**12**

331en12

## MARRIAGE

You must be aware that marriage is an important social relationship. It is found everywhere in the world. Through marriage, two persons of opposite sex get social approval to live together as husband and wife. Marriage marks the beginning of a new phase of life for the bride and the groom. You must have participated in the joy and festivity associated with a marriage ceremony in any society.

The significance attached to marriage is reflected in society. The present lesson will acquaint you with this important social institution.

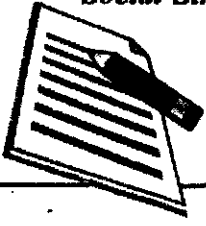
### OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, you will be able to:

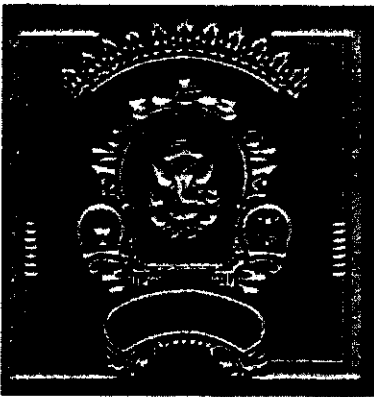
- define marriage;
- describe different types of marriage;
- explain functions of marriage;
- describe Hindu marriage as a sacrament;
- explain marriage as a contract among the Muslims; and
- explain the changes in the institution of marriage.

### 12.1 MEANING AND DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE

Marriage is an institution to satisfy physical, psychological, social, cultural and economic needs of men and women. It permits men and women to establish a stable relationship with each other in order to form a family.



**Notes**



*Sample of a Wedding Card*

Regulation of sexual activities through a stable relationship is the primary aim of marriage. Such a regulation is essential because sexual desire, if left unchecked, may cause serious disruption in society. It may lead to unnecessary competition for partners.

Hence, every society develops certain institutions to regulate the mating behaviour of its members. Marriage is one such **social institution**. In addition, marriage also authorises husband and wife to produce **children** and engage in many other socio-economic activities together.

In simple words, marriage has been defined as an institution for admitting men and women into family life, legitimating off-springs and establishing other rights and obligations of husband, wife and children.

Society gives its approval to the marital relationship between a man and woman generally in a civil or religious ceremony. After the ceremony is over, the husband and wife begin to live with each other, thereby forming a family. They give birth to children who are legally accepted by society. Married couples have to fulfil many obligations towards each other and society in general. In return, they get many rights and privileges.

Now, you can understand that marriage is a multi-dimensional relationship between a man and woman. It is different from other forms of transitory and purely biological matings to fulfill sexual desires.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 12.1**

Write True or False against the statement.

(1) Marriage is a social relationship that marks the beginning of family life.

(2) Mark the correct answer:

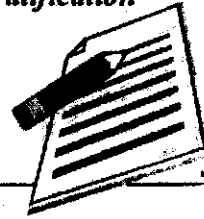
Marriage is an important institution because:

- (a) It is a permanent bond between husband and wife.
- (b) It aims at procreation and maintenance of children.
- (c) It regulates sexual behaviour and social harmony.
- (d) all the above.

(3) Fill in the blank:

Society gives approval to the marital relationship of man and women in ..... and/ or ..... ceremony.

- (4) What is marriage? Define it in one sentence.
- 



Notes

## 12.2 TYPES OF MARRIAGE

Types and terms of marriage differ from society to society according to the norms or the rules related to marriage.

To understand the types of marriage, we would classify it according to the following criteria:

- (i) Number of mates
- (ii) Ways of acquiring mates

### 12.2.1 Types of Marriage on the Basis of Number of Mates

Marriage may be classified into two main types on the basis of number of husbands or wives a person may have at a time:

- (a) Monogamy
- (b) Polygamy

**(a) Monogamy:** (Mono= single, gamy = marriage) Monogamy is that form of marriage in which a man/woman remains married to only one woman/man at a time. One can marry in certain extraordinary circumstances such as the death of the spouse (husband or wife) or divorce.

Monogamy is the most prevalent form of marriage the world over.

