

The Impact of Globalization on the New Middle Class Family in India

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ABSTRACT: In the wake of contemporary globalization, the Indian subcontinent has witnessed a rapid change in its economic, cultural, religious and social settings, and human development. Recognizing the diversity of Indian society, the purpose of the present article is to demonstrate that the emerging new middle class (NMC) family is undergoing significant transformation, with both constructive response and resilience. In such context, the need for inclusive and holistic human development is increasingly solicited. Through an analysis of the NMC family and its economic and socio-cultural distinctiveness, the article shows its emergence and ongoing transformation on the backdrop of the mid-1980s and the 1990s neo-liberalization. In such context, the confident and ambitious NMC has sprouted up across the country with about 300-400 million people and is increasing rapidly. The article, further argues that how scholarly attention and active engagement is essential to effectively engage with the NMC family both in India and abroad as a sizable majority of the NMC are transnational and globally represents Indian diaspora in the UAE, the USA, Europe, and a few other countries. Further, while focusing on the emerging NMC family in India, it also considers the human development of the NMC and the impact of globalization. It is now universally acknowledged that family plays a significant role in overall human development and society's well-being. However, the ongoing transformation of the NMC family poses some serious challenges to the institution of the family and demands appropriate attention and substantial enhancement.

Key words: Globalization, Neoliberalization, New Middle class, Family Predicament and development, Transformation, Family disintegration

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I. INTRODUCTION

The focus of this article, the New Middle Class (NMC)¹ family, is a category not so easy to describe or delineate, especially at this time of rapid transformations that mark the post-liberalization era coupled with globalization. Today, globalization is a dominant driving force and is profoundly "restructuring the social order around the world, and families are the center of this change" (Trask 2010: v). Indeed, globalization is transforming the family, their development, and the institution of family is taking a new diversion due to its impact.

¹The "new middle class" and its plural form, "new middle classes," are used interchangeably as NMC and NMCs and employed to connote the distinctive complex or compound social classes that are emerging in India and not to make distinction in meaning between the two terms. When the term "*middle class*" is italicized; it refers to the Western ideal type of the concept "middle class." One need not assume that India's middle class is like Western *middle class* and can be analyzed by using simple sociological or economic constructs. In much of the existing literature, the 'new' middle class refers to the English-speaking, securely propertied elite and professionals. However, the actual *middle* middle class and lower middle class bear little cultural resemblance to the elite, as evidenced by the fact that 'large segments of the middle class continue to rely on networks of political patronage, party connections and mobilizations, as well as ethnically based social movements.' For further see. Leela Fernandes, *India's New Middle Class: Democratic Politics in an Era of Economic Reforms* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 196.

While studying the linkages between globalization and the NMC family, the purpose of this article is to assess the role of globalization in altering the NMC family institution and its related human predicament and development. The size of the NMC has significant implications as they play a vital role in India's economic growth and sustainability. Indeed, they constitute a sizeable portion of the global workforce, particularly in IT and related industries that have enhanced their identity, influence and global-local exchange.

The subject of an Indian family in its entirety is quite complicated as the Indian family roots are deeply ingrained in Hindu religious pedigrees and ancient traditions that are vast and complex. Therefore, it is highly strenuous to study all aspects in a single article or so. Thus, the focus of the present study is on the impact of globalization on the key aspects of the NMC family and not the entire family institution with all related issues such as interpersonal, social, cultural, religious and legal aspects.

II. THE NMC IN INDIA

The concept of 'middle class' is not of contemporary origin. This is apparent by the fact that Aristotle, "during his era (389 BC to 322 BC), used the term 'middle class' and measured it to be exceptionally central for the very continuation of society" (Pandey, 2009). However, India's middle class development was initiated by the British rule and subsequent introduction of English education endorsed by the colonial era. It was when Macaulay's policy of advancement of western education in English was implemented that significantly initiated the growth of the middle classes in India (Pandey, 2009).

However, in the contemporary period, which is the focus of the present study, the 'new' middle class, is represented as a social group, which is negotiating India's new relationship globally, in both cultural and economic terms (Fernandes, 2000: 88–112). It is of prime importance first to acknowledge that modern middle class is not a homogenous group, for it is disjointed according to by social position and ideology on the one hand and earnings and occupation on the other (Upadhyaya, 2004: 5141–5151).

Madhukar Sabnavis suggests that the Indian middle class is anywhere between 300 to 400 million and growing (2010: 2). According to Zoya Hasan, "A broader definition suggests that the middle class in India is approximately a fifth of its 1.2 billion people. The absolute numbers are still very sizeable" (2013:31). The size and definition of the middle class are subject of incongruity and depends on several aspects such as income, status, identity and power, consumption, occupation, and lifestyle. Hence, there is no single standard definition of India's middle class.

