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The British Family between Change
and Continuity

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to:

My sweet mother and my beloved father may Allah have mercy on him.

My sisters, their sons, and to my brother.

And all my relatives.

To all my friends...

Acknowledgements

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious and Most Merciful,

My thanks must first of all go to my supervisors Dr. Azzouz

Omar and Mr.Kameche Mohammed for whom I am very

grateful for their great efforts. Thanks for the inspiring

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much. I am also grateful to all my teachers.

I would also like to express my thanks to my friends, and

every person who has made a share of help and overwhelmed

me with a piece of advice especially "kader".

Abstract

This paper aims to be a starting point for a debate on policy, charting the changing nature of the family, and what that means for parents, children and the wider society; drawing on the expansion of the latest new researches. One thing that unites everyone in Britain is the need for parents to take more responsibility for their children. The traditional single male breadwinner family is declining and the growth of single-parent families and other new kinds of family present many new challenges for government policy on welfare, work-life balance and in many other areas. This dissertation explores the changing shape of families in Britain today, the main reasons that contributed to this change, the impact of such changes on society and the role of government.

List of Abbreviations

C.T.C	:	Child Tax Credit.
F.C	:	Family Credit.
F.I.Ps	:	Family Intervention Projects.
O.N.S	:	Office for National Statistics.
U.K	:	United Kingdom.
W.F.T.C	:	Working Families Tax Credit.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Family is a group of people who are related to each other; according to several sociologists, philosophers, scholars distinguish between two types of family such as: the nuclear family which consists of parents and their children; and the extended family which includes relatives as grandparents, aunts and uncles.

Marriage is the most common form of partnership for both men and women, but it becomes less common nowadays than it has been before the divorce rate rose steadily during the late part of the twentieth century in Britain.

The researcher tries to present the evolution of the British family; and look beyond changes in household's composition to the relationships within which family has lived. Moreover, she focuses deeply on compositional changes.

In this research, the British family is presented through the radical changes in households structure, Great Britain becomes one many countries that have experienced very significant changes in pattern of family formation because most families have become less stable and more diverse.

Further, men and women's roles within the family have also changed which have led to renew the sociological norms.

This research paper is divided in two chapters. The first one aims at showing the decline of traditional family, and the rise of new forms of family composition; it also tackles the structure of the modern British family.

The family in Britain is changing; the one typical British family headed by two parents and has undergone substantial changes in the modern era. For example, there has been a rise in the number of single-parents households. Unlike traditional families whose parents were married before their children, were born and remained together. In this new type of family more people are living alone, more children are being raised alone by single parents besides women do not want to have children immediately, and they prefer to concentrate on their jobs and put-off having a baby until the late thirties.

In fact, the number of single parents' families is increasing; this is mainly due to more marriages ending in divorce.

This chapter also undertakes cohabitation, where many couples mostly in their twenties or thirties, live together without getting married.

The second chapter is devoted to analyse the impacts of change in the British family i.e: the factors that have contributed to this decline, changes in family life are not only a matter of changing the family structure, but also family role and their relationships. These changes are apparent with respect to all kinds of modern social problems as employment, the decline of traditional values, the impact of feminism, changing sexual norm and growing individualism.

Besides it sheds light on how the government should make a balance between work and care.

The objective of this research is to show the most significant changes that the British families have experienced in the modern period and finds out the most prominent impacts that have contributed to this change.

Chapter One

The Decline of the Traditional Family and the Emergence of
New Forms of Family Composition

Chapter One The Decline of the Traditional Family and the Emergence of New Forms of Family Composition

Introduction

Families do no longer consist of married parents living together with their children.

In the current epoch, an indefinite large number of families contain a nontraditional structure as step families, cohabitingparents, singleparents, couples living apart together and civil partnerships.

Today, both the public and politicians consent that families have changed in Britain. Thetraditional family does no more exist. This form of the British family has significantly beenthe most familiar over the last sixty years.

This chapter embarks upon some changes in British family and the rise of new types offamily. The researcher examines several differences in family patterns and household. Shealsotackles the decline of marriage and the appearance of cohabitation and what the public think about these changes.

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1.1 The Decline of Traditional Family:

Life has not always been easy or good, but through it; there have been a traditional family that consisted of just two parents. Nevertheless, they have succeeded in overcoming several obstacles by trying to maintain a sense of family values. This kind of family attempts to be typical and exemplary by satisfying their children's needs and meeting their wants whether they were physical, mental, moral and religious.

