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COURSE: INTRODUCTION TO SOCIOLOGY.

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ASSIGNMENT:

- 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.) What is family?

Family is a group consisting of two parents and their children living together as a unit. It is otherwise known as a fundamental social group in society typically consisting of one or two parents and their children; although this definition is a good starting point, there are several modern family structures that are excluded by this definition, such as childless couples or other variations on the family unit.

'Family' is a single word, with many different meanings. People have many ways of defining a family and what being a part of a family means to them. Families differ in terms of economic, cultural, social, and many other facets, but what every family has in common is that the people who call it a family are making clear that those people are important in some way to the person calling them his family.

In human society, a family is a group of people related either by consanguinity (by recognized birth) or affinity (by marriage or other relationship). The purpose of families is to maintain the well-being of its members and of society. Ideally, families would offer predictability, structure, and safety as members mature and participate in the community. In most societies, it is within families that children acquire socialization for life outside the family. Additionally, as the basic unit for meeting the basic needs of its members, it provides a sense of boundaries for performing tasks in a safe environment, ideally builds a person into a functional adult, transmits culture, and ensures continuity of humankind with precedents of knowledge.

2.) Discuss the functions of the family.

FUNCTIONS OF THE FAMILY

Famous sociologists like Ogburn and Nimkoff have classified functions of family mainly into six types such as:

- (i) Affectional
- (ii) Economic functions
- (iii) Recreational functions
- (iv) Protective functions
- (v) Religious functions and
- (vi) Educational functions.

Another famous sociologist K. Davis has classified the functions of family into four main divisions such as

- (i) Reproduction
- (ii) Maintenance

(iii) Placement and

(iv) Socialization of the young.

Davis calls these as social functions and opines that family also performs some individual functions which are a corollary of its social functions. Although we still have other sociologists and their own perspectives on the functions of family.

Now looking at general functions, the family helps to;

1. The responsibility for the addition of new members through reproduction. Society must maintain a stable population in order to survive. Population growth provides a competitive advantage that usually enables a society to become wealthier.
2. Provision of physical care for their members, including adults, children and dependent elderly. When families are unable to care for their members, hardship results unless the society is organized to replace the family in this function. (Eg: Retirement homes)
3. Socialize children by teaching skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes of the society. Children who learn these can work and relate to others within appropriate adult roles.
4. Control the behavior of members to maintain order within the family and the society in which they live. Families monitor and evaluate the behavior of individuals and provide feedback. This control contributes to the socialization process and protects the reputation of individuals identified with family group within society.
5. Maintain morale and motivate individuals to participate in society. Commitment to family may be based on a spiritual sense of duty, or economic necessity. People assume that affective nurturance, meeting the emotional needs of individuals, is the foundation of our commitment to each other. Participation in appropriate social roles contributes to the health of the society as well as providing the means with which families care for their members.
6. Dealing with the economic function of producing and consuming goods and services. At one time, each family produced all the goods and services it consumed, and used only what it could produce. Now individuals sell their time and skills by producing goods and services within a specialized economy.

3.) Discuss the African traditional family

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. In rural areas, the family typically remains the basic unit of agricultural production.

However, no single type of family exists in Africa. Societies have defined family in many different ways, and many bear little resemblance to the Western idea of the nuclear family. Furthermore, throughout the continent, traditional family patterns are changing. Colonialism, capitalism, the growth of cities, exposure to Western culture, and increasing opportunities for women are some of the factors that are affecting the shape of family life.

FAMILY STRUCTURE IN THE AFRICAN SOCIETY.

Each of the many family systems in Africa can be defined in terms of two broad kinds of relationships. Relationships of descent are genealogical—that is, based on the connections between generations. Relationships of affinity are marital—based on marriage. The interweaving of these relationships creates the family that an individual sees every day, as well as the wider network of kinship that surrounds each person.

Relationships of Descent

Everyone is part of some sort of descent system, either patrilineal, matrilineal, or both. In patrilineal systems, property and political power pass through the male side of the family; the female side determines descent in matrilineal systems. In these relationships, senior generations have more power or status than junior ones. Younger people are expected to show respect toward older family members. In the past, this power could take the form of ownership. Among some peoples in the Congo Basin, for example, a man could sell his sister's child into slavery.

