Yanomamo Tribe Culture Society and Social Theories

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Introduction

The Yanomamo tribe belongs to Central Brazil and is one of the oldest tribes that can be categorized into classic forest footmen. The ancient tribe, which wasn't discovered until the late 1960s, lives in complete isolation from the outside world and its threats. The Yanomamo people live in small groups or tribes, forming villages and residing in communal huts called shabonos, which are collective living quarters for multiple families without any segregation.

Their language is only spoken by the indigenous people. There is no formal education system or written form of their language. Their basic education revolves around survival, which involves hunting, growing crops, and feeding on them. Moreover, the Yanomami people have little to no clothing, depending on the level of their position in the tribe. While they focus most of their time on gardening, gathering food, creating crafts, and decorating their faces, the Yanomami also believe in socializing and helping each other.

The locals' regulations consider men in high ranks the protectors of the women and children of their village. Additionally, they also have authority over their women and are allowed to beat them and marry more than one wife at a time. This concept is adopted in order to increase the population of the tribe and secure their society from foreign invasion (Borofsky, Rob, and Bruce Albert).

Furthermore, the Yanomamo tribe strongly believes in forming political alliances with other tribes and villagers, which are celebrated through feasts and festivals where they present their beautiful culture through face painting, dancing, and music. The social activity helps Yanomami people form unity against the foreign population, which can be threatening to them and their minority culture, which is already at risk of extinction.

Yanomamo vs Modern Civilization

The Yanomamo tribe was first discovered in 1964 when Dr Napoleon Chagnon published his work regarding the living style of the untouched tribe, which was unfamiliar to the modern world, its theories, and developments. The Yanomamo people have been threatened by foreign invasion several

times due to the riches of their land. Gold miners, in 1993, entered the area in search of wealth and killed sixteen Yanomami Indians.

The activities of the unfamiliar crowd alarmed the indigenous people, and they realized the threat that was caused by the foreign invasion. The gold miners also damaged their land, which was the most important thing to the people of the Yanomamo tribe, as their survival depended on it. The miners killed enough animals to cause a food shortage for the locals. Moreover, they polluted the waters with mercury, killing river life, damaging nearby crops, and risking the lives of many Yanomami civilians.

According to Chagnon (1966), the Yanomamo people are violent and sexist and kill to feed and survive. They see women as a form of men's property; therefore, the more women and offspring a man had, the more powerful he was considered and the more respected he was by other members. They killed their own kind and the people who interfered with their aim of surviving through hunting, gardening, and other activities that were necessary for living.

The Yanomami tribes are among the most isolated Brazilian tribes, living in different villages whose members live under one hut. Every village is considered economically independent. The indigenous people have developed this practice of being self-sufficient to be able to survive on whatever resources are available to them without seeking an outsider's help and taking the risk of returning that favour. However, the culture of socializing is practised between the villages of Yanomami tribes in order to perform marriages and increase the population.

The Yanomami culture is tagged as hostile to outsiders. Nevertheless, it is their traditions, concepts, and way of life that differ from the rest of the world. Their attitude towards women is sexist and oppressive of the female gender. They kill female infants at birth to avoid shame in the family. That is the reason there aren't enough women in their society, which can threaten the population.

The land of the Yanomami territory might be isolated from the rest of the world, but this is not the reason behind their backward culture and distance from modern civilization. The indigenous people have maintained this distance in order to avoid the interference of foreign cultures in their own, which can risk their survival. Additionally, events in the past and their first impression of foreign invasion have been factors in maintaining this distance.

Moreover, the ancient tribe is self-sufficient, and unlike other civilizations, its members are not required to engage with outsiders to exchange goods and services in order to increase their standard of living. This is due to their beliefs, their acceptance of a basic life, and their aim to survive rather than improve their standards of living. They believe in peace and a simple life that revolves around hunting, gardening, and feasting.

