

A Sociological Study of Behavior Pattern of Single Child Family

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Abstract - The purpose of this study is to the Single child family has been becoming a family norm among a substantial number of people. In an age when family groups are fundamentally changing, to understand the interaction dynamics and its multi-faceted consequences on the behaviour pattern of children seems significant. There have been various stereo-typical beliefs in general about the personality and behavior pattern of the single child as well as about the interaction dynamics in the single child family in the present culture. At the same time, growth of individualizing tendencies in the tiny households creates major concern about societal unity. Family being the primary agency of socialization has a great impact in shaping the new generation. It has been noticed that the parenting style and the socialization pattern undergo changes with the changes in the structure of the family. Hence a sociological analysis of the single child family is expected to reveal many key insights into the socialization process in these new family formations. It has been found that whereas adolescence is proposed to be a period of storm and stress, its appearance is ultimately controlled by the individual socio- cultural surroundings. Hence in the back drop of a relatively new family type such as single child household, study of the behavior pattern of adolescents becomes particularly relevant. As per the empirical evidences, the downward trend in the fertility in India is neither driven by increasing childlessness nor by increasing number of unmarried women. As the fall in marital fertility aiming at moulding of a high quality globalized children have been highlighted as the key factor, it is likely to have substantial effect on the parent –child interaction pattern in the small family. Further, the modern compact family is projected to exhibit a totally new dynamics in the setting of shifting status, power and gender dimensions. But it can be also argued that the intricacies of modernity in many times turn out in effect as ‘King Midas’ touch’. The social worry about the prospect of development of a generation weak in social skills from the individualizing environment of the nuclear family needs more careful research of emerging family configurations such as single child family.

Keywords - Behavior Pattern, Single Child Family, socialization pattern, family configurations, family needs

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INTRODUCTION

When people connect and communicate with each other in their core group, they develop human and social characteristics. Cooley (1964) Charles Horton Cooley

Rapid fertility decrease is a global problem that has affected both wealthy and developing countries in recent decades. In the backdrop of this downward trend in fertility, the single-child family can be considered as a relatively new demographic phenomenon. As a result, a relatively small but yet considerable proportion of Indians live in families with only one kid, particularly in urban areas. A low crude birth rate (CBR) of 17 and a sub-replacement level total fertility rate (TFR) of 1.7 were the outcome of a fertility decrease. Due to Kerala's projected population decline over the next three decades, children will become increasingly scarce. The state's socio-

economic environment is feeling the effects of these rapid shifts, which occurred despite little improvement in the economic sector. The essential facts of social life are defined by demography, and changes in the demographic structure of a society are first reflected in the form and composition of families.

Even in industrialized countries, reproductive issues such as low fertility, below the replacement level, sub replacement level, and lowest-low fertility are well understood and studied. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, several European countries, including Denmark, France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, saw sustained fertility levels below replacement levels. Europe has been a leader in the trend toward low and very low fertility, not only fertility that is below replacement level. A total fertility rate (TFR) of less than 1.3 children per woman has emerged in Europe in the previous 15 years, an

unprecedented phenomenon. Fertility rates in 75 countries and areas (44 of which are located in developed regions) were below replacement level between 2005 and 2010, while fertility rates in 121 countries and areas (all of which are located in less developed regions) were at or above replacement level between the same time periods (2005-2010). Around 3.2 billion people live in the 75 countries with fertility below replacement level between 2005 and 2010. Five out of every ten individuals in the globe live in countries where fertility is at or above the replacement level. This demographic scenario of low fertility was previously assumed to be the norm in wealthy countries. Many emerging countries have seen a rapid fall in fertility during the last few decades. Overall, the developing world's overall fertility rate decreased from 6 children born per woman in the late 1960s to 2.9 children born in 2000-2005. The fastest declines have occurred in Asia, North Africa, and Latin America, countries that have also experienced substantial social and economic progress. Fifty years ago, the fear of population expansion in Asia was palpable. Now, fertility rates are plummeting across much of the continent. Today, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan have the lowest birth rates in the world, with TFRs of 1.32, 1.26, 1.12, and 1.12, respectively. Concerns have been expressed concerning the social and economic effects of exceptionally low fertility in the future because of the rapid drop in fertility in this region.

