

Unit 16

Marriage, Family and Kinship

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Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, you will be able to

- Discuss the impact of urbanization and social change in India
- Describe the kinds of changes that have occurred in the institution of marriage.
- Explain the changes that have occurred in the institution of family in India and finally
- Outline the changes that have occurred in the institution of kinship in India

16.1 Introduction

In this unit, as in the previous one, we are going to study the impact of the process of urbanization on social institutions like marriage family and kinship in India. The Book 1 of this course, MSOE-004: Urban Sociology has already familiarized you with the concept of urban and the process of urbanization. You learnt about the origin and development of urban sociology in the west as well as in India. It was explained to you very clearly that in India urban structures have evolved since the very ancient times from Indus valley civilization to contemporary period in India.

The forces of social change that have taken place in India, such as, the colonial impact, introduction of modern education, better means of transport and communication and so on, have had its impact on the different institutions in society. Their impact has been felt throughout India but more so on the population living in the cities than the villages. In this unit you will learn about the impact of urbanization on the social institutions of marriage, family and kinship in urban India.

16.2 Impact of urbanization and social change in India

You must have studied the unit on urbanization (unit 25, MSO- 004 Sociology in India) which is part of the M.A. (sociology) core course to refresh your memory, let me explain some aspects of the process of urbanization.

Urbanization is a structural process of change which is associated with the movement or migration of people from rural to urban areas. It is generally related to industrialization but it is not always the result of industrialization. It results due to the concentration of large-scale and small-scale industrial and commercial, financial and administrative set up in the cities, technological development in transport and communication, cultural and recreational activities.

Since, the process of urbanization is in excess of the process of industrialization in India, what we often find is over urbanization. Here, a peculiar phenomenon can be observed in urban areas. There is industrial growth without a significant shift of population from agriculture to industry and of growth of urban population without a significant rise in the ratio of the urban to the total population while in terms of ratio, there may not be a great shift from rural to urban activity. But there is still a large migration of population from rural areas to urban areas. As a result we find that urban areas, towns and cities are choked and there is lack of adequate infrastructure and amenities to cope up with this large influx of population in most cities in India.

As mentioned in unit 25 Urbanization, urbanization implies a cultural and social psychological process whereby people acquire material and non-material culture, including behavioral patterns, forms of organization, and ideas that originated in, or are distinctive of the city. Although the flow of cultural influences is in both directions, i.e. from rural to urban and urban to rural, but there is no doubt that the cultural influences created by the city on non urban people are probably more pervasive than the influences exerted by the rural. The India of urbanization may be better understood when interpreted as aspects of diffusion and acculturation. Urbanization may be manifest either as intra- society or inter-society diffusion, i.e. urban culture may spread to various parts of same society or it may have cross-cultural or national boundaries and spread to other societies. It involves both borrowing and lending. On the other side of the diffusion coin is acculturation, the process where by individuals acquire the material possessions, behavioral patterns, social organizations bodies of knowledge, and

meanings of groups where culture differs in certain respects from their own. Urbanization as seen in this light is a complex process (Gist and Favia: 1933).

It is, thus clear that urbanization process is an important force of social change. In India this process besides reflecting economic growth, political change, change in values and attitudes, has also revealed elements of continuity between rural and urban social structures. Pocock (1960) categorically maintains that villages and cities in India are part of the same civilization and as such cannot be separately understood. Therefore any discussion of urban social structure in India is in terms of its basic social institutions, such as the family, marriage, kinship and caste. All these four aspects are closely related with each other in both rural, as well as, urban social structure.

It is often assumed by sociologists studying the urban society in India that the process of urbanization leads to the break down of the joint family, increase of nuclear family, slackens the caste and kinship ties and role of religion. These assumptions have been critiqued by several sociologists who tried to understand the urban social structure in India.

