UNIT 4: KINSHIP SYSTEM

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4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to -

- Explain the concept of kinship
- Discuss the types and degrees of kinship
- Describe the rules or usages of kinship and the taboos associated with it
- Explain the kinship structure and pattern in the different geographical zones across India.

4.2 INTRODUCTION

An individual cannot live alone in society. From birth till death she/he is surrounded by a number of people. Some of these people are her/his relatives, some are friends, some are neighbors while all others are strangers and unknown to her/him. An individual is bound to all those people who are related to her/him either on the basis of blood or marriage. The relations based on blood or marriage may be close or distant. The bond of blood or marriage which binds people together in group is called kinship. According to the Dictionary of Anthropology, kinship system includes socially

recognized relationships based on supposed as well as actual genealogical ties. These relationships are the result of social interaction and are recognized by the society.

Kinship system represents one of the basic social institutions. Kinship is universal and in most societies plays a significant role in the socialisation of individuals and the maintenance of group solidarity. The universal nature of the system shows its functional importance in social life. It is therefore, important to understand the aspect of kinship system in studying social life of a cultural group. In the previous unit we have learned about family and marraige in India. In this unit we shall try to understand the concept of kinship system and its different types. We would understand the types, degree and rules associated with the kinship system along with the kinship structure and pattern across India.

4.3 KINSHIP: MEANING AND DEFINITION

Kinship is one of the main organizing principles of society. It is one of the basic social institutions found in every society. This institution establishes relationships between individuals and groups. People in all societies are bound together by various kinds of bonds.The most basic bonds are those based on marriage and reproduction. Kinship refers to these bonds, and all other relationships resulting from them. Thus, the institution of kinship refers to a set of relationships and relatives formed thereof, based on blood relationships (consanguineal), or marriage (affinal).

There are different definitions of kinship. A few definitions are examined here.

- **Robin Fox***: "Kinship is simply the relations between the 'kin' that is persons related by real, putative or factitive consanguinity".*
- **A.R. Radcliffe Brown:***"Kinship is "a system of dynamic relations between person and person in a community, the behavior of any two persons in any of these relations being regulated in some way and to greater or less extent by social usage".*

4.3.1 Types and Degrees of Kinship

In any society, kin relationships are based either on birth (blood relations), or marriage. These two aspects of human life are the basis for the two main types of kinship in society.

- **Consanguineal Kinship:**

  It refers to the relationships based on blood, i.e., the relationship between parents and children, and between siblings. They are the most basic and universal kin relations. In this connection it may be pointed out that blood relation may be actual as well as supposed. Among polyandrous tribe the actual father of a child is unknown. An adopted child is treated as if it were one's own biologically produced child. Thus, blood relationship may be established not only on biological basis but also on the basis of social recognition.

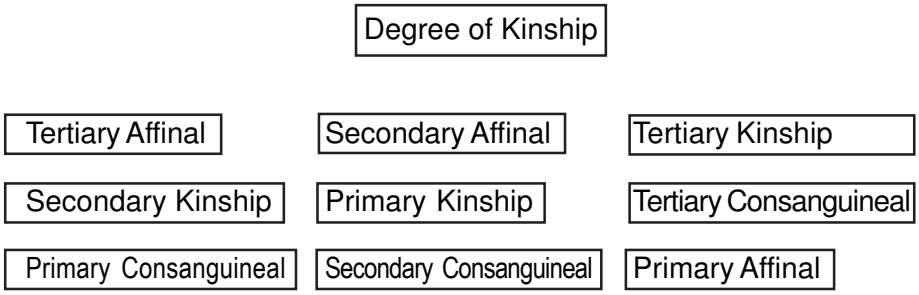
- **Affinal Kinship:**

  It refers to the relationships formed on the basis of marriage. The most basic relationship that results from marriage is that between husband and wife. When a person marries, she/he establishes relationship not only with the man/women whom she/he marries but also with a number of other people in the spouses family. Moreover, it is not only the person marrying who gets bound to the family members of the boy/girl but her/his family members also get bound to the family members of the girl/boy. For example, after marriage a boy not only becomes a husband, but he also becomes brother-in-law, son-in-law etc. and vice-versa. Thus, marriage creates a host of relationships which are called affinal kin.