Today, the middle class is defined differently by various sociologists. However, it is largely defined based on a combination of income, education, wealth and occupation and sometimes even on the basis of consumerism, and one's influence in society.

The 'newness' of this Indian middle class is a cultural characteristic that is marked by attitude, lifestyle and consumption practices associated with comparable trends in the construction of the 'new rich' (Beng-Huat 2000; Robison and Goodman 1996) as a social group that is the prime beneficiary of globalization in contemporary Asia (Fernandes, 2004: 2415). Conversely, there are hosts of others who convey through ethnographic research findings that globalization has not benefited all sectors of NMC and others uniformly.¹ They challenge the notion of a homogeneous Indian middle class as evenly benefiting from recent neoliberal economic reforms. They establish that it is mainly upper tier of the NMC who are globalized and upwardly mobile have greatly benefited from globalization. Accordingly, it is assumed that the significant benefits have ushered to IT² professionals and its related industry employment.

Moreover, sectors of the NMC, particularly the lower and middle tiers of the NMC are economically insolvent and have not significantly benefited by globalization. Moreover, a few segments of the NMC including the upper tier, face issues and challenges related to family and overall human development, and even with work-related pressures. These challenges and issues have caused stress, health and related issues and unrest in personal, and in the family and work relationships. According to Vinita Pandey, urban living, and its stress are creating tremendous health problems amongst the NMC and others (2009). Moreover, the lower and middle tiers of the NMC who didn't benefit much with new economic reforms, face several real-life issues and challenges that need serious attention.

III. THE INDIAN FAMILY³

Some social scientists used the term family to refer to a distinguishing characteristic of the social life. The Functionalist's view focuses mainly family in terms of activity and their effect on society (Mahesh, "Family" 15). However, Marxist viewpoint explains the family "as the basic unit of oppression and to envisage its eventual abolition" (15).

The family institution is considered the fundamental and prevailing foundation for the individual as well as the collective human development of society. MacIver and Page note,

Of all the organizations, large and small, which the society unfolds, none transcends the family in the intensity of its sociological significance. It influences the whole society in innumerable ways, and its changes

reverberate through the whole structure. It is capable of endless variation and yet reveals a remarkable continuity and persistence through change (240).

The human civilization is considered progressive; consequently, the definition of family has undergone various changes. Presently, the transforming impact of globalization on the NMC families and its contemporary makeover and related dynamics such as its changing form, functions, and structure are crucial for understanding the NMC and draw implications for the Church in India and beyond.

Disintegration to Transformation: The NMC Family in the Making

Indian society and the traditional joint family advocates social solidarity, interdependence and follow the similar principles of collectivism (Chadda and Deb 299). To an extent it is still intact; however, the disintegration of the joint family cannot be denied.

According to J.P. Singh, Indian society is witnessing transformation as never before, where the traditional joint family is virtually disappearing from the urban scene. He observes that there is an increased proportion of female-headed households, decline in the average age of household heads, rise in separation and divorce cases. Moreover, higher disagreement and conflicts between wife and husband, parents and children are on the increase. More freedom of marital choice, greater involvement of females in decision making, lack of ties to kinship and the mutual dialogue between parents and grown-up children on familial matters are increasingly observed today (2004: 129-133).

Globalization is increasingly spreading the dissimilar forms, ideologies, and even practices of different family patterns and lifestyles (Trask 2010: 21). It's a complicated task then to analyze which are beneficial, and which are detrimental changes that are taking place within the NMC's family context. However, it's certain that the family institution is under severe impediment and undergoing significant transformation.

Changing Joint family and Household Dynamics

The traditional joint family system in India has undergone both structural and functional changes, further influencing and transforming households and families in India (Ganguly-Scrase 2003:544-50). The joint family system in India has been disrupted due to several factors.

Aileen Ross studied Hindu families in an urbanized setting, provides significant understanding about change that has taken place over a period and still continues.

Ross elaborates on Hindu family:

- (1) The trend of family form is towards a breakaway from the traditional joint family form into nuclear family units.
- (2) The small joint family is now the most typical form of family life.
- (3) A growing number of people now spend at least part of their lives in single-family units.
- (4) Living in several types of the family during lifetime seems so widespread that we can talk of a cycle of family types as being the normal sequence for city-dwellers.
- (5) Distant relatives are less important to the present generation than they were to their parents and grandparents.
- (6) City-dweller son has become more spatially separated from all relatives (Ross 1961:38-39).