Gandhi, Raj (1983: 5) believes that ‘any discussion on problems of change in connection with urban sociology in India, ought not to make one feel that the sociologist of urban India should necessarily be the sociologist of social change. It merely reminds us of two facts:

1. Urbanism is often thought of as a force of social change, particularly when we are dealing with the developing society such as India, hence acquaintance with the problems of social change could be rewarding.
2. Often comparisons and contrasts are drawn between several aspects of rural and urban structure of India. The latter is, at times, interpreted as different from the former without any commentary on the problems of change. In this sense also, theoretical understanding of the problems of change could be fruitful.

Thus it is important that any discussion on the social institutions of marriage, family and kinship in urban India is understood within the theoretical framework of wider social change both from within, as well, as without, taking place in society in India.

16.3 Continuity and Change: The Institution of Marriage

Social institutions have been defined as the network of social relationships in society which are relatively permanent, Weber (cf. Martindale, 1962: 55- 8) has defined social institution as the social relations in a whole network of social actions. The institutions exists only so far as people act in certain ways. It is manifest only as a pattern of behavior. Thus social institutions in the Indian cities as marriage, kinship, family, caste and religion could be conceptualized as the occurrences of complex sets of social interactions. Gandhi (1983: 20) believes that in the traditional city of India ,the institutional complex of the marriage, kinship, family, caste is most strategic for analysis and understanding of the socio cultural life of the city. He says that due to the relative preoccupation of Indian sociologists with the study of India's villages marriage within urban contact has received scant attention. Marriage as an institution has traditionally been embedded and linked with the institution of caste in India in both rural and urban areas. Marriages have been contracted keeping the caste or jati endogamy in mind Rules of marriage in each caste community in different religions of India follow different rules and regulations. Giri Raj Gupta (1974) examines a number of social dimensions of marriage, such as marriage rituals in the context of intra- family roles and norms implications of caste per for marriage and the family, social exchange among the castes, the 'nata' alliance (remarriage) etc. He examines them in a Rajasthan village.

In the urban cities, the phenomenon of inter caste marriages, inter-communal, inter regional, and inter- religious marriages even though infrequent, must be studied in details with the help of such methods as extensive depth interviews, caste histories and the social geographies of individuals involved. (Gandhi R. 1983: 21) "just twenty five years ago the instances of inter-caste marriage were very few, and those individuals who dared to marry out side the caste had to undergo truly great hardships. Today the situation is altogether different not only has the privileges of inter-caste marriage become considerable, but even the difficulties the inter-caste marriage couple have to face, have become comparatively quite mild " (Kannan, C.T : 1974)

C. T. Kannan's study of inter-caste and intercommunity marriages in Bombay is based on two hundred inter-caste marriages and fifty inter-community marriages in Bombay during 1958-59. The analysis of the couples by the year in which they got married shows a steady increase in the incidence, a majority of 64% being married after 1950. Kannan says that the spread of higher education both among the males and females is one of the reasons for the increase in

the incidence of inter-caste and inter-religious marriages amongst the younger generations in the cities. Indeed, one could safely assert that the graph of inter-caste marriages is steadily rising, never becoming a plateau, much less declining. Even in the newspaper columns, the pros and cons of inter-caste marriage are found freely debated particularly by ladies, a subject which was formerly almost a taboo. (Kannan, C. T. 1974).

Due to modern education full of western thoughts and ideas, emancipation of women and the association of young men and women with various political and social organizations, new ideas which are incompatible with the traditional norms and values are nurtured amongst the youth in cities. As a result their attitudes towards traditional norms changes and new values develop which affects marriage, kinship and family.

Kannan in his study mentioned earlier found that besides schools and colleges, social organizations such as Jati Seva Dal, Lok Sena, Swastik League, Kshariakya Parisad, etc., have played a great role in influencing the younger generations in selection of their partners. Political organizations have also been responsible in providing suitable claim for some males and females to come together and develop intimacies.

