

Attitude of Married Ladies towards Joint Family System

NIGHAT IQBAL¹, MUHAMMAD SHAMIM², ZUBAIDA ZAIN³, MUHAMMAD JAWAD ANWAR⁴, ALI AFZAL⁵, FIZZAH IQBAL⁶, ABDUL BARI⁷, M. IQBAL MUGHAL⁸

¹Psychologist / Sr. Lecturer Medical Education & Counseling Department, Central Park Medical College, Lahore,

²Asstt. Prof. of Pathology, Amna Inayat Medical College, Lahore,

³Assoc. Prof. Forensic Medicine, Fazaia Medical College, Islamabad,

⁴Assoc. Prof. Chemical Pathology, Amna Inayat Medical College, Lahore,

⁵Demonstrator Pathology, Amna Inayat Medical College, Lahore,

⁶Research Scholar Biochemistry Deptt., PGMI, Lahore,

⁷MO, WAPDA Hospital Complex, Lahore,

⁸Prof. of Forensic Medicine, Central Park Medical College, Lahore.

Correspondence to Nighat Iqbal, Email: nighat63@hotmail.com, Cell: 03014113472

ABSTRACT

Background: In the recent years there are many marital strains which pertain to partner choice, parent child conflict or domestic violence. It has been observed that living in a joint family system has much influence on these issues. In different societies at different timings there is variable approach about joint family system.

Aims: To assess the changes in values of the society and the attitude of married ladies towards joint family system

Methods: Study design: Cross-sectional study

Setting: Central Park Medical College, Lahore.

Sample Size: 30 married ladies were included in the study belonged to various locations of city of Lahore.

Results: The study included 30 married females ranging between 22-45 years of age with mean age 32.40±7.24. The majority (53%) belonged to joint families, maximum participants (33%) were in income group from 20001/- to 30000/-, sixty percent were on job, 40% were married within 5 years, 56% were well educated, 26% were living in joint families and the same number in nuclear families during past 5 years. In 56% families the number of family members was 5-8. In 56% families the number of children ranged from 1-3. Most of the participants were of the opinion that there are some good points in joint family system like facilitation in children brought up (60%), better moral learning (66%), better children care (76%), sharing in expenses (50%) opportunity of saving (53%), given value to their opinions (66%) & ranked life better in nuclear style of living (70%). However some negative points in joint family system were also highlighted like, incidence of more conflicts and disputes (83%), interference from others (53%), more stress in joint families (66%), chances of exposure (56%), adverse effects on budget (70%), lack of independence (56%), insufficient time spending with husband (60%).

Conclusions: The majority has liked nuclear system of living. However, many people have appreciated the positive aspects of joint family system like supporting attitude among the family members. Therefore society still finds a place for joint family system. It has come out that education plays an important role in minimizing the negative factors of the joint family system. It is recommended that public awareness should be enhanced to look after the rights of others particularly of women in Islamic and legal perspective.

Keywords: joint family, nuclear family, family system.

INTRODUCTION

In the recent years there are many marital strains which pertain to partner choice, parent child conflict or domestic violence. It has been observed that living in a joint family system has much influence on these issues. In different societies at different timings there is variable approach about joint family system. We need to study the changing trends in our society.

The family is an important unit of human society in which multiple people live together and they are connected with each other through various relations like marriage, parent-ship and adoption. It not only helps in development of individuals but also inculcate socialization and emotional binding in family members. The changing values of society also influence the attitude of family members¹.

When we consider various family systems prevailing in the world, two systems are commonly observed in

Pakistan. One is Joint Family System and other is Nuclear Family System. The nuclear family system is one in which a married couple lives with their children. Whereas a joint family system is an extended family system and include more family members like parents and siblings of husband².

In joint families more than one generation live together. They may include children living with parents and grandparents.³ The joint family reflects the existence of a social set up.

Kapadia (1966) has defined a joint family where the people live in one house and they eat together and they worship together¹.

In nuclear families the concept of 'me & my' is pronounced and it needs to be focused. This change in emotional ethics has influenced the psychosocial side of an individual. One may feel himself alienated. The concept of community is being compromised. In the modern civilization one thinks about himself and this has reduced the tolerance in young generation¹.

Received on 11-10-2018

Accepted on 10-01-2019

The question arises what is need of opting a particular family system. Since long time people lived jointly for various reasons like sharing of work, security and enjoying the socialization².

