CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

For young people, entry point at marriage is a very crucial stage. Choosing a spouse is, perhaps, one of the most important and difficult decisions they make. Every young boy or girl has certain expectations regarding the partner he/she will select for marriage and dreams about married life. Such expectations form an integral part of young people's cognitive and emotive world and have their genesis in one's formative years. One's experiences may often colour the future choice and at the same time pose many fears and apprehensions. During the decision making period, fear of unknown is also there, since the couple, keeping in view our Indian set up, does not get enough opportunities to meet and to know and understand each other in a better way. Young boys and girls, may have one or the other type of tensions, anxieties, fears and apprehensions etc. regarding the adjustment they will have to make in their marital life in different areas, which may be physical, social, emotional or interpersonal, financial, and the gratification of certain personal needs etc.

The changing values of our society have brought about
a change in people's attitudes toward marriage, and the marital relationship. In contrast to the conventional idea of marriage where marriage was rather a social duty towards the family or community recent studies have shown that marriage has taken a psychological footing and the expectations have changed accordingly. People now view their marriages to be very important for their psychological well-being (Glenn and Weaver, 1981). They are more apt to marry for companionship and relationship aspects of marriage (Bell, 1975; Tavris and Jayaratne, 1976). People have come to believe that personal happiness is their right and the principal matrimonial goal (Kapur, 1973; Atwater, 1983; Kephart and Jedlicka, 1988).

The situation concerning marital role structure has also changed, thus adding to the expectations as well as the tensions in marriage. Friedman (1963) was among the first contemporary feminists to identify and criticize the traditional view of male-female roles and she labeled it the 'feminine mystique'. The educated women of today expect more from their marriages (Kapur, 1974, 1978) than being mere housekeepers and their husbands mere providers. This is because there is a greater awareness among women of their rights. In the marital relationship today, there are
expectations regarding acceptance of each other's uniqueness, flexibility in interpersonal relationships and a more supportive role for both partners. Couples prefer an equalitarian or democratic marital role relationship and reject the conventional sex role stereotypes (Ross, 1961; Kapur, 1970; King, 1977; Craddock, 1980).

Expectations from marriage, thus have gained new dimensions. Boys and girls, tend to expect more from their marriages today than in the past. The emerging trends have also generated tensions and stress in intimate relations. The youth is apprehensive whether the expectations are going to be met in their marriage or not and whether their marriage is going to be a success the way they want or not. Anything falling short of the realisation of expectations from marital relationship is likely to develop tension and frustration (Barot, 1972; Kapur, 1970, 1974; Sager, 1976).

Personal factors have come to play an important role in the mate selection process. The youth seems to have departed from the traditional values. This is apparent in the shift in importance given to the mate characteristics in mate selection (Shah, 1976; Hoyt and Hudson, 1982). The whole situation reflects changes in the current social and economic conditions.
In India, there is a relative paucity of research in the area of pre-marital perceptions, including the expectations and apprehensions of young unmarried people. Some studies have been done to understand the pre-marital attitudes of young people towards marriage and the various factors associated with it. Attitudes towards the arranged type of marriages have been studied by Gore (1968), Kurian (1974) and Rao and Rao (1976, 1982). Attitudes of youth towards their mate selection process and the evaluation of traditional patterns of marriage have also been examined by Ross (1961), Goode (1963), Rao and Rao (1982). Kapur (1968, 1970, 1973, 1974) has conducted an extensive research to study the attitudes of educated and working women towards various aspects of marriage and marital relationship. Many scholars (Kapadia, 1958; Cormack, 1961; Das, 1971 and Kapur, 1973) have studied the attitudes of young people towards intercaste and interfaith marriages. Age at marriage and opinions regarding the ideal age at marriage have been noted by Agarwala (1962), Rao and Rao (1982), Goyal (1988). But there is hardly any research to probe into the premarital expectations of unmarried youth regarding their marital partner and/or their marital relationship. The area of pre-marital anxieties and apprehensions has perhaps remained a totally unprobed field. Psychologists and sociologists in the
west have studied the pre-marital expectations and role expectations of young couples (dating, courting or engaged couples). However, in India due to cultural differences there is no formal provision of dating or courtship; post engagement meetings have started under close parental supervision. The engaged couple keeps a mask of their best appearances. As such, the type of work which has emerged in the western culture regarding pre-marital role expectations is based on the experiences of young people exposed to opposite sexes. In India, when such a work is undertaken to study the expectations and apprehensions of the young people about marriage and marital roles, it is at the best a tentative one, through projections into an imaginary future. The euphoria and charm of visualising marriage as a 'bed of roses' or continuous honeymoon can be as prevailing, as the fears generated and guarded threats of adjustments into a new family. For females especially, incidences of dowry deaths and in-laws torture can be a deterrent for marriage.

