

MARRIAGE

MARRIAGE: DEFINITION AND UNIVERSALITY

Anthropologists have been trying to provide a universal definition for the institution of marriage. Early definitions emphasize on the various criteria that are required to constitute a marriage.

According to Westermarck "Marriage is a ritually recognized union between a man and woman, that the spouses live together, and that couple have recognized mutual sexual rights."

This definition cannot be a universal definition i.e. it cannot be applied to all the societies because there are some societies.

- The contract marriages without ritual ceremonies.
- Where the couple do not live under the same roof
- In which spouse are permitted to have extra marital sex.

According to Murdock, "Marriage is a universal institution that involves residential cohabitation, economic cooperation and formation of the nuclear family".

Even this definition cannot be applied universally as in cases like Nayers of Kerala, couples do not live under same roof, there is no long economic cooperation between couple and most important is the absence of the nuclear family structure.

Seligman explain marriage as, "a union between a man and a woman such that the children born to the woman are recognized as legitimate offspring of both the parents".

It is not a satisfactory definition as according to this **polygamy and polyandry (as in Khasa and Todas)** cannot be recognized as marriages.

Woman marriage existing in Nuer of Africa studied by Evans Pritchard. Here woman marriages take place between same sexes. In this type of marriage system, a woman who lost her husband without a male child assumes the role of her late husband and marries another woman. She procures the services of a male kinsman or a friend to beget children through the woman she married. The children born are treated as the children begotten by the widow's deceased husband.

Kathleen Gough defines marriages as a "relationship established between a woman and one or more other persons, which provides that a child born to the woman under the circumstances not prohibited by the rules of relationship is accorded full birth status rights, common to normal members of his society or the social stratum".

This definition does not cover some of the societies like the Azande of Sudan which allow a form of marriage based on homosexuality.

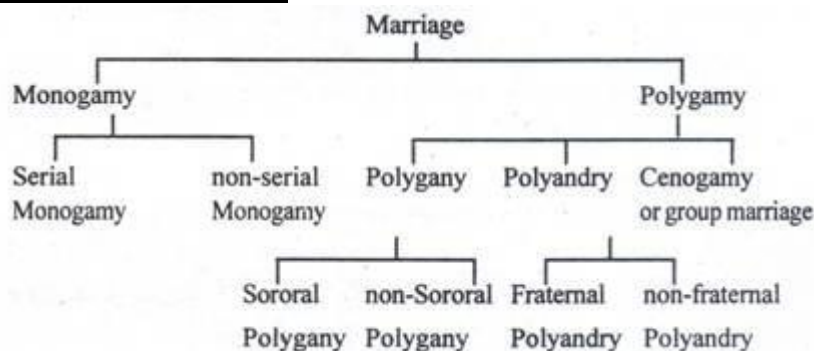
William N Stephen defines marriage as a "socially legitimate sexual union, began with public pronouncement, undertaken with the idea of permanence, assumed with more or less explicit marriage contract which spells out reciprocal economic obligation between the spouses and future children".

This definition also lacks universal appeal as it ignores many social customs found in the world. For eg. Marriages sometime do not begin with public pronouncement. Marriage at many place is not permanent- Nayers

By this discussion it is very clear that a universal definition to the institution of marriage cannot be successfully provided. The problem is further aggravated also because there are some societies, where the sexual rights, economic responsibilities and the socialization of the children are not derived from

the relationship resulting from marriage but are part of the rights and duties of groups other than of husband wife.

Types of Marriages



Monogamy:

It is a form of marriage when a single man marries a single woman or vice-versa and they settle down from a family. “Mono” means single and “Gamous” means marriage. Anthropologist who took evolutionary approach to the study of culture once believed that monogamy like monotheism is a sign of progress and civilization. Whether a society permits one marriage partner or a number partners is in no way related to that society’s level of development. Monogamy occurs worldwide. Economic and population factors in the society tend to limit the number of spouses. In most of the cases, only the most powerful and wealthy man can afford to have more than one wife. In some cases there simply are not enough women to allow for two or more wives to every man.

Similarly, prescribed or preferential forms of marriages forms of mating limits the number of possible marital linkages, for example Khasi, Santhal and Khadars. There are instances of high bride prices and dowry which limits the number of spouses or forces only monogamy.

Monogamy is a response to balance sex ratio. As it also favors almost everyone a chance to have at least one spouse and also it provides effective sexual gratification for women and men. It also facilitates relatively easy rules of inheritance, succession and membership in kin group. Monogamy helps to maintain effective child rearing procedure and augment close emotional ties between parents and children. This form of marriage is vibrant in Indian Hindu Society.

Monogamy can be further understood as:

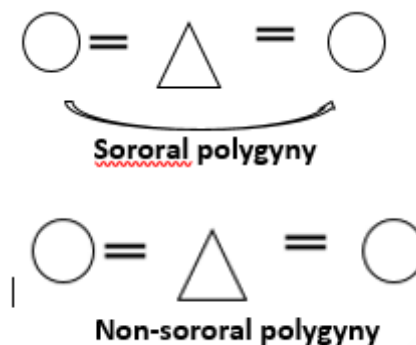
i) **Serial Monogamy:** It is a sub-form of monogamy where a man gets married to another woman after the death of the first wife or after divorce. The form of monogamy characterizing the western society is termed as serial monogamy. This consists of a pattern of marriage, divorce and another marriage. Thus, although an individual is married to only one person at a time, over a number of years he or she may have had a number of spouses. It is prevalent in parts of the world (including Europe and North America), where divorce rates are high and people who have been divorced remarry.

ii) **Non – Serial Monogamy:** It is a sub-form of monogamy where a man gets married to a woman and stays with each other till he or she dies. There is no provision for second marriage.

