



MARRIAGE

1. Definition and problems associated with universal definition of Marriage.
2. Universality of marriage.
3. Why Marriage is unique to humans?
4. Types of Marriage
5. Marriage payments
6. Marriage Regulations
7. Incest Taboo
8. Means of Acquiring Bride in different Indian tribes
9. Live in Relationships vs Marriage
10. Functions of Marriage
11. Is marriage pattern changing?

PYQ's:

- 1) Discuss the role of marriage regulations in traditional societies in India for strengthening social solidarity. (20M ---2023)
- 2) Marriage Regulations and Alliance Theory (10 Marks, 2021)
- 3) Ways of acquiring mate in Tribal society. 10 M (2018)
- 4) Discuss the Different forms of preferential marriage with suitable examples from tribal societies in India. 15 M (2017)
- 5) Define marriage & describe the various types of marriages in human societies. (15Marks 2014)
- 6) Where do you situate 'live-in relationship' within the institution of marriage? (15Marks 2013)
- 7) Ways of acquiring a spouse in simpler societies (12Marks 2012)
- 8) How does taboo serve as a means of social control? (15Marks 2013)
- 9) Incest Taboo (2006)
- 10) Describe various ways of getting mate in Primitive Society. Give examples from Indian context. (1994)
- 11) Matrilineal society (1991)



- 12) Describe the problems of Universal definition of marriage. (1991)
- 13) Describe the different forms of marriage among the tribal people of India. (1991)
- 14) Define Marriage. Describe its different forms with suitable examples as prevalent among the tribal people of India. Point out the Functions of marriage. (1989)
- 15) What are incest regulations? Bring out their socio-cultural functions in the context of stability in the institutions of marriage, family and kinship. (1988)
- 16) What are various forms of preferential mating? Explain with Indian examples. (1985)



**Introduction-**

Marriage is a phenomena found in all types of societies though the pattern of marriage differs in different societies. Marriage by most anthropologists has been described as a universal phenomena yet the debate continues on universality of definition of marriage and how marriage came into existence.

Definition and Universality of definition of Marriage.

First ever anthropological definition of marriage was given in 1951 in **Notes and Queries** as “Marriage is a union between a man and a woman such that the children born to the woman are recognised as legitimate offspring of both partners”

Edmund Leach in 1960 highlighted that this definition doesn't hold universality for defining marriage, as-

1. Union between a man and a woman- The following contradicts this phase

- The word ‘Union’ does not exemplify marriage correctly because after marriage individual do not lose their identity.
- The second objection is on including union only of a single man and single woman, which is not true in many societies. Contradiction to this are
- Polygamy in the form –
 - Polyandry - Fraternal polyandry among **Toda tribe of Nilgiris** and Non-Fraternal among **Nayars of kerala**.
 - Polygyny - Muslim tribes
 - Polygynandry - **khasas of jaunsar Bawar**.
- Concubinage union among the **Jamaican negros**.
- Woman- Woman marriage among **Neurs of South Sudan**
- Man - Man marriage among the azande tribes
- Ghost marriage or posthumous marriage or spirit marriage among **Neurs**
- Self-Marriage or Sologamy
- Boston Marriage (lesbian Marriage)

2. Legitimacy of offspring- Legitimacy is a legal terms, which is missing in its true sense in stateless societies. Tribes like Todas of Nilgiris decides legitimacy by bow and arrow ceremony.

- **George Peter Murdock (1949) definition of marriage**-a universal institution that involves residential co-habitation, economic co-operation and the formation of the nuclear family.



- Even this definition cannot be applied to all the societies of the world, exceptional cases like the **Nayars of Kerala**, where the couples do not live under same roof, there is no lifelong economic cooperation between the couples and most importantly absence of nuclear family structure.
- **Westermarck definition of marriage-** a recognised union between a man and a woman, that the spouse live together and that the couple have clearly recognised mutual sexual rights.
- Criticism to definition of Notes and Queries and to Murdock's definition also apply to Westermarck's definition.
- **Kathleen Gough's definition-** She tried to give the definition of marriage that suits all the societies of the world, after analysing marriage among Nayar's of South India and it's cross cultural implications.
- **She defined marriage** as a 'relationship established between a woman and one or more other persons, which provides that a child born to the woman under circumstances not prohibited by the rules of the relationship, is accorded full birth-status rights common to normal members of his society or social stratum'.

Though this definition encompasses different type of marriages which were not covered in earlier definitions such as group marriage of Nayar type, fraternal and non- fraternal polyandry, woman to woman marriage of Nuer type, and term 'full birth status right' gives a compressed reference to all social relationship and property rights.

However this definition also fall short of universality on following grounds-

- It does not cover Homo sexual marriage of **Azande of Sudan**.
- It does not cover **concubinage of feudal China** where full rights are given to children born out of it.
- **Cattle marriage** in Bantu tribe of Africa.

Conclusion-

Various other definitions are also given, but they fail to be applied on all societies. Thus following Edmund Leach, we can say that a single definition of marriage cannot be applied to all cultures. As of now Kathleen Gough's definition remains the widest possible definition of all marriages.



Also anthropologists are not interested in single possible definition of marriage as they once were. Instead of it they are interested in kind of rights that are transferred through marriage such as sexual access to women, economic responsibility, rights over children and the kind of families and domestic groups the marriage establishes.

Universality of marriage as a social institution

Marriage is a universal phenomenon where each and every society has rules governing sexual relationships and procreation of children which vary from society to society. Social institutions like marriage are defined by social functions.

Reasons for existence of marriage

- The reasons are both biological and socio-cultural.
- The biological reasons include satisfying permanent need of sexual gratification.
- The inherent desire of procreation of human being and its sustenance.
- The socio-cultural reasons include providing security to mother and the new-born.
- The institution of marriage results into enculturation which enjoins small social groups who exhibit quite a social organisation.
- Females and males in every society known to anthropology perform different economic activities. This gender division of labour has often been cited as a reason for marriage.
- Humans exhibit the longest period of infant dependency of any primate. The child's prolonged dependence places the greatest burden on the mother. The burden of prolonged child care by human females may limit the kinds of work they can do. Because of this prolonged dependency, it has been suggested, marriage is necessary.
- Humans throughout the world have to deal with the potential strife surrounding access to sexual relations. It is clear that this issue causes anxiety to people—competition for access to sexual relations is in itself universal. Marriage diminishes this competition.
- Marriage forms the basic unit of family and thus society as a whole.
- Marriage plays an important role in continuity of social structure.

Conclusion

It is therefore logical to assume we should see a universal need for cultures to have specific transactions/contracts which clarify and define these sexual issues so as to smooth the way for our group existence. Each culture's explicit rules reduce strife and anxiety and tend to channel sexual energy as well as legitimize child bearing.



With increasing women empowerment and individuality new type of institutions are emerging like Live-in relationship, single parent family, however these institutions have not replaced marriage rather they are acting as a transitory institutions which ultimately leads to the institution of marriage. **Thus universality of marriage as social institution is well established fact among anthropologist today.**

What is Sologamy or 'self-marriage'?

- Sologamy is the act of **marrying oneself in a public ceremony, also referred to as self-marriage or autogamy.**
- While such a marriage has **no legal sanction or status, the symbolic ceremony is used by many as an act to emphasize their self-love and independence.**

When did the trend begin?

