

The impact of globalization on family–structure: a sociological study (In reference to the 300 bengali families situating in Udham Singh nagar district of Uttarakhand).

Anchalesh Kumar

¹Department of Sociology, Government P.G. College, Bageshwar (Uttarakhand), India.

Abstract

In the present research paper, we shall discuss a study which has been carried out on the Bengali community situating in the lowlands (Tarai) of the Udham Singh Nagar district of Uttarakhand and the effect of Modernization and Globalization on their family structure on this community. Its historicity lies in the fact that the Bengali community living in the lowlands of Udham Singh Nagar has all come from East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh) and mainly from its three districts viz. Khulna, Faridpur and Jasaur.

Keywords: Impact of Globalization , Family–Structure, Population Exchange Policy

INTRODUCTION

Ever since the growth of human civilization, change has remained a consistent part of every society though there have been variations in its state and directions. At different phases of growth the processes of change have affected the various aspects of society. The processes of social change like: Modernization, Westernization, Urbanization and Sanskritization have contributed a lot in changing the Society. In the decade of 90's, the policy of Liberalization in the economic field, has resulted in frequent exchanges and a huge increase in the import-export between nations, and the development of various modes of communication has made the social exchanges between nations possible and easy. These social contacts have been defined in the form of globalization have also influenced the different aspects of Indian society. The primary unit of society and also primary source of socialization is family. The family has also been influenced by the effects of Globalization. Though it is the fact that processes like- Industrialization and Modernization have influences the traditional structure of family in the early years, but the changes have been rapid in the recent years on the Indian rural society, which has also passed through Globalization and Information Revolution along with other social changes. Globalization is a concept of the emergence of a society that is based on the global outlook. Globalization is outcome of various social and cultural interactions between the masses.

The department of Rehabilitation of Indian Government had done ample work for rehabilitating this community in the lowlands (Tarai) of Udham Singh Nagar. This rehabilitation was done under the "Population Exchange Policy" after the partition of the country and so they are considered as Non-Residents or Refugees in the Tarai. The lowland of Uttarakhand stretches through four Districts

(Dehradun, Haridwar, Udham Singh Nagar and Champawat). The present paper is in reference to the Udham Singh Nagar districts under the Gadarpur Tehsil and within it the Dineshpur town and around 36 villages surrounding it, and the Bengali families undergoing change in their family structure. For the study around 36 villages in and around the Dineshpur town and also from the adjacent residential colonies around 6 villages were chosen of through purposive sample method. Thereafter for random sampling the Lottery method was applied out of which 300 respondents (50 persons per village) were taken into consideration for analyzing the role of globalization on their family structure. All the 300 respondents (male and female) were the head of their respective families. This study was based on the explorative and descriptive research design. The main basis of the research was the primary data, which was collected through the quasi participant observation and through the interview schedule. In this research, for the collection of required facts the secondary data was also used on two major aspects of the changes in the family structure were being kept into mind while conducting the research (a) changes in family structure (b) An analysis has also been done on the change in the family functions in the present scenario. Change in the first aspect of family structure has been clarified by the following point:

Change in the Structure of Family

Due to the influence of Modernization and Globalization, there has been definite change in the family structure and the original structure of family has been undergoing changes. The nuclear Family has become the fashion and is taking the place of joint family system. In the past, the joint family system was much prevalent in this community. But in the younger generation nuclear family system is practiced at larger scale. During research it also came in limelight that in the past majority of the families were large, but in the present time the family size has been changing rapidly. The table given below shows the family structure and size of the Bengali community situating the lowlands (Tarai) region of Udham Singh Nagar district.

Received: Jan 2, 2012; Revised: Jan 12, 2012; Accepted: Jan 28, 2012.

