



Family, Kinship, and Social Solidarity in Contemporary Kashmiri Society

Bilal Ahmad Mir

¹ Post-Doctoral Research Scholar, ICSSR, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, Tamil Nadu, India

*** Corresponding Author:**

Bilal Ahmad Mir
bilalahmad5113@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Family and kinship remain central to the organisation of social life in contemporary Kashmiri society, shaping patterns of solidarity, support, and everyday interaction. Based on qualitative fieldwork conducted in selected rural and urban contexts, this study explores how kinship networks operate amid social change, economic pressures, migration, and expanding educational opportunities. The analysis reveals that while extended family structures continue to hold cultural and social significance, there is a gradual shift towards semi-nuclear households and more flexible kin relations. Despite these changes, kinship networks provide crucial emotional, economic, and moral support, especially during periods of uncertainty. Intergenerational relations, gender roles, and decision-making processes within families are increasingly negotiated rather than fixed, reflecting broader transformations in social values. Social solidarity is sustained through practices of mutual aid, marriage alliances, and shared cultural norms, even as everyday relationships adapt to new circumstances. The study suggests that solidarity in Kashmiri society is not eroding but being re-shaped through adaptive family strategies, offering insights into resilience and social cohesion in societies experiencing prolonged social stress.



INTRODUCTION

Family and kinship have long formed the core of social organisation in Kashmiri society, shaping everyday relationships, moral obligations, and patterns of mutual support. As primary social institutions, they structure individual identity, regulate social behaviour, and sustain community cohesion across generations. In contexts marked by prolonged social stress, uncertainty, and rapid transformation, family and kinship networks often assume roles that extend beyond the domestic sphere, functioning as mechanisms of social security, emotional resilience, and collective survival. Understanding these institutions is therefore central to any sociological enquiry into contemporary Kashmiri society. Kashmir presents a distinctive social setting where tradition and change coexist in complex ways. Kinship relations, marriage practices, and household arrangements are deeply embedded in cultural norms and religious values, yet they are increasingly influenced by forces such as education, labour migration, urbanisation, and exposure to wider social worlds. While extended families and close-knit kin networks have historically provided stability and continuity, recent decades have witnessed noticeable shifts in family composition and intergenerational relations. Semi-nuclear households, delayed marriages, and renegotiated gender roles point towards evolving forms of social organisation without necessarily indicating a breakdown of familial bonds.

Social solidarity in Kashmiri society is closely tied to kinship practices that emphasise reciprocity, collective responsibility, and shared moral expectations. Obligations towards relatives extend across economic assistance, caregiving, conflict resolution, and ritual participation. These practices foster trust and belonging, reinforcing a sense of community that often compensates for limited institutional support. At the same time, solidarity is not static; it is shaped through everyday negotiations within families and kin groups, particularly as younger generations navigate new aspirations and constraints. Tensions between tradition and change are therefore not merely individual experiences but social processes that redefine relationships and authority within households. From a sociological perspective, examining family and kinship allows insight into broader questions of social change and resilience. Families serve as sites where structural pressures are interpreted and managed, where cultural continuity is maintained, and where adaptation occurs through

pragmatic adjustments rather than abrupt ruptures. Gender relations, intergenerational dynamics, and decision-making processes reveal how power and responsibility are distributed and contested within the domestic sphere. These dynamics illuminate the ways in which social solidarity is reproduced, challenged, and reconfigured in everyday life.

Despite the centrality of family and kinship in Kashmiri society, much existing literature tends to focus on macro-level political or economic narratives, often overlooking the micro-level social relations that sustain daily life. There remains a need for sociologically grounded studies that foreground lived experience and everyday practices within households and kin networks. By focusing on family, kinship, and social solidarity, this study seeks to address this gap and contribute to a more nuanced understanding of social organisation in contemporary Kashmir. Such an approach not only enriches regional sociology but also offers broader insights into how families function as adaptive institutions in societies experiencing prolonged uncertainty and transformation.

