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### **Family at Urban Setting – A Sociological Study of Changing Family System in Shillong**

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#### **Abstract:**

*Family has been recognized as a basic unit of society and is a link between individual and community. The family is often understood as an ideal homogenous unit with strong coping mechanisms. It is a basic, cohesive and integral unit of larger social systems. Family is traditionally considered in all societies as the primary social unit of human existence and hence, the basis for expressing and moulding the basic tenets of social behavior and relationship in society. In India, for most part, the traditional family system had survived for centuries without any major institutional alternations or dislocations. However, with the advent of the British and later with the process of industrialization, modernization, urbanization and the recent trends of globalization, the institution of family, especially in urbanized areas started undergoing changes both in the structural features and functional implications in the emerging socio-cultural fabric of the Indian society. Thus, in this backdrop, the present paper is an attempt to study the changing family system from the sociological angle in one of the cosmopolitan hill city of North-East India, i.e., Shillong.*

**Keywords: Urban, Society, Family, Industrialisation, Modernization, Shillong City.**

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**Introduction:** Family is the basic unit of the social structure in every society. Family is the most permanent and pervasive of all social institutions. There is no human society without any family system. History and importance of family, as a social institution is as old as the human beings started living in tribes, communities and societies (Shah 1973, Sonawat 2001). Family is a permanent and universal institution and one of the constants of human life. Family is the first and the most immediate social environment to which a child is exposed. It is in the family a child learns language, the behavioural patterns and social norms in his childhood. In some way or the other the family is a universal group. Family is the first agency through which culture operates on the individual. The family is moulded by the culture, and at the same time, it moulds the culture. D'Souza (1972) rightly points out that the family is not only a product of social factors, but is itself a significant and dynamic force in the creation of culture, social character and social development. Thus, it is the

cradle of future society and also the hub of social life for most people. Apart from being the transmitter of culture, it determines the quality of the next generation and lays the foundation of the child's personality, emotional stability and mental health. As Kardiner and Linton (1939) point out, it is in the family that definite ground work is laid of the basic personality structure.

The word 'family' has its origin in the Latin word *familia* derived from *famulus* meaning servant. In Roman law the word denotes a group of producers and slaves and other servants as well as members connected by common descent or marriage. The early and classical definitions emphasized that the family was a group based on marriage, common residence, emotional bonds and stipulation of domestic services. The family has also been defined as group based on marital relations, rights and duties of parenthood, common habitation and reciprocal relations between parents and children. Some sociologists feel that the family is a social group characterized by common residence, economic co-operation and reproduction. Social scientists have defined family in a number of ways. According to MacIver and Page (1949) "family is a group defined by a sex relationship sufficiently precise and enduring to provide for procreation and upbringing of children". George Peter Murdock (1949) defined family as "a social group characterized by common residence, economic co-operation and reproduction. It includes both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship and one or more children, own or adopted". Family may be defined as "a group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood or adoption or consensual unions, generally constituting a single household, interacting and communicating with each other and creating and maintaining a common culture" (Burgess and Locke, 1950). Rose (1968) defined family as "a group of interacting persons who recognize a relationship with each other based on common parentage, marriage and/ or adoption". To Levi Strauss (1971) family is a "social groups that originate in marriage, they consist of husband, wife and children born of their union; they bind members with legal, economic and religious bonds as well as duties and privileges; and they provide a network of sexual privileges and prohibitions, and varying degrees of love, respect and affection". Mainstream family studies explain family as that unit where :"(1) at least two adult persons of opposite sex reside together, (ii) they engage in some kind of division of labour, (iii) they engage in many types of economic and social exchanges; that is they do things for one another, (iv) they share many things in common, such as food, sex, residence and both goods and social activities, (v) the adults have parental relations with their children, as their children have filial relations with them; the parents have some authority over their children and both share with one another, while also assuming some obligation for protection, cooperation and nurturance, and (vi) there are sibling relations among the children themselves, with, once more, a range of obligations to share, protect and help one another. When all these conditions exist, few people would deny that the unit is a family" (Goode, 1982). Family is also defined as "a group of individuals related to one another by blood ties, marriage or adoption, who form an economic unit, the adult members of which are responsible for the upbringing of children" (Giddens, 2010).