*Corresponding Author

Anchalesh Kumar
Department of Sociology, Government P.G. College, Bageshwar (Uttarakhand),
India

Tel: +91-9412926680; Fax: +91-5963-220081
Email: anchalesh_kr@yahoo.com

Table 1. Nature and size of family in the Bengali community

Sl.No.	Nature of Family	Size of Family			Total	Percentage
		Small (01-04 Members)	Medium (03-07 Members)	Large (Above 07 Members)		
1	Joint	00	00	81	81	27
2	Nuclear	105	114	00	219	81
3	Total	105	114	81	300	100
4	Percentage	35%	38%	27%	100	100

The above mentioned table infers that about 27 percent families belong to large-size and come under the category of joint family systems. The total numbers of members in these families are usually above 07. On the other hand 73 percent nuclear families are of small and medium size and in these families the total numbers of members do not exceed 07. Here, it can be said that in this community the family size has decreased. In the process of globalization, the relationship between husband and wife has also undergone change in this community. About 51 percent respondents have accepted changes in the husband–wife relationship, while 49 percent respondents have denied of any change. From the research survey, it has come to the notice that in the modern times most of the women do not consider their partners as parmeshwar (Everything) or like God and are keen on accepting them as companion. This tendency has been found much on an increasing way among the

educated men and women, while this move has been found less among the less-educated and illiterate classes.

With the increase of the educated mass, the rights in regard to family authority and decision-making have also changed in some way or the other. Now the wife also reserves the right to take decisions and her decisions are considered to be important. The new evolved powers that are the epitomes of change in the modern age though have not much influence on the concept of family authority, but even then if they have ended the monopoly of men in regard to decision making in the family. Now in the family, most of the decisions are taken by both man and woman with equal respect and consideration to each-other's views.

The tendency of respondents in regard to family authority and decision-making in the changing scenario is demonstrates in the table given below:

Table 2. The Tendency in regards to Family-Authority and Decision-Making in the Changing Scenario

Sl. No.	Nature of Decision	Only Husband	Only Wife	Husband-Wife both	Total	Percentage
1	Education related decision of children	81 (27)	53 (11)	186 (62)	300	100
2	Family expenditure related decisions	78(26)	51(17)	171(57)	300	100
3	Decision about Professional future of young members of the family	99(33)	24(08)	177(59)	300	100
4	Decision regarding agricultural –work	93(31)	42(14)	165(55)	300	100
5	Decision regarding marriage	87(29)	63(21)	150(50)	300	100
6	Decision regarding the arrival of Guests	102(34)	18(06)	180(60)	300	100
7	Decision regarding property – buying/house building etc.	108(36)	36 (12)	156(52)	300	100

It is clear from the above mentioned table that there have been definite changes in the family-authority and decision-making. The status of wife and women has gained importance in the present times compared to the past. In every sort of family decisions, the role of woman and her decisions have become decisive and important. The cause of this has been the growing awareness among women for their rights and duties, as a result it can be inferred that globalization has brought changes through various means of independence communication. There has been increase in the independence of women in every sphere of life.

In this sequence, around 56 percent respondents have accepted this fact while 44 percent respondents have rejected this inference. The respondents who have accepted this inference agree to it that the women liberation has increased because of the influence of means of communications and information revolution. There has also been a partial change in the marriage rules; in accordance to this a few respondents agree to it that the local Hindu rituals of marriage have been included in their traditional Hindu marriage system and hence modernizing their own marriage rituals.

The kinship relations have started losing their importance and this fact has also been accepted by 59 percent respondents and

rejected by 41 percent respondents. The respondents who have accepted this have said that the kinship relations are not given much importance. Most of the people keep in touch with other relations over the technological means of communication like: Telephone, Mobile phone etc. In the Bengali community, the rights of the senior members and their respective roles in the family have also been declining day by day. The rights of the senior members have got distributed among other family members and their children. The family system has taken over the democratic principles of living avoiding the ancient dictatorial set up. There has also been increase in the instability in the family because of interpersonal relations among members. In this regard, 57 percent respondents have agreed to it while 43 percent respondents chose to disagree. The respondents who have accepted this instability says that the mutual relation among the members of the family has suffered a set back. This instability has accursed because of the influence of information revolution, increase in distance between the family members, increase in modern education and economic independence of men and women. The Head of the family suffers a lack of supporting hand from their family members. Today's family members are less concerned about collective responsibility but have an inclination for

self interest and his/her own profit. So, there has been an increasing tendency among peoples to have a personalized view of everything and the values like cooperation and sacrifice are not followed by the members of the family. Other changes in the family structure at the secondary level can be stated by the following point:

