

THE SOCIAL ESSENCE OF FAMILY DEMOGRAPHY

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Annotation: This article provides information and analysis on the concept of family, its legal foundations, spousal relationships in young families, key characteristics of the family, types of families, family relationships, and family functions.

Keywords: Family, Marriage, Patriarchal family, Polyandry, Polygamy, Polygyny, Types of families, Family functions, Spousal relationships in the family, Family divorces, Family conflicts.

A family is a system regulated based on marriage that satisfies physiological-natural, social, and economic needs. It is a union of people who engage in joint activities, bound by socio-psychological kinship relations and economic property relations. A family is a small group based on marriage or blood ties. Its members are connected by household unity, mutual assistance, and moral responsibility. The most important social functions of a family include the continuation of human lineage, raising children, and organizing the living conditions and leisure time of family members efficiently. Although family relationships are considered relatively independent phenomena, they are determined by and evolve under the influence of the existing social, economic, and ideological relations in society. Accordingly, each society establishes a family type and family relationships that adapt to its transformations.

The family did not always exist in the history of society. In the earliest stage of the primitive communal system, when people lived in groups, relationships between genders did not have specific rules, and all men and women in the group were considered common spouses. Over the course of historical development, sexual relationships gradually became regulated. Initially, sexual relations between parents and children were prohibited, followed by restrictions on relationships between brothers and sisters, leading to the emergence of group marriage. However, in such families, the marriage between a man and a woman was not yet stable, and they did not possess separate households. At this stage, the natural factor played its role—relatives by blood were excluded from sexual relationships, and sexual relations became limited to one man and one woman (see also: Patriarchal family, Polyandry, Polygamy, Polygyny).

With the development of social production—livestock breeding and agriculture—the value of men's labor increased, and their contribution to production grew, significantly changing their social status. The existing customs, in which children were considered to belong only to their mother and inherited her property, conflicted with the new position of men. As a result, a patriarchal family, based on paternal authority, emerged. Thus, the predecessor of the modern nuclear family, the monogamous family, came into existence (see also: Monogamy).

A family serves as a testing ground for customs and traditions related to the life and lifestyle of the people and society. It preserves the best of these traditions and passes them on to future generations. By raising children and instilling universal human values in them, the family

provides them with an initial social orientation. By integrating its children into the broader society, the family also influences the social direction, economy, culture, and enlightenment of the community. For this reason, in the East, the family has long been considered a sacred institution. In particular, the characteristics of Uzbek families, such as their large and extended nature, are still preserved today. The formation of a certain lifestyle in Uzbek families, their accumulation of life experience, their frugality and well-organized household management, and the role of elders and parents in raising well-mannered and spiritually mature children are of great significance. Uzbek families are distinguished by their stability, orderliness, deep love for children, respect for kinship ties, compassion, and other values.

Families are classified according to various characteristics:

1. By completeness: complete, incomplete, and reconstituted (second marriage) families.
2. By the number of generations: nuclear (consisting of parents and children) and extended (including two or more generations living together).
3. By the number of children: childless, single-child, two-child, three-four-child, and families with five or more children.
4. By the social background of spouses: working-class families, peasant families, service worker families, intellectual families, and mixed-type families.
5. By the age of the family: young families (up to one year, three to five years, six to ten years of marital experience), middle-aged families, and mature (elderly) families.
6. By the educational level of spouses: families formed by partners with higher education, secondary specialized education, secondary education, incomplete secondary education, or special-needs education.
7. By the financial status of the spouses' parents: families where the economic conditions of both sets of in-laws are similar or those where there is a significant financial disparity.
8. By regional characteristics: urban, rural, and mixed-type families.
9. By marital satisfaction level: families on the verge of divorce, families with different levels of marital satisfaction (low, moderate, or high).
10. By the relationship between spouses: authoritarian, democratic, liberal, and mixed-type families.
11. By the nationality of spouses: single-nationality families and international (multinational) families. International families can be further divided into:
 - a) Marriages between representatives of ethnic groups that share the same religion, customs, and language, such as Uzbek-Tajik, Uzbek-Kazakh, or Uzbek-Turkmen.
 - b) Marriages between representatives of ethnic groups that do not share the same religion, customs, or language, such as Uzbek-Russian, Uzbek-Ukrainian, or Uzbek-German.

