

An Exploratory Study on the Influence of Globalization on the Modern Sri Lankan Family unit: The Evolution of the Extended Family

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Abstract

The influence of an ever-evolving society extends to every aspect of everyday life. Including that of familial relationships and dynamics. Likewise, the basic social institution of a family unit in turn has a significant influence on society at large. The definition of family has changed significantly over several decades of society evolving in its march towards a more diverse future.

Though seemingly having the common ambition of a more accepting and progressive society, radically different outcomes are to be expected depending on the cultural context of each family. The aim of this study is to understand and bring awareness to how globalization has impacted the familial structure in Sri Lanka. The study will discuss and analyze the impact of global factors on the modern Sri Lankan family unit as well as the subsequent influence on the dynamics within said family units, using a sociological and theoretical framework. The study will also explore how this modern family unit withstands or yields to said changes, pressures and challenges, the pressure on the concept of the 'extended family' and what it means to the future of Sri Lankan society.

Through this research, I will illustrate the geographical, community and cultural context, local family dynamics as well as the complexities societal globalization presents within Sri Lanka. The survey research was conducted using the systematic random sampling method. Questionnaires, interviews and simple observations were utilized for data collection. This field survey was conducted in the southern province, Matara district, within three divisional secretaries in five grama niladhari divisions. The sample of three hundred respondents is inclusive of representations from the urban, rural and tea plantation sectors of above mentioned five grama niladhari sectors. The primary objective of this study is to analyze the changes global factors have on the Sri Lankan family unit and the challenges of maintaining extended families in a rapidly changing society. Through my research findings I will answer the

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questions “what are the recent changes in the Sri Lankan family structure” and “does the Sri Lankan extended family collapse or adapt to global factors”

Keywords: Family, Globalization, Cultural Norms, Gender Roles, Structural Changes

Introduction

Every individual has a biological family, a family of procreation, or both and is the primary institution in society. It is the simplest and the most elementary form of all social institutions being the immediate social environment to which most humans are first exposed to. Thus, being instrumental to their development. The familial unit is often romanticized as ‘heaven in a heartless world’, one’s own personal safe haven from the constant stressors of the public world (O’Donnell, 1997, p.53). However, sociologists find this over simplified idealization an inadequate definition of the complexities of the familial unit. The interest in the influence of society on the family and the subsequent influence family dynamics and units have on society has been explored through sociological frameworks. With major shifts in globalization, ideologies and movements, the modern family unit has changed radically from the hetero normative traditionally constructed ideal. As with the structure, the functions of family units have also shifted. The social, economic, educational, legal, cultural, scientific and technological advances are contributing factors for these changes. Some significant trends and movements can be examined to more thoroughly understand the reasons for the cascade of norm change within the familial. Globalization, industrialization, urbanization, democratic ideals, economic dependence and emancipation of women, declined birth rate, divorce, inter-generational tensions, recognition of domestic abuse, the pursuit of romantic love, sexual liberation movements, feminist movements and rejection of oppressive traditions to name a few. Sociologists in an attempt to fully comprehend the changes, examine the following functions of the family:

- The sexual regulation of the family
- Educational functions of the family
- The economic functions of the family
- Socialization functions of the family
- The recreational functions of the family

While there are radical shifts in terms of the family unit and its traditional functions, certain essential functions remain. Sociologists use a variety of theories to explain the structure and dynamics of families. Functionalists emphasize how the family unit has a purpose to fulfill. Each internal dynamic within the unit thus serving a greater purpose in society at large, as a cog in the wheel essential to keep society functioning.

The conflicting perspective does not view the family as stable and uniform but rather as complex and ever-evolving. This perspective acknowledges that conflict, struggle and hierarchical power imbalance as being an inherent part of family dynamics. Some family members benefiting more than others due to systematic and institutional prejudices. A particularly fortified framework in this argument is the Feminist Theory. The feminist theory outlines how women's subordination and their gendered duties within the family unit are a direct result of the patriarchy.