To enable one to understand the dynamics of expectations out of marriage, one has to lean heavily on the factors which lead to adjusted marriage. At best, the way we can study the factors underlying expectations and apprehensions is through the ex-post-facto studies of marriage and
mate selection. In order to do so, it is necessary to understand the basic theories put forth for mate selection. It is only through hypothetico deductions from these ex-post-facto studies, that some parameters for pre-marital expectations and apprehensions can be envisaged.

THEORIES OF MATE SELECTION

A brief history of marital choice shows that, over the years, there have been many changes in the purpose and criteria for marriage. In early days, marriage was largely a matter of parental dominance and family interest with the sole purpose of propagation. A 'rational marriage' (Murstein, 1986) was one where both the spouses were of same socio-economic rank and comparable background for the purpose of cogeniality and obtaining best possible progeny. Love as a basis for marriage had practically no chance in the 17th and 18th centuries. There was hardly any chance of the expectations of young participants to be involved in the selection of their mates, and more so in India, since the marriages were arranged even before the spouses gained maturity. According to the Hindu Ideal of mate selection, the most desired qualities in a spouse were chastity and potency with an additional quality for earning in the boy. Also caste
endogamy was given a great importance. By the first half of the nineteenth century, certain changes were discernible. While parents still had a fair measure of control over the marriages of their sons and daughters, love matches started growing in favour. The youth gained a modicum of freedom in their choice of marital partner. Gradually, the personal factors came to gain recognition in marriage. Individual choice and personal expectations, thus have gained more and more importance over the years.

The rudimentary theories (Murstein, 1986) presented in the United States in the 19th century threw further light on marital choice. In the first half of the century, emphasis was laid on the qualities that were thought to be essential in both spouses for playing their stratified roles. There was little concern for any intimate relationship, needs, and role aspirations. In the second half of the 19th century, compatibility based on interpersonal factors came to be talked of. Murstein (1986) divides these into 3 categories: Homogamy - Complementarity combination, Evolution and Phrenology.

The first approach stressed the need for similarity as well as dissimilarities in certain cases. As Fowler (1859)
remarked, "Wherein, and as far as you are what you ought to be, marry one like yourself; but wherein and as far as you have any marked excesses or defects, marry those like unlike yourself in these objectional particulars."

Darwin's (1871) theory of evolution, his concepts of 'natural selection' and 'sexual selection' influenced the marital choice theories. Bellamy (1889) in his novel, 'Experimental marriage' said that each individual within his life time evolves gradually toward a more perfect union, shedding less evolutionary fit spouses along the way. Westermarck (1936) declared that monogmy was the most evolutionary form of marriage. Weininger (1906) argued that no sex was of a pure gender. A man possessed predominantly masculine characteristics in his cells, but also some female characteristics. Each characteristic seeks its opposite in the opposite sex.

The nineteenth century people were greatly influenced by phrenology. Based on the premise that the character and talent of a person are localised in specific portions of the brain, this theory was originally formulated by Franz Joseph Gall, about 1800. The areas related to marriage were said to reside in the posterior regions of the brain. According to Wells (1809) these areas included Amativeness (for sexual
activity) conjugality (for the mating propensity) and inhabitiveness (for the love of home).

Later on, a great many factors came to be identified as important in mate selection. Propinquity (Burgess and Wallin, 1953), Complementarity of needs (Winch, 1955), Perceived homogamy (Trost, 1967), Personality variables (Burgess and Wallin, 1953, Murstein, 1967), Image of an ideal mate (Strauss, 1945, Anderson, 1986). Murstein (1970) proposed a theory of mate selection explaining the developmental process of the formation of dyadic relations.