Polygamy:

Polygamy is marriage to more than one person and it is fairly widespread all over the world. Even in tribal India polygamy is widespread. Polygamy is of two types- **Polygyny and Polyandry.**

Polygyny- is the marriage of a man to several women. It is found in Baigas, Nagas, Gonds etc.



Why Polygyny?

One theory is that polygyny will be permitted in societies that have a long post-partum sex taboo. In these societies, a couple must abstain from intercourse until their child is at least a year old. By observing long post-partum sex taboo, and thereby ensuring that her children are widely spaced, a woman can nurse each child longer. If a child gets protein from mother's milk during its first few years, the likelihood of contracting Kwashiorkor may be greatly reduced.

Another explanation of polygyny is that it is a response to an excess of women over men. Such an imbalanced sex ratio may occur because of prevalence of warfare in a society. Because men generally die in warfare polygyny might be a way for providing spouses for surplus women.

Polygyny is particularly common in traditional food producing societies that support themselves by herding grazing animals or growing crops and where women do the bulk of cultivation. Under these conditions, women are valued both as workers and as child bearers. Because the labour of wives in polygynous households generates wealth and little support is required from husbands, the wives have a strong bargaining position within the household. Often, they have considerable freedom of movement and some economic independence from the sale of crafts or crops. Wealth-generating polygyny is found in its fullest elaboration in parts of sub-Saharan Africa and south-western Asia, though it is known elsewhere as well.

By contrast, in societies where men are more heavily involved in productive work, generally only a small minority of marriages are polygynous. Under these circumstances women are more dependent on men for support, so they are valued as child bearers more than for the work they do. This is commonly the case in pastoral nomadic societies where men are the primary owners and tenders of livestock. This makes women especially vulnerable if they prove incapable of bearing children, which is one reason a man may seek another wife.

Another reason for a man to take on secondary wives is to demonstrate his high position in society. But where men do most of the productive work, they must work extremely hard to support more than one wife, and few actually do so. Usually, it is the exceptional hunter or male shaman ("medicine man") in a food-foraging society or a particularly wealthy man in a horticultural, agricultural, or pastoral society who is most apt to practice polygyny. When he does, it is usually of the *sororal* type, with the co-wives being sisters. Having lived their lives together before marriage, the sisters continue to do so with their husband, instead of occupying separate dwellings of their own.

The custom of men marrying later than women promotes polygyny. Among the Kanuri people of Bornu, Nigeria, men got married between the ages of 18 and 30; women, between 12 and 14 (Cohen 1967). The age difference between spouses meant that there were more widows than widowers. Most of the widows remarried, some in polygynous unions. Among the Kanuri of Bornu and in other

polygynous societies, widows made up a large number of the women involved in plural marriages (Hart, Pilling, and Goodale 1988).

In many societies, including the Kanuri, the number of wives is an indicator of a man's household productivity, prestige, and social position. The more wives, the more workers. Increased productivity means more wealth. This wealth in turn attracts additional wives to the household. Wealth and wives bring greater prestige to the household and its head.

If a plural marriage is to work, there needs to be some agreement among the existing spouses when another one is to be added, especially if they are to share the same household. In certain societies, the first wife requests a second wife to help with household chores. The second wife's status is lower than that of the first; they are senior and junior wives. The senior wife sometimes chooses the junior one from among her close kinswomen. Among the Betsileo of Madagascar, the different wives always lived in different villages. A man's first and senior wife, called "Big Wife," lived in the village where he cultivated his best rice field and spent most of his time. High-status men with several rice fields and multiple wives had households near each field. They spent most of their time with the senior wife but visited the others throughout the year.

Plural wives can play important political roles in nonindustrial states. The king of the Merina, a society with more than one million people in the highlands of Madagascar, had palaces for each of his 12 wives in different provinces. He stayed with them when he travelled through the kingdom. They were his local agents, overseeing and reporting on provincial matters. The king of Buganda, the major precolonial state of Uganda, took hundreds of wives, representing all the clans in his nation. Everyone in the kingdom became the king's in-law, and all the clans had a chance to provide the next ruler. This was a way of giving the common people a stake in the government.

Polyandry:

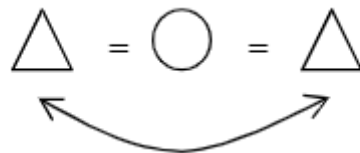
Polyandry is the marriage of one woman to many men. Polyandry is comparatively restricted in its distribution. It is found among the Todas, the Kota, the Khasa and Ladakhi Boto. When the husbands are brothers it is called **fraternal polyandry**; if they are not brothers it is called **non-fraternal polyandry**. Some Tibetans, Todas of Nilgiri and Sinhalese of Sri Lanka have practiced fraternal polyandry. Among Tibetans who practice fraternal polyandry biological paternity seems to be of no particular concern; there is no attempt to link children biologically to a particular brother, and all children are treated as same.

One possible explanation of polyandry is **shortage of women**. The Toda practiced female infanticide; the Marquesan of Polynesia too practiced female infanticide due to food shortages and hence polyandry is prevalent among them.

Another possible explanation of polyandry is that it is an **adaptive response to severely limited resources like land**. Melvyn Goldstein studied Tibetans who live in North-west corner of Nepal, above 12000 ft. Cultivable land is extremely scarce there. The people say they practice fraternal polyandry in order to prevent division of family's farm and animals. Although not recognized by Tibetans, polyandry also minimizes population growth. 30% of women don't marry and hence do not reproduce. Thus it minimizes the mouth to feed.

Polyandry in India

Earliest example in India is Draupadi of Mahabharata. Polyandry is mainly prevalent in Kinnaur region of Himachal Pradesh and also in Khasa of Uttarakhand. They claim themselves to be descendant of Pandavas and hence practice polyandry.



