

SOCIAL IMPACT OF URBANIZATION ON THE INSTITUTION OF FAMILY IN KASHMIR: A STUDY OF SRINAGAR CITY

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ABSTRACT

Urbanization implies a change in the economic, social and cultural aspects of the society. It is a process of becoming urban, the movement of people or processes to urban areas, increase of urban areas, population or processes. Globally, more people live in urban areas than in rural areas with 54 per cent of the world's population residing in urban areas in 2014. In 1950, 30 per cent of the world's population was urban, and by 2050, 66 per cent of the world's population is projected to be urban. First the developed countries and now the developing countries like India has become the epicentre of rapid urbanization. Based on a sample of 400 respondents in the city of Srinagar and using interview schedule as the tool of data collection, the study explores the social impact of urbanization on the institution of family like breakdown of joint family system, authority pattern, family structure, economic independence of women and high cost of living etc.

Keywords: Urbanization; breakdown of joint family system, family structure, economic independence of women, Srinagar city

1. Introduction

Among the great revolutions of the human history, urbanization stands out as a significant process of social transformation. The three great revolutions- the industrial revolution, the agrarian revolution and the transport revolution sparked off another great revolution- the urban revolution (Yadav & Sharma, 2004)¹. The process of urbanization has assumed a great precedence at the global as well as local scale. The increased pace of urbanization and its attendant ramifications have widely attracted the attention of social scientists. The transformations that it has ushered, in the social, political, economic, ecological and cultural domains of human life have been enormous. The development of this phenomena in the human history symbolizing it as one of the recent developments in the world history, coupled by the consequences of this process in terms of the revolutionary changes it has brought in the whole pattern of social life certainly make urbanization worth global academic attention. Moreover the symbolic representation of city as the centre of power and influence and finally the plethora of problems and challenges that have emerged due to the process of urbanization has caught the sociological attention (Davis, 1955)². Thus urbanization is a multifaceted, multidimensional and very complex phenomenon. An understanding into the nature and implications of this process necessitates an understanding of this process from various vantage points.

Urbanization being a product of economic and technological changes, once it comes into being, in turn, affects every dimension of human existence. The revolutions in the field of science and technology

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led to a shift in the pattern and mode of economic activities which in turn led to the emergence of new settlement pattern. The emergent settlement pattern was markedly different from the past. People increasingly began to live in cities. The increase in the proportion of population living in cities in turn had implications on the various aspects of social life. The increase in the concentration of population in the cities led to increase in the differentiation and specialization of population and gave way to a complex division of labour. The society that emerged had a different social order. Increase in the specialization and differentiation prompted urbanization and in turn urbanization led to more complex forms of division of labour. Thus the two reinforced each other. The increase in the size and density of population which form the most important features in the definition urbanization greatly modified the social organization. This transformation greatly engaged the nineteenth century thinkers into the nature of social order that was emerging, radically different from the past. The shift from mechanical to organic solidarity in Durkheimian terms, and from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* quoting Ferdinand Tonnies entailed the development of a complex economic and social organization. A social order based upon differences and diversity and integrated by the interdependence is the product of the process of urbanization. A new kind of city emerged during the nineteenth century, built on productive power, massed population and industrial technology. By the end of the century, this new city had been credited with the creation of a system of social life founded entirely on new principles³. These new principles of social life were radically different from the earlier social order. The social consequences of urbanization thus got expressed in the transformation of human nature, social organization, social institutions, value systems and the total network of social relationships.

2. Factors of Urbanization in Kashmir

Agricultural surplus, demographic revolution, technological revolution, commercial revolution and revolution in transportation are the factors that have played a significant role in the urbanization process. The agricultural surplus was a prerequisite for the emergence of city as it released a significant proportion of population from the necessities of food production and their engagement in non-agricultural endeavours. The invention of steam engine, development of mass production techniques, factory system made possible the concentration of people in a densely settled pattern. Likewise, the development of world markets and improved means of transportation facilitated the conditions under which cities would flourish. Most importantly the demographic revolution provided the necessary labor force for the cities and also as potential consumers for the growing markets.

