

## UNIT 8: RE-IMAGINING FAMILIES

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### 8.0 OBJECTIVES

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After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- To enumerate the key characteristics of family in dominant/classical theories in sociology.
- Examine the problems and challenges of understanding family only from classical perspective
- Elaborate on the criticism of family by cultural theorists and feminists
- Provide an account on how the meaning of family has changed historically and has significant implications on kinship studies
- Examine new forms of family which are different from traditional-biological family

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## 8.1 INTRODUCTION

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Family is one of the vital institutions of human society. In sociology, family has been referred as the fundamental/primary institution of society providing an expression to basic and universal biological needs, care-giving and socialisation functions. Though it is a universal institution, there are cross-cultural variations in the definition of family. There is no singular structure and pattern of family. While in certain cultural contexts family is described as a large group constituted by husband, wife, children and kinfolks in others it is explained as a smaller unit with adult man, woman and their children. Whatever, variations may be evident in the structure and pattern of family by the virtue of members who constitute it, by most it is seen as a group of persons united by ties of affinity (created by marriage) and consanguinity (those based on birth) who reside in a single household.

In general perception it is seen as ahistorical and static structure of society incapable of any real change, a constant form of social life, representing natural order of things (Mitterauer and Sieder 1982: 1). However, there has been several changes in the meaning as well composition of family. There have been multiple arrangements and patterns that have come to characterise family in contemporary times that mark a significant departure from conventional models making many to interpret it in crisis and contest its future. Family has been constantly evolving and changing its forms. In the light of the shifts and changes taking place, there have been attempts made to examine the institution from a point of view that question the conventional understanding. But before we go into the debates and discourses of re-imagining families, it is pertinent that we understand the meaning and concept in the classical theories.

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## 8.2 UNDERSTANDING FAMILY: CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGY

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There is not one clear single definition of “family”. It tends to be used either in a broad sense (all the descendants of a common ancestor, as in a “family tree”) or in a narrower sense, of parents living together with their children as a “unit”. In sociology family is defined as a unit that comprises of people living together who are related either by blood (cognate) or marriage (agnate). Different terms are used to refer to English word Family- *kutumba*, *graha*, *kula*, *vamsa*, *parivar*. Family is viewed as a “cultural ideal and a focus of identity” (Karlekar 1998: 1741). In the conventional sense family is simply seen as a part of natural order of things understood in terms of relations formulated as a part of intersection of three elements-

marriage, parenthood and cohabitation/residence. The family is understood as the first line of defence especially for children and a major factor in their survival, health, education, and protection. It is also viewed as a major source of nurturance and emotional bonding. Such conceptions are consistent with descriptions of family and its functions. Therefore, in classical theories, family has been understood as a combination of three elements: marriage, parenthood and residence. The biological factors are the paramount in dominant understanding of family. A heterosexual conjugal household is seen as fundamental to the formation of family.

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### **8.2.1. BASIC CONCEPTS & DEFINITION**

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There are several concepts that are often considered synonymous of family but in sociology a clear cut distinction is made between them. Further, there is no one definition of family. The definition depends on the perspective taken and the purpose of defining family. In this section, let us examine the core concepts and definition relevant for understanding of family.

#### **8.2.1.1. Household**

A household can be defined as ‘a group of persons sharing a home or living space, who aggregate and share their incomes, as evidenced by the fact that they regularly take meals together i.e. in what is described as the ‘common cooking pot’ (Scott and Marshall, 2005). In other words, a household is the basic residential unit where economic production, consumption, inheritance, child rearing and shelter are organized and carried out. The household (ghar) is a residential and domestic unit composed of one or more persons living under the same roof and eating food cooked in the same kitchen (hearth/chulah).

