



Breaking traditions: understanding the rise of nuclear families in Haryana

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Abstract

This paper, titled "Breaking Traditions: Understanding the Rise of Nuclear Families in Haryana," explores the shifting dynamics of family structures in Haryana, a state deeply rooted in traditional joint family systems. Using data from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2022-23, the study examines the prevalence of nuclear and joint families across different social groups and sectors. The analysis reveals a clear trend towards nuclear families, especially in urban areas, driven by factors such as economic development, urbanization, and rising education levels. The study also employs logistic regression to identify socio-economic determinants influencing this shift. The findings indicate that higher household income, education, and urban residence significantly increase the likelihood of nuclear family structures, while traditional social groups and self-employment are associated with the persistence of joint families, particularly in rural areas. These results have important implications for social policy and family welfare programs in Haryana, highlighting the need to address the diverse needs of evolving family structures in the state.

Keywords: nuclear families, joint families, Haryana, socio-economic determinants, family structure, urbanization

Introduction

The family structure in India has traditionally been rooted in the concept of joint families, where multiple generations live together under one roof, sharing resources and responsibilities. This model has long been considered the bedrock of Indian society, particularly in rural areas where agricultural economies have thrived on collective living and cooperative labor. The joint family system has not only provided economic security but has also served as a social safety net, fostering interdependence and strong kinship bonds (Nayar, 2023) ^[1].

However, over the past few decades, India has witnessed significant transformations in its social and economic landscape, leading to a gradual decline in the prevalence of joint families. The forces of modernization, urbanization, and economic liberalization have catalyzed a shift towards nuclear families, particularly in urban areas. This transition is marked by a movement away from the traditional collective living arrangements towards smaller, more autonomous family units. Economic factors such as increased mobility, rising living costs, and the pursuit of individual aspirations have further contributed to this trend (Sharma & Kaur, 2017) ^[2].

In the state of Haryana, known for its distinct socio-economic profile and deeply rooted cultural practices, the rise of nuclear families is particularly noteworthy. Haryana's rapid economic development, driven by industrialization and agricultural advancements, has brought about profound changes in its social fabric. The traditional joint family system, while still prevalent in many parts, is increasingly giving way to nuclear families, especially in urban and peri-urban areas. This shift reflects broader trends in Indian society but is also shaped by the unique

dynamics of Haryana's socio-economic environment, including land fragmentation, migration, and changing gender roles (Dave, 2020) ^[3].

Understanding the changing family structures in Haryana is crucial for gaining insights into broader sociological and policy implications. As family dynamics evolve, they influence various aspects of life, including social security, elder care, and gender relations. Analyzing these trends in Haryana can offer valuable perspectives on the future of family systems in India, particularly in states undergoing rapid economic and social transformations.

Literature review

Nayar (2023) ^[1] highlights that the family structure in India has traditionally been characterized by the joint family system, a socio-cultural institution where extended family members, often spanning multiple generations, live together under one roof. This system has been especially prevalent in rural areas and has historically served as the foundation of Indian society, providing not only economic stability but also acting as a robust social safety net. In a joint family, resources, responsibilities, and social roles are shared among members, fostering a strong sense of interdependence and kinship. This arrangement has been particularly beneficial in agrarian communities, where collective labor is essential for agricultural productivity and maintaining the family's economic stability. Nayar (2023) ^[1] also notes that the inherent stability of the joint family system has played a crucial role in maintaining social cohesion, especially in rural India, where the economy is predominantly based on agriculture. The system ensures the

pooling of resources, facilitates the transmission of cultural values and traditions across generations, and offers a sense of identity and belonging to its members. This traditional family structure has long been considered integral to the preservation of the social fabric in rural communities.

However, Sharma and Kaur (2017) ^[2] observe that in recent decades, India has undergone significant socio-economic transformations that have led to a gradual decline in the prevalence of joint families. Modernization, urbanization, and economic liberalization have emerged as key drivers of this shift, particularly in urban areas where the nuclear family structure has become increasingly common. The transition from joint to nuclear families represents a move away from traditional collective living arrangements towards smaller, more autonomous family units. This shift is often motivated by economic factors such as increased mobility, rising living costs, and the pursuit of individual aspirations, which are more easily accommodated within the nuclear family framework.