- **Degree of Kinship:**

  Any relationship between two individuals is based on the degree of closeness or distance of that relationship. This closeness or distance of any relationship depends upon how individuals are related to each other.

  Kinship basically has three degrees, which can be explained in the following ways (Figure 1):



(Figure 1)

❍ **Primary Kinship :**

Primary kinship refers to direct relations. People who are directly related to each other are known as primary kin. There are basically eight primary kins—husband-wife, father son, father daughter , mother son, mother daughter; brother sister; and younger brother/sister older brother/ sister.

Primary kinship is of two kinds:

1. Primary Consanguineal Kinship:

Primary consanguineal kin are those kin, who are directly related to each other by birth. The relationships between parents and children and between siblings form primary kinship. These are the only primary consanguineal kin found in societies all over the world.

2. Primary Affinal Kinship:

Primary affinal kinship refers to the direct relationship formed as a result of marriage. The only direct affinal kinship is the relationship between husband and wife.

❍ **Secondary Kinship:**

Secondary kinship refers to the primary kin of primary kin. In other words, those who are directly related to primary kin (primary kin's primary kin) become one's secondary kin. There are 33 secondary kin.

Secondary kinship is also of two kinds:

1. Secondary Consanguineal kinship:

This type of kinship refers to the primary consanguineal kin's primary consanguineal kin. The most basic type of secondary consanguineal kinship is the relationship between grandparents and grandchildren. For Example, there is a direct consanguineal relationship between Eno and his parents.

For Eno, his parents are his primary consanguineal kin. However, for Eno's parents, their parents are their primary consanguineal kin. Therefore, for Eno, his grandparents are his primary consanguineal kin's (his parents) primary kin. For him, they become secondary consanguineal kin.

2. Secondary Affinal Kinship:

Secondary affinal kinship refers to one's primary affinal kins of primary kin. This kinship includes the relationships between an individual and all his/her sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law, and parents-in-law. For an individual, his/her spouse is his/her primary affinal kin, and for the spouse, his/her parents and siblings are his/her primary kin. Therefore, for the individual, the parents or brother/sister-in-law will become his/her secondary affinal kin. Similarly, any sibling's spouse or sibling's parents-in-law will become secondary affinal kin for an individual.

❍ **Tertiary Kinship:**

Tertiary kinship refers to the primary kin of primary kin's primary kin or secondary kin of primary kin or primary kin of secondary kin. Roughly 151 tertiary kin have been identified.

Like other two degrees of kinship, tertiary kinship also has two categories:

1. TertiaryConsanguineal Kinship:

Tertiary consanguineal kinship refers to an individual's primary consanguineal kin (parents), their primary kin (parents' parents), and their primary kin (parent's parent's parents). Thus, the relationship is between great grand-children and great grandparents, and great grand aunts and uncles, and consequently the relationship between great grand uncles and aunts and great grand nieces and nephews.

For example, Eno's primary kin are his parents, their primary kin are his grandparents and his grandparent's primary kin (who are Eno's primary kin's primary kin's primary kin) are his great grandparents. Thus, tertiary kin are primary kin's primary kin's primary kin.

This relationship can be seen in different ways – Eno's tertiary kin are his primary kin's (parents) secondary kin (father's grandparents), thus showing that tertiary kin are primary kin's secondary kin. Another way of

looking at this same relationship is by showing that Eno's tertiary kin are his secondary consanguineal kin's (his grandparents) primary kin (grandfather's parents), which proves that tertiary kin can be second-ary kin's primary kin.

2. Tertiary Affinal Kinship:

Tertiary affinal kinship refers to primary affinal kin's primary kin's primary kin, or secondary affinal kin's primary kin, or primary affinal kin's secondary kin. These relationships are many, and some examples will suffice at this stage of tertiary affinal kin can be spouse's grandparents, or grand uncles and aunts, or they can be brother or sister-in-law's spouses or their children.

