

Significance of Marriage as Social Institution in Indian English Writings

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Abstract

The institution of marriage is the central draft of all the forms of human society which are a part of civilization. Marriage is the deepest as well as the most complex of all human relations because it is a difficult task for two people to lead their life together when they have their independent thinking and way of living. In Indian life, role expectations are highly specific and institutional in marriage, thus a woman's role in family has remained multifarious. Marriage and family, as a set of institutions, also encompass formal and informal, objective and subjective aspects. Family is the fundamental building block of all human civilization. Marriage is the glue that holds it together. The health of culture, its citizens and their children is ultimately linked to the success of marriage. The paper projects the marriage as a social institution in various writings of Indian English writers, which supports the social acceptance of marriage as a social institution through literature.

Keywords

Marriage, Social, Institution, Civilization

1. INTRODUCTION

Marriage is an institution that admits man and woman to family life. It is a stable relationship in which a man and a woman are socially permitted to live together without losing their status in the community. Marriage is not merely concerned with the couple; rather it affects the whole society and future generations. The responsibilities it entrusts a couple with are thus both heavy and delicate. In Hindu view, marriage is not a concession to human weakness, but a means for spiritual growth. Man and woman are soul mates who, through the institution of marriage, can direct the energy associated with their individual instincts and passion into the progress of their souls. Chaucer, the father of English poetry, has beautifully established a very noteworthy feature of the blissful state of marriage and husband-wife relation in his essay *The Merchant's Tale*:

Thilke blissful lyf

That is betwixe an husband and his wyf

And for to live under that holy bond

With which that first God man and woman bond

Non other lyf, sayde he, is worth a bene;

For wedlock is so easy and so clene

That in this world it is a paradys [1].

Since our childhood when children play *home -home*, the sister takes on the role of the *mother* and *brother* becomes the *father* even if he is younger. The *mother* packs lunch for the *father* before sending him to office. She then washes clothes, feeds and puts her doll children to sleep, dresses up and goes *marketing*. Sometimes the 'couple' even has mock fights, mostly over minor matters. At that very moment they are only imitating their parents but with every single day of play, the idea of *married family life* becomes much deep rooted in the minds of the children. The same minds of these children read fairy tales where every body lives happily ever after. This is the dictum they have been brought to believe in and try to make their marriage successful at every cost. Children are always taught, and will always be taught that, there are many paths they will travel in life, but for the greatest self-respect and fulfillment, they are to get but, one traveling companion, keeping their lives warm and fresh by discovering new truths about each other along the way. It is the most common way of life, the path that the majority are called to tread. Fundamentally, marital relations regulate human behavior between persons of opposite sex. It is evolved and developed with the socio-economic progress of mankind. Socially, it is an announcement of the new relationship. Since it is a demographic event, it has a great impact on social welfare. Marriage is considered a main domain of the kinsmen. One of the most important structural sub systems of every society is its kinship system, which is made up of families and other types of kin group.

Every religious tradition and culture encourages marriage as a responsible adult act, as it bears a social and spiritual significance. Even in a society where celibacy is a religious virtue, it is expected that, to become a celibate ascetic one has to first experience marriage and parenthood. Man or woman is considered incomplete without the other.

The sacred principle is referred to as *Purusha* (The Male) and cosmic energy as *Prakritior Shakti* (the female), in the Macrocosm. It is the most important rite to equip man or woman for life. It is meant to bring a strong bond between two individuals [2].

Marriage reflects the loving communion of the spouses and it provides a means of population on the earth and nurturing children. Jeremy Taylor says, “**Marriage is the mother of the world, and preserves kingdoms, and fills cities, churches and Heaven itself. It is that state of thing to which God has designed the present constitution of the world**” [3].

