

Sociology Daily Answer Writing

Week 6 - Day 4

Model Structures

1. Functionalists believe families have to exist in every society because they meet the essential needs of society and individuals. In this context, critically examine the functionalist views on the institution of family. 20

Model Structure:

Introduction:

- Any of the Sociological Definition of Family (given by Thinkers)

Main Body:

- Functionalists see the family as an essential subsystem which depends on other subsystems. The family is a building block in society; it holds it together.
- The main Functionalist theorists of the family are G P Murdock and Talcott Parsons.
 - Murdock argued on the basis of his studies that the nuclear family was a universal social institution and that it existed universally because it fulfilled four basic functions for society: the sexual, reproductive, economic and education functions.
 - Parsons has a historical perspective on the evolution of the nuclear family. His functional fit theory is that as society changes, the type of family that fits that society, and the functions it performs change. Further, according to Parsons, although the nuclear family performs reduced functions, it is still the only institution that can perform two core functions in society - Primary Socialisation and the Stabilisation of Adult Personalities.
 - Ogburn & Nimkoff: basic functions of family are - affectional, economic, recreation, protection and education
 - Merton: Latent and Manifest functions of family
 - Durkheim - Family increases a person's integration into society, thus reduces egoistic suicides
- Criticism of Functionalist perspective on Family:
 - Feminist perspective - Family as breeding grounds of patriarchal domination.

- Family perpetuates unpaid labour (Margaret Benston)
- Family legitimises violence and sexual abuse (Murray Strauss)
- Edmund Leach Perspective (A Runaway World?)
- Vogel and Bell - Scapegoat of Children amidst Parental disturbance causes Dysfunctions.
- Marxist - Family as a means of production in Capitalist society - Female as free labour, thus exploitation.
- David Cooper (Death of family): Family is an ideological conditioning device in an exploitative society.

Conclusion:

- Beck and Beck thesis on Normal chaos of Love - functional existence of Family stays irrespective of dysfunctionalities of Industrialization and Globalisation.

2. Analyse the contemporary trends in family with examples.

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Model Structure:

Introduction:

- George Peter Murdock defined the family as "a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation, and reproduction." He added that the family "includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children".

Main Body:

- A lot of changes are taking place in the institution of the family which led to changes in composition and functions of the traditional family system. The following trends may be observed in the institution of the family.
 - Nuclear family: The trend in the urban societies is towards nuclear family, wherein only Husband, wife and their unmarried children reside together. This is also advocated by Talcott Parsons as Isolated nuclear family.

- Decreased Control of the Marriage Contract: SECULARISATION - Marriage has become a civil contract rather than a religious sacrament. The authority of religion over the conditions of marriage has markedly declined.
 - Divorce, desertion and separation are a frequent occurrence in a modern family whereas it was a rare phenomenon in a traditional family.
- Changes in Relationship of Man and Woman: Due to the employment opportunity and economic independence of women, symmetrical conjugal roles have been observed as advocated by Young & Willmott in Symmetrical Family (Stage 3 family)
- Separation of Non-Essential Functions: The modern family has given up many functions like economic, education etc., which were performed by the traditional family. This is illustrated by Parsons by his concept of structural differentiation.
- Parent Youth Conflict: Interpersonal conflicts in the family are increasing. An unusual amount of conflict between parents and their adolescent children are taking place. Kingsley Davis says, the stress and strain in our culture is symptomatic of the functionless instability of the modern small family.
- Non-marital habituation: Unwed mothers, 'live in relationship' between a couple without the ceremony of marriage
- DINK – Double income no kids
- Weekend families
- Patrilocal trend after marriage changed to neolocal household
- A. M. Shah's Perspective on Nuclearisation of Family - Household dimension of family
- Families undergoing same sex marriage prevalence among the LGBTQ community members.

Conclusion:

- Despite the above changes, the Functional necessity of Family is inevitable for economic stability, recreation and sexual gratification.