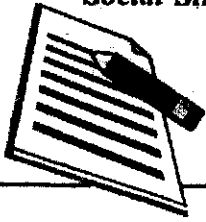
**(b) Polygamy:** (poly = many, gamy = marriage) In this form of marriage, a man or woman is permitted to marry more than one woman or man and live with all the wives/husbands at the same time.

Polygamy may be further subdivided into two types:

- (i) Polygyny
- (ii) Polyandry

**(i) Polygyny:** (poly = many, gyny = female) Polygyny is that form of marriage in which a man is married to more than one woman.

Polygyny is permitted among the Muslims. Many tribal societies also follow polygyny. Historically also polygyny was practised. In ancient India you might recall that Raja Dasratha, father of Lord Sri Ram, had three wives.

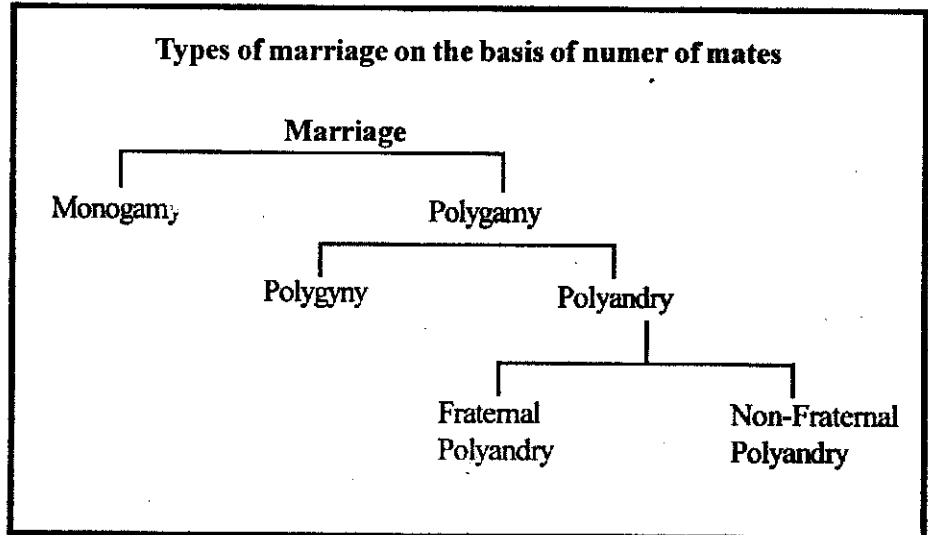


Notes



(ii) **Polyandry:** (Poly= many, andry = male) Polyandry is that form of marriage in which a woman is married to more than one man. In other words, under polyandry, a woman is allowed to have more than one husband at the same time.

In some tribes like the 'Khas' of Utranchal, a woman marries men who are brothers. This practice is called fraternal polyandry. In the epic 'Mahabharat' you must have come across the name of Draupadi who was married to all the five Pandavas.



If the husbands of a woman are not brothers, it is called non-fraternal polyandry. Such marriages are found among the Nayars of Kerala.

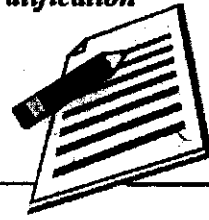
It would be interesting for you to know that polygyny appears to be the norm in a large number of societies. But, monogamy is the most prevalent form of marriage all over the world.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 12.2**

(1) Mark the correct answer:

The form of marriage in which one man marries several women is called:

- (a) Fraternal polyandry
- (b) Non-fraternal polyandry
- (c) Polygyny



Notes

(d) Polyandry

(2) Write True or False against the statement

Monogamy is the most widely prevalent form of marriage all over the world.

(3) Fill in the blanks;

Marriage by ..... is the most common form of marriage among most of the Indians.

## 12.3 RULES OF SPOUSE-SELECTION

Every society lays down certain rules to govern the marital alliances among its members. Members are not allowed to marry whosoever they want. They have to abide by the prohibitive and prescriptive rules of marriage while selecting their marital partners. Some such rules are discussed here.

