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**AFRICAN FAMILY SYSTEMS IN THE CONTEXT OF
SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

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AFRICAN FAMILY SYSTEMS IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Summary outline of a paper to be prepared for session 6 of the Third African Population Conference held in Dakar November 1992. (This paper will draw upon five specially commissioned papers by IPPF, CERPOD, Dr. M. Mhloyi, Dr Gandaho and Ms Marindo-Ranganai. None of these have yet been received (may 20 1992)). The paper will follow as far as possible the guidelines already suggested for preparation. The text of these guidelines is not repeated below.

Introduction

The regional context of economic crisis and rapid increases in population size, youthfulness, and social and spatial mobility will be outlined, as well as high continuing levels of morbidity and mortality. The implications of these economic and demographic trends for the composition and functioning of family systems will be indicated.

In view of these changing events and processes and the limited ability of state governments to provide the necessary means of economic assistance and social support to families, the current problems faced by parents and relatives in raising their children to socially and economically mature adulthood will be stressed.

Customary Security and Survival Strategies: The solidarities and strengths of traditional systems of kinship and marriage.

In order to examine more easily the current situation an effective paradigm of the structure and functioning of traditional, lineage - based systems of kinship and associated marriage systems will be succinctly presented. It will accommodate consideration of gender roles and conjugal family functioning with respect to:-

1. production and management of resources;
2. procreation and care of infants;
3. socialization and transitions o adulthood of youth;
4. dependency and support of the aged.

This paradigm will highlight the substitutability of familial actors characteristic of traditional systems and its significance for customary solidarity, security and continuity.

Contemporary economic Security and Survival Strategies: the growing individualism and fragility in current family systems

Possible occupational strategies adopted by women and men will be outlined, according to the changing systems of production and management of resources - economic activities and opportunities of family members - changing occupational roles:

1. Individual survival strategies - wage and salaried employment;
2. Family farms;
3. Family businesses etc.

The varied and changing division of economic tasks and opportunities between females and males and young and old will be discussed and their implications for changes in conjugal, kin and parento-filial relationships.

This discussion will include the persistence of polygyny, new marriage strategies; the practice of fostering in new forms and the significance of informal work-based organizations etc.

Impacts of Migration on Marriage, Kinship and Parenthood

The impacts of labour migration and of movements of people for environmental reasons are profound and have reverberating effects upon family life, splitting up husbands and wives, parents and children and kinsfolk. This section will use the background paper by CERPOD to examine impacts of spatial movements on families, on conjugal, parental and filial role and relationships.

Procreation and the Care of Infants

Drawing upon the paper of Dr. Mhloyi an over view will be given of the changes observed in reproduction and factors implicated in the :

1. Timing, spacing and numbers of births
2. The use of traditional and modern means to avert births
3. Breastfeeding and weaning of infants
4. Modes of infants care and maintenance

Special attention will be given to women's strategies to harmonize the combination of economic activities and child-care and to attract and keep various sources of support and assistance for their child-bearing, rearing and maintenance responsibilities. The coverage of maternity protection legislation will be considered.

Socialization and Transitions to Adulthood of Youth

This section will draw upon the background paper of the IPPF and discuss changes in:

1. Processes of child rearing and socialization
2. Education/training and assumption of occupational roles
3. Sexual relations, marriage, pregnancy and assumption of parental roles.

The implication of some of these changes for social policy, training and employment policies and legal change will be considered, including the issue of child labour.

Concluding Comments

The last section will summarize some of the major points regarding alternation taking place in family systems, noting the diversities at the micro level and the overall patterns at the macro level of some of the changes taking place. Some implications for social policies will be considered.