4.3.2 Rules and Taboos

Kinship usages or the rules of kinship are significant in understanding kinship system as such. The study of kinship system does not end with the description of various kinds of kin and the basis of their classification but it also includes the study of behaviour patterns of different kins. Every relationship involves a particular type of behaviour. The behaviour of a son towards his father is one of respect while the behaviour of husband towards wife is one of love. The behaviour of a brother towards his sister is one of affection. There are some usages which regulate the behaviour of different kin. These usages are called kinship usages. Some rules are associated with **incest taboos.** The word incest means sexual intercourse with closely related person of one's family like brother and sister, mother and son, father and daughter etc. Taboo refers to the prohibition of intercourse on religious and moral grounds. Thus incest taboo means the prohibition of sexual intercourse or marriage between the closely related persons of family.

Some of these usages are the following :

- **Avoidance:**

In all societies the usage of avoidance is observed in one form or another. It means that the two kins should remain away from each other. In

other words, they should avoid each other. They should not only avoid sexual relationship but in some cases avoid seeing the face of each other. Thus, a father-in-law should avoid daughter-in-law. The custom of putting on the veil in front of elders in Hindu family illustrates the usage of avoidance.

Different explanations have been given for the usage of avoidance. Two of them are functionalist explanations given by Redcliff Brown and G. P. Murdock. According to them, avoidance serves to forestall further and more serious trouble between relatives. The third is the Freudian explanation according to which avoidances represent a sort of institutionalized neurotic symptom.

➢ **Joking Relationship:**

It is the reverse of avoidance relationship. Under it, two person in a relation is permitted to tease or make fun of the other. Such relationship prevails between a woman and her husband's brother, between a man and his wife's sister etc.

"A joking relationship involves a particular combination of friendliness and antagonism between individuals and groups in certain social situations. In these situations one individual or group is allowed to mimic or ridicule the other without offence being taken". Duncan Mitchell.

➢ **Teknonymy:**

The word 'teknonymy' has been taken from a Greek word and was used in anthropology for the first time by Taylor. According to this usage, a kin is not referred to directly but he is referred to through another kin. A kin becomes the medium of reference between two kins. Thus, in traditional Hindu family a wife does not utter the name of her husband. She calls him through her son or daughter. For example he is referred to by her as the father of Deepti or Varun.

➢ **Avunclate:**

This kinship usage is a peculiar feature of matrilineal system. It gives to the maternal uncle (mama) a prominent place in the life of his nephews and nieces. He has special obligations towards them which exceed those of father. He has a prior right over their loyalties. He comes first among all male relatives.

➢ **Amitate:**

When a special role given is to the father's sister it is known as amitate. The father's sister gets more respect than the mother. Amongst the todas the child gets its name not through the parents but through the father's sister.

➢ **Couvade:**

This is a queer usage which is found among many tribes like the Khasi and the Toda. Under this usage the husband is made to lead the life of an invalid along with his wife whenever she gives birth to a child. He refrains from active work and takes sick diet. He observes the same taboos which are observed by his wife. This kinship usage thus involves the husband and wife.

Kinship usages accomplish-two major tasks. First, they create groups: special groupings of kin. Thus marriage assigns each mother a husband, and makes her children his children, thereby creating a special group of father, mother and children, which we call "family".

The second major function of kinship usage is to govern the role relationships between kin; that is, how one kinsman should behave in a particular kinsman's presence, or what one kinsman owes to another. Kinship assigns guidelines for interactions between persons. It defines proper, acceptable role relationship between father and daughter, between brother and sister, between son-in-law and mother-in-law and between fellow lineage members and clansmen. Kinship thus acts as a regulator of social life and maintains the solidarity of social system.

It may, however, be noted that rules governing the relationship between a pair of kinsmen may be highly "patterned" in some societies to allow little leeway for spontaneity or individual differences, while in other societies, such rules may be less "patterned" so as to leave much room for individualized behaviour. The Hindu society has absolute maximum of patterned kin behaviour.

