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SOCIOLOGY OF KINSHIP

B.S.O.C.-109

B.A. Sociology (Hons.) - 4th Semester

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QUESTION PAPER

June – 2023

(Solved)

SOCIOLOGY OF KINSHIP

B.S.O.C.-109

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Note: Answer any five questions. All questions carry equal marks.

Q. 1. Discuss Iravati Karve's understanding of Kinship in India.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-1, Page No. 11, Q. No. 8.

Q. 2. What do you understand by the concept of family and what are its types?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-2, Page No. 18, 'Family'.

Q. 3. What are the different types of marriage? Explain with examples.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-2, Page No. 19, 'Types of Marriage'.

Q. 4. In what way did cultural approach challenge the previous approaches to the study of kinship.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-5, Page No. 60, 'Introduction', 'David Schneider's Contribution'.

Q. 5. Write a note on Janet Carsten's concept of 'relatedness'.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-9, Page No. 114, 'Understanding Relatedness in Kinship Studies'.

Q. 6. Explain Dravidian cross-cousin marriage as explained by Louis Dumont.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-4, Page No. 47, 'Louis Dumont: Dravidian Kinship'.

Q. 7. How has Evans-Pritchard explain descent in his study of the Nuer?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-3, Page No. 31, 'Meaning of the Concept of Descent' Page No. 37, Q. No. 5.

Q. 8. What are the various forms of fictive kinship?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-9, Page No. 117, 'Meaning and Relevance of Fictive Kinship', 'Forms of Fictive Kinship'.

■■

QUESTION PAPER

December – 2022

(Solved)

SOCIOLOGY OF KINSHIP

B.S.O.C.-109

Time: 3 Hours]

[Maximum Marks: 100

Note: Answer any five questions. All questions carry equal marks.

Q. 1. Discuss the major criticism against descent theory.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-3, Page No. 34, 'Critiques of Descent Theory'.

Q. 2. How various sociologists defined marriage?

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-2, Page No. 19, 'Marriage', 'The Concept of Marriage'.

Q. 3. Explain the main features of Dravidian Kinship.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-4, Page No. 47, 'Louis Demont: Dravidian Kingship'.

Q. 4. Write a note on Leela Dube's contribution to Kinship Studies.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-10, Page No. 129, 'Lala Dube'.

Q. 5. Bring out the difference between household and family.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-8, Page No. 109, Q. No. 5.

Q. 6. Explain the relationship between Caste and Kinship.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-7, Page No. 85, 'Caste and Kinship'.

Q. 7. Discuss the main rules of marriage in North India.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-6, Page No. 74, 'Rules of Marriage', 'North: Clan Exogamy, The Four-Clan Rule and Rules of Endogamy', Page No. 78, Q. No. 6.

Q. 8. Write an essay on the feminist contributions to kinship studies.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-10, Page No. 131, Q. No. 3.

■■

Sample Preview of The Chapter

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SOCIOLOGY OF KINSHIP

BLOCK-1 : INTRODUCTION



Understanding Kinship Studies

INTRODUCTION

There are many sociologists and anthropologists like Peter G. Murdock, Radcliffe-Brown, Levi Strauss, Edmund Leach, Iravati Karve, K.M. Kapadia who have contributed a lot in kinship studies. We will first understand the concept of kinship. Kinship can be defined as a relationship which is based on marriage (Affinal) or blood ties (Consanguineal). The kinship system not only establishes relationship but also assigns roles and status which governs the behaviour of the people. According to Murdock, kinship can be defined as, "A structured system of kinship in which kin are bound to one another by interlocking ties." This chapter deals with the kinship as viewed by different scholars and about the western and Indian kinship studies.

CHAPTER AT A GLANCE

KINSHIP STUDIES: WESTERN PERSPECTIVE

The beginning of the studies on kinship can be marked by the work of Morgan in 1875. After that, there are many ways of studying kinship that have emerged over the years. There have been analysis of kinship terms and then the study of differences and similarities between societies across the world. The kinship studies in the year 1960s saw a shift towards study of rules of descent, marriage, kinship terminologies due to efforts of Schneider, Edmund Leach and others and by 1970s, kinship studies did not occupy the same importance in anthropology as it did in the earlier studies.