Although such scenario remains, globalization has intensified family transformation ushering rapid changes. These realities are more existent and swift, particularly among the NMCs as the "majority of them live away from their families, secondly, in some cases, both son and daughter-in-law are working, due to increasingly joint family structure many of the families are not living together even if they live in the same city such as Bangalore (S. Lamb 90). Manisha Jha asserts that such developments and further acknowledges, the change in the family structure, redefined neighborhoods, the notion of recreation, growing caste, and religious intolerance. She is of the opinion that such changes have transformed family dynamics and created a breakdown of the extended and joint families, which has contributed to a crisis of urban middle class (12). Although Indians widely recognize joint family, it also faces increased conflict, arguments, envy, pain, and disturbance that exist within joint families (S. Lamb 90).

IV. THE CHANGING FAMILY PATTERN: NEW FORMS OF THE FAMILY

According to Vinodh Kumar, from the past two decades, urban society in India is experiencing increased transformation in its family relationships and marriage institution due to the fast growth of the public sector, the entrance of global companies and IT and related industries, resulting in both positive and negative outcomes (2013: 67). It's not definite how fast the nuclear family is replacing the joint family structure; moreover, most Indians still prefer to be in a joint family. Nevertheless, as seen earlier, the trend of nuclear family structures is emerging convincingly (Niranjan et al. 623-25; Shah 2005:19-22).

Anchalesh Kumar further explores these change dynamics and notes that:

Due to the influence of Modernization and Globalization, there has been a definite change in the family structure and the original structure of family has been undergoing changes. The nuclear Family has become the fashion and is taking the place of the joint family system. In the past, the joint family system was much prevalent in this community. But in the younger generation, the nuclear family system is practiced at a larger scale (2012:10).

Kumar further maintains that the family pattern has witnessed a significant shift during the industrial revolution (67–72).

The Extended Family

In the context of accelerated urbanization, globalization is significantly influencing the urban society. R. Mukherjee (1965) describes the extended family pattern and its development, he notes:

The ties of kinship bind the individual both to the family of orientation, into which one is born and to the family of procreation, which one founds at marriage and which often includes one's spouse's relatives. The nuclear family also may be extended through the acquisition of more than one spouse, or through the common residence of two or more married couples and their children or of several generations connected in the male or female line. This is called the extended family; it is widespread in many parts of the world, by no means exclusively in pastoral and agricultural economics (S. Rao 21).

Sarah Lamb, based on her ethnographic research in Kolkata⁴, is of the opinion that joint families are still intact, and the majority of India lives in 'joint families'. Lamb further infers that social change is initiated by the young while the old remain secure in cultural traditions and over a period. Although globalization ushered several positive changes, it is also proved to be a threat to the Indian family patterns and functions, values such as the concept of marriage as a divine covenant, parental responsibility and relationship and other such social morals and values. It is also affecting the time-proven socio-cultural norms, family traditions, and values that are slowly displaced and disoriented (2010:89).

The Nuclear Family In contemporary discourses, there has been much discussion about the nuclear family, which consists only of parents and children (A. Kumar 10). However, the nuclear family has a different understanding, as they tend to move away from the joint family and into smaller units, mostly by choice and at times by pressing needs.

Henrike Donner opines that the family ideal, such as the joint family, does not necessarily reflect the actual practices. She comments, "whilst the extended joint family is upheld as an ideal, the nuclear family unit is increasingly taking place, especially in places like Bangalore where middle class employees migrate for work" (2012:2). However, the precise nature of how nuclear families are notably increasing in urban India needs more contextual empirical insights. Nevertheless, the NMC family size is shrinking and changing rapidly (A. Kumar, 10).

Conversely, nuclear families in India are not 'nuclear' in many ways as seen in the Western world. Indian families have strong family ties with their extended families, such as parents, siblings, grandparents and other relatives, although they may be living elsewhere for economic or any other reasons (Thankachan 66). However, such connected unity has now been split and family life is estranged. For instance, in the daytime, children are increasingly kept in daycare centers while their parents are working, and their grandparents are not a part of the family to the same extent as before (Overgaard 40).

One-person Households (OPH)

According to S. Coontz, every society privileges specific family forms over new forms. Although culturally privileged family patterns have certain advantages and are not evenly distributed or accompanied by high costs for individual family members, those who accept modern arrangements for some or other benefits, face great dishonor and hindrances (Trask 2010:22). Even then, according to Premchand Dommaraju, the OPH is on the rise, both in small and big cities and the number of such households is estimated to grow in the next few decades. He further notes that "it reveals the socio-cultural and demographically important social, economic and demographic differences between one-person and multi-person households. Here, elderly females and young migrants who live alone are potential vulnerable groups" (Dommaraju 1239).

