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SOC102

1. A family is an intimate domestic group made up of people related to each other by bonds of blood, sexual mating or legal ties. It is a specific group of people that may be made up of people that may be made up of partners, children, parents, aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents. It can also be said to be a group of people who share common ancestors. The most acceptable definition is, family is a group of people who are related by blood, marriage or adoption.
2. Family is the universal and fundamental social institution which performs a variety of functions of human society.
* Socialization: it is another essential function of family. It is said that man is not born human but made human. New born human babies become humans after they are socialized by humans.
* Nurturing children: children are born into families expected to be fed, clothed, educated, and cared for. This responsibility lies in the hands of the family.
* Provision of home: the family provides a home for common living to all it’s members. It is only in a home that children are born and brought up.
* Educational functions: family performs many educational functions for its members. As a primary educational institution, family teaches discipline and morality.
* Religious functions: family is the center of all religious activities. All the family members offer their prayers together and observe different religious rites, rituals and practices jointly.
* Regulation of sexual relationship: one of the paramount biological needs of man in all society is sexual relationship. Such relationship is often protected with rules and regulations in all societies and it is family that helps and enforces such rules.
* Affection and companionship: the family is expected to provide affection and companionship for its members. Children are given warm affection within the family to develop a positive self-image, ad adults in the family in the family need intimate companionship to cope with life. This breeds a sense of belonging.
1. 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.

No single type of family exists in Africa. Societies have defined family in many ways, and many bear little resemblance to the western idea of the nuclear family. 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](https://geography.name/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](https://geography.name/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](https://geography.name/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, neighbors, 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.

1. THE NUCLEAR FAMILY

A nuclear family, also known as an elementary family or conjugal family in anthropology and sociology is a group of people who are united by ties of partnership and parenthood and consisting of a pair of adult and their socially recognized children. It is a group consisting of two parents and their children. The nuclear family typically centers on the married couple. It may have any number of children.

My family is a nuclear family which consists of my father, mother and my four siblings. We all live together, alone.

s

Mathias Onwe

Charles

Tracy

Tennyson

Jordan

Cindy

Victoria

Robert

Evelyn Onwe

Eliza Abara

John Abara