

- Society has been organized into various institutions and each of these institutions have been assigned some specific roles.
- These organizations bring an order, organize the society so that it functions smoothly.
- Of these institutions, the most important and basic to any society is the institution of family.
- Family/Home is first institution members learn to socialize, to behave and carry out their assigned social roles.
- Family is the central facet of any society – having inevitable influence on the life of individuals
- Changes in socio-cultural-economic-political scenario in this ever changing world often bring about changes in the family too.
- Family inculcates into its functions, roles and values the characteristics of the culture to which they belong.

FAMILY INSTITUTION IN INDIA

- Dharma Shastras divide the life of an individual into four ashramas or stages:
 - Brahmacharya ashrama - the boy, leads a life of a student, dwelling in his guru's residence and completes his studies;
 - Grihastha ashrama :- the householder,
 - Vanaprastha ashrama :- when he begins to detach himself
 - Sanyas ashram :- leads the life of a mendicant – severing his ties with the material world.
- The family in the West is nuclear or conjugal whereas in India this is not so.
- In western family, emotional and material gain is an end to itself, the Indian family is seen as the means for the 'realisation of self', the goal of life.
- According to Prabhu (1963) the real family life of an individual starts with the marriage.
- The basis of marriage is the spiritual unification of the couple with the three basic aims: Dharma - rights and obligations; Praja - progeny and Rati - libidinal satisfaction.
- The continuity of the family and through it the community and the society at large is one of the important functions of family.
- Based on this expectation, the society assigns status and roles to the members of the family.
- In a traditional Indian family, the male member is expected to be the breadwinner and has the major say in the decision making while the women are assigned the task of taking care of the household, mostly playing a surrogate role, being economically dependent on the men.

- Number of Indian women employed in the semi-professional and professional sectors has increased.
- Changes that have taken place in the socio-political scenario, urbanization and industrialization and better educational and economic opportunities have contributed to these changes immensely (roopnaraine et. al, 1992).

TYPES OF FAMILY

- There are different classifications of family. The criteria of this division depends on the following basis
 - Marriage,
 - Nature of residence,
 - Ancestry or descent,
 - Nature of relations, and
 - Size and structure.
- On the basis of marriage, family has been divided into the following two major types:
 - Polygamous family: It means the practice of multiple of marriage. A person having multiple spouses. Polygamous family can be polygynous where one man has multiple wives or polyandrous where one woman has multiple husbands. Polygyny is far more common than polyandry.
 - Monogamous family: In this form of marriage an individual has one spouse. This is the most common and acceptable form of marriage.
 - On the basis of the nature of residence, family is classified into the following three main forms:
 - ★ Family of matrilocal residence: This is more common among matrilineal societies where the married couple stay near, or at the wife's maternal home
 - ★ Family of patrilocal residence: In this form of family, the married couple stays with the husband's family of origin. This form of residence is seen more in the patriarchal family which is the most common system followed in India
 - ★ Family of changing residence
- Family can be classified into two main types on the basis of their ancestry or descent, which are given below:
 - ❖ Matrilineal family: The lineage or descent is traced through the mother's lineage or ancestors. Children carry the mother's family names and the daughters are natural successors of mother's property. Matrilineal families are more common in Kerala.

- ❖ **Patrilineal family:** In India most families are patrilineal. The lineage is traced through the father and his ancestors. Inheritance of property, names and titles are through the male line.

- Based on the nature of relations among the family members, we have the following classifications:
 - **Conjugal family:** The family includes the couple among whom exists sexual relationship. Nuclear family is sometimes known as conjugal family too.
 - **Consanguine family:** The family which consists of members among whom there exists blood relationship like that of brother and sister, father and son etc.
- Based on the size or structure and the depth of generations, family can be classified into the following three main types:
 - Nuclear or the single unit family,
 - Extended family, and
 - Joint family.

DEFINING THE FAMILY

- According to Sumner (1906), 'Marriage is an imperfect institution since it has no structure and the "family is the institution and it was the antecedent to marriage'.
- Burgess and Locke (1953) have defined family as a 'group of persons united by ties of marriage, blood or adoptions, constituting a single household; interacting and communicating with each other in respective social roles of husband and wife, mother and father, son and daughter, brother and sister and creating and maintaining a common culture'.
- According to Olson & Defrain (1994) who saw family as two or more persons committed to each other and who share intimacy, resources, decisions and values.
- According to Carter and McGoldrick (1999), families comprise people who have a shared history and future.
- Families encompass the entire emotional system of multiple generations that are tied together by blood, legal and or historical ties

NUCLEAR FAMILIES

- Nuclear family can be defined simply as a family that consists of wife/mother, a husband/father, and their children.
- It is the smallest and most elementary kinship unit that consists of two parents and children who are dependent on them.
- Since nuclear family emphasizes relationship formed through marriage, it is a conjugal family system.
- Nuclear family is generally short lived, dissolved when parents die or children launch out and hence the family traditions need not be strongly practised in these families (Olson and Defrain, 1994).

