CHAPTER - 3

FAMILY, KINSHIP, AND MARRIAGE

For a better understanding of any society a study of basic institutions such as family, kinship and marriage are very essential. Further, structure and types of family are very important to study from the point of authority, behaviour and inheritance of property.

Burgess and Locke (1953:8) have defined family as a "group of persons united by the marriage, blood or adoption; constituting a single household; interacting and communicating with each other in their respective social roles of husband and wife, mother and father, son and daughter, brother and sister; and creating and maintaining a common culture". It is true that, it consists of a man and woman with their children living together in the same abode during the minority of their children.

The family, as a social unit, has already assimilated through years and ages, tradition, sentiments and modes of behaviour of the society. It plays the part of a suitable medium to convey these to its individual members. Thus in the family "the biological, psychological and sociological forces meet in giving the individual his
Families develop moral codes, more or less in conformity with the general sentiments, but with interesting variations. The family more than any other group affects development of the individual’s moral attitudes. It has an almost uncontested control over children and most impressionable years. Sensitive to the prevailing culture, it seeks to transmit the moral ideas of the group to its members. When it fails in this task, through disorganisation, the child may grow up with distorted sentiments and find itself socially isolated or at war with the community. The Hindu home, graha, the seat of Hindu family (kutumba), is regarded as the dwelling place not only of the living members of the family but also of the nitya, the ancestors, under the care and blessings of Agni – the sacred fire, the presiding deity of the home.

A Hindu home is also regarded as the holy temple of knowledge. It is the basic institution of learning to every child. From the very beginning the family teaches the children about the custom, manners to its children. They also learn about their roles and duties and also their position in the family, kinship, and the society at large, from their family. In this way the family helps in transmitting the cultural heritage of the society and potential creators of a new family group. Furthermore,
they do not face agonising decisions in their daily lives. The pattern is there, and all they have to do is to fit into it. As children they have little responsibility and little suffering, unless the family is very poor in which case all are bound to suffer. In a village like Basavapura, which is a closed community, there is no independent status to an individual outside his family. The family rather than the individual is taken into consideration for public participation and customary payments during community level activities. In some ways individual members are identified and recognised through their family. During important rites and functions like marriage and funeral, presence is expected of all the families related by blood or affinity, though anybody in the family can represent on such functions or occasions. During the period of ritual pollution, it is the family as a whole which is polluted and not one or two individuals. So, the family in general is more important than the individual (o.f. Surumurthy, 1976:60).

The family is also a ritual unit. The religious activities are more family centred rather than the priest, temple or math centred. To see that all members undergo religious rites properly the Hindus adopted the joint
family system. In the same way each family will have its own family or lineage deity.

In Basavapura, there are 260 families. Out of this 165 are elementary and 45 are extended families. The extended family may be laterally, vertically and laterally vertically extended. There are also a few families which can be classed as incomplete with the absence of father or mother and in the same way the families with dependents such as a widowed sister living with them. Elementary family consists of father, mother and their unmarried children. Now-a-days elementary families are increasing in number and are believed to be suitable for present day conditions. The researcher has found out that 80% of literate and 35% of illiterate informants agreed that elementary family is most suitable for present day conditions. They believe so because of its limited size, which gives them greater freedom of expression, sharing of responsibility and lesser or no mental botherations. It also helps parents to take good care of their children. There would also be no scope for family conflict and on the other hand it helps the members to provide more security and attention towards each other. The literate informants were of the opinion that this type of a family is more suitable to the present day conditions for any group.
On the contrary the extended families consist of parent(s), married son(s) and grand children. There is no limit on the size of an extended family. It generally includes three generations. Illiterate informants are prepared to live in an extended family for better security, leisure, socialization, recreation and equal responsibility to all the members. Head of the extended family will be either the father or the grand father. If both are absent, the responsibility is usually shifted to the eldest son. Now-a-days the extended families are losing their importance due to the impact of individualism, industrialisation, liberal education and so on. In the same manner it is also not suitable in several ways, where some members who are educated and employed in far off places prefer to take their wives along with them. Thus, the old value that 'strength lies in unity' is being lost. Owing to dowry, modern education, love marriages, etc., daughters-in-law who come from non-kin background may not love and respect their in-laws. The new and modern concept of education and family life also does not subscribe for the group life that one finds in an extended family.

With regard to the headship of the family 100% of both the literate and illiterate informants expressed
that the head of the family should be a male member, generally either the father-in-law or husband, though there are a few women who discharged their roles as heads of families equally efficiently, they did not approve a woman to head the family. The reasons given by them are: they are weak, illiterate, inexperienced and so incapable of moving outside the house freely and discharge their duties. Moreover they are generally over partial to their sons or daughters and this always bring quarrels in the family.

