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COURSE TITLE: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY II

QUESTION:

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.

1. FAMILY:

Family refers to a domestic group made up of people related to one another by bonds of blood or legal ties. It is the smallest and most basic social unit, which is also the most important primary group found in any society. It is the simplest and most elementary group found in a society. It is a social group consisting of a father, mother and one or more children. It is the most immediate group a child is exposed to. In fact, it is the most enduring group, which has tremendous influence on the life of an individual, from birth until death.

Family is a group of persons united by ties of marriage, blood or adoption constituting a single household interacting and inter-communicating with each other in their respective social roles of husband and wife, father and mother, son and daughter, brother and sister, creating a common culture. Family is an important agent of cultural transmission i.e. culture is transmitted from one generation to another through family. Each member of the family shares duties and responsibilities.

2. FUNCTIONS OF THE FAMILY:

- i. Family is a unit through which procreation takes place. Marriage establishes a family which is further reinforced with the birth of children.
- ii. Family provides an individual with an identity.
- iii. Family is responsible for the production and upbringing of children.
- iv. Family is an important agent of socialization.

- v. It is through the family that the family name is carried from one generation to another.
- vi. Family is a great source of strength. All the members are aware that they can depend upon their family in times of need.
- vii. Family provides an individual with a home, and establishes enduring social relationships.
- viii. Family is traditionally responsible for the education of the children.
- ix. Family has a recreational function i.e. going for parties, movies, marriages, festivals, etc.
- x. Family is an agent of cultural transmission.

3. AFRICAN TRADITIONAL FAMILY:

INTRODUCTION:

Traditional African family forms are slowly but progressively being changed as a result of modernity being put in place. This is to say that family patterns are being substituted for modern norms. Sub Saharan Africa has one of the fastest growing yearly population growth rates. The transformation of societies in the sub-continent from rural to urban settings has led to changes in family structure. African families are increasingly faced with the problem rising from the competition between modern and traditional family norms/values. Two key issues associated with African family patterns which are: marriage and family size will be examined.

MARRIAGE

Marriage can be perceived from different facets, as an institution, a partnership, a lifecycle phase and as a role. Marriage as an institution is confronted with the process of adapting to the process of modernization which inherently helps to shape modern marriage structure. Marriage constitutes a vital variable that is pivotal for procreation. Marriage is still quite important in African communities, the age at first marriage ranges between 17 to 22 years for women. It varies across regions depending on regional and ethnic practices. Africa has the highest rate of polygamy prevalence in the world. Marriage in contemporary sub Saharan Africa is substantially marked by the movement from polygamous marriages to monogamous marriage. This is prominent in urban areas in the region mostly amongst the younger generation.

FAMILY SIZE

The advent of modernity has inherently fostered a progressive transformation of African family organization marked by the drift from larger family size to

small size households. Demographers often identify the changes taking place in family patterns such as changes in family size to be a characteristic of the second demographic transition process. One major area that has encountered or is experiencing change is the size of family that is the number of children that married women give birth to. The factors that have been identified to be responsible for high fertility rates are extensive, ranging from high infant mortality, low contraceptive use, early marriage to cite a few.

CONCLUSION

From the things mentioned above, we can say that practices in the rural sub Saharan African societies are being changed due to the shift from polygamous marriage to monogamous marriage and the movement from large households to small households.

4. NUCLEAR FAMILY:

DEFINITION OF NUCLEAR FAMILY

A nuclear family is a family consisting of the father, mother and the child(ren). Nuclear family may have any number of children. This type of family consists of parents (father and mother) and children.

FEATURES/CHARACTERISTICS OF NUCLEAR FAMILY

- i. **Monogamous:** In the bosom of a nuclear family is the union between a mother and a father. An existing marriage or a legal union between the father and the mother is also a determining aspect of a nuclear family.
- ii. **Responsibilities:** The responsibilities of leading a nuclear family are exclusively of the man and woman of the house. Some nuclear families have both parents working outside the home, others work outside the home, while the wife stays at home and even a small minority asks the man to stay at home while the woman works.
- iii. **Small and intimate:** Modern nuclear families are usually small in size and tend to be intimate.
- iv. **Emotional component:** The nuclear family produces the emotional unity of the family structure. Children develop their emotional and cognitive senses from the core of the nuclear family, the mother and the father.
- v. **Temporary:** The nuclear family is impermanent because at some point the children of that family stop living with their parents.

5. MY FAMILY TREE:

