UNIT 4 GENEALOGY AND PEDIGREE

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Learning Objectives

Once you have studied this unit, you should be able to:

➢ learn the meaning of genealogy and pedigree;
➢ distinguish between genealogy and pedigree;
➢ know the applications of genealogy and pedigree in anthropological studies;
➢ learn various symbols used in genealogy and pedigree; and
➢ learn how to draw genealogical and pedigree charts.

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The most fundamental institution of human society is the nuclear family. It is based on marriage and parentage. It consists of a wife, a husband and their unmarried children. Nuclear family is the formative domain for many other socio-cultural institutions. However nuclear family does not exist in isolation or independently. It is linked with other families, kin groups, community and society at large. Family also exists in other forms, for example, extended family. The relationships that exist between members of different types and forms of
family in different cultures reflect variation and complexity. These relationships also form the basis in understanding kinship systems. Further, family membership and family positions are used as criteria for membership and position in larger kin and social units. Kinship commonly plays a crucial role in the structure of non-industrial societies, determining both social relations and group relationship of the present generation as well as past generations. Marriage, for example, is usually significant in determining social/economic/religious and sometimes military alliances between villages, kin groups like clans and ethnic groups. In this unit, we will learn about how genealogy and pedigree are used as research techniques for understanding these networks of relationships. The genealogical method is a well-established procedure to collect kin relationships in ethnographic studies. It was used as a technique by the early ethnographers to identify all-important links of kinship determined by alliance and descent. Pedigree and genealogy have other wider applications in the study of human society and cultures.

4.2 MEANING OF GENEALOGY

We begin by defining and describing what genealogy is. Genealogy, derived from the Greek language (genea, “generation” and, logos, “knowledge”), is the study of families and the tracing of their lineages and history. Genealogy is an analytical tool to study kinship and social organisation. Genealogists and anthropologists use interviews, case study, oral traditions, historical records, and other records to obtain information about a family and to demonstrate kinship and pedigrees of its members. This practice is found in most parts of the world. Originally concerned with tracing royal, aristocratic, or clerical lines, genealogy has broadened its scope over the years, and many ordinary people now pursue it to keep the record of their ancestors and also as a hobby.

Keeping the track of family descent is an ancient practice and profession, for example, ancient Europe (written genealogies), China (printed genealogies), Redjang of south Sumatra, (genealogies written on bark cloth), north India (professional castes in compilation of genealogies), Samoa (memorised genealogies and presently recorded in notebooks) etc. Even The Old Testament contains lists of descent. There is a formalised oral recitation of descent lines in several preliterate societies. In these cultures, genealogical information was transmitted orally, usually as a list of names; later generations recorded and documented this information. Divine origins were often ascribed to kings and heroes. Modern genealogists use artifacts, including ancient records, coins, deeds, tapestries, paintings, and monuments to help them in their work. In anthropology, genealogy is used for generating information about various socio-cultural traits particularly related to kinship, descent, genetic analysis and to understand aspects like inheritance, succession etc.

4.3 MEANING OF PEDIGREE

Now we will briefly define the meaning of pedigree. Pedigree is a line of ancestors or a list of ancestors; it is a way of representing family tree. The word pedigree is a corruption of the French “pied de grue” (pe, foot + de, of + grue, crane) or crane’s foot, because the typical lines and split lines (each split leading to different offspring of the one parent line) resemble the thin leg and foot of a crane. Pedigree is a chart of an individual’s ancestors. It is used in
human genetics to analyse Mendelian inheritance of certain traits, especially of familial diseases. In generic terms, a pedigree chart is an illustration which depicts the manifestation and appearance or phenotypes of a specific gene or genetic organism, along with its ancestors from every generation. It is seen in humans and may also be seen in race horses and show dogs. In physical anthropology, pedigree (otherwise also a cousin chart or table of consanguinity) is helpful in identifying the degree of cousin relationship between two individuals using their most recent common ancestor as the reference point. Pedigree can illustrate cousinship between two individuals either in degrees (first cousin, second cousin etc.) or in removals (once removed, twice removed etc.). This is done on the basis of how close in terms of generation the common ancestor is to each person. Pedigree is used by physical anthropologists to find out the exact relationship embedded in classificatory kin terms like cousins, uncles and aunts in the studies on consanguinity and other genetic studies.

