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SOCIOLOGY ASSIGNMENT.

**Question 1: what is family?**

There are different definitions to family. Family can therefore be defined as:

The people living in the same house; household.

A social unit consisting of parents and the children they rear

A group of people related by ancestry or marriage; relatives

All those claiming descent from a common ancestor; tribe or clan; lineage

A commune (sense) living in one household, esp. under one head

A group of things having a common source or similar features.

Family can also be seen as the basic unit in society traditionally consisting of two parents rearing their children. Family is defined as a specific group of people that may be made up of partners, children, parents, aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents. According to Sociologists, 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.

**Question 2: Discuss the functions of the family.**

Family is the most universal and fundamental social institution which performs a variety of functions in human society.

First, the family is the primary unit for socializing children. As known, no society is possible without adequate socialization of its young. In most societies, the family is the major unit in which socialization happens. Parents, siblings, and, if the family is extended rather than nuclear, other relatives all help to socialize children from the time they are born.

Second, the family is ideally a major source of practical; and emotional support for its members. It provides them food, clothing, shelter, and other essentials, and it also provides them love, comfort, help in times of emotional distress, and other types of intangible support that we all need.

Third, the family help regulate sexual activities and sexual reproduction . All societies have norms governing with whom and how often a person should have sex. The family is the major unit for teaching these norms and the major unit through which sexual reproduction occurs. One reason for this is to ensure that infants have adequate emotional and practical care when they are born. The incest taboo that most societies have, which prohibits sex between certain relatives, helps to minimize conflict within the family if sex occurred among its members and to establish social ties among different families and thus among society as a whole.

Fourth, the family provides its members with a social identity. Children are born into their parents’ social class, race and ethnicity, religion, and so forth. As we have seen in earlier chapters, social identity is important for our life chances. Some children have advantages throughout life because of the social identity they acquire from their parents, while others face many obstacles because the social class or race and ethnicity into which they are born is at the bottom of the social hierarchy.

Each person in the family has an evident role to play:

1. **The Father**:

* He serves as a provider for his family as he is too provide the basic need of living for his family. He is not to allow his family suffer as the breadwinner of the family he is too provide for them.
* Security and protection: it is the role of a father to protect his family from all sort of harm and external danger.
* Religious: the father is to lead his family and teach them the way of the God he serves
* He serves as a good example to his children and also serves as a role model.
* Train his children to be responsible and law abiding people and make sure they follow the right path so they don’t become wayward.

1. **The Mother**:

* The mother is the second in charge in terms of authority. She stands in when the father is not available or when he is indisposed.
* She supports the family economically and in making decisions.
* She has the role and duty of child-training.
* She is the one that is mostly around in the house, raise and takes care of the children, thus, making the children be close to her than their father.
* The mother cooks the meal, does the laundry and is concerned with the upkeep of the house.
* Most times, she is the first to wake up and the last to sleep in the house. A mother serves as the pivot in the family.
* A Mother serves as a teacher to her children and teach their children. They are supposed to guide their children through what they do not understand. They teach their children about relationships, problem resolution. Even more, they teach their children how to maintain a good hygiene and keep clean, bath twice a day.

1. **The Children:**

* The children are the offspring and product of the union between the father and mother
* They have different roles and duties due to the differences in age and gender.

The female ones are expected to learn from their mothers, they are seen in the kitchen and they do the laundry in the house.

* The male children in the house are close to the father, learn from their fathers and they take up the masculine roles.
* The children learn the norms, beliefs, values of the society from the family and they practice it.
* The children are to highly respect their parents and do as they are told and they are to take care of their parents when they are old

**Question 3: Discuss the African traditional society:**

**WHAT IS TRADITION?**

A tradition is a [belief](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belief) or behavior (folk custom) passed down within a group or society with symbolic meaning or special significance with origins in the past. Tradition is also seen as the name given to those cultural features which, in situations of change, were to be continued to be handed on, thought about, preserved and not lost.

**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.

The traditional African societies (or traditional beliefs and practices of African people) are a set of highly diverse beliefs that includes various [ethnic religions](file://localhost/wiki/Ethnic_religion). Generally, these traditions are [oral](file://localhost/wiki/Oral_tradition) rather than scriptural, include belief in an amount of higher and lower gods, sometimes including a supreme creator, belief in spirits, [veneration of the dead](file://localhost/wiki/Veneration_of_the_dead), use of [magic](file://localhost/wiki/Magic_(supernatural)) and [traditional African medicine](file://localhost/wiki/Traditional_African_medicine). Most religions societies can be described as [animistic](file://localhost/wiki/Animism) with various polytheistic and [pantheistic](file://localhost/wiki/Pantheistic) aspects. The role of humanity is generally seen as one of harmonizing nature with the supernatural. According to the author Lugira, "it is the only religion that can claim to have originated in Africa. Other religions found in Africa have their origins in other parts of the world."

