

MARRIAGE

MODULE 1

INTRODUCTION

- It has been generally assumed that the institution of marriage is a universal feature in human societies. Although many sociologists and anthropologists have attempted to provide definitions of marriage, none of them has been satisfactorily and sufficiently general enough to encompass all its various manifestations. This is because marriage is a unique institution of human society that has different implications in different cultures. It is a biological fact that marriage is intimately linked to parenthood. This has led to many anthropologists like Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown to propose definitions of marriage centering on the Principle of Legitimacy.

DEFINATIONS

- According to Malinowski, a legal marriage is one which gives a woman a socially recognized husband and her children a socially recognized father.
- Radcliffe-Brown states that Marriage is a social arrangement by which a child is given a legitimate position in the society determined by parent hood in the social sense.
- According to Westermarck it is a relation of one or more men to one or more women which is recognized by custom or law and involves certain rights and duties both in the case of parties entering the union and in the case of children born out of this union.
- According to Lundberg, marriage consists of rules and regulations that define the rights, duties and privileges of husband and wife with respect to each other.
- According to Horton and Hunt marriage is the approved social pattern whereby two or more persons establish a family.

TYPES

- ***Monogamy*** is the type of marriage wherein one man marries only one woman at a time. It is widely followed all across the world today. It is of two types: *Serial monogamy* is when a person can get remarried in case of divorce or death of the spouse and *Non-serial monogamy* is when a person is supposed to have a single spouse all throughout one's life.
- ***Polygamy*** is the type of marriage in which one can have multiple spouses. It is of three types:
- *Polygyny* refers to the marriage in which a man marries multiple women at a time. Each of the wives lives in a separate household and the man keeps visiting each of them. It is further divided into: *Sorroral polygyny* wherein a man gets married to his wife's sisters, either all at a time or after his wife's death and *Non-sorroral polygyny* wherein a man marries multiple women who are not sisters, which is the opposite of sorroral polygyny.

CHARACTERSTICS

- **Characteristics of Marriage:**
- Universality. **Marriage** is more or less a universal institution. ...
- Relationship between Man and Woman: **Marriage** is a union of man and woman. ...
- **Marriage** Bond is enduring: ...
- **Marriage** Requires Social Approval: ...
- **Marriage** is Associated with Some Civil or Religious Ceremony: ...
- **Marriage** Creates Mutual Obligations:

FUNCTIONS

- **Functions of Marriage:**
- Marriage is an institutionalized relationship within the family system. It fulfills many functions attributed to the family in general. Family functions include basic personality formation, status ascriptions, socialization, tension management, and replacement of members, economic cooperation, reproduction, stabilization of adults, and the like.
- Many of these functions, while not requiring marriage for their fulfillment, are enhanced by the marital system". In fact, evidence suggests marriage to be of great significance for the well-being of the individual. Researchers have shown that compared to the unmarried, married persons are generally happier, healthier, less depressed and disturbed and less prone to premature deaths. Marriage, rather than becoming less important or unimportant, may be increasingly indispensable.

FUNCTIONS

- The functions of marriage differ as the structure of marriage differs. 'For example, where marriage is specially an extension of the kin and extended family system, then procreation, passing on the family name and continuation of property become a basic function. Thus, to not have a child or more specifically, to not have a male child, is sufficient reason to replace the present wife or add a new wife.
- Where marriage is based on "free choice," i.e. parents and kinsmen play no role in selecting the partner, individualistic forces are accorded greater significance. Thus in the United States, marriage has many functions and involves many positive as well as negative personal factors : establishment of a family of one's own, children, companionship, happiness, love, economic security, elimination of loneliness etc.
- The greater the extent to which the perceived needs of marriage are met, and the fewer the alternatives in the replacement of the unmet needs, the greater the likelihood of marriage and the continuation of that marriage. At a personal level, any perceived reason may explain marriage, but at a social level, all societies sanction certain reasons and renounce others.

