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Exploring the Stable and Changing Beliefs of Middle Class (Urban) Hindu Couples in New Delhi about Marriage

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EXPLORING THE STABLE AND CHANGING BELIEFS OF MIDDLE CLASS [URBAN]
HINDU COUPLES IN NEW DELHI ABOUT MARRIAGE

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the loving memory of my father Col. S. P. Chand who taught me the importance of laughing and taking one baby step at a time to achieve my goals. Papa, you are a constant presence in my life. I miss you dearly.

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to explore the beliefs of middle class urban Hindus (MCUHs) about the meaning and purpose of the institution of marriage, their expectations from marriage, requirements for staying married, any change that they think has come about in the construction of this meaning over the last decade, and the possible reasons for this change. A total of 32 individual semi-structured interviews were conducted (15 couples and two married individuals who were not married to each other) in the participants' homes. All had been married for at least seven years, resided in two middle class neighborhoods of New Delhi, India, and had a collective income ranging between INR 10,000 and 40,000 per month. Qualitative methodology along with the constant comparison method was used to analyze the data. The findings indicated that MCUHs view marriage to be a practical relationship bound by duty, obligation, and responsibility. Pragmatic love characterizes the marriage much more than romantic love. The relationship with the extended in-laws is a very important part of the marital relationship. The purpose of marriage is to continue the family name, and for the wives to go to their "true" home wherein they experience freedom to go "roaming" with their husbands and the pleasures of family life. The participants also described an institution in flux through the influences of formal education, Western thinking, and technological development. In response to these influences marriage is no longer universally believed to be a permanent bond appropriately arranged by the elders of the family.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary India, every person is encouraged to marry (Badrinath, 2003). However, despite the importance of this institution, there has been little scholarship regarding it. In fact, with regard to the concept of marriage and the rules governing what is both a social and religious institution, scholars typically reference the *Laws of Manu* (Doniger & Smith, 1991), an ancient Indian text written approximately 3000 years ago (c. 200 BC-AD 200). Little is known about how adults in contemporary India regard the institution of marriage, namely what they believe to be the purpose of marriage, what they expect to get out of being married, how they construct the meaning of marriage, and what is required to maintain a marriage.

It is tempting to use a Western lens to look at the institution of marriage in India. For approximately two centuries it was colonized by the British. It has a growing and increasingly industrial economy, and Western cultural mores and beliefs have infiltrated the society through various channels of mass communication. Nevertheless, it is a fundamental error to view one society through the lenses of another (Berger, 1992; Brislin, 1986; Hall, 1977) because the cultural and linguistic context within which a phenomenon is embedded is specific to individual societies.

To explore social institutions in India is a complex matter. India is not homogeneous. It supports a culture of 114 spoken languages, including mother tongues and local dialects, and seven religious traditions, namely Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism (Census, 2001). India has a collectivist and pluralistic society with pronounced attitudinal differences between and within her 28 states and seven union territories. Furthermore, although major changes may be under way, contemporary Indian culture's social and economic structures are still primarily collectivist and agrarian in character. These differ significantly from the Western societies that are industrial and individualistic in character (Ramu, 1987).

Any interpretation of an action, behavior, or belief is appropriate and valid only when it is juxtaposed against a specific cultural context (Hall, 1977). If not then the *other* is always seen from the presuppositions that the observer carries as part of his or her own cultural baggage (Badrinath, 2003). To understand the norms surrounding the institution of marriage within a specific cultural context, it is essential to begin with the attitudes – the unique combinations of beliefs, affects, and action tendencies (Krech, Crutchfield, & Ballachey, 1962) – held by a people about certain phenomenon. In so doing one must consider how much of language is common in its meaning and implications across different cultures (“etic”) and that which is unique to only one culture and no other, e.g., one must examine other societies on their own terms (“emic”) (Brislin, 1986; Pike, 1966; Yaple & Korzenny, 1989). Distinction between the etic and the emic cultural variables captures the phenomenon of cultural lenses. It is through them we perceive and make our own sense of the language, behaviors, beliefs, and actions in different cultures (Brislin, 1986;

Shaw, 1987). The structural units or parts that comprise a language or a system need to be understood within the boundaries of a specific culture. They are not transportable without error or omission of important cultural nuances. To consider the social structures and phenomena of one culture through the eyes of another makes for inappropriate impositions and errors in assessment regarding what is relevant, and to what extent, in one cultural environment as opposed to another.

Statement of the Problem

In India, adult men and women are expected to get married. Marriage has been considered to be the very foundation of Indian society (Badrinath, 2003; Prabhu, 1963). Despite its importance, there has been little research about the institution of marriage in India, to wit, the construction of its meaning, the reasons why adults get married, or the extent to which Indian citizens even think about such matters. Even less has been empirically studied and published about what people's motivations are for staying married or what adjustments may be required to maintain a marriage. Moreover, India is neither static nor homogenous. Formerly an agrarian nation, it is now moving swiftly toward industrialization and urbanization (Fernandes, 2006). What was written about marriage 3000 years ago from a conceptual point of view needs to be updated. Attitudes regarding marriage need to be explored empirically, with a special eye given to the variables relevant to India's changing culture: religious involvement, educational level, matriarchal versus patriarchal orientation, gender differences, and adherence to traditionalism.

The purpose of this study is to explore the beliefs of middle class urban Hindu couples (MCUH) about the institute of marriage, its purpose, expectations from it, requirements for maintaining it, whether the beliefs regarding the fore mentioned have changed over the last decade or so, and the reasons attributed for this change.

My overall program of research is to develop a comprehensive understanding of the institution of marriage in contemporary India. To begin this life-long scholarly journey, my first step is to ask fundamental questions of a relevant sample comprised of one subgroup within one region of one state. I propose to interview middle class Hindu adult men and women in the union territory of New Delhi, the capital of India. The reasons for selecting the sample from this particular group are as follows:

- India's population predominantly comprises of people who follow the Hindu religion. The population of New Delhi is also primarily Hindu.
- The middle class is the largest socioeconomic group or subset of the urban population of India.

Additionally:

- Members of the middle class are removed from preoccupation with deficiency (survival) needs and might have more free time available to meet with me and to be interviewed.

- The middle class forms the largest subsection of the Indian urban population and therefore may be an appropriate indicator of the voice of the Indian people at large.
- The middle class is also the subsection of the society that is most impacted by the growing and changing economy. It is the most upwardly mobile socioeconomic group and reflects the changes that a culture is undergoing in its evolutionary trajectory.

Further elaboration of my rationale in choosing this sample for my first exploration, including the merits of using socioeconomic class as opposed to caste, is reserved for the literature review (Chapter 2).

Importance of the Problem

This understanding will become the basis for the educational, prophylactic, enrichment, and therapeutic endeavors among others. It will add to the existing knowledge regarding these issues while also helping clinicians in India as well as the United States provide culturally sensitive services to Indian families. The current project will also provide a stepping-stone for future studies (both mono- and cross-cultural) to be conducted in the area of marital stability, marital satisfaction, marital quality, etc. All these projects will be made possible by taking the first step of determining the manner in which the concept of marriage is constructed by Hindu couples in India.

Theoretical Framework

To understand the norms surrounding the institution of marriage, or any other relationship, it is essential to situate the attitudes people hold within their unique cultural context, namely the nested environments in which they are embedded. Human ecology theory meets this need. More specifically, the evolving Bioecological theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1986, 1992), and the Family Ecology theory of Bubolz and Sontag (1993), comprise the conceptual framework for this study. These will be described and elaborated upon in Chapter 2.

Qualitative Inquiry

If I want to validly accomplish an ecosystemic or emic exploration of a social institution within a culture, then I am obliged to use an ethnographic, qualitative approach. Only through such an approach can the individuals within a culture identify and define that which is relevant in a deep and holistic way (Goodyear, 1992; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A qualitative approach assumes that there are multiple realities in a given situation and the goal is to uncover or discover the patterns or theories that help explain the phenomenon of interest (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Qualitative inquiry is value laden and since all entities in a cultural environment are assumed to shape and to be shaped by each other, distinguishing causes and effects becomes an impossibility (Creswell, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1988). In fact, a qualitative methodology may be the method of choice in developing countries because secondary data required for random sampling may not be available and the respondents may not be familiar with surveys or questionnaires (Elder, 1973; Harari & Beaty, 1990). Moreover, in many of these

cultures interpersonal trust is an issue, and therefore conducting face-to face interviews is not only appropriate but a necessity (Harari & Beaty, 1990). My qualitative procedures are described and elaborated in Chapter 3.

Assumptions

Assumptions are statements that are presumed to be fact, or taken as a given in the research process. There are several assumptions that shape my perspective in this study. Although such assumptions are complex and difficult to measure and test (Reynolds, 1971), it is essential to make the underlying assumptions of the study overt for the readers and other researchers. Doing so increases the trustworthiness (internal validity) of the study (Creswell, 2003; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984; Fetterman, 1989). The assumptions presented here are two-fold: broad statements that relate to the concepts underlying this project as a whole; and domain assumptions that underlie the interview questions and their coding.

Broad Assumptions

Assumption 1. This study uses an ecological research model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bubolz & Sontag, 1993) that assumes on a basic level that all humans are in constant interaction with their environment and that both entities exert their influence on the other in a continuous manner.

Assumption 2. This study further assumes that the relationship between the two entities is real and orderly, and can be measured both directly through naturalistic observation as well as indirectly through empirical methodology.

Domain Assumptions

Assumption 1. MCUHs view marriage differently from Westerners.

Assumption 2. MCUH's view of marriage is influenced by their cultural environments.

Based on insider knowledge as a member of the MCUH subculture under study, who also has studied and lived in the West, I assume the following statements as domain assumptions:

Assumption 3: Desirable attributes in partners are more pragmatic in Hindus as opposed to romantic in Westerners.

Assumption 4: Romantic love is not a primary motivator for marriage among MCUH.

Assumption 5: Dissolution or nullification of marriage is a greater cultural deviation with social repercussions for MCUH than it is for Westerners.

Definitions

Types of marriage:

- Self-selection of spouse or a "love marriage" refers to a marital union where mate selection is conducted by the individuals themselves without any aid from their family members. The individuals fall in love, decide to marry, and then convey their decision to the family members. Romantic love is a necessary prelude to a "love marriage."

- Arranged marriage is when the mate selection is conducted by the elders of a family or by employing the services of a “match-making” agency. Sometimes, an individual is permitted to select their spouse from a group of potential mates that have been short-listed by the family members (under which circumstances romantic love is not necessarily a prelude to the marriage). In other words, self-selection can occur in an arranged marriage setting also but it does not require the individuals making the choice to be “in love” with each other before they get married. In this way, the parents still manage the marriage process for their children.
- Inter-caste marriage refers to a marital union where the two individuals follow the same religion but belong to different castes. There are five broad castes within the Hindu religion, Brahmin or the priestly caste, *Ksatriya* or warrior caste, *Vaishya* or trader/merchant caste, and *Sudra* or untouchable caste (Kapadia, 1966). The castes differ from each other in performing rituals, following customs, and instilling values in the next generation such as acquiring education, earning money, conducting animal sacrifices, etc.

Types of family structure and household composition:

- A nuclear family unit is defined as the members of the immediate family who live together with no extended kin. A nuclear family is comprised of the parental dyad and their children.
- A joint family unit is defined as the undivided family unit, where two or more patrilineally related males along with their spouses and children dwell in the same house, take their meals together, perform rituals and worship together, and have joint ownership of the property (Kapadia, 1966; Khatri, 1972; Ross, 1962).
- An extended family is defined as a nuclear family with one or more relatives living in the same house (Khatri, 1972). For example, if the parents of the husband or the mother of the wife lives in the home with the marital dyad and their children, this would constitute an extended family.
- A broken family is defined as a family in which a divorce has occurred, or either a father or a mother of the children has died, or has deserted them (Khatri, 1972; 1988).

Chapter 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This review will elaborate on and document the central topics outlined in the introduction:

- Hindu marriage according to its cultural literature
- Hindu concept of marriage
- The place of the Hindu wife in the family
- Caste in the Indian culture
- Middle class in India
- Types of marriage in Hindu society
- Marriage in the context of culture: Studies of contemporary Hindu marriages
 - Basis for mate selection
 - Rationale for marriage
 - Expectations of marriage
 - Adjustment to marriage
 - Rationale for staying married
- Rationale for the current study (including critique of “that which is known” through previous published work)
- Theoretical bases; Scientific assumptions
 - Ecosystemic orientation
 - Qualitative methodology
 - Postmodern stance

Hindu Marriage as Described in Cultural Literature

Marriage is described as the most fundamental of human relationships because it forms the basis for establishing family relationships and rearing the next generation (Larson & Homan, 1994). Each culture or human group defines marriage uniquely and each individual within a marriage experiences it idiosyncratically. Marriage may be dictated by law, religion, or whim and it may be prohibited, preferred, or proscribed for a multitude of reasons (Alexander, 1977). In India, marriage is the destiny for nearly all women. No provisions are made in the religious texts for a woman to remain unmarried or to become a nun. Although the social pressures are not equal, members of both the sexes are strongly encouraged to get married (Dube, 1988a).

Marriage is denoted by the Sanskrit word *vivaha*, which literally means carrying the bride away (Pothen, 1986). The Hindu scheme of *asramas* stipulate that there are four stages of life based on certain developmental tasks that need to be accomplished at each stage – *brahmacharya*, *grahastha*, *vanaprastha*, and *samnyasa* (Prabhu, 1963). During the *brahmacharya* stage the male individual is single and a student. During the *grahastha* stage he gets married, becomes a house-holder, and raises a family, during the *vanaprastha* stage he retires from the cares of the family and moves towards the forest. Finally, during the *samnyasa*

stage, he renounces all worldly positions, relationships, and attachments in a means to withdraw from the world (Khatri, 1983).

Badrinath (2003) clarifies that the last two *asramas* have intrinsic meaning for all individuals, women as well as men. True renunciation is when a person conquers his or her anger and excessive joy, and when he or she gives up the elements that entangle the mind (both within and outside the self), and spends personal wealth on works of higher purposes. Therefore, giving up the notion of ownership of things is what true renunciation is about and it breaks the cycle of life and death for a person. The duties of the last two stages can be fulfilled while a person is still a householder. Therefore, the second *asrama* – *establishing a marital household* – is the most prominent and most valuable for an individual.

The second or *Grahastha-asrama* is also considered the most important of the four life stages because it lends support to the other three (Badrinath, 2003). Family is the first natural context in which life begins and where human beings grow as persons. The lawgivers of the *dharmasutras* (texts that define the right path to be followed) discuss in detail the life of a householder (*grahastha*) or the 'one living in family' (Doniger & Smith, 1991). Kane (1941) states that the lawgivers in the *dharmasastras* explicitly spell out what, exactly how, precisely when, and strictly where the householder (both men and woman) did what he or she was prescribed to do in the minutest details as part of their daily family and individual duties. The purpose of this was to spell out the outward ritualistic acts so as to protect and perpetuate the social structure of that time.

Regimented and ritualistic as the above may sound, its purpose has been to encourage every person to overcome divisions within the self and the divisions between the self and others as clarified in the *Upanishads* (the mystic or spiritual contemplation of the *Vedas* or the Hindu scriptures that discuss philosophy, meditation, and the nature of God). A major task of the 'one living in family' is to acquire self-knowledge while overcoming self-divisions and artificial complexities created by castes, *varnas* (hierarchy within the caste), and *gotras* (family lineage) (Badrinath, 2003).

Hindu Concept of Marriage

According to its cultural literature, the institution of Hindu marriage is much more than a legal bond and status. It is: Ceremonial; Sacramental; Obligatory, from both the religious and social perspectives; Complementary; and Eternal.

Ceremonial

Gupta, Pawan, and Srivastava (1986) state that Indian marriages are ceremonial in nature. In Indian tradition, for marriage, the words *Panigragan* and *vivah* have been used which mean 'to accept the hands of the bride' and 'to carry purposefully' respectively. Thus Hindu marriage means a procedure through which the bridegroom accepts the bride and brings her

home in a ceremonial manner. In Hindu view, marriage is regarded as the gateway to *Grahashta-asrama*.

Sacramental

In the Hindu culture, marriage is more than a legal bond. It is a sacred bond that is irrevocable, preordained by the Gods, and is to be performed by a Brahmin in the presence of the sacred fire (Doniger & Smith, 1991; Kapadia, 1966; Pothen, 1986). The aim of the Hindu marriage is: *dharma* (practice of religion), *praja* (progeny), and *rati* (pleasure), in this order of importance (Gupta, Pawan, & Srivastava, 1986; Kapadia, 1966; Pothen, 1989; Ramu, 1977).

Obligatory

Although Kautilya's books of the *Arthashastra* (a treatise on statecraft, economic policy, and military strategy) (Kangle, 1997) refer to marriage as a contractual agreement between two families that can be terminated, not much has been written about this view, it has not attracted scholarly interest, and the people of India do not subscribe to it in their practices. For centuries Hindus are said to have been guided by the Laws of Manu (Doniger & Smith, 1991). These state that it is only after entering into the sacred union of marriage and having a son that an individual can hope to enter heaven (or to obtain *Moksha* – not to be reborn again) after his or her death. In brief, according to the Laws of Manu, Hindu marriage is a social obligation rather than a provision for an individual's private pleasure (Kapadia, 1966). In the vedic period marriage was even regarded as a personal sacrifice; unless one entered into married life he or she was considered to be the "one without sacrifice", a contemptuous remark for vedic Hindus (Gupta, Pawan, & Srivastava, 1986).

Unlike contemporary Western marriages, the institution of Hindu marriage is not a matter of personal happiness for the individuals entering into the institution. Indeed, romantic love is not considered to be a necessary component of a marital union (Rajadhon, 1961). Instead, the institution of Hindu marriage is centered on the appropriateness of the marital alliance between the families – which unites the two families akin to blood relations (Mehta, 1970; Mullatti, 1995). As you can see, the foundation of family relationships is not the individual will and its changing content, but obligation and its unchanging form (Badrinath, 2003). A sense of obligation or a sense of duty is the criterion to behave when a person is a part of a relationship.

Complementary; and Eternal

Hindus are taught that marriage is not so much a union of hearts as it is a coming together of complementary functions. Moreover, the Laws of Manu (Doniger & Smith, 1991) state that the bond of marriage is not broken even after death and continues into the after life. The duties of a husband include providing, caring, and protecting the wife. It is the duty of the husband to make his wife happy and the wife can demand this of him even out of pure self-interest (Dhruvarajan, 1988). The duties of a wife require her to be a *pativrata* (only devoted to the husband), a *dharma-patni* (inseparable companion to the husband in socio-religious

obligations, worship the husband as he is the Lord (*Patiparmeshwar*), obey him, and to look after his children (Doniger & Smith, 1991; Mukerjee & Gupta, 1933). The role of the wife-mother is highly valued and respected in the society since she is a *sahadharmini*, meaning co-partner who shares her husband's role as a householder (Ramu, 1988). Dhruvarajan (1988) states that one's self-interest is served the best by serving the interest of the other. That is, the happiness of the other is an essential condition for one's own happiness. In the realm of sexual relations between husband and wife, this is even more so.

Marriage is a state of emotional togetherness or friendship denoted by *saha-dharma* and *saha-kama*. According to Badrinath (2003) it is not a relationship where a struggle for power and violence between a man and a woman takes place. *Saha* is togetherness and forms the foundation of not only the marital relationship but of all human relationships, since by definition, togetherness requires the existence of self and of the other (Badrinath, 2003). Hence, *saha-kama*, the feeling of togetherness as the foundation of sexual happiness, is prime in a marriage without which sexuality and sexual pleasure are meaningless (Badrinath, 2003).

Place of the Hindu Wife in the Family

The Laws of Manu point out, "to be mothers were women created and to be fathers men; the Vedas ordain that *Dharma* must be practiced by man together with his wife" (Doniger & Smith, 1991, p.49). The place of the wife is both functional and relational. In the *Dharmasastras* the presence of the wife is required by the side of her husband to enable him to perform the prescribed rituals and rites (Doniger & Smith, 1991). The *Mahabharata* (one of the two major Sanskrit epics) states that it is only by the presence of the wife that a house is called a home, and a dwelling where there is no wife is like the wilderness (Badrinath, 2003). The *Mahabharata* also states that the greatest wealth of a man is his wife because there is no friend or support like the wife, and there is no one else in the world that helps one to live a meaningful life (Badrinath, 2003). The wife is considered to be the root of all order, material prosperity, and fulfillment of desires, and the husband does not have any greater privileges than the wife in the home (Dhruvarajan, 1988). In the complexities of man-woman relationship, both are said to be equally placed. In the *Mahabharata*, the wife is often portrayed as the person who protects her husband from his mistaken notions (Badrinath, 2003).

The wife-mother has the most exalted status in the family and occupies a very central place as a 'teacher' in the Hindu culture. Hindus are taught in the *Mahabharata* that the preceptor is greater than ten teachers and the father is greater than ten preceptors. However, *the mother is greater than ten fathers*. Therefore the greatest *guru* (teacher) of all is the mother (Badrinath, 2003).

Finally, marriage signifies good fortune and a state of bliss for the couple and the family. This idea is expressed all over India through the terms "the fortunate one", or "the auspicious

one” which are used to address or identify a married woman who has a loving husband (Chanana, 2003; Dube, 1988 a).

Caste in the Indian Culture

Hinduism is a very broad religion which incorporates the worship of several deities and includes various castes that make up its traditional hierarchical socioeconomic system (Derné, 1995). In ancient times everything was classified and divided into numerous artificially created groups. People were divided into different castes on the basis of occupation and families were clubbed together on the basis of different *varanas* or the different ways in which the families earned their livelihood. For example, the Brahman or the priestly caste was further divided into four subgroups (Badrinath, 2003). These subgroups were further divided until the lower common factor uniting the smallest of the subgroups called the *Gotra* or the family lineage or clan was reached (Karve, 1993). The word caste incorporates both the concepts of *varana* and *jati*. Quigley (1993) states that *jati* means a group of people who are some fundamental way alike because of their common origins, and fundamentally different from those who do not share these origins. A person cannot choose his or her *jati*, it is defined by birth. However, a person can choose whether one's *jati* refers to a more or less inclusive group. It can signify a person's lineage, it may refer to all the lineages with whom one can intermarry, or it may refer to those whose common ethnic or cultural heritage sets them apart from their neighbors. However, *varana* signifies a function that an individual performs, that is necessary to ensure that social harmony and cosmic stability are maintained (Quigley, 1993). The four *varanas* are presented in the *Rigveda* (one of the four canonical Hindu sacred texts, *Rig* means praise or verse and *Veda* means knowledge) (written in 1,000 B.C.) as *Brahmana* (priests), *Rajanya* (later *Ksatriya* – warriors), *Vaishya* (traders), and *Sudra* (artisans and laborers).

It may appear that social ranking is deterministic and one dimensional. In actuality it is multi-faceted and multi causal (Sharma, 1997). Brahmins may occupy the top position of the caste hierarchy but they do not always enjoy comparable economic positions in Indian society (Selvam, 2000). Indians distinguish between the ritual status and the actual status of a person/caste wherein the latter is characterized by the secular bases of social stratification (Tharpar, 1974). Caste has never been static as it has been made out to be and many internal and external factors have caused new castes and sub-castes to arise from time to time and have changed the prestige ranking of the caste hierarchy (Ghurye, 1952). Tharpar (1974) observes that the division between caste and class in ancient India was never rigid because Indian society was not rigidly structured. Indian society was dynamic, and change in one aspect affected the others. Hence, the application of the caste model for studying Indian society is inappropriate and has sent wrong messages about its historicity and specificity (Béteille, 1993).

According to Durmont (1970) both ritual and political power are rooted in the religio-ritualistic order of the caste system. Caste is seen as the basis of inter-group relations based on

the principle of pollution-purity. Srinivas (1952) notes that ritual impurity, normal ritual status, and ritual purity constitute the social hierarchy. Thus, the main criteria for the ranking of castes are rituals and not economics, which form the basis for class distinctions (Dube, 1955).

Among Hindus, endogamous and exogamous restrictions are prevalent in the process of selecting a mate (Gupta, Pawan, & Srivastava, 1986). Endogamy permits mates to be chosen only from within the limits of caste, sub-caste, or linguistic area, while exogamy requires that a person should select mates outside their own group. Marriage between the same *gotra* and members of the extended maternal and paternal family up to five generations is prohibited (Gupta, Pawan, & Srivastava, 1986; Kadetotad, 1979). Kadetotad (1979) studied families and marital relations in two communities in the city of Dharwar and found that during the process of mate selection the boundaries of caste were maintained but within that the sub-castes that people belonged to were often over looked. Another trend noted was that people tended to maintain their class, educational status, or occupational status by establishing marital relationships with families who belonged to an equal class rather than a caste. Kadetotad (1979) also found that the relevance of the caste system was diminishing as the restrictions around the boundaries were being relaxed – especially among the educated populations – and the only time it held some significance was during the mate selection process.

According to Sharma (1997) horizontal mobility in the caste system implies a consideration of some factors other than caste alone. The structure and concept of caste has undergone a vast change in the last two centuries. Education, reservation for jobs, legal and constitutional provisions and safeguards, and developmental programs instituted by the government have all aided social mobility in India (Sharma, 1997). Tharpar (1974) states that due to the fore-mentioned changes, the rules surrounding marriage and status-relationships have been unable to remain bound by the rigid and static boundaries of caste.

Although many caste customs have not yet changed radically, the tradition that sons should follow caste occupations has weakened enough among the urban middle and upper classes that little opposition occurs when young men choose new occupational lines, providing that those they choose have prestige equal to or higher than the traditional caste occupations (Ross, 1962). Occupational homogeneity of castes is no longer observed to be a fact because the new occupational opportunities brought about by industrialization presents incentives for educated unemployed youth to have a better paying job and a better life. In fact, social class and caste membership are correlated through various intricately woven factors (Sharma, 1997).

Middle Class in India

Class categorizes people on the basis of their common economic and occupational interests (Tharpar, 1974; Ross, 1962). In India, class membership is not static. Social mobility is both a historical and contextual social reality (Sharma, 1997; Srinivas, 1952).

According to Shah (1987) the middle classes in India are a product of both capitalist development and the State. The middle classes are trained service groups that serve both the upper and lower classes, although not in equal measure (Sharma, 1997). The middle class forms the largest subsection of the Indian urban population and thus is an approximate indicator of the voice of the urban Indian people at large. Approximately 100 million or 10% of the country's urban population belongs to the middle class (Rajgopal, 1999) and approximately 66% of the population on New Delhi is categorized as belonging to the same (Census, 2001). The Hindu population in India is noted as 80.46% and in New Delhi it is noted as 76.26% (Census, 2001).

The middle class is also the subsection of the society that is most impacted by the growing and changing economy (Fernandes, 2006). It is the most upwardly mobile socioeconomic group with the most flexible boundaries and is thought to reflect the changes that a culture is undergoing in its evolutionary trajectory (Fernandes, 2006; Sharma, 1997). Fernandes (2006) states that on a structural level the middle classes largely encompasses English-speaking urban white-collar groups who benefit from new employment opportunities brought about by the effects of economic liberalization in the private sector. The boundaries of this group are noted to be fluid because they permit other social segments to join them. Therefore, in recent times the class rather than the caste to which a family belongs has been considered to be a more appropriate indicator of the family's socioeconomic status (Liddle & Joshi, 1986). Social caste is no longer a clear distinction because formal education has brought forth the opportunities for people to pursue any profession irrespective of the caste to which a family belongs. For example, a person of *Vaishya* caste (the trader caste) may study and become a physician thus retaining the family caste but not the same socioeconomic class.

Since class is primarily defined by ownership of property and wage relations (Liddle & Joshi, 1986), the middle class population would be removed from the preoccupation of deficiency or survival needs because the premise is that these needs have already been met and the family does not lack for food or shelter, thus making them more available to meet with the researcher for the purpose of conducting the interviews. Maslow (1948) states that the main organizing principle in people's lives is the hierarchical arrangement of certain needs that must be met in that particular order. Deficiency needs such as basic needs for food and shelter are lower in hierarchy but they are greater in potency. Therefore, they supersede so-called "higher" needs for security, self-esteem, need to be loved and respected, and self-actualization. If the basic needs are not met, an individual feels anxious and cannot look to satisfy the other needs that are placed at a higher level on the hierarchical system (Maslow, 1975).

Types of Marriages in Hindu Society

Hindu marriages also vary by geographic region. The Punjabis of north India (Hershman, 1993) most often marry a distant relative of a member of their kin or a kin member's friend. The marriage alliance is usually initiated by the elders of the family thus resulting in an arranged

marriage. According to Khatri (1988) the north Indian culture is predominantly patrilineal and dictates that women join the husband's home and family after the marriage. The Nayars of south India have an established matrilineal society and trace their descent from women only. Marriage in their society is either polyandrous, polygynous, or both. The role of the father is minimal and they reside in separate homes from the women (Gough, 1993). Polyandry is practiced in Hindu communities of the Himalayan region as well. Marriage is viewed as a contract between a group of brothers and one woman and can be broken at any time by either partner. However, in case of a separation, the children from the marriage remain with the father (Berreman, 1993).

Dube (1997) found that divorce and remarriage have traditionally been permitted among the lower and some middle classes in Hindu India. However, a clear distinction is made between the first and the second marriage. A second marriage is performed with a simple ceremony or with no ceremony at all as opposed to the first, which is performed with full rites and a public celebration. Dumont (1970) and Srinivas (1962) found that the words denoting this union were different from the words that denote the primary or first marriage (*vivaha*, *byah*, *shaadi*, and *lagna*). Some of the Hindi words used to indicate a second marriage are *churi pahanana* (giving glass bangles), *baithana* (getting someone to sit), and *chadar dalna* (throwing over a woman's head a sheet with red corners) (Dube, 1997; Chowdhry, 1994; Kolenda, 1983).

