

FAMILY

Group in which both relations of affinity and consanguinity (adoption) are found

GP MURDOCH

Elementary family was found everywhere (studied 250 societies)

Characteristics:

Common residence

Economic coordination

Sexual reproduction

Socially approved sexual relations b/w adults of both sexes

Children born to adults or adopted

Murdoch thought these characteristics are universal but blacks in Southern USA/Nayars were exceptions.

So his family is not universal.

Anthony Giddens

Gives simplified definition of family

As a group of person directly linked by kin connection, adult members of which assume responsibility of caring of children.

He emphasizes on criterion of commitment over and above traditional features of family.

TYPES OF FAMILY

1. Conjugal or Companionate: deliberately avoid having kids. DINK
(Double income no kids)
 2. Nuclear (children born out of monogamous)
 3. Compound (children – polygamous)
 4. Lineally extended (3 or more generations)
 5. Laterally extended (2 or more couples)
6. Extended joint (Henry Maine coined this. Property held jointly)

Can also be based on

Descent (patri, matri bilateral- ex nairs of Malabar and khasis of Meghalaya are matrilineal)

Residence (Matri, patri , neo, duo local, Avunco)

Authority (patriarchy, matriarchy, filiocentric)

Name (patronymic, metronymic)

Conjugal and Consanguinal

Contemporary Trends

T Parsons

Pre industrial society had extended family

(Life expectancy short

Need social support

Labor intensive economy

Simple skills required taught in family)

Industrialization

(specialized skills

Less labour intensive

High social/geographical mobility

Universalistic value against particularistic value of family)

So nucleated family becomes structural fit in industrial society

Therefore, Family becomes structurally isolated from other Social Institutions

William Goode

Supports Parsons

Occupational Statuses to be achieved not Ascribed

Ideology of individualism against ethos of family

Role bargain increasing where people selectively maintain relations
with important kins

Nuclear Family helped industrialisation

Thus, nuclear family becoming a culture

COUNTER VIEWS (against nuclearization)

Elizabeth Roberts

Industrialization lead to growth in extended family due to help provided

Wilmert and Young

In England - Regular contacts with extended family by working/middle class

Babysitting

In USA – Structurally isolated nuclear family rare.

Found only in dual-career, professional middle class families. Maintained no ties with kins because of self-sufficiency

Even super-rich maintain kin ties

Colin Bell

Physical distance overcome by internet, telephone and air travel

(frequency less but quality more of contact)

‘Modified or dispersed extended family’

Common residence might not be there but kinship ties are maintained

Bade Thorne

‘Cereal packet image’

i.e. problem of monolithic image of family

There is plurality of family forms

New Developments

Reconstituted Family

(spouses live with children of previous as well as current marriage)

Single parent

Live in

Dual career (Mowrer)

Rapaport (single parent, homosexual, commune living, live in)

New Developments

Contemporary Trends (overall)

Marriage losing appeal
Diversity in family forms growing
Rising divorces/separation/
Sanctity of marriage declining
Law has made divorce easy
Stigma of divorce vanishing

Giddens

'Forever love' changing into 'love till further notice' ('plastic love')

Frederic Leplay

Uses the term unstable for working class family

Contemporary Trends (India)

Marriage still important

Major event in life

Caste active – Technology re-enforcing

Class becoming important as well

Urban areas – Rise of live-in

Rise of divorce rate in IT professionals

Joint Family has Sentimental value

Girl's choice is increasingly getting considered

Male still seen as major, important bread winner

Role of elderly getting confined to only rituals

Rise of Filio-centric approach

6 pocket syndrome family

Functional Aspect of Family

G Murdock

In his book 'social structure'

4 functions

- Economic
- Controls reproduction
- Regulates sexual relations
 - Socialises children

T Parsons

Identifies two basic functions

- 1) Primary socialization of children
- 2) Stabilization of Adult Personality

Ronald Fletcher

Talked about multifunctional family

In which the basic function may exist and other functions are being
reinvented

Further functions can be divided as

Individual perspective

Physical security (childhood)

Emotional/psychological security

Economic security

Legitimate means of sexual gratification

Entertainment

Gives readymade status

Initial socialization

Changing trends in Individual perspective

Individual rely more on peers/friends for securities

Rise of alternative institutions like hospital, play school, multiplexes, media etc
which are taking some functions of family

Societal Perspective

Reproduction (providing members to the society)

Cultural transmission (socialization and transmission of values

but

media/school etc are playing major roles now)

Mechanism of social control (now police/law etc)

Unit of economic production (readymade jobs but now focus on corporate jobs)

Ronald Fletcher says that function of family has increased in this regard

As family provides for making necessary provisions for training and choice of forces

Criticisms of Family Dysfunctions

Family is often accused to be status quoist

For ex Karl Marx argues that family assures conformity of the individual, thereby, submitting to the exploitation of haves.

David Cooper in his book 'death of family' consider it as ideological conditioning device in exploitative society

Family is accused of producing psychological disorders in children

ex: RD Laing in his book 'politics of family' studies schizophrenic children and concludes it is due to expectations of the parents

Family produces emotional stress in the members leading to conflicts within family.

Edmond Leach in his book 'A runaway world?' concludes that the members expect too much of each other.

Criticisms of Family Dysfunctions

Family legitimizes the exploitation of the women.

Ex household work done by them goes unnoticed and family legitimizes sexual abuse.

Family legitimizes domestic violence as it is often ignored or even accepted.

Ex Murray Strauss states Marriage licence is a hitting licence

Family is used as neutralization device to justify deviant acts.

Ex corruption

It is argued family hampers creativity of individual when he submits his desires to family.