Pandey and Singh (2017) ^[4] further explain that the process of urbanization has brought about profound changes in Indian society, particularly in the way families organize themselves. As people migrate to cities in search of better employment opportunities, the constraints of urban living—such as limited space and higher living expenses—make the joint family model less viable. Moreover, the pursuit of individual goals and the desire for personal space, which are hallmarks of modern life, are more easily realized within the nuclear family structure. Economic liberalization has further contributed to this shift by creating new avenues for individual advancement, thereby encouraging the formation of nuclear families. The emergence of a consumer-driven economy, coupled with greater access to education and employment, has fostered a culture of independence that aligns more closely with the nuclear family model. As a result, the nuclear family is increasingly seen as a more practical and desirable arrangement, particularly in urban settings where the pressures of modern life demand greater flexibility and autonomy.

Dave (2020) ^[3] offers Haryana as a compelling case study for understanding the rise of nuclear families. The state's rapid economic development, driven by industrialization and agricultural advancements, has brought about significant changes in its social fabric. While the joint family system remains prevalent in many parts of Haryana, there is a noticeable trend towards nuclearization, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas. The socio-economic transformation in Haryana has led to a reconfiguration of traditional family structures, with nuclear families becoming more common in areas experiencing rapid urbanization. This trend is particularly pronounced in urban centers, where the demands of modern life, coupled with economic opportunities, have made the nuclear family model more attractive.

Singh (2013) ^[6] and Sangwan (2019) ^[7] have explored the socio-economic determinants influencing family structures in Haryana. Factors such as household income, education levels, social group, and employment type play significant roles in determining whether a family adheres to a joint or nuclear structure. Higher household income and education levels are

often associated with a greater likelihood of nuclear family structures, especially in urban areas where there is an increasing preference for financial independence and personal space. The correlation between higher income levels and nuclear family structures is particularly evident in urban areas, where economic stability allows for greater individual autonomy. Higher education levels are positively correlated with the likelihood of adopting a nuclear family structure. This trend suggests that education not only enhances economic prospects but also promotes a more individualistic approach to family life, which aligns with the nuclear family model.

Conversely, Kaur (2019) ^[8] and Verma and Sharma (2013) ^[9] note that social group and employment type significantly influence the prevalence of joint family systems. Traditional social groups and self-employed households are more likely to maintain joint families, especially in rural sectors of Haryana. In rural areas, where self-employment and traditional occupations dominate, the joint family remains a crucial social institution, providing economic security and social support. The cultural significance of extended family support is deeply ingrained in these communities, making the joint family model more resilient to socio-economic changes. This resilience is especially noticeable in rural settings, where the joint family system continues to thrive despite broader socio-economic shifts towards nuclear families in urban areas.

Finally, Dhillon, Ladusingh, and Agrawal (2016) ^[10] and Kumar and Ram (2013) discuss the implications of evolving family structures in Haryana for social policy and family welfare programs. As family dynamics change, there is a growing need to address the unique challenges faced by both nuclear and joint families. For instance, nuclear families may require more support in areas such as childcare and eldercare, while joint families may benefit from programs that enhance economic cooperation and conflict resolution. Understanding the changing family structures in Haryana provides valuable insights into broader sociological trends in India. The shift from joint to nuclear families reflects larger socio-economic transformations and highlights the need for targeted social policies that cater to the diverse needs of different family types. Future research should continue to explore these dynamics, with a particular focus on how they affect various aspects of life, including social security, eldercare, and gender relations.

Objective of the study

- To analyze the distribution of nuclear and joint families across social groups and sectors in Haryana using PLFS 2022-23 data.
- To examine the socio-economic determinants of family structures in Haryana through logistic regression analysis.
- To explore the implications of family structure trends for social policy and welfare programs in Haryana.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1-

- **Null Hypothesis (H₀):** Higher household income and education levels do not increase the likelihood of nuclear family structures in Haryana, regardless of urban or rural settings.

- **Alternative Hypothesis (H₁):** Higher household income and education levels increase the likelihood of nuclear family structures in Haryana, particularly in urban areas.

Hypothesis 2-

- **Null Hypothesis (H₀):** Social group and employment type do not significantly influence the prevalence of joint family systems in Haryana.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H₁):** Social group and employment type significantly influence the prevalence of joint family systems, with traditional social groups and self-employed households more likely to maintain joint families, especially in rural areas.