The theories, which encompass a great variety of factors important in mate selection are presented below -

(i) Psychoanalytic/Parental Image Theory

Frend's psychoanalysis viewed marital choice to be determined by unconscious processes and oedipal configuration. This theory postulates a resemblance between a woman's father and her husband and between a man's mother and the mate he seeks. The determinants of marital choice are largely shaped by the way the individual passes through the stages of psychosexual development - oral, anal, phallic and genital. Of primary importance is the phallic stage where the little boy develops a possessive kind of love for his mother and the
little girl for her father. Gradually, however, both the little girl and the little boy identify with the parents of their own sex. But such experiences of resolution or unresolution of the conflicts centering around their early attraction to the opposite sexed parent influence their later choice of mates.

Burgess and Wallin (1955) working on engaged couples, reported that besides the attraction for someone with the characteristics of the opposite sex parent, there is also attraction for someone with the traits of the same sex parent known as the 'reverse parental image'. Another pattern found to be quite frequent in mate selection was a combination of those traits of both parents which had a positive response value in the childhood relations.

Aron et al's (1974) result indicates that both men and women seek to repeat in marriage, their relationship with their mothers, thus indicating a strong influence of the mother in seeking parental image in the spouses.

Jedlicka (1980) tested the psychoanalytic theory of mate selection and found parental images to be important. He feels that it is unlikely that there are universal parent images. Some subjects may place greater importance on
parent's religion, occupation, age, or some other aspect of personality or ethnicity. Others may consider the type of parent child interaction.

Visualising the psychoanalytic theory of mate selection in the context of pre-marital expectations, it can be said that the young unmarried males and females expect their spouses to have all the good qualities of their opposite sexed parent.

(ii) Theory of Homogamy

When individuals are alike on a characteristic, they are said to be homogamous for it. If a couple has some similar characteristic, it is said that they are assortatively matched for it (Murstein, 1986).

According to this sociocultural theory, social characteristics which are important variables generally in society, such as race, religion, or class are also important variables in mate selection and are assortatively matched. Assortment has been shown for a host of characteristics:

- Homagamy for social characteristics was found by Burgess and Wallin (1953) in their study on engaged couples. The tendency of like to marry like was found to be highest for religious affiliation and behaviour,
followed by family backgrounds, courtship behaviour, conceptions of marriage, social participation and lowest for family relationships.

- Socio-economic status follows the rule of homogamy very well, as has been shown by number of studies (Hollingshead, 1950; Dinitz et al 1960; Buss, 1985). Glover (1964) in his book, 'How to marry someone you can live with all your life', states that partners who share similar socio-economic background usually feel comfortable together.

- Assortativeness for values also has been established by many studies. Schellenberg (1960) and Murstein (1970) found value similarity in dating and courting couples. Ghaemmaghami (1984) reported that men and women entered marriage sharing many of the same beliefs.

- Assortment has been found for some personality characteristics. Burgess and Wallin (1953) indicated homogamy in the degree of day dreaming, loneliness, feelings easily hurt, touchiness etc. The tendency for persons with neurotic symptoms to be engaged with people like themselves was evident. Murstein (1967, 1971) and Hoyt and Centers (1971) demonstrated a mild
but statistically significant tendency for individuals to court those of comparable degree of self-acceptance, ego-dysfunction and neuroticism. Buss (1984) also reported assortment for personality dispositions.

Similarity in physical attractiveness has been reported by Murstein (1972), Deaux and Wrightsman (1984) say, "People tend to relate to people who approximately equal them in evaluated beauty".

The youth may be said to have such pre marital expectations since similarity and compatibility in social and mental characteristics between the two partners produce an adequate environment for agreeableness among the partners and thus, reduce the chances of friction between them. There may be an underlined unconscious or conscious fear that disparity in such characteristics might lead to inferiority feelings in one of them and also might cause adjustment problems.

(iii) Theory of Complementary Needs

The formulation of a comprehensive theory of mate selection in terms of complementary personality needs and the partial testing of the theory were accomplished by Winch (1956) and his associates. The theory, holds first, that all
human behaviour is oriented toward the gratification of needs. Each person selects, from within his or her field of eligibles, that person who gives greatest promise of providing him with maximum need gratification. The partners needs patterns, consequently, will be complementary. When the gratification of same need is involved, it should follow that the couple should be negatively correlated for that need. Which calls this Type I complementary. When the gratification of two needs is involved, that situation is called Type II complementary.