In ancient Indian literature there are mentioned two forms of inter-caste marriages: *anuloma* and *pratiloma* (Doniger & Smith, 1991). Under *anuloma*, men of higher castes are permitted to marry women of lower castes, and under *pratiloma*, men of lower castes marry women who belong to the upper castes (Gupta, Pawan, & Srivastava, 1986). The latter however is not permitted, and is looked down upon in the society.

Marriage in the Context of Culture: Studies of Contemporary Hindu Marriages

Culture is the machinery that individuals use to "orient themselves in a world otherwise opaque" (p.363) and to make sense of actions they see around them (Geertz, 1966, 1973b). Culture is the lens through which people see the world (Mills, 1959, 1963). The relationship between the individual and the society in India is colored by the social control that the larger society exerts over the individual in all that he or she does (see study by Derné, 1995).

The roles of each person are defined in the context of the culture, norms, religion, and caste (Cohen, 1974). Contemporary Indian climate provides for a complex and confusing time for the people. Legal and social reforms continue to be instituted in order to bring the status of men and women to a more equitable level and to bring about egalitarianism in their role socialization. However, this effort contradicts the traditions that maintain power differentials on the basis of gender that affect the marital relationship as well (Ramu, 1988).

In a study where Hindu men from the city of Benaras were interviewed, Derné (1995) found that most men understood that individual actions did not arise from individual choices but that they were a reflection of the group – the family, caste, or religion – to which they belonged.

Therefore, actions of individuals in India appear to be driven by the social pressures (Derné, 1995). The men interviewed held firmly to the belief that marriages should be arranged by the parents of the bride and the groom, and while they insist that this is right and proper, they also know that the practice of arranging marriages is not part of the natural world, but is a distinctive part of Hindu culture. Derné (1995) found that, in their commonsense thinking of family life, the main understanding or belief held by Indian men is that people's actions and behavior should be guided by social pressures.

In the Indian culture women who do not marry are considered to be an oddity and are only in the urban areas (Dube, 1997). However, a large number of men remain unmarried but they do not concern their parents in the way that the girls do (Dube, 1997). In India girls and boys are believed to achieve adulthood (considered to be a man and a woman) only after they are married (Dube, 1997). This cultural construct in India adds to the social pressure for both men and women to get married.

Manifold interacting variables may determine the construction of the institution of marriage by Hindu individuals. Nevertheless, some research has been undertaken. This body of literature is of dubious value because of methodological weaknesses, namely, inadequate theoretical frames, definitions, sample sizes and selection criteria, and controls. For the sake of completeness, these studies are compiled below. They address five questions: basis for mate selection; rationale for marriage; expectations of marriage; adjustments to marriage; and rationale for staying married.

Basis for Mate Selection

Dube (1997) noted that Hindu culture places a great emphasis on virginity at first marriage. And since the main concern of the society is to manage the female sexuality, first marriages are customarily thought to be the responsibility of the parents. Young adults choosing their own life partners is considered scandalous especially for the girl. Dube (1997) found this belief to be true even for the educated urban population, in which first marriages were generally arranged with the help of the elders of the family. However, in contradiction to these findings, some studies in urban areas have found that young individuals sometimes preferred to pick their own mates and endorsed romantic love as a prerequisite to marriage (Gupta, 1976; Gupta & Singh, 1982).

Rationale for Marriage

The emergence of romantic love as a criterion for marriage suggests the concurrent emergence of hedonistic rationales. Nevertheless, the empirical literature exploring rationale suggests otherwise. The primary reasons for getting married are:

- For men to have sons to continue the family name and the male bloodline so that after death, an individual can enter heaven or attain *Moksha* (Doniger & Smith, 1991; Saraswati, 1977).

- For women to bear children and have a husband and family to nurture, processes considered to be their most fulfilling social roles (Ramu, 1987).
- Gaining in financial security, escaping from an unhappy home life, getting social approval, family pressure, to have companionship, and to have someone to love (Kumar & Rohatgi, 1989).
- Acquiring a sexual partner (Dube, 1997; Kumar & Rohatgi, 1989). For Hindus marriage sanctifies female sexuality. Since sex is viewed as a natural craving of human beings, marriage is visualized as an event that is a necessary part of life.

Besides these empirical works, there are many conceptual treatises that emphasize the teachings of the ancient books of Hinduism, such as the importance of marriage to entering heaven, *Moksha*, and the ramifications of *Karma*.

Expectations of Marriage

Meiss (1980) observes that “to serve the husband gladly and without hesitation is the highest duty of the good Hindu wife” (p. 269). The question of service especially who serves whom is integrally tied to the structure of authority set up in Indian families (Ramu, 1987). Ramu (1988) states that married couples usually agree about their expectations that need to be fulfilled within the marriage. The wives expect their husbands to be the primary provider economically and to be affectionate, caring, and protective towards them and their children. The husbands expect their wives to be caring and loyal to them, to have proper conduct and character, and to be virtuous. The wife is also expected to give service to the husband, bear children, meet the husband’s sexual needs, help with problems of the family, and to take care of the children and to be good mothers (Pottenberger, 1975; Ramu, 1988).

In regard to the foregoing, it is interesting to observe that it is in contradiction to the ancient texts that stipulate that both the husband and the wife occupy an equal status in the family and they have duties and obligations towards each other that they must fulfill (Badrinath, 2003; Dhruvarajan, 1988; Ramu, 1988). Ross (1961) states that the structure of power within a family is not maintained between the marital dyad, it is the mother-son relationship that has the highest emotional tie and the most power in the family.

Derné (1995) interviewed married men in the north Indian city of Benaras and found that they expected their wives to refrain from complaining in their home – which also housed their extended family, to obey them and their parents, and to fulfill their duty of serving them. Pottenberger (1975) found similar results when he interviewed 24 Indian wives. The results indicated that a good wife was expected to have proper conduct and a virtuous character. Derné (1995) also found that restricting the wife’s influence in her husband’s home was a source of personal pleasure for some men.

Pottenberger (1975) found that the wives expected their husbands to be good providers and to have a good education so that they were able to provide security for them (education level as

an expectation was not mentioned by the husbands in reference to their wives at all). They also expected their husband to have a healthy appearance, to be gentle and not harsh in their interactions with them, and to be faithful to them. Sexual relations with the husband, and the husband's role as care taker of the children, were also included as benefits of marriage (Pottenberger, 1975).

Pottenberger (1975) found that for the husbands the physical appearance of their wife was not an important characteristic or criteria. Most husbands he interviewed shared that companionship was more valuable than beauty and that a husband should enjoy the company of his wife. This appears to be reflective of the Indian philosophy that the appearance of a person is not as important as their personality, conduct, or their heart (Carter, 1982).

Ross (1962) found that as marriage is the ritual through which the continuity of the family is regulated and assured, utmost care is taken in all societies to see that the appropriate people marry. In traditional societies the new marriage partner is expected to fit into the total family pattern, therefore granting control over the selection process to the elders of the family as they claim to be in a better position to assess the new member's qualifications. Ross (1962) also found that the personal compatibility of husband and wife was not an expectation since the husband-wife relationship was not viewed to be central to the family structure.

Mehta (1970) found that the institution of marriage is expected to provide protection and economic security for the woman. Pottenberger (1975) also found similar results that indicate that marriage provides security for the woman. She does not have to worry about money, and she gains in social respect as long as she remains married.

Ramu (1988) interviewed married couples in south India and found that both the spouses agreed that the main role of a husband was to be a good provider and to be affectionate, caring, and protective of his family. The role of the wife was described as loving, caring, loyal, and being a good mother. Ramu (1988) also found that the marital relationship of the participants was more egalitarian in reality than it was portrayed either in books or by the older generation.

Expectations from a spouse and expectations from the institution of marriage appear to be nested categories. Some research has been conducted on the spousal roles and expectations but little research has been conducted so far on the expectations that spouses have from the institution of marriage which appears to encompass the former category.

Adjustment to Marriage

Waller and Hill (1951) suggest that there are three dimensions of adjustment in family relations. First, the individual member must adjust individually to the crisis situation; secondly he must adjust as a pair, for example a husband to his wife; thirdly, there must be an adjustment in terms of the whole family. The complexity of this total adjustment increases with the number of family members involved. This view is in contradiction to the Indian view of adjustment in marriage which is considered primarily the role and duty of the new wife since she is the

newcomer to the patrilineal family. Indeed, the concept of adjustment in marriage has historically and traditionally been the task for Hindu women. They are socialized through mythology and various stories about Gods and Goddesses to believe that their goal for married life is to “understand” and accept their husband, to cater to all his needs, and to nurture the children in order to achieve salvation (Dhruvarajan, 1988). Dhruvarajan (1988) found that a mutual trust and companionship is developed between the marital dyad within the hierarchical context whereby the wife defers to the husband and the husband provides for her material and emotional comforts.

In the Indian culture self-assertion is perceived as selfishness and independent decision making as disobedience. Sonpar (1995) found that although a marital couple was expected to fulfill the adult roles of spouses and parents, they were at the same time also expected to be obedient children to their parents and their parents-in-law. Derné (1995) found that men in his sample who lived in joint families (that included their parents and brothers’ families) were constantly faced with their wife’s dissatisfaction pertaining to their lives. Their belief that love between a husband and a wife is dangerous if it is not tempered by social fears contributed to their wife’s dissatisfaction along with aiding their reluctance of giving in to their temptation of living separately from their parents.

Ross (1962) found that the main conflicts between husbands and wives centered around friction with the in-laws. Most women in the study attributed the peace in their marriage to them living separately from their in-laws. They shared that their husbands were the source of very few conflicts, but when these were present they were a source of much distress for the wives.

According to Pothen (1989) the first few years of marriage are usually reported to be the happiest for a couple and also the most critical for adjustments to occur between them. Sinha and Mukerjee (1989) found that since marriage in India is considered to be a pious duty, middle class women still hold very traditional views regarding marital life. They consider the domestic chores their duties and define their identity in terms of motherhood and worthy wives (Bharat, 1995).

According to Rao and Rao (1975) the marital relationship between working wives and their husbands indicate elements of friendship and sharing in mutually interesting activities. This might be considered an indication of the marital relationship moving toward a more egalitarian stance. However, it was noted that the strong socialization of the women made it difficult for them to ignore their duty toward their household and their husbands irrespective of their status as a co-earner in the family (Rao & Rao, 1975).

Dasgupta and Basu (1997) noted that the combination of Indian husbands with traditional role orientation and wives with an egalitarian orientation provided for the lowest amount of marital satisfaction for the couple. Indian wives socialized toward a traditional and feminine attitude indicated a higher level of marital happiness than wives with an egalitarian or more masculine outlook (Isaac & Shah, 2004). Indian men with a non-traditional socialization also indicated a

higher level of marital quality. Low marital quality and happiness was only noted for couples with a traditional husband and an egalitarian wife (Dasgupta & Basu, 1997; Isaac & Shah, 2004).

Pothen (1989) states that in patriarchal societies such as India, social changes regarding the status or role of women are met with resistance. Though the educated Indian male is noted to desire an educated female partner, he also sought to maintain the traditional roles and values as far as marital relations are concerned. Pothen (1989) also noted that the educated and economically independent women did not see themselves as subservient and inferior to men and expressed to do away with the old traditions that did not inspire mutual respect.

Pottenberger (1975) interviewed families in an Indian village and found that when the current marital relationship of a couple was compared with their parents' marriage, most husbands and wives noted that they had more conflict between them than the previous generation. For the husbands their wives were not as subservient and obedient as the noted ideal they grew up with, and they had to make adjustments in the face of conflict brought about by this discrepancy. Most conflicts, Pottenberger (1975) noted occurred when either a husband or a wife fell short of their traditional role expectations. Hindi romance films and contact with the city life were noted as the primary causes of change in gender role expectations. The husbands shared that in earlier times a husband would love his wife even if she was "not clean and courteous" (p. 36), however in current times the husband would find this to be intolerable, therefore demanding that the wife adjust to how her husband wanted her to present herself. Pottenberger (1975) also found that most of the husbands helped with the housework and child raising activities that their own fathers did not do while they were growing up.

Mehta (1970) interviewed 50 western educated women between the ages of 20 and 25 years from different provinces in India and the United States and found that they were socialized to believe and reminded by their families that marriage was not a matter of happiness between two people but an alliance between two families. It was noted that the women were raised to believe that marriage was a sacrament for which the sacrifice of personal ambition such as a career would not be considered too great. Mehta (1970) found that education on the other hand was considered an important complement to marriage but not a substitute for it. The women believed that marriage needed discipline and commitment from them but no mention was made of an expectation of discipline or commitment from the husbands. The women were socialized to view marriage in terms of a fuller life and not necessarily one in which there was excitement and passion. The women were socialized to believe that love was the fruit of selfless devotion to the man one married and that marriage tested a woman's finer qualities. Marriage was considered a union in which happiness was not easily achieved nor was that the only goal (Mehta, 1970; Rajadhon, 1961).

Ross (1962) found that higher or postgraduate education for women was viewed with some skepticism by their families as they feared that they may become too independent and may

not be also to adjust to a family or husband with orthodox views. Higher education for men on the other hand was seen as a desirable characteristic for mate selection because education provided a stable job and security for the family.

Kadetotad (1979) found that most experiences of love marriages for people were not positive because of the withdrawal of support from the extended family to the married couple. The family viewed the union as a means to satisfy the sexual urge by the partners therefore taking away from the true purpose of marriage.

Sonpar (2005) considered the common issues that Indian couples struggle with and found that earlier in the marriage the husband negotiated a new position within his family as a married man with loyalties both as a son and as a husband. The task required that he not come across to his family as having fallen under the sway of his wife. The task of the new wife on the other hand was to secure her relationship with her husband and also to find her footing with the other family members, to detach herself from attachments and relationships from her own family, and to adapt to the role of the subordinate daughter-in-law (Sonpar, 2005).

According to Ramu (1988) the urban wives he interviewed shared that they were able to influence their husbands' actions by voicing their wishes and asking the husbands to comply especially in reference to how the husbands spent their leisure time. The wives expressed that their husbands spend more time at home with their families rather than with their male friends.

Krishnaswamy and Mantri (1997) administered surveys to 170 married working women in the city of Dharward and found that when girls were raised to be self sacrificing, quiet, and subservient they experienced more anxiety in their marriage and found adjusting to marriage a challenge. Girls who were raised to give voice to their concerns were noted to experience less anxiety during the initial years of marriage.

Reasons for Staying Married

Most Indians in contemporary society still view marriage as a lifelong commitment and consider divorce to be an event that is cause for shame and to lose ace within the community (Pothen, 1989). The Laws of Manu (Doniger & Smith, 1991) specify that a man who leaves his wife "is a sinner and should be punished as a thief" (p.101). To leave the husband is not the Dharma of a Hindu woman and if the separation occurs, it points to the weakness in the woman and her inability to 'understand' her husband and carry out her duty (Mehta, 1970). Mehta (1970) found That Indian women were raised to see marriage as a source of economic and emotional security and that 'love' was transient and could easily evaporate if it was not linked with a congenial way of life. She also found that most women in her study lacked the courage to express themselves clearly and saw marriage as the only way of providing 'real' security for themselves. Apart from these studies not much is known about why Indian couples stay in healthy, happy, or dysfunctional marriages.

Rationale for the Current Study

The findings presented above lack cohesion because they were not investigated within an overarching conceptual frame. They also lack trustworthiness because of methodological barriers to internal and external validity. We cannot be certain that the researchers are measuring that which they claim to be measuring, and the extent to which their discoveries, if valid, can be generalized beyond their samples. This matter is too burdensome to include here, but the interested reader is referred to Chand, 2006.

Theoretical Bases – Scientific Assumptions

Three central conceptual schemes that form a foundation for the proposed study are: an ecosystemic orientation, qualitative methodology, and postmodern stance. Like all hypothetical constructs used to construct phenomena, these theories are assumptions chosen for their expected heuristic value, with full awareness that any such model to some extent determines that which is seen and unseen.

The Ecosystemic Orientation

The bioecological theory of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1992; Lerner, 1991) and family ecology theory (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993) provide the conceptual framework for this study because these best represent the beliefs and dynamics of family life in Hindu India. The belief more explicitly states that human and family life is a complex system of relationships and an individual exists and functions from birth to death within the confines of interdependent relationships (Badrinath, 2003).

The Bioecological Theory of Human Development. Bronfenbrenner (1979) defines human development as “the process through which the growing person acquires a more extended differentiated, and valid conception of the ecological environment, and becomes motivated and able to engage in activities that reveal the properties of, sustain, or restructure that environment at levels of similar or greater complexity in form and content” (p. 27). Therefore, development is the process through which the characteristics of the environment and the individual with each other to produce an outcome that has elements of both constancy and change from a bioecological perspective for a person throughout their life span (Bronfenbrenner, 1992).

Human development takes place through interactional processes between an individual and the environment and these interactions are reciprocal in the influence they exert (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Lerner, 1991, 2002). In other words, development is a result of the interactions or proximal processes between the individual characteristics of a person and their immediate as well as remote environments. Proximal processes are the basic processes or interactions that facilitate human development as they occur within the immediate environment or context of the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 2001). Proximal processes are foundational in human development as they occur on a regular basis and drive the interactions helping the individual acquire knowledge to adapt to the changing environment around them. Changes in the immediate

environment influence the individual's behavior and development just as the individual (his or her personal beliefs, hopes, values, and personality) influences how they interact within a given environmental setting (Bronfenbrenner, 2001). There are four nested contexts within which an individual interacts and develops (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). These contexts are the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, and the macrosystem.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) states that the microsystem is "a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given setting with particular physical and material characteristics" (p. 22). The microsystem is the setting within which an individual interacts or behaves at a given point in time. This also includes the activities, interpersonal relationships, and the roles that the individual plays at this level (Bronfenbrenner, 2001). The interactions include the semiotic system or the use of symbols and language that help individuals interpret intentions, goals, and actions that they or others engage in (Brandtstadter, 1999).

Homans (1964) emphasizes that a focus on structural characteristics of societies usually obscures the part that the individual or social actor plays in establishing and interacting with the structures. Gender culture, marital or individual behaviors are constituted by the social practices of a particular people. These practices are constrained by the larger cultural structures that are already set in place (Derné, 1995). Thus, social attitudes and behaviors are constituted and reconstituted at the micro level where the individual influences and gets influenced by their surrounding environment.

Of great importance are the perceptions of an individual toward his or her environment (Lewin, 1931, 1935, 1951) as these set the tone for interactions, provide basis for the meaning making process to take place, and aid psychological growth (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Mead, 1934). The roles, expectations, and perceptions of an Indian husband and wife influence their interactions with not only each other but also with extended kin who constitute their microsystem. Roles are sets of "activities and relations expected of a person occupying a particular position in society, and of others in relation to that person" (Bronfenbrenner, 1971, p. 85). The socially and culturally sanctioned ideal role of a husband in India is to provide for the family, be the primary decision maker and authority figure, and not spend much time on domestic labor (Ramu, 1987; Derné, 1995). In this way, the role a husband is expected to play combined with his personality traits influences his interactions with the family members and vice versa in the microsystem that is the home of the family.

The mesosystem is a set of many different Microsystems and "comprises of the interrelations among two or more settings in which the developing person actively participates (such as, "for a child, the relations among home, school, and neighborhood peer group"; for an adult, "relations among family, work, and social life" within a given community or neighborhood) (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 25).

Bronfenbrenner (1979) refers to the exosystem as an extension of the mesosystem and as “one or more settings that do not involve the developing person as an active participant, but in which events occur that affect, or are affected by, what happens in the setting containing the developing person” (p. 25). The exosystem is the environment that has the potential to influence the individual’s development, though not directly (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For example, the interactions of both parents at their individual workplace (or individual parent at his or her workplace), interactions of parents with the members of their extended community, etc. influence the tone of their interactions with members of their individual families.

The macrosystem is the level that includes the culture, government, public and social policy, etc. that govern a people or the cultural norms that a people choose to be governed by. The macrosystem influences the nature of interactions permeating all other levels or systems within which the individual develops and interacts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1992). It is in likeness to a “blueprint” of a culture that incorporates the sociopolitical orientation and philosophies of a people by which they live their lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 26). It includes characteristics and building blocks that make up subcultures within a culture, such as social class, lifestyle patterns, belief systems, economic resources available to certain members due to race, minority or majority status, history of the people, and the times in which individuals live their lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1992). In the Indian context, the macrosystem incorporates the lessons from the ancient texts such as the *Vedas*, the *Smritis* (Hindu religious scriptures that cover the sacred law-codes such as noted in the *Dharmasastra*), *Ramayana* (a major Sanskrit epic), the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Upanishads*, and the *Puranas* (meaning belonging to ancient or olden times and cover themes such as history, philosophy, tradition, and religion) that share the doctrines on appropriate behavior, attitude, attire, appropriate architecture for specific buildings, family structure, specific roles for individuals and how best to fulfill them. The sociopolitical orientation of collectivism and socialism in India is also a part of the cultural make-up that provides the framework for interactions that are deemed appropriate within the culture (Karve, 1993).

As mentioned before, the interrelated ecological levels are nested in relation to one another. The mesosystem incorporates the various Microsystems, the exosystem incorporates the mesosystem, the macrosystem in turn incorporates the exosystem of a given culture. The focus of the person-process-context model within the bioecological theory is to understand the dynamic relationship between a developing individual and the integrated, multilevel ecology of human development. The innate characteristics of an individual serve as indirect producers of development, where development is the process and the process and the product or intended outcome (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Lerner, 1991).

The chronosystem is a part of the Bioecological model and consists of various concepts of ‘time’ (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). For example, the manner in which time relates to the course of development of an individual, historical time during which an individual is alive, the

impact of the historical time on the culture of the individual, family time, etc., all moderate the changes through out the life course of a developing person (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). The external environment such as the economic boom facilitated by several multinational companies setting up establishments in urban India, the privatization of mass media, and easy access to the internet and therefore different cultures of the world can be the driving force to bring about changes in an individual (Fernandes, 2006). On the other hand, the internal environment of the individual such as illness, change in perception, or meaning attributed to an event can also influence the adjustments made by an individual. The concept of time affects all levels of the adjustments made by an individual. The concept of time affects all levels of the bioecological model. Within the microsystem the affect of time is observed in the continuity or discontinuity of proximal processes (the individual's interactions within their immediate environment). Within the mesosystem, time is considered in larger units such as days and weeks. The proximal processes unfold over the days or weeks, thus displaying the effects of time. Within the macro level, time is reflected in how the changing events in a society at large influence the interactions of individuals within and across generations in a reciprocal way (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Luria, 1978).

In the process-person-context model, 'process' comprises of multiple interactions of the individual within their context; the 'person' is defined as a biological entity with specific biopsychosocial features such as genetic make-up, cognitive and behavioral characteristics, knowledge, and motional abilities; the 'context' is defined as the nested levels of the micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystems that the individual interacts with directly or indirectly, and 'time' is defined as the chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). The bioecological entity or 'person' has cognition, temperament, and developmental conception that enable them to impact every other member and relationship within the microsystem in a reciprocal manner based on these features (Bronfenbrenner, 1992). In order to understand the development, beliefs, attitudes, and behavior of individuals or organisms, it is imperative to collect and examine data that reflect on as many environments that influence their interactions (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998).

Family Ecology Theory. On a similar note, Bubolz and Sontag (1993) state that a system is made up of the sum of its parts and that each part exerts its influence on the other parts as well as on the system as a whole. Miller (1978) refers to a system as "a set of interacting units with relationships among them" (p. 16). According to the family ecology theory, the human system and the environment share an interdependent relationship to one another as one is embedded in the other. For example, a family system is a part of a larger whole comprising of the cultural system. The environment is defined as "not only the natural phenomenon and physical structures such as land and buildings, but also such components as social-cultural values and social institutions" (Sontag & Bubolz, 1996, p. 1). The environment provides a context for individuals and families to interact with and develop. The environment does not determine the behavior of the individuals directly, the individuals use the environment or adapt to it to meet their needs, or they change the

environment if necessary to meet their needs. Adaptation facilitates the survival of the individuals. It ensures their quality of life and also the conservation of their environment (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993). Bristor (1990) states that the resources such as access to knowledge or skills available to a family or system determines the probability of their successful adaptation.

Sontag and Bubolz (1996) define an ecosystem as an “interaction system” that is comprised of “living things together with their non-living habitat”, and a family ecosystem consists of a family along with its interactions within its environment (p. 18). A human ecosystem, according to Sprout and Sprout (1965) consists of humans, their environment, and the bidirectional interaction that takes place between them. The family ecology theory borrows concepts from the systems theory such as boundaries between the different systems, the structure of a system, the process or function that it performs, and the inputs to and outputs from a system to help explain the human ecosystem. The processes include communication, decision making, and learning on the part of the system.

Qualitative Methodology

I am assuming that open-ended interviewing and the “patterning” process inherent in a qualitative approach will provide the most likely and effective means for gathering and analyzing the data in this research project. It especially is well-suited to “emic” discovery, or the way on which individuals occupying a culture give meaning to their social institutions.

Qualitative Inquiry. Rosenau (1992) notes that the traditional scientific methods do not lend themselves well when it comes to understanding the complexities of family systems as qualitative methodology does. Positivistic approaches often times are inappropriate to use to study the circularity of human experiences because they attempt to reduce data to an objective “truth” and do not appreciate the subjective meanings inherent in the phenomenon under study (Gergen, 1991a; Gilgun, 1992; Guba, 1990; Hoshmand, 1989; White & Epston, 1990). In qualitative research the cultural context within which human beings construct their version of reality is considered very important because the assumption adhered to is that knowledge is socially constructed and the investigator has the power to greatly impact this construction during the research process (Rosenau, 1992).

A qualitative approach to research builds upon the interpretive information about the experiences and meanings attached to events in the lives of the people, namely the institution of marriage among the middle class Hindu couples in India. The detailed descriptions and explanations that people offer as their responses to the questions posed to them will comprise the data for this project as the focus is on exploration of the variables rather than quantifying them (Daly, 1992). Therefore a qualitative approach is appropriate for the present study as the research question makes this the appropriate methodology to use as the paradigm of inquiry is post-positivistic and tries to understand what people know and how they know it (Glaser, 1978). The researcher is considered the main agent of data collection and analysis and it is the

researcher's lenses and sensitivity that aid the emergence of categories from the data at hand (Dey, 1999; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Qualitative methodology is also used for the discovery of regularities and the identification of elements or themes and the exploration of the connections between them (Miles & Huberman, 1994). It offers a mechanism for the analysis of ethno-cultural representations and at the same time provides a theoretical richness to the exploration of phenomenon being studied (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Studying couples who have been a part of the institution of marriage for a long time in the Indian (Hindu) cultural setting using a qualitative methodological approach may contribute to and further our understanding around the meaning, stability, change, and adjustments in the marital process.

Implicit in qualitative methodology is the notion that phenomenon are dynamic (Rafuls & Moon, 1996). This methodology uses data that is collected through multiple sources such as observations, semi-structured or structured interviews, or through the review of written, audio, or video sources to enrich the understanding process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The data are analyzed using the constant comparison method (Rafuls & V Moon, 1996) for the categories or themes, which are then looped back into the data to continue the search for meaning and relationships till no new patterns or categories emerge (Glaser, 1978). This process is also referred to as saturation of the data whereby the categories or emerging themes and codes do not overlap, and provide for rich and succinct groups. Qualitative methodology suggests that developing an understanding of events or cultural outlooks takes place on a substantive level and adds a descriptive component to the already formal level of abstraction of themes as the process of constant comparison proceeds over time (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Detailed substantive information may help to explain many dimensions of the research question being asked or inquired about. As substantive data is collected and compared, the process of intellectual knowing beings to take place as comparisons are made across substantive cases and are checked against previous research (Echevarria-Doan & Tubbs, 2005). Theoretical sensitivity or the ability of the researcher to use personal and professional knowledge and experiences, as well as the literature, allows the researcher to see the research situation in new ways and to use the data to develop and promote the understanding of phenomena and events (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The strengths of qualitative inquiry are as follows: first, the process of getting information from a person using a qualitative methodological approach is parallel to the way a therapist would conduct a session, using open ended questions intended to bring to light alternative perspectives, understanding, and meaning making process about a certain issue (Echevarria-Doan & Tubbs, 2005). This parallel process helps family therapists to conduct the interviews to elicit information about their views and experiences from the study participants. Secondly, the parallel process of

asking questions and seeking answers also helps to bridge the gap between research and practice for family therapists (Rafuls & Moon, 1996).

Postmodern stance

Postmodern approaches may be particularly useful in the study of families, couples, and family relationships given that these interactions are characterized by intricacy and complexity. Social constructivism appreciates the tendency for human beings to give meaning to their experiences and social interactions that are based in language systems embedded in our cultural beliefs, thus helping us create our own reality (Gergen, 1985). These realities contribute significantly to the development of beliefs as well as behaviors driven by the beliefs (Gergen, 1985; 1991a). Narrative construction involves unconscious, preconscious, and conscious processes whereby people attempt to organize their life experiences in a way that helps them make sense of their life events (Gergen & Gergen, 1988). These narratives also inform present realities and have the power to shape future experiences (Borden, 1992).

Chapter 3
METHODOLOGY

Research Objectives and Questions

The objective of this study was to increase understanding and add to the existing knowledge base regarding the meaning and construction of marriage, middle class, members of an urban Hindu subculture.

This population was sampled because it was convenient to a first, exploratory study of this type. It would take place in New Delhi, the researcher's home town, and within her own subculture. This maximized her resources for obtaining, engaging, and understanding the sample. Moreover, 66% of the population of New Delhi is middle class (Census of India, 2001).

Married adults for this subculture were interviewed to elicit their beliefs about the institution of marriage, namely, what it is, what its purpose is, what is required of the participants, and how all of these are learned. More formally stated, the research questions were: In contemporary urban middle class Hindu (MCUH) society:

1. What is the meaning of marriage?
2. Has the meaning of marriage changed in the last decade or so?
3. If so, in what way, and what has contributed to this change?
4. What is the purpose of marriage?
5. What constitutes adjustment in marriage?

