

Meaning and Types:

Like family, marriage is another important social institution. Marriage and family are two aspects of the same social reality i.e. the bio-psychic and social instincts of man. Marriage is one of the most ancient, important, universal and indispensable social institution which has been in existence since the inception of human civilization.

As an institution marriage is designed to satisfy the biological needs especially the sexual needs of the individual in a legal, customary, culturally defined and socially approved manner. Unilateral descent rule Cognative non-unilineal

It also admits men and women to family life and fixes certain rights and duties in respect of children born of their union. As a stable social institution it binds two opposite sexes and allows them to live as husband and wife. It also confers on them social legitimation to have sexual relations and have children.

The institutionalized form of sex relations is called marriage. It is closely associated with the institution of family and women to family.

But the term marriage or vivaha is a combination of two terms i.e. 'Vi' and 'Vaha' which means the ceremony of carrying away the bride to the house of bridegroom. In some society it is considered as a religious sacrament whereas in other society it is a social contract.

Definition of Marriage:

Different scholars and sociologists have tried to define it. They differ from each other.

(1) According to Encyclopedia Britannica, "Marriage is a physical, legal and moral union between man and woman in complete community life for the establishment of a family."

(2) According to Malinowski, "Marriage is a contract for the production and maintenance of children."

(3) Edward Westermarck in his famous book 'History of human marriage' defined, "Marriage is a relation of one or more men to one or more women which is recognized by customs or law and involves certain rights and duties both in case of parties entering into the union and in the case of children born of it."

(4) According to H.M. Johnson, "Marriage is a stable relationship in which a man and a woman are socially permitted without loss of standing in community to have children."

(5) According to Lowie, "Marriage is a relatively permanent bond between permissible mates."

(6) According to Horton and Hunt, "Marriage is the approved social pattern whereby two or more persons establish a family."

(7) According to Hoebel, "The complexes of social norms that define and Control the relations of a mated pair to each other their kinsmen, their offspring and their society at large.

Characteristics of Marriage:

Marriage may have the following characteristics.

(1) Marriage is a universal social institution. It is found in almost all societies and at all stages of development.

(2) Marriage is a permanent bond between husband and wife. It is designed to fulfill the social, psychological, biological and religious aims.

(3) Marriage is a specific relationship between two individuals of opposite sex and based on mutual rights and obligations. Relationship is enduring.

(4) Marriage requires social approval. The relationship between men and women must have social approval. Without which marriage is not valid.

(5) Marriage establishes family. Family helps in providing facilities for the procreation and upbringing of children.

(6) Marriage creates mutual obligations between husband and wife. The couple fulfill their mutual obligations on the basis of customs or rules.

(7) Marriage is always associated with some civil and religious ceremony. This social and religious ceremony provides validity to marriage. Though modern marriage performed in courts still it requires certain religious or customary practices.

(8) Marriage regulates sex relationship according to prescribed customs and laws.

(9) Marriage has certain symbols like ring, vermilion, special cloths, special sign before the house etc.

Types of Marriage:

As a universal social institution marriage is found to exist in all societies and at all stages of development. Types or forms of marriage varies from society to society. Types or forms of marriage in different communities, societies and cultural groups differ according to their customs, practices and systems of thought. In some societies marriage is a religious sacrament whereas in others it is a social contract. However, there are several types of marriage which is classified on different basis.

(A) On the basis of number of mates:

On the basis of number of mates marriage may be classified into three types such as Monogamy, Polygamy and Endogamy or group marriage. This can be known from the following

diagram.

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(1) Monogamy:

Monogamy is an ideal, widespread and rational type of marriage. It is found in all civilized societies. Monogamy refers to a marriage of one man with one woman at a time. This type of marriage is normally unbreakable in nature. It continues till death. Today the principle of monogamy i.e. one husband and one wife is practised and emphasised throughout the world. Monogamy is of two types such as serial Monogamy and non-serial Monogamy.

(i) Serial Monogamy:

In serial Monogamous marriage the possibility of remarriage exists in case of divorce or death. In spite of his remarriage he remains to be monogamous.

(ii) Non-serial Monogamy:

In case of non-serial monogamy the question of remarriage does not arise by either of the couple. Here a spouse has the same single spouse throughout his life.