4.4 GENEALOGY AND PEDIGREE

This part will tell us why the use of genealogy and pedigree is important. Genealogy and pedigree are used interchangeably for tracing out ancestry, to show kin relationships between persons and for statements of genealogical connections. Genealogy is also used as an abstract noun for the study of these statements. Genealogy can be referred to as a tool used by certain practitioners (like bards, aristocratic families, some occupational specialists etc.) who operate kinship systems. These oral or written records are comparable to the genealogies prepared by ethnographers. These traditional records are also used by ethnographers as evidences while generating genealogies in the field. However the oral/written records of traditional societies, aristocratic families, other families or individuals or practicing genealogists and the genealogies built up by ethnographers are not one and the same.

The genealogical statement made orally, diagrammatically or in written form or as narratives can be called as pedigrees. Anthropologist J. A. Barnes uses the word pedigree for a genealogical statement made orally, diagrammatically, or in writing by an actor or informant. Anthropologist Meyer Fortes defines pedigree as a 'charter by which any particular person presents himself as the descendant of a specified ancestor'. Yalman writing about the Kandyan Sinhalese draws a distinction between pedigree which link living people with their dead ancestors and genealogy which link living people to others around them. J. A. Barnes says that genealogy is a genealogical statement made by an ethnographer as part of his field record or of its analysis. It is found that, the genealogical data in an ethnographic investigation, entails a much larger range of attributes and networks than the people taken into consideration in the collection of pedigree enquiry. A pedigree is normally a contemporary statement, showing connections between people, many of whom died long ago. In a genealogy, the ethnographer, tries to show how these people during their life time, were thought to be related to one another as well as how these relationships are viewed now. In the construction of pedigree, the cultural factors play a role in showing the lines of descent. In genealogy, the demands of science play a role in recording the lines of descent and also other related information.

Thus genealogy can be designated as (1) the chart or diagram prepared by the ethnographer while tracing descent of a person or generated for a specialised
or particular purpose in order to understand the socio-cultural dimensions by following certain scientific procedures; and (2) genealogy can also be designated as an analytical tool to study the genealogical connections recorded in the form of statements.

For anthropologists, genealogy is distinguished from pedigree by the nature of their descriptions. While genealogy can be viewed as a popular, traditional interpretation of ancestrally defined relations, pedigree may be seen as a scientific interpretation of the same. The distinction rests upon the genealogical method as a scientific method of anthropological inquiry, from the popular art or tradition of certain practitioners or professionals who maintain the lines of descent of certain families and ethnic groups or communities. W.H.R. Rivers converted the way the English elite viewed the concept of pedigree into a scientific method. It grew into a distinct part of conducting fieldwork and the way ethnography was written. It was more than just accumulating genealogical links.

Ethnographers, usually but not invariably, begin drawing charts by identifying a central person, a key informant or the head of family or a leader, priest, a shaman, a known ancestor etc., and weave around his/her relatives, descendants, ascendants, collaterals either in a male line or female line or both. The results are often displayed in charts or written as narratives. Further this genealogical information is put to use for analysing various socio-cultural features in the populations studied by anthropologists. Pedigree is usually used to show or record the lines of descent of families though physical anthropologists apply for a specialised purpose of understanding consanguinity and its genetic implications.

