SOCIAL CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT: CONNECTING MODERNIZATION AND FAMILY INSTITUTION ON QUALITATIVE GROUNDS

Imran 1, Intikhab Alam 2, Mamoon Khan Khattak 3, Muhammad Jawad 4, Muhammad Aurangzeb Khan 5

1 Lector of Sociology, Department of Social and Gender Studies, University of Swat, Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan; 2 Lector of Sociology, Department of Rural Sociology, The University of Agriculture Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan; 3 Associate Professor of Social Work, Department of Social Work and Sociology, Kohat University of Science and Technology, Kohat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan; 4 Assistant Professor of Social Work, Department of Social Work, Women University Swabi, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan.

Email: 1 sociologistimran1@gmail.com / imran_sociologist@uswat.edu.pk, 2 imran_sociologist@uswat.edu.pk, 3 mamoonkk@gmail.com, 4 mjawadukhel@aup.edu.pk, 5 aurangzeb78@gmail.com

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: The qualitative study has been designed with the primary objective to find the impact of and link between modernization and the changing facets of the family institution. The study also focused on exploring the various dimensions of modernization responsible for bringing change in the family institution.

Methodology: The data was collected from the different nature of potential participants from all seven tehsils of district Swat, Pakistan. In-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussion (FDG) were incorporated as research instruments, whereas an interview guide was used under IDIs and FGDs. The collected data were processed under the frame of qualitative research approach wherein after transcribing and coding of the data themes was identified.

Main Findings: The thematic analysis of family structure, patriarchy, decision making in the family, and ways of communication exposed that due to modernization, the family institution is under continuous change.

Applications of this study: The research results can be applied to such studies that focus on changes in family institutions, communities with similar socio-cultural characteristics.

Novelty/Originality of this study: The unique feature of this study is that such kinds of topics have been very rarely investigated in the context of Pakistani society and especially in Pakhtun culture.

Keywords: Communication, Decision Making, Family Institution, Modernization, Patriarchy, Structure.

INTRODUCTION

During the latter half of the twentieth century, nearly all Asian countries underwent their own “modernization,” in which dynamic socio-political and economic changes took place at varying rates and levels. This modernization included urbanization, industrialization, family nuclearization, which resulted in the collapse of the traditional family system, and "westernization," which resulted in the adoption of Western philosophy of value orientation like liberalism, democracy, individualism, issues of freedom of choice, and issues of equal rights between men and women. The most critical and significant changes associated with Korean transformation processes are improvements in the family structure, functions, and responsibilities, as they have immediate and long-term consequences for people's life and mental health (Hong, 2006).

In India, families undergo profound changes such as rising rates of divorce and separation, domestic violence, inter-generational conflicts, drug abuse, social problems, juvenile delinquency, etc. These shifts reflect the family institution’s inability to cope with today's stresses (Sonawat, 2001). The concept ‘alternate family pattern’ implies family dynamics arising from personal circumstances outside one's control (partner's death, infertility) or other social factors such as male migration and female job participation. In these situations, people are forced to adapt to their environment’s family patterns. Therefore, such families are not mere experiments with the lifestyle but come from certain circumstances (Bharat, 1994). Although agriculture is the main occupation in rural India, there are not many large landholdings. Modern education and other related factors make maintaining joint families hard (Mullatti, 1995).