4.3.3 Kinship structure and pattern in the different geographical zones across India

Kinship in India can be analysed within family and beyond family separately as well as in terms of the nexus between the two. Kinship within family would include 'primary relatives' with the focus on intra-family relationships, which include husband and wife, father and son, mother and daughter, mother and son, father and daughter, elder and younger brother, elder and younger sisters and brother and sister. These relationships are part of the same nuclear family, which is also referred to as 'family of procreation'.

Kinship beyond family comprises of 'secondary' and 'tertiary' relatives. Murdock (1949) refers to eight 'primary' and 33 'secondary' relatives. Each secondary relative has primary relatives. The tertiary relatives number 151 possible kins, and there are also 'distant' relatives who are beyond the tertiary relatives.

In India, we have, generally speaking, 'clan exogamy' and 'caste endogamy'. A given caste has several clans, and a given clan has several lineages. The common ancestor of lineage members is usually an actual, remembered person, but the common ancestor of a clan is typically a legendary, supernatural entity. The members of a clan are spread over a given area, and hence they find themselves unable to have common interests or joint action.

A clan, however, provides generally a basis for corporate activity, common worship- On the basis of clan, eligibility for marriage within a given caste is determined. In many ways, more than clan-based primordiality, there is caste-ethnocentrism in regard to observance of rituals, performance of economic activities, mutual aid, etc.

It is to be noted that kinship is certainly a major basis for social organisation, but at the same time it is also a basis for division and dissension in regard to succession and inheritance of property. Hostility at times supersedes lineage unity. Fights between sons and grandsons, brothers and cousins have been experienced quite often. Sibling rivalry has also been observed.

➢ **Karve's Study of Kinship Organisation in India:**

Iravati Karve (1953) undertakes a comparative analysis of four cultural zones with a view to trace out something like a regional pattern of social behaviour. A region may show various local patterns. There are variations between castes because of hierarchy and caste-based isolation and separation. Karve analyses the process of acculturation and accommodation in the context of kinship. She has adopted a historical perspective covering a span of 3,000 years based on ethno-sources, observations and folk-literature along with Sanskritic texts.

Karve's comparative study takes the following points into consideration :

- Lists of kinship terms in Indian languages,
- Their linguistic contexts and corresponding behaviour and attitudes,
- Rules of descent and inheritance,
- Patterns of marriage and family, and
- Difference between the Sanskritic north and the Dravidian south.

Karve spells out the configuration of the linguistic regions, the institution of caste and family organisation as the most vital bases for understanding of the patterns of kinship in India. She divides the whole country into northern, central, southern and eastern zones keeping in view the linguistic, caste and family organisation.

The kinship organisation follows roughly the linguistic pattern, but in some respects, language and kinship do not go hand in hand. For example, Maharashtra has Dravidian impact, and the impact of northern neighbours speaking Sanskritic languages could be seen on the Dravidian kinship system.

Despite variations based on these factors, there are two common points:

- Marriage is always within a caste or tribe, and
- Marriage between parents and children and between siblings is forbidden.

➢ **Kinship in North India:**

In north India, there are (1) terms for blood relations, and (2) terms for affinal relations. There are primary terms for three generations of immediate relations and the terms for one generation are not exchangeable for those of another generation. All the other terms are derived from the primary terms.

The northern zone consists of the areas of the Sindhi, Punjabi, Hindi (and Pahari) and Bihari. In these areas, caste endogamy, clan exogamy and incest taboos regarding sexual relations between primary kins are strictly observed.

The rule of 'sasan' is key to all marriage alliances, that is, a person must not marry in his patri-family and must avoid marriage with sapinda kin. Gotras in the old Brahmanic sense of the word are exogamous units. Sometimes a caste is also divided into endogamous gotras or exogamous gotras as also gotras which do not seem to have any function in marriage regulations. There is village exogamy. Thus, there are at least four basic features of kinship in north India:

- Territoriality,
- Genealogy,
- Incest taboos, and
- Local exogamy.

