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1. **The basic unit in society traditionally consisting of two parent rearing their children** also: any of various social units differing from but regarded as equivalent to the traditional family a **single-parent family**.

2 The importance of family is closely related to the various functions which it performs towards society. Through functions of family may differ with cultures, yet they can be broadly divided into two main categories:

**Basic or Universal Functions**

This class of functions includes those functions that are essential and common in all cultures and societies. These are further classified into two types:

**(a) Biological Functions:**

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These functions are performed by the family since its very formation. These include:

1. **Satisfaction of sexual desires:**

Sexual desires are basic human instincts. It is an important function performed by the family. But every society has social control over an individual’s sex desires in its own traditions.

**(ii) Reproduction:**

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It is yet another important biological function which is essential for the survival of the human beings. Though this function is possible outside the family also but then it does not have social approval. The reproductive function depends upon the relation between husband and wife through the marriage bonds and bears social approval. It also provides stable nature to family.

**(iii) Nurture of children:**

Since time immemorial family has provided a security to children and environment for their growth. This function of family has been tried out to be performed by other social institutions at many places, but the results are not fully satisfactory.

**(b) Psychological Functions:**

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This is also a very important universal function of family. The feelings of love, affection, respect, cooperation, faith, etc., play a very crucial role in the development and mental status of each member of family. These feelings make family bonds more stronger.

**(i) Psychological security:**

This is the first psychological function that a family performs. This aspect is very significant especially for younger and immature members of the family. They feel secured and get solace in home from the outside world.

The psychological security provided by family gives them confidence to face adversities of the world. It develops their total personality- mental as well as physical.

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**(ii) Affection:**

Another important aspect of psychological functions of family is affection. The sentiment of love and affection makes a family member to feel that he is wanted in the world and is an important entity as others are. This affects the personality he develops.

-pr**ovision of food and clothing:**

Family provides nutritious and balanced food for its members. On this depends the health and growth of its members.

In the similar manner, clothing requirement of each member is also fulfilled by the family. Purchasing, stitching, leaning, ironing, storage, etc., are the various aspects of clothing requirements of family.

Both these needs can be partially looked after for particular period or exigency by other agencies like hotels, lodges, etc., in case of food requirements and laundry and washer man in case of clothing requirements. But still, the responsibility for both these requirements, i.e., food and clothing is fulfilled by the family.

**(b) Economic Functions:**

In addition to biological, psychological and physical functions, the family also fulfills the economic requirements of the family. These are:

**(i) Labour division:**

A family comprises of members of all ages, genders and capabilities according to which they work. Male members are considered to be the earning members who work outside whereas the females have to look after the household duties.

But this concept has considerably changed as more and more females are working to earn for bettering the family’s economic strength. The children always contribute to the household work according to their capacities.

**(ii) Determination of inheritance:**

The family has its own money and property. The head of the family runs and controls the family. The inheritance is handed over to the next senior members according to the system prevalent in the particular family. In the modern families, inheritance is the right of both daughters and sons.

3The **definition** of a **traditional family** is a social unit that consists of parents and children, whether living together or not. This **definition** is not immutable nor is it specific. **Family** no longer refers to individuals in a group related by blood.

4 A nuclear family, elementary family or conjugal family is a family group consisting of two parents and their children (one or more). It is in contrast to a single-parent family, the larger extended family, and a family with more than two parents. Nuclear families typically center on a married couple; the nuclear family may have any number of children. There are differences in definition among observers; some definitions allow only biological children that are full-blood siblings, but others allow for a stepparent and any mix of dependent children including stepchildren and adopted children. Some sociologists and anthropologists consider the nuclear family as the most basic form of social organization.