Objectives

The study aims to examine the structure and functioning of family and kinship systems in contemporary Kashmiri society, with a focus on their role in sustaining social solidarity. It seeks to understand changes in household arrangements, intergenerational relations, and gender roles, and to analyse how broader social change reshapes everyday kinship practices and support networks.

Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative research design based on fieldwork conducted in selected rural and urban areas of Kashmir. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and participant observation, supplemented by informal discussions. Purposive sampling was used to capture diverse family structures and social backgrounds, and the data were analysed thematically to interpret patterns of kinship and social solidarity.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

To comprehend the structure and functioning of family and kinship systems in contemporary Kashmiri society, it is essential to contextualize them within the broader sociological traditions of South Asia, while also being mindful of local cultural practices and lived experiences. In Kashmir, family and kinship are not simply private



or domestic arrangements; they represent essential social institutions that structure authority, govern behavior, and maintain social order. Classical sociological analyses of Indian society have consistently highlighted the primacy of kinship as a social relational system that regulates marriage, inheritance, residence, and reciprocal obligations (Madan, 1991; Uberoi, 1993). In Kashmir, these functions gain enhanced significance owing to the region's unique social conditions, where kinship networks often serve as intermediaries between individuals and broader social structures. Traditionally, Kashmiri families have had strong ties to their extended family members. They value collective responsibility, respect for elders, and clearly defined roles for men and women of different ages. In the past, people have preferred living with their extended family or with other families in the same house. This was especially true in rural areas, where working together and sharing resources helped keep families close. Marriage customs, frequently endogamous within kin or community networks, have functioned as essential mechanisms for sustaining social cohesion and fortifying alliances among families. These patterns reflect overarching South Asian kinship norms, wherein family operates as a unit of production, consumption, and social reproduction, rather than merely an emotional or individualized space (Uberoi, 1993).

In modern-day Kashmir, these traditional forms are still around, but they have changed slowly and unevenly. Things like more education, people moving for work, cities growing, and people seeing more global media have changed the way families are structured and what they expect. Semi-nuclear households have become more common, especially in cities, as younger couples want to be independent but still be part of larger family networks. Sociological studies indicate that these transformations do not signify the dissolution of kinship but rather its reconfiguration to adapt to evolving social and economic conditions (Madan, 1991). In Kashmir, extended kin remain actively involved in decision-making, conflict resolution, and caregiving, despite the spatial separation of households. Reciprocity and mutual aid are very important to how kinship systems work in Kashmiri society. Kinship duties go beyond just close family members. They also include a larger group of relatives who are expected to help out during major life events, sickness, money problems, and social crises. These practices keep a lot of social ties strong, which helps people feel like they belong and trust

each other. Anthropological and sociological research indicates that these networks frequently serve as substitutes for inadequate formal welfare systems, positioning the family at the core of social security and risk management (Gellner, 1981). In the context of Kashmir, kinship-based support continues to be one of the most dependable forms of social protection.

Intergenerational relations provide an essential perspective for analyzing the operation of family systems. Traditionally, Kashmiri families have looked to older people, especially the male heads of households, for guidance. These men made important decisions and controlled the family's money. Respect for elders is still a strong cultural value, but families today show that generations are more willing to work together. Younger members, influenced by education and new goals, are more involved in decisions about marriage, work, and school. These negotiations exemplify extensive sociological trends in South Asia, where familial authority is being restructured rather than abolished (Uberoi, 1993). In Kashmir, these changes have led to new kinds of authority that mix traditional respect with the ability to adapt to different situations. There have also been clear changes in gender relations within families and kinship systems. Historically, women have been key in keeping family ties strong, running households, and passing on cultural values, even when men were in charge. Modern social change has increased women's involvement in education and public life, which has changed how families work and make decisions. Sociological research underscores that these alterations are optimally perceived as gradual renegotiations within the familial unit rather than sudden upheavals (Madan, 1991). In Kashmiri society, women persist in sustaining kinship networks while concurrently managing emerging expectations and obligations.