Fraternal Polyandry



Non Fraternal Polyandry

Toda of Nilgiri hills practice Polyandry. A Toda woman when married was automatically married to her husband's brother. When the wife became pregnant one husband would ceremonially give a bow and arrow to the wife, and would be the father of that child. When the next child arrives, another husband would perform the ceremony and become father.

Group Marriages:

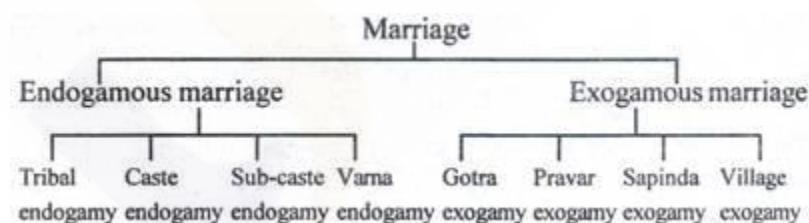
In this type of marriage a group of men marry a group of women at a time. Every woman is the wife of every man belonging to the particular groups. Sociologist, like Dr. Rivers call it as a kind of **sexual communism**. This type of marriage is found among some tribes of New Guinea and Africa. Group marriages implies a strong commitment to be faithful- by only having sex within the group and stay in together long term. Family members may be open to taking on new partners, but only if all members of family agree to accept new person as a partner.

Among ancient Hawaiians-the relationship Punaluan involved the fact that brothers among with their wives were inclined to possess each other in common.

Laws of Marriage

1. Endogamy
2. Exogamy
3. Hypergamy
4. Hypogamy
5. Incest taboo

Endogamy and Exogamy:



1. Endogamy

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. Lewis defines endogamy as "The rule that requires a person to marry within a specific social group of which he is a member". 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.

Endogamy is followed in order to maintain the purity of the group or to prevent intermixture of biological traits. Factors, such as the policy of separation, virtual geographic separation of people, the desire to keep wealth within the group, religious, racial and cultural differences, sense of superiority or inferiority, etc., are said to be the causes of endogamy.

Endogamy as a rule of marriage has its own advantages. It contributes to the group unity and solidarity. It keeps women happier within their group. It helps to preserve the property within the group. It also safeguards the purity of the group. Finally, it helps to keep under secret the strength and weakness and also the professional secrets of-the group.

Endogamy has its, disadvantages, (i) By dividing the society into small endogamous units, it strikes at national unity, (ii) By limiting the choice of life-partners, it often gives scope for evil practices such as polygyny, dowry system, bride price, etc. (iii) It may also make its followers to develop hatred and contempt for other groups, (iv) It is also said that close-in-breeding caused by endogamy may affect the biological potentiality of the offspring.

2. Exogamy:

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 sapinda.

(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.

In every society, there are both endo and exo groups. The Todas in India for example, have a society which is divided into 2 endogamous moieties each with separate economic and ritual functions. Each of these endogamous moieties is having a number of clans which are exogamous. A woman should marry a man from other clan in the same moiety.

It has often been theorized that exogamy developed as an extension of incest taboo, covering various relatives. It is however more than a mere extension of incest taboo and it has its own advantages. Exogamy results in bringing more families together. Moreover, it brings some kind of group survival. Early anthropologists suggested that our ancestors discovered the advantage of intermarriage as a means of creating bonds of friendship. French anthropologist Claude Lévi Strauss elaborated on this idea. He saw exogamy as a form of intergroup social exchange in which "wife giving" and "wife-taking" (or, as happens in communities with female-headed households, husband-giving and husband-taking) created social networks and alliances between distinct communities. By widening the human network, a larger number of people could pool natural resources and cultural information, including technology and other useful knowledge.

Building on the theory advanced by Lévi-Strauss, other anthropologists have proposed that exogamy is an important means of creating and maintaining political alliances and promoting trade between groups, thereby ensuring mutual protection and access to needed goods and resources not otherwise available. Forging wider kinship networks, exogamy also functions to integrate distinctive groups and thus potentially reduces violent conflict.

According to **Herbert Risley** the desire to have variety in life has influenced people to seek ties with strangers and this has led to exogamy.

According to **Audrey Richards**, there was a constant scarcity of food in the communities of the hunters gatherers, a situation that has compelled them into practice of female infanticide. This practice led to scarcity of women, which in turn led to a practice of getting women from outside the bands through bride capture.

Westermarck has provided yet another interpretation for exogamy. He says familiarity brings contempt.

Hypergamy and Hypogamy:

Under the kind of social structure that caste has given rise to in India, there are certain restrictions in the form of limits beyond which a man and a woman cannot go in the choice of a spouse; of course, he or she must invariably marry outside of his or her own gotra. Just as in modern times, if a millionaire daughter, who chooses to marry a pauper who will accept no doles from his father-in-law, would lose her economic status, likewise, under the caste system, if a high caste woman marries a low caste man she loses caste status which is indicative of a degree of ritual purity. Up to marriage a daughter shares her father's caste status and after marriage her husband's. but a man himself does not lose caste status by marrying a low-caste woman, though his offspring would suffer from a partial lowering from their father's caste status. Therefore, to prevent a woman from losing caste and becoming ritually

impure, Manu and other ancient law-givers prescribes **hypergamous** marriage under which a man can marry from his own caste or from those below, but a woman can marry only in her caste or above.

Hypogamy is marriage of a woman to a man from a lower caste which is not permitted in Hindu society.

