

Explain the structure and functions of Pakistani family with practical examples and research based arguments. What do you see the future of Pakistani family system while keeping in view of the social changes occurring in the last decade?

Answer

1) Introduction -

The institution of family holds central position in Pakistan. The two main family structures are joint family and nuclear family. Families with single parent (divorced or widowed) are also getting normalized. The institution itself performs a variety of functions ranging from rearing and socialization of children and prevention of sexual perversion to acting as economical unit and psychological support for the members. A look at the future prospect of family system reveals erosion of control on members, loss of unity/harmony among spouses and decline in birth rate. Positive changes include rise in female education and employment.

and disposal of wasteful family customs

2) Structure of Pakistani Family:-

A cursory look at Pakistani family system reveals a strong conbat of Patriarchy even in highly modernized, educated families. Patriarchal control determines access to resources (economic, social and psychological) and opportunities.

Example:

This difference in resource access is highlighted by the fact that female literacy in Pakistan stands at 52.8% while that of male is at 68%. (Economic Survey of Pakistan, 2024-25)

a) Joint Family Structure

This family structure comprises of all relatives of paternal side living together in a large house. Here the elder males exercise conbat.

b) Nuclear Family Structure

This family structure consists of mother, father and their children. Urbanization and rise of corporate jobs have led to the rise of this type.

c) Single Parent Families

In the past, the existence of families led by divorced or widowed mothers was considered almost impossible. That trend is now changing and is fueled by women education, employment and importance of consent of women in deciding to live alone or re-marry...

3) Functions of Pakistani Family System:-

Following are the main functions of this institution:-

a) Caring and Rearing of Children

Providing offsprings to a family and ensuring appropriate care for them is the main aim of family. According to Gallup Survey (2019), 95% of parents prefer taking care of their children without hiring help.

b) Mate Selection

Given the fact that almost 90% of marriages in Pakistan are arranged, it shows how crucial a role the family plays in finding a suitable match for their children.

c) Acting as Hub of Economic Activity

The parents are the ones who spend so much on childcare, education of children and then help them get a job or establish a business or join the family business. In this way, a Pakistan family ~~serves~~^{serves} as the main hub of economic activity.

d) Acting as Hotspot for Communal Health

It is the family of a child who is responsible for his initial vaccination and for imparting basic sense of hygiene to them. Maternal and Neonatal health is also closely associated with the family.

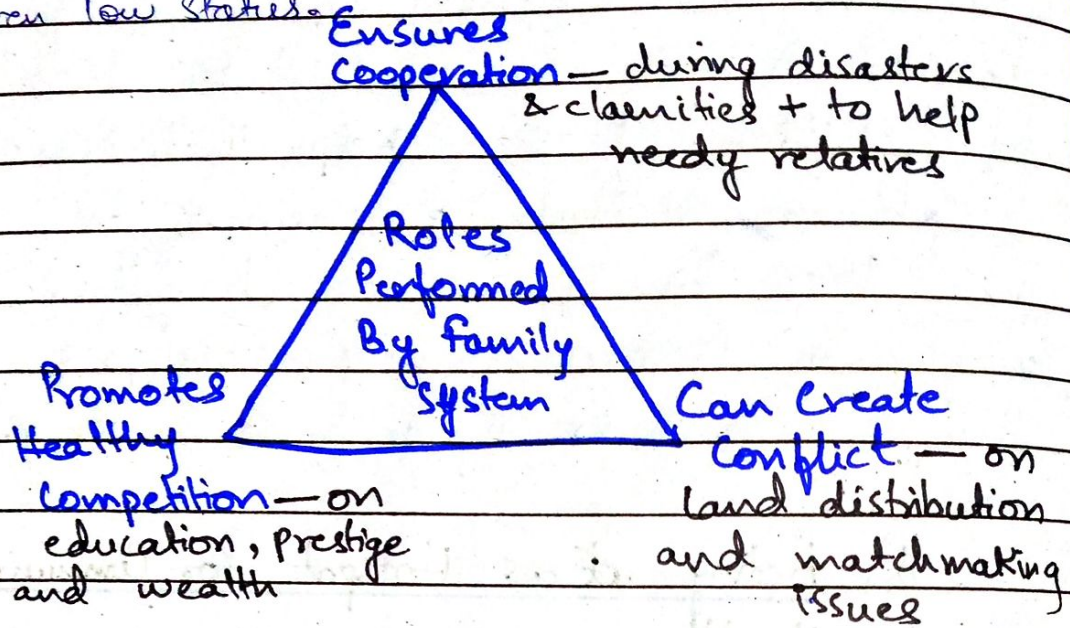
e) Teaching Acceptable Ways of Social Conduct

According to Symbolic Interactionists' perspective, family is the main place where children learn about self-concept, develop identity and learn about their roles in the larger system of society.

f) Defining Social Status of Each Family Member

Family also confers a hierarchical status to each member of the family. In Pakistani families,

The relatives on father's side are usually given low status.



↑ Functions of Family

4) Future of Family System in View of Social Change:-

Just like every other institution, the effects of social change are also visible on family system in Pakistan. Following is an account of what the future of family looks like.

a) Erosion of family Control

With the rise of Western values of individualism and rise of technological use in teenagers, the control of families on the members' choices seem to be decreasing. This control is going to erode even more in the future.

b) Rise in Divorce Rate

Pakistan has seen unprecedented rate of increase in divorce rate. According

to Gallup Survey (2019), 68% of people believe this increase is due to lack of patience among spouses

c) Decline of Birth Rate

Due to changes in perceptions about family size and dissemination of family planning strategies the birth rate in Pakistan has gone down from 6 to 3.6 between 1990s and 2024 (PMC, 2024). In the future, this rate is projected to decline even more -

d) Rise in Female Education and Freedom

In terms of female freedom, we are seeing rise in female education. Although the gender gap in education is still at $\sim 15\%$, we are seeing closing of this gap. (Global Gender Gap Report, 2025). Women employment is also increasing.

e) Disposal of Wasteful Family Customs

Due to social change and rise of education and awareness, we are seeing families increasingly willing to dispose off

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wasteful customs.

Example:- Resistance to demands of dowry.

5) Conclusion:-

Family ~~System~~ is a crucial institutions of Pakistan that maintains social harmony and ensures continuity of society. Recent years have seen this institute change a lot. These changes are both positive and negative. While positive changes need to be welcomed, negative social changes need to be curtailed. This is crucial to preserve the essence of family ~~and~~ system.