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SYSTEMS OF KINSHIP IN INDIA

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 - Lineage and descent in India
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TYPES OF KINSHIP SYSTEMS

The kinship system, that is, the way in which relations between individuals and groups are organized, occupies a central place in all human societies. Marriage is a link between the family of orientation and the family of procreation. This fact of individual membership in two nuclear families gives rise to kinship system. Theodorson has defined Kinship as "a social relationship based upon family relatedness". The relationship which may be consanguine based on blood relation or affinal, based on marriage, determines the rights and obligations of related persons. As such, kinship system is referred to as "a structured system of statuses and roles and of relationship in which the kin (primary, secondary, tertiary and distant) are bound to one-another by complex interlocking ties".

After family, kinship group plays a very crucial role in daily life, rituals and social ceremonies of Hindus. People turn to their kin not only for help in exigencies of life but also on regular occasions. The important kinship groups, after the family, are Vansa (lineage) and gotra (clan). Vansa is a consanguineous unilateral descent group whose members trace themselves from a known and real common ancestor. It may be either patrilineal or matrilineal and is an exogamous unit. The members of a vansa are treated as brothers and sisters. Lineage ties remain up to few generations only. The main linkage among the families of a lineage is common participation in ritual functions like birth, death etc. The vansa passes into gotra which though is a unilateral kin group but is larger than the lineage. It is an exogamous group.

The kinship features in North and Central India differ from those in South India. The socio-cultural correlates of kinship system are language caste and (plain and hilly) region. In spite of the effect of these three factors in the kinship relations, it is possible to talk of kinship organization on some collective basis, e.g., on caste and zonal basis.

Northern Zone

The northern zone consists of the Sindhi, Punjabi, Hindi (and Pahari), Bihari, Bengali, Assami and Nepali. Though kinship behaviour in the northern zone changes slightly from region to region and within each region from caste to caste, yet comparative study shows that it is possible to talk of an 'ideal' northern patterns referring to practices and attitudes generally found to be common among a majority of the castes. **Iravati Karve** has given some important features of the kinship organization of the northern zone:

- In these areas caste endogamy, clan exogamy and incest taboos regarding sexual relations between primary kins are strictly observed. Marriage among close kin is not permitted.

- Kin junior to ego are addressed by their personal names and senior to ego by the kinship term.
 - All children in ascending and descending generations are equated with one's own sibling group (brothers and sisters) and all children of one's sibling group are again equated with one's own children.
 - The principle of unity of generations is observed (for example, great-grandfather and grandfather are given same respect as father).
 - Within the same generation, the older and the younger kin are kept distinct.
 - The duties and behaviour patterns of the members of three generations are strictly regulated.
 - Some of the ancient kinship terms having Sanskrit origin have been replaced by new terms, for example, pitamaha is replaced by pita. Suffix 'ji' is added to kinship terms used for kin older than the speaker for example, chachaji, tauji, etc. In Bengal, instead of 'ji' suffix 'moshai' is added.
 - After marriage, a girl is not expected to be free with her parents-in-law, but when she becomes a mother, she achieves position of respect and power and restrictions on her are lessened.
 - The family is so structured that children, parents and grand-parents either live together or social kinship obligations towards them are clearly met.
 - Apart from the joint family which represents a person's intimate and nearest circle of relations, there is always a larger circle of kin who play a part in his life. These kindred represent the circle of his patri-kin or matri-kin that may stand by him and help him when the immediate family no longer suffices.
- respective languages. All the languages of this region are of Sanskritic origin, and therefore, they have affinity with the northern zone. But there are pockets of Dravidian languages in this region. There is also impact of the eastern zone. Tribal people have there unique and somewhat different position compared to other people. The salient features of kinship organization of the Central India are not much different from those of the North India. The important features of kinship in Central India are:
- Cross cousin marriages are prevalent which are not witnessed in the north zone.
 - Every region follows northern India practices of marriage, that is, consanguinity is the main consideration which rules marriage.
 - Many castes are divided into exogamous clans. Among some castes, the exogamous clans are arranged in hypergamous hierarchy.
 - The kinship terminology shows intimacy and closeness between various kin. The relations between kin are governed by the custom of 'neota gifts' according to which cash-gift is given equivalent to cash-gift received. The neota-registers are maintained and preserved for generation.
 - In Gujarat, mamera-type of cousin marriage with mother's brother and levirate (marriage with husband's brother) are practiced by some caste.
 - The custom of periodic marriages in Gujarat has led to child marriages as well as unequal marriages. Such marriages are practiced even today.
 - In Maharashtra, there is impact of both modern and southern zones in kinship relations. For example, the clan organization of the Marathas is similar to that of the Rajputs which is arranged in a ladder manner. Clans are grouped into divisions and each division is named according to the number of clans it comprises; for example parch-kuli, sat-kuli, etc. The clans are arranged in hypergamous

Central Zone :

The central zone comprises the linguistic regions of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujrat and Kathiawar, Maharashtra and Orissa with their

In the matrilineal family, the kinship relationship of women to one another is that of a daughter, mother, sister, mother's mother, mother's sister, and sister's daughter. In the kinship relationship of women with men, males are related to women as brother, son, daughter's son, and sister's son. The kinship relationship of males to one another is that of brother, mother's brother and sister's son. All these kinship relations are based on blood. There are no relations by marriage. This is because husband visits the family occasionally. We, therefore, find:

- absence of companionship between husband and wife and absence of closeness between father and children; and
- There is complete independence of women as regards their livelihood; they do not partake of the earnings of their husband.

This is how some southern families differ from the northern families.

The Nayars, the Tiyans, some Mopias in Malabar region and the Bants in Kanara district have matrilineal and matrilocal family, and it is called Tharawad. The important characteristics of Tharawad are:

- The property of Tharawad is the property of all males and females belonging to it.
- Unmarried sons belong to mother's Tharawad but married sons belong to their wife's Tharawad.
- Manager of Tharawad's property is oldest male member in the family; called Karnavan. Karnavan is an absolute ruler in the family. On his death, the next senior male member becomes Karnavan. He can invest money in his own name, can mortgage property, can give money on loan, can give land as gift, and is not accountable to any member in respect of income and expenditure.
- When Tharawad becomes too large and unwieldy, it is divided into Tavazhis. A Tavazhi in relation to a woman is a group of persons consisting of a female, her children, and all her descendants in the female line.

