

UNIT 6 CROSS-CULTURAL VARIATIONS IN INDIA*

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6.0 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, the student would be able to:

- Explain the basis for cross-cultural variations in the kinship pattern in India
- Describe the various forms of lineages, being practiced in various cultures
- Explain the different kinship terminologies and their key functions in different cultures
- Highlight the variations in the marital rules across cultures
- Discuss how different cultures practice exchange of ceremonial gifts

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Kinship is the basic unit of the social system, when an individual enters into such relationships, his larger socio-cultural universe is shaped. This universe is what has been called by the sociologists as a kinship system.

A kinship system is conditioned by a certain set of norms, rules and patterns, which vary from region to region. There is, therefore, nothing like a universal kinship system. This adds to the sociological understanding that kinship system is, fundamentally, a cultural system. An individual gets his set of relationships, his roles and responsibilities; based on his position within this socio-cultural system. Although, the kinship system remains essential for the socialisation of the individuals in India, there lies a great variation in the regional composition of kinship arrangements.

Also, the norms and patterns guiding these arrangement present unique variations. These variations would be considered, as we go forward in this unit.

For the purpose of this unit, the cross-cultural variations within the kinship patterns are explored, drawing instances from four regions within India, which can be classified as following (Table 6.1.), adapting from Karve’s 1953 landmark monograph, ‘*Kinship Organisation in India*’.

S.No.	REGIONS	STATES / LANGUAGES / COMMUNITIES
1	North	Prominent languages: Hindi, Bihari, Sindhi, Pahari, Punjabi, Assamese and Bengali
2	Central	Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Odisha
3	Eastern	Prominent communities: Korku, Annamese, Saka, Bhumij, Munda, Semang and Khasi Communities of Assam, Jharkhand, West Bengal and parts of Odisha
	Southern	Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala

Table 6.1. Regional Variations for drawing Kinship Patterns in India

6.2 KINSHIP DIMENSIONS: BASIS FOR CROSS -CULTURAL VARIATIONS

Sociologists working in the domain of Indian kinship have laid down certain dimensions, which together constitute, the basic features of this system. These include - lineage patterns, kinship terminology, marriage rules and exchange of gifts. These dimensions are necessary for role and duty allocation to different relationships with family and society at large. In the Indian context, it is because of these dimensions that individuals gather the knowledge of their social location, like lineage, including their kula and gotra. These dimensions lay down the rules for marriage, inheritance and religious conduct.

Without these dimensions, one may never know how are the other individuals related to oneself. Not just social composition of one's life, kinship dimensions also impact their economic aspects like the possession of property, land and other means of production. Along with these prescribed behavioural patterns, the kinship dimensions are also central to the avoidances or social, religious and cultural taboos. The said kinship dimensions differ in different regions, depending upon the culture, language and religion of the people in the region. And, in each kinship dimension, there are various aspects which ensure regional diversity, in this context. Let us now explore these variations.

Check you Progress 1.

1. What are the four dimensions of kinship system, which mark the foundation for cross-cultural variations?

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6.3 VARIATIONS IN LINEAGE PATTERNS

Kinship system can be defined as a group of human beings, who are related to each other by the virtue of either a blood relationship or that of marriage. As per this definition within any given kinship arrangement, there are those who fall in the same lineage as the individual himself. However, sometimes such relations also become a part of the kinship, which are not related to an individual by blood or by marriage, depending upon their acceptance by the society. Take for example: the case of an adopted child. Even if the child is not related to the individual by blood, but since their relationship is accepted by the society and law, they remain immediate kins to each other. The reason for such an arrangement is that kinship is a social fact, in which attaining social and legal acceptance is fundamental for a kinship system to exist. Kinship in our society is used for establishing social units. Each one of us is a member of such a cooperating and closely bound group of people. Such cooperating local groups are always larger than basic families of spouses and their children. But, there are no universal rules for such units to exist. Rules differ in different societies.

6.3.1 Predominantly Patrilineal North: In the region, the most usual form of lineage is unilineal descent, i.e. descent on male lines - from father to son, known as the '*Mitakshara*' school of inheritance. This constitutes the basis of cooperation, conflict, along with inheritance of property

and status among the members of the lineage. Members cooperate in the matters of religious rituals and economic matters, in which most importance is attached to the elderly men of the lineage. Anthropological studies done in the past have suggested that cooperation among the members of a lineage is consolidated by the fact that all of them live close together within a same village. However, gradually owing to migration due to the universal phenomena like globalisation, urbanisation, and industrial revolution, etc. this trend has changed. Yet, the members of a lineage stay united because of their economic obligations, in which they inherit property from the singular line of descent. In North India, the property passes generally in the male line.

6.3.2 A mix of Patrilineal and Matrilineal East: The eastern region is geographically scattered and comprises mostly the Austro-Asiatic tribes, like Bhumij, Korcu, Khasi and Santhal, among others. Of these, while the Bhumij and Munda tribes of Jharkhand observe a patrilineal mode of descent, the Khasi tribe of Assam remains uniquely matrilineal. As per their customary law, property, particularly the agricultural land, moves along the male lines and women have no inheritance of land or property among the former set of tribes. In these cultures, nuclear families are preferred over the joint one, though the husband often keep his widowed mother or unmarried brothers with him. In such a system, the patrilineal relations between nuclear households of a common descent are maintained through a common place of ancestor worship and extending cooperation in each other's moments of crisis. On the other hand, the matrilineal Khasis practice a unique joint family system with common place of worship and a common graveyard; yet the husband and wife live in a separate house of their own. In this culture, after the death of the head of the family the property passes on to the mother or the youngest daughter. When opted to not remarry, the widow gets half of the property, if there are no female wards to inherit the property within the family.

6.3.3 Predominantly Patrilineal yet Matrilineal South: The family organisation and kinship system patterns present a very complicated arrangement in this zone. Just like the northern zone, the patrilineal systems dominate here as well, however some sections remain matrilineal in their rules of descent. The Nayars in Kerala, the Bants and the Billawas in Kanara and the Tiyans, and some Moplas in Malabar regions of the South stay matrilineal.

6.3.3.1 The Nayars of Kerala: The matrilineal system unique to the Nayars of Kerala is known as 'Marumakkattayam', in which women have traditionally got not just a right to property but with respect, power and prestige. In this system, the family lived together in a household called, 'Tharavad', which comprised of mother, her children, her brothers and sisters. Even though the lineage was traced through the mother, the head of the household remained the eldest brother or the 'karnavar'. But, the ownership of the property remained joined. Interestingly, *karnavar's* property

was inherited by his nephew and not his own children. However, with modernisation and cosmopolitanism setting in, and also paving way for migration of Nair men, along with their women and children; the '*Marumakkattayam*' has become rare in Kerala. All these developments have not gone in the favour of the joint family system. As a consequence of these social changes, many of the joint families got gradually broken into what is known as the '*Makkattayam*' system, which means inheritance through male line. But, there still remains the practice of carrying mother's surname, old family names and titles in some Nayar (also spelt Nair) families, showcasing their affinity to the old '*Marumakkattayam*' system.

6.3.3.2 The Bunts and Billawas of Kanara: These and the non-priestly class among the Jainas in Karnataka are governed by a system of law, known as the '*Aliyasanthana*' system, sanctioned by the Hindu Succession Act. According to this law, the right to inherit the property and all other rights within the family runs through the female line. For instance: the name of the mother's ancestral house normally became the prefix or suffix of one's name and some of the surnames of Bunts also came from the mother's side. So obviously, under this system, more respect is given to the mother's side of the family. Maternal Uncles are more respected than the paternal uncles.

6.3.3.3 The Namboodari Brahmins of Kerala: They again present an interesting case of predominantly patrilineal, yet a matrilineal society. The patrilineage, in which they lived, is traditionally known as '*illam*' in Malayali. The *illam* was situated on the ancestral estate, along with a cremation ground and a sacred serpent grove. Within an *illam*, only the eldest son was permitted to marry a Namboodari girl and the younger sons made *sambandam* or liason with girls, belonging to the Nayar caste. As their culture goes, the younger sons visited their partners at night and children born of this union became a part of their mother's *taravad* or *tharavadu*, which we discussed earlier. Traditionally, the Namboodari *illam*, thus, consisted of the eldest son and his wife, the younger brothers, sometimes his old parents or eldest son's children.

Though this section, has tried to draw a sketch of variations in lineage patterns in different regions of India, in the matters of culture, both rigidity and flexibility, go hand in hand, in actual kinship practices of lineage. These are reflected in the changing family structures, systems of residence and descent, inheritance of property and succession, among others. However, despite all its complexities as a result of mobility, education and migration, kinship continues to remain the most basic unit if social organisation and mobilisation.

Check your Progress 2.

1. How are the North Indian patterns of lineage different from the patterns found in the East?

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2. What are the unique characteristics of lineage system in Southern India? Explain with key examples.
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6.4 KINSHIP TERMS: DESCRIPTIVE NORTH VS. CLASSIFICATORY SOUTH

The kinship terms play a significant role in deciphering the features of a given kinship system. Say for instance; in the way people are referred to in any system, tell us a lot about the prescriptions and taboos in that system, roles people acquire and to which category of kins they belong to. In this section, we would discuss about the following two categories of kinship terminologies, in North and South, respectively - terms of address and terms of reference. The former set of terms are those which people use in addressing each other. The latter are those, with which people refer to particular relationships. Though, sometimes these two types may be expressed using one term only. Let us now consider the cross-cultural variations in these terms.

