
UNIT 1 TRIBAL SOCIAL SYSTEMS

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Social System, Structure and Organization of Tribals
- 1.3 Units of Tribal Social Systems
- 1.4 Patterns of Tribal Social Systems
- 1.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.6 Further Readings and References

1.0 OBJECTIVES

Tribal Social Systems is one of the important areas to understand the institutions of tribal systems of the tribal people. This unit concentrates on understanding the tribes, their characteristics, and tribal social systems like a group of tribes, sub-tribe moiety, phratry, clan, local group of village community, lineage, and family.

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- describe the social organization and social structure of tribal community;
- to know the geographical division of tribe in India; and
- understand the various tribal social systems.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Tribal people constitute an important segment of India. It is having the largest tribal population in the world next to Africa. It constitutes 8.6 percent of total population (2011 Census). There are 705 tribal communities (MSW-001) who speak over 150 languages and 225 subsidiary languages. The tribal groups of India belong to various racial, linguistic, cultural and ethnic categories. Each and every tribe has its unique culture, tradition, values, mores and folkways. In India the diversity of the tribes is very rich in nature from the length and breadth of its region. It is quite interesting to know the social systems because every society or group has a system without which no unit can operate. Each social system has sub-systems such as educational system, economic system, religious system and political system. In the same way, the tribal system speak about its traditional pattern of living as well as its unique features like a group of tribe, tribe, sub-tribe clan, lineage, family and so on. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the various tribal social systems of our country and related concepts of tribal social systems such as tribe, sub-tribe moiety, phratry, and clan, local group of village community, lineage, and family. We will discuss in detail the above aspects later in this chapter.

1.2 SOCIAL SYSTEM, STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION OF TRIBALS

The core of the human life depends on the social life of a person. The social life develops through social interaction and building relationships among the human beings. There are some common characteristics found among the Indian tribes in terms of social life. But, there are some local differences found as well. There are five factors which form the prevailing conditions of social life among the tribes. They are 1) natural environment, 2) population, 3) human being, 4) material technology and 5) social environment. Among these components, the natural environment is basic for all societies. They depend on it for basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, fuel etc. The population provides a raw material for well organized society without which social life cannot exist.

The human being is another factor that is responsible for the patterns and ways of the social life. All individuals are supposed to meet the requirements of the group by collective means. Material technology is an indivisible part of social life because it helps in getting natural resources, erecting a shelter, making tools and preparing food. The social environment plays a vital role for social life. A systematic social life occurs in consonance to the surroundings of uncountable other social environments such as social organization, social interaction, social order, its design, co-operation, the economic construction etc. Therefore, the social life is a combination of whole or a web of varied social organizations.

Piddington (1952) cited that the tribal social life is specific in nature as the tribal people have their own ways of life. He mentioned ten factors of primitive structure and organizations of tribes. They are sex difference, age, kinship, locality, social status, political power, profession, religion and magic, totemism and volunteer associations. Among these, religion, magic and totemism are special features of tribal life. On the other hand, these people have all interlinked organization mainly socio-economic, socio-political and religio-economic.

Let, us understand in detail the social organization and social structure based on view of various authors. Lowie (1950) stated that the study of social organization deals primarily with the significant grouping of individuals. Man cannot live alone and he has to meet his basic needs like food and shelter and social need such as companionship, recreation, religious activities and play. He thus forms a group or association with the help of other men and creates institutions and satisfies his needs. Firth (1961) opines that all community life involves methods of grouping and grading people for an effective carrying out of the various types of activities demanded by the common existence.

According to Redfield (1955) “a social structure is a system”. The elements of social structure do not exist independently of one another. Firth (1961) considers that “it must be concerned with the ordered relations of parts to a whole, with the arrangement in which the elements of the social life are linked together. These relations must be regarded as built up one upon another-they are a series of varying orders of complexity”. Evans Pritchard (1940) restricts social structure to the interrelations of groups explicitly excluding inter-personal relations. Nadel (1957) describes social structure in these words: “structure indicates an ordered arrangement of parts, which can be treated as transposable, being relatively invariant, while the parts themselves are variable”.

Moreover, Redfield (1955) finds among the Chankoms three kinds of kinship relationship in the village –consanguine, affinal and ritual-forming a recognizable system. According to Firth (1961) while dealing with the Tikopian social structure talks about their division into two, based on geographical districts, their clan and kinship division, authority in clan-head and wealth division which are the basic elements in their structure. Like the Tikopian the tribal social structure of India also has some basic structural elements.

Social structure cannot be seen as an isolated web or structure in the social life of a group or community. It embodies some concept of a functional kind such as exogamy. The exogamy is associated with a clan structure and requiring a clan member shall not marry anyone who is a member of the same clan is said to be one of the distinctive features of structural unit clan. Hence, structural analysis alone cannot interpret social life. The organizational aspect of social life is also very important among the tribal social system.

According to Firth (1961) social organization is the synonym for social structure. However, generally the idea of organization is that of people getting things done by planned action. It is the way things get done over a period of time in the community. The social structure is an important system of elements which lasts and which everybody takes account of. The social structure offers a number of courses of action. Thus, social structure is a definable morphological element, the social anatomy; it is maintained and given its ultimate form by organisational decision.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

- 1) Explain the social organisation and social structure of tribals based on the view of various authors.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

1.3 UNITS OF TRIBAL SOCIAL SYSTEMS

After discussing the social structure of the tribals, it is important to explain different constituent social units with the characteristics of the concerned structural unit. An important basis for the existence of a tribe as a social system is a combination of different social systems. The social systems (units) are a number of group of tribes designated by a common name, tribe, sub-tribe, moiety or dual organization, phratry or territorial groups, clan or local group or village community, sub-clan or sub-local group, lineage, family, marriage and youth dormitory.

Group of Tribes Designated by Common Name

Sometimes tribes are known by their neighbouring people and outsiders by a common name. This common name is used in a broad sense to include many other types of tribal communities inhabiting a common territory. For instance, the communities living on the hills might be geographically grouped and known by a common term by the plain dwellers. The different tribes of the group have their own linguistic and cultural traditions. They share many cultural and social customs with their cohorts. At the same time due to the same geographical habitat of today they develop some common cultural traditions.