4.5 EARLY WORKS ON GENEALOGY

In this portion we will delve into how the genealogical method was used in the beginning. Genealogical method has been regarded as a popular and chief technique in the field of ethnography. Most probably, the existence of Western pedigrees must have generated interest among many travelers to collect genealogies among other peoples whom they visited. One of the first published genealogies of tribal people was collected by Sir George Grey in Western Australia. In his study of kinship terminology, the famous classical anthropologist L.H. Morgan showed much interest in the genealogical method. However the genealogical method, in anthropology, was devised and popularised by W.H.R. Rivers, during the Torres Straits Expedition of 1898-99. Rivers was interested in genetic as well as socially recognised kinship and paid much attention to kinship terminology. His method laid the foundation for later developments in social demography and the construction of statistical models. A comprehensive account on genealogy was given in Notes and Queries on Anthropology (1912), after which it became a standard procedure in social anthropology and physical anthropology. Its primary purpose, as Rivers opines, was to improve the analysis of social organisation, i.e. the concrete practice of interpersonal relations in kin groups and socio-cultural arrangements. The method uses extensive interviewing of named individuals (personal names) in order to: (1) collect kin relationship terms and vital statistics among non-literate populations, and (2) record their pedigrees, which reflected rights and responsibilities, social customs and practices relating primarily to rules concerning descent, post-marital residence, succession, and inheritance.
The method was used, along with censuses and settlement plans, in anthropological field research for classical monographs on the Todas (Rivers), Tallensi (Meyer Fortes), Tikopia (Raymond Firth), Ndembu (Victor Turner) and Sinhalese (Edmund Leach) among others. Robin Fox (1995) added a further dimension to the method by showing that, because a genealogy is a cultural form, care has to be taken that names are elicited in accordance with local practice. Robin Fox’s Irish islanders began not with a named individual (an ego) but with ancestors. Alan Barnard and Anthony Good (1984) added further procedural refinements to ensure that no patrilineal bias affects the use of the genealogical method.

### 4.6 GENEALOGY AND ETHNOGRAPHY/ ANTHROPOLOGY

Before learning about the applications of genealogy, we also briefly need to know the difference between genealogy and ethnography and anthropology. A simple difference lies between what genealogy is and how it is used in ethnography and anthropology. The main idea of genealogy is to reconstruct family trees and create logical family histories. However ethnography and historical anthropology in particular, uses genealogical method to build and describe the principles of kinship, marriage and descent which Kottak describes as “the social blocks of nonindustrial cultures” in the so-called kin-based societies (1991:26). It is also used to depict households as fundamental social units with the help of census data and comparative/typological analysis (Otterbein 1972). Detailed account of the “classical” genealogical method has been offered by Tyler (1969), also defined as ethno-genealogical method.

### 4.7 APPLICATIONS OF GENEALOGICAL METHOD

We now proceed to learn about how genealogy is used in anthropology and specifically in kinship studies. Kinship plays an important part in the organisation of behaviour and the creation of social groups, as it is one of the most common existing features in human society. Kinship systems are dependent on the social identification and cultural application of affiliations based on descent and marriage. These usually include a set of kinship nomenclatures and a connected set of behavioural outlines and attitudes which form a methodical ensemble. On the basis of descent and consanguinity societies set apart different categories of relationships. Marriage and affinity also helps in distinguishing relationships. All may fall under the term kinship and it is genealogy and its study which helps in comprehending these relationships.

In actuality the significance of the genealogical method moves beyond the specific arena of descent studies yet it is hardly used by anthropologists who do not research on kinship or kin-based societies. It nevertheless presented the foundation of a type of structural demography in anthropology as promoted by Levi-Strauss. This seeks at a calculated description of the relationship between the order and permanence of social structure and the real size of a population. It is based on the collection of personal demographic and social information and the creating of pedigrees, household surveys etc.
The genealogical method is also used in the study of present urban anthropology. Here it is mostly used with ego-centred network analysis. It has also been widely used in migration studies of ethnic groups to America. However it has been most fundamental in the study of medical anthropology. For example, with the help of genealogical studies it was found that the disease kuru, found among the New Guinea highlanders was not hereditary as was first postulated, but due to the spread of cannibalism among them. Anthropologists have also used the genealogical method in AIDS research in Africa. Indeed, the nature and problems encountered in these two cases reflect W.H.R. Rivers’ concerns when he first confronted Melanesian depopulation and inexplicable illnesses at the turn of the twentieth century, the setting in which he first began to develop the genealogical method. Genealogical method is also used in claiming land ownership rights by indigenous peoples. It is also used in establishing authenticity in the issuance of caste certificates. Because of these manifold applications, genealogy will remain a significant tool for empirical study and theoretical reflections in anthropology, indigenous rights, assertion of caste/tribe identity in availing some constitutional benefits.

