HOME SCIENCE BA PART III FAMILY DYNAMICS

The Family

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Family is a set of people related by blood, marriage, or adoption who shares the primary responsibility for reproduction and caring for members of society

 The family is a universal institution present in all cultures

Family: Meaning, Characteristics, Function and Types! Meaning:

The family is an intimate domestic group made up of people related to one another by bonds of blood, sexual mating or legal ties. It is the smallest and most basic social unit, which is also the most important primary group found in any society.

It is the simplest and most elementary group found in a society. It is a social group consisting of a father, mother and one or more children. It is the most immediate group a child is exposed to. In fact, it is the most enduring group, which has tremendous influence on the life of an individual, from birth until death. It also accounts for the most enduring social relationship found in society. Family has been defined by different social scientists.

Some of these definitions are given below:

'Family is a group defined by sexual relationship, sufficiently precise and enduring to provide for the procreation and upbringing of children.'

MacIver

'The family, almost without question, is the most important of any groups that human experience offers ... the family ... is with us always, or more precisely, we are with it.'

Family is a more or less durable association of husband and wife, with or without child, or of a man or woman alone, with children.'

- M. F. Nimkoff
- 'Family is the biological social unit composed of husband, wife and children.'
- Eliot and Merrill

'Family is a group of persons united by ties of marriage, blood or adoption constituting a single household interacting and intercommunicating with each other in their respective social roles of husband and wife, father and mother, son and daughter, brother and sister, creating a common culture.'

- Burgess and Locke
- 'Family is a group of persons, whose relations to one another are based upon consanguinity and who are therefore kin to one another.'
- Kingsley Davis

Characteristics of Family:

- 1. Family is a Universal group. It is found in some form or the other, in all types of societies whether primitive or modern.
- 2. A family is based on marriage, which results in a mating relationship between two adults of opposite sex.
- 3. Every family provides an individual with a name, and hence, it is a source of nomenclature.
- 4. Family is the group through which descent or ancestry can be traced.
- 5. Family is the most important group in any individual's life.
- 6. Family is the most basic and important group in primary socialization of an individual.
- 7. A family is generally limited in size, even large, joint and extended families.
- 8. The family is the most important group in society; it is the nucleus of all institutions, organizations and groups.
- 9. Family is based on emotions and sentiments. Mating, procreation, maternal and fraternal devotion, love and affection are the basis of family ties.
- 10. The family is a unit of emotional and economic cooperation.
- 11. Each member of family shares duties and responsibilities.
- 12. Every family is made up of husband and wife, and/or one or more children, both natural and adopted.
- 13. Each family is made up of different social roles, like those of husband, wife, mother, father, children, brothers or sisters.

Functions of Family:

As a social group and as an important social institution, family performs various functions that are as follows:

- 1. Family is a unit through which procreation takes place. Marriage sanctions sexual relationships, and it also establishes a family, which is further reinforced with the birth of children.
- 2. The process of reproduction is institutionalized, regulated and controlled in a family. The family legitimizes the act of reproduction.
- 3. Family helps in propagation of human species and perpetuation of human race.
- 4. Family provides an individual with an identity.
- 5. It is through the family that every family name is carried on from one generation to another.
- 6. Family is responsible for the production and upbringing of children.
- 7. Family is an important agent of socialization. The primary socialization of any individual takes place within the family. The immediate family members teach all the basic rules and norms of social life to a child.
- 8. Family is also an important agent of cultural transmission. Culture is transmitted from one generation to another through family. All the aspects of culture are learnt within the family structure.

- 9. Family is a great source of strength, emotional and psychological, for its members. All the members are aware that they can depend upon their family in the times of need.
- 10. Family provides an individual with a home, and establishes enduring social relationships.
- 11. The family is the basis of division of labour, where all members have their duties and obligations towards each other.
- 12. A family fulfills the economic needs of its members. This function has undergone transformation, with families moving from being production and consumption units in earlier times, to becoming more of consuming units rather than a producing one. Now-a-days, members of a family no longer produce things themselves; rather, they go out and work for some monetary remuneration or wages.
- 13. Family is traditionally responsible for the education of the children.
- 14. Family also has a recreational function. Earlier, most recreation was family- based. Family gatherings during festivals, functions, family reunions, marriages, brought entire families together. Now-a-days, taking family members out on holidays or for movies, plays, dinners, or parties, etc., perform the same function.