Parents have always liked that their kids trust them, encouraged and supported them in any way they have been able to. Moreover, they have usually tried to treat them properly and discuss with them different topics of interests. Besides, .Parents have attempted to be good listeners and have often helped their children to solve their problems and surmount obstacles whereas nowadays, family members tend to stop listening to one another because both parents and children become so busy and so stressed by the pressure of the living conditions and hectic life. Even after returning home exhausted, they prefer to listen to the radio, or watch TV, or read the newspaper, or chat on the Internet.

Children from a traditional family developed in a family where the mother was at home, and the father worked outside the house as well as grandparents who used to live next door, and the kids used to grow up in the neighbourhood. At that time, there was a real friendship that does not exist these days.

The school and the church were also important since they used to contribute too much to their education and learning.

Over the past 25 to 50 years, things have changed a lot, even the definition of family has changed but not for the better as some people think.

Families have changed with time as there have appeared couples who have been cohabiting with one another, a certain number among them have at last become married whereas others have broken up their cohabiting relations and very few stay

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together as cohabitants for long. What is so remarkable recently is that women are more likely to give birth before they turn 25 year; then they get married. Some of official statistics illustrate how the British family life has been changing greatly in a generation. The more people reside alone, the more children will be reared by single parents.

Many children are born through unmarried couples because of marriage drop to the lowest level. Dr Richard Woolfson¹, said: “The nature of family life has changed significantly in the last thirty years (...) the traditional nuclear family of two parents and two, four children have become a museum piece²”.

In the early times, unmarried couples did not use to exist but now this group is socially accepted. Children who do not obtain the balance of two parents in their growth, some psychologists viewed that they suffer too much.

Mr. Duncan Smith³ said: “It is not our job as politicians, to lecture but, the problem has been caused by successive United Kingdom Governments centering on the child and forgetting the parents [...] marriage is not just a piece of paper⁴.”

The Divorce Reform Act of 1969 was passed faster to dissolve marriage. What is remarkable is that the government made laws which have advantages for unmarried couples. Sue Palmer⁵ said: “The more parents work, the more children stay at home, are not playing outside with friends....”⁶ Unlike the previous time, these days there are many children who are born in unmarried families because many women prefer to have children without being married⁷.

¹A leading family expert and a child psychologist.

² Mori, Ipson. *Families in Britain, London, 1998*, p. 11.

³ Lain Duncan Smith, a former conservative leader and chairman of the center of social justice.

⁴ Mori, Ipson, *Op.cit.*, p. 17.

⁵ Sue Palmer, a child expert and author of “Toxic childhood”.

⁶ Palmer, Sue. *Toxic childhood*. Ed. London, 2002, p. 71.

⁷ *Social Policy Justice Group*, “Factured Families”, Center of Social Justice, 2006, p. 13.

1.2 Changing Family Structure and the Emergence of New Form Family Structure

As previously mentioned, a family is defined as a group of people who are related by blood or marriage, household refers to a person living alone or a group of people with the same address. As a matter of fact, the extended family⁸ was only appropriate for agricultural societies where intensive work was carried out; nonetheless, it was no longer needed, because the nuclear family⁹ was the most appropriate in urban regions as the living conditions there were different from rural areas.

On the other hand, currently, nuclear families make up only 36% of the British families. Social and cultural evolution has brought about considerable changes with reference to family. Nowadays, more women are employed than ever before. Law relating to divorce and miscarriage has influenced the nature of women's role in the family. Both the high rate of divorce and over increasing number of marriages present a considerable increase in the number of single parents' families and cohabiting couples.

However, the birth rate has fallen. This decade has witnessed the age of women giving birth for the first time when reaching thirty years old since most of women these days are focusing more on their jobs than on rearing children.

Families in the past may have been inter-dependent. Possibly an economic unit, certainly a social one which gave great support to its members, but it was also full of constraints, nevertheless these days, smaller families lacking free time and rising opportunities appear to provide a sort of isolation between its members.

In spite of the fact that the nuclear family has succeeded to some extent in occupying a certain type of respect and admiration in the society, it is criticized in comparison to the extended family. Though the latter used to experience a kind of isolation, both parents and children used to live together in an emotional hot house

⁸ A family unit consisting of two parents (a mother and a father) and their children.

⁹ A family consisting of parents and children, along with grandparents, aunts or uncles, cousins, ect...

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atmosphere in the countryside or village whereas the family these days is a mobile unit centered in the town¹⁰ and the environment in which it is placed is linked to the most variable services concerning with education, health and entertainment.

It is obvious that family's differences reflect all sorts of distinctions in the whole society; this is prominent in the present discussions about women's rights, man exploiting her, the importance of work, different opportunities, getting paid... What is more, is growing tension between parents and children which eventually leads to family breakdown. This family breakdown sometimes ends in divorce. It is quite possible to argue that "Divorce is a healthy symptom of the desire of individuals to obtain happiness"¹¹.

