

Marriage- Definitions

□ Marriage is one of the deepest and most complex involvements of human relationships.

□ It is a very necessary part of the Indian social system, involves the social sanction, generally in the form of a civil or/and religious ceremony, authorizing two persons of socio economic relations.

- Marriage is considered to be sacrament joining together two human beings into eternal and indissoluble union.
- It is defined as an institution in which men and women are admitted to family life to live in intimate personal relationship primarily for the purpose of begetting and rearing children.
- Marriage is a socially legitimate sexual union begins with public announcement and undertaken with the idea of permanent relationship.
- In India 'Marriage' is considered as ceremonial gift of the bride by her father or other appropriate relative to the bridegroom to fulfill 3 purposes of human existence by - Dharma, Artha and Karma
- Religiously 'Marriage' is considered as a sacrament with all religious sanctity in marriage, which is an outward or visible sign of act having inner and spiritual significance for the participants.

Purposes of marriage

- Make sexual intercourse legitimate, restraining it within bounds, consistent with the perpetuation of the species.
- Experience the joy of setting up new home, sex, birth and rearing of children, new relationship to each other and to community.
- Fulfill the desire for security, accumulation of property, education of children, and provision for old age.
- Gratify the desire for recognition of the individual status in the family and for personal achievement.
- Escape from unpleasant home conditions and perpetuation of family name.
- Biological, emotional, social and spiritual fulfillment and development, which can't be achieved in isolation.

In order to properly prepare for marriage, to understand and live it successfully requires a clear and correct notion not only of the nature of man and of marriage, but also of the goals of marriage. The purpose of marriage is intended to serve are not simple, on the contrary they are quite complex.

Marriage is a natural contract and artificial

- Marriage contract consists of an agreement – a consent behavior a man and woman to take each other as husband and wife.
- This implies that they are entering an agreement to affect certain goals in a certain way.
- Since, marriage is nature's invention; its goals are posited by the nature to satisfy biological and psychological needs of individuals. Sociologists feel that marriage is an artificial device or a mere convention (custom) of society.
- The marital literature reveals that there are no absolute and fixed natural goals, rather marriage has emerged as the result of evolutionary process.
- People enter into marriage for prestige, wealth, security and companionship etc.

Marriage is a social institution and individual

- The chief purpose of marriage is social, but not individual.
- To serve the society marriage is important for generative act, rearing and education of children.
- Due to marriage, a series of relationships arise among various family members, knowledge and mastery of these relationships leads to art of successful and happy marriage.
- The primary end of marriage is the procreation and education of the children and the second is mutual support – Christian philosophy.
- Marriage is primarily a social institution designed to perpetuate the human race, only secondarily, it is intended for personal gain.
- Marriage is important for the development of individuals' personality, as marriage provides more benefits to people, results in development of their personalities.

Marriage has generic and specific goals

- Marriage has generic goal, since it is common to all other societies, personal happiness is a rightful goal of marriage.
- But this cannot be a specific goal of marriage, since happiness is not the unique goal of marriage alone.
- The other goal of marriage is to safe guard, the society from foulness, unchastely and also expanding the society.

Marriage is a legal contract

Marriage is a legal contract, the role of the civil law is two folded.

1. To confirm the natural laws and not violate them.
2. Should recognize that cultural differences exist in various places.

Permanence of marriage should be reflected in civil law.

Marriage is a sacrament:

- Marriage is considered as supernatural as well as natural
- The entire married life of the couple is elevated to this super natural level.
- Grace is imparted throughout married life.

Functions of marriage

The function of 'Marriage' fall under 2 categories

1. Need Gratification

1. **Biological needs:** Biological needs for food, clothing and shelter one possible only through personal relationships of family life. Sexual gratification of partners is also one of the distinctive functions of marriage. Perpetuating the race is one of the biological needs.
2. **Psychological needs:** Are also will be satisfied through personal

relations. Need of belongingness, companionship, recreation security as a member of the family, there by getting economic support are some of the psychological needs to be satisfied through marriage.

2. **Social control:** Because marriage satisfies both biological and psychological needs, the morality and ethics of the society is safeguarded. The culture of the society is safeguarded through maintenance system, the family safeguards the religious sanctities. It provides education to the children and makes them useful members of the society.

premarital Sexual Relationships

- Is a problem in all cultures except those in which such relationships are expected or accepted
- Young people must make decisions concerning their sex conduct before marriage.
- Majority of children in our families are still brought up believing that sexual relationships before marriage is a deviation from acceptable moral standards.
- Premarital chastity is still the norm in our society, experimentation for the sake of experimentation or for variety in experience can be seen as undesirable

Consequences of Premarital Intimacy

1. **Society's attitude:** Once the intimacy is developed on whose initiative, it is always the girl/woman who is blamed for it. Being an Indian, she is expected to save and protect her virginity for her husband only. There are double standards in our society for boys and girls, for ex: there is no equivalent word in any language for virginity in male.
2. **Physical consequences:**
 1. **STD/Venereal diseases:** People involved with prostitutes often

encounter with these diseases as prostitutes are at high risk of infections as they involve with many partners.

2. **Premarital / Teenage pregnancy:** Premarital conception is a common consequence; the risk of conception depends on the frequency of sexual contacts/intercourses. The secondary consequences of teenage pregnancy are – abortion, illegitimacy, premature marriage

Abortion: Induced abortion in 3/4th cases of all premature pregnancies.

Illegitimacy : Rearing a child out of wedlock is the rarest option for a girl.

Premature marriage : An undesired pregnancy raises extra problems when couple marry sooner than expected – education, training gets disturbed, divorce rate increases.

3. **Psychological consequences:**

In comparison to such tangible effects as pregnancy, abortion and diseases, the emotional consequences of intimacy are difficult to measure, regret more common for women and guilt feeling.

4. **Interpersonal consequences:**

- In order to improve the chances of marriage, some try to become pregnant.
- Sexual contacts alter the character of relationship from attraction to fulfillment from the appeal of the unknown to boredom with the known.
- As per male psychology, sexual inaccessibility heightens to partners desirability, increases the desire to marry her.
- Sexual intimacy weakens the males desire to continue the relationship.
- In general, intimacy decreases the ‘momentum’ towards marriage for the man or at least the sexual incentive is reduced.
- Whereas for the girl, it has opposite effect, her desire to marry may increase to guarantee social security in case of pregnancy, value of losing her virginity, feeling of left over and feeling of second hand commodity etc.
- Research reveals that divorce rate was high in couples who had premarital intercourse than happily married couples.
- Marital happiness was greatest to couples who have saved sex relations for marriage.

- Where multiple partners are involved, they have less happy marriages and more frequent divorce.
- Normally well adjusted young people will suffer no ill effects if they maintain self control and avoid excessive sex interest until they marry.

Introduction

Preparation for Marriage is an initiative to support couples starting out in married life.

Need and Importance

- Most of us are either poorly or partially prepared for marriage, very few are adequately prepared.
- Our society has not helped us in educating for marriage.
- The training for marriage that most young adults receive in the home tends to perpetuate mistakes rather than the success of their parents.
- Young people make a serious effort to prepare for marriage.
- The 2 important factors which help young people achieve greater happiness in their married life are – preparation for marriage and selection of mate wisely.
- Young men and women are not educated properly regarding marriage and parenthood, the basic preparation for marriage is to know and understand oneself.
- The success of marriage depends on 2 factors: Sound knowledge of human body and its proper functioning and various internal and external emotions affecting human functioning and the attitude.
- The more a person understands the facts of structure and functions of reproductive system, personal hygiene, the more she/he gets good emotional and physical adjustment in marriage.
- The more the individual aware of his/her mate's attitude towards marriage and family living, human behavior, the more fit he/she is to make a good personal and emotional adjustment in the family unit.

Ways to prepare for marriage

Selection of the mate:

- In marriage two individuals come from different background different attitudes and different ways of life and require adjustments during the married life. Hence young men and women require help, advice and guidance from the superiors i.e. either from parents, priest or social organizations.
- The most preferred qualities in a mate include –Economic well being - well placed in a well to do job with economic potential. Highly educated and intelligent, cleanliness and good health, good family background, good looking, impressive personality, charming manners, sociability and adjustability.
- Proper preparation for marriage depends on 2 factors – what we are and what we know.
- Marital success depends chiefly upon traits of character and personality.
- Proper attitudes of mind and heart, adequate information about marital issues are essential for success.
- The information about religious, social, educational, psychological, physiological, economic and legal aspects of ‘Marriage’ are essential.
- Knowledge of family life, child care and understanding of children are also important.

Variations in Marital Relations

There are wide variations in marital relations

Number of mates:

- Taking the number of mating partners as variable, marital relations may be monogamous, polygamous and polyandrous.
- Mating relation is monogamous where marriage is a union of one man and one woman.
- Polygynous relations occurs where a man has right to have more than one

wife.

- In polyandrous, when a woman is simultaneously married to two or more men.

Kinds of mates: The personalities of the partners will have impact on marital relations.

Choice of mates: There are 2 possibilities i.e. based on choice of mates – love marriage or Arranged marriage. Secondly, exogamous and endogamous marital relations.

Exchange at marriage: It deals with what are the different arrangements that exist for the transfer of wealth at the marriage, there are 3 possibilities –

- Wealth may be transferred by the husband or his kin to the bride's family – bride's price.
- Wealth or dowry is a sum of money or property i.e. brought to the marriage by the girl – groom's price.
- It is the transfer of wealth in the form of gifts to help the young couple to set up the new household – wedding presents.

Degree of authority: Where the wife enjoys a subordinate position in relation to the husband, the marital status is patriarchal. The relation is matriarchal, where husband enjoys a subordinate position in relation to the wife.

Strength of bond: Marriage is the sanctioning by a society of a durable bond between a man and woman. If the marital relations exist for a very short period, it is called temporary. If the couple overcomes the differences without going for divorce, the marital relations remain unbreakable.

Possibility of remarriage: On the basis of possibility of remarriage, there may be 3 kinds of marital relations – no marriage after death or divorce, permissive remarriage, mandatory remarriage.

Residence after marriage: There are 3 possible relations which depend upon the residence set up by the young people.

- When a man moves to his wife's family's household, matrilocal.
- If the wife joins her husband's family's household, patrilocal
- When the married couple set up a new residence, neolocal.

Age at marriage: On the basis of age at marriage, there are 2 possibilities of marital relations – Early and Late marriages.

Ancient forms

The Indian subcontinent has been home to a wide variety of marriages. Over the time, from historical Vedic religion to classical orthodox Hinduism and eventually era of social reform and female emancipation, marriage has changed and evolved in interesting ways. Some of the ancient marriage types are still prevalent, while other types have vanished or have got modernised with the strong winds of industrialisation, urbanisation and globalisation witnessed by India.

Ancient forms of marriage: According to Manu Smiriti, the laws of Manu or Manava Dharma Shastra, there existed eight main forms of Hindu marriages in ancient India namely Brahma Vivah, Daiva Vivah, Arsha Vivah, Prajapatya Vivah, Gandharva Vivah, Asura Vivah, Rakshasa Vivah and Pisaka Vivah. Although not all eight marriages had religious sanction, it is said that in the ancient time, all these forms of marriages were observed among many communities of the people. Out of these eight different forms of marriage only first four were approved and encouraged in the society. The specific characteristics of these eight different forms of Hindu marriages are as follows:

1. **Brahma Marriage:** In this type of marriage, the girl's father himself invited a Veda learned and pious man and gave him his highly dressed and bejeweled daughter in the marriage solemnized by a Brahmin.
2. **Daiva Marriage:** In this type of marriage, the girl's father gifted her properly dressed and bejeweled daughter to a priest as dakshina (fees) for officiating over a sacrifice.
3. **Arsha Marriage:** Marriage in which the girl's father gave away his daughter, according to the rule, in exchange of a pair of cattle or two cows given by the bridegroom, for the fulfillment of the sacred law.
4. **Prajapatya Marriage:** Marriage in which the bridegroom was duly worshipped and married to the bride by her father with due honor and words of blessings "May both of you perform together your duties". Besides this, no marriage ceremonies were performed.
5. **Asuras Marriage:** Marriage in which the bridegroom received a maiden, after bestowing as much wealth as he can afford, to the kinsmen and to the bride herself, according to his own will.
6. **Gandharva Marriage:** Marriage in which there is voluntary union of a

girl with a man in solitude when both of them were in love. In this form of marriage, neither the consent of the parents nor the rites of dowry was essential. Only the will of the marrying parties was given importance. This marriage was believed to spring from desire and had sex satisfaction as its chief purpose.

7. **Rakshasa Marriage:** It was marriage by capture or abduction that is without obtaining the consent of the girl or her parents. The maiden was captured or abducted from her home after her kinsmen have been slain or wounded and their houses broken open.

8. **Pisaka Marriage:** It was marriage by seduction, stealing or fraud. The girl was sexually violated while she was asleep or intoxicated or unconscious or mentally disturbed and later given her the social status of a wife.

Ancient forms of muslim marriage

Among Indian Muslims also, besides, the permanent form of marriage that is Nikah, a system of temporary marriage, called muta marriage was found to exist. This form of marriage was practiced during Prophet's time with the purpose to fulfill the physical needs only. It was permitted under severe circumstances during the time of jihad, but was prohibited immediately after the need for it vanished.

Muta Marriage: This was a marriage settled by a man and a woman by mutual consent without the intervention of kin. A man was permitted to contract muta marriage with a Muslim, a Jew or a Christian girl but a woman cannot contract such marriage with a non-Muslim. A wife secured through muta marriage was known as sigha. For the validity of this marriage, two essentials were necessary;

- the period of cohabitation had to be stipulated or prefixed, and
- the amount of dower had to be pre-determined.

If the period was not fixed but the dower was fixed, the marriage was regarded as permanent but if the period was fixed and the dower was not fixed, the marriage was considered as void. The children born during this period were considered legitimate and the woman's kin had to own them. However, Muta marriage did not create rights of inheritance between the man and the woman. A sigha wife could not claim any maintenance, nor could she inherit her husband's property.

But the children being legitimate had a share in their both parents property. The muta marriage did not recognize the right of divorce. But a husband could put an end to the contract by making a gift of the remaining period to his wife. If the marriage did not consummate, only half of the dower settled was given, but if it consummated, full dower had to be paid. If the woman left her husband before the expiry of the term, the husband was entitled to deduct a proportionate part of the dower. Muta marriage was condemned in the Islamic Law because

- The woman in this marriage did not leave her home,
- Her people gave up no rights which they had over her, and
- The children of the marriage did not belong to father and could not be affiliated to his clan.

Prevalent forms of marriage

Various forms of marriage coexist in the present Indian society on the basis of following classifications:

1. **Based on Selection of Mate**
2. **Based on number of spouses**

based on Selection of Mate

According to the **party who selects mate** there are two types of marriage viz.

1. **Arranged Marriage:** It is the marriage where marriage mate is selected by someone other than those being married but with the consent of the boy or the girl involved in marriage. The match could be arranged by parents, a matchmaking agent, matrimonial site, or a trusted third party. Majority of the marriages in India are fixed or arranged.
2. **Love Marriage:** A love marriage is a union of two individuals who themselves choose each other to marry based upon mutual love, affection, commitment and attraction. The concept of love marriage has never been foreign to India. But still, love affairs and marriages have always been discouraged in the Indian society. However with time, the Indian society is

becoming more and more tolerant to love marriages. The love marriage is no longer a taboo in Indian society, especially among younger generation. A love marriage turned into an arranged one is the best thing that can happen. If a love marriage gets the consent of the family members it can really turn into a beautiful relationship. Same way if in arranged marriage, both boy and girl are given the freedom to spend some time together before getting married and to decide for themselves, it would work wonders. The bottom line is that be it an arranged marriage or a love marriage, both the partners should realize that no one is perfect. There is no clear answer about which one is better than the other; it all depends on one's personal circumstances and personality. Love, trust, loyalty, patience, respect, understanding, appreciating are some of the keywords of a successful marriage, if all this is there in a marriage then be it an arranged marriage or a love marriage, it is bound to be a happy and an everlasting one.

Based on number of spouses

According to **the number of spouses**, there are three major types of marriage viz.

Monogamy: Monogamy is a Greek derivative of “Monos” – ‘one or alone’ and “gamos” – marriage or union. Monogamy is a marriage between one male and one female that is it is a form of marriage in which one woman is married to one man at a time. It is the ideal form of marriage, universally approved and widely practiced in India. Among the Hindus, until the passing of the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, a Hindu man was permitted to marry more than one woman at a time. After Independence, the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 established monogamy for all Hindus and others who came to be governed by this Act. Monogamy is reported to be of two types:

1. **Strict Monogamy:** In this type of marriage, a person is married only once in his or her life that is a person has only one spouse per lifetime. It means the divorcee or widow/widower don't remarry.
2. **Serial Monogamy:** In this type of marriage, a person may have several spouses over life time but only one at a given period of time. This is also called as ‘modified polygamy’.

There are also several specialised types of monogamous marriages that involve

cousins viz.

1. **Cross Cousin Marriage:** A cross cousin is a cousin from a parent's opposite-sexed sibling. So, a cross cousin is the child of the mother's brother (maternal uncle's child) or of the father's sister (paternal aunt's child). Cross cousin marriage rules per se are specified from a male perspective. Thus, cross-cousin marriage is the marriage of a man with his mother's brother's daughter or father's sister's daughter or a relative who is simultaneously his mother's brother's and father's sister's daughter. It is of following types:

- **Matrilateral Cross Cousin Marriage:** It occurs when a man marries his mother's brother's daughter. Continued over a number of generations, this eventually forms a circle where everyone is connected to each other. In Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh, matrilateral cross-cousin marriage is especially favored.
- **Patrilateral Cross Cousin Marriage:** It occurs when a man marries his father's sister's daughter. Continued over a number of generations, this eventually forms a circle where everyone is connected to each other. Patrilateral cross-cousin marriage is observed among the Paraiyars and other castes/tribes of Tamil Nadu.
- **Bilateral Cross Cousin Marriage:** It occurs when a man marries a girl who is simultaneously his mother's brother's and father's sister's daughter. It also occurs when men marry each other's sisters. The practice of marrying each other's sisters is seen in Yanomamo of the Amazon and also in Australia.

2. **Parallel Cousin Marriage:** A parallel cousin (or ortho-cousin) is a cousin from a parent's same sex sibling. So a parallel cousin is the child of the father's brother (paternal uncle's child) or the mother's sister (maternal aunt's child). Parallel cousin marriage is the marriage of a person with his father's brother's child or mother's sister's child. It is also further subdivided into:

- **Matrilateral Parallel Cousin Marriage:** It occurs when children of two sisters marry each other. It is prevalent among several communities of Madras, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra.
- **Patrilateral Parallel Cousin Marriage:** It occurs when children of two brothers marry each other. This type of marriage serves to

preserve wealth within extended family or lineage. The disadvantage is that it limits any possible ties between two groups. It is prevalent in several communities of Madras and Tamil Nadu.

Reasons behind preference for cousin marriage: In certain communities or tribes of India, Cousin marriage is preferred over marriage with a stranger or outsider as:

- It affirms the tradition or cultural values of their community;
- It ensures the authenticity and compatibility of spouses for marital stability and durability;
- It ensures an intimate and conjugal relationship between the bride and her in-laws;
- It further strengthens the already existing family ties;
- It helps maintain the family structure;
- It preserves familial wealth, sometimes via advantages relating to dowry or bride price;
- It eases prenuptial negotiations;
- It enhances female autonomy.

Unique Features of Monogamy: There are several reasons which make monogamy, the ideal form of marriage. Those are:

- It ensures that everyone gets a higher chance of obtaining a partner.
- It provides a stable environment for children to grow in the form of consistent male and female parent role models.
- It provides certain regularity and a shared set of expectations for adult participation.
- In this system the husband and wife each regard the feelings, sentiments and the sexual benefits of the other, as exclusively belonging to him/her.
- It promotes physical health by reducing the chance of acquiring STDs.
- It contributes to the financial health of the family and thus, comparatively high standard of living due to the small family size.

Polygamy

In this type of marriage a man/woman marries more than one woman/man at a given time. In other words, a person marries more than one spouse of the opposite sex. Polygamy is reported to be of two types that is :

1. **Polygyny:** In this type of marriage, a man marries more than one woman (wife) at a given time. Polygyny is further of two types:

1. Sororal Polygyny: It is a type of marriage in which a man is simultaneously married to one or more of his wife's sisters. The most common form is a man marrying the eldest sister first then eventually marrying her younger sisters. It is usually observed among the Naga, Gond, Baiga, Bhil and Toda communities of India.

Sororate: The Latin word 'Soror' stands for "Sister". It refers to the marriage where a man marries the sister of his dead or barren (inability to bear children) wife.

2. Non-Sororal Polygyny: It is a type of marriage in which wives are not related as sisters. Islam approves of non-sororal polygyny. A Muslim man can have as many as four living wives at a time, provided that they all are treated as equals. In Hindu Mythology, it is seen in Ramayana. Father of Ram, King Dasharath, had three wives.

Polyandry

In this type of marriage one woman marries more than one man (husband) at a given time. Polyandry is even less common than polygyny. Polyandry is also of two types:

1. Fraternal Polyandry: It is also called as 'Adelphic polyandry'. In this a woman is married to a group of brothers. The children are treated as the offspring of the eldest brother regardless of who the biological father is. This type of marriage usually occurs in the Himalayan areas of Nepal and Tibet. Fraternal polyandry is prevalent among the Todas of Nilgiri Hills, Iravans and Kammala caste of Malabar in Kerala. In Hindu mythology, it is found among the five brothers called Pandavas.