Lewis H. Morgan

Morgan studied about the evolution of kinship and marriage in his book *Ancient Society* published in 1877. According to him, the terms related to kinship contained the key to unwind the kinship system of any society.

There were many samples that were collected by Morgan from American Indians tribes. He made the comparison with the Asian societies. In his work *Ancient Society*, he made an effort to explain the emergence of family, property and government. He was interested in the research on American Indian tribe of Iroquois and opined that the kinship system was based on biological descent. He added that the family and marriage were ways of making sure about the continuity of humankind. He also wrote that the marriage rules govern the family organisation and the growth of family. Morgan is famous for his contribution of classificatory and descriptive system of kinship.

Box 1. Classificatory and Descriptive Systems of Kinship

In the classificatory system of kinship, the same term is used for direct and collateral kin. Collateral kin means the father's brother or father's sister or mother's sister or mother's brother. Morgan stated that the descriptive system uses different terms for lineal and collateral kin, that is mother and mother's sister are referred to by different kin terms. There are many kinship groups in which different terms are used for parallel cousins i.e., children of the same sex sibling of parent, for example, father's brother's children are parallel cousins or cross-cousin i.e., children of opposite sex sibling of parent; for example, children of mother's brother children are cross-cousins.

A.R. Radcliffe-Brown

According to Radcliffe-Brown, the term kinship system is used to denote relationships that arose due to marriage and affinity. He added that the elementary family consists of man, wife and their child/children and there is a man with several wives (**Polygynous**) in a compound family. He stated that in any given society

a certain number of these relationships are known for social purposes. As per the studies conducted by Radcliffe-Brown, the kinship system refers to a network of social relations that is expressed through the family, clan, lineage groups or moieties. He stated that the difference between clan and lineage is that the clan is a group of people, who are believed to belong to a kin group on the basis of an ancestor who they may or may not have existed and lineage consists of people who can trace back their ancestry to a common ancestor. Radcliffe-Brown opined that the kinship nomenclature is an important part of the kinship system and also a part of language. He also mentioned about a category within which several relatives of a single person can be grouped or in other words "a single term is used to refer to a category of relatives". For example, the category of uncle which can be used both for mother's brother and father's brother. According to Radcliffe-Brown, the nomenclature of uncle also depicts the social relationship where there is no particular difference in the relationship of the nephew with his paternal or maternal uncle/aunt. In India, the terms are created according to age, gender and seniority as we know in the case of father's elder brother and younger brother.

Claude Levi-Strauss

Claude Levi-Strauss' focused on the study of the structural significance of ties that are related to marriage and alliance (not descent). He opined in his work, *Elementary Structures of Kinship*, about the principle of exchange of women through marriage and stated that every society had its own distinct kinship system. He believed that the kinship system in each society was to be separated from other aspects of the society. According to the study conducted by Levi-Strauss, the "Kinship systems, marriage rules, and descent groups constitute a co-ordinated whole, the function of which is to ensure the permanency of the social group by means of inter-twining consanguineous and affinal ties. Levi-Strauss stated that the basic unit of kinship was sibblingship which comes from the relationship between two siblings. Levi-Strauss opined that the kinship system of societies is based on certain universal elements of organizational structures such as prohibition of incest, exogamy, residence after marriage etc. He added that the marriage is the key in the system of kinship and reproduction is an essential part of the system.

Jack Goody

Jack Goody, in his work *The Oriental, the Ancient and the Primitive*, focused on the kinship and marriage

in preindustrial societies in Eurasia. Goody studied about the idea of marriage and the role of women in agrarian societies in Asia and concluded that the perceived role of women in these agrarian societies is seen to differentiate these societies from the western societies. He proclaimed that married women in patrilineal societies in the East have moral and material rights in their natal home. He studied that the gender inequality does exist in Asian patrilineal societies but the differences between them and the western societies are not so wide.

Goody stated that the analysis of kinship system is not complete without examining it in reference to the mode of production, influence of state and judiciary and religion of the society under study.

David Murray Schneider

David Murray Schneider provides insight into the kinship system of North America and Britain in his work *American Kinship: A Cultural Account*. Schneider opined that the kinship system is a system of symbols and meaning and not just roles and status. Schneider used the cultural symbols like the home, family and love to make a group of the relations based on blood and marriage. The approach used by Schneider was much criticised for delinking kinship from household organization, divorce and sexuality. He opined that the American kinship system is a single system across gender, class and even other ethnic groups.