The structure of the British family has shifted significantly over the last fifty years and it is clear that it will continue. These changes have resulted in the decline of marriage and the rise of cohabitation that have led to the appearance of new forms of family structures and compositions; families are no longer made up of married parents living with their children. At the present time, a lot of families comprise a number of nontraditional structures because of the changes in marriage, divorce and relationships which have contributed in making a step family that is one of the fastest growing family forms in Britain.

At present, researchers argue that one in ten off all families¹² is of this kind. The number of single parent families have also gone up to 2.3 million making up 14% of all families¹³. Consequently, more and more children are growing up in single parent and in step families. Further, a high number of couples are now living together. Moreover, many people have regular partners in other household excluding students who get full time and people who live with parents. In most cases, this is either due to working in different locations or owing to the early relationships. Another type of family called civil partnership which

¹⁰Bulterworth, Eric. Social Problems of Modern Britain. p. 74.

¹¹Ibid; p.75.

¹²Office for National Statistics, « civil parentship ». 2008.

¹³Mori, Ipson. Families in Britain, p. 26.

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gathers the same sex couples occupy 26,787 civil partnerships since the law that was introduced in December 2005¹⁴.

1.3 Family Structure in UK :

In the domain of lone parenthood in particular, sociological research agendas have particularly shaped by criticizing the discourses surrounding the presumed meanings of lone parenthood as an indicator of family change and of patterns claims on state welfare. The increasing number of lone parents recently is due to more events leading to lone parenthood and to an increasing duration of lone parenthood. The recent rise in never married lone parenthood includes a growth in the breakdown of cohabiting relationships; a pattern which is linked to a tendency now for lone parents to be younger and to have younger children and smaller family sizes than in the past. Additionally, early lone parenthood appears to be the result of growing inequality of opportunity among young women¹⁵. For those with extra-marital births, were spent as a lone parent was three years, for those who divorced, the median duration was 45 years. Those becoming lone parents recently have tended to remain lone parents for longer; as well as more people becoming lone parents.

Lately, Britain has had a comparatively high proportion of children living in lone parent families, matched only in Europe by Denmark. In 1994, about one quarter of all families with dependent children under the age of sixteen in UK were headed by a lone parent, a proportion two to three times greater than the Netherlands or Germany. In the UK around 15% of dependent children live in single parent households.

“The growing social acceptance of a separation of sex marriage and parenthood has created a situation in which lone parenthood is increasingly coming to be seen as another stage in the family life cycle, rather than as an aberration from ‘normal’ family patterns, not just in the UK but throughout the western industrialized countries.

¹⁴Office for National Statistics, « Step Families », 2005.

¹⁵Social Trends, 1999.

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Much more diverse patterns of family structure are developing with more complexities of family love, support, exchange, duty and obligation.”¹⁶

It is the more adequate conceptualization of such diversity and its meanings, in terms of lived experience, perceptions of fairness and appropriate modes of behaviour, and the related distribution of opportunity and meaningful social participation.

Changing composition of household and new pattern in the British family has been more remarkable. Not long ago, there has been a huge rise in the proportion of one person household and the proportion of lone parent families. Currently Britain has had a comparatively high proportion of child living in lone parent families¹⁷.

One parent or single parent families are not something new, however, in the past most of them were conferred through divorce—there has been a dramatic increase in the proportion of single parent households in Britain in the two last decades; nevertheless, many children in one parent households have two parents alive, and may have regular contact with the parent outside the household.

Lone parent households are likely to share a number of characteristics; it is clear that most of lone parent households are headed by women. Further, the average age of children is generally under five years old. Likewise, kids are used to living in poverty because often lone mothers are less likely to be employed than married mothers. In the current social and cultural structure, it is more acceptable for homosexual couples to share their lives openly, although there is still debate about if they are able to adopt children. Countless people these days frankly live in couples as families nonetheless, the extent to which this is socially tolerated remains in question.

1.4 The Decline of Marriage and the Rise of Cohabitation:

¹⁶Ford, R., Marsh, A., and McKay, Changes in Lone Parenthood, Department of Social Security, Research Report N° 40, London; HMSO., 1995.

¹⁷A parent without a partner living with their dependent children.

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Traditionally, British government and society have supported the institution of marriage by giving certain privileges and responsibilities, and by enforcing consequences for breaking marriage vows.

