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Fertility, marriage, migration, and household transformation in Nepal

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Abstract

Family change in Nepal has occurred rapidly in recent decades mainly after the trend of modern social development and increased mobility for sustaining livelihood. Women's growing economic participation, population ageing, and migration have contributed to changes in family structure in Nepal. This article examines these changes from a sociological perspective using secondary data available from the Nepal Demographic and Health Surveys 2011 and 2022, and the Nepal Living Standards Surveys III (2010/11) and IV (2022/23). It uses a comparative design to examine long-term trends in fertility, marriage, mortality, household size, migration, and women's involvement in work. The findings of this analysis show that family life in Nepal has changed in several important ways reflecting a major transformation. Firstly, fertility has declined significantly, the age at first marriage has increased noticeably, and infant and child mortality have decreased significantly. Household size has become smaller, while the number of female-headed households has increased indicating a shift in family formation patterns in Nepal. Internal and international migration have expanded rapidly over the past two decades. Remittances have become an important source of household income in the present context. Migration has also increased the responsibilities of women and older family members who remain at home because of the absence of younger family members. The older population is growing because of changes in family composition and a family dynamic. Family structure, living arrangements with mobility, and caregiving practices are changing in response to demographic and social change. However, existing family ties and responsibilities remain strong because traditional kinship values, practices and bounds continue to shape family life in the modern context.

Keywords: Family change, Nepal, fertility, migration, household size, globalization, ageing.



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Introduction

The family is one of the basic social institutions around the world. Family organizes reproduction, socialization, care, inheritance, authority, and everyday livelihood which making it possible families to continue across generations. In the past, family life in Nepal was closely associated with agrarian production and livestock. It was also characterized by strong kinship ties, intergenerational co-residence, patriarchal authority, and the joint or extended household system. The family was not only a private unit for maintaining these arrangement and continuation but it was also a key institution for cultural integration, economic production and social organization. It functioned as a social, cultural, and economic base of community life from its origin. However, family institutions and associated kinship ties have not remained in their traditional form particularly after industrialization. Family structure and functioning change over time as society experiences new forms in mobility, population patterns, economic systems, technological innovation, and social values across different times and contexts (Goode, 1963)

Family dynamics in a broader form in Nepal have undergone significant transformation due to the causes of socio-economic change, migration pattern, demographic transition, and evolving gender roles (Rai & Dangal, 2021). Nepal has experienced major transformations in multiple sectors over the last three decades. However, these transformations begin after the 1950s with the emergence of democracy and development. National surveys undertaken by the government of Nepal clearly show these changes in multiple forms. There has been a steady decline in fertility which is significant for change in family arrangements. The age at marriage has increased remarkably, showing delayed in family formation and changing social norms. Infant and child mortality have decreased in Nepal significantly in the present context of development which shows improved child survival and better overall health conditions. Household size has become smaller than in previous decades due to the cause of migration and fertility control and improving health condition. This pattern in fertility and mortality of Nepal shows a change toward smaller family units and changing living arrangements within family relationships (Subedi et al., 2016). Female-headed households have increased significantly in all communities which reflecting an important social change associated to family dynamics. Both internal and international migration have expanded with urbanization and global mobility mainly in search of opportunities and sustaining livelihood (Sharma & Shakya, 2025). Access to education, communication technology, and non-farm income sources has also grown indicating the development that have been achieved by Nepal. The Nepal Living Standards Survey IV reports that the average household size declined from 5.7 in 1995/96 to 4.0 in 2022/23 indicating significant family change. It also shows a rise in smaller households and a decline in households with five or more members in Nepalese family arrangements. The same report shown an i increasing trend of internal migration, a growing absentee population, and strong dependence on remittances. These factors directly influence family structure and everyday relationships. The Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2022 further shows that fertility has reached 2.1 children per woman. Marriage is taking place later than before reflecting the increasing trend of bargaining power of youth with their family. Increasing access to women's employment, internet use, and participation in decision-making also indicate broader social changes that affect family life.