### 12.3.1 Prohibitive Rules

Prohibitive rules are those which put a restriction on the selection of mates. These rules forbid men and women from entering into marital alliance with a certain category of people. Such categorization is done according to the religious norms and local customs.

Some of the widely prevalent prohibitive rules are as follows:

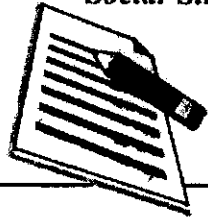
**a. Incest Taboo:** Incest is prohibited in all human societies. Incest implies sexual or marital relation between two persons, who are related to each other by blood ties or, who belong to the same nuclear family.

In every society, marital relation is prohibited between father and daughter, mother and son and brother and sister. This prohibition is known as **incest taboo**.

Society also prohibits marriage among close kins. Among the Hindus of north India, for example, marriage among cousins, marriage with mother's brother, father's sister or brothers is also prohibited.

**b. Exogamy:** (Exo= outside, gamy = marriage) Exogamy is a custom which requires an individual to marry outside a specific group of which he is a member such as kinship group, a family, a clan, a village group or any other social group to which he may belong.

**c. Endogamy :** (Endo= within, gamy = marriage) Endogamy is a custom that requires marriage within one's own social group. The social group may be



one's own tribe or caste or religious group but not clan in most cases. Very rarely the clans are endogamous. Mostly, they are exogamous.

Tribes are endogamous social units. Castes among the Hindus are endogamous. Among the Muslims, there are two endogamous units, namely, 'Shia' and 'Sunni'. Among the Christians too, there are endogamous groups such as 'Roman Catholics' and 'Protestants'.

Traditionally, castes in India are endogamous groups. But inter-caste/inter-varna marriages in ancient times were permitted under the rules of hypergamy and hypogamy.

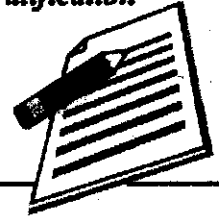
- d. **Hypergamy (Anuloma):** is a social custom according to which a boy from upper caste can marry a girl from lower caste. Thus, a Brahmin boy can marry a girl from any lower caste or varna.
- e. **Hypogamy (Pratiloma):** is the marriage in which a boy from lower caste marries a girl from higher caste. Such marriages were not encouraged in traditional Indian society. Hence, it was not possible for a Brahmin girl to marry lower caste/ varna boy and get acceptance from society.

### 12.3.2 Prescriptive and Preferential Rules

The above discussion has made you aware about the rules which put restrictions on the selection of mates. There are some other rules which give preference to certain types of alliances over others. In certain cases, there is prescription to marry within a particular kin group. These customs which prescribe or direct implicitly as to whom one should marry or prefer to marry are called prescriptive rules. Some of these rules are as follows:

- a. **Parallel cousin marriage:** It is the marriage between the children of either two brothers or two sisters. Such marriages are aimed at strengthening the bond among two brothers or two sisters. Such marriage are exception to the rules of clan exogamy. Parallel cousin marriage is preferred among Muslims.
- b. **Cross cousin marriage:** It is the marriage of a man with his maternal uncle's daughter (mother's brother's daughter) or paternal aunt's daughter (father's sister's daughter). Alternatively, it may be defined as a marriage of a girl with her mother's brother's son or father's sister's son.

This form has been the preferred form of marriage in several parts of India such as among Gonds of Madhya Pradesh and Oraon and Kharia tribes of Jharkhand. This is also practised in Maharashtra. Maternal uncle is the prescribed mate among some South Indian Hindus.



Notes

- c. **Levirate:** Levirate is the custom in which a widow marries her husband's brother. Generally, husband's younger brother marries the widow. This practice is prevalent among the Toda of Nilgiri Hills.
- d. **Sororate:** Sororate is the custom in which a widower marries the younger sister of his deceased wife. It is generally found among the tribes of central India such as Gond or Baiga.

**INTEXT QUESTIONS 12.3**

1. Mark the correct answer

Marriage of a man of high caste with a woman of lower caste is called

- (a) Anuloma marriage
- (b) Pratiloma marriage
- (c) Polygamy
- (d) Polyandry

2. Fill in the blanks:

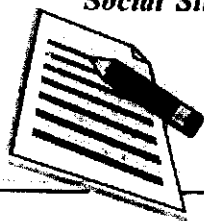
Marriage between a man and sister of his deceased wife is called .....