These questions were expected to best be understood within Bronfenbrenner's (e.g., 1992) ecosystemic theorizing, namely phenomena such as human attitudes (constellations of beliefs, affect, and action tendencies) as the unique products of the total embedded environments in which individual psyches are situated.

Semi structured in-depth interviews using open-ended questions were conducted until no new information was reached, namely, a point of saturation (Rafuls & Moon, 1996). The open-ended questions used to guide the interview process were as follows:

- a) What does the institution of marriage mean to you? What does marriage mean to you personally?
- b) What does being married mean to you? What is the significance of your marriage for you?
- c) Why should someone get married?
- d) Why did you get married?
- e) What do people expect to get from or out of marriage? What are the hopes, dreams, and wishes that a person has from marriage?
- f) What do you expect to get from or out of marriage?
- g) What is required of men (and women) to stay married? What should men and women do to stay married?

h) What is required of you to stay married?

Open-ended prompts were used to gain a better understanding of the information being shared with the researcher:

- What does that mean?
- Tell me more about that.
- Can you give me an example of what you are talking about?
- Can you help me understand that better?
- Some of the other participants have shared their views on this question by commenting on this particular aspect of marriage, what are your views on that?

Sample

Participants

Because this was a first, exploratory study, the sample was both convenient and purposive:

Convenient. Middle class Hindu married individuals who conveniently resided in the researcher's home city of New Delhi, India, and who – like the researcher herself – were members of that city's majority society. The determination of middle class was made on the basis of the family's place of residence – either the Northern or Western parts of New Delhi – and the total family income earned in a month (Kuppuswami, 1962). The income of the participants did not exceed INR 50,000 (approximately USD 1,190) per month for the entire household.

Purposive. Given the underlying theory, participants needed to be members of the same embedded subcultures and those presumed to be most influential, namely, socioeconomic class and religion. Participants also were required to have been married for at least seven years. This decision, albeit arbitrary, was based on the researcher's need to assure that the participants had sufficient experience in their marriages from which to draw.

Sample size

The sample for this study was comprised of 15 married couples, and two individuals who were married, but not to each other. Responses from the pilot interview were also included in the sample because they were similar in content to the responses from the other interviewees.

A mandate for a specific sample size does not exist within the qualitative research literature. Unlike the requirements of quantitative methodology, qualitative research requires only enough participants so that the data is saturated (Creswell, 1998), that is, a point in data collection where "new data ceases to yield new information" (Rafuls & Moon, 1996, p 69). In the present case, the point of saturation was reached within a total of 32 interviews and therefore the interview process was stopped at this point.

Sample Acquisition and Site

Recruitment for participants was carried out in local communities in which the majority of the population was Hindu and socioeconomically middle class, namely, in the northern and

western parts of New Delhi. A local data collection agency was employed for the purpose of recruiting participants. Personnel from the agency used a door to door technique and recruited 80 couples from the northern and western areas of New Delhi who met the criteria for the project. From this pool of eligible participants, individuals were provided with dates and times for the purpose of meeting and interviewing with the researcher. The interviews were conducted in the natural setting of the participants, namely, their homes. This provided the researcher the opportunity to observe the home life and familial experiences of the participants while conducting the interviews (Creswell, 2003). The field notes were used to provide a description of the respondent's home for the benefit of the readers and to take them on the cultural journey with the researcher. Each individual in a couple was interviewed separately to ensure safety, comfort, and confidentiality.

Other families/couples who had been recruited could not be interviewed for the following reasons:

- Scheduling conflicts,
- Discomfort with meeting the researcher and conducting the interviews in their home,
- No consent provided for the audio recording of the interviews, and
- Declining to be interviewed when approached by the researcher to confirm the interview day, time, and venue.

Data Collection

Interview Process

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with participants on an individual basis. A pilot interview was also conducted to determine the average duration of the interviews and to assess the reliability and appropriateness of the interview questions. The respondents were given a choice of either talking to the researcher in English or in their native language Hindi. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim for the purpose of conducting the analysis.

Prior to the interview, the participants completed a Basic Background/Demographic Information form along with the researcher. This form was used to collect information regarding the participant's age, length of marriage, number of children, employment status, monthly income, and education level. The form also included a 10 point self report measure asking the participants to identify themselves as being secular (number 1) versus very religious (number 10) in their thinking and beliefs. This question was asked to see (during data analysis) if the participants' beliefs about the institution of marriage were influenced by the ancient Hindu religious texts and teachings if they had in fact identified themselves as being "religious" to some extent.

According to Creswell (2003) there are certain limitations to using interviews for data collection:

- The participants may provide the researcher with socially accepted or appropriate responses, and

- They may not understand the question or questions being asked, or
- They may not be able to express themselves and their opinions in an articulate manner.

Therefore, apart from careful prompting of the participants for responses, written observations regarding the behaviors, body language, or tone of the participant while engaging in the interview were also noted by the researcher (Creswell, 2003). Such observations provide behavioral information regarding the comfort level of the participants surrounding a topic or issue and are then used as probes to further their responses.

Data Analysis

The data from the recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. The interviews conducted in Hindi were initially transcribed verbatim (in Hindi) and then translated into English. The English translations were verified by an individual who had her Bachelor's degree in Hindi Literature from Delhi University.

The data from the pilot interview were also used for analysis because the content of the responses were similar to the other interviews. The data collected was coded using open, axial, and selective coding procedures (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) and analyzed using the constant comparison method of analysis to explore the emerging categories and patterns of meaning (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Rafuls & Moon, 1996).

The constant comparison method involves coding, recoding, categorization, and sorting of the data on a constant basis parallel to data collection (Hoshmand, 1989). Analyses of the data were conducted until the interrelationships between the categories yielded an over-arching and all-encompassing theme or category that described the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Coding Process

The transcripts were printed on different color paper to differentiate between the couple participants. For example, the transcripts for couple number one were printed on yellow colored paper and had margin lines to distinguish whether the respondent was the husband (one line) or the wife (two lines).

Strauss and Corbin (1990) define open coding as a process of conceptualizing, comparing for similarities and differences, and categorizing data into broad classes (or categories) so the researcher is able to examine it in more detail and get more involved in it conceptually. The researcher read all the transcripts and extracted broad classes such as 'what marriage means to middle class urban Hindus (MCUHs) indicated by concepts (or codes) such as, 'marriage is an end in itself', and 'marriage is a means to an end'. Themes are groups of similar statements or indicators for a particular concept (LaRossa, 2005). The statements that did not belong with one theme under one concept were examined further to see if they did belong with another theme either under the same or a different concept. For example, the themes or indicators of the concept 'marriage is an end in itself' were 'religious institution', 'social institution', 'universal developmental milestone', and 'mandatory arrangement'. The theme 'bond and

bandhan was grouped under the code (concept) 'marriage is a means to an end' instead of 'marriage is an end in itself' because it reflected the participants' expectations surrounding the institution of marriage and the meaning that they assigned to the dynamic of the marital relationship. Therefore, if the statement did not belong under a previous category or code (concept), then a new category or code was developed to give meaning to the particular statement (LaRossa, 2005).

Axial coding refers to the process of reducing the data by identifying the subcategories (or themes) and establishing relationships between them from the perspective of the theoretical model (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The function of axial coding, according to Strauss (1987), is to act as "a reminder to code data for relevance to whatever phenomenon is referenced by a given category" (p. 27-28). For example, within the code of 'attributes of the partner' the relationship between the subcategories or themes of 'physical characteristics', 'educational status', 'financial attractiveness', 'management of extended family', 'female obedience', 'realistic expectations', 'conflict resolution skills', and 'prosocial personality traits' are embedded in the Indian culture that lends meaning and significance to this code by providing more information about what is considered appealing or aversive in a partner. Another important aspect of the process of data reduction is the attention to culture, in this case, the community and familial aspects of the social setting within which a marriage takes place and is maintained in India are culturally defined according to the collectivistic character of the society.

Selective coding according to Strauss and Corbin (1990) is the selection of a theme and relating that theme to the other themes that have also emerged from the data and collectively places them under an appropriately titled code. Selective coding brings to light the relationships between the themes and identifies a core theme (or a code). It also identifies themes that do not indicate a relationship, which suggests further exploration on that specific topic. For examples, a core theme or code, would be 'cultural deviation' which relates to the themes or subcategories of 'increased autonomy of choice', 'romantic love as a threshold state for marriage', 'impermanency', and 'shifts in views of adult women' that the core theme or code encompasses.

After the coding process was completed, a coding frame was constructed as the codes and themes emerged to organize the findings.

Transferability and Trustworthiness

External reliability in a qualitative study refers to the likelihood of reproducing the study results when a different researcher conducts a study under a similar setting, with similar criteria for sample selection and data analysis (Rafuls & Moon, 1996). The threats to external reliability are minimized and managed by explicitly stating the theoretical approach and detailing the methodology used.

Internal reliability in a qualitative project refers to the inter-rater reliability, namely, assurance that another researcher would find similar themes and categories (codes) from the

data that have been collected (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). Threats to the internal reliability of the present qualitative study were minimized by using two methods (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). First, three individuals uninvolved in this study were separately asked to confirm or disaffirm the themes, categories (codes), and the results of the study. One was a middle class widowed Hindu woman who had been married for 26 years. The other two coders have doctorates in Marriage and Family Therapy and at the time the present study was conducted were involved in other unrelated qualitative studies themselves. The final coding frame reflects the questions and insights of these diverse parties. Second, the researcher provided a detailed account of her experience of the research process - including data collection, interview process, coding process, and interpretation of the themes – in order to make overt any biases that may affect or influence the research processes.

Trustworthiness in the form of internal validity pertains to the accuracy of the study results, in other words, that what the researcher believes she observed is actually what was observed (Creswell, 2003; Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). In qualitative research, trustworthiness is established by triangulating the data, that is, by collecting data using different sources. The data for the current study was triangulated by comparing the interview transcripts with the reflective interview observation notes and the researcher's field journal -- a detailed account of her experience on each site. Such a process highlights biases during the different phases of the study and makes them overt (Creswell, 2003). In Chapter 5, further triangulation is provided by looking at the goals, methods, and findings of the present study illuminated by insights from an earlier unpublished quantitative study (Chand, 2006) of this same population by the researcher.

In a quantitative project, external validity refers to the generalizability or transferability of the results from the sample to the population (Glaser, 1998). From this point of view, generalizability is not an objective of qualitative inquiry. However, the transferability of findings from one participant to another *is* the objective (Firestone, 1993). Interestingly, the onus of establishing transferability is thought to fall on the readers and not on the researchers (Lincoln & Gupta, 1985). In so doing it is important to keep in mind the sampling criteria so as to maximize differences between groups to facilitate a comparison (Firestone, 1993). However, researchers also have two obligations which must be followed. Their conceptualizations must be broad and abstract enough to apply to different situations (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and they must provide readers with ample explanatory data so that the readers are able to make their own assessments about the validity and transferability of the results (Firestone, 1993). Directions from these obligations were followed for conducting the coding process and also the methodology used for the study.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher is aware of many biases associated with her upper middle class upbringing in India. She has also been educated in the West and has lived outside of India for

over 14 years. Accordingly, she is aware that her thinking has incorporated some facets of the Western belief system (e.g., “marriage is a partnership between two people, entered into by choice and mutual consent”). Her personal marital history – an inter-religious marriage followed by divorce –also is likely to have some bearing on the direction of the probing questions and the events in the lives of the interviewees she decides to pursue. These sources of bias in qualitative studies are managed by the process of reflexivity. Reflexivity refers to researchers’ sensitivity to and awareness of how their own biases, personal histories, values, and interests influence and impact their studies in terms of data collection process (deciding what probing questions to ask, and what event/meaning to pursue), and the interpretation of the data at hand (Creswell, 2003)

Lincoln and Guba (1985) state that “the inquirer and the ‘objects’ of inquiry interact to influence one another; knower and the known are inseparable” (p 94). This reflects a subject-subject relationship between the researcher and participants or topic of inquiry. In qualitative inquiry, researchers are assumed to be part of the phenomenon being studied and mutual shaping of both researcher and participants occurs (Echevarria-Doan & Tubbs, 2005). Furthermore, the personal qualities and experiences of the researchers are thought to provide theoretical sensitivity that enhances insight, gives meaning to data, and helps to understand and separate relevant from irrelevant data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The theoretical sensitivity in the current study was enhanced by the researcher’s own cultural perspective. The data are being collected in the researcher’s native cultural environment and she is familiar with the native language, history, and cultural meanings of some concepts as they relate to the topic under study. Therefore, the topic of study, the participants, and the researcher, all have a mutual influence on each other in the research process. The process of sensitive reflexivity, informed by all these sources of information, adds trustworthiness to the findings.

The history of a failed inter-religious marriage of the researcher did not come up during the interview process. Thus the researcher was not presented with the opportunity of sharing this with the participants. This information would have been shared with the respondents to facilitate the alliance between the interviewee and the researcher.

Chapter 4
FINDINGS
Overview

The purpose of this project was the exploration of Middle Class Urban Hindu couples' (MCUH) narrative descriptions of marriage. Furthermore the purpose was also to accumulate a base line definition or observation about the meaning of marriage since it is one of the most fundamental of human relationships and forms the basis for establishing a family and raising the young (Larson & Homan, 1994).

Sample Description and Demographics

The sample reached saturation within 32 respondents: 15 married couples, and one male and one female married to non-respondents. The wives in the sample were between the ages of 28-59 years, and their mean was 40.3 years, with a standard deviation of 9.5 years. Therefore, 68% of the wives were between 30.8 and 49.8 years of age. The husbands were between the ages of 32-68 years, with a mean of 45.8 years and standard deviation of 11.5 years. Sixty-eight percent of the husbands were between the ages of 34.3 and 57.3 years.

The average length of marriage for the couples is 21.4 years (Standard deviation = 10.8 years). 15 couples (88.2%) were single earner families with the husband as the primary provider and the wife a homemaker. Two couples lived in a dual earner household where both the husband and the wife worked outside of the home. Five of the men (31.25%) and four of the women (25%) were given some degree of choice in whom they would marry. Education achievement for the husbands in the sample ranged from 8th grade to a Master's degree. Education achievement for the wives ranged from 6th grade to a Master's degree. All 17 couples (15 married to each other, two additional couples with only one spouse participating) had biological children in their family. The average number of children for the families in the study was 2.6 ($SD = 0.10$). The range of religious versus secular orientation for the husbands on a ten point self-report scale, where "1" indicated Secular and "10" indicated Very Religious, was from 1-10, with the mean of 6.37 ($SD = 2.1$) and for the wives was 5-10 with the mean of 8.43 ($SD = 1.6$). These indicate that although the sample included individuals of all persuasions, 68% of them were between the scores of 6 and 10, and therefore, described themselves as being more religious than not. Additional information about this sample is given in Tables 1 and 2. As you can see, the participants are somewhat traditional in having their marriage largely arranged and within caste and yet they are "contemporary" as a majority of them (70.58%) currently live in their own homes and not in traditional joint families.

The transcripts were analyzed for codes and themes by employing three separate coders for the purpose of triangulation (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984) to reduce the threats to internal reliability and to increase the trustworthiness. There was a high level of consensus between the coders as the coding process progressed. The coders reviewed the coding frame separately and

the transcripts were also compared with the reflective interview observation notes to get feedback about the emerging coding frame. There was a relatively high level of consensus amongst the members of the coding team as there was only one instance of disagreement pertaining to the themes and codes under the class – Learning Process. The themes were initially clubbed together as one, but later were separated as distinct themes that emerged from the code – Ecosystemic Environments. Consensus about this was reached by discussing the issue about the purpose and meaning of a “code” and a “theme.”

Table 1

Types of Marriage and Living Arrangements for This Sample

Couples	Number of Couples	Percentage
Currently living in joint family	4	23.5%
Have lived in a joint family in the past	8	47.05%
Currently living in a nuclear family	12	70.58%
Arranged marriage	15	88.2%
Love marriage	2	11.76%
Within-caste marriage	16	94.1%
Inter-caste marriage	1	5.9%

Men: N=16, Women: N=16, Couples: N=17

Table 2

Additional Demographic Descriptors of the Sample

	Men			Women			Couples		
	Range	Mean	Standard deviation	Range	Mean	Standard deviation	Range	Mean	Standard deviation
Age	32-68	45.9	11.5	28-59	40.3	9.5	28-68	43	10.5
Number of Children							1-4	2.6	0.1
Number of years married							7-46	21.4	10.8
Religious Vs. Secular Scale	1-10	6.37	2.1	5-10	8.43	1.6	1-10	7.41	2.1

Men: N=16, Women: N=16, Couples: N=17

Narrative description of the participants in their interview settings

In the following descriptions, the names of the participants were changed to protect their identities.

Pilot Interview. The husband (Kuldeep) is 48 years old and has been married for 20 years. He and his wife have two biological children. Kuldeep has a Bachelor's degree in Science and is currently employed as a manager in a private research company. Kuldeep's wife works in the capacity of a school teacher. The family lives in a community in the Northern part of New Delhi and has lived there for approximately 30 years. The interview was conducted at Kuldeep's office, which was located on the 3rd floor of an office building near his residence. The interview could not be conducted at his home because the family's relatives were visiting and his wife could not take the time out to meet with the researcher.

Couple # 1. The husband (Ram) is 58 years old and his wife (Sushila) is 48 years old. They have been married for 34 years and have four biological children. Ram is a high school graduate, and Sushila has completed her schooling till the 6th grade. Ram worked for the Border Security Force as a soldier and is currently retired, and Sushila is a homemaker. The family has lived in the Northern part of New Delhi for the past 10 years. The couple's home was constructed using the traditional Indian architecture. There was a small courtyard or open space at the center of the house and the rooms were arranged all around it. The courtyard area was not covered by the roof. The couple lived in the house with their two adult sons. The interview was conducted in the living room area that had four chairs and a traditional Indian sitting place like a low set bed (*diwan*) to sit on, as well as the refrigerator. The researcher could not see into the rooms therefore could not tell of the family had a prayer room or area, and the other amenities they used in their daily living. Ram was reserved but was warm and forth coming during the interview. Sushila was reserved also while talking to the researcher. She wore a traditional *saree* with all the traditional indicators of a married woman, namely the red dot (*bindi*) on her forehead, the red powder (*sindoor*) in the parting of her hair, glass bangles (*churi*), the *mangalsutra* (marriage necklace), and toe rings (*bitchu*) on both feet. She walked barefoot in her home, especially when she entered the kitchen. The researcher was not asked to remove her shoes before entering the couple's home. Sushila served the researcher drinks after the interviews were conducted.

Couple # 2. The husband (Raju) is 37 years old and his wife (Krishna) is 33 years old. They have been married for 11 years and have two biological children. Both Raju and Krishna have a Bachelor's of Arts degree each. Krishna shared that she had completed one year of a Master's degree but had to drop out because she gave birth to her first child at that time. Raju worked in the purchasing department of a raw materials processing factory and Krishna was a homemaker. The family has lived in the Northern part of New Delhi with their extended kin for approximately eight years. The couple live in an independent one bedroom apartment on the second floor. Raju's parents and sisters live on the first floor of the house in an independent

apartment. The living room in their home had one sofa, two chairs, one color TV, and a high raised bed or the children to sleep on. The interviews were conducted in the couple's bedroom that had a washing machine (just outside the bathroom), and an open closet with shelves. One shelf in the closet was reserved as the place for the figurines of the Gods and Goddesses that the family prayed to and burnt incense for. The bedroom also had a small TV, a double bed, and a chair placed beside the washing machine. Krishna wore a traditional *salwar kameez* (a long shirt with loose pajama-type trousers) and wore some of the indicators of a married woman. She had a red dot (*bindi*) on her forehead, the red powder (*sindoor*) in the parting of her hair, glass bangles, and toe rings on both feet. The researcher did not see the marriage necklace around her neck. Raju wore his work uniform which was a shirt with the company logo and trousers, the oldest son wore shorts and a t-shirt and the younger son wore a traditional kurta pajama (a loose long shirt and pajama pants). During the interviews the apartment lost electricity twice due to power cuts in the community by the local governance.

Couple # 3. The husband (Nalin) is 35 years old and his wife (Mamta) is 30 years old. They have been married for eight years and have two biological children. Nalin has a Master's degree on Chemistry and Mamta has a Bachelor's degree in Arts. Nalin was employed by a company in the capacity of a sales intelligence officer and Mamta was a homemaker. The couple have lived in the Northern part of New Delhi with their children for almost eight years. They currently live in a rented one bedroom apartment on the 2nd floor with a large patio area. The couple's extended family members do not live with them. Mamta shared that they are saving to purchase their own home. The interviews were conducted in the living room of the apartment. The living room had four chairs, one bed, a color TV, and a refrigerator. The kitchen was a separate enclosure with access to it only through the patio area. Mamta wore a traditional *saree* and wore all the indicators of a married woman. She wore a red dot (*bindi*) on her forehead, the red powder (*sindoor*) in the parting of her hair, the *mangalsutra* (marriage necklace) around her neck, glass bangles, toe rings on both feet, and her nose was pierced. Nalin wore a shirt and trousers. Both Nalin and Mamta were barefoot in their home, but the researcher was not asked to remove her shoes before entering their home. The couple's sons wore shorts and a shirt and they also wore their shoes in the house. Before the interview, Mamta served the researcher cold water and then stayed outside the living room area while Nalin spoke to the researcher about the project and the interview process. During the interview there was a power cut in the community and the remainder of the second interview was conducted in candle light as the room had no windows and was very dark.

Couple # 4. The husband (Shankar) is 67 years old and his wife (Sudha) is 48 years old. They have been married for 30 years and have four biological children. Shankar has completed high school and is a certified electrician, and Sudha has a Master's degree in Sanskrit. Shankar worked at the city's department of power in the capacity of an electrician and Sudha was a

homemaker. The couple have lived in the Northern part of New Delhi with their children for approximately 20 years. They currently live in a two bedroom apartment on the 3rd floor of an apartment building with their two male children. The researcher introduced the project to them in their living room that had two chairs, one love seat, a high raised bed, a center table, and a small screen color TV. The interviews were conducted in the apartment across the hall where the neighbors ran a daycare center for the children in their community. The room had 10 chairs, a center table and a TV. There was a box full of toys for small children in the corner as well. The researcher was asked to remove her shoes before going into the couple's home. Sudha wore a *saree* and all the indicators of a married woman. Her nose was pierced, she wore a red dot (*bindi*) on her forehead, red powder (*sindoor*) in the parting of her hair, glass bangles, and the *mangalsutra* (marriage necklace) around her neck. Sudha was very open and forthcoming in her responses during the interview. She shared that nobody had ever asked her questions about her marriage or what she thought about the institution and that this was a very nice trip down memory lane for her. Shankar spoke with the researcher as soon as he returned home from work. He wore a shirt with the company logo and trousers. He was very forceful and opinionated in his views. He shared that he did not think it was either appropriate or significant that the researcher was 'doing a PhD' about marriage when there were so many other social problems plaguing the country. He requested the researcher to 'do a PhD' on a more meaningful subject that could help in the upliftment of the community and the common man. He also expressed his surprise and amazement at the fact that the researcher was living and studying in another country without being married.

Couple # 5. The husband (Bala) is 55 years old and his wife (Shashi Prabha) is 50 years old. They have been married for 30 years and have three biological children. Bala has some high school education and a diploma in electrical circuitry, and Shashi Prabha has a Bachelor's degree in Hindi literature. Bala worked for the city's power house in the capacity of an electrician and Shashi Prabha worked at the local high school as a teacher. The couple have lived in the Northern part of New Delhi with their children for 30 years. The couple currently live in a three bedroom apartment with their children and their dog. The researcher introduced the study to the couple in the living room that had two couches, and a traditional Indian sitting place like a low set bed (*diwan*). The interviews were conducted in the couple's bedroom that had a double bed. Two bed side tables with lamps, and two wooden cupboards. The bottom shelf of one cupboard was converted into a place to keep the figurines of Gods and Goddesses and to burn incense. Shashi Prabha was very friendly and open during the interview. She wore a traditional *salwar kameez* (a long shirt with loose pajama-type pants) and did not wear all the traditional indicators of a married woman. Her nose was not pierced, she did not wear toe rings or *sindoor* in the parting of her hair, and the researcher could not see if she wore the *mangalsutra* or not. She wore a red *bindi* on her forehead and she wore glass bangles. The researcher was not asked to remove her shoes before

coming into the house. The interview with Shashi Prabha was interrupted by her oldest son who came home from college and rushed into the room to 'check-in' with his mother. She whispered the words 'divorce', 'widows', and older unmarried girls' whenever these came up in the conversation. Bala was very warm and friendly during the interview and shared his views openly. He wore his office uniform which was a shirt with the company logo and trousers.

Couple # 6. The husband (Sameer) is 48 years old and his wife (Bina) is 38 years old. They have been married for 22 years and have three biological children. Sameer has a Bachelor's degree in Arts and Bina has completed her education till the 8th grade in her village. Sameer was employed in the private sector and worked for a gas station in the capacity of an attendant and store manager. Bina worked as a tailor from their home. The couple have lived in the Northern part of New Delhi with their children for the past 20 years. They live in a newly constructed two bedroom house that has the traditional Indian architecture with the open courtyard in the center and the rooms built around it. The floor of the courtyard was covered with marble tiles and the kitchen was a separate room built to one side of the courtyard. The researcher introduced the study to the couple in their living room that had one raised bed, two chairs, a computer on a desk, and a bookshelf that had lots of threads and beads for Bina's tailoring business. When the researcher introduced the study to the couple, Sameer sat on a stool and Bina sat besides him on the mat on the floor. The interviews were conducted in the couple's bedroom where there were two separate beds and a sewing machine. Their son slept in one of the beds while the researcher talked to the parents. He woke up and left the room when there was a local power cut and the fans stopped working. The courtyard had a place where the family lit a *diya* (traditional Indian lamp) every evening for the Gods. Bina was very warm and friendly and spoke to the researcher very candidly about her experiences in her marriage. She shared that she had never spoken about 'things like these' before with anybody. She wore a traditional *salwar kameez* but did not wear all the indicators of a married woman. She wore a red *bindi* on her forehead, *sindoor* in the parting of her hair, glass bangles, and toe rings on both feet. She did not have her nose pierced and the researcher could not tell if she wore the *mangalsutra*. Sameer wore Western clothes (a shirt and trousers) and was also very forthcoming during the interview. He shared openly about his family and his marriage. During the interviews there were two power cuts in the local area so there was no electricity for about 40 minutes. Bina served the researcher drinks after the interviews were over.

Couple # 7. The husband (Akshay) is 30 years old and his wife (Neelam) is 28 years old. They have been married for seven years and have two biological children. Akshay has a Bachelor's degree in administration and Neelam has a Bachelor's degree in commerce. Akshay was employed by the Home Ministry office in the capacity of an administrator and Neelam was a homemaker. The family along with Akshay's mother lived in a two bedroom apartment on the 6th floor of a building in the Western part of New Delhi. They have live din this apartment for

approximately seven years. The researcher introduced the study to the couple in their living room that had two chairs, a sofa for three people, a center table, an air cooler, and a color TV. In the corridor was a washing machine which was placed next to the bathroom door. The interviews were conducted in the couple's bedroom that had a double bed, an air cooler, and a small trolley cart that had figurines of Gods and Goddesses that the family prayed to. Neelam was friendly and talked openly about her marriage, but sometimes observed to the questions in a socially appropriate manner. She wore a *salwar kameez* and wore most of the indicators of a married woman. She wore glass bangles, a red *bindi* on her forehead, *sindoor* in the parting of her hair, and the *mangalsutra*. She did not wear any toe rings. Akshay wore Western clothes (a shirt and trousers) and expressed his curiosity about the research project and the researcher's interest in the topic of marriage. He also expressed his apprehension about the researcher collecting sensitive information about the couple's sex life and then selling it to some magazine for profit. He was open and honest in his responses during the interview process. Neelam served the researcher tea and biscuits after the interview was over.

Couple # 8. The husband (Rajiv) is 32 years old and his wife (Seema) is 30 years old. They have been married for 10 years and have two biological children. Rajiv has completed his schooling till the 10th grade and Seema has a Bachelor's degree in Arts. Rajiv owned a business of exporting garments and Seema was a homemaker. The family lived in a three bedroom apartment which was on the floor above Rajiv's business shop. A narrow marble staircase from the shop led to the apartment upstairs. The couple have lived in the Western part of New Delhi with their children, Rajiv's brother and his family for the past 10 years. The researcher introduced the study to the couple in the living room area that had a color TV, two sofa chairs, a traditional Indian sitting place like a low set bed (*diwan*), and a center table. The interviews were conducted in the couple's bedroom that had a double bed, an air cooler, an ironing board, and two large metal cupboards. Rajiv wore Western clothes (a shirt and trousers) and Seema wore a traditional *saree*. Both Rajiv and Seema did not wear any footwear inside their home. Their shoes were kept outside the main door of the home. However, the researcher was not asked to remove her shoes before entering their home. Seema wore the traditional indicators of a married woman. She wore a red *bindi* on her forehead, *sindoor* in the parting of her hair, toe rings, glass bangles, *mangalsutra*, and a nose ring. The couple were very hospitable and fed the researcher snacks while the interviews were being conducted.

Couple # 9. The husband (Dinesh) is 46 years old and his wife (Rita) is 41 years old. They have been married for 24 years and have four biological children. Dinesh has completed his education till the 8th grade and Rita has completed her education till the 10th grade. Dinesh owned an electrical repair shop and Rita was a homemaker. The couple have lived in the Western part of New Delhi with their children for the past 24 years. They lived in a joint family for 13 years and then moved into a three bedroom home as a nuclear family. The researcher introduced the study

to the couple in their living room that had a color TV, a *diwan*, two chairs, a sofa chair to seat three people, and a center table. The interviews were conducted in a room that had a metal cupboard, a carpet, and narrow mattresses along the length of two walls for the purpose of sitting. Dinesh wore Western clothes (a shirt and trousers) and Rita wore a traditional *salwar kameez*. She wore some of the traditional indicators of a married woman, namely *sindoor* in the parting of her hair, glass bangles, and toe rings. She did not wear a red *bindi*, *mangalsutra*, or a nose ring. Rita spoke very candidly with the researcher about the unhappy experiences in her marriage. She shared that marriage was a useless institution and that it was better for a person to stay single rather than get married into a family that has no love for the daughter-in-law. The family served the researcher tea and snacks after the interviews were conducted.

