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**Family**

**What is family?**

A group consisting of two or more parents and their children living together as a unit. A group of people related by blood, marriage or adoption. Government agencies often have to define what a family is in order to determine who benefits from their program and who does not. The family is said to be universal because it is found in more societies than any other social institution, including the economy, the state, religious communities, and educational organizations. (Census 1990) “a householder and one or more other persons living in the same household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption”. This definition includes many family types commonly regarded as families including traditional families (breadwinner husband, homemaker wife and their children), remarried families, dual-earner families, and single parent families. Yet it also omits some relationships that are commonly regarded as an integral part of families such as a grandparent who does not reside in the household, a noncustodial parent, an unmarried parent who does not reside with his/her child, a child in a divorced family who spends half of the week with one parent and stepparent, and the other half with another parent and stepparent and a man and woman who are legally married but maintain separate apartments and see each other on weekends.

**Discuss the functions of the family**

Zabriskie and McCormick (2001) stated that families are goal-directed, self-correcting, dynamic, interconnected systems that both affect and are affected by their environment and by qualities within the family itself. The structure, function or relations within the family are often common within a society or a region. They decide the social structure and shape the culture of the society. It is noteworthy that both family and society affect each other. The words goal-directed, self-correcting, dynamic, interconnected etc give family a sense of life. It is only a good family that makes house a home. In families, goals for better living are set, the drawbacks or wrong traditions or superstitions are corrected. Love, compassion, trust and cooperation play positive role and fear, hatred and selfishness play a negative role thus giving family a dynamic look. The family is the basic and important unit of society because of the role it plays in generation of human capital resources and the power that is vested in it to influence individual, households, and community behaviour (Sriram, 1993). It is, therefore, a basic unit of study in most social sciences disciplines, such as sociology, psychology, economics, anthropology, social psychiatry, social work or human development. It plays important role for survival, protection and support, socialisation and societal identification of the individual. One of the most important functions that families should perform in order to sustain their existence healthfully is to solve family problems fast and efficiently . Parents are taken as role models by their children during the problem-solving process. The child observes how they solve a particular problem, and stores those problem-solving strategies adopted by the parents for later use. The reason for the statistical significance in favour of the extended families in the sub-dimension of problem solving might be the fact that children belonging to extended families have more opportunities to observe problem solving strategies adopted by the elders.

**Discuss the African Traditional family**

Traditional African family patterns were mostly dominated by polygamy and arranged marriages. In some places in Africa, the daughters were given out by debtors to pay debt to people that they owed one thing or another. In some places, marrying more than a wife was a symbol of affluence and wealth. Some kings and heads of societies were required to marry more than a wife as well according to the customs of such a place. Even after the death of a spouse various different measures are taken in respect to the custom of such places. Some require the brother of the late man to marry the widow or for the widow to marry her son or father-in-law. Different rituals were carried out after the death of a spouse (majorly the husband). In most African traditional families, there is just one bread winner and the first child inherits the father’s entire property. But after and during colonization, the African traditional family pattern began to change slowly but progressively being altered as a result of the process of modernization which is exhibited through trends like urbanization. Family patterns that were the norm in traditional rural African societies are gradually being altered and substituted by modern values. African families are increasingly faced with the challenge and pressure emanating from the competition prevailing between traditional and modern family values. Hence, Contemporary family patterns in the region are increasingly subjected to transform and adapt to changing times. Discussions of family patterns in contemporary Sub Saharan Africa are usually made in reference to the process of acculturation, urbanization (the movement from rural to urban areas), which have helped to shape modern family structures, as well as fostered the prevalence of demographic changes (Kalu 1981:353).

**Discuss your nuclear family**

In my family, we are a family of five (5); two parents and three (3) daughters. I am the oldest child and daughter in my family which makes me the Ada according to our custom. My two younger sisters are six (6) years apart. My both parents are in the labour force which my Dad disqualifies my Dad from being the sole bread winner, even though he brings in more money. We have four (4) grandparents; two (2) living grandmothers and (2) dead grandfathers. We are all students university, secondary school and primary school respectively

**Draw your Family Tree**