Types or Forms of Family:

We shall look at some of the types of family in this section (Figure 1).

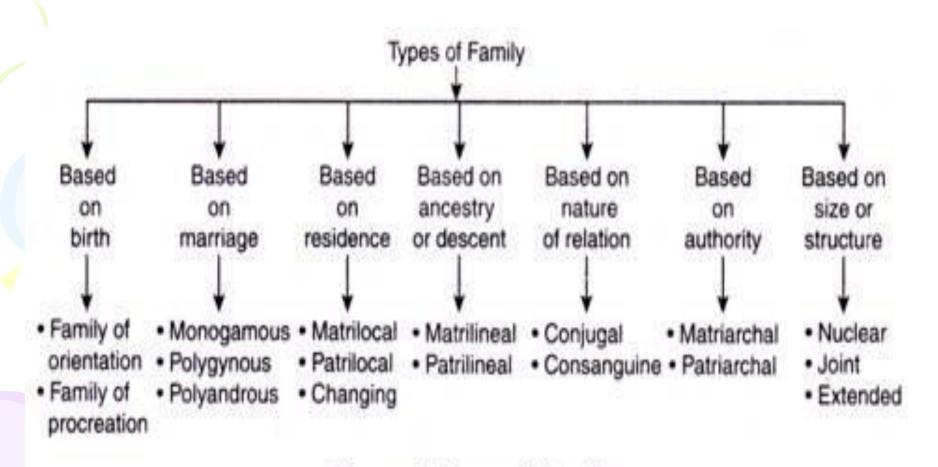


Figure 1 Types of Family

A description of the above classification of types or forms of family is explained here:

1. Based on Birth:

Family of Orientation:

The family in which an individual is born is his family of orientation.

Family of Procreation:

The family where an individual sets up after his/her marriage is his/her family of procreation.

The family of orientation and procreation may live together under the same roof, but can still be distinguished. – Robert Bierstedt

2.Based on Marriage: Monogamous Family:

This family consists of one husband and wife, including children and is based on monogamous marriages.

Polygynous Family:

A family consisting of one husband, and more than one wife, and all the children born to all the wives or adopted by each of them. This type of family has its basis in the polygynous form of marriage.

Polyandrous Family:

A family made up of one wife and more than one husband, and the children, either born or adopted with each one of them. This family is based on polyandrous marriage.

3. Based on Residence:

Family of Matrilocal Residence:

When a couple stays in the wife's house, the family is known as family of matrilocal residence.

Family of Patrilocal Residence:

When a family stays in the house of husband, the family is known as family of patrilocal residence.

Family of Changing Residence:

When a family stays in the husband's house for some time, and moves to wife's house, stays there for a period of time, and then moves back to husband's parents, or starts living in another place, the family is called a family of changing residence.

4. Based on Ancestry or Descent: Matrilineal Family:

When ancestry or descent is traced through the female line, or through the mother's side, the family is called matrilineal family. **Patrilineal Family:**

A family in which the authority is carried down the male line, and descent is traced through the male line or the father's side, is called a patrilineal family.

5. Based on Authority:

Matriarchal Family:

Matriarchal families are generally found in matrilineal societies. In these families, a woman is the head of the family, and authority is vested in her. Succession of property is through the female line, i.e., only daughters inherit the property.

After marriage, the husband resides in the wife's house and descent is traced through the mother's side. Here, children are brought up in mother's house. Thus, in matriarchal societies, the matrilocal system exists. Matriarchal families are found only in matrilineal societies, which are very limited in number all over the world. They are found in parts of Latin America, Ceylon, parts of Africa and India (the Khasis and the Garos).

Patriarchal Family:

Patriarchal families are commonly found in all parts of the world, since most societies in the world are patrilineal societies. In patriarchal families, the head of the family is a male, and authority is vested in him. Descent and property is passed through the male line and children are brought up in father's house. Such families are patrilocal in nature.

6. Based on the Nature of Relations:

Conjugal Family:

The conjugal family is made up of adults among whom there is a sexual relationship. It refers to a family system of spouses and their dependent children. The emphasis is placed on the marital relationship that exists between spouses. In modern times, the term 'conjugal family' is being used for partners, who have a long- term sexual relationship, but are not actually married.

