

MARRIAGE THEORETICALLY AND CHANGING ASPECTS

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Abstract

The advent of the industrial economy facilitated the transition from a production-oriented culture to one that revolved around consumption. In ancient family systems, houses were self-reliant and produced all essential commodities, encompassing shelter, sustenance, and attire. The shift from producers to consumers has had a significant influence on the marital structure. The citation is derived from Sinha's publication in 1984. The trends of increasing levels of education among women and decreasing fertility rates were initiated. These modifications have led to increased prospects for women outside of the household realm and diminished the economic reliance between genders. The source cited is Leete's work from 1994. The increase in divorce rates has led to a shift in the way marriage is viewed, no longer solely as an economic and reproductive institution. This change has opened up many opportunities in modern society. Although certain societal incentives for marriage still exist, the dominant cultural expectation of marrying primarily for financial motives has greatly declined. In the post-modern age, there has been a rise in the occurrence of cohabitation, solo parenting, couples opting not to have children, and the societal acceptance of same-sex unions.

Introduction

Marriage is a significant social institution that exists in all countries worldwide, regardless of the various methods of choosing a partner and the many sorts of marriages. An inherent problem within this institution is its endorsement of the union between males and females with the intention of forming a household, reproducing, and nurturing their children (Majumder, 1977). The institution of marriage holds significant importance as it serves as the fundamental unit of society. This is mostly due to its crucial function in generating human capital resources and the authority it possesses to shape the behaviour of individuals, households, and communities (Sriram, 1993). Additionally, it serves as a significant provider of care, emotional connection, and social development, while also serving as a connection between consistency and transformation (Desai, 1995).

Change is an inherent principle of nature. Every aspect of this planet is subject to constant change. Family and marriage, being social institutions, are subject to the influence of societal pressures. Both institutions have endured the passage of time and the impacts of millennia. While the structure of families in India has predominantly shifted from joint to nuclear, the institution of marriage has experienced significant transformations. These include changes in the age at which people get married, the prevalence of divorce, a decrease in the frequency of marriages, and an increase in excessive spending on weddings. Several modifications have

been made. Some actions are regarded as beneficial for society, while others are perceived in a bad light. The current article aims to examine the evolving trends in marriage in India, focusing on the following specific objectives: To analyse the transformations taking place inside the institution of marriage and investigate the diverse elements accountable for these changes.

Industrialization brought about a significant transformation in the family institution by creating a clear division between work and family life. The dichotomy between work and family life had various effects on marital systems. Initially, families shifted from expansive extended family structures to more compact nuclear households. The emergence of the industrial economy also enabled the shift from a culture focused on production to one centered around consumption. In previous family systems, households were self-sufficient in producing all necessary items, including housing, food, and clothing. The transition from producers to consumers has had a considerable impact on the marital arrangement. The reference is from Sinha's work published in 1984. The trends of rising educational attainment among women and declining fertility were initiated. These changes have resulted in more opportunities for women beyond the domestic sphere and reduced the economic interdependence between genders. The source cited is Leete's work from 1994. In contemporary society, the perception of marriage has evolved beyond its traditional role as a means of economic collaboration and procreation, leading to a multitude of possibilities despite the rising divorce rates. While it is true that some pressures to marriage still exist, the practice of marrying solely for economic reasons is no longer commonplace. The prevalence of cohabitation, single parenting, couples choosing not to have children, and the acceptance of same-sex unions has increased within the post-modern context.

Industrialization significantly altered the family institution by creating a distinct division between work and family life. The dichotomy between work and family life had various effects on marital systems. Initially, families shifted from expansive extended family structures to more compact nuclear households. The emergence of the industrial economy also enabled the shift from a culture focused on production to one centered around consumption. In previous family systems, households were self-sufficient and generated all necessary items, including housing, food, and clothing. The transition from producers to consumers has had a considerable impact on the marital arrangement. The citation is from Sinha's work published in 1984. The trends of rising levels of education among women and declining fertility rates were initiated. These changes have resulted in more opportunities for women beyond the domestic sphere and reduced the economic interdependence between genders. (Leete, 1994). Although divorce rates have risen, the changing perception of marriage as mainly an economic and reproductive institution has created numerous possibilities in contemporary culture. While it is true that not all societal incentives to marriage have completely disappeared, the prevailing norm of marrying solely for economic reasons has significantly diminished. The prevalence of cohabitation, single parenting, couples choosing not to have children, and the acceptance of same-sex unions has also increased in the post-modern era.

Factors influencing the alteration of marital patterns:

1. Economic factors: The changes in the institution of marriage are directly linked to the significant advancements in education, the growing urbanization, and the rising participation of women in economic activities beyond the household. Individuals have begun seeking employment opportunities outside of their immediate family, and women have also become active participants alongside men in the pursuit of employment and financial gain. This has enhanced the self-esteem and self-assurance of women. The institution of marriage has been impacted by these advancements (Kapadia, 1982). Another contributing aspect is the prevalence of materialism among affluent individuals. Technological advancements have significantly improved the quality of life and the actual buying power of citizens. The main consequence of the rising wealth associated with marriage breakdown is that individuals are now more financially capable of covering the costs of divorce. These expenses encompass not just legal bills but also the financial burden of keeping a second residence and the additional costs of recreational activities for the children (Afzal, 2009). These indications suggest changes taking place in the institution of marriage.

