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## **CHAPTER –1**

### **THE FUNDAMENTAL UNIT OF LIFE**

#### **Structure of Cell**

Cell is generally composed of three basic components:

(i) Cell wall and cell membrane

(ii) Nucleus

(iii) Cytoplasm

#### **(i) Cell membrane or Plasma membrane:**

Plasma membrane is the covering of the cell that separates the contents of the cell from its external environment.

It is a living part of the cell and is present in cells of plants, animals and microorganisms.

It is very thin, delicate, elastic and selectively permeable membrane.

It is composed of lipid and protein.

#### **Function:**

As it is selectively permeable membrane, it allows the flow of limited substances in and out of the cell.

#### **(ii) Cell wall:**

cell wall is non-living, thick and freely permeable covering made up of cellulose.

It is present in eukaryotic plant cells and in prokaryotic cells.

#### **Functions:**

- It determines the shape and rigidity to the plant cell.
- It protects the plasma membrane.

- It prevents desiccation or dryness in cell.
  - It helps in the transport of various substances in and out of the cell.
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