• In southern zone there is a system of caste endogamy and clan exogamy similar to northern system. A caste is divided into five exogamous clans. Few characteristics of clan organization are:

- Each clan, which is composed of a number of families, uses some symbols for their clan. The main symbols used for clans are of silver, gold, axe, elephant, snake, jasmine, stone etc.
- A person from one clan can seek a spouse from any other clan except his own. However, this choice is theoretical because of the rule of exchange of daughters.
- In marriages, there is not only the rule of clan exogamy but also of family exchange of daughters.
- Because of the marriage rule of exchange of daughters, many kinship terms are common. For example, the term used for nanad (HuSi) is also used for bhabhi; the term used for sala (WiBr) is also used for bahnoi (SiHu); the term used for sasur (HuFa) is also used for bhabhi's father (BrWiFa).
- Marriage between maternal parallel cousins, that is, between children of two sisters, is not permissible.
- Sororate marriage (that is, marriage with wife's younger sister) is practiced. Also, two sisters can marry two brothers in one family.
- There is a system of preferential mating in the south. In a large number of castes, the first preference is given to elder sister's daughter, second preference to father's sister's daughter, and third preference to mother's brother's daughter. However, today cross-cousin marriage and especially the uncle-niece marriage is beginning to be considered as outmoded and a thing to be ashamed of among those groups which have come in contact with the northern Indians or with western culture.
- The taboos prescribed for marriage are: a man cannot marry his younger sister's daughter,

a widow cannot marry her husband's elder or younger brother, that is, levitate is a taboo; and a man cannot marry his mother's sister's daughter.

- Marriage is dependent on the chronological age differences rather than the principle of generational divisions as in the north. One example is that the marriage of grandfather and granddaughter is possible in south.
- Yet, another feature of marriage and kinship in the south is that marriage is not arranged with a view to widening a kin group but each marriage strengthens already existing bonds and makes doubly near those people who were already very near kin.
- A girl has to marry a person who belong to the groups older than her, that is, *tan-mum*, and also to the group younger than her, that is, *tam-mum*, and also to the group younger than her parents, that is, she can marry any of her older cross-cousins. A boy must marry in a *tan-pin* group and to one who is a child of group of *tam-mum*.
- The dichotomy of status and sentiments expressed in such northern terms like *kanya* (unmarried girl), *bahu* (married girl), *pihar* (mother's house) and *sasural* (husband's house) are absent in south. This is because in south, a girl after marriage does not enter the house of strangers as in mother. One's husband is one's mother's brother's son and so on. Marriage in the south, thus, does not symbolize separation from father's house for a girl. A girl moves freely in her father-in-law's house.

Comparison of Kinship System of North and South India

In a southern family, there is no clear-cut distinction between the family of birth, that is, family of orientation and family of marriage, that is, family of procreation as found in the northern family. In the north, no member from Ego's family of orientation can also become a member of his family of marriage; but this is possible in the south.

- In the north, an Ego (person under reference/ study) has some kin who are his blood relatives only and others who are his affinal. In the south blood relatives are affinal kin at the same time.
- In the south, organization of kin is arranged according to age categories in the two groups, that is, older than Ego (*tam-mun*) and younger than Ego (*tam-pin*) (*tam* is 'self', *mun* is 'before' and *pin* is 'after').
- In the south, kinship organization is dependent on the chronological age differences while in the north, it is dependent on the principle of generational divisions.
- No special norms of behaviour are evolved for married girls in the south whereas in the north, many restrictions are imposed on them.
- Marriage does not symbolize woman's separation from her father's house in the south but in the north, a woman becomes a casual visitor to her parent's family.
- In the north, marriage is to widen the kinship group while in the south it is to strengthen already existing bonds.

At the end, it can be concluded that both rigidity and flexibility exist side by side in regard to values and norms related to kinship systems. These are reflected in regard to divorce, widow remarriage, incest taboos, caste endogamy, rule of avoidance, family structure, systems of lineage and residence, authority system, succession and inheritance of property etc. The kinship organization in India is influenced by caste and language. In this age of sharp competition for status and livelihood, a man and his family must have kin as allies. Caste and linguistic groups may help an individual from time to time but his most staunch, trustworthy and loyal supporters could only be his nearest kin. It is, therefore, necessary that a person must not only strengthen his bonds with kin but should also try to enlarge his circle of kin. Cousin marriages, preferential mating, exchange rules and the marriage norms which circumvent the field of mate selection are

now so changing that kinship relations through marriage are being extended and a person is able to get their help in seeking power and the status lift that power can bring. Kinship continues to be a basic principle of social organization and mobilization on the one hand and division and dissension on the other. It is a complex phenomenon, and its role can be sensed even in modern society.

FAMILY AND MARRIAGE IN INDIA

Family in India is an institution and a foremost primary group because it is the sheet anchor of the patriarchal authority on the one hand, and a protector and defender of individual members right to property on the other. Despite wide ranging changes in Indian society, because of synthesis of collectivism and individualism, the Hindu family continues to be important social institution. Several studies on family have revealed that industrialization, urbanization, education, and migration have not necessarily resulted in nuclearisation of family in India. Even a nuclear family in India is not simply a conjugal family. A real change in family must refer to changed pattern of kinship relations, obligations of members towards each other, individualization etc.

The word family is used in several different ways. A. M. Shah outlines at least four inter-related social situations of family life in India. These are:

- The body of persons who live in one house or under one head including parent, children, servants etc.
- The group consisting of parents and their children whether living together or not.

In wide sense all those who are related by blood and affinity.

- Those descended or claiming descent from a common ancestor; a house, kindred or lineage.

Generally a family consists of a man, his wife and their children. This is known as elementary family. Such a family could be an independent unit, it could also be a part of joint or extended

family, without necessarily residing together. An elementary family consists of members of two generations, that of ego and his offspring's. Such a family may share property in common with other such units of the ego's brother's family. According to Shah, an elementary family could be both, a complete one and an incomplete one. A complete elementary family consists of husband, wife and their unmarried children. In an incomplete family some and not all persons are found.

Joint Family in India

There has been a lot of debate about nature of joint family in India. The definition given by Iravati Karve can be taken as starting point for analyzing changes in family in India. According to Iravati Karve, the traditional ancient Indian family was joint in terms of residence, property and function. She has given five characteristics of joint family: common residence, common kitchen, common property, common family worship, and some kinship relationship. On this basis, she defines joint family as "a group of people, who generally live under one roof, eat food cooked at one hearth, hold property in common, participate in common family worship and are related to each other as some particular type of kindred". The word 'common' or 'joint property' here (according to the Hindu Succession Act, 1956) means that all the living male and female members up to three generations have a share in the paternal property.

- According to I.P. Desai, co-residence and common kitchen are not as important dimensions of joint family as intra-family relationships are. He thinks that when two families having kinship relationship are living separately but function under one common authority, it will be a joint family. He calls it functional joint family. He calls a traditional joint family as one which consists of three or more generations. He calls two-generation family as a marginal joint family.
- Ramakrishna Mukherjee while giving five types of relations- conjugal, parental – filial inter-sibling, lineal and affinal – has maintained

that a joint family is a co-resident and commensal kin-group which consists of one or more of the first three types of relations and either lineal and/or affinal relations among the members.

- K.M. Kapadia has given five types of family: nuclear (husband, wife and unmarried children), nuclear with married sons and nuclear family with a dependant (widowed sister, etc.)
- M.S. Gore has said that a joint family should be viewed as "a family of co-parceners and their dependants" instead of viewing it as a multiplicity of nuclear families. He holds that in a nuclear family, the emphasis is on filial and fraternal relationships. According to Gore, joint family is of three types, filial joint family (parents and their married sons with their offspring), fraternal joint family (two married brothers and their children) and filial and fraternal (combined) joint family.