6.4.1 Descriptive North: In north, the kinship terms are used as such to describe the kinship relation from the standpoint of the speaker. The descriptive character of such terminologies is so strong that in just a few terms, even the most distant kin can be appropriately described. The English terms like aunty, uncle, nephew, cousin, etc. do not reveal the exact relationship, take for instance; whether the kin is from patrilineal side of the speaker or from the matrilineal side, whether the kin is younger or older than the speaker; and the like. But in the North India, kinship terms remain very clear on these parameters. Let us consider a few examples: to emphasise the patrilineal descent, a sharp distinction between parallel and cross-cousins is observed. The children of one's brother are *bhatija* (for male child) and *bhatiji* (for female child). The children of one's sister are *bhanja* (for male child) and *bhanji* (for female child). Similarly, when one says *chachera bhai*, it can be easily translated as father's younger brother's (*chacha's*) son, who stands in the relationship of a brother (*bhai*) to the speaker. On the other hand, *mamera bhai* means mother's brother's (mama's) son. The kinship terminologies are also significant in representing the expected behaviour from a particular kin. It lays down the prescribed and tabooed behaviour in a kinship group. Let us take the popular relationships of 'joking' and 'avoidance' in a North Indian household. The *devar-bhabhi* relationship is an epitome of the former set of relationship, because *bhabhi* is to be taken as akin to his mother by the *devar*. And, the relationship between the father in-

law, known as *sasur* or *shvasur* and the daughter-in-law, as well as a woman's relationship with her husband's elder brother, i.e. *jeth* or *bhasur*, is that of avoidance. Owing to such a relationship, the practice of veil or *purdah* is still very common in most parts of Northern India.

6.4.2 Classificatory South: The Dravidian kinship terms, remain classificatory because it divides the speaker's own generation into the following two categories. One group consists of all the brothers and sisters, including one's parallel cousins and the children of the father's parallel cousins. This category of kins, is known as '*pangali*' in Tamil. And, the other group comprises cross-cousins and affinal relatives such as wife/husband of the former set of kins. In Tamil, this category of kins is known by the term of '*mama-machchinan*'. This broad classification applies to the entire range of kins in one's own generation. There is no third category of kins. In Tamil, *pangali* means the ones who share. The term has both - specific as well as general connotations. Specifically, it refers strictly to those who share in the joint family property. And in a more general sense, it includes even those brothers do not share the joint family property. Such kins may also be known with another Tamil kinship term, '*murei*'.

This classification between the *pangali* and *murei* also applies to those who are further affinally connected to one's own affinal kins. The kinship system down south rests completely upon the classification of one's kins into one or the other of these two categories. So, if A is affinally related to B, who is an affine of C, then the relationship between A and C again is drawn on the basis of this given formulation between a *murei*, a *pangali* or a classificatory brother. The kinship logic here is very basic - anyone who is related to you, but is not your *mama-machchinan*, then this has to be either a *murei* or a *pangali* to you. Similarly, by separating the older and younger relatives, one's own generation and the preceding generation of one's father are both divided into two parts. For instance: In Tamil, brothers and sisters and parallel cousins older to ego are called *annan* / *akka*, respectively, and those younger to ego are called *tambi* / *tangaichi*, respectively. In the same way all brothers/sisters and parallel cousins older to one's father are called *periyappa* / *periyamma* and younger one's are *chittappa* / *sinnappa* / *chithi* / *sinnamma*, respectively.

Interestingly, in the generation, which is further older, in the generation of one's grand-parents, the sex distinction gets paired with the alliance distinction. In other words, as soon as a distinction is not significant for establishing an alliance relationship, it is merged. For example: For the generation of one's grandchildren, there remains no distinction between the children of one's daughter as well as one's son. In Tamil, both the types of kins are referred to as *peran* for grandson and *peththi* for granddaughter. Similarly, both maternal and paternal grand-fathers are known by the term *Tata*; and, both maternal and paternal grand-mothers are called *Patti*. Such a tendency of

merging of the sex distinction in generations of grandparents and grandchildren has been observed by anthropologists as showing that the boundaries where the relationship of alliance ceases to matter, both the paternal and maternal sides of kins can be assimilated into one category.

Check Your Progress 3.

1. What are the descriptive terminologies of kinship? Explain using the insights from North India.

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2. Describe the classificatory kinship of South India.

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Activity 1.

Make a list of kinship terminologies, used in your family. For example: the terms with which you refer to your mother, your father, father's father, your father's brother, his sister, his sister's husband, his sister's son and daughter, his brother's son and daughter, his brother's wife; your mother's father, her brother, her brother's son and daughter, her brother's wife, her sister, her sister's husband, her sister's son and daughter. After making the list, try to pen down the prescribed kinship relationship between some of them, as we discussed about the prescribed relation of joking between *devar-bhabhi*, particularly in North India. If possible, compare this list of yours, with others at your study centre. And draw similarities and differences based on your cultural variations.

6.5 RULES OF MARRIAGE

Marriage is the very basis on which any kinship structure is built. With every marriage in a given family, new kinship bonds are created. The kin relationships operate within the context of rules of marriage, i.e. within the categories of people who are allowed or prohibited from marrying each other within the given kinship groups. The institution of marriage also lays down the relationship between the bride-givers and bride-takers, which contributes in enhancing and consolidating a kinship structure. Therefore, the rules of marriage become an important aspect, in providing cultural variations in the study of kinship. This section of the unit delves into such variations.

6.5.1 North: Clan Exogamy, The Four-Clan Rule and Rules of Endogamy:- The clear boundaries of one's natal descent line is reflected in the marital rules in North. The cluster of lineage ties up to four-five generations is known as a clan or *gotra*. The *gotra* is an exogamous unit within a sub-caste, which plays the basic function of regulating marriages within that particular sub-caste. Simply put, two individuals of the same *gotra* cannot enter a marital alliance. Based on this kinship arrangement, Karve in her monograph, goes further in observing a four-clan rule that operates in this regard in the North. According to this rule, a man is not allowed to marry a woman from his father's *gotra*, his mother's *gotra*, his father's mother's *gotra* and his mother's mother's *gotra*. As an important restriction laid down by the rules of clan exogamy, there is another restriction on marrying within the same village. The reason is - within a village, the inhabitants belong to only a few lineages, and are considered as brothers and sisters to each other.

On the other hand, caste is an endogamous unit in the North; which is to say that marriages are permissible strictly within the limits of one's own caste group alone. But, still there are certain 'negative' rules, i.e. rules of prohibition that guide such an alliance.

Rule of No Reversal: Because caste is a highly stratified and hierarchical social structure, the status of various sub-castes, and thereafter, of the units within them differs, and remains hierarchically placed. This rule is a result of this arrangement. Let us understand this through an example of Sarjupari Brahmins of Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh. Sarjapur Brahmins have three sub-castes, each of which are further stratified into three houses or lineages or kin groups. These groups are hierarchically arranged. And, marriages are always arranged from the lower to the higher lineage. There is, therefore, a hierarchical relationship between the bride-givers and bride-takers. Let's say that the two lineages are named A and B; in which lineage A has given a woman (say, W) in marriage to a man (say, M) of lineage B. Therefore, M gets a high ritual status in the marriage alliance and ceremonies. In case, if M's daughter gets married to a man of lineage A, then M will have to give the same high ritual status to the man of lineage A. But, according to the rule of hypergamy, lineage A is lower to lineage B and therefore, this marriage would imply a reversal of roles. In North India, such a reversal is not allowed and thus, one finds prohibition on marriage with patrilateral cross-cousins.

Rule of No Repetition: This rule implies that if a person's sister is already married in a particular family, then his daughter cannot be given in that same family. It basically implies that marriage between matrilateral cross-cousins is again prohibited in North India. Both - the patrilateral as well as matrilateral cross-cousin marriages, are thus, not allowed in this particular region.

6.5.2 Central: Cross-Cousin Marriages and Other Variations: - The caste groups like Ahir, Kathi, Garasia and Ghadava Charan; along with tribal groups like Dhed, Bhil and Koli, allow for both the patrilateral and the matrilateral cross-cousin marriages in the Central India. In Maharashtra, the dominant Marathas and Kunbis showcase a mix of allowance and prohibition in this regard. Some practice levirate. Similarly, some consider cross-cousin marriage as a taboo; while some others do not prohibit such marriages. The rules of exogamy within the Marathas are based upon the clan symbol, known as ‘*devaka*’ in Marathi. No two people having same *devaka* can marry. With a *devaka*, is identified the status of a clan. All the clans are hypergamous units, which place a taboo on parallel cousin marriages, paternal cousin marriages; but prefers maternal cross-cousin marriages.

6.5.3 South: Preferred Marital Alliances vs. Restrictions:- The marital rules in South are characterised as the positive rules; i.e. it lays emphasis on whom one can marry. In this regard, there are three types of marriages. First, in several castes, marriage between a man and his elder sister’s daughter. However, matrilineal Nayars do not allow such an alliance. Second, man’s marriage to his father’s sister’s daughter is preferred by some caste groups. In such marriages, however exists, a tendency to return; i.e. if a man marries a daughter in a particular family, then he expects them to marry their daughter in his, in return. Third, another type of preferred marriage is between a man and his mother’s brother’s daughter. Havik Brahmins of Karnataka, some Reddy castes of Andhra Pradesh and the Kallars of Tamil Nadu prescribe for such cross-cousin marriages. Unlike, the previous category, here no return policy is practised; and hence, the brides are given in only one direction.

