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**ASSIGNMENT**

**(1)WHAT IS FAMILY**

The most basic institution in any society is the family and it is the social context into which members of a society derive their primary identity. Sociologists have come up with different definitions of the family and this owing to the fact that the family has various manifestations, organisation and structures in various societies. One can then talk of various types or forms of family, including primary, secondary, single parent, nuclear and extended(Knuttila). Hence, Mair(1972), defined the family as a domestic group in which parents and children live together, and in its elementary form consists of a couple and their children. Duberman and Hartjen(1979) defined a family as universal institution whose most important functions are to socialise and nurture the younger generation. Similarly, Smith and Preston(1982) defined the family as a social group whose members are related either through common ancestry or marriage and are bound by moral and economic rights and duties. Some Sociologists define family as an intimate domestic group of people related to one another by bonds of blood, sexual mating, or legal ties. It has been a very resilient social unit that has survived and adapted through time.

Family is defined as a specific group of people that may be up of partners, children, parents, aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents. The definition of family is the group of people who share common ancestors. An example of family is all the descendants of a specific.

**(2) DISCUSS THE FUNCTIONS OF THE FAMILY**

a. Nurture: Every child is born into a family and every child is expected to be fed, clothed, educated and cared for. This responsibility lies in the hands of the family; hence the family ensures providing for the welfare needs of the children thereby ensuring the survival of the next generation of society.

b. Regulation of Sexual Relationships: One of the paramount biological needs of man in all society is sexual relationship. Such relationship is often protected with rules and regulations in all societies and it is the family that helps and enforces such rules. This is done to prevent incestuous relationships for example the need for one not to have sexual relationship with a close relative or kin etc. The family also screens and approves sexual partners and spouses for members.

c. Procreation: The family through the regulation of sexual relationship function fulfils the biological need of reproduction and perpetuation of both the immediate family and the society as a whole.

d. Social placement: An individual acquires his identity and place in society through his family. The family ascribes many statuses to its members such as; race, ethnic affiliation, nationality, religion, royalty etc.

e. Affection and companionship: The family is expected to provide affection and companionship for its members. Children are given warm affection within the family to develop a positive self-image, and adults in the family need intimate companionship to cope with life. This breeds a sense of belonging.

**(3)** **DISCUSS THE AFRICAN TRADITIONAL FAMILY**

Family plays a central role in African society. It shapes such daily experiences as how and where individuals live, how they interact with the people around them, and even, in some cases, whom they marry. It can determine a person's political identity and the way money and property are transferred. In rural areas, the family typically remains the basic unit of agricultural production.

However, no single type of family exists in Africa. Societies have defined family in many different ways, and many bear little resemblance to the Western idea of the nuclear family. Furthermore, throughout the continent, traditional family patterns are changing. Colonialism, capitalism, the growth of cities, exposure to Western culture, and increasing opportunities for women are some of the factors that are affecting the shape of family life.

FAMILY STRUCTURE

Each of the many family systems in Africa can be defined in terms of two broad kinds of relationships. Relationships of descent are genealogical—that is, based on the connections between generations. Relationships of affinity are marital—based on marriage. The interweaving of these relationships creates the family that an individual sees every day, as well as the wider network of kinship that surrounds each person.

Relationships of Descent

Everyone is part of some sort of descent system, either patrilineal, matrilineal, or both. In patrilineal systems, property and political power pass through the male side of the family; the female side determines descent in matrilineal systems. In these relationships, senior generations have more power or status than junior ones. Younger people are expected to show respect toward older family members. In the past, this power could take the form of ownership. Among some peoples in the Congo Basin, for example, a man could sell his sister's child into slavery.

Relationships of Affinity

MARRIAGE SYSTEMS in Africa are highly diverse. In sub-Saharan Africa, some pairings of men and women are temporary, others permanent. Depending on the culture, a couple may live in the husband's home or the wife's home. Among some groups, such as the ASANTE, each spouse continues to live in the home in which he or she was born. Children may stay with their parents until they marry, or they may spend part of their adolescence in the home of another relative. In some cultures, young people leave their families at puberty to live in villages of adolescents.

