ATTITUDE OF MODERN SOCIETY TOWARDS LOVE, MARRIAGE AND SEX

The whole animate Universe is made up of two sexes - male and female. This duality keeps the creation active, energetic and progressive. Though male and female are two but they always try to be one. It does not, however, mean that there are no contradictions. They seem one. But this capability of becoming one consists in differences. If actually they could become one there would have been no essence of life remaining. It is this difference which creates, and keeps the bond of attraction active between the two.

Almost every branch of learning has tried to go deep into this man-woman relationship, which is the base of life. Many poetic philosophies of life have been based upon this relationship. What makes man different from other animals is his inquisitiveness. While others live simply, man is always curious to know the mystery of life. He questions himself, puzzles himself in the matter of creation. That is why he cannot live completely, complacently. From time to time many traditions, many civilizations have emerged, flourished and then declined. But there are some ever burning questions which find their place in every tradition and every civilization. They never become stale. The most important of them is the question of man-woman relationship which is relevant in every society since time immemorial.

In olden times it was difficult to ask and to know others views about love, marriage and sex but we cannot ignore the fact that the question was there, though not on the lips of people, it was rooted deep in their hearts. Love, marriage and
sex are most fundamental for the existence, organization and functioning, not only of social life but also for the creation, sustenance and continuation of the very human beings who constitute society.

With the change of times, science and technology have provided more and more time and luxury of life to human beings. On the one hand, it has increased their complexities, and on the other, they have become more outspoken and frank to know and let others know their views. The changing attitude towards love, marriage and sex which are central interests in the life of all men and women is studied not only by sociologists but by a large number of socio - psychologists anthropologists and educationists too.

It was twenty three years ago in 1973, when Dr. Promilla Kapur wrote;

Talking and expressing opinions about love marriage and sex is comparatively a recent phenomenon in India. By and large people today are becoming curious to know what different sections of society think, feel and do about these important issues. In the absence of any scientific and any detailed study of the contemporary attitudes or behaviour, or of the emerging change in the attitudes towards these significant aspects of human life, people generally base their impressions and knowledge on speculation and unscientific generalizations.¹

It is in 1994 that Shobha De writes,

There is no denying the new glasnost where the subject of sex is concerned. More people are discussing it today than ever before. More articles have been written on the subject during the past two
years than in the last decade. Television talk-shows discuss the hitherto taboo topics such as pre-marital sex and child abuse with the naturalness that was previously reserved for 'family subjects' such as caring for the aged and small-scale investments.

In between we have covered a long period of scientific evolution, the impact of which could be seen in the form of Freudian psychology. Makers of TV Serials, movies, publishers of women's magazines and writers of the subconscious and the unconscious have unanimously made use of psychology. Fifty years ago sex was really a taboo, people were neither aware of the new ideas in this field, nor were they cautious about the dangers of sex. Life could be called simple. Now-a-days a child is brought up before TV, watching and knowing the dangers of AIDS, use of contraceptive pills etc. The whole atmosphere compels us to go and find out what the reality is. What are the new ideas behind the vital fluid of society? Though the task is difficult yet the challenging spirit of a writer, social scientist and psychologist always tries to find out the base of human relationship, its impact on them, and the ever changing values of basic needs of life.

Some sociologists find the cause of changing values of love, marriage and sex in modern society, in the changing position of women in society, Dr Promilla Kapur observes:

Socially one of the most remarkable changes has been the emancipation of womankind. This socio-economic emancipation has been a product of, and an instrument in the changes in their lives, their goals, status and life patterns. And this change in their lives has also affected and is being affected by their views and behaviour patterns with regard to every field of individual and social activity. For
such a basic change almost a social revolution - affects not only the family structure and relationships, but also penetrates every other field of social activity-economic, political, educational and social!'

Our novelists, the emancipated women of the modern age, though can not be called the children of the age of sex-revolution in India (started as late as 1980), yet certainly, are living and writing in this revolutionary age. Their writings reflect the changing values of love, marriage and sex in the modern society. Both the authors have tried to depict the complex human behaviour in different styles of their own. But the origin of their themes, thoughts, is this society, in which they are born, brought-up and living. Before knowing their views on the particular theme of love, marriage and sex we have tried to know the attitude of modern society towards these vital issues of life, through the works of eminent sociologists and psychologists.

LOVE: Love has created a great deal of confusion about its nature and real meaning. At one point it is compared to faith in God and at another point it is supposed to lie beyond the reach of scientific study. According to Khanna;

Love can be defined as friendship plus sex. Friendship here means an intimate mental relationship which is made up of several factors, viz. (i) understanding, companionship, mutual interests, social adjustment. Sex is a physical desire based on bodily attractions. All these elements of love must be patterned in a variety of ways in a close relationship and must achieve a harmonious co-ordination, failing which true and lasting love between a man and a women can not exist.⁴

It means love and sex, though different from each other, are two aspects of one thing. They are as old as human heart beats. Sex was considered right of every
person and every person used to have it. We know, there was neither society, nor constitution in the beginning of creation. In those days men and women used full play of their imagination. They loved each other and battled and struggled sometimes, for the possession of their beloved one. In this connection the institution of marriage would have been established. Thus, we can say that love, marriage and sex, though may be treated individually, are inter-related terms. Love may exist in both.

Love is an important aspect of human involvement and a significant emotive phenomenon, but little is known about the conception of love. "There is no word more often pronounced than love" wrote Bonstetten many years ago, "yet there is no subject more mysterious of that which touches us most nearly we know least. We measure the march of the stars and we do not know how we love." 5

A large part of the available printed material on love is either poetic, humanistic, literary or erotic and pornographic which describes it as a passionate experience. It is very seldom that socio-psychological attention has been given to love. Freud gives the impression that love is a bi-product of repressed sexual desire. But there are forms of love beyond this sexual love. Chesser points out that;

Our instincts can be roughly divided into three classes! ego instinct, such as self-preservation, sex instinct, including the maternal instinct, and social instinct which in human beings include altruism. 6

For centuries moralists have tried to solve the problem of making a distinction between love and sex. Love was regarded as purely spiritual and therefore vir-
Once the element of sex entered into love it was looked upon as suspect. Gradually the change came in the individual conception of love and sex. Now, on first thought love and sex might appear to be one and the same thing. But this may not be so. The definition of both might clarify this confusion, though it is very difficult to define them. Love is such a complicated feeling that any definition would be only an oversimplification of this entire complex phenomenon. Love is a loose concept which may vary in meaning for different people.

"Love is considered to be sexual whenever the genitals are directly or indirectly stimulated but whenever they are not involved love is non-sexual." Love is not merely another name for sex instinct as many people understand by it. This instinct existed long before men developed the capacity of loving. Love needs expression. It needs exercise to come out. The sex instinct is found since the beginning of the human species and it is believed that like other animals man would also have blindly followed his impulse of mating, which is no more than mere copulation in thoughtlessly following the urge to procreate with a female partner. It was never more than an anonymous outlet for physical desire. Chesser explains;

In the process of human evolution a change emerged in human consciousness about a million years ago which made man conscious of his willingness to co-operate and help others as well as of having a concern for others. With this development men started feeling the need for companionship with a particular female partner, and he desired more than purely physical gratification of the blind sex instinct with an anonymous human being. This emerging human need infused new meaning into the sexual act. It infused it with new tenderness and with a new sense of loyalty. It was only when a certain level of human evolution had been reached that love appears as an emer-
gent quality and capability in the human species.