Strong stable marriages are the best way to ensure that children become responsible members of society. Marriage improves the health and longevity of men and women; gives them access to more active and satisfactory married life, increases wealth and assets, boosts children’s chances of success and enhances men’s performance at work and their earning. When one gets rid of the institution altogether there are many harmful consequences. It is not just the marrying of two people together but its success or failure equally affects society. When a family falls apart, it leaves a negative impact on the community because the children of such a family are more likely to be delinquents. On the contrary when a family is strong, the community is positively affected. Every child that goes out into the world from a stable happy home is a blessing to the community, and is able to make a contribution, rather than being a drain on the community. Madhu Kishwar, the editor of feminist paper, *Manushi* says in an interview:

A family is essentially a support system, a form of people living together in more or less permanent alliance. Most human beings cannot live without support, so if people move out of one alliance they try to move in to another [4].

The institution of marriage has been regarded as the central feature of all forms of human society. It lays down the nucleus of society. It is one of the most important social institutions of all the societies of the world. There is no greater event in a family than a wedding, dramatically evoking every possible social obligation, kinship bond, traditional value, impassioned sentiment, and economic resource. In the words of MacIver and Page:

The family has no origin in the sense that, there never existed a stage of human life from which the family was absent to another stage in which it emerged [5].

Marriage is a relationship of man to woman which is recognized by custom and law and involves certain rights and duties in the case of both the persons entering the union. According to Hindu mythology:

Creation of male and female is not an accidental fact or afterthought but the very apex of God’s creative activity. Even more it is the sexual pairing of male and female activity that is the pinnacle of the creative process. To deny the distinction of two sexes is to deny what is integral to God’s ultimate creative act [6].

Marriage is more important than any other institution one is capable to form in this life, as it is not individual’s happiness only, but that of others also, which is affected by their conduct in it. It has been ordained for the protection of society from foul and immoral acts on the one hand, and continuance of the chain of society itself on the other.

The inherent characteristics of marriage are intimacy, companionship, procreation and parenting. Marriage is not simply a celebration or expression of love. It is the world’s most basic and universal institution – the foundation on which families are created and society reproduces itself. Society suffers when procreation and parenting is separated from the definition of marriage. Marriage is the most diverse relationship known to humanity because it unites the two halves of humanity – male and female. It is not a civil right; it is an institution given specific cultural and legal recognition because of the unique benefits it confers on adults, children and society at large.

Humanity has faced certain kind of challenges over and over again since the dawn of civilized existence and it continues to face them even now. Every human being craves for permanence. Man perceives the real world through his senses, but his perception is not same as the real world, as there are aspects of the real world which lie beyond the range of the perception of the senses. Man lives in society and he has created over the centuries many different social systems to achieve various objectives. These social systems have created numerous problems which apparently are quite different in different ages whereas they have been the same in different eras of history, one such institution is *Marriage*. Most ancient societies needed a secure environment for the perpetuation of the species, a system to rule, to handle the granting of property rights and the protection from bloodshed. It is held by many scholars:

The human race must have originally lived in the state of promiscuity, where individual marriage did not exist, where all the men in a horde or tribe had

indiscriminate access to all the women, and where the children born of this union belonged to the community at large [7].

We have beautifully sung lines by Halufield Cosgayne O' Donnogue that reflect the significance of marriage in life:

**Hail, wedded joy! Thou fairest growth of all
That bollm'd in Eden, or surviv'd the fall.
Thy leaves, thy flowers, thy fragrance and thy fruit,
Thou human lips were dumb, and songs were mute
were cheap and precious still, whate'er the price save
of lost innocence and paradise;
Thy leaves; — with love immortal vendor green;
Thy flowers—the beauty of each marriage scene;
Thy fragrance, — is the buds of nuptial bliss,
The wife's first smile—the infant's earliest kiss;
Thy fruits—why name the loveliest fruit on earth,
A numerous offspring clustering round the hearth?
Oh! Might the exulting theme exalt
My song and verse bundle as it flows along [8].**

The subject of the poem has been sung by the sweetest poets; eulogized by the ablest of philosophers and has received from heaven the approving blessing of the divine presence. It carries with it the hopes and the hearts of men; it excites in them the tenderness and the sweetest affection of which they are susceptible; it fills their breasts with feelings of kindness; and affects the pious mind with sentiments of holy friendship and religious duty.

