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UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU

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STUDY MATERIAL

For

M.A. SOCIOLOGY

(SEMESTER-IST)

TITLE : SOCIOLOGY OF FAMILY, KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE

SESSION 2020

COURSE No. SOC-C-102

LESSON No. 1-20

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Syllabus of Sociology
M.A. 1st Semester
To be held in the year Dec. 2019, 2020 & 2021 (Non-CBCS)

Course No. SOC-C-102 Title : Sociology of Family, Kinship and Marriage

Credits : 6 Max. Marks : 100

Duration of examination : 2 & 1/2 hrs. (a) Semester examination : 80

(b) Sessional assessment : 20

Objectives :

To demonstrate to the students the universally acknowledged social importance of Family and Kinship structure and familiarize them with the rich diversity in the types of networks of relationship created by genealogical links of marriage and other social ties. The course also intends to make the students understand how the study of kinship systems in different ethnographic settings can facilitate a comparative understanding of societies and social institutions. The course would also provide exposure to the students about different approaches, issues and debates in studies of kinship, marriage and family.

Unit I Kinship

Defining Kinship, Incest Taboo, Descent Groups and Descent Theory, Inheritance and Succession, Kinship Usages and Kinship Terminology.

Unit II Marriage and Affinity

Marriage : Meaning and Evolution, Alliance Theory : Symmetrical and Asymmetrical exchange, Marriage transactions, Rules of Residence.

Unit III Family

Definition, Structure and Function, Theoretical perspective on study of family, Alternatives to family institution, Changing family structure, Development cycle.

Unit IV The Indian Context

Kinship Studies in India : Specific Studies by Dumont, Irawati Karve and T.N. Madan, Forms of marriage among different communities in India, Joint Nuclear family debate, Household dimension of family : A.M. Shah.

Note for Paper Setting :

The question paper will consist of three sections A, B and C.

Section A will consist of eight long answer type questions, two from each unit with internal choice. The candidate is required to answer any four questions selecting one from each unit. Each question carries 12 marks ($12 \times 4 = 48$ Marks).

Section B will consist of eight short answer type questions - two from each unit with internal choice. The candidate is required to answer four questions selecting one from each unit. Each question carries 6 marks ($4 \times 6 = 24$).

Section C consist of eight objective type questions one mark each. The candidate is required to answer entire the eight questions. Total weightage will be of $1 \times 8 = 8$ marks.

Model Test Paper

SOCIOLOGY

Course No. : 102

Time Allowed - 2 & 1/2 hrs.

Max. Marks - 80

Note :

1. Attempt four questions from Section -A, selecting one from each unit. Each question carries 12 marks.
2. Attempt four questions from Section - B, selecting one question from each unit. Each question carries 6 marks.
3. Attempt all questions from Section -C. Each question carries 1 mark.

Section A

Unit I

1. Define descent. Explain in detail the different descent groups.
or
What is kinship ? Explain in detail the different kinship usages with examples.

Unit II

2. Explain in detail the alliance theory.
or
Explain in detail the different marriage transactions.

Unit III

3. What are the different theoretical perspectives of studying a family ? Explain any two in detail.
or
Explain in detail the structure and function of family.

Unit IV

4. Elaborate in detail the different forms of marriages among different communities in India.

or

Discuss in detail the joint / nuclear family debate.

Section B

Unit I

5. Write a short note on inheritance and succession.

or

Write a note on incest taboo.

Unit II

6. Explain the meaning and evolution of family.

or

Explain in brief the rules of residence.

Unit III

7. Discuss the changing family structure.

or

Explain briefly alternatives to family institution.

Unit IV

8. Discuss the household dimension of family.

or

Explain in brief Karve's observation on kinship structure in India.

Section C

Choose the correct answer.

- A. Kibbutzim is an example :
- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| i) Cohabitation | ii) Communes |
| iii) Single parent family | iv) 6 None of them |

- B. “Invitation to social and cultural anthropology” book is authored by :
 i) K. N. Dash ii) Madan and Mazumdar
 iii) Lucy Mair iv) T. N. Madan
- C. The article “The emotionally disturbed child as a family scapegoat” is written by :
 i) Talcott Parsons ii) Vogell and Bell
 iii) G. P. Murdock iv) Dumont
- D. The family in which one is born is known as :
 i) Family of orientation ii) Family of procreation
 iii) Both (i) and (ii) iv) None of them
- E. Number of lineages combine together to form :
 i) Phratry ii) Moiety
 iii) Clan iv) All of them
- F. The concept of joint family was given by :
 i) Iravati Karve ii) Desai
 iii) Alien Ross iv) Kapadia
- G. When the married couple and their offspring put up with the husband’s family, the residence is :
 i) Patrilocal ii) Matrilocal
 iii) Avunculocal iv) None of them
- H. Individuals related to one another through marital ties are known as :
 i) Cognates ii) Affines
 iii) Uterines iv) All of them

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## BASIC TERMS AND CONCEPTS

|                             |                     |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Course No. SOC-C-102</b> | <b>Lesson No. 1</b> |
| <b>Semester-I</b>           | <b>Unit-I</b>       |

### Defining Kinship

#### Structure

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Objectives
- 1.3 What is Kinship
- 1.4 Kinship and Social Anthropology
- 1.5 Dilemmas in application of Kinship and Anthropology,
- 1.6 Kinship abbreviations and Diagrams
- 1.7 Types of Kinship
- 1.8 Degree of Kinship
- 1.9 Concept of Lineage
- 1.10 Concept of Kindred
- 1.11 Concept of Consanguinity & Affinity
- 1.12 Concept of Clain
- 1.13 Concept of Phratry, Moiety
- 1.14 Conclusion
- 1.15 References

#### **1.1 Introduction**

In the societies of simple technology most statuses are ascribed. This is another way of saying that a person's place in society, his rights and duties, his claim to property, largely depend on his genealogical relationships to other members. The primary social groups are all linked by kinship, and in many cases their membership is fixed by descent. The ties of kinship which are recognized in different societies give people claims to land

for cultivation, to other kinds of property, to mutual assistance in the pursuit of common interests, to authority over others ; and obligations which complement these claims.

Thus, kinship occupies a prominent place both in the theoretical discourse of social anthropologists and in the life of the people. Kinship is often thought to be the most difficult sub-field of social anthropology, largely because of the extra effort it takes to master its practitioners, and the intricacies of kinship systems. Conventional anthropological approaches to kinship divide the field into three general areas : relationship terminologies, social institutions (including the family, descent groups and aspects of residence), and marital alliance. These three areas of interest are often interrelated. Whereas, most modern anthropologists deal with more specific theoretical aspects of kinship. Broadly speaking, current kinship studies consists of 3 main areas of interest : kinship terminology, descent theory and alliance theory.

The study of kinship in general began in the 19th century with what have been called conjectural histories - attempts made by people like German philosopher Friedrich Engels to speculate on the origin and development of kinship systems. In the early 20th century, Sigmund Freud expanded his psychoanalytic studies to speculate on the historical roots of the family and later in the century socio-biologists used genetics and evolutionary theory to the same end.

Engels, Freud and the socio-biologists are the best known and among the most dramatic of those who have touched upon the question of kinship in human society. All three attempts to explain the origins and evolution of kinship and to account for aspects of kinship found universally in human societies.

## **1.2 Objective**

This unit is an introductory unit to acquaint you with

- The understanding of Kinship
- The role of Social Anthropology in Kinship Studies.
- Various Kinship abbreviations, concepts, types and degree of Kinship
- The idea of lineage in kinship.

The unit will introduce you with the idea of :

- Concept of clan, its function and structure
- Clan among Indian tribes

- Concept of Phratry and Moiety
- In this unit we are going to discuss :
- Concept of Kindred and its utility
- Concept of Consanguinity and Affinal groups.
- Concept of Incest
- Theories of Incest

### **1.3 What is Kinship**

The central fabric of kinship is biology as stated earlier. It is because of biology that we find kinship in all human societies. But kinship varies from society to society. In a matriarchal society, the mother's brother occupies a pivotal place; on the other hand, in a patriarchal society, the father's brother occupies the important place. Thus, the classification of kin is based on culture. Kinship has now been developed into a full-fledged theory. John Lewis defines it in very simple and general terms :

“Kinship is a social recognition and expression of genealogical relationships. It is not only actual but may be based on supposed ties of blood.”

Lewis' approach to kinship is genealogical or based on descent. Descent could be traced from mother or father, or in some cases, both. Lewis also says that kinship relations could also be extended to persons who are treated as being on par with blood or marital kin.

A. R. Brown, who is credited to have conducted fieldwork among three tribes of western Australia (1913), has defined kinship as follows:

“Kinship is genealogical relationship recognized for social purposes and made the basis of the customary relation of social relations.”

Brown's thesis is that kinship lies at the root of genealogical relations but its social extensions constitute the meaning of kinship. The importance of kinship, Brown further says, is reckoned on the occasions of various customs observed during births, marriages, deaths and festivals.

Yet another definition of kinship is given by Charles Winick, who observes:

“Kinship system may include socially recognized relationship based on supposed

as well as actual genealogicalties.”

Quite like others, Winick also recognizes both biological or descent kin and socially accepted kin within the kinship system. He stresses on the point that kinship is basically related to social approval. This approval is observable on social and cultural occasions such as phases of life and festivals.

Levi-Strauss is said to be the master figure in developing the theory of kinship. In his classical study, titled *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1969), he makes an important theoretical contribution. He challenges the descent theory. He does not regard shared descent but rather the development of alliances between two groups through the exchange of women, as the fundamental fact of kinship. Levi-Strauss, in theoretical terms, is a structuralist. He holds the view that the mind organizes the world in contrasting pairs and develops coherent systems of relationship from such a starting point. It is through kinship that there is transmission of cultural values and knowledge between two generations.

#### **1.4 Kinship and Social Anthropology**

Blood is thicker than water” goes an old saying. When we are in distress, we look forward for help to our relatives. Likewise, tribal society is also closely knit by kinship relations. Evans-Pritchard, while working among the Nuer, a tribal group of Africa, found that relatives have an important place in their life. He further says that a Nuer holds a person who is his relative as very close to him. Therefore, if you want to get help from a Nuer, you have to identify yourself as one of their kinsmen.

Iravati Karve, who has conducted intensive fieldwork in different parts of India, says that caste is nothing but an extension of kin. The importance of kinship can hardly be emphasized. In social anthropology much of the literature revolves round the discussion on kinship. Some people think that if kinship is taken out of social anthropology, there is nothing left to study. In fact, the study of kinship has been a predominant tradition or culture of social anthropology. Kinship, it appears, is an obsession with the social anthropologists. Eriksen writes about the central place of kinship of social anthropology :

Generations of anthropologists have been flabbergasted at the intricate kinship systems existing in many ‘primitive’ societies. Several famous examples of such complicated

systems are to be found in the Australian aboriginal population. These peoples traditionally hunters and gatherers have the simplest technology in the world. They lack metals, domesticated animals and writing, and in most cases they do not have even the rudiments of agriculture. Nevertheless, many of these nomadic groups have kinship systems so complex that it may take an outsider years to comprehend them fully ... The study of kinship has always been a core topic in anthropology. Towards the end of the 1940s kinship was so central, especially in British social anthropology, that people (and students) spoke ironically of the subject as 'kinshipology'. Many known anthropologists have reacted with incomprehension at the great interest in kinship still prevalent in the profession.

According to Doshi and Jain (2001), why is kinship so important in social anthropology? Following can be the answers :

1. It is through kinship that a person earns his livelihood. Traditional occupational knowledge is given through this organization. It is kin who make all efforts for the welfare and of the person.
2. The career of the individual is planned and executed by kinsmen. It is very common to find in India the Marwaris settled in different parts of country, are running their business through kinship ties. If one member of a kin group goes to Mumbai, the migrant group would grow in big size in a couple of years. The tribals are also drawn through kinship ties to different cities.
3. It is through kinship that matrimonial arrangements are made. It is common to find the bio-data of the prospective groom and bride contain details about the affinal and agnate kin. This clearly shows the importance of kinship in the settlement of marriage.
4. On the death of a person the mourning period is observed according to the degree of relationship with the deceased. Birth, marriage and death are the three basic occasions when there is a serious and careful reckoning of kin.
5. Kinship is related to all the other aspects of society such as economy, celebration of festivals, worship and folkways.
6. The social organization of a society revolves round kinship. If we examine the organization of a particular society we see that kinship is its integral part.

7. I.P. Desai, the noted sociologist, has empirically established that the institution of family is nothing but a part of wider social relations. According to him, kinship has its origin in biology but its legitimacy extends to relationship. In the west, on the other hand, some anthropologists such as Schneider have argued that kinship is related to biology and blood ties. However, anthropological research generally analyzes it as cultural classification of people. And, as aspects of group formation.

The importance of kinship is very great in social anthropology. It is the kin group which takes care of one's livelihood, career, marriage, protection and social identity. The importance becomes all the more stronger among the tribals as they reside in unfriendly and inhospitable environment in the hills and forests. We have enough empirical evidence to suggest that the survival of a tribal in poverty and deprivation is almost impossible without the support of the kin group. For instance, on occasion of marriage, among the Bhils, the relatives carry maize bread for the guests; on occasion of death the kinsmen also provide means to the bereaved family. From cradle to grave, the strength of succour lies in kinship.

### **1.5 Dilemmas in application of Kinship and Anthropology**

All human societies have kinship, that is they all impose some privileged cultural order over the biological universals of sexual relations and continuous human reproduction through birth. In many societies, kinship even appears to be the sole or main structuring factor, and it especially these societies that have traditionally interested anthropologists the most.

It is important to realize at the outset, while the biologist studies kinship in the physical sense, for the social anthropologist kinship is not biology, but particular social or cultural interpretations of the biological universals. This further, brings us to the relationship between anthropology and science generally, and to the status of anthropology as a science. Its scientific character is so because the scientific world view forms a legitimate object of anthropological enquiry as regards its place in those societies that acknowledge it. Although there are differences between the scientific world view and the attitudes held by ordinary people but kinship (within anthropology) becomes more evidently a matter of social definition, of belief. Anthropologically, 'truth' is not the truth but whatever people in a particular society and for set of circumstances decide is the truth, ultimately, therefore, despite occasional



scientific interventions, paternity and kinship generally, remain matters of purely social definition.

Such considerations need not lead to an absolute cultural relativism, but an over-enthusiastic universalism is equally to be resisted. The range of different world views is impressive, an important consideration because otherwise societies would barely be distinguishable from one another at all, whether for themselves or for the anthropologist. But this is principally true of the most explicit and conscious level of data. Many aspects of social life are implicit, automatic and unconscious, felt rather than expressed and there may be only a limited range of options open for expression. There is only a restricted number of ways of tracing descent from earlier generations, for instance of residence rules, or of viable marriage system. Such aspects occur widely enough to invite comparative effort to establish cross-cultural correlations, but they are still not universal enough to rule out all cultural variation. As far as kinship is concerned, we may find here : different ideas concerning parenthood, the relations between the sexes or the nature of marriage relations; particular symbols used to denote aspects of kinship; and different ways of rationalizing the existence of particular marriage or descent systems. These all promote variety rather than uniformity among cultures, and at the level of greatest detail, they are likely to be culturally specific.

There is also the vexed question of the concepts and terms the anthropologist uses in discussion of kinship, and of the relationship between them. Anthropologists have not completely lacked imagination in developing concepts and terms specific to their subject. Nonetheless they routinely use western notions of kinship in describing indigenous representation of it, mainly to make them more readily understandable to themselves and to their readers. However, Anthropologists themselves are by no means in total agreement about how all these terms should be used, mainly because of the variety of cultural conceptions of kinship the terms have to deal with. This use of western notions of kinship in discussions of non-western ideas about it can never be more than a sort of short-hand device enabling rough-and-ready assessment to be made. Certainly anthropology needs some sort of terminology in which to discuss its ideas.

## **1.6 Kinship abbreviations and diagrams**

The study of kinship involves the study of the relationships of any particular individual in the society, whether male or female. In discussing kinship systems, that individual is conventionally designated “ego”. Some- times in discussing ego’s relationships

with just one other person, this other person is designated “alter” or “referent”. Abbreviations are available for different sorts of relative. The details are —

|                      |                        |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| (i) Father — F/Fa    | (ii) Mother — M/Mo/m   |
| (iii) Brother — B/Br | (iv) Sister — Z/Si/s   |
| (v) Son — S/So       | (vi) Daughter — D/Da/d |
| (vii) Husband — H/Hu | (viii) Wife — W/Wi/w   |
| (ix) Parent — P/Pa   | (x) Sibling — G/Sb     |
| (xi) Spouse — E/Sp   | (xii) Child — C/Ch.    |

Each of the above abbreviations, whether single or in combination, can be seen as a symbol standing for a particular kin type.

Diagrams are often used in discussing kinship. These frequently, but not invariably, use the conventions of the genealogy. Male individuals are represented by triangles, female individuals by circles; sometimes a rectangle or square is used to denote individuals regardless of their sex. Further the relationships between individuals are shown by lines or other symbols. Connections by descent or filiation are indicated by vertical lines, siblings are indicated by raised horizontal lines. Marriage is indicated by lowered horizontal lines or by the equals sign. A loop is used to carry lines over one another where they are not intended to be conceived as intersecting or joining.

### Graphic representation of Kinship relation

|            |                     |
|------------|---------------------|
|            | relation of descent |
| ┌───┐      | sibling relation    |
| └───┘ or = | marital relation    |
| D or ♂     | male                |
| O or ♀     | female              |
| ▲/✕        | deceased            |

## 1.7 Types of Kinship

A kin type is a designation that is assigned to each individual relationship, such as a mother, father, mother’s brother, mother’s sister. Each relationship is described by a sequence of primary components, which are strung together to indicate actual biological

relationships :

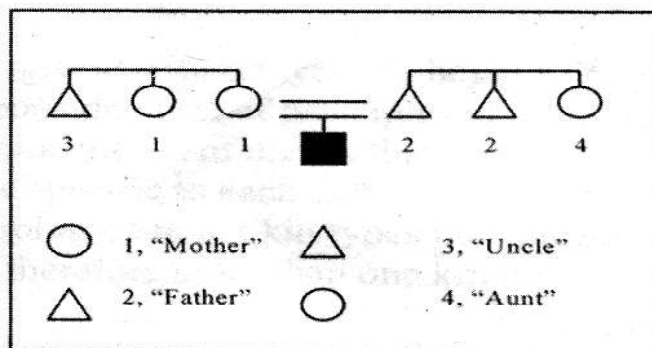
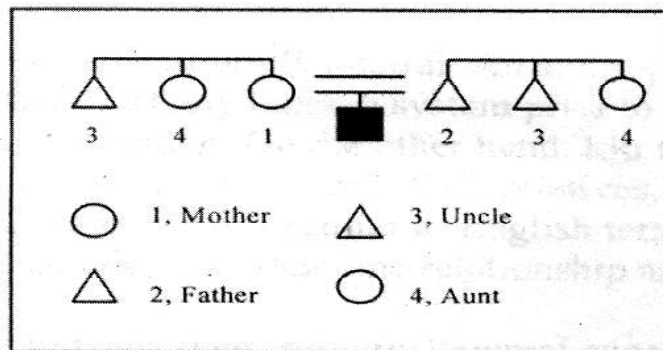
**Primary components and letter symbols**

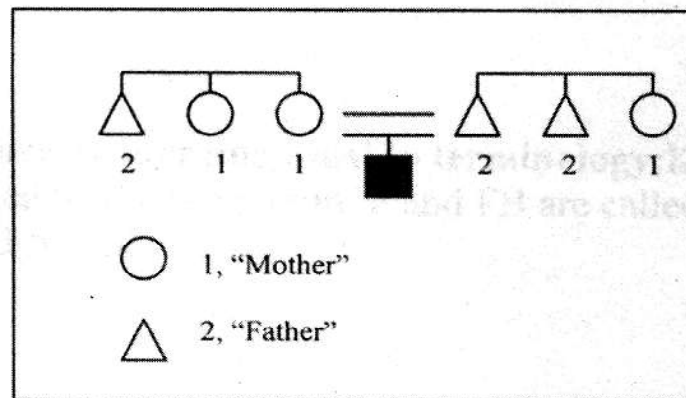
- Mother (M)
- Father (F)
- Sister (Z)
- Brother (B)
- Daughter (D)
- Son (S)
- Husband (H)
- Wife (W)

**Compound Strings**

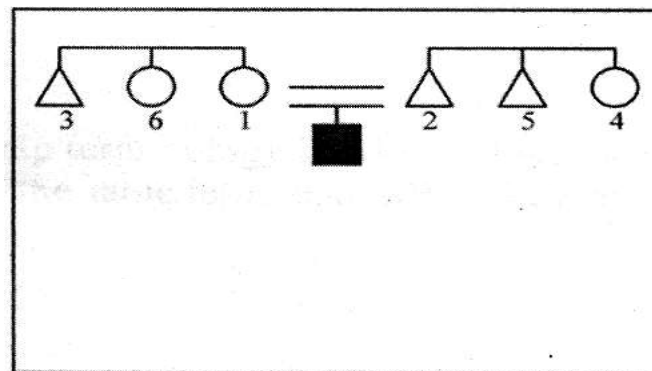
- Mother's Sister (MZ)
- Mother's sister daughter (MZD)
- Sister's Son (ZS)

The diagram which following shows how several basic relationship are designated by kin types :





Generational Kinship Terminology



Bifurcate Collateral Kinship Terminology

### KINSHIP SYMBOLS

|   |                                      |   |                       |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| △ | Male                                 | F | Father                |
| ○ | Female                               | M | Mother                |
| □ | Individual regardless of sex         | S | Son                   |
| = | Is married to                        | D | Daughter              |
| ≠ | Is divorced from                     | B | Brother               |
|   | Is descended from                    | Z | Sister                |
|   | Is the sibling of                    | C | child (of either sex) |
| ● | Female ego whose kin are being shown | H | Husband               |
| △ | Male ego whose kin are being shown   | W | Wife                  |
| ⊗ | Individual is deceased               |   |                       |

## **Kin terms**

Kin types are culturally neutral. An anthropologist uses these types to begin a description and analysis of any kinship system prior to a consideration of principles of classification within that system. On the other hand, kin terms, the set of names that people actually use to designate and address their relatives, are specific to each culture. The terms uncle, cousin, grandfather, peculiar to English terminology, are not kin types but categories which include more than one relationship and therefore more than one kin type.

**Lineal kinship terminology:** Parental generation kin terminology with four terms one for M, one for F, one for FB and MB, and one for MZ and FZ.

**Bifurcate merging kinship terminology:** Kinship terminology in which M and MZ are called by the same term, F and FB are called by the same term, and MB and FZ are called by different terms.

**Bifurcate collateral kinship terminology:** Kinship terminology employing separate terms for M, F, MB, MZ, FB, and FZ

**Generational kinship terminology:** Kinship terminology with only two terms for the parental generation, one designating M, MZ, and FZ and the other designating F, FB, and MB

**Affinals:** relatives by marriage, whether of lineals (e.g., son's wife) or collaterals (e.g., sister's husband)

**Ambilineal:** principle of descent that does not automatically exclude children of either sons or daughters

**Bilateral kinship calculation:** A system in which kinship ties are calculated equally through both sexes: mother and father, sister and brother, daughter and son, and so on.

**Corporate groups:** groups that exist in perpetuity and manage a common estate, including descent groups and modern corporations

**Ego:** Latin for 'I' In kinship charts, the point from which one views.

**Kindred:** A group of people closely related to one living individual through both parents

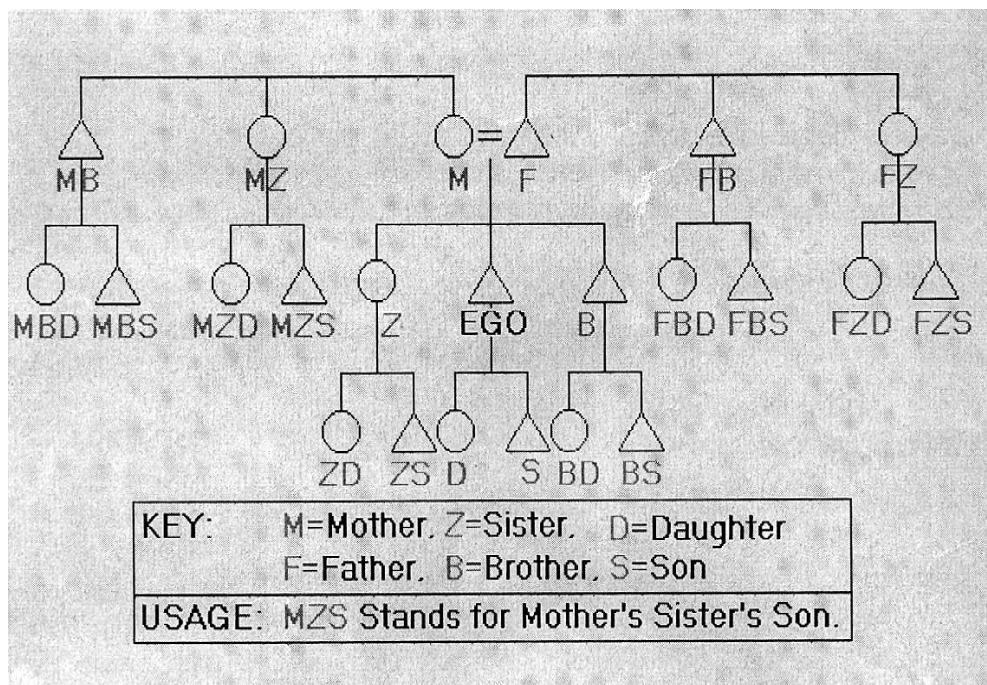
**Lineal relative:** Any of ego's ancestor's or descendants (e.g., parents,

grandparents, children, grandchildren) or the direct line of descent that leads to and from ego.

**Ambilocal:** postmarital residence pattern in which the couple may reside with either the husband's or wife's group

**Neolocality:** Postmarital residence pattern in which a couple establishes a new place of residence rather than living with or near either set of parents

**Unilocal:** Either virilocal or uxorilocal postmarital residence; requires that a married couple reside with the relatives of either the husband (vir) or the wife (uxor), depending on the society.



### Criteria for terminologies:

#### Relative age

Some languages, such as Bengali, Tamil, Sinhalese, Chinese (see Chinese kinship), Japanese, Korean, Hungarian, Bulgarian and Nepalese add another dimension to some relations: relative age. Rather than one term for “brother”, there exist, for example, different words for “older brother” and “younger brother”. In Nepali, an older male sibling is referred

to as *daju or dai* and a younger male sibling as *bhai*, whereas older and younger female siblings are called *didi* and *bahini* respectively.

### **Identification of alternating generations**

Other languages, such as Chiricahua, use the same terms of address for alternating generations. So a Chiricahua child (male or female) calls her paternal grandmother *ch 'ine*, and likewise this grandmother will call her son's child *-ch 'ine*. Terms that recognize alternating generations and the prohibition of marriage within one's own set of alternate generation relatives (0,  $\pm 2$ ,  $\pm 4$ ,  $\pm 6$ , etc.) are common in Australian Aboriginal kinship.

### **Relative age and identification of alternating generations**

In all societies people are bound together in groups by various kinds of bonds. The most universal and the most basic of these bonds is that which is based on reproduction, an inherent human drive, and is called kinship. The desire for reproduction gives rise to two kinds of bonds. Firstly, there is the bond between spouses and their relatives on either side; and secondly, there is the bond between parents and their children, and that between siblings i.e., children of the same parents. The first kind or bond, which arises out of a socially or legally defined marital relationship, is called affinal kinship, and the relatives so related are called affinal kin. The affinal kin are not connected to each other through blood, which is the case with relatives of the second kind enumerated above, who are called consanguineous kin. The relationship based on blood-ties is called consanguineous (same-blood) kinship.

In this connexion it is necessary to point out that in determining consanguineous kinship it is not the biological fact that is important but social recognition. Among many primitive societies the role of a father in the birth of a child is unknown as among the Trobriand Islanders or Melanesia for instance. Among them it is the wife's husband who is conventionally accepted as father. Among the polyandrous Toda, until another brother makes the ceremonial presentation of a bow and arrow to the common wife, all children born to her of several brothers are regarded as the children of that brother who last performed the ceremony, even though he may have been away or dead for a long time. Here is an instance where ignorance of the biological role of fatherhood is not implied; only social recognitions shown to override biological fact. Among some African primitives, in case a husband dies, a woman assumes the role of father to the expected child of the wife of the deceased.

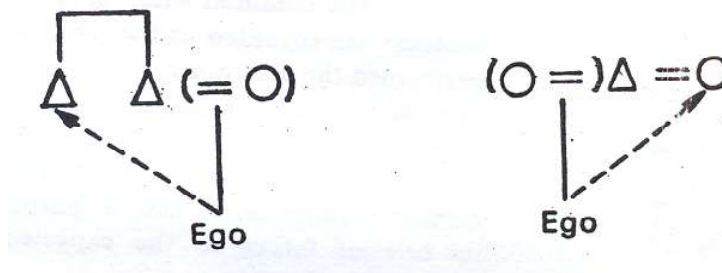
A universal example of the overriding nature of social Recognition is the practice of adoption. An adopted child is everywhere treated as if it were one's own biologically produced offspring. So, in kinship social recognition overrides biological facts.

### 1.8 Degree of Kinship

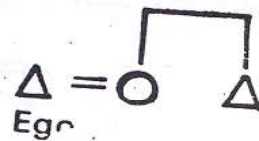
If a person is related to ego directly, then he is ego's primary kin; e.g., one's father is one's primary consanguineous, and one's wife one's primary affinal kin.



Any kin related to ego through primary kin, themselves being primary kin of ego's primary kin, are one of the secondary degree; e.g., ego's father's brother, or ego's stepmother are ego's secondary consanguineous kin, and secondary affinal kind respectively.



Likewise one's wife brother is one's affinal secondary kin.



This relationship may be expressed as

$$\Delta [=] \Delta$$



Likewise, the secondary kin of our primary kin and the primary kin of our secondary kin will be our tertiary kin. The degree of kinship can thus be calculated, at least theoretically to the  $n$ th degree.

### 1.9 Concept of Lineage

The occurrence of lineage in kinship terminology is very common. A lineage is a kin group that consists of members who are the unilineal descendants of a common ancestor, whose identity is traceable. A lineage generally does not include members belonging to more than five generations. Sometimes lineage is used synonymous with clan. However, they are different terms. **Eriksen** defines lineage as — “As a general rule, we may say that a lineage consists of persons who can indicate by stating all the intermediate links, common descent from a shared ancestors or ancestress”. Lineage’s thus, is a group of people who link themselves to a common ancestor. The members practise strict exogamy. According to **John Lewis**, “lineage is a group resulting from descent reckoned either from the father’s or the mother’s line.” According to Eriksen, lineage is an important part of kinship. Actually, kinship begins with the family and grows into a lineage. And lineage goes further to make a clan. He further adds that lineage traces its origin from a known ancestor who has a name, a place of birth and an identity. The clan, on the other hand, depends on the assumption of the ancestor who started it. However, the definition of lineage given by **Jacobs and Stern** is very pointed and precise :- “Lineage is a subdivision of a clan composed of actual and not fictitious kin”. In this regard **Lowie** has analyzed the importance of lineage in the clan in the tribal situation. He says that the status of an individual, for instance among the Nootka Indians, is nothing without his lineage identity. It is the lineage which gives recognition to a person in the clan. Thus, for Lowie, lineage consists of all the members of a particular genealogical group. **Firth** (1956) says “a lineage, meaning primarily a line of descent, is now taken also to mean a unilineal descent group, all the members of which trace their genealogical relationship back to the founding ancestor. If the lineage system is patrilineal, the members consist of men, their children and their sisters and they trace their descent through male, normally to an original male ancestor. If the system is matrilineal, the members consist of women, their children, their brother tracing descent through female, normally to an original ancestress.” Lineage may be divided and sub-divided into smaller segments which are

called segmentary lineages as among Nuer. Evan Prichard (1940), suggests four stages of lineage segmentation, viz : (i) Maximal lineage (ii) Major lineage (iii) Minor lineage and (iv) Minimal lineage.

The lineage plays a major role in various fields of tribal life. Firstly, the lineage have their own supernatural devices to control the supernatural world for the benefit of society. For example, the Nayars of Kerala have separate shrines for lineages. Secondly, the lineage is frequently a local residential group and the members cooperate and aid mutually on a daily basis. Thirdly, the lineage is also important in regulating marriage by means of exogamy so that the solidarity is maintained within a group. Fourthly, to meet the need of security, the lineage acts as a concrete base. Fifthly, the lineage may act as a corporate unit in land ownership. Thus member get economic co-operation on a regular basis.

### 1.10 Concept of Kindred

Within any society people are both organized in groups—that is to say, they form bodies of persons with common interests and common leadership and classified in categories—that is to say, they are regarded by their fellows as having something in common. A group may be identified by the outsiders analyzing a society, or it may be labelled by the members of the society and so form a category in their system of ideas.

The basis of the basic groups like descent groups or lineages in many simple societies varies. In these societies, Kinship relations are very complicated. Each society has traditions of membership to a particular kin. According to Eriksen, members of a particular kin are those who are born in the group, that is, who are blood kin and those who are brought into the groups by marriage.

In general, there are six possible ways of kin group membership :-

1. **Patrilineal** : Transmission of membership or resources takes place unilineally through the father's lineage.
2. **Matrilineal** : Transmission of membership or resources takes place unilineally through the mother lineage.
3. **Double** : Some resources are transmitted through the father's lineage, others through the mother's lineage. But the two lineages are kept separate.

4. **Cognatic** : Resources can be transmitted through kin on both mother's and father's sides (bilaterally).
5. **Parallel** : In this, men transmit to their sons and women to their daughters.
6. **Crossing or alternative** : This is the opposition of the parallel. Here men transmit to their daughter and women to their sons.

We will be dealing with these aspects in descent groups again. To be more precise, let us focus on some other concepts and terms which provide the basis for the formation of the descent groups and also other terms directly or indirectly related to it.

Nobody recognizes kinship with all the people to whom he is linked by common descent. There are also differences in the direction along which the members of different societies consider it appropriate to trace their Kins and in the arrangement of people that result.

These may be looked at in two ways. One is to put yourself in the place of an individual, and ask whom he regards as Kin and how he arranges his different Kinsmen into categories. The other is to stand outside the society you are looking at and see if you can identify corporate groups organized on some principle of Kinship.

A little thought will make it obvious that the body of kin who are recognized by one man will be different from those recognized by any other; except his own full brothers and sisters. Here the Kindred, as such a body of persons are called, is simply the total of the people who are genealogically linked to the man one happens to be thinking about.

To be more clear about Kindred, we have to look at bilateral descent i.e. one which affiliates an individual with a group of kin who are related to him/her through both his/her father and mother. It is obvious that such a bilateral Kin groups invariably will be too large in member, and hence each society has definite ways to delimit the recognition of Kin upto certain degree alone. The bilateral Kin group which, ego reckons kinship, upto certain degree, may serve as 'operational groups' in economic pursuits, political expeditions and so on may be designated as Kindred. Thus a culturally recognized category of Bilateral Kinsmen, which may extend only to a certain degree of relationship

from Ego, or may be conceptualized as the total universe of Ego's Kin is called Kindred. The term 'descent group' is generally avoided in this case, because a kindred is merely a ephemeral grouping which is neither permanent nor a continuing one through generations in any fixed pattern. It is also true that every individual in a society has a Kindred but no Kindred is common for any two individuals besides siblings. A Kindred is thus not ancestor-focused but ego-centered.

Kindred need not be bounded by genealogical distance but by geographical distance, or generation or some other social factor. More distant links may be assumed rather than demonstrated, and their boundaries may be fuzzy. Relatives by marriage may be included, though some kindred are exogamous.

Kindreds often have some specific purpose, which as well as the regulation of marriage may be economic cooperation, help in feuding, and so on. They may become apparent only when this purpose is invoked, especially as they are often unnamed. Because they are focussed on a sibling group, kindreds have much less continuity over time than the typical descent group. Thus the social significance of the kindred varies according to the nature of the kinship system, because different kinship systems employ different principles of selection or closure which limit or channel Ego's social relations with certain members of the kindred. In general, its members may, however, have common obligations towards the person to whom they are all linked. In some societies it is the duty of a man's kindred to avenge his murder. This used to be the rule among the Anglo-Saxons and among the Ifuago in the Philippines. A rule of this kind may specify how far-to how many cousins—the obligation extends. But in practice it is unlikely that all of these will turn out on every occasion. Who actually fulfils the obligation will depend on who is within reach.

### **1.11 Concept of Consanguinity and Affinity**

Human societies have devised countless culturally contrived means and modes of interaction between people. These interactions are based on definite forms of relationships that are existing or are created between people. The fundamental relationship between human beings is based on kinship. Kinship relationships arise out of two different kinds of bonds that cement people together. They are Consanguineal bond and Affinal bond.

Relatives related to ego by descent or filiation are collectively called cognates or consanguines (etymologically suggests blood relationships). Thus consanguinity is basically 'blood' or kinship relations based on biological ties. Consanguineal relatives are thus persons related through parental or sibling ties. For example, the relationship between mother and son/daughter, sister and brother/sister, father and son/daughter are consanguineal.

Analytically opposed to cognates are affines, sometimes allies (alliance) especially in French (allies), that is relatives by marriage. It is a global term for relatives by marriage. A marriage thus, creates relationships of affinity between people who may have been strangers before. An affinal kin includes spouse, spouse's parents and spouse siblings.

### **Concept of Incest**

There are rules which prohibit certain persons as sexual partners and as marriage partners. These are the rules of incest. Incest refers to sexual congress as such; exogamy to marriage, a relationship which cannot be created merely by sexual congress and includes in addition to sexual congress, number of reciprocal rights and duties.

Lewis has described incest as :

Incest is the term applied to any such prohibited union. It is essential to an understanding of this question to realize that prohibition extends to those cousins who are held to be within the family, even though they may be several degree distant and biologically hardly related at all. For instance, it is almost universally held that a man may not marry the daughter of his mother's sister, who is parallel cousin, but he may marry the daughter of his mother's brother, who is a cross-cousin.

Thus incest prohibitions or incest taboos prohibit ego from sexual relations with particular relatives. They appear to be present in some form universally, though their exact range varies considerably from society to society. The prohibition on incest is because the partners are closely related. They need not, however, be blood relations in some societies. However, the relationship within which sexual congress is everywhere considered incestuous are those of parent to child and of brother to sister.

At the outset, the parameters of the prohibition seem to be simple—no marriage

among close relations. But who are the close relations? On this point there are different observations among the anthropologists :

- (i) Tylor and Freud argue that in all societies sex relations with the close kin are prohibited and there are some social advantage of the rule. The taboo helps expansion of the group through the inclusion of new members and the forging of alliance across kin boundaries. If there is no prohibition on the sexual relations with close kin, the expansion of the family would stop because there will be in-breeding.
- (ii) Another explanation in this regard is that there is no prohibition on sexual relations with close kin, it would lead to biological degeneration.
- (iii) Levi Strauss who has propounded the theory of structuralism, says that there are forms of relations in the mind of a man. The man divides the woman into two mutually exclusive categories : wives and sisters. Thus the woman falling in the category of sister cannot be contracted for sexual relations.
- (iv) Westermarck argued that people who grew up together (thinking primarily of brothers and sisters) were so used to one another that by the time they were adults the idea of sexual desire did not occur to them.

In general, the theories about incest are of two kinds. One asks why it is regarded with such horror; one asks why there is a rule against it in every known society. The first question is what philosophers would call a pseudo-problem, incest is often held to be a sin, that is to call down supernatural punishment without the need of any human agent to punish the offenders. Freud accounted for the horror as a build-in-mechanism to repress a strongly felt desire (thinking primarily of sons and mothers).

However, what is more interesting to the student of society is the second question: why sexual congress between persons in certain genealogical relationships is always prohibited and often regarded with horror. The explanation offered by Malinowski is the one generally accepted by anthropologists. The family is the institution within which the cultural tradition of a society is handed on to the new generation. This indispensable function could not be fulfilled unless the relations of parents and children were relations reciprocally of authority and respect. Such relations could not be maintained

if sexual passions were given free play within the family circle. To Levi Strauss, the prohibition of marriage within the family is the essential criterion of cultural life because it is the beginning of that exchange—in this case the exchange of women between descent groups—which he takes to be the basis of social structure.

We find that the reasons for incest prohibition have always been a controversial matter. Naturalistic and psychological theories suffer from the wide variation in the range of prohibition that different societies impose. Arguments that seek its cause in the familiarity engendered by the fact of sitting being brought up and living together, or the subliminal recognition that in-breeding produces harmful genetic effects, are again controversial. Further, the attitude to incest differ considerably in intensity. Many societies view it as absurd rather than evil, others may regard adultery as more serious. Perhaps the most fruitful thesis concerning the prohibition of incest has been that it is the product of exchange relations between groups. According to this view, it is the exchange of women that draws groups to form a society.

### **1.12 Concept of Clan**

Apart from family, there are various groups in societies which are more wider and complex in nature. Some basic groups are lineage, clan, phratry and moiety. These groups are basically prevalent among the tribal and primitive groups and varies from society to society. Although family and lineage groups are based on known ancestry whereas clan, phratry and moiety are more assumptive based groups and are imaginary in character.

In terms of complexity, Clan is an exogamous group which comes next to family. If the tribe or caste is endogamous, the clan is exogamous. The institution of clan is found in all the primitive societies. In British anthropology, sib is understood as clan whereas in American anthropology clan is defined as sib. Clan or sib traces its origin through either parent to the total neglect of the other. If a tribe is organized into mother clans, every child regardless of sex is considered a member of her mother's clan and takes the maternal clan name, if there is one. In the same manner, if the tribe is organized into father clans, every child is a member of his father's clan and takes the paternal clan name. In the Indian context, the tribal groups follow both the patterns.

The importance of clan can hardly be exaggerated. It is often said that everybody

in a tribal group is related by agnatic or descent ties. Viewed from this perspective, the members of the clan are members of a wider blood group, constituting a sort of brotherhood. Normally, clans are found in a particular region and more often a single village consists of one or two clans only. It is because of this that a village is an exogamous unit. Village exogamy goes with the clan exogamy. There are several uses of clan in a primitive society. Anthropologists consider clan to be an organization between family and descent. In the discussion ahead, we discuss the origin and meaning of clan and its differentiation from family, lineage and totemism. All these concepts are closely related. They constitute the comprehensive concept of kinship. Let us further see, what we mean by clan.

### **What is Clan?**

Social anthropologists define clan as a unilinear group. Originally, the meaning of clan was taken from the Latin word *gens*, the literal meaning of which is unilinear group. But in English the meaning of *gens* has come to mean a patrilineal group. It is because of this that the American anthropologists differentiate the terms clan and sib. They use clan for matrilineal groups and *gens* for patrilineal groups. Thus, for them, the clan and *gens* together make a sib.

The meaning of clan runs into debate. American anthropologists prefer to use sib in place of clan in social anthropology. Murdock, for instance, has suggested that clan should be used only for a descent group whereas in the British tradition the meaning of clan is wider and includes both the matriarchal and patriarchal clans. On the other hand, Morgan and others in their evolutionary theory use clan only for the patriarchal descent group. Despite this controversy there is a consensus in social anthropology that clan is an important kin group which determines the life order of the people. It creates integration among the wider descent group.

It must be admitted that there is rich literature on clan in social anthropology. Kroeber has come out with a classical work on clan known as *Zuni Kin and Clan* (1917). Firth has described the kin and clan organization of the Tikopia tribal group of Africa in his book *We, the Tikopia* (1936). Similarly, Fortes has studied the Ashanti tribe along with other African primitive groups. His book, *The Dynamics of Clanship amongst the Tallensi* (1945) very elaborately describes the changing character of clanship. Evans-Pritchard has also analyzed the kinship organization in



his classical work, *The Nuer* (1940). All these works assume importance in social anthropology because for the first time primitive clan and kin have been taken for comprehensive analysis. These studies have also conceptually examined the differences in kinship, descent, lineage, totemism and clan.

Different scholars have defined the term 'clan' differently. To begin with, Robert H. Lowie says :

"The sib ('clan' of British anthropologists) is most briefly defined as a unilateral kinship group."

Likewise, describing the characteristics of clan found among the Ashanti tribal group, Fortes writes :

There are only eight such clans in Ashanti, and it is noteworthy that the same *small number* of clans bearing the *same or equivalent names* is duplicated among all the Akan-speaking peoples. This is often adduced in confirmation of their *remote common origins*. There is evidence that traditionally each clan had *specific totemic animal avoidance*. These appear to have been associated with the hereditary offices held in the clan, and have largely lapsed in modern times. What now remains distinctive of each clan is the strict recognition of its structural autonomy, founded on the dogma of *common matrilineal descent*.

According to Thomas Hylland Eriksen, people of one clan belong to a common ancestry. This ancestry could be either matriarchal or patriarchal. Thus, according to him, clan is a unilinear descent group. However, the ancestors do not constitute any regular genealogy. His definition runs as under :

"A clan encompasses people who assume shared descent from an ancestor/ ancestress without being able to enumerate all of these links."

Finally, the definition given by John Lewis :

"Membership in a clan depends on kinship through one parent. It is often exogamous. It provides mutual security, government, marriage regulations, religion and ceremonies, property regulations and social control. Some authorities require not only a rule of descent but also a definite place of residence or locality and social integration."

Thus, on the basis of above definitions, we can infer some common characteristics of clan as under :

1. Clan is a unit between family and descent.
2. It is unilateral, *i.e.*, either from male or female side.
3. It is exogamous.
4. It provides rules for marriage, ceremonies, inheritance and social control.
5. It is found in some specific places.
6. It also has some authority over an area.
7. It is totemic.
8. It traces its descent from some common ancestor.

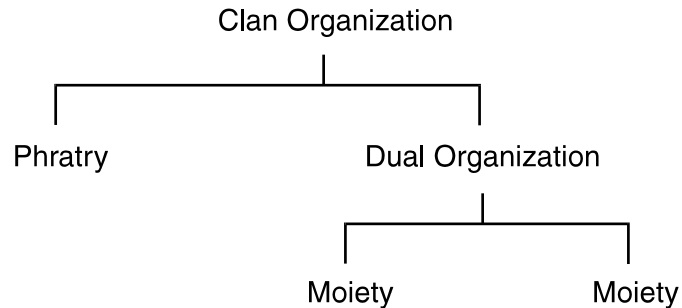
### **Social Structure of Clan**

The clan system has an elaborate social structure. In a single village, there are two or three clans. Generally, the clans have their hierarchy in a tribe. R.H. Lowie has made an attempt to establish different orders of clan among the African primitive groups. In western India, S.L. Dolin informs that the Mairiya among the Bhils occupy a higher rank. It is followed by Damor. Similar ranking is also found in Gond and Santhal tribes.

Majumdar and Madan in their *Introductory Social Anthropology* have described the social structure of a clan. According to them, the clans are divided into two : 1. phratry, and 2. moiety.

Some anthropologists have called phratry lined clans. Actually, the phratry is a blood related group. It is exogamous. When for some reason, two, three or more clans unite together, the union is called phratry. Sometimes it so happens that in a large tribal group some people having common blood ties establish a separate identity. This autonomous and separate identity is called phratry. The phratries in a tribal group are individually called a moiety. Thus, the moiety is a part of a phratry. In a single tribe there could be phratries and each part of the phratry is a moiety. The phratry, therefore, constitute a dual organization of the tribe. In a phratry, thus, there could be several clans.

In the following figure we give the social structure of clan :



The function of phratry and dual organization is normally to regulate marriages. Empirically, these days, the clan has limited functions. Its identity survives only in implementing the marriage rules. The boundaries of phratries have also become loose. It appears that in the wake of modernization which the tribals are experiencing the hierarchy and status of phratry is fast eroding. The rights of reservation in terms of safety and security have weakened the dual division of clan. Reservations, is basically concerned with the tribal group and not the clan. This makes phratry irrelevant.

### **Characteristics of Clan**

Social anthropology contains descriptions of various tribal clans pertaining to Africa, Australia and India. On the strength of the empirical data, we give below some of the important features of a clan :

1. Normally, a clan is an exogamous group. The members of a clan trace their origin to a common ancestor who is normally not real but fictitious. The ancestor could be a tree, plant, animal, bird or an inanimate object.
2. A clan is unilateral. It links itself either with the mother or father. It is never bilateral.
3. According to the theory of clan, it is assumed that all the clan members are brothers and sisters. They cannot marry among themselves.
4. Clan is an independent autonomous unit. That is how it differs from family, lineage and totem.

5. Ordinarily, the members of a clan reside in a specific territory. Rivers, who has worked among Todas, also informs that the members of a single clan normally reside in a definite territorial area.

### **Clan, Family, Lineage and Totem**

A clan is not a tribe. It is only a pattern of unilateral social relationship within the tribe. It is also not a family, neither is it a lineage. As a matter of fact, clan is related to several concepts, the important ones being family, lineage and totem. There are differences in all the three concepts. For a proper understanding of clan we should bring out the differences in these concepts.

#### ***Family and Clan***

A family is a group of persons wherein the husband and wife have legitimized sexual relations. It is the objective of family to procreate. Thus, the family consists of affines and agnates. At the time of marriage, the genealogy of father and mother is taken into consideration. Viewed from this perspective the family is bilateral. In the patriarchal family, the clan is traced from the father, grandfather, great grandfather and so on. In the matriarchal family, conversely, the clan of mother, grandmother and so on are traced. Thus, the first difference of family and clan is that family is bilateral whereas clan is unilateral.

A family may become extinct because of the lack of a son. Despite the extinction of family, the clan of the family would continue. Therefore, a clan is the combination of a large number of families and descent groups whereas a family consists only of the parents and their children.

If we trace the origin of family and clan, it could be said that there would have been the appearance of family first and clan later on. It is because of this that the family which does not have a long history might not have a clan system. For instance, among the Kadars, there is total absence of clan system though they have family. On the other hand, the tribal groups which have long family history, such as Kamar, Baiga and Bhil, there is a clan system. Thus, the institution of family is universal, and a clan is not.

The members of a family reside under the same roof, take their meals from the same hearth and have a common purse, whereas the members of a clan do not have this kind of sharing. The members of a clan are scattered and claim their origin from

a common ancestor. Their relationship with the ancestor is largely social and cultural. The only binding force which holds them together is the common ancestor.

Thus, in any analysis of clan system, the descent system of family cannot be neglected. In a broader way, it could be said that in the structure of clan, family is the smallest unit.

### ***Lineage and Clan***

The basic difference between a lineage and clan is that the former is actual and real while the latter is fictitious. If we refer to the case of feudal rulers we find that each ruler had his genealogy which was updated by bards. Similarly, the Hindus have their own genealogies which are maintained by the priests. Genealogies thus constitute the record of the previous generations. However, it is difficult to trace the ancestor who gave rise to a clan, therefore, the originator of a clan is lost in oblivion. John Lewis defines lineage as below :

Lineage is a group resulting from descent reckoned either from the father's or the mother's line. Whereas in a clan relationship it is assumed, in a lineage group it must be demonstrated, that is, the actual relationship must be specific and known.

Lewis makes the differentiation between lineage and clan quite clear : the former is real, whereas later is assumed. It could be said that a clan is composed of a number of lineages. In other words, lineages or family genealogies constitute a clan.

Eriksen considers lineage as an important part of kinship. Actually, kinship begins with the family and grows into a lineage. And lineage goes further to make a clan. He observes :

As a general rule, we may say that a lineage consists of persons who can indicate, by stating all the intermediate links, common descent from a shared ancestor or ancestress. A clan encompasses people who assume shared descent from an ancestor/ancestress without being able to enumerate all of these links.

Though lineage and clan are technically defined as two different concepts, they are normally used as synonyms. For social anthropological purposes, Eriksen argues that lineage traces its origin from a known ancestor who has a name, a place of birth and an identity. The clan, on the other hand, depends on the assumption of the ancestor

who started it. Another observation made by Eriksen is that lineage is found in both the matriarchal and patriarchal societies. This applies to the occurrence of clan also.

The definition of lineage given by Jacobs and Stern is very pointed and precise :

Lineage is a subdivision of a clan composed of *actual* and not *fictitious* kin.

Lowie has analyzed the importance of lineage in the clan in the tribal situation. He says that the status of an individual, for instance, among the Nootka Indians, is nothing without his lineage identity. It is the lineage which gives recognition to a person in the clan. The position given to lineage in the clan system by Lowie is supported by Sapir also. Thus, for Lowie, lineage consists of all the members of a particular genealogical group.

### ***Totem and Clan***

Social anthropologists have produced rich literature on totemism. Among the African tribes totems are very widely found. Each clan organization bears the names of animals and plants. This mode of designating a clan is often coupled with beliefs and practices revolving round the eponym. Sometimes, the animal is held sacred and there is a strong sense of kinship with it on the part of the clan. Elsewhere groups are not named after plants or animals but are nevertheless definitely associated with them. Frequently, there is a belief in the descent of the clan from the eponym. All these and similar usages are brought together under the head of totemism and the animal plant or object in question is called a totem.

Totemism has a very wide distribution among the tribals. It is found in America, Australia, Melanesia, Africa and India. "This extensive diffusion deeply impressed the scholars who first investigated the relevant data, and following the theoretical bias of their times, they assumed without further enquiry that all the phenomena labeled totemism represented identical psychological processes and had originated independently in different areas through the psychic unity of mankind." It appears that totemism has developed from the practice of animal nicknames.

Lowie has traced the origin and development of totemism. He says that it was for the first time that Goldenweiser in 1910 approached totemism from a quite different point of view. He was followed by Boas. These anthropologists

argued that totemism all over the primitive world is not alike. It differs substantially. for example, in Central Australia, totemism does not focus on animals. It emphasizes ritualistic performances. It helps to enhance the magic power of a person. Goldenweiser also borrows from J. G. Frazer. His conclusion is that totemism is not associated with exogamy. Some anthropologists have worked very elaborately on the theme of totemism. For one thing, all agree that totemic ties keep the people of a group united. It is a part of kinship relationship. In family there is a biological and socio-cultural relationship among the members; in line-age there is a linkage with the ancestors; clan consists of lineages and totem keeps the people held together by an object which the people consider as their common and shared identity.

Totemism binds the people on the basis of some animal, plant and tree. The observance of the totemic rules is not based on biological origin. It is social and cultural. In a precise way, totem is different from clan but it forms a part of clan. In Indian social anthropology, some work has been done in totemism. For instance, among the Kharias, there are about ten exogamous totemic clans. Similarly, among the Kamars, there are a large number of exogamous clans. Each clan has its own totems. Normally, totems are operative only in the realm of marriage. Clan, on the other hand, has comprehensive social and cultural functions. The Kamars have totems in the name of tiger, serpent, goat, birds, etc.

Totemism in India has come as a tradition of British social anthropology. In Britain and other parts of Europe, totemism developed through Goldenweiser and Frazer. In England, Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown worked considerably to develop the theme of totemism. For instance, Malinowski has written extensively on totemism which is found in Trobriand Islands. These primitives believed that totemic plants and animals are helpful for the maintenance of society. Radcliffe-Brown developed a more complex view of totemism. Borrowing from Durkheim, he says that totem causes a special relationship between it and the social order and the ultimate function of totemism is to maintain social integration. The totem is, thus, a tangible identity marker for a group. Durkheim himself mentions flag as a kind of totem. Similarly, defining totem, Jacob and Stern write :

An animal associated with a clan is a totem. Its flesh is tabooed by the clan

members. The clan members believe themselves descended from the animal and they conduct rites for it. Some writers give broader definitions allowing for plant or other beings as clan totems, or for any zoomorphic supernatural powers as totems even if unconnected with clans. The beliefs and practices connected with totems are called totemism.

According to John Lewis :

A totem is an object towards which members of a kinship must have a special mystical relationship and with which the unit's name is associated. The object may be an animal or a plant.

Our discussion here does not relate to the description of totemism. That is secondary for us. What we want to emphasize is that totemism is different from clan, family and lineage. We have argued that totemism creates a group of people who associate themselves with some animal or plant. This association makes them share their common identity. It ends up with the practice of totemic exogamy. On the other hand, the members of a clan associate themselves with a common ancestor who was fictitious. In totemism the association is with animal or plant but never human beings. Thus, technically, totemism and clan are different. But it is the totem which gives its name to a clan. It is an identity mark of the clan.

### **Functions of Clan**

The primitive peoples all over the world have lived in an unfriendly environment. Though the forests provide them wild game, living within its cover sometimes proves to be very dangerous. The tribals who have taken to agriculture are more often than not victims of floods and droughts. Deprived of most of the facilities of security, they have to depend on their kinsmen and clansmen. We have enough studies to infer that a tribal group can hardly survive without the functioning of clans. It is normal to find a Gond saying : "While hurting the member of my clan, you have actually hurt me." The identification in the name of clan in a tribal group is very strong. Despite this, as mentioned above, under the influence of modernization many of the functions of clan are getting weak or eroded. We, however, give below some of the important functions of clan :

(i) ***Protection and Help*** : The insecure environment puts tribals always



in constant need of help and protection. The clan members provide them security and help at such times. For instance, if the family is in difficulty, the clan members would come forward to render all material and economic help and when the family is under heavy indebtedness, the clan members would contribute an appropriate amount for redemption. The clan is an exogamous group and therefore it has to give and take daughters and brides in exchange from other clans. This widens the area of assistance for a particular clan. The marriage alliance, therefore, is a source of strength for a particular clan.

(ii) **Political Hegemony :** In African tribes, as among India ones, the clan has a political clout. There are “big men” in a tribal group. These men play an important role to help the tribals integrate themselves in the regional politics. Politics has been defined differently. According to one definition, politics “can be defined as agency; as the establishment of authoritative decisions. Second, politics may be seen as a system in which case the word refers to the circulation of power and authority in a society.” In northern Pakistan there is a tribal group of Swat Pathans. They are cereal farmers. A tiny majority of the Pathans–Pakthuns–own virtually all of the land, while the majority of the rest of the population are their tenants. The Pathans are patrilineal and all formal political power is vested with men. Only sons can inherit from their fathers, but all sons have rights of inheritance. In order to expand his fields, a Pakthun needs a large political following, or in other words, he needs many clients. It is for this reason that he gives his land for cultivation to his clansmen. This makes a particular clan politically strong. In our country, the dominant clans get a larger share of political power. In western India, the Maira clan of Bhils has dominance in most of the panchayat samitis.

(iii) **Wielding of Sanction :** The clan has a right to levy a penalty for non-observance of tribal traditions. It can oblige the clan member to follow a certain course of action. In western India and parts of Madhya Pradesh, if a member of a clan is killed by a member of another clan, the former takes revenge. The loss of a man is the loss of a clan. Therefore, all the

clan members make it a point to apply the primitive law—eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth—and annihilate the members of another clan. On the other hand, if the clan member disobeys the tradition of his clan, he is ousted and remains in isolation. The clan can inflict physical injury also on a deviant member.

- (iv) **Exogamy** : All the males and the females of a clan constitute, in a broad way, a common blood group. They are constrained to observe the rules of exogamy. Deviance in the observation of exogamy is penalized severely.
- (v) **Religion and Customs** : Each clan has its deities, ancestors and totems. On occasions of birth, marriage, death and scarcities, the clan deities are worshipped. It is firmly believed by all the members of the clan that only by observing respect for the deities can a crisis be overcome.

The functions of clan are several. However, in the modern context of development, many of these functions have become extinct. Normally, one comes forward to help the clan members, particularly in the case of financial difficulties. Politics also has become individual-centric. The changes in the functions of clan have made the institution ineffective. Empirically, one could very easily observe that there are conflicts pertaining to land and development benefits. There is much competition to find out opportunities of employment and in this field there are disputes and conflicts in a particular clan. Among Indian tribes, it is really difficult to find any substantial unity among the clan members. However, there is only one function of clan which stands as a high tower and that is the field of exogamy. Normally, one cannot find a person having marriage alliance within his own clan. In this respect, the clan stands as a bedrock.

### **Clans among Indian Tribes**

It is indeed very difficult to find out the origin of clan in each primitive group of the world and for that matter in India. We do not have enough literature on the origin and development of clan in our country. Despite this limitation we refer to some of the clans found among Indian tribes. But, before we do that, let us refer to the clans found among Hindus. The Hindus regulate their marriage according to *gotra*. *Gotra*, as P. N. Prabhu tells us, consists of two Sanskrit words : 'go' meaning cow, and 'tra' meaning

herd. Thus, the Hindu *gotra* is a group of people united by a common ancestor. There are seven *rishis*, namely, Vishvamitra, Jamadgni, Bhardwaj, Gautam, Ari, Vashishtha and Kashyap who gave origin to seven Hindu *gotras*. Generally, the Hindus trace their origin to one of these *rishis*. The progeny of a single *rishis* are brothers and sisters. Brothers and sisters cannot marry among themselves. And, therefore, the Hindu *gotra* is an exogamous group.

Unlike Hindus the tribals do not have such a simple origin of clan. Each tribe has its history, ethnology and therefore, a traditional history for its clan. It is difficult to describe the clans found among more than 400 tribal groups found in the country. We, therefore, mention some of the notable clans of major tribal groups.

The Santhal tribe is found in Bihar and Bengal. It has more than 100 clans that are related to or trace their origin from a tree, plant, animal or some inanimate objects. Similarly, the Ho tribe has about 50 clans. Some of these clans are the same as are found among Santhals. The Munda tribe has 65 clans. The Bhils of western India are reported to have 38 clans. The clans are related to wild animals, trees and plants. Majumdar and Madan have enumerated eight clans in Kharia tribe. These include *Khoren* (a stone), *Myur* (crocodile), *Samad* (deer), *Barliha* (a fruit), *Charad*, *Hansad*, *Mail* and *Tepna* (all birds). Among the Tamarias the clan name is related to a ghost, animal or plant. For example, the origin of a Panduwing *gotra* among these people is traced to a leaf.