The phenomenon of grouping of tribes designated by a common name is a common feature in the north-eastern Himalayan region. The expression "Naga" is a common term to denote Nagaland people. The group of the Nagas includes in itself tribes like the Angami; Ao, Chakhesang, Chang, Khienmungun, Konyak, Ikota, Phom, Rengma, Sangtam, Sema, Yimchung and Zeliang. Ellwin cited that the tribal groups of Nagaland are forming new affiliations and using new names like the Chkhesangs-a combination of Chakru, Khezha (both southern Angami) and Sangtam groups with two Rengma villages and Zeliangs-mixed group of Zemis, Liangmais.

In the south, the Manipur Valley roughly marks the point of contact between the Naga tribes and much more closely interrelated groups of the Kuki tribes. Manipur is inhabited by a large number of Kuki tribes which have been split into two broad divisions, namely Old Kukis and New kukis. The Old kukis include such tribes as the Aimol, Anai, Chothe or Chawte Chiru, Kolhan, Kom, Lamgang, Purum, Tikhup, Vaishei and Mhar of Manipur and Hrankhol (or Rangkhoh) and Biete (or Bete) of Cachar. The New Kukis are composed of a single tribe called the thadous who are scattered in Cachar (Assam), Naga Hills (Nagaland) and Manipur. Almost allied to them, at least linguistically are the Paite of Manipur and Ralte of Manipur and Lushai hills (Mizoram).

In Arunachal Pradesh, the people living in the Abor hills are known by the name of Abor. This includes tribes like the Pais, Minyong, Pangi, Padam, etc.

In the middle India, the hillmen of Rajmahal hills are popularly known as Paharias (hillmen) because they live on the hills. This generic term Paharia includes three different types of people namely Sauria Paharias or malers, Mal or Manr Pharias and Kumarbhag Paharias. The plains dwellers know them by the famous term, Paharia, for all those living on the hills.

In western India the Sahyadri group of tribes includes in itself tribes like Koli Mahadeo, Varli, Kokna, Thakur, Kathodi, Koli Malhar, Koli Dhor, Dubla and Dholia who inhabit Nasik, Ahmednagar, Pune (Poona), Satara, Sholapur and Aurangabad districts of Maharashtra. The Bhils of western and middle India also include a number of tribes like, Bhil mina, Bhil Garasia, Dholi Bhil, Dungri Bhil, Dungri Garasia, Nawasi Bhil, Rawal Bhil, Bhagawalia, Bhilala, Pawara, Vasava, Barela, Patelia, etc.

Tribe: The Little Community

Generally, tribe itself is the basic social unit for the community. According to George Peter Murdock (1949) tribe is a social group in which there are many clans, nomadic band villages or other such groups, which usually have a definite geographical area, a separate language, a singular and distinct culture and either common political organization or common political organization or at least a feeling of common determination against strangers.

Majumdar (1961) opines that a tribe is a collection or group of families. He further says that a tribe is ordinarily an endogamous unit, the members of which confine their marriages within the tribe. Several clans constitute a tribe and each clan claims kinship among its members belonging to it, based either on totemic division, territorial congruity or common residence.

Official Definition of Tribe

The official definition of Scheduled Tribe keeps in its view the country's historical experience and tribe-caste relations. Article 366 (25) of the constitution of India has defined Scheduled Tribes as "such tribes or tribal communities or parts or groups within such tribes or tribal communities as are deemed under Article 342 to be Scheduled Tribes for the purpose of this constitution". By the Scheduled Tribes order, 1950, issued by the President in exercise of the powers conferred by Clause (1) of Article 232 of the Constitution of the India, 312 tribes have been declared to be Scheduled Tribes. Later, by an Act of Parliament, some other groups were also included in the schedule. (Jain, 2001).

Characteristic of a Tribe

Some of the important characteristics of tribal community mentioned by Jain (2000) are: Tribal people live within a definite topography. They possess a sense of unity in a particular area. They are endogamous in nature. They have common dialect to speak. They are tied with blood relationship which is a powerful bond among them. They have a common system of offering prayers to God. They always need protection from intrusion and infiltration. Every tribe has its own distinct political organization. They have common culture to produce a sense of homogeneity among themselves

The tribe itself is the basic social system. The small community like a tribe is a very predominant form of human living. According to Robert Redfield (1955) the development of systematic investigation of human life in the small community has come to provide a commonly recognized unit of subject-matter. He puts forward four qualities for the small community. They are distinctiveness, smallness, homogeneity and self-sufficiency.

The distinctiveness is apparent to the observer and is expressed in the consciousness of the people of the community. The smallness is a compact community with a small population which provides in some part of it a unit of personal observation fully representative of the whole. The homogeneity refers to the activities and states of mind are much like for all persons, and the career of one generation repeats that of the preceding and finally its characteristics exists. The self sufficiency denotes that where the community is self sufficient and provides for all or most of the activities and needs of its people. All these characteristics are realized to a great extent in particular groups and villages of rural and tribal India.

Sub-tribe

A tribe is divided into a few groups depending on the economy, ecology and isolation. Initially, people of the group are of the same cultural traditions. They eke out their livelihood that separates them from the others even today. The geographically isolated habitation also leads to a sub-group in the real unity of the tribe. Vidyarthi and B.K.Rai (1976) stated that in the Himalayan region, the Rengmas of Nagaland are divided into two groups based on their geographical isolation namely Eastern Rengmas and Western Rengmas. The Jaunsaris of Dehra Doon in central Himalaya have divided themselves into different castes like Brahman, Rajputs, Koltas etc., based on the status as well as the economy. In Central India, the birhors have two sub-groups namely Janghi and Ulthu based on their habitation pattern. The former leads a somewhat settled life whereas the latter leads a nomadic life. The ecology and economy keep them moving. The Kharias of Chotanagpur are divided into three sub-tribes namely Hill Kharia, Dudh Kharia and Dhelki Kharia. The division in their case is based on their habitation.