There is always a close relationship between the number of elementary families and the area of the selection of brides. The daughters-in-law who come from different family and kin background do not generally like to continue to live together, the way the girls from symmetrical cross-cousin marriage system do. Secondly, women who are educated and have outside contacts may not like to be subordinate to the elders and certainly not to the mother-in-law and sister-in-law. Realising that the atmosphere in the elementary family of their own will be much more free, they try to be separate as soon as possible.

Secondly, possession of landed property is yet another factor. Little or no landed property makes a
family more unstable because a poor family which earns its living on day labour will be naturally leading a relatively low standard of living. The food they eat and the houses in which they live are of poor quality. As such it will not matter much for them whether they live in an elementary family or in an extended one. Moreover, owing to the lack of space and also freedom, one may not like to live in an extended family. There are other reasons for becoming separate, and they may be such as misunderstanding, jealousy, narrow mindedness, hatred, superiority and inferiority feeling; which may become sources of conflict and breaking of the family. The villagers believe and quote proverbs to support their belief that no two women in any family live happily for a long time. A proverb of the area says - 'hundred wolves may live together but not two women'. However, no one mentioned about the need for better care for children, freedom and so on as the reasons for breaking away from the extended family.

Division of labour:

The different family members - father, mother, sons, daughters-in-law, daughters and grand children depending upon their age and sex, have different roles
to perform. For example, earning for the family is the job of men and women keep home. But in an agricultural village like Basavapura both men and women work hard both at home and on the farm. Generally men fetch water in the morning and also clean the cattle shed. Meanwhile women-folk clean the house and prepare food. It is the women who serve food and clean the utensils. After food able bodied men and women go to fields for work. Here again driving the bullock, operating the agricultural tools, is the job of men. Women do sawing, weeding and collect waste from the fields. We can say that women play an equally important role in agriculture operation. A saying goes like this 'For a farmer bullocks are only next to his wife'. This means the bullocks work only in the fields but the farmer's wife work both at home and in the fields as well.

Woman also keeps home and bring-up children for the husband. At home she fetches water, cooks food, feeds men, children and aged ins-laws. Looking after the cattle, milking them and preparing butter, etc. are some of her main jobs. She also part-takes in the feasts, festivities and trips to pilgrimages. The girls in the family help their mother in cleaning, fetching water, fire wood and also in cooking. They also carry food to the fields for
parents and also collect firewood. They wash clothes and also keep a watch on the fields against stray cattle and birds. The older women also have their own roles to play. Though they are old their experience of years help them to guide the young. They feed and discipline young daughters-in-law and also children. They guide them in making special foods like pickles, parad, etc. A few also know folk medical remedies for the ailments of women and children. A few others perform magico-religious acts to cure evil eye and such other problems with the infants. In the field of agriculture through their experience, they guide in preserving seeds, sowing them and raising seedlings for transplantation and so on. In this way a woman is of much help at all stages of her life, from girlhood to old age, to an agricultural family. As such it is no wonder that girls are always welcomed, loved and respected in an agricultural community like Basavapura.

Interaction in a family:

Different members of a family interact among themselves in a particular pattern. The interaction between husband and wife will be mostly cordial. There may be a few who have married against their own will and lack harmony in the family life. Generally the husband and wife interact collectively in all matters of family
life by working and thinking together for the good of the family and children. When a young bride enters her husband's family and if she is not a kin to the family, she has to adjust to every member of the family. If she is good and industrious by nature, most of her problems are averted. If by nature she is lazy, slow, quarrelsome, jealous, narrow and petty minded - many problems will arise. Normally her relation with her parents-in-law will be of respect and keeping a distance from them. The sisters-in-law who will be of her own generation, will have joking and friendly relations. They work together and co-operate with each other. But if they do not like each other and if her parents-in-law and husband fail to protect her she will be miserable indeed.

One of the aims of marriage is to propagate the family line. If the couple fail to beget children within one or two years after marriage, it is the wife who gets the blame for sterility. If she gives birth to only daughters, then also she is blamed. A quarrelsome, insane and the one suffering from incurable diseases, is superseded with another wife. However, now the situations are changed. If they are ill or sterile, they consult a doctor. If the wife cannot put-up with her in-s-law, may demand to be separated. To establish her claim she may even go to
her natal home and stay there herself. In case if she fails to get support from her natal home, she may try to adjust with her in-laws or put-up with them much against her wishes. When it becomes unbearable she may even commit suicide to solve her misery and also to dishonour her ins-law.

In Bongaigaon a house-wife is also supposed to care and respect her ins-law. Owing to clash of personalities the two women may clash. In most of the cases the wife is blamed for her disrespect towards the old. However, this is not the rule and the old lady may also be blamed if she does not look after her ins-law cordially and care for them. The daughter-in-law is also supposed to treat the visitors and guests to the family with hospitality. Any violation will bring her a bad name and the whole village and kin group will begin to gossip about her acts. She is also supposed to have cordial relations with her husband's sisters, especially the widowed and young, and be friendly with them. A woman who cares more for kith and kin from her own natal side will naturally earn the displeasure of the family. No doubt she has to be hospitable to them but any over doing or partiality towards the kith and kin from her husband's side will immediately bring her a bad name.
As a neighbour and as a member of the caste and community, the woman is supposed to have friendly, helping, and co-operating relations. Any violation will bring her bad name. She is not only supposed to visit and barrow things needed in daily life from her neighbours but she should also welcome them, treat them cordially and also lend them whatever they want at the times of need. Naturally any failure on her part will reflect on her behaviour.

