

A row of five yellow pawns standing on a dark wooden surface. The pawns are slightly out of focus, with the one in the center being sharper. The background is a light blue-grey gradient.

SYM 101

Sociological Concepts

Unit: 05

Topic – Marriage



Content

- ▶ Meaning and Definition of Marriage
- ▶ Characteristics of Marriage
- ▶ Function and Importance of Marriage
- ▶ Forms of Marriage
- ▶ Norms of Mate Selection
- ▶ Emerging pattern of Marriage and Family

Introduction

- ▶ Human beings like all mammals, mate, copulate and have children. Like other creatures too, they rear families which survive until the young become independent. However, humans, unlike animals, mate and procreate in some 'orderly way' to which they have given the name 'marriage'. Marriage is the basis of human society. Marriage forms society as our social forms are reinforced by marriage. It is a basic institution found in all human societies. No other union of men and women meets all the requirements of mating, home-making, love and personality development at the level of biological, psychological, social, ethical and spiritual evolution which marriage does.

- ▶ Marriage is one of the universal social institutions. It is established by the human society to control and regulate the sex life of human beings. It is closely connected with the institution of family. Infact family and marriage are complementary to each other. As Gillin and Gillin have said, “Marriage is a socially approved way of establishing a family of procreation”. Westermarck has remarked, “Marriage is rooted in the family rather than the family in the marriage”.

Meaning and Definition of Marriage

- ▶ Marriage is an institution of society which can have very different implications in different cultures. Its purposes, functions and forms may differ from society to society, but it is present everywhere as an institution. In almost all societies, marriage is understood as a legally and socially recognized sexual relationship, always between a man and woman (or more than one woman or one man) and usually with other restrictions of race, ethnicity, religion, caste, etc., implicitly specified. Depending on the society, marriage may require religious or civil sanction (or both), although some couples may be considered married simply by living together for a prescribed period.



► Casual intercourse suffices for sexual satisfaction up to a point, but it does not and cannot create marital or family life. Man and woman constitute two parts of a complete whole—the one complementary to the other with corresponding distinctions and relations. To regard marriage as mere means of sexual satisfaction is to reduce it to a sub-rational level of instinctive mating. Moreover, sexual relations between a man and woman do not constitute marriage in some parts of the world. The institution of marriage makes human beings subjects of rights and duties, which finds expression in the man-woman relationship. As a legal institution, marriage confers various rights on those who enter into it, for example, to be regarded as next-of-kin to one's partner. There is a bit difference of point of view between anthropologists and sociologists about marriage. Anthropologists like Lowie, Murdock and Westermarck emphasized on social sanction in the union and how it is accomplished by different rituals and ceremonies; sociologists like Bowman, Baber and Burgess, on the other hand, view it as a system of roles and as involving primary relationships.

Definitions:

- ▶ **Edward Westermarck** in his “**History of Human Marriage**” defines marriage as “the more or less durable connection between male and female lasting beyond the mere act of propagation till after the birth of offspring”.
- ▶ **Malinowski** says that marriage is a “contract for the production and maintenance of children”.

Robert H. Lowie writes, “Marriage is a relatively permanent bond between permissible mates.”

