CHAPTER- 4
FAMILY, KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE: CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Of all human groups family is the most important primary group. It is a small social group consisting of man, women and their children. One can say it is a miniature social organisation, including two generations, and is characteristically formed upon the blood bond. Maclver and Page (1971: 238) write that family is a group defined by sex relationship sufficiently precise and enduring to provide for the procreation and upbringing of children. The American Bureau of Census defines family as a group of two or more persons related by blood, marriage or adoption, and residing together, all such persons are considered as members of one family. According to Murdock (1965: 1) “family is a social group characterised by common residence, economic co-operation and reproduction”. Beals and Hoijer (1953: 382) define family as “a social grouping of members which are united by bond of kinship.”

There are various types of families. According to Murdock, families are of three types. The first type is nuclear family, composed of husband, wife and children when a unit comprises a residential kin group in its own right. Nuclear families sometimes combine to form large residential kin groups. There are two of these types – polygamous families and extended families. A polygamous family could be polygynous when a man has two or more co-wives and children, or it could be polyandrous, when the family consist of one wife and two or more husbands. All family members live either in a single house or each co-wife (in polygynous type) occupies a separate house or hut of her own, and the huts are clustered together within a
family compound. The extended family is a merger of several nuclear families. A small extended family might include an old man, his wife, their sons, the son’s wives and their children. It can also be seen as two nuclear families – the sons being members of both. A large extended family might include three or four nuclear families. A particular type of an extended family is the joint family. Joint family, which is a typical feature of Indian society, is characterised by the co-residence, commensality, joint property, unit of common worship, authority and decision-making generally vested in the eldest male. This distinction made by Murdock is based on the structure of a family (i.e. whether it is nuclear or extended). However, on the basis of authority, a family may be patriarchal or matriarchal. Under the patriarchal family the male head of the family is possessed of inclusive powers. He is the owner and administrator of the family property and rights. He presides over the religious rites of the family. In matriarchal family the authority vests in the women head of the family with the males being subordinate. She is the owner of the family property and rules over the family.

TRADITIONAL TIBETAN FAMILY AND KINSHIP

Though the traditional Tibetan society had a few typical type of families, now as refugees the Tibetans have a wide range of family types. In the Mongol census of Tibet in the 13th century, a family was defined as a house, four pillars in size, containing six persons: the married couple (their child), manservant and maidservant. The household also included domestic animals and fields (Stein, 1972: 120).

A Tibetan family, based on kinship structure, can be divided into man types – (1) elementary family, and (2) extended family. In Tibet by the necessity of the economic co-operation, joint families were more
advantageous and were more in practice. Tibetans, who lived as peasants, nomads and traders, had many functions to perform simultaneously. Different occupations in the family, such as peasantry, nomadism, trade, made the male members to go away from their main household for longer period of time. During their absence it required others to maintain their family and it was their own brothers who could do it. This factor necessitated them to bring into existence the marriage of all brothers to a single wife to hold the family jointly in economic co-operation. The same is known as fraternal polyandry. This was seen among all the classes in Tibetan society. The possible reasons for all the classes can be noted as below. The nomads had a dualistic system of life, i.e., came back to their homes only during winter season, and during other seasons they were away looking after their flock of sheep and herds of cattle. Another factor, which relates generally to all the classes and mainly to the peasants, was that they held land from their nobles and had an obligation to pay heavy taxes in terms of services and cash needed by their immediate master. It was necessary for them not only to maintain a joint family but also the practice of polyandry so that the family and its property are inherited through a single line. The unity of the family was also sought to be maintained. Among the nobles, who were more interested in keeping the family property intact so as to stand high in socio-economic and political position, maintained joint families, and elementary families were not preferred. Landlords or nobles, holding big estates and large number of serfs attached to them, tried to retain them intact by maintaining a single line of inheritance of property. Breaking-up of family property, therefore, was strictly forbidden among the Tibetans. In the cases where polyandry was not practiced many other methods were adopted to keep the family inheritance in a single line: wherein
the eldest son inherited the entire property and also married to continue the family pedigree so as to inherit the family and its property in the next generation. Among other sons of the family a few of them joined the monastery, accepting celibacy and a few others married matrilocally to other families (Mag-pa) and became members of those families. Brothers who enter a mag-pa marriage were sent out of the main family in marriage, without any property. And expenses of brothers who had joined the monastery were to be borne by the eldest brother of the family where he continued the generation. There was also another practice wherein the younger brothers married girls from other families and were sent out of the main family to reside neolocally. They were not allowed to have equal share in the family property but were given just enough to maintain their subsistence.

