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COURSE CODE: SOC 102

QUESTIONS: WHAT IS FAMILY

 DISCUSS THE FUNCTIONS OF THE FAMILY

 DISCUSS THE AFRICAN TRADITIONAL FAMILY

 DISCUSS YOUR NUCLEAR FAMILY

 DRAW YOUR FAMILY TREE.

A family is a group consisting of two parents and their children living together. It could also be all the descendants of a common ancestor. In other words, family is defined as a specific group of people that may be made up of parents, aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents. An example of a family is a set of parents living with their children.

The family performs several essential functions for the society. These functions are:

1. Stable satisfaction of sexual needs: this is the most important essential function of family. Family has been performing this functions since the inceptions of human civilization. It is a well known fact that sex urge is the most important and powerful instinct and natural urge of human being. It is the primary duty of family to satisfy the sexual urge of its members in a stable and desirable way.
2. Procreation and rearing of children: it is another important sectional function of family. Necessary arrangement of stable satisfaction of sexual urge resulted in procreation. Family provides the legitimate basis for production of children. It institutionalizes the process of procreation. By performing this function of procreation family contributes to the continuity of family and ultimately human race. Hence perpetuation of human race or society is the most important function of family.
3. Provision of home: family perform another important function of providing a home for common living to all its members. It is only a home that children are born and brought up. Even if children are born in hospitals in modern time still they are taken care of and properly nourished in a home only. Because family and home have no substitute. In a home all the members of family live together and a child is brought up under the strict vigilance of all its members. A home provides emotional and psychological support to all its members.
4. Socialization: it is another essential function of family. It is said that man is not born human but made human. New born human baby became human being after they are socialized. Family plays an important role in the socialization process. It is one of the primary agents of socialization. Living in a family, a human baby learns norms, values, morals and ideals of society. He learns culture and acquires character through the process of socialization. From family he learns what is right and wrong and what is good and bad. Through socialization he becomes a social man and acquires good character.
5. Economic functions: since ancient times, family has been performing several economic functions. It is an important economic unit. In ancient time family was both a production and consumption unit. It is used to fulfil almost all the economic needs of its members such as food, clothing, housing, etc. In the then days, family was self-sufficient. But nowadays almost all the economic functions of family is performed by other agencies and family only remain as a consumption unit. But in spite of all that family still performing some economic functions of purchasing, protecting and maintaining property. It also equally distributes property among its members.

Family plays a central role in African society. It shapes such daily experiences as how and where individuals live, how they interact with the people around them, and even, in some cases, whom they marry. It can determine a person’s political identity and the way money and property are transferred. Here, I will briefly explore traditional African family patterns describing the patrilineal and matrilineal families. Some major issues raised include polygamy, tribe, clan, the extended family, etc.

Scholars of the African traditional family agree that the one widely known aspect that distinguishes the African traditional family, say from the European one, is the perversity of polygamy. Although polygamy is the act of an individual being married to more than one spouse at the same time, the more commonly practiced in Africa is polygyny-the legal marriage of one man to two or more women concurrently. Polygyny was widely practiced in Africa and it often formed the backbone of the traditional African family patterns.

The Baganda use ‘classificatory’ system of kinship terminology which seems common to virtually all the Bantu people of Central and Southern Africa. In this system, all brothers of the father are called ‘father’, all sisters of the mother are called ‘sister’. The Baganda have a very important aspect of the social or family structure, ‘the consanguinal kin group’ or ‘blood line’ which is a line of descent traced through the male members of the family or patri-sib. Among the Baganda, the clan has remained the most important kinship entity. The existence of patriarchy and the patrilineal system among the Bangada might suggest that individual men have the most dominant social status. The Baganda practice the levirate custom. The man who is the heir to the widow has the additional family responsibility of adopting the widow’s family.

Among the Bemba people of Northern Zambia, marriage is matrilocal. That is to say a man goes to live in his wife’s village at any rate for the first years of his married life. This is also true of marriage among other Zambian tribes like Bisa, Lala, Lamba, etc. during the period earlier than 1940s, marriages remained completely matrilocal during the couple’s entire life. But however, after a few years of contact with white civilization and subsequent social change, the custom has gradually changed. The husband could take his wife home if the marriage was thought stable especially after the couple has had two or more children. The basic family unit among the Bemba was not the nuclear family. But rather the matrilocal extended family comprised of a man and his wife, their married daughters, son-in-laws, and their children. The basic kinship unit of Bemba society is not the individual family composed of a man and his wife, their married daughters and the latter’s husbands and children.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary the term Nuclear family dates back to 1925 and actually originates from nucleus, which is originally latin and means core. A nuclear family is a family where father, mother and their children live in one household-they flock together like objects around a nucleus (e.g. an atom).

In my family, we are six in number. There is my dad, my mum, my older brother, my twin brother and my younger brother. I am the only girl in my family with three brothers.

A family tree is, or pedigree chart, is a chart representing family relationships in a conventional tree structure. The more detailed family trees used in medicine social work are known as genograms.

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| grandfather |  | grandmother |

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| --- |
| Uncles. |

|  |
| --- |
| aunties |

|  |
| --- |
| Mother. |

|  |
| --- |
| Father. |

|  |
| --- |
| Cousins. |

|  |
| --- |
| Tolu. |

|  |
| --- |
| Me. |

|  |
| --- |
| Franklin. |

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| --- |
| Fiyin. |