

# Sociological Impact Of Social Change Upon Institution Of Family With Special Focus On Pakistan

Hamadullah Kakepoto<sup>1</sup>

*Family is considered as the oldest social institution in the world. As an institution it performs many important functions and valuable tasks. It provides bedrock for its members. Family as a social institution has directly or indirectly got affected due to the rapid social changes. Technology which is considered as the basic factor of social change has made important changes in the family structure and organization. Nuclear family has replaced joint family system. Schools and other agencies like baby homes have stolen the basic functions of family. Industrialization and urbanization have weakened the basic fabric of relationships. People rush to work in industries than the agriculture. Pakistan is one of the countries of the world where family as a social institution has got a new shape with new assignments. As a result, general masses are migrating from rural areas to the urban. Feudalistic approach of life where females used to be dealt as secondary in social status has vanished to certain extent. This paper will try to analyze the factors of social change and its overall sociological impact upon family. The main focus will remain on Pakistan, however, theories and literature included in this paper is of general nature.*

## Introduction

Social change has a direct impact on the basic structure and functions of the social institutions. Technology is considered as a powerful tool of social change. It has drastically changed the way of life. It has also institutionalized the functioning of the social institutions. The institutions of family, religion, morality, marriage, state, property have been altered. Modern technology has also shifted the industry from the household. As a result, some radical changes have been witnessed in the family organization. This is called in literary language as the 'social impact of technology' on the social institutions (Ralph, 2007). Other agencies have stolen the many functions of the family. The marriage contract is going to be considered not as a

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<sup>1</sup> Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Sindh, Jamshoro-Pakistan  
Email: hamadullah2001@yahoo.com

sacred one but a social contract. Consequently, divorces and separation are on the increase.

No doubt, the technology has elevated the social status of women in the family. But at the same time it has put the fabric of social relationships at stake. Much distress has been witnessed in the social relationships between husband and wife. Religion has also lost ground. People are becoming more secular, rational and scientific but less religious in their outlook. Some inventions have also weakened the very roots of the religion. State functions have also widened in recent years. Criminal activities are increasing and state authority has also become weaker. Nuclear family is considered as a direct outcome of social change. It generally is based on three things. They are the emotional attachment between spouses, maternal love, and a firm belief that the relationships between the family members are more closer and affirmative than the rest of world (Elkind 1992).

## **Theoretical Background**

Theories related to social change and family system are presented in the following paragraphs. These are: The Functionalist Theory, The Conflict Theory, Theory of Modernity and Modernization.

### **The Functionalist Theory**

Functionalism is the oldest, and still the dominant, theoretical perception. This perception is built upon double weights: appliance of the scientific method to the objective world and use of a comparison between the individual being and society. Functionalist approach focuses on the international level issues disturbing income inequality. Particularly, functionalists are concerned in employment opportunities and the pay gap between individuals (Davis, 1945). The functionalist theory highlights the basic functions of the society. It, therefore, has asserted that these basic functions are limited and universal and out of them a variety of structures have arisen to carry out these basic functions. According to this perspective “social change involves structural change and not a change in the basic functions of social systems (Ronald, 1976: 21)”.

The most influential American structural functionalist theorist is Talcum Parsons. He has analyzed the processes and structures that contribute to the stability of social system. He outlined basic four functions that are necessary and need to be filled for the subsistence of any social and non-social system. The first function is that system must adapt to its social environment. The second function is to attain a goal that is to mobilize and allocate the social roles and scarce resources in order to satisfy individual and collective needs. The third one is integration imperative that

harmonizes the various structures and their associated activities, norms, goals, and values. The last function is to reduce tension and the institutions that are charged to fulfill this function are family, school and other social control agents.

From the functionalist court comes a positive and negative point of view. Both points of view see the modern technology and social change as intertwined and integrated process. According to this theory the incidence of social change is normal function of the society. If there is no change in the society then society will lose its importance. The very basic function of the society is to meet the needs of modern technological advances for the betterment of its members. As a result, social changes are basic functions of the society. All the social institutions including family, therefore, need to be changed as per rate and speed of social changes. Otherwise, they will cease automatically to perform their regular functions.