Over the last few decades, India's rapidly expanding population has been a major source of concern. As soon as the country gained independence in 1947, planners were apprehensive about the predicted population boom. Researchers and policymakers have been concerned about population growth for decades. For example, the government began providing free family planning services for married couples as early as 1952, making it the first country to implement an official family planning program. Hum Do, Hamare Do (which translates to "we are two, we have two") and other such slogans were popularized in the hope that the country with the world's biggest population of illiterates would pay attention to them. Six decades after the country's independence, the family planning program has evolved from a target-oriented approach to one that provides complete, integrated and gender-sensitive services.

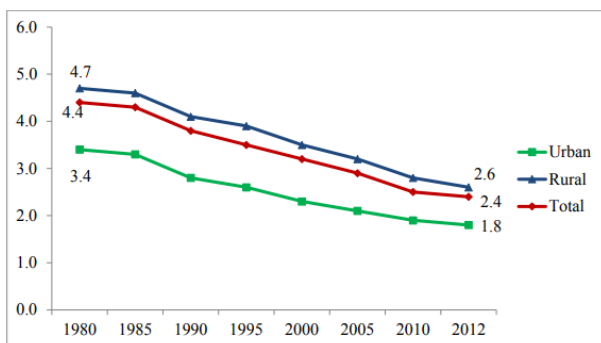


Figure 1: Total Fertility Rate by residence, India, 1981-2012

After decades of declining fertility rates, India entered its third demographic revolution in the early 1990s. TFR in India has decreased from 4.4 in 1980 to 2.4 in 2012 according to the Sample Registration System (Figure-1). In 2012, the urban TFR in India was 1.8. Countries have taken varied approaches to reducing fertility, even if they are all on a path toward a lower fertility rate. Even within the countries currently in the "post-transition" period, there is enough diversity to justify this conclusion. This holds true in India as well. The fertility transition may be occurring in India; however there are wide variances between states and between rural and urban areas.

Table 1: Total fertility rate (TFR) by residence, India and major states, 2012

India and major states	Total	Rural	Urban
Andhra Pradesh	1.8	1.9	1.7
Assam	2.4	2.5	1.5
Bihar	3.5	3.6	2.5
Chhattisgarh	2.7	2.9	1.8
Delhi	1.8	1.9	1.8
Gujarat	2.3	2.5	2.0
Haryana	2.3	2.4	2.0
Himachal Pradesh	1.7	1.7	1.2
Jammu and Kashmir	1.9	2.0	1.3
Jharkhand	2.8	3.0	2.0
Karnataka	1.9	2.0	1.7
Kerala	1.8	1.9	1.8
Madhya Pradesh	2.9	3.1	2.0
Maharashtra	1.8	2.0	1.6
Odisha	2.1	2.2	1.5
Punjab	1.7	1.7	1.6
Rajasthan	2.9	3.1	2.3
Tamil Nadu	1.7	1.7	1.7
Uttar Pradesh	3.3	3.4	2.5
West Bengal	1.7	1.8	1.2
India	2.4	2.6	1.8

Over half of India's major states attained replacement level fertility by 2012, as seen in table 1. Seventeen out of the twenty most populous states have a TFR in urban areas below the level of replacement fertility. There were 7 per cent of ever-married women (45-49 years) with a single kid in 2005-06, according to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) (IIPS and Macro International, 2007). Hum Do Hamare Do (We are two and we have two) may soon be replaced by "Hum Do HamaraEk" (We are two and we have one) as a family planning campaign slogan. The problem is that in a society where high fertility has always been a problem and a concern, little is known about single-child couples. In light of this, it is imperative to study the single-child couples of India in order to better understand their shifting attitudes, family-building processes, and fertility behaviors.

SINGLE CHILD FAMILY- INTERNATIONAL SCENARIO

Single child family has become a natural trend of the fertility decline in developed countries. High proportion of single child families has become one of the main reasons for extremely low fertility in the developed world. One child policy had been enforced in China, since 1979 until recently.