MacIver (1937) have outlined a list of characteristics of the family which includes the following: (1) a mating relationship, (2) a form of marriage or other institutional arrangement in accordance with which the mating relationship is established and maintained, (3) a system of nomenclature, involving also a mode of reckoning with descent, (4) some economic needs associated with child bearing and child rearing and (5) a common habitation, home or household which, however, may not be exclusive to the family group. According to Murdock (1949) family is a social group which performs essential functions that cannot be carried out as efficiently by others in a society and was based on residence, common economic activities which involves co-operation, and biological reproduction. The various functions of family identified by him are: (1) sex (socially approved sexual relationship), (2) reproduction, (3) education (enculturation) and (4) subsistence (sexual division of labour). Scholars also argued that though the family is made up of individuals, yet it is also a social unit, and part of a larger social network. Families are not isolated, self-enclosed social systems but intersect with other social institutions (Goode, 1982). The bewildering variety of family forms, noticed in societies throughout the world in the course of human history, is a cultural phenomenon of considerable interest. Historically, the family has existed in two major forms. One is the extended or consanguine family (of the same blood). The other family form is the nuclear, also called conjugal family (Perry and Perry, 2012). However, these are not the only two forms of family but there are various forms of family that existed across time and across societies in the same period of time.

The above definitions, characteristics and functions of family shows that on one hand family have biological aspects in which man and woman become husband and wife by certain institutional modes. Sexual and affective relationship exists between them. They procreate and bring up children. On the other hand, family has social aspects in which the family members have responsibilities towards each other. At the same time in a socio-cultural sphere the family influences its members by the process of socialization. Family also regulates the behaviour of its members. Thus, family as an institution helps to solve the problem of regulating sexual behaviour, surviving economically, reproducing new members of society and socializing them to become effective members of the society and culture.

**Family in the Context of Indian Society:** Family has been and continues to be one of the most important elements in the fabric of Indian society. The bond that ties the individual to his/her family, the range of the influence and authority that the family exercises make the family in India not merely an institutional structure of Indian society, but accord it with a deep value. The family has indeed contributed to the stability to Indian society and culture. Family in India is the most important institution that has survived through the ages. India, like most other less industrialized, traditional, eastern societies is a collectivist society that emphasizes family integrity, family loyalty and family unity which is reflected in greater readiness to cooperate with family members and extended kin on decisions affecting most aspects of life, including mate selection, marriage and its continuity. In India family has

been a dominant institution in the life of the individual and in the life of the community (Mullatti, 1992).

In the past several studies have put forth the proposition of the existence of a joint family in the traditional Indian society (Mandelbaum, 1959; Gore, 1965, 1968). Most of the micro level studies stated joint family in India as one of the common feature among the higher castes (Gough, 1956; Kapadia, 1956; Cohn, 1961; Madan, 1965; Kolenda, 1968; Caldwell et.al., 1984; Shah, 1968, 1996; Srivastava and Nauriyal, 1993). In the past, Nimkoff (1959) stated that in India, the joint family system is traditionally most common among the elite, the higher castes and those with more property. A preference for the joint family is demonstrated clearly in a variety of studies by urban and rural people, across caste and class (Ames, 1969; Conklin, 1976, 1988; Khatri, 1975).

Historically, the traditional, ideal and desired family in India is the joint family. A joint family includes kinsmen and generally includes three to four living generations, including uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews and grandparents living together in the same household. It is a group composed of a number of family units living in separate rooms of the same house. These members eat the food cooked at one hearth, share a common income, common property is related to one another through kinship ties, and worship the same idols. The family supports the old persons, take care of the widows, never-married adults and the disabled; assists during periods of unemployment and provides security and a sense of support and togetherness (Chekki, 1996).