Bose (1929) opined that the Korwas of Palamau have two sections namely Hill korwas and Plain Korwas. These separations are due to the geographical isolation. Even the Bhuiyas are divided into two sub-tribes – Pauri (hill) Bhuiyas and Desh (plain) Bhuiyas. The Khonds of Orissa have a number of sub-tribe like Kutia khonds, Dongaria Khonds, Desaya Khonds, Tikiria Khonds, Yenity khonds, etc, which are an example of territorial division. The Koyas have sub-tribe like Rajahor Rashakoyas, Lingadhari Koyas, Kotty Koyas, etc. The Savaras include the Kapu Savara, Maliya Savara or Khutto Savara. The juangs of Orissa have two sub-divisions the Thaniya, those who dwell in their original home and the Bhagudiya are those who left their original home. From these classification we come to know that some division of sub-tribes in India exists.

Moiety

Moieties are called half tribes. When a tribe is socially divided into only two groups based on its social activities, each group is called moiety. This organization is known as a dual organization. The main activities of these two groups of the community regulate the social behaviour and acts of the people. Lowie (1950) describes a number of attributes of a moiety. Moiety may be exogamous, agamous or more rarely endogamous. Agamy may mean that once exogamous dual organization has relaxed the rule on prevention of marriage within the group. However, it may also mean that for some reason the same kinship has never been extended, nor fully extended to the moiety.

The exogamous dual organization varies from a multiple clan system. When the group is divided into two parts in terms of the rule of descent, the moiety affiliation of all its relation can be reduced. But there are more than two clans or exogamous clan-like groups the relative affiliations are not traceable or are only partly determined. Any dichotomy in the two halves of the tribe may prove a practical complete division of the tribe. They occupy two different parts of the village one in the south *toal* and the other in the north. These two groups of the tribe will clearly reflect their political and mutual behaviour. They wear different clothes and one of the moieties socially ranks higher than the other.

The dual organization is frequently asymmetrical in division. Ehrenfels (1950) expressed that “such reciprocal groups usually look upon each other in a mixture of aggressive pride and dependent comradeship at the same time, thus producing a marked sense of rivalry. The stressed reciprocity of all these groupings seems to have rooted in the idea of magic fertility, since warfare between the two marriages-classes play a similar role as human sacrifice or head-hunting in the lunar mythological fertility rites. One of the two parties in a genuine dual system is often found to be either more skilled, powerful numerous or somehow superior.”

According to Lowie (1950) “exogamy readily disappears and readily develops”. Further, he says that agamy naturally develops as a sequel to exogamy in a dual organization. Firstly, a prosperous moiety grows so large that its members lose a sense of kinship or find it greatly weakened. Secondly, the usual difficulty of finding mates also leads to agomy. It was observed that the moieties, exogamous or otherwise, commonly comprise lesser clans. It is also possible that multiple clans may combine into two large groups, or some may die out leaving only two. Such local names of the moieties meaning thereby four-clans and three-clans indicate in themselves an alliance of the clans.

We find all established moieties among the Ao Nagas, Rengama Nagas and Angami Nagas in the north-eastern Himalayan region. It shows that the moieties are not fixed in such system. The Aos are divided into two main divisions namely Mongsens and Chungli. These two divisions have different pattern and design of clothes in order to differentiate themselves. Chungles eat all kinds of food whereas Mongsens refrain customarily from polluted food. They do not eat the stomach of a pig. The hair styles of these two divisions also differ. According to Mills (1951) the Rengma Nagas have divided themselves into two territorial division namely Eastern Rengmas and Western Rengmas. The Western Rengmas have two groups of clans whereas the Eastern Rengmas have no such clan. Lowie (1950) viewed that among the Angami Nagas there are two divisions of clans namely, Pezoma and Pefuma. These two divisions once intermarrying moieties but for some time the taboos has been observed only within the lesser sub-division. For instance, the inhabitants of Kohima are all Pefuma but they freely intermarry unless of the same clan.

According to Srinivas (1953) in the Central Himalayan region, the Tharus seem to have evolved a dichotomous organization of their own community into two sections namely higher and the lower. The higher section has within itself a number of endogamous kuries. Those kuries are Batha, Birtia, Dahait, Badvait and Mahtum. These five kuries form a new endogamous group and call themselves Rana Thakur. The lower moiety which is in a minority has certainly welcomed the name of Thakur for their group of seven sections. They place themselves a little lower than the Ran Thakurs in the social orders.

There are two branches of Mundas in Middle India as older and younger Mundas. They are Mahli Mundako or Patar and Kampat Mundako. These two are endogamous in nature and the Mahli Mundako is inferior to the Kampat Mundako socially. The Saoras of Ganjam in Orissa are divided into two moieties namely aristocrats and Ryats. Saora aristocrats have their secular head Gamangs assisted by Dol-Behara as well as mandal and the religious head Bayya. They are endogamous groups.

The Gonds of Madhya Pradesh have a type of dual organization among its member tribes that is hill Marias. Each Moiety is composed of a number of clans. There are 90 clans in one moiety whereas in the other there are 69 clans.

The Andhs of Andhra Pradesh, moieties of South India are divided into two divisions namely, Vartati (pure) and Khaltati (illegitimate). The Vartati division considered more superior than the Khaltati. They do not intermarry within themselves (they follow exogamous marriage practice within themselves). The Todas of Nilgiri in Tamil Nadu give a classic example of moiety. They have two primary divisions of Tharthazoll and Thevelioll. These divisions are endogamous in nature and each is again sub-divided into a number of exogamous clans. The Tharthazoll moiety shares as many as 10 clans namely Inikithi, Karsh, Kerheir, Kerrodr, Medr, Melgarsh, Nedhi, Norsh, Pirgotl and Tharadr among the existing clans. The Thevelioll division has only six clans namely, Amgarh, Koite, Konigore, Marthikedr, Pett and Pirgott II.

Phratry

A tribe or sub-tribe is divided into number of clans that are further grouped into three or more groups or cluster of clans in order to maintain their individuality on a higher order to form a phratry. In other words, a few clans unite to form a group called phratry. According to Lowie (1950) Morgan who conveniently applied the phratry to a group of two or more clans united for certain common objective. Further, he pointed out that phratry is evidently nothing but a convenient term for a kin linkage. According to Majumdar and Madan (1956) when a group of clans merge together for some reasons or the other the emergent grouping is called phratry. Phratry is more common in tribal India among the north eastern Himalayan tribes and a few tribes of Middle India.