Check Your Progress 4

1. What are the four-clan rule and other dimensions governing the marital rules in North India?
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2. What is peculiar about marriages in Central India?
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3. How are marriages in South Indian culture different from the other cultures?
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6.6 CEREMONIAL EXCHANGE OF GIFTS

Within any given kinship structure, based on the location of an individual in several hierarchies that characterise it, she/he gives and receives gifts on different occasions, like the life cycle rituals. This kinship practice has been observed by the anthropologists as reflecting patterns of behaviour among various categories of kins. But there lies tremendous difference in the cultural practices of Northern and Southern regions, in this regard. Let us consider them now.

6.6.1 Mostly one-directional flow of gifts in North: Perceiving their own status as inferior, it is the bride-givers, who mark any ceremony - be it the marriage or festivals and all the life cycle occasions, thereafter - by giving gifts to the various members of the bride-takers. In such an arrangement, to keep giving gifts is taken as an indicator of status of the family of the bride-givers. Also, it is done to be ensure respect for the bride in her in-law's family. This process keeps going till the woman is alive and in some cases, even after that. So for instance: when a woman marries off her daughter, she herself as in her own family gives gifts to the bride takers; but also the family of her parents would send gifts to them. And, in the north the responsibility of keeping this kinship tradition of gift-giving alive is seen as the responsibility of a bride's brother, even more than her mother and father. So, the role of the bride's own brother and that of her mother's brother becomes the same - the gift givers.

6.6.2 Reciprocal exchange of gifts in South: Here, with the process of gift-giving and taking is identified the separation or assimilation of various categories of kins. In South, there are two categories of gifts - gifts are exchanged between affines; and, internal exchange of gifts. The first category includes exchange of gifts between the families of the bride and the groom, respectively. And, the second category consists of those people who belong to both the sides of exchange - the receivers as well as givers - and therefore, receives gifts from both of them. Many have called this as the process of merging of relationships. In Tamil Nadu, among the Pramalai Kallar sub-caste, the money given by the bride-groom's father to the bride's father is known as '*parisam*', which is used by the receiver to buy jewellery for the bride. However, the receiver is expected to spend, twice the amount received as *parisam*, on bride's jewellery. This exchange of gifts continue for at least three years, after marriage. A similar exchange, known as '*vere pona sir*' (literally, the gift of going apart) takes place on the birth of the first child or when the couple moves out in their separate household.

Thus, there lies a stark cultural variation between north and south, when it comes to the exchange of gifts during the ceremonial and life-cycle rituals. While in north, the flow of gifts remains uni-direction from the bride-givers to bride-taker, in the South there is a reciprocity of gifts; even though the bride-giver need to give double the gifts received from the bride-takers.

Check your Progress 5.

1. How are the ceremonial gifts given in the North Indian cultures?

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2. How do the South Indian cultures exchange ceremonial gifts?

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6.7 LET US SUM UP

The norms, rules and patterns shaping up a kinship system differ from region to region. There are a certain dimensions, on which, these cultural variations in the kinship system can be traced. The communities and regions in India can be classified on the basis of these variations. Even though, the unit tries to point out such cross-cultural variations, much of it has been subject to certain change, owing to the forces of modernisation, urbanisation and migration.

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6.9 SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check your Progress 1.

1. Lineage patterns, kinship terminology, marriage rules and exchange of gifts.

Check Your

our Progress 2.

1. Your answer should first explain the patrilineal basis of North Indian Kinship. It should then move on to explain how in the Eastern cultures, both the matrilineal and patrilineal dimensions of lineage are followed.

2. Using the examples of Nayars of Kerala, The Bunts and Billawas of Kanara and Nomboodri Brahmins of Kerala, try to highlight how South Indian lineage patterns too remain a mix of matrilineal and patrilineal tendencies.

Check Your Progress 3.

1. Firstly, define the descriptive terminologies of kinship, then with examples substantiate their usage in the Northern cultures.
2. The Dravidian kinship terms, remain classificatory because it divides the speaker's own generation into the following two categories. One group consists of all the brothers and sisters, including one's parallel cousins and the children of the father's parallel cousins. And, the other group comprises cross-cousins and affinal relatives such as wife/husband of the former set of kins. This broad classification applies to the entire range of kins in one's own generation.

Check Your Progress 4.

1. Begin by defining the four-clan rule as practiced in the North Indian marriages, then move on to the other dimensions deciding upon whom not to marry, like clan exogamy and caste endogamy.
2. In this, you have to describe what forms of cross-cousin marriages are allowed and prohibited in the central Indian cultures
3. Start by explaining how marriages in Southern cultures present a mix of both the North Indian and Central Indian cultures.

Check Your Progress 5.

1. The ceremonial gifts in the North Indian cultures flow in one direction. Using examples expand this further.
2. In South, there is an exchange of ceremonial gifts between the bride-givers and the bride-takers, though with a glitch, expand on it using examples

UNIT 7. CASTE, CLASS AND GENDER DIMENSION*

Structure

7.0 Objectives

7.1 Introduction

7.2 Caste and Kinship

7.2.1 Understanding Caste System

7.2.2 Caste and Kinship as Synonymous

7.2.3 Caste and kinship as Separate

7.3. Class and Kinship

7.3.1 Kinship across class

7.3.2 Inter-class kinship system

7.3.3 Class-Kinship Intersection

7.4 Gender and Kinship

7.4.1 Neglect of gender in kinship studies

7.4.2 Feminist Contributions

7.4.3 New Direction in kinship studies

7.5 Let Us Sum Up

7.6 Further Readings

7.7 Specimen Answers to Check Your Progress

7.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to:

- Explain the relationship and intersectionality between kinship and caste
- Discuss how class has a bearing on the kinship systems
- Note the feminist contributions to understanding gender dimension of kinship
- Look at some of examples of regional variations in India to understand various social categories and their intersectionality with kinship

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7.1 INTRODUCTION

In this unit we are going to learn about the dimension of caste, class and gender and its relationship with kinship. Each of these dimensions impact kinship relation and therefore important to understand the intersectionality.

In the beginning of kinship studies focus was mainly on tracing genealogical and marital ties and the complexity of caste, class and gender was neglected. It was after the emergence of the cultural approach that caste, class and gender-based analysis of kinship became part of anthropological research. In this unit both aspect the neglect and incorporation of these dimension is being discussed. We also look at some of examples of regional variations in India to comprehend the inter relation between caste, class and gender. In the beginning anthropology was dominated by study of kinship based on biological ties and alliance formed between groups. Kinship studies was limited to tracing genealogical links for understanding kinship terminology, behaviour and role among members related through blood and marriage. In was post Schneider's cultural approach that focus shifted to understanding construction of kinship relation outside biology and alliance.

The cultural approach to kinship was further developed by the feminist anthropologist who brought in gender into kinship studies. Collier and Yanagisako in the work, '*Gender and Kinship: Towards a Unified Analysis*', challenged the view that gender and kinship are distinct rather than closely linked. According to them, kinship, sex and gender can be understood on a continuum. Gayle Rubin (1975) stated that kinship system are made up of concrete forms of socially organised sexuality. Thus, kinship system are observable and empirical forms of sex/gender systems. Feminist anthropologists developed a framework that helped locate gendered power relations and women's oppression within the structures of caste and class domination. It enabled to explore the complex and dynamic interconnections between caste, class and patriarchy. Thus, along with gender, the dimensions of caste and class also became integral for understanding relation and kin network. Scholars accepted the feminist call to view women as class rather than as bodies over whom men had rights (Radcliffe-Brown's biological approach) and who function to knit society together (Levi-Strauss's alliance approach). Taking the dimensions of caste, class and gender into study of kinship takes the debates beyond the dichotomy of nature/biology and culture. It is believed that the complementarity of human social behaviour is the distinctive feature of human society.

7.2 CASTE AND KINSHIP

The word "Caste" originates from the Spanish word 'Casta' which means 'breed, race, or kind.' Caste is a system of stratification specifically found in the Indian sub-continent. It is based on ascribed status of being born into a particular group. It categorises individual into different groups assigning different occupation. Hence caste is also described as occupational division or hierarchy as the occupations are differently valued and given different status is the hierarchy. M.N. Srinivas defined "caste as a hereditary endogamous, usually localised group having a traditional association with an occupation and a particular position in the local hierarchy of castes.

7.2.1 Caste and Kinship as synonymous

In the earlier studies on kinship system, caste and kinship were assumed to be synonymous and scholars used the two interchangeable. Irawati Karve considered caste and kinship as inseparable. She noted that every caste is an endogamous unit and one has no relatives outside of one's own caste. Similarly Louis Dumont in his study of South Indian kinship and marriages stated that caste cannot be severed from kinship.

Caste and kinship were assumed to be inseparable at several areas:

- a) Family -kinship system operates within the families of the caste groups, living in one village or a nearby cluster of villages.
- b) Marriage –Castes being endogamous, i.e., one marries within one's caste, implies that people belonging to one caste group are kinsmen in the sense that they are already related or can be potentially related to each other.
- c) Status and honour- Caste-fellows generally come forward to help each other when others challenge their honour and status. They may also hold rituals together and help each other economically.

Kinship and Caste interrelation can be seen at sub division also. Sub-caste is the largest segment of caste and it performs nearly all the functions of caste, such as endogamy and social control. Thus the internal structure of the sub-caste provides the framework within which the operation of the kinship system occurs. The members of a sub-caste cooperate as kinspersons.

Check Your Progress 1

1) What do you understand by Caste System?

2) Write down the Karve's view on caste and kinship.

