



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

COURSE CODE: PED 313

**COURSE TITLE: HISTORY AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF
IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT**

COURSE GUIDE

PED 313

HISTORY AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT

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PED 313: HISTORY AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT

1.0: INTRODUCTION

The course PED 313 titled “History and Cultural Background of Immediate Environment” is a two-credit course consisting of three modules and fifteen units. It is designed to cater for undergraduates offering B.A.Ed. Primary Education and other related programmes in the School of Education of the National Open University of Nigeria. It is a compulsory two-unit course which demands your full attention and commitment as an undergraduate student.

As a student of Primary Education or Early Childhood Education programme, the course familiarizes you with a variety of concepts relating to the child’s environment, culture, historical and cultural background and their effects on parenting and child rearing practices as well as the growth and development of the child. Your successful completion of this course should prepare you better for understanding the influence of the child’s immediate socio-cultural environment on his or her growth and future social interaction.

This course guide tells you briefly what the course is all about, what relevant reference materials are available to complement your reading of the course material and how you can work your way through the course. It suggests some general guidelines for the amount of time you are likely to spend on each unit of the course in order to complete it successfully. It also gives you some guidance on your tutor-marked assignments.

2.0: WHAT YOU WILL LEARN IN THIS COURSE

The course PED 313 titled “History and Cultural Background of Immediate Environment” discusses a variety of concepts relating to a child’s environment, his/her culture, styles of parenting and child rearing practices. As a learner you will also be opportune in this course to read about the United Nation’s interpretation of who a child is as stipulated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The course material also discusses patterns of family communication and their influence as well as how best to promote such patterns on child rearing practices in Nigeria. The ways by which a child views him/her self and others in the

family are also highlighted in the course material. The issue of modernity is examined in this material with special emphasis on its effect on child rearing practices in the contemporary Nigerian society. Your interaction with the course material will rounded up with the role of the school and community in child rearing practices and how community and social support networks positively facilitate such practices and an all round development of the child.

3.0: COURSE AIM

The course is designed for you as a reader and student to improve your level of awareness of the relationship between the historical and cultural background of a child and the nature of child rearing practices he or she experiences through such environment.

4.0: COURSE OBJECTIVES

The aim of this course as stated in the preceding section serves as an all embracing goal which equally influences the objectives of your studying each of the fifteen units presented in the course material. The objectives have been identified for each of the units. You are advised to read them before you start working through each of the units. You may want to refer to them during your study of the unit to check on your progress. You should always look at the unit objectives after completing a unit, in this way, you can be sure that you have done what is required of you by the unit.

By the end of this course it is therefore expected that you should be able to do the following:

- a. Explain the concepts of environment, culture, historical and cultural background of a child
- b. Describe who is a child
- c. Describe the relationship between the child and his/her immediate environment
- d. Explain the concepts of child rearing and of parenting
- e. Describe the processes of child rearing and the different parenting models
- f. Identify the various cultural differences in the child rearing practices in Nigeria
- g. Identify some of the problems of child rearing in Nigeria
- h. Discuss child fosterage as a form of child rearing practice and its associated problems
- i. Discuss the benefits of appreciating cultural differences in child rearing practices

- j. Describe the relationship between family communication patterns among different cultures in Nigeria and the child's upbringing and social behaviours.
- k. Describe how children view themselves and others in the family
- l. Describe the roles of the school and community in child rearing practices
- m. Describe the influence of modernity on parenting and child rearing practices
- n. Describe how child rearing practices can be improved through different community support networks

5.0: WORKING THROUGH THIS COURSE

It is important for you to be determined to complete this course by reading through from Unit 1 of the first module to the last unit of the third module and, carrying out all the activities stipulated therein. These include self-assessment exercises and tutor-marked assignments listed under every unit. At certain points during the course, you will be expected to submit your tutor-marked assignments as your scores in some of them form a reasonable percentage of your total scores for the course.

Each unit of each of the modules starts with an introduction followed by objectives to be achieved after interacting with the main content and the exercises. Your facilitator for the course will be available to attend to you in case you find it difficult to comprehend any aspect of the course material. You are therefore advised to ensure that you read ahead and attend tutorial sessions where you would be able to ask questions and interact with other colleagues of yours and the facilitator.

At the end of the course is a final examination. The course should take you about a total 42 weeks to complete. Below are the components of the course, what you have to do, and how you should allocate your time to each unit in order to complete the course successfully on time.

6.0: THE COURSE MATERIAL

The major components of the course which will be made available to you include:

- The Course Guide
- The course material with the corresponding Study Units
- Assignment file (which will be available from the web CT OLE in due course) &

- Presentation Schedule.

7.0: STUDY UNITS

The study units in this course are presented in the table below.

Module Title	Unit No.	Unit Title
The Child's Environment	1.	The Concept of Environment
	2.	Historical and Cultural Environment
	3.	Who is a Child?
	4.	Relationship between the Child and his Immediate Environment
Cultural Differences in Child Rearing Practices in Nigeria	1.	Concepts of Child Rearing and Parenting
	2.	Common Cultural Differences in Child Rearing Practices in Nigeria
	3.	Child Fosterage as a Form of Child Rearing Practice
	4.	The Benefits of Appreciating Cultural Differences in Child Rearing Practices
The Child and Family Communication Patterns among Different Cultures in Nigeria	1.	Meaning and Forms of Communication
	2.	Patterns of Families Communication among Different Cultures in Nigeria
	3.	Effects of Family Communication Patterns on Child Social Behaviour
	4.	Children and their Views of Self and others in the Family
Roles of the School and Community Child Rearing Practices	1.	The School and Community Roles in Child Rearing Practices
	2.	Modernity, Parenting and Child Rearing Practices
	3.	Improving Child Rearing Practices Through Different

		Community Networks	Support
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8.0: ASSIGNMENT FILE

Your assignment file will be posted on the Web CT OLE in due course. In this course, you will find all the details of the work you must submit to your tutor for marking. The marks you obtain for these assignments will count towards the final mark you obtain for this course. Further information on assignments will be found in the assignment file itself and later in the section on assessment in this course guide. There are 15 tutor-marked assignments in this course and you are expected to practice all but submit at most 4.

9.0: PRESENTATION SCHEDULE

The presentation schedule included in your course materials gives you the important dates for this year for the completion of tutor-marked assignments (TMAs) and attending tutorials. Remember, you are required to submit all your assignments by the due dates. You should guard against falling behind in your works.

10.0: ASSESSMENTS

There are two aspects to the assessment of the course: first are the tutor-marked assignments (30%) ; and second is a written examination (70%).

In tackling the assignments, you are expected to apply information, knowledge and techniques gathered during the course. The assignments must be submitted to your tutor for formal assessment in accordance with the deadlines stated in the *Presentation Schedule* and the *Assignment File*

At the end of the course, you will need to sit for a final written examination of two hours duration

11.0: TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS (TMAs)

There are fifteen (15) tutor-marked assignments in this course and you are advised to attempt all. Aside from the course material provided, you are advised to read and research widely using other references which will give you a broader viewpoint and may provide a deeper understanding of the subject. Ensure all completed assignments are submitted on schedule before set deadlines. If for any reasons, you cannot complete your work on time, contact

your facilitator before the assignment is due to discuss the possibility of an extension.

The extension may not however be granted after the due date except with very genuine excuse.

12.0: FINAL EXAMINATION AND GRADING

The final examination for this course will be of two hours duration and has a value of 70% of the total course grade. All areas of the course will be assessed and the examination will consist of questions, which reflect the type of self-testing, practice exercises and tutor-marked problems you have previously encountered. All areas of the course will be assessed.

Utilise the time between the conclusion of the last study unit and sitting for the examination to revise the entire course. You may find it useful to review your self-assessment exercises, tutor-marked assignments and comments on them before the examination.

13.0: COURSE MARKING SCHEME

The work you submit will count for 30% of your total course mark. At the end of the course, you will be required to sit for a final examination, which will also count for 70% of your total mark. The table below shows how the actual course marking is broken down.

Table 1: Course Marking Scheme

ASSESSMENT	MARKS
Assignment 4 (TMAs)	4 assignments, best 3 will be used for C.A = 10 x 3 = 30%
Final Examination	70% of overall course marks
Total	100% of course marks

14.0: COURSE OVERVIEW

This table brings together the units and the number of weeks you should take to complete them and the assignment that follow them.

Unit	Title of work	Week`s activity	Assessment (end of unit)
1	The Concept of Environment		
2	Historical and Cultural		

	Environment		
3	Who is a Child?		
4	Relationship between the Child and his Immediate Environment		
5	Concepts of Child Rearing and Parenting		
6	Common Cultural Differences in Child Rearing Practices in Nigeria		
7	Child Fosterage as a Form of Child Rearing Practice		
8	The Benefits of Appreciating Cultural Differences in Child Rearing Practices		
9	Meaning and Forms of Communication		
10	Patterns of Families Communication among Different Cultures in Nigeria		
11	Effects of Family Communication Patterns on Child Social Behaviour		
12	Children and their Views of Self and others in the Family		
13	The School and Community Roles in Child Rearing Practices		
14	Modernity, Parenting and Child Rearing Practices		
15	Improving Child Rearing Practices Through Different Community Support Networks		
	Revision		
	Total		

15.0: HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM THIS COURSE

In distance learning, the study units are specially developed and designed to replace the university lecturer. Hence, you can work through these materials at your own pace, and at a time and place that suits you best. Visualize it as reading the lecture instead listening to a lecturer.

Each of the study units follows a common format as earlier explained under the section on `Working through the Course`. The first item is an introduction to the subject matter of the unit, and how a particular unit is integrated with the other units and the course as a whole. Next is a set of learning objectives. These objectives let you know what you should be able to do by the time you have completed the unit. You should use these objectives to guide your study. When you have finished the unit, you must go back and check whether you have achieved the objectives. If you make a habit of doing this, you will significantly improve your chances of passing the course.

The main body of the unit guides you through the required reading from other sources. This will usually be either from your set books or from a **Reading Section**.

Working through the self assessment exercises will help you to achieve the objectives of the units and prepare you for the assignments and the examinations. You should do each activity as you come to it in the study unit.

The following is a practical strategy for working through the course. If you run into any trouble, telephone your facilitator or post the questions on the Web CT OLE's discussion board. Remember that your facilitator's job is to help you. When you need help, don't hesitate to call and ask your tutor to provide it. In summary,

- Read this course guide.
- Organise a study schedule. Refer to the course overview for more details. Note the time you are expected to spend on each unit and how the assignments relate to the unit. Important information e.g. details of your tutorials, and the date of the first day of the semester is available from the Web CT OLE. You need to gather together all this information in one place, such as your diary or a wall calendar. Whatever method you choose to use, you should decide on and write in your own dates for working on each unit.
- Once you have created your own study schedule, do everything you can to stick to it. The major reason that students fail is that they get behind with their coursework. If you get into difficulties with your schedule, please let your facilitator know before it is too late for help.
- Turn to Unit 1 and read the introduction and the objectives for the unit.

- Assemble the study materials. Information about what you need for a unit is given in the 'Overview' at the beginning of each unit.
- Keep an eye on the Web CT OLE. Up-to-date course information will be continuously posted there.
- Well before the relevant due dates (about 4 weeks before the dates) access the Assignment file on the Web CT OLE and download your next required assignment. Keep in mind that you will learn a lot by doing the assignments carefully. They have been designed to help you meet the objectives of the course and, therefore, will help you pass the examination. Submit all assignments not later than the due dates.
- Review the objectives for each study unit to confirm that you have achieved them. If you feel unsure about any of the objectives, review the study material or consult your facilitator.
- When you are confident that you have achieved a unit's objectives, you can then start on the next unit. Proceed unit by unit through the course and try to pace your study so that you keep yourself on schedule.
- When you have submitted an assignment to your facilitator for marking, do not wait for its return before starting on the next unit. Keep to your schedule. When the assignment is returned, pay particular attention to your facilitator's comments. Consult your facilitator as soon as possible if you have any questions or problems.
- After completing the last unit, review the course and prepare yourself for the final examination. Check that you have achieved the unit objectives and the course objectives.

16.0: FACILITATORS AND TUTORIALS

There are 20 hours of tutorials (ten 2-hour sessions) provided in support of this course. You will be notified of the dates, times and location of these tutorials, together with the names and phone number of your facilitator, as soon as you are allocated a tutorial group.

Your facilitator will mark and comment on your assignments. Keep a close watch on your progress and on any difficulties you might encounter as they would provide assistance to you during the course. You must mail your tutor-

marked assignments to your facilitator well before the due date (at least two working days are required). They will be marked by your facilitator and returned to you as soon as possible. Do not hesitate to contact your facilitator by telephone, e-mail, or discussion board if you need help. The following might be circumstances in which you would find help necessary: when

- you do not understand any part of the study units or the assigned readings.
- you have difficulty with the self-assessment exercises.
- you have a question or problem with an assignment with your facilitator's comment on an assignment or with the grading of an assignment.

You should try your possible best to attend the tutorials. This is the only chance to have face-to-face contact with your facilitator and to ask questions which are answered instantly. You can raise any problem encountered in the course of your study. To gain the maximum benefit from course tutorials, prepare a question list before attending them. You will learn a lot from participations in discussions.

17.0: SUMMARY

In this course PED 313, you have learnt about a variety of concepts and issues relating to child rearing practices, parenting and effects of the child's cultural and historical background on his/her social behaviours and growth.

Specifically, you have interacted with topics such as:

We hope you enjoy your acquaintances with the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). Best of luck in your examinations. We wish you every success in the future.

16.0: TEXTBOOKS AND REFERENCE MATERIALS

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- The Concept of Environment
- Historical and Cultural Environment
- Who is a Child?
- Relationship between the Child and his Immediate Environment
- Concepts of Child Rearing and Parenting
- Common Cultural Differences in Child Rearing Practices in Nigeria
- Child Fosterage as a Form of Child Rearing Practice
- The Benefits of Appreciating Cultural Differences in Child Rearing Practices
- Meaning and Forms of Communication
- Patterns of Families Communication among Different Cultures in Nigeria
- Effects of Family Communication Patterns on Child Social Behaviour
- Children and their Views of Self and others in the Family
- The School and Community Roles in Child Rearing Practices
- Modernity, Parenting and Child Rearing Practices
- Improving Child Rearing Practices Through Different Community Support Networks

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PED 313: HISTORY AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT

MODULE 1: THE CHILD'S ENVIRONMENT

Unit 1: The Concept of Environment

Unit 2: Concepts of Culture, Historical and Cultural Background

Unit 3: Who is a Child?

Unit 4: Relationship between the Child and his Immediate Environment

UNIT 1: THE CONCEPT OF ENVIRONMENT

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1.0: INTRODUCTION

The concept of environment can be defined in a number of ways depending on which discipline is looking at it and for what purpose. Seeking the definition of the concept can therefore be likened to the old story of an elephant and the six blind men, where each of them characterised the elephant according to the part of the body he was touching. This establishes the fact that a universally acceptable definition of the concept is difficult to arrive at.

However, attempts will be made in this Unit to identify and discuss various definitions of the concept of environment and their characteristic features. This will provide an ample opportunity for a better understanding of what makes up a child's immediate environment.

2.0: OBJECTIVES

At the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

- i. Give a minimum of four definitions of the concept of environment
- ii. Describe the characteristic features of the various definitions of the concept of environment
- iii. Cite examples of the different types of environment.
- iv. Explain in simple terms what a child's immediate environment is made of.

3.0: MAIN CONTENT

3.1: Definitions of Environment

Basically, environment can be described as all the external conditions which influence the development or existence of an organism such as man. The environment of an individual subsumes not only the physical, climatic and physiological structures of the land area but also the settlement patterns, the peoples and animals that inhabit an area as well as their ways of life (Lawal, 2002).

This definition is related to McKechine's (1983) view which says environment includes immediate surroundings, all conditions, circumstances and influences surrounding and affecting an organism or a group of organisms. It is a collective term in which an organism lives in terms of temperature, light, water and other living thing things.

For simplicity, Okidi (2003) defines environment as the "totality of the nature and natural resources as well as the context within which they exist and interact. This includes the infrastructures which support socio-economic activities and which become part of our natural and cultural heritage.

The implication of this is that the environment does not only include the physical phenomena but people, culture and ideas as well. In the words of Mays (1985) it is everything that is outside us including in a subtle way the individuals themselves. It subsumes the cultures of the peoples in their normal habitat.

Okello-Oleng (1989) defined environment as the total outer physical system within which human beings, animals and other organisms live. Sabaya in DSE (1993) further describes environment as the area and surrounding which greatly determine the viability and extent of human life. It encompasses the physical and natural heritage of an area as well as the man-made physical inputs or deficiencies and defects.

An environment may also be considered to include the political, economic, social, cultural and technological features of a society. It is the aggregate of external conditions which determine and influence the patterns of life and behaviour of man. It is a whole and complicated system with many interacting components, of which the child is a major one.

It will therefore be correct to say that our environment is something we are very familiar with. It is everything that makes up our surroundings and affects our ability to live on the earth- the air we breathe, the water that covers most of the earth's surface, the plants and animals around us, and much more.

3.2: Types of Environment

An environment may be endowed with forests, fertile soils; it may be rich in general flora and fauna; it may be rich with water and water resources and may also be punctuated by human inputs in terms of buildings, farming systems, roads and railway systems. It can also be seen from the human-initiated angle.

These variety of forms through which our environment have been viewed in the preceding sections of this Unit have greatly influenced the classification or categorization of the concept. Thus, environment can be physical, social, bio-physical (natural and built). It can equally be classified from the ecological view point (abiotic and biotic).

3.2.1: Physical environment

This is characterized by all phenomena apart from man and the things he creates. It consists of four major interactive components which are the lithosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere and the biosphere.

3.2.1.1: The Lithosphere: The lithosphere is the solid, rocky crust covering entire planet. This crust is inorganic and is composed of minerals. The lithosphere includes the crust (the rocks of the continents and the ocean floor) and the uppermost part of the mantle beneath the crust. These two layers are different in mineralogy but very similar mechanically, so for the most part they act as one plate.

The lithosphere is not totally rigid, but slightly elastic. It flexes when loads are placed on it or removed from it. Ice-age glaciers are one type of load It covers the entire surface of the earth from the top of Mount Everest to the bottom of the Mariana Trench.

3.2.1.2: The Hydrosphere: A **hydrosphere** (from Greek *ύδωρ* - *hydor*, "water" + *σφαίρα* - *sphaira*, "sphere") describes the combined mass of water found on, under, and over the surface of a planet The hydrosphere is composed of all of the water on or near the earth. This includes the oceans, rivers, lakes, and even the moisture in the air. Ninety-seven percent of the earth's water is in the oceans. The remaining three percent is fresh water; three-quarters of the fresh water is solid and exists in ice sheets.

3.2.1.3: The Atmosphere: The atmosphere is the body of air which surrounds our planet. Most of our atmosphere is located close to the earth's surface where it is most dense. The air of our planet is 79% nitrogen and just under 21% oxygen; the small amount remaining is composed of carbon

dioxide and other gasses. It is thickest near the surface and thins out with height until it eventually merges with space.

The atmosphere is divided into five layers:

- The troposphere is the first layer above the surface and contains half of the Earth's atmosphere. Weather occurs in this layer.
- There is also the stratosphere. Many jet aircrafts fly in the stratosphere because it is very stable. Also, the ozone layer absorbs harmful rays from the Sun.
- The mesosphere is where meteors or rock fragments burn up.
- The thermosphere is a layer with auroras. It is also where the space shuttle orbits.
- Another layer is the extremely thin exosphere. The atmosphere merges into space in this layer. It is the upper limit of our atmosphere.

3.2.1.4: The Biosphere: The biosphere is composed of all living organisms. Plants, animals, and one-celled organisms are all part of the biosphere. Most of the planet's life is found from three meters below the ground to thirty meters above it and in the top 200 meters of the oceans and seas. Ecosystems, of which there are numerous types and are a defined part of the biosphere, collectively make up the whole of the biosphere. Within an ecosystem there are habitats in which an organism (including humans) exists.

From the ecological viewpoint, the environment can also be categorised as **abiotic** and **biotic**. The **abiotic environment** comprises of everything that is not associated directly with the presence of other organisms. It consists of all those physical and non-living chemical aspects of our surroundings that exert influence on living organisms. These include climatic factors such as rainfall, relative humidity, sunlight, atmospheric pressure, wind. Other factors include, slopes, hills, valleys, rivers, river basins, mountains soils in terms of texture, structure and organic matter.

The **biotic environment** consists of living organisms, the flora (plants) and fauna (animals) which interact with each other and are inseparably interrelated with their abiotic environment. This environment includes timber, birds, insects, amphibious vertebrates (toads, sea turtles, frogs, crocodiles and hippopotamus), tree and ground dwelling animals (monkeys, chimpanzees, leopards, elephants, rodents, antelopes and reptiles).

3.2.2: Social environment

The social environment is that environment developed by humans. It is the identical or similar social positions and social roles as a whole that influence the individuals of a group.

The social environment of an individual is the culture that he or she was educated and/or lives in, and the people and institutions with whom the person interacts. A given social environment is likely to create a feeling of solidarity amongst its members, who are more likely to keep together, trust and help one another. Members of the same social environment will often think in similar styles and patterns even when their conclusions differ (Wikipedia, 2009).

It is the aggregate of social and cultural conditions such as customs, laws, language and religion, economic and political organisations that influence the life of an individual or community.

It involves interpersonal relationships at four basic levels of the human society which are:

- The family level- Here, interpersonal relations are at the basis of love, hardwork, mutual understanding, progress and happiness.
- The inter-family level- which builds and promotes neighbourhood inter personal relationships.
- The intercommunity level- Relationships here, could be in various forms, that is, inter-town, inter-local government, inter-state or through cooperative associations or competition in sports, and interactions on religious, socio-economic, political and cultural matters.
- The international level- This involves relationships among nations in terms of the ways different nations relate to one another in political, economic, scientific, and technical matters.