A decrease in the number of marriages and an increase in cohabitation have both come in the wake of a large increase in divorce in the last thirty years. Some people argue that these trends are due to people being less willing to make commitments, or perhaps being more fearful that others will break their promises. Marriage is still the most common form of parenthood for both men and women, but it becomes less common in UK now than it has been in the past. The majority of people experienced a typical life course pattern of courtship leading to marriage, followed by the birth of children; the woman gave up paid employment during her years of children bringing up and the couple stayed together until death took one of them, yet in the late twentieth and the early twenty first century, it is figured that there is now more women who are still married but no marriage is on the escalation; cohabitation has been increasingly common, usually preceding or following marriage.

The proportion of non-married women under sixty cohabiting almost doubled in less than 15 years, from 13% in 1986 to 25% in 1999¹⁸. The timing of marriage has changed; it is estimated that the average age of first marriage was twenty eight for women and thirty for men compared to twenty two and twenty four. Marriage declined nearly 10% in the UK during 2005, according to report by ONS¹⁹.

Sociologists have endeavoured to build an explanation of growing divorce rates more than they have engaged with the other demographic changes so far addressed. Among the core development commonly cited as significant are:

Change in the marital bases of people's livelihood, leading to marital ties being based progressively on emotion and romantic love, rather than economic necessity.

¹⁸Office of National statistics.2000.

¹⁹Office of National Statistics.2005.

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Expectations in this newly dominant field could not realistically be met, hence break-up. The other core development which has engendered a good deal of research has been the issue of gender relations, and changes in women's access to 'independent' income. The latter notion has never squared with the patterning of divorce which is associated with female disadvantage, not its opposite. There is an apparent contradiction between the greater 'wealth' of women and the frequent poverty of those who divorce.

In fact, divorce is clearly associated with the absence of access to resources—material or cultural, and takes place in highly constrained environments. The most significant causes of divorce rates occurring amongst people who marry at an early age; those who are economically, **somatically** and emotionally vulnerable²⁰.

In the 1990's, unmarried motherhood has risen rapidly; this is mainly as a result of raising rate cohabitation, a woman who separates from a cohabiting partner and becomes alone as never married, for six years, she will become a lone parent, the proportion of dependent children living with lone mothers increased from 19 to **22²¹%**.

Between 1996 and 2006, the number of married couples fell by over 4% while the number of cohabiting couple families augmented by 23 million; representing 14% of all families. It is estimated that more than seven out of ten men and women now in their thirties will marry to nine out of ten men in their mid-sixties', it is by 2031 these trends will continue and the number of single parent families will rapidly rise²².

The majority of divorcees choose cohabitation as a new form of relationship. It appears that their previous experience affected them; those who have previously been married tend to engage in long cohabitation than never-married and their cohabitation are more likely to end in marriage²³.

²⁰Boheim, R, and Ermisch, J, Analysis of the Dynamics of Lone Parent Families, Institute for Social and Economic Research Working Paper, p. 98.

²¹**Wales and the USA in population studies vol: 59, p. 135.**

²²Mori, Ipson. Families in Britain. p25.

²³National Statistics, Living in Britain 2001, www.statistics.gov.uk.html

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The rise of cohabitation suggests a change from previous patterns, when cohabiting couples is raised dramatically too fast.

To conclude, not all cohabitation will lead dramatically to marriage; much cohabitation breaks up; other couples viewed it as an alternative to marriage; but all these are less helpful to create a long-term stable family.

Still, changing in law has made it easy to be able to get a divorce, so Britain now has one of the highest rates in Europe and the highest percentage of people in European nations who have been divorced²⁴ .

Conclusion

²⁴<http://iser.essex.ac.uk/pbs/wp98.8html> (25 February; 2015).

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The decline of the nuclear family unit is well-documented in the UK. These days, it is estimated that nuclear families make up only 36% of British families. Social and cultural evolutions have brought about considerable changes with reference to the family. Nowadays, more women are employed than ever before and law relating to divorce, contraception and misbirth certainly affect the nature of the women's role in the family. A high rate of divorce and a small number of marriages have betaken a considerable boost in the number of single parent families and cohabiting couples. The changing natures of relationships coupled with the rise of divorce have also led to a developed number of families with step-relatives and children who have one parent in common.

The family unit has undoubtedly changed significantly over the last few decades. The nuclear family unit consisting of a set of parents and their children is now much rarer, with new structures such as lone parent families and step-relatives much more common place.

Chapter Two

The Impacts of Change in the British Family

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Introduction

Families are less stable in this present generation today than in previous ones. Children often grow up with different parents in step families, cohabiting families. As a result, there is substantial evidence suggesting that kids are more likely to experience poverty, poor health and lack of welfare as well as eventually be involved in anti-social behaviour.

Families will go on evolving as more women have care, and seek more egalitarian relationships. Both men and women frequently need to negotiate their roles within the family; the impact of new family compositions and the changing dynamic within the families has had different effects upon children, mothers, fathers and other dependent groups of the family.