An early test supported the notion that the assertive-receptive dimension is important in mate selection; high assertives tended to marry high receptives. Similarly, it was found that when same traits in husbands and wives were correlated (abasement with abasement, hostility with hostility, dominance with dominance and so on) the relationships were generally negative (Type I). When the husband's hostility scores were correlated with the wife's abasement scores, by contrast, the relationship was positive; (Type II) their needs in this respect were complementary.

Complementarity theory, then, suggests that the unmarried youth has this expectation that their spouses
should be able to grant them fulfillment of their needs. In the pursuit of need fulfillment, a person with a dominant or assertive personality expects a partner with submissive or receptive personality. There may be an underlying apprehension that in case both of them are high on such a need, it would be difficult to achieve gratification of their needs. However, Banta and Hetherington (1963) found no consistent evidence for complementarity in mate and friendship selection. Centers (1975) held that type I complementarity (where same need is involved) is illogical. He stated, "Only different needs gratifying to each other can be complementary. For needs to be complementary, they must be different in quality or kind, and productive of different kinds of behaviour" (Centers, 1975). Murstein (1976) reviewed the criticism levelled against Winch's (1955) complementary theory.

(iv) Instrumental Theory

Developed by Centers (1975), the theory, in simple words states that one tries to pair with someone with whom association brings the most rewards and the fewest costs. This can be the case in any relationship. Centers (1975) states, "In the inter-sexual dyad formation each person seeks, among his circle of acquaintances, within the campass
of his self-acknowledged compeers, to form a relationship with that person or those persons whose behavioural and other resources provide (or are perceived to provide) maximum gratification and minimum punification (sic) for his needs."

According to Centers (1975) some needs are more important than others. Sex and affiliation are more important than succorance and abasement for both sexes when 'in love' and couples should show a significant positive correlation for both needs. Also some needs are more important for one sex than for another. Male dominance has high attractiveness value for females. Female nurturance, likewise, has high attractiveness value for males (Centers, 1975).

Centers (1975) states another principle i.e. 'genderic congruency', whereby premartial couples show high correlation regarding the most masculine need and the most feminine need. Evidence for this was found on the biggest need differential, dominance for men and affiliation for women.

Within the framework of pre-marital expectations, the instrumental theory implies two things. Firstly, young males and females expect to get their needs fulfilled in marriage and expect this fulfillment to come at the minimum expense possible. Secondly, there are sex differences in the pre-
marital expectations regarding the preference given to needs.

(v) The Stimulus - Value - Role Theory of Dyadic Relations

Murstein (1970, 1976), put forth a three stage exchange theory - stimulus, value, Role (S.V.R.). The three stages refer to the chronological sequence of the development of the relationship. The theory holds that in a relatively free choice situation, attraction and interaction depend on the exchange value of the assets and liabilities that each of the parties brings to the situation (Murstein, 1970).

The stimulus stage

The first stage concerns factors which are based on -

1) Perception of the other
2) Perception of the self.

Perception of the other comprises the appreciation of the other's physical, social, mental, or reputational attributes. Physical attractiveness is highly valued here but at the same time evaluation of self is also very important.

Perception of self, comprises the perception of one's own qualities that might be attractive to the other person. An individual's self concept includes many different aspects and a person might think of himself as adequate in some
aspects and inadequate in others. Thus, individuals who are attracted to each other have a balance for the "total weighted amalgam of stimulus attributes" (Murstein, 1970).

Focusing on an important stimulus variable, 'Physical attraction, Murstein (1970) hypothesized that as a result of 'bargaining', pre marital couples will show greater than chance similarity with respect to physical attraction, whether objectively or subjectively measured. On the basis of his 1967 study on 99 college couples who were either engaged or going steady and the measures of their physical attractiveness, Murstein (1970) showed support for the hypothesis and concluded that the stimulus portion of S V R theory appeared to be substantiated.