- Levirate: It is a specialized version of fraternal polyandry where a man marries the widow of his dead brother. Levirate is the derivative of Latin word 'Levir' which means 'Husband's Brother'. It is popularly known as devar vivah. This practice helped maintain

and reinforce family connections and alliances created by marriages. The form prevails among the Ahirs of Haryana, some Jats and Gujars and some other castes of U.P.

2. Non- Fraternal Polyandry: In this, all the husbands of a woman are not necessarily brothers. The woman lives with her different husbands in turns. While she lives with one husband, others have no right or claim over her. If a child is born, any husband can be chosen as the child's social parent through a special ritual. This type of marriage is practiced among Nair of Kerala & Tibetians.

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Polyfidelity / Group Marriage

Polyfidelity (also sometimes called Polyexclusivity) means the marriage of two or more women with two or more men. Here, the husbands are common husbands and wives are common wives and they all together form a single family unit and all members of the marriage share parental responsibility for any children arising from the marriage that is children are regarded as the children of the entire group as a whole. Some of the tribes in Australia, India, Tibet and Ceylon are believed to have practiced group marriage. Practitioners of Group marriage hold that:

“The human heart is capable of loving any number of times and any number of persons. This is the law of nature. There is no occasion to find fault with it. Variety is in the nature of things, as beautiful and as useful in love as in eating and drinking We need love as much as we need food and clothing, and God knows it; and if we trust Him for those things, why not for love?” (Quoted in Parker, R. (1935). *Yankee Saint: John Humphrey Noyes and the Oneida Community*. New York: Putnam.182-183)

The reasons for origin and prevalence of polyfidelity, as well as its extinction, atleast, in India are the sum collective of reasons behind the origin/prevalence and decline of polygamy in India.

Marriage based on the field of selection

According to the **rule of marriage** or **field of selection**, there are two types of marriage viz.

1. **Endogamous:** A marriage in which an individual follows the rule of endogamy and marries within a specified or defined group of which he or she is a member. The endogamous groups specifically refer to varna, caste and subcaste. They also include religious and national affiliation. Notable examples of endogamous religious groups in India are Parsis.
2. **Exogamous:** A marriage in which an individual follows the rule of exogamy and marries outside the gotra and sapinda relationships.

Reasons behind the origin or prevalence of rule of exogamy:
The rule of exogamy was followed in early society due to the following probable reasons:

- Scarcity of women within certain exogamous group;
- Prevent early sexual promiscuity within the clan;
- Clan blood was regarded sacred and to spare the sacredness of the totem, one had to refrain from its appropriation for sexual purpose.

Marriage Based on Caste

According to the **castes of the partners** the marriage is classified as:

1. **Hypergamous (anuloma):** A marriage in which a boy follows the rule of hypergamy and marries a girl from the sub-caste lower to him and vice versa.
2. **Hypogamous (pratiloma):** According to the rule of hypogamy, man belonging to the lower sub caste marries the girl belonging to the higher sub caste. In ancient scriptures, it is also given that pratiloma marriages, whereby a girl is married to a boy from a lower caste sub-caste, was condemned.
3. **Homogamous:** Homogamy refers to marriage between the partners who resemble themselves in certain ways. In present day, homogamy is one of the most common criteria for mate selection among the youth.

Readiness for Marriage

Introduction

Marriage is not a child play. It is an important responsibility requiring a degree of readiness, for it to be successful. Family life which normally comes soon after marriage is even a greater responsibility requiring even greater readiness, to be successful. Readiness is being prepared. Readiness for marriage is preparing individuals for marriage. Being ready for marriage is not just a matter of age. Ideas about the level of readiness needed for marriage differ from culture to culture and within cultures. Different people and individuals are ready for marriage at different times and in different ways. This preparation is not an overnight phenomenon. The preparation for healthy living and happy married and family life begins at an early age in most of the societies.

Areas of Readiness for Marriage

Major areas of readiness for marriage are as follows:

1. **Physiological readiness**
2. **Psychological readiness**
3. **Intellectual readiness**
4. **Social readiness**
5. **Emotional readiness**
6. **Spiritual-Moral readiness**
7. **Economical readiness**

Physiological Readiness

Physiological readiness: is one of the basic requirements of marriage. It requires individuals to acquire fully matured reproductive organs and system, be potent,

virile / fertile and free from congenital and venereal diseases.

- Fully matured reproductive organs and system: Menarche (first menstruation) in girls and first ejaculation in boys indicates having attained fully matured reproductive organs and system.
- Potency: It refers to sexual fitness or the physical ability of the individual to enter into sexual relationship. This ability mainly relates to the man's ability to attain and maintain erection, although women too, may suffer from physical or emotional disability that affect their sexual fitness. Study on sexual behaviour reveal that a man is fairly well aware of the degree of his sexual adequacy, as practically all men have experienced some form of sexual activity which usually begins in childhood or adolescence.
- Virility and fertility: It is also referred to as manhood and womanhood which relates to ability of a person to procreate. It is not necessary that a man who is highly potent is virile or vice versa i.e., a virile person to be sexually potent. Virility of men can be known before marriage by semen test where a fairly fresh specimen of man's semen fluid is obtained and examined microscopically. The sperm count, the structure and physical health of the sperm can be known by this method. It is also possible to estimate to some extent the fertility of women, but there is no method available as yet to establish with certainty whether the couples will be fertile together. However, by medical examination the medical doctors can often determine whether any condition is present which might make procreation difficult or impossible.
- Health: By health we imply the eugenics or genetic health as well general health of the individuals who wish to enter into marriage. Good health is desirable in marriage, yet perfect health is not essential for marriage. What is important is the eugenics fitness, which is always considered while selecting mates. The man and woman, who marry, naturally expect that their children be well-born with sound mind and body. This directly relates to the genetic and physical health of the couple. Physiologically, absence of venereal diseases like gonorrhoea, syphilis, AIDS, genetically disorders like sickle anaemia etc. and chronic health condition facilitate marriage.

Psychological Readiness

Psychological readiness for marriage is much more complex and harder to measure than the physiological readiness. It is also much more important. Marriage involves intimate relationship and thus, requires sensitivity to interpersonal relations which is possible only when to be married couple is psychologically ready for it.

Psychological readiness for marriage means:

- Being able to accept new relations, new roles and necessary adjustments required in it.
- Assuming personal responsibility for one's growth and development.
- Having healthy attitude towards sex, sexuality and overcome fears, if any, towards sex, pregnancy, child-birth, in-laws and fear of non-performance among men.

Intellectual Readiness

Intellectual readiness for marriage mainly refers to ability to function at higher stages of cognitive development viz.

- Capacity for comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation of the situation to take right decisions for family life.
- Recognizing one's attitudes, values, perceptions, limitations and strengths, that is, understanding oneself which is related to intelligence. Similarly ability to know and appreciate prospective spouse.
- Self-observation, self-assessment, self-regulation and self-reinforcement which helps them see themselves as capable of accepting challenges and invest a lot of efforts in terms of effective strategies to achieve their goals and persist in the face of difficulty.

Social Readiness

Marriage is a social act that greatly affects society. It brings in new status to the individual along with new social roles and interpersonal relations in the family – a basic social unit. It also constitutes of various marriage rituals and customs, which have special symbolic significance. Thus, social readiness with respect to marriage refers to:

- At least a general understanding of what marriage means in the cultural context – its concept, functions, duties, privileges and obligations. Besides this, readiness to undergo the ceremonies and rituals of marriage with sufficient understanding of their symbolic meaning.
- Having established a healthy measure of trust, autonomy, initiative, accomplishment and identity before they are ready for intimacy since it is the level at which a person requires the ability to give and receive love needed to begin making long-term commitments to relationships that get formed through marriage.
- Being able to over look the shortcomings of others and focus on our own and to think not only of our self, but be concerned about the welfare of another.
- Having capacity for kindness, compassion and companionship for others and the ability to collaborate, cooperate and consult with others to solve problems.
- Possessing civic virtues and being equipped in performing some socially redeemable service to society in which one lives as well as humanity as a whole that can also contribute to the well-being of the marriage and family.

Emotional Readiness

Emotional readiness is of great importance in the success or failure of any marriage. It refers to

- Ability to see oneself and others objectively, to be able to discriminate between facts and feelings, and to act on the basis of facts in a situation rather than feelings alone.
- Ability to control emotions like pride, anger, malice, resentment, bitterness and strife and communicate effectively.
- Flexibility or adaptability in relationships with other people.
- Competency, compatibility and consistency in handling different aspects

of relationships with the opposite sex including conflicts.

Spiritual-Moral Readiness

Happiness and harmony in the marriage and family are directly related to the moral character and spiritual maturity of the individual. Spiritual-Moral readiness for marriage can sustain and nourish the marriage and the individuals in this world and may continue to do so long after the physical bond has been broken. Spiritual-Moral readiness for marriage stands for:

1. A number of virtues like patience, wisdom, forbearance, humility, selflessness and service. Being able to balance mercy with justice, freedom with responsibility and excellence with humility symbolizes spiritual-moral readiness for marriage. Spiritual maturity results from following the spiritual practices found in the sacred scriptures, such as prayer, meditation, fasting, study and good actions.
2. Creating equitable relationships. Some agreeable level of equity and justice is necessary for a successful marriage. If either party unjustly and inequitably treats the other, disunity and distress will result.

Economic Readiness

There are many needs which love cannot meet like children's education, food, shelter, clothing etc; it takes only money to do that. Thus, economic factor plays an important role in marriage. The aspects related to economic readiness for marriage are:

1. **Economic readiness of man:** Since man is basically and traditionally the breadwinner of the family, it is expected that a man-to- marry should have the
 - Ability to earn a livelihood and to support others through a regular source of income,
 - Financial intelligence to manage and utilize income for appropriate family living and
 - Investment mentality that enables him to foresee the individual and family requirements and assess appropriately where the investments

should be made for securing finances for future needs.

2. **Economic readiness of woman:** Traditionally, woman of the family was a homemaker. She was assigned the role of household care, child rearing and upbringing etc. She didn't have the responsibility of earning for the family. But, in present scenario of economic inflation, value on material possession, desire to fulfil individual desires, needs and woman's own need for social and economic security has necessitate the females to possess economic capability. The economic capacity of woman is a desirable trait but not essential for marriage. Today most men look for this quality in females when his family is selecting mate for him. An earning female or a female with potential of fetching regular income is considered social as well as economic asset to the family. Therefore, females must also prepare themselves to obtain appropriate knowledge and skills that may fetch them job or income generation.
3. **Economic readiness of family:** Marriage whether organised in a big way or as a small function does require a handsome investment. In India, usually the parent of the groom in patriarchal families make an effort to develop economic security to certain extent either by purchasing property or building economic capabilities of their son; arrange for ornaments, dresses and residential facilities for the prospective bride of their son. The parents of the girl (would-be-bride) make economic arrangements for dowry /gifts to be given to bridegroom's family and other eligible relatives of the family and community workers, household items, ornaments and dresses for various occasions. Both the parties also make necessary economic arrangements for the feast that follows various rituals and wedding ceremonies.

Mate selection

Concept

Social scientists refer to the process of searching for, finding and choosing a marriage partner as mate selection. Selection of partner for marriage is one of the most important decisions for lifetime. It affects not only success in this world but has a profound effect on happiness or misery in this world. We can change our careers, our occupations, our homes, our friends but we cannot change our life-

mates; they are partners until death.

Every human society has some kind of mate selection procedure which functions to sort out males and females as marriage partners. The methods and processes for doing this differ from society to society, and from time to time in a given society.

Defining the Field of Eligible

The individual we marry usually comes from the field of eligible, that is, the people of whom our culture approves as potential partners. The pool of candidates eligible as marriage partners are defined in most societies in terms of factors as:

1. **The incest taboo:** The incest taboo excludes close relatives from the field of eligible marriage partners. This prohibition applies almost universally to members of the immediate or nuclear family but in many societies it also extends to other blood relatives, such as cousins, aunts, and uncles, and may extend to various in-laws and others related by marriage or adoption.
2. **Age:** Another factor which tends to limit the range of eligible candidates is age. The reduction in the field of eligible due to age is greatest among young males and older females.
3. **Propinquity:** Another factor which influences the practical pool of eligible candidates is physical proximity or propinquity. It has become a sociological truism that young people tend to choose a marriage partner from among those who live near them since they don't want to marry someone he or she has not met and interacted with and that one is more apt to meet and interact the person who lives nearby
4. **Homogamy:** Refers to the general tendency of like to marry like. The term has been most frequently used to apply to social and cultural "likes," for example, persons belonging to the same race, nationality, religion or social class.

Theories of Mate Selection

We have seen that mate selection in our society is circumscribed by many social and demographic factors including age, kinship, propinquity, race, social class, religion, and ethnicity. However, within the actual field of eligible, who will marry who is difficult to answer. Some of the theories of mate selection offered by today's social scientists are as follows:

1. **Role Theory**
2. **Value theory**
3. **Exchange theory**
4. **Complementary Needs Theory**
5. **Sequential Theories**

Role Theory

According to this theory, it would be unlikely that a man and a woman with widely discrepant definitions of the husband role or the wife role would select each other as marriage partners. Interpreted positively, role theory says that people tend to seek marriage partners whose marital role definitions or expectations are in agreement with their own. For example, a man with a traditional –patriarchal orientation who believes that the husband should be the sole family provider and the boss in the family would tend to select a wife who he expects to be a conventional housewife and mother rather than a career woman or a woman's liberation activist. So according to role theory it is the anticipated compatibility of future marriage and family roles that are important in mate selection.

Value Theory

Values define what is good or bad, right or wrong, moral or immoral in a given society. Thus values are central to a person's mode of conduct, including one's goals in life and the means one adopts to pursue these goals. Value Theory of mate selection suggests that one's values or value system is so important to the individual that one will seek out a marriage partner who shares similar values. Since persons with similar social backgrounds tend to learn and share similar

values so they attract.

Exchange Theory

Exchange theory holds that social relationships are regulated or shaped by the desire of each participant to derive maximum gain or profit at minimum cost or pain. As applied to mate selection, the exchange theory of homogamous mate selection holds that

- Within any collectivity of potential mates, a marriageable person will seek out that individual who is perceived as maximizing his rewards.
- Individuals with equivalent resources are most likely to maximize each other's rewards.
- Pairs with equivalent resources are most likely to possess homogamous characteristics.
- Mate selection, therefore, will be homogamous with respect to a given set of characteristics.

Complementary Needs Theory

This theory emphasizes that while one chooses a marriage partner he/she expects that his/her partner will provide maximum need-gratification and this gratification occurs best when the personality characteristics of the man and the woman are complementary rather than similar. If, for example, the male is basically submissive, he will seek a woman who can dominate him. Or if a woman is a "nurturant" person who needs to have things done for her, she will be attracted to a "succorant" man who gains satisfaction from doing things for others.

Sequential Theories

There are certain theories which attempted to combine or place in sequence several factors which play a very important role in mate selection. Three such

theories are as follows

1. **Filter Theory:** This theory, advanced by Kerkhoff and Davis (1962), holds that mate selection is not just a matter of marrying of "likes" in social background (homogamy), nor of the marrying of "unlikes" in personality needs (heterogamy). Rather, social background, group memberships, values and interests, and complementary personality needs may all come into play at various stages of a given courtship from its beginning to the ultimate marriage. The filter theory points to a sequence or series of screening or filtering processes which operate in courtship and mate selection. In the initial stage, such factors as race, religion, and social class have normally restricted the field of eligible. At this early stage, courtship involves doing enjoyable things together. Many relationships do not survive this stage, since the enjoyment can wear off. Those relationships which do survive this early and often idealized stage may lead to the discovery of shared; compatible values. Deepening involvement may now entail complementary personality needs and their satisfaction. Thus in the later stages of courtship a much stronger personality-based bond develops, which can lead to marriage.

2. **The process approach to mate selection:** Advocates of this sequential approach argue that mate selection is not merely a function of values, interests, needs, and the social backgrounds of the couple. Rather, the actual selection of a mate is a developmental process during which increasing commitment pushes the couple toward marriage. This process approach to mate selection does not ignore social backgrounds or personality factors. It does attempt, however, to put such factors in the context of the developing relationship of a courting couple, as the relationship gathers momentum and escalates toward a final commitment to marry.

3. **Stimulus-Value-Role theory (SVR Theory):** Murstein (1970) explained mate selection as a three-stage sequence involving stimulus value-roles (SVR). He believes that in an essentially free-choice society most couples pass through these three stages before coming to the final decision to marry.
 - The stimulus stage: Initially a man may be attracted to a woman (or vice versa) because of his perception of her personality or her

physical or social attributes, and also his perception of his own qualities that might be attractive to the other person. If there is sufficient mutual stimulus attraction between the man and the woman they then enter the second stage of "value comparison."

- The value comparison stage: Unlike the "stimulus" stage in which attributes of the partner are evaluated without any necessary interpersonal contact, the value comparison stage involves the appraisal of value compatibility through verbal interaction. Increasing interaction permits more continuous and closer scrutiny of physical appearance and other factors, such as temperament, and ability to relate to others.
- The role compatibility stage: Here the couple begins to test their role compatibility in areas of life relevant to marriage. The couple's relationship ripens; the members increasingly confide in each other and, thus, become aware of a broader range of each other's behavior than before. They may also become more cognizant of what they desire in a future spouse, and more consciously compare their expectations with their perception of the partner. The mutual "role fit" is mutually rewarding, and the desire to continue this highly satisfying relationship can lead to a decision to get married.

Psychological Factors in Mate Selection

The number one emotional reason for marriage is love. But it's not the only psychological reason behind selecting a mate. In many cases there are others which are as follows

1. **Need meeting:** The individuals select a person for marriage to meet his psychological need for e.g. if one partner has a high dominance need, he will select someone with a low dominance need or if a man had a high need for recognition, he will select a wife with a high deference need.
2. **Fear:** One of the most potent fears is the fear of being left without a mate. Both men and women suffer from this fear. In our society it is seen to be

much higher among girls than boys especially among those who have poor self image. This leads to anxiety and desperation ultimately making her less and less desirable. A girl who is sure of her desirableness can confidently turn down a poor offer, believing that she will have other chances. But the one who is insecure and inclined to be negative and pessimistic about the future may well choose (deliberately or half-consciously) her mate because of a fear of being left.

3. **Escape:** Escape, usually from oppressive parents, is another common reason in mate selection. Some young people have wanted to get away from seemingly repressive parents. Often this appears to be an easy way of ending parental domination but later the escaping pair discovers that marriage does not diminish restrictions and responsibilities on the contrary it increases them.
4. **Adult Identification:** In order to prove to their parents or to the world that they have grown up or are adults and should be treated as mature adults they deliberately marry.
5. **Revenge or Rebound:** Sometimes an individual marries a person even if he/she doesn't like him/her just for the sake to show down certain people whom he/she hates the most or has jealousy with. A person who feels rejected by one love often rushes off to find another-sometimes to prove to himself that he is desirable and sometimes to prove it to the person who rejected him.
6. **Sexual attraction:** Although the exact components of masculinity and femininity are hard to define but play a very important role in mate selection process. Sexual attraction is clearly necessary both to mate selection and to the perpetuation of the species. Problem arises when sexual attraction is the only criterion by which a person selects a mate.
7. **Success and status:** Sometimes mate selection is based essentially on the need for success-social or financial. An individual gives preference to high status person for marriage against honest, caring person.

Reasons for Poor Choice of Marriage Partner

Some of the possible factors contributing to a poor choice of a mate are:

1. Strong sex urges and confusing infatuation with love
2. Hoping to reform other party
3. Judging by too few qualities
4. Marrying before tastes and attitudes are well understood
5. Overemphasizing money over other good psychological traits
6. Acting under the stimulus of rebound, spite, habit, pity, and similar attitudes.
7. Need or desire to escape from an unhappy or unpleasant home situation or work situation.

Guidelines for Mate Selection

General guidelines for selecting ideal mate for self are as follows

1. Study yourself
2. Study the prospect
3. Study the possible effects of the relationship
4. Involve parents in choice making and consider their opinion

Study Yourself

It is not easy, despite the amount of time you have in which to do it. To really know yourself, you have to ask yourself the hard questions:

- What are your needs?
- Do you have a normal need to love and, more important, to give love?
- Do you have normal needs for security, recognition, response, and new experience?
- Are you dependent on someone else for emotional support?
- Can you accept some insecurity in other persons? If so, how much?
- Do you need a parent figure as your mate, someone who can tell you what to do?
- Why do you want to get married? Panic....escapee...adult identification
- Will this particular marriage be a solution or will it increase your problems?

Study the Prospect

There are several ways of doing this:

- Listen carefully for the real meanings in what he/she says.
- Objectively observe the way he/she behaves.
- Could you live with him/her the way he/she is?
- Or do you think that he/she will change after you are married?
- How well do other people like him/her?
- Does he get along well with other people of his/her own sex?
- What do your friends think of him/her?
- What are his/her parents like?

Study the possible effects of the relationship between the two of you

Consider the possible effects of the relationship between your personality and that of your prospective mate.

