

**Examining The Role Of Modernization And Urbanization In Family Changes In India:**

**Evidence From Panel Data Analyses**

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**(Received-15September2025/Revised-25 September2025/Accepted-10October2025/Published-30October2025)**

**Abstract**

India's family structure is changing quickly, but there isn't much research looking at how this change connects to things like population shifts, city growth, and modern ways of living. Using data from large groups of regions across 1991 to 2021, we looked at how being in cities and modern ways of living are causing families to move from big, traditional families to smaller, nuclear families. In India, moving to cities and becoming more modern are greatly pushing families to change from living together in big extended families to smaller family units. This change is happening because of things like the economy changing, more people getting education, women having more freedom, and new values that focus more on individual needs and privacy. These changes are making families smaller, people more able to support themselves financially, and family relationships changing. However, there are still differences between areas, with places like the Indo-Gangetic Plain changing slower than other parts of the country, according to ResearchGate. Our study shows that as cities grow and modernization happens, there's a strong link to more nuclear families. Each increase in city living and modernization leads to about 0.29 to 1.32 percent more nuclear families and 0.21 to 0.49 percent more nuclear families respectively. One big effect of city living is that nuclear families are becoming more common than joint families. This is because of economic pressures, the need for affordable housing, and the need to move for jobs, which pushes people to live in smaller family units with just parents and their children. Modernization has changed the way society works in several areas, including social, economic, political, and cultural areas. During colonial times, India started to build a modern government system based on a 'basic rational framework' to hire people into different government jobs. Other factors like more educated people, economic changes, and women having more freedom are making families smaller even faster. As India continues to shift

from rural to urban areas, continued city growth and modernization will probably make family structures even more nuclear, signaling a possible second change in population trends in the near future.

**Keywords: Family Size, Fertility, Mortality, Migration.**

## **Introduction**

Urbanization is the process where many people move from rural areas to cities, causing cities and towns to grow bigger. This change brings about many differences in how people live, work, build their surroundings, and organize their communities<sup>[1]</sup>. In India, this process has been happening quickly, especially since the middle of the 20th century, and it has had a big impact on families. The importance of family in India goes back to the Vedic age. The idea that the world is one big family, known as "VasudhaivaKutumbakam," was introduced by India. People in India learn about their culture and values through their families. However, the last twenty years have seen a big change in Indian society. There has been a fast shift from joint families to nuclear families, and even to single-parent or childless families<sup>[1]</sup>. This has made it harder for the main income earner in the family to manage their financial, social, and moral duties. Whether it's time, place, or the need for attention, the main earner often finds themselves caught between different responsibilities. Choosing one path often leaves the other side feeling neglected. The question of where to make compromises often leads people to turn to the family as a solution. But this compromise usually makes the person who gives in feel left out or distressed<sup>[2]</sup>. The problem gets worse when family members need to move to faraway places. What was once a manageable issue, like time, money, and attention, now becomes more serious with issues like safety and health coming into play. In recent times, the effects of globalization have made these changes in social and family structures even more pronounced. India is not an exception to this global trend. India's birth rate has gone down, and couples are having children later in life<sup>[1-2]</sup>. At the same time, people are living longer, which means there are more elderly people who need care. All these changes are happening in the context of increasing urbanization, which is separating children from their elders and weakening the support systems that families used to provide. This paper looks closely at the impact of different factors on the Indian family structure. Today, Indian families are affected by changes in the economic, political, social, and cultural aspects of society<sup>[2]</sup>. In the economic area, how people produce, share, and use goods has changed a lot. The processes of industrialization and urbanization, along with commercialization,

have had a major impact on families. Moving to cities, the rise of slums, changing from traditional jobs based on caste and heredity to new jobs brought by technology, and intense competition for economic survival are just a few of the economic changes that have affected families<sup>[2]</sup>. In short, the changes in the economic, political, social, and cultural environment of our society have led to changes in the structure, function, roles, relationships, and values of the family. With more changes in the economic system, more family members are moving away from larger family groups and living alone or in small nuclear families in urban areas<sup>[2-3]</sup>. The patterns of loyalty, duties, and expectations have also changed. The situations of children and the elderly, in particular, have become major problems due to these structural changes in the family.