In the rural or peasant context the good or bad behaviour of a woman is always related to her family background. Her mother is generally criticised for her acts. A proverb says - "As is the yarn so is the saree and as in the mother so is her daughter". So mothers specially advise and warn their daughters to behave properly and bring good name to her and also to the natal family. Many a time a good natured mother may not approve all acts of her own daughter. In this way the norms, public opinion, aim in life, aspiration for good name and life, etc. make women-folk behave properly in life and also help others to lead a good family life.
Kinship

Next to one's family kinship group plays an important and dominant role in the life of an individual. Kinship in any society is built on the foundation of lineage and clan groups. Both patrilineal and affinal groups play an equally important role in regulating kinship pattern and interaction among the kin. Kinmen in general are referred to as relatives (sambandhikara). However, the collateral agnates are called as čawedicaly, meaning those who have a right to the ancestral property of the group. Locally they are called mana-taparala, literally meaning brothers (cf. Gurumurthy, 1976:63). The affinal relatives are referred to as bescara and nentara, which means those who have bonds of affinal type.

It is easy to establish the relationship of a person taking his clan name or totemic symbol into consideration. Among these, totemic groups help in finding the position of an individual in his family ranking from forefathers to future generation. Totemic groups are locally known by such terms as kholā and baddag. The membership to a totemic group is determined by knowing the name of his totemic group or its symbol. It plays an important role while finding a bride or bride-groom or
avoiding a family. People with common totemic symbol cannot establish marital relations, because they are collateral kin and they have to find their mates in another group. Many a time people may not know the name of their totemic symbol but they will be conscious of this group identity. It is only during the marriage negotiations and festivals and rituals connected with totemic groups that they are made known.

The people who belong to one totemic group will also have a common family deity. They may make a trip to the shrine together if they live in the same community and celebrate the rituals together. The clan or lineage obligations make them conscious of their group. In a village many clan and caste groups live together. In this village exogamy is not a rule. So marriages between individuals from different clan groups are common within the same village. This has resulted in the stay of both affinal and consanguinal kins within the same village.

A woman, before marriage will belong to her father's clan. So she has to be adopted into her husband's clan by performing an elaborate rite like marriage. Symbolically her ties with her natal clan are cut-off by celebrating the Janamabheda ceremony. Later when she
is without membership to any group she is given in marriage (adoption) to her affinal kin. Then follows a rite to incorporate her into her husband's clan. However, Hindus in many cases consider their wives an 'outsider' and never 'trust' them into rituals and religious duties, as such she is not given any independent ritual roles to perform. A childless widow is allowed to adopt a son and propagate her husband's lineage only in the name of her deceased husband. Even the offerings, worships, gifts, etc., she makes are in the name of her husband or son. Thus she gets a peculiar place in her husband's clan, an adopted or incorporated one with roles confined to 'guardianship' and not 'ownership'. She gets privileges and not rights over property and other things. Even then several women have sacrificed themselves in such a society to bring name and fame to her husband's family; all in the name of duty and obligation. All these show that a woman was and is considered as an outsider even when she was adopted into the clan and worked for her husband's family, till she has become a widow.

Lineage groups:

Patriarchal lineage is the order in the area under study. Lineage groups are locally called as Vathara.
Usually the members of the lineage group are found living in the same street. Lineage group of a person can be easily traced by knowing his surname, which is locally called as addahamuru. There are many families who are known by the name of their ancestor or village from which they have migrated; for example Hayakondadavaru, Jakkemullur, Koggammcru, Jajuoru, Kallepurodavaru, Bendiholuru, Rabburaruru, Amabaru, Sasaaru maeysavaru, etc. Members belonging to one lineage are called as agnates, who have a right in the ancestral property. During special occasions like marriage, death, etc., they have a moral obligation to assist one another. Interaction and clashes are also common among agnates who share the ancestral property. Their properties which lie side by side, provide lot of scope for quarrels and fights. However, the women-folk who come into the lineage through marriage are treated as outsiders. Therefore, they usually keep away from such quarrels to avoid adverse public opinion. Above all they are not supposed to cease talking with other women-folk of the lineage so that the mutual visits, interaction and help continue even if the two families are at conflict. In this matter women are also considered neutral and so act as links between two families even at times of their quarrel over property, etc.
The agnates worship a common set of ancestors and celebrate the ancestral worship either during Deepavali or Ugadi festival. Usually arrangements for ancestors worship is made in the house of the eldest male member of the lineage or family, who is alive. People believe that the deceased join the ancestral spirits only after the celebration of the unification ceremony of ancestors (Hiriyarenna Kūdisuvadu). Custom demands that to this worship all the lineage members should come with offerings. Many a times owing to their quarrels, the male members may stay away and send their women-folk and children to partake in such rites.