- How able is he/she to meet your needs over the long run?
- How able are you to meet his/her?
- Does he/she even now really provide what you want?
- Is he/she able to communicate with you?
- Does he/she talk so much that you sometimes wish you weren't with him/her?
- Are you so flattered by his possessiveness or her tendency to cling to you that you don't recognize that this really represents a pathological insecurity on his or her part?
- Can he provide the kind of decisiveness and leadership you want?

Involve parents in choice making and consider their opinion

Parents can predict with some accuracy the probable marital success or failure of their sons or daughters-especially the latter. It suggests that it would be advisable for a son or daughter to pay some attention to the views and reactions of their parents when it comes to seeking a mate. Parents may, of course, belong to an earlier generation and their experiences and norms tend to be somewhat different from those of their children. In spite of such differences between the experiences and outlooks of parents and their children, there are still sound reasons for a son or daughter to listen to their parent's reactions to a prospective mate.

Engagement

Engagement is understandably considered by many as one of the most important stages or periods-in the whole courtship process. Engagement means an explicit and more serious commitment to each other and to marriage. Couples are now fiancés and this label brings a change in their self-concepts and in their relationship. Engagement involves a shift from one's parental family to one's marital family, with the anticipation of shifting from a son or daughter role to a new husband or wife role and from a single status to a marital status. Engagement has a very important place in the process of mate selection.

Importance of Engagement

The number of functions of engagement is as follows

- **Public announcement:** It notifies families and friends that the couple intends to get married. Publicity gives the couple a chance to discover how it feels to be officially committed. Formal engagement serves as notice that other eligible have been dropped and the future is to be concentrated on the “one and only one” who remains.
- **Compatibility testing:** Engagement brings a sobering realization of the closeness and seriousness of marriage. Couple learns many things about each other not known before. It is a time during which the couple can take a last careful look before they leap into the uncertainties of marriage but not a binding legal agreement. Its the last chance to pretest the marriage.
- **Deepening Relationships:** The couple experiences a wider and deeper exploration of each other. Much of the earlier meeting experiences can be quite superficial, limited to fun, recreational activities. Even people deeply in love do not find it easy to reveal their most intimate selves to each other. It also helps bring about a more thorough knowledge of each other's family. Anthropologists say we marry not only the other person but, in a sense, the other person's family as well. If one has not come to know one's prospective in-laws prior to engagement, now, rather than after marriage, is the time to do so. This advance knowledge proves valuable in the inevitable relationships with and adjustments to one's in-laws following marriage, and probably helps the couple in their own marital adjustment.

- Planning for marriage: Although nothing prevents couples from talking about marriage beforehand but once they are engaged they begin planning in earnest. Plans can be made not only for the wedding and honeymoon but also for the first year of marriage and future.

In sum, engagement functions as an important learning and preparatory period for many couples. It formalizes their commitment to each other and helps clarify the situation for family and friends. It helps a couple test their compatibility and their prospects for a successful marriage.

Rituals and ceremonies of marriage in different religions in India

Muslim Marriage

Muslims are divided into Shias and Sunnis and three other groups called Ashraf, Azlab and Arzal Saiyeds. The Shias and Sunnis on the one hand and the Ashrafs, the Azlas and the Arzals on the other hand are endogamous groups. Inter-marriages among these groups though are not condemned but are discouraged. Among the Sunnis, social inferiority on the part of the bridegroom could be a ground for the cancellation of marriage though it is not so among the Shias.

Marriage Rituals and Ceremonies

Muslim Wedding or Nikah is celebrated on a grand scale for a period of five-days. Muslim wedding can be conducted at any convenient time, as there is no concept of auspicious time. The Nikah ceremony can take place either at the bride or bridegroom's residence or at a place that is convenient for both parties. Just as in any other Indian wedding, here too marriage ceremonies can be divided into pre-wedding, wedding and post-wedding celebrations.

1. Pre wedding rituals
2. During wedding rituals
3. Post wedding rituals

Pre-Wedding Rituals

Here is a short description of the pre-wedding rituals followed in a typical Muslim

Nikah.

- Legan Chir: When the date of marriage is finalized, cash present is sent to the bride's father by the groom's father. The ceremony is known as Legan Chir.
- Day 1 and Day 2 Ceremonies: On days one and two, first the bride's people and then the groom's, go to the other party's house, carrying mehendi paste in a plate. The children carry candles, which are lit before entering the respective houses. Dinner is served and songs teasing both the boy and girl are sung.
- Manjha Ceremony: On the third day, manjha ceremony takes place. The prospective bride is seated on a small square table and anointed with haldi (turmeric) provided by the boy's family. Following this ceremony, a married friend will accompany the bride everywhere and at all times. This friend will also spread the turmeric over the bride's whole body before she bathes. For this ceremony the bride is supposed to wear yellow clothes and no jewelry. There is, again, much celebration and singing.
- Mehndi Ceremony: The Mehndi ceremony is held at the home of the bride on the eve of the wedding ceremony or a couple of days before it. Following the tradition, the female relatives of the bride anoint her with turmeric paste to bring out the glow in her complexion. A relative or a mehndiwali applies mehndi on the hands and feet of the bride. The event has a festive feel to it with the women singing traditional songs. According to custom the bride must not step out of the house for the next few days until her marriage. The bride's cousins sometimes apply a dot of mehndi on the palm of the groom.

Wedding Rituals

Muslims observe a unique set of rituals at the time of their wedding which are as follows:

1. Welcoming the Baraat: The groom arrives at the wedding venue with a wedding procession or baraat consisting of relatives and friends. A band of musicians strike up some traditional notes to announce their arrival. The groom shares a drink of sherbet with the bride's brother. The bride's sisters play pranks and slap the guests playfully with batons made of flowers.

2. Nikaah: It is on day four the actual Muslim Nikaah or wedding ceremony takes place. Nikah can be conducted at the home of the bride or the groom or at any other convenient venue. The nikaah ceremony is presided over by the qazi or law officer.

- The qazi appoints two men as witnesses (Gawah) on the groom's behalf, to receive orders for the nikah from the bride's family. In addition to the presence of two witnesses, the presence of the two 'Walis' (the bride's and the bridegroom's father) is also necessary. The bride's father is required to care for and protect her rights and the groom's father to endorse his rights. In orthodox Muslim communities, the men and women are seated separately in Zenana (for woman) and Mardaana (for men).
- The Maulvi reads selected verses from the Quran and the Nikaah is complete after the Ijab-e-Qubul (proposal and acceptance). The validity of the Nikaah depends on proposal on one side, usually the groom's (Ijab) and acceptance on the other side, the bride's (Qubul). The mutual consent of the bride and groom is of great importance for the marriage to be legal.
- On the day of the Nikaah the elder members of the two families decide the amount of Mehar (nuptial gift). In Muslim Nikah, Mehar is a compulsory amount of money given by the groom's family to the bride. The qazi personally asks the bride if she has agreed to marry the groom and whether she accepts the quantum of mehar.
- Once the bride gives her consent the qazi reads the marriage contract to the groom.
- After the groom gives his consent, the Nikaah-Nama or marriage contract must be signed by the bride, the bridegroom, their Walis, the witnesses and the Qazi. The Nikaah-Nama also contains certain terms and conditions, which are in accordance with the religion and agreeable to both parties. A noteworthy condition is that in case of a disagreement between the two partners, the girl has a right to divorce her husband.
- After the Nikaah-Nama is signed, the Qazi delivers a sermon called Khutba, consisting of verses from the Quran which were recited by the prophet and which lay particular emphasis on obligations toward women. The Qazi explains the meaning of these verses to the audience with an explanation of the mutual rights and duties of the spouses.

3. **Blessing the Groom:** After the wedding ceremonies are over the groom receives blessings from the older women and offers them his salaam. The guests pray for the marital bliss of the newlywed couple.
4. **Dinner, Prayers and Aarsimashaf:** Dinner is a lavish spread. Usually, the women and the men dine separately. After dinner, the newly-weds sits together for the first time. Their heads are covered by a dupatta while they read prayers under the direction of the maulvi (priest). The Quran is placed between the couple and they are allowed to see each other only through mirrors.

Post-Wedding Rituals

Post-Wedding rituals followed in Muslim Nikah are similar to what we see in other Indian weddings. However, here the customs are followed under different names and some cultural variations can be observed.

1. **Ruksat:** The bride's family bids her a tearful farewell before she departs for her husband's house. The bride's father gives her hand to her husband and tells him to take protect and take good care of her.
2. **Welcoming the Bride:** At the groom's house, the groom's mother holds the Islamic Holy book Quran above the head of her newlywed daughter-in-law as she enters her new home for the first time.
3. **Chauthi:** The Chauthi is the fourth day after the wedding. It is customary for the bride to visit the home of her parents on this day. The bride receives a joyous welcome on this day.
1. **Valimah:** The Valimah is the lavish reception that the groom's family hosts after the Nikaah. It is a joyous occasion that brings together the two families, their relatives and friends.

Hindu marriage

In Hindu view, marriage is not a concession to human weakness, but a means for spiritual growth. Man and woman are soul mates who, through the institution of marriage, can direct the energy associated with their individual instincts and passion into the progress of their souls. The Hindu wedding lays emphasis on three essential values: happiness, harmony, and growth.

Marriage Rituals and Ceremonies

All of the rituals vary based on family traditions. The names of the rituals also vary depending on the area the ritual is performed like south or north India.

1. Prior to marriage
2. During marriage festivities
3. At their new home

Prior to marriage

1. Engagement or Ring ceremony: In a relatively small gathering of close relatives and friends of the bride and groom, both exchange rings after a small puja is performed. It is the platform where alliance between the two families is announced formally and other issues related to marriage like date of the wedding etc are finalized among elderly of both the parties.
2. Barni Bandhwana: Approximately 15 days prior to the actual wedding, on an auspicious day, the pundit performs a puja to Lord Ganesh (the remover of obstacles). During this puja a piece of mauli (thread) is tied to the hands of the groom and his parents. This puja is done to humbly request that the wedding happen without any problems, apart from the occasional trivial mishaps
3. Bhaat: The Bhaat is an important ceremony, common to both the bride's and the groom's families. The mother's of both the parties go to their brother's home and give them formal invitation for wedding. On invitation, maternal uncle of the groom/bride along with their family arrive at wedding with much fanfare and gifts for the bride/groom and whole family.
4. Sangeet Sandhya: The sangeet sandhya is an evening of musical entertainment organized in the homes of both the parties. This event takes place 2 or 3 days before a wedding in a Banquet Hall or if a small affair, then at home. The friends and relatives of the groom and bride sing dance and feast.

5. **Tilak Ceremony:** The male members of the bride's family, like her father, brother, uncles go to groom's place where all his family members, relatives and community members gather for Tilak Ceremony. In the ceremony, brother of the bride puts a tilak on the forehead of the groom and presents him gifts promised to be given to bride at the time of marriage and invites him to come to his home with all his family members, relatives and friends for wedding with his sister.

6. **Haldi and Mehendi Ceremony:** Another name for "Vivaah" is "haath pila karna". This ceremony is performed at both the houses. The females of both the families apply haldi paste on whole body of the bride and groom while singing songs. After it bride and groom take bath and mehndi is applied on their hands.

During Marriage Festivities

1. **Barat Nikasi:** The groom leaves for the wedding venue riding a decorated horse or elephant. This is a very colorful and grand ceremony. On his head he wears a sehra (turban). Before he departs, his relatives apply the ceremonial tilak on his forehead and his sister feeds the horse or elephant sweetened grain. The baraat (consisting of the groom seated on the horse or elephant, and relatives and friends of the groom) is headed by the dancing of the congregated folks.

2. **Aarti:** The baraatis (groom's party) are received by the bride's family at the entrance. The bride's mother welcomes the groom by performing the aarti (traditional Indian welcome ritual with a lamp or diya placed on a platter or thali) to welcome her son-in-law and places a tilak on his forehead.

3. **Var Mala/Jai Mala:** In most Hindu weddings, the groom is led to a small stage, known as mandap, where he is greeted by the bride's family. The maternal uncle, brother or brides' best friends bring the bride to the stage. The bride and the groom are handed the garlands while the priest is chanting the religious hymns. Following this, the groom and bride exchange garlands, which are the var mala or jai mala, signifying their acceptance of each other as husband and wife.

4. **Kanya Daan:** Kanya Daan is a very significant ritual performed by the father of the bride in presence of a large gathering that is invited to witness the wedding. The father pours out libation of sacred water symbolizing the giving away of his daughter to the bride groom. The groom recites Vedic hymns to Kama, the god of love, for pure love and blessings. As a condition for offering his daughter for marriage, the father of the bride requests a promise from the groom for assisting the bride in realizing the three ends: dharma, artha and kama. The groom makes the promise by repeating it three times. Ideally, the parents of the bride place the right hand of the bride over the right hand of the groom and place their own left hands at the bottom and the right hands (the two of them) on top, securing the Conch with gold, betel nut, flowers and a little fruit (in it) placed in bride's hand. It is at this point that the purpose of the Kanyadaan is clearly stated per scripture and the names of the parents and forefathers are stated from both sides. The wedding cannot legally proceed without this Kanyadaan step in which parents of the bride agree to the wedding.
5. **Gathabandhan:** In this ritual, priest ties a knot between the ends of the groom's Turban and bride's saree or odhni. The knot signifies the sacred wedlock.
6. **Laja Homa:** Three obligations are offered to the sacred fire. The brother of the bride puts puffed rice into the bride's hand. Mantras are chanted. The bride prays to Yama, the God of death, to grant long life, health, happiness, and prosperity to the bridegroom.
7. **Saptapadi:** The groom holds the bride's right hand in his own right hand and takes seven circles of the Agni which is considered a witness to the vows they make each other. The first six circles are led by the bride and the final one by the groom. At the end of each walk, the bride's brother signifying wealth and prosperity fills the open palms of the bride with puffed rice. With each circle, the couple makes a specific vow to establish some aspect of a happy relationship and household for each other. The seven vows are as follows:
 - To provide for food always.
 - To give you excellent health and energy.
 - To be dained in Vedas, during your life time.
 - To give you happiness in life.
 - To make your cows and good animals grow in strength and in

numbers.

- To make all the seasons be beneficial to you.
- To make the homams (sacrifices to be done in Holy Fire) to be performed by you in your life as ordained in Vedas, successful and free from hindrances.

8. Soubhagya Chinha (blessing the bride):The bridegroom blesses the bride by putting kumkum or sindoor at the parting of her hair or on her forehead and by giving her a sacred necklace (mangalsutra). The mangalsutra represents the couple's togetherness love and sacred union.
9. Juta Chupaai: The bride's sisters hide the groom's shoes and ask for money if he (groom) wants them back and be able to go home with the bride. This is a sign of the groom's loyalty.
- 10.Vidaai: This is considered to be the most emotional ritual, when the bride leaves her parents' home and makes her way to her husband's. Family and friends, who also shower her with blessings and gifts, give her a tearful farewell. The malemembers of the bride's family bid farewell to the groom by applying the traditional Tilak to his forehead and showering him with gifts.

At their New Home

1. Dwar-Rokai: After leaving the bride's house, the couple come groom's home. They are stopped at the entrance of the house by either the groom's sister or his father's sister. There, in an earthen vessel, the sister/aunt uses a mixture of salt and water to ward off evil spirits from the groom. After this, the pot is thrown on the ground and destroyed. The couple then enters the house. The groom also gives money or gift to her for the same.
2. Griha Pravesh: When the bride arrives at her new home, her mother-in-law welcomes her with the traditional Aarti. At the entrance, she puts her right foot onto a tray of vermilion powder mixed in water or milk, symbolizing the arrival of good fortune and purity. With both her feet now covered in the red powder paste, she kicks over a vessel filled with rice and coins to denote the arrival of fertility and wealth in her marital home and steps inside alongwith her husband.

3. Mooh Dikhai: This ritual helps introduce the newlywed to members of her husband's family. Each member of the groom's family comes in turn to make an acquaintance with the new bride and gives her gifts. After it the family indulges in a series of games organized for the newlywed couple.
4. Pheri: The couple returns (unaccompanied by the groom's family) to the bride's parents' home the day after the wedding, usually for an afternoon meal and evening tea. The groom is introduced to the bride's side of the extended family and her friends.

Christians marriage

Just as Hindus are stratified into various castes or Muslims are divided into various groups like Shias and Sunnis, we find stratification among the Christians too. The two groups in which they are divided are Protestants and Catholics. The latter are further sub-divided as Latin Catholics and Syrian Catholics. Each group and sub-group is an endogamous group. Catholics do not marry with Protestants and Latin Catholics do not marry with Syrian Catholics. With this background of social stratification among the Christians, we may analyze the Christian marriage.

Marriage Rituals and Ceremonies

Indian Christian marriage ceremonies vary from place to place and one denomination to another. Though the rituals differ, the subject line remains the same, love each other till your last breath with the guidance and blessings from God.

1. After the selection of the partner, betrothal ceremony is performed at the bride's house where the boy gives a ring to the girl. Occasionally, in

exchange, the girl also gives a ring to the boy. After the engagement, the formalities to be fulfilled include:

- Producing a certificate of church membership
- Producing a certificate of character and
- Submitting an application for marriage in the church three weeks before the due date.
- The church priest then invites the objections against the marriage. The marriage day is fixed, if no objection is received in a specified period.

2. The Day before wedding: The Indian Christian wedding ceremony starts from the day before marriage ceremonies. The bride and the groom in their respective houses are coated with turmeric paste from head to toe. The bride and all the relatives from both the sides are made to wear green glass bangles too. Many village Christians practices this tradition. It is adopted by the Hindu custom and traditions. However it may seem alien to many metropolitan Christians.

3. In the Church: The groom is usually in the best suit of clothes, with a red rose stuck in his blazer pocket. He walks in the church while a faded music is played or sung by the congregation to welcome him. The bride walks in after a while with white gown (or white Saris) and her father by her side. The flowing veil of bride is clasped by the flower girls of 5-8 years of age. Some flower girls hold a basket of colored thermocols, rose petals or sparkling papers and throw at the congregation or on the floor as the bride walks in. The church is made to stand (including the groom) with the hymn being played or sung by the congregation.

- Bride and Bridegroom are made to sit together in front of the podium. Best man and the best girl are made to sit behind the bridegroom and the bride respectively for any help at the tick of the time.
- The church service proceeds with the bible reading and a sermon by the priest. The sermon for the day emphasizes on leading a better family life with reverence to the Holy Scriptures.
- After the sermons the parents of the bride are asked to come forward to submit their daughters hand on the groom's hand for the oath. The vows exchanged, between the bride and the groom asked by the priest is,

(Groom) _____, do you take _____ to be your Wife? ("I do") Do you promise to love, honor, cherish and protect her, forsaking all others and holding only unto her? ("I do")

(Bride) _____, do you take _____ to be your Husband? ("I do") Do you promise to love, honor, cherish and protect him, forsaking all others and holding only unto him? ("I do")

- The groom ties 'Mangal Sutra' to the bride, after the promise. Wedding rings are also exchanged as the signs of marriage later. After the exchange of symbolic signs the Bride and the Groom take these vows.

(Groom) I _____, take thee , _____ to be my Wife-
To have and to hold, in sickness and in health, for richer or for poorer, and I
promise my love to you forevermore.

(Bride) I _____ , take thee _____, to be my
Husband. To have and to hold, in sickness and in health, for richer or for
poorer, and I promise My love to you forevermore.

- After the vows the priest declares them as the husband and wife to the church and gives benediction.
- After the marriage the newly married couples are taken outside the church. People are given, rice or a mixture of rice and jawar to be thrown on the married couples as a symbolic reference of 'showers of blessings'.
- After the marriage ceremony a reception is held where people join in to congratulate and wish them.

Sikha marriage

Sikh, Jain, Buddhist and Parsi communities are one of the significant parts/sects of Hindu religion, hence, the objectives of marriage and its characteristic features in these sects almost remain same as of Hindu religion with variation only in the marriage rituals and ceremonies. Marriage rituals and ceremonies of these communities are discussed here onwards.

Sikh

Marriage:

Sikhism is a monotheistic religion opposed to idol worship and is against the practice of asceticism, the caste system and ritualism. A Sikh wedding is called an Anand Karaj. The ceremony takes place in the presence of the Sikh Holy Book and Guru, the Guru Granth Sahib. The marriage ceremony consists of the recitation of the Anand Sahib (therefore called Anand Karaj) and the Lavan (wedding songs), which are sung as the couple go around the Guru Granth Sahib.

Marriage System: Rituals and Ceremonies

- **Milni:** The 'baraat' (groom's party) arrives at the venue and is greeted by the male relatives from the bride's family to the singing of 'Hum Ghar Saajan Aaye' a hymn giving thanks for being blessed by the arrival of the gracious folk. The 'Ardaas' is said. The bride's father greets the groom's father by garlanding him and is garlanded in return. All the male relatives of the bride greet their counterparts in the groom's family in sequence, in like manner.
- **Anand Karaj or Lavan Phera:** The 'Anand Karaj' or wedding ritual takes place at 'anand vela' (early morning, usually associated with peace and tranquility). In case, the ceremony begins a little later, it must conclude before noon. In the presence of the Guru Granth Sahib, a normal Morning Prayer service is conducted, after which the 'Asa di Vaar' (the morning hymn) is sung. The bride is escorted in by her father or uncle, her sisters and girlfriends and seated on the left of the groom. Since, the Sikhs do not have an ordained clergy, a respected member of the community or gurudwara may conduct the ceremony. The officiator of the ceremony asks the bride, groom and their parents to stand for the 'Ardaas', after which they all bow down to the Holy Book in assent of the marriage. The bride's father places a comer of the bride's veil or 'pallav' in the groom's hands and over his shoulder into the bride's hands, symbolically connecting them and giving his daughter away in marriage. The groom then leads the bride four times around the Holy Book, each round interspersed with hymns containing blessings and advice. The ceremony concludes with the 'Ardaas' and is followed by the 'vaak' (Guru's counsel). This is done by opening the Holy Book at random and reading out a verse from the page on the right. 'Karah Parshaad' is distributed and the couple is garlanded.

