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Sociology 102

1) What is family?

The family is an intimate domestic group of people related to one another by bonds of blood, sexual mating or legal ties. It has been a very resilient social unit that has survived and adapted through time.

The family acts as a primary socialization of children whereby the child first learns the basic values and norms of the culture they will grow up in. a child needs to be carefully nurtured, cherished and moulded into responsible individuals with good values and strong ethics. Therefore, it is important that children grow in a family which is the primary unit of socialization in order to be able to attain all of those listed above.

The family is seen as the main pillar block of a community; family structure and upbringing influence the social character of any given society. Family is where everyone learns to love, to care, to be compassionate, to be ethical, to be honest, to be fair, to have common sense and acquire values which are essential for living in a community

Stephen (1999) defines the family as a social arrangement based on marriage including recognition of rights and duties of parenthood, common residence for husband, wife and children are reciprocal economic obligations between husband and wife.

2) Discuss the functions of the family

The family as an instrument of culture transmission and an agent of socialization: No society is possible without adequate socialization of its young. In most societies, the family is the major unit in which socialization happens. The family provides the children with our first system of values, norms, and beliefs which in the long run will be a reflection of their own social status, religion, ethnic group and more. The family also serves as an instrument of culture transmission and biological continuity of the human race. It transmits ideas and ideologies, folkways, and mores, customs and traditions, beliefs and values from one generation to the next.

Status ascribing function: the family provides status ascription and societal identification for individuals e.g. age and sex. It is the family that serves almost exclusively as the conferring agency or institution. People recognise us by our names and our names are given to us by our

family. Our ethnic status, our nationality status, religious status, residential status, class status and our educational status are conferred upon us by our family but can be changed later.

Affectional function: man has his physical, as well as mental needs and requires fulfilment of both of these needs. The family is an institution which provides the mental or the emotional satisfaction and security to its individual members. It is the family which provides the most intimate and the dearest relationship for all its members. The individual first experiences affection in his parental family as parents and siblings offer him love, sympathy and affection. Lack of affection can damage an infant's ability to thrive.

Economic functions: the family fulfils the economic needs of its members. This has been the traditional function of the family. Without family, a weak economic unit would be left with no stability or dependency. The family is important so that there are members to produce, distribute goods and services

Educational functions: the family provides the basis for the child's formal learning. The family still gives the child basic training in the social attitude and habit important to adult participation in social life. As a primary educational institution, family is used to teach letters, knowledge, skills and trade secrets to all its members. It looks after the primary education of its members and moulds their careers and character. Mother acts as the first and best teacher of a child. The child learns all sorts of informal educations such as discipline, obedience, manners etc.

3) Discuss the African traditional family

The African traditional family is mainly characterised by polygamy, patriarchy, tribe, clan and extended family. Polygyny is widely practiced in Africa and it forms the backbone of the traditional African family pattern. The polygynous joint family consists of his wives and their children which is the ideal for most Africans. In this case, the wives live with their children in different sections and are head of their own respective household while the man rules and runs all the households. In the African traditional family, marrying many wives and having many children is a symbol of wealth and strength of the man. It often raises the societal status of the man as the society is a patrilineal one. Children are expected to help in minor household tasks. Boys herd the domestic animals and also perform light duties for relatives. Girls at an early age are taught a wide range of household and agricultural duties including cooking, taking care of the home and their younger ones. In the African traditional family, girls, in distinction to boys, seldomly have time to play games.

4) Discuss your nuclear family

The name of my family is Ganiyu family which comprises of a father, mother and four children. My family is a family of six with myself being the third born. I have two elder brothers and one younger sister. My family being a nuclear family, there are no extended family members living with my family. My father is the head of the family and cater for the family needs while my

mother looks after the home and makes sure everything is in order. The children run errands and assist our parents at home.

5) Draw your family tree

Ganiyu family tree