This chapter aims at exploring the most significant causes that have contributed directly to the changes in families, as well as changes in legislation, women's entry into the labour market and the effect of development of science and technology.

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2.1 Contributing Factors to Family Change

Researchers confirm that the current era is witnessing a set of changes in social norms and a loose attitude towards sex, in laws, divorce as well as civil partnership. More women work, besides, advances in science and technology. As a consequence of all these factors, the structure of families in Britain has changed.

2.2 Changes in Social Norms:

Traditional families are gradually being replaced by a variety of nontraditional family structure such as step families, cohabiting parents and so on. All these new types of family structure have become more common, so that, seven out of ten people think that premarital sex is rare or not wrong at all²⁵. Further, psychologists agree that there is a little difference; socially between being married and living together, and others think that living with a partner shows just as much commitment as getting married. These findings may be associated with wrong beliefs by many unmarried couples who live together as if married have the same rights as married couples. While few couples get married, marriage is seen as a piece of paper²⁶.

A series of attitudes towards marriage have evolved; some religious leaders have been forced to mention these changes and have discussed the issue of sexual activity (The ideology of no sex before marriage). Although strict religious beliefs about sexual activity outside of marriage have been put forward, it has been exercised in secret.

In addition, the proportion of population with strong religious beliefs has been reduced and the concept of sex in both religion and society has influenced the delay in marriage, or abandonment of it completely.

²⁵ Duncan 's and Philips, Mc, New Families, .p. 5.

²⁶ James G and Park A, Just a Piece of Paper, 2001, p. 20.

2.3 Changes in Legislation and Understanding Family Law:

The number of divorce floods speedily after the 1969 Divorce Reform Act, so that the divorce rate gets much higher because now it is easier than it was previously practiced. While some people think that marriage is less successful today²⁷, changes in legislation have allowed for the formalization of new types of families. For instance, legislations have allowed lesbian parents to have their own biological children; and discrimination laws around adoption, have also accepted gay couples become families with children. In 2007, new laws made it illegal for gay couples to adopt children; however there are still very few gay families with children²⁸.

Changes in law have also led to changes in women's employment circumstances. Women have had more important rights; the legal rights of those who are married and cohabiting stocked a relevant example.

To understand family law, some people think that marriage provides more security than cohabitation; some data present that people argue that the separation in cohabiting relationship should be treated similarly to marriage. Likewise, they maintain that they should be in a high level support for similar legal treatment for cohabiting and married couples.

The law commission would like to see couples who have been cohabiting for at least two years, given the same rights as married couples to the safeguard of their finances in the cases of break up or death while would remove the motivation for couples to marry²⁹.

²⁷ Cabinet Office/the Strategy Unit, *Families in Britain, 2008*, p. 85.

²⁸ <http://www.communitycare.co.uk>. (Tuesday, April 1st, 2015)

²⁹ Darwen, Joe, *Cohabitation and the Law*, p. 41.

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Twenty years ago, people believed that those who wanted children should get married, but in 2008 this belief fell. Even though the public feel that there is no need to get married, marriage continues to be viewed positively when children are involved; seven in ten people believe that it is better for parents' children to be married rather than unmarried³⁰.

2.4 The Mass Employment of Women:

Particularly, female patterns of participation are often grouped with movements in family and household structure, related divisions of labour in financial and case based resourcing. The lines have been drawn in different ways. There are general patterns of change in paid employment while the most part, reviewing these in relation to household level divisions of labour and gender (and life course) related developments in respect of access to and rewards from employment. Important modifications in gender, relations to education, employment, household resourcing, and related developments in respect of the articulation of family obligations as well as patterns of employment.

Recent decades have seen a growth in participation in post compulsory education, partly linked to changes in the employment opportunity structure, as well as to changes in early life course trajectories and familial relations of partial dependence and obligation, and linked to growing inequality. Qualifications level is an important marker of difference within employment.

In brief, one of the key drives behind society change towards the roles within the families has been the increase of women in the labour market. In current decades, changes in society including improved educational access for women, legislative change, change in social attitudes towards gender roles, have all proved the way for women's mass entry into the labour market. Between 1971 and 2008 women's

³⁰ <http://www.new.bbc.co.uk>. (Friday, March 20th, 2015; 18:00)

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employment rate rose from 59% to 70%, while men's rate fell from 95% to 79%³¹ regardless to their involvement in the labour market.

Women still care of domestic responsibilities within the family. They also face substantial penalties in terms of pay and promotion, for taking time out of the labour market or reducing their working hours to care children.

