

# 1. Introduction To System Approach in Family Resource Management

**Dr. Sarita Kumari**

Assistant Professor/ Head,  
P.G Department of Home science,  
MDDM, College, BRABU, Muzaffarpur.

## **Abstract:**

*The modern instructional process has become increasingly complex due to a shift in focus towards curriculum planning driven by technology. This shift has led to a proliferation of objectives, materials, media, and participants in education. In response, comprehensive planning is essential, encompassing not only objectives but also strategies for teaching and evaluation methods. This approach, borrowed from engineering and cybernetics, is known as the systems approach, which aims to manage, control, and enhance the educational process and outcomes.*

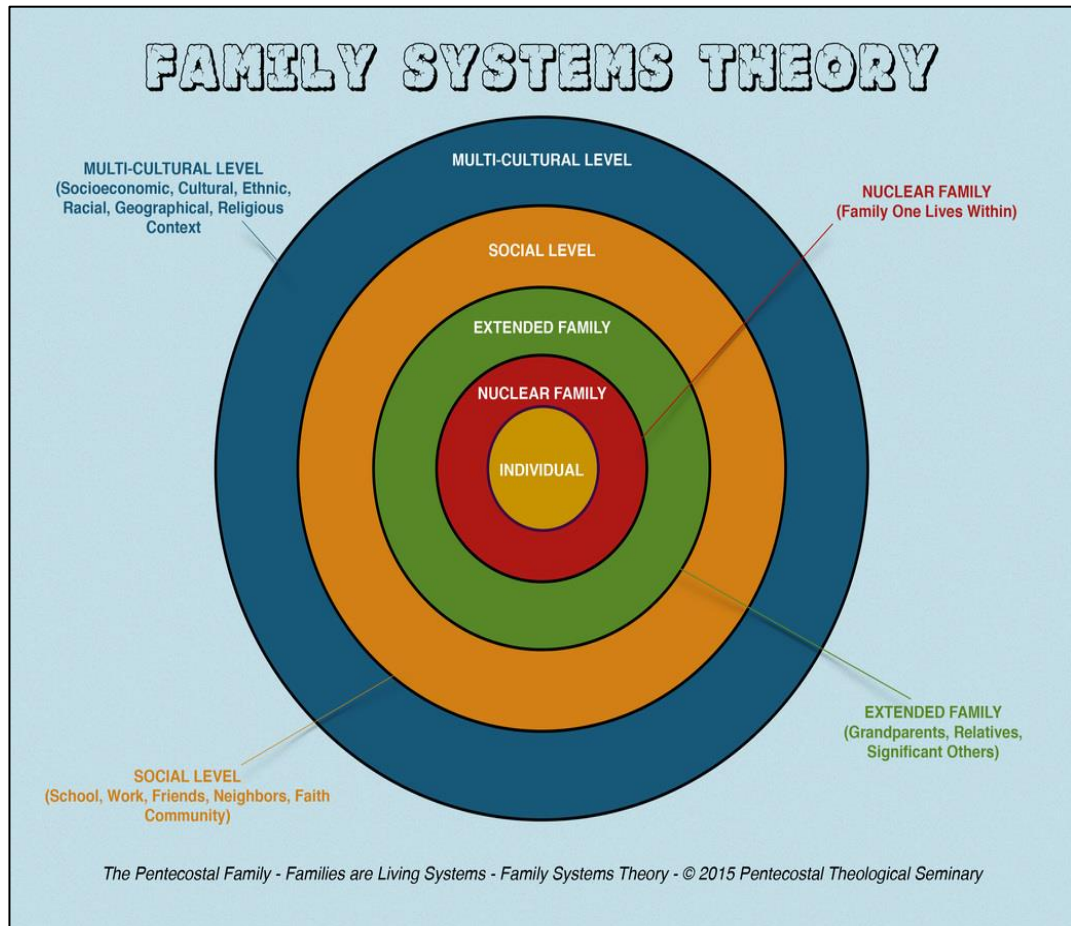
## **1.1 Introduction:**

Systems Theory, developed in the 1940s, focuses on understanding complex entities through their interrelated components. Pioneered by Ludwig von Bertalanffy and Ross Ashby, General Systems Theory examines how different parts of a system interact to form a whole. This approach can be applied across various disciplines, including biology, engineering, sociology, and more. General Systems

