

Sociologists attempt to understand family

Sociology



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Family in sociology Family in sociology Family is the smallest recognized group of society consisting individuals (usually joined by blood, marriage, or adoption). Members of the family establish an emotional connection and family as a whole is considered as the economic unit of the society.

In sociological perspective there are two forms of types of nuclear family and extended family. Nuclear family consists of one male and female couple and their children (including adopted), thus two generation family. While on the other hand, extended family includes individuals of the same lineage, many adult couples (nuclear families) with their children and sisters and brothers belonging to a single family. The family can be extended vertically (aunts, uncles parents) or horizontally (grandparents, older aunts, and uncles).

Families are called symmetrical, if the authority and responsibilities are shared between the male and female partners.

Extended family is more depiction of traditional families where the family is lead by a male adult (usually the older one), while other males, females and children linked with blood, adoption are lower in status. According to functionalist approach, extended family depicts that family is the institution that plays the basic functions of a society. The nature of a family determines the nature of a society. There are differences within a family on the basis of gender, age, sex, status, type of hierarchy and education. In functionalist view, the family maintains the order and stability of the society. The sexual function is regulated through sexual activity between husband and wife in a family. This function exists in all societies and is maintained through various norms and values throughout the world. The sexual function serves the sexual, reproductive, economic, and educational aspects in a society.

Reproductive function refers to producing and raising children provides the

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society with enough human resource. Society's responsibilities are shared by the members added by the family. The family has a functional, economic perspective, as there lies a distinct distribution of economic resources and access. There also exists a clear distinct and clear division of labor. The family also has an educational function, i. e., it carries out the socialization of individuals within the family, hence meets with the socialization needs of a society. Through education, family inculcate the values, mores, ethics, and culture to the new members of the family. Thus, education fulfills the need of socialization. Primary socialization is carried out at home and family has a vital role in the socialization of young individuals, secondary socialization is carried out through formal institutions of school, college, academics, religious sessions, etc.

Contradictory to the functionalist view, Conflict theory proposes that family is a source of oppression to suppress the liberty and freedom of the young individuals. Conflict theories explain the underpinnings of social conflicts due to inequality in a society. Important views were that presented by Carl Marx and Frederick Engels. Carl Marx viewed the family like an extension of the capitalist agenda. Capitalism is based on two classes of proletariat and bourgeoisie. The later class is the dominant class and holds all the resources inside a society; thus, in marks view capitalism is based on social and economic inequality. He viewed that capitalism exerts it oppressive authority also through family and intern; family serves to strengthen the capitalist system. The economic, education, socialization, and the reproductive role of a family is deemed by Marxists as the extension of the societal functions.

Family serves as the basic unit of resource generation and resources distribution; and determinant of hierarchy and authority, social status and

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the importance of gender and sexes in a family.

Engels implies that the nuclear family is the result of private property.

Private property and nuclear family supported gender oriented society.

Private property also set the rules of legitimate hierarchy in the family

(OpenStax, 2013). Feminism and Marxist feminism also influenced the the

perspective of family with respect to gender; and thus, Feminism has

challenged the culture of monolithic, patriarch family, dominated by a male

individual. Particularly, Marxist feminists elaborate that nuclear family leads

to exploitation of women in a capitalist society.

Reference

OpenStax, 2013. Introduction to Sociology. EElectronic ed. Houston Texas:

Rice University.