Most significant aspect of change that the noticed was that the young generation becomes individualistic by such influences and they take their own decision even in the matter of marriage. They become less caste-conscious than their elders and, therefore, in their inter group relations they ignore caste and creed differences. In many cases the objections to such inter-caste marriage by the parents was there but not always due to caste considerations. It is observed that far more important considerations existed behind parental opposition than caste of their child's bride/ groom. These were mainly the lack of wealth and status in the partner. Where these factors were favourable, the parents had given their consent and cooperation to marriage, ignoring caste differences. Thus, education and socio economic background matters more in cities than caste (Kannan, C. T 1974: 341).

In a study by B. V. Shah (1964: 84-86) of male students of Baroda University, it was found that a higher proportion of unbetrothed students from urban background (cities, 63 per cent; towns 14 per cent) than from rural background (18 per cent) existed. In case of selection of bride too a higher proportion from the urban background (cities 61 per cent; towns; 47 per cent) favoured at least a matriculate (i.e. high school graduate) than from the rural background

(only 13 per cent). Thus, the non-traditionality as regards bride selection is found largely in urban areas, whereas traditionality is found proportionately greater in rural areas than in urban areas.

It is also found that a 'new concept of wifhood' (i.e. emphasis on conjugal relationship) has emerged which is associated with urban living in the contemporary society in India. (Gandhi, Raj 1983: 21) M. S. Gore (1968: 196) in a study of a community near Delhi found that the urban educated respondents who had changed their occupation felt 'closer to their wife' than their mother. Thus, it is found that in urban society the joint family living in India which traditionally deemphasizes the direct conjugal relationship between man and his wife seems to have changed as nearly three-quarters of the highly urbanized male respondents tend to favour closeness to wife.'

Gandhi, R. says that these developments as discovered by Gore and others conform to William J. Goode (1963) who hypothesized that there is a logical fit between the urban-industrial society and the 'conjugal family' which is supposed to be the characteristic of the west. Conkhin's study (1973) of the emerging conjugal role patterns in the city of Dharwar in South India notes that urbanization and education does result in a significant increase in conjugal role patterns, even within a joint household.

However, while some sociologists may jump to the conclusion that urbanization and education will lead to 'conjugal family patterns' in India even before industrialization; it is a matter of doubt whether the 'conjugal family pattern' and joint family pattern did not co-exist in urban India since early times (c.f. A M Shah, 1974). The distinction between the two is a false dichotomy of western sociology unnecessarily imposed upon the understanding of Indian urban society.

Another change observed by sociologists of urban areas is that age at marriage has increased. But the question of self choice or 'arranged marriage' still remains a debatable point. Cormack's claim (1961: 101) that the Indian youth are increasingly allowed the 'right' of decision for their marriage without the 'means' to make it. Therefore, it is quite clear from the available evidence that situation in urban India is not automatically conducive to increase in the freedom of choice for one's marriage since marriage is still closely tied to family (and hence to parental authority and kin-constraint) and caste (Gandhi, R. 1983).

Aileen Ross (1961: 253) in her study of the Hindu families in the city of Bangalore found that young people tend to select their spouse themselves and then take the approval from their parents. But Vatuk (1972:73-111) is opposed to this view. She studied two middle class neighborhoods in the North Indian city of Meerut. She found only four cases of so-called “love marriages” (i.e. marriages of personal choice) during her field-work among the mohalla residents. These occurred within the circle of relatives and friends, involving either fellow students in a co-educational college, fellow workers in an office, affinal kins or residents of the same dwelling. During her study she did not find even a single case of arranged inter-caste marriage.

Men in these middle class mohallas accepted their inability to arrange inter-caste marriages for their children, however, egalitarian they may be. Karve (1965) like Srinivas (1969) and Khare (1970) observed that the role of dowry in marriage arrangements was of significance. She found a tendency to give larger amounts of cash rather than goods amongst the wealthy Banias. Gandhi (1983) believes that what urbanism does is to increase the ‘price’ of the college educated urban youth of India in the matrimonial market.

