1.Definition of Family  
  
In the context of human society, a family (from Latin: familia) is a group of people related either by consanguinity (by recognized birth) or affinity (by marriage or other relationship). The purpose of families is to maintain the well-being of its members and of society. Ideally, families would offer predictability, structure, and safety as members mature and participate in the community.[1] In most societies, it is within families that children acquire socialization for life outside the family. Additionally, as the basic unit for meeting the basic needs of its members, it provides a sense of boundaries for performing tasks in a safe environment, ideally builds a person into a functional adult, transmits culture, and ensures continuity of humankind with precedents of knowledge.  
  
Anthropologists generally classify most family organizations as matrifocal (a mother and her children); patrifocal (a father and his children); conjugal (a wife, her husband, and children, also called the nuclear family); avuncular (for example, a grandparent, a brother, his sister, and her children); or extended (parents and children co-reside with other members of one parent's family).  
Retrieved from https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Family  
  
  
The dictionary defines family in several ways. One definition is "a fundamental social group in society typically consisting of one or two parents and their children.  
Blessing. M(2006-2020) meaning of family retrieved from https://family.lovetoknow.com/about-family-values/meaning-family.  
  
  
2. Recall that the functional perspective emphasizes that social institutions perform several important functions to help preserve social stability and otherwise keep a society working. A functional understanding of the family thus stresses the ways in which the family as a social institution helps make society possible. As such, the family performs several important functions.  
  
First, the family is the primary unit for socializing children. As previous chapters indicated, no society is possible without adequate socialization of its young. In most societies, the family is the major unit in which socialization happens. Parents, siblings, and, if the family is extended rather than nuclear, other relatives all help to socialize children from the time they are born.  
  
  
  
  
One of the most important functions of the family is the socialization of children. In most societies the family is the major unit through which socialization occurs.  
  
Second, the family is ideally a major source of practical and emotional support for its members. It provides them food, clothing, shelter, and other essentials, and it also provides them love, comfort, help in times of emotional distress, and other types of intangible support that we all need.  
  
Third, the family helps regulate sexual activity and sexual reproduction. All societies have norms governing with whom and how often a person should have sex. The family is the major unit for teaching these norms and the major unit through which sexual reproduction occurs. One reason for this is to ensure that infants have adequate emotional and practical care when they are born. The incest taboo that most societies have, which prohibits sex between certain relatives, helps to minimize conflict within the family if sex occurred among its members and to establish social ties among different families and thus among society as a whole.  
  
Fourth, the family provides its members with a social identity. Children are born into their parents’ social class, race and ethnicity, religion, and so forth. As we have seen in earlier chapters, social identity is important for our life chances. Some children have advantages throughout life because of the social identity they acquire from their parents, while others face many obstacles because the social class or race and ethnicity into which they are born is at the bottom of the social hierarchy.  
  
Beyond discussing the family’s functions, the functional perspective on the family maintains that sudden or far-reaching changes in conventional family structure and processes threaten the family’s stability and thus that of society. For example, most sociology and marriage-and-family textbooks during the 1950s maintained that the male breadwinner–female homemaker nuclear family was the best arrangement for children, as it provided for a family’s economic and child-rearing needs. Any shift in this arrangement, they warned, would harm children and by extension the family as a social institution and even society itself.   
Libre texts project(2019 august 9th)11.3:sociology perspectives on the family. Retrieved from [https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Sociology/Book%3A\_Sociology\_(Barkan)/11%3A\_The\_Family/11.03%3A\_Sociological\_Perspectives\_on\_the\_Family#title ]  
  
3. Family plays a central role in African society. It shapes such daily experiences as how and where individuals live, how they interact with the people around them, and even, in some cases, whom they marry. It can determine a person's political identity and the way money and property are transferred. In rural areas, the family typically remains the basic unit of agricultural production.  
  
