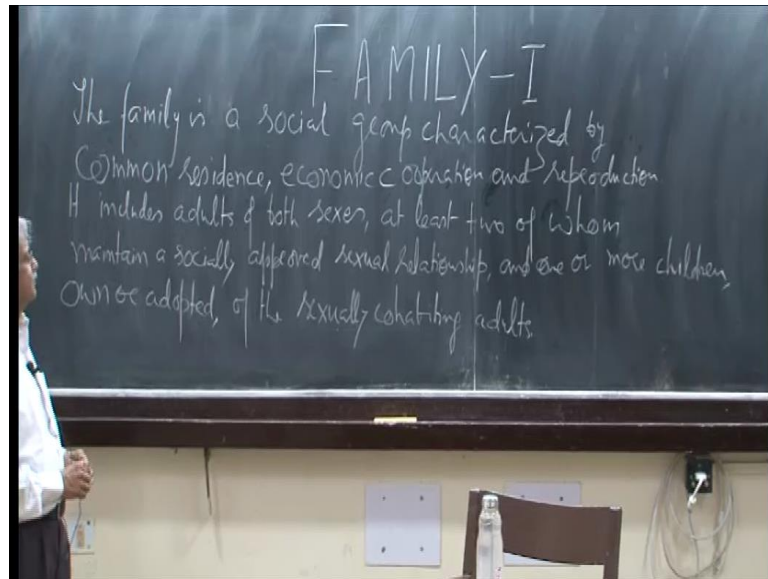


**Introductory Sociology**  
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**Lecture - 5**  
**Family-I: Definition and classification of family**

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Today, we are going to discuss family, the next chapter in (( )) book is family. So far what we have discussed; and we will apply what we have learned so far, to study of concrete phenomena in society, family, state, education, social stratification, etcetera. Now, what we have learned so far is, what is the subject matter of sociology? What is sociology? Who are the founding fathers of sociology? What have they done? And, what kinds of approaches have been used in their discipline?

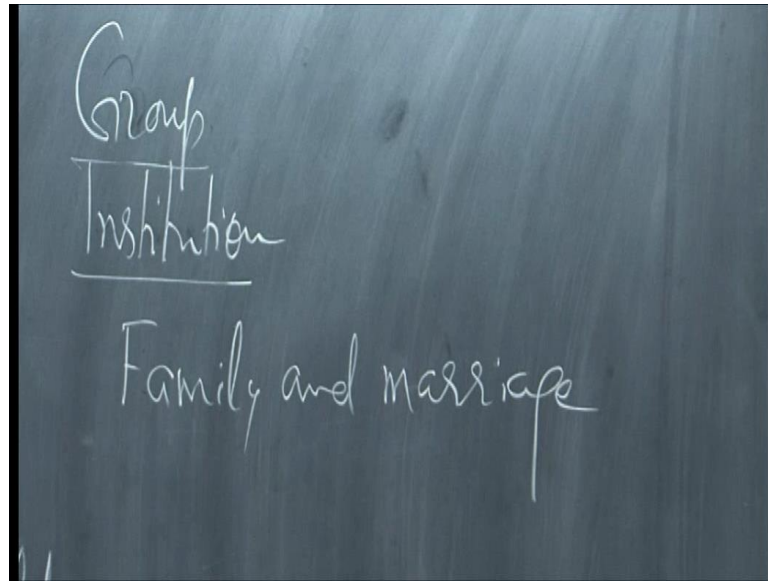
For example, there are some sociologists who use naturally stake or positivistic method; they have a tendency to use physical science model, or develop their sociological theories on the pattern of models of physics or other natural sciences. There are some sociologists who develop their models; they have done mathematical and statistical equations. There are some sociologists who do more of field work and follow anthropological tradition. And, there are some who use philosophical or historical or theoretical models to develop their arguments in favor of some idea, or against some idea.

Towards the end of the last lecture, I said that broadly speaking, you can think of three perspectives in sociology. A managerial perspective, which will be employed by a state or government, in policy making, in developing various schemes and program for the upliftment of people, well enabled sections of society, poor, rural, downtrodden. And, the general perspective, which is the perspective of experts or social scientists or sociologists; the approach of social scientists or experts is going to be different from the expert of state or those associated, those sociologists which are associated with state. And, there can be another sociology, you can think of another sociology or another perspective, which yesterday's social phenomena, from the perspective of people.