In any case, in structural sense joint family implies living together of members of two or more elementary both lineally and laterally. When joint family consists of grandparents, parents and grandsons and daughters, it is called a lineal joint family. When married brothers along with their wives and offspring live together, it is known as lateral joint family. Besides patrilineal joint family, there is also matrilineal joint family.

The characteristics of joint family

- It has an authoritarian structure, i.e., power to make decisions lies in the hands of the head of the family (patriarch). Contrary to the authoritarian family, in a democratic family, the authority is vested in one or more individuals on the basis of competence and ability.
- It has familistic organization, i.e., individual's interests are subordinated to the interests of the family as a whole, or the goals of the family are the goals of the individual members.

- Status of members is determined by their age and relationship: The status of a man is higher than his wife; in two generations, the status of a person in the higher generation is higher than the status of a person in the lower generation; in the same generation, the status of a person of higher age is higher than the status of a person of lower age; and the status of a woman is determined by the status of her husband in the family.
- The filial and fraternal relationship gets preference over conjugal relationship, i.e., husband-wife relationships is subordinated to father-son or brother-brother relationship.
- The family functions on the ideal of joint responsibility. If a father takes loan to marry his daughter, it is also the responsibility of his sons to repay the loan.
- All members get equal attention. A poor brother's son will be admitted to the same school (even if costly) as rich brother's son.
- The authority in the family (between men and men, men and women, and women and women) is determined on the principle of seniority. Though the eldest male (or female) may delegate the authority to someone else yet even this delegation is based on the principle of seniority, which limits the scope for the emergence of individualism.

CHANGING PATTERN OF FAMILY IN INDIA

Changes in the family are mainly concerned with the changes in structure and interaction level in the family. Is joint family structure being nuclearised? Many studies in India have proved that joint family in India is not disappearing. This is evident from various empirical studies conducted by various scholars in different parts of the country.

STRUCTURAL CHANGES

I. P. Desai studied urban families in Mahuva in Gujarat and found that:

- nuclearity is increasing and jointness is decreasing;

- Spirit of individualism is not growing, as about half of the households are joint with other households; and
- The radius of kinship relations within the circle of jointness is becoming smaller. The joint relations are mostly confined to parents-children, siblings, and uncles, nephews, i.e., lineal relationship are found between father, son and grandson, and the collateral relationship is found between a man and his brothers and uncles.

K. M. Kapadia studied rural and urban families in Gujarat's Navasari town and its 15 surrounding villages and concluded that:

- In the rural community, the proportion of joint families is almost the same as that of the nuclear families. Viewed in terms of castes, in villages, higher castes have predominantly joint family while lower castes show a greater incidence of nuclear family.
- In the urban community, there are more joint families than nuclear families. In the 'impact' villages (i.e., villages within the radius of 7 to 8 km from a town), the family pattern closely resembles the rural pattern and has no correspondence with the urban pattern.
- Taking all areas (rural, urban and impact) together, it may be held that joint family structure is not being nuclearised. The difference in the rural and the urban family pattern is the result of modification of the caste pattern by economic factors.

Allen Ross studied Hindu families in Bangalore in Karnataka and concluded that:

- The trend of family nuclear family units. The small joint family is now the most typical form of family life;
- a growing number of people now spend at least part of their lives in single family units;
- Living in several types of family during life-time seems to be widespread that we can talk of a cycle of family types as being the normal sequence for city-dwellers;

- Distant relatives are less important to the present generation than they were to their parents and grand-parents;
- City-dweller son has become more spatially separated from all relatives.

A.M. Shah studied families in one village in Gujarat. Classifying families as simple (consisting of whole or part of the parental family) and complex (consisting of two or more parental families), he found that one-third families were complex and two-third were simple, indicating the breakdown of joint family system in rural India.

M. S. Gore studied families in an urban area (Delhi), rural and fringe areas of Rohtak and Hissar districts in Haryana; found that two types of families:

- One, husband, wife and sons-dominated children, and
- Two, husband, wife, unmarried and married sons.

Sachchidananda studied families in 30 villages in Shahabad district in Bihar and found that:

- One-fourth families were nuclear and three-fourth were joint, indicating predominance of traditional families.
- There were more nuclear families in upper castes than in middle and lower castes.
- Nuclearity tends to rise with the level of education.

Kolenda used data from 26 studies conducted between the 1950s and 1970s and found that:

- Majority of the families are nuclear.
- There are regional differences in the proportions of joint families. There are higher proportions of joint families in Gangetic plain than in Central India or Eastern India (including West Bengal).
- The joint family is more characteristic of upper and landowning castes than of lower and landless castes.
- Caste is more closely related to the size and the proportion of joint families.

Ram Ahuja studied families in 1976 in an urban area and in 1988 in rural areas during his two research projects. Both studies pointed out that though the number of nuclear families is growing yet it does not indicate the disappearance of joint family system.

Studies on structural changes indicate that:

- The number of fissioned families is increasing but even living separately, they fulfil their traditional obligations towards their parental families.
- There is more jointness in traditional (rural) communities and more nuclearity, in communities exposed to forces of industrialization, urbanization and westernization.
- The size of the (traditional) joint family has become smaller.
- So long the old cultural values persist among people; the functional type of joint family will be sustained in our society.
- Changes from 'traditional' to 'transitional' family include trends toward new-local residence, functional jointness, equality of individuals, equal status for women, increasing opportunity to individual members to achieve their aspirations and the weakening of family norms.

The important values which sustained joint family structure are:

- Filial devotion of sons.
- Lack of economic viability of some brothers, i.e., their inability to support their children economically.
- Lack of a state-organized system of social security for the old-age men and women.
- A material incentive for organizing the size of labour unit since it constituted the major share of the capital required for production of goods and services and people had to depend on family labour.

The factors which are now breaking the joint family are :

- A differential earnings of brothers generating tensions in the family, as unit of production and service today is predominantly an individual. Up to a point, the values the members inculcate may enable them to subside tension by mutual adjustment and compromise but brothers separate when they focus on the conjugal units.
- The death of the 'root couple' who holds economic power, and inability, incompetence and self-interest of sons and their wives to take up the role of 'parental couple'.
- Incentive of depending on family labour is disappearing with the emergence of a cash nexus.
- System of social security, savings and extended earning opportunities of the people are leading to nuclearisation of joint family structures.

INTERACTIONAL CHANGES

The changes in intra-family relations may be examined at three levels: husband-wife relations, parental-filial relations and relations between daughter-in-law and parents-in-law.

The relations between husband and wife in Indian family have been reviewed by Goode, Kapadia, Gore and Murray Straus.

- Change in power allocation in decision-making: In traditional family, wife had no voice in family decision-making. But in contemporary family, in budgeting the family expenditure, in disciplining the children, in purchasing goods and giving gifts, the wife now credits herself as equal in power role. Though husband continues to play the instrumental role and wife the expressive role, yet both often talk things over and consult each other in the process of arriving at a decision. This also does not mean that husband-dominant family is changing into wife-dominant or equalitarian family. The assumption of economic role and

the education of wife have made wives potential equals.

