

Marriage, Family and Kinship PYQ 2022

Q1. Discuss major anthropological debates to understand kinship studies.

Ans 1. There have been several major anthropological debates that have shaped the study of kinship. Here are some of the most significant ones:

The Nature vs. Nurture Debate: This debate centers around the question of whether kinship is a biological or cultural phenomenon. Proponents of the nature perspective argue that kinship is primarily a result of biological relatedness, while proponents of the nurture perspective argue that it is primarily a cultural construct. This debate has led to discussions about the role of genetics versus culture in shaping kinship practices and beliefs.

The Descent Debate: The descent debate centers around the question of how kinship is traced through the generations. Some societies trace descent through the male line (patrilineal), while others trace it through the female line (matrilineal), and still others trace it through both lines (bilineal). This debate has led to discussions about the significance of descent for understanding kinship and its relationship to broader social structures.

The Alliance vs. Descent Debate: This debate centers around the question of whether kinship is primarily about biological relatedness or social relationships. Proponents of the alliance perspective argue that kinship is primarily about building and maintaining social relationships, while proponents of the descent perspective argue that it is primarily about biological relatedness. This debate has led to discussions about the role of kinship in shaping social relationships and the ways in which social relationships can be used to build and maintain kinship.

The Kinship vs. Family Debate: This debate centers around the question of whether kinship is synonymous with family or whether it extends beyond the bounds of the family. Some argue that kinship is limited to the nuclear family or to blood relations, while others argue that it can extend to non-blood relations, such as godparents or close friends. This debate has led to discussions about the social and cultural meanings of kinship and the various ways in which it is constructed and experienced.

The Universal vs. Cultural Specificity Debate: This debate centers around the question of whether kinship practices and beliefs are universal or culturally specific. Some argue that kinship is a universal phenomenon, while others argue that it is culturally specific and varies across different societies. This debate has led to discussions about the ways in which kinship practices and beliefs are shaped by cultural and historical factors and the extent to which they reflect broader social structures and values.

These debates have contributed to a deeper understanding of kinship and its role in shaping social relationships and structures. They highlight the complexity and diversity of kinship practices and beliefs across different societies and the ongoing need for anthropological research to understand these phenomena.

Q2. Critically examine the role descent approach to understand kinship system.

Ans2. The descent approach is one of the key ways in which anthropologists have tried to understand kinship systems. This approach focuses on how kinship is traced through generations, either through the male line (patrilineal), the female line (matrilineal), or both lines (bilateral). While the descent approach has provided important insights into the ways in which kinship systems operate in different societies, it is not without its limitations and criticisms.

One of the criticisms of the descent approach is that it can sometimes oversimplify the complexity of kinship systems. In many societies, descent is not the only way in which kinship is constructed and understood. For example, in some societies, kinship is also based on marriage ties, fictive kinship, or adoption, and these relationships may be given greater importance than descent. Therefore, an exclusive focus on descent can result in an incomplete understanding of kinship systems.

Another criticism of the descent approach is that it can sometimes lead to essentializing or stereotyping of cultures. The patrilineal, matrilineal, or bilateral classification is often based on a binary gender model that assumes a clear distinction between male and female roles and identities. This classification may not accurately reflect the diverse and complex gender identities and roles that exist in many societies. Additionally, a focus on descent can reinforce stereotypes about gender roles, such as the assumption that men are always the dominant figures in patrilineal societies.

Finally, the descent approach can sometimes obscure the economic, political, and social factors that shape kinship systems. Kinship systems are not static or isolated; they are influenced by wider social, economic, and political structures, including migration, colonialism, and globalization. An exclusive focus on descent can limit our understanding of these broader factors and their influence on kinship systems.

In conclusion, while the descent approach has been a useful tool for understanding kinship systems, it should not be used in isolation or at the expense of other approaches. Anthropologists should be aware of its limitations and biases and incorporate a range of methods and perspectives to gain a more comprehensive understanding of kinship systems.

Q3. Discuss new trends in marriage, family kinship relations with suitable examples.

Ans3. Marriage, family, and kinship relations are dynamic and continuously evolving social institutions that reflect changing social, economic, and cultural conditions. Here are some new trends that have emerged in recent years:

Non-traditional families: There has been a significant increase in non-traditional families in recent years, including single-parent households, blended families, and same-sex parent families. These families challenge traditional notions of what constitutes a family and the roles that family members play. For example, same-sex parents may challenge traditional gender roles within the family by sharing caregiving responsibilities more equally.

Delayed marriage and childbearing: In many countries, there has been a trend towards delayed marriage and childbearing, as people prioritize education, career, and personal development. This has led to changes in the timing and sequencing of family formation, with people marrying and having children later in life. This can have implications for the structure and dynamics of families, such as having smaller families or having children at a later age.

Increased diversity and multiculturalism: Globalization and increased migration have led to more diverse families and kinship networks, as people bring different cultural practices and values to their new homes. For example, intercultural marriages are becoming more common, leading to new forms of kinship relations and practices that combine different cultural traditions.

