

**II B.Sc**  
**COUNSELLING II**  
**SEM IV**

*Unit – III*  
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## **Types of Family Structures**

The term “family” refers to the basic sociological unit. The term has been used to denote two or more people staying together and related to each other by blood or marriage. The composition, size and structure (in terms of roles and statuses) has undergone a change across time and culture. There have been large families including grandparents, parents, children, uncles, aunts and cousins (all staying together as a joint family); and small families which comprise just parents with their children (nuclear family). Roles and statuses have also changed, with both men and women taking active part in making purchase decisions, and women playing roles which were earlier reserved for men and vice versa. Thus, the family as a social unit has varied in composition and structure, as well as the roles played by family members. It is noteworthy that from a marketers perspective while, families have been referred to as households, not all households are families. A household may also refer to a house that has just a single individual, or it might include individuals who are not related to each other such as friends, roommates, or work peers. Nevertheless so far as consumer behavior is concerned, families and households are treated as synonymous.

## **Family Structures**

The following types of families exist today, with some families naturally falling into multiple categories. For example, a single parent family who lives in a larger, extended family. While these types of families are distinct in definition, in practice the lines are less clear. As laws and norms change, so do family structures. For example, the [2020 U.S. Census](#) will be the first to give respondents the chance to indicate that they are part of a same-sex couple, either married or unmarried.

### **Nuclear Family**

The [nuclear family](#) is the traditional type of family structure. This family type consists of two parents and children. The nuclear family was long held in esteem by society as being the ideal in which to raise children. Children in nuclear families receive strength and stability from the two-parent structure and generally have more opportunities due to the financial ease of two adults. According to [2010 U.S. Census data](#), almost 70 percent of children live in a [nuclear family unit](#).

### **Childless Family**

While most people think of family as including children, there are couples who either cannot or choose not to have children. The childless family is sometimes the "forgotten

family," as it does not meet the traditional standards set by society. Childless families consist of two partners living and working together. Many childless families take on the responsibility of pet ownership or have extensive contact with their nieces and nephews.

### Step Family

Over half of all [marriages end in divorce](#), and many of these individuals choose to get remarried. This creates the step or [blended family](#) which involves two separate families merging into one new unit. It consists of a new husband, wife, or spouse and their children from previous marriages or relationships. Step families are about as common as the nuclear family, although they tend to have more [problems, such as adjustment periods](#) and discipline issues. Step families need to learn to work together and also work with their exes to ensure these family units run smoothly.

### Grandparent Family

Many grandparents today are [raising their grandchildren](#) for a variety of reasons. [One in fourteen children](#) is raised by his grandparents, and the parents are not present in the child's life. This could be due to parents' death, addiction, abandonment or being unfit parents. Many grandparents need to go back to work or find additional sources of income to help raise their grandchildren.



### Traditional Family Life Cycle:

Traditionally the life cycle, illustrated a progression of stages through which families passed; it comprised stages, starting from bachelorhood (single), to married (couple), to family growth (parenthood: birth of children), to family contraction (grown up children leaving home for studies or employment) to post parenthood (all children leaving home) to dissolution (single survivor: death of one of the spouses). Based on these, the traditional FLC can be synthesized into five basic stages, which may be mentioned as follows: - Stage I: Bachelorhood: Young

single adult (male/female) living apart from parents and into a livelihood. - Stage II: Honeymooners: Young married couple. - Stage III: Parenthood: Married couple with at least one child living with them at home. - Stage IV: Postparenthood: An older married couple with no children living at home. Children have left home for studies or for employment. - Stage V: Dissolution: One surviving spouse

Stage I: Bachelorhood: The stage comprises a young single adult (male/female) living apart from parents and into a livelihood. While incomes are low as they have just started a career, financial burdens and responsibilities are also low. As such bachelors have a high level of disposable income. Priorities and Preferences of Purchase: They tend to spend their money on house rent, basic furniture and kitchen equipment. They are recreation oriented and like to spend on purchase of automobiles (particularly motor bikes), travel (trekking and holidays), adventure sports (motor racing, bungee jumping etc.), health clubs, clothes and fashion accessories). Implications for Marketers: Marketers realize that bachelors possess large disposable income; they find in them an attractive segment for sports, travel, entertainment and fun.

