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**DATE : 18/04/2020**

**Course Name : Sociology 2**

**COLLEGE** : LAW

**Matric Number :** 19/Law01/022

**COURSE** : SOC 102

**FAMILY**

Definition

According to Webster’s dictionary, a family is a group of people related by blood, adoption or marriage. What this means is that such relations can exist in form of a person giving birth to another, marrying another or adopting another. Anything outside of these pretexts can not be considered family relations. Hence, friendships are not marriages.

Functions of the Family

* **Procreation** and Rearing of Children
* Provision of Home
* **Socialization**
* Economic functions
* Educational functions
* Religious functions
* Health related functions

#### **Procreation and Rearing of Children:**

It is another important sectional function of family .Necessary arrangement of stable satisfaction of sexual urge resulted in procreation. Family provides the legitimate basis for production of children. It institutionalizes the process of procreation. By performing this function of procreation family contributes to the continuity of family and ultimately human race. Hence perpetuation of human race or society is the most important function of family. Not only the production of children but also child rearing is another important function of family. Family is the only place where the function of child rearing is better performed.

#### **Provision of Home:**

Family perform another important function of providing a home for common living to all it’s members. It is only in a home that children are born and brought up. Even if children are born in hospitals in modern time still they are taken care of and properly nourished in a home only. Because family and a home have no substitute. In a home all the members of family live together and a child is brought up under the strict vigilance of all it’s members.

**Socialization:**

It is another important essential function of family. It is said man is not born human but made human. New born human baby became human being after they are socialized. Family plays an important role in the socialization process. It is one of the primary agents of socialization. Living in a family human baby learns norms, values, morals and ideals of society. He learns culture and acquires character through the process of socialization. His personality develops in the course of his living in family. From family he learns what is right and wrong and what is good or bad. Through socialization he became a social man and acquires good character.

#### **Economic functions:**

Since ancient times family has been performing several economic functions. It is an important economic unit. In ancient time family was both a production and consumption unit. It used to fulfill almost all the economic needs of it’s members such as food, clothing, housing etc. In the then days family was self- sufficient. But now a days almost all the economic functions of family is performed by other agencies and family only remain as a consumption unit. It do not produce anything. All the members of family now working outside the home.

#### **Educational functions:**

Family performs many educational functions for it’s members. As an primary educational institution family used to teach letters, knowledge, skill and trade secret to all it’s members. It looks after the primary education of it’s members and moulds their career and character. Mother act as the first and best teacher of a child. Besides he learns all sorts of informal education such as discipline, obedience, manners etc. from family. Of course at present many of the educational functions of family are taken over by school, college and universities sill family continues to play an important role in providing the first lessons and primary education to its members.

**AFRICAN TRADITIONAL FAMILY**

Family plays a crucial role in Africa.  Mbiti says that “each person in African traditional life lives in or as a part of the family” (1975, p. 175). Kisembo asserts that “the family community was the fundamental element of the African, this basic sphere of action, through which he became integrated with the larger, human community… he always acted from within the sphere of the family” (1998, pp. 202-203).  
In this work I will try to provide a description of the wider family and its functions in the traditional African society. After that, I will focus on some sociological changes taking place in the contemporary society in order to find out whether those changes affected the traditional meaning of wider family.

Nuclear family would consist of parents and their own children. Shorter (1998, p. 83) sees such a family as autonomous and operating without reference to other relatives. Often their place of residence would be neolocal.  
Extended/wider family comprises more people. Mbiti says that “for African people the family has a much wider circle of members than the word suggests in Europe or North America. In traditional society, the family includes children, parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters who may have their own children and other immediate relatives” (1969, p.106). The relationships within extended family would be based on kinship (biological or putative blood relationship) and affinity (relationship between blood relationships of one marriage partner and those of the other marriage partner). Such a family would include adopted and fostered children.

MY NUCLEAR FAMILY

My nuclear family consists of my father, mother and 4 children with me.

We are a simple, private family with a large extended family. My father is the head of the house and enjoys much support from my mother and eldest sister. We are happy.

Family Tree

Father &.Mother -> Ima Akpabio, Inyene, Oto, Ifiok.

***Citations***

http://mojaafryka.weebly.com/concept-of-family.html

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