

Changing Family Cohesion, Communication and Adaptability: A study

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Abstract

The present study was conducted in Kanpur city of Uttar Pradesh. The aim of research study was to assess the changing Family Cohesion, Communication and Adaptability in urban area of Kanpur City. Purposively 80 nuclear families of middle socio-economic strata were selected for the study. A survey was conducted using a self-structured questionnaire with close ended questions, to collect the data regarding changing Family Cohesion, Communication and Adaptability. Data was analyzed in terms of mean, frequency and percentage.

Findings reveals that most of the families were having Separated cohesion (41.24%) , structured adaptability (42.50) and facilitating interpersonal communication (71.25%) whereas families having connected cohesion (36.25%) and flexible adaptability (40.00%). Only 13.75% families were having extreme Emotional closeness (Enmeshed cohesion), chaotic adaptability (6.25%) and High interpersonal communication (18.75%) whereas 8.75% families were having disengaged cohesion, rigid adaptability (11.25% %) and low interpersonal communication (10.00%).

Keywords: Family Cohesion, Communication and Adaptability, Urban Area, Nuclear Families

Introduction

Family is the foundation stone of society. It teaches us to be social. It teaches us to digest the fact that there is a common interest, which may be more important than individual interest. Thus, it may require to be given up in favour of family interest. It

modifies individual behaviour and cultivates tolerance, patience, respect for others, love and affection, dedication, care and sacrifice. It checks selfishness and restrains rigidity. In fact, a family is the first institution that cultivates social values and social behaviour among individuals. Social values are basically family values written at large. Had the family been absent, concepts like nationalism could never originate. Traditional Asian societies have survived for thousands of years mainly because there has been a consistent emphasis on enforcing family values. Collapse of the family system simultaneously leads to social breakdown. 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. Briefly speaking, these changes in the socio-economic-political-cultural milieu of our society have led to changes in the structures, functions, roles, relationships and values of the family.

With the advent of urbanization and modernization, younger generations are turning away from the joint family form. One of the most striking features of contemporary societies is the presence of a range of family variations, from the most traditional, extended families with strict, gender based sex roles to the modern dual career families based on liberal, equal sex roles and to adults cohabiting without marriage. The term "alternative family patterns" suggests family patterns that result from personal circumstances outside one's control (death of a partner, infertility) or from socio-economic conditions (male migration, work participation of women). Thus this study was planned assess changing family cohesion, communication and adaptability in Kanpur city of Uttar Pradesh.

Objectives

The major objectives of the study were

- To assess the changing family Cohesion
- To assess the changing family Communication and
- To assess the changing family Adaptability

Method

The study was carried out in Kanpur city of Uttar Pradesh. Purposively eighty nuclear families of middle income group, were selected for the study. A survey, was conducted using a self-structured questionnaire with close ended questions to collect the data regarding changing Family Cohesion((Emotional bonding, family Involvement, Marital relationship, Parent-child relationship, Time (physical and emotional presence), Decision making), Communication (Leadership, Discipline, Negotiation , Roles, Rules) and Adaptability (Continuity in Communication, Respect and regards for family members, Clarity in Communication, Freedom of expression, Communicating and listening skills (speaking for self, other, empathy, alternative listening etc.)). Data was analyzed in terms of mean, frequency and percentage.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage distribution regarding cohesion in Family

Family Cohesion							
(Emotional bonding, family Involvement, Marital relationship, Parent-child relationship, Time (physical and emotional presence), Decision making)							
Disengaged (Very Low)		Separated (Low to Moderate)		Connected (Moderate to High)		Enmeshed (Very High)	
Score 8		Score Between 8-13		Score Between 14-19		Score Between 19-24	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
7	8.75	33	41.25	29	36.25	11	13.75