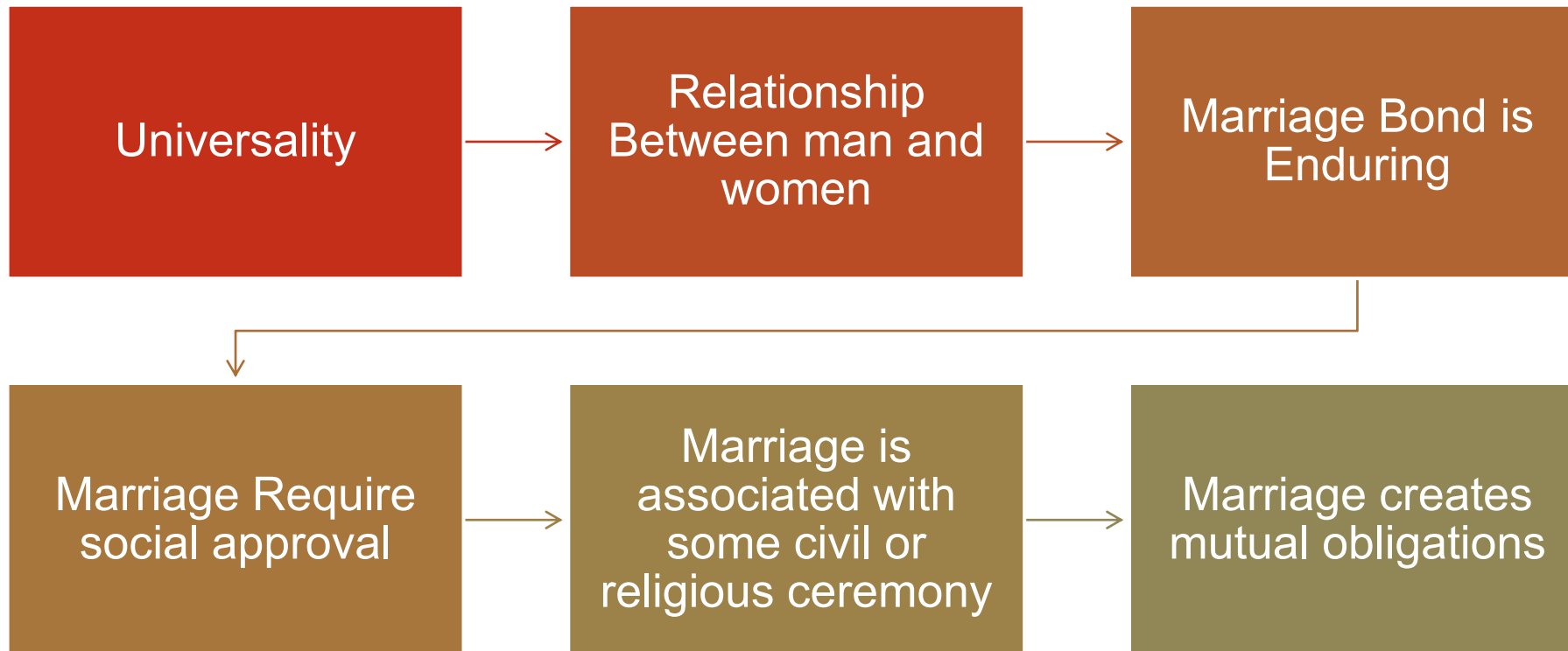
The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Sociology’ (1994) defines it as, “Marriage is traditionally conceived to be legally recognized relationship, between an adult male and female, that carries certain rights and obligations.”

Giddens states, “Marriage can be defined as a socially recognized relationship and approved sexual union between an adult male and female that carries certain rights and obligations.”

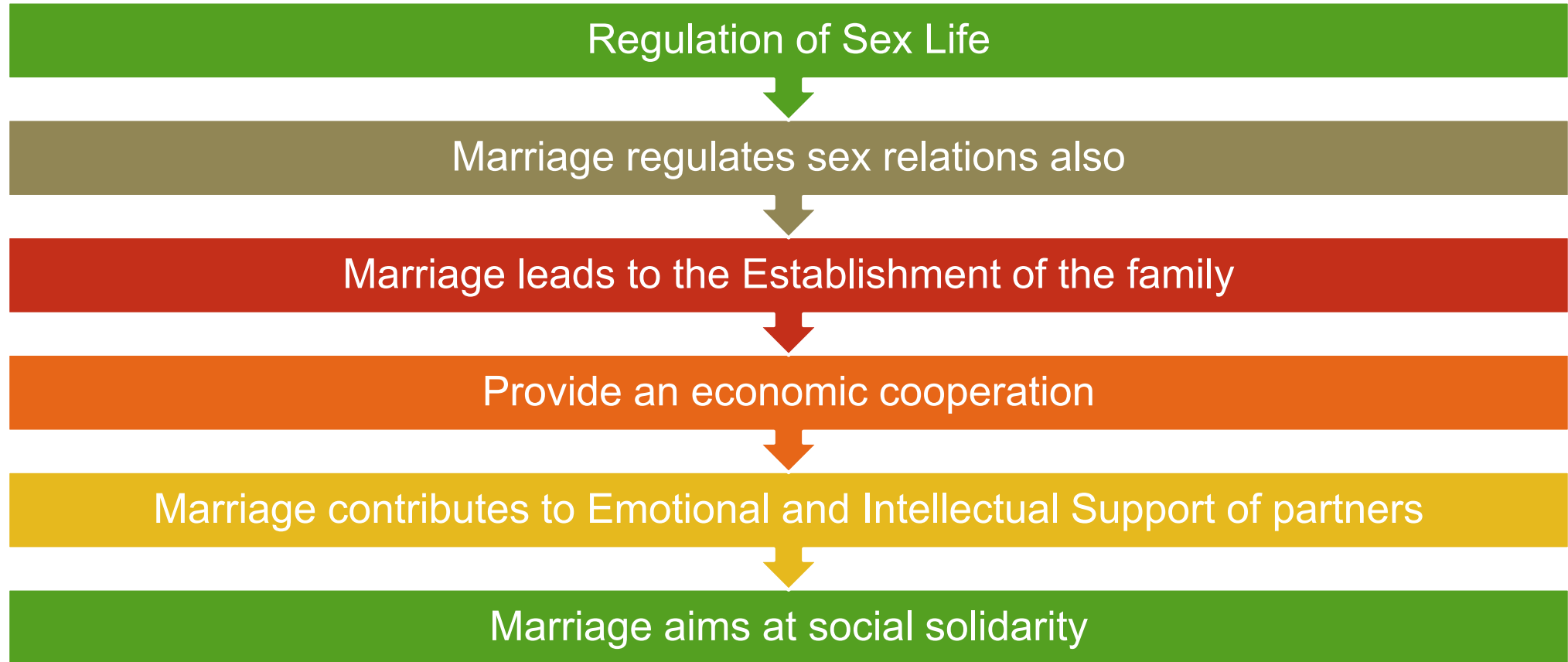
Broadly speaking, however, marriage may be defined as “a socially sanctioned sex relationship involving two or more people of the opposite sex, whose relationship is expected to endure beyond the time required for gestation and the birth.