- The source of power has shifted from 'culture' to 'resource' where 'resource' is 'anything that one partner may make available to the other helping the latter satisfy his/her needs or attain his/her goals, as such, the balance of power will be on the side of that partner who contributes greater resources to the marriage.
- Murray Straus study on 'husband to wife power score' also supported the hypothesis based on 'resource theory' rather than the 'cultural values theory'. He found that the middle-class husbands have a higher 'effective power' score than the working class husbands. It indicated that compared to middle-class families, working class families have less joint husband-wife activity of all types. It also means that in middle class families, both husband and wife take more active part than do working class families in attempting to direct the behaviour of the family group toward solution of the problem.
- Straus's study thus indicated that both nuclearity and low socio-economic status are associated with reduction in the husband's power. Emphasizing 'resources' factor does not mean that 'culture' (what Max Weber has called 'traditional authority') has lost its importance. In fact, both factors are important today in 'conjugal bonds'. It may thus be averred that though an average Indian family is husband-dominant yet the ideological source of power of women is giving place to a pragmatic one.
- Emancipation of wife: The change in conjugal bonds is also evident from the increasing emancipation of wife. In urban areas, wife going with husband a for social visits, taking food with husband or even before he does, going together to restaurants and movies, etc. – indicate increasing 'companion' role of wife. Husband no longer regards his wife as inferior to him or devoid of reasoning but consults her and trusts her with serious matters. As regards closeness of man to his wife and mother, man, particularly the educated one, is now equally close to both (Gore).
- The relations between parents and children may be assessed in terms of holding authority, freedom of discussing problems, opposition of parents by children, and modes of imposing penalty. In traditional family, while power and authority was totally vested in the patriarch and he was virtually all powerful who decided everything about education, occupation, marriage and the career of children in the patriarch and he was virtually all powerful who decided everything about education, occupation, marriage and the career of children in the family (Kathleen Gough, McKim Marriot), in contemporary family – not only in nuclear but also in joint family – the grandfather has lost his authority.
- The authority has shifted from patriarch to parents who consult their children on all important issues before taking any decisions about them (Ross) also maintains that grandparents are no longer as influential as they were earlier (Gore) also found that it is now parents who take decisions about schooling, occupation and marriage of their children. They even oppose their parents.
- Kapadia and Margaret Cormack also found that children today enjoy more freedom. Some legislative measures have also given powers to children to demand their rights. Perhaps, it is because of all this that parents do not use old methods of punishing their children.
- They use economic and psychological methods (denying money, scolding, restricting freedom, reasoning) more than the physical methods (beating). In spite of these changes in relations between parents and children, the children do not think only of their rights and privileges but also of the 'welfare of parents'.
- Relations between daughter-in-law and parents-in-law have also undergone change.

However, this change is not so significant in daughter-in-law relations. The educated daughter-in-law does not observe purdah from her father-in-law and discusses not only the family problems but also the social and even the political issues.

- Taking all three types of relations – husband-wife, parents-children and daughter-in-law and father in law – together, it may be concluded that:
- Younger generation now claims more individuality.
- Consanguineous relationship does not have primacy over conjugal relationships.
- Along with 'culture' and 'ideological' factor, the 'resource' factor also affects relations.

HOW LONG FAMILY IS GOING TO SURVIVE?

This question is concerned with the future of family as an institution, in general and the future of joint family, in particular. As the survival of family as an institution is concerned, it may be discussed in terms of four factors affecting the family :

- **Technological Advancement:** access to such conveniences as electricity, piped water in homes, intricate home appliances like gas and fridge, telephone, buses and other vehicles have all changed common man's living and raised his standard of life. Effects of the industrial-technological changes on family are quite evident, like those of productive function, abandonment of self-sufficiency in family economy, occupational and population mobility, weakening of kinship ties, and so forth;
- **Population Explosion:** shift from agriculture to manufacturing and service, migration from rural to urban areas, decrease in birth and death rates, increase in average expectation of life and availability of elderly persons in family, replacement of early marriages by post-puberty add late marriages, etc., have created problems and readjustment, changes

in power structure, desire for smaller families and so on;

- **Democratic Society:** ideals of democracy have filtered down to the level of family living. Demand of rights by women, emancipation of children from patriarch's authority, willingness to approach decision-making through democratic process, and change from familism to individualism may be described as important trends in family;
- **Secular Outlook:** there is a shift away from religious values to rational values. Changes in wife's attitude towards husband, demand for divorce on maladjustment, children's reluctance to support parents in old age, elimination of family worship, are all the result of rational thinking and deviation from moral and religious norms.

As regards the survival of joint family, many studies have proved that joint family will never be completely nuclearised in our society. The two structures, joint and nuclear will continue to survive. Only the nature of jointness will change from residential to functional one and the size of joint family will shrink to two or three generations.

Dominant trends in Indian family in the last few decades:

- Increasing importance of nuclear family.
- Transference of some functions (e.g., educational, recreational, protective, etc.) to some other institutions.
- Fundamental change in family age structure, i.e., proportionately fewer children to care for and proportionately more elderly persons surviving. This has created the necessity of transferring support function from the family to the state and to private insurance companies. This has affected the family power structure too.
- Freedom to women due to their education and increasing economic independence.
- Declining reliance of children upon family controls.

- Changing values of youth. Though they have respect for and fear of parents yet they want parental 'support' for achieving their individuals' interests.
- Liberalization of attitudes and practices towards sex.
- Change from pre-puberty to post-puberty marriages.
- Decreasing family size.

These characteristics of the present-day Indian family point out change in structure and family ties. These only trends are ongoing processes. They have not come to a stop. Nevertheless, it is possible to get a fair idea of what the family will be like in the future.

Following Harold Christensen, we can expect following possible changes in Indian family in the first quarter of the twenty-first century

- The family will continue to exist. It will not be replaced by state-controlled systems of reproduction and child bearing.
- Its stability will depend more on interpersonal bonds than on social pressures from outside or upon kinship loyalty.
- It will more depend upon community support and services.
- With medical advances, the family will have greater control over its biological process (of separating sexual from reproductive function, controlling sickness and death, and determining sex of the offspring).
- Remarriage and divorce rates will be high.
- Parents and grand parents will continue to support their children and grandchildren even after their retirement.
- Woman's position of power within the family will further improve with increase in gainful employment.
- Viewed generally, the family will not be equalitarian but will remain husband-dominant family.

HOUSEHOLD DIMENSIONS OF FAMILY IN INDIA

Desai, based on the data collected from Mahuwa, examined the household dimension of family. Jointness is a process, a part of household cycle. A family becomes joint from its nuclear position when one or more sons get married and live with the parents or it becomes joint also when parents continue to stay with their married sons. When married sons establish their independent households, and live with their unmarried children they become nuclear families. This is only a structural dimension of family. Desai outlines structure of family as follows:

1. Husband and wife
2. Unimember households
3. Husband, wife and married sons without children and other unmarried children
4. The above group with other relatives who do not add to generation depth
5. Three generation groups of lineal descendents
6. Four or more than four generations of lineal descendents.