According to sociological perspective household may not be always an essential element in defining family. People can be member of one family while not sharing a common household. A.M. Shah (1968:129) focuses in relation to the Indian scenario pointing out that two brothers and their wives and children may live in separate households, but may be bound by number of relationships of many kind. They would co-operate in economic pursuits, hold and manage property jointly, help each other on many occasions, celebrate festivals, rituals and ceremonies jointly, and so on (ibid.). This is a normal process, which highlights the importance of technical distinction between household and 'family'. Thus, two or more households may be separate but they may constitute one family (ibid.).

### **8.2.1.2. Difference between family and Household-**

The family is based on the principles of kinship whose members usually share a common residence. They reside in a house/homestead. This residential unit is called the household. The members of a household have a set of relational ties amongst them. These ties are linked with the statuses held and the corroborating role complexes members of the family are expected to constitute. The household is a commensal and co-resident group/ unit. According to A. M Shah, kin and residence rules distinguish between family and household.

The household is an extension of family, a family can be a household but a household need not be a family. A group of people can live together, regardless of whether there are any kinship ties. For example flat mates (such as students), people living on their own, multiple-occupancy homes for migrant workers, etc. A family not only consist of household but often family is an extension of two or more households, members of which though may have separate residence yet may belong to same family and have familial bonding and responsibilities. Family along with being a functional unit is more of an ideological and emotional unit, whereas household may be described as more of a functional unit.

It is more apt to take 'household' as the unit of analysis to understand Indian social structure rather than 'family'. Family according to them "...is a grouping of households of agnatically related men, their wives and unmarried sisters and daughters" (Shah, 1976, In Uberoi, 1993, p. 420). Thus, for them the proper object of study should be the household dimension of family rather than family itself (Uberoi, 2001, p.15). The distinction between family and household helps us to understand the changes taking place in family in India, in terms of composition.

### **8.2.1.3. Domestic group**

Domestic groups can be described as a group of people residing together and sharing activities of domestic life. It is often used synonymous with household, where several households are spread across several regions but think of themselves as one kinship unit. Domestic groups are basically resource owning and production units. They are living (and usually eating) together, and characteristically exercising corporate control over family property. Meyer Fortes defined domestic groups as a house-holding and housekeeping group which helps members to organize resources which are needed for the development of all its members. According to Fortes, each domestic group undergoes cyclical developments. There are three main stages

or phases in the developmental cycle of the domestic group. The first phase of expansion lasts from the marriage of two people to the completion of their procreation. The second phase of dispersion or fusion begins with the physical departure of the oldest child for school or a job, or with the marriage of the oldest child. This period continues until all the children are dispersed or married. This is the phase of replacement in the social structure of the family, founded by the families of their children.

#### **8.2.1.4. Differences between a Domestic Group and a Family**

The original meaning of family in Latin is similar to that of “domestic group” but in sociology the two have been differentiated on the basis that some domestic groups are formed by individuals who have no kinship relationship. At the same time, members of one family may be distributed over two or more domestic groups. The actual composition of the nuclear family and the domestic group may be identical. However, one can differentiate the strictly reproductive functions, in our sense of the concept of social reproduction, from the activities concerned with the production of food and shelter and the nonmaterial means for ensuring continuity with society at large. One might put it that the domestic domain is the system of social relations through which the reproductive nucleus is integrated with the environment and with the structure of the total society.

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### **8.2.2. SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES**

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Sociology looks at the social institution of the family through many lenses, but its four dominant theoretical premises are:

- i. functionalism,
- ii. conflict theory,
- iii. symbolic interactionism and
- iv. feminist perspective

These varying perspectives provides varying approaches for understanding the family as a social institution.