1. Postponement of Childbearing

Other studies have found that one of the primary causes of today's low fertility is women delaying childbearing (i.e. delaying the tempo or timing of conception). According to Jones (2007), there are many factors that contribute to low fertility in Pacific Asia, including the uncertainty of continued employment, conflicts between work and family responsibilities and a lack of appropriate policies to support childrearing as well as the ideology of a "quality" child and financial costs of raising children. Low fertility societies are seeing an increase in the rarity of babies with a greater parity (the third and subsequent births). When it comes to single-child households, both postponement of childbirth and low-parity births are linked to one growing issue that demographers and sociologists have been studying recently. In addition to delaying childbearing, which reduces a woman's chances of having a second child significantly if she gives birth late, many couples are actively choosing to have a single kid. The risk that a woman will not have a second child is strongly correlated with both her current age and the age she was when she gave birth to her first child. Delayed childbearing boosts women's chances of empowerment because it is linked to higher educational attainment, better career possibilities, and greater lifetime earnings in both the developing and developed worlds. When women have more control over the number of children they have and the time of their births, their children have higher levels of human capital, which improves the chances of the following generation's survival. As a final point, women at the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum gain greatly from increased access to reproductive rights. However, despite the fact that female marriageable age and the age at first birth in India are still at historically low levels, several states in India have surpassed replacement level fertility.

2. Work and Family

Women's better status and work, enhanced contraceptives and health care facilities, liberalized abortion laws and rising costs of living, especially the cost of medical treatment and schooling, have all contributed to the current trend toward single-child families. Many women are attempting to strike a balance between their professional and personal lives, and as a result, many are taking on part-time or flexible work schedules, or even so-called "family-friendly" jobs, which can result in lower wages, fewer opportunities for advancement, and a lack of legal protections, benefits, and overall financial security. Maintaining work-family balance can limit women's ability to realize their full potential and power. Having a

family and pursuing a profession are both "greedy institutions" that need significant time and energy investment, especially in the early stages of both. Working women who are planning to start a family tend to employ a variety of tactics in their efforts to preserve a work-family balance. Either they quit their jobs, cut their working hours, or change careers to ones deemed to be more "family-friendly," in order to better accommodate the demands of raising a family while also working full-time.

3. Cost of Child Bearing and Child Care

A rise in the price of a kid was the primary subject of Caldwell's demand theory explanations in 1981. This emphasis on quality rather than number led to an increase in the expense of children in 19th-century European countries. There are few options for those who want to have a modest family because of the rising costs of raising children, he said. In today's world, a youngster must attend one of the best schools possible. All of this has made raising a child a costly endeavor. Another key issue that has compelled many couples to choose a single child is the rise in the cost of education. With the help of macro-level data from four countries in East and Southeast Asia, Ogawa et al. (2009) investigated the connection between expenditures and the number of children in these nations. At the aggregate level, there is a strong correlation between the expense of raising children and the population of these countries. Estimated child-rearing costs were used to evaluate Oyama's (2004) claim that rising child-rearing costs are to blame for Japanese fertility drop. Surveys conducted by ASSOCHAM in various Indian cities on "Rising School Expenses Via Young Parents' Dilemma" indicated that even well-off young parents are deterred from having more than one kid because of the rising costs of schooling.

4. Support of Family

Harknett et al. (2010) found that mothers are less likely to have another child in regions where mothers provide more extensive support to grandparents. This suggests that care giving responsibilities to elderly parents may inhibit fertility choices. Decision of the employed women to have additional children is dependent on the actual support available to them (McDonald, 2001). Now-a-days the support to working mothers also includes support of the institutions along with the support of the partners and other family members.

