



ASSIGNMENT 3

Understanding Kinship Terminologies

Submitted to
Zahir Ahmed (ZhA)

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Mohammad Tanvirul Hasan
1912762042

Introduction

Kinship, in basic terms, means a relationship between groups of people. It defines a bonding of social connections that make up an essential part of the lives of human beings. The kinship classification goes across three spectrums; one is the Blood-ties kinship, then the Marriage ties kinship, and last the fictive kinship. Each of these kinships has specified distinctions. For example, blood ties kinship suggests the relationship of blood with parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, siblings, etc. On the other hand, Marriage-ties kinship refers to the relationship between individuals who bond together with the knot of marriage. Lastly, fictive kinship demonstrates social bondings based on neither blood ties nor marriage; it is a relationship where individuals share the same emotional ties as done in the other kinships but are not related by birth or marriage; a good example for fictive kinship would be friends.

Types of Kinship

When we talk about Blood-ties kinship, we refer to descent groups and lineage. A *lineage* is a descent group that comes from the same ancestry. There are matrilineal descent groups, in which individuals automatically join the mother's descent side, for patrilineal descent individuals join the father's descent side. For Matrilinial descent groups, mothers are considered the head of the family, wherein patrilineal descent groups and fathers are the family's heads. The prevalence of patrilineal descent groups is widely seen around Bangladesh. People take up their father's name and their wealth as it moves down generations. However, the presence is matrilineal descent is common between tribes and many people from different regions. Matrilineal and Patrilineal descent are types of unilineal descent, where individuals only recognize one line of descent. Ambinial descent, on the other hand, refers to the type of descent, where individuals can choose which descent group they want to belong to. Here, in unilineal descent, membership is ascribed, but for ambilineal descent, membership is achieved. There is also a presence of bilateral descent, where individuals recognize both sides of their parent's family relatives as equally essential and nurture those as equal emotional ties. Bilateral descents are primarily found in western countries, such as America and Canada. In those countries, people acquire the independence to choose their kinship as Kin links through male and female are considered equal. In the eastern countries, Unilineal descent is the most widely spread practice as people tend to follow patrilineal descent.

Kinship Terminologies

Kinship terminologies give a broader perspective to how kinship is referred around the world. It demonstrates how in languages or regions, a person related to another person through kinship is addressed. Kinship terminology happens to be of four types: Lineal terminology, Bifurcate merging terminology, Generational terminology, and Bifurcate collateral terminology.

Lineal terminology distinguishes blood relatives, collateral relatives, and marital relatives. It identifies the types of relatives with a distinct identity. For example, an individual referring to their mother's brother as uncle and mother's sister as an aunt, at the same time referring father's brother as uncle and father's sister as an aunt, would be following linear terminology. Lineal terminology has no distinction with what their parents' siblings are addresses as, ie. Aunt and

uncle are used for siblings of both parents. This is widely practiced in different parts of the world but mainly used in western countries, such as America and Canada.

Bifurcate merging terminology demonstrates addressing an individual's father and father's brother, similarly for their mother and mother's sister, with the same word. For example, when bifurcate merging terminology is used, the father's brother is also referred to in the same manner as a father. The mother's sister is referred to in the same manner as the mother. However, the mother's brother or the father's sister is regarded as uncle and aunt. Another name for Bifurcate merging terminology is Iroquois kinship, which came from its usage by the Iroquois tribe from North America. It is still found in some places in South India and Sri Lanka.

Generational Kinship Terminology identifies their parents' male and female siblings as the same as their parents. For example, the brother of a father and a mother are equal to the father; similarly, the sister of a mother and the father are referred to as equal to the mother. This type of kinship terminology is found in ambilineal descent, where same-sex relatives are called the same.

Lastly, in bifurcate collateral kinship terminology, an individual's parent's siblings are identified as different from each other. Different terms are used to address the parents and their parent's siblings. For example, the sister of a mother would be addressed as the mother's sister, and the sister of the father would be addressed differently as the father's sister. This kinship terminology is used in many parts of Asia and is very embedded in the culture of Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, people address their mother's sister as "খালা" and father's sister as "ফুঁপি" at the same time we address our mother's brother as "মামা" and father's brother as "চাঁচা".

Kinship in context to Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, we tend to see the existence of patrilineal descent mostly. However, among many tribes and indigenous people there is an existence of matrilineal descent. Due to the dense presence of patrilineal descent, patrilocality is found to be practiced widely. This, nonetheless, has been changing a lot since married people tend to move to their own houses. On the other hand, the presence of matrilocality is sparse but it is practiced among many indigenous people.

Conclusion

The kinship terminologies are embedded very well in different cultures and have been followed for years after years. This illustrates the complex structure of descent and kinship that has evolved over the many years of human civilization.