However, no single type of family exists in Africa. Societies have defined family in many different ways, and many bear little resemblance to the Western idea of the nuclear family. Furthermore, throughout the continent, traditional family patterns are changing. Colonialism, capitalism, the growth of cities, exposure to Western culture, and increasing opportunities for women are some of the factors that are affecting the shape of family life.  
  
  
  
  
FAMILY STRUCTURE  
  
Each of the many family systems in Africa can be defined in terms of two broad kinds of relationships. Relationships of descent are genealogical—that is, based on the connections between generations. Relationships of affinity are marital—based on marriage. The interweaving of these relationships creates the family that an individual sees every day, as well as the wider network of kinship that surrounds each person.  
  
Relationships of Descent  
  
Everyone is part of some sort of descent system, either patrilineal, matrilineal, or both. In patrilineal systems, property and political power pass through the male side of the family; the female side determines descent in matrilineal systems. In these relationships, senior generations have more power or status than junior ones. Younger people are expected to show respect toward older family members. In the past, this power could take the form of ownership. Among some peoples in the Congo Basin, for example, a man could sell his sister's child into slavery.  
  
Relationships of Affinity  
  
MARRIAGE SYSTEMS in Africa are highly diverse. In sub-Saharan Africa, some pairings of men and women are temporary, others permanent. Depending on the culture, a couple may live in the husband's home or the wife's home. Among some groups, such as the ASANTE, each spouse continues to live in the home in which he or she was born. Children may stay with their parents until they marry, or they may spend part of their adolescence in the home of another relative. In some cultures, young people leave their families at puberty to live in villages of adolescents.  
  
African marriage can be polygynous—that is, a man may have more than one wife. In practice, though, only the senior or wealthy individuals in a society have been able to have multiple wives. When polygyny occurs, the family unit is based on mothers. Each wife has her own house and property that are generally transferred to her own children. The mother and child, rather than the husband and wife, thus form the basis of family and kinship in such communities. Christian marriages in Africa, as elsewhere, are generally monogamous, with a man having only one wife.  
  
In some African societies, nuclear families are contained within larger social groups that may include kinfolk, neighbours, people of the same age or gender, and others. The nuclear family does not always have its own property or decide what tasks its members will perform. Rather, relationships between husbands and wives and between parents and children often unfold within larger domestic units called households, which may consist of joint or extended families.  
  
Households  
  
In a household community, several generations and several nuclear families live and work together. In joint family households, all members live together in a single large homestead or compound. In extended family households, the nuclear families within the household each live in separate compounds. A joint or extended family is under the authority of its senior member, typically a grandfather or great grand-father. Such families may be patrilineal or matrilineal.  
  
Most members of a joint or extended family household are born and raised within it or marry into it. Some, however, such as adopted children or adults, may be unrelated to the others. In sub-Saharan Africa, distant relatives are sometimes invited to settle with a household, but they usually have lower status than their hosts. A household might also include servants or, in the past, slaves.  
  
The household functions as an economic as well as a family unit. It can be described in material terms—for example, by acres of land, number of buildings, or certain tasks performed by certain members. A family compound among the Tswana of Botswana might include the huts and grain sheds of a man and his wife (or wives) and children, an unmarried brother, and an elderly mother. In rural areas, household members work together to produce food and other goods; in a town or city, the members might work to pay rent and buy groceries. In either case, the household needs to maintain itself, which means that productive new members must be added to replace the elderly, the disabled, and those who die. In this way, households are more flexible and inclusive than other family groups.  
  
Retrieved from https://geography.name/family/  
  
  
4. My nuclear family is a number of five, consisting of two parents and three children. The eldest is eight years older than the youngest and the middle child is two years younger than the eldest. My nuclear family definitely has all its roles assigned to various household members effectively. My parents are well and advanced aged and my siblings are young adults making me the only child that still hangs around at home.  
My dad's job often takes him out of the house leaving my mum to run the household but sometimes also, with the support of my two elder siblings, we also have a family dog named waldo . I really love my family.

5 