INDIVIDUAL /FAMILY INTERACTIONS AND TRANSACTIONS - WITH AND WITHIN THE ENVIRONMENTS -3
Family is known as an ecological system which governs individuals who are living organisms that interact with and within the environment.

Individuals interact within the family -- sharing values, resources, goals, responsibilities and commitments.

Family and individuals must interact to obtain resources, materials, energy and information to survive.
1. Family ecosystem as a social system

Every part of the family interacts with each other and with the environment forming an ecosystem

Interrelated / interdependent

Family fulfills physical and biological maintenance activities and reproductive activities

Family tasks includes socializations of the off-springs

Family well-beings may be influenced by the “world” well-being, vice versa
Family is a semi-open system, has its own goals, dynamic & adaptive

Families respond, change, develop, grow, act, react and adjust in the environment

Adaptation is a continuous process in any family system

All parts of the environment are interrelated & influential of each other

Family as a system, use materials and transform energy to:

- sustain and generate life
- function
2 sets of rules influence family – environment interactions:

- Natural physical and biological laws - such as thermodynamic rules of matter-energy transformation
- Values and rules that are constructed by the human beings
Factors that need to be considered in studying families:

- Components (size, age, gender, life cycle)
- Structure (intact, single-headed (divorce/death/never married))
- Environment (other living/non-living organism)
- Processes that take place between family and the environment

→ studied as a system
The environment does not **DETERMINE** human behaviour:

- but it does provide **boundaries or sanctions and opportunities** for family growth.

Families do have certain degree of controls & freedom over some interactional aspects in life

- **Decision making process (DMP)** is a basic controlling mechanism

DMP guides human behaviour towards achieving individual and family goals which in turn will influence the other environments.
Some basic concepts:

Family:
- is a basic unit of the society comprises interacting organisms.
- By definitions, a family covers memberships of individuals who are blood related or related through marriage; or adopted as members.

Members are:
- interdependent, and independent to certain extend
- share common goals & resources
- committed towards each other
Needs:

Conditions that need to be fulfilled in order to survive and behave adaptively.

3 categories of individuals and family needs:
- The need to own/obtain resources (materials or information)
- The need to interact (sense of belonging, love & care, communicate)
- The need to exist (growth & development; to excel)

Family needs must be considered based upon the socio-cultural contexts.
Values:

- Individual and family values must be understood.
- May influence decision making process; actions & interactions within the socio-cultural environment.
Goals:

- Individuals and the family share common goal(s) → goal orientation
- Goals (and values) motivate family to function
- Goals are influenced by time:
  - short term
  - long term
- Families pursue goals; may be shifted depending upon situations
Resources

Used by families to pursue goals, expectations & demands

2 types: human & materials (tangible & non-tangible)

Human resources include personal characteristic (knowledge, skills, emotions, health, energy, time)

Materials: natural or man-made (money, asset)
Management:

A comprehensive process that involves achievement, discovery, coordination & usage of resources to obtain goals & for values realization.

It covers interrelated processes of determining goals, planning & implementation.

It involves decision making process.
DECISION MAKING

- Serves as family controlling system
- It reflects family interaction patterns; is based on values, goals & standards
- It helps family to adapt in the environment
- A decision situation exist when conflict & alternatives occur
Common characteristics of Decision Making

- Is considered to be universal
- Involves information processing
- Involves a choice among alternatives
- Involves conflict management
- Reflects family member's perceptions, needs, values
- Reflects family dynamics (interactions, communication, power, authority)
- Reflects a style
- Past & future related
- Reflects a commitment to a course of actions
- Is basic to all family functions
Basic requirements in making a decision:

1. Aware that a decision is needed
2. Identifying & comparing alternatives
3. Making a choice from the alternatives
Family decision making is a complex process:

- Families make numerous decisions in life: social, technical, economics, legal, political.

- Most of the times decisions are made when families are faced with uncertainties / risks

- Some of the decisions involved group / whole family members
Outcomes of decision making:

3 kinds of decision making patterns:

1. Consensus,
2. Accomodation
3. Defacto
1. **Consensus**
   - discuss the issue to be decided until agreement is reached;
   - requires compromise, flexibility, negotiation.
   - time consuming

2. **Accommodation**
   - one person consents to a decision not because of total agreement, but because of the belief that further discussion will not resolve the issue;
   - it encourages dominant behaviour;
   - may disturb family connectedness
3. **Defacto**

- made without direct family agreement;
- only made to keep family functioning;
- may cause complaints by members;
- dominant members are victorious, others are suppressed.