**8.2.2.1. Functional Perspective-** The functionalist perspective demonstrates family as a vital institution. According to it, family has important functions for the society and individuals. They have analysed family in terms of the functions it performs and mostly highlighted the positive functions. Society is regarded as a system made up of different parts which depend on each other. Sociologists like George Murdock and Talcott Parsons advocated a functional

understanding of family George Murdock spelt his views on family in Social Structure, 1949. Talcott Parsons updated Murdock's perception on family. For George Murdock family performed four functions, namely, regulation of sexual behaviour, reproduction, economic cooperation and socialisation. Talcott Parsons pointed out the efficacy of family rests in two important functions of primary socialisation of children and stabilisation of adult personality. He argued that in modern industrial societies while the state had come to perform economic function (through welfare provisions) and provide education but still the family continued to perform irreducible and significant functions.

Focuses on the structural properties and important social functions performed by the institution. The functions performed by the institution of family as highlighted by functionalist theories are:

- Biologically family provides a legitimate platform for two adult members to sexually cohabit together as a couple and enhance social continuity.
- Family provides shelter and fulfils basic metabolic need of meeting food intake.
- Family acts as an economic unit in which members take part in productive activity; members may do similar or different jobs
- Household works are divided on the basis of division of labor based on age, gender and position of a person in family and even personal competence.

**8.2.2.2. Conflict theory** posits that society is characterized by conflict between social groups. Groups with unequal power and competing interests compete for scarce resources. They examine families function within a society to perpetuate structural inequalities. This perspective suggests that the family structure contributes to social inequality because it supports economic and gendered inequality by reinforcing patriarchal values. For example, intergenerational transmission of wealth within families creates and maintains inequality.

**8.2.2.3. Social interactionism** is a social theory that focuses on the analysis of patterns of communication, interpretation, and adjustment between individuals in relation to the meanings of symbols. This perspective emphasizes that families reinforce and rejuvenate bonds through symbolic mechanism rituals such as family meals and holidays. They also explore the changing meanings attached to family. This theory argues that shared activities help to build emotional bonds among family members, and that marriage and family relationships are based on negotiated meanings.

### Check Your Progress 1

i. What are three elements that characterise family according dominant understanding?

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ii. State any four functions of family as given by the functional theories.

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### 8.3. PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES IN CLASSICAL THEORIES

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This section elaborates on the idea of connectedness that stands in contradistinction to biologically established kinship and family ties. It focuses on adoption based affinity and homosexual alliances/kinship. In the contemporary society, there are lot of uncertainty when it comes for determining the idea of family as a safe-haven. The question arises does in every culture family continues to provide emotional and physical protection to its members. The answer would be as negative especially in the light of increase in child sexual abuse by members of primary groups, increase in disputes among siblings over property, increase rate of domestic violence on women and divorce as well as the mental health issues of homosexuals and transgender individual. The family cannot be defined as union between consensual individuals. Rather many have started questioning the fact of being born in family without a choice and therefore the concept of family by choice.

#### 8.3.2. Family by Adoption

Adoption creates a familial relationship of parent and child between people who are not naturally related. It challenges the inevitability of biology as the only basis to parenthood. In short, it draws attention to connectedness forged through law. Historically, adoption has been practised in almost all societies. This shows centrality of the idea of attaining parenthood among all human beings. However, the purpose of adoption in traditional contexts has varied considerably from those emphasised today. In ancient times childless couples have resorted to adoption to ensure continuity of the male line for political, religious or economic reasons. Consequently, the adoption of male persons was prevalent predominantly, then. The aspect of

welfare and well-being of the child was not significant. Contrarily, the modern laws pertaining to adoption are fundamentally concerned with the welfare of the child. This idea gathered force post-World War I period in Europe and United States as a large number of children had been orphaned and there was tremendous increase in illegitimate birth. Later the idea was to gain legitimacy from scholarly studies in disciplines like psychology and sociology, which emphasised the positive implications of stable family life on the development of child.