### **1.13 Concept of Phratry**

A phratry is a very large kin group which consists of some linked clans, and which appears in a combination of more than two such equivalent groups in a society. In simple terms it refers to a grouping of two or more clans who claim common descent from a mythological ancestor. It is said that when a group of clans gets merged together for some reason or another the emergent grouping is called a phratry. If all the clans of a tribe are constituted into just two phratries, then the emergent type of social structure is called dual organization.

Some anthropologists have called phratry lined clans. Actually, the phratry is a blood related group. It is exogamous. Sometimes it so happens that in a large tribal group some people having common bloodties establish a separate identity. This autonomous and separate identity is called Phratry.

According to Doshi & Jain (2001). The function of phratry and dual organization is normally to regulate marriage, but now the boundaries of phratries have also become loose. It appears that in the wake of modernization which the tribals are experiencing the hierarchy and status of phratry is fast dwindling. The rights of reservation in terms of safety and security have weakened the dual division of clan. Reservation, is basically concerned with the tribal group and not the clan. This makes phratry irrelevant.

### **Concept of Moiety**

It has emerged from the French word 'moitie', meaning 'half', this refers to the division of a group or society into halves. According to Lucy Mair (1965), some societies are divided into two complementary halves. The name given to these division is moieties The division into moieties is usually considered to be based on Descent, giving rise to division of groups into 2 parti and matri-moieties. As the word was first used by anthropologists, it meant a division based on descent, or clan and lineage membership. Some North American and Some Australian tribes are divided into exogamous moieties; that is, every member of the tribe belongs by birth to one of two halves and must marry a member of the other. But moiety divisions are not always exogamous and even when they are, their principal significance is commonly in the field of religion rather than in marriage relationships. The two divisions cooperate in important rituals, each having its appropriate task and both being indispensable to the success of the ceremony.

A number of peoples of Eastern Africa are organized in moieties of a different type. These are based on the principle of alternation, expressed in various ways. Among the Turkana of Northern Kenya, every man belongs to the opposite moiety from that of his father, but his arrangement does not oppose all the men of one generation to all those of the next. Both moieties are represented in every generation, and every ceremony of initiation creates two new age-sets, one of each moiety. The names of the moieties are Stones and Heopards.

Arusha society, who live high up on Mount Meru in Tanganyika, is also divided into moieties of a different kind. Every man is born into one of two divisions of the whole tribe, but each of these is further divided into two, and so are these again. The

significance of these divisions is that, when some quarrel about rights arises, each of the disputants has the right to call on members of his own division to help him pursue his claim. In this way, this acts as a machinery like court in the primitive society.

#### **1.14 Conclusion**

In this chapter, we came to know that clan is a exogamous group which is unilateral in nature but here the persons are not able to trace there intermediary links due to its wider context. However Phratry is the assemblage of clan on some basis of commonality whereas moiety is division of society into two halves.

1. There are two types of kinship relations consanguineal and Affinal.
2. Consanguineal is relationship through blood whereas Affinal is the relationship through marriage.
3. Kindred is a group of people decided by ego. It is temporary and associational in nature.
4. Incest is a rule which prohibit sexual relations with the close relatives.

Kinship is a social recognition and expression of genealogical relationships. It is not only actual but may be based on supposed ties of blood. We further found how social anthropology contributes in understanding kinship and other terms. We find that conceptually lineage is a group of people who link themselves to a common ancestor.

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## **BASIC TERMS AND CONCEPTS**

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|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Course No. SOC-C-102</b> |                         | <b>Lesson No. 2</b> |
| <b>Semester-I</b>           | <b>INCEST AND TABOO</b> | <b>Unit-I</b>       |

- 2.1 Objective
- 2.2 History and etymology
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  - 2.3.1 Hindus
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## **2.1 Objective:**

This unit will acquaint you with:

- The meaning and history of incest.
- The views of hindus Buddhist Christian etc. on incest.
- The definition and meaning of taboo.
- The various classes and objects of taboos.
- Taboos related to food and drink, on death etc.

## **2.2 History and Etymology:**

The word ‘incest’ was introduced into Middle English around 1225 as a legal term to describe the crime of familial incest as it is known today. It was also used to describe sexual relations between married persons, one of whom had taken a vow of celibacy (often called spiritual incest). It derives from the Latin incestus or incestum, the substantive use of the adjective incestus meaning ‘unchaste, impure’, which itself is derived from the Latin castus meaning ‘chaste’. The derived adjective incestuous does not appear until the 16th century. Prior to the introduction of the Latin term, incest was known in Old English as sibbleger (from sibb ‘kinship’ + leger ‘to lie’) or mreghremed (from moeg ‘kin, parent’ + haemed ‘sexual intercourse’) but in time, both words fell out of use.

In ancient China, first cousins with the same surnames (i.e., those born to the father’s brothers) were not permitted to marry, while those with different surnames (i.e., maternal cousins and paternal cousins born to the father’s sisters) were. The fable of Oedipus, with a theme of inadvertent incest between a mother and son, ends in disaster and shows ancient taboos against incest as Oedipus is punished for incestuous actions by blinding himself. In the “sequel” to Oedipus, Antigone, his four children are also punished for their parents having been incestuous. Incest is mentioned and condemned in Virgil’s Aeneid Book VI: hic thalamum invasit natae vetitosque hymenaeos; “This one invaded a daughter’s room and a forbidden sex act”.

It is generally accepted that sibling marriages were widespread at least during the Graeco-Roman period of Egyptian history. Numerous papyri and the Roman census declarations attest to many husbands and wives being brother and sister. Some of



these incestuous relationships were in the royal family, especially the Ptolemies; The famous Cleopatra VII was married to her younger brother, Ptolemy XIII. Her mother and father, Cleopatra V and Ptolemy XII, had also been brother and sister. In Ancient Greece, Spartan King Leonidas I, hero of the legendary Battle of Thermopylae, was married to his niece Gorgo, daughter of his half brother Cleomenes I.

Incestuous unions were frowned upon and considered as nefas (against the laws of gods and man) in ancient Rome. In AD 295 incest was explicitly forbidden by an imperial edict, which divided the concept of incestus into two categories of unequal gravity: the incestus iuris gentium, which was applied to both Romans and non-Romans in the Empire, and the incestus iuris civilis, which concerned only Roman citizens. Therefore, for example, an Egyptian could marry an aunt, but a Roman could not. Despite the act of incest being unacceptable within the Roman Empire, Roman Emperor Caligula is rumored to have had sexual relationships with all three of his sisters (Julia Livilla, Drusilla, and Agrippina the Younger).<sup>[64]</sup> Emperor Claudius, after executing his previous wife, married his niece Agrippina the Younger, changing the law to allow an otherwise illegal union.<sup>[65]</sup> The taboo against incest in Ancient Rome is demonstrated by the fact that politicians would use charges of incest (often false charges) as insults and means of political disenfranchisement. Many European monarchs were related due to political marriages, sometimes resulting in distant cousins (and even first cousins) being married. This was especially true in the Habsburg, Hohenzollern and Bourbon royal houses.

## **2.3 Views of Incest:**

### **2.3.1 Hindu**

Hinduism speaks of incest in abhorrent terms. Hindus are fearful of the bad effects of incest and thus practice strict rules of both endogamy and exogamy within castes (Varna in Hinduism) but not in the same family tree (gotra) or bloodline (Pravara). Marriages within the gotra (“swagotra” marriages) are banned under the rule of exogamy in the traditional matrimonial system. People within the gotra are regarded as kin and marrying such a person would be thought of as incest. i.e. Marriage with cousins is strictly prohibited. In fact marriage between two people whose parents are related paternally up to seven generations is expressly prohibited. Gotra is transferred down the male lineage while the Gotra of a female changes upon marriage. i.e., upon marriage

a woman belongs to her husband's Gotra and no longer belongs to her father's Gotra. At the same time, a girl's children are not allowed to marry brother's children. Hence marriage with a person having same Gotra as of the original Gotras of paternal grandfather, paternal grandmother, maternal grandfather and maternal grandmother is prohibited. In certain cases of incest, the Garuda Purana prescribes suicide as the only acceptable penance.

### **2.3.2 Buddhist**

Buddhist societies take a strong ethical stand in human affairs and sexual behavior in particular. Most variations of Buddhism decide locally about the details of incest as a wrongdoing, according to local cultural standards. Sexual misconduct is mentioned but the definition of what constitutes misconduct sex is an individual issue. The most common formulation of Buddhist ethics are the Five Precepts and the Noble Eightfold Path: one should neither be attached to nor crave sensual pleasure. These precepts take the form of voluntary, personal undertakings, not divine mandate or instruction. The third of the Five Precepts is "To refrain from committing sexual misconduct". 'Sexual misconduct' means any sexual conduct involving violence, manipulation or deceit - conduct that therefore leads to suffering and trouble. Buddhist Saints and monks strictly forbid any type of sexual misconduct but incest is not specifically defined as sexual misconduct, and therefore depends on the culture of the area, not on mandate from the faith.

### **2.3.3 Christian**

In the Catholic Church, marriage is never permitted if the potential spouses are related in the collateral line up to and including the fourth degree. The Church does not permit the marriage if a doubt exists on whether the potential spouses are related by consanguinity in any degree of the direct line or in the second degree of the collateral line.

In the Eastern Orthodox Church, marriages are not allowed between second cousins or closer and between second uncles / aunts and second nieces / nephews (between first cousins once removed) or closer. Also, marriages that produce children that are closer genetic relatives than legal are also not permitted (unless the genetic relationship does allow marriage between those children). For example, two siblings

may not marry two other siblings because legally their children will be cousins, but genetically they'll be half-siblings. On the other hand, two siblings may marry two cousins.

The Anglican Communion allows marriages up to and including first cousins. But in all of the three preceding Christian churches, marriages to uncles, aunts, relatives in the direct line, or their respective spouses are not allowed.

#### **2.3.4 Jews:**

In three places in the Torah, there are lists of family members between whom it is prohibited to have sexual relations; each of these lists is progressively shorter. The biblical lists are not symmetrical - the implied rules for women are not the same. In the 4th century BC, the Soferim (scribes) declared that there were relationships within which marriage constituted incest, in addition to those mentioned by the Torah. These additional relationships were termed seconds (Hebrew: sheniyyot), and included the wives of a man's grandfather and grandson. The classical rabbis prohibited marriage between a man and any of these seconds of his, on the basis that doing so would act as a safeguard against infringing the biblical incest rules, although there was inconclusive debate about exactly what the limits should be for the definition of seconds. Marriages forbidden in the Torah were regarded by the rabbis of the Middle Ages as invalid - as if they had never occurred; any children born to such a couple were regarded as Jewish bastards, and the relatives of the spouse were not regarded as forbidden relations for a further marriage. On the other hand, those relationships which were prohibited due to qualifying as seconds, and so forth, were regarded as wicked, but still valid; while they might have pressured such a couple to divorce, any children of the union were still seen as legitimate.

#### **2.4 Exogamy and Incest Prohibitions:**

Exogamy or out marriage and associated incest taboos are a basic feature of all marriage systems. Numerous theories have been proposed to explain the universality of these prohibitions. Anthropologists generally prefer sociological explanations, which consider sexual restrictions as a function of marriage regulation, over biological or psychological theories, which focus on the incest taboo. This perspective results from our emphasis on social and cultural conditioning of individual behaviour and on detailing and explaining cultural variation.

Sociological theories of exogamy include:

**1. Role theory** - This position was elucidated by Malinowski and maintains that kinship and marriage systems are important for the assignment of unambiguously defined and distributed social roles. If close kin, were allowed to intermarry, they would assume a alternative set of roles, rights, and responsibilities to those already in force. The resulting confusion and conflict over role definitions would undermine social order.

**2. Alliance theory** - This position, championed by Levi-Strauss, maintains that small close-knit groups must force their members to marry outside of their immediate circle in order achieve the cultural, political, and economic benefits that a society build on extensive interactions and alliances provides.

## **2.5 Definition:**

**According to Encyclopaedia Britannica Online ‘taboo’**, also spelled tabu, Tongan tabu, Maori tapu, the prohibition of an action based on the belief that such behaviour is either too sacred and consecrated or too dangerous and accursed for ordinary individuals to undertake. The term taboo is of Polynesian origin and was first noted by Captain James Cook during his visit to Tonga in 1771; he introduced it into the English language, after which it achieved widespread currency. Although taboos are often associated with the Polynesian cultures of the South Pacific, they have proved to be present in virtually all societies past and present.

A **taboo** is a strong social prohibition (or ban) relating to any area of human activity or social custom that is sacred and forbidden based on moral judgment and religious beliefs. Breaking the taboo is usually considered objectionable or abhorrent by society. The term comes from the Tongan word tabu, meaning set apart or forbidden, and appears in many Polynesian cultures. In those cultures, a tabu (or taDu or kapu) often has specific religious associations. American author Herman Melville, in his first novel “Typee” describes both the origin and use of the word in Polynesian culture. “The word itself (taboo) is used in more than one signification. It is sometimes used by a parent to his child, when in the exercise of parental authority he forbids it to perform a particular action. Anything opposed to the ordinary customs of the islands, although not expressly prohibited is said to be “taboo”.” When an activity or custom is taboo,

it is forbidden and interdictions are implemented concerning it, such as the ground set apart as a sanctuary for criminals. Some taboo activities or customs are prohibited under law and transgressions may lead to severe penalties. Other taboos result in embarrassment, shame, and rudeness. Although critics and/or dissenters may oppose taboos, they are put into place to avoid disrespect to any given authority, be it legal, moral and/or religious.

**Wundt** calls taboo the oldest unwritten code of law of humanity. It is generally assumed that taboo is older than the gods and goes back to the pre-religious age. In an article on “Taboo” in the Encyclopedia Britannica written by the anthropologist Northcote W. Thomas taboo is described as “Properly speaking taboo includes only a) the sacred (or unclean) character of persons or things, b) the kind of prohibition which results from this character, and c) the sanctity (or uncleanness) which results from a violation of the prohibition. The converse of taboo in Polynesia is ‘noa’ and allied forms which mean ‘general’ or ‘common’.

## **2.6 Frazers meaning of Taboo:**

In primitive society the rules of ceremonial purity observed by divine kings, chiefs, and priests agree in many respects with the rules observed by homicides, mourners, women in childbed, girls at puberty, hunters and fishermen, and so on. To us these various classes of persons appear to differ totally in character and condition; some of them we should call holy, others we might pronounce unclean and polluted. But the savage makes no such moral distinction between them; the conceptions of holiness and pollution are not yet differentiated in his mind. To him the common feature of all these persons is that they are dangerous and in danger, and the danger in which they stand and to which they expose others is what we should call spiritual or ghostly, and therefore imaginary. The danger, however, is not less real because it is imaginary; imagination acts upon man as really as does gravitation, and may kill him as certainly as a dose of prussic acid. To seclude these persons from the rest of the world so that the dreaded spiritual danger shall neither reach them nor spread from them, is the object of the taboos which they have to observe. These taboos act, so to say, as electrical insulators to preserve the spiritual force with which these persons are charged from suffering or inflicting harm by contact with the outer world.

### **2.7 Classes of Taboo:**

1. Natural or direct, the result of 'mana' (mysterious power) inherent in a person or thing;
2. Communicated or indirect, equally the result of 'mana' but (a) acquired or (b) imposed by a priest, chief or other person;
3. Intermediate, where both factors are present, as in the appropriation of a wife to her husband.

The term taboo is also applied to ritual prohibitions of a different nature; but its use in these senses is better avoided. It might be argued that the term should be extended to embrace cases in which the sanction of the prohibition is the creation of a god or spirit, i.e., to religious interdictions as distinguished from magical, but there is neither automatic action nor contagion in such a case, and a better term for it is religious interdiction.

### **2.8 The objects of Taboo are:**

1. Direct taboos aim at :
  - (a) protection of important persons-chiefs, priests, etc. and things against harm;
  - (b) safeguarding of the weak-women, children and common people generally-from the powerful mana (magical influence) of chiefs and priests;
  - (c) providing against the dangers incurred by handling or coming in contact with corpses, by eating certain food, etc.;
  - (d) guarding the chief acts of life-births, initiation, marriage and sexual functions-against interference;
  - (e) securing human beings against the wrath or power of gods and spirits;
  - (f) securing unborn infants and young children, who stand in a specially sympathetic relation with their parents, from the consequence of certain actions, and more especially from the communication of qualities supposed to be derived from certain foods.

2. Taboos are imposed in order to secure against thieves the property of an individual, his fields, tools, etc.

Generally, the prohibition that is inherent in a taboo includes the idea that its breach or defiance will be followed by some kind of trouble to the offender, such as lack of success in hunting or fishing, sickness, miscarriage, or death. In some cases proscription is the only way to avoid this danger; examples include rules against fishing or picking fruit at certain seasons and against walking or traveling in certain areas. Dietary restrictions are common, as are rules for the behaviour of people facing important life events such as *parturition*, *marriage*, *death*, and *rites of passage*.

In other cases, the danger represented by the taboo can be overcome through ritual. This is often the case for taboos meant to protect communities and individuals from beings or situations that are simultaneously so powerful as to be inherently dangerous and so common that they are essentially unavoidable. For example, many cultures require persons who have been in physical contact with the dead to engage in a ritual cleansing. Many cultures also circumscribe physical contact with a woman who is *menstruating*—or, less often, a woman who is pregnant—because she is the locus of extremely powerful reproductive forces. Perhaps the most familiar resolution to this taboo is the Jewish practice of bathing in a *mikvah* after menstruation and parturition.

Taboos that are meant to prevent the sacred from being defiled by the ordinary include those that prohibited ordinary people from touching the head—or even the shadow—of a Polynesian chief because doing so would compromise his *mana*, or sacred power. As the chief's mana was important in maintaining the ritual security of the community, such actions were believed to place the entire “population at risk.

There is broad agreement that the taboos current in any society tend to relate to objects and actions that are significant for the *social order* and that, such, taboos belong to the general system of *social control*. *Sigmund Freud* provided perhaps the most ingenious explanation for the apparently irrational nature of taboos, positing that they were generated by ambivalent social attitudes and represents forbidden actions for which there nevertheless exists a strong unconscious inclination. He directly applied this viewpoint to the most universal of all taboos, the incest taboo, which prohibits sexual relations between close relatives.

Other important researchers or theorists on the topic were *William Robertson Smith*, *Sir James G. Frazer*, and *Willelm Wundt*; important books have included Freud's *Totem and Taboo* (1913), Franz Baermann Steiner's classic *Taboo* (1956), and Mary Douglas's enduring *Purity and Danger* (1966). Sigmund Freud provided an analysis of taboo behaviors, highlighting strong unconscious motivations driving such prohibitions. In this system, described in his collections of essays *Totem and Taboo*, Freud postulates a link between forbidden behaviors and the sanctification of objects to certain kinship groups. Freud also states here that the only two "universal" taboos are that of incest and patricide, which formed the eventual basis of modern society.

On an universal scale in almost all cultures, Taboos can include *sex*, *death*, dietary restrictions (halal and kosher diets, religious *vegetarianism*, and the prohibition of *cannibalism*), restrictions on sexual activities and *relationships* (*sex outside of marriage*, *adultery*, *intermarriage*, *miscegenation*, *incest*, *animal-human sex*, *adult-child sex*, *sex with the dead*), *sexual fetishes*, restrictions of bodily functions (*burping*, *flatulence*, *defecation and urination*), restrictions on the use of psychoactive drugs, restrictions on state of genitalia such as (*transsexual gender identity*, *circumcision* or *sex reassignment*), *exposure of body parts* (ankles in the *Victorian British Empire*, women's hair in parts of the *Middle East*, *nudity* in the *US*), and restrictions on the use of offensive language.

Practices considered acceptable in one culture may be considered taboo in other cultures. For example, *Foot Binding*, practiced in ancient China, would be considered taboo in the context of modern cultural morals. Exposure of intimate parts is generally taboo in (most) modern developed countries. Other subjects perceived to be taboo involve burning money; some countries or nations (most notably post- WWII Europe whose governments often object going to *war* except for reasons of self-defense) and moral-philosophical debates on whether or not humanity should (or not) exist.

No taboo is known to be *universal*, but some (such as cannibalism, intentional *homicide*, and *incest taboos*) occur in the majority of societies. Taboos may serve many functions, and often remain in effect after the original reason behind them has expired. Some have argued that taboos therefore reveal the history of societies when other records are lacking.



Certain taboos lose their sting over periods of time. In the United States and western countries, most people are now more comfortable than before when they discuss and explore social issues: *gossip* and *scandal*, *alcoholism*, *depression*, *homosexuality*, *divorce*, *income disparity*, *personal relationships*, *pregnancy* and *childbirth*, and *teenage rebellion*. Medical disorders and diseases like *cancer*, *polio*, *AIDS*, *mental disorders* and *suicide* aren't as heavily taboo now as in the past. Certain personal things such as age, height, weight and appearance are not always shared with confidants or in public; this indicates that such topics may be taboo to some people.

Taboos often extend to cover discussion of taboo topics. This can result in taboo deformation (*euphemism*) or replacement of *taboo words*. Marvin Harris, a leading figure in *cultural materialism*, endeavored to explain taboos as a consequence of the *ecologic* and *economic* conditions of their societies. Taboos challenge one's free speech and individual rights to express a subject or issue in need to be addressed for the benefit, not to damage; any given society.

Other societal taboos to a certain extent or to some people are the polarizing issues of *racism*, *sexism*, *ethnicity*, *nationality*, *religion*, *conspiracy theories*, *politics*, *money*, *socio-economic class*, *sexual orientation*, and *disability*. People follow this advice of not discussing, joking about or making an issue of things that can lead to bigotry, discrimination, *defamation* and stigmatization of people with those social group differences.

For such topics, the moderated environment of an organized debate may be the only socially acceptable place to discuss them. They developed as a result of concerns for civil rights, sensitivity, and multiculturalism in the late 20th century.

In today's world (esp. true in the *USA*), certain political ideologies like fascism (i.e. *Nazism*) and *Communism*, including extreme forms of *socialism* and left-wing or right-wing extremes like *anarchism* (no rulers) and *militarism* (military dictators) would be perceived as taboo to a democratic society, which finds these alternatives immoral and sinister.

## **2.9 Taboo Food and Drink:**

Food and beverages which people abstain from consuming for religious, cultural

or hygienic reasons. Many food taboos forbid the meat of a particular animal, including mammals, rodents, reptiles, amphibians, *bony fish*, and crustaceans. Some taboos are specific to a particular part or excretion of an animal, while other taboos forgo the consumption of plants, fungi, or insects.

Food taboos can be defined as rules, codified or otherwise, about which foods or combinations of foods may not be eaten and how animals are to be *slaughtered*. The origins of these prohibitions and commandments are varied. In some cases, these taboos are a result of health considerations or other practical reasons.<sup>(1)</sup> In others, they are a result of human *symbolic systems*.<sup>(2)</sup> Some foods may be prohibited during certain festivals (e.g., *Lent*), at certain times of life (e.g., *pregnancy*), or to certain classes of people (e.g., *priests*), although the food is in general permissible.

Various religions forbid the consumption of certain types of food. For example, *Judaism* prescribes a strict set of rules, called *Kashrut*, regarding what may and may not be eaten. *Islam* has similar laws, dividing foods into *haraam* (forbidden) and *halal* (permitted). *Jains* often follow religious directives to observe vegetarianism. Hinduism has no specific proscriptions against eating meat, but *Hindus* apply the concept of ahimsa (non-violence) to their diet and consider vegetarianism as ideal, and largely practise forms of vegetarianism.

Aside from formal rules, there are cultural taboos against the consumption of some animals. One cause is the classification of a food as *famine food* - the association of a food with famine, and hence association of the food with hardship. Within a given society, some meats will be considered taboo simply because they are outside the range of the generally accepted definition of a foodstuff, not necessarily because the meat is considered repulsive in *flavor*, *aroma*, *texture* or appearance. (*Dog meat* is eaten, in certain circumstances, in *Korea*, *Vietnam*, and *China*, although it is nowhere a common dish.) Similarly, *horse meat* is rarely eaten in the *Anglosphere*, although it is part of the national cuisine of countries as widespread as *Kazakhstan*, *Japan*, and *France*.

In some instances, a food taboo may only apply to certain parts of an animal.

Sometimes food taboos enter national or local law, as with the ban on cattle *abattoirs* in most of *India*, and *horse slaughter* in the *United States*. Even after

reversion to Chinese rule, *Hong Kong* has not lifted its ban on supplying meat from dogs and cats, imposed in *colonial times*.

*Environmentalism, ethical consumerism* and other *activist* movements are giving rise to new taboos and eating guidelines. A fairly recent addition to cultural food taboos is the meat and eggs of *endangered species* or animals that are otherwise protected by law or international treaty. Examples of such protected species include some species of whales, *sea turtles*, and *migratory birds*.

Similarly, *sustainable seafood advisory lists and certification* consider certain seafood to be taboo due to *unsustainable fishing*. *Organic certification* prohibits most *synthetic* chemical inputs during food production, or *genetically modified organisms*, *irradiation*, and the use of sewage sludge. The *Fair Trade* movement and certification discourage the consumption of food and other goods produced in exploitative working conditions. Other social movements generating taboos include *Local Food* and *The 100-Mile Diet*, both of which encourage abstinence from non-locally produced food, and *veganism*, in which adherents endeavor not to use or consume animal products of any kind.

## **2.10 Taboo on the dead:**

It includes the *taboo* against touching of the dead and those surrounding them; the taboo against mourners of the dead; and the taboo against anything associated with the dead.

### **Examples**

- Among the *Maori* anyone who had handled a corpse or taken any part in its burial was in the highest degree unclean and was almost cut off from intercourse with his fellow-men. He could not enter any house, or come into contact with any person or thing without infecting them. He might not even touch food with his hands, which, owing to their uncleanness, had become quite useless. "Food would be set for him on the ground, and he would then sit or kneel down, and, with his hands carefully held behind his back, would gnaw at it as best he could. In some cases he would be fed by another person, who with outstretched arm contrived to do it without touching the tabooed man." The mourners of the dead were also secluded from the public. When their period of mourning

was near completion, “all the dishes he had used in his seclusion were diligently smashed, and all the garments he had worn were carefully thrown away.”

### **2.11 The Taboo on the mourners:**

- Among the *Shuswaps* of *British Columbia* widows and widowers in mourning are secluded and forbidden to touch their own head or body; the cups and cooking vessels which they use may be used by no one else. [...] No hunter would come near such mourners, for their presence is unlucky. If their shadow were to fall on anyone, he would be taken ill at once. They employ thorn-bushes for bed and pillow, in order to keep away the ghost of the deceased; and thorn bushes are also laid all around their beds.ill
- Among the *Agutainos*, who inhabit Palawan, one of the *Philippine Islands*, a widow may not leave her hut for seven or eight days after the death; and even then she may only go out at an hour when is not likely to meet anybody, for whoever looks upon her dies a sudden death. To prevent this fatal catastrophe, the widow knocks with a wooden peg on the trees as she goes along, thus warning people of her dangerous proximity; and the very trees on which she knocks soon die.”

### **2.12 The Taboo against naming the dead:**

- Among the *Guavcurus* of *Paraguav*, when a death had taken place, the chief used to change the name of every member of the tribe; and from that moment everybody remembered his new name just as if he had borne it all his life.<sup>(2)</sup>
- After a *Yolngu* man named Bitjingu died, the word bithiwul “no; nothing” was avoided.ill In its place, a *synonym* or a *loanword* from another language would be used for a certain period, after which the original word could be used again; but in some cases the replacement word would continue to be used.

### **2.13 Origins and Causes:**

*Sigmund Freud* traces back the origin of the dangerous character of widowers and widows to the danger of temptation. A man who has lost his wife must resist a desire to find a substitute for her; a widow must fight against the same wish and is moreover liable to arouse the desires of other men. Substitutive satisfactions of such a kind run counter to the sense of mourning and they would inevitably kindle the ghost’s

wrath.

*Sigmund Freud* explains that the fundamental reason for the existence of such taboos is the fear of the presence or of the return of the dead person's ghost. It is exactly this fear that leads to a great number of ceremonies aimed at keeping the ghost at a distance or driving him off.

The *Tuaregs* of *Sahara*, for example, dread the return of the dead man's spirit so much that "[they] do all they can to avoid it by shifting their camp after a death, ceasing for ever to pronounce the name of the departed, and eschewing everything that might be regarded as an evocation or recall of his soul. Hence they do not, like the Arabs, designate individuals by adding to their personal names the names of their fathers, they give to every man a name which will live and die with him." In many cases the taboo remains intact until the body of the dead has completely decayed, but until then the community must disguise itself so that the ghost shall not recognize them. For example, the Nicobar Islanders try to disguise themselves by shaving their heads.

Psychologist *Wilhelm Wundt* associates the taboo to a fear that the dead man's soul has become a demon. Moreover, many cases show a hostility toward the dead and their representation as malevolent figures. *Edward Westermarck* notes that "Death is commonly regarded as the gravest of all misfortunes; hence the dead are believed to be exceedingly dissatisfied with their fate [...] such a death naturally tends to make the soul revengeful and ill-tempered. It is envious of the living and is longing for the company of its old friend."

## **2.14 Conclusion:**

In short we can say that the meaning of taboo branches off into two opposite directions. On the one hand it means to us *sacred, consecrated*: but on the other hand it means, *uncanny, dangerous, forbidden, and unclean*. The opposite for taboo is designated in Polynesian by the word *noa* and signifies something ordinary and generally accessible. Thus something like the concept of reserve inheres in taboo; taboo expresses itself essentially in prohibitions and restrictions. Our combination of "holy dread" would often express the meaning of taboo. The taboo restrictions are different from religious or moral prohibitions. They are not traced to a commandment

of a god but really they themselves impose their own prohibitions; they are differentiated from moral prohibitions by failing to be included in a system which declares abstinences in general to be necessary and gives reasons for this necessity. The taboo prohibitions lack all justification and are of unknown origin. Though incomprehensible to us they are taken as a matter of course by those who are under their dominance.

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**Structure**

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Objectives
- 2.3 Concept of Descent
- 2.4 Types of Descent Groups
- 2.5 Descent Theory
- 2.6 Conclusion
- 2.7 References

**2.1 Introduction**

Kinship is the sociological recognition of biological ties. These kin relationship normally are performed on the basis of line of tracing with the ancestors. This association of the present generation with the past generation is called as descent and there are various ways in which members are linked and that gives rise to various descent groups.

**2.2 Objectives**

This unit will enable you to understand :

- The meaning of descent
- The forms of descent in different societies.
- The functionality of descent groups.

**2.3 Concept of Descent**

The system of acknowledged social parentage, which varies from society to society, whereby a person may claim kinship ties with another. If no limitation

were placed on the recognition of kinship, everybody would be kin to everyone else; but in most societies some limitation is imposed on the perception of common ancestry, so that a person regards many of his associates as not his kin.

The practical importance of descent comes from its use as a means for one person to assert rights, duties, privileges, or status in relation to another person, who may be related to the first either because one is ancestor to the other or because the two acknowledge a common ancestor. Descent has special influence when rights to succession, inheritance, or residence follow kinship lines.

One method of limiting the recognition of kinship is to emphasize the relationships through one parent only. Such “unilineal” kinship systems, as they are called, are of two main types—patrilineal (or agnatic) systems, in which the relationship through the father are emphasized; and matrilineal (or uxorial) descent systems, in which the maternal relationships are stressed.

In systems of double unilineal descent, patrilineal and matrilineal principles operate in the same society, and there are two series of enduring groups, a person belonging to groups in each series. Ambilateral (or ambilineal) descent systems are those in which membership in a kinship group may be claimed through either parent.

Unilineal systems differ radically from so-called cognatic systems, in which everyone has obligations and duties of much the same kind toward both his paternal and maternal kind and, conversely, can expect rights and privileges from them. Thus, whereas in a matriliney, for example, a person would feel cousin obligations only to the children of his mother’s siblings, in a cognatic system he is in some sense allied to the children of both parent’s siblings. The practical significance of this cognatic system may be either that an individual establishes claim on another person of common descent or that he enjoys some status or privilege by virtue of his lineage or descent. Both structurally and in terms of rights and duties, the cognatic system is vague and tends to characterize the more industrialized countries, in which individual rights and duties are defined to an increasing extent institutionally or legally.

Thus, Descent traces its origin to persons who were ancestors. These ancestors were real beings. Descent thus is geneological, It links the present generation with the preceding generations. (A) is the ego. His father was (B), his grandfather was



(C), his great grandfather was (D), and so on and so forth. Descent, thus, traces a person's origin to the one who created the generation. Anthropologists have defined descent in many ways. According to Meyer Fortes :

A descent group is an arrangement of persons that serves the attainment of legitimate social and personal ends.

Fortes has defined descent group with reference to his study of African tribes. He stresses on the social functions of the group. He does not take into consideration the biological origin of the members of the descent group.

G.P. Murdock, who is the celebrated expounder of the concept of social structure, says;

Descent refers solely to a cultural principle whereby an individual is socially allocated to a specific group of consanguineal kinsmen.

A consanguineal group, according to Murdock, is that which is a blood group. And, thus, the members of a descent group essentially are members of a blood group. When the descent membership is traced for generations, the members born out of this group are the members of the descent group. There are some characteristics which are common to a descent group :

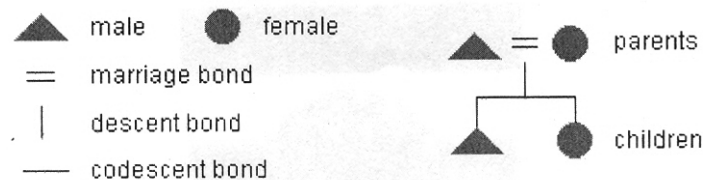
- (1) Members of a descent group trace their origin to a single ancestor who happened to live in the past.
- (2) The ancestor is a living being, a reality.
- (3) The ancestor is never mythological or fictitious.
- (4) The members of a descent group are united by blood ties.
- (5) Marriage and sexual relations are not allowed among the descent group, since they belong to the same ancestor.
- (6) Members of a descent group are also related to inheritance and succession.

We find that the rules of residence ultimately serve to assemble in one place a particular aggregation of relations along with their families of procreation. Thus descent in the sociological affiliation of children to their parents. Based on its cultural background, each society has devised its own means and ways of

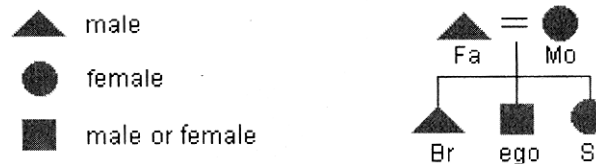
reckoning descent. However, when we look at the various rules of descent, we find that, based on their similarities and differences, they may be classified into a few broad categories.

## 2.4 Descent Principles:

Kinship is reckoned in a number of different ways around the world, resulting in a variety of types of descent patterns and kin groups. Anthropologists frequently use diagrams to illustrate kinship relationships to make them more understandable. The symbols shown here are usually employed. They may be combined, as in the example below on the right, to represent a family consisting of a married couple and their children.



In kinship diagrams, one individual is usually labeled as ego. This is the person to whom all kinship relationships are referred. In the case below on the right, ego has a brother (Br), sister (Si), father (Fa), and mother (Mo). Note also that ego is shown as being gender nonspecific—that is, either male or female.



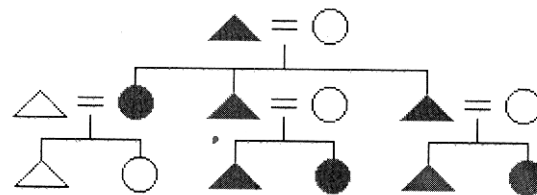
## 2.6 Descent theory:

### A. Unilineal Descent

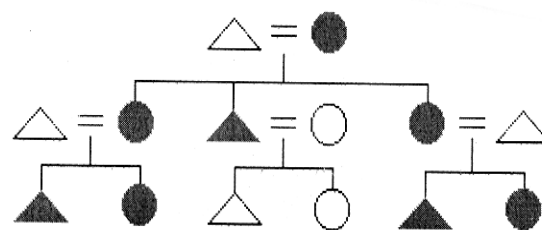
Most cultures severely limit the range of people through whom descent is traced by using a unilineal descent principle. This traces descent only through a single line of ancestors, male or female. Both males and females are members of a unilineal family, but descent links are only recognized through relatives of one gender. The two

basic forms of unilineal descent are referred to as patrilineal and matrilineal)

- (i) **Patrilineal** : Patrilineal Descent affiliates an individual with a group of kin who are related to him through his father alone. It is important to note that, although a man's sons and daughters are all members of the same descent group, application to that group is transmitted only by the sons. The term agnatic is often used for referring to transmission of descent in the male line.



- (ii) **Matrilineal** : Matrilineal descent affiliates an individual with a group of kin who are related to her mother alone. Although, a woman's sons and daughter are all members of the same descent group, affiliation to that group is transmitted only by the daughter. The term uterine is often used for referring to transmission of descent in the female line.



Both patrilineal and matrilineal rules of descent are unilineal rules, because an individual reckons descent through linkage with members of exclusively one sex only. In a society with unilineal descent, the people refer themselves as belonging to a particular unilineal descent groups, because they believe all members of that particular group to be related by virtue of common descent.

The major type of unilineal descent groups are— lineage, clan, Phratry and Moiety.

Inheritance patterns for men in matrilineal societies also often reflect the importance of the mother's brother. For example, in the Ashanti Kingdom of Central Ghana, a king traditionally passes his title and status on to his sister's son. A king's own biological son does not inherit the kingship because he is not a member of the ruling matrilineal family group. Women usually inherit status and property directly from their mothers in matrilineal societies.

Unilineal descent has been found most commonly, but not exclusively, among materially rich foragers, small-scale farmers, and nomadic pastoralists. The common factors for these types of societies are small populations that usually have more than adequate food supplies. Until the early 20th century, approximately 60% of all societies traced descent unilineally. Since then, many of these societies have disappeared or have been absorbed by larger societies that follow other rules of descent.

#### **B. Non-Unilineal/Cognatic System :**

Etymologically, the term cognatic means 'a kin to both parents'. The underlying principle in non-unilineal system is thus the affiliation of an individual with a group of kin who are related to him/her through both his/her parents, irrespective of whether kinships linkages are traced through the mother or the father.

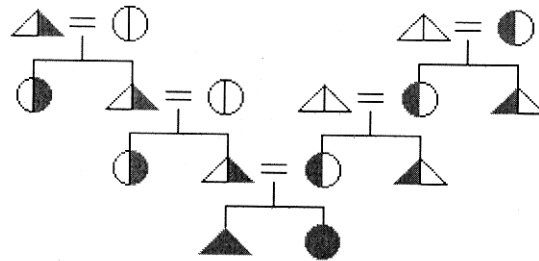
#### **Cognatic Descent**

At least 40% of the societies around the world today trace descent through both the mother's and the father's ancestors to some degree. They follow one of several nonunilineal or cognatic descent principles. The result is usually more varied and complex family systems than are found in societies with patrilineal or matrilineal descent patterns. Cognatic descent is known to occur in four variations : bilineal, ambilineal, parallel, and bilateral descent. By far the most common pattern is bilateral descent, which is commonly used in European cultures. It is described in the next section of this tutorial.

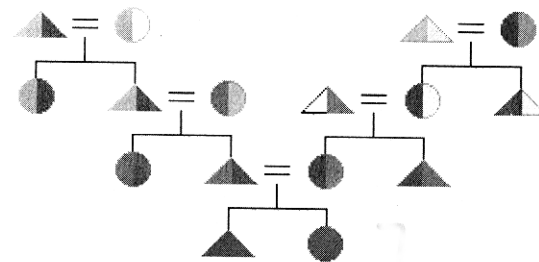
##### **(a) Bilineal:**

When Doth patrilineal and matrilineal descent principles are combined, the

result is the bilineal, or double, descent pattern shown below. With this rare hybrid system, every individual is a member of his or her mother's *matrilineage* and father's *patrilineage*.



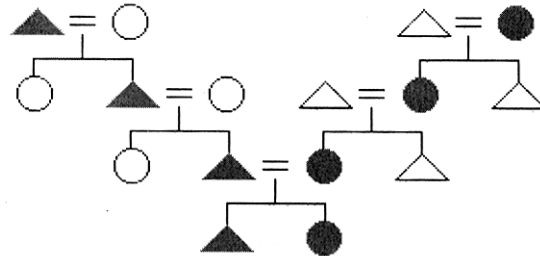
As a result, everyone, except siblings, potentially have a unique combination of two unilineal family lines, as shown in the diagram below. Note that parents only share either their children's matrilineal line or patrilineal line of descent.



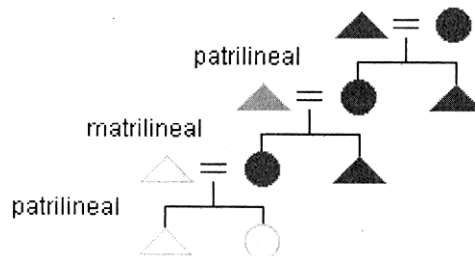
The Yako of southeastern Nigeria are an example of a society with bilineal descent. Their important portable property, including livestock and money, are inherited matrilineally. Fixed property, such as farm plots, pass down through the patrilineal line as do rights to trees and other forest products. It is not surprising that they have patrilineally inherited obligations to cooperate in cultivating their fields. Obligations to perform funerals and pay *bride price* for sons are inherited through the matrilineal line.

The Toda of southern India also follow bilineal descent. Their property is inherited patrilineally and ritualistic privileges related to funerals are inherited matrilineally.

A similarly rare combination of unilineal descent patterns is known as **parallel descent**. With this system, men trace their ancestry through male lines and women trace theirs through female lines. Unlike *bilineal descent*, each individual is a member of only one descent group.



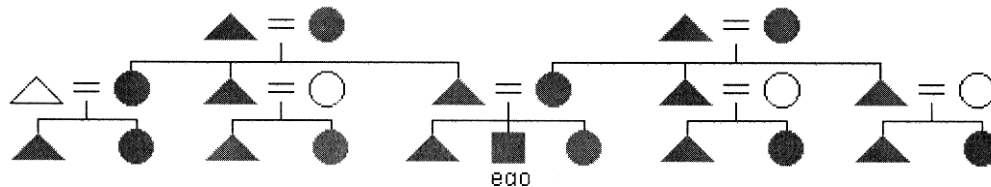
(b) **Ambilineal Descent** is still another unusual descent system that, in a sense. Descent from either males or females is recognized, but individuals may select only one line to trace descent. Since each generation can choose which parent to trace descent through, a family line may be patrilineal in one generation and matrilineal in the next.



The reason for choosing one side over the other often has to do with the relative importance of each family. In other words, ambilineal descent is flexible in that it allows people to adjust to changing family situations. For instance, when a man marries a woman from a politically or economically more important family, he may agree to let his children identify with their mother's family line to enhance their prospects and standing within the society.

(c) **Bilateral** descent is used by most people in Europe and the Americas today. This coanatic system traces descent from all biological ancestors regardless of their

gender and side of the family. In addition, all male and female children are members of both their father's and mother's families. Everyone shown in red below is a bilateral relative of ego.



While there is no inherent gender bias in the bilateral descent principle, there often is a slight male bias in marriage practices and in the creation of families. This can be seen in North America today when a man's last name is used by his wife and children. With this exception, however, there usually is no other similarity with patrilineal descent.

Bilateral descent is rare among the societies of the world, though, it is common if you count people instead of societies. It is characteristic of large agricultural and industrial nations as well as hunters and gatherers in harsh, relatively nonproductive environments such as deserts and arctic wastelands. It is also found among some transhumance pastoralists living in poor environments)

### How Many Relatives do you have?

The specific type of descent system employed has a major effect on the number of people who are recognized as ancestors. With unilineal descent, there is only one direct ancestor in each generation. However, with bilateral descent, there is a doubling of ancestors with each generation further back in time.

| ANCESTRAL<br>GENERATION | NUMBER OF DIRECT ANCESTORS |          | Bilateral |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|----------|-----------|
|                         | Unilineal                  | Bilineal |           |
| 1                       | 1                          | 2        | 2         |
| 2                       | 1                          | 2        | 4         |
| 3                       | 1                          | 2        | 8         |
| 4                       | 1                          | 2        | 16        |

|   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|----|
| 5 | 1 | 2 | 32 |
| 6 | 1 | 2 | 64 |

Given the fact that bilateral descent results in many ancestors in just a few generations, it is not surprising that few people in North America know the names of all eight of their great grandparents, let alone the names of their sixteen great grandparents.

By comparison, it is not unusual for people who use unilineal descent systems to remember all of their ancestors for five or more generations. In fact, some Polynesians from the island of Rarotonga in the early 20th century knew the names of their ancestors back 90 or more generations. In fairness, however, it should be noted that the people of Rarotonga traditionally have had more of an ancestor focus than do most people in North America today. This difference in focus may have as much to do with their respective economies and pace of life as with their kinship systems. .

One further trait of bilateral descent deserves mention. Families using this system have a potential for recognizing far more *collateral* descendants than would those using one of the unilineal patterns. This is not due to producing more offspring but to having descent lines continued by both male and female children every generation.

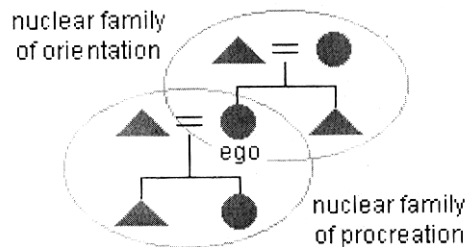
You have learned that the two principle ways people around the world trace descent are *unilineal* and *coanatic* (or non lineal). Unilineal descent recognizes only a single line of ancestors through males or females. It occurs in two forms—*patrilineal*, which follows the male line, and *matrilineal*, which follows the female line. The patrilineal form is more common. With cognatic descent, both the mother's and the father's ancestors to some degree are considered to be within the family line. Cognatic descent occurs in four forms—*bilineal*, *parallel*, *ambilineal*, and *bilateral* descent.

| GENERAL RULE      | SPECIFIC RULE       |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| unilineal descent | patrilineal descent |
|                   | matrilinal descent  |
|                   | bilineal descent    |
| cognatic descent  | parallel descent    |
|                   | ambilineal descent  |
|                   | bilateral descent   |

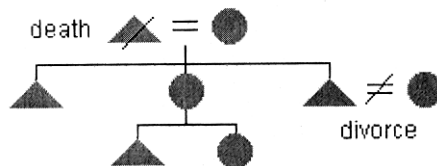


## 2.5 Descent Groups:

Different descent principles and marriage rules result in the formation of different types of families and larger kin based groups. Regardless of the descent and marriage pattern used by a society, however, most people at some time in their lives are members of more than one family group. For example, in North America and other monogamous societies with bilateral descent patterns, people usually see themselves as being members of two related nuclear families—the one in which they are a child (family of orientation) and the one in which they are a parent (family of procreation).



In reality, the 21st century American family is often missing an adult male as a result of death, divorce, abandonment, or no marriage having occurred. Such families are often referred to as being matricentric or matrifocused. They may also include the mother's daughter's children, as in the case shown in the diagram below. The matricentric family pattern exists in all segments of the American society today but is most common in poor urban African American communities.

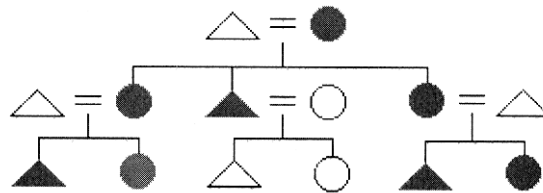


In some cases, it is the wife-mother who is absent from the family. As a result, the husband-father usually takes on both parent roles. Another increasingly common form of family in contemporary America is the dual-family. This occurs when children

move between the separate households of their divorced or separated parents. Since half of all marriages in the U.S. now end in divorce, it is likely that the dual-family will become a more accepted family alternative.

### Unilineal Descent Groups:

When a *unilineal descent* principle is used, people are most often members of multi-generational groups of close relatives called unilineages. These may be matrilineages, as in the case of the green people in the diagram below, or they may be patrilineages, depending on whether the links are traced through women or men.



**Three generations of a small matrilineage**

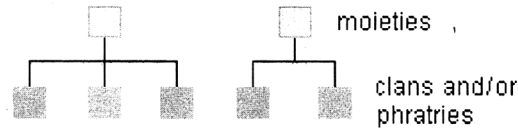
Societies that have unilineages also often define larger, more inclusive kin groups called clans. These are groups of people who claim unilineal descent from a common ancestor but who cannot specify all of the actual links. The ancestor is *genealogically*, so remote that he or she is thought of often as a mythical being.

Such distant, non-human ancestors become identifying symbols of the clan. Anthropologists often refer to these fictional clan originators as **totems** or totemic emblems. Often, there are cultural rules requiring that clan members show respect for the totemic animal or plant and observe a prohibition against killing or eating it. Medieval European heraldry also used animal representations to identify family lines. However, such creatures were not considered to be family ancestors but rather as symbolic representations of virtues such as strength and loyalty.

Some societies group their clans into even larger-scale unilineal descent groups called **phratries**. As with clans, the actual genealogical links are not clear and the phratry ancestors are usually mythical.

Entire societies may be divided into two large unilineal descent groups that have *reciprocal* responsibilities with each other. These groups are known as *moieties* (from the French word for half). The distinction between phratries and moieties is not

simply a matter of the number of groupings. Moieties are intended to produce a balanced opposition within a society. The constantly reinforced social and economic exchanges between moieties encourages economic equality and political stability.



The often complex patterns of reciprocity inherent in moiety systems can be seen operating in the marriage patterns of the Kariera Aborigines of Western Australia. They follow patrilineal descent but with a peculiar twist that is known by anthropologists as a four class system. They have two moieties and four “marriage classes.” An individual’s moiety and marriage class identity determines who he or she may marry.

Each Kariera moiety has two generational marriage class “names.” Everyone in a moiety who is in the same generation has the same marriage class identity. For simplicity, the moieties are designated below as “A” and “B”, while the marriage class “names” are “a”, “b”, “c”, and “d” respectively.

|              | moiety A |   | moiety B |
|--------------|----------|---|----------|
| generation 1 | a        | = | c        |
| generation 2 | b        | = | d        |
| generation 3 | a        | = | c        |

An “a” man can only marry a “c” woman from moiety “B”. Their children will be “b’s” in moiety “A”. Conversely, a “c” man can only marry a woman from moiety “A” and their children will be “d’s” in moiety “B”.

|              | moiety A |   | moiety B |
|--------------|----------|---|----------|
| generation 1 | a        | = | c        |
|              | ↓        |   | ↓        |
| generation 2 | b        | = | d        |
|              | ↓        |   | ↓        |
| generation 3 | a        | = | c        |

Ideally, Kariera men from different moieties marry each other's sisters. This results in strong reciprocal bonds between the men and their moieties. There is a generational alternation in class "names" among the Kariera. People have the same class identity as their grandparents and grandchildren but not their parents and children. It is sobering to note that as confusing as the Kariera 4-class system seems, it is not the most complex example of Australian Aboriginal kinship.

Societies with moieties usually consist of a few thousand people or less. In contrast, societies with phratries are often larger. As in the case of clans and phratries, moiety members usually cannot demonstrate all of the descent links back to their supposed common ancestor.

Membership in unilineages, clans, moieties, and phratries is inherited and usually continues throughout life. As a result, these unilineal descent groups often function successfully as long-term joint property owners and economic production teams.

### **Bilateral Descent Groups:**

Bilateral descent groups tend to be more fragile and short term than unilineal ones. Beyond the nuclear family, there usually only exists a kindred. This is a group of relatives who are linked together by a single individual who can trace descent and/or marriage relationships to every other member of the kindred.

In North America today, a kindred group usually informally includes spouses and in-laws as well as biological relatives. All of the people below may be part of ego's kindred.

This loosely defined type of kindred allows people to be part of the extended families of their spouses as well as their own. An unfortunate consequence is divided family loyalties when an issue comes up that places consanguinal relatives and affines on opposite sides. Conflicting interests and obligations usually prevent such expanded kindreds from functioning as efficiently as a unilineage in collective ownership and mutual aid.

Descent theorists are more concerned with groups than with terminology, a theoretical interest that derives from the British tradition of functionalism, which dominated anthropological thinking in Britain and most of the Commonwealth

from the 1920s to the 1950s. Functionalists such as A.R. Radcliffe-Brown saw societies as being made up of component parts—institutions (such as marriage, chieftainship, or the stock market) and systems (such as kinship, politics, or economics). Descent theorists take a functionalist view in their appraisal of the significance of group structure. In descent theory, the mechanisms of recruitment of groups, and the social functions such groups perform, are the primary foci of study.

### **Patrilineal and Matrilineal Descent**

Systems of patrilineal descent are widely distributed. The ancient Greeks and Romans traced descent patrilineally, as do contemporary societies in many parts of Africa, Asia, and the Pacific.

The defining feature of a patrilineal descent system is that membership in a social group is determined by descent through the father. A patrilineal descent group, such as the Greek phratry or the Roman gens, thus includes a person's father, father's father, father's father's father, and so on. In addition, the child of any male member of the group, regardless of the child's own sex, is a member. Thus, a person's father's brothers and sisters (all children of the father's father) are also members of the patrilineal group. Similarly, a man's children are members of his patrilineal group, but a woman's children are not members of hers (the one she was born into); they belong to her husband's group. A woman's own status as a member of her natal group or of her husband's group depends on which such membership the society recognizes.

Matrilineal descent systems are less common than those of patrilineal descent, but they are, nevertheless, found in many widely differing societies in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific, as well as in Amerindian societies. Examples include the Trobriand Islanders of Melanesia, the Crow and Iroquois of North America, the Bemba of central Africa and the Nayar of India. Nayar society, however, is unusual in that the social role of the father is virtually nonexistent (see family: The Nayar case). Normally, matrilineal societies maintain family relationship much like those of any other society.

Matrilineal descent is defined as descent through the mother. This does not necessarily or even usually imply that a matrilineal group is matriarchal,

with authority in the hands of the mother or females, but only that a person traces membership in the group through female links. Authority within the family or kin group may be in the hands of the father or, more commonly, in the hands of the mother's brother. The mother's brother is a focus for the kin group because, for any given person, the mother's brother is the closest senior male in the group. The father is a member of a different matrilineal group.

A matrilineal descent group includes a person's mother, mother's mother, mother's mother's mother, and so on, as well as the descendants of all these people in the female line. In a matrilineal society a person's mother's brothers and sisters, and his own brothers and sisters, are all members of such a group. A woman's children are members of her group, but a man's children are not members of his; they belong to his wife's group.

### **Double Unilineal Descent**

Double unilineal, or duo-lineal, descent is very rare. Arguably, a form of double descent exists among groups of Australian Aboriginals, but the most definitive examples are found in Africa. The Yako of Nigeria and the Herero of Namibia and Botswana are best known. The principle of double descent is that two kinds of descent group, patrilineal and matrilineal, exist simultaneously in the same society and that each person belongs to both. Often the two groups have different functions. Among the Yako, for example, residential groupings are patrilineal and land is inherited through the father, whereas movable property is inherited within matrilineal groups. A person has obligations toward each kin group.

Double descent is similar to, but distinguished from, complementary filiation. Complementary filiation occurs in patrilineal or matrilineal societies when a person has obligations toward kin on the opposite side of the family from which he traces descent. In this case, however, only one kind of descent group is recognized, either patrilineal or matrilineal, not both. The Tallensi of Ghana, for example, are patrilineal, but in this society a man has obligations not only to his own patrilineal group but also to his mother's patrilineal group.

Cognatic, or bilateral, descent is, in a sense, the opposite of double descent.

In a cognatic society there are no unilineal groups (i.e., groups descended strictly in the father's or mother's line). A person is reckoned to be equally related to kinfolk on either side of the family. Western societies are mostly cognatic : although surnames, titles of nobility, and so on are inherited patrilineally, there are no longer any patrilineal descent groups as such. For example, a modern Italian, unlike an ancient Roman, feels no closer to his father's brother's child than to any other cousin. They share the same surname, but they do not share membership in a descent group comparable to the Roman gens.

Most modern industrialized nations have cognatic kinship systems, and so, too, do most hunting and gathering societies. In the latter case, persons may join either their father's or mother's band or, often, the band of a spouse or some more distant relative. These bands, consisting of perhaps 25 people among most African and Asian hunter-gatherers, or up to a few hundred in the case of native North Americans, are descent groups, even though they are not unilineal descent groups.

Finally, there are some societies that recognize an ideal of patrilineal descent but in which persons may opt for tracing descent through a female link. This arrangement, known as ambilineal descent (through either line), bears some relation to the cognatic descent system of egalitarian hunter-gatherers, but it is found instead in the hierarchical societies of Polynesia. In these societies, a person may join the group that offers the most prestige, either the father's or the mother's, but in so doing the person gives up any rights held in relation to the other group.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter, we came to know that descent is line of tracing our ancestors. It is genological tie which links present generation with the previous generations. Further this link can be in two different forms—Unilineal and Non-unilineal descent groups. Unilineal groups consist of sub groups like Patrilineal, Matrilineal, double descent, bilinear whereas Non-unilineal group consist of Ambilineal and Bilateral.

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| <b>Course No. SOC-C-102</b> | <b>Lesson No. 4</b>               |
| <b>Semester-I</b>           | <b>Inheritance and Succession</b> |
|                             | <b>Unit-I</b>                     |

### **Structure**

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Objectives
- 4.3 Concept of Inheritance and Succession
- 4.4 Inheritance and Property Right
- 4.5 Critiques of Inheritance
- 4.6 Prime issues in Inheritance and Succession
- 4.7 Succession–Historical Development
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#### **4.1 Introduction**

In primitive society the notion of property is closely related to display and expenditure of wealth rather than to its accumulation. However, land, personal effects and certain intangible rights are owned as property. The conception of property we are familiar with today is feudal or even more modern and historically later than the European feudal times. However, it may be said that, rather than the accumulation of certain types of material culture only, property consists of certain privileges, which may include the privilege to destroy what one has.

In whichever form property may be recognized, its recognition entails the existence of some rules of inheritance. Inheritance acquires particular importance when individuals possess property by themselves. These inheritance laws may be patrilineal or matrilineal or some kind of a combination of both.

## **4.2 Objectives**

This unit will acquaint you with the knowledge about :-

- Meaning of Inheritance and Succession.
- Issues involved in Inheritance and Succession.
- Historical development of Inheritance and Succession.

## **4.3 Concept of Inheritance and Succession**

The transmission of property following the death of its owner is termed as inheritance. In its strict sense it should not be considered in isolation from other forms of property transmission and distribution, including marriage payments, gifts etc. which may transmit property to the succeeding generation before the death of the owner. Pattern of inheritance and transfer of property between the generations constitute an important element in social organization in those societies where there is considerable accumulation of property, which may take the form of land rights, cattle or animals, or money and other valuables. Such property may be held and transmitted by Kin corporations, by family or Kin groups, or by individuals, and it is common for different types of property to be subject to different forms of ownership and inheritance. One should also keep in mind that inheritable property is not limited to material goods in the sense in which we conventionally understand them. Names, titles, ceremonial and ritual knowledge may also be inherited, and may constitute important valuable items for transmission. In concrete terms, the inheritance of property may include the intangible such as a name or spiritual essence, whereas succession is associated with office including ritual office.

## **4.4 Inheritance and Property Rights**

Inheritance of property cannot occur unless goods are regarded as belonging to individuals rather than to groups and unless the goods are of such permanence that they continue to exist and to be useful beyond the death of the owner. Among primitive food-gatherers and hunters, it has not been uncommon for such personal belongings as weapons or bowls to be destroyed after the death of the owner in order to protect the survivors from being molested by his spirit. Among the Papua of New Guinea and the Damara (Bergdama) of Namibia, the hut of the dead man was abandoned or burned down so as to ban the magic of the disease of which

the owner had died. Among the Herero of southwest Africa, the dead man's goats were slaughtered and eaten; this custom seems to have been connected with the fear that they were affected by his magic and also with the belief that the spirits of the slaughtered goats would follow the dead owner into the realm of spirits, where he would need them. Belief in providing for the needs of the dead seems to have been the root of the widespread custom of burying with the body or burning victuals, utensils, treasure, slaves, or wives. Tombs have yielded a wealth of evidence of such practices in the cultures of the Stone and Bronze ages as well as in the high civilizations of ancient Egypt and pre-Columbian Mexico. Another way of disposing of a dead man's effects was to distribute them among remote relatives and friends, as in the case of such American Indian tribes as the Delaware and the Iroquois; distribution of this sort, in the absence of rules of inheritance, could easily lead to quarrels and violence, as frequently happened among the Comanche Indians.

The view of some Marxist writers that common ownership of all goods, or at least of land, was once universal among mankind can be neither proved nor disproved. Group ownership has been widespread but by no means universal among primitive and archaic agriculturalists. It has, indeed, persisted into modern times in India and parts of Africa and Asia, and it played a considerable role in the development of the Teutonic and Slavic peoples of Europe. In Serbia, ownership of the land by *zadrugas*—that is to say, large groups of progeny of a common ancestor—continued into the 20th century. In western Europe, the common ownership of pastures and woods, which grew out of the former system of common ownership of the land of a village, can still be found, especially in the Alpine regions of Switzerland and Austria. While in earlier times colonization of new land tended to be carried on by groups—for instance, the German settlement of the regions east of the Elbe in the 10th to 13th centuries—the Europeans who settled in North America, Australia, South Africa, and other parts of the world during the 18th and 19th centuries regarded individual ownership of land as most favourable to efficient use. In the 20th century, socialist ideas, combined with large-scale mechanization, resulted in new forms of land ownership in common: the *kolkhozy* of the former Soviet Union, the communes of the People's Republic of China, and the *kibbutzim* of Israel. Wherever land is held in common, the death of a member of the group results not in inheritance but rather in a rearrangement of duties and of rights of participation in the produce of the land or rights of temporary usage of the land itself.