## Activity

Identify descriptive terms, classificatory terms, cross cousins and parallel cousins, clan exogamy, from a sample genealogy chart (caste, tribe, and religion based genealogies).

### 4.8 HOW TO DRAW PEDIGREE AND GENEALOGICAL CHARTS

As pointed out earlier, pedigree and genealogy are represented by means of charts or diagrams. The following two paragraphs show how to draw a pedigree chart. The next section gives an account on how to draw genealogical charts. It is essential to understand various symbols and notations used in pedigree and genealogy.

### 4.9 ELEMENTARY DIAGRAM OF PRIMARY KIN CONNECTIONS

a) \[ A \rightarrow B \]

b) \[ A \ \ \ \ X \ \ \ \ B \]

\[
\begin{array}{cc}
C & D \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{cc}
C & D \\
\end{array}
\]

c) \[ A \rightarrow m \rightarrow B \]

d) \[ A \rightarrow B \]

\[
\begin{array}{cc}
C & D \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{cc}
C & D \\
\end{array}
\]
In the above charts “-”, “X” and “m” and an upward bracket \[\overline{\text{---}}\] represents marriage; the downward bracket \[\overline{\text{---}}\] and the vertical line indicates descent; the horizontal lines connecting C and D indicate sibling relationship. Another basic and most popularly used diagram is:

\[\begin{array}{cc}
A & B \\
\text{C} & \text{E} & \text{D}
\end{array}\]

The horizontal line connecting A and B shows alliance relationship and the vertical lines connecting C, E and D indicate descent. However, in genealogical representations, alphabets are not used. The following account gives various symbols used in pedigree/genealogy charts.

The symbol used to depict females is a small circle \(\bigcirc\) and males are depicted by a square \(\square\). A horizontal marriage line joins the symbols representing parents. The children are placed in a horizontal row below which is joined by a vertical line emerging from the parents’ horizontal line. That is the horizontal line above the symbols for the children is itself connected to the parents’ marriage line by a vertical line. The symbol for a single child is directly attached to this vertical line. Having understood how to draw primary relationships in a nuclear family we move on to draw a pedigree chart.

### 4.10 PEDIGREE DIAGRAMS

A pedigree diagram shows family relationships where the people are represented by symbols and genetic relationships are represented by lines. Such diagrams make it simpler to envisage familial relationships especially large extended families. The mode of inheritance of biological traits, like dominant or recessive, for genetic ailments is determined by pedigrees. Below is an example of such a pedigree.

In a pedigree, males are represented by squares and females by circles. Mating is represented by a horizontal line connecting a male and a female. Children are represented by vertical lines which go downwards from the parents’ line. The following generations are placed underneath parental generations and the top of the pedigree is represented by the oldest representatives in the family line.

If a pedigree analyses the pattern of inheritance of a specific trait, then the symbols of the persons who have the particular trait are shaded.
The pedigree above demonstrates that the grandparents have two children, a son and a daughter. The trait under study is possessed by the son. One of his four children, his son also has the trait.

In a pedigree, siblings or sibs are shown from left to right based on the sequence of birth. Every individual is labeled with a number by which reference can be made. The numbering system can follow a sequential arrangement from the oldest generation to the most recent or every generation may be represented by a Roman numeral and the individuals in a generation may be represented by Arabic numerals. Thus II-2 would signify the second individual in the second generation of the pedigree.