Research methodology

This study examines the evolving family structures in Haryana, specifically focusing on the prevalence of nuclear and joint families across different social groups and sectors. The analysis utilizes unit-level data from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) 2022-23, which provides a comprehensive dataset on household and family dynamics. The study aims to quantify the level of nuclearization within the state and identify the socio-economic determinants influencing the shift towards nuclear families.

Data collection and preparation

The main data source for this research is PLFS 2022-23, which includes detailed information on household characteristics, work status, and social group categorizations across rural and urban areas. The dataset encompasses a total number of families, categorized into three major social groups: General, SCST (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes), and OBC (Other Backward Classes). These families are further divided into two sectors: rural and urban.

To analyse the family structure, the data was processed and several key variables were created:

a) Household income

The monthly income for each household was calculated by aggregating various sources of earnings. This includes wages, salaries, and other forms of income. The total income was then converted into thousands of rupees for standardization purposes.

Family income

The total income for each family was computed by summing the monthly incomes across all family members.

b) Educational attainment

The average years of education among adults in the household (aged above 18) were derived by dividing the total educational years by the number of adults in the household.

c) Nuclear family

Nuclear families were identified as those which contains couple and their unmarried children. Other than this was considered as joint family.

Model overview

The logistic regression model is applied to estimate the likelihood of belonging to a nuclear family based on various independent variables. The analysis is conducted separately for rural, urban, and combined data. The significance levels are indicated as follows: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$.

Dependent variable

- **Nuclear Family:** A binary variable where 1 indicates the individual belongs to a nuclear family, and 0 otherwise.

Independent variables

- **FIncome:** Family income.
- **AVGEDU:** Average education level in the family.
- **Social Group:**
 - "Gen vs SCST" compares General caste with Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes.
 - "OBC vs SCST" compares Other Backward Classes with Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes.
- **Sector:** "Urban vs Rural" compares urban areas with rural areas.
- **Job group:**
 - "Casual Job vs Selfemployed" compares casual jobs with self-employment.
 - "Regular Job vs Selfemployed" compares regular jobs with self-employment.

Logit model formula

The logistic regression model used in this study is mathematically formulated as follows:

$$L_i = \log \left[\frac{P_i}{1 - P_i} \right] = \alpha + \beta_1(\text{Family Income}) + \beta_2(\text{Average Years of Education among Adults}) + \beta_3(\text{Gen vs SCST}) + \beta_4(\text{OBC vs SCST}) + \beta_5(\text{Urban vs Rural}) + \beta_6(\text{Casual Job vs Self Employed}) + \beta_7(\text{Regular Job vs Self Employed})$$

Where P_i represents the probability of being in a nuclear family.

The logistic regression models allow us to assess the impact of income, education, social group, sector, and occupation on the likelihood of a family being nuclear. The coefficients from these models provide insights into how these factors contribute

to the rise of nuclear families in Haryana, with a particular focus on the differences between rural and urban areas.

Explanation of the study

The family structure in Haryana is undergoing significant changes, reflecting broader socio-economic shifts in the state. Data from the PLFS 2022-23 reveals a distinct trend towards

nuclear families, particularly in urban areas, where economic opportunities, education, and modern lifestyles are more prevalent. In rural Haryana, however, the traditional joint family system remains more common, though the nuclear family model is also gaining ground. This trend indicates a gradual transition in family dynamics, influenced by factors such as urbanization, rising incomes, and changing social norms. The variations across different social groups further highlight the diverse impacts of these socio-economic changes on family structures in Haryana.

Present status of family structure in Haryana

Table 1: Family structure in Haryana in 2022-23

Sector	Social Group	Total Families	Nuclear Family (%)	Joint Family (%)
Rural	Gen	1,349,539.5	50.3	49.7
	OBC	1,118,278.5	51.5	48.5
	SCST	957,507.6	56.9	43.1
	Overall	3,425,325.5	52.5	47.5
Urban	Gen	800,699.1	63.6	36.4
	OBC	804,152.6	69.2	30.8
	SCST	468,710.6	71.1	28.9
	Overall	2,073,562.2	67.5	32.5
Total	Gen	2,150,238.5	55.2	44.8
	OBC	1,922,431.0	58.9	41.1
	SCST	1,426,218.1	61.5	38.5
	Overall	5,498,887.7	58.1	41.9