The operation of kinship in Kashmir is intrinsically linked to its influence on the formation of social solidarity. Kinship networks create a sense of belonging that goes beyond individual households, which strengthens the community. Shared rituals, marriage exchanges, and daily interactions uphold moral norms and social boundaries. These practices correspond with sociological theories that conceptualize kinship as a moral framework that organizes social existence through collective values and responsibilities (Gellner, 1981). In situations characterized by uncertainty and extended stress, these kin-based solidarities gain increased significance, providing emotional stability and continuity. Recent



sociological research on Kashmir has highlighted the adaptation of everyday social relations in prolonged uncertainty, illustrating that families and kinship networks serve as arenas of resilience and social adjustment (Duschinski, 2010). Instead of retreating into solitude, families frequently strengthen kinship ties, depending on reliable networks to navigate risk and uncertainty. This supports the idea that kinship in Kashmir is a living social process that changes with the times but is still based on long-lasting cultural frameworks.

Investigating the structure and operation of family and kinship systems in modern Kashmiri society uncovers a pattern of continuity amid change. Traditional kinship structures continue to exert influence, yet they are perpetually redefined through quotidian practices and negotiations. Families serve as adaptive entities that assimilate social pressures, navigate structural limitations, and uphold social cohesion. This viewpoint contests oversimplified accounts of decline or disintegration, presenting a sociological interpretation of kinship as a versatile and robust underpinning of social existence. Kinship networks are very important in Kashmiri society because they organize everyday social interactions around obligations, trust, and shared moral expectations. This helps keep social solidarity and mutual support strong. These networks go beyond the immediate family to include a large group of relatives who are connected by blood, marriage, and long-standing social ties. These kinds of relationships create a thick social fabric that people are born into, which shapes their sense of belonging and duty to others.

Reciprocal support is one of the main ways that kinship networks keep social solidarity strong. Help given within kin groups is not usually based on transactions or time limits; instead, it is based on long-lasting moral duties. It is understood that everyone has a duty to help each other during times of illness, financial trouble, weddings, funerals, or other crises. This give-and-take builds trust and makes people feel less alone, so they don't have to deal with problems on their own very often. Repeated acts of helping each other over time make relationships stronger and give everyone a sense of safety in numbers. Kinship networks also act as informal welfare systems. When formal institutional support is not available or is not enough, families and extended family members step in to help with money, childcare, elder care, and emotional support. Kin groups often share or redistribute resources, which helps families deal with uncertainty and risk. These kinds of behaviors keep people together by

making them depend on each other and share responsibility, which makes kinship a practical and moral basis for social life.

Kinship-based rules for behavior also help to strengthen social solidarity. Within families and extended kin groups, rules about respect, duty, and moral behavior are passed down and enforced. Elders, especially, are important for keeping the peace, settling disagreements, and guiding younger members. Although authority within kin networks has become more negotiable over time, the expectation that conflicts should be resolved internally continues to strengthen solidarity and prevent fragmentation of social relations. Marriage is another important way that kinship networks keep people together. Marriage alliances connect families and kin groups, making networks of duty and cooperation bigger. These alliances are not just between the couple; they also involve families giving each other support, visiting each other, and taking part in rituals. These kinds of connections make networks of solidarity that overlap and hold communities together, strengthening their shared social identity.

Kinship networks also give people emotional support and a sense of stability. Shared memories, stories, and everyday interactions help people feel connected to each other and strengthen their social ties. In situations where there is a lot of uncertainty, these emotional aspects of family become even more important. Families provide environments of familiarity and comfort, facilitating individuals' ability to manage stress while preserving a sense of normalcy in daily life.