Many women can achieve balance between both family responsibilities and career. The current government has favoured the economic and social benefits of being a working mother, through the introduction of initiatives designed to help women with children. These have comprised:

Firstly, extending paid maternity leave from 18 to 29 weeks; secondly, introducing a further optional 12 weeks, unpaid maternity leave; thirdly, introducing paid paternity leave and additional paternity leave; fourthly, introducing the right to request flexible working for careers and parents with children less than sixteen years; fifthly, the ability to claim up to 80% of child care cost and sixthly, increasing the provision of child care through the launch of national child care strategy. Despite undertaking paid employment, some women feel it is their role to be the primary carer for their children³².

When intending to integrate employment and care responsibility, child care is considered as the obstacle to enter to the labour market; single parent, often mothers find it chiefly difficult to balance work and care responsibilities. The single parent employment rate is currently 56% compared to 72% of women in two parent households and 91% for men household³³. Notwithstanding, single parent seem to face some difficulties. For this, the government has outlined the additional measures to help

³¹ Office for National Statistics "Working Lives", 2008, .p. 13.

³² Irson, Dolf, *Families That Work*, 2003, p. 64.

³³ Office of National Statistics (March 2015;10:30) .

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them by a guaranteed job interview for all single parent seeking work extended work trials and access to in work credit³⁴.

In general, female empowerment has caused family break up, “The clock could not be turned back”³⁵.

2.5 The Impact of Technology:

Besides the social and legislative changes, science and technology have also played a great part in reorganizing the family by allowing families especially women to have great control and flexibility over their daily lives and a capability to plan for the future. The technological advancement of household instruments has cut the time and effort needed to support a household. Moreover, the introduction and development of technology mainly computers have dramatically dropped flexibility in employment opportunities. Many parents are now able to merge working at home with parental responsibilities.

Nowadays, even children claimed the quality of friendship among young people since it has declined through the Face book Generation who spends more time in front of their screens than outside practicing sports or playing some games or at least breathing fresh air.

2.6 The Impact of Changes on the Family:

2.6.1 Family's Instability:

Generally speaking, one of the consequences of greater marital instability is the larger frequency of residual families.

The decline of traditional family has led to increase the tension and instability in modern families. The nontraditional families such as step families and cohabiting parents are more over hung to breaking down.

³⁴ Irson, Dolf, *Families that Work*, op.cit., 2003, p. 68.

³⁵ Sue, Palmer. *Toxic Childhood*. op.cit., p. 17.

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In Britain step families are growing up so swift. Generally, most of children stay with their mother; four in five step families consist of a natural mother and a step father³⁶.

In addition, cohabiting- parent families separate before their children get five years and get another step father at the age of eight, and then another one when he or she is eleven. This means that the structure of a family can change several times while a child is growing up. This lack of stability has been linked to other issues such as poverty, poor health and antisocial behaviour.

2.6.2 Family's Poverty:

The improvement is held to rising rates of employment for women with children and pushed by the introduction of the Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC)³⁷. Many believe that work has a prodigious impact on the family poverty. Seven in ten who are in part-time work and two in ten for those in full-time work. Nonetheless, others argue that work is not always a solution-over half of poor children who live with a parent who works.

Financial squeeze often causes family strains and may be a factor in family breakdown. Families like individuals are facing growing anxiety over rising costs and debt. It is proclaimed that the number of vacancies has also fallen to its lowest level since 2001. Therefore, economy is cited as the most important issues facing Britain today³⁸.

Since the 1970's, there was a growth of permanent, lifetime inequalities and short term income risk. In 1977 -6% of the population had incomes less than half the national average. By 1995, this had trebled to 18% of the population and income inequality by the mid-nineties greater than at any time since the late 1940's.

³⁶ Tanya, Evans. *Fractured Families*, op.cit., p.17.

³⁷ Mori, Irson. *Families in Britain*, op.cit., p.34.

³⁸ [\(28/03/2015,14:00\)](http://save the children.org.uk/em/41html).

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From 1961 to 1979, all income groups had risen, then, from 1979 to 1991 average incomes grew by 36% while poorest saw static incomes. Factors contributing to income inequality growth between the late 1970's and early 1990's have been mentioned as:

- ✓ A growing gap between high and low pay, with increasing premiums for skills and qualifications.
- ✓ The number of jobless households rising faster than overall official unemployment rates, with more households containing only one adult and growing polarization between no earner and dual-earner couples.
- ✓ The 1980's price linking of benefits meant a falling behind of the rest of the population when overall incomes rose³⁹.