Value Stage

The stimulus stage gets terminated at the point when the equity of stimulus characteristics does not seem to be enough and the partners wish to have a comparison of their values as well. The main focus of this stage, then, is a varied appraisal and exploration of the kinds of values of the partner. Information is gathered about the partner's temperament, style of life, religious orientation and attitude towards politics, parents, friends, role of men and women in society and their marital roles etc. The partners
evaluate the effect of the revelations and disclosures of values on each other. If they find themselves holding same values for certain important areas, they tend to develop stronger positive feelings for each other. Since they have similar values they are more likely to engage in similar activities and thus have "similar reward value in the world at large" which further draws them closer. Murstein (1970) was able to confirm his hypothesis that marital choice is dependent on value similarity.

Role Stage

This stage comprises behavioural and role expectations regarding the self and the spouse as well as "the perceived fulfillment of these expectations" (Murstein, 1980) While describing the SVR theory (Murstein, 1970) lists 3 important areas under the 'Role' Stage-

Role 'fit'
Personality Adequacy.
Sex Drive.

Attempting to answer the question 'Is the partner perceived to be similar or opposite to the self?', Murstein (1970) concluded that high self acceptance or satisfaction with the self leads to a choice of partners who are
perceived to be similar to the self in general. Evidence was found for imagined role compatibility as against actual role compatibility.

The second task involves evaluation of personal adequacy of the self and the spouse. Investigation of mental health in accordance with the exchange theory is important (Murstein, 1970) because mental states like moodiness, failure in decision making, disliking and dissatisfaction of the self and neuroticism etc. involve high cost and no reward value. On the other hand individuals with high self acceptance and non neurotic tendencies prove to be assets in marital life since they make few unreasonable demands and also are close to the concept of 'ideal spouse'. Murstein (1970) presented strong support for the similarity of self-acceptance hypothesis and slight support for the neuroticism-similarity hypothesis in pre-marital couples. It was concluded that 'Personal adequacy' is a key factor in marital choice.

The third task involves the necessity of attaining sexual compatibility as similarity of sex drive is rewarding. Evidence was presented for the following (Murstein, 1970). a) Couples going together exhibit a greater than chance similarity of sexual drive level; b) High sex drive men
possessed less role compatibility, were less accurate perceivers of their partners and thus were poor on courtship progress'.

Murstein (1976) listed 39 hypotheses relating to SVR theory. Support was found for 33 of these. The theory has been generalized beyond courtship to marriage adjustment (Murstein, 1971) with results similar to those found for premarital couples.

The stimulus-Value-Role theory of mate selection, thus, implies that during the course of relationship development, the partners expect similarity in their stimulus characteristics, values and behavioural and role expectations. Those having great differences in such characteristics do not progress further in their relationship, probably because they foresee certain adjustment problems because of their differences. According to the SVR theory, the premarital expectations and apprehensions of the individuals get affected by an evaluation of the qualities of the spouse that may be rewarding and qualities that are not rewarding.

vi) Theory of Interpersonal Attraction

Apart from these theories of mate selection the concept of 'interpersonal attraction' also helps in the
understanding of intimate sentiment relationships and the process of their development. Factors found important in general interpersonal attraction research, such as, propinquity, physical attraction and similarity have been found to be important in the selection of marital partner.

Attraction involves likeability - the belief that, under the appropriate circumstances, a positive sentiment relationship could develop between a person and a target (Crano and Messè, 1982). Interpersonal attraction has been explained within the framework of reward-cost or exchange theory of Thibaut and Kelley (1959). The basic premise of exchange theory is that people expect to maximize their rewards and minimize their costs when interacting with others.

Many social scientists have commented that the development of a relationship, liking or loving, follows a step by step progression (Murstein, 1970, 1976; Secord and Backman, 1974) Crano and Messè's four stage theory which is presented below is an adaptation from a model of the stages originally proposed by Secord and Backman (1974). The theory explains the progress of the process of interpersonal attraction and the phenomenon involved in the process. The
various stages suggest how acquaintance progresses from friendship and love. The theory implies that after sometime of interaction, at an advanced stage of the intimate relationship, two persons of the opposite sex involved in it, may think seriously of going beyond friendship and getting into matrimony.

In the initial stages, the primary concern is forming estimates of one another's likeability. People attempt to sample the rewards that the other can provide. If the perceived likeability of the other person is less than the value of the available alternative, there may be an attempt to opt for this other source. Physical attraction seems to a major mediator of initial attraction.