5. Gender and Family Size

Women who work and raise children are not only the primary breadwinners in the household, but they are also the primary caregivers. That's why fertility intentions aren't solely influenced by women's actions, but by their partners' as well. Fertility decline is largely caused by changes in the roles and behaviors of men and women in the home. However, there is no clear link between the reduction in

reproduction and gender equity. It has been shown that high levels of total fertility and gender equity can be found in nations such as the Netherlands (1.8), Denmark (1.8), Finland (1.8) or Sweden (1.8). Whereas the fertility rates of countries like Italy (1.3), Spain (1.2), and Greece (1.2) are extremely low. When it comes to fertility, Torr and Short (2004) found that couples who divide the chores are more likely to have children. Gender parity in the home is associated with increased fertility in subsequent generations. The modern marriage was most likely to have a second child, where the wife does less than 54% of the housework. At the same time, the link between gender equity and fertility appeared to have a U-shaped pattern. Couples with a traditional work-at-home female predominance are also more likely to have a second child sooner.

6. Infertility problem

When a couple with a child stops having more children, people assume that they just don't want any more kids. Falbo (1978) in his study found that women may have only one child for reasons that are not entirely voluntary rather because of secondary infertility. Rarely do people consider that there may be some medical problem. As they already have one child, couples with secondary infertility are usually less interested in treatment than those with primary infertility.

SINGLE CHILD FAMILIES IN INDIA

Solitary-child families have been steadily increasing in India during the past decade. According to the most recent data, 3.9 percent of all families have only one child (IIPS and Macro International, 2007, as cited in Pradhan&Sekher, 2014). Southern, eastern, and northeastern states with sub-replacement fertility are most affected by this trend. People in metropolitan regions with a high level of education and income, as well as employed spouses, have a larger percentage of single children. This problem is likely to rise in the next years as a result of rising economic growth, urbanization, and education spending. It means that more children will be raised in single-parent households.

Table 2: Proportion of single-child families among women who have completed their reproductive life by background characteristics, 1992–1993 to 2005–2006, India

Background characteristics	1998–1999		1992–1993		2005–2006		Pooled data	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Place of residence								
Urban	4.5	16,650	3.6	10,984	3.6	9890	4.0	37,524
Rural	3.6	21,164	2.9	22,626	3.3	20,785	3.3	64,575
Religion								
Hindu	3.9	30,331	3.1	27,738	3.4	25,304	3.5	83,373
Muslim	2.9	3491	2.6	2752	3.3	2049	2.9	8292
Christian	6.1	2176	3.2	1643	3.9	1898	4.5	5717
Others	3.1	1816	3.0	1477	2.3	1424	2.8	4717
Caste								
Scheduled Castes	3.5	6951	3.2	5837	3.2	3579	3.4	16,367
Scheduled Tribes	3.7	3942	3.3	3242	4.1	3189	3.7	10,373
OBCs	3.7	13,372	3.1	10,491				
Others	4.4	13,549	2.9	14,040	3.4	23,907	3.5	75,359
Wealth Index								
Rich	4.1	20,323	3.0	14,794	3.0	13,375	3.5	48,492
Middle	3.9	7736	2.3	7302	3.2	6617	3.2	21,655
Poor	3.5	9755	3.5	11,514	3.9	10,333	3.6	31,602
Women's age at marriage								
Below 18 years	3.0	22,159	2.7	20,677	3.2	19,248	3.0	62,084
18–22 years	4.4	12,787	3.2	11,083	3.2	9850	3.7	33,720
23–27 years	9.9	2380	7.1	1626	7.0	1349	8.3	5355
Above 27 years	26.3	488	22.1	224	24.6	228	25.0	940

