

## **HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF FAMILY**

The evolution of economy and society is strongly related and influences the way family is structured, functions and interacts within that environment. Four main types of society namely primitive, agrarian, industrial and post-industrial have been marked out. To this end, we will look at the main characteristics of the economy and the society of each time and link it to the features, functions and role of the family.

In primitive societies people lived close to the physical environment which supported them and determined their economic activity. Their main economic activity was hunting and food gathering. Families were small or extended, didn't settle in one place, but rather moved from one area to another, living in nomadic groups. Men and women were equal since they had diverse but significant roles. Men hunted big animals whereas women collected food such as plants and insects. Both of them looked after their children and women were respected for the miracle of birth.

The rapid developments in the agricultural production and farm technology initiated the agrarian period and society. The invention of the plough and other tools allowed humans to perform tasks more efficiently. This new form of economy made possible a more rapid growth in population. People founded villages and thereby created the need for new forms of social structure and social control like land ownership and wealth, community, specialization (servants, craftsmen, clergy, state officials, soldiers etc.). In this environment, the family becomes more important. It acts as an economic unit and everybody contributes to the production of goods. However, gender inequality appears and family and society becomes patriarchal: the father is the final arbiter in most of the family's major decisions. Marriage is important and paternity becomes important for ensuring the transfer of property to legitimate heirs.

The Industrial revolution was the most important event in the history of society that has brought about far-reaching consequences in the structure of societies. The key enabler for the transformation of the economy was the machine-based manufacturing processes and the rise of factory based systems. Nevertheless, there was massive urbanization and this resulted in worsened living conditions. Families no longer acted as economic units and both men and women essentially became workers. Marriage was no longer an economic

necessity, the laws started to protect women and they gradually became independent from men.

Finally, in the post-industrial era the major economic change is that the economy no longer relies on heavy industry and manufacturing but instead on the offering of services. It's what is called a service-based economy. The society is characterized by the growth of the middle class. The nuclear type of family recedes, equality and justice are the predominant concepts that govern the function of the family and the society. There is an increase in interethnic couples as a result of the international migration. Marriage is irrelevant in the formation of a family and a steady increase in co-habiting couples is observed.

We have presented the historical evolution of the society and family throughout the main periods of the human history describing the key characteristics of each period, the features of the family, its role and functions. The main conclusion that we can draw is that the developments in the economic field have had a strong impact on the structure and function of the family within the society.