**Physical Attraction**

Most readily available and easily processed set of cues used in initial likeability judgements come from the other's physical appearance. Walster et al (1966) demonstrated that physical attractiveness was by far the major predictor of heterosexual 'liking' and subsequent dating behaviour among college students. Other research (Byrne et al, 1970; Berscheid et al, 1971; Touhey, 1979) has also presented evidence consistent with the hypothesis that physical attractiveness is important in organizing
impressions about people. Forming relationship with an attractive other is rewarding as it attests to one's own desirability in the eyes of others. The concerns about rejection often lead to pairing of persons who are reasonably well-matched on physical attractiveness. Support for this 'matching hypothesis' has been found by Walster et al (1966), Berscheid et al (1971) and Murstein (1976).

As the relationship progresses into the second stage, the interactants explore the range of mutually acceptable and rewarding activities and outcomes. The mechanisms which appear to be important are:

**Opportunity/Propinquity**

There are some factors in the physical environment that enhance the opportunity for interaction. The most important environmental variable determining opportunity is social proximity or propinquity. Bossard (1932) was one of the first to examine the importance of physical distance in mate selection for marriage. Katz and Hill (1958) and Catton and Smircich (1964) describe the marriage rate to be a function of distance between spouse's residences.

Propinquity enhances opportunities for interaction and thus facilitate the general process of explorations of mutual
Belief Similarity

That similarity is related to attraction has a long history of empirical support. Early studies of mate selection (Kirkpatrick, 1955) generally found that persons were attracted to others who were similar in social background characteristics and values. Longitudinal studies of the growth of attraction in groups (Newcomb, 1961) provide support for the association between similarity and attraction. An extensive array of experiments (Byrne, 1971) concerning the degree of similarity with respect to opinions, personality traits and social background characteristics has mainly supported the similarity attraction relationship. Of most interest is Byrne's (1971) finding that couples where both people were physically attractive and shared similar beliefs were most likely to have continued the relationship.

Belief similarity appears to facilitate the development of liking and loving relationship for a number of reasons. Similarity in itself is reinforcing. Agreement with another leads the person to anticipate rewarding interaction. Agreement is rewarding and disagreement punishing, because rewards in the relationship. It is less costly to interact with people who are nearby.
liking an agreeing other and disliking one who disagrees provides a balanced cognitive state - one that is psychologically pleasant and comfortable (New Comb, 1961). Agreement also satisfies a person's affectance needs, the need to feel secure in dealing with the world (Byrne, 1971).

Reciprocity

The progress of interpersonal relationship also depends on the development of mutual regard and trust. One major indicant of such trust and regard involves reciprocity, especially with respect to attraction, self disclosure and reward exchange. The perception that another likes us contributes to our likeability of that person. As the relationship progresses, it becomes significant that the feelings are actually reciprocated by the person.

As the relationship further progresses into the next stage, sentimental attachment becomes increasingly strong. A set of roles emerges from events that occurred over the course of earlier stages. Compatibility of roles is an important feature of this advanced stage of 'commitment'. Murstein (1976) provides evidence that is consistent with the relative importance of role compatibility during the later stages of a sentiment relationship.
When the interactants are perceived as a single entity i.e. forming a unit relationship, they are said to be in the final phase of liking and loving relationship, which Secord and Backman (1974) have termed 'institutionalization'. Here, sentiment plays the most dominant role. Termination of a liking or loving relationship might take place if there are changes in the ratio of rewards to costs. People's needs and motives may change overtime, thus bringing a change in the reward - cost ratio.