- **Doli:** The groom lifts the bride's veil and seeing her as a married woman for the first time her family blesses her with money. She changes into a set of clothes and jewellery brought by the groom's parents. She feeds the male members of her own family with cooked rice and turning her back on them throws back handfuls of puffed rice, invoking a blessing of prosperity on her father and family. She then bids a tearful farewell to her family and friends—a very emotional moment in any Indian wedding. Her father seats her in the decorated car alongside her husband and her brother escorts her to her new home.

On reaching the marital home, the groom's mother, who pours a little oil outside on the doorstep before they enter, receives the couple. She then attempts to drink water from a 'lota' (steel jar), but the groom prevents her! After the third attempt he relents and she drinks it. This is repeated with six other female relatives.

- **Doli Dinner:** The groom's family and close friends get together the night the bride arrives for the 'doli' dinner. Literally translated 'doli' means palanquin. As a courtesy, they may invite the bride's family and her guests who have come from out of town. This may be a very quiet evening with a home-cooked meal, or a full fledged Reception.
- **Reception:** The groom's parents usually host the wedding reception. It is a formal party, presenting the newlywed couple to their extended family and friends. A military band is often requested to play elegant marches and classical tunes during this celebration. The wedding reception is an import from the West.
- **Phera:** This visit is made a day after the wedding, if the bride and groom are leaving to live in another city. Otherwise, it may be made whenever convenient. The couple visits the bride's paternal home and receives gifts and blessings.

Buddhist Marriage

Buddhist marriage is very traditional, simple and does not include lot of complicated rituals.

1. **Pre-Marriage Ceremony:** Once the horoscope of the boy and the girl

match, the family of the groom consult the lama for an auspicious day for proposing the marriage. After consulting the lama (priest), the groom's family chooses an auspicious day to visit the bride's house to ask her parents for their daughter's hand in marriage. "Chessian" is the betrothal ceremony. The maternal uncle of the parent of the bride sit on a raised platform and the lama or the priest, recites a prayer and distributes a religious drink, "madyan," among those present. The date of marriage is fixed in consultation with the astrologer.

2. **Marriage Ceremony:** The marriage ceremony is a very private affair and only very close family friends are invited. A Buddhist lama (priest) presides over the wedding. The wedding ceremony is conducted at the bride's home. The lama leads the couple through the religious rites that include the groom's family offering the mother of the bride the price of milk. After the religious rites, the couple is declared as man and wife. Then depending on the horoscope, the bride accompanies her husband to her new house either on the same day, or the next day.
3. **Post-Marriage Ceremony:** At her husband's house she is received by her mother-in-law. A feast is then arranged.

Parsi Marriage

In Parsi community, there is a belief that God revealed to Zarathushtra, the prophet, that, not only is marriage a righteous act, but, it is also a commitment, which makes even the earth rejoice.

1. **Pre-Marriage Ceremony:** The engagement ceremony begins by the groom's side gifting a red sari (Adravadu), jewellery and accessories to the bride. The bride's family goes to the groom's house with gifts such as clothes, etc. Inside the groom's home, both the bride and the groom are made to stand on a wooden plank with a "rangoli" design. The bride's mother puts a "tilak" on the groom's forehead, garlands him and offers a coconut to him. Then rings are exchanged.
 - **Mandav Saro:** "Mandav Saro" is a Parsi ritual, which is performed four days prior to the marriage ceremony. A flowerpot with a mango plant, planted in it is kept in the house. The flowerpot is placed above a rangoli design. Then a square with a cross in center is

drawn on the wall with "haldi" (turmeric) and "kumkum" paste. A plate is decorated with coconut, curd, sugar, betelnut, kharak, a little packet (pudi) of small green and red motis and coins. All these ingredients along with milk, water and a 1.50 paise coin is put into the flowerpot after removing the mango plant. A coconut is circled seven times around the pot and then smashed against the wall or ground. Everyone prays that the marriage should take place peacefully.

- **Naha:** On the eve of the marriage, the bride and groom take a religious bath or "Naha" who bathe with consecrated water drawn from the well in a Fire Temple—"Nirang" or consecrated Bulls urine, which has to be sipped, and a pomegranate leaf which has to be chewed and spat out. The Parsi priest stands outside the door of the bathroom and instructs the candidate. The "Nirang" is to purify the body while the pomegranate leaf is to imbibe wisdom, the fruit being a symbol for wisdom. After the holy bath, the bridal couple dress for the occasion until its time to go on the wedding platform.
- **The Achu Michu Ritual:** This ritual is performed to purify the mind and body of the bridal couple. Female members of the respective families carry two silver platters each containing the following items. The first tray (Achu Michu) contains the following items: egg (symbolizing life giving force), coconut (symbolizing inner and outer worlds), betel leaf and areca nut (symbolizing suppleness and strength), unshelled almond (symbolizing virtue and honesty), dried date (symbolizing resilience), sugar crystal or sugar biscuit (symbolizing sweetness), dry rice (symbolizing abundance), rose petals (symbolizing happiness), a glass of water (symbolizing purity, sanctity and perfection). The second tray contains the following items: silver cone (symbolizing the mountain of sweetness from which good spirits are believed to descend), coconut (symbolizing the inner and outer worlds), grains of rice or wheat (symbolizing abundance), vermilion (symbolizing the receptacle of holiness), sugar crystals (symbolizing sweetness), green leaves (symbolizing nourishment), pomegranate (symbolizing immortality), pistachio nuts (symbolizing firmness), silver and gold coins (symbolizing wealth), garland of flowers (symbolizing joy).
The bride's mother then performs the ceremony. The bride's mother takes an egg in her right hand from the "Achu Michu" tray, rotates it seven times in a clockwise manner over the groom's head and breaks

it on a stone placed to the right of the groom's feet. Then the bridegroom's mother takes the betel leaf, areca nut, dried date, and almond and sugar crystal in her right hand and rotates it seven times in a clockwise manner over the groom's head. Then the coconut is rotated over the groom's head and broken on the stone placed to the right of the groom's feet. Afterwards, a few grains of rice and rose petals are taken out of the tray, while water is sprinkled on the remaining rice and rose petals and the tray is once again rotated over the groom's head. The mixture is cast down on both sides of the groom's feet. A handful of dry rice is showered over the groom as a token of invoking blessings. The groom is garlanded and given a fresh coconut to hold. A vertical "tilak" is applied to his forehead in vermilion. The groom then steps onto the stage with his right foot and awaits the arrival of his bride. The bride also goes through the same rituals as undergone earlier by the groom. Upon the completion of all the preliminary rituals, the bride steps onto the stage and is seated opposite the groom.

2. **Marriage Ceremony:** Once the bridal couple is seated opposite each other on the stage, a white cloth is held between them so that they cannot see each other. The bride's family makes a bundle of two threads entwined. This is offered to the priest, who holds both the right hands of the couple beneath the cloth and makes seven rounds of thread on their hands. Family members who are married hold this thread from the right and seven rounds are taken on the stage while the priest chants prayers. The couples then throw some rice on one another and then the cloth is removed. The couple then sits facing east and then the priest asks in Persian three times "Do you wish to marry this man/woman" and the couple have to say "Pasande Kardum." After completion of the blessing, rings are exchanged and the priest declares that the couple are officially married and the groom kisses the bride.
1. **Post-Marriage Ceremony:** The first task, after the marriage ceremony, is to legalize the marriage. A representative from the office of the Registrar of Marriages is invited as an honoured guest to stay for the marriage feast. The young couple signs the documents of marriage registration and the official seal is then stamped on the paper. After this, the couple head straight for the Fire Temple to offer prayer and take blessings of the God. And, then, the couple attends the reception party. After the party, the bride

and the bridegroom leave for home separately guarding a "diya" in a small silver container. The bridegroom reaches home first and carefully places the "diya" on the side table in the bedroom. The bride is then accompanied by her aunt or other female relatives and she also guards the flame and on reaching home to her impatiently waiting husband places the lamp next to his in the bedroom. And, this culminates the marriage.

Jain Marriage Rituals

The marriage Rituals and ceremonies of Jain marriage are as follows:

- A typical jain marriage initiates with "Vagdana", wherein, the parents of the bride and groom declare the intention to marry them, after which,
- the "Pradana" takes place, where the bride is gifted with ornaments. Then,
- the mandap and the vedi are made ready—"Mandapa-vedi-Pratishtha" and also the ornament is installed in a ceremony called "Torana Pratishtha."
- The "Vara Ghoda" is taken out, wherein, the groom rides the horse.
- Upon reaching the destination the "Torana Vidhi" rites of welcoming is performed, which includes "Gotra Occhara", reciting of the genealogies or gotra.
- Then, the bride and groom are allowed to take a look at each other's faces in a ceremony called "Paraspara Mukh Avalokana" after which
- the "Varmala" garlanding ceremony takes place and
- vows are taken in "Vara Pratijna."
- Then, the couple goes round the fire in "Agni Pradakshina" and
- the bride's father gives her away in "Kanyadaan."
- Thereafter comes the "Deva Shastra Guru Puja", wherein, the Jina, Scriptures and Gurus are worshipped.
- The knot is then tied between the bride and groom's dresses in "Granthi Bandhana" after which
- the "Panigrahana" ceremony takes place where the groom holds the bride's hand and takes seven steps "Sapta Padi."
- The couple then seeks "Ashirvada", blessing from the elders present, after, which the bride comes to her own new house which is called "Sva Graha Aagamana."
- Lastly, suitable donations are made to the temples, institutes in "Jina Grahe Dhan Arpana."

Marital roles and behaviour

Introduction

Successful attainment of marital goal requires that each partner play a particular role in marriage. The determination of these roles depends upon not only the nature and purposes of marriage but also the nature and purposes of men and women and the requirements of a given socio-cultural milieu. Role expectations brought into marriage not only predict what the husband or wife will do but are evaluative standards applied to an incumbent of a position. They are beliefs about what the spouse ought to do.

Roles and their importance

Only when men ideally play their roles of husbands and fathers and when women properly adhere to their natural roles of wives and mothers, marriage can be successful and family would function as a cohesive unit. Certain roles are also needed between parents and children, between the members of a family and between blood relatives. Like economic, religious and recreational roles of father and mother; sex roles of husband and wife; educational role of children etc. The actual execution of these roles is essential for the attainment of marriage and family goals.

Marriage as Status and Role Transition:

Marriage statuses and roles entail reciprocally related norms and expectations. The status or position of husband consists of a bundle of duties, rights, obligations, privileges, and so on which are in reciprocity to those of the status of wife. For example, the husband's traditional duty to support his wife financially is reciprocally tied to her right to receive this support; she in turn has the duty to provide a home for him to return to after work, which becomes one of his rights as her husband. Since marital roles of husband and wife are reciprocally intertwined, the attitudes and actions of each partner affect the role performance of the other. Successful marriage requires much give and take between a man and a woman who are continuously taking into account each other's roles, attitudes,

interests and other personality characteristics.

Concepts Related to Gender Roles

1. **Bipolar gender roles:** The traditional view of masculinity and femininity is bipolar that is masculinity and femininity are opposite or mirror images of each other. When people speak of the opposite sex, they suggest that each sex has little in common with the other. Our gender role stereotypes fit this bipolar pattern: men-aggressive and women-passive; men-instrumental and women-expressive and so on. According to this view of gender roles, a real man possesses exclusively masculine traits and behaviors and a real woman possesses exclusively feminine traits and behaviors.

Androgynous Gender Roles

The term androgyny is derived from two Greek words, andros meaning man and gyne meaning woman and thus, literally means male – female. It refers to flexibility in gender roles and the unique combination of instrumental and expressive traits as influenced by individual differences, situations and stages in the life cycle. In short, it means masking or possible elimination of differences between the sexes. An androgynous person combines both the instrumental traits previously associated with masculinity and the expressive traits associated with traditional femininity. An androgynous lifestyle allows men and women to choose from full range of emotions and behaviors according to their temperament, situation, and common humanity rather than their sex. Males may be expressive without being called effeminate. Women can express the instrumental aspects of their personalities without fear of disapproval. Flexibility and integration are important aspects of androgyny. Individuals, who are rigidly both instrumental and expressive, despite the situation, are not considered androgynous. For e.g., a woman who is always aggressive at work and passive at home would not be called androgynous, as work may call for compassion and

home life for assertion.

- Androgynous individuals and couples have greater ability to form and sustain intimate relationships and adopt a wider range of behavior and values.
- They tend to have greater confidence in social situations than sex typed individuals.
- They have greater resilience to stress.
- They are more aware of love feelings and are more expressive of them.
- They have greater satisfaction in their relationships.

Androgyny, like other personality theories, assumes that masculinity and femininity are basic aspects of an individual's personality. It assumes that when we are active, we are expressing our masculine side and when we are sensitive, we are expressing the feminine side of our personality.

Sex-Role Transcendence

The sex-role transcendence implies flexibility, plurality, personal choice and the development of new or emergent possibilities once we move away from the present oppressor-oppressed sex-roles. Conventional sex roles would be transcended, allowing each person to do what is appropriate or satisfying without the constraint of masculine or feminine labeling. In the family, the wife, for example, may pursue a career and provide the family income, while husband may stay home and do the housework, if that is what both want.

Changing Gender Roles

Within the past generation, there has been a significant shift from traditional towards more egalitarian gender roles. While women have changed more than men, men also are changing. These changes seem to affect all classes. According to the exchange model, women are more likely than men to support egalitarian gender roles, because women have more to gain and men have more to lose. Because men benefit from women's increased income, they are more likely to support gender equality. Men's support for gender equality has increased but not

as much as women's. The cost/benefit ratio of maintaining traditional gender roles continues to favor men in many ways. Therefore, they are less supportive than women in changing traditional housework responsibilities. Only when the cost becomes too great- involving frustration, fights, guilt –are men likely to accept a more egalitarian or equitable division of household labor.

Traditional Gender Roles

According to traditional gender-role stereotypes, many of the traits ascribed to one sex are not ascribed to the other. Men show instrumental traits-that is, goal-oriented, self-directing traits such as logic and aggression. Women display expressive traits-that is, interpersonal, emotive traits such as compassion and nurturing. These personality traits theoretically complemented their traditional roles in the family. Because women were thought to be primarily expressive, they were expected to remain in the home as wives and mothers.

Male

Central features of the traditional male role include dominance and work. Both have consequences for family relationships. Males are generally regarded as being more power oriented than females and demonstrate higher degrees of aggression, While aggressive traits may be useful in the corporate world, politics and the military, such characteristics are rarely helpful to a man in fulfilling marital and family roles requiring understanding, cooperation, and communication and nurturing. The centrality of men's work identity affects their family roles as husbands and fathers. Traditional men see their primary family function as that of provider, which takes precedence over all other family functions, such as nurturing and caring for children, doing housework, preparing meals and being intimate.

Female

Traditional female gender roles center around women's 'roles' as wives and mothers. When a woman leaves adolescence, she is expected to get married and have children. Although a traditional woman may work prior to marriage, she is not expected to defer marriage for work goals. And soon after marriage, she is expected to be "expecting." Once married, she is expected to devote her energies to her husband and family and to find her meaning as a woman by fulfilling her roles as wife and mother. Within the household, she is expected to subordinate herself to her husband.

Contemporary Gender Roles

Now gender roles are becoming more androgynous that is incorporating both masculine and feminine traits. Contemporary gender roles are evolving from traditional hierarchical gender roles (in which one sex is subordinate to the other) to more egalitarian roles (in which both the sexes are treated equally) and androgynous roles (in which both the sexes display the instrumental and expressive traits previously associated with one sex). Thus, contemporary gender roles often display traditional elements as well as egalitarian and androgynous one. Within the family, attitudes toward gender roles have become more liberal; in practice, however, gender roles continue to favour men, especially in terms of housekeeping and childcare activities.

Marital adjustment

Introduction

Marriage is a process wherein adjustments are necessary to make a marriage work. Adjustment means altering or modification. The goal of adjustment is relief from tension. Adjustment may be achieved by one person's changing his behaviour, by the other's changing his attitude, or by a change in the elements

that compose the situation – such as income, housing, or proximity to relatives. Everybody has to make adjustments not only in the beginning of his marriage but throughout his married life. Marital adjustment is, therefore, dynamic rather than static. For some, the adjustments are so easy that they don't even know they are adjusting. For others, adjusting is a conscious and deliberate process of learning to understand, to accept, and to change. When adjustment does not eventuate, the tension may produce dissatisfaction or failure.

Definitions

- **The Dictionary of Modern Sociology (Holt, 1969)** defines marital adjustment as "changes in the marital partners' attitudes and behaviors such that the partners may mutually fulfill their marriage expectations and hopes; sometimes operationally defined as a complex of factors (for example, shared activities, degree of role complementarity, amount of conflict, etc) believed to be associated with the happiness or success of given marriages."
- **LeMasters (1957)** says that "marital adjustment can be conceptualized as the capacity for adjustment or adaptation, as ability to solve problems rather than absence of problems." Marital adjustment is always a matter of degree, so any marriage at a given time would occupy a point on a scale ranging from poor adjustment to very good adjustment.

Areas of Marital Adjustment

- **In-laws adjustment:** Marriage creates 'In-laws'. Thus, husband and wife both, have to adjust to the other's family of orientation. The problem lays in the fact that one's family values and beliefs generally differ from others and more diverse the backgrounds of each partner, greater are the adjustment issues. Secondly, newlyweds also have to handle continuing relationships with parents and other close kin after marriage. Couple has to pay regards not only to his/her own family but has to whole heartedly accept his/her spouse's family. He/she must always be ready to listen, forget and forgive.

- **Work-role adjustments:** It refers to sharing responsibilities of one's own family that is equitable distribution of household work. There is always the possibility of things not going one's way because there is hardly anything around the house that is personal. Paying bills, doing the laundry etc. are some of the small chores that take a toll on many couples. Thus, couple has to be ready to divide the responsibilities that are best functional between them. Sometimes one has to be flexible in doing what one's spouse ought to have done but could not for some reason - however, serious or inconsequential that might be.
- **Sexual adjustment:** Sexual gratification is one of the basic foundations of marriage. It influences marital relations to large extent. A couple has to essentially adjust to the sexual expectations that are frequency, quantity and quality of sex needs laid down by the partner for having a happy married life ahead.
- **Adjusting on pattern of authority:** A couple has to make adjustments in their inherit patterns of authority. The couple has to mutually arrive at a decision regarding the pattern of authority to be followed in their family.
- **Gender-role adjustments:** In marriage each partner not only has to think out and make choices as to his or her own marital roles; each also has to seek out and understand the role expectations of other. How well each partner perceives, understands, and essentially agrees with the role definition and expectations of the others is most important in marital adjustment. In marriage the role desires and expectations each partner holds for one's spouse and oneself are among those crucial aspects of marriage which require continuous adjustment and good communication. Couple's gender role adjustments are essentially important for dual earning families. A couple may pursue traditional/ bipolar gender roles if the wife agrees to it. However, in dual earning families the couple has to make adjustments in gender roles and take up androgynous gender roles.
- **Financial adjustment:** A couple has to decide on the pattern of dealing with money in their marriage. While some believe in spending it to fulfil each and every desire, some are more comfortable with the thought that they have saved enough for the future. One has to make adjustment on these differing issues related to finance and also discuss financial

responsibilities that each one has to shoulder.

- **Social adjustment:** One has to make adjustments on the preferred leisure activities of the two involved so that they have shared leisure activities. Besides this, one has to whole heartedly accept each other's social circle, no matter he/she likes socializing or the circle members or not.
- **Psychological adjustment:** Both the sexes differ in terms of their desires, appreciation, status, and security. Knowledge and acceptance of the differing psychological traits of the two sexes is especially important to adjust in marriage. People go into marriage with certain expectations. Most of the time, marriage is the opposite of what they expected. People romanticize marriage and become disillusioned once those romantic expectations aren't met. So one has to adjust on unmet expectations as well.
- **Personality adjustment:** A person has to adjust to almost all peculiarities and eccentricities of the unique individual one has married. The habits that partners bring to marriage are usually deep-seated and not easily changed and usually must be adjusted to. Odd food preferences, queer notions on home arrangements, disorderly closets, tendencies to be quiet and un-talkative- these and other similar peculiarities of one's partner has to be accommodated in some fashion if successful marital adjustment has to be attained.