Thus for men, the following marriages are permissible:

Brahmin- Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra

Kshatriya-Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra

Vaishya- Vaishya, Shudra

Shudra- Shudra

Likewise, for women:

Shudra- Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra

Vaishya- Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya

Kshatriya- Brahmin, Kshatriya

Brahmin- Brahmin

The social consequences of such a practice are not only obvious but have also been borne out by historical facts. Thus, in the later decades of last century, Brahmin girls either to pay huge dowries or choose between polygyny and spinsterhood. Among the Kulin Brahmins of Bengal, young men took to marrying several wives and would visit them at their parents houses; otherwise, in the absence of financial solvency, which would solve the problem, spinsterhood was the only other alternative. Hence, Brahmins have traditionally despised female children and a daughter has become a synonym for curse and the cause of her parents' discomfort and humiliation.

Hypergamy is a system of marriage where a man gets his daughter married to a person of the same or higher social and economic status. This type of system is found in the stratified societies like Hindus, wherein it is practiced to retain the social status and prestige of the group. In Hindu society this is known as **Anuloma**.

Hypogamy is just the opposite of Hypergamy. Here, a man gets his daughter married to a man of either same or lower social and economic status than his. In Hindu society this is known as **Pratiloma**.

Incest Taboo:

Incest taboo is the prohibition of sexual contact between certain close relatives. But, what is defined as "close" is not the same in all cultures. Moreover, such definitions may be subject to change over time. While the scope and details of the taboo vary across cultures and time, almost all societies past and present strongly forbid sexual relations at least between parents and children and nearly always between siblings. In some societies the taboo extends to other close relatives, such as cousins, and even some relatives linked through marriage. Anthropologists have long been fascinated by the incest taboo and have proposed many explanations for its cross-cultural existence and variation.

Among the Yanomami of Venezuela and Brazil (Chagnon 1997), boys anticipate eventual marriage to a cross cousin by calling her "wife." They call their male cross cousins "brother-in-law." Yanomami girls call their male cross cousins "husband" and their female cross cousins "sister-in-law." Among the Yanomami, as in many societies with unilineal descent, sex with cross cousins is proper but sex with

parallel cousins is considered incestuous. A custom that is much rarer than cross-cousin marriage also illustrates that people define their kin, and thus incest, differently in different societies.

When unilineal descent is very strongly developed, the parent who does not belong to one's own descent group isn't considered a relative. Thus, with strict patrilineality, the mother is not a relative but a kind of in-law who has married a member of ego's group—ego's father. With strict matrilineality, the father isn't a relative, because he belongs to a different descent group.

Several explanations have been suggested for why the familial incest taboo is universal.

Childhood-Familiarity Theory (By Edward Westermarck)

The childhood-familiarity theory, suggested by Edward Westermarck, was given a wide hearing in the early 1920s. Westermarck argued that people who have been closely associated with each other since earliest childhood, such as siblings, are not sexually attracted to each other and would therefore avoid marriage with each other. This theory was rejected upon the subsequent discovery that some children were sexually interested in their parents and siblings. More recent studies have suggested, however, that there might be something to Westermarck's theory.

Even if it is likely that familiarity in childhood normally leads to sexual disinterest, we must ask why societies need to prohibit marriages that would voluntarily be avoided because of disinterest. And if familiarity breeds disinterest, what are we to make of couples who remain actively interested in each other sexually after years of marriage.

Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory (by Sigmund Freud)

Sigmund Freud proposed that the incest taboo is a reaction against unconscious, unacceptable desires. He suggested that the son is attracted to his mother (as the daughter is to her father) and as a result feels jealousy and hostility toward his father. But the son knows that these feelings cannot continue, for they might lead the father to retaliate against him; therefore, they must be renounced or repressed. Usually the unacceptable feelings are repressed and retreat into the unconscious. But the desire to possess the mother continues to exist in the unconscious, and, according to Freud, horror at the thought of incest is a reaction to, or a defense against, the forbidden unconscious impulse.

Freud's theory may account for the aversion felt toward parent-child incest, but it does not explain why society needs an explicit taboo, particularly on brother-sister incest.

Family-Disruption Theory (by Malinowski)

Sexual competition among family members would create so much rivalry and tension that the family could not function as an effective unit. Because the family must function effectively for society to survive, society has to curtail competition within the family. The familial incest taboo is thus imposed to keep the family intact.

But while this theory might explain why father-daughter and mother-son incest would need to be prohibited, why couldn't societies have a rule that brothers and sisters could marry when they were adults? Hypothetically, brother-sister incest would not disrupt the authority of the parents if the children were allowed to marry when mature. And brother-sister marriages did exist in ancient Egypt (Cleopatra married her brothers). The family-disruption theory, then, does not explain the origin of the incest taboo.

Cooperation Theory (by Tylor, Levi-Strauss)

The cooperation theory was proposed by the early anthropologist Edward B. Tylor and further elaborated by Leslie A. White and Claude Lévi-Strauss. It emphasizes the value of the incest taboo in

promoting cooperation among family groups and thus helping communities to survive. As Tylor saw it, certain operations necessary for the welfare of the community can be accomplished only by large numbers of people working together. To break down suspicion and hostility between family groups and make such cooperation possible, early humans developed the incest taboo to ensure that individuals would marry members of other families. The ties created by intermarriage would serve to hold the community together. Thus, Tylor explained the incest taboo as an answer to the choice “between marrying out and being killed out.”

Even if marriage outside the family promoted cooperation with other groups, why would it be necessary to prohibit all marriages within the family? Couldn't families have required some of their members to marry outside the family if they thought it necessary for survival, but permitted incestuous marriages when such alliances were not needed? Although the incest taboo might enhance cooperation between families, other customs can also promote alliances. The need for cooperation does not adequately explain why the incest taboo exists in all societies. In particular, the cooperation theory does not explain the sexual aspect of the incest taboo. Premarital and extramarital sex is common and tolerated in many societies. Incestuous sex could likewise theoretically be allowed, as long as children were required to marry outside the family.