Women's age at child birth								
Below 18 years	2.7	12,933	2.3	12,692	2.7	11,481	2.5	37,106
18–22 years	3.2	18,748	2.7	16,585	2.8	15,323	2.9	50,656
23–27 years	7.6	5045	5.8	3658	6.8	3284	6.8	11,987
Above 27 years	24.6	1088	20.4	675	25.8	587	23.6	2350
Couple's education								
High level of education	6.7	3949	3.5	4240	4.3	2043	4.0	13,830
Medium level of education	3.8	13,585	2.5	9726	2.9	7706	3.8	30,840
Low level of education	3.7	19,969	3.2	19,571	3.5	20,697	3.1	56,804
Women's occupation								
Not working	3.7	19,652	2.7	19,706	2.8	18,867	3.1	58,225
Professional and service	5.7	4572	5.6	1912	5.9	1897	5.8	8381
Agriculture and manual	3.7	13,590	3.2	11,992	4.0	9911	3.6	35,493
Husband's occupation								
Not working	5.6	1037	4.6	1373	4.0	411	4.9	2821
Professional and service	4.6	12,529	3.2	9489	3.5	9677	3.8	31,695
Agriculture and manual	3.6	24,248	2.9	22,748	3.3	20,587	3.3	67,583
Women's exposure to mass media								
No	3.1	6968	3.0	11,209	–	–	–	–
Yes	4.1	30,846	3.1	22,401	–	–	–	–
Time period								
1992–1993	–	–	–	–	–	–	3.4	30,675
1998–1999	–	–	–	–	–	–	3.1	33,610
2005–2006	–	–	–	–	–	–	3.9	37,814
Total	3.9	37,814	3.1	33,610	3.4	30,675	3.5	1,02,099

Table 3: Proportion of single-child families among women who have completed their reproductive life, India and selected states, 1992–1993 to 2005–2006.

India and States	Total	2005–2006		Total	1998–1999		Total	1992–1993	
		Urban	Rural		Urban	Rural		Urban	Rural
Andhra Pradesh	5.7	5.2	5.9	3.8	4.6	3.6	5.2	5.7	5.0
Karnataka	5.6	6.4	5.1	3.6	4.4	3.2	3.4	3.8	3.2
Kerala	3.5	4.7	3.0	3.4	4.7	3.0	3.2	3.0	3.2
Maharashtra	3.3	3.9	2.9	2.2	2.9	1.7	3.0	3.0	2.9
Odisha	5.6	5.8	5.5	4.2	4.6	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.2
Tamil Nadu	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.9	5.8	5.9	5.2	4.1	5.7
West Bengal	5.4	9.8	3.8	4.5	7.0	3.8	4.7	6.6	4.1
India	3.9	4.6	3.5	3.1	3.6	2.9	3.4	3.6	3.3

MODERN NUCLEAR FAMILY AND SOCIALIZATION

For centuries, the phrase "from joint to elementary (nuclear) family" has served as a catchphrase in India to describe changes to the family. The term "nuclear family" refers to a family that consists solely of a man, his wife, and their kids. Murdock defines an elementary family as including parents and children as well as one or more individuals who are not members of the elementary family in question. There is a lack of extended kinship networks and generations in the nuclear family as a result of its modest size. Reproduction and socialization are two important functions of the family in ensuring society's long-term viability. Modernity, with its emphasis on individualism, is widely acknowledged to be the driving factor behind the current family's interaction dynamics and interpersonal connections. As a result, modernity has left its mark on the processes of reproduction and socialization. The modern planned family's socialization process is confined to the interaction between parents and their children.. According to research, youngsters in the democratic and amicable environment of a modern compact family are better able to communicate their difficulties with their parents. Children are now viewed as more valuable than they were previously. Small families may afford to give better material amenities and comforts for their children because they place a higher value on their children and because they have more purchasing power. Those in the urban professional class who have usually embraced the small family norm are said by Shah (1998) to make significant sacrifices in order to keep their families small. They put a lot of money, time, and effort into their children's future professional lives, especially their boys. As a result, the socialization of children in nuclear families can be significantly impacted by their filiocentricity.¹ To put it another way, the composition of a family can have a significant impact on how children are socialized and how they interact with their families. Youngsters used to spend more time with each other in larger families in the past, however in modern tiny households, children spend more time with their parents. In the family, parents are the only ones who may have a significant impact on socialization. As a result, modern parent-child relationships are more intensely emotional.