Kinship networks are not fixed, however. Changes in education, migration, and people's goals have changed how kinship works. Physical distance has changed how people interact with each other every day, but emotional and moral obligations often stay strong through regular communication, sending money, and participating in rituals. This flexibility lets kinship networks keep their solidarity even when social conditions change. To comprehend the alterations in domestic configurations and intergenerational dynamics within contemporary Kashmiri society, one must engage sociologically with both enduring kinship customs and current social transformations. In South Asian societies, the household has traditionally served as a fundamental unit of social organization, encompassing economic collaboration, authority, caregiving, and moral regulation within a communal domestic environment (Shah, 1998; Uberoi, 1993). Kashmir largely followed this pattern, with extended or joint



family households serving as the dominant form, especially in rural areas. These kinds of arrangements made it possible to share resources, take care of dependents, and strengthen authority structures that were based on age and gender hierarchies.

Classical sociological and anthropological analyses of the Indian family underscore that joint households functioned not merely as residential entities but as social institutions that delineated intergenerational relationships through distinctly defined roles and responsibilities (Madan, 1991; Dube, 1997). Elders, especially older men, had the final say on decisions about the home, property, and marriage, while younger members did work and followed the rules. In Kashmir, cultural and religious values that emphasized respect for elders, collective honor, and family unity reinforced these patterns. Intergenerational relationships were marked by hierarchy, dependence, and moral obligation, thereby ensuring continuity across generations.

Over the past few decades, the way people live in Kashmir has changed slowly but noticeably. One of the most important changes is that more and more households are becoming semi-nuclear, where married couples live in different places but stay close to their extended family. This trend is similar to changes that have happened in South Asia as a whole. For example, population growth, lack of housing, education, and job mobility have changed how people live without breaking up family ties (Shah, 1998). Space constraints and economic factors in urban areas of Kashmir frequently promote smaller household units, whereas in rural contexts, extended families are still prevalent, although internal divisions within joint households are becoming more pronounced. These changes in the way families are set up have had a big effect on how people of different generations get along with each other. Generational physical separation has diminished the frequency of daily interactions, transforming dynamics of authority and dependence. Even though older people are still respected, they don't have as much direct control over younger family members anymore. Sociological research on familial transformations in India indicates that authority is becoming more situational than absolute, influenced by education, income, and access to external resources (Uberoi, 1993). In Kashmiri families, younger members who have degrees or jobs often have more say in decisions, especially when it comes to careers, spending, and moving around.

Intergenerational dependence, on the other hand, is still there. Older family members still depend on younger generations for care, money, and help with adjusting to new social situations. Shah (1998) notes that the Indian family has adjusted to contemporary circumstances by reallocating responsibilities instead of forsaking intergenerational duties. This pattern is clear in Kashmir, where it is still expected that children will take care of their elderly parents, even if they can't live with them anymore. Support is often given through regular visits, money transfers, and making decisions together, which shows that intergenerational solidarity continues even as household structures change.

Younger generations' changing goals have also changed how people of different generations get along with each other. Education has broadened perspectives and introduced novel concepts regarding personal agency, matrimony, and employment. Dube (1997) contends that intergenerational transitions within families frequently generate conflict, as younger individuals pursue independence while older members strive to maintain traditional norms. In Kashmiri society, these kinds of tensions can be seen in talks about when to get married, who to marry, and what career to choose. But these talks almost never end in a break. Instead, families come up with ways to make everyone happy that take into account both their own goals and the goals of the group. This shows how flexible kinship systems can be.

Gender has been a major factor in changing how families are set up and how generations interact with each other. Historically, women's roles were focused on domestic labor, caregiving, and the preservation of familial connections, frequently within extended households. Women have moved up in their families because they have more access to education and, in some cases, paid work. This has changed how decisions are made and how authority is shared between generations. Madan (1991) observes that alterations in women's roles typically modify family dynamics gradually rather than via sudden transformation. In Kashmiri households, women often serve as intermediaries between generations, alleviating tensions and promoting collaboration amid evolving domestic structures. Changes in household composition and relationships between generations have been made worse by migration. Families that move away for school or work now live in different places, which has led to the creation of trans-local households that operate in more than one place. Shah (1998) notes that these



types of arrangements are becoming more common in India, where families stay close by sending money, talking to each other, and taking part in rituals. In Kashmir, migration has diminished daily cohabitation but has not disrupted intergenerational connections. Instead, obligations are upheld through consistent communication and ongoing participation in family decisions, reinforcing the notion that alterations within the household do not signify social disintegration.