African marriage can be polygynous—that is, a man may have more than one wife. In practice, though, only the senior or wealthy individuals in a society have been able to have multiple wives. When polygyny occurs, the family unit is based on mothers. Each wife has her own house and property that are generally transferred to her own children. The mother and child, rather than the husband and wife, thus form the basis of family and kinship in such communities. Christian marriages in Africa, as elsewhere, are generally monogamous, with a man having only one wife.

In some African societies, nuclear families are contained within larger social groups that may include kinfolk, neighbors, people of the same age or gender, and others. The nuclear family does not always have its own property or decide what tasks its members will perform. Rather, relationships between husbands and wives and between parents and children often unfold within larger domestic units called households, which may consist of joint or extended families.

Household

In a household community, several generations and several nuclear families live and work together. In joint family households, all members live together in a single large homestead or compound. In extended family households, the nuclear families within the household each live in separate compounds. A joint or extended family is under the authority of its senior member, typically a grandfather or great grand-father. Such families may be patrilineal or matrilineal.

Most members of a joint or extended family household are born and raised within it or marry into it. Some, however, such as adopted children or adults, may be unrelated to the others. In sub-Saharan Africa, distant relatives are sometimes invited to settle with a household, but they usually have lower status than their hosts. A household might also include servants or, in the past, slaves.

The household functions as an economic as well as a family unit. It can be described in material terms—for example, by acres of land, number of buildings, or certain tasks performed by certain members. A family compound among the Tswana of Botswana might include the huts and grain sheds of a man and his wife (or wives) and children, an unmarried brother, and an elderly mother. In rural areas, household members work together to produce food and other goods; in a town or city, the members might work to pay rent and buy groceries. In either case, the household needs to maintain itself, which means that productive new members must be added to replace the elderly, the disabled, and those who die. In this way, households are more flexible and inclusive than other family groups.

ISLAM AND FAMILY LIFE

Islam has had a profound influence on family life in some parts of Africa. It has affected not only the ARABS, the majority population in North Africa, but also such non-Arab peoples as the BERBERS.

Arab Families

Arabs who live in rural areas tend to maintain more traditional customs than the inhabitants of towns and cities. Rural Arabs live in extended families, with three generations or more sharing a residence. Marriage is regarded not as the union of two individuals but as the joining of two families, often already linked by ties of KINSHIP. Family members are expected to stick closely to expected roles: fathers are stern disciplinarians, mothers are nurturers, and children become members of the family workforce who will one day provide for their parents in old age. Children of both genders are treated with affection, but boys have a higher position in the family and inherit more of its money and land.

The tight, traditional structure of rural Arab families is sometimes weakened when family members take on new roles—as when a son leaves to work in a city or a daughter decides not to marry the man chosen by her parents. Such breaks in traditional patterns occur most often in urban settings, where people have more job opportunities and can be more independent.

Berber Families

The Berbers are non-Arab peoples descended from the original inhabitants of North Africa. They have adopted the Islamic religion and some Arab customs. A traditional Berber household consists of father, mother, and unmarried children. Family descent is patrilineal. Today, however, with many men working away from home for long periods, more households are headed by women. Both the Berbers and the Arabs permit polygyny under Islamic law, but in practice only wealthy men can afford separate households for each wife.

**(4) DISCUSS YOUR NUCLEAR FAMILY**

Nuclear family refers to a couple along with any dependent, unmarried children who share a residence and form a social unit. In other words it is made up of a husband, wife, and dependent children living together in a single dwelling. The nuclear family is the smallest unit of society and it is also called the elementary family.

My nuclear family is made up of my dad, my mom, my brothers, my sisters and I living together .

**(5) DRAW YOUR FAMILY TREE**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| GRANDFATHER | GRANDMOTHER | |
| MY FAMILY TREE | | | |
| FATHER | MOTHER | | UNCLE | | | | AUNT |
|  | | | COUSIN COUSIN | |
| BROTHER | SISTER | ME |