7.2.2 Caste and kinship as separate systems

Kathleen Gough tried to differentiate between caste and kinship. In her study of Kumbabettai village, in the Tanjore district of Tamil Nadu, she tried to show the difference and disparities of family and kinship relations and values between Brahmans and Adi Dravidians. The Brahmans migrated to other cities for education and employment and lower caste from surrounding areas migrated to Kumbabettai and this resulted in the village coming in contact with wider economic system.

Mayer Fortes clearly separated caste from kinship by arguing that caste refers to external relation whereas kinship refers to domestic or internal relation. Applying Fortes distinction, Adrian Mayer in his study of caste and kinship in central India argued that caste referred to the internal structure, which is relation within the village whereas kinship referred to relation outside the village. Kinship at the level of *jati* is seen as a collection of inter-personal relations. Therefore members within the village are referred as agnates or relation through blood and those outside the village are referred as uterine or affinal. This distinction between the two kinds of relatives gets reflected in rules of marriage where members of caste are required to marry outside one's village because members in the village are all blood relatives.

Leach too differentiated between the domain of caste and kinship/ caste for Leach referred to the politico-jural domain and kinship referred to domestic domain. For example the Dule bagdis of Jaynagar in West Bengal make explicit distinction between two categories- caste mates (*dalastha*) and kinsmen (*deiji*). Caste mates have external status and kinsmen have internal status.

7.2.3 Caste- kinship relation-case studies

The Girasias (generally held to be a 'tribe' by others) live in Rajasthan in proximity to the Rajputs (generally held to be a 'caste'; Girasias themselves claim to be a branch of the Rajput caste). On many points the way in which a group categorises itself does not correspond with the way in which it is categorised by members of other groups. In practice the Girasias share many social, economic and religious institutions with the other 'caste' communities in the region as also with the 'tribal Bhils. This does not mean that these groups are indistinguishable, but 'Rajput' and 'Bhil' stereotypes were used within the Girasia group to express differences, identifications and evaluations. However the tribe/caste distinction and the corresponding division of labour between anthropologists and sociologists in India is thereby called into question. To the Girasias, patrilineal kinship and territory play a central role in their sense of 'caste' identity, unlike other communities (the Rajputs and Bhils are exceptions) for whom caste is a more dispersed, agnatic and affinal group. Descent is crucial. Although their kinship ideology emphasises a sense of separation rather than hierarchy, Girasia kin divisions present members with equal opportunities to be unequal. Lineal kinship provides the paradigm for talking about all relationships whether or not based on actual biological ties. Equally, gender provides an idiom for the construction of difference. Descent groups are differentiated according to the evaluation of groups from which they have been able to obtain wives. Both Girasias and outsiders use the attire and the behaviour of women and perceived gender roles to distinguish between themselves. Despite the local complexity of Girasia kinship and gender relations which cannot be expressed in the language of caste and tribe, outsiders (other castes, classes, government officials, academics) continue to regard the Girasias as tribal as a result of the politics of caste and gender at the local, regional and national levels (Unnithan, 1993). Another example is of the Sarjupari Brahmin of Mirzapur district in Uttar Pradesh, studied by Louis Dumont (1966: 107). The three sub-castes of Sarjupari Brahmins of this area is divided into three 'houses' (kin groups or lineages), which are arranged hierarchically in status. 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 'house'. This shows clearly that marriage rules among Brahmins and other higher castes in North India maintain a hierarchic relationship between the bride-givers and bride-takers.

7.3 CLASS AND KINSHIP

Class refers to a status group in a society. Here status indicate economic prosperity. Thus, Class is a person's economic position in a society. Marx defined class in term of social group having control over the means of production. According to Marx society consisted of two classes capitalist or bourgeois class (those who own means of production) and proletariat class (those who don't own means of production or the labour class). In Max Weber's opinion class is not merely a product of the economic relations in society there are other factors that influences class like 'status' (the differences between social groups in the social honour or prestige) and 'party' (a group of individuals who work together due to the fact that they have common backgrounds, aims or interests) in society. In class based societies kinship is useful for understanding social dynamics. Class makes the understanding inequality in kinship system more comprehensive. Analysis of economic dimension has revitalised kinship studies with greater focus of class. This has enabled deeper analysis of the inter relations between resources, social organisation and inter personal relations.

7.3.1 Kinship across class

According to Schneider, all class have the same kinship system. In his study of the American kinship system, he studied the middle class and assumed that it was same in the lower class. However, Carol Stack in his study of Black American argues that the kinship system of the lower class is different from the middle and upper class. Among the lower class, relatives form a support network for sharing of goods as well as care and emotion. Those biological relatives who choose not to be involved in the network is renounced as kin. Here it is the class factors that determines kinship relations.

Class-Kinship Intersection

Studies on tribal societies and chiefdoms have frequently emphasised how structures of kinship and domestic domains have been affected by state policies, trade, and colonialism. Reiter's work in rural France is a pioneering work on public and private domains, which shows how the state policies supports the private-public dichotomy, especially with reference to division of labour. Women are assigned the jobs of serving and reproducing kinship networks. States, especially those built upon industrial capitalism, need taxes and

labour power, hence people are reproduced. Men on the other hand are responsible for invention and production.

Another study on class-kinship interaction is the work of feminist scholar, Irene Silverblatt. In her research she reveals the processes of class formation in the context of the consolidation of Inca state (1988) and the construction of gender hierarchy. She argues that the formation of new nation states led to the re-writing of gender relations. In the case of Inca, it was assertion of access to the women of the conquered groups which symbolized the group's submission to the conquerors. The setting of bureaucratic organization (essential for functioning of nation states) led to the change in gender relations as well. The sexual division of labour was replaced by sexual hierarchy with state promoting men from being warriors to state administrators. Women were denied any place in the bureaucratic organization and were alienated from their rights to land and property. Thus the consolidation of state provided material benefit only to men, thereby making women financially dependent on men. In her study, Silverblatt discusses the relation between state and gender from four dimensions- the control of resources, the control of sexuality, the manipulation of competing hierarchies and the symbolic representation of gender and power.

In similar lines, Watson (131) has demonstrated that the development of powerful, localized patrilineages (tsu) was by no means an inevitable outcome of the patrilineal order, but occurred amid "a high degree of political centralization and economic inequality where a small landlord-merchant class dominated a much larger smallholder tenant class" (125:284). This was not a lineage mode of production, but the social relations of production were expressed in a kinship idiom that stressed unity and equality among brothers, which thus helped reproduce class (and gender) inequalities.

Class-gender and kinship

Friedrich Engle's, *Origin of Family, Private Property, and State* helps to understand how kin based and class based social relations of production influence gender roles and status. Engles provided a materialist theory of gender inequality. Within such a framework he saw women's position as varying in space and time according to the existing economic and political conditions of the society. His argument was based on the premise that women's position had not always been of subordinate as it exists at present. Here reference is to the growth of

capitalism everywhere and the ways in which it has affected the position of women in relative to men. He traces the ways in which the emergence of private property led to change in relations between men and women, between women and work and more generally to the relationship of property to class and society.

Vanessa Maher examines the relation between men and women within the inequalities of a class based society. Her study of working class seamstresses in Turin's high-fashion industry between the wars reveals how evolving relations between the bourgeois and the working class created ambiguities in the ideological definition of domestic and public spheres that seamstresses could transcend. Industrialist's efforts to evade labour laws by characterising their factories as 'domestic' gave young working class woman freedom from parental supervision, while at the same time seamstresses sewing knowledge of how wealthy women dressed permitted flirtations across class lines with male university students. Similarly married seamstresses sewing in their homes could satisfy husband's desire that they stay inside; simultaneously, their use of family home to receive bourgeois clients violated their working class husband's desire for privacy, comfort and monopoly over wifely services.

Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Do you think kinship system varies with class? Justify your answer.

- 2) Discuss the intersectionality between caste, class and gender in understanding kinship.

7.5 GENDER AND KINSHIP

Gender relations are embedded within varying and changing kinship relations. The complexity of kinship challenges generalisation along positions of women within class, race, culture and nation. Kinship contextualises gender relations through offering different positions to women in culture and society. However prior to 1970s, kinship studies neglected the gender dimension in understanding biological and marital relations. It was only after the studies done by feminist anthropologists that the significance of gender in comprehending

kinship relation got recognised. The dimension of gender was used by anthropologists to understand women's place in society and possibilities of change.

7.5.1 Neglect of gender in kinship studies

In the early study by anthropologists, there was a neglect of women in understanding of kinship terminology and behaviour. Gender was absent as an analytical category on the assumption that study of men implied women as well. One of the reason for the invisibility of women was inherent in the research method or fieldwork whereby researchers spoke only with men. Women would only appear as respondent on issues related to family and marriage assuming that these were integral to women.

7.5.2 Feminist Contributions

There has been a new direction in kinship studies since the 1990s with greater focus on study of gender, personhood, homosexual family, new reproductive technologies and other related issues. The works of Reiter (1975), '*Towards an Anthropology of Women*' and Rodaldo and Lamphere (1974), '*Women, Culture and Society*', brought in the dynamics of power relations in understanding kinship. It was argued that is not only blood ties and marriage links that determines relations among members of society but also relations of power. Linda Stone suggested that kinship needs to be looked at in terms of the dynamic power relations and negotiation rather than as abstract system of descent and alliance. Kinship began to be understood not only in terms of rights and duties but also in terms of power, subordination and strategies to gain power and position in society. Collier's work on patrilineal system emphasised women as strategists and argued that wives are tied with the patrilocal domestic group advancing their interests as they work through their sons and husband to free themselves from the bonds of domesticity.