In the north-western and central Himalayas and in middle India social class and territorial grouping of the tribe as its sub-division are common. The Kukis and Hmars have two sections of phratry namely, Rangkhols and Bietas. The Rabhas of Assam have bars as their clan. Two or more bars might unite to form a phratry-Hur. Among the Ao Nagas the Chungli moiety has a number of phratries namely, Pngen, Lungkan, Chami etc. The western Rengma Nagas are divided into six exogamous groups each containing a number of clans. In Middle India the Raj Gonds have four phratries such as Yerwen, Saga, Sarwen, Saga Siwen Saga and Nalwen Saga. These phratries are exogamous groups.

Local Group of Village Community

The local group is a distinct social system or unit. It comprises of number of families who are living in a common settlement, tola or village. They perform certain ceremonies, functions for their common welfare. Moreover, this local group proves to be a bigger unit than the family itself. They are helping hands for one another. In the tribal communities, the tribal village serves as an economic, social and religious unit. On all the occasions the whole settlement is formed of one or more than one clan or lineage. However, the whole settlement is bound by a common link of co-villagers. Among the tribals the thought of village exogamy is the outcome of a brotherhood feeling. Over all atmosphere of the village community is democratic in nature and all the members practice equality in working.

The local group is a permanent unit for those who live in settled villages. While it is a temporary unit for the wanderers like the Birhors. They play a vital role in the social and economic life. On the other hand, there is a high degree of social and economic co-operation within the group. The cooperation of the people is more mutual. The villagers in their economic life help each other such as preparing a cultivable field and construction of house. In these activities Malers of Bihar or the Ao Nagas of Nagaland show much cooperation and unity. There is definite system of rights and obligation followed among the tribes in the villages or settlement level especially in religious ceremonies.

Clan

Tribal group is divided into clans. The clan is an important part of tribal social system. Majumdar and Madan (1956) have considered the sibs as clans and according to them, it is often the combination of a few lineages and descent. It is ultimately traced to a mythical ancestor who may be human, human like, animal, plant or even inanimate. According to Vidyarti (1976) clan can be defined as an exogamous division of a tribe, the members of which are held to be related to one another by some common ties, may be belief in descent from common ancestor, possession of a common totem or habitation of a common territory. A clan is constituted by including all the relatives of either her mother's or the father's lineage and all the off springs of ancestors in such a lineage. In such a manner, many lineages constitute a clan.

We may categorise the clan into some common empirical combinations based on the study of clan organization of the tribes of India and the construction of typology of clans. Primarily, among the Indian tribes clan, organization, it is found that in almost all the tribal groups and the majority of the groups are based on its totemic principle. As regards to totemic principle the totem occurs in wide areas of the tribal society. Secondly, we have a clan like the *gotra* of the Hindu society and the people claim their ancestry in some rishis. Tertiarily, group of tribals who have no clan organization take the help of territorial or distant descendants and relatives or local groups in marital alliances. Therefore, based on these three classifications most of the Indian tribe clan organizations are classified into three groups namely totemic clan; clan based on rishis or saints and local groups based on generation or territory.

The totemic clan is associated with a definite group of individuals set in certain relation to an animal, a plant, an object, animate or inanimate. After that, they are named and in connection the view prevails that the members of this group cannot establish marital ties among them and the object after which the group is named must be respected. This type of clan organization are found in tribe like Santal Bhil, Gond, Oraon, Munda or small as the Birhor and Chenchu.

Another form of clan which exist is reported from many tribes named after rishis or saints. For instance, the Gonds have named their clans after mythological saints namely, Bashitha, Kashyao and Dadhichi. They have divided themselves into social clans and trace their ancestry from any rishi of the Hindu society. There are few exceptions of clan organization on tribal India level. They are Malers of Rajmahal, in Santhal Pargana, the Kadars of Cochin and Andamanese of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. These groups function almost like clan groups. So these are functionally established clans or local

groups. But they regulate their marital ties on generational or territorial grouping by forming a local group.

In all-India level another classification of clan made on the basis of their combination and sub-division. They are in monometric, diametric, triadic or more and sub-clan forms of structure. They are modeled as follows:

- a) Tribe divided into numerous clans which may be called monometric in structure.
- b) Clans grouped mainly into two groups which may be called diametric in structure or conventionally called 'moiety'
- c) Clans of a tribe grouped into three or more groups which may be called triadic phratry.
- d) Clan itself is divided into a number of sub-clans.

Firstly, among many tribes the monometric structure of a clan is found in India. It is found in Munda tribe wherein 64 clans are present. Secondly, the diametric structure of clan is called moiety conventionally or combination of clans into two groups found in many tribes. It is found in Toda of Nilgiri tribe. They have two endogamous groups such as Tharthazoll and Thevelioll. They consist of 12 and 6 clans respectively. Thirdly, the phratry structure is composed of three or more groups formed by combining a number of clans. The Raj Gonds of Satpura have divided themselves into four groups and further divided into many clans. The clans of the Hos and the Killis are divided into sub-clans. For instance, the Purty clan is divided into seven clans. These split-up of clans may or may not allow marriages between one section and another. This splitting up of clans into sub clans is either due to their migration or adoption of new cultural traits.

Further, the clan can be observed on the basis of their extension and expansion. It can be enumerated as conical clan, dispersed clan, territorial clan, and local cognatic descent groups which function as clan. The conical clan presents a conical form of descent group. The descendants claim themselves to come from a common-real, mythical or imaginary ancestor. In matrilineal communities the common tie lies in the female ancestor whereas common male ancestor exists in the patrilineal communities. The third type of conical clan is bilineal based on double descent. Therefore, the three types of conical clan are matrilineal conical clan, patrilineal conical clan and Bilineal conical clan.