Alfred McClung Lee writes, “Marriage is the public joining together, under socially specified regulations of a man and woman as husband and wife.”

Characteristics of Marriage



Function and Importance of Marriage



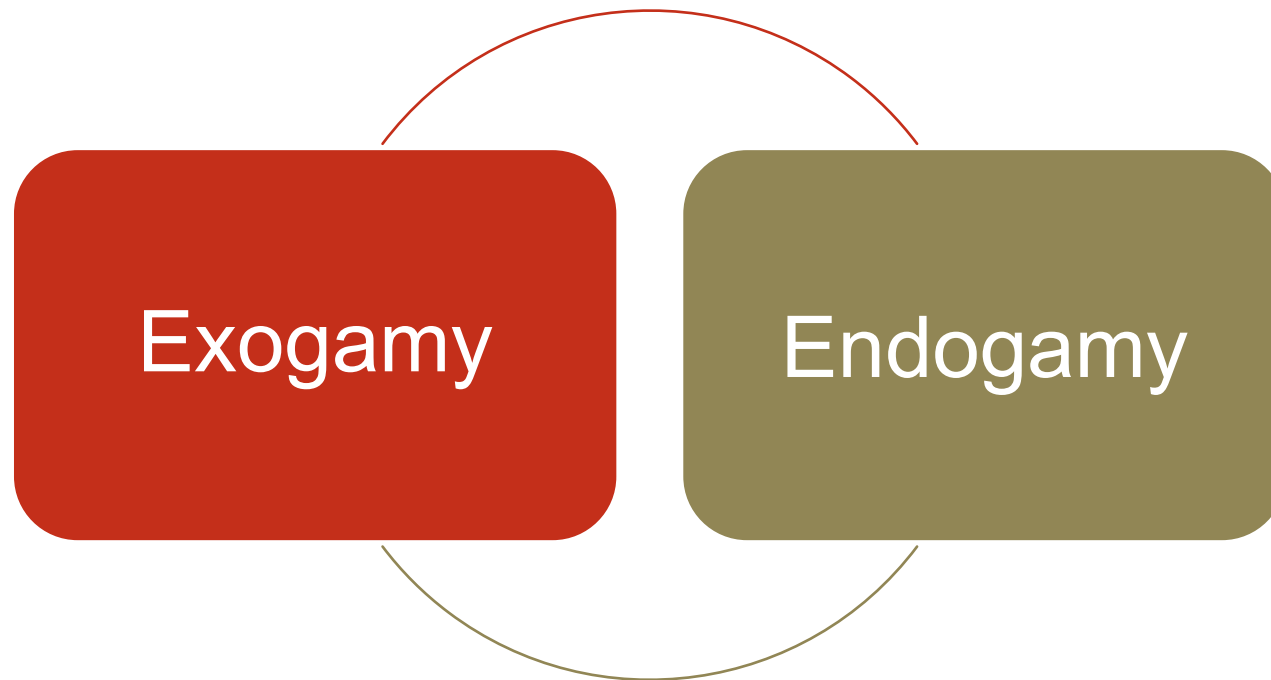
Forms of Marriage

**Monogamy
and
Polygamy**

The diagram consists of two chevron-shaped boxes pointing to the right. The first box is red and contains the text 'Monogamy and Polygamy'. The second box is olive green and contains the text 'Polygyny, Polyandry & Group Marriage'. The boxes are positioned horizontally, with the red box on the left and the olive green box on the right. The background features abstract green geometric shapes on the right side.

