

# **Marriage in Indian Society: Forms, Types, Rules and Changing Patterns**

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In Indian society marriage is a universal phenomenon referred to as the legal union of persons of opposite sexes constituted by acts, ceremony or process and the legality of this union may be established by civil, religious or other means recognized by the laws. Marriage provides for the biological continuity of the society through procreations and also for its cultural continuity by providing a suitable atmosphere for socialization. In the traditional Hindu society, the main aims of marriage are believed to be: dharma (righteousness or the performance of duty), praja(progeny), and rati(pleasure). Dharma was given the top most importance, followed by procreation and sex-gratification. Daftri (1948; 61) has also argued that sexual enjoyment was not regarded as the sole objective of (Hindu) marriage. There have been discernible changes in the pattern of marriages throughout the world. It has played a major role in determining the growth rate of a population through its linkage to marital fertility. Historically, changes in the pattern of marriages have played significant roles with respect to demographic transitions in many countries of Europe (Van de Walle, 1972). Several less developed countries experiencing slowdown in population growth rate demonstrate changes in marriage patterns (Das et al., 1998). In many societies, reproduction is primarily confined within marriage; changes in respect to marriage age and resultant reduction in the proportion of women remaining in the married state are directly linked to fertility and thus determine the future trend of demographic transition. In this paper, forms, types, rules and the changing patterns of marriages in India are discussed and analyzed.