The joint family has always been the preferred family type in the Indian culture, and most Indians at some point in their lives have participated in joint family living. The beauty of Indian culture lies in its age-long prevailing tradition of the joint family system. It's a system under which, even extended members of a family like one's parents, children, the children's spouses and their offspring etc. live together. The elder-most, usually the male member is the head in the joint family system that makes all important decisions and rules, whereas other family members abide by it dutifully with full respect. The important factor that keeps all members- old and young united in love and peace in a joint family system in India is the importance attached to protocol. The head of the family responds by caring and treating each member of the family the same. The objective behind the formation of any social unit will fail to serve its purpose if discipline is lacking and the same applies to the joint family system as well. Due to this reason, discipline is another factor given utmost importance in the joint family system in India. As a rule, it is always the say of the family head that prevails upon other members of the family. In case of any disagreement, the matter is diligently sorted out by taking suggestions from other adult members. However, with change of times and with the advent of urbanization and modernization, younger generations are turning away from the joint family form. Some scholars hold that the modified extended family has replaced the traditional joint family that does not demand geographical proximity or occupational involvement and does not have a hierarchal authority structure (Nandan and Eames, 1980).

But today, the Indian family is subjected to the effects of changes that have been taking place in the economic, political, social and cultural spheres of the society. The increasing urbanization, commercialization of the economy and the development of the infrastructure of the modern state have brought changes in the composition and structure of Indian family since the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Studies on Factors Affecting Changes in the Family – A Brief Review:** Kapadia's (1955) work on "Marriage and Family in India" forms a significant contribution to family research in India. His analysis of family change is supported by a small survey which he undertook for evaluating the changes in the family relationship and determining broadly the kind and extent to which the joint family was undergoing change. A study by Ross (1961) on "The Hindus in its Urban Settings" showed that how the traditional form of the joint family is changing its structure and relations under the pressure of forces like industrialization and urbanization. The study also revealed that the women appear to be more inclined to lead their life in the nuclear family. The younger generation appears to be less attached to their distant relatives than the older generations. Expectation of obligations also gets changed under the impact of urbanization. Srivastava (1966) on "Social Class and Family Life in India" has studied the effects of class position on the structure and function of urban family and observed that modern forces do not influence all the classes in an identical manner. The upper class has proved to be more favorable and liberal towards various changes in different channels of the society. The proclivity in this behalf, demonstrated by the middle class has been more than satisfactory. This change, however, is not catching up with families placed in lower class of society with the same vigor and zeal. The overall analysis regarding the extent of tradition and modernity indicates that people are neither more traditional nor more modern; they are in a transitional phase. Gore's (1968) study on "Urbanization and Family Change" is a sociological study of the nature and extent of change in family relationships among the Agarwals, a business community in and around Delhi, under the possible impact of industrialization and urbanization. This study was an attempt to see the impact of urbanization on the perception, attitudes and behaviour patterns of the family. He has found that the patterns of rural-urban differences suggest that the differences are small on questions of actual behaviour such as size and composition of family and decision making and larger on questions of age of marriage, divorce and family preferences. Ames (1969) conducted a study on the "Modernization and Social Structure" in the steel city of Jamshedpur. The study tried to discover the ways in which the workers and their families responded to the pressures of modern industrialization and how they organized their lives within the context of a modernizing environment.

Sinha (1972) has observed, with modernization and the social changes that are taking place in the country, the structure and role of the family have altered, and interrelationships with it have been radically transformed. Growth of industrialization has radically altered the employment structure with the possibility of individuals going beyond their caste and family occupations. It has also led to the concentration of population in some centres, development of new cities and townships, and migration of rural people to these places in

search of employment. Migration has inevitably led to separation from the family and created a situation in which individuals have begun to resent income sharing with other members of the family. A complementary factor that has led to the weakening of the joint family is the family feud, property divisions and various laws which have made it often profitable, at least economically, to live separately. Uprooting of population due to migration has also generated new values and rejection of many traditional values of which the joint family had been the repository. Gore (1977) in his paper on “Family and Social Change” discussed the role of the family as an independent and intervening variable in the process of social change particularly in the processes of industrialization and modernization. He draws on comparative material from Japan, China, Russia and India and concludes that the Indian case is different from the Japanese as well as Russian and Chinese. In India, social reforms and family changes are viewed primarily in terms of human dignity and equality and not as factors relevant to development and modernization.