The Matrilineal conical clan is scattered among the tribes like the Jaintiya where all members of a *Kur* (clan) always claim descent from a common ancestress. The patrilineal conical clan existed among many middle India tribes and the descent calculated from the father's line. The Dimasa Kacharis have the Bilineal conical clan in which the male child gets the clanship of the father and the female child gets from the mother's clan. The conical clan has the matrix of unilateral grouping which in due course combines itself with a few lineages to form a clan namely a number of lineages in the Bhunjias of Orissa from Baraj (clan). In almost all the tribes the dispersed clan is found as the most famous and extensive form of clan.

In this type also, the clan members claim a common ancestor and a common link on either matrilineal or patrilineal line of which they are really dispersed.

They lose their visible or traceable coordination. This type of clans are scattered over vast areas and in different locales and sometimes they give rise to another type of clan based on territory. Gonds are such case and they are distributed in vast areas and in due course borne the territorial names like Chhattisgarhi and Chhindwara.

The territorial clan claims and defends a definite territory within which most of the clan –man of the group reside and make up the core. The Nagas of Nagaland have clans with their typical local groups, Khals which are territorial in nature. The Kamars of Chhattisgarh have territorial groups, such as Mahandia, Jaunpura, Surgujia and Bastarha. This kind of clan is also found in the Chenchus of Andhra Pradesh and Adiyans of Kerala tribes.

The local cognatic descent groups are usually internally grouped and ranked by the number of generations. They are neither exogamous nor endogamous. Each descent group forms a network of their kinsmen. This local group consists of the descendants of a given ancestral pair.

Lineage

Lineage is a group of families having a common ancestor. According to Evan Pritchard (1940) lineage is a group of agnates, descended from the founder of a particular line. Logically it includes dead persons descended from the founder in order to know their genealogical position and to identify the living. He further suggests four stages of lineage segmentation based on their size, position in the segmentary system and functions. They are maximal lineage, major lineage, minor lineage and minimal lineage. The minimal lineage is the smallest unit and has a time depth of three to five generations. Majumdar (1962) discusses the lineage system as an extension of the joint family system in its wide scope. He further extended Evans-Pritchard's four stage lineage in to six. They are Inter-village, Village, Lineage Group, Lineage, Sub-lineage and family respectively.

According to Lowie (1950), "the lineage is made up exclusively of provable blood relatives which denote all members who are demonstrably descended from a common ancestor or ancestress". Firth (1956) cited that "a lineage, meaning primarily a line of descent, is now taken also to mean a unilineal descent group, all members of which trace their genealogical relationship back to founding ancestor. If the lineage system is patrilineal (organitic), the members consist of men, their children and their sisters and they (the members) trace their descent through male, normally to an original male ancestor. If the system is matrilineal, the members consist of women, their children, and their brothers, tracing descent through female, normally to an original ancestress".

He further says that groups of lineage type usually tend to form sub-groups by division, in what has been called segmentation, fission, ramification or branching. In regard to this branching process, lineage groups have been termed as *ramages*, a name linked with the metaphor which some of these systems use that "grow-like-branches-of-a-tree". In Sanskrit the term "Vansh-Vriksha" is equal to lineage tree, which itself explains that its grown like a tree.

According to Karve (1953) there are two terms namely Kula and Vansh. "A kula was a localized great family". It was supposed to be necessary for a man to be able to name his father, mother and kula and one who could name his kula was a Kulina which has come to mean "well born". She again describes that Vansa is a line of patrilineal descent; kula is a pratri-kin based on locality. The Vansa and kula were patronymic derived from the name of some famous ancestors among whom a new hero arose and gave his name to his own descendants.

Moreover, Nath (1960) says the Bhils of western India are from few villages. The population consists of a single lineage group with a depth and extension of up to five or six generations. Among the Mundas and the Oraons of Bihar the people are of a number of lineages (*khunt*) like the pahan Munda khunt or Mahto khunt who live together. Roy (1915) views that the original settlers (Bhuinhars) of an Oraon village split into two or three khunts. The khunt is the sacerdotal head (pahan) and the temporal headman or headmen (munda or Mahto or both).

He further states that the lineage groups are again classified into two types based on the phase of settling of their members in a village namely, the lineages of original settlers (the dominant lineage) and the lineages of later comers or tenants (the subordinate lineage). In the villages of the Mundas, Oraons and Bhils one finds a dominant lineage group, claiming descent from the original founders of the village and, therefore, the ownership of the entire village. On the other hand, the lineage groups in the village are the descendants of those people who, in the distant past were permitted or invited to settle in the village by the elders of the dominant lineage. The original founders possess the most fertile bits of land in big holdings. They have some reserved pastures for their cattle. The dominant lineage is mostly concentrated and exercised as the authority in the villages.

Family

Family is the primary social group. It has its own functions and forms in different communities. According to Radcliffe-Brown (1941) family includes a husband and wife with their child or children. Lowie (1950) defines family as a trait that at once distinguishes it from lineages and kins. The death of husband/wife destroys the family; the marriage of a son or daughter alters its constitution.

Everywhere, human beings live in households. Most of the tribes live in ideal household in which two or more married couples and their children live together. Men and women take collective responsibility in order to take care of their offspring as well as take collective responsibility in the physical proximity of their living arrangements. Therefore, a household is the residential form of family. The distribution of household types across different tribes will give forms to the family. According to George Peter Murdock (1949) the "family is a social group characterized by common residence, economic co-operation and reproduction. It includes adults of both genders, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted of the sexually inhabiting adults".

As regards, the importance of family, the ethnographer visits a family in its physical or residential form that is the household and stated that "the family

is an ethno scientifically derived construct and can be mapped on to the criteria of descent, affinity and consanguinity (Buchler & Selby, 1968). Further stated that the family is the minimum social unit such as co-operates in production and distribution ; is so age graded as to allocate responsibility for the education and safety of children to the senior age-grades and is engaged in exchange of women with other like units. The term household should be carefully understood in the context of family whose shape is derived culturally.

The important characteristics of family are that, a family is the fundamental instrumental foundation of the larger social design; some version of family as a type of social organisation exists everywhere; participation in family activities by all the individual members is its quality; everyone (member of family) is duty bound to assume a direct role or responsibility in family; family acts as a source of force on an individual to adjust to work or with the need; family is a functional unit for all such purposes as reproduction, socialisation, social control, social order, economy and so on.