Most people believe love to be pure, should be devoid of sex. But the morality of love and sex varies from generation to generation. While giving a synopsis of the history of romantic love as traced by Reiss, Stephens writes,

At many points in the romantic love movement, it was also thought that to consummate love with sexual intercourse was to destroy it. Love, to last must remain free of marriage and sex... In the early phases of courtly love there was often little sexual element involved. It consisted mainly of admiration from a distance, with perhaps a kiss on the forehead as a reward for heroic duty or a newly composed or well sung ballad. The knights and troubadours, for a while at least, were content with the idealistic element of their love and even seemed to glory their self denial...

By the sixteenth century the lover's deeds began to be regularly rewarded by carnal favours rather than with a kiss on forehead...

In the course of a few centuries the system broke-down and sexual intercourse became the reward which was informally taken; by the middle of the sixteenth century extra-marital coitus was formally given as the reward. Gradually however, the conventions of courtly love became "corrupted," that is, the sexual component became less sublimated, and love and sex were joined, as were love and marriage.

Whatever be the origin, love undoubtedly is one of the basic and fundamental needs of human beings. But what is love? There are many definitions of love given by many critics and learned scholars, and researchers. According to Overstreet,
The love of a person implies not the possession of that person but the affirmation of that person. It means granting him gladly the full right to his unique humanness, one does not truly love a person and yet seek to enslave him - by law, or by bonds of dependence and possessiveness. Whenever we experience a unique love we are moved by the transforming experience toward a capacity for good will.  

Similarity of tastes and interests is not necessary in love. It can be inspired by physical or spiritual attraction - as in the Bhagwat where references of the love feelings are expressed as a form of devotion, as a means to attain salvation. In Popenoe's words.

Love makes one see the best rather than the worst in a partner. It is an emotion that remains and grows more valuable long after the biological mating impulse may have lessened. This sexually coloured comradeship is so important that people often speak of it as love.

There are different elements of love but one basic element remains constant - a conscious or unconscious set of need satisfaction. It is derived from a specific object or person like a wife, brother, mother, home or country. An individual starts loving a particular object or person because certain conscious or unconscious needs which he considers important are fulfilled while loving that person or object. "Love", writes Radhakrishnan, "is predominantly a subjective experience, of which the essential components are imagination and desire... much of the cause of love is in the lover, and the object is only an accident".  

The experience of love is always associated with the individual needs. By and large it is defined as an emotional feeling that always urges for satisfaction or
fulfilment. The child psychologists tell us that the child learns to love only those things that are significant to him. Again only those things are significant for him which satisfy the basic needs like food and protection. His experience of life is influenced and coloured by gratification or denial of these needs. As he grows in life the spectrum of his needs expands on the physical, as well as emotional planes. He develops the feeling of love or emotion towards those objects which satisfy his needs. In turn the tenderness of love and emotion, which he receives from the world around him, makes his life worth living and meaningful. Gradually he realises that the feeling of love involves both give and take.

Social researchers also assure us that the degree of fulfilment of the emotional needs for the warmth of love shape the personality of the child and the process of his mental and intellectual growth. His perception of this world, his reaction to events and indeed his total behaviour is influenced by the quality and degree of love that he receives. Therefore the emotion of love is very significant for the development of the identity and total personality of man.

No doubt, love is a complex phenomenon, yet it is meaningful and significant for interpersonal relationships. Understanding of love complex is necessary to know the views and conceptions of various people of a particular group as well as to understand the socio-psychological dimensions of interpersonal interactions of the people of that social group. Many sociologists including those who have done a good deal of research on man-woman relationship reveal to us the present day attitude of society towards the theme of love.

India has experienced vital changes in the last five or six decades. The
period after Second World War made the world compact due to various scientific inventions. While the space became shorter people's views became broader than before. Whatever happens in one part of the world, can be seen in a moment in the other part. The most remarkable change has been industrialization and urbanisation in India. It also gave chance to women of middle and upper class society to come out of the four walls of their home and earn money. The changed socio-economic condition of women has brought tremendous changes in their status and outlook. Since woman is the pivot around which love, marriage and sex move, a little change in her outlook brings great changes in the values of love, marriage and sex in society. There are various aspects of love, but this study deals only with the love relationship between man and woman.

In ancient India, even upto the beginning of twentieth century love was taken as a sort of unconditional devotion of a woman towards a man. The concept of this love was all sacrificing and unselfish for the sake of the bliss of loving without having any demands in return for love. Various mythological and religious scriptures are replete with the altruistic love of a woman towards her master. Famous story of Mira-Shrikrishna is nothing but unconditional, devotional love of Mira for her Lord. Gradually love was found as an experience or feeling which is a give and take transaction. Women felt that love should be provided by attention, and comfort given in return for love. But in modern society the value of love has totally changed. The shift is now from all sacrificing and unselfish towards all satisfying and advantageous. Promilla Kapur observes the position of love in her study on love, marriage and sex upon working women in India, "It was not convinced as all sacrificing or unselfish but as an attachment which is developed almost only for personal gain and satisfaction and for one's own advantage and exists only till it continues to pay dividends."
A change has also been noticed in the conception of romantic love. Previously it was believed that love is a spontaneous feeling which is altruistic in nature. It was also believed that romantic love exists for its own sake, in the form of involuntary emotion towards another person for its own joy, satisfaction even without knowing the loved person well. The literature of this period is also full of love-at-first-sight. Later education made women believe that love was not an aimless emotion but was developed with a specific motive or purpose in view. Now, the shift in modern society, is from romantic to rational love. People now believe that mature love is rational and is not based on infatuation, romantic sentiments, or on imagination, but on realities of day to day life.

The change is also visible specially in the case of working women with regard to contribution of a man’s love towards a woman’s life. For non-working woman a man’s love is the most important thing in her life, because she is receiver and he a giver. Earlier most of the women believed that a man’s love was the most valuable thing for a woman and that it made her life rich and fulfilled, if and when she received it. Later, when women came out of the home and became independent they started believing that if a man’s love was sincere and genuine it contributed primarily towards satisfaction in a woman’s life, whereas if it was insincere it contributed primarily towards dissatisfaction and disappointment in her life.

As for as love with or without sex is concerned it was general tendency in India, specially among women that sincere love before marriage is love without sex. The word sex without love was taboo and nobody thought of it. Gradually values of love changed and it was found that all the four types of love - love without sex, love with sex, sex without love and sex with love can be approved, depending upon the
situations and the specific purpose or motive which was being fulfilled.

Dr. Promilla Kapur in her study on love, marriage and sex asked working women in 1960, “What do you need most in life in order to be happy?” In answer to this question 39% women replied that “love” was the most important factor needed to be happy in their life. While in response to the same question 21% women replied same answer ten years later. It shows that in ten years the values of love declined almost two times.