**Cluster of factors in Mate Selection**

Some investigators have grouped the various factors which in their view are important determiners of mate selection. The early Burgess - Wallin (1953) interviews with young engaged couples and a study by Strauss (1945) indicate the operation of such factors as propinquity, image of an ideal mate, parental image, personality needs and homogamy to be important in choice of a mate. Kephart (1957) visualized four sets of operating factors in mate selection process - Demographic factors (race, religion, age at marriage, propinquity, social class, education etc.), romantic love, personality interaction and expediency (opportunistic and situational factors. Jacobsohn and Matheny's (1963) search of the literature yielded seven major determinants of mate
selection - Demographic and ecological factors (age, sex ratio, propinquity), Legal and statutory factors, Socio-economic factors (social class, religion, ethnicity and race, education, occupation), Social conditions, Marital status, Significant others (parents, peer groups, mass media and culture heroes), Personal attributes (physical traits, behavioural traits etc.). Shah (1975) categorized the principal factors controlling mate selection according to the Hindu Ideal into four broad areas, namely, opportunities for love and self choice in mate selection, role of the parents, guardians and friends in mate selection, age at marriage, and desired familial and individual characteristics of the mates. Murstein (1986) in his book 'Paths to marriage' lists the socio-cultural variables associated with marital choice to be similarity, age, education, ethnicity, personality traits, physical attractiveness, propinquity; socio-economic class and values.

Cultural Variations in Mate Selection

The degree to which one or a combination of the mate selection factors serve as the basis for mate selection varies widely across the cultures. In a given culture, mate selection is subject to its control mechanisms and societal
regulations which determine who should get married to whom. Marriages based on love and romance are likely to be institutionalized in societies with nuclear family systems than in those in which families are typically extended (Lee and Stone, 1980). In India, where the family system is very strong and family unity is emphasized much, the family exerts a greater control on the process of mate selection and the institutionalisation of arranged marriages (Gupta, 1976). Here, a great emphasis is put on the family alliances and social-economic considerations. As a result, the personal criteria and the expectations involved in the choice of a partner get affected.

Unlike the Western societies, the practice of dowry is prevalent among many in India, more so in the rural areas. Despite the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 and dowry being considered a social evil and burden on girl's parents (Rao and Rao, 1982; Punia, Punia and Sharma, 1987), it has been found to assume importance in settling marriages in many instances. Despite of their liberal views, Rao and Rao (1982) report that about one third of the subjects expected dowry in their marriages. Dowry expectations differ for persons with different educational backgrounds. At times, dowry demands increase as the prestige of education increases (Rao and Rao,
1982). Consciously or unconsciously, many people happen to have dowry expectations as may be seen from the fact that many dowry deaths take place in India.

In modern Western societies, the youth may have contact with the opposite sex before marriage and then make a choice. Dating, one way of having heterosexual contacts, has been found to be more than dalliance and a search for a marital partner. Individuals dating tend to pair on the same variables that people who marry do (Hansen and Hicks, 1980). Earlier Blood (1956) found that college dating is functional in the sense that students seek in their pre-marital experiences the sort of relationship which wears well both before and after marriage. The road to commitment proceeds from dating to going steady, to engagement or courting and marriage (Murstein, 1986). Cohabitation for most individuals is a developmental stage of courtship that eventually terminates in marriage (Murstein, 1986). Such modes of premarital heterosexual contacts like dating, courtship, premarital cohabitation and even trial marriages are popular in the Western societies, whereas, in India, these factors are not approved of by our society. The opportunities of meeting many people of the opposite sex are limited. The concepts of dating and courtship do not seem to exist in
India. Whatever dating or courting exists, is not on socially acceptable platform, but, rather done surreptitiously generating a considerable amount of guilt, anxiety and apprehensions. The very fact that in the west a vast amount of research has been done on dating and courting couples regarding the study of intimate relationships, and in India, such type of research is presumably non-existant, goes to show how far these factors are operative in India before marriage.

The forces of modernisation, however, seemed to have paved the way for changes in the mate selection attitudes of Indian Youth (Kurian, 1982). The attitudes, today, show a definite shift from the traditional practices of mate selection. Young people tend to be more liberal and express more independent attitudes towards the selection of their marital partner. The youth today would like to see and know their mates before marriage to make a better choice and for better understanding among themselves (Shah, 1961; Mathew, 1966; Rao and Rao, 1976, 1982). They prefer to have free contacts and increased decision making for themselves. They want more freedom in selecting their spouses (Rao and Rao, 1976). The educated people give more weightage to personal selection and expect their involvement in mate selection.
process (Kapur, 1970, 1973). They are ready to break caste endogamy (Das, 1971; Kapur, 1973). Love as a factor in marriage has also gained recognition. Corwin (1977) reported that there is increasing toleration of inter caste and love marriages in India. This goes to show that the attitudes towards mate selection have changed. The expectations involved have become manifold.