In those families where a male heir is not present to continue pedigree, accepted mag-pa in marriage for the eldest daughter of the family and others went to the same mag-pa in polygnous union and the family pedigree was continued or if they liked to marry outside they were allowed to, and were married off at any time, even after the dissolution of their mag-pa marriage. In a mag-pa household the woman holding matrilocal residence after marriage also holds the matrilineal succession and matriarchal authority over the property of the family which she inherits. The other type of family through the patrilocal residence, matrilineal succession and patriarchal authority, was much more in practice and was termed as bag-ma or na-ma. Value was always therefore attached to the continuation of the family name and family property without fail or breaks either through matrilocal or patrilineal discent. In mag-pa institution, all the rights of authority were with the woman, had the option to take some more husbands into the union forming non-fraternal polyandry. In a
matrilocal marriage, as Prince Peter (1963: 315-16) says, ‘the younger brothers of a mag-pa do not hold any access for the sexual rights in his wife because she does not belong to her husband but he belongs to her and her family. She, however, would allow them to have sex in fraternal polyandry in a bag-ma marriage. The heireness’s children take her name and her to have the children she needs to hand down the property, she has inherited and undivided’. A mag-pa also had no right over her and her property. He could be turned out at any time without any obligations. Thus these two forms of residences — matrilocal and patrilocal, with their preferred type of marriages in the system formed the authority and succession through their respective system. This helped the family to bring stability and hold the family in elementary or extended form depending on the necessary of situation (Arakeri, 1998: 112-113).

The importance of family lies, first in the fact that it is universal to all societies in different stages of development and, with the exception of religions’, the only social institutions which is formally developed in all types of societies. Secondly, family is the fundamental instrumental foundation of the large social structure. It is as a member of the family that an individual fulfills the tasks and obligations that society entails upon him. The Tibetan family assumes a unique importance of its own, both on humanistic and theoretical levels. In Tibet, in semi-settled agricultural-cum-pastoral society of several autonomous ethnic / regional communities bound by a feudal order, man lived almost his entire life in and between family and religion, the latter operating through the family organization.

The Tibetan concept of social life is best expressed through the fundamental human aims and obligations, according to which an individual owes three debts: to gods, to sages and to ancestors. He is
required to pay them off by responsible living in society, through devotion to worship and rituals, learning and teaching as well as through founding a family and raising children. If he fails, he is denied salvation and gets interminably bound to the cycle of transmigration. This comes very close to the traditional Hindu postulates of life-values. On describing the structure of Tibetan society, Stein pinpoints its basic complexity and also its secret of stability. He remarks “One feature of social morphology sufficiently common to be significant may be expressed in a formula, equally applicable to the family group and to the structure of political power. It is co-existence of two principles, which are both inter-dependent and antagonistic: egalitarian joint ownership and hierarchy (Stein, R.A., and 1972:94). This accord-discord relationship of these two principles is illustrated in the family system, and its two basic organising principles, i.e. the rules governing marriage and those governing succession and inheritance. However, the relationship embraces a much wider area. In Tibet the family and the structure of political power seeping deep into social system were so harmoniously balanced that from it came a unique (almost eternal) stability in the social system.

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN TIBETAN FAMILY STRUCTURE: THE PRESENT SCENARIO

After studying in detail the traditional family structure of the Tibetan society, the emphasis is now turned towards continuity and change in the family system in exile. In this respect the approach is very selective because it is pointless to focus on those features of the family systems which could have been transplanted here from there i.e. from the ‘native’ social context. The family, which is most important part of all societies, assumes added significance in the Tibetan refugees’ context because of the uniquely important place it has had
always occupied in their traditional society. Before outlining the changes that have found in Tibetan family system, it would be appropriate to describe how and from which region of Tibet these refugees came from. The movement of population from Tibet was by and large because of political interference of Chinese rule. All those respondents who have migrated from their homeland said that the main reason of their flight was essentially the political interference of Chinese rule. During the flight refugees left their native land, most of them did not move out as families but as individuals, or as parts of a family and with their community members. During the flight to India some of the respondents lost their kith and kin either by Chinese army or by natural calamities. It is because the passage to India was very hard and tough. One of the respondent, Norbu who is 73 years old and originally from Khamb valley in Tibet, said that he fled to India in 1959. There were about 170-200 other Tibetans with him who fled to India. He said on the way they faced many problems like scarcity of food, tough terrain, bad weather condition and no transport system. They first entered through Sikkim in India where a base camp was situated and stayed there for about 15 days. He said that they were seven brothers in Tibet. Chinese army killed his five brothers. So along with his younger brother fled to India with other people. On the way to India during flight younger brother was also killed by the Chinese army. Another respondent, 52 year old Chhepak Dolma, said that she along with her mother and around 35 people fled to India in 1960. They all belonged to Runtag village in Tibet. They brought their sheep and goat and luggages, which were necessary for them. During the flight to India, the Chinese army followed them and some of their people were caught by them. She reminded that some were killed by the Chinese army. Thus in present study, inquiries revealed that as
many as 85% of the sampled households, one or more members of their primary family were left behind in Tibet. There were also large number refugees who came all alone.

