5
Female	13.2	14.1	17.1	14.9	14.9	17.6	14.4	14.6	17.5

Source- NFHS-3, 4, 5, from 2005-06 to 2019-21

Source- Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation 2021
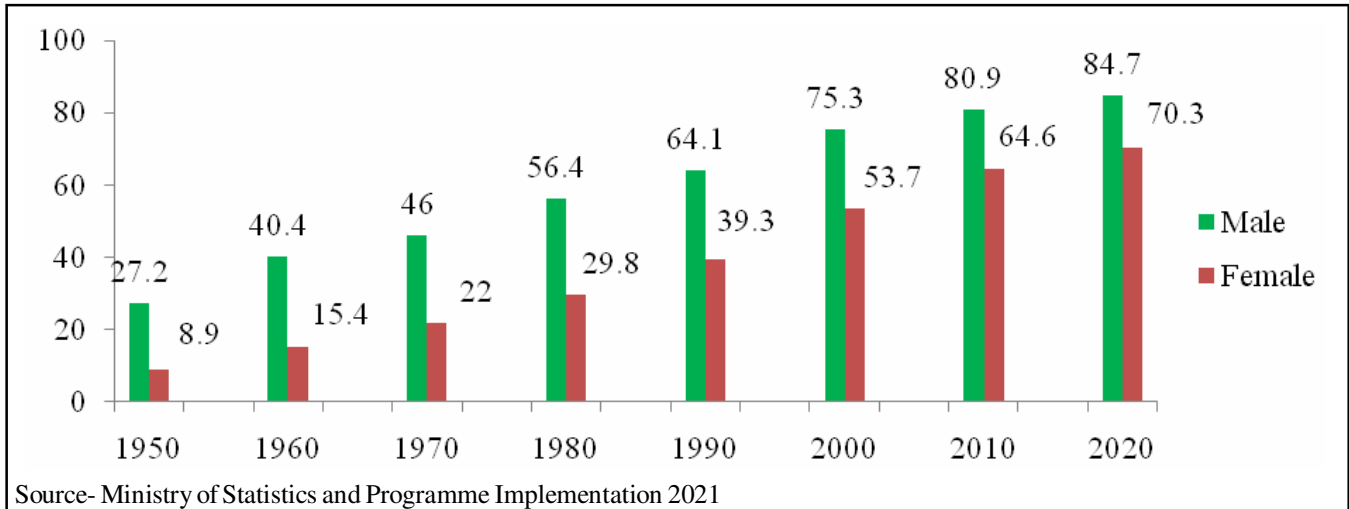
Fig. 2 :   Literacy rate of India (1950-2020)

Education (NPE) in 1986, the gender gap in literacy has been steadily shrinking. The overall literacy rate was 64.84 per cent, with male literacy rates exceeding seventy five per cent and female literacy rates for the first time surpassing fifty per cent. The gender gap decreased from 24.84 per cent in earlier decades to 21.59 per cent in 2001. The overall literacy rate was 74.04 per cent in the 2011, with males having a literacy rate of 82.1 per cent and females having a literacy rate of 65.5 per cent. The gender disparity in literacy has decreased by 5 per cent and now stands at 16.6 per cent. The literacy rate will be 85 per cent for men and 70.30 per cent for women in 2020. There will be fifteen per cent decrease in the gender literacy gap (MoSPI, 2021). The decline in the gender gap in literacy is attributable to the implementation of numerous laws and programmes as well as rising public awareness. With the decline of gender gap in literacy rate women now show their presence in every field of world. Today's women must push themselves to develop their own identities outside of the home and go beyond just caring for their families and cooking. Today's women must be independent outside the home. The advancement of women in every aspect of life has changed as a result society also change his view regarding women.

According to the most recent Periodic Labour Force Survey, there were 15.3 million women working in India in 2020–21. A total of 70.7 percent of estimated workers are men and 29.3 percent are women in the industries of manufacturing, construction, trade, transportation, education, health, lodging and dining, IT/BPO, and financial services (The Tribune, 2022). In India, the agricultural industry employs eighty per cent of all economically active women; they make up thirty three per cent of the agricultural labour force and forty eight per cent of independent farmers. Majority of rural Indian (85%) women work in agriculture, while thirteen per cent of them own land (OXFAM 2018). Professional, technical, management, and administrative occupations account for 10% for women (MoSPIREPORT, 2021). By June 30th, 2022, more than 76.94 lakh SHGs had been formed by 8.39 crore rural poor women in which they started some income generating activities (Press Information Bureau, Delhi, 2022). All this data indicted the enhanced role of women in income generation which ultimately change their role in family as well in society.