In the context of Asia, Asian values strictly dictate certain aspects of the familial that are strictly enforced such as hetero normativity, the implementation of religious principles, the maintenance of the extended family, regulated gendered roles as well as an internal hierarchy. However, international movements for human rights have reconstructed what was considered normative in the favor of more liberal and essential steps towards equality (Lamanna & Reidmann, 2009). For example in terms of radical progress in gender equality, with the feminist agendas empowering women globally, women's status in the familial unit has undergone profound changes. Women are no longer confined to the private realm of simply attending to their gendered responsibilities of housekeeping and child-rearing. The better access to their own anatomy, academia, the workforce, as well as political legislation has propelled the feminist movement forward, thus deconstructing many layers of patriarchal restraints. Success in the workforce now being an important component of contemporary identity and wellbeing regardless of gender identity (Jhan, 2005).

In Sri Lanka, the concept of maintaining extended family relationships is tied to dominant religious practices, cultural traditions and community norms. The familial ideologies stem from the worship and idealization of the elderly. The fast pace of modern society leaves little time to invest in such relationships. Which begs the question of whether extended families are a thing of the past or have managed to evolve better suit the rapid pace. The social exchange theory uses the principles of economics to explain family dynamics by paying special attention to the methods and motivations of the decisions individuals make. More specifically, it focuses on why we are attracted to certain people and not others and why we pursue and remain in some relationships and avoid or abandon others. Which provides an insight into how the tradition of an extended family applies to the modern Sri Lankan family.

Significance of the Study

The modern Sri Lankan family much like many families globally has experienced many changes due to the ever-evolving state of society. Although it was made evident to me through my independent sociology research that there were many Sri Lankan family related studies, relating

to the cultural and religious differences of familial in a multi-cultural state, multi-ethnicity, post-war reconciliation and migration. However, there was a notable lack of in-depth studies on the structural changes within the modern local family. I believe an in-depth study on this topic is necessary for both the general public and policy makers in order to better make headway and cater to the needs of modern Sri Lankans.

The aims and objectives of this study are:

- To understand changes in familial structures in Sri Lanka
- To analyze the evolution of extended families in Sri Lanka
- To evaluate whether the extended family exists invisibly in the sidelines
- To compare power relationships in contemporary families
- To evaluate recent family trends and changing marriage patterns in Sri Lanka

Research Method and Methodology

Epistemologically, this study follows a positivist methodology. This study analyses the data collected to extract scientific knowledge on the modern Sri Lankan family. Social research serves many purposes, the aim of this study is to conduct an exploration.

The study of the Sri Lankan familyhood in the twentieth century have been many and varied, ranging from anthropological, ancestry and historical narratives, class stratification studies, psychological and psychoanalytic oriented works and investigative studies of the effects of national peculiarities such as the fluctuating economy, post-colonialism, multi-ethnicity, terrorism, divisiveness of war and anxieties of natural disasters. Many studies explore unique factors of Sri Lankan history, shared grief, resilience, cultural norms and community. They also examine family oriented matters such as what a family consists of, the varying family dynamics, gendered roles and religious or cultural factors that govern aspects of the Sri Lankan family. Through this research it was my intention to explore how the modern Sri Lankan family units have evolved to adapt to globalization and the status of the extended family.

‘Exploratory studies are very valuable in social scientific research. They are essential whenever a research is breaking ground and they can almost always yield new insight into a topic for research (Babbie, 1983, p.52).’

The hypothesis of this study being, ‘the Sri Lankan extended family has not collapsed due to global factors, instead it has adapted to them’, this research conducted its exploration on the lived realities of modern Sri Lankan family units by using a questionnaire, simple observations as well as a theoretical framework to provide context. The data was gathered through the systematic random sampling method. It was then analyzed through the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) method. The

SPSS method, consists of statistical tools such as cross tabulation analysis also known as contingency table analysis which was used to understand the categorical data. Collected. A cross tabulation is a multi-dimensional table that records the number (frequency) of respondents that have the specific characteristics described in the cells of the table. Cross tabulation tables provide a wealth of information about the relationship between the variables.

The questionnaire was tactfully formulated to cover the bases of the effects of globalization on the familial dynamics as well as the presence of the extended family in each case. Apart from the questionnaires, further interviews and observations were also conducted for further data gathering as well.