EXTENDED FAMILY

- Extended family can be defined as a kinship network of social ties, made of multiple generations, sharing the same residence or residing in the same geographic vicinity without a joint ownership to property.
- **JOINT FAMILY**
- It means two or more elementary families joint together (Shah, 1998).
- A joint family consists of many generations living under the same roof
- It means, two or more nuclear families related through blood, living under the same roof.
- Money earned by members of the family is collected and spent for the entire family and all property is held jointly
- It is called a patrilineal joint family when the lineage is based on the patrilineal descent and matrilineal joint family when lineage is based on matrilineal descent (Shah, 1998).
- In a patrilineal joint family, usually all the male members are blood relatives.
- The oldest male heads of the family in social & economic decision making.
- This form of joint family system is more common in India.
- In a matrilineal joint family, the family members of the wife and mother's relatives stay together sharing the same food and property.
- The relationships and dynamics of the family undergo changes as the families move through their life cycle.

FAMILY LIFE CYCLE & ROLE OF DEVELOPMENT

- Like that of an individual's development, most families make an orderly progression through some general stages (Tienda, 1980).
- According to this concept, at each stage, family members have to perform various sets of tasks.
- It makes an effort to understand the family in its totality, its functions and dysfunctions and its impact on the individual's development.
- Out of the several family life cycle stages put forth by various authors, the most widely used one is that of Duvall's (1971).
- Stage I - Married couple without children
- Stage II- Child bearing family (oldest child's birth to 30 months)
- Stage III- Family with preschool children (oldest child 2 Y2 years to 6 yrs)
- Stage IV- Family with school going children (oldest child 6 yrs-13 yrs)
- Stage V - Family with teenagers (oldest child 13 yrs-20 yrs)
- Stage VI- Family as a launching centre (oldest child gone to last child's leaving)
- Stage VII- Family in the middle years (empty nest to retirement)

- Stage VIII - Ageing family (retirement to death of one spouse)
- Though family life cycle is divided into stages, the progressions need not be orderly and there could be a disruption by events like divorce, remarriage, deaths, non-nuclear members moving into the nuclear system and unplanned conception.
- Developmental tasks are the responsibilities that arise in each stage of life in a family, successful achievement of which leads to satisfaction and success with later tasks while failure leads to unhappiness in the family, disapproval by the society and difficulty with later developmental tasks (Duvall, 1962)
- Duvall & Miller (1985) describe the following developmental tasks of various family life stages
 - Married couple without children – Establishing Mutually satisfying marriage, adjusting to pregnancy, fitting into kin network.
 - Child bearing family – Having & adjusting to an infant ; establishing a satisfying home base for parents & infants
 - Family with preschool Children – coping with energy depletion & lack of privacy as parents.
 - Family with school going children – Fitting into community, encouraging children's educational achievements.
 - Family with teenagers – Balancing freedom with responsibility, establishing post parental interests.
 - Family as a launching centre :- Launching youth into adults, maintaining a supportive home base
 - Family in the middle years : Refocusing on marriage relationship, maintaining kin ties with older & young Generations
 - Ageing family : - Coping with death and living alone, adjusting to retirement.
- Attaining these tasks is one of the objectives of the family's development.
- Tasks in the Indian family system more or less are similar to the tasks outlined above.
- Women are expected to blend into and accept the spouse's family as her own.
- Typically in Indian families, the nuclear family has to learn to balance their relationship with the joint or extended family & carry out their developmental tasks without upsetting the dynamics in their extended and joint families.
- When the families are unable to complete the expected tasks in each stage, it can lead to the family lagging in their smooth progression and this can often result in conflicts, distress and unhappiness in the family.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EXTENDED FAMILIES

AUTHORITARIAN STRUCTURE

- There are key differences between extended and joint family though these terms have been used interchangeably.

- Whether joint or extended in nature, these families have a lot of influence on the 'elementary family'
- The power to make decisions and pass judgements is vested in the hands of one person who demands immediate obedience.
- In a democratic family, the power is traditionally given to those members who are competent and able; & they usually make decisions in consultation with other members of the family.
- In a typically traditional and autocratic joint family, the eldest male member is vested with all power to make the decisions and need not necessarily consider the opinions of other members of the family.

FAMILISTIC ORGANISATION

- In this type of organization, individual interests and goals cannot be different from the family interests and goals.
- This simply means that when it comes to choosing between individual needs and family needs, the member is expected to choose what the family wants and set aside her or his goals and interests.