Fig. 3 revealed that women's involvement in major household expenses and in other decisions had increased since NFHS-4, from seventy three per cent in NFHS-4 to eighty per cent in NFHS-5. In the four years following NFHS-4, women's participation in their own health care and their involvement in decisions regarding visits to family or relatives both increased by six percentage points, from seventy five per cent to eighty one per cent respectively.

Migration:

Migration is frequently thought of as a transition from one place to another, but it is actually a deliberate choice made by a person and his or her family in order to survive. International Organisation for Migration 2020 states that India has 450 million internal migrants as well as a 17.5 million people from different regions throughout the world. Migration is frequently encouraged to send remittances

Source- NFHS- 4,5, 2015-16 to 2019-21

Fig. 3 : Women's participation in household decision making
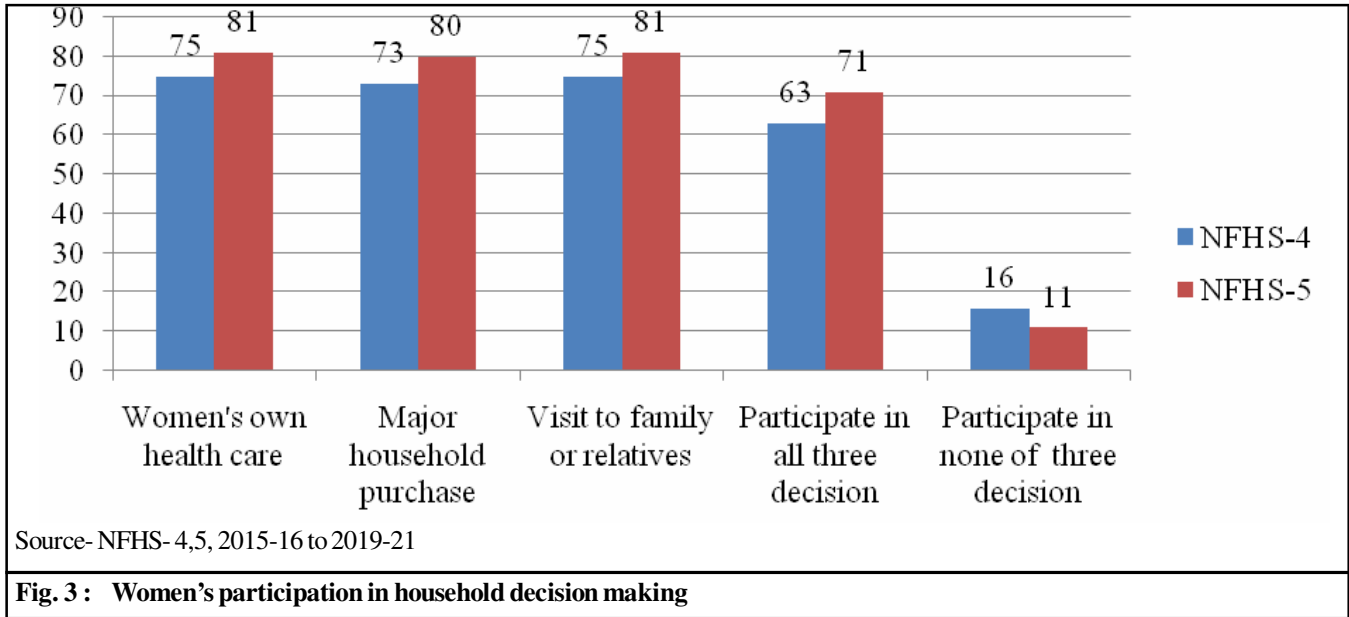
and aiding the families financially (Sharma, 2021 and Khanal *et al.,* 2018).