Fredrick Engel in his work, '*The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*' (1884), traces the origin of patriarchy and subordinate status of women to the emergence of private property. He argued that women's oppression coincided with the division of society into classes and the rise of the stat. According to Engel, the pre-capitalist society were egalitarian and the progress in economic conditions collided with gender inequality. In critique to Engel's theory, Karen Sacks argues that the decline in the status of women was due to the advantages shared by the ruling class men, who were there even when primitive communism was practiced. The selection of producers of goods and values is done from amongst the

ruling class and men are at an advantage because they are free from domestic work. The division between women's domestic work and men's productive work creates conditions that disable women from growing into full adult members and starts being dependant on men. Some of the assumptions about the role and position of women in different spheres of society were also challenged by feminists. Annette Weiner's work, *Women of Value, Men of Renown* (1976) critiqued Malinowski's neglect of women's exchange networks.

The task of feminist anthropologists in kinship theory was to reject some of the dichotomies that were used that in a way made women and their position invisible. The most important dichotomy to be rejected was the private-public dichotomy. Thus this dichotomy between the two spheres has been very durable. It is present in the descent theory, alliance theory and studies of marriage transactions. For example – the descent theory rests on the notion of an invariant mother-child bond. They believe that this relation is a universal relation present irrespective of the society being a matrilineal or patrilineal society. The mother and child bond based on moral, affective convictions are part of domestic unit and the line of descent is a part of politico-jural domain. The dichotomy was used for understanding gender relation, assuming that the domestic sphere dedicated to sexuality and childrearing associated primarily with women and 'public' sphere on legal rules and legitimate authority, associated primarily with men.

The alliance theory dealing with exchanges of women between men structures relations between social groups, also talks of the exchanges between domestic and public spheres. Levi-Strauss, for example writes of the form, but not the content, of marital exchanges because he is content to assume that women everywhere, as the providers of sexual and domestic services, are of equal and inherent value of child bearing and that men enjoy the legitimate authority to exchange women. In taking for granted the characters, functions and social domains of men and women and seeing variation only in their structural arrangement i.e. in terms of hierarchy (wife takers are superior to wife-givers), Levi-Strauss fails to investigate the dialectical construction of gender categories and structural arrangement.

In anthropological literature, kinship was limited only to domestic domain and was reduced to its primary function of reproduction for the formation of nuclear family. However by taking for granted the notion of reproductive functions to be enduring core of the family, such a perspective fails to understand how modern society as lineages in lineage-societies. These

understanding overlooks as to how family both reproduces, recast gender inequality at the same time nurture children. The usual notion that associates women with domestic domain and man with public domain was challenged by feminist anthropologists. Mayer Fortes used the dichotomy of domestic and politico-jural to differentiate between kinship from political and economic domain. She developed the concept of politico-jural in order to challenge the western assumption about the biological basis of kinship. She asserted that kinship has a jural, political dimension too. However in carving out the jural domain of kinship based on legal rules, Fortes left intact the assumption of domestic domain built upon the affective ties and moral sanctions of mother-child bond.

Marilyn Strathern brought into discussion of kinship the significance of the relation between personhood, gender and descent. Strathern did her fieldwork in Papua New Guinea (Melanesia) to examine the structure of ideas underlying concepts of personhood and their relation to conceptions of kinship. Among the people of Mount Hagen (Western Highlands Province of New Guinea), kinship can be 'disconnected' from the person, thus providing an ideal situation of connection with other people and things. Women, for example can be detached from their own clans and added to those of their husbands, just as objects can be detached from the makers and added to the wealth of those who acquire them. These ideas of disconnection generate the conceptual premises allowing for the accumulation of wives, wealth objects and prestige and therefore for building of big men. On the other hand among Wiru (district of the Southern Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea), women are not detached from the natal relatives. Rather their marriages create connections between affines. Thus, we see from above societies of 'Wiru' and Mount Hagen, there are different kinds of cultural and political dynamics that constitute these two societies that appear to share an ideology of patrilineal descent. Similarly, the anthropologist Shapiro shows how 'patrilineal descent' in America results not from tracing of genealogical connections, but from the cultural construction of masculinity, implying agnatic ties used for political and religious organisation.

It is clear from the above discussion that feminists redefined the dichotomy of private and public. They argued that rather than observing the dichotomies, it is important to question kinship studies and understand the gender and kinship as a unified unit. The feminists questioned the notion of reproduction being domestic domain. With the coming in of surrogacy, IVF reproduction, reproduction can take outside the domestic domain of

house. Thus, kinship as well as gender is not solely biologically constructed they are also a culturally construct.

7.5.3 New Direction in kinship studies

There has been a new direction in kinship studies since the 1990s with greater focus on study of gender, personhood, homosexual family, new reproductive technologies and other related issues. The emphasis is to capture everyday experience and representation of different dimensions of power and subordination. Attempt is also made to devote attention to themes of contradictions, paradoxes and ambivalence. Some of areas in which kinship studies have started focusing are:

i. *Re-examination of relevant concepts*

K. Saradamani (1999) in her work, '*Matriliny Transforming*', re-examines the concept of matriliney from a gender perspective. She argues that there have been changes in the matriliney rule among Nayers of Kerala due to different legislations of inheritance, succession, marriage and family.

ii. *Re-interpretation of institution of marriage*

Feminist scholars have shown how alliance or marriage is a process of subordination for women, whereby they become a resource in the hands of the groups of which they are member, caste or sub-caste. As Gayle Rubin has put it:

'The exchange of women is a shorthand for expressing that the social relations of kinship system specify that men have certain rights in female kin and that women do not have the same rights in their male kin....[It is] a system in which women do not have full rights to themselves.' (1978).

Raymond Smith believed that in West Indian Creole society, 'marriage' and 'irregular unions' was considered as different types of unions. The differentiation was based on the interaction of race, class, and gender inequities in a class stratified society. Thus, for Smith, marriage is too complex to be explored separately and therefore the connection between marriage and other social institutions had to be explored. He tries to demonstrate that 'irregular unions' are not merely failures to realize the monogamous nuclear family.

iii.) *Questioning mother-child bond*

By 1980s, feminist anthropologists began to explore if the mother-child relationship could have other purposes outside human reproduction, such as economic, political, and ideological. As a result, they tended to cast doubt on the mother-child bond, as well as the

relationship between ostensible male authority and the true dynamics of power and privilege in a given social structure. Furthermore, biological truths are only meaningful within larger systems of meaning. This comes out vividly in Jack Goody's work where reproductive processes and transmission of property shape domestic groups. Thus, we see that feminists point out how gender and kinship are mutually constructed. They also challenge the notion of how they view differences between sexes as pre-social and existing outside and beyond culture, based on the natural difference (ability to reproduce). Furthermore, feminists reject the dichotomy of the category of male and female.

Check Your Progress 3

1. Discuss how feminist anthropologists contributed to re-casting kinship studies.

2. Write a short note on how new reproductive technologies have changed the meaning of maternity and motherhood.

7.5. LET US SUM UP

Caste, class and gender dimensions impact kinship relation in certain ways and hence important to understand its intersectionality. Such an approach became dominant in anthropological research after David Schneider drew attention to the study of kinship as a cultural process. Till then kinship studies was limited to the study of genealogy, descent and marital ties. The cultural approach was further extended by feminist anthropologists who focused on studying the gender dimensions in terms of relatedness and coming of new reproductive technologies that changed the way the concept of maternity, motherhood and descent was understood. There has been a new direction in kinship studies since the 1990s with greater focus on study of gender, personhood, homosexual family, new reproductive technologies and other related issues.

7.6. KEY WORDS

Caste	Caste is a system of stratification specifically found in the Indian sub-continent. It is based on ascribed status of being born into a particular group.
Class	Class refers to a status group in a society. Marx defined class in term of social group having control over the means of production. For Max Weber's factors that influences class are 'status' (the differences between social groups in the social honour or prestige) and 'party' (a group of individuals who work together due to the fact that they have common backgrounds, aims or interests) in society.
Gender	Gender refers to social or cultural distinctions between men and women in terms of certain norms and values attached to femininity and masculinity.
Intersectionality	The interconnection between different social categories like caste, class, gender and race refers to intersectionality. It leads to disadvantage and exploitation from multiple sources.
New Kinship Studies	New Kinship Studies emerged in the 1990s with greater focus on study of gender, personhood, homosexual family, new reproductive technologies and other related issues. The emphasis is to capture everyday experience and representation of different dimensions of power and subordination. Attempt is also made to devote attention to themes of contradictions, paradoxes and ambivalence.
Materialistic theory	is based on thinking of Karl Marx for whom the material or economic conditions were the foundation for social-cultural aspects.

7.6 FURTHER READINGS

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7.8. SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

1) The word "Caste" is derived from the Spanish word '*Casta*' which means 'breed, race, or kind.' Caste system is a system of stratification specifically found in the Indian sub-continent where individuals are ascribed membership of four Varna depending on birth. Based on the ascribed membership individuals are assigned occupation, for example if one is born as a lower then he is given the work of cleaning. Thus caste system categorizes individuals into different groups assigning different occupation.

2) Iravati Karve uses a comparative analysis to look at the relation between caste and kinship by dividing India into four cultural zones. The division suggests that the regional pattern of social behaviour in society. The different regions may show different local patterns. There are different types of caste due to the hierarchy and caste division and separation. Karve looks after all the process of accommodation and acculturation in the field of kinship.