- It can be traced back to Linda Baker, a dental hygienist **from the US, who married herself in 1993**
- It is widely considered the first publicized act of self-marriage
- A **sologamy divorce** was also reported last year when a Brazilian model, announced she was ending her solo-marriage after just 90 days as she had fallen in love with someone else.

KATHLEEN GOUGH'S STUDY ON MARRIAGE AMONG NAYARS OF KERALA, A CASE STUDY:

- Kathleen Gough studied the Nayers of Kerala in great depth and said that Nayers seem to have treated marriage apart from sex and economic relations between men and women.
- The basic household unit is called the **taravad** which is a large matrilineally extended family.
- The head of taravad is called **karanavan**. The term enangar is applied to a matrilineal lineage.
- A ritual marriage will be arranged by the karanavan, called the **thali kettu kalyanam** in which a man ties a gold chain (Thali) around the neck of his bride and the couple will be circum ambulating sacred fire, will be conducted in a public ceremony celebrated for 3-7 days.



- This marriage was performed **before puberty** or at about that stage in the life of a girl. A taravad will be excommunicated if a girl in that taravad will not get married till the age of sexual maturity.
- A girl will be married in this manner to a man who belonged to an **enangar** other than hers and usually grooms are the cross cousins of the brides. After attainment of puberty by the bride she is required to live together with her ritual husband for three days in a continuous succession.
- After this brief period of cohabitation a **ritual bath** was given to the couple after which the loin cloth joining the couple will be ritually torn into two halves to establish that the ritual husband did not have any exclusive sexual rights over her from that moment onwards.
- This ritual is called **asunder**. He neither had any more responsibilities with regard to her. Sometimes he never see her again. Now the woman who customarily live in large taravad was exposed to free cohabitation with men coming from the enangars of her ritual husband or from other higher caste groups particularly the Namboodiri Brahmins.

These men were called the visiting husbands had sexual relations with the woman but no responsibilities or support to the woman or the children. In this connection those who want to have **sambandham** with her must fulfil certain formalities.

1. They must get a formal consent from the **karanavan** for sambandham with the girl.
 2. They must present some silk clothes and some coconut oil to the girl through karanavan.
- **Louis Dumont and Gough** treat the thalickettu kalyanam as primary marriage and the sambandham as a secondary marriage.
 - High is the prestige of the girl who can have a greater number of sambandham husbands.
 - Apart from the sexual relation, these sambandham husbands do not have any further responsibilities of either the girl or the children born to her.
 - However during the period of her pregnancy one of these visiting husbands usually came forward to give gifts in order to finance the child birth expenditures. But it should not be assumed that this person served as father to the children born because it was irrelevant in the matrilineal society. A child only socially belonged to the matrilineage and the matrilineal household of the mother. According to prince peter of Greece the sambandham is a means by



which the matrilineal nayar caste exists in the patrilineal Nambudiri milieu. Namboodiri Brahmins consider sambandham as a concubinage. Leach says that the concept of fatherhood is absent in the nayars. Nayar children call namboodiri man as Achan (Lord). They call the ritual husband of their mother as **appan**.

Why is marriage unique to humans

Animals are known to have societies but not marriage. The question arise what is so typical in human beings that makes marriage as a universal social institution. Reasons for its uniqueness can be-

A) To check chaos that may result because of sexual competition

- As opposed to animals, human beings exhibit following features-
 - Human female has capacity to mate all throughout the year (animal female oestrous cycle is seasonally regulated.)
 - Sexual dimorphism which limits mating in animals is not all that marked in human beings.
- All these factors if not if not curtailed can result in fierce sexual competition which if not curtailed may lead to chaos.
- Here marriage as an institution serves a very well important function of regulating mating. It provides institutionalized mating between culturally defined mates.

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B) Security of mother-new born combination

- Animals babies are born with almost fully developed brain and are on their feet within minutes or hours but with ever increasing brain size a stage in evolution of human being came when delivery of babies with fully develop brain could be fatal for the mother as well as for the baby.
- Consequently it resulted in longer period of dependency of babies on mother during the early years of life requiring the perennial protection of mother who becomes significantly handicap to carry out her daily routine immediately after child birth.
- This necessitated association of a male who could take care of the mother child combine. But before the child could be independent the mother was pregnant again.
- Only a somewhat permanent binding of a male with mother and children could save the society from extinction but as the male nature goes no male would like to get attached to female in a permanent bond. This could not be possible without some binding norms in the form of existence of the institution of marriage.

Conclusion-

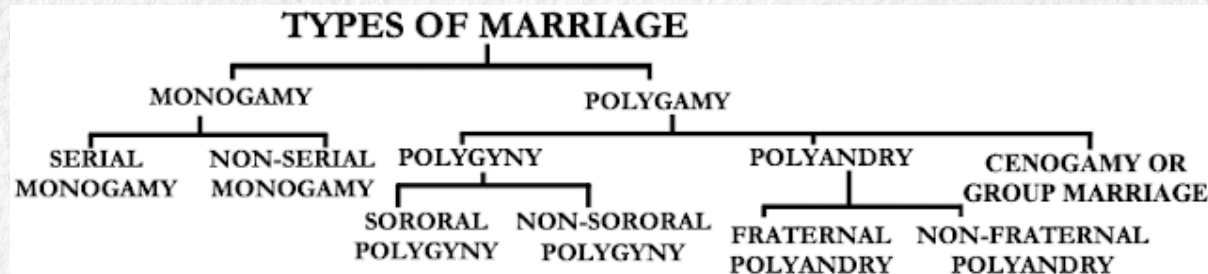
Thus we can say that marriage institution is unique to humans and it has to be a universal feature of human society.

Note –Ember have given the view that several other primates also have some aspects of marriage as male-female bond, infant childcare but they lack one or other aspects of marriage such as postpartum care of female etc, several other anthropological research is going on that says marriage is found in other primates also but it has not been proven concretely, so as far as UPSC examination is concerned we will conclude that marriage is unique to humans.



Types of marriage

Depending on the type of society, the marriage pattern and style also vary. Types of marriages universally found are (a) Monogamy and (b) Polygamy. Other forms of marriage are- Group marriage, fictive marriage, Ghost marriage.



Monogamy- is a form of marriage in which the practice is to have only one spouse at one time. It is of two types-

- **Serial monogamy-** pertains to a state where a man has a series of wives one after the other, but only one wife at any given point of time. Thus, in the United States where divorce rate is high but only monogamy is legal, serial monogamy is widely noticed. **Semangs of Malay forest** in Malaysia practice it.
- **Non-serial monogamy-** where a man has a single wife throughout his life. In such societies the divorce rate is rare and as such it is the preferred norm, in societies like the **Hindu society** of India non-serial monogamy is mostly practiced.

Tribes practising monogamy are- Most of the tribes in India practice monogamy like **Andamanese, Khasi, Asura, Angami nagas, Gonds**. The **Ho's** have been forced into monogamy due to high bride price. Further the political-legal system has imposed monogamy in many western and the Hindu society in India.

Polygamy: It is the marriage of one person with more than one person of the opposite sex. It has three sub types: (a) Polygyny. (b) Polyandry. (c) Polygynandry.