Considerations of caste status tend to restrict the area of endogamy. Marriage prohibitions tend to bar marriage over a wide area in terms of kinship as well as space. Cognatic prohibitions and local exogamy are strictly adhered to in marriage alliances.

Four-gotra (sasan) rule, that is, avoidance of the gotras of father, mother, grandmother and maternal grandmother is generally practised among Brahmanas and other upper castes in north India. However, some intermediate and most of the lower castes avoid two gotras, namely, that of father and mother.

Kinship in Central India:

The central zone comprises the linguistic regions of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh (now Chhattisgarh also), Gujarat and Kathiawad, Maharashtra and Orissa with their respective languages, namely, Rajasthani, Hindi, Gujarati and Kathiawadi, Marathi and Oriya. All these languages are of Sanskritic origin, and therefore, they have affinity to the northern zone. But there are pockets of Dravidian languages in this zone. There is also some impact of the eastern zone. Tribal people have their unique and somewhat different situation compared to other people in the region.

In regard to the central zone the following points may be noted:

- Cross-cousin marriages are prevalent which are not witnessed in the north zone. Cross-cousins are children of siblings of opposite sex, parallel cousins are children of the siblings of the same sex.
- Many castes are divided into exogamous clans like the north zone.
- In some castes exogamous clans are arranged in a hypergamous hierarchy.

However, none of these features are found all over the zone. In Rajasthan, for example, Jats follow two-gotra exogamy along with village exogamy; Banias practise four-gotra rule; and Rajputs have hypergamous clans, and feudal status is an important consideration in marriage alliances. Rajputs are not a homogeneous caste. They put a lot of emphasis on purity and nobility of descent. The fact of being a hero and a ruler has been a major consideration. Symbolic marriages (marriage with sword) were quite a practice. Status of mother on either side is also a factor in marriage alliances.

In Kathiawad and Gujarat one finds a mix of peculiar local customs and northern practices. Some castes allow cross-cousin marriages, others allowed marriages once a year, and some others permitted once every four, five, nine or twelve years. When the marriage year arrives, it is announced from village to village and there is a rush to perform marriages. The practice of 'Nantra' (levirate) exists even today. Brahmanas, Banias, Kunbis and higher artisan castes follow the northern pattern of kinship organisation, but some practices of southern region are also observed.

Cross-cousin marriage among the Kathi, Ahir, GhadavaCharan and Garasia castes is quite common. Kolis and Dheds and Bhils (tribe), allow both types of cross-cousin marriages. Thus, Rajasthan and Gujarat largely follow northern pattern. The terminology is Sanskritic in origin and some kinship terms have central Asiatic derivation.

Karve observes that Maharashtra is an area where Sanskritic northern traits and the Dravidian southern traits almost hold a balance with perhaps a slight dominance of the former. Northern languages spoken are like Gujarati, Rajasthani, Himachali and Hindi. The tribals in the area speak Mundari. The Dravidian languages are mixed up with the Sanskritic languages. Maharashtra kinship structure is a little different from both southern and northern zones.

The Marathas and Kunbis together form about 40 per cent of the population; Marathas are supposed to be higher in status but a rich Kunbi can reach the status of a Maratha. The two groups call themselves Kshatriyas. Maratha-Kunbi complex has been a ruling clan. Even today headman or patil is a Maratha in a village.

Kunbis are divided into exogamous clans. Some practise levirate; other consider cross-cousin marriages as a taboo; but some others do not prohibit such marriages. In central Maharashtra hypergamy and clan exogamy exists. In southern Maharashtra there are instances of both types of marriages, namely, cross-cousin and uncle-niece. The clan organisation of the Marathas has some similarity with that of the Rajputs.

For example, mythological origin comparable with Rajputs is also claimed by the Marathas. Their names are also similar to that of Rajputs. The rule of exogamy is, however, not dependent on the clan name but on the symbol connected with the clan. The symbol is called devaka. No two people having the same devaka can marry. The clans and the devaka both play a significant role in marriage. Status of a clan is important in hypergamous marriage alliances.

