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Q2(b)

Give some of the important studies relating to the structural changes in the Indian family system.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2015 · Sociology GS 2 · 15 marks · Rural and Agrarian Social Structure

Rural and Agrarian Social Structure: The idea of Indian village and village studies; Agrarian social structure - evolution of land tenure system, land reforms.

Core demand of the question

- Give some of the important studies relating to the structural changes in the Indian family system
- Use village and urban fieldwork, not only census types

Revision summary

Desai and Shah split household residence from the wider family.

Karve showed regional kinship systems, not one joint-family India.

Rampura, Sripuram, and Kolenda document fission without the end of kinship.

Urban studies find nuclear homes with extended obligations.

Gender ideology often outlasts the joint roof.

Introduction

Indian family change is not a simple joint-to-nuclear story. Important studies show household form shifting with land, migration, and law, while kinship ideology often stays patrilineal.

Body**Village and Indological baselines**

- **I. P. Desai** distinguished household from family and warned that co-residence is not the whole joint family.
- **Irawati Karve** mapped regional kinship: north, south, east, and the Himalayan belt, so structure is not one Hindu joint family.
- **A. M. Shah** treated the household as the observable unit and the family as a wider kin process.

Change on the ground

- Srinivas's Rampura and Beteille's Sripuram linked land reform and education to fission of joint living among the propertied.
- **Pauline Kolenda** reviewed Indian joint family studies and found regional and caste variation, not linear Westernisation.
- Leela Dube showed that Seed and Earth keeps gender structure even when the roof splits.

Urban and policy studies

- M. S. Gore and later urban family work showed nuclear living with strong extra-household kin, a modified extended family.
- **Census** and NFHS track smaller households, delayed marriage, and elderly living, which Yogendra Singh would read as modernization of tradition, not replacement.

Flow diagram

Desai Shah household versus family -> Fission migration

Karve regions -> Fission migration

Dube gender -> Patriliney persists

Conclusion

- **The important studies agree:** households are smaller and more mobile, yet lineage, dowry, and care still organise the Indian family. Structure changed; the kin map did not vanish.

Facts & figures

I. P. Desai

Stressed that jointness is a process of rights and duties, not only a common kitchen.

A. M. Shah

Made the household the empirical unit for studying family change.

Irawati Karve

Mapped North-South and other regional kinship structures.

Pauline Kolenda

Surveyed joint-family research and rejected a single evolutionary path.