A few years earlier mate-selection was totally the preserve of parents. Daughters along with their parents wished to have a man with very moneyed parents, whether he himself was capable of earning or not. Then came a reaction and from material attitude it swung absolutely to the emotional side and then, specially the educated youth attached greatest importance to the man or woman with whom they were in “love”. Their attitudes have now changed. Promilla Kapur’s observations in 1970, show how far the values of love have been changed. She says;

Ten years ago when asked which of the qualities they (women) would like most in a husband, most of them earlier had said, “loving and sincere”, or “somebody with interests common to mine”. In mate selection now, loving and being loved are not the only important considerations, having enough money and good social status and success in his possession are more important factors for her. Though the educated working woman admits that love is very necessary for a good marriage and for personal satisfaction, today love only plays a minor part in her choice of a life partner. “

Can it be called mature love?” How can it be mature when it finds its base
On materialistic things like wealth and position in society? Fromm says in the *Art of Loving*:

In a society whose value emphasizes stress on externals and appearances, on glamour and sophistication and on considering people as commodities - a view in which one person gives something in order to receive something in return, rather than on internal qualities - inner nature - a deep emotional commitment to a human relationship is avoided. 15

A society is always affected by the changing economical values of life. Items of luxury which were found only in the upper strata of life find place in the middle class houses. Respect is given in the society to those persons who have post, money and power. Nothing values as high as money. In general, movies, literature, advertisement, television, magazines all are playing an important part in fostering these attitudes in the minds of the people. Again, insistence, now, is on a nuclear family with one son and one daughter. Attention, previously which was only on sons, has now shifted on both equally. That is why girls are more confident now and instead of paying attention to boys in their teenage, they spend their time in developing their career. Having come out of the secured boundaries of house these girls have also become aware of the external world which is glamorous as well as shrewed in its business. These girls thinking of security and a comfortable future choose a mate, "with a cool and calm head and wide-open eyes rather than with a confused head, excited heart and vision blurred with sentimentality and romantic love." 16

Sociologists say that family relationships are most important in the for-
mulation of these concepts. If love is valued as a human experience in a family, the meeeber of that family will certainly develop positive attitudes towards love and capacity to receive and express love. The atmosphere of modern society is impersonal and de-individualised in which one feels alienated and neglected and almost craves for genuine love and affection. In order to compensate for this big vaccum in their lives these people, specially the educated women, pursue almost neurotically, temporary and superficial relationships and crave for 'wealth and fame', 'well placed husband' and a 'nice home' while the boys look for an educated, working woman with the training in all house hold work, and with heavy dowry and good looking figure, thinking that they would get attention, appreciation, care and love of others, if they are able to achieve wealth and fame. Actually it is the need for love which is felt though unconsciously more by them now than before; only its manifestation has changed, and with this change their attitude towards love has also become more calculating and intellectualised instead of being sentimental. The modern attitude towards love has become more selfish and egocentric with an equal or greater emphasis on receiving than on imparting love, and on gaining personal advantages and favours from love than in offering 'all sacrificing' and 'all giving' love. However love still remains for human beings a highly valuable and much sought for need though it has changed its meaning and manifestations for them.

MARRIAGE: Marriage is not a mere chain upon love as the anarchists say; nor it is a mere crown upon love as the sentimentals say. Marriage is in fact, an actual human relation like that of motherhood, which has certain human habits and loyalties, except in a few monstrous case where it is turned to torture by special insanity and sin. A marriage is neither an ecstasy nor a slavery, it is a commonwealth.
These are the views of G.B. Shaw on marriage one of those personalities of the age who thought of superhuman being as a fair product of marriage. Marriage is one of the deepest and complex human involvements of human relationships. "Ideally, it aims not only at the individual's complete development and fulfilment but also at the development fulfilment and welfare of the family and through it of society and mankind."

Marriage as an institution common to all societies of the world has different values in different parts of the world. For Hindus marriage is a sanskara and as such it is a sacrament which could be broken only by death. According to traditional Hindu concept marriage is essential for the fulfilment of Dharma, Kama, Artha and Moksha, for fulfilling obligations for the family, society and mankind, whereas in the West marriage is considered essential for the fulfilment of personal needs and happiness. A.K. Sur writes, "In the eyes of the authors of the law books Vivaha or marriage was religious duty incumbent on all persons alike. It was necessary for procreation of the progeny who would rescue the ancestors from the torment of hell." It was absolutely bindings on girls as was Upnayana for boys. For men, marriage was obligatory because heirs were necessary for men to achieve spiritual salvation, whereas it was obligatory for woman because she also could not go to heaven unless her body was consecrated by sacrament of marriage. On reading the sociological treatises it becomes evident that Hindu marriage was monogamous. Goode says:

Several indices suggest that the Hindu cultural idea of marriage was monogamous. The Vedic gods are monogamous. The rules for the performance of domestic religious rituals do not allow for the possibility of an additional wife. Mutual conjugal fidelity is emphasised in the wedding hymn and in philosophical discussions of marriage.
There were many forms of marriage prevalent in India but as for as the consent of girls and boys is concerned there were two main forms known as Gandharva and Swayamvara. Gandharva marriage was based on the mutual consent of the prospective bride and bridegroom. In this type of marriage the lover chose his bride through a simple ceremony of an exchange of garlands. This has been considered an ideal type of marriage by Vatsyayana in Kam-Sutra.

In the epic period the practice of Swayamvara became popular in which the bride had privilege of choosing her husband from and amongst the men who were selected by her parents as worthy of their daughters.

Regarding the rights in marriage Kautilya laid down the conditions in which divorce was permissible to the wife. "If a husband is of bad character, or is long gone abroad, or is guilty of high treason, or is dangerous to his wife, or has become an outcaste, or has lost virility, he may be abondoned by his wife. "Iyengar writes about the rights of remarriage, " Remarriage of woman is found to be expressly sanctioned by ancien: Hindu Law only for those who have left their husband for a justifiable cause, or whose husbands have deserted them or dead." 22

It was only later, due to various socio-political reasons, that women's education was discouraged and child and pre-puberty marriages came in existence with the decline in women's education and the lowering of the age of marriage, men and women remain passive in selection of their own mate, and so marriage arranged specially by parents came in vogue. As Mehta observes;

Marriage under Hindu orthodoxy was not a matter of free selection
between two individuals; rather it was an alliance negotiated between two families. It was an indissoluble sacrament, blessed by religious Vedic rights in which the individuals most concerned were not consulted. Marriage for Hindu orthodoxy was not only for the duration of the husband's life but was a partnership that extended even after his death. Widows were consequently forbidden by social custom to marry. 23

Marriage has always had such an abiding effect on the lives of men and women that the approach and attitude towards this institution has always been the topic of interest among people. Looking back to Vedic age and evaluating our contemporary society we find that values of marriage have undergone a tremendous change. Thinking about marriage one comes across these points: (i) necessity of marriage (ii) concept of marriage (iii) objective or aim in getting married. (iv) forms of marriage (v) types of marriage (vi) divorce and (vii) remarriage after divorce or after the death of the mate. In order to know the changing values of marriage on these point we have based our study on the illustrations of eminent sociologists and anthropologists.

In 1959, according to Russell, the concept of marriage was that it is, "something more serious than the pleasure of the two people in each other's company. It is an institution which has an importance, extending far beyond the personal feelings of the husband and wife." 24 It was observed by Dr. Promilla Kapur in 1970 that the concept of marriage has changed a lot in these years. Her research work shows that marriage which was a sacrament solemnised primarily for the fulfilment of one's duty and for the good and welfare of family has shifted to the concept that marriage is a social contract which is entered into primarily for the good of the individual and for his or her personal happiness and satisfaction.
In ancient India marriage was considered necessary for the complete fulfilment of the purpose of life of men and women without which it was believed they could not achieve "Moksha". Later on, it was considered necessary for women due to tradition and culture and above all because of the complete economic dependence of women on men. It was not always desired for genuine companionship or for getting married but economic necessity that made woman marry even if they were treated like slaves. With an increase in their sufferings they were hostile to the idea of getting married, for they felt when they could earn and support themselves they should not be under man's subjection.

