FAMILY FORMATION

- Premarital relationship???
  - VERY critical
  - SMART START
  - Why? How do people choose their marital partner?
  - Is LOVE really important?
  - Can people be happily married without falling in love?
  - "Mawaddah – wa – Rahmah”

Theories related to choosing a life partner

Homogamy vs. heterogamy

- People marry those of the same kind (similar characteristics)
- The concept of KAFAAA/ kufu (ethnic, SES, religion, values)
  - Homogamy; > common

Choosing a life partner

- In Islam, marital partner is advised to be chosen based on 4 elements: wealth, beauty, family history/genetic factors, and on top of all: RELIGION
- Each individual may have different ideas of his/her IDEAL partner

- Those who marry “outside” the similar territory or those of opposite characteristics are known as heterogamy; may face greater challenges

+++ endogamy: marrying within one’s own social group vs. exogamy – outside the group)
  - “Complementary” = characteristics that compliment each other

Filtering Theory

- Filtering process to minimize the size of the 'pool’ of the potential candidates (Kerckhoff & Davis, 1962)
- Filter 1 = propinquity (distance, time factor, physical space; geographic closeness)
- Filter 2: Social background (ethnicity; SES)
- Filter 3: Attractiveness (similar or more or less about the same)
Filter 4: Matched (personality, interest, values)
Filter 5: "balanced sheet filter" – analyzing benefit & loss; if balance; proceed to commitment stage ➔ marriage

Marital preparation / readiness
- Spiritual
  - Faith, religion as way of life
  - Knowing the rights/wrong; rights & responsibilities
  - A clean start
- Physical
  - Healthy: physical, mental, emotions
  - Free from diseases
  - Fertile
  - Sexual

All eligible candidates
Filter 1 – propinquity
All eligible candidates that one knows of
Filter 2 – social background
Candidates that have similar background characteristic
Filter 3: Attractiveness
Partners get attracted to each other
Filter 4: matching
Personality, interest, values
Filter 5: balance sheet commitment

Potential Mr/Mrs WRONG?
- Don Juans/sexual predators
- Incompatible basic values
- Carrying "old luggage"
- Extreme jealousy / violent tendencies / controlling
- Substance abuse
- Excessive time spent with others
- Flirting around
- Lack of communication
- Financial instability?

Socio-cultural
- The Wedding
- Relationships with families of orientations; in-laws; neighbours; friends (yours, mine, ours)
- Work & family

Socio-emotional
- The importance of being in-love; staying in-love through-out; marital Q
- Parenting

Socio-economy
- Nafkah
- Responsibilities towards family of procreation
- Responsibilities towards families of orientation
Family Developmental Tasks

- Basic family tasks; specific for each level of the family life cycle
  - Involves responsibly, roles that are shaped & in accord with biological needs, cultural influences, values & family aspirations
  - Occur simultaneously & parallel with individual development

Success in fulfilling the tasks:

- Satisfaction; happiness; recognition from society; ease the accomplishment of the subsequent tasks
- Failure???
  - May limit growth (various aspects)
  - May interfere with later stages
  - May create conflict

Basic family tasks:

- Provision of basic needs: shelter, food, clothing, safety etc
- Fulfilment of living cost through distribution of resources (time, space, energy); & facilities
- Division of household tasks such as "breadwinner"; "family manager"; maintenance of home & family members

- Ensuring the "success" of the socialization process
- Provision of the "know how" of interactional processes (communication, expression of feelings, sexuality etc)

- Give birth, nurture, bring-up the children, launch them
  - Establishment of good relationships with the outside world (neighbours, friends, school, community, religious institution
  - Nurturing value system; morale behaviour, motivations, positive conflict management; strategizing life goals and honesty ("basic life skills")

- ** every member holds specific tasks pertinent to his/her position in the family (husband/father; wife/mother; siblings; children)
- How do today’s families differ from those of the 50’s? 80’s?
Family tasks according to stages across the family life cycle

