

## Chapter – 7

# MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

### 7.1 (A) Marriage and its meaning

Marriage is one of the universal social institutions, which permits both man and woman to lead conjugal life. It is established by the human society to control and regulate the sex life of man. It is closely connected with the institution of family. In fact, family and marriage are complementary to each other. As Gillin and Gillin have said, "Marriage is a socially approved way of establishing a family of procreation". As Westermarch has marked, "Marriage is rooted in the family rather than the family in the marriage. Marriage is institution of society which can have very different culture. Its purposes, functions and forms may differ from society to society, but it is present everywhere as an institution.

#### Definition :

There is no definition which adequately covers all types of human marriage. But different anthropologist and sociologist offer some definition. Some of them are given below :

1. Edward Westermarck in his "History of Human Marriage" defines marriage as "the more or less durable connection between male and female lasting beyond the mere act of propagation till after the birth of offspring".
2. Malinowski says that marriage is a "contract for the production and maintenance of children".
3. Robert H. Lowie, "Marriage is a relatively permanent bond between permissible mates.
4. Alfred Mc Clung Lee writes, "Marriage is the public joining together, under socially specified regulations of man and woman as husband and wife".
5. Duncan Mitchell's "A dictionary of sociology" Marriage may be defined as "a socially sanctioned sex relationship involving two or more people of the opposite sex, whose relationship is expected to endure beyond the time required for gestation and the birth of children".



### 7.1(B) Types of Marriage :

Indian marriages can be classified according to time i.e., Ancient and Modern. Different sociologist and Anthropologist gave their views on types of marriages (Ancient) and classified as follows.

1. **Monogamy :**
  - a. Serial Monogamy
  - b. Non-Serial Monogamy

2. **Polygamy :**
  - (i) Sororal Polygamy
  - (ii) Non-Sororal Polygamy

3. **Polyandry**
  - (i) Fraternal Polyandry
  - (ii) Non-Fraternal Polyandry
  - (iii) Familial Polyandry
  - (c) Polygynandry

#### **Monogamy :**

It is a form of marriage in which one man marries one woman. It is the most common and acceptable form of marriage.

#### **Serial Monogamy :**

In many societies individuals are permitted to marry again often on the death of the first spouse or after divorce but they cannot have more than one spouse at one and the same time.

#### **Non-Serial Monogamy :**

It is sub-form of monogamy in which an individual has the same single spouse life long.

#### **Polygamy :**

It is a form of marriage in which one man marries more than one

woman at a given time. It is of two types – Sororal polygamy and non-sororal polygamy.

**Sororal Polygamy :**

It is a type of marriage in which the wives are invariably the sisters. It is often called sororate.

**Non-Sororal Polygamy :**

It is a type of marriage in which the wives are not related as sisters.

**Polyandry :**

It is the marriage of one woman with more than one man. It is less common than polygyny. It is of two types. Fraternal Polyandry and non fraternal polyandry.

**Fraternal Polyandry :**

When several brothers share the same wife and the practice can be called alelphic or fraternal polyandry. This practice of being mate, actual or potential to one's husband's brothers is called-levirate. It is prevalent among Todas.

**Non-Fraternal Polyandry :**

In this type the husband need not have any close relationship prior to the marriage. The wife goes to spend some time with each husband. So long as a woman lives with one of her husbands, the others have no claim over her.

**Polygynandry :**

It is a sub-form of polygamy in which a man has multiple wives and a woman has multiple husbands at any given time. It shows the coexistence of polygyny and polyanadry. It is a rare form existing among the Todas of Nilgiri Hills, the Khasas of Jaunsar Bawar and the Marquesans of Polynesia. Modern types of marriage changes in modes and selecting suitable partner.

India is a land of multitude religion and all the religions of India



consider wedding as the most auspicious occasion, an association related to tradition, customs, rituals and colourful celebrations.

As compared to marriages of the West, the Indian weddings are not only the union of two individuals but the marriage of two bodies, hearts and souls. Traditionally, marriages in India were arranged by the family members: however, during the course of time there has been considerable changes in the way individuals choose to get married. It is due to this effect which has led to the development of different types of Indian Marriages.

### **Arranged Marriages :**

The Arranged Marriages in India are a tradition in Indian society and culture and even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century continues to dominate the majority of marriages in India.

The Arranged marriages are arranged by the family members of the Bride and the Groom. The boy and girl meet and then decide whether they want to get married or not.

The acceptance of the boy/girl is taken into consideration when searching for a suitable partner. The Arranged Marriages as compared to other forms of marriages in India have being proved successful. One can find an ideal match for arranged marriages in newspapers, matrimonial web sites, through friends, or relatives.

### **Love Marriages :**

“Happy marriages begin when we marry the ones we love, and they blossom when we love the ones we marry.” Tom Muller. In India, the Love Marriages are getting immensely popular by every passing day. While the arranged marriages was the only sole option for the boy and the girl, but the scenario has changed, with love marriages in vogue among the couples. Parents, today have broader perspective and totally understands that it is mutual understanding and the feeling of love that matters the most and not the economic standard or ethnicity.

Considering the awareness level, Love Marriages are restrained to the urban city culture and are still not part of rural mass culture, where arranged marriages are still considered the most auspicious.



### **Love cum Arranged Marriages :**

The concept of love-cum-arranged marriages came into picture with the increase in modernity in the Indian Society.

Earlier the family members had the responsibility of choosing a suitable partner for their son/daughter, but now the children prefer choosing their life partner on their own, hence the Love-cum-arranged marriages concept came into the picture. In short, it is a form of love marriage mutually agreed by both the families. Though the parents generally don't object to their child's choice, they make sure that the person preferred by their child is worth.

### **Inter Caste Marriage :**

The Inter Caste Marriages in India is a marriage between man and woman belonging to different castes and considered a taboo and is confronted with unique challenges and protest from the family. However, with the change of time, Inter caste marriages are also becoming part of the Indian Society.

Inter-religious marriage in India is basically understood to mean marriage between persons belonging to different religions. Though the Inter religion marriages are not very frequent in the society, as the couples meet with fierce protests and in some cases death threats from their own family members, the Inter-religious marriages in India are performed by the couples secretly or in a court, temples.

Though our Government has tried to come up with many approaches to curb these differences, not many parents/families are able to understand it and still consider it as an offence.

### **Court Marriages :**

The graph of the Court Marriages in India is fast catching up with the times as they are simultaneously getting popular. In a country like India, court marriages are considered to be the marriages with legal support and thus can be entitled for various rights.

These kinds of marriages are popular among the educated Indians who do not want to spend money on lavish celebrations plus couples

who are restricted to get married by the family members, also go for Indian Court Marriages.

The Court Marriages do not involve any religious ceremonies and are strictly done legally in front of the Marriage Officer and witness. A Marriage Certificate is given to the couple opting for Court Marriages in India as a proof.

### **Group Marriages :**

It means the marriage of two or more women with two or more men. Here the husbands are common husbands and wives are common wives. Children are regarded as the children of the entire group as a whole.

### **Child Marriages :**

Child Marriages means a marriage to which either of the contracting parties is a child, "child" means a person who if a male, has not completed twenty-one years of age, and if a female, has not completed eighteen years of age.