In this classification emphasis is on the understanding of structure or composition of households based on generation and lineage combination. House is the unit of the above classification. There may be several reasons for change in the structure of family. According to Desai there are two types of reasons: natural, and circumstantial. Jointness itself could be a cause for a change in family. For example, married brothers or parents and married children staying together separate due to unmarried brother's or son's marriage. Brothers separate after parent's death. Separation also takes place because of unwieldy size of the parental family or due to shortage of space in the household. The circumstantial reasons for separation are due to contingent situations in man's life. These are:

- men staying with relatives such as the maternal uncle later on establish one's own household;

- other relatives staying with the head die or go away; and
- head of the family goes away alone for business purposes.

Besides the structural aspect of family Desai examines carefully the types of jointness based on degree, intensity and orientation in regard to functions and obligations which people perform for each other through living separately and at times at different far off places. Desai finds the following five types of households:

- Households with zero degree of jointness
- Households of low degree jointness (joint by way of the fulfilment of mutual obligations)
- Household with high degree of jointness (jointness by way of common ownership of property)
- Households with higher degree of jointness (marginally joint families)
- Households of highest degree of jointness (traditional joint families).

Desai concludes that today family is structurally nuclear and functionally joint based on the fact that 61 per cent are nuclear and 39 per cent are joint in Mahuwa with varying degrees as indicated above. Of the 423 respondents in Desai's study only 5 per cent are not joint at all. There are 27 per cent families with low degree of jointness, 17 per cent with high degree, and 30 per cent with higher and 21 per cent with highest degree. Desai also reports that 220 respondents believe in jointness unconditionally, 24 have faith in muscularity unconditionally, 51 believe in jointness conditionally and 58 express their faith in nuclear family with certain conditions. It is undoubtedly clear that people have belief in joint family system, though it is another thing that they are constrained to live apart from their parents and brothers and other kin due to structural conditions on which they do not have any control.

Family is an international unit with diverse and dynamic relationships within the household based on age, sex, kinship status, education, occupational status, place of work, office or power,

status of in-laws etc. One cannot understand such a complex situation by looking at household dimensions of family from a legalistic point of view. An extended household is a miniature world, and as such it reflects the ethos of wider social system of which it is a constituent unit. Besides the diverse and dynamic relationships within the household, composition, basic norms of deference and etiquette, authority of the head of the family and rights and duties of other members, performance of common and particular tasks etc., are some other dimensions to be noted in the functioning of family in India. There are also regional variations in household dimensions. Higher education does not weaken multi-member household, and since higher education is found more among the upper and upper-middle castes, joint family is more among them than the lower caste and class people. In functional terms, jointness of household is nothing but a structure of obligations among the closest kinsmen.

DESCENT AND LINEAGE IN INDIA

In our own society, our consanguinal relatives are always related to us biologically, this is what we mean, of course, when we loosely call them "blood" relatives. Ego's recognized consanguine relatives – the ones to whom he is bound by the kinship system – are, in general, persons to whom he may normally look for emotional support and various kinds of help in case of need. Their importance depends upon the fact that they are few in number as compared with the whole population of the society. Hence every society limits the circle of ego's consanguinal relatives. The principle or set of principles by which ego's consanguinal relatives are determined is known technically as '**Rules of Descent**'. There are three basic rules of descent:

- In patrilineal descent, each individual automatically becomes a member of any consanguinal kin group to which his father belongs, but not of those to which his mother belongs. As a syndrome agnatic is sometimes used and patrilineally related person is therefore an agnate.

- In Matrilineal descent, an individual joins the consanguine kin group of his mother, but not of his father. As a synonym uterine is sometimes used.
- In Bilateral descent, an individual inherits some but not all of his father's consanguinal relatives and also the corresponding consanguinal relatives of his mother. In a general way, the significant relatives in this system are also the close biological relatives; how far in the ever widening circles of relationship the kin relation is recognized i.e., involves social obligations will vary somewhat from one bilateral society to another. We tend to become rather vague about our kinship with relatives beyond first cousins.

Strictly speaking, probably no society is perfectly bilateral. Generally one favours the part lineal side by taking our names from our fathers.

When a descent is traced from only one parent it is called unilineal descent. The most important consanguinal kin groups associated with unilineal rules of descent the lineage and sibs. A lineage is the simplest type of unilateral grouping which consists of all the probable blood relations of one line of descent exclusively. A lineage consists of descendants in one line, who know their exact genealogical relationships and who recognize obligations to one another. A lineage is this smaller, more localized and more function-laden than the broad kinship grouping.

The lineage is only one form of corporate kin group. But there are many kinds of kinship organization, most can be classified into four major types. Patrilineage, Matrilineage, Clans and Kindred. They differ by virtue of the mode of tracing descent. The two widespread modes are unilineal and bilineal.

Bilineal descent is also known as cognitive descent or omnilinear descent. In this case, some difficulties may arise. The groups formed on this basis are bound to overlap for a start, according to this arrangement. I am a member of both my mother's and father's group. These could scarcely

the groups of permanent territorial residence because it could not be permanently resident in two groups at once.

The unilineal descent thus has some obvious advantages. First it assigns an individual to the group only and thus avoids the problem of overlapping groups. The unilineal stops the indefinite proliferation of inheritors that the bilateral principle demands.

Bilateral is a term used to describe the transmission of decent or of property rights through male and female parents, without emphasizing one or the other lines. The membership is loosely defined by the bilateral rules of descent.

Seen in comparative perspective, the kindred have a peculiar feature in that its membership and duties are defined strictly in relation to a given ego. Unlike lineage and this therefore, kindred are not mutually exclusive in membership, they overlap one another. The members have no group activities apart from their several connections with one specific person.

The tenaciousness of weakness of the kindred as a cooperative group points to a more general fact, namely, the bilateral descent, unlike either kind of unilateral descent, may be best throughout in negative terms, it amounts to a lack of emphasis on either line of descent and hence on descent as such.

In every society the rule of descent is important for at least two reasons:

- It automatically establishes for every individual a network of social positions in which he participates with obligation and rights.
- Aside from mutual aid of various kinds, the rights and obligations ascribed on the basis of descent always include some regulations of marriage and sexual relations.

Descent always prescribes, to some extent inheritance of property, and it often prescribes succession to titles or rank. Perhaps the most important supplement to descent for the disposal

of property rights at death is: rights established by marriage; rights established by creditors unpaid before the death of the deceased; inheritance of taxes etc.

MARRIAGE IN INDIA

In almost all societies marriage is an institutionalized social relationship of crucial significance. It is generally associated with number of other important social relationship. There are different types of marital union. These have implications for population composition, property relations, inheritance etc. Further, there are various regulations and prohibitions associated with marriage and sexual relations in various cultures.

Marriage is more than simply a legalized sexual union between a man and a woman; it is socially acknowledged and approved. In India, people generally believe that marriage is not between two individuals, but it is between two families in terms of bonds it creates between them. Certainly marriage provides recognition of legitimacy to children; it confers acknowledged social status on the offspring, and this is important in terms of inheritance and succession.

