KINSHIP

- The system of kinship, that is, the way in which relations between individuals and groups are organised, occupies a central place in all human societies.

- Radcliffe-Brown (1964) insisted on the study of a kinship system as a field of rights and obligations and saw it as part of the social structure.

- Evans-Pritchard's study of the Nuer of the southern Sudan (1951) focused on kinship groups, particularly groups based on descent in the male line from known ancestor.

- **Kinship** is the most universal and basic of all human relationships and is based on ties of blood, marriage, or adoption.
- There are two basic kinds of **kinship** ties: those based on blood ties that trace descent and those based on marriage, adoption, or other connections.

- Kinship systems are also seen as methods of organising marriage relations between groups.
- Through marriage, Levi-Strauss (1969) observes, members are recruited to kinship groups.
- A female is recruited as a wife, as a daughter-in-law and so on through her marriage to another group; and a male through his marriage is recruited as husband, son-in-law of his wife's parents.
- Thus, kinship group alliances are transacted through marriage.

- **Kinship Terminology:**
- **Murdock (1949), while analysing the interrelation between kinship terminology and kinship behaviour, mentions two categories of kinship terms:**
- (1) Terms of address, and
- (2) Terms of reference.
- Terms of address form an integral part of the culturally patterned relationships between kinsmen

- Terms of reference are linguistic symbols denoting one of the two statuses involved in each such relationship.
- Since any status is defined in terms of the culturally expected behaviour, there are a priori reasons for assuming a close functional congruity between the terms of reference and the relationship in which the denoted kinsmen interact.
- A close correlation has been found between the terminological classification of kindred or relatives and the social classification. But, the congruity between kinship terms and behaviour patterns is not absolute.

- The gap between the two is due to the application of a single classificatory term to a variety of different relatives – for example, 'mother' to all the wives of the father. The kinship terms like 'uncle' and 'aunt' are unable to explain the proper relations unless they are specified in contextual terms.

- 'Uncle' can be referred to denote father's brother, mother's brother, father's sister's husband and so on. Kinship terminology is determined by several factors such as historical influences, differences in language, psychological processes, rules of marriage, etc.

- **Some of the important kinship terms defined by Lucy Mair (1984) are as follows:**
- **Kindred:**
- Kindred are a body of persons, who are genea-logically linked to the ego. They may have common obligations to the ego.
- **Cognates:**
- All the people who are related by blood' in any way to an individual are known as cognates.
- **Affines:**
- Those who are related to a person by marriage are affines.

- **Corporate groups:**
- These are continuing property holding groups. Corporate groups are recruited by descent – patrilineal or agnatic and matrilineal or uterine kin.
- **Lineage:**
- A corporate group recruited by descent is called a lineage. There may be several lineages in a given clan.
- **Lateral:**
- It indicates the 'side' of the kinship group.
- **Lineal:**
- It refers to the 'line' of the kinship group.
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Types of Kinship:

- (i) Affinal Kinship, and
- (ii) Consanguineous Kinship.
- **(i) Affinal Kinship:**
- The bond of marriage is called affinal kinship. When a person marries, he establishes relationship not only with the girl whom he marries but also with a number of other people in the girl's family.
- Moreover, it is not only the person marrying who gets bound to the family members of the girl but his family members also get bound to the family members of the girl.
- Thus, a host of relations are created as soon as a marriage takes place. For example, after marriage a person becomes not only a husband, but he also becomes brother-in-law and son-in- law.

- Here it may be noted that in English language a number of relations created by marriage are referred by the same term.

- Thus, the same term 'brother-in-law is used for bahnoi, sala, jija and sadahu. On marriage a person also becomes foofa, nandoi and mausa.

- Likewise a girl on marriage becomes not only a wife but also becomes daughter-in-law, she also becomes chachi, bhabhi, devrani, jethani, mami etc.

- Thus, marriage creates a host of relationships which are called affinal kin.

ii) Consanguineous Kinship:

- The bond of blood is called consanguineous kinship. The consanguineous kin are related through blood whereas the affinal kin are related through marriage. The bond between parents and their children and that between siblings is consanguineous kinship. Siblings are the children of the same parents.

- Thus, son, brother, sister, uncle (chacha), elder uncle (taoo), nephew and cousin are consanguineous kin. i.e., related through blood. In this connection it may be pointed out that blood relationship may be actual as well as supposed.

- Among polyandrous tribes 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.

Degree of Kinship:

- **Primary kinship**
- On the basis of nearness or distance relatives can be classified in several categories. Some relatives are very close, direct and near, for example, father-son, sister-brother, husband-wife. They are called primary kin.
- According to Dr. Dubey, there are **eight** such primary kins. They are husband-wife, father-son, mother- daughter, father-daughter, mother-son, younger-elder brothers, younger-elder sisters and sister-brother.

secondary kins:

- They are primary kin of primary kin.
- In other words, they are related through primary kin. They are not our primary kin but are the primary kin of our primary kin, hence our secondary kin.
- For example, father's brother (chacha), sister's husband (bahnoi) are secondary kin. The father is my primary kin and his brother is the primary kin of father.
- Therefore, father's brother is my secondary kin, the primary kin of primary kin. Similarly, sister is may primary kin but her husband is my secondary kin.

tertiary kins:

- They are the secondary kin of our primary kin or primary kin of our secondary kin.
- Thus the wife of brother-in-law(sala)called sarhaj in Hindi is tertiary kin because brother-in- law is my secondary kin and his wife is the primary kin of brother-in-law.
- Similarly the brother-in-law of my brother is my tertiary kin because the brother is my primary kin and his brother-in-law is the secondary kin of my brother.
- According to Murdock, there are thirty-three secondary and 151 tertiary kins of a person

Kinship Usages:

- **(i) 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 (sasur) should avoid daughter-in-law. The purdah system in Hindu family illustrates the usage of avoidance.

- **(ii) Joking Relationship:**
- It is the reverse of avoidance relationship. Under it a relation is permitted to tease or make fun of the other.
- The relationship between devar-bhabhi, jija-sali is joking relationship. The joking may amount to exchange of abuse and vulgar references to sex.

- **(iii) Teknonymy:**
- The word 'teknonymy' has been taken from the 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. He is referred to by her as the father of Guddu or Tunnu.

- **(iv) Avunclate:**
- This kinship usage is a peculiar feature of matriarchal 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. ,

- **(v) Amitate:**
- When a special role given to the father's sister it is known as amitate. The father's sister gets more respect than the mother.
- **(vi) Couvade:**
- This is a queer usage which is found among many primitive 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.

Role of kinship

- 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 regularizer of social life and maintains the solidarity of social system.

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