It is significant to note that equal importance is given to both male and female ancestors - and is arranged in the form of a pot, decorated with dress and ornaments. When compared to the Brahmanic order this South Indian custom is different; perhaps this may be cited as a Dravidian feature, where both father and mother are given equal importance and worshipped as ancestors.

Affinal Kin:

Those who become kin through the establishment of marriage, by giving sisters or daughters or bringing wives
or daughters-in-law, are affinal kin. Kin by rule, have no right over the property of their affinals. They are also not supposed to interfere in the matters of their affinal kin. Their frequent visits are also not welcomed. However, they are specially invited for festivals and rites celebrated in the family. But they have moral obligations to support their affinal kin at times of crises and need. They have certain customary roles to play during rites of passage like marriage, birth and funeral. In day-to-day life the lineage members should have good ties. But in practice it is not so because of quarrels over property and other matters. In the absence of their help and support the villagers go to their affinal kin. Though it is not approved, the society tolerates this since it is better than going to non-kin.

The customary roles played during needy hours strengthen the villagers' belief that closer the affinal kin reside the better. [92% of illiterate and 60% of literate informants preferred a distance within 10 miles to establish marital relations.] This preference is owing to more interaction and better communication it brings among the relatives. They also think it helps to get assistance and support quickly at times of need and also reduces unnecessary travelling and expenses for both the parties.
Shore are also divided opinion on the kin and non-kin marriages. Regarding non-kin marriages - 40% of literate informants, who also come from economically better-off family background, expressed that they approve them. Reasons given for this are as follows: (1) This new group will naturally be living away from their village and very little of them will be known in that village and so less gossiping about them; (2) New ties make both kin groups alert and express cordiality to each other; (3) Especially for women, if they are married out to a non-kin group, when they come back to their natal home after some time, all will treat her with cordiality and affection; and (4) Undue exploitation of one of the kin groups in the name of kin obligation will be less in case of non-kin relations.

Generally the illiterate informants particularly those who come from low-castes, preferred kin marriages, i.e., cross-cousin and uncle-niece marriages. They also considered them ideal and say that one has a right and also a moral obligation to marry one's niece or cross-cousin. In the past the cross-cousin and uncle-niece marriages were preferred to strengthen the bonds of kinship and also to avoid the problems and expenses which come owing to the establishment of non-kin marriages.
In cross-cousin marriage, father's sisters and maternal uncles, as a right, usually demand that their daughters should be taken in marriage by their nephews or brothers. On a few occasions distant cousins also get a similar right. Sisters also insisted on giving their daughters to their brothers or nephews with the belief that their daughter will be happy there. At the same time they thought they too will have an easy access to their natal family, even after the death of their parents or brothers. Because the brothers who marry outside the kin group, may not have the same affinity towards them. To insist on this they may visit natal home quite often and bring gifts to young girls or boys. A few customs like paying for the tatooing or presenting themselves during the naming ceremony of a girl to give her a name which is matching to her own son's name, later brings her a right over the girl.

Kinship ties help, not only in establishing bonds of marriage but also they play an important role in every walk of life. At times of emergency like death and accident, kinsmen extend their help physically, monetarily and morally. Politically, during elections, kinsmen help each other by voting, canvassing and raising funds for the person in whom they are interested.
Women-folk also play an equally important role in the kin matters during marriage and other rites and festivals. On occasions like birth and at the time of crises like death, accidents, etc., they help one another. Their role in taking care of the too old, and the too young, and sick is really great. During day-to-day interaction kins-women help one another by lending household things and labour. They may also look after the children when others go out for work. They think it is a moral obligation on their part.

Family deity:

It is common for each family to possess a family deity. Those who possess a common deity are considered to belong to one seat of god, irrespective of their caste membership, and so are treated as brothers. However, marriage alliances are allowed within this group as long as the totemic symbol of the groups are different. In all it is found that the 810 families of Basavapura possess 82 family deities. The family deities are in both male or female form. A few are also in animal forms like bull-god, Basava and Anjaneya (monkey-god). Social standing and status of a family is also measured on the basis of its family deity. The female deities like Yaliamma, Ayyanava,
Badami Banashankari, Uchanganne, Durugavva, Chowdavva, Kallavva, etc., are considered low in their status and so is the status of the families who have them as their family deities. Studies by Gurumurthy (1976:53) show that the traditional minded people who have gods in human and also male form do not prefer to establish marriage alliances with the families whose family deities are female and are in animal form.