In the context of the valley of Kashmir, the city of Srinagar has emerged as the premier urban center. The city of Srinagar has witnessed rapid urban growth. The growth of urban population in the city of Srinagar increased nine times from 122,618 in 1901 to 1,147,617 in 2011. Being a million plus city the city of Srinagar shares 37 percent of the urban population of Jammu and Kashmir and about 53 percent of the total population of the Kashmir valley. An analysis of the urbanization pattern of Srinagar city reveals that it has combined taken place due to auto-urbanization, migration and territorial annexation. The natural increase in the population of the city of Srinagar has significantly contributed towards the urban growth of the city. A remarkable increase in the share of territorial annexation has also contributed towards rapid urbanization of the city. Migration has also consistently contributed for the population growth of the city,

mainly because of excessive concentration of economic, political, administrative and socio-cultural activities in the city which pull people from various parts of the State (City development plan for Srinagar city).⁴ The city of Srinagar being the summer capital of the state of Jammu and Kashmir has historically been the administrative and political hub of the valley. The concentration of medical, educational, administrative institutions and better civic amenities in the city of Srinagar has made it the foci of rapid urbanization. Moreover, the significance of the city has a potential source of employment opportunities has also led to increased migration and hence to increased urban growth. Cities have broader fields of employment as a newer way of life than rural areas. And these attractions, remarks Barclay, often coincide with rural distress, which helps to induce people to move (Khan, 1978).⁵

3. Research Methodology

3.1 The universe of the study

The universe of the present study is the city of Srinagar. As per the census of Jammu and Kashmir, 2011⁶ the total population of Srinagar district is 12, 36,829. The total area of the Srinagar city is 278 sq. km, but without taking the cantonment area under defence into consideration. The average population density of the city is 4,128 persons per sq.km as per census of India, 2011⁷. The total number of households in the Srinagar district is near about 178,213 with an average household density of 4,126 households per square km as per census 2011.

3.2. Sampling plan of the study

The sample for the present study comprises of 400 households, taking into consideration the time and cost factors. A stratified random sampling technique was used to collect the data. The city of Srinagar is divided into four administrative zones- east, west, north and south. From each of the four administrative zones, a sample of 100 households was chosen randomly. A descriptive research design was used to carry out the study. Interview schedule was used to obtain information from the respondents. The observation method was utilized by the researcher to gain additional information from the respondents.

3.3. Hypothesis of the study

Urbanization as a process of social change has led to a significant change in the institution of family in the Srinagar city. This has led to the transformation in the structural and functional aspects of the family system.

3.4. Objectives of the study:

1. To understand nature of urbanization in the Srinagar city,
2. To explore the factors of urbanization in the Srinagar city,
3. To trace the social impact of urbanization on the institution of family like breakdown of joint family system, authority pattern, family structure: economic independence of women: and high cost of living etc.

4. Discussion and Analysis

The findings of the study are as under:

4.1 Impact on Family

4.1.1. Breakdown of joint family system

The family is regarded as the basic social institution for two reasons. First it may be the prime mover in determining the nature of life in a given society. Second, the family is the primary determinant of the life chances of the individual born into it⁸. Among the social institutions the family has the greatest potential for touching the individual through the most intimate of human experiences. The family is a unique institution in that almost everyone is both born into a family and establishes his own⁹. The analysis of the impact of urbanization on the organization of the family is of great sociological significance. Though the institution of family is witnessing change due to various factors but here the concern of the researcher has been with the factor of urbanization. Generally, urban sociologists maintain that the process of urbanization leads to decline in family size and weakening of family ties. Under the influence of urbanization joint family system gets replaced by nuclear family system. Growth of an individualistic attitude, norms emphasizing rationality, importance of the uniqueness of individual personality, the individual's right to pursue his own goals, etc. are some of the features that characterize urbanism. However, the answer to the above inferences demand support from relevant data. It was in this context that the study was carried out. To gauge the social situation in the city of Srinagar, the respondents were asked some attitudinal questions. For, the change in the institution of family is expected to be expressed in new status definitions, new interpersonal relationships and personality orientations. Under the influence of urbanization, the nuclear family is expected to be culturally more acceptable and urban members are expected to be expressing attitudes more compatible to that change.

