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ASSIGNMENT TITLE: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY II
COURSE TITLE: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY II
COURSE CODE: SOC 102

Question

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

1. FAMILY: Family is a basic social unit consisting of the father, mother and children. The family, by definition is a group of people affiliated by a specific relationship. It influences one’s personal, emotional, intellectual and social development. It can also be a group of individuals who share a legal or genetic bond, but for many people, family means much more, and even the simple idea of genetic bonds can be more complicated than it seems. Families are legally bound through marriages, adoptions, and guardianships, including the rights, duties, and obligations of those legal contracts. Legal bonds can be changed, expanded, or dissolved to change the composition of a family. Individuals who are directly related through a common ancestor are part of a family. This includes both close and distant relatives such as siblings, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and cousins. Researching a family tree or genealogical records can reveal familial blood bonds

2. FUNCTIONS OF THE FAMLY

The family performs several functions. Firstly, the family is the primary unit for socializing children and it provides emotional support, it provides its members with a social identity. The family is a major unit in which socialization happens, parents and siblings help to socialize children from the time they are born. And it also provides its members with social identity. Social identity is important in our life. Some children have advantage in life because the social identity they acquire from their parents, while some face any problems because of the social class or race and ethnicity into which they are born.

Also, the family performs the role of educating the children. It is an important educational agency. The child learns the first under the guidance of parents. Family is said to be the first school which a child attends. The family inculcates preschool education in the child and provides a proper environment for the child’s education. Both of these play very important role in achieving the future success of an individual as a member of society.

The culture of the society is kept alive due to the family. The family teaches its younger members regarding the life style, traditions, moral values and social values which the family follows. Family, thus, inculcates and transfers the culture from one generation to next.

The family provides relaxation through recreation to its members. The personal interaction between various members of a family, mutual jokes and playful activities of children serve as recreation for other members of the family.

Family provides nutritious and balanced food for its members. On this depends the health and growth of its members.

In the similar manner, clothing requirement of each member is also fulfilled by the family. Purchasing, stitching, leaning, ironing, storage, etc., are the various aspects of clothing requirements of family.

Both these needs can be partially looked after for particular period or exigency by other agencies like hotels, lodges, etc., in case of food requirements and laundry and washer man in case of clothing requirements. But still, the responsibility for both these requirements, i.e., food and clothing is fulfilled by the family

3. African Traditional Family: The traditional African family is a very broad concept which has challenging variations across the continent. These variations are caused by differences in tribal customs or culture according geography, history, religion, external influence of colonialism, inter migration, political and economic structures and influences. Because of this wide spectrum, it is not possible to explore all aspects of the traditional African family. Polygyny was widely practiced in Africa and it often formed the backbone of the traditional African family patterns. Their children, is the ideal for most Africans.”5 Studies conducted from the 1930s to 1950s indicate that polygyny was common virtually in all regions of Africa

Matrilineal and polygynous patrilineal were African traditional family patterns because they seem representative of the broad patterns that exists on the continent. It must be emphasized, however, that these were traditional patterns as far back as late 1800s up to as late as 1960s. The dramatic social changes in Africa during the last three decades of political independence from European colonialism have obviously affected the traditional family. 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 . This author argues that because of its perversity, the presence and absence of polygyny was a significant determinant and indicator of the nature of virtually every African social group; whether tribe, clan, or extended family, whether matrilineality or patrilineality was practiced, bride price existed, and how children were raised.

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