Let us discuss some of the family forms in regional basis. In north-western Himalaya, the families of Gujjars who are mostly Muslims, of the Gaddis who are Hindus, and of the Pangwals of Jammu Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh are Patrilineal. The Khasas of Uttar Pradesh practice polyandry and are of the partilineal type. In north-eastern Himalaya, the Garos and the Khasis are matrilineal people. They get the motherhood and claim descent from a common ancestress or mother. Among the Mikirs, children belong to the father's Kur (clan) and the sons inherit the property. They are generally monogamous but persons in power can adopt. The Mizos are patriarchal in nature and according to their customary law the youngest son inherits the property. The Dasama Kacharis practice the rule of double descent that is son descends on the father line and the daughter on the mother line.

The major tribes like the Santal, Munda, Oraon, Ho, Gond, Bhil, Kol, Kharia and Bhumiji are all partilocal, patrilineal, patriarchal and partinymic. They are also monogamous in general with nuclear family. At the same time, joint and extended families are prevalent among them. The minor tribes like the Birhor, Korwa and Parahiya also follow the same as the major tribes structure. In Orissa the major tribes like the Khond and Savara believe in patriarchal type of family.

The tribal families in western India are also patriarchal in nature. The Bhils, the most famous tribe, practice more or less complete Hindu law of inheritance and succession with father as the priest or the supreme. The family among the Minas, Mahadev Kolis, Varlis, koknes, Thakurs, Kotodis, Koli Malhars, Koli Dhors, Dublas, Gamits, are patriarchal in character.

We can find both patriarchal and matriarchal family forms in South India tribes. The Kurichchian, Kundu Vadians and Malayaurs are Matrilineal. It is also found that many tribes have no clear rule of inheritance in terms of property. There are some tribes with inter-mixture of patriarchy and matriarchy. Kadars, Irulas, Puliayans are in the mixture of both the above mentioned category. However, the Nicobaris by rule are in patriarchy and after marriage the two parties reach a decision in this regard after considering the number of members in each family. If the girl's family members are less in number and the boy decides with the consent of elders to reside with the girls and loses his share in his family property and acquires a full share in the girl's family.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

1) What is the official definition of tribe?

.....
.....
.....
.....

1.4 PATTERNS OF TRIBAL SOCIAL SYSTEMS

The social nature of the tribals are living together in a group and effectively carrying out the various activities for common existence by sharing in common activities under the bonds of relationship. Each tribe has their own structure and organization. They form a small community of their own, in particular territory their relations are direct and intimate. According to T.C. Das (1953) tribal organization in India reveals seven types. They are classified on the basis of the difference in the types of spheres or units. They are as follows:

1. Family-Local Group-Tribe
2. Families - Clans-Tribe
3. Families-Moities-Tribe
4. Families-Clans-Phratries-Tribe
5. Families-Clans-Phratries-Moities-Tribe
6. Families-Clans-Subtribe-Tribe and
7. Families-Subclans-Orthogamous clans or selected clans-Tribe.

But, Dubey (1971) opines that in India, tribal design consists of family then clan, phratry and finally tribe. The minimum sphere for an Indian tribal design will include in itself four spheres i.e. individual forming families, families forming clan or local group and clans forming the tribe.

No attempt is made in order to know the tribal design in context to their specific social life in India. A broad typology of the tribal design from a single person “individual”, “family”, “clan or local group”, and “tribe” might be evolved in different forms in its ascending order. The smallest unit is the individual who forms the minimum or the smallest group like family or household. These smaller groups are combined into a larger one through several levels of incorporation. The total understanding might be drawn something like this: a number of individuals are joined in families or households, families in lineages, lineages in sub-clans or sub-local groups, sub-clans or village or local groups, clans in phratries or territorial groups, phratries in moieties, moieties in sub-tribes and finally sub-tribes making up the tribe.

On the other hand, an arbitrary or generic term is used to denote a group of tribes living in a certain territory. All the tribes occupying the same geographic

region are called by outsiders by the same common term. The majority of the tribes of India fall into these minimum categories i.e. "Individual-Families-Clans-Tribe". The concentration of tribes found in four major geographical areas or zones. They are the north-north-eastern zone, the central zone, the western zone, the southern zone and the tribes of Andaman, Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands.

North-North-Eastern Zone

This zone includes Arunchal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura and the Himalayan belt of Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh besides Darjeeling district of West Bengal. The tribes of this zone belong to the mongoloid race. The tribes like the Naga, the Garo, the Khasi, the Lapcha, the Bhutiya, the Lusheis are living in this zone. Traditionally, they are shift cultivators, especially Naga tribes. They weave their own cloth while they grow cotton along with rice and millet. They also trade in wool, salt, sugar and other merchandise in India and Tibet.

Central Zone

This zone includes the states of West Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, North and central Gujarat, Maharashtra and Orissa. The maximum concentrations of tribals found in these regions are the Khond, the Bumiji, the Bhuiya, the Munda, the Oraon, the Ho and Birhor and the Kol and the Bhil. Their main occupation is shift cultivation, hunting, and food gathering.

Western Zone

The western zone includes western Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Goa, Daman & Diu. This zone has its own important tribes, which include the Dubla, the Bhil and the Varli, the Dhodia, the Bharia and the Mina. Except for the tribes like the Bhil and the Varli who live in isolation rest of them live in villages along with non-tribal population. Their main occupation is shift cultivation, hunting and weaving.

Southern Zone

The tribes in this zone belong to most primitive and backward among the tribes of India. Generally, the tribes live in this area are small. Tamil literature of Sangam period has a reference that they are the earliest inhabitants living in India. They have common characteristics in general and live in separate geographical areas. In this zone the tribes live in different geographical areas within southern zone. They are tribes of Erstwhile Travencore and Cochin states, tribes of Wynad, the tribes of South Kanara and Coorg Hills, the tribes of the Deccan Region of Andhra Pradesh, the tribes of the Agency of Andhra Pradesh and the tribes of the Nilgiris.