- **Polygyny-** In this male have multiple wives at any time. It is practiced in tribe as Baiga, Nagas, Todas etc. It exist in two types-
 - **Sororal polygyny-** In this multiple wives of a male are sisters. Tribes practicing it **Kanikkar and Urail** of Kerala.
 - **Non-Sororal polygyny-** In this multiple wives of a male are not sisters.



Reasons for Polygyny- Anthropologists have come up with explanations for the prevalence of polygyny.

- Polygyny is said to provide economic and political advantages in terms of larger kin group.
- Polygynous families have more off-springs, thus more availability of labour.
- Postpartum sex taboo in some societies.
- Factor where males marry at a later age,
- Demographic ratio where the number of women are higher and the society experiences high male mortality due to warfare.
- All these aspects provide a hint into existence of polygyny in many societies. Moreover it has been observed that larger concentration of economic resources with men, provides security to women and thus polygyny to such men is considered advantageous.
- **Polyandry-** In this a woman has multiple husbands at a given point of time. It exist in two form-
 - **Fraternal polyandry (Adelphic polyandry)-** In this multiple husbands of a woman are brothers. **Todas** of Nilgiri hills practice it. **Khasa** also practice it.
 - **Non-Fraternal polyandry (Non-Adelphic polyandry)-**In this multiple husbands of a woman are not brothers. **Nayars** of Kerala practice it.

Reasons for Polyandry-

- The main causes behind polyandry could be property or resource considerations, to prevent division among the brothers.
- Sex ratio disparity having shortage of women. Toda's have both these consideration in mind.
- They practice female infanticide Polyandry is said to have fewer children to every woman and fewer male children, a high incidence of sterility among women. This ensures population control and a better standard of living among those with limited resources.

Other forms of Marriage-:

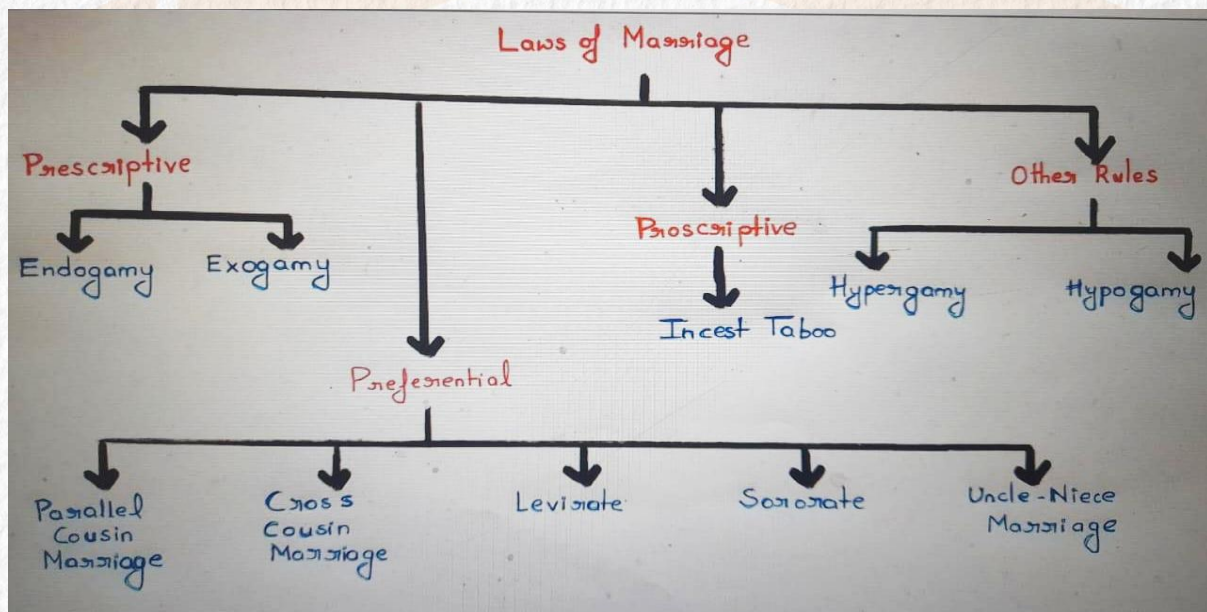
- **Group marriage (Polygynandry)** -Polygynandry another variety of polygamy pertains to a marriage where several men are married to several women or a man has many wives and a woman has many husbands at any given time. Such marriages were prevalent among the **Marquesans of Polynesia** and also among the **Todas** of the Nilgiri hills and the **Khasas of Jaunsar Bawar** of India.



- **Fictive marriage-** Legal marriage that allows both partners to acquire social benefits without no family being set up.
- **Ghost marriage-** it is a practiced in several cultures. **Nuer** practice it, if an elder brother dies without fathering children, one of his younger brother must marry his widow. Children resulting from ghost marriage are considered the offspring of the deceased brother.

Marriage Regulations-

- Every society has certain rules and regulations regarding marriage.
- Whom to marry?
- Whom not to marry?
- These aspects will be decided by these rules. These rules are mostly aimed at maintaining the coherence and unity in the family and the society so that it brings about peaceful coexistence. They also decide how to punish non adherence to these rules.



- **Prescriptive Norms-** These norms are to be strictly followed in a society, and breaking them entails strong sanctions. The rules here prescribe whom a person should marry. **Endogamy and Exogamy are the main regulations under prescriptive marriages.**

Exogamy:

- Exogamy refers to selection of spouse outside one's kin group or community. **Lineage exogamy, Clan exogamy, phratry exogamy, moiety exogamy, gotra exogamy, village exogamy** are some forms of exogamy practices in the society.



- A clan, lineage exogamy is considered necessary because marrying within a clan is considered marrying a descendent from a common ancestor and that is prohibited.
- A gotra exogamy is similar, because people of the same gotra are considered to be the descendents of the same sage.

Reasons for the presence of exogamy.

- **Edward Tylor** argued that in the paleolithic hunting and gathering bands marital exchange promoted peace and enlarged the kin group providing survival advantage. This was also practiced among the kings and members of the royalty.
- **Herbert Risley** proposed that need for variety in life led to exogamy in search for unfamiliarity. He said familiarity breeds contempt and such aversion led to exogamy.
- **Audrey Richards** argued that female infanticide in hunting and gathering societies, caused as a result of food shortage could have led such communities to seek brides from outside mostly by capture.

Exogamy has its own unique advantages.

- It prevents inbreeding, promotes hybrid vigour generating better quality of individuals in a society.
- It enlarges the kin group, provides social support in times of need and warfare.
- Breach of exogamy brings disaster among the Khasi.
- It entails excommunication, refusal of funeral ceremonies and no resting place in the sepulcher of the clan.

Conclusion-

Most often in societies we find a combination of both endogamy and exogamy. Caste endogamy with gotra exogamy is very common. Among the Todas the two main tribes, Tartharol and Teivaliol are endogamous, but their subdivisions sibs are exogamous.

Endogamy-

- **Lewis** defined endogamy as the rule that requires a person to marry within a specific social group of which he is a member. It can be **clan endogamy, religion endogamy, caste endogamy** etc.
- Endogamy is characteristic of aristocracies and religious and ethnic minorities in industrialized societies but also of the caste system in India and of class-conscious non-



literate societies. This requirement was created to keep wealth, culture, and ethnicity within cultural groups.

