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**COURSE: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY 2 (SOC102)**

**WHAT IS A FAMILY**

A family is a group of people who are related by blood. It is also referred as a relationship that exists between (at least) two persons who are related by birth, marriage or adoption. The family is the oldest institution in the society. Also, it is the basic and most important unit in many ways. The family is seen as the foundation of society and the basis for all human relationships. All of us belong to a family, whether we live with our father and mother, grandmother, grandfather, brothers, sisters, uncles, and aunts or even close friends, these people are our family.

There are two common types of family namely:

* Nuclear family
* Extended family

**NUCLEAR FAMILY :**  system is a family structure that consists of two parents living with their biological children. It is also known as an immediate family.

**EXETENDED FAMILY:** consists of people who are closely related, living together in the same house or compound. Usually, it consists of parents, grandparents, uncles, and aunties, cousins, nephews and nieces all living together in a huge house.

**FUNCTIONS OF THE FAMILY**

The family as an institution plays an important part in our lives and our society in general. It is our top-ranking social institutions. The family were to be swept away, the world would become a place of regimentation, chaos and dissolution. This is because family fulfills some basic functions. These functions:

**1.Procreation:** procreation is one of the most important functions of the family. Through procreation, the family ensures the crucial role of populating our society and thereby guaranteeing the continued existence OT the human race.

**2.Socialization of children:**  Socialization is generally defined as the process by which individuals within a society are taught the acceptable ways of behaviour and the culture of the society. The family is the first group with which we come in contact. From birth to death there is hardly an action that can be performed by a person that I’d not guided and coloured by what is learned in the family. It is the family that gives the child the earliest sets of concepts, values, knowledge and skills. The family guarantees That the child has a place in the society. The name of one’s family immediately distinguishes one individual from another.

**3.Emotional care:** Emotional care me and giving and receiving of encouragement, support and the easing of emotional pains received in life . It is a feeling of acceptance and approval. It means being needed and approved by people who know all about us and like us in spite of it . Studies have shown that children brought up in very harsh home or homes with little love, may suffer retarded growth. The same is true for children reared in institution and orphanages where warmth and affection are lacking. Children especially, need the right balance of love, attention and affection if they are to grow into normal and well-adjusted individuals.

**AFRICAN TRADITIONAL FAMILY**

The cultural and physical diversity added with the dramatic social changes of the last three decades on the continent makes the family pattern situation so variegated as to defy any sweeping generalizations. As the African society has not been static, changes in the traditional family patterns will be briefly alluded to. Lastly, this author will argue that the Eurocentric nature of the descriptions and characterization of the traditional African family patterns by earlier scholars has tended to distort and obscure many of the strengths of the African traditional family. Contemporary African family patterns are subjected to changes that emanate as a result of the ameliorated economic conditions, education and health opportunities. These factors continuously exert tremendous impact on contemporary family patterns in the sub-continent. Socioeconomic circumstances in the sub-continent are encountering alterations that have to a considerable extent triggered changes in the fundamental cultural values most especially in the domain of the family. The occurrence of competition between traditional and modern family patterns illustrates a dichotomy. There is a rise in the pace towards the abandonment of traditional practices for modern ones (western). However, the most popular trend is that of the prevalence of family patterns that are increasing merging traditional and modern marriage norms, values or practices (Kalu1981:2). The next section provides information on marriage.

**MY NUCLEAR FAMILY**

The name of my family is the “Ikpesu”family. My dad name is clever ikpesu and my mom name is Regina ikpesu. We live together and love each other, I’m the only son and child of my parents. We live in our own compound and we are doing well.