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Course Title: Introduction to Sociology II

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Assignment Questions

1. What is family?
2. Discuss the functions of the family.
3. Discuss the African Traditional family.
4. Discuss your nuclear family.
5. Draw your family tree.

Answers.

1. Family may be defined as a socially recognized group (usually joined by blood, marriage, cohabitation, or adoption) that forms an emotional connection and serves as an economic unit of society.
2. The functions of the family can be classified under two headings. That is; the primary functions and the secondary functions.
   1. Primary Functions.

* **Stable Satisfaction of Sex need**:

Sex instinct is the natural urge of human being and satisfaction of this need requires that both male and female should live together as life partners. It is the family where the husband and wife can satisfy their sex instincts easily and comfortably. A family not only satisfies but also provides the appropriate mechanism through marriage to regulate sexual behavior of husband and wife.

* **Reproduction or procreation**:

Reproduction or procreation is another essential function of family. Along with regulating the sexual behavior in relation to the satisfaction of sexual needs, the family secures a legitimate basis for procreation. Since the inception of family, it has been performing this fundamental function. This function of family contributes to the continuity of family and ultimately perpetuates the human race as a whole.

* **Protection and care of the young**:

Protection and care of the children is another essential function of family. The family is regarded as the most basic and important institution for the production and rearing of children. It is true that no other institution can take required care of the child like family. The child at birth is complete helpless and cannot survive at all without the help of the family. It is the family which provides care, protection, security (Physical, mental) and fulfills all other needs to make him fit in the society.

* **Socializing Functions**:

Family is one of the primary agents of socialization. Family members teach the child the norms, value morals, beliefs and ideals of society. In the family the children first learn what is good and bad, what is right and wrong. They develop specific habits, traits of character, attitudes and values. The senior members of the family pass the family culture to the new generation thought socialization process. Thus, family acts an instrument of culture transmission.

* **Provision of a home**:

Family makes a provision of a home or a common habitation for its members. Both husband and if live together for procreation, protection and care of the children. All the members of the family depend on home for comfort, protection and peace. It is that institution which provides the mental or the emotional satisfaction. Members of the family exchange their love, sympathy and affection among themselves.

* 1. Secondary Functions.
* **Economic functions**:

The family fulfils the economic needs of its members through the provision of amenities such as food, clothing, shelter etc. The goods required by its members are produced at home.

* **Educational function**:

Family is regarded as the first school for children. The family provides the basis for the child's formal learning and gives the child his basic training in the social attitudes and habits.

* **Religious function**:

The family is a center for the religious training of the children. The family teaches the children the religious values, moral precepts etc. It is through the family the religious inheritance is passed on to the next generation.

* **Recreational functions**:

Family is the center of recreation. It serves as a center of all recreational activities like singing, dancing, playing indoor games etc. The small children are the source of recreation for the elders.

* **Protective function**:

Family always looks after the health of its members both young and old. It takes up the responsibility of its members and maintains sound and good health.

1. The Traditional African family patterns can be divided into two main branches, that is the patrilineal and matrilineal families. It is also important to note that (although this practice is gradually changing), polygamy, that is the act of an individual being married to more than one spouse at the same time, is a common practice in the traditional African society. Polygamy often formed the backbone of the traditional African family patterns. For many societies in Nigeria, it is believed that a man with many wives and children is wealthy and shows his status by his ability to take care of his wives. Other societies in Africa practice polygamy for the birthing of many children who will help in farm work or the family business to bring wealth to the family.

It is also important to note that kinship is also an important concept in the traditional African family. It is one of the main organizing principles of society and a basic social institution found in every society. This institution establishes relationships between individuals and groups. People in all societies are bound together by various kinds of bonds.

The most basic bonds are those based on marriage and reproduction. Kinship refers to these bonds, and all other relationships resulting from them. Thus, the institu­tion of kinship refers to a set of relationships and relatives formed thereof, based on blood relationships (consanguineal), or marriage (affinal).

The Matrilineal traditional African family can be described as one where the tracing of kinship is done through the female line. It may also be described as a social system in which individuals are identified with their mothers lineage.

On the other hand, the Patrilineal traditional African family, which is a mpre common kinship system, is one in which an individual's family membership derives from and is recorded through their father's lineage.

In conclusion, the traditional African family is a very broad concept which has challenging variations across the continent. These variations are caused by differences in tribal customs or culture according geography, history, religion, external influence of colonialism, inter migration, political and economic structures and influences. Because of this wide spectrum, it is not possible to explore all aspects of the traditional African family.

1. The basic structure of a nuclear family system is a family structure that consists of two parents living with their children, also known as an immediate family. This system is different from an extended family system, in which the household may include non-immediate family members, such as grandparents, aunts and uncles.

My nuclear family is a simple one which consists of my father, my mother and four children; two girls and two boys.

The advantages of this small household include financial stability as the income earned by my parents is sufficient enough to provide for the families needs. Consistency in raising children is also another advantage as the small number makes it easier for us to fall into daily routines which is consistent and gives us a sense of responsibility. Stronger bonds between us are also established which enhances appropriate interaction between my parents and my siblings.

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