Functionalist Theory

According to the functionalist theory, society is a body of interconnected parts that are meant to work together as a unit in order to achieve a balanced state and social equilibrium. An example of this concept is the unique contribution of every social institution to society as a whole. A family provides reproduction and is responsible for the upbringing and nurturing of children, while education helps the youth become more knowledgeable, develop skills, and understand culture; politics is an institution for governing a society; economics is about the concept of production, distribution, and consumption; and lastly, religion provides guidance, support, and a higher entity to worship for society, which brings people hope and morality (Matsumoto, David Ricky, and Linda P. Juang).

This functionalist theory of society holds that all the departments of a society work together to form a lifestyle, and every institution has an influence over the others. A higher divorce rate has resulted in more children with a single parent who can't balance providing for the family with raising them. On the other hand, an increase in female workers has resulted in new policies regarding harassment in the workplace and sexist discrimination.

Yanomami Society and Functionalist Theory

The people of Yanomami live in unity to protect their kind and their culture. They believe in socializing and connecting with each other to keep their population running. The functionalist theory is applied to their society when it comes to the economic institution, which produces food through gardening and hunting. The economic institution is related to their way of life and the institutions of family and politics, which revolve around survival and the learning and teaching of producing and hunting food.

Families raise and bring up their children to be able to lead a successful life in Yanomami society, which believes in the aim of living a peaceful life without any requirements for developments or inventions, sticking to Stone Age methods. The institution of education provides teachings on leading a basic life of hunting and feeding.

Hence, it can be concluded that the functionalist theory is applicable to Yanomami society to a great extent because most of their social institutions work in harmony to build up their way of living and meet the ultimate goal of their existence.

Interactionist Theory

Interactionism derives from social processes of human development through connecting with other human beings. Interactionist theory refers to how individuals contribute to the way a society runs and how society influences the individual. The theory also suggests that a person's identity and personality are developed through social interactions. We see ourselves in how others tag us or

recommend us. When a bunch of people consider you a kind-hearted person, you will begin to act like one and believe it.

Yanomami Society and Interactionism

Interaction exists in the society of the Yanomami people because of their belief in socializing and forming good connections in order to succeed. Their theory of a strong man who has many wives and children has encouraged men to oppress women and exploit them because they have begun to see themselves that way. On the other hand, they are influenced by the behaviours of each other and live in conformity without raising questions about their way of living or exploring the world beyond.

Thus, the interactionist theory applies to some extent to the people of Yanomami but not entirely due to the low number of interactions with the outside world. They are unaware of the perspective of people in other parts of the world and how they are seen by foreigners.

Conflict Theory

This theory of sociology refers to conflict among people over the limited resources available to them for their unlimited wants. On the other hand, the conflict perspective is a concept in which different groups and interests that exist in society compete for the power and resources available to them.

Conflict theory divides people with different opinions and interests into different groups. Industrialists and capitalists are interested in profits, customer exploitation, and minimum costs, while the working class is concerned with wages and taxes. Every group fights for its right to hold a strong place in society in order to survive. This division has led to the creation of classes, positions in society, and higher and lower standards.

Yanomami Society and Conflict Theory

Yanomamo society has shown evidence of conflict theory with its hostile behaviour towards foreign invasions that are threatening its limited food resources. Additionally, the killing of villagers from other villages and causing war among each other are all results of the constant search for food and competition for the available amount.

Moreover, society believes in giving power to an entity in order to avoid war and conflicts among its members; therefore, men in society are given power over women, and the one with the most wives and offspring is considered the most respected. This thought has led to constant competition to become the best and gain power through several marriages and fathering children.

Hence, Yanomamo society reflects conflict theory because the idea of power has always been there

since ancient times, along with the setting of certain rules to achieve it. Additionally, a limited resource such as food has encouraged competition among the people of Yanomami.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Yanomami society is one of the most unique, oldest, and peaceful cultures that needs to be cherished and saved for the long term. The lifestyle of the people of Yanomami is very different from that of modern civilization. They have developed economic independence to avoid engagement with outsiders and to escape any form of invasion and the illegal capture of their land. The sociological fundamentals are all applicable to Yanomami society to some extent because of its organized way of living.

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