In the context of increasing job and business opportunities for both male and female provide financial independence that further distance them from family and their reliance on parents for housing and other such needs (Derne et al. 145-150). Moreover, increasing number of divorcees among the NMC and widows, and widower also comprises such OPH households that are becoming a significant reality in urban India.

Furthermore, the NMC migration, particularly young people, are moving to urban areas in search of new opportunities, which is also restructuring living arrangements (Taylor and Bain 262). OPH is slowly but steadily escalating in urban India and will continue to increase; however, we cannot gauge the speed of increase.

Changes in Family Functions

According to The Columbia Encyclopaedia, the primary functions of the family are a reproduction, economic, social, and educational (S. B. Rao 21). However, in changing scenario, Bahira Trask notes that such functions that relate to traditional notions of family life, work, identity, and the interpersonal relationships are being transformed due to globalizing forces (2010: v).

Vinodh Kumar asserts that the functions of the family are changing where the social and cultural function of the family has undergone significant transformation (67-72). As the family changes, “the functions in regard to marriage rituals, procedures have also seen changes. There has also been a slight change in the attitude of the people of this community regarding widow remarriage and divorce” (A. Kumar 12).

Another significant area where we see the transformation is in the sphere of the economy that relates to earning. Today, the economic and financial authority is not constrained in the hands of the family head but has been disseminated among family members who are independent and self-sufficient due to the economic independence, the influence of modern education and impact of information revolution (A. Kumar 13). Due to these and several other changes, the functional aspects are undergoing a transformational phase that has vital importance.

Gender Relations and Shifting Roles

The family functions are closely related to gender and the current influence of liberalization and globalization are never far from the picture.

In the post-liberalization era, the rise of ‘the modern’, “new’ Indian woman emerged that symbolizes the synthesis of tradition and modernity within a distinctly ‘Indian national identity” (McLachlin et al., 2012:7). However, the notion of ‘the new Indian women’ comes with fluidity and hybridity where traditional and modern is blended as modern women are able to exemplify both the traditional cultural identity of ‘Indian’ and the veracity of changing social arrangement (McLachlin et al., 1).

It is not surprising then that gender equation among the NMC are changing and globalization has altered various perceptions about gender status, role, and privileges, issue of freedom, individuality, the socialization and care of children, the well-being of the elderly, work and family relationship et.al. The gap between male and female among the NMCs is ever declining and new gender roles are being formed and exercised.

V. THE RESTRUCTURING OF INSTITUTE OF MARRIAGE

According to Henrike Donner, there is no one kind of marriage to pinpoint how it is evolving at the moment, she notes that the middle class ideal of arranged marriage is still enduring and has not changed much. Nonetheless, she remarks that “love marriages are on the rise, same-sex relations have been decriminalized, and legislation exists to dissolve marriages, there is still the strong idea that marriages should be arranged, heterosexual, and lifelong unions” (2012:1-2).

In urban scenarios, arranged marriages and love marriages are increasingly deliberated among the progressive, educated and modern NMCs and often presented as contrasting to each other. There is openness as well as the tension between singles and their parents, and the extended family over which kind of marriage should be favored.

Arranged Marriages Substituted by Love Marriage

Traditionally, the most standard route to marriage was “arranged” marriage by parents with or without the consent of a boy or a girl who would be getting married. Today, it’s changing where for some, ‘arranged marriage’ is a “safe” option as some have become cautious with experience and consider that an arranged marriage is secure where more family members are involved in the decision-making process (Gandhi 2016: 1). In such context, it is often observed that “even professional young men working in Western countries fly to India to get married through the aid of their families” (Khatri 638). However, this type of marriage and wedding arrangements are going through a transformation, although, traditions, caste affiliations, and religious feelings are well preserved.

Amit Mundra observes this new trend, particularly, in cities, he notes:

In cities, in any case, more people are coming to realize the importance of allowing the young to choose their mates, rather than the elders make the selection mechanically and in terms of a possible alliance with a prestigious family, without having any regard for the compatibility of the parties to the marriage (3-4).

The NMC, broadly speaking, is considered to be open for love marriages. At times, boys and girls make their own decisions and select a life partner.

Furthermore, Caste and religious backgrounds still play a vital role; however, several love marriages disregard caste affiliation and socioeconomic status (Jacobson 2004 2-3). However, caste plays dynamic a role both in arranged and love marriages as one of the recent findings indicates that just over five percent of urban

India marries outside their caste.⁵ Interestingly, this percentage is only marginally higher than in rural India (Desai 2010:667–687). However, among most of urban NMCs, there is increasing openness as the caste obstacle is not as strong as before and individual freedom to choose a life partner is more significant than before.

