

introduction

- sociologists have long been divided on the issue of feminists views of the family.
- the underlying belief is that women experience injustice on the basis of their gender and that society works to favour men.
- functionalists would disagree with feminism as they overlook the affects of major social inequalities such as sexism and patriarchy.

Conclusion

- underlying beliefs that all feminist share is that women experience injustice in the family on the basis of their gender
- believe society works to favour men and this male domination of society is known as patriarchy.

criticisms

- women may feel oppressed, but men may be forced into an aggressive role.
- gender systems can be damaging to both men and women.
- tend to over look other forms of inequality like race, age and disability.

liberal feminists

liberal feminists believe gender inequality is gradually being achieved through laws and policies for the family.

-they are concerned with discrimination of women in areas such as work and education

-women's oppression is thus being overcome through these law changes in addition to the changing attitudes surrounding the role or position of women in the family

-sex discrimination act outlaws discrimination in employment which allows women to break through the 'glass ceiling' (a social barrier preventing women from being promoted to top jobs) of oppression within the workplace

-Jenny Somerville believes women have access to a number of opportunities in society which they did not previously have access to including job opportunities and control over fertility

radical feminist

radical feminists see men as the enemy and marriage as a fantasy into which women are drawn in order for men to control their behaviour.

-refers to the term 'sex class' because with the combo of female biology and patriarchy it is inevitable women will depend on men

-'political lesbianism' (main idea is that sexuality is a choice) is the only way women can gain equality

-radical feminist Germaine Greer says women have been 'castrated' by a patriarchal society that demeans and hates women, she argues that girls are socialised into traditional ideas of femininity.

criticisms: Fail to recognise that men are just as constrained by socialisation into masculine roles as women are by feminine rules.

difference feminists

most feminists

Difference feminists believe that all women have different experiences of exploitations, they focus on exploitation of women both through their sexuality and ethnicity.

-Asian women may experience more patriarchy in their families due to cultures and beliefs, and black feminists may view the family as supportive against racism.

Criticisms: DF criticise other feminists for their failure to consider the influence of racism as well as patriarchy but this can be seen as belittling other people's experiences due to their ethnicity.

Most feminists agree that men oppress women and treat women unfairly through law.

-these often show when violence against women is not taken seriously by official agencies or the gender pay gap.

-women are also oppressed by men when they take on unpaid work in the home known as the triple shift. Marxist feminist Margaret Benson says 'the amount of unpaid labour women perform in the home is very large compared to men.'

-men tend to control important decisions as they have financial power.

-gender roles in the family mean women have no freedom due to either the dual burden or the triple shift.

Criticisms: some feminists' writing has been extreme and hostile to men and assumes, for example that all men are potential rapists.



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Page 2 of 2.

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