



MODERN PERSPECTIVES OF GENEALOGY IN ANTHROPOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

Marriage has a value of positive and negative degrees depending upon the individual sex. The 'birth' of a living organism has always represented a positive value or a value always greater than zero. Death in the sense appears only as a negative value. If we denote the above three as elements – marriage, birth and death - we find that 'genealogy' is structured and controlled by them. The present paper is an attempt to discuss this matter analogically.

Keywords: Genealogy, Marriage, Death, Birth, Time and Space

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Introduction

W.H.R. Rivers (1864-1922) has invented the Genealogical method. During the Torres Straits expedition of 1898-99, he had proposed this method. He later discussed it elaborately in *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* (1912), after which it became a popular standard procedure in Social Anthropology. Its primary purpose is to improve and develop the analysis of Social Anthropology, i.e. the concrete particular actuality of interpersonal relations and living arrangements. Barnard and Spencer (1996: 330) have prescribed that the method has demanded extensive interviewing of named individuals to first hoard the

vital statistics among a non-literate community, and secondly, to record their pedigrees, which throw light on rights and responsibilities relating primarily to descent succession, and inheritance. According to them, "It is more meaningful to express the mathematical expression of the relationship between the functioning and durability of social structure and the actual size of the population" (Barnard and Spencer: 1996: 330).

Professor Rivers showed in *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* (1912: 122) some tables from 1 to 17A where he enlightened elaborately the large part of material which was being used in working out

of the Western Tribe Torres Straits. In this report he discusses how genealogies and their value may be used in giving statistical information on many matters of anthropological interest.

In the opinion to Barnes (1967), “the genealogy or pedigree is the chronicle of one’s descent from an ancestor or ancestors by enumeration of the intermediate person, is used chiefly in connection with the last of these processes. It is a statement of how individuals are connected through marriage and common parentage. The connections stated in the genealogy are the grounds for set-aside straight-out rights and duties, membership, and status, for specific purposes”.

According to Srivastava (2013), “Genealogy is useful to take one individual (called ego) as a point of reference for defining kinship relation and also he recommended that one should always define the relationship exactly. Thus, we do not use the term ‘brother-in-law’ but either wife’s brother (W.B) or sister’s husband (Si H), as the case may be. In many ethnographers, Z is used for sister”.

Objectives

The main objective of the study is to critically examine how genealogy can be seen in the light of physics and to understand how the components or agents of the genealogy like time and space have designated the actual lineage of a population.

Methodology

For the study genealogical and interview techniques have been used. The people of the present study have been living in ward No.05 at Gobardanga Municipality, North 24 Parganas, West Bengal, India. The family under scrutiny has been living here for about seventy years more. They are higher caste people (Karmakar) and the surname is Dhar. A Census schedule has also been used in this study. In the study the ‘Interview’ technique was used. “Case study” is one of the research ‘techniques’ which was used during the study. Study area is Garpara, Gobardanga Municipality. Ward, No.05 at North 24 Parganas, in West Bengal, India.

Discussion and Results

Anthropology and Physics sometimes show an analogical distinctive feature of social structure. In

anthropology, social structure can be described as the existing pattern of behavior of human society. Many anthropologists discern that social structure itself is a real entity. In pre-industrial society it comprehensively evolved as a portrait by the drawing of genealogy. Rivers was the first pioneer who invented the ‘Genealogical’ method for conducting anthropological research. According to Radcliff Brown (1952: 180) “if we go to investigate a village or small scale pre-industrial society thereupon we look at existing facts like the house, human relation, relative terms, behavior pattern, etc. because these are a real entity and we try to draw the genealogy so that the structure of people behavior can be the lookout.”