A good social environment is characterized by high levels of support, order and organization as well as low level of anger and aggression

3.2.3: Biophysical environment

The **biophysical environment** is the symbiosis between the physical environment and the biological life forms within the environment, and include all variables that comprise the Earth's biosphere (Wikipedia, 2009). The biophysical environment can vary in scale from microscopic to global in extent.

They can also be subdivided according to their attributes. The biophysical environment can be divided into two categories: the natural environment and the built environment, with some overlap between the two.

3.2.3.1: The natural environment

The concept of the natural environment can be broken down into a few key components:

- Complete ecological units that function as natural systems without massive human intervention, including all vegetation, animals, microorganisms, soil, rocks, atmosphere and natural phenomena that occur within their boundaries.
- Universal natural resources and physical phenomena that lack clear-cut boundaries, such as air, water, and climate, as well as energy, radiation, electric charge, and magnetism, not originating from human activity.

A geographical area can be regarded as a natural environment, if the human impact on it is kept under a certain limited level. This level depends on the specific context, and changes in different areas and contexts. Some examples may be the Marine environment, the atmospheric environment and the terrestrial environment.

3.2.3.2: The built environment

The built environment comprises the areas and components that are strongly influenced by humans. It is the designed environment as reflected in any modification by humans of the face of the earth.

Hence, built environments include such human modifications as the planting or clearing of forests, the diversion of rivers and clearing of fields in certain patterns, the placement of roads, highways and dams, of cities; roadside stands, markets and are as much designed environments as glamorous office blocks and cultural centers; camps or villages and architects' or planners' activities of dreaming up ideal cities or creating high-style buildings..

Following the industrial revolution, the built environment has become an increasingly significant part of the Earth's environment.

3.2.4: Child's immediate environment

This is characterized by all these types of environment and the particular location he/she finds himself or herself at a given time. For instance, the child normally lives, grows, develops and operates within an environment that is made of several other environments. Essentially, the child's immediate environment starts from the family. This is the child's non-shared environment. It serves as the nucleus of every other environments, that is the shared environment, he/she interacts with.

Depending on where he or she finds him/herself, the child becomes the nucleus of such environment with every other feature revolving around him/her from both simple and complex environments. His or her immediate environment could therefore be an environment that is disciplined; an environment of neglect; an environment that is rich in abundant natural

resources, an environment of poverty; an environment that may not be supportive of the boy child or girl child; an environment of abundant or average wealth; an environment of socio-cultural bankruptcy; an environment of moral uprightness, an environment of political stability or instability and an environment of opportunities to acquire tangible knowledge and skills or one that does not even provide for such.

The child therefore finds himself or herself operating in multiple environments at any given time. Just as he or she is establishing social relationships with his/her parents, peers and community members, he or she is also located and functional within the bio-physical and built environments. For example, he/she lives on land which contains soil and which of course will have mineral materials from the lithosphere. Additionally, there will be elements of the hydrosphere present as moisture within the soil, the biosphere as insects and plants, and even the atmosphere as pockets of air between soil pieces. All these make his/her survival less stressful as he/she conducts his/her daily affairs.

3.3: Self Assessment Exercise

1. State in simple terms what you understand by the concept of environment.
2. Attempt a categorization of the different categories of the physical environment.
3. Distinguish with concrete examples the built and the natural environments as two major types of our bio-physical environment.
4. Describe what the social environment of a child can look like.

4.0: CONCLUSION

This Unit has discussed the concept of environment in terms of its meaning, types, different characteristics, and what makes the child's immediate environment. It is therefore expected that a detailed understanding of the different types of environment will expose readers to the fact that the child's immediate environment range from simple to complex depending on where he/she finds him/herself and the nature of interaction he/she is involved in within such location.

5.0: SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that our environment can be physical, social, biophysical (natural or built), biotic and abiotic. The Unit has also discussed the fact that settlements and people, the child inclusive, are essential components of our environment. Hence, the child's immediate environment could be a combination of a variety of environments.

6.0: TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Use your understanding of the various types of environment to describe what a typical immediate environment of a child can look like.

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MODULE 1

UNIT 2: CULTURE, HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL BACKGROUND

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1.0: Introduction

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1.0: INTRODUCTION

In Unit 1 of this module, we have learnt that our environment is made up of different components and characteristics. These varieties of components influence the categorisation of the environment. In addition to these, our cultural traits and historical experiences also play very vital roles in the characterisation of the environment we find ourselves as human beings.

It is therefore pertinent to have a clear understanding of the concepts of culture as well as historical and cultural background.

2.0: OBJECTIVES

At end of this Unit, you should be able to:

- i. Explain the concept of culture
- ii. Describe the different types of culture
- iii. Explain how the different types of culture influence the evolution of cultural and historical background.

3.0: MAIN CONTENT

3.1: Definitions of Culture

3.2: Types of Culture

3.3: Influence of Different Types of Culture on Evolution of Cultural and Historical

Background

3.1: Definitions of Culture

Culture is a dynamic phenomenon. The dynamism that characterizes its nature has over time reflected in the numerous views and perspectives about the concept. Culture represents a people's unique and commonly shared ways of life. It is the total way of life a people. It is in one sense, an inter-connected set of attitudes, feelings and actions which have been learnt and shared by a group of people within an identifiable geographical entity. Culture distinguishes one human group from others.

Culture has also been defined as the knowledge, language, values, customs, and material objects that are passed from person to person and from one generation to the next in a human group or society. While a society is made up of people, a culture is made up of ideas, behaviors, and material possessions. Culture exists in society and organizations and can be a supportive force providing a sense of continuity - it can also be a force that generates discord, conflict and even violence (Lausanne Institute, 2009)

How people view culture depends on their location in society with regard to their race/ethnicity, class, sex, and age. We learn culture through interaction, observation, and imitation in order to participate as members of the group. Day-to-day interactions are simplified when you share a common culture with others. Culture can equally be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only arts, letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of human beings, value systems, traditions and beliefs. It is also an adaptive mechanism, a set of human attributes which are interposed between groups and their environments in order to ensure collective security and communal survival.

Culture anywhere in the world can be better understood with the following characteristics:

- It is learned.
- It is symbolic.
- It is shared.
- It provides acceptable patterns for meeting needs.
- It depends on the society for its existence.
- It is relative to time and place.
- It is cumulative.

- It rises and declines gradually.
- It is both implicit and explicit.
- It is the aggregate of people's development (Ajetunmobi, 2000)

Culture helps us understand how things are created, developed, managed and changed. Each culture is unique. Hence, it will be difficult to find any culture that is exactly like another culture but it is possible to find many similarities among different cultures. This makes for cultural diversity among the different social or cultural groups across the world. Whilst on the surface most countries of the world demonstrate cultural similarities, there are many differences, hidden below the surface. One can talk about "the West", but Italians and English, both belonging to the so called "West", are very different in outlook when one looks below the surface. We can also talk of the Yoruba people and their different dialects and peculiar cultural traits, just as we can say the same thing of the Hausa or the Ibo of Nigeria.

Differences between cultures seem to almost outweigh the similarities. Some differences other than the obvious language barriers would normally include personal and family values. For instance, what is considered polite in one family may not be so in another. Likewise, what is taken as food by a cultural group may not be the same by another group. More of these will be discussed when we get to the module on child rearing practices.

3.2: Types of Culture

The basic elements of culture are quite useful tools for promoting a better understanding of the different types of culture. These elements include language, norms, values, beliefs and ideologies, social collectives, statuses and roles as well as cultural integration. Hundreds of distinctive cultural variations can therefore be categorized using these basic elements.

Contemporary anthropologists have in recent time categorized culture into four broad categories. These are **material**, **social**, **ideological** and **arts** (Microsoft Encarta Premium, 2009).

3.2.1: Material culture

This includes products of human manufacture, such as technology as well as concrete acquisitions of human beings in the form of bridges, pots, buckets, cooking utensils and products of handicraft. They are objects which people have learned to produce and use to satisfy their needs in the society.

In small societies people usually build shelters and make clothing out of readily available plant and animal materials. The Ilaje of south western Nigeria and the Ijaw of the Niger Delta are known to make use of wood to build stilt houses on rivers as people who live on rivers. In primarily agricultural societies, many of which still exist today in countries throughout Africa and Asia, the people build sturdy houses of sun-dried

mud brick and thatch, wooden beams, or quarried stones. People in agrarian societies also have many methods of cooking using pots and ovens of mud-brick or stone.

In large industrial and commerce-based societies, most people live in cement block or brick houses and apartment buildings with plumbing, supplies of electricity and natural gas, and telephone service. Much of the material culture in these societies consists of mass-produced goods created through industrial production. The variety of common household technologies includes television sets, microwave ovens and computers.

The use of automobile, train, ship, airplane and ship for moving humans, goods and services are also examples of material culture.

3.2.2: Social culture

This is related to people's forms of social organization in terms of how they interact and organize themselves in groups. People in all types of societies organize themselves in relation to each other for work and other duties, and to structure their interactions. The common ways through which they organize themselves include, through bonds by kinship (blood relation) and marriage; work duties and economic positions; and political positions. Hence, we have people who share ties by blood and marriage living together in families.

Through the kinship system, people define the appropriate types of behaviours expected between kin. Kinship and family relations are both important in agricultural societies. But for many people today living in large societies, kinship and family relations have become less important. People now live alone or in small families and also depend on organizations, workplaces, and government institutions to provide support which people in smaller societies enjoy through their kin and family.

People in small societies often live in extended families, in which several generations of kin and relatives by marriage live in the same household. In industrial societies few households are self-sufficient. So we find people in such societies depending on technologies such cars, computers and refrigerators that no one could produce alone from raw materials.

So the social culture of the people in the industrialised world is quite different from that of the smaller and less industrialised. For instance, in the area of gender roles, we find out that the patterns in the two societies

are different. We talk of equal roles for both men and women in the industrialised society while it is not so in the other society. People in most modern industrial and commerce-based societies identify strongly with groups of people united by work, such as professional organizations and labour unions and these groups are entirely separate from family and kinship ties.

3.2.3: Ideological culture

This relates to what people think, value, believe, and hold as ideals. It is part of the non-material aspect of culture. People's beliefs give them an understanding of how the world works and how they should respond to the actions of others and their environments. These beliefs often tie in closely with the daily concerns of domestic life, such as making a living, health and sickness, happiness and sadness, interpersonal relationships, and death.

Again, people's values are fundamental tools for guiding them to understand the differences between what is right and what is wrong, or good from bad. The ideals complement this cultural pattern by serving as models for what people hope to achieve in life.

The ideological culture therefore plays a major role in shaping people's values, ideals and behaviours within any social group they find themselves. This is reflected in their religious beliefs and practices or the way they observe and relate with the natural world.

3.2.3: Art

Art has been described by Microsoft Encarta Premium (2009) as a distinctly human production which many people consider as the ultimate form of culture because it can have the quality of pure expression, entirely separate from basic human needs.

Art as a category of culture comes in form of music or acting which resides in the mind and body and takes expression as performance.

Some art however take the form of material production while others are nonmaterial. The material arts include pottery, painting, sculpture, textiles and clothing and cookery. The nonmaterial arts on the other hand include music, dance, drama and dramatic arts, storytelling and written narratives.

It is this category of culture that people find most convenient to use for establishing their personal and group identity through such forms of artistic expression as patterns of dress and body adornment, ceremonial costumes and dances, or group symbols. Other people use art as a primary form of storing and reproducing their culture. Many people also use art as a vehicle for spiritual expression or to ask for help from the spiritual world.

In the contemporary modern day societies, art is used for commercial and political purposes. Politicians are known to commission artists to produce songs for their campaigns and advertisement of their manifestoes.

Each of these categories of culture play one role or the other in the evolution of the cultural and historical background of people in any society; small or large, traditional or modern.

3.3: Influence of Different Types of Culture on Evolution of Cultural and Historical

Background

Culture is the essence of any society. Culture is essential for our individual survival and our communication with other people. We rely on culture because we are not born with the information we need to survive such as taking care of ourselves, how to behave, how to dress, what to eat, what religion to worship, or how to make or spend money. This implies that a social group without a past might find it difficult to have a present.

Culture is therefore a factor of historical experiences as well as the type of life already lived. The existence of culture provides people with opportunity to learn how to live their life. Such learning process is usually greatly influenced by their cultural and historical background, which gives them a reference point.

The different types of culture avail people with the chances of acquiring some virtues and experiences usually through assimilation, acculturation, and a climate of pluralism which all facilitate the molding of people's identity in relation to their cultural and historical background.

Often different cultures exist side by side within countries, especially in Africa. It is not uncommon to have a European culture, alongside an indigenous culture. Culture also reveals itself in many ways and in preferences for colours, styles, religion, family ties and so on. The colour red is very popular in the west, but not popular in Islamic countries, where sober colours like black are preferred. So when we are talking about aesthetics as a component of culture, we can therefore expect people to rely on their cultural and historical background as it relates to the traditional colour preference of that particular social group. Thus, it would be culturally inappropriate for people from an Islamic country to be seen glorifying colour red.

Furthermore, it is important to emphasize the fact that every one of us is born into a culture and this serves as the nucleus of cultural and historical background. This is because we inherit our culture from our parents and grandparents and we in turn pass on our culture to our children. Based on our cultural and historical background, we are from birth, taught the ways of

thinking, believing and behaving that are accepted in our culture and as supported by the cultural and historical background of the social group to which we belong.

Hence, a child's cultural and historical background is expected to be a reflection of his or her cultural beliefs and practices which determine his or her immediate environment and how he or she functions within it.

The traits of his or her cultural and historical background can be described as a compendium of those norms, values, beliefs and ideologies of the social group which he or she belongs to. Through these, members of such social group acquire new and additional knowledge, information, as well as skills that further shape social interactions within their immediate and wider environment.

3.4: Self Assessment Exercise

- i. Give any two concise definitions of culture.
- ii. Attempt a distinction among any three different types of culture.
- iii. Highlight the influence of culture on the cultural or historical background of an individual within the social group he or she belongs to.

4.0: CONCLUSION

This Unit has exposed you as learners to the fact that culture can be defined from various perspectives and that it is a dynamic concept which plays a very important role in the day to day activities of human beings. The fact culture can be material or nonmaterial makes it possible for its traits to be exhibited in different forms by different social groups in the society. The diversity in cultural traits among social groups is therefore a major tool for experiencing differences in cultural and historical background which ultimately influence the nature of an individual's immediate and wider environment.

5.0: SUMMARY

. In this Unit we have learnt about the concept of culture and its different types. The roles which different types of culture play in shaping different spheres of human life have also been presented. The centrality of culture in the understanding people's past and present, both as individuals and members of the society has been discussed. It is therefore important to conclude that an attempt to understand the rate and processes of development in a given community or among any social group demands that the culture of such social group or community must be understood from its historical perspective.

6.0: TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Attempt a review of any three definitions of culture and the different forms through which it can be exhibited by people.

Establish a relationship between a social group's cultural and historical background and the type of cultural traits its members are likely to embrace.

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UNIT 3: WHO IS A CHILD?

1.0: Introduction

2.0: Objectives

3.0: Main Content

3.1: The Child

3.2: Childhood Traits and Characteristics

3.3: Extracts from the Convention on the Rights of the Child and Nigeria Child Rights

Act 2003

4.0: Conclusion

5.0: Summary

6.0: Tutor Marked Assignments

7.0: References/Further Readings

1.0: INTRODUCTION

In order to understand fully the relationship between the child and his/her environment we need a view of what it means to be a child and what childhood ought to be. This will be facilitated with an analysis of the emerging global consensus about the meaning of childhood as well as other views on the definition of a child.

A description of childhood traits and characteristics in this unit will supply a large part of the perspective on the child which is needed to promote a better understanding of what kind of childhood to expect in a particular environment and how best we can make children enjoy their environment, bearing in mind his/her traits and the peculiar environmental characteristics.

2.0: OBJECTIVES

At the end of this Unit you should be able to:

- i. State United Nations definition of a child.
- ii. Give biological and legal definitions of a child.
- iii. Describe the traits and characteristics of childhood
- iv. Highlight some of the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Child Rights Act 2003 of Nigeria.

3.0: MAIN CONTENT

3.1: The Child

Describing who a child is could seem the simplest of any educational task. However, the cultural differences and societal perception of the concept have contributed significantly to the different but related definitions and descriptions of who actually is a child. While some have differed on the age bracket for categorizing who a child is others have used other characteristics to describe the concept as we shall see in the next few paragraphs.

Wikipedia (2009) defines a child as a human being between the stages of birth and puberty. This definition is quite related to that of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which in its own case is age-specific. It

defines a child as "every human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier (Article 1). In line with this internationally initiated definition, Nigeria's Child Rights Act 2003 (CRA, 2003) defines a child as any person below the age of 18 years, which will thus include adolescents.

Biologically, a child can also be described as anyone in the developmental stage of childhood, between infancy and adulthood. He or she could therefore be seen as a person between birth and full growth; a boy or girl.

Socially, a child is thus a son or daughter in relation to the father or mother. He or she is a human offspring a descendant of somebody, or a member of a people with a common ancestor or geographic origin, usually person who has not attained maturity or the age of legal majority. Child may also describe a relationship with a parent or authority figure, or signify group membership in a clan, tribe, or religion; it can also signify being strongly affected by a specific time, place, or circumstance, as in "a child of nature" or "a child of the Sixties"

Legally, a child is generally referred to as a minor, otherwise known as a person younger than the age of majority.

3.2: CHILDHOOD TRAITS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Each child in every society is unique both as a member and a learner, with each possessing singular personality, distinctive cultural and historical background and experience. They however share some characteristics with their fellow children which very often affect their mode of interaction within the environment they find themselves at a particular time.

Some of these traits and characteristics are reflected both in their stages of development and in the process of socialization. Let us take a look at some examples of these as we shall be discussing the relationship between the child and his/her immediate environment in the next unit of this module.

These childhood characteristics include:

- Seeking out things that are fun to do
- Jumping from one interest to another
- Curious, eager to try new things
- Smile and laugh a lot
- Experience and express emotions freely
- Creative and innovative
- Physically active
- Constantly growing mentally and physically
- Risk often - are not afraid to keep trying something that they are not initially good at and are not afraid to fail
- Rest when their body tells them to
- Learn enthusiastically
- Dream and imagine
- Believe in the impossible
- Generally don't worry about things, and
- Passionate

The nature of their temperament (a set of in-born traits that organize the child's approach to the world) is also unique. They are instrumental in the development of the child's distinct personality. These traits also determine how the child goes about learning about the world around him\her. These traits appear to be relatively stable from birth. They are enduring characteristics that are actually never "good" or "bad." How they are received determines whether they are perceived by the child as being a bad or good thing. The child`s immediate environment and its components therefore become a key role player in this case. Children`s learning styles at this stage of development put them in the position of a set of “incredible sponges constantly soaking up new knowledge and information”. The child here is struggling to understand the world in terms of how it works, what the rules are, how to cope and how to exist. The implication of this is that he/she has to be encouraged to remain curious, aware and interested as he/she relates with his/her environment.

3.3: EXTRACTS FROM THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD AND NIGERIA'S CHILD RIGHTS ACT 2003

The ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child at the international level and the domestication of this Convention at both the national and state levels in a country like Nigeria is a reflection of the great value placed on the child across the world. Some of the Articles of the Convention, the provisions in the relevant National Assembly Act and State Edict clearly specify how issues relating to the child in any environment; immediate or wider should be handled with less stress on the child.

Examples of some of these are extracted and presented in the next few paragraphs.

3.3.1: United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

- Recalling one of the provisions in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations has proclaimed that childhood is entitled to special care and assistance,
- Convinced that the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community,
- Recognizing that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding,
- Considering that the child should be fully prepared to live an individual life in society, and brought up in the spirit of the ideals proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, and in particular in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity,
- Bearing in mind that the need to extend particular care to the child has been stated in the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1924 and in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child adopted by the General Assembly on 20 November 1959 and recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (in particular in articles 23 and 24), in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (in particular in article 10) and in the statutes and relevant instruments of specialized agencies and international organizations concerned with the welfare of children, '
- Bearing in mind that, as indicated in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, "the child, by reason of his physical and mental

immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth",

- Recognizing that, in all countries in the world, there are children living in exceptionally difficult conditions, and that such children need special consideration,
- Taking due account of the importance of the traditions and cultural values of each people for the protection and harmonious development of the child,
- Recognizing the importance of international co-operation for improving the living conditions of children in every country, in particular in the developing countries,

Have agreed among others to ensure:

- i. That in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.
- ii. To the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.
- iii. That States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognized by law without unlawful interference.
- iv. That States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.
- v. That the child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.
- vi. That States Parties recognize the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health. States Parties shall strive to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to such health care services.

3.3.2: Nigeria Child Rights Act (2003)

The Child's Rights Act 2003 (CRA 2003) contains a number of laudable provisions which, if implemented, would go a long way to ensure the protection and welfare of the Nigerian Child.

The Act outlines certain basic rights of the child and goes further to provide criminal sanctions for the violation of some of these rights in a

bid to ensure that these rights are upheld. Some of these rights which are recognized by the CRA 2003 include the following:

- Right to life, survival and development
- Right to a name, nationality, privacy and family life
- Freedom of association and peaceful assembly (in conformity with the law and in accordance with the directions of his/her parents)
- Freedom of thought, conscience and religion – which in essence means the right to express his or her opinions – subject to parental direction especially when adoption, fostering, guardianship or custody is in issue
- Freedom of movement subject to parental control
- Freedom from discrimination merely by reason of his belonging to a particular community, ethnic group, sex, religion, circumstances of birth
- Respect for dignity of person which implies that the child shall not be subjected to physical mental/emotional injury, abuse, torture, inhuman or degrading treatment, servitude, slavery or other debasing acts
- Right to leisure, recreation and cultural activities
- Right to health and health services, parental care, free compulsory and universal primary education, amongst others

The current Nigeria Child Rights Act 2003 defines a new child protective system and allows opportunities for the participation of children in matters that concern their rights and welfare.