These changes are important from a sociological perspective because they show how social change is reflected beyond economic indicators. Changes in a demographic composition reshape how families are formed, maintained, and experienced in a changing context. A decline in fertility reduces family size and it changes dependency structures which reflect as in a broader social transformation. Delayed marriage shifts the timing of adulthood and childbearing leading to new family arrangement with new mode of family life (Giddens, 2006). Lower mortality improves survival and changes family planning and parental expectations in the changing context of family (Caldwell, 1976). Similarly, migration spreads families across different locations from their own urban areas to abroad. This creates translocal and transnational forms of family organization with new forms of perceptions, expectations and relations. Similarly, urbanization changes residential patterns and reduces the feasibility of large co-residential kin groups because of adjustment challenges. Increasing mobility and women's participation in economic activities affects domestic authority, decisions, ownership and gender role. Population ageing creates new care responsibilities, mainly for older family members, especially when younger members of family migrate for the issues of livelihood. Globalization connects families to global labor markets, media influences, consumption patterns, and communication technologies with a new mode of thinking, expectations, priorities, and responsibilities. These processes generates new family forms with new relations while it also reshaping traditional kinship responsibilities and relationships because of Nepal's kin-based family structure. Traditional kinship systems are not simply disappearing from family relationships and social roles. Instead, they are being reorganized under conditions and expectations of modernization, mobility, and demographic transition making this an important context for examining family dynamics.

This article examines these transformations through secondary data provided by recent National surveys and sociological interpretation. It uses national survey data and key sociological literature to address a central question of how demographic and socio-economic transition are reshaping family dynamics in Nepal. More specifically, it explores changes in fertility patterns, marriage, mortality trends, family size, women's economic participation, migration and mobility and the recent trend of ageing in Nepal. These changes reflect broader shifts in family structure and social relationships providing a comprehensive understanding of family dynamics. The article draws on standard relevant sociological theories and literature to explain how family dynamics are changing. It then explains the data sources from national-level surveys and follows a comparative method which strengths the generalizability of the findings.

Literature Review and Theoretical Orientation

The family is a changing institution that is largely influenced by broader social, economic, and cultural transformations (Goode, 1963). So, it is not universal or fixed in meaning, expectations and forms in terms of its size, relations, autonomy, mobility and division of work. Instead, it varies across time and different social and cultural contexts. Early structural-functionalist perspectives in sociology focused on the role of the family in maintaining social order and coherence, integrity and consensus universally. This theoretical approach emphasized functions of the family such as socialization, emotional support, cultural continuation and role allocation which help maintain social stability and family continuation.

Talcott Parsons and Robert F. Bales (1955) argued that modern industrial societies tend to support smaller and more specialized family units to meet new expectation, unlike those of feudal society. This is especially evident where mobility increases occupational roles that become more differentiated to meet the changing goal of family. Large extended households lose their practical importance after the expansion of the market economy and the capitalist mode of production. However, this functional approach has been criticized for focusing too much on stability and consensus under conditions of social complexity and uncertainty.

William J. Goode (1963) supports the theory of modernization and argued that industrialization, urbanization, education, and occupational mobility influence family structure as families adjust to new social and economic environment. These factors encourage family members to move away from extended families to meet new social expectations and market based division labour. Urban conditions support the growth of nuclear family forms by encouraging mobility and individual autonomy under economic uncertainties. However, William J. Goode (1963) identified a general tendency for modern economic systems to reduce the importance of large kin-based family relations. In the context of Nepal, the decline in household size and the growing role of migration and wage labor in the process of urbanization and globalization strongly support this argument that is reflected in Nepali society. Marriage, intimacy, and family relationships have changed as societies have become more socially and culturally connected in the process of globalization. These changes have increased the value of personal choice, life-course options and individual autonomy (Giddens, 1992). More recent sociological work shows that family change is more complex in industrial society than in previous. Expanded global mobility in the present context is not just a shift toward nuclear families based on size alone. It involves broader changes in family relationships, values, expectations, working patterns and arrangements. The pattern of changing family has introduced the idea of individualization which is significant aspect to change perceptions of family. This concept suggests that traditional rules guiding marriage, parenthood, and kinship are becoming less rigid in the modern context (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). Relationships between family members are increasingly based on personal choice and negotiation, which gradually move away from traditional norms, values, expectations and sense of family needs. Similarly, modern social change in the family is possible with new forms of intimacy, changing gender expectations, and more reflexive decision-making (Giddens, 2006). These ideas for examining changing family relations in Nepal because family arrangement are changing rapidly. Growing education, expanded migration, media exposure, and women's changing roles have reshaped family expectations about work, marriage and fertility in the present context global mobility.

