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MATRIC NO: 19/LAW01/219

COURSE: SOC 102

DEPARTMENT: LAW

FAMILY

Family is single word, with many different meanings. People have many ways of defining family and what being a part of a family means to them. A family is a group consisting of two parents and their children living together as a unit. It can still be said to be a group of people related by blood or marriage. It can also be said to be a group of related things.

In my own words, I believe family to be a group of people who come together and stay together as one and are either related by blood, marriage, or by a mutual relationship with one another. It could still be people who live in the same house together; household. Also it could be said to be a social unit consisting of parents and the children they rear, or the children of the same parents, one's spouse and children.

A family could still be seen as a group of things having a common source or similar features. It could still be said to be a group of people related by ancestry or marriage; relatives. Families differ in terms of economic, cultural, social, and many other facets, but what every family are making clear that those people who call it a family are making clear that those people are important in some way to the person calling them his family. One may ask what makes a family?. A family consist of the father, the mother, and the children. This is referred to as a standard family. But due to modern day analysis and development, family is known to be what you make it. Whether made of blood relatives, friends, or pets, or a combination of these, your family can offer you the support you need to thrive.

Functions of a Family

The functions of the family include;

- Production and rearing of children;

The family is made essentially for the pro-creation of children and rearing of them to be able to be independent on their own. Man and woman come together for the purpose of creating children. In that they produce children in order to first of all add to the number of people that make up their family. Also they produce children in order to train them to be able to survive on their own in the world while looking for ways to start up their own family when the time is right.

- Provision of a home;

Families perform another important function of providing a home for common living to all its members. It is only in a home that children are born and brought up. Even if they are born in hospitals in modern times still they are taken care of and properly nourished in a home only.

- Stable satisfaction sexual needs;

This is the most important essential function of family. Family has been performing this function since the inception of human civilization. It is a well-known fact that sex urge is the most powerful instinct and natural urge of human beings. It is the primary duty of family to satisfy the sexual urge of its members in a stable and desirable way.

- Socialization;

It is another important essential function of family. It is said man is not born human but made human. New born human baby becomes human being after they are socialized. Family plays an important role in the socialization process.

- Educational functions;

Family performs many educational functions for its members. As a primary educational institution family used to teach letters, knowledge, skill and trade secret to all its members. It looks after the primary education of its members and moulds their career and character. Of course present many of the educational functions of family are taken over by school, college and universities still family continues to play an important role in providing the first lessons and primary education to its members.

African Traditional Family

The traditional family patterns in Africa is so broad and cannot be adequately addressed in one chapter. The cultural and physical diversity added with dramatic social changes of the last three decades on the continent makes the family pattern situation so variegated as to defy any sweeping generalizations. This difficulty in generalization bone of diversity was already apparent to many early scholars of the African traditional family like Mair and Goode.

To begin with, one major aspect that distinguishes the African traditional family from the European one is the act of polygamy. Polygamy is a situation whereby an individual is allowed to take in more than one spouse at the same time, the more commonly practiced is “polygyny”. Polygyny is the legal marriage of one man to two or more women concurrently. In the African traditional family polygyny was a determinant and indicator of the nature of virtually every African social group; whether tribe, clan, or extended family, whether matrilineality or patrilineality was practiced, bride price was existed, and how children were raised. Polygyny was said to be the backbone of the traditional African family patterns.

Another aspect commonly found in the African traditional family was a system known as classificatory system. In this system, all brothers of the father are called “father” , all sisters of the mother are called “mother” all their children “brother” and “sister”. In male speaking terms, father’s sister’s daughters (cross- cousins) are called cousins. But they are terminologically differentiated from parallel cousins and from sisters.

It was also said in the African traditional family that the existence of patriarchy and the patrilineal system would suggest that individual men have the most dominant social status. But quite to the contrary, the clan seems to have a more supreme influence. For example in Baganda Uganda, when a man dies his power over the property ends. The clan chooses the heir. “the clan assumes control of inheritance; the wishes of the dead person may or may not be honoured. The eldest cannot inherit.

Another aspect of the African traditional family was the practice of the Levirate custom. The man who is the heir to the widow has the additional family responsibility of adopting the widow’s family. He also adopts the deceased person’s children, calling them his and making no distinction between them and his own children.

Nuclear Family

A nuclear family, elementary family or conjugal family is a family group consisting of two parents and their children (one or more). It is in contrast to a single-parent family, the larger extended family, and a family with more than two parents. It can be said to be a group of people who are united by ties of partnership and parenthood and consisting of a pair of adults and their socially recognized children. Typically, but not always, the adults in a nuclear family are married. Although such couples are most often a man and a woman, the

definition of the nuclear family has expanded with the advent of same-sex marriage. Children in a nuclear family may be the couple's biological or adopted offspring. It is also said that what is universal is a "nuclear family complex" in which the roles of husband, wife, mother, father, son, daughter, brother, and sister are embodied by people whose biological relationships do not necessarily conform to the western definitions of these terms.

Nuclear family consists of two units. They are the conjugal and the consanguineal family. The conjugal family is knit together primarily by the marriage tie and consists of mother, father, their children, and some close relatives. The consanguineal family, on the other hand, typically groups itself around a unilineal descent group known as a lineage, a form that reckons kinship through either the father's or the mother's line but not both. Whether a culture is patrilineal or matrilineal, a consanguineal family comprises lineage relatives and consists of parents, their children, and their children's children. The stability of the conjugal family depends on the quality of the marriage of the husband and the wife, a relationship that is more emphasized in the kinds of industrialized, highly mobile societies that frequently demand that people reside away from their kin groups. The consanguineal family derives its stability from its corporate nature and its permanence, as its relationships emphasize the perpetuation of the line.

My family Tree

