

## **Gender Consciousness - The Crisis of Personal Engineering**

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**Abstract**

Literature is the most authentic document on human perversities which become the fodder for greatest of creations like *Oedipus, the Rex, King Lear, Othello, and Macbeth*. For, the centre of human evolution has been the family, and it has always been the family from which human evil has cropped up, in its multifarious projections. Family and marriage have been a part of human society since times immemorial, and all has never been well with mankind, even if Robert Browning in 'Pippa's Song' tries to convince us:

God's in his Heaven,  
All's right with the world.

The focus of this article is the family, and its structure. It is intended as philosophical enquiry into the formation of the family, its basic tenets, how it helped the society, and what is its present condition, and how much of it is left as a support system for a flourishing happy society. Marriage was necessitated to give social sanction to the procreative activities of homo sapiens. Random sex, as in animals, based on natural instinct, was not enough to keep the human flock bound in unity at the lowest level. The animals too live in herds, and have their own family groups, and they guard them vociferously, but humans differ because of their socialization and family became the bulwark for further navigation into the future. But, looking back and forth, it is not difficult to assimilate that family has lost its pristine position in human preferential scale. It has lost not only in its economic necessity, but also, its sacredness which kept people tied to each other. It is of interest, for intellectuals as well sociologists, to encounter contemporary reality, and it is not far to see that the prevalent decline in human stuff can be traced to the molestation and foul play with the ideal of the family.

**Keywords:** family, love, marriage, gender, gender consciousness, youth, crime patrol, personal engineering

## **Introduction**

By nature, human beings are given to the habit of living in groups, and the smallest group is known as family. So natural is this habit, of familising everything that comes our way, that we can remember telephone numbers too only by forming them into small groups. Look at this No 9873622351. It is difficult to remember. But it gets easier if we divide it into several groups, such as 98/736/22351 or 987/362/2351 or still further, 9873/622/351. It is easy to remember this number now. But not in its original form. Thus, grouping comes naturally to man. And, family was the need of the hour, and perhaps the first step of the homo sapiens towards socializing, and then, civilizing themselves.

Wikipedia describes family as having roots in Latin- *familia*. A family is a group of people related either by consanguinity [by recognized birth], affinity [by marriage or other relationships], or co-residence [as implied by the etymology of the English word ‘family’]. Members of the immediate family may include spouses, parents, brothers, sisters, sons and daughters, while the extended family had grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, and siblings-in-law. Most societies recognize family as the principal institution for the socialization of the children.

Marriage is the socially recognized centre of a family. On the tree, there are many branches, and then leaves. The structure of the family too is organic. Scientifically it was a perfect arrangement, which provided security to the woman, physical as well as economic, and man was assigned the task of earning the bread and butter. It has continued since times immemorial. Marriages are not only a thing of the living history. They have been very opulent in mythologies also. Gods and goddesses too are described to be married to each other. Thus, marriage is the central hub of the family, and these families then formed into village groups.

## **The Brave Deserve the Fair**

So far as our hindsight can work, it can be seen that marriage from the beginning has been an institutional crop-up and it has been based on force. The brave deserve the fair- the old adage aptly sums up the idea of force, power, hegemony and macho image of the male, while entering into a marital alliance. When Kings married women from other kingdoms, it was a pure politico-economic affair. Shahzada Salim’s mother was a Hindu princess, offered to the Mughal emperor as a political gesture of appeasement. Very rare are the stories when people loved and entered into a marital bond. Dushyant and Shakuntla story is rooted in sufferings, before she is united with the King. All those who loved and wanted to marry, have a similar story of troubles and travails at the

hands of an unrelenting parenthood, and eager-to-punish society. What happened to the legendary love-pairs in Punjab is an object lesson that marriage has nothing to do with love.

We are straight pushed into the question: what is the basis of marriage? What we expect from marriage? And how we go about it? And what is the success rate?

