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**ASSIGNMENT**

**WHAT IS A FAMILY?**

A family, can be defined as the most basic institution in any society, it is the social context into which members of a society derive their primary identity. Sociologist, have come up with different definitions of the family and this is owing to the fact that the family has various manifestations, organization and structures in various societies. Furthermore, we can discuss the various types of family, including primary, secondary, single parent, nuclear and extended. According to *Mair 1972,* “family is a domestic group which consists of a parents and children”. Also, according to *Duberman and Hartjen 1979,* “family is a universal institution whose most important functions are to socialize and nurture the younger generation. Also, smith and preston, stated that a family as a social group whose members are related by either common ancestral or marriage and are bound by moral and economic rights and duties.

There are basically three types of family: Nuclear, Extended and Compound.

1. **Nuclear family**: basically a nuclear family, refers to a couple along with any dependent individual, unmarried children who share a residence and form a social unit. In simple words, it is made up of a husband, wife dependent children living together. The nuclear family is the smallest unit of the society and it is also called the elementary family.
2. **Extended family:** an extended family is a constituent of several related person by descent, marriage or adoption such as a husband and wife and their children and least one of their set of parents, aunts, uncles, nieces and nephews all living together in a single dwelling or in close proximity.
3. **Compound family:** it Is the type of family organization that can be seen as an overlapping set of nuclear families, each with the same man as family head. It consist of the head of house or the husband, his wives and concubines, who live in different homestead with their children.

**FUNCTIONS OF A FAMILY**

1. **Nurturing:** in every society, it is expected that any child that is been born into a family, should be fed, educated and cared for by his or her family. It is the responsibility of the family to provide the needs and welfare of the children, thereby, ensuring the survival of the next generation.
2. **Regulation of sexual relationships:** sexual relationship is one of the biological needs of man. Such relationship is often protected by rules and regulations in all societies and it is the duty of the family to help enforce such rules. This is done in other to prevent incestuous relationships, for example, the need for one not to have sexual relationships with close relatives or kin. The family also directly or indirectly approves sexual partners and spouse for members.
3. **Procreation:** the family through the regulation of sexual relationship function fulfills the biological need of reproduction and perpetuation of both the immediate family and the society as a whole.
4. **Social placement:** an individual acquires his identity and place in society through his family. the family ascribes many statuses to members such as race, ethnic affiliation, nationality, religion and so on.
5. **Affection and companionship:** the family is expected to provide affection and companionship to its members. Children given affection with in the family to develop a positive self-image and adults in the family need intimate companionship to cope with life, which creates a sense of belonging.
6. **Preservation of culture:** it is the responsibility of the family to teach the younger generation about their, norms, value, etc, in order to prevent the culture from dying or going into extinction.

In conclusion, the family institution has undergone tremendous changes due to the modernization and civilization. However, it is very important to note that the society cannot do without or exist with the family.

**DISSCUS YOUR NUCLEAR FAMILY**

The nuclear family refers to a couple along with ant dependent, unmarried children who share a residence and form a social family. In other words it consists of the father, mother and children/child.

Furthermore, my nuclear family is a family of seven and it consists of my father, mother, my four siblings and I, who all live in the same residence and are related by blood.

1. Introduction

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 the norm in traditional rural African societies are gradually being altered and

substituted by modern values. Sub Saharan Africa has one of the fastest annual population growth

rate (Merrick 202:41). 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

/traditional norms and values that characterized 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. Discussions

of family patterns in contemporary Sub Saharan Africa are usually made in reference to the

process of acculturation, urbanization (the movement from rural to urban areas), which have

helped to shape modern family structures, as well as fostered the prevalence of demographic

changes (Kalu 1981:353). Family in sub Saharan Africa is experiencing changes which are felt in

fertility rates that is the number of children women give birth to, and age at marriage to name

a few.

This article seeks to examine the trends that depict family patterns in most sub Saharan

African countries. It 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

characterizing their prevalence. Discussion on the latter will be limited to the discourse of

fertility rate which in this paper encapsulates the number of children women in the region give

birth to. In essence, it is centred on the discourse of childbirth that is number of children per

woman. It is unconceivable to discuss family patterns in the region, without assessing the issue

of marriage. The main interest is that of portraying the changes taking place in marriages in

region, from which information can be derived on the changes that have so far been

encountered in its contraction.

1.2 Overview of family patterns in sub Saharan Africa

Despite the changes taking place in sub Saharan African 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-Adebusoye (2001:5) outlined the major characteristic features of African

household to be that they are mostly rural, patriarchal and hierarchic

kinship networks, and finally they attached substantial importance to lineage continuation.

These features in all play a pivotal role in influencing the number of children women give birth

to. The social organization of most African 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 (Makinwaadebusoye2001:5). At marriage women tend to have lower status than all the members of their

husband’s family (Makinwa-adebusoye (20016). In traditional rural societies in most sub

Saharan societies, women were voiceless and powerless. According to Göran Therborn (2006)

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.

Contemporary African family patterns are subjected to changes that emanate as a result of

the ameliorated economic conditions, education and health opportunities. These factors

continuously exert tremendous impact on contemporary family patterns in the sub-continent.

Socioeconomic circumstances in the sub-continent are encountering alterations that have to a

considerable extent triggered changes in the fundamental cultural values most especially in the

domain of the family. The occurrence of competition between traditional and modern family

patterns illustrates a dichotomy. There is a rise in the pace towards the abandonment of

traditional practices for modern ones (western). However, the most popular trend is that of the

prevalence of family patterns that are increasing merging traditional and modern marriage

norms, values or practices (Kalu1981:2). The next section provides information on marriage; it

is followed by information on family size.

DRAW A FAMILY TREE

NUCLEAR FAMILY TREE

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| FATHER AND MOTHER( JIBRIL AND FATIMA) | | | | |
| FIRST CHILD (HALIMA) | SECOND CHILD (HAFSAT) | THIRD CHILD  (HADIZA) | FOURTH CHILD  (MUHAMMAD) | FIFTH CHILD (ABDULSALAM) |