Couple # 10. The husband (Vinod) is 40 years old and his wife (Sneh) is 39 years old. They have been married for 20 years and have two biological children. Vinod has a High School diploma and Sneh has completed her education till the 10th grade. Vinod owned a general store and Sneh was a homemaker. The couple have lived in the Western part of New Delhi with their children for the past 20 years. They currently live in a joint family and preferred to be interviewed at the home of Couple # 9 (Dinesh and Rita) as the two families are friends and they did not want their extended family to feel uncomfortable or raise questions about the interviews. Vinod wore Western clothes (a shirt and trousers) and Sneh wore a traditional *saree*. She wore all the traditional indicators of a married woman – red *bindi* on the forehead, *sindoor* in the parting of her hair, glass bangles, toe rings on both feet, a nose ring, and the *mangalsutra*. Vinod was very forthcoming during the interview and spoke very candidly with the researcher. Sneh was a little apprehensive during the interview and thought that she had to comment on the problems in her marriage. She repeated that she did not have any problems in her marriage after briefly responding to every question posed to her by the researcher.

Couple # 11. Only the wife (Shakuntla) was interviewed. Her husband was not available due to scheduling conflicts. Shakuntla is 48 years old and has been married for 31 years. The couple have four biological children. Shakuntla has completed her education till the 6th grade and is a homemaker. Her husband owned a hardware store. The couple have recently moved into their newly constructed three bedroom home in the Northern part of New Delhi with their children. The researcher introduced the project to Shakuntla in the living room that had a color TV, one sofa chair, two chairs, one *diwan*, and a center table. The interview was conducted in the couple's bedroom that had a double bed, two built-in cupboards with wooden doors, and a dresser drawer set. Shakuntla wore a traditional *saree*, and the traditional indicators of a married woman. She wore a red *bindi* on her forehead, *sindoor* in the parting of her hair, glass bangles, toe rings on both feet, and the *mangalsutra*. She did not have her nose pierced. She was very warm and friendly and spoken openly about her relationship with her extended in-law family. She talked about her struggles in trying to get her in-laws to accept, appreciate, and love her. She shared

that she had helped raise her husband's younger siblings and she and her husband had helped to 'get them settled" but they did not appreciate any of her efforts at all. The couple's 20 year old daughter was at home during the interview. She was shy but friendly, and wore jeans and a t-shirt at home.

Couple # 12. The husband (Vijay) is 39 years old and his wife (Suneeta) is 38 years old. They have been married for 20 years and have two biological children. Vijay has completed his education till the 11th grade and Suneeta has completed her education till the 10th grade. Vijay helped manage the family business and looked after one of the three hardware stores that the family owned and Suneeta was a homemaker. The couple's hardware store was on the 1st floor and their house was on the floor above the store. The couple have lived in the Northern part of New Delhi with their children for the past 20 years. A narrow staircase from the store led to the three bedroom house that was built in the traditional Indian architectural style. It had a small open courtyard in the center and the rooms were built around the courtyard space. The researcher introduced the project to the couple in one of the bedrooms that had one bed, a floor fan, and a color TV. The interviews were conducted in the children's bedroom. Vijay wore Western clothes (a shirt and trousers) and Suneeta wore a traditional *saree*. She wore some of the indicators of a married woman namely, the red *bindi*, glass bangles, and the *mangalsutra*. Suneeta was extremely self-conscious during the interview and whispered many of her responses. She returned to cooking the afternoon meal for the family as soon as the interview was over. Vijay rushed through the interview and requested the researcher to 'finish the chat' as soon as possible because he did not have any help at the store at that time. Suneeta served the researcher drinks after the interviews were completed.

Couple # 13. The husband (Sanjay) is 49 years old and his wife (Kiran) is 48 years old. They have been married for 27 years and have four biological children. Sanjay has a Bachelor's degree in Commerce and Kiran has completed her high school education. Sanjay was employed in the private sector and managed a construction site and the couple also had a costume jewelry shop in their house. Kiran shared that she helped her husband in the shop from time to time but not on a regular basis. The couple have lived in a three bedroom house in the Northern part of New Delhi with their children for the past 27 years. The researcher introduced the study to the couple and conducted the interviews in the living room that had a *diwan*, a sofa set, a center table, a dining table with six chairs, and a cabinet with china and decorative figurines in it. Sanjay wore Western clothes (a shirt and trousers) and Kiran wore a traditional *saree*. She also wore some of the indicators of a married woman – a red *bindi* on her forehead, *sindoor* in the parting of her hair, glass bangles, and the *mangalsutra*. She did not have her nose pierced and she did not wear toe rings. Sanjay talked openly with the researcher and asked many questions about the culture and communities in the United States. He was especially interested in teen pregnancies and gang violence. Kiran served tea and snacks to the researcher during the interviews.

Couple # 14. The husband (Narayan) is 42 years old and his wife (Uma) is 37 years old. They have been married for 14 years and have two biological children. Narayan has an MBA degree and Uma has a Master's degree in Political Science. Narayan worked in the private sector for an international health project company in the capacity of a finance and project manager and Uma was a homemaker but she volunteered her time at the local community center as a counselor for children and gave talks on meditation techniques and acupressure healing. The couple lived in a three bedroom apartment in a gated community with high rise buildings. They have lived in the Western part of New Delhi with their children, Narayan's parents, and Narayan's paternal grandmother. The researcher was asked to remove her shoes outside the apartment before entering their home. The researcher introduced the study to the couple in the living room that had a sofa set, a center table, two chairs, a dining table with four chairs. The walls of the room had pictures of Gods and Goddesses and traditional Indian art. The interviews were conducted in the bedroom where Narayan's mother and grandmother were sleeping. Narayan wore shorts and a t-shirt and Uma wore a *salwar kameez*. She wore some of the indicators of a married woman – toe rings, glass bangles, and the *mangalsutra*. She did not wear a red *bindi* on her forehead and she did not have the *sindoor* in the parting of her hair. She wore her hair short (just below the ears). Both Narayan and Uma were very forthcoming about their beliefs and shared openly about their experiences in their marriage.

Couple # 15. The husband (Indrajit) is 38 years old and his wife (Rachna) is 30 years old. They have been married for 10 years and have one biological child. Indrajit has a Bachelor's degree in Aircraft Maintenance Engineering and Rachna has a Bachelor's degree in Arts. Indrajit worked for a domestic airline and Rachna was a homemaker. The couple have lived in a three bedroom apartment within a gated community of high rise buildings in the Western part of New Delhi with their child for eight years. The researcher introduced the study to the couple in the living room that had a sofa set, two chairs, a center table, an aquarium with several gold fish, decorative figurines, and a statue of an elephant. The interviews were conducted in the couple's bedroom that had a double bed, two built-in cupboards, an air conditioner, and an ironing board. The couple's dog was in the room during the interviews. Indrajit wore Western clothes (a shirt and trousers) and Rachna wore *salwar kameez*. She wore only two indicators of a married woman – glass bangles and the *mangalsutra*. She did not have a red *bindi* on her forehead, nor any *sindoor* in the parting of her hair. She did not have her nose pierced and she did not wear any toe rings. She wore her hair very short. Rachna shared her unhappy experiences in her marriage and told the researcher that she had not spoken about this with anyone other than her mother. Indrajit provided very socially appropriate responses to the researcher's questions and did not mention any marital stress at all.

Couple # 16. The husband (Karan) is 68 years old and his wife (Veena) is 59 years old. They have been married for 46 years and have two biological children. Karan has a Bachelor's

degree in Engineering and Veena has a Bachelor’s degree in Science. Karan was retired and Veena was a homemaker. The couple has lived in a high rise building in the Western part of New Delhi with their son, his wife, and children for approximately 10 years. The researcher introduced the study to them in their living room that had a sofa set, center table, a color TV, a cabinet with china, and decorative figurines on side tables. The interviews were conducted in the couple’s bedroom that had a double bed, two built-in cupboards with wooden doors, one built-in bookshelf, one side table with a lamp on it, and an ironing board. Figurines of Gods and Goddesses were placed on one shelf with a place to burn incense. Veena wore a traditional *saree* with some of the indicators of a married woman. She wore a red *bindi* on her forehead, glass bangles, the *mangalsutra*, and *sindoor* in the parting of her hair. She did not have toe rings on her feet and she did not have her nose pierced. Karan wore Western clothes (a shirt and trousers). Veena was cheerful and joked with the researcher during the interview. Karan spoke openly, but became awkward when asked to comment on intimacy. He shared that he could not say much because the researcher was a “lady” and it was not appropriate for him to talk about “such things.” He also expressed his irritation with his wife’s carelessness at not anticipating a visit from a guest and changing the bed cover in the room. The bed cover looked clean and according to the researcher did not need changing.

Qualitative Analysis of the Interviews

The coding frame is given in Table 3. It may be a helpful “roadmap” (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990) as each class, and the codes and themes within each class, are described and illustrated. In so doing, all of the illustrative quotations are verbatim. In addition, although it is customary to limit all editorial comments to the Discussion section of a manuscript, that custom has not been strictly followed here. Explanations and qualifications in the presentation of the findings are necessary to provide the Western reader important frames of reference.

Table 3

Coding Frame Emerging from the Qualitative Analysis of the Interviews

Class	Code	Theme
1. What marriage means to MCUHs (Middle Class Urban Hindus).	1. Marriage is an end in itself.	1. Religious institution.
	2. Marriage is a means to an end.	2. Social institution. 3. Universal developmental milestone. 4. Mandatory arrangement. 1. Cultural respect and approval. 2. Fulfilling parents’ expectations and demands. 3. Bond and <i>bandhan</i> .

Table 3 – Continued.

Class	Code	Theme
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Union of two families. 5. Continuation of the cycle of life. 6. Interpersonal relationship. 7. Personal fulfillment. 8. Security. 9. Financial improvement.
2. Desirable elements of a MCUH marriage.	1. Attributes of the partner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical characteristics. 2. Educational status. 3. Financial attractiveness. 4. Management of extended family. 5. Female obedience. 6. Realistic expectations. 7. Conflict resolution skills. 8. Prosocial personality traits.
3. Learning process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Attributes of extended family. 1. Ecosystemic environments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supportive in-laws and extended family. 1. Ancient books. 2. Community or societal modeling. 3. Observing parents and extended kin. 4. Self or own ideas.
4. Contemporary changes in MCUH marriage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cultural deviation. 2. Sources of change. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased autonomy of choice. 2. Romantic love as a threshold state for marriage. 3. Impermanency. 4. Shift in views of adult women. 1. Formal education. 2. Media. 3. Technology.

Class: What Marriage means to MCUHs (Middle Class Urban Hindus)

The participants' beliefs with regard to the meaning of marriage were broadly integrated throughout the various classes. This class, however, concentrated specifically on definitions of what marriage meant to them and the purpose of the institution. The first question posed to the participants was "What do you believe about the institution of marriage in general?" Many of the respondents had difficulty understanding the term "institution of marriage", because marriage is better understood to be a state (Doniger & Smith, 1991), for example, a state of being married (*Dam-pati*) and marriage simply is, as stated by Mamta (a wife), "marriage is marriage, it has to be done." For this reason the question was further translated as "What is marriage, and "What is

the meaning of marriage?” Three other research questions yielded similar responses during the interview that resulted in an overlap of the codes. These questions included “What does marriage mean to you?” and “Why should someone get married?” and “Why did you get married?” The overlapping codes were collapsed to make the codes and the analysis tighter. The purpose of these questions was to explore the beliefs surrounding the concept of marriage in broad and general terms. It was meant to start the interview process by helping the respondents become more comfortable with the topic, subsequently leading to a deeper discussion of the more personal and intimate aspects of the institution. In the coding scheme this class had two codes: Marriage is an end in itself; and Marriage is a means to an end.

Code. Marriage is an end in itself

From a sociological point of view the word “institution” has an abstract meaning and is defined as “a system of patterned and predictable ways of thinking and behaving – beliefs, values, attitudes, and norms – that are organized around vital aspects of group life and serve essential social functions” (Lamanna & Riedmann, 2003, p. 62). The participants understood the description of the “institution of marriage” when it was provided to them, but not the term by itself. In the Hindi language there is no parallel translation of this term. The closest word is *Dam-pati* and it means “state of marriage” or the marital couple being in the state of marriage. *Suhag* is another word that means marital good luck for the woman. As participants were asked to make meaning of the institution of marriage, many focused on what they believed to be a specific definition of marriage itself. The postmodern movement in literature and family therapy focuses on there being no absolutes, therefore the meanings attributed to an event or the definition ascribed to it are subjective and culture specific (Nichols & Schwartz, 2001). Within the postmodern tradition, narrative therapy focuses on the cultural messages that surround an individual which the individual incorporates into their own meaning-making process (White & Epston, 1990). Also when an individual is questioned about the meaning of marriage to them, then it is prudent to let them elaborate on the topic and to understand the particular event or relationship as they see it and not to let another person’s version or views impose upon it (de Shazer, 1988, 1994; de Shazer & Berg, 1993). In the view of MCUHs, getting married is a goal for all individuals. Within this code four primary themes emerged:

1. Religious institution
2. Social institution,
3. Universal developmental milestone
4. Mandatory arrangement.

Theme: Religious institution. According to the Hindu religion, marriage is a bond for life between not only a man and a woman but between the two families that is decreed by God (Khatri, 1983). It is a family-arranged irrevocable and unbreakable sacrament and not so much a legal contract or bond. Therefore, marriage is a permanent relationship and it is necessary for

having children and fulfilling certain rites and rituals, and only after entering into this stage can a person establish a family and hope to enter heaven after they die (Doniger & Smith, 1991). For performing most rites and rituals the husband needs to have his wife, who is also known as his *ardhangini* (her body completes the marital dyad), present with him or else he or the couple are unable to perform the rites and rituals. The Hindu people attribute the philosophy of *Karma* to assign meaning to all events and actions in their life. Therefore, the spouse selected for them are considered to be preordained (Gatwood, 1985). Some participants' responses pointed to the preordained nature of marriage which was created by God. A husband, Dinesh shared that, "marriage is created by God and it is the Truth. So everyone should take pleasure from this Truth ... everything happens with God's grace. So people should get married and do the deeds they have been sent here to do since they are born, they should do God's bidding and good Karma. Whatever is written for us, we should do, and not bother with what others are doing or what their destiny is." A wife, Sneha stated simply, "Well it is a natural thing and God has made it for us. And as far as my opinion is concerned, all people should get married." Uma, another wife, shared that marriage meant "... moving forward in life because as human beings we will have to follow the cycle of first of being a student, then an adult, then of marriage, and then having children, and finally to make them (the children) self sufficient. This is the cycle that God has given us." Shankar, a husband, stated a similar response to Uma's. He shared that "even our Sastras say that once you have a life partner then you feel stronger. And that life is supposed to be lived in five stages (marriage being one of them). Only then a person is successful (in life). First, it is about your education and career. Then it is time to share your life with a wife (and bring children into the world). After this is old age where you need the support from a walking stick (your wife whom you can lean on)." Dinesh, another husband, shared that marriage meant, "to find or to get a life partner" and it meant "bringing light into one's life (because) when a person gets married and brings his bride home, she enters his home like Goddess Lakshmi (goddess of prosperity) and illuminates the home like a lamp does. She brings light with her."

One wife, Sudha shared that, "marriage generally is a religious bond (*bandhan*), it is a religious and social bond and *bandhan* too." Kiran, another wife shared that in her opinion marriage was, "a pure bond."

Theme: Social institution. Marriage is the foundational relationship upon which a society rests. According to Lamanna and Riedman (2003) marriage is a practical social institution that provides for economic security and the foundation for children to be raised and it serves a social function that incorporates beliefs and values that are considered to be significant by a people or culture. In India, the family unit fulfills many basic social functions for the individual members such as socialization, education, religious training, and personal needs (Das & Bardis, 1978). A husband, Vinod stated that, "marriage is a societal bond" and another husband, Vijay added to that by saying, "marriage is a bond of responsibilities" (that a person has to fulfill if he or she has

to live in the society). Uma, a wife commented on the societal aspect of marriage as an institution by saying, "We are complete with each other (after getting married) and we give rise to a new generation with the completeness. So it is necessary for a strong society, to have a strong nation and to have a better life, I think marriage is a very, very important institution."

To repeat, social values are integral parts of social institutions. There were five relational values learned about and experienced in the marital relationship that were mentioned most often by the participants: commitment, faithfulness (sexual fidelity), respect, trust, and love. The participants talked about relational values when they were asked questions about the requirements for a lasting marriage. The specific questions posed to them were, "What is required of men and women in general to maintain their marriage?" and, "What would be (is) required of you personally to maintain your marriage?" These questions were further translated as, "What do you think people should do in general to make sure that their marriage does not break?" and "What do you have to do or what have you done to ensure that your marriage remains intact and does not break?"

Western social scientists Lamanna and Riedmann (2003) define commitment as the "determination of the people to work through their problems and not give up on the relationship in times of conflict" (p. 125). The construct of commitment in the Indian context seemed parallel to the Western expectation of permanence from marriage. The only difference was that this was a given since marriage is considered to be an unbreakable and permanent bond. Nalin commented on the expectation that the marital dyad will work through their problems without considering the option of divorce. He said, "Throughout the life when you are staying in a single room with your wife, there must be some problems. Obviously there will be some problems with the husband and wife but it does not mean that you will separate and you will divorce at a time of a fight." Rachna shared about the expectation of permanence and commitment when she said, "This is one thing that I have done to maintain my marriage. I have always thought that I am not going to leave this marriage and I am not going to break it. I do not have anybody in my family who has been divorced, so I am not going to do this. And this is part of our Indian culture. And the other thing is that I have made many, many compromises in my marriage to maintain it." Rachna's husband Indrajit shared, "They (the husband and wife) must have faith and they must be faithful to each other ... the two people must be loyal to each other ... I think that we are going to be together till we die." Krishna, another wife also commented on the importance of commitment in marriage when she said, "You should stay with your husband for the rest of your life, because it is not about our life alone anymore. The person who we have married, it is about their life too ... so if we are married to one person, then we should try and stay together ... you are with someone in the happy times but when there are hard times then you do not want to accompany them. Well when you are together in happiness then you are also the one who will have to be with your husband in difficult times. So this is what Ramayana teaches us ... if it (a habit in your partner

that you don't appreciate) improves then it is great, and even if it does not improve I have not thought that I would leave him or any such thing. I had thought that once I am married then I will spend the rest of my life with my husband."

Faithfulness or sexual fidelity or exclusivity is when the two partners in a relationship promise to have sexual relations only with each other and no one else (Lamanna & Riedmann, 2003). Some of the responses that indicated that sexual fidelity or being faithful were important in a marriage are as follows: Vijay shared, "In order to maintain a marriage, a man should pay attention to his work and to his family. A man should also have integrity and should be faithful to his life partner." Seema, a wife said, "The biggest thing is faith. The husband and wife must have faith in one another and be faithful to each other." Seema's husband Rajiv shared on similar lines as his wife, "The other thing is that a husband must understand the feelings and emotions of his wife. He should not go outside of his home and seek pleasure from another woman. He should not have an affair with some other woman. And he should not spend money on just about anything or anybody. He should be careful with his money and should keep it only for his family's expenses."

Respect is giving the other person consideration (act of giving particular attention), regard (esteem), and having good faith in them (Blum, 1988; Gosh-Dastidar, 1987). Krishna spoke about the relational aspect of respect and that it can be conveyed by not just the words but also the tone used during a conversation: "It affects the lives of the children when we think about ourselves (only) or when we think that our husband is not worthy of our respect and that we should talk to him in any way we please." Sneh, a wife, shared simply, "They (the husband and wife) should care and respect each other's feelings and emotions." Sameer added, "We have to respect each other as well." Indrajit stressed, "This is the main thing. They must respect each other also. They must give each other proper respect." Narayan shared that "Respecting each other's tasks and supporting each other is important too." Seema's response focused on the caring aspect of respect. She said, "The two people in the marriage (should) understand each other and the place each of them is coming from should be respected by both of them. They (should) care about each other's feelings." Shankar was forceful in his opinion as she shared, "They (the husband and wife) should respect each other. And do not let the old thoughts about gender and inequality seep into your thinking. A man should not think that he is the man and so he is higher than her (his wife) and that he has a right over her. This is wrong. They should look at each other as friends and should give each other the position of equality ... till you change your thought process to reflect this, and till you don't show respect for your spouse, then it is useless. It is essential to remove your *ahankar* (egotism, arrogance, and thinking of self) and to give attention to your life partner." Sanjay, explained the concept of respect further when he said, "The first thing is that they should respect each other ... in India, a person thinks about the other so much more, and they respect the other person, because people still have shame in them. Under

these circumstances a person is not able to say whatever comes to his mind thus showing respect for the other.” Shakuntla shared that, “He (the husband) should be mindful of the fact that his wife is born and raised in another family, and that she has come to join his family from another home so she too is worthy of his respect and consideration.”

Trust was another value that most participants considered to be important in a relationship. Trust can be described as a relationship of reliance between two or more people. It is defined as belief in the honesty, competence, and benevolence of the other person (Misztal, 1996). Seema said, “They (the husband and wife) should have trust between them too. They should also have an understanding between them, and this is necessary.” Similarly, Seema’s husband Rajiv stated, “and the other thing is that the two people should believe in one another and should have confidence in one another. Like the husband should believe that the wife will take care of the children, and she will look after the home.” Uma shared, “and the conclusion is that for any kind of relationship to work you should enter it very innocently with lots of trust, and lots of love, and lots of confidence.” Uma’s husband Narayan shared her view and said, “I think trust is most important.” Shashi Prabha shared on similar lines that, “The most important thing is trust in oneself and in each other ... if the two people have trust in one another then married life can be spent in peace.” Krishna, another wife, talked about trust in a relationship being much more important and necessary than love *per se*. She stated, “My personal belief (is) that if a person cannot trust you, then it is not possible for one to spend the rest of your life with them. If the people do not trust each other, then how can they stay together? The other thing is that the amount of love between the two people, or the love that they feel for each other may not be all that much, that is still okay, you can still stay together with one another. When we stay together, love increases and decreases between the couple. But if there is no trust between them and if they keep doubting one another then they cannot stay together.” Indrajit also stressed this idea when he said, “Marriage means that you believe each other. A partner must believe their wife or husband. They must believe.”

Love is defined by Westerner’s as “a delight in the presence of the other person and an affirming of his or her value and development as much as one’s own” (May, 1975, p. 116). Hooks (2000) defines love as “the will to nurture one’s own or another’s spiritual growth, revealed through acts of care, respect, knowing, and assuming responsibility (p. 136). In India, it is slightly different. When the participants spoke of “love” they mainly focused on caring about, respecting, and valuing their partners. That is, their responses illustrated the nurturing aspect of love rather than the passionate or romantic aspect of love. The “love” that the respondents talked about mirrored the “pragma” style of love which provides a more practical and rational way of focusing on and assessing the needs of the partner rather than then the “eros” style which is more erotic and passionate and is characterized by an intense sexual desire (Lee, 1973). Akshay said, “The second reason (for getting married) is an emotional one. A person wants to be loved. A person

wants to love and they want to be loved also.” Seema shared Akshay’s views when she shared, “A wife gets the love of her husband, and the love of her children.” Mamta spoke about conflict being a normal part of a marital relationship. She said, “But in that fight there is lot of hidden as well. Like, if you have a fight, then you make-up also. And things become okay. It is not a big deal. Fights are a part of all relationships. Relationships that have love in them, fights and disagreements are a part of those relationships ... but when there is love between the two people then there are fights between them too. So if my husband and I have a disagreement then because we have love between us we make-up also. So this is normal.” Uma talked about the connection between loving a person and accepting them as they are and for who they are when she shared, “We know that each of us we are complete with each other and we cannot live without each other because we love each other so much. So that feeling was always there with us. So in front of that feeling the other things (like disagreements) always seem to be very small. So you know love is great. When you love somebody with your whole heart, you accept him with all his weakness and all his strengths. So things so not bother you because you know him thoroughly and you know that maybe this is the time maybe he is feeling low but I know what his true personality is. He knows what my true personality is. At the end of the day we know that and also that we are required for each other. We are the complete partners for each other and no one can replace us. So that is it ... to me we do have different roles to play. As a wife you should be the comforting agent, you should be the comforting partner and not the demanding partner. Because if you love somebody then love cannot be selfish, and if it is selfish then it is not love.” Rachna shared, “We want affection from our husbands and we want understanding from him. These are the only things that we want from marriage. The other (material) things that we have in our life, you never know whether they will be there with us tomorrow or not. These are all transitory things... I (thought I) will be loved (by my husband after I get married).”

Theme: Universal developmental milestone. In India, marriage marks the passage into adulthood for girls and boys (Das & Bardis, 1978; Lamanna & Riedmann, 2003). Marriage is normative in the Indian culture; there is no other acceptable choice. Young adults are addressed as girls and boys until they get married, and only after marriage are they addressed as women and men. This theme emerged as the respondents talked about living in a certain culture and following the rules set for them. Vijay brought to light the cultural system that is in place when he said, “Being part of the system, even I got married.” Narayan also referred to the cultural system by saying, “Marriage was the next step for me as an adult. And this is the way of the elders that have been following.” Similarly Kuldeep added, “and it was time for me to get married also ... In India, because you grow up and earn, and people say you should get married now ... after a certain age the parents will compelled to get married. Means, they will not force you, but they will tell you that this is an ideal time to get married.”

Theme: Mandatory arrangement. Young adults in India feel a sense of obligation to family and community to get married at an appropriate time that is decided by their parents. Getting married is something a person has to do in India, as it is sanctioned by the temple, the society, the community, the extended family, and family friends. While there is no census data to determine the exact ratio of arranged marriages compared with “love” marriages, a large majority of marriages in India are arranged, and almost everybody gets married. According to the Census of India (2001) 45.6% of Hindu men and 43.6% of adult Hindu females in New Delhi are currently married. These figures do not include individuals who are divorced, widowed, separated, or who are under the age of 18 years. The participants’ responses reflected the belief that marriage was a mandatory event in a person’s life. Veena laughed and added, “Well, getting married is something that we have to do.” A wife, Mamta, shared that “Marriage is marriage. It is an arrangement that has to be done. You get some sadness from it but you also get happiness from it.” Karan, a husband, shared that the institution of marriage “means that it is a nice thing that you have to do.” Another husband, Shankar said, “A man’s life story starts after he gets married. And it depends on what kind of a wife he gets, what kind of nature she has, and whether our thoughts and views match or not. So depending on all this our life moves forward and progresses. And it is already decided that a person has to get married, so that is a given.” Yet another husband, Sameer shared that, “It (marriage) is okay in order to run one’s life. We have to live with one person for our whole life ... in olden times, whatever was decided by the elders was okay and (we) stood by that.” Akshay noted that not following parental wishes or social norms encourages curiosity and idle gossip in the community. He said, “Everybody pushes you to get married. If you do not get married, everybody expresses their curiosity about it and they will express it to you also. I do this too.” Akshay also shared, “So people think that since each one of them is married, so why is this one person still single and not married? The social reason includes peer pressure also.”

Three wife respondents mentioned their personal desire to get married along with the obligation to follow the social norms set before them. Krishna shared, “Well I also got married for the reasons like, parents’ wish, and because I had to, and I also had a desire to get married.” Sushila stated her response as a life goal for everyone. She said, “This is everybody’s wish that they should get married.” Neelam shared, “When I got married I did not know very much about it. I used to look at all my friends and cousins getting married, and so I would feel like getting married too.”

Code. Marriage is a means to an end

The beliefs about the meaning of marriage or “what marriage is” for the participants also reflected directly that it is a process and the reason why people in India get married is because it helps them accomplish tasks and helps in needs fulfillment. The participants observed to the questions “Why should someone get married?” and “What do people generally expect from the

institution of marriage?” The responses to both these questions focused on marriage as a means to an end for the participants. They commented on the relational aspect of their marriage and of the marital relationship in general as they talked about their beliefs and views about the institution. This code also emerged when the participants’ personal reasons for getting married were explored by posing the questions, “Why did you get married?” and “What did you expect to get out of marriage?” The responses to the first question were accompanied by coy smiles and lowering of the gaze by most participants. In many cultures it is assumed that a person chooses to get married and that the decision is personal and involves only the two parties who are getting married. In India however, the reasons for marriage include the family and the community to an extent, and the personal choice aspect of the decision is rather limited. The second question had to be modified and translated to reflect physical, emotional, and psychological expectations, rather than just the word “expectation.” The word was dropped from the question because the respondents only focused on the financial expectations or *dowry* (groom price) issue in India as an expectation that people (especially the groom’s family) have while framing their responses. The words “desire”, “wish”, and “hope” were substituted and used instead of the word “expectation”. The responses from these questions yielded similar and overlapping themes that were later collapsed yielding nine subsequent themes, namely:

1. Cultural respect and approval
2. Fulfilling parents’ expectations and demands
3. Bond and “*bandhan*”
4. Union of two families
5. Continuation of the cycle of life
6. Interpersonal relationship
7. Personal fulfillment
8. Security
9. Financial improvement.