Sinha (1982) in his study on “Family Structure and Mental Health Implications in Developing Countries” has taken Indian family as a case and identified the changes that have occurred due to various kinds of development programmes and the process of modernization in the country as a whole. The study also highlighted that contemporary changes is taking place in the traditional Indian family structure, which is moving toward nucleation to meet the demands of industrialization, urbanization and modernization. Sinha (1982) in his theoretical paper on “Some Recent Changes in the Indian Family and their Implications for Socialization” discussed the transitional phase of Indian family and outlined some of the main factors like – industrialization, urbanization, migration from villages to cities, general spread of education, changes in occupation structures, conferment of political and property rights, modification in the legal status of women and their taking up of various occupations and the general weakening of caste as a social force for bringing rapid changes in the Indian family. Bharat (1991) in an edited volume highlighted that today the Indian family is subjected to the effects of changes that have been taking place in the economic, political, social and cultural spheres of the society. The process of industrialization and the consequent urbanization and commercialization have drastic impacts on the family. Migration to urban areas, growth of slums, change from caste oriented and hereditary occupations to new patterns of employment offered by a technological revolution, the cut-throat competition for economic survival and many other economic changes have left their impact on the family and which led to changes in the structures, functions, roles, relationships and values of the Indian family.

Singh (2002) has focused on the changes concerning shift in authority and the position of women within the family under the new urban settings. He has pointed out that with references to shift in authority, the social distance between the father and the son is much less now than before. Those members of the family who earn more and hold high public offices tend to wield a greater say in family matters. Age grade hierarchical authority has diminished in its importance both at familial and societal levels. The constellation of relations within the family has also undergone considerable changes. Kashyap (2004) in his

paper on “The Impact of Modernization on Indian Families: The Counselling Challenge” explains that with urbanization and migration, kinship bonds have been weakening in urban areas. The study also revealed that along with the change in the structure of the family from the traditional joint or extended family systems to the evolving nuclear form, changes have been observed in role relationships and authority among the family members. Norms of interpersonal relationships are gradually becoming more egalitarian and reciprocal. Mishra, Ansari and Mishra (2012) in their paper “A Comparative Study of Changing Family Composition, Structure and Practices in Urban Area of Kanpur City” concludes that majority of families of middle socio-economic status has brought about radical changes in family composition, family structure and family practices. Lal (2017) conducted a study in Bhota Town of District Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh on changing family composition, structure and practices and came to the conclusion that majority of the families have brought very basic and important changes in the composition and structure of the family. These changes were viewed in the form of status, role, power, relationships, family practices and marriage patterns.

**Methodology of Study:** Family in India is often understood as an ideal homogenous unit with strong coping mechanisms. It is a basic, cohesive and integral unit of the larger social system. Moreover, families in a large and culturally diverse country such as India have plurality of forms that vary with class, ethnicity, and individual choices. Its members are bound by interpersonal relationships in a wider network of role and social relations. The family is the basic and important unit of society because of the role it plays in generation of human capital resources and the power that is vested in it to influence individual, household and community behaviour (Sriram, 1993).

However, from the last few decades’ family in India has been undergoing rapid changes in both structure and functions due to a plethora of techno-economic and socio-cultural processes like - urbanization, industrialization, globalization, migration of population from villages to cities and better educational opportunities, consequent exposure to western ideals and norms, changes in occupational structures, conferment of political and property rights, women’s movement for equal rights and status and the general weakening of castes as a social force, are erecting far-reaching effects on the Indian families. The main areas in which changes have occurred are from joint to nuclear family unit, alterations in family obligations, hierarchy, power structure and decision-making, familial interrelationships, attitudinal and value changes and differences in child-rearing and socialization practices. These changes are more visible in the urban areas where constrains in sharing limited resources and increasing cost of living are encouraging more individualistic orientations among people. Further, participation of women in the workforce outside the home has created a drastic change in the whole family scenario. The family invasion by television, internet, mobile phone, video culture and growing consumerism has further helped the process of value transformation. Thus, these changes in the socio-economic and politico-cultural milieu of Indian society have led to changes in the structures, functions, roles, relationships and values of the family.

Keeping the above conditions in mind, an attempt has been made in this paper to sociologically study the changing family system in one of the most cosmopolitan Hill city of North-East India i.e., Shillong, with the following objectives:

1. To understand the changing urban family composition.
2. To examine the changing urban family practices.
3. To assess the changing values of urban family.

The universe of the study is five urban localities, i.e., Laban, Laitumkhrach, Lachumiere, Mawprem and Nongthymmai, covering the Municipal and non-Municipal areas of Shillong city. The study is based on the empirical survey of the respondents in these localities. The unit of observation is the families of the same income group residing in these localities. Through the use of purposive sampling method 43 head of the families were selected for the present study.