Many families had been reduced to the status of broken families since their members were lost. Widows or those, who lost their spouse in flight, joined the original noble family to which they belonged. In some cases the family grew out of new combinations of separated spouses and broken families, and the human problem would have been tremendous but for the freedom granted by the Tibetan tradition to forge new ties and bonds. During flight many separated from their families. These separated men and women remarried and established new families with new partners. In certain cases after being separated by the force of circumstances, they searched desperately for their old partners. Thus during flight to India due to certain insecurity, uncertainty and necessity to lean on each other a few co-travelers became life-partners, without any formal marriage ceremony.

FORM AND SIZE OF FAMILY

In Tibet joint family system was mostly adopted by all the people. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 shows the change in the family structure after migration.

Table 4.1: Change in family structure (Dharamsala)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family structure</th>
<th>Before migration</th>
<th>After migration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Dharamsala, after studying the family structure it is observed that 86% of families was of joint families (in Tibet before migration) and 28% of the families were nuclear in form. But after migration to India 36% of families are of joint families while 82% of families are of nuclear in form.

In Kullu, it is observed, that 92.7% of families were of joint family and 13.39% of families were of nuclear in form before migration. On the other hand after migrating to India it is observed that 72% of families are of nuclear type and 25.7% of families are of joint type. Tibetans after migrating to India have lost their traditional family structure. On the other hand, most of the families are adopting nuclear families. Most of the respondents agree that the change in their traditional family structure i.e. joint family to nuclear family is the result of impact of local population, economic condition and lack of space in the new place. On the other hand, in Tibet they had their own agricultural land, sheep and cows etc. but in Dharamsala and district Kullu these Tibetan refugees do not have such facilities. In table 4.3 and 4.4 respondents asked about the attitude towards joint family.
Table 4.3: Attitude towards institution of Joint Family (Dharamsala)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>As long as possible one must try to live in a joint family</th>
<th>A joint family helps in the economic development of the family</th>
<th>A joint family hinders the development of child’s personality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M*</td>
<td>F*</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*M – Male, *F– Female

Table 4.4: Attitude towards institution of Joint Family (District Kullu)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>As long as possible one must try to live in a joint family</th>
<th>A joint family helps in the economic development of the family</th>
<th>A joint family hinders the development of child’s personality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M*</td>
<td>F*</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*M – Male, *F – Female

The tables 4.3 and 4.4 shows that the attitude of the respondents towards joint family in Dharamsala and district Kullu in which 54% of respondents from Dharamsala and 80.11% of respondents from Kullu agree that as long as possible one must like in joint family. 80% of respondents from Dharamsala and 82.4% of respondents from district Kullu agree that a joint family helps in the
economic development of a family. Out of total respondents there was about 83.3% of male and 71.4% of female respondents in district Kullu and 54.1% male and 53.3% female respondents in Dharamsala agree that one must live in a joint family. About 77.5% male and 88.8% female respondents in district Kullu and 79.16% male and 81.2% female respondents in Dharamsala agree that joint family helps in the economic development of a family. In Dharamsala as well as in district Kullu, the respondents said that it was not possible to stay as joint family here in India. It is because they do not have proper accommodation in exile. Most of the families are living in one or two rooms only. In Dharamsala most of the families are living in pukka houses. On the other hand, in district Kullu some of the families are living in small kaccha houses, built of mud. These refugees have been given land temporarily in the bank of river Beas to build houses. Most of these houses have not more than two rooms. Another factor of adopting nuclear family in these places is lack of any agricultural land. Most of the families are either engaged in small petty business like sweater-selling or services sector of different departments of Tibetan govt. in exile. Thus the traditional system has lost its values for most part and the youngsters have new values of life in the present changed situation. The present economic conditions also led them to adopt nuclear family in exile. The new generation with its new perspectives and values are now moving away from their natal family. Thus consciousness to maintain the traditional family, its property, mainly its name and breed through descendents, is now shifted to the maintenance of their own individual families with their own independent occupations.

The younger generations also has disregarded the authoritarian dominance of the head of the joint family. The emergence of modern
education and the consciousness of their status and roles by women have contributed to the preference for a nuclear family. This has affected the joint family system since the women coming from different family background with different views prefer to live separately with their husbands. Because of this number of elementary families has increased in exile. About older people in such families these days do not have any interference in family activities. Their knowledge about the society and culture too has become obsolete in the modern situation. However, they continue to stay with their sons comfortably, concentrating on meditation. Some attend to such jobs as looking after children and their guarding their houses when others go for work.