Every family, as part of the social system structure, fulfills specific responsibilities toward society. When discussing the social functions of the family, it is necessary to consider both the influence of society on the family and the role of the family within the broader social system, as well as the social duties it performs. The family carries out the following key functions:

1. Economic Function. Managing the family budget, planning expenses, allocating funds for daily needs, or saving for planned purchases all contribute to the financial well-being of the family. To successfully manage economic aspects, spouses must have sufficient experience and skills.

2. Educational Function. Parents are the artists, the child is the artwork, and upbringing is the art itself. The educational function of the family is of great importance. A child's intellectual, physical, moral, and aesthetic upbringing begins within the family. The family's role is fundamental in shaping a person's worldview, values, beliefs, and overall spiritual development. The key areas of family education include intellectual upbringing, moral education, aesthetic education, national values-based education, holistic personal development, physical education, ethical upbringing, cultural education, religious upbringing, and education based on national traditions.

3. Reproductive Function. The reproductive responsibility of the family toward society refers to the role of ensuring population continuity, meaning each family is expected to have a certain number of children. The essence of this function is to continue the human race, introduce children to scientific and cultural achievements, and ensure their health.

4. Recreational Function. This involves providing physical, material, moral, and psychological support to family members, strengthening their well-being, and organizing rest and leisure for them.

5. Communicative Function. The communicative function of the family serves to fulfill the need for mutual understanding and interaction among family members. This function includes internal family communication, social interactions, emotional culture development, and respectful dialogue between family members.

6. Felicitological Function. This function is about striving for happiness within the family structure. The factors contributing to family happiness include mutual understanding between spouses, creating an environment where individuals feel happy within both the family and society, and realizing their natural creative potential. Additionally, fostering virtues such as honesty, integrity, and conscientiousness is essential for achieving happiness.

7. Regulatory Function. The regulatory function of the family involves managing relationships among family members, enforcing social norms, maintaining authority and respect, and exercising primary social control. This includes the guidance of younger generations by elders, as well as material and moral support. It also covers the regulation of behavior, responsibility, and obligations within the family.

8. Relaxation Function. This function is about restoring family members' emotional and physical well-being, replenishing their energy, and maintaining their ability to work and function effectively.

It is important to emphasize that the family is an integral part of society and its fundamental unit. Therefore, the successful fulfillment of its functions not only influences its internal dynamics but also affects the overall social well-being. Strengthening the family structure and addressing both internal and societal challenges is essential for building a healthy society.

Marital relations in young families represent a delicate and decisive phase of relationship development, influenced by regional, ethnic, gender, age, and individual psychological characteristics. The way these relationships evolve depends largely on the factors that led to the marriage and the specific conditions under which the family was formed. However, in reality—especially in family life—not everything unfolds as expected. Family life comes with its own set of complexities, ups and downs, and challenges. One of the most significant challenges for young couples is adapting to their new social status and roles: husband, groom, married man, wife, bride, or newly married woman. This adaptation also involves integrating into a new social environment and a new family system.

Naturally, this adjustment process is generally easier for men than for women. Due to the ethnic characteristics of Uzbek families, women traditionally move into their husband's home, where they live with his parents and other relatives. This means that after marriage, the man continues living in a familiar environment, surrounded by family members and maintaining pre-existing interpersonal relationships.

For women, however, marriage brings a dramatic shift. They enter an unfamiliar environment, completely different from their parental home. The new family has its own system of interpersonal relationships, role distributions, and behavioral norms, which may not align with the upbringing and lifestyle of the bride's previous household. The expectations, responsibilities, and requirements in the new family may be significantly different. One of the primary reasons why adaptation is particularly difficult for women in Uzbek families is the feeling of being an outsider in the husband's family. Alongside the challenges of adjusting to new social conditions, a young bride often experiences a sense of alienation in her new home. After the formation of a young family, various social, psychological, ethnic, regional, and gender-related factors can hinder the smooth development of marital relationships. Therefore, it is crucial for young couples to be aware of these potential challenges and be prepared to mitigate their negative effects while fostering positive aspects of their relationship.

1. Traditional Family – As a social group, the primary goal of such families is to continue the lineage while preserving family traditions and values. In these families, spouses prioritize stability and continuity.

2. Partnership-Based Family – The defining principle of this family type is equality among family members. Decision-making responsibility is shared equally, and there is a high level of mutual understanding and conflict resolution skills.