The results are estimated by the author from PLFS 2022-23

The family structure data for Haryana in 2022-23 reveals significant variations in the prevalence of nuclear and joint families across different social groups and sectors. In rural areas, the General (Gen) category has a nearly equal distribution of nuclear (50.3%) and joint families (49.7%). The

Determinant of joint family system in Haryana

Table 2: Logistic regression estimates for nuclear family by sector in Haryana

Term/Metric	All Data	Rural	Urban
(Intercept)	-0.132	0.235	0.152
FIncome	-0.028***	-0.043***	-0.023***
AVGEDU	0.103***	0.091***	0.112***
Gen vs SCST	-0.111	0.075	-0.37**
OBC vs SCST	0.077	0.157	-0.092
Urban vs Rural	0.473***		
Casual Job vs Selfemployed	0.516***	0.28*	0.776***
Regular Job vs Selfemployed	0.298***	0.154	0.508***
Observations	2594	1318	1276
Log Likelihood	-1599	-852	-735
DF	2586	1311	1269
Chi-Square	74.84	75.31	47.36
Probability > Chi-Square	0	0	0
Pseudo R-Squared	0.07	0.06	0.07
AIC	3214	1719	1485

The results are estimated by the author from unit level PLFS data 2022-23. Significance levels: *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Other Backward Classes (OBC) group shows a slight tilt towards nuclear families with 51.5% nuclear and 48.5% joint. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SCST) group exhibits a more pronounced preference for nuclear families, with 56.9% nuclear and 43.1% joint families. Overall, in rural Haryana, nuclear families constitute 52.5% of households, while joint families make up 47.5%.

In contrast, urban areas show a clearer trend towards nuclear families. Among the General category, 63.6% of families are nuclear, and 36.4% are joint. The OBC group has an even higher proportion of nuclear families at 69.2%, with only 30.8% being joint. The SCST group leads with 71.1% nuclear families and 28.9% joint families. Overall, urban areas have 67.5% nuclear families and 32.5% joint families.

When considering the entire state, the General category has 55.2% nuclear and 44.8% joint families. For the OBC group, 58.9% are nuclear and 41.1% joint, while the SCST group has 61.5% nuclear and 38.5% joint families. Overall, the state shows a trend towards nuclear families with 58.1% nuclear and 41.9% joint families.

These findings reflect significant socio-economic changes and urbanization trends in Haryana. The higher prevalence of nuclear families in urban areas compared to rural areas suggests that economic opportunities, modern lifestyles, and greater mobility in cities are driving the shift towards nuclear family structures. This shift may be influenced by factors such as increased individualism, economic independence, and changing social norms. Conversely, the persistence of joint families in rural areas indicates the continued importance of traditional family support systems in these settings. The data underscores the impact of urbanization and socio-economic development on family dynamics, highlighting the need for policies that address the evolving needs of different family structures in Haryana.

The logistic regression estimates for nuclear family structures in Haryana provide valuable insights into how various socio-economic factors influence the likelihood of a family being nuclear. The analysis, segmented by overall, rural, and urban sectors, highlights several key determinants: family income, average education level, social category, employment type, and sector.

Family income has a negative relationship with the likelihood of being a nuclear family across all datasets. Specifically, the coefficient for family income is -0.028 overall, -0.043 in rural areas, and -0.023 in urban areas, all statistically significant. This indicates that as family income increases, the probability of a family being nuclear decreases. The negative effect is more pronounced in rural areas, suggesting that higher incomes in these areas are more strongly associated with maintaining joint family structures. In urban areas, while the effect remains significant, it is less pronounced, indicating a more complex relationship between income and family structure.

Average education level, on the other hand, is positively associated with the likelihood of a family being nuclear. The coefficients for average education level are 0.103 overall, 0.091 in rural areas, and 0.112 in urban areas, all statistically significant. This suggests that higher education levels increase the probability of a family being nuclear, with a slightly stronger effect in urban areas compared to rural ones. This finding highlights the role of education in fostering nuclear family structures, potentially due to greater economic opportunities and individualism associated with higher education.