## **The Conflict Theory**

Conflict theory is another important sociological perspective on social change. The theories that put emphasis on conflict have roots in the ideas of Karl Marx (1818-1883), the great German theorist and political activist. The Marxist, conflict approach emphasizes a materialist elucidation of history, a dialectical method of analysis, a critical stance toward existing social arrangements, and a political program of revolution or, at least, reform. Conflict theorists are unconvinced of functionalist viewpoint. According to this view social change is the result of social movements. Society always remains in tension where different parts try to overlap with each other. Thus, conflict theorists argue that the economic system of capitalist countries operate to create and perpetuate a high degree of economic inequality (James, 1993).

Marx (1978) saw the roots of economic and political troubles in industrialized societies within the exploitation of workers by the capitalists. During transition to industrialization, workers—and even those who cannot find work (the reserve army)—realize that their misery benefits the capitalist classes. If the adverse conditions were to persist, Marx theorized that the workers of the world would develop class-consciousness and overthrow their oppressors. Yet, he saw at least two hurdles against the rise in class consciousness: one, that workers would lose their resolve during the process of exploitation, and two, that they might become alienated from the products of their own labour, leading to alienation from their sense of self. In either case, their inability to deal with their exploitation would be self-destructive.

Conflict approach on social change and family is based on the assumption that life itself is a continuous struggle in which members of powerful groups seek to maintain the control of scarce resources such as social, economic, political superiority. Conflict theorists using the Marxist approach believe that income inequality primarily

results from capitalism and private ownership of the means of production. Under capitalism, men gain control over property (Kemp, 1994). Patriarchal system of family where men has been empowered to control women is its outcome.

Conflict theory argues that social change is usually favourable to industrialized society. It is antagonistic to agrarian and traditional societies. It breeds tussle and keeps one institution against the other. Economic betterment when happens not equal for everyone then lust for money increases. As a result, joint family system is going to be vanished for the money minting pursuits.

## **Theory of Modernity and Modernization**

This theory is considered as one of the most conspicuous perspective on social change (Haferkamp and Smelser, 1992). The term 'modernity' has been related to the meaning and significance of social changes that took place in Europe in nineteenth century as a result of industrialization, urbanization, and political democracy. It was coincided to capture these changes in progress by contrasting the 'modern' with 'traditional'. This is mostly clear among nineteen century theorists of modernity. At that time the theorists were quite optimistic in character and based on the ideas of progress. They discussed thoroughly the role of societies moving from one stage to the other i.e. from traditional to modern.

Almost all the theorists explained the changes that took place in Western societies. Later on, they were found attentive to the study of other underdeveloped and backward societies. That took place when the sociological research extended its concern beyond the Western society to study other societies, especially the Third World. Therefore, the term modernity has been defined as the movement from the peripheries to the core of modern society. It has been described as the effort of the underdeveloped societies to catch up with the leading most developed countries (Sztompka, 1994). According to this theory old family system and pattern of life has been replaced and changed with the modern way of life. Joint family system is old system, therefore, replaced in nuclear family system. Old patterns like marriage rituals and socialization patterns are endowed with formal type of rituals and ceremonies.

## **Different Approaches Regarding Social Change and Family**

Change is such an evident feature of social reality that any social-scientific theory, whatever its conceptual starting point, must sooner or later address it. At the same time it is essential to note that the ways social change has been identified have varied greatly in the history of thought. Furthermore, conceptions of change appear to have mirrored the historical realities of different epochs in large degree. In his

essay for this volume Giesen shows that even though ideas of time existed and evolved over thousands of years—ranging from the identification of time as a period of action and a period of living to the differentiation of time according to hierarchical position (the gods are eternal; empires rise, prosper, and fall; humans have a time lifespan), to the conception of time as progress—stability and order were the norm and changes were exceptional. But in more recent centuries the dominant conceptions of change itself have changed. Social change as a concept for comprehending a continual dynamic in social units became salient during the French Revolution and the industrial revolution in England, both periods of extraordinary dynamism. Comprehensive change became normal, and, accordingly, social philosophers and later sociologists gradually replaced the older ideas of natural constants and the contractual constructions of natural and rational order with conceptions of social change, even though precise formulations were slow to appear. For these thinkers social change was "a property of social order, known as change" (Luhmann 1984, 471). Moreover, in the midst of change observers began to look in retrospect to the dramatic changes that had occurred in earlier epochs.