3. Dictatorial Family – In this type of family, one member holds dominant power, often leading to authoritarian control. This dominance can manifest through moral, physical, or psychological abuse. Either the husband or the wife may impose their authority on the other spouse or family members, often resulting in severe psychological trauma and fear.

1. Peaceful and Happy Families – These families successfully fulfill their responsibilities, respect the rights of all members, and ensure their needs are met promptly. Gender equality is maintained, and any arising problems are resolved independently or with the help of specialists. Occasionally, community activists may provide guidance or minor support. These families serve as positive role models for others.

2. At-Risk Families – These families face certain difficulties in fulfilling their responsibilities due to lower social adaptability. They often struggle with financial stability and child upbringing. They require supervision and assistance from community activists, especially in cases where infertility causes family distress.

3. Dysfunctional Families – These families have a low social status and fail to fulfill their responsibilities. Their members experience economic and moral hardships, with slow and difficult socialization processes. They require significant support from community activists, including socio-economic aid programs. The risk of divorce is high, and children often witness constant conflicts between parents. This category includes families where one or both parents struggle with drug addiction or unemployment. Community activists working with such families encounter various social issues such as children not attending school, neglected elderly individuals, prostitution, drug addiction, runaway children, and marital breakdowns.

4. Asocial Families – These families require fundamental reform. Parents in such households engage in immoral and unlawful behavior, and their living conditions fail to meet basic hygiene and cleanliness standards. They neglect their children, who grow up without supervision and often experience developmental delays. In extreme cases, children may be drawn into criminal or anti-social activities. Community activists working with these families must collaborate closely with law enforcement agencies to address their issues effectively.

Currently, various measures are being implemented in Uzbekistan to support families and women, including providing housing for young families, educational benefits, opportunities to start entrepreneurial activities, additional income sources, and other socio-economic policies. These efforts positively impact family well-being.

Starting in 2023, the Family and Women's Research Institute introduced a system to measure the overall happiness index of families based on surveys and official statistical data analysis. This index is assessed through a general formula consisting of 8 indicators and 21 sub-indicators.

1. Economic well-being of families
2. Demographic stability
3. Life expectancy and healthy living
4. Access to education

5. Employment rate
6. Satisfaction with family life and sense of happiness in marriage
7. Importance and role of family values

8. Satisfaction with government services and institutions. The overall happiness index for families in Uzbekistan is +0.56, indicating a predominantly positive societal mood. The analysis showed that most families in Uzbekistan consider themselves happy, approach life with optimism and confidence in the future, have clear goals and plans, and overcome difficulties with a sense of gratitude characteristic of Uzbek culture. Among the indicators, the highest scores were observed in demographic stability, the significance of family values, and satisfaction with family life (+0.667). Key factors contributing to family happiness include the presence of children, strong commitment to family traditions, sincere relationships, mutual care, opportunities for a healthy lifestyle, and economic stability. The study also found that as people's economic well-being and job satisfaction increased, their contentment with life and family stability also improved. This highlights the growing significance of economic factors alongside moral and social aspects in determining happiness. Among the indicators, employment level (+0.323) and access to education (+0.114) showed relatively lower results. While the desire for higher education and ensuring children receive a good education remains strong, economic, regional, and qualification-related challenges sometimes limit educational opportunities. Difficulties in securing employment and finding suitable jobs negatively impact families' confidence in the future and their overall satisfaction with life. A family's social adaptation level determines its social status, reflecting its current condition in society. Family status is shaped by a combination of individual characteristics of its members. There are four types of social status:

1. Socio-economic status – Defines a family's financial situation, including income levels and living standards.

2. Psychological (emotional) status – Represents the family's emotional climate. A positive climate is characterized by emotional closeness, cooperation, and equality, while a negative climate is marked by frequent conflicts and emotional distress.

3. Socio-cultural status – Involves education level, cultural behavior, preservation and transmission of traditions, a broad range of interests, high spiritual needs, and shared recreational activities.

4. Adaptation – The ability of individuals to actively interact with society and utilize their potential for personal development. Additionally, deviant behavior refers to actions that deviate from social or moral norms.

Conclusion

In New Uzbekistan, increasing attention is being given to strengthening the legal foundations of families and family education. Educating young people about family life, addressing potential issues in young families, ensuring housing, and raising morally upright, knowledgeable, and modern-thinking children are among the key responsibilities of young families.

Thus, every individual must recognize their family responsibilities and contribute to the stability and strength of their family.

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