**Polygyny,
Polyandry &
Group
Marriage**

Norms of Mate Selection



Emerging Pattern of Marriage and Family

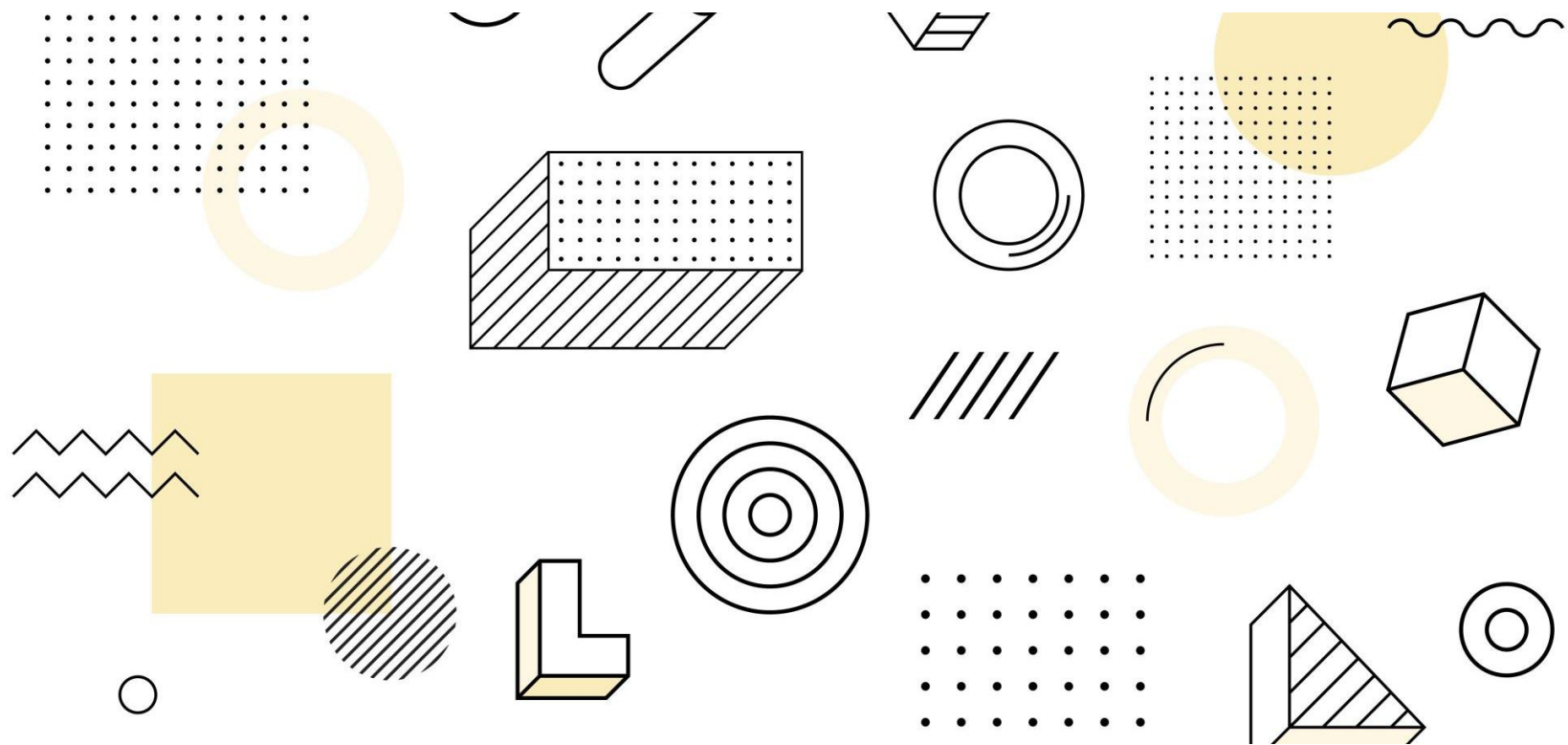
Consensual Unions



Single Parent Family



Homosexual Marriage



Thankyou