Reasons for practicing Endogamy

- Minorities can use it to stay ethnically homogeneous over a long time as distinct communities within societies that have other practices and beliefs.
- The fear of the unknown, differences in the culture, language, customs also contribute to the practice of endogamy.
- Most of the tribes in India practice endogamy like the **Khasis, Todas, Kadars, Gonds** for the above reason.
- In the Hindu society, caste endogamy is mostly observed. Endogamy came to be practiced so that occupation secrets could be well guarded.
- It ensured that the control over the resources and technology continued to exist within the group.

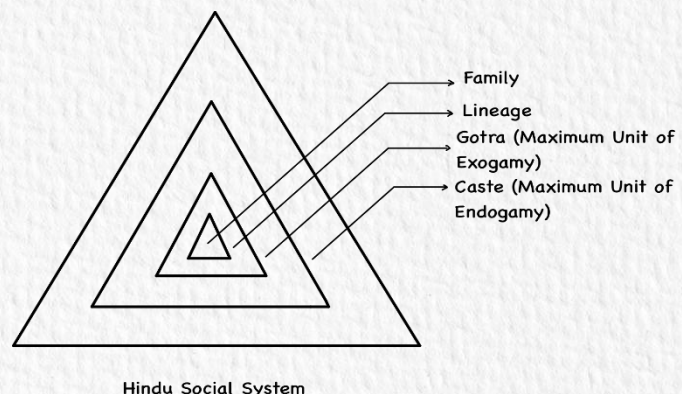
In Indian society, Marriage happens within the members of same religion and in many cases within the family. **Cross-cousin marriages are common form of endogamy** while parallel cousin marriages are not.

In many of the Islamic societies a man marries his father's brother's daughter known as parallel cousin marriage which is a very rare form of endogamy.

The **Kurds** of eastern and south-eastern Turkey still continue with the practice of parallel cousin-marriage. Sometimes, endogamy could have negative impact on the group. The isolationist practices of endogamy may lead to a group's extinction. For example, the Parsi community in India is said to be facing declining population.

Note

Endogamy and Inbreeding are not the same. Inbreeding is a highly restricted form of endogamy, between individuals closely related by ancestry, which could lead to inbreeding depression. However if the community is very small, endogamy can produce similar results as inbreeding.





Conclusion-

Eriksen writes that all human groups are both endogamous and exogamous to varying degrees that an endogamy once can be an exogamy other time.

Proscriptive Norm- These norms forbid marriage between specific social relations, so as to prohibit mating between such relations. **Incest taboo** and **Avoidance** are its example.

INCEST TABOO

A taboo is an activity that is forbidden or sacred based on religious beliefs or morals of the society. Breaking a taboo is extremely objectionable in society as a whole. Around the world, an act may be taboo in one culture and not in another.

Incest taboo is the prohibition against sexual union and marriage between close blood relatives namely parents and children, brothers and sisters, grandparents and grandchildren. **Except for ancient Egyptian, Inca and Hawaiian royal families the incest taboos are almost universal.** The Tallensi of Ghana also does not strongly prescribe to the norm of incest taboo between brother and sister while a relationship between a man and the wife of a lineage mate is an unpardonable sin.

Breach of taboo is often punished by inflicting heavy fines, excommunication. There is also fear of supernatural punishment. To explain this almost universal existence of incest, Anthropologists have come up with **various theories**. The important of these are-

1. Psychoanalytic Theory: This theory is presented by Sigmund Freud. According to this theory a strong sexual relation exists between two persons of a closely related family like mother and son, and father and daughter. But during the process of socialization these sexual feelings of children are depressed due to fear from parents. Although the sexual attraction is continuously exist between them. So, incest taboo is a way to control the sexual line or it is necessary for the defense against the sexual relations between these persons.

Criticism-

- Why society need explicit taboo?
- Studies show that some children do have instinct for incest, but generalizing such statement is incorrect.
- Also, the theory fails to explain as to why majority of children do not indulge in incest in a family where elders are absent.



2. **Childhood familiarity Theory:** This theory was presented by Edward Wester in 1920. According to this theory, "People who have brought up together like siblings would not be sexually attached to each other". To test the hypothesis, a study was conducted in Israel, in which 125 pairs of male and female children of the same age were kept in a separate centre. They were nourished and reared in that centre and had no relations with parents. When they reached to maturity, it was observed that among 125 pairs of male and female, there was no single case of sexuality. So, it was proved that the persons who are born, reared and socialized in the same place have no sexual attraction with each-others.

Criticism-

- Why societies have to prohibit marriage that can be avoided because of disinterest itself?
- Also why did it not apply to the first cousin marriage?
- If over familiarity is the only reason for sexual disinterest and avoiding marriage, no marriage should not last long because marriage invariably results in absolute intimacy and familiarity. So this theory has been rejected.

3. **Inbreeding Avoidance Theory:** This is one of oldest theory. According to this theory, inbreeding leads to illness or weakness in the population by increasing the incidence of genetic diseases. For this purpose incest taboo is necessary.

Criticism-

- This theory was rejected because inbreeding was practiced in ancient Egyptians and there were no harmful diseases.
- Eriksen says "It does not explain what it is that makes people reject incest, since they are, in many cases, ignorant of its possible negative effects on the genetic material."
- According to population genetics studies of 20th century, inbreeding has both advantages and disadvantages. It brings out recessive genes of both superior and inferior character.

4. **Cooperation Theory:** This theory was presented by an eminent anthropologist **E.B-Taylor**. According to him, "incest taboo is necessary for co-operation and healthy relationships among family members. Incest taboo accelerate cooperation among the members and if there is no restriction of sexual relations, it would lead to suspicious and hostility among members." Incest taboo enforce a person to marry outside one's family and if he perform exogamy, he attached to another family. So, in this way the bond of cooperation with that family will be strengthened. So, Taylor is of the view that due to incest taboo cooperation among family members and with outside family members increases.



Criticism-

This cooperation theory does not adequately explain the existence of incest taboo in all societies. They might have made other customs to promote alliance.

- 5. Family Disruption Theory:** This theory was presented by **Malinowski**. According to him, “Sexual relations within a family members would create many rivalries, enmity, jealousy, tension, and disturbance which effects the function of a good family”. So, incest taboo means to keep the unity and function of the family intact. Incest taboo is necessary for the protection of the family members from disturbance and other rivalries.

Criticism

Society could have set other rules. Why would brother-sister incest being so disruptive, existed in ancient Egypt.

- 6. Forming Wider alliances-**Proposed by **Claude Levi-Strauss** (1969) stresses the importance of cooperation among groups larger than the nuclear family. The incest taboo forces people to marry outside the family, joining families together into larger social community thus helps in surviving and expanding. This has undoubtedly contributed to the success of the human species, this seems to be adaptive and can account for the persistence of familial incest taboo and its extension to groups other than the nuclear family.

Criticism-

The logic is sound, but fails to account as to why man did not choose to marry one or two members outside the group and rest within. This would have led to several new ties, and prevented the pain of losing many members, along with diversion of resources.

Conclusion

Rodney Needham, a noted anthropologist, is against the use of the term 'incest'. This is because of the fact that the meaning of incest varies from culture to culture. In such a situation, the use of the term would create confusion rather than help understand the rules of marriage. None of the theories of incest taboo is sufficient to explain the existence of this taboo in humans, yet socio-functional and inbreeding theory highlight its relevance. Whether incest taboo is a typical of human society is not definite (**e.g Chimpanzee- mother tries to keep away her adolescent male offspring**).