#### **4.5 Critiques of Inheritance**

The institution of inheritance has been criticized because it renders possible the acquisition of wealth without work and because it is regarded as a principal source of economic inequality. Such attacks have come not only from radicals to whom complete equality of income appeals as a social ideal but also from more moderate thinkers to whom great differences in the distribution of wealth appear to be incompatible with modern views of the dignity of man. In response to their criticisms, inheritance has been defended on economic as well as on moral grounds.

Inheritance has been said to be necessary within the framework of an economy of individual property to guarantee the continuity of enterprise, without which long-range economic activity could not flourish. This argument has lost much of its force as large-scale enterprise has come to be carried on in corporate form and thus to be directed not by owners but by specialists in management who succeed each other in the manner of officeholders. There is, however, still force in the argument that, without the incentive of handing on the fruits of one's work, competition and consequently the functioning of the total economy would be hampered.

It is possible to conceive of a social system in which property rights would end with the owner's death. If the assets left behind were not reassigned to some other individual, the eventual result would be complete ownership of all wealth by the community, and the system of individual property would end. A new individual owner could be determined in one of four ways : ownership by the first taker, a practice that would produce strife and disorder; reassignment by a governmental agency, which would constitute an exercise of power regarded as dangerous in a free society; reallocation in accordance with settled rules generally fixed for all; or reallocation in accordance with the wishes of the decedent. The last two are the ways in which the modern systems of inheritance work : the estate is reallocated according to the rules of intestacy law or according to the will of the decedent.

The only debatable issues within a system of private ownership are : who are to be the takers in intestate succession; and whether or not and within what limits freedom of testation shall be permitted. In all societies, inheritance has developed as an incident of kinship. Even in a society in which property is regarded as belonging to individuals rather than kinship groups, the feeling of belonging to one's group is still

so strong, especially between parent and children, that a person's sense of freedom would not be complete unless he knew that he could pass on his possessions to his children. The question arises, however, whether inheritance shall extend beyond the circle of those persons with whom the decedent was connected by ties of affection or about whose well-being he or she was, or should have been, concerned. In the urbanized, mobile population of highly industrialized nations, the family as a felt unit has tended to shrink to the small circle of husband, wife, and children. Ties of relationship tend to be weak even among first cousins.

In an age of expanding demands on government, there has been an inclination to let the estate of a person dying intestate pass to the public treasury rather than go to enrich distant relatives. In England, the circle of intestate takers has been limited by the Administration of Estates Act of 1925 to relatives no more remote than the grandparents, uncles, and aunts of the deceased. Even more restrictive than those of England are the intestacy laws of communist countries. Under the law of the Soviet Union, intestate succession did not extend beyond descendants, the surviving spouse, grandparents, brothers, sisters, and incapacitated persons who had been dependent upon the decedent for at least one year prior to his death.

Another way of limiting the rights of remote relatives for the benefit of the public treasury consists in increasing the rates of inheritance taxes in proportion to the remoteness of the relationship between the takers and the decedent. In the United States, although the federal tax on succession depends solely on the size of the estate, the additional inheritance taxes levied by the states are widely patterned upon the closeness of relationship. This method is also employed in numerous other countries but not, since 1949, in England.

Inheritance law is also used to reduce inequalities in the distribution of wealth. This may be done by compulsory partitions, as under the laws of the French and the German pattern, or by means of progressive inheritance taxation, as in the United Kingdom or the United States, or by a combination of both. The law of inheritance and inheritance taxation thus functions as an instrument of social policy.

An impressive illustration of the way in which the law of inheritance serves social policy is the series of modifications to Soviet inheritance legislation. In the early stage of the Bolshevik Revolution, inheritance was limited to the descent of a modest amount

of property to close relatives or to the surviving spouse, provided they were in need. The limit upon the amount of the property was lifted in 1926; and the requirement of need was also abolished for inheritance by the surviving spouse, descendants, parents, grandparents, brothers, and sisters. Under the civil code of 1922, the power of testation was limited to increasing or reducing the share of particular intestate successors. After 1961, property could be left to any person. Private property could not exist in the means of production, and therefore inheritance was limited to goods of use or consumption and to saving accounts. Within the limits stated, inheritance and freedom of testation were regarded as constituting useful incentives to productivity without constituting a danger to the socialist system. Inheritance of private property was thus listed in the constitution of 1936 and reaffirmed in the constitution of 1977 as one of the rights of citizens.

#### **4.6 Prime Issues in Inheritance and Succession :**

In a society, in which inheritance exists, two issues are of prime importance for the distribution of wealth and for the social and political structure of the society : (1) the issue of the extent to which owners of property shall have the power by their own decision to determine the course of inheritance and (2) the issue of whether or not estates shall be allowed or even required to pass undivided to one single heir.

##### **(a) Freedom of Testation**

The power of an owner of property to determine who is to have it upon his death is thought to stimulate economic activity: it is also considered desirable that a property owner be allowed to modify the rigid rules of the intestacy laws so as to adapt them to the particular situation of his family by preferring, for instance, a disabled child over one of proven capacity. The freedom to disinherit a child may be used to induce filial obedience, but freedom of testation also implies the freedom of making provision for charity. The possibility of abuse for ends of spite, arbitrariness, or whimsy is the price society has to pay for such power. Freedom of testation developed slowly, and nowhere does it exist without limitations. The questions of what the limits shall be, especially to what extent an owner of property shall be free to disinherit close members of his family and to what extent he shall have the power to tie up property from beyond the grave, have been answered in widely diverse ways.

## **Historical Development**

In a primitive or archaic society in which property is owned by the kinship or neighbourhood group rather than by individuals, freedom of testation cannot exist. Transition from group to individual ownership has rarely if ever occurred in one single step. As to land, even when its use was regarded as rightfully belonging to an individual, its free alienation by sale or gift, and even more so by will, was for long periods hedged in by superior rights of the kinship group, the village, or the feudal lord. Transition to free alienation has often been achieved by means of subterfuge, such as the adoption of the “purchaser” or “devisee” as a son, or, once free alienation had become possible *inter vivos* (between living persons) but not yet upon death, by fictitious sale or gift to a middleman who would promise to let the grantor keep the property as long as he should live and upon his death to deal with it as directed by the grantor. Such use of adoption occurred in ancient Babylonia, China, Japan, India, and other societies of an archaic patriarchic order. In ancient Greece, effects similar to those of a will were achieved by gift, to take effect upon the death of the donor or, where the only child of the family was a daughter, by giving her in marriage together with the estate. Transfer by use of a middleman became possible among the Germanic peoples following the decline of the Roman Empire.

In ancient Rome the institution of the will appeared at an early stage of cultural development, but there, too, it seems to have been preceded by a state in which its effects could be achieved only by indirection. The so-called will made in assembly (*testamentum comities calatis*) seems to have been the approval by the assembly of the adoption of a son by the childless chief of an aristocratic house so that the house and the worship of its deities would be perpetuated.

By the 5th century BC, the head of a Roman family seems to have been able during his lifetime to achieve the purposes of a testamentary transaction by fictitious sale to a middleman, *familiae emptor* (purchaser of the family property). In the period of the early principate (1st century AD), the testament was fully recognized in its proper sense. In the mature form in which it is dealt with in the *Corpus Juris* (6th century AD), it became in the late Middle Ages the model for continental Europe.

Among the Anglo-Saxons and other Germanic peoples, land was subject to ties of the kinship group and, later, of feudalism, so that there was no place for disposition

by will. Chattels were more freely alienable. In establishing freedom of testation, a prominent role was played by the church, which desired thereby to obtain funds for its activities, which included the bulk of medieval education, charity, and cultivation of the arts. In England, the church succeeded shortly after the Norman Conquest in establishing the jurisdiction of its courts for matters concerning succession upon death to personal property. Through the church the will of the Roman pattern became firmly institutionalized, but a testator still had to leave a “reasonable part of the estate” (ordinarily at least one-third) to his wife and children.

Once the alienation of real property had again become possible by gift or sale, there grew up all over Europe that same practice of indirectly achieving the effects of a will by fictitious grant to a middleman (German *Salmann*, “sale man”; English *feoffee to uses*) that, in analogous circumstances, had grown up at other times and places. On the Continent, the will as such became again available when Roman law was rediscovered and “received,” which occurred from the 11th century onward, first in Italy and then north of the Alps. In France and Germany, the will of the Roman pattern was fully recognized in the late 15th century. Just about that time, however, the *enfeoffment to uses*, which had been popular in England, was abolished by Henry VIII’s Statute of Uses in 1535. The King wished to restore to the crown its prospects of escheat and of certain feudal duties, which could be evaded by the alienation to uses. Public indignation was so strong, however, that five years later the King found it advisable, by the enactment of the Statute of Wills, to open the way for true testamentary disposition of land. Restrictions limiting devises of those lands of which ownership was connected with the duty of rendering military service were abolished at the time of the Restoration by the Military Tenures Act of 1662. In Scotland, testamentary disposition of land remained precarious until the enactment of the Titles to Land Consolidation Act in 1868.

#### **(b) Limits on Freedom of Testation**

Freedom of testation has never been absolutely unlimited. Nowhere is a testamentary provision valid if its enforcement would be shocking to public morals. When a testamentary gift is conditioned upon an act of the beneficiary that in good morals should not be so conditioned, as for instance, a gift conditioned upon the beneficiary’s changing his religion, the gift is either invalid or valid unconditionally. Generally,



property given by testament cannot be tied up by the testator for an indefinite future. Under the rule against perpetuities, as developed in England and commonly applied in the United States, a testator may leave property to a person for life and upon the first taker's death to some other person; but the last "remainder" must "vest" not later than, roughly speaking, one generation after the testator's death or, in England, since the Perpetuities and Accumulation Act of 1964, a fixed period of years up to 80. In the civil-law countries of the German system, the freedom to provide for substitutions is limited in similar ways, but in those of the French system it is limited much more strictly.

A testator's freedom to disinherit a surviving spouse, children, or other heirs has been more extensive in ancient Roman and modern Anglo-American law than in the modern civil-law countries, but it has always had limits. In republican Rome, a testator had the power to disinherit a spouse and children, but if he wished to do this he had to say so expressly in the will. In the period of the principate (27 BC–AD 284), it became necessary to state the reasons, because a will disinheriting a close member of the family without reasonable and honest cause was in danger of being declared invalid. In the late Roman Empire the descendants—and if there were no descendants, the ascendants (e.g., parents)—were given the right to a share in the estate (*pars legitima*), of which none of them could be deprived except upon serious cause stated in the will. When, after the fall of the Roman Empire, testamentary disposition came to be recognized again in the later Middle Ages, custom generally required that some minimum share, frequently one-third, be left to the surviving spouse, or the descendants, or both. Upon the revival of Roman law on the European continent and in Scotland, these customs were in various ways combined with the rules of the *Corpus Juris*.

In the modern civil law, two systems are used to provide protection against disinheritance. Under the French system, a testator who is survived by descendants, parents, or (in some countries) brothers, sisters, or even other close relatives, cannot dispose at all of the "reserved portion" of his estate, the size of which depends upon the number and the degree of nearness of relationship of the surviving "forced heirs." Under the civil code of France, for instance, donations *inter vivos* or by last will cannot exceed one-half of the property of the disposer, if he leaves at his decease one child; one-third, if he leaves two children; and one-fourth, if he leaves three or a greater number. The indisposable share is one-half of the property if the disposer, having no

children, leaves ascendants of both his father's and his mother's lines and three-quarters if he leaves ascendants in only one line. Under the German pattern, the surviving spouse, a descendant, or, if there are no descendants, a parent can claim to be paid in money one-half the value of the share that would have been his in the case of intestate succession.

In England, those customs that required a minimum share in the personal property to be left to the surviving spouse and descendants disappeared in the 17th and 18th centuries. The interest of dower, which guaranteed a life estate to the widow in one-third of each parcel of the real estate of the predeceased husband, lost its protective effect in 1833. At the turn of the 20th century, freedom of disinheritance was complete in England as well as in the dominions but not in Scotland. There, in the movable estate, the legitim (bairn's part) is still reserved to the children, the ius relicti to the widower, and the ius relictae to the widow. Until 1964 (in immovables) the widower was entitled to curtesy, a life rent in his wife's heritage (i.e., immovable) property, and the widow had the right of terce—i.e., a life rent out of one-third of her husband's inheritable estate. In England, freedom of testation, while unlimited by law, was kept within narrow limits by the custom among wealthy families of preventing the splitting up or alienation of the family wealth by means of a so-called strict settlement. In each generation, the head of the family would settle the estate upon the eldest son in such a way that it would descend to him undivided but subject to a generous life estate for the widow and to provisions for the daughters, younger sons, and other needy relatives.

In the different social climate of New Zealand, a new device for protecting needy family members against disinheritance was invented with the enactment, in 1900, of a statute that empowers the court to order adequate provision for the maintenance of a spouse or a needy child out of the estate of any testator who has not made such provision. Family provision acts of this kind have since been enacted in Australia, Canada, and England.

Under the English Inheritance (Family Provision) Act of 1938, as amended in a series of enactments, the court, if it found the decedent had failed to make reasonable financial provision for the applicant, was empowered to order maintenance from the estate to the surviving spouse, an unmarried daughter, a minor son, any incapacitated child, or an unmarried former spouse of the decedent. The scope of this system of

discretionary financial provision was extended by the Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependents) Act of 1975. Under that act, the standard for provision for a surviving spouse is no longer limited to maintenance but is a reasonable share of the deceased's estate. The class of applicants has been widened to include any person treated by the deceased as a child of the family and any person who was being wholly or partly maintained by the deceased immediately before his death.

In the United States, the surviving spouse is protected against complete disinheritance in every state through one or more of the following devices : dower, indefeasible share, community property, homestead, or family allowances. The most widespread is the indefeasible share, which guarantees to the surviving spouse a certain portion, usually expressed in terms of a fixed dollar amount plus a fraction or, under older statutes, as just a fraction, of the decedent's estate. The weakness of this system however, is that the indefeasible share can be diminished or wiped out if the decedent has given away most or all of his property before his death. A number of states have tried to remedy this difficulty by permitting the surviving spouse's rights to be asserted against certain inter vivos transfers.

In many states, the indefeasible share system exists alongside a modernized version of the old common-law estates of dower and curtesy, which have now been generally assimilated to each other under the single heading of dower. Under some statutes each spouse's dower rights attach upon marriage to any real estate owned by the other spouse and upon acquisition to any real estate acquired by the other spouse during the marriage. These rights cannot be affected during the marriage by any transaction of the owner-spouse without the other's consent. Upon the death of the owner-spouse, dower entitles the surviving spouse to a life estate in all or part of the real estate of the predeceasing spouse. Dower has long ceased to be the major device for protecting a surviving spouse against disinheritance because it applies only to real estate and thus offers no security at all in the situation where the wealth of the predeceasing spouse was only or mainly composed of personal property such as savings or shares of stock. A further reason for the decline of dower is that a system of marital rights in real estate that cannot be defeated by sale, gift, mortgage, or will of the owner-spouse came to be seen as a clog on marketability and a threat to the security of titles. Thus, several states have followed the example of England and have abolished dower altogether, while a number of others have redefined dower as an interest that attaches

only to whatever real estate is left upon the death of the predeceasing spouse.

In those U.S. jurisdictions that have adopted the so-called community-property system, an indefeasible share in the family wealth is secured to the surviving spouse by his or her being entitled to one-half of the community property, which generally consists of the property acquired during the marriage by the gainful activities of either spouse. Varying systems of community property also exist in numerous European and Latin-American countries. In the countries of the French system, community-property law applies unless it has been expressly contracted out by the parties to the marriage. Under the Scandinavian system, the assets of husband and wife remain separate during marriage but upon the termination of the marriage are distributed between them. Protection of the surviving spouse can, furthermore, be achieved through homestead laws and family allowance laws that guarantee to the widow or the widower an award of income payable out of the estate for a few months immediately following the death of the other spouse.

The only jurisdictions in the United States that protect descendants against disinheritance by giving them indefeasible shares are Louisiana and Puerto Rico, whose legal systems are not derived from the common law. In the other states the descendants are protected either not at all or only indirectly and incompletely by (1) “pretermitted heir” statutes, which, like early Roman law, require the testator to state the disinheritance of a descendant expressly in the will, or (2) “afterborn heir” statutes, under which a child born after the making of the will receives his intestate share unless a contrary intention is stated in the will, or (3) “charity begins at home statutes,” under which no more than a certain fraction (e.g., one-half) of the estate may be given to charity by a testator who is survived by certain close relatives, or (4) “hellfire statutes,” which declare ineffective a testamentary provision for charitable purpose made by the testator upon his deathbed, in his last illness, or within a fixed period immediately preceding his death.

In the Soviet Union a compulsory share of one-third of the decedent’s intestate share was guaranteed to his minor children and to any of the following who were unable to work : the decedent’s children, spouse, parents, and those who had been dependent on him.

Prime issues in inheritance and succession

### **(c) Divided or Undivided Inheritance**

Like the problem of whether and to what extent freedom of testation shall be permitted, the question of whether a person's estate may pass undivided to one person or whether it should be divided among several takers has significant political implications. The issue has been especially important in the history of Anglo-American law, where it is usually referred to as the problem of primogeniture. The term is too narrow, however, because the sole heir need not necessarily be the first-born son (primogenitus). Under the system of ultimogeniture, which existed in parts of England as the custom of Borough English, and also under the German National Socialist law of 1933, the person favoured was the youngest son; under systems of seniorate or juniorate, it is the oldest or youngest member of the family; under that of majorate or minorate, it is the oldest or the youngest person standing in equal degree of consanguinity to the decedent. There have also been cases where certain lands have been reserved to the second-born son and his line (secundogeniture) or the third-born and his line (tertiogeniture), etc.

In England, undivided inheritance was applied to real but not to personal property. The distinction between the two kinds of property was important in the struggle for power between church and state. In medieval England, the organization of society in general and of the army and the public offices in particular was based upon the distribution of the ownership of the land, over all of which the king was lord paramount. The church, on the other hand, concerned itself with divine worship, the care of the sick and poor, and the cultivation of learning and the arts. After the Norman Conquest a compromise was worked out between the king and the church, under which the royal courts exercised jurisdiction over real property while succession to personal property was to be the concern of the ecclesiastical courts. Until 1926, descent to real property thus was subject to rules different from those applying to the distribution of personal property. For the former, the common-law courts developed a system that tended to maintain the existing military and social order through unpartitioned descent of land to one heir rather than division among several coheirs and, for a long time, by reluctance in admitting freedom of testation.

As to personal property, however, the ecclesiastical courts favoured a freedom of testation that allowed a decedent to leave part of his property to the church for the

promotion of its manifold activities. In case of intestacy, the church favoured distribution among family members of equal nearness to the decedent. It applied rules, similar to those laid down in the 6th century by the Roman emperor Justinian (see below Intestate succession : Roman law), that in 1670 were fixed in the Statute of Distribution. The problem about which the two sets of courts differed—namely, whether an inheritance should be split up among several coheirs or pass undivided to a single heir – has, of course, not been limited to England. Unpartitioned inheritance has occurred in the most diverse civilizations—among the Khoikhoi of southwest Africa, the Moari of New Zealand, the inhabitants of the Tonga islands, in parts of China and Siberia, and in western Europe.

Why and how primogeniture became the common-law system of inheritance of freehold real estate is not clear. Primogeniture obviously served the needs of feudalism, in which the ownership of a parcel of land tended to be connected with a public office or with military duties that could not be well divided among several people. Partition was also likely to result in confusion regarding the services the peasants were bound to render to the landlord. At the peasant level, primogeniture prevented holdings from being split up until they were too small to allow a family to make a living. Attempts to avoid physical partition by selling the land and dividing the proceeds were impracticable in a society in which it was considered important to preserve family ownership of the farm and in which money was not readily available.

In spite of these circumstances, undivided descent of land to one heir never was the exclusive system among the European peasantry. It became, however, the almost universal system among the nobility, who were anxious to preserve intact the family wealth. In order to achieve this purpose, it became necessary, after alienability of land and freedom of testation had developed, not only to establish unpartitioned descent as the rule of intestate succession but also to “entail” the land—i.e., to prevent the owner from selling, giving away, or encumbering the land as well as from disposing of it by will. In England, varying legal devices were used from the 13th century on. After the 17th century, the so-called strict family settlement became the principal device, while on the Continent the *fidei commissum* of late Roman law was adapted to serve the purpose. The political power secured in this way to the nobility and gentry enabled it, as the necessary counterpart of primogeniture, to secure for the younger sons the lucrative positions in the church, the army, and, on the Continent, the expanding bureaucracy. In

the 18th century this system was attacked both by the supporters of democratic ideals and by the economists of the classical school. To the latter, entails were objectionable because they not only stood in the way of mortgaging the land for purposes of improvement but also because inalienability prevented its coming into the hands of the most efficient cultivator. The system was first destroyed in the British colonies in New England and in the course of the American Revolution it was swept away in the other states. In Europe, it collapsed during the French Revolution and in the Napoleonic Code care was taken to prevent its reestablishment. Not only were all descendants or other relatives of equal degree to take part equally in intestate succession but also, by giving each child the right to a minimum share, a testator was prevented from giving all to one child.

In England, the main object of the economists attach upon settlements was removed when, through a series of statutes, settled lands were gradually restored to the market; life tenants were thereby given the power under certain circumstances to mortgage or sell the land. Stocks and bonds, which had become a form of wealth more important than land, could, and still can be, tied up by means of a trust; but through the impact of heavy death duties this power has now been restricted. Primogeniture as the rule of intestacy was finally abolished by the Administration of Estates Act in 1925.

On the Continent, equal division among descendants and other relatives in equal degree became the general rule in the codes of the 19th century, but in certain countries, especially Austria and Germany, the possibility of entail lingered on until World War I. A new argument came to be used, however, in favour of unpartitioned inheritance of land in the 19th century. First in France and then in central Europe and Scandinavia, the argument was put forward that agricultural holdings were being reduced to less than the size necessary to provide a living for a family and that the old peasantry was thus in danger of being driven from the land. This led to the enactment of special laws on farm inheritance in sections of Austria, Germany, and Scandinavia. These laws, while providing unpartitioned inheritance in the case of intestacy, most often left unimpaired the power to provide for multiple succession by will and the power of alienation by sale. A more radical farm-inheritance law was enacted in Germany in 1933 by the National Socialists. It provided not only for undivided inheritance but also forbade partition by

will and even the sale of the farm or its encumbrance by mortgage. The peasantry was to be secured as a social class living on the soil, removed from the vicissitudes and temptations of a market economy, although the law allowed the state to remove an unproductive holder. The law was repealed after World War II, but statutes attempting in milder ways to counteract the partitioning of farmsteads have been enacted. Even in France, the civil code was amended by a chain of laws beginning in 1922 so as to postpone, atleast temporarily, the physical partition of a farmstead and certain other small holdings.

#### **4.7 Succession :**

##### **Historical Development**

In preliterate society, the order of succession seems to be basically determined by the kinship structure. But in both archaic and developed societies the laws of intestacy have often been distorted by traditionalism, so that features once well adapted to the structure of the family were preserved into periods in which that structure had assumed new shape. The formalism that is characteristic of archaic legal systems (and often occurs in developed ones) tends to generalize rules that have originated in connection with special situations into applications beyond their initial scope. Intestacy laws have thus frequently looked obsolete, confused, or arbitrary. Even the Roman law of the Twelve Tables (c. 450 BC) seems not to have fully accorded with the social needs of its day.

##### **Roman Law**

The basic unit of society in ancient Rome was the “house,” the extended family ruled by its head, the paterfamilias, to whom his wife, his slaves, and possibly several generations of his descendants were subject and in whom title to all property was vested, so that a son or any other member of the house, even as an adult, did not own anything until he had been released from membership by emancipation. The paterfamilias was responsible for all liabilities incurred by any member. The Roman house of those early times resembled the system that prevailed in Japan until very recently. But whereas in Japan the leader of the house had just one successor, under the system of the Twelve Tables the Roman paterfamilias was succeeded by as many new ones as there were sui heredes—i.e., persons who by the death of the chief were



freed from his power and thus became persons *sui iuris*. If a house chief died without being survived by *sui heredes*, the law of the Twelve Tables provided that the estate (*familia*) could be acquired by the nearest agnatic relative—i.e., the person related to the decedent by male descent who would be closest to him. If there was no such person, the estate could be had by the *Gentiles*, who seem to have been the clan like group—composed of all descendants of a real or mythical ancestor—that apparently had ceased to play a significant role in Roman society even at the time of the Twelve Tables. This arrangement for succession seems to have been so unsatisfactory that it became customary—and even a moral, religious, and political duty—to eliminate its coming into play by the execution of a testament. The very name “intestate succession” (*successio ab intestato*) indicates that dying without having made a will constituted an exceptional situation.

As Rome grew into an empire, the system of the Twelve Tables became less and less satisfactory. The house of olden times receded in significance; relationship through females came to play as much a role in the consciousness of the people as that through males; and wives mostly ceased to be subject to the power of their husbands or their husbands’ house chiefs. Adaptation of the law to the new structure of the family was made, first by the heads of the judicial system, the praetors, and then by imperial legislation. But the changes were unsystematic and halfhearted. In its final stage, the intestacy law became such a patchwork that in AD 543 and 548 the emperor Justinian found it necessary to make an entirely new beginning. By Novels (*Novellae Constitutiones post Codicem*, part of the *Corpus Juris Civilis*), a new order of intestacy was established. Relatives of a decedent were divided into four classes : (1) the descendants of the decedent, (2) the ascendants of the decedent, his brothers and sisters of the full blood, and the children of brothers and sisters of the full blood, (3) the decedent’s brothers and sisters of the half blood and the children of such brothers and sisters, and (4) the other collaterals of the decedent related to him in the nearest grade of consanguinity. No person in a more remote class was to succeed as long as the decedent was survived by a member of a prior class. The surviving spouse stood outside the four classes of relatives. He or she was to succeed only if there was no relative at all. As long as any relative, no matter how remote, could be found, the family wealth was not to be diverted from the bloodline. But a widow’s needs were

ordinarily taken care of by the dowry, which, given to the husband, usually by her family, at the time of the marriage, was to be hers after the husband's death. For the exceptional case of a "poor widow"—i.e., a widow without dowry—a share in the estate was provided. Distribution among members of the same class was not in all respects clearly regulated by Justinian's text, and so several points remained controversial.

### **Intestate Succession**

Insofar as the course of succession is not determined by will, it is regulated by the laws of intestate succession. The legal systems of the world present a bewildering variety of intestacy laws, but they all have one feature in common : the intestate takers of the estate of a decedent are universally persons standing to him in a relation of kinship. Consequently, the composition of the group of successors in a society in which kinship is organized matrilineally is different from that of a society of patrilineal or, in modern society, bilineal kinships organization. Whether or not a surviving spouse belongs to the kin group of the decedent depends again on the way in which kinships is organized in the society in question. In modern laws, the surviving spouse is universally given some place in the table of successors, even though he or she may not be regarded as Kin, or a relative, of the decedent.

### **4.8 Conclusion**

Thus we get the following details from the chapter—

- (i) Property is a matter of material and non-material culture, consisting of certain privileges.
- (ii) The transmission of property after the death of the owner is called inheritance.
- (iii) Inheritance rule can go on either side-patrilineal or matrilineal, as well as both side.
- (iv) Inheritance normally incorporate idea of tangible and non-tangible items. Whereas succession is normally associated with an office.

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**Structure**

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- 5.2 Objectives
- 5.3 Understanding Kinship Terminology
- 5.4 Kinship Terminology in different forms of Society
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**5.1 Introduction**

Kinship provides a varieties of groups formation in different societies. These groups are further distinguished and identified on the basis of specific Kinship term associated to them. Since identification of groups varies from society to society, therefore different societies have their own Kinship terms to associate it to a particular member in a particular groups. Kinship terminology thus helps in identification and differentiation of members from each other in a group.

**5.2 Objectives**

The broad objectives of this chapter are to familiarise you :

- With the idea of Kinship terms

- Forms of Kinship Terminology used in different societies
- Criteria of distinguishing Kinship Terminology.
- Utility of Kinship Terminology.

### **5.3 Understanding Kinship Terminology**

The study of kinship (or relationship) terminology concerns the way people in a society classify their relatives. Many scholars are interested in the social rather than the purely linguistic aspects of these classifications. How is terminology related to membership in descent groups? Which categories of relatives are permitted as marriage partners? Can generalizations be made about the correlation between terminology and social structures? Other scholars, and especially those with a training and interest in linguistics, are more concerned with the formal properties of the terminology itself. Does a given language “merge” parents with parents’ same-sex siblings—in other words, call the father and father’s brother by the same term? Does it “skew” generations, perhaps by calling every male member of the father’s group by the term father? The scholars who address these questions often argue that terminology is independent of social structure, a school of thought that is most common among North American anthropologists.

A kin term or kinship term or relationship term designates a particular category of kin or relative regarded as a single semantic unit. The whole ensemble of kinship terms is referred to as a kinship terminology or relationship terminology. Kinship terminologies have discernible patterns, but these vary from society to society. The terminology of direct address often differs in detail from the terminology of reference used in the same society, usually consisting of fewer terms, each covering a large number of kin types. The ‘reference terminology’ represents what might be described as the ‘true’ classification. For example, in English cousins belonging genealogically to previous generations may be addressed by name or a ‘uncle’ or ‘aunt’ but they still remain cousins in what the society regards as the ‘real’ classification. The usual distinction between address and reference terminologies on the basis of the circumstances of their use, that is, respectively direct address and reference to third parties, is in one respect problematic, because both sorts of use are likely to be subject to some degree of contextualization, and therefore flexibility. The address terminology has

more relevance in respect of the ways in which people behave in face-to-face interaction, through it has to share its sphere of application with other designations such as names or titles.

However, it was L.H. Morgan (1874), who had contributed significantly to the kinship terminology. He found two broad categories of kinship terms, the 'classificatory' and 'descriptive' system of kinships terms in different societies of the world.

Under classificatory system, the various kins are included in one category and are referred to try the same term such as uncle, aunt, nephau, niece etc. To classify further, in English language, an individual call his or her father's brother and mother's brother, mother's sister's husband or father's sister's husband by the same term uncle. Under a classificatory term, several kins are lumped together, lineal as well as collateral and often even affinal and all are referred to by the same term of designation.

The descriptive term of kinship emphasises the speaker's exact relation towards a particular person, whom she or he is addressing. For example, 'father' in English language is a descriptive term. Under this system, one term refers to only one relation. A Kinship term that applies to a particular genealogical status and no other than it, is called descriptive term.

In no societies of the world, neither only classificatory kin terms nor only descriptive kin terms are found. It means that in a society, an amalgamation of both types of kin terms are used. However, Morgan says that when we move away from backward preliterate societies towards advanced modern societies, we simultaneously move away from classificatory towards descriptive kinship terms.

#### **5.4 Kinship Terminology in different Forms of Society :**

Rivers says that Kinship terminology used in a society may reflect its prevailing kind of family, its rule of residence and its rule of descent, and other aspect of its social organization. Lowie (1931), introduced a system for classifying kinships terminologies according to merging or bifurcation of the parental level of kinsmen. This result in four class systems : generational, lineal, bifurcate merging and bifurcate collateral. There are six types of kinship classification systems defined by anthropologists like Murdock (1949). They are :-

- (i) **The Hawaiian System :** This system is relatively simple in that, it uses the least number of kinship terms. All relatives of the same sex and generation—for example father, father's brother and mother's brother are referred to by the same kinship term. It draws no distinction between cousins and siblings, all of whom belong to the same kindred. It is found in Polynesia.
- (ii) **The Eskimo System :** In this system, all cousins are lumped together under the same term but are distinguished from brothers and sisters and all aunts and uncles are lumped together generally under the same term but are distinguished from father and mother. It means none of the term applied to outside of the nuclear family, and second, there is no distinction between parallel and cross cousin. It generally lack corporate descent group. It is found among and North American and among Eskimos.
- (iii) **The Iroquois System :** In the absence of unilineal Kin-groups, there is a tendency to distinguish parallel from cross-cousins. This pattern is widely associated with a similar distinction in the first ascending generation, whereby father's brothers are distinguished from mother's brother and father's sister are distinguished from mother's brother and father's sister are distinguished from mother's sister.
- (iv) **The Crow System :** It is named after a north American tribe and matrilineal equivalent Omaha tribe. This system indicates that the relations on the male side will be lumped together, whereas generational differences will be recognized in the mother's matrilineal groups only.
- (v) **The Omaha System :** The Omaha system is found among the patrilineal people and named after a north American tribe. In this system, mother and female matrilineal cross-cousin are merged under one term. Mother, mother's sister, mother's brother's daughter are all referred to by the same term.  
Secondly, father and father's brother are lumped together and both of whom are called by the same term. Parallel cousin are equated with siblings, but cross-cousin are referred to by the same term. In this system, there is generational merging on the mother's side only but generational merging is not applied to relations on father's side.

- (vi) **The Sudanese System :** This system has separate terms for each type of cousin, for siblings and for aunts, nieces, nephews and uncle. The most extremely descriptive terminological system are sometimes called Sudanese system. This type is just opposite of the Hawaiian system.

Morgan's typology of Kinship terminologies was modified and elaborated by later anthropologists such as Kroeber and Murdock.

### 5.5 Criteria of Kinship Terminology :

Kroeber postulate and principles that serve as the basis for distinguishing and differentiating are kin term from another. They are —

- (i) Differentiation of Generation levels :
- (ii) Differentiation of Age.
- (iii) Differentiation of Collateral and Lineal Kin.
- (iv) Differentiation of Affinal and Consanguineal kin.
- (v) Differentiation of Sex of Kin
- (vi) Differentiation of Sex of Connecting relatives
- (vii) Differentiation of sex of the speaker.
- (viii) Differentiation between live and dead kin.

For more clarity, let us visualize the analysis of differentiation of generation level.

- a) **Parents' generation terms :** In the parent's generation, four forms of classification are found. These are illustrated here with examples of female relatives, though the male equivalents follow the same pattern.

The simplest type found, for example, in Polynesian societies, classification of all female relatives (or all male relatives) in the parental generation by the same term. A person's mother, mother's sisters, and father's sisters are all called by a term that translates loosely into English as "mother" There is no equivalent to the English term aunt. This type of classification is known as generational terminology.

A more complex type, represented by the English language, distinguishes mother from aunts. This is known as lineal terminology, in reference to its



distinction between lineal relatives (those from whom a person is descended, in this case the mother) and collateral relatives (those related through a sister or brother, in this case those classified as aunts or, more precisely, the person's father's and mother's sisters).

A different terminology, the most common in the world's languages, is the bifurcate merging type. This structure makes the distinction between parallel relatives (including lineal relatives and those related through a same-sex sibling link) and cross-relatives (those related through an opposite-sex sibling link). In this system, a person's mother and mother's sisters are called by one term and the father's sisters by another. For instance, in Tswana, a Bantu language of southern Africa, a person's mother and mother's sisters are both called *mme* (loosely, but not exactly, translatable into English as "mother"), while the father's sisters are called *rrakgadi*.

The ancient Romans used slightly different but related terms for mother (*mater*) and mother's sister (*matertera*), but they sharply distinguished the father's sister (*amita*), who, in their patrilineal society, was closely associated with the kin group of the father. The equivalent terms for male relatives of this generation, as discussed above, were *pater*, *patruus*, and *avunculus*, the last being derived from *avus*, meaning "grandfather". Although, the Latin terminology can be considered bifurcate merging—because relatives on the same side of the family are called by linguistically related, if not identical, terms—strictly speaking the Roman terminology is bifurcate collateral. It "bifurcates" by employing different terms for the father's and mother's sides of the family, but it is "collateral" in that it distinguished lineal relatives from collateral ones by calling the mother's sister, for example, by a different term from the mother. Scandinavian languages, as well as Old English and other Germanic languages, have had kinship terminologies of this type, with no equivalent of the modern English terms aunt and uncle. Instead relatives are literally called "mother's sister", "father's sister", and so on.

- (b) Own generation terms :** The classification of terminologies by terms for relatives in a person's own generation (brothers, sister, and cousins) is more complex. The most prevalent classification is that of George

Peter Murdock, who distinguished six types. (as previously discussed). Murdock called the simplest type of terminology “Hawaiian”. In this type, often found in societies that have a generational-terminology structure for the parental generation, there is no distinction between sisters and cousins; all are termed “sister”. Similarly, all the males are called “brother”, both by one another and by their “sisters”. The term Hawaiian refers to a terminology structure like that found in the Hawaiian language, but it is not peculiar to the Hawaiian language or people. Hawaiian terminologies are also found in other parts of Polynesia and commonly in West Africa.

The “Eskimo” type is found in English-speaking societies as well as among Eskimo or Inuit groups. The formal definition of an Eskimo terminology is simply that it distinguishes sisters and brothers from cousins. Most European societies have terminologies of this type, as do small-scale hunting and gathering societies such as the ! Kung of southern Africa and most (though not all) Eskimo groups in Canada, Greenland, and Alaska. It tends to be found in societies that have cognatic descent systems, that is, those that lack either strong patrilineal or matrilineal principles.

“Iroquois” systems on the other hand, are generally found in patrilineal and matrilineal societies and in those societies that permit marriage to cross-cousins. This type, which is the most common throughout the world, is structurally related to the bifurcate-merging type. It distinguishes cross-cousins (father’s sister’s and mother’s brother’s children) from parallel cousins (father’s brothers’ and mother’s sister’s children), and it often classifies parallel cousins by the same terms as brothers and sisters. English-speaking anthropologists have had to invent the words parallel cousin and cross-cousin in order to talk about this distinction, since English speakers do not classify their own kinfolk in this way. Iroquois systems are found commonly among North American Indians, in African societies, in some Asian societies, and in other parts of the world.

Some scholars use the term Dravidian (from the name of the South Asian language family) to describe systems similar to the Iroquois but in which terms for father’s sister and mother’s brother are identical to those for parents-in-law. The terminologies reflect the fact that a cross-cousin in these societies is considered a person’s ideal spouse. The parents of cross-cousins are considered a type of in-law,

even if one marries someone else. Terminologies with this feature are found not only in South Asia but also among South American Indians and Australian Aborigines.

Two more complex types are those to which Murdock referred as “Crow” and “Omaha”. These are almost invariably found in strongly unilineal societies. As in Iroquois terminologies, cross-cousins are distinguished from parallel cousins, but, in addition, cross-cousins on one or the other side of the family are equated with their parents. Crow terminologies classify the father’s sister’s daughters by the same term as the father’s sisters (if the society is matrilineal, these people are members of the same matrilineal group). Omaha terminologies classify the mother’s brother’s sons by the same term as the mother’s brothers (who are all members of the same patrilineal group).

In societies using the Crow and Omaha terminologies, many other relatives are classified by terms that similarly transcend generational distinctions. For example, among the Trobriand Islanders, the term *tabu*, for “father’s sister” and “father’s sister’s daughter,” in fact refers to all female members of a person’s father’s matrilineal group. Male members of the kin group are all termed *tama*. This is sometimes translated loosely as “father”, even though it refers not only to a person’s actual father but also includes the father’s brothers, the father’s sister’s sons, and even the father’s sisters’ daughters’ sons.

Such systems found in North America, Melanesia, and Southeast Asia, emphasize lineage membership over generation or genealogical distance. Genealogical distance is a key feature specifically of Eskimo terminologies like the English one, and generation is a key feature of most other forms of kinship terminology. The Crow and Omaha terminologies, however, show that neither genealogy nor generation is universally important for kinship organization.

Apart from this, Murdock elaborates scheme for understanding kinship terminology. According to him, Kinship terms are technically classified in 3 different ways :-

- (i) By their mode of use.
- (ii) By their linguistic structure.
- (iii) By their range of application.

## **5.6 Discovery of Dravidian Kinship Terminology:**

Floyd Lounsbury (1964) discovered a seventh, Dravidian type of terminological system that had been conflated with Iroquois in Morgan's typology of kin-term systems because both systems distinguish relatives by marriage from relatives by descent, although both are classificatory categories rather than based on biological descent. Kay (1967), Scheffler (1971), and Tjon Sie Fat (1981) gave variant criteria for Dravidian classificatory logic, but the basic idea is that of applying an even/odd distinction to relatives that takes into account the gender of every linking relative for ego's kin relation to any given person. A MFBD(C), for example, is a mother's father's brother's daughter's child. If each female link (M,D) is assigned a 0 and each male (F,B), the number of 1s is either even or odd; in this case, even. In a Dravidian system with a patrilineal modulo-2 counting system, marriage is prohibited with this reality a marriageable relative must be modulo-2 odd. There exists also a version of this logic with a matrilineal bias. Discoveries of systems that use modulo-2 logic, as in South Asia, Australia, and many other parts of the world, marked a major advance in the understanding of kinship terminologies that differ from kin relations and terminologies employed by Europeans.

### **5.6.1 The Significance of Terminology**

It has long been known that languages classify the world differently. A word in one language does not necessarily have an exact equivalent in another. The way people classify the world reflects the way they think, or, conversely, they think according to the way they classify the world. That the Latin language classifies the father's brother by one term, *patruus*, and the mother's brother by a different one, *avunculus*, reflects the way ancient Roman family life was organized. For English speakers, who use only one term, *uncle*, for both, the distinction between these two is unimportant; an uncle on the father's side of the family is treated in much the same way as an uncle on the mother's side. The Romans, however, treated them differently, the *patruus* being a stern figure much like the father and the *avunculus* being literally an "avuncular" figure, likened somewhat to a grandfather, who unlike the father was not a figure of authority.

Similarly, the English language distinguishes some categories that other languages

do not. English speakers have two terms for the other children of their parents (brother and sister) and another term for the children of their parents' brothers and sisters (cousin). Polynesian languages, on the other hand, have no equivalent of the term cousin; cousins are called by the same terms as brothers and sisters. The fact that speakers of English make this distinction reflects the fact that they treat brothers and sisters differently from cousins, or at least that they regard them as being in a different kind of relationship.

The first person to study the problem of kinship terminology in a scientific manner was Lewis Henry Morgan. Before writing *Ancient Society*, Morgan has discovered that the Iroquois Indians of New York state classify their cousins differently from English-speaking Americans. A male Iroquois calls his sisters and the daughters of his father's brothers and of his mother's sisters all by the terms *ahje* (if they are older than he is) and *kaga* (if they are younger). Yet he calls the daughters of his father's sisters and of his mother's brothers by a different term, *ahgareseh*. He makes similar distinctions between males of his generation, while female Iroquois also employ a comparable, though not identical, classification. The Iroquois traditionally behave toward all these categories of kin according to their classification. For example, an Iroquois can marry a cousin classified as an *ahgareseh*, but not a cousin classified as an *ahje* or *kaga*.

At first Morgan thought the Iroquois were unique, but as he became more familiar with the customs and languages of the North American Indian tribes he realized that this was not the case. Eventually, he sent questionnaires on the subject to all parts of the world, mainly to American consular officials and missionaries. Morgan asked them to fill in the questionnaires with the terms for a wide variety of specific genealogical positions in all the languages the respondents encountered. The results were eventually published under the title *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family* (1871). This massive work concluded with a discussion of the theory that kinship terminologies reflect pre-existing social structure and that one can therefore study the pre-history of society by analyzing known kinship terminologies, an idea that became the basis of Morgan's later book, *Ancient Society*.

Although most anthropologists no longer agree with Morgan's theory, they

nevertheless acknowledge the great importance of his discovery of the diversity of kinship terminology structures. Anthropologists now study kinship terminologies, or relationship terminologies (as they are variously known), in relation to existing social institutions, rather than as clues to the past. If a people classify relatives in a particular way, the implication is that they do this for a reason that may be found in their existing social structure. Even where terminologies are conservative and reflect the customs of the past, the categories are nevertheless clues to the perceptions of the people who use them.

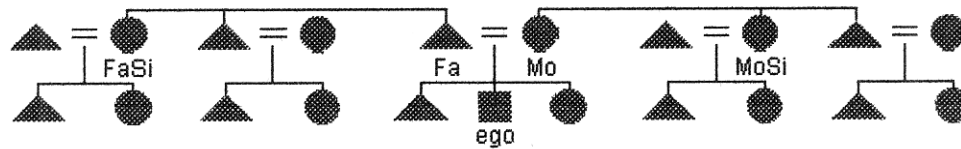
## **5.7 KIN NAMING SYSTEMS:**

One of the founders of the anthropological relationship research was Lewis Henry Morgan in his *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family* (1871). Members of a society may use kinship terms without all being biologically related, a fact already evident in Morgan's use of the term affinity within his concept of the "system of kinship". The most lasting of Morgan's contributions was his discovery of the difference between descriptive and classificatory kinship, which situates broad kinship classes on the basis of imputing abstract social patterns of relationships having little or no overall relation to genetic closeness but do reflect cognition about kinship, social distinctions as they affect linguistic usages in kinship terminology, and strongly relate, if only by approximation, to patterns of marriage. The major patterns of kinship systems which Lewis Henry Morgan identified through kinship terminology in his 1871 work *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family* are:

- Iroquois kinship (also known as "bifurcate merging")
- Crow kinship (an expansion of bifurcate merging)
- Omaha kinship (also an expansion of bifurcate merging)
- Dravidian kinship (the classical type of classificatory kinship with bifurcate merging but totally distinct from Iroquois). Most Australian Aboriginal kinship is also classificatory.
- Eskimo kinship (also referred to as "lineal kinship")
- Hawaiian kinship (also referred to as the "generational system")
- Sudanese kinship (also referred to as the "descriptive system").

The six types (Crow, Eskimo, Hawaiian, Iroquois, Omaha, Sudanese) that are not fully classificatory (Dravidian, Australian) are those identified by Murdock (1949) prior to Lounsbury's (1964) rediscovery of the linguistic principles of classificatory kin terms.

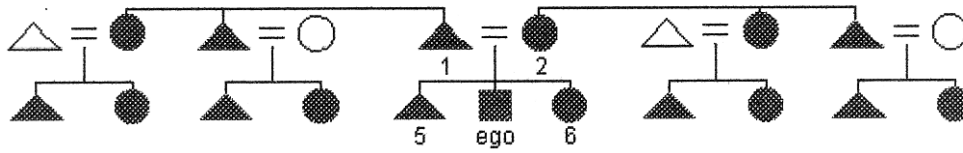
All societies have standard kinship names for specific categories of relatives. For example, both ego's father's sister (FaSi) and mother's sister (MoSi) in the diagram below would be referred to as ego's aunt by most North Americans. Ego obviously knows the difference between the aunts, but it is not important to assign distinct terms of reference for them.



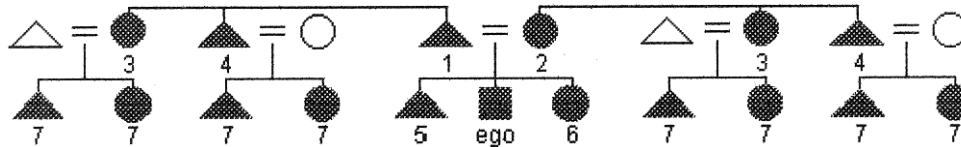
Different cultures often have very dissimilar reference terms for relatives. For instance, some cultures refer to the person in the diagram above labeled MoSi (aunt in North America) as ego's mother. She is treated the same way as the biological mother (who is also referred to as mother) for kinship related matters. They both have the same responsibilities and expectations in regards to ego. Such kin terms are valuable clues to the nature of a kinship system in a society as well as to the social statuses and roles of kinsmen. Anthropologists have discovered that there are only six basic kin naming patterns or systems used by almost all of the thousands of cultures in the world. They are referred to as the Eskimo, Hawaiian, Sudanese, Omaha, Crow, and Iroquois systems.

### **Eskimo System**

The most common kin naming pattern in North America and Europe today is known as the Eskimo system. Members of the nuclear family are given terms of reference based only on their gender and generation (in the diagram below 1 = father, 2 = mother, 5 = brother, and 6 = sister). No other relative is referred to by any of these terms.



Aunts and uncles are distinguished from parents in the Eskimo system and separated only by gender (3 = aunt and 4 = uncle). The spouses of aunts and uncles may also be given these kin terms. All cousins are lumped together (7 = cousin). No kinship distinction is made between uncles, aunts, and cousins with regard to side of the family. For instance, there is no kin term for aunts on the mother's side of the family in contrast to those on the father's side—they are all called aunt.



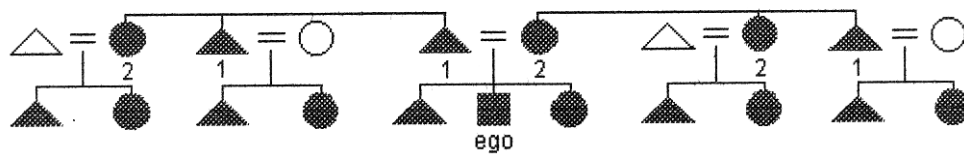
The Eskimo kin naming system is found mainly in societies that use the bilateral principle of descent and that strongly emphasize the nuclear family over more distant kinsmen. Both ego's mother's and father's collateral relatives are considered equally important. That is to say, no distinction is made between relatives on the mother's and father's side of the family. This is reflected in the kin names. Despite the fact that some relatives are lumped together with the same linguistic terms in the Eskimo and other kin naming systems, people do make distinctions between them as unique individuals. For instance, you would make a distinction between your uncle John and your uncle Pete by using their first names along with the kinship term.

The Eskimo system is one of the simplest, despite the fact that it is found among some of the most technologically complex societies. It is also found among hunters and gatherers living in harsh environments, such as the Inuit, or Eskimo. In both of these extremes, the common denominator for the Eskimo kin naming system is an economy that forces the nuclear family to be mostly independent. The Eskimo system is used today by about 10% of the world's societies.

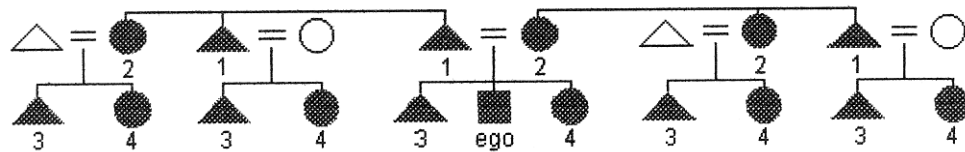


## Hawaiian System

The least complex kin naming pattern is found in the Hawaiian system. The nuclear family is de-emphasized. Relatives within the extended family are distinguished only by generation and gender. This results in just four different terms of reference. Ego's father and all male relatives in his generation have the same kin name (1). Likewise, ego's mother and all female relatives in her generation are referred to by the same kin term (2).



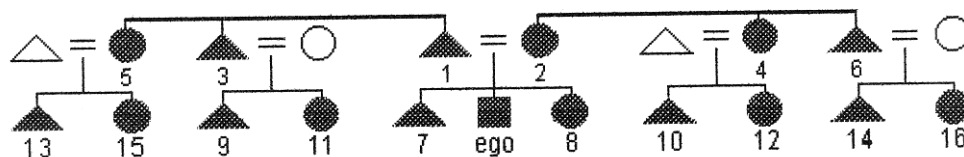
Similarly, all brothers and male cousins are linked by giving them the same kin term (3). Sisters and all female cousins are also referred to by the same term (4). Not surprisingly, marriage of cousins is generally forbidden since they are treated like brothers and sisters.



The Hawaiian terminological system is used by about a third of the world's societies, though they are relatively small ones. It is found widely in the islands of Polynesia where it is usually associated with ambilineal descent. Since both sides of the family are treated equally, an individual's choice of ancestral line to trace is less biased.

## Sudanese System

At the opposite extreme in complexity is the Sudanese system. Most kinsmen are not lumped together under the same terms of reference. Each category of relative is given a distinct term based on genealogical distance from ego and on the side of the family. There can be eight different cousin terms, all of whom are distinguished from ego's brother and sister.

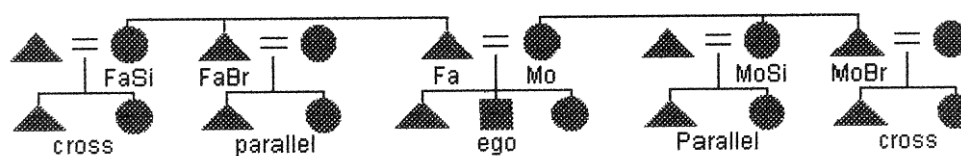


The Sudanese system is found in Sudan, Turkey, and some other societies with patrilineal descent and considerable social complexity. The fine distinctions made between kinsmen mirrors the society's desire to distinguish people on the basis of class, occupation, and political power.

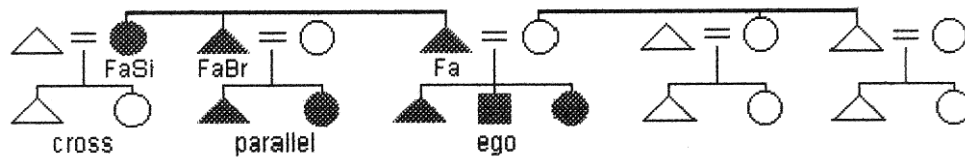
The remaining kin terminological systems are named after three North American Indian cultures that used them: Omaha, Crow, and Iroquois. The fact that these naming systems are strikingly different from each other is a reminder that there was considerable cultural diversity among the original inhabitants of the western hemisphere.

In order to comprehend the Omaha, Crow, and Iroquois naming systems, it is important to first understand a common distinction made between types of cousins in societies following unilineal descent. For the majority of people in contemporary Europe and the Americas whose cultures use the bilateral descent principle, these cousin differences seem to be irrelevant and unnecessary. However, they are logical and easy to understand when viewed in their cultural context.

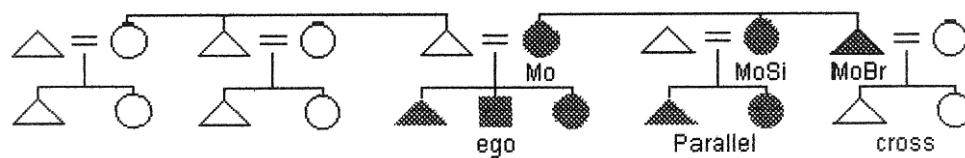
**Parallel cousins** are ego's father's brother's children and mother's sister's children. In contrast, cross cousins are ego's father's sister's children and mother's brother's children. In other words, there is a crossing of gender in the parent generation with cross cousins but not with parallel ones. The gender of the cousin is not relevant in making this distinction.



The importance of this categorization of cousins can be understood in terms of descent relationships. Note that in the red *patrilineage* shown below, parallel cousins are members of ego's unilineage, while cross cousins are not.

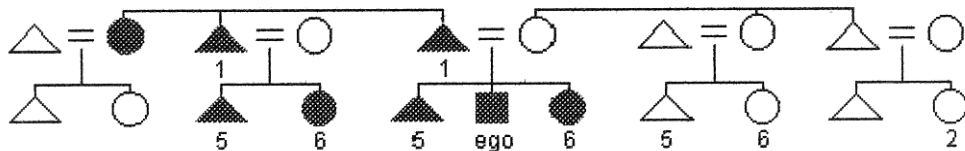


The same is true with matrilineages—only parallel cousins are relatives. These distinctions can be critical in determining who an individual may and may not marry and with whom there is likely to be mutual assistance obligations.

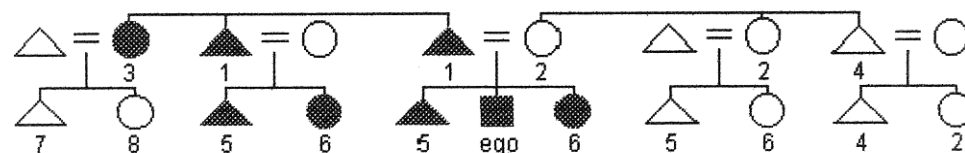


### Omaha System

The Omaha kin naming system is characteristic of societies that use patrilineal descent. Relatives are lumped together on the basis of descent and gender. Siblings and parallel cousins of the same gender are given the same term of reference (5 = males and 6 = females). Father and father's brothers also have the same kin term (1).

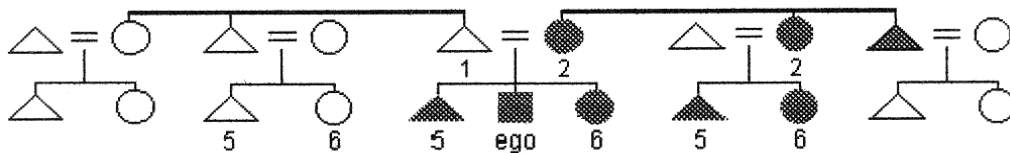


Other people in ego's mother's patrilineage are lumped across generations (2 = female and 4 = male). This reflects the comparative unimportance of the mother's side of the family in a society that strongly follows the patrilineal descent principle.

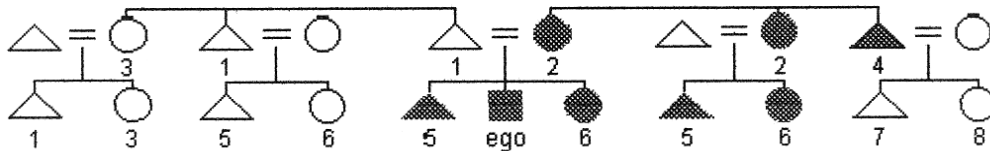


## Crow System

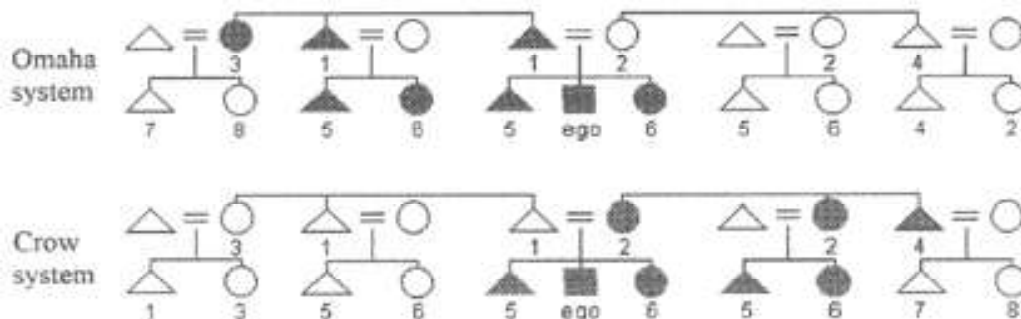
An almost mirror image of the Omaha pattern is the matrilineally based Crow kin naming system. Relatives are also lumped together on the basis of descent and gender. Siblings and parallel cousins of the same gender are given the same term of reference (5 = male and 6 = female). Mother and mother's sister also have the same kin term (2). Mother and mother's sister also have the same kin term (2).



Other people in ego's father's matrilineage are lumped across generations (1 = male and 3 = female). This reflects the comparative unimportance of the father's side of the family in a society that strongly follows the matrilineal principle of descent.

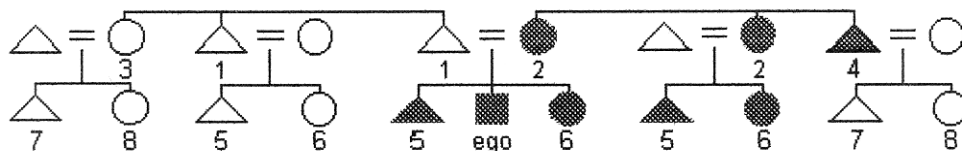


Differences between the Omaha and Crow systems can be seen in the terms of reference for cross cousins and whether or not uncles and aunts are lumped with them. These differences stem from the fact that the Omaha system is patrilineal and the Crow is matrilineal. Compare the two kin naming systems and note the similarities and differences.

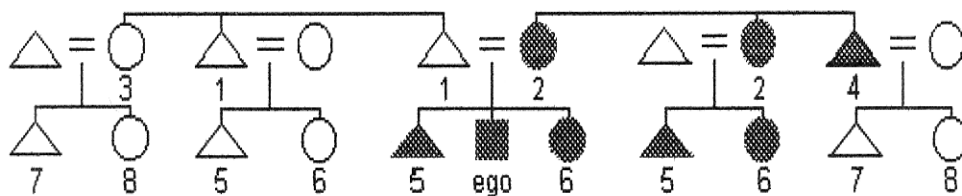


## Iroquois System

In the Iroquois kin naming system, the same term of reference is used for father and father's brother (1) as well as mother and mother's sister (2). This merging is related to shared membership in unilineages, as it is in the Omaha and Crow systems. However, the Iroquois system may be either patrilineal or matrilineal and is usually not as strongly one or the other.



Also like the Omaha and Crow patterns, the Iroquois system lumps together parallel cousins from both sides of the family with siblings but distinguishes them by gender (5 = male and 6 = female). What sets the Iroquois system apart is the fact that cross cousins are also lumped together and distinguished by gender (7 = male and 8 = female). The reason is that there usually is a preference for marriage to cross cousins in societies that use the Iroquois system.



## Aborigines System

The kinship system is a feature of Aboriginal social organisation and family relationships across Central Australia. It is a complex system that determines how people relate to each other and their roles, responsibilities and obligations in relation to one another, ceremonial business and land. The kinship system determines who marries who, ceremonial relationships, funeral roles and behaviour patterns with other kin. Today the number of 'wrong skin' marriages is increasing, and families are attempting to accommodate the contradictions.

