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DEPT/ COLLEGE; LAW

MATRIC NO; 19/LAW01/013

COURSE; SOC 102

COURSE TITILE; INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY 2

 **Question(s)**

 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

 Answers

1. Family (from Latin: familia) is a group consisting of parents and children living together in a household.

 Family maybe defined as a specific group of people that maybe made up of partners, children, parents, aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents. Also, family is defined as a group of people who share common ancestors, An example of family is all the descendants of a specific person.

2. The functions of the family have been categorized differently by many sociologists overtime. Some of these categories and their philosophizers are as follows:

 Famous sociologist like **Ogburn** and **Nimkoff** have classified functions of family into six types:

i) Affectional Functions

ii) Economic Functions

iii) Recreational Functions

iv) Protective Functions

v) Religious Functions

vi) Educational Functions

 According to **Goode**

 Another Sociologists called Goode classified it into five functions:

i) Procreative Functions

ii) Socio-Economic Security Functions

iii) Status Determination Functions

iv) Socialization Functions

v) Social Control Functions

 According to **Prof. Lundberg**

 Similarly, Prof. Lundberg enumerated four basic functions of family, namely;

i) Regulation of sexual behavior of members and reproduction

ii) Care and training of children

iii) Co-operation and division of labor

iv) Primary group satisfaction

 According to **Reed**

Reed classified functions of the family into four namely;

i) Race Perpetuation

ii) Satisfaction of sexual needs

iii) Socialization

iv) Economic Functions

 According to **Maclver**

He classified the functions of family into two broad categories such as essential and non-essential.

Under essential or Primary Functions. Here, he included three functions namely;

i) Stable satisfaction of sexual needs

ii) Production and rearing of children

iii) Provision of a home

Under non-essential or secondary functions he includes;

i) Economic; Since ancient time family has been performing several economic functions as it was both a production and consumption unit. It used to fulfil all economic needs of it’s members such as clothing, food and housing etc. In the then days family was self-sufficient but now almost all economic functions of family is performed by other agencies and family only remain a consumption unit.

ii) Religious; Family is the centre of all religious activities. All the family members offer their prayers together and observe different religious rites, rituals and practices jointly.

iii) Educational Functions; The family as a primary educational institution provides education for it’s members. It looks after the education of it’s members and moulds their career and character. The mother acts as the first and best teacher for the child

iv) Health and health related functions; The family as a primary social group performs several health related functions for it’s members. Family members take care of the aged and sick members of their family and also by providing necessary nutritive food to it’s members.

v) Recreational Functions; By entertaining it’s members in various ways. All members together organize family feasts, visit family relations and organize family picnics

vi) Cultural Functions; The family performs almost all cultural functions. It preserves different cultural traits. Man learns and acquires culture from family and transmits it to succeeding generations. That is why family is regarded as the centre of culture

3. To answer this, the families of sub-Saharan Africa would be used as a model.

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 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 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. At marriage women tend to have lower status than all the members of their husband’s family. In traditional rural societies in most Sub-Saharan African 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 practice.

4. The nuclear family is made up of the parents and children and is regarded as a basic social unit. The children are usually a dependent unit. My nuclear family is made up of my two parents and my younger brother. The head and supporter of the family is my father as he provides for and caters for all basic necessities, my mother supervises, organises and manages all resources. She is the rock and foundation of the family as she is what the family stands upon. She has created a home and ensures to her very best that we are comfortable and also offers emotional support and encouragement. My both parents also teach essential values to make sure we become better people than they were in life. My brother and I on the other hand run errands around the home and abide by the laws established in the home. We also respect all elders in the family and live by the values our parents inculcate.