3. Write True or False against the statement-

Pratiloma marriage is marriage between woman of low caste and man of higher caste.

4. Match the following

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| (a) Exogamy                  | (i) Marriage of a widow with her husband's brother                       |
| (b) Endogamy                 | (ii) Marriage between the children of either two brothers or two sisters |
| (c) Levirate                 | (iii) Marriage within one's own social group                             |
| (d) Parallel cousin marriage | (iv) marriage outside one's own social group                             |



Notes

## 12.4 FUNCTIONS OF MARRIAGE

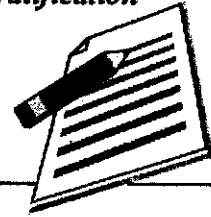
Marriage in society performs the following basic functions:

- (i) **Satisfaction of sex:** Marriage brings the two individuals together and allows them to have sex with each other in a socially approved manner. At the same time, married persons are permitted by society to have sexual relation with their respective spouses and not with anyone else. Thus, marriage regularises sexual relations.
- (ii) **Procreation and nurturing of children:** Marriage fulfills the functions of producing children and bringing them up according to social norms. Procreation and nurturing of children is done in a family set-up, where both the husband and wife together look after their children so that they can survive and become physically and mentally strong. Relatives and friends also help the couple in taking care of their child/children.

A human child needs much more care and protection to survive than the offsprings of animals. It is an important function of marriage to ensure the survival of the child.

- (iii) **Economic co-operation and security:** Marriage provides valuable and reliable help to an individual in economic activities. The couple, i.e. the husband and wife, work together at home, in the field or forest, in the cottage industry or in any other occupation to support the family they have set up. They also look after each other's economic needs. Together, they take care of their children's economic requirements such as food, clothing, shelter, education, medical and recreational needs and so on. Traditionally, only husband was supposed to earn money and the wife was expected to manage with this income. In modern times, however, it is quite normal to see both husband and wife contributing to family earnings.
- (iv) **Companionship and emotional support:** Marriage provides a constant companion, a life-partner in the form of husband and wife. The bride and the groom are often not familiar with each other initially but as they begin to spend their life together, they gradually become each other's best friends. Their affection for each other grows with each passing year. They help each other socially, economically and emotionally, in joy and sorrow and develop a better understanding of each other's perspective in managing the family.





Notes

## INTEXT QUESTIONS 12.4

1. Mark the correct answer.

Which of the following can be considered important function of family:

- (a) Sexual fulfillment
- (b) Procreation of children
- (c) Economic support
- (d) All the above.

2. Write True or False against the statement:

Marriage helps in the survival of groups as well as their culture. True/False

3. 'Marriage performs important function for the group as well as individual'.  
State whether this statement is right or wrong. Right/Wrong

4. Mention economic function of marriage.

## 12.5 HINDU MARRIAGE

### 12.5.1 Objective

In Hindu society, marriage is an important *Sanskar*. It is a religious duty. *Sanskar* is a ritual which purifies a person. Every Hindu must perform the religious duty i.e. *dharma* of getting married. Through this, a person enters the second stage of life i.e. 'Grihastha Ashram', leaving behind the stage of *Brahmacharya Ashram*.

In traditional Hindu society, only a married man gets the right to participate fully in all the social and religious activities along with his wife.

The main objectives behind a Hindu marriage are the following:

- (i) Performance of religious duty – *Dharma*
- (ii) Giving birth to children – *Praja*
- (iii) Sex satisfaction – *Rati*

Among the three objectives of Hindu marriage, the objective of *Dharma* has been given the greatest importance. It implies that one must marry in order to fulfill one's socio-religious duties. A married couple is expected to give birth to children who may carry on the family tradition to the next generation.



Notes

Sex-gratification is considered yet another objective of marriage in Hindu society. But, it is not the sole objective or the most important objective.