In present contexts in addition, to the adoption by childless couples, an unmarried adult individual may adopt and assume the role of a single parent. Adoption is also viable idea for homosexual couples and individuals who may want to start an independent family of their own. However, in India despite repeal of Section 377 of the Constitution, which has decriminalised homosexuality, homosexuals are still not eligible for adoption. Different countries have different legal procedures and laws regarding adoption. In India the Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection) Act, 2015 lays out provisions and criteria for adoption. According to this Act adoption is the process through which the adopted child is permanently separated from his biological parents and becomes the lawful child of the adoptive parents with all the rights, privileges and responsibilities that are attached to a biological child. The Act recognises five kinds of adoption recognized in law in India. These include adoption of an abandoned, surrendered, destitute children adopted by unrelated person/s living within and outside the country. Similarly, a related child can be adopted by relatives living within and outside the country. Also, the stepparents can adopt children within the country.

### **8.3.2. Step-Families: Redefining the Family**

Stepfamilies are not new and have been common throughout history but absent in sociological and anthropological studies prior to 1970s. Now there has been lot studies of step families on two grounds, first due to increase case of re-marriage in many Western countries as well as in India, the instances of step-families or blended families have increased. Second, the change in the anthropological approach to the study of marriage, family and kinship.

A stepfamily can be defined as family in which at least one of the parent has a child or children from previous relationships. Going by this definition, the step-families does not fit in the conventional definition of family based on sharing of blood and there are also number of

conflicts going on in such families. Children in a stepfamily may live with one biological or adoptive parent, or they may live with each biological or adoptive parent for a period of time

The step families are different from nuclear-biological families on several account. The problems in step families are the result of entry of few members into a family on re-marriage of either father or mother. It's not only the issue of children but also the problem of sharing responsibilities among the members. The entire notion of parental responsibility is altered in such families. They members also face problems of sharing living space, developing relationship, negotiating relations with previous spouse as well as emotional and mental issues.

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## **8.4. CRITIQUE OF THE CLASSICAL THEORY**

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The definitions of family in sociology were done from a Western cultural understanding of biology and its centrality to the formation of family. Prior to 1970s, most sociologist were engaged with the task of differentiating family from household and further to use it for a comparison of social changes taking place due to industrialization. The dominant assumption was about family as a procreative and a safe-haven for its members which was getting affected due the growth of rationality and scientific temper. This began to change post 1970s, the traditional assumption about the functionality of family began to be challenged. Family began to be conceptualised in terms of its fluid nature that reflected the divide between kinship as a given biological fact and kinship as social, constructed and processual.

The section focuses on the underside of the family as an institution in general and particularly in the Indian context by elaborating on some of the scholarship that offers a critique to it. These critiques are relevant as they offer perspectives to comprehend alternate arrangement which are beyond biology and marriage yet constitute a family.

### **8.4.1. Cultural Theory: Beyond blood and Marriage Ties**

The cultural theorists made the claim that classical definitions of the family were heavily influenced by largely unexamined Western cultural assumptions about biology and its relationship to kinship. They were of opinion that sociologist studying family had only two engagements, firstly to compare and differentiate family from household and secondly to examine the changes taking place due to impact of industrialization. And seen in the earlier

section, family was defined as a functional unit where the task of reproduction, emotional ties and other domestic work was done. However, post 1980s, changes were visible in theories of family, especially in kinship studies, where the traditional embedded assumptions about the universality of the family and its sociological purposes were debated and ultimately discarded.

Family began to visualize in terms of its fluid nature that reflected the divide between kinship as a given biological fact and kinship as social, constructed and processual.

Family began to be re-imagined beyond the ideal of nuclear family and biological ties for reproduction. The meanings of the family re-imagined at two new levels:

- i. Children are no longer taken as a necessary precondition, and
- ii. Family relations are extended to include friends.