- Marriage is perceived by sociologists as a system of roles of a man and a woman whose union has been given social sanction as husband and wife. The equilibrium of the system requires adjustment between the two partners so that the role enactment of one (partner) corresponds to the role expectations of the other (Robert O' Blood).
- Indologists look upon Hindu marriage as a *sanskara*, having three objects of *dharma* (fulfilment of religious duties), *rati* (sex gratification), and *praja* (procreation). Marriage performed for *dharma* was called *dharmik* marriage, while one performed for sexual pleasures was regarded as *adharmik* marriage.

Marriage was considered sacred because of several reasons :

- *dharma* was the highest aim of marriage.
- rites were performed before sacred god *Agni* by reciting mantras from sacred scriptures *Vedas* by a sacred *Brahman*,
- union (between man and woman) was considered indissoluble and irrevocable;
- emphasis was on chastity of the woman and faithfulness of the man. Even today, the sanctity of the marriage is recognized by Hindus in spite of the fact that marriage is performed for companionship and not for performing duties, and whenever found a failure, it is dissolved by divorce.
- mutual fidelity and devotion to partner are still considered to be the essence of marriage. Kapadia (1966) has said: "Hindu marriage continues to be a sacrament; only it is raised to an ethical plane."

In other words, marriage in Hindu culture is a spiritual union between a man and a woman for spiritual realization.

Hindu culture also recognizes besides the above-mentioned *Brahma* marriage seven other forms of marriage with lesser and lower ideals.

- The four of these marriages – *Gandharva* (entering into sex before getting the social sanction of society), *Asura* (eloping with a woman), *Rakshasya* (forcibly abducting a woman from her home) and *Paisacha* (Man molesting a girl when she is asleep or intoxicated or in a state of unbalanced mind) – had such a low ideal that they were termed as *Adharmik* marriages.
- The remaining three – *Daiva* (woman is married to a priest, a man of intellect and money, belonging to an aristocratic class), *Prajapatiya* (entering wedlock for biological function of sex satisfaction and having children) and *Arsha* (women marrying a man of intellect and character (sage who is reluctant to enter marriage, so that she may get intelligent progeny and good home environment) – were given the label of *Dharmik* marriages.

The main reason for recognizing the four Adharmik marriages as marriages was to confer the respectful status of a wife on the 'injured' women.

MATE SELECTION AND RULES OF MARRIAGE

According to Kapadia the question of mate selection in marriage today involves three important issues namely the field of selection, the party to selection, and the criteria of selection. Preferential code, prohibiting restrictions, endogamy and exogamy explain the field, the party, and the criteria of selection of mates for marital alliance. Besides these rules which limit the field of selection in marriage, caste exercises a tremendous control over its members by imposing penalties on the defaulting members. With a view to grant freedom to a person in selection of marriage partner outside ones caste, many Acts were enacted. Despite these legal enactments, exclusivity of caste groups remains a hard fact even today.

The regulation of mate selection in Hindu society is subsumed under the concepts of endogamy, exogamy and hypergamy.

- Endogamy is a social rule that requires a person to select the spouse from within the caste and sub-caste,
- Exogamy forbids selection from gotra and sapinda (i.e., cousins like chachera, mamera, phuphera and mausera); and
- According to hypergamy, a boy from the upper caste can marry a girl from the lower caste and vice-versa.
- In early society, caste endogamy was functional because it preserved the occupational secrets of the caste, maintained the solidarity of the caste and checked decrease in the membership or strength of the caste.
- In the present society, though it makes marital adjustment easier, yet it has proved to be dysfunctional in some ways since it creates inter-caste tensions which adversely affect the

political unity of the country, makes field of mate-selection limited and circumscribed, and creates problems of dowry, child marriage, etc.

The exogamous taboos, according to Valvaikar, were designed for restricting free marital relations between parents and offspring and between siblings. Kane has maintained that exogamous restrictions were imposed for preventing transmission of family defects through heredity and for the fear that there may be clandestine love affairs and consequent loss of morals.

However, these arguments are not accepted today for the reasons that decay of lineage is not reported among non-Hindu communities (Muslims) who practice cousin marriages. Kapadia has said that the rule of sapinda exogamy was of the nature of a pious recommendation and remained so till the end of the eighth century. Today, though this rule is followed by and large by all Hindus, yet cases of cousin marriages are not unknown.

Present Situation

- While earlier mates for children were selected by parents, now children believe in joint selection by parents and children, though cases of individual selection (i.e., selection by children themselves) are not rare.
- The criteria of selecting mates by parents are quite different from those of children. Parents give importance to family status, sanskara, caste, dowry and so forth.
- Children give importance to education, character, physical appearance, equipment and skills, etc.
- The joint selection today keeps in mind the needs of the family as well as the interests of the person acquiring a spouse.
- Many studies conducted by scholars like B.V. Shah, Margaret Cormack, Vimal Shah, etc., showed that a very large number of young boys and girls wanted to select their mates in consultation with parents.

CHANGES IN HINDU MARRIAGE SYSTEM

Changes in marriage system among Hindus may be analyzed in seven areas :

- **Object of marriage:** Traditionally Hindu marriage treated as a *sanskara*, having three objects of *dharma* (fulfilment of religious duties), *rati* (sex gratification), and *praja* (procreation). Marriage performed for *dharma* is called *dharmik* marriage. Marriage was a social duty toward the family and the community, and such little individual interest. Traditionally Hindu marriage is a sacrament. But today situation has undergone sea change. Many legislations i.e., Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, socio cultural awakening, education, and urban employment etc., have weakened the sacred ethos and objectives of Hindu marriage.
- **Process of mate selection:** Changes mentioned above*
- **Form of marriage:** Changes in the form of marriage refers to change from polygyny to monogamy and prevalence of both hypogamy and hypergamy marriages.
- **Change in age at marriage:** It refers to change from pre-puberty marriages to post-puberty marriages. It is realized that pre-puberty marriage harmful on health grounds and also result into higher number of widowhood. Education and employment are considered more or less as valuable for girls as for boys. Hypergamy and concomitant constrain on dowry also contribute to increase in age at marriage. In other words, change in the outlook, values and increased awakening as cultural factors and education, occupation, migration and dowry as structural factors have contributed to change in age at marriage.
- **Economic aspect of marriage (dowry):** The Anti-Dowry Act, 1961, has made giving and taking dowry as a legal offence.
- **Stability of marriage (divorce):** Hindu Marriage Act of 1954 and 1955 prohibit bigamy and permit divorce also on various grounds.

- **Widow remarriage:** The Widow Remarriage Act, 1856 permits widows to remarry but forfeits them the right of maintenance from the property of the first husband. Various laws were enacted in India relate to age at marriage, field of mate selection, number of spouses in marriage, dissolving marriage, dowry and remarriage.