The breakdown of joint family and proliferation of nuclear family accompanies the process of urbanization. However, the above hypothesis has to be substantiated by the empirical data. The results from various studies carried out by sociologists point out to the prevalence of joint family in urban centres. To understand the scenario in the city of Srinagar, the respondents were asked about the disintegration of joint families. Does urban living weaken the joint family pattern of living and attitudes, and strengthen nuclear family patterns? The opinion of respondents was sought in terms of whether the family structure was undergoing change from joint to nuclear structure.

Table 4.1.1: Shift in Family Structure

Theme	Responses	Number	Percentage
Family disintegrating from joint to nuclear	Strongly agree	211	52.75
	Agree	156	39.00
	Undecided	11	2.75
	Disagree	9	2.25
	Strongly disagree	13	3.25

Total	400	100
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Source: *Field Work, 2016 carried out in urban Srinagar.*

As per the table 4.1.1, when asked that family is disintegrating from joint to nuclear, 211 respondents (52.75 percent) strongly agreed with the statement. 156 respondents (39 percent) agreed that the joint family is disintegrating. 11 respondents (2.75 percent) felt undecided. 9 respondents (2.25 percent) disagreed; while as 13 respondents (3.25 percent) strongly disagreed about the disintegration process. Overall the majority of respondents expressed affirmation that family is witnessing disintegration. Majority of respondents said that the family is changing from joint to nuclear structure. Against the traditional society which was marked by the preponderance of joint family structure, the city of Srinagar has witnessed dramatic changes and the proliferation of nuclear family is an observable fact. A similar trend has been witnessed by Singh (2003)¹⁰ in his study, "Breakdown of household and family in India", where his data substantiates the generalization that the Indian family is in transition from consanguinity orientation to conjugal orientation. As per this study, the available evidence, both from the Census and the all India surveys, bears ample testimony to the fact that the nuclear family has become a kind of basic residential unit in urban India.

4.1.2. Authority pattern

Urbanism is often associated with the weakening of the strong authoritative structure. One of the dominant hypotheses about family patterns in urban sociology suggests that urban living tends to weaken the traditional pattern of familial authority, thus giving rise to expectations of greater participation by all in the process of decision making. The fact that male in the society plays a major role in the occupational system gives him an upper hand and makes him focus of power in the family system. Catering of overall authority in the eldest male is a characteristic feature of the patriarchal family system. All the decisions come from the patriarch. Kashmir being a patriarchal society, the city of Srinagar forms a part of the general society. However, Srinagar by virtue of being the primate city is the reservoir of the forces of change. In this context the respondents were asked about the authority patterns prevalent in their home. The opinions of respondents on the issue of authority were sought.

Table 4.1.2: Authority pattern

Theme	Responses	Number	Percentage
Authority of father/ elder male diminished	Strongly agree	137	34.25
	Agree	177	44.25
	Undecided	29	7.25
	Disagree	46	11.5
	Strongly disagree	11	2.75
Total		400	100

Source: *Field Work, 2016 carried out in urban Srinagar.*

The respondents were asked that the authority of father/elder male has diminished. As per the table 4.1.2, 137 respondents (34.25 percent) strongly agreed, 177 respondents agreed, while 29 respondents (7.25 percent) remained undecided. 46 respondents (11.5 percent) disagreed whereas 11 respondents (2.75 percent) strongly disagreed.

percent) strongly disagreed that the authority of elder male is diminishing. Thus as the data reveals, majority of respondents argue that the authority pattern is witnessing a change. The rigid authoritative pattern has witnessed a decline and the decisions are made by taking other family members into consideration. As per the respondents, times have changed. The younger generation no longer feel obliged to confirm to the old norms and customs. They in no way, are ready to submit their freedom to anyone. The spirit of individualism and the notions of freedom are very dear to the youth. As a result the authority pattern has modified itself. The head of family no longer is absolute, supported by the weight of traditions. As per the respondents the decision making process has become somewhat democratic where other members are included and their opinions are deemed necessary.