Such an understanding of family broadened the discourse on family whose meanings were seen as continuously negotiated in everyday situations. Judith Stacey work titled *Brave New Families*, gave a new description of the creative nature of contemporary post-industrial family life due to changes in economic realities, gender roles, and kinship conceptualizations. Theorization of same-sex family challenged the assumption of hetero-sexual family as the norm. The new ways of conceptualizing families has laid emphasis on human interaction, gendered relation, and parent-child relationships. According to these cultural theorists, there are alternate modes of constructing that signifies the subjective meaning of relatedness, rather than formal objective ties based purely on biological or marriage ties

#### **8.4.2 A Feminist Perspective: Power and Discrimination**

Mainstream studies have described the family as an indispensable social institution based on cooperation, harmony, common interests and equality. To a large extent they have also taken 'man' within the family as the basic unit of their study and have neglected the woman's experiences. Feminism challenged this vision of the family as a cooperative, harmonious and egalitarian realm. They have sought to show that rather than being a mutually beneficial institution maintained on equal contribution of all members, the family functions largely with the exploitation of the woman's labour. The feminist criticisms bring to scrutiny family by focusing on power dynamics underlying it. They illuminate the hierarchies and sexual repression that underlie family, and henceforth, reflect on its in egalitarian and oppressive character.

Feminists like Marxists and functionalists have argued that the family is essentially a conservative institution that functions to preserve the social order. However, they disagree with functionalists and agree with Marxists that in doing so it benefits only a powerful group within society. For feminists, this group is men. They argue that families preserve, support and embed patriarchy. Feminists criticize mainstream theories for not recognizing existing unequal power relations within the family that help maintain patriarchy at the cost of the woman's life and rights. Okin (1989) observes that justice is glaringly lacking from the cornerstone institution of society: the family. She elaborates that marriage and the traditional family structure renders women vulnerable to dependency, exploitation and abuse. Her work is a critique of traditional scholarship on justice that holds family as a noble institution, a moral community and an instance of "enlarged affection". Feminist critique makes us aware of inequality of sexes questioning the unequal division of labour in the traditional family structures, where women are preordained into home-making and child rearing activities and men take up paid work. This leads to economic dependency of women on men and make many of them fear divorce and be victims of violence and abuse. Further, when women seek work outside the home, the justness of family decisions does not change, due to tendency to burden women with more family responsibilities than men (Pagac 1990:1822).

Yet, another critique of the institution of family comes from the work by Raheja and Gold (1996) on image of women in oral folk tradition of Rajasthan in North India. Their work highlights that the folk songs of women in North India are an expression of their critique of conventional conceptions of family and kinship and women's position in it. While these songs posit a positive self-image of women, as they are a powerful expression of opposition by them of their subordination, they do not dismiss the inequalities, disadvantages and sexual repression women face in family in everyday contexts. Karlekar (1998) enumerates family in Indian context as a site for violence; and thereby questions its sanctity as a cultural ideal. She uses the life-cycle approach and argues that at every stage there is discrimination and violence, particularly against girl children and later women within the household, either natal or conjugal (p. 1741). In this context she focuses on familial violence reflecting on it in terms of female infanticide, child labour and inter-spousal violence etc.

## **Check Your Progress 2**

- i. How does the cultural theory challenge the understanding of family as a biological unit? Write in answer in three/four lines

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- ii. What is Okin’s perception on the institution of family? (Elaborate in a short paragraph)

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## **8.5. NEW FAMILY FORMS**

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Families have been changing and affected by multiple forces and variables like industrialization, growing independence of women, rise in levels of education, economic change, legal regulations, feminist critiques and political discourses. Since the 1970s, changes in the structure of the family has been taking place. There was the emergence of new forms of family like single parent family, same-sex or family by choice and co-habitation without marriage. These forms were referred as ‘non-traditional’ family as it did not fit into the classical definition of family formed on basis of biology and alliance. However, many in academics preferred to use the term ‘new families’ to refer to forms of family that did not exist or were not visible until the later part of twentieth century. This section focuses on the some of the multiple patterns and arrangements that mark a shift from conventional understanding of family.

