

**Paper – Principles of sociology, B.A. Honours**

**Topic: Principles of Sociology**

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**Family: concept, types, functions and recent changes**

The family is the most important primary group in society. It is the simplest and the most elementary form of society. It is the most basic of all social groupings. It is the first and the most immediate social environment to which a child is exposed. It is an outstanding primary group, because, it is in the family that the child develops its basic attitudes.

Broadly speaking, family refers to the group comprising parents and children. It may also refer, in some cases, to a group of relatives and their dependants forming one household. All these refer to the compositional aspect of this institution. Another aspect is that of residence of its members.

**Family Tree**

Family Tree				
Father	Grand Mother & Grand Father	Mother	Child (01)	Child (02)

**Definition:**

According to MacIver and page, “family is a group defined by a sex relationship, sufficiently precise and enduring to provide for the procreation and upbringing of children”.

According to Elliot and Mercl, “Family is the biological social unit composed of husband, wife and children”.

**Characteristics of family:**

Characteristics of Family	A mating relationship
	A form of marriage
	A common habitation
	A system of nomenclature
	An economic provision
	System of interaction and communication
	Universality
	Emotional basis

**1. A mating Relationship:**

A family come into existence when a man and woman establish mating relation between then.

**2. A form of marriage:**

Mating relationship is established through the institution of marriage. The society regulates sexual behaviour between opposite sexes through the institution of marriage. Though the institution of marriage, mating relationship is established. Without marriage family is not possible. Hence, family is a form of marriage.

**3. A common Habitation:**

A family requir3es a home or household for its living without a dwelling place the task of child – bearing and child rearing cannot be adequately performed. The members of a family have a common habitation or household.

**4. A system of Nomenclature:**

Every family is known by a particular name. It has own system of reckoning descent. Descent may be recognized through male line or through the mother’s line. In matrilineal families descent is recognized through male line. Similarly, in matrilineal families descent is recogned through mother’s line.

**5. An Economic Provision:**

Every family needs an economic provision to satisfy the economic needs. The head of the family carries on certain profession and earns to maintain the family.

**Types of Family:**

<b>On the Basis of organisation</b>				
01. Nuclear family		02. Joint family		
<b>On the Basis of Authority</b>				
01. Patriarchal family		02. Matriarchal family		
<b>On the Basis of Residence</b>				
Patrilocal Family	Matrilocal family	Neolocal residence	Avunculocal family	Matri-patri local family
<b>The Basis of Descent</b>				

1. Patrilineal family	2. Matrilineal family	
<b>On the Basis of Blood Relationship</b>		
1. Consanguine family	2. Conjugal family	
<b>On the Basis of Marriage</b>		
1. Monogamous family	2. Polygamous family	
	a. Polygynous	b. Polyandrous family

## **01. On the Basis of Organisation**

### **i. Nuclear Family:**

The nuclear family is a unit composed of husband, wife and their unmarried children. This is the predominant form in modern industrial societies. This type of family is based on companionship between parents and children.

### **ii. Joint Family:**

The term extended family is used to indicate the combination of two or more nuclear families based on an extension of the parent child relationships. According to Murdock, an extended family consists of two or more nuclear families affiliated through an extension of the parent child relationship ... i.e. by joining the nuclear family of a married adult to that of this parents.

In an extended family, a man and his wife live with the families of their married sons and with their unmarried sons and daughters, grand children or great grand children in the paternal or maternal line. Different types of extended family are still common in Asia, says Bottomore.

## **02. on the Basis of Authority**

### **i. Patriarchal Family:**

Patriarchal family is a type of family in which all authority belongs to the paternal side. In this family, the eldest male or the father is the head of the family. He exercises his authority over the members of the family.

### **ii. Matriarchal Family:**

It is a form of family in which authority is centred in the wife or mother. The matriarchal family system implies rule of the family by the mother, not by the father, in this type of family women are entitled to perform religious rites and husband lives in the house of wife.

### **03 On the Basis of Residence**

#### **i. Patrilocal Family**

When the wife goes to live with the husband's family, it is called the patrilocal family.

#### **ii. Matrilocal Family:**

When the couple after marriage moves to live with the wife's family. Such residence is called matrilocal. The husband has a secondary position in the wife's family where his children live.

#### **iii. Neolocal Residence:**

When the couple after marriage moves to settle in an independent residence which is neither attached to the bride's family of origin nor bridegroom's family of origin it is called neolocal residence.

#### **iv. Avunculocal family :**

In this type of family the married couple moves to the house of the maternal uncle and live with his son after marriage . Avunculocal family is found among the Nayers of Kerala. .

#### **v. Matri – Patrilocal family:**

In matri – patrilocal family, immediately after marriage the bridegroom moves to the house of the bride and temporarily settles there till the birth of the first child and then comes back to his family of orientations along with wife and child for permanent settlement. The chenchuas of Andhra Pradesh live in this type of family .

### **04. On the basis of descent:**

#### **i. Patrilineal family :**

When descent is traced through the father, it is called matrilineal family. In this type of family inheritance of property takes places along the male line of descent. The ancestry of such family is determined on the basis of male line or the father. A patriarchal and patrilocal. This is the common type of family prevalent today.

ii. **Matrilineal Family:**

In this type of family descent is traced along the female line and inheritance of property also takes place along the female line of descent.

**5. On the Basis of Blood – relationship**

i. **Consanguine Family:**

The consanguine family is built upon the parent – child relationship (on blood-descent). The family is a descent group through the male line which is firmly vested with authority. The consanguine family comprises a nucleus of blood relatives surrounded by a fringe of wives and others who are incidental to the maintenance of the family unit. Such families can became very large. The Nayar family is a typical example.

ii. **Conjugal Family:**

The congeal family is a nucleus of the husband, the wife and their offspring, who are surrounded by a fringe of relatives only incidental to the functioning of the family as a unit. In this type family, the authority and solidarity of the family group reside solely in the conjugal pair.

**Functions of the Family:**

The family as a social institution performs several functions. Various opinions have been expressed regarding the functions of family. Kings lay Davis speaks of four main functions of the family:

Reproduction	Maintenance
<b>Function of Family</b>	
Placement	Socialisation

Ogburn and Nimkoff have mentioned six major functions of family:

Function of Family	Affectional
	Protective
	Economic
	Religious
	Recreational
	Educational

Recent changing family patterns:

Recent Changing Family Patterns	Change with regards to satisfaction of sex needs
	Change in the reproduction function
	Change in sustenance function
	Change in socialisation function
	Change in economic function
	Changes in educational functions
	Change in religious function
	Changes in the recreational function