Changing gender roles: There has been a significant shift in gender roles within families and households, with women increasingly participating in the labor force and men taking on more caregiving responsibilities. This has led to changes in the division of labor within families and the re-negotiation of gender roles and expectations.

Changing attitudes towards marriage and family: There has been a shift in attitudes towards marriage and family, with people increasingly viewing these institutions as optional rather than mandatory. This has led to greater acceptance of alternative family structures, such as cohabitation, and a re-evaluation of the importance of marriage and parenthood in people's lives.

Examples of these new trends in marriage, family, and kinship relations can be seen around the world. For example, in countries like Japan, South Korea, and Singapore, there has been a significant decline in marriage and childbearing rates, as people prioritize education and career advancement. In the United States, same-sex marriage has been legalized in many states, leading to new forms of family formation and kinship practices. In Europe, increased migration has led to more diverse and multicultural families, with new forms of kinship relations and practices emerging.

Q4. Write an essay on the practice of dowry in India.

Ans4. The practice of dowry in India has been a controversial and deeply ingrained tradition for centuries. Dowry refers to the gifts and money that are given by the bride's family to the groom's family at the time of marriage. It is seen as a way of ensuring financial security for the bride and her future family, as well as a way of displaying the family's social status and wealth. However, in recent years, the practice of dowry has come under scrutiny for its negative impact on women's lives and its role in perpetuating gender inequality.

The practice of dowry is deeply rooted in Indian society, and it cuts across class, caste, and religion. The practice is especially prevalent in North India, where it is seen as an integral part of the wedding ceremony. Dowry is typically paid in the form of cash, jewelry, or household goods, and the amount can range from a few thousand rupees to millions of rupees. The amount of dowry is often negotiated between the families, and the bride's family is expected to provide the dowry even if they cannot afford it.

One of the negative consequences of dowry is that it perpetuates gender inequality and reinforces the idea that women are inferior to men. Dowry is seen as a way of compensating the groom's family for taking on the financial burden of caring for a woman, and it reinforces the idea that women are a liability rather than an asset. This can lead to the mistreatment of women, including physical and emotional abuse, as well as dowry-related violence and even murder.

Another negative consequence of dowry is that it can lead to financial stress and even bankruptcy for the bride's family. In many cases, the dowry amount is so high that it is impossible for the bride's family to pay it, leading to financial ruin and hardship. This can also lead to pressure on the bride to

conform to the groom's family's demands, as her family's reputation and financial security are at stake.

In recent years, there have been efforts to combat the practice of dowry in India. The Indian government has passed laws that make dowry illegal, and there are support groups and NGOs working to raise awareness about the negative consequences of dowry. However, changing attitudes and traditions is a slow process, and dowry continues to be a pervasive problem in Indian society.

In conclusion, the practice of dowry in India is a complex and deeply ingrained tradition that has negative consequences for women's lives and perpetuates gender inequality. While there have been efforts to combat the practice, changing attitudes and traditions is a slow process, and it will take sustained effort from the government, civil society, and individuals to bring about real change.

Q5. Critically examine the role of new reproductive technology to understand kinship relations in contemporary times.

Ans5. New reproductive technologies, such as in vitro fertilization (IVF), surrogacy, and gamete donation, have significantly impacted kinship relations in contemporary times. These technologies have made it possible for individuals and couples who would not have been able to conceive children otherwise to become parents, but they have also raised complex ethical and legal questions about kinship relations and family formation.

One of the main ways that new reproductive technologies impact kinship relations is by challenging traditional notions of biological kinship. With IVF and gamete donation, it is possible for a child to be genetically related to only one or neither of their parents. This challenges the idea that biological relatedness is the foundation of kinship and family relationships. Instead, kinship relations are increasingly based on social and legal ties, such as adoption or surrogacy agreements.

Surrogacy is another area where new reproductive technology is impacting kinship relations. In traditional surrogacy, the surrogate is also the biological mother of the child, which can lead to complex and sometimes confusing kinship relationships. In gestational surrogacy, the surrogate carries a child that is not biologically related to her, but she still plays a significant role in the child's life and may have ongoing relationships with the child and intended parents.

New reproductive technologies have also raised questions about the legal and ethical rights of parents and children. For example, in cases of gamete donation, the donor may have legal rights to the child, and there may be questions about the rights of the child to know their biological origins. In surrogacy, there may be disputes over parental rights and responsibilities, as well as questions about the rights of the surrogate to make decisions about the child's well-being.

Furthermore, new reproductive technologies have allowed for the creation of non-traditional families, such as same-sex parent families and single-parent families. These families challenge traditional notions of what constitutes a family and the roles that family members play. They also highlight the importance of legal and social recognition of these families, and the need for laws and policies that support their rights and well-being.

In conclusion, new reproductive technologies have significantly impacted kinship relations in contemporary times by challenging traditional notions of biological relatedness and creating new forms of family formation. They have raised complex legal and ethical questions about parental

rights and responsibilities, as well as the rights of children to know their biological origins. While these technologies have provided new opportunities for individuals and couples to become parents, they also highlight the need for ongoing dialogue and discussion about the role of kinship in modern society.

