

ATTITUDE OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINEES TOWARDS JOINT FAMILY IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

The paper attempted to assess the attitude of pre service teacher trainees towards joint family and to explore the change (if any); therein. The study involves exploratory as well as descriptive orientation. This study was conducted on one hundred and eighteen graduates and post graduates drawn from the universe comprising of students enrolled in Colleges of Education in Distt. Kangra under H.P University, Shimla during the academic session 2010-11. The data for this study was gathered by conducting interviews with the pupil teachers with the help of interview schedule which was specifically developed for this purpose. The entire population considered for study belongs to Hindu community. On the basis of analysis of information about the social background characteristics of the sampled respondents it was found that there were 39.83 per cent males and 60.17 percent females; 83.89 per cent high caste Hindus and 16.11 per cent low caste Hindus; 44.92 per cent born in villages, 28.8 per cent in towns and 26.27 per cent born in cities; 35.59 per cent brought up in villages, 33.05 percent in town and 31.36 per cent brought in cities; 57.63 per cent residing in urban areas and 42.37 dwelling in rural area; 52.54 per cent brought up in nuclear families and 47.46 per cent in joint families; 55.93 per cent from nuclear households and 44.07 per cent from joint; and the average age was about 22 years. This showed that there was preponderance of females over the males and majority hailed from nuclear families. Such a distribution of back ground characteristics of the sample had helped to make some generalization about the attitudes of the educated Hindu youths in Himachal Pradesh.

Keywords: Attitude, Joint Family, Pre-service Teacher Trainees and Youths.

INTRODUCTION:

The traditional pattern of living in India was that of a joint family whose members were bound together by ties of common ancestry, and common property and having a common kitchen. Sense of solidarity, mutual cooperation, love and understanding, toleration, respect form aged

and kinship among the members signify the attributes of the joint family. It works on the Principle of “one for all and all for one”. It fosters discipline and ensures protection shelter and care for weaker sex, particularly, widows; provides support for the old, aged, infirm and unemployed members. The young wife and mother too learnt a great deal from the wisdom and experience of other older women in the family who normally took the charge of food, clothing etc. Marriage partners were selected by family elders without consultation of mates. The world of women was confined within the boundary of kitchen either in her family of orientation or in her in-laws family. Being tradition bound the family protocol left little room for a gifted individual to take any leadership. As an individual effort would not bring any personal gain there was not enough incentive for hard work. Nevertheless, in the past when agriculture was the exclusive source of livelihood, such traditional joint family was common and most preferred one.

In India at the present time, multidirectional forces such as industrialization, urbanization and socio-educational advancement are affecting various aspects of the traditional pattern of living. The roots of these forces of change extend into the appearance of British rule in India which initiated changes in all spheres of Indian society. Today, with the advent of diversified occupations and a monetized economy, the members in the joint family tend to seek their fortune outside. The principle of “One for all and all for one” seem to be waning. The cultural elements such as dominance, subordination and obedience have diluted to a greater extent and are being replaced by equalitarianism and individualism. This change from collective-orientation to self-orientation has created problems of adjustment among members in the joint family. Allocation of work among the family members creates strains. Unlike the traditional joint family, the contemporary family in the village is becoming mainly a consuming unit. Nowadays, an individual spends his adolescence outside the family and imbibe new values which are thought to be determinate to traditional joint family living.

Most of the studies undertaken so far seem to have been obsessed with a single question, “Is the joint family in India breaking down or losing its existence (importance) and undergoing a process of nuclearisation? At least some of them seem to have accepted the assumption that a general tendency exists towards the breakdown of the joint family (Mains, O’Malley,

Mandelbaum, Ross, Kapadia, etc.) and some others seems to have rejected this assumption by putting forward the argument that the joint families are still intact i.e this institution is as strong today as it was ever (Mukharj, Mancher, Kolenda, etc.). However those who feel it is disintegrating have outnumbered those who do not confirm to this view. The diversity of observations has its origin in the varied definitions adopted by sociologists and the diverse nature of the social groups in different parts of the country. The joint family in Himachal Pradesh is the basic institution; but the catastrophe is that despite it being an important institution, this region (Himachal Pradesh) has remained unexplored hitherto. Family studies at regional level are essential to gather mass of information from two points (1) to refresh the finding and (2) to have stock of fresh knowledge on this aspect. This study was conducted on an important section of the society i.e younger generation, the section which is supposed to be the parents of tomorrow. Imbibitions of new values and norms by individuals may lead to change in their attitudes and which in turn leads to changes in the institution. Kapadia (1955) pointed out that any analysis of institutional change must examine its two phases: attitudinal change, and ideological change. The west has brought about remarkable attitudinal change in respect of some of our social and cultural institutions. As a result of it and under the impact of various other forces the structural change is also evident in some respects. If our institutions have still survived it is due to the fact that there is no appreciable ideological change in the Hindu community. The reason is that it has a- past which is long and intellectualized and therefore very strong. However, today ideological change is also being noticed in the Hindu community in Indian society.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To assess the socio-economic background of teacher trainees;
- To assess the attitudes of teacher trainees towards joint family;
- To understand change in the attitudes of teacher trainees towards joint family;
- To study relationship between attitudes and sociological factors of respondents;
- To attempt to explain the reasons for variations, if any, in attitudes of the graduates.