System of marriage has been different in different countries. In Hindu society, the responsibility for the marriage of sons and daughters retains with the parents. Parents find good matches for their offspring, settle dowry, and marry them off. In this marriage, the wishes of the boys and the girls carry no weight. The father acts as the great patriarch. The brother of the girl is the sole keeper of her honour. We have customs like 'Rakhi' where the brother vows to protect the honour of his sister. In a male dominated society, marriage is a one-way traffic. It is all male bastion. He is the king, and the woman is not the queen. She is the 'daasi'. Here is the Achilles' heel of this system. Woman was like a sheep. Parents found a husband for her. She had no power to say No. She had no will even to say: Wait.

I sometimes wonder, even today, when we see Crime Patrol serials, 80% of the serials are based on marital disharmony and discord. Parents force their sons and daughters into marriage with partners the youngsters don't like, and then, there is a whole life of mental and psychological disrepair. Can we give away our whole life to an unbecoming bed-wed? But this is what is happening. And, when pushed to the wall, young boys and girls, either end their own lives, or kill their spouses, landing themselves in prison. All because a father was fond of his daughter so much, and acted as a boss, that he did not listen to her pleas, and forced her into a marriage she never desired, and never, perhaps, recovered from. Mothers and fathers never stop to listen to the silent cries of their sons and daughters.

### **Fall Out of Forced Marriages**

And, these people never know how they contribute to the pollution of the general air of society. It is not a single affair. Every home has a daughter who is sacrificed at the altar of a system, which has refused to evolve. And, forced marriages have led to criminalization of society on a staggering scale. Every wedding is an organized conspiracy against the wishes of the youngsters. Money is the sole issue that clicks a marriage. Wealth, land, property, power and position - these are the deciding factors. Boy and girl, their needs, their natures, never find themselves on the agenda of the parents.

I wonder if the parents have ever stopped to think what they think of marriage. Is marriage only a ritual? Why the woman cries while sitting into the 'doli'? She does not weep for leaving the house of the ignorant father, but because she is not sure about the house of her in-laws. What will happen to her? Who knows. And with a man, she had never seen, and whom, she does not like,

she has to spend a whole lifetime. Fearing. Slaving. Saving her marriage. 'Sati Savitri'. To leave that house only when she is dead. And in-between, even if she is maltreated, or thrashed, she never tells her parents. This is an ideal bride. And this is an ideal marriage. This is India, and this is Indian society. On the brink of a social disaster. When men and women are running to police stations and courts for divorces. And, mostly, they find themselves behind the bars, because one of them commits some folly. Add to it, the cases of transgression. Which are on the increase. The family atmosphere is all messed up simply because, the parents have taken the idea of marriage entirely amiss.

Who knows who will buy the plot next to yours and build a house and who knows your neighbour will be a mixing type or a fighting type. But you are placed by each other by divine forces to live, love or fight. For life, or as long as you stay in that house, if it is rented. If it is rented, and your neighbor troubles you day and night, what will be your natural reaction if you don't want to fight it out? To change the flat. Extending this argument to your life, who knows who is going to occupy the bed next to yours. Will he or she ever transcend the invisible borders and come over to you or remain there like the archetypal neighbor, who is more a jealous enemy than a loving friend always scheming for your down fall? If a pizza even after being cooked and well laid out most ceremoniously finds Parmesan/Ramano cheese, Ranch Sauce and Fresh Pan Dough declaring independence and all together raise a revolt against the oven, my God what will happen to the mouth that tastes it and the belly that waits eagerly down the throat?