Marriage, says the *Apostle* of Divine Institution “**is honorable in all instituted by God, in the time of man's primitive innocence, as the means of his happiness and perpetuity of his race. In every age this institution has been felt and acknowledged. Men, by experience, have found that it is not good for them to live in the state of celibacy and isolation [9].**”

2. MAJOR FINDINGS ABOUT MARRIAGE IN DIVERSE CULTURE

Marriage was a civil institution in nations until about the mid-5th century A.D. Around that time, Augustine and others philosophized about marriage and the Christian Church started taking an interest in co-opting it. Christians began to have their marriages conducted by ministers in Christian gatherings. It was in the 12th century that the Roman Catholic Church, as well as other orthodoxies, formally defined marriage as a sacrament. In *Roman Catholicism*, the Sacrament of Matrimony is between God, the man and the woman. Most Christian churches give some form of blessing to a marriage; Christian communions, notably Anglicanism,

Catholicism, and Orthodoxy, consider marriage (sometimes termed holy matrimony) to be an expression of grace, termed a sacrament or mystery.

The *Roman institution* of marriage has been lauded as being the first purely humanistic law of marriage, one that is based on the idea of marriage being a free and freely dissolvable union of two equal partners for life. This is quite a simplistic view, as there were many differing forms of marriage in Rome, from the arranged marriages of the elite to the unions of slaves and soldiers. The Roman did not believe in any bond of marriage as institution, but only the mutual commitment towards each other as husband and wife was enough to lead a life mutually. Marriage, for both male and female, granted them a larger network of family members and the security that came with it, and for the woman, her husband's social status.

In the *Medieval Times*, however, marriage was quite different. Women did not have a choice as to whom they would marry, most of the time they did not even know the man before they were married, sometimes men were able to choose their bride. Marriage was not based on love. Husband and wife were generally strangers until they first met. If love was involved at all, it came after the couple had been married and if love did not develop through marriage, the couple generally developed a friendship of some sort. The couple's parents did the arrangement of marriage which was based on monetary worth. The family of the girl who was to be married gave a dowry, or donation, to the boy she was to marry. The dowry went with her at the time of the marriage and stayed with the boy forever. The church ceremony in the middle ages took place outside the church door before entering the church for a nuptial mass. During the ceremony in front of the church doors the man stood on the right side and the woman stood on the left side, facing the door of the church, the reason being that she was formed out of ‘**a rib in the left side of Adam [9].**’

Hincmar, the Archbishop of Rheims (845-882), attempted to resolve the conflicting views about marriage in his treatise *De Divortio*. He held that legitimate marriage had to meet four conditions and that it consisted of three elements. The conditions Hincmar noted were:

**The partners had to be of equal and free rank and must give their consent.
The woman must be given by her father and dowered.
The marriage must be honored publicly.
The union was completed by sexual consummation [9].**

The three elements which marriage rites contained **were sacrament, mutual consent, and sexual union [9].**

Islam considers marriage as both a physical and spiritual bond that endures into the afterlife, also recommends marriage high among other things, it helps in the pursuit of spiritual perfection. The Bahá'í Faith sees marriage as, *a foundation of the structure of society.*

Buddhism does not encourage or discourage marriage, although it does teach how one might live a happily married life.

Hinduism sees marriage as a sacred duty that entails both religious and social obligations. Old Hindu literature in Sanskrit gives many different types of marriages and their categorization ranging from *Gandharva Vivaha* (instant marriage by mutual consent of participants only, without any need for even a single third person as witness) to normal (present day) marriages, to *Rakshasa Vivaha* (Marriage performed by abduction of one participant by the other participant usually but, not always with the help of other persons).

