



India's Glorious Cultural Heritage: Continuity and Changes

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Interpreting Marriage and Relationship from a Secular Perspective: A Socio-Cultural Review

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“Every society has its cultures, namely the patterns of how the people of that society live.[...]The process of growth is never static therefore there are mutations and changes within the society. There is communication and interaction with other societies through which cultures evolve and mutate” (Thapar XI).

Society is a dynamic platform. It transforms, evolves and upgrades itself to suit the need of the people. Culture which is integral to society is always reconstructing in response to the intellectual demand of the age. Culture is considered as the “essence of a body of values” inherited, accumulated and communicated through “multiplicity of intellectual disciplines”; it is an “intangible creativity”, a ‘touchstone’ to judge the quality of life, ‘the yardstick’ to measure the rhythm and pace of life (Vatsyayan 34-35). Culture is the intellectual essence and artistic fragrance of society. Marriage is not the mutual decision of a man and a woman to stay together but it is “the approval of that union from the society which is essentially developed by religion and cultures” (Ansari and Anjum 14). “As an important and vital social institution, as “a miniature social system which must be kept in equilibrium” (James 33), Marriage is significant from both the societal as well as from the individual’s perspective. It establishes a relationship which is approved in a society, and which is defined by custom and sanctioned by law. The idea of marriage contains the combined suggestiveness of physical gratification, spiritual elevation and cultural purification to ensure the stability and prosperity of the family. The legitimacy of the offspring born of the married couple is important in terms of inheritance and succession. In every religion, marriage is considered not only crucial to life but also an essential obligation. Even in five or six decades ago girls were brought up with such belief that a woman is predestined to marry not only to achieve the cherished motherhood, but also to execute all the pre-sanctioned duty and responsibility concerning the members of her