This attitude was prevalent about six or seven decades ago as is indicated by a few studies, carried out at that time. Hate's study undertaken in 1930 reveals that nearly fifty percent of the unmarried girls declared their wish to remain unmarried, whereas her study in 1946 found that only thirteen percent of the women did not intend to marry. The very fact that they could afford to think of living an unmarried life, itself indicates a change in their subjective and objective environment.

However, they realised soon that it was not only economic need that made marriage so essential but emotional and biological needs. Gradually this attitude underwent change with the change in their psychological understanding and environment and now more and more tend to believe that marriage is a necessity, but they have also altered the traditional method and conceptions of marriage. They are now using their brains. They have discovered new emotions, they have developed new ambitions. "Few want to be anything but happy wives and mothers", wrote Cormack in 1961, "but the recipe for happiness is changing. One young lady smiled as she said, peeling an
Orange and hand feeding it to my husband as I sit at his feet in humble adoration is not my idea of marriage. I want to be his intellectual and social companion not his slave.  

Though the idea was right one but they have not succeeded yet in becoming an intellectual and social companion. The reason may be seen in the attitudes of men who are the other complementary part of marriage life. Due to economic crisis, though most Indian men have accepted their women's working outside home but what they want is the old and new woman wrapped up in one package. A man wrote, "women should have chance in every sphere of life but the habit of opposing men - whether right or wrong - should not be developed. Women should not be emotional in their thinking,"  

This one sided development in the society has done a great deal of harm. Growing aspirations of women and men's still sticking to old norms, has created a chasm in the life of human beings. Commenting upon the dangling condition of women in the society, Cormack says, "Girls and women all too often want to have their cake and eat it too. Many want new opportunities, old securities, new freedom, old protection. This is natural, for the new freedoms are usually partial, tentative, and socially disapproved."  

Previously marriage was preferred for personal and financial security by women. Now specially the working women, having received financial security say that marriage is not the only thing they need most in order to be happy, they maintain that "besides a well - to - do husband, home and children they need greatly in order to be happy - 'marital comforts', 'good health', 'youthfulness' and 'individual official status'". Thus we find that marriage is felt to be more necessary and important in society. It is only that the conception of it and attitude towards it have changed.
The socio-psychological study of marriage in urban cities, in the present
decade shows entirely new formulations. Ura Marcus, a well known relate counsellor
writes, "it's women who want to settle down and that men resist making that commit-
ment. But we have got it wrong. It's men who like being married." She observes that
one of the great causes for this is that men lack communication. They want to be lis-
tened to only not to be told. Most of her women client complained that men, only hear
what they want to. She strengthens her statement by presenting the government's statis-
tics;

Figures from the office of population, census and surveys in 1988
show that the risk of pre-mature death in divorced men aged 35 to 45
is twice than that of married men. As a 1991 report, marital break
down and the health of the nation by one plus one, marriage and
partnership research puts it, there is a wide spread finding that mar-
riage is particularly beneficial for men. Evidence suggests that wives
provide a greater degree of emotional support to husbands, than hus-
bands to wives. 30

The author's indication of change is visible in the form or pattern of
marriage. Previously arranged marriages were preferred in which only parents' consent
were taken. Later, love marriages came in vogue as a direct and instant result of eman-
cipation of women. Now, both men and women disapprove "purely arranged
marriages" as well as "purely love marriages", instead young generation now approve
"modern type of arranged marriages", which mean a marriage in which they feel the
parents should select a marriage partner for their son and daughter and should introduce
them to each other. "They strongly feel that the prospective marriage partners should be
allowed to meet each other a number of times and know each other and should develop
feelings of great liking or love before they take their final decision regarding their marriage.”

In love marriages grounds used to have sheer love, infatuation, sexual attraction, instantaneous love, love at first sight and blind love. Now, discarding this romantic concept of love marriage people base love marriages on cool and calculated love, rational love and practical love, which is no more than a result of their knowledge and assessment of the material and emotional assets of the future husband and wife.

In India a girl is traditionally married to a man of her own caste, province and religion, and sometimes because of this constraint it becomes difficult to find a suitable match for her. Gradually this attitude of society is changing. The bold steps are being taken not from parents only but from partners themselves. People are marrying in other castes, races and even religions. This change towards the acceptance of inter-caste marriage was observed long ago by Ghurye, “formerly marriage outside one’s caste was not to be even thought of, today many young educated men and women are prepared to break through the bonds of caste if mutual love or attention demands it.”

Kannan has shown in his study that “there has been a steady increase in inter-caste marriages since 1917 but the increase has escalated after 1946.”

According to Hindu philosophy marriage was a sacrament which once performed could never be broken by any act of man. This was considered to be a holy union which was accepted in the same spirit. “Marriage in the Vedic age gave the wife a very high status in society. The wife was honoured in the family and after marriage she was looked upon as guardian of all the members of the new family. A man could not
become a spiritual whole unless he was accompanied by his wife. The gods were thought not to accept the oblation offered by a bachelor." In a sense women enjoyed being married. But later on in other periods gradually the position of woman declined. The idea of spiritual union of the husband and wife by magic mantras gave place to the idea of transference of the ownership of the bride. By the Mauryan times the position of women had become so low that wives were considered objects of pleasure and instrument for bearing children. Still women kept silent, still marriage was an indissoluble union governed by Hindu religious laws and the code of Manu. But in 1955, appearance of the Hindu Marriage Act 1955 made people think of marriage as a social contract between two partners which could be dissolved under certain circumstances. It has also altered the conception of marriage from a sacramental to a contractual one, because it permits divorce.

Though the divorce is legally permitted, due to complicated social structure, it is not an easy process. It creates a lot of pain to detach oneself from marriage life, tradition and society. If we spend some moments of life with a person even for a short time, it seems difficult to get away from those memories, then how difficult it is to end everything with that person whom one considered life partner. Can those moments of love, caring and sharing be detached as easily from memory as law passes it? Rinki Bhattacharya writes in this connection;

For me (and for other women whether I know them or not) divorce, was not a choice. It was a necessity. As inevitable and tragic as death. Something both men and women can not evade beyond a point, nor resist. With a high permission on marriage, family life and the obligatory male heir- divorce is the most uncertain liaison in Indian society. If there is anything more uncertain, it’s a long term emotional
involvement with an already married partner.\textsuperscript{35}

Inspite of this tragic pain contained in divorce, it is women who are suing for divorce in India and in abroad too. Indrani Jaisingh, the leading lawyer of the Supreme Court points out, "from my experience, I can say that a larger number of women are suing their husbands for divorce than the other way round."\textsuperscript{36} This change in the attitude towards marriage and its dissolution may be found in the freedom of women. Indrani Jaisingh concludes in this connection;

There is a new confidence about these women, born out of the expanding economic opportunities available to them in the job market with that has come the knowledge that marriage is not the only option for a lifestyle. Their aspiration for an equal relationship within marriage and a life with dignity are so firmly established that they are willing to break the marriage if they don't find it. These aspirations are often the cause of a woman opting out of bad marriage.\textsuperscript{37}

