

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q5(b)

Discuss various theoretical perspectives on family.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2022 · Sociology GS 1 · 10 marks · Sociology

Sociology - The Discipline: Modernity and social changes in Europe and emergence of sociology; Scope of the subject and comparison with other social sciences; Sociology and common sense.

Core demand of the question

- Discuss various theoretical perspectives on family
- Keep the discussion within a 10-mark length

Revision summary

- **Parsons:** nuclear family specialises in socialisation and adult stability.
- **Engels:** family form follows property and women's subordination.
- **Oakley and Walby:** housework and patriarchy as inequality.
- **Mead and Levi-Strauss:** roles and alliance.

Census and **NFHS** show mixed Indian household forms.

Introduction

The family is not one object. Functional, Marxist, feminist, and interactionist perspectives name different work that households do: socialisation, reproduction of labour, gendered unpaid care, and everyday performance of roles.

Body**Functional and modernisation views**

- Talcott **Parsons** treated the isolated nuclear family as specialised in primary socialisation and adult personality stabilisation in industrial society.
- William J. Goode argued that industrialisation spreads a conjugal family form. Indian joint households, still visible in the **Census**, qualify that path.

Conflict and materialist views

- Friedrich **Engels** linked the monogamous family to private property and the subordination of women.
- The household reproduces labour-power for capital, often through unpaid care that wage tables miss.

Feminist perspectives

- Ann **Oakley** made housework visible. Sylvia Walby placed the household among structures of patriarchy.
- The family is a site of inequality and violence, not only of warmth. **NFHS** on decision-making and spousal violence is the Indian file.

Interaction and alliance

- George Herbert Mead's self is first trained in the family game of roles.
- Claude Levi-Strauss treated alliance and the exchange of spouses as the elementary structure, which kinship studies in India still use beside caste endogamy.

Discussion

- No single perspective owns the family. **Parsons** explains role specialisation and hides unpaid gender.
- **Engels** and feminists explain power and miss some care as chosen solidarity.
- Use the set, and read SHG and migration households as changing forms, not as failed nuclear types.

Flow diagram

Family -> Parsons socialisation
Family -> Engels property
Family -> Feminist unpaid care
Family -> Mead roles

Conclusion

Perspectives on the family split along function, property, gender, and interaction. **Parsons**, **Engels**, **Oakley**, Mead, and Levi-Strauss still organise the debate. Indian **Census** and **NFHS** households show joint, nuclear, and female-headed mixes that no one theory saturates.

Facts & figures

Parsons

Isolated nuclear family as functional fit to industrial occupational systems.

Engels

The Origin of the Family tied monogamy and inheritance to private property.

Oakley

Housework as work; a founding feminist critique of the happy-family function tale.

NFHS

Household data on women's agency and violence that test rosy family models.