However, Monogamy is an ideal or best form of marriage because of its different advantages which are as follows:

- (1) It is suitable for all society and for all levels of people.
- (2) It provides better sex satisfaction to both husband and wife.
- (3) It promotes better understanding between the spouse.
- (4) It minimizes jealousy, hatred and quarrels in the family.
- (5) It upholds gender equality and provides equal status to men and women.
- (6) It provides stable sex-life and stable family life.
- (7) Children are taken proper care by parents.
- (8) It facilitates easy rules of inheritance and succession.

Because of the above advantages Monogamy is considered as the best form of marriage and is practiced everywhere. The only disadvantages of Monogamy is divorce which is resulted due to

the monogamous boredom.

(2) Polygamy:

Polygamy is a type of marriage in which there is plurality of partners. It allows a man to marry more than one woman or a woman to marry more than one man at a time. Polygamy is of three types such as polygamy, polyandry and endogamy or group marriage.

(i) Polygamy:

Polygamy is a type of marriage in which a man marries more than one wife at a time. In this type of marriage each wife has her separate household and the husband visits them in turn. It was a preferred form of marriage in ancient Indian society. But now it was not in practice among majority of population.

But it is now found among few tribal's such as Naga, Gond and Baiga. Economic and political cause was mainly responsible for polygamy. Besides man's taste for variety, enforced celibacy, Barrenness of women more women population etc. are some of the cause of polygamy. Polygamy is further divided into two types such as Sororal polygyny and non- sororal polygyny.

(a) Sororal Polygamy:

Sororal polygamy is often called as surrogate. The term surrogate comes from the Latin word 'soror' which means sister. Accordingly it refers to a marriage practice in which a man marries the sisters of his wife at a time or after the death of his wife.

(b) Non-sororal Polygamy:

It is just opposite of the sororal polygamy, when a man marries several women at a time who are not necessarily sister to each other it is known as non-sororal polygamy.

(ii) Polyandry:

Polyandry is a very rare type of marriage in present day. In this type of marriage a woman marries several men at a time. In the words of K.M. Kapadia, "Polyandry is a form of union in which a woman has more than one husband at a time or in which brothers share a wife or wives in common. At present it is found among some of the tribes like toda, khasi and nayars. Polyandry is divided into two types such as fraternal polyandry and non-fraternal polyandry.

(a) Fraternal Polyandry:

When several brothers share a common wife it is called as fraternal polyandry. Draupadi's marriage to Pandabs is fine example of fraternal polyandry. The determination of father is

associated with some rituals. At present time this type of marriage is practised by some tribals like toda and khasi.

(b) Non-fraternal Polyandry:

It is just opposite of fraternal polyandry. In this type of marriage husbands of a woman is not necessarily brother to each other. This type of marriage is found among the Nayars of Kerala, Wife goes to spend some time with each of her husband. So long as a woman lives with one of her husbands, the others have no claim on her. This mainly happens due to scarcity of women.

(iii) Endogamy or Group Marriage:

Endogamy is otherwise known as group marriage. In this type of marriage a group of men marry a group of women at a time. Every woman is the wife of every man belonging to the particular groups. Sociologist, like Dr. Rivers call it as a kind of sexual communism. This type of marriage is found among some tribes of New Guinea and Africa,

(B) On the basis of choice of mate or on the basis of rules of mate selection:

Marriage may be divided into two types i.e. endogamous and exogamous marriages on the basis of choice of mate or on the basis of the rules of choice of mate. Endogamy is divided into four sub types such as caste, sub-caste, varna and tribal endogamy. Similarly exogamous marriage may be divided into four sub-types such as Gotra, Pravar, Sapinda and village exogamy. All this can be presented in the following diagram.

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(1) Endogamy or endogamous marriage:

Endogamy or endogamous marriage refers to the marriage within one's own group such as within one's own caste, sub-caste, varna and tribe. In other words there are several types of endogamous marriage such as caste endogamy, sub-caste endogamy, varna endogamy and tribal endogamy.

(a) Caste endogamy:

Caste endogamy is a type of endogamous marriage in which marriage takes place within one's own caste. In a caste based society endogamy is strictly followed. Members of each caste marry within its own caste group.