RESIDENTIAL PATTERN

In a household residential pattern of the members is a basis for the structure of the family. In a family, members are linked by either consanguinal or affinal relationship. These members of the household are grouped together to form a single family or have broken out into smaller groups. This may bring some changes in the structure of an ideal family in which the household consists of a man, his wife and children. Nuclear or extended families have their own ideal structure. This ideal structure cannot be realised by some of the families. Such families are affected by the biological or socio-economic factors such as divorce, batchelorhood, widowhood or barrenness. These have resulted in the adequacy of self-support for economic and social means. These families which were living separately have now reunited with the families of their original affinal or consanguinal ones to form either nuclear or joint families which are dependent on each other for economic co-operation. There are, therefore a few deviations from the ideal types of families. There are some causes which bring deviation in the ideal pattern of the families. These are such as due to economic
co-operation between brothers and brothers-in-law to take up different occupation like readymade sweater selling, running small restaurants etc. all at one time. In some cases those who are married while their place of residence is not finalised by the respective parents, are staying with their parents to support them economically. Today there is also much social and spatial mobility.

In the present day society in Dharamsala and the district Kullu it is my observation that individual members can go out and established the family of their own independently. Earlier in Tibet, the residence used to be either patrilocal or matrilocal. But here in the studied areas the shift is towards patrilocal and neolocal. Because of these changes, rise in the number of nuclear families increases. It was also observed during field study, in those families where elder parents are alive they try to hold the family intact in the traditional form, more for the emotional and social reasons than economic. A number of factors which have put a strain on the family structure of immigrant Tibetans in Dharamsala and District Kullu. The strain producing factors are namely loss of family members while fleeing from Tibet, break-up of families due to family tension and widowhood. Due the strains on the family structure the members of the affected families face difficulty in supporting themselves economically and socially. There are few cases in rich families once separated, united and setup a new unit.

FAMILY’S AUTHORITY STRUCTURE

Today most the families in the studied areas are patrilineal. However, such a family has lost most of its functions and authority derived from those functions. In traditional family the economic basis of the authority was on head of the family, which was derived from the control of the family property, has now changed in new place. It is observed during the field study, the perception of change in authority
among older age group higher than that of younger generation. The older age group expressed that a change has come about in the authority of the father or male head of the family.

Notwithstanding the fact that the younger age group might not have been in position to compare the two family settings, the new and the old, thus most of the youngsters said that there may not be change in authority in family. Besides age, education could be considered as another important variable in the perception of change in family behaviour. Hence, effort was made to outline family change by taking the educational status of the respondents. The educational achievement norm of the younger generation was found to be appreciably higher than that of the older generation. Most of the youngsters thus are more educated than that of the older generation. Though the educational status does not appear to be highly significant in the perception of change in father-son relationship, it does indicate that educated ones, in a slightly higher proportion than others, view the traditional relationship structure as having remained unchanged. During the fieldwork it was also observed among young respondents that the Tibetan youth, particularly the educated have evolved some sort of notions that the father should also deserve respect here in new place, whereas in the native traditional society the father automatically got respect from his children.

MARRIAGE AND MARRIAGE PRACTICES IN TIBETAN SOCIETY

Marriage is an institution, which admits men and women to family life. It is stable relationship in which a man and woman are socially permitted to have children implying the right to sexual relations. Edward Westermark defined marriages as the "more or less durable connection between male and female, lasting beyond the me'e act of propagation till after the birth of offspring (1936)" according
to Lundberg, marriages consists of “the rules and regulations which define the rights, duties and privileges of husband and wife, with respect to each other” (1958:133). Mazumdar define marriage “as a socially sanctioned union of male and female, or as a secondary institution devised by society to sanction the union and mating of male and female, for purpose of (a) establishing a household (b) entering into sex relations, (c) procreating and (d) providing care for the offspring” (1966:582). Thus in almost all societies one or the other form of marriage exists. Among Tibetans a marriage unites not just two persons but kin groups as well. Through marriage several bonds of kinship-cognetic and affinal, are produced. Marriage brings a change in the social personality of the bride and the groom. After marriage they acquire more responsibilities and higher position and also more rights and obligations in the social system of the society.

In traditional Tibetan society marriage rites are considered auspicious. A social importance is given to the ritual acts in a marriage and therefore marriages are performed at a very auspicious time to conduct a marriage ceremony. In Tibet there are no caste restrictions with regard to marriage as in India. The rich may bestow their daughters on the poor, the daughter of the poor man may become the bride of the proudest noble of the country. But the girls of the royal family and those of high rank are not generally bestowed on the low classes; but in the event of their not finding a suitable match, they are sent convents. The daughters of commoners do, however, occasionally become the wives of the nobles.

MARRIAGE CEREMONY IN TIBETAN SOCIETY

The nuptial ceremonies are alike for all classes, the only difference being in the amount of money expended in the festivities. In the first place, the friends of the bridegrooms employ to go-between to
make the first overtures to the parents or guardians of the girl. Should
the later entertain the proposal, the parents of the would-be
bridegroom either take or send presents to them, consisting of Khatag
and wine called chhang, “proposal wine”, and formally make an offer of
marriage. The girl’s parents make excuses, saying that she is neither
handsome nor accomplished, and will be of no service to the suitor.
The go-between thereupon more and more earnestly press their suit.
After these conventional phrases have been exchanged the girls
parents say “if you are really in earnest, and believe that she will be of
service to you, we shall consult with our friends and relatives and let
you know our decision”. A few days later their consent to the union is
formally conveyed to the suitor’s parents, when the latter taking with
them twenty or thirty gallons of wine, proceed to the home of the bride,
where they entertain not only all her relatives, but also the servants
and neighbors and present each other a scarf. The purchase-money
(rin) is then paid, which, for the middle classes are usually five or six
doche (625 to 750 rupees), and about fifty gallons of wine. Another
scarf is then presented to each of the elder members of the bride’s
family, and also to prominent persons among her friends and neighbor.

