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Puspa Shrestha

Reading

Family

Before you read

- Do you live in a small family or a big family? Which type of family do you like? Why?
- How important is family to you? How important is it in your culture?



Read the following text about family and do the given tasks.

At its most basic, a family consists of an adult and his or her offspring. Most commonly, it consists of two married adults, usually a man and a woman (almost always from different lineages and not related by blood) along with their offspring, usually living in a private and separate dwelling. This type of unit, more specifically known as a nuclear family, is believed to be the oldest of the various types of families in existence. Sometimes the family includes not only the parents and their unmarried children living at home but also children that have married, their spouses, and their offspring, and possibly elderly dependents as well; such an arrangement is called an extended family.

At its best, the family performs various valuable functions for its members. Perhaps most important of all, it provides for emotional and psychological security, particularly through the warmth, love, and companionship that living together generates between spouses and in turn between them and their children. The family also provides a valuable social and political function by institutionalizing procreation and by providing guidelines for the regulation of sexual conduct. The family additionally provides such other socially beneficial functions as the rearing and socialization of children, along with such humanitarian activities as caring for its members when they are sick or disabled. On the economic side, the family provides food, shelter, clothing, and physical security for its members, some of whom may be too young or too old to provide for the basic necessities of life themselves. Finally, on the social side, the

family may serve to promote order and stability within society as a whole.

Historically, in most cultures, the family was patriarchal, or male-dominated. Perhaps the most striking example of the male-dominated family is the description of the family given in the Hebrew Bible (or Old Testament), where the male heads of the clans were allowed to have several wives as well as concubines. As a general rule, women had a rather low status. In Roman times the family was still patriarchal, but polygamy was not practiced, and in general the status of women was somewhat improved over that suggested in the Hebrew Bible, although they still were not allowed to manage their own affairs. The Roman family was an extended one. The family as it existed in medieval Europe was male-dominated and extended.

In the West, industrialization and the accompanying urbanization spawned—and continue to spawn—many changes in family structure by causing a sharp change in life and occupational styles. Many people, particularly unmarried youths, left farms and went to urban centres to become industrial workers. This process led to the dissolution of many extended families.

The modern family that emerged after the Industrial Revolution is different from the earlier model. For instance, patriarchal rule began to give way to greater equality between the sexes. Similarly, family roles once considered exclusively male or female broke down. Caring for the home and children, once the exclusive duty of the female, is often a shared activity, as, increasingly, is the earning of wages and the pursuit of public life, once the exclusive domain of the male. The structure of the family is also changing in that some couples choose not to marry legally and instead elect to have their children out of wedlock; many of these informal relationships tend to be of short duration, and this—as well as the rise in levels of divorce—has led to a rapid increase in the number of one-parent households.

Family law varies from culture to culture, but in its broadest application it defines the legal relationships among family members as well as the relationships between families and society at large. Some of the important questions dealt with in family law include the terms and parameters of marriage, the status of children, and the succession of property from one generation to the next. In nearly every case, family law represents a delicate balance between the interests of society and the protection of individual rights.

The general rule in marriages until modern times was the legal transfer of dependency, that of the bride, from father to groom. Not only did the groom assume guardianship, he usually assumed control over all of his wife's affairs. Often, the woman lost any legal identity through marriage, as was the case in English common law. There have been exceptions to this practice. Muslim women, for instance, had considerable control over their own personal property. The use of dowries, an amount of money or property given to the husband with the bride in compensation for her dependency, has long been

practiced in many countries, but it has tended to disappear in many industrial societies. In general, modern marriage is best-described as a voluntary union, usually between a man and a woman (although there are still vestiges of the arranged marriage that once flourished in eastern Europe and Asia). The emancipation of women in the 19th and 20th centuries changed marriage dramatically, particularly in connection with property and economic status. By the mid-20th century, most Western countries had enacted legislation establishing equality between spouses. Similarly changed is the concept of economic maintenance, which traditionally fell on the shoulders of the husband. Though many laws still lean toward this view, there was increasing recognition of a woman's potential to contribute to the support of the family. At the beginning of the 21st century, family law and the notion of family itself was further complicated by calls for acceptance of same-sex marriages and nontraditional families.

Dissolution of marriages is one of the areas in which laws must try to balance private and public interest, since realistically it is the couple itself that can best decide whether its marriage is viable. In many older systems—e.g., Roman, Muslim, Jewish, Chinese, and Japanese—some form of unilateral divorce was possible, requiring only one party to give notice of the intention, usually the male. Most modern systems recognize a mutual request for divorce, though many require an attempt to reconcile before granting divorce. Extreme circumstances, in which blatant neglect, abuse, misbehaviour, or incapacity can be demonstrated, find resolution in civil court. Many systems favour special family courts that attempt to deal more fairly with sensitive issues such as custody of children.