Marathas have as many as 96 clans. Among these, there are concentric circles of mobility and status. Ethnically, there is no homogeneity. There are panchkula, a cluster of five clans, then there are ‘seven clans’,

and all are hypergamous divisions. No taboo is attached to bilateral kinship like north zone. No parallel-cousin marriages are allowed. There is also taboo on paternal-cousin marriages. Generally, preference for a man's marriage is with his maternal cross-cousin. Sisters can and do marry the same man. Brothers generally avoid marrying two sisters. Levirate is practised among the northern Kunbis. However, exchange marriages are avoided.

The tribal people in Orissa like Gonds, Oraons and Konds speak Dravidian languages, and their kinship system can be equated with that of the Dravidian-speaking people. The Munda, the Hondo and some of the Saora speak Mundari languages. The Oriya-speaking people have the same type of caste divisions as are found in northern regions with slightly different names.

Brahmanas in Orissa seem to be immigrants from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. AranyakaBrahmanas and Karans (Kayasthas) do not allow cross-cousin marriages. Some agricultural castes allow cousin-marriages, but others prohibit. Junior levirate is found among the poorer classes.

➢ **Kinship in South India:**

There are five regions in the southern zone consisting of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and the regions of mixed languages and people. The southern zone presents a very compli-cated pattern of kinship system and family organisation. Here, patrilineal and patrilocal systems dominate. However, some sections have matrilineal and matrilocal systems, and they possess features of both types of kinship organisation. Some castes allow polygamy, whereas some have both polygyny and polyandry. In Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and among some castes of Malabar, patrilineal and patrilocal joint family dominates as in the northern zone.

The Nayars, the Tiyans, some Moplas in Malabar region and the Bants in Kanara district have matrilineal and matrilocal family, and it is called tharawad. It consists of a woman, her brothers and sisters, her own and her sister's sons and daughters. No affinal relation lives in the tharawad. Some consanguines are excluded (children of the males). There is no husband-wife, father-children relationship in a tharawad.

In the southern zone there is the system of caste endogamy and clan exogamy similar to the northern system. It is called as 'Bedagu' or 'Bedaga' or 'Bali' in Karnataka. The Kotas of Nilgiris call it 'Keri', the KottaiVellals call it 'Kilai', the Koyas name it 'Gotta' and the Kurubas call it 'Gunpu'. Some Telugu people call it 'Inti-peru', and the Malayalis mention it 'Illom'. In Travancore, it is referred to as 'Veli'. The word 'Gotra' is also widely used. The main symbols used for clans are of silver, gold, axe, elephant, snake, jasmine, stone, etc.

In northern zone village exogamy is a widely accepted norm. But, in southern zone, there are inter-marrying clans in the same village. Gonds do not observe village exogamy. The only principle is that of exogamy or illom or veli. A given caste is divided like northern castes into exogamous clans. Inter-clan marriages do not cover all clans. Within an endogamous caste, there are smaller circles of endogamous units made up of a few families giving and receiving daughters in marriage.

The southern zone has its peculiar features which are quite different from that of the northern part of India. Preferential marriages with elder sister's daughter, father's sister's daughter, and with mother's brother's daughter are particularly prevalent in the southern zone. The main thrust of such a system of preferential marriages lies in maintaining unity and solidarity of the 'clan' and upholding of the principle of return (exchange) of daughters in the same generation.

However, there are taboos on marrying of younger sister's daughter, levirate, and mother's sister's daughter. Maternal uncle and niece marriages and cross-cousin marriages result in double relationships. A cousin is also a wife, and after marriage a cousin is more of a wife than a cousin.

Comparing the southern kinship system with the northern one we can mention that there is no distinction between the family of birth and the family of marriage in the south whereas such a distinction is clear in the northern India. In the north, terms for blood relatives and affinal ones are clear, whereas in the south many terms do not indicate this distinction clearly.