The significance of caste endogamy too remains largely unchanged as ‘arranged marriages’ are contracted traditionally within one’s own caste. Kapadia’s study (1968; 119) of family in urban India found that 51 per cent out of 513 university graduates interviewed expressed their willingness to give their children in marriage outside their own caste but only one their were against the departure from tradition. This change of attitude is reflected in opinion rather than actual practice. Caste considerations are still playing a major role in marriage in reality.

In a study conducted by Raj Gandhi (1976) of the Bania Sub-caste in the city of Jamnagar found that 67.5 per cent of the kin of the respondents were found to be married into their own Dasa Bania sub-caste. Of the remaining 32.5 per cent, 13.3 per cent had married into a higher Visa sub-caste; the practice of hypergamy, which does not necessarily reflect the breach of caste endogamy. He found only 14 cases (11.6 per cent) of real inter-caste marriages going beyond the sub-caste and caste boundaries. Mandelbaum (1970: 653) gives a general statement which according to Gandhi sums up the developments that have occurred and the continuities that exist in the arena of marriage as a social institution. He says that ‘although endogamy remains a major consideration in arranging a marriage, the boundaries of the endogamous group... are typically being enlarged, and marriage patterns may now come from

formerly separate jatis (sub-castes) of the same jati cluster... but such unions are still very exceptional even among the urban educated people.’

Since, the studies on marriage in urban areas are few and far between, it is difficult to generalise. But what stands out clearly is the continuing link it has with caste. There has been increase in factors like, age at marriage, wider circle of spouse selection within the caste, level of education of bride and so on. Let us now understand the social institution of family in the urban context.

16.4 Continuity and Change: The Institution of Family

Family in India has been generally of two kinds, joint or extended family comprising more than two generations of members such as a married couple, their children, married or unmarried and one or both parents. The other type of family is the nuclear family consisting of husband, wife and unmarried children.

It was initially assumed that the process of urbanization leads to a decline in family size, weakening of family ties and break up of joint family system into nuclear families. This assumption was a result of application of Western notions of evolution. F. Tonnies, E. Durkheim, Louis Wirth etc., advanced theories which explained these developments in society as it moved from simple to complex. Industrialization and urbanization brought about these types of social changes in society and nuclear families came to be associated with the modern industrial urban societies. In India, too, this assumption presupposes that joint family is an institution of the rural social structure and as society gets urbanized the joint families, associated with rural agrarian economy will give way to nuclear family with the increase of non-agrarian occupations.

But as evidence gathered by sociologists studying family in urban India reveals, this hypothesis does not hold much credence since as a matter of fact joint families are found in urban areas as well. The correlation of “joint” family with rural areas and “nuclear family with urban is not tenable. In fact, sociologists like A.M, Shah (1970) Kapadia (1956) Gore (1968) and others observe a cyclical change from nuclear to joint to nuclear family within a period of time. This is the household dimension of family in India which indicates that there is no correlation between urbanization and ‘separate’ nuclear households.

A. M. Shah (1970: 100-101) dispels the myth of the breakdown of the joint family in urban India. He studied the social history of Gujarat and on the basis of his findings, he claims that in the past the sanskritized castes (i.e. those castes which have adopted the values, customs and behaviour of the upper castes) formed a much higher proportion of the population in towns (or cities) than in villages. This implies that the principle of the residential unity of partikin and their wives was practiced to a much greater extent in towns than in villages. This shows that towns included a considerable number of households composed of two or more married brothers living together after their parent's death. It may also have included a few large households where married cousins lived together in the same household even after the death of their father and grandfather; the households composed of parents and two or more married sons formed a greater proportion of household in the town.

Shah believes that these findings are very important because they debunk the two notions that are widely prevalent amongst urban sociologists in India. These notions are: (1) that the people who migrate from villages are governed by strong emphasis on the principle of the residential unity of patrikins and their wives; and (2) that the urban area into which they come to live is necessarily an area having a weak emphasis on the principle of the residential unity of patrikin and their wives.'