Marriage was well established in the Vedic age. The history of ancient India may be said to commence with the period during which the *Rig Veda* was composed. Vedic literature is the prime source of all cultural manifestations in India. Marriage was considered as a social and religious institution and a necessity for two individuals of opposite sex who had attained full physical development. **Woman as wife is denoted by the words *Jaya, Jani, Patni*. *Jaya: shares the husband's affection, Jani: the mother of the children, Patni: the partner in the observance and performance of religious sacrifices* [10].**

Some references show that the household fire was tended by the husband and the wife together. Marriage was made obligatory for all girls by about 300 B.C. for the society found that there were pitfalls in the path of an unmarried woman than those in the way of an unmarried man, as it prevented sexual immorality to a great extent. From the religious point of view, says a Vedic passage, a person who is unmarried remains unholy and is not fully eligible to participate in sacraments. This continued to be the view of society in subsequent ages. Even in the *Vedic Age* (1500-1200 B.C.) women had considerable freedom to move about in the family and society. Marriage used to take place at the age of sixteen or seventeen. From the ancient times marriage among the Hindus was a well-established institution. For the Aryans, it was a very sacred ritual in which women held a high esteem. The husband and wife constituted an indivisible unit in society.

In the *Upanishadic period* woman was viewed not as an object of sensuous pleasure, but as an inseparable partner in life performing the religious obligation on man. Family, house and religion are always co-related to one

another; from the mythological point of view every religion considers marriage as a holy institution. A Vedic passage reads:

Man is only one half and he is not complete till he is united with a wife. Hindu mythology has the concept of *Ardhnarishwara*- half female and half male combination to make the perfect whole: *Shiva and Shakti* [11].

In referring to a divine couple the name of the female is often taken first eg: *Radha Krishna, Gauri Shankar, Lakshmi Narayan, Sita Ram* showing the exalted position held by women.

A woman's existence merged with that of a man through the performance of a ceremony and hence it was imperative for the couple to carry out their promises made before supreme witness: *Agni*. In the *Brahadaranyaka Upanishad*, the ideal picture of a wife (*Patni*) and the other half of the husband (*Pati*) have been beautifully delineated by a very telling simile of the half of a shell [12]. The development of sutra literature is generally assigned to the period from 500- 200 B.C. The nucleus of *Grihya- Sutra* in *Upanishad* is a treatise dealing with rituals beneficial to a house (*grihyahitahgriyah*). These epics depict the importance of marriage in life, and woman not as an object of sensuous pleasure, but as an inseparable partner-in-life. *VIVAH* (marriage) according to the religious scriptures is one of the major *Sanskaras* binding the couple not only in this life but also in the life thereafter.

For a woman, marriage is irrevocable and indissoluble for all times. In Hindu society marriage is supposed to be a social obligation, for it is believed that marriage is not only a means of continuing the family but also a way of repaying one's debt to the ancestors. It is a life-long commitment of wife and husband and is the strongest social bond that takes place between a man and a woman. The norms set up for regulating the marital behavior in Hindu society is closely connected with religious duties and hence the impact of religious duties has more effect than any other element. *Grahashta Ashram* (the householder stage), the second of the four stages of life, begins when a man and a woman marry and start a household.

The ancient traditions of marriage are still practiced as they were earlier. The marriage ceremony contains much of the same wording as was used in the middle ages. Today, man and woman stand on the same sides of the altar as they did in the middle ages. The wedding ceremony includes a ring exchange, and the ring is put on the fourth finger, the same finger it was placed on during the middle ages. Wearing of ring in the fourth finger followed by feast after the marriage with the

family is still followed by the Christian community even today as was in the middle ages. The diverse traditions and cultures are followed by different community to justify the commitment of two people as husband and wife through their life. In the present society, whatsoever traditions are followed, they are not new but are being followed from ages. The duties of husband and wife are also clearly defined in the epics that help in attaining the marital happiness. Lasting happiness is attained when the couple emulates the golden rule – be as enduring as *Shiva*; be an *Annapurna* eternal provider as *Parvati*. *Shiva* is the ideal husband the most carefree one. He leaves the entire responsibly to feed *Ganesha*, *Kartikeya* and an ever-increasing army of ghosts to *Parvati* but she never complains and provides for all. If marriages have broken – the inference is obvious.