Relationships of Affinity

MARRIAGE SYSTEMS in Africa are highly diverse. In sub-Saharan Africa, some pairings of men and women are temporary, others permanent. Depending on the culture, a couple may live in the husband's home or the wife's home. Among some groups, such as the ASANTE, each spouse continues to live in the home in which he or she was born. Children may stay with their parents until they marry, or they may spend part of their adolescence in the home of another relative. In some cultures, young people leave their families at puberty to live in villages of adolescents.

African marriage can be polygynous—that is, a man may have more than one wife. In practice, though, only the senior or wealthy individuals in a society have been able to

have multiple wives. When polygyny occurs, the family unit is based on mothers. Each wife has her own house and property that are generally transferred to her own children. The mother and child, rather than the husband and wife, thus form the basis of family and kinship in such communities. Christian marriages in Africa, as elsewhere, are generally monogamous, with a man having only one wife.

In some African societies, nuclear families are contained within larger social groups that may include kinfolk, neighbors, people of the same age or gender, and others. The nuclear family does not always have its own property or decide what tasks its members will perform. Rather, relationships between husbands and wives and between parents and children often unfold within larger domestic units called households, which may consist of joint or extended families.

HOUSEHOLDS

In a household community, several generations and several nuclear families live and work together. In joint family households, all members live together in a single large homestead or compound. In extended family households, the nuclear families within the household each live in separate compounds. A joint or extended family is under the authority of its senior member, typically a grandfather or greatgrand-father. Such families may be patrilineal or matrilineal.

Most members of a joint or extended family household are born and raised within it or marry into it. Some, however, such as adopted children or adults, may be unrelated to the others. In sub-Saharan Africa, distant relatives are sometimes invited to settle with a household, but they usually have lower status than their hosts. A household might also include servants or, in the past, slaves.

The household functions as an economic as well as a family unit. It can be described in material terms—for example, by acres of land, number of buildings, or certain tasks performed by certain members. A family compound among the Tswana of Botswana might include the huts and grain sheds of a man and his wife (or wives) and children, an unmarried brother, and an elderly mother. In rural areas, household members work together to produce food and other goods; in a town or city, the members might work to pay rent and buy groceries. In either case, the household needs to maintain itself, which means that productive new members must be added to replace the elderly, the disabled, and those who die. In this way, households are more flexible and inclusive than other family groups.

ISLAM AND FAMILY LIFE

Islam has had a profound influence on family life in some parts of Africa. It has affected not only the **ARABS**, the majority population in North Africa, but also such non-Arab peoples as the **BERBERS**.

Arab Families

Arabs who live in rural areas tend to maintain more traditional customs than the inhabitants of towns and cities. Rural Arabs live in extended families, with three generations or more sharing a residence. Marriage is regarded not as the union of two individuals but as the joining of two families, often already linked by ties of KINSHIP. Family members are expected to stick closely to expected roles: fathers are stern disciplinarians, mothers are nurturers, and children become members of the family workforce who will one day provide for their parents in old age. Children of both genders are treated with affection, but boys have a higher position in the family and inherit more of its money and land.

Berber Families

The Berbers are non-Arab peoples descended from the original inhabitants of North Africa. They have adopted the Islamic religion and some Arab customs. A traditional Berber household consists of father, mother, and unmarried children. Family descent is patrilineal. Today, however, with many men working away from home for long periods, more households are headed by women. Both the Berbers and the Arabs permit polygyny under Islamic law, but in practice only wealthy men can afford separate households for each wife.

4.) Discuss your nuclear family.

The nuclear family is the traditional type of family structure. This family type consists of two parents and children. The nuclear family was long held in esteem by society as being the ideal in which to raise children. Children in nuclear families receive strength and stability from the two-parent structure and generally have more opportunities due to the financial ease of two adults.

My nuclear family consists of my both parents and eight children. My father married my mother when she was in her teen age, and she bare him eight children including I. I am the last of all the children. The first born three burns are girls followed by four boys and then down to me. My older first three older siblings are happily married now with their life partners while the next four just just finished from school accordingly.

5.) Draw your family tree.