Consanguine Family:

A consanguine family is made up of members among whom a blood relation exists, or those who are consanguineal kin, i.e., a family consisting of parent(s) and children, or siblings (brothers, sisters, or brothers and sisters).

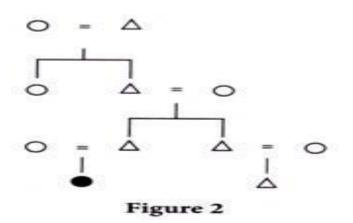
7. Based on state or structure:

Nuclear Family:

A nuclear family is a small group consisting of a husband, a wife and children, natural or adopted. It is more or less an autonomous unit that is not under the control of adults or elders of the family. It consists of two generations only. In all modern societies, nuclear family is the most common type of family. In fact, nuclear family is both the consequence as well as the cause of the disintegration of joint family.

Joint Family:

A joint family consists of three generation, living together under the same roof, sharing the same kitchen and purse or economic expenses. It is a family consisting of three nuclear families living together. According to Iravati Karve, a joint family is 'a group of people, who generally live under the same roof, who eat food cooked at one hearth, who hold property in common, and who participate in common family worship and are related to each other as some particular type of kindered.'



In Figure 2, Ego (the shaded figure) is a part of a joint family consisting of four generations—the children, parents, grandparents and great-grandparents, all from the fathers side. These types of joint families are also known as patriarchal (father- centred) or patrilineal (lineage traced through the father s or male side) joint families. In such families, only unmarried daughters, or at times widowed daughters are a part of the family. Married daughters no longer belong to the family as they become a part of their husbands family. However, in the case of matriarchal joint families (mother-centered) or matrilineal (lineage or descent traced through the mothers side or the female side), daughters are a part of the joint family, whereas sons become a part of their wives' families.



Composition: What Is the Family? Nuclear Family

 The nuclear family consists of a married couple and their unmarried children living together

Extended Family



- An extended family is a family in which relatives such as grandparents, aunts, or uncles live in the same home as parents and their children.
- Extended families provide greater emotional and financial support.

Types of Marriage

Monogamy is a form of marriage where one woman and one man are married only to each other

Serial Monogamy

A form of marriage where a person may have several spouses in his/her lifetime but only one spouse at a time.

Polygamy is a situation where you are allowed to have more than one husband or wife.

Polygamy takes two forms:

- 1. Polygyny is when a man marries more than one woman at the same time
- 2. Polyandry is when a woman marries more than one man at the same time.

Authority Patterns: Who Rules?

Patriarchy

 When males are expected to dominate in all family decision making, that society is a patriarchy

Matriarchy

 When women have greater authority than men, that society is a matriarchy.

Egalitarian family

A family in which spouses are regarded as equals

Studying the Family

- Functionalist View
 - The family serves six functions for society:
 - Reproduction
 - Protection
 - Socialization
 - Regulation of sexual behavior
 - Affection
 - Providing of social status

Studying the Family

Conflict View

- The conflict view believes that family reflects the inequality in wealth and power found within society.
- The conflict view recognizes that historically, husbands exercised power and authority within the family.
- The conflict view sees the family as an economic unit contributing to social injustice.

Studying the Family

Interactionist View

- The interactionist view focuses on the micro level of family and other intimate relationships.
- The interactionist view is interested in how individuals interact with each other,
- 1. cohabiting partners or
- 2. long-term married couples.

Social-exchange analysis depicts courtship and marriage as forms of negotiation.

Courtship and Mate Selection

Aspects of Mate Selection

Endogamy: Endogamy specifies the groups within which a spouse must be found and prohibits marriage with members of other groups.

Exogamy: Exogamy requires mate selection outside certain groups, usually one's own family or certain kin

Factors Associated with Divorce

- 1. Greater social acceptance
- 2. Relaxing of negative attitudes by religious denominations
- 3. States adopting more liberal divorce laws (no fault).
- 4. Marriage at an early age.
- 5. A short acquaintanceship before marriage
- Disapproval of marriage by relatives and friends

- 7. Limited economic resources and low wages.
- 8. A high school education or less.
- 9. Living in a big city as opposed to rural settings.