Check Your Progress 2

1) According to David Schneider, who gave the cultural approach to the study of kinship, all classes have the same kinship system. In his study of the American kinship system, he studied the middle class and assumed that it was same in the lower class. However, Carol Stack in her study of African Americans argues that the kinship system of the lower class is different from the middle and upper class.

2) The intersection of gender, class and caste can help us understand the relations between kin and the kinship structure of different societies. Such an approach allows looking at women as belonging to caste and class rather than just as bodies over whom men have rights (Radcliffe-Brown's biological approach) and who function to knit society together (Levi-Strauss's alliance approach). Taking the dimensions of caste, class and gender into study of kinship takes the debates beyond the dichotomy of nature/biology and culture. It is believed

that the complementarity of human social behaviour is the distinctive feature of human society.

Check Your Progress 3

1) There has been a new direction in kinship studies since the 1990s with greater focus on study of gender, personhood, homosexual family, new reproductive technologies and other related issues. It was argued that is not only blood ties and marriage links that determines relations among members of society but also relations of power. Kinship began to be understood not only in terms of rights and duties but also in terms of power, subordination and strategies to gain power and position in society. Feminist anthropologist brought into discussion of kinship as being significant in the understanding of the relation between personhood, gender and descent.

2) The new reproductive technology has contributed to major transformations of the Western kinship model that emphasised blood ties and marriage alliance. It has impacted the dynamics of family structure and the way in which one perceives maternity and motherhood. The NRT is visualised as medium for looking at kinship as processual, emerging as a cultural construction of relations Biological or marriage base is not needed as many relations are constructed through secular means.

THE PEOPLE'S
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UNIT 8: RE-IMAGINING FAMILIES

8.0 Objectives

8.1 Introduction

8.2 Understanding Family in Classical Theories

8.2.1. Basic Concepts & terms

8.2.1: Different Sociological Perspectives

8.3. Problems & Challenges

8.3.1. Family by Adoption

8.3.2. Challenging Biology

8.4 New Direction in study of family

8.4.1. Cultural theory: Beyond blood and Marriage ties

8.4.2. A Feminist Critique: Power & Discrimination

8.5. New Family Forms

8.5.1. Family by Choice (same-sex family)

8.5.2. Live-in Relationship

8.5.3. Single Parent Family

8.5.4. Surrogacy Families

8.6. Let Us Sum Up

8.7. Key Words

8.8. References

8.9 Specimen Answers to Check Your Progress

8.0 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you should be able to:

- To enumerate the key characteristics of family in dominant/classical theories in sociology.
- Examine the problems and challenges of understanding family only from classical perspective
- Elaborate on the criticism of family by cultural theorists and feminists
- Provide an account on how the meaning of family has changed historically and has significant implications on kinship studies
- Examine new forms of family which are different from traditional-biological family

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Family is one of the vital institutions of human society. In sociology, family has been referred as the fundamental/primary institution of society providing an expression to basic and universal biological needs, care-giving and socialisation functions. Though it is a universal institution, there are cross-cultural variations in the definition of family. There is no singular structure and pattern of family. While in certain cultural contexts family is described as a large group constituted by husband, wife, children and kinfolks in others it is explained as a smaller unit with adult man, woman and their children. Whatever, variations may be evident in the structure and pattern of family by the virtue of members who constitute it, by most it is seen as a group of persons united by ties of affinity (created by marriage) and consanguinity (those based on birth) who reside in a single household.

In general perception it is seen as ahistorical and static structure of society incapable of any real change, a constant form of social life, representing natural order of things (Mitterauer and Sieder 1982: 1). However, there has been several changes in the meaning as well composition of family. There have been multiple arrangements and patterns that have come to characterise family in contemporary times that mark a significant departure from conventional models making many to interpret it in crisis and contest its future. Family has been constantly evolving and changing its forms. In the light of the shifts and changes taking place, there have been attempts made to examine the institution from a point of view that question the conventional understanding. But before we go into the debates and discourses of re-imagining families, it is pertinent that we understand the meaning and concept in the classical theories.

8.2 UNDERSTANDING FAMILY: CLASSICAL SOCIOLOGY

There is not one clear single definition of “family”. It tends to be used either in a broad sense (all the descendants of a common ancestor, as in a “family tree”) or in a narrower sense, of parents living together with their children as a “unit”. In sociology family is defined as a unit that comprises of people living together who are related either by blood (cognate) or marriage (agnate). Different terms are used to refer to English word Family- *kutumba*, *graha*, *kula*, *vamsa*, *parivar*. Family is viewed as a “cultural ideal and a focus of identity” (Karlekar 1998: 1741). In the conventional sense family is simply seen as a part of natural order of things understood in terms of relations formulated as a part of intersection of three elements-

marriage, parenthood and cohabitation/residence. The family is understood as the first line of defence especially for children and a major factor in their survival, health, education, and protection. It is also viewed as a major source of nurturance and emotional bonding. Such conceptions are consistent with descriptions of family and its functions. Therefore, in classical theories, family has been understood as a combination of three elements: marriage, parenthood and residence. The biological factors are the paramount in dominant understanding of family. A heterosexual conjugal household is seen as fundamental to the formation of family.

8.2.1. BASIC CONCEPTS & DEFINITION

There are several concepts that are often considered synonymous of family but in sociology a clear cut distinction is made between them. Further, there is no one definition of family. The definition depends on the perspective taken and the purpose of defining family. In this section, let us examine the core concepts and definition relevant for understanding of family.

8.2.1.1. Household

A household can be defined as ‘a group of persons sharing a home or living space, who aggregate and share their incomes, as evidenced by the fact that they regularly take meals together i.e. in what is described as the ‘common cooking pot’ (Scott and Marshall, 2005). In other words, a household is the basic residential unit where economic production, consumption, inheritance, child rearing and shelter are organized and carried out. The household (ghar) is a residential and domestic unit composed of one or more persons living under the same roof and eating food cooked in the same kitchen (hearth/chulah).

According to sociological perspective household may not be always an essential element in defining family. People can be member of one family while not sharing a common household. A.M. Shah (1968:129) focuses in relation to the Indian scenario pointing out that two brothers and their wives and children may live in separate households, but may be bound by number of relationships of many kind. They would co-operate in economic pursuits, hold and manage property jointly, help each other on many occasions, celebrate festivals, rituals and ceremonies jointly, and so on (ibid.). This is a normal process, which highlights the importance of technical distinction between household and 'family'. Thus, two or more households may be separate but they may constitute one family (ibid.).

8.2.1.2. Difference between family and Household-

The family is based on the principles of kinship whose members usually share a common residence. They reside in a house/homestead. This residential unit is called the household. The members of a household have a set of relational ties amongst them. These ties are linked with the statuses held and the corroborating role complexes members of the family are expected to constitute. The household is a commensal and co-resident group/ unit. According to A. M Shah, kin and residence rules distinguish between family and household.

The household is an extension of family, a family can be a household but a household need not be a family. A group of people can live together, regardless of whether there are any kinship ties. For example flat mates (such as students), people living on their own, multiple-occupancy homes for migrant workers, etc. A family not only consist of household but often family is an extension of two or more households, members of which though may have separate residence yet may belong to same family and have familial bonding and responsibilities. Family along with being a functional unit is more of an ideological and emotional unit, whereas household may be described as more of a functional unit.

It is more apt to take 'household' as the unit of analysis to understand Indian social structure rather than 'family'. Family according to them "...is a grouping of households of agnatically related men, their wives and unmarried sisters and daughters" (Shah, 1976, In Uberoi, 1993, p. 420). Thus, for them the proper object of study should be the household dimension of family rather than family itself (Uberoi, 2001, p.15). The distinction between family and household helps us to understand the changes taking place in family in India, in terms of composition.

8.2.1.3. Domestic group

Domestic groups can be described as a group of people residing together and sharing activities of domestic life. It is often used synonymous with household, where several households are spread across several regions but think of themselves as one kinship unit. Domestic groups are basically resource owning and production units. They are living (and usually eating) together, and characteristically exercising corporate control over family property. Meyer Fortes defined domestic groups as a house-holding and housekeeping group which helps members to organize resources which are needed for the development of all its members. According to Fortes, each domestic group undergoes cyclical developments. There are three main stages

or phases in the developmental cycle of the domestic group. The first phase of expansion lasts from the marriage of two people to the completion of their procreation. The second phase of dispersion or fusion begins with the physical departure of the oldest child for school or a job, or with the marriage of the oldest child. This period continues until all the children are dispersed or married. This is the phase of replacement in the social structure of the family, founded by the families of their children.

8.2.1.4. Differences between a Domestic Group and a Family

The original meaning of family in Latin is similar to that of “domestic group” but in sociology the two have been differentiated on the basis that some domestic groups are formed by individuals who have no kinship relationship. At the same time, members of one family may be distributed over two or more domestic groups. The actual composition of the nuclear family and the domestic group may be identical. However, one can differentiate the strictly reproductive functions, in our sense of the concept of social reproduction, from the activities concerned with the production of food and shelter and the nonmaterial means for ensuring continuity with society at large. One might put it that the domestic domain is the system of social relations through which the reproductive nucleus is integrated with the environment and with the structure of the total society.

8.2.2. SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Sociology looks at the social institution of the family through many lenses, but its four dominant theoretical premises are:

- i. functionalism,
- ii. conflict theory,
- iii. symbolic interactionism and
- iv. feminist perspective

These varying perspectives provides varying approaches for understanding the family as a social institution.

