

Joint Family

For the students of Sociology, the study of the Indian family system deserves special attention, not only because they are born in Indian families but also for here the family system differs in material respects from the western family system. The family in India does not consist only of husband, wife and their children but also of uncles, aunts and cousins and grandsons.

This system, called joint family or extended family system is a peculiar characteristic of the Indian social life. A son after marriage does not usually separate himself from the parents but continues to stay with them under the same roof messing together and holding property in common.

The family has joint property and every person has his share in it since the time he is born. The earnings of all the members are put in a common fund out of which family expenses are met. Non-earning members have as much share as the earning members. The Indian family system is thus like a socialistic community in which everyone earns according to his capacity and receives according to his needs.

The family in India is based on patrilineal descent. Children are identified by name and allegiance with the father's family. Property is passed from generation to generation within the father's family.

Definition of Joint Family

1. According to Chandra Shekhar, "In a word joint family is simple, the common ownership of means of production & common enjoyment of fruits of labor."

2. According to Elliot and Merrill, "Family disorganization includes any weakness, maladjustment of dissolution of the ties binding members of this group together."

3. According to Dr. Mower, "It is the disruption of the family relationship, climax of long series of conflicts which have threatened the unity of the family. This sequence of conflicts may be called family disorganization."

4. According to 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."

5. According to I.P. Desai, "We call that household a joint family which has greater generation depth than individual family and the members of which are related to one another by property, income and mutual rights and obligations."

6. According to Davis, "The joint family consists of persons 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."

7. According to Jolly, "In a joint family not only parents and children, brothers and stepbrothers live on the common property, but it may sometime include ascendants and collaterals up to many generations."

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