Avoidance Relationships



Avoidance refers to instances of limited social interactions between some relatives. One or other kind of avoidance is observed in all societies. It is observed to prevent any kind of incestuous sexual relationships. **Frazer and Freud** tried to explain avoidance in the situation of tabooed sexual relations.

If the function of incest taboo are required to be mentioned, then use the following-

- **Genetic variability-** Incest taboo prevents inbreeding, and thereby decreases the prevalence of homozygous traits in a population. This leads to enhance genetic variability, thereby possibly (though not proven) enhancing the survival chances of the population.
- **Community cooperation-** As explained by the Family Cooperation theory.
- **Family harmony-** As explained by the Family Disruption theory.

Example of Avoidance

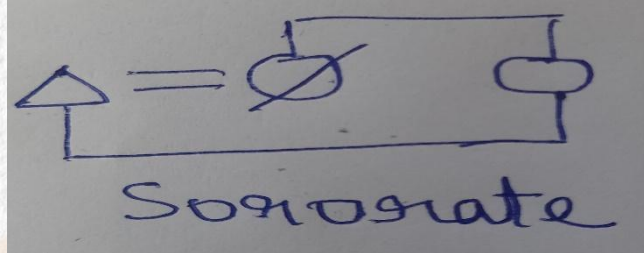
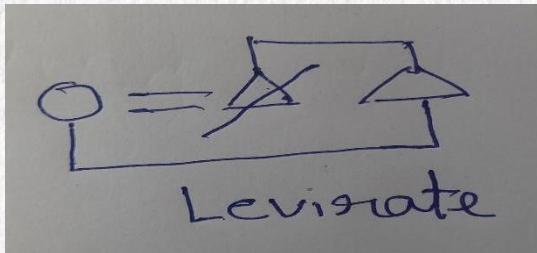
- **Ceylonese tribe, Vedda** practice brother-sister avoidance – avoid living under the same roof, do not take food together and avoid any kind of intimacy or familiarity between them.
- Brother- Sister avoidance is also observed among the **Tobriand Islanders**. If a brother sees his sister being wooed by a man all three have to commit suicide.
- Father-in-law and Daughter-in –law and Mother-in-law and son-in-law avoidance. Mother in law could look similar to the daughter which could attract son-in -law, and it is possible that she could put herself in her daughter's shoes. Further it could also be related to animosity between mother-in-law and son-in-law because she had to let go of her daughter.

Reasons for practicing Avoidance

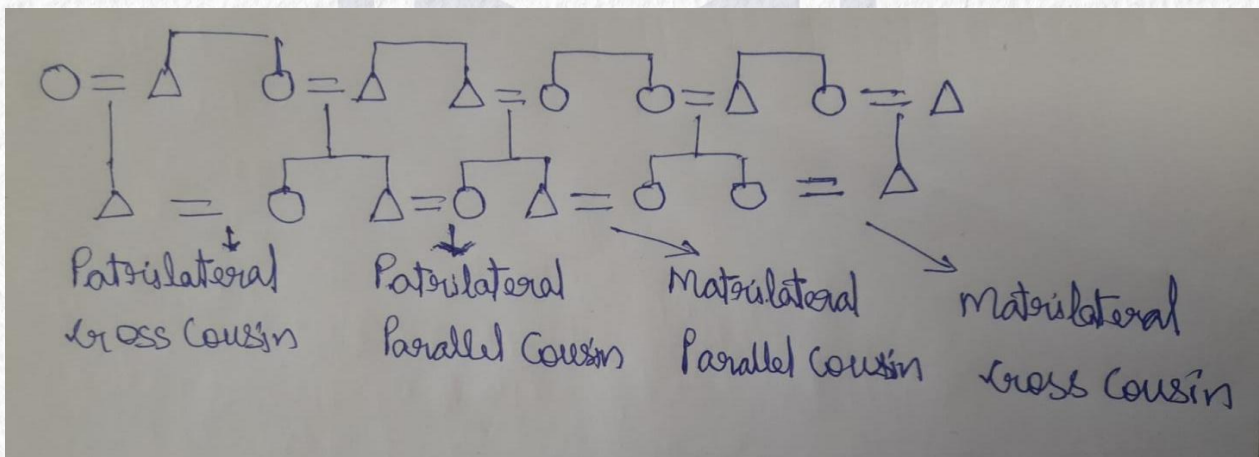
- **Tylor** explained it in terms of conflict of Authority of mother-in-law in matrilineal societies.
- **Lowie** explained it in terms of cultural influence, wherein the daughter-in-law can influence the cultural practices of the family she is married into and it will definitely impact her husband, Avoidance is done to reduce this impact on other in-laws.
- **Others also explain** this phenomenon as a mechanism to avoid conflict in the household between daughter-in-law and her in-laws, keep low rate of interaction between individuals who could upset social structure if interaction rate was higher and so on.



- **Preferential norms-** These norms promote particular kind of relations for marriage purposes. However breaking these norms does not entail severe sanctions. It includes **cousin marriage, levirate and sororate**.
- **Levirate-** It is a type of marriage where a woman marries her deceased husband's brother. Example – Among the tribes in Northeast Indian, Jewish Community.



- **Sororate-** It is a type of marriage where a man marries his deceased wife's sister. E.g- **Bonda**
- **Cross Cousin Marriage:** It is the type of marriage where an individual is married to his or her cross-cousin. For example: Individual getting married to mother's brother's son/daughter, individual getting married to father's sister's son/daughter. This type of marriage is found in **Kharia, Oraon**
- **Parallel-cousin Marriage:** It is the type of marriage where an individual is married to his or her parallel cousin. For example: Individual getting married to mother's sister's son/daughter, individual getting married to father's brother's son/daughter. This type of marriage is found in **Kadar community**.





Joking Relationships

- These are relationships which are opposite to avoidance. Such relationships are indicators of possible preferential marriages [potential sexual relationships]. It also indicates equality and mutual reciprocity.
- It is categorized by extreme degree of familiarity between the individuals. According to Radcliffe brown, it is an indication of high level of friendliness displayed through hostility.
- Chapple and Coon regard this way as usage as a way to stimulate higher interaction rate between people which may not be possible otherwise.
- The type of interaction varies and may include exchange of abuse and banter, light teasing, chastisement, sexual ribaldry, ridicule, horseplay, damage to each other's property and so on.
- The relationship may be mutual (symmetrical) or formalized in such a way that one person or group does the teasing and the other is not allowed to retaliate (asymmetrical).

Examples of joking relationships are found between,

- Man and his wife's younger sisters [Sororate indicator]
- Woman and her husband's younger brothers [Levirate indicators]
- Man and his maternal uncle's wife – indication in maternal societies for inheritance of maternal uncle's property including his wife.
- **Example** – matrilineal Hopi and matrilineal Tobriand Islanders. Grandparents and grandchildren – Oraon and Baiga , Chamar.

Other rules- Hypergamy and Hypogamy are two systems which bypass caste endogamy in a partially open class structure of a society, with few rules to regulate their practice.

HYPERGAMY

- It is the act of marrying an individual of superior caste or class. In the Indian society, such marriages are called **Anuloma marriage**.
- Hypergamy is usually seen from the perspective of a woman. According to Manu, and ancient lawmakers, a woman, of the lower caste can marry a man of a higher caste.
- A man does not lose his ritual purity by marrying a woman from lower caste.
- A woman's caste is subject to change after marriage and by the virtue of hypergamy, she can be promoted to a different caste.