**Findings and Discussions:** The several components which make up the personal background of the respondents in the present study comprise of age, marital status, type of family and economic standing on personal and family level. Thus, there is an attempt to focus on the background of the respondents through component associations.

We have classified our respondents according to age-groups and assume that their views are bound to be influenced by their age. The respondents have been divided into four age-groups. Out of the total 43 respondents, the majority of the respondents that is 18 fall in the age group between 66-70 years which accounts for 41.86 percent. This was followed by 14 respondents that is 32.55 percent who fall in the age-group 61-65 years, and another 08 respondents, that is 18.60 percent fall in the age group of 55-60 years. And only 03 respondents that is 06.97 percent reported their ages between 71 and above years.

Regarding the sex composition of the respondents, out of the total 43 respondents, 33 that is 76.74 percent were males and 10 that is 23.25 percent were females.

The marital status of the sample studied constituted that out of the 43 respondents, majority of them were married which accounted for 86.04 percent. This was followed by 09.30 percent of the respondents who reported that they were widowed. And another 04.65 of the respondents admitted that they were widower.

Regarding the religious background of the respondents it was seen that majority of them were Hindus which accounted for 65.11 percent of the sample. This was followed by Christians 27.90 percent and Muslims 04.65 percent of the respondents respectively. And only 02.32 percent of the respondents were the followers of *Seng Khasi* religion (indigenous faith).

In this study we tried to uncover from our respondents about their place of birth. And it was found that 86.04 percent of the respondents were born in the state of Meghalaya and another 13.95 percent of the respondents reported that they were born outside the state of Meghalaya. In response to the information whether their place of birth was a rural or urban



areas, it was found that majority of them were born in urban areas that is 60.46 percent and the rest 39.53 percent of them were born in rural areas.

The ethnic composition of the respondents under study reveals that, a considerable number of them were the Bengalis which constituted 34.88 percent. Next to them were the Khasis 30.23 percent, which was followed by 11.62 percent of the respondents who were Assamese. Among the others which constituted less than 10 percent includes, Marwaris 09.30 percent, Nepalis 06.97 percent, Oriya 04.65 percent and Beharis 02.32 percent respectively.

Regarding the respondents level of education, it was found that majority of them that is 41.86 percent were graduate. This was followed by 25.58 percent who had completed their post-graduation. Respondents who have completed their matriculation as their level of education constituted for 23.25 percent. And another 13.95 percent of the respondents have reported that they have completed their professional degrees in different fields.

About the source of family income of the respondents it was found that 51.16 percent of the respondents' source of income was from business, which was followed by services both in government and private sector which accounted for 39.53 percent. And 09.30 percent of the respondents' source of income was from entrepreneurial vocations.

An enquiry was also done from the respondents that whether they own a house in the city or not. And in response it was found that 65.11 percent of the respondents have reported that they own a house, whereas 34.88 percent of the respondents have claimed that they do not own a house.

Family is the bridge between an individual and the community. It acts as the communicator of social expectations and norms, mediator of individual and collective interests and regulator of persons in the context of group relations. Keeping this view, the respondents of the present study were asked to provide information about their types of family. And to this response it was found that overwhelming majority of the respondents belong to the nuclear family which accounted for 95.34 percent and only 04.65 percent said that they come from joint family.

It was interesting to know from the respondents that whether all members of the parental family live together in the same household. And in response to this query it was found that 90.69 percent of the respondents have said no, all the members of the parental family do not stay together. Whereas 09.30 percent of the respondents have reported yes, all the members of the parental family stay together.

Our interest was to know from the respondents that at present who control the role, power and status in the family. To this it was found that 100.00 percent of the respondents have said that it is they who control the role, power and status in the family at present. Next a query was done from the respondents that on what basis the role, power and status are accorded to them in the family. In response it was found that 72.09 percent of the respondents have said that it is according to age of the person in the family. And 27.90

percent of the respondents have reported for gender for distribution of role, power and status in the family.