Some of the instances prohibited as provided by the Act include the following:

- Buying and selling of children for the purpose of begging, prostitution, guiding beggars, domestic or sexual labour, slavery, child trafficking, debt bondage, etc attract 10 years imprisonment
- Unlawful sexual intercourse with a child is rape and attracts a penalty of life imprisonment regardless of the fact that the offender believed the child to be above 18 or whether the child agreed to it.
- No child can be validly married or betrothed and anything contrary to this will attract a penalty of 5 years imprisonment or N50,000 fine
- Tattooing the skin or making any mark on any part of the body of a child attracts a penalty of N5,000 or 7 months imprisonment
- Using a child for drug trafficking attracts life imprisonment
- Using of children to commit criminal activities attracts a penalty of 14 years in imprisonment

The implication of the provisions of both documents for child rearing practices and development in a country like Nigeria is quite germane. This is particularly so when we remember that the child's immediate and wider environment

encompass a variety of actors and actresses who are expected to play key roles on regular basis in order to ensure that the child has an all round development devoid of stress and poor quality of life.

3.4: Self Assessment Exercise

- i. Define a child according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child/
- ii. Briefly describe any five traits and characteristics you will use to convince your colleague that you actually what it takes to be a growing child.

4.0: CONCLUSION

Defining the concept of child is not as tasking as doing so with any other concept. This is because while a universally accepted definition exists, courtesy of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, other definitions of the concept have been discovered to share similar characteristics as presented in this Unit.

Furthermore, it is important to re-emphasize the uniqueness of every child as characterized with individual temperament, learning style, family background, pattern and timing of growth. There are, however, universal, predictable sequences of growth and change that occur during the growing period of a child. The existence of a Convention and Act of Parliament at both the international and national levels respectively on the rights of the child is a pointer to the significance of children in every society. It is therefore expected that the nature of interaction between the child and his/her environment needs to be better understood in order to facilitate a well adjusted growth and development.

5.0: SUMMARY

In this Unit, attempt has been made to examine who a child is with special focus placed on the definition of the child according to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The biological, social and legal definitions of a child have also been discussed. Extracts of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Nigeria`s Child Rights Act 2003 were highlighted for the purpose of promoting a better understanding of the concept and its significance in the society.

6.0: TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Convince a group of social psychologists that you actually understand who a child is, in all ramifications.

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MODULE 1

UNIT 4: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CHILD AND HIS ENVIRONMENT

CONTENTS

1.0: Introduction

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3.0References/Further Readings

1.0: INTRODUCTION

What happens or doesn't happen to a child in the earliest years of his/her life is of critical importance and it depends on the nature of the environment he/she finds him/herself growing. This is premised on the fact that every child observes, learns and depends on his or her environment for survival. A growing child's family life has a great influence on his or her development. Parent and family features as well as socio-economic background are strongly linked to the child's development than any other factor one can imagine at this period. It is therefore not out of place to reiterate the fact that a relationship exists between a child's environment and his/her physical, physiological and psycho-social development.

This however does not imply that a child's genes do not play a key role in his/her development, rather we need to accept the fact that children are a product of their genes and their environment. Nevertheless, our concern in this Unit is to discuss the relationship between the child and his/her environment.

2.0: OBJECTIVES

At the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

- i. Establish that a relationship exist between the child and his/her environment
- ii. Describe some of the effects of such relationship.

3.0: MAIN CONTENT

3.1: The Child and His Environment

You will recall that in Unit 1 of this module, we discussed what a child`s immediate environment is made up. For emphasis sake, we need to remind ourselves of the characteristics of such environment so that we could become better prepared to identify the nature of relationship it has with the child as an individual. This environment is made up of the different types of environment revolving around the child who is located within a particular place at a given time. Being the nucleus of this environment, he/she is found establishing a variety of relationships which have multiple effects on his/her survival (see Figure 3.1 for an illustration of the child`s relationship with his/her environment).

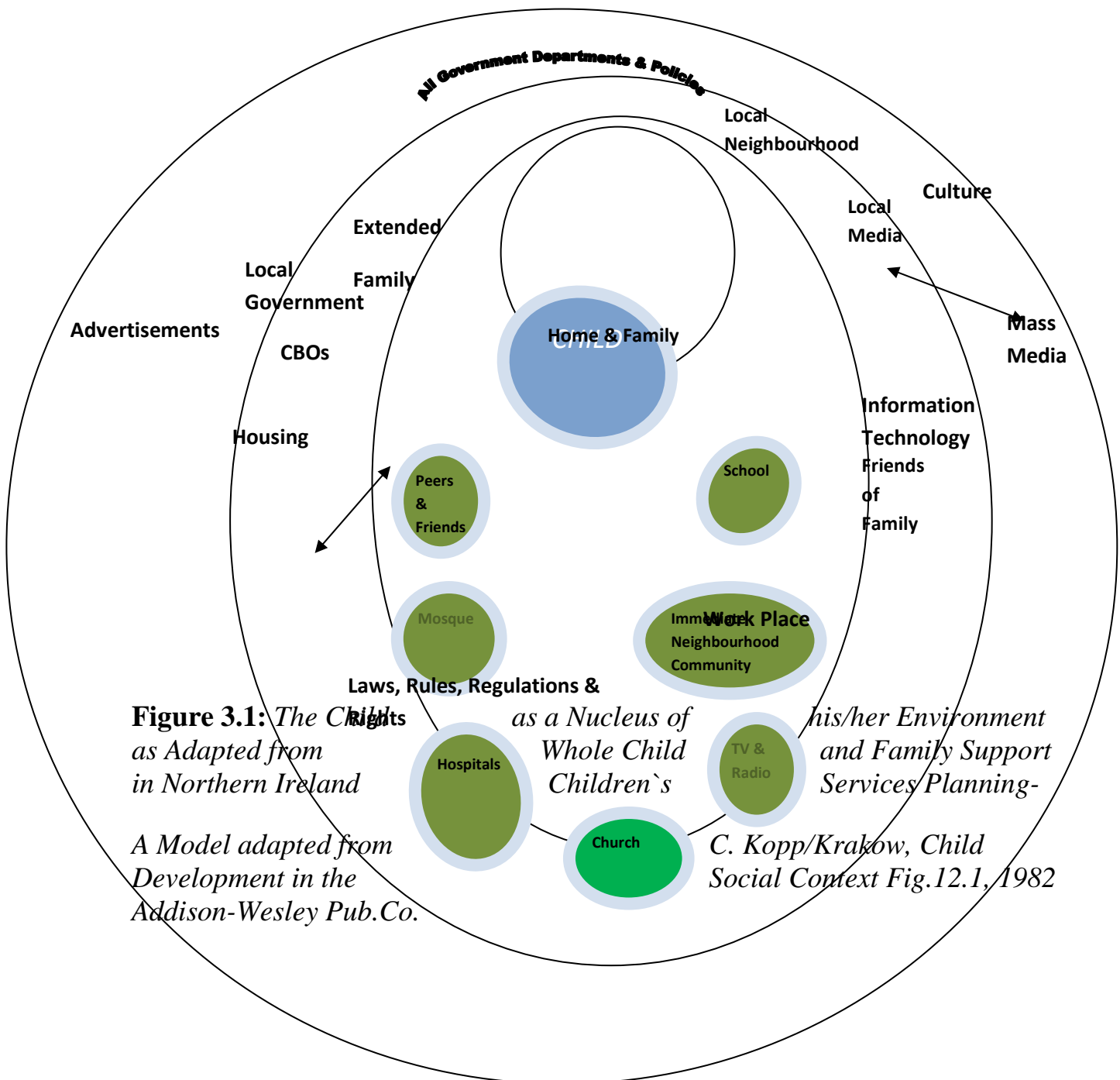


Figure 3.1: *The Child as a Nucleus of his/her Environment and Family Support Services Planning - as Adapted from in Northern Ireland*
A Model adapted from Development in the Addison-Wesley Pub.Co.
C. Kopp/Krakow, Child Social Context Fig.12.1, 1982

Of the many different relationships people form over the course of the lifespan, the relationship between the family (which is the child's immediate environment) and the child him/herself, is among the most important. The child is born into an environment where he/she is expected to learn the rudiments of living and surviving. Every child's later personality in adult life is shaped by biological and social influences. The social influences are experienced in the social system through social interactions within their environment. Children act in the environment taking initiatives. They are not passive inhabitants but are inquisitive, explorative and out to control. They do not see the environment solely from their own point of view, but are capable of looking at it from someone else's as well. Hence, it is impossible to separate the environment from the person acting in it.

The structure, characteristics and quality of such environment can make or mar his or her development, growth and social interaction. The child's environment helps young children to develop intellectual and cognitive skills. It is a product of many factors; physical, mental, social and cultural, and this greatly affect the child's development and growth.

Let us look at some of the components of the environment and their relationship with the child.

3.1.1: Language

The environment of language is the environment of human relationships. The child's family environment provides him/her with opportunity to acquire language skills (listening and speaking) which form the basis of relationships with other people and brings about socialization.

Language as one of the components of the child's environment constitutes a cognitive tool of great power. It truly transforms the child in his/her environment. It relieves the child of the need to see, hear or feel everything at first hand and enormously expanding his/her field of thought.

The growing child in the course of language acquisition at home may experience the need to learn the language of his/her immediate locality which might be different from that of his/her home. This is needed because of his/her desire to want to relate and communicate with his/her peers who might not be speaking the same home language with him/her. Baron (1992) remarks that by the time he or she gets to a particular level of schooling, the environment would have so influenced him/her to the extent that he/she will be a competent speaker of two languages, using one language at home and the other outside the home. This process he referred to as code switching.

This process is an indication of the role which the child's external environment can play in stimulating young children to acquire speech. The language that a young child hears by virtue of those around him/her influences him/her in various ways. It enables him/her to learn what is going on; it helps him/her to

interpret these events; it is selective and draws his/her attention to those aspects of experience that are held to be significant; and enables him/her to attain concepts (Mays 1988).

These are all premised on the fact that language is rooted in human environment and there is no child who does not use speech as a means of satisfying their needs. So the child's environment plays a very key role in language development. Hence, an environment with defective language acquisition process and patterns will adversely affect the quality of language to be acquired by the child. On the other hand, the one with high quality accessories and personnel (parents, wards, relations and peers) will enhance acquisition of high quality language skills in the child.

3.1.2: Physiological characteristics/health status

There is a relationship between a child's residential/neighbourhood characteristics and his/her physiological characteristics and health status. Neighbourhoods provide a social and physical context which structures opportunities for children to engage in behaviours that promote or inhibit weight gain. Residing in a disadvantaged neighbourhood may promote weight gain through access to a less healthy food supply, limited access to recreation facilities and increased safety concerns. Neighbourhood factors may be more influential as children age and have more freedom to access the neighbourhood.

Also it is not out of place to report research findings on the relationship between a child's home environment in terms of intact family or broken or foster home and the health status of the child. In a study conducted by Hayes & Oliver (2008), a variable indicated that children living in an 'intact family' with both biological parents are more likely to have higher levels of health and well-being.

3.1.3: Social behaviour and interactions

The type of environment in which a child finds him/herself matters a lot when it comes to development of social skills needed for interactions. Through adult-child relationships a child is nurtured and taught basic social skills. These skills include those of inter-personal communication, friendship, negotiation, bargaining and compromising.

Again, through peer relationships he/she is taught cooperation, competition, and intimacy. On the other hand, he/she could be taught negative social values where he/she comes in contact with an environment characterized by peer groups or family members with defective and anti-social behavioural traits. A socially contaminated environment characterized by trauma, depression, despair

and alienation can therefore affect the social behaviour of a growing child and subsequently make him/her maladjusted.

Also, a child`s non-shared environment; the family environment, plays vital roles in the development of his/her social behaviours and subsequent social interactions. For instance, in the area of birth order effect, parents are known to tend to treat first children differently from the way they treat subsequent children and this affects how siblings interact, with the oldest child tending to be more authoritative.

3.1.4: Emotional and psychological status

Positive emotional and psychological development of the child is based on the active and creative exploration of his/her environment which is a world that gradually expands from first steps in the family, to early years in the neighbourhood, to school, and beyond.

The emotional attachments of young children to their parents other adults remain a cornerstone of psychological well-being in early childhood. But as young children develop their sense of self and learn to negotiate, compromise, resist, and assert their own preferences, they are likely to come into conflict with their parents and these adults in their environment who increasingly set limits and expect compliance, based on the child's developing capacities for self-control.

The approach to discipline and to conflict resolution in such environment has important effects on the quality of the parent-child relationship and the child's early personality growth. Generally, developmental scientists have found that when parents frequently exercise power and authority to overcome their children's assertiveness, the children comply but are also likely to become angry and frustrated—and to be defiant when the parent is not present.

Often, children who live in environments where parents use physical punishment act aggressively toward others. Parental strategies that emphasize communicating firm and consistent expectations and their rationale, as well as listening receptively to the child's views, foster the child's cooperation and a more harmonious parent-child relationship in such typical environment. An environment characterized by affectionate parent-child relationship, in turn, enhances the child's compliance and cooperation.

3.2: Effects of the Relationship between the Child and His Environment

Children who are denied permission to explore themselves and their environment can spend their lives with a damaged or incomplete understanding of who they are. They may end living not being able to:

- Ask questions
- Risk things, try new things, learn new information, seek out a different or better way of doing things
- Have a positive and hopeful view of the world and their future in it
- Talk about tough or personal issues
- Disagree and voice their own thoughts
- Trust their own emotions
- Trust self to make decisions
- Forgive self for making mistakes

- Be proud of an accomplishment, be proud of self, feel worthy on own merits

Furthermore, a child`s environment adds to his/her genetic personality factors. Some children are genetically predisposed to violence but as long as they are in a good home or socially stable environment they will probably overcome the weakness. But if they are born in a family and live in an environment that has poor communication or is abusive they are more likely to engage in criminal activity.

Equally, when a child operates within an emotionally imbalance environment, where parents and other adults exercise power and authority to overcome their children`s assertiveness, the children may comply but they are also likely to become angry and frustrated. This state of frustration could lead to exhibition of deviant behaviours particularly in the absence of their parents or other adults in their immediate environment.

However, living in an environment filled with warm relationships can motivate young children to want to comply with an adult`s expectations and maintain strong positive links with such environment. This is also expected when they are exposed to new experiences and given chances to safely explore their physical environment.

It is also not impossible that children who come from home environments where parents are more educated, with higher income, well organized routines and where mothers have fewer or no symptoms of depression, will be more intellectually developed than those from environments where a combination of these factors are missing.

The implications of the foregoing discussion is that every society should accept the promotion of a conducive environment (immediate and wider) as a responsibility and task essential for an all round positive development of the child as a key member of any society.

3.3: Self Assessment Exercise

1. Identify any three components of a child`s environment and briefly describe their relationship with him/her.
2. Outline any five things that could happen to a growing child if he/she is deprived the opportunity to explore his/her environment
3. Describe the likely effects of a child`s environment on his/her social behaviour and interactions.

4.0: CONCLUSION

The Unit has established that the child is inextricably linked with his/her environment. A well developed and socially stable environment is capable of

positively enhancing the growth and development of the child as a useful member of his/her family and the society. In situations where the child`s environment is defective and maladjusted the child may end up living in atmosphere of stress, depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem.

5.0: SUMMARY

In this Unit we recalled the features of a child`s immediate environment and moved on to learn about the relationship between the child and his/her environment. The relationships between components of the environment such as language, physiological and health status, social behaviour and interactions, emotional and psychological status on one hand and the child were examined. The effects of these relationships could be both positive or negative depending on the nature and characteristics of the child`s environment.

6.0: TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

To what extent is it true that a child`s environment has any influence on his/her development and growth either negatively or positively.

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MODULE 2: CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN CHILD REARING PRACTICES IN NIGERIA

Unit1: Concepts of Child Rearing and Parenting

Unit 2: Common Cultural Differences in Child Rearing Practices in Nigeria

Unit 3: Child Fosterage as a Form of Child Rearing Practice

UNIT 1: CONCEPTS OF CHILD REARING AND PARENTING CONTENTS

1.0: Introduction

2.0: Objectives

3.0: Main Content

3.1: Meaning of Child Rearing

3.2: Meaning of Parenting

3.3: Processes of Child Rearing

3.4: Parenting Models

3.5: Self Assessment Exercise

4.0: Conclusion

5.0: Summary

6.0: Tutor Marked Assignments

7.0: References and Further Readings

1.0: INTRODUCTION

Children are more than the object of their parents` attention and love; they are also a biological and social necessity. The human species perpetuates itself through children; cultural, religious and national groups transmit their values and traditions through children; families maintain their lineage through children; and individuals pass on their genetic and social heritage through children (Arnold et. al 1975). None of these is however possible without appropriate child rearing and parenting.

This Unit therefore explains the two concepts; child rearing and parenting in terms of processes and models, with the intention of examining in the other units of this module, the variations in the patterns and practices across different cultural groups in Nigeria.

2.0: OBJECTIVES

At the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

1. Explain the concept of child rearing.
2. Explain the concept of parenting
3. Differentiate the concept of child rearing from that of parenting.

4. Explain some of the processes of child rearing.
5. Describe some models of parenting.

3.0: MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Meaning of Child Rearing

Simply put child rearing refers to the behaviours of parents towards their minority-age children. Child rearing is the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood.

The concept of child rearing and its associated patterns and practices are embedded in the socialization processes of any social group. It is the training or bringing-up of children by parents or parent-substitutes. It is used also for child rearing practices in different societies, at different economic levels, in different ethnic groups, etc. It differs from parenting in that in child rearing the emphasis is on the act of training or bringing up the child and the interaction between the parent and child, while parenting emphasizes the responsibility and qualities of exemplary behaviour of the parent. Effective socialization of the child therefore depends greatly on the quality and richness of child rearing practices and parenting.

Evans & Mayers (1994) observed that child rearing practices are embedded in the culture and determine, to a large extent, the behaviours and expectations surrounding a child's birth and infancy. They also influence childhood, adolescence and the way these children parent when they become adults. Child rearing therefore is usually grounded in cultural patterns and beliefs.

In the case of humans, child rearing is usually done by the biological parents of the child in question, although governments and society take a role as well. In many cases, orphaned or abandoned children receive parental care from non-parent blood relations. Others may be adopted, raised by foster care, or be placed in an orphanage.

Mothers and fathers are essential for optimal child rearing. This is because gender complementarity has been found to be capable of affording children the opportunity to thrive in the best possible environment (Byrd, 2006). Usually, parental figures provide for a child's physical needs, protect them from harm, and impart in them skills and cultural values until they reach legal adulthood, usually after adolescence. All these are part of child rearing. It equally involves descriptions of how children are raised within cultures, including beliefs and practices surrounding pregnancy, childbirth and treatment of young children.

The task of raising a child has never been an easy one. Quoting St. Dimitri of Rostov (1709), Alexander (2001) says "A young child is like a board prepared for icon painting. Whatever the iconographer paints on it,

honourable or dishonourable, holy or sinful, an angel or a demon, it remains forever. The same applies to a young child: that upbringing which he/she is given, those manners he/she is taught--whether God-pleasing or God-despised, angelic or demonic--shall be part of him/her for the rest of his/her life."

Seventeenth-century philosopher and physician JOHN LOCKE offered another analogy for child rearing when he conceived of the child's mind as a *tabula rasa*, or blank slate, for parent's to write upon. His influential *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) articulated his vision of parenting as a systematic and consequential enterprise.

The fact that children are so impressionable, parents must be especially vigilant regarding the influences surrounding their children, ensuring as much as possible that these make a positive contribution to their development, towards making them worthy citizens and good parents in future.

Child rearing can also be scientifically explained. The *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society* (2008) remarked that the idea of child rearing as a scientific enterprise made increasing headway in the nineteenth century. The focus on specialized techniques of child rearing was at least partially a consequence of economic and demographic changes, which contributed to smaller family sizes and intensified nurturing. In 1800, the average family raised seven children to adulthood; by 1900, that number had shrunk to three or four. With fewer children and productive responsibilities in the home, child rearing became a focal point of women's work in the home. In a society where one's fortunes could rise and fall in a lifetime, parents sought to inculcate children with the habits and virtues that would allow them to maintain or improve their economic position and social status. While philosophy and religion initially provided the theoretical rationales for informing parents about the best means of rearing children, science and medicine began to make inroads on this discourse by the close of the century.

The advent of the field of PEDIATRICS in the nineteenth century therefore became central to the evolution of scientific child rearing. This afforded physicians an opportunity to acquire greater influence over family life throughout the century. Pediatricians orchestrated campaigns to alleviate INFANT MORTALITY, initiated regularly scheduled well baby examinations, and pronounced themselves as authorities on INFANT FEEDING. During the World War I era, child health activists sponsored infant welfare clinics, better baby contests, and milk stations. In both rural and urban areas mothers congregated at settlement houses, county fairs, and government offices to have their babies weighed, measured, and receive milk. In these venues, mothers learned that there

were scientific rationales for psychological as well as for physical care. Physicians and nurses offered advice about feeding, clothing, and how to respond to a crying infant. However, there was variability in the extent to which mothers accepted scientific authority over their mothering practices. Poor mothers, especially, were often receptive to suggestions concerning sanitation and nutrition, while remaining skeptical about the idea that science should determine their techniques of nurture and discipline.