Ura Marcus observes too; "... What has made our marriage - is - good - for - women - but - bad - for - men myth look so dated, is that women now have a choice. Marriage is no longer the financial or social necessity it once was."\textsuperscript{38} In sociological studies the percentage of those women who approved of a woman's divorcing her husband does not vary much, but the range of the reasons or of the circumstances under which they approved or did not mind divorce and remarriage of divorced women had considerably widened. In 1960s most of the women who favoured divorce for women had approved it only on such grounds as ill treatment or cruelty of the husband, his drunkenness, his having a bad character, his suffering from some incurable mental or physical disease which could harm her, dowry or physical violence, where as ten years later in 1970s, in addition to their strongly approving of divorce on the above men-
tioned grounds. "the percentage of those women had increased considerably who did not mind or approved of a woman's dissolving the marriage even under such circumstances as husband and wife not being compatible, their not being able to pull on well together, their being completely dissatisfied with each other or with their married life, or their having absolutely no love for each other and very often an urge for self determi-
mination and self-experience." 39

According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, "In its traditional form marriage is
taken more as a social charter for the establishment of a legitimate family rather than as
social sanction or licence for sexual indulgence." 40 While in its legal form, the institu-
tion of marriage is intimately tied up with sexuality. It is almost as if marriage laws exist
to legalize sexuality, punish any deviations from legally sanctioned rules and of course
to legalize the children of the marriage. "Hence non consummation of the marriage,
refusal to have sexual intercourse, adultery, un-natural sex, impotency are all grounds
for divorce." 41 Lack of sexual compatibility and unfulfilled sexual needs have been
major grounds on which women have sought divorce. This again reflects the changing
attitude of women, a willingness to recognise their sexual needs and being bold enough
to refuse, being passive recipient of their husbands' sexual needs.

There is a new awareness found in women of today, who demand consist-
tently that the law of rape be changed. It should be considered an offence even within
marriage. If a man rapes another woman, he is accused of the act and punished, but if he
rapes his own wife, he is not committing a crime. It is assumed that by marrying a man,
a woman has given her consent to sexual intercourse with her husband at any time.
Thus, even if he forces himself upon her, he is not committing an offence (of rape) as her
consent is assumed. "A recent judgement of a court in England indicates that rape within marriage can be an offence. Several states in the U.S. have specially amended their original law to make it an offence," reports Indrani Jaisingh. Indian women are still waiting for justice.

Thus we can say that this opening up of the option of divorce has enabled women to opt out of an oppressive relationship. Women who opt for divorce are those who have already changed their attitude to marriage. In fact, changes in attitude to marriage precede changes in attitude to divorce. Today's younger generation do not see marriage as inevitable and consequently divorce is not a traumatic experience.

Again, we find a shift in the concept of monogamous marriage. In 1960's, while people specially women complained about the social customs like dowry and purely arranged marriages with too many ceremonies and rites, ten years later in 1970 they started attacking monogamy, labelling it monotonous and unsatisfying and the concepts of "trial-marriage" and "group marriage" were introduced.

The idea of group marriage, though suggested by a minor section of society takes support of the argument that it was not a new idea in itself, and that the first marriages known to men were of the group types. "They argue", writes P.Kapur, "why should human beings who are like social animals be expected to restrict their contacts to only one person of the opposite sex? Why should a group of people be not allowed to marry each other and fulfill their multifarious needs and share their multiple interests in the group itself and learn to share their common possessions including mates and children, be co-operative, unselfish and sacrificing which group living in such intimate relationship teaches?"
It is still not clear whether it was the strong bond of tradition and culture, or the prevailing norms of selfishness, non-co-operation, and irresponsibility, however the idea could not be implemented. Therefore the idea of trial marriage was suggested. It was tried by a few people of the upper strata of society during the last two decades, but the statistics show that it is in vogue in upper and middle class societies now-a-days. Though the idea of trial marriage is somewhat different from that of Margaret Mead’s idea in which there are two forms of marriages, one of which may or may not follow the other. First may be individual marriage and the other parental marriage having its own licence, ceremony and kind of responsibility. The attitude of modern Indian society is that of spouse-swapping. This form is quite in fashion in the modern society.

On the whole it may be concluded that the people of all age groups still hold traditional ideas that marriage is a necessity for completeness of life. It is found that educated youth’s attitude towards marriage, motivations of individual and personal interests and gains are gaining ground, whereas the consideration for others and welfare of society is losing ground. Their thinking, their arguments and actions as related by them further strengthens the indication that marriage is now entered into less and less with the idea of spiritual, altruistic and societal gains, and more and more for the satisfaction of the individual’s material, emotional and sensual needs.

SEX: Sex exists from the very beginning of the animate universe and even while there is nothing new in sex, it has always been controversial. The attraction of one sex for the other, the sexual desire of one for the other, and ultimate sexual union have been the themes of literature of almost every land since the most ancient times. Various scholars
have described and defined it. We get the basic definition of sex through psychology.

Schofield says, "Sex in psychological terms is one of the basic drives motivating human behaviour."* Sex can mean a variety of things from just the 'mating instinct' to 'life drive' and 'life energy'. About the sexual instinct Geddes writes that it is "an urge, an impulse, a drive, something we are born with. It manifests itself in the first month of infancy, sometimes even at birth. It lasts until death. It has peak of urgency."*4 Freud, the greatest man of sex, in the present century saw it psychologically and gave the name "libido" to that urge which brings people in close contact. For Freud, "not only is the adult heterosexual love relationship libidinal in nature but also parental love, sibling love, and the love of close relationships in the heterosexual as well as in the homosexual sense."*6 Freud uses in a very broad sense the term "sexuality" and "Libido" which he defines in terms of all close human love relationship.

In Hindu philosophy sex life is considered sacred. Vatsyayana's concept of sex was that it was not only meant for procreation, but was also a source and means of deriving one of the greatest earthly pleasures, and which every individual had a right to experience and enjoy. Ellis says in this connection:

In India sexual life has been sanctified and divinised to a greater extent than in any other part of the world. It seems never to have entered into the heads of the Hindu legislations that anything natural could be offensively obscene. A singularity which pervades all their writings but is no proof of the depravity of the morals.*7

No one can deny the importance of sex in human life. Some great men have seen it even beyond physical life and say that axis of the world is sex around which
every creation and destruction takes place. Pomeri rightly observes, "The truth about sex, then, is that it is one of the most potent and beneficial factors in human life. It is the part of beauty, the arts, and all genuine creativeness..." Radhakrishnan maintains, "It is not right to think that a man and a woman should not take physical delight in each other for its own sake, and should do only for the sake of children. It is wrong to think that sexual desire in itself is evil, and virtue consists in dominating it and suppressing it on principle." Freud emphasises the fact that sexual repression is always the cause of neuroses, hysteria and mental abnormality. Agreeing with this view Radhakrishnan observes:

Biologically, the failure to satisfy the sex instinct leads to nervous instability; psychologically it results in emptiness and misanthropy... for the rest majority of men and women and for the race as a whole, the sex relation is one of the most urgent and important.

In human beings sex is not only a pure psychological instinct as it is in animals, which has almost a set universal pattern of overt manifestation. Sex for human beings has two major functions. One is reproduction the other is pleasure. Sex is a biological necessity for preserving the species, has always been upheld by all at all times and in all places as highly desirable. But its pursuit for the gratification of the senses alone has been a subject of social and ethical controversy. It is a powerful and controversial topic because it involves the values of each individual in a very personal way, and it also involves the basic value system of a society.

During last few decades, sex mores have been changing and the new views and attitude towards sex have alarmed many citizens, psychologists and social
thinkers. They feel that the increasing disregard for taboos is an indication of a tendency towards irresponsible hedonism and ultimately their approaching towards social decay. However, there are others who do not feel that the emerging permissiveness in sex attitudes or breaking down of taboos is a sign of moral degradation. On the contrary they feel that it is probably the most healthy thing that could happen.