Globalization has changed family organization and relationship by influencing household structure, family roles, and everyday social relationships (Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). Globalization and associated mobility have increased international migration. This process has created transnational families and relationships contributing to changes in family relations among household members (Levitt, 2001). Migration studies provide a valuable perspective for understanding changes in family life in a comprehensive framework. It shows how mobility reshapes household structures, the division of work, and relationships among family members. Migration as part of household strategies and a concern to livelihood options

and it makes possible to examine broader structural change (Massey et al., 1993). Later research on Nepal shows that migration does not simply break family structure in a visible way. Instead, it reorganizes family roles, expectations and responsibilities in a changing context. The emerging nature of splitting household and transnational family forms have become common among Nepali migrants in present context as migration has accelerated (Yamanaka, 2005). Migration decisions are often formed and practiced within extended family settings, where choices are discussed and influenced collectively among family members (Monteiro, 2016). However, after industrial development economic globalization has expanded women's participation in education and paid employment, politics and in public sphere significantly. It has contributed to changes in gender roles, support system and household responsibilities (Chant & McIlwaine, 2009). Intergenerational care can weaken after modernization in family system and impact on transnational family settings in the modern context due to expanded migration and global mobility (Aryal & Guveli, 2023). These studies suggest that family change in Nepal cannot be understood only by examination of household size or co-residence patterns. Research must also consider people's mobility, their absence, and remittance-based arrangements. The rise of remittance-based economies has reshaped family life, particularly, caregiving, work pattern and decision, in many Nepali families. So, remittances play an important role in increasing household income and shaping spending patterns due to the migration impact in large size of Nepali family. They also improve access to education, opportunities and support social mobility (Aryal, 2022). Migration and remittance income now play a key role in shaping household decisions, livelihood practices, and relations between generations which are reflected in family dynamics. Findings from post-disaster Nepal indicate that caregiving roles within kinship networks vary across ethnic communities. These differences are reflected in women's decisions within households and influence how households are formed and managed in a new contexts and expectations. However, traditional caregiving expectations often limit women's options and influence how families are organized and work together (Fischer, 2023).

This article therefore adopts an integrated sociological approach to examine changing family patterns. It does not depend on a single theoretical framework to explain changing nature of family comprehensively. The present analysis includes a structural-functional perspective on family roles and adaptability under changing division of labour. It also uses modernization and demographic transition theories to explain changes in family, fertility and marriage. It draws on migration studies to understand the transnational nature of family and nature of split-household arrangements. In addition, it applies contemporary sociology to examine individualization, negotiation, and gender transformation in a modern context. The main assumption is that family change in Nepal is a measurable phenomenon as indicated by current data. Sociologically, this change does not represent a simple replacement of traditional family patterns with modern forms of family structure, authority, and everyday practices.

Data Sources and Method

This article is based on secondary data analysis and does not use primary fieldwork. The empirical foundation of this analysis consists of four official national surveys conducted by the government of Nepal. These two forms and nature of data include the Nepal Living Standards Survey III (2010/11) and the Nepal Living Standards Survey IV (2022/23). It also

includes the Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2011 and the Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2022. The national survey data are important because it provides nationally representative information on key aspects of Nepalese society. They include data on household composition, fertility, mortality, migration, education, women's status, and overall demographic structure which are important for examining changes at family level. The Nepal Demographic and Health Survey provides different data which are useful for key indicators such as total fertility rate, age at first marriage, mortality levels, marital status, and women's employment for examining family dynamics. Data from the Nepal Living Standards Survey are valuable for understanding household size, migration patterns, absentee population, remittance inflows, demographic change, and labor market trends.