8.2.2.1. Functional Perspective- The functionalist perspective demonstrates family as a vital institution. According to it, family has important functions for the society and individuals. They have analysed family in terms of the functions it performs and mostly highlighted the positive functions. Society is regarded as a system made up of different parts which depend on each other. Sociologists like George Murdock and Talcott Parsons advocated a functional

understanding of family George Murdock spelt his views on family in Social Structure, 1949. Talcott Parsons updated Murdock's perception on family. For George Murdock family performed four functions, namely, regulation of sexual behaviour, reproduction, economic cooperation and socialisation. Talcott Parsons pointed out the efficacy of family rests in two important functions of primary socialisation of children and stabilisation of adult personality. He argued that in modern industrial societies while the state had come to perform economic function (through welfare provisions) and provide education but still the family continued to perform irreducible and significant functions.

Focuses on the structural properties and important social functions performed by the institution. The functions performed by the institution of family as highlighted by functionalist theories are:

- Biologically family provides a legitimate platform for two adult members to sexually cohabit together as a couple and enhance social continuity.
- Family provides shelter and fulfils basic metabolic need of meeting food intake.
- Family acts as an economic unit in which members take part in productive activity; members may do similar or different jobs
- Household works are divided on the basis of division of labor based on age, gender and position of a person in family and even personal competence.

8.2.2.2. Conflict theory posits that society is characterized by conflict between social groups. Groups with unequal power and competing interests compete for scarce resources. They examine families function within a society to perpetuate structural inequalities. This perspective suggests that the family structure contributes to social inequality because it supports economic and gendered inequality by reinforcing patriarchal values. For example, intergenerational transmission of wealth within families creates and maintains inequality.

8.2.2.3. Social interactionism is a social theory that focuses on the analysis of patterns of communication, interpretation, and adjustment between individuals in relation to the meanings of symbols. This perspective emphasizes that families reinforce and rejuvenate bonds through symbolic mechanism rituals such as family meals and holidays. They also explore the changing meanings attached to family. This theory argues that shared activities help to build emotional bonds among family members, and that marriage and family relationships are based on negotiated meanings.

Check Your Progress 1

i. What are three elements that characterise family according dominant understanding?

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ii. State any four functions of family as given by the functional theories.

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8.3. PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES IN CLASSICAL THEORIES

This section elaborates on the idea of connectedness that stands in contradistinction to biologically established kinship and family ties. It focuses on adoption based affinity and homosexual alliances/kinship. In the contemporary society, there are lot of uncertainty when it comes for determining the idea of family as a safe-haven. The question arises does in every culture family continues to provide emotional and physical protection to its members. The answer would be as negative especially in the light of increase in child sexual abuse by members of primary groups, increase in disputes among siblings over property, increase rate of domestic violence on women and divorce as well as the mental health issues of homosexuals and transgender individual. The family cannot be defined as union between consensual individuals. Rather many have started questioning the fact of being born in family without a choice and therefore the concept of family by choice.

8.3.2. Family by Adoption

Adoption creates a familial relationship of parent and child between people who are not naturally related. It challenges the inevitability of biology as the only basis to parenthood. In short, it draws attention to connectedness forged through law. Historically, adoption has been practised in almost all societies. This shows centrality of the idea of attaining parenthood among all human beings. However, the purpose of adoption in traditional contexts has varied considerably from those emphasised today. In ancient times childless couples have resorted to adoption to ensure continuity of the male line for political, religious or economic reasons. Consequently, the adoption of male persons was prevalent predominantly, then. The aspect of

welfare and well-being of the child was not significant. Contrarily, the modern laws pertaining to adoption are fundamentally concerned with the welfare of the child. This idea gathered force post-World War I period in Europe and United States as a large number of children had been orphaned and there was tremendous increase in illegitimate birth. Later the idea was to gain legitimacy from scholarly studies in disciplines like psychology and sociology, which emphasised the positive implications of stable family life on the development of child.

In present contexts in addition, to the adoption by childless couples, an unmarried adult individual may adopt and assume the role of a single parent. Adoption is also viable idea for homosexual couples and individuals who may want to start an independent family of their own. However, in India despite repeal of Section 377 of the Constitution, which has decriminalised homosexuality, homosexuals are still not eligible for adoption. Different countries have different legal procedures and laws regarding adoption. In India the Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection) Act, 2015 lays out provisions and criteria for adoption. According to this Act adoption is the process through which the adopted child is permanently separated from his biological parents and becomes the lawful child of the adoptive parents with all the rights, privileges and responsibilities that are attached to a biological child. The Act recognises five kinds of adoption recognized in law in India. These include adoption of an abandoned, surrendered, destitute children adopted by unrelated person/s living within and outside the country. Similarly, a related child can be adopted by relatives living within and outside the country. Also, the stepparents can adopt children within the country.

8.3.2. Step-Families: Redefining the Family

Stepfamilies are not new and have been common throughout history but absent in sociological and anthropological studies prior to 1970s. Now there has been lot studies of step families on two grounds, first due to increase case of re-marriage in many Western countries as well as in India, the instances of step-families or blended families have increased. Second, the change in the anthropological approach to the study of marriage, family and kinship.

A stepfamily can be defined as family in which at least one of the parent has a child or children from previous relationships. Going by this definition, the step-families does not fit in the conventional definition of family based on sharing of blood and there are also number of

conflicts going on in such families. Children in a stepfamily may live with one biological or adoptive parent, or they may live with each biological or adoptive parent for a period of time

The step families are different from nuclear-biological families on several account. The problems in step families are the result of entry of few members into a family on re-marriage of either father or mother. It's not only the issue of children but also the problem of sharing responsibilities among the members. The entire notion of parental responsibility is altered in such families. They members also face problems of sharing living space, developing relationship, negotiating relations with previous spouse as well as emotional and mental issues.

8.4. CRITIQUE OF THE CLASSICAL THEORY

The definitions of family in sociology were done from a Western cultural understanding of biology and its centrality to the formation of family. Prior to 1970s, most sociologist were engaged with the task of differentiating family from household and further to use it for a comparison of social changes taking place due to industrialization. The dominant assumption was about family as a procreative and a safe-haven for its members which was getting affected due the growth of rationality and scientific temper. This began to change post 1970s, the traditional assumption about the functionality of family began to be challenged. Family began to be conceptualised in terms of its fluid nature that reflected the divide between kinship as a given biological fact and kinship as social, constructed and processual.

The section focuses on the underside of the family as an institution in general and particularly in the Indian context by elaborating on some of the scholarship that offers a critique to it. These critiques are relevant as they offer perspectives to comprehend alternate arrangement which are beyond biology and marriage yet constitute a family.

8.4.1. Cultural Theory: Beyond blood and Marriage Ties

The cultural theorists made the claim that classical definitions of the family were heavily influenced by largely unexamined Western cultural assumptions about biology and its relationship to kinship. They were of opinion that sociologist studying family had only two engagements, firstly to compare and differentiate family from household and secondly to examine the changes taking place due to impact of industrialization. And seen in the earlier

section, family was defined as a functional unit where the task of reproduction, emotional ties and other domestic work was done. However, post 1980s, changes were visible in theories of family, especially in kinship studies, where the traditional embedded assumptions about the universality of the family and its sociological purposes were debated and ultimately discarded.

Family began to visualize in terms of its fluid nature that reflected the divide between kinship as a given biological fact and kinship as social, constructed and processual.

Family began to be re-imagined beyond the ideal of nuclear family and biological ties for reproduction. The meanings of the family re-imagined at two new levels:

- i. Children are no longer taken as a necessary precondition, and
- ii. Family relations are extended to include friends.

Such an understanding of family broadened the discourse on family whose meanings were seen as continuously negotiated in everyday situations. Judith Stacey work titled *Brave New Families*, gave a new description of the creative nature of contemporary post-industrial family life due to changes in economic realities, gender roles, and kinship conceptualizations. Theorization of same-sex family challenged the assumption of hetero-sexual family as the norm. The new ways of conceptualizing families has laid emphasis on human interaction, gendered relation, and parent-child relationships. According to these cultural theorists, there are alternate modes of constructing that signifies the subjective meaning of relatedness, rather than formal objective ties based purely on biological or marriage ties

8.4.2 A Feminist Perspective: Power and Discrimination

Mainstream studies have described the family as an indispensable social institution based on cooperation, harmony, common interests and equality. To a large extent they have also taken 'man' within the family as the basic unit of their study and have neglected the woman's experiences. Feminism challenged this vision of the family as a cooperative, harmonious and egalitarian realm. They have sought to show that rather than being a mutually beneficial institution maintained on equal contribution of all members, the family functions largely with the exploitation of the woman's labour. The feminist criticisms bring to scrutiny family by focusing on power dynamics underlying it. They illuminate the hierarchies and sexual repression that underlie family, and henceforth, reflect on its in egalitarian and oppressive character.

Feminists like Marxists and functionalists have argued that the family is essentially a conservative institution that functions to preserve the social order. However, they disagree with functionalists and agree with Marxists that in doing so it benefits only a powerful group within society. For feminists, this group is men. They argue that families preserve, support and embed patriarchy. Feminists criticize mainstream theories for not recognizing existing unequal power relations within the family that help maintain patriarchy at the cost of the woman's life and rights. Okin (1989) observes that justice is glaringly lacking from the cornerstone institution of society: the family. She elaborates that marriage and the traditional family structure renders women vulnerable to dependency, exploitation and abuse. Her work is a critique of traditional scholarship on justice that holds family as a noble institution, a moral community and an instance of "enlarged affection". Feminist critique makes us aware of inequality of sexes questioning the unequal division of labour in the traditional family structures, where women are preordained into home-making and child rearing activities and men take up paid work. This leads to economic dependency of women on men and make many of them fear divorce and be victims of violence and abuse. Further, when women seek work outside the home, the justness of family decisions does not change, due to tendency to burden women with more family responsibilities than men (Pagac 1990:1822).