Many eminent scholars have dealt with this controversial topic and have put forth their views for or against issues such as sexual freedom, desirability of pre-marital coitus, and extra-marital concessions. Pomeri is of the view that, “modern men and women are suffering from a form of eroticism scarcely distinguishable from neuroticism and H.G.Wells expressed no more than the truth when he declared that ‘our current civilization is a sexual lunatic. Man under civilization has become immeasurably more erotic than were his savage forbearers.” What Pomeri said about the then modern men and women could be seen entering into urban educated India in 1960, is true to the upper as well as middle class society of India of today, for people of all age groups. And this according to Russell is because of too many restrictions imposed upon civilized men. “When there is freedom, sex takes its due place and ceases to be obsessional madness,” while people like Khushwant Singh comment, “what is to be welcomed is that the fact that in today’s India these issues are being discussed with a frankness seldom seen in the past. And as every one is interested in sex, it can only be beneficial for all of us, if more of us are open about it.” Shobha De observes in this connection;

The very fact that sex is no longer the most dreaded and despised three letter word in India, is enough cause to celebrate. One gener-
ally fears what one does not know with ignorance levels rapidly dropping, chances are we will walk into a new era of enlightened, evolved sexual relation. "The act" in future may well be viewed as something more meaningful than mere mating or animal copulation with only propagation of the species in mind.34

Whatever might be true of these but it is certain that all discussions of sex begin and end with the male obsession that there is little else to women besides being sex objects. Woman has always been the centre of attraction in sex. That is why even a little change in the position of women in society shifts the balance of sexual relationship and brings about a change in the values of morality and thus happens a new revolution in sexual field.

The position of woman affects the attitude of society towards love, marriage and particularly sex. In order to know the changing attitude of modern society towards sex it becomes necessary to peep into the past and evaluate the moral values of society along with the position of women in different periods.

"In the Vedic era", writes Khushwant Singh, "our Pre-Aryan female ancestors enjoyed a licence that would shock the avant-garde of today. They wore nothing above the waist and the barest minimum below it. They drank strong liquor, danced till the early hours of the morning and were not inhibited in their sexual relations."55 In later period Aryans started accepting this pattern of life. In those days home was not the only place for women, nor did they depend upon their husbands, and so they were not considered sinful. It was the sanctioned custom of society. This freedom continued up to the period of the Rig Veda. In this age women enjoyed the equality of sexes, participation in
debates, performances in religious rituals and pleasures of wine and flesh. Even married women were allowed to entertain the guest as a part of hospitality. They had full liberty to choose their career. That is why Vedic women were shown in the sphere of military too. Glorifying the position of Vedic women in the history of women Roma Chaudhury writes;

Vedic women were not only first chronologically, but also educationally, socially, culturally; and they will, for ever, stand before the whole world as eternal emblems of Janana - Bhakti - Karma (Supreme knowledge - devotion - service), also Satya - Siva - Sundara (Truth - Beauty - Goodness) to the lasting benefit of all women, all over the world, all throughout the ages.  

Then, later due to socio-cultural changes, the economic set up of the Hindu society was changed and since then women were not allowed to go out of the four walls of their homes. First polyandrous intercourse was stopped. The first person to ban polyandry was Uddalaka, son of the sage Swetaketu. "He said one woman can make love to one man only ... If a woman is unfaithful to her husband from today onwards it will be a sin."  

Then, the condition of women began to decline. They began to be considered as child bearers only. According to Maitreyani Samhita; “woman is on par with dice and drink, a major social evil, the spirit of untruth, the genius of darkness.” The chief responsible man for lowering the status of women was Manu the famous lawgiver of ancient India. He wrote, when creating them, the lord of creatures allotted to women a love of their ornaments, impure thoughts, wrath, dishonesty, malice and bad conduct. Manu emphasised woman’s secondary role in life. From the cradle to the grave
a woman is dependent on a male, in childhood on her father, in youth on her husband, in old age on her son.

And the worst happened when Muslims who ruled over India 1000 A.D. onwards for 700 years introduced the institution of purdah, the veil, and seclusion of women in harems. The Hindus of the upper classes imitated the muslim rulers by incarcerating their women in the Zenana. This was certainly the darkest age in the history of women.

Then, change for the better came with the British rule. Some enlightened spirits supported the British reformers against orthodox Hindu reactionaries. The biggest achievement was through Mahatma Gandhi under whose inspired leadership women came out of home and very enthusiastically took part in India’s freedom movement of 1942. Next, education was given top priority and woman at last liberated herself through the age old bondages.

The emancipation does not come in a day only. It is a social process, very slow. In the course of time woman changed and with this ultimately changed the attitude of society towards sex. Social researches represent the actual attitude of society towards sex.

Education, and hard economical condition made Indian women take up two jobs. One was the age old job of cooking, looking after children and family and doing other house hold works, the other one was doing remunerative jobs in government or private sectors to make up the degrading social status. It was the other job which opened up many more avenues of exposure to the members of the opposite sex.
In this connection Dr. Promilla Kapur writes, “The greater general freedom is liable to result in greater sexual freedom which again is liable to lead to the infringement of the traditional sexual restrictions and taboos.”

After the Second War when the world became shorter and life of Americans and Europeans came in vogue, educated people of all age groups, especially educated youth, viewed sexual desire as a biologically, socially and psychologically normal phenomenon rather than as something evil or dirty. Particularly educated women emerged with the conviction that sexual pleasure is not a sin. On the contrary more of them feel now that it is a human right and hence needs no other justification.

Psychologists also helped people in realising that woman is an independent being with her own sexual needs and satisfaction. Among other things, Freud’s thinking has also made a specific contribution to the gradually modified attitude towards sex. It helped a lot in the general recognition and acceptance of the place of sex in life.

There is a new sense of awareness and gratification found in modern women. Sociologists say that after centuries of suppression and silent resignation in sexual field, in 1960s and 70s the educated women started challenging and questioning the justifiability of the double standard of sexual morality. Previously man frequently used woman’s body for his own pleasure, or for producing children. The women was considered to be frivolous and immoral if she gave expression to the pleasure experienced by her in her sex life even within marriage. Now they claim their privileges to sexual gratification within matrimony. “They raised the status of sex in marriage from
merely a means of relieving man’s sexual tensions while the wife remains entirely passive to co-partnership in physical joy, relaxation and satisfaction.\textsuperscript{60}

Social researches in 1980s and early 90s show the further extension of this awareness. They say it is not only within marriage, but outside marriage too women are demanding a lot. A woman in her mid thirties says, “sex is about pleasure not power. But yes I am through with men who say things like, ‘I’m giving it to you… aren’t you lucky?’ I’m also through with men who label independent minded women “nymphos” just because they (the women) are unwilling to play the old subjugated roles. To me, sex is something special, something beautiful, something shared. If a man doesn’t feel the same way about it, I don’t have the time for him.”\textsuperscript{61}

To this, a psychotherapist pointed out that the urban working women had changed an entire generation’s outlook towards sex. He commented, “she has taken the lead in this matter. She is definitely more confident, more assertive and more demanding. Besides - she can afford to be all that. No man can take her for granted. She expects and gets sex on her terms now.”\textsuperscript{62}

The demand is increasing to such an extent that today’s men seem to be scared of. A man in his late twenties says, “women these days want too much. Pre-sex tenderness, post-sex tenderness, during-sex tenderness - the works! Heck! we don’t have the time or energy for it. Besides all these macho females are now into role-reversal. And they expect us to crawl to them begging for sex.”\textsuperscript{63}

There is found to be an increasing tendency, though very slow and weak.
to abolish the stress on virginity before marriage, and there is a slightly developing
trend in pre-marital sex and sexual permissiveness. In 1950s women permitted to in-
dulge in holding hands, casual kissing on the forehead, cheeks, hands and on the lips but
in 1960s most of the women were found to say that "boys and girls before marriage
could go up to passionate kissing, embracing and indulging in physical intimacies ex-
cept sexual intercourse, provided the two people indulging in these acts loved one an-
other, had planned to marry or were already engaged to be married." In 1980s it was
a question of how far a woman could go beyond necking and patting? Women specially
working women were found more frank to express their opinion. Now it was not related
with men and women who had planned to marry in future. It is now just for enjoyment.
One girl said, "My friends and I go out in groups. If one of us fancies a guy, she makes
it obvious, but nobody is forced into a situation he or she doesn't want. Her friend's
opinion is, "We don't rape the man, for god's sake. It is just we believe in real, not fake
equality. Besides, all of us live on our own. We have a place to go to on our own terms.
It is a great feeling to ask a man home and not have parents hanging around." 