The study uses a comparative descriptive approach combined to examine the family dynamics in Nepal. The analysis focuses on changes over time by comparing indicators across different survey periods. The study incorporates comparative analytical tables in the analysis section to analyze data comparatively. It refers to the comparison of indicators across time and across different dimensions of family life, rather than the statistical cross-tabulation of raw microdata. Therefore, the analysis does not depend new statistical measurement. It fully depends on the interpretation of data presented in published survey findings.

The analysis is organized around several key sociological themes. These include mainly changes in fertility, age at marriage, mortality, and family size. They also cover of marriage patterns and women's participation in economic development. Migration is another key area of analysis that contributes significantly to understanding family dynamics. The study further examines the impact of international migration on family life and the dynamics of internal migration. In addition, it explores the effects of urbanization on family structure, the impact of ageing, and the influence of globalization. It focuses on how these changes influence family structure, authority relations, care arrangements, gender roles, and intergenerational relationships in Nepal.

Results

Demographic Change and Family Formation Patterns in Nepal

Fertility decline and changes in the age at marriage are the most important indicators of family transformation in Nepal. These changes directly affect family size, reproductive behavior, women's life course, and the timing of family formation. According to national survey data, fertility has steadily declined, while the age at first marriage for both women and men has increased significantly. These changes in demographic composition collectively may reflect broader changes in education, social relations, and economic conditions. It also indicates a gradual move away from early marriage and high fertility toward more controlled and delayed family formation patterns in Nepal in latest two decades which are important for understanding change in the family system.

Table 1 clearly shows that fertility and marriage patterns have changed significantly in Nepal over the past decades. Sociologically, the decline in fertility suggests a transition toward smaller families and may promote individualism within family relations. This change is directly associated with increased education, better child survival, and wider use of family planning (Adhikari, 2010). It reflect the government of Nepal's priority on social development which

has contributed to these achievements. It also reflects changing parental expectations in new forms of family, where families invest more in fewer children and place greater emphasis to their education and better future. According to CBS data, from 2011 to 2022, fertility declined from 2.6 to 2.1 children per woman, while the median age at first marriage increased for both women and men. This is important for understanding changes in family size, composition and gender perception. This pattern shows that people are marrying later and having fewer children over time in a significant form. These changes indicate a gradual shift in family patterns in Nepal from extended to nuclear families. However, some traditional social and cultural values, supports system and family integrity still remains.

Table 1

Demographic Change and Family Formation Patterns in Nepal

Indicator	Earlier Status	Current Status
Total fertility rate (children per woman)	2.6 (2011)	2.1 (2022)
Median age at first marriage, women (years)	17.5 (2011)	18.3 (2022)
Median age at first marriage, men (years)	21.6 (2011)	22.3 (2022)

Note. Data obtained from CBS (2011); NSO (2024)

The rise in age at marriage indicates a delay in family formation similar to pattern observed urbanized Western societies after the industrial revolution. It provides more time for education, skill development, and entry into the labor market beyond agriculture-based occupation, and organization. It also postpones childbearing for a career development in modern society which reduces early reproductive pressure. As a result, individuals gain greater autonomy in decision-making which is significant for change in family relations. These changes contribute to changing gender roles and more negotiated family relationship across gender and generations.

The data in Table 1, show that family formation may be becoming more planned and less strictly controlled by traditional norms and values in Nepal. However, the increase in age at marriage is still moderate compared to developed society and it varies according to social groups in Nepal. Nepal continues to show earlier marriage practices compared to many developed societies partly because of prevailing gender perceptions. This suggests that gradual changes in family relations in Nepal are uneven and diverse. However, the data above in Table 1 indicate a significant shift toward smaller and later-forming families. This reflects the broader demographic transition and changing social values occurring at the family in Nepal.