Contemporary theories of social change have become more generalized in order to explain far-reaching processes of change in past and present. In a review of contemporary theories of change Hermann Strasser and Susan C. Randall (1981) have identified the following attributes for these changes: "magnitude of change, time span, direction, rate of change, amount of violence involved" (p, 16).

Among the most persistent themes that appear in the evolutionist and neo-evolutionist literature are those of differentiation, integration, conflict, and, in particular, the relationship among these. The notion of differentiation (or specialization) was central in the work of Adam Smith, Karl Marx, Herbert Spencer, and Emile Durkheim. The same notion informs the work of a number of contemporary theorists, notably Parsons. Yet both the causes and consequences of social differentiation remain unclear. They are explored by many of the contributors to this volume.

One way of organizing existing thought on structural differentiation is to trace the ways in which this phenomenon has been related to both integration and conflict. In the theories of Adam Smith and Herbert Spencer differentiation was regarded as a fundamental principle of change. But the integration of specialized activities was not problematic in their theories because it was regarded as a result that emerged from the aggregation of voluntary exchange in society. Differentiation (the division of labour) also played a central role in the theories of Karl Marx and Emile Durkheim. Marx posited contradictions, conflicts, and ultimate disintegration as arising from the differentiation of economic and social positions in economic systems. Durkheim stressed the need for positive integration in a differentiated society if anomie and conflict were not to become endemic. Some of the important approaches advocated by different writers are enlisted as under:

## **Ferdinand Toennies: The Loss of Community**

Ferdinand Toennies' classic book *Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft* focuses on the process of modernization. Essentially, the Industrial Revolution weakened the fabric of community tradition and led people to associate mostly on the basis of self-interest. While synthesizing various dimensions of social change, Toennies's work did not clarify cause and effect relationships between the variables he studied, and he ignored the persistence of close relationships in urban areas.

## **Emile Durkheim: The Division of Labour**

Central to Durkheim's (1858-1917) analysis of modernity is his view of the increasing division of labour in society. Durkheim did not see technology which is coincided with modernization as the loss of community, but rather as a change in the basis of community from mechanical solidarity, or shared sentiments and likeness, to organic solidarity, or community based on specialization and interdependence. These two types of solidarity are similar in meaning to Toennies' concepts of *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft*. Durkheim was more optimistic than Toennies about the effects of modern technology, yet he still feared anomie (little moral guidance) could result given the increasing internal diversity of society.

## **Max Weber: Rationalization**

For Weber, modernity and technology meant increased rationality and a corresponding decline in tradition. In this process bureaucracy increased as well. Compared to Toennies and Durkheim, Weber was pessimistic and critical about the effects of modernity and technology. He was concerned that rationalization would erode the human spirit.

## **Review of Related Literature**

Godwin (1972) in a book captioned "Change and Continuity" has beautifully portrayed the life, social organization of village, marriage patterns, community brotherhood, and traditional village characteristics and attitudes with key focus on Indian villages. He noted little changes in the occupation of cultivation, with all the techniques and instruments traditionally utilized. The same also applies to clothing, although some changes do seem to have occurred. Godwin reported that as regards the leadership structure in the villages, there seems to have been little radical changes. But what little changes did occur were along traditional lines. The writer

has further noted that as regards traditional village attitudes and characteristics, the changes that have occurred have also been in the nature both of displacement-addition and of reinforcement-reformation, though the relative weightage would seem to be more in favour of the latter than of the former. In the end, Goodwin found some radical changes in family life patterns. He noted that profound changes seem to have taken place and still to be taking place due to the forces of modernization and technological inventions.

Szymon Chodak (1973) in a book captioned "Societal Development" has critically analyzed the various theories and approaches of development. The book is too old but it provides a solid ground towards the development and social change. The book has also forecasted some technological revolutions which in the present circumstances come to be true. The author of the book has presented a revolutionary idea of development with the inceptions of rapid social changes due to urbanization and industrialization. The theories he has analyzed are quite pertinent to the impact of technology in developing and changing the values and norms of the society.

Freestone (1974) in a book entitled "The South-east Asian Village: A Geographic, Social and Economic Study" has emphasized the importance of village as a social and economic unit in South-east Asia. According to him the rural community in villages is the most significant unit so far as the great mass of population is concerned. Those communities are widespread and deeply rooted traditions of democratic election to village offices, of communal planting, ploughing, planting, and harvesting, of land tenure, and of mutual aid among the members of the community. To support his ideas he has presented the data of nine countries including Malaysia. He has also presented the pictures of some of the villages showing the family, communal, social, and religious life of the people. He held the opinion that technology has lesser impact in changing the social life of village people because of adherent and blind faith in out-dated folkways and mores of the people.

