

WRAP Exams · wrapexams.com

Prelims PYQ, Mains model answers, and copy evaluation. Write to the desk for this paper, a doubt, or the AI waitlist.

ask@wrapexams.com · +91 85951 84903 · wrapexams.com

Q2(c)

Broadly compare the kinship system of North and South India.

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2015 · Sociology GS 2 · 15 marks · Systems of Kinship in India

Systems of Kinship in India: Lineage and descent in India; Types of kinship systems; Family and marriage in India; Household dimensions of the family; Patriarchy, entitlements and sexual division of labour.

Core demand of the question

- Broadly compare the kinship system of North and South India
- Keep regional variation and marriage rules at the centre

Revision summary

Karve's regional contrast still holds as a broad map.

The North emphasises gotra and village exogamy and hypergamy.

The South more often permits **cross-cousin marriage** and closer natal links.

Seed and Earth ideology is stronger as a north Indian default.

Cities and Sanskritization mix the two without ending caste endogamy.

Introduction

North and South Indian kinship differ most in marriage, descent talk, and the woman's tie to her natal home. **Irawati Karve's** regional map still organises the comparison, with many local exceptions.

Body**North**

- Preferential village and **gotra exogamy**, with a wide bride-giving zone, produces hypergamy and a daughter who is sent out.
- Patriliney and virilocality are strong. Leela Dube's Seed and Earth fits this belt especially well.
- The wife's natal kin are often distant; purdah and honour codes thicken.

South

- Many Dravidian systems allow **cross-cousin marriage**, so the bride is already kin and the affinal gap is smaller.
- Karve noted closer natal ties and, in pockets, matriliney such as among Nayars historically, which is not the north Indian default.
- Hierarchy exists, but the north Indian **kanyadan**-plus-hypergamy machine is less universal.

Shared and changing

- Caste endogamy binds both. Srinivas's Sanskritization can push southern groups toward northern honour styles.
- Law, migration, and dowry inflation mix the two maps in cities.

Flow diagram

North exogamy hypergamy -> Daughter sent out
South cross-cousin -> Bride already kin
Endogamy -> North exogamy hypergamy
Endogamy -> South cross-cousin

Conclusion

North Indian kinship stresses exogamy, hypergamy, and a severed daughter. South Indian kinship more often recycles kin through cousin marriage and keeps natal ties warmer. Both remain caste kinships.

Facts & figures

Irawati Karve

Classic regional typology of Indian kinship zones.

Gotra exogamy

North Indian rule that pushes marriage outside a named descent group and often the village.

Cross-cousin marriage

Preferred in many southern Dravidian systems, knitting affines back into kin.

Kanyadan

Gift of the virgin daughter that marks a sharper break in much of the North.