However, there are some rules which are adhered to, in particular certain 'avoidance relationships', especially that between a mother-in-law and a son-in-law. This relationship requires a social distance, such that they may not be able to be in the same room or car. Be sensitive to the signals that alert one to this situation, for example being told that there is 'no room' in a car or a building when there appears to be sufficient 'space'. Aspects of this system of social organisation differ between regions. This is seen in the so-called 'skin system', a method of subdividing the society into named categories which are related to one another through the kinship system. A moiety system (i.e. division into two groups: 'sun side' and 'shade side') exists across the region. Most language groups also use a section or subsection system with either four to eight 'skin names'. An individual gains a 'skin name' upon birth based on the skin names of his or her parents, to indicate the section/subsection that he/she belongs to.

### **Dravidian kinship**

The Dravidian kinship system involves selective "cousinhood." One's mother's brother's children and one's mother's sister's children are NOT cousins but brothers and sisters "one step removed." They are considered "consanguinous" ("pangali") and marriage with them is strictly forbidden as it is "incestuous." However, one's mother's sister's children and one's mother's brother's children are considered cousins and potential mates ("muraicherugu"). Marriages between such cousins are allowed and encouraged. There is a clear distinction between "cross" cousins who are one's true cousins and parallel cousins who are in fact "siblings". Like Iroquois people, Dravidians refer to their father's sister as "mother-in-law" and their mother's brother as "father-in-law."

Some Dravidian communities also practise uncle-niece marriages where the mother's younger brother may marry his niece (his elder sister's daughter).

### **India: Large Kinship Groups**

In most of Hindu India, people belong not only to coresident family groups but to larger aggregates of kin as well. Subsuming the family is the patrilineage (known in northern and central India as the khandan, kutumb, or kul), a locally based set of males who trace their ancestry to a common progenitor a few generations back, plus their wives and unmarried daughters. Larger than the patrilineage is the clan, commonly known as the gotra or got, a much larger group of patrilineally related males and their

wives and daughters, who often trace common ancestry to a mythological figure. In some regions, particularly among the high-ranking Rajputs of western India, clans are hierarchically ordered. Some people also claim membership in larger, more amorphous groupings known as *vansh* and *sakha*.

Hindu lineages and clans are strictly exogamous—that is, a person may not marry or have a sexual alliance with a member of his own lineage or clan; such an arrangement would be considered incestuous. In North India, rules further prohibit marriage between a person and his mother's lineage members as well. Among some high-ranking castes of the north, exogamy is also extended to the mother's, father's mother's, and mother's mother's clans. In contrast, in South India, marriage to a member of the mother's kin group is often encouraged.

Muslims also recognize kinship groupings larger than the family. These include the *khandan*, or patrilineage, and the *azizdar*, or kindred. The *azizdar* group differs slightly for each individual and includes all relatives linked to a person by blood or marriage. Muslims throughout India encourage marriage within the lineage and kindred, and marriages between the children of siblings are common.

Within a village or urban neighborhood, members of a lineage recognize their kinship in a variety of ways. Mutual assistance in daily work, in emergencies, and in factional struggles is expected. For Hindus, cooperation in specific annual rituals helps define the kin group. For example, in many areas, at the worship of the goddess deemed responsible for the welfare of the lineage, patrilineally related males and their wives join in the rites and consume specially consecrated fried breads or other foods. Unmarried daughters of the lineage are only spectators at the rites and do not share in the special foods. Upon marriage, a woman becomes a member of her husband's lineage and then participates regularly in the worship of her husband's lineage goddess. Lineage bonds are also evident at life-cycle observances, when kin join together in celebrating births, marriages, and religious initiations. Upon the death of a lineage member, other lineage members observe ritual death pollution rules for a prescribed number of days and carry out appropriate funeral rites and feasts.

For some castes, especially in the north, careful records of lineage ties are kept by a professional genealogist, a member of a caste whose traditional task is maintaining genealogical tomes. These itinerant bards make their rounds from village to village over

the course of a year or more, recording births, deaths, and glorious accomplishments of the patrilineal descent group. These genealogical services have been especially crucial among Rajputs, Jats, and similar groups whose lineages own land and where power can depend on fine calculations of pedigree and inheritance rights.

Some important kinship linkages are not traced through men but through women. These linkages involve those related to an individual by blood and marriage through a mother, married sisters, or married daughters, and for a man, through his wife. Anthropologist David Mandelbaum has termed these “feminal kin.” Key relationships are those between a brother and sister, parents and daughters, and a person and his or her mother’s brother. Through bonds with these close kin, a person has links with several households and lineages in many settlements. Throughout most of India, there are continuous visits—some of which may last for months and include the exchange of gifts at visits, life-cycle rites, and holidays, and many other key interactions between such relatives. These relationships are often characterized by deep affection and willingly offered support.

These ties cut across the countryside, linking each person with kin in villages and towns near and far. Almost everywhere a villager goes—especially in the north, where marriage networks cover wide distances—he can find some kind of relative. Moral support, a place to stay, economic assistance, and political backing are all available through these kinship networks.

The multitude of kinship ties is further extended through the device of fictive kinship. Residents of a single village usually use kinship terms for one another, and especially strong ties of fictive kinship can be ceremonially created with fellow religious initiates or fellow pilgrims of one’s village or neighborhood. In the villages and cities of the north, on the festival of Raksha Bandhan (the Tying of the Protective Thread, during which sisters tie sacred threads on their brothers’ wrists to symbolize the continuing bond between them), a female may tie a thread on the wrist of an otherwise unrelated male and “make him her brother.” Fictive kinship bonds cut across caste and class lines and involve obligations of hospitality, gift-giving, and variable levels of cooperation and assistance.

Neighbours and friends may also create fictive kinship ties by informal agreement. Actually, any strong friendship between otherwise unrelated people is



typically imbued with kinship-like qualities. In such friendships, kinship terms are adopted for address, and the give and take of kinship may develop. Such bonds commonly evolve between neighbors in urban apartment buildings, between special friends at school, and between close associates at work. The use of kinship terms enhances affection in the relationship. In Gujarat, personal names usually include the word for “sister” and “brother,” so that the use of someone’s personal name automatically sounds affectionate and caring.

### **Kinship Usages**

Within each kin group, whether it is a particularist family, or an extension thereof, like the joint family or the sib, there are certain types of coactive behavior patterns which exhibit a regularity, a more or less permanent and definite structure. Such types of behavior, verbal and non-verbal, constitute kinship usages. Some of these usages, universally found, are described below.

### **Avoidance**

It has been found that in all societies avoidance of one kind or another is observed in the realization between a daughter-in-law and her parents-in-law. Likewise, though less universally and also less rigorously, a son-in-law’s relations with his parents-inlaw are found to be cramped by certain restrictions. Thus, we have the universal kinship usage of avoidance.

One of the earliest explanations of this practice was given by Tylor. He said that in early stages of human history, when sons-in-law went to live with their wives, they were obliged to be on restricted relations with their mothers-in-law, who represented the matriarchal family in which they found themselves as complete strangers and in subservient positions. Thus, Tylor related son-in-law and mother-in-law avoidance causally to matrilocal residence. Later writers have questioned the validity of Tylor’s conclusions, since these were based on deceptive statistics. (Offshoots of the same cultural matrix were treated by him as’ separate examples.) It is quite likely that what Tylor thought to be a causal ‘relation may in most be only a correlation. After Tylor, Frazer and Freud gave their own explanations of the kinship usage of avoidance. Both, based themselves on the repugnance, among all societies, for tabooed sexual relations.

Frazer’s explanation applies to such examples of avoidance as were reported

from the very primitive Ceylonese tribe, the Vedda, viz. brother-sister avoidance, or limit relations between brothers and sisters reported from the Trobriand Islands and, in fact, from all parts of the world should a Trobriand brother happen to see his sister being wooed by a man, or she making love to him, all the three will be commit suicide. But among the Vedda, brother and sister may not live under the same roof, nor even may they rake their food together. No kind of intimacy or familiarity can ever develop between them. Frazer said that the purpose of avoidance is to prevent such sexual intimacy as would amount to incest. But, the question arises why is avoidance observed between members of the same sex? Frazer said that such avoidance must have been a later development.

Freud's psycho-analytical explanation, like Frazer's, is based! on sexual attraction and the need to prevent sexual intimacy between various kinds of relatives. According to this explanation, a boy or girl when young has an infantile sexual passion for the parent of the opposite sex. Training is, therefore, required to teach the child to overcome and repress this feeling. Family customs are the medium through which this training is imparted. The natural consequence is the rise of ambivalent emotions in the subject's mind who is sought to be pulled away from his/her parent. Avoidance is observed to prevent any error on behalf of the subject in adult life in the observance of the norms of sexual conduct.

Mother-in-law and son-in-law avoidance is explained thus: There is a reluctance on behalf of the mother to hand over her daughter to a stranger; it is a kind of animosity that is given rise to by suspicious feelings. Further, she feels displaced in the affections and loyalty of her daughter.

The son-in-law, on his own side, has to put up with interference and, therefore; the control of a stranger in the guise of his wife's mother. This embitters him. Besides, he feels jealous of all those people who have a claim on his wife. On the other hand, there are factors that attract a son-in-law towards his mother-in-law. The outward aspects of bearing may give her an appearance akin to that of her daughter, and these might attract the son-in-law. The mother-in-law herself is supposed to be at such a stage of her life when her own sexual activity is ebbing. Naturally there may be cravings in her to find herself in the position of her daughter, and she may at least mentally identify herself with the latter. She must overcome these incestuous feelings and hence

the mother-in-law -son-in-law avoidance. Thus runs the complicated Freudian argument.

As one can see from the foregoing argument, there is an overestimate of the attractions that might operate between a son-in-law and his wife's mother. Besides, if the explanation lies in certain human (psychic) tendencies, then why is it not a universal usage? and further, why should members of the same sex avoid "each other? These explanations turn the primitive into a preoccupied conscientious thinker which he is not.

Lowie has come forward with a very significant explanation. He says that a daughter-in-law represents an alien and perhaps a different set of social, cultural, and moral values. Her language, dress and notions about etiquette may be quite different from that of her husband's family. As an individual, her husband is bound to be influenced by her, but the rest of the family must be saved. Hence, the avoidance between her and her parents-in-law. Likewise, the son-in-law must be prevented from making cultural inroads into his wife's family.

Tunney-High says that avoidance is a mechanism to preserve peace in the family. A woman's loyalty as wife may come into conflict with her loyalties as daughter-in-law. Consequently, the authority of the parents-in-law might collide with that of the husband; This would subject the wife to severe strain and impair the parents-son relationship. To prevent such social strains, daughter-in-law-parent's-in-law avoidance is observed. In other words, there is an implicit recognition that the spouse's authority should get the upper hand, but since in the familial structure it is his/her parents - who stand supreme, avoidance between parents-in-law and daughter/ son-in-law is the only way to meet the demands of this situation.

Radcliffe-Brown has given one of the most plausible of contemporary explanations. He points out that avoidance is a social fad and must, therefore, have a social explanation. He says that whenever people come in contact with each other, the possibilities of cooperation as well as conflict are always equally present. But there are certain kinds of kinship where hostility is regarded as against social norms. The best way to prevent such hostility from becoming manifest is to put restrictions on the growth of intimacy; and hence the kinship usage of avoidance. The same explanation is put differently by Chapple and Coon who root the avoidance usages in the necessity

to keep the interaction rate low between individuals who would upset the social structure if this rate were increased.

There are other subsidiary kinds of avoidance also, like the taboo on using one's spouse's name which are for the most part the outcome of the fear of witchcraft and sorcery that always dominates the primitive mind. It is necessary to point out that in many societies, the attitudes towards tabooed relatives are those of respect and consideration rather than hostile or ambivalent.

### **Joking Relationships**

The reverse of the avoidance relationship is an extreme-degree of familiarity expressed through joking relationships. Such joking may amount to exchange of abuse and banter, obscenity and vulgar references to sex, damage of each other's property, ridicule and so on. Various explanations have been given to explain this equally-queer usage of privileged familiarity.

Joking relationships may be indicative of equality and mutual reciprocity. They may also be indicative of potential 'sexual relationship. This is explained in the joking relationship "between a man and his wife's younger sister, or between a woman and her husband's younger brother. In each case the two "may be potential mates. A joking relationship with one's maternal uncle's wife may be indicative of the practice of inheriting all the property of one's maternal uncle, including his wife. It may be indicative of a joking relationship with the maternal uncle himself, expressed through sexual intimacy with his wife. "Such usages have been reported from the matrilineal Hopi and the matrilineal Trobriand Islanders.

Among many primitive folk joking relationships have been found to prevail between grandparents and grandchildren. Thus, among the Oraon and the Baiga, such joking relationships are found. It is of immense ethnographic interest that S. C. Roy has reported an instance of a grandfather marrying "his granddaughter among the Oraon. Verrier Elwin has reported a similar instance from the Baiga where a grandson married his own grandmother. Recently a similar instance of a grandfather having married his granddaughter, leading to the birth of a child also, has been reported from the Chamar, a depressed caste of leather-tanners spread all over north India. Ordinarily a Joking relation between the two kin does obtain among them.

A joking relationship, when not mutual, assumes the role of social control. It becomes indicative of correction through ridicule.

Radcliffe-Brown regards the joking relationship as having a symbolic meaning (just as he does in case of the avoidance relationship); He says that joking relations may be a kind of friendliness expressed by a show of hostility. Exchange of abuse and even beating each other is at best sham hostility. Chapple and Coon regard this usage as the way to stimulate a higher interaction rate between various people which it may not be possible to do otherwise.

### **Teknonymy**

All over rural India, and among some tribal groups like the Jhasi as well and also elsewhere among the primitive societies of some parts of the world, a person is referred to as the father or the mother of his/her child, i.e., teknonymously. Tylor regarded this kinship usage also as a relic of the former supremacy of women, who never accept the son-in-law as one of them in their residence and recognized a secondary relationship with him through the children he helped to bring to life. Through extension, a mother may likewise be referred to teknonymously.

### **A vunculate**

If the maternal uncle enjoys a pre-eminent place in the life and affections of his nephews and nieces as a matter of convention, if he has special obligations towards them which exceed those of their father, if he has a prior right over their loyalties if he transmits his property to his nephew, and if the nephew works for him rather than for his own father; in sum, if the maternal uncle comes first among all male relatives, then this kinship usage is designated as avunculate, and the maternal uncle's authority as avuncpotestality. If nephews and nieces, are brought up in their maternal uncle's family, the Condition is referred to as avunculocal residence. This is a common usage among matrilineal peoples, but may also be found among patrilineal societies, as a result of diffusion (borrowing from outside) or as a survival of a previous mode of matrilineal social structure.

### **Amitate**

A special role, similar to that outlined in case of the maternal uncle, for one's father's sister is designated as amitate. Whereas amitate may be easily explicable in a

patrilineal society, it has to be explained in the context of the matrilineal culture complex of the Trobriand Islanders. It would seem that whereas avunculate in a matrilineal society and amitate in a patrilineal society may be the outcome of an obvious emphasis on one particular group of relatives, such emphasis expressed through avunculate in patrilineal society and amitate in a matrilineal society may be the social mechanism for preventing certain kinship bonds from falling into neglect. Or, to borrow once again the phraseology of Chapple and Coon, these usages are the way to keep up the rate of interaction between such is among whom it may fall low due to their belonging to such groups which are not taken into account while reclaiming descent.

### **Couvade**

A queer practice designated couvade by anthropologists has been reported from among many primitive tribes like the Khasi and the Toda, as also from outside India. The practice consists in making a husband lead the life of an invalid along with his wife whenever she gives birth to a child. He refrains from active life, goes on sick diet and observes certain taboos. Thus, the Khasi husband, like his wife, cannot cross a stream or wash clothes until the spirits connected with childbirth are propitiated. This kinship usage involving wife and husband has been variously explained. Some authorities have seen in it a survival of the transitional stage of the maternal-paternal complex. At the paternal stage there is no excuse for treating the father so, for patrilocal residence leaves no room for doubt concerning the paternity of the child. It is only at the maternal stage that paternity is not likely to be known, nor is it considered important as the child takes the name of the mother's family and inheritance of property follows about line or descent.

In the maternal-paternal stage, where residence may be matrilineal, but inheritance patrilineal, or conversely, some conventional methods of ascertaining paternity are needed-keeping the father confined in a room or the customary bow and arrow ceremony on the Toda. The difficulty is that couvade is found associated with patriarchal clans and there is hardly any evidence to show that these clans at any time followed any system of inheritance other than the patrilineal. Malinowski believed, Couvade to be a cementing bond of married life and a social mechanism designed to secure paternal affection. Raglan regards it as an irrational belief which may be prior to marriage and even a contributory cause of the emergence of marriage

as an institution.

Other writers have to give a psycho analytic explanation they have attributed this' usage to the husband's desire lighten the wife's discomforts by a process of participation through identification. 'But of late other explanations also. have Deem but forward. Thus, it is said that a: woman who has been delivered of a child undergoes certain chemical processes within her body which affect the atmosphere around her, if she is in an ill-ventilated ceil or room, making ill those other people who live, and therefore breathe in the same room. So, it is said, couvade is based not on superstition but on a fact. Of course, illness would result only in a few case and it has been, and is, only anticipated in all the remaining cases.

### **Kinship Terms**

Kinship terms are the terms used in designating kin of various types. The study of kinship terms is as old as anthropology as a modern science is. The first significant contribution to the study of kinship terms was made by Morgan, who - published his import.ant conclusions as regards the study of kinship terms in the second half of the last' century. Morgan studied kinship terms from all parts of the world and coined the still-used nomenclature for the two broad categories of kinship terms, viz. the classificatory and descriptive systems or kinship terms.

Under a classificatory system several people, lineal as well as collateral, and often even, affinal, are all referred to by the same term of designation. The term classes them as similar. Such terms refer more to' relationship 'rather than to kin. Against this, a descriptive term of' designation describes the Speaker's exact relation towards him/her whom he/she is referring to or addressing. Thus, 'uncle' is a classificatory term but 'father' is a descriptive term. Rivers refers also to a third family system of terms. Such terms refer to the members of a single biological family individually.

There is no place in the world where either the pure descriptive or the pure classificatory system of nomenclature is used. Nephews, cousins and in-laws are some examples of classificatory terms used by modern 'Western society. However, Morgan was of the' view that as we move away from backward primitive societies towards the so-called civilized societies we simultaneously move away from classificatory towards descriptive kinship terms. Some examples may now be considered.

The Sema Naga of Assam use, *aja* for mother; father's brother's wife; mother's sister. The first two terms are indicative of levirate and the first and the third of sororate. The term *apu* is used for father; father's brother; mother's sister's husband, indicating marriage of several sisters to husbands who are brothers. *Ami* is used for father's sister; wife's mother; husband's mother; husband's brother's wife. The first two terms indicate crosscousin marriage.

Among Kuki clans *hepu* is used for father's father; mother's father; mother's brother; wife's father; mother's brother's son; wife's brother; wife's 'brother's son. Thus people of various age groups (generations) are designated by a single term.

Among Angami Naga, *shi* stands for elder brother; wife's elder sister; husband's elder brother; elder sister's husband; elder brother's wife; mother's brother's wife; father's brother's wife. Thus here we find the same term being used for members of opposite sexes.

## **5.8 Conclusion:**

In this chapter we found that :

- Kinship terminology concern the way people in a society classify their relatives.
- Kinship terminology has two categories of kinship terms in different societies, viz classificatory and descriptive system.
- Kin terms are distinguished on the basis of generation level, age, sex, type of kin, etc.,

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## MARRIAGE & AFFINITY

Course No. SOC-C-102

Lesson No. 6

Semester-I

Marriage : Meaning and Evolution

Unit-II

### Structure

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Objectives
- 6.3 Meaning of Marriage
- 6.4 Rules of Marriage
- 6.5 Forms of Marriage
- 6.6 Evolution of Marriage
- 6.7 Conclusion
- 6.8 Functions of Marriage
- 6.9 References

### 6.1 Introduction

All societies impose limitation and restriction on sexual activities as it is allowed in certain clearly defined directions. Marriage is a social institution, a machinery by which society enables people to satisfy their biological needs in an orderly way. It is a relatively more universal and major social institution because it fulfils the one of the most important function of the society *i.e.* reproduction with some degree of social regulation over sex relationship. In contemporary world, it is impossible to find out any society in which marriage, in any form be entirely absent.

### 6.2 Objectives

The main objective of this unit is to equip you with :

- The idea of marriage.
- Various rules of marriage.

- Different forms of marriage.
- Evolution of institution of marriage.

### 6.3 Meaning of Marriage

Marriage is a ritual union between a man and woman such that the children born to the women are the legitimate offspring of both the partners.

**Westermarck (1925)** defines it as a relation of one or more men to one or more women which is recognised by custom or law and involves certain rights and duties both in case of parties entering the union and in the case of children born of it.

According to **Rivers (1914)**, “marriage is a union between two opposite sex for regulating their sexual relationship. It is an organised institution for regulating sex relationships.”

**D.N. Majumdar and T.N. Madan (1955)** defines, “it involves the social sanction generally in the form of civil and/or religious ceremony authorising two persons of opposite sexes to engage in sexual and other subsequent and correlated socio-economic relations with one another.”

According to **Malinowski**, “marriage is the licensing of parenthood.”

**Edmund Leach** argues that a universal definition of marriage is not possible and it is futile to discuss the matter. According to him, the institutions commonly classed as marriage are concerned with the allocation of a number of distinguishable classes of rights, and hence, a marriage may serve to do any or some or all of the following :

1. to establish the legal father of a woman’s children;
2. to establish the legal mother of a man’s children;
3. to give the husband monopoly of wife’s sexuality;
4. to give the wife monopoly of the husband’s sexuality;
5. to give the husband partial or monopolistic rights to the wife’s domestic and other labour services;
6. to give the wife partial or monopolistic rights to the husband’s labour services;
7. to give the husband partial or total rights over property belonging or potentially according to the wife;
8. to give the wife partial or total rights over property belonging or potentially accruing to the husband;

9. to establish a joint fund of property - a partnership for the benefit of children of the marriage.
10. to establish a socially significant relationship of affinity between the husband and wife's brothers.

From the above definitions, it is found that marriage is a socially sanctioned union of two or more opposite sexes and it involves all the institutional demand of marital rights and duties. Marriage creates a new social relationship and reciprocal rights between each and the kin of the other, and establishes what will the rights and status of the children when they are born. It is primarily a means of regularising sex relations and the children born to them are cared and reared by the parents for the stability of the human social group. Children born to the married women are legitimate.

#### 6.4 Rules of Marriage

In no culture and in no society marriage is a matter of entirely free choice because the institution of marriage is socially derived and socially sanctioned. Every society places certain limitations on the range of persons from among whom spouses may be chosen. There are two major rules of marriage that are almost always present in all societies. They are exogamy and endogamy.

**Exogamy** : Hoebel (1958) defined it as “the social rule that requires an individual to marry outside of a culturally defined group of which he is a member.” The universal nuclear family is always exogamous. Exogamy, it is said sometimes, results from the effect of **incest taboo**. The social gap, beyond which is marriage is required to take place be a lineage, or a clan, or a phratry or a moiety. Hindus marry outside their gotra, so they practise **gotra exogamy**. Almost all tribes of India practise **lineage** and **clan exogamy**. Many tribes like Garo, Munda, Waga practise **village exogamy**. Actually, in exogamy near relatives are not supposed to marry among themselves. However, the degree of nearness varies from community to community.

**Endogamy** : Hoebel defined it as “the social rule that requires a person to marry within a culturally defined group of which he is a member.” Endogamy can take various forms like caste endogamy, subcaste endogamy, class endogamy, tribal endogamy etc. In India, **caste** is an **endogamous group** in Hindu society. Besides the above forms **village endogamy** is found in America and some parts of Asia. Every tribe in India is endogamous.

The endogamous marriage may occur due to racial, cultural, religious or geographical differences between various groups. The reasons of endogamy varies from one society to another depending upon the context of social group. To a large extent, endogamy tends to maintain unity and purity in the group.

## 6.5 Forms of Marriage

1. **Monogamy** : Monogamy means marriage of one man with another woman at a time. This form of marriage is found in most of the advanced industrial societies alongwith some traditional societies. Sexual intercourse? is institutionalized only between husband and wife. However, sexual relations between other categories of individuals occur, but generally they are considered wrong. The tribes like Didayi, Koya, Khasis etc. practise monogamy.

$$D = O$$

2. **Polygamy** : It is a form of marriage in which one man marries more than one woman at a given time and has socially approved sex relations with all of them.

$$O = D = O$$

It is of two types :

- (i) **Sororal Polygamy** : Here, wives are invariably the sisters.
- (ii) **Non-Sororal Polygamy** : Here, wives are not related as sisters.

Polygamy is found in Eskimo tribes, Crow Indians, the Nagas, Gonds etc. It is also prevalent among muslims.

3. **Polyandry** : Polyandry is the marriage of one woman with several men. In India, tribes such as Tiyan, the Kota, the Toda, the Khasa and Ladakhi Pota are polyandrous groups.

$$D = O = D$$

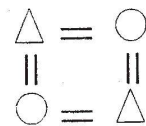
Polyandry is of two types :

- (i) **Fraternal or adelphic polyandry** : Here, several brothers have the same wife.
  - (ii) **Non-fraternal or Non-adelphic polyandry** : Here, the woman's husbands are not related as brothers.
4. **Group Marriage** : It means the marriage of two or more men with two or

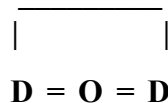
more women. Here, husbands are common husbands and wives are common wives. Children are regarded as the children of entire group, as a whole.

However, there is no evidence to substantiate the group marriage as it has not been found in any of the traditional simplest cultures.

Among Todas of India, **Lowie** (1920) points out that group marriage seems to have developed by the combinations of polygamy and polyandry practice.

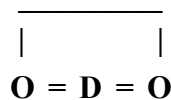


The **Levirate** and **Sororate** marriages : **Levirate marriage** : This marriage is also known as Devar Vivah. Here, the widows marries the younger brother of the husband after his death. In many patrilineal societies, a man's heir is his next brother who succeeds to his responsibilities as well as inheriting his possessions. The survivor of a man's widow are retained within the domestic unit by having her marry one of his brothers. Since, the marriage involves exchange of rights and duties and obligations, the family of the wife can be assured that she will be cared even if her husband dies. The cultural rule oblige a man to marry his brother's widows. In India, this type of marriage is found in tribes like Munda, Oraon, Hond, Santhal etc.



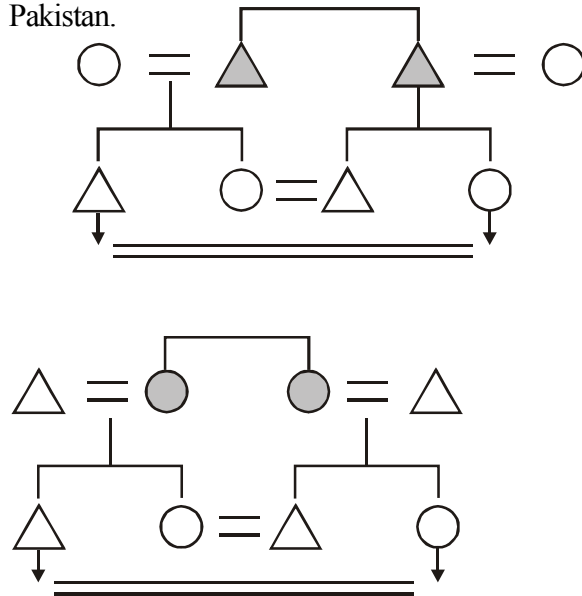
**Sororate Marriage** : In this type of marriage, a man marries his wife's younger sister after her death. It is the converse of levirate. It should not be confused with sorocal polygamy in which the husband does not wait for the death of his wife to marry her younger sister. It is found in tribes like Kolha, Lodha, Kavar etc.

In tribal India, the father of the daughter feels his responsibility to fill the gap created by the death of his daughter in his son-in-law house. The cultural rules oblige a woman to marry her deceased sister's husband.

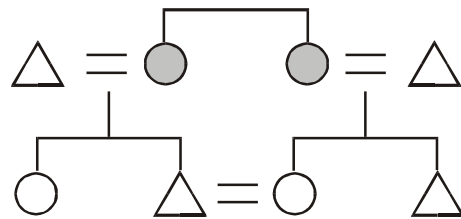


## 5. Cross-Cousin and Parallel Cousin marriages

**Parallel Cousin Marriage :** Marriage with mother's sister's or father's brother's child is Parallel Cousin marriage. It is found in Arabic muslims and Muslims of India and Pakistan.



**Cross Cousin Marriage :** Marriage with father's sister's or mother's brother's child is called cross-cousin marriage. The cross-cousin type of marriage is found among tribes like Oran, Koya, Didayi, Kuki, Gonds etc.



## 6. Hypergamy and Hypogamy

When a man of higher caste marries a woman of lower caste it is called **Anuloma** marriage or Hypergamy.

When a woman of higher caste marries a man of lower caste, it is called **Hypogamy** or **Pratiloma** marriage.

### 6.6 Evolution of Marriage :

Classical evolutionists have attempted to show the development of institution of marriage in sequences. Taylor, Morgan, Maine, McLennan etc. have shown that the institution of marriage has passed through the stages of promiscuity group marriage, polyandrous marriage, polygynous marriage and monogamous marriage. According to **Morgan**, in the beginning there was no marriage institution among human beings. There was a complete **sexual promiscuity** among human beings. There was no restriction among the members in the society regarding sexual relationship. An unregulated animal like sexual anarchy existed during that period. However, there is no substantial evidence to prove it because even the most primitive tribes of India, Australia and Africa don't have complete promiscuity in sex relationships. But despite lack of evidence it is believed to be so. The unregulated animal like sexual anarchy was however checked to some extent by **group marriage** in which all males of a group marry all females of another group. According to Morgan, it was the first stage of institution of marriage. Presently group marriage is not found in India but among tribes of Australia, group marriage is still existing. The group marriage was progressively reduced by customary restrictions by which **polyandry** form of marriage developed gradually where only one woman was shared by a no. of men. Next came **polygyny** where a man had more than one wife. **Monogamy** was attained as the latest form of marriage in which one husband and one wife constitute family.

**Morgan** has identified five main stages of marriage as under :—

- (i) **Consanguine marriage** : This stage had sexual promiscuity and marriage between blood relations was not forbidden.
- (ii) **Punaluant marriage** : Group marriage was prevalent in this stage and all brothers of a group married all sisters of another group.
- (iii) **Syndasmian marriage** : In this stage, one man married one woman, but he was free to establish sex relations with other woman married in the family.
- (iv) **Patriarchal marriage** : In this stage man's ascendancy and dominance in the family had fully been achieved. He could marry many women and had sex relations with them.
- (v) **Monogamous marriage** : This is the present stage of marriage in which one

man can marry one woman and vice-versa.

## **6.7 Conclusion**

We thus found that marriage is the union between man and woman such that the children born to the woman are the legitimate offspring of both the parents. The various rules of marriage includes the rule of endogamy and exogamy whereas its forms includes. Monogamy, polygamy, sororal polygamy, polyandry, fraternal polyandry, group marriage, cross-cousin and parallel cousin and hypergamy. Regarding the evolution of marriage, it has started with consanguine and followed by punaluan, Syndasmian, Patriarchal and Monogamous marriage.

## **6.8 Functions of Marriage**

1. **Social Recognition:** Marriage gives social recognition to all sexual relationships, which otherwise would have many social problems. Marriage alone makes the society accept the relationship of boy and girl, as husband and wife.
2. **Procreation of Children:** Then another function of the marriage is to have legitimate children; The children born as a result of socially recognized marriage are accepted by the society as legitimate and legal heirs to the property and other assets of the family.
3. **Sense of Sympathy:** After the marriage alone the husband and wife and their children develop a sense of sympathy for each other and they begin to share each other's joys and sorrows. They sacrifice for the sake of each other.
4. **Basis of Family:** Then another function of marriage is that it is the basis of family life. As we all know that after marriage family comes into being and with that the virtues of all the family life emerge in the society.
5. **Stability in Relationship:** After marriage alone relationships come into being e.g. the relationship of husband and wife. son or daughter, father in law and mother in law or that of grand-father and grand-mother etc. these relations get stabilized with the passage of time but only after marriage but not before marriage.
6. **Perpetuation of Lineage:** It is after marriage that there is desire to perpetuate the name of the family. The children perpetuate the names of their parents and



then come grand children. great grand children etc. After some time then there is a desire to perpetuate the lineage of the family and it at any stage in the family there are no offshoots, then every effort is made to have then, so that the name of the family continues.

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**Structure**

- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Objectives
- 7.3 Alliance Theory
- 7.4 Basic Features of Alliance Theory
- 7.5 Levi Strauss Contribution to Elementary and Complex Kinship Structure
- 7.6 Analysis of Alliance Theory
- 7.7 L. Dumont Contribution to Alliance Theory
- 7.8 Symmetrical Exchange
- 7.9 Asymmetrical Exchange
- 7.10 Conclusion
- 7.11 References

**7.1 Introduction**

Exogamous groups must by definition obtain women from outside. A principal point in the study of marriage rules and practices concerns politics, alliance and stability. Since all groups are exogamous at some level, marriage necessarily creates alliance outside the nuclear family, the lineage or the clan. These kinds of alliances have implicitly or explicitly argued against those who regard descent and lineage-based solidarity as the most fundamental facts of kinship.

Some influential, classic studies of kinship, notably Evan Pritchard's (1940) and Meyer Fortes's (1945) studies of the Nuer and the Tallensi respectively, focused strongly

on descent-based corporations. They showed how groups with shared unilinear descent were corporate group, united through shared ancestry, was seen as the fundamental fact of kinship in stateless societies.

It is justly famous study of kinship, the elementary structures of kinship (1969), Levi Strauss challenges descent theory in a more theoretical way. He does not regard shared descent, but rather the development of alliances between groups through the exchange of women as the fundamental fact of kinship.

## **7.2 Objectives**

Broad objectives of this chapter is to :-

- Acquaint you with the understanding of alliance theory.
- Main proponents of alliance theory.
- Utility of alliance theory.
- Types of exchange and reciprocity

The broad objectives of the chapter is :-

- To acquaint you with alliance exchange.
- To explain symmetrical and asymmetrical exchange

## **7.3 Alliance theory**

Alliance theory emphasizes the marital bond and relations between groups. It is derived from French structuralism, in particular from the work in the field of kinship by Claude Levi Strauss and Louis Dumont. Structuralism is more concerned with the collective thought of a people than with their social institutions.

The English term alliance, in its technical sense, carries the specific meaning of alliance through marriage, a connotation derived directly from the French word alliance (meaning “marriage”). Alliance theorists pay close attention to those kinship systems in which rules of marriage between groups appear to dominate a large area of social endeavour. In particular, they analyze the rules that determine which people a person may marry and which people he may not. These rules, in turn, are based on rules of incest avoidance.

Thus structuralist anthropologist Levi Strauss and with subsequent developments in the theory of Kinship and marriage stress the structural and organizational importance of alliance rather than of Descent. Taking his clue from structural linguistics and the sociology of Marcel Mauss, where reciprocity was emphasized as a basic mode for humanity. Levi Strauss develops a highly original view of the institution of Kinship. Indeed, he argues that the very formation of society occurs when a man gives his sister away to another man, thereby creating ties of affinity.

#### **7.4 BASIC FEATURES OF ALLIANCE THEORY**

- It holds that the basic principle of kinship is the incest taboo: i.e. the nearuniversal rule that one marries outside of a close category of relatives.
- In tribal societies, this is expressed at the level of the lineage or clan in the rule of exogamy.
- The function of this rule is to establish marriage ties BETWEEN lineages and so knit the society together.
- Most basic form is symmetrical alliance, in which two lineages, groups of lineages or moieties exchange women between them. Levi-Strauss also referred to this as restricted exchange and saw it as disharmonious because only two groups were united in marriage alliances. Basic nomad was two kinship groups exchanging women.
- A different form was asymmetrical alliances, in which wife-giving lineages, wifetaking lineages and others are distinguished and marriages are arranged such that theoretically all lineages can be related to each other in a kind of chain. This Levi-Strauss also termed harmonious exchange. Found in highland south and southeast Asia.

#### **7.5 Levi Strauss Contribution to Elementary and complex kinship structures :-**

A central element in Levi-Strauss perspective is the idea that all Kinship systems are elaborations on four fundamental kin relationships : brother-sister, husband-wife, father-son and mother's brother-sister's son. Levi-s Strauss regarded this 'elementary structure; or 'Kinship atom', inspired by similar structures from structural linguistics as fundamental to Kinship and to human society as such. Some societies are constructed directly on the 'elementary structure', including societies based on a symmetrical alliances.

He emphasises that elementary systems have positive marriage rules; they do not only specify whom one cannot marry, but also whom one can marry. To him, affinity is thus a universal key to the understanding of the integration of society. The nuclear family, which was earlier considered to be the smallest building block of kinship, becomes a secondary structure within this scheme. Thus Levi-Strauss further regarded the principle of cross-cousin marriage as a fundamental expression of reciprocity between kin groups with an elementary kinship system.

According to Levi-Strauss, the incest taboo and exogamy lie at the root of human society. The incest taboo is on the one hand natural and universal, since every society recognizes it, and on the other hand cultural, since exactly which relatives are forbidden to marry vary widely among societies. Generally speaking, the specification of the taboo and the consequent marriage rules take two possible forms; Levi-Strauss called these “elementary” and “complex.”

Elementary kinship structures are those in which there exists a positive rule for marriage to someone of a particular kinship category, for example, to a cross-cousin (father’s sisters’ and mother’s brothers’ children) or someone of a wider category including cross-cousins. In principle, elementary structures offer limited choice of a spouse. Complex kinship structures (which, ironically, are much simpler to understand) are those that have negative marriage rules—*i.e.*, those specifying which persons one may not marry. Since ancient times all Western societies have had complex structures, because under their rules of kinship, brothers, sisters, children, and other close relatives may not marry, although a person may marry anyone else.

Modern societies in most parts of the world have complex structures—those in which the patterns of marriage are not precise or easily discernible and, hence, are “complex.” Many scholars believe that these complex systems emerged from elementary ones. Certain systems fall between the elementary–complex distinction. The traditional kinship systems of some native North American and West African peoples (the so-called Crow-Omaha systems), for example, have a complex set of negative marriage rules, but they have so many such rules that the choice of a spouse is as restricted as in an elementary system. In such societies entire clans, and even clusters of clans presumed to be related, are forbidden as possible spouses.

Since the formulation of Levi-Strauss’s theory in the 1940s, anthropologists

have tried to define more precisely the essential properties of elementary structures. For the British anthropologist Rodney Needham the crucial distinction is not between elementary and complex but between prescriptive and non-prescriptive (formerly called preferential) systems. Prescriptive systems include those in which the kinship terminology defines exactly all the marriage possibilities. In some such societies the term for wife and cross-cousin is the same, whether a man actually marries one of his cross-cousins or not. The implication is simply that a man must marry someone of the category that includes cross-cousins. For a person born into a society with a prescriptive terminology, marriage to a cross-cousin is a logical consequence of the terminology structure itself.

## **7.6 Analysis of Alliance Theory**

Alliance theory has consistently been linked to structural anthropology and its concern for the tracing of the logic of reciprocity and exchange in socio-cultural system.

Given the idea of 'reciprocity' as the general principle underlying kinship organization, Levi Strauss proceeded to examine instances of 'elementary structures of marital exchange, i.e. case where the preferred spouses is positively identified. He began with the most obvious types of 'exchange marriage', so-called, marriage of the type recorded through much of aboriginal Australia and 'dual organisation' of society into exogamous societies. In this type of elementary structure, Group A giveS its women in marriage to Group B, and Group B reciprocally gives its women to Group A. This is termed by him as restricted exchange. However many people traditionally practise the cyclical exchange of women between more than two groups, so that, say, clan A gives women to clan B, which gives women to clan C, which gives women to clan D, which in turn gives women to clan A.

A system where three or more groups are mutually linked through some kind of cyclical exchange of wives may be on a larger scale than society system, since it depends on a greater number of relationships to function. Such a system, where one distinguishes categorically between wife-giver and wife-taker is called as 'asymmetrical alliance system.

Thus one of the major areas of study within alliance theory has been the implications of different types of positive marriage rules in real-life social and political system. Thus, the formal models of direct exchange, of materilineal cross-cousin marriage, of patrilineal cross-cousin marriage and so on, with their implications of moieties, of

marrying in a circle or of 'delayed reciprocity' respectively are far from sufficient accounts of real marriage systems. In practise, the marriage rules and associated kinship terminology may or may not coincide with the empirical existence of the appropriate system of wife-exchanging local groups. Modern Kinship studies have shown that the degree of flexibility and adaptability of kinship term and marriage norm is such that few if any features of social organisation can be predicted from knowledge of the marriage rule in its terminological expression alone.

Another important area of modern alliance theory is the broadening of the study of marriage alliance systems to those societies where there is apparently no positive marriage rule but where nevertheless we may discern patterns of repeated or reciprocal alliance which replicate the same structural principle as are found in the so-called 'elementary system'.

#### **7.7 L. Dumont contribution to Alliance Theory**

His work on 'Hierarchy and marriage alliance in South Indian Kinship (1957) is dedicated to Levi Strauss.' Dumont had begun his ethnographic work in South India as an indologist seeking to study the civilization of Dravidian speaking India. Discovering a remarkable coincidence between indigenous understanding of relationship and Levi Strauss theory of kinship; he became known as the foremost exponent, after Levi Strauss himself, of alliance theory.

Based on his intensive fieldwork among the Kallar, he showed that actual alliance relations are usually short cycles of exchange between local groups. Again, while the terminology points to prescribe bilateral cross-consin marriage, in practise sister exchange is discouraged. To him Dravidian Kinships exemplified the general relevance of alliance as a perspective. In this system, he maintained, 'affinity' is a principle of comparable importance to 'consanguinity'.

#### **7.7 Symmetric Exchange**

The various units like families, bands, lineages, clans, moieties, tribes, they enter into relations of exchange with each other, and form alliances. Once an alliance has been formed, it is perpetuated. That is what elementary systems of marital alliance are about : the perpetuation through time of alliances.

Once we have given you women, we continue to give you women, once we have

taken women from you we continue to take them in perpetuity. This has the effect of laying down not only the category of persons whom one may not marry (same clan or family, parallel cousins etc.) but also that into which one must marry (opposite moiety, dama lineages, 'mother's brothers daughter etc.). This is what anthropologists mean by saying that elementary systems are characterized by a 'positive' marriage rule as well as a negative.

The systems differ in the ways in which they organise this positive marriage rule and have two alternatives, as far as any unit is concerned, its "wife givers" are either the same as its "wife takers" or they are different.

If they are the same, then we are working on the principle of "straight swaps". If they are different, then we are not directly exchanging women, but 'circulating' them. Thus the two types of exchanges differ most fundamentally in the way spouses are transferred between exchange groups. In one type the exchange is reciprocal or symmetric, that is one group may give women to the same group it takes them from.

In the other, the exchange is asymmetric, that is, women always go in one direction between exchange groups, that the group that gives woman to one's own group is different from that which takes women from it.

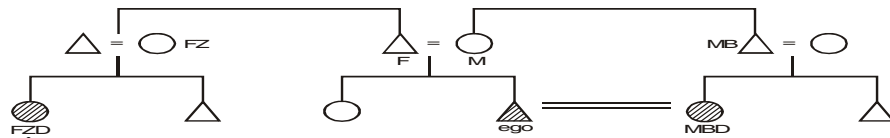
Both types have in common a basis in the operation of positive marriage rules, but it is also important to realize that, in the analytical model, these rules are treated as being observed repeatedly, generation after generation, by all members of the society. Actual alliances are not necessarily concerned nor conducted in such a way and they are certainly not unchangeable nor unbreakable but they form the basis of the way many societies are structured and are the way many peoples view their own social structure.

### **Symmetric Exchange**

The logical assumption underlying symmetric exchanges is that women are continually exchanged between two exogamous groups. In practice, these are very often descent groups or their segments, but exchange groups can also, for example, be village or households, the latter usually lacking continuity across many generations.

The typical diagram labelling only the minimal genealogical specifications shows the exchange of sisters or daughters.

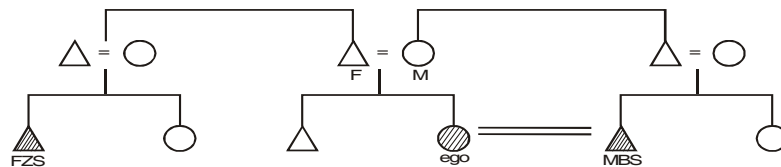




### Explanation :-

From a male ego's point of view, it shows him marrying a woman, who is classed simultaneously as his MBD and FZD.

From a female ego's point of view, it shows her marrying a man who is classed simultaneously as her MBS & FZS.



In both cases, the spouse is a bilateral cross cousin not merely the genealogical bilateral cross cousin but also his or her classificatory equivalents in collateral lines. There are certainly societies in which the genealogical cross cousin is, in fact rarely married, even where such a marriage is regarded ideal in the indigenous view and in other societies particularly he/she may be expressly prohibited, only classificatory equivalents being allowed.

In ego's level, the category which includes male ego's wife may also be seen as including, not only his bilateral female cross cousin (classificatory MBD/FZD) but also BW and WZ, because the category will include all the potential spouses of male ego and his brothers.

His sisters (that, is female ego's) HZ will also be included here because the latter are potentially her MBD/FZD the category which includes the brothers of MBD/FZD, that is ego's classificatory MBS/FZS will take wives from the category that includes his sister, hence the category MBS/FZS may also be seen as including ZH, HB and WB.

Disregarding individualizing terms such as those for wife or husband, which may or may not present, for example, the position marked for male ego, covers his brothers too, but in principle, it will also include his male parallel cousins (classificatory and actual FBS/MZS). Thus parallel cousins take their wives from the same category as this ego. In the same way, the category that covers ego's sister will include female parallel cousins

(classificatory and actual FBD/MZD).

Levi-Strauss has characterised “Symmetric Exchange” as restricted exchange and “Asymmetric Exchange” as a “Generalized Exchange”.

Exchange is “restricted” where it has to involve two groups who exchange directly. Such as system can only “grow” by splitting into four, eight, sixteen etc. groups and by continuing to exchange directly. This might suit small populations with a small number of groups but it is difficult to run it with large and complex societies. The generalized method, on the other hand, can expand indefinitely.

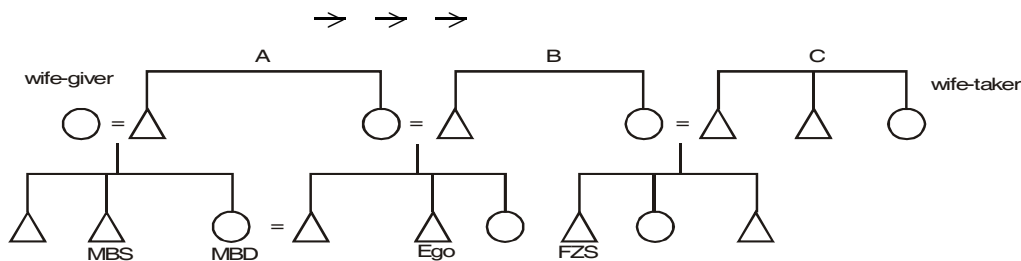
## 7.8 Asymmetrical Exchange

In this system, women move asymmetrically between alliance groups so that ego’s group takes women from a different group from the one it gives them to. This means that atleast three groups are required, and the model usually envisages them as marrying in a circle.

There are two broad separate groups. One consisting of ego’s wife-givers, the other is wife takers. A male ego will take his own wife from the former but gives his sister to the latter. This means that the woman he marries will be his classificatory MBD (the matrilineal cross cousin, that is she is not also FZD). While for a female ego, the correct category of spouse will be that including FZS but not including MBS.

Although atleast three exchange groups are necessary, there may be, and frequently are, many more which are again thought of as marrying in a circle. It may be simply stated thus : “wife-givers cannot be wife-taker. A group cannot give women to a group from which it has taken women.

In such a system, if group B takes women from group A then it must give women to group C, which in turn must give women to a group other than B. It could of course give them to A and here the exchange comes in. The women could cycle round the three groups. A → B → C → A..... of-course, many more than three groups could join in as many as possible.



### **An Example of Asymmetrical Exchange: The Purum of Assam**

In Asymmetrical exchange, the lineages can either be ranked or unranked. The Purum are unranked. The Kachin have ranked lineages. The crucial rule in such systems is that a lineage that gives wives to yours cannot also take wives from yours. All lineages are therefore divided into:

- Wife-giving lineages.
- Wife-receiving or wife-taking lineages.
- One's own lineage.
- Other lineages with whom marriages have not been contracted.

Marriages are with the classificatory mother's brother's daughter. Hence women characteristically move in one direction, goods and bride-service move in the opposite direction. Women from inappropriate lineages are often adopted into the appropriate lineage. This typically is associated with a dualistic symbolic worldview.

### **7.9 An Example of Symmetrical Exchange: The Kareira of Australia**

Four section system two sections subdivided" into two more by generation. Karimera and Burung are in a father/son relationship; so are Palyeri and Banaka. Both exchange wives between themselves; i.e. Karimera and Palyeri will exchange women and so will the Burung and Banaka. Entire universe is divided into 'us' and 'them'. those who you cannot marry and those who you can and should. Children of a Karimera man and Palyeri woman will be Burung; children of a Burung man and Banaka woman will be Karimera. Vice-versa if we consider women, since this is a patrilineal society. Other Australian societies are in 8 section systems, in which each of the two are further subdivided. One only has to know one's father's lineage in order to know one's own lineage and who is marriageable.

#### **Example - 2**

Let us take a system of eight lineages A to H and run through some of the possibilities. Let us say that

A gives women to lineages BHF and takes from DEGC

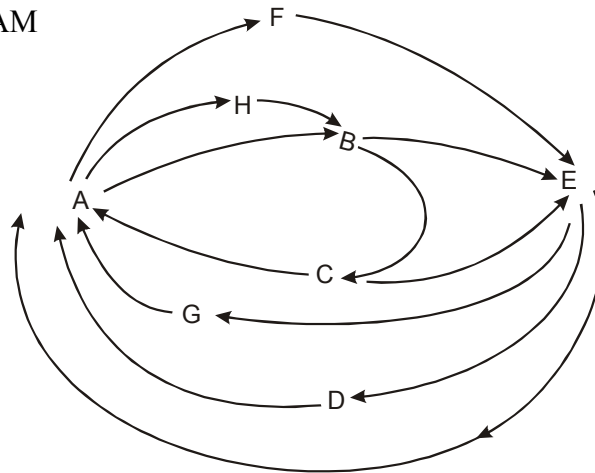
E gives women to lineages ADG and takes from BFC

B gives women to lineages ECF and takes from HA

### Possible sequences

|    |   |   |   |   |              |   |   |   |
|----|---|---|---|---|--------------|---|---|---|
| 1. | A | B | C | A |              | ← | ← | ← |
| 2. | A | B | F | E | A            | ← | ← | ← |
| 3. | A | H | B | E | A            | ← | ← | ← |
| 4. | A | H | B | C | A            | ← | ← | ← |
| 5. | A | F | E | G | A and so on. | ← | ← | ← |

### FLOW DIAGRAM



Thus, for example there is a cycle  $E \rightarrow G \rightarrow A \rightarrow H \rightarrow B \rightarrow E$  and many others.

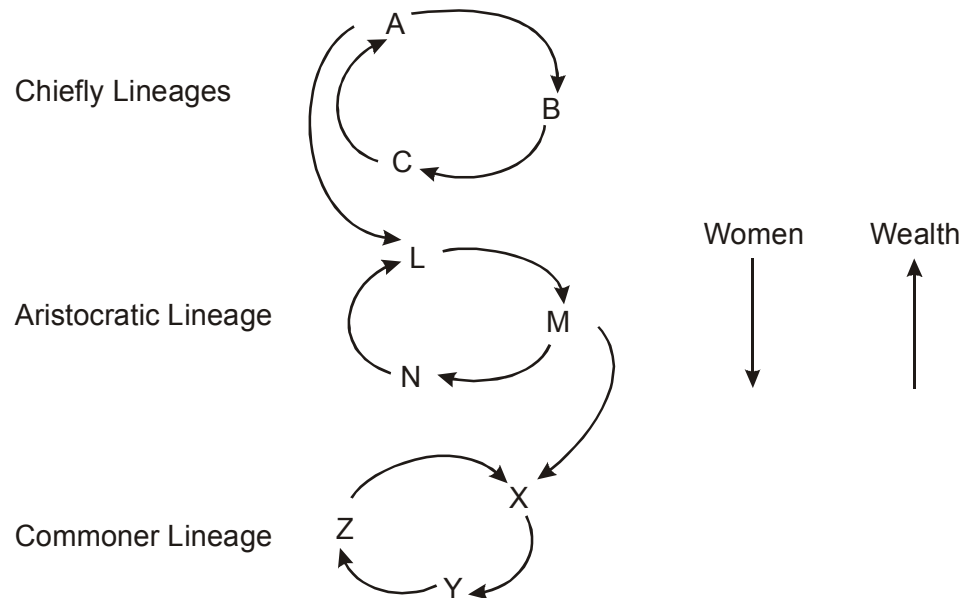
The main thing to note here is that in sharp contrast to the direct exchange systems, the 'debt is never wiped out. B never gives back a woman to A. If wife givers are superior to wife takers, then A will always be superior to B. However, no one is absolutely inferior in such systems, a group will always be a debtor to some groups but a creditor to others.

Very often the 'debt' will be in a sense cancelled by the payment of bride-wealth. This does not alter the dominant-subordinate relationships. The bride-wealth becomes a kind of "tribute" paid by an inferior to a superior. But this is not an hierarchial system. There is a 'peck order' but it is not linear. In a linear peck order, A pecks B who pecks C who pecks no one. In peck order, A is superior to B who is superior to C who is superior to A. It becomes a cyclical peck order.

Insofar as the peck order is cyclical, such a system must be to some extent ‘democratic’, no one group can dominate all the others, but the superior-inferior relationship still exist to minimal extent.

Wife givers are also called mayu and wife takers as dama and in a system consisting of chiefly lineages, woman pass ‘down’ the system and wealth passes ‘up’ it as bride wealth is paid by dama groups to their mayu. As the chiefs are expected to give lavish feasts for their retainers, some of the wealth that flows up to them is redistributed.

The ideal model of the system is as follows :



Here in A's domain there are three aristocratic lineages L, M, N. A is mayu to L. There are three commoner lineages, X, Y, Z. M is mayu to X. Thus within the classes the system is circular and ‘democratic’ between the classes it is hierarchial.

Thus both Symmetric and Asymmetric Exchanges systems operates in the society but not in strict manner because by one and other means both overlaps after a gap of generation or time period.

### 1. **Hypergamy or Anuloma**

It is a form of marriage which allows a man of higher caste or Varna to marry

a woman of lower caste or Varna. The old Indian epics and other literatures bear evidence of the practice of Hypergamy. Until recent times, the practice of Hypergamy prevailed among that particular sect of Bengali Brahmins, who were regarded as noble (Kulin) Brahmins. Everybody had the desire to marry his daughter into the family of the Kulin Brahmin.

The Kulin Brahmins were considered to be noble persons of very high status and descendants of very learned people. Hypergamy was not confined to Bengal. There were some sections of people in Kerala like the Nambudri Brahmins who, though superior to others, married the Nayar women, who are of lower castes.

## **2. Hypogamy or Pratiloma**

Hypogamy or pratiloma is another form of inter-caste marriage. It allows men of lower caste or Varna to marry women of higher caste or Varna. The ancient law givers, especially Manu discouraged the practice of Hypogamy, but a number of scholars have recognised it as an acceptable form of marriage. It is said that Kakustha Varma, a Brahmin king gave his daughter in marriage to a non-Brahmin king of the Gupta dynasty.

In another instance Jajati, a Kshatriya king married Devayani a Brahmin girl. Similarly a number of instances of pratiloma are found in our modern society. This inter-caste marriage is becoming very popular in the modern Indian society. The government also legalized the inter-caste marriage under Hindu-Marriage Act, 1955.

## **7.10 Conclusion**

In this chapter, we talked about alliance exchange. We find that there are two types of exchange—Symmetrical and Asymmetrical. In the symmetric exchange one group may give women to the same group it takes them from. It is also called as ‘direct exchange’. Whereas in the asymmetrical alliance, women always goes in one direction between exchange group, so that the group that gives women to one’s own group is different from that which takes women from it. It is also called as ‘indirect exchange.’

In this chapter, we find the importance credited to alliance theory, just like the descent theory. It has been shown that how through restricted marriages in the elementary system, and with the positive rules of marriage, the alliance relations are put to prominence. The work of Levi Strauss and L. Dumont are good example of this alliance theory.

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**Structure**

- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Objectives
- 8.3 Marriage transactions
- 8.4 Marriage payment
- 8.5 A.R. Radcliffe Brown's—Dowry and Bride wealth
- 8.6 Conclusion
- 8.7 References

**8.1 Introduction**

As we know that marriage creates new social relationships and reciprocal rights between the spouses and between each and the kin of the other. Thus every society has recognized procedures for creating such relationships and right, and for making it known that they have been created.

Although, the rights that are created by a marriage are reciprocal—*i.e.*, both side gain something. In the simpler societies, and indeed in some industrialized ones, women are never wholly independent. A woman must always be under the guardianship of some man, and when she marries her original guardian hands over some or all of his responsibility for her to her husband. It is correct to say that men dispose of women when marriages are made, although women may be allowed some freedom of choice. The woman's guardian gives to some man the rights over her to which a husband is entitled, whatever these may be in a given society. For these the husband makes some return, a return that should be thought of as part of a chain of mutual favours and not as a purchase price.



The rights acquired by a husband differ markedly between patrilineal societies and those which are not patrilineal. In the former, the woman's kin give how the means of continuing his line and keeping his name alive, of building a numerous household around him, of being remembered as an ancestor when he dies. It is no wonder that in so many African societies, the husband and his kin are expected to give in return a number of cattle – commonly called bride wealth. It is not surprising that the gifts or services that the husband in a matrilineal society renders to his wife's kinsmen impose much less of a strain on his resources than would the bride wealth. Goods and services due, as these are, from one party to another in virtue of status relationship are sometimes called prestations.

## **8.2 Objectives**

After going through this unit, you will generate a knowledge about :

- Exchange took place during marriage.
- Types of marriage exchange.
- Significance of marriage transaction.
- Difference between Dowry and Bride wealth

## **8.3 Marriage transaction**

The study of marriage transaction revolves around the major distinction between bride wealth and dowry, though bride-service, sister exchange and token gifts provide alternative general forms. The typology is crude but the distinction is important, as Radcliffe Brown indicates, Bride wealth is particularly characteristic of Africa, while dowry is found, in varying forms, in all the major cultures in Europe and Asia. While bride of marrying more than one wife (polygyny), dowry is linked with monogamy. Moreover, while bride wealth circulates wealth throughout the society, in the exchange of rights over property for rights over women, dowry is a kind of anticipated inheritance whereby the bride receives her 'lot' or portion of the familial estate at her marriage.

Murdock (1949, 1967, p. 155) recognized six primary "modes of marriage": bride service, bride wealth, token bride wealth, dowry, gift exchange, and woman exchange. He also recognized that some societies have an absence of transactions

and that many societies have primary and secondary marriage transactions. Schlegel and Flou (1987) revised Murdock's cross-cultural codes by adding a seventh type of marriage transaction, "indirect dowry." This term had been previously used by Goody (1973, p. 2) to refer to the transfer of goods from the groom's parents directly to the bride, who may then share all or some of these goods with her husband.

### **The Newly Added Marriage Transactions:**

**Groom service.** When a bride provides service to the groom and his family for one week or more prior to marriage, we consider this "groom service." Groom and bride service are similar in that both can function as tests of the potential spouse's suitability as a marriage partner and household member. Groom and bride service also serve as training for the duties a spouse will assume on a full-time basis upon marriage.

**Groom wealth.** We define groom wealth as the bride, bride's parents, or bride's relatives making a nonfood, material transfer to the groom's parents or relatives.

**Dowry from groom's parents.** Contemporary anthropologists generally understand dowry to be a transfer of wealth from the bride's parents to the bride, which upon marriage becomes the property of the couple. However, in some of the world's societies, it is customary for the groom's parents to transfer wealth to the couple upon their marriage.

Gift-giving to the couple. Both kinds of dowry are transfers of wealth from parents to offspring. "Gift-giving to the bride and groom" is different from both kinds of dowry in that gifts come from the couple's parents' relatives and friends rather than from their parents. Gift giving to the couple is found among the Saami of Finland. Saami brides and grooms receive gifts during a series of lavish banquets on the days following the church wedding ceremony.

**Gift-giving to the bride's parents and to the groom's parents.** Related to gift giving to the bride and groom are two other transactions: "gift-giving to the groom's parents" by the groom's parents' relatives and friends, and "gift giving to the bride's parents" by the bride's parents' relatives and friends. Marriage-related expenditure,

can be quite substantial for the groom's and bride's parents, and these two gift-giving customs offset some of their expenditures. This is the case for the Kanuri, an agricultural group living in western Nigeria, where the bride's and groom's parents are responsible for a number of substantial expenses.

