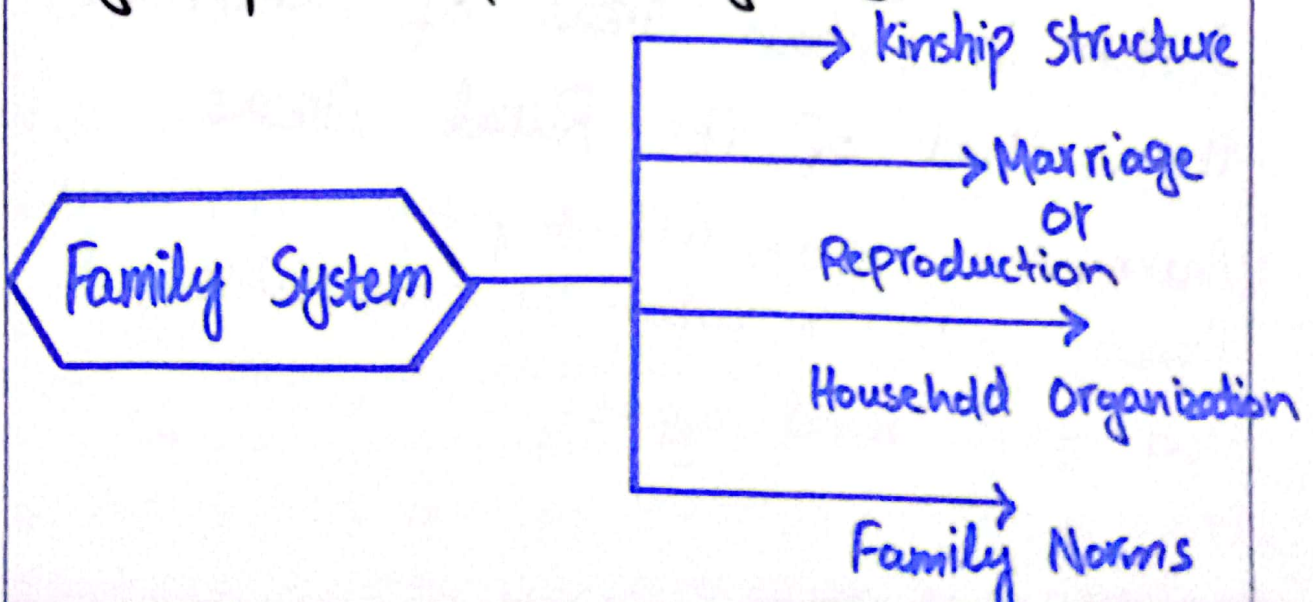


Q: Family system in urban areas of Pakistan is weak than that of its rural areas. Why? Give reasons in Anthropological context.

Expounding the Concept of Family System in Anthropology

In anthropology, family system refers to the system or organization of family roles and relationships within a culture or society. There are different aspects of family system which include kinship structures, family norms, marriage and reproduction and household organization. Anthropology explicates how family relationships are related to one another that is through blood (**consanguinity**) or marriage (**affinity**). It also explicates the reasons for which urban areas of Pakistan have weak family system than that of its rural areas.

Key Aspects of Family System



Importance of Family System in the Light of Theories of Anthropology

i- Structural Functionalism of A.R. Radcliffe Brown

A.R. Radcliffe Brown's structural functionalism explains that 'family is an integral part of social structure which plays its role in maintaining social order and cohesion through kinship structures.'

ii- Alliance Theory of Claude Lévi Strauss

Claude Lévi Strauss in alliance theory also known as kinship theory explains that social organization is maintained through exchange of women between groups. He introduced 'elementary structures of kinship' focussing on kinship roles in social organization.

Explicating Reasons for Weak Family System in Urban Areas of Pakistan than that of its Rural Areas

Anthropology gives following reasons for weak family system in urban areas of Pakistan than that of its rural areas.

1- Difference of family structure ~~between~~ rural and urban areas:

One of the primary reason for weak family system in urban areas of Pakistan than that of its rural areas is difference of family structure ^{between} rural and urban areas. For example, Emile Durkheim in his classical work "Division of Labor in Society" sheds light on structural Functionalism while emphasizing that industrialization and urbanization have compelled urban areas toward a shift from extended family system to nuclear families, in which family relationships are not as strong as in extended families of rural areas.

2- Availability of Vast Social Networks in Urban Areas:

Another reason for weak family system in urban areas of Pakistan than that of its rural areas is availability of vast social networks in urban areas. For instance, Mark Granovetter in his Social Network Theory explains that weak family relationships in nuclear families of urban areas compel individuals to rely on social networks rather than relying on familial support system. However, in rural areas of Pakistan family offers strong support system that is another reason for weak family system in urban areas than rural areas.

3- Increased Social Mobility in Urban Areas

Talcott Parsons in Modernization theory explains that the increased ^{geographic and social} mobility in urban areas can disrupt the traditional family structure of urban areas. This is another reason due to which urban areas of Pakistan have weak family system than that of its rural areas.

4- Difference of Perspective on Gender Roles between Urban and Rural Areas

Another reason for weak family system in urban areas of Pakistan than that of its rural areas is difference of perspective on gender roles between rural and urban areas. **Michel Foucault** in his work on power, knowledge and social institutions in Post-modernism explains that urban areas have complex power structure including media, government, education system etc, due to which they have more progressive and diverse perspectives on gender roles that can influence traditional family dynamics of urban areas.

5- Urbanization Stress

Urbanization stress also leads to weak family system in urban areas ^{of Pakistan}, which is not prevalent in rural areas. For instance, Oscar Lewis in urban anthropology explains that the stress associated with urbanization including congestion,

pollution, economic stress and social isolation negatively impact family cohesion of urban areas (The children of Sanchez: Autobiography of Mexican Family, 1961).

6. Less Intergenerational Interaction in Urban Areas

Another reason for weak family system in urban areas of Pakistan than that of its rural areas is less intergenerational interaction in urban areas.

For instance, Murray Bowen in Family System theory explains that ^{due to} more nuclear families and less space in urban areas, the intergenerational interaction become more limited.

7. Economic Stress of Urban Areas

Both urban anthropology and structural functionalism contend that urban areas have higher living costs which can strain family resources and cause financial stress that harshly influence family relationships. This is another important reason for weak family system in urban areas of Pakistan than that of its rural areas.

8. Rapid Cultural Shift in Urban Areas

Urban areas of Pakistan face rapid cultural shift and according to Clifford Geertz's symbolic and interpretive anthropological approach human behavior is shaped by symbols that are culturally constructed. Since in urban areas, due to cultural diversity the symbolic framework to support traditional family roles become fragmented. That is why Pakistani urban areas have weak family system than that of its rural areas.

9. Prioritizing Career Over Family

In urban areas, people usually prioritize career over family. According to theory of cultural relativism given by Marvin Harris, material conditions like economic conditions shape cultural practices and social structures which led toward preference of career over family in urban areas. This is another reason for weak family system in urban areas of Pakistan than that of its rural areas.

Concluding Thoughts

Anthropology has explained the roles, relationships and responsibilities of family members in different family structures. It has also shed

light on how different factors contribute to weak family system in urban areas of Pakistan and why rural areas have comparatively strong family system. In a nutshell, anthropology has given holistic analysis for explicating the reasons behind weak family system in urban areas of Pakistan than that of its rural areas.