STATUS OF A MEMBER IS DECIDED BY AGE OR RELATIONSHIP

- The status of members in the family is decided on gender - where males are placed in a higher position than females; on generation - where those in the higher generation have a higher status than those in the lower generation; on age - where members of the same generation who are older get more status than the younger ones . The status of women usually depends on the status of their husbands.
- THE FILIAL & FRATERNAL RELATIONSHIPS GETS PREFERENCE OVER CONJUGAL
- RELATIONSHIPS – The husband-wife relationship stands secondary to the father son and Or brother-brother relationships.
- The family functions on the ideal of joint responsibility: – It is the responsibility of all the members of the family to fulfil the obligations and debts of the family.
- The authority in the family is determined by the principle of seniority: authority is usually centered around the senior most member in the family and delegation of authority is also based on this criteria.
- FUNCTIONS OF JOINT/EXTENDED FAMILIES
- The earliest function of family may have been reproductive or biological in nature, but over the years, it has developed into a primary social unit and has assumed a lot of importance for the human beings and the society at large.
- There are a number of ways in which family changes the society and influences the social structure.
- Family is capable of endless variations and in spite of that has continued and persisted though change.

- Being one of the prime and important social institutions, family has a wide range of functions.

FUNCTIONS

- Procreation, care and nurture of the young members (children),
- Stable satisfaction of sexual needs of members,
- Sharing of a home and all that this involves,
- Provide economic security,
- Provide emotional and intellectual growth,
- Social development of the young members,
- Religious security for the members,
- Provide platform for learning and carrying out family tradition and culture, Protection against distress and unemployment among members,
- Security for the aged and the physically/mentally challenged members, and
- Regulate individual interests in order to suit the interests of the wider community
- In the joint family setup, day to day chores are shared among the members. The roles and responsibilities are often distributed based on the gender & the power.
- This sometimes creates an unequal allocation of roles and responsibilities.
- In a typically traditional family, men are expected to provide and contribute towards the common money pool.
- The women are expected to be the homemakers and cook for the entire family.
- The oldest male member of the family decides the rules and regulations in the family.
- Decisions of individual family members are taken often in consultation with this patriarch of the family.
- Senior members of the household are often in-charge of the infants and babies while the mothers are working.
- This is true when the mothers are employed outside of the family too.
- Women are also assigned the duty of teaching the children social etiquettes, family traditions, language and religion.
- An ideal joint family system exhibits tolerance, cohesion, selflessness, cooperation, equality and mutual respect.
- Children reared in this nature are expected to learn these humanitarian values and thereby limit high individualism as they grow up.
- The members who earn lesser also get an opportunity to maintain a decent living and provide basic facility to their children.
- Joint time spent by members of different ages provide good opportunity for relaxation and recreation.

PROBLEMS IN JOINT/EXTENDED FAMILY

- Joint family system can often foster dependency since most responsibilities of earning usually rest on

the earning members of the family who could be few in number

- Social mobility could be prevented since members are urged to stay on in the family and are discouraged from launching out physically into a different geographical location
- Problems can surface when there are fewer earning members in the family adding to economic and role strain among some members;
- Individual goals could be in conflict with the joint family goals which has the potential to result in conflicts and estrangement between/among family members;
- Intergenerational conflicts are also common in these types of families;
- There could be more than one authority figure in the family which induces more conflicts and discontent;
- This kind of joint living and decision making could stifle individualism which could have an adverse effect on the growing personality of a youngster; and
- When space is a constraint, lack of privacy could be a major problem faced by family members

PROBLEMS IN DIFFERENT DOMAINS OF LIFE

ECONOMIC DOMAIN

- More often when it comes to allocating funds towards personal and family needs, conflicts are imminent.
- This happens most often when there is an autocratic patriarch in the family. When expenditure has to get the approval of the powerful members of the family, the weaker members find it difficult to make decisions of their choice in spending or saving their money.

MARITAL DOMAIN

- A joint family consists of multiple nuclear families or 'elementary families'.
- The term marital domain here stands for all those domains related to the elementary family.
- It is often seen that the marital/parental dyad (husband-wife/father-mother) in these families struggle to make independent decisions when it comes to their immediate nuclear members.
- The joint family expects the newly wed couple to stay along with the family
- The marital dyad is also confronted with a dilemma of when to plan for a child?
- Even if the couple wants to postpone pregnancy, sometimes they have to change their individual plans to accommodate the larger interests of the entire family. The older generation may not approve of the way children are being disciplined or brought up
- The elementary family may find it difficult to spend quality time together as a couple or as parents.

- Members who find it difficult to verbalize their difficulties feel the strain and eventually this could affect their marital relationship
- The marital or the parent dyad at times finds itself incapable of making independent decisions for itself. This includes schooling of the child, socializing or even the diet of the child.

PERSONAL DOMAIN

- Personal goals have to be sacrificed for the benefit of the family.

- This could put tremendous strain on members who experience internal conflicts over this
- It is often seen that in some families, members are unable to marry the mate of their choice, for their choice may not get the approval of the powerful and the influential members of the family
- Career choices also seem to be influenced by the joint will of the family.



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