So, I wrote on the board, at the end of the last lecture that these are three major perspectives: a perspective of a state, or corporate world, or managers; another perspective of sociologists or experts, these sociologists and experts are to be found in university departments, some of them are freelancers, intellectuals; and third is the perspective of people. So, to understand the perspective of people, we have to do fieldwork, we have to live with them, understand their problems from their own angles; these are 3 perspectives.

Now, what we have learned so far, we will apply to study of concrete phenomena, like family. Then, we will study state, education, social stratification, or the issue of equality or inequality between people. Towards the end, we will examine some issues connected with social change, planning, we can agree with your theories and methods.

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Now, when we talk of family, one among all the concepts that we discussed so far- one was the concept of group, and another was the concept of institution. Group is an aggregate of individuals characterized by interaction, identity, unity, purpose, and a structure. Institutions are norms, customs, traditions, folkways, mores, taboos, customary laws, enacted laws, fashion, fair, grace, interwoven or built around certain values of society or certain key activities like family, economic activities. So, accordingly we talk of family institution, economic institution, political institutions, and so on.

Looked at from that perspective, family is both; family is a group and family is also an institution. Some sociologists use the term family and marriage interchangeably, but actually there is a difference. Although, some sociologist could not make much difference between family and marriage, and they will use these two terms interchangeably, but there is a difference. When we look at family as a group, then we are referring to family as a group, it is a family.

Family is a group in the sense, go back to the definition of group, it is an aggregate of people. Family consists of two or more persons, it is an aggregate. Family has interaction, members of a family interact among themselves. And, what is interaction? It is not simply acting in the context of family or behavior, but acting keeping in view others expectations from us; and also with a full conciseness of how will other members

of family or other members of the group react or respond to the way I behave in. So, there is a social interaction.

There is an aggregate; there is interaction; there is identity, we strongly identify with our family. Family is one group with which perhaps we identify most intimately, more intensely, more emotionally, more spiritually than with any other group. Family, using the concept of Cooley, and that has the greatest influence on our personality- thoughts, personality; it is a primary group; using Cooley's definition, it is primary.

Marriage is an institution. So, when I write family, I am referring to group; when I write marriage, I am referring to institution. Marriage is the beginning of formation of a family. When two adults get married, there is a beginning of a new family. Now, why should the, why should the sociologists be interested in studying family? For several reasons: one, that family is one of the most important primary groups that shapes our personality.

Theoretical interest in family may also arise from the fact that sociologists want to study relationship between different facts of society, social facts or different patterns of society. And therefore, they would be interested in studying what are the variations in family? If social facts belong to society, and one social fact is to be explained in relationship with other social facts, it is obvious that the nature of family as a social fact will vary from one society to another. And, sociologists would be theoretically interested in, what is the nature of family in different societies, in different cultures? What are the major characteristics of family? And, how those characteristics of family are shaped by the larger socioeconomic, political, cultural milieus?

We do not expect, if sociological proposition of positivism is correct that one social fact is to be explained in terms of other social facts, then we should not find the same type of family in all societies. Although, the term family may be used in different languages and in different societies, but if family as a social fact is determined by other facts of society then obviously, in different societies and in different cultures, where social organization is different, level of economic development is different, political system is different, religions are different, value systems are different, we should not expect the same characteristics of family to prevail.

So, family is a social fact, a part of society, and in dynamic terms, a social phenomenon, and we should study. Some sociologists also study family, because they find that many ills of society, or many things which are, in simple language, unwanted, which you do not want to see them to exist, or because the family, inefficiency, bribe, corruption, many forms of deviance, many bad things of society, inequality, social stratification, authoritarian rules, or discrimination on the basis of gender, they are due to existence of family.

And, then what happens to family, may also affect the level of happiness or the quality of life. Some people think that when family is strong, then people are more happy, the quality of life is much better. And, when family is breaking down, when the divorce rate is raising, or there is an increased incidence of separation, widowhood, divorce, desertion, the quality of life suffers. Divorce is always a very painful process; and, if there is widowhood, how to, society has to find ways of dealing with widowhood. Doctor Ambedkar in his anthropological work on annihilation of caste, attempted to relate the issue of widowhood with the caste and inequality, and maybe sometimes when I am talking about caste, I will shade more light on this issue. So, family is important.