The important legislations relating to these aspects are:

- The Child Marriage Act, 1954, dealing with age at marriage, freedom to children to marry without parental consent, bigamy, and dissolving marriage,
- The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, amended in 1986, and dealing with age at marriage with parents consent, bigamy and annulment of marriage.
- The first three Acts (of 1929, 1954 and 1955) pertaining to the age of marriage prescribe the marriage age of girls as 18 years and for boys as 21 years. The difference in the Acts is that the 1929 Act (amended in 1978) does not invalidate the marriage for violating the provisions in the Act. It only prescribes punishment for the bridegroom, parents, guardians and the priest (but not for violation of the age provision). The 1955 Act converse marriage performed with the consent of parents but the 1954 Act covers marriages performed through courts, with or without the parental consent. Both these Acts (1954 and 1955) prohibit bigamy and permit divorce also on various grounds and put restriction on marriage within the degrees of prohibited relationships, unless custom permits such marriages.
- The Widow Remarriage Act, 1856 permits widows to remarry but forfeits them the right of maintenance from the property of the first husband.
- The Hindu Succession Act, 1956, has given share to wife and daughters in man's property equal to that of sons and brothers.

We agree that social legislation is necessary for providing new direction to culture and society and permitting change and removing evils by filling up the gap between social opinion and social needs of the people. Dr. Radhakrishnan, at the time of introducing the bills related to marriage in 1952, said: "The ancient history cannot solve the problems of modern society. The function of the social legislation is to adjust the legal system continually to a society which is constantly outgrowing that system. While social legislation is essential, the will to implement it is more crucial.

MARRIAGE AMONG MUSLIMS

It is said that marriage among Muslims is more of a contract rather than a sacrament like Hindus.

Muslim marriage, called nikah, is considered to be a civil contract. Its important objectives are control over sex, procreation of children and perpetuation of family, upbringing of children, and ordering of domestic life. S.C. Sarkar also maintains that marriage among Muslims is a civil contract.

But it will be wrong to say that Muslim marriage has no religious duty. It is devotion and an act of ibadat. Jany is, therefore, more correct in maintaining that nikah, though essentially a contract, is also a devotional act. But it is surely not a sacrament like Hindus. Muslim society is stratified among different groups i.e., Shias and Sunnis, Ashraf, Azlaf etc. All these groups are endogamous and inter-marriages among them are condemned and discouraged.

Features of Muslim marriage

- proposal and its acceptance: The proposal is made by the bridegroom to the bride just before the wedding ceremony in the presence of two witnesses and a Maulvi (priest). For recognizing marriage as sahi (regular), it is necessary that both the proposal and its acceptance must be at the same meeting. Not doing so makes marriage 'fasid' (irregular) but not batil (invalid).

- capacity to contract marriage, doctrine of equality, The doctrine of equality refers to marriage with a person of low status. Such marriages are looked down upon. Similarly runaway marriages (called kifa) are also not recognized.
- preference system : The preferential system refers to giving preference first to parallel (chachera and mausera cousin and then to cross-cousin (only mamera but not phuphera). But these days, cousin marriages are discouraged.
- Mahar (dower) custom in marriage refers to money which a wife is entitled to get from her husband in consideration of marriage. Maha can be specified (fixed) or proper (considered reasonable). It can also be prompt (payable on husband's death or divorce) or deferred. At one time, the Muslims had a practice of muta (temporary) marriage but that practice has been abolished now.
- Divorce (talaq) in Muslim society can be given with or without the intervention of the court. A woman can divorce her husband only through the court but a man can divorce his wife without approaching the court and by making a single pronouncement during one tuhr (one menstruation period) i.e., one month called Talaq-e-Ahasan or three pronouncements in three tuhrs (called Talaq-e-Hasan) or three pronouncements in a single tuhr (called Talaq-e-Ulbidat). In addition to these three types of divorce, there are three other kinds of divorce too: illa, zihar, and lian.
- In illa, the husband swears by Allah (God) to abstain from sexual relations with his wife for a period of four or more months or for a specified period. After making illa, if he really abstains from sexual intercourse, the marriage is considered to be dissolved.
- In zihar, the husband declares in the presence of two witnesses that his wife is like a mother to him. Zihar does not dissolve the marriage but it provides a ground to the wife to sue her husband for divorce.

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- In *illa*, the husband swears by Allah (God) to abstain from sexual relations with his wife for a period of four or more months or for a specified period. After making *illa*, if he really abstains from sexual intercourse, the marriage is considered to be dissolved.
- In *zihar*, the husband declares in the presence of two witnesses that his wife is like a mother to him. *Zihar* does not dissolve the marriage but it provides a ground to the wife to sue her husband for divorce.

- In Ilian, the husband accuses his wife of adultery. This provides ground to wife to approach the court for divorce. Divorce given by mutual consent of husband and wife is called khula (initiated at the instance of the wife) or mubarat (initiative coming from wife or husband).

After divorce, the wife is not entitled to get maintenance allowance from her husband. However, about fifteen years ago, the Supreme Court allowed maintenance allowance to one Shah Bano. Since this decision was questioned by the Muslim leaders, describing it as interference the Muslim Personal Law, the government had to amend the legislation. In February 1993, the Uttar Pradesh High Court also ordered the payment of maintenance allowance to one Hameedan and her two children. The All India Muslim Personal Law Board then filed a review petition in the High Court.

All these features point out the difference between the Hindu and the Muslim marriage in terms of aims and ideals of marriage, nature of marriage, characteristics of marriage and dissolving marriage.

It is now contended that the belief that Muslims practice polygyny and easy divorce in large numbers is a misconception. The number of Muslims who have more than one wife is negligible now. There are more cases of bigamy amongst Hindus. Likewise there are more divorces among Hindus and Sikhs than among Muslims.

MARRIAGE AMONG CHRISTIANS

As among Hindus and Muslims, we find stratification among Christians too. The two groups in which Christians are divided are: Protestants and Catholics. The later are further subdivided as Latin and Syrian Christians. All these groups and sub-groups are endogamous.

- The main object of marriage among Christians, as among Hindus and Muslims, is to get social sanction for sex relations and procreation.
- Further, religion also has great significance in Christian marriage. Christians believe that marriage takes place because of the will of

God, and after marriage man and woman submerge themselves in each other.

- The three objects of Christian marriage are believed to be procreation, escape from fornication (sex relations without marriage), and mutual help and comfort.
- The marriage partners are selected either by parents, or by children, or jointly by parents and children. However, in 9 out of 10 cases, selection is made and marriage is settled by parents. While selecting partners, the focus is on avoiding blood relations, and giving importance to social status of family, character, education, physical fitness, etc.
- Restrictions on consanguinity and affinity among Christians and Hindus are almost the same. Christians have no practice of 'preferred persons' like the Muslims. After the engagement ceremony, the formalities to be fulfilled before the marriage are: producing a certificate of character, and submitting an application for marriage in the church three weeks before the due date. The church pretest then invites objections against the proposed marriage and when no objection is received, marriage date is fixed. The marriage is solemnized in the church and the couple declares that they take each other as wedded partner in the presence of two witnesses and in the name of Lord Christ.
- Christians do not permit polygyny and polyandry. The Indian Christian Marriage Act, 1872, amended six or seven times since then, covers all aspects of marriage.
- Christians practice divorce too, though the church does not appreciate it. The Indian Divorce Act, 1869 refers to the conditions under which divorce may be obtained. The Act covers dissolution of marriage, declaring marriage null and void, decree of judicial separation and restitution of conjugal rights.
- There is no practice of dowry or dower among Christians. Remarriage of widows is not only accepted but also encouraged.

