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Q2(b)

Discuss the impact of urbanization and feminist movements on family in India.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2016 · Anthropology GS 1 · 15 marks · Family

2.4 Family: Definition and universality; Family, household and domestic groups; functions of family; Types of family (from the perspectives of structure, blood relation, marriage, residence and succession); Impact of urbanization, industrialization and feminist movements on family.

Core demand of the question

- Discuss the impact of urbanization and feminist movements on family in India
- Write about 200 words for 15 marks

Revision summary

Urban jobs push neolocal residence while property often stays joint.

- **Shah's point:** jointness can survive split houses.

Feminist movements targeted dowry, succession, and domestic violence.

Laws changed the script faster than everyday kinship.

The result is negotiated families, not one modern nuclear standard.

Introduction

Urban work and feminist politics have both pressed the Indian family. The joint household did not vanish, but authority, marriage, and care were renegotiated.

Body**Urbanization**

- Jobs, migration, and rented rooms favour **neolocal** nuclear units, as **Gore, Kapadia**, and later urban ethnography recorded.
- Remittances still feed a rural joint estate. **Shah** argued the joint family persists as property and ritual even when residence splits.
- **Caste endogamy and arranged marriage adapt:** matrimonial ads, not a free love market for all classes.
- Care of the old and the child becomes a crisis when women also work for wages.

Feminist movements

- From **nineteenth-century** social reform to **1970s** campaigns, feminists named dowry death, domestic violence, and the Hindu Undivided Family as political.
- **Law: Hindu Succession** amendments, **PNDT**, and **domestic violence** statutes shift, slowly, who owns and who may leave.
- **Shah Bano** and later debates showed that gender justice and community law can collide.

- Women as earners claim voice in the house; the double shift of office and kitchen is the unfinished impact.

Together

- The city supplies the wage. Feminism names the inequality inside the household. Neither produced a single new family type.

Flow diagram

Urbanization -> Neolocal wage
Feminism -> Law property violence
Urbanization -> Indian family
Feminism -> Indian family

Conclusion

Urbanization splits residence more than it kills kin. Feminist movements politicised dowry, property, and violence. Indian family change is both demographic and legal.

Facts & figures

A. M. Shah

The Household Dimension of the Family in India: jointness as a set of ties, not only one roof.

Hindu Succession Act 2005

Daughters as coparceners in the Mitakshara coparcenary, a feminist-legal landmark.

Dowry Prohibition

Law plus campaign, with a gap between statute and practice.

PNDT

Regulates sex-selection technology that urban clinics made easy.

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