However, the rapidly evolving social and cultural conditions induced by modernization have adversely influenced what and how traditions are passed on to the children over the years (Zani, 1999). Its cultures, beliefs, habits, and patterns often change with the changing society. The changes have been positive and cynical and, in particular, the principles that continue to evolve following the character of a changing society marked by increased moral decadence that is now being seen in disturbing proportions and more anxiety (George & Üvanga, 2014). Cultural values are shifting, as seen in the role of fathers who are not now the sole winners of bread, a position they once held. On the other hand, and unlike in the past, where women were rarely found in paid employment, women today prefer to work due to their creative development, economic and social characteristics (Urszula, 2011). Contemporary trends indicate that women are about 40 percent of breadwinners, a fact brought about by modernization (Filipovic, 2013).
Morals and ethics were given importance in family values (Walter, 2005). The agents of modernization and globalization have changed the family system dramatically. In modern times, people are using technologies, which have contributed to shifts in the social set-up. The family members are now more readily connected to their relatives and friends, and now it is easy for them to communicate with the people living in other parts of the globe. Modernization not only has adverse effects on the structure of the family as well as some optimistic indicators. Approximately 47 percent disclosed that the effect of modernization on family size, roles, and the breathing pattern is evident. The family relationship with other relatives has become fragile with modernity, and people who seemed to visit friends and family more often now occasionally visit their relatives. With modern tools and methods, family relationships have become limited in terms of visits paid to each other. Now only meetings could be seen in demise times as it is the religious and social responsibility to visit the deceased family. Utilizing modern equipment such as mobile phones, internet facilities have restricted the links to a phone call or text messages from WhatsApp. Social theorists and other scholars are surprised to see the progress of a society in which people do not have formal work but are occupied and have little time to visit their kith or kin (Bhat, 2019).

Exploring the impacts of modernization over the family institution has been focused on this research study. The process of modernizing family institutions in Pakistani society has been witnesses with the induction of the exogenous cultural traits which deteriorating the very basic structure and functions of the joint family system in Pakhtun society. To probe the multifarious aspects of the impact of modernization on the family institution, which has been left by the researchers unnoticed so far, was the motivation behind conducting this research focusing on Pakhtun society in Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, as the universe of the study.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

Owing to the effects of modernization and globalization, the family structure has undergone a significant change, and the original family structure has changed. The nuclear family is the trend and took the place of the joint family structure. In the past, there has had a substantial prevalence of the joint family system. Nevertheless, the nuclear family system is being practised on a grander scale in the younger generation. It also came into the spotlight during research that most families were large in the past, but the family size has changed rapidly in the present time (Kumar, 2011).

There is a continuous layer of change in the family system, like many other social institutions, due to the adoption of living standards. Some life vents like migration, loss of a partner, the birth of a new child, and divorce have affected a given family, and those are called “troubles” by Charles Wright Mills. A family is a group of persons tied by blood, marriage, or a single household. They interact with each other in their respective social positions, typically those of siblings, parents, spouses, and children. It is the utmost essential and fundamental unit of society. The nature of change in the family system is not sudden or abrupt; instead, it gradually occurs. Joint and extended families were the prominent features of the traditional societies, which are now transforming into a nuclear family system in a gradual manner (Francis, 1991).

Traditional societies characterized by joint and extended family systems are now changing into nuclear family systems due to modernity (Shahzad et al., 2015). Anthropologists have identified the joint, extended, and nuclear family systems. Families have adopted various beliefs, values, and norms from their ancestors through cultural transformation. Moreover, family and cultural norms are also badly suffered from industrialization, media, and communication (Ibrahim et al., 2011). Unlike social media, many African and, by extension, Agikũyũ actions held moral lessons and traditions transferred from one generation to the next with them (Ezenweke, 2016). Likewise, the Synod of Bishops mentioned that while the advantages of mass media involve more significant access to information and prospects for the exchange of knowledge, these potentialities cannot, however, conceal the threat when this type of culture is taken to the extreme (Synod of Bishops, 2012). Urbanization not only disorganizes familial relations but also brings together people of different cultural backgrounds. In this boiling pot, traditional values under the strain of emerging technology and new modes of transmitting information tend to decline (Ojukwu & Esimone, 2014). The effects of modernization have combined to create a severe risk to the Karuri family structure to inculcate moral values and beliefs, such that individualism (Kinoti, 2013).