Family, as an institution, is to be found even in the most primitive of human societies in the world. The Vedic word *Dampatti*, denoting jointly the husband and the wife, etymologically means the joint owners of the house. **“A family is a community of people living together in an environment which is center of healing, a place where one can live, where one can admit one’s frustrations, stupidities and anger to people who do not have to retaliate [2].”**The family is by far the most important institution in society. Family is formulated by marriage, as two people get married they form a family, which moves further, and get benefit and give benefits to society. It includes relations between parents and their children and also extends to grandparents. The family disintegrates when the marital relations break, as in the case of divorce. Historically it has been transformed from a more or less self-contained unit into a definite and limited organization of minimum size, consisting primarily of the original contracting parties. It is a unit of society, society to state and state to nation. Kate Millet believes that:

The fate of the three patriarchal institutions, the family, the society and the state are interrelated as co-operation between family and the large society is essential else both would fall apart [13].

For the existence of the family it is essential to have the existence of the blood relations. The members of the family have generally the same ancestors. The family does not mean a place or location but, is rather a web of mutual relations between the members of family, in the same way in which the meaning of society lies not in its being a group of human beings but in being a web of relations between them. The foundation of the family is based upon man’s biological and psychological needs. In the modern age many functions of the family have shifted to other institutions, nevertheless the psychological needs cannot be satiated without a family. The members of the family are bound in the ties of duties

and rights. Proper social organization depends upon proper organization of families; if the families disintegrate, society will never be safe.

A person is socialized in the family. The child’s first school is his home and family, which conditions his attitude and behavior towards the elders in society, and which imparts practical education to the child concerning the customs in society, conduct, and other important elements of culture, preservation of health, love, sympathy, and cooperation. It is in the family that the child acquires important qualities as sincerity, sympathy, self-submission, responsibility and character which help the child in becoming an important and responsible member of society. In the family the child gets full freedom of expressing his ideas and views. Psychologists have incontestably proved that the proper development of child is impossible without a good environment in the family. The 2003 report supported by Rutgers University states:

Indeed, if there is a story to be told about marriage over recent decades, it is not that it’s withering away from adults, but that it is withering away from children [14].

Marriage is a legally, socially, and religiously recognized interpersonal relationship, usually intimate and sexual, and often created as a contract. Marriages are perpetual agreements with legal consequences, terminated only by the death of one party or by formal dissolution processes such as divorce and annulment. It is not just a social convenience or an invention for living together; it is ordained by God and patterned to reflect the loving relationship. Many religions have extensive teachings regarding marriage. With the changing time the role has changed but the basic idea remains unchanged.

In all the rich and various cultures flung throughout the ecosphere, in society after society, whether tribal or complex, and however bizarre, human beings have created systems of publicly approved sexual union between man and woman that entails well-defined responsibilities of mother and father. Not all these marriage systems look like our own, which is rooted in a fusion of Greek, Roman, Jewish, and Christian culture. Yet everywhere, in isolated mountain valleys, parched deserts, jungle thickets, and broad plains, people have come up with some version of marriage. It makes an incomplete human being a complete one. It makes him/her a grown up person and gives him/her responsibilities whether those responsibilities are to feed and clothe the wife or to assist the husband. Marriage is supposed to take a person out of the hectic lifestyle that one is in and place him or her in an organized environment giving a path to follow in life and a shoulder to lean on.

In short, marriage arranges one's life. It helps to safeguard one's faith i.e. it stops one from committing such acts by which she/he could be considered immoral. It is the most basic significant social relationship among human kind. The psychological adjustment of the members of the family to one another in the course of its inexorable changes creates perhaps the most important series of the numerous problems, personal and social, engendered by an association which affects so intimately and in such incalculable ways, which more than any other engrosses, expresses, and circumscribes the personality of man.

Men and women are generically like in certain respects, but they are also unlike and they are complementary [15].

In the Indian society it is very difficult to survive alone. It is supposed that woman is safe in the boundaries of the house and with a person i.e. her husband, no matter how she is treated. In such situation women never try to step out of the house, but struggle with the situations to make them favorable.