In kinship matters today lot of changes have taken place and many of them are concerned with women. First, when a kin marriage was the preferred type, the newly married bride was not a stranger to her affinal kin. Her husband was her cross-cousin or maternal uncle and his sisters were her cousins or aunts and his mother was her aunt or grandmother. So she had no problems of adjustment with her sisters-in-laws nor mother-in-law. Now the non-kin marriages are on the increase owing to dowry, free choice of suitable brides and grooms. As a result the cordial relations which existed between the affinal kin groups have been lost.

Secondly, there is a change in marriage range. In the past when marriages were established in kin-groups and also in known villages there were less adjustment problems
to the new bride. Now she has to face a lot of problems in far off places. Though the changed occupations, neo-local residences and improved means of transport and communication have helped them to go to far off places to bring brides - the girls face most of the problems of isolation and adjustment. With the coming of non-kin girls as ins-law the cordiality and familiarity in the family and kin group is lost. As a result husband's sisters and other kin from his side very rarely visit and also offer a helping hand. This has come in the way of reciprocal visits, exchange of things and help among kin.

Marriage:

Marriage is an institution which unites two or more individuals into a union and regulates their sexual life, brings legitimate status to women and children born to her. Marriage also denotes the residence of husband or wife after marriage, patrilocal, matrilocal or neo-local. Marriage does not necessarily mean union of one man and one woman. It may be one man with more than one woman, resulting in polygamy or one woman with more than one man, resulting in polyandry.

In general, marriage is an universal institution
and found in all times and in all cultures. But only its form and function varies. It is an established fact that some type of rules are practiced while selecting a mate. In no society known to us it is found that a father-daughter, mother-son, brother-sister marriages took place. Normally we do not come across a society where there is no marriage institution. However, depending upon the level of civilization, location a society may practice polygamy, polyandry, uncle-niece, cross-cousin, parallel cousin, endogamous or exogamous marriages. They may also pay some amount of bride price or wealth, dowry or other gifts. In this way marriage results in change of place for women and wealth. Similarly marrying age, number of spouses one has, etc., denote the status of women in the group. Thus we can see that rules and practices connected with marriage are universal, like the human race itself.

There are a few types of marriages which are universal. They are monogamy, polygamy and polyandry. In societies where the ratio of men and women is equal or men and women are considered equal, monogamy, marriage between single man with a single woman is practiced. Only the death or divorce of the spouses make way for another person to enter the marriage union. In case of polygamy
a man marries more than one woman. This happens due to several factors like demographic, social and economic factors. Where there is disparity in the number due to early death rates of men, the society provides an opportunity to each and every woman to marry and have sex. Thus men are allowed to have more than one wife and see that all eligible women are included in wedlock and provided with an opportunity for sex and social protection. Similarly, for economic reasons owing to bride-wealth or bride price, men were allowed to take more than one wife. But here the status of a wife is reduced in the family and naturally her sharing of her husband with other women affected her status and privileges in that community. Usually, in these societies, women are considered inferior, a type of movable property, chattel. This naturally results in a variety of problems in that particular society.

The institution of marriage has several functions. The main and important one is the regulation of sex among the men and women who enter the wedlock. It prescribes that one should marry within a particular group and at the same time prescribes not to marry in another, resulting in endogamy, exogamy and preferential categories. Similarly, marriage of parents brings legitimate status to children.
Birth of children outside wedlock brings a lower status, a stigma, to the children.

Marriage also brings ties between not only two individuals but also between two families and two kin groups. This further brings interaction of people, exchange of gifts, foods, money and other material between the two families. This exchange of visits, gifts, and also wives, results in a reciprocal relation and enduring kinship ties between two groups and some times between two villages.

With this general background now let us see how the institution of marriage in Basavapura, a Hindu village, functions.

Hindu marriage is both a sacrament and a religious rite. The Vedic marriage rite is considered to be among the highest and purest ceremonies. According to the laws of Manu, to the woman it is the equivalent of the sacred thread ceremony. It symbolises the end of training, with rebirth into a new life. It is the union of man and woman but less for the individual happiness than for the necessity of joining two family groups and perpetuation of the race,
the symbol of union being the seven steps around the sacrificial fire. It is the custom for the husband to put vermillion, considered the sign of marriage, at his wife's hair parting and on her forehead. Like the seven steps it has its origin in ancient Hindu myth.

The Yajurveda contains prayer in the service of which the woman speaks:

I yoke thee with milk, with ghee;
I yoke thee with water, and plants;
I yoke thee with offspring;
And in the birth of the creator, in the place of good action;
I make it pleasant for me with my husband.

According to Hindu Dharma sutras, marriage is a social and ethical relationship. In Hindu marriage happiness will arise from the fulfilment of a traditional design, and does not depend upon the accident of sensibility. To be like such a husband as Rama, and to be like such a wife as Sita, is the aim of a Hindu marriage (Comack, 1953:147). A Hindu woman is given the opportunity to be a woman .... woman represents the continuity of the racial life, an
energy which cannot be divided or diverted without corresponding loss of vital energy, she can no more desire to be something other than herself (ibid).