Mortality Change and Family Security in Nepal

Mortality decline is a key factor in shaping family transformation in Nepal. It is an important trend in forming family structure which is a significant trend denoting the impact of investment in the health sectors (Dumka et al., 2024). Improvement in health services, nutrition, and overall living conditions supported by remittance significantly help to reduced infant and child mortality over time in Nepal. It shows a clear decline in both infant mortality and under-five mortality between 2011 and 2022 in Nepal which may supportive to make new forms of family structure, priorities and relations.

The data in Table 2 shows a strong decline in infant and child mortality in Nepal over a ten-year period. This pattern of change carries has important sociological implications for

understanding family life in a changing context. In the past, high mortality created uncertainty in family life encouraging high birth within family structure. Families often had more children across the region to ensure that some would survive into adulthood. This pattern of uncontrolled birth and traditional understanding of family contributed to larger family sizes and higher fertility simultaneously which was existed in a previous time.

Table 2

Mortality Change and Family Security in Nepal

Indicator	Earlier Status	Current Status
Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	46 (2011)	28 (2022)
Under-five mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	54 (2011)	33 (2022)

Note. MoHP et al. (2012, 2023)

However, in Nepal, infant mortality declined from 46 to 28 per 1,000 live births between 2011 and 2022 (MoHP et al. 2023). According to the report of NDHS, under-five mortality also decreased from 54 to 33 per 1,000 live births during the same period. These nature of changes in family composition in terms of fertility and mortality indicate growing confidence in child survival among Nepali families and contribute to greater stability within families over time. Parents now have greater confidence that their children will survive which, may encourage birth control. As a result, they are more likely to choose smaller families as a part of modern arrangements. This directly supports the broader process of fertility decline and family-size reduction in Nepal.

Mortality decline also changes the meaning of family itself in terms of family size, education and mobility. Families move from a survival-focused system toward a more future-oriented, while family size decrease. There is greater emphasis on education, health, and emotional investment in children. Improved survival rates within family relation strengthen intergeneration through greater support, care, and long-term family relationships. Family members can support each other for a longer period which reflects social development. This pattern changes how care, support system and responsibility are understood and practiced at the household level. It also encourages a change toward smaller and more planned families that invest more in family well-being and adapt to changing economic conditions.

Household Structure and Family Size Change in Nepal

Household size is one of the most visible indicators of family transformation (Esteve et al., 2024). National-level survey data which provided by government agencies for population composition, show a steady decline in average household size across the years. The average household size decreased from 5.7 persons in 1995/96 to 4.9 in 2010/11 in Nepal (CBS, 2011). Similarly, it further decreased to 4.0 in 2022/23 (NSO, 2023). There has been an increase in smaller households and a decline in households with five or more members which is an important reflection to examine family dynamics. There is also a significant rise in female-headed households at the same time. These changes are closely associated with migration, changing authority patterns, and shifting forms of co-residence which are significant in sociological analysis.

Table 3 shows a clear reduction in household size in Nepal in the present context. This decline indicates a change from large-size families to smaller family units. Large joint

households with multiple married sons and extended kin are becoming less common in everyday living arrangements in both urban and rural contexts. Instead, smaller households are increasing which is reflecting changing patterns of living arrangements and family organization (Burch, 1967).

Table 3

Household Structure and Living Arrangement Changes in Nepal

Indicator	Earlier Status	Current Status
Average household size	4.9 (2010/11)	4.0 (2022/23)
Female-headed households	26.6% (2010/11)	37.1% (2022/23)

Note. CBS (2011); NSO (2024)

However, this change should not be interpreted as the disappearance of traditional kinship ties and associated values. Family relationships often continue despite changes in co-residence and physical separation in the present Nepalese context. Even when households become smaller, kinship obligations remain active through remittances, visits, rituals, and shared responsibilities supported by their cultural values which help the integrity of family. This means that family networks are not weakening despite increasing trend of mobility. However, they are reorganized and functioning differently in a changing context.

