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| **Learning Table 1: The Functions of the Family: FEMINISM** | | |
| **Analysis** | **Evaluation** | **Application** |
| Feminists see the family as a place of work. They consider housework to be work. They believe men gain from this more than women as they have their meals cooked, clothes cleaned etc. whilst women remain unpaid for this work.  Feminists attack the notion of the ‘symmetrical family’ and do not believe there is a substantial growth of equality between partners in the family.  Because of this inequality feminists argue that women have a greater dependency on men (generally due to the fact that women only earn approx. 85% of what men earn), and also that women are more at risk of suffering from domestic violence.  ***Liberal Feminism***  Believe that women’s position in the family can have adverse effects on a woman’s power, career and health.  They believe that to improve the position of women, we must:   * Change socialisation and parenting practices to avoid steering women into the ‘housewife-mother’ role * Establish and assert legal rights of women. This would include equal pay measures, a stop to sex discrimination equality in maternity/paternity leave * Better and cheaper childcare * Sharing housework * Stronger action against domestic violence   ***Radical Feminism***  Patriarchy in society and the family is the problem.  Greer (2007) argues that many relationships in society are patriarchal and exploitive. They see the family as a patriarchal institution that benefits men and exploits women. Men are able to exercise their patriarchal power and control, sometimes backed up with physical and sexual violence. Women are better off by avoiding patriarchal families. The solution is to reject the family and family life, and in many cases reject relationships with men altogether.  ***Marxist Feminist***  Believe women are doubly exploited; both as workers in a capitalist society and as women. They see the family, particularly the women’s role, as contributing to the maintenance of capitalism in the following ways:   * The social reproduction of labour power: the family provides a place where children can be born and raised with a sense of security, and the ruling class is provided with a readily available and passive labour force for its factories and offices * Social control of the working class: This means we keep people conforming to the dominant norms and values of society. Expectations such as what makes a ‘good parent’ | **Criticisms of the Marxist feminist and radical feminist perspectives**   * Women’s roles are not the same in all families e.g. dual-worker couples * Assume that women are passive victims in the family: Hakim (2011) suggests women’s inequality in the family and sex-role stereotyping may be the result of women’s personal choices. Personal choice and preference could be the simple explanation e.g. some women may simply want to be a house wife because they enjoy staying home with the children and doing the housework, as opposed to them being *made* to do it. * More women are working and have independent incomes and so have more power in the family than some feminist writers may imply * Children have much more status and power in the family and so because of the increased exposure to education and media alongside a wider range of socialising opportunities, women may be more likely to also assert themselves more in family life. |  |