As mentioned earlier the SPSS method is the operating engine of this data analyzing process. Conducting well-rounded social research is a balance of collecting data and utilizing the best methods of analysis.

Through the SPSS package, the researcher can examine relationships among the variables, gather the statistics of collected data and perform tests of statistical significance on the hypothesis. ‘SPSS can be very helpful when it comes to manipulating large amounts of data, finding patterns and testing hypothesis (Babbie, 1983).’

Field of Research

This field survey was conducted in the Southern Province, Matara District, within three Divisional Secretariats in five Grama Niladari Divisions. The reason for selecting Matara district is justified to be the district under review under the topic of ‘Reflections of global cultural impact on the family.’ What’s unique about Matara district is that it represents an educated urban sector, fisherfolk in the coastal areas, owner and workers of the tea plantation sector and slum dwellers. For the purposes of study objectives, the researcher had to identify the study population, within different strata of society, inclusive of the different ethnicities, different religions, different social standing, in other words, study the diversity within one community. Then the researcher could get the inclusive, varied and explorative data from the study population.

These layers of diversity within the district of Matarathat made it geographically ideal to study. The sampling framework was formulated with the electoral list provided by the Grama Niladari (Government appointed district Representative).

The systematic Random Sampling Method was used in this study to make the research objectives achievable. From the electoral list, possible respondents were evaluated within each divisional secretariat in the Matara District. Each group was divided into 50 of upper income and 50 lower-income sections. Therefore, this becomes multi-stage stratified sampling research.

The sample of this field of study is given below:

Urban Sector – This is represented by 100 respondents in the Matara District, Matara divisional secretariat and the Devinuwara divisional secretariat. 50 from the upper income group. The lower income group of 50 are equally divided into two groups: the slum residents and the fisher community.

Rural Sector – This is represented by 100 respondents in the Matara District, Athuraliya divisional secretariat. 50 from upper income families and 50 from lower income families.

Tea Plantations Sector – This is represented by 100 respondents in the Matara District, Akuressa divisional secretariat. 50 from upper income families and 50 from lower income families.

Theoretical Perspectives

Sociological theories explain aspects of the social world and enable prediction about future events, while others function as broad perspectives that guide further sociological analyses. They range in scope from brief descriptions of a single social process to models for analysis and interpretation.

It is useful to consider varying theoretical perspectives on familial relations when taking into consideration lived realities and thus having accumulated knowledge on the functions of the modern Sri Lankan familial unit in order to draw conclusions from the analyzed data.

Structural Functionalism

In the structural-functional perspective, the family is seen as a social institution that performs certain essential functions for society. Society is consistent with patterns of behavior, ways of thinking and universally accepted constructs – beliefs, values, attitudes, and norms – that play a vital role in many aspects of group life and lived realities. They also serve essential social functions, meeting the needs of individuals and enabling the society to survive. Said functions depend on the context of the society, its organization and its governance. Likewise, family structure or the form of the family varies according to the society within which it is embedded.

Other sociologists see families as essential for survival not simply for species continuance but also for the purpose of an individual's primary source of emotional and practical training in society. Such an image of family derives from a theoretical perspective in sociology called structural functionalism.

This perspective emphasizes how society is structured to maintain its stability. Societies are thought of as massive organisms, with the various social institutions working together to keep society alive, maintain order

and allow community. When examined through this framework, the family becomes not simply an intimate personal relationship but an important necessary institution for the survival of the larger society (Parsons & Bales, 1955, p.35). This perspective forces people to look at the family in terms of its contribution to society. This is the ideology of Talcott Parsons who is the main contributor to structural functionalism.

Another important function served by families is socialization – the process by which individuals learn the values, attitudes and behaviors appropriate for them in a given society. Families provide members with a sense of identity and self, as well as a set of beliefs and attitudes. It is through one's family that determines their own worth, their future paths and their personality.

In pre-industrial or traditional Sri Lankan society, the family structure was largely that of an extended one. The extended family (consisting of parents, children, grandparents and other distant relatives by blood, adoption, or marriage) performed most societal functions, including financial stability, economic production (farming) the protection and nurturing of family members, vocational training, and maintenance of social order.