When the recorder of a pedigree is unable to locate the sex of a person, then the symbol of diamond is used. When a number is inserted in an open symbol, this signifies the number of sibs of the same sex who are not separately recorded. If the disease or trait which the recorder is looking for is found in pedigree s/he is designing, then the affected symbol (person) is shaded black. If a circle or square remains unaffected, that is, the trait is absent then the symbol remains empty. The pedigree above shows that the marriage between II-2 and II-3 did not result in any children. II-5 and II-6 are siblings whose parents have not been added to this pedigree. The symbols III-4 and III-5 are identical twins. This is shown through the short vertical line coming downward from the sibship line. Symbols III-6 and III-7 are twins too but are not identical as they are not joined by a vertical line.

Activity

Draw pedigree charts showing first cousins, second cousin, one and half cousin and also cousin once removed, twice removed thrice removed etc.

4.11 SYMBOLS USED IN GENEALOGY TO REPRESENT KINSHIP RELATIONS

Anthropologists and other specialists of genealogies usually employ a simple set of symbols to represent persons and relationships in generating genealogical charts to represent kinship systems. These symbols were largely adopted from the International Federation of Eugenic Organisations in 1932 by the Sociological Research Committee of the Royal Anthropological Society of Great Britain (Man 1932, vol 32: 120-121) in a paper that was titled as The
Standarisation of Pedigree Charts (TSPC). However, symbols and rules are changed according to the suitability of any field situation and specific features of kinship system, and field researchers devise sets of particular symbols that are appropriate for the conditions in which the work is carried out. The symbols discussed below are accepted and recognised generically. In a genealogical chart, two different kinds of symbols are seen. The first set depicts persons and the second set depicts the relationships between these persons. These are known as connections.

The following account gives us an idea about the symbols used to represent persons: A male, whether boy or man, is usually represented by a triangle. A female, whether girl or woman, by a circle. A third symbol used is the square, where the gender is not specified. It could either represent a man or a woman. For example, the word cousin can be used for either a woman cousin or a man cousin. So in such cases a square helps to designate words/relationships which represent both males and females.

![Symbols for male, female, and both](image)

In kinship studies and genealogical representations one has to remember the rule of economy: symbols used in graphic representations and verbal descriptions to describe a relationship should be shortest and the most efficient way, taking care not to distort native meanings underlying the relationships. Other suitable ways and symbols can be used to capture the essence and feature of kin terminology.

It is required to stress if a person is still living, or if he or she is deceased. In the case of being dead, the triangle, circle or square is coloured in black or crossed out.

### 4.11.1 Representing Persons in Genealogies

These genealogical symbols depicting individuals do not tell us how these individuals can be connected to each other. We use more symbols to show these connections. Three types of connections can be shown: two individuals are connected through marriage, another two are connected by birth, i.e. they are siblings (brothers and sisters) and two persons are connected as one is the parent (father or mother) of the other. This connection is called filiation.

A marriage connection, also called alliance, is represented as a line that goes from below a person to below another person. Sometimes the symbol '∞' is used. A sibling connection is represented as a line that goes from top of a person to the top of another person. The filiation connection (parent-children) is shown by a line which runs from below a parent to the top of the children. However when adoption is to be depicted in a genealogy then the connection line runs similarly but this is illustrated by using a broken line. In the diagrams below the three fundamental connection types (marriage, sibling, filiation) are portrayed.

![Marriage connection](image)  ![Sibling connection](image)  ![Filiation](image)
4.11.2 Representing Connection Types

The above basic connections are combined in genealogies, and every person is linked to multiple persons through at least one of these connection types. This leads us to the second rule called the rule of multiple connectedness: to make genealogies informative, each person has to be connected to at least one other person; and the information becomes more informative with every distinct connection type that is added subsequently to each other person. We may say that genealogy allows more elements for explanation to point out if an individual is connected to several other individuals. In fact it represents how every individual is connected to other individuals through different connection types (marriage, sibling, filiation, date and place of birth, kind of residence, more than one marriage, marital status etc.)