2.6.3 Family's Poor Health and Misery:

Some families thought of the important for certain health outcomes. It seems that children in two-parent households have better health and educational outcomes whereas children reared by a single parent family are more likely to suffer from illnesses than those brought up in two-parent households. For example, children of single parents whether single or widowed are likely to have a mental health problem comparison to those living with married or cohabiting couples⁴⁰.

Married parents are happier with their lives, with nine in ten married parents are satisfied. This is probably because married parents are likely to have higher incomes and are therefore able to live in areas with less deprivation and practicing easy activities⁴¹.

2.6.4 Most Tension over Paid Work and Care:

³⁹ <http://www.jrf.org.uk/Social-policy/SP107.html>. (29/03/2015.11:30)

⁴⁰ <http://Family Situation, save the children.org.uk/em/41html>. (29/03/2015.17:00).

⁴¹ Mori, Ipson. Families in Britain, op.cit., p.71.

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Families play a crucial role in supporting and caring for young children. The entry of women into the workplace has had an effect on the balance of work and care in the family. As female labour market, engagement has augmented and the structure of families has changed. Thus, more employees than in previous generations have cared responsibilities to balance with the challenges of working life.

Britain's population is growing and the issue of caring for the older generation is one of great debate. History maintains that many generations used to live together in the family home and while this may be true in some cultures today, it is not common in modern British society.

Despite trends indicating that adults are staying longer in the parental home, it is extremely rare to find three generations under the same roof today⁴².

2.6.5 The Impact of Change on Children of the Non-traditional Family:

Youth living without their biological fathers are more likely to face psychological problems; they begin to smoke in an early age, drink alcohol, take drugs, be excluded from school because of many absences, so that, they may leave school at the age of sixteen. Hence, they are likely to suffer from unemployment, homelessness, or cohabitation,

Children outside marriage, however, run away from home and they are exposed to a high risk of sexual abuse.

Not only children who are going to suffer, but also parents are going to pain deeply. For example, lone mothers are suffering from stress and other emotional and psychological problems. Thence, they list a high average of death and suicide because of drinking and unsafe sex⁴³.

⁴²<http://www.low.com.gov.uk/docs.ic.307>. (20 April 2015; 01:30)

⁴³<http://sexualattitudeandlifestyle.ac.uk>. (22 April 2015, 00:30).

2.6.6 The Impact on Social Fabric and Involvement in Antisocial Behaviour:

Disturbance in family life certainly has had an influence upon men and women as well as children; yet, it is the situation that changes in patterns of family structure also have an effect on the huge society. It is not easy to number all the causes that have led to the impact but it is possible to find some of the social changes linked with changes in family life that have happened over decades; some examples of effects on society are the rise of crimes and violence, over decades, the rate of crimes that have boosted at the same time as rates of divorce, the relation between crime and family environment without forgetting the factor of poverty.

An American study has found that “Juvenile offending was effected not only by whether a particular child’s parents were married, but also by the prevalent family structure in his neighborhood. It has been suggested that this might be the case because two parents’ families are better able to monitor antisocial behaviour which often leads to more serious crimes”⁴⁴.

Analyses of general household survey data show that two parents’ families are more likely to be concerned in their local communities than lone parent families. From this statement, it is noticed that community relations have increased.

Certain family sorts are more probable to explore their children involved in antisocial and criminal behaviour. This may be related to emotional and health outcomes of living in poverty. As a result, parents face greater struggle in controlling the challenging behaviour of their children.

2.7 Government Constraints with Families:

The community is not always aware of the role of government, often seeing services as being provided by their employers or child care

⁴⁴Mori, Ipson., op.cit., p. 75.

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providers. Nonetheless, there is swelling concurrence that government has a role in assuring justice among all groups in society, principally those that are most powerless. The shift across non-traditional family forms can lead to poor outcomes for families regarding health, well-being and poverty. Accordingly, the question that should be asked here: should the government interfere in families and if yes, what are the best ways of helping them?

The Labour Government grasped position in Britain in May 1997 promising policy change towards a wide range of areas. One of the ten commitments in 1997; (The Promise of Manifesto), “We will help build strong families and strong communities.”⁴⁵ And in October 1998, the Home Office published a discussion document (Supporting Families) which proposed two main types of policy intervention. First there was a measure that aimed at providing direct support for families in cash or in sorts of measures to lower poverty within twenty years and the latter contains measures such as the national child care strategy, which are very new in Britain; no previous British government has made such a promise. Other significant new policies include measures to back up and encourage lone parents into paid employment with a base set for employment levels, otherwise, benefits for the poorest children (those in families receiving Income Support) have been growing basically⁴⁶.

The responses to these kinds of proposals, illustrate some of the difficulties inveterate in the development of an explicit family policy in post modern society.