Theory (GST) emphasizes the idea that the properties of systems cannot be fully understood by studying their parts in isolation. Instead, the interactions and relationships between parts are crucial. Key concepts in GST include: Holistic -The system as a whole has properties that are different from the sum of its parts, Open Systems: Systems exchange matter, energy, or information with their environment, Feedback Loops: Processes that help maintain system stability or promote change through feedback mechanisms.

## **1.2 Family Systems Theory:**

In the 1950s, Dr. Murray Bowen extended systems theory into the realm of human relationships with his development of Family Systems Theory (FST). Bowen's theory posits that individuals cannot be understood in isolation from their family unit, as families are interconnected systems where each member influences and is influenced by others. While individualism prioritizes personal autonomy and fulfillment, Family Systems Theory underscores the importance of understanding individuals within the context of their family relationships. FST suggests that family life is a result of the complex interactions among family members, and it highlights the interconnectedness and mutual influence that shape individual behaviors and identities. This holistic perspective provides a more comprehensive understanding of human behavior in the relational context of family dynamics.



**Figure 1.1: Family System Theory**

A family system consists of interconnected individuals whose daily interactions and relationships form a complex and dynamic structure. To understand this system, one must identify and consider the various levels within it: the individual (each person in the family has unique characteristics, needs, and behaviors), the nuclear family (the immediate family unit, usually including parents and children, where primary daily interactions occur), the extended family (Relatives beyond the nuclear family, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, who contribute to broader family dynamics), the social level (The family's interactions with external social structures, including schools, workplaces, and community organizations), and the multi-cultural context (The broader cultural and societal context that influences and is influenced by the family, encompassing cultural norms, values, and traditions).

Each level is interrelated, contributing to and being influenced by the others, providing a comprehensive understanding of the family's operations and dynamics. Boundaries in the family system delineate the distinctions between the family unit and the external environment. These boundaries determine what is considered part of the family system and what is outside it.

The system approach in Family Resource Management (FRM) views the family as a complex system with interrelated parts. It considers how decisions and actions in one area of family life affect other areas.

For example, financial decisions can impact emotional well-being, and vice versa. This approach emphasizes understanding the dynamics within families and how they interact with external influences like culture, economics, and society.

### **Meaning of System:**

“System is a set of interrelated and interdependent elements”. (R.L. Ackoff,1971)

“A system is a systematic organization of the element that operate in a unique way” (Cranford Robb,1973).

“A system may be defined as a dynamic complex, integrated whole consisting of a self-regulating pattern of interrelated and interdependent elements organized to achieve the predetermined and specific objectives’ (A.K Jalaluddin,1981)

Gross, Crandall, and Knoll argue for the systems approach as a conceptual framework for several reasons:

- Management isn't an isolated activity; it's interconnected with various elements.
- The systems approach emphasizes the interconnectedness, interdependence, and interactions within the real world, providing a holistic view.
- It enables focusing on individual components while still maintaining an understanding of the broader system dynamics.

### **The system approach in Family Resource Management (FRM) is characterized by several key features:**

The systems approach in management is indeed a modern approach that views organizations as interconnected systems composed of interdependent parts. Here are the key concepts of this approach

- **Interconnectedness:** Recognizes that different aspects of family life, such as finances, time management, and emotional well-being, are interconnected and influence each other.
- **Holistic Perspective:** Views the family as a whole, considering the interactions between its members and various factors within and outside the family unit.
- **Feedback Loops:** Acknowledges the presence of feedback loops, where outcomes of decisions and actions within the family system affect future behaviors and choices.
- **Adaptability:** Recognizes that families must adapt to changes in their environment, such as economic shifts, societal norms, and individual life events.
- **Goal Orientation:** Focuses on setting and achieving goals that enhance the overall well-being and functioning of the family unit.