### **Revised Typology for Coding Marriage Transactions**

1. Woman exchange: Parents of family "A" provide a wife for a son of family "B," and parents of family "B" provide a wife (or son of family "A."
2. Gift exchange: The bride's parents and relatives exchange nonfood, material items with the groom's parallel and relatives.
3. Bride service: The groom works for the bride and her family for one week or more.
4. Groom service: The bride works for the groom and his family for one week or more.
5. Bride wealth: The groom, groom's parents, or groom's relatives make a nonfood, material transfer to the bride's parents or relatives.
6. Groom wealth: The bride, bride's parents, or bride's relatives make a nonfood, material transfer to the groom's parents or relatives.
7. Dowry from bride's parent): The bride's parents make a nonfood, material transfer to the couple.
8. Dowry from groom's parents: The groom's parents make a nonfood, material transfer to the couple.
9. Gift-giving to the couple: : The couple's friends or the couple's parents' relatives give gifts to the couple.
10. Gift-giving to bride's parents: The bride's parents' relatives and friends give nonfood, material items to the bride's parents.
11. Gift-giving to groom's parents: The groom's parents' relatives and friends give nonfood, material items to the groom's parents.

#### **8.4 Marriage Payments**

The topic of marriage payments has been the focus of considerable anthropological discussion and debate, as several authors have attempted to establish and refine schemes of correlation between marriage payments and other features of social organization : Marriage payments may take the form of bridewealth when the payment flows from the husband or his group to the wife's group, or of dowry when the payment flows from the wife's group to the husband's group or typically to the couple themselves. The use of the term 'brideprice' was rejected in anthropological writings due to its connotation of 'buying and selling' a life, and the term bridewealth was substituted to refer to the flow of goods or payments which compensate the wife's group for the loss or transfer of certain rights in the woman and her children. Common to most anthropological discussion of marriage payments are the agreement that these payments serve to legitimize marriage relationships at the same time that they signify or mark the transfer of rights in human and children.

The structural functional school produced several interpretations of marriage payments as 'compensation' for the transfer of a person or rights in that person from one kin group to another, for the granting of rights in offspring, and so on. It was suggested in consequence that bridewealth exists in patrilineal societies where marriage transfers the productivity and reproductive powers of a wife to her husband's group.

Goody, in a volume of essays on bridewealth and dowry (1973), suggests that these should be analyzed in terms of the wider context of property relations. He suggests that dowry is a form of premarital inheritance associated with bilateral kinship systems, while bridewealth is associated with unilineal systems. Dowry in Europe and Asia, he argues, is associated with the hierarchy and hypergamy of stratified society. On the other hand, African systems characterized by bridewealth are associated with egalitarian societies where status differential in marriage are insignificant. Goody suggests that dowry is associated with a tendency to Monogamy as well as with system of marriage alliance which stress 'status negotiation. Bridewealth, on the other hand, is associated with unilineal descent corporations as the central property holding groups, with polygamy and with the lack of status negotiation in marriage.

Other approaches to marriage payments include that of Meillassoux (1972), who suggests that control over bridewealth permits elders to perpetuate the dependency of young men in age-stratified societies, since the elders who control the property of Kin groups are thus enabled to negotiate and control marriage relationships. Levi-Strauss, (1969) on the other hand, argues that marriage payments are 'tokens' in system of delayed reciprocity.

#### **8.5 A.R. Radcliffe Brown's – Dowry and Bridewealth (1950)**

He has analyzed the African customs relating to marriage. To him marriage is a compact between two bodies of persons, the Kin of the woman who agree to wed their daughter to the man, and his Kinmen who pledge themselves that the terms of the agreement will be carried out. The bridegroom and his Kinsmen must promise to make the payment to her father. He must also state what present he will give to his bride for permitting the physical consummation of the marriage; this was the so-called 'morning gift' to be period after the bridal night. There was further an agreement as to the amount of the dowry, the portion of the husband's wealth of which wife should have the use during her lifetime if her husband died before her. The agreement is concluded by giving of the wed, the symbolic payment made by the bridegroom and his Kin to the woman's Kinsmen.

In most African marriage, as in the early English marriage, the making of a payment of goods or services by the bridegroom to the bride's Kin is an essential part of the establishment of 'legality'. Some people regard payment of this kind as being a 'purchase' of a wife. However, a marriage in many African societies involves a whole series of prestations (payments, gifts or services), and while the most important of these are from the husband and his Kin to wife's Kin, there are frequently some in the direction.

There is, of course, an immense diversity in the particulars of prestations connected with betrothal and marriage in different societies and in each case they have to be studied, with regard to their meanings and functions, in relation to the society in which they are found. For general theory —

In the first place it is necessary to recognize that whatever economic importance some of these transactions may have, it is their symbolic aspect that we chiefly have to

consider. This may be made clear by the English custom of the engagement ring. Though an engagement ring may have considerable value, the giving of it is not regarded as an economic or at least not as a business transaction. It is symbolic.

In what follows the term 'marriage payment' will be used for the major payment or payments made by the bridegroom to the wife's Kin. Where there is a payment from the wife's Kin to the husband this will be called the 'counter payment'. The marriage payment was called 'the price of unfostering' and was thus interpreted as a return to the father or guardian of the expense of rearing a daughter. But in somewhat earlier times the payment was differently interpreted. It was a payment for the transfer of the woman's mund from the father to the husband, whereby the latter gained and the former lost certain rights. Marriage payment can be regarded as an indemnity or compensation given by the bridegroom to the bride's Kin for the loss of their daughter.

Further, African marriage system can also be interpreted as an alliance between two families. The role of the marriage payment is a method of establishing or maintaining a friendly relation between separate groups or between individuals belonging to separate groups. It can also be seen as the payment received for a woman's marriage may be used to obtain a wife for a member of her family, usually her brother.

### **Bride Price**

The first European observers of bride wealth arrangements concluded that it constituted an actual purchase of wife akin to buying a slave. The general anthropological interpretation is that the actual funds transferred are less significant as economic inducements or assets than as counters in a social exchange system that binds the bride's and groom's families together in the course of the marriage. Thus the exchange of material items (money, cattle, pigs) as well as of women assume mainly political and symbolic value. Sometimes they constitute a special purpose currency that can be used only for marriage payments. Bride wealth also contributes to the stability of the marriage. Since they often must be repaid if the marriage is dissolved, a woman's family has an interest in resolving any problems between their daughter and her husband to ensure the stability of the union.

In spite of their obvious integrative importance, the value and relative scarcity of bride wealth payments does have implications for the accumulation and use of

both physical and social capital. In general the need for bride payment supports the institution of polygyny, where men marry more than one wife, since it will take a man a long time to accumulate the necessary marriage wealth. In the process, older men, who have had more time to acquire the requisite resources, will be able to marry several women before their juniors have assembled enough wealth to begin their own marital careers. Their larger families will be able to attest to their prestige and social status and provide them with a considerable base to accumulate more wealth.

The institution of bride wealth and polygyny are present in many societies. They involve a variety of forms, in many instances special items that are used exclusively for marriage payments. In some areas special valuable shells or stones are used. In others, domestic animals such as pigs or cattle are prominent. For example, many South African societies, such as the Zulu or the Swazi, require bride payments, known as lobola, in the form of cattle, which are considered to be a special wealth object whose exchange is restricted to a few highly prominent social transactions (Kuper 1982).

The marriage cattle are transferred from the groom or his family to the bride's father or brother. However, the recipient of the payment does not fully assume the right to dispose of the animals involved. If his daughter fails to bear children or becomes divorced, he must return them to his former in-laws. He may otherwise use them to acquire wives for himself or other members of his family. A father is expected to provide first wives for his sons, although this contribution, as many other transactions in the system, sets up a debt. A son must hand over lobola payment that he receives from his first daughter's marriage as a repayment to his father.

In the South African system marriage cattle form the focus of an alliance system similar to one constructed through cross cousin marriage, except that cattle as well as women are systematically transferred from family to family. In some cases lobola and cross cousin marriage are interrelated. Among the Lovedu, a man holds a special relationship to his "cattle-linked sister", whose marriage payment he receives. He will usually use these cattle to acquire a wife of his own, a benefit for which he becomes indebted to his sister. Accordingly he is required to give her the right to determine the marriage of one of his daughters and forgo any expectation of a bride payment. His sister may marry off her niece to her son, creating a matrilineal cross cousin marriage.

She can also give her to her own husband to obtain a dependent co-wife, or may even marry her in her own right and become a female husband, within the Lovedu system of “woman marriage”.

The South African example introduces a curious problem related to the status of family and lineage groupings. The alliance theory of marriage maintains that the circulation of women and cattle binds the groups that make up the society into a system of reciprocal exchange and cooperation in which all units are equal. However, both economic and/or demographic conditions can create or support a situation in which the groups involved assume higher or lower statuses according to the number of women or the amount of cattle they possess. In the South African Systems economic, political, and social inequalities are actually structural features of marriage institutions. Selected patrilineages assume aristocratic statuses in numerous kingdoms and chiefdoms in the region and maintain and validate their leadership positions specifically in terms of the lobola system. They possess larger herds of cattle and exchange them for wives according to a pattern in which wife gives cattle recipients are subordinate to wife takers/cattle givers. This arrangement is term hypergamy, an institution in which women marry upward rather than in an egalitarian circle. They accumulate at the top, where the major power holders benefit and enhance their status by having many wives in return for the redistribution of their cattle to lower ranking groups. High status occupants includes kings and ranks of subordinate chiefains and sometimes queens, and other female power holders, who use their wives, and cattle as political currency in the same way as their male counterparts. For example the Lovedu rain queen, regularly received wives as tribute from all the districts of her realm and their numbers may have been as high as a hundred women (Kuper 1982:72)

## **8.6 Conclusion**

Thus we found that marriage transaction revolves around the major distinction between bridewealth and dowry. While bridewealth tends to be associated with the possibility of polygyny, dowry is linked with monogamy. Further marriage payment is a complex institution having many varieties in form and function. In Africa the marriage payment is the objective instrument by which a ‘legal’ marriage is established. In some instance it is a compensation to the woman’s family for the loss of member.



## **8.7 References**

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### Structure

- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Objectives
- 9.3 Rules of Residence
- 9.4 Conclusion
- 9.5 References

#### 9.1 Introduction

Although it is tempting to look at family structure and Kinship organizations as part of human nature, in fact there is great variability from one society to another as to how such relations are defined. Because many smaller scale societies base their entire social structure on kin relations, Kinship studies have been called “the a, b, c’s” of ethnography (the study of culture). Kinship is divided into several key areas. The study of descent focus on how corporate groups (people who have rights and obligations in common) are defined. The study of nomenclature system—the terms that people employ when referring to kin—complements the focus on descent. **Resident Patterns—the rules or preferences for who lives with whom—is the third focus the kinship studies.**

The residence patterns are used by sociologists to describe who lives with whom. The question of how households are defined is linked to other elements of kinship and social structure. The term **Residence** includes the question of right or authority over, **place, property, house etc.**

#### 9.2 Objectives

The main idea of this unit is to familiarise you with :-

- The idea of rules of residence.
- The types of residence rules find in different societies.
- The significance of residence rules on other social organizations.

### 9.3 Rules of Residence :-

**1. Patrilocal :-** (Virilocal) In it, the role of man is important, a woman lives with her husband's kin after marriage. The majority of known societies has male-centered residence. Seventy one percent of 1179 societies of Murdock's ethnographic sample are patrilocal in nature. Residence tends to be patrilocal if males **contributed of more to the economy**. Where men do most of the subsistence work, residence is more likely to be patrilocal. The **Khasas**, though Polyandrous are patrilineal and patrilocal. It has been pointed out that, where men must work cooperatively such as in societies dependent on hunting or intensive agriculture, there will be patrilocal rule of residence.

**Ember and Ember** suggest that the type of residence depend on the type of warfare practised in a society. When the warfare is internal, residence is almost always patrilocal rather than matrilineal.

**2. Matrilocal :-** (or Uxori local) In matrilocal residence rule, the husband lives with the wife's kin after marriage. Internal piece is more maintained in matrilocal residence like **Iroquois of Newyork** or Huron of Ontario as matrilocality is incompatible with polygyny. Among the **Nayars of Malabar**, the Khasis and Garos of the residence does not necessarily add to the status of a wife, although it certainly does to that of her kin. The husband has a secondary position in the wife's family where his children live.

Among the Cewa and Yao of Malawi, when a man first marries he must live at his wife's home, but later he may be allowed to remove her to a village of his own matrilineal kin.

Matrilocality would appear to be adaptive in horticultural societies where women have an important role in the economy. Ember and Ember suggested that where the warfare is external that means warfare takes place between societies rather than within them, residence is almost always matrilineal in nature.

The **Hopi in the American South West** have traditionally preferred a matrilineal

residence pattern. When combined with matrilineality, this gives women a relatively high status in society. It is important to note, however, that neither matrilineality nor matrilocality implies that a society is matriarchal. Not all matrilineal societies are matrilocal.

**3. Avunculocal :-** A characteristic pattern that undermines the authority women might have in a matrilineal system is called **avunculocality**. In this type the married couple is expected to live with the **husbands mother's brother**. It is the uncle-nephew link that connects the associated nuclear families of adjacent generation to form a single domestic group. The avunculocal residential family enhances solidarity among the males in the female discut group by concentrating them in a single residence. Although avunculocal residence pattern is relatively rare, all avunculocal societies are matrilineal. The mother's brother are closest male relative who play an important role in decision making in societies of matrilineal. Nephews and nieces are brought up in the maternal uncle's family in the condition of avunculoal residence. Among the Trobrian ders, a boy is grown up in his father's house but when he marries and sets up house, he is expected to live in the village of his mother's brother where he has a claim to land.

Avunculocality may be way of keeping related men together after marriage to provide for quick mobilization in case of surprise attack from near by societies. Avunculocality probably occurs so often because males continue to dominate the affairs of matrilineal groups when warfare has not been suppressed.

The **Ashanti** of **Ghana** moves into house of his mother's brother after he marries, as the Ashanti traces descent through the female line and his mother's brother, not his father, is the closest male relative. His uncle then becomes the head of an avunculocal extended family. In Polynesia as well as Africa, the avunculocal residence is more prevalent form of post-marital residence pattern.

In this type, the descent may be traced through the women, therefore the actual authority figure in the household is mother's brother. **B. Malinowski** conducted a classic study of this kind of system and the impact it had on the psychodynamics of the family among the **Trobriand Islanders**, Publishing his findings as **The sexual life of Savages in North Western Malanesia (1929)**.

**4. Bilocal residence :-** In this type, the couple has the choice of living with either the wife's or the husband's family. The pattern is one of the bilocal residence. The biolocality usually reflects a high degree of mobility and flexibility among the nuclear families which is useful for hunters and gatherers of Kung-san.

Bilocality, according to **Elman Service**, is likely to occur in societies that have recently suffered a severe loss of population because of the introduction of new infectious diseases in several societies of Asia and Africa by contact of Europeans.

The structural variability of this form of the family is reflective of the unstable techno-environmental conditions of the people among whom it is found on.

**5. Neolocal :-** In Neolocal residence, it is the form of married couple to establish an independent residence. The North American is associated with advantages in respect to wage labour opportunities and the substitute of price market money exchange for kinship-mediated forms of exchange. Neolocality depend upon a certain level of economic independent and is linked to a kin system based on nuclear families rather than on larger descent group. The North American nomenclature patterns, which provides specific term for close family members only but for more distant relatives it fit into the generally category. Kin system. A high level of geographic mobility contributes to all these features of North American kin relations. In societies in which larger extended families rather than nuclear families form the building blocks of societies neolocal residence is not common.

**6. Patri-Matrilocal :-** In this type, the husband and wife live in turns in their houses. A transitory role of residence, intermediate between the matrilocal and patrilocal types. It reveals a special combination of matrilocal and patrilocal residences that alternate periodically throughout the married life of a couple.

**7. Natolocal :-** The wife and husband after marriage, live in their native residences. Natolocal refers to residence in the house or village of one's birth, which, taken literally, can usually only describe the situation for one spouse, especially if the reference is to a house.

#### **9.4 Conclusion**

Residence is not necessarily uniform either throughout the life cycle or throughout the society, and should often be seen as a matter of preference or mere tendencies

rather than hard and fast rules.

Residence patterns are used by sociologists to describe who lives with whom. The question of how household are defined is linked to other elements of kinship and social structure.

Residence patterns are rarely hard and fast rules; more often, such pattern are generally accepted ideals. In much of the world, tradition patterns are being disrupted as economic, social and demographic changes makes the classic norms more difficult to maintain.

However, the possible rules of residence includes the category like– Patrilocal, Matrilocal, Avunculocal, Bilocal, Neolocal, Patri-Matri local and Natolocal.

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## FAMILY

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|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <b>Course No. SOC-C-102</b> | <b>Lesson No. 10</b>                     |
| <b>Semester-I</b>           | <b>Structure and Functions of Family</b> |
|                             | <b>Unit-III</b>                          |

### Structure

- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Objectives
- 10.3 Meaning, Characteristic and Features of Family
- 10.4 Forms of Family
- 10.5 Structure of the Family
- 10.6 Functions of the Family
- 10.7 Family and Household
- 10.8 Conclusion
- 10.9 References

### 10.1 Introduction

The family is the most important primary group in society. All societies both large and small, primitive and civilized, ancient and modern have some form of family or the other. As a reproductive or a biological unit, a family is composed of a man and a woman having a socially approved sexual relationship and whatever offspring they might have. As a social unit, a family is defined as a group of persons of both sexes, related by marriage, blood or adoption, performing roles based on age, sex and relationship, and socially distinguished as making up a single household or a sub-household.

Apart from above understanding about the idea of family, it is also marked by various structures and functions which helps in evaluating and analyzing the institution of

family in a sociological framework. But before going into its structure and functions, let us understand the meaning and characteristics of family.

## 10.2 Objectives

The major aim of this unit is to —

- provide you the idea of family
- identify characteristic of family
- provide you the structure of family
- emphasize the function of family

## 10.3 Meaning, Characteristics and Features of Family

The meaning of family can be better understood through various definitions. Let us view the definition given by various social scientists.

**Burgess and Locke** – ‘Family is a group of persons united by household interacting and inter-communicating with each other in their respective social roles of husband and wife, father and mother, son and daughter, brother and sister, creating a common culture.’

**MacIver** – ‘Family is a group defined by sex-relationship sufficiently precise and enduring to provide for the procreation and upbringing of children.’

**G.P. Murdock** – ‘The family is a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, atleast two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually co-habiting adults.’

### Characteristics

- (i) **Mating-relationship** – Family is an outcome of union between male and female for mating.
- (ii) **System of nomenclature** – Every family is known or recognized by a distinctive name.
- (iii) **Common residence** – Family requires a home or household to live in. After marriage, the newly wed couples have to live together in a specific home.
- (iv) **Economic Provision** – Family provides for the satisfaction of the economic



needs of its members.

- (v) **Form of Marriage** – Family is an outcome of specific form of marriage. It can be through monogamy, polygamy, polyandry or group marriage.

### **Features of the Family**

- (i) **Universality** – According to Murdock, family is a universal institution. There is no human society in which some form of the family is present.
- (ii) **Emotional basis** – The family is grounded in emotions and sentiments. It is based on our impulse of mating, procreation, material love and parental support. It is built upon sentiments of love, affection, sympathy, cooperation and friendship.
- (iii) **Limited Size** – As a primary group its size is necessarily limited. It seems to be the smallest social unit.
- (iv) **Nuclear position in social structure** – It is the nucleus of all other social organizations. The whole social structure is built of family units. It influences various aspects of society.
- (v) **Responsibility of Members** – The members of the family has certain responsibilities, duties and obligations. The smooth running of family depends on how best the members discharge their responsibilities in coordination with the other individuals of the family.
- (vi) **Social Regulation** – The family is guarded both by social taboos and by legal regulations. The attempt of members is to retain its strength.

### **10.4 Forms of Family**

Of all the social organizations, large or small, family is of the greatest sociological significance. It occupies the central position in our social structure. It is the first and the most immediate social environment to which a child is exposed. From the composition and the principle of integration underlying the family, it is obvious that it is a functional unit. It grows out of biological needs, particularly those of the expectant mother and the infant child, who cannot support and live by themselves.

According to Madan and Majumdar, there are two ways of looking at the family. It can be regarded and studied as one of the universal and permanent institutions of mankind, *i.e.*, as a functional unit. There is yet another way of studying the family,

that of regarding it as a group, or a deliberately formed association. Such an approach would study the form and the content of the family *i.e.* its character and composition, as also its variations from time to time and place to place.

It has been pointed out that the family has a biological matrix; it is the expectant mother and the infant who require familial protection most. However it is never the mother and the infants alone who constitute a family; there are always the mother's mate and their children, who complete the initial membership. This basic grouping of the mates and their children, has been called by various names such as the nuclear, the immediate or the primary family. The implication of all these terms is that the nucleus of all types of families consist of those individuals who are bound together by a procreative urge and grouped with their children into a protective-cum productive association.

### **Forms of Family**

It is difficult to enumerate the various forms of family because of the wider application of this institution. However, the forms of family can be identified on the basis of certain criteria like the size, descent, residence, marriage and others, which are universally known.

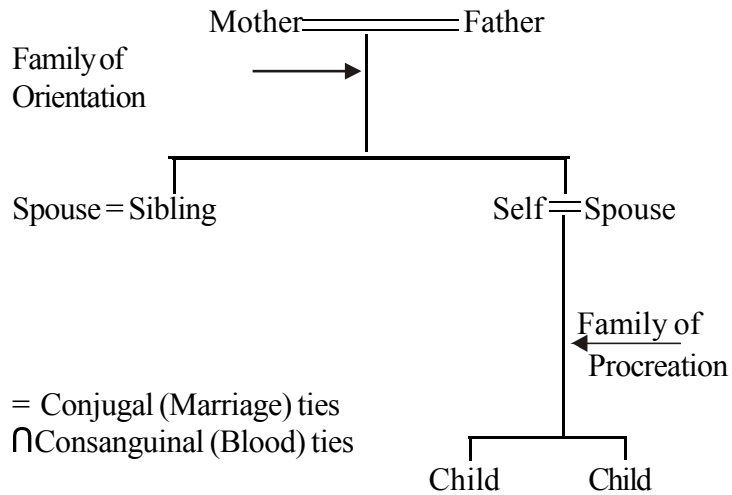
Let us understand the various forms of family on the basis of specific criteria:

**(i) On the Basis of Kinship ties :** On this basis, the family has been classified as Consanguineous family and Conjugal family.

*(a) Consanguineous family :* If a nucleus of blood relatives is surrounded by a fringe of spouses, the resultant grouping is called a consanguineous family. It consist of members related by birth and thus it is more stable. Maturation of children or break up of the marriage bond does not destroy the consanguineous family. Owing to marriage between close relatives being universally ruled out, the consanguineous family can meet any demand of its members except that for sexual gratification; and it is this fact that necessitates the fringes of spouses. Thus emphasis here is more on blood relationship and not the marriage basis.

*(b)* There are two types of conjugal families - (a) Family of Orientation (b)

Family of Procreation.



### Types of Conjugal Families

The type of family in which there is a nucleus of spouses and their offspring surrounded by a fringe of relatives is called a conjugal family. The emphasis here is on the conjugal bond, and therefore this type of family is not stable and it disintegrate with the death of the parents.

(ii) **On the basis of Size :** The size of the family can take the forms like —

- (a) *Nuclear family* : It can be defined as “a small group composed of husband and wife and immature children which constitutes a unit apart from the rest of the community.” Talcott Parsons calls the nuclear family an isolated family. It is isolated because it does not form an integral part of a wider system of Kinship relationships. Parsons argues that there is functional relationship between the isolated nuclear family and the economic system in industrial society. In particular, the isolated nuclear family is shaped to meet the requirements of the economic system.
- (b) *Extended Family* : If the primary nucleus is extended by the addition of other closely related kin then it is called an extended family. Extended family are of various types. Firstly, there are those which grow mainly

round the nucleus and secondly there are those which are extended still further, by extending the principle of kinship, like in the Hindu Joint Family. An extended family may include a woman, her husband, their children and her married daughters, with her husband.

- (c) *Joint family* : The joint family is a mode of combining smaller families into a larger family units through the extension of three or more generations including at least grandparents, parents and children. It is the family which consist of members related by blood.

According to Iravati Karve, the joint family may be defined as as a group of people who generally live under one roof, who eat food cooked at one hearth, who hold property in common and who participate in common family worship and are related to each other as some particular type of kindred.

- (iii) **On the basis of Authority** : The family can be of two types according to authority —

- (a) *Patriarchal family* : The patriarchal family is father centered. Here, the father or the eldest man is the head of the family and he exercise authority. He is the owner and administrator of the family property.

Its typicality is evident in ancient Hebrew, Greeks, Romans and the Aryans of India. The Roman patriarch had “the Patria Potestas.” (the power of the father) which gave the head of the family an unlimited authority over all the other members.

- (b) *Matriarchal family* : This is a mother centred family. Here the woman is the head of the family and she exercise authority. She is the owner of the property and manager of the household. These families are prevalent among the Eskimos, Malay Islanders, Trobri and Islander, The Khasi of India and others.

- (iv) **On the basis of Residence** : Families are also identified on the basis of residence and they are of two types —

- (a) *Matrilocal family* : It is a family in which the married couple

resides with the wife's family or kin group. In such families, the husbands either visit their wives periodically or live permanently with the matrilocal family. In India, there are some tribal groups which have matrilocal family. The Khasis of Assam, have this pattern of family.

- (b) *Patrilocal family* : This is a kind of family wherein a woman after marriage comes and lives with her husband. In this kind of family, the descent is also traced through the male line. Most of the tribal family like Kharia, Ho, Bhil and Gond are patrilocal.

(v) **On the basis of Descent** : It again includes two categories —

- (a) *Patrilineal family* : In this type of family, the authority rests with the oldest male of the family. In this, the property inheritance and reckoning of descent takes place along the male line. The common examples are the Gond, Santhal, Bhil and Ho tribals.
- (b) *Matrilineal family* : In this family, the authority lies with the female head and the property inheritance and reckoning of descent takes place along the female line. The Khasis of Assam are its example.

(vi) **On the basis of Marriage :-** This type of family is based on the number of spouses the man or woman has.

- (a) *Monogamous family* : This type of family is the general pattern of family where the husband and wife live together. Here one husband has one wife.
- (b) *Polygynous family* : In this family, a man has more than one wife. Thus sometimes reflect the inferiority of women in the society. A man who has many wives has great prestige. This family pattern is common among the Bhils of Central India.
- (c) *Polyandrous family* : In this type of family, a woman has several husband. This is due to shortage of women. Generally in a family with three or four brothers, the brothers live together and share their wives. This is common among the Todas of Nilgiris, the Khasa of Jannsar Bawar.

## 9.5 Structure of the Family

Family is a reproductive or biological unit and is composed of a man and a woman and whatever offspring they might have. Thus structure of family in specific sense consists of assemblage of individuals in relationship having certain rights and obligations. It is the structure of the family which give rise to the various forms of family.

Aileen Ross (1961) definition of family includes physical, social and psychological elements of family life. According to her, family is a group of people usually related as some particular type of kindred, who may live in one household, and whose unity resides in a patterning of rights and duties, sentiments and authority. She, thus makes distinction between four sub-structures of family :—

- (i) Ecological sub-structure, *i.e.*, spatial arrangement of family members and their households, or how relatives live geographically close to each other. In simple words, this refers to the size of the household and type of the family;
- (ii) Sub-structure of rights and duties, *i.e.*, division of labour within the household;
- (iii) Sub-structure of power and authority; *i.e.* control over the actions of others; and
- (iv) Sub-structure of sentiments, *i.e.*, relationship between different sets of members; for example between parents and children, husband and wife, siblings and siblings etc.

Chattopadhyay (1961) has given three types of family : simple, compound and composite.

- (i) **Simple family** – It consist of a man, his wife and unmarried children.
- (ii) **Compound family** – Sometimes it happens that one partner dies after the birth of some children and the other remarries. Thus we have two simple families. This type of family is a compound family. In such family structure, there are two sets of children— one from the deceased partner and other from the newly married living partners, but one parent is common in the two sets.
- (iii) **Composite Family** – A joint family may be of various types. It may be either lineal *i.e.* the extension is vertical or collateral *i.e.* where the extension is horizontal.

Burgess and Locke (1963) have classified families as institutional and companionship on the basis of the behaviour of the individuals. In the institutional family, the behaviour of the members is controlled by mores and public opinion, while in the companionship

family, behaviour arises from the mutual affection and consensus of its members.

Zimmerman (1947) has classified families as trustee, domestic and atomistic. The trustee family has the right and power to make the family members conform to its wishes as this family has no concept of individual rights. The authority of the family head is not absolute but it is delegated to him in his role as trustee for carrying out family responsibilities. The domestic family is the intermediary between the trustee and atomistic families, having characteristic of both the families. It maintain a balance between formalism and individualism. The atomistic family is one in which the conventional mores lose their significance and each member has to make his own choice. The authority of the family over its members is minimum.

## **9.6 Functions of the Family**

The family as a social institution performs several functions. Various opinions have been expressed regarding the functions of family. *Kingsley Davis* speaks of four main functions of the family : (i) *Reproduction*, (ii) *Maintenance*, (iii) *Placement*, and (iv) *Socialisation*.

*Ogburn and Nimkoff* have mentioned six major functions of family : (i) *Affectional*, (ii) *Economic*, (iii) *Recreational*, (iv) *Protective*, (v) *Religious*, and (vi) *Educational*. *Reed* has described four functions of the family : (i) *Race perpetuation*, (ii) *Socialisation*, (iii) *Regulation and satisfaction of sex needs*, and (iv) *Economic functions*.

### **Primary and Secondary or Essential and Non-essential Functions**

*MacIver* classifies the functions of family into two types : *Essential* and *Non-essential* functions. According to him, the essential functions include (i) the stable satisfaction of sex need, (ii) production and rearing of children, and (iii) provision of a home. Under the non-essential functions he includes, religious, educational, economic, health and recreation, and other functions.

### **The Primary Functions**

Some of the functions of family are basic to its continued existence. They are referred to as *essential* functions by MacIver. They may also be regarded as *Primary* functions of family. They are explained below :

- (i) *Stable Satisfaction of Sex Need*. Sex drive is powerful in human beings. Man

is susceptible to sexual stimulation throughout his life. The sex need is irresistible also. It motivates man to seek an established basis of its satisfaction. Family regulates the sexual behaviour of man by its agent, the marriage. Thus it provides for the satisfaction of the sex need for man. Even Manu, the Hindu Law-giver and Vatsyaayana, the author of *Kamasutra*, have stated that sexual satisfaction is one of the main aims of family life.

- (ii) *Reproduction or Procreation.* Reproductive activity is carried on by all lower and higher animals. But it is an activity that needs control or regulation. The result of sexual satisfaction is reproduction. The process of reproduction is institutionalized in the family. Hence it assumes a regularity and a stability that all societies recognize as desirable. Thus family introduces a legitimacy into the act of reproduction. All societies surround this function with norms and support them with strong sanctions. By fulfilling its reproductive function family has made it possible to have the propagation of species and the perpetuation of the human race.
- (iii) *Production and Rearing of the Child.* The family gives the individual his life and a chance to survive. We owe our life to the family. The human infancy is a prolonged one. The child which is helpless at the time of birth is given the needed protection of the family. Further, family is an institution *par excellence*, for the production and rearing of children. No other institution can as efficiently bring up the child as can the family. This can be referred to as the function of ‘*maintenance*’ also.
- (iv) *Provision of Home.* Family provides the home for its members. The desire for home is strongly felt in men and women. Children are born and brought up in homes only. Though, often children are born in hospitals, clinics, maternity homes, etc., they are nursed and nourished in the homes only. Even the parents who work outside are dependent on home for comfort, protection and peace. Home remains still the ‘*sweet*’ home.
- (v) *Family—An Instrument of Culture Transmission and An Agent of Socialisation.* The family serves as an *instrument of culture transmission*. The family guarantees not only the biological continuity of the human race but also the cultural continuity of the society of which it is a part. It transmits ideas and ideologies, folkways and mores, customs and traditions, beliefs and values from one generation to the next.



The family is *an agent of socialisation* also. Socialisation is its service to the individual. Socialisation is the process whereby one internalizes the norms of one's groups so that a distinct '*self*' emerges unique to the individual. The family indoctrinates the child with the values, the morals, beliefs and ideals of the society. It prepares its children for participation in larger world and acquaints them with a larger culture. It is a chief agency which prepares the new generation for life in community. It emotionally conditions the child. It lays down the basic plan of the personality. Indeed, it *shapes the personality* of the child. Family is a mechanism for disciplining the child in terms of cultural goals. In short, it transforms the infant barbarian into the civilized adult.

- (vi) *Status Ascribing Function*. The family also performs a pair of functions— (i) *status ascription for the individual*, and (ii) *societal identification for the individual*. Statuses are of two kinds : *Ascribed* and *achieved*. The family provides the *ascribed* statuses. Two of these, *age* and *sex* are biological ascriptions. Others, however, are social ascriptions. It is the family that serves almost exclusively as the conferring agency or institution.

People recognise us by our names, and *our names are given to us by our family*. Here, the family is the source of our societal identification. Various statuses are initially ascribed by our families. Our *ethnic* status, our *nationality* status, our *religious* status, or *residential* status, or *class* status— sometimes our *political* status and our *educational* status as well—are all conferred upon us by our families. Of course, these may be changed later. Wherever statuses are inherited as in the case of royalty and nobility it is the family that serves as the controlling mechanism. Status ascription and societal identification are two faces of the same process. The importance of family in this regard can hardly be exaggerated.

- (vii) *Affectional Function*. Man has his physical, as well as mental needs. He requires the fulfillment of both of these needs. Family is an institution which provides the mental or the emotional satisfaction and security to its individual members. It is the family which provides the most intimate and the dearest relationship for all its members. The individual first experiences affection in his parental family as parents and siblings offer him love, sympathy and affection. Lack of affection actually damages an infant's ability to thrive. *A person who has never been loved is*

*seldom happy.*

### **Secondary Functions of Family**

In addition to the above described essential or primary functions the family performs some secondary or non-essential functions in some way or the other. Of these, the following may be noted.

- (i) *Economic Functions.* The family fulfils the economic needs of its members. This has been the traditional function of family. Previously, the family was an economic unit. Goods were produced in the family. Men used to work in family or in farms for the production of goods. Family members used to work together for this purpose. It was to a great extent self-sufficient. A clear cut division of labour between sexes, that is, between men and women, was evident. But today, the situation has changed. The family members do not work together at home. They are engaged in different economic activities outside the home. They are no longer held together by division of labour.

The economic role of modern family is considerably modified. The process of industrialisation has affected family. The centre of production has moved from home to the factory. The factory is giving job only to the individual worker and not to the entire family. The factory is producing goods which are consumed within the family. Thus, family has become more a consuming unit than a producing one. Its members are busy with “earning wages” rather than with “making a living”. Family is thus slowly transferring its economic functions to the external agencies. Still, the institution of property is embedded with the family.

- (ii) *Educational Functions.* The family provides the basis for the child’s formal learning. In spite of great changes, the family still gives the child his basic training in the social attitudes and habits important to adult participation on social life. The manner in which he learns how to get along with his family will be carried over to his interactions with school authorities, religious leaders, the police and other agents of social control.” When the child grows up, he learns to manage situations outside the home and family. He extends his interests to other groups. With all this his intelligence, his emotions, and his social habits develop until he weans himself from the original dependence on the mother, father and other family members.
- (iii) *Religious Functions.* The family is a centre for the religious training of the

children. The children learn from their parents various religious virtues. Previously, the homes were also centres of religious quest. The family used to teach the children the religious values, moral precepts, way to worshipping God, etc. Even today, it is in the family that the foundations are laid down for the moral standards that are to guide the children throughout their life. *The family meets the spiritual needs of its members*. It is through the family that the religious inheritance is passed on to the next generation.

- (iv) *The Recreational Functions*. At one time, recreation was largely family based. It fostered a close solidarity. Reading aloud, visiting relatives, family reunions, church socials, singing, dancing, playing indoor games, etc., brought together the entire family. Elders would organise social gathering among themselves in each other's homes. Children would organise their own recreations among themselves or together with other children. Often parents and children would join together in the same recreational activities. The effect of this on the cohesion of the family was considerable.

## **9.7 Family & Household**

Indian sociology considered the joint family to be one of the three fundamental structures of society, the other two being caste and the village community. This implies that the joint family is the norm for familiar institutions in India. According to A.M. Shah, the word 'family' is polysemic not only in popular parlance but also in social science. It seemed to him that the main source of confusion in much of the literature on the family in India was the indiscriminate use of the word 'family', and the tendency to move imperceptibly from one sense of the word to another. A distinction between household and family therefore became necessary. In this unit, we will try to explore the distinction between family and household; as discussed by A.M. Shah and others.

### **Family in India : Basic Terms and Concepts**

In common English parlance the word 'family' is used in several different senses :

- (i) 'Household', the body of persons who live in one house or under one head including parents, children, servants etc.

- (ii) The group consisting of parents and their children, whether living together or not.
- (iii) In wider sense, all those who are nearly related by 'blood and affinity.'
- (iv) Those descended or claiming descent from a common ancestor; a house, kindred, lineage.

The generally acknowledged meaning of 'elementary family' is 'a group composed of a man, his wife and their children'. It is assumed by many writers on Indian family that the members of an elementary family always live together in the same household, either by themselves or as part of a wider household group such as a joint or extended family.'

To Shah, the woman on marriage leaves her parental home and goes to live in her husband's parental home, and unmarried children live with their parents. Although the members of an elementary family live in a single household, frequently they are related to members of a wider kin-group for a number of purposes. According to Prof. I.P. Desai, 'a household is a nuclear family if it is composed of the husband, wife and unmarried children, not related to their other kin through or by property or income or the rights and obligations pertaining to them and as are expected by those related by kinship. This means a household composed of the members of an elementary family should not be called an elementary family if they are related with members of a wider kin-group. In brief, according to Prof. Desai, a household is not necessarily a family.'

Further, 'joint family' means 'two or more' elementary families joined together. It is called patrilineal joint family when based on the principle of patrilineal descent. In many writings, the term 'generation' is used to define the limit of the extension of patrilineal descent in the formation of joint family. On these lines, Prof. Mandelbaum depicts the model of the orthodox, scriptural joint family as a household group having three types of composition : 'All the men are related by blood as — (i) a man and his sons and grandsons, or (ii) a set of brothers, their sons and grandsons. The women of the household are their wives, unmarried daughters, and perhaps the widow of a deceased kinsman.' (iii) There are even now households in which four generations are to be found living together under one roof'. It is clear that he

followed, the classical 3-4 generation formula. Even, Prof. I. Karve (1953) in 'Kinship organization in India' states the composition of the joint family as — 'There are three or four generations of males related to a male ego as grandfather and his brothers, father and his brothers, (ego's) brothers and cousins, sons and nephews, and wives of all these male relatives, plus the ego's own unmarried sisters and daughters.

M.N. Srinivas in the work 'A joint family dispute in a Mysore Village, describes joint family as a multi functional group and defines its composition in general terms, it consists of the descendents in the male line, of a common ancestor, and their wives, sons, married as well as unmarried, and unmarried daughters.'

In Indian village (1955), Prof. S.C. Dube defines an 'ideal' joint family as a five-generation unit, composed of Ego, his wife, his parents and paternal grand parents, his brothers and their wives and children, his sons and their wives and children and his unmarried sisters and daughters.

Prof. I.P. Desai's study of family in Mahuva, makes a distinction between family and household. He says — 'co-residence and commensality are neither adequate nor reliable criteria for judging the type of the family.' To him, 'the residential joint family group is three-generations group, but the functionally effective group is much wider.'

In 'Caste and Kinship in Central India', A.C. Mayer consider the joint family a corporate property group of patrikin, not necessarily a discrete living unit, and refers to cases where brothers share the land and form together, yet reside separately and divide the crops.

A.M. Shah viewed his study of family in India as one of the elementary family as the starting point for the definition of all other terms and concepts while others not concerned with it at all. Most scholars have used it in the sense of a group wider than an elementary family, the widening of relationship being based on patrilineal descent and virilocal residence. They also defines the depth or extent of patrilineal descent in the formation of joint family.

### **Conception of Household**

The study of the household has travelled a long way and in different directions. On the one side, the ideology of the householder has received considerable attention. On the other, many economists now think that the household should become the unit

of analysis. Demographers have also given a great deal of attention to the household, particularly after the publication of massive data on it by the Census of India since 1951. To A.M. Shah, these developments in cognate disciplines increase the responsibility of sociologist and social anthropologist to sharpen, deepen and widen their studies of household. To him, the household is the site for play of some of the deepest emotions and sentiments.

A.M. Shah, while examining the literature on family, decided to use a few new terms in the analysis of the village household. In place of the two basic terms 'unclear' and 'joint' family, he used the terms 'simple' and 'complex' household respectively in his work. 'The Household dimension of the family in India (1973). To him, the joint family is an institution with several dimensions, one of which — a basic one — in the household.

An important development in the study of the family in India took place in 1951, when the Census of India for the first time in its long history began to collect data on the household. The definition of the 'household' remained uniform from 1951 to 1991, namely, a group of persons who lived together in the same house and took their meals from a common kitchen. Thus, the household became a unit of enumeration and a uniform definition of it was used for the country as a whole since the census of 1951. At the earlier censuses, some provinces and states defined household 'socially', as the number of people sharing one hearth, and others defined it 'structurally', as the number of people living in one house.

The household is, however, not a discrete unit in an absolute sense. It is intimately related to the family and other structures of Kinship and marriage. In fact, the very attempt to distinguish between family and household in India, if not elsewhere too, goes hand in hand with establishing a relationship between the two.

The legal entity called the joint family is covered by an enormous corpus of complicated legalities. It has two fundamental characteristics: (i) The joint family is composed of male descendents of a common male ancestor by three or four generations, plus their wives and unmarried daughters. (ii) This unit is concerned with ownership and inheritance of property and with right of maintenance from property to individual members. The male members have rights of ownership and inheritance, while the female members have only rights to maintenance. This unit has nothing to do with the

household unit *i.e.* where its members reside, whether in a single household or in separate households. One of the greatest confusions in the study of the family in India arises with the presumption that the joint family is also by definition a household unit.

## **9.8 Conclusion**

We find that the main source of confusion in much of the literature on the family in India was the indiscriminate use of the word family, and the tendency to move imperceptibly from one sense of the word to another. A distinction between household and family therefore became necessary.

The family refers on the one hand to genealogical models, without any definite indication of the activities or functions of the persons composing the model (as in nuclear and extended family) and on the other hand to social groups having certain activities or functions, without any indication of the persons composing the group (as 'family' in the sense of household). We find that household has been used by economist and demographers and also by sociologist. However, the household is the site for play of some of the deepest emotions and sentiments.

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- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 Objectives
- 11.3 Various Perspectives of Family
  - 11.3.1 Functionalist Perspective
  - 11.3.2 Marxian Perspective
  - 11.3.3 Marxian-Feminist Perspective
  - 11.3.4 Phenomenological Perspective
- 11.4 Conclusion
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### **11.1 Introduction**

Family is an important and primary unit of any society. All of us are the products of family. We identify ourselves with family and our status is also associated with it. Currently, the institution of family has become controversial. Though it is a universal social institution and is regarded as fundamental, both for the individual and society as a whole, there are new perspectives which question many of the assumptions of the more traditional view. These approaches have not assumed that the family is inevitable. Often, they have been openly critical of the institution of the family.

Before going to the various perspectives of family, let us analyze at least one definition, especially by G.P. Murdock, who claimed the universality of family in different societies. Murdock defines the family as follows—

‘The family is a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of



whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted of the sexually co-habiting adults.’ However, the structure of the family varies from society to society. The smallest family unit is known as the nuclear family and consists of husband and wife and their immature offsprings. Units larger than the nuclear family are usually known as extended families.

## **11.2 Objectives**

The main objectives of this chapter is to give you the idea of —

- Universality of family as an institution
- Various perspectives of family
- Conflict dimension of family
- Gender dimension of family

## **11.3 Various Perspectives of Family**

The family has been viewed by social scientist in varied perspective. Some see it as an inevitable institution, some view it as exploiting institution, while some see it as interactive and interpretative unit. Let us view the various perspectives under different heads—

**11.3.1. Functionalist Perspective :** This perspective views the function of family in the maintenance of the social system. It is also assumed that there must be a certain degree of fit, integration and harmony between the parts of the social system if society is going to function efficiently. In this perspective the major contributors are —

**(a) George P. Murdock :** According to Harlombas, Murdock argues from his analysis of 250 societies that the family performs four basic functions in all societies. These universal functions he terms the sexual, reproductive, economic and educational. They are essential for social life since without the sexual and reproductive functions there would be no members of society, without the economic function, for example the provision and prepration of food, life

would cease, and without education, a term Murdock uses for socialization, there would be no culture. Human society without culture could not function.

Murdock's picture of the family is rather like the multi-faceted. In his enthusiasm for the family, Murdock does not seriously consider whether its functions could be performed by other social institutions. D.H. Morgan notes in his criticism, Murdock could not answer 'to what extent these basic functions are inevitably linked to the institution of the nuclear family.'

- (b) **Talcott Parsons** : Parsons concentrates his analysis on the family in modern American society. To him, American family retains two basic and irreducible functions, which are common to the family in all societies. These are the primary socialization of children and the stabilization of the adult personalities of the population of the society.

Parsons has also been accused of idealizing the family (especially middle class family). According to D.H.J. Morgan, in Parson's analysis the distinction between middle class and working class families is not mentioned, further, Parsons fails to explore the functional alternatives to the family.

- (c) **Ezra F. Vogel and N.W. Bell** : In an article entitled, 'the emotionally disturbed child as the family scapegoat', they examine the functional significance of family, they ask functional 'for whom', and 'for what' ? They argued that the tension and hostility of unresolved conflicts between the parents are projected as to the child. The child is thus used as an emotional scapegoat by the parents to relieve their tensions. Clearly, the process of scapegoating is dysfunctional for the child. He becomes emotionally disturbed. Thus **Vogel and Bells** analysis does have the merit of dealing with dysfunctional aspects of the family within a functionalist framework.

**11.3.2 Marxian Perspectives :** Marxian sociologists have tended to bypass the family in their pre-occupation with social class. Apart from Friedrich Engel's work on 'The Origin of the Family, Private property and the State (1884)', in later 1960's few writers attempted to apply Marxian theory to the family.

(a) **F. Engels :** Like many 19th century scholars, Engels took an evolutionary view of the family, attempting to trace its origin and evolution through time. He combined an evolutionary approach with Marxian theory arguing that as the mode of production changed, so did the family. During the early stages of human evolution, Engels believed that the forces of production were communally owned and the family as such did not exist. This era of 'primitive communism' has characterized by promiscuity.

Engels argued that throughout man's history, more and more restrictions were placed on sexual relationships and the production of children. He speculated that from the promiscuous horde, marriage and the family evolved through a series of stages which included polygyny to its present stage, the monogamous nuclear family. Each successive stage placed greater restrictions on the number of mates available to the individual. The monogamous nuclear family developed with the emergence of private property, in particular the private ownership of the forces of production and the advent of state. The state instituted laws to protect the system of private property and to enforce the rules of monogamous marriage.

**11.3.3 Marxian–feminist Perspective :** Marxian analysis of the family in capitalist society developed mainly in late 1960's and 1970's, when several feminist writers employed Marxian conception in the criticism of family. From this perspective, the family is seen as a unit which produces one of the basic commodities of capitalism *i.e.*, labour. It produces it cheaply from the point of view of the capitalists. In particular the wife is not paid for producing and rearing children.

- (a) *Margaret Benston* : Benston states that 'the amount of unpaid labour performed by women is very large and very profitable to those who own the means of production. Benston argues that, 'As an economic unit, the nuclear family is a valuable stabilizing force in capitalist society. Since the production which is done in the home is paid for by the husband-father's earnings, his ability to withhold labour from the market is much reduced.
- (b) *Fran Ansley* : Ansley translates Parson's view, that the family function to stabilize adult personalities into a Marxian framework, she sees the emotional support provided by the wife as a safety valve for the frustration produced in the husband by working in a capitalist system. Rather than being turned against the system which produced it, this frustration is absorbed by the comforting wife. In Ansley's words, when 'wives play their traditional role as takers of shit, they often absorb their husband's legitimate anger and frustration at their own powerlessness and oppression.'
- (c) *Kathy McAfee and Myrshawood* : They too make a their discussion of male dominance in the family. They claim that the petty dictatorship which most men exercise over their wives and families enable them to vent their anger and frustration in a way which poses no challenge to the system.

The social reproduction of labour power does not simply involve producing children and maintaining them in good health. It also involves the reproduction of the attitude essential for an efficient workforce under capitalism.

#### **11.3.4 Phenomenological Approach :**

This is an approach and radical alternative to the functionalist picture of the 'happy family'.

- (a) *R.D. Laing* : Laing in the work 'The Politics of the Family' is concerned with interaction within the family and the meanings which develop in that

context. His work is largely based on the study of families in which one member has been defined as schizophrenic. Laing argues that the behaviour of so-called schizophrenics can only be understood in terms of relationships within the family. Far from viewing schizophrenia as madness, he argues that it makes sense in terms of the meaning and interaction which develop within the family.

Laing views the family in terms of set of interactions. Individuals form alliance, adopt various strategies and play off one or more individuals off against others in a complex tactical game. Laing is preoccupied with interaction situations which he regards as harmful and destructive. Throughout his work, he concentrates on exploitative aspect of family relationships.

- (b) *David Cooper* : His work 'The death of the family' is an outright condemnation of the family as an institution. Like Laing, he sees the family as a stultifying institution which stunts the self and largely denies people the freedom to develop their own individuality. Like Laing, he argues that individuals interiorize the family. Because of this, the self can never be free since it is made up of other family members.

Cooper develops his ideas along Marxian lines. He argues that the family operates as an ideological conditioning device in an exploitative society. The behaviour is conditioned with endlessly obedient citizen who is easily manipulated by ruling classes. As a result of the social controls implanted into the child by family socialization, the child is in fact primarily taught not how to survive in the society but how to submit to it. Each child has the potential to be an artist, a visionary and revolutionary but this potential is crushed in the family. However, the opportunities to develop are stifled by the submission of the self to the demand of the family. Cooper's view of the relationship between the family and society is summarized as— 'so the family goes on and is externally reflected in all our relationships.' An exploitative family produces an exploitive society.

### **11.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter, we find that functionalist perspective on the family is viewed in the maintenance of the social system. The main proponents of this perspective were G.P. Murdock, Talcott Parsons's, E.F. Vogel and N.W. Bell. However, the functionalist perspective of the family have been accused of having a conservative bias. With their emphasis on the universality and inevitability of the family, they justify its existence. In opposite to it, Laing and Cooper are committed to the needs of the individual. They are preoccupied with individuality, with self-awareness, self-actualization and individual autonomy and freedom. As a result the close bonds of family life appears suffocating, constricting and restraining. In contrast, the revival of the Marxian approach to the family emphasize on exploitation, oppression and revolutionary change. Feminist Marxist viewed family as a place where the women are oppressed and exploited.

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| <b>Course No. SOC-C-102</b> | <b>Lesson No. 12</b>                      |
| <b>Semester-I</b>           | <b>Alternatives to Family Institution</b> |
|                             | <b>Unit-III</b>                           |

### **Structure**

- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Objectives
- 12.3 Changes in Family Pattern Worldwide
- 12.4 Alternatives to the Family Institution
- 12.5 Future Family Trends
- 12.6 Conclusion
- 12.7 References

#### **12.1 Introduction**

The family is a social institution that unites individuals into cooperative groups that oversee the bearing and raising of children. Some scholars now object to define ‘families’ as only married couples and children because it implies that everyone should embrace a single standard of moral conduct.

However, if we view pre-industrial societies, it takes the broad view of family ties, recognizing the extended family as a family unit including parents and children, but also other kin. Industrialization provided geographic and social mobility and give rise to the nuclear family. In some nations, the government has taken over various family responsibilities by having social welfare programmes. Thus, we find the decline in the existence of institution of family. Various factors have contributed in the emergence of new and alternatives of families.

## **12.2 Objectives**

The main objective of this unit is to stress on —

- the understanding of family
- changes in the family pattern
- alternative arrangements emerging against the family institution.
- understanding on the future trends of family

## **12.3 Changes in family patterns worldwide**

A diversity of family forms continues to exist in different societies across the world. In some areas, such as more remote regions in Asia, Africa and the Pacific, traditional family systems are little altered. In most countries, however, widespread changes are occurring. The origins of these changes are complex, but several factors can be picked out as especially important. One is the spread of Western culture. Western ideals of romantic love, for example, have spread to societies in which it was previously unknown. Another factor is the development of centralized government in areas previously composed of autonomous smaller societies. People's lives become influenced by their involvement in a national political system; moreover, governments make active attempts to alter traditional ways of behaviour. For example, in China or Mongolia, because of the problem of rapidly expanding population growth, states frequently introduce programmes advocating smaller families, the use of contraception, and so forth.

These changes are creating a worldwide movement towards the predominance of the nuclear family, breaking down extended family systems and other types of kinship groups. This was first documented thirty years ago by William J. Goode in his book *World Revolution in Family Patterns* (1963) and has been borne out by subsequent research.

### **Directions of Change**

The most important changes occurring worldwide are the following :

1. Extended families and other kin groups are declining in their influence;
2. There is a general trend towards the free choice of a spouse;
3. The rights of women are becoming more widely recognized, in respect to both the initiation of marriage and decision-making within the family;



4. Kin marriages are becoming less common;
5. Higher levels of sexual freedom are developing in societies that were very restrictive;
6. There is a general trend towards the extension of children's rights.

It would be a mistake to exaggerate these trends, or to suppose that the nuclear family has everywhere become the dominant form. In most societies today, extended families are still the norm, and traditional family practices continue. Moreover, there are differences in the speed at which change is occurring, and there are reversals and countertrends. A study in the Philippines, for example, found a higher proportion of extended families in urban areas than in surrounding rural regions. These had not just developed from traditional extended family households, but represented something new. Leaving the rural areas, cousins, nephew and nieces went to live with their relatives in the cities to take advantage of the employment opportunities available there.

#### **12.4 Alternatives to the Family Institution**

Due to decline in the structure and functioning of the family, due to alteration and replacement of family functions with other institutions, the new arrangements have emerged and they act as an alternatives to the family. Although they are not universal and conformitory but still they have started visible in many parts of the world, especially the developed nations. Let us try to see these alternatives to family institution in detail.

- (a) *Communes* : In the nineteenth century, numerous thinkers proposed that family life should be replaced by more communal forms of living. Some of these ideas were acted on, one of the best known example being the Oneida Community, of New England in the USA, set up in the middle of the nineteenth century. It was based on the religious beliefs of John Humphrey Noyes. Every man in the community was married to every woman, and all were supposed to be parents to the community's children. A large variety of communal groups were established in the 1960's, often involving free sexual relations within the group and collective responsibility for the raising of children.

The most important example of communal domestic life is that of the

Kibbutzim in Israel. A Kibbutz is a community of families and individuals which cooperates in the raising of children. Each Kibbutz operates as though it were a single household, child care being treated as the responsibility of the whole community rather than the family. Children live in special children's houses rather than with their parents, although they spend weekends with their families. The children's houses in the Kibbutz are today perhaps better described as providing extensive child-care facilities rather than expressing communal responsibility for the raising of children.

- (b) *Co-habitation* : It is the sharing of a household by an unmarried couple. It is a phenomenon more wide spread among the Western societies. In Britain cohabitation was generally regarded as somewhat scandalous. During the 1980's ; however, the number of unmarried men and women sharing a household went up sharply. Co-habitation has become widespread among college and university students. Co-habitation in Britain today seems to be for the most part an experimental stage before marriage. Young people come to live together usually by drifting into it, rather than through calculated planning. Young people living together almost always anticipate getting married at some date but not necessarily to their current partners. This is not surprising that most young people see cohabitation as 'trial marriage.'

Certainly much cohabitation is the product of sexual passion; but in today's uncertain economic climate, moving in together is also a practical strategy for the people looking to trim expenses. Some say that co-habitation is a normative way to test the strength of a serious relationship.

In global perspective, cohabitation is common in Sweden and other Scandinavian societies as a long term form of family life, with or without children. By contrast, this family form is rare in more traditional nations such as Italy. While co-habitation is gaining in popularity in the United States — almost half of people between twenty five and forty four years of age have cohabited at some point-such partnership are still usually of short duration, with perhaps 40% of couples marrying after several years and remaining splitting up.

- (c) *Gay and Lesbian couples* : Many homosexual men and lesbian women now live in stable, relationships as couples, and some gay couples have been

formally 'married' even if these ceremonies have no standing in law except in few countries. In 1989, Denmark became the first country to formally recognize homosexual marriages, thereby extending social legitimacy to gay and lesbian couples as well as conferring legal advantages for inheritance, taxation and joint property ownership. Most U.S. gay couples in households including children raise the offspring of previous, heterosexual union ; some couples have adopted children.

- (d) *Remaining single* : Several factors have combined to increase the number of people living alone in modern Western societies. It is found that more Americans are postponing entry into first marriage than was true in the past. The trend toward maintaining an unmarried life style is related to the growing economic independence of young people. This is especially significant for women. There are many reasons why a person may choose not to marry. Singleness is an attractive option for those who do not want to limit their sexual intimacy to one lifetime partner. In addition, some American do not want to become highly dependent on any one person and do not want any one depending heavily on them. In a society which values individuality and personal self-fulfillment, the single life style can offer certain freedoms that married couples may not enjoy.
- (e) *Single-parent families* : This is a family in which there is only one parent present to care for the children, can hardly be viewed as a rarity in the United States. Whether judged in economic or emotional terms, the lives of single parents and their children are not inevitably more difficult than life in a traditional nuclear family. It is inaccurate to assume that a single-parent family is necessarily 'deprived' as it is to assume that a two-parent family is always secure and happy.

However, it has been pointed out by few that single parenthood—especially when the parent is a woman—greatly increases the risks of poverty, as it limits the woman's ability to work and to further her education. At least one-third of women in the United States now become pregnant as unmarried teenagers, and many decide to raise their children on their own. These young women with children— especially if they have the additional disadvantage of

being minorities— form the core of the rising problem of child poverty in the United States.

- (f) *Dual-Career families* : In the traditional nuclear family, the husband serves as the sole bread winner, while the wife fills the roles of mother and home maker. However, an increasing proportion of American couples are rejecting this model for a ‘dual-carrer’ lifestyle. Currently, the majority of all married couples have two partners active in the paid labour force.

Members of dual-career couples must undergo a process of re-socialization. A newly married couple may intend to have a “two career household’ and share child care in an egalitarian manner. In the dual-career model, married women who work for pay outside the home enjoy greater marital power than full-time homemaker. However, the fact that both spouses have carrers is no guarantee that a marriage will be genuinely egalitarian.

- (g) *Marriage without children* : Some couples choose not to have children and regard themselves a child-free. They do not believe that having children automatically follows from marriage, nor do they feel that reproduction is the duty of all married couples.

Economic consideration have contributed to this shift in attitude; having children has become quite expensive. The economic burden of rearing child, for their education, clothing etc., some couples are having fewer children than they otherwise might and others are weighing the advantage of a child-free marriage.

## **12.5 Future Family Trend**

It is true that the institution of family has changed and is changing. Now we must turn our gaze to the future, a far more risky and uncertain endeavor. But we can extrapolate from some current trends to get a glimpse of what family life might look like as we enter the next century.

- (a) *Risk of sexual freedom* : Despite energetic attempts to convince young people of the virtues of sexual abstinence, sexuality for most people will continue to be a matter of personal choice not bound to marriage and child-bearing.

However, advances in medical technology may also have an effect on future sexuality. No disease has had a powerful impact on people's lives over the last two decades as AIDS. We must be tremendously cautious in how we interpret statistics regarding the AIDS epidemic. Although there is some reason for optimism, it's probably too early to be thinking about a massive societal shift towards a carefree sexual behaviour.

- (b) *Increasing life expectancy* : Medical advances will likely contribute to a continued decline in mortality rates and an increase in life expectancy. Low death rates will result in a large proportion of the population over 70's;. Hence, the demands of growing elderly population in need of care will be felt more strongly by society in the foreseeable future. The aging of the population will have serious implications for the way people live their lives within families. The financial responsibility for the care of elderly family members, as well as demand for emotional and social support, will likely still fall on families.
- (c) *Marriage, divorce and remarriage* : The increased intensity of marriage and the heightened expectation that accompany it have made it all the more difficult for people to keep their marriages together when they are less than perfect. This has led to high level of divorce, cohabitation and voluntary single hood in future. The high rate of divorce means that a growing proportion of the population in the twenty-first century will marry more than once. Families and step families will continue to grow in complexity.
- (d) *The disappearance of childhood* : One of the major family concerns over the past decade has to do with the problems children are being forced to face. Children today worry about everything and even parents have stopped trying to shield their children from the world's woes and instead focus on preparing them for the dangers that inevitably awaits them. Thus the duration of childhood continues to shrink.
- (e) *Expanded definition of family* : The term family will be used with increasing looseness in the future. Apart from the traditional relationships, various non-traditional relationships under the legal rubric of family will be at the forefront

of emotional debate for years to come.

## **12.6 Conclusion**

There is a massive social change in a society and their effects are often strongly felt in families. Due to changing circumstances family alternatives have emerged like communes, cohabitation, gay relations, single parent family, dual career family etc. which are replacing the institutional roles of family. Ultimately, it have far reaching consequences on the societal life. Like problem of aged, shrinking childhood etc.

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## FAMILY

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|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Course No. SOC-C-102</b>      | <b>Lesson No. 13</b> |
| <b>Semester-I</b>                | <b>Unit-III</b>      |
| <b>Changing Family Structure</b> |                      |

### Structure

- 13.1 Introduction
- 13.2 Objectives
- 13.3 Change in the Joint Family System
- 13.4 Functional and Dysfunctional Aspect of Change
- 13.5 Trends of Family in Urban Setting
- 13.6 Family in an Industrial Setting
- 13.7 Emerging Issues in Changing Family Structure
- 13.8 Conclusion
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### 13.1 Introduction

Family is the basic and universal social structure of human society. It fulfils needs and performs functions which are indispensable for the continuity, integration and change in the social system. A considerable body of sociological literature has appeared in recent decades regarding the effects of modern forces on the extended and nuclear family, both in rural and urban areas in different parts of the world. The changes brought about by industrialization, urbanization and other modern forces have raised questions in the minds of sociologists and anthropologists and other researchers over the status of the “isolated nuclear family” and the viability of joint or extended family networks in India.