Erich Fromm, humanistic psychologist postulated that humans are the freaks of the universe. They have capabilities like self-awareness, imagination and reason. The quality of reason may be a curse or may be a blessing. It makes the people to feel lonely and isolated but it also makes the person to reunite the world. It has been observed that as the people become more independent economically and politically they feel themselves more segregated. It is difficult to get freedom but when we get it we want to escape. Both at individual level or social level the freedom has resulted in anxiety and feeling of loneliness⁸.

The joint family system suggests better prospects for sustainability of life and natural resources. The benefits accruing from this system support its existence and appears to be suitable for future families. Highly populated countries like India face scarcity of land and space. The individuals and families face worries and tensions because of financial burden. In joint family if one member goes out of job then other family members help and provide financial assistance. Youngsters are better guided by grandparents. They also help to resolve family issues particularly husband and wife conflicts and thereby breakage of family is prevented. It is important that each members in a joint family must feel that he has a worth in the family although might be having some weaknesses and limitations.

Sometime un-necessary demands from elders may produce ill feelings in youngsters and at time elders feel disappointed. Similarly comparison between siblings should also be avoided³.

In study in India it is found that problems of present era are the same which were seen in West in 1960s. Major one is marital conflicts & dissolutions, parent-child conflicts and violence incidents. Such issues have significant impact on wellbeing and future of families. A minor change in family pattern particularly with regard to exercise of authority and autonomy significantly influences the members' expectations about marriage and choice of marriage partner. In educated families the children are enjoying their autonomy regarding marriage, education and employment. This adoption of responsibility by young individuals has led to a situation that Dr. Gore calls it as 'choice anxiety'⁴.

The living in joint family is debatable since long time. In the recent years society has advanced a lot. The present study is planned to see the current attitudes of married ladies about the systems of living. Married females from different social strata were included in the study. While unmarried non willing to participate were excluded.

The objectives of the study were assess the changes in values of the society and the attitude of married ladies towards joint family system

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This cross-sectional study was carried out at Central Park Medical College, Lahore during a period of 8 weeks. Thirty

married ladies were included in the study belonged to various locations of city of Lahore.

The technique used was random sampling. The response from willing participants was recorded on predesigned proforma in Urdu version.

RESULTS

The study included 30 married females ranging between 22-45 years of age with mean age 32.40±7.24. The majority (53%) belonged to joint families (Table 1), maximum participants (33%) were in income group from 20001/- to 30000/- (Table 2), sixty percent were on job (Table 3), 56% were well educated (Table 4), 26% were living in joint families & the same number in nuclear families for a period up to 5 years and 40% were married within 5 years (Table 5). In 56% females the number of family members was 5-8 (Table 6). In most of the families the number of children ranged from 1-3 (Table 7). Most of the participants were of the opinion that there are some good points in joint family system like facilitation in children brought up (60%), better moral learning (66%), better children care (76%), sharing in expenses (50%) opportunity of saving (53%), given value to their opinions (66%) (Table 8). However some negative points in joint family system were also highlighted like, incidence of more conflicts and disputes (83%), interference from others (53%), more stress in joint families (66%), chances of exposure (56%), adverse effects on budget (70%), lack of independence (56%), insufficient time spending with husband (60%), 70% ranked the life better in nuclear style of living (Table 9). The cross table analysis showed that in less educated group there is high incidence of conflicts and disputes in the joint families (Table 10), the incidence of conflicts are more in families with 1-3 children (Table 11), with in first 5 years of marriage (Table 12), in working class (Table 13) & in income group below 30000/- (Table 14).

Statistical analysis: The statistical analysis was done in SPSS. The results of cross table analysis are statistically significant at 5% level of significance.

Table 1: Frequency distribution with reference to living in joint family.

Status of living in joint family	Cases	%age
Living in joint family	16	53.30
Not living in joint family	14	46.70
Total	30	100.00

Table 2: Frequency distribution with reference to income.

Income in rupees per month	Cases	%age
0-10000	0	0.00
10001-20000	3	10.00
20001-30000	10	33.30
30001-40000	4	13.30
40001-50000	3	10.00
50001-60000	5	16.70
60001-70000	1	3.30
70001-80000	1	3.30
80001-90000	0	0.00
90001-10000	3	10.00
Total	30	100.00

Table 3: Frequency distribution with reference to job.

Job status	Cases	%age
Working class	18	60.00
Non working	12	40.00

Table 4: Frequency distribution with reference to education.