The connection categories may spread to other individuals. Such lines do not have to connect directly to an individual, but may attach to show another connection type. For example, a nuclear family consisting of a father, a mother and their children is depicted in the diagram in the following manner:

![Diagram of a nuclear family with connections between parents, marriage, filiation, siblings, and children.]

4.11.3 Representing a Nuclear Family

The two filiation lines which go down from the parents are combined together with each child into one and thus show the sibling bond between the boy and the girl. This also signifies the marriage connection between their parents. Any line depicting connection can either lead to a person directly or to another connection which shows a different type.

![Diagram showing the connection of siblings and children in a nuclear family.]

Finally, we add father’s younger sister to the nuclear family shown above. She can fit into what Levi-Strauss named as the atom of kinship. In other words she in this example signifies the smallest social unit from which kinship system kinds may be inferred.

4.11.4 Atom of Kinship

Along the graphical/diagrammatic representation of genealogies, anthropologists...
Fieldwork Tradition in Anthropology

also use conventional linguistic abbreviations to describe persons and relations. These abbreviations are to be remembered, even though they are straightforward.

The driving idea for these conventions is the fact that kinship terms cannot be translated from one system or culture to another. The English word “uncle”, for example, does not have any exact equivalent in the Aboriginal Australian Western Desert language, or in any south Indian tribe say Konda Reddy, because the word does not cover the same categories of persons. Indeed, an “uncle” is one’s mother’s as well as one’s father’s brother in English. In the Western Desert, however, these two persons are called with different words and constitute different types of relatives. In the Chenchu tribe (Andhra Pradesh), mother’s brother is called ‘mama’ and father’s brother is called ‘nayana’. Among the caste Hindus in Andhra Pradesh, father’s younger brother is called ‘babai’ or ‘chinnayana’. Anthropologists therefore use abbreviations that are descriptive, that is, they are not a translation of a specific kin term (“uncle” or babai or chinnayana), but are based on primary or “biological” relations (such as mother, brother, father’s brother, mother’s brother etc.). Below is a table that summarizes these conventions and the corresponding relationship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Specific</th>
<th>General</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>any person’s Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>any person’s Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Brother</td>
<td>any person’s Brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>Sister</td>
<td>any person’s Sister (Z is used for sister in order to avoid confusion with Son)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Son</td>
<td>any person’s Son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td>any person’s Daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>any person’s Husband</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Wife</td>
<td>any person’s Wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sp</td>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>Husband and/or Wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>elder</td>
<td>eB, for example, is the elder Brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>y</td>
<td>younger</td>
<td>yB, for example, is the younger Brother</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional abbreviations**

**Genealogical Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B = Brother</th>
<th>C = Child(ren)</th>
<th>D = Daughter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F = Father</td>
<td>GC = Grandchild(ren)</td>
<td>GP = Grandparent(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P = Parent</td>
<td>S = Son</td>
<td>Z = Sister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W = Wife</td>
<td>H = Husband</td>
<td>SP = Spouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA = In-law</td>
<td>SI = Sibling</td>
<td>M = Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m.s.) = male speaking</td>
<td>(f.s.) = female speaking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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4.12 CONVENTIONS FOR DESCRIBING KINSHIP RELATIONSHIPS

The abbreviations or conventions are collective. They are the same as the graphical depiction of genealogies. For example, in English the relation uncle can either be a mother’s brother (MB) or a father’s brother (FB). The nomenclature for both the relation is the same. However in many other places, like the Western Desert, a mother’s brother and a father’s brother have different names and these names represent different meaning and relationship. Sometimes these combinations become rather complex. For example a second cousin can be a mother’s mother’s brother’s daughter’s son (MMBDS) but a mother’s mother is also of course one of the grandmothers.