Factors Influencing Marital Adjustment

- : Men are characterized as more aggressive; excel in social activities, comparatively strong where as women find more interest in social issues, nurturing roles. For good marital adjustment one partner should play complementary role to his/her spouse. They should have proper understanding of needs of their partners. If the personality traits of two spouses are complementary they would have high marital adjustment as there is a balance whereas if both have almost similar traits the marriage will either somehow survive or end up.
- **Family background:** The way marriage partners handle their differences

and make adjustments is often either completely dictated by, or at least influenced, by the pattern of marital adjustments present in their respective parental family. The spouse who comes from a family of high ethics, values and compassion makes maximum adjustments in their marriage while those who have always seen their parents dominate each other, quarrel and abuse, feel that it is the way marriages go and hence marital adjustment on their part is extensively low. When a person from a rough and tumble family background marries someone like himself, they get along well, fighting all the time. If however, a person from such a background marries a person from non hostile family background, there is liable to be trauma in both the directions.

- **Social class background:** Social class differences in customs, values and beliefs are reflected in marriage and family attitudes and behavior. Marital adjustment is greater in middle and upper ranges of the social class spectrum than in lower ranges since lower class marriages are subject to chronic stresses and strains related to menial jobs, low income, unemployment, poor housing etc. which contributes to the feelings of disenchantment, apathy and low self-esteem and ultimately poor marital adjustment.
- **Sexual factors:** One of the main objectives of marriage is sexual gratification; hence, it determines the extent of marital adjustment. Gratification of this basic need between the partners leads to enhanced marital adjustment whereas if they don't share a happy sex life then it gives rise to feelings of incompetence, frustration and aggressiveness which hinders with their adjustment in marriage.
- **In-law relationships:** Marriage is not about two persons getting into the wedlock but it is about two families entering into the marriage. In marriage two individuals unite to become one soul but still their previous family that is their parents remain an inseparable part of their new life. Hence in-law relationships are very important determinant of marital adjustment. Conflicts in in-law relationships somehow penetrate into marital relationship and significantly affect marital adjustment.
- **Attitudes toward money:** Money is very important for human sustenance. Any marriage or family cannot function without money so attitude of spouses towards money is a very important factor of marital adjustment. If

a partner is spendthrift or extremely miser it affects smooth family functioning and thus gives way to adjustment problems in marriage.

- **Religion and basic values:** Religious background of the spouses is relatively insignificant factor in marital happiness, however agreement on religious matters and basic values is positively correlated with marital adjustment.
- **Children:** The presence or absence of children in a family also affects marital adjustment. It is believed that most of the times strong differences in opinion or unresolved conflicts do exist between the spouses but they somehow compromise and adjust for the sake of welfare of their children. Besides this, children in the family means added responsibilities, emotional as well as financial. As a family expands, it sees changes in the roles of the couples. They have less time to spend together and more worries, like taking children to the doctor, picking them up from school and attending their games of soccer, to deal with.
- **Age at marriage:** Most studies investigating age as a factor have shown that marital adjustment is lower when the partners marry at a very young age, that is when the man is under age 20 and the woman is under age 18 (Urdu, 1974; Schoen, 1975). The studies suggest that in their immaturity they tend to romanticize marriage and are less well prepared for the responsibilities of marriage than those who marry later. The very young usually, rather more quickly, become disappointed, discouraged and unhappy on confrontation by the demands and burdens of marriage (DeLissovoy, 1973). However, findings of the studies dealing with age differences between the spouses and marital adjustment have not been conclusive.
- **Education of the spouses:** There is a good deal of evidence that the more education the marriage partners have, the greater the probability of good marital adjustment and the lower the probability of divorce (Bumpass & Sweet, 1972). This is due to the fact that education broadens one's mental horizon and, thus, people work on marital issues with liberal minds and not the way society gets it done. Shift from gender specific roles to egalitarian roles in marriage is also an outcome of high education of spouses. Besides this, it was observed that marriages in which the husband had less education than the wife were more apt to end in divorce than marriages in

which the husband had as much or more education than the wife (Scanzoni, 1968).

- **Male and female subcultures:** For most young women and men, marriage is the first point at which each really lives intimately into the world of the other sex. A girl who has brothers and a father probably has shared their male world only in a limited way. Similarly, boys normally have only a marginal exposure to the feminine world of their sisters and mother. Thus, after having spent a good part of one's childhood and youth immersed in the subculture of one's sex group, marriage brings each marriage partner into contact and interaction with subculture of the other in a new, much more intimate way. Good marital adjustment requires that each partner make an effort to understand that the other is largely a product of the social world and subculture of the opposite sex. The sex subcultures usually produce some basic differences in basic value orientations between men and women. Where sex role differentiation is greater there is greater likelihood of differences in values and interests between the sexes, thus, a smaller basis for mutual understanding and companionship exists between them. On the other hand, where sex role differentiation is diminishing somewhat, there will likely be a parallel lessening of the value differences between the male and female subcultures, making it easier for the wife and husband to understand and adjust to each other.

Obstacles to Marital Adjustment

Some of the most common impediments to marital adjustment are as follows

1. **Arguments**
2. **Quarelling**
3. **Disguised feelings and passive resistance**
4. **Blackmailing and brain washing**

Arguments

Who is right? Of all the impediments to adjustment, no one is more insidious or more universal than the "who's right?" argument. This is not an effective problem solving behavior as

- There is no impartial judge in a marriage to step in and render judgment and so force the loser to be at the behest of the winner.
- Knowing "who's right" doesn't do any good as most marriage partners won't agree that they are wrong. Showing him that he was wrong, would stimulate him to find more reasons why she was wrong. Moreover, it would make him even more defensive and less willing to find a solution to the problem.
- Proving "who's right" is sometimes self-defeating. Belittling one's spouse is not like winning but it's like defeating oneself. It is better to protect other partner's integrity by allowing him to save face and back off gracefully than it is to score an empty victory.
- A person can be completely right but still she cannot get what she wants from the other partner until he wishes so. In that case only solution to the problem lies in finding a way to relate to that partner so that he willingly gives up.
- Ultimate goal of deciding who's right in the marriage is to use the verdict to force the partner into changing his way of behaving. Even if it is possible to determine who's right, it is impossible to force the other partner to conform.
- Another goal of this argument is re-winning love. Sometimes the individual wants the other partner to give her more affection because she is right. Being right is often the poorest way to redevelop a love relationship. Love is given as a reward for meeting needs and not as a reward for being right.

Quarreling

Basically, most fights are a product of the individuals and not a product of the situation. People can fight about almost anything if they want to. They can avoid conflict, even in the face of severe provocation, if they have learned how to resolve their differences without fighting and if they have a mutual desire to do so. Some level of quarreling, from placid discussion to violent shouting, is common in marriage. Basically there are two types of quarreling:

1. **Constructive quarreling:** Constructive quarrels are those that leave the marriage stronger than it was before the quarrel started, by redefining the situation that caused the conflict.

- Constructive quarreling is directed towards the issue and leads to a better understanding of the issue;
- It emphasizes problems and conditions rather than personalities as the object of constructive quarreling.

Since these quarrels tend to reduce tension, they should become fewer and less violent as the marriage progresses and as patterns of adjusting are more firmly established. In constructive quarreling, people:

- spell out exactly what they don't like and how they want things to be changed,
- stick to the point and avoid side issues,
- stay with it until they thrash things out,
- go on to some simple next step for improvement,
- don't let the matter aggravate,
- attack their problem rather than each other,
- avoid dragging in relatives, and
- give each other cues as the tension lets up.

2. **Destructive quarreling:** Destructive quarrels leave fewer assets in the relationship than were present before. Destructive quarrels are directed at the personality of the marriage partner and are intended to destroy the illusions and fictions by which he has lived. Destructive quarreling is belittling and punishing, and it leads to alienation and further quarreling.

Disguised Feelings and Passive Resistance

Passive –aggressive behavior is as damaging to marriage as is destructive quarreling. The passive-aggressive behavior is characterized by non-cooperation, negativism, quiet hostility, under enthusiasm and other signs of subtle resistance. Since approval and acceptance are vitally important to any love relationship, withholding approval and acceptance can be as devastating as aggressive shouting and yelling-if not more so. These various forms of passive resistance are often generated by unresolved resentments that have been allowed to aggravate quietly.

There are some people who have been so much damaged by their childhood relationships that they are unable to express their normal emotional feelings in normal ways. Some of these people develop devices and stratagems for obtaining the emotional satisfaction or release they need, without ever having to admit to themselves that they were the ones who started the hostility. The least harmful of these devices is accusing the partner of “not loving me anymore”, in the hope that the partner will change his behavior in order to prove that he does. The more harmful stratagems include playing the role of martyr and various forms of emotional blackmail and manipulation.

Martyrdom is also one means of seeking control in the marriage. This technique is based on the assumption that the other person will feel sorry for the martyr and, hopefully, change his way of behaving. Even if her partner doesn't change, the martyr gets the emotional satisfaction of being abused. Sometimes martyr can win either or both ways. Many a times it is so satisfying to certain personality types that it tends to become self-enlarging and ultimately it reaches a point where it becomes intolerable and hinders with marital adjustment.

Blackmailing and Brain Washing

All sorts of coercion, both understated and obvious, gentle and arm-twisting, are used in marriage. Saying “I'll do this thing for your mother provided you do what I say” is a sort of marital blackmailing. Extended blackmail can lead to brainwashing, the technique of making certain behavior of the mate so painful that he foregoes it rather than accept the punishment that it provokes from his mate. Tears, sulking, and refusal to communicate can be enough, when repeated over and over again, to condition a mate to give in.

Marital adjustment techniques

Steps in Improvement of Marital Adjustment

1. **Identifying the problem:** In identifying the problem, one has to be specific. Simply saying “my partner never helps around the house” will get

one nowhere. One needs to outline what specific tasks her partner must help with. Some problems are easier to identify and bring out in the open than others for e.g. sex problems. If one has lost interest in sex with his/her spouse then one should try to know “why,” and “what” is causing the loss of interest. Is it hormonal or what? Finding a solution means finding the underlying cause of problem. Generalization such as “he/she never helps around the house” or “I’m just not interested in sex,” is the problem. The trick is to find out what is causing the problem and solving the cause.

2. **Exploring alternative solutions:** When the problem or issue has been clearly identified, and the feelings of each partner have been expressed and heard, it is time for each to offer some kind of a solution. Each, in turn, says what she or he would like, and what seems to her or him to be a good solution. Neither one should feel threatened, because each has the opportunity to express views and propose solutions. As soon as one possible solution is suggested, they can discuss the pros and cons. Incompleteness is often a difficulty here. Instead of seeking all possible alternatives, only a few are considered. Seeking and discussing a variety of alternatives gives each partner a sense of involvement in reaching a final decision.
3. **Selecting the best alternatives:** After considering a range of alternative solutions to the problem, the couple can begin looking for the one or two best choices. This means evaluating each proposal on its own merits, and then eventually finding one solution on which they can agree. On some complex, ambivalent problems, decision making may be expedited by drawing up a list of pros and cons, or gains and losses, and finally making a certain choice. An example could be one in which the partners have to decide whether or not to accept a job offer in another city. Will the gains of a higher salary and opportunities for promotion offset the loss of friends, the trials of changing schools for the children, and higher living expenses? At some point the weighing of alternative solutions must come to a halt and a decision made. A danger here is that one or both partners may not be disclosing their true feelings because they may be tailoring their proposals too much to what they think the other partner wants. It is difficult to find the best solution if each partner has not candidly expressed her or his real preference. If they are lucky, they may discover that they both prefer the same thing and thus arrive at a consensus. If this is not possible, further discussion and

postponement may be in order. "Sleeping on it" often gives both a new perspective, and once the tensions have relaxed, agreement may appear, perhaps unexpectedly. The final decision will probably require an accommodation of each partner to the feelings and, desires, of the other, and usually some degree of compromise between the preferences of each.

4. **Implementing the decision:** Once the choice has been made it has to be carried out. Implementation of a decision is not automatic. An advantage of a jointly made decision over a unilateral one is that in the former both partners feel some responsibility for its implementation. No matter how thoroughly the partners agreed on their decision, difficulties may crop up in putting it into operation. If deeply embedded habits have to be altered, the agreed-upon solution to the problem will take time and effort to implement, even with the best of intentions. For example, in marriages in which the wife has taken a full time job the husband may agree that he should compensate by doing more of the housework, but his long standing habits of doing other things on evenings and weekends may be hard to change.
5. **Rebuilding the relationship:** Except in the cases where husband-wife consensus has been reached in making the final decision, one partner may probably feel like the loser, to some extent at least. Winner is often aware of the bad feelings of the loser and should take steps to relieve these feelings. Such efforts may include expressions of sympathy and reassurances of love which expresses efforts toward rebuilding the relationship following a difficult decision in which one partner has been put in the position of a loser or atleast feels that way. The whole experience may bring the couple into a fresh or renewed relationship.
6. **Reviewing the decision-making process:** Couples time to review what they had done, particularly after a strenuous struggle. They would take pride in the way each had "fought fair" in the give and take of working towards a solution to their problem. They felt satisfaction in improving their problem-solving skills. Couples found it stimulating and provocative to rehash the whole experience. The struggle they share helps them discover and understand things about themselves that would be valuable in their future relations.

Techniques of Marital Adjustment

Adjustment is an art which some enjoy by natural ability but others must acquire by strenuous effort. Natural flexibility and knowledge of adjustment techniques are two of the most valuable assets a partner can bring to his marriage. With these qualities all problems which are at all reconcilable can be solved. There are many methods of adjustment-both positive and negative-of which the following are, perhaps, the most important positive ones.

1. **Compromise/Alteration:** Compromise implies alteration of attitudes and behaviors on the part of both parties without any loss of personal worth and self respect. Compromises are usually a solution in which neither partner gets all he wants. Thus, both partner wind up with a feeling of something less than complete satisfaction. Given a reasonable amount of open mindedness and good communicative ability, a couple can reach not only adequate but often a superior adjustment by compromise. Some think it to be the most frequent method employed in marriage to resolve differences.
2. **Acceptance** is another useful technique of adjustment. There are occasions when the wisest attitude is simply to take one's partner as he is despite his shortcomings. This does not mean that one is required to completely subserve himself to the will of the other. While remembering the duty to correct one's spouse, there are many instances where this is not feasible and can only worsen an already poor relationship.
3. **Conversion:** It implies a complete and total surrender to the position of a partner in marriage. This is likely to be achieved only when one retains an unemotional approach and the modesty to admit the error of his own position. This requires genuine maturity of character.
4. **Sublimation:** It is often the only adjustment possible. If all others fail or are not feasible, this technique remains available. By it, a partner accepts the unavoidable behavior of his or her spouse for entirely noble and lofty reasons. The wife of an unfaithful husband takes up religious spirituals believing that through her acceptance and suffering God will be sympathetic - this wife has learned the meaning of sublimation.
5. **Passive aggression:** It is one of the possible ways of adjusting in which one partner is deliberately obstructionist or negative or tries to manipulate the other by tears and martyr playing.
6. **Abandonment** is an adjustment which leads one to leave everything on

the supernatural level that is the designs of a God and to sense His paternal protection in the midst of the most trying situations. It is a strong defense against physical or mental breakdown. It propels a partner to great heights of holiness in marriage.

7. **Counseling** is a useful method of removing differences when one or both parties through emotionality or wrong attitudes have lost their true perspective on marital relationships. In such instances, a person selected because of his ability to counsel and to remain objective may prove the only effective aid.

Marital Success

The process of defining marital success appears to be an endless one. With time, some expectations and purposes of marriage grow in relative importance while others lessen. The purposes of marriage also have different priority according to the type of union considered most useful in a particular culture at a given time. No marriage can be expected to meet all the criteria for success all the time, nor can it be expected to arrive at complete perfection.

Ways to judge marital success

Marital success is a relative matter. It cannot be judged in any absolute terms; however, the extent to which the union appears to meet the purposes for which marriage is supported in society and the degree to which the couple is satisfied with fulfillment of their personal expectations in the union can be assessed and used as an index of marital success.

Criteria of Marital Success

Marital success is dependent upon the criteria used as standards. A given marriage might be considered relatively successful when compared by certain criteria, yet it might be considered unsuccessful when compared by different standards. Several tentative criteria of marital success include individual personalities and dynamics of interpersonal interaction like:

1. Marital interaction is marked by accommodation by both parties.
2. Basic roles are mutually complimentary and comfortable.
3. Both parties have a feeling of emotional security.
4. Group relationships are satisfactory for raising children.
5. Spouses have their ego-demands satisfactorily met.

6. Economic problems are adequately solved.
7. Self development is provided, although not at the expense of the marriage.
8. Spouses think of their relationship as a solid entity.

Family

Introduction

A family is a group and person united by the ties of marriage, blood or adoption constituting a common household, interacting and inters communicating with each other in their respective social role of husband and wife, mother and father, son and daughter, brother and sister, creating and maintaining a common culture.

Characteristics of Family

Family is primarily based on mating relationship. Family represents an enduring relationship reckoning of descent either through father or mother. Child bearing and rearing is also as important characteristics of family. Relationships of the members of the family are socially sanctioned and are traditional in nature. Living together of various members of a family is also one of its characteristics.

The characteristics of family are explained in detail as under different subheadings.

1. **The family experiences are continuous and persistent:** Family exerts a continuous and considerable influence upon the child. The family is the only agency which gives the child a stable relationship, through which he grows and thrives. Real security is found only in the family.
2. **The family is the Major Agent for transmitting culture:** The culture of the society is transmitted to the child by the family. The taboos, customs and beliefs are passed on to him by the adult members of the family.

children generally reflect their parents culture.

3. **Family conditioning has a special Emotional Quality:** The family environment profoundly influences character formation in the child. Family environment is the most conducive for his free expression. Most of his psychological and physical needs are satisfied in the family.
4. **The family has a status:** Each child, as he enters into this world gets his identification only from his family, is association with its past history and present status. Members of the family are bound together in a complex unity, built upon their sentimental interdependence. Each family member is important to another and identifies with one another. Any distinction to any family member raises the status of the whole family.
5. **Family is an area of interacting personalities:** The family provides the stage to develop and utilize the child's abilities. It establishes the first approving audience. The family is the place where the individual gets a warm welcome at all stages of his life, is comforted and soothed during difficult periods by the love warmth and affection of the members.
6. **The family passes on Ideas and Ideals:** - society controls the behavior of individuals through the families. Each family has its own ideas and ideals. Although the ideas which shape behavior, may be common for all the families. The ideals are not. The ideals are handed down in each family by the previous generations taking a changed form in each consequent generation. What was considered as the ideal form of management in grandfather's time may not be considered ideal in the modern family.
7. **Every family has its own Heirlooms:** As institutions preserve their converted certificate. Trophies and awards each family has its own heirlooms – grandfather's photographs old cards. Some unique jewellery utensil and soon. Each family takes pride in preserving these heirlooms. However worn out they may be.
8. **It has forms:** though family is a universal institution. Its structures or forms not only from one society to another. But also from one class to another within the same society.

Functions of the Family

Biological Function: Reproduction - From religious point of view. To assume family responsibility-children bring kind and affectionate relationship.

Performance of Shradh for the dead to make the soul united with- the God.

Economic Function: Family is the chief producer and consumer of goods. Now it is only the consumer. Members earn money to run the family. Saving for emergencies and clearing of debts is also important function of the family. Education of children is an economic asset.

Protective Function: Caring and protecting the children, sick and old. Church, temple, mosque served as centers for social intercourse and recreation. Rites and ceremonies are means of furthering family life and promoting marital accord. Religious functions and ceremonies in the family and participation in common prayer help to solidify the relationship between family members under stress.

Educational Function: Family is the first institution from where the child starts education. The home teaches social and ethical values. It trains and prepares the child for his future roles.

Socializing Function: Socialization through different events is influenced by the extent to which the family backs him up. Parents teach the child how to move in the society. Family teaches the child to learn culturally approved habits, ideas and attitudes. The child is taught the rights and duties of his position. Through socialization the family assures the child of conformity to the culture. The family transmits what has been learned and used to children. It passes ideas and ideals that control individuals.

Recreational Function: It embraces both the young and old in the family. Family members share their experiences after hectic work of the day. Plans suitable programmes to cater to the needs of family members. Family members release their tensions, stresses through family recreations.

Affectional Function: It consists of complex and important relationships which are necessary for family members to develop as normal socially adjusted human beings. It is present throughout life. Family provides close and intimate responses necessary for cultivating individual personalities. This affectional relationship extends to outside family also. It provides opportunities to develop sense of trust, which is essential for adjustment to family members to become marital partners when they grow up.

Structures and Forms of Family

The family can be classified on the following screen bases.

1. **Based on Organization**
2. **Based on the blood relationship**
3. **Based on in group or out group affiliation**
4. **Based on forms**
5. **Based on authority**
6. **Based on residence**
7. **Based on the descent**

Based on Organization

Nuclear family	Extended family
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. It depends on individuality of married couples.2. Interdependence on parents and grandparents is less.3. It consists of husband wife and their children.4. It is an autonomous unit free from control and elders.5. It manages its own affairs.6. Both husband and wife take part of family matters.7. This type of family lines only until one of the parents die	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. It is merging and several nuclear families consisting of husband, wife and sons children, nieces and nephews brothers their wives and children etc.2. Hindu marriages are and this type.3. It is collection of more than the primary family.4. The basis being close blood ties and common residence a single house with in as extended family compound.5. It is continuous i.e members may come and go but the group continues.6. Run by patriarchal system.