Further an enquiry was made from the respondents as to who enjoyed the greatest authority in family during their father's generation. To this query it was found 60.46 percent of the respondents informed that it was their father who held the authority in the affairs of the family in the previous generation. 20.93 percent of the respondents answered that it was their mother could enjoy the greatest authority in family affairs. The other two responses were grandfather 11.62 percent and grandmother 06.97 percent. This information suggests that at least 20 percent of the respondents belonged to joint family.

Next an enquiry was made from the respondents about their relationship with the extended family. In response to this query it was found that 41.86 percent of the respondents have reported that they have good dyadic relationship with their extended family members. This was followed by having normal dyadic relationship with the extended family which constituted 32.55 percent. Another section of the respondents that is 16.27 percent have claimed for having enmeshed dyadic relationship with their extended family. And only 09.30 percent of the respondents have admitted that they were not connected or poorly connected to their extended family.

Moving forward it was interesting to know from the respondents about their relationship with kinship group. And in response it was found that 44.18 percent of the respondents were having normal dyadic relationship which was followed by 32.55 percent of the respondents who had good dyadic relationship with their kinship reference group. Another 16.27 percent of respondents have claimed for having enmeshed dyadic relationship with their kinship reference group. And 06.97 percent of the respondents have reported that they were not well connected or poorly connected to their kinship reference group.

It was interesting to know from the respondents about the marriage patterns of their family. And in response it was found that 100.00 percent of the respondents have reported that their family had adopted monogamous marriage pattern.

Our interest was also to know from the respondents that do their family still adhere to the rules to marriage i.e., endogamy and exogamy. To this it was found that 81.39 percent of the respondents have said yes, their family still adheres to the rules of marriage. Whereas 16.60 percent of the respondents have said no, at present their family does not stick to the rules of marriage.

Moving further it was interesting to know from the respondents that at present what type of marriage is being preferred in their family. And in response to this question it was found that 44.18 percent of the respondents have reported for love cum arrange marriage as preferred type of marriage in their family. This was followed by love marriage 30.23 percent and arrange marriage 25.58 percent of the respondents respectively for preferred type of marriages in their family.

An enquiry was also made from the respondents with regard to the mate selection of their family. The response for this query was that 60.46 percent of the respondents reported that it is always the partner's choice with parents consent. This was followed by parents' choice with partner's consent which constituted 27.90 percent of the respondents. And another section of respondents that is 11.62 percent have admitted that it is the partner's choice without parents' consent with regard to mate selection in their family.

Our interest was also to know from the respondents the preferred marriageable age of both boys and girls of their family at present. To this query it was found that 100.00 percent of the respondents have reported that these days both boys and girls of their family want to get married at their late age, as because first they all want to get established themselves and then only they want to get settled.

It was interesting to know from the respondents that whether marriage customs and rituals are still being performed at the time of marriage in the family. And in reply it was found that 100.00 percent of the respondents have reported that yes, marriage customs and rituals are still being performed to some extent.

Next an enquiry was also made from the respondents to know from them that did any member of their family married against the wishes of the family elders. To this it was found that 74.41 percent of the respondents have said no, till now no family member got married against the wishes of the elders. On the other hand 25.58 percent of the respondents have said yes, some of their family member went against the wishes of the elders and got married.

Further an enquiry was done from the respondents to know from them that whether they think these days mutual love, respect and equality are increasing among the modern couples. And in response to this query it was found that 100.00 percent of the respondents have said yes, they do think so that it is increasing.

An enquiry was also made from the respondents to know whether there was any case of divorce in their family. To this query it was found that 97.67 percent of the respondents have reported that no, there is no such case of divorce in their family. And on the other hand 02.32 percent of the respondents had admitted that yes, divorce took place in their family with some members.

Our interest was also to know from the respondents that at present who take the guardianship and custody of children in their family. In reply to this question it was found that 93.02 percent of the respondents showed giving preference to their own family members for guardianship and custody of their children in the family. Whereas 06.97 percent of the respondents have reported that in their family children are being looked after by others, other than their own family members like neighbours, community centres etc.

An enquiry was made from the respondents to know from them that whether these days the duration of family socialization is decreasing in their family. And in response it was found that 58.13 percent of the respondents were of the view that no, family socialization is

not decreasing in their family. On the other hand 41.86 percent of the respondents have reported that yes, to some extent family socialization is decreasing in their family.