Biswas and Ray (2014) have tried to explain how anthropological knowledge is described by the simple law of physics or mathematics in this context. A ‘genealogy’ simply represents people’s cultural and social life of the past and present. In genealogy, it is seen that several symbols have been used. Males are denoted by a triangle, females by a circle, marriage ties by an equal sign, descents are denoted as a single vertical line and brothers and sisters or siblings by a common straight line with descent line. Every generation in a genealogy is imaged through the symbols. Each person has been counted as numerical numbers.

Most of the scholars are interested in drawing individual numbers continuously, and do not like to focus on generation wise numbers. Though, many of the other scholars would prefer to draw individual numbers separately followed by the generations. The second process is very much important for actual social anthropological research because if one sets out to study any indigenous society there one will often find lineage, phratry, moiety, and clan at a large level. A huge number of generation wise members could be found. However, the demographical data calculations can be smooth by the use of separate generation wise numbers.

Case -I: Anil Kumar Dhar and his four brothers have lived in the same place and time but separately i.e. they have separate hearths. Anil Dhar, his wife, and his two sons and a daughter lived twenty years ago. His daughter had married and had gone to the husband’s home (at least 10 years ago), the eldest

son was dead, youngest son now lives at another place. At present, Anil Dhar, his wife, daughter in law and his eldest son's daughter live together. Here some incidents have happened. Ten years ago the total family member of Anil Dhar has changed after his daughter's marriage and the second change has happened after his eldest son died and last and initially changes were seen while his youngest son has started to live separately. At this time some member emitted and some member is included. So, therefore, time is a factor to contain a structural discontinuity. But genealogy is never lost. Genealogy somewhat looks like a 'space' where individuals are presented in concerning to the time. So, a theorem in the light of physics can be said that the 'time' and 'space' both are controlled the genealogical existence and also it looks like a magnetic field where direction and property inheritance are seen. Therefore, social anthropological research cannot be a more meaningful or enlightening mission without the help of these two factors. Before his daughter's marriage, the total family member was five, after daughter marriage, it was four. In this time genealogy was consisted of three males (Father and sons) and two females (wife and daughter). One female member was transferred to another family due to monogamy marriage. Then another monogamy marriage of eldest son one new female member joined his family to daughter in law (His son's wife). Again total family member was five. After his eldest son died, his family again changed and stands to four. At this time number of a total family member were consisted of two males (Anil Dhar and his youngest son) and two females (His wife and eldest son's wife). So here we find that one female member replaced by one female and relation has changed which means daughter replaced by daughter in law. But in the case of a male one is deceased. Again his family number was changed after his youngest son's marriage; another one female is included concerning daughter in law which is Anil Dhar's youngest son's wife. So in this phase family consists of two males and four females (his wife and his two daughters in law and eldest son's daughter). After the youngest son's childbirth family member has again changed and it has consisted of three males and four females in total six. So the fact is that in time series or every

moment the number family member was changed but genealogy remains constant. During this period several social-cultural facts and patterns of behavior have also been changed.

Case-2: Mr. Ajit Dhar is one of the brothers of Anil Dhar and he has two sons and two daughters. Before his daughter's marriage, he lived with his spouse, two unmarried sons. At that time total family members were six. The genealogy focused on three males and three females. But after his daughter's marriage, the total family member has changed and it was four. Occasionally after his son's marriages, it again stands six, because his two daughters in law have joined with his family and after marriages of his two daughters have joined to their husband's families. Now Mr. Ajit Dhar's eldest son has two sons and the youngest son has single sons. Ajit Dhar's two grandsons have got married. At present total family, the number is eleven (male-6 and female-5). So here also the fact is that in time series or every moment the number family member was changed but genealogy remains constant. During this period several social-cultural facts and patterns of behavior have also been changed.

Case-3: Mr. Asit Dhar has three sons but no daughter. After his son's marriages, two daughters in law have joined with them. His eldest son has two daughters and the second son has a single daughter and the youngest son has a single son. Before his son's marriages, Mr. Asit Dhar consists of four male and single female (his wife) family members. But after son's marriages, they have increased into twelve in a total family member. Here now five males and seven female members are present. After his son's marriages, three daughters in law have joined their family.