I. P. Desia (1964: 117-8) in his study of Mahuva considers 'jointness' of Indian family when seen in the light of the actions of members guided by the traditional norms, and then examines the effects of urbanization on 'jointness'. He operationalizes urbanization in terms of the 'duration of stay in Mahuva'. During his study he found that the older families tend to be more joint than the younger ones and where the nuclear families preponderate over the older families, nuclearity may also preponderate over the joint families. He found that the families under investigation were more joint than nuclear in terms of ownership of property and mutual obligations. In case of residentiality too, he found enough evidence that nuclear families continue to grow joint and joint becomes nuclear.

In this sense, his findings conform with A. M. Shah's suggestion that one of the most fruitful approaches in this case would be to examine the developmental process of (family) households, both progressive and regressive which is assumed to be operative in the villages, towns, and we believe, the cities of India (Gandhi; R 1983:33).

Ram Krishna Mukherjee (1964:87) studied the rural-urban differences in the familial organization of West Bengal society. He too, while examining the co-resident and commensal relationships amongst kin groups as the locally functioning family units found the presence of extended or non-nuclear family types amongst the cities, towns and villages equally. But as he mentions, paradoxically, the nuclear type of family is found most frequently in villages, then in the towns, and the least frequently in cities.

In a different study, Mukherjee (1965) reports that unlike the common assumption, his data does not support the belief that joint family organization is not linked with the urban way of life. His study indicates clearly that joint family organization increases progressively as one shifts from villages to small towns to large cities or from non-industrial through partly industrial to highly industrial towns. He discovered that the upper castes, who also generally belong to the upper economic classes gave more importance to the joint family organization than the lower castes and lower economic classes. Mukherjee's findings support Shah's (1974: 246) correlation between household, caste and rural-urban community.

Similarly, M. S. Gore (1968) came to a similar conclusion while testing a similar kind of hypothesis in three communities which is supposed to be represented by three stages of urbanization, viz. the city of Delhi, villages on the fringe of Delhi, and the villages away from Delhi. In spite of the fact that he confined his empirical study (using questionnaire interview method) to only the merchant caste of Aggarwals, he took almost equal number of families from rural and urban communities, almost equally divided between 'nuclear' and 'joint' families in each type of community. According to Gore, there is a distinction between the processes of industrialization and urbanization. He uses the latter i.e. urbanization to refer to the increasing ratio of urban dwelling to the non-urban dwelling persons in a county. He further states that the family change may be induced by such factors as higher education, modern professions and bureaucratic populations (considering that these are the attributes of urban life). However, he found that neither of these factors, not even industrial occupations were found to have any significant change in the joint family.

Kapadia (1956) in his analysis of the National Register data on households in the towns of Navasari and the fifteen villages around Navasari in South Gujarat similarly found that the assumption that people in cities and towns live in nuclear families while joint families are stronger in the villages is incorrect contrary to this opinion, he found during his studies (1954

& 1955) of 531 high school teachers (279 Gujarati, 187 Maharashtrian and 47 Kannadiga in Bombay city, that so far as the residential family is concerned, 219 (42 per cent) out of 513 teachers lived in elementary families i.e. nuclear families, while 67 per cent (294 teachers) lived in joint families. Not only a high degree of jointness was found in the residential group, but outside the residential group (Gandhi, R 1983).

Conklin (1976) too during his study of the household composition of Karnataka State based on the Government survey result found that urbanization was not associated with a decline of complex households (joint households) nor was there any relationship between the two. Saroj Kapoor's (1965) study of family and kinship among the Khatri, a wealthy caste of businessmen in Delhi also found that at least 42.9 per cent of complex households existed in a neighbourhood in the metropolitan city of Delhi.

We find in the analysis of several studies of family and household in the urban context that not only kinship is found to be an important principle of social organization in cities but also that there is a structural congruity between the joint family on the one hand and the requirements of industrial and urban life on the other. Milton Singer's (1968) study of 19 families of outstanding business leaders in Chennai city discovered that these leaders could effectively 'compartmentalize' traditional values and life style in the area of home and modern professional outlook for the business or company at their offices. There need not be any conflict between the two. He argued that a modified version of traditional joint family is consistent with the urban industrial setting.

