

## Changing Idea of Family

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Family is the very basic unit of any society. It has universal functions ranging from reproduction to internalization of values and norms. Through families the norms and values of society are transferred from one generation to the other. There are two types of families broadly, one is 'joint family' and the other is 'nuclear family'. Now-a-days, the trend is towards nuclear family due to industrialization and forces of modernization. The role and function of family has gone under transformation. But in India, by and large 'joint family' system operates in most parts of the country.

Joint family has been the common practice though the trend towards 'nuclear family' cannot be ruled out. Joint family is that system in which parents along with their children and children's children live. Sometimes the relative also live. But in nuclear families only the parents along with their children live. In Joint families grandparents did not feel sense of aloofness. The practice of storytelling to grandchildren was common. Children used to learn a lot from stories. Individual shocks and depressions were managed well. Crisis situations in terms of money and other things were adequately taken care of by elders. But the greatest demerit developed in terms of depending. Initiatives were lacking. Youngers could not develop properly. All the time they were dependent on somebody. Individual development got hampered. When faced with crisis situations, individually they could not learn to tackle well. But at the same time joint family provided stability and security to its members.

Industrialisation and forces of modernization gave serious jolt to joint family system. People started moving to urban areas in want of good education and better jobs. Urbanization increased due to industrialisation which provided better opportunities for education as well as jobs. Nuclear families have become the necessity as jobs are the requirement and need of the people. As a result earning members leave the parent house and live where they work with their children. The nature and functions of nuclear families are different from joint families. The element of initiative and ability to take independent decisions are the hallmark of nuclear families. They are in better position to tackle crisis situations. It helps in professionalism and enhances the prospects for achievement.

In West too the trend is towards nuclear families as the children at very young stage are encouraged to choose their professions and become independent. The need towards achievement and success is greatly found in them. This need can be seen in metropolitan cities with most of the people in India. It has its own

problems too. The problem of drug abuse, teenage pregnancies and juvenile delinquency are the immediate consequences of Western type of living. In the absence of proper guidance and direction adolescents fall prey to the negative fallouts of Westernisation and modernization. Sometimes, in the West the idea of family itself is abandoned. That is why we see increasing tendency towards single men and women. Either they do not marry or marry at late years. In these families the development of children becomes faulty as there is emotional deprivation among children. When the parents work, especially the mother, child gets less of time to stay with their parents. As a result they are deprived of basic development which is very essential at that stage.

But in recent years, the trend is again towards joint families. Though the structure and form is different. Quite often parents and relatives love and stay with their children at working places. The meeting is quite often, though they stay separately. Nowadays the living especially the rent in metros is so expensive that brothers or cousins stay in one house and hence able to feel the togetherness. The link is never broken. People keep coming from villages or distant places. Continuity is maintained which serves both the purpose of need for excellence and a feeling of belongingness. By living in such arrangements it combines good points of both the family systems.

There has been considerable change in idea of family as change is inevitable. More and more people are becoming individualistic and self centered due to greed and consumerist culture but the need for family has been felt at all times. It will be felt and institution of family will continue to be there due to its generic significance. Family teaches love and compassion. Family is the basic unit of education and morality. It is the first and most important learning centre for children. Children are most loved in the family despite their whatsoever bad behavior. Good values can be instilled in the family itself, which is the need of the hour in today's increasing normlessness and chaotic society. Then only society can become free of rampant social ills. If the institution of family declines, the situation will become still worse and beyond imagination. So the institution of family should be strengthened with all the right inputs in order to live in a more peaceful and humane world.