Marriage is a serious commitment, one that is not taken lightly for most people. In light of modern day, the old tradition has changed with the new development and education. In the present time the meaning of marriage has changed. *Collins Paperback English Dictionary* states under the heading of marriage that it is the contract made by a man and a woman to live as husband and wife but, in India marriage is not completely looked upon as a contract rather it is seen as a spiritual union. The *Hutchinson Encyclopedia* defines marriage as a, **"Legally or culturally sanctioned union [16]"**.

According to the dictionary and the encyclopedia, marriage is supposed to be a relationship that joins a man and a woman together via contract. When one looks at marriage, one finds a completely different picture. It seems as though modern couples sign a contract with a get-out-when-ever-you-like-upon-trivial-matters clause, which enables both the husband and the wife to scrap their marriage contract and break their wedding oaths whenever they feel like leaving their partner and move on.

Today, the world is witnessing a new era where marriage is no longer considered necessary or even significant for a relationship. Today people are changing the traditional roles and are creating their own rules, which leaves an adverse impact not only on the lives of couples but also on society. When two people are tied in life long bond of marriage, different relations are formed that grow the family. Marriage is a source of relations where apart from blood relation, relations are multiplied, as one get new relations and can equally rely on them.

Marriage gives a form of identity and provides security and honor. Security means the certainty that a person has, that will not reject her or him under any circumstances. Honor is simply through relationship and is not affected by intelligence, money or one's contribution to the family. To speak of a person without talking about his relationship as husband, wife, son, or daughter is not possible e.g. whether in school, college records, military, prison or office records the relationship of the individual in question is invariably mentioned.

According to the social anthropologists, sociologists and historians, the institution of marriage in human society gradually evolved to its present stage starting from promiscuous relationship between male and female. Despite changing circumstances there are certain problems being faced by couples; undoubtedly divorce rate is increasing day by day, and still there is no other better option than marriage from the ancient time. In Indian society the discord arises because:

The modern Indian wife is confronted with the problem of multiplicity of roles she has to perform, the modern husband is experiencing a value conflict as he is being pulled in to two opposite directions by images and expectations of the traditional and modern wife [17].

This relationship must be nurtured and maintained for the welfare of all; without marriage, the development of the society is inevitable. Controversies apart, marriages are still made in heaven for the average Hindu couple. It is a lifelong commitment and is the strongest social bond between a man and a woman. The human society developed and redefined the institution of marriage over a long period of time. Although, scientific achievements have provided the world with all kind of amenities, the human being has not changed at basic level. The human instinct such as love, affection, joy, jealousy, hate, fear, and pride has not changed over millenniums. People still need stable family environment and friends to share life experiences. No doubt with the changing circumstances, the significance of marriage is decreasing. It is considered as something secondary, not necessary. To make a family now the new generation is adopting children from orphanages but, the fact is that for giving the child love, affection, attachment, warmth of relations a family is required.

The surface which marriages customarily present to the world is often misleading. Indeed, one of the central paradoxes in this most intimate relationship is that although almost everybody has some personal and immediate experience of it, and although there is a vast array of social research that has looked at marriage from the outside the main impediments of a compatible marriage are technical, cultural and ecological change,

identity crises, tension in marriage, less tolerance, ego clashes. Despite these impediments to a compatible marriage there is no substitute of marriage because no alternative has yet been discovered in which a man and a woman can relate to each other in the way they can in the framework of marriage. As Mount (1982) in a review of the experience of *Marriage and Family History* comments:

It is the essence of marriage that it is private and apart from the rest of society. Its 'selfishness' or 'exclusiveness' is not its undertone but its heart and soul [18].

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature has served the cause very well concentrating on the problems of life and has looked at individual problem through a social frame. Marriage has been the background of social issues in all different ages. Literature in scriptures provides sufficient proof in this regard. Varied world of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* is packed with marriages of varied kind. Important ones are providing clue to main action. Talk about marriage of *Dusheratha* with *Kaikaiye* or *Santanu* with *Ganga*, the whole action is generated and this continues till date when we hear a modern writer Vikam Seth that his family is the most important thing and comes first.