4.1.3. Change in family structure

Urbanism which implies that complex of traits that makes up the characteristic mode of life in cities and denotes the development and extension of these factors, find their most pronounced expression in metropolitan areas¹¹. City is characterized by secondary rather than primary contacts. The size, density and heterogeneity tend to create a social structure in which primary group relationships inevitably get replaced by secondary contacts. Anonymity, impersonality, transitory and segmental relations, superficiality, individualistic ideology, materialistic ethos are some of the defining features related to urbanism as a way of life. The net consequence of these features does carry implications for the existing family pattern. These traits have significant role in the emergence of nuclear family as the dominant family type in the modern urban society. To understand the role of these factors in the disintegration of nuclear family, the respondents were asked whether urbanism has been the reason behind this disintegration.

Table 4.1.3: Urbanism and change in family structure

Theme	Responses	Number	Percentage
Is it because of urbanism	Strongly agree	134	33.5
	Agree	138	34.5
	Undecided	87	21.75
	Disagree	34	8.5
	Strongly disagree	7	1.75
Total		400	100

Source: Field Work, 2016 carried out in urban Srinagar.

As highlighted by the table 4.1.3, 134 respondents (33.5 percent) strongly agreed, while 138 respondents (34.5 percent) agreed that the spirit of urbanism has led to such disintegration. As per the respondents with the rise of an urbanized society in which rationality, individualism and anonymity are the defining features such pattern of change is bound to occur. Materialistic ethos and inward looking attitude, have replaced the collective sharing and caring attitude that one was prevalent in the society. Rather the society has now witnessed a shift in its normative structure as per the respondents. Thus such changes are bound to happen. However, 87 respondents (21.75 percent) remained undecided, 34 respondents (8.5

percent) disagreed whereas, 7 respondents (1.75 percent) strongly disagreed that urbanism is responsible for such a state of affairs. As per these respondents the normative structure has not witnessed such radical changes.

4.1.4. Economic independence of women

Urbanization entails the participation of women in the economic system. The participation of women in the labour force implies the economic independence of women. The exposure of women to the outside world certainly has led to a change in her attitude and perceptions. As against the traditional family pattern, her role structure has become more complicated. The economic power along with the exposure of women to liberal values tends to impact the behavioural aspect of women. She no longer is expected to comply with the traditional normative structure. The women who have got gainful jobs seek more freedom in many aspects. The impatience with the restrictiveness of the joint family is one of the factors that lead to the establishment of nuclear family. Thus in such a situation the link between the participation of women in the economy and the disintegration of joint family system needs to be analysed. To understand the role of economic independence behind disintegration of joint family system, the respondents were asked their opinions.

Table 4.1.4: Economic independence of women

Theme	Responses	Number	Percentage
Economic independence of women a cause of family disintegration	Strongly agree	113	28.25
	Agree	129	32.25
	Undecided	47	11.75
	Disagree	73	18.25
	Strongly disagree	38	9.5
Total		400	100

Source: Field Work, 2016 carried out in urban Srinagar.

Thus as the table 4.1.4, suggests, a significant majority of 113 respondents (28.25 percent) strongly agreed whereas 129 respondents (32.25 percent) agreed with the statement. 47 respondents (11.75 percent) were undecided. However, 73 respondents (18.25 percent) disagreed and 38 respondents (9.5 percent) strongly disagreed that economic independence of women is the reason behind such change. As per the respondents economy stands as a potential factor in the decisions making power. The women who is economically productive stands as an equal partner with his spouse in the decision making process. Her economic role makes her more assertive with respect to various domains of family life. She can defend herself from the traditional role structure as well as can equally stand for her self-esteem. The prospects of greater independence, as per the respondents make nuclear family favourable to working women. That is why employment of women stands a factor in the changing pattern of family structure.

4.1.5. High cost of living

High cost of living is an associated feature of urban living. Family in an urban setting is not a unit of production but one of consumption. The urban living demands reliance on other facilities, all of which are

based on monetary exchange. The complexities of modern life and the consumerist ethos do not render joint families as suitable for the urban living. The importance of high cost of urban living as a factor in the preference for nuclear family was sought from the respondents.