UNIVERSE OF STUDY:

This study has been carried out in the state of Himachal Pradesh. The information on the institution of joint family should be sought from large number of people from all walks of life, but in this study only the student population of colleges of education in District Kangra under University has been considered. The students of these colleges hail from the different parts of the state. Therefore, it has been assumed that this population represents all the communities and cultures of the state. The student population of the colleges of education in dist. Kangra, constitutes universe of the study.

STUDY SAMPLE:

The College of Education in district Kangra has on its rolls the students numbering over six hundred and fifty belonging to different streams viz Medical, Non-Medical and Arts courses. These students are further distributed into various teaching subject groups such as Languages, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, Mathematics and Hindi. It was decided to restrict the sample to the students colleges of Education in district Kangra who have sought admission in during the academic session 2010-2011. Stratified random sampling technique has been adopted to draw the study samples.

The selection of sampled respondents has been done on random basis from each college. In this way one hundred and eighteen students from different colleges of education been included in the study. Including fresh graduates and post graduates in the study sample has been done with a point in mind that they have recently joined these colleges and before this they have been in long association with their families; and this would help us to include the impact of university environment (which is more liberal than under graduate institutions) on their attitudes and would provide us first hand information of their attitudes towards joint family.

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES OF DATA COLLECTION:

For collecting information on personal and sociological background of the respondents included

in the study an interview schedule has been developed. It has two parts: the first part contains questions on the personal and sociological background of the subjects, and second part contains questions on various aspects of the family such as reference for particular type of family living, marriage, divorce, kinship, identity, obligation, socialization, residence and household maintenance etc. Attitudes towards these elements of family culture constitute area of concern for research in family. An attitudinal inventory has also been developed on the lines contained in the Likert Method of Scaling. For this purpose a pool of 36 statements on various aspects of joint family has been prepared, each statement has been assigned three response categories (i) "Strongly agree", (ii) "Disagree", (iii) "No Definite opinion". The responses have been given weights 1, 2, 3, for positive statements and 3, 2, 1 for negative others statement.

To explore the possibility of finding out whether certain background characteristics in general and of a sub-group of the sample make any difference in their traditional versus non-traditional attitude, the relationship based on frequencies & percentage' was explained by controlling, separately for sex, caste, place of residence, place of brought up, type and size of family, parents education and occupation and income of the family. These background factors have significant bearing on one's preference for family types and this helped us to put forward some generalizations regarding joint family in Himachal Pradesh.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS:

The data for this study was gathered by conducting interviews with the pupil teacher with the help of interview schedule which was specifically developed for this purpose. The entire population considered for study belongs to Hindu community. On the basis of analysis of information about the social background characteristics of the sampled respondents it was found that there were 39.83 per cent males and 60.17 percent females; 83.89 per cent high caste Hindus and 16.11 per cent low caste Hindus; 44.92 per cent born in villages, 28.8 per cent in towns and 26.27 per cent born in cities; 35.59 per cent brought up in villages, 33.05 percent in town and 31.36 per cent brought in cities; 57.63 per cent residing in urban areas and 42.37 dwelling in rural area; 52.54 per cent brought up in nuclear families and 47.46 per cent in joint families;

55.93 per cent from nuclear households and 44.07 per cent from joint; and the average age was about 22 years. This showed that there was preponderance of females over the males and majority hailed from nuclear families. Such a distribution of back ground characteristics of the sample had helped us to make some generalization about the attitudes of the educated Hindu youths in Himachal Pradesh.

DO YOU THINK JOINT FAMILY IS GOOD FOR LIVING

| RESPONSES | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 79 | 66.95 |
| No | 39 | 33.05 |
| Total | 118 | 100 |

SEX AND PREFERENCE FOR JOINT FAMILY LIVING

| RESPONSE | | SEX | | TOTAL |
|----------|-------|-------|--------|-------|
| | | MALE | FEMALE | |
| Good | Freq. | 33 | 30 | 63 |
| | %age | 70.21 | 42.25 | 53.38 |
| Not Good | Freq. | 14 | 41 | 55 |
| | %age | 29.79 | 57.75 | 46.62 |
| Total | | 47 | 71 | 118 |

The test involving separate controls shows that the pattern of traditional attitude still prevails among university graduates. These findings conform to Shah's (2006) study to some extent. However, the female graduates with regard to preference for joint family, overwhelmingly do not conform to traditional attitude. Male graduates in larger number, no doubt, still hold traditional attitude toward joint family. This is perhaps due to the fact that female respondents for certain reasons do not like to live in joint family therefore tendered preferences against it. Merchant's (1935) study also reveals the similar observations. This should not lead us to think that educated males do not indicate any change in traditional attitude.