After an auspicious day has been fixed for the wedding, the
parties make the arrangements necessary for the occasion. On the
appointed day the bridegroom’s parents depute some seven or eight
respectable men to go as their representatives to bring home the
bride. They remain at her father’s house three days, during which they
are engaged in making negotiations and in assuring their hosts, by
whom they are provided during this period with all necessaries that
the r daughter will be happy in her new home. At the end of three days
the bride is told by his parents to go to the bridegroom’s house. They
give her a good milk-cow or yak, a pony, four or five oxen, two suits of

102
summer and winter dress, a complete set of jewelery according to the custom of the country, and a piece and stuffed carpet and a small dining table, cups, plate, cooking vessels and other articles for domestic use, fifty ounces of silver, and a female attendant. All those who have received scarves now come to present her in return with a scarf and a piece of money. The nearest relatives and friends of the parents, the chief of the country, and other people of position, present her with scarves, clothes, blankets etc, and silver coins.

Presently about twenty of the bridegroom’s friends arrive to conduct the bride to her new home. For the first half of the journey the arrangements are made and expenses defrayed by the bride’s parents; for the second half by those of the bridegroom, and it is made on horseback. The bride riding in the middle of the party. Arriving at their destination, the bride is seated on a cushion placed on a raised stand by the side of her husband in the middle of the bridal party. At the auspicious hour a short religious service is performed by the village Lama, and the parents or sponsors of the parties offer prayer for the happiness of the union. The bridegroom’s parents the beseech the got to witness the ceremony of their son’s marriage, and declare that henceforth the bride will be owned by the bridegroom and his brothers alone. For three days the festivities continue, during which time as much as fifty chapan of wine, three oxen, and three pigs are consumed. The notables among the bridegroom’s friends arrive with presents of scarves, and are entertained by the father.

On the third day the bride exchanges the clothes and jewelery. She wore on her arrival, for others supplied by the bridegroom. After a short prayer to the gods the pair are left together, for the first time, and on the following morning the bride begins to apply herself to her household duties. Her brothers and relatives, who have accompanied
her, return home at the expiration of the seven days. Some three months after the wedding her parents, accompanied by the chief men among their friends and servants, arrive with presents of food and request that their daughter may pay them a visit. After being entertained for ten or twelve days, they return home, and are followed some weeks later by the young couple, who are accompanied by a number of female servants bearing presents of scarves, provisions, wire etc. They remain a month, and on their departure the bride receives from her father a new costume and jewellery, and the husband a complete suit of cloths and the inevitable scarf.

THE AGE AT MARRIAGE

The age at marriage in Tibetan society, is decided mainly on three factors-physical, social and economic. For girls the age at puberty is taken as the suitable age for marriage. Child marriages were not practiced and late marriages were the order among the Tibetans. For marriage, they believe that not only the physical but also the mental development is necessary. Marriages are arranged late so that the youth will know the meaning and responsibilities of a marriage and also the rules which govern them. They thought that this will contribute to stability and happiness in married life. In settling a Tibetan marriage through the partners had very little choice to make in their traditional society they are now permitted to choose their partners for themselves. The Tibetans believe that the marriages arranged with the consent of the spouses will be more stable.

TYPES OF MARRIAGES IN TIBETAN SOCIETY

There are mainly three types of marriages practiced by Tibetans. These are Monogamy, Polyandry and Polygyny. Monogamy is mostly practiced and polyandry is common both among the commoners and nobility.
**Monogamous marriages:** In Tibet monogamous marriages are more in practice as they are more convenient in sexual relationships. Sex relations are expected to have the sanction of marriage. Regarding the rules of the residence, after marriage the spouses are allowed to live together. When a bride moves to her groom’s family, there results a patrilocal type of residence (*na-ma*). When wife’s family lacks male members or when extra members are needed by it for economic co-operations or when the groom is alone without any affinal or cognetic kins, then the husband is accepted into bride’s family. This results in a matrilocal residence (*mag-pa*). The married couples stay away from both matri and patri families, having their own independent residences forming neolocal residences. In some cases the bride and groom were not co-residents. The reason were being the formal marriage rites were not performed even though they had children, so their living together was not approved by the society. Secondly, even though the ritual ceremony took place, the bride and groom were to look after their respective parents who were old. However, they shared the economic, social and reproductive activities of their family. Exchange of bride is also prevalent in Tibetan society. These are of two types (1) exchange of sisters and (2) exchange of daughter for a sister. Two brothers exchanging their sisters is very common in Tibetan society. In some cases two brothers marrying two sisters. There is also a case where a sister is exchanged to her husband’s daughter by his first wife. Tibetans thought that all such relations bring unity among family.