(b) Sub-caste endogamy:

It is another type of endogamous marriage. In a caste based society each caste is divided into many sub-castes. Like caste each sub-caste is also an endogamous unit. In sub-caste

endogamy marriage takes place within one's sub-caste only.

(c) Varna endogamy:

Varna endogamy is another type of endogamous marriage. In the traditional Indian Society we found the existence of four varnas such as Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra. In varna endogamy the choice of mate is restricted to one's own varna only.

(d) Tribal endogamy:

Tribe is a territorial group. Tribal endogamy is a type of endogamous married in which the choice of mate is restricted to one's own tribal group. Like caste tribe is also an endogamous unit.

(ii) Exogamy or Exogamous marriage:

It is just opposite to the endogamy or endogamous marriage system. It refers to a system of marriage in which an individual has to marry outside one's own group such as gotra, pravara, sapinda or village. This is a sound marriage system which leads to the creation of healthy and intelligent children. However there are several forms of exogamy such as:

(a) Gotra exogamy:

Gotra refers to clan. Members of a particular gotra or clan supposed to have close blood relation among themselves. Hence according to gotra exogamy one has to marry outside one's own gotra.

(b) Pravara exogamy:

Pravara means siblings. People originating from a common saint are said to belong a particular Pravara. According to Pravara exogamy one has to marry outside one's own pravara. Marriage within pravara is forbidden.

(c) Sapinda exogamy:

Sapinda means-lineage. People belonging to five generations from father side and three or seven generation from mother side are known as sapindas. They believed to belong a particular pinda. Hence according to sapinda exogamy marriage within one's own sapinda is forbidden. They are supposed to marry outside one's own sapnida.

(d) Village exogamy:

According to this principle marriage within one's own village is forbidden each and every society

prescribes certain rules relating to marriage. Some societies put several restrictions on marriage among kins whereas some other societies allows marriage between a limited number of kins.

Hence in those societies marriage is sanctioned on the basis of preference or priority. Accordingly socially sanctioned marriage among kins is known as preferential marriage. In other words on the basis of preference marriage may be divided into four types such as cross-cousin marriage, parallel cousin marriage, levirate and surrogate.

(i) Cross-cousin marriage:

When marriage takes place between one's mother's brother's daughter/son with father's sister's son/daughter we called it as cross cousin marriage. The marriage of Abhimanyu with Sashikala is an example of this cross-cousin type of marriage. This type of marriage supposed to be practised in some part of Orissa, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra etc. This type of marriage occur to avoid payment of high bride price and to maintain one's family property.

(ii) Parallel Cousin marriage:

When marriage takes place between the children of either two sisters or two brothers it is known as parallel cousin marriage. This type of marriage is mostly found among Muslims.

(iii) Levirate:

It is otherwise known as 'Devar Vivaha'. When a woman marries her husband's brother after the death of her husband it is known as levirate. This type of marriage is found among some tribes like the Gond, the Munda or the Santal the oran and the Toda etc

(iv) Sororate:

It is otherwise known as 'Sali Vivah'. When a man marries his wife's sister after the death of his wife or even when the wife is alive it is called as sororate. This type of marriage is found among some tribes like the Kharia and the Gond.

(E) Anuloma or Pratiloma:

Sociologist have classified marriage into Anuloma or Pratiloma.

(i) Anuloma marriage or Hypergamy:

When a man of higher caste or varna marries a woman of lower caste or varna it is called as Anuloma or Hypergamy marriage. In traditional Indian society hypergamy is known as Anuloma. This was in practice among the nobles in the past. In Bengal it was found in the form of Kulinism.

(ii) Pratiloma marriage or Hypogamy:

Pratiloma or hypogamy marriage is just opposite of Anuloma or hypergamy. When a man of lower caste or status marries a woman of higher caste or status it is known as pratiloma or hypogamy marriage. This is not an approved form of marriage. Ancient Hindu law give a man a lower caste or status marries a woman of higher caste or status it is known as pratiloma or hypogamy marriage. This is not an approved form of marriage. Ancient Hindu law give Manu denounced Pratiloma is still it practice among the people.