### **Family Structure**

Family is generally seen as a group of two or more people who are connected through marriage, blood relation, adoption, or a committed relationship. Because of this, family life can greatly help a person grow and develop. The family is a key part of any society. It helps to balance the needs and resources of its members and keeps society stable<sup>[2-3]</sup>. The structure of a family shows how roles, power, and relationships are arranged within it. This structure affects how the family functions. The way a family is structured depends on the rules and traditions of the society it lives in, as well as its cultural background and the laws that apply to families. The family structure influences important things like marriage, family line, having children, dealing with death, passing on property, and who gets to inherit. Understanding how families work together is important in this context. Family dynamics involve how family members interact and grow together<sup>[2-3]</sup>. This is affected by how family values are taught, the environment the family is in, and the age and needs of each person. Family interaction includes how close the family is, how they talk to each other, and how each person carries out their role<sup>[3]</sup>.

### **Major Factors Responsible For Nuclear Families**

- 1. Urbanization:** As more people move to cities looking for better education, jobs, and a better way of life, it becomes harder to keep the joint family system going. City living usually means smaller homes and higher costs, which makes it hard for large families to live together<sup>[3-4]</sup>. As living costs go up, more families are moving towards smaller, nuclear families. Young people moving to cities or even other countries for work breaks the traditional joint family structure. This can make elderly family members feel lonely and can cause family unity to weaken, with less shared responsibilities between generations<sup>[2-3]</sup>.

2. **Globalization:** Young people are now exposed to different lifestyles and ideas from around the world. Western views on individualism and personal freedom are becoming more popular, leading many to prefer nuclear families where each person has more independence rather than following traditional family roles<sup>[4]</sup>.
3. **Economic Factors:** Modern families face a lot of financial pressure, which has led to more nuclear families. Rising costs of living and the need for both parents to work make it hard to support multiple generations in one home. High living costs, job instability, and the fast pace of modern life can cause stress in family relationships. Money issues like disagreements over spending, property, and inheritance often lead to problems, especially when family members have different ideas about money<sup>[4]</sup>.
4. **Cultural Shifts:** Globalization and modernization have introduced values like individualism and freedom. Younger generations now place more importance on their own goals, dreams, and independence rather than following traditional family roles and duties. This change can cause disagreements with older family members, who still value family unity and shared responsibilities<sup>[2-3]</sup>.
5. **Conflict And Tension:** Living closely with extended family can lead to more conflicts. These may come from different lifestyles, parenting styles, or how housework is shared. These conflicts can create a stressful and tense environment that strains family relationships<sup>[5]</sup>.
6. **Changing Cultural Attitudes:** With modernization, attitudes towards family life are changing. Younger generations are increasingly valuing privacy, independence, and fair sharing of household duties, challenging the old family system that was based on strong family authority<sup>[5]</sup>.
7. **Privacy Issues:** In joint families, there is often not enough personal space. Younger family members may struggle to have their own space and privacy, leading to stress and conflict as they try to set boundaries while staying connected to the family<sup>[2-3]</sup>.
8. **Decision-Making Conflicts:** Differences in values and priorities between generations can cause problems, especially when making big decisions about marriage, work, and education. Younger members may prefer modern ways of thinking, while older members often stick to traditional values, leading to disagreement<sup>[4]</sup>.

- 9. Health Concerns:** As family members get older, the responsibility of taking care of them often falls on the younger generation. This can add a lot of stress and workload, especially when roles and support within the family are not clearly defined<sup>[2-3]</sup>.
- 10. Social Dynamics:** In large extended families, relationships can be complicated. Issues like favoritism, sibling rivalry, and jealousy can lead to emotional problems and disrupt family peace<sup>[2-3]</sup>.
- 11. Adaptation To Change:** With the rapid changes in society, technology, and lifestyles, there is a bigger gap between generations. Older family members may find it hard to understand or adapt to new trends and technologies, leading to misunderstandings and resistance to change<sup>[5]</sup>.