	<p>7. The nuclear family have little power for independent decision making.</p> <p>8. Property is held in common.</p> <p>9. Earnings are all pooled together and spent for maintenance of the family.</p> <p>10. The head acts like a trustee.</p>	
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Based on the blood relationship	
The conjugal family	The consanguineous family
<p>1. A conjugal family is one which consists of spouses their of springs and relatives thorough marriage</p>	<p>1. The consists of blood relatives together with their mates and children.</p>

Based on in group or out group affiliation	
The endogamous family	The exogamous family
<p>1. A man marries with in his caste/ within his group.</p> <p>2. The merits include group homogently.</p> <p>3. Protection of prestige and status preserves purity of caste keeps the property within the group.</p>	<p>1. A man marries wife out of his own class with different gotra.</p> <p>2. Most prevalent form of marriage</p>

Based on forms

Monogamous family	Polygamous families
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. In this type of family one man marries one women only at one time.2. It is most prevalent form all over the country.3. It brings a better state for women better case of children.4. Fathers and mother tenders affection and wook after their welfare and ----- bring.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. One man marries many women at a time.2. It was prevalent because of enforced celibacy.3. Desire for variety in sexual life.4. To obtain more children and greater social prestige.5. Economic necessity of getting cheap and reliable labour in the form of wives.6. Quorely ----- among wives is common.7. Lower position of women8. Under Hindu marriage act 1955 polygyny is an offence.

Polyanduous family

1. One woman marries many men and live with all of them or with each of them alternately.
2. More prevalent among Rodes and beotas of south.
3. Fraternal polyandrow – wher the family consists of husband who are all brother or cousins on the father side.
4. Non fraternal polyanduous family where the husbands are not so related.

Demerits

include

:

Limit the sphere of mate selection. Encourage castism. Encourage hatred and jealousy among different group. Encourages dowry and bride price.

Based on Authority

Patriarchal	Matriarchal
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Male member exercises role Pater and unlimited authority over the member of the family2. Father is the supreme lord, owner and administrator of the property.3. Wife's position and subordinate4. Individual members have no right5. The head presides over the religious lights and graduation of family gods and of the sacred health.6. He is the protector and ruler of the family enjoying full authority over family members.7. Descent is reckoned through the father and son are known by the name of father's family.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The authority rests in the women heard of the family.2. Males have subordinated position.3. Women is the owner and ruler.4. The descent is reckoned through the mothers and daughter.5. No marriage relations are in the house.6. Husband visits wife occasionally7. Mother's brother act like loco parents not to his children but to his sister children.8. No companionship between husband and wife and father and children9. Property is transferred through the mother and only female's succeed to it.

Based on Residence

Matrilocal family	Patrilocal family
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<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Husband goes to live in the house wife. 2. More common among some caste and communities in south – Mayars and tigers of malabar and bents of kanan. Tamil nadu not permitted is north. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wife goes to live in the house of her husband after marriage. 2. Her identity is merged with that of her husband's family. 3. It is a dominant family type all over India among all communities.
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Based on the Descent	
Matrilineal family	Patrilineal family
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The females are in charge of the family and children get family title of mother's. 2. property inherited from the mother's family. 3. The future of the children is more secure in matrilineal families 4. The status of women is better in matrilineal families 5. Children are reared by the maternal uncle 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Families are headed by males and children get the family title of the father. 2. Property was inherited from the father's family. 3. The women have subordinate status 4. Children are reared by the biological father
<p>Both systems are imperfect and there is a need of a family system where both man and woman are equal and it being only matter of choice whether the woman retains her title or adopts her husband's name of mother should be recorded in hospital and school record whereas it should be optional to add father's name also.</p>	

Impact of Social Change on the Family

The social changes have impact on family structure and functions in various ways these include changes from

1. Rural to urban
2. Large to small
3. Stable to unstable
4. Fixed to mobile
5. Productive to consumptive unit
6. Rigid to flexible roles
7. Authoritarian to democratic
8. Definite enforced to indefinite freedom

Factors

1. **Decline of religious influence:** Earlier marriage was thought as sacred, but now marriage is considered as more secularized (not sacred), religious laws are ignored. Marriage is thought as a man made affair or a social convention (custom/practice). The outlook of marriage also has changed emphasis is placed on comforts and high standard of living.
2. **Idealized changes and cultural long:** Attitude towards marriage and family are changing, due to rapid industrialization and urbanization, the structure of the family is modified. Women got economic independence and are working equally with man. Marriage is considered as purely material and natural but not spiritual. Marriage is considered as legal, children are considered as for giving personal happiness and not as primary goal of marriage. Wives claim for equal status and authority but earlier they were submissive to husbands. Children's are considered as partners in the family council than under parental authority.
3. **Industrialization:** Industrialization brought imperishment to many and inadequate housing in slum areas. Industrial revolution substitutes the system of production process in place of home products.
4. **Urbanization:** The growth of city life provide artificial environment not

suitable for domestic living. It created noisy tensions and pollutions in city life. It has taken away spacious rural environment to live, lack of privacy and paucity of play space for children.

5. **Growth of science:** Advancement in science lead to use of contraceptives and small families. Political factors like increasing authority by state for protecting the child from neglect of parents and check ID and compulsory schooling for children. Science with its labour saving devices have changed the nature of home making more convenient to women.
6. **Transfer of function:** Home chores are transferred to outside agencies like home learning of children to public, private schools, home recreation to playgrounds and cinemas, religious and ministers of religion.
7. **Social and political factors:** Mobility of women, higher education of women make families favour small families. Political factors like increasing authority by state for protecting the child from the neglect of parents and check of ID and compulsory schooling for children change in legal status of women, due to their entry in politics, education and employment.
8. **Changing functions:**
 - Need for survival function: Changed from home production to consumption unit
 - Security function: It is weakened by neglect, rejection, breakdown of kingship family, inadequate protection in case of death of bread winner.
 - Endowment function: Economic hardship forces wives to work, causes quarrels and induces birth control.
 - Disciplinary function: It is decreasing due to over indulgence of children.
 - Vocational function: It is declining with the loss of vision of home as a centre of work, production and education.
 - Recreational function: Home parties are not entertained, commercialized amusements are entertained. Little yard space is available for children to play.
 - Character building function: It is handed over to schools and institutions.
 - Erotic function: Less time at home, preferring office job to

mothering and staying with partner.

- Harmonic function: Decline is indicated by increased rates of divorce, separation, desertion and growing quest for marriage counseling
- No eugenic function: Families are not paying attention to improve the qualities of race by control of inherited traits.

Causes Leading to Break Down of The Family

Economic factors: It includes industrial revolution which substituted the factory system of production processes in place of the home production leading to separation of home from the place of employment. Home has become a distribution and consumption centre and not the production centre. Because of rapid industrialization and urbanization the structure of the family has been markedly modified. Women got economic independence and are working equally with men.

Political factors: Political factors like increasing authority by state for protecting the child from neglect of parents and check of Juvenile delinquency and compulsory schooling for children and change in legal status both married and unmarried women- due to their entry in politics education and employment.

Social factors: mobility of women, higher education of women make families favour small families.

Religious or philosophical factors: Decline in the religious control on marriage and divorce unless broken only by death, but has become more common that is broken by divorce, separation or desertion. The outlook also has changed, where by emphasis is placed on material comforts and the insistence upon a high standard of living.

- Decreased control of marriage contract.
- Changing economic role of women.
- Decline of religious control
- Modern civilization has given high and new status to women.
- The reduction in family functioning, lightening of tasks at home, gap between child births, are the other conditions which have transformed the

family into a new kind of partnership and created new problems for the family of the present and future.

Family Life cycle

According to Duvall (1977) the family life cycle consists of 8 overlapping stages, these stages are characterized by different stages in the personality development of each individual, different family responsibilities and different degrees of satisfaction in marriage.

Life cycle by length of time in each eight stages.

1. Married couples without children.
2. Child bearing families' oldest child – birth – 30 months.
3. Families with preschool children – 30 month to 6 years.
4. Families with school children – oldest child 6 – 13 years.
5. Families with teenagers – oldest child 13 – 20 years.
6. Families launching young adults – 1st to last child leaving home.
7. Middle aged parents – empty nest to retirement.
8. Aging family members – retirement to dead of both spouses.

Developmental tasks for Different Stages in the family life

1. Married couple : Wife, Husband

Developmental tasks of a couple:

- There is a constant change in the developmental tasks of a couple as children develop from infancy through the stage of launching into adulthood.
- These tasks are both challenging and time constant as child oriented responsibilities consume time, hence couple can't spend more time to strengthen their marriage.
- Tasks that focus specifically on the spouse relationship appear at stage I and then disappear until stage 7, when the children are grown.

- General satisfaction on marriage life and the experience of +ve husband and wife companionship are at their peak in stage I, before the children arrive.
- Satisfaction declines after the children are born and doesn't return to stage I level till the couple reaches retirement age.
- Marriage helps the couple to develop their personality and their social roles and expectations enhances while bringing up their children.

2. **Child bearing:** Wife – mother, Husband – father, Infant – daughter, Infant son.

Developmental Tasks:

- Establishing a satisfying home for both parents and infants/infant.
- Adjustments to new role of mother and encourages the development of infant.
- Management of house hold work and taking care of body.
- The couples interests continues, but with adjustments of children.
- Due to changes in daily routine, couple have mixed feelings.

3. **Preschool age:** Wife – mother, Husband – father, Daughter – sister, Son – brother.

Developmental tasks

- Adapting to the critical needs and interests of preschool children in stimulating, growth promoting ways.
- Coping with energy depletion and lack of privacy as children grow older.

4. **Families with school age children:** Wife – mother, Husband – father, Daughter – sister, Son – brother.

Developmental tasks

- Fitting into the community of school age families in constructive way.
- Encouraging children's educational achievements.
- Mother continues to be busy with young ones.

5. **Families with teenagers**

Developmental tasks

- Financial demands are more.
- Balancing freedom with responsibility as teenagers matures and emancipate themselves.
- Wife will be involving herself more in guiding children and husband works hard for extra income.
- They become work partners to achieve their own aspirations and the life filled with joy and satisfaction.

6. **Family as launching center:** Wife – mother – grandmother, Husband – father – grand father, Daughter – sister – aunt , Son – brother – uncle.

Developmental tasks

- College, marriage age with appropriate rituals and assistance

7. **Middle aged parents:** Wife – mother – grand mother, Husband – father – grand father.

Developmental tasks

- Releasing young adults into work.

8. **Aging family members** – retirement, Preparation to death of self and spouses.

Developmental tasks

- Coping with retirement and living alone
- Women usually adjust to retirement and to death of spouse as they are used to engage in diverse tasks and hobbies.

The concept of family life cycle uses a development framework to explain people behavior in families. Families change over time in terms of both the people and the roles they play. The key factor in terms of developmental tasks of family is the presence of children. The family organizes itself around its child rearing responsibilities.

Marital dissolution

Introduction

Breaking up or ending or termination of marriage/marital ties is known as marital

dissolution. Marital dissolution can be voluntary or involuntary. Marriage dissolved by death is involuntary on the part of marriage partners whereas that by annulment, desertion, legal separation and divorce is a voluntary action on the part of one of the marriage partners or sometimes both. Annulment and divorce are the two ways to legally end a marriage whereas; desertion and judicial separation are the grounds for grant of decree of divorce. The grounds for the grant of decree of nullity, legal separation and divorce vary with the Act under which their marriage is recognized viz. Hindu Marriage Act, 1955; Muslim Marriage Act, 1939; Indian Divorce Act, 1869; Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1936.

Grounds for Marital Dissolution

1. **Death:** Sooner or later all marriages, not dissolved by some other way, will ultimately end with the death of one of the partners. Age, disease, accident and tragedy are the possible causes of marital dissolution by death. Marriage dissolved by death differs from others in that it is involuntary and over and against the choice (action) of the two involved. Death ends person-to-person contact, but it does not negate his/her memories. The expired person remains a longed-for and missed unit in the still-existing community called family. He, even in his death, is part of the narratives and history of the family.
2. **Annulment:** This is a legal process by which a marriage is cancelled and the man and woman are restored to their single statuses again just as if they had never been married. In fact, a decree of annulment means that legally or technically no marriage had ever taken place. An annulment case can be initiated either by the husband or the wife. The party initiating the annulment must prove that he or she has the grounds to do so and if proven, the marriage will be considered null and void by the court.
3. **Desertion:** Sometimes referred to as "the poor man's divorce," desertion is an informal means for ending or altering marriage. When one marriage partner deserts, the marriage ends socially but not legally, although desertion may become a legal ground for a subsequent divorce. For the

remaining spouse, desertion may be more traumatic than divorce because it is unannounced and will likely take the surviving spouse and children by surprise.

4. **Legal separation:** Legal separation also known as Judicial Separation is in the form of decree granted by the Family court to the couples to live separately. This is a step before actual grant of Decree of Divorce. This amounts to a limited divorce. In simpler terms, in this process, both the partners agree to stay apart from each other, but both of them have certain legal rights, responsibilities and commitments towards each other while they are living apart. As a matter of fact, both the people continue to stay bound to each other similar to that of a married couple. Due to this, they are not permitted to remarry as in the case of divorce or annulment. In legal sense, the marriage is really altered rather than ended, but, in social sense, the marriage generally ends with legal separation. Such legal separation may be resorted to when there are not strong reasons for getting a divorce; or it may be a way of assuring economic support for an estranged wife. It allows couples time apart, away from the conflict of the marriage to decide if divorce is what they truly want.

5. **Divorce:** In common man's language, divorce is a method of terminating the marriage. However, in legal terms, divorce is considered to be the final stage in the dissolution process of the marriage. As a matter of fact, when two people reach this final stage of divorce, all the legal rights, duties, obligations and commitments that bind two people together are finally taken away. Both the people involved finally lose their marital status and also get the licence to remarry. The couples living under the Decree of Legal or Judicial Separation can unite & start living together i.e. they can resume the conjugal relationship without any legal formalities, but the couples granted decree of divorce cannot unite & start living together i.e. they cannot resume the conjugal relationship. If they want, they'll have to marry again legally.

Factors Responsible for an Increase in the Rate of Legal Marital Dissolution

There are many dimensions in the causality of legal marital dissolution. Some of

the most prominent one are as follows

Personal factors

While considering various personal or individual factors which may lead to legal marital dissolution, it should be kept in mind that many of these factors were present in the early period marriages too, but did not result in annulment or divorce due to the societal pressure opposing divorce. Among the most frequently mentioned factors of a personal nature which nowadays lead to legal marital dissolution some are:-

- the marriage has not been consummated owing to the impotence of the respondent;
- the spouse was at the time of the marriage pregnant by some person other than the petitioner
- the parties are sapindas of each other, unless the custom or usage governing each of them permits of a marriage between the two
- the parties are within the degrees of prohibited relationship unless the custom or usage governing each of them permits of a marriage between the two;
- spouse is subject to recurrent attacks of insanity or epilepsy
- the bridegroom has not completed the age of [twenty-one years] and the bride the age of [eighteen years] at the time of the marriage;
- any of the party was incapable of giving a valid consent to it in consequence of unsoundness of mind; or
- though capable of giving a valid consent, has been suffering from mental disorder of such a kind or to such an extent as to be unfit for marriage and the procreation of children
- the consent of the party to marriage was obtained by force or by fraud as to the nature of the ceremony or as to any material fact or circumstances concerning the respondent;

The above mentioned are some of the grounds for a marriage to be declared voidable and annulled by a decree of nullity in India. On the other side, there are some grounds of personal/individual nature, on the basis of which decree of judicial separation and eventually divorce can be obtained in India. They are as follows:

- after the solemnization of the marriage, spouse had voluntary, sexual intercourse with any person other than him/her
- after the solemnization of the marriage, spouse treated the petitioner with cruelty
- spouse has deserted the petitioner for a continuous period of not less than two years immediately preceding the presentation of the petition
- spouse has converted to another religion
- spouse has been incurably of unsound mind, or has been suffering continuously or intermittently from mental disorder of such a kind and to such an extent that the petitioner cannot reasonably be expected to live with the respondent
- spouse has been suffering from a virulent and incurable form of leprosy
- spouse has been suffering from venereal disease in a communicable form that there has been no resumption of cohabitation as between the parties to the marriage for a period of [one year] or upwards after the passing of a decree for judicial separation in a proceeding to which they were parties or husband has, since the solemnization of the marriage, been guilty of rape, sodomy or bestiality husband entered into marriage with petitioner while he was still legally married to another which is known as bigamy.
- spouse has renounced all worldly affairs by embracing a religious order
- spouse is drug or substance or alcohol addict

Societal factors

Some of the most important social changes contributing to rise in divorce rates in the 21st century are:

1. **Decline in stigma of divorce:** The rise in divorce rates itself signals the unmistakable message that divorce is an acceptable solution to marriage problems and carries no social stigma or a stamp of personal failure. Most divorced persons who wish to remarry can do so; in fact, most do. Also, a divorced woman today has a greater likelihood of being self-supporting than earlier. The decline in disapproval of divorce has been the result of various changes including:
 - the ascendancy of individualism and
 - personal criteria of marital success,
 - some questioning of the traditional viewpoint of what marriage itself

means and

- greater tolerance of the unconventional things.

2. **Reduction in the institutional functions of the family:**In majority of the present day families, spouses are socially and economically independent and even emotionally and physically sometimes; that is they are no longer interdependent. It means, slowly the institution of family has lost that essence of interdependence in which one used to earn and the other used to look after the home and also they were the only source of emotional, social and sexual gratification for each other. Thus, they now have simply one of many choices: they may choose singlehood, cohabitation, marriage or divorce, and if they choose to divorce, they enter the cycle of choices again-singlehood, cohabitation, or remarriage and possibly divorce for a second time.
3. **Lower levels of social integration:** Social integration, the degree of interaction between the individuals and the larger community, is emerging as an important factor in the rise of divorce rate. Those who live in the metropolitans, where social integration is considerably low; even the neighbours are strangers to each other, are less likely to be subject to the community's social or moral pressures against divorce. They are more independent and have greater freedom of personal choice for marriage or divorce.
4. **Casual approach towards marriages:**Since, the institution of family has lost its essence; people have developed a casual approach towards marriage, relationships, family etc. They don't believe or basically don't know what relationship is and what is meant by adjustment, sacrifice, honesty in a relationship. People have started taking every relationship for granted; even their relationship with parents; then what to talk of their relationship with spouse. Hasty marriages as well as marriages among the immature are some of the most divorce prone.
5. **Decline in moral values and religious beliefs:** People in this era of technological advancement, have somehow again developed more faith in the supreme power that is God, but, at the same time have lost trust in the religious sanctions like marriage is a union of two souls for seven births; husband is God and its wife's duty to sacrifice her whole life in pleasing him even if he is inhuman. The reason behind this change in mindset is

education. People have also become highly self centered and materialistic. Their own welfare and interest is supreme to all of the others. This decline in their moral and religious values has weakened the moral and religious based sanctions against divorce.

6. **Priority of personal happiness over family happiness:**As noted earlier, modern couples regard personal happiness as the principle goal of matrimony. If happiness fails to materialize in a given marriage, divorce may well be considered.
7. **More liberal divorce laws:**Down through the 19th century, divorce was rare and was presumed to be granted only for "grave and serious reasons." During the 21st century, Indian constitution has greatly expanded the grounds for divorce which has made divorce easy.

Demographic Factors

- **Differences in socioeconomic status of spouses:**Socioeconomic status is probably the most important correlate of divorce. Major differences in family and socioeconomic backgrounds many a time result in differing views and expectations for marriage which eventually gives rise to conflicts and ultimately divorce, in some cases.
- **Employment or financial independence of women:** In the present era, women have entered the career world in large numbers and this great change demands several consecutive changes in the traditional Indian family set up like shift from the traditional gender roles to egalitarian gender roles. In its absence, wives' employment may lead to conflict about the traditional division of household labor, child-care stress, and other work spillover problems that, in turn, creates marital distress. In today's scenarios, because of their psychological and economic independence they are less likely to put up with a bad marriage.
- **Low educational level of spouses:** The lower the educational level, more likely is the high divorce rate. This is so because high education on the part of both husband and wife broadens their mental horizons and they move out of the traditional marital roles and pursue egalitarian roles.

Besides this, their problem solving capacity also improves to some extent.

Life Course Factors

- **Intergenerational Transmission:** Marital success or failure tends to run in families. Children of happily married parents are far less likely to be divorced since they have seen what good relationship is all about and how it is acquired by adjustment, sacrifice etc on the part of both spouses. Even their parents from their own experience provide the right guidance to them in times of marital crisis and save their marriage. On the contrary, those who are from the abusive families are more likely to put up fighting, quarrelling in their habit believing it as a normal practice in every family and end up in divorce.
- **Young for marriage:** Early twenty marriages are more likely to end in divorce than marriages that take place when people are in late twenties since younger partners are less likely to be emotionally and psychologically mature; and hence fail to meet up with the adjustments required in a successful marriage.
- **Remarriage:** The probability factors associated with the kinds of people who divorced in first marriages-low levels of education, unwillingness to settle for unsatisfactory marriages, and membership in certain ethnic groups-are present in subsequent marriages, increasing the likelihood of divorce. The dynamics of second marriages, especially the presence of stepchildren, increase the chances of divorce.

Family Processes

- **Low marital happiness:** Those who have low marital happiness scores in the first years of marriage are 4 to 5 times more likely to divorce within three years than those with high marital happiness scores. The relationship between low marital happiness and divorce decreases in later stages of marriage since couples, despite regular differences in opinion and conflicts have developed love and attraction for each other.