Education	No. of cases	Percentage
Matriculation	7	23.30
Intermediate	3	10.00
Graduation	3	10.00
Masters	16	53.30
Post-graduation	1	3.30

Table 5: Frequency distribution with reference duration of living in joint family or nuclear family & duration of marriage

Duration of living	Joint family	Nuclear Family	Duration of marriage.
0-5	8(26.70%)	7(26.70%)	12(40%)
6-10	3(10%)	3(10%)	5(16.70%)
11-15	2(6.70%)	2(6.70%)	6(20%)
16-20	3(10%)	2(10%)	7(23.30%)

Table 8: Frequency distribution of various positive influencing factors.

Response	Convenience in children brought up in joint family	Moral learning in joint family	Better child care in nuclear family	Contribution in expenses in joint family	Savings in joint family	value of opinion in joint family
	Cases (%age)	Cases (%age)	Cases (%age)	Cases (%age)	Cases (%age)	Cases (%age)
Yes	18(60)	20(66.7)	23(76.7)	15(50)	16(53.3)	20(66.7)
No	12(40)	10(32.3)	7(23.3)	15(50)	14(46.7)	10(32.3)
Total	30(100)	30(100)	30(100)	30(100)	30(100)	30(100)

Table 9: Frequency distribution of various negative influencing factors

Response	Adverse effect on budget in joint family	Opportunity of independence in joint family	mutual time spending with husband in joint family	Incidences of rifts in joint family	Interference from others in joint family	Stress incidence in joint family	Chances of exposure in joint family	Better life in nuclear family
	Cases (%age)	Cases (%age)	Cases (%age)	Cases (%age)	Cases (%age)	Cases (%age)	Cases (%age)	Cases (%age)
Yes	21(70.0)	13(43.3)	12(40)	25(83.3)	16(53.3)	20(66.7)	17(56.7)	21(70.0)
No	9(30)	17(56.7)	18(60)	5(16.7)	14(46.7)	10(33.3)	13(43.3)	9(30)
Total	30(100)	30(100)	30(100)	30(100)	30(100)	30(100)	30(100)	30(100)

Table 10: Frequency of conflicts / disputes in families with reference to their educational perspective

Various educational levels	Families with no conflicts / disputes	Families with conflicts / disputes	Total
Matriculation	1(14.30)	6(85.70)	7(100%)
Intermediate	0	3(100%)	3(100%)
Graduation	0	3(100%)	3(100%)
Masters	4(25%)	12(75%)	16(100%)
Post-graduation	0	1(100%)	1(100%)
Total	5	25	30

P<0.05

Table 11: Frequency of conflicts / disputes in families with reference to number of children

Number of children	Families with no conflicts / disputes	Families with conflicts / disputes	Total
0	0	3(100%)	3(100%)
1	2(33%)	6(67%)	8(100%)
2	1(13%)	7(87%)	8(100%)
3	1(11%)	8(89%)	9(100%)
4	0	1(100%)	1(100%)
5	1(100%)	0	1(100%)
Total	5	25	30

P<0.01

Table 6: Frequency distribution with reference number of family members.

Number of family members	Cases	%age
0-4	8	26.70
5-8	17	56.70
9-12	2	6.70
13-16	1	3.30
17-20	2	6.70
Total	30	100.00

Table 7: Frequency distribution with reference number of children.

Number of children	Cases	%age
0	3	10.00
1	8	26.70
2	8	26.70
3	9	30.00
4	1	3.30
5	1	3.30
Total	30	100.00

Table 12: Frequency of conflicts/disputes in families with reference to duration of marriage

Number of children	Families with no conflicts / disputes	Families with conflicts / disputes	Total
0-5	3(33%)	9(67%)	12(100%)
6-10	0	5(100%)	5(100%)
11-15	1(17%)	5(83%)	6(100%)
16-20	1(14%)	6(86%)	7(100%)
Total	5	25	30

p<0.05

Table 13: Frequency of conflicts / disputes in families with reference to job.

Job status	Families with no conflicts / disputes	Families with conflicts / disputes	Total
Working class	1(6%)	17(94%)	18(100%)
Non working	4(33%)	8(67%)	12(100%)
Total	5	25	30

p<0.01

Table 14: Frequency of conflicts / disputes in families with reference to income

Various income groups	Families with no conflicts / disputes	Families with conflicts / disputes	Total
0-10000	0	0	0
10001-20000	0	3(100%)	3(100%)
20001-30000	2(20%)	8(80%)	10(100%)
30001-40000	2(50%)	2(50%)	4(100%)
40001-50000	0	3(100%)	3(100%)
50001-60000	1(20%)	4(80%)	5(100%)
60001-70000	0	1(100%)	1(100%)
70001-80000	0	1(100%)	1(100%)
80001-90000	0	0	0
90001-10000	0	3(100%)	3(100%)
Total	5	25	30

P<0.01

DISCUSSION

The study included 30 married females ranging between 22-45 years of age with mean age 32.40±7.24. In our study 53% participants were from joint family system and 47% were living as nuclear families. However 70% commented better life in nuclear living. The study by Shah in Indian Gujrat revealed that 39.5% were in favour of joint family system, 44.5% approved the system but with some modifications and 16 % totally disapproved the joint family system⁵.