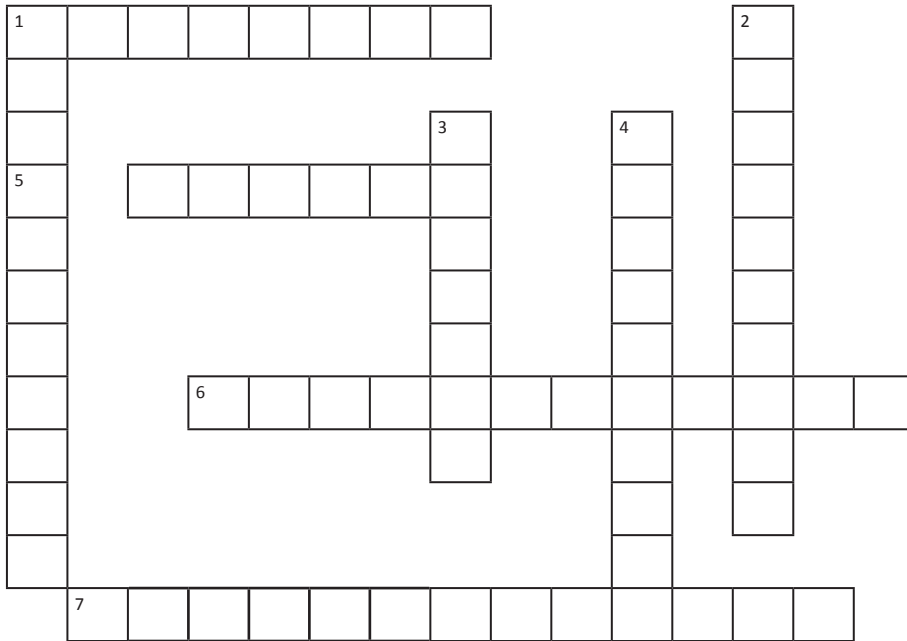
The issue of children poses special problems for family law. In nearly every culture, the welfare of children was formerly left to the parents entirely, and this usually meant the father. Most societies have come to recognize the general benefit of protecting children's rights and of prescribing certain standards of rearing. Thus, more than in any other area, family law intervenes in private lives with regard to children. Compulsory education is an example of the law superseding parental authority. In the case of single-parent homes, the law will frequently provide some form of support. Legislation on child labour and child abuse also asserts society's responsibility for a child's best interests.

The succession of family interests upon the death of its members can be considered a part of family law. Most legal systems have some means of dealing with division of property left by a deceased family member. The will, or testament, specifies the decedent's wishes as to such distribution, but a surviving spouse or offspring may contest what appear to be unreasonable or inequitable provisions. There are also laws that recognize family claims in the event that property is left intestate (i.e., with no will to determine its distribution).

- Alan John Barnard

Working with words

A. Find the words from the text and solve the puzzle. Clues are given below.



ACROSS

1. the custom of having more than one wife at the same time
5. to find an acceptable way of dealing with opposing ideas, needs etc.
6. the process in which towns, streets, etc. are built where there was once countryside
7. the process by which somebody learns to behave in an acceptable way in their society

DOWN

1. ruled or controlled by men
2. the act of taking over a position
3. done in a way without caring if people are shocked
4. single-parent

B. Find the meanings of the following family-related words and use them in your own sentences.

nuclear family, monogamy, sibling-in-law, milk kinship, matrilineal, nepotism, maternity

C. The following words are from the above text. Each word has two parts.

polygamy, unmarried, nontraditional, dissolution, inequitable

poly, un, non, dis and *in* are prefixes. They make new words when they are added to the beginning of other root words.

Make at least five words using the prefixes given. Consult a dictionary to learn how they change the meaning of root words.

pre-, semi-, sub-, mis-, mono-, un-, in-, inter-.

Comprehension

- A. The headings of the first five paragraphs of the above text are given below. Write paragraph number next to them.
- Patriarchal family
 - Functions of the family
 - Modern model of family
 - Effects of industrialization on family structure
 - Defining family
- B. Answer the following questions.
- What type of family is thought to be the oldest form of the family?
 - How does a family provide security to its members?
 - What were the features of medieval European family?
 - What caused the dissolution of extended families in the West?
 - What change occurred in gender role in the modern family that emerged after the Industrial Revolution?
 - What is family law?
 - How is modern marriage defined?
 - What do special family courts try to do?
 - What does the legislation on child labour and child abuse declare?
 - What is common among most legal systems regarding property?

