ANALYSIS OF GENEALOGY

8.1 Definition and importance

An unavoidable part of kinship study is the analysis of Genealogy. This is one of the important methods of the study of kinship. According to Barnes (1961), "Genealogy is an account of one's descent from an ancestor by enumeration of the intermediate person." Barron (1961) has defined "Genealogy as the study of family origins and history and the compilations of the pedigrees and list of ancestors" Fortes (1959) defined "Genealogy as the character by which any particular person presents himself as the descendant of a specified ancestor." We will be more sure of the above definitions from the distinction made by Barnes (1961) between "Genealogy" and "pedigree." According to him, "The Genealogy is the scientific record made (though as we shall see not necessarily biological based) in standard format by the anthropologist, with random errors removed, evidence duly verified and the testimonies of different informants combined and consolidated. But the "pedigree" is the information provided by informants in culturally specific fashion."

Since its proposition by W H R Rivers, it has been serving the anthropological research, specifically in the scientific research of "kinship." Barnard and Good (1984) have opined that "Genealogies are not accounts of biological relationship but sociological artifacts whose relevance for demographic, genetic, and other kinds of study, be it objective or quantitative, is often problematic." However, it has its intrinsic significance, as each piece of information fits into this cross-cutting matrix of kinship study. One systematic feature to look out for, especially in societies for which lineages or lineal pedigrees are important, is the use of genealogies to
describe or order “contemporary” relationships among putatively kin-based social groupings or local communities (Barnard and Good, 1984) Among the types of Genealogies, those are (i) objective genealogies, which aim to state as accurately as possible the “true” sociological relationships actually existing “out there”. These are obtained by checking, comparing and combining the statements of informants, so as to eliminate errors and distortions, and overcome gaps of individual knowledge. The intention here is to produce a historically accurate account (ii) Subjective genealogies, which reflect the situation as perceived by particular persons or groups at particular times. These should correlate to some extent with the ages, sexes, social status and aspirations of people concerned (iii) Jural genealogies are those which express idealized or normative relationships between persons or group, (iv) behavioral genealogies are expressing the way things actually work out in practice.

Thus, it is an essential technique in social investigation. Barnes (1967) viewed “Genealogy” in the concrete sense, as “a genealogical statement made by an ethnographer as part of his field record or of its analysis”. Generally genealogical method plays an important role among non-literate people, by which ancestry is often traced back to several generations as well as a large number of collateral are known by name. The value and validation of Genealogy is expressed in itself in (a) Regulation of marriage and Marriage alliances, (b) inheritance of property, (c) Succession to chieftainship. Finally, genealogies guarantee the accuracy of information.

One of the first genealogies of tribal people to be published was collected by Sir George Grey (1941) in western Australia. In 1860s, Morgan fostered a scientific interest in genealogical connections but did not lead to an interest in genealogies in themselves. The true utility of genealogies for ethnographic inquiry began to be recognized since W H R Rivers published the
result of his inquiries during the Torres Straits expedition of 1898-1899 (Rivers, 1910, 1968). He was interested in genetic as well as socially recognized kinship and paid much attention to kinship terminology. However, his method laid the foundation for later developments in social demography and the construction of statistical models, developments, of which he was one of the first appraisers. Now it is one of the indispensable methods in anthropological research, in particularly in kinship study.

8.2 Uses of genealogies

The potential applications of information contained within a genealogical chart in practical development are many:

- Genealogies provide an accurate record of social identities in a community.
- Relational (rather than statistical) information is particularly important for social analysis, and it helps overcome the statistical fiction that communities are composed of assemblies of independent households.
- In conjunction with the village map, the location and kinship relationship of all members of the village could be established through genealogy.
- Genealogies provide field workers with knowledge, which helps them situate individuals and draw social connections in a way, which parallels that used by villagers themselves.
- It facilitates the identification of village sub-groups and alliances and the interpretation of conflicts.
- The genealogy can and has been used to cross check social information obtained in other ways, e.g. information on the village map, from a village census. In the present case, several gaps were identified and corrected.
- Used in conjunction with other sources of information (participatory mapping, wealth ranking, cadastral maps etc.) genealogies can provide a key to understanding and analysing patterns of landholding, inheritance and fragmentation.
Using the genealogy in Chatra Kuta, for example, it becomes clear that up until a certain point land rights must have been linked to cultivation, larger families cultivated more land and acquired more wealth. However, in recent times following registration, land is held by title and divided equally between brothers - with the ultimate consequence of fragmentation.

A genealogy provides a grid on which a variety of things can be 'mapped'.

The nature of participation in project activities can be 'mapped' in kinship terms. It was only after we had completed the genealogy, for example, that it was clear that those who were most actively participating in the PRA exercises were from key families of the principal lineage, and more particularly that the minor lineage (and therefore their views) was poorly represented.

It is possible to identify the kinship identity of all of the key village figures and holders of formal and informal offices. Once the project had established a procedure for recording the name of all participants in project meetings and activities, the genealogy provides a useful tool in the interpretation of this information.

Equally the pattern of other social activities can be recorded, e.g. involvement in seasonal migration; the flow of information and innovation.

Genealogies provide a means to overcome the inherent bias (in existing forms of social mapping) towards spatial models and metaphors of social links (maps, linkage diagrams).

The genealogy provides information on the major kin groups in a community and on minority or subordinate groups (e.g. affinal or immigrant lineages). The genealogy thus provides a reference point for discussion of a range of issues (some otherwise sensitive) concerning the composition and social organisation of the community.