And what about men? What do they think about pre-marital sexual relationship? The answer can be found in women's views of men, who said in 1950 that they would not indulge in pre-marital affairs because of men's belief that a girl should be a virgin till marriage, because of the fear of pregnancy. In 1960s too, their view was fear of losing the men's respect for them, fear of losing the lover, and the fear of being exploited. In 1980s and early 90s we find men echoing the same views. A 28 year old man said, "I'm still old fashioned enough to want to marry a virgin. But that doesn't mean I won't have my fun before settling down. Take my word for it - the girls I bed will not be the girls, I think of marrying." These are the views in general of modern men.
of the society. It is enough to show while in three four decades women have changed a lot, men are still where they were in the beginning of the century. They haven't changed yet.

The most wide spread change in the attitude towards sex of modern people is discussed in their increasing tolerance for and participation in open discussion of all sorts of pre-marital and extra-marital sexual activities and practices indulging trial marriage, group sex and wife-swapping. There is found to be greater tolerance for people who want to experiment with new types of socio-sexual relationships. It is also found that the attitude towards adultery has become more liberal than towards pre-marital sexual coitus or fornication.

In the primitive society husband’s lending his wife as a sex mate to his guest was considered an act of hospitality. With civilization this act was looked down upon and the husband reacted disfavourably and in many cases violently if he came to know that his wife has been used by or had been a sex mate to any other man. There are also references in old literature to very severe punishment for adultery. Brahspani suggested the following punishment for adulterous women: when a woman has been enjoyed against her will, she should be kept in the house well guarded smeared with ashes lying on a low couch and receiving bare maintenance only. While Manu considered the slaying of adulterous woman as a minor offence. These punishments, either rigidly or lineantly were the trend of society up to the so called emancipation of women.

Then, the change started in modern society on the basis of equality, with the view that adultery is equally serious in the case of a husband and that of a wife, and
that, 'both husband and wife should equally forgive their spouse, if she or he committed adultery.' Only a decade later in 1970s the change in the attitude was confirmed with the view that a woman would be justified in having a sexual relationship before marriage and outside marriage under those very situations and conditions in which a man was. Dr. Promilla Kapur observed that women allowed adultery on the basis of the argument that a married woman would be justified in having an extra matrimonial sexual relationship even in situations where her husband was adulterous or was not faithful to her, or where he did not care for her, or if her marriage was a failure.

But researches in 1980s and early 90s show entirely different opinion regarding extra-marital sexual relationships. Upto now women permitted adultery among themselves, men kept silent. But in the last decade modern men seemed to be with modern women. Now they both permit extra-marital relations not because a man fails to make love to his wife, or is incapable of producing children or he does not like his wife living with him due to social necessity, but because they believe in "live and let live" and of "laissez-faire" - let people look after their own business - which indicates an attenuated effect of the crippling fear and rigid conventions on them, and of increased tolerance for people's unconventional or untraditional behaviour or attitude. 68

Women still seem struggling for the long required equality when they say, "There are more important aspects to marriage. Children, financial security... It's unrealistic to expect two people to remain faithful in today's context. It's almost absurd. All of us like younger men. They are better lovers and much more attentive. Our husbands had their fuck and chuck girl friends but we had nothing... no satisfaction, no
stimulation. We lay back on the pillows when they pumped us. That was it. Things are
different now. Our boy friends have made us aware of our bodies - taught as a trick or
two. We make better love to our husbands. They are happy, we are happy.” One other
lady said, “My friends and I love our husbands. Our affairs have nothing to do with
marriage. We believe our relationships are strong enough. In any case - if he can stray so
can we.”

Men give bold statements to be called modern. One said, “Look, in my
father's time, the men travelled frequently and all alone. One of the main attractions
used to be exotic sex. Today the women want the same options. These girls are good
looking, independent and rich in their own right, why can’t they have some fun too? It’s
fine by me - so long as my wife doesn’t pick up AIDS somewhere.”

Both men and women advocate equality when they say that each person
should decide for himself what is right and what is wrong for him. They also say that
everything is right and nothing is wrong in sexual indulgence between two consenting
adults, so long as it does not hurt anybody. These people do not believe in interference
in their personal and private affairs which depends upon the mutual consent of the other
partners and which neither exploits nor hurts anybody.

Recently in the field of recreational sex a new trend has been observed,
specially in the middle class society. This new trend of permissiveness is an attempt to
alleviate the sexual monotony in their lives by trying out spouse-swapping. The principal
correspondent of India Today, Amit Agrawal went through the cases and reported
in June'94, “If you thought spouse-swapping was an aberration of the kinky West or a
fantasy indulged in by the beautiful people in big cities meet your next door Indian middle class neighbour - she a docile dharmpatni, draped in five metres of saree, sporting her trademark bindi and mangalsutra. He; a simple clerk in the phone department who probably would not allow his own daughter to date openly. Family; orthodox, children : Two, Income; about Rs. 5000/-. Hobbies : reading erotica, watching blue films.

Though the trend is not new in India but it had place of its own, only in the upper class society. Sex Revolution which was at its peak in 1960s in America, had just entered India. More than thirty years later now, it is flourishing here. The Indian sexual Revolution of the 1990s can be said to be natural follow - through of the widespread prosperity of 1980s. According to some estimate the size of the middle class doubled during that decade. As new people entered the middle class they brought new attitudes. They had drive. Before one could understand, the revolution had rooted deep in the middle class life. Shobha De rightly says, “Middle class attitude to sex had certainly undergone a sea change ... Sub-urban sex had obviously gone through the roof when no one was looking.”

Middle class Indian couple behind the veneer of domesticity, are shedding their inhibitions and displaying a fetish for recreational sex: The exciting new prospect of exchanging partner with other broad minded couples. In the field of research, data show the phenomenon of partner swapping is making its way into middle class bedrooms and providing married couples of all ages, provisions and economic strata with a range of possibilities to experiment with.

Earlier swapping was done only among the well-known groups or related
couples. The difference now is that it is taking a form of institution and is being done with strangers, with people often living in different towns and cities. The agents for this company are not men but various magazines dealing with sexuality. People advocate need of variety in sex. They say life is short so we should enjoy it. Some complain of getting bored eating the same dish every day. Some do it because of incompatibility with their spouse, while some come forward with the genuine purpose of having their own child. They think in this way at least half the percentage will be theirs. However, this custom is not a new one in India. In Epic age Niyoga custom was popular among people to beget the child in absence of potency in the spouse. Since middle class is concerned the question of morality comes first. Interestingly they all do it without guilt consideration. In fact it is quite the reverse. The involvement of both the partners seems to absolve each of the guilt. Some of them try to normalize the matter by saying that there would be guilt if they were doing it without their partners knowing. But when their spouse is with them, they are not being unfaithful.