KINSHIP STUDIES: INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

There are many Indian anthropologists who were influenced by the work of western anthropologists in studying kinship. The researchers like Ghurye, Srinivas, Kapadia, Shah, Gore and Karve are some of the anthropologists who studied kinship in various areas like village, caste and religion.

G.S. Ghurye

In his book *Family and Kin in Indo-European Culture*, G.S. Ghurye made an comparison between the kinship terminology and associated behaviour in Indo-Aryan, Greek, and Latin cultures. Another work of Ghurye namely *Two Brahmanical Institutions: Gotra and Charana*, was also within a similar Indological framework. K.M. Kapadia's, a student of Ghurye also followed the footsteps of Ghurye and in his book *Kinship*, presented a detailed analysis of Brahmanical texts and their positions on various aspects of kinship like house-hold, organisation of kin, marriage, adoption, inheritance, succession, and death impurities. Kapadia also presented the tone for fieldwork in his next book, *Marriage and Family in India* and also points out the

lacunae in terms of exclusion of Muslims and tribal communities and primary data through field work.

Irawati Karve

In studying about kinship, Irawati Karve divided the country into four main zones based on language: North, South, East and Central and stated that kinship behaviour and patterns are not uniform across the region and are different from one village to another and from one caste to another. Karve gave the following features of kinship organization:

North Zone: According to Karve, in north India, there are some defined terms for blood relations and for affinal relations. The Brahmanas and the upper caste generally follow the four-gotra (sasan) rule, i.e., avoidance of the gotras of father, mother, grandmother and maternal grandmother.

Central Zone: There are certain similarities between the north and central zone in terms of kinship organization. She stated that certain caste groups like the Marathas and Kunbis practice both the system of dowry and bride price and the Maharashtra kinship organization shows the influence of north and south zones.

South Zone: The concept of kinship is different in the southern zone. This zone is dominated by the patrilocal and patrilineal system and in some areas matrilineal and matrilocal systems. The marriage system that is preferred in this zone is among the cross cousins, that is the children of the brother and sisters marry. The focus in the South Indian kinship is on the bilateral kin relationships of brother and sister through their children.

The Eastern Zone: There are many Austro-Asiatic tribes in this zone. The people speaking Mundari languages have patrilineal and patrilocal families. There are tribes like Ho and Munda which are divided into exogamous totemistic groups where marriage has to be outside the totemic group or clan. The Khasis tribe has clan exogamy and marriages of parallel cousins are not allowed. Cross-cousin marriage is also rarely seen.

T. N. Madan

The work titled '*Family and Kinship: A study of the Pandits of Rural Kashmir*', by Prof. Madan is a pioneering work on kinship in India. He stated that the kinship rituals of the Pandits are a combination of both Sanskritic and non-Sanskritic rites and ceremonies. There are two main subcastes of the Pandits: *Gor* (those who are involved in priestly duties) and the *Karkun* (roughly translated as workers). There cannot be

intermarriage between the two subcastes village exogamy was also followed and reciprocal marriages were common where daughter is given in exchange of a daughter-in-law. There is another practice that is followed that involved bride price, where the groom's family paid a certain sum of money to the bride instead of the usual practice of taking dowry.

The *gara* (household) or *chulah* (hearth group) are the basic unit in which the family would consist of paternal grandparents, brothers and their children and in case the parent is absent, then the eldest brother of the family was the patriarch often taking decisions for the children of other brothers. The larger group that consisted of extended kin was called the *kotamb*. Madan referred about *kol* which he says is the backbone of the kinship structure. He added that it is patrilineage or the lineage based on descent through the father's kin. He also studied that at the time of field work there was biased behaviour against girls in the Pandit community. The girls were denied education and were supposed to help in the household work. In the rural Kashmiri Pandit family, when the father died, the sons may divide the property, as the mother has no rights over the property. The married sister staying in the marital home had no rights over property and if she stays at her natal home, due to a failed marriage or widowhood then she has claims over the property, though her children do not. According to Madan, the important aspect of the kinship idea among Pandits is differentiating between those who were born into a kin and those who are married into it.

