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What is configuration of Kinship Structure in Pakistan? How does this institution contributing to the thriving of socio-cultural life? Elaborate your answer with pertinent examples.

Introduction: Kinship is a social institution in a society which is formed by relations of blood. Family is basic unit of this institution. Kinship has three main functions:

- i Continuity of generation
- ii System providing pathway to transfer inheritance
- iii Assigning rights and obligation between members of kinship

These are various terms to understand the institution of kinship. Such as, Descent group, lineage, clan, etc. Descent group is a group of consanguineal kin (who are related through blood) who are lineal descendants of a common ancestor extending beyond two generations. There are three types of descent group. Namely, Unilineal Descent Group (Patrilinal descent group, matrilineal descent

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group), bilateral descent group, and double descent group. Another term that is used in kinship institution is lineage.

A lineage is a group of kins whose members can trace their descent from a common ancestor. This lineage tend to have domestic functions.

Whereas, Clan is a group whose members believe they have a common ancestors but cannot trace the relationship genealogically. Clans tend to have political and social functions.

Configuration of Kinship Structure in Pakistan:

Kinship structure in Pakistan consists of patrilineal descent group. Patrilineal descent group characterized by the phenomenon that a man's children belong to his lineage, as do the children of his sons but not of his daughter. In this structure, husband has strong control

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over his wife and children; and the common economic interests of brothers is a major feature of the society. The patrilineal kinship system is opposite of matrilineal system where a woman's children belong to her lineage and mother's brother has authority over his sister's children.

Some principles used to categorize relatives in kinship system in Pakistan:

There are some principles that are used to categorize relatives in kinship system in Pakistan. Namely,

- i- Generation
- ii- relative age
- iii- lineality or collaterality
- iv- Sex
- v- Consanguinity or affinity
- vi bifurcation.

Older generation is called grand - parents. The term used for grand - mother is "Daadi" and term used

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For grand-^{father}~~mother~~ is "Daada".

And children of daughters and sons are called grand-children. Specific terms are "Poota" and "Potti".

Kins are also categorized based upon relative age. For example father's elder brother is called "Taya", whereas younger brother is called "Chacha".

In the same way, husband's elder brother would be "Taiti" and younger brother would be called "Dewar".

by wife.

Kin related to a single unbroken line is called lineality. For example grand-father - father - son.

Collateral relationships are those kin that descended from a common ancestor but not in a direct ascendant.

Such as siblings and cousins.

Cousins can be distinguished as parallel cousins (children of a parent's same sex siblings.

e.g. mother's sisters, father's brother)

and cross cousins (children of a parent's opposite sex

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Siblings e.g. mother's brothers,
father's sisters).

Relatives are also distinguished
on the basis of Sex. For
example father's sister is called
"Phupo" and father's brother
is called "Chacha or Taya"

depending upon their relative age.

Kins that are related by
blood are called **Consanguineal**
Kins such as siblings. While

affinal kins are those
that made due to marriage.

Such as Sister-in-law, brother-
in-law. In the same way,

father and mother are Consanguineal
Kins while father-in-law and
daughter-in-law are affinal kins
of an individual.

Bifurcation is used to distinguish
between father's side relatives
and mother's side relatives.

Such as "Mamo" is mother's
brother and "Chacha or Taya"
is father's brother etc.

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Institution of Kinship contributing to the thriving of socio-cultural life:

The social institution, Kinship, contributes to the thriving of socio-cultural life of an individual.

There are following ways through which Kinship contributes;

i Identification and Sense of belonging:

Kinship provides identification to an individual in a society.

Individual belongs himself to certain family and clan.

For example individual belongs to different clans such as Yousafzai, Mohmand, etc. The

kins of these clans feel sense of belonging and they feel pride at their clans.

Individuals find their social status through these clans and share common value and moral aspects.

ii Enculturation and Acculturation:

When a child is born, kins are obliged to teach their children. They are bound to make him

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educated and valuable member of the society. In Pakistan, joint-family structure is common. In joint-family system, all the family members take their duty to educate the child. Grand-parents teach child how to behave, how to pray, how to recite Quran. Uncle and aunts also contribute to the upbringing of the child, along with his parents. In this way, the child learn how to behave with others. He learn his culture through his family members then gradually he adopted the same culture.

iii. Conflict Resolution:

In Pakistan, Kinship system is very strong. There is mutual respect within the members of the family. People behave respectfully, especially with the elder people of the family. When there is any conflict arises, elder member of the family resolve that issue internally.

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In the same way at a bigger level, clans have system to resolve conflicts within or between the families.

For example, in Punjab, Panchayat system is followed to resolve conflicts, and in Balochistan and Pushtun culture, Tigrā system is there to resolve the conflicts. Peaceful resolution of the conflicts maintain harmony in a society.

iv Preservation of culture: Through Kinship system, cultural values are transferred to the children. Children learn their local language. Elder kins tell them ~~their~~ folk stories.

For example, in Sindh, children are taught about the poetry of Shah Latif Bhattai (a revered sufi of Sindh).

In the same way, in Punjab, Punjabi folks are transferred to the offsprings.

Relatives meet each other and children learn the phenomenon of hospitality.

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Festivals are celebrated ~~not~~ very enthusiastically in Pakistan.

At eid festival, culturally dishes such as Biryani, Sheer Kurma are cooked. And gifts (Erdi) is given to the children.

These culturally important things then followed by off-springs. Hence, kinship system involve in cultural preservation.

✓ Economic Security: Kinship

System in Pakistan is very strong. Kins take care of each other. Joint and extended family members take interests in economic situation of each other. At the time

of crises, they help each other emotionally and financially.

In this context, religion also plays important role in Pakistani society. People are bound to religious values. And religion i.e.

Islam taught to uphold the rights of relatives. Hence,

Relatives have right in Pakistan, if one person is ill

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and needs financial support for expenses of hospital, other kins contribute to help him financially. Besides that, kinship also provides economic strength as members of the family work together. For example, in Punjab, agriculture system is common. Families work together in the fields to grow wheat or rice. Men, women and even children contribute in the fields. In families where income source is business, kins specially brothers work together to grow the family business. In this way, work division provides less difficulties in the business.

vi Political influence: Kinship also contributes towards political influence. In rural areas of Pakistan kinship such as Bhutto family in Sindh, Sharif family in Punjab are some supreme

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examples relationships

They

Started
Social
and
influence

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examples where strong kinship
relationships can be seen.

They become strong ~~that~~ so
much that they
started maintain their
social influence on other
and then eventually political
influence can be seen.