**Polygynous marriages:** It is very common in rich people in Tibetan society. They practice both patrilocal and matrilocal residence after marriage. In patrilocal marriage a rich man married more than one wife. They think that having more than one wife is a status symbol in their society. In matrilocal family, where there is no any male issue a
man who married the eldest daughter of the family also married her all sisters if they agreed to be his additional wives, otherwise they have to join nunnery. A man to have another wife, has to take permission from first wife, irrespective if whether she was the sister of first wife or not.

In traditional Tibetan society there is some other types of polygyny which is also very prevalent. In one case both mother and daughter share one man as their husband. In such cases when a woman is divorcee or widow carries daughter with her to her new conjugal family. When the daughter gets mature, she is also taken as wife by her mother’s husband. Such kinds of marriages are not involving any rituals. Very few close relatives are invited to attend marriage and people are served with local wine Chhang.

There are many reasons to have such kind of marriages in their society. In first case when there is scarcity of woman to marry in one’s own class group a man marries much elder divorcee or a widow who has a grown up daughter from her previous husband. Here the stepfather looks after the girl who is neither a sociological nor a biological father and after her maturity; she is taken in marriage by the man. The man can also call his younger brother to join him in polyandry. In second case widows or divorcee who had now to look after them get remarried, and later owing to their emotional attachment towards their daughters from first union never wanted to give them out in marriage. In third case the stepfathers marrying stepdaughter to give legitimate status to their illegitimate children. Some time the girl did not agree to marry their stepfathers who were elder or poor, but the stepfathers even force them to have sex with them and later announced in the community that the girl had been married to him. In some cases the girl married to a young man paying bride price and when the man died or refused to stay with her, the father of the man
takes the girl as his wife. Thus most of these types of marriages were polygynous without any formal rituals.

**Polyandrous marriages:** In Tibet polyandry was common among the poor, where several brothers shared one wife and worked together to support the family. Tibetans used the term *Sa-Sum-pa* for polyandry, which means “the three who eat together”. Polyandry is closely connected with the principle of keeping the property in one hand. The property which the ancestor has left behind to the posterity should not be allowed to disintegrate. This is evident from the fact that if brother leaves the parental house and settles down elsewhere independently with a wife of his own without accepting his brother’s right over her, he would fight the right to the property of the family.

There are several cases of polyandry husbands in Tibet. These are (1) when several brothers share the same woman as their wife (2) when two or more men, not brothers, marry a woman by mutual agreement, (3) when a married woman gains influence over her husband and with his consent marries another in addition. In all these cases, the woman exercises her authority over her husband *(Hamer, 1975)*. Usually both the bride and groom are of the same age except in some rare cases. Generally the parents arrange the marriage except in a few rare cases when the girl selects her husband. In arranged marriages the parents may not even take the consent of their daughter. Generally not more than three husbands were accepted in polyandrous marriages in Tibetan society. If there were many brothers in a family the youngest brother was either sent to the monastery accepting celibacy or allowed to marry matrilocally to other families. Bringing a new wife in polyandrous marriage was strictly prohibited. If any brother marries with new girl he was separated out of the family with his wife and small amount of movable property. This is
to retain family property intact and this shows the importance the Tibetans gave for the family property. The major reasons of practicing polyandry by Tibetans are (a) to maintain property intact or to avoid the division of property into small segments.

(b) To maintain peace in the family having only one woman.

(c) To increase the economic conditions of the family by maintaining unity and co-operation among the brothers.

(d) To lower the family burdens and other problems because it was shared by more than one man.

Discussing the system of polyandry is prevalent in Tibet Rahul Sankrityayan, the noted Indian Tibetologist, has pointed out that due to sharing of the same wife by all the brothers, population in Tibet did not increase and there was never any population explosion. Further he also mentions that in case there were no sons and only daughters in the family, the son-in-law became the heir-apparent, and his children kept the family name alive (1953:235). According to Joseph Kerk Folsom (1953:235), a distinguished scholar on ‘family’ pinpoints the economic advantage of polyandry to the Tibetans. According to him the evidence suggests that the desire to transmit an estate undivided, instead of dividing it among several male heirs, had something to do with the system of polyandry. The property inheritance system, Folsom adds, was sometimes a result and sometimes a cause of this type of marrying pattern. Well known social anthropologists R.Linton (1936:183) while commenting on the Tibetan forms of marriage, “a society may, in fact, recognize more than one of these varieties as among Tibetans, the economically depressed practise polyandry, the better off monogamy, and some of the wealthy nobles.
Rules of Marriages in Traditional Tibetan Society: Though there are inadequate statistics available on the rules and customs governing the marriage alliances in traditional Tibetan society from the secondary sources it was gathered that the Tibetans abided by strict rules of endogamy and exogamy, the objectives being saving the family property from disintegration maintaining the purity of the family stock, avoidance of in-breeding and retention of the class distinctions. All these went to make the Tibetan marriage system a very complex one. Heinrich Harrer (1956:168) confirms the above criteria and states, “The aristocracy may only marry in their own class and this rule was strictly applied. Relatives may not marry one another except after seven generations, in order to avoid in-breeding. The Dalai Lama alone may permit exceptions to these rules.