Our inclination was also to know from the respondents that does their family at present performs all the religious functions with sanctity. The answer to this query was that 74.41 percent of the respondents have reported that no, these days all the religious functions are not being performed with all religious sanctity in their family. Whereas 25.58 percent of the respondents have admitted that yes, till today all the religious functions are being performed with religious sanctity in their family.

Next it was desirable to know from the respondents that are the women members of their family given due importance and whether the women have a say in the family affairs and matters relating to buying a property, matrimonial affairs, children education, day-to-day activities of the family. To this it was found that 100.00 percent of the respondents have answered in affirmative against this query.

We were interested to know from the respondents about the disciplinary system of their family. To this, the answer what we received was that 76.74 percent of the respondents have reported that they were following democratic disciplinary system in their family. This was followed by authoritative disciplinary system which constituted for 13.74 percent of the respondents and another segment of 09.30 percent of the respondents have reported that they were permissive to their children.

We enquired from the respondents that at present who takes the major decision in the family. And in reply it was found that 53.48 percent of the respondents have admitted that the major decisions are taken by all the members of the family. Decisions taken by the head of the family was reported by 34.88 percent of the respondents. And segment of 11.62 percent of the respondents have reported that the young earning members of the family take the decision at present.

It was also interesting to know from the respondents that is there equal work participation among the members in the family. To this it was found that 67.44 percent of the respondents have said yes, there is equal work distribution in their family. Whereas on the other hand 32.55 percent of the respondents have admitted that no, there is no equal work distribution of work in their family.

Further an enquiry was made from the respondents to know from them that whether these days do the children have more freedom in the family. The answer received for this query was that 90.69 percent of the respondents have admitted that yes, these days children have more freedom in the family. And only 09.30 percent of the respondents have reported that no, children do not have that much freedom in the family.

Our interest was also to know from the respondents that whether do they think that these days family relations has become more formal than being informal. And in response it was found that 93.02 percent of the respondents have said yes, the relationships in the family are

becoming more formal these days. Whereas 06.97 percent of the respondents were of the view that no, it is not so in their family.

Moving forward it was interesting to know from the respondents that whether these days caring of old age parents is decreasing in the family. The answer for this query was that 74.41 percent of the respondents have said that yes, these days the caring of old age parents in the family is decreasing. On the other hand 25.58 percent of the respondents have admitted that no, in their family caring of old age parents is not decreasing.

Next it was desirable to know from the respondents that whether they think that these days family is losing its recreational functions. To this query it was found that 100.00 percent of the respondents have said yes, at present time families are losing its recreational functions.

Moving forward it was interesting to know from the respondents that whether their family is losing its grip on various family members at present. In reply it was found that 100.00 percent of the respondents agreed to it and said that yes, at present time their family is losing its grip on various members.

Our next query was to know from the respondents that whether at present the various family members of their family are pulling in different directions. In response to this query it was found that 95.34 percent of the respondents have said yes, at present the various members of their family are pulled into different directions. On the other hand 04.65 percent of the respondents have said no, they do not think so that the various members of their family are being pulled into different directions.

It was interesting to know from the respondents that whether they take any suggestions relating to family matters from the younger members of their family. To this it was found that 81.39 percent of the respondents have said yes, at times they do take suggestions from the younger members of their family. And 18.60 percent of the respondents have reported that no, they do not take any suggestions relating to family matters from the younger members of their family.

We were interested to know from the respondents that whether these days the families are becoming more self-centered. In reply to this question it was found that 93.02 percent of the respondents have said yes, these days' families are becoming more self-centered. On the other hand 06.97 percent of the respondents have reported that no, they do not think that families are becoming self-centred these days'.

Our next interest was to know from the respondents that whether these days individual freedom is increasing more among the family members. And the answer for this query was that 100.00 percent of the respondents have stated in affirmative, yes, individual freedom is increasing among the family members these days.

An enquiry was done from the respondents to know from them that whether they think these days the concept of family is narrowing down. And in response it was found that

72.09 percent of the respondents have said no, they do not think that it is narrowing down. Another 16.27 percent of the respondents have claimed that yes, it is narrowing down. And 11.62 percent of the respondents have admitted that they do not know whether it is narrowing down or not.

