

## **Towards A Global Family**

One distinguishing feature that separates human beings from other animals in nature is the strong family bondage prevalent amongst human beings. Living as a family is not just an adjustment made to sustain progeny and to nurture the growth of offspring in humans. It is a broader concept of emotional sharing, caring and intimate relationship. This has been the hallmark of a civilized human society, all along.

But with the advent of technology and the growth of industrial economy, we are witnessing rapid changes in the traditional family system and an overall transformation in the social scenario. The concept of large families living under one roof, sharing the bounty and burden of life, is no longer existent. The order of the day is nuclear families that care for their own sectarian needs. However, off late there seems to be a resurgence of the larger family concept of a different kind. Technological advancement has made this world a smaller place to live in. The natural boundaries that separated people from one another, are now being bridged by cyber networks and satellite networks.

New friends and acquaintances can now be made with people living thousands and thousands of kilometres away from home at the click of a button, using Internet. Like-minded individuals can interact, exchange views and ideas or simply chat with others in different parts of the world by this. A true reflection of life and culture in different parts of the world is made available through satellite networks right in your living room. With all these developments, the term family has assumed a different definition. The world is moving towards a global family.

Is this a positive trend? There are both positive and negative sides to it. On one side, Internet as the new medium of global interaction has opened up unlimited options for people to understand, appreciate and forge relationships with people of diverse traditions, cultures and geographical locations. On the other side, this cyber revolution has rendered people inactive and insensitive to the social relationships in their immediate neighbourhood. Socializing, which is one of the most important aspects of human development, would be a casualty in this new world order.

So, does this new global family system strip us of our natural instincts? No. To gain some, you may have to lose some. Since the positive aspects far outweigh the negative ones, the new global family concept as rendered by the Internet (and other technologies) is a welcome development. While welcoming this with open arms on the occasion of the international day of the family, we should never forget to know who is living in our neighbourhood.

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May 1998 - Technoworld