Tribes of Erstwhile Travencore and Cochin States

The tribes live in the forests and hill ranges of the Western Ghats. They are the most primitive tribes of India. The main tribes are the Kadar, the Kanikkar, the Malai Pandaram, the Muduvan, the Mannan and the Ulladan. They are mostly food gatherers, hunters and shift cultivators. Some of them also work as labourers in coffee and rubber estates. They are still depending upon forests for their survival.

Tribes of Wynad

The Wynad is a part of Nilgiris Plateau. The eastern half of the Wynad is spread to the Nilgiris and Coorg and is inhabited by the Kanarese-speaking tribes. The Western half is inhabited by the Malayalam speaking tribes. The Kurichcha is one of the most important tribes of this area. They have their own land and their main occupation is agriculture. They follow a very rigid matrilineal system. They divide their territory into several 'nads' and there is a headman for each nad. The headman of each nad along with council of elders settles community dispute. They are very orthodox in customs and traditions. For example they do not take food touched by other castes or tribes. The Kurumbas of this area are divided into two groups. They are the Mulla Kurumba and the Urali Kurumba. Their main occupation is agriculture. They practice both wet paddy cultivation and shifting cultivation on the hill slopes. The Urali Kurumba tribals are artisan and usually they are skilled blacksmiths, carpenters, potters and basket makers.

The Tribes of South Kanara and Coorg Hills

This area is located in Mysore state. The tribes of this area are the Yerava, the Koraga, the Sholaga, the Marati, the Kurumba, the Kuruman, the Kudiyaor Melakudi, the Palliyan and the Meda. Their main occupation is shifting cultivation along with hunting and food gathering. They speak a language of both Tulu and Kanarese. Most of them now are basket makers and agricultural labourers.

The tribes of the Deccan Region of Andhra Pradesh

These area tribes are the Andh, the Chenchu, the Gond, the Naipod and the Rajgond, the Kolam, the Paradhan, the Yerukula and the Sugali. These tribes inhabit the Nallamallai Hills across the Krishna River. They are food-gathering tribes. They are living in the hilly tracts of Nellore, Guntur, Krishna and Chittoor districts of Andhra Pradesh.

The tribes of the Agency Areas of Andhra Pradesh

The forest and mountain ranges straits of the East Godavari and Vishakhapatnam districts of Andhra Pradesh are declared as Scheduled Tribes Areas of the State. In this territory about 20 tribes are living. They speak Dravidian or Mundari dialects. These tribes have a better level of economic and technological development than other tribes of Indian peninsular. Some of the important tribes belonging to this areas are the Kondh, the Koya and the Konda Reddi. The Savara are found in Vishakhapatnam in the neighbouring areas of Orissa. They are good in cultivation of rice. The Gadaba tribe belongs to the Mundari branch. Their main occupation is agriculture and also supplements their food by hunting and fishing. The Gadaba woman devote to weaving and dyeing of cloth. The Kodh tribals are one of the largest Dravidian speaking tribes. They practiced human sacrifice for conducting agricultural and war rituals.

Tribes of the Nilgiris

The Badaga, the Kota and the Toda are the tribes belonging to this area. They are very less in number. This region has been attracted for research by social workers than most of the other tribes of India due to the rituals concerning sacredness, their sex, marriage regulations such as fraternal

polyandry. These are the factors attracted by the research scholars in that area. Their main occupation is herd men, blacksmiths, carpenters and potters. They also act as a professional musician for the tribes of this area. The Badaga, on the other hand is a tribe engage in agricultural works. At present they are no more treated as Scheduled Tribes in Tamil Nadu because they have achieved a high level of development with the local population.

The Tribes of Andaman, Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands

Apart from the above-discussed tribes, a few other tribes are also found in Andaman, Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands. These tribes are Onge of the Little Andaman, the Jarawa of South Andaman and the Sentinelese of North Sentinal Island. They are considered among the most primitive tribes.

There are more than five hundred and thirty (with many overlapping types in more than one State) as per notified Schedule under Article 342 of the Constitution of India in different States and Union Territories of the country with the largest number of 62 being in the State of Orissa.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answer.

- 1) List the classification of tribals in India.

.....

.....

.....

.....

1.5 LET US SUM UP

To conclude, the tribal social system gives an idea of the people living in an organized society. They have a definite geographical area, a separate language or dialect and distinct culture and have at least a common feeling of determination against strangers. The social organization and structure of the tribe projects the whole picture of the tribes in India. Tribe is a group of people of the same race and the same customs, language, religion and living in a particular area and often led by chief.

The sub-tribe is divided into a few groups depending on the economy, ecology and isolation. These divisions are due to geographical isolation. Moieties are known as half tribes and if a tribe is socially separated into only two groups based on the social activities and that each group is called moiety. This organization is also called dual organization. The moieties are endogamous in nature and each tribe is again sub-divided into a number of exogamous clans. A tribe or sub-tribe is divided into number of clan that are further grouped into three or more groups or cluster of clans in order to maintain their individuality on a higher order to form a phratry. It is more common in tribal India among the north eastern Himalayan tribes and a few tribes of middle India.

The local group is a distinct system. It comprises of number of families who are living in a common settlement tola or village. It is a permanent unit of those who live in settled villages. They play a vital role in social and economic life. The clan is an important part of tribal social system. It is defined as an exogamous division of a tribe, the members of which are held to be related to one another by some common ties, may be belief in descent from common ancestor, possession of a common totem or habitation of a common territory. Clan can be observed on the basis of their extension and expansion. It can be calculated as conical clan, dispersed clan, territorial clan and local cognatic descent groups which functions as clan.

Lineage is group of families having a common ancestor. It is enumerated in terms of matrilineal and patrilineal lineages decent groups. In some cases lineage groups are classified into two types based on the phase of settling of their members in a village namely the lineages of original settler (the dominant lineage) and the lineages of later comers or tenants (subordinate lineage).

Family is the primary institution which has its own functions and forms in different communities. In tribal families, both men and women take collective responsibility in order to take care of their offspring as well as take collective responsibility in the physical proximity of their living arrangements. There are different forms of family but the forms can be categorized on three ways namely on its condition, on its marital ties and on its compositional types. Patterns of tribal social systems discusses about the seven types of tribes classified by Das. Further, it tells about the various zonal dimensions of tribe such as north-north eastern, central, western, southern and the tribes of Andaman Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands. Thus, we have discussed in detail the tribal social systems.

