

Sociology Daily Answer Writing

Week 5 - Day 5

Model Structures

1. Critically analyse the contributions of G.H. Mead to symbolic interactionism 20

Model Structure

Introduction:

- Mead introduced a new perspective to sociology when he gave more importance to the micro-structure in a social setting.
- Definition of Symbolic interactionism

Main Body

- Hitherto, sociology had subordinated the individual to the social structure and thus agency was completely subordinated to the structure.
- We can say Mead further thinned the wall between Sociology and Psychology.
- Mead used the concept of Pragmatism as introduced by Dewey in which an actor before taking any social action evaluates all the alternatives and takes the best one for social interaction.
- He was also inspired by Cooley's socio-psychological concept of 'looking glass self' (briefly write about this term).
- Moreover to systematically develop the Symbolic Interactionism as a perspective he introduced the concepts such as 'Significant and Insignificant Symbols'
- Basic tenets of Symbolic interactionism:
 - Humans act as per the symbols assigned towards the thing
 - These symbols are developed in due course of interaction
 - With changes in the meaning of symbol, human behaviour changes
- Criticism (EXAMPLES)
 - Subjectivity and value loaded study mars Objective analysis
 - Origin of symbol is not specified by GH Mead

- Why a particular individual will assign a particular symbol towards a particular thing is not specified by Mead.
- There can be multiple symbols assigned towards a particular thing and also a single symbol can be assigned to the number of things. Mead failed to address the same
- Marxist criticizes Mead of ignoring the role of equal class structure in influencing symbolic interaction

Conclusion

- GH Mead symbolic interactionism paved the way for futuristic studies by many Sociological Investigators, whose cores of study was based on the interactions among humans.

2. Correlate relative deprivation and reference group behaviour.

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Model Structure

Introduction:

- Explain briefly about Merton
 - R K Merton was a prominent American sociologist known for his path breaking theories like reference group, relative deprivation, etc. OR
 - One can also define both the concepts here

Main Body

- Reference groups are used in order to evaluate and determine the nature of a given individual or other group's characteristics and sociological attributes.
- Merton: Social Theory and Social Structure (1949)
 - Explained concept of relative deprivation; CLOSELY linked with Ref Group
 - Examined the findings of the Samuel Stouffer - American Soldier - a work published in 1949
 - By choosing the Ref Group - relative deprivation of an individual differs.

- Stouffer found: Soldiers happier than the HQ employees, which contradicts the conventional notion.
- Frequency of interaction with one's reference group, proximity, degree of openness or closeness of the system and rewards determine the way in which one deals with relative deprivation

Conclusion

- Sociologist now argues that relative differences in economic wealth are more important than absolute deprivation, and that it is more significant in determining human quality of life (great even in defining class)

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