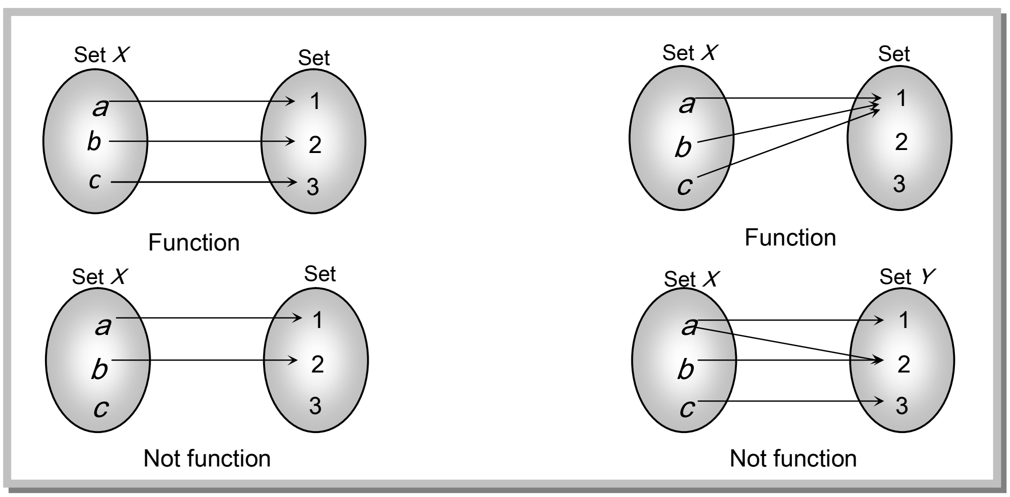
Definition of Function.

(1) Function can be easily defined with the help of the concept of mapping. Let X and Y be any two non-empty sets. "A function from X to Y is a rule or correspondence that assigns to each element of set X, one and only one element of set Y". Let the correspondence be 'f' then mathematically we write $f: X \to Y$ where $y = f(x), x \in X$ and $y \in Y$. We say that 'y' is the image of 'x' under f (or x is the pre image of y).

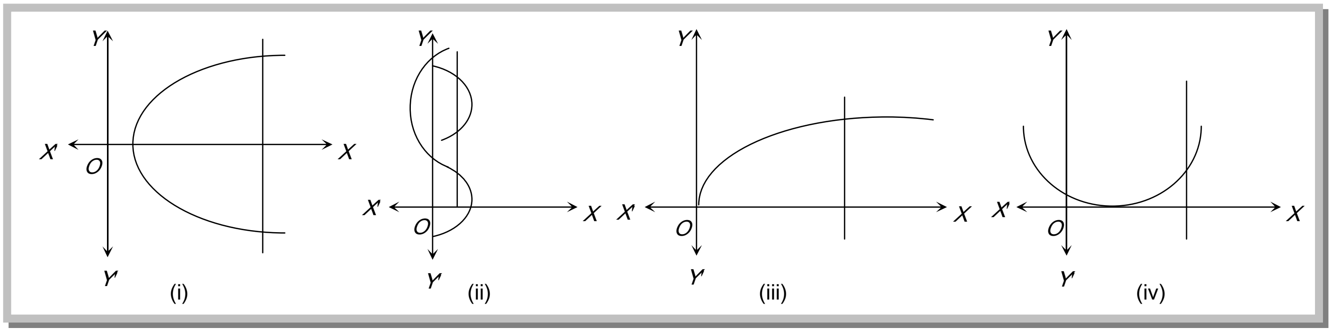
Two things should always be kept in mind:

(i) A mapping $f: X \to Y$ is said to be a function if each element in the set X hasits image in set Y. It is also possible that there are few elements in set Y which are not the images of any element in set X.

(ii) Every element in set X should have one and only one image. That means it is impossible to have more than one image for a specific element in set X. Functions cannot be multi-valued (A mapping that is multi-valued is called a relation from X and Y) *e.g.*



(2) **Testing for a function by vertical line test:** A relation $f: A \to B$ is a function or not it can be checked by a graph of the relation. If it is possible to draw a vertical line which cuts the given curve at more than one point then the given relation is not a function and when this vertical line means line parallel to Y-axis cuts the curve at only one point then it is a function. Figure (iii) and (iv) represents a function.



(3) **Number of functions:** Let X and Y be two finite sets having m and n elements respectively. Then each element of set X can be associated to any one of n elements of set Y. So, total number of functions from set X to set Y is n^m.

(4) Value of the function: If $y = f(x)$ is a function then to find its values at some value of x, say $x = a$, we directly substitute $x = a$ in its given rule $f(x)$ and it is denoted by $f(a)$.

e.g. If $f(x) = x^2 + 1$, then $f(1) = 1^2 + 1 = 2$, $f(2) = 2^2 + 1 = 5$, $f(0) = 0^2 + 1 = 1$ *etc.*