3.2: Meaning of Parenting

Parenting has been described by Wikipedia Encyclopedia (2008) as the process of raising and educating a child from birth until adulthood. Parenting refers to the activity of raising a child rather than the biological relationship.

The term "parenting" is a derivative of the word "parent" taken as a verb. When people say "to parent" a child it means "to be a parent," or "to fulfill parental duties." Since everyone who has a child has to parent he or she has his/her own view on what parental duties should entail. Generally, the majority of parents admit that those duties are to provide for the needs of a child - the child's need for security and development. This implies security and development of a child's body, mind and psyche. In other words, it is physical, intellectual, and emotional security and development.

Parenting is usually done in a child's family by the mother and/or father (i.e., the biological parents). Most parenting practices are deeply rooted in the belief systems of the people who follow them. When parents are unable or unwilling to provide this care, it is usually undertaken by close relatives, such as older siblings, aunts and uncles, or grandparents. In other cases, children may be cared for by adoptive parents, foster parents, or in institutions (such as group homes or orphanages which are not so common in a country like Nigeria). Parenting therefore demands that parents must do all or a combination of the following:

- Providing physical security in terms of physical safety, shelter, clothes, nourishment, protection from dangers, caring for the child's health and general safety of a child's life.
- Developing a child physically, that is, providing conditions for a healthy growth of the child, by training the body and developing good health habits in him/her.
- Providing the child intellectual security in terms of conditions in which a child's mind can develop so that his/her dignity is safe enough to enable him/her learn effectively. The child must be provided an atmosphere of

peace and justice in the family, where a "no-fear," "no-threat," "no-verbal abuse" environment exists.

- Providing intellectual development in terms of opportunities for a child to learn about laws of nature and moral laws, acquire social skills, ethics and value systems, reading, writing and calculating skills.
- Providing emotional security to child by protecting and shielding his/her fragile psyche through the provision of a safe and loving environment that can give the child a sense of being loved, being needed, and welcomed.
- Providing emotional development by giving a child an opportunity to love other people, to care and to learn to help others through showing of empathy and compassion to younger and older, weaker and sicker as well as grandparents.

The implication of these parenting roles is that most parents across the world rely on their own socialization into parenting, their intuitive sense of right and wrong, and their cultural beliefs to create a prerogative which confers on them the responsibility to guide their children to become competent, responsible, and fully functioning members of the society.

Hence, parenting that is responsive and demanding is likely to produce healthier child development. Parents are therefore not expected to be detached from their children. They are not expected to care less or be unaware of their children's needs for affection and discipline. Thus, parenting demands that parents must necessarily support, understand, trust, and protect their children as well as be accountable in terms of social and familial responsibility.

3.3: Processes of Child Rearing

One of the most important roles of parents in child rearing is presumed to be socialization. Socialization is the process by which an infant becomes an acceptable member of his/her society- one who behaves appropriately, knows the language, the requisite skills, and holds the prevailing beliefs and attitudes. It also consists of those patterns of actions, or aspects of actions which inculcate in individuals the skills, motives and attitudes necessary for the performance of present and anticipated roles in the society. This is however carried out through different processes listed and discussed in the next few pages of this Unit.

3.3.1: Direct teaching- This process involves guiding the child through verbal instructions and actions to acquire some behavioural traits and skills. Here, the child is told what to do or not to do and he/she is either rewarded for the right thing or punished for doing the wrong one. He/she is also shown practically how to do some things at home or within the neighbourhood and

he/she is expected to practice doing such thing under the guidance of the parents or other adults in the family or extended family.

3.3.2: Incidental learning- Majority of what the child learns in the process of growing up is unconsciously taught. Here, parents and other adults engage the child in activities and experiences which might be fun in nature and he/she can be learning a great deal through such without having to notice that learning is taking place. It happens in many ways: through observation, repetition, social interaction, and problem solving; from mistakes, assumptions, or from being forced to accept or adapt to situations.

3.3.3: Imitation/Assimilation/Learning from models - Children while growing up are fond of imitating both adults and their peers. They learn to imitate their parents when they within the home. When they are outside the home, they strive to imitate their same-sex peers in terms of dressing, speaking and behaviours. From their daily interactions and observations, children end up engaging in actions which tend to resemble those of their parents, older brothers or sisters or even individuals they see on the television. This is imitation. The most important factor to note here is the ability of adult figures and parents to serve as good role models who can correctly copied by the children.

3.3.4: Role learning- In every society, people occupy different positions and each of these positions has certain expectations associated with it. So occupiers of positions are expected to behave in ways that are peculiar to these positions. Children occupy the position of off springs in a home and as such there are roles, skills, values and attitudes they are expected to learn, acquire and exhibit. These are usually prescribed or determined by the culture of the society or group to which they belong. Hence, it is a process that that affords the child to learn the requirement of that culture.

3.4: Parenting models

The fact that children's social responsibility starts from home implies that parents must have full input in training them to become well adjusted members of their society. The nature of parents across the world has influenced the different methods and models adopted for dealing with the problems associated with child rearing. Some of these as presented by Wikipedia Free Encyclopedia (2008) include:

- **Rules of traffic model** - Parents explain to their children how to behave, assuming that they taught the rules of behavior as they did the rules of traffic. What they try to teach the child doesn't necessarily mean it'll get through to them. The problem of parenting, in this case, is not that they tried to teach him/her the right thing, but that they considered parenting as a single, narrow minded method of parenting, without fulfilling the range of parental duties.
- **Fine gardening model** - Parents believe that children have positive and negative qualities, the latter of which parents should "weed out" or "prune" into an appropriate shape. The problem in this parenting method is that parents fight with the faults of their child rather than appreciate their current achievements and/or capabilities. This may destroy relationships if not properly handled.
- **Reward and punishment model** - "RaP" is a most popular model of parenting based on logic: for a good action - a reward/praise and for a bad action - a punishment/scolding/reprimand. To teach a child by this logic is relatively easy and can even be effective, especially if it is done consistently. It is because it forms a sense of justice in a child's mind that it works. But, simultaneously, it imparts the child's universal image of the reward and punishment and when real life doesn't prove to be just it undermines the child's faith in justice.

In recent times these models have been found to be fraught with lot problems which are capable of affecting the adult life of the growing children. Parenting typically utilizes tools of reward and punishment method, but most child development experts now agree that corporal punishment is not an effective behaviour modification tool. In some jurisdictions corporal punishment (e.g., spanking or whipping) has been prohibited by law. In Nigeria the Child Rights Act 2003 does not support this. Many parents have consequently adopted non-physical approaches to child rearing and discipline and examples of these are listed below:

- **Nurturant parent model-** A family model where children are expected to explore their surroundings with protection from their parents.
- **Attachment parenting** - Seeks to create strong emotional bonds, avoiding physical punishment and accomplishing discipline through interactions, recognizing a child's emotional needs, all while focusing on holistic understanding of the child.
- **Taking Children Seriously-** Sees both praise and punishment as manipulative and harmful to children and advocates other methods to reach agreement with them.
- **Parenting For Everyone** - The philosophy of this model considers parenting from the ethical point of view. It analyses parenting goals, conditions and means of childrearing. It offers to look at a child's internal world (emotions, intelligence and spirit) and derive the sources of parenting success from there. The concept of heart implies the child's sense of being loved and their ability to love others. The concept of intelligence implies the child's morals. And the concept of spirit implies the child's desire to do good actions and avoid bad behavior, avoid encroaching upon anybody's dignity. The core concept of the philosophy of Parenting for Everyone is the concept of dignity, the child's sense of worthiness and justice.

It is however pertinent to note that no matter the choice of model(s) or process(s) of child rearing adopted by a family, parenting is a phenomenon that doesn't stop when children grow up and age. Parents always remain to be parents for old children. Their relationship continues developing if both parties want to keep it or improve.

3.4: Self Assessment Exercise

1. What is child rearing?
2. Attempt a differentiation between child rearing and parenting.
3. The process of child rearing can take different forms in a family. Discuss.
4. Highlight the different models of parenting that have been discussed in this Unit.

4.0: CONCLUSION

The recognition of the child as a full-fledged member of a family makes his/her effective upbringing very vital in every society. Parents, other adults in the family (nucleus and extended) and peers play one role or the other in child rearing using a combination of processes and models. The full and harmonious development and growth of the child's personality demands that he/she needs protection and assistance so that the family as whole can fully assume its responsibilities within the larger community.

5.0: SUMMARY

In this Unit, you have learnt that child rearing and parenting are essential for child development. Attempt has also been made to highlight the differences and similarities between the two concepts. The discussion on the various processes of child rearing has equally familiarized you with the various ways by which children are provided opportunity to learn in the course of child rearing. Likewise, the models of parenting discussed have further clarified your thoughts on the need for parents to be more cautious when considering the model(s) of parenting to adopt for child rearing. This is because there are some of these models which are capable of negatively affecting the parent-child relationship instead of enhancing it. Hence, for a child to be reared in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding parents, other adults and children's peers must necessarily play positive roles using appropriate processes and models that are family-friendly.

6.0: TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- a. Distinguish between child rearing and parenting.
- b. Identify and briefly any two processes of child rearing and three models of parenting that are common to your locality.

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MODULE 2

UNIT 2: COMMON CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN CHILD REARING PRACTICES IN NIGERIA

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1.0: INTRODUCTION

In humans, customs of child rearing and patterns of parent-infant interaction vary widely from culture to culture. Despite these variations it is expected that parents, other adults, children`s peers, as well as brothers and sisters are expected to provide a warm and nurturing environment for children. They all have an obligation to teach social and familial responsibility. While doing all these with the children, they cannot but have their own shortcomings and cultural differences which go a long in determining how a child is raised within a social group.

Hence, this Unit is presenting child rearing practices across the different major ethnic groups of Nigeria as a way of demonstrating the belief that the culture of each group plays key role in the patterns and practices of child rearing. The culture guides parents` beliefs, practices and beliefs about discipline, behaviour management and control.

2.0: OBJECTIVES

At the end of this Unit you should be able to:

1. Explain the relationship between child rearing practices, patterns, and cultural beliefs of people.
2. Identify some examples of cultural differences in child rearing practices and patterns among some ethnic and social groups in Nigeria.

3.0: MAIN CONTENT

3.1: Child Rearing Practices/Patterns and Cultural Beliefs

Child rearing practices, patterns and beliefs are usually based on a culturally –bound understanding of what children need and what they are expected to become later in life. These practices and patterns are grounded in the cultural patterns and beliefs of the child`s immediate environment, that is, the non-shared environment and to some extent the wider local environment of the child (the shared environment). This is premised on the principles of cultural relativism, that is, there is no right or wrong way to bring up a child. Child rearing practices should therefore be judged in relation to assisting children to adjust to their culture.

Evans & Myers (1994) observe that such practices from which the child benefits in the course of rearing in most societies usually include activities which:

- guarantee the child`s physical well-being, that is, keeping the child safe and free from harm, providing shelter and clothing, preventing and attending to illness.
- Promote the child`s psycho-social well-being- providing emotional security, socialization, nurturing and giving love and affection.
- Support the child`s physical development- feeding, bathing, providing safe places to play and explore.
- Promote the child`s mental development- interaction, stimulation and play.
- Facilitate the child`s interaction with others outside the home- within the community, at school, etc.

Specifically however, what is done to help a child survive, grow and develop merges with how it is done to define and distinguish practices that are greatly influenced by cultural differences. The “how” in this case is the pattern of child rearing or simply put, the child rearing norms. The patterns define child rearing in a way that assures the survival, maintenance and development of the group or culture as well as of the child.

The fact that the family is the primary unit given the responsibility for raising the child makes it a major factor in the cultural development of any social group. Hence, the considerable variation which characterizes practices from family to family influences how each family rears its own child. The psychological make-up of the parents, including their own personality, their experiences while growing as children and the conditions under which they are living all contribute to their styles of parenting and child rearing.

3.2: Cultural Differences in Child Rearing Practices and Patterns among some

Ethnic and Social Groups in Nigeria

There exist many cultural values and arts in Nigeria as there are many different ethnic and sub-ethnic groups. This diversity has been playing key role in the different child rearing practices and patterns among families found in different cultural settings or milieu in the country.

Each ethnic or sometimes dialect group is known to exhibit different values of behaviour on the same subject matter which may not be far away from norms. Such differences equally amount to variation in the way each group engages itself in child rearing practices. Some of these practices are categorized and discussed in the next few paragraphs of this Unit.

3.2.1: Language development and acquisition

Language is one tool of child rearing that children learn unconsciously and without any formal training. The fact a child must communicate with the parents and vice versa, implies that a link must be established. Hence, nobody directly teaches any growing child the language he or she will use for interaction. Rather, by mimicking and imitating their parents, they learn to acquire the language of their non-shared environment which is mother tongue, and that of the shared environment (language of the child's immediate outside environment).

In addition to this, some cultures have peculiar language training programmes for the growing child. For instance, in the south western Nigeria, the use of the non verbal communication tools in terms of signs, different eye contacts and symbols is part of language training for the growing child. He/she is trained to respond or react to a variety of eye contacts at the exhibition of different positive or negative behaviour(s) to notice parental approval or rejection.

Again, the fact that language is varied as exhibited in multiplicity of dialects among ethnic groups in Nigeria makes for variation in child rearing practices when it comes to language training. For example, a Yoruba boy from a traditional family of herbalists is consciously trained to acquire language proficiency and skills in the power of incantations as a tool for warding off evil. In the northern Nigeria, such training is non-existing, but parents or *mallams* can teach the growing child some verses of the Glorious Quran that can be spoken or recited to ward off similar evils.

3.2.2: Discipline, punishment and character training

Developing of the proper character is the supreme part of rearing a child. Character training, discipline and punishment as part of child rearing in Nigeria is a component that has been influenced over time by factors such as the structure of an average Nigerian family (usually large with extended family members), the presence of large number of adults and the religious beliefs of parents.

The father figure is very vital in the process of disciplining a child in most traditional families in Nigeria. Nevertheless, in most cultures Nigeria most parents are known to love their children and attempt to raise them according to the customs and traditions of their society. However, parents hold the belief that if one is too lenient in training a child, he or she will likely bring misfortune to him/her self and the entire family.

Hence, different cultures adopted a variety of means to ensure that their children are not left undisciplined when they offend. In some parts of the northern and south western Nigeria, the philosophy of “spare the rod and spoil the child” has been a dominant one in child rearing when it comes to discipline and moral training.

This does not however mean that parents in the eastern Nigeria are not conscious of moral and character training in child rearing. Here, there is a culture which allows everybody to play a role. This is because of the Ibo belief that a growing child is for the community and not only for the parents.

3.2.3: Toilet etiquette

A child is trained by every family in Nigeria to acquire some toilet etiquette as he/she is growing but the way this is done vary from culture to culture. For instance, a child in the south western Nigeria is trained to respond to the mother`s call to urinate right from the infant stage. This the mother does by using a particular command eg. “Sssssssssssss”, to get the infant to urinate especially after feeding. It is a practice that is also shared by mothers from northern part of Nigeria.

Mothers in both the eastern and northern Nigeria share similar practice, but the child in the eastern Nigeria who gets to the stage of walking is trained to visit a small hole usually dug just outside the house by the parents for toilet activities. The growing child before age one in the northern Nigeria is trained to use his/her body language to indicate readiness for a toilet activity and the mother as part of training responds to such communication.

3.2.4: Health habits

Sanitation is one vital component of the health habits which most parents and the society focus on as part of child rearing practices. Parents hold strong belief that “cleanliness is next to Godliness”. Hence, they train their children to keep their home clean. Some gender assigned roles are however peculiar in some parts of the country. For example, it is girls that are practically trained by mothers to learn how to sweep the rooms and clean the kitchen in the eastern Nigeria, with the boys trained by their older siblings to sweep and clean the family compound.

Traditionally in the northern Nigeria it is not the responsibility of the mother to give such training to the male child but she expects other adults in the family preferably the males to perform such task. This is quite unlike the south western Nigeria where the responsibility of providing such training is on every other of the family, extended inclusive.

Caring for the sick child is however the business of the parents and other adults in most Nigeria families. The older siblings in most cultural settings are trained to care for their sick junior ones and this implies that not much of cultural difference exist among Nigerian families on this aspect.

3.2.5: Food habits

Food habits in terms of what is eaten, how it is prepared and who prepares it among Nigerian families vary from culture to culture. Consequently, the nature of opportunity made available to a child in this area differs from culture to culture. It is however important to reiterate the fact that there is no Nigerian culture which does not support breastfeeding as a major child rearing practice. Every infant born to a mother in Nigeria is breastfed and the skill of sucking acquired by the child is developed in the baby by the mother, whether she is from the north, east or south western Nigeria.

Children are taught to eat the staple foods that are commonly found in the family. For instance in the north it is guinea corn, rice, beans and yam. In the east it is yam and cassava, while in the west it is cassava, yam beans and rice. The child is trained to eat each of these in the most common form of preparation peculiar to his or her socio-cultural group. For example, the Yoruba child is trained to eat *amala* made out yam flour, and while the Ibo child will be trained to eat porridge, the Hausa child will eat boiled yam derived from the same yam.

Genders roles also differ from culture to culture when it comes to who is trained to prepared foods in Nigerian homes. Traditionally, the female child is trained to cook in most eastern Nigeria families with the male child`s entry into the kitchen seen as quite an uncultured act. While the northern Nigeria families are not so fussy about this, their counterparts in

the south western Nigeria see the training of both boys and girls in the art of cooking as very essential.

3.2.6: Recreation and Leisure

Like children in most parts of the world, boys and girls from Nigerian families love to play by themselves at times and with other children at other times. Play activities are of great value to Nigerian children. Hake (200??) remarks that physically, play affords opportunities for large muscle exercise; stimulates growth and increases the demand for oxygen; improves digestion and stimulates adequate excretion. Psychologically, play is also of the greatest importance. Through play, many lessons in socialization are learned in a natural way. The child learns how to cooperate with playmates, to lead or to be led, to make compromises, to defend his rights and to learn to withstand antagonism.

Just as children from the eastern Nigeria are trained by the elders to get involved in special games of storytelling and short plays through tales by moonlight, their peers in both the south west and northern Nigeria are equally not left out. These games bother on philosophy and culture as tools of socialization. In addition, parents in the north encourage older siblings to train their children in simple physical combat aimed at building their physique and promoting endurance as well as perseverance as they grow up. This is probably why Northern Nigerian boys seem to be given more opportunities for play than girls.

3.2.7: Sex knowledge and training

Puberty rites for both male and female adolescents have lost much of their former importance in most Nigeria families of today. In fact, it is difficult to find villages where puberty rites are still celebrated. If one finds this still being celebrated it will be probably in very remote areas and villages.

Likewise sex training is almost non-existent in many traditional even to some extent modern Nigerian families. It is considered to be sinful or 'corrupting' to speak about such matters candidly between parents and children. Adolescent boys especially are given little or no information about the sexual changes taking place in their bodies.

This does not mean that children are not provided with specific opportunities to acquire some sex knowledge and training in different ethnic groups and within different families in the nation. The males learn about sexual matters, primarily from older brothers rather than by their mothers or fathers. In the case of the females, their mothers are the main

informants in sexual matters, with their older sister, aunts, and sometimes “house-mothers” in boarding schools and grandmothers also helping out in this matter. Each one of these groups of people however does the training with a lot of caution.

3.2.8: Behaviour and social relations

Naturally, every ethnic group in the country has its ideal cultural patterns which refer its e of expects children from such group to learn how to conform to these standard norms in the course of relating with others (old and young).

For instance in the area of greetings, a growing Yoruba boy of the south western Nigeria is trained by his parents to prostrate for elders while the girls kneel down for the same group of people. This is not so with their Hausa or Fulani peers in the northern Nigeria. Here, both boys and girls do not need to prostrate or kneel down for their own elders while greeting. Rather, they are trained to show some reverence to elders while greeting, by just bending down a bit. If the elder is a highly placed individual rather than bending, the boys are trained to squat with clenched fist as a sign of respect.

In the eastern Nigeria, prostrating is not part of training in greetings for boys neither is kneeling down for girls. Children are trained to use the time of the day or events to greet both elders and their peers. Physical posturing therefore is not significant while greeting, although, children are still trained to hold their own wrist with the left hand or use the two hands when shaking hands with the elderly ones.

In the area of peer relationship and interaction, there is little or no restriction for a growing child in most eastern and northern Nigeria traditional societies. Children are trained to mix freely with their peers, particularly those of the same sex, although some monitoring is still ensured by adults and older members of their society. The situation is not quite the same in the traditional south western Nigerian societies. The growing child who lives within an extended family system is trained to relate first with peers within such set up before approval is given for going beyond such bounds. However, there seems to less restriction on the male child than the female one when it comes to relating with the peer group particularly the opposite sex. This is quite similar in most parts of the country.

Religious teachings of Nigerian families are also used as a means of shaping the social behaviour of children. Parents use the law aspects of their religious belief to teach their children morality through regular attendance of church or mosque and Sunday school or Quranic School, respect for elders, saying prayers regularly, memorizing religious poems and verses from the Bible or Quran, and by personal example. They also

regularly refer to examples of people in the Bible or Quran who were wicked and were punished or were good and subsequently rewarded by God for their good deeds.

3.2.9: Education

Education, particularly at the non formal level is another component of child rearing in the traditional Nigerian society. Parents and other adults in the family provide children with opportunities to acquire what Adamu (2009) calls indigenous knowledge, that is, knowledge that is unique to a given culture or society. This serves as the child's basis for local level decision making in agriculture, health care, food preparation, natural resource management, vocational skills acquisition and a host of other activities in rural communities.