“Love but Arranged Marriage”

In modern society and urban spaces, more and more freedom and choices are exercised by the younger generation while parents and society are becoming broadminded sometimes, optimistically, at times, reluctantly.

Subsequently, “the most interesting emerging trend heralded by portal matrimony is that individuals participate much more in the process of ‘arranging their marriages’, as a result of which they tend to have greater ‘ownership’ over their marriages” (Gandhi 2016:2).

Furthermore, in life partner search, at times, even parents are participating; Divya Gandhi notes this new trend:

Marriage portals are advertised as spaces where individuals, along with their families, search for life partners. But how real is the individual’s participation? While it’s true that families are taking on board the preferences of their sons and daughters, it is also true that it is often the parents or other relatives who initiate and engage with the portal on behalf of their children (2).

To substantiate, one of the survey reports indicated 40% of the IT professionals opted for love marriage, several of them later “arranged” by respective parents and extended relatives along with consent of soon to be married son and daughter. Such drift has perhaps restricted the hegemony of caste, customs, traditions and cultural preference that has undoubtedly produced a significant effect on urban communities in India. In recent times, the traditional marriages have been dominated by web-based marriages (V. Kumar 72).

Cohabitation. Live-in Relationship/Marriages

In contemporary urban India, marriage is going through some significant changes with several unmarried boys and girls preferring a live-in relationship. Few, if not many, are living together and even having children and settling down in family life without proper marriage. This certainly goes against the norm of tradition, custom and moral values established in a traditional Indian family.

Conversely, these types of live-in relationships are also witnessing a sharp rise in cases of discord and apprehension. Justice S N Dhingra observed, “Live-in relationship is a walk-in and walk-out relationship. There are no strings attached to this relationship nor does this relationship create any legal bond between the parties.” (My Bangalore 2010: 1). The most significant predicament in a live-in relationship is that no party in a live-in relationship can complain of immorality or infidelity. However, this leaves us with the question, is the entire marriage institution headed toward oblivion?

The ongoing globalization tremendously impacted the NMC family, particularly, in urban India. It has brought unprecedented changes in the Indian family structure, pattern, and functions while affecting the institution of marriage, women’s role and status in the family, upsetting work-life balance and the overall family unit including children and elderly.

VI. THE NMC FAMILY PREDICAMENT AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The NMC family is in transition and despite significant pressures, it is thriving and progressing ahead to achieve their dreams and aspirations. However, the ongoing family crisis and tensions are resulting in discontented marriages, extramarital relationships, youth indulgences in unhealthy habits and lifestyle, and seclusion and depression among all ages. Besides, marriages are short-lived, divorces are substantially increasing, family conflicts and relationship issues have taken disheartened bent. The seeking for separation and individualism among the professionals is on the high alarm. ‘Family problems’ are one of the pressing issues among the NMC and a reason for the rise in the rate of suicides, mental illness and depression along with other consequences. Hence, comprehensive and serious measures must be taken. Failing to do so might have adverse effect on the society and overall human development.

The Ongoing Challenges for the NMC Family

The NMC’s global exposure has resulted in the erosion of Indian values to a substantial extent. There is evidence of resilience and a resurgence of customs and traditions from a section of the NMC. However, the “social traditional values are being undermined; work culture is mostly transplanted from the west; the divorce rate is increasing, suicides are on the rise, and marriages more tenuous; the joint family structure is breaking down slowly into nuclear families” (Patole 84). According to The National Crime Records Bureau of India “‘Family problem’ as one of the leading reason for the increase in the rate of suicides in India. Mental illness and depression are the usual reasons quoted for suicides in most countries” (Thankachan 20).

Although the traditional joint and extended family still persists, the drift toward the nuclear family is gaining momentum. The nuclearization of the family has implications for the society as well as the future of the family-human development as it will affect in alteration of traditional value system, collectivism, interdependence, kinship relations, functional aspects and so on.

Consequently, decision-making in the family, which used to be under the hegemony of the male elders, is slowly but steadily creating weakened family bonds and abridged extended support. Cultural orientation is now negotiated, individualism unmistakably emerging, and kinship ties disappearing. In turn, this leads to the further disintegration of social living arrangements and family environment, while allowing independence, isolation, freedom and personal choice, which is a growing trend among the new generation of the NMC with several adverse consequences. Besides, attitudinal changes, dilapidation of traditional value system, customs, mannerism, that are now overtaken by global values, culture, and tendencies.