Hans-Dieter (1977) in a paper captioned "The Challenge of Diversity: Basic Concepts and Theories in the Study of South-East Asian Societies" presented at the Conference on Southeast Asian Studies at Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia reported an extreme social, cultural, and political diversity of the area. He found dual societies, rural societies, loosely structured social systems, and involution in South-East Asia. In the end he realizes that an in-depth field research is still an important task for South-East Asian sociologists. He opined that a rethinking of basic theoretical issues is certainly necessary to enable a thorough analysis of long-term trends in social change and development in South-East Asia.

Rao Manohar (1987) in a book namely "Social Movements and Social Transformation" has made an attempt to analyze the social movements within the framework of the sociology of social movements. The study of social movements logically belongs to the realm of social process. He has mentioned that ideology is an important component of all social movements. However, the social movements

among the backward classes developed a protest ideology, based on their conditions and perceptions of relative deprivation. He is of the opinion that protest ideology, based on relative deprivation, helps establishing the identity and draw boundaries between the protesting and dominant groups.

Gupta (1992) in a book captioned “Social Stratification” noted the rapid emergence of industrial labour force in South Asia with special focus on India. According to the author although there is complete agreement on the view that in India especially unemployment is widespread, there has been almost equally uniform agreement among industrialists, officials, and scholars that industrial development is seriously hampered due to the difficulty of mobilizing a stable, disciplined labour force of adequate size. The writer recommends that in order to discuss the supply of labour, it will be useful briefly to consider the rural sector seriously from which the majority of the work force initially comes.

Zainah Anwar (2001) in her research article captioned “The Struggle for Women’s Rights within the Religious Framework: The Experience of Sisters in Islam” has noted that the biggest challenge facing the Muslim societies in the world is the challenge of modernity, plurality, and changing times and circumstances. According to the author the reassertion of Islam that has gripped almost all Muslim countries has brought forth different levels of tension and competing ideologies within these societies. She has pinpointed the four issues of concern. First is the use of religion to justify the subordination of women in many developing Muslim countries. Second issue is the women’s continuing failure to enjoy equal social rights that will enable them to accept the legal rights granted to them under the law. Third concern as noted by the author is the failure to recognize the difference between what is revealed, and therefore divine and infallible, and what is the result of human intellectual effort and social customs, and therefore fallible and challengeable. The last one is the belief that the *Ulama* (religious scholars) have the right to talk and decide on matters of religion.

Sumaya Mohammad (2003) in a PhD thesis entitled “Islamic Concept of Social Change: A Preliminary Study” conducted in International Islamic University Malaysia has presented a thorough analysis of social change in the religious context. She has cited different verses from Holy Quran and also put forth some strong arguments with the help of Hadith. Some of conclusions from her thesis are as under:

- (1) Generally change is a universal, unavoidable, irreversible and is a necessary phenomenon. Change is everywhere and happens all the time. It is unavoidable in the sense that it imposes itself upon us. It occurs whether we like it or not. Change is endemic; therefore all societies have to change. Those that do not will disappear.
- (2) Islam has a unique vision about social change, which is not found in other ideologies and religions. Islam agrees with the necessity, unavoidability, irreversibility and universality of change. Therefore, it advocates the



necessity of changing human societies particularly Muslim in accordance with Shari'ah requirements.

- (3) The theories offered by Western sociologists are generally materialistic in nature. The reason is that these theories were formulated to oppose religion in general as well as Christianity in particular, which was against change.

## **Sociology of Social Change and Family System in Pakistan**

Pakistan is developing countries of the world. Majority of people in Pakistan are settled in rural areas. Rural societies are considered traditional societies. The village is the most important unit in the rural set-up. Simplicity, honesty, and homogeneity are considered as the basic hallmark of the rural society. Rural society has own characteristics. It is isolated with limited boundaries. It is small in size. The members of family have group consciousness and have personal and direct relationships.

Among the social institutions the family is the most important social institution in the rural set-up. It plays a decisive role in the material and cultural life of the people. In Pakistan, the family system is traditional in its very essence. Family in Pakistan is well knitted with greater social control over its members. The family as an institution is the full fledged with all the functions and responsibilities.