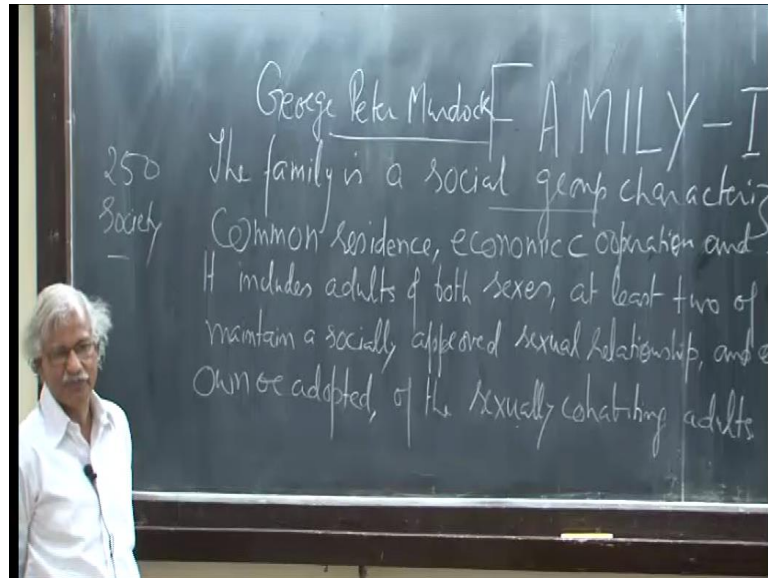
Now, sociologists face a problem that, if sociologists are going to study something, which features will vary from society to society, then how do we study it? For making any study, comparative, longitudinal, for connecting something to other aspects of society, you need a working definition at least; that definition may not apply to all societies, and we will see what kind of problems arise when we try to define a family. But, at least for the purpose of communication, for beginning a discourse in something, we need an operational definition.

If family is completely determined by other facts of society, and is so variable, so different from society to society, then we cannot even define it, what family is? Then we cannot talk about family; that problem will arise in studying any institution of society, any group of society. So, we have to have a working definition; we will not be happy with that definition, but we have to have a definition.

In one book, I got a definition of family; I thought that I will share that with you first, so that we can start talking about forms of family; we know what we have in, what are we talking about, some working definition of family. And, there was a social anthropologist,

there is very little distinction between sociologists and anthropologists, in certain domain.

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There was a sociologist cum anthropologist, George Peter Murdock. Sometime in 1940s, he wrote a book on family. And, after making a study of nearly 250 societies- rich and poor, tribals, and civilizations, different parts of the world- Asia, Africa, America, Europe; after making a study of 250 societies, he said that something like this, is found in all societies, and he says that this can be a working definition of family. All the features of family, as seen from this definition, may not apply to all societies. But, to study society, to study differences in family between different societies, to study changes in family system, we can define family like this.

According to George Peter Murdock, the family is a social group. Let us see, what are the important aspects of this definition? Family is a social group, means individuals alone cannot comprise a family, it is a group, it is not individual; family is not individual, family is a group. Size of the group may be small or big, but it is a group, characterized by, what are the characteristics of this group? They are so many groups.

A specific characteristic of family as a group are common residence. Let all the members of family live at one place, now right from where you are you can see the difficulties in defining family. You are living in IIT Kanpur, and your parents are living in Tamil Nadu; there is no common residence today, but still you say that you belong to this

family. So, maybe some allowance will have to be made to temporary separation, or maybe it is not so much the physical aspect of living together but mental aspect, you feel that you belong to this family, that feeling part is more important than living.

Today, due to pressure of job, many husbands and wives live in different cities, and still they feel that they are part of the same family. Anyway, for George Peter Murdock, one common feature of family, or at least he would say, in majority of families, not in all families but in most families, one characteristic of the group called family is that, there is a common residence; for all the members of the family there is a common residence.

Economic cooperation, there is also some kind of economic cooperation between members of family; what kind of cooperation, that depends; again, there are variations, in economic cooperation there will be variations. It is a family in which one person is earning, or a family in which both husband and wife are earning, or a family in which three or more persons are earning, whether they maintain separate accounts, whether they buy immobile property land or house in the name names of all the persons, or in the name of so-called head of the family, head of the group. But, there is some kind of economic cooperation. And, family as a whole, therefore, acts as a unit, in taking decisions regarding production and consumption; you buy a new TV that TV belongs to whole family; you buy a new car, a new refrigerator, these things belongs to the whole family, there is economic cooperation

Even when people are living at different places; a farmer is cultivating his land or his father's land in the village, and farmer's brother is working in Mumbai. The person who is working in Mumbai may send remittances to provide for agricultural inputs- to buy fertilizer, water, seeds, herbicides, pesticides; and when the produce comes, according to their shared understanding, they can share the agricultural produce among themselves. So, there is a cooperation, economic cooperation, joint property; joint property or economic cooperation is another characteristic of family.