### 12.5.2 Hindu marriage as a sacrament

Hindu marriage is a sacrament which purifies a person. Marriage is considered so sacred that there is no provision for divorce in the Hindu texts. In fact, marriage is considered a union of two souls which remain faithful to each other forever.

The marital rites are performed before the most sacred God Agni ( the Fire God) by reciting passages or *mantras* from the sacred scriptures. A sacred person, the *Brahmin*, solemnizes the marriage.

The bride and the groom exchange many promises to remain dutiful and faithful to each other. Well-wishers bless the couple for a happy married life.

### 12.5.3 Traditional Forms of Hindu Marriage

In the traditional Hindu society, the following eight forms of marriage were recognised. Out of these, first four were considered proper and desirable and the last four were regarded as undesirable-

- In *Brahma* marriage, a father gifts his daughter to a learned man of good character.
- In *Daiva* marriage, the father gifts his daughter to a Brahmin priest.
- In *Arsha* marriage, the groom presents some gifts like a pair of cows or bulls to the father of the bride before marriage.
- In *Prajapatya* marriage, a father gifts his daughter to a man after proper negotiation with his parents. Most of the marriages among the Hindus are of this nature.
- In *Asura* marriage, bride-price is given by the groom to the bride's father.
- In *Gandharva* marriage, the bride and the groom like each other and marry without taking the consent of the parents.
- In *Rakshasa* marriage, the girl is kidnapped and married without the consent of either the girl or her parents.
- In *Paisacha* marriage, the girl who is asleep, intoxicated or of unsound mind is forced to surrender her chastity. Later, the girl is given the status of wife.

**12.6 MUSLIM MARRIAGE****12.6.1 Muslim Marriage as a Contract**

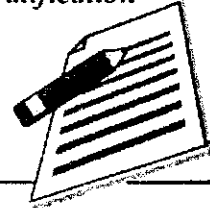
Muslim marriage or *Nikah* is a civil contract between a man and a woman for the purpose of legalizing sexual relationship and the procreation of children. In this sense, it is different from Hindu marriage. The Muslim marriage-contract or agreement, can be broken at the will of the husband or wife. It can also be broken if either the husband or the wife fails to carry out the promises made at the time of marriage.

Muslim marriage is solemnized in the presence of witnesses including a priest-the *Maulvi*. The *Maulvi* recites holy hymns from the *Koran* and asks the bride and the groom to give their consent. Also, the husband must agree to pay the dower or the *Mahr* to his wife in the event of a divorce.

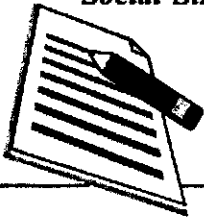
**12.6.2 Forms of Muslim Marriage**

There are four forms of Muslim marriage:-

- (a) *Nikah* or 'Sahi *Nikah*'
  - (b) *Fasid*
  - (c) *Muta*
  - (d) *Batil*
- The marriage which conforms to the rules of marriage as laid down in the *Koran*- the holy book of Muslims, is termed as regular marriage or *Nikah* or *Sahi Nikah*.
  - The marriage which fails to conform to a few conditions initially is called 'irregular marriage' or *Fasid*. The irregularity can later be removed and it can be converted into *Sahi Nikah*.
  - Muslims also have a system of temporary marriage and it is called *Muta*. This type of marriage contract is valid for a fixed period of time and after the expiry of this period, marital relation is automatically dissolved. However, the children born out of this temporary union are given a share in the father's property.
  - *Batil* is that form of mating which cannot be regularised because it violates certain basic principles of Muslim marriage.



Notes



Notes

### 12.6.3 Divorce or Dissolution of Muslim Marriage

Divorce among the Muslims is obtained by a very simple procedure. A husband can divorce his wife by using the word "*talaq*" thrice. But the husband must pay the dower (Mahr) promised by him to compensate the loss of financial stability provided by him.

A wife can also obtain divorce from her husband provided he agrees to her proposal of divorce. Such a divorce is called *Khula* (release).

If wife and husband separate by mutual consent, such dissolution of marriage is called *Mubarat*.

Marriage can also be dissolved by legal means through Muslim Divorce Act, 1939.