In another study conducted by Prasher in a medical college of India 58 percent females declined the joint family living & only 42% preferred it⁴.

The questionnaire in our study was designed to evaluate different aspects of joint & nuclear family. These include duration since marriage, duration since living in joint family or nuclear family, number of family members, number of children, facilitations of joint family in the form of convenience in children brought up, moral learning, child care, existence of conflicts / disputes, interference from others, stress, contribution in home budget, value of opinions in family matters, availability of value time for a couple & perception about nuclear family system.

The demographic findings revealed that majority of participants in this study were from joint families, from working class, highly qualified, in moderate income range, married within 5 years, having 5-8 family members and 1-3 children.

Prasher has concluded on the basis of his study that supporting factors for joint family are mutual help in difficulties and necessities (40.5%), mutual love, cooperation, better division of labor and better care of children (25.3%) mutual love and cooperation (22.8%), and

better economic progress (11.4%)⁴. In our study sixty percent commented that joint family living facilitate in children brought up, sixty six percent said that moral learning is better in joint family living. Seventy six percent admitted that there is better children care in joint families. Fifty % admitted that family members contribute in expenses in joint families, 53% said that there is opportunity of saving in joint family system. Sixty six percent consider that they are given value to their opinions in joint family living.

The reasons for non-preference for joint family were due to incidence of conflicts among family member (56.4%), negligence towards children (25.6%), lack of freedom (18%).⁴ The Shah in his study considered various factors which made the system debatable, "quarrels between members of the family arising out of differences in education, occupation, earning capacity, interests, temperament, ideas, opinions, outlook and ways of living".⁵ In our study 83% commented that there are more rifts and disputes in joint families, 53% said that there is interference from others in joint families, 66% pointed more stress in joint families, 55% revealed that there are chances of exposure in joint families, 70% said adverse effects on budget, 56% said there is lack of independence in joint families, 60% opined that they don't get sufficient time spending with husband. The incidence of disputes and rifts was highest in families with 3 children (Table 11), during first 5 years of marriage (Table 12), in working class (Table 13) & in income group below 30000/- (Table 14).

Considering the joint family issues in educational perspective, in our study majority of the females were well educated (56% masters & above). The incidences of dispute are relatively less as compared to those with low

levels of education in which such incidences are very frequent (Table 10).

The influence of education on joint family system is significant. It changes beliefs, values, ideologies and attitude. It equally affects both genders. This has led to thinking against continuation of joint family system. Desai and Ross is of the opinion that firstly, education has inculcated the importance individualism and which has brought in their minds a concept of family system opposite to joint family & secondly it has given them a thought to find a job which best suits to their qualification and for this purpose they became ready to leave their native place. So they pursued new style of living and which is against concept of joint family system⁷. The study of Prasher conducted at a medical college is also in accord with this approach.

In our study sixty percent ladies were on job. The increased level of education and hence the more opportunities of jobs has raised the status of women. As they earn their living & consequently they feel themselves independent⁷.

In joint family system a working lady find it difficult to meet household responsibilities along with retaining a job. She feels further discouragement if she has to spend her income on her in-laws. The parents of husband expect more contribution in family expense as they think both husband and wife are earning. This leads to a setback to their idea of saving. Practically in joint family system females fail to save, rather get anxiety and tension and reduction in life expectancy¹¹.

The psychological state does affect the family environment. The married ladies suffering from anxiety ultimately go the depression. This is prevailing throughout the world and same is with those living in Pakistan particularly in Sindh region. The depression also affects the behaviour of such ladies and ultimately of the society. Depression is considered as fourth largest illness in the world. The male to female ratio is 2:1⁶. In our study 67% responded that they face stress in joint family.

In joint family the social values also get strengthened. According to Islamic dictates elders should be given respect and care. The grandparents have very important role in promotion of moral learning in the youngsters. They also share in caring of children when working class parents are away from home. This also minimizes risk of child molesting by the servants and exploitation of parents by the servants. In our study sixty percent commented that joint family living facilitate in children brought up & sixty six percent said that moral learning is better in joint family living, Seventy six percent admitted that there is better children care in joint families. Fifty percent admitted that there is sharing in expenses by family members in joint families. This system provides support to siblings with meager source of income. In addition a handicapped member in the family is also supported by other family members.