Sudha Kaldate ({1962}2003) however, holds a different opinion. She says that all these studies which assert that 'although structurally the traditional (joint) family appears to be breaking down, functionally it is not so. These try to maintain that the joint family is not disintegrating in order to function as independent units (nuclear) but adapting to new patterns which have the same degrees of jointness. The strong protagonists of the views are Kapadia (1954) and Desai (1956), these are not looking at the varying outside factors.'

She says that 'any social institution which is exposed to a number of varying outside factors should result in change. Urbanization, in addition to reflecting technological change, creates a new form of economic organization and gives rise to a new way of life, Cultural uniformity

and traditional patterns of belief and behaviour tend to change under the impact of the above changes and social change gets accelerated.’

Kaldate (2003:173) believes that these types of changes in social institutions do not affect the areas where a large proportion of the indigenous population is resident in a village within the urban framework. To the extent that these populations remains outside from urban contacts they tend to retain their ‘folk society’ characteristics (Hauser 1957). This fact is very important since it is this reason that the extent of change in the institution of family is found to exist more in the areas within the orbit of the city and less in the interior communities. We may give the example of the pockets of rural areas within and on the fringes of metropolitan city of Delhi.

Kaldate supports her hypothesis with empirical data available. Her basic thesis is that “ in the process of social disorganization, the changes in family organization tend to take the form of changes from the large or joint family system to the small family system. Larger proportions of joint as well as quasi-joint families are found in the more traditional communities (existing outside the urban framework); and smaller proportions of such types of families are found in such communities as have been more exposed to outside influence.’

So far we learnt about the impact of urbanization of the social institution of family. Let us now explain briefly the institution of kinship in India.

16.5 Continuity and Change: The Institution of Kinship

As you already know the social institution of marriage, family, kinship and caste are closely interrelated in Indian society.

The kinship pattern in Indian society is generally viewed in the context of Hindu joint family and therefore has not received much attention. However, like the studies of family in the urban contact, this area of kinship again suffers from the same dichotomous assertions of opposition between the rural and the urban. But ever since the ‘break up’ theories of joint family in urban communities has been proved incorrect a few interesting studies on urban kinship in India have reported elaborate network of kinship in Indian cities. Gandhi, R. (1983 : 25) in his study of family, kin group and sub-caste as the realms of primary interactions of the Indian urbanite found that as many as 36.7 percent of the women of the Das Bania sub-caste had their

parental or natal kin (parents, brothers, their wives, sisters, their husbands) living in the same city, similarly, the largest proportion, about 55 percent of the respondents were found to interact most frequently with their natal kin, these findings have further implications, according to Gandhi, when we compare them with Vatuk's study of the north Indian city of Meerut.

Vatuk (1972: 140-41) believed that because of the patrilineal emphasis in the north Indian kinship system, a wife is expected to interact most frequently and intensively with her affines, agnates of her husband and their wives. However, in Meerut, she found that the significant number of married women who live near their natal kin (i.e. their own parents) interact more frequently with them than with the affinal kin. It is true that under such circumstances, the bonds between the women and her natal kin could be stronger as such interactions are face to face, primary and reciprocal and they tend to maintain the continuity and solidarity with her natal kin unit.

However, Vatuk assumes that there was a strong patrilineal emphasis in Meerut prior to urbanization. Gandhi believes that traditionally the cities of India have always manifested strong ties with both the natal and the affinal kin of women as it has been possible for them to marry within the city where their parents (i.e. natal unit) lived unlike the situation in the north Indian villages where village exogamy separated the woman from her natal village after marriage.