2. Social factors: Previously, there existed extended families characterized by interdependence among family members and a closely-knit community. Within the context of today's urban and prosperous culture, there has been a shift in labor patterns, resulting in a decrease in the need for community interaction. This process has led to the emergence of individuality (Sonawat, 2008). The concept of "Systemness" refers to the functional theory that explains how society grows more complex as a result of structural differentiation and specialization. Presently, society exhibits a notable level of specialization in various domains such as employment, education, health care, and transportation. Before this specialization, the family fulfilled various tasks for its members, including economic, educational, recreational, health care, procreative, protection, and affectionate roles. Over time, with the process of industrialization, these duties have been transferred from the family and placed under the control of institutions outside of the house (Sinha, 1984). The institution of marriage has undergone significant transformation due to changes in living conditions, beliefs, conventions, and traditions. In patriarchal societies, girls had little or no influence in family concerns, particularly in marriage affairs. Previously, they were unable to intervene or express any objections, even if their own weddings had been arranged. Previously, divorce was regarded as a social disgrace, but societal attitudes have evolved over time. Women are now publicly expressing their opinions on matters such as choosing a partner and have complete autonomy to seek divorce if the marriage is unsuccessful. Phenomena such as shifts in public opinion are commonly colloquially referred to as 'changing times'. Individuals have increasingly grown more self-centered, leading to a growing feeling of individualization that is causing people to deviate from established societal conventions about marriage. This has resulted in the formation of households without legal marriage, as noted by Herzberger (1993).

3. Psychological factors: Historically, women considered their most significant personal accomplishment and source of fulfillment to be getting married, raising children, and creating an ideal home and family environment. No other aspect of life can offer an equivalent sense

of individual value. Men find self-fulfillment by securing stable career, marrying their ideal partner, and offering financial assistance to their family. Both men and women have distinct and well-defined notions of their separate roles. Nevertheless, the rise in urbanization, the establishment of defined family roles, advancements in home care technology, and rising wealth have diminished the ability of home life to offer stimulation and a sense of value derived from fulfilling personal accomplishments. The source cited is Hines (1997). Furthermore, the principle of individualism fostered the empowerment of both genders, enabling them to actualize their personal capabilities. The increasing financial autonomy of women resulted in calls for more gender equality in family dynamics, namely in the domains of child rearing, decision making, financial matters, and household responsibilities. The departure of established patterns caused more tension in homes due to changes in family norms and role expectations. Women face the challenge of balancing their aspirations for a successful profession and their desire to have children, resulting in conflicts within marriage relationships and disrupted home life.

4. Technological factors: The advent of modern technologies has also emerged as a significant factor in bringing about changes in the institution of marriage. In the past, joint families were prevalent, when grandparents and other elder members held authority over the younger ones. However, nowadays, nuclear families have become more common, with both parents working and children being significantly neglected. They lack any form of surveillance and consequently become socially isolated, relying on mass media and other technologies like as computers, mobile devices, and television. They utilize social networking platforms, which distance them from their family members but bring them closer to the outside world (Kolenda, 1987).

5. Legislative factors: Over the past 50 years or more, the government has implemented legislative measures that have altered the institution of marriage. These policies have introduced legal safeguards that were not present in traditional Hindu society. The original significance, relevance, and purpose of many beliefs, values, goals, and norms of marriage prescribed by the Hindu Shastrakarashave had been diminished. Legislations were enacted under both the British rule and after independence to effectuate favorable modifications in the Hindu Marriage system. The laws pertained to the following aspects: (i) minimum age for marriage (ii) criteria for selecting a spouse (iii) permissible number of spouses in a marriage (iv) grounds for dissolution of marriage (v) regulations on dowry exchange (vi) regulations about remarriage. The legislation has abolished certain inhumane traditions related with marriage, such as the practice of sati. Legislations have both prohibited child marriages and established a minimum age for marriage, which is 18 years for girls and 21 years for guys. The legislation has also clarified the criteria for selecting marriage partners, namely determining who can marry whom. In addition, they have also sanctioned intercaste and inter-religious weddings and established provisions for recorded marriages. Legal frameworks have established provisions for the dissolution of marriage. Men and women are granted equal rights in this matter. Rao (2004)Legislations have established explicit criteria for divorce.Legislative measures have been implemented to provide specific safeguards for women, aiming to avoid the abuse of their vulnerability and disadvantages by others. To

mitigate the dominant influence of patriarchal attitudes on joint family laws, legislative measures have been implemented to ensure gender equality by granting women equal chances, advantages, rights, and amenities.

Changes are inevitable and the institution of marriage is also undergoing several transformations. Technological advancements, economic factors, new educational models, and changes in lifestyles are significant contributors to this transformation. Over time, there have been significant changes in the age at which people get married, the process of choosing a partner, the goals and objectives of marriage, divorce rates, and the economic factors associated with marriage. The shifting marriage patterns have significant consequences, as the rising age at marriage has a substantial impact on reducing fertility rates. Multiple elements, including social, economic, psychological, technological, and regulatory aspects, significantly influence the transformation of the institution of marriage. With the rise of liberalization, individuals are becoming more self-reliant. However, this has also led to an increase in consumerism and the creation of unrealistic goals, resulting in a widening gap between people's wishes and their actual satisfaction. Moreover, the novel ideals that are seen acceptable, or even desirable, by consumerism encompass the pursuit of rapid wealth accumulation through all means available. Within such a context, the preexisting imbalances of power within the family serve as a means to rapidly accumulate riches at whatever expense. Conflicts within this institution are arising as a result of the interplay between tradition and modernization. Emerging marriage patterns, such as same-sex marriages and cohabitation, are gaining prominence in certain regions and are expected to have significant impacts in the future. Despite the prevalence of these contemporary practices, the significance of marriage has not waned. It is still widely and consistently performed by everyone. While its sanctity may be slightly compromised, it does not diminish to the status of a mere civil agreement. Hindu men and women continue to have strong emotional connections within their marriages.

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