Then, reproduction; in most societies, the feature of reproduction, producing babies is associated with family. Family and reproduction cannot be separated. Only in some rare cases reproduction takes place outside family, but then even when reproduction takes place outside family, reproduction itself can lead to formation of a family. So, one day I was giving you the example of some working women from Germany who are unmarried

and who have kids, they did not have a family, they were living alone, and then they had kids, but now after having kids, they have a family, it becomes a group; this women, mothers and their children constitute a family now. So, reproduction is closely associated with family.

It includes normally, not always, this a working definition; it includes, adults of both sexes. Adults of one sex alone would not constitute a family, otherwise your hostel is also a family; many features of family are found in hostel. Hostel is a group, a social group, common residence, economic cooperation, collection of fees, mess establishment charges from all the students, then there is HEC under supervision of wardens, there is economic cooperation, for the whole group of the students. On behalf of the students, HEC takes decision regarding menu, on these days what things will be made, we have to buy different inputs- wheat, rice, vegetables, coal; and how to calculate mess bill, if some new workers have to be appointed, economic cooperation.

But, what it lacks? Why we cannot call hostel a family? That there is no reproduction; children are not born, in hostels children are not born. Then hostels do not have adults of both sexes; we have either boys hostel or girls hostel. If we have a hostel in which boys and girls live together, then that is closer to family; then you will have a social group, you will have common residence, you will have economic cooperation, and you will have adults of both sexes; there may still be no reproduction, only adults of both sexes.

At least two of whom, another characteristic of family; at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship. In most societies, families have sexual relationship, families permit sexual relationship; family, the approved form of, or legitimate form of sexual unions; sexual unions can be established even otherwise, but in family there is an approval of having sexual relationship. Sex takes place outside family also; some people in all countries have been known for going to as a prostitute or sex workers. But, the client of sex worker and sex worker do not constitute a family, because that sexual relationship is not approved by society. Sexual relationship in family is socially approved; and apart from these two adults of different sexes, there is one or more children, one or more children.

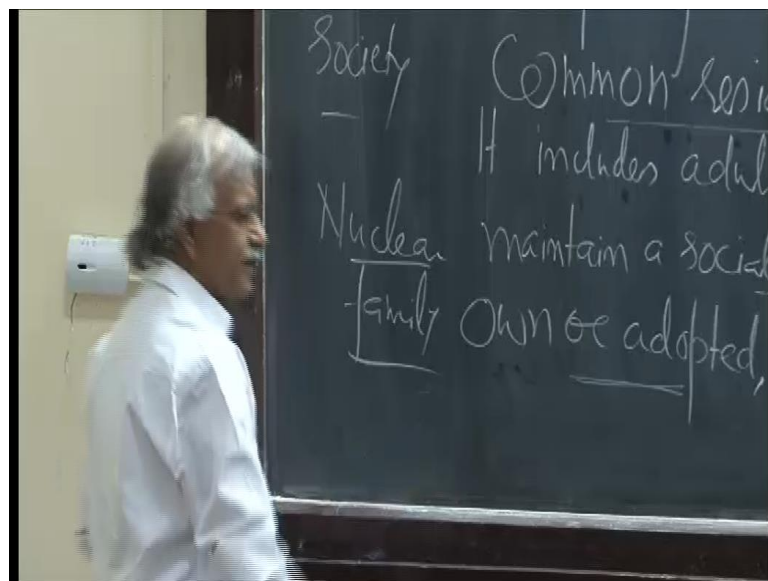
Size of a number of children may vary from country to country. So, in some societies, in some tribes, like in, there has been a study of one, a tribe in united states in the last



century, in which average number of children was found to be more than 11. And, there are countries today, like Austria, where average number of children is only 1.2. So, from 1.2 on the lower side to 11 on the higher side, the number of children may vary, but in family you find children one or more.

Own, the children may be own, or they may be adopted. Actually, for society, it is social relationship of fatherhood that is more important. Society is not so much bothered about biology; there must be social fatherhood, and therefore, own or adopted. And, the children belong to sexually cohabiting adults; this is what family means, but... So, let me repeat, the family is a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually cohabiting adults.