HYPOGAMY

- It is the act of marrying an individual of inferior caste or class. In the Indian society, such marriages are called **Pratiloma marriage**.
- Pratiloma marriages are not permitted for women but allowed for men. The woman on hypogamy, loses the status of a upper caste individual and is lowered to the caste status of her husband thus becoming ritually impure.
- This led to problems for Brahmin women who had very little choice of partners. Either they were subjected to polygamy or even spinsterhood.
- This led to prejudice against female children among the Brahmins.
- Similar fate was of a Shudra man in the context of hypergamy. They had to raise high bride price or choose between polyandry and bachelorhood.
- In some cases hypogamy of Brahmin girl with a Kshatriya man also accepted.

Ways of Acquiring a Mate

Marriage as the term implies has a lot of connotation in different societies. It does not just mean a man finding a girl to be his wife. Even when a man chooses a mate for himself he has to ascribe to the norms of the society while claiming his bride. Herein, we would outline some of the prescribed customs in societies through which a man can acquire a mate.

1. Marriage by negotiation

- It is a very frequently practiced way of acquiring a mate. In such a system either the girl's family or the boy's family as per their customs puts forward a proposal for marriage through a third party or mediator.
- In such a system bride price, bride wealth, dowry also has an important role to play and it is usually a long drawn process where consensus of the bride and groom's family is all done by the mediator.
- In Indian context it is also known as arranged marriage.
- It is found in most of the simple societies like the **Ituri of Congo** region in Africa, **Siwai of Soloman Islands**, the aboriginals of Australia, Andamanese of Andaman Islands and also in complex societies like the Hindu society of India, China, Japan, Europe and America.



2. Marriage by exchange

- It forms a part of the marriage by negotiation system.
- Herein, such a system the bride price or bride wealth, whichever is applicable to the society, is waived off by marriage through exchange.
- This happens generally if there are daughters or sisters for exchange for the grooms. This helps in not only forming an alliance but also strengthens the bond between groups.
- **Examples** of such exchange is seen in societies of Australia, Melanesia, **Tive of Nigeria** and also in some of the tribes in India- **Muria Gonds, Baiga of Bastar and the Koya and the Saora** of Andhra Pradesh.

3. Marriage by service

It is found among some of the tribes in North East India. In this the bride wealth forms a part of the marriage negotiation and if the groom's party is not able to pay the bride wealth then the compensation is through service. The boy works for the bride's family and only when the bride family is satisfied that the marriage is solemnised.

Example-Among the **Naga's of North East India**.

4. Marriage by probation

- It involves the consent of the bride parents along with the girl's consent.
- In this the groom stays at the bride's place on a trial basis.
- The groom is allowed to stay with the girl so that they both get to know each other's temperament and if the girl likes the boy the marriage takes place, else the boy has to pay compensation in cash to the girl's family.
- **Example-**Among the **Kukis of Manipur** of India such a marriage is a practised norm.

5. Marriage by capture

- It is found in many societies.
- The capture can be a physical capture or a ceremonial one.
- Among the tribes of **Yahomamo of Venezuela, Northern Brazil and the Nagas of Nagaland** in India during raids the men from one village capture and take home females of the other village and marry them as wives. Such a situation is ascribed as **physical capture**.
- In **ceremonial capture** a boy desiring to marry a girl propositions her in a community fair or festival and makes his intentions towards her known by either holding her hand or marking her with vermilion as in the case of **Kharia and the Birhor** of Bihar.



6. Marriage by intrusion

- It is a type of marriage wherein a girl forces her way into the boy's house and forces him to accept her as his spouse.
- She bears all the taunts and abuses by the groom's family.
- After some time groom's family become ready to marriage.
- Such marriages are seen in **Birhor and Ho** of Bihar and also among the **Kamars** of Madhya Pradesh.

7. Marriage by trial

- It is a process in which the groom has to prove his strength and valour while claiming his bride.
- Such marriages by trail are found in many societies in India and some of the examples are the **Bhils of Rajasthan** they call it **Gol Gadedho** and the Nagas of Nagaland.

8. Marriage by Elopement

- It is a customary marriage in some societies whereas looked down in others.
- In societies where a huge amount of wealth is required for the marriage rituals and which is usually difficult for the families to bear in such societies marriage by elopement has come up as a customary practice.
- Such marriage is seen among the Karbis of Karbi Anglong district of Assam. In other cases marriage by elopement takes place when either of the prospective groom or bride's family does not approve of the wedding or when marriage is fixed with a distasteful partner.
- In such a case, the bride elopes with the partner of her choice. Such marriage by elopement is seen in almost all parts of the world.

Marriage Payments

Marriage often involves economic considerations as have been described in many areas before. These are implicit and act as one of the major function of marriage. Apart from these, Anthropologists have identified that more than 75% societies studied involved explicit economic transactions which take place before and after marriage.

They are **Bride price or bride wealth, bride service, exchange of females, gift exchange, dowry or indirect dowry.**



1. Bride Price

- Bride price or Bride Wealth is the gift of money or goods from the groom or his kin to the bride's kin.
- This gift usually grants the right of the bride to the groom and also the rights to her children.
- Even in the unusual female-female marriages, the female husband has to pay bride price.
- Depending on the bride price, the payments could be during marriage or fixed for a later date.
- It is a very common practice among all the economic transactions.
- It is practiced among nearly 44% of the societies, as per a study.
- It occurs all around the world but more common in Africa and Oceania.
- Payments were made in livestock or food. But with the increasing importance of money, it has become a part of the bride price.
- **Example - reindeers are given as bridewealth by the reindeerherding Chukchee, sheep by the Navajo, cattles by the Nuers, Maasai and Samburu of Africa, spears in Somalia etc.**
- Bride price should not be equated to slavery. It is considered as a security to the girl's parents.
- It was considered as a price given to the bride's parents for their loss in the way of help in economic activities.
- Moreover if a woman returns to her kin group at a later stage for no fault of hers, the parents are not obliged to return the bride price.
- On the other hand in cases where the woman is involved in extra-marital affairs, bride price has to be returned.
- A larger bride price is associated with more difficulty in obtaining divorce.
- When the anthropologists studies the societies in which bride wealth is in existence, they found out that such societies had low status for women or women played a very important role in subsistence economy, but the decision making authority rested with the men.



2. Dowry

- It is the opposite of bride price.
- It involves substantial transfer of goods and money by the bride's family to the groom, groom's family or the couple.
- It is said to occur in 8% of the societies.
- The money spent will never be returned to the bride's family. It was observed in the European societies and Indian society.

Reasons behind dowry - According to the anthropologists are, in monogamous societies, it could be the best way to attract suitable groom and ensure better upkeep of the daughter and her children. It is also often seen in societies where women do not participate much in primary activities and the societies have a very high degree of social stratification.