Theme: Cultural respect and approval. The concept of societal respect is related to the collective characteristic of the Indian culture and society. Maintaining the family name, saving face in front of others, and not having any ideal talk about the family in the community is a considered very important for the honor of the family. Family honor is maintained by following the rules set by the society and being socially delayed on any of the social milestones such as getting children married at a certain age, the married children starting their own families after they have been married for a certain number of years, etc. (Ross, 1961). In some communities the family has to justify their choices or helplessness to friends and family members when questioned about their actions or decisions. Kiran, a wife, said, “When we get married then we get respect from the society and our environment. So we should do the things that bring more respect to us and our families from our environment ... the other thing is that a person who follows the rules and the

norms of a society, that person can live with their head held up high with pride.” Rita shared, “Yes, the parents cannot hold their head up high because their child is unmarried and (this means that) they have not been mindful of their responsibilities (according to the people in the society).” Vijay stated categorically, “this (marriage) is a system that has been around from the beginning. This is a part of the society. And we all have to live our lives within the society. So that is why a person should get married.” Dinesh, another husband, shared, “God and history are a witness to this. Till a person is able to make a home there is no prosperity for this person. If a person is unable to make a home he is called all sorts of names” (and idle talk is made about him and his family within the community). Ram, another husband, also commented in a similar manner and emphasized the traditions in the culture by saying, “There are some traditions of the society and culture, if not followed, then the family name is spoiled. So a person always thinks if I do this or if I do that, then my family will get insulted by and within the society and community. So because of this fear, the people go (ahead and do) what is determined by the elders of the family.” Raju shared the same idea in his response, namely, “Our society or our culture has a general way of doing things what we call *parampara* or traditions (*riti rivaaz*). That is why getting married is necessary.”

Theme: Fulfilling parents’ expectations and demands. The duty of every child in India is to obey their parents and to fulfill their wishes (Sonpar, 1995). By doing this the children meet the requirement of “good” offspring and the parents feel reassured that they have raised their children well, and family is able to maintain its good name and reputation within the community (Ross, 1961). To raise children who defy or disobey parental wishes is a source of grave disappointment and shame as the parents feel responsible for not being able to raise them well. The question posed to the respondents was “Why did you get married?” They commented on several reasons for getting married, and obeying and following their parents’ wishes was one of them. Krishna, a wife, shared “I got married because it was my parents’ wish.” Kiran pleased her parents by obeying their wishes. She shared, “my parents tied me to my husband and I got tied to him in this life long relationship.” Vinod agreed to his father’s wishes even though personally he did not feel ready for marriage. He said, “My father told me to get married, so I got married. This was my responsibility and I fulfilled it by obeying my father... my parents had trouble doing all the household chores. So they told me that they wanted to get a daughter-in-law. So I got married when they told me this. There is a lot of work to be done in the village, so I said yes to my father’s wishes.” Shankar’s response indicated -- like the responses of other participants -- that marriage is not a matter of personal choice. The decision to marry many times is made by the parents and the young adult follows this decision. Shankar looked confused at being asked about this. He said, “This is not a question. My parents told me to get married and so I got married. At that time I did not have a wish to get married, but my parents told me that I had to get married, so I got married.” Suneeta stated, as a matter of fact, “My parents decided to get me married and so I got

married. I did not think about what will happen after I get married or what life will be like, I just got married because my parents had arranged it for me.” Sneh stated, “Earlier on the children would follow all the instructions given to them by their parents. They would marry the person their parents chose for them without saying anything.” Dinesh shook his head from side to side and said, “The kind of new generation we are seeing now (is different). In our time we were not able to say such things. We used to listen to our parents and we used to do the things that they used to ask us to do.”

Theme: Bond and “bandhan.” Many participants observed by using the word “*bandhan*” or bond when asked to describe what they thought and believed marriage to be, and this helped to name the emerging theme as well. *Bandhan* is best illustrated by a visual where two people are tied together with some distance between them with a piece of string that has some elasticity. They have to negotiate their movements so as not to strain or break the string. In a literal translation, *bandhan* (or bondage) means tied to someone or something. A bond has the same connotation but with the visual image or underlying idea of “being tied” or being together with someone (Khatri, 1983). One husband, Sameer, commented that, “Marriage is a form of bond and *bandhan* (bondage).” Sudha smiled and shared, “Marriage is a *bandhan* too, you know.” Kiran, another wife, considered marriage to be “a pure *bandhan*.” Vijay shared that marriage according to him was “a bond (*bandhan*) of social and familial responsibilities that needed to be fulfilled along with a life partner.”

Theme: Union of two families. In India the cultural norm dictates that the wife joins the husband’s home and family after marriage. She joins the joint family and helps form the glue that binds the two families together (Ross, 1961). A wife, Bina, that “Marriage means the coming together of two people. It means that two families become one ... when the girl and boy come together in a union, it automatically means that their families are there too and that they come together too.” Raju, a husband, stated simply that, “Marriage is like the merging of two lives ... and their families.” Sanjay, another husband, provided a similar view: “It is the coming together and merging of two families.” A wife, Seema, said “It (marriage) is the understanding that two people have between each other. It is the understanding between two families. It is a very good feeling that one cannot understand before marriage.” Uma stated on similar lines that “... It is not just two people getting married, it is two families coming together with different personalities, different thought processes, different weaknesses, and different strengths. It is the combination of two different cultures coming together.”

Theme: Continuation of the cycle of life. In the Indian culture, a person has children only after they get married (Shah, 1993). This is considered appropriate also from the point of view of expressing and experiencing sexuality within the bounds of a legal and sacred relationship (Doniger & Smith, 1991). Children born out of wedlock are a source of shame for the family and are given away to orphanages. The purpose of marriage is to procreate and to bring the next

generation into the world also so that the children can perform certain rites for the family members when the opportunity arises, for example, the oldest son lights the funeral pyre for his parents when they pass away (Doniger & Smith, 1991). Hindus believe that life is meant to be lived in stages and marriage or *grihasta asrama* is one of them. A husband, Rajeev shared, "I have two children ... and the family moves forward too, the family name continues (because of marriage)." His wife, Seema, shared, "One can definitely say that the bloodline continues through marriage." Nalin, a husband, said "The second thing of marriage means to help our predecessors, (and) to proceed to the next generation." On a similar note Sameer, a husband, stated "In society, we have to expand our family and we have to take our family forward. And we have to ensure that the name of the family continues on ... people should get married to carry their family name forward and to make sure that their family grows and continues." His wife Bina shared in a questioning way that, "If a person does not get married, then they will not have any children. And, so how will their family advance?" Bala put his views in a cultural context and stated that "The meaning of marriage is that it is a time old tradition in our country to bring the next generation into the world and to continue the name of the family. Every man wants this, like my father did and my grandfather also wanted that he should have a son who would continue the family tradition and the family name." His wife, Shashi Prabha, echoed her husband's views: "I believe it (marriage) is to bring a new generation into this world and for them (the children) to carry (on) the family name after us." Vinod, a husband, said "It (marriage) is to get children, just like our parents did ... it is simple, (in order) to expand your family a person should get married." Another husband, Vijay, stated that, "It (marriage) is also a relationship through which one can continue the family name and the bloodline." A wife, Veena shared emphatically that "only through marriage you can have children and have a family." Her husband Karan stated that "You get children (from marriage) and so you are able to enjoy with them." Sanjay, a husband, also stated that "Through marriage the family name continues and this (getting married and having children) is also necessary part of life."

The male respondents commented on extending or continuing their family name as part of their responsibility to their family of origin. The wives' responses did not bring up this topic when asked about their specific reason for getting married. This may be reflective of the fact that the children in a family carry their father's name and not their mother's name or lineage. This could be a reason why the women participants did not comment on carrying on their family name as a significant reason for them to get married. As mentioned earlier, only marriage legitimizes children and only a legitimate child can help in continuing the family name forward into the next generation. Sameer shared, "I also got married so that the name of my family will continue and my bloodline will continue. And also so that I could have a family." Sanjay talked in a similar way when he said, "Marriage is to continue the bloodline. This is very important because only after marriage will your family name continues on. So this is absolutely necessary."

Along with bringing children into the world, a parent's responsibility also entails rearing them to be good and productive citizens of the community (Ross, 1961). Nalin commented on the biological aspect of having children and said, "We can do everything alone except have children. I got married for my successors. And she (my wife) has to take care of my kids ... so we can find a good family and raise our children, and give good children to the society." Shankar also talked about up holding the responsibility of raising children the right way. He said, "So I asked her to do her duty by the children and to keep her focus on the children. I asked her to love the children and to raise them... what you should ask her to do is to take care of the children's well being and their education." Shankar's wife Sudha viewed things similarly: "Yes, we think that just as our parents had us and raised us, we will also have children of our own and we will also raise them to be good citizens for the community." Narayan spoke about continued citizenship when he said, "The thing is that the next step in life can be accomplished and the next generation can be brought into the world. And another thing is that if the people are literate and broad minded then they can go into the next phase of life with their companion and raise their children in the right way so that they can carry on your name and work in the community." Krishna shared the same sentiment as Narayan when she stated, "You also expect that you will have your own children. You will have your own family. You might love your parents and your siblings' family very much and you may be very attached to them, but you cannot make that your own family. You cannot spend your entire life with them. You have to raise your own family and teach your children to walk the right path just as our parents taught us." Karan, a husband, said, "...and also the development of the children and to take care of their higher education, and instilling our cultural values and things like that in the children so that they can distinguish right from wrong on their own." Dinesh also talked about raising children to be "good" citizens as part of his parental duty when he said, "From marriage, people expect everything from it. When you get married and have 2-4 children, then we have desires in our hearts to take our children out or to sit with them and talk to them, to raise them with good values, so that they can be independent and self reliant in the community and can help support what we have built in the community."

The appropriate parental duties for MCUHs also include "settling" their adult children by arranging their marriages with suitable partners. Vinod implied this duty by stating "The meaning of marriage is to have children, raise them, and then get them married." Sameer shared about his sense of responsibilities regarding his children when he said, "Like I have to get my daughter married, so I would wish that she should get married into a good family and a good home. And that she should have no worries there. And then when I will get my son married, then I will wish that his bride comes from a good family too ... when we raise our children right, we also have to be responsible for their future, so I have make sure that I marry them into good families where they have the least amount of worries and troubles." Sameer's wife Bina said, "I keep asking my son to tell me if he likes someone, so that we can go and meet with the family... we have two

daughters and we worry about them sometimes because they are growing up and they are almost as tall as I am. So this is a kind of burden and responsibility on our heads till they go to their own homes after marriage. We have to look for good matches for them so that they can be happy in their homes. We worry about the honor of our family.” Bala added, “My son carries my family name forward. And I got all these things along with my children from marriage. I could not have any of this without marriage. I have a very intelligent daughter, and when I get my sons married, they will bring daughters-in-law into my home. So I am able to get all this only through marriage.” Bala’s wife Shashi Prabha shared, “We are looking for a good match for my oldest son, but I keep asking him that if he has anyone in mind or if he likes someone he should tell us so we can approach her family and get the horoscopes matched. To settle my children, to get them married is also my duty as a mother and if I have children then I have to see to their well being also.”

Theme: Interpersonal relationship. Interpersonal relationship includes companionship, intimacy, affection, and sexuality as these were the different aspects that the participants talked about when answering the questions “What is required of men and women in general to maintain a marriage?” and “What is required of you personally to maintain your marriage?” The respondents discussed issues of commitment, intimacy, and sexuality while trying to share what they thought married individuals needed to do in order to keep their marriage intact.

Other words for companionship are fellowship, togetherness, and to have the company of another. Companionship according to the participants was to have a person spend their time with you and this aspect of the marital relationship was mentioned time and again by most husbands (Pottenberger, 1975). However “companionship” per se was not overtly discussed by the wives during the interview. Bala said, “A man is alone and lonely before he gets married”, implying that marriage brings a partner and companion into a person’s life. Karan, a husband, talked about the importance of what being married brings to him. He shared, “You get company, and (you get) a comfortable life. You come back from office and you get a good environment in the home ... otherwise all alone we will not like doing these things (such as coming back to an empty home, going to eat outside, or visiting places). And with great company (of the spouse) we feel happy.” Sanjay brought to light a cultural issue that he believed to be specific to the Indian Hindu society by saying, “A person cannot pass their time by themselves, they need a partner to live with for their entire life. This is India, it is not a foreign land where this is possible.” Kuldeep shared that the partner’s company would not equalize, but abate some of the stresses that life brings. In his words, “This is life, ups and downs will be there. Definitely (the ups and downs) will be there. So, companionship should save you from all these things.” Sameer commented on how lonely he feels when his wife and children visit extended family without him. He smiled as he admitted to feeling lonely and said, “When my wife and children go to the village, I just do not feel like cooking anything or even eating food alone. Whatever my wife cooks and keeps for me, I eat that and go

to sleep. It becomes very difficult for me when my wife and children go away for a few days. I feel all alone at that time.”

Another aspect of the companionship is intimacy. From a Western perspective, Wagner-Raphael, Seal, and Ehrhardt (2001) define intimacy as “an interpersonal process that involves the expression and sharing of emotions, communication of personal feelings and information, development of shared affection, support, and feeling closely connected with another person” (p. 243). This definition may not be an all encompassing statement on a cultural level so it may or may not hold true for the MCUHs. Components of intimacy involve psychic and sexual intimacy. Psychic intimacy can be developed by engaging in self-disclosure regarding thoughts, feelings, and goals with the partner. This process once again pertains to the Western construction of the concept. Little is known about the process through which MCUH couples develop psychic intimacy. Commitment is another part of intimacy, but that was addressed in another theme because the respondents commented on commitment as a separate issue. Most responses were from the husbands who shared that sharing their emotions with their wives was an important part of their marital relationship. Only one wife commented on the relational aspect of her marriage relating to intimacy or sharing her emotions with her husband. Indrajit, a husband, said, “The meaning of marriage for me is love ... when you were a child, you needed your friends. When a person grows up and becomes a young man, then he needs a partner. At least you can share your emotions and your thoughts with your partner.” Ram, another husband, said, “You can share your happiness and sadness with a person, and can have a heart to heart chat with (them) and share (your) inner feelings with them.” Akshay, another husband, spoke about the sharing aspect of his marriage with an emotional voice. He said, “It (marriage) is sharing your life with your spouse. Sharing each and every aspect of your life like monetary, physical, mental, and religious aspects (with your spouse). So sharing everything means sharing your life.” Kuldeep, the married man from the pilot interview, observed something similar to Ram: “I mean you can share your happiness, sorrow with one partner, you can say marriage means to share the things, like to share your ideas... basically the aim (in marriage) is to share the ideas” (with each other). Dinesh’s response was similar to Ram’s and Kuldeep’s in saying “You get a partner to share your life with and your joys and sorrows with. And she can share her life with me. She talks to me and I talk to her and slowly we live our life and the time passes on.” Nalin, another husband, shared “We just merge our concepts, merge our feelings, merge our internal things, and that is called marriage.” Shankar, a husband, commented overtly on the reciprocity of sharing in the marital relationship by saying, “marriage means that you care about and respect one another’s feelings, perceptions, wishes, and desires (*bhawna*). And to find a life partner with whom and in whose arms we can stay and feel cared for... and to share ourselves in all aspects with another person... it (marriage) is very meaningful for me. People have tensions and stresses in their life, but when you get a life partner and a true friend in your life, then we can share everything that we

think and feel with them. And that person also shares their thoughts and feelings with you.” Narayan, a husband, with his voice strained with emotion, said that a life partner is “a person who is with me always as I have struggled through life. And I have someone to share my stress or sorrow and happiness (with). Through marriage I have someone who is there for me always.” Shakuntla, a wife, shared that after a girl gets married, “then she is able to share all the things that are inside of her with him. She is able to share all the goodness and all the things that are not so nice about her with her life partner. So the things she is not able to share with her parents, she can share with her husband.”

In India sexual relations are only considered appropriate within the confines of the marital relationship (Doniger & Smith, 1991). Premarital sexual relations or extra marital sexual relations are looked down upon and carry a stigma for the entire family and not just for the individual who engages in or establishes sexual relations with another person (Carter, 1982). Only husbands shared their views on this topic. They talked about sexual tension inside the body and getting married being the only legitimate way of satisfying this need. The wife respondents did not comment on the physical or sexual need or that meeting this need would constitute a reason to get married. Nalin stated, “...and second thing is that she should understand the physical need of the person, that is one more thing.” Narayan also stated, “In a general way, one is to get a physical relation.” Bala shared, “it is a natural thing after a girl or boy turns 20 or 22 years old, there is a tension inside them and they watch the persons of the opposite sex keenly. So when I was young, I wanted to marry any pretty girl that I saw ... a person’s body experiences a build up of pressure or tension from within, like a sexual tension begins to happen. So if he does not get married, then he will probably stay disturbed or then he will go here and there and will try and will try and release the tension that he feels inside of him.” Akshay emphasized satisfying sexual needs when he said, “The foremost reason is for physical needs of a person. That is very important in a marriage ...when one is young, at that moment only that comes to your mind. Only sex comes to your mind. So this is the first reason I got married ... physical satisfaction, or getting satisfied in bed.”

Theme: Personal fulfillment. The participants talked about becoming a couple by getting married and how that event leads to the fulfillment of personal needs such as (a) freedom to roam around, (b) experience true happiness, and (c) experience growing love in their lives. This theme emerged because getting married in order to meet personal needs such as the need to be cared for, wanted, loved, and gaining some personal freedom and mobility were brought up consistently in the conversations.

Once again, unlike the Western connotation of “love”, the style of love addressed by the participants was more practical, caring, and supportive than passionate or erotic in nature. Shankar shared, “There has been a little change now. Initially, when a person would get married they would think about running a house, but today this is not so. There is a shift toward friendship

between the two people (who get married). Today the husband and the wife think of themselves as friends and want to establish a relationship of friendship, and they support each other. Initially the marriage was a *bandhan* (binding, bond, to be tied together), now it is not so.” Kiran also shared that love was essential in a marriage when she said, “there should be love in the relationship. This is important.” Neelam, another wife, also shared that love was an important part of a relationship when she said, “The most important thing is that the two people should think of the other person always and they should pay attention to each other’s needs. This is the most important thing. This only happens when we love each other and we have strong loving feelings for each other.” Indrajit also stated the importance of love in a relationship by saying, “The two people must be loyal to each other. And they must love each other. Love is the main thing between the two people.” Vinod said, “The first thing that is needed is love for each other. Without love you can’t do anything and cannot accomplish anything for the family. So when you have love in your life then everything else falls into place. So this is the most important ... the two people should be able to understand one another. They should listen to each other and they should obey each other. And they should support each other. This is what I mean by saying that they should have love between them.” Krishna, a wife, shared her interpretation of the connection between “understanding” and “love” when she said, “And then, after we understand the person, you fall in love and this can happen after marriage also ... love and faith are two big things in a marriage.”

Going “roaming” or *Ghumna Phirna* was mentioned frequently by both the husbands and the wives as an expression of freedom. Visiting places with a companion or just strolling around in the community roughly describes the concept of *Ghumna Phirna* (Derné, 1995). Sneha shared, “Well, I wanted to visit places and I wanted to go out for a stroll or a drive or even to go out for a meal. All these wishes of mine came true and were all fulfilled (after I got married).” Sunita, another wife said, “I wanted to get freedom after marriage because then I could go visit places or go just go out with my husband. And I also wished that I will have no interference from anybody to run my own house.” Neelam shared openly about her desire and expectation to go roaming when she said, “And I used to think that after you get married you can roam around all you want, you get to go places with your husband, you get to go to a hotel and have dinner with your husband, etc. I used to think that we will go roaming around, we will have lots of fun, and that we will live our life to the full. This is what we saw in the movies so this is what I thought was going to happen as well.” Dinesh said, “It is difficult for me to articulate what my wishes and desires were at the time of my marriage. I used to think that once I got married then I would have a partner with whom I will be able to roam around and see the sights and go visiting places.” Dinesh’s wife Rita shared, “I used to think that I am married now and I can go out with my husband alone, or go roaming, and have fun. I wanted to stay with my husband alone or go out for a meal with just him.” Rachna, another wife shared, “I will be loved, I will get all dressed up, and go roaming around with my husband, this is what I thought marriage was going to bring for me.”

Happiness or *Sukh* is a state of wellbeing accompanied by a feeling of joy, enjoyment and satisfaction (Gatwood, 1985). The participants mentioned happiness as an expectation from marriage and also as something that they experience once they do get married. Shashi Prabha laughed and commented on the unrealistic expectation of happiness from marriage that people have. She said, "The people when they get married, be it a lady or a gent, they feel that after they get married they should get all the happiness of the world. But this is impossible." Shankar said, "A person gets a lot of happiness after marriage, at least they expect to get it and be happy ... so everybody has a wish pertaining to a good name in the community, being well to do, and for happiness. A person wishes for these, it is a different matter whether they get it or not." Shankar's wife Sudha shared, "I mean that we will get all the happiness there is to get from life when we get married. Our parents already have had that happiness, so by marrying we should get it too ... one gets happiness and pleasure on a physical level, and also the happiness that comes from having children after we get married." Seema, another wife, said, "The happiness that a person gets from giving love to your children and by living with your husband, that you get only from getting married. So when a person gets married, then they hope that they will get all this happiness too." Rachna shared her disappointment as she talked about her expectations and the fulfillment of these expectations from marriage. She said, "Initially I thought marriage is about a happy life, living with my husband happily, having children, taking care of them, etc. But I don't think that is what marriage is. At least it has not been that way for me." Vijay shared what he thought marriage would bring to his life when he said, "I just thought that we will live in happiness and we will live in comfort and in peace."

Theme: Security. Security in a relationship can be experienced and defined in several ways. One aspect of security can mean that the partners feel protected against danger or loss, and another aspect can mean that they feel freedom from anxiety and fear resulting in emotional security. Roth (1993) states that emotional security is influenced by things in a person's environment that can impact their emotional well-being. Roth (1993) also defines emotional security as "individual achievement of self-respect, recognition, and positive self-actualization as it relates to the individual's definition of an acceptable purpose in life" (p.16). Here the participants repeatedly commented on the emotional security and a feeling of being *santusht* (at peace or satisfied) that a marriage provides rather than the financial security aspect of it. It was interesting to note that only some wives and no husbands commented on the issue of security provided by marriage. Veena, a wife stated that, "Marriage means security. It is a relationship between a husband and a wife ... the first thing is that it provides a sense of security to me (to have my husband with me in my life)." Uma, another wife, said that "Marriage is a beautiful concept. It is a concept designed to protect a man and a woman from the outside world." According to another wife, Shakuntla, "When I did have the physical relationship with my husband, and when I did have my children, then I felt that there is more to the purpose of marriage. Then I thought about the fact

that I have my own husband, my own home, and my own children now, and I have fulfilled my duty as a human being.” Sudha, another wife, shared, “Yes, it (getting married) is safer for her (the girl) because she is protected by the husband. So I believe that this is also a big reason that a person should get married so they can feel safe and secure.”

Experiencing peace or being *santusht* (Carter, 1983) was another aspect of security that the participants commented on as something that entering into the state of being married provided for them. Indrajit said, “I got a child, a good wife, and a good peaceful life ... people want peace from marriage. Peace is very important. I think they want peace.” Shankar, another husband shared, “By (having) peace in the home things (become) stable. The home is clean and the things such as utensils are kept where they ought to be kept ... a person gets a lot of happiness. They (the husband and wife) get peace and satisfaction in their hearts. And along with the peace the person also gets cooked food after marriage.” Shankar’s wife Sudha commented on the security and peace that the parents of a girl experience once she is married. She said, “Well you don’t really get anything from marriage. I told you earlier that a person really can’t live alone. Now if a girl goes out somewhere all by herself then her parents will worry about her and think that she is going somewhere all alone and that maybe someone might say something to her or tease her. This is very prevalent in India, that if some girl is going somewhere even in the night then people tease her or say nasty things to her. But if she is with her husband then nobody will say anything to her or touch her.” Veena shared that, “People want that their life in the future becomes satisfying and calm, and marriage helps in this.” Sneha talked about the expectation of living a smooth and peaceful life when she said, “Well, I suppose they expect to live lives happily and smoothly. Also, people want they should not have any tensions of any kinds. Apart from this I don’t think people want anything else from marriage. As long as people have peace and satisfaction, then it is good. Peace is what people look for as well.” Shashi Prabha also made a similar comment on the issue by saying, “the most important thing is trust in oneself and in each other ... if the two people have trust in one another then married life can be spent in peace.”

Support in the marital context has multiple interpretations ranging from moral and psychological support or aid to financial support, to physical support. Spousal support for Indian couples means that the two partners agree with each other and they help each other accomplish tasks and duties (Derné, 1995). Another interpretation of support is that the partners approve of and aid each other in their causes and interests (Lamanna & Riedmann, 2003). The participants talked about offering and receiving emotional support from each other and they also addressed physical support that the partners offer each other at the later stage in life when they are old and do not have anybody else to depend on except their mates. The financial aspect of support was not discussed by the participants here probably because that was perceived to be the domain of the husband much more than that of the wife and was not necessarily a mutual or an interactional factor. Kuldeep, a husband, posed a question and then answered it by emphasizing the emotional

and psychological aid aspect of marriage. He asked, “Who can support you emotionally and at the time of crisis? Marriage means you (the spouse) can support and understand my feelings at the time of sorrow, and other things, (it means) being friends.” Vinod, a husband, raised a finger, nodded his head, and said, “You have to support one another and live within this bond (of marriage).” According to Kiran, a wife, “When we talk to one another and we ask for advice from one another only then does life move forward. When the husband and wife support each other and it feels good and this is the only way that life progresses. One person cannot do much on their own. Personally I feel that if a person does not get married then who will be the source of their support. They will not be able to become anyone’s support and nobody will be able to become a support for them.” Krishna also said the same thing as Kiran did. She shared, “but once you get married, you should support the spouse and the marriage (*nibhana*) at all times.” Krishna’s husband Raju shared that the only way a person can get a supportive partner in their life is by getting married. He said, “To get a life partner it is necessary to get married. So that a person stays with you and supports you in happiness and in sadness.” Kuldeep shared how his wife had supported him and also protected him from the potential criticism that he could have faced from his own parents. He said, “I mean everything, *mind-wise* (an Indian-English word that means pertaining to the mind, psychology, or thoughts and views) she (my wife) was here, she cooperated with me, she defended me, she supported me like anything. Thanks to her even my family understands my decisions.” Karan shared, “well you can get company and if you want to promote some things then she (the wife) helps you every time. If you want to go high in any field then she can only help you do that... so you expect your wife to help you in your own promotion, experience, or business and the promotion of your children.”

Uma shared the struggles with her in-laws and talked about her husband’s support during those trying times when she said, “Like it had taken me a full year to win over my in-laws. So that was a struggle in which my husband backed me completely. He supported me completely ... so whatever, when you are upset and when you feel low, obviously you expect your husband to support you or your spouse to support you.” Then she added another feature: “The same kind of support you should first initially be able to give it to your partner. Then only you will receive it.” Kiran shared of her own marriage by saying, “we supported each other while raising our children ... we did not leave each other even when things were rough. We faced the rough times together.” Neelam shared her own attitude and said, “I supported and did my utmost with my parents and now I will do my utmost with my husband. I will do this because I have to spend my entire life with him.” Sameer shared what he thought helps to keep a marriage intact. He said, “We have to support each other and stand by each other. We have to respect each other as well.” Shakuntla shared what she did in order to keep her marriage intact. She said, “I always supported my husband’s actions and his decisions. I did not complain to him or criticize him, or tell him that he was wrong and I was right.” Karan also commented on what he does to support his wife and to

help maintain his marriage. He shared, "I don't like some of the things that she does, but I keep quiet and try to be supportive of her."

Rajiv shared, "Earlier the husband and wife did not need to make any adjustments to one another, they lived very parallel lives in large joint families. But these days the husbands and wives adjust to one another and walk hand in hand and support each other. Both the spouses do all the work as a team, be it the work inside the house or outside it." Sanjay, another husband, commented on the teamwork aspect of supporting partners when he said, "My expectations were that my wife should be a good housewife and that she should have a good nature... the expectations from marriage are that your partner will help you run your life in a timely fashion. When you come home your wife welcomes you and provides food for you in a timely way. So these are the hopes that people have from marriage. You hope that you will get all this after you get married." Vinod said, "I think people expect the homely girls to be housewives, to cook and clean, to have children, and to raise them, and that is about it. There is nothing more than this."

Some participants specifically talked about "support" or *sahara* during their old age when their bodies would be frail, and they would be dependent on someone to take care of them. Ram, was retired and talked openly about the possibility of him falling ill and depending on his wife for care. He shared, "If a person were to fall ill, your children cannot help you or look after you as much as your husband or wife can ... in the times that have yet to come, like old age, if a person is married then they can help one another (in times of illness and need)." Bina posed the same concern as a question, the answer to which indicated the purpose of marriage and the importance placed on care taking and supporting each other during old age. She asked, "And if a person does not have a family with children, where will he or she get support from in their old age?" Sanjay echoed Bina and Ram in his response by saying, "If I fall ill when I am old, who will look after me? But I have my wife with me so both of us can look after each other and can support one another through our old age and in our life together. Nobody else will come to your aid only your spouse will be there for you in your time of need. This is the reason why marriage is a very important and a prime part of our lives." This may indicate the parents' awkwardness while approaching their children or extended family for help in very personal issues or issues that they may be embarrassed about. Shankar shared while shaking his head that, "at the end (in old age), it is only your wife who supports you or can support you, also because at this stage of life, other people usually break their ties with you." Kiran, Sanjay's wife, stated her response as a matter of common sense. She drew a comparison between a person's needs during their youth and their needs during their old age. "If one does not get married then one does not have anybody in their life who will support them. A person will have no trouble during their youth, but during their old age, they will have problems because they will have nobody in their life with them."