Table 4.1.5: High cost of living

S.no	Theme	Responses	Number	Percentage
1	High cost of life resulted in family disintegration	Strongly agree	152	38
2		Agree	149	37.25
3		Undecided	33	8.25
4		Disagree	53	13.25
5		Strongly disagree	13	3.25
Total			400	100

Source: Field Work, 2016 carried out in urban Srinagar.

As is clear from the table 4.1.5, 152 respondents (38 percent) held the strongly agreed opinion, followed by 149 respondents (37.25 percent) who agreed with this statement. The respondents were of the opinion that the joint family proved to be an economic burden for them. So they had to set up their own nucleated family. As per them, the nuclear family minimizes economic liability, so they prefer nuclear family. 33 respondents (8.25 percent) remained inconclusive. However, 53 respondents (13.25 percent) expressed disagreement while 13 respondents (3.25 percent) strongly disagreed that high cost of living is responsible from the structural shift of joint family into nuclear form. As per these respondents the joint family acts as a strong system of social support and security. So there was no reason to link economic exigencies to the breakdown of joint family system.

4.1.6. Better child care

In the descriptions of urban mode of life, it is observed that the focus is more on the conjugal bonds. The children assume central focus of their parents. Compared to joint family pattern of living where the eldest male member carry the responsibility of care of all the children in the family, this role now seems a daunting task for the urban residents. The strong inclination and loyalty towards the family of procreation is a factor in the breakdown of the joint family. Contrary to the old pattern, the father is more involved in the rearing and caring of his children. The relationship between the parents and their kids are more based on the lines of friendship. Thus the children assume greater importance i.e. their grooming, education, health etc. This primacy of parent-child relationship and intensely emotional nature of their relationship proves a threat to the filial and fraternal relationships that exist in a joint family living. This paves the way for disintegration of joint family. The nuclear family implies the full and exclusive acceptance of the responsibility of one's own children. In this context, respondents were asked that did the concern for better care of children among the people of Srinagar stand as one of the factors in the shift of family from joint to nuclear.

4.1.6: Better child care

Theme	Responses	Number	Percentage
For better care of children nuclear family preferred	Strongly agree	157	39.25
	Agree	152	38
	Undecided	15	3.75
	Disagree	58	14.5
	Strongly disagree	18	4.5
Total		400	100

Source: *Field Work, 2016 carried out in urban Srinagar.*

As the table highlights 4.1.6, 157 respondents (39.25 percent) strongly agree, followed by 152 respondents (38 percent) who agreed, while 15 respondents (3.75 percent) remained undecided. 58 respondents (14.5 percent) expressed disagreement and 18 respondents (4.5 percent) strongly disagreed that for better care of children nuclear family is preferred. As per the respondents the increasing involvement of parents towards the well-being of their children paves the way towards the breakdown of joint family. The inclination of people towards the nuclear family unit and their loyalty towards it makes them opt for the latter. However, among the respondents those who disagreed with the above argument cited that joint family proved to be as pervasive agent of better care of children. Under the surveillance of the grandparents and other kin they were susceptible to social security as well as social control.

5. Conclusion

Urbanization as a process of the concentration of population and economic activities in large urban places is a recent phenomenon in the history of man. Nonetheless, judged in terms of its magnitude and impact, it has assumed great significance as the fourth great revolution- the urban revolution. Urbanization is essentially a process of social transformation, a process of social change. The consequences of urbanization for the social order have remained a pervasive question in the writing of sociologists. The present study was concerned with the impact that urbanization had brought in the social institutions of family in the context of the city of Srinagar. The most consequences for social organization of city consist in the declining social significance of family and in the change in the structure of the family. The findings of this study also showed that the urbanization process has significantly affected the social organization of the urban society of Srinagar. Under the influence of urbanization the nuclear family has emerged as the dominant family type in the city with majority of respondents living in nuclear family setup. The pattern of authority is no longer patriarchal and dictatorial and has shifted towards more egalitarian norms. The main reasons for the emergence of nuclear family as per study were economic independence of women, better child care, concern for better future and lack of accommodation. The study also identified urbanism (operationalized as a complex of traits like individualism, rationality, modernity) as a potential factor for the structural shift in the institution of family.

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