INDIVIDUAL /FAMILY INTERACTIONS AND TRANSACTIONS - WITH AND WITHIN THE ENVIRONMENTS -1

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 include socializations of the offspring
- Family well-beings may be influenced by the "world" well-being, vice versa

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 & the environment
  ➔ studied as a system

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.

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

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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 exists 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

**Outcomes of decision making:**
- 3 kinds of decision making patterns:
  1. Consensus,
  2. Accommodation
  3. Defacto

**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
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.