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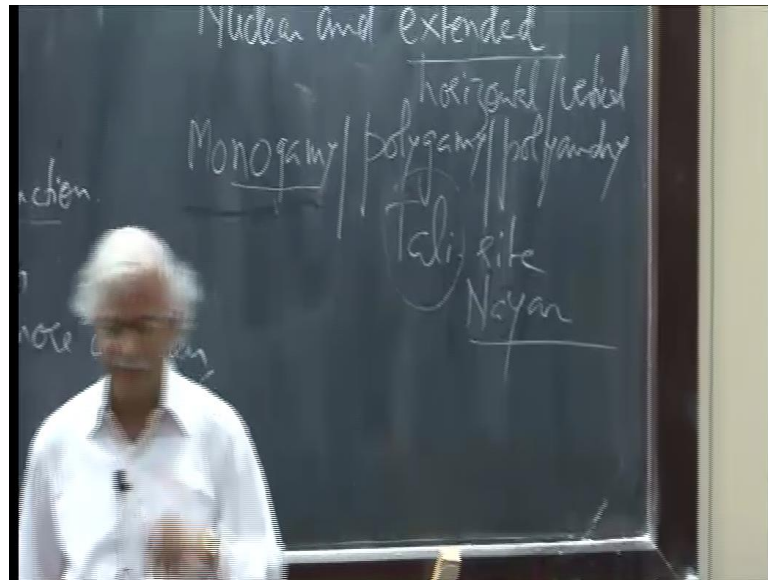


Mr. George Peter Murdock's definition; and you can very well say that this is the example of a nuclear family. Some form of nuclear family is found in all societies, but yes, there are variations. Variations with respect to all the features mentioned here, except that family is a social group. Family is different from individuals, except that you find that, with respect to all the features of family mentioned here, there are differences.

So, now, what I will do? I will first show you the different form that, family and married state, in different societies. What are the departs are from this definition? And then, in

the next lecture we will come to storage of family, or perspectives on family; how do different sociologists have looked at the issue of family? What is functional theory? What is Marxist theory? What is critical theory? How do interaction is, or symbolic interaction is look at family; and related issues.

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First, a kind of typology; we have to have some typology. This typology will also help you in understanding, what are the different forms that family takes in different settings? A standard classification of family; first of all, we make a difference between nuclear and extended family. The definition of family given by George Peter Murdock is an example of nuclear family. Essentially, it means a group, comprising of husband, wife and children, their own children, own or adopted; this is the nuclear group.

But all families are not nuclear. There are several families in which more than 2, 2 or more than 2 married brothers, or married persons in general, are living together, and economic cooperation, reproduction. There may be families in which an old couple is living with married sons or married daughters; and they have their own children these are extended families, nuclear; these are the nuclei of family. But, family may be extended, and this extension of family may be horizontal, or vertical; family may be horizontally extended, or family may be vertically extended.

When two or more married brothers are living with their spouses and children then we are referring to horizontally extended family, because they belong to the same

generation. Because, married brothers or belong to the, or sometime married brothers and married sisters may be living together, these chances of this type of family are rare, but married brothers are found to be living together, till their property gets divided, or they develop some conflict, or their wives want to live separately, this is, in rural society we had a horizontally extended family for a long time. Two or more married brothers, or two or more married sisters living together that is extension, horizontal extension.

Vertical extension will mean that a married couple with children is living with parents of the husband or parents of the wife; that is vertically two generations or three generations. So, married, an old married couple one generation; their children married, their married son, wife and their children; children belong to the third generation; three generations are living together; that is vertically extended family.

Then, before I have mentioned other categories or other types of family, you see sociologists are interested in these issues, because they would like to know that if family exist in several forms- as a nuclear family, as a joint family, or extended family; and in extended family, it can be horizontally extended family or vertically extended family; what sociological or what social forces determine exactly the nature of family? In what circumstances, you find that family is extended? And, in what circumstances, family is nuclear?

I think most of you, if you look around, would say that family in agricultural society was extended family. In agricultural setting, in rural areas, in villages, family was extended; and sometime it was highly extended, married couples or at least one of them, one has died, husband has died or wife has died, living with several married sons and their wives and children; and sometime 3 generations of 2 or more married brothers will be living together.

