



Mains Practice Question

Q. The traditional Indian family structure has undergone significant transformations in recent decades. Examine the changing nature of the Indian family, with particular emphasis on the impact of urbanization and globalization. **(250 words)**

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Approach

- Introduce the answer by highlighting the transformation of Indian Families
- Delve into the changing nature of Indian Families due to Urbanisation and Globalisation
- Conclude suitably.

Introduction

The **Indian family system**, traditionally characterized by joint families and strong kinship ties, has undergone significant transformations in recent decades.

- **Urbanization and globalization** have been key drivers of these changes, reshaping family structures, relationships, and values.

Body

Changing Nature of Indian Families:

- **Due to Urbanization:**
 - **Shift from Joint to Nuclear Families:** There's a growing prevalence of nuclear families, especially in urban areas. In metropolitan cities like Mumbai and Bangalore, the majority of households are **now nuclear families**.
 - **Cause:** Urbanization has led to migration for **job opportunities, often separating family members geographically**.
 - The IT boom in cities like Pune and Hyderabad has attracted young professionals from across India, leading to the formation of nuclear families away from their ancestral homes.
 - **Changing Family Size:** Family sizes are shrinking, with a **decline in the average number of children per family**.
 - India's Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has dropped from **3.4 in 1992-93 to 2.0 in 2019-21**, indicating a shift towards smaller families.
 - **Cause:** Increased awareness about family planning, higher education levels, and career aspirations contribute to this trend.
 - **Rise of Single-Parent Families:** Increasing acceptance and prevalence of single-parent households.
 - An estimated **4.5% of all Indian households** are run by single mothers. (UN Women 2019)
 - **Cause:** Higher divorce rates, personal choice, and reduced stigma around single parenthood.

- Bollywood celebrities like **Sushmita Sen and Tusshar Kapoor** choosing single parenthood has helped normalize this family structure.
- **Changing Rituals and Traditions:** Adaptation and sometimes dilution of traditional family rituals and customs.
 - **Small-scale, intimate weddings**, rather than large, fat Indian weddings, have become the preferred choice for young couples
 - **Cause:** Time constraints, urbanization, and blending of cultural influences.
 - The emergence of **professional priests offering "short-format" pujas** for busy urban families during festivals like Diwali.
- **Due to Globalization:**
 - **Evolving Gender Role:** There's a gradual shift towards more **egalitarian gender roles within families**. The female participation in the labor force has increased by **9.5% points in 2021-22 over the year 2017-18**, indicating more women taking up careers.
 - **Cause: Education, economic independence, and exposure to global ideas** have empowered women and challenged traditional gender norms.
 - Also, the **Indian Supreme Court's 2018 judgment** decriminalizing homosexuality has led to increased visibility and acceptance of **LGBTQ+ relationships**, challenging traditional family norms.
 - **Changing Marriage Patterns:** There's a shift towards **later marriages, increased divorce rates, and greater acceptance of inter-caste and inter-religious marriages**.
 - While the mean age of marriage of women in India stood at **21.2 years in the 2011 Census** and improved to **22.1 years in 2017**
 - **Cause:** Higher education levels, career priorities, and changing social norms contribute to these shifts.
 - **Changing Attitudes Towards Mental Health:** Growing awareness and acceptance of mental health issues within families.
 - The National Mental Health Survey 2015-16 found that **15% of India's population required active mental health interventions**, leading to more open family discussions about mental health.
 - **Cause:** Increased education, media coverage, and celebrity advocacy around mental health.

Conclusion

The Indian family has evolved significantly due to urbanization and globalization, shifting from traditional joint families to nuclear families and empowering women. While these changes have brought about **greater individualism** and **acceptance of alternative family structures**, **the family continues to be a vital source of support and identity in India.**