The mode of delivery and content of this kind of education is however influenced by the child's cultural background. Hence, we experience variations in the kind of skills developed in the child, depending on his/her environment and location. For example, while in the traditional Hausa culture, a growing boy is given Quranic education; his peer in Yoruba culture is given the opportunity to access western education. Nevertheless, both of them are still exposed to some trades, vocations and skills practiced by any of their parents, depending on the sex of the child. This is equally so with the male child in eastern Nigeria, but the female child is considered for more access into western education until recent time when the boy-child education programme was launched.

Child care generally in most Nigerian cultures is characterized by positive and nurturing parent-child interaction. Nigerian mothers and fathers buy and make toys and gifts for their children, particularly on special occasions such as religious celebrations. They also befriend and comfort their children when they are threatened with physical harm by either other adults or children in the neighbourhood. Parents also show their love and affection for their children by giving them special care in washing, dressing and feeding them properly. And some parents demonstrate their devotion to their children by being a constant companion to them

Grandparents, uncle, aunts, other wives, neighbours and hired housemaids are also part of the people rearing and caring for children in most Nigerian homes. They all help the growing child to understand what is expected of him/her socially. For example, in many Northern Nigerian families, older brothers and sisters as well as other relatives, are sometimes expected to train younger

children in toilet etiquette, table manners, cleanliness habits, etc. Also, they are often given authority by the parents to teach the younger siblings social controls. If the younger child misbehaves, the older sibling may use some kind of punishment, and occasionally this may involve corporal punitive measures.

3.2.10: Self Assessment Exercise

1. Explain briefly the concept of child rearing practice.
2. Identify some of the components of child rearing practices and patterns that can be used to describe the upbringing of children in Nigeria.
3. Describe some of the cultural differences that characterize food habits and behaviour and social relations as part child rearing practices in Nigeria.

4.0: CONCLUSION

A detailed understanding of child rearing practices and patterns is quite essential for proper development of any child. There are however many cultural variables affecting the ways in which the child is raised and these vary from one cultural group to the other. The influence of these variations reflects in the nature of socialization experienced by each child depending on his/her ethnic or social group and the level of sophistication of his/her family.

While most Nigerian families can be said to play key roles (although varied) in all the different categories of child rearing practices in their society, the area of sex training still needs to be more concentrated upon. Parents and the schools need to play more dominant role in educating boys and girls as to the scientific nature of sexual changes and their social and psychological meaning to the maturing adolescent.

5.0: SUMMARY

In this Unit you have learnt that a relationship exists between child rearing practices and the cultural background of the child. The diversity of culture among different families accounts for the differences in the patterns and practices of child rearing among the various ethnic and social groups in Nigeria. Differences exist in how children are raised in terms of food habits, discipline, behaviour and social relations, toilet etiquette, recreation and leisure, language development and acquisition as well as health habits.

Nevertheless, child rearing practices and patterns among Nigerian families still appear to be a mixture of good-natured freedom together with the use of strict controls, as children are strongly believed to be a major source of joy and happiness in most Nigerian societies. Collective groups have traditionally raised children and this could go without saying that children were considered children

of the entire community. A child is therefore seen to bring pride or its reverse to the collective group as a whole and not to his or birth parents alone.

6.0: TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

To what extent is it true that child rearing practices and patterns in Nigeria are a reflection of the cultural background and characteristics of a child's family and ethnic or social group. Use concrete examples to defend your position.

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MODULE 2

UNIT 3: CHILD FOSTERAGE AS A FORM OF CHILD REARING PRACTICE

CONTENTS

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MAIN CONTENT

1.0: INTRODUCTION

In the preceding Unit, you learnt about the ways by which children are reared and the influence of cultural differences on the different child rearing practices and patterns across the geo-political zones of Nigeria. Most of these practices and patterns of child rearing are anchored by parents, older siblings and other adults in the family.

It is however pertinent for us to note at this juncture that some children in the African society, Nigeria inclusive, still end up being brought up by adults who are not their biological mothers. Let us imagine a woman who gave birth to ten children without necessarily raising all of them herself. The implication here is that some of the children must have been raised by other people who might not actually be part of their immediate family. This is child fostering.

In this Unit, it is therefore expected that you will learn about the concept and types of child fostering/fosterage as a child rearing practice, the reasons for this practice, and its pros and cons.

2.0: OBJECTIVES

At the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

1. Explain the concept and types of child fostering/fosterage.
2. Identify and explain some of the merits and demerits of child fostering/fosterage in our society.

3.0: MAIN CONTENT

3.1: Meaning and Types of Child Fostering/Fosterage

Usiugo-Abanihe (1985) remarks that the anthropological literature of West Africa contains much evidence of child relocation, i.e. the transfer, giving out, or exchange of children among families. This child rearing practice she refers to as child fostering or fosterage. It is simply defined as “the relocation or transfer of children from biological or natal homes where they are raised and cared for foster parents” (Usiugo-Abanihe, 1985).

The delegation of parental roles by fostering out children entails the sharing of child rearing responsibilities, and the removal of the burdens and constraints of prolific child bearing. It is a practice that is well institutionalized in some parts of West Africa, e.g. Nigeria, Ghana, and Sierra Leone.

Child fostering is a valued traditional child rearing practice among many ethnic groups in Nigeria. The practice can be described as one phenomenon that has become more prevalent and assume new dimensions as societies have become more complex and diversified.

This practice is rooted in kinship structures and traditions children are sent out not only in the event of family crisis or when one or both natural parents cannot for some reason, manage to bring them up. Rather, child fostering is practised by both stable and unstable families, married and single mothers, healthy and handicapped parents, rural and urban homes, wealthy and poor parents. The reasons for this will be better understood when we start talking about what makes people to practice child fostering.

It is a cultural practice that involves biological parents giving out of the child at a young age (sometimes as early as four or five years) to a surrogate family for upbringing. In many societies in West Africa, child fosterage is simply an accepted means of raising children. Even West African immigrants in America and Europe were reported to have been practicing the idea of sending their children to foster homes (Isiugo-Abanihe, 1985).

3.2: Types of Child Fostering/Fosterage

The cultural undertone of child fostering as a form of child rearing makes for the variations in the way and why it is practised in different societies. Basically, it comes as kinship fostering, crisis fostering, alliance and apprentice fostering and domestic fostering.

3.2.1: Kinship fostering

This is the predominant type of child fostering among many ethnic groups in West Africa. It is very common in Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone. It involves sending children to live with relatives of either parent or exchange of children among kinsmen who share kinship obligations and assistance.

In Nigeria, this type of child fostering is a common practice among most ethnic groups. It is based on the belief that children are generally thought of as belonging not only to their biological parents but also to the lineage or kinship group. Hence, we find a male child being sent to his mother's or father's brother's home and a female child being sent to her mother's or brother's sister's home to go and live and be raised.

Grandparents are perhaps the most important recipients of foster children. They are always ready to receive their grandchildren for a variety of reasons that will be discussed later in this Unit. Among the Yoruba and the Ibo of Nigeria, it is a thing of pride for a grandmother to have her grandchildren living with her. Precisely, in Ibo land it is regarded as a blessing when a woman starts building around her a small "army" of grandchildren and great grandchildren.

3.2.2: Crisis fostering

This is a form of fostering that results from some crisis in child's home. The child is relocated in this case due reasons or situations such as dissolution of the family of orientation by divorce, separation or death of a spouse. Sometimes children born out of wedlock fall within this category, as their mothers tend to hide such children from their spouses. They are therefore given to their own relations to take care of such children on their behalf.

Isiugo-Abanihe (1984) also categorized the art of sending out of a child because of the apprehension over his/her survival as another example of crisis fostering. That is, the fear of witchcraft by a neighbouring old woman, for example or of reprisals by the spirits of unappeased dead kinsmen or ancestors could result in a child out, while the supposed cause of the crisis is ameliorated.

3.2.3: Wardship and alliance fostering

Quoting Goody, 1978; & Sinclair, 1972, Isiugo-Abanihe (1984) observed that in many West African societies, there is a specific emphasis on the use of fostering to establish and strengthen social, economic or political alliances. This is through the sending of children out as wards to the homes of non-relatives, friends, and people of certain social standing. For example, in the northern part of Nigeria, male children are often sent at young ages to live with influential religious or political leaders or landlords to receive care, training, education and instruction in the Glorious Quran.

The fact that alliance fostering or wardship often combines the responsibilities of training and sponsoring of young children, it goes hand in hand with apprentice fostering. Here, children could be sent out at very early age to homes where they are disciplined or where they learn a trade.

3.2.4: Domestic fostering

The essence of this type of fostering is to promote redistribution of children's domestic importance especially between households with many children and those with few. Here, female children particularly are sent to experienced women where they are expected to learn the domestic roles they would be performing later in their future homes. For example, little girls are often sent to the homes of a new mother, especially a young mother, to help 'carry' the baby and to act as little baby minder, in return for their training and maintenance.

Children are also sent out for here, to elderly women or women without their own children for companionship. Likewise, childless couples are often given children by their relatives to rear so that they do not become discouraged.

3.2.5: Educational fostering

This is usually done for educational purpose. Children in this form of fostering are often boarded out with relatives who are expected to provide them with formal education. The children are sometimes sent to non-relatives where there are few relatives living near the schools to be attended by these children or where relatives are no longer willing to honour the kinship claims of distant relatives.

3.3: Merits and Demerits of Child Fostering

Child fostering as a form of child rearing practice has been a valued traditional practice among many ethnic groups in West Africa, particularly in Nigeria. This however does not mean that the practice has not been totally beneficial to all those involved in it. Hence, we need to briefly discuss the merits and demerits of the practice.

3.3.1: Merits

In situations where children are sent to their grandmothers for fostering, it gives the biological mother more time to work or go to market or the farm in the traditional society. Also, it engenders an inbuilt support system because the occasional visits and gifts of money, foodstuff, and clothing by parents to the grandparents form an important part of their resource accumulation. This does not however imply that wealth does not usually flow from parents to grandparents in the absence of fosters, but the presence of fosters guarantees the regularity of visits and the size and assortment of goods brought in (Asiugo-Abanihe, 1985).

Consequently, the extended family, on which child fostering is buttressed, acts to even out the hardships of large family size. The delegation of parental roles by fostering out children promotes the sharing of child rearing responsibilities and helps to reduce the burdens and constraints of prolific child bearing.

Child fostering also helps in easing some of the usual problems associated with migration of parents. Parents who migrate (internally or internationally) can leave children behind with relatives, either temporarily or permanently, thereby reducing such parents worries about how to manage the case of leaving behind their children. This is equally beneficial to women who are trying to return to school or enter the labour force.

Where kinship fostering is practised, it strengthens kinship ties and also promotes reallocation of resources thereby contributing to higher chances of maximum survival for the unit. The recognition of the responsibility of a child's upbringing as every body's business is also enhanced through child fostering.

Practising crisis child fostering can help improve the survival chances of children by removing them from the source of a crisis, real or imagined. For example, if a child is sent to go and live with his/her grandparents due to witchcraft scare, it is possible to bring such child under a more cautious and caring environment.

Surrogate parents are capable of inculcating stricter discipline in foster children than their parents, especially if such surrogate parents are good disciplinarians and are socially upright. Hence, child fostering in this case is a motivation for social mobility. This is because children who are

raised under the supervision of surrogate parents, especially those socialized in superior or prestigious homes are more likely to be more sophisticated than those raised by their own parents who are of lesser socio-economic standing. The same principle applies when we have children who are sent to go and live with professionals such as teachers and others. They could become better groomed and prepared for future educational enterprise.

3.3.2: Demerits

It is not impossible that the economic costs of children to biological parents may be lowered by the practice of child fostering but the costs would surely become higher to the foster parents, who would normally be expected to do his/her best in ensuring that the child is well brought up.

Also, this implies that fertility regulation among the educated elites does not guarantee them small family size. We can therefore witness situations in which these elites end up acquiring large families from poorer relatives or even non-relatives.

In some situations child fostering can subject the fostered child to untold hardships especially if the foster parent is the non-caring and wicked type. Such foster parents may end up using such children as housemaids charged with doing all the odd jobs at home.

It is expected that a fostered child should at one time be reunited back with the biological parents, but what we witness in some cases is that the long time emotional detachment from these parents usually affects such reunification. The bond that develops between the foster parents and the foster child sometimes gets so strong that at reunification point the foster parents become emotionally destabilised. This in could in turn have serious implications on the relationship between the foster parents and the biological parents.

3.4: Self Assessment Exercise

1. What do you understand by child fosterage/fostering?
2. How far is it true that child fosterage can be experienced by a child through different ways?
3. Highlight the merits and demerits of child fosterage as a child rearing practice.

4.0: CONCLUSION

Child fosterage/fostering is a child rearing practice that is quite common among ethnic groups and within communities in West Africa and Nigeria in particular. It is a practice that aimed at providing support and care for the young person by foster parents with the consent of his/her biological parents. It is a practice that is well encouraged by the culture and traditions of a large number of ethnic groups in Nigeria. As good as it is we should not shy away from the fact that child fostering could be detrimental to the growing child, the parents and sometimes the foster parents.

5.0: SUMMARY

Child fostering/fosterage as a child rearing practice is quite prevalent in West Africa, especially Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Ghana and Liberia. It can be referred to as the relocation or transfer of children from biological or natal homes to other homes where they are raised and cared for by surrogate parents or foster parents. People get involved in child fosterage for a variety of reasons and these inform the different types of child fostering that we have in our communities. The way this form of child rearing is practised is however characterized by some pros and cons which could affect both the fostered child and the biological/foster parents.

6.0: TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Explain the concept of child fosterage as a child rearing practice and establish the fact that if not well practised it could be detrimental to its beneficiaries.

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MODULE 2

UNIT 4: THE BENEFITS OF APPRECIATING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES IN CHILD REARING PRACTICES

CONTENTS

1.0: Introduction

2.0: Objectives

3.0: Main Content

3.1: Benefits of Proper and Appropriate Child Rearing Practices and Patterns

3.2: Benefits of Understanding Cultural Differences in Child Rearing Practices and Patterns

3.3: Self Assessment Exercise

4.0: Conclusion

5.0: Summary

6.0: Tutor Marked Assignment

7.0: References/Further Readings

1.0: INTRODUCTION

The practice of raising or bringing up children in most African societies, Nigeria inclusive, is highly beneficial to the child as an individual, the parents and the community at large. Breastfeeding, carrying the child on the back, sleeping with the child, educating and providing socialization avenues for him/her create an intimate relationship between the child and his/her parents. Again, many of the traditional child rearing practices and patterns in our society are known to promote child mental health.

This Unit is therefore presents some of the benefits that be derived from proper and appropriate child rearing by all the parties that are usually involved in the process; the child, his/her parents, older siblings, older adults and the entire community to which he/she belongs.

2.0: OBJECTIVES

At the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

1. Identify some of the benefits that are derived from proper and appropriate child rearing practices and patterns.
2. Discuss the benefits of understanding cultural differences in child rearing practices and patterns.

3.0: MAIN CONTENT

3.1: Benefits of Proper and Appropriate Child Rearing Practices and Patterns

The fact that a child's social responsibility starts in the home makes it imperative for him/her to enjoy proper and appropriate child rearing practices through the parents and other older adults in his/her home. Through some of these practices and the patterns of carrying them out, parents show love and protect their children. For instance, firmness as part of child rearing keeps children on the right track and this ends up making lovable.

Bringing up a child to respect his/her parents' rules and regulations helps to promote in him/her, a good sense of responsibility. Through this the child is encouraged to inculcate a strong sense of kinship ties and respect for others within their larger community. This practice is capable of reducing dissension and creating a homogenous community where all could expect to be treated fairly and with compassion. They are also likely to grow up with a feeling that they are in this world not their own satisfaction, but primarily to serve others.

Proper and appropriate child rearing practices and patterns could be part of parents' demonstration of their belief in one of the provisions in Declaration of the Rights of the Child which emphasizes that the child, by reason of his physical and mental maturity, needs special safeguards and care, before as well as after birth. Hence, where a child is trained to acquire some food and health habits as well as social relations skills as part of child rearing, he/she has higher chances of growing up to be a well adjusted individual. As children are cared for by their parents both parties develop understandings of the other.

With responsive and demanding parenting there is the possibility for healthier child development to evolve. The manner in which parents respond to a child's behaviour as part of child rearing will have an effect on the child's self-esteem and future interactions with others.

The development of self control as part of child rearing promotes the child's will to conquer attention. It leads him/her set to achievable goals in life and always aspires to seek for things that can be more appealing, and be ready to work hard, which in essence is the fruit of social control.

Child rearing practices help humanize the growing child as a biological organism and transform him/her into "a self" thereby creating in him/her a sense

of identity, endowing him/her with ideas, values and aspirations necessary for the development of human society at large.

There is no growing child who does not need what Rubottom (2001) calls “frequent doses of reassurance and encouragement. This is because while growing up, they are prone to worries and sometimes combine information received from adults with their own imaginations to come to some frightful and unfounded conclusions. Through appropriate child rearing practices which emphasise affection, love and care a good sense of security and confidence is developed in children.

3.2: Benefits of Understanding Cultural Differences in Child Rearing Practices and Patterns

Children grow up in a wide variety of different physical, social and cultural circumstances. The fact that within cultures there exists diversity implies that there is no right or most correct way to bring up children. By detecting and understanding the cultural differences and their effects on child rearing practices, it is possible to identify those practices which should be supported and those which ought to be discouraged.

Furthermore, it will create opportunity for people to respect cultural differences and the child’s right to his/her cultural identity as stipulated by the United Nation’s Convention on the Rights of the Child.

For continuity sake, it is important to understand cultural differences in child rearing practices so that in times of rapid change, some old practices can still be applied in new settings without necessarily taking a misguided step. This is because traditional practices and beliefs still have a particularly important role to play when children’s lives have radically changed as a result of some circumstances beyond their control.

The benefits of understanding cultural differences in child rearing practices and patterns can be better appreciated using some the central dimensions of child rearing identified by Barry et.al. (1959) through the University of Leicester, School of Education Social Science Resources (2009).

- **Obedience training-** This is the degree to which children are trained to respect and obey adults. This varies from culture to culture and an understanding of the different but culture-specific ways of training a child to become obedient will promote better social relationships among the different ethnic groups in Nigeria. For instance, while a Yoruba boy is trained not to call his senior siblings by names, it is not the case with the Hausa boy or his Ibo peers. Nevertheless, all of them still emphasise respect for elders. An understanding of this difference is not likely going to make a Yoruba elder to frown at a Hausa boy found calling his seniors by name.
- **Responsibility training-** This is related to the degree to which children are trained to take responsibility for subsistence or household tasks and

this cannot be the same across cultures. It will therefore be another source of difference if understood and respected will facilitate better social relationships. For example, in the south eastern Nigeria, the place of a growing boy is traditionally not the kitchen, whereas both boys and girls are trained in the south west to take the responsibility of cooking and preparing food for members of the family.

- **Nurturance training-** This concerns the degree to which children are trained to care for and help younger siblings and other dependent people. Here, the level of belief in the extended family features influence greatly the kind of training received by a child. In some societies the older siblings are trained to act out the roles of their parents while their junior ones are growing up. The female ones are trained to back their younger ones, feed them and even wash their under wares. In some other societies it is not so. An understanding of the cultural differences in nurturing is therefore capable of reducing stereotypic beliefs about a particular ethnic group.
- **Self-reliance training-** This relates to the degree to which children are trained to take care of themselves and to independent of assistance from others in supplying their needs or wants. This equally varies from culture to culture. Recognition of these differences makes for a better understanding of group dynamics and the competency levels of different groups of children when it comes to execution of some tasks. For example, the degree of self reliance training (usually tough & high) of a Fulani boy or Ibo boy cannot be compared with that of a Yoruba boy, but all of them still have to be understood for a well adjusted socio-economic development of such children to take place.

The implication of the foregoing discussion is that a better understanding of these cultural differences in child rearing practices is capable of reducing ethnocentric feelings among adults who would find themselves relating with these children at one point or another of their growth and development.

Again, it is possible to reduce the chances of viewing the culturally diverse child rearing practices as wrong and abusive when they are not in conformity with those that are quite common within a locality. By this, educators and others within that locality are not likely to be involved in misjudging the appropriateness of such differing child rearing practices or parenting styles.

3.3: Self Assessment Exercise

1. State any four benefits of proper and appropriate child rearing practices and parenting.
2. What are the benefits that can be derived from a detailed understanding of the cultural differences that are found among child rearing practices in the different geo-political areas of Nigeria?

4.0: CONCLUSION

Most individuals tend to be ethnocentric because they at most times truly understand only their own personal culture or background. The fact that they are unfamiliar with other peoples` cultures can make them view some child rearing practices and patterns as being inferior to their own. However, an understanding of the differences social, cultural, religious and moral values associated to child rearing practices can engender a clearer perception of the variations in these practices as being proper. This can equally promote cultural tolerance and respect for practices and patterns different from our own. Resultantly, this will prevent misunderstanding and facilitate more active involvement in the upbringing of our children.

5.0: SUMMARY

In this Unit you have learnt that proper and appropriate child rearing practices are quite culture –specific and could be highly beneficial. The degree to which physical and emotional nurturance, shelter, safety, security and health care are provided as part of child rearing practices vary in nature and volume from one culture to another. Despite these variations, we have learnt that an understanding of the differences and the reasons for such will go a long way in improving our cultural knowledge base as well as social relations and tangible involvement in the business of child rearing in our society.

6.0: TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Convince a colleague of yours in not more than 2000 words that understanding the cultural differences among the various child rearing practices and patterns in Nigeria could be highly beneficial to both the growing child and the society to which he/she belongs.