For example, Phupha-Phuphi for father's sister's husband and father's sister and Mama-Mami for mother's brother and his wife are used in the north, whereas in the south Attai is used for both Phuphi and Mami. Mama is used for both Phupha and Mama. In the north, there are the 'extended family of birth' and the 'extended family of marriage'. There is no such distinction in the south. No special terms are used for affinal relatives in the south. Same relatives appear in two successive generations in the south.

Thus, southern and northern kinship systems differ in the context of relations by marriage and relations by birth and more particularly in regard to the arrangement of kin in different genera-tions. There does not seem to be any clear-cut classification of kin on the principle of generation at all in the southern terminology. In south zone all the relatives are arranged according to whether they are older or younger than ego (self) without any reference to gener-ation.

There are no words for brothers and sisters in the Dravidian languages. However, there are words for 'younger' and 'older' brothers and sisters. A number of terms are used in common for (1) father and elder brother (Anna, Ayya), (2) mother and elder sister, (3) younger brother and son (Pirkal), and (4) younger sister and daughter (Pinnawal). These terms denote respectability to the elders and not to the actual blood relationships. The point of reference is the ego – and the persons older and younger than the ego are ranked based on their age.

Age, and not generation, is the main consideration in the southern kinship system. Marriage is outside the exogamous kin group called Balli or Begadu or Kilai. Exchange of daughters is favoured and marriage among the close kin is also preferred. The rules of marriage are: one must marry a member of one's own clan, and a girl must marry a person who belongs to the group older than self, and also to the younger than the parents.

Older cross-cousins and also younger brother of girl's mother are preferred. A person can marry any of his younger female cross-cousins and also a daughter of any of his elder sisters. Consequently, we find recip-rocal relations and kinship terms referred to this reciprocity.

➢**Louis Dumont highlights the following points about the southern kinship system:**

- Principle of immediate exchange,
- A policy of social consolidation,
- A clustering of kin group in a narrow area,
- No sharp distinction between kin by blood and kin by marriage, and
- Greater freedom for women in society.

Kinship in Eastern India:

The eastern zone is not compact and geographically it is not contiguous like other zones. Besides northern languages, Mundari and Monkhmer languages are also spoken. The main communities are Korku, Assamese, Saka, Semang and Khasi. The other languages are Mon, Khmer and Chain. The area consists of a number of Austro-Asiatic tribes.

All the people speaking Mundari languages have patrilineal and patrilocal families. The Ho and Santhal have the practice of cross-cousin marriage. But till the father's sister or the mother's brother are alive, they cannot marry their daughters. This condition makes cross-cousin marriage a rare phenomenon. The Bondo people, for example, do not have taboo on cross-cousin marriage, but one does not find an example of cross-cousin marriage among them, as reported by Elwin.

The Ho and Munda have separate dormitories for bachelors and maidens and they indulge in pre-marital sexual relationships. Sometimes these relationships result into marriages but quite often the marriage mate is different from the mate of the dormitory days. All these people are divided into exogamous totemistic clans. A person must marry outside of the clan and also outside of the circle of near relations like first cousins.

Money is given for procuring a bride. Service by the would-be-husband in girl's father's house is also considered as bride price. After marriage one establishes his separate household, but may keep his younger brother and widowed mother, etc., along with him in his newly established house. The Mundari people thus differ from the rest of India in not having joint family. People maintain patrician relations by common worship of ancestors and residence. They extend help to each other but live independent life.

The Khasis of Meghalaya speak Monkhmer language, and they are a matrilineal people like Nayars, but are quite different from them. The Nayars have a matrilineal joint family and husbands are only occasional visitors. The Khasis have joint family with common worship and common graveyard, but the husband and wife live together in a small house of their own. After death the property goes to mother or youngest daughter.

If there are no female relatives, widow gets half of the property if she opts not to remarry. A man's position is like that of a Hindu bride in the patri-family. But there is difference because the Hindu bride is incorporated as a member of her husband's family whereas a Khasi husband is considered as a stranger. A woman enjoys a great amount of freedom. After divorce children are handed over to her. The Khasis have clan exogamy. Marriages of parallel cousins are not allowed. Cross-cousin marriage is also quite rare.

