
Family Structures

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Introduction

According to George Bernard Shaw, “A family is but an earlier heaven.”(Sweatt, 2016). A family is a group of people who are together through relations like parents, siblings, husband, wife, etc. There are different types of families like nuclear families, and joint families. Perspectives vary from person to person about which family they prefer to live in. New family forms are rapidly emerging like extended families and joint families among others. However, people living in an extended or joint family can face a variety of issues, such as privacy, difficulty in fulfilling all the needs of all the members, and disagreements pertaining to finances and expenditure.

Most families in urban India prefer to live in nuclear families, the reason being there is more space available for the family members (The Times of India, 2014). Keeping this in mind, this report seeks to explore different perspectives of family systems specifically, nuclear families. There are numerous issues to be explored for this particular research question but I have chosen issues like loneliness and isolation, conflicts, and a small support system as I did research on the topic and found out that these were the most important ones.

Loneliness and isolation

The first issue is loneliness and isolation. Loneliness is defined as the feeling of being depressed due to numerous reasons whereas on the other hand isolation is the state of feeling alone. Since there is a possibility that both parents might be working. When it comes to parents working for a minimum of 8 hours, leaving their child alone can lead to damage to the parent-child bond. Similarly, the child can begin to feel alienated from their family values Furthermore, a child may also fall into bad company in the absence of their parents which will lead to misbehavior with parents. (Reddy, n.d.). According to the bureau of labor statistics in 2011, 63% of mothers with kids under the age of six were working (Campbell, 2015). Parents would leave their children in a daycare center so it would be obvious that the child would be more connected to the caretaker if the child doesn't get love from one side they will be more attracted to the places where they will get love and the mother might not even like this. Eventually, children may end up having a lot of arguments with their parents when they are in their teenage “years” as their thoughts would not match because parents don't learn about children's likes and dislikes as a result of a huge distance is created between both parents and their child. Furthermore, a study published in the Pediatrics journal shows that a poor quality mother-and-child relationship, like a mother not spending quality time with her kids, can result in a 2.45 times higher risk of obesity for their child therefore to distract themselves, children might take advantage of their parents working and

having a busy schedule by spending a lot of time watching television or using gadgets. Children may lose all their precious time that they would rather have spent doing some physical activity or doing their homework. Moreover, sitting in front of the television can also lead to health issues like obesity (CHAN, n.d.)

Thinking of this, parents should decide and take a day off work and spend quality time with their kids to know more about each other, share ideas, and solve misunderstandings, and conflicts which will eventually make the parent-child bonding strong enough. A study shows that spending quality time with children also leads to better academic grades and fewer behavioral problems including violent behavior. Furthermore, some studies also show that spending little time with loved ones can lead to stress hormones in the body to decrease. (Jennings, 2018).

Correspondingly scheduling family meals can lead to better academic scores. (Lee, 2019) having snacks or breakfast together can lead to improved behavior as well as by this they would feel close to the parents which will strengthen the bond and the problem of loneliness and isolation will be solved to an extent.

Looking at a national perspective In India, the percentage of nuclear families has constantly been decreasing. Between the years 2001 and 2011, the number of people living in extended families rose from 6.8 million to 9.04 million which is an increase of 33%. nuclear families have been decreasing in developed nations. Even in the USA, 42% of all American households were living in nuclear families 50 years ago however if we look at the percentage today it is only 22% which is nearly a decline of half.

Conflicts

There are fewer conflicts in a nuclear family in comparison to joint families. As several families live together there are more chances of arguments. Through time, the needs, values, and opinions of family members change. Changes can occur between nuclear families and in-laws (Anon, 2016). This can happen because of family members who often interfere in others' lives. Calls from relatives frequently or infrequently can lead to conflicts. Moreover, there also may be arguments between couples themselves, we expect someone to stand for us when an individual makes us feel bad or embarrassed. In every relationship, there is always a devoted spouse or a devoted son often husbands take their mother's side rather than their wives according to research conducted by the psychologist Terri Apter, 49 couples who participated in her survey more frequently supported their mothers.

An article on Psychology Today states about a woman Shelley, who felt that her mother-in-law, Nora tried to exclude her from her family gatherings and she thought to speak to Nora about it but it turned into a shouting match and Nora told Shelley that she was 'selfish' and 'controlling'.

Later on, when Cal (Shelley's husband) got to know about this argument he shouted at Shelley to make his mom upset.

Additionally, according to a study of hundreds of families over two decades, 60 percent of the women admitted the relationship with their mothers-in-law caused them long-term unhappiness and stress. (Hill, n.d.) which might eventually lead up to a divorce between the couple. Statistics show that kids are 50% more likely to become seriously ill after a divorce than those with two parents. Adult children of parents that get divorced are 14 times more likely to give up their lives by suicide.

In the United States of America in over forty years, more than 67% of all couples got a divorce. One out of every ten children have gone through multiple divorces with their parents. (Wright, 2018)

Looking at how arguments can affect the children, especially looking at why arguments occur the family should sit and share all their experiences and hardships in life. After all this, the bond will be powerful, and the chances of arguments will comparatively be less.

Usually, the conflict can be solved by discussing and negotiating between the members of the family. Elderly people should also understand the generation gap and how their thinking of people has evolved. Not only the elderly people, but others should also respectfully express their opinion and also listen to the other person's perspective.

Small support systems

In a nuclear family, there is a pertinent issue of a small support system reason being when any family member meets an accident it would be hard to support and fulfill all the basic needs for the treatment and can leave the family in crisis. Since a nuclear family has fewer earning members, it would be very difficult to look after all the needs. However, extended families do not face these issues to support this claim the Preserve Articles analysis points out how extended family structures offer built-in help for these scenarios. In a nuclear family, the couple might need emotional support that is possible when a family is around be it a financial crisis having a family around always helps.

Additionally, if there is an argument between the couple there is no one to give any suggestions and help them to clear out all misunderstandings. Couples may find it hard to look at each other's perspectives which can ultimately be a cause of divorce.

Correspondingly this can even affect the children in several ways like increasing health problems, change in behavior like being rude, feeling guilty children may wonder what caused their parents to separate. A study published in 2013 shows that mothers become less affectionate and less supportive after divorce, hence it will have a negative impact on the children. (Morin,

2021) According to 2018 statistics, children of divorced parents are 50% more likely to develop health problems. ("Statistics: Children & Divorce", n.d.)

However, I feel that nuclear families do not face this problem. In my neighborhood, there lives a nuclear family and they are financially more stable than joint families and their children are studying in the United States of America.

Furthermore to solve this issue of a small support system a family should spend a lot of time together where they get to know a lot about each other and they can themselves be a great support for each other not depending on others for any support and they will be strong enough to look after each other. Also, each member of the family understands the importance of one another.

Conclusion

In conclusion, my perspective has changed because of a lot of research on the topic, nuclear families have always been better for people. I think that working parents can be a huge advantage for the children as they become very independent and learn to make all the decisions according to time. They learn a lot of valuable skills at a young age and use them throughout their lives. Secondly, conflicts and small support systems make the family members emotionally strong and they also start to understand the importance of each member of the family. Rather than depending on anyone else for any support or love they can be strong enough to stand by each other.

Additionally, we also learn different patterns of behavior when we have a conflict with someone we learn about how people work and once we get to know the pattern it would help us be more effective in our relationships

However the perspectives may vary from person to person, some people may prefer to live in joint or extended families. It is hard to change the perspective of every individual. Every family structure is unique, whether it be a nuclear family where everyone has their privacy or a joint family where all opinions are respected. I feel it all depends on every individual and how they make up a family.

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