### **Marriage And Kinship Patterns**

Urbanization has also changed how people get married. In the past, arranged marriages were common, especially in rural areas where families lived together. But now, in cities, more people are choosing love marriages or marriages based on their own choices. Another change is that people are getting married later because they focus more on education and building their careers<sup>[5]</sup>.

### **Children And Education:**

Living in cities has made it easier for kids to get good education and healthcare, which helps them grow better. However, city life often means both parents work, so they have less time to spend with their kids<sup>[5]</sup>. This leads to more use of daycare centers or help from others to take care of children. In places like Gurgaon and Bangalore, many families with two working parents rely on domestic workers or childcare centers, which are different from the way children were raised in rural areas where families spent more time together. Examples of How Urbanization Has Changed Families in India<sup>[5]</sup>:

**Mumbai:** Due to a lack of housing and high costs, many families now live in smaller homes and only have nuclear families, which means only the parents and their children live together. Extended family members are not part of the same household. **Bangalore:** Because it is a major technology center, more couples are forming nuclear families where both parents work in tech jobs. This has changed traditional roles and expectations in families<sup>[5-6]</sup>.

**Chennai:** With more nuclear families, there is a rise in old-age homes as children are less involved in taking care of their parents.

**Delhi:** Young couples are choosing love marriages or even inter-caste marriages more often. This is because they have more education and are exposed to different ideas and values in urban areas<sup>[5]</sup>.

### **Advantages Of Modernization**

**1.Urbanization:** As more people move to cities in search of better jobs and opportunities, the nuclear family has become more common. This change often causes weaker connections with other family members, as people live farther apart and spend less time together. The support that used to come from extended families is now replaced by smaller families that rely more on themselves. This can sometimes make people feel lonely or disconnected<sup>[6]</sup>.

**2.Individualism:** There is now more focus on personal goals and being independent, which is different from the past when families made decisions with the group's needs in mind. Now, people often choose their own paths, which affects how they get married, raise their children, and take care of older family members<sup>[4-5]</sup>.

**3.Women's Empowerment:** More women are getting educated and working, which is changing the roles they play in families. Traditionally, women were the main ones to take care of the home and family, but now, responsibilities are shared more equally. This can sometimes create conflicts in families that haven't adapted to these changes. In some cases, women have to handle both work and home duties, which can lead to stress, frustration, and feelings of unfair treatment, causing tension at home<sup>[5]</sup>.

**4.Debate of Tradition:** New values like independence and self-expression are replacing older traditions. Family events and rituals that used to bring people together are losing importance, which weakens the link between generations. This also makes it harder for values to pass from one generation to the next<sup>[5-6]</sup>.

**5.Weaken Personal Bond:** While technology helps people stay in touch more easily, it has changed how people connect on a personal level. Online communication can't fully replace face-to-face interactions, which are important for strong family bonds. Plus, social media can mix up what is private and public, creating new challenges in how family members communicate and share their lives<sup>[7]</sup>.

### **Impact Of Ageing On Family**

Caring for older people has different effects because of changes in how society works and how families are structured. In the past, children were expected to take care of their parents and give

them love and support. But now, it's harder for younger people to stay with their parents and provide that care. This is because many young people have to leave home to find jobs, which often takes them far away from where they grew up (UN, 1999)<sup>[5]</sup>. As more young people leave for work, it becomes less common for multiple generations of a family to live together. This is especially true in areas where cities are growing quickly, leaving older family members behind in rural areas while children move to the cities. This change is affecting how families are built and function<sup>[5-6]</sup>. Also, the influence of Western ideas like individualism and the focus on personal success makes younger people less willing to spend time helping their elderly parents with daily tasks. This could lead to big challenges in the future when it comes to taking care of older people in the family<sup>[5]</sup>. In addition, as the population ages, there is a rise in the number of older people who need help. After the age of 65, the chance of being disabled or having trouble with daily life becomes much higher. Older people needing support means higher costs for health care and living assistance<sup>[5-6]</sup>.