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MODULE 3: THE CHILD AND FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS AMONG DIFFERENT CULTURES IN NIGERIA

Unit 1: Meaning and Forms of Communication

Unit 2: Patterns of Communication among Different Families in Nigeria

Unit 3: Effects of Family Communication Patterns on Child Social Behaviour

Unit 4: Children and their Views of Self and Others in the Family

UNIT 1: MEANING AND FORMS OF COMMUNICATION CONTENTS

1.0: Introduction

2.0: Objectives

3.0: Main Content

3.1: Meaning of Communication

3.2: Types and Forms of Communication

3.3: Self Assessment Exercise

4.0: Conclusion

5.0: Summary

6.0: Tutor Marked Assignment

7.0: References/Further Readings

1.0: INTRODUCTION

Every child in any society belongs to a family and each family has a set of unique ways of communicating among its members. This is in terms of a set of cognitive representations which guides individuals' perceptions, evaluations, and motivations as a benchmark to which actual family interactions are compared and contrasted. These communications patterns are usually culture specific. An attempt to fully understand the patterns and their underpinning cultural differences requires an understanding of the concept of communication and its different forms.

2.0: OBJECTIVES

At the end of this Unit you should be able to:

1. Explain the concept of communication using different scholars' views.
2. Identify and describe the different forms and types of communication.

3.0: MAIN CONTENT

3.1: Meaning of Communication

Definitions of communication range widely, some recognizing that animals can communicate with each other as well as human beings, and some more narrow, only including human beings within the parameters of human symbolic interaction.

A look at the etymology of the word “communication” will reveal that it contains two root words: com (for the Latin “*cum*” translating “with” or “together with”) and “*unio*” (the Latin for “union”) (COM 707, www.regent.edu). Hence, communication refers to “union with” for the purpose of conveying a message. This influenced a lecturer handling the course COM 7 in his definition of communication which he gave as “a process in which a person, through the use of signs (natural, universal)/symbol (by human convention), verbally and /or non verbally, consciously or not consciously but intentionally, conveys meaning to another in order to affect change.

Communication has been described by Wikipedia (2009) as “the process of transferring information from one source to another”. It involves imparting or interchanging of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing or signs. It can be perceived as a two-way process in which there is an exchange and progression of thoughts, feelings or ideas towards a mutually accepted goal or direction.

Communication simply means “the science and practice of transmitting or exchanging information or ideas (Lawal, 2004). It is a process whereby information is encoded and imparted by a sender to receiver via a channel or medium. It requires the receiver to decode the message and give the sender a feedback. That is, the sender encodes and sends the message, which is then carried via the communication channel to the receiver where the receiver decodes the message, processes the information and sends an appropriate reply via the same communication channel. It is therefore what happens when the transmitter changes state of being of the recipient based on the message transmitted.

Communication is transaction that involves all social processes. It is a process by which people assign and convey meaning in an attempt to create shared information and understanding. The process requires a vast repertoire of skills in intrapersonal and interpersonal processing, listening, observing, speaking, questioning analyzing and evaluating.

YourDictionary.com (2009) defines communication as the act of transmitting, giving or exchanging information, signals or messages as by talk, gestures or writing. It further defines it as the art of expressing ideas, especially in speech and writing. It involves exchange of information, thoughts, ideas and emotions.

Douglas Harper (2008) further defines communication as the articulation of sending a message through different media, be it verbal or non-verbal, as a being transmits a thought provoking idea, gesture, action etc. It is also a learned skill. Most babies are born with the physical ability to make sounds, but must learn to speak and communicate effectively. Speaking, listening, and human ability to understand verbal and non-verbal meanings are skills we develop in various ways. These skills are acquired by observing other people, modeling behaviours based on what is seen. Human beings are also taught some communication skills directly through education, and by practicing those skills and having them evaluated.

Communication is usually described along a few major dimensions which include content- what type of things are communicated; source, emissary, sender or encoder – by whom; form – in which form; channel- through which medium; destination, receiver, target or decoder-to whom; and the purpose or pragmatic aspect. Between parties, communication includes acts that confer knowledge and experiences, give advice and commands, and ask questions. These acts may take many forms, in one of the various manners of communication.

Wikipedia (2009) further describes communication as processes of information transmission governed by three levels of semiotic rules which include:

- Syntactic (formal properties of signs and symbols)
- Pragmatic (concerned with the relations between signs/expressions and their users) and
- Semantic (study of relationships between signs and symbols and what they represent).

These rules make communication a social interaction where at least two interacting agents share a common set of signs and a common set of semiotic rules.

Communication can occur via various processes and methods and depending on the channel used and the style of communication there can be various types and forms of communication, some of which are discussed in the next few paragraphs.

3.2: Types and Forms of Communication

Effective communication can evolve through non-verbal, verbal, written, or wireless forms. Traditionally, human beings are known to have some forms of communication which include dancing, sculpture works, painting, divination, acting and festivals. However, regardless of the form, communication patterns all over the world are known to serve very useful purposes. This is because no matter how we feel and regardless how well informed we may be on any issue unless we can transmit this information to others it will remain what Anijah-Obi (2001) calls “the rich deposits of metal in the earth and the valuable number in the forest which is of no value to anyone”. The next few paragraphs will therefore explore these different forms of communication and the means of using them.

3.2.1: Verbal communication

The basis of communication is the interaction between people. Verbal communication is one way for people to communicate face-to-face. Some of the key components of verbal communication are sound, words, speaking, and the language.

Manohar (2008) describes verbal communication as a communication type that is oral. The **oral communication** refers to the spoken words in the communication process. Oral communication can either be face-to-face communication or a conversation over the phone or on the voice chat over the Internet. Spoken conversations or dialogues are influenced by voice modulation, pitch, volume and even the speed and clarity of speaking.

Effective oral communication is not learned from reading: it takes practice, practice, and more practice. It involves developing a vocabulary that allows you to express your opinions, to state your position during a dialogue relative to reaching a decision, to phrase your questions clearly and concisely, and to make your wishes known on any number of matters. At birth, most people have vocal cords, which produce sounds. As a child grows it learns how to form these sounds into words. Some words may be imitative of natural sounds, but others may come from expressions of emotion, such as laughter or crying. Words alone have no meaning. Only people can put meaning into words. As meaning is assigned to words, language develops, which leads to the development of speaking; a major process in oral communication.

3.2.2: Written Communication

Written communication can be either via snail mail, or email. The effectiveness of written communication depends on the style of writing, vocabulary used, grammar, clarity and precision of language. Written communication takes on many different forms. It includes general correspondence, reports of different types, procedures, record keeping, operating instructions, spreadsheet data, announcements, documentation, and presentations.

Written communication could be handwritten, typed, or machine printed messages. The practice of sending notes, names, written advertisements etc also falls within this category of communication. This form of communication is simple to use and easy to receive by the recipients.

Parents use more of oral communication than the written communication during child rearing in most families in Nigeria. This however does not exclude the fact that the written form of communication is not used by family members in the course of bringing up a child as it shall be noted in the next Unit of this Module.

3.2.3: Nonverbal communication

Nonverbal communication is the process of communicating through sending and receiving wordless messages (nonverbal codes) in a variety of ways. It involves those nonverbal stimuli in a communication setting that are generated by both the source (speaker) and his/her use of the environment and that have potential message value for the source or receiver (listener). It could be both intentional and unintentional.

Non-verbal communication includes the overall body language of the person who is speaking, which will include the body posture, the hand gestures, and overall body movements. The facial expressions also play a major role while communication since the expressions on a person's face say a lot about his/her mood. On the other hand gestures like a handshake, a smile or a hug can independently convey emotions (Manohar, 2008).

Non verbal communication can also be in the form of pictorial representations, signboards, or even photographs, sketches and paintings, vocal nuance, intonation, glance and posture.

Furthermore, Wikipedia (2009) reveals that nonverbal communication can be communicated through object communication such as clothing, hairstyles or even architecture, symbols and info graphics. The quality of a message sender's voice, his/her emotions and speaking style, as well as prosodic features such as rhythm, intonation and stress, all form part of nonverbal communication.

Elements such as physique, height, weight, hair, skin color, gender, odors, and clothing send nonverbal messages during interaction. Research into height has generally found that taller people are perceived as being more impressive. Melamed & Bozionelos (1992) studied a sample of managers in the UK and found that height was a key factor affecting who was promoted. Often people try to make themselves taller, for example, standing on a platform, when they want to make more of an impact with their speaking.

There are two basic categories of nonverbal communication. The first one comprises those nonverbal messages produced by the body and the second being those produced by the broad setting in terms of time, space, and silence. From these two broad categories several different types of nonverbal communication can be identified. Some of these have been highlighted by Kendra Van Wagner (2009) and they include:

- **Facial Expression-** Facial expressions are responsible for a huge proportion of nonverbal communication. These could be through smiling or frowning. Smiling is a powerful cue that transmits happiness, friendliness, warmth, and liking. So, a

person who smiles frequently is more likely to be perceived as more likable, friendly, warm and approachable. Smiling is often contagious and people will react favourably. They will be more comfortable around such an individual and will want to listen more.

- **Eye Contact-** This helps to regulate the flow of communication. It signals interest in others and increases the speaker's credibility. People who make eye contact open the flow of communication and convey interest, concern, warmth, and credibility. Looking, staring and blinking can also be important nonverbal behaviours. When people encounter people or things that they like, the rate of blinking increases and their pupils dilate. Again, looking at another person can indicate a range of emotions, including hostility, interest and attraction. Argyle et.al. (1970) remarked that eye gaze comprises the actions of looking while talking, looking while listening, amount of gaze, and frequency of glances and patterns of fixation.

- **Gestures-** These are deliberate movements and signals used for

communicating meaning without words. Common gestures include waving, pointing, movements of the head, and using fingers to indicate number amounts. It is so unique as a form of nonverbal communication. For instance, if one fails to gesture while speaking one may be perceived as boring and stiff. Gestures can come in form of **emblems**, that is, those associated with direct verbal translations e.g. a goodbye wave; **illustrators-** e.g. turning an imaginary steering wheel while talking about driving; **affect display-** a gesture that conveys emotions e.g. a smile; and **adaptor-** which facilitates the release of bodily tension, e.g. quickly moving one's leg.

- **Body Language and Posture-** Posture and movement in terms of body

orientation, arm position and body openness when talking with another person goes a long way to influence the degree of interest that can be attracted during an interpersonal relationship. For instance, an individual communicates numerous messages the way he or she talks and moves. Standing erect and leaning forward communicates to listeners that one is approachable, receptive, and friendly. On

the other hand, speaking with ones back turned or looking at the floor or ceiling communicates disinterest.

- **Paralinguistic-** This refers to vocal communication that is separate from actual language. It includes factors such as tone of voice, loudness, pitch and accent. It includes the voice set which is the context in which the speaker is speaking in terms of situation, gender, mood, age and a person`s culture. Voice qualities and vocalization are also part of paralinguage which affect the meaning of the message an individual is trying to pass.
- **Proximity-** This is related to how people use and perceive the physical space around them. It is also called proxemics, that is, the role of distance and body orientation in human communication. It is premised on the principle that the space between the sender and the receiver of a message influences the way the message is interpreted. Cultural norms dictate a comfortable distance for interaction with others. The amount of distance people need and the amount of space they perceive as belonging to them is influenced by a number of factors including social norms, situational factors, personality characteristics, and level of familiarity. For example, there are signals of discomfort caused by invading the other person`s space. These signals include, rocking, leg swinging, tapping and gaze aversion.
- **Haptics-** Communicating through touch is another important nonverbal form of communication. Touches that can be defined as communication include handshakes, holding hands, kissing (cheek, lips, hand), back slapping, high fives, a pat on the shoulder, and brushing an arm. The meaning conveyed from touch is highly dependent upon the context of the situation, the relationship between communicators and the manner of touch.
- **Appearance-** Human beings choice of colour, clothing, hairstyles and other factors affecting appearance are also means of non verbal communication. Colours are capable of invoking different moods and appearances can equally alter physiological reactions, judgement, and interpretations.

The foregoing is a confirmation that communication can come through many facets. It is however not limited to humans, or even to primates. Every information exchange between living organisms- that is, transmission of signals

involving a living sender and a receiver, can be considered a form of communication.

3.2. Self Assessment Exercise

- (a) Use any three concise definitions to explain the concept of communication.
- (b) Explain verbal communication as a form of communication.
- (c) Distinguish between verbal and non-verbal communication.
- (d) Identify and explain any five forms of non verbal communication, the skills of which you can develop in a growing child.

4.0: CONCLUSION

Communication is a process of transmitting message. It is an exchange of information between a sender and a receiver. It comes in different forms and regardless of this, a message can only be said to have been transmitted successfully only when it is understood by the receiver, that is, decoded. Both verbal and nonverbal communications are therefore very essential for successful human relationship and interaction in any social setting. Family members employ both in the course of child rearing as it shall be discussed in the next unit of this module.

5.0: SUMMARY

Communication as a process involves having a thought which usually exists in the mind of the sender, sending a message to a receiver in words or other symbols, and decoding which involves the receiver in translating the words or symbols into a concept or an information that can be understood.

Communication can either be verbal or nonverbal. When it is verbal, it could be face to face or through conversation over the phone or on the voice over the internet. The nonverbal communication on the other hand makes no use of words, sentences, grammar and other structures that can be associated with spoken and written language. It includes the overall body language of the person who is speaking, in terms of body posture, facial expression/gestures, the hand gestures and overall body movements. It can also be in the form pictorial representations, signboards, or even photographs, sketches and painting.

6.0: TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Demonstrate your understanding of the concept of communication by giving any three scholars` views of its definition and briefly discuss the different forms it can take humans to communicate.

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MODULE 3: THE CHILD AND FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS AMONG DIFFERENT CULTURES IN NIGERIA

UNIT 2: PATTERNS OF COMMUNICATION AMONG DIFFERENT FAMILIES IN NIGERIA

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1.0: INTRODUCTION

Communication within the family is extremely important because it enables members to express their needs, wants, and concerns to each other. Effective communication is an important characteristic of strong, healthy families. It is an essential building block of strong marital, parent-child, and sibling relationships.

Researchers have discovered a strong link between communication patterns and satisfaction with family relationships (Noller & Fitzpatrick, 1990). In fact, one researcher discovered that the more positively couples rated their communication, the more satisfied they were with their relationship five and a half years later (Markman, 1981). The cultural differences in beliefs and practices among families in our society contribute significantly to the variations in family communication patterns and the nature of upbringing.

Standards, or beliefs about the patterns of communication among family members, affect social phenomena and the social behaviour of a growing child in various ways. Poor family communication is associated with an increased risk of divorce and marital separation and more behavioural problems in children.

2.0: OBJECTIVES

At the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

1. Explain what family communication patterns entail
2. Identify and describe the different types of family communication patterns found among families in Nigeria
3. Suggest ways of promoting effective family communication patterns

3.0: MAIN CONTENT

3.1: Meaning of Family Communication Patterns

The family has long been regarded as among the most interesting and influential interpersonal systems and nowhere is its influence on individual behaviors more profound than in the area of communicative behaviours. Reiss (1981) has argued strongly that families are characterized by uniquely shared world views and value and belief systems. These value and belief systems have far reaching consequences for how family members perceive their social environment and their family's place in it and, as a consequence, how they communicate within it.

The concept of family communication patterns was articulated by McLeod and Chaffee (1972), who were interested in the role of family as an influence in children's use of media. According to Ritchie and Fitzpatrick (1990), "the family communication environment is a set of norms governing the tradeoff between informational and relational objectives of communication.

Family communication has been described by Epstein et al. (1993) as the way verbal and non-verbal information is exchanged between family members. It is the primary means by which children learn to communicate with others, to interpret other's behaviours, to experience emotions, and to act in their relationships. It involves parent-child communication.

Family communication is premised on the fact that open and honest communication creates an atmosphere that allows family members to express their differences as well as love and admiration for one another. It is through family communication that members are able to resolve the unavoidable problems that arise in all families.

Family communication involves the ability of family members to pay attention to what members of the family are thinking and feeling. It is not just talking, but listening to what others have to say in the family. Koerner & Maki (2004) describe family communication as the primary means by which children learn to

communicate with others, to interpret others' behaviours, to experience emotions, and to act in their relationships. Parents' communicative motives and preferences provide a model of behaviour that shapes their children's communication skills and behaviours.

A growing body of research examining family communication patterns has provided support for the notion that the communication environment within the family influences the communicative behaviors of the individual family members as well as perceptions of the family unit (Barbato, Graham, & Perse, 2003; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a, 2004; Orrego & Rodriguez, 2001).

Families repeat themselves within and across generations. Members become caught up in predictable, but often unexamined, life patterns, which are created in part through their interactions with others. Some of these patterns are communication patterns and they reflect the belief that communication is "transactional," which means that interpersonal communication mutually impacts each participant.

Thus, in communicative relationships, participants affect and are affected simultaneously by the others. As two people interact, each creates a context for the other and relates to the other within that context. It does not matter how much more talking one person appears to do; the mutual impact remains the same. Within these views, relationships take precedence over individuals

These family communication patterns are guided by some standards. These are in terms of a set of cognitive representations regarding the ideal ways of communicating among family members (Caughlin, 2003). These standards guide individuals' perceptions, evaluations, and motivations as a benchmark to which actual family interactions are compared and contrasted.

3.2: Different Types of Family Communication Patterns

Caughlin (2003) found that individuals differ substantially in their beliefs about the ideal family interactions. Hence, he identified distinct dimensions that specifically focus on family interaction as principal family communication standards.

These include; openness, respecting privacy, providing support, expression of affection, maintaining structural stability, emotional/instrumental support, politeness, mindreading, discipline, humour/sarcasm, regular routine interaction, and avoidance.

Family environments can be classified according to whether the child is encouraged to develop and express autonomous opinions and ideas or to pursue relational objectives by conforming to parental authority.

These two distinct family environments have gone a long way to influence the dimensions of family communication patterns which are: conversation orientation and conformity orientation, both of which define characteristics of family interactions (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a, 2002b, 2004).

3.2.1: Conversation orientation

This refers to the extent to which family members engage in frequent, spontaneous interactions with each other, unconstrained by topics discussed or time spent in discussion. All members of the family are encouraged to participate, and the family environment emphasizes open communication and the exploration of new ideas. It does not support a communication environment where children are better seen than heard.

Families in this case emphasise the development of strong and varied concept-relations in an environment comparatively free of social restraints. Children enjoying this kind of orientation are usually encouraged to examine different ideas and to even reach a different conclusion from their parents on certain issues.

3.2.2: Conformity orientation

This is characterized by a uniformity of beliefs and attitudes within the family. Interactions focus on maintaining harmonious relationships that reflect obedience to the parents, often manifest in the pressure to agree and to maintain the existing hierarchy (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997, 2002a, 2002b).

Conformity orientation in families results from children focusing on their parents to learn appropriate attitudes and behaviours, including expectations for how one should behave in a given social situation.

Although conversation orientation and conformity orientation are distinct concepts, these two dimensions are not entirely independent of one another. For example, researchers consistently have found small to moderate negative correlations between conformity orientation and conversation orientation (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997;

2002b). In addition, these two dimensions often interact with each another with respect to the effects they have on various outcomes. For example, in research on family communication patterns and conflict behaviors of adult children, Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2002c) found that conversation orientation in the family of origin amplified the effects conformity orientation had on conflict behaviors.

Whichever dimension the communication pattern in a family takes it is important to remark that the style of communication within such family equally goes a long way to influence its pattern(s). Epstein et.al. (1993) identified the following styles of communication as capable of playing key roles in family communication patterns. These are:

- **Clear and direct communication**

Clear and direct communication is the healthiest form of communication and occurs when the message is stated plainly and directly to the appropriate family member. An example of this style of communication is when a mother, disappointed about his son failing to complete his chore, states, "Son, I'm disappointed that you forgot to wash the dishes today without my having to remind you."

- **Clear and indirect communication**

In this second style of communication, the message is clear, but it is not directed to the person for whom it is intended. Using the previous example, the mother might say, "It's disappointing when people forget to complete their chores." In this message the son may not know that his mother is referring to him.

- **Masked and direct communication**

Masked and direct communication occurs when the content of the message is unclear, but directed to the appropriate family member. The mother in our example may say something like, "Son, people just don't work as hard as they used to."

- **Masked and indirect communication**

Masked and indirect communication occurs when both the message and intended recipient is unclear. In unhealthy family relationships, communication tends to be very masked and indirect. An example of this type of communication might be the mother stating, "The youth of today are very lazy."

Marriage and family therapists often report that poor communication is a common complaint of families who are having difficulties. Poor communication

is unclear and indirect. It can lead to numerous family problems, including excessive family conflict, ineffective problem solving, lack of intimacy, and weak emotional bonding. It is therefore expected that family members must always aspire to become more effective communicators in order to improve the quality of their relationships.

3.3: Ways of Promoting Effective Family Communication Patterns

Families can improve their communication skills and patterns by following some suggestions made by Peterson & Green (1999) for building effective family communication. These include:

- **Frequent communicating**

One of the most difficult challenges facing families today is finding time to spend together. With our busy schedules, it is difficult to find sufficient time to spend with one another in meaningful conversation. It is extremely important for families to make time to communicate. These could include, talking in the car; turning the TV off and eating dinner together; scheduling informal or formal family meetings to talk about important issues that affect ones family; and talking to our children at bedtime.

- **Communicating clearly and directly**

Healthy families communicate their thoughts and feelings in a clear and direct manner. This is especially important when attempting to resolve problems that arise between family members (e.g., spouse, parent-child). Indirect and vague communication will not only fail to resolve problems, but will also contribute to a lack of intimacy and emotional bonding between family members.