Further, the female participation ratio in various professions is positively increasing, especially in IT, outsourcing, call centers, banking, finance and related industries. Besides, the proportion of dual-earning couples (DEC) is also substantially growing. It has enormously altered the traditional and functional role of women, family planning while distressing the family dynamics and affecting children and elderly at home.

Detrimental Effects on the Family: Children and Elderly

The significance of the family lies in bringing up the child to a full adult in a loving and healthy family atmosphere. It has been a time-honored obligation in Indian culture as elsewhere that the child is a gift of God that must be nurtured with love, utmost care and affection within the family and society as a future pillar of the nation (S. S. B. Rao 20).

C.B Rau affirms such developments and comments how it's affecting the NMCs family:

Middle class homes have always been incubators for family values, morality and to instil the instinct for *vichakshinasakthi*(the ability to discriminate right and wrong). That instinct, which over time becomes a habit, is now in peril in a culturally homogenised world. The virtual death of the joint family deprives children of the comforting intimacy and character building proximity of an elder other than the parent. Parental influence, while indispensable, has certain limitations. As a result, externalities - school, street, playground, peer pressure - are playing greater roles in personality development (2).

In such an environment, the vibrant fluctuating children and youth who are brought up in the globalized era are the most complex unit of the family. It is not only hard to track their variant taste and preferences but also poses a huge task to understand them in a rapidly changing youth culture.

J. Webster (2002) maintains that the presence of large percentage of women in the labor force and their aspiration for careers has resulted in escalating concentration to work-family balance concerns (Valk and Srinivasan 40). Studies of working married women in India have indicated that the economic need as being the most important reason for employment;⁶ however, other studies suggest that Family-work conflict (FWC) and work-family conflict (WFC) are more likely to exert negative consequences (Reddy et al. 112).

Shoba Srinath and others in their empirical research in 2015 researched that there is limited data on child mental health in India. Substance abuse among Indian children is growing at a much alarming rate. "The average age of those using drugs like opium, pharmaceutical opioids and heroin is as low as 14.3 years, noted the study which covered more than 4,000 children and adolescent substance abusers across India" (Raza 2013). These and other such issues has created unrest within the family and consequently has affected the overall wellbeing of a healthy family.

The NMC children and adolescents, although enjoy a better lifestyle, education, sports, and other life needs, they face several personal, family and peer-related challenges. Moreover, with regard to their overall health and mental growth one cannot deny further in-depth research.

Regarding the elderly, Bhatnagar and Rajadhyaksha (2001) insists that in comparison to women in Western societies, many Indian women, particularly those in traditional joint and extended families are constrained to care for elderly family members. However, in some joint and extended family situations, in-laws too help women to pursue their careers while taking care of children and other household chores. Moreover, availability of helpers for the child and elderly care and household work is becoming common and accessible. Although daycare and other childcare arrangements are improving, it remains one of the significant hurdles for working women. At times, aspirational, highly educated, pragmatic NMC women find it difficult to stay at home and just take care of household responsibilities. This too has caused much tension among many NMC families.

As seen earlier, several NMC families are opting for a nuclear family; however, elder care is entirely a contentious issue as many "widely acknowledge that tensions, arguments, jealousy, pain, and frustration exist in joint families" (S. Lamb 90). Globalization is also firmly intersected with aging and the elderly where "there is broad acknowledgment in the West that the aging of the population means difficulties for societies in the near future" (Trask ix). There are no such assessments within India. However, currently, India has not many programs and policies in place for the elderly and the several issues they face.

In such scenario, the family life is enormously complex and demanding. There is high stress at work and family issues and challenges which keeps them anxious, insecure and at times exhausted.

Another eminent challenge the NMCs family is facing is family tension, the discrepancy between spouses and escalating divorces. The issue of the relationship between husband and wife within the context of family and society is vast and complex. The challenge of divorce is widely observed among the majority of the urban couples “mainly amongst the higher middle class section of society, it is primarily younger couples who refuse to adjust” (G. Sharma, 2016: 1), besides, “70 percent of the divorce seekers are between the ages of 25 and 35” (Thankachan 6).

How and why is the family disintegrating and resulting in a catastrophe such as a divorce? Dipannita Das indicates that the most important reasons behind divorces are the breakdown of the joint family system, economic autonomy, ego conflicts and high pace and stressful lifestyle together with a lack of conflict management skills (1).

There are several other factors that are affecting the NMC marriage, here are some key aspects:

- Work pressure and stress
- Economical security
- Haphazard working hours
- Lack of time to spend in the house with family
- Lack of cohesion.
- Financial freedom
- Matrimonial freedom
- Financial instability (V.G.C. Kumar 71-72).

Personal choices, preference, independent decision making along with occupation and family pressure are certainly affecting family and foundation of marriage. Marital purity is another significant area that is the important moral basis for healthy marital relationships say researchers suggesting that “conflicting values of purity are responsible for driving people apart while shared values of purity bring them together” (IANS News 2016:1).

Overall, the velocities in which divorces are taking place are shocking and needs serious reflection and appropriate remedy.

VII. THE WORK AND FAMILY SPHERES: THE CHANGING NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP

There is an expanding scholarship on work and family, addressing issues such as dual-earning couples (DEC), unequal gender roles in marriage, work-related stress, and work-family challenges. Moreover, work and family issues are much more complex than many of these perceptions indicate (Trask viii).

Grishma Shah explores the impact of contemporary globalization on employments and family issues and values in India. She notes:

Results demonstrate that respondents living in globalized cities exhibit greater family collectivism than those in lesser-globalized cities... Results suggest that while Indians are becoming more career driven and competitive in regard to work values, they are retaining potent elements of collectivism in relation to family values. Conclusively, in an increasingly global India, young Indians will be less cooperative and less compromising in situations arising at work and their career ambitions but will continue to strive to preserve traditional values of collectivism when it comes to family (G. Shah iii)

However, in such scenario, there is a new trend, where higher percentage of women are preferring professional employments, at times, working at odd and night shifts. There are several reasons for such adjustments, however, most of the times they opt it due to financial compulsion or aspirations, even if it is opposed by in-laws or extended family members. Incidentally, social support may come from an employee's spouse or parents, siblings, children or extended family and friends. Numerous studies have confirmed that such support positively enhances the work-family balance (Valk and Srinivasan 40). However, several public and private sector jobs have inadequate or insignificant workplace support systems that indeed disturb work-family harmony.

Ruchira and Timothy Scrase provide some glimpses of changes that are felt by working professionals:

At the workplace, there are growing problems. People have forgotten how to lead a systematic peaceful life. Everywhere there is chaos. All sorts of troubles are everywhere. Prices have skyrocketed. Life seems to have become very complicated. People were not like this before. People were different, they were peace-loving. But now there is a different sense, a different feeling. I don't know how to explain this clearly, but...it's a feeling I have that we are going through a great change (2009:1).

In the present scenario of globalization, many of the companies in urban spaces function 24/7, The work culture is often vigorous and expects employees to work late hours making them workaholics. Shobha and others suggest that when “the stress levels are high many gets into the habit of drugs and alcohol to keep diverted and amused” (Shobha, Gowda, and Sridhara 9).

Furthermore, the work and economy related challenges further add to such difficulties. Ruchira and Timothy Scrase notes such crucial dynamics:

...for many families, their lives have been made more difficult due to rising prices, inflation, increasing debt, increasing competition for jobs and housing, and a marked decline in overall living standards. While opportunities have undoubtedly increased for them, so too, we find, have their levels of personal and financial stress(2009:3).

Apparently, several NMC families and individuals find their hectic work affecting them enormously regarding interpersonal relationships; time spent together over evening supper time, recreation activities, fellowship with extended family and friends and playing time with children. Teresa Platz affirms that today's young generation finds it challenging to keep healthy work-life-balance (64).

Moreover, although the NMC women have positively benefited by the neoliberal policies and globalization, they tend to face numerous work-related predicaments and difficulties that in due course affects them as well their immediate family.

Varsha Kumari in her research on working urban women points out that:

...different age groups of working women have different kinds of problems and challenges and different categories as married, single, divorced, single parent, separated, have different issues at stake in the workplace. Some problems are definitely common, like mental and physical stress, lack of proper balance between employment and family care, unfair treatment in the workplace, stressful life and workplace discrimination etc. But some challenges are age or category specific, like prejudiced and stereotyped thinking, safety and security issues, ego hassles with colleagues, and the problem of glass ceiling etc. (1).

The majority of the NMC women are in white-collar employment and many believe that they are given proper wages, safety and security facilities, however, this may not be so. There are incidents of workplace sexual abuse and harassment based on gender discrimination. (V. Kumari 28-40). Besides that, various social and print media, and journal reports indicate that women in the workplace usually face mental stress, sexual annoyance, discriminatory practices, safety and security issues (Martin, 2001). Coincidentally, the Indian family and society, slowly but steadily, has begun to recognize women in a different perspective.