ADVANTAGES OF MONOGAMY (TYPES)

- **Keeping in view the advantages of monogamy the world has granted recognition to monogamous form of marriage. The following are its advantages:**
- **1. Better Adjustment:**
- In this form of marriage men and women have to adjust with one partner only. In this way there is better adjustment between them.

DISADVANTAGES

- **Disadvantages:**
- **1. Adjustment:**
- Monogamy is a marriage between one husband and one wife. So if the partner is not of choice then life loses its charm. They have to adjust between themselves but now-a-days divorce is the answer to their problem.
- **2. Monopoly:**
- According to Sumner and Keller, “Monogamy is monopoly.” Wherever there is monopoly, there is bound to be both ‘ins and outs’.
- **3. Childlessness:**
- Some inpatients can’t have kids or some barren cannot have kids. If one of the partners has some problem couples cannot have children. They have to suffer from childlessness.

OTHER TYPES

- **(ii) Polyandry:**
- It is a form of marriage in which one woman has more than one husband at a given time. According to 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. This type marriage is prevalent in few places such as tribes of Malaya and some tribes of India like Toda, Khasi and Kota etc. Polyandry is of two types:
 - (i) Fraternal Polyandry and
 - (ii) Non-Fraternal Polyandry.
- **(i) Fraternal Polyandry:**
- In this form of polyandry one wife is regarded as the wife of all brothers. All the brothers in a family share the same woman as their wife. The children are treated as the offspring of the eldest brother, it is found in some Indian tribes like Toda and Khasis. This type of marriage was popular in Ceylon (Srilanka at present).

OTHER TYPES

- **(iii) Group Marriage:**
- Group marriage is that type of marriage in which a group of men marry a group of women. Each man of male group is considered to be the husband of every woman of female group. Similarly, every woman is the wife of every man of male group. Pair bonded or Multilateral marriage are the substitute term for group marriages.
- This form of marriage is found among some tribes of New Guinea and Africa. In India group marriage is practised by the Toda Tribe of Nilgiri Hills. Except on an experimental basis it is an extremely rare occurrence and may never have existed as a viable form of marriage for any society in the world.
- The Oneida community of New York State has been frequently cited as an example of group marriage experiment. It involved economic and sexual sharing based on spiritual and religious principles. Like most group marriage on record, its time span was limited. Rarely do they endure beyond one or two generations.

FORMS

- **2. Polygamy:**
- Distinguished from monogamy is polygamy. Polygamy refer to the marriage of several or many. Polygamy is the form of marriage in which one man marries two or more women or one woman marries two or more men or a number of men many a number of women. According to F.N. Balasara, “The forms of marriage in which there is plurality of partners is called polygamy”.
- Polygamy, like other forms of marriage is highly regulated and normatively controlled. It is likely to be supported by the attitudes and values of both the sexes. Polygamy itself has many forms and variations. Polygamy is of three types: (i) Polygyny, (ii) Polyandry and (iii) Group marriage.
- Let us now discuss forms of polygamy in details,
- **(i) Polygyny:**
- Polygyny is a form of marriage in which a man has more than one .wife at a time. In other words it is a form of marriage in which one man marries more than one woman at a given time. It is the prevalent form of marriage among the tribes, Polygyny also appears to be the privilege of the wealthy, in many African societies the rich usually have more than one wife.
- This type of marriage is found in Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya and Uganda. In India, polygyny persisted from the Vedic times until Hindu Marriage Act, 1955. Now polygyny is visible among many tribes of India.

FORMS

- **LEVIRATE:** In levirate the wife marries the brother of the dead husband. If a man dies, his wife marries the brother of her dead husband. Marriage of the widow with the dead husband's elder brother is called Senior Levirate. But when she marries to the younger brother of the dead husband, it is called Junior Levirate.
- **(ii) Sororate:**
- In Sororate the husband marries the sister of his wife. Sororate is again divided into two types namely restricted Sororate and simultaneous Sororate. In restricted sororate, after the death of one's wife, the man marries the sister of his wife. In simultaneous sororate, the sister of one's wife automatically becomes his wife.