Case-4: Dr. Arunkumar Dhar is one of the brothers of Mr. Anil Kiumar Dhar. He is a Homeopathy doctor. His first wife was dead near about twenty-five years ago. He did remarriage nearly twenty-one years back. He has two daughters, out of them, one is coming from the first wife and another is coming next or the second wife. After marriage, his first daughter had already been gone to her husband's house. But yet not have been done her second daughter marriage happened, so there they lived together.

In the case of Arun Dhar , two remarkable incidents have occurred one his first wife died and the other is his second remarriage. Before his first wife died, they were three to the total family members. But after the death of first wife and second remarriage of his second wife, the family member was raised in numerically at four. That means two daughters and one wife and Arun Dhar himself one. Here also genealogy can be drawn but members are changed due to the times.

Case-5: The latest brother of Anil Kumar Dhar is Dr. Kalyan Kumar Dhar. He is a Homeopathy doctor. He has two daughters. Before his first daughter's marriage, the total family member was four. That means K.Dhar his wife and two daughters i.e. one male and three females. But after his first daughter's marriage, the total family member goes to three.

Therefore case-1, case-2, case-3 are siblings of the same parents. We know the descendants like brothers and sisters while descended from the same parents (only from the monogamy marriage couple) are called siblings. So,therefore, all brothers of Anil Dhar are siblings,(chart-1)

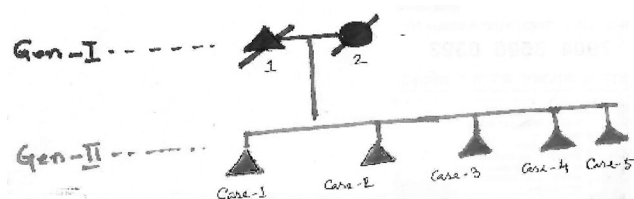


Figure 1: (Siblings have shown)

The above showing genealogy (fig:1) contains two deceased persons in generation-I, those are the parents of case-1, case-2, case-3, case-4'and case-5. In this diagram two generations are seen and total individuals are seven including two deceased persons. The actual living individual is five. The individual number has denoted separately with generation wise.

The following genealogies try to explain the aims of the essay.

Gen-II (fig. 2) has six members in total, but individual number Gen-II, (1) is deceased. In gen-II, the individual number of gen-II, (3) is not living with this family because she is the daughter of Gen-I,(1) and after her marriage, she has gone to

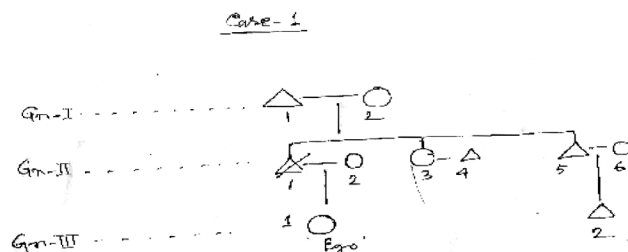


Figure 2

her husband's family. Presently case-1 is consists of the family members of seven (7) (actual lineage).

Case-2: Case-2 (fig; 3) has consisted of a family number of fifteen in total. Here Gen-II is concentrated with a highly populated member that is eight in number. In Gen-II, two members are not living here, because they are the daughters of Gen-1. Naturally, after their marriages, they have gone to husband's homes. Therefore, the actual member of this genealogy is eleven because Gen-II, individual numbers 3,4,5,6 are not members of this family. The actual lineage of the particular family holds eleven (actual lineage)

