

## Topic - Matrilineal and Matriarchy Societies UNIT-1

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## Main Points

- Meaning of Matrilineal
- Matrilineal Societies
- Characteristics
- Matriarchy
- Essential Attributes



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## Matrilineal

- Matrilineal refers to familial relationship that can be traced through a female . In order to follow the matrilineal line in a family we have to start with immediate mother.
- In latin ‘ matri’ refers to the mother and ‘lineal’ refers to someone’s lineage’, or the line of people that came before that person.
- Matrilineal means Mother lineage

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- So Matrilineal describes- anything related to kinship through female line.
- If children in the culture take their mother's last name and not their father's then this is a matrilineal tradition.

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## Matrilineal Societies

- Exist in various forms among the tribes of African countries , Maldives, in some part of South –East Asian counties , and among a few communities in India.
- Minangkabau of west Sumatra is regarded as the largest matrilineal society in the world.
- In India it is followed in small pockets of Kerela, Lakhs Dweep , and Meghalaya.

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## CHARACTERISTICS

- 1. Succession through the mother- receives family name through the mother .
- 2. Matrilocal Family- Where husbands lives at the residence of the wife.
- 3. Inheritance of property to female and decided by female side . Khasi and Garo tribes of Assam is a example of this where this tradition follows.
- 4. Succession is decided by mother's side. It is believed that female is the original founder of tribes.

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## Characteristics

- 5. Marriage-proposal is made from women side, no exchange of money at time of marriage.
- 6. Religious functions- in hands of women who serve as priest on religious occasions.
- Examples-
- Meghalaya- Khasi and Garo tribes
- Kerela- Nairs and Ezhavas
- Karnataka- Bunt and Billava they follow matrilineal descent known as Ajyasantana.

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- After independence a strong culture of patriarchy is resulting in the fading of matrilineal families in India.
- Kerela state banned the matrilineal family structure through the joint Family System (Abolition ) Act ,1975.

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## Matriarchy

- Concept of Matriarchy first formulated on the basis of Swiss Joann Jakob Bachofen ethnologist's work "The mothers law"(1861).
- Matriarchy refers to a society in which female ,especially mother have central role in political leadership , moral authority, social privilege and control of property.
- Here the family name ,racial affinity , property and all other rights are transferred from mother to children ,while the right of the inheritance belong only to girls.

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## Definition

- According to Oxford dictionary , Matriarchy is the form of social organization in which the mother or oldest female is the head of the family and descent and relationship are reckoned through the female line, government or rule by a woman or women.”
- Margot Adler stated that Matriarchy means government by mothers or more broadly ,government and power in the hand of women.

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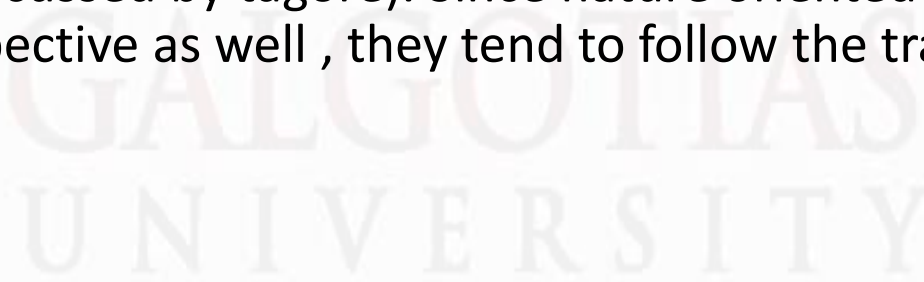
## Essential attribute

- Descent is recognized through the mother instead of father.
- Marital relationships are transient .The husband is a casual visitor only in many instances. Wife relatives take care of the bringing up of the children.
- Family authority lies in the hand of wife or in some representative of wife kin.
- Property is inherited through the mother and only females (daughter ) succeed to it.

Although in India Matriarchial societies existed in West Bengal , Kerela, Punjab but today conditions are far from the attribute of a Matriarchial Society.

## Status of Education of women

- The outlook of society has liberal view of research and experimentation. They believe that experience and observation play a very imp role in everyone's life. This fact clearly states that educating children is a vital component of socialization process of matriarchal societies.
- In such societies no binding for receiving knowledge and going educational institution.
- They believe more in educating children with the ways of naturalism(discussed by tagore). Since nature oriented and have a feminist perspective as well , they tend to follow the trait of eco feminism.



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- In matriarchal societies a women receiving education does not face any hurdle with regard to her marriage.
- In this society any gender students is free to receive any kind of education.
- To receive Vocational education is also easier than patriarchal society. Women can choose to be head of family , politician, police service or any other they like.
- Here purpose of the educational system is to make harmony with nature .
- Matriarchal system promotes integration of two sexes at educational institution.

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## Self Check

- 1. Matrilineal means .....
- 2. ....of west Sumatra is regarded as the largest matrilineal society in the world.
- 3. Concept of Matriarchy first formulated by.....

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- **Answers –**

- 1. Mother lineage
- 2. Minangkabau
- 3. Joann Jakob Bachofen

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## References

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