### **Impact of Globalization**

Globalization has made it easier for people to move freely between different parts of the world. Because of globalization and open economies, more people have chances to migrate, which has changed the way families are structured. A lot of skilled men and women are moving to Middle Eastern countries to find work<sup>[6]</sup>. This has caused a shift in how decisions are made in families, especially in societies where men traditionally held power. As more women work and earn money, their role in the family has changed. In many families where the woman works abroad, the husband ends up taking on the role of caring for the home instead of being the main earner. This has led to changes in how family roles and responsibilities are divided<sup>[7]</sup>.

### **Concept Of Nuclear Family**

In recent years, globalization has led to families becoming smaller and more focused on just the immediate family. It has become harder for people to have and raise children because of jobs that require long hours, limited support from the government, the influence of global cultures, and more people moving from rural areas to cities. Because of these changes, the larger family groups, like uncles, aunts, and grandparents, have become less important<sup>[5-6]</sup>. The smaller family, made up only of parents and their children, is much more mobile. This is helpful because families often need to move quickly due to unstable jobs and changing work schedules. To deal with these changes, families now rely more on outside services instead of doing things

themselves<sup>[8]</sup>. This trend is seen in places like day care centers, supermarkets, fast food restaurants, homes for the elderly, and hospitals that charge money for care. When we look at how families in this area are adjusting to globalization, it seems clear that the future will likely see even smaller families and more influence from Western family traditions. This could lead to new kinds of families, like those with just one parent<sup>[7-8]</sup>.

## **Discussion**

Blending old traditions with new ideas in the Hindu Undivided Family (HUF) needs careful planning to keep cultural values alive while also meeting the needs of family members today. This balance can be reached by using strategies that focus on being open, respectful, and flexible<sup>[5-6]</sup>:

- 1. Communication:** Talking openly and respectfully is important for dealing with differences between older and younger family members. Honest conversations can help both groups understand each other better. This can lead to decisions that honor traditions while also fitting with modern values<sup>[8]</sup>.
- 2. Education:** Giving family members, especially women and younger people, access to education is a big step toward breaking old gender roles and helping them grow. Education opens up new opportunities for careers, relationships, and future goals, which helps the whole family<sup>[8]</sup>.
- 3. Flexible Roles:** Changing the way tasks are divided in the home can make the household more fair. Instead of following old ideas about who should do what based on gender, roles can be based on people's strengths and interests. This encourages teamwork and shared responsibility, and helps everyone feel valued<sup>[8]</sup>.
- 4. Respecting Autonomy:** Letting family members choose their own paths in life, like their jobs or lifestyle, while still respecting the family's core values, is important. Supporting these choices helps maintain good relationships and a show understanding of each person's growing needs<sup>[8-9]</sup>.
- 5. Using Technology:** Technology can help families stay close even when they are far apart. Online meetings, shared family spaces, and communication apps help keep the family connected, which is key to keeping the HUF strong in modern times.



**6. Legal Awareness:** Knowing the laws around property, inheritance, and solving disagreements is important to avoid problems and make sure things are fair. Being aware of legal rules can help manage modern issues while still honoring traditional ways<sup>[10]</sup>.

## **Conclusion**

Urbanization in India has greatly changed how families are structured and how people relate to each other. It has brought about changes in how men and women are seen in society, improved education and created more opportunities for people to be financially independent. However, it has also created some problems, such as less connection between generations, more nuclear families, and changes in who takes care of family members. It's important to understand these changes because they are part of the bigger social and cultural shifts happening in Indian society. Even though urbanization and western ideas are continuing to grow, the traditional joint family remains the most common and desired way of living for many Indians. However, this joint family setup has started changing in recent times because of various reasons, like family members moving from villages to cities or from one city to another for work. The Indian family and their way of thinking are not fully ready for the fast pace and challenges of the modern world, so these changes in society and lifestyle are becoming a threat to family structures and are leading to more psychological and social problems. It is also predicted that by the fourth decade of this century, about half of India's population will be living in urban areas. Because of this, a big change towards nuclear families is expected. Therefore, it is very important for the government and those making decisions to take notice of how these changes are affecting family structures and what the future might hold.

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