"Vivah" is one of the 'Sarva-Samskaras' (Sacraments of sanctifying the body) through which every man and woman must pass at the proper age and time. Manu considers it as a social institution for the regulation of proper relation between the sexes. It is believed that one's progeny is considerably connected with and instrumental to happiness both in this world as well as hereafter. Manu says further, "No alone is a perfect man, who consists of his wife, himself and his offspring".

The Hindu Sastraskaras are especially particular about the vivah of women, though it is also enjoined that every male should marry. For, a wife is, the source of the purusharthas, not only of dharma, artha and kama, but even of moksha. Those wives that can fulfill their due obligation in the world (kriyavantah); those that have wives, truly lead a family life; those that have wives can be happy; and those that have wives lead a full life (Sriyanvita).
The term 'marriage' has been often used to denote a social institution complete by itself. For, the vivah is in essence of a ritual and formality of course, very important, through which an individual has to go, to be able to start his or her life in the Grihaashtra, i.e., the householder's life. The meaning of vivah refers to the ceremony of 'carrying away' the bride to the house of the bridegroom.

The forms of marriage usually listed are monogamy, polygamy, polyandry and group marriages. The different modes of acquiring mates among Hindus are Brahma, Daiva, Arsha, Prajapatya, Asura, Gandharva, Rakshaka and Valoncha. Today all these types of marriages and modes are not practised in a Hindu society and certainly not in Basavapura. The most commonly found here, however, are monogamy and occasionally polygamy; the latter for special reasons. Similarly the Brahma type, where a girl is given in marriage as a gift to a man, is commonly protected in Basavapura.

Regarding the age of marriage there are several opinions expressed by psychologists, reformers and traditionalists. Manu, for instance, said that men of
should marry a girl of 12, and men of 24 should marry a girl of 8. Vatsayana says that the bride must be at least 3 years younger than the bridegroom. In Dharmasastra it is mentioned that child marriage was practiced in 4th B.C. Gautama and Vishnu were in favor of pre-puberty marriages. Because in those days they attached more importance to the chastity of a girl than her age. Several other early records show that early marriage at the age of 6 were arranged in South India. Sarithi witness of the period 500 - 1000 A.D. began to encourage marriages much before the time of puberty. Upto the medieval times this was practiced. 8th or 9th was the usual marriageable age for girls during this period.

At the advent of British rule, disruption of the joint family, introduction of Western ideas, economic struggle for existence induced a section of Hindu society throw over-board Sarithi injunctions, and to adopt post puberty marriages. British rulers and Indian social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy exposed the early marriages. Because it resulted in the increase of child widows and the problem of re-marriages in the Hindu society. Introduction of Charada Act 1899, which laid down 19 and 14 as the minimum legal age of marriage for boys and girls.
respectively also discouraged child marriages. Second World War caused further rise in the marriageable age of girls. Education and employment for girls increased the age at marriage to about 20 or 21. This change and attitude towards the increase of age has not brought any effect in rural areas. Even with all these, such change is not found in villages like Basavapura. It is all due to ignorance, lack of education and belief in superstition. It is extremely difficult to say anything specific and uniform about the general opinion on the subject of marriageable age by the Hindu women of Basavapura. The only thing, in which both educated and uneducated women agree about is that the age of the bride must be less than that of the groom.

Here in Basavapura there is not a single case in the village where the age of the bridegroom is less than that of the bride. Women of Basavapura accept that the age of a bride should always be less than the age of bridegroom. The reason given by them is that girls mature mentally and bodily earlier than boys. (See Table No. 3)

The ideal age for marriage, according to informants, is that the girls should get married one or two years after they attain puberty. However, it may be found that girls
### Table No. 3: Caste, Age and Marital Status of Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Widowed</th>
<th>1-10</th>
<th>11-15</th>
<th>16-20</th>
<th>21-26</th>
<th>26-30</th>
<th>31-35</th>
<th>36-40</th>
<th>41-45</th>
<th>46-50</th>
<th>50 &amp; above</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lingayat</td>
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</table>

**Note:** The table provides a breakdown of caste, age, and marital status of women. The categories include Married and Widowed. The age groups range from 1-10, 11-15, 16-20, etc., and the marital status is categorized as Married or Widowed. The total number of women across all categories is 314.
of 18 to 20 years still not married in the village. In any case girls will be given in marriage soon and rarely the girls of 25 years and more are found unmarried. Very rarely a family, which is socially conscious, may keep a girl at home struggling to find a suitable match for her. On the contrary there are cases of early marriages in the village. This is not a strange phenomenon in Pasawar. This situation was recorded by the Age of Consent Committee of 1939, which computed that about 39% of girls were married before the age of 10. The Census of 1971 showed that the number of girls who married before the age of 14 and 17 are more among low caste families. This is due to great demand for girls in marriage among the lower castes even with offers of gold, marriage expenses and bride-price, etc. This offer naturally tempts the poor parents to give their daughters in marriage early. However, owing to dowry and level finding, the girls from upper class have to marry comparatively late.