Concepts like classificatory and descriptive kinship comes up in the discussion of how important are a relation in one culture and the kinship system studied. So for example, an uncle might have much significance in some society whereas in another he might have no important role to play. Discussion of such terms and naming them are all related to the studying of genealogies.

For example, in the Western Desert, people who are not related by blood, i.e. is not directly genealogically connected (as in European society) are still considered as a part of a family. They are seen as kin members but they have to have something in common with the family to be considered a kin. Living in the same community for a long length of time is good enough reason to be considered a part of a family. So though husband, wife, children, i.e. the nuclear family and their extended family are still important, (like in the European society) the kinship system extends beyond members connected by birth and marriage. Thus the aboriginal Australian kinship systems fall under the classificatory kinship system and are universal.

4.13 SUMMARY

Social groups, usually, comprise persons known to each other through membership criteria such as caste, tribe, kinship, occupation, neighbourhood, religion etc. Closely knitted social groups are formed mainly through kinship particularly among the traditional communities, though modern communities are no exceptions to this dictum. In fact, almost all social groups which are very closely knitted are formed through a network of kin relations. These relations ramify and connect other social groups through the principles (or rules) of common descent, consanguinity, affinity and alliance, filiation (or offshoot formation), residence etc., apart from other social, economic criterion. Many a times, the kin relationships assume some specialty which needs a careful understanding. Genealogy and pedigree are used, primarily, as research techniques in order to decipher the underlying meanings of kin relations and to show diagrammatically the web of kin connections between families and wider kin groups such as clans, moieties and fratries etc. Genealogy and pedigree are, then, the tools with which one can understand the social as well as biological relations exiting between person to person(s), group to group(s) and person(s) to group(s). Pedigree and genealogy have also other wider applications in the study of human society and cultures.

Genealogy and pedigree have been regarded as one and the same. Both deal primarily with tracing kin connections existing between members of kin groups.
However, in anthropology, genealogy and pedigree are used for different analytical purposes to arrive at different inferences and hence these two can be distinguished for analytical purposes.

In physical anthropology pedigree is used for a specialised purpose of understanding consanguinity and its genetic implications by tracing exact biological connections between persons and to analyse Mendelian inheritance of certain traits, especially of familial diseases. In order to understand a particular “stated” relationship through a kin term (which may not be biologically meaningful), it is essential to have cultural explanations of the “stated” relationship(s).

The genealogical method, in anthropology, was devised and popularised by W.H.R. Rivers during the Torres Straits Expedition of 1898-99. Genealogy is generally used in kinship studies, structural anthropo-demography, in modern urban anthropology, studies on migration of ethnic groups, in medical anthropology, in AIDS research. Genealogical method is also used in claiming land ownership rights by indigenous peoples. It is also used in establishing authenticity in the issuance of caste certificates.

Pedigree and genealogy are represented by means of charts or diagrams. Different symbols and notations are used to represent different kin members and different kin connections. Symbols are shaded where a particular biological trait is inherited by the members in succeeding generations.

Before going to the field for data collection, it is advisable to practice drawing genealogical and pedigree charts. It should be remembered that that genealogy and pedigree are indispensable for anthropological fieldwork. The fieldworker has to collect extensive genealogies and as many pedigrees as possible in support of the data they are analysing and interpreting.

References


**Suggested Reading**


**Sample Questions**

1) Define and distinguish genealogy and pedigree.

2) Discuss the importance and application of genealogical method in understanding social organisation of human communities.

3) Present various symbols and notations used in drawing genealogical and pedigree charts.

4) Trace out the genealogical connections of a person known to you and explain various facets of his/her genealogical connections.

5) Trace out the inheritance of a particular biological trait (normal or abnormal) by means of a pedigree chart.

**Note**: The last two questions must show the characteristic features of marriage rules. Hence suitable examples are to be used.