

1) What is family?

The term family is used to refer to that portion of human experience which results from the behaviour of men and women in connection with reproduction and care of offspring. But these activities, related to reproduction, have the biological purpose of the survival of the species. This distinguishes family from all other associations that grow out of the needs of the individual organism so as to fulfill them. The family came into being to satisfy three primary needs. There is in the first place, the sex urge which has driven man and woman to seek an established basis for its satisfaction.

Secondly, there is the reproductive urge, particularly strong among women, which finds its fulfillment in the family. Thirdly, in its attempt to perform a biological and social function, the family is necessarily forced to assume economic responsibilities and, as a consequence, becomes an economic unit.

According to MacIver and Page family is a group defined by sex relationship sufficiently precise and enduring to provide for the procreation and upbringing of children.

2) Discuss the functions of the family

The functions of the family can be in two ways, its functions towards an individual and towards the society

The function of the family towards the individual

A) It transforms a biological organism into a human being introducing him to several cultural aids by way of compensating, as it were, nature's failure to teach him the instinctive art of survival.

B) Family enables adults of both sexes to maintain a socially approved sexual relationship. Besides, the family shapes, channelizes and restricts the sex drive of man in all societies in terms of social norms.

C) Family helps an individual develop an integrated personality. Man is a cultural being and, as such, he has both emotional and physical needs. He needs food, protection and care for his survival. He also needs love, affection, understanding and sympathy for satisfaction of his emotional needs.

D) Since an individual is born in a family, he acquires a social status at birth. This kind of social status which we acquire at first through our family fulfils our sense of security. We become conscious very early in life what we should or should not expect from others and what others may expect from us.

The function of the family towards the society

A) To begin with, the family provides opportunity for the sexual gratification for the spouses. At the same time, the sexual function of the family helps to stabilize society. The prescriptive and proscriptive rules which contain sexual activity between the spouses within the family prevent the probable disruptive effects on social order that will result if the sex drive were allowed free play. A family thus provides both 'control and expression' of sexual drives and in doing so, performs important functions for its individual members, for the family as an institution and for society as a whole.

B) The reproductive functions of the family help the human species to survive. We have already noted the helpless condition of a human baby at birth and for several years thereafter. For his survival it is necessary that the family must feed and protect him and, at the same time, teach him various cultural aids.

If the family does not make adequate provision for the biological needs of man and teach him all cultural aids that are required for his survival, he would die and obviously society also will die.

C) Thirdly, Talcott Parsons refers to socialization during the early years of childhood which takes place within the narrow circle of the family. This is to be distinguished from secondary socialization which takes place in later years when the family is less involved and the other agencies like the peer group and the school exert increasing influence.

Parson points out two basic processes are involved in primary socialization. First, the internalization of society's culture; second, the structuring of the personality in terms of society's culture is essential for the existence of society, because society cannot exist in the absence of shared norms and values.

Likewise if the child's personality is not moulded in terms of the central values of society's culture he would be a misfit in society in later life.

Talcott Parsons believes that family is essential for producing 'socialized' personalities. Primary socialization requires a context which provides warmth, security and mutual support. He can conceive of no institution other than family which could provide this context.

Parsons argues that it is not enough to produce the personality. Once produced, the personality must be kept stable. This is the second important function of family to which Parson refers. Family creates a situation in which the spouses provide emotional security and affectionate sympathy for each other. This enables the couple to stand the strains and stresses of everyday life which tend to make the personality unstable. Besides, the family relationship allows the adult members who act out childish elements of their own personalities which they have retained from childhood but which cannot be given expression in an adult company. For example, the father plays with his son's toy train and indulges in many other childish pranks in his child's company. This is as necessary for father as for his son. The family, therefore, provides a situation in which husband and wife can express their childish whims, give and receive emotional support, recharge their childish whims, give and receive emotional support, recharge their batteries and so stabilise their personalities.

3) Discuss the African traditional family

Traditional African family patterns are slowly but progressively being altered as a result of the process of modernization which is exhibited through trends like urbanization. Family patterns that were in traditional rural African society are gradually being altered and substituted by modern values. Sub-Saharan Africa has one of the fastest annual population growth rates. It has the fastest rate of urbanization presently taking place in the world. The transformation of societies in the sub-continent from rural to urban settings has immensely contributed in triggering changes in family structure. This has triggered the distortion of cultural norms and values that characterize rural communities in the region. African families are increasingly faced with the challenge and pressure emanating from the competition prevailing between traditional and modern family values. Hence, contemporary family patterns in the region are increasingly subjected to transform and adapt to changing times. Discussion of family patterns in contemporary sub-Saharan Africa are usually made in reference to the process of acculturation, urbanization which have helped to shape modern family structures as well as fostered the prevalence of demographic changes. Family in sub-Saharan Africa is experiencing changes which are felt in fertility rate and age at marriage. This aims at examining two key issues connected

with African family patterns, that is; marriage and family size, with the goal of illuminating the changes that are characterising their prevalence and fertility rate which encapsulates the number of children women give birth to. In essence it is centred on the discourse of childbirth that is number of children per woman. It is inconceivable to discuss family patterns in the region, from which information can be derived on the changes that has so far been encountered in its contraction.

Despite the changes taking place in sub saharan societies due to the modernization process, the family still remains a prominent nexus in the social life of Africans. In Africa there is considerable importance attached to the respect for elders and ancestors. African communities are characterized by the prevalence of collectivism as opposed to individuality. Paulina Makinwa Adebusey outlined the major characteristic features of African household to be that they are mostly rural patriarchal and hierarchical, polygamous and open to kinship networks, and finally they attach substantial importance to lineage continuation. These features in all play a very pivotal role in influencing the number of children women give birth to. The social organisation of most African of most families is embedded in a patriarchal and hierarchical system that precludes the possibility of women, who generally have lower status than men in the society to make deliberate choice on the number of children they want to have. At marriage women tend to have lower status than all the members of their husbands family. In traditional rural societies in most Sub saharan societies, women are voiceless and powerless. According to Gibran Therborn African societies have experienced slight distortion in the patriarchal tradition, following the advent of urbanization, as well as due to the drop in the importance attached to land and cattle in the economy. Male supremacy has also being altered a bit even though it still has a prominent strong hold in the society. There is the existence of substantial cultural importance attributed to fertility and lineage continuation, tight patriarchal traditions, wide rate of polygamy prevalence. These are the prominent features that characterized most traditional African societies.

4) Discuss your nuclear family

My nuclear family is made up of My Father who is the bread winner of the family, My Mother who supports my Dad in everything he does, I and my two siblings who also contribute to the success of the family by doing well in everything we find ourselves doing. My family upholds the tenets of God and believe in Jesus, we also help each other to achieve our individual goals in the family. My family is caring and loving we receive advice from those we want to be like and we also help others to actualize their dreams. My family is an understanding one. We love to care, share and help others in our own different ways.

[MY FAMILY]

FATHER

MOTHER

MR. IHEANACHO SAMUEL

MRS MERCY SAMUEL

CHILDREN

. KING DAVID SAMUEL TREASURE SAMUEL COVENANT SAMUEL