- **Be an active listener**

An essential aspect of effective communication is listening to what others are saying. Being an active listener involves trying your best to understand the point of view of the other person. Families members need to learn to always listen and pay close attention to verbal and non-verbal messages being passed by any of them. As an active listener, members must learn to acknowledge and respect the other person's perspective and point of view. For example, when listening to a spouse or child, you should nod your head or say, "I understand," which conveys to the other person that you care about what he or she has to say. Another aspect of active listening is seeking clarification if you do not understand the other family member. This can be done by simply asking, "What did you mean when you said..?" or "Did I understand you correctly?"

Be open and honest

- In order for effective communication to take place within families, individual family members must be open and honest with one another. This openness and honesty will set the stage for trusting relationships. Without trust, families cannot build strong relationships. Parents, especially, are responsible for providing a safe environment that allows family members to openly express their thoughts and feelings.

- **Think about the person with whom you are communicating**

Not all family members communicate in the same manner or at the same level. This is especially true of young children. When communicating with young children, it is important for adults to listen carefully to what the children are saying without making unwarranted assumptions. It is also important to take into consideration the ages and maturity levels of children. Parents cannot communicate with children in the same way that they communicate with their spouse because the child may not be old enough to understand.

- **Pay attention to non-verbal messages**

In addition to carefully listening to what is being said, effective communicators also pay close attention to the non-verbal behaviors of other family members. For example, a spouse or child may say something verbally, but their facial expressions or body language may be telling you something completely different. In cases such as these, it is important to find out how the person is really feeling.

- **Be Positive**

While it is often necessary to address problems between family members, or to deal with negative situations, effective communication is primarily positive. Couples who are very dissatisfied with their relationships typically engage in more negative interactions than positive. It is very important for family members to verbally compliment and encourage one another.

3.3: Self Assessment Exercise

1. Explain in simple term what is meant by family communication pattern.
2. Outline and briefly describe the two dimensions of family communication patterns.
3. What are those styles of communication that can affect the patterns of communication within a family?
4. Make a list of any five things you would want to promote effective communication patterns in a family.

4.0: CONCLUSION

Communication is a key to successful family functioning. Clear, open, and frequent communication is a basic characteristic of a strong, healthy family. Families that communicate in healthy ways are more capable of problem-solving and tend to be more satisfied with their relationships. Family members are therefore expected to avoid patterns that do not promote positive interaction so that such is not passed down to others either consciously or unconsciously.

5.0: SUMMARY

Family communication pattern is a communication perspective that focuses on the interaction between two or more persons and the patterns which emerge as they interact over time. It demands that each person within a family system communicates within an interpersonal context and each communication act reflects the nature of those relationships. These account for the variations in the communication patterns found among families. Just as effective communication is almost found in strong and healthy families, poor communication is usually found in unhealthy family relationships. Communication patterns that promote responsiveness to members` needs and serve the function of comfort, encouragement, reassurance of caring and readiness for tangible assistance are those patterns that should be emphasised by family members.

6.0: TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- a. To what extent is it true that patterns of communication vary among families?
- b. Discuss briefly some of the ways of building more effective communication patterns among family members.

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MODULE 3: THE CHILD AND FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS AMONG DIFFERENT CULTURES IN NIGERIA

UNIT 3: EFFECTS OF FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS ON CHILD SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

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1.0: INTRODUCTION

Family communication patterns and styles influence children`s attitudes and behaviours in a number of areas. Some recent research, in fact, has begun to demonstrate a connection between family communication patterns and communication problems such as communication apprehension (Elwood & Schrader, 1998; Hsu, 1998), shyness (Huang, 1999) and unwillingness to communicate (Avtgis, 1999).

2.0: OBJECTIVES

At the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

1. Recall the two categories of family communication patterns
2. Identify the various types of families that are derivable from these two categories of family communication patterns,
3. Describe the effects of these patterns and the characteristics of the family types on the social behaviour characteristics of their children, and
4. Identify keys to building effective family communication and positive social behaviours in children.

3.0: MAIN CONTENT

3.1: Typical Family Communication Patterns and their Effects on Children`s Social Behaviour

Parents typically serve as children`s first communicative role models; thus, the interactions with parents may have the great impact on a child`s communicative development and social behaviour. However, not all families socialize children to communicate in the same ways. Hence, a family`s pattern of communication can be so peculiar and resultantly influential on the child as a member of such family. You will recall the two major family communication patterns earlier discussed in one of the preceding units - conservation-orientation pattern and the conformity-orientation one. These are both capable of influencing the child`s social behaviours. This categorization of family communication patterns yields four family types, the characteristics of which affect the way a child is brought up to relate among his/her peers and within any social system he or she finds him/her self.

Let us look at each of these family types in relation with their communication patterns and the resultant effects on children`s social behaviours.

3.1.1: Pluralistic families

Pluralistic families encourage free and open conversation among members in a supportive, communicative environment with few topical limitations. Family members openly express opinions and ideas that may differ with other family members. They are high in conversation-orientation, that is, the extent to which family members engage in frequent, spontaneous interactions with each other, and all members of the family encouraged to participate in open communication exploration of new ideas. They are however low in conformity-orientation

A child brought up in this type of environment is likely to socially develop towards becoming an energetic-friendly child. The social behaviour characteristics of such child will likely include: self-reliance, self-controlled; cheerfulness; friendly relations with peers; copes well with stress; cooperative with adults; tractable; purposive, interest and curiosity in novel situations.

3.1.2: Protective families

They stress obedience and harmony in the family. Parents tend to prefer that children “be seen and not heard.” Open communication is discouraged and typically family members only discuss topics about which they agree. Protective families are high on conformity-orientation and low on conversation-orientation. That is, interactions within the family focus on maintaining harmonious relationships that reflect both obedience to the parents which often manifest in the pressure to agree and to maintain the existing hierarchy (Koerner, Fitzpatrick, 1997, 2002a & 2002b).

Because of their lack of experience in expressing their own opinions and because conformity to others’ wishes is stressed, children from protective families are easily influenced by people outside of the family, especially those in authoritative positions (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997).

Such children tend to be shy. They are more likely to exhibit reticent behaviours, that is, a behaviour, which occurs when, “people avoid communication because they believe it is better to remain silent than to risk appearing foolish” (Keaten & Kelly, 2000). Children exhibiting these social behavioural characteristics are referred to as reticent as they “engage in chronic silence out of fear of foolishness” (Keaten & Kelly, 2000).

The children who were brought up using this family communication orientation are more likely to develop social behaviours that are characterized by low self-reliance, aggressiveness, low in achievement orientation, quick to anger but fast to recover cheerful mood and quite impulsive.

3.1.3: Consensual families

Communication in consensual families reflects a tension between exploring ideas through open communicative exchanges and a pressure to agree in support of the existing family hierarchy. They are high on both conversation and conformity-orientation. Consensual families encourage open communication about topics when families express unanimity. Children in consensual families attempt to meet two dialectical goals: (a) conforming to their parents’ views, and thus preserving family harmony, while (b) attempting to communicate openly, opinions may differ.

The social behavioural characteristics of children in this group is a combination of those found in both pluralistic and protective families depending on the situation the child finds him/her self.

Thus, children in consensual families may perceive conflicting communication signals from their parents: speak openly, but only express opinions in agreement with parents' views. Children's adoption of the parents' ideas results in less tension in the family. However, children and parents rarely agree on every topic. If children disagree with the parents, they can exercise three options: (a) remain silent on the issue, (b) verbally agree with the parents, even when they hold different views (i.e., lie), or (c) express their opinions and risk disrupting family harmony.

3.1.4: Laissez-faire families

Laissez-faire families are low in both conservation orientation and conformity orientation Here members are free to hold similar or differing opinions and little communication occurs among family members. These families develop little cohesion. In this type of families, the communication patterns do not support situations where members regularly engage each other in conversation. Members place little value on communication or the maintenance of a family unit.

Apart from all these, scholars (Miller et al.'s, 2001) have also observed that the perception of parental approval/disapproval of teen sexual activity is considered a parental communication variable in mediated conceptual model of family relationships and adolescent pregnancy risk. They conclude that parental attitudes and values disapproving of adolescent sexual intercourse are related to lower adolescent pregnancy risk.

In addition to perception of parental disapproval, quality of communication with parents and closeness of the relationship with parents appear to be among the other important aspects of parent-child communication that are related to lower levels of adolescent pregnancy. Many researchers conclude that parent/teen closeness combined with open, positive, and frequent parent/child communication about sex are associated with adolescents' abstinence, postponing sexual debut, having fewer sexual partners, and more consistent contraceptive use (Barnett, Papini, & Gbur, 1991; Gupta, Weiss, & Mane, 1996; Karofsky, Zeng, & Kosovok, 2000; Miller et al., 2001; Romer et al., 1999).

3.2: Keys to Building Effective Family Communication and Positive Social Behaviours in Children

There are many things that families can do to become more effective communicators so as to help improve the quality of their relationships as well as their children`s social behaviours . Peterson and Green (1999) remark that families can improve their communication skills by following some suggestions for building effective family communication. These include:

- **Communicating frequently**
One of the most difficult challenges facing families today is finding time to spend together. According to a recent Wall Street Journal survey, 40% of the respondents stated that lack of time was a greater problem for them than lack of money (Graham & Crossan, 1996).
With our busy schedules, it is difficult to find sufficient time to spend with one another in meaningful conversation. It is extremely important for families to make time to communicate. This could be through, talking in the car; turning the TV off and eating dinner together; scheduling informal or formal family meetings to talk about important issues that affect one`s family; and talking to one`s children at bedtime.
- **Communicating clearly and directly**
Healthy families communicate their thoughts and feelings in a clear and direct manner. This is especially important when attempting to resolve problems that arise between family members (e.g., spouse, parent-child). Indirect and vague communication will not only fail to resolve problems, but will also contribute to a lack of intimacy and emotional bonding between family members.
- **Becoming a more active listener**
An essential aspect of effective communication is listening to what others are saying. Being an active listener involves trying your best to understand the point of view of the other person. Whether you are listening to a spouse or a child, it is important to pay close attention to their verbal and non-verbal messages. As an active listener, you must acknowledge and respect the other person's perspective. For example, when listening to a spouse or child, you should nod your head or say, "I understand," which conveys to the other person that you care about what he or she has to say. Another aspect of active listening is seeking clarification if you do not understand the other family member. This can be done by simply asking, "What did you mean when you said..?" or "Did I understand you correctly?"
Active listening involves acknowledging and respecting the other person's point of view.
- **Being open and honest**

In order for effective communication to take place within families, individual family members must be open and honest with one another. This openness and honesty will set the stage for trusting relationships. Without trust, families cannot build strong relationships. Parents, especially, are responsible for providing a safe environment that allows family members to openly express their thoughts and feelings.

- **Thinking about the person with whom you are communicating**
Not all family members communicate in the same manner or at the same level. This is especially true of young children. When communicating with young children, it is important for adults to listen carefully to what the children are saying without making unwarranted assumptions. It is also important to take into consideration the ages and maturity levels of children. Parents cannot communicate with children in the same way that they communicate with their spouse because the child may not be old enough to understand.
- **Paying attention to non-verbal messages**
In addition to carefully listening to what is being said, effective communicators also pay close attention to the non-verbal behaviors of other family members. For example, a spouse or child may say something verbally, but their facial expressions or body language may be telling you something completely different. In cases such as these, it is important to find out how the person is really feeling.
- **Being Positive**
While it is often necessary to address problems between family members, or to deal with negative situations, effective communication is primarily positive. Marital and family researchers have discovered that unhappy family relationships are often the result of negative communication patterns (e.g., criticism, contempt, defensiveness). In fact, John Gottman and his colleagues have found that satisfied married couples had five positive interactions to every one negative interaction (Gottman, 1994). Couples who are very dissatisfied with their relationships typically engage in more negative interactions than positive. It is very important for family members to verbally compliment and encourage one another.

3.3: Self Assessment Exercise

1. Identify the two major categories of family communication patterns.
2. Identify the four family types associated with these communication patterns.
3. What are the likely effects of each of the four types of families on the social behaviours of their children?

4.0: CONCLUSION

Family communication patterns, particularly a pattern that reflects a high degree of conversation and open exchange of ideas among family members, may be associated with lower communication apprehension (Elwood & Schrader, 1998; Hsu, 1998), less unwillingness to communicate (Avtgis, 1999) and less shyness (Huang, 1999).

If parents communicate little to their children and do not discuss their own feelings and emotions openly, then children do not have effective models for daily interaction or for discussion of feelings. Goleman (1995) explained the centrality of family interaction in developing emotional intelligence, “we learn how to feel about ourselves and how others will react to our feelings; how to think about these feelings and what choices we have in reacting; how to read and express hopes and fears” (Goleman, 1995).

5.0: SUMMARY

In this Unit, you have been able to interact with the different family interpersonal **communication** patterns and the family types derivable from them. The differences revealed in these family communication patterns and their links with the development of children`s social behaviour characteristics have discussed. Pluralistic families seem to possess communication patterns that can best facilitate the development of more positive social behaviours in children. This is followed by the consensual type. The protective and the laissez-faire types are however as good as the other two in the area of facilitating positive social behaviour development in the children. Suggestions with regards to how best these behaviours can be better promoted are provided.

6.0: TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

How far is true that a child's family communication patterns and type are capable of exerting serious influence on his/her social behavioural characteristics?

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MODULE 3: THE CHILD AND FAMILY COMMUNICATION PATTERNS AMONG DIFFERENT CULTURES IN NIGERIA

UNIT 4: CHILDREN AND THEIR VIEWS OF SELF AND OTHERS IN THE FAMILY

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1.0: INTRODUCTION

The family is the basic unit of socialization in every society. It is comprised of key members of whom the child is one. A family without a child is regarded as one that is not yet fully formed. Hence, children have become accepted as very important in every family. As members of the family, children have very unique way of perceiving themselves in terms of likes, dislikes, preferences, what they think about themselves and how look at other people in the family. These varying perceptions contribute significantly to how they want to be related with by the different members of their family, as mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters (younger or elder), uncles, aunts, nephews, cousins or other relations.

2.0: OBJECTIVES

By the end of this Unit, you should be able to:

1. Describe the various ways by which children view themselves.
2. Describe how they view other people in the family.

3.0: MAIN CONTENT

3.1: Children and their Views of Self

Children are born small, knowing the world in limited ways, with little or no understanding of other people as separate from themselves in body or mind, and no understanding of social relations or morality. They grow larger, learn about the physical and social worlds, join different cooperative social groups, and cultivate a more and more complex sense of right and wrong.

Children are at once thinking, acting, and feeling beings. Their thoughts and actions always involve feelings. They may like some subjects and be excited about them and interested in certain media or dislike doing routine drills, be angry with a certain teacher or be intensely involved with a project.

Children at early ages of their lives are very good at human group affiliation, but they do this cautiously as they can. Hence, their views of self at this stage of their life are partially reflected in the exhibition of signs of preferential attraction to others like them. Brooks & Lewis (1976) confirmed with a remark that year-old infants are interested in and attracted to other infants-including those they have never met before at an age when they are wary of strange adults.

During early childhood, children are known to develop the attributes, abilities, attitudes and values that help define their own "self-concept". Hence, as early as age 3, (between 18 and 30 months), Oswatt (2007) observes that children have developed their Categorical Self. This is the concrete way of viewing themselves in "this or that" labels.

Specifically, they view themselves in terms of age as "child or adult". They use gender and physical characteristics to label and view themselves as "boy or girl", and "short or tall". They are proud to say "I am a boy or I am a girl" or "I am short or I am tall".

They are also known to describe their self-concept in in simple emotional and attitude terms. Here, they are found to express their preferences and emotional attachments to people, animals and things in very concrete and observable terms. For example, You find children describing themselves saying "I'm shorter than Mummy", "I love Musa", "Today, I'm happy"

In addition, young children develop an Inner Self, private thoughts, feelings, and desires that nobody else knows about unless a child chooses to share this information.

The fact that early self-concepts are based on easily defined and observed variables, and because many young children are given lots of encouragement, pre-operational children often have relatively high self-esteem (a judgment about one's worth). Young children are also generally optimistic that they have the ability to learn a new skill, succeed, and finish a task if they keep trying. This belief is called "Achievement-Related Attribution", or sometimes "self-efficacy". Self-esteem comes from several sources, such as school ability, athletic ability, friendships, and relationships with peers.

The temperament of a child is one factor that is capable of affecting his or her self-concept. For example, a child's temperament can affect how they view themselves and their ability to successfully complete tasks. Children with easy temperaments are typically willing to try things repeatedly and are better able to handle frustrations and challenges. In contrast, children with more difficult temperaments may become more easily frustrated and discouraged by challenges or changes in the situation.

Children who can better cope with frustrations and challenges are more likely to think of themselves as successful, valuable, and good, which will lead to a higher self-esteem. In contrast, children who become easily frustrated and discouraged often quit or need extra assistance to complete a task. These children may have lower self-esteem if they start to believe that they can't be successful and aren't valuable.

Also young children with parents and teachers providing them with positive feedback about their abilities and attempts to succeed (even if they aren't successful the first time) usually have higher self-esteem. On the contrary, when parents or teachers are regularly negative or punitive towards children's attempts to succeed, or regularly ignore or downplay those achievements, young children will have a poor self-image and a lower self-esteem.

Peers also have an impact on young children's self-concept. Young children who have playmates and classmates that are usually nice and apt to include the child in activities will develop a positive self-image. However, a young child who is regularly left out, teased, or bullied by same-age or older peers can develop low self-esteem.

We have to note the fact that each child is unique, and he or she may respond to different environments in different ways. This uniqueness influences the way a child views himself or herself. Some young children are naturally emotionally "resilient" in certain situations. Resilient children experience or witness something seemingly negative or harmful, without experiencing damage to their self-esteem or emotional development.

The cultural identity of a child equally affects his or her view of self. In a situation where children are taught about their cultural and religious traditions it goes a long way to enrich their self concept. Consequently, it makes them to view themselves as important members of a cultural setting.

3.2: Children and their Views of others in the Family

Other people in the family would normally include older children, father, mother, and in some cases stewards, and extended family members. Each and every member of a child's family relates with the child in one form or the other and the child reciprocates based on his or her perception of each of these members.

Malaguzzi (1993) visualizes the child as an individual that is rich in potential, strong, powerful, competent and most of all connected to adults and other children. This description and connection has significant effect on the ways children view other people in the family, especially as they live toddlerhood. As young children leave toddlerhood behind, they also begin to mature in their ability to interact with others socially and commence the creation of other social relationships.

The need to create new social relationships demands that, children must acquire some social skills such as learning to take turns and follow simple group rules and norms. This makes them to view others in the family as individuals or groups that should be connected with, listened to, and get directives or directions from.

The fact that families typically give young children the opportunity to interact with a variety of people in a range of roles makes them to view members of the family (older children, adults and parents) as authority figures that they must follow absolutely. They see them as people giving rules that are real with unchangeable guidelines. But as they grow older these change, and they develop more abstract thinking, and become less self-focused.

Children become more capable of forming more flexible rules and applying them selectively for the sake of shared objectives and a desire to co-operate with other people within and outside the family.

They view elders as individuals who can help facilitate the development of necessary positive attitudes, values, and proper social behaviours of the culture into which they were born. Children perceive other people in the family as individuals that should help develop in them those tools needed for success in their native culture and as active participants in the preservation of such culture from generation to generation.

Children are equally known to be keen at viewing other people in the family such as their mother, father older siblings and other adults as individuals who can be imitated or modeled, especially where they find them interesting and attractive. However, the danger associated with this is that where the role model is exhibiting traits that are negative and quite anti-social but ignorantly found interesting by the children, it might create an unnecessarily influence on the growth of the children.

They also see other people in the family as “reservoir of love and affection” which these people must share them as children. Hence, children tend to want rely so much on this people when they are in need.

Children also view the adults, their parents and older siblings in the family as agents of with the approval of right and wrong. Hence, they are usually very conscious of what any of these people in the family will say any time they are trying to exhibit a right or wrong act.

In situations where any of this other people in the family presents him or herself in a manner that is contrary to the ways they have been perceived or viewed by the children it could strain their relationship and create distrust in the minds of the affected children.

3.3: Self Assessment Exercise

1. State any two ways by which children view themselves.
2. How do children view adults and their parents as members of the family?

4.0: CONCLUSION

Children are active participants in the world around them, beginning with their immediate family. They have very unique ways of viewing themselves and other people in the family. The self image of a child goes a long way to influence how he or she relates with fellow child and other people in the family. Hence, members of the family to which a child belongs should be conscious of this when handling issues related to a child`s of self image and his or her perception of others in the family.

5.0: SUMMARY

This Unit has availed you an opportunity to better understand how children view themselves as well as other people in the family. The likely negative effects of getting children to have a wrong view of any other member of the family have also been highlighted. It is therefore important for adults, parents and other older children in the family to provide avenues that will enhance brighter chances of developing positive views of self and other people in the family in children. Through this, positive emotional and psychological development will be enhanced in the growing child.

6.0: TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

How far is it true that children have very unique ways of viewing themselves and other people in the family? Support your position with some concrete real life examples.

7.0: REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED FURTHER READINGS

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MODULE 4: ROLES OF THE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY IN CHILD REARING PRACTICES

Unit 1: The School and Community Roles in Child Rearing Practices

Unit 2: Modernity, Parenting and Child Rearing Practices

Unit 3: Improving Child Rearing Practices Through Different Community Support Networks

UNIT 1: THE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY ROLES IN CHILD REARING PRACTICES

CONTENTS

1.0: Introduction

2.0: Objectives

3.0: Main Content

3.1: Meaning of School

3.2: Meaning of Community

3.3: The School and Community Roles in Child Rearing

3.4: Self Assessment Exercise

4.0: Conclusion

5.0: Summary

6.0: Tutor Marked Assignment

7.0: References/Further Readings

1.0: INTRODUCTION

You will recall that in the last Unit attempts were made to discuss how children view themselves as well as other people in the family. The importance of correct perception of others by the child on his or her emotional and psychological development was also emphasized. As part of his/her growth and development, the child must enroll for formal education in school and he/she must necessarily continue to interact with his/her community. It therefore becomes important at this juncture to highlight and discuss the roles which both the school and the community, where the child operates, play in his/her upbringing and growth.

2.0: OBJECTIVES

At the end of your interaction with this Unit you should be able to:

1. Explain the concepts of school and schooling.
2. Explain the concept of community and
3. Describe some of the roles played by both the school and community in the upbringing of a child.

3.0: MAIN CONTENT

3.1: The Concepts of School and Schooling

The term school can be used to refer to all educational institutions where one or more teachers are available to give instruction under an assigned administrator; based in one or more buildings; and with enrolled or prospectively enrolled students. Wikipedia (2009) describes a school as an institution designed to allow and encourage students (or "pupils") to learn, under the supervision of teachers.

Schools are organized spaces purposed for teaching and learning. The classrooms, where teachers teach and students learn, are of central importance, but typical schools have many other areas which may include: athletic field or playground; office- where the administrative work of the school is done; specialized classrooms including laboratories for science education; library- where students consult and check out books and magazines and auditorium or hall where student theatrical and musical productions can be staged and where all-school events such as assemblies are held.

It could be public or private. A **public school** is one that is supported with public funds; authorized by action of and operated under the oversight of a publicly constituted local, state or federal educational agency. A public school provides educational services to all students who are enrolled; has appropriately credentialed teachers who provide instruction; has at least one appropriately credentialed administrator, usually a /head teacher, who is responsible for all aspects of school administration including supervision and evaluation of staff, fiscal responsibility, student discipline and safety, supervision and assessment of academic achievement and school accountability.

A **private school** on the other hand is a school as defined that is, owned or operated by a private person, firm, association, organization, religious groups or corporation, rather than by a public agency. a school established and controlled privately and supported by endowment and tuition It is run and supported by private individuals or a corporation rather than by a government or public agency. Private, nonpublic, or independent schools do not normally receive governmental funding and are usually administered by individuals, denominational or secular boards. In contemporary Nigeria most of them are operated for profit. They are supported primarily by private funds. They are

characterized by a process of double selection because the schools select their teachers and students and the parents select the schools for their children.

Schooling is an organized form of indoctrination that takes place in schools. It is a sub-set of education. It is instruction, education, or training, especially, when received in a school. Schooling is the act of teaching. Schooling also involves acquiring skills in an educational institution through training carried out systematically and in a disciplined way. Schooling is a process of education linked with the formal system of education.

Schooling deals primarily with literacy and numeracy, structured curriculum and subjects to be learnt. It requires a specific space and environment and it is a major component of any progressive community.

3.2: The Concept of Community

A community can be simply described as a group of people who live in the same area, or the area in which they live or a group of people with a common background or with shared interests within society or a group of nations with a common history or common economic or political interests (Microsoft Encarta, 2009). It could also be described as a body of people having common rights, privileges, or interests, or living in the same place under the same laws and regulations. It is also a feeling of sharing things and belonging to a group in the place where one lives.

It is a complex arrangement of people with kinship, political, economic, religious and social ties to one another and other communities. Depending on the nature of these relationships, communities can be cohesive or divided. Ties among community members are often generational, and deeply entrenched, as are the ways by which a community deals with crisis or problems.

Traditionally a "community" can be defined as a group of interacting people living in a common location. The word is often used to refer to a group that is organized around common values and social cohesion within a shared geographical location, generally in social units larger than a household. The word can also refer to the national community or global community.

Since the advent of the Internet, the concept of community no longer has geographical limitations, as people can now virtually gather in an online community and share common interests regardless of physical location (Wikipedia, 2009).

3.3: The Roles of the School and Community in Child Rearing

Schools are institutions structured to operate in such manners that will ensure that every child's needs and deserves are addressed to the best of their capabilities. They provide children with a safe place to learn and grow; a

healthy start and a healthy future; a marketable skill to use upon graduation and a chance to give back to peers and community.

The family is a basic unit of socialization and the nucleus of every community. Families play a critical role in their children's growth and development. The network of social relationships and interconnectedness among families in any society makes for effective functioning of the community as an agent of child rearing.

The school relates with the community by striving to keep parents and others caring for the child integrally involved in their children's education particularly during their period of early growth. The schools help the community through parents facilitate their children's learning at home and at school and become advocates for their children and for school improvement

Both the school and the community therefore play key complementary roles in shaping the lives of a growing child. This is informed by the fact that no single person or institution can meet all the needs of the children in a community. But with the school and the community taking one or more of these needs, they can together weave the seamless web of family and the community support needed by the growing child.

The school assists in looking first at what is known about children's abilities when they first enter school, various factors associated with those abilities, and the implications of those abilities for children's later school success. It also looks at evidence regarding the effectiveness of various interventions that include a family or community focus. These interventions range from large-scale, comprehensive programs to highly targeted strategies addressing specific skills. Some interventions begin in the earliest months of a child's life; others target the preschool years or early elementary years or both.

One major role which the school especially the public one plays in child rearing is that it creates chance for a child to get to know many other children in the community, neighborhood or town, which makes it easier for after-school socializing. Also, public schools usually have a more diverse student body than private schools, and going to school with people from different cultural, racial, and economic backgrounds can teach children many important life lessons.

Specifically, the school through its teachers sees firsthand the everyday issues facing children, their families and the early childhood community at large. Hence, it serves as advocate of the correct type of training a child should be given in his/her community. Apart from this role, the school is expected to set model examples of child rearing practices that promote positive growth and

development of children for the families and the community complementary roles. The school therefore uses its teachers to supplement the nurturing role of the parents in the community without necessarily violating the parent-child bond.

With the increasing complexity of modern life, a growing number of family functions in child rearing have been taken over by the community institutions and organizations: education by the school system; recreation and entertainment by peers and religious organizations. These institutions now provide fora for children to be trained in the norms and mores of the society which the children find themselves. A growing child who decides not to be part of this effort is usually described as a non-conformist or deviant who must be checked before he or she begins to influence others.

The school as a symbol of community solidarity therefore serves individual child`s developmental needs, provides him or her opportunities for upward mobility, teach morality and what it takes to be responsible members of their community and citizens of their country.

The school and the community at formal and non formal levels respectively assist in changing children`s overall life situations and attitudes which they pass on to these children in the form of new child rearing practices that promote cognitive development.

3.3: Self Assessment Exercise

1. In a simple sentence describe the concepts of school and schooling.
2. Briefly describe the concept of community.
3. Identify any two roles of the school in the rearing of a child.
4. State two ways through which the community participates in the rearing of child.

4.0: CONCLUSION

The idea that early childhood is a time for allowing children to learn and develop through play, exploration, and child-initiated discovery makes it important to accept the fact that the school, the home and the community to which they all belong must play a key role in the child`s upbringing. So all of them are expected to provide the child with a variety of open-ended materials and opportunities to manipulate, create, and learn with the whole self (body and mind) in direct encounters with materials, activities and people. The more responsible the school and the community are the more their readiness to play key roles in the rearing of children located within such a community.

5.0: SUMMARY

In this Unit you have about the meanings of school, schooling and community. Specific attempts have been made to discuss the roles which each of these concepts play in child rearing. The discussions have revealed that the school serves to complement the roles of the families and the community in the upbringing of the growing child. Both the school and the community help to increase children`s knowledge base, including the ways of using language.

6.0: TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Establish the fact that both the school and the community play key complementary in the business of child rearing which is thought to be the main concern of the institution of family.

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MODULE 4: ROLES OF THE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY IN CHILD REARING PRACTICES

UNIT 2: MODERNITY, PARENTING AND CHILD REARING PRACTICES

CONTENTS

1.0: Introduction

2.0: Objectives

3.0: Main Content

3.1: Modernity in Parenting and Child Rearing Practices

3.2: Effects of Modernity on Parenting and Child Rearing Practices

3.3: Self Assessment Exercise

4.0: Conclusion

5.0: Summary

6.0: Tutor Marked Assignment

7.0: References/Further Readings

MAIN CONTENT

1.0: INTRODUCTION

You will recall that you interacted with a Unit titled “Concepts of Child Rearing and Parenting” in Module 2 Unit 1. A quick recall of these concepts will be very useful in understanding the topic of this Unit- Modernity and Child rearing Practices.

For the sake of this quick recall, child rearing has been described in Module 2 Unit 1, as the process of promoting and supporting the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood. . It is the training or bringing-up of children by parents or parent-substitutes. It is used also for child rearing practices in different societies, at different economic levels, in different ethnic groups, etc. It differs from parenting, in that, in child rearing, the emphasis is on the act of training or bringing up the child and the interaction between the parent and child, while parenting emphasizes the responsibility and qualities of exemplary behaviour of the parent. Effective socialization of the child therefore depends greatly on the quality and richness of child rearing practices and parenting. (You can get more information on these two concepts from Module 2 Unit1).

What we did not however talk about in that module and unit was the effect or influence of modernity on the concepts of parenting and child rearing practices.

2.0: OBJECTIVES

It is expected that reading through the next few paragraphs of this Unit, you should be able to:

1. Explain the concept of modernity.
2. Identify instances of reflecting modernity in parenting and child rearing practices in among Nigerian families.
3. Discuss the effects of modernity on parenting styles and child rearing practices in Nigeria.

3.0: MAIN CONTENT

3.1: Modernity in Parenting and Child Rearing Practices

Modernity as a concept can be described as the quality of being up-to- date. It involves changing something in order to make it conform to modern tastes, attitudes, or standards, or be changed in this way. A cognitive factor that has been contributing to cultural variation in parenting in recent times is what Patel-Amin & Power (2002) described as attitudinal modernity--a broad concept that refers to the "Westernization" of attitudes in such diverse areas as gender role conceptions, political attitudes, attitudes toward authority, the family, and religious beliefs.

Wikipedia (2009) describes modernity as a shorthand term for modern society or industrial civilization. Portrayed in more detail, it is associated with a certain set of attitudes towards the world, the idea of the world as open to transformation by human intervention and a complex of economic institutions, especially industrial production and a market economy. Largely as a result of these characteristics, modernity is vastly more dynamic than any previous type of social order. It is a society—more technically, a complex of institutions—which unlike any preceding culture lives in the future rather than the past. (Giddens, 1998)

There have been numerous ways of understanding what modernity is, particularly in the field of sociology. Modernity may be considered "marked and defined by an obsession with 'evidence'", visuality, and visibility (Leppert 2004, 19). In general, it involves increased movement of goods, capital, people, and information among formerly separate areas, and increased influence that reaches beyond a local area and increased specialization of different segments of society, such as the division of labour, and interdependency among areas.

Modernity has been characterized in many seemingly contradictory ways and many of those characterizations can be reduced to a relatively simple set of concepts of social change, a phenomenon which incidentally has been having significant effects on family, its members and that transpire therein including child rearing.

Modernity has therefore become one major phenomenon that has been most significant effect on the attitudes of individuals especially those from countries undergoing the rapid social and economic changes that usually accompany industrialization and urbanization.

3.2: Effects of Modernity on Parenting Styles and Child Rearing Practices in Nigeria.

The paradox of modernity is that while it has brought a series of seemingly indisputable benefits to the people it has equally been accompanied with some unpalatable experiences for human beings. For instance, lower infant mortality rate, decreased death from starvation, eradication of some of the fatal diseases, more equal treatment of people with different backgrounds and incomes, and so on can be identified as some of the positive effects of modernity. But on the other side of the continuum are issues such as population explosion and its attendant problems courtesy of improved medical care, loss of communal living principles to mention just but a few. Parents as major actors in child rearing have not been spared of some of these effects. So also are their children.

Parents` level of modernity is capable of predicting the nature of parental child rearing values and practices in a given society. Parenting and child rearing practices cannot therefore be excluded from the process of modernity. No one can doubt that modernity has affected childrearing in many profound ways. Some changes have been unquestionably to the good. Other changes have been clearly for the ill: for example, the dissolution of familial and community bonds that has cut millions of children loose from the guidance and protection that they need during their formative years.

Mechanical and scientific invention has changed human health and all aspects of human society (economic, religious, social, and theoretical). Technology for instance has made a wide variety of supports available to families that are available within our traditional cultures. The availability of different kinds of technologies has radically changed people`s lives despite the pros and cons of technological development. For example, bottle feeding has made it easier for women to have more time for their jobs. But the introduction of bottle feeding and the decrease in breastfeeding has adversely affected the development of needed affection and love usually associated with breastfeeding in the course of child rearing.

Again in societies with rapid flux, it is normal to witness dramatic changes from one generation to the next and these changes affect the way children are raised. Hence, these lead to differences in the type of care that is provided for children. Families living under traditional beliefs will raise children in one way that is different from those who consider themselves modern and possess quite a different set of beliefs and patterns that determine their child rearing practices. The bonds that used to hold family members together as the fundamental unit of society, have become weakened by cultural, demographic, economic, and political factors resulting from modernity.

Furthermore, it is a known fact that the Nigerian society before now had a very high regard for parenting. Children and their upbringing were considered the responsibility of the entire community. Collective groups traditionally raised children. But with modernization and globalization these collective child rearing patterns have become eroded to varying degrees in many of our communities. This is due in part, to migration patterns, acculturation, and acquisition of new life styles, changing perceptions and misconceptions about expectations and the realities of life in the western world.

Child rearing in modern day Nigeria has become quite challenging. In a rapidly changing world, the demands of daily life often times seems to overshadow the structure, care and nurturing that our children need in our role as parents. What we now witness too often is the abandoning of parental roles to nannies and the schools with such parents forgetting that they are giving other people permission to define their children`s thoughts and attitudes and indirectly defining their future as they see fit.

Modernity to some extent has given room to parents to condone their children`s misbehavior in the name of promoting permissive environment for such children to grow. For example, a larger percentage of Nigerian parents nowadays are finding it difficult to employ `spanking` as a tool for correcting their children`s misbehaviour, whereas before now the traditional Nigerian family had a strong belief in the philosophy of `spare the rod and spoil the child`.

The foregoing discussion does not however imply that modernity is not associated with positive growth of the child. Scholars like Jeffer Shears and Jo Ann Robinson (2005) have been able to establish the fact that higher levels of modernity can be associated with better outcomes for children. A study on the impact of fathering attitudes and practices on child development conducted by these scholars revealed that father`s modernity (which broadly speaking encouraged autonomy in their children) was associated with positive-mother-child interaction and child cognitive development. Results show that fathers` modernity defined as endorsing more child-directed versus adult-directed parenting attitudes was a correlate of maternal beliefs and maternal supportiveness, and was directly associated with higher cognitive scores for the focus child.

3.3: Self Assessment Exercise

1. Explain the concept of modernity in not more than two sentences.
2. Cite three examples of incidences of modernity in a typical Nigerian family/

3. List any three positive and two negative effects of modernity on parenting and child rearing.

4.0: CONCLUSION

When societies modernize, child-rearing practices change along with everything else. Parents become more interested in their children's intellectual development and probably want to do more to encourage it than they did in the past. This however does not imply that the growing child does not experience some negative effects of modernity.

The fact that both the parents and their children have to learn to gradually adapt to changes that come along with modernity means that they have to learn to sift from the barrage of new and different beliefs and practices that compete strongly with their own currently held beliefs. Families find both wanted and unwanted changes taking place in their lives and in the lives of their children. Some changes are hoped for and chosen, some are absorbed without conscious choice, and some are resisted but thrust upon families by the powerful messages of the new culture. The overall effect of all these is that their hitherto child rearing practices become altered and the child becomes a victim of modernisation sometimes for good and at times for the worst.

5.0: SUMMARY

In this Unit you learnt about the concept of modernity and its effects on parenting and child rearing practices. Specifically, the Unit availed you an opportunity to understand the inevitability of the phenomenon of modernity in any growing society, its negative and positive effects on child rearing practices and the need for parents to be skilful in manipulating the gains of modernity for the good of their children and themselves.

6.0: TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Establish the relationship between modernity and the practices of child rearing in a typical family of the contemporary Nigerian society.

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MODULE 4: ROLES OF THE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY IN CHILD REARING PRACTICES

UNIT 3: IMPROVING CHILD REARING PRACTICES THROUGH DIFFERENT COMMUNITY SUPPORT NETWORKS

CONTENTS

1.0: Introduction

2.0: Objectives

3.0: Main Content

3.1: Typical Community Support Networks

3.2: Community Support Networks and their Values for Child Rearing Practices

3.3: Self Assessment Exercise

4.0: Conclusion

5.0: Summary

6.0: Tutor Marked Assignment

7.0: References/Further Readings

1.0: INTRODUCTION

Families have always been embedded in networks of relatives, neighbours and friends. These network members have undoubtedly influenced the rearing of children, sometimes directly and often indirectly. The school and community as institutions that play key role in children rearing as discussed in the previous unit are part of these social support networks. This unit therefore hopes to expose you as a reader to the various typical community support networks and their values for positive growth of the child.

2.0: OBJECTIVES

It is hoped that your interaction with this Unit would avail you an opportunity to

1. Explain what is meant by social or community support networks
2. Explain the values of these social and community support networks on child rearing.

3.0: MAIN CONTENT

3.1: Community Support Networks

Community support network can be simply described as that network of people outside the household of a family who engage in activities and exchanges of an affective and or material nature with the members of the immediate family. The persons making up the community support network may change from parent to parent and child to child, even within the same nuclear family.

Community support networks exist to assist members, children inclusive, to navigate their environment and explore the benefits available to them as they grow in their community.

Community support networks should aim at expanding and strengthening positive relationships between children and various members in the local community. They serve as local resource base for the growing child and help to foster a sense of community in them.

Community support suggests interpersonal relationships and behaviours based on positive functions. The various forms of supports could include culturally and linguistically appropriate services that help children to become integrated into their community.

Typical examples of community and social support networks that serve very useful purposes for child rearing include the peer groups, youth organisations, religious organisations, social clubs, professional associations, trade groups, student associations, township clubs etc.

3.2: Values of Social and Community Support Networks on Child Rearing

Cutrona and Russell (1987) were of the opinion that any social support should serve some basic functions which include guidance, reliable alliance, attachment, reassurance of worth, social integration and opportunity for nurturance.

Each of these functions has specific values in the process of child rearing. **Guidance** for instance refers to advice or information often obtained from mentors, parents – figures or even teachers who are usually members of the community to which a child belongs. Such advice relating to the ethics of relating with adults, peers and different groups of people in the community is provided through this medium.

Reliable alliance refers to the assurance that others can be counted on for tangible assistance, as money or shelter. The support network here involves aids and provision of needs by people other than parents in critical times of need. For instance, we know of communities organizing scholarship schemes for indigent and/or brilliant students in the community. Children feel more comfortable when they know that there is somebody to rely upon for their basic or immediate needs particularly in the absence of their parents.

Attachment on the other hand refers to a sense of emotional closeness to others from which one derives a sense of security. A good network of social and community support is that which allows the growing child to learn how to associate with people. Where parents, adults and teachers in the community present themselves as good role models, the growing child becomes better adjusted socially in the course of growing up.

Reassurance of worth as part of the functions of social support network provides the growing child with an opportunity for his or her competence, skills and values to be recognized by different categories of people being interacted with in the community. This gives him or her the confidence to explore other avenues of relationships and become more accepted in the community.

Social integration refers to a sense of belonging to a group that shares similar interests, concerns, and recreational activities. As a function of social support network provides avenues for the child to become a full- fledged member of the community to which he or she belongs. This is in terms of identity- family name, communal affiliation/indigeneship, imbibing the mores and cultural traits of his or her immediate community, and youth affinity.

The social and community support network also offers the growing child the chances of rearing him or her to become an individual that who can be relied upon by others in the community for their own well being. This implies that as he or she is growing, he or she is brought up to realize the importance of interdependence in human relations. This is the **nurturance** function. He or she is made to see him/herself as a provider of some services to some other people in the community.

Social and community supports help children to learn to survive, and facilitate their participation and integration in activities that are regularly carried out in their communities. They connect children and other members of the community with local organisations, social and economic institutions that help in preparing them on how to embrace the challenges of growing and acquire skills necessary for building a future for themselves.

3.3: Self-Assessment Exercises

- a. What is community or social support network?
- b. Highlight any three values of community or social support networks in child rearing.

4.0: CONCLUSION

Effective nurturing and upbringing of a child is dependent upon a multiplicity of factors among which is the different types of community and social support networks. They provide stimulation of the child for emotional, social and intellectual developments through a path work of formal and informal services

provided by peer groups, age groups, trade groups, adult figures, opinion leaders, government agencies, business groups and non-governmental organisations.

These social and community support networks are therefore expected to be recognised as vital tools for promoting proper child rearing among families and in the society. This is because where they are well utilised they serve as agents of social integration, alliance and instruments for building positive relationships between the children and other members of their community.

5.0: SUMMARY

The Unit has provided you as a reader with an opportunity to learn about social and community support networks and their role in the upbringing of a child both in the family and in the larger society. Such knowledge has also exposed you to the values embedded in these support networks. It is expected that the experience you have acquired through this Unit will further enhance your understanding of this Module.

6.0: TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Discuss the values of social and community support networks in the upbringing of a child using concrete examples drawn from your locality.

7.0: REFERENCES AND SUGGESTED FURTHER READINGS

- Cochran, M.M. Brassard, J.A. (1979) Child development and personal social networks JSTOR: Child Development 50 (3) 601-616
- Cutrona, C.E. & Russell, D. W. (1987) The provisions of social support and adaptation to stress. In W.H. Jones & D. Perlman (Eds.), *Advances in Personal Relationships*. Greenwich CT: JAI Press
- Greer, S. (2009) AW2 community support network AW2 Blog Retrieved 3rd August 2009