Vatuk, however, arrives at the conclusion that so far as changes in the kinship system are concerned there is an increasing tendency toward neolocal residence in the city. However the weakness of this interpretation is that she presumes that the neolocal residence for a married couple in an Indian city is a new phenomenon. This belief coupled with the belief that earlier most residences in Meerut city were patrilocal have no supportive evidence

Unlike Vatuk, I.P Desai's study of Mahuva town effectively proves that the cyclical pattern of patrilocal–neolocal– patrilocal residence i.e. joint residence to nuclear and back again to joint residence may continue to exist in any city, village or town and there is no conclusive evidence to prove change in any one direction. This conclusion is again supported by Gandhi's study of the city in Jamnagar in western India, (Gandhi R., 1983: 27)

It is the evolutionary bias in sociology in general and urban sociology in particular that can be observed in the finding or research in kinship patterns. Chekki (1974: 156) studied two caste clusters, Brahmin(Gokul) and Lingayat (Kalyan) from the suburbs of Dharwar city, Karnataka. He discovered that in order to meet the demands of complex modern urban life a modified extended family is emerging and it consist of a series of nuclear families joined together on an equalitarian basis for mutual aid and functioning to felicitate the mobility strivings of its component member families and individuals.

Mary Chatterjee (1947: 337-49) in her study of kinship in sweeper(low caste) locality in Banaras city found that the kinship terms were also used not only for persons in the mohalla, whether or not related, but also for most of the persons encountered outside the locality. She found that kinship was the basic principle in structuring of that urban locality, both as a means of conceptualization of relations and as a principle of recruitment to residence. The consanguineal (i.e. blood relatives) and affinals (relatives by marriage) were linked in terms of their relation to the acquisition of cleaning jobs in the municipality.

Gandhi (1983) observes that largely the kinship studies in urban areas go to prove the contention of Pocock (1960) who believed that the presumed dichotomy between 'rural' and 'urban' does not obtain in the Indian situation, at least when we examine such social institutions as family and kinship in urban India.

He says that when we think in terms of change in the patterns of kinship in urban India' we observe a strange anomaly between continuity and change. However, increase in neolocal residences, change in the outward forms or observable patterns of kinship, may be change in degree and not in kind. Although urban-rural differences were not found to be statistically significant, the study (Conklin's and other) maintains that urbanization levels and employment of wife of the household outside are major factors in the relative freedom of women.

16.6 Conclusion

when we study the impact of urbanization on the social institutions of marriage, family and kinship, we find that the evolutionary approach of western scholars, from Durkheim, F. Tonnies (1940) Louis Wirth (1938) have markedly influenced the studies of urban sociologists. Such theoretical assumptions led to the biased approach of dichotomizing the

rural and urban as two different types of societies. Initially several sociologists jumped to the conclusion that the joint family is associated with the rural agrarian economy, as found in the west and the nuclear family belonged to the urban industrialized non-agrarian economies.

However, several studies on family, marriage, kinship and caste in urban India, e.g. I.P Desai's(1964), K.M. Kapadia (1956). Ramkrishana Mukherjee and so on found contrary to this view there was no such link between the types of society and jointness or nuclearity of the family and the household. In fact A.M. Shah's study gives a turning point to these studies by pointing out that there is a cyclical change of joint to nuclear to joint in urban areas as well. However, it is quite clear from the analysis of all these studies that slight modifications in terms of personal and private lives and professional competitive life in the cities and towns; as pointed out by Milton Singer (1968) does exist.

Another important fact is that ample confusion in terms of defining and understanding of what constitutes "joint" and "nuclear" exists. This area of study therefore needs greater attention since as mentioned in the sections of the unit, all the social institutions marriage, family and kinship are constantly adjusting and accommodating to new needs and requirements and therefore subtle changes keep taking place without affecting the larger form.

16.7 Further Reading

Gandhi, Raj 1983 in Main Currents in Indian Sociology, ed. By Giri Raj Gupta, vol. VI Urban India, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd: New Delhi.

Sandhu, R.S (ed.) 2003, Urbanization in India Sociological Contributions, Sage Publications: New Delhi.