Yet, another critique of the institution of family comes from the work by Raheja and Gold (1996) on image of women in oral folk tradition of Rajasthan in North India. Their work highlights that the folk songs of women in North India are an expression of their critique of conventional conceptions of family and kinship and women's position in it. While these songs posit a positive self-image of women, as they are a powerful expression of opposition by them of their subordination, they do not dismiss the inequalities, disadvantages and sexual repression women face in family in everyday contexts. Karlekar (1998) enumerates family in Indian context as a site for violence; and thereby questions its sanctity as a cultural ideal. She uses the life-cycle approach and argues that at every stage there is discrimination and violence, particularly against girl children and later women within the household, either natal or conjugal (p. 1741). In this context she focuses on familial violence reflecting on it in terms of female infanticide, child labour and inter-spousal violence etc.

Check Your Progress 2

- i. How does the cultural theory challenge the understanding of family as a biological unit? Write in answer in three/four lines

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- ii. What is Okin’s perception on the institution of family? (Elaborate in a short paragraph)

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8.5. NEW FAMILY FORMS

Families have been changing and affected by multiple forces and variables like industrialization, growing independence of women, rise in levels of education, economic change, legal regulations, feminist critiques and political discourses. Since the 1970s, changes in the structure of the family has been taking place. There was the emergence of new forms of family like single parent family, same-sex or family by choice and co-habitation without marriage. These forms were referred as ‘non-traditional’ family as it did not fit into the classical definition of family formed on basis of biology and alliance. However, many in academics preferred to use the term ‘new families’ to refer to forms of family that did not exist or were not visible until the later part of twentieth century. This section focuses on the some of the multiple patterns and arrangements that mark a shift from conventional understanding of family.

8.5.1. Family by Choice

The term ‘families we choose’ was used by Kath Weston to describe queer forms of kinship different to the biological family. Also described as ‘families we create’ suggests that individuals have a choice in the formation of family. According to Weston, in gay and lesbian communities in 1980s San Francisco, "Kinship began to seem more like an effort and a choice than a permanent, unshakable bond or a birth-right." Weston’s (1991) study provides a significant basis to reconceptualise and redefine the concept of family and kinship in view of

relationships between gay men and lesbian women. It questions the genealogical basis to kinship by bringing it to scrutiny and denaturalising it, implying that kinship need not be postulated taking procreation as the base or centre piece. The study reflects on the non-procreative, non-material and symbolic relations of lesbian women and gay men in the U.S., which provide a critique of kinship and contest assumptions regarding the bearing of biology, genetics and heterosexual intercourse on the meaning of family.

The family by choice is an illustration of the fact that biology is not the only defining feature of kinship. People can be kin without sharing blood and marital relation. Kinship is based on love and enduring solidarity expected to characterise these familial relationship. Further it also negates the ideas of procreation based on heterosexual identities. Family is no longer seen only as unit for reproduction rather it can be a non-procreative unit. Such family ties are based on ideology of choice and love, and stand in opposition to biological model of kinship. The families of choice therefore, emerge as an important basis to question biologically modelled heterosexual domain of kinship, which has failed to provide support and care to lesbian women and men.

8.5.2 Live-In Relationship

Live-in relations, a departure from the conjugally established familial units, have emerged as preferred form of arrangements among many. Live-in relationship i.e. cohabitation is an arrangement whereby two adults decide to live together on a long term permanent basis in an emotionally and sexually intimate relationship outside the wedlock of marriage. The live-in relation may be entered into both by heterosexual and homosexual couples. There is a preference for living-in relation among the younger generation in the urban cities across the globe. There are a number of reasons that may govern individual's preference for live-in relations. It finds its foundation in the fundamental right of an individual to have the liberty to choose his or her partner. For many it has emerged as a basis to assess the mutual compatibility or to establish financial security prior to entering into a legalised wedlock. For some it provides an escape from marriage expenses. Also, those unable to enter into marital alliance may enter in live-in relation for e.g. members of same sex, interreligious or interracial group.

However, live-in relations are seen by many as immoral and viewed encouraging free-sexual behaviour. They are seen as threat to the traditional institution of marriage and family. Added

to this, the children born from these relationships are pointed as to have less secure future. In short, these relations are viewed as threat to the legally wedded wife and her children and are seen to give encouragement to extra-marital affairs. Such relations have also been contested on medical grounds and pointed as responsible for rising HIV/AIDs cases. The live-in relations are considered far short-lived than relations based on marriage as they do not require legal recourse to be terminated. Though live-in relationships have been accorded legitimacy along with children born from such arrangements, the latter is not entitled to claim inheritance in Hindu ancestral coparcenary property (in the undivided joint Hindu family) and can only claim a share in the parent's self-acquired property.

8.5.3. Surrogacy Families

The term 'surrogacy family' is used to refer to a family formed with the help of third party (generally a women) who rents her womb for the gestation of the child. The surrogate enters into a legal contract with the fertility clinic that after the delivery of the child, she will have no claim or relations. Surrogacy family functions as traditional family but the only difference is that the notion of maternity is complicated. Motherhood is not defined by the period of gestation but by the capacity to rent a womb. The absence of gestational link between mother and child does not affect their physical and emotional relationship. Surrogacy provides an opportunity to individuals who due to medical reasons cannot conceive, to same-sex partners and those who are want to bring up children without necessarily marrying.

Check Your Progress 3

- i. Give any two difference between biological family and family by choice.
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- ii. Illustrate with suitable example the formation of new family forms due to impact of reproductive technologies.
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8.6. LET US SUM UP

The unit began by focusing on how in the dominant thinking the institution of family has been regarded as the cornerstone/basic unit and an inevitable part of human society. By most family is regarded in positive light, efficacious and desirable. It however, pointed out that such an understanding diverts attention from the underside of family and discourages from rethinking on it. In doing so the unit reflected on feminist critiques and their questioning of many of the assumptions that underlie the traditional/conventional perceptions of family and kinship. These shake the foundation of family by attacking the role of women in it. Then, various alternatives like families based on ideology of love and live-in relationships may be seen as possible ways to negotiate with the traditionally sexually oppressive family forms and kinship patterns. Again, the unit reflected on the challenges posed by stepfamily indicating that being in family may not always be all that a fulfilling experience.

The unit has reflected on the multiplicity of family forms and patterns that allow us to move beyond the terrain of biology. The stepfamily, family based on adoption, gay and lesbian ties based on choice challenge the biological determined understanding of family and kinship.

8.7. KEY WORDS

Household- It is the basic residential unit where economic production, consumption, inheritance, child rearing and shelter are organized and carried out. The household (ghar) is a residential and domestic unit composed of one or more persons living under the same roof and eating food cooked in the same kitchen (hearth/chulah).

Domestic group - Meyer Fortes defined domestic groups as a house-holding and housekeeping group which helps members to organize resources which are needed for the development of all its members.

Step family - A stepfamily can be defined as family in which at least one of the parent has a child or children from previous relationships.

Live-In A Live-in relationship i.e. cohabitation is an arrangement whereby two adults decide to live together on a long term permanent basis in an emotionally and sexually intimate relationship outside the wedlock of marriage.

Surrogacy- The term 'surrogacy family' is used to refer to a family formed with the help of third party (generally a women) who rents her womb for the gestation of the child.

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8.9. SPECIMEN ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress 1

- i) The three characteristics of family according to dominant understandings are:
1. A union between man and women for purpose of procreation- Family is formed with primary function of procreation and hence defined as a mating relation between man and woman.
 2. Institution legalised through marriage: the union between man and women is legalised to constitute a family only through marriage solemnised by the community.
 3. Performs functions of providing economic, emotional and physical security and protection to all its members.
- ii) The functions performed by the institution of family as highlighted by functionalist theories are:
1. Biologically family provides a legitimate platform for two adult members to sexually cohabit together as a couple and enhance social continuity.
 2. Family provides shelter and fulfils basic metabolic need of meeting food intake.

3. Family acts as an economic unit in which members take part in productive activity; members may do similar or different jobs
4. Household works are divided on the basis of division of labor based on age, gender and position of a person in family and even personal competence.

Check Your Progress 2

i) The cultural theorists were of opinion that the traditional theories of family focused on two things, firstly to compare and differentiate family from household and secondly to examine the changes taking place due to impact of industrialization. Cultural theories expanded on this and for them the meanings of the family re-imagined beyond biology and marriage. Children were no longer considered as a necessary precondition for setting up of family and further family relations are extended to include friends.

ii) Okin (1989) observes that justice is glaringly lacking from the cornerstone institution of society: the family. She elaborates that marriage and the traditional family structure renders women vulnerable to dependency, exploitation and abuse. Her work makes us aware of inequality of sexes questioning the unequal division of labour in the traditional family structures, where women are preordained into home-making and child rearing activities and men take up paid work. This leads to economic dependency of women on men and make many of them fear divorce and be victims of violence and abuse.

Check Your Progress 3

i) The basis of the formation of biological family is the sharing of blood and heterosexual union. On the contrary families by choice is non-procreative and is formed on basis of love and solidarity between homosexuals. The second difference is that individuals are born in biological family, so it is formed at birth. The family of choice is formed when individual are grown up and are able to select their family members.

ii) The emergence of new reproductive technologies has expanded the choice of procreation and family. Surrogacy families is an illustration of the new form of family resulting due to the reproductive technologies.