The genealogy clearly indicates the composition of each household. This provides a rapid picture of family sizes, single vs. joint residence and shared 'hearts'.

Genealogies provide a clear record of the history of individual families, the pattern of family expansion and separation and the nature of present day inter-generational links (e.g. which households have elderly dependents).
8.3 Analysis of Genealogical Chart

Analysis of genealogical chart is both the theme and tool through which utility of genealogical method is being perceived. Analysis of genealogy brings necessary information about a given topic. The completed genealogical narratives should be converted into diagrams or charts. Charts summaries and rearrange the information contained in narratives, but detailed chart is not necessary. A chart containing genealogical narratives is more amicable to conceive the social facts easily.

Therefore, in the present study after collecting the genealogy of Saora in the study area, genealogical charts have been prepared for all the studied villages and for different Birinda, which exist in the studied villages. The Saora genealogy gives a clear view of their social setting like the descent rules, marriage rules, rules of inheritance, and rules of adoption. The elder members are tasked with the responsibilities of remembering their ancestors and the extent of consanguines in different villages. Another source of genealogical information is the ‘kudan’ and ‘kudanbori’.

The village ‘Rejingtal’ consists of four birndas and each of them is connected by its genealogy. The other villages that were considered for genealogical analysis are Jongjong, Dungdunger and Kereba.

Through genealogies, I have tried to show the members of each ‘Birnda’ of the four villages such as Rejingtal, Jongjong, Dungdunger and Kereba. Rejingtal village has comparatively more population than the other three and so also number of ‘Birnda’. Gamango Birinda is observed as the power holder (Jani Gamango) while Dalbehera Birinda is the extensive one carrying larger consanguines than others. Karji and Badaraita are smaller than Dalabehera and Gamango. The “Raita” population consists mostly of the migrants from other...
villages and therefore is not included in the present Genealogical analysis. Genealogical analysis for Badarata, Gamanga and Dalabehera of the village Rejingtal is presented in Figure 8.1. It is observed that inter-Birnda Marriage is permissible i.e., between Gamango, Dalabehera and Badarata and Raita. Usually within one village the people under same Birnda are the consanguineal (Kheja-members) and this factor restricts them to permit marriage, which is considered as incest. Marriages between same Birnda (but not Kheja members) of different villages are preferable. Saoras give importance to the status of each Birnda for consideration of marriages. As observed from the marriage distance, saora prefer to marry within the village or within shorter distance from the village.

Village Rejingtal also shows more number of joint families than nuclear families. It is one of their social rules to provide new house in the same locality for the newly married couple. But due to fragmentation of land holdings, presently they prefer to be in joint family and to have joint holding of agricultural lands, so that they can manage the property easily and can solve the problem of labour requirement for cleaning, plantation and harvesting the seasonal crops.

On various social/religious occasions, the lineage (Kheja) members usually join together and enjoy feast of buffalo meat. On the occasions of feast sacrifices to God like “Darisum” are made through Duripur. For this only lineage members and the Kulam members (affinal) of nearest line like parent of the ill person’s husband or wife are invited. But on the occasion of marriage, Guar (1st death ritual) and Karjya (2nd death ritual) the attendance of kinmembers are largest along with friends and village people. However “kulam” (affinal) get more amount of buffalo meat (Panangtang) than the friends and different relatives (Gasitub). Polygynous (Bindarasing) families are also present but a few only. Divorced (andamanaboi) sisters and daughters are observed to be living with their married brothers or living parents.
In the village Jongjong, the Gamango Birinda is the largest, which has ten families. Dalaberha has four and Raita has four families. Figure 8.2 depicts the genealogy of the village Jongjong. The people of this village are mostly migrated from the village “Puta” and some members of “Gamango” Birinda have also migrated (due to scarcity of agriculture land) to village “Ladde”. Daughter of Je Gamango of the village is married to Nirraya Gamango of Rejingtal. This shows that Gamango Birinda of both the villages are not consanguine or of one lineage (Khjea/Punja), as per the tribe’s marriage rule. My informant Margasra Gamango of this village is the village headman (Gamango) and also ego of the village Genealogy.

Village Dungdunger consists mostly of people/members of “Dalabehera” Birinda. But there are two separate lineages (Kheja). These two Birinda members are refereeing each other as ‘Sadda Bhat’ and no marriage is yet permitted between the two Dalabehera Birinda. One case of marriage within lineage is cited. Ramjanantang Dalabehera married to Jebanti of his lineage and hence no more invited to the socio-religious occasions. They have no child and people believe it to be a curse of ancestors, as they don’t obey the rules of “Kheja”. But they are allowed to stay back in the village after paying the compensation (Rasakul). Figure 8.3 presents the genealogies of the two Dalabehera birinda of the village Dungdunger.

Village Kereba has the people with “Gamango”, “Dalabehera”, “Sabara” and Raita Birinda. The total population is converted to Christianity and hence don’t follow the traditional rules (socio-religious). Perhaps due to their distance from the traditional Saora culture, people were not supportive to provide information for drawing the genealogy of the village Kereba. Part of the genealogy that could be drawn is presented in Figure 8.4.
Fig 8.1. Geneologies of village Rejingtal i) Badaraita Birnda, ii) Gamango birnda and iii) Dalabehera birnda
Fig. 8.2. Geneologies of village Jongjong i) Dalabhera birinda and ii) Gamango birinda
Fig 8.3: Geneologies of village Dungdunger of Dalabehera birinda I & II.
Fig. 8.4 Geneologies of village Kereba (Dalabehera birinda) 260