Thus, there are very different visions about government intervention in family matters, mostly measures intended to strengthen then marriage which have been controversial because they seem to suggest that other family types as lone parents, step families, are less acceptable and less deserving of support.

Other measures, such as the stress on reducing joblessness and swelling levels of employment for all parents, comprising lone parents, have also been criticized for

⁴⁵<http://www.bbc-news-uk-gov>. (Tuesday, April 21st, 2015 ;23:40)

⁴⁶<http://www.Family Politics and Family Policy.gov> (Monday, April 27th, 2015; 16:25).

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failing to recognize and value the contribution made by women's unpaid care work within the family⁴⁷.

2.8 Bad Parenting and Government Procedures:

Some evidence indicates that children growing up in new family structures demonstrate poorer consequences in relation to educational achievement, health, poverty and participation in anti-social behaviour. This has raised the question of the degree to which parents are responsible for their child's accretion, and whether the government has a role in intervening in families.

In spite of marking that families do not necessarily want further government interference, the public think that parents have a responsibility to rear children properly and supply them with the best start in life. When asked what constitutes 'Bad parenting', the public feel that it is reinforced by varying forms of neglect. "It is very difficult to measure what is a good and bad parenting...so it is difficult to have sanctions⁴⁸."

A different tactic which the government has made mounting use in recent years is to interpose directly with parenting orders and family interference to try to decrease the number of seriously pigments functional families. Parenting orders can be urged judge courts if a child is between 10-17 years and has been condemned of a felony; typically the order specifies attendance at a parenting programme which can last up to three months.

Family Intervention Projects (FIPs) are much more heavy programs to manage highly problematic families. They provide a single key worker to 'grip' the family and defy the root causes of their behaviour by giving individual support.

The most intense level families who ask supervision and support on a 24 hour basis stay in a residential unit.

⁴⁷<http://www.HomeOffice.gov.UK>. (Monday, April 27th, 2015; 22:14)

⁴⁸<http://www.respect.gov.uk> (Saturday, April 25th, 2015; 23:45)

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These programmes have achieved some success; the public really struggled to understand how the government would be able to decide what is ‘proper parenting’. If ‘bad parents’ can be identified the public felt it would be preferable to offer them care and education through parenting programmes rather than imposing sanctions or fines to prevent bad parenting being passed from generation to generation. Besides the idea of a contract between the parent and the state, and if the contract was broken, an educational route would be preferable to financial sanctions⁴⁹.

⁴⁹<http://www.Communities and Local Government.org/html/>. (April 02nd, 2015 ;17:00)

Conclusion

Traditionally, marriage has had a special status in British law and society; it is developed as a way to provide stability for families and for the whole society and it is a declaration of commitment which has public as well as private consequences. Marriage is an institution which offers advantages not only to the couples themselves but to the society as a whole. This promise builds encouragement to make sacrifices for the good of the family.

From the past, British government and society claimed the institution of marriage by giving it certain privileges and responsibilities. With the emergence of new family formations and households, children are more likely to face all types of failure of health condition, wellbeing, education and respect, which eventually lead them to perpetrate crimes and criminal acts.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

The British family expanded interesting points and it has been refreshing to see some of the social policy that governs the family life set context.

Coming back to the days when women used to stay at home and care about the children and men were bread winners, the British family has shown just how society has changed over the years.

The first chapter demonstrates that the traditional British family has been reduced and there is no specific definition of a “typical” family.

This work includes a discussion of new family structures, including nuclear, extended, lone-parent families, and the roles of family members.

These days, there is no such thing as a typical British family. It has been heard about the nuclear family, which usually consists of an adult man, an adult woman and dependent children; this is the typical British family.

The second chapter discusses many issues concerning the woman’s liberation and her access to the labour market, and lots of factors that have contributed to the change in the British family such as change in social attitudes and customs, in legislation, and the advancement of science and technology. As a result, both children and especially women have been suffering a lot due to this change.

As more mothers and fathers share roles within the home, it would be good to begin to push family policy towards a more egalitarian support of parenthood for example. It could start by recognizing and acknowledging that mothers not only want to work outside the home but participate in the society and that fathers benefit from being close to their children.

Chiefly,those old feminist stalwart who were active in breaking open the prison walls of the family in the place.Especially,noisy on the issue of men abandoning women would be up in arms at any suggestion that move to a more egalitarian society.It is a belief that is not only present in the British family policy to this day,but one which continues to be barefacedly expounded by British politicians and furthered by policy makers.

This belief,which has created a welfare system that, sees mothers as a carer for her children first and worker second,continues its control on the society.

Finally,this work should intervene,what types of help should provide and make benefits conditional.

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