Dark side of Dowry :

1. **Dowry Murder** : M. N Srinivas and Ram Abuja had revealed in their studies that Dowry Murder is a prevalent fact in Middle class societies in India
2. **Harassment**: of the bride . In certain cases burning of the bride has been reported in states like Uttar pradesh and Bihar .
3. **Female foeticide and Infanticide**: Due to menace of Dowry girl child is seen as a burden by most of the middle class families.
4. **Domestic violence** : NCRB data reveals that more than 50% women in rural India undergo domestic violence for not bringing Dowry in Marriage .
5. **Debt burden on Family** : the girl's family will fall in the vicious cycle of debt for paying Dowry.
6. Decrease In the number to educate girls .
It can lead to both polyandry and polygyny

3. Indirect dowry

It is another situation of economic exchange. Here the source of dowry is the groom's family which first gifts them to the bride's family. The bride's family in turn returns them to the bride in the form of goods needed to setup a new household. 12% of societies follow indirect dowry. Among the **Basseri of Southern Iran** groom's father gives cash to bride's father who uses this money to buy household necessities for his daughter.

4. Bride service

- Bride service requires that the groom works for the bride's family.
- It can be once the marriage is fixed or after marriage.



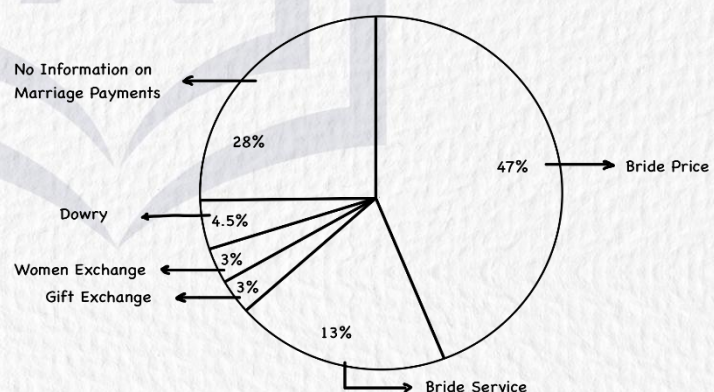
- It can range from months to years and marriage could be consummated anytime in between.
- It is practiced in about **19% of the societies**. Sometimes bride service could be a replacement or reduction of bride price.
- It is practiced among some of the tribes in North East India. Among the **Naga's of North East India** the bride wealth forms a part of the marriage negotiation and if the groom's party is not able to pay the bride wealth then the compensation is through service. The boy works for the bride's family and only when the bride's family is satisfied that the marriage is solemnized.

Exchange of females

- In some societies, a sister or a female relative of the groom is exchanged for the bride.
- This usually happens in egalitarian societies where women play a very important economic role.
- Among these societies are the **Tiv of West Africa, Yanomamo of Venezuela-Brazil**. Among the tribes in India- **Muria Gonds, Baiga of Bastar and the Koya and the Saora** of Andhra Pradesh have such practice.

Gift Exchange

- This system involves exchange of gifts almost of equal value among the kin groups.
- Among the **Andaman Islanders**, once the couple express intention to be married, there is continuous gift exchange in the form of food and other objects through a third party till the marriage unites the couple.



Frequency of marriage payments as survey conducted by G.P. Murdock in 1957

**Functions of marriage**

Marriage as a social institution is universal among the human societies. The rules and systems could differ from society to society but the universal existence points out to the fact that marriage serves some basic functions.

1. **Biological Functions** - Every individual have basic biological needs like food, shelter and reproduction. Marriage is that institution which is responsible for facilitating the sexual and reproductive needs of an individual. Unlike other organisms human beings tend to form relatively long term and stable sexual relationships. Marriage regulates this activity by certain rules and regulations. These rules vary from society to society. It provides social validity and legitimacy to the couple and the children born of them. It is through reproductive activity that the society is perpetuated. Thus it serves biological needs of human beings.
2. **Economic Functions** - Like reproduction, Food and shelter form the basic needs. Human society is based on cooperation between individuals to acquire food and shelter. Marriage forms a bond, which promotes sexual division of labour in an organized way, among the partners and at individual level. For example, the man is expected to be the breadwinner of the family in many societies while the woman has the role to look after the household and the child care.
3. **Social Functions** - Human being is a social animal and kinship bonds are necessary aspects of living in a society. Marriage is not bond between two individuals but it brings two kin groups together into a union. It is the foundation for a family. Marriage thus leads to expansion of kin groups. In many cases it is responsible for power and prestige of a group. Thus it serves many social functions.
4. **Educational Functions** - Human child has a prolonged dependence on parents when compared to any other primates. This puts responsibility of educating the child on the parents. The parents are responsible for enculturation of the child and ensure that the child can participate successfully in the bio-social aspects of the society. Only then can perpetuation of culture is possible. Thus parents are responsible for successful upbringing of the children and educating them. Marriage provides a stable home and environment where the spouses can carry out this role successfully.
5. **Psychological Functions** - Human beings are evolved sentinel beings. The stress and fears of the individual posits a challenge of existence and mental stability. Marriage provides a



stable partnership between the individuals who can benefit from emotional security provided by the spouse.

Where Live in relationships situate in institution of marriage?

Live-in relation i.e. cohabitation is an arrangement whereby two people decide to live together on a long-term or permanent basis in an emotionally and/or sexually intimate relationship. The term is most frequently applied to couples who are not married.

- **People may live together for a number of reasons-**These may include wanting to test the compatibility or to establish financial security before marrying. It may also be because they are unable to legally marry, for instance, if they are of the same sex, some interracial or inter-religious marriages are not legal or permitted. Other reasons include living with someone before marriage in an effort to avoid divorce, a way to avoid the higher income taxes paid by some two-income married couples (in the United States), philosophical opposition to the institution of marriage and seeing little difference between the commitment to live together and the commitment to marriage. Some individuals may also choose cohabitation because they see their relationships as being private and personal matters, and not to be controlled by political, religious or patriarchal institutions.
- **Inclusion in the ambit of marriage-** Answer varies from society to society. It depends on social recognition, not legal recognition. Many Western communities today give live-in relations equal rights as bestowed upon by marriage. India has legally recognised these relations, but as of now, society in general does not accept them. In such societies, live-in relations cannot be equated with the institution of marriage.

As a threat to marriage

In recent years there has been a remarkable increase in the number of people opting for living-in relationships instead of marriages. Though this trend has been popular in western countries for a long time now, it is catching up in India as well with more and more couples choosing to live in, because of the space, choice and personal freedom it gives them along with reasons mentioned above.

Conclusion-

Though marriages also have their pros and cons, no relationship enjoys the social and legal recognition as a marriage does. The obvious merits of a marriage are the emotional



commitment and the support that the partners have for each other. Since a marriage is protected by law, couples expect loyalty and fidelity from each-other. Further, marriage is an incentive to develop staying power in a relationship. There is a lot of emotional investment in the relationship. Though marriages also have their ups and downs with an increasing number of couples going for divorces in recent years, when it comes to commitment and security, no relationship can match a marriage. It is a bond that can last a lifetime. So live-in relationship cannot replace marriage. Even in the most modern society, live-in relations are treated as a precursor to marriage.

Is pattern of marriage in Indian Society changing?

- Like the other social phenomenon, the institution of marriage has also been experiencing profound changes.
- The practice of monogamy has largely been followed by all sections of society, society which were practicing other forms of marriage are also following monogamy.
- Taking consent of the children for their marriage which were not the case earlier is new phenomena.
- Declining stability of the marriage coupled with enhanced greed of the bridegroom's family are some of the perceptible changes occurring in the institution of marriage.

