BSOE-146: MARRIGE, FAMILY AND KINSHIP
Tutor Marked Assignments

Programme Code : BAG/BAM
Course Code: BSOE-146
Assignment Code: ASST /TMA /2026-27
Total Marks: 100

There are three Sections in the Assignment. You have to answer all the questions.

Section I

Answer the following Descriptive Category questions in about 400 words each.

1. Critically examine the descent approach to the study of kinship. 20

2. Discuss the relationship between marriage and migration. 20

Section II

Answer the following Middle Category questions in about 250 words each.

3. In what way is family an agent of gender socialisation? Give examples. 10

4. Briefly discuss feminist contribution to kinship studies. 10

5. Write a note on the various conceptions of marriage. 10

Section III

Answer the following Short Category questions in about 100 words each.

6. Levirate 06

7. Virilocal residence 06

8. Endogamy 06

9. Nuclear family 06

10. New Reproductive Technologies (NRT) 06

1. Critically examine the descent approach to the study of kinship. 20

Answer

The descent approach explains kinship mainly through the links that people trace between generations. It asks how membership of a social group passes from parents or ancestors to children, and how that membership affects rights, duties and relations between families. This approach became influential in British social anthropology during the first half of the twentieth century. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, Meyer Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard are important scholars associated with the study of descent and lineage organisation.

A descent group is a collection of people who understand themselves to be descended from a common ancestor. The ancestor may be remembered by name or treated as the founder of a lineage. Descent does not mean simply that relatives share biological connections. It becomes socially important when people use those connections to determine identity, inheritance, leadership, marriage restrictions and obligations. A lineage usually has recognised genealogical links among its members. A clan may claim a common ancestor even when the connecting links cannot all be traced.

Descent is often classified as patrilineal, matrilineal or bilateral. In a patrilineal arrangement, group membership is passed through the father's line. In a matrilineal arrangement, membership follows the mother's line, although this does not automatically mean women hold all political authority. Bilateral kinship recognises relatives through both parents and may not produce a permanent, exclusive lineage in the same way. These patterns should not be confused with residence: a patrilineal society need not always be patrilocal, and a matrilineal one need not always be matrilocal.

The major strength of the descent approach is its explanation of corporate kin groups. A corporate group continues beyond the lives of individual members and may jointly own land, control rituals, organise mutual assistance or settle disputes. Descent can therefore connect domestic relations with political and economic arrangements. Fortes showed that lineage membership and family relations cannot simply be treated as identical. People have emotional relationships within families, while descent groups may hold lasting public rights and responsibilities.

Evans-Pritchard's work among the Nuer of the Sudan is an influential example. He described segmentary lineages, in which smaller related segments can join against a more distant segment during conflict. Such