In traditional Tibetan society the brides should be brought from families which are not related by blood. These days the name of the clan has disappeared and is replaced by either the name of the territory, ancestral house, estate, monastery, or a religious teacher. The Tibetans strictly observe clan exogamy up to seventh generation. They compare their clan organization to a human hand which has seven joints-from shoulder to the tip of the fingers. Each joint is a separate piece but connected with one another in continuous and single line. They also consider that the blood flows continuous in a single line up to seventh generation. After the fourth joint like in human hand the clan branches into separate divisions. In exceptional cases one is permitted to marry his clan after a gap of four generations (Arakeri, 1998:132).

There are two main endogamous groups in Tibetan society i.e. high and low castes. These two groups are based ion high and low castes. Among the pure bones themselves there are again groups
high and low. They again are endogamous in nature. Thus a pure bone man can marry with a pure bone woman only. In some cases higher group man can marry lower group. In this case the woman and her children cannot inherit or claim the property and status of father. But among the peasants, traders, nomads and artisans can marry with in their group as well as outside groups, except with the artisans who are considered impure bone.

In summary, traditional Tibetan society was generally patrilocal in terms of property inheritance, and the succession of rights and duties within the family unit, but bilateral in biological descent reckoning and patrilocal in residence. The various polygynous marriage forms and their related idealization are clearly related to socio-economic considerations: retention of family property, particularly land, demand domestic and taxation labor within the family, gain in social prestige through economic well being, social recognition, etc. Ultimately these marriage forms worked as social/cultural mechanisms for population control, as well as means to cope with social conditions imposed by the scarcity of fertile land, harsh climate and other environmental conditions, and as Goldstein (1971) points out by the socio-economic aspects of the stratification system.

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN MARRIAGE INSTITUTION: PRESENT SCENARIO

Earlier in this chapter we have discussed about traditional marriage system in Tibet through available documentary sources and by information’s derived from those respondents who had migrated from and also from these Tibetans who were born and brought up in India. Tibet and are now settled in Dharamsala and district Kullu. Now the focus of this study will be shifted to continuity and change in this institution among the Tibetan refugees in these areas.
The rituals and ceremonials which form part of the marriage cycle were significantly related to the traditional social structure. Hence any change in them is indicative of structural change in the society. In all the societies the scale of ceremonials is always a question of means and is related to the socio-economic status of the families involved. However, the weight of the tradition in enforcing decisions, even beyond the economic or social means, is also well recognized. For the Tibetans, marriage being an occasion for display of prestige, the scale and grandeur might have varied according to one’s socio-economic status. Nonetheless marriage ceremonials were obligatory for all the sections. After taking interviews and case studies of these Tibetan refugees in Dharamsala and district Kullu, what appeared was that a significant change had overtaken the Tibetan refugee society in regard to the ceremonial and rituals, forms of marriages etc. Gradually in new place, the marriage ceremony is becoming a personal family event which might includes its close circle of friends, rather than an event in social life cycle.

It was also observed that the traditional kinship system and specially that of the fraternal group called rus (clan), has weakened. The sacrament part which includes the presence of Lamas during marriage ceremony are also reducing. A respondent Dawa from Kullu said that “while in Tibet we invite large number of Lamas in marriage ceremonies but here in new place only few Lamas are invited and perform pujas and other rituals of marriages. She said that one of the main reason of decline in participation of Lamas in marriage ceremonies is that these are less in number and also here in new place marriage ceremony costs very high.” Another respondent Chhudon from Dharamsala said that, “in Tibet we used to celebrate
marriage ceremonies for many days and all the people in marriage were served with our local wine Chhang. Yak meat was also provided to guests during marriage ceremonies. She also said that in Tibet we used to go from groom’s place to bride’s place either on foot or on horse and yak. But here in new place it is totally changed. Here we use modern vehicles like cars, jeeps and buses etc. She also said that the marriage ceremonies are just formalities and only few close friends and relatives are invited to attend marriage. Here in new place the duration of marriage ceremony is not more than two days.”

Table 4.5 and 4.6 shows that there was about 77% of respondents of sample population from Dharamsala and 97% of respondents from district Kullu said that some changes have been taken place in marriage system. Out of total respondents 75% of male and 80% of female in Dharamsala and 92.5% of male and 94% female respondents in district Kullu said that some changes have been taken place in their marriage system.