Critical thinking

- What changes have started to occur in Nepali families in recent days? What impacts will they bring on the society? Discuss.
- We see many elderly people in the elderly homes these days in Nepal. Some of them are abandoned while others live there willingly. Do you think Nepali people are deviating from their traditional culture? Give reasons.

Writing

- A. Write an essay on *The Importance of Family*. In your essay, you can use these guiding questions.
- Why family is important to you.
 - Why family is or is not important for society.
 - How you think families will change in the future.
- B. Some people think it is better to live in a nuclear family. Other people think that living in extended family is more advantageous. What do you think? Write an essay discussing the advantages and disadvantages of both.

Grammar

Modal verbs

A. Study the given sentences carefully.

- Please read this letter for me. I **can't** see without my glasses.
- After working for a couple of years in China, I **can** speak Chinese now.
- When he was 40, he **could** earn six digit salary.
- After six hours' climbing, we **were able to** reach the summit.
- Yesterday, I lost my keys. I looked for them everywhere but I **couldn't** find.

B. Choose the best answer to complete the sentences.

- 'How much was your parking ticket?' 'Fifty rupees.' 'Oh well, it been worse.'
 - could have
 - must have
 - should have
- It got lost in the post. These things happen sometimes.
 - can't have
 - might have
 - must have
- 'Sorry I'm late. I got delayed at work.' 'You called. I was really worried about you.'
 - must have
 - could have
 - would have
- 'I don't think he meant to be rude.' 'He said sorry.'
 - must have
 - might have
 - would have
- 'Whose signature is this?' 'I don't know. It be Manoj's. That looks a bit like an M.'
 - must
 - could
 - should
- I had it when I left the office so I lost it on the way to home.
 - mustn't have
 - must have
 - should have
- You think it's funny, but I think it's pathetic.
 - might
 - should
 - could

C. Complete the following sentences with appropriate endings. Use correct modal verbs.

Example: *She could be a doctor; however,.....*

She could be a doctor; however, she preferred to be an advocate.

- At the end of the course,
- If you want to earn a lot of money,
- You were not in your house yesterday. You
- I'm quite busy tomorrow. I

- e. When you were a small kid
- f. My car is broken. I
- g. I've got a fast speed internet at home. I
- h. Even though she didn't study well, she
- i. There are plenty of newspapers in the library. You
if you want.
- j. What do you think you were doing, playing in the road? You
- k. I have no time. I
- l. You don't look well. You

Listening

A. Look at the picture and answer these questions.

- a. Do you live by yourself or with your family members?
- b. The girl in the picture looks happy despite living alone. How do you feel about living alone?



B. Listen to the audio and fill in the gaps with suitable information.

- a. Despite having decent jobs, the people choose to live with their parents.
- b. There are many people who rely on their parents for food, clothing and
- c. The speaker's parents her decisions.
- d. As she moved to the new apartment, she could save
of her travelling time.
- e. Living on one's own has some
- f. One of the major issues of living on your own is

C. Listen to the audio again and answer these questions.

- a. What is the Chinese traditional value of family?
- b. How do other people react when the speaker tells them about moving out?
- c. What problem did the speaker face in her new apartment?
- d. What occupied most of the speaker's saved time?
- e. How does the speaker feel about staying in her own?

D. How does it feel to be far away from your family? Talk to your friends.

Speaking

Arguing/defending a point

A. Act out the given conversation in pairs.

Son : Dad, I want to ask you a favour.

Father : What's it?

Son : Our class is going for an educational tour. Can I go with them?

Father : No, my dear. This is not a suitable time for a tour.

Son : Why, dad? It's spring. The weather is okay and the temperature is also fine everywhere.

Father : No, not now. Covid -19 pandemic is at its peak and the government has warned us to stay inside.

Son : Yes, but we'll take every precaution. And, what's more, we'll wash hands as frequently as possible.

B. Here are some expressions that you can use to argue or defend a point. Learn them.

a. The main idea/thing is ...

b. The most important idea is ...

c. The primary argument for ... is ...

d. In addition to that, ...

e. Not to mention the fact that ...

f. I agree/admit that ..., but we must remember that ...

C. Work in pairs. Have a conversation in the given situations.

a. You are against the idea of keeping animals in the zoo but one of your friends disagrees.

b. You want to study during your leisure time but your sister insists on playing games.

c. Your parents want you to study what they want but you don't agree.

d. Your friend wants to do a job but you want to start your own business.

e. You want to go to a concert but your friend wants to go to a movie.

Project work

Work in groups. Find some elderly couples or a widow/widower staying apart from their children because they are abandoned. Ask them what they had expected from their children and what actually happened. Prepare a story and present it to the class.