### INTEXT QUESTIONS 12.5

- Write True and False against the statement.  
The Hindu marriage can be dissolved at will.
- Tick the correct answer:  
The most popular form of Hindu marriage is-  
(a) *Brahma*      (b) *Prajapatya*      (c) *Daiva*
- Match the following :-  
(a) *Arsha*      (i) marriage through proper negotiation between parents  
(b) *Gandharva*      (ii) marriage by mutual consent of the boy and the girl.  
(c) *Daiva*      (iii) marriage to a Brahmin priest  
(d) *Prajapatya*      (iv) marriage after presentation of a pair of cows or bulls by the groom to the bride's father.
- Muslim marriage is a civil contract. State whether this statement is right or wrong.
- What are the four forms of Muslim marriage?  
\_\_\_\_\_

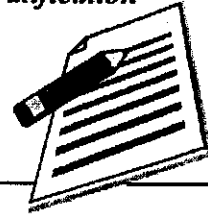
## 12.7 CHANGES IN MARRIAGE

Over the years, the institution of marriage has undergone many changes. These changes are outlined as under:

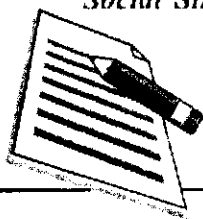
- There has been a change in the form of marriage, that is, from plurality of partners or polygamy to one partner or monogamy. In modern era, monogamy is the most popular form of marriage.
- Process of selection of marital partner has also undergone changes in many ways. The boys and girls are selecting their mates who may belong to other castes. Such inter-caste marriages are now coming to be increasingly accepted by society and the family.
- The Special Marriage Act 1954 has recognized inter-caste and inter-religious marriages. The boy and girl may marry in the presence of the Marriage Officer by signing a legal document.
- The selection of life-partners is now done more and more by the boys and girls themselves on the basis of mutual attraction and similarity of nature etc. The role of parents in the selection of mates is decreasing-especially in urban areas.
- The criteria of selection has also undergone considerable change. Earlier, the elders of the family finalized the marriage proposal after considering family status, etc. Status is important even now but due importance is also given to the comparative merit of the boy and the girl and their likes and dislikes as well.
- The boys and girls are getting married at a later age. The Hindu Marriage Act 1955 has stipulated that the boy must have completed twenty-one years and girl must be over eighteen years at the time of marriage. Child marriage has been banned by the The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929.
- The Hindu marriage was considered indissoluble earlier. But the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 has permitted divorce among the Hindus. As a result, the stability of marriage has been adversely affected. But the good aspect of it is that the husband and wife can get rid of each other if they are mutually incompatible unhappy.
- Widow-remarriage has been permitted by the Hindu Widows Re-Marriage Act, 1856. Earlier widows were not allowed to marry again.
- The dowry demand is touching new heights among certain sections of society. Girls are being harassed and even killed by their in-laws for bringing insufficient dowry. The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 has banned giving and taking of dowry. However, the Act is not very effective.
- To fight dowry, caste, religious and parental pressures, the educated boys and girls are going in for marriage by choice instead of accepting arranged marriages.

## MODULE - II

### *Social Institution and Social Stratification*



Notes



Notes



**INTEXT QUESTIONS 12.6**

1. Write True or False against the statement :  
Hindu marriages are indissoluble even by legal means
2. Mark the correct answer :  
The attitude towards marriage is becoming  
(a) utility-based    (b) tradition-based    (c) reasoning-based
3. Match the following :
 

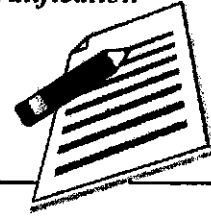
(a) Traditional arranged marriage	(i) based on family status & caste considerations
(b) Modern arranged marriage	(ii) based on caste and dowry consideration
(c) Choice marriage	(iii) based on mutual likes and dislikes
4. Mark the correct answer:  
Arranged marriages are opposed by the boys and girls because of :  
(i) exorbitant dowry demands  
(ii) disregard of opinion of the boy and the girl  
(iii) caste and religious restrictions while selecting mates  
(iv) all the above.



**WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT**

- Marriage is the basis on which family is formed.
- Marriage is a stable relationship, between men and women, which is socially accepted.
- Marriage allows a man and a woman biological satisfaction and other socio-economic relationships to form a family.
- The functions of marriage are :
  - (i) satisfaction of sex instinct
  - (ii) economic co-operation
  - (iii) pro-creation and nurturing of children
- Types and terms of marriage according to number of mates are :
 

(i) Monogamy	(ii) Polygamy
(a) Polygyny	(b) Polyandry



Notes

- Hindu marriage is a religious sacrament which purifies body and soul.
- It is indissoluble in the eyes of religion, but divorce is now granted legally under Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.
- There are four forms of Muslim marriage -  
(i) Nikah                      (ii) Fasid                      (iii) Muta                      (iv) Batil
- Types of divorce among the Muslim are -  
(i) Talaq                      (ii) Khula                      (iii) Mubarat
- Attitude towards marriage is changing. It is becoming more and more utility-based. Dowry demands are increasing and girls are being tortured for this reason.
- Educated boys and girls are opting for choice-marriage to avoid caste and religious restrictions as well as dowry.
- Divorce is increasing because husbands and wives are not ready to tolerate endless misconduct from each other.
- Divorce laws are getting simplified.
- The Special Marriage Act, 1954 has recognized inter-caste and inter-religious marriage.
- The Hindu Widows Re-Marriage Act, 1856 has permitted widows to remarry.
- The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 has banned giving and taking of dowry.
- The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 has fixed the minimum age of marriage of the boy at twenty one and the girl at eighteen.

**GLOSSARY**

**Anuloma** - Marriage of a boy of higher caste to a girl of lower caste.

**Cross-cousin marriage** - marriage between children of brother and sister.

**Endogamy** - Marriage within one's own social group because of compulsory restriction imposed by society. The endogamous unit maybe a kin unit, a religious group, a social class, a caste and so on.

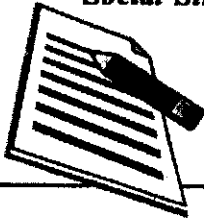
**Exogamy** - marriage outside a specific group. The exogamy group may be a kinship group such as a family, a clan, a village, or any other social group.

**Incest** - Sexual relations between individuals who belong to the same nuclear family. In other words, there is prohibition of incest between father and daughter, mother and son, and brother and sister.

**Institution** - Established way of doing things or behaviour

**Monogamy** - The marriage of one man to one woman at a time.

**Parallel cousin marriage** - Marriage between children of siblings of the same sex, that is, between two brothers' or two sisters' children.



Notes

**Polyandry** - A form of marriage in which one woman may be married to several men at the same time.

**Polygamy** - A form of marriage in which a husband has more than one wife at the same time or a wife has more than one husband.

**Polygyny** - A form of marriage in which a husband has more than one wife at the same time.

**Pratiloma** - Marriage of a girl of higher caste to a boy of lower caste.

**Sanskara** - Sacrament, rite or ritual which purifies an individual.



**TERMINAL EXERCISE**

1. Explain briefly the functions of marriage?
2. Explain the types of marriage based on number of mates giving suitable examples.
3. State the objectives of marriage among the Hindus.
4. How is Muslim marriage different from a Hindu marriage?
- 5.. Write a short note on the following :
  - (i) *Prajapatya* marriage
  - (ii) *Sahi Nikah*
  - (iii) Types of divorce among the Muslims
  - (iv) Changing attitude towards marriage



**ANSWER TO INTENT QUESTIONS**

- 12.1 (1) True (2) (d) (3) Civil and religious
- 12.2 (1) c (2) True (3) Negotiation
- 12.3 (1) a (2) Soroate (3) False
- (4) a - (iv), b - (iii), c - (i), d - (ii)
- 12.4 (1) d (2) True (3) Right
- 12.5 (1) False (2) b (3) a - (iv), b - (ii), c - (iii), d - (i),  
(5) Nikah, Fasid, Muta & Batil
- 12.6 (1) False (2) a (3) - a - (I), b - (ii), c - (iii).