- **Having no children out of marriage:** Women without children have considerably higher divorce rates than women with children. Children are considered a deterrent to divorce since couples try to somehow resolve their conflicts and stay together for the sake of their children.

Factors responsible for refraining from divorce after marriage failure: There are numerous reasons for a couple to refrain from divorce when a marriage has failed. Those are

- They may remain together for the sake of the children.
- There may be property considerations.
- The divorce may be desired by only one spouse, but he may have no grounds.
- Habit patterns may be too deeply entrenched like there may be memory of their earlier life together. There may be common interests and common responsibilities.
- The couple may have the hope that their marriage will be readjusted.
- They may have the attitude of making a bargain and holding to it.
- The woman may remain in an unhappy relationship for the sake of support.
- There may be moral or religious reasons.
- There may be love, in spite of their inability to live together.
- They may live in a state that does not permit divorce to which they could or would resort.

Consequences of Divorce

Legal divorce is a traumatic experience for all involved. Many changes result, which have a lifetime impact on the spouse and children. Impact of divorce on spouse and children is as follows

1. **For spouse**
2. **For Children**

For spouse

The various impacts of divorce for a spouse are:

- **Sexual impact:** He/she is deprived of regular sexual outlets unless he/she remarries or is involved in non ethical practices.
- **Practical Impact:** Earlier he/she assumed only few household responsibilities but now all household responsibilities have to be assumed all alone.
- **Social impact:** They face social disgrace. Hence, their social lives become limited mainly to relatives and very close friends of the same sex. Their involvement or participation in recreational activities and family functions reduces substantially.
- **Emotional impact:** Separation and divorce bring on a strong sense of personal loss and loneliness. Besides this he/she develops feelings of failure, self-doubt, and wounded pride. The large majority of divorced persons do eventually recover from the trauma and loneliness, which are most acute in the early stages of separation and divorce. The whole experience can make the person wiser, more mature. Despite the distress associated with divorce, it can also have positive effects. A divorced person is free of the demands and stresses of a deteriorating marriage, free to reorganize life on his or her own terms.
- **Economic impact:** When a conventional family, in which the husband or father is the sole family provider, splits by divorce, his one income has to stretch to cover two households, although seldom equally. When both husband and wife are employed, the economic consequences of divorce may not be so bad, but again, two households must be supported where only one was before. Separation and divorce dramatically change many mothers' employment patterns. If a mother was not employed prior to separation, she is likely to seek a job following her split-up since it is not possible to rely on alimony and child support alone for sustaining the family.

For Children

According to Wallerstein and Kelly (1980b), children experience divorce as a three-stage process:

1. **Initial Stage:** The initial stage, following the decision to separate, is extremely stressful; conflict escalates and unhappiness is endemic. The children's aggressive responses are exaggerated by the parents' inability to

cope because of the crisis in their own lives.

2. **Transition Stage:** The transition stage begins about a year after the separation, when the extreme emotional responses of the children have diminished or disappeared. This period is characterized by restructuring of the family and by economic and social changes which includes living with only one parent and visiting the other, moving, making new friends and losing old ones, financial stress, and so on.
3. **Re-stabilization Stage:** Finally the re-stabilization stage, which the families reach by the end of five years. Economic and social changes get incorporated into daily living. The postdivorce family, usually a single-parent or stepfamily, gets stabilized.

Children's response to divorce:
The most significant factor affecting children's responses to the separation or divorce is their age. Younger and older children respond differently to divorce, mainly in the way in which they express-or do not express-their feelings.

1. **Younger children:** Younger children react to the initial news of a parental breakup in many different ways. Feelings range from guilt to anger and from sorrow to relief, often vacillating among all of these. Very young children tend to have more temper tantrums. Preschool children often blame themselves feeling that they drove their parents apart by being naughty or messy. They beg their parents to stay, promising to be better. Children of school age may blame one parent and direct their anger toward him or her, believing the other one innocent. Preadolescent children, who seem to experience a deep sadness and anxiety about the future, are usually the most upset. Some may go back to immature behavior, wetting their beds or becoming excessively possessive. Problems seem to be compounded when there are children of various ages.

Young children need a competent and loving parent to take care of them. They tend to do poorly when a parenting adult becomes enmeshed in constant turmoil, depression and worry. The presence of elder brothers and sisters helps a lot as the children have others to play with and rely on in addition to the Single parent. If they have good friends or do well in school, this contributes to their self-esteem. Regardless of the child's age, it is important that the absent parent continue to play a role in his or her life. The children need to know that they have not been abandoned and that the absent parent still cares.

2. **Adolescents:** Family life before separation seems to affect how adolescents respond to their parent's divorce. Adolescents tend to protect themselves from the conflict preceding separation by distancing themselves. Although

they usually experience immense turmoil within, they may outwardly appear cool and detached. Unlike younger children, they rarely blame themselves. Rather, they are likely to be angry with both parents, blaming them for upsetting their lives.

Adjustment to Divorce

Adjustment to divorce is not an easy task. It is traumatic and passes through various phases. The five general phases of adjustment to divorce are:

- Denial that there was divorce
- Anger towards those involved
- Bargaining on the parts of children to bring parents back together
- Depression
- Acceptance of divorce

Divorce necessitates certain adjustments on the part of every member of the family. Some common adjustments required are:

- Adjustment to the knowledge that divorce will take place;
- Adjustment to the divorce itself;
- Adjustment to implications of family failure;
- Adjustment to changed feelings;
- Adjustment to living with one parent or singly, in case of spouse;
- Adjustment to the use by one parent of the child against the other parent;
- Adjustment to peer group attitudes;
- In some cases adjustment to remarriages.

Helping children adjust: Divorced parents can help children go through it in better way. Some suggested help are:

- Prior to separation, the parents should have open discussion with the children of the forthcoming separation and divorce and problems associated with it.
- The child should have continued involvement with the noncustodial parent through frequent visits and unrestricted access.
- Divorced parents should not be hostile to each other.
- There should be good emotional and psychological adjustment to the divorce on the part of the custodial parent.
- Custodial parent should have good parenting skills and should maintain an orderly and stable living situation for the children.

Alternative forms of family

Alternate Forms of the Family

Alternate family forms like single parent families, women headed families, childless families and adoptive families have always been in existence in all societies. The other terms used for alternative family forms include Non traditional families, Variant family forms (variation of the norm), Alternative family forms and Alternate family patterns.

The most commonly used and accepted term is alternate family pattern in the result of personal circumstances. Outside ones control (fertility) or from certain socio economic conditions (male migration, work participation of women). In such circumstances people are forced to adopt family patterns that suit their conditions. The commonly observed family variations in India include

1. Single parent families & Female headed households
2. Dual earner/career families
3. Adoptive families
4. Childless families

Single parent families & Female headed households

Single parent families are the most commonly found alternate family forms throughout the world. It is defines as the family in which the children reside with one parent who should take the major responsibility for the upcoming. In such families either the mother or the father is absent due to the following reasons

- Death of the mother/father
- Divorce/separation between parents
- Migration of one of the parents usually father to other places for a job.
- Prolonged hospitalization of one parent because of chronic diseases.
- Long term imprisonment of one of the parents.

- Desertion by one of the parents
- Unwed motherhood

The single parent families may be

- Permanent / temporary
- Physical / psychological

Because single parent families are mainly headed by women they are also referred to as female headed families.

The term female headed family is generally used for those families where women are heads for those families where women are heads of the families by virtue of their main earner status. The groups of women included are – widowed, divorced, abandoned, separated and single mothers; women whose husbands have migrated for employment and women whose husbands are not economic providers due to unemployment and health. About 8% of all family units are single headed families and 80% of the single headed families are established due to widowhood and more than 70% of single parents are women.

Impact of single parenting on the family partner and children.

Dual Earner Families

In dual earner families both the husband and wife work outside the family for better economic status. Various socio economic factors are responsible for the growing incidence of dual earner families. A dual earner family is defined as that family where both the husband and wife are simultaneously employed in fulltime, paid jobs outside their home.

Problems of earning women

- Role overload for women
- Role conflict and multiple roles
- Women experience feelings of guilt as they are unable to take care of their families efficiently

Family dynamics in dual earner families: Women's working status did not change her status at home but her involvement has improved in decision making

Adoptive Families

The adoptive family is created by the state rather than by procreation. The family come into existence by socio legal process rather than through biological process. In this type of family formation couples are infertile or unable to bear children due to various reasons and adopt a child or children of known or unknown background.

Child Free Marriage/Family

Parenthood may now be considered a matter of choice owing to widespread use of birth control. If men and women want to have children, they can decide when to have them. The term childless is often replaced by child-free in recent articles and discussions of marriage. This change in terminology reflects a shift of values in our culture.

Couples who do not choose to have children need no longer be viewed as lacking something. It is considered essential for personal fulfillment. Women who choose to be child-free are generally well educated and career oriented.

Although the partners in some child-free marriage have never felt that they wanted to have children, for most the decision seems to have been gradual. J.E. Veevers (1980) identified four stages of this decision process:

1. The couple decides to postpone children for a definite time period (until he/she gets a degree/promotion & so on).
2. When the time period expires, they decide to postpone children indefinitely (until they “feel like it”).
3. They increasingly appreciate the positive advantages of being child-free.
4. The decision is made final, generally by the sterilization of one or both partners.

Reasons:

Studies of child-free marriage show nine basic categories of reasons given

by those who have chosen this alternative (Houseknecht, 1987). The categories of reasons in descending order to importance are as follows:

- Freedom from child-care responsibility and greater opportunity for self fulfillment
- More satisfactory marital relationship
- Wife career considerations
- Monetary advantages
- Concern about population growth
- General dislike of the children
- Early socialization experiences and doubts about parenting ability
- Concern about physical aspects of childbirth
- Concern for children in present world conditions

It has also been observed that divorce is more probable in child-free marriages, because unlike some other unhappily married couples, the child-free couple do not stay together “for the sake of the children”.

Introduction

Marriage makes a relational commitment to partners, is an established institution, an organization governed by laws, social expectations. Marriage brings change in individual's status, legality of ownership and liability. Due to various reasons the relational bond sometimes becomes hard and marriage vows suddenly tarnish & become threatened by discontent.

The alternative life style to marriage allows people to be free to evolve and change. Instead of binding one another through convention and law, the alternative partner relationship allows mutual attraction with dynamic force of love. This alternative life style to marriage is a relational bond i.e. holistic, wholesome and mutually beneficial for both the partners. The alternative life styles include

Consensual

union:

The relationship between two people usually resident in the same dwelling who:

- Share mutual concern for each other

- Have a degree of economic, social emotional interdependence to be akin to marriage or civil union

Singlehood

Singles are stereotyped, Stigmatized and ignored, marginalized, or discriminated against for being single and still live happily ever after. Some are being single as it is their ideal & others are forced to be single as they have not found the right person.

Reasons:

1. *Desire for a career*: Stronger career drive is a handicap to early marriage for both genders because preparation for successful career takes several years.
2. *Parental influence*: It includes family circumstances, too much devotion towards parents, financial responsibility, parental interference or disapproval.
3. *Lack of opportunities*: Not finding a suitable mate, physical handicap, poor health.
4. *Delayed marriage*: The longer one postpones marriage, the greater the likelihood of never marrying.
5. *Increased number of women enrolled in colleges & universities*.
6. *Expanded life-style and employment options* currently open to women.
7. *More liberal social and sexual standards* including the increasing acceptance of cohabitation.

Types of Never – Married Singles

Much depends on whether a person is single by choice and whether he or she considers being single temporary or permanent. If one is voluntarily single, his or her sense of well-being is likely to be better than that of a person is involuntarily single. Shostak (1987) has divided singles into four types and they may shift from one type to another at different times.

Heterosexual Cohabitation

A practice of a male and female sharing a household although unmarried. It is an emotional and physical relationship without the benefit of legal, cultural, or religious sanctions. Living together tends to be more transitory than marriage, when a couple live together, their primary commitment is to each other. As long they feel they have love each other, they will stay together.

In marriage, each partner will do things to save a marriage like they may give up dreams, work, ambitions, extra marital relationships to make a marriage work. Where as a man & woman who are living together may not work as hard as married people to save their relationship. Unmarried couple rarely receives the support from the society, parents may even urge their 'living together' children to split up rather than give up plans for work, school, or career.

If the couple is beginning to encounter sexual difficulties, it is more likely that they will split up if they are cohabitating than if they are married.

Types

According (1978), there are different types of relationships –

1. Affectionate dating or going together: Two people live together because they enjoy being with each other, they will continue living together as long as it is mutually satisfying.
2. Trial marriage: This includes persons who are 'engaged to be engaged' as well as couples who are trying to discover if they want to marry each other.
3. Temporary alternative to marriage: two people are committed to each other but are waiting for a better time to marry.
4. Permanent alternative to marriage: Two people live together essentially as husband and wife but reject the idea of marriage.

Social Implications

The most notable social impact of cohabitation is that it delays the age of marriage for those who live together. As a consequence, cohabitation may actually encourage more stable marriages, because the older a person is at the time of marriage, the less likely he or she is to divorce. However, there is some evidence that cohabitation helps to prepare a couple for marriage and weeds out incompatible couples. Furthermore a later marriage is likely to produce few or no children.

Social support

Compared to marriage, cohabitation receives less social support, except from peers. It may be considered an inferior to marriage as it doesn't symbolize lifetime commitment. It is immoral as it involves sexual activity without the sanction of marriage. This lack of social reinforcement is an important factor in the greater instability of living together relationships. Parents usually do not support with the same enthusiasm as they would marriage.

Stress

Concept

Life involves constant change to which both the individual and the family must adjust. Change brings stress-psychological or emotional distress or disruption. A certain amount of family stress is inevitable. While most people try to avoid stress, no family is immune to it. Stress comes in a variety of forms. It can build from a variety of everyday events or from a one-time crisis event and means different things to different people. It is how a family handles and copes with stress that makes a difference. Stressed out families can often lead to more problems and issues. It is a major cause of marital problems and parenting problems.

Definition:

Family stress may be defined as an upset in the steady state of the family. Families constantly face stress, tension resulting from real or perceived demands that require the family system to adjust or adapt its behavior. As a result, individuals and families are involved in a delicate balancing act to adapt to changing situations introduced by stressors while maintaining their integrity.

Types/ Categories of Stressors

Stressor events are the life events which influence the family unit in way that produces or has the potential of producing positive or negative changes in the family social system and thus disrupts the equilibrium of the family. Stressors or

stressor events may be:

1. **Normative/ Non-Normative Stressors**
2. **External/ Internal Stressors**
3. **Short-Term/ Long-Term Stressors**
4. **With Norms/ Normless Stressors**
5. **Ambiguous/ Non-Ambiguous Stressors**
6. **Volitional/ Non-Volitional Stressors**
7. **Chronic/ Acute Stressors**
8. **Cumulative/ Isolated Stressors**

Normative/ Non-Normative Stressors

Normative stressors may be predictable and expected stressful events that are common in all the families across the life cycle- like birth, marriage, retirement, death of elderly members, and so on. In short, normative stressors are developmental or universal challenges most families encounter. These normative stressors are typical and can be anticipated and some of their consequences alleviated. Non-normative stressors are unexpected life events which are not always disastrous such as caring for a disabled or elderly family member, winning a lottery or accidental death, sudden loss of income, being taken hostage, murder, assault, incest etc. Non-normative stressors are atypical for all families that is non-normative stressors are idiosyncratic challenges and events not typically present in families

External/ Internal Stressors

In dealing with the stress, it is important to know whether the stressor originates from inside or outside the family. External stressors are stressful events that originate from someone or something outside the family, such as earthquakes, terrorism, the inflation rate, or cultural attitudes toward women and minorities. If external stressors are not so constant or overwhelming that they destroy the family then they can foster family unity for e.g. natural disasters such as floods and hurricanes, wars encourage family cooperation. Families tend to meet these

kinds of events head on. Internal stressors are the stressful events that originate from someone inside the family like severe illness, alcoholism, unemployment, extramarital affairs, suicide etc. Internal stressors can break apart the family that heroically withstood a natural disaster or persecution. The family may search for a scapegoat, fight among themselves as to whom to blame, or take sides.

Short-Term/ Long-Term Stressors

A short-term stressor, such as a broken leg or temporary unemployment, creates stress for a limited time. Such stress can be extremely painful, but the family may return to its normal pattern of interactions once the short-term stressor is eliminated. Long-term stressors, however, are generally more disruptive and require considerable family adjustment. A broken leg soon mends and the family may return to its usual mode of operation, but an amputated limb requires permanent change in the way the family works, such as other family members performing some of the responsibilities, of the disabled member.

With Norms/ Normless Stressors

Society often provides us with the norms or guidelines that assist us in coping with stressors. If we give birth to a child under typical circumstances, our society provides us with the guidelines for how to feel and behave as parents of a newborn, easing some of the stress associated with becoming a parent. Since, we have fewer or no norms to assist us in transition to adoptive parenthood or unmarried parenthood; we may experience a more stressful transition. Society is supportive of normal parenthood but often negative or hostile towards non-normative parenthood.

Ambiguous/ Non-Ambiguous Stressors

Ambiguous stressors are the one which are so unclear that one is not even sure that it's happening to him and his family. One can't get the facts surrounding the event. Non-ambiguous stressors are the one about which clear facts are available that is what is happening, when, how long, and to whom.

Volitional/ Non-Volitional Stressors

Volitional stressors are the events that are wanted and sought out, such as a freely chosen job change, a college entrance, or a wanted pregnancy. Non-volitional stressors are those events that are not sought out but just happen, such as being laid off or the sudden loss of someone loved.

Chronic/ Acute Stressors

Chronic stressors are typical circumstances that occur over an extended period of time, are difficult to amend, and may have debilitating effects for parents and children such as diabetes, caste discrimination. Acute stressor is an event that lasts a short time but is severe, such as breaking a limb, losing a job, or flunking a test.

Cumulative/ Isolated Stressors

Those events that pile up, one right after the other, so that there is no resolution before the next one occurs are cumulative stressors. It is a dangerous situation in most cases. Isolated stressor is an event that occurs alone, at least with no other events apparent at that time. It can be pinpointed easily.

HILL'S ABCX Model/ Theory of Family Stress

Reuben Hill (1949) theorized that there are two complex variables which act to safeguard the family from acute stressors and reduce the direct correlation between multiple stressors and family crisis. Stressors cited by Hill and other researchers include sudden economic hardship, divorce, physical abuse of children or spouses, illness, substance abuse and relapse, accidents and any other sudden onset events. These were formulated into what he called his ABCX theory of family stress. In Hill's model, the letter

- "A" refers to the event that disrupts equilibrium. Hill also cited protective factors at work within the family that help safeguard it against

the negative consequences of sudden stress. Hill called one of the protective factors “B” and the other “C”.

- The "B" variable refers to the complex of internal and external family resources and social support available to the family, i.e., the social connectedness within the family, as well as social connectedness outside the family through church, community or other resources. Families with strong social ties are better able to cope with the sudden onset of stress than families with poor social ties. Hill theorized that social isolation would significantly increase the impact of the multiple stresses on the family functioning; in contrast, positive social supports would minimize the impact.
- The “C” factor refers to shared family beliefs and perceptions held about the stressors e.g., the extent to which the family perceived the changes as a disaster vs. an opportunity. It was the second predictor of the extensiveness of the impact of stress on the family. Hill suggested that if families perceived stressful events positively or constructively, they were better able to cope with the event. Those families that perceived and dwelled on the negative impact of the stressful event had a more difficult time coping with it.
- The “X” factor at the end of Hill’s theoretical model refers to family crisis. If the family does not adapt to the stressful event and cope with it, they may end up in crisis. The stressor, resources and perception of the event (A, B, and C components) determines X, the outcome of the crisis

Hill considers the lack of "B" and "C" variables as similarly potent and equally predictive of a family crisis. If a family experiences multiple stressors and 1) they are socially isolated and emotionally disconnected to one another, and 2) they are depressed, hopeless, and disempowered, they will be at increased risk for illness, accidents, child abuse and neglect, and substance abuse, delinquency and school failure. With a positive set of cognitions, an empowered attitude, and an active informal and formal support network, there would be a reduction in the likelihood that the stressful life experiences would result in a family crisis. Other theorists have added onto Hill’s original model, (Mc.Cubbin et al. (1983) THE DOUBLE ABC-X Model of Family Stress) but Hill’s model has withstood the test of time and remains the basis for family stress theory. His findings and suggestions remain relevant today.

Causes of Family Stress

Reducing family stress means first trying to understand what's causing it. Some possible causes include:

- **Personal factors** like sexual incompatibility, poor health, illness, disability, low self-concept, alcoholism, extramarital affairs, divorce, substance abuse, illiteracy or low education, unemployment, childlessness, aging, single parenting, desertion or divorce, temporary separation, rape etc.
- **Work factors** like work pressure, over commitment, underemployment, gender biasness, sexual exploitation and humiliation, politics, interviews and self appraisal tests, low income etc, suspension or rustication from job.
- **Economic factors** like theft of household cash or belongings, high medical expenses, repossession of a car, utilities cut off from service, money lost in gambling or drug addiction and poverty, loss of job.
- **Natural factors** like floods, earthquake, wars, drought hurricanes, fire or even extended periods of high heat and humidity, or gloomy or excessively cold weather, etc.
- **Life factors** like birth, marriage, retirement, accident, death, etc.
- **Family factors** like lack of communication, unresolved conflict, lack of time, economic hardships, domestic violence, offspring with differences, an unplanned pregnancy, lack of social supports, parent's desertion, a chronically ill family member etc.
- **Community factors** like terrorism, the inflation rate, cultural attitudes toward women and minorities, caste and religion discrimination, lack of community resources and inadequate educational programs etc.