The social category comparisons show varying impacts. For the General vs. SCST comparison, the coefficient is -0.111 overall and 0.075 in rural areas, indicating no significant difference. However, in urban areas, the coefficient is -0.37 ($p < 0.05$), suggesting that General families are less likely to be nuclear compared to SCST families. This reflects differing social norms and traditions across social categories, particularly in urban settings. The OBC vs. SCST comparison shows positive coefficients that are not statistically significant, indicating that the impact of this social distinction on nuclear family likelihood is not substantial.

The sector variable significantly influences family structure, with the coefficient for urban vs. rural being 0.473 overall ($p < 0.01$). This strong positive relationship indicates that families in urban areas are more likely to be nuclear compared to those in rural areas. This trend underscores the impact of urbanization on family structures, where modern lifestyles and economic opportunities contribute to a higher prevalence of nuclear families.

Employment type also affects family structure. Casual labour compared to self-employment has a coefficient of 0.516 overall ($p < 0.01$), indicating that families in casual jobs are more likely to be nuclear. This effect is weaker in rural areas (0.28, $p < 0.1$) but stronger in urban areas (0.776, $p < 0.01$). Regular jobs compared to self-employment show a positive coefficient of 0.298 overall ($p < 0.01$), with a stronger impact in urban areas (0.508, $p < 0.01$). These results suggest that employment types associated with higher economic stability and formal sectors

are linked with a greater likelihood of nuclear family structures, particularly in urban contexts.

In summary, the logistic regression analysis reveals that socio-economic factors such as education, sector, and employment type significantly influence the likelihood of nuclear families in Haryana. Urban areas exhibit a stronger trend towards nuclear families, reflecting the broader socio-economic changes and urbanization trends that affect family structures. The findings underscore the importance of considering these factors in understanding family dynamics and planning for future socio-economic developments.

Findings of the study

The analysis of family structure data for Haryana in 2022-23 reveals distinct patterns in the distribution of nuclear and joint families across different social groups and sectors. The findings highlight the influence of socio-economic factors and urbanization on family dynamics in the state.

In rural Haryana, the prevalence of nuclear families is relatively balanced with joint families. The General (Gen) category shows a nearly equal split between nuclear (50.3%) and joint families (49.7%). The Other Backward Classes (OBC) group exhibits a slight preference for nuclear families (51.5%) over joint families (48.5%). The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SCST) group has a more pronounced tilt towards nuclear families, with 56.9% being nuclear and 43.1% joint families. Overall, rural areas in Haryana have 52.5% nuclear families and 47.5% joint families, reflecting the ongoing relevance of traditional family structures.

In contrast, urban areas exhibit a stronger trend towards nuclear families. The General category has 63.6% nuclear families, while the OBC group shows an even higher proportion at 69.2%. The SCST group leads with 71.1% nuclear families. Overall, urban Haryana has 67.5% nuclear families and 32.5% joint families, indicating the impact of urbanization and modern lifestyles on family structures.

When considering the state as a whole, nuclear families constitute 58.1% of the total, with joint families making up 41.9%. The trend towards nuclear families is more pronounced among the SCST and OBC groups compared to the General category. These findings suggest that economic opportunities, education, and urbanization are key drivers of the shift towards nuclear families, while rural areas continue to uphold traditional joint family systems to a significant extent.

Policy implications

The findings of the study highlight the need for policies that address the evolving family structures in Haryana, particularly in the context of urbanization and socio-economic changes. As nuclear families become more prevalent, especially in urban areas, there is a growing need for social and economic policies that support these smaller family units. This includes providing access to affordable housing, child care services, and employment opportunities that accommodate the needs of nuclear families.

In rural areas, where joint families still hold significant importance, policies should aim to strengthen these traditional

family systems. This could involve promoting agricultural and rural development programs that support extended family livelihoods and preserve cultural practices associated with joint families.

Education emerges as a key factor influencing family structures, with higher education levels associated with a greater likelihood of nuclear families. Therefore, expanding access to quality education, particularly in rural areas, can contribute to the socio-economic empowerment of individuals and facilitate the transition to nuclear family systems where desired.

Employment type also plays a crucial role in family dynamics, with more stable and formal employment linked to a higher prevalence of nuclear families. Policies that promote formal employment opportunities, particularly in rural areas, can support economic stability and allow for more diverse family structures to thrive.

Overall, the study underscores the importance of considering the diverse needs of different family structures in Haryana's policy planning. By addressing the socio-economic factors that influence family dynamics, the state can better support its population during a time of significant demographic and cultural change.

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