Changes occurring in the Marriage patterns

- 1. Changes in the Forms of Marriage:** Though in the traditional Hindu society, monogamy was the prime form of marriage yet polyandry, polygamy, bigamy and marriage by exchange were quite popular. Now over the time polygamy, polyandry and exchange marriages have severely declined and monogamy is being followed by most people of Indian society.
- 2. Change in the Aim and Purpose of marriage:** The traditional Hindu marriage consider "dharma" as for performance of religious duties. Earlier the marriages were to perform the sacred duties and functions. The prime function was to become kins and protectors of the family. With the advent of variety of factors like mass media, consumerism, globalization the sacred nature of marriage is turning fade.
- 3. Change in Process of Mate Selection:** In olden times, parents usually selected the spouse and there was hardly any say of the girl. Now due to various factors like increasing education among girls, urbanization, economic independence etc children are consulted



in marriage matters and even girl and boy talk and try to know the views of each other before executing marriage ceremonies. The marriages which were earlier held by middlemen are now replaced with matchmaking agencies and the advertisement by newspaper and various social networking sites (**Jones,2010**).

4. **Change in the Age at Marriage:** Traditionally in India marriage occurs at early age but now due to arrival of various factors like technology and awareness among girls there is a big change. Further due to arrival of professional education, children are busy in studies for a longer time and hence marriages get delayed to 25-30 years. It has played a major role in determining the growth rate of population through its linkage to marital fertility. The delayed marriage makes considerable difference in lowering fertility rates.
5. **Change in stability of Marriage (Increase in Divorce Rates)**-In the olden times institution of marriage was quite stable and hardly any divorce was noted. Fear of kinship system, strong social codes, never allowed married couples to break up marriages even if they want to live together or not.
 - Now due to legislatives, education, technology advancement and more awareness has changed stability in the institution of marriage. Divorce is increasing in society across the globe. In the agro based states like Punjab and Haryana there is increase of 150% since last decade and in Kerala known as most literate state there in an increase of 350% divorce rates since last decade. Love, personal commitment and intrinsic satisfaction are now seen as the cornerstone of marriage (**Allen and Grow, 2001**)
6. **Change in field of selection (Increasing number of Inter caste Marriage)**- Until sometime back, marrying a person belonging to some other caste or religion was not permitted by the families.
 - **Kapadia (1982)** conducted a study on inter-caste marriages in India and the data revealed that more than fifty percent parents expressed their willingness to allow their children marrying outside their own caste. Only one third were against this departure from custom.
 - **Afzal (2009)** found that the religion plays important role in inter-caste marriage. Women belonging to Muslim and other religious group were less likely to have inter-caste marriages than Hindus. Also workingwomen were more likely to have inter-caste marriage than non-working women.



7. **Change in Economic Aspects of Marriages** - Marriage is often held in cities as a social or a civil ceremony than religious ceremony. In the past, the ceremony was a family affair, confined to an economical budget, even though the guest list was long. On the contrary, in the present time, the occasion is generally celebrated in an elaborated way, a long guest list, colorful and extravagant venue, lavish feast and a series of rituals are the key ingredients of the 'big fat Indian wedding' that we see today.

Factors responsible for changing marriage patterns

1. **Economic factors:** Changes in marriage institution are clearly related to the remarkable development in education, increasing urbanization and involvement of women in economic activities outside household. People have started “going out of the family” for work and women also have joined men in process of finding out jobs and earning money. This has boosted self-respect and self-confidence of women. These developments have affected the institution of marriage (**Kapadia, 1982**).

2. **Social factors:** In the past, there were joint families in which there was interdependence of family members and there was closely interacting community. In the transition, today’s highly urban and affluent society, work patterns have become more differentiated reducing the necessity to interact with the community. This pattern has given rise to individualism (**Sonawat, 2008**).

Now, the society is characterized by high degree of specialization in terms of employment, education, health care, transportation. Due to these increasing individualism and specialization the institution of marriage has gone a tremendous change in living condition, values, norms and traditions. (**Herzberger, 1993**)

3. **Psychological factors:** In the past, for women the greatest personal achievement and source of reward was to be married, raising children and ensuring an optimal home and family life. No other life content could provide the same sense of personal worth. For men self-fulfillment lay in maintaining good employment, marrying the woman of their dreams and providing financial support to their family. Men and women have clear cut idea of their respective roles.

However increasing urbanization, institutionalization of family roles, technological improvements in home care products and increased affluence reduced the potential of home life to provide stimulation and feelings of worth from satisfactory personal achievements. In addition, the ethos of individualism encouraged both men and women to



realize their own potentials. This has brought the conflict and disturbance in the institution of marriage.

- 4. Technological factors:** The arrival of new technology like computers, mobiles, social networking sites has also been emerging as a new factor for generating changes in the institution of marriage.
- 5. Legislative factors:** The legislative measures taken by the government in the last 50 years or more has helped to change the nature of institution of marriage as now legal safeguards are provided in marriage which were not part of traditional Hindu society. During the British rule and also after independence legislations were passed in order to bring about desirable changes in the Hindu Marriage system.

Emerging new institutions

Besides shift in Age, education, caste, dowry and divorces there are some structural changes in the marriage pattern which have a great impact on the society. Though limited in number but in metropolitan cities and urban areas there are occurring some other serious problems which are as follows-

- 1. Gay relationships/ Lesbians-**Though it seems as a shock to the Indian society but gay/ lesbians are emerging in India at a fast rate. According to a report by NGO there are thousands of gay/ lesbians in metropolitan cities of Indian society. In 2004, the civil partnership Act has given same sex couples similar legal rights to married couples in respect of pensions, inheritance, tenancies and property.
- 2. Cohabitation-**The young people may find marriage less important because premarital sex is becoming increasingly acceptable. Cohabitation is when the couple moves from dating to living together which may or may not lead to marriage (Manning, 2007).
- 3. One-Person Households-** When one person establishes his family is the one person household. People are now more self-centred. Men as well as women want to establish their own identities by independently establishing households. There are almost three in ten households (6.8 million people) who are one person held houses (WorldBank Report, 2008).
- 4. Living apart together-** It is commonly seen in the western countries where the people though being married are living far from each other. As people are getting more isolated and have greater egoistic attitudes they don't want their privacy to be interfered so they



adopt the path of living apart together. In 2008, according to a survey by British Social Attitudes it was noted that every 1 in 10 adults are 'living apart together' or 'LATs'.

5. **DINK Syndrome (Double Income no kids)**- The post-2000 economic crisis have solidified this social trend as more couples wait longer to have kids, with one in five choosing not to have them at all. People don't want to take responsibility of the kids and want to enjoy their life without any tensions. They find the kids as the additional responsibility.

Conclusion

Changes are bound to occur and institution of marriage is also experiencing many changes. Technological, economical, new educational patterns and changes in life styles, are major factors playing profound role in this change. With the passage of time the age at marriage, process of mate selection, aims and the purposes of marriage, trends of divorce rates and the economic aspects of marriage have undergone a tremendous change. Conflicts in this institution are also emerging due to the interaction of tradition with modernity new patterns in the marriage like Gay, Cohabitation etc. are also emerging in some places which may have more effects in the coming time. Though these new trends are observed today the importance of marriage has not diminished. It is still universally practiced. Though its sanctity is affected a little, it is not reduced to the level of a mere civil contract. Men and women are still emotionally involved in their marriages.