One day I was telling you that, even today in 2012, when in urban areas, the dominant form of family is nuclear, among certain business community in marvadis, it is not rare to find a family with membership of 2 or more. I myself know of several cases of such families in Kanpur, in Bareilly, several places, in Rajasthan, in Calcutta, among marvadis, business men, all of them 20, 25, 30, 35, 40 persons live together, each from the same kitchen. And, they take it to be a matter of pride that they are still together, that they have not divided their parents' property and they are living together. And, there is

very close cooperation, economic, social, emotional, religious, spiritual all worshipping the powerfully holy at the same time, together. There is a feeling of togetherness, and they also feel that from this togetherness comes they are socially strength. So, there are variances; under different circumstances you will have different type of families.

Another category, another feature of family that family may be monogamous, monogamy or polygamy or polyandry. This is more with respect to marriage. Monogamy means one male is married to one female. Most of the families, in most countries are monogamous, one male one female; adults of both sexes; one male, one female. When one man gets married to one woman, it is monogamy.

Men or women may be change in the course of life that is the different thing, like in united states divorce is so common; that a man or a woman may live with 7, 8, 9 spouses in lifetime; the number of spouses in lifetime for an average American man or woman may be quiet large. But, at a given point of time, they live in monogamous marriage, and they are expected to be as much faithful, devoted, loving of the other person, as in those monogamous marriages, where they do not even think of ever going for divorce or separation; that is monogamy- one men, one man, one woman.

In polygamy, this is a marriage between one man and several woman; polygamy, poly means multiple, mono means one. Marriage means one man, one woman. Polygamy means one man married to 2 or more women at the same time; the reverse of this is also true, one woman, polyandry, again multiple, multiple marriages means one woman is married to several men at the same time.

Now, since, all of you come from a family based on monogamous marriage, you may not believe that such things may exist, but they exist (( )) book or Haralambos' book or Giddens book or other sociology books give you examples of other forms of marriages from different parts of the world; Eskimo, examples of Eskimos is frequently given; primitive tribes from Australia is frequently given.

Let me give you one or two examples from your own country. Now, in your own country near Dehradun in Jaunsar-Bawar, it is a tribe in Jaunsar-Bawar; and guess what say that there is a whole belt going upto Hindu Kush extending to Pakistan. In this whole belt, but certainly, anthropological works have shown that, certainly in Jaunsar-Bawar, they have a polyandrous form of family in which one woman gets married to several men.

Not only this that, there is polyandry. If a man visitor comes to their house, they often welcome the guest by offering their wife, and it is not considered to be anything bad, it is socially approved; exchange of wives, offering wives to guests for entertainment, one wife several husbands, Jaunsar-Bawar has this kind of arrangement, but arrangement is changing. For a long time in Jaunsar-Bawar such kind of arrangement existed.

In Nilgiri, polygamus marriage is found to exist. The most interesting case is of tali-rite marriage which prevailed rite is a sociological term for certain patterns of activities on certain occasions; tali-rite, tali is more important than rite. This, under the arrangement of tali, tali was one arrangement, among nayar families in Kerala. What is tali marriage? Tali marriage is actually is much more interesting than this polyandry or polygamy.

In tali marriage, before a woman reaches puberty, before the menstruation cycle starts, in India we have a tradition of marrying our girls before puberty. So, before puberty, a girl is married to a man of the same community, in higher man; and he becomes her husband. But, by going by George Murdock's consideration common residence, economic cooperation, sexual relationship, there is nothing of this kind; a girl before puberty is married to a man of the same community, according to tali-rite. So, the man offers her a tali, a necklace kind and the woman gets married

This girl, even when she becomes mature and sexually active, does not have sexual relationship with her husband, this tali husband. Tali husband is not suppose to cooperate economically, there is no economical relationship. And, the tali husband and the woman do not even live together, because the woman continues to live with her mother, father, brother, sister, mother; it is a mother-centered family; the woman continues to live with her mother; this nayar woman under tali-rite, after marriage also continues to live with her mother, sisters, other married sisters and their children.

There is only one obligation on the part of this tali woman that, when her tali husband will die then she will, she is suppose to mourn the death of her husband that is, that is the only expectation from a wife. The only expectation from tali wife is that, later on sometime after 10 years, 20 years, 50 years, when her husband will die, she is supposed to cry. Then, what about sex and reproduction? Regarding sex and reproduction, all the members of the community, means all adult nayar's are her husband. Nayar was a warrior community; and quiet often the nayar men, nayar adults are away from home.