Lia and Thornton (2015) explained that in the mid-1950s, the socialist transformation movement effectively questioned long-standing patriarchal norms in urban China. It resulted in later marriages by soul-choice, instead of arranged by parents, more equitable and romantic marital connections, and a deviation from the historical significance of family loyalty (Whyte and Xu, 2003; Whyte and Ikels 2004; Whyte and Parish 1985; Yang, 1996). These challenges justify the discourse of modernization up to a more considerable extent (Diamant and O’Brien, 2015). Ali et al. (2011) found that in Pakistani society, a woman is subordinate due to the patriarchal system, resulting in severe issues for men and women in Pakistan. Imran et al. (2010) pointed out that Pakhtun society is patriarchal, whereas gender-based discrimination exists in every walk of life. In particular, studies in transforming contexts have pointed to some of the main differences in patriarchal family and kinship systems. As they have seen, each family structure has distinct values that govern inheritance and succession, marital activities, and work for organization. These various rules and practices set the structural constraints within which women plan and exercise agency (Kabeer, 2007). The family is an institution that has traditionally been a patriarchal hegemony and represented males' social influence and dominance over females. In its broader context, the patriarchy implies "the representation and perpetuation of male superiority over children and women.
in the home, and the extension of male supremacy over women in society at large” (Lerner, 2006). Patriarchy, or the father/husband rule, may have been the "great loser of the twentieth century (Thorborn, 2014), but constitutional equality between men and women is still to be gained everywhere (UN Women, 2019).

One of the ways to recall the past is communication. It also helps us plan for the future and think about the present and interact efficiently with each other and be a useful member of society (Emanuel, 2007). The computer led to technological advancement which limited the time people spent with their families (Mesch, 2006). Besides, the internet is a speedy source of interaction with close friends and family members (DiMaggio et al., 2001). On the other hand, Aarsand (2007) viewed digital technologies as helpful in interacting with family members. These technologies may be used for meeting and contact with different generations and doing something collectively. New ICTs (information and communications technologies) such as cell phone apps, free internet-based calls, and messaging apps, and also social media platforms play a vital role in maintaining relationships between migrant mothers and children as well as another left behind family members (Uy-Tioco, 2007; Parreñas 2005; Madianou and Miller, 2011). ICTs have significantly enhanced 'transnational mothering' activities among economic migrants, mainly supporting home worked children and offering emotional assistance (Uy-Tioco, 2007).

The new Western family is expected to represent the opposites – individualism, stable and egalitarian marriage, independent living, self-reliance, women's high status, and regulated fertility (Thornton 2001; Thornton and Philipov, 2009). Brown (1994) outlined that communication is vital in terms of contributing to achieving family goals. Meaningful interactions among families are associated with constant and effective communication. Effective communication is helpful in building self-confidence, trust, and unity among the family members. Bodomo et al. (2010) stated that those children who are raised in urban areas prefer to learn English as their first language due to their perception regarding the status of English being an elitist.

The phenomenon of modernization is not solely confined to a single aspect of human life; instead, it impacts various dimensions of human society (Imran et al., 2020). Modernization has dramatically affected people's lives to the extent that they remain busy on their cell phones. They seem to be busy attending calls, checking emails, or texting even at the time of eating (Cafferty, 2011). In another study, Mensah and Amissah (2016) further stated that children's connectivity to technological gadgets is alarming, and even they are unable to share their routine life stories due to their strong attachment to watching television. Malik (2003) opined in a similar way that due to the advent of cable television transmission, the routine affairs are at stake and ill-affected. Moazzama et al. (2014) revealed that cultural invasion is a crucial element in distorting the indigenous culture. People prefer to spend their time watching dramas, shows dominating the Indian cultural philosophy in specific and rest of the cultures in general. Broadcasting such content on media gives a safe passage to inculcate the Indian and Western cultures in Pakistan.

Women enjoy progress in education and jobs in societies with strong patriarchal traditions like Asian cultures but minimal change in family expectations. As a result, over time, both fertility and marriage rates are declining. Women face low social status and low levels of equality of the sexes inside the family and in family-oriented bodies, and little sources of help outside the family at the same time. Closely connected to this opinion, several experts argue that the function incompatibility between job and child-rearing accounts for reduced marriage and fertility rates (Bumpass et al., 2009; Rindfuss et al., 2004). Researchers have consistently emphasized Confucian norms and principles as the primary sources of both shifts and population trend stability and have rejected modernization mechanisms as outdated to describe changes in Chinese families over time (Chu et al., 2011; Mu and Xie, 2014; Raymo et al., 2015; Xie and Zhu, 2009; Yu and Xie, 2015; u and Xie, 2015). Modernization ideas contrasted strongly with the entrenched patriarchal and patri-linear traditions present in China and stressing value shifts. Nevertheless, given some predictable features of Chinese intergenerational ties (e.g., large ratios of co-residence), current empirical research indicates substantial changes in the essence of intergenerational transitions. Over the period, daughters have become more significant sources of economic and realistic parental assistance (Cong and Silverstein, 2008; Guo et al., 2009; Xie and Zhu, 2009), despite its persistent preference for a son.

**METHODOLOGY**

Talking of research methodology does not mean to focus on research methods only; instead, it also considers the justification behind the methods we apply in the context of our research activity. Similarly, we also justify using specific approaches while dropping the alternative one (Kothari, 2017). Methodology implies ‘... a system of methods and principles for doing something’ (Cobuild, 1987). The researchers went through several processes involved in research methodology (Isiugo-Abanibe, 2013). All seven tehsils (N=07) of Swat (a district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan) were selected for the study universe because of the research limitations and suitability of the phenomenon at hand. The information was obtained from the study participants representing different professional backgrounds, i.e., literary persons, politicians, intellectuals, lawyers, and community leaders. The widely used research instrument in qualitative research, i.e., in-depth interview (Patton, 2011; Simsek and Yildirim, 2011) was administered in the field to get comprehensive and detailed findings (Bauman and Briggs, 2003). Parallel to this, with the help of research moderator (Isiugo-Abanibe, 1995); the researchers used focus group discussion as a well-known research instrument in the field of qualitative research studies (Simsek and Yildirim, 2011; Isiugo-Abanibe and Alonge, 2002). In this study, a total of 35 in-depth interviews and 07 focus group discussions were carried out while using a non-probability sampling
procedure. The collected data was transcribed; the classification of data was made, then the analysis was narrow down for further analysis (Wester et al., 2000) under the umbrella of thematic analysis.

**FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

A detailed description of the study themes, i.e., family structure, authoritative parents/patriarchy, decision making, and means of communication with family members and relatives, are given below.

**Family Structure**

Participants of this study believed that modernization played a pivotal role in changing the normative structure of the whole society and particularly of the family system. They agreed that industrialization, media / social media, and urbanization have greatly influenced the social fabric. It disturbed the traditional structure of family from joint to extended and nuclear one.

Mr. Rafiul Mulk Khan (the study participant) opined about the structure of the family system and presented a comparative analysis of the number of children in a family in district Swat:

“The statistical data of population in Swat shows a rapid increase occurred in population. Different probable reasons could be responsible for the increase in population like early marriages, desire for a male son, etc. On average, a family structure in terms of the number of children stands between 4-8 children”.

One of the participants, Mr. Pervesh Khan, stated his views in the following manner:

“Modern education has shattered our values. Today, the family system is divided into a joint, extended, a nuclear one. There were several advantages of the joint family system. Living together in one house was much beneficial in many ways, like in a joint family, all responsible members of the family share their expenses collectively. Apart from this, in the joint family, they become united in any sort of challenging and threatening situation. Another main advantage of the joint family was that it provides division of labour which makes the tasks easier and more productive. In this scenario, every individual is held responsible for his/her own assigned tasks and responsibilities”.

Mr. Ishaq Khan (participant of the study) focused on the following views concerning separation from the joint family system:

“There is an inclination of living in nuclear families as compared to joint families due particularly after the marriage, the newly married couple wants to reside in a separate household. Apart from the education, media, urbanization, there are certain other factors that also contribute toward nuclearization families like increase in population. Population increase may be due to cultural and religious factors that compelled people to reside separately in nuclear families. This propensity is higher in urban areas”.