The informants were questioned regarding their approval of age at marriage for both boys and girls and also the reasons for the age group they approve. The findings are as shown in Table No. 11. No literate informant approved the marriage of boys and girls who are less than 14 years of age. Among the illiterates only 24% approved the age at 14
only for girls and not for boys. Further, the literates did not also approve the marriage of both boys and girls who are less than 17 years. However, among the illiterates, the approval was 4% for boys and 20% for girls. The literates did not approve of boys marrying at the age of even 20 years and however 20% of them approved this age for girls. On the contrary 68% of illiterates approved the age range between 18-20 for boys and 14-16 years for girls. This means they thought 20 years is too late for a girl and she should be married by this time. Age between 21-23 years was approved for boys (12%) and girls (20%) by the literates. Among the illiterates 16% approved the same age for both boys and girls. Age between 24-26 was approved by 56% for men and 40% for women, by the literates. On the contrary 12% of illiterate informants approved this age for men only. They thought this age will be too late for girls. Age between 27-29 was approved for marriage for both men and women by literates only (20% each for men and women). The illiterates thought this advanced age is even baring for men. Finally 30 years as age for marriage was approved by only the literates and that too only for men (12%). This shows that beyond 30 is too late for every one.

Besides this, the findings from the table show that educated informants in general support late marriages.
The reason given for this are: the early marriage brings lot of problems to young couple. Further they will be prone to produce more children and have more responsibility at an early age. These hard problems in life may bring mental stress and problems to them. On the contrary they believed that late marriage helps them to have fewer children. Their advanced age, in turn, helps them to meet the difficulties and responsibilities of married life better. The mental maturity also helps them to adjust and further face the problem of life with confidence. It also helps the couple to understand each other and interact better. For those, who want to study higher or to acquire skills in life, late marriages help them to fulfill their ambitions.

On the contrary those who supported early marriages came mostly from lower castes and poorer backgrounds and the reasons given by them were poverty, insecurity in life, social and moral norms, etc. Lack of means and also lack of ambition in life to achieve good things like education, better marriage prospects, etc., made them to marry early. Together with this early awareness in the matters of sex, owing to their exposure to such things while working with men or while living in single roomed houses, made the parents to give them in marriage before they attain proper marriage age.
According to our informants poor economic conditions, lack of land, more work with little income, dowry system, inability to maintain the joint family, rise in the cost of living - have created great tension in the minds of parents with daughter to be married. To celebrate the marriage of their daughter becomes a great problem for many a parents. These factors have intum influenced the parents to give their daughters away in marriage early whenever an opportunity comes. Another important point is early marriage gives an opportunity to the parents to give their daughter in marriage to a boy of their own liking and even if the girl is not willing. They cannot force a girl if she is mature enough to express her likes and dislikes about a marriage proposal. Thus, because of these reasons daughters are given in marriage before they get to know about the marriage and its consequences. There are three cases of child marriages, among the Harijans of Badavapura. One common thing about these marriages is that they are all kin-marriages.

On the contrary a few informants opposed early marriage. They opined that, to have knowledge about sex at an early age is harmful to the development of personality of both boys and girls. When it is the case it is equally harmful physically and mentally to have sex at an early age,
said a married informant. So they approve late marriages. But late means always from their point, where the age of boys and girls may be far below the legally prescribed age. However, many factors force them to give their daughters early in marriage. Among these the wish of the parents and grand-parents to see their children are married during their own life time; also plays an important part. Bad financial conditions, bankruptcy, etc., are also equally important and they compel the villagers to celebrate the marriage of their children early.

However, on the whole in Sasavapura arranged marriage is the rule. Owing to custom, young age, respect for elders, lack of any other ways to acquire a partner in life, the youth in general have accepted the arranged marriage as the order. Here the marriage is not only prescribed but also proscribed - to marry in one's own caste, sub-caste and kin group. So the question of inter-caste and inter-group marriages does not arise. However, here and there we come across love affairs. But when parents come to know of that they immediately arrange for their marriage with a boy or girl of their own choice and wash-off their hands. Because here their caste, class, status, etc., and their face saving counts more than the feelings of the youth. The youth also does not resist this
because of the lack of financial support and public opinion. And moreover they get very little opportunity to mix with opposite sex and select their life partners. So they meekly accept their parents' choice and suppress their feelings.

However, there is a case of inter-caste and an inter sub-caste marriages in the village. Both are love marriages and naturally they were not approved by the community. In one case a Sādara Bhagayat boy married a Jangma girl. The girl coming from higher status group married against the wishes of her parents. On the other hand the boy's family also did not approve the idea and this resulted in his parting from parental joint family before his marriage. Now they are living in the village but without the support of their parental families. In another case a Bhayak girl was married to a Kuruba boy, which was also not approved by the parents of both families. Now this young couple have migrated to Davangere and are earning their living as labourers.