The rise in female-headed households is also significant for understanding family how family operate. This change is closely connected to migration, especially male out-migration for work create environment which has increased the number of female-headed household. When men migrate, women often take on greater responsibility in managing the household in even in traditionally organized families. This shifts everyday authority patterns and decision-making roles within families which is notable changes in the Nepali family structure. This changes have mixed implications for family life and private sphere. Women may gain more autonomy and visibility which is significant when we analyze gender relations in private and public sphere. However, they may also increase workload and responsibilities simultaneously which is hidden. Household management, caregiving, and economic activities may all fall on as women's responsibility simultaneously. The decline in household size and the rise in female-headed households reflect a restructuring family life particularly in migrant's households in Nepal. Co-residence is a sharply decreasing trend in Nepal because of migration. Similarly, family relations are becoming more flexible and increasingly shaped by mobility and economic change.

Migration, Mobility, and Transnational Family Dynamics in Nepal

Migration has become a central force shaping family life and the mode of social organization in Nepal. Both internal and international migration have increased rapidly over time which is reflecting the trend of expanded mobility. National survey data show a rise in both internal and external migration from all over the country. They also indicate a sharp increase in the absentee population within households and a growing share of people living outside the country due to the international migration. A large proportion of households now receive remittances at the same time which support family life particularly by improving household income, health and education. These trends indicate that many families are no longer fully co-residential which is reflecting a new pattern in family life in Nepal.

Table 4

Migration, Mobility, and Transnational Family Dynamics in Nepal

Indicator	Previous Status	Present Status
Internal migration rate	36.9% (2010/11)	38.1% (2022/23)
Absentee population, both sexes	10.9% (2010/11)	20.0% (2022/23)
Absentees outside Nepal	43.1% (2010/11)	51.6% (2022/23)
Households receiving remittances	—	76.8% (2022/23)

Note. CBS (2011); NSO (2024)

Table 4 shows that migration has become a defining feature of family life in Nepal. The increase in internal migration indicates that mobility within the country is becoming more common resulting the absence of family members from their households. People move for marriage, education, work, and family reasons which are common forms of migration in Nepal. These moves are linked to life transitions and the search for opportunities in the global market. They make mobility a regular part of family life which is a declining the traditional patterns of co-residential families. This movement changes residential patterns and contributes to the formation of smaller and more flexible households.

The rise in the absentee population because of migration is especially important for understanding family transitions in Nepal. It shows that a large number of family members are physically absent from their households which affects support system for dependent family members. Many families are now split across places for work and study. Data available from two surveys, internal migration rose slightly from 36.9% in 2010/11 to 38.1% in 2022/23 during the period of two decades in Nepal (NSO, 2024). The portion of absentees nearly doubled from 10.9% to 20.0%, with a larger proportion living abroad which has affected family life during the same period which is significant to understand family dynamics. By 2022/23, about 76.8% of households were receiving remittances which indicating a strong dependency on migration as a new livelihood strategy of Nepalese people.

The increase in international migration further strengthens the pattern of remittance-based family structure and relations during the same period. A growing share of migrants live outside Nepal, creating transnational family arrangements and changing family life. These families are connected across borders through communication and financial support forming new type of family bound. They depend heavily on remittances and long-distance relationships which have become a common realities of Nepali family.

The high percentage of households receiving remittances shows how deeply migration is embedded in everyday family, although it may have negative long-term effect. So, this is a broader global phenomenon that affect family structure. Remittances support consumption, education, housing, and health significantly in Nepali families. It improves economic security and support education and social security significantly which contributing Nepal's social development goals initiated by the government. However, it also come with only social costs including the cost of family disintegration, stress, risk, weakened relationships and reduced support in the long-term because of permanent migration. Nepali migration is widespread around the world with about 2–3 million temporary migrant workers abroad (CBS, 2022). Similarly, the permanent diaspora from Nepal in developed regions is estimated at around

800,000 which is in growing trend (Adhikari, 2022). Older family's members and children often experience separation from their primary caregivers because of large scale migration of Nepal. It reduces face-to-face interaction, sympathy, love, emotional support and changes caregiving roles in the family.

