**“The decline in traditional family life and family values   
has been bad for society.” Do you agree with this view? (15 Marks)**

Statistics show that the traditional Nuclear family of a married Mum and Dad with their children has been declining in society. We now have more diverse family forms such as single parent families and same sex families. Some sociologists would argue that this change has been bad for society, however others would disagree and see the changes positively.

Functionalist Sociologists such as Parsons, have argued that families serve important functions in society and that if the traditional Nuclear family breaks-down it is bad for society, since only the Nuclear family can complete these functions. For example, primary socialisation with both a male and female role model. Functionalists would argue other family types cannot complete these functions effectively, and therefore would agree with the statement that the decline in traditional family life has been bad for society.

New Right Sociologists, such as Murray would also agree with the statement. For example, he claims that there is a growing underclass in Britain caused by the decline in ‘family values’; people who are living on benefits and lots of single parent families. The New Right think this is bad for society, as you end up with people who are ‘lazy’ and lots of boys without strong male role models. Therefore, the New Right would also agree with the statements and say the change in families have been bas for society.

Feminist sociologists, such as Oakley, might view these changes in terms of progress and claim that they have been good for society. These trends are the result of women becoming more independent and powerful: women are less reliant on men and are no longer defined merely in terms of being a mother and a wife. So-called “traditional” values are patriarchal values: they designed to give men power over women and the fact they continue to decline is good for all women and, therefore, good for society. This shows that Feminists would disagree with the statement and would argue that the changes have been positive in society.

In conclusion, while some groups of sociologists highlight the negatives that have come from the decline in traditional family values, there are also positives that can be highlighted. Britain still seems to be functioning as a society, and also seems to be more respectful and tolerant. This goes against the claim in the title.