This chapter aims at facilitating a better understanding of the changing structure and function of the family.

### **13.2 Objectives**

The main idea of the chapter is to acquaint you with :-

- changing structure of family in India.
- distintegration of joint family.
- functional and dysfunctional aspect of change.
- Issues in the changing family structure

### **13.3 Changes in the Joint Family System**

Within the past century, the people of India have been strongly affected by the worldwide tides of social change. Such change has occurred as a result of the establishment of the British rule in India, the impact of Christianity, social movement, modern education, western values, the impact of industrialization, a share in the new economic opportunities and the modern political ideas. Modern forces such as industrialization, urbanization, education, occupational differentiation, do seem to correlate with an increasing proportion of nuclear families and many studies have emphasized the effects of these forces on the family structure and functions. Beals (1955) study showed a trend towards reference for nuclear families or a result of modern education, new urban-industrial occupations, development of market cash economies, and changes in the family law dealing with joint property. In this connection Kapadia (1951) stated that “the net result of the administration of the Hindu Law by British Courts were the disintegrating of the joint family organization, and the assertion of the individual’s inherent right in the property held by the head of the family.” Beals (1955) supported this theory in his research in South India. He argued that the change in the legal position of the joint family, and the use of law courts, explains why all but are of large families divided after 1920. By 1953 it has become almost customary for families to divide as soon as the children reached maturity.

The moral to urban migration because of population pressure on land also added to the weakening of the joint family. Bailay (1957), in his account of an Orrisa village, emphasized that changes have been brought about in the villages by the arrival of political administration and the development of commercial economy. He argued that the breakdown of the joint family system in the village was due to diverse occupation. Morrison (1959) also observed in his study of Badlapur that the greater acceptance of nuclear families among rural people was a response to the impact of modern education,



urbanization, industrialization and modern values. He indicated that only 6% of the total sample was living in joint families, 8% of the total was quasi-joint families and 85% of the total were nuclear families. He noted that although the nuclear family was found in all status levels, it was more so among upper and middle classes. Orenstein's (1960) research of 59 villages in Poona provided further evidence of this. He examined the relationship of agricultural technology to family type. He founded that families with more technological advances in agriculture were much less likely to have joint families. A study conducted by Desai (1964) in Mahuva, a town in South Gujarat showed that of 423 families surveyed, about 95% of the families practised some kind of jointness. Further those people having non-traditional occupations have a slightly lesser degree of jointness than those do with the traditional types. Desai indicated that common ownership of property was the main factor, which helped to maintain jointness. Ross (1961) research among the traditional middle and upper class urban Hindu family in Bangalore, provided further evidence of the impact of industrialization on the family. She discussed how the various factors such as increased pressure on land, modern education, western influence, new techniques of mass communication, increased employment opportunities in towns and cities have contributed to break up the traditional large joint family and how these factors have affected the role relationships within the family and wider Kinship network. Gore (1968) investigated whether industrialization and urbanization led to greater acceptance of nuclear family norms. His sample was based on 399 Agarwal families from urban fringes and rural areas in Delhi who followed their traditional occupation such as banking and commerce. He also obtained information from 100 additional families of professionals who do not follow traditional occupations. These families showed less favour for joint family living and were more eager to change than those who followed traditional occupations.

#### **13.4 Functional and dysfunctional aspects of change**

The change in the structure from traditional to fissioned or nuclear family is both functional and dysfunctional. It is functional, first because joint families creates parasites. Some members do not work thinking that other family members are there to support them. Even if a person does not earn anything, he, his spouse and his children get the same attention from the family head as the children of earning members get. Therefore, even if these non-earning members try to get some job, the efforts are half-hearted. This

leads to suspicions, misunderstanding and quarrels affecting the harmonious relations of members and the organization of family. Second, joint family curbs individualism. Third, joint family is a hot bed of quarrels and bickerings. Most of the quarrels start because of the narrow-minded, suspicious, conservative, jealous, superstitions, and quarrelsome women. The uneven distribution of burden of work among women, the upbringing of children, and the differentiation in treatment of women by the elders also becomes a frequent source of trouble. Finally, joint family adversely affects the status of women, they feel repressed and sufferer from emotional strains.

The change in traditional joint family is dysfunctional first, because it leads to the fragmentation of landholdings, which affects the agricultural production and national income of the country. Second, the disintegration of the residential jointness has negatively affected us in the sense that joint family was an asylum for the old and weak. Third, in the emerging residential nuclear family, an individual is not able to develop the value of love, faith and sacrifices as he was able to do in a joint family. Such training in integrative processes provided us the required experience of life, developed our social maturity, and thus contributed much to our personality development.

### **13.5 Trends of family in urban setting**

Various trends and patterns in the family have changed a lot due to urbanisation and industrialisation. Due to urbanisation, more and more people are shifting out of villages and are settling in towns and cities. Thus number of town and city dwellers is on constant rise. The urban families differ from rural families not only in position but in ideology too. Nuclear family in urban areas is somewhat smaller than the non-urban nuclear family and the urban dweller is more likely to choose nuclear family than rural dweller. Urban families show a shift away from joint family norms in their attitudes, role perceptions, and in their behaviour.

For Example, in the area of decision making, unlike rural families, in the urban families parents rather than the eldest males take decisions about their children. Similarly, urban people who favour the idea of brothers living together after the death of parents are fewer than the rural people with the same attitude. Thus, in urban areas the trend is more likely towards nuclear families.

Urbanisation as such may not result in the break up of the joint family system.

But there exist a significant relationship between the duration of the stay of the family in the urban area and traditional jointness *i.e.* longer the duration of stay of family in the urban area, lower will be the degree of jointness. And jointness tends more among the 'very old' and 'old families' than in the 'new one'.

Urban living weakens joint family pattern and strengthens nuclear families. Cities provide increasing opportunities for new occupations and higher education. Those who deviate from the traditional family occupation and take to new professions, show a greater shift in their attitudes than those who follow traditional occupations. Similarly, educated persons in urban areas are less in favour of, if not less conforming to joint family norms. Change in attitude has direct relationship with length of stay in the city. Cities provide opportunities to females also for gainful employment and when woman starts earning, she seeks freedom in many spheres. She tries to break away more and more from her husband's family orientation. Urban residence thus seems to introduce a certain measure of variation in family pattern in our society.

### **13.6 Family in an industrial setting**

In earlier society trend was mostly towards an agrarian society. Thus the whole family had the same occupation. All the family members used to work together jointly on their common piece of land. By working together towards a common goal and motive, they developed similar interest and preferred and stay as a joint single unit. But with urbanisation and industrialisation, different family members showed different interest and choices which led to their drifting apart and forming a nuclear family.

Industrialisation got under way in India in last quarter of nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century cities grew around the new industries. Before industrialisation, we had -

- (i) agrarian non-monetized economy.
- (ii) a level of technology where the domestic unit was also the unit of economic exchange.
- (iii) a non-differentiation of occupations between father and son and between brothers and brothers, and
- (iv) a value system, where authority of elders of the sanctity of tradition were both supported as against the criterion of 'rationality'.

But the industrialisation has brought the economic and socio-cultural changes in our society in general and family in particular. In the economic field, it has resulted in the specialization in work, occupation mobility, monetisation of the economic, and a breakdown of link between kinship and the occupational structures, in the social field, it has resulted in the migration of people from rural to urban area spread of education, and a strong centralised political structure; in the cultural field, it has brought secularisation of beliefs. There have been 3 important effects of industrialisation on family organisation. **First**, the family which was a principal unit of production has been transformed into a consumption unit. Instead of all family members working together in an integrated economic enterprise, a few male members go out of the home to earn the family's structure of the joint family but also the relations among the members.

Second, factory employment has freed young adults from direct dependence upon their families. As their wages have made them financially independent, the authority of the head of the household has weakened further. In the city, in many cases along with men their wives also have started working and earning. This has affected intra-family relations to some extent.

Finally, children have ceased to be economic assets and have become liabilities. Although in few cases, the use and abuse of child labour has also increased, law does not permit children to work. At the same time, educational requirements have increased, lengthening dependence upon parental support. Accommodation in the cities is expensive and child care is demanding. Thus, work and home have become separated due to industrialization.

Some sociologists have, however recently challenged the theory of emergence of nuclear families due to industrialisation. This challenge is based on the results of empirical studies and documentation of variety of family systems in diff. parts of the world. Jointness is more preferred and prevalent in business communities, and many nuclear families maintain widespread kin ties. Several recent researches in the industrialised west have also emphasised the supportive role of kin and their function of acting as a buffer between the family and impersonal wide world. Social historians too have shown that the nuclear family was prevalent as a cultural norm in Europe and the United States even before industrialisation. However, it has to be noted that the supportive role of kin does not have compulsory character which is found in family obligations of the Indian

nuclear family. The youngsters in the nuclear family still willingly follow the norm of responsibility towards the primary kin such as parents and siblings, solidarity of the close kin, and some sense of unity of the family even though living in separate households. All these changes have modified our family system while population movement from the rural to the urban areas has led to decline in authoritarian power, growth of secularism has developed a value system which emphasise individual initiative and responsibility. Individuals now function without any restrictive familial controls. Formerly, when man worked in the family and all family members helped him in the work, there was more intimacy among the family members but now since he works in the industry away from the family, the intimacy in the relations has been adversely affected. The effect of industrialisation on the pattern of family relationship is also evident from the decline in self-sufficiency of the family, and attitudinal changes towards family. Industrialisation has thus contributed markedly to the creation of new social and psychological settings in which survival of the early joint family with its authoritarian familistic organisation has become very difficult.

### **13.7 Emerging Issues in Changing Family Structure**

The earlier discussion on family change in India leads us to the following broad conclusions on the process and trends of change :

(1) Family change in India has been working in Indian Society as a process during past few decades. This family change has been marked not only in the family structure, but also in the functional family. The change has affected the interpersonal relations of different members of family and their role behaviour. Thus the role dynamics of the family has been much affected.

(2) The former thesis of some scholars that the joint families are more common in rural society than in Urban Society, and that the urban living essentially means individual households has been much challenged by recent researches on Indian Society. The latest finding as found by Tapan Kumar Mazumdar in his doctoral research in Kanpur, *The Structure and Composition of the Urban Middle classes in city of Kanpur* (1957) reveals that about 41.2 per cent live in joint families, 8.1 per cent in, small joint families, and while another 15.9 per cent though living in individual households maintain some kind of functional ties with their native family. This revelation challenges the common thesis that joint family breaks down as people move from villages to urban

and industrial areas. But in the meantime further enquiries revealed that they maintained most of one kind of functional tie with their joint families in the native towns or villages and could be well included among small joint families in the manner of Tapan Kumar Mazumdar. This suggests that though structural change comes first in family, functional change does not follow immediately thereafter but actually takes much time longer and it may come in temporal sequences.

What can be safely concluded here that urbanization naturally affect the structure of joint family, which gets changed as some members of the joint household leave the native joint family to get employment in Urban and industrial areas. But after some time the nuclear family in the new urban setting faces crisis and challenge and needs some assorted kins to help them. A widow or sister is called from the native place to look after the small children who are left at home during day time because of the both husband's and wife's employment.

Thus joint family comes into temporal existence. It may remain in form and function for some time and again cease, as assorted kins may leave or the nuclear family may move to some other place on transfer or fresh employ. This small joint family then becomes both structurally and functionally joint over a phase of time and serves as a link between the joint family and the nuclear family.

The recent changes in the Indian family in the context of urbanization, industrialization and trends of modernization have tended to break-up the joint family structure in the late years. Some times the break-up has been into an individual, typically nuclear households but quite often the joint family splits-up into a small joint family.

Often, this break up of a joint household is only a structural and temporal change, as after a periodic absence to towns or industrial joint family may often return to their native home after sometime and thus form again a joint family. Though now with passage of time the members of the old joint family may now not necessarily be there and often whole one generation may be missing but the fact remains that both structurally and functionally joint family comes into existence. The members may come and go, but joint family goes forever.

(3) This kind of change, is again, a structural change, functionally the members of such families may remain joint and continued to discharge their role obligations by

regular monetary remittances to home and by periodic visits. The feeling of belonging to a common home is maintained. It however, remains time that this functional discharge is not regularly made, and for a daily round of duties, a splitted family on migration to a town or an industrial centre works out its own independent system.

(4) It seems probable that whereas a tendency of nuclearization is being marked more in the recent years in the contemporary urban Hindu family, the joint family still persists in some areas and in certain conditions, largely out of cultural traditions, as well as because of some practical factors.

(5) The pressure of urbanization has given birth to a comparatively smaller joint family structure, which can be called the small joint family. It is getting more popular and is more conveniently continued for a larger time even in highly urbanized areas. Practical considerations like the need for a helping hand have accentuated it. But it has to be noted that this small joint family is not formed by reduction of joint family into small joint but by family growth of rather nuclear family into small joint family.

(6) The pressures of urbanization and occupation of both the husband and the wife have also given rise to a new institution called *Jhoolaghar* or creche which are now performing some of the functions of family as far as looking after children is concerned. The *Jhoolaghars* can be said to be playing the new situational role of 'child care' for the nuclear family in an urban complex. It is an important observation that the children sent to such *Jhoolaghars* or creches come mostly from unclear families and seldom from small joint or joint families. Where helping hands may be readily available. Where additional members of family are available to look after small children, while the husband and wife are busy in their jobs, as is generally found in small joint and joint families, there is hardly and need to send children to creches. The substitutive role of child care is played by creches, where the original role players of joint or small joint family are not available to perform the basic role and where the members of nuclear family have little time to perform this role.

(7) There is a basic change marked in the sphere of family obligations. The educated and enlightened father is now expected to adopt a tolerant and more liberal attitude towards his children in the family. His approach towards his children is now imbued with psychological and child developmental considerations. The old authoritative

role of parents is now changing into a role of tolerant patronage and companionship. This change appears to be in tune with time.

(8) In the sphere of husband-wife relation also there is now marked a basic change in the roles. The husband in the old joint family was an authoritative husband who treated his wife as a sub-ordinate and absolutely dependent woman. Education, enlightenment and independent employment of woman in the modern days have earned for them a more respectable place in their husband's family. The modern husband, educated and enlightened as he is, now adopts a more rational attitude in life and discharges a role of companionship to his wife. Most of husbands in all three types of families believed that their wives have earned an equal place with them in the family. The old authoritative role of husband is now changing into a role of companionship under the stresses and strains of urbanization. The role of authority usually vested in the Head of Household is showing a gradual decline in the modern urban Hindu family.

(9) In the sphere of marriages, it was found that though rigidity about caste is maintained in all three types of family there is now a trend towards accepting love marriage though with reluctance, in the educated families. There appears a gradual change in the attitude towards marriages. But this change is mostly marked in the nuclear and small joint families.

(10) In the sphere of values, it was found that some basic values of Hindu society culturally ingrained in the family were still considered important. This suggests the conclusion that education, enlightenment, modern ideas, new ideology and new innovations are casting their influence on the urban family, but the family institution in all its three types still fosters some faith in the conventional value pattern and derives its inspiration and strength from it.

(11) In the sphere of role of wife there appears to be a basic change. As the modern Hindu wife in an urban family is now an educated and often also earning woman, she now also learns her place in her husband's family. She is now not able to give that much time to her husband as a wife in rural family could do. But she is now sharing with her husband more concretely the burden of the family. She thus also expects proper adjustment and sympathetic consideration by her husband. Her husband is also now more educated and rational man and he often concedes her an equal status



in the family. Where this is not ensured, chances of frictions and conflicts arise. It was found that it is basically husband's attitude that saved or involved a wife into a situation of conflict in her discharge of two different roles, the house-wife's and the working-woman's.

(12) Role and status get changed according to variation in situations and pressurised needs. Trends of modernization influence these roles and statuses to a great extent.

(13) In the sphere of socio-economic participation of the family, it is found that tendencies of individualism and nuclearization have taken away the governing role of headship from the authoritative head of family and distributed it between individual earning heads and house-wives, and sometimes between other earning members of the family too. Education alone had equipped her more to share this participation. Her occupational status actively only accelerates it more.

It can be safely concluded here that those wives who are educated are playing an equal role with their husbands in the sphere of socio-economic participation.

(14) In the sphere of wife's expression of personality, it was found that only nuclear family provides a more open and favourable atmosphere for a development of such personality.

(15) Finally it can be said towards conclusion of this research work that roles in family in their different and multifold expressive forms all work under a culturally oriented system which determines and prescribes different roles for different family members, and then accordingly expects their obligatory performance by each set. These not only fulfil definite functions in family but also keep the family integrated into "meaningful whole" and strike a balance in its multifold operations. Changes in different roles are ultimately indicators of change in the family institution.

(16) Changing roles, new emerging roles and participation of different family members in their newly expected roles suggest changes a family is undergoing and changes it is accepting and admitting within. In this way, change in family become a denominator of change in society, family change and social change thus become two interlinked processes of change in society and are important for all sociological studies as well as for those of academic value.

### **13.8 Conclusion**

In this chapter we find the structure of family is changing in India. First of all, the concept of Indian joint family is under scrutiny because we find its few characteristic still surviving. The wider spread of nuclear family is an outcome of the process of urbanization and industrialization. Further, the authority, decision making, patriarchal dominance, division of labour etc. are taking new shapes in new types of family.

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**Structure**

- 14.1 Introduction
- 14.2 Objectives
- 14.3 Family Life Cycle in Contemporary World
- 14.4 Relationship between Social System and Developmental Cycle
- 14.5 Institutional Mechanism of Social Reproduction
- 14.6 Phases in Development Cycle
- 14.7 Conclusion.
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**14.1 Introduction**

One way of approaching the study of ‘the family’ the domestic aspect of kinship, is through the analysis of the various types of group – productive, reproductive, residential, and consuming—around which domestic activities revolve. Such groups are dynamic systems. Their structure may be changing over the long term, due to external or internal forces. But there is also a cyclical movement of growth and decline, fission and fusion, as members marry, set up on their own, bear children and die.

The analysis of the developmental cycle has been developed by Fortes and his colleagues, who have used it to shed light on patterns of residence, divorce and other more general aspects of kinship.

Let us talk about M. Fortes contribution to the developmental cycle *i.e.* “The domestic cycle in domestic groups”.

## **14.2 Objectives**

The main objectives of the unit are :-

- To understand the role of social system in development cycle.
- Importance of social capital in development cycle.
- Institutional mechanism involved in developmental cycle.
- Various stages of developmental cycle.

## **14.3 Family Life Cycle in Contemporary World :**

Changes in marriage and family have induced modification and expansion of stages of the family life cycle as:

- Independence
- Coupling or marriage
- Parenting: babies through adolescents
- Launching adult children.
- Retirement or senior years.

### **Independence Stage**

Independence is the most critical stage of the family life cycle. As you enter young adulthood, you begin to separate emotionally from your family. During this stage, you strive to become fully able to support yourself emotionally, physically, socially, and financially. You begin to develop unique qualities and characteristics that define your individual identity.

Intimacy is a vital skill to develop during your independent, young adult years. Intimacy is the ability to develop and maintain close relationships that can endure hard times and other challenges. In an intimate relationship, you learn about:

- Commitment
- Commonality or similarity.
- Compatibility.
- Attachment.

- Dependence on another person who is not in your family.
- Shared emotion in a relationship.

You also learn who you are outside of your identity within your family. Your ability to develop an intimate relationship depends on how successful you were at developing your individual identity earlier in life.

For a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered person (LGBT), this stage may include making your sexual orientation known, or “coming out” to your family and friends. Exploring interests and career goals is part of developing independence. To live successfully away from your family, you must develop financial and emotional independence. You also begin to be responsible for your own health in this stage. You become responsible for your nutritional, physical, and medical needs. Developing healthy habits at this time such as good nutrition, regular exercise, and safe sex practices-is important for lifelong good health and happiness. You learn new aspects of independence throughout your lifetime. Even when you have moved on to another stage of life, such as coupling, you continue to learn independence within the context of that stage.

During the independence stage you hope to:

- Learn to see yourself as a separate person in relation to your original family parents, siblings, and extended family members.
- Develop intimate peer relationships outside the family.
- Establish yourself in your work or career.

Other important qualities you develop during this phase include:

- Trust.
- Morals.
- Initiative.
- Work ethic.
- Identity, or who you are in the world.

## **Coupling Stage**

After you achieve independence, the next stage in the family life cycle is coupling. You explore your ability to commit to a new family and a new way of life. Although being in a relationship with someone does involve a process of adaptation and relationship building, a marriage or committed union often requires unique skills.

When you join families through a marriage or committed union, you form a new family system. Your family system includes your personal ideas, expectations, and values. These are shaped by the relationships and experiences with your original family. When you marry or form a union, you combine your family system with your spouse's or partner's. This requires reshaping your goals and your partner's goals. In the most functional relationships, partners have the ability to take two different points of view and create an option that neither person had considered. It differs from a compromise in that it is not giving up something. Rather, it is creating a third, better option.

You may find that some of the ideas or expectations that you held in the past are not realistic at this stage. Some common areas of adjustment include:

- Finances
- Lifestyle.
- Recreational activities or hobbies.
- Relationships with in-laws.
- Sexuality or sexual compatibility.
- Friendships.
- Putting another person's needs before your own.

The ultimate goal at this stage is to achieve interdependence, which occurs when you are able to fully enter into a relationship with another person. Interdependence also requires that you share goals and that you are able to sometimes place the needs of another above your own. But before you can achieve interdependence, you must have first acquired a high degree of independence.

The relationship skills you learn in coupling serve as a foundation for other relationships, such as parent-child, teacher-student, or physician-patient.

Within a couple, you learn:

- Advanced interpersonal communication
- Problem-solving skills.
- Common spiritual and emotional development goals.
- How to form boundaries in relationships.
- When to place the needs or importance of the other person above your own.

Some of the challenges of this stage include:

- Transitioning into the new family system.
- Including your spouse or partner in your relationships with friends and family members.
- Being committed to making your marriage work.
- Putting the needs of another ahead of your own.

Specific goals for this stage of the family life cycle are:

- Forming a new family with your partner.
- Realigning your relationships with your family of origin and your friends to now include your spouse.

## **Parenting: Babies through Adolescents**

### ***Making the decision to have a baby***

At some point in your relationship, you and your partner will decide if you want to have a baby. Some couples know going into a relationship that they do not want children. Parenting is one of the most challenging phases of the family life cycle.

The decision to have children is one that affects your individual development,

the identity of your family, and your relationship. Children are so time-consuming that skills not learned in previous stages will be difficult to pick up at this stage. Your ability to communicate well, maintain your relationships, and solve problems are often tested during this stage. Introducing a child into your family results in a major change in roles for you and your partner. Each parent has three distinct and demanding roles: as an individual, a partner and a parent. As new parents, your individual identities shift along with how you relate to each other and to others. If you have not learned compromise and commitment in the previous stage, you may not have the skills you need to transition well into this stage.

Along with the joy that comes from having a child, you may feel a great deal of stress and fear about these changes. A woman might have concerns about being pregnant and going through childbirth. Fathers tend to keep their fears and stress to themselves, which can cause health problems.

### **Parenting young children**

Adapting children into other relationships is a key emotional process of this stage. You will take on the parenting role and transition from being a member of a couple to being a parent. While you are still evolving as individuals, you and your partner are also becoming decision-makers for your family. Continuing to express your individuality while working well together as a couple results in a strong marriage.

Specific goals when young children join your family are:

- Adjusting your marital system to make space for children.
- Taking on parenting roles.
- Realigning your relationships with your extended family to include parenting and grand parenting roles.

### **Parenting adolescents**

Parenting teenagers can be a rough time for your family and can test your relationship skills. It's also a time for positive growth and creative exploration for your entire family. Families that function best during this period have strong, flexible relationships developed through good communication, problem solving, mutual caring, support, and trust.



Most teens experiment with different thoughts, beliefs, and styles, which can cause family conflict. Your strengths as an individual and as part of a couple are critical as you deal with the increasing challenges of raising a teenager. Strive for a balanced atmosphere in which your teenager has a sense of support and emotional safety as well as opportunities to try new behaviors. An important skill at this stage is flexibility as you encourage your child to become independent and creative. Establish boundaries for your teenager, but encourage exploration at the same time. Teens may question themselves in many areas, including their sexual orientation and gender identities.

If you properly developed your individual identity in earlier stages of your life, you will be much more secure about the changes your child is going through. But if you did not gain the needed skills at earlier stages of life, you may feel very threatened by your child's new developments.

Flexibility in the roles each person plays in the family system is a valuable skill to develop at this stage. Responsibilities such as the demands of a job or caring for someone who is ill may require each person in the family to take on various, and sometimes changing, roles.

This is a time when one or more family members may feel some level of depression or other distress. It may also lead to physical complaints that have no physical cause (somatization disorders such as stomach upsets and some headaches) along with other stress-related disorders.

Nurturing your relationship and your individual growth can sometimes be ignored at this stage. Toward the end of this phase, a parent's focus shifts from the maturing teen to career and relationship. Neglecting your personal development and your relationship can make this shift difficult.

You also may begin thinking about your role in caring for aging parents. Making your own health a priority in this phase is helpful as you enter the next stage of the family life cycle.

Specific goals during the stage of parenting adolescents include:

- Shifting parent-child relationships to allow the child to move in and out of the family system.

- Shifting focus back to your midlife relationship and career issues.
- Beginning a shift toward concern for older generations in your extended family.

### **Empty Nest: Launching Adult Children**

The stage of launching adult children begins when your first child leaves home and ends with the “empty nest.” When older children leave home, there are both positive and negative consequences. If your family has developed significant skills through the family life cycle, your children will be ready to leave home, ready to handle life’s challenges. Free from the everyday demands of parenting, you may choose to rekindle your own relationship and possibly your career goals.

Developing adult relationships with your children is a key skill in this stage. You may be challenged to accept new members into your family through your children’s relationships. You may focus on reprioritizing your life, forgiving those who have wronged you (maybe long ago), and assessing your beliefs about life.

If you have not moved through the phases with the appropriate tools and attitudes, you may not have taught your children the skills they need to live well on their own. If you and your partner have not transitioned together, you may no longer feel compatible with each other. But remember that you can still gain the skills you may have missed. Self-examination, education and counseling can enhance your life and help ensure a healthy transition to the next phase.

This is a time when your health and energy levels may decline. Some people are diagnosed with chronic illnesses. Symptoms of these diseases can limit normal activities and even long-enjoyed pastimes. Health issues related to midlife may begin to occur and can include:

- High blood pressure (hypertension).
- Weight problems.
- Arthritis.
- Menopause.
- Osteoporosis.

- Heart disease (coronary artery disease).
- Depression.
- Stress-related illnesses.

Specific goals to reach at this stage include:

- Refocusing on your relationship without children.
- Developing adult relationships with your grown children.
- Realigning relationships to include in-laws and grandchildren when your children begin their own families.

### **Retirement or Senior Stage of Life**

During the retirement phase of the family life cycle, many changes occur in your life. Welcoming new family members or seeing others leave your family is often a large part of this stage as your children marry or divorce or you become a grandparent.

This stage can be a great adventure where you are free from the responsibilities of raising your children and can simply enjoy the fruits of your life's work. Challenges you may face include being a support to other family members, even as you are still exploring your own interests and activities or focusing on maintaining your relationship. Many people are caring for elderly parents at this time. You may feel challenged by their emotional, financial, and physical needs while trying to help them keep their independence.

You may experience declining physical and mental abilities or changes in your financial or social status. Sometimes you must deal with the death of other family members, including your partner. The quality of your life at this stage depends on how well you adjusted to the changes in earlier stages. It often also depends on how well you have cared for your own health up to this point. Normal aging will affect your body, resulting in wrinkles, aches, pains, and loss of bone density. The chances of having a mental or chronic physical illness do increase with age. But aging does not mean you will automatically experience poor health.

Retirement can be a fulfilling and happy time. Becoming a grandparent can

bring you great joy without the responsibility of raising a child. Those who are without adequate support systems or not well off financially, though, may have a more difficult time in this phase of life.

Specific goals to reach for at this final stage of your family life cycle include:

- Maintaining your own interests and physical functioning, along with those of your partner, as your body ages.
- Exploring new family and social roles.
- Providing emotional support for your adult children and extended family members.
- Making room in the family system for the wisdom and experience of older adults.
- Providing supply for the older generation without doing too much for them.
- Dealing with the loss of a partner, siblings, and other peers, and preparing for your own death.
- Reviewing your life and reflecting on all you have learned and experienced during your life cycle.

#### **14.4 Relationship between Social System and Domestic Cycle :**

To M. Fortes the more fundamental and difficult problems involved in the truism that the idea of society, necessarily implies extension through a stretch of time. A social system, to him, has a life. It is a social system, that particular social system, only so long as its elements and components are maintained and adequately replaced; and the replacement process is the crucial one because the human organism has a limited life space. Maintenance and replacement are temporal phenomena. It is the processes by which they are ensured that concern us when we study the time factor in social structure.

These processes have biological determinants. One is the life span of the individual; the other is the physical replacement of every generation by the next in the succession of death and birth. It is also to remind that a social system will not persist if the average

life span of its members is too short for them to have offspring and to rear them to the age when they in turn can have offsprings. From the anthropological point of view, the important thing is that the physical growth and development of the individual is embodied in the social system through his education in the culture of his society, and the succession of the generations through incorporation in the social structure. The facts of physical continuity and replacement are thus converted into the process of social reproduction.

To Fortes, these generalities can be analyzed as—For a social system to maintain itself its two vital resources must be maintained at an adequate level by continuous use and replacement. These two resources are human capital and its social capital. The social capital consists of the total body of knowledge and skill, values and beliefs, laws and morals, embodied in the customs and institutions of a society and of the utilities made available for supporting the livelihood of its members through the application of the cultural outfit to natural resources. The process of social reproduction includes all those institutional mechanisms and customary activities and norms which serve to maintain, replenish and transmit the social capital from generation to generation.

#### **14.5 Institutional mechanism of social reproduction :**

In all human societies, the workshop, so to speak, of social reproduction, is the domestic group. It is this group which must remain in operation over a stretch of time long enough to rear offspring to the stage of physical and social reproductivity if a society is to maintain itself. This is cyclical process. The domestic group goes through a cycle of development analogous to the growth cycle of a living organism. The group as a unit retains the same form, but its members, and the activities which unite them, go through a regular sequence of changes during the cycle which culminates in the dissolution of the original unit and its replacement by one or more units of the same kind. A significant feature of the developmental cycle of the domestic group is that it is at one and the same time a process within the internal field (social relations) and a movement governed by its relations to the external field (politico-jural field).

To investigate this process in a given society we must first establish what the domestic group is in that society. Similarly, if we wish to determine reliably the structure and boundaries of the domestic group in a given society, it is essential to use a reliable and representative sample of domestic groups, and more particularly, to take into account their 'age-specific' characters—that is, the stages of the developmental cycle.

#### **14.6 Phases in the developmental cycle :**

In developmental terms, marriage leads to an actual or incipient split in one or both of the spouse's natal families and domestic group, and fission in the domestic group is always translated into spatial representation in the residential arrangements.

We can set up a parading in distinguishing three main stages or phases in the developmental cycle of the domestic group.

- I. Phase of expansion :-** This lasts from the marriage of two people until the completion of their family of procreation. The biological limiting factor here is the duration of the wife's fertility. In structural terms it corresponds to the period during which all the offering of the parents are economically, effectively and jurally dependent on them.
- II. Phase of dispersion :-** This begins with the marriage of the oldest child and continues until all the children are married. Where the custom by which the youngest child remains to take over the family estate is found, this commonly marks the beginning of the final phase.
- III. Phase of replacement :-** The phase of replacement begins with the youngest child remaining to take over the family estate. This is marked further and ends with the death of the parents and the replacement in the social structure of the family they founded by the families of their children, more specifically, by the family of the father's heir amongst the children.

In short, the structural and cultural variables involved in the developmental cycle mean all the forces generated by the social structure, and all the customers and institutions through which these forces and the values they reflect are manifested.

#### **14.7 Conclusion**

We find that developmental cycle has close association with family. The structure of the family although remains static externally but internally it keeps on replacement of members. It is seen in relation to social system, which again involves the issue of equilibrium and dynamism. The role of social reproduction is important in making the developmental cycle moving. Finally, the stages of developmental cycle can be seen as - phase of expansion, phase of dispersion and phase of replacement.

## **14.8 References**

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## THE INDIAN CONTEXT

**Course No. SOC-C-102**

**Lesson No. 15**

**Semester-I Kinship Studies in India : by Louis Dumont**

**Unit-IV**

### **Structure**

- 15.1 Introduction
- 15.2 Objectives
- 15.3 L. Dumont : Hierarchy and Marriage alliance.
- 15.4 Relevance of Affinity/ Alliance
- 15.5 Contrast between North and South Indian Kinship Organization.
- 15.6 Conclusion
- 15.7 References

### **15.1 Introduction**

L. Dumont dedicated his important paper on 'Hierarchy and marriage alliance in south Indian kinship to Levi-Strauss. He was a man of indology, who started his ethnographic work in South India. In his study on Pramalai Kallar of Tamil Nadu, he focussed upon the importance of affinity principle in understanding Kinship relationship. To him, 'alliance' was the fundamental principle of Dravidian kinship.

### **15.2 Objectives**

The main objective of the chapter is

- To study the contribution of L. Dumont in Kinship studies
- To highlight the importance of affinity.
- To study the distinction between North and South Indian Kinship.

### **15.3 L. Dumont : Hierarchy and marriage alliance**

It is surely of interest, that 'Hierarchy and marriage alliance' first appeared



under the imprimatur of the Royal Anthropological Institute, marking, one presumes, a measure of acceptance of Dumont's approach to south Indian kinship, and indirectly, too, of Lévi-Strauss theory of kinship. By contrast, Dumont's earlier contribution on the same theme to the Royal Anthropological Institute's journal, *Man* (1953; see 1983a : 3-35), had been greeted with sarcastic disapproval by one of Britain's foremost exponents of kinship studies, A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, who wrote in feigned modesty :

I cannot claim that I understand the article on Dravidian kinship terminology by Mr. Dumont, though I have read it carefully several times. I should like to be enlightened as to its meaning, and I suspect that there are others in the same position as myself (1983a : 18).

He went on to add :

When Mr. Dumont asks us to abandon our 'customary and peculiar vocabulary' and speak of the maternal uncle not as a brother of the mother but as a brother-in-law of the father he ought to give us some adequate reason for making the change and explain what will be the advantages. This he has not done. He is asking us to repudiate the idea of cognatic kinship by which persons are cognates if they are descended, through males or through females, from a common ancestor or ancestress. A mother's brother's son is just as much a cognate as a father's brother's son but is classified by Mr. Dumont as an 'affine'. Why?

Dumont had begun his ethnographic work in south India as an indologist seeking a conservative Tamil-speaking milieu in which to study the civilization of Dravidian-speaking India'. Finding there a remarkable coincidence between indigenous understandings of relationship and Lévi-Strauss theory of kinship, he turned to sociology and shortly became known as the foremost exponent, after Lévi-Strauss himself, of Alliance Theory. (Dumont subsequently contributed the authoritative article on 'Marriage Alliance' to the *International encyclopedia of the social sciences* (1968). In the Introduction to his monographic study of the Pramalai Kallar of Tamilnadu, Dumont recalled :

It was during fieldwork, through contact with the facts, that the

sociological approach took the upper hand. It is important to note here the remarkable convergence between Lévi-Strauss theory of marriage alliance and the emphasis put by Tamil informants on analogous themes. The work cited [i.e. *Elementary Structures*], and other contributions by the same author, have made possible the use of the idea of structure, which proved equally fruitful. The two ideas of alliance and structure, as they emerge from this somehow experimental test, seem indispensable for a sociology of South India.

Based on his intensive fieldwork among the Kallar, with more cursory comparative inquiries into the kinship practices of a number of other communities of the region, 'Hierarchy and marriage alliance' does for a limited region of south India what Lévi-Strauss had attempted, but rather less satisfactorily, for a vast area of Asia, Melanesia and Australasia. It is thus a much more controlled exploration along the lines suggested by Lévi-Strauss of the possible systematic relations between modes of descent and residence, and unilateral marriage preferences (both normative and behavioural).

While it is impossible to understand the issues Louis Dumont addressed without references to Lévi-Strauss grand theory, it should not be thought that Dumont was a mere done of his mentor, assiduously 'applying' the structural approach to the south Indian data. Dumont was able both to affirm the importance of the approach, and to modify and reorient it in certain respects as well. Unfortunately, the innovative aspect of Dumont's work is not usually acknowledged in the sociological literature, while Indianists tend to commit the reverse mistake and fail to consider the contours and constraints of the larger intellectual project within which Dumont's work pertained. However, pinpointing the specific areas of Dumont's innovation within the alliance perspective is a task that will have to await another occasion.

Responding on the one hand to Leach's criticism of Lévi-Strauss, already referred to (1961 : 54-104), and to the evidence of his own South Indian data, Dumont showed that Dravidian kinship practices reflect only partially and imperfectly the structure of the system as revealed at the abstract level of terminology (1953). Actual alliance relations are usually short cycles of exchange between local groups. Again, while the terminology points to prescribed bilateral cross-cousin marriage, in practice sister exchange is

discouraged. And in many actual genealogies, a stated unilateral preference is often found reversed, suggesting that the matrilateral/patrilateral antithesis proposed by Lévi-Strauss is not always applicable.

Nonetheless, according to Dumont, and despite the variety of its forms, Dravidian kinship exemplified the general relevance of alliance as a perspective. In this system, he maintained, 'affinity' is a principle of comparable importance to 'consanguinity'. The symmetrical structure of the Dravidian kinship terminology reveals a thorough going opposition of consanguinity and affinity, and the preferred marriage partner, the cross-cousin, is already terminologically classed as an affine. Affinity has an important diachronic dimension, and indeed Dumont's ethnography detailed how ritual and gift-giving affinal obligations are passed on from the senior to the junior generation, just like the responsibilities of consanguinity, with the possibility of further renewal of the alliance relation through the operation of the same preferential marriage rules.

On this evidence, Dumont asserted that 'alliance' was 'the fundamental principle of South Indian kinship', complementary to the descent principle which was so conspicuously the focus of kinship organization in the African context in which so many British anthropologists had conducted their work. In fact, Alliance Theory has also opened the way for a reanalysis of the African materials from a new perspective.

As already noted, Dumont's initial focus was on the singularity of the region of Dravidian kinship—construed as a special ethnographic area where the notional axes of generalized and restricted exchange intersect, and where all three types of cross-cousin marriage are found. In 1966, Dumont published an extremely innovative paper (1966) in which he attempted to show that north Indian marriage, which at first glance appears to be determined only by the rules of *sapinda* exogamy and caste endogamy can be best understood as an alliance system in which 'case' plays the part of the unilateral preferences of the Dravidian marriage system. In the hypergamous milieu of north India, wife-givers and wife-takers may never be confused, but hierarchical relations of alliance are reiterated over time and the affinal obligations in respect of ceremonial functions and gift-giving are 'inherited' in a manner similar to that described for south India. 'Affinity' is a 'value' in north India too.

kinship terminology itself gives expression to the complementary apposition of the two principles of consanguinity and affinity and how the positive marriage rules in South India serve to ensure that affinal relations between groups are transmitted from one generation to the next through successive inter-marriages. An innovative aspect of Dumont's presentation was his investigation of the structure of ritual gift-giving in the context of kinship and marriage. He showed –

1. how Kanyadana marriage creates asymmetrical gift giving obligations-unidirectionally from the wife-givers to the wife-takers.
2. how these affinal rights and duties are transmitted from one generation to the next when a man's obligation to his married daughter's conjugal family is reproduced in his son's ritual and gift giving relation to his sister's children.
3. how the gift relation in India expresses and maintains an asymmetry of status between wife-givers and wife-takers. According to Dumont, asymmetry in the relation between wife-givers and wife-takers as expressed through gift giving, is the common factor that unites the manifestly dissimilar systems of North and South Indian.

### **15.5 Contrast between North and South Indian Kinship Organization**

While comparing the North and South Indian kinship system, Dumont emphasises that within the wide zone called "North India" the differences between the kinship systems of different groups are much less than the differences between any of them and that of a South Indian group. Practically, in the present state of our knowledge this assumption is not unjustified. He brought in an example of prestations from Malwa and then turned more intensively to Eastern U. P. with a timid generalization to U. P. in general and then again in the matter of the kinship vocabulary, assumed that its configuration did not vary fundamentally among most of the Indo-Aryan languages.

For the purposes of describing the kinship systems found in India, Irawati Karve has identified four cultural zones – the Northern, the Central, the Southern and Eastern zones. The northern zone according to Karve lies between the Himalayas to the north and the Vindhya ranges to the south. In this region the majority of people speak languages derived from Sanskrit. Sociological studies in various parts of North India show how North India differs in rules of kinship as well as marriage from that of South India.

**Patrilineage :-** In North India there are mostly patrilineal descent groups. This means that the descent is traced in the male line from father to son.

**Clan :-** A lineage is an exogamous unit *i.e.* a boy and girl of the same lineage cannot marry. A larger exogamous category is called the clan. Among Hindus this category is known as gotra. Each person belongs to the clan of his/ her father and cannot marry within the clan or gotra.

1. **Clan Exogamy :-** Belonging to one's natal descent line is best expressed in matters of marriage. No man is allowed to marry a daughter of his patriline. In North India, lineage ties upto five or six generations are generally remembered and marriage alliances are not allowed within this range.
2. **The four clan rule :-** In North Indian context, we heard the practice of four gotra or four clan rule. According to this rule a man must not marry a woman from :-
  - (a) his father's gotra
  - (b) his mother's gotra
  - (c) his father's mother's gotra
  - (d) his mother's mother's gotra

In other words, this rule prohibits marriage between two persons who share any

two of their eight gotra links. This means that the rule of exogamy goes beyond one's own lineage.

Another related kind of exogamy which exists in North India is village exogamy. A village usually has members of one or two lineages living in it. Members belonging to the same lineage are not permitted to inter marry.

- 3. Marriage within the Sub-caste :-** Taking the example of Saryupari Brahmin of Mirzapur district in Uttar Pradesh studied by Louis Dumont. We find that each of the three sub-castes of Saryupari Brahmins of this area is divided into three houses which range hierarchically in status. The marriages are always arranged from lower to higher house. This means that women are always given to the family which is placed in the house above her own. There is popular saying in North India that 'the creeper must to go back'. This clearly shows that marriage rules in North India maintain a hierarchic relationship between bride-givers and bride-takers. It means that there is no rule of repetition. One may not give wife to the group where he takes from.

Another rule prevalent in N. India is of Hypergamy. This means that wife-take are superiors to wife-givers in terms of prestige and honour.

- 4. Ceremonial Exchange of Gifts :** Ceremonial exchange of gifts on the occasions, provides us the understanding of patterned behaviour among various categories of kin. Louis Dumont has pointed out that mother's brother (uterine kin) and wife brother's (affinal kin) have similar ceremonial functions. A. C. Mayer has described in his study of kinship in a village in Malwa that all gifts given by one's mother's brother are called **mamere**. In contrast to the gifts given by the mother's brother there are gifts known as **Ban** given by one's agnates. Ban is the term used for the gifts given by one's wife's brother.

Another example of this is given by L. Dumont in the context of gift giving at the end of mourning in a village of Gorakhpur Distt. of U. P. Here the main woman is in generally a son an agnate of the deceased. The ceremony of tying a turban on the head of main mourner is done by an affine who has taken a wife. In other words, the turban is tied by sister's husband or father's sister's husband. This ceremony emphasises their status as wife takers. The priest clearly asks for those who have taken a daughter

to come forward for receiving the Shaiyya (bed). So wife-takers are preferred over wife-givers.

**(b) Kinship System in South India :-** The Southern zone comprises of the states of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala where the languages of the Dravidian family are spoken. Like in North we find diversity in the kinship pattern in the south too. The state of Kerala is distinct because of its matrilineal system of descent and the practice of inter-caste hypergamy. Main features of this system are :-

**(i) Parallel and Cross Cousins :** Parallel cousins are those who are the children of the siblings of same sex. This means that children of two brothers or of two sisters are parallel cousins to each other. Cross cousins are those who are the children of the siblings of the opposite sex. This means that children of a brother and a sister are cross cousins. There are very reasons for the prohibition of parallel cousins marriage and acceptance of cross cousin marriage. In Tamil, all parallel cousins are referred as brothers / sisters. *e.g.* All parallel cousins are addressed as *annan* (*i.e.* elder brother) or *Tambi* (*i.e.* younger brother) and *akka* (*i.e.* elder sister) or *tangachi* (younger sister) Cross cousins are never brothers and sisters. They are referred as *mama magal/ magan* (*i.e.* mother's, brother's daughter/son) or *attai Magal/ magan* *i.e.* father's sister's daughter/son).

## 15.6 Conclusion

Dumont 'affinity' is a principle of comparable importance to consanguinity. The symmetrical structure of the Dravidian reveals a thorough going opposition of consanguinity and affinity, and the preferred marriage partner, the cross cousin is already terminologically classed as an affine. Affinity has an important diachronic dimension and indeed Dumont's ethnography detailed how ritual and gift giving affinal obligations are passed on from the senior to the junior generation, just like the responsibilities of consanguinity, with the possibility of further renewal of the alliance relation through the operation of the same preferential marriage rules.

In north India, there is sapinda exogamy while in the south India caste endogamy can be understood as an alliance system in which 'caste' plays the part of unilateral

preferences of the Dravidian marriage system. In most Dravidian system with important exception, marriage partners must be of the same generation and the groom must be older than the bride.

In regard to the contrast between Dravidian and Indo Aryan, kinship we may simply state that survey of the historical record of dynastic marriages shows that cross cousin marriage occurs only within the present confines of Dravidian ones and that the uses of marriage in North India follow different strategies under its very different Indo Aryan constraints.

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| <b>Course No. SOC-C-102</b>                                   | <b>Lesson No. 16</b> |
| <b>Semester-I      Kinship Studies in India-Iravati Karve</b> | <b>Unit-IV</b>       |

### **Structure**

- 16.1 Introduction
- 16.2 Objectives
- 16.3 The Kinship Map of India
- 16.4 The Northern Zone
- 16.5 The Central Zone
- 16.6 The Southern Zone
- 16.7 The Eastern Zone
- 16.8 Conclusion
- 16.9 References

### **16.1 Introduction**

The pioneering efforts to write a morphology of Indian kinship systems was Iravati Karve's '*Kinship organization in India*' (1953 [1965]), condensed for our first reading, which has effectively set the terms of discourse on this theme. Like Lewis Henry Morgan, and many students of kinship since his time, Karve looked to vocabularies of kin terms for insights into kinship structure and for principles for classifying and comparing kinship systems. Thus, she identified three major types of kinship organization—in her terms, northern, southern and eastern— co-ordinate with the culture areas of the three major language families (the Indo-Aryan or Sanskritic, the Dravidian and the Austro-Asiatic). Along with these, she posited a fourth, so-called 'central' zone, intermediate between the northern and southern types and combining features of both. The chief focus of her discussion was the north-south contrast, and the core of this contrast was the question of *marriage*. The south Indian system

enjoins certain types of close kin marriage which are forbidden in the north. According to Karve, this fact qualitatively affects inter-and intra-family relations, especially as experienced by women.

Having once defined the distinctive features of the northern and southern types—the Eastern zone has been largely a residual category in these discussions—the problem then became the essentially *political* one of locating the ‘unity’ of India beneath these contradictions. Several different solutions have been offered. For Irawati Karve, the unity of India is to be found in the existence throughout the subcontinent of two important social institutions : the joint family.

## **16.2 Objectives**

The main objectives of this chapter are —

- To discuss the contribution of I. Karve in Kinship Studies
- To understand the Kinship map of India
- To analyze the different rules of marriage, family system and Kinship relation in different regions of India

## **16.3 The Kinship Map of India**

Three things are absolutely necessary for the understanding of any cultural phenomenon in India. These are : the configuration of the linguistic regions, the institution of caste and the family organization. Each of these three factors is intimately bound up with the other two and the three together give meaning and supply basis to all other aspects of Indian culture.

A language area is one in which several languages belonging to one language-family are spoken.

The linguistic regions possess a certain homogeneity of culture traits and kinship organization. The common language makes communication easy, sets the limits of marital connections and confines kinship mostly within the language region. Common folksongs and common literature characterize such an area. This is inevitable as large numbers of people are illiterate and literary traditions are transmitted orally.

It would have been possible and might have seemed more logical to divide and deal with these areas separately as (1) Indo-European or Sanskritic, (2) Dravidian, and

(3) Mundari organizations of kinship. Instead, I have presented the kinship organizations in a geographical sequence of (1) northern, (2) central, (3) southern and (4) eastern zones. This procedure was adopted deliberately to emphasize the spatial pattern and interrelation of the kinship organization and the linguistic divisions. Since, the geographical distribution of different language families in India is well known, here I have only tried to relate this configuration with another cultural phenomenon, the kinship organization.

The kinship organization follows the linguistic pattern roughly; but in some aspects language and kinship pattern do not go hand in hand. Thus though the Maharashtra region belongs to the area of Sanskritic languages its kinship organization is to a large extent modelled on that of the Dravidian south, its southern neighbour. The Dravidian north on the other hand has been affected to a large extent by its northern neighbours speaking Sanskritic languages. It is not the people of Karnataka and Andhra alone, whose literature is saturated with Sanskrit words and Sanskrit epics, who use some northern kinship terms, but also the Oraons and Gonds, the primitive jungle folk who live within the northern linguistic area, and have kinship vocabularies which show over 50 per cent of words borrowed from Sanskritic languages. Iravati Karve have therefore presented the kinship material in geographical divisions, which are easy to understand particularly after they are brought into relationship with the language areas of India.

#### **16.4 The Northern Zone**

The northern zone comprises that part of India which lies between the Himalayas to the north and the Vindhya ranges to the south. Linguistically, it is the northern half of the language-area where languages derived from Sanskrit are spoken by a large majority of the people. The states (administrative units) included in this area are : Sind (now a part of West Pakistan), Punjab (West Punjab is now part of West Pakistan), Kashmir, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, part of Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal, Assam and the independent kingdom of Nepal. The languages spoken are Sindhi, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Hindi, Bihari, Bengali, Assami and Nepali .....

In the northern zone, kinship behaviour changes slightly from region to region and, within each region, from caste to caste. The study of these differences is very fruitful for the understanding of the social structure of each region but one needs a certain norm for undertaking a comparative study. The following sketch attempts to give

such a norm, giving an 'ideal' northern pattern by referring to practices and attitudes found most commonly among a majority of the castes in the northern zone.

***The Gotra and the Clan Systems*** :— There are certain groups in India whose social prestige makes others copy their institutions, at least in name. The two most important groups have been, since very ancient times, the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas. The *gotra-system* of the Brahmins is like the clan-system of the non-Aryans. This *gotra-system* was written down and made into a system which applied to all Brahmins and was copied by many other castes. The castes which claim to be Kshatriyas and Vaishyas (traders) have social divisions possessing *gotras*. There is however no caste in India besides Brahmins which possesses the elaborate *pravaras* included in the *gotra-organization*. Many lower castes also have *gotras* and even primitive people talk of their clans as *gotta* or *gotra*.

There is reason to believe that Brahminhood was bestowed in ancient times on people not born Brahmins, but in modern times few people can pass into the Brahmins fold, even though they possess a system of exogamy which tries to imitate and is therefore similar to the Brahmin *gotra* system. The Kshatriya rank on the other hand has been much more elastic and during the historical period many foreign tribes and lesser castes have assumed, and are even now assuming, the name and status of Kshatriya.

**Hypergamy and Kulinism** :— The tendency towards hypergamous stratification is found among all caste clusters. The Brahmins for example are generally roughly divided into (1) those who do not have to earn their living by officiating at domestic ritual and (2) those who do it for a living. The former generally own land and engage in literary studies. The latter are family priests, or priests officiating at holy places. The priests who officiate at holy places when people take their baths in the holy rivers or offer worship, are held to be rather lower in status than the family priests. Among the priests at holy places (*ksetra* in Sanskrit) those who officiate at funerary rites hold again a position lower than those who officiate at auspicious ceremonies. In Banaras, Mathura, Ayodhya, Gaya, Nasik, Rameshwar and all over India in the sacred places there are these Brahmins who are generally well off but are held to belong to a very low status among Brahmins. The Brahmins of each of these divisions marry only among themselves, but may sometimes receive a bride from a slightly

lower division but not from a division many steps lower than their own. Thus a Brahmin of the first class i.e. belonging to a learned family will never marry the daughter of a *Mahabrahmana* who officiates at funerary rites. The custom according to which a man marries a girl belonging to the same division or to one which is only of a slightly lower status has resulted in a phenomenon called *kulinism* in Bengal. In Bengal a class of Brahmins, supposed to be descendants of learned people called in by a medieval king, call themselves *kulin* and the rich girls of families whose *kulin* descent was not universally acknowledged hoped to marry into *kulin* families. The *kulin* groom could always demand a very high price and it is reported that some *kulin* families who had sons only made a business of it by getting the sons to marry a large number of wives. Sometimes, the poorer wives or those born with a slightly lower status were never brought as brides to the husband's home at all. They lived at their parental home and were visited by their lord and master, who every time demanded money for such a visit. *Kulin* youths were said to make the round of their wife's houses, extorting money and living off their parents-in-law. This resulted in a curious custom by which the children would be brought up at the maternal uncle's house. Sometimes, they would be acknowledged and taken to the father's house but quite often they lived with the mother's people. The matrimonial difficulties of this class were so great that a wave of suicide swept over Bengal, where girls of poor *kulin* parents chose death rather than bring ruin on their parents, through the payment of exorbitant dowry. The system was broken by the social reformers and the spread of education among girls.

### **Rules of Marriage**

The organization of the family is essentially similar throughout northern India and most of the castes conform to the same basic pattern which has its roots in the Indo-Aryan patriarchal family of ancient times. We have also seen that the modern kinship terms are mostly derived from the old Sanskrit terms.

It is therefore not surprising to find that the marriage regulations are based mainly on considerations of consanguinity. The ancient rule of avoiding marriage with somebody who is removed by less than seven degrees from the father and five degrees from the mother is quoted by all castes from the highest to the lowest when asked about marriage practices.

The actual rule of marriage is however that a person (1) must not marry in his patri-family which can be called the patri-clan in some cases and (2) must also avoid marriage (a) with the children of his mother's siblings and cousins and (b) with the children of his father's sisters and the children of his father's female cousins. This rule is the same as the one which was in vogue in ancient northern India. A person must not marry in his patri-family and must avoid marriage with the *sapinda*-kin. In almost all castes in the northern zone, the marriage of cousins (removed even by two or three degrees) is viewed with great disfavour though a few cases occur as exceptions.

This rule is elaborated in different ways in different communities.

Among the Brahmins, who possess *gotras* in the old Brahmanic sense of the word, a man marries outside his own *gotra* and also that of his mother. Just as the taboo on the father's kin embraces the patri-clan so the taboo on the mother's kin embraces the whole of the matri-clan. Besides this there is also a taboo on marriage with cousins. In the western and central parts of the northern zone, there is also local exogamy in as much as Brahmins and other castes of the same village, even if they are of different *gotras*, do not inter-marry.

The Jat is an agricultural and a fighting caste of south Punjab, Delhi and northern Rajputana. It is divided into exogamous *gotras* and the marriage rule is that a man must not marry into (1) his father's *i.e.* his own *gotra* (2) his mother's *gotra* and (3) his *dadi's i.e.* father's mother's *gotra*. Not so long ago, and among the orthodox people even now, a man also had to avoid his (4) *nani's i.e.* his mother's mother's *gotra*.

Stated in the form of the four *gotra* rule, as it is called by most of the castes who practise it, it resembles the Australian eight class system and it has the same function, namely the avoidance of marriage of kin removed by less than two degrees.

### **Spatial and Geographical Limits of Endogamy and Exogamy**

If a daughter is given into a certain family of a certain village, a second daughter is generally not given into the same family or village in that generation and, owing to the taboos mentioned above, not in the next two generations at least. Also, there is a prejudice against exchanging daughters.

The Rajasthan Rajputs are divided into hypergamous clans but apart from clan hypergamy a new kind of hypergamy has resulted through their spread all over India.

During the middle ages, they spread all over northern India. Wherever they spread they are supposed to have mixed with local people so that the status of the Rajputs becomes lower and lower the more easterly they are. In the Gangetic plain it is, therefore, customary for eastern brides to seek western grooms. This rule of marriage is given in a saying 'the girl from the east, the boy from the west'. A record of Rajput marriages over areas in the north should show that western villages provide grooms while the eastern villages provide brides and that there is a direction in the transaction of circulation of women.

Not only is the family which gives a daughter in marriage supposed to have a status inferior to the family which receives a daughter, but even a village which gives a daughter is inferior in status to a village which receives one. Dr McKim Marriott, find a directional trend showing 'daughter-giving villages' on one side and 'daughter-receiving villages' on the other, but rarely does it happen that a village which receives a daughter gives one in return.

There is thus a wider and wider circle for seeking marital alliances but there is always an outer limit for this expansion which is different for each caste. This region of endogamy may comprise from a few administrative districts to a whole linguistic region. This limitation of the field for marriage is due to the fear that the bride or groom of a distant village, though professing to belong to the same caste as one's own, may be inferior in some ways. Therefore, one gives daughters in marriage to families with whom old affinal relations of one's own family or of one's affinal families can be established.

There are thus two opposing tendencies. The consciousness of caste status keeps marriage territorially and genealogically within a group which, from old times, is established as an affinal group, while the taboos on the marriage of near kin and the prescription of local exogamy tend to spread the affinal group over a comparatively large area and to include a considerable number of families within it. It would be interesting to find out the exact limits of the inner and outer circles of exclusion and inclusion in different northern areas and among different castes.

### **'Daughters' versus 'Brides'**

Girls and boys were generally married when they were children. The bride is not finally sent to the groom's house until she reaches puberty. Till that time she goes

to her parents-in-law's house for a few days as a guest. The groom is called to take away the bride on an auspicious day after the bride has her first menses and a ceremony called *gauna* is performed. Fruit is piled in the lap of the bride. Rich presents are given to her, to the groom and to his parents. Generally, ceremonial cohabitation takes place. Sometimes, it is deferred until the groom and bride go to the groom's house. Between the marriage and *gauna* ceremony a period of anything from a few months to a few years can elapse depending on the ages of the groom and the bride. Among some castes, the bride accompanied by a woman from her father's house is taken to her husband's home immediately after marriage and returns to her parental home after a short stay. When she goes with the husband after *gauna*, she comes back but rarely on some ceremonial occasions.

Early marriage to a stranger and the separation from the mother is given peculiar tone to all the northern folk things and have given rise to certain situations cleverly exploited in story-telling.

It is the parents of the groom and bride who arrange the marriage. The groom and bride see each other only at the time of the marriage when propriety dictates that the girl must sit with her eyes and head lowered. Even when the party returns to the groom's home the bride sits surrounded by the women-folk, very shy and veiled, and generally sorrowful and frightened. The groom should also be shy, but being a man a bold glance at the bride now and then during the ceremony may evoke a jest but not a reprimand.

The north has separate words for 'daughters' and 'brides' in each regional language, with a double standard of behaviour and sometimes of morality for each category. This custom of local exogamy divides the women of a local group into two sharp divisions : the 'daughters' of the village and the 'brides' of the village. The daughters of different local families are very friendly with each other and enjoy each other's company whenever they come back to the village from their father-in-law's houses. They all constitute a sort of a spy service to watch the behaviour of the 'brides'. Folk literature singles out certain pairs of relations as natural enemies. *Nanad-bhojāi* i.e. a woman and her husband's sister is one such pair. *Sas-bahū* i.e. a woman and her husband's mother is another. *Nanad* (husband's sister) is the daughter of a house. *Bhojai* (brother's wife) is the bride. The *nanad* has to leave the house in which she was



born and finds that a complete stranger takes her place in it. *Sās* is the mother-in-law, the ruler of the joint family. *Bahû* is the young daughter-in-law. Though both are brides, i.e. women who have come into the family through marriage, the *sās* being the mother has established certain rights. The *bahû* is a stranger, who is the present slave and the future mistress. The rivalry between *sās* and *bahû* is the rivalry of two generations of women between whom, in the course of time, power is transferred from the old to the young. All the girls of the husband's village watch over the 'brides' and report their smallest gesture to their mothers, who are of course the mother-in-law of the young brides. There is hardly a song which does not talk of the ever wakeful *sās* and *nanad* who would wake up at night and interfere even if the bride goes to her own husband.