The change in women’s attitude is also indicated by the new changes in their style of dressing, for the way a woman dresses herself is one of the greatest indications of what a woman is and how she wants others to look at her. Men and women represent their views separately in this matter. “An ad man comments laconically, Provocative dressing is invariably interpreted as a positive signal. If these girls want to hang on to pristine pure images, they should dress more decorously.” While the girls unanimously protest by saying “That’s crazy. We are free to wear what’s in, what’s hot. We like funky dressing. Even cross-dressing. But that’s a fashion-option not an invitation to bed.”

Thus, we see in the modern society sex is no longer a taboo and the...
Hypocrisy is crumbling. There has been an increasing overtiness about sexuality. The basic change is found towards greater equalitarianism, greater female acceptance of permussiveness and free discussion of sexual issues.

In modern age, in the base of any revolution the important role has been that of media. Since the discussion is upon sex, the role of media, magazines, newspapers and books which deal with sex in its variegated forms gradually become more and more popular. A report in India Today says, "In June 1992, when three men in Allahabad realised their fantasy and came out with Fantasy they were thought to be crazy. A sex magazine produced by a total editorial staff of three people from Allahabad? But they went on to surprise everybody. The magazine ... today the monthly sale claims of over one lakh copies, and along the way the cover price has increased from Rs 35 to Rs 50. Emboldened the magazine editor and publisher has now launched another sex magazine Fun meant for "younger people" which is now four issues old."

The Indian film Industry, the biggest one of India, has fostered the sexual revolution. The mass produced films are filled with blatant sexuality while the producers keep themselves busy bypassing the censor. Ad agencies and movies are not only making use of sex but they are selling it. Whether it is advertisement of a soap or a detergent it is fantasy, the idea of sex that is shown on the television. Puru Das attacks the flood of Blue Films. He says, "The most important instrument of the sexual revolution, however, is the little black box next to the television screen. The video is the guillotine of our revolution fuelled by pirated cassettes from Hollywood. Every video library that doesn't stock the ubiquitous pornographic blue movies has plenty of sex comedies that present the same image." The impact of this can be seen in the lives of
middle class people. A young house wife said, "I never knew people did such things. The first time I watched a blue film was at a party. At first I felt most awkward. But when I saw how relaxed the others were I too watched with interest. Now my husband and I get such films regularly."

Thus, it becomes evident that sex revolution has not only started but has also rooted itself deep in India. Modern society has walked a long distance on this path. Now it is not the time to ask whether its results will be positive or negative, whether it will make men super human being or will destroy his personality. Rather it is the time to think only of safe sex, sex education, teenage pregnancies, higher suicide rates, child prostitution, single parenthood, abandoned children of unwanted pregnancies, increased abortions, alarming AIDS figures and greater S.T.D. (sexually transmitted diseases) numbers.

The above mentioned findings do indicate a considerable change in the attitude of modern society towards love, marriage and sex. The society is gradually becoming less and less traditional, and less conservative in its ways of feelings, perceiving, thinking and believing with regard to love, marriage and sex. Specially the educated youth are breaking through the hard shell of traditionalism.

The educated women are found to be gradually developing de-traditionalized life patterns and life styles. They have been influenced by the principles of equalitarianism and egalitarianism. There is a confusion between their own attitude and their perception of the attitude of society, specially of men, towards the same issues.
And this creates conflict and anxiety in them and this makes their attitudes ambivalent.

Since the values and goals of the modern members of society are changing, their attitudes towards love, marriage and sex are also changing. In a tradition directed society like the Indian society, on which the hold of tradition is still very strong and in which tradition oriented conceptions still largely prevail, and where thinking is influenced by tradition bound ethos, "ideally these three systems have been arranged in a pattern of closeness in the order of marriage, sex and love. Ideally, therefore, sex follows marriage, and love follows sex. Among the young educated people, the new trends that are emerging are moving towards the re-arranging of the order of these three systems in the hierarchy of love, marriage and sex or even of love, sex and if possible then marriage."

Young generation, especially the young women’s views about sex are changing a lot. Sex is being taken by them as a positive value of life which works as a creative influence for the fulfilment of human relationship. Agreeing with this view of new generation Hemming commented in 1970;

We can now look forward to a future already struggling to be born, when uninhibited but controlled, sexuality within society will enhance the whole quality of life and of marriage. We need this to happen in the interests of humanity, and also because the future will make demands on all the creative vigour that is available in person and society.78

A future to which Hemming looked forward in 1970 was in a way the re-emerging of an attitude that somewhat existed in ancient India. According to ancient
Indian literature, even in the glory of spiritual exultation, the practical side of life was never rigidly excluded. Vedas and Upanishads acknowledge sex desire in an idealized form as a primal source of all existence. They believe that sex desire stands on the same level as any other desire. Vatsyayana’s Kam-Sutra approaches the generally forbidden subject as a part of humanities. It propagates that a person who develops Dharma and Artha as well as Kama without becoming the slave of his passions, and rather develops a complete control over his senses, succeeds in everything he undertakes. Art, architecture and sculpture of the period of Vatsyayana’s Kam-Sutra and that of Khajuraho indicate the positive role that sex played at that time. It was the later socio-religious-cultural influences that made people believe that sex was only for procreation and that sex for personal gratification was sinful. Sex could be accepted within marriage but outside marriage it was considered to be the greatest sin and an act of immorality.

Later on, the industrial revolution, urbanization, education, and the political and legal rights of women, advanced technology and science, improved techniques of birth-control, advance mass media, and easily available works of Freud and Kinsey changed the attitude that sex could be both pleasurable as well as procreative. The growing reaction against the ‘Puritanical’ or ‘Victorian’ restrictive sexual morality has been accelerated by these socio-political-cultural changes in the country.

The present study focuses its attention on the novel. Of all the literary forms the novel is considered to be the most socially oriented because it depicts human society in its varied aspects of enterprise and struggle, chaos and anarchy. In such a situation the novelist raises various issues and makes his characters move around them. It can be said that the novelist is more or less a sociologist who keenly observes the
existing social values, ideologies and issues, and depicts not only his own reaction to them, but also of the people he represents in his fictional world. The inspirational base on which a novelist strives to express his emotional interpretation of life is, essentially social. In response to certain social needs felt by him, the writer adopts, develops and perfects the talent required to fulfill these needs. The World's best literature has succeeded in measuring the depth of human life and of all the literary forms fiction, poetry, drama, prose etc it is the novel specially that has achieved a major accomplishment in the field of literature. According to Robert Escarpit, "the writer not only reports how individual reacts to the pressures of society, he also offers a picture of changing views about comparative importance of psychic and social forces."?

Having these considerations - the attitude of modern society towards love, marriage and sex, depicted by eminent sociologists and psychologists, as well as the deep relation between a society and a creative work of art in the view, we shall try in the forthcoming chapters, to investigate through an analytical and thematic view how far Indian women novelists - Anita Desai and Sashi Deshpande have succeeded in coping with the growing thought content towards love, marriage and sex in society.
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Love is a secret feeding fire that gives all creatures being
Life to the dead, speech to the dumb, and to the blind man seeing.

- Anon.