The reorganization of households has also changed how people act in everyday situations of authority and care. Decision-making is becoming more collaborative, with younger individuals engaging more actively in discussions that were previously led by older generations. Uberoi (1993) says that this change is a sign of the shift from hierarchical to negotiated family relationships. In Kashmiri society, respect for elders continues to hold cultural significance, yet it now exists alongside an increased focus on dialogue and mutual understanding. These changes indicate a transformation of intergenerational relationships rather than their deterioration. Understanding how families and relationships between generations have changed in Kashmir shows a complicated process of both continuity and change. Even though people are moving around more and authority is becoming more flexible, extended families and strong family ties still shape social life. The household continues to be a vital locus for the assimilation and management of social change, enabling families to adapt to evolving economic and cultural circumstances while preserving intergenerational cohesion. This sociological viewpoint contests the presumption of family disintegration and instead highlights the adaptability of kinship systems in restructuring to address modern circumstances.

To investigate gender roles and decision-making processes in Kashmiri familial structures, one must consider both persistent cultural norms and incremental social transformations. Historically, gender relations within families have been influenced by patriarchal structures prevalent in South Asian societies, where authority, inheritance, and public decision-making were predominantly linked to men, while women's roles were focused on domestic labor, caregiving, and the preservation of kinship ties (Dube, 1997; Uberoi, 1993). In Kashmir, these patterns were bolstered by robust family unity, religious principles, and societal norms that emphasized communal harmony over personal expression.

Traditionally, Kashmiri families made decisions in a hierarchical way. Senior male members, especially fathers or older brothers, had the most power over things like marriage arrangements, property, moving, and big financial choices. Women, particularly daughters-in-law, were anticipated to adhere to household standards and partake in domestic responsibilities and caregiving. Nevertheless, sociological research warns against perceiving women's roles as wholly passive. Dube (1997) observes that women frequently exerted informal influence within households via quotidian negotiations, emotional labor, and their pivotal role in maintaining familial relationships. Women in Kashmiri families have historically served as intermediaries among generations and kin groups, subtly influencing decisions despite the presence of formal authority elsewhere.

Changes in education, work, and exposure to more social influences have changed the roles of men and women in the family over time. More women can now go to school, which has made it easier for them to take part in conversations about health, education, and household spending. Madan (1991) contends that education often transforms familial authority by integrating novel forms of competence and legitimacy into decision-making processes. In modern Kashmiri families, educated women are often asked for their opinions on things like dealing with the government, going to school, and getting medical care. This gives them more power in the family.

Families are more and more likely to negotiate decisions instead of making them on their own. While elders still deserve respect, family members are more likely to make decisions together, especially in nuclear or semi-nuclear households. Uberoi (1993) points out that the Indian family hasn't gotten rid of hierarchy; instead, they've made it less strict by talking and making deals. This change can be seen in Kashmir in choices about when to get married, how to educate children, and how to run a household. Women, especially mothers, have a big impact on these results, which shows that gendered authority is slowly becoming more equal. Marriage is still a big place where gender roles and decision-making come together. In the past, elders arranged marriages, and the bride and groom didn't have much say in the matter. Family involvement is still strong, but modern practices are more likely to include younger members, especially educated sons and daughters. Dube (1997) notes that these changes frequently result in intergenerational negotiation



rather than conflict. In Kashmiri families, women often serve as mediators in marriage discussions, reconciling parental expectations with the desires of younger family members. This role gives women more power in the home, even though making decisions together is still the norm.