Early marriage to a complete stranger out of the native village is a terrible crisis in a girl's life. In India, marriage is a sacrament and no normal man or woman must die without receiving this sacrament. It is a custom among many communities that if a woman dies a spinster, a marriage ceremony is performed with the corpse and the woman is then cremated with the honours due to a married woman. There is greater freedom for a man, but if a man who has gone through the initiation ceremony dies without marrying, he is supposed to become a ghost. To die childless is to miss heaven. This firmly established belief would make a girl unhappy if she is not married. The marriage ceremony is pomp and fun and yet the moment of parting from the mother is poignant. The whole of the northern zone reflects this in the number of pairs of words for the father-in-law's house on the one hand and the beloved house of the father and mother on the other. Hundreds of folk-songs bear witness to the agony of a girl at parting for ever from her parent's home. The husband is a shadowy figure; the real people are the parents-in-law and from an indulgent home she has to go to strangers who are ready to find fault with her at the slightest gesture. In the husband's home there is the ever present fear of the husband bringing another wife. Only when a girl becomes the mother of a boy does she feel completely at home in her husband's house. The sentiment existing between the two families joined by a marriage is well reflected in the custom according to which a respectable man does not take food at his daughter's husband's house when he goes on a visit. He is among strangers. The relationship is that of givers and receivers. One who gives the daughter should not receive anything. A father rarely visits a married daughter. He may go only on extremely formal occasions

but the brother may go often and hence in northern Indian folksongs girls sing always of the *bīr* (the brother) who comes as a beloved visitor and brings news of the parents. One hears again and again of the *mā-jāiā* (born of the same mother) *bīr*. In a polygynous society brothers and sisters born of the same mother have closer bonds than those born of different mothers. It is considered a great shame for a man in old age to have to live with his son-in-law for lack of sons or other agnatic kin.

### **Levirate, Polygyny and Remarriage**

Though the system of levirate (marriage of a widow to the husband's brother) is found among a large number of castes it has not the sanction of the present-day Brahminic religion. The Smritis have all condemned it as a custom not suited to the present times, so that during that historical period one finds the customs of adoption coming into vogue. Higher castes and ruling families generally prohibit levirate and prefer that the widow should adopt a boy. In a majority of cases, however, it is the man who adopts a child, if he finds himself childless in spite of marrying again and again. A very large amount of litigation arises out of the quarrels between the adopted child and both or one of his parents. Agnates generally prefer a widow to adopt a child from the agnatic branch, preferably a child of the brother or cousin of the deceased husband. Sometimes they wish to prevent an adoption as they hope to get a portion of the estate if there is no son as successor. It was said that one of the reasons why so many widows were forcibly burnt with their dead husbands was to prevent adoption of a stranger as a son into the family.

The most powerful motive for polygyny besides the display of social status and wealth is the desire for male progeny. Not only does a man marry again if the first wife proves barren but it is generally observed by the scholars that the cases in which the first wife insisted on a second marriage of her husband in order that children should be born in the house. When asked why she would not adopt a child, she replied, 'An adopted child is a complete stranger. A co-wife's child is at least the child of my husband and I could love it as such. I would hate to bring up strangers as my children.' Far more usual is the attitude where, in a polygynous household, a woman hates her rival's children who are a constant living reminder of her defeat and a symbol of her humiliation.

All over India, the words for 'marriage' are always different from the words for 'widow-marriage'. The second marriage of a woman needed no ritual and vows. It is

merely considered to be a living together of a man and woman after letting a few friends and relatives know about it. In the north the word for marriage is *byāh* (Sanskrit *ivāha*) and those for widow-remarriage are *sagai* or *karāo* or *karewā* and *sanga*. The marriage of a widow was absolutely prohibited in certain castes, while in other castes, where it was allowed, such a marriage had not the sacredness of a first marriage. This type of taboo on the second marriage of a *man* does not exist, but there is a social dislike against it. Well-to-do men married formerly a second or third time even when the previous wives were living. Multiple marriage gave prestige to a man, but lowered the social status of the family which gave its daughter to a man whose first wife was alive. In Indian languages there are proverbs, folk-songs and folk-tales about the co-wife. In such songs, the plight of a woman who has to live with a co-wife is depicted. In other circumstances, following the tradition of the Sanskrit classical drama (Kalidasa), a girl was expected to live like a friend with a co-wife. In still other circumstances, a barren woman induced her husband to marry a second wife. In such cases, the position of dominance in household affairs remained with the first wife who controlled the servants, brought up the children and also exercised some power over the younger co-wife.

Giving a girl as a bride to a man who is a widower is considered to be not the best kind of marriage for a girl. Such a marriage is supposed to have been contracted for money considerations or might indicate the existence of some defect in the bride. A man loses his social status to some extent if he gives his daughter to a man who is marrying for the second time.

### **Roles in a Joint Family**

The behaviour pattern of the kin-group in the northern family is like that of the patri-family in ancient India. The man lives with his patri-kin among whom he is born and reared. He comes in contact with his wife's relations but rarely. The woman on the other hand spends her life, except for the few childhood years, with her affinal kin with whom she is not acquainted up to the moment of her marriage. Definite patterns are set up for her behaviour with these relations.

A woman must stand up and cover her head and face if she is in the same room as her parents-in-law, and the brothers and cousins of the parents-in-law, whom also she refers to as father-in-law and mother-in-law. Except on ceremonial occasions, she

must never be in the same room as her father-in-law or the elder brothers and cousins of her husband. The women generally occupy the inner rooms. The mode of greeting for these relations and for her husband is for the woman to bow low to the ground and place her head on their feet. When a bride comes home all the women neighbours come to see the bride when she takes off the end of the sari from her head. This ceremony is called *mukh-dikhāi*. During the marriage ceremony, her face is shown to all the affinal kin. Even on this occasion, she is supposed to keep her glance lowered or her eyes shut. Towards the younger brother of her husband, her behaviour is more free and she may joke with him. A bride however should be neither seen too much except when working nor heard too much. Only when she becomes a mother can she be a little free, but only when the mother-in-law is old or dead does a woman have freedom of speech and behaviour. If the husband dies when the bride is but young she is branded as an inauspicious woman and her lot is hard. This is an ancient sentiment. Already in a Rigvedic hymn, a person supplicates to the powers that the bride may not be a killer of her husband or brother-in-law or the cattle. In modern times, whatever misfortunes fall to a house within a year of bringing in a new bride are ascribed to the inauspicious qualities of the bride. Generally, a woman is so dominated by the affinal kin or by the husband that she rarely makes a positive impression except as a mother. It is not rare to see women, who were nothing but meek.

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The northern joint family is a status group where husband, wife, parents-in-law, daughters-in-law, sons, daughters, sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law have each a definite place assigned to him or her vis-à-vis all others. The work which each has to do, the pleasures each will enjoy are more or less fixed by convention, and the important thing one has to learn are these conventions of kinship behaviour. A man behaves in a deferential manner to all elder relatives of his wife and jokes with her younger brothers and sisters. A man may marry the younger sister of his wife during the life-time of his wife or after her death. Many folk tales exploit this situation in the relationship of sisters.

A father does not eat in the house where his daughter is given as bride. Sometimes, even the village in which the daughter's husband's people live is avoided for meals. If he goes on a visit he takes presents, but will receive neither presents nor food. The brother on the other hand may visit his sister. He is much sung in northern folk-songs as *bir*— the champion. The groom's family is always supposed to be 'higher' in status than the bride's family. The pattern of gift-giving is such that one always *gives* gifts to one's daughter's husband. If a 'daughter' of the family brings a gift on any occasion it needs to be returned at least twofold. Daughters of poor parents therefore will rather give on gift so that they do not impose the burden of a bigger return gift on their parents.

In the whole of the north, women rarely go out of their houses, or take part in marriage processions. In the central and southern zones, women in their coloured saris and rich ornaments are the most conspicuous members of marriage processions. In the north, the women's sphere is much more isolated from that of the men than in the south

and this is due to the fact that the family is not only patrilineally oriented but dominated by the patri-kin and girls are always given in marriage to people with whom they are not acquainted. The southern patrilineal families on the other hand, prefer marriages of cousins so that the orientation is not entirely patrilocal.

Since, the establishment of the British rule government service and work in industrial areas has given rise to what appear to be single family units of husband, wife and children on the European model. In such families, the wife has a position of responsibility and respect but in a majority of cases it is not a true single family, because it has economic and ritual ties with a larger patri-family whose member the husband is.

The present northern family is thus a continuation of the family of the ancient times with slight modifications. It is patrilineal, patrilocal and patriarchal. Marriage is generally outside of the kin-group and the local group. It is a joint family in which the brides are all brought from outside and the girls are all given away. The behaviour is strictly regulated according to generations, according to whether one is born in the family or married into the family and finally according to whether one is a man or a woman. Customs like levirate and sororate, by which a widow lives with the younger brother of her husband and a man marries the younger sister of his wife, show that marriage is very much a relationship between two families rather than between two individuals. The giving and receiving of gifts also reflects the familial aspect rather than the individual aspect of gifts also reflects the familial aspect rather than the individual aspect of the transaction. It seems as if some non-Aryan influence has been at work in modifying ancient taboos on consanguine relations into the law of the exogamy of four *gotras*.

## **16.5 The Central Zone**

### ***Linguistic Sub-regions***

The central zone comprises the following linguistic regions: (1) Rajasthan where Rajasthani is spoken, (2) Madhya Pradesh where Hindi is spoken, (3) Gujarat and Kathiawad where Gujarati and Kathiawadi are spoken, (4) Maharashtra where Marathi is spoken and (5) Orissa where Uriya is spoken.

Rajasthani, Hindi, Gujarati, Kathiawadi, Marathi and Uriya are all languages of Sanskritic origin and so from the point of view of the languages spoken this zone has affinity to the northern zone. But within this zone there are large pockets of people

speaking languages of the Dravidian family and also some areas where Austro-Asiatic languages are spoken.

Every one of the above regions contains primitive tribes at all stages of assimilation to the predominant agricultural economy of the zone. There are some tribes like the korkus in north central Maharashtra who are still in the stage of food-gatherers and dependent hunters while there are others like Bhils who are indifferent agriculturists and Kolams and Warlis who are skilled rice-growers... How much of the present population of this zone is made up of these tribes we need not discuss in the present context but there is not doubt that that element must have been of great influence towards shaping the kinship pattern of the various regions of this zone.

### ***Kinship Organization in the Central Zone***

As regards kinship organization every region enumerated above, besides following the northern practices described in the previous section, also has certain castes which show a new type of mating—the marriage of a man to his mother's brother's daughter, which is the same as the marriage of a girl to her father's sister's son. In some regions this marriage is practised by only a few castes while in one region at least it is preferred by the majority of castes. The second feature in the kinship organization of this zone is that many of the castes are divided into exogamous clans. The third is that among some castes the exogamous clans are arranged in a hypergamous hierarchy, i.e., a girl in a lower clan can marry a man of a higher clan but a girl in a higher clan may not marry a man in a lower clan. Of these three features, we have seen the existence of hypergamy in some of the castes in the northern zone but there is reason to believe that the northern hypergamy is an imitation of the system followed by the Rajputs who spread all over northern India as conquerors from the sixth century of the Christian era.

None of the features enumerated above are found all over the zone, nor all over a single region within the zone. There is however one region, i.e., Maharashtra, which has the three features more widely spread than all the other regions. The kinship terminology of Maharashtra though mainly Sanskritic in origin uses concepts which are not found among other regions where Sanskritic languages are spoken and which can be understood only by a reference to the kinship organization and kinship terms used in the southern zone.

To sum up, we find that in the central zone :

- (1) Rajasthan, Kathiawad and Gujarat is a region where only Sanskritic languages are spoken though there are some non-Sanskritic words in daily speech. The kinship pattern is predominantly northern, though a few customs have similarities with southern customs. Some groups practise one type of cross-cousin marriage as a permissive form of marriage *i.e.*, the marriage of a man of his mother's brother's daughter.

Hypergamy and one type of cross-cousin marriage seem to be two aspects of one and the same social relationship arising out of amalgamation of different ethnic elements through successive incursions and conquests.

- (2) Maharashtra is a region where the overwhelming majority of people speak a Sanskritic language. There are however semiprimitive people in the east who speak Dravidian languages (*i.e.*, Gondi and Kolami). The Marathi language has also a considerable number of words of Dravidian origin in its vocabulary since the earliest times. The majority of castes and tribes practise one type of cross-cousin marriage *i.e.* mother's brother's daughter marriage. In central and northern Maharashtra there is a definite taboo on the other type of marriage [*i.e.*, father's sister's daughter marriage], though it occurs in south Maharashtra. In north Maharashtra junior levirate is allowed among many castes. In central and south Maharashtra it is not allowed. The Marathas, the most numerous of the Maharashtra castes, show a hypergamous clan structure. It is the region most affected by and literature shows that it is a region of cultural borrowings and cultural synthesis.

- (3) More than one-fourth of the population of Orissa is tribal population. Languages belonging to three major linguistic families in India are spoken in this region but as the region is cut up by rivers, hills and forests there has not evolved such a homogeneous mixed culture as in Maharashtra. Still all ethnic groups are affected by one another and copy each other's practices. The Uriya-speaking groups generally show a northern pattern though many agriculturists allow cross-cousin marriage of one type only.

Thus the central zone, though differing in its various areas, has one thing in



common, viz, that many of its castes practise one type of cross-cousin marriage and have a definite taboo or aversion towards the other type of cross-cousin marriage. It forms in many ways, a region of transition from the north and the south.

## **16.6 The Southern Zone**

### *Linguistic Regions*

The southern zone is here intended to cover those areas of southern and central India where the languages of the Dravidian family are spoken. For our purposes, it is convenient to divide this zone into 5 regions : (1) Karnatak, where the Kanarese or Kannada language is spoken; (2) Andhra Pradesh of Telingana, where Andhra or Telugu is spoken; (3) Tamilnad where the name of both the language and the people is Tamil; (4) Kerala or Malabar where the language spoken is Malyalam; and (5) a region that extends north of Andhra Pradesh from the forests of the lower reaches of the Godavari river through Bastar and Western Orissa into southern Bihar. This is a region of mixed languages and peoples. The predominant populations are tribal peoples, the most important among them being the Koya, Gond and Khond who speak Kui, the Kolam who speak Kolami and the Oraon who speak Kurukh. Besides these tribes who speak Dravidian languages, there are various other tribes speaking Munda (Austro-Asiatic) languages such as the Bondo, Gadaba and Saora of Orissa; the Ho, Santal and Kharia of Bihar and Bengal. In addition to the tribal peoples, there are also Hindu populations who speak Aryan languages. This region is thus a contact region of peoples who speak languages belonging to three distinct language families. The family organization of the Dravidian-speaking peoples of this region reveals differing degrees of contact and assimilation with neighbouring elements. The terminology is greatly affected by Marathi, Uriya and Bihari, but in some cases preserves forms which help us to interpret the meaning of terms in other Dravidian areas.

The southern zone presents a very complicated pattern of kinship systems and family organization. Though the patrilineal and patrilocal family is the dominant family type for the greater number of castes and communities, there are important sections of the population which are matrilineal and matrilocal and quite a number whose systems possess features of both types of organizations. As in the rest of India, most castes in this zone allow the practice of polygyny and there are some who practise both polyandry

and polygyny.

In Karnatak, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnad and among certain important castes of Malabar the predominant form of family organization is the patrilineal and patrilocal joint family. The family is composed of similar categories of kin as in the north. The males are born and live all their lives in the house of their paternal kin, while their wives are brought in from other families and the girls born in the family are given away as brides into other families. But in this in Malabar, the Nayar, Tiyan, some Mohammedan Mopla, and in the Kanara district the Bant, the family is matrilineal and matrilocal.

The patrilineal family is like that of the north as regards its members and need not be described in detail at this stage. In spite of these diverse patterns of family organization, there are certain institutions which are found among a majority of the people in the southern zone and which are not so widely distributed in the north. One such institution which seems to be almost universal in the southern zone is the system of exogamous clans. These clans are exogamous divisions in an endogamous caste or tribe. There are patrilineal clans among patrilineal people and matrilineal clans among matrilineal people.

#### *Marriage Preferences and Taboos*

1. In a large number of castes, the first preference is given by a man choosing his elder sister's daughter as a bride. There are innumerable instances of such marriages. A man's elder sister is given in marriage to a family which is led into an obligation to give the daughter of the marriage back to the family from which they had originally received the bride.

Among non-Brahmin castes (Hindu as well as Lingayat) there is a taboo against a man's marriage with the *younger* sister's daughter. Among the Brahmins, however, though in the majority of cases in which the marriage is with the elder sister's daughter, a few cases of marriage with the younger sister's daughter have also come to the notice. The marriage of a woman to her maternal uncle, i.e., of a man to his sister's daughter is taboo among all matrilineal communities of the south.

2. Among the preferred marriages, a man's marriage with his father's sister's daughter (i.e., a woman marrying her mother's brother's son) comes next

among a very large number of castes. The family which gives a daughter expects one in return. This return is however effected in the next generation. In the case of the maternal uncle-niece marriage, the girl to be returned belongs to a generation lower than the man to whom she is given in marriage. There are a number of cases of exchange of daughter in the same generation. These are however not as numerous as the other two types of marriages.

3. The third type of preferential mating is that of a man with his maternal uncle's (mother's brother's) daughter. There are some castes like the Havig Brahmins of Karnatak, the Kallar of Tamilnad, some types of Reddi in Andhra (Telingana) and many others who allow only this type of cross-cousin marriage. In Telingana and Karnataka, this practice was followed sometimes by one part of a caste, while another followed the other type of cross-cousin marriage. In the case of those, who practised only the former type of cross-cousin marriage, which as we saw is prevalent in the central zone, there are generally claims of social superiority, or inter-caste hypergamy. The Reddis claim to be Kshatriyas. The Kallars, though a poverty-ridden people, also claim to be some kind of Kshatriyas. Reddis and Kallars also have a hypergamous division of society, but it is not as formalized as that among the Marathas or Rajputs. Those who have given a daughter to a particular family must continue to do so ever afterwards; those who have received one from a particular family must always go on receiving from that family.

Besides all these marriage (which are preferred types), there are also quite a number of marriages outside the group of close kin. These happen if there is no suitable mate in one's own kin-group, i.e. if any of the preferred types described above are not possible. Among younger people, especially of the educated classes, there is a tendency to seek advantageous marriages outside the kin-group. This tendency sometimes causes great sorrow and frustration. Cross-cousin marriage and especially the uncle-niece marriage is beginning to be considered as outmoded and a thing to be ashamed of among those groups which have come in contact with the northern Indians and the English-speaking people. The proposed unified civil code for all India contemplated the immediate abolition of the custom of

of marriage had not taken place. In the south, there is a definite bias for marriage within a very small kin-group just outside of the immediate primary family. The only rule for southern marriages is clan-exogamy and no type of marriage discussed above infringes this rule. There are however certain types which, though conforming to the principle of clan-exogamy, are not allowed and where the prohibition seems to be based on some other considerations. The following are illustrations of such taboos.

1. A man can marry his *elder* sister's daughter but is not allowed (except among Brahmins) to marry his *younger* sister's daughter.
2. Though widow-remarriage is practised among almost all castes (except Brahmins), a widow is not allowed to marry either the elder or the younger brother (real or classificatory) of her husband. In regions where the Dravidian-speaking population has come in contact with the northern population the taboo is not observed and the marriage of a widow to her husband's younger brother is allowed, but elsewhere, especially in the southern areas, namely Tamilnad, Andhra, Karnatak and Kerala, this taboo is general.
3. There seems to be a general taboo against the marriage of a man with his mother's sister's daughter even if she belongs to a clan different from his own, though some informants averred that such a marriage can take place if the *ballis* exogamous kin-groups of the cousins are different.
4. The complicated kinship relations arising in a family owing to maternal uncle-niece marriage and cross-cousin marriage, sometimes result in two people being related to each other in more ways than one. There may be one relationship where a marriage would be ordinarily forbidden, while from another angle the relationship may be one in which a marriage usually does take place. People seem to act according to convenience and the circumstances of a family in such cases.

northern and southern usages. Among both people there is a taboo against a man's marriage with his wife's elder sister.

*Summary Characteristics of Dravidian Kinship Organization*

The Dravidian kinship organization is thus fundamentally different from that of the northern zone. The kin in the immediate family is arranged not according to generations but according to age categories of 'older than ego' and 'younger than ego'. Marriage is outside the exogamous kin-group called *balli* or *bedagu* or *kilai*, which has similarities to totemistic clans. Exchange of daughters is favoured and marriage among close kin is the preferred one. The rules for marriage as deduced from kinship behaviour are :

- (1) One must not marry a member of one's own clan.
- (2) A girl must marry a person who belongs to the group 'older than self' and also to the group 'younger than the parents'. Therefore, she can marry any of her older cross-cousins, as also the younger brother of her mother.
- (3) A boy must marry a girl belonging to a group 'younger than self' ... and who is a child of the group 'older than self'...

He can therefore, marry any of his younger female cross-cousins and also a daughter of any of his elder sisters.

This results in reciprocal relations and reciprocal kinship terms. The categories of kin are not blood-relations and in-law relations as in the north, but blood-relations whom one may not marry and blood-relations whom one may marry. A man does not bring a stranger as a bride to his home, a woman is not thrown among complete strangers on her marriage. Marriage strengthens existing bonds. The emphasis is on knitting families closer together and narrowing the circle of the kin-groups, a policy exactly the opposite of the one followed in the north. The whole tone of the southern society is different. The distinction between the father's house and the father-in law's house is not as sharp as in the north. The distinction between 'daughters' and 'brides'

or 'wives' is not as deep as in the north. A girl's behaviour in her husband's family is much free. After all, her husband is either her uncle or her cross-cousin and his mother is either her own grand-mother or her aunt. Neither is she separated for long periods from her parent's house.

The custom of marrying close kin results in girls being given in marriage to families living not too far from their houses and there is much visiting between the two houses, and the girl goes often and on long visits to her parents and almost always for her confinements. It would be interesting to gather folk-tales and folk-songs of the south and compare them with those of the north.

The north represents the principle of extended exchange, a policy of expansion, incorporation of outsiders as wives into the family, leading to great stresses and strains, a double standard of women's behaviour pattern, a wide circle of kin, a society having a pastoral economy or an agricultural economy supported by pastoral pursuits.

The south represents the principle of immediate exchange, a policy of consolidation, a clustering of kinship in a narrow area, no sharp distinction between kin by blood and kin by marriage, greater freedom for women in a society which was mainly agricultural, with very few or almost no pastoral traditions.

### **16.7 The Eastern Zone**

In this zone are included some of the people of the north-east and the east who speak Mundari and Monkhmer languages.

The northern, central and southern zones are compact and geographically contiguous. The eastern zone shows neither of these characteristics.

The Mundari-and Monkhmer-speaking groups, though spread over a very wide area, represent today linguistic islands separated from each other by regions where other languages are spoken. Even within these linguistic islands the penetration of other linguistic groups and the consequent contamination of other languages is very great.

The Mundari and Monkhmer languages belong to a language family called the Austro-Asiatic family of languages. Languages of this family are spoken by many peoples of south-east Asia. All these people live as scattered groups among people speaking other languages like the Tibeto-Burmese, Chinese, Aryan and Dravidian. The western-most people of this group are the Korku who live in central India in the Satpura and

Vindhya ranges. The eastern-most people are the Annamese on the south-eastern coast of the Asiatic mainland. The southern most people are the primitive Sakai and Semang living in the jungles of Malay peninsula. The northern-most people are the Khasi of Assam in India. The Austro-Asiatic languages are divided into two great groups of languages, the Monkhmer and the Mundari. Of these the people who speak Monkhmer languages are all, with the exception of the Khasi, outside, and to the east of India; those who speak Mundari are found in central and eastern India. The speakers on Mon, Khmer and Cham had built great empires and have records of their languages in inscriptions of the seventh and the eighth century of the Christian Era. The other speakers of the Monkhmer group and all the speakers of the Mundari group are represented today by the so-called primitive tribes living in jungles and ranging from nomadic hunters to cultivators of rice.

#### **16.8 Conclusion**

In this chapter, we found that the Kinship map of India is divided on the basis of language and regions. The northern zone is marked by gotra, hypergamy, Kulinism, endogamy, exogamy, widow marriage etc. The central zone is distinguished by cross-cousin marriage, the southern zone is marked by clan exogamy and cross cousin. However, eastern zone has tribal grouping with heterogeneity of characteristic.

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| <b>Structure</b> | <b>Dr. Hema Gandotra</b> |
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- 17.3 Kashmiri Brahmans under Early Muslim rule
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- 17.7 Conclusion

#### **17.1. Introduction**

##### ***Kashmiri Pandits: History and Social Organization:***

The Brahmans of Kashmir were in past times renowned for their learning and scholastic achievements, and are known as Kashmiri Pandits all over India. As is well known, the Sanskrit word Pandit means ‘a learned man.’ They refer to themselves by the word bhatta, which is the Prakrit form of Sanskrit bharti, meaning ‘doctor’, the designation of great scholars’

Besides Pandits, there are two other Hindu minority groups in Kashmir, viz. the Buher (or Bohra) and the Purib (or Purbi). They have been almost assimilated into the Pandit culture, although intermarriage and interdinning are yet the exception rather than the rule. The historical origins of these two groups are not clear.

Lawrence (1895) maintains that the Bohra are ‘khatris’ and probably of Punjabi origin. Hutton writes of the khatri as a trading caste of Punjab and north-west India . According to T.N Madan, the bohra are descended from the pandits who lost caste during the early days of Muslim rule, either because they failed to observe essential



rituals out of the fear of punitive taxes, or because they temporarily accepted conversion to Islam as matter of expediency. A Khatri origin is more probable as the bohra are found only in urban areas and their traditional occupation is trade and shop-keeping. In fact the word bohra( or buhur, singular of buher) is often used in Kashmir in the sense of a grocer.

The Purbi, also found only in urban areas, are probably descended from an immigrant Brahman caste. According to Madan, they came to Kashmir from the Chamba valley in east Punjab several hundred years ago. The appellation of Pandit is commonly used by the Purbi as it is by the Pandits themselves.

There has also been an influx of Hindus from Jammu and the Punjab during last hundred years or so, but they are all confined to the city of Srinagar and preserve their linguistic and cultural identity.

### ***Population:***

According to the 1981 census, kashmiri is spoken by 3,176,975 persons of whom 46,105 (1.45%) are distributed outside Jammu and Kashmir. Himachal Pradesh, which is a contiguous state, accounts for 67.13% of Kashmir speakers found outside Jammu and Kashmir. The other states having Kashmir speakers are Haryana (2.9%), Maharashtra (3.28%), Punjab (2.5%), Rajasthan (2.23%), Uttar Pradesh (4.55%) and Delhi (10.9%).

According to the 1961 census 89,102 of the 1,899,438 inhabitants of Kashmir are Hindus, constituting about 5 percent of the total population. (*besides the hindus, there were 1,793,300 Muslims, 16,713 sikhs, 304 christians, 11 buddhists and 5 Jains resident in Kashmir in 1961. see Census of India, Paper No. 1 of 1963:1961 census-Religion, pp.14f*)

The Hindu population of the valley has increased steadily since 1891, when it was 52,576 but failed to keep pace with the increase in the total population as is evident from the fact that the foregoing 1891 figure represented about 7 percent of the total population ( see Lawrence 1895). Separate demographic figures for the pandits are not available in the 1962 census records. According to 1941 census, however, there were 76,868 Pandits in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

### ***Pandits Domiciled Outside Kashmir:***

Contrary to what their names may suggest, Kashmiri Pandits are found not only in the

valley but also in many cities of north India, such as Jammu, Jaipur, Delhi, Agra, Lucknow, Allahabad and Banaras.

### 17.2 Objective

The motive of this lesson is

- To acquaint the learner's with the kinship studies of T.N. Madan
- To know the social structure of Kashmiri Pandits.
- To know the relation between household and family.

### 17.3 Kashmiri Brahmins under Early Muslim Rule:

One of the typical features of Kashmiri Hindu Society is the absence of non-Brahman castes in it, though it was not always thus. Beginning with the mid-seventh century, there are many references to the castes, in the *Rajatarangini*. Brahmana, kshatriya, damara (feudal lords), vaishya, kayastha (clerical castes), merchants, watchman, scavengers, chandala and many others are mentioned.

The first mention of Muslims dates back to the reign of the Hindu King Harsha (A.D. 1089-1101), who said to have enlisted them in his army. However they do not seem to have played any significant role in the political and cultural history of Kashmir till A. D. 1320. In that year a Tartar warlord, Dulucha (Zulqadar Khan), invaded Kashmir. Suhadeva, the Hindu king, fled from the valley; nor did Dulucha stay long. After pillage and plunder he withdrew, but no sooner was he gone than a Tibetan Buddhist chieftain's son, Rinchana, invaded the prostrate Hindu Kingdom. He was given a stiff fight by Brahman noble, Ramchandra, who was however, killed by treachery. Rinchana then proclaimed himself the King, married Ramchandra's daughter Kota and sought to become a Hindu, but the Brahmins refused to proselytize him. Subsequently he embraced Islam. He collected many Muslims at his Court, among them one Shah Mir, an immigrant from Swat, who had earlier taken up service with Suhadeva. Rinchana died in A. D. 1323 leaving behind an infant son. Suhadeva's younger brother Udyanadeva came to the throne, but the real power rested in the hands of Kota who now married him. He died in A.D. 1339, and Shah Mir became the next King after a brief struggle with Kota. Kashmir was ruled by Muslims for the next 500 years. (A.D. 1339-1819).

Two Periods during the early years of Muslim rule are of vital importance:

the reigns of Sikandar (A.D. 1389-1414) and Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-70). To begin with, Sikandar was a tolerant King, but later on he became very oppressive towards his Hindu subjects under the influence of his advisers and courtiers, some of them immigrant Muslims and others converts from Hinduism. He imposed punitive taxes upon them, banned many of their religious ceremonies, and looted and demolished their temples- the ruins of which may be seen even today all over Kashmir, taxes upon them, banned many of their religious ceremonies, and looted and demolished their temples- the ruins of which may be seen even today all over Kashmir. Not satisfied with these measures, the king is said to have eventually proclaimed all over his kingdom that his Hindu subjects should choose between Islam, exile or the sword. Large scale conversions to Islam followed and many people escaped out of Kashmir 'by the end of his reign all Hindu inhabitants of the valley, except the Brahmans, had probably adopted Islam'. Tradition has it that only eleven Brahman families survived in Kashmir when Sikandar died in A. D. 1413-14. Sikandar was succeeded by his elder son who passed on the throne to his younger brother in A. D. 1420. The new king Zain-ul-Abidin was to become famous as the *Bad-shah* (great king), even as his father had earned the title of the *but shikan* (iconoclast).

Restored to health by a Brahman physician, who asked for no fees except 'mercy for his co-religionists', Zain-ul-Abidin revoked most of the anti-hindu laws and strove to restore confidence among his Hindu subjects. 'The destruction of Hindu scriptures was forthwith stopped. The Brahmans who had fled repatriated, their lands and property which had been usurped by Muslims were restored to them. The annual capitation tax . . . . . was reduced to a nominal fee . . . . and later was entirely abolished. Sacrifices and pilgrimages were again permitted. Prohibition against the cremation was removed. The schools were reopened, and the Hindu boys were allowed to study their own scriptures. The king . . . . Himself attended Hindu shrines, performed sacrifices, built monasteries, and not only acquired a thorough knowledge of Sanskrit, but employed all his available time in the study of its sacred books.

The descendants of the Brahmans of Zain-ul-Abidin's time are the Pandits of today. The descendants of the families which survived in Kashmir during Sikandar's time are known as *malamasi*, and the descendants of the fugitives, who returned to Kashmir during Zain-ul-Abidin's reign, as the *banamasi*. The only difference between these two

divisions of Pandit society is in the manner in which they reckon the additional month in the three-yearly leap year of the Hindu Lunar calendar.

***Later History:***

The golden period' of the *bad shah* was followed by less favorable times. A change of dynasty brought Muslim Chaks to the throne and a period of hardship for the Pandits. After 26 years of Chak rule, Kashmir became a province of the Mughal Empire in A. D. 1586, and was ruled by Viceroys, some kind and tolerant and others cruel towards the Pandits. The last of the great Mughals, Aurangzeb, 'visited the valley once; but in that brief time he showed his zeal against the unbelievers, and his name is still execrated by the Brahmans' (Lawrence, 1909, p.25).

Kashmir was conquered for the Afghans by Ahmad Shah Durani in A. D. 1752. Hard times followed for the pandits once again. Although some of them rose high in Afghanistan-one even became Prime minister at Kabul- at home they were engaged in a constant struggle to keep themselves alive under their Afghan rulers. 'governors from Kabul plundered and tortured the people indiscriminately, but reserved their worst cruelties for the Brahmans, the shias, and the Bambas of the Jhelum Valley'. A conspiracy was hatched; a Pandit, Birbal Dar, escaped from Srinagar and after a long and hazardous journey over mountains and snowbound passes, reached the court of Ranjit Singh at Lahore in 1819. The Sikh potentate was apprised of the situation in Kashmir and induced to incorporate it in his empire. Kashmir was conquered by the Sikhs, but they proved better than the Afghans only in as much as they completely neglected Kashmir and the needs of the Kashmiris, and did not discriminate against Pandits in favour of Muslims as the earlier Muslim rulers had done.

In 1846 the battle of Sobraon saw the collapse of Sikh power in northern India. In March, that year, the British Government of India transferred to Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu the Sikh possessions in the north, including Jammu and Kashmir, and in return received from him Rs. 7,500,000 (million pounds). Thus began the rule of yet another alien dynasty over Kashmir. For the Pandits, however, this period far better than the previous 500 years of Muslim and Sikh rule, as it saved them from religious persecution and enabled them to rehabilitate themselves. They were in many respects favored by the Hindu government as against the Muslims, and were quick to take advantage of these favorable circumstances. By 1947, when Dogra rule came to

an abrupt end, the Pandits had improved their economic and political position to such an extent as to be identified with the ruling class of Dogra Hindus in the eyes of the Muslims. However, many Pandits had argued for more than a decade that their interests lay in joining the Kashmiri Muslims against the Dogra rulers; consequently the national government which was formed in 1948 consisted of both Muslims and Pandits, as well as anti-monarchist Dogras. The Political and Economic changes that have taken place in the state of Jammu and Kashmir since 1947 are bound to have far reaching consequences for the Pandits.

#### **17.4 Social Structure of Kashmiri Pandit:**

The Pandits of Kashmir refer to themselves as Saraswat Brahman, the caste regarded as highest among the Hindus in almost the whole of India. They are known as Batta in the valley and Kashmiri Pandits outside the valley. The Kashmiri Pandits are the original inhabitants of Kashmir who have produced some great saints and sages as well as great philosophers and scholars. They are patrilineal and patrilocal people living cordially till very recently with the Muslims in several villages of Kashmir valley even though their number in every village was always much less than those of the Muslims. In Madan's study of a village Utrassu-Umanagiri in 1957, of the total 2,644 about 80 percent were Muslims. Though some villages also included other non-Pandit Hindus like the Punjabi and also Sikhs, the Pandit maintained their exclusiveness through marriage and kinship ties, which existed within the community. Though there are two other Hindu minority groups in Kashmir, the Buher or Bohra and the Purib or Purbi, they have almost been assimilated into Pandit Culture, even though there are restrictions on the intermarriage and interdining among them. The historical origins of these two groups are not clear, but some scholars believe that the Bohra are Khatri (traders) and Purbi are descendents from an immigrant Brahman Caste from Punjab. (Walter Lawrence, 1895.) Hutton writes of the khatri as a trading caste of Punjab and north-west India. According to T.N Madan, the bohra are descended from the pandits who lost caste during the early days of Muslim rule, either because they failed to observe essential rituals out of the fear of punitive taxes, or because they temporarily accepted conversion to Islam as matter of expediency. A Khatri origin is more probable as the bohra are found only in urban areas and their traditional occupation is trade and shop-keeping. In fact the word bohra (or buhur, singular of buher) is often used in Kashmir in the sense of a grocer.

The Purbi, also found only in urban areas, are probably descended from an immigrant Brahman caste. According to Madan, they came to Kashmir from the Chamba valley in east Punjab several hundred years ago. The appellation of Pandit is commonly used by the Purbi as it is by the Pandits themselves.

There has also been an influx of Hindus from Jammu and the Punjab during last hundred years or so, but they are all confined to the city of Srinagar and preserve their linguistic and cultural identity.

Kashmiri village is thus not a homogeneous place and in several cases, Pandits would align themselves more closely to the other castes and communities of the village as against 'the other' of other villages or anybody outsider. In most of the villages, the Pandits and Muslims have common and mutual interests. The Pandits remained dependent on the Muslims for the essential services they provided to the Pandits. This included the works like those of an agricultural laborer, a barber, oil presser, a washerman or a butcher. These relations were by and large economic in nature and in the matter of religion, social organization and culture they maintained their own identities. They use the term *baradari* or *bhatta baradari* for themselves and refer to other communities by name, for instance Muslims are called *Musalman*.

There are two endogamous sub-castes among the Pandits, viz, the *Gor* (priests) and the *Karkun* (secular workers, non-Priests). The latter constitute the great bulk of the Pandit population, though the differences between the *Gor* and the *Karkun* are negligible. Those Pandits who devoted themselves to the study of the scriptures and the performance of priestly duties came to be known as the *bhasha Bhatta* or more simply, the *gor* (derived from the Sanskrit *guru* for 'guide' or 'preceptor'). Those who continued to study the scriptures without taking up priestly duties were called the *Pandit* or *jyotishi* (*astrologers*). The followers of secular occupations were called the *karkun* (workers); today they far outnumber the other two groups. The *jyotishi* have not grown into an endogamous group, as have the *gor*; and may intermarry with the *karkun*, but not with the *gor*. Thus besides maintaining the caste endogamy, the pandits also maintain the subcaste endogamy. Hereditary occupational specialization, endogamy and an explicit differentiation in social status have thus produced an internal subdivision of Pandit society into two subcastes. It is of interest to note that most priests do not even now wear leather made footwear because contact with leather is polluting to a Brahman, and tie their turban in what must have been the

earlier Mughal fashion. The *karkun* turban is of Persian style, though in recent years many priests also have adopted it.

The relationship of a priest with his *yajman* is hereditary. Its permanency is unaffected by any arrangement that may be made for its suspension for reasons of convenience. In such circumstances the *kula-gor* (*priest to the lineage*) may officiate at only such important occasions as initiation and marriage. If a priest dies without leaving a son, or any closely related agnate, behind him, the right to serve his clientele may be inherited by his daughter's son.

On every occasion that he provides his services to a client-household, the priest receives a fee (*dakshina*) in cash or kind, or both. The amount of the fee varies with the economic status of each household and the importance of each occasion. The priests are thus economically dependent upon their *yajman*, who include priests also as even a priestly household needs on certain occasions the services of a specialist. A priestly family does not provide such ritual services to itself. There are other kinship rules like lineage exogamy and preferential village exogamy among Pandits- some of which have changed, more drastically in the recent years. The concept of traditional household, its structure, function and nature has altered, but its importance in the lives of the Kashmiri Pandit is still paramount.

### **17.5 Household and Family:**

Functionally the most important group in Pandit society is the domestic group called the *gara* (household) or *chulah* (hearth group). It may vary in its composition. It is small in size and rarely consists of more than a dozen persons. Familial in character, it usually consists of primary and secondary kin and their spouses, and has two to three generations depth. It may be nuclear or extended family, and besides, may include other kin or affines. Based upon the patrilocal residence, it is primary unit of production and consumption, responsible for the socialization of children and the performance of the rituals of kinship.

A *chulah* rarely stands by itself in a village. It is usually embedded, as it were, in a wider grouping of domestic groups called the *kotamb* (family). The *kotamb* is usually a large, extended family and may include kin who are genealogically separated by several degrees of collaterality. It can be said that this is a group consisting of brothers having several households. Within the household and the encompassing family there is a subtle but

crucial distinction between the agnate core of kinsfolk called sakula (belonging to the same lineage as oneself) or simply zamati (those who have born into the group) on the one hand nasd amati (those who have come into the group) on the other. A person classifies his mother, wife, wives of other agnates all falling in the category of amati. The backbone or the structural core of the kotamb is the Kol (patrilineage). the kol however, does not emerge as an existential lineage group; it never acts as such, independent of the kotamb and the domestic groups. It is rather conceived as a category of kin who are divided into several kotamb. The kotamb is a local group and includes all the agnates and their spouses resident in a village. They usually reside in a number of houses in one compound or several contiguous compounds. Occasional cases of patrilocal marriage or migration result in the dispersal of the families; consequently a domestic group may be formed in a village where its male members do not have any ties of agnation outside their own chulah. In course of time this domestic group may grow into another kotamb of the same kol.

The domestic group and the family are the groups within which a Pandit plays his or her diverse kinship and affinal roles. In consequence of the prevailing mode of residence, a woman is in the course of her life-time linked to two sets of domestic groups and families, her father's and her husband's. The chulah is an area of person-to-person relations, whereas within the kotamb the emphasis is rather upon inter (domestic)-group relations. Within the chulah cooperation overrides conflict which develops gradually between brothers till the group breaks up.

The kotamb as a whole is a functionally less important grouping and does not have common ownership rights, or ritual and economic obligations towards its individual members or outsiders. They however share in common the celebration of rituals related to the kotamb like birth and death pollution and shraddha (ritual offerings of food to manes). more distantly related kinsmen lose active contact with each other and regard themselves as belonging to the same kol rather than the same kotamb. The kotamb and kol do not have such rights and the household as a group, lives and functions for its members, and every pandit lives and works for his or her household or chulah.

As an economic unit household is characterized by a division of labour based on differences of age and sex. Men have the responsibility of providing the necessities of the household while women work at home, in the kitchen and the garden, cook and distribute food, rear children, and look after the upkeep of the house. As an



estate holding group, the household is a joint family, but only its natal male members enjoy permanent and vested coparcenary rights. With household is associated the domestic cult and worship to gods and oblations to the male ancestors of the natal members of the domestic family are offered. A Woman, when not in the polluted stage participates with her husband in the worship offered to god, but it is men who play the part major role in the rites.

It can be said that agnation play an important part in the ordering of the intra-household relations wherein women occupy only a secondary position in jural, economic and ritual terms in the household. Her position infact undergoes a significant change throughout her social life. Till the marriage a women does not have the status of a ritual adult and with marriage she is permanently transferred into her husband's natal family. In relation to the right of inheritance, a women is treated as coparcener till her marriage. If she marries patrivoril locally, as is most likely, she receives a marriage portion and dowry and continues to receive presentations from her natal family throughout har life but looses all her coparcenary rights there. In case of widowhood, especially before motherhood, a woman returns to her natal home and is only entitled to maintenance but not jural and ritual rights. such a return however does not sever her ties with her conjugal family and she enjoys limited rights. These are not coparcenary rights but only economic right of maintenance.

A married woman however, plays a very important part in the affairs of her conjugal household and the personal influence she is able to exercise far influences her jural position. The Pandits clearly make a distinction between the zamati (natal members) and amati (in married members). The distinction between kinship and affinity is strongly expressed in the basic Pandit rule of exogamy, i.e., no marriage between the consanguineous kins or among the agnates.

Non-agnatic kinship is not the basis of group formation in Pandit society. A person is bound by material and non-material rights and obligations and by sentiments to his or her non-agnatic cognates but has no interests in common with them. Among them one has particularly close relations with one's mother's natal family which is called the matamal.

Opposed to kinship (consanguinity) are the ties of affinity. For a man his *howur* (wife's natal family) remains for ever in the category of non –kin, even after the birth of his children who are their cognates. But for a woman, who lives the adult (longer and active) part of her life in her husband's household, her conjugal family (*variw*)

is also her family of procreation. It is here that she becomes a mother, a mother-in-law, a grandmother, and may be great-sons. Most of her rituals and jural ties with her own agnates become extinguished when she leaves her natal family 'to enter', as the saying goes, 'her own home'.

#### **17.6 Kinship and Marriage:**

The Pandits regards marriage as one of the most important events in the life of an individual; unless a man is married he will not be able legitimately to beget sons, and thus ensure the continuance of the ritual offerings of food and drink to his manes. The gratification of sexual desire, the mutual love of spouses, and the joy and comfort of domestic life also make married life a highly desired state of existence for a man. Bachelors are much pitied in Pandit society.

Not all bachelors adopt sons for religious purposes, and thus show utter disregard for their own and their ancestors' welfare in the life hereafter.

For a woman, marriage is the beginning of the fulfillment of her life. The destiny of the Pandit woman is motherhood, and wife hood is the only culturally approved means to it. She begins her adult and the socially significant phase of her life only with her marriage, which also marks her initiation into the full ritual status of a Brahman woman. Only thereafter can she participate, alongside of her husband, in domestic rituals, receive full cremation rites, and joins the manes.

It is the moral duty of parents to arrange for the marriage of their children, particularly their daughters. Giving of a virgin in marriage is held to be an act loaded with religious merit.

Pandit marriage is systematically organized compact between households, and not the result of mutual choice by, or agreement between, two persons. It brings together not only two individuals and two households, but also two families.

*Selection of Spouses:*

*Prescription and Prohibitions*

The Pandit follow caste and community endogamy and the between a Pandit and a Muslim is permanently polluting unless a person renounces his or her religion and, he must be willing to leave his household, sever all kinship ties. Such renunciation entails the loss of all

property rights.

A Pandit is expected, and desired, to marry in his own subcaste of *karkun* or *gor*. The shortage of Pandit women in rural areas has occasionally led an individual in exceptional circumstances, to marry a non-Pandit woman from outside with preference for Brahman woman and then from other Hindu castes. This was the case mainly with the widowers. Widow remarriage among the Pandits is a more recent phenomenon and still rare.

The rule of endogamy limits the choice to one's own subcaste; but within the subcaste there are obligatory rules of exogamy. The broadest of these rules is the prohibition of marriage within the *gotra*.

Pandits are divided into many *gotra* (Lawrence (1895, p.304) mentions 18 levite and 103 *karkun gotra* groups. Koul (1924) writes there are 199 such groups (p.20) but the list he gives (pp. 86-92) contains only 189 names. In Utrassu-Umanagri there are 16 *gotra* several of which are not to be found in Koul's list), and the members of each such category are named after one or more pseudo-historical or mythological founding sages from whom they claim descent. But the members of the same *gotra* do not regard themselves as kin in the normal sense of the term. A man's *gotra* name is the same as that of his father and other male agnates, but a married woman belongs to her husband's *gotra*. Membership of a *gotra* is acquired by boys at the time of ritual initiation, and by girls at the time of marriage and a man should not obtain a wife for himself, his sons, in other words, who are his agnates, from a family, which has the same *gotra* name as his own.\*

A more important proscription is that of *sapinda* exogamy according to which a man should not marry a woman who is a *sapinda* (literally, 'connected by having in common particles of one body' [Mayne 1953, p. 147]) of his mother or father. This rule excludes marriage between ego and his (or her) own agnates of six ascendant generations, and his (or her) mother's agnates of four ascendant generations. But the Pandits rarely care to remember all genealogical ties beyond three ascendant generations. According to Madan, what matters in practice is that a man does not marry any known kinswoman, particularly if she belongs to the same lineage as himself. (*Though it is undesirable to do so, yet, in exceptional circumstances, non-agnatic cognates may marry, but only if they are more distantly related than as second degree cousins, or second degree cousin once removed and uncle or aunt. The kinship term for a second degree cousin includes the*

*affix ter (feminine) or tur (masculine) twice, and the Pandits say that where two or more ter (ascendant generations) intervene, the kin may marry.) (\*)*

In normal circumstances the husband is older than the wife, but a widow may be older than her second husband. Widow marriage is, however, a recent innovation and as yet very rare as compared to widower remarriage.

*Preferences:*

Compelled by customs, Pandit parents take great care in the selection of future homes for their daughters. Customs lays down the proposal for a marriage should come from the girl's parents. They try to ensure that the households into which their daughters are married should at least have, as the Pandits put it, *hakh-bata* ('greens and rice', the staples of Pandit diet), i.e. they should not be so poor as to be in need of the basic necessities of life. The marriage of one's daughters into the households of higher socio-economic standing is coveted as it is one of the ways in which a *chulah* may raise its own status.

The parents of a son are not so limited in their ambitions. The richer a daughter's parents and the higher their social status, the more her parents-in-law stand to gain by such an alliance. There is a preference of giving daughters in the villages close by though the daughter-in-law coming from a distant village is not disfavoured. There are various reasons given for not preferring to have their Sonya in their own village. Firstly a close natal home of a woman stands in the way of her speedy acceptance and adjustment in her conjugal household. Secondly, Sonya are expected to have formal relations with each other with deference and humility in all their behaviour and activities including sending of regular visits by the girls natal household. Thirdly to avoid conflicts and mudslinging that may result due to close contact. The general attitude of Pandit parents may be summed up as follows: A man must seek *sonya* who are rich and illustrious so that he can fall back upon them when in need, and boast of his good connexions.

The household and the family rather than the individual qualities of boys and girls receive much attention. Physical defects are a hindrance in finding a wife for a man, but a girl never faces spinsterhood for such a reason; not only is marriage obligatory for a woman, but a husband can also always be found for her. Nevertheless, the parents of a physically defective girl may have to wait long before they can find a match for her, or they may have to give her to a man who is himself old or physically defective.

The priest or astrologer plays an important role in determining the compatibility of the horoscopes of the girl and the proposed husband. The most important event to guard against is the girl's widowhood as there is no greater misfortune which may befall a Pandit woman. The *gor* do not usually compare horoscopes because of the limitation of their small number.

### ***Types of Marriage***

There are three types of marriages among Pandits. The ideal is represented by marriage with 'dowry' (ornaments and clothes for the bride, domestic utensils and other gifts in cash and kind for her relatives-in-law). The Pandits say that such a marriage is unsullied by any elements of bargaining on either side. The second type is the reciprocal marriages, involving the exchange of women and gifts. They are the commonest type of marriage and the Pandits have resorted to them as a means of ensuring wives and daughters-in-laws for as many households as can offer women in exchange. The third type of marriage involves payments in cash and/or kind by the girl-receiving *chulah* to the girl-giving *chulah*. These payments may be intended to provide for the marriage expenses or part thereof, or may be a bride price in the literal sense of the term. This type of marriage is considered to be against religion and morality as it amounts to selling of the girl by the parents or guardian. Such marriages are held to be against *dharma*. Even the man who takes the girl in marriage in this form is not held in high esteem and is usually a widower, a bachelor in advanced age or a divorcee. In words of Madan 'selling a daughter shames a parent, and buying a wife does a man no credit' (page 104). It is extreme poverty and the presence of several nubile daughters in the household which compel it to resort to this kind of marriage. The parents never make such a proposal but accept it when it is made to them. In his study of village in Kashmir Madan notes that in 1957 nine persons of Utrassu-Umanagri, five men and four girls were married. Eight of these were married in four reciprocal marriages. The total of 148 incidence of marriages, 38 percent were marriage with dowry, 45 percent were reciprocal marriages and 17 percent were of third type (page, 100-101).

There are several reasons for the greater frequency of reciprocal marriages. There have been more males than females among the Pandits of Kashmir, so finding the partner was difficult.

Secondly, many a Pandit from Srinagar, unable to get married there, obtains a wife from a village; but city-dwellers do not marry their daughters into villages. The rural Pandits

have resorted to reciprocal marriages as a means of ensuring wives and daughters-in-law for as many households as can offer women in exchange. The practice is by no means a recent one. Another likely reason for reciprocal marriages is that these eliminate the possibility of the extortion of girls from a woman's natal household by her parents-in-law. Each side fears reprisals by the other, and the conflicts which are usually associated with the relations between the affinally related households remain somewhat in check.

In the great majority of reciprocal marriages men exchange their sisters or cousins. All the instances of reciprocal marriage in Utrassu-Umanagri fall into this category. The arrangement places the parents and the siblings, and, in fact, all other kins of the exchanged women in 'double' and incompatible roles: thus a brother is his sister's husband's sister's husband; a sister her brother's wife's brother's wife; a father (mother) is his (her daughter's husband's sister's father (mother)-in-law; and cross cousins are related in both the possible ways.

### ***Secondary Marriages and Remarriage***

Marriage is indissoluble, but a man may take a second wife if his first wife dies or is unable to bear him children. Pandit men do not usually take secondary wives for the sake of children; only one case was reported to Madan, and that too from the city of Srinagar. Whereas widowers have been traditionally permitted to remarry, widows did not have this right probably, or at least partly, because they cannot be given as ritual gifts and therefore, their marriage for a second time cannot be truly solemnized. The ritual status of a widow's children by a second marriage also would be doubtful. 'Social reformation movement' – so called – in support of widow remarriage and other changes in the traditional way of life originated in the city in the early 'thirties and later spread to the villages.

### ***Village Exogamy***

Generally speaking, the Pandits of a village prefer to give their daughters in marriage in nearby villages, though not in their own village. They are thus able to maintain close contacts with the female agnates who marry out; proximity facilitates mutual visiting and prevents the withering away of affective ties. A marital alliance between households of two widely separated villages often raises suspicion about the worthiness of the bride and the bridegroom.

When it comes to bringing a daughter-in-law into one's home, marital alliance with

relatively distant villages are not disfavoured too much. Moreover, the relative shortage of women of marriageable age often enables a girl's parents to pick and choose a son-in-law, whereas a boy's parents have less freedom of choice. But when *reciprocal* marriages are arranged, a daughter is given in exchange for a daughter-in-law, ruling out any discrimination.

***Marriage ceremonies and its ritual aspects:***

There is possibly no social function anywhere in any community as elaborate, as protracted, as consuming of time, energy and resources, as a Kashmiri wedding. It is a process that starts mentally with the birth of an offspring. If it is a girl, the parents start collecting items like jewellery, bridal dresses, expensive garments like the *pashmina* and *shahtoos*, and numerous gifts for the groom and his near relatives over a long period of time. This makes her dowry at the wedding time.

Social and economic profile, the education and the vocation, the physiognomy are kept in mind by the parents for finding a suitable match. The information regarding the *Tekni* (the astrological profile) from the horoscope and, the details of the immediate family tree, is prepared by the family priest. Once the *Teknis* are matched and the other expectations met, it is followed with a formal ring ceremony.

After the exodus from Kashmir most young girls and boys, who move away from their parents to major metropolises and other towns of India in search of education and jobs, find it convenient as well as expedient to strike relationships on their own, within their own community as well as outside. Thus, one sees an increasing trend to what are termed, 'love marriages' and 'intercommunity marriages', which are most of the time within the Hindu fold.

The Pandits maintain that marriage is one of the rituals for the spiritual good of the human body. A series of rites, performed in two parts, constitute the ritual of marriage. Most of the rites are of Sanskritic origin. The Pandits call marriage *nethar* (*ne* = never + *ether* = change), meaning thereby a permanent bond. The Sanskrit term *vivaha* also is employed, and means 'carrying away'; it refers to the change of residence by the bride who is carried away to her conjugal home.

A ritual of pacification is performed for the bride and the bridegroom in their respective homes a couple of days, but never more than seven days, before the solemnization of the marriage. The purpose of this ritual is to intercede with gods and evil spirits so that

supernatural interference may not preclude the performance of the marriage ritual proper. In the case of the bride, it is also the occasion for the performance of nine other rites, which should have been ideally performed between her birth and marriage. Subsequently, the bridegroom, accompanied by close kin, neighbours and friends, goes to the home of the bride on an appointed and auspicious day for the wedding.

For a few months after her marriage a woman is referred to as the bride (*mahrini*) by her relatives-in-law. She is not allowed to do any heavy work such as cooking or fetching water. She is allowed to visit her natal home (*malyun*) frequently; in fact, she does not spend more than nine months or so of the year after her marriage in her conjugal home (*variw*), but she must be present on all occasions of domestic importance such as ritual feasts and fasts, birthdays and death anniversaries. The contrast between the joys of a woman's life in her *malyun* and the hardships she has to bear in her *variw* are a favourite theme in Kashmiri folklore. For her conjugal family there are the joys of having a new daughter-in-law (*nosh*) in the house and of receiving gifts.

The attitude of a mother-in-law towards her daughter-in-law is influenced by two important factors: (1) the extent to which a man allows his relations with his wife to affect his relations with his parents and siblings; and (2) the extent to which the parents-in-law of a woman are satisfied with the gifts they receive from her parents. Moreover, Pandit women are traditionally domineering and harsh in their attitude towards their daughters-in-law; but whether a particular mother-in-law is kinder or harsher than usually depends upon her own temperamental make-up and the temperament and behaviour of her daughter-in-law. Among the Pandits a daughter-in-law is traditionally expected to be self-effacing, hard working, respectful and obedient, and to conform to a severe code of etiquette. She may not eat before her mother-in-law and sister-in-law (husband's sister) have had their food. Since no woman eats before the male members of the household, she may not on occasion get enough to eat, or get all the things that have been cooked. She should not speak to any adult male directly or look him in the face. She should sit with her back turned towards the elders as facing them is regarded as being overbold. She does not have a joking relationship with any of her affines, but may be on familiar terms with such of them as are younger than herself. Above all, she should completely avoid her husband in the presence of others.

Strained relations between a woman and her relatives-in-law are of common



occurrence. Relations of a woman with her daughter-in-law are much influenced by her nubile daughters. The Pandits say that the husband's sister is a mother-in-law in miniature.

The daughter-in-law becoming a mother is an important event which contributes towards her assimilation in her conjugal household. The Pandits say that a daughter-in-law proves her worth when she bears a child. After a woman has borne several children her contacts with her natal home gradually becomes weakened; she goes there less often, particularly after the death of her parents, and her interests in her conjugal household become ramified. Another crucial development in this process of assimilation is her father-in-law's death, particularly if her husband is the eldest of several brothers or the only son of his parents, for he then succeeds his father as the head of the household. Daughters-in-law may come into serious conflict with their mother-in-law in this phase of *chulah* development, and seek to challenge her authority over them.

### ***Birth and Adoption***

The Pandits are well aware of the fact that sexual intercourse between a physiologically normal couple is the material cause of conception, but supernatural and mystical forces are judged to be decisive in determining conception and safe delivery. They recognize a fertile period among women between menarche and menopause, and among men from 'the rise of the juice in the testicles' till senile old age.

Pandits believe that apart from organic defects, supernatural forces are believed to prevent conception or safe delivery. The good or bad *karma* of a couple, the benign or unfavorable conjunction of planets in their horoscopes, the favors or wrath of gods, and the blessings of saints or the malevolence of evil spirits are believed to be the ultimate determinants of whether a couple will have many or no children, or only daughters.

Supernatural interference may also follow the breaking of certain taboos. Thus a pregnant woman should not see an eclipse nor do any work during its duration, or else her child may be born malformed. A pregnant woman is expected not to defecate or urinate in the places such as old trees, creeks, graveyards and cremation grounds, which are likely or known to be the haunts or dwelling-places of evil spirits. This may lead into a miscarriage or birth of a still-born child.

The Pandits regard miscarriages and still-births as unfortunate and ominous.

Miscarriages are often due to physical debility and overwork, although the Pandits usually attribute them to supernatural interference.

Deliberate abortions are probably rare and the only motive for abortion would be to save a widow or unmarried girl from absolute shame and social damnation.

Pandit women have a well-developed lore connected with child birth. Thus they say that it is possible to forecast the sex of an unborn child by observing the expectant woman's unconscious actions, her appearance, and the likes and dislikes she develops during pregnancy. Underlying various portents is a traditional identification of the two sexes with two with opposite sets of values. The male sex is forecast by the portents which the Pandits regard as good; for example, the expectant woman's preference for sweet (as contrasted with hot or sour) dishes, her greater use of the limbs of the right, mystically superior, side of the body, general cheerfulness and good health foretell a male child. In these beliefs may be seen a cultural expression of the preference for sons among the Pandits.

#### ***Rituals and Ceremonies connected with Childbirth***

The Sanskritic tradition stipulates the performance of a ritual before the marriage of a woman, to ensure that she becomes fertile. This is performed a day or two before her marriage. There is also a non-Sanskritic ceremony in the seventh month of the first pregnancy called 'the giving of milk'. The ceremony becomes a pretext for the pregnant woman to go to her natal home and spend a few restful weeks there before she returns laden with gifts of ornaments and new clothes for herself, also gifts in cash and kind for her relatives-in-law, which are given to her mother-in-law for distribution. The most important of these gifts is yoghurt, which is preferred to milk because it is regarded as more auspicious. The yoghurt is distributed among the close relative of the pregnant woman's husband and the neighbour of her conjugal *chulah*. The purpose of the ceremony seems to be threefold: (i) It enables the young pregnant woman to spend some time with her natal family. This ceremony is usually held before the delivery of the first child only, and never after the birth of the second child. (ii) 'The giving of milk' ceremony is the public announcement and celebration of woman's first conception which is in a sense the biggest event in her life. Delivering of the first child is considered to have proven the worth and found her real self (*athi ayi*). (iii) It is also intended to ensure the distribution of yoghurt ensures the flow of mother's milk on which the life of the child depends.

Childbirth may take place in the pregnant woman's natal or conjugal home, and professional midwives, who are Muslims, and experienced older women of the family and the neighbourhood assist at the delivery.

Child birth causes pollution as everything that comes out of the human body (spittle, perspiration, faeces, urine, menses and offspring) is polluting. Child birth causes pollution to the woman who gives birth to a child, her husband and some of his kin. T h u s , even when a woman is delivered of a child in her natal home, the members of that *chulah* do not suffer lasting pollution. But all of the newly born child's agnates suffer longer pollution. The period of pollution is 10 days for all ritually initiated male agnates, and their wives, who are related to the child through his father's father's father. Remoter agnates and their wives observe pollution for periods ranging from six to three days. The miscarriage of a foetus does not cause pollution, but the birth of a still-born child does. Strictly, ritual pollution should begin at the moment a child is born, but since patrilineal kinsmen are not invariably a local grouping, it is not always possible to observe this rule of immediate pollution. In such cases the Pandits say that, 'just as an eclipse begins when you see it, similarly pollution begins when you hear of it'. The days of pollution to be observed are, however, always counted from the day of birth or death.

