

Nuclear family

Vs

Joint family



#PERSPECTIVE

Is living in a joint family better?

Family is where we feel safe, family is what we love, and family is what makes a house a home. While every family is unique in its own dynamic, it can still be categorised into two joint family and nuclear family. And along with the category comes the big question, is it better to live in a joint family or a nuclear family?

It's an interesting question with plenty of pros and cons on both sides. It has kept sociologists arguing for a long time. So, what is the correct answer? Or is there even a correct answer? Is a joint family truly better than a nuclear family? Or is it the other way around?

Joint family vs nuclear family

A joint family is a multigenerational family (two or more generations) that lives together under one roof, share the same kitchen, and the economic expenses. Which means a joint family is usually an expanded family where the parents live with their children and their spouses. Often there are more members in a joint family that might include but are not limited to grandparents, uncles, aunts, and even more members.

On the other hand, a nuclear family consists of just the parents and the children. There are no expansions, making a nuclear family one of the smallest units in society.

Which one is better?

Rakib Hasan from Jatrabari, Dhaka grew up in a joint family and even though Rakib and his siblings are all grown up and some of them are married, they are still living together. "I grew up surrounded by people and I think this is the better way," he said.

"When there are more members in the

family, you get cared for by everyone. In a smaller family, if the parents are away or sick, you have to worry about even the simplest things like cooking and what not. But in a larger family, if one person gets sick, someone will take care of him. Another member will make sure the chores are done and the children are cared for," he said pointing out that in a joint family he never gets lonely because there's always someone available to talk to.

However, Tamzida Tamanna from Bogura had a different point of view. "I grew up in a joint family. We were eight cousins and I remember those days when we were little and we used to sit together during blackouts and sing," she said recalling her childhood.

"Those days were fun but as we grew up, there were issues. Different members of the family had different opinions about various things. Then there were the issues regarding the household chores. Such issues created contempt amongst family members. This is why I prefer nuclear family. I think even if you live apart, there's always love for family members. Which is better than contempt," said Tamanna.

Hazat Sabbir, a Dhaka University graduate had a very strong opinion regarding the issue. "I think joint family is

better than nuclear family without a doubt. Let me explain. The nuclear family has no members other than the children and the parents. Which means the chance for those children to interact with people is very limited. Even more so if the family lives in a city like Dhaka. Things get much worse if both of the parents are working. They leave the children with a babysitter. So, the children are getting very little interactions with other people, even less so with their parents which stands in their way of socialisation."

Socialisation is the process through which individuals are prepared to become successful members of society. This is how the norms and ideologies of a society are internalised in an individual. Without proper socialisation, individuals can become less empathetic, less understanding, and society in turn will suffer.

"These children growing up in nuclear families without proper socialisation grow up to be adults who do not fit in the society. This causes suffering for the society and even more importantly for those individuals. They start to struggle. Mentally, socially, and every other way. So, for the sake of society itself and the individual person, I think a joint family is better," Sabbir

said before pointing out that he grew up in a nuclear family that used to move around often because of his father's job and it affected him.

The verdict

It is difficult to reach a definite decision regarding the question because every family has a different dynamic and every individual person is unique with their own personalities. Which means generalisation might not be a good idea. While a joint family has various advantages, there are some issues such as conflicts, economic issues, differences of opinion and perhaps most importantly, lack of privacy.

On the other hand, nuclear family offers plenty of privacy and freedom but at the cost of separation from your family and risking socialisation for the children. So, it comes down to the family members.

As someone who has lived in a joint family and a nuclear family, I think the correct choice depends on the family members more than any other variable and therefore your decision should be based on the situations of your family above anything else.

By Ashif Ahmed Rudro
Photo: Collected