Economic factors have also changed the roles of men and women in families. Even though women in Kashmir still don't work as much as men, their education, informal work, or home-based activities have made them more important in family decision-making. Shah (1998) says that making more money often gives people more power to negotiate within their own families. In Kashmiri society, women who provide financial support or have educational qualifications are more likely to be involved in decisions about spending, saving, and the future of their children. This shows that decision-making is becoming more open to everyone. Intergenerational gender dynamics make it even harder to make decisions. Older women, especially mothers-in-law, often have a lot of power in extended families, especially when it comes to organizing the home and following religious rituals. Madan (1991) underscores that patriarchy in South Asia is not exclusively perpetuated by men but is ingrained in familial hierarchies where senior women also possess authority. In Kashmir, the relationships between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law show how complicated this is by mixing cooperation, negotiation, and tension. In these situations, age, marital status, and experience have as much of an effect on decisions as gender does.

Even with these changes, gender-based inequalities still exist. Men still make most of the decisions about property ownership, inheritance, and interactions with people outside of the family. This is because of larger structural issues. Dube (1997) contends that although families adjust to social change, entrenched gender norms frequently impede the speed of transformation. In Kashmiri families, women often have the most power to make decisions about things that happen in the home, but men still make the most important decisions that will have long-term effects on the economy. This division shows that change and continuity can happen at the same time in family structures. Families make decisions every day that show how gender roles are always being negotiated and not set in stone. Decisions about how to spend money on the house, who will take care of the kids, and their education require constant conversation and change. Even when formal power structures are still patriarchal,

women have a lot of practical power because they are in charge of daily routines. Uberoi (1993) asserts that quotidian practices are essential for comprehending family dynamics, as they expose the lived experiences underlying normative ideals. Examining gender roles and decision-making processes in Kashmiri families uncovers a dynamic interaction between tradition and transformation. Families are not fixed entities; rather, they are arenas where gendered authority is reconfigured through education, economic participation, and intergenerational negotiation. Even though patriarchal norms still affect family life, women's roles in making decisions have grown in small but important ways. This gradual change shows how family systems can adapt to social change while still keeping their unity and solidarity.

To understand how social change affects daily family and kinship practices in Kashmiri society, we need to pay attention to the small, everyday ways that social relationships are reorganized instead of big, dramatic changes. Sociological research on South Asian families consistently indicates that social change seldom disassembles kinship systems; rather, it transforms quotidian practices via negotiation, adaptation, and selective continuity (Madan, 1991; Uberoi, 1993). In Kashmir, family and kinship continue to be fundamental to social life; however, their daily operations are influenced by the pressures and opportunities arising from education, migration, economic restructuring, and evolving aspirations. One of the most obvious effects of social change is how families interact with each other every day. Traditional kinship practices stressed regular face-to-face contact, shared household chores, and making decisions together in large families. These practices are still common in many places, especially in rural areas, but the rhythm of everyday family life has changed because people are more mobile and live in different places. People moving away for school or work has made it less common for families to live together, but family ties are still strong through regular communication, visits, and financial help. Shah (1998) observes that these changes result in what can be termed "stretched families," wherein emotional and moral connections endure despite geographical separation. In Kashmir, this has resulted in novel kinship practices, wherein phone calls, intermittent gatherings, and ceremonial events replace quotidian interactions.

Changes in society have also affected how people care for and help each other. In the past, extended families took care of children, the elderly,



and the sick by sharing work and resources. As families get smaller and women's roles change, caregiving practices have become more flexible. But the family is still responsible. Madan (1991) notes that Indian families adapt to changing circumstances by reallocating caregiving responsibilities instead of relinquishing them. In Kashmiri families, taking care of elderly parents is still seen as a moral obligation, even if it means working together with other families or depending on female relatives who live close by. These practices show how kinship changes with society while keeping its moral base.