Our inclination was also to know from the respondents that whether at present has there been any change in the status and role of the various members in their family. The response received for this query was that 100.00 percent of the respondents have said yes; these days there is a change in the status and role of the various family members in their family.

We were inquisitive to find out from our respondents about their mutual relationship among the different members of their family. In response to this query it was found that 39.53 percent of the respondents have revealed to have intimate relations. This was followed by formal relation 30.23 percent and very intimate relation 25.58 percent of the respondents respectively for this particular query. And 04.65 percent of the respondents have reported to have bitter relation among the members of their family.

Further an enquiry was done from the respondents to know whether they could always maintain the familial needs of their family. And in response it was found that 83.72 percent of the respondents have reported that yes, they could able to fulfill their familial needs. Whereas 16.27 percent of the respondents claimed that at times they are unable to fulfill their familial needs, due to high market price, etc.

It was interesting to know from the respondents that whether these days their family members prefer to be more attached and close with friends rather than with their own relatives. To this query it was found that 60.46 percent of the respondents have said yes, their family members are more attached and close with their friend circle rather than their own relatives these days. And on the other hand 39.53 percent of the respondents revealed that no, still their family members are not that attached and close with their friends rather they are more close and attached with their own relatives only.

An enquiry was also made from the respondents to know from them that whether still their family is united and there is no disharmony in the family. And in reply it was found that 83.72 percent of the respondents have admitted that still their family is united and there is no disharmony as such in their family. On the other hand 16.27 percent of the respondents have reported that at present disharmony prevails in their family.

It was interesting to know from the respondents that whether these days is there any change in the family entertainment. To this it was found that 100.00 percent of the respondents have revealed that yes, these days the family entertainment has changed a lot and almost all the family members are always busy with Television, Social Media, Video Game, Laptop, Online Shopping, Kitty Party etc.

An enquiry was also done from the respondents to know on which accounts usually they have their family re-union. And in response to this query it was found that 44.18 percent of the respondents have reported that it is during holidays usually there is family re-union.

This was followed by religious festivals 27.90 percent and marriage and other ritual ceremony by another 18.60 percent of the respondents respectively for their family re-union. A segment of respondents revealed that at present there is no family re-union of their family. And 02.32 percent of the respondents did not give any reply for this query.

Lastly, our interest was to know from the respondents that whether in their family still the head of the family is given due importance and being respected by all the members. To this it was found that 79.06 percent of the respondents have said yes, still their head of the family is given due importance and respect by all their family members. And on the other hand 20.93 percent of the respondents have reported that these days the head of their family is not given due respect and importance as always their family members have different views and also at the same time the young generation is assenting more.

**Conclusion:** Family is a dynamic institution and as such it has always been changing, both in its structure and in its function. The family is the most vulnerable and the most easily modified of all institutions, and at the same time one of the toughest. It bows before all the passing winds of fortune; it is easily crushed by physiological, social and economic changes. And yet, in one form or another it always survives, weathering crises and adapting itself to changes in the environment.

It is the considered opinion of the sociologists that the rate of change in family has been accelerated after the industrial revolution. And it is also very true at Indian context too. The traditional family in India has undergone both structural and functional changes due to industrialization. Though the process of change in a family started since the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century under British rule, it accelerated in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the independence of India. The important forces which brought changes in the structure and function of a family have been the result of industrialization and modernization which includes the western type of education, development of transport and communication, social legislation and urbanization. And the present micro level study which was conducted at Shillong city is also no exception to this. The study revealed that all the families belonging to the same income level i.e., middle socio-economic class has undergone many changes in the form of status, role, power, relationship, family values, family practices and marriage patterns. But at the same time it can also be seen from the study that some of the traditional family practices is still remained untouched in the modern society in spite of the continuous wave of urbanization, modernization and globalization.

Thus, as Wadia (1966) rightly points out that, even in the midst of dire calamities, the family structure and the sense of family responsibilities have not broken down, but have remained as sustaining influences. As an institution, it has shown marvelous adaptability in meeting the new demands of a changing environment. If one looks at the new pattern of family structure and interactions that are developing contemporaneously in India, one is impressed by the adaptive nature of the family as an institution. In spite of some resistance, it is undergoing transformation, however slow it may be, which is adjustive to the new

demands of the changing society. In this process, though the family is changing, certain basic elements have tended to persevere and endure.

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