Migration is typically a family decision, and migrants feel a sense of duty to their families and support them, primarily through the remittances. International and domestic migration both have an impact on family life (most commonly from rural to urban). Family dissolution is frequently a result of labour migration's impact on them. Additionally, there is frequently a negative impact on relationships between spouses and siblings as well as parents, grandparents, and grandchildren. For instance, the growing problem of *"left behind children,"* which occurs when young adults move to urban areas and leave their kids in the care of grandparents, is likely to cause conflicts across generations regarding parenting methods and standards. This is a particularly challenging time in their lives due to economic issues. Children that are abandoned go through a number of tension, hopelessness, loneliness, and dropout are only a few examples of psychological and social issues. Receiving Remittances, on the other hand, have been demonstrated to have a detrimental effect on children's academic performance, because of a lack of involvement with, among other things, drop-out rates rising, bad habits developing, stress and despair family members (Khatia, 2020, Kaur, 2016, Zhou *et al.,* 2015 and Su *et al.,* 2012).

The number of jobs in the agriculture sector decreased from 250 million in 2004 to 215 million in 2016 (World Bank, 2019a). Agriculture employment as a share

of all jobs fell from sixty three to forty three per cent during a longer time span, from 1991 to 2019. This transition away from agriculture and toward other occupations was particularly significant among men, with the percentage falling to 40 per cent by 2019 (World Bank, 2019b). The outcome is that the rural families relocate from rural to urban areas. There are work opportunities in factories and newly developing sectors in metropolitan settings. The main causes of the reported agricultural distress include low agrarian production, farmer debt, crop failure, and general precarity (Sharma *et al.,* 2021, Khatia *et al.,* 2020, Khanal *et al.,* 2018 and Kaur, 2016). Both internal (from rural to urban) and international migration impacts the family system. Individual family members depart from their socially and culturally anchored networks and encounter difficulties reconstructing or establishing new social networks in the host countries. Labour migration frequently puts strain on and causes family dissolution. Intergenerational relationships between parents, grandparents, and kids, as well as siblings and spouses frequently suffer as well (United Nations Populaion Fund, 2021).

Geriatric issues/Old age issues :

According to Hindu undivided family, the family's eldest son is known as *Karta*. Family members generally showed respect for the patriarch in accordance with his traditional role. The younger generation today, does not seem to have the same respect for seniors or parents as

their fathers did. Boys and girls are starting to express their preferences for mates now, in contrast to the traditional norm. The authority of parents is no longer absolute. A slow fall in the erosion of old guard power, notably in questions of mate choice, is also being seen in rural regions (Chaudhary, 2021, Mayowa, 2019, Gupta *et al.,* 2019, Gidwani, 2013 and Singh, 2010).

People born at various times have distinct opinions and worldviews is known as generation gap. Between the two groups, this division frequently causes miscommunication and lack of trust. It may also be interpreted as parents' ongoing battle to stop their children from engaging in behavior that their own experience and experience-based wisdom teach them is wrong. Children, on the other hand, make a persistent effort to persuade the guardians that they are capable of taking charge of their life. In a typical Indian society, it is frequently observe that the older generation places a high importance on culture, values, and superstitions. The younger generation's use of education enabled them to challenge the superstitious ideas that the elder generation had forced upon them (Chaudhary, 2021, Chandrika, kumara and Devi, 2015 and Gidwani, 2013). Some of the problems faced by elderly are mistreatment, abuse, exploitation, violence, financial exploitation, loneliness, particularly for those who have lost their spouse, and their children have moved out due to factors like education, jobs, migration or other obligations. Senior persons' percentage will rise from 8 per cent in 2015 to nineteen per cent in 2050 (UNFP, 2021). Old age population is facing higher levels of chronic stress and social isolation, numerous health issues, a limited ability to engage in regular activities, and many more (Sherbourne *et al.,* 1992 and Cohen and Thomas, 1985). The elderly were neglected and given little emotional assistance. Due to youth migration out of India and a lack of government incentives for the older people who are left behind, the elderly people exhibit indicators of anguish when they are in old age homes (Khanal *et al.,* 2018).

Conclusion:

Every society goes through some changes over the period of time. Family is the most important unit of society and changes coming in the family system are also inevitable. Inspite of all these still the essential and basic functions of the family remain unchanged. Due to modernisation, individualism, globalisation and westernisation change occur in family structure. Changes

are occurring in economic and social structure of family institution. There is need to understand the change occurring in social, cultural and economic system. So, that it doesn't destroy the social fabric of society.

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