



## General Studies-1; Topic: Salient features of Indian Society, Diversity of India.

### The Family in Indian Society

#### Introduction

- If there is one cohesive, cementing force at the heart of traditional Indian society — it is our family system.
- We must cherish the role played by our joint family system in nurturing and preserving our cultural and social values.

#### The Family in Indian Society

- The family, in Indian society is a symbol of the collectivist culture of India right from the ancient times.
- The joint family system has been an important feature of Indian culture, till urbanisation and western influence began to affect in home and hearth.
- This is especially true of urban areas, where nuclear families have become the order of the day.
- The socio-economic factors have played their role in the joint family system getting diluted.

#### Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam

- Present-day lifestyle is causing serious damage to the critical role played by a joint family system in preserving cultural values, traditions and customs, which have been passed on from generation to generation.
- Indians must consider ourselves to be better placed than others because the concept of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' (world is one family) is ingrained in us.
- It is our duty to pass on the collective age-old wisdom to our succeeding generations.

#### Women's emancipation

- Societies evolve with changing times and any process that brings in progressive customs and practices should be welcomed by one and all.

- **Emancipation of women through education is essential to deal with regressive social problems like child marriages, dowry menace, violence against women and superstitious customs.**
- Women should be empowered through education, and they should be encouraged to be in the forefront of the battle against blind beliefs and customs, even if there is resistance from male-dominated patriarchal societies.
- **Educating a woman amounts to educating an entire family and a society**, which is the fundamental requirement for the growth and progress of a nation.

### Advantages of joint family

- It provides strong bonding among siblings and other members of the family even while providing a sense of security to the children.
- It is believed that children will imbibe the qualities of sharing, caring, empathy and understanding.
- The bonding and bonhomie one finds in close knit joint families has a positive impact on the emotional quotient of children.
- Respect and care for elders are among the central principles in Indian family system.
- Living with close family members rather than spending time in a crèche or play school will immensely contribute towards the overall personality development of an individual.
- **Family system creates a strong bond of unity at an early age, paves the way for social cohesion and in a broader sense promotes national unity.**
- Children who grow up in a joint family not only imbibe qualities of tolerance, patience, democratic attitude of accepting others' viewpoints, but also develop sportsman's spirit while playing with siblings and cousins.

### Neglect of the elderly

- It is saddening to know that the trend of the elderly being admitted into old age homes is increasing.
- It could be due to lack of adequate residential space in nuclear families, or in a globalised world, due to overseas location of children.
- It is not good in the long run either for the country or the society to neglect the elderly.
- The government has enacted laws to deal with such instances, but every effort should be made by all to ensure that the value system of respecting the elderly is not eroded.

### Imbibing values

- The **family system lays the seeds for social cohesion and democratic thinking.**
- Families play an important role in preserving and promoting the cultural and social values in a society.
- This year's theme (United Nations), "Families and inclusive societies" is meant to highlight the pivotal role families and family policies can play in promoting peaceful and inclusive societies and in advancing Sustainable Development Goals.
- The crucial role that families can play in the creation of healthy and happy societies has been recognised in the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights.**
- Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, which embodies the spirit of humanism, compassion, magnanimity and tolerance, family becomes the basic building block of a harmonious, inclusive society.
- Therefore, Family can shape the world view, foster and reinforce the value system of the individuals.