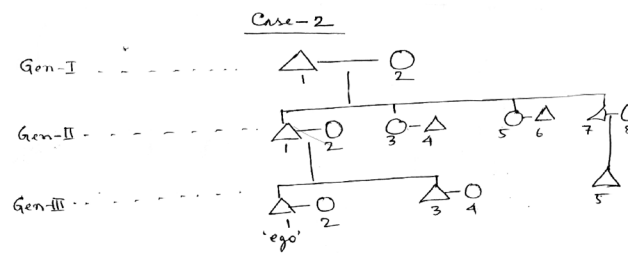


Figure 3

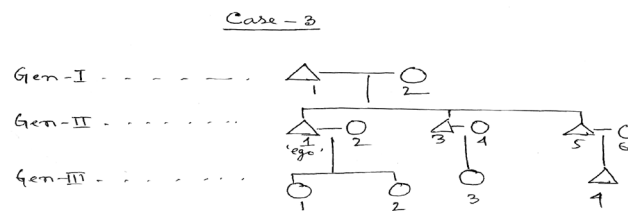


Figure 4

There are three generations (fig;4) are seen in Case-3. Gen-II shows the highest member that is six. All the members are living in the same place and time. Therefore, this genealogy represents twelve members in total.

In case-4(ii), gen-I, (1) first marriage is showing here and. Gen-I, (2) was died or deceased and gen-II (1) has not lived with them. In case -4

(i) all members are living now. The total family member of that family is now three (3). The case-4(i) individual number i.e. Gen-I (1) and case-4 (ii) individual number Gen-I (1) is the same person. The numerical changes have been occurred by the cause of his first wife's death and daughter's marriage. (fig. 5).

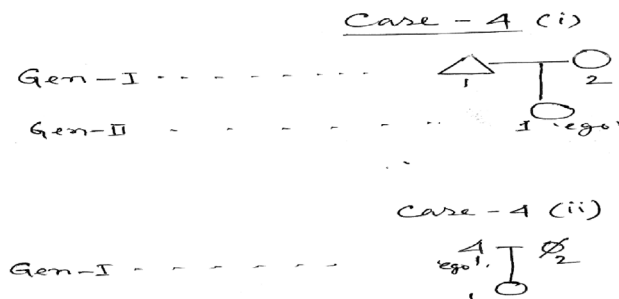


Figure 5

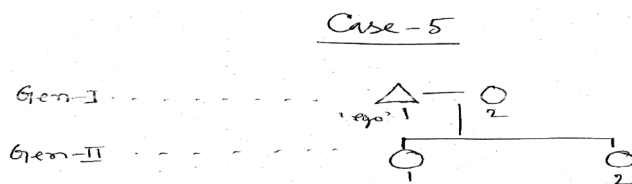


Figure 6

In the case -5 (fig. 6), the total population is three, because Gen-I,(1) 's first daughter has gone to other families after her marriage.

Furthermore, it may be said that the marriage, death, and birth are three basic components that affect the numerical strength of a genealogy. Marriage has a value of positive and negative degrees depending upon the individual of sex. Birth always represents a positive value or zero. Death in the sense bears only a negative value. If we denote above the three elements as follows, we find generally.

Marriage = '+' and "--"charge (Male / Female)

Birth = '0' or '+' charge (x1, x2, x3.....xN) = 0/ one or more

Death = only Negative (-x1, -x2, -xn) = less than 0

Death is the only character that possessed a negative charge. Birth is a typical character that possessed two values i.e. "0" and more than zero. Though, Zero is not a character of negative. So, the theorem is that birth is a positive factor and greater than zero (Birth>0)

Conclusion

The study intends to draw a relation among the time, space, and genealogy and genealogy somewhat looks like a 'space' where individuals are presented concerning the time. The 'time and space' have controlled the genealogical existence of human groups and the continuity of human society. Therefore, social anthropological research can be a more meaningful or enlightening mission with the help of these two lenses. The study has also reported that genealogy is influenced by three components; these are marriage, death, and birth. These three components have a value of negative and positive nature. The positive value i.e. birth always increases and negative charge decreases the numerical strength of a genealogy. And a major institution like 'marriage' confirms the role of birth.

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