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Q7(b)

## Discuss the contemporary trends in family as a response to social change in modern society.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2016 · Sociology GS 1 · 15 marks · Social Change in Modern Society

Social Change in Modern Society: Sociological theories of social change; Development and dependency; Agents of social change; Education and social change; Science, technology and social change.

### Core demand of the question

- Discuss the contemporary trends in family as a response to social change in modern society
- Keep the discussion within a 15-mark length

### Revision summary

Families respond to industry, school, law, and women's work.

- **Trends:** smaller size, fertility decline, dual earning, migration splits, more female-headed houses.

**Parsons** and Goode named nuclearisation; **Census** joint forms persist.

Oakley, **Walby**, **Marx**, and caste alliance explain unpaid care and honour.

Trends are mixed responses, not a finished nuclear script.

### Introduction

The family responds to industrial work, schooling, law, and women's employment. Contemporary trends are not a single march to the isolated nuclear household. They are a mix of nuclearisation, persistence of kin, and new strains.

### Body

#### Classic modernisation claims

- **Talcott Parsons:** nuclear family specialised in socialisation and adult personality in industrial society.
- **William J. Goode:** conjugal family as a global trend. Indian **Census** joint households qualify a total path.

#### Contemporary trends as responses

- Smaller households, later marriage, and fertility decline, which **NFHS** tracks, respond to costs of children and women's schooling.
- Dual-earner and gig households respond to labour markets; unpaid care still falls on women, as Ann Oakley and Sylvia **Walby** insist.
- **Migration splits residence from kinship obligation:** remittance families, left-behind elders.
- Divorce, single-person, and female-headed households rise from law, longevity, and male out-migration, not only from "Western values".

- George Herbert Mead's family as first role-game continues, often with media and school as extra others.

### What does not vanish

- Caste endogamy and alliance rules still organise marriage, a Levi-Strauss and Dumont point in Indian form.
- **Karl Marx and Engels:** the household still reproduces labour-power for capital.
- **Max Weber's** status honour still polices who is a proper family.

### Strain

- **Emile Durkheim's** anomie in rapid city life shows in weak kin support without new institutions.
- **Robert K. Merton:** manifest companionate marriage, latent overload on the couple.

### Flow diagram

Modern social change -> Family trends

Modern social change -> Smaller dual-earner

Modern social change -> Kin remittance caste marriage

Unpaid care -> Family trends

### Conclusion

- **Contemporary family trends respond to work, school, law, and migration:** smaller units, dual earning, split residence, and more female-headed houses. **Parsons's** nuclear type is a trend, not the whole. Kin, caste, and unpaid care persist as modern responses, not as simple leftovers.

### Facts & figures

#### Parsons

Isolated nuclear family as functionally specialised in industrial society.

#### NFHS

Tracks fertility, household decision-making, and women's work as family change files.

#### Female-headed household

A growing **Census** and survey category linked to widowhood, migration, and separation.

#### Walby

Household as a patriarchal structure that modern labour markets have not simply dissolved.