Inbreeding Theory

One of the oldest explanations for the incest taboo is inbreeding theory. It focuses on the potentially damaging consequences of inbreeding or marrying within the family. People within the same family are likely to carry the same harmful recessive genes. Inbreeding, then, will tend to produce offspring who are more likely to die early of genetic disorders than are the offspring of unrelated spouses. Recent evidence suggests that inbreeding also tends to increase the likelihood of diseases that affect people later in life, such as heart disease and diabetes.

Genetic mutations occur frequently. Although many pose no harm to the individuals who carry a single recessive gene, matings between two people who carry the same gene often produce offspring with a harmful or lethal condition. Close blood relatives are much more likely than unrelated individuals to carry the same harmful recessive gene. If close relatives mate, their offspring have a higher probability than the offspring of non-relatives of inheriting the harmful trait.

Although most scholars acknowledge the harmful effects of inbreeding, some question whether people in former days would deliberately have invented or borrowed the incest taboo because they knew that inbreeding was biologically harmful. William Durham's cross-cultural survey suggests that they did. Ethnographers do not always report the perceived consequences of incest, but Durham found that biological harm to offspring was mentioned in 50 percent of ethnographic reports.

For example, **Raymond Firth reporting on the Tikopia**, who live on an island in the South Pacific, wrote: The idea is firmly held that unions of close kin bear with them their own doom, their **mara**. The idea [mara] essentially concerns barrenness. The peculiar barrenness of an incestuous union consists not in the absence of children, but in their illness or death, or some other mishap. The idea that the offspring of a marriage between near kin are weak and likely to die young is stoutly held by these natives and examples are adduced to prove it.

Durham concluded that if the harm of inbreeding was widely recognized, people may have deliberately invented or borrowed the incest taboo.

Marriage Regulations/Choice of Spouse

Marriage in every society is regulated by a set of rules. These rules render marriage a different phenomenon in every society for they influence the nature, structure and functions of marriage to a considerable extent.

There are 3 types of marriage regulations

- 1. Proscriptive Rules-** which directs whom a person should not marry- Incest Taboo
- 2. Prescriptive Rules-** which directs whom a person can marry- Endogamy and Exogamy
- 3. Preferential Rules-** they define whom an individual can prefer to marry

Proscriptive rules:

Proscriptive rules in every society are manifest in the form of incest taboos. Even when love, sex and economics are contributing factors, regulations specify whom one may or may not marry. Perhaps the most rigid regulation, found in all cultures is the Incest Taboo, which prohibits sexual intercourse or marriage between certain categories of kin.

The most universal aspect of the incest taboo is the prohibition of sexual intercourse or marriage between mother and son, father and daughter, and brother and sister. A few societies in the past, however did permit incest, mostly within the royal and aristocratic families, though generally it was forbidden to the rest of population. Best known example of allowed incest involves Cleopatra of Egypt who was married to 2 of her younger brothers at different times. The reason seems to have been partly religious- a member of the family of the pharaoh, who was considered a god, could not marry ordinary human- and partly economic, for marriage within family kept royal property undivided.

But no culture today permits incest in nuclear family. Several explanations are: **(Mentioned Above)**

Prescriptive Rules:

Endogamy and exogamy explained above.

Preferential Rules:

Under this rule a person is expected to prefer certain categories of relatives over others for marriage. The best example of preferential marriages are the **cousin marriages, levirate and sororate**.

1. Cousin Marriages:

There are 2 types of Cousin marriages a) **Cross Cousin** b) **Parallel Cousin**

Cross cousin are children of siblings of opposite sex; that is, a person's cross cousins are father's sister's children and mother's brother's children. Parallel cousins are children of sibling's same sex; a person's parallel cousins, are father's brother's children and mother's sister's children.

a) Cross Cousin:

It is a kind of marriage which means marriage of a man with either his mother's brother's daughter or his father's sister's daughter. This is popular and orthodox type of marriage among the tribal communities of India. But marriage with mother's brother's daughter is more common. This type of marriage is found to be prevalent among most of the tribes of North-East India such as **the Garos, Khasis, Kukis, Karbis, Nagas, Gonds, Oraons, Baigas and some other tribes of the rest of India practice this type of marriage**. Virtually all the tribes of North and Central Melanesia practice cross-cousin marriage. It is also practiced in Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Australia, Polynesia, South and East Africa, Siberia etc.

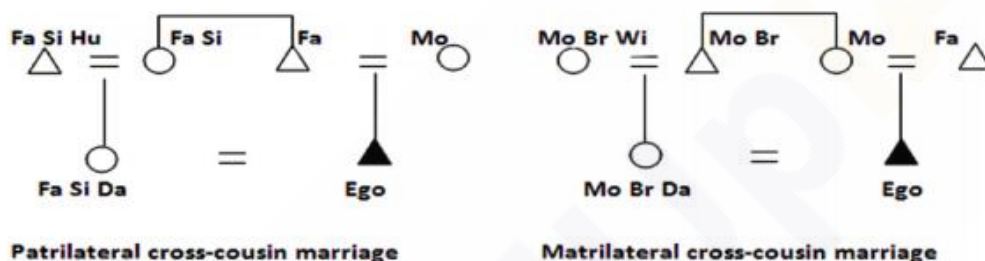
There are **two types of cross-cousin marriages: (a) Symmetrical and (b) Asymmetrical**.

When both mother's brother's daughter and father's sister's daughter are acceptable as a mate, it is called a Symmetrical cross-cousin marriage. It is also termed as bilateral cross-cousin marriage. In

Assam symmetrical cross-cousin marriages are prevalent. Similarly, the **Dravidians practice symmetrical cross-cousin marriage**.