RESIDENCE AND PREFERENCE FOR JOINT FAMILY LIVING

| RESPONSE | | RESIDENCE | | TOTAL |
|----------|-------|-----------|-------|-------|
| | | RURAL | URBAN | |
| Good | Freq. | 37 | 31 | 68 |
| | %age | 74.00 | 45.59 | 57.63 |
| Not Good | Freq. | 13 | 37 | 50 |
| | %age | 26.00 | 54.41 | 42.37 |
| Total | | 50 | 68 | 118 |

Looking to the rural/urban differences we found that the rural born student hold more traditional attitude than the urban ones, in matters of liking for joint family living and similar observations have been made in terms of place of residence i.e those graduates who dwell in rural areas were more prone to joint living than those who live in urban areas. Driver (1958) and Morrison (1959) also arrived at same conclusions. This reflection may be due to the impact of education and urbanization on urban youths who do not prefer to live in joint family. Further, with regard to place of bringing up and preference for joint living it was found that irrespective of place of their upbringing a significant number prefer to live in joint family.

CASTE AND PREFERENCE FOR JOINT FAMILY LIVING

| RESPONSE | | CASTE | | TOTAL |
|----------|-------|--------|-------|-------|
| | | HIGHER | LOWER | |
| Good | Freq. | 72 | 17 | 89 |
| | %age | 72.73 | 89.47 | 75.42 |
| Not Good | Freq. | 27 | 2 | 29 |
| | %age | 27.27 | 10.53 | 24.58 |
| Total | | 99 | 19 | 118 |

Further more, caste seemed to be a more important factor in determining individuals preference for type of family, and in this regard it was observed that both higher and low caste respondents expressed their preference for joint family. This may be attributed to the persistence of influence

of caste on the members of society in Himachal Pradesh. However among higher caste subjects a significant number voted against joint family, this indicates the departure from traditional pattern and emergence of nontraditional attitude. This again is attributable to diversities of occupation to which different castes are exposed to.

Family size preferences show that the graduates living in joint family wish to continue in it while those who had tasted nuclearisation do not prefer joint families. Here on the basis of these findings our assumption that; those who live in joint family will prefer living in it likewise those who have experienced nuclear type of living will prefer continuing in it, is proved. Similarly respondents from medium families and large families prefer joint family, while a considerable number from small families do not prefer joint living. It was also found that higher the educational level of parents of respondents lesser is the preference for joint family. Preference for joint living was also noticed among certain occupational groups such as agriculture and horticulture but those whose parents were in service significantly disliked joint living. It was found that preference for joint living is much frequent among almost all income groups (high & low). However the number of those who do not prefer joint living though not large, but are considerable in each income category.

Reasons advanced by those who prefer joint family were; mutual love and cooperation help in difficulties and necessities, better economic progresses and better division of labour, etc. On the other hand reasons tendered by respondents for not preferring joint living include; lack of freedom, conflict among family members and negligence toward children.

From the previous description it is evident that majority did not like to stay in joint family from the moment they start earning, however, they would share income with family members. It was interesting to know that majority of them would stay with their parents after they got married - an indicator of prevalence of traditional attitudes towards joint living. On account of marriage, majority was in favour of self-selection of the mate with the consent of parents. These reflections are suggestive of departure from the responsibility of parents in traditional joint family. However, they in sizeable proportion prefer inter-caste marriage but deny marrying a member from lower caste. With regard to family regulations majority opined that both mother and father

should equally hold authority in the family. Similar observations have come about management of financial and domestic activities. The observations indicate development of a trend towards democratization of the family regulation in our study. Though majority of respondents opined in favour of continuousness of joint family in India yet the number of those who do not favour its persistence was also in sizeable proportion. These findings help us to prognosticate, to some extent, that the future trend increasingly may be toward increase in the number of nuclear units.

The cumulative attitude towards joint family in terms of three categories i.e. strongly favourable, favourable and not favourable, revealed the traditional attitude of majority of respondents. In other words attitude of larger number of graduates was in favour of joint family.

The analysis of the attitudes of Pre Service teacher trainees underlines only one conclusion, viz., there is a feeling for the joint family in the generation that is coming up. This prevalence of traditional attitude is clearly due to the fact that the forces of industrialization, urbanization and westernization have reached late in this region. That is why graduates with slight change still hold traditional attitude towards joint living. Our analysis also shows the emergence of value of democratization in the institution.

More investigations on this line are needed to offer very useful information for assessing the strength of sentiments in favour of or against the joint family among men and women who have to perpetuate or break it. More extensive and intensive investigations in respect of the attitudinal and structural changes (in this particular region) alone can help to prognosticate the process and direction of the change and the future of the joint family in Himachal Pradesh.

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