

B. A. Part III
Paper VIII
Family Dynamics
Unit – I
Unit - Family in past

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Family in the past

The form of the family in our past was in the form of joint. Family is one of the universal and permanent institutions of mankind. In every society and at every stage of development we found some sort of family. As a result we found different types of family all over the world. But in the past we found a peculiar family system which deserve special attention. The family in In the past period does not consist only of husband, wife and their children but also of uncles, aunts and cousins and grandsons.

This system is called joint family or extended family system. This joint family system is a peculiar characteristic of the Indian social life. Usually a son after marriage does not separate himself from the

parents but continue to live under the same roof eating food cooked at one hearth participating in common worship and holding property in common and every person has share in it.

All the members of joint family keep their earnings in a common fund out of which family expenses are met. Accordingly Indian Joint family system is like a socialistic community in which every members earns according to his capacity and receives according to his needs. This joint family or extended family is organized on close blood relationships. It normally consists of members of three to four generations.

In other words joint family is a collection of more than one primary family on the basis of close blood ties and common residences. The entire members are bound by mutual obligations and have a common ancestor. It consist of an individual his wife and married sons their children and unmarried daughter, his brother and his parent.

But to have a clear understanding of the meaning of joint family we must have to analyze some of its definitions given by different sociologists.

Some of this definitions are as follows:

According to Smt. Iravati Karve, “A joint family is a group of people who generally live under one roof, who eat food cooked at one hearth, who hold property in common and who participate in common worship and are related to each other as some particular type of Kindred.”

According to K.M. Kapadia, “Joint family is a group formed not only of a couple and their children but also other relations either from father’s side or from mother’s side depending on whether the joint family is patrilineal or matrilineal.”

According to Henery Maine, “The Hindu joint family is a group constituted of known ancestors and adopted sons and relatives related to these sons through marriage.”

According to K. Davis, “The joint family consists of males having a common male ancestor female offspring not yet married and women brought into the group by marriage. All of these persons might live in a common household or in several households near to one another. In any case, so long as the joint family holds together, its members are expected to contribute to the support of the whole and to receive from it a share of the total product.” Thus we conclude that the joint family comprises of a large number of members which has greater generation depth and who are related to one another by property, income, household and mutual rights and obligations. It is organised on the basis of close blood ties.

Features or Characteristics of Joint Family:

Joint family has the following features or characteristics.

(1) Large in Size:

The most important characteristic of joint family is that it is large in size. Because it consists of members of three to four generations. It includes parents, grandparents, children grand children and other close blood relatives. Several nuclear families live together as one and constitute a joint family.

(2) Joint Property:

Joint or common property is another important characteristic of joint family. All movable and immovable property of the family held jointly. Ownership, production and consumption of property take place jointly. All the members pool their income in a common family fund from which expenditure is incurred equally irrespective of their income. The head of the family acts as a trustee of the family property and looks towards the material and spiritual welfare of the family members. A family continue to remain joint till it's property held

jointly. Division of property means division of family.

(3) Common Kitchen:

It is the next important feature of joint family. All the members of joint family eat food cooked at one hearth. There is division of work in a joint family. Male members work in the field whereas female members remain engaged in the hearth. The eldest female member remains in charge of the kitchen and supervises the work of other women. This joint kitchen keeps the joint family integrated. Because separate kitchen means separation of family.

(4) Common Residence:

All the members of a joint family live under a common roof or in a common residence. This joint living crates a sense of unity among all the members of the family. As the joint family consists of several

nuclear family when it became too large and the accommodation became insufficient they may live in separate houses in close proximity to one another. Thus living in a common residence all the members eats similar type of food, wear similar type of dresses and shows similar type of behavior.

(5) Common Worship:

All the members of a joint family believe in a particular religion and worships common gods and goddesses. This common god is known as 'kula devatas'. All the members participate in common prayer and worship their 'kula devatas' jointly. They have similar faith and beliefs. All the members celebrate religious rites, duties and festivals jointly. This joint worship passes from generation to generation.

(6) Similar rights and obligations:

All the members of the joint family except the head enjoy similar rights and shows similar obligations towards each other. This keeps the joint family integrated. Each member remain conscious about his rights and obligations.

(7) Close blood ties:

All the members of joint family are bound by close blood ties. In other words there exists close blood relationships among the members of joint family.

(8) Absolute power of the head:

In a joint family the eldest male member or the head enjoy absolute power over others. In every respect his decision is final and binding.

(9) Co-operation:

Co-operation is the basis of joint family. All the members co-operate with each other in realization of their common objective and while performing family functions.

(10) Socialistic Ideals:

Joint family based on socialistic ideals “from each according to his capacity and to each according to his necessity”.