### **The Ideal of Family, Home, and Cradle of Civilization**

Yes, home was considered to be the cradle of civilization. It is home where human affections grow and take a tangible shape. Where people know what is love, and then, they are prepared to share it further on to society. But, actually, home was long back hijacked by economics. A family is less a social, and more a political unit. Politics and economy were behind the shape that it took over centuries. Economic dependence of woman and then, the fear that man might not leave her alone, after pregnancy after pregnancy, made the society to bring up religion and organize a marriage in the form of a ritual. Marriage became precedent to a family. Marriage, by religious rites, was supposed to have a divine sanction, and we come across proverbs like, marriages are made in heaven, and celebrated on earth. Up to the beginning of modern times, marriage was never under fire of the sociologists and feminists. It was an accepted practice that a girl child is most unwelcome in the family, she is a liability, and when she grows up, she has to be taught home-making, and then married off to a suitable boy. On the surface, the male society had taken care to see that there was an orderly situation working up. Man has a female at home, for sexual pleasure, and procreation. In a family, the woman and the children, and even the older people were well cared for.

### **Modern Trends**

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Gender Awareness - A Crisis of Personal Engineering

Looking back, we take pride in our family system, and exalt our traditions, and often criticize the modern trends which conflict with our ethos. It is the ethos of male chauvinism, male ego, suppressing the woman, and her individuality.

This is our marriage. We bring two unknown persons together by 'fraudulent' means and, then, in front of rituals by fire, expect them to become one, start loving, and after begetting children, we feel they will be immobilized. But instead of revolting and declaring independence, they keep it up though always at logger heads. Never at peace. Always at cats and dogs.

Will anything good come out if these 'fraudulent' marriages? The result is before our eyes. Kids who are deficient in human virtues. They are denied love and they have no faith in any institution. We have despoiled the idea of a family by insisting on the economic aspects of this union, throwing to winds the spiritual side.

Love has nothing to do in our marital arrangements. Rather whenever parents come to know that his son or daughter is in love, they hasten the processors and arrange a marriage in which neither of the partners is interested. Jeopardizing the family happiness because now they will never come to terms. And it destroys their lives and as the divorce system is very rigid, they take to single living. And when one of them starts afresh with another person, the other party tries to finish him/her off.

### **Marital Disorders**

Why has the economic wisdom failed to keep the family together? Today, very few marriages are safe. In most cases, they are rocked by internal disorders. There is increasing distrust among the partners, and these days, nobody wants to mortgage his life for a sham love for family honour. Parents are getting a back seat in marital choices. But what we are choosing now? Even today, the educated youngsters who are working in high-end positions are going in for high-end partners, and the result is again: discord. The reason behind all this is: that we have never been trained to look for the right reasons to marry a person.

### **The Wrong Reasons:**

1. Because my parents have selected the boy or the girl.
2. Because of the caste considerations.
3. Family status.
4. Educational equations.
5. The job prospects and economic security.
6. Property of the in-laws.
7. Social status of the in-laws.

8. Marry for security,
9. Marry because marriage is a common practice.
10. Marry to have kids and a family.

These are often the explanations behind the marriages that are taking place and reach the rocks in no time. Because the major reason for a marriage has to be Love, which is absent from these commercial transactions. We marry right people for wrong reasons, and it turns the whole system upside down. What a home actually needs, in order of preference, [we can read family too for a home]:

1. Love
2. Compatibility
3. Financial Security
4. Sharing of dreams
5. Happiness

You don't need anything else. If a family is architected on these lines, there will be no discord. No rapes. No abductions. The fulfilment quotient of the people will be high. They will be less troubled in mind. Less rash in their decisions. And society will have less of tensions, and in a far better position than the other way round.

Today, our society is sick. Our family is sick. Our home is sick.

Our children, born of commercial unions, look for love around. Marriage, in the absence of love, is food devoid of essential food value. We eat and eat, and yet remain hungry for joy, happiness, fulfilment, peace, and real prosperity.

Today, if you tell the people that the marriage system is imperfect, pat comes the reply: our system is far better than the West. And they don't stop attacking love marriages which are going to the rocks in increasing numbers.