**Patriarchy / Authoritative Parents**

The majority of the participants of this study revealed that although patriarchy is the predominant feature of our society. Nevertheless, the wave of modernization is weakening the patriarchal influence in the family. As for power, in the family is concerned, so in Pakistani society in general and in Pashtun culture in particular, the overall matters about family life are controlled by the male members of the house, which is usually termed as patriarchy in sociological literature. Due to modernization, parents are less authoritative in comparison to the last time.

One of the study participants, Mr. Hashim Babar, opined about the patriarchy as below:

“Patriarchy remained one of the dominating features of Pashtun culture, however, over time as society is getting influenced by the waves of modernization due to education, urbanization, media which resulting in weakening the power holding by the male head of the family. In today’s world where women are exposed to the opportunities of education, employment, and access to new knowledge about their rights through media the hold of males is reducing in running and controlling the affairs of the family”.

On the other hand, Mr. Karim Bakhsh (one of the participants of the study) expressed his views regarding the patriarchy that:

“The concept of patriarchy has a central place in our Pashtun society as human life is subject to change due to modernization, so in result, it affects the patriarchal power structure of males. However, the ratio of change is different for urban and rural areas”.

**Decision Making in Family**

Decision making politics in the family is another important aspect of this study. The decision making power rests in the hands of family elders. However, there are numerous cultural hindrances with the emerging influence of modernization under the umbrella of education, urbanization, and media. The young generation is taking part in the decision-making
process in family affairs. Apart from this, the share of decision making concerning male and female children is still one-sided, where male children dominate and vice versa.

Mr. Sadiq Khan (the study participant) stated about the prevailing scenario of decision making in the families in Swat in the following words:

“unlikely today, the dependency of children on their parents was much higher. This was because of lack of education, media, and urbanization; the new generation is now feeling much learned and experienced one. This case predominantly exists in cities, but in rural areas, children still regard their parents and cannot deviate from their stance”.

The majority of participants argued that with the increasing ratio of literacy in the region and easy means of transportation and communication, children are exposed to more information and knowledge of day-to-day life and how to cope with the challenges. However, one thing missing is the folk wisdom, which cannot be obtained from books, the internet, bazaars. It can be obtained through sitting with the parents and get the benefit of their life experiences and then analyze it following their level of education and knowledge. Due to modernization, the young generation (predominantly male) enjoys more freedom and liberty, and decision-making.

**Ways of Communication**

Human life is dependent on communication, whereas communication is a vital aspect of a culture. The majority of the participants in the study area depicted that due to modernization, the communication styles within family members have gone through significant changes. Pakhtuns native language is Pasho but the recent waves of modernization where media and education put pressure on the young generation to go with the emerging trends of communication in English. They further added that instead of using indigenous cultural words, we prefer to use English words for getting more satisfaction, source of fashion, and perceived as a status symbol. Due to the International recognition and usage of the English language, we may not ignore it and getting more dependent on it day by day.

Apart from the language, the communication styles remained strict and obedience centred in Pakhtuns families. Due to strictness and reluctance, and fear; earlier communication was indirect in contrast to the present-day direct mode of interaction. Increase in the use of media and other technological gadgets; children remain busy playing games and watching movies or keep them busy in chatting on social media sites like Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter, etc. They give their parents less time to ask them about their health and other family matters and update them about their academic, co-curricular, or professional activities. Nowadays, only in far-flung areas of Swat; one can expect children and youngsters to sit together with their parents and listen to the folktales from their grandparents, especially grandmother (neya). Today’s youth is least interested in spending time with their parents and listening to their life experiences; instead, they are more inclined to use mobile phones and other media channels. Although youth are mostly under the grip of watching movies, surfing on the internet for social media, they are still more or less in regard to their parents and other family members during the communication. Wachege & Rugendo (2017) also pointed out the moral implications of modernization on youth in this regard.

Mr. Jameel Ahmad shed light on ways of communication with family and relatives as:

“At earlier, when there was no facility of letter writing, telephone people were using nai / kasab gar (the person who sends/receives messages) for communicating the message. Later on, due to modernization where education played an important role people started letters and greeting cards, and subsequently due to technological advancement and financial stability of people they started the use of the telephone for this purpose. Now the impact of modernization is so dominating where the use of greeting cards and letters remained a dream. Now people using mobiles and social media for communication with their family members and relatives”.