Change in the Functions of Family

There have been changes in the family-structure due to the impact of globalization and simultaneously the function of family has also been changed. The social and cultural function of the family has also undergone a change which is supported by 59 percent

respondents while 41 percent respondents did not agree to it. The respondents who have agreed to this change have accepted that modernization has replaced traditionality, influence of information revolution, increasing importance of money, impact of modern education and impact of western education, culture & ideology have caused tremendous changes in family structure in this community. There has been lessening of mutuality and cordiality in relationship in the family. In the Bengali families, the impact of globalization and the nature of relations are much evident. The lessening of mutual ties in between the members of the family is shown in the table given below:

Table 3. The Tendency in regard to Decrease in the Mutual Relations among Members of Family

Sl. No.	Nature of Relations	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	More Intimate	21	07
2	Close	132	44
3	Formal	120	40
4	Sour Relations	27	09
5	Total	300	100

Table No. 03 shows that about 51 percent respondents have enjoyed cordial relations with their family members. These respondents feels that even in this phase of change the mutual relations have not suffered any decline and the relations closeness is intact as there was in the past. It is possible because members have due respect for each other. Most of the respondents who have expressed this view are traditional and conventional in their thoughts and attitudes. These respondents do not approve of this change in the family-structure because of the ongoing process of globalization. On the other hand 49 percent respondents have accepted that there relations have sour and formal relations in the family.

These respondents agree that there have been adverse effect of globalization in maintaining ties between the members. In the present stage, the close mutual and cordial relations that were existent in the family during the past have been replaced by formal relationships that have gained primary importance, as people find less time in maintaining relations. The function in regard to marriage rituals, procedures have also seen changes. There has also been slight change in the attitude of the people of this community in regard to widow remarriage and divorce. The people have agreed to it that widow remarriage and the marriage of a divorcee becomes important as the women gets support and companionship for the rest of her life. It too apply in regard to divorce, they agree that it can also be implemented or practiced to keep the family tension free and have a conducive ambience inside it. Most of the respondents are against the practice of dowry and consider it as an evil practice and they want to eradicate it completely. The use of make up and cosmetics etc. among the women has also undergone a change. The use of cosmetics, beauty-enhancers etc. have increases because the modern cosmetics and other related things have come in fashion.

The recreational forms have also changed in the family. Compared to the traditional forms of entertainment sources the modern equipments have gained importance. Most of the respondents own modern means of equipments like T.V., Tape-recorder, Mobile phone, Computer, Newspaper etc. and they have replaced the traditional means of recreation. In regard to the caste-system, 52 percent respondents have accepted that there has been change in it, while 48 percent respondents considers that there has not been any change in the caste system. In the caste system, prohibitions are still existed but there has been some leniency in it. Rather it is not strictly practiced. Inhibitions and certain prohibition in regard to profession and food habits are not followed so strictly while prohibitions in marriage (except prohibitions) are still followed. In the Bengali community, all respondents belong to Hindu religion. Regarding religious sentiment 58 percent respondents agree to it that the importance of religion and faith has also suffered a decline while around 42 percent respondents still believe that religion plays a divinity role in the lives of the people of the community. Those who feel that there has been decline in religious sentiments and faith say that the commercialization of religion, influence of electronic media, progress of science and technology, progress in education and its expansion, the concept of humanism etc. are the factors that have caused this decline in religion.