The question is: at which age, young boys and girls should marry. Love is a natural phenomenon, like sexual urge, and cannot be given any scientific explanation, or even there is no fixed treatment. Only, let us look at the life of our kids as we are rearing them up. Here is an example:

We have a schooling system based on gender. We believe in girls and boys in separate schools, and their mixing up is treated sacrilegious by the elderly people. This is how the life of a growing up young Indian boy passes:

By the time he is 15 years of age, he is in the tenth standard.

He is often disturbed by the presence of the fair sex. Girls too are always looking around for boys who are looking at them. By graduation, it is his twentieth year, the boy is serious in affair with a girl. Both are busy thinking of their parents who will never agree to their marriage. Some boys, who are discovered, are thrashed, and some are killed also, if the parents of the girl are too rooted in tradition. In India, there is a tradition of honour killing also. Some brothers think that their sisters cannot have affairs, while they themselves don't mind having their own love-life.

One question needs to be asked. Is there any boy who is young and does not look for a girl? And is there any girl who does not look for a boy-friend? We believe that our sons and daughters have class fellows, but no friends. If there is any iota of doubt, sharp eyes try to bog them down. Or, you know? Your dad. will.....

My question is: in the absence of a fair share of time to meet, talk, discuss, and play together, move together, which is no less than a catharsis, for a young growing boy or girl, what will they do? We parents are fools if we believe that they can be brought to the books, or stopped from their fantasies. The more they are denied the joy of loving friendship, the greater will be the distraction from their studies.

Move further. It is M.A., also not forget to take into account their age. It is twenty five years. Boy and girl have discovered a boy or girl friend in the University. Now, it is serious love and they want to marry. But, again, due either to caste, or creed or even the sheer nonsensical ego of the parents, they are forced to marry partners, chosen by their parents. All the films of India, showing love stories, are based on this separation of lovers. We force them into unwanted alliances, and what is the result? It is a mockery of the relationship when young girls start loving somebody and from the beginning are ready to be married off to someone else by their parents.

For five or six years, they cannot forget their love. And, in most cases, they visit police stations. There are Panchayats. And they are advised to surrender before their fate. It is 30 years now. And they get a child or two by the time they are 35. Now, the boy is seen on a scooter, taking two kids to school. And the girl has stopped complaining, accepted her fate, and now going to a private school.

This is the sordid story of Indian youth. One result of this social mal-engineering we have absolutely missed: From 15 to 35 years is the most intellectually creative period of a man. We waste our youthful potential in idle fantasies. We force them to live devoid of simple joys of life. We keep them away from cross-gender friendships, and force our will, if they want to marry. And, in the process, destroy their potential, and we have turned our country into a nation of averagers.

Can we understand this hard fact why all the discoveries and inventions were done by the Britishers? And it needs investigation by sociologists how they treat their young ones.

Compare our conditions with western countries who are more rational in their outlook on growing children. Who will give them proper lessons in personal engineering, in the absence of sensible parentage? This is the tragedy of our youth. We have destroyed the family. And we have destroyed our society, by giving it people of average thought processing. We have refused to grow. We have refused to evolve. And the bitter consequences are before us: rapes, abductions, and morphed minds churning out of joyless families heading to the courts for life long adjudication on divorce petitions. How tragic for a society as a whole!

### Conclusion

The foregoing discussion does not close here, rather it opens the floodgates of anxiety and calls upon the social and personal engineers of the society to look into this malaise, which has done good to society in the past, but now, it stands brutalized under the pressures of commercialism, and a blind love for formalities. Is it possible to re-evaluate the role of the family, and re-place marriage in human relationships? We need to give a better deal to the young growing minds, who need peaceful atmosphere at home, and a healthy relationship which does not hinder their progression. The present generation has gone down the drain, because we have seen the dislocation and disintegration of the family, but we have not been able to do anything to stop its erosion. East or West, family is the sheet-anchor for every young soul, to ride the ladder of success. We must identify whether we want to continue with the broken system, leading to more and more of violence in this most fundamental human relationship, or have some original ideas to replace it with a more vibrant system, of marriage, family, love, procreation, coupled with simultaneous growth into prosperity.



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