Theme: Financial improvement. In India getting married also provides a state of improved finances for the woman (Kumar & Rohatgi, 1989). This held true for the marriages with the

traditional marital roles wherein the husband was the primary provider and the wife did not work outside of the home. However, in recent times this view has changed as both the husband and the wife work outside the home and some men ask their parents to look for an appropriate partner for them who is already employed and will continue with her employment even after getting married. The husbands think of providing a reliable and dependable financial base for their family as part of their responsibility toward their family. Financial resources and security are means for ensuring that the children and family are well taken care of. Shashi Prabha shared that, "Everybody (who is female) has a wish that they should get married into a family that is well to do ...". Sudha talked about how a girl cannot stay financially dependent on her parents all her life and that it is appropriate for her to "go to her husband's house" and allow him take care of her and the family: "When the husband will earn an income then I will be able to run the house as well. So, yes, it will add to my stability and security financially. Now not all women work outside the home, so how long can her parents keep fulfilling her needs and giving her money? If she was to get married then she gets her husband to take care of her needs ...I will also get money from my husband. Even if we don't earn, the income comes into our hands. And just as our parents spent money on what they wished for desired, we will also get a chance to do that. You see whatever one does not have, a person wants to know what that is about and wants to experience it." Krishna said that her expectation was that "the husband will earn money and will give it to me and I will spend it the way I want to", again indicating marriage as a means of obtaining financial autonomy from her parents. Shakuntla shared, "Even though I am not very well educated... I wanted my partner to be educated and to have a good job so that I would be able to run my house well." Kuldeep said, "What I feel in my case I got a very good support from my wife. She is also working. So I got a very good support from her both emotionally and financially." He also talked about his responsibility as a husband and father to see to the well being of his family. He said, "Of course that has to be taken care of. I mean as a husband I have to take the responsibility, as a father again I have to take the responsibility. I mean, to educate my children, I mean from the financial perspective I have to take care of the responsibilities ... I have to take care of the growth and prosperity of my family and give them every sort of things, whatever as a father and as a husband. Means I have to give them protection." Sanjay shared on similar lines, "I know that I have to get the things that my wife wants and needs. I support her financially. So I have done that. And we all fulfill our need for the physical relationship. So I have done that and have tried to keep my wife happy." Similarly Vinod said, "One does need a steady income to run the house, you know. We also have to live in this society and this community and take part in the rituals and family life. We also have to fulfill all of our responsibilities to our parents and also to our immediate family. So we have to do all this in order to maintain our marriage."

Akshay shared, "I was looking for a working girl. And I got so much pressure from my friends, and they told me that your expenses will increase a lot (after marriage), so how will you

manage? So I thought that a working wife would be good for me then. It did not matter what she looked like. The only thing that was important to me was that she should be employed.” He also shared that he faced much ridicule and criticism from his family for voicing this wish. His family members asked him that if he did consider himself to be a man then he should have the confidence that he would be able to look after his wife and his family.

Class: Desirable elements of a MCUH marriage

Some of the questions posed to the participants were “What were your expectations from marriage?” and “What do people in general expect to get out of marriage?” These were further translated as “What were your hopes and wishes when you got married?” and “Did you have any desires when you got married as far as your partner and your in-law family were concerned?” Responses to the questions inquiring into the maintenance of marriage and keeping it intact were also included here in order to get a clearer picture of the characteristics and components of a Hindu middle class marriage. There were two primary codes that emerged from this class:

Attributes of partner, and Attributes of extended family.

Code. Attributes of partner

When asked about their expectations or wishes from marriage, most participants talked about certain behaviors and attributes that they wished their partner would have. The questions had to be translated and the words “wishes” and “desires” used instead of “expectations” for two reasons. The first reason was that the word “expectation” carried the connotation of the practice of “dowry” or the bride’s family paying a groom price during the wedding ceremony, and the second reason was that the participants shared that most of the time they did not have any expectations because having expectations sets one up for disappointment. For them, the Hindu religious teachings of the *Dharmasastra*, *Vedas*, and the *Gita* talk about conquering one’s expectations and living a life without any sense for expectations to experience a pure and deep joy (Gatwood, 1985). The themes emerged as the participants talked about role appropriate behaviors and attitudes that were considered desirable in a partner. Eight primary themes emerged from within this code:

1. Physical characteristics,
2. Educational status,
3. Financial attractiveness,
4. Management of extended family,
5. Female obedience,
6. Realistic expectations,
7. Conflict resolution skills, and
8. Prosocial personality traits.

Theme: Physical characteristics. Only some participants mentioned the physical attributes or attractiveness as a desirable characteristic in their partner. This may reflect the

Indian idea that a person's physical appearance is not what makes them who they are but their personality and who they are as people that makes them attractive (Carter, 1982). Raju shared, "In today's world, what people think about marriage is that a girl should be beautiful and should be fair, and the boy should be handsome ... so there is a lot of focus on the looks and the physical relations." Neelam talked about her personal desire to marry a handsome man when she said, "I wished that I would get a smart and handsome husband ... that I will wear nice *sarees*, and I will wear make-up. So at that time this is what I thought I would get from getting married." Shashi Prabha stated simply, "The women wish for a handsome, famous, and rich husband." Ram talked about the couple matching each other in their physical appearance as being appropriate. He shared, "The second thing is that her looks or the way she looks should also have been considered. If we were to ever walk together, then people should not look at her and laugh or make idle talk. Well it happens like this, doesn't it? Well if the pair is not matched even in looks, people do not say anything to them to their face, but later they talk behind their backs. They say, well his parents really did not think about this, and even the girl's parents did not think about this. Look at how the girl looks and look at how the boy looks."

Theme: Educational status. Education is considered important in India because of the recent economic boom. Education is considered the avenue through which people get opportunities of professional employment and appropriate behavior (Fernandes, 2006). Here the participants commented on the educational status of women more than the men because in recent times formally educating the girl child has been a priority in the culture and many government programs have been implemented on the macrosystemic level to ensure this social change on the microsystemic level (Sharma, 1997; Nandy, 1988). Middle class Hindus recognize that when a girl is formally educated she is able to be a better partner and is able to be a better teacher for her children. Bina shared, "an educated person should have an educated partner. There has to be a match here. And the children should not feel that they are educated but that their partner does not know how to talk to or conduct themselves in front of their friends. Or that the girl is educated but her husband is uneducated. In this case she may get embarrassed in front of her friends if her husband does not talk well or is not a good match for her." Education for the female partner was a much desired quality because in the Indian culture the woman or the mother is considered to be the teacher in the family and she instills values, ethics, morals, and lessons about the appropriateness of behavior to her children (Badrinath, 2003; Doniger & Smith, 1991). Ram once again talked about there being a match in the education level of the husband and wife when he said, "The girl should be educated till the metric grade (10th grade) at least because I have completed my intermediate, so there must be a match. To get an educated wife is a good thing. So people expect this." Bala said, "The girl should be good and nice and she should also be educated. And this is really a gift from God." Shankar shared, "An educated girl as a wife

ensures that your children will be educated and qualified too. And that they get the right education, learning, and knowledge.”

Theme: Financial attractiveness. Educational attractiveness for the male partners goes hand in hand with their financial attractiveness because the educational status usually is parallel to their earning potential, thus placing them in the position of a good provider for the family (Kumar & Rohatgi, 1989). Traditionally most men would follow their father’s footsteps and join his business, trade, or work. With the recent changes in the society and with the opportunities offered by large companies in the cities, formal education and a “job” is more emphasized rather than following the family tradition of trade or type of work (Fernandes, 2006). Shakuntla shared that her hope was to “get a family where people would be educated and they should have a good income... even though I am not very well educated, but I wanted my partner to be educated and to have a good job so that I would be able to run my house well.”

Theme: Management of extended family. The wife in India is considered to be the glue that binds the two extended families and maintains relationships between them (Badrinath, 2003; Ramu, 1988). A good wife is one who maintains this relationship with tact and believes her husband’s family and not her family of origin to be her “true” family. The husband, in India is not expected to maintain relationships between the two extended families. The reason for this might be because traditionally the wife joins the husband’s home and family after she gets married. The husband does not move into a new home or away from his family after he gets married (Ross, 1962). Rajiv shared this expectation and desire when he said, “I wished to get a good wife, a person who would understand my nature. And that she should be able to take care of the household duties and that she should respect my parents. And she should be able to adjust to my home and my family well. It should not be like she keeps insisting that I take her out all the time or that she wants this and that, or she wants to go to her parents’ house all the time. I mean that she should do things according to the right time and the rules and norms. So I wanted her to be aware of the environment in my home and I wanted her to adapt herself to that.”

Theme: Female obedience. Many participants commented on the importance of getting married to a person who would “listen” to them, meaning that they would “obey” or follow their instructions, views, or wishes. The wives did not however comment that they wanted an obedient husband, but for the husbands obedience was a very desirable quality in their partner (Derné, 1995). Shashi Prabha shared that in her opinion, “The men always wish for an obedient wife.” Shankar, a husband, commented on what he thought was part of the wife’s duty toward her husband and her children and said, “In the morning when the man is leaving for work, his wife tells him to eat lunch outside because she does not have the time to prepare it and she has to go to work too. And I think to myself, ‘well, if you have to eat your meals outside then why did you get married?’ What is the use of being married if you can’t get home cooked food? ...my wife has a master’s degree and she used to work outside the home before we got married. I told her very

respectfully that she was not going to work after we got married. I told her I need a mother for my children so she cannot go and do work outside the home. There was no question about that happening, and she obeyed my wish.”

Theme: Realistic Expectations. Expectations are culturally and also personally determined within the marital relationship. The messages from the larger culture (such as myths) and the subculture (the extended family and friends) within which a couple resides or the macrosystem, dictates the appropriateness, relevance, and significance of expectations (or cultural messages) that people hold in a given relationship (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Nichols & Schwartz, 2001). The participants talked about their “wishes and desire” in their marriage, but at the same time also commented on either restricting these or examining them to see if they were realistic enough to be achieved or that they may impose or inconvenience their partner thus setting them up for failure and disappointment. Ram said, “This is what a person should always think about that not all the things that a person wants in life they will get. So even in marriage, not everything you will get, you will have to let go of at least one thing.” Similarly, Kuldeep shared, “what I feel is, I mean these days people are having a lot of expectations. They should limit these because that is not realistic.” Sneha brought to light that she did have her own individual way of thinking in her marriage because her husband did not expect her to follow him all the time. She said, “My husband does not have this unrealistic expectation of me either, that I will think (exactly) like him and do all that he wants me or asks me to do all the time.” Kiran warned that having too many expectations interferes with a person’s ability to understand their partner by saying, “I would say one thing - that it is prudent to live your life in a mature and understanding way. And to make decisions using maturity and understanding also. Having too many expectations hinders understanding from your side in a marriage.” Suneeta offered advice, “Today the young people have a lot of wishes that they want fulfilled. These wishes should be appropriate to the house that you have been married into (in terms of finances and the nature of your spouse or the personality he has).” Dinesh shared, “Yes, a person should only pay attention to what they have to do and that is it. And they should not waste their time seeing what others have and do not have and comparing their situation with it. What others do in their life is based on their sense of responsibility, and what we do in our life is based in what we feel our responsibility to be. So there is no comparison actually. We should not expect to have what others have in their lives. That is not realistic and the will cause many fights.”

Theme: Conflict resolution skills. The participants were asked how they maintained their marriage and also what should couples do in general to keep their marriages intact. Many of the participants talked about taking turns to talk and listen to each other and they also talked about making personal accommodations or sacrifices, making compromises, and accepting blame when appropriate in order to maintain their marriage. Aspects of constructive communication skills included actively listening to one’s partner, letting them speak and not interrupting them,

and talking to them in a loving manner by using loving words. These were initially separated as individual themes, but were later combined together as various aspect of or skills required for resolving conflicts.

Active listening, according to Lamanna and Riedmann (2003) involves paying attention to what the other person is saying and providing feedback about what was said. The MCUH participants commonly stated that listening quietly when their partner was talking was effective in helping them maintain their marriages. Another way was that they did not interrupt or counter their partner when they were talking. Rather they brought up the subject at a later time and talked about it with their spouse using a lot of tact. This strategy is similar to the techniques mentioned by Gottman (1994; 1998) and Markman, Stanley, and Blumberg (1994) to improve communication, increase happiness, and manage conflict in a relationship. Suneeta said, "Sometimes when we did fight I would talk to him in a loving way and get him to see my point of view." Raju spoke about talking to his wife when she is upset by saying, "I talk to her lovingly and in a calm way and then things become okay. Sometimes she does not eat her food so then I feed her too." Rachna commented on taking turns while talking to one's husband. She said, "The most important thing is that the two people should talk to one another and to communicate with each other. If the husband wants to talk the wife should listen to him and when the wife wants to talk to the husband the husband should definitely listen to her." Kiran also talked about sharing her views with her husband at a later time and using tact while doing so. "Then I can tell him that I think he is wrong and then I can move away after airing my thoughts on the matter. So it is not that I am going to keep quiet, but I will do it tactfully." Shankar also commented on listening to his wife and talking to her in a loving way: "...Sometimes your thinking does not match. So at that time you can decide to keep quiet and let her talk. Then you can get a chance to talk and then she keeps quiet. So this is the way we have never had a fight between us ... I also explain things to her in a loving way and talk to her about both the sides of an event or a wish. Like I say to her that if we do this in this way then this will be the result and this will be good, and if we do it the other way then the result will not be so good."

Sameer shared the one thing that had helped him keep his marriage intact. He said, "We (my wife and I) had to listen to what each other was saying in order to maintain our marriage." Karan echoed Sameer's views when he said, "So both partners should listen to each other and follow each others instructions. This is how we adjust to one another." Ram shared, "So I will have to think with a cool and calm mind that whatever she is saying is right and to what extent it is right. If it is right then I should listen to her, and follow what she is saying or asking me to do things." Ram's wife Sushila shared, "And then later, I would approach him and we would talk about the same thing and he would be open to my suggestions and views and he would understand where I was coming from and accept it. And he would realize that he was wrong about something and accept it." Shakuntla, another wife said, "A life partner should be able to

understand the girl that he gets married to. He should pay attention to and focus on his wife's views and opinions. He should actively listen to his wife and pay attention to where she is coming from. He should not listen to her half-heartedly and then forget what she said quickly ... and I would say that if the husband and wife have some disagreements then these can be resolved by sitting and talking to one another with love and by trying to understand one another."

The ability to make compromises was also considered to be a desirable characteristic in a partner by the participants. Compromise is a part of adjustment but it requires the two people to reach an accommodation or a settlement by mutual concession or to mutually agree upon the adjustment (Spangler, 2000; Wandberg, 2000). The MCUH sample embraced such a concept. Vijay put his thoughts across simply when he said, "One has to compromise in life and in marriage. One might not have to make big compromises but you have to make small compromises." Kuldeep said: "Because I am of this mentality that one should never impose anything on anyone, then it is necessary to compromise in a relationship." Sudha gave an example of how she and her husband might reach a compromise and she also shared that she felt happy making compromises with her husband. "Suppose he wants to give something to somebody and I do not want him to give it. I tried to stop him from doing so but he does not listen to me. So I would tell myself it is okay and it is not a big deal, we will see how things work out and I would compromise with him on this matter like this ... I felt good about it. I felt that I am compromising today and this will facilitate a strong foundation of our marriage. So I felt very good about that and about compromising." Sudha used the word "compromise" interchangeably with "sacrifice" and "individual adjustment". Apparently, for her, all of these entities were valued qualities in a partner because they help to maintain the marital relationship. Raju shared a similar view by saying, "The compromise can be about anything. Yes, whenever possible the persons should compromise and adjust. If you want life to move forward and continue, then you should compromise. But if you want life to end or the relationship to end, then it is okay to be stubborn." Sneh stressed the importance of making compromises in a marriage when she said, "A husband should also compromise with his wife. A couple is able to maintain their marriage when the husband and wife take turns to compromise and make peace with each other. But if their egos come in between them then the balance of the marriage will be disrupted ... and when small things do creep into the marriage, then each of them should be open to making compromises and should go ahead and make them ... the ego should not come into marriage. Compromises are necessary to maintain a marriage ... and whenever it is possible, or when a person either a husband or a wife needs to make a compromise, then they should go ahead and do it." Like Sudha, Sneh also used the word compromise interchangeably with personal sacrifice and individual adjustment. Similarly Rita shared, "Yes, both the people should do things in the marriage for the marriage. This is the era of making compromises. If the woman yields then the man should yield too." Sanjay smiled, shrugged his shoulders and said, "Well, everybody has to

make compromises. This is a given. One just has to make compromises in life. If you have to maintain your marriage, then you have to make compromises under any and all circumstances.” His wife Kiran expressed a similar opinion. “Everybody fights and everybody gets angry. So if you get angry then you should just move a little on to the side. It is not necessary for you to continue the fight. You should remove yourself from the situation. Both the husband and the wife should do this to calm things down. Two days later when things have calmed down and the fight has ended, then a compromise will happen on its own between the two people ... and both the people have to compromise in order to maintain the peace. We don't get everything that we want.” Seema talked about the reciprocity of making compromises and that in the Indian context it was not always equal between the partners. She shared her views about this by saying, “They (the husband and the wife) should be able to make compromises in life. If your husband wants something then you should yield to that. And if you express some desire or if you want something then the husband should also yield to that. So there should be an understanding between the two of them and this is very important ... yes, and it should be both-sided. Sometimes the lady has to compromise a little more than the gent, and there is nothing wrong in this. I don't believe there is anything wrong in this or that it is bad. Because if the family can stay intact because one person yields usually, then there is nothing wrong in this. It is for the betterment of the family.”

Another aspect that was considered to be highly desirable in a spouse by the participants was the ability of one partner to make sacrifices for not only the relationship but also for their spouse. Akshay shared that he had sacrificed his idea of the kind of wife he wanted and accept the girl that his parents chose for him for who she was. He said, “One adjustment I have already told about. I wanted a working wife but I got a homemaker instead. I have adjusted well with her parents also. I had to adjust to her education also.” His wife Neelam talked about how her priorities had changed and she had learnt to place other members of her family before herself. “Now I have to think about my children, about their future, about how to maintain my house, about my husband's well being, etc. Before marriage none of these responsibilities were there on my shoulders and I had no tensions at all. So in order to maintain my marriage I have to do all these things that I did not have to do before I got married ... before marriage, if I had a slight fever I would exaggerate and tell my mother that I was very ill and that I was not going to move around a lot. And she would say that that was okay. But now even if I am not feeling well I put that out of my mind because I have to take care of my family and my home. So to maintain my marriage I have to do this now. And I do it happily ...yes, my priorities have changed. I do not focus on myself as much as I did once upon a time. My sense of self, like my sense of 'I', has changed to 'my family'. There is no more 'I' for me anymore.” Narayan said, “And not nagging each other is also important. Everyone has their own egos, and so somehow we need to adjust to the other person's ego, so this is important.” Sneha shared, “Your life should continue after you have understood each other's feelings and views. This, a person should always do and should also try

to understand the other's point of view ... adjustment had to be made from both the people in the marriage. This is the only way it can work." Shakuntla talked about specific adjustments that she made in her marriage. She said, "I followed all the instructions given to me by my husband. I did not go outside the house without informing my husband. So I adjusted in this way." Similarly, Rachna shared, "When the husband's family visits then even the husband asks the wife to do things according to the wishes or norms of his family members, so the wife has to adjust ... I only do the things he asks me or tells me to do. I have stopped going out, and I have stopped going to my mother's house." Sanjay said, "Well, after you have had a discussion then one person has to take a step back and has to bow down. At that time one person will have to keep quiet. One person will have to adjust to the other person. If a person gets stuck on a point due to their ego then this will cause great harm and difficulties in the future ... and I will add that when the man is in the wrong and the woman does not make a big deal about it and keeps quiet about it, this is a great strength and maturity in her ... over here, the married couple live in a joint family. When there are other people around then a person thinks a lot before acting because it will have a direct impact on the rest of the family members. So he thinks of the consequences of his actions." His wife Kiran also said the same thing as her husband did on this topic, "it is essential for both people to give in a little bit and to adjust to the other person. It is not right for just one person to keep doing the adjusting ... this is your life and it will become better for the future. So you should live your life with the future in mind. You have all the talent and tools with you. You should just learn how to use them."

Interestingly, although the man or husband is said to be the leader and "boss" in the house, some husbands pointed out that the reality is that they must please their wife and family as well. Karan commented on placing his wife's wishes above his own so that the peace in the home could be maintained. He said, "And in my opinion the first person that you should try and satisfy is the wife and only after that you should focus on your own things. Because if the wife, and your parents are not satisfied there will be a lot of tension in the house." Sanjay, another husband similarly said, "So I respect her wishes and try and put her wants before mine. And I don't have very many wishes or desires, so this becomes easy for me to do." Shankar shared that he was sensitive to his wife's wishes by saying, "I had to be mindful of her wishes. If she said sometimes, like these bangles are nice, then I paid attention to that. Even if she does not have wishes, does not mean that I should not get anything for her. I should get things for her from time to time."

Although compromise is desirable, some of the wives felt that the role of the wife often called for them to accommodate to their husband's wishes, and to absorb the tension surrounding an issue in order to maintain the peace in the relationship. Seema talked about giving in to her husband's views ever so often when he becomes stubborn about something. She shared, "I don't have to do much. We have a good understanding between us. But sometimes my husband gets

angry and then he does not budge from his point. At that time he will not bend or yield to another's point of view and he does not say sorry to me. The rare times that we do have a fight, he does not say sorry to me. So I have to make-up with him and say sorry to him instead."

Sushila said, "This is the only thing that I had to do on a consistent basis. I had to agree with him on most things. So in the moment, even if he was saying the wrong thing, I agreed with him and there was no problem, no arguments." Sanjay's wife Kiran interestingly pointed toward her own sacrifices in her marriage by saying, "I have compromised more than my husband has. And I have had to accept some of his views even though I did not agree with them. But I have walked along with my husband in the way that he has wanted me to."

Sudha talked about specific examples of adjustment. She said, "Suppose he (my husband) wants to go somewhere and I do not want to go, but then I have to go because then, well if I go with him then when I am in the mood to go somewhere then he will also go with me whether he is in the mood to do so or not. If I listen to him today only then will he listen to me on the future or tomorrow, and accept my wishes ... I had a lot of habits that he was not particularly fond of. But I am not a stubborn person, so I did not insist on things. So my husband was patient with me. Sometimes he fulfilled my wish and went along with what I was insisting on, but sometimes he refused me also, and sometimes he delayed fulfilling my wish too." Neelam shared, "In reality we have to adjust a lot after we get married. We have to do a lot of work, physical and otherwise, and we have to really try and understand our partner as a person. We get a lot of responsibilities on our head and we have to bear them. And then we have to stay happily with our spouse ... if we are self-centered and we keep thinking about ourselves then it is clear that the other person is not important to us. And we will not be able to make the other person important for us and we will not be able to maintain the marriage." Veena stated categorically, "Yes, that you have to do. All ladies have to make the adjustments. There is no question about it ... I did whatever he wanted me to do and in the manner in which he wanted me to do it." Karan shared, "I don't like some of the things that she (my wife) does, but I keep quiet and try to be supportive of her. This is what adjustments are all about. This impacts the children also because they will follow your behavior." As mentioned before, even though the husband is the leader in the house, he has to placate his wife at times to maintain the peace in the household. For example, Raju shared, "my wife has a temper and so to calm her down I have had to adjust more." Dinesh talked about making adjustments as a continuous process when he said, "everybody has their own way of thinking you know. When a person gets married or the alliance has been arranged for the two persons to get married, then it is no point in complaining about things as to why is this thing happening like this or that should happen instead. So a person should adjust themselves to their circumstances." Dinesh's wife Rita shared similar views as her husband. She said, "If I keep nagging him then we will fight, the children will see us fight and this will spoil their lives. So I have decided to let him be. If he doesn't listen to me then so be it. What else can you do? If you keep

fighting then the household gets disrupted ... I had to suffer through a lot of hardships. I had to keep doing things that others told me to do ... the only thing I say is that a person should adapt to the changing environment and the changing time. This is the only way the family can progress and move forward and be happy.”

Bala talked about making adjustments as inevitable in a marriage. He said, “Both the people should be able to adjust to these little things in their life. These are little things and they come about in the initial phase of a marriage. So in order to maintain your marriage and to ensure it’s smooth workings, a person has to and must adjust.” Bala’s wife Shashi Prabha talked at length about how important making adjustments was in a relationship and how a person should be open to this. She shared, “Either you have to ask someone to do the adjustment or then you have to do it yourself ... when one has to do the adjustment, and that is a given, then a person should go ahead and do it, get married and adjust with their spouse ... I am the oldest amongst my siblings so I had much confidence in myself that no matter what kind of a husband I got I knew that I would be able to adapt myself to him or that I would be able to get him to adapt to me ... suppose the views do not match and are in opposition to each other. And you do not know about these immediately when you meet a person. As you spend time with each other you find out more and more of their views and what their nature is. So if you have the courage and strength, then you can mould your husband towards your nature, or then you can mould yourself towards your husband’s nature. By doing this, then you can live your life in peace and with each other ... and I have molded him a little according to my nature and my ways. But I could not do that completely. Some things I had to change about myself too and I had to adapt myself to his ways and his nature too ... but when you get to know more and more about your husband’s nature then you don’t get hurt. It is their nature and you have to manage it in your interactions.” Rajiv shared that adjustment in a marriage happened automatically. He said, “Everyone has to adjust in a marriage. One has to learn to walk along with the other, the partner. So I have seen that take place in the marriages around me ... all these things one gets to know automatically in about a year or two. A person adjusts to the likes and dislikes of a person automatically. So both the people make this adjustment and so one does not even come to know about it, but each of them understands the likes and dislikes of the other person quite well on their own.” Rajiv’s wife Seema said, “I mean whatever their views are, or what they want and desire, the two people try and fulfill these for each other. If my husband likes something then I will try and do things that way, even though I may not like doing it that way myself. So even though I do not like doing something a certain way, I will still go ahead and do it because my husband likes it done that way.” Vinod shared, “Just as we fight, we compromise with each other also. One person has to bend and then we can make peace with each other. Both of us cannot stand strong on our individual points because that will never lead us to a place of peace.”

Acceptance of blame in an argument and taking personal responsibility for actions were other attributes most participants mentioned while talking about desirable qualities in a partner and also how these attributes help them in their own marriage. Raju shared, "These are small adjustments and I tell her sorry and that I will not do this in the future ... it is not much work. I just keep quiet and let her vent. When she keeps quiet then I tell her that I am sorry and that I will not do it again." Sneha said, "Yes, we do not blame the other person for our mistakes ... I adjust to him and he adjusts to me. If he makes a mistake he apologizes for it. I do not expect him to apologize for something wrong that I have done." On a similar note, her husband Vinod shared, "When a person does make a mistake and when we do have a fight it is not reasonable to hold on to the wrong thought or your view even though you know that you are wrong. So after a fight I usually own my mistake if it was my mistake." Indrajit shared that he does not expect his wife to apologize when he is at fault. "If my wife tells me that I am doing something wrong then I try to change my way of doing that thing. So I cooperate with my wife. This is when I am in the wrong, and I do say that I am wrong and that I am sorry. When my wife is in the wrong, then she is the one who makes the change. So we apologize to one another and that is the main thing ... if you were right then it is okay, but if you were wrong then you will accept that and will say sorry to the other person. So both persons must understand each other." Ram also shared the same sentiment by saying, "It is not necessary that whatever the man says is right ... it is important to think with a calm and collected mind. Maybe at that time, it is not possible, but one should listen to whatever is being said with a cool mind. That if she is right and I am wrong then I should accept that ... so if one person is wrong or has made a mistake, they should accept that they are wrong. We should all do this in our lives ... if it has happened and you have fought, then you can always make-up with your wife. You can always say that it is my fault. This helps in keeping the environment of the home okay ... one should not place so much importance on oneself and one should not be so proud that one should think that if I were to accept my mistake then it means that I have become small as a person."

Theme: Prosocial personality traits. Very broadly and very briefly speaking, according to Western psychologists personality is made up of the organized and consistent characteristic patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that make a person unique (Erikson, 1982; Maslow, 1954). From the participants' responses to the questions "What is required of men and women in general to maintain their marriage?" several themes emerged such as "understanding the partner", "having unity amongst the partners", and "self control". Instead of keeping these as separate themes, they were collectively placed under the encompassing theme - personality traits. Personality traits such as self-control, empathy or understanding (or accepting) their partner's point of view especially in conflictual situations were mentioned consistently by the participants.

Even though the participants used the word “understanding”, the meaning implied was that the partner should be an “accepting” person more than anything else and should try and accept their partner for who and what they are and also what they say. This also includes being in agreement with the partner’s views. Nalin shared, “Psychologically in the sense like when I am coming home from office, when I am coming from outside, she should understand what could be the problems when I was outside or when I was in office. So she should be polite, she should understand actually when you are happy or when you are sad. So she should avoid talking about the problems that she has now and she should just make me comfortable then she can put her problems like this is the problem in our household before me, so this is one thing ... and she should understand, or he should understand, well both should understand each other from any point of view or in any complication, they should understand each other. That is what I feel, she (my wife) should understand me well. She should cooperate with me at every point of view.” Ram said, “They should also know about each other’s nature and personalities. They should understand that about one another.” Shakuntla shared, “And the wife should understand her husband ... both the boy and the girl should make an effort to understand each other. This is not an easy relationship and it can neither be broken easily nor put back together easily ... if the wife understands her husband then the marriage will remain intact.” Similarly, Karan stressed the nonverbal communication between partners when he said, “If your partner does not understand you then it is not good. If she understands your signals then it is very good. If you have to tell her something ten times then it is useless ... I have also tried to understand my wife and to adjust to her.” Indrajit said simply, “And both the people must understand each other. If I say something to her then she should not fight with me about it or oppose me. This will not be good. And they should build a family together.” Sudha said, “The first and foremost thing is that we should understand each other’s wishes, that is, what is it that they want.” Her husband Shankar, shared her views when he emphasized that the partners should “understand” one another. He said, “The biggest thing is that we should understand one another and should move forward together ... there is only one thing here. The two people should try to understand each other’s views and opinions ... they should understand the other person’s feelings instead (of fighting).” Kiran shared that, “A person should try and understand his or her partner’s way of thinking and the views that they hold.” Sneha, another wife said, “The main thing that I would say to them is that the husband and wife should understand each other’s emotions and feelings, and they should also understand each other’s thoughts, views, and opinions. If they are able to do this then they not have any arguments, fights, or disruptions in their marriage ... sometimes mistakes happen suddenly and are not intentional. Understanding where your partner is coming from or what they mean when they say something is important because that eliminates arguments and fights.” Krishna also voiced the same idea by saying, “The first thing is that they should be able to understand one another. They should know one another. In an arranged marriage you only get to understand your

spouse after you get married to them. In love marriage, you can understand your partner before marriage.” Sanjay mentioned the same concept and stressed that the partners should invest time to understand one another. He said, “The people should have a level of understanding between them ... they should try and understand one another. They should try and understand each other’s personalities (*swabhava*) and idiosyncrasies. If there is a difference of opinion then they should try to understand that about their partner.”