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 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 (Makinwa- adebusoye2001:5).

**Spread of the societies**

Adherents of traditional religions in [Sub-Saharan Africa](file://localhost/wiki/Sub-Saharan_Africa) are distributed among 43 countries and are estimated to number over 100 million. Although the majority of Africans today are adherents of [Christianity](file://localhost/wiki/Christianity) or [Islam](file://localhost/wiki/Islam), African people often combine the practice of their traditional belief with the practice of Abrahamic religions. The two Abrahamic religions are widespread across Africa, though mostly concentrated in different areas. They have replaced indigenous African religions, but are often adapted to African cultural contexts and belief systems. Followers of traditional African religions are also found around the world. In recent times, traditional religions, such as the [Yoruba](file://localhost/wiki/Yoruba_religion) religion, are on the rise.

**African Cultural Characteristics**

• Despite their diversity, African cultures display certain common features that attest to an underlying cultural unity that some scholars have called “Africanity.”

• One of these common cultural features is a concept of kingship in which kings are ritually isolated and oversee societies in which the people are arranged in age groups and kinship divisions.

• Other common features include cultivation with the hoe and digging stick, the use of rhythm in African music, and the functions of dancing and mask wearing in rituals.

**An African traditional society structure**

1. Nuclear Family

2. Extended Family

3. Age-Set

4. Clan

5. Lineage (ancestry)

6. TRIBE (communal living)

**Common Traits or Characteristics of Traditional African Tribal Life**

1. The good of the group comes ahead of the good of the individual.

2. All land is owned by the group.

3. Strong feeling of loyalty to the group.

4. Important ceremonies at different parts of a person’s life.

5. Special age and work associations.

6. Deep respect for ancestors.

7. Religion is an important part of everyday life.

8. Government is in the hands of the chiefs [kings].

**Social Structures**

**Common Features**

• Many societies developed village-based cultures

• At heart, extended family living in one household

• Families with common ancestors formed clans to which all members loyal

**Age-Sets**

• In some areas, people took part in type of group called age-sets

• Men who had been born within same two, three years formed special bonds

• Men in same age-set had duty to help each other

Specific Duties

• Loyalty to family, age-sets helped village members work together

• Men hunted, farmed; women cared for children, farmed, did domestic chores

• Even very old, very young had own tasks; elders often taught traditions to younger generation

**Problems of Tribalism Today**

1. The tribe is more important than the nation.

2. Communication problems.

3. Inter-tribal warfare: civil wars

4. Tribal favourites for government jobs:

* Nepotism
* Urbanization:
* Breaks down tribal traditions.
* Tribal intermingling on the job.

**African traditional societies practices**

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

FGM entails partial or total ablation of a woman’s external genital organs (Sawadogo 2003). It involves surgical removal of parts or all of the most sensitive female genital organs. It refers to “all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external features of the female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs whether for cultural or other non- therapeutic reasons.

**Marriage by Abduction**

Marriage by abduction is the unlawful carrying away of a woman for marriage. It is a form of sexual violence against the woman. The would-be abductor forms a group of intimate friends and relatives to kidnap the girl without the slightest clue or information being given to the girl’s family, relatives or friends. In some cases, abduction is followed by rape.

**Child Marriages/ Early marriage and Dowry**

This practice takes place in almost all the countries in the SADC (Southern African Development Community) region. Child marriage is a violation of human rights whether it happens to a girl or a boy, but it represents perhaps the most prevalent form of sexual abuse and exploitation of girls. The issue of child marriage leads to denial of right to education for women. Child marriage can be defined as a formal marriage or informal union before age 18, and is a reality for both boys and girls, but in this case the girl child is most affected.

**Conclusion**

African family patterns are increasingly faced with the challenge and pressure between traditional and modern family values and structure. There is the steady increase 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 or practices(Kalu1981:2). The changes that are characterizing marriage and family size in Africa. There are other practices taking place such as non-marital childbearing, single parenthood, non-marital unions that are as well gradually gaining momentum in the region.

**Question 4: Discuss your nuclear family:**

A nuclear family is a family unit that includes two married parents of opposite genders and their biological or adopted children living in the same residence. A nuclear family, also called a conjugal, elementary, or traditional family, typically consists of two married or committed parents and their biological or adopted children all living in the same residence and sharing the values, duties, and responsibilities of the family unit. There can be any number of children in the family, and one or both parents may work outside the home.

Basically, in my nuclear family we comprise of: my father, my mother, my sister, my brother and I of course. This is due to the fact that we are five in my family, my parents and three kids.

**Question 5: Draw your family tree:**

**MY FAMILY TREE**

Angela

Ian

Stephanie

Denzel

Declan

Brigid

Ebubee

Ebuka

Sunny

Geney

Chinelo

Nnamdi

Obinna

Grandfather

Grandmother