M.N. Srinivas

Another pioneer of Indian anthropology is M.N. Srinivas who studied Master of Arts (MA) on *Marriage and Family among Kannada caste in Mysore*. He researched about various marriage practices such as rituals, bride price, dowry and the family structure. There is another work by him which is based on intensive field in Coorg, '*Religion and Society among Coorgs*' speaks about the idea of lineage among Coorgs. He made many observations based on Coorg's study about his village like religion-beliefs, rituals, ceremonies, family life and structure and lineage. He observed that Coorg did not follow any Vedic practices or rituals. There is a **patrilineal** system where lineage is traced through the male side of the family and **patrilocal** a custom where the married couple are expected to reside in the family of the husband. Srinivas also made a comparison between the Coorg family structure to that of matrilineal Taravad of the

Nayars and the patrilineal Illam of the Nambudris. There is a headman of every village and the position is hereditary and a council of elders. The male members had the rights in the ancestral estate and it is the son who carries the legacy of the Okka. There is a sharp division between the men and women in the Okka, with special spaces designated to each gender. The women are no longer members of their natal Okka after getting married and in case of widowhood, women can remarry and there is a system of **levirate** i.e., a marriage custom where the widow marries the brother of the deceased husband in Coorg. The men of the community are supposed to be skilful in hunting and have to dance during the harvest festival and other religious festivals, while women watch from afar.

KINSHIP STUDIES AND GENDER

After the study about the kinship terminologies, family organisation, descent and lineage and relationships, there were many new perspectives like the Marxist, postmodern and the feminist which were studied later on. According to the Marxist and feminist perspectives, there are inherent inequalities in the kinship system like bride price, gender specific rituals, gift giving and its nature, leadership etc. One of the leading anthropologists of India namely Leela Dube writes about her own life story to highlight the connection between gender and kinship. Dube talks about the expectations from girls to learn the household chores as a preparation for married life. She mentioned about her single women or unmarried women which was rarely seen. The education of women was seen as helping in case of unforeseen difficulties like widowhood and were not allowed to visit their natal homes after marriage nor were the bride's family welcomed by the groom's family. The widows were remarried in the Gond society and there was bride price instead of dowry. The Gond women possessed more freedom than upper caste women and the older women were dependent on their children as there was no source of income. Gond also observed another aspect of gender i.e., the impact of gay and lesbian relationship on the concept of family. This relationship does not fit in the family box and it raises the question on whether kinship can only be defined by blood ties or genetics.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q. 1. What according to Radcliffe-Brown is the difference between clan and lineage?

Ans. Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown (1881-1955) was one of the most eminent anthropologists of

the first half of the twentieth century. By example and teaching he helped to develop and establish modern "social" anthropology as a generalizing, theoretical discipline. The most notable from his many important contributions was his application to primitive societies of some of the ideas of systems theory, which led to a revolution in the analysis and interpretation of social relations. In brief, he may be said to have turned social anthropology from its pre-occupation with historical development and psychological extrapolation to the comparative study of persistent and changing social structures. Radcliffe also differentiated between clan and lineage. He stated that a clan is a group of people, who claim to belong to a kin group on the basis of an ancestor who they may or may not have existed. This is similar to the *gotra* system in India. The lineage consists of people who can trace back their ancestry to a common ancestor.

Q. 2. According to Morgan the study ofholds the key to understanding kinship.

Ans. Morgan studied about the evolution of kinship and marriage in his book *Ancient Society* published in 1877 and stated that the **kinship terminologies** holds the key to understanding kinship. In order to understand this, he gathered huge samples of terminologies from American Indians tribes and compared them to Asian societies.

Q. 3. Affinal relationship is based onwhile consanguineal is based on

Ans. Affinal relationship is based on **non-blood ties** while consanguineal is based on **blood relation**.

Q. 4. The main sources for study of kinship in India in the initial years wereand

Ans. The main sources for study of kinship in India in the initial years were **religious and literary texts**.

Q. 5. Name two Indian societies that are matrilineal.

Ans. Matrilineal societies in India are typified by the Khasi in Meghalaya state and by the traditional Nayar in Kerala but among the Nayars the property is controlled by a male member, mainly the brother. Among those groups, the main difference is observed in matrilineal, duolocal, and neolocal residence patterns. The pattern of duolocal residence (the husband and wife occupy different homes) exists among the Asante, the Minangkabau, and the Nayar.

The Khasi generally follow the matrilineal residence pattern (the husband moves in with his wife's