

Question no 1; Answer

Talcot parson's contribution to sociology

Talcott Parsons was one of the most important American sociologists of the 20th century. He is the father of structuralist-functionalism, and he is credited for introducing European sociology to the US by translating important texts of European scholars.

Parsons is famous for creating a whole school of thought within sociology by connecting the discipline to **clinical psychology** and **social anthropology**.

The Structure of Social Action (1937) is parson's first book, It deals with the Hobbesian problem of how social order was possible. It is mainly based on the works of Weber, Pareto and Durkheim. Its conclusion is that **social action** was shaped by shared norms and values rather than on individual

personalities (as argued by Freud and Weber).

Talcott Parsons and functionalism

Talcott Parsons was one of the most important scholars of **functionalism**. He focused on how society achieves **social stability**, which he referred to as 'dynamic equilibrium'.

According to functionalists, all institutions and individuals serve a certain function in society, thus making sure of the smooth working of the whole social system.

Parsons identified four **functional sub-systems** and their purposes in society. These sub-systems are:

- economic sub-system,
- political sub-system,
- family sub-system, and
- cultural sub-system.

These sub-systems work not only in and of themselves but also for the other sub-

systems to be able to function properly.

Question no 2; Answer

Sick role is a term used in medical sociology regarding sickness and the rights and obligations of the affected. Parsons was a functionalist sociologist, who argued that being sick means that the sufferer enters a role of 'sanctioned deviance'. This is because, from a functionalist perspective, a sick individual is not a productive member of society. The patterns of sickness are often caused by persistent pain which helps to support their attitude of not wanting to take positive action to get better.[4]

[5] Therefore this deviance needs to be policed, which is the role of the medical profession. Generally, Parsons argued that the best way to understand illness sociologically is to view it as a form of deviance which disturbs the social

function of the society.

The general idea is that the individual who has fallen ill is not only physically sick, but now adheres to the specifically patterned social role of being sick. 'Being Sick' is not simply a 'state of fact' or 'condition', it contains within itself customary rights and obligations based on the social norms that surround it. The theory outlined three rights of a sick person and two obligations:

Rights:

- The sick person is exempt from normal social roles
- The sick person is not responsible for their condition has right to be taken care of.

Obligations:

- The sick person should try to get well
- The sick person should seek technically competent help and cooperate with the medical

professional

There are three versions of sick role:

- Conditional
- Unconditionally legitimate
- Illegitimate role: condition that is stigmatized by others