Migration also reshapes gender and generational relations with in family structure. Women often take on more responsibility and workload in managing households when men migrate. Older family members may also take on child care responsibilities creating additional burden. Children may grow up with limited parental presence and may develop emotional distance and changed patterns of attachment which are suffered by a large size of people. These changes create both opportunities and pressures within families in an unintentional way. Migration transforms the family from a co-residential unit into a networked based system representing a new form of family relations. It connects households across places while also introducing new forms of separation, responsibility, and adjustment patterns in the long run.

Gender, Ageing, and Social Change in Nepal

Recent social changes in Nepal are also evident in gender roles, population ageing, and expanding global connectivity in the process of migration and globalization. National data show a gradual increase in the proportion of the older population which may result from improvement in the health system and greater health awareness. Internet use among both women and men has increased rapidly over the past decade. These trends are closely associated with migration, education, technological expansion, and globalization. They shape new family relations, behaviors and support adaptation to a changing social context

Table 5

Gender, Ageing, and Social Change in Nepal

Indicator	Previous Status	Present Status
Population age 60+	9.1% (2010/11)	10.9% (2022/23)
Internet use, women	—	65% (2022)
Internet use, men	—	76% (2022)

Note. CBS (2011); NSO (2024)

Table 5 shows that important social changes have occurred as reflected in demographic, communication and development indicators. The increase in the population aged 60 and above shows that Nepal is entering a phase of population ageing which has significant for family dynamics of Nepal. This has significant implications for families in terms of care and support. As households become smaller and younger members migrate, the effect of population ageing on the Nepali family become more evident. The responsibility of caring for elderly family members is becoming more complex because of the absence of younger family members. Families must manage care with fewer co-resident members placing greater pressure on those who remain at home.

The rapid expansion of internet use and social media among both women and men in Nepali families reflects the growing influence of globalization and family change. Digital technology has become part of everyday family life for Nepali people contributing to change family relations. It facilitates communication and make closer between family members across long distance, especially in migrant households. It also exposes individuals to new ideas,

lifestyles, and expectations regarding family, gender, and relationships which are important topics in sociological research.

This digital and global exposure of Nepali people can reshape the aspirations, integrity and social norms of family members. It may encourage individual choice, diverse livelihood options, consumption-oriented behavior, global connectivity and new forms of interaction within families. It can create generational differences values and expectations among family members. These changes show that family transformation in Nepal is not only demographic and economic. New gender roles and ageing are significantly associated with changes in how families function, communicate, and organize care and responsibility.

Population ageing is becoming more important in the sociology of family in Nepal. However, it has not received sufficiently attention in family, research and policy discussions. The share of the population aged 60 and above increased from 9.1 percent in 2010/11 to 10.9 percent in 2022/23 which is notable for family co-residence and relationship. This trend occurs while household size is decreasing and migration intensifying. The implication is that family-based elder care may face growing pressure and may become a major challenge for Nepali families.

Older persons may be supported by co-resident adult children and grandchildren in a joint family. On the other hand, older people may remain with fewer family members, or depend on remittances rather than direct daily care in a smaller or migration-affected household. Ageing is not a biological process; it also changes the meaning of intergenerational responsibility, care and support. It also raises the possibility of emotional isolation among the elder population through the trend and process of migration. Ageing creates tension between continuing family obligations and declining co-residential support, which is significant trend in modern family. Nepalese family norms and values continue to emphasize respect and care for older. However, the demographic and migration transition are making these obligations difficult to fulfill through traditional family arrangements.

Impact of Globalization

Globalization is not measured as a single variable in national reports of population transition because of its complexity and multidimensional nature. Global labour mobility has changed family life particularly through changes in care responsibilities, division of work and relationship (Hochschild, 2000). Its effects can be seen across multiple indicators of social life. International migration, remittance dependence, internet use, and employment change reflect globalization's influence at the family level which is significant for exploring family dynamics from a structure-agency framework. Similarly, globalization has contributed to changes in cultural values, family norms, and intergenerational relationships through modernization, urban life style and social development (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). Changing aspirations among family members also show how globalization is shaping family life in Nepal through modern technology, education and mobility. NDHS 2022 reports that 65 percent of women and 76 percent of men used the internet in the previous 12 months indicating the growing connectivity of Nepali family. Similarly, NLSS IV shows that remittance flows are widespread and central to household survival and mobility across all regions and people. These processes of globalization do not simply westernize the family. Rather, they create mixed