Stage II: Honeymooners: The stage comprises a newly married couple and continues till the first child is born. One of the spouses may be working or both may be working. They are financially better off than they would be in the next stages. If both are working, income is higher. If both are working, the couple has discretionary income at hand that permits a good lifestyle, and provides for purchases or savings. Priorities and Preferences of Purchase: They tend to spend on creating a home for themselves. They spend on cars, furniture, curtains and upholstery, electronics, kitchen appliances and utensils, and vacations. Implications for Marketers: They form an attractive segment for the marketer as they form the highest purchase rate amongst segments. The highest average purchase of durables takes place in this stage.

Stage III: Parenthood:

The stage comprises married couple with children. This stage extends for about a long 20-25 year period; and could be further broken up into three stages, viz., Full Nest I, Full Nest II and Full Nest III. Throughout these stages, the size and structure of the family gradually changes, so does income and expenses with varying priorities. The financial expenses increase rapidly with children being born in Full Nest I and gradually decrease as children become independent and self-supporting as one reaches Full Nest III.

Full Nest I: The youngest child in the family is six or below. Priorities and Preferences of Purchase: While liquidity of cash is low, expenses are high. The family spends on baby food, diapers, medicines for cough and cold, doctor visits, child toys and games, school admissions and fees and insurance policies. There are increased expenses on child care. Implications for Marketers: At this stage, purchasing is at the peak, and so this is an attractive segment for the marketer. The children in the family begin to impact family purchases, and are a huge potential for future.

Full Nest II: The youngest child in the family is six or above. Generally the stage comprises children aged 6-12 years. Priorities and Preferences of Purchase: Financial position gets better as one begins to rise up the ladder. If the wife is also working, children are "latchkey kids." The family spends on food, clothes for children, education of children, insurance policies and

investments. They also pay for medical expenses and particularly, dental treatment. They go in for deals; buy larger-size packages, and economy packs. Junk food, fashion clothing and accessories, video games etc. are prime demands. Implications for Marketers: At this stage, purchasing is still at the peak, and so this is also an attractive segment for the marketer. The children, as also teenagers continue to impact family purchases. The latchkey kids are a potential for home delivered junk food like pizzas and burgers.

Stage IV: Postparenthood:

This is a stage that occurs once children have left home. They leave home first for education, and then for employment. As they complete their education, and find employment, they gradually leave home one by one, thus, leaving the nest. Thus, this stage has also been broken into two stages, viz., Empty Nest I and Empty Nest II. As one moves across Empty Nest I and II, the size and structure of the family changes (quite similar to the Parenthood stage and the Full Nest I, II and III).

Stage V: Dissolution:

This stage in the FLC occurs when one of the couple dies, and leaves behind the other surviving spouse. Priorities and Preferences of Purchase: When one of the spouses is still earning, or earns money from savings and investments, things are little easier. However, if he/she is not earning, he/she follows a lifestyle that is economical. The primary expenditure is on medicines, checkups with doctors and restrictive diet. Implications for Marketers: The stage is characteristic of a widow/widower with lower income and least shopping and expenses.

Modifications to the FLC:

With changes in our society, we witness a change in the traditional Family Life Cycle and the various stages through which it progressed earlier. There are various forms like single; late marriages; divorced (with/without children); dual income, no kids (DINKS); live-ins etc. Consumer researchers have thus brought about changes in the traditional FLC, so as to reflect changes in the family and lifestyle arrangements. Broadly speaking households may be 11 classified as family households and non-family households (single individual or live-ins). Each of these family types has varying features and characteristics, which also get exhibited in their buying patterns and consumption expenditure

### **Introduction to Life Issues**

Welcome to our **Life Issues** topic area. Life issues are common problems, issues and/or crises that happen to normal people living normal lives. Examples include managing one's relationships so that they are healthy and functional, surviving disabilities, coping with grief, loss and self-esteem issues. This is a broad set of topics to be sure. Specific information on specific life issues can be found in one of several topic centers that are children of this one:

### **MARRIAGE COUNSELLING**

Marriage counseling, also called couples therapy, is a type of psychotherapy. Marriage counseling helps couples of all types recognize and resolve conflicts and improve their relationships. Through marriage counseling, you can make thoughtful decisions about rebuilding and strengthening your relationship or going your separate ways.