Previously, a family crisis of the nature of a maladjustment between husband and wife was overcome by the constraining influence of the elders, kinsmen and social mores and traditions and the family was saved from disintegration but, with the existing loss of respect for the power of these modes of social control husband and wife are deprived of guide or mediator and in a fit of temper or even vengeance they destroy delicately loving nurtured sapling which is the family.

In the modern time, the institution of family is undergoing rapid changes due to which the structure of the family is changing. The tie of marriage is the basis of the family. Weakening of marriage ties results in weakening of family ties. Now-a-days marriage is not a religious ritual but merely a social contract which can easily be broken on the grounds of boredom, or some kind of misunderstanding. Consequently, there are an increasing number of divorces. A major cause of the weakening of marriage ties is the failure of men to adapt to new circumstances created by the education of women.

Previously the woman was completely dependent on her husband. Now being educated, they also earn as much as their husbands or at least possess the capacity to do so. They have come to recognize their rights and want to be equal to men in every aspect of life. They now demand

the same fidelity, which men demand from them. When the men do not want to have women on an equal footing with themselves, the result is a conflict, due to which the family tends to become disorganized. Now-a-days the agreements objectives, ambitions, thoughts and ideals of the family are coming to an end or tending in that direction. Men, women, children have their own ideals, their own plans, in which they brook no interference whatever. In this way though living together, moving together, no one is concerned with the other. The house becomes a hotel where the husband and wife are employed. A similar distance is seen to exist between them but, the fact is that the social structure has to stand at any cost. Outside this structure progress is impossible even in the most advanced part of the world.

Keeping in view, the requirement of the society, and enormous challenges that are globally faced through high exposure, it is very important that the ailing areas of the institution of marriage are looked after and its strength is ensured. There is no questioning of the relevance of marriage because this institution was, is and will forever be inevitable as there is no better option for the betterment of man, woman, and society. The requirement of the time is to redefine its norms with the demand of changing time.

Social institutions and their impact on human lives and society has always been the subject of interest of authors in all periods. Men and women writers equally participated in the presentation of their ideas without being confined to specific area. The father of Indo Anglian fiction R. K. Narayan is the most unpretentious and unassuming among those writers who have successfully experimented with the novel form. In his novels he portrays the attachment between husband and wife for whom love is not an elemental force and marriage remains a sacred institution for them.

Husband wife relationship has been the primary subject frequently used by the writers and all the other relations are secondary in their works. K. R. Venkataramani's **Murugan: the Tiller (1927)**, R.K. Narayan's **The Dark Room (1938)**, **The English Teacher(1945)**, **The Financial Expert (1952)**, and K. Nagarajan's **The Chronicles of Kedaram** portray the husband-wife relations. Depiction of the social scene has always been the strong suit of women novelists. Kamala Markandaya, NayantaraSahgal, Shashi Deshpande, Jhabvala, and Anita Desai portray the relationship between husband and wife very minutely. The relationship of man and woman has always been the subject of literature.

The novels of 30s and 40s show individuals seeking fulfillment and peace by spiritualizing their desires within the framework of marriage, religion and rules of the family. By staying in family they are able to guide

each other. Common image of woman appears in various literatures of the world. Woman as mother and protector, as inspirer and cherisher, as motivating primal force, as the chaste, as suffering wife, as charmer are some of the facets familiar in literature. The figure of Indian woman is portrayed in the novels where she is her husband's wife. We see the figure of Indian woman in Shobha De's *Snapshot*, where she shows the importance of institution. Despite holding a higher position in society, when she comes back home she is her husband's wife. Remember, a woman in our society is nothing without a husband.

Study as much as you wish, win prizes get a good job, but don't let these things affects you or, gives you a big head. You may be the Prime Minister of India tomorrow, but when you come home, you automatically become you husband's wife. If you forget, you are finished your marriage is finished [19].

