



# Hindu Marriage

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# Concept and Definition of Marriage

- Marriage is an important social institution. It is a relationship, which is socially approved. The relationship is defined and sanctioned by custom and law. Children born of marriage are considered the legitimate offspring of the married couple. This legitimacy is important in the matter of inheritance and succession. Thus marriage is not only a means of sexual. It is more or less a universal social institution in India.

# Concept and Definition of Marriage

- It has given a number of definitions and explanations among which the following may be noted. Edward westmark in his 'History of Marriage' defines Marriage as “the more or less durable connection between male and female lasting beyond the mere act of propagation till after the birth of offspring”.

# Concept and Definition of Marriage

- Malinowski says that marriage is a “contract for the production and maintenance of children”. According to Robert H. Lowie, “Marriage is a relatively permanent bond between permissible mates”. Alfred Mc Clung Lee writes “Marriage is the public joining together, under socially specified regulations of a man and women as husband and wife”

# Concept and Definition of Hindu Marriage

- According to the Hindu view, marriage or vivaha is in essence an obligatory ritual which an individual has to perform to be able to start his life as a householder or grhastha. The Vedas prescribe that dharma must be practiced by a man together with his wife. The ritual of marriage enables a man to have a son and without a son a Hindu cannot hope to get salvation or moksha which is the ultimate aim of his life

# Concept and Definition of Hindu Marriage

- It is therefore, regarded as a « sacrament or samskara which purifies the body. Manu declares that marriage is a social institution for the regulation of proper relation between the two sexes. He also says that he is only a perfect man who consists of his wife, himself and his offsprings.

# Concept and Definition of Hindu Marriage

- According to Rgveda, the marriage has two objectives, namely, to enable an individual to perform sacrifices for gods and to have children. The Aitareya Brahmana states that the wife is called a jdyā because in her the husband is born in the form of a son. Apastamba and Jaimini are of the same view that performance of rituals and having sons are the two chief aims of marriage.<sup>5</sup> Manu adds another aim that is the satisfaction of the sex instinct.

# Nature of Hindu Marriage

- according to traditional Hindu Law, Marriage is a sacrament and not a civil contract. It is a 'sanskara' or purificatory ceremony for every Hindu. The Hindu religious books have enjoined marriage as a duty because an unmarried man cannot perform some of the most important religious rites.

# Nature of Hindu Marriage

- Accordingly, marriage in India is a holy performance of religious duties. The union is sacred and indissoluble in life and continues even after the death of the husband. The parents are morally obliged to find mates for their children, and the children to accept the parental choice. The marriage is considered a union between two joint families rather than between two young people. As such in Hindu marriage there is no room for romantic love as the basis of marital selection. There is no room for courtship, because the young people never see each other before marriage. Romantic love could result from marriage but could not be a cause of it.

# HINDU MARRIAGE: A Sacrament

- Marriage being mainly performed for dharma and not for pleasure, it was considered a sacrament among Hindus. Several reasons may be given for considering the Hindu marriage sacred
- (i) dharma was the highest aim of marriage;
- (ii) performance of the religious ceremony included certain rites like havan, kanyadan, panigrahana, etc, which, being based on the sacred formula, were considered sacred

# HINDU MARRIAGE: A Sacrament

- (iii)the rites were performed before Agni(the most sacred God)by reciting mantras from Vedas(the most sacred scriptures)by a Brahmin(the most sacred person on earth),
- (iv)the union was considered indissoluble and irrevocable and husband and wife were bound to each other not only until death but even after the death

# HINDU MARRIAGE: A Sacrament

- ,(v)thought a man performed several sacraments during the course of his life, a woman performed only one sacrament of marriage in her life, hence its greatest importance for her,(vi)emphasis was on chastity of a woman and the faithfulness of a man, and
- (vii)marriage was considered to be a 'social duty 'towards the family and the community and there was little idea of individual interest and aspiration

# Forms of Marriage

- Rite of Brahmana (Brahma) - where the father of the bride invites a man learned in the Vedas and has a good conduct, and gives his daughter in marriage to him after decking her with jewels and costly garments.
- Rite of the Gods (Daiva) - where the daughter is laced with ornaments and given to a priest who duly officiates a sacrifice during the course of performance of this rite.

# Forms of Marriage

- Rite of the Rishis (Arsha) - when the father gives away his daughter after receiving a cow and a bull from the bridegroom.
- Rite of the Prajapati - (Prajapatya) where the father gives away his daughter after blessing the couple with the text "May both of you perform your duties together"

# Forms of Marriage

- Rite of the Asuras (Demons) - when the bridegroom receives a maiden after bestowing wealth to the kinsmen and to the bride according to his own will.
- Rite of the Gandharva - the voluntary union of a maiden and her lover, which arises from desire and sexual intercourse for its purpose. x

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# Forms of Marriage

- Rite of the Rakshasa - forcible abduction of a maiden from her home after her kinsmen have been slain or wounded and their houses broken open.
- Rite of the Pischach - when a man by stealth seduces a girl who is sleeping or intoxicated or is mentally unstable or handicapped