Marriage counseling is often provided by licensed therapists known as marriage and family therapists. These therapists have graduate or postgraduate degrees — and many choose to become credentialed by the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT).

Marriage counseling is often short term. Marriage counseling typically includes both partners, but sometimes one partner chooses to work with a therapist alone. The specific treatment plan depends on the situation.

### **Why it's done**

Marriage counseling can help couples in all types of intimate relationships — regardless of sexual orientation or marriage status.

Some couples seek marriage counseling to strengthen their partnership and gain a better understanding of each other. Marriage counseling can also help couples who plan to get married. Premarital counseling can help couples achieve a deeper understanding of each other and iron out differences before marriage.

In other cases, couples seek marriage counseling to improve a troubled relationship. You can use marriage counseling to help with many specific issues, including:

- Communication problems
- Sexual difficulties
- Conflicts about child rearing or blended families
- Substance abuse
- Anger
- Infidelity

Marriage counseling might also be helpful in cases of domestic abuse. If violence has escalated to the point that you're afraid, however, counseling alone isn't adequate. Contact the police or a local shelter or crisis center for emergency support.

## How you prepare

The only preparation needed for marriage counseling is to find a therapist. You can ask your primary care doctor for a referral to a therapist. Loved ones, friends, your health insurer, employee assistance program, clergy, or state or local mental health agencies might offer recommendations. It can be helpful to interview several therapists before you decide on one.

Before scheduling sessions with a specific therapist, consider whether the therapist would be a good fit for you and your partner. You might ask questions about:

- **Education and experience.** What is your educational and training background? Are you licensed by the state? Are you credentialed by the AAMFT? What is your experience with our type of issue?
- **Logistics.** Where is your office? What are your office hours? Are you available in case of emergency?
- **Treatment plan.** How many sessions should we expect to have? How long is each session?
- **Fees and insurance.** How much do you charge for each session? Are your services covered by our health insurance plan?

## What you can expect

Marriage counseling typically brings couples or partners together for joint therapy sessions. Working with a therapist, you'll learn skills to solidify your relationship, such as:

- Open communication
- Problem-solving
- How to discuss differences rationally

You'll talk about the good and bad parts of your relationship as you pinpoint and better understand the sources of your conflicts. Together you'll learn how to identify problems without blame and instead examine how things can be improved.

Here are some things to keep in mind when considering marriage counseling:

- **It might be hard to talk about your problems with the counselor.** Sessions might pass in silence as you and your partner remain angry over perceived wrongs — or you might yell or argue during

sessions. Both are OK. Your therapist can act as a referee and help you cope with the resulting emotions.

- **You can go by yourself.** If your partner refuses to attend marriage counseling sessions, you can still attend. It's more challenging to mend a relationship this way, but you can benefit by learning more about your reactions and behavior.
- **Therapy is often short term.** Some people need only a few sessions of marriage counseling, while others need it for several months. The specific treatment plan will depend on your situation. Sometimes, marriage counseling helps couples discover that their differences truly are irreconcilable and that it's best to end the relationship. Sessions can then focus on skills for ending the relationship on good terms.
- **You might have homework.** Your counselor might suggest communication exercises at home to help you practice what you've learned during your session. For example, talk face-to-face with your partner for a few minutes every day about nonstressful things — without any interruptions from TVs, phones or children.
- **You or your partner might need additional care.** If one of you is coping with mental illness, substance abuse or other issues, your therapist might work with other health care providers to provide more complete treatment.

Making the decision to go to marriage counseling can be tough. If you have a troubled relationship, however, seeking help is more effective than ignoring your problems or hoping they get better on their own. Sometimes taking the first step by admitting the relationship needs help is the hardest part. Most individuals find the experience to be insightful and empowering.

BY

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