An aspect of understanding the partner is being on the same page with them and to have a united front (in front of others and with each other) as far as their thinking is concerned. A person’s willingness and ability to “match their thinking process with their partner” was viewed as a desirable quality by the participants as this helps to keep a marriage intact. They mentioned that when the couple were able to be on the same page or were able to present a united front, that indicated that they “understood” each other well. Akshay shared, “Their thinking should be same, It should be a good match ... their thinking should be same. It should be a good match.” Seema also said, “I mean that the views and thoughts of two people match with each other. They are in sync with each other.” Rita shared, “both the hands should work together, and both the man and the woman should walk together in life and this is the only way you can maintain a marriage. If both of them take off in different directions then that is counterproductive.” Sneha stated, “Their views should match well with one another.” Krishna described this by using a metaphor. She said, “If a vehicle has one wheel from a cycle and one wheel from a tractor, how do you expect this vehicle to move forward? The vehicle will not be able to move well. Either both the wheels should be from the cycle or both of them should be from the tractor. Only then will the vehicle of life move forward.” Ram used a similar metaphor to explain how he saw life moving ahead smoothly. He said, “The partners are like the tires of a vehicle. Only if the tires move together and go the same way will the vehicle move and move in the right direction ... well for this, a man should know about his wife’s habits. He should know what her habits are. And the wife should know about her husband’s habits also. They should understand each other.” Kiran shared similar views when she said, “First and foremost, the two people should walk together. They should be united ... so only when both the people develop a similar way of thinking then it will be a good thing.”

All the participants mentioned the ability of a person to control oneself -- their words or actions in a situation, and to demonstrate tolerance towards their partner and the behaviors that they do not like. Increasing tolerance for differences is part of Hindu philosophy and is encouraged by the elders as desirable and appropriate attitude in people (Carter, 1982). Sushila laughed and shared, “One thing is that if one person is saying something, the other person should tolerate it ... if I speak in front of my husband when my husband is also speaking then the argument will not end ... my husband is from the military and his way of speaking is different. He was in the official line, so it is like that and I have had to tolerate it.” Krishna explained what she

meant by developing tolerance by saying, “If we were to take a step in life, like if there is a fight in the house, but till something really big does not happen, something that is beyond tolerance, well a person should tolerate some things, because we are all humans, you know and nobody is perfect. So if a person gets married, and if they have something lacking inside of them like a flaw, then you can work on it and make it better ... when you do fall in love with a person, and after that you find out something about them that you do not like then what will you say to them? Will you tell him that you have these bad points in you and you are like this and like that? And because of all these things I cannot love you anymore. So lets just finish this thing called love right here. Well, you can't say something like this you know. So you have to tolerate some things that you don't like about the one you love.” Shakuntla talked about her children and not her marriage on this topic. She said, “I taught them (my children) that they should increase their tolerance for conflict and delayed gratification so that they are able to maintain the peace in their homes and families.” Uma shared, “To stay married, first of all they should have good control over their emotions. They should have patience and they should have forgiveness. They should have a lot of forgiveness in them. Because every person cannot be perfect. No one is perfect. But forgiving as soon as possible is what makes a marriage work.” Similarly, Sameer shared, “People should not fight with each other and should maintain the peace and calm within themselves and with each other. Some people have a hot temper so they should try and control that.”

Code. Attributes of extended family

As mentioned earlier, a marriage in India unites two families rather than just the two individuals. Many wife participants talked about establishing a relationship with their in-laws and finding their place within their in-law or *true* family. The husband participants talked about their wish of marrying a person who would help to keep the family intact and who would raise their own children in a positive environment. A positive relationship with the in-law family members was one of the issues that the respondents mentioned when asked what would they would hope to get from or out of marriage. One primary theme emerged from this code: *Supportive in-laws and extended family*.

Theme: Supportive in-laws and extended family. In India, more often than not, the bride joins the husband's home and family after the marriage. Some wives talked about wishing that they would get married in a family where the members were supportive, kind, accepting, and loving, and who provided some autonomy to the new member of the family. To “get” a good and supportive in-law family is noted as a very desirable attribute in connection to the prospective spouse. The husbands did not comment on this much. Traditionally they do not integrate into their wife's families. Rita, who had experienced rejection from her in-laws and husband's extended family, shared, “The in-laws should be good people. The husband should also be a good person. He and the in-laws should not be nit-picking people who are always pointing things out to you on a constant basis. The in-laws should keep their daughters-in-law just like they would keep their

daughters in their home ... if a person gets married then the family that they go into should be a good family or else staying single is a good place to be ... all I wanted was to get a good family. What else can a person ask for and what else can a person get, you know.” Bala said, “So every boy and girl thinks about and wishes that they get married and that they get married into a good home and family.” Shakuntla shared, “So I used to think that I should get a family where people would be happy people ... also, she (the new bride) should get the respect from all the members of his (the husband’s) family too including his brothers, sisters, and his parents ... besides the husband should respect and honor his wife also.” Suneeta shared, “And I also wished that I will have no interference from anybody (in my in-law family) to run my own house.”

Class. Learning Process

Historically, Hindus in India have a tradition through which cultural information, knowledge, and behaviors are passed on to others or to the next generation either orally (Gatwood, 1985; Khatri, 1983) or by social modeling within a given environment (Bandura, 1988). The participants were asked, “Where did you learn your beliefs from?” and “How did you learn your beliefs about marriage?” A follow up question posed to them was “Who taught you your beliefs?” In their responses they all indicated their family or the community that they lived in as a source of learning. As a result, one main group or category of how they came to believe what they believed about marriage emerged from this class: Ecosystemic environments.

Code. Ecosystemic environments

The participants commented on their environment in their home and in their communities that had helped them to learn about their culture, religion, and relationships. Four primary themes emerged:

1. Ancient books
2. Community or societal modeling
3. Observing parents and extended kin
4. Self or own ideas

Theme: Ancient books. This theme emerged as only some of the participants shared that they had read the ancient religious books and that was the source of the cultural transmission and their beliefs about marriage. Not many respondents shared that they actively engaged in reading the religious books. However, they did share that most of their behavior and the practice of rituals was influenced by these texts. In a prayer ceremony or the celebration of a festival the prayers that are either recited or sung are derived from the religious texts but these are taught to the younger generation by their parents when they recite them over and over again. India is a secular country and as such does not permit the teaching of religious texts in schools and colleges. There are no departments or programs specializing in Hindu religious studies at the universities in the urban areas of the countries (Das & Bardis, 1978). Indian religious and ancient books such as the *Manusastra*, the *Dharmasastras*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Vedas*, *Upanishads*,

the *Puranas*, and the *Ramayana* are some of the ancient texts that mention the marital and familial relationships and appropriate behavior for people within these relationships. The duties and responsibilities are also specified in the texts that form a blueprint of sorts for people to follow. In the *Ramayana*, the wife's behavior is modeled after a quiet, mature, supportive, emotionally strong yet submissive, and obedient woman. In contrast, in the *Mahabharata*, the wife's behavior is modeled after a passionate, fiery, ethical, supportive, humorous, yet an obedient woman. The behaviors of the husbands in both these epics are modeled after an ethical, dutiful, pious, religious, and sensitive man. Ram pointed to this elaborate literature source when he said, "There is a lot written in our ancient books on marriage." Akshay claimed the ancient texts as his source for cultural transmission and stated, "And I learned this from my Hindu religious teachings." Similarly, Krishna shared, "This I learned from my education. When we study and learn (from our religious texts), and utilize our brain, (then we grow as people)." Shakuntla eluded to the blueprint to be followed in the religious texts when she shared, "We read religious books then we get guidance from that (about what marriage means, what to do and how to do it)." Nalin, shared about his religious education and said, "Basically, I am a Brahmin from Orissa. And from the very beginning, from my childhood, I have learnt about the Ramayana, Gita, and Mahabharata, etc., etc. I know the marriage system in Ramayana and the marriage system in the Mahabharata very well. So in my family they do follow the same thing. So this (my belief) is nothing beyond that."

Theme: Community or societal modeling. India is a collectivist culture with ideologies that match this sociopolitical dogma (Dhruvarajan, 1988). In a collectivist society, the family name and social standing within a community, and saving face by not bringing shame to the family are of prime importance (Dhruvarajan, 1988). Societal norms set by the Hindu Indian culture dictate the appropriateness of behavior, views, attitudes, and what constitutes shame or inappropriateness (Anderson, 1997; Doherty, 1991; Fowers & Richardson, 1996). The aim of all families and family members is to protect the family name and social standing by following the social norm and the rules set by the culture/community. Not following the norms results in serious repercussions and the family is shamed in their extended community (comprised of their extended kin and friends). The uniformity of the social norms and the consistency with which they are followed provide a modeling base for the initiation of the next generation of young adults and it takes place through observation (Bandura, 2006; Walters & Parke, 2006) and by following the oral tradition of knowledge transmission. Krishna, brought to light the impact of observing her community and society had on what she learned and how she incorporated that into her own belief system. "We live in a society and a culture. In this culture, we have to be careful, while we are growing up we look at what is happening around us in our neighborhood or even in our own homes, we see all of this ... so we learn from that." Kiran shared similarly, "I learnt it from the society and from my own parents." Uma, another wife pointed out, "this is purely my observation ... I observed my close

friends, people who come across me in my neighborhood, my friends, and my associates, and learnt from them.” Rajiv talked directly about the social norms when he shared, “and we also learn this from watching the society and what is considered appropriate by it.” Akshay, another husband, shrugged his shoulders and said, “yes, my learning came to me from my environment.” Vinod commented on the cyclic and continuous aspect of observing the society and learning from it by sharing, “I learnt it from the society ... this is the same thing that has been happening and continuing from ages and from the past. So I watched this and learnt from it.” Finally, Nalin included the mass media: “I learned this from the society itself only ... in media, in the paper, you just come across everyday, different type of marriage and different type of things.”

Rita commented on the observational aspect of how she formed her beliefs and then shared that she did not think marriage to be a valuable and useful institution by any means. She sounded hurt and disappointed when she shared, “I saw people and I saw families and then I learnt about it. Nobody taught it to me directly. The things that I have experienced, and the things that I have lived through have taught me that marriage is really a useless thing.”

Theme: Observing parents and extended kin. Many participants shared that they incorporated their parents’ views, behaviors, and the traditions (participating in rituals and rites) into their own belief systems by being an observer as well as a participant and following directions given to them about certain traditions (Bandura, 2006). Following the prayer rituals of the family, celebrating festivals with stories narrated from the Indian mythology, or the reason why a day or event is celebrated are shared by the family and community members. Also, the birthdays of the major Gods and Goddesses in the Indian pantheon are celebrated with prayers and stories about their life and accomplishments as well as the lessons that should be drawn from their life story. These cultural and religious messages from the larger culture impact the family and the individual in how they live, what views they hold, and what they consider appropriate versus not. Sanjay said in a matter of fact way, “I am just following the tradition that has been followed before me (in my house) ... I saw what my parents did and how they lived. So this is where I learnt this (my beliefs) from.” Indrajit, another husband said, “I learnt this from my parents. I saw that they respect each other very much. They love each other very much. So I learnt this from them.” Shankar, Sudha’s husband elaborated on observational learning from his family a little more and said, “Well, you can call them family traditions. We were lucky to have been born in a home where we had traditions that taught us to respect other people. And we were taught to respect women also and to honor their wishes and desires. So whatever they (my parents) did, we watched, and it influenced us, and our thinking. The same traditions we have brought into our own lives as well.” Seema recalled her days in her parents’ home before she was married and shared, “I saw how my parents lived together as husband and wife, and learnt things from them. My parents have a wonderful understanding between them. I have never seen them argue or fight with each other. I have always seen a lot of love between them.”

Akshay's comment highlighted the indirect manner of observational learning when he shared, "Nobody taught it (beliefs about the meaning of marriage) to me. It automatically came to me because I have seen so many people and I have seen my parents together for the last so many years. So it automatically came to me." Akshay's wife, Neelam shared without hesitation about her learning source and said, "My parents, of course. I saw the relationship that my mother and father shared with each other, so I learnt this from them. I saw the way my mother supported my father and how she was with his parents, so I learnt a lot from that." Sneha clarified the distinction between the environment inside and outside of the home. She also placed all responsibility and accountability for learning and cultural transmission to take place inside of the house, namely on the parents. She said, "We were taught the right values and morals at home. We are taught values in our homes. We don't learn values from places outside our home. So, all that I have learnt and seen is because of my parents. I have gained in experience after watching my parents' marriage and how they lived with each other." Mamta agreed with Sneha's response and shared, "My parents taught me this as well as my ethics ...No I have never read any *sastra*, so it is not from there. This is what I have learnt from my parents."

Some participants extended their learning model from their parents to their relatives and extended kin, namely elders and ancestors in facilitating the learning process. Ram said, "I learnt these from my elders and ancestors." Bala, another husband, pointed to the importance of elders. He noted that he observed more than just his parents and said, "When I was a little boy I looked after my elders a lot. I did chores for them and took care of their needs. I spent a lot of time with them and I would hear their conversations all the time, so I learnt a lot from them. I learnt my views from them as well." Seema's husband Rajiv opined, "We understand a lot by watching the other relatives who are married, and the other people in the society who are married." Veena also included her extended family in the pool of people that she had observed and from whom she had learned about marriage. She said, "I used to see my own parents and I used to see how well they lived with each other. So that is where I learnt this from. And I also watched my other family members. It is a cycle." Similarly, Dinesh shared, "I saw my older sister and how she conducted herself in her married life, and I also saw my parents' relationship. Then I learnt a few things." Sudha commented on her learning process by saying, "I have seen this from our forefathers." Sameer put it simply and stated, "I learnt this from my family."

Theme: Self or own ideas. Some participants did say that the way they incorporated the cultural messages and the religious messages about marriage did not come from external teaching and models. Many participants mentioned that their beliefs about marriage were a product of their own thinking and who they were as people. Words as "automatic learning" and "natural learning" were used to indicate how they accepted the cultural messages about the institution and incorporated them in their own beliefs. The participants shared that their observations (as mentioned earlier) were "automatically" incorporated in their thinking resulting in

their current beliefs. This theme indicated individuality in thoughts and beliefs of the participants, but at the same time reflected collective ideology as far as the content of the beliefs was concerned. Sushila shared, “No one taught me. I have learnt these from my own wish (and attempt), my *hunar* (talent, skill, knowledge), and from the point of view of my soul, I have had these views and opinions.” Her response almost suggests that it was out of choice that she believed what she did. But no mention was made of the social pressures to incorporate these beliefs or the consequences a person might face if they were to believe something different, thus maintaining the illusion of personal choice. This dynamic could be part of the large social control that is a part of the Hindu Indian collectivist culture. Similarly, Vijay shared, “No, no one taught me. It just came into my mind. I got this view by looking at my environment.” Seema commented on the natural acquisition of her beliefs by saying, “Nobody taught these to me. It is natural. These came naturally to me.” Her husband Rajiv laughed and then responded, “These views a person learns on their own.” When asked about his laughter, he just shrugged his shoulders and smiled. Likewise, Raju observed “Nobody taught them to me. These (beliefs) are from my heart.” Shashi Prabha also shared “...You can also say that this is a product of my own natural thinking.” Bina, a wife said, “We have learned all this on our own. I have tried to understand the situations that we have found ourselves in and then by keeping an eye on the future I have made decisions using my own understanding and intellect.” Uma, another wife, voiced a belief similar to those of the others. To Uma, her life experiences had helped shape/form her beliefs: “My self experience has taught these to me.”

Class: Contemporary Changes in MCUH Marriage

Many participants talked about how, in their opinion, “things” were much different in the present time that they were even a few years ago: “These days girls are *doing* love marriages”; “These days boys just don’t listen, they want to study and get a good job, a house, a car, before they think about marriage.” These statements led the inquiry toward changes in beliefs about marriage through the eyes of the participants. The questions posed to the participants were “Has there been a change in the way people think about marriage from 10 years ago to now?” and “Has the meaning and purpose of marriage changed over the last 10 years?” The follow up question posed to them was “What do you think has contributed to this change?” This question was further translated as “What in your opinion is the reason for this change?” Two primary codes emerged from this class: *Cultural deviation* and *Sources of change*.

Code. Cultural deviation

Participants talked about the Hindu culture not being able to retain its uniqueness as they discussed the changes that they saw in the community around them. It seemed to them that – at the macrosystemic level -- Western mores, through the processes of mass media, were changing their traditional Hindu culture such that people were encouraged to no longer adhere strictly to traditional ways. They also talked about the reciprocal relationship between the messages the

new generation gets from the macrosystem and the beliefs and attitudes they currently hold, which very much are the domain of the microsystem and the mesosystem within which the Hindu participant population is embedded. Four primary themes emerged from within this code:

1. Increased autonomy of choice
2. Romantic love as a threshold state for marriage
3. Impermanency
4. Shift in views of adult women

Theme: Increasing autonomy of choice. Increased autonomy in choosing a partner emerged as a broad theme that encompassed “self selection”, “in consultation with parents”, and “in collaboration with parents.” An increased autonomy of choice in mate selection indicates a change in the process because now the young adults can choose from their partner from a “list” of potential partners that have already been initially screened by their parents as opposed to the parents selecting the partner for their adult child and informing them of the decision and choice. The participants elaborated on the three ways and explained what each of them meant. The process of “self selection” means that the young adult chooses their partner from a group of “pre-approved potential partners” brought to them by their parents. “In consultation with parents” means that the parents ask their child if they are ready to get married, their preferences, and the qualities that may appeal to them. The parents then go ahead and seek a partner for their child whom they believe is appropriate. “In collaboration with the parents” means that the parents work together with their adult child to find the best possible match for them as far as family background, family structure, personal qualities, employment, etc. are concerned. In such a case, finding a partner is a fully collaborative endeavor.

Veena talked about the self-selection process when she shared, “Earlier on there was a lot of restriction and a feeling of bondage. But now people have a lot more freedom and the youngsters of today do things according to their wishes.” Rita also alluded to the young adults selecting their partners when she said, “The children are not paying attention to things such as caste. They are not looking at anything else except their hormones and that they like this one person. They do not respect anything or anyone, so that is what I meant by saying that they are moving very fast.” Sneha, another wife also indicated the same process when she shared, “Today the youngsters prefer to select their mates themselves. And this trend is increasing.” Suneeta observed, “In earlier days girls were very dependent and they were not educated. But today they are moving ahead with education and job skills to back them up. They choose their own life partner these days, which was not the case earlier on.”

Shakuntla commented on consulting with her children in regards to getting them married. She said, “This is another change that has come about. So we discuss the potential partners with our daughters and let them know about his educational level and his family, and the kind of job that he is doing. This did not happen in olden days, so this is a big change that has come about in

our society.” Ram also shared the same view: “Today, we ask our children about this. We talk to them and tell them that we are thinking of getting you married, why don’t you see/meet the girl. If the child is a girl who is to get married then we ask her as well to see the boy. So that no child can say that the parents forced him or her to get married to a certain person. Because later in life then there is a possibility of them having fights and arguments. One of them can say (to the parents) that they did not know anything and was not told anything, they were just married off ... That is why we have decided that we will not do with our children how things were done with us when we were young by our parents. We will provide our children with an opportunity to see, meet, and talk to the boy or the girl before they decide to get married so that you can get to know what the other person’s views are and they can get to know what your views and opinions are ... In today’s society, the times have changed, so even we believe that the children are educated and they should help in this decision regarding their future. This is something that has changed. The boy and girl can see each other before they get married. It is not a rule that we still follow the ways that were set by our ancestors.”

Bina talked about collaborating with her children as far as finding the best possible match for them or then yielding to their wishes. She said, “This is a big change from how things were once upon a time. And these days the parents have also changed. If the children say that this is the person they want to get married to, the parents also get the two of them married even if the person is from another caste.” Sushila compared her experience of the mate selection process and pointed out how much it had changed when she shared, “Well, my husband did not see me and I didn’t see him either (before we got married). Our fathers decided on the match and then we just got married. And now I have boys who want to see, and they see the girl first and then decide whether it is going to be a yes or a no for the match ... Before, the elders would decide to get a child married, the child would get married and then have children. But today, the boy and the girl select and choose their partner. So the person they like is the person they will choose to settle down with.” Shankar said, “These days the young people are given the time by their parents to find out more about each other. They are asked to assess each other and to understand one another as people. They are also asked to find out whether their views and thoughts match or not. Nowadays our society seems to be a little more relaxed about these matters relating to the girls and boys of marriageable age. This is the reason I said that things have changed and it almost seems like things have been flipped around (*paltav*).” Shankar’s wife, Sudha, expressed similar views: “At that time the parents used to see and select the life partner for the girl and she did not know how that person would turn out to be because she had not seen them. But today, they see the person and judge him first, and then decide. So this is a very good thing.” Kiran raised her eyebrows and said, “These days the children tell their parents to show the potential partner to them first and they decide whether they want to get married to that person or not.” Shashi Prabha talked about managing the mate selection process as in an arranged

marriage yet providing the two individuals with some freedom of choice in the matter. She said, "The (pre-selected) girl and the boy are made to sit in front of each (during a meeting of the two families) and told that they can see each other and each is told what the other does and what qualifications they hold. And if they like each other then they say yes to the match. And if they do not approve of one another then that is okay too. So I like this new change in the tradition. Both the children are given the opportunity to get to know one another and to understand one another (during the meeting) with regard to what each one of them is like as a person. And then the marriage should take place after this has happened. So I like this. And I feel that this is right also."

Theme: Romantic love as a threshold state for marriage. The participants shared that one of the changes that they had noticed was that the younger generation preferred to fall in love with a person and then decide to marry them whether their parents approved of the match or not. So romantic love is increasingly being considered a prerequisite to marriage. Some participants disapproved of this change. For example, Vinod shook his head from side to side in apparent disapproval and said "They marry people from outside their community and status. They fall in love these days and *then* decide to get married." But others felt differently about this trend. For example, Akshay observed that "these days love marriages are happening more. And the parents also accept this very easily. Earlier it was a very taboo thing." Bina partially accepted this change in contemporary thinking when she said, "both girls and boys fall in love and then they get married to each other. Girls these days tell their parents very clearly that they want to get married to a specific person ... I want that my educated son should go and find an educated partner for himself. If he wants to, then this is a good thing, if that is what he chooses to do. In the village you do not find very educated girls." Sudha suggested that one reason why "love marriages" were increasing in the society was that the boys and girls were coming together in the work force and, besides meeting each other, the exposure eroded inhibitions. "Well they (young girls and boys) work outside the home and do service. There are call centers here where both girls and boys work together. So they spend the entire day together, and when they will interact with each other so much and then they will tell their parents that they will choose their partner themselves ... boys are, or the children of today are so forward, much more than what we were."

The two couples who had selected their spouses gave two reasons for getting married: "Being in love" with their partners and wanting to spend all their time together with each other. Uma stated, "I was looking forward to getting married because I loved him and he loved me and we really wanted to get married." Her husband Narayan shared, "Firstly, we were dating each other and we wanted to get married. We wanted to be together and this is the only way we could live together. And marriage is the right way to do it and it is approved by everyone ... today the children choose their own partners (falling in love) without looking at the family and the medical history of the members." Indrajit said, "I was so much in love with her at that time. We were seeing each other and at that time I wanted her to be with me all the time. And that is why we

decided to marry and spend all our time with each other.” His wife Rachna shared in a melancholy manner, “They say that love is blind. I was blind when I got married. So that is why I got married, I fell in love and got married.” According to Stanley (2001) love causes blindness and the only cure for it is marriage. An individual who is blind in love, can only cure his condition by getting married (Markman, Stanley, & Blumberg, 1994; Stanley, Trathen, McCain, & Bryan, 1998).

Theme: Impermanency. Impermanence is a concept in Hinduism and Buddhism that means that all things -- including attachments -- are transitory and nothing lasts forever (Carter, 1982; Dhruvarajan, 1988). However, the notion of impermanence does not relate to human relationships and families. Relationships such as marriage or parent child relationships are permanent and ever lasting. In light of this philosophic thought, in recent times Hindu people are considering divorce and separation from their spouse as an option. They thereby are contradicting the ancient Hindu meaning of marriage and extending the idea of impermanence to marriage. An interesting observation was that the participants used the English word “divorce” while addressing this issue because there is no comparable word in Hindi for divorce. There is an Urdu word (*talak*) that has been incorporated into the Hindi language instead. Krishna commented on why she thought people would consider getting divorced as an option. She said, “The first initial months after the marriage, if there is a lot of fighting that happens between them, then this is not enough time for the love to grow between the couple. And then the fighting gets more and the love becomes less so the couple start talking about divorce.” Her husband Raju observed, “Today you will see, within two years of a marriage, people go and seek divorce. There are so many court cases regarding divorce these days ... First people used to believe in the husband and wife staying together. But in today’s world, they have a fight, and they are not cooperating with one another. They are like a vehicle that needs to be pushed every now and then to start the engine (and not a well maintained and functioning vehicle that runs on its own).” Nalin, another husband, said, “People do marry, divorce after three months, four months, or three years. Again they get married, I believe they do this for entertainment (and do not take marriage seriously).” Sneha seemed to attribute contemporary marital breakup to some women’s inability to select good mates or subsequent inability to adjust. “In olden times the parents of a girl would get her married even without showing her the groom, and she would make her life with him because this was her lot in life. But now this is not the case anymore. Even though the girls are selecting their own partners now ...they still are not able to make their lives with their husbands sometimes.” Uma pointed towards the social repercussions that a person may face and how some people do not fear that anymore. She said, “They (young adults of today) know what they want they don’t get scared to get separated or to break it (marriage).”

Akshay talked about the changing meaning of the institution of marriage when he said, “Earlier marriage was considered to be a very sacred thing and a very religious institution. But

now it is not like that anymore. It has become more like a business.” His wife Neelam commented, “Now the importance placed on marriage has reduced quite a lot. These days there is a new system that is becoming popular. It is the ‘living together’ system. They stay with each other as a married couple without getting married. So you will stay with this person for about a year, and then there is no guarantee of anything, and then you change your partners and move in with someone else for another duration of time.” Seema, another wife opined, “In society there has been a lot of change in the way people think these days. A lot of people have started thinking of marriage as a game. Once upon a time people used to think of marriage as a sacred and pure relationship. But these days people think of it in terms of bondage and they feel tied down forcefully (so they look for ways of getting out of it).”

Theme: Shift in views of adult women. This theme emerged as the participants talked about Hindu women pursuing formal education and becoming more independent as a matter of courage and choice on their part (Kakar, 1988; Nandy, 1988). They also talked about Hindu families encouraging their daughters to pursue economic independence through formal education and employment (Das & Ghadially, 1988; Roy, 1988). Most women participants commented on this topic. However, very few husbands had anything to say about it. Mamta talked about experiencing personal freedom after getting married. She shared, “It is very open, like nobody stops you from going anywhere for any work or anything. Initially if a girl was married, she had to cover her head and much of her face all the time in the house (*ghunghat*), and she could not go out of the house. But now this is not there anymore.” Suneeta added, “And the girls are making fewer compromises in their marriage these days.” Krishna commented on the women becoming more independent and the decreasing stigma attached to divorce in contemporary society. She said, “Today both husbands and wives have more of an ego problem. If there is something amiss, neither one wants to tolerate it and neither wants to end the fight. And since the girls are independent, they are working outside the house, they feel that they should not have to tolerate any fighting. The women in today’s day say that they can nurture and raise their child on their own. They do not want to be dependent on others or want others to raise their child. About ten years ago, and even before that, people would think that divorce was very wrong. And nobody would marry a divorced girl, but now it is not like that. Girls are getting divorced and they are getting remarried.” Neelam also commented on women becoming more independent and placing themselves and their needs before anybody or anything else when she said, “I feel that girls should be independent and strong in their life ...so I think that these days the people have started thinking about themselves more than the other person ... in earlier times maybe the girls thought about themselves less. And this was true even before they got married. So when they were in the parents’ home they would give more importance to their parents and what they wanted and needed. And after the marriage, they would do the same thing in their husband’s home. They would give more importance to their husband’s needs and their children’s needs than to

themselves. By doing this they were able to live a long life with their husbands. Now I think the girls think about themselves more.”

Indrajit shared that, in his opinion, women who wanted to work outside the home were interested in pursuing money in lieu of more traditional ways of being. He said, “Globally our country and our world is changing. Because of money, things are changing too. People are running after money. They are searching for money, money, money. Women are working outside the home now because even they are after money.” Seema spoke of increased tolerance in the communities for independent choices by saying, “I think it is a generation gap ... the young girls of today have also become very advanced today ... and many times people have their own personal reasons for not wanting to get married. So people think these days that it is someone else’s life and that person should be allowed to live it on his terms and they should be allowed to make choices their way.” Shakuntla shared, “Initially, when the girl would turn 15 or 16 years old, the parents used to think of her as a burden. So they used to think of getting her married so that they could be relieved of their burden. She was also thought of as another person’s wealth because she would go to another’s house after marriage. So the parents used to think about finishing their responsibility towards their daughters. But today, and I cannot say that all people are alike in their thinking, but I would like to say that there is about a 60% change in our society and girls are no longer thought of as a burden and the only way that parents can take care of their responsibility is by getting their daughters married ... Our entire country is moving towards success now. Young girls are going outside their homes these days and they are able to do just about anything. Today, the girls are not only matching the boys in their steps, but they are moving ahead of them too and being successful at it. So this is where the change is ...people do not differentiate between the girls and the boys these days. Both the genders are considered to be equal by our society now.”