The change in the means of medicinal practices etc. is also seen in this community. Earlier for treatment traditional means were practiced viz, traditional Hakeems, Ojhas, magic, Chandsi practise etc, but there thing are not followed with much faith in the present day. The modern means of treatment viz, Homeopathy, Alloepathy have replaced the traditional means of treatment. The following table shows this change in the means of treatment:

Table 4. The Tendency in Regards to Means of Treatment

S.No	Various means and their use	No of Respondents	Percentage
1	New means of treatment	177	59
2	Traditional means of treatment	123	41
3	Total	300	100

The aforesaid table reveals that 59 percent respondents agree to the practice of modern means of treatment. They have

viewed that because of the process of change and modernization, new means of treatment have come in use and they have replaced

traditional means of treatments. Most of the respondents who approve of these modern means are educated and have modern ideas while the other 41 percent respondents accept that they prefer and approve of the traditional means of treatment these respondents feel that the traditional means do not give any adverse effect on health. The respondents who have expressed these views are traditional, illiterate and also have conventional attitude.

Besides these, 66 percent respondents have agreed upon the fact that there has been change in the economic and financial matters of the family, while 34 percent respondents feel that there has been no change in the family functions in regard to economic and financial matters. The respondents who have accepted change agree to it that the economic and financial authority is not confined in the hands of the family head. It has got distributed among members of the households who are independent are self sufficient, and this change has also come due to the impact of information revolution, economic independence of men and women and the influence of modern education. In the Bengali families, the traditional education is completely replaced by the modern education.

In the present time, there has been more inclination of parents and guardians towards Private schools, Convent schools compared to the Government schools. 57 percent respondents have accepted that education has become essential in the present scenario; while 43 percent respondents consider the necessity of education as normal. The respondents who consider education as important accept that the modern education and its expansion, impact of information revolution, various educational Government project, western education and impact of western culture and family encouragement etc. are the factors that have caused the increase of education in the Bengali community in the Tarai region of Udham Singh Nagar District.

CONCLUSION

The present research paper concludes that there have been many changes found in the Bengali community and this has been because of the impact of globalization. But this change mainly happens in the form of limited changes that have occurred in their family structure. This change is related mainly to the both aspects of family structure but the functional aspect of change has been demonstrated in a limited way. This community has it neither

altogether given up its traditional practices nor has it totally accepted modernization in regard to family structure. The social functioning is operational in between the background of globalization and family values. It also reflects that the family structure has been incapable in following its traditional collectivity in the modern scenario, but even then the basic characteristics of traditionality is existent and it has kept the family together and one. In brief, we can say that the traditional values are gradually losing their importance and the place is taken by the modern values. As a result, the Bengali community is prone to change in its family structure due to the impact of globalization which can also be referred to as transitional phase of society.

REFERENCES

- [1] Doshi, S.L. 2002. *Modernity, Post-Modernity and Neo-Sociological Theories*. Jaipur and New Delhi: Rawat Publications.
- [2] Giddens, Anthony. 1990. *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- [3] Goode, W.J. & Hatt, P.K. 1983. *Methods in Social Research*. Auckland: McGraw Hill International.
- [4] Gore, M.S. 1968. *Urbanization and Family Change in India*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan.
- [5] Jain, Shobhita. 2002. *Bharat men Parivar, Vivah aur Natedari*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications.
- [6] Pathak, Avijit. 2003. - *Post war thinking: Need for egalitarian Globalization, Mainstream*, 41 (22). 2003 (17 May): 11-12.
- [7] Ross, A.D. 1961. *Hindu Family in its Urban Setting*. Toronto: Oxford University Press. Robertson. 1997. - *Social Theory and Global Culture*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- [8] Singh, Yogendra. 2000. *Culture Change in India*. Jaipur: Rawat Publications.
- [9] Waters, Malcolm. 1998. *Globalization*. London: Routledge.
- [10] Weber, Max. 1947. *Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. New York: Oxford University Press.