Subsequently, there is another aspect of communication in families that also underwent various changes. In the past, people were used to sending messages to their family members and other relatives through nai / kasab gar. Slowly and gradually, the pattern changed. People started letters for communicating their message to the other family member who was living out stationed for earning bread for their families or getting an education in another city. Subsequently, sending letters and greeting cards on Eid is almost vanished and replaced with a telephone. However, the influence of modernization dominated and introduced new communication methods, i.e., mobile phones, Skype, IMO, Facebook, etc.

Mr Amin Ullah stated that:

“Previously, the mode of communication was simple, and nai / kasab ghar was responsible for sending messages. Later on, this practice was replaced by letters, telephone, and now people use mobiles, WhatsApp, Facebook, and other social media apps for communication. As for as a language is concerned, in past people preferred to use their native language this was probably because of lack of education, media influences and the technological advancement but nowadays due to the impact of these waves of

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1 A person was responsible for delivering the message and provide services on different ceremonial occasions.
modernization parents prefer to use English and Urdu as means of communication in the family. The terms Baba / Daji are changed into Papa / Dady / Abo; Mor changed into Mama / Ami; Tror is changed into Aapi / Aunti; Trah (uncle) / Mama / Kaka is changed into uncle respectively”.

The majority of the participants revealed that due to the devastating impact of modernization, children are overburdened from getting an education, then going to a madrassa for getting religious education, then for tuition, and then completing the assigned homework at schools. After performing all these tasks, children go for their co-curricular activities (sports/games/picnics, etc.). In the end, they have very little time to sit with their parents to know about the routine affairs of the family and to learn lessons from their folk wisdom. On the other hand, parents are also under the pressure of financial challenges wherein all male members, and sometimes female members, go for their jobs. Upon their return to their homes, they are not in a position to ask their children about their curricular and co-curricular activities as the majority of the parents belong to lower-class families. Hence, they remain busy doing their labour to earn a livelihood for their families.

Owing to the impact of media, children are usually busy watching dramas, movies, or playing mobile games, or chatting/texting on phones. Parents, especially mothers, have the responsibility of rearing and caring for children. However, even they are busy watching dramas/movies or talking all the time on a mobile phone to the family members or relatives. In contrary to the above, in the past, there were no such technological gadgets and pressure on educational attainment. Life pattern was simple, and people were used to sitting in Hujras, which served the seat of learning, conflict resolution, ceremonies, discussions, communications, etc. Female was used to remaining busy in their domestic chores, and they discuss their routine affairs on Godar (the place where female go to fetch water for their houses). Parents and grandparents used to tell stories to their children, and they get learning and inspiration from them.

CONCLUSION

It has been learned that family institution is the backbone of any society. Numerous functions are attached to the family institution in Pakhtun society. This research study disclosed that family structure has viewed changes wherein the size of the families has enlarged rapidly, and people are now moving toward nuclear family systems from joint families. Further, it was also found that the mainstream power in the family remained in the hands of males; however, modernization weakened this unipolar world of men and gave space to females. In the past, decision making was the sole proprietary of males, but nowadays, females are also taking part in decision making. Besides, the customary ways of disseminating information and communication have been replaced to a greater extent with the new mode of communication with family members and relatives, respectively.

LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

The researchers examined multifaceted aspects of the dynamics of family institutions owing to modernization. However, the investigated phenomenon requires an in-depth analysis of the concomitant aspects of the family institution. Given the above, in the next phase of our research, the researchers will focus on the detailed analysis of the specific aspects of the family institution, which are altered or changing due to modernization.

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AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

Dr. Imran is the Principal and Corresponding author of this research and contributed from the conception of the idea until the research’s final stage. Dr. Intikhab Alam and Dr. Mamoon Khan Khattak added designing the research methodology, its application, primary data tools, and manuscript linguistic standardization. Dr. Muhammad Aurangzeb Khan and Dr. Muhammad Jawad contributed to data collection and manuscript formatting.

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