Level I: Early stage
- Newly wed, lasts for 1 – 3 years; high marital Q

Family life tasks:
- Forming roles both in marriage & family; discuss expectations; adapt to meet own, partner’s & marital needs; planning for children; parenting
- Provide emotional support for each other (love, emotions, self identity & "married person" identity; sexual responsibilities
- Establish interactional patterns, communication, expression of love & other emotions etc
- Personal adaptations – give & take, tolerance of personal habits / likes-dislikes / hobbies
- Tolerance of gender role in accord with personalities, skills, needs, interest, justice & fairness

- Family first – managing work-family conflict, balancing work/family goals; recognizing unpaid labour; sharing of household tasks
- Improve communication skills; sharing of problems
- Financial management; short vs. long term goals

Level II: Child bearing / rearing stage
- Forming a family; expecting birth of a child; family with 1-2 children; decreased marital Q

Tasks:
- Adaptation of parental roles
- Establish family stability – all members are learning "the new roles"
- Establish & strengthen family relationships
- Involvement in neighbourhood activities; mutual friends, own friends
- Strengthen religious beliefs; nurturing morale values
**Level III: Family with pre-schooler**

- Child’s age – 2.5 – 6 yrs. old. Nurturing & subsequent birth; takes about 3 – 4 years

**Tasks**
- Provide enough & suitable space, facilities, other things to fit the expanded family
- Prepare for both expected & unexpected cost
- > Matured; remain “warm”
- Nurture & raise children with love & positive stimulation

**Level IV: Family with schooling children**

- First child ages 6-12; takes 6-7 years to complete

**Tasks**
- Provide enough & suitable space, facilities & other things for schooling children; maintain couple’s privacy
- Financial management – to meet extra demands

**Expand family socialization process**
- Improving communication Q
- Strengthen relationships with outside systems
- Strengthen religiosity; nurturing morale values

- Learn about child development – practice smart rearing
- Financial management (current & future)
- Strengthen relationships with extended family members – the grandparents
- Adjust to new roles as couples with children; family routines & rituals, holidays & festivals

- Strengthen good relationships with extended families
- Identify additional resources from outside
- Motivate family members
- Strengthen religiosity; nurturing morale values

- Safety first – for the little ones; arrange home furniture accordingly
- Family planning
- Strengthen religiosity; nurturing morale values
Level V: Family & Adolescent
1st. Child ages 13-20; takes about 7 years to complete

Tasks:
- Space & facilities
- Financial management
- Sharing of household responsibilities
- Re-focus on marital relationship
- Improve intergenerations communication Q

Level VI: “Launching” stage
1st. child leaves home; ends when the youngest child leaves. Takes about 8 yrs.
Marital Q has high potential to improve or... fail

Tasks
- Rearrange household arrangement
- Preparing to launch the children
- Transfer some responsibilities to adult children

Level VII: Middle age Family
Begins when the youngest child leaves home, ends when couples retire – “Empty Nest stage” or the boomerang generation starts

Tasks
- Prepare facilities for well-being; comfort & health needs
- Distribute resources taking into account retirement plan

- Establish interactional pattern of “mutual fulfilment of needs”; improve marital Q
- Increase meaningful social roles; family relationship
- Religiousity, values, ethics
Level VIII: Family during the golden years
- Couples are economically inactive; death of one or both partners

Tasks
- Arrange for meaningful life
- Adapt financial needs with limited resources
- Set comforting routines; healthcare, strengthen marital relationship
- Increase social role; family relationships
- Religiousity, values, ethics; searching for meaning of life?

Variations in family life cycle
- Family life stages is experienced uniquely by each family; in accord with formation; time; duration; age of first child; subsequent children; family types
- Transitional from one to the next level produce changes that can influence family relationship; adaptation is need
- Various social changes influence the trends / form / functions of the family;

Examples:
- Postponed marriages; postponed child-bearing, all other stages are being postponed
- Career first?
- Families without children?
- Adopted children?
- Fewer children may shorten the span of life cycle
- Birth of special children
  - Divorced families? Single parent families; step – families? Blended families?
  - Some singles -- adopted children (trendsetter = artist?)

- Pregnancy out of the wedlock; homosexual couples?
- The shoot off of the launching stage is debatable
- Improved life expectancy – demands for children to provide care for their elderly