### **8.5.1. Family by Choice**

The term ‘families we choose’ was used by Kath Weston to describe queer forms of kinship different to the biological family. Also described as ‘families we create’ suggests that individuals have a choice in the formation of family. According to Weston, in gay and lesbian communities in 1980s San Francisco, "Kinship began to seem more like an effort and a choice than a permanent, unshakable bond or a birth-right." Weston’s (1991) study provides a significant basis to reconceptualise and redefine the concept of family and kinship in view of

relationships between gay men and lesbian women. It questions the genealogical basis to kinship by bringing it to scrutiny and denaturalising it, implying that kinship need not be postulated taking procreation as the base or centre piece. The study reflects on the non-procreative, non-material and symbolic relations of lesbian women and gay men in the U.S., which provide a critique of kinship and contest assumptions regarding the bearing of biology, genetics and heterosexual intercourse on the meaning of family.

The family by choice is an illustration of the fact that biology is not the only defining feature of kinship. People can be kin without sharing blood and marital relation. Kinship is based on love and enduring solidarity expected to characterise these familial relationship. Further it also negates the ideas of procreation based on heterosexual identities. Family is no longer seen only as unit for reproduction rather it can be a non-procreative unit. Such family ties are based on ideology of choice and love, and stand in opposition to biological model of kinship. The families of choice therefore, emerge as an important basis to question biologically modelled heterosexual domain of kinship, which has failed to provide support and care to lesbian women and men.

#### **8.5.2 Live-In Relationship**

Live-in relations, a departure from the conjugally established familial units, have emerged as preferred form of arrangements among many. Live-in relationship i.e. cohabitation is an arrangement whereby two adults decide to live together on a long term permanent basis in an emotionally and sexually intimate relationship outside the wedlock of marriage. The live-in relation may be entered into both by heterosexual and homosexual couples. There is a preference for living-in relation among the younger generation in the urban cities across the globe. There are a number of reasons that may govern individual's preference for live-in relations. It finds its foundation in the fundamental right of an individual to have the liberty to choose his or her partner. For many it has emerged as a basis to assess the mutual compatibility or to establish financial security prior to entering into a legalised wedlock. For some it provides an escape from marriage expenses. Also, those unable to enter into marital alliance may enter in live-in relation for e.g. members of same sex, interreligious or interracial group.

However, live-in relations are seen by many as immoral and viewed encouraging free-sexual behaviour. They are seen as threat to the traditional institution of marriage and family. Added

to this, the children born from these relationships are pointed as to have less secure future. In short, these relations are viewed as threat to the legally wedded wife and her children and are seen to give encouragement to extra-marital affairs. Such relations have also been contested on medical grounds and pointed as responsible for rising HIV/AIDs cases. The live-in relations are considered far short-lived than relations based on marriage as they do not require legal recourse to be terminated. Though live-in relationships have been accorded legitimacy along with children born from such arrangements, the latter is not entitled to claim inheritance in Hindu ancestral coparcenary property (in the undivided joint Hindu family) and can only claim a share in the parent's self-acquired property.

### 8.5.3. Surrogacy Families

The term 'surrogacy family' is used to refer to a family formed with the help of third party (generally a women) who rents her womb for the gestation of the child. The surrogate enters into a legal contract with the fertility clinic that after the delivery of the child, she will have no claim or relations. Surrogacy family functions as traditional family but the only difference is that the notion of maternity is complicated. Motherhood is not defined by the period of gestation but by the capacity to rent a womb. The absence of gestational link between mother and child does not affect their physical and emotional relationship. Surrogacy provides an opportunity to individuals who due to medical reasons cannot conceive, to same-sex partners and those who are want to bring up children without necessarily marrying.

#### Check Your Progress 3

i. Give any two difference between biological family and family by choice.

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ii. Illustrate with suitable example the formation of new family forms due to impact of reproductive technologies.