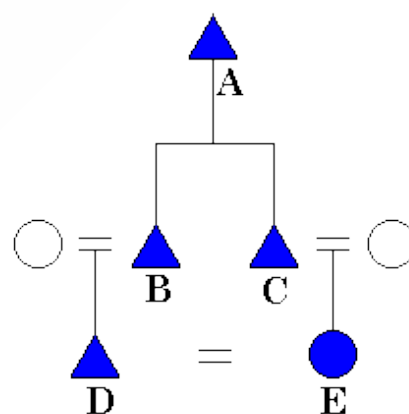
Asymmetrical cross-cousin marriage is the one according to which, marriage is preferred with either mother's brother's daughter or father's sister's daughter and not with both. That is if one marries mother's brother's daughter, he cannot marry father's sister's daughter and vice versa. Marriage with mother's brother's daughter is called Matrilateral cross-cousin marriage and that with father's sister's daughter is termed as patrilineal cross-cousin marriage. **The Trobriand Islanders of Melanesia permit marriage only with father's sister's daughter.** The Murngin of Australia and the Miwok of California practice asymmetrical cross-cousin marriage.

Cross-cousin marriages are often devised as a balance against the high bride price, the bargaining of price is often minimized among the familiar kin. Moreover, the amount lost in paying bride-price for getting a bride is regained in due course when a girl from his family has to be given in marriage to the same family. The simple implication here is that the bride-price paid for A's marriage would be returned to his family when a daughter would marry her mother's brother's son.



Parallel Cousin Marriages: It means the marriage of man with either his father's brother's daughter or mother's sister's daughter. It is prevalent among the **Semitic Arabs and also found amongst the Muslim of India. It is also practiced by the Riangs of Tripura.** It has been said that marriages with close relatives lead to fewer number of issues. Again, among the Bedouins of Arab, this type of marriage is very popular. The Bedouins is a nomadic people. **Such marriages help to keep their males within the band and so manpower is protected for fighting and other purpose of defense.**

Usually in a community, where cross-cousin marriage is allowed, parallel-cousin marriage is forbidden. A man maintains formal as well as respect full relationship with his female parallel-cousin. **Joking relationship prevails only among the cross-cousin. Significance of joking relationship lies in the possibility of marriage, whereas respectful relationship indicates rigidity of the incest taboo. In most of the societies of the world parallel-cousin marriage is prohibited.**



Patrilineal Parallel cousin marriage

2. Levirate (Latin-Levir means husband's brother): When a widow marries her brother-in-law (deceased husband's brother) this system of remarriage is known as Levirate. This is practised by the natives of Australia, the Biblical Hebrews, the Incas, the Muslims of India, the Kukis, the Lushais, the Nagas, the Karbis, the Vedas etc. In patrilineal societies, after the death of a man, his heir is his brother who not only succeeds to his status and responsibilities, also inherits all the possession of the deceased brother, including his wife or wives. **Levirate consists of two types, Junior Levirate and Senior Levirate.**

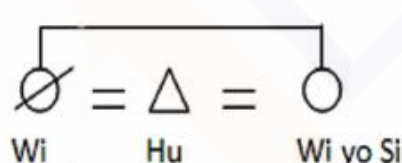
Junior Levirate: When the younger brother marries the wife of his deceased elder brother, it is known as junior levirate. This is found to have been practiced by Australians; the Biblical Hebrews, the Incas, the Muslims of India, the Kukis, the Lushais, the Nagas, the Karbis and the Veddas etc.

Senior Levirate: When marriage takes place between the widow and elder brother of the deceased husband, it is called Senior Levirate. The Bhumij of Orissa, the Hos, the Panions (south India), the Kirghiz, the Turks, the Mongloids etc. practice this system of marriage. The custom of Levirate is regarded more as a duty than as a right. The nearest relative is obliged to care for the widow left with children, land and herd. In some societies the children of the new couple are regarded socially as the children of the dead man.



3. Sororate: (Latin, soror means sister): In sororate a bereaved husband marries his deceased wife's sister. That is, a girl marries her deceased sister's husband. In some cases, it is mandatory and in others, it is performed on permissive basis. Like Levirate, **Sororate is also of two types: (i) Senior sororate and (ii) Junior sororate.**

Junior Sororate :



Senior Sororate :



Senior sororate: When the bereaved husband marries his deceased wife's elder sister, it is called Senior Sororate and it is very limited in its distribution.

Junior sororate: When the bereaved husband marries his deceased wife's younger sister, the system of marriage is called the Junior Sororate, which is prevalent in many parts of the world. Hindus, Muslims, and many tribes of India are found to practice sororate. It is practiced by virtually every tribe of North America outside the Pueblo area and is found widely distributed throughout the world.

Levirate and Sororate serve useful social functions. They provide the widow with most reliable social and economic support from their near relatives. Levirate ensures the continuity of line if a man dies

childless. Sororate ensure that a man who has handed over the bride price shall have a privilege he is entitled to, like the services of a wife.

Levirate and Sororate reestablish the bond of kinship that is threatened by the death of one of the spouses. Levirate also serves another very important function of the retention of rights and obligation within the group.

Functions of marriage

Biological Functions:

One of the most important functions of marriage is reproduction. Marriage forms a permanent mating pair. These pairs establish exclusive sexual rights over one another. It is through marriage that the society organizes sexual activities. In other words, the institution of marriages regulates and socially validates relative long term legitimate sexual relations between males and females. It is through reproduction that the society is perpetuated and this is the reason why marriage serves the biological function.