Families' everyday economic activities have also changed. The rising cost of living, education, and job security have changed how kin networks pool and share resources. Financial assistance among relatives is still common, but it is now more focused and based on the situation than it used to be. Dube (1997) says that when the economy changes, families start to negotiate in new ways because dependence is based more on each person's contribution and need. In Kashmir, kinship-based assistance persists during marriages, illness, or crises; however, expectations of long-term economic dependence have diminished, particularly among younger generations pursuing autonomy.

Marriage practices provide a clear illustration of how social change influences everyday kinship behaviour. While marriage remains a family-centred institution, everyday practices surrounding mate selection, timing, and preparation have evolved. Increased education has expanded the role of consultation with prospective brides and grooms, even when elders retain final authority. Uberoi (1993) argues that such changes reflect a shift from rigid control to negotiated consent within families. In Kashmiri society, this negotiation often unfolds through informal discussions within households, mediated by women, revealing how everyday kinship practices absorb new values without rejecting collective norms. Gender roles within everyday family life have been particularly shaped by social change. Women's increased educational participation and exposure to public institutions have altered daily routines, decision-making, and divisions of labour. While women continue to bear primary responsibility for domestic work and kin maintenance, their involvement in decisions related to children's education, healthcare, and household expenditure has expanded. Dube (1997) emphasises that these changes are most visible in everyday practices rather than formal declarations of equality. In Kashmiri families, women's everyday authority often derives

from their practical knowledge and emotional labour, reshaping kinship relations from within.

Intergenerational relationships have also been influenced by changing social conditions. Everyday practices of obedience and authority have softened, giving way to dialogue and explanation, especially in matters concerning education and employment. Shah (1998) observes that younger generations increasingly participate in family discussions, though this participation remains bounded by respect for elders. In Kashmir, everyday interactions between parents and children reflect this balance, where advice and persuasion often replace command and compliance. Such practices signal a reworking of authority that preserves intergenerational solidarity while accommodating new aspirations. Rituals and everyday symbolic practices further demonstrate the influence of social change on kinship. Participation in life-cycle rituals, religious observances, and family gatherings continues to reinforce kin ties, though their scale and frequency may vary. Madan (1991) notes that rituals adapt to practical constraints while retaining their symbolic importance. In contemporary Kashmiri society, smaller or simplified rituals still serve to reaffirm kinship bonds, indicating that everyday symbolic practices remain vital to social cohesion. Importantly, social change has not affected all families uniformly. Class, education, location, and gender intersect to shape how kinship practices evolve. Urban, educated families often display greater flexibility in household arrangements and decision-making, while rural families tend to retain more traditional routines, albeit with gradual modification. Uberoi (1993) cautions against assuming linear change, stressing that multiple forms of family life coexist within the same society. This observation holds true in Kashmir, where continuity and change operate simultaneously across different social contexts.

CONCLUSION

Family and kinship continue to occupy a central position in contemporary Kashmiri society, serving as enduring sources of social solidarity, emotional security, and collective support. The findings of this study indicate that while family structures and kinship practices are undergoing gradual change, they remain resilient and adaptive rather than weakened. Shifts towards semi-nuclear households, evolving gender roles, and renegotiated intergenerational relations reflect broader social transformations, yet these changes have not



disrupted the foundational importance of kinship ties. Kinship networks continue to function as crucial mechanisms of mutual aid, caregiving, and social regulation, particularly in contexts marked by uncertainty and limited institutional support. Obligations rooted in cultural norms and shared moral values sustain trust and cohesion within families and extended kin groups. At the same time, everyday negotiations within households reveal emerging forms of authority and responsibility

shaped by education, economic pressures, and changing aspirations, especially among younger generations. The study demonstrates that social solidarity in Kashmiri society is actively produced through routine practices, shared experiences, and adaptive strategies rather than fixed traditions. Families operate as dynamic social institutions that mediate between continuity and change, allowing individuals and communities to navigate social stress while preserving a sense of belonging.

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