Effects/ Impact of Family Stress

Individuals, who experience too many stressors at one time, i.e., too many changes in their daily routines and circumstances, experience:

Manifestations/ Recognising symptoms of Family Stress

How do we know if our family is experiencing stress? Probably the best way is through the individual impressions of family members. Families under stress

may continuously report of some of the following

1. Common physical manifestations include:

- Headaches
- Neck and back pain
- Gastrointestinal distress and heartburn
- Constipation or diarrhoea
- Fatigue
- High Blood Pressure
- Insomnia
- Shortness of breath
- Stiff neck or jaw
- Upset stomach
- Weight gain or loss
- In severe cases stress can cause loss of hair and a variety of other physical ailments such as numbness in the body that has no physiological explanation for its occurrence

2. Common psychological manifestations include a variety of emotions such as

- Sadness
- Anxiety
- Sense of urgency
- Anger
- Depression
- Desire for the simpler life
- No time to relax
- Explosive arguments
- Bickering
- Meals eaten in haste
- Constant rushing from place to place
- Escaping into work or other activity
- Sense of isolation
- Sense of guilt
- Frustration (too much to do)
- Difficulties in concentrating
- In severe cases stress can create a variety of psychological disorders including taking on another person's identity and afterwards having no recollection of the experience.

3. Common social manifestations include continuous increase in:

- conflicts,
- sexual difficulties, and
- problems in intimate relationships
- little time to spend together

Characteristics of Crisis Events

There are some major characteristics of crisis events:

- There is a presence of both danger and opportunity.
- Crisis events bring about complicated symptomology that defy cause and effect descriptions and may not always be logical and cohesive.
- Crisis carries seeds of both growth and change. In a crisis, usual methods of problem solving are not effective or not available. The person becomes more willing to try new ways of problem solving (including professional help) and this results in his growth. It means there is an absence of panacea. There is also a necessity of choice. According to Kaplan, crisis is defined as a choice point.
- Crisis is universal and idiosyncratic: something is going to happen to everyone, and it can be a matter of pure luck.
- Crises are time-limited, and involve a precipitating event.
- They can be situational as well as developmental.
- Crisis is a state of disorganization and disequilibrium.
- Crisis brings about vulnerability and reduced defensiveness, as well as a heightened state of suggestibility.
- Crisis also involves a breakdown in coping.

Effects of crisis

Some of the common reactions to crisis are listed below.

1. Immediate effects:

- Children and adults may have nightmares or develop fears that a fresh crisis will occur to them, or the family member involved.
- Family members may be angry because of the fear and distress they were put through; these feelings may be directed at the family member involved, at each other or at people outside the family.
- Family members may lose trust and confidence in themselves and other people. The world may no longer feel safe; their welfare may

seem uncertain; everything may seem too difficult to manage.

- Children may express their insecurity by naughtiness, bed-wetting, changes in eating and sleeping habits, grizzling or even reverting to behaviour they have grown out of.
- Emotional turbulence, anger, guilt, sadness, unpredictable behaviour or unreasonable reactions may occur in any family member.
- Communication may be difficult because family members do not know what to say to each other, or they do not feel like talking.

2. Medium term effects: Some families cope well with the crisis and immediate aftermath. Changes which are not obviously related to the crisis may occur some weeks or months after the incident.

- Routine and work patterns, ambition or motivation in the affected member or others in the family may change; work efficiency and concentration may be reduced.
- Spouses/parents may be short tempered, irritable or intolerant, leading to friction in relationships and misunderstanding between themselves and their children.
- Children or teenagers can be clingy, attention seeking\or disobedient – this usually indicates they are anxious or fearful.
- Teenagers may become more rebellious or demanding, or through other behaviour, demonstrate a need to have a sense of control over their lives.
- Child or adult family members may be overly concerned to help. They may try hard not to do anything wrong and postpone their own needs to support the affected member.
- Family members' feelings for each other may change by becoming more detached, uninvolved or preoccupied with personal problems as each member tries to cope with their own reactions.
- Spouses may experience changes in their sexual relationship.
- Children and teenagers' school performance and concentration may be lowered; they may lose former interests.
- Family members may lose interest in leisure, recreation, sport or social activities.
- Teenagers may turn outside the family for emotional support from peers or other adults.
- Immediate post crisis responses may persist or sometimes begin to appear for the first time.

3. Long term effects: Sometimes problems become evident for the first time, months or years after the event.
- The memories of the traumatic event may come back for family members involved in another crisis, although it was dealt with at the time.
 - Family members, including children, often need to go over the events again when they grow into new stages of maturity and develop a capacity for greater understanding.
 - People may find future crises harder to handle, particularly when similar feelings are aroused, even if for different reasons.
 - Family members may cover up or cope with difficult feelings until all the fuss is over and things have returned to normal and only then show their distress.
 - Any of the immediate or medium term effects may occur as delayed reactions or may become habits.
 - Problems often appear in the form of everyday frustrations.

Factors which affect meeting the crises

The ability of a marriage or a family to meet the inevitable crises which will affect it depends on such factors as:

1. The kind of trouble the family faces and whether that trouble came suddenly or slowly;
2. The preparation the family had made in advance for meeting such emergencies;
3. The previous experience of a family in dealing with whatever the trouble is;
4. The family's own definition of the trouble, that is, whether they regard it as a crisis;
5. The number of supportive relatives, neighbors, and friends;
6. The social expectations of peers and customs;
7. The family strengths and resources; and
8. The personal maturity of the individual partners. Nothing can substitute for the decisiveness, competence, and leadership ability of the marriage partners themselves.

Adjustment to the Crisis

The family structure often determines a crisis pattern. In fact, the family climate can lead a family away from a crisis or force it into one. Bonds of unity within a family-such as common interests, affection, interdependence, and individual respect-can often help the family members ward off a crisis before it occurs. The family that is integrated to function for the greatest benefit of all is least likely to disintegrate when faced with a crisis.

One crisis can cause many changes in many areas of family living. Hill cites that involuntary separation in wartime is usually accompanied by other situations such as a sharp change in income level, housing inadequacies, new and increased role responsibilities, a need for new methods of discipline, and so forth. It is not enough therefore, to focus on the single crisis; rather, it is necessary to readjust in many areas touched by the event. The greater the crisis, the more the areas in the living pattern likely to be disturbed.

1. **Acceptance of the Facts:** The first basic factor for adjusting to crises is development of a realistic attitude which admits that such things can and do happen. In accepting facts, it is necessary to realize that emotional upset in any crisis is normal and should be fully expressed. Learning to modify personal behavior by occasionally doing things differently helps to increase personal adaptability. Rigid routine is a liability to adjustment in the crisis.
2. **Acceptance of Help:** The function of outside help in any crisis is to ease the stress and strain of the situation. Agencies and organizations have been established to assist in these emergencies. No one should hesitate to accept the supportive aid from outside groups in a crisis. These services exist for his benefit and should be used without shame.
3. **Preparation for the Unexpected:** Adaptability to crises is related to how well the individual, the couple, and the family are prepared for the unexpected. The individual who loses himself completely in a marriage and gives up his personal identity may be unable to act independently of his spouse in any situation. Yet, in a crisis, independent thinking and action-as well as paired thinking and action-are needed. It is possible to learn something of value from every experience, including a crisis.

Success in one crisis situation is likely to lead to success in handling other serious situations.

Things to do in Crisis

General things to do in times of crisis: A few simple things will help families recover from crisis:

1. **Keep communicating:** Talk about what is happening, how members feel, what they need from each other etc. This avoids feeling alone, isolated and not understood. Don't leave communication to chance; make opportunities for it to happen.
2. **Share information:** Communicate with children, teenagers and toddlers. They know something is going on and a painful reality is easier to deal with than the unknown worry of fear.
3. **Do things together:** Ensure time is reserved for recreation, enjoyment and rewarding experiences. Shared pleasure carries a family through many difficulties.
4. **Keep family roles clear:** Help members preserve their role and position in the family and support them. Don't overprotect children or adults. Understand if a member cannot fulfil their role for a time and talk about how they will resume when they are ready and able.
5. **Be active:** Tackle problems, seek help, seek information and don't let small issues build up. Whatever the cause, stress leads to further problems. Stress factors don't add up but they multiply and make everything feel worse than it is.
6. **Look back:** From time to time take stock of how each member has changed since the crisis. Look for the ways the crisis has influenced everyone for better or worse.
7. **Allow expressions of emotions:** Support distressed family members and allow them time to find their way through their feelings. They may express distress many times before it diminishes. Suppressing emotions places them outside control and therefore outside recovery.
8. **Use other people:** Keep in contact with support groups, other family members, friends, neighbours, and workmates. Share the experience with those you trust.

Coping Strategies Adopted by Families of Chronically Ill Children

Hamilton McCubbin and his colleagues (1979) found three important successful coping patterns for families with chronically ill children. These patterns also may be applied to families with older chronically ill or disabled members

1. **Maintaining family integration, cooperation, and an optimistic definition of the situation.** Such families emphasize doing things together as a family, strengthening family relationships: and developing" an optimistic attitude towards life, especially with the ill or disabled family member.
2. **Maintain social 'support, self-esteem and psychological stability** Spouse and parent maintain their own sense of wellbeing by actively involved in outside social relationship and activities that enhance their self-esteem. They develop techniques for handling psychological tension and strains, such as taking breaks from the situation, seeking counselling, and finding additional help.
3. **Understanding the medical situation through communication with similar families** and medical consultations. Such families develop relationships with families that have similar problems; they share information and provide information and 'Support for each others . They try to understand and master necessary medical information. They feel competent in operating medical equipment.

Common Coping Strategies Adopted by Families

Learning to deal with family stress before the stress becomes a huge problem is a good idea. Families can successfully develop effective coping skills for handling family stress. A certain amount of family stress is inevitable. It is how a family handles and copes with stress that is truly important. Families can (and some do) develop effective coping skills for handling stress.

1. Share the stress. Keep the lines of communication and conversation open in the family so that every family member feels comfortable voicing their feelings if they start to feel stressed out.
2. Make a "to-do" list of the things that you want to get done and then cross things off your list when they're done so you can see that you are making

progress.

3. Set family priorities. One of the biggest causes of family stress is simply too much to do in a short period of time. We often try to squeeze too much into a short period of time and end up not being able to enjoy any of it. Work together as a family to prioritize (and trim) your to-do list, get things done and enjoy time together.
4. Learn to say no to things that are not of utmost importance to you. It's not easy, but it makes a huge difference. Fewer activities on calendar mean more time to relax with family.
5. Limit travel. Long trips especially during stressful times make you more stressed.
6. Spend smart. Realize the importance of saving money and concept of financial responsibility.
7. Identify the stressful event as well as your feelings about that event, but do not dwell on the negative feelings. Learn from this event and set up an action plan so that you are able to move forward.
8. Develop a support network for yourself and your family. Your personal support system consists of the people who fulfil different roles in your life, for example, a sister or another family member who is going through a similar situation and hence is able to provide support and encouragement. Use your support system to talk about your feelings and you will cope with this stress.
9. Keep busy. Donate time to some other cause that is important to you. This may seem difficult to do in a stressful time, but the busier you are, the less time your mind has to worry about your situation.
10. Practice deep breathing. When you feel yourself getting especially stressed or angry, take three deep breaths in and slowly exhale, blowing the stress out of your body.
11. Get outside. Taking a five-minute walk around your neighbourhood or house can calm you down and begin to help you relax. Meditate.
12. Sleep substantially. Those who sleep less than six hours on weeknights are more likely to say they are tired, stressed, sad, and angry than those who sleep more than eight hours.
13. Use and develop your sense of humour. By choosing to project a positive attitude, you are more likely to be surrounded by optimistic, caring people.
14. Surround yourself with positive, supportive people. Spending time with others who are going through similar situations is not a bad thing, but it may turn negative if your group does not focus on coping with the stress and moving forward. Make an effort to interact and be around people who

provide support and encouragement for you and your family.

15. Focus on you and your family's health. In stressful times, some people turn to drugs, alcohol or other substances as an outlet for the negative feelings they may have. Stop or limit use of alcohol and tobacco. Try to fit in physical activity for 30 minutes at least 3 days per week.

Laws

Hindu Marriage Act (1955)

According to this act marriage is valid only when it fulfills the following conditions otherwise it is considered as void.

- Either spouse should not have an earlier living spouse.
- Both husband and wife should not have mental illness.
- At the time of marriage men should have completed 21 years and women 18 years of age.
- The parties should not be sapinda to each other unless the custom governing them permits such marriage.

Child Marriage Restraint Amendment Act (1976)

This act was proposed in 1929. This act raises the age of marriage for girls from 15 to 18 years and for boys 18 to 21 years. Parents of the children performing, conducting or directing such marriage are subjected to punishment.

Special Marriage Act (1954)

The special marriage act with its provision for divorce and succession to property was passed in 1872. The parties marrying under this act are required to declare that they did not believe in religion in which they were born. Since most of them were not prepared to do so the law was amended in 1923.

The law further amended in 1954

- Neither party must at the time of marriage have a husband or a wife living.
- The man must have reached the age of 21 years and women that of 18 years.
- Neither party should be an idiot or lunatic.
- The parties are not within any degree of prohibited relationship.

Dowry Prohibition Act (1961)

Under this act any property valuable thing given or agreed to be given in connection with marriage to the bride or bridegroom or any other person before or at any time after the marriage is dowry. This act was amended in 1984 to make the offence cognizable to enhance the penalty (both fine and imprisonment) to widen the scope of the act and to make it effective. This act was further amended in 1986 and the minimum punishment for taking of dowry has been raised to 5 years and a fine Rs.15,000/- .

Minority And Hindu Guardianship Act (1956)

This act provides that the natural guardian for both boys and girls is first then father and after him mother. The prior right of the mother is recognized only with respect to custody in the case of children below 5 years.

Dissolution Of Hindu Marriage Act (1955)

This act provides equal rights for women to obtain divorce on the following grounds.

1. Adultery
2. Change religion
3. Lunacy
4. Incurable diseases
5. If the husband has more than one wife living
6. If the husband deserted the wife for 7 years
7. If the girl is married before the age of 18 years
8. If the husband is impotent.

But however in this act divorce is given only after completion of one year from

the marriage date.

Dissolution Of Hindu Marriage Act (1955)

It amends and codifies the laws relating to adoption and maintenance among Hindus.

- Any Hindu male or female who is major or single can adopt Hindu children below the age of 15 years.
- A married female cannot adopt
- A married male can adopt with the consent of his wife
- If the adopter and adoptee are of different sexes, there should be an age difference of 21 years between the two
- Section 9 enjoins the court to consider the wishes of the child to be adopted before granting permission

A Muslim marriage is void only if a prohibited relationship is discovered. A Muslim man can divorce his wife without going to court. Muslim women can divorce her husband if he has earlier delegated such powers to her or she pays him some consideration.

The Dissolution Of Muslim Marriage Act (1939)

A women married under Muslim law can obtain a decree for dissolution of marriage on any one or more of the following grounds.

- Whereabouts of husband not known for 4 years.
- Husband has neglected/not provided for maintenance for 2 years.
- Husband has been sentenced to imprisonment for a period of 7 years or upward.
- Husband has failed to perform within reasonable cause, marital obligations for 3 years.
- Husband was impotent at the time of marriage and continues to be so.
- Husband is insane/leprous/suffering from virulent venereal disease.
- If she was married before 15 years and repudiated it before 18 years, provided that the marriage was not consummated.

Christian Marriage Act 1872

- It allows marriage with a non-Christian
- The boy should be over 21 years, the girl over 18 years.

Counselling

Concept

- Many marital problems arise from the failure and one or both to line up to the expectations of the other. New role expectations arise in a changing social setting and present demands which many husbands and wives are unable to fulfill.
- Modern society is: faced with the necessity of strengthening marital roles and making it possible for men and women to play them more effectively.
- Husbands and wives are unhappy because of their inability to play the stereotyped roles.

Nature of Marriage Counseling

- Marriage counseling is a form of guided interaction between spouses either individually or together and a person who is professionally qualified to give information and or advice concerning the performance of marital roles.
- Part of Marriage Counseling is remedial, in that it arises after the partners have experienced frustrations, incompatibility or unsatisfaction role functioning.
- The other part of Marriage counseling is preventive or educational, is that they involve couples who seek premarital advice concerning their own personalities or the general problem of marriage.
- A functional definition of Marriage counseling has been proposed by a noted psychiatrist. It is a form of short – term psycho therapy dealing with interpersonal relationship in which problems relating to marriage are the central factors.
- It tries to help one or both spouses to define his/her roles and there by make a more satisfactory adjustment to marriage.
- Improvement of interpersonal interaction is the ultimate aim Marriage counseling in this context.

- Different approaches to Marital counseling are currently practiced, depending upon the training and orientation of the counselors.
- Some counselors are doctors of medicine and concentrate on matters like genetic qualities of spouses their physical difficulties/deficiencies and advice on contraception.
- Other counselors have psychiatric training in addition to basic medical training and their interests gravitate to problems of neurotic conflict.
- Still others are clinical psychologists, who tend to be concerned with individuals as individuals – with their intellectual capacities, temperaments and emotional responses.
- The sociological approaches to Marriage counseling are increasingly directed to role interaction analysis. Sociologists deal with marriage as a small social system and his primary interest rents with the functioning and marital roles.

Need and Importance of Marriage Counselling

The concept of MC services entered India only recently in olden times people in trouble used to go to their parents, teachers relatives or trusted friends for comfort. New youth feel older generations are in capable of understanding their difficulties and their solutions not applicable to current situations. Hence, every effort until be made in educating and counseling youth to meet life adequate resources.

The family must exercise its functions as a training ground for personality adjustments and the schools must educate the emotions as well as the intellect. The newly married couples have to adjust themselves to one another and with-in-law on both sides.

Disagreements might arise due to one's right or use of fly income, individual's roles, cold or unsympathetic attitude constant lack or inadequacy of love for each other, insulting before other etc.

1. All these situations need proper adjustment between the 2 partners
2. Higher education better employment and late marriages of women, made them not to compromise with partners and in-laws.
3. The married couple also needs knowledge about – parental attitudes, fly life education and emotions, health education etc.
4. Hence Marriage Counseling services are essential to create harmony and mutual understanding by removing conflicts and dissatisfaction.

Types of Marriage Counseling

1. Premarital counseling: It is designed to meet the needs of young about to be married, it deals with –

- To increase the awareness levels and function of individual.
- To increase the communication skills and self esteem.
- To develop positive attitude towards life.

Premarital counseling is concerned with

4. General education of youth

1. Education in personal, emotional development and human relations
2. Education in domestic or Home Science
3. Sex education

In premarital counseling the clients are usually young educated, open minded and progressive persons, who are highly motivated to make their marriage work. Their questions may range from advises on mixed marriages to information on techniques of contraception.

5. Premarital Instruction: General preparation for marriage in specific situation such as physiology and sex, adjustment in marriage and with-in-laws ethical laws, laws relating to marriage, medical exam before marriage etc.

Marital and Family Counseling
Meant to meet the needs of married couples who face problems in family relationship which they find it's their inability to solve without expert guidance.

Counseling deals with -

- Dynamics of family life, responsibilities and roles of individual members in family
- Participation of partners in social, psychic and spiritual life.
- Adjustment and adaptability of spouses.
- Health education, economics of family and future planning of family.

Counseling Procedures

The Role of the Counselor:
The role of the counselor is to assist the person in gaining insight into his problem and in making his own decisions. In dealing with the problem, the counselor emphasize either on Childhood personality of the individual

inner feelings and behavior.

Characteristics of Counselor:

- A counselor must be familiar with the entire personality of his client – physiological functions, emotional maturity, personality make up, responsibilities and resources at home, work and society.
- Then only he can recognize and evaluate the actual problem understand the real causes and choose the proper means
- In order to be successful, the marriage counselor must process the following qualities.
- He/she should be married enough to understand the problems of women and men should have solved his/her problems first.
- The counselor should have flexible attitude should maintain confidentiality and should not disclose clients secrets to others.
- He should always concentrate on marriage and marital harmony and not on any one of the partners.
- He should try to go to the root cause and should deal the problems objectively.
- He/She should avoid being a perfectionist.
- He should have patience and persistence to listen to the client should not be aggressive
- The counselor should not feel that he is in a position of power.
- He should possess the power of concession (not accepting the words by its Values)
- He should counsel the client.

When the interview come to an end, two general conclusions are possible

First the spouse may have gained enough insight into their interpersonal relationships to work out their own adjustment. At the other extreme, the spouse may conclude that their mal adjustments are so deep seated that they can never solve their marital problems. In the later case, they may decide to get a divorce.

The junction of the marriage counselor, is thus in effect to communicate with married couples in order to clarify their role expectations and reconcile them with their role performance.

In this sense, counseling is the process “where by professional skills and experience, within the context of an understanding and accepting face to face relationship, are brought to the assistance of spouses as they explore, evaluate, and clarify feeling and issues as they seek to communicate verbally and emotionally and as they learn to choose course of action

which will lead to source resolution of their problems. This process may either lead to more satisfying marital interaction or it may crystallize a decision to dissolve the marriage.