Marriage helps cultural groups to have a measure of control over population growth by providing proscribed rules about when it is appropriate to have children. Regulating sexual behavior helps to reduce sexual competition and negative effects associate with sexual competition. This does not mean that there are no socially approved sexual unions that take place outside of marriage. Early anthropological studies documented that the Toda living in the Nilgiri Mountains of Southern India allowed married women to have intercourse with male priests with the husband's approval. In the Philippines, the Kalinda institutionalized mistresses. If a man's wife was unable to have children, he could take a mistress in order to have children. Usually his wife would help him choose a mistress.

Economic functions:

As long as division of labor by sex exists every society has to have some mechanism by which men and share the produce of the labor. Marriage is one way to solve this problem. It solves how to share the work efforts and how to implement an organized division of labor at individual and personal level. Marriage of men and women create family in which men and women share their labours to satisfy the economic needs of the family members. Both male and female remain engaged in economic activities through the institution of marriage for the economic upliftment of the family.

Social functions:

Through marriage new Kinsmen are acquired because spouse's relative is added to one's own group of Kin. The institution of marriage also enables the society to assign to the parents their responsibility of socializing the child by transforming social customs and social regulations.

Educational Functions:

The institution of marriage educates the young to be responsible future parents to pass the culture from one generation to another. Thus marriage performs the most sacred biological function that-gives rise to the family system. Apart from this it performs a number of social, cultural, educational and economic functions.

Ways of Acquiring Mates in Tribal Societies

The tribes in India have a variety of ways of acquiring mates. Since the tribals consider their marriage, more or less, as a social and civil contract. The tribal marriages do not have absolute things like religious rituals and rites.

i. Probationary Marriage:

In this type of marriage, a tribal youth lives in the house of his potential mate for weeks or months together. Thereafter, if both the boy and the girl like each other, they may enter into wedlock or in case of dislike they may be separated. If marriage is not solemnized, the boy will have to pay compensation to the girls' parents. It is called as probationary marriage because the boy stays in his would be father-in-law's house as a probationer. The Kuki tribe of Arunachal Pradesh are said to follow this type of marriage.

ii. Marriage by capture:

This is a popular type of marriage among several Indian tribes. It can be both ceremonial and forceful or physical. The boy and the girl like each other but due to restriction from the parent and the community and inability to pay bride-price, the capture takes place. Sometimes the physical captures are pre-arranged and often take place in fairs, festivals, markets, and sometimes in ceremonial captures the boy simply smears vermillion on the girl's forehead (as in Birhor). This type of marriage is practiced among the Kondha, Juang, Bhuinya, Kharia, Birhor, etc. The Nagas take recourse to physical capture during raids from one village to another.

iii. Marriage by trial:

This is a peculiar type of tribal marriage practiced among the Bhils. In this type of marriage, the courage and bravery of the young man is appreciated and recognized in assigned competition. If a boy comes out successful in his endeavor, he is free to choose any girl from the group for marriage.

iv. Marriage by Purchase:

The man pays the price for the bride in the form of bride-price to the girl's parents before he has her as his wife. The price paid may be in the form of cash or kind. This type of marriage is widely prevalent among a number of tribes all over India. The price is paid by the groom's father to the girl's father according to the traditional custom. This type of marriage is found among the Kondh, Juang, Ho and Munda. The Rengma Nagas also practice this way of acquiring mates.

v. Marriage by Service:

Some tribals have evolved the solution of higher bride price which the economically weaker tribal youths cannot afford to. If the bridegroom is unable to pay the bride price, he has to serve in his would be father-in-law's house as a servant and marry the girl after the lapse of specific period. During the period the boy works in the house of the would be father-in-law without any payment and equalizes the bride price by providing his free services. Gond and Baiga practice this type of marriage.

vi. Marriage by exchange:

If a son and daughter of marriageable age are available in two families they may exchange the daughters and do not pay any bride price for obtaining the bride. In tribal India Kondh, Saora, Juang, Bhuinya, Santal, etc. practice this type of marriage.

vii. Marriage by Elopement:

Among many Indian tribes the unmarried boys and girls stay in dormitory and are often involved in sexual relationship by coming in contact with each other. If the parents do not give consent, to the love of the boy and the girl for marriage, then they flee away to some other place without any information to the parents. Such delinquent couple may, later on, be received back by their parents. In this type of marriage, bride price is easily avoided. Juang, Santal, Bhuinya, Kondha and Saora practice this type of marriage.

viii. Marriage by Intrusion:

This is the reverse way of marriage by capture, wherein a girl desirous of marrying a particular tribal male expresses her willingness and goes to his house to stay. She forcibly thrusts herself onto him and stays with him, despite the non-acceptance of the male and his family. In the process she is subjected to humiliating treatment and refusal of food and often physical torture. But in spite of such humiliation, disrespect or torture if she sticks to the marriage and stays there she is accepted and the marriage is performed. The Juang, Kondh, Bhuiyan practice this types of marriage. But such marriages are widely reported from the Birhor and Ho tribes of Chhotanagpur region.

ix. Inheritance of Widow:

Widow Marriage is widely prevalent among the Indian tribes. From the point of view of tradition, custom or personal choice, the youngsters do not usually prefer to marry a widow. In the practice of sororate there is no option. Otherwise the widows are preferred by the widowers. No bride price is paid in the widow marriage. As a customary practice, the Sema Nagas as a matter of obligation often marries his father's widow, other than his own mother. This type of marriage is held so as to inherit the family property from the widows, because the widows are the legal heirs of their dead husband's property. The practice of the inheritance of widows is also reported among the Santal, Bhuinyan, Juang and Kondh.

x. Divorce:

Divorce or the dissolution of marriage is practiced in the tribal communities. But one cannot divorce the other whimsically or at will. Some rules and regulations persist in this regard. Murdock has mentioned a number of recognized grounds for divorce, such as incompatibility, adultery, diseases, barrenness or sterility, impotency, sexual unwillingness, laziness, economic incapacity, quarrelsome, mistreatment, etc. Since the Indian tribes do not consider marriage as a religious sacrament, the process and procedure of divorce is rather simple. In most of the cases of marital disaster the separation occurs with the mutual consent of both the parties. As a matter of customary practice, the divorce cases are generally decided by the tribal council and performed in a public place in the presence of elderly villagers.