Non-Sanskritic ceremonies follow on the third, fifth and sixth days after childbirth. The ceremony on the sixth day, *shransondar*, is the occasion on which the baby receives its first bath and is given a name. Pandit names are in most cases the names of Hindu gods and goddesses, or the words for such qualities as chastity, intelligence, cheerfulness, and grace which are prized in human beings. If the mother is well, she is also bathed. After the bathing is over, the baby's father's eldest married sister lights a fire of birch bark. Taking a piece of burning bark in her right hand, she waves it round the head of the mother, who has the baby in her lap, and says several times '*shokh to punahsun*, congratulations and may you have more (children)'. The apparent purpose of this ceremony is to ensure the child's safety and the mother's future fertility. It is of interest to note that the major role in this ceremony is played by the new-born child's father's sister. Her ties with and residual interest in her natal family are thus stressed.

On the eleventh or the twelfth day after childbirth ritual bathing and more non-Sanskritic ceremonies take place. The first Sanskritic rite, called the *kahanethar*, and mainly purificatory in character, is also performed on this day or soon after. A couple of

years later boys get their first haircut (*zarakasai*) and girls have their ear lobes pierced (*kanchombun*). Pandit girls and women never cut their hair but let it grow long. Moreover, married women wear ear pendants called *dejahor* as a sign of wifehood.

Boys are ritually initiated before they are 12 years old. *Mekhal*, or ritual initiation, consists of series of rites and ceremonies. After his *mekhal* a boy enjoys the full ritual status of a Brahman; he is now entitled to go through the ritual marriage (*nether*), cremate his parents, offer food and water to his manes, and, in the event of his own death, full cremation rites will be performed for him.

Girls do not go through an initiation rite and do not acquire full ritual status till they are married. The marriage ritual is preceded by a series of rites which the bride and the bridegroom go through in their respective homes. It is only after she goes through these rites that a girl can be given in marriage and full cremation rites performed for her.

### **Attitude toward Sons and Daughters**

Sons are particularly auspicious and, therefore, greatly desired; they are called 'this as well as the other world' (*yahi-lok ta para-lok*) of their parents. Under the rules of patrilocal residence and patrilineal inheritance it is the exclusive duty of sons to look after their parents in their old age unlike Daughters are regarded as a heavy responsibility. Further it is the sons alone who can offer food and drink to their manes and 'immortalize' them by continuing the 'line' of descent. The greater the number of sons a couple have, the happier they are.

Although the giving of a daughter in marriage is regarded as a highly meritorious act, yet the absence of daughters is not generally bewailed if couples have sons. '*Daughters are guests*', say the Pandit; '*they are ornaments held in custody to be surrendered at the rightful owner's demand*'; '*they are the wealth of others and not of those who give them birth*'. Having more than three or four daughters, is regarded as a burden because a large amount of money is needed to marry them into good families. There is an often-quoted Kashmiri saying to the effect that a daughter's birth makes even a philosophic man (who has renounced the world) gloomy, whereas a son's birth is like sunrise in the abode of gods.

Having twin sons is regarded as auspicious and lucky, and having twin daughters, a misfortune. Young boys are better treated by their elders than young girls. Whether it is

in the distribution of food and clothes or in the verbal expression of love, sons generally receive greater attention than daughters. The Pandits affirm that daughters should be disciplined early, and not spoilt, as they have to be married into other households. Madan in his work argues that nubile girls did not have the freedom to move freely in the village, unlike the boys. In brief, the Pandits admit of discrimination against girls, and always try to justify it, but do not agree that they love their daughters less than their sons.

### ***Adoption***

A couple usually adopts a son when they are convinced that they are not going to have one of their own. The Pandits do not approve of the Sanskritic injunction that a man may marry a second wife, in the lifetime of his first wife, if the latter fails to bear him a son. Childless widowers usually endeavour to remarry and do not generally adopt sons.

When a well-to-do couple have several sons but no daughters, they may adopt a girl but more often a daughter may be adopted for a period of a few months or weeks to be married in exchange for a daughter-in-law. The general attitude of the Pandits towards the adoption of daughters is summed up in the following saying: ‘Adopting a daughter is like rearing a pariah dog in the hope of obtaining wool.’

The ceremony of adoption is not accompanied by any rituals. After the two households concerned have agreed upon the adoption, the adoptive father goes to the natal home of the child on an auspicious day. A feast is generally given to mark the occasion. If the child’s natural and adoptive parents belong to the same *chulah*, any ceremony is unlikely to take place.

A child’s natural parents are not expected to receive any reward or compensation for giving him away in adoption, or else it will amount to sale. What induce parents to give a son in adoption are their close kinship ties, implying love and obligation, with the person seeking a son, or their poverty and the consequent inability to bring up several children.

### ***Death and Mourning Rites:***

Life and death go side by side while celebrations bring joy and excitement, death in the family cause pain and mourning. Finally, there are the *antimsamskar* (last rites) culminating in cremation. These are ideally performed by a man’s (or woman’s) eldest son; a daughter is not permitted to cremate her parents. In the absence of a son a man is cremated by the nearest male agnate available, and a woman by a male agnate of her husband.

Some social traditions are associated with these rites. Soon after knowing about the death of an elder, the ladies of the house and closely related ladies remove gold chains and put them back when the mourning is over. All the relatives and the neighbours come to the family to join in their grief. The next two days are for religious ceremonies only. The son takes a bath and the in-laws of the son arrange new dress for him, serve milk, tea, fruits etc. to all the mourners at house.

During the year after death, a person's spirit travels towards the *pitra-lok* (land of manes); to assist it in its travels, rites are performed for 12 days after death and fortnightly for three months, and thereafter monthly for the rest of the year. After the first death anniversary libations (*tarpan*) are poured daily and food offerings (*shreddha*) are made biannually in the name of one's manes. A man may pour libations in the name of any dead person, even unrelated friends, but he performs the *shraddha* rite only for his lineal ascendants. He offers *pinda* (cooked rice balls) and other eatables to six of his lineal male ascendants, beginning with his father, and to his mother, father's mother, FaFaMo, FaFaFaMo, FaFaFaFaMo, and FaFaFaFaFaMo. The striking feature of the food offerings made at one's mother's *shraddha* is the exclusion of her manes, and her inclusion with the mothers of ego's agnatic ancestors. A man is, however, permitted, if he so chooses, to make food offerings to his mother's parents; but the water and food received from a daughter's son are not adequate for the well-being of manes.

Only if the son is ritually purified after his birth, initiated, and married, will be able to cremate his parents and beget sons who will continue the lineage and offer water and food to their manes.

### ***Economic situation:***

The Pandits of rural Kashmir have traditionally depended upon land, salaried employment and trade for their livelihood. The freehold ownership of agricultural land as a form of property has been possible only since 1932. Under different dynasties, the cultivation in Kashmir did not possess any proprietary rights. There has been no such law or mention of even occupancy rights. 'It appears, however, that some form of hereditary right, though never admitted by the state authorities, was maintained and recognized by the people themselves, in certain cases sales of land, though illegal and therefore, unenforceable, actually took place. Land now became a symbol of prestige, power and wealth and many

Pandit households (all of them in the village of Utrassu-Umanagri as described by T. N. Madan) acquired property rights in the land in their possession. The land became a precious commodity as the Pandits as well as the Muslims began to invest in land. Salaried employment has been another employment as observed by Lawrence. Infact 'state service' is recorded as the traditional occupation of the Pandits in various census reports. Many rural Pandits have also worked as domestic servants and cooks in the houses of the Pandits of Srinagar. The third major traditional source of household income has been trade. Pandits availed the raw material and services of their Muslim neighbours and co-villagers to make and sell products in the towns. The insurgency that engulfed the Kashmir valley in the recent years, not only affected the trade of Kashmiri Pandits but also of the Muslims who are now have to seek for new traders or to venture into less known locale to sell their products.

According to Madan, between the turn of the nineteenth century till 1948, the two major changes occurred in the economic situation of the Kashmiri Pandit household. These were the grant of proprietary rights in land and the gradual increase in the number of literate persons. With the country becoming independent and national government being formed in the State of Jammu and Kashmir in 1948, the government introduced radical land reforms, which deprived Pandits of their privileged economic situation.

In the first year of its office itself, the government abolished privileged forms of land tenure, deferred by one year the realization of debts, reduced the rent for tenancies, distributed free of cost state-owned land to the landless laborers and prohibited the ejection of tenants by landlords in 1950s, the *Distressed Debtors Relief Act* was passed followed by *Abolition of Big Landed Estate Act*, under which ceiling were placed on the ownership of land. In 1952 the government decided that compensation, which should have been the paid under the 1950 Act, would not be paid to the landowners, part of whose land had been expropriated, because the tenants who had received the land were too poor to pay the requisite tax. 'the land reforms changed drastically the agricultural and social structure of Kashmir. The feudal system was abolished, land-owners disappeared and thousands of peasants living in virtual slavery became landlords'.

In the Kashmir valley, these reforms favored the Muslim majority, as more Pandits compared to them were landowners and rest were the tenants of other landlords.

The Muslims got advantage due to new rates of tenancies and receipt of land confiscated from the Kashmiri Pandits. Besides these consequences of land reforms, what affected the Kashmiri Pandits more was that the reforms were enacted swiftly and without compensation of any sort. This generated a fear among them and in the decline of value of land for them. In both the spheres, in government services as well as in trade, the monopoly of the Kashmiri Pandits started declining which prompted them once again to look for job elsewhere and migrate to those regions where the availability existed. Madan noted from the village he studied, that some Kashmiri Pandits have already started going out to seek employment in neighboring states like Punjab and Himachal Pradesh and never before 1947 had any Pandit from the village taken up employment outside the state (p 131). For a long time, then till the rise of militancy and the final exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the valley, their position remained one of dominance in economic and occupational fields.

In course of time the Muslims in Kashmir came to occupy important positions in the political economy of the state. Though they constituted a little more than half the population of the state, they possessed three-fourth share in the legislative body, administrative organization and all the local government institutions. In the Kashmir province, the Kashmiri Pandits have no elected representative today. The Muslims began to own and control most of the economic and industrial structure of the Kashmir province as well as the agricultural land, orchards and other urban landed estates. They now have monopoly over the industrial organization, trade, commerce, resources and exports of the province of Kashmir. The economic situation of the Kashmiri Pandits deteriorated further with their migration from the valley as a result of the militant and insurgent activities.

For the people who lived in rural areas, their lands have been encroached and orchards destroyed and most of the fruit growers faced a great loss of revenue. Agricultural land has been forcibly occupied and the migrants have been forced to sell their land at a very low price. The state government has admitted the cases of fraudulent mutation of land and distress sale as well. Though not all people have sold their land, but they feel that, it could have been destroyed or illegally occupied. Of those who have not sold their property, barely ten percent of them are able to get returns on their land. The migrants in the camps either depend on relief from the government or get salary from the government job without extra benefits. Then there are people who are engaged in their own work or do any other private work. Nearly 80 percent of the migrants living in the camps depend on government



relief (cash as well as kind).

### **17.7 Conclusion:**

The Pandits of rural Kashmir must reckon with the fact that the typical Kashmiri village is not culturally homogeneous; both Muslims and Pandits live in it. Co-residence in the same village entails mutual intercourse between them. In several domains of social life the pandits and the muslims of a village have common interests, and act together in pursuance of common or complementary aims. Their relations are, however, mainly characterized by economic interdependence. But they retain their separate identities by following their own customs and practices. They do not intermarry, nor do they interdine. The above discussion therefore has tried to highlight the family and kinship of the pandits of rural Kashmir as studied by T.N. Madan in detail.

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**Structure**

- 18.1 Introduction
- 18.2 Objectives
- 18.3 Basic Rituals of marriage among different communities
- 18.4 Hindu marriage pattern
- 18.5 Islamic pattern of marriage
- 18.6 Changes in marriage pattern in recent times
- 18.7 Conclusion
- 18.8 References

**18.1 Introduction**

Marriage is an important social institution. It is a relationship which is socially approved. The relationship is defined and sanctioned by custom and law. The religious texts of many communities in India have outlined the purpose, rights and duties involved in marriage. Among the Hindus, for instance, marriage is regarded as a socio-religious duty. Ancient Hindu texts point out three main aims of marriage. These are **dharm**a (duty) **Paraja** (progeny) and **rati** (sensual pleasure). Marriage is significant in that it provides children especially sons who would not only carry on the family name but also perform periodic rituals including the annual “Sradha” to propitiate the dead ancestors. Islam looks upon marriage as “Sunnat” (an obligation) which must be fulfilled by every Muslim.

**18.2 Objectives**

The broad objectives of the unit are :

- To understand the importance of marriage
- To know the various rituals associated with marriage.
- To analyze the marriage pattern in ancient India
- To highlight features of Hindu and Muslim marriage
- To understand the change marriage pattern.

### 18.3 Basic Rituals of Marriages among different Communities

For the Hindus, marriage is a sacrament. This means that a Hindu marriage cannot be dissolved. It is a union for life. This is also reflected in the marital rites. Some of the essential rites are **Kanyadan** (the giving off of the bride to the groom by the father).

**Panigrahana** (the clasping of the bride's hand by the groom)

**Lajahoma** (offering of the parched grain to the sacrificial fire) and **Saptapadi** (walking seven steps by the bride and the groom). These basic rituals are not confined to the twice born castes (Brahman, Kshatriya and Vaishya) only, but these are also performed with same variations among other castes too. In fact, marriage is the first major sanskara (life cycle rituals) for a Hindu woman.

Certain sections of the Jain community (like the Digambara and Svetambara) and the Sikh community have marriage customs and rituals which are similar to those of Hindus. The core ceremony of Sikhs, however, is different. It is called '**Anand Karaj**' and is solemnised in the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib, the holy book of the Sikhs. Muslim marriage is not a sacrament. Rather, it is a contract, which can be terminated. Some rites of the Shia sect of Muslims differs from the Sunni, a sect among the Muslims. However, the essential ceremony of Muslim marriage is known as the nikah. The ceremony is performed by the Priest or the Kazi. The nikah is considered to be complete only when the consent of both the groom and the bride has been obtained. A formal document known as **nikahnama** bears the signature of the couple. Among certain sections the signatures of two witnesses are also included in the document and the document may also contain details of the payment to be made to the bride by the groom. This payment is called the **mehr** which is a stipulated sum of money or other assets paid to the wife.

Among the christians, the wedding takes place in a church. The exchange of the

ring is an important ritual among them. Some sections of the Christians like the Syrian christians of Kerala, have the Hindu rite of the groom tying a 'tali'

Marriage in most cases involves material as well as non-material transactions between the bride-giver and the bride-taker. It involves with a few exceptions, the transfer of the wife to the husband's family. Two major types of transfers of material wealth accompany marriage. In one, wealth travels in the opposite direction of the bride and in another, it travels along with the bride in the same direction. The former is identified as **bride price** while the latter as **dowry**.

#### 18.4 Hindu Marriage Patterns

The Dharmashastra treatment of marriage presupposes the Hindu ritual of marriage which, although it varies from caste to caste and region to region by the addition of many purely local elements, is in its central structure a Vedic sacrifice, involving Brahmin priest, *mantras*, fire, and offerings. Indeed, at a time when ancient Vedic sacrifices are rarely performed, the Hindu wedding ceremony remains a living representative, and a very robust one at that, of the Vedic ritual complex.

The structure of the wedding ritual has a three-part movement: the procession of the groom's family to the bride's home; the wedding proper, centring upon the sacred fire and the ritual acts performed before it, including the gift of the bride by her father to the groom (*kanyadana*), the clasping of hands (*panigrahana*), taking of seven steps with the ends of the bride's and groom's garments knotted together (*saptapadi*), and putting *sindhur* (vermillion) in the parting of the bride's hair (*sindburadana*); and the recessional of the bridal couple to the groom's home. The ritual has the threefold character of *gift*, of *initiation*, and of *sacrament*. The *gift* elements have to do with the incorporation of the bride into the family of the groom and its ancestors. Marriage is said to be the *initiation* for girls, comparable to the thread ceremony for boys, marking the transition to spiritual adulthood. And, because of the use of fire and Vedic mantra, it is a *sacrament*, creating a bond between the couple that is indissoluble and that makes them a single unit capable of performing rituals. Divorce is an impossibility and the marriage bond is, in a sense, prolonged into the next life, in which deceased male ancestors and their wives are ritually fed by the married householders who are their living descendants. The model of the family underlying this structure is

of a set of males related to one another by patrilineal descent, their in-marrying wives (*kula-vadhu*) and their daughters who are given in marriage (*pratta*) to other families, a highly gendered structure in which the destinies of boys is to remain in their family of birth as shareholders of its property, and that of girls is to grow up in the family of birth but leave it to marry into another, taking with them their claim upon the family wealth in the form of a dowry.

Polygamy has been legal for Hindus till recent times, in the form of polygyny (multiple wives) but not polyandry (multiple husbands), except in the legendary and exceptional case of Draupadi and the Five Pandavas of the *Mahabharata*. The fully sacramental character of Hindu marriage as just described, is typically reserved for the principal marriage, and various forms of secondary marriage do exist. Even in sacramental Hindu marriage it is important to be clear that the prohibition of jural separation (divorce) does not extend to conjugal separation; if anything, the absence of a legal remedy for failed marriage entails social remedies of separate living while staying married under law. Secondary marriages may be unmade without legal hindrance and with relatively little formality.

Two aspects of the treatment of marriage in the Dharmashastra require a closer look, because they reveal the complex relations which Hindu marriage patterns hold to the Indo-Aryan and Dravidian regional patterns : the rules of marriage, and the conception of marriage as the gift of a maiden from one family to another.

The rules of marriage in the Dharmashastra are essentially two : a man is to marry a woman who is not of the same gotra (*a-sa-gotra*) or patrilineal clan, and who is not a relative through a common *pinda* or funeral offering to the ancestors (*a-sa-pinda*). The first rule refers only to Brahmins, and their exogamous, patrilineal clans whose members are notionally the descendants of the ancient sages (*rshis*) to whom the Vedas were revealed; though other castes may have clans called gotras, the Dharmashastra takes little cognizance of them and leaves such matters to be governed by the customary law of castes. In the marriages of Brahmins, the bride abandons the gotra of her father and acquires that of her husband upon marriage (*gotrantara*). The second rule, which applies to all castes, is a law of prohibited degrees, specifying (in one influential formulation) that marriage is forbidden with relatives who fall within five or seven degrees

(generations) on the mother's and the father's side—very wide bounds indeed, which have the intent of prohibiting marriage more or less wherever a relationship is traceable.

The matter of marriage as gift of a maiden (*kanyadana*) has a quite different bearing. In the Dharmashastra, *kanyadana* is by no means universal; it is recognized as only one form of the marriage transaction among others, which include purchase, the elopement of lovers, and forcible abduction. Although the forms of marriage that depart from *kanyadana* are disparaged, they are nevertheless valid under certain circumstances (for example for non-Brahmins) and have as great a claim to antiquity as it has, as has the self-choice of a princess (*suayamuara*) which seems to be found in many early Indo-European cultures, not just in India. The payment of bride wealth in particular has been widespread in India till recently, and seems to have been part of Vedic culture; it is quite opposed to the *kanyadana* pattern with its accompaniment of dowry. It is evident that it is the jurists themselves who have propagated *kanyadana* through the Dharmashastra as a universal ideal by disparaging and limiting the scope of the alternatives.

The conception of marriage as gift is a highly theorized one, in which marriage is but a special case of a more general theory of gift. This theory comes out of the reinterpretation of the Veda in the light of the reincarnation doctrine, in response to the challenge of the anti-Vedic religions of Buddhism and Jainism. It is the project of the school of interpretation called the Mimamsa, on which the Dharmashastra draws. According to this theory, reciprocated gifts bear a 'seen' (*drishta*) recompense and are worldly; but dharmic gifts are those scripturally enjoined gifts which, because they are not reciprocated, bear an 'unseen' (*a-drishta*), karmic recompense in the next life (see Trautmann 1981 : 239–40). This point of view reinterprets marriage as a non-reciprocal transaction, in which all gifts beginning with the bride herself flow from her family to the groom's but not vice-versa, since reciprocal gifts cancel the dharmic character of the principal gift, the bride. And it textures the asymmetrical relation such that it puts the groom's family in a superior role, as the object of unrequired gifts yielding 'unseen' future benefits. The asymmetrical relation between bride's and groom's families and the doctrine of non-reciprocity serves to promote the radical distinction of wife-givers and wife-takers in the Hindi terminology and in north

Indian practice generally. In the south, the Dravidian pattern can be accommodated to this asymmetry by limiting marriage to the matrilineal form (MBD marries FZS), which has the result that there is no reciprocal exchange of children in marriage between families.

Overall, it is apparent that the kanyadana ideal, which has become ever more pervasive in the course of India's history, is, in relation to the three regional patterns, a new creation forming a pattern claiming universality, and as such builds an all-India culture of marriage.

A further aspect of the Dharmashastra norms informing the Hindu marriage pattern is the way in which marriage is connected with caste. The Dharmashastra envisions three possibilities, that marriage will be with a person of the same caste (*sa-varna*), or that the bride will marry a groom of higher caste (*anuloma*, 'with the hair'), or a groom of lower caste (*pratiloma*, 'against the hair'), giving them names lovelier than the scientific Greek the anthropologists use : isogamy, hypergamy, hypogamy. The first is best and the last worst; but the texts, though they do not fully approve of inter-caste marriage, nevertheless give qualified recognition to the hypergamous direction of marriage, the direction that is most consistent with the kanyadana idea.

The hypergamous direction of marriage is very visible at certain places in the ethnographic record, especially in north India, where among Rajputs, for example, there has been an overall hypergamous flow of brides from lower- to higher-status clans and not in the opposite direction. The ideal of intra-caste marriage, which is the dominant one, provides that family-to-family relations of alliance will be implemented through marriage, but that caste-to-caste relations will exclude marriage. This ideal coexists in tension with that of hypergamy, through which the marriage pattern tends to overspill the bounds of caste and to organize relations between castes.

### **18.5 The Islamic Pattern a Marriage**

The marriage patterns of Indian Muslims often resemble those of their Hindu neighbours, especially among the non-Ashraf groups. Among the Ashraf groups (those upper - status lineages claiming an ancestral origin that is Arab, Persian, or Central Asian), the Islamic pattern formalized in the Shariah and perpetuated through the colonial period in the Anglo-Muhammedan law to the present, adds a further

complication to the picture of marriage patterns in India.

This pattern derives from Arabia. It is essentially the Arab pattern associated with segmentary lineages of classic type based on patrilineal descent, with a propensity to form alliances with other lineages and lineage segments based on a calculus of segmentary nearness. Associated with this pattern is a kinship terminology that is 'descriptive' in the sense that it makes few of the equations we find, for example, in Dravidian terminologies, distinguishing the different kinds of aunts, uncles, and cousins.

What is distinctive of the Arab pattern is the strongly endogamous tendency of the lineage, or, put another way, the reluctance to form alliances through marriage with distant or non-related lineages, against whom one's own lineage and other close lineages might very well be called upon to take up arms. These tendencies crystallize in canonical preference for the *bint 'amm*, the father's brother's daughter, who of course is of the same patrilineal group, while the other first cousins are not forbidden in marriage. It is unfortunate that anthropological discussion of this pattern sometimes refers to it as a preference for the patrilateral parallel cousin, since of course there is no distinction of cross and parallel in the Arabic terminology of kinship the logic of the distinctions not supplied by considerations of crossness, which is absent, but the segmentary patrilineage and its characteristic ways of forming alliances against enemies. This pattern, then, is quite different from the Dravidian pattern, and it leans in the opposite direction from the Indo-Aryan one, preferring to find marriage partners close to home within the structure of patrilineages, rather than (as in the latter) strictly forbidding marriage within patrilineal lineages or clans and encouraging the formation of dispersed alliances.

Two other concomitants of the Arabic pattern that Islam brings to South Asia are the payment of a bride price (*mahr*), and the conception of marriage as a contract made by persons who can dissolve it at will. Both features differ from those associated with the idea of *kanyadana* and the sacramental character of the principal marriage among Hindus.

The various groups of Indian Muslims follow Dravidian, Indo Aryan, and Arab patterns or variants of them. Because of the different logics of the patterns (repetition of alliances, dispersed alliance, endogamous alliance) the difference among Muslim groups taken together is considerable.



### **18.6 Change in marriage pattern in recent times :**

The reluctance of the British to interfere with Hindu and Muslim marriage made them unable to undertake legislation for the reform of marriage laws. The main legislative initiatives concerning marriage in the colonial period had to do with providing for that the Hindu and Muslim law did not, principally the Special Marriage Act of 1872 making civil marriage available to persons marrying outside their castes. It is symptomatic of the British unwillingness to interfere with the religious law that it was necessary for the parties to declare that they did not profess the Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Jain, Muslim, Jewish, Parsi, or Christian faith in order to avail themselves of the opportunity of civil marriage, a provision which the Parliament of independent India soon did away with, by the Special Marriage Act of 1954. The one reformatory measure of the colonial regime was the Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act (1856) which gave legal recognition to the remarriage of Hindu widows which of course was a permissive measure requiring no massive change of behaviour or opinion (Smith 1963). At the same time, marriage was under intense debate among Indian reformers, missionary critics, and others. The colonial situation had the effect of fueling debate and stultifying change at the same time. Similarly, the nationalist effort to end colonial rule had the general tendency to put reform of marriage on the back burner as a divisive issue when solidarity was needed for the freedom struggle.

Independence broke the log jam in a certain sense, and in 1955, the Hindu Marriage Act was approved by Parliament together with other bills covering inheritance, guardianship, and adoption, though only after strong criticism from opposing directions. The voices of Hindu traditionalism were particularly loud over provisions for divorce in the bill which, it was argued, was destructive of the sacramental character of Hindu marriage. In general, the new Act and its companions has the effect of displacing the Dharmashastra from the law courts, and replacing its authority with that of the legislative power of the people through its representatives which was certainly a major change, and rendered marriage patterns subject to rearrangement whenever the Parliamentary majority chose. Other critics of the Act pulled in the opposite direction, calling for a secular and progressive marriage law that applied to everyone irrespective of religion, and argued that creating a Hindu Marriage Act would promote communalism. The framers of the Indian Constitution

provided for a uniform civil code as one of the items among the Directive Principle of State Policy. The backers of the Hindu Marriage Act construed it not as a settled resolution of the reform issue, but as a way station towards a future uniform code.

Thus contradiction between emerging reformist views of marriage and the relatively unchanging and unchangeable state of the law at the end of the colonial period was rectified shortly after Independence in respect of Hindus (and also for Jains and Sikhs who were included in its provisions) by this and other laws recognizing widow remarriage, ending polygamy, making provision for separation and divorce, and giving daughters inheritance rights in land. But the obstacles continue, in respect of Muslim law. Muslim religious leadership in India has tended to oppose interfering with the Shariah-based Anglo-Muhammedan law, contending that the legitimacy of the (non-Muslim) government of India for Muslims depends upon its countenance. Parliament, inevitably having a non-Muslim majority, finds itself in a predicament not unlike that of its colonial predecessors, having the power but lacking the moral authority to reform the law of marriage for Muslims. The impasse continues and is central to the post-colonial quandary. The legal framework of marriage patterns in India, then, is one of a reformed regime of marriage for Hindus and others, and a continuing, unreformed and unreformable regime of the Anglo-Muhammedan law for Indian Muslims. The huge controversy over the Shah Bano affair is a symptom of this impasse.

Against the background of that framework of law, marriage patterns have been subject to a variety of pushes and pulls in recent times that have changed them in many ways, though in ways not easy to capture in a country so pluralistic as India. We may mention four of them: the increasing scope and intensity of kanyadana marriage and dowry; the decline of crosscousin marriage; the emergence of a norm of post-puberty marriage; and the strengthening of the ideals of intimacy and companionship between the man and woman forming a married couple.

The idea of marriage as the gift of a maiden was promoted by the writers of the Dharmashastra against other accepted conceptions of the marriage transaction, as part of an overall philosophy of the gift that bears 'unseen' fruit in another life. It is a paradox that modern conditions, which have promoted the critical examination of marriage in India, have also promoted the further spread of this conception, and of the practice of dowry, at the expense of the use of bride price which was customary in many

localities until recently—a clear case of modern conditions fostering what Srinivas calls Sanskritization (Srinivas 1955). The dowry itself, in an emerging economy of consumerism, grows without limit in the imagination and has become a highly visible social pathology in the epidemic of dowry deaths over the last several decades.

Another pattern, the Dravidian rule of cross-cousin marriage, has been in retreat in the twentieth century, and although it remains imprinted upon the terminology the incidence of its practice declines. One very evident factor at work here is the belief that the marriage of close relatives leads to physical defects in the children. This belief has been under discussion in the West for over a century, leading to legislation against the marriage of close cousins, and it is notable that it began well before modern genetics proposed a scientific basis for it in the idea of recessive genes and their often deleterious character. These ideas have been taken up in India and form part of a kind of modern common sense that frowns upon the Dravidian custom, although the long survival of the Dravidian rule argues against it having been so very deleterious in practice. The forces that promote individual choice in marriage partners tend in the same direction, towards lower incidences of the marriage of cross-cousins. One effect which might congeal into a settled pattern is the tendency to ban the marriage of first cousins, but to find second or more distant cousins in the cross-cousin category, which is similar to the Munda pattern, and is more compatible with north Indian norms (see Rajadhyaksha 1995).

A third point concerns the rising age at marriage. After many centuries over which the marriage of children before puberty had become more prominent, it is in this century that the individual choice or voice is greater than ever before. Marriage no longer colonizes so great a part of one's early life. Effects of the receding age of marriage upon girls have been studied by Rajadhyaksha (1995). Menstruation is a complex symbol in Hinduism, combining ideas of temporary impurity, which requires temporary segregation from contact with others in the family, with those of fertility, which is to be celebrated but needs to be secured by the family of a husband. Under the old regime of child marriages, the onset of menstruation followed marriage and was welcomed and ritually marked, and monthly periods were known to all by the observance of certain rules of temporary withdrawal. Modern ideas have reversed the secular trend towards securing fertility by ever earlier marriage, and as the age at marriage has increased, the menstruating girl who is not yet married has emerged as a new

phenomenon. Her menstruation is a cause of anxiety both to her – who must bear the burden of it without celebration and indeed in silence – and a worry to her parents, who know their daughter is capable of becoming sexually active, a dangerous period of life until she is safely married. The new dispensation may be better, but it is more isolating and some of the collective and ritual burden lifting is no longer available (Rajadhyaksha 1995).

The final area of change to be addressed here is the development of ideals of intimacy and companionship in marriage. The desire for intimacy and companionship is no doubt always a part of marriage, but it must be balanced with other social objectives, and in India while the married state and the married couple as normative are highly stressed, public expression of intimacy by the couple is generally suppressed out of deference of elders and the occasions for experiencing intimacy may be quite limited. Divorce is the obverse of the coin of intimacy, and the demand for a legal remedy for marriages that have gone bad on the part of those who led newly independent India was a part of the rethinking on marriage that had been going on during the previous century. What has tended to decline with the greater demand for intimacy between the married couple is the competing demand for familial solidarity and the alliance aspect of marriage, so strongly developed in India's history, now receding, unevenly and variously (Jain 1996; Kakkar 1996). More than ever before, marriages that are 'out of pattern' and that are governed less by considerations like the family-to-family relations that are made by marriage, and more by the desire for intimacy by the couple forming the marriage, are a possibility for a larger numbers of Indians.

**18.7 Conclusion :** In this chapter we come to understand that marriage is a socially sanctioned arrangement which helps in propagation of society. We find that the marriage forms among different communities varies in terms of various rites and rituals associated with it. Broadly, the Hindu marriage involves the issue of Saptapadi, Kanayadan, Panigrahan etc. Likewise Muslims have nikhanama and mehr. Although the marriage patterns are continuing since past but due to recent developments after independence, there is change in performance and realization of various rituals. Still one find the uniqueness associated with various communities in terms of marriage patterns and rules.

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### **Changing Family Pattern**

#### **Introduction**

Let us now examine how is traditional (joint) family changing in our society. Is it disintegrating?

#### **Nature of Change**

The contention is that 'jointness' of family (that is, co-resident and commensal kin group) is not disappearing and that stage can never be envisaged in India when the joint family will be lost in the mental horizon of people; only the 'cutting off' point of 'jointness' is changing. Instead of large joint families, we will have only locally functioning effective small joint families of two generations or so. At the same time, even the majority of those nuclear families in which a man, his wife and unmarried children live separately, will continue to be 'joint' with their primary kin like father or brother in terms of 'functioning'.

#### **Empirical Studies on Change**

The Census Commissioner of 1951 observed that a large proportion of small households (33 % in villages and 38% in towns) is prima facie indication that families do not continue to be 'joint' according to the traditional custom of the country and the habit of breaking away from the joint family and setting up separate households is quite strong. Several sociological studies made in different parts of the country between 1950s and 1980s also indicated that the old-style joint family is rare and the nature of jointness is changing from that of 'residence' to one of 'fulfilling obligations'. We will attempt to analyze these changes in Indian family in two areas, namely, change in structure, and change in interpersonal relation :

## **Change in Structure**

Of the studies conducted by a few scholars for analyzing the change, structure of family in India, we will discuss here only the outstanding surveys of scholars like LP. Desai, K.M. Kapadia, Aileen Ross, M.S. Gore, A.M. Shah and Sachchidananda.

Desai (1964: 41) had studied 423 families in 1955-57 in Mahuwa town in Gujarat with a population of about 25,000 persons and 4,800 households. Of the total population, 78 percent were Hindus and 22 percent were Muslims. Classifying 423 families in his sample on the basis of the generation depth, he found that 4.02 percent families were one generation nuclear families, 57.45 percent were two-generation nuclear families, 32.86 per cent were three-generation joint families, and 5.67 percent were four or more generation joint families. In other words, 61.47 per cent families were nuclear and 38.53 percent were joint, showing thereby that nuclearity prevails more than jointness.

Classifying 423 families on the basis of relationship with other households, that is, in terms of the degree of jointness, Desai (Ibid: 69) found that about half of the families were joint with others in terms of residence, property and functioning and about one-third were joint with others only in terms of functioning. In 4.96 per cent cases, he found zero degree of jointness; in 26.48 percent cases, low jointness (that is, joint-ness in mutual obligations only); in 17.02 percent cases, high jointness (that is, jointness in mutual obligations and property); in 30.26 percent cases higher jointness (that is, marginal jointness, or jointness in residence (less than three generations), mutual obligations, and property); and in 21.28 per cent cases, highest jointness (that is, traditional jointness, or jointness in residence (involving three or more generations), mutual obligations, and property).

Thus, Desai (1956: 154-56) gave three conclusions pertaining to the change in the urban family : (1) Nuclearity is increasing and jointness is decreasing, and the husband-wife-children group is predominant in the residential and compositional pattern of the families. (2) Spirit of in-dividualism is not growing, as of the households that are residentially and compositionally nuclear, little less than 50 percent are actively joint with other households in the same town or outside it. (3) The radius of kinship relations within the circle of jointness is becoming smaller. The relations between parents and sons, brothers and brothers, and uncles and nephews predominated in joint families. In other words, the lineal depth of relationship is found between father, son, and grandson, and the colateral

relationships are between a man and his father's brother and his own brothers.

Kapadia's study (1956: 112), conducted in 1955-56, gave comparative change of urban and rural families (unlike Desai's study which painted the pattern of change only in urban family). He had studied one town Navsari and its fifteen surrounding villages in Surat district in Gujarat. In all, he studied 1,345 families of which 18 per cent were from Navsari town and 82 per cent were from its surrounding villages.

Analyzing the structure of family by taking the urban and the rural areas together, Kapadia (Ibid: 113-15) found that 49.1 per cent families were nuclear and 50.9 per cent were joint. The conclusions about the family patterns were delineated by Kapadia as follows:

1. In the rural community, firstly, the proportion of Joint families (49.7%) is almost the same as that of nuclear families (50.3%). Secondly, when the nature of the family pattern is viewed in relation to castes, higher castes (e.g., Patidars, Brahmins, and Banias) have predominantly joint family, its proportion to the nuclear family being nearly 5:3. The lower castes show a greater incidence of nuclear family, the proportion of the joint family to the nuclear being 9:11. Thus, while among the higher castes, there is 0.6 nuclear family per one joint family; among the lower castes, every joint family has its counterpart 1.2 nuclear families. Thirdly, the joint family is predominant not only among the agricultural castes (for example, Patidars and Anavils) but also among the functional castes (that is, carpenter, tailor, gold-smith, black-smith, grocer, potter, oil-presser, bangle-seller, etc.) which shows that it is doubtful whether the joint family is now necessarily a concomitant of the agricultural economy.

2. In the urban community, there are more joint families (56.5%) than nuclear families (43.5%), the proportion being 0.77 nuclear family for every one joint family. This is against the general presumption about it people in cities and big towns live in nuclear families and that towns and cities have disintegrative influences on the structure of the family.

3. In the 'impact' villages (that is, villages within the radius of 7 to 8 km from the town), the family pattern closely resembles the rural pattern and has no correspondence with the town pattern (that is, the proportion of joint families is almost the same as that of nuclear families). Secondly, as far the pattern showing the caste variations is concerned,



unlike other villages, in 'impact' villages, the functional castes show a gradual increase of nuclear families and agricultural castes (Patidars, etc.) show a gradual decrease of nuclear families. It is difficult to say whether this is due to the impact of the town or is merely an expression of caste variations.

In the light of the above data, Kapadia gave two important conclusions: (1) joint family structure is not being nuclearized, and (2) the difference in the rural and the urban family patterns is the result of modification of the caste pattern by economic factors.

Aileen Ross (1961: 303) studied the pattern of change in middle and upper class families in an urban area. She studied 157 families in Bangalore in 1957. Her interviews were asked to describe the composition of their households at two periods of time: first, when they were 'grow-ing up' (that is, in their childhood) and second, at the time of 'the interview'. The answers revealed that at the time of 'growing up', 12.1 percent families were large joint (that is, with three or more generations with lineal and/or colateral kin), 28.0 percent were small joint (that is, either a man, his wife, unmarried children and married sons without offspring, or a man, his wife, parents, unmarried children and married sons without offspring, or two married brothers with their wives and unmarried children), 49.1 percent were nuclear, and 10.8 percent were nuclear with dependents. At the time of interview, the structure of the respondents' households was found to be large joint in 5.1 per cent cases, small joint in 30.6 percent cases, nuclear in 43.3 percent cases, and nuclear with dependents in 21.0 percent cases (Ibid: 36-37).

On the basis of these figures, Ross (Ibid: 49) concluded that: (1) the trend of family form in India today is towards a break away from the traditional joint family form into nuclear family units; (2) the small joint family is now the most typical form of family life; (3) a growing number of people now spend at least part of their lives in single family units; (4) living in several types of family during a life-time seems so widespread that it is possible to talk of a cycle of family types as being the normal sequence for city-dwellers; (5) distant relatives are less important to the present generation than they were to their parents and grandparents. They tend to see them less often and have less affection and feelings of responsibility for them; and (6) the city-dweller son has become more spatially separated from all relatives (due to small accommodation in the house and the changing attitudes towards individuality and privacy which make visitors less welcome than in the large joint family), and consequently less under their influence and control than in the tightly spatially bound joint family.

A.M. Shah studied 283 households in one village (called Radhvanaj) in Gujarat in between 1955 and 1958. This village is situated at a distance of about 35 km from Ahmedabad and had 283 households and a total population of 1,185 persons belonging to twenty one castes at the time of study of the total households, 34.3 per cent were small households (with three or less members), 47.0 per cent were medium-sized households (with four to six members), 15.5 per cent were large households (with seven to nine members), and 3.2 per cent. were very large households (with ten or more members).

In terms of the composition, Shah classified the households into two groups: 'simple' and 'complex'. Simple households were defined as those which consisted of whole or part of the parental family, while complex households were defined as those which consisted of two or more parental or part of the parental families. The parental family was defined as one consisting of a man, his wife and unmarried children. Shah maintained that a simple household had six possible compositions: (i) a man and his wife, (ii) either only a man or only his wife, (iii) a man, his wife and his unmarried children, (iv) unmarried brothers and sisters, (v) a father and his unmarried children, and (vi) a mother and her unmarried children. Likewise, a complex household had three possible compositions: (i) two or more parental families, (ii) one parental family plus part of a parental family, and (iii) part of one parental family plus part of one other parental family.

On the basis of this classification, Shah found that 68.0 per cent households in the village were simple households and 32.0 percent were complex households. Since 'simple' household in Shah's analysis represented a nuclear family and 'complex' household represented a joint family, it could be maintained that Shah's study also revealed the breakdown of joint family system in rural India.

Rama Krishna Mukherjee (1975: 4) studied 4,120 families in West Bengal in 1960-61 and concluded that joint family structures are being nuclearized in course of time and that replacement of joint family by nuclear family is *fait accompli*.

M.S. Gore (1968: 247 - 48) studied 499 Agarwal families (399 in the main sample and 100 in the additional sample) in 1960 living in or coming from Haryana region. The families in the main sample were engaged in traditional occupation of business, trade and money-lending and had comparatively less formal education. These families were selected

from three different sectors-urban, fringe and rural. The urban families were selected from Delhi, the fringe families from the surrounding villages of Delhi, and the rural families from Rohtak and Hissar districts of Haryana. The families in the additional sample included those which were engaged in non-traditional occupation, were comparatively more educated, and living in an urban area. From each of these four types of families (urban, rural, fringe, and additional group), Gore selected both nuclear and joint families. The urban families were further classified as 'local' (in which head of the family was born in Delhi) and 'immigrant' families (in which head of the family was born outside Delhi). The break-up of the 499 families in all these types was: urban local nuclear and joint families: 50; urban immigrant nuclear and joint families: 149; fringe nuclear: 49; fringe joint: 51; rural nuclear: 48; rural joint: 52; and additional nuclear and joint: 100. Thus, the total number of nuclear and joint families studied in the main sample was 195 and 204 respectively. From each family, Gore selected two or more respondents for interview. In this way, he studied 1,274 persons in all-1,174 in the main sample and 100 in the additional sample. Of these, 490 respondents were from the nuclear families (422 in the main sample and 68 in the additional sample) and 784 were from the joint families (752 in the main and 32 in additional sample).

Classifying 399 families in the main sample on the basis of six classifications, Gore (Ibid: 94-96) found 154 nuclear families of type I (that is, a man, his wife and unmarried children), 41 nuclear families of type II and III (that is, either a man, his wife, unmarried children and unmarried brothers or a man, his wife, unmarried children and some dependent who is not a coparcener), 137 joint families of type IV (that is, a man, his wife, unmarried children and married sons), 47 joint families of type V (that is, a man, his wife, unmarried children, married sons and unmarried brothers), and 20 joint families of type VI (that is, a man, his wife, unmarried children, married sons, unmarried brothers, and married brothers and their families). This shows that two types of families dominate over all others one consisting of a man, his wife and unmarried children (154 out of 399 or 38.6%) and secondly, one consisting of a man, his wife and unmarried and married children (137 out of 399 or 34.3%).

Edwin Driver (1962: 112-120) conducted a survey in 1958 in Nagpur district in (then) Bombay State. He contacted 2,314 families, 882 living in the city, 309 in the town and 1,123 in the villages. Of these, 93.3 per cent were Hindu families and 6.7 per cent

were non-Hindu families. The analysis of the 2,314 families revealed that in the city, 22.9 per cent families were joint and 77.1 per cent nuclear; in the town, 24.9 per cent were joint and 75.1 per cent nuclear; and in the village, 37.0 per cent were joint and 63.0 per cent nuclear. Taking all the three areas (city, town and villages) together, 30.0 per cent families were found joint and 70.0 per cent nuclear (see, Kapadia, 1966: 297). As is evident from these-figures, there are more nuclear families in the urban areas and more joint families in the rural areas.

Analyzing the pattern of family with reference to the income group, Driver found that in the rural areas, joint families are more in the higher income group (Rs. 1,000 and over) than in the lower, whereas in the urban areas, they (joint families) are less in the higher income groups than in the lower. He also studied the family pattern with reference to generational differences. While in the older generation, he found 16.03 per cent families joint and 28.48 per cent nuclear, in the younger generation he found 14.0 per cent joint and 41.5 per cent nuclear, showing thereby that the joint family is more frequent among the older couples (see, Kapadia, 1966).

The University School of Economics and Sociology, Bombay carrying out the economic survey of Greater Bombay in 1957 analyzed the patterns of 13,369 families, out of which 74.8 per cent were Hindu families. The data on these families showed that 11.52 per cent families were uni-member, 5.74 per cent nuclear, 8.04 per cent nuclear with some affinal relative, 34.02 per cent marginal joint, and 40.68 per cent joint families (see, Kapadia, 1966: 297-98). This shows that nearly 75.0 per cent were joint families and only 17.26 per cent were truly nuclear families.

Sachchidananda (1977) studied 720 families in 1970 selected from thirty villages in Shahabad district in Bihar. From each village, he selected twenty four families on the stratified random sample basis. The three variables used for stratifying the families were: caste (two levels), size of landholding (three levels) and sharecropping (two levels). He selected two families from each level-group. The families in the sample covered 6,675 persons.

Out of the total families studied, 25.8 per cent were nuclear and 74.2 per cent joint (here nuclear family included the dependents also). Sachchidananda analyzed the relationship between the type of the family and different variables like

caste, education, landholding, and size of the family. He found that though the number of joint families was high in all the three types of castes-upper (70.0%), middle (76.0%), and scheduled' castes (89.0%)--but contrary to expectations, there were more nuclear families in upper castes (30.0%) than in middle castes (24.0%) and scheduled castes (11.0%). Relating education with family pattern, he found that nuclearity tends to rise with the level of education. While 39.0 per cent families were nuclear where the level of family education was matric and above, only 24.0 per cent families were nuclear where the level of family education was middle or less. As regards the relationship between the family pattern and landholding is concerned, he found that as landholdings increase, the number of joint families also increase, or less the landholdings, less the joint families and more the landholdings, more the joint families. Lastly, analyzing the range of kin constituents, he found that 26.0 per cent families consisted of only primary kin, 62.0 per cent consisted of primary and secondary kin, and 3.0 per cent consisted of primary, secondary, tertiary, and distant kin.

Pauline Kolenda (1968) used the quantitative data on the composition of households (co-residential, commensal family units) from twenty six studies conducted between 1950s and 1970s, including nine village studies, ten studies of individual castes, and surveys from seven districts. Her findings are: (1) While the majority of the people may live in joint and supplemented nuclear families, the majority of households/ families are nuclear in structure. (2) Regional differences are more evident in the proportions of joint families. There are higher proportions of joint families on the Gangetic plain than in Central India or Eastern India (including West Bengal). (3) The joint family is more characteristic of upper and landowning castes than of lower and landless castes. (4) Caste rank is more closely related to the size and the proportion of joint families. However, Kolenda's assumptions require further careful research.

This author also studied the family pattern while engaged in two different research projects (on "Drug Abuse Among Students" in 1976 and "Rights of Women : A Feminist Perspective" in 1988). In the first project, 4,181 respondents (students) were studied in one city (Jaipur), while in the second project, 753 families were studied in eight villages of one district (Jaipur). Both the studies showed that the joint family system has not completely

disappeared, though the number of nuclear families is large. In the 1988 study, 51.8 per cent families were found joint and 48.2 per cent nuclear .

### **Conclusion**

Taking all the above mentioned empirical studies together (of Desai, Kapadia, Ross, Shah, Mukherjee, Gore, Driver, Bombay University, Sachchidananda, Kolenda, and Ahuja), the following conclusions may be derived regarding the change in family structure in our country :

1. The number of fissioned families is increasing, that is, sons prefer to live separately from their parents but at the same time continue to fulfil their traditional obligations towards them.
2. There is more jointness in traditional communities and more nuclearity in communities exposed to outside influences.
3. The size of the traditional family (that is, co-resident and commensal kinship unit) has become smaller.
4. So long the cultural ideal that a male should look after his parents and his teenage brothers and sisters persists, the functional type joint family will be sustained in our society.

It is not possible to specify when the Indian family began to undergo changes. The system never was completely static of course, and change proceeded slowly throughout the twentieth century. Until the end of the third decade of the twentieth century, however, there was no political, social or industrial power that could successfully break Indian family's self-imposed isolation from the families of the rest of the world. Marked change followed from the fourth decade of the twentieth century, particularly after the independence.

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| <b>Course No. SOC-C-102</b> | <b>Lesson No. 20</b>                      |
| <b>Semester-I</b>           | <b>Household Dimensions of the Family</b> |
|                             | <b>Unit-IV</b>                            |

**Structure**

**Dr. Hema Gandotra**

**20.1 Introduction**

**20.2 Objectives**

**20.3 Family and Household**

**19.3.1 Family**

**19.3.2 Household**

**19.3.3 Classification of Household**

**20.4 Conclusion**

**20.1 Introduction**

Traditional India was village India, and the joint family was therefore a characteristic of village India; contrari-wise, urban areas are new and characterized by the elementary family and urbanization, therefore, leads to disintegration of the joint family. Some sociologists have pointed out that urbanization does not lead to disintegration but only to transformation of the joint family. They do not, however, question the belief that the joint family was always a characteristic of village India. However, the discussion is concerned with the beliefs about the traditional family only insofar as they refer to its household aspect. To distinguish between ‘household’ and ‘family’ has now become common in sociology and social anthropology.

**20.2 Objectives**

The main focus to this lesson is

— The idea of Family & Household

— To know the classification of Household

### **20.3 Family and Household**

To distinguish between 'household' and 'family' has now become common in sociology and social anthropology. In common English parlance the word 'family' has several different meanings, including 'household'. The common Indian word for the family, viz., *kutumb*, has likewise several different meanings. However, for the sake of technical analysis, 'household' should be distinguished from the other referents of 'family'. For example, two brothers and their wives and children may live in two separate households, but they may be bound by a number of relationships of many kinds. For the sake of clarity, it is necessary to consider such inter-household relationships as distinct from relationships within the household. Although the aim of the study of the family should be to study it in all its aspects, a beginning has to be made with the study of the household. An examination of ideas about the past of the Indian household is, therefore, crucial in a comprehensive study of changes in the Indian family.

#### **20.3.1 Family**

Family is used in several different senses:

- 1) Household, the body of persons who live in one house or under one head, including parents, children, servants etc.
- 2) The group consisting of parents and their children, whether living together or not;
- 3) In a wider sense, all those who are nearly related by blood and affinity
- 4) Those descended or claiming descent from a common ancestor; a house, kindred, lineage.

The generally acknowledged meaning of 'elementary family' is a group composed of a man, his wife and their children. The members of an elementary family always live together in the same household, either by themselves or as part of a wider household group such as a joint or extended family.



The legal definition of the joint family is a highly specialized one and has nothing to do with the sociological distinction between elementary family and joint family. A joint family of the legal conception can exist even within an elementary family of the sociological conception. For example, a father and an unmarried son, or a widow and her unmarried son, are sufficient to constitute a joint family according to the law. The law does not lay down the rule that the joint family of the legal conception should always be a joint household. A son may live separately from his father, and one brother from another, but they continue to be members of their respective joint property group. In brief, the law is concerned primarily with the rights of constituting a property-holding group and of maintenance there from, but not with the constitution of the household group.

‘Joint family’ means two or more elementary families joined together. It is called patrilineal joint family when based on the principle of patrilineal descent, and matrilineal joint family when based on the principle of matrilineal descent. Frequently the term ‘extended family’ is used in the place of ‘joint family’. The patrilineal extended family is based on an extension of father-son relationship, and the matrilineal extended family on the mother-daughter relationship.

### **20.3.2 *Household***

If one takes a census of households in any section of Indian society—a village, town, or caste—and examine their numerical and kinship composition, one finds a number of types of composition, ranging from the most simple single-member household to a very complex household of many members. A ‘simple’ household is composed of a complete elementary family or a part of an elementary family. A ‘complex’ or ‘joint’ household is composed of two or more elementary families, or of parts of two or more elementary families, or of one elementary family and parts of one or more other elementary families.

One of the first tasks in an analysis of households is to formulate the types of composition. The structure of the household becomes more complex as more categories of relatives are included. In a one-member household there is no relationship; in a two-member household there is one relationship; but beyond this

the addition of one relative means an addition of more than one relationship. For example, the addition of a son's wife to a Household of father, mother and son, means the addition of relationships not only between the son and his wife but also between father-in-law and daughter-in-law and between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. Addition of relationships tends to create conflict between roles. For example, the conflict between a man's loyalty to his wife and loyalty to his parents is proverbial.

Each person in a household is involved in a complex pattern of behaviour with every other member. Everyone in a household has his own likes and dislikes, habits, tastes and idiosyncracies. Life in a household is marked by sentiments and emotions, and cooperation as well as conflict. Therefore, if the aim is to understand household life in its entirety, the formulation of types of household composition should take into account all the various members of a household.

### **20.3.3 Classification of Households**

Classification of households according to types of composition is not, however, an end in itself. The types are not discrete and haphazard but are interrelated in a developmental process. This process may be in progression or in regression. Progressive development of a household takes place due to increase in membership, mainly by marriage, death and partition. It may be mentioned in passing that there is always some pattern in the developmental process, but it is not cyclical in nature as considered by Fortes and his associates.

One of the determinants of the developmental process is a set of explicitly stated rules or norms governing the formation of households. In most sections of Indian society, the bride after marriage leaves her parental home and goes to live in her conjugal home. A son and his wife are required not only to start their married life in his parental home but also to continue to live there afterwards. This norm has a number of implications. For instance, if a man has more than one son, each of the junior sons and his wife will have to live not only with his parents but also with his senior brothers and their wives and children. In fact, frequently people state that a man and his wife should live with his brothers and their wives. Furthermore,

they say that brothers and their wives should live together not only during the lifetime of the brothers' parents but also after their death, and the brothers' sons and their wives should also live in the same household. Sometimes the norm is extended still further.

Taking all these norms together, the central idea is that while female patrilineal descendants of a male ancestor go away to live with their husbands, the male patrilineal descendants and their wives should live together. The wives should be so completely incorporated into their husbands' kin-group that they should not be divorced and that even after their husbands' death they should stay on in the same household. Unmarried children should be with their parents; in the event of divorce or death of the mother, they should stay with their father or his male patrikin. The central idea behind these norms is the principle of residential unity of patrikin and their wives. It is necessary to clarify that this principle is normative in nature, and that there are always deviations from it as in the case of all norms.

While the principle is common to almost the entire Hindu society, there are differences between different sections of the society in the extent to which it is observed. First of all, there are differences in the maximum extent to which the developmental process goes in progression along the path set by the principle. For example, in a Gujarat village A. M. Shah studied that there is no case of two or more married brothers living in a single household after the death of their parents. In a nearby village, on the other hand, there is a considerable number of households of this type. Such differences in the maximum extent may also exist between villages and towns, between one caste and another caste, and between one region and another region.

Secondly, while the maximum extent of the developmental process may be the same in two sections of society, there may be differences in the frequencies of the cases in which the norm is observed within this extent. For example, in the Gujarat village just cited, only about 5 per cent of the total numbers of households are composed of one or both parents and two or more married sons and their wives and children, while 19 per cent of the households are composed of one or both

parents and one married son. This is mainly due to the fact that married sons tend to live separately from parents even before the death of parents. Out of 41 cases of parents having two or more married sons, only in 12 cases (29.26 per cent) all the sons live with the parents in a single household, while in 29 cases (70.73 per cent) all or some of the sons live in separate households (in the village itself). And out of 50 cases of parents having one married son, in 38 cases (76 per cent) the parents and the son form a joint household, while in 12 cases (24 per cent) the parents and the son live in separate households.

One of the factors affecting the degree of extension of the principle of the residential unity of Patrikin and their wives appears to be the degree of Sanskritization of a caste. Another factor affecting the degree of extension of the principle appears to be the custom of cross-cousin and uncle-niece marriages.

Whatever be the maximum extent to which the principle goes in progression in a particular section of the society, it is important to note that the processes of progressive and regressive developments go on simultaneously in the society taken as a whole. While one household may be undergoing progression, another may be undergoing regression. As a result, there are always households in the society which are small and simple in composition, along with households which are large and complex in composition.

While one household may be undergoing progression, another may be undergoing regression. As a result, there are always households in the society which are small and simple in composition, along with households which are large and complex in composition. When a complex household, say, of two or more married brothers, is partitioned, two or more separate households come into existence, but at the same time a number of other relationships continue to operate. They would cooperate in economic pursuits, hold and manage property jointly, help each other on many occasions, celebrate festivals, rituals and ceremonies jointly, and so on. This is also a normal process. Thus, two or more households may be separate but they may constitute one family.

The households constituting a family are interrelated by a multitude of activities in addition to those of holding and managing property and performing ancestor worship. The households may be poor, with little joint property, but they would nonetheless be involved in many family activities.

Performance of a large number of rites of passage from birth to death involves members of the family. For example, the invitation on the occasion of the wedding of a member of a household is usually extended on behalf of members of all the households of the family. Their names are usually printed on the invitation card. The numerous chores involved in organizing the functions are all allocated to the members of the family.

A crisis situation created by such events as death, illness and hospitalization brings the members of the family together. They provide emotional support to each other in many ways. At other times when a member of the family is in economic distress, other members are expected to help. Similarly, when a member's child needs support, the family members provide it. Therefore the issues of changes in the family needs to be seen in the context of changes in the household.

For a long time, students of the Indian family have used ancient Indian literature for information about its past. This information is of two main kinds: (a) pertaining to the property aspect of the family, which is generally included in the study of Hindu Law, and (b) pertaining to certain family rituals, such as the *shraddha*.

The Hindu legal text *Mitaksara* first defines a coparcenary: it comprises only those males who are entitled by birth to an interest in the joint or coparcenary property, i.e., a person himself and his sons, son's sons, and son's grandsons. As each son acquires by birth an interest in coparcenary property, even a father and his unmarried son are sufficient to constitute a coparcenary. Under the *Dayabhaga*, there is no coparcenary between a man and his son(s), married or unmarried, even though they may be living in a single household. The legal definition of the joint family is based on that of the coparcenary: it consists of all males included in the coparcenary, plus their wives and unmarried daughters. The latter are not coparceners but have only a right to maintenance. The main points here are two: (i) The legal definition of the joint family is a highly specialized one and has nothing to do with the

sociological distinction between elementary family and joint family. A joint family of the legal conception can exist even within an elementary family of the sociological conception. For example, a father and an unmarried son, or a widow and her unmarried son, are sufficient to constitute a joint family according to the law. (ii) The law does not lay down the rule that the joint family of the legal conception should always be a joint household. A son may live separately from his father, and one brother from another, but they continue to be members of their respective joint property group. In brief, the law is concerned primarily with the rights of constituting a property-holding group and of maintenance there from, but not with the constitution of the household group.

In the sacred texts (shastras), the question as to who should hold and inherit property is discussed usually in relation to the question as to who should perform the shraddha ritual for whom. In other words, the legal definition of the constitution of the joint family tends to coincide with and is sanctioned by the definition of the circle of persons required to perform the shraddha. This circle of persons need not live in a single household, just as the persons constituting the joint property group need not live in a single household. It seems to me that it was because of the coincidence of the legal and the ritual definitions of the joint family that the definition given in the shastras came to be accepted as the general definition of the Hindu joint family. A.M. Shah calls it the Indological definition. As most of the early studies were carried out by Indologist (including historians, Sanskrit's, and Orient list) on the basis of sacred literature, and as both Indologists and lawyers were dominant in the academic field in India, the Indological idea of the joint family carried a lot of weight and gained popularity.

The Indological-cum-legal material on the Indian family was used by Henry Maine in his general theory of the evolution of the family. He compared and contrasted the joint family of India with the individual family of the West, and considered the latter as later in evolution than the former. He thus laid the foundation of the sociological study of the Indian family, and through him the indological view of the Indian family came to be accepted in sociology.

The Indological definition is not concerned primarily with the composition of the household. Insofar as it was concerned with the household, it laid down the

definition of the ideal household, or in my terms, only the maximum extent of progression of the developmental process of households. The Indological literature does not provide any information on the various types households, nor on the frequency of households of each type. Obviously there was no census of households, in any section of Hindu society, at any period of time. Furthermore, the literature provides information more about the Brahmins and a few other higher castes whose property relations and rituals were governed by the sacred texts. With regard to the household also, the ideal that the texts emphasized was high-a household of four generations-and it seems only the higher castes tried to emulate the ideal to a higher degree. The texts do not provide any idea of differences in the family life of different sections of the society.

#### **20.4 Conclusion**

During the last thirty years or so, professional sociologists and social anthropologists have studied the problem of changes in the family in India. Some of these studies are concerned only with the household and some with the household as well as other aspects of the family. A.M. Shah argued that first of all, one has to distinguish the normal developmental process from change. Secondly, there is no point in postulating a single line of change for the entire Indian society. It would be profitable to bring into the study of the household 'Srinivas' ideas on Sanskritization and Westernization. In this context it is worthwhile to recall the slight increase in the average size of the household indicated by Orenstein. It is possible that increase may be due to some demography factor. Orensten himself has suggested that it may be due to a rise in the average number of children or in the average number of adults per household. (If the later is true, it astengthen the argument in favor of an increase overall emphasis on large and joint households). Not withstanding the influence of demographic factors, it seems worth inquiring whether the Sanskritization of lower castes and Adivasi tribes that has been going on a massive scale in the country has contributed anything to an overall greater emphasis on the principle of residential unity of patrikin and their wives. It cannot be denied that Westernization of the higher castes has contributed to a lesser emphasis on the principle, but the countervailing influence of Sanskritization might have led to an overall tendency in favour of greater emphasis on it.

Finally, one needs to have a fresh look at the problem of the impact of industrialization and urbanization on the household. It has already been pointed out that the situation in the past was possible quite the reverse of what it has been assumed. That is to say, there was greater emphasis on large and joint households in towns than in villages. Migration of rural people to towns, therefore, does not necessarily mean migration from a social environment of large and joint households to that of small and simple households.

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