When they are at home then in the nighttime they can approach any woman belonging to their community or slightly lower community in caste, any woman; they will go after dinner, they spend night with the woman, and before the day begins they will come out; in day time there is no mixing, no interaction, no relationship. And that way, all the nayar men of the village, from sexual point of view, where husband of the tali woman.

In our own country, there are very interesting; India is so diverse; Khazi family, UP family, Tamil family, Kerala family, Karnataka family with respect to structure, size, with respect to institution of marriage, there are very significant differences. So, here is one example; one example a departure from this definition is tribal family of Jaunsar-Bawar near Dehradun, another example is tali-rite marriage of Nayar women.

Then, what about economic aspects? And so, sex is taken care of. Any nayar man present on a night in the village, can visit any nayar woman under tali-rite. What about children? And, what about economic aspects? In economic aspects, when the nayar man, after having sexual intercourse with the nayar woman in night leaves, he must leave before the day begins, he can put some money or some gifts or some ornaments or something golden or some clothes below the pillow of the woman and that becomes the economic exchange, you call it gift or whatever you call.

What about children? When children are born, then any nayar man who declare that he will bear the expenses of certain rights done at the time of birth say, giving some clothes or ornaments or some money to midwife or (( )) to barber that, that person is suppose to be or he is declared to be the father of the child. So, the relationship between child and father is not biological, it is social. Any nayar man, on that day, present in the village can bear the expenses of child rights associated with child birth; and is declared to be the father of the child. The woman and the children continue to live with mother or other married sisters, this is marriage under tali-rite in nayar community.

There are very interesting variations. Now, one thing I found interesting when I was reading about tali-rite marriage; their society is present even there. For example, how is society present? There is no restriction on the number of women with whom a man can sleep, no, for men there is no restriction. So, a man virtually all the nayar women of the village are his wife. But, for women there is a restriction, not more than ten. Gender difference, I was not expecting any gender difference in such kind of marriage system,

but even then there are restrictions, women cannot take more than ten husband, but husbands can take any number of wives.

Another interesting example that Haralambos gives, in his sociology themes and perspectives that, in New Guinea, in the tribe Banaro, a woman is not supposed to have sexual relationship with her husband, unless she has borne a child from husband's father's friend. First she will have relationship with husband's father's friend, produce a baby and then only she can live with husband.

Quite variations, that if you look at age of marriage, then in our country, at the time of marriage, girls are 4 to 5 years older than boys; in the past the gap was much, the gap was 8 to 10 years. And, there are again interesting variations. There I was doing some field work in Jagua district of Madhya Pradesh in tribal areas, and to my surprise I found that at the time of marriage they look at the age of girl, but not at the age of boy. So, when they think that now girls are of marriageable age, say 13, 14, or it may be sometime 12. So, in that range 12 to 15, when they think that now girls are marriageable, they arrange for their daughters' marriage; the boy at the time may be 5 years, 6 years, 7 years. And, commonly in all the tribal communities there, one day I was mentioning that there are 3 tribal communities there, bhil, bhilala, patliyas; patliyas are more advanced and they think they are charity's; bhilalas are least advanced.

Now, if you closely examine their economic condition, migration, history, values, beliefs to them, it makes sense, because for family girl is more important than boy. So, at that, girl can work, she can migrate, go to Surat work as a labourer in construction industry or in diamond industry; girl is more important for family than boys. So, for them, they can, they have no problem absolutely, if girl is of 18 and boys 7 years.

In another study, one of my PhD students studied the bondo tribe of Odisha. A small segment of bondos is still living in primitive condition; they do not wear clothes; they remain naked in the hilly region; they are called upper bondos; the upper bondos still live in that primitive states. And in bondos also, sexual relationships are more common between a daughter-in-law and father-in-law, not between women and husband, at least initially for several years. My student was shocked, when, in one case, early in the field works she met a girl mature enough and she asked, how many children do you have? And, she said, she does not have a child. Then, she asked, why do not you have a child?

And the answer was that, because her father-in-law does not keep well. So, she does not have a child.

Among the upper bondos then, the thing is that sexual relationships resulting in reproduction, are maintained more, or initially at least, between a women and her father-in-law; not between women and her husband. So, there are, now we see there are variations, societies, about study of variations in social phenomena and family, like any other institution, like any other group has variations. We will continue this discussion in the next class, and look at various perspectives on family.