In post-industrial or modern societies, family structures have evolved into a nuclear family (consisting of parental units and children) and subsequently lost many functions formerly performed by traditional extended family units (Goode, 1964, p.110).

The extended family does continue to play a supportive role in many Sri Lankan units. Nevertheless, in contemporary society, the extended family remains principally accountable for at least three important family functions: raising children, financial support, and emotional security (Hasbulla & Morrison, 2004).

The economic functions of the modern nuclear family consist of entering the workforce, pooling resources, and making consumption decisions together. In assisting one another economically, family members create a sense of material security. Familial responsibilities such as housework and caregiving are equally divided among family members.

The structural-functional perspective calls attention to cross-cultural variations in family structure and functions. It points to the essential role the extended family plays in different societies and how much it has evolved.

Globalization Process and Changes in the Family Structure

Malcolm Waters define globalization as “a social process in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding” (Waters, 2002, pp. 3-5). According to Water's definition, physical

distance and obstacles have become less important in communication and exchange in social, political, economic and cultural matters.

Increase in global inter-connectedness is apparent in the economic, political and cultural implications wherefrom the individual, regional, national and community points of view. These global factors also translate into the private sphere more than ever in this state of heightened globalization (O'Donnell, 1997, p.595) the concept of family becomes globalized against this backdrop.

Cultural globalization

Mike Featherstone (1991, p.51) suggests a number of ways in which the globalization of culture is occurring. According to him, there are certain important trends towards cultural globalization however there is also significant cultural differentiation is also occurring. The global culture is felt in Sri Lanka with the infusion of international social media, brands and companies. All individuals are embedded in a dense global network of global regulations. Globalization involves a process of speeding up or increasing the velocity of human activities and relations. The family unit comes under the influence of all these social changes. For an instance unlike in the past, men take on more responsibilities within the household. Due to the feminist revolution, women have been breaking out of various layers of oppressive norms and gender roles. Due to better access to education, autonomy, the workforce and equal social standing has greatly changed the perception of restrictive cultural norms.

Social change via the process of globalization

A process can be defined simply as a series of development changes. In this sense, globalization is the process of becoming global. These processes are multiple and cover most areas of social life and human relations from the individual and basic family unit in the micro sense and the economic, political, cultural, ideology, religion and legislation in the macro sense. What is obvious though, is that globalization involves constant changes in conceptions of space as a part of social relations.

One of such processes central to globalization is de-territorialization. This convoluted concept simply conveys the idea that, under conditions of globalization, territory becomes less relevant to human relations. For instance, that's to information technology, anyone in Sri Lanka equipped with a device and an internet connection can converse with family members who have gone abroad through all platforms of free social media.

In other words, family ties are not severed through geographical separation. Territories and borders have become irrelevant to such interactions that are therefore global in nature. These changes have impacted the structure, form and function of the family unit and its relationship with the extended family. The process of de-territorialization makes globalization different from any other processes of social change

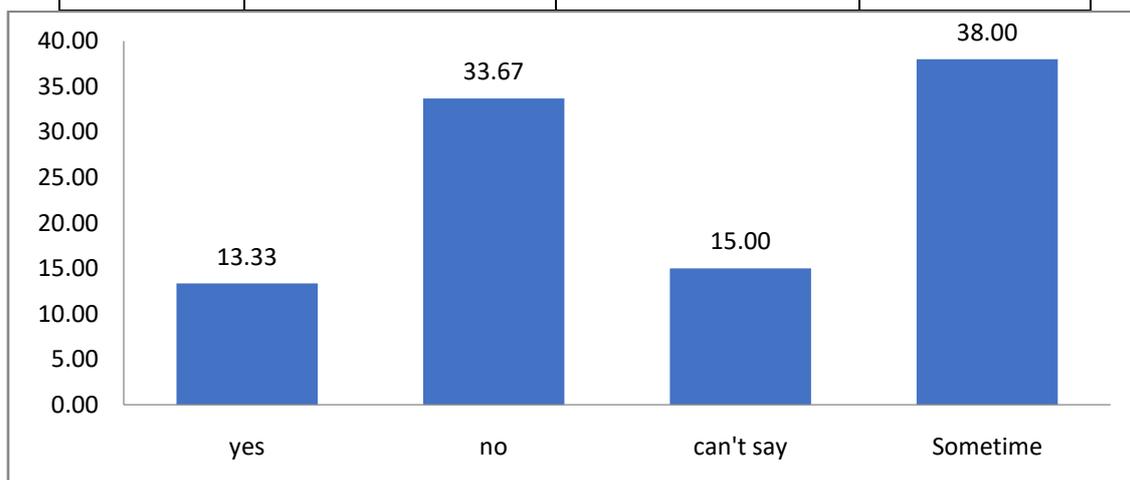
in human history. David Harvey describes this process as time-space compression. (Harvey, 1973, p.6). Time and space are compressed through the technological creation of a virtual space of live interaction making distance irrelevant.

The 20th century has exposed the family to unprecedented pressure because of the globalization process. Hence, cultural ideological influences and political circumstances are affected by the family structure. A number of the other specific factors have had considerable influence on the family such as improvements in transport and communications have given most people access to information about lifestyle values and behavioral norms different from those of their own societies. Family patterns have been affected by post-colonization, industrialization urbanization and growing globalization. Within that growing globalization, the modern family has to face economic, political and cultural changes through the advances in communication technologies in the world. This all contributes towards the diversification of the family unit.

Findings

Advances in Telecommunication Technology and its Effect on Family ties

Q1. Did modern communication devices like computer and telephones help to progress of family			
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	40	13.33
	No	101	33.67
	Undecided	45	15.00
	Sometime	114	38.00
Total		300	100.00



Source: Independent field survey 2014

The question at hand was whether global factors such as modern telecommunications technologies have a direct and positive effect on strengthening of family ties, the answers to this in the survey stands at 33.6% for a resounding No, with 13.37% believes that it has an effect with a Yes. There is also a group that responded with a ‘sometimes’ as at 38%. The overall impression is that there is no drastic change in family communication and tie strengthening. When the two groups Yes and Sometimes are combined, it is apparent that technologies have a positive effect and that the latent function of this technology that the extended family is active in an invisible form.

Some attested to using these communication methods to build up their family ties, while it helps some keep in touch with siblings and elders, therefore the percentage that uses communication tools in a global sense to keep in touch is comparatively larger as a group. Even though the percentage that is not dependent on communication tools is also a notable figure.

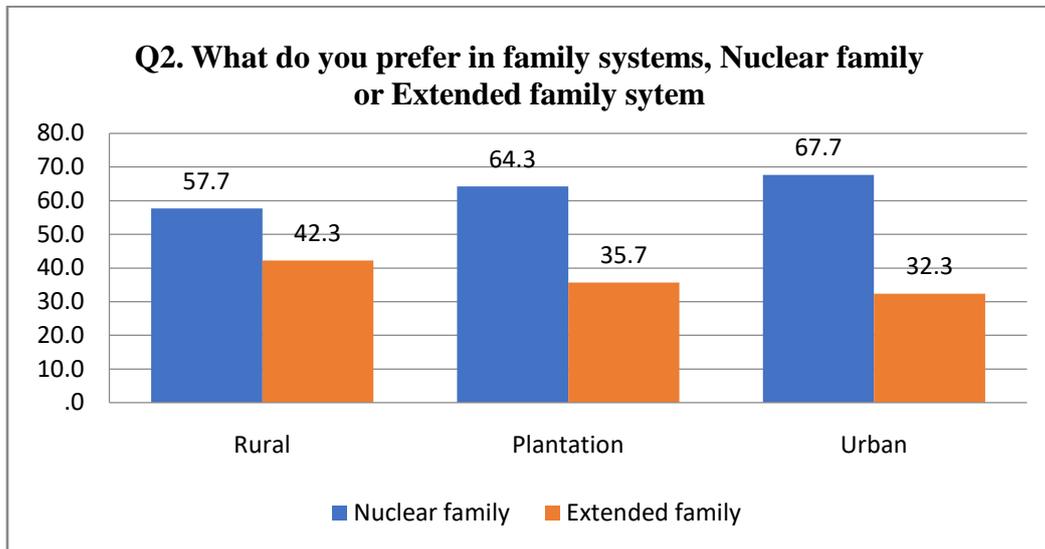
‘Effective communications always depend on the non-existence of the border. It was one thing when communication was predominantly physical. Telephone likes allowed a person to speak with someone directly on the side of the world without having to go through a host of intermediate exchanges. Observers might be forgiven for not fully realizing the potency and prevalence of the global economy. It is largely invisible,’ (Ohmae, 2005, pp. 20-22).

At present, the positioning of modern communication technologies throughout the world is apparent through this trend. The impact of this has different effects on the family. As per Kenichi Ohmae, ‘At a personal level, the global stage means that we have to become more adaptable and more willing to proactively take part rather than remaining a spectator,’ (2005, p.223).

Preference of Family System

Table 1.1: Preference of family system

	Rural	Plantation	Urban
Nuclear family	57.7	64.3	67.7
Extended family	42.3	35.7	32.3



Source: Independent field survey 2014

Table 1.2: Preference of family system

Q2. What do you prefer in family systems, Nuclear family or Extended family system			Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
New income class						
Rural	Valid	Nuclear family	56	56.0	57.7	57.7
		Extended family	41	41.0	42.3	100.0
		Total	97	97.0	100.0	
	Missing	Value	3	3.0		
	Total		100	100.0		
Plantation	Valid	Nuclear family	63	63.0	64.3	64.3
		Extended family	35	35.0	35.7	100.0
		Total	98	98.0	100.0	
	Missing	Value	2	2.0		
	Total		100	100.0		
Urban	Valid	Nuclear family	67	67.0	67.7	67.7
		Extended family	32	32.0	32.3	100.0
		Total	99	99.0	100.0	
	Missing	Value	1	1.0		
	Total		100	100.0		

Source: Independent field survey 2014

The majority response is that the nuclear family pattern is well-liked in the three sectors under review, comparatively the extended family does not have the same response. The nuclear family is a trend that is accepted and practiced worldwide, through this, the survey data rings true. In a dual-career family system, a family will have separate dwellings, this is another global trend. But research data proves that links with parents and siblings are well maintained, therefore relationships with extended family are maintained. Even though the modern nuclear family is existing structurally, the individuals will use technological advances in the telecommunication sector to strengthen ties with blood relatives.

The findings are consisted of Sri Lankan families having been subjected to change. However, there is one factor that is not subjected to change, whatever social challenges are present 'the family' even though it faces structural or attitudinal changes it continues to exist in society. The family still meets fundamental and social needs such as child-rearing and providing adults, children with companionship, emotional support, food, shelter and economic support. Even though some of these needs are met by other supporting institutions, the family becomes the main institution that provides this support network.

We cannot isolate the family and talk about the changes within it. The family is impacted by social, cultural, political, economic, environmental, biological and global variable factors. Due to global social impacts, this is a period where the family changes. By now the nuclear family structure too has changed. The family unit which is comprised of 'husband – breadwinner,' 'wife – housewife' dynamic has now changed (Hasbulla & Morrison, 2004). Multiple or dual-career families are now in operation in Sri Lanka, therefore raising children has become a struggle. Even though the elder's support is required to solve this problem, alternatives have been provided by commercial institutions. Even though on the surface level it seems as if the nuclear family is stronger and the extended family is no longer a formidable force, there is evidence to the contrary. They may not live under one roof but they still make themselves readily available for each other, both emotionally as well as economically.

Evidence shows that the coming decades will see a return to a more highly structured, less permissive family than that of today. Most probably change and adaptation will occur rather than replacement by new alternatives. Finally, it can be concluded as thus, in reality, the extended family is not fragmented but is adapting to current social changes. Within the existing global cultural discourse, the extended family is not shattered, even though on the surface level it's not actively visible, the extended family is operating as a network that supports the nuclear families.

The co-relationship between Support from Elders and the Nature of Relationship between Siblings

To understand the changes of the family structure, the dynamics within the family must be explored and the function of the nuclear families and how it translates into the extended unit.

The co-relationship between support from elders and the nature of the relationship between siblings

Table 1.3 Contingency table of Q3. Do you have support from your elders (parents)						
Q4. The nature of the relationship among siblings Cross tabulation						
			Q4. The nature of the relationship among siblings			Total
			strong	Weak	balanced	
Q3. Do you have to support from your elders (parents)	yes	Count	61	33	53	147
		% within Q4. The nature of the relationship among siblings	59.8%	53.2%	46.1%	52.7%
	no	Count	28	26	48	102
		% within Q4. The nature of the relationship among siblings	27.5%	41.9%	41.7%	36.6%
	somet imes	Count	13	3	14	30
		% within Q4. The nature of the relationship among siblings	12.7%	4.8%	12.2%	10.8%
Total		Count	102	62	115	279
		% within Q4. The nature of the relationship among siblings	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0%	100.0 %

Source: Independent field survey 2014

The co-relationship between support from elders and the nature of relationship between siblings

An Exploratory Study on the Influence of Globalization

Table 1.4 Contingency table of Q3. Do you have support from your elders (parents)

Q4. The nature of the relationship among siblings. Cross tabulation

			Q4. The nature of the relationship among siblings			Total
			strong	Weak	balanced	
Q3. Do you have support from your elders (parents)	yes	Count	61	33	53	147
		% within Q3. Do you have to support from your elders (parents)	41.5%	22.4%	36.1%	100.0%
	no	Count	28	26	48	102
		% within Q3. Do you have to support from your elders (parents)	27.5%	25.5%	47.1%	100.0%
	sometimes	Count	13	3	14	30
		% within Q3. Do you have to support from your elders (parents)	43.3%	10.0%	46.7%	100.0%
Total		Count	102	62	115	279
		% within Q3. Do you have to support from your elders (parents)	36.6%	22.2%	41.2%	100.0%

Source: *Independent field survey 2014*

According to table 1.3 within ‘strong’ relationship category, 59.8% is belongs to group who had support from elders. On the other hand, within the group who had support from elders, 41.5% belongs to ‘strong’ category in the relationship among siblings. Within the group those who had no support from the elder, 47.1% belong to the ‘balanced’ relationship category. It seems that the relationship between elders’ support and relationship among siblings in the family.

This shows that the nuclear family is not isolated – elders and siblings are there for these families. Within the functionalist perspectives, roles provide the link between the individual and society in a fairly determinist fashion. In this perspective, there is an assumption of consensus on the basis of a shared system of values,’ (Willis, 1995, p. 113).

Maintaining a good relationship with the blood relatives leads one naturally to practice good relationship building. This could be seen as a survival tactic as one cannot survive alone in society, this could be another way of widening the safety net through the blood relatives and legally bound as in through marriage with the intention of surviving.

American sociologist W. I Thomas states, ‘that which is defined as real is real in its consequences, even in circumstances where individuals’ interpretations are able to be demonstrated to be false.’ Even though there is no proper relationship or bond with blood relatives, some would assume that neighbors and society will place them under scrutiny would go to the extent of faking a relationship for the benefit of supposed onlookers.

This according to interactionism, then makes a subjectivist assumption that there is no absolute reality but that people purposefully construct their social reality, the purpose is the goals they seek, and social action is goal-oriented, (Willis, 1995, p.119).

Preference of family Systems and Relationship between Siblings

Attitude towards the extended family and nuclear family is questioned by questionnaire to identify the relationship with various variables. Table 1.5 shows the cross-tabulation analysis of attitude toward extended family and nuclear family against relationships among siblings.

Table: 1.5: Contingency table of Q2.What do you prefer in family systems, Nuclear family or Extended family system * Q4. The nature of the relationship among siblings Cross tabulation

			Q4. The nature of the relationship among siblings			Total
			strong	weak	balanced	
Q2. What do you prefer in family systems, Nuclear family or Extended family system	Nuclear family	Count	79	37	65	181
		% within Q2. What do you prefer in family systems, Nuclear family or Extended family system	43.6%	20.4%	35.9%	100.0%
	Extended family	Count	24	25	57	106
		% within Q2. What do you prefer in family	22.6%	23.6%	53.8%	100.0%

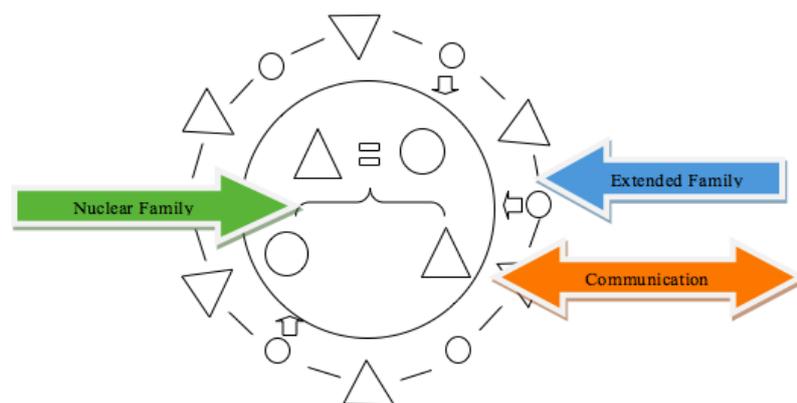
An Exploratory Study on the Influence of Globalization

		systems, Nuclear family or Extended family system				
Total	Count	103	62	122	287	
	% within Q2. What do you prefer in family systems, Nuclear family or Extended family system	35.9%	21.6%	42.5%	100.0%	

Source: Independent field survey 2014

According to table 1.5, within the group of those who preferred ‘nuclear family’ the highest percentage (42.6%) goes to ‘Strong’ relationship and the lowest percentage (20.4%) goes to ‘weak’ relationship among siblings. Within the group of those who preferred ‘Extended family’ the highest percentage (42.5%) goes to ‘Balanced’ relationship and the lowest percentage (21.6%) goes to ‘weak’ relationship among siblings.

There is a strong link between the extended family systems and balanced sibling relationships. Data of this nature further emphasizes structural changes within families which lead to come to the conclusion that nuclear families are now informally transforming into yet another version of an extended family. The modern Sri Lankan family though structurally is nuclear in form is now invisibly transforming into an extended family system. This was emphasized through the data given above.



Visualization of findings

Conclusion

Due to the cultural and religious obligations, the concept of the family was romanticized and idealized as a compulsory step in early adulthood. Within which men's and women's roles are clearly defined and obligatory, the roles within the household on occasion being their sole purpose (Skolnick, 1996, p.224). Within the past few decades, however such assumptions about families have been challenged. With the revision of oppressive cultural and religious scripts the structural functionalism, in particular, has been criticized for emphasizing the usefulness of existing social arrangements without examining why certain arrangements are created and maintained and how they might exploit or otherwise disadvantage certain groups or individuals.

In this study in to better analyze the objective of understanding the changing family structure, the data collected was analyzed through univariate and cross tabulation methods. The research data supports while the extended family hasn't disappeared, the pattern of its existence has changed. Although the nuclear family system is the current trend, at an invisible level it coexists within the extended family. Globalization has greatly influenced elements such as social structure, spousal selection, legitimacy of non-heteronormative relationships, matters of the state, Asian values, community ideals, gendered roles, parenting, strictly imposed tradition, familial roles and dynamics to name a few.

The research problem was the changes in the family structure in Sri Lanka while the hypothesis was 'The Sri Lankan extended family has not collapsed due to global factors, instead it has adapted to them'. The objectives of the field research, conducted among 300 families.

There are a number of different theoretical perspectives on the family. It was useful to think of each theoretical perspective as a point of view on the family as with a physical object such as a building when people see a family from different angles they have a better grasp of what it is than if they look at it from a single fixed position. When studying the Sri Lankan familyhood in the twentieth century it should be explored from many angles, ranging from anthropological, ancestry and historical narratives, class stratification studies, psychological and psychoanalytic oriented works and investigative studies of the effects of national peculiarities such as the fluctuating economy, post-colonialism, multi-ethnicity, and anxieties of globalization.

The study was able to draw conclusions about the current position of Sri Lanka in relation to the influence of globalization on the modern Sri Lankan family unit and the evolution of the extended family through the primary and secondary research data and its analysis.

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