Table 4.5 : Change in marriage system and influence of local culture (Dharamsala).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you think that some changes have been taken place in your marriage system?</th>
<th>Is there any influence of local culture in your marriage system?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.6: Change in marriage system and influence of local culture (District Kullu)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you think that some changes have been taken place in your marriage system?</th>
<th>Is there any influence of local culture in your marriage system?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

About influence of local culture in their marriage system 69% of the respondents in Dharamsala and 85% of respondents in Kullu district agreed that it has influence on their marriage system.

About the types of marriages, table 4.7 from Dharamsala shows that 31% of respondents prefer arranged marriage, 7% of respondents prefer semi-arranged marriage, 43% of respondents in love marriage and 19% of respondents prefer self-arranged marriage.

Table 4.8 shows that in district Kullu 36% of respondents prefer arranged marriage, 8% prefer semi-arranged, 41% prefer love marriages and 19% of the respondents prefer self-arranged marriage. In Dharamsala 77% of respondents agreed that preference of marriage will be in their own community. Same as in district Kullu 73.7% of respondents prefer marriage within their own communities. In studied area it is observed that preference of arranged marriage by females are higher than that of mans. It is observed that about 29.1% males and 33.9% females in Dharamsala and 27.7% males and 40% females in district Kullu prefer arranged marriages. It is also observed that preference of love marriage is higher than that of other types of marriages. In Dharamsala 71.6% of male and 45% of female prefer
love marriage. On the other hand in district Kullu 38.8% male and 40% female respondents prefer love marriages. On the other hand elders and older generations give their preference in arranged marriage. Out of total respondents there was about 66.6% male and 81% female respondents in Dharamsala and 77.7% male and 87.7% female respondents in district Kullu sand that there is influence of local culture in their marriage system. Thus both in Dharamsala and district Kullu the preference of love marriage is higher than other type of marriages. It has been seen that in Tibet marriage were mostly of arranged type. But here in new place love marriages are mostly preferred. The older generations still object love marriages but they could not stop youngsters to choose their own partner. Some of the older respondents agreed that they have to accept all the changes.

**Table 4.7: Preference of types of marriage in Dharamsala**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of marriage</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Arranged</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Semi-arranged</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Love-marriage</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Self-arranged</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.8: Preference of types of marriage in district Kullu**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of marriage</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Arranged</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Semi-arranged</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Love-marriage</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Self-arranged</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In table 4.9 and 4.10 the respondents attitude towards intercommunity marriage and adjustment between the spouses as well as the two communities become difficult in inter-community marriages was asked. The table shows that both in Dharamsala as well as in district Kullu percentage of marriage with in its own community is higher than that of communities. It is observed that percentage of males is higher marriage within one’s own community. In Dharamsala about 86.66% and in district Kullu 83.33% of male respondents said that on must marry within one’s own community. On the other hand 62.5% and 63.6% females in Dharamsala and district Kullu respectively said that one must marry within one’s own community. About adjustment between the spouses of different communities, it is observed that 40.83% and 55.55% of male respondents in Dharamsala and district Kullu agree that it is difficult to adjust in intercommunity marriage. While on the other hand 25% and 36% female respondents in Dharamsala and district Kullu agree that adjustment in intercommunity marriage is difficult.

This shows their strong community feeling and always wanted to keep their identity as much as possible. No case of marriage between Indian and Tibetan spouses came in sample.
Table 4.9: Attitude towards intercommunity marriage and adjustment between the spouses (Dharamsala)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.10: Attitude towards intercommunity marriage and adjustment between the spouses (District Kullu)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>37.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here in studied areas it is observed that the style of nuptial celebration is also changing towards western modes. The younger generation celebrating the occasion by western music and dancing in western style. A respondent Tsekey Dawa from Kullu said that today younger generation not following their traditional marriage system, she said that here in India these youngsters choose their partners.
themselves and without any consent of their parents they get marry. She also said that today arranged marriages are not accepted by the youngsters. Apparently, this was not appreciated by the older generation which wanted the marriage to be celebrated in the traditional style.

About the types of marriages in studied areas it has been observed that not even a single polyandrous type of marriage is practiced. Monogamy is practiced by all the sample families. Most of the respondents said that here in new place practicing polyandry is not possible. One of the main reasons of this is not having their own agricultural land. In Tibet they had their own agriculture land. Another reason of practicing monogamy here in present set up is that the elder brother does not hold the authority and power as in Tibet. So the younger brother prefers to marry separately and establish their own separate household. Some changes also have taken place in the ideal constitution of monogamy. The spouses under monogamy include the remarriage of even divorcees; widowed etc. some Tibetans who have lost their spouses during the flight to India now married to the divorced or unmarried or widowed. Thus the Tibetans, especially the younger groups-in-exile gradually loosing their traditional marriage system.