- Thus, Christian marriage is not a sacrament like Hindu marriage but is a contract between a man and a woman life. Muslim marriage in which there is greater stress on companionship.

It is necessary that till a uniform civil code is enacted, the Divorce Act of Christians, which is a century and a quarter old, be amended and certain new laws passed. For example, the grounds for divorce are too limited and harsh. Even as between husband and wife, there is discrimination in as much as the husband as simply to prove adultery whereas the wife has to prove another matrimonial offence along with adultery for getting relief. Even when both parties wish on mutual consent basis to separate and the court are convinced that living together is impossibility, no relief can be given. The wife is considered to be a property of the husband as the provision in the Divorce Act entitles a husband to claim damages from the wife's adulterer.

PATRIARCHY, ENTITLEMENTS AND SEXUAL DIVISION OF LABOUR

Patriarchy : Literally, rule by father, this concept is used to refer to a system that values men more and gives them power over women.

Sexual division of labour: A system in which all work inside the home is either done by the women of the family, or organized by them through the domestic helpers. Gender division is a form of hierarchical social division seen everywhere, but is rarely recognized in the sociological studies. The gender division tends to be understood as natural and unchangeable. However, it is not based on biology but on social expectations and stereotypes.

Boys and girls are brought up to believe that the main responsibility of women is housework and bringing up children.

SEXUAL DIVISION OF LABOUR

In most families, women do all work inside the home such as cooking, cleaning, washing clothes, tailoring, looking after children, etc., and

men do all the work outside the home. It is not that men cannot do housework; they simply think that it is for women to attend to these things. When these jobs are paid for, men are ready to take up these works. Most tailors or cooks in hotels are men. Similarly, it is not that women do not work outside their home. In villages, women fetch water, collect fuel and work in the fields. In urban areas, poor women work as domestic helper in middle class homes, while middle class women work in offices. In fact the majority of women do some sort of paid work in addition to domestic labour. But their work is not valued and does not get recognition.

The result of SEXUAL DIVISION OF LABOUR is that

- Although women constitute half of the humanity, their role in public life, especially politics, is minimal in most societies.
- Earlier, only men were allowed to participate in public affairs, vote and contest for public offices.
- Gradually the gender issue was raised in politics. Women in different parts of the world organized and agitated for equal rights. There were agitations in different countries for the extension of voting rights to women.
- These agitations demanded enhancing the political and legal status of women and improving their educational and career opportunities.
- More radical women's movements aimed at equality in personal and family life as well. These movements are called FEMINIST movements.
- Political expression of gender division and political mobilization on this question helped to improve women's role in public life.
- We now find women working as scientists, doctors, engineers, lawyers, managers and college and university teachers which were earlier not considered suitable for women.

- In some parts of the world, for example in Scandinavian countries such as Sweden, Norway and Finland, the participation of women in public life is very high.

Entitlement means the socially sanctioned right to have or do something, something that we have an official right to: the amount that we have the right to receive. When we analyze entitlement at microscopic, refers to place where one is living (the household), food one is taking within the household, over the property, over the child, over the sexual relationship, over work, over power and authority, over liberty and equality. At macroscopic level entitlement is defined by law, etc.

Differential entitlement of every individual over social and political affairs is characteristics of traditional society e.g. Dalits were denied temple entry in traditional Indian society, Women were not entitled to take part in social and political affairs in most part of traditional Indian society.

Entitlements are equitably distributed in modern societies. For example class mobility is now possible to lower strata of society. They can achieve this through education, acquisition of wealth, political power etc.

Feminist sociologists criticize modern criteria of entitlements. They blame that entitlement is differentially distributed modern society. Patriarchy still defines entitlements, not the modernity.

ENTITLEMENTS ON THE BASIS OF GENDER STATUS

- Entitlements over household: A woman's right over household declines after the death of her parents. Entitlements of ownership over her house are restricted because of patriarchy and primordial values.
- Entitlements over food: Bina Majumdar studied status of a woman on the basis of entitlement over food. Her findings show the influence of patriarchal values still prevalent in matters of food in the family. Malinowski in his study found that— food meant for god is prepared by unmarried girls and food for

domestic consumption is prepared by married women.

- Entitlement over projection oneself: Women make food using mental and physical labour. So her productive labour is involved in preparation of food. But she is not given credit for such act. Entitlement over maiden surname changed after marriage. Prefix is a must before the name of women after marriage. This signifies women as private property of man. Cultural prescription, patriarchal prescriptions define how a woman will present herself before or after her marriage. This shows that a woman does not have entitlement over her own existence.
- Entitlement over women's own self: Tulsi Patel in study of Rajasthan concluded that a woman becomes mother-in-law by the age of 35. This is because of child marriage. This shows that women do not have entitlement over the children she is going to produce.
- Entitlement over sexuality: Women's sexuality is greatly controlled and men's sexuality is free, in a patriarchal society. Women sexuality is subjected to patriarchal construct. Men make culture and dominate private sphere of women. Men and women are born equal but it is the society and culture which makes the status unequal.
- Entitlement over work: Gender based inequality in sphere of work is found in almost all societies. But it is absolute in socialist society. Reproductive role of women restricted her role in work field. Women never get out of her confinement of domestic life. Women's labour is rendered unpaid in domestic sphere. Her work is absolutely unrecognized and unappreciated. A kind of exploitation of women takes place at home. Gender role division persists. Women are silent workers. Exploitation in industries leads to revolution by exploited workers. But the silent workers never manifest the opposition to exploitation.

- Entitlement over power in the family and society : Decisions taken in a family are also influenced by patriarchal values. In less important decisions women are concerned. Important decisions are taken by elders in the family in consultation with other male members. Women don't have the power to control over her body. The number of children to produce, the name of the child, property belonging to family, her public affairs are all controlled by family.
- In our country, women still lag much behind men despite some improvement since Independence. Ours is still a male-dominated, **PATRIACHAL** society. Women face disadvantage, discrimination and oppression in various ways.
- The literacy rate among women is only 54 per cent compared with 76 per cent among men. Similarly, a smaller proportion of girls students go for higher studies. When we look at school results, girls perform as well as boys, if not better in some places. But they dropout because parents prefer to spend their resources for their boys education rather than spending equally on their sons and daughters.
- No wonder the proportion of women among the highly paid and valued jobs is still very small. On an average an Indian woman works one hour more than an average man every day. Yet much of her work is not paid and therefore often not valued.
- The Equal Wages Act provides that equal wages should be paid to equal work. However in almost all areas of work, from sports and cinema, to factories and fields, women are paid less than men, even when boy do exactly the same work.
- In many parts of India parents prefer to have sons and find ways to have the girls child aborted before she is born. Such sex-selective abortion led to a decline in child sex ratio (number of girls children per thousand boys) in the country to merely 927.
- There are reports of various kinds of harassment, exploitation and violence against women. Urban areas have become particularly unsafe for women. They are not safe even within their own home from beating, harassment and other forms of domestic violence.