As shown in table 1, 41.24% families were having Separated cohesion (Emotional Separation, Involved with members but personal distance were preferred, Emotional Separation in Marital relationship, Little Parent-child closeness with boundaries, taking joint decisions sometimes, emotionally present for each other and More focus on outside than inside of family), followed by families having connected cohesion: Emotional closeness, Parent-child closeness without generational boundaries , spending time together, having joint decisions, More focused on inside than outside of family (36.25%). Only 13.75% families were having extreme Emotional closeness, very high symbolic involvement and interaction, extreme Emotional closeness and reactivity, Parent-child closeness without generational boundaries, expanding more time with each other, making Decisions on wishes of entire group, More focus on inside of family Decision making (enmeshed cohesion) whereas 8.75% families were having disengaged cohesion (extreme Emotional Disengagement, very low involvement and interaction, extreme marital emotional Disengagement, Lack of Parent-child closeness, Rarely spending time together, Individual decision and More focus on outside than inside of family).

Table 2: Frequency and Percentage distribution regarding Family Adaptability

Family Adaptability							
(Leadership, Discipline, Negotiation , Roles, Rules)							
Rigid (Very Low)		Structured (Low to Moderate)		Flexible (Moderate to High)		Chaotic (Very High)	
Score Below 6		Score Between 7-11		Score Between 12-16		Score Between 17-20	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
9	11.25	34	42.50	32	40.00	5	6.25

Table 2 reveals that most of families (42.50%) were having structured adaptability: authoritarian but some equalitarian leadership, Somewhat democratic and Seldom lenient, Structured negotiations, Decisions mainly made by parents, stable Roles, but may be shared, only Few rule changes and firmly enforced on members followed by 40.00% families having flexible adaptability: Equalitarian leadership with fluid changes Somewhat democratic discipline, and Seldom lenient, Flexible negotiations, Agreed upon decision, Role sharing and making, Fluid changes of roles, Some rule changes and flexibly enforced. Only 6.25% family were having chaotic adaptability: Limited and/or erratic leadership, Parental control unsuccessful rebuffed, Laissez-faire and ineffective, Inconsistent consequences, Very lenient, Endless negotiations, Impulsive decisions, Lack of role clarity, role shifts and role reversals, Frequent rule changes and consistently enforced whereas 11.25% families were rigid in adopting any change in family.

Table 3: Frequency and Percentage distribution regarding Patterns of interpersonal Communication in Family

Family Communication					
(Continuity in Communication, Respect and regards for family members, Clarity in Communication, Freedom of expression, Communicating and listening skills (speaking for self, other, empathy, alternative listening etc.))					
N=80					
Low Interpersonal communication		Facilitating Interpersonal communication		High Interpersonal communication	
Score Below 7		Score Between 8-11		Score Between 12-15	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
8	10.00	57	71.25	15	18.75

As shown in table 3 71.25% families were having facilitating interpersonal communication: Some continuity but inconsistency in continuity, respectful but not consistent across the time to all members, Inconsistent and some degree of clarity in verbal and non-verbal messages , Sometimes discussion of self, feelings and relationship, speaking for self, other, empathy, alternative listening etc were evident sometimes. Only 18.75% families were having High interpersonal communication: Consistent tracing of member, Consistently appears with respect and regards for all members, consistent and clear verbal and non-verbal messages , frequent discussion of self, feelings and relationship, speaking for self, other, empathy, alternative listening etc were often evident whereas 10.00% families were having low interpersonal communication: Lack of continuity, Lack of respect and regards for members, Inconsistent and Unclear verbal and non-verbal messages, Infrequent discussion of self, feelings and relationship, speaking for self, other, empathy, alternative listening etc were seldom evident.

Conclusion

Findings reveals that most of the families were having Separated and connected cohesion structured and flexible adaptability and facilitating interpersonal communication (Some continuity but inconsistency in continuity, respectful but not consistent across the time to all members, Inconsistent and some degree of clarity in verbal and non-verbal messages , Sometimes discussion of self, feelings and relationship, speaking for self, other, empathy, alternative listening etc were evident sometimes). Only few families were having extreme Emotional closeness, chaotic adaptability and High interpersonal communication whereas some families were having disengaged cohesion, rigid adaptability and low interpersonal communication. Results indicates, with the advent of urbanization and modernization, urban nuclear families becoming less rigid in adopting changes, becoming more connected and having facilitating communication within their families.

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