1.6 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

Bin ww, A, 2012, Indian Tribles: Problems and that Solution. Retired from [www. the opinion-journal.com/up/and/galloy/14452607851791332399.pdf](http://www.theopinion-journal.com/up/and/galloy/14452607851791332399.pdf)

Bose, N.K, 1929, Juanf Associations, Ian in India, Vol.IX.

Buchler, Ira R & Henry, A. Selby, 1968, Kinship and Social Organisation, Mac Millian, New York,

Buddhadeb C. 1992, Tribal Transformation in India- Education and Literacy Programmes, Vol.IV Inter-India Publications, New Delhi.

Das, Tarachand, 1953, Social Organisation of Tribal People, "The Indian Journal of Social Work, Vol, 14, No.3.

Devendra Thakur N., 1994. Tribal Life in India. Deep and Deep Publications, Delhi

Dube,S.C. 1971, Manav aur Samskriti, Raj kamal, Delhi.

Ehrenfels, R.Von, 1950, Quoted by Varrier Elwin in his Book, Bondo Highlander, OUP, Bombay.

Evans-Pritchard, E.E. 1940, The Nuer, OUP, London.

Firth (1961), Elements of Social Organisation, Watts and Co. London.

Firth,Raymond, 1956, Human Types, An Introduction to Social Anthropology, Thomas Nelson & Sons, London.

- Government of India, Census Report-1991, New Delhi. GOI.
- Government of India, Primary Census Abstract-2001, New Delhi. GOI.
- Hoebel, E.A, 1922, In Introduction of the Lhota Nagas of J.P.M.Mills, Macmillan & co, London.
- Jain Lal. G. 2000, Rural Economy and Society, Mangal Deep Publications. Jaipur.
- Jaya Kumar.G.S 1995, Tribals from Tradition to Transition. . M.D. Publications Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi
- Joshi, 1996, Development and Tribal Fertility, Shiva Publishers Distributors, Udaipur.
- Karve, Kravati, 1953, Kinship Organisation in India, Poona, the Deccan College Post graduate and Research Institute.
- Kothari, 1985. Tribal Social Change in India. Himalayan Publication. New Delhi.
- Lowie, Robert, H, 1950, Social Organisation, Routledge & Kegan Paul (1969 print), London.
- Mahapatra .D, 2001, Tribal Religion and Rituals, Dominant Publishers and Distributors. New Delhi
- Majumdar, D.N & Madan, T.N. 1956, An Introduction to Social Anthropology, Asia Publishing House, Bombay
- Majumdar, D.N, 1958, The Eastern Anthropologist, Sep,-Nov,
- Majumdar, D.N, 1961, Races and Culture of India, Asia Publishing House, Bombay.
- Majumdar, D.N. & Madan, T.N, 1967, An Introduction to Social Anthropology, Asia Publishing House. Bombay,
- Mandelbaum, David G, 1970, Society in India. University of California Press. California.
- Mills, 1937, The Rengma Nagas, London, Macmillan.
- Mills, J.P, 1926, The Ao Nagas, Macmillan, London.
- Mirmal, 1993, Continuing Change in Tribal Society, Indian Institute of Advanced Study Rastrapati Nivas Simla. New Delhi.
- Murdock, G.P, 1949, Social structure, Macmillan, New York.
- Nadel, S.F. (1957), The theory of Social Structure, Cohen and West Ltd. London.
- Nag, C.R.1993, The Mizo Society in Transition, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd.New Delhi.
- Nath, Y.U.S, 1960, Bhils Of Ratnamal, The M.S. University of Baroda, Baroda
- Pachamakshi P.R. 1996, Educational Change in India, Hai-Anand Publications, New Delhi.
- Parry, N.E. 1932, The Lakher, Macmillan & co, London.
- Patel M.L. 1998, Agrarian Transformation in Tribal India. M.D. Publication Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi.

- Piddington, R.C. 1952, An Introduction to bowl olpur and Boyd, London, Anthoropology.
- Radcliffe-Brown, A.R. 1941, The study bof Kinship System, Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland.No.71,(p.1-18)
- Redfield, Robert, 1955, The Little Community, Uppasala, Almquist and Wiksells Boktrycheri, A.B.
- Roy Burman, B.K.1971, Chetlat, Cesus of India, 1961, Village Survey Monograph.L.M & A .Islands, Manager of Publications, Delhi,
- Roy,S.C.1915,The Oraons of Chotoagpur, Ranchi, Man in India Office.
- Rudolf C Heredia, 2000, Tribal History Living word or Dead Letter? *Economic and Political Weekly*, 35 (18), 1522-1525.
- Sali Basu, 1994, Tribal Health in India, Manak Publication Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi.
- Shachi.A, 1998, Tribal Activism, Prem Rawat. Rawat Publication. Jaipur
- Sharma, R.K, 2004, Indian Society Institutions and Change, Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi.
- Singh K. S. 1982, Tribal Movement In India, Ramesh Jain Monohar Publicationjs, New Delhi.
- Singh K.S. 2002, The Tribal Situation in India, Indian Institute of Advanced Study Rashtrapati Nivas , Simla
- Singh Rana J.P. 1998, Marriage and Customs of Tribes of India, M.D. Publications Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi.
- Srinivas, M.N. 1953. Religion and Society among the Goorgs of South India The Clarendon Press, Oxford. London.
- Srinivas,M.N. 1962,Caste in Modern India, , Asia Publications, Bombay
- Srinivastava A.R.N. 1992, Changing values and Tribal Societies, Inter-India Publication New Delhi
- The World Book Encyclopedia (International) 1994.Vol.19
- Vidyarthi, L.P & B.K. Rai, 1976, The Tribal Culture of India, Concept Publishing company, New Delhi.
- Virginus Xaxa, 1999, Transformation of Tribes in India, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 34(24), 1519 –1524.
- Virginus Xaxa, 1999, Tribes as Indigenous People of India, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 34 (51), 3589 –3595.
- Yadav C.P.2000. Encyclopedia of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. 3 &4. Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi.