



A Sociological Analysis of Changing Marriage Patterns in Traditional Rural Society in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Marriage is one of the important social institutions found in all societies of the world. According to the most influential anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski, "marriage as a contract for the production and maintenance of children". It acts as a social and legal contract that gives a partner someone to rely on, brings a greater degree of intimacy and emotional security. Many local and foreign social anthropologists such as E.R. Leach, Nuur Yalman and Gananatha Obeyesekere have studied the institution of marriage in Sri Lankan traditional rural society during the 1950- 1960s. Nowadays, the pattern of marriage in the traditional rural society has changed. Accordingly, why marriage has been undergoing modifications in Sri Lankan traditional rural society along with the other social institutions? is the main problem of this research. The main objective of this research was to highlight the changing patterns of marriage in traditional rural society in Sri Lanka. Moreover, the sub-objective was to identify the factors influencing the change in traditional marriage patterns in the rural society in Sri Lanka. This study is based on literature and it relies heavily on secondary data. The conceptual framework was developed using literature, and the findings were interpreted using research articles, e-books, magazines, printed materials, relevant websites and they were made base to arrive at conclusion. According to those secondary sources, six main causes of changing patterns of marriage in traditional rural society in Sri Lanka were found; trends of divorce rates, love marriages instead of cross cousin marriages, monogamy instead of polygamy, modernization of wedding ceremonies and commercialization of marriages, changing attitudes towards about children and reproductive decisions have undergone tremendous changes in the institution of marriage. Some of these changes are considered good for society while some are felt in negative term. Though these new trends are observed in present, the importance of marriage has not diminished. Due to these transformations, Sri Lankan rural society has become complex instead of simple as before.

Keywords: Changes, Marriage, Rural society, Sri Lanka, Traditional