Due to the caste and kinship joint family system is considered as the ideal one where patriarchal type of power prevails. Father is considered as the head of the family. Joint family comprises on father, mother, children, grand father and mother. Generally they live with other members having the same caste, or some remote blood relationship. Cousin marriage is most common in Pakistan. However, in recent days due to the industrialization and urbanization the drastic changes in family system are observed in most part of the country. Nuclear family system is going to replace joint family system as is happening all over the world.

Generally it is believed that in Pakistan people prefer monogamous marriages. There are strong norms which are compulsory for women to follow to safeguard their sexual fidelity. As the society is traditional, therefore, the land is considered the most precious. Son preference or having more male members is highly desired. According to a survey sixty percent of all marriages in Pakistan are between cousins (DHSL/Institute of Population Studies 1992).

Social values and cultural norms are deeply rooted in Pakistan. Review of literature suggests that all traditional societies of the world are strong supporter of their cultural norms values. It is also noteworthy that there is a close relationship between culture and family's social norms and values (LeVine 1974; Wenke 1984; LeVine, Miller, and West 1988).

Modernization is considered as a process of adopting the modern values and modern mode of living style. In its true sense it is an attempt on the part of people who usually are the staunch practitioners of their respective cultural, moral, and ethical ideals adapting the modernity. It points out towards a change in people's food habits, dress habits, speaking styles, tastes, choices, preferences, ideas, values, recreational activities and so on (Robert, 2008). People give more importance to science and technology in the process of getting them modernized. The modern scientific inventions have rationalized the society in a distinctive way. The whole web of social relationships got drastic changes and installed new ideologies in the place of traditional ones.

There is a sharp contrast and differences over the definition of modern family between the sociologists of the West and this part of the world. As per approach of Western sociologists modern family is the family where mate selection and even resorting to premarital pregnancy is acceptable (Dizard and Gadlin 1990, 5-24). Whereas, in Pakistani local context modern family means the family where all the technological appliances are available and so on used. In Pakistani culture premarital sex is not permissible at any cost. It is totally formidable and punishable.

Social change is although positive but at the same time it has also marred moral values of family as an institution. Family cooperation is losing ground (Dizard and Gadlin, 1990). Social respect of elders has lessened to some extent in Pakistan. Sociologically speaking, discomfort and distress is vehemently observed everywhere within the family. There is a huge gap between material and non-material culture of family. William Ogburn called it 'cultural lag'.

In Pakistan electronic media has glamorized the concept of marriage. It has changed the family in its very essence. Arrange marriages are on sharp decline. Love marriages are on the increase. Clashes on property are common. Parents are not looked after and cared as they used to be when joint family system was common. Cousin marriages are common in villages but in urban areas the marriage bond has weakened to certain extent.

## **Technologies and the Family**

In Pakistan social change due to the use of modern technology has eased life in general. Technology has ushered a new era in the field of reproduction health. Contraceptive use has helped to some extent in controlling the over population. It has also provided the chance to allow the couples to keep the number of children as they want. But as compared to other part of the world contraceptive use is yet to get recognition. Ultrasound check-up has helped to have a good monitoring of the pregnancies for the sound health of the child as well as of the mother.

In urban areas of Pakistan the technology used in the houses is helpful because it reduces labour and saves the time. Now everything is done on machines in the homes. Washing machines, dishwashers, clothes driers and microwaves are extensively used for day-to-day home chores. Microwaves have changed cooking patterns. Now food is cooked within minutes. As a result, more and more females are opting for outside work because they find ample time to do something extra. In olden days, females were too busy in cooking and doing other household chores and found little time to do something more.

## Conclusion

Social change has far reaching effects. It has changed almost all of spheres of life. It has both desired and undesired consequences. It is also controversial. People adopt and accept the fruits and consequences of social change as per their ethnocentric lenses. Pakistan is no exception. Social change has changed the social institutions especially family. Joint family system in Pakistan is losing its ground. Socialization patterns are getting change. Emotional attachment within the family members has lessened to certain extent. Due to the better economic benefits in urban areas migration to cities is on the increase. Electronic media has glamorized the concept and functions of marriage. At the same time social change has also left positive effects on family as a social institution in Pakistan. Females are aware of their rights. Industrialization and urbanization has eased and totally ushered a new family life.

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