EMERGENCE OF ADOLESCENTS IN THE FAMILY

Modern society's economic structure demanded a longer schooling period for youngsters. As a result, their time of dependent on their parents also increased. Due to this, we now have a term for the period of time between puberty and adulthood: adolescence. Adolescence is now widely understood to be a time of transition including multiple dimensions of change, including biological, psychological (including cognitive), and social. Adolescents undergo pubertal changes, including changes in brain anatomy and increased sexual interest. Adolescents' cognitive abilities are maturing psychologically. The social changes that teenagers go through at school and in other transitions and responsibilities within their

families, communities, and schools are a last consideration (National Research Council [NRC], 2002, as cited in UNICEF, 2005). 'A phase of life that begins in biology and finishes in society' is a common description of adolescence. Adolescence is seen as a time of tremendous transformation in all societies, yet the perceptions of adolescence vary from country to country (UNFPA, 2003). Adolescents' behavior will be influenced by their socialization in a particular social and economic context. Consequently, interfamilial and extra-familial elements, including marital relationship, economic and social resources, family structure etc. influence the changes associated with adolescence. In the past, adolescence has been viewed as a transitional time toward adulthood. Like Erickson, psychoanalysts consider it as a moment of identity crisis, during which the individual must build a personal identity. Families have an important role in this shift from childhood dependent to maturity self-sufficiency. The modern nuclear family's extended span of childhood and adolescence has resulted in significant interaction dynamics between parents and their offspring. Adolescence may be a difficult time for families because of the potential shifts in family power dynamics. Transitioning from childhood to adulthood can be more difficult in the modern nuclear family because of the close relationship between parents and children. On the other hand, in a small family with close-knit parent-child ties, it may be difficult for adolescents to develop healthy detachment, allowing for their own autonomy and sense of self-identity.

EFFECTS OF PARENTAL ATTITUDES ON FAMILY RELATIONSHIP:-

Family ties, as well as the attitudes and behaviors of children, are profoundly influenced by parental attitudes. Those that succeed later in life came from households where their parents had positive attitudes toward them and had a healthy relationship with them. When parents and teachers have a positive relationship, the result is a class full of happy, outgoing kids who don't have a lot of worries and who work together to make the group a better place. Unhappy parent-child connections, on the other hand, are the most common cause of children with poor adjustment. When a child is deprived of parental attention and affection, he or she craves it and is terrified of being left out. Furthermore, they have a tendency to go out of their way to accommodate the needs of others. Compensation and an attempt to buy love at any price are all that this is. A child's relationship with his or her grandparents and other relatives is influenced by his or her parents' attitude toward them, as well as the parent-child relationship itself. In the same way, they have an impact on relationships within families. Resentment and hostility are common among siblings when their parents demonstrate preference for one of them. They tend to band together in open animosity towards the youngster who is not favored, and this can be dangerous. When parents abuse their power, their children band together to rebel

against them, displaying little regard or compassion for them in the process. The relationship between a child and his or her parents is influenced by how the youngster is treated by his or her parents. In this relationship, it is the child that initiates the conversation rather than the parent. Respect for parents can be eroded if parents, for example, are indulgent with their children or show submission to them. Instead, they act irrationally and disregard the rights of their fellow family members. When this happens, family members' relationships suffer, and the atmosphere in the house becomes one of perpetual conflict. Parents who allow their children to take control of their lives tend to develop resentment toward them because they believe their children have little regard for or love for them. In turn, this has an adverse effect on their children's well-being and worsens the already strained family ties.

CONCLUSION

The decreasing of family size is not only a demographic issue. Any change in the size and structure of the institution of family lead to consequent changes in the interaction dynamics. As the nature of relationship and the accompanying behavior pattern of the members of the family are dependent on the interaction dynamics in the family, a sociological analysis of the behavior pattern of the adolescents in the single kid family presents a rewarding undertaking. The behavior pattern of the teenagers of single child families in this study is characterized by close attachment and dependency with the parents. It has been proposed that autonomy, individuation and dissociation are the fundamental aspects in the process by which teenagers explore their surroundings and form an adult identity. This concept argues that experiences of emotional autonomy are adaptive, that teenagers who have these feelings are in some respect more competent and well-adjusted than their classmates. In this view, the high degree of adolescent dependency and attachment upon the parents identified in the case of single children under study poses severe problems regarding their independent identity construction. The continuous observation of the teenagers' activities in the context of protective parenting combined with helicopter parenting as well as parental dependency has been negatively damaging the agency of the adolescents in the single child household.

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