

Sociology of Family:

1. Introduction to the sociology of family:

✚ Definition of family in sociology:

A family according to sociologists, is a group of individuals who live together, share financial resources, emotional support, and social roles, and are related by blood, marriage, or adaptation.

✚ The family as a social institution:

The family is regarded as an important institution because it:

- Gives values and laws in people.
- Offers financial and emotional support.
- Affects social standing and personal identity.

✚ The importance of studying the family in sociology:

Sociologists examine families in order to comprehend:

- The evolution of family structures.
- The effect of families on people and society.
- The influence of culture, class, and gender on family relationships.
- Family-related social issues include divorce, domestic abuse, and difficulties raising children.

2. Theoretical perspectives on the family:

- ❖ **Functionalist perspective:** believes that the family is an essential institution that upholds social stability. Talcott Parsons (1950s) identified two key family functions:
 - Primary socialization: educating children about cultural customs, values, and conventions.
 - Stabilization of adult personalities: fulfilling roles and offering emotional support.
- ❖ **Conflict perspective:** believes that power battles inside the family frequently serve to reinforce gender and class inequalities. This viewpoint, which was influenced by Karl Marx, contends that social stratification is maintained by families passing on privilege and riches. The conventional family is criticised by feminists for supporting patriarchy, which gives men greater authority.
- ❖ **Symbolic interactionist perspective:** focuses on how people interact to define and understand family roles. It demonstrates how the meaning of family evolves over time.
- ❖ **Postmodern perspective:** argues that families today are diverse and flexible.

3. Functions of the family:

- **Primary socialization:** the family is the primary socialisation agent, teaching values, language, and conventions.
- **Emotional support:** provides love, security, and guidance.
- **Economic function:** families provide financial support and divide labor.
- **Reproductive function:** family raises children and ensures the continuation of society.

4. Challenges facing families in the modern world:

_ Divorce.

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- _ Domestic violence and abuse.
- _ Economic pressures and Dual-income households.
- _ Changing gender roles.