



FACULTY OF JURIDICAL SCIENCES

COURSE: B.A.LL.B 204

Semester II

SUBJECT: SOCIOLOGY-II

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Lecture-5



LECTURE 5:

Forms of Marriage: Every society has certain forms of pairing arrangements to which we call marriage but remaining single or pairing without marriage (living together) is fast emerging as an acceptable form of lifestyle in the modern world. The trend towards maintaining an unmarried lifestyle is related to the growing economic independence of young people. Singleness is an attractive option for those who do not want to limit their sexual intimacy to one lifetime partner or have the burden of children over the past 50 years, living alone has become one of the most rapidly increasing social trends. The single life—for both men and women—is not viewed as a social taboo anymore. Eric Klinenberg, professor of sociology at New York University, in his recently published book *Going Solo* (2012) revealed that there is a fascinating rise in the numbers of ‘singletons’ (people who live alone). Such people regard solitary living as a sign of accomplishment. This is appealing to millions of people around the world. India, along with China and Brazil, has recorded the fastest growth of single-person households. This change has affected families, communities, cities and personal lives. The main forms of marriage are:

1. Monogamy: It is a form of marriage in which one man is married to one woman at a time. It allows one wife to have one husband till death and only divorce separates them apart. This form of marriage is the only universally recognized form and is the predominant even in societies where other forms exist. In Western countries and the United States, an increasing number of married people end their relationship with one spouse (leading to subsequent divorce) and remarry another. This pattern of marrying is called serial monogamy. It means a person is allowed to have several spouses in his or her life at a time.
2. Polygamy: Some cultures allow an individual to have more than one spouse at the same time. Having more than one marriage partner at a time is known as polygamy. It was practised in most of the societies of the world but now the trend is towards monogamy. However, as anthropologist George Murdock (1959) found, 80 per cent of societies had some type of polygamy. There are three basic forms of polygamy:
 - (a) Polygyny: It refers to plurality of wives or having more than one wife at the same time. In many societies, having several wives is a mark of prestige, distinction and status. It is very common among Muslims in Africa and in Middle East and Asia.
 - (b) Polyandry: It is a type of marriage in which a woman can have several husbands (plurality of husbands) or two or more husbands simultaneously. It is very rare form of marriage. Wherever it is practised, the cohusbands are usually brothers, either blood brothers or clan brothers and are of the same generation. It is known as adelphic or fractural polyandry. The Todas (South India) and Khasa (North India) are the famous examples of polyandry. One motive in this case would be the maintenance of land and property within one family.
 - (c) Group Marriage: It is one more type of polygamy, in which several or many men marry to several or many women. It is practised in some indigenous societies.