- **Resource Allocation:** Emphasizes the efficient allocation of resources, including time, money, and energy, to meet the needs and goals of the family.
- **Openness to Change:** Encourages flexibility and openness to change within the family system to address evolving circumstances and challenges.
- **Boundaries:** the distinctions between the family unit and the external environment. These boundaries determine what is considered part of the family system and what is outside it. Boundaries control the flow of information and interaction between the family and the environment. There are two types of boundaries
- **Open Boundaries:** Allow information and interaction to flow freely in and out of the family system.
- **Closed Boundaries:** Restrict the flow of information and interaction, creating barriers to protect the family from external influences.

Understanding these concepts helps in analyzing and managing organizations effectively, recognizing their interconnectedness and their interaction with the external environment.

### 1.3 Component of System Approach:

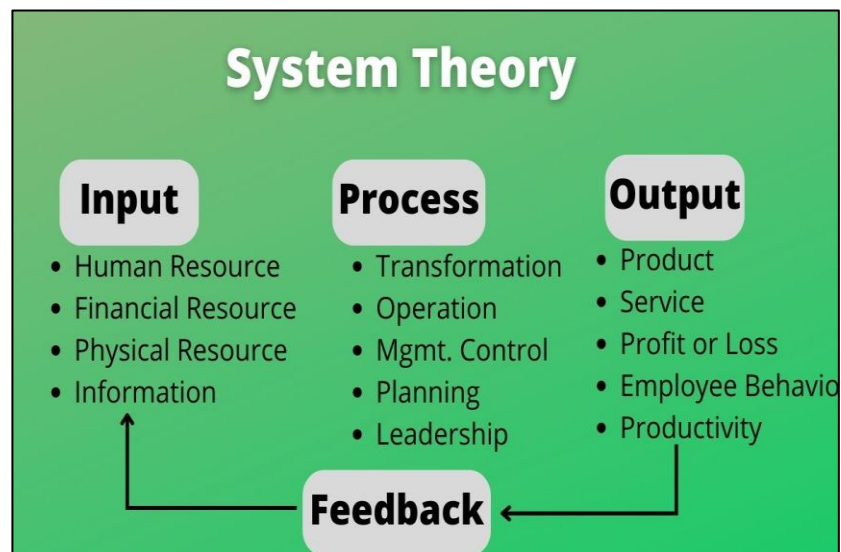


Figure 1.2: General System Approach

#### 1.3.1 Input:

The system approach to management addresses various aspects of household activities, considering inputs such as recognizing questions like "why" and "what." By understanding priorities, households can organize activities to achieve their desired quality of life. For example, family and individual goals, like affection, companionship, and economic security, guide task performance and organization within the household. By prioritizing goals such as happy children, personal development, religion, economic security, and others, households can effectively manage their resources and activities to enhance overall well-being and satisfaction

### **1.3.2 Process:**

The throughput phase in the system approach to management focuses on seeking solutions to questions like "how," "how much," "when," and "where."

Home management involves appraising available resources, judging their utilization in alignment with goals or demands, and developing and implementing plans accordingly. This phase encompasses activities such as setting standards, sequencing actions, controlling, and facilitating.

### **1.3.3 Output:**

Output from household activities represents the culmination of the input and throughput processes. It includes the accomplishment of tasks, resulting in varying degrees of satisfaction, resource utilization, and sometimes fatigue or stress associated with task completion.