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## 8.6. LET US SUM UP

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The unit began by focusing on how in the dominant thinking the institution of family has been regarded as the cornerstone/basic unit and an inevitable part of human society. By most family is regarded in positive light, efficacious and desirable. It however, pointed out that such an understanding diverts attention from the underside of family and discourages from rethinking on it. In doing so the unit reflected on feminist critiques and their questioning of many of the assumptions that underlie the traditional/conventional perceptions of family and kinship. These shake the foundation of family by attacking the role of women in it. Then, various alternatives like families based on ideology of love and live-in relationships may be seen as possible ways to negotiate with the traditionally sexually oppressive family forms and kinship patterns. Again, the unit reflected on the challenges posed by stepfamily indicating that being in family may not always be all that a fulfilling experience.

The unit has reflected on the multiplicity of family forms and patterns that allow us to move beyond the terrain of biology. The stepfamily, family based on adoption, gay and lesbian ties based on choice challenge the biological determined understanding of family and kinship.

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## 8.7. KEY WORDS

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**Household-** It is the basic residential unit where economic production, consumption, inheritance, child rearing and shelter are organized and carried out. The household (ghar) is a residential and domestic unit composed of one or more persons living under the same roof and eating food cooked in the same kitchen (hearth/chulah).

**Domestic group** - Meyer Fortes defined domestic groups as a house-holding and housekeeping group which helps members to organize resources which are needed for the development of all its members.

**Step family** - A stepfamily can be defined as family in which at least one of the parent has a child or children from previous relationships.

**Live-In** A Live-in relationship i.e. cohabitation is an arrangement whereby two adults decide to live together on a long term permanent basis in an emotionally and sexually intimate relationship outside the wedlock of marriage.

**Surrogacy-** The term 'surrogacy family' is used to refer to a family formed with the help of third party (generally a women) who rents her womb for the gestation of the child.

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## 8.9. SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress 1

- i) The three characteristics of family according to dominant understandings are:
1. A union between man and women for purpose of procreation- Family is formed with primary function of procreation and hence defined as a mating relation between man and woman.
  2. Institution legalised through marriage: the union between man and women is legalised to constitute a family only through marriage solemnised by the community.
  3. Performs functions of providing economic, emotional and physical security and protection to all its members.
- ii) The functions performed by the institution of family as highlighted by functionalist theories are:
1. Biologically family provides a legitimate platform for two adult members to sexually cohabit together as a couple and enhance social continuity.
  2. Family provides shelter and fulfils basic metabolic need of meeting food intake.

3. Family acts as an economic unit in which members take part in productive activity; members may do similar or different jobs
4. Household works are divided on the basis of division of labor based on age, gender and position of a person in family and even personal competence.

### **Check Your Progress 2**

i) The cultural theorists were of opinion that the traditional theories of family focused on two things, firstly to compare and differentiate family from household and secondly to examine the changes taking place due to impact of industrialization. Cultural theories expanded on this and for them the meanings of the family re-imagined beyond biology and marriage. Children were no longer considered as a necessary precondition for setting up of family and further family relations are extended to include friends.

ii) Okin (1989) observes that justice is glaringly lacking from the cornerstone institution of society: the family. She elaborates that marriage and the traditional family structure renders women vulnerable to dependency, exploitation and abuse. Her work makes us aware of inequality of sexes questioning the unequal division of labour in the traditional family structures, where women are preordained into home-making and child rearing activities and men take up paid work. This leads to economic dependency of women on men and make many of them fear divorce and be victims of violence and abuse.

### **Check Your Progress 3**

i) The basis of the formation of biological family is the sharing of blood and heterosexual union. On the contrary families by choice is non-procreative and is formed on basis of love and solidarity between homosexuals. The second difference is that individuals are born in biological family, so it is formed at birth. The family of choice is formed when individual are grown up and are able to select their family members.

ii) The emergence of new reproductive technologies has expanded the choice of procreation and family. Surrogacy families is an illustration of the new form of family resulting due to the reproductive technologies.