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Q3(a)

Bring out the significance of the difference between family and household.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2016 · Sociology GS 2 · 20 marks · Systems of Kinship in India

Systems of Kinship in India: Lineage and descent in India; Types of kinship systems; Family and marriage in India; Household dimensions of the family; Patriarchy, entitlements and sexual division of labour.

Core demand of the question

- Bring out the significance of the difference between family and household
- Use **I. P. Desai** and **A. M. Shah**

Revision summary

Household is co-residence and common living.

Family is the wider kin process of descent and duty.

Desai and Shah established this split for Indian sociology.

Nuclear roofs can remain joint in property and ritual.

Policy and change debates fail if the two are collapsed.

Introduction

Family is a kinship process of rights, duties, and descent. Household is a residential and commensal unit under one roof or kitchen. Mixing them makes Indian family change look like a false death of the joint family.

Body

The difference

- **A. M. Shah** made the household the countable unit: who lives and eats together.
- **I. P. Desai** insisted jointness can continue as property, ritual, and care among several households.
- Karve's kinship map is family; the census house is household.

Significance

- Nuclear households may still send remittance, take a bride for the lineage, and pool funeral duty. Structure has not become Western kinship.
- Policy that targets the household (ration, LPG) can miss the wider family that actually decides daughters and elderly.
- Leela Dube's gender ideology lives in family even when the household splits.

Change studies

- Kolenda's reviews only make sense if fission of household is not read as the end of family.

Flow diagram

Household residence -> Census kitchen
Family kinship -> Rights duties line
Family kinship -> Household residence

Conclusion

The difference matters because India can have small households and large families at once. Sociology that confuses the two misreads both modernity and patriarchy.

Facts & figures

A. M. Shah

Theorist of the household as the empirical unit of family research.

I. P. Desai

Showed jointness as a process beyond the common kitchen.

Census household

A residential count that cannot by itself map the Indian family.

Modified extended family

Urban pattern of separate households with strong kin obligations.