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Q1(b)

Theoretical significance of Purum kinship-system.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2025 · Anthropology GS 1 · 10 marks · Kinship

2.5 Kinship: Consanguinity and Affinity; Principles and types of descent (Unilineal, Double, Bilateral, Ambilineal); Forms of descent groups (lineage, clan, phratry, moiety and kindred); Kinship terminology (descriptive and classificatory); Descent, Filiation and Complimentary Filiation; Descent and Alliance.

Facts & figures for this PYQ only.

Numbers move. Confirm the latest Budget, Economic Survey or census round. This sheet is for revision, not a substitute for the model answer.

<https://wrapexams.com/upsc/mains-answers/anthropology-gs-1/2025/theoretical-significance-of-purum-kinship-system/>

Rodney Needham

Structure and Sentiment (1962) used Purum marriage to argue for structural alliance against psychological explanations of mother's brother's daughter marriage.

Claude Lévi-Strauss

Elementary Structures of Kinship contrasts elementary (prescriptive) and complex (preferential or choice) marriage systems. Purum was recruited as an elementary exhibit.

Matrilateral cross-cousin marriage

Marriage to mother's brother's daughter, generating asymmetric alliance and a cycle of wife-giving and wife-taking groups.

Homans and Schneider

They explained mother's brother's daughter marriage by affective closeness to the mother's brother. Needham treated this as reducing structure to sentiment.

Edmund Leach

Political Systems of Highland Burma used Kachin asymmetric alliance as another famous case of ranked wife-givers and wife-takers.

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