Though we have drawn a sketchy view of the kinship organi-sation in India, we come to know that both rigidity and flexibility exist side by side with regard to values and norms related to the kinship systems. These are reflected with regard to divorce, widow remarriage, incest taboos, caste endogamy, clan exogamy, rule of avoidance, family structure, systems of lineage and residence, authority system, succession and inheritance of property etc.

However, kinship continues to be a basic principle of social organi-sation and mobilisation on the one hand and division and dissension on the other. It is a complex phenomenon, and its role can be sensed even in modern organisations. Migration, mobility and education have weakened the kinship systems and rules of clan organisation because members of a caste/sub-caste or of a clan do not live at the same place. Matriliny in Kerala has almost withered away. In north-east also it has become weak.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1 : What is Kinship?

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Q2 : Why is kinship a social instiution?

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Q3 : What is the difference between consanguineal and affinal kinship?

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Q4 : What is understood by Incest Taboo?

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Q5 : What is the pattern of kinship found in North India?

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4.4 LET US SUM UP

- Kinship is one of the main organizing principles of society. It is one of the basic social institutions found in every society.
- This institution establishes relationships between individuals and groups. People in all societies are bound together by various kinds of bonds.
- The most basic bonds are those based on marriage and reproduction. Kinship refers to these bonds, and all other relationships resulting from them.
- Thus, the institution of kinship refers to a set of relationships and relatives formed thereof, based on blood relationships (consanguineal), or marriage (affinal).

- There are different degrees of kinship like the primary, secondary and tertiary kinship which is further divided into primary consaguineal, primary affinal kinship, secondary consaguineal, secondary affinal kinship and tertiary cosaguineal and tertiayaffinal kinship respectively.
- The kinship system has certain usages or is guided by a set of rules.
- Avoidance means that two kins should remain away from each other. In other words, they should avoid each other.
- Joking Relationship is the reverse of avoidance relationship. Under it a relation is permitted to tease or make fun of the other.
- In Tecknonymy, a kin is not referred to directly but he is referred to through another kin.
- In Avunclate the maternal uncle (mama) is given a prominent place in the life of his nephews and nieces.
- In Amitate a special role is given to the father's sister.
- Couvade, the husband is made to lead the life of an invalid along with his wife whenever she gives birth to a child.
- The structure and pattern of kinship in India has been studied by Iravati Karve where she divides the whole country into northern, central, southern and eastern zones keeping in view the linguistic, caste and family organisation.



4.5 FURTHER READING

1) Basha.Chand.P (2016), "Sociology basic concepts"; Raj Publications

2) Bhushan.Vidya,Sachdeva.D.R, "An Introduction to Sociology"; Kitab Mahal Publishers;New Delhi.

4.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No. 1 : The institution of kinship refers to a set of relationships and relatives formed thereof, based on either blood relationships (consanguineal) or marriage (affinal).

Ans to Q No. 2 : Kinship is a social institution because in most societies it plays a significant role in the socialisation of individuals and the maintenance of group solidarity. The universal nature of the system shows its functional importance in social life.

Ans to Q No. 3 : Consanguineal kinship refers to the relationships based on blood whereas affinal kinship refers to the relationships formed on the basis of marriage.

Ans to Q No. 4 : Incest taboo means the prohibition of sexual intercourse or marriage between the closely related persons of family.

Ans to Q No. 5 : In North India, caste endogamy, clan exogamy and incest taboos regarding sexual relations between primary kins are strictly observed.The rule of sasan is key to all marriage alliances, that is, a person must not marry in his patri-family and must avoid marriage with sapinda kin(marriage between cousins in Hinduism).



4.7 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words)

Q1 : Distinguish between the types of tertiary kinship with examples.

Q2 : Explain the difference between primary affinal and secondary affinal kinship.

B) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-350 words)

Q1 : Explain the various kinship usages.

Q2 : Discuss in brief the structure and pattern of kinship in India.

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