### **The process involved in the system approach to Family Resource Management (FRM) typically involves several stages:**

- **Identification of Family Goals and Needs:** The process begins with identifying the goals, values, and needs of the family members. This step involves open communication and collaboration to understand what is important to everyone in the family.
- **Assessment of Resources:** Families then assess their available resources, including financial resources, time, skills, and social support networks. This step helps in understanding what resources are available to achieve the identified goals.
- **Analysis of Interrelationships:** Next, the family examines the interrelationships between various aspects of family life, such as finances, time management, household responsibilities, and emotional well-being. This analysis helps in understanding how decisions and actions in one area may impact other areas.
- **Development of Strategies:** Based on the identified goals, needs, and resources, the family develops strategies and plans to effectively manage their resources. This may involve setting priorities, creating budgets, establishing routines, and allocating responsibilities among family members.
- **Implementation:** Once strategies are developed, the family implements them by taking action according to the plans. This may involve changes in behavior, habits, or routines to better manage resources and achieve goals.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Families continuously monitor their progress towards their goals and evaluate the effectiveness of their strategies. This step involves assessing whether the chosen approaches are yielding the desired outcomes and making adjustments as needed.
- **Feedback and Adaptation:** Families use feedback from their monitoring and evaluation processes to adapt their strategies and plans as necessary. This may involve revising goals, reallocating resources, or adopting new approaches based on changing circumstances or priorities.

By following these processes, families can effectively apply the system approach to FRM, leading to better resource management, improved family functioning, and increased overall well-being.

#### **1.4 Utility of System Approach in Family Resource Management:**

Applying a systems approach in family resource management helps to view the family unit as a complex system with interconnected parts.

It allows for a holistic understanding of how decisions in one area impact others, promoting better resource allocation, communication, and problem-solving within the family. This approach can enhance efficiency, harmony, and adaptability within the family unit.

The system approach in family resource management offers several benefits and utilities:

- **Holistic Perspective:** By viewing the family as a complex system with interconnected parts, this approach enables a comprehensive understanding of how various factors such as individual behaviors, relationships, and external influences impact resource management within the family. It helps to avoid oversimplification of issues and encourages considering multiple perspectives.
- **Identification of Interdependencies:** A systems approach allows for the recognition of interdependencies among family members and resources. For example, a decision regarding financial planning may affect not only the family's budget but also individual members' time allocation, stress levels, and overall well-being. Understanding these interdependencies helps in making informed decisions that consider the broader implications for the family system.
- **Promotion of Communication and Collaboration:** By recognizing the interconnectedness of family members and resources, the system approach promotes effective communication and collaboration within the family. It encourages open dialogue, active listening, and problem-solving as a collective effort, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation.
- **Optimization of Resource Allocation:** With a systems perspective, families can optimize resource allocation by identifying inefficiencies, redundancies, and areas for improvement. For example, understanding the allocation of time among family members may reveal opportunities to streamline routines, delegate tasks more effectively, or prioritize activities that align with family goals and values.
- **Enhanced Adaptability and Resilience:** Families face various challenges and changes over time, such as job loss, relocation, or health issues. A systems approach promotes adaptability and resilience by helping families anticipate and respond to these challenges more effectively. By understanding the dynamics of the family system, members can adjust their strategies, roles, and priorities to navigate transitions more smoothly.
- **Empowerment and Agency:** Adopting a systems approach empowers family members to take ownership of their roles and responsibilities in resource management. It encourages proactive problem-solving, goal-setting, and decision-making based on a collective understanding of the family's needs, strengths, and values.

- Long-term Sustainability: By considering the long-term implications of resource management decisions on the overall well-being and sustainability of the family system, this approach supports the development of strategies that promote stability, growth, and fulfillment over time.

In summary, the system approach in family resource management provides a framework for understanding, analyzing, and optimizing the complex dynamics of family life.

By promoting holistic thinking, collaboration, and adaptability, it enables families to effectively manage their resources and navigate challenges while fostering resilience and well-being.

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