

THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF FAMILY

The institution of family wasn't always as it is today. It has changed through the years based on the special economic characteristics of each era.

In primitive societies the basic need was to provide food for your family. So people lived in small groups in order to protect themselves and to help each other with food collection. The role of men, in every family, was to hunt large animals while women and children were collecting plants and insects. Women were equal to men and were taking decisions together.

In agricultural societies things were completely different. People could cultivate the land after the invention of the plough and families settled down in permanent land. Because of the above, population grew and concepts such as that of wealth, emerged leading to the appearance of inequality between rich and poor people. The family now is more important because it acts as an economic unit and also because descendants inherit family property. Because women weren't strong enough to cultivate the land, gender inequality appears and their role was restricted to childcare.

A real revolution started in the industrial era. The machines were discovered and the standard of living improved a lot, but unfortunately not for all people. Now both women and men are workers, women are freed from male domination and they

gradually gain the same rights. Women can have their own beliefs and opinion and that leads to people getting married only for love and only if they really want to. All these change the character of the family. Now, both parents must not only provide for the obvious, such as food and safety, but also love and sentimental safety.

In the late industrial era, there is further liberalization of society and marriage is a completely free and non-compulsory choice. The model of nuclear family has decreased but remains dominant but overall there is diversity in the family structure. There are single parent families, families with two dads or two mums and most importantly there are interethnic couples.

As we all admit, the importance of the institution of the family is without doubt extremely crucial. Although it has changed through the years, its functions seem to remain similar for every era.