family forms at the same time that combine traditional kinship ties with modern mode of life and changing social roles and expectations. A family may remain culturally traditional in its ritual performance and kinship obligation while becoming economically dependent on migration. Globalization therefore intensifies family transformation, changing life style, relationships, access, connectivity, making it an important area for sociological research on changing family dynamics.

Discussion

The findings show that family change in Nepal is multidimensional and cumulative in nature. These social processes of family change in Nepal include fertility decline, delayed marriage, lower mortality, smaller households, migration, remittance use and ageing. All of these aspects are interconnected and interact with one another, and collectively contribute to the transformation of family structure and dynamics. They work together to shape changes in family life in Nepal. They reshape the demographic, economic, and normative foundations of family life. The evidence indicates a clear shift away from large, early-marriage, high-fertility and agrarian family patterns towards new way of life. Declining fertility and mortality have reduced family size and changed parental strategies in modern families. Later marriage has extended the transition to adulthood and shifted the timing of family formation which is also a significant for family composition.

These patterns broadly support classical sociological perspectives on modernization and family change. However, the Nepalese case does not follow a simple linear transition from joint to nuclear family forms which is significant for sociological research. Instead, the findings suggest a process of restructuring in which family forms are reorganized under changing social, economic, and demographic conditions. Marriage remains a dominant phenomenon while its timing is shifting remarkably and gender relations are adjusting in uneven ways often creating a double burden for women.

This restructuring is especially visible in the context of migration-affected families. Many households have become smaller because of migration. However, they remain dependent on absent family members and are sustaining by remittance flows. Women often take on greater responsibility for child and elder care household and community activities because of the absence of their partners. Elderly parents may live with fewer co-resident family members because the absence of close family members. However, they remain connected to migrant children through financial support. New challenges are emerging in the process of transition in Nepal. Smaller families and migration can reduce direct support between generations, which is a major challenge in the modern context. Ageing increases the burden of care within smaller household and place greater responsibilities on adult children. These pressures show that the family as an institution still exists and continue to change in its forms and expectations to manage with increasing social and economic demands.

Conclusion

This article examined changing family dynamics in Nepal through secondary data based on NDHS 2011, NDHS 2022, NLSS III, and NLSS IV. The evidence shows a clear change towards smaller family unit under changing demographic and social conditions. Fertility has declined and marriage is taking place later which is significant for family transition in Nepal.

Child mortality has decreased significantly and simultaneously household size has become smaller. This condition reflecting a new pattern of family structure in Nepal has been practicing. Migration has increased tremendously and remittances have become central options of household support. It representing a new family livelihood strategy and changing living arrangement. Urbanization which is speedy trend in Nepal is encouraging smaller households because living costs are higher, and people prefer more independent lifestyle which encourages to make nuclear family structure. Ageing is also in increasing trend is creating new pressures on caregiving and daily living for both care recipients and caregivers. These changes indicate an increasing trend of family restructuring in size, arrangement, relations and dependability in Nepal. Nepalese families in the present context are changing under the influence of migration, remittances, and changing gender roles significantly. These changes are also possible by new demographic conditions and everyday social realities under new family structure. They are increasingly operating across smaller households, multiple residences, remittance based livelihoods and transnational spaces.

Nepal is not abandoning the family as a central institution; rather its forms and patterns are changing trend under the pressure of globalism. This helps explain how social institutions adjust to the modern context and persist as conditions change with expansion of market. The family's adaptation to changing economic condition, mobility, risk, and aspirations provide an important area for future research. It should give attention to caregiving, marital negotiation, youth transitions, and intergenerational support from a sociological perspective under multidimensional framework. These areas need to be studied in both migrant and non-migrant settings which would enhance the sociological understanding of family life and pattern of family transition.

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