Since arranged marriages are the order of the day, the consultation of horoscope plays an important role here. Traditional minded families and persons attach much importance
to this. However, there is a criticism that horoscope is used as a pretext to drop a proposal which is not acceptable. It is also commented in the village if both the parties are determined to establish marital relation no lapse in the horoscope will come in their way.

There is general belief that arranged marriages are always better marriages since they are arranged by parents and kin, who are well-wishers of their wards. Sometimes parents who think they always do good to their children even go to the extent of forcing their children to accept their decision.

During the field work a few instances of forced marriages were also recorded. In the first case the boy and the girl were not willing to marry the suitors chosen by their parents. The parents told the investigator that they celebrated the marriage with the belief and experience that they will be alright with the birth of children. In the second case the young girl married a widower who is much older than her. It was an arranged marriage for convenience. The bride’s father was old and there were many children to support. It was agreed that if the eldest daughter is married to the rich widower, he would inturn
help the family financially. So the caste and kin elders arranged this marriage. Here the girl was forced to marry for the good of the family.

To some extent it is only the literate boys who get the veto power against the decision of their parents regarding the selection of girl for them. The illiterate boys and both literate and illiterate girls have no such privilege at all. But they may express their disliking indirectly, through a sympathetic kin. Many a time the parents may take note of it and may drop the proposal. But not all will be that lucky. Now the opinion of boys and girls is taken note-off and they are persuaded than pressurised to accept their choice. Because, these days, it has become common to youth to commit suicide by taking poison or falling under a moving train when their wishes are not fulfilled. When this happens it will reduce the status of the family and so before this happens wise parents try to persuade the youth to accept their choice by offering gifts like a fat dowry, bicycle, gold, land, etc.

100% of our literate and 90% of our illiterate informants agreed that consent of the girl should be taken before her marriage was settled. However, 10% of illiterate
Informants were not in favour of this on the ground that the girl will be incapable to decide about her future life and so on. In turn they also thought that it is the parents who have to choose a groom who is suitable to their girl. Both literate and illiterate informants agreed that the education as one of the essential qualities in a girl for marriage and helps her to make a good woman. 100% of literate and 60% of illiterate informants also expressed their willingness to take an educated girl as their daughter-in-law.

Bride price and dowry system are still prevailing in Nasavamura village and they play an important role in selecting spouses for their children. It is only among the Harijans that the bride-price is prevailing, this is paid in the form of food grain, money, gifts of livestock, etc. Among the higher castes instead dowry is paid to the bridegroom depending upon his educational attainments and social standing in the society. The dowry payment varies from two to ten thousands. This amount sometimes bars a family from going in for educated and employed grooms. It has been suggested that the safer method is to educate one of their own sons and later arrange for a mutual (exchange) marriage, where brothers exchange sisters in marriage.
It is found from our data that 80% of our educated and 40% of our illiterate informants disapproved both payment and receiving of the dowry. However, 20% of educated and 60% illiterate favoured the dowry. Those who favoured it said that dowry system helps to get better grooms for their daughters. Those who did not favour it said it brings more problem to the parents. Because in their race to get better grooms parents go into debt and also sell their landed property. A few diverted money from other developmental programmes like improvement of land, mechanisation of farming, construction of better houses, etc. It was also found that higher the education a girl has, better groom the family has to look for her and pay higher dowry. So a few parents do not give higher education to their daughters. However, there are cases from this village where educated and employed girls did not pay any dowry when they married highly educated and employed men.

Hindu marriage is regarded as a sacrament and the bond of marriage was irrevocable. However, Hindu marriage Act of 1955 has given provision for divorce. But the people of Basavapura are not aware of all this. Both literate and illiterate informants disapproved divorce under any condition. They believed that marriage bondage is of lives and not of single birth. They agreed that quarrels do arise in married
life and opined that divorce is not a solution for it. They have to compromise and swallow many things in life and live on.

Since they believe that marriage cannot be dissolved and when it becomes unbearable, the partners get separated, usually the women going away to her natal home for support. If her parents are not sympathetic towards her, she may return and try to put up with the situation or she may solve it by committing suicide, by jumping into a well or by hanging herself. If she gets support in her natal home she may stay there happily till her parents are alive. Later also she may stay happily if her brother and his wife show sympathy to her. If she is not treated properly she cannot demand it since her stay in her natal home after the marriage is not socially approved. Any attempt she makes to get good and better treatment will only arouse passive opinion against her. This shows a married woman's place in her conjugal home whether she is treated properly or not. However, the case of a widowed sister will be different from this. But there are also cases in Bissamapura where a deserted sister assumed a dominant place in her natal home and runs the whole show.
Mother Bathing the Child

A Housewife Decorating the Varunda with Hengoli

Teacher and Children in Nursery School

Mother and Children