Q6. Write short notes on any two of the following:

(a) Marriage migration and masculinity

Ans6 a Marriage migration is a phenomenon where individuals move to another country to marry someone from that country. This practice has been on the rise in recent years, particularly in Asia, as globalization and increased mobility have made it easier for people to meet and form relationships with those from different countries.

Masculinity, or the set of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors associated with being male, can play a significant role in marriage migration. For example, men who migrate to marry a woman from another country may see themselves as fulfilling traditional gender roles as providers and protectors. This can lead to a sense of pride and fulfillment in their masculinity, as they feel they are fulfilling their duty as a man.

However, masculinity can also contribute to problems in marriage migration. For example, some men may see their wives as possessions, rather than equal partners, and may exhibit controlling or abusive behaviors. This can be exacerbated by cultural differences between the two partners, as well as the power dynamic that comes with being the one who holds the legal and financial power in the relationship.

Masculinity can also play a role in the experience of women who migrate for marriage. Women who migrate to marry a man from another country may be seen as passive or dependent, and may face challenges in asserting their own agency and autonomy. Additionally, they may face discrimination or marginalization due to their gender, ethnicity, or nationality.

In conclusion, marriage migration can be influenced by ideas of masculinity and gender roles, both positively and negatively. While some men may see marriage migration as a way to fulfill their traditional gender roles as providers and protectors, others may exhibit controlling or abusive behaviors. Women who migrate for marriage may face challenges in asserting their agency and autonomy, as well as discrimination or marginalization. It is important to recognize and address these issues to promote healthy and equitable relationships in marriage migration.

(b) The structural context of Low sex ratio in, India

Ans6 b The sex ratio in India, particularly in certain regions and among certain communities, has been a topic of concern for many years. The structural context of low sex ratio in India can be traced to various cultural, social, and economic factors.

One of the main reasons for low sex ratio in India is the cultural preference for male children. This preference is rooted in the patrilineal and patriarchal nature of Indian society, where sons are seen

as the ones who will carry on the family name, inherit property, and take care of their parents in old age. This cultural preference has led to practices such as female infanticide, sex-selective abortion, and neglect of female children, all of which contribute to a lower sex ratio.

Another factor contributing to low sex ratio in India is poverty and economic disadvantage. In many communities, having a daughter is seen as a financial burden, as the family is expected to provide a dowry when she gets married. This can be a significant financial strain on families who are already struggling to make ends meet. Additionally, the lack of access to education and economic opportunities for women can lead to a perception that having a daughter is not financially viable, and can further contribute to the practice of sex-selective abortion.

The structural context of low sex ratio in India is also shaped by the intersection of caste, class, and gender. Women from lower castes and classes may be particularly vulnerable to discrimination and violence, including female infanticide and sex-selective abortion. The intersection of gender and caste also affects access to education and economic opportunities, with women from lower castes and classes facing greater barriers than their higher-caste and class counterparts.

In conclusion, the structural context of low sex ratio in India is shaped by a complex interplay of cultural, social, and economic factors. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive approach that involves addressing the cultural preference for male children, providing economic and educational opportunities for women, and tackling discrimination and violence against women from lower castes and classes. By addressing these underlying factors, it may be possible to create a society where the sex ratio is more balanced and all individuals are valued equally, regardless of their gender.

(c) Gender, culture and violence in north India

Ans6 c Gender, culture, and violence are interconnected issues in North India, where cultural norms and traditions often perpetuate gender inequality and violence against women.

Gender roles in North India are traditionally defined by a strict division of labor, where men are expected to be the breadwinners and women are responsible for domestic duties. This patriarchal system reinforces the idea that women are inferior to men and should be subservient to them. Violence against women is seen as a means of exerting control and maintaining this power dynamic.

Culture also plays a role in perpetuating gender-based violence in North India. For example, the practice of dowry is deeply ingrained in the culture of North India and is a major contributor to violence against women. Dowry is a payment of money or gifts given by the bride's family to the groom's family at the time of marriage. If the dowry is deemed insufficient, the groom's family may use violence or threaten violence against the bride or her family. This cultural practice perpetuates the idea that women are commodities to be traded and can be punished if they fail to meet certain expectations.

Additionally, religious and caste-based differences can also contribute to violence against women in North India. Inter-caste and inter-faith marriages are often seen as a violation of cultural norms, and women who marry outside of their caste or religion may face violence or ostracism from their communities.

Efforts to address gender-based violence in North India require a multi-faceted approach that involves challenging traditional gender roles and cultural norms, providing education and economic opportunities for women, and enforcing laws and policies that protect women from violence.

Additionally, community-based initiatives that engage men and boys in conversations about gender and violence can be effective in changing attitudes and behavior towards women.

In conclusion, gender, culture, and violence are deeply interconnected in North India. Addressing the root causes of gender-based violence requires challenging patriarchal cultural norms, providing opportunities and resources for women, and enforcing laws and policies that protect women's rights. By working towards gender equality and creating safe spaces for women, it may be possible to create a society where violence against women is no longer accepted as a norm.

UniNotes.in