The tribal communities allow both the husband and wife the right to divorce the other spouse on certain grounds. Among the tribals, the husband is divorced, generally on the grounds of disease, drunkenness, impotency, extra-marital sexual relationship with other women etc. Generally, a wife is divorced on the plea that she has become an insane, a thief or a witch or a runaway. However, there are no common grounds of divorce among all the tribes in India.

However, if his wife deserts him or is caught in adultery, she has to arrange for the return of the bride price her husband paid to her. A second marriage between those once divorced is possible." Mutual consent is essential for divorce and the divorced couples cannot remarry. Wide variations are also marked in the ground of divorce. Whereas the Gond allows divorce freely on grounds of marital infidelity, carelessness in household work, barrenness and quarrelsome disposition, the Khasi permits divorce for reasons of adultery, barrenness and incompatibility of temperament. The Kharia tribe allows divorce for reasons of marital infidelity, sterility of the wife, Laziness, wife's refusal to live with the husband, and theft. Both the parties are allowed to divorce.

Marriage Payments

	Type	Where Practiced
Dowry	Goods and money given by the bride's family to the married couple	Europe and Asia; agriculturalists and industrialists
Groomprice	A form of dowry: goods and money given by the bride's family to the married couple and to the parents of the groom	South Asia, especially northern India
Brideprice (or bride-wealth)	Goods and money given by the groom's family to the parents of the bride	Asia, Africa, and Central and South America; horticulturalists and pastoralists
Brideservice	Labor given by the groom to the parents of the bride	Southeast Asia, the Pacific, and Amazonia; horticulturalists

Bride Price: is a gift of money or goods from the groom or his kin to the bride's kin. The gift usually grants the groom the right to marry the bride and the right to her children. Of all the forms of economic transaction involved in marriage, bride price is the most common. In one cross-cultural sample, 44% of the societies with economic transactions at marriage practiced bride-price; in almost all of those societies the bride price was substantial. Bride price occurs all over the world but is especially common in Africa and Oceania. Payment can be made in different currencies; livestock and food are two of the more common. With the increased importance of commercial exchange, money has increasingly become part of the bride price payments. Among the Nandi, the bride price consists of about five to seven cattle, one or two sheep and goats, cowrie shells, and money equivalent to the value of one cow. Even in unusual female-female "husband" must pay a bride price to arrange the marriage and be considered the "father".

The Subanun of the Philippines have an expensive bride price- several times the annual income of the groom plus three to five years of bride service. Among the Manus of the Admiralty Islands off New Guinea, a groom requires an economic backer, usually an older brother or an uncle, if he is to marry. Cross culturally societies with bride price are likely to practice horticulture and lack social stratification. Bride price is also likely where women contribute a great deal to primary subsistence activities and where they contribute more than men in all kinds of economic activities.

Bride Service is the next most common type of economic transactions at marriage. It requires the groom to work for the bride's family, sometimes before the marriage begins, sometimes after. Bride service varies in duration. In some societies it lasts for few months in some for years. Among the North Alaskan Eskimos, for example, the boy works for his in laws after marriage is arranged. In some societies bride service is a substitute for bride price. An individual might give bride service if he is unable to pay bride price.

Exchange of Females The societies may also exchange females. For example, Tiv of Nigeria and Yanomami of Brazil follow this practice. This is practiced generally in horticulturalists, egalitarian and in which women contribute more to economic activities.

Gift Exchange involves the exchange of gifts of about equal value by the two kin groups to be linked by marriage, occurs somewhat more often than exchange of females. For example, among the

Andaman Islanders, as soon as a boy and girl indicate their intention to marry, their respective sets of parents cease all communication and begin sending gifts of food and other objects to each other through a third party. This arrangement continues until the marriage is completed and the two groups are united.

Dowry A substantial transfer of goods or money from the bride's family to the bride, the groom, or the couple is known as a **dowry**. A family has to have wealth to give a dowry, but because the goods go to the new household, no wealth comes back to the family that gave the dowry. Payment of dowries was common in medieval and Renaissance Europe, where the size of the dowry often determined the desirability of the daughter. The custom is still practiced in parts of eastern Europe and in sections of southern Italy and France, where land is often the major item the bride's family provides. Parts of India also practice the dowry.

In contrast of societies with bride price, societies with dowries tend to be those in which women contribute relatively little to primary subsistence activities, there is high degree to social stratification, and a man is not allowed to be married more than one woman simultaneously.

Why does dowry tend to occur in these types of societies?

One theory suggests that the dowry is intended to guarantee future support for a woman and her children, even though she will not do much subsistence work. Another theory is that the dowry is intended to attract the best bridegroom for a daughter in monogamous societies with a high degree of social inequality. The dowry strategy is presumed to increase the likelihood that the daughter and her children will do-well reproductively.

Indirect Dowry

The dowry is provided by the bride's family to the bride, the groom, or the couple. But sometimes the payments to the bride originate from the groom's family. Because the goods are sometimes first given to the bride's father, who passes most if not all of them to her, this kind of transaction is called **indirect dowry**. For example, among the Basseri of southern Iran, the groom's father assumes the expense of setting up the couple's new household. He gives cash to the bride's father, who uses at least some of the money to buy his daughter household utensils, blankets, and rugs.