If the novels written in 30s and 40s are deeply analyzed we will find that the couples had deep respect for the marital relation and the female protagonists had deep sense of tolerance and were always ready to face every problem just to make their marital relation survive. Many writers have dealt with the theme of marriage and its problems. All have portrayed man and woman who adjust with the situations and make their marriage successful. Undoubtedly, there were problems in the marital relations but writers suggested the way to cope up with the situations.

Bhabani Bhattacharya believed that, **“Art must teach, but unobtrusively, by its vivid interpretation of life. Art must preach, but only by virtue of its being a vehicle of truth. If that is propaganda, there is no need to eschew the word [20].”**In his novel *Music of Mohini* Bhattacharya describes the difficulty of a city-bred Brahmin girl when she is married to Jaydev with his roots in village. On the contrary Jaydev's sister Rooplekha is village-bred, and married in the city. Rooplekha tells Mohini,

“You are city – bred, village –wed. I am village –wed, city – bred. We share one common lot; we have been pulled up by the roots [21].”

Shashi Deshpande catches the subtle psychological complexities of the individual mind. The protagonists do not disregard the importance of marriage as a social institution, and seek solution to their marital problems. In her novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, the protagonist Sarita attempts to resolve the problems in the married life by the process of temporary withdrawal from the family followed by an objective appraisal of the whole problem. She returns to her paternal home to escape from her husband Manohar's sadism, to make her married life

successful and worth working. Her circumstances lead to her becoming mentally mature who considers marriage as worthy of preservation.

Kamala Markandaya's novels revolve round the paramount theme of East and West Encounter. She depicts the husband-wife relationship from every angle and shows that in spite of the difference there is no better relationship than this. She gives a true picture of the Indian wife who is the mixture of moral energy and spiritual gift. Rukmani in *Nectar in a Seive*, married to Nathan, faces a lot of difficulty in life. They can hardly arrange for a square meal a day, but she is content to live in the soulful quietude of her little village. Like a patient Job she tides her crises and patiently waits for the time to be better. Her philosophy is one of fortitude. She believes that, **“a man's spirit” is “given to him to rise above his misfortunes.”** Man's wants are many and cannot be fulfilled [22].

Anita Desai does not challenge the utility of marriage as an institution but discloses the inner psyche of the characters through their relations. She does not believe that **“marriage is a farce as all human relationships are [23].”** She has definite idea of a happy conjugal life. As marriage is a union of two different minds, some adjustment is bound to be there from both the sides: husband and wife. In her novel *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* she portrays a woman character Sita who marries a man of her father's choice, but with time she loses her zest for life. The cause of her grief is that she is bored, dull, unhappy and runs away to Maroni to escape from “her duties and responsibilities; from order and routine from life and city [24].” But later she realizes that she cannot stay indefinitely, and decides to go back and face the fact of life.

Nayantara Sahgal and Ruth Praver Jhabvala project the married couples and their married life in their novels. In Sahgal's *A Time to be Happy* the protagonists Maya and Kusum accept the changed life after marriage and honor the institution. In Ruth Praver Jhabvala's *Esmond in India* the protagonist Gulab regards the institution as pious and her husband as God.

Indian novelists have dealt with family relationships with high seriousness because the traditional heritage of India gives importance to the family unit. They have significantly dealt with the theme of man woman relationship. They believe that, **“a novel must have a social purpose. It must place before the reader something from the society's point of view [20].”**Therefore, writers consider marriage as an honorable institution throughout their works, and also give the solution of the associated problems.

3. CONCLUSION

The review of literature justifies that marriage is the noblest way to journey through life. It is a relationship between individuals, which often forms the foundation of a family and include social and religious elements. People, marry not because it is their social duty to perpetuate the institution of the family or because the scriptures recommend matrimony or because they fall in love with each other but because they lived in a family as children and cannot get over the feeling that being in a family is the only proper way to live in society and to be in a family it is essential to marry as, in almost all the societies one or the other form of marriage exists.

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