VIII. THE NMC FAMILY HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The 'Family problem' is a significant challenge that needs serious attention and a clear-cut understanding of the NMC's critical issues and pressing needs. As seen earlier, globalization has ushered a significant divide among the NMCs. Most of the *middle* and lower NMC are yet to fully realize the benefits of liberalization and economic mobility. The lower tiers along with part of the middle tiers of the NMC have several issues that need to be understood by giving attention to it in order to provide a sympathized support for inclusive human development. In marital discords, several counselors and experts believe most marriages can be saved, family problems settled, and conflicts resolved. However, to provide such help and support, it needs to be addressed and dealt with at the initial stage. The need to engage with the NMC family development is enormous and critical for the wellbeing of the society since the family structure is the fundamental and vital component of Indian society.

Incidentally, these are several deepening concerns as mentioned above and require urgent attention and corrective measures. The deep awareness of such reality itself will be helpful and help to further sympathize with these hurting families and their pressing issues. Besides, the Indian society at large must endeavor to advocate worth and importance of the family institution, the sanctity of life, exquisiteness of marriage and the necessity of the family's wellbeing. It certainly requires developing creative and innovative approaches to engage with the young adult and professionals along with other family members. The society at large with all other institutes and NGOs must step up their programs and projects for them and their pressing issues. This also includes need-based programs and care to resolve peer pressure, depression, anxiety, loneliness, stress, physical or emotional pain, behavioral problems, substance abuse, and unhealthy suicidal habits. However, it will need both short-term and long-term action plans and facilities. Sometimes, parents and extended family are unaware of the dilemma that their children and young adults are going through, while other times, they are unable to handle the situation since they lack the expertise.

Besides, new initiatives and family counseling centers can positively address and help in personal matters, relationship problems or other emotional and mental health issues, through family therapy, parenting counseling, and 'marriage counseling', which is popular among the section of the NMC and other populations. In recent times, as social and mass media platforms are available along with online facilities, such services can be developed and provide in-general facilities and even online services.

There are a few family networks and good models at work in several cities and towns, however, as the need is great, new initiatives and appropriate family help centers are solicited to conduct various need-based activities, seminars, and lectures to handle the pressing issues that the NMC youth, females, professionals and families are facing.

IX. ARTICLE SUMMARY

The contemporary globalization along with liberalization and urbanization, are steering the family transformation. The NMC family is grappling to preserve the whole traditional collective in the modern scenario. However, the essential characteristic of conventional family value system is still existent.

The NMC family, for the most part, recognized as the 'new rich', consumerist, living a comfortable and peaceful life. However, several pressing issues and the level of stress among the professionals and their families are mounting. These issues need to be addressed sensitively with a positive approach in order to avoid further family, health and relationship breakdown and other harmful consequences both for the family and the society at large.

The study suggests that the NMC family is poised to become the crucial segment of the population in urban India, as elsewhere. Globalization in India will continue to appeal to the consumerist, 'glocal' and 'upwardly mobile' NMC. Its influence on the NMCs economic, family, cultural and religious domains will further challenge the NMC's global movements, national and state political, and moral pursuit and ideals, and social dynamics.

¹For instance, Steve Derne (*Globalization on the Ground* 2008) Ruchira and Timothy Scrase (*Globalization and the Middle Classes* 2009), Manisha Jha ("Study of Urban Middle Class Family" 2014), Yogendra Singh (*Culture Change in India* 2012), C.J. Fuller, and Haripriya Narasimhan (*Information Technology Professionals* 2007), and Minna Saavala ("Low Caste but Middle-Class" 2001; *Middle-Class Moralities* 2010).

²The two most important sectors of the Indian IT industry are software and services, and business process outsourcing (BPO) (Fuller and Narasimhan 2007: 122).

³In this article and rest of the thesis, the household size dimension has been considered to distinguish "nuclear family" (one couple and children), "joint family" (at least two couples and children), and "ex- tended family" (one couple and one or more relatives without spouse/s), its explanation is followed. For further see, Khatri 634.

⁴From 1989 to 1990 and 2003-2007, Lamb studied 100 old-age home residents and 34 persons who were living, according to local conceptualizations, "alone."

⁵According to the India Human Development Survey II (IHDS-II) conducted by the National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) and the University of Maryland in 2012. The survey included 35,275 ever-married women aged 15-49 years (Gandhi 2016).

⁶For further see, Srivastava V. New Delhi: National Publishing House; 1978. *Employment of Educated Women in India; Its Causes and Consequences* and Ramanna A, Bombawale U. *Transitory Status Images of Working Women in Modern India*. Indian J Soc Work. 1984; 45:189-202.

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