A study conducted by Bahadur and Dhawan comments that in joint family system the children adapt same social values as their parents have. The values are internalized in a child on the basis of childhood parent-child interaction. This contributes in development of personality.

The base of child's skills, attitudes, capabilities and interests rest with his family brought up¹.

From our point of view a limiting factor in joint family is possibility of exposure amongst various delicate relations, like cousins, brother & sister-in-law, spouses of siblings. Many also felt that the system thwarts the development of the individuality of its younger members because of assertion of authority by parents and presence of restrictions on movement and behavior⁹.

The joint family system has grave impact on our socio-economic development. It is frequently seen that issues arise while distributing the responsibilities for different household tasks, financial contribution and division of resources among family members. In rich class the joint family system is successful but the children are extremely pampered in these families and economically these children are unfit in Pakistan. The joint family system in middle class is failed and same is with lower income class as it is bringing more poverty due its weaknesses. The nuclear system is in accord with Islamic concepts. The wife is responsible to look after husband and children first and then parents if they are disable. It is unfair with a newly married girl to put burden of whole family on her and expecting from her to look after the siblings of husband⁹.

Living in a joint family was once considered useful for co-existence but now its role is questionable on the grounds of adjustments and compromises. The couples after marriage desire to live independently away from in-laws. They think that living in joint family is an intrusion into their conjugal space¹⁰.

As commented by Prasher the cumulative attitude of larger number of participants was in favour of joint family⁴. In another study of author on the same topic 20 years back majority showed a positive attitude towards joint family system.

In present study a good number of participants have appreciated the positive aspects of joint family but 70% declared that nuclear style of living is better.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The majority has liked nuclear type of living. However many people has appreciated the positive aspects of joint family system like supporting attitude among the family members. Therefore society still finds a place for joint family system. It has come out that education plays a role in minimizing the negative factors of the joint family system. It is recommended that public awareness should be enhanced to look after the rights of others particularly of women in Islamic and legal perspective. A psycho-social support should be given to working women as they are playing dual role of family management and society development. The family counseling technique can be of help to encourage and promote the strong institution of joint family.

REFERENCES

1. Bahadur A, Dhawan N. Social value of parents and children in joint family and nuclear families. *Jr of Ind Acad of App Psych* 2008;34:74-80.
2. Kashif A. Joint vs. nuclear family system. *Asiana Wedding* 2012;2(6). Available at ayashaheaven.blogspot.com/2013/07/family-system-joint-vs-nuclear, retrieved on 31.08.2018.

3. Joshi A. Essay on joint families vs. nuclear families. Available at <https://www.studymode.com/essays/Essay-On-Joint-Family-Vs-Nuclear-1774153.html>, retrieved on 31.08.2018.
4. Prasher CL, Bhardwaj AK, Raina SK, Chander V, Badhola BP, Sood A. Attitude towards joint family system among undergraduate students of a Medical College in rural area. *National Jr of Comm Med* 2011;2(3):465-69.
5. Shah BV. Joint Family System An Opinion Survey of Gujarati Students. *The Economic Weekly* 1960;12(52):1860-70 Available at www.epw.in/system/files/pdf/1960_12/52/joint_family_system.pdf retrieved on 31.08.2018.
6. Haider K, Nighat A. Evaluation of the joint family system as a major cause of depression among married women of Sindh, *interdisciplinary journal of contemporary research in business* 2013; 4(10):113-132 available at <https://journal-archives28.webs.com/113-132.pdf> retrieved on 31.08.2018.
7. Mondal P, 12 Causes of Disintegration of Joint Family System in India, available at <http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/family/12-causes-of-disintegration-of-joint-family-system-in-india-1541-words/6129> retrieved on 31.08.2018.
8. Fromm E. *Humanistic psychoanalysis*. In: *Escape from freedom*, 1941; author, Fromm E; UK, Publisher Frerar & Rinehart; pp178-200.
9. Hanif S. Influence of joint family system on socio-economic development of Pakistan, 2010; available at *Influence of joint family system on socio-economic development of Pakistan*, 2010 retrieved on 31.08.2018.
10. Mitra I. A joint family is more than living together, September 2013; available at <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/relationships/love-sex/a-joint-family-is-more-than-living-together/articleshow/12673451.cms> retrieved on 31.08.2018.
11. Amir N. The plight of working mothers in Pakistan: advantages and disadvantages of a joint family system, available at http://www.spdc.org.pk/Publication_detail.aspx?sysID=101 retrieved on 31.08.2018