Code. Sources of change

The participants discussed how they saw a change in the beliefs about marriage and then talked about why they thought this change has occurred. The specific question posed to them was “In your opinion, why has this change come about?” The question was also translated as “What has brought about this change in how people view marriage or what they believe marriage to be?” From their responses three categories or primary themes emerged for this code:

1. Formal education
2. Media
3. Technology

Theme: Formal education. Many participants observed that the opening of economic markets and the establishment of multinational companies with good-paying jobs were leading to an increased emphasis on and drive toward formal education. This subsequent formal education was changing how young people think. Sanjay said “Education is the reason for this. Earlier on

people did not pay much attention to education. In earlier times we did not have so many companies in India where educated people could find employment.” Shankar stated, “I think it is awareness and education. In earlier times there was not awareness and no emphasis was given to education. People were uneducated and they went to the fields to work. We did not even have many sources of entertainment such as the TV or internet. These days education is being emphasized, and openness is increasing and people are expanding their views and thinking processes.” Krishna “at that time education was not emphasized all that much (and now it is).” Suneeta insinuated that a person can only be well settled if they are formally educated by saying, “All parents want their children to study and to get well settled.” Akshay observed, “Education is another thing. Everybody is totally educated these days.” Karan also shared, “But now there is more emphasis on education. Education provides a wider outlook or perspective for the people.” Mamta was more open to the change and shared, “in olden times girls were not educated, but now they have started educating the girls. Like when we were in the village, my mother dropped out of school in her 5th or 6th grade, but she made sure that I was educated till college. (So every generation studies a little more than the previous one).”

And, according to this sample, with the new acquisition formal education, came, not just better paying jobs, but changes in people’s beliefs about marriage.

For one thing, formal education facilitated independence of thought and action in people. As Seema observed, “When a person is educated, they become more mature and are able to understand different things and make decisions ... Now people are educated and they can understand that there are some people who really do not want to get married, or that they do not want to lose their freedom. Or that some people actually prefer to stay with another person without getting married ... So education is what teaches you to think like this. An uneducated person is not able to understand this and becomes a follower instead. He follows whatever is set before him and he is not able to think for himself. After a person receives an education he is able to think for himself and is able to make the distinction that what ever used to happen in the olden days is not necessarily appropriate in today’s time and it may or may not be right. So he is able to think that it is not necessary that the olden ways are always right. So a lot of changes come about through education.” Bina saw the influence of education in much the same way. “In my opinion this change has come about due to education. When the children are educated they do not believe in castes anymore. They only focus on whether the person they like is educated or not. God has created everybody so why should anyone bother with caste any more.” Sneh made an interesting observation: The new educational gap between children and their parents and an attendant decrease in the authority of family elders: “Well this is the new generation. The children are all educated. The parents are a little less educated than their children these days and so what they say and want for their children is not always honored by the children. They live their lives according to their own rules now.”

Theme: Media. Because of the exposure to nontraditional ways of being it afforded the people, the participants held the media -- TV programs, films both domestic and foreign, plays, popular magazines both domestic and international -- responsible for bringing about a shift in beliefs in contemporary Hindu society. Sudha observed, "When we were growing up we did not have a TV. So there were so many things that the children did not know and were sheltered from. But these days the children watch so much TV (and that influences them)." Her husband Shankar placed the responsibility of this change on the members of the previous generation and pointed a finger at them for not being careful about what they allow their children to be exposed to. He said, "And TV is such a big part of it. It shows us what the youth of today are interested in and being attracted to. We are pouring in front of them and serving them such a wrong culture to consume. But they are children and they see all that is happening in front of them and this creates a tension in them. And now you can see what the state of this current generation is." Akshay stated, "Western cultures came to our country like movies and TV serials. All these show the same things happening like falling in love, passion, getting divorced, etc. and this influences the children (people)." Seema said, "I think the Western culture has also influenced our thinking a lot. The new generation watches the Western culture on TV and sees that people over there fall in love with one person, and they may or may not marry that person. Then they leave that person and marry someone else. All this has affected the new generation a lot. Movies have also influenced our thinking a lot too. Similarly, when we read things, we get to know the views and beliefs of other people and of other people in other nations. So why should we not allow the other person to live their life and to fulfill what they want. Why should we as a people pressurize the person to live his or her life according to us or according to our society?" Her husband Rajiv opined, "I will say it has come about because of education and media. The new generation is an educated one, so they do not follow the old schools of thought anymore."

Nalin expressed his upset and its perceived cause: "I feel this is happening due to the Western countries. See what is happening in the Western countries, that virus. Well I can call it a virus, that comes to India, and that is why this change is happening." Dinesh, another husband said, "The movies, plays, and the TV programs all show what is going on in contemporary society. They are showing all sorts of things these days. So the young children see all of this and find out about things (such as sex and intimacy) and then they imitate it. So this is the reason for the change." His wife Rita expressed her disapproval by saying "The cable TV has really spoilt the children and has made them more advanced than they should be. They even show the things that are not meant to be shown on TV." Karan said, "The outlook of the people has changed, it has become wild. We have media and TV today, our culture is changing because of these two things. Initially, whatever the parents would tell the children would be the best thing, but now they see and hear different messages on TV." Narayan shared, "I think one reason is the influence

from the Western countries. This is a major reason. And because of the expansion of media such as TV, this is the major issue in my opinion. And also through TV we know what is happening in the West or in other places (and that is the good side of the expansion).”

Theme: Technology. Another source of influence that the participants noted was the development of technology which includes the internet, computer technology, mobile phones, CDs, DVDs, etc. They shared that through this medium the exposure to various cultural influences was inevitable and more difficult to monitor. Some participants approved of this and some shared their disapproval, and there were some participants that noted that advances in technology had two sides to it. One was a positive side and the other was a negative side since the younger generation were impacted in adverse ways. Uma shared, “Well the reason is, number one is globalization. See when I was young, when I was getting married there was no internet and there were no PCs. And our needs and wants were little but with the exposure brought about by technology, like my son today is 12 years old, and he knows what a Bluetooth is and what a pen drive is, and he knows about CDs.” Vinod said, “I would say it is because of TV and also because of cell phones. These things affect us a lot and have made things so convenient.” Shashi Prabha shared, “This is the time or era (*yug*) for science. Right? So according to that all the fields are progressing and experiencing successes. So it is to be expected that things and relationships will change.” Sudha expressed her disapproval in saying, “And if not today then tomorrow the children get to know about everything. So this is the change of TV and computer and other technology things in our society. Instead of getting to know about adult things tomorrow, the children are finding out these things today.”

Chapter 5
DISCUSSION
Overview

One of the predominant challenges in qualitative research is managing the data and deciding what is most relevant to include in the report of results (Gilgun, 1992). Although the qualitative methodology approach does not advocate a detailed description of every case, its value lies in “thick description” of the data as a whole for the purpose of explicating the intricacies of meaning (Gilgun, 1992). From these meanings, intellectual knowing and understanding can take place, and in this case, inform clinical assessment and treatment when working with families from different cultural backgrounds (see Moon, Dillon, & Sprenkle, 1990, 1991). This chapter highlights some key findings in the data. It also addresses some of the theoretical, research, and clinical implications of this study.

Theoretical Foundations and Implications

The benefits of using qualitative methodology for the study were many. To date there have been no empirical studies focusing on beliefs about the meaning of marriage for MCUHs. This study kept within the goals of a qualitative inquiry approach, which does not call upon generalizing the findings to a population (Newfield et al., 1996). This study provides baseline data that can be used to determine the meaning MCUHs assign to constructs such as marriage and to promote further research upon which a strengths model can be constructed to serve these families in a more sensitive and culturally appropriate manner.

Another advantage of using an ethnographic stance was that I was exploring topics about which the interviewees could be sensitive. The use of an ethnographic stance attends to the sensitive nature of the topic (Laird, 2001). It employs several techniques that are used in a therapeutic setting, thereby creating a safe environment for the participants to construct their narrative and to share their beliefs, views, and experiences.

In fact, the use of qualitative data gathering techniques helped to create a rich picture of the individual attributes of the couples, their families, and the ecosystemic environments that contributed to their beliefs regarding what marriage means to them. A quantitative study format would not have facilitated the collection of rich descriptive data. In fact, in an unpublished study in 2005, I gave a large sample of MCUH individuals the *Marital Satisfaction Inventory* (Snyder, 1998), an extraordinarily well-validated assessment device standardized on many diverse populations in the United States. Through exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, I discovered that this instrument was in no way applicable to MCUH.

A qualitative study also is well-suited to exploration of entities that cannot be “locked down.” The institution of marriage in India is such an entity. It is in a state of flux, presumably because of India’s urbanization, industrialization, and exposure to Western influences. Moreover, we may assume that, however intrusive Western influences may be, Indians (and MCUHs) have

not embraced Western thinking in its entirety. It is more likely that Western ideals and ways have been processed through Indian lenses and therefore have an “Indian-ness” about them. Quantitative studies are premature, and those using Western lenses are inappropriate.

Summary of Key Findings

According to Laird (2001), meanings can only be construed from beliefs and experiences after they have been languaged. The MCUH population is not well represented in the family therapy literature and qualitative methodology provides an avenue for their belief systems to be represented in a more holistic manner.

Construction of the meaning/view of marriage

The MCUHs view marriage as practical relationship bound by duty, obligation, and responsibilities, rather than a romantic relationship based on the passionate, or eros, style of love. The participants talked about the pragmatic love, caring, and respect for each other that they developed after marriage and after they got to know their partners as individuals. For them, there is a practical meaning attributed to the relationship. As Uma said, “Marriage is important to make life move forward.” Marriage is considered to be an essential step in every individual’s life and everybody has to get married. Their culture does not make provisions for an individual who wants to remain single.

Furthermore, to our MCUH, marriage is a “given”; it simply is. Most of the participants found it difficult to verbalize their views and beliefs concerning marriage or the marital relationship. Many of them looked at me with an incredulous expression in their eyes, as if to say “Why are you asking us this? Don’t you know?” The MCUHs have internalized the cultural message of marriage being compulsory and permanent to such a great extent that it is accepted without question and a deviation from this raises eyebrows within the community.

The unquestioned and compulsory aspect of marriage is a complex issue with long-standing (over eons of) secular and religious ties. This belief system shows how much the purpose of marriage as written in the ancient texts – for example, the Dharmasastra, which stipulates that a man without his partner cannot perform most of the religious rites and rituals necessary to live an honorable and righteous life – have been internalized into MCUH psyches. Similarly, respecting and obeying the husband finds its roots in the religious teachings. The “husband” is referred to as the provider and the “lord” of the house. Both the men and women talked about obeying and respecting the husbands.

Arranging their children’s marriages is a great responsibility for the MCUH parents so that their children can follow the righteous path as well. This is a reciprocal obligation: “Settling” their children is the parents’ responsibility. Obeying the parents’ wishes is the duty of an adult child. The social pressure to “settle” the child and to fulfill the parental responsibility is enormous and influences behavior strongly. The family name would otherwise be tarnished in the community.

Extended family

Marriage for the MCUHs was not about the two individuals getting married. Instead it was about the two families who were getting united through the marriage of the individuals. The extent to which the extended family is involved in a marriage is noteworthy. During the process of mate selection, parental and elder approval of the potential partner is very important because more often than not the individuals after marriage would live with the extended in-law family from the husband's side. From this context, attributes such as obedience and prosocial personality traits in a partner are important not only to make the marital relationship successful, but also to maintain relationships within the extended in-law families for both the bride and groom. Traditionally the new bride joins the husband's family and resides with them, and the husband maintains cordial relations with her side of the family.

Ecosystemic Processes Shaping the Meaning Making

The components of the *Person-Context-Process* model (Bronfenbrenner, 1992) pervade the descriptions of marriage provided by this sample. People are influenced by the environments in which they are situated, with the most influence being between those most proximal to each other. Applied here, we have the person and at least three additional environments, one embedded within the other: couple, family, community. The process in this case is a combination of clear beliefs enforced by strong, unwavering social sanctions applied within and outside of the family.

Psychology's Social Learning Theory provides excellent insight into the process involved in the inculcation of MCUH beliefs about marriage within that population, and the strength of these. According to Social Learning Theory, learning to a large extent takes place through modeling and social reinforcement (Bandura, 1965). Among the MCUHs, the stimuli are both verbal and modeled messages from the larger culture (such as marriage is necessary for bringing the new generation into the world, marriage is a permanent *bandhan*, and staying single is not a viable option). The community and the family within it respond to, first, ideas about, and subsequently to compliant and deviant behavior with strong positive or negative social reinforcement. These fundamental techniques of social learning are the means whereby social cultures transmit normative behavior to their constituent members and control it (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1963b; Bandura & Walters, 1963). In essence, people in the community are the source of information and reinforcement that maintains what attitudes and behaviors are deemed socially appropriate. They provide personal rewards such as praise and increased stature within the family, and also familial rewards such as increased respect for the family in the community and the reassurance that the family had fulfilled all their duties appropriately. This ecosystemic process of behavior modification is unmistakable and, among the MUCH, a very powerful agent in maintaining social control with little fear of deviation from the norm. The participants in the sample all seem to have their thoughts and beliefs shaped by the dominant beliefs of the ecosystemic

environments of which they are a part. However, I also would like to point out that this process is not absolute. The MCUH couples in the sample were able to identify personally negative messages (such as the social ills related to the practice of dowry, and the suppression and curbing of women's independence) in their dominant beliefs and transcend them through formal education. Such formal education "provides a person with the ability to think for themselves, distinguish right from wrong, and not follow the superstitious ways of the past."

Having said this, there nevertheless are strong influences at all levels of the MCUH ecosystem toward maintaining marriage and keeping it intact. Negative judgmental statements – such as "social stigma for the family", "inability for the parents to find appropriate matches for the younger, still-to-be-married, siblings", "losing face and reputation in the community" – were related to any deviance by individuals from the social norm of getting married and staying married. The participants also talked about how not only their family would be shamed in their society, but also that society would view the particular individual as "deviant" and "undesirable." Many participants also described members of the community expressing their curiosity about an individual's separation, divorce, or delayed marriage, and the family interpreting that curiosity and questioning as an indication of them not fulfilling their parental duty or not raising their children appropriately. As is common in collectivistic cultures, the actions of the offspring reflect upon the parents and the family that they come from more than they reflect upon the young adults themselves.

Among the MCUH, transacting ecosystemic influences were highly supportive of smooth and permanent marital and family life. Community, family, and male and female individuals within both:

- Believed marriage to be "essential" and "permanent"; "life could not progress appropriately for a person without marriage".
- Believed that married partners each should possess problem-solving qualities associated with maintaining their marriage. These qualities included "being open to compromises" and "making adjustment", "understanding the other partner" and "being mature about ending a disagreement by keeping quiet rather than continuing it by talking more"
- Indicated that being happy in the marriage was not as important as being married and staying married. The complex interplay of the three ecosystemic systems – individual, couple, family and community - is exemplified by three wives who shared that they were unhappy in their marriages but chose to stay (or had to stay) married anyway because (a) marriage is a permanent relationship and (b) out of fear of the social consequences, namely, "not being accepted back into their biological family", "unable to get married again", "losing access to their children", "and becoming a burden on their parents and extended kin."

Influence of gender on constructions on the meaning of marriage

There were several notable differences that emerged in the meaning that was attributed to marriage by the husbands versus the meaning attributed by the wives. The main purpose of marriage for the husbands was to continue their family name by having sons through marriage. This was dismissed as a valid purpose of marriage by the wives because “only the husband’s family name continues on, not the wife’s family name, when she has sons” (Shashi Prabha).

For the MCUH wives, the purpose of marriage was that it brought more freedom (both personal and financial) for them and they could go “roaming” with their husbands, they did not have to obtain permission for everything that they did, and they were able to go to their own, or true, home. The true home and family for a MCUH woman was said to be her husband’s home and his extended family - not her own family of origin. This particular belief appears to be markedly different from the perceptions of women in the United States where a distinction is not made between “family of origin” and “true family”.

Another difference that emerged was about the meaning attributed to the word “adjustment” in marriage. On the one hand, both MCUH husbands and wives commonly described strategies to be employed by both partners for making adjustments in marriage. Such strategies were “taking turns to talk about an issue”, “keeping quiet in the moment and revisiting the issue at a later time”, “being open to making compromises”, and “not being stubborn about something” were in common. On the other hand, most husbands opined that their wives had made more adjustments in their marriage than they had. They also attributed the “peace” in their marriage to the efforts of their wives. In cultural context, this is to be expected. The MCUH women are raised to be caretakers. They also are taught to yield to authority figures. Moreover, MCUH women are taught the value of making adjustments and accommodations from a young age. After all, the social norm dictates that more often than not the wife will join the husband’s household and extended family after marriage. This norm also places the onus of adjustment and “finding a place within the extended family” on the shoulders of the woman, thereby also placing the responsibility of maintaining relationships with the extended kin on her shoulders (usually with the support of her husband and the other daughters-in-law in the house). The MCUH custom of maintaining close relationships with the extended family and living with them appears to be in sharp contrast with the type of family structure and household set up that is most prevalent in the United States, namely a nuclear family living separately from both sets of extended kin (US Bureau of Census, 2000).

Both the husbands and wives said that it was important for men and women to have the company and support of a married partner: “It is not possible to live one’s entire life all alone.” However, the husbands noted this as being more important for them than did the wives. One possible reason could be that a MCUH wife provides supportive care and nurturing for her

husband and children because she believes that it is her duty to fulfill his and her children's needs.

Language issues

The Indian subcontinent was a British colony for almost 200 years and consequently there are several English words that have been incorporated into the Hindi language just as Hindi words (such as *bazaar*, *kamar-band*, *pajamas*, and *khaki*) have been incorporated into the English language. However, the adopted or assimilated English words in the Hindi language do not carry the same meaning and connotation as they do in the original language. This was clearly apparent during the interviews with the MCUH couples. They used the English words with ease. *But the words were used to convey different meanings.* For example, both the husbands and wives used the words "adjustment" and "compromise" interchangeably, and many times the same words were used to convey the concept of "accommodation by the marital dyad" as well. For the MCUH, it was significant to note that adjustment was the action of one person towards the other person and that a compromise required input and change from both the parties involved. MUCH couples spoke at length about "understanding" their partner to maintain a marriage. They used the word "understand" but clearly meant that both the husband and wife should "accept" their partner for who and what they are as individuals and that they should also agree with each other's views and opinions. The latter was observed to be more true for the wives than for the husbands and also tied in with marital adjustment for the MCUH population in the study. Words such as "happy" and "satisfied" were used frequently by both the husbands and wives to indicate "peace and harmony" in the family and home.

Another interesting observation was that many couples used metaphors when talking about marriage and the maintenance of the marital relationship. For example, the metaphor of "the wheels of a car, vehicle or a bicycle" was the most commonly used metaphor: "All the wheels should be the same. How can you expect something to move smoothly if one wheel belongs to a cycle and the other wheel belongs to a tractor?" (Raju). The implication was that, in order for the marital relationship to have harmony and the family life to be peaceful, both the husband and wife must be on the same page and must present a united front as a team as far as their views and beliefs are concerned. In response to the question as to how this task might be accomplished, most of the husbands and wives said "when you understand your partner the adjustment happens automatically" once again eluding to "accepting the partner" and "agreeing with the partner" rather than merely "understanding" them as individuals.

Research Implications

This study was a preliminary project with the MCUH population in New Delhi with the goal to explore their beliefs and attitudes about marriage. The study also presents as a foundation to further our understanding and awareness of this particular sub-population of India. The analysis of the data opened many doors for further exploration to be conducted. The analysis provided

some of the answers to the questions posed to the MCUH but it also brought up many questions that only can be satisfied by conducting more research. In future, I will look over this data through the lenses of gender, age, and religious fundamentalism to tease out more differences and similarities in views and beliefs about marriage and to see if any of the fore-mentioned variables influence the beliefs about the meaning of marriage for the MCUHs.

Clearly, using an instrument that has been normed or standardized on one culture to gather data within another culture is inappropriate since the constructs and the meanings assigned to the words and constructs may be completely different. Family scientists and clinicians cannot assume the reliability and validity of the instrument and the generalizability of the data collected (Brislin, 1986; Pike, 1966; Yaple & Korzenny, 1989). For example, the Western construct of marital satisfaction may be entirely different from what constitutes marital satisfaction for the MCUH (if for no other reason than the relationship with the in-law family would be included in the measure), which would in turn call for not only formally defining constructs such as “marital satisfaction”, “intimacy in a marital relationship”, “components of happiness in marriage”, etc. within the cultural context of MCUH, but would also require operationalizing these constructs to be validly measured in a specific cultural environment.

Another future research project to be conducted is a cross-cultural study on the beliefs about the meaning of marriage among the Hindus in India, Hindus in the United States, and middle class American couples to assess for the impact of acculturation on the same.

Clinical Implications

The current study has numerous implications for mental health practitioners who may have the opportunity to provide services to the MCUH population either in India or in the United States. This study provides information regarding some of the cultural differences in the meaning and purpose of marriage in the two cultures. This would be information in which therapists and clinical practitioners can be well-versed so as to increase their cultural sensitivity, knowledge base, and competence level, and be able to therapeutically align with the family when they present for services. The following are some important points of which practitioners should be mindful regarding the beliefs about marriage while working with the Hindu populations:

- Marriage is a permanent bond and maintaining the longevity of the relationship is not perceived as a challenge.
- The marital relationship is bound by practical “love” characterized by duties, responsibilities, and obligations rather than a passionate or romantic type of love, Members of the husband’s extended family and relationships with them are a very crucial part of a (any) marital relationship.
- Every young adult must get married to be able to live their life in an appropriate and righteous manner as has been taught and followed by previous generations.

- The man in the family is the family's leader for the family. He sets the rules for the family to follow and he and his wife modeling ideal behavior along with his wife as an example for the rest of the family to follow.
- Family name or status in the community and saving face with family and friends are two important and powerful processes that dictate behavior and attitudes.

Family therapists and other clinical practitioners will serve this population better by keeping these core beliefs in mind and using that insight to facilitate therapeutic alliances, that is, joining with the family members during the initial sessions of therapeutic service delivery.

Certain Family Therapy orientations such as Bowen, Structural, Feminist, and Postmodern have the potential for working well with couples and families of Asian Indian ethnicity who follow Hinduism.

Bowen family system therapy stipulates that the family context and the behaviors that the context maintains, shapes life within the particular family and that more often than not women in a given system absorb the stress stemming from or within a relationship (Bowen 1966, 1976). However, it is important to note the reciprocity in the marital relationship. Just as the MCUH wife defers to her husband's authority and views, the husband at the same time provides financial and physical security and comfort for his wife. Therefore, learning about the family context, the cultural context, and the extended family relationships provides the therapist with a level of understanding that can be extremely helpful while serving the therapeutic needs of a family. The dynamic between the concepts of *togetherness* and *individuality* that is foundational to the Bowenian theory is very parallel to the dynamics that a MCUH couple has to maintain after marriage (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

Structural Family Therapy focuses on the hierarchy that has been established within a family to provide structure and functionality (Minuchin, 1974). Since MCUH families were noted to have a definite hierarchy and structure to them, the concepts and techniques used in Structural family therapy would likely be helpful. The therapist helps the family restructure their hierarchy and functions thus enabling them to move from a place of feeling stuck to a place of mobility and change (Minuchin, 1974; Minuchin & Fishman, 1981). Structural family therapists also emphasize the boundaries between familial subsystems and highlight the coalitions that take place among the subsystems (Minuchin & Fishman, 1981). This all seems useful to MCUH family understanding. However, MCUH family structure and boundaries vary from their American counterparts in that the parental dyad usually is not the primary dyad in the family, the family boundaries include extended kin such as the in-laws, and the terms rigid boundaries, clear boundaries, and diffused boundaries do not carry the same connotation as they do in the United States. A culturally sensitive and competent therapist would take these cultural nuances into account and work with the MCUH families as they present for therapy.

Constructs from Feminist Family Therapy would also lend well to working with this population. They focus on the meaning-making process in therapy and stem from the foundational belief that all realities are not created equally (Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1988; Rosenau, 1992). Gender biases, inequalities, power differentials among the designated minorities and majorities, and access to resources that are implemented on a larger sociopolitical or cultural stage find their way into the private arena of the family life and individual belief systems by which people make sense of the world around them. Feminism also critiques the illusion that all members of a family are equally to blame or responsible when a problem or an issue comes about. Feminist family therapists pay great attention to the power dynamics within family relationships and make this overt. When the MCUH wife joins her husband's family and home, it places her in a position of limited power within the family. This makes it even more important for her survival to make adjustments and to co-exist with the other family members. This is not to say that the husband does not help her adjust or gain in power in the family. It is in his best interest to see to the wellbeing of his wife because marriage is believed to be a life long relationship. A husband or a wife, after all, is referred to as a "life partner" by the MCUHs.

The postmodern approach and therapies such as Solution focused (de Shazer, 1994; 1988), Narrative therapy (Freedman & Combs, 1996; White & Epston, 1990), and Collaborative Languages (Anderson, 1997) would lend themselves very well to working with this population in India and in the United States. The foundation of these orientations is that truth is subjective and that culture, spirituality, and history play a vital part in defining the context for a family or individual. The client's view of how they construct their reality is not challenged since they are regarded as the experts in their own lives. However, change is sought by re-authoring their lives, and helping them consider and co-edit their meaning-making language within their own cultural context.

Limitations

The onus for generalizing the findings of a qualitative study resides with the reader (Lincoln & Gupta, 1985). However, generalizing from the present sample is not only limited by its presumed subculture (MCUH) but also by the fact that it was drawn from only two regions in the capital city of New Delhi, India. The beliefs about the meaning of marriage of MCUH couples residing in other geographic regions of New Delhi may differ from the present sample. In fact, Hinduism is not a monolithic religion and the sample was not separated according to the form or kind of Hinduism that they followed. The participants were not asked if they were followers of Lord Krishna, or Lord Shiva, or the Goddess Durga, etc., which may have provided information for further exploration and brought to light differences within the broad religious spectrum of Hinduism as well.

Some enthusiastic readers may feel tempted to generalize the findings of this study to "Indian marriages". However, this study does not permit that. India is a sub-continent, and its

population is comprised of people who are influenced by and/or follow the teachings of different religions such as Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and Sikhism. These religious orientations may influence the beliefs pertaining to the institution of marriage which may be very different from the current findings.

Moreover, only couples who belonged to the middle class socioeconomic strata were interviewed for the present study. Couples who belong to other socioeconomic classes may construct the meaning of marriage differently and marriage may have a different purpose for them.

Another limitation of my study is that only couples who had intact marriages were interviewed. Hindu couples who are separated or divorced may have different beliefs about the meaning of marriage.

The data were not analyzed comparing the responses of men versus women, and younger couples versus older couples, to ascertain what their beliefs were. Analyzing the participant responses based on these variables may bring out differences that would add to our knowledge base and provide more insight into the beliefs of this population.

The final limitation was my own personal lens that influenced me to distinguish what I thought was important or interesting to pursue in terms of probing questions during the interviews with the participants. Another researcher may have pursued a different line of probing questions depending on her or his experiences, curiosity, and interests. Such researcher differences might have provided different data that, in turn may, have yielded similar or different findings.

Conclusion

Postmodern theorists of family therapy have challenged the biases of the traditional schools of family therapy by stating that the “clients” are the experts about their lives, that they provide the context within which their families are embedded, and that their construction and interpretation of truth is what matters in therapeutic settings (Anderson, 1990; Doherty, 1991). It is essential to know the different cultural constructions about an institution that forms the basis of social and family life not only in the United States but in other nations as well. The MCUH view marriage differently from their counterparts in the United States. In the United States, romantic love and companionship are essential marital components, and relationships with the extended in-law families take a back seat to the primary marital dyad. For the MCUH, marriage is about the family rather than the individuals who get married. Two *families* get united through marriage and the relationships with the husband’s extended kin are very important part of the marriage since, typically, the wife lives with her husband’s family in their family home after marriage. Marriage is also duty, obligation, and responsibility bound with a focus on pragmatic love rather than romantic love. The couples in this present study provided a rich and promising first step in the direction of adding to our knowledge base and understanding an under-studied population, namely, the middle class urban Hindus (MCUH) in India.

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear Research Participant/Interviewee,

My name is Maitri Chand and I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Family and Child Sciences in the Marriage and Family Therapy program at The Florida State University. As part of my dissertation, I am conducting a research study to explore the construct of marriage and the concept of marital satisfaction in Middle Class Hindu couples in India.

This form is to inform you of your rights as well as the procedure of this research study.

I understand that my participation will involve filling out a Basic Background Information/Demographic Information Form and participate in an interview that will focus on how we think about marriage in India. The interview will be audio recorded and transcribed by me. Your total time commitment would be approximately 60 (sixty) minutes.

I understand that my participation is voluntary; if I choose not to participate or not to answer any questions at any time, there will be no penalty for me.

I understand that all my responses to the questions will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law, and that any personal identifying information collected from me will not be reported. My returned Basic Background Information/Demographic Information Form and the audio-cassette tape of my interview will be assigned a Response Code Number only. My name will not appear on any of the results. Some individual responses/opinions from the interview may be reported, but this will be done using fictitious names. Mostly group or collective findings will be reported.

I understand that there is a monetary reimbursement of INR 200 (approximately \$5.00) for my participation in the study. Other possible benefits of my voluntary participation would be to help others understand cross-cultural perspectives on marriage, that is, what constitutes a good versus a bad marriage, and whether marital satisfaction exists as a concept within the context of Hindu marriages in India. This knowledge could be used to understand and to help raise the awareness around the subject of marital and cultural norms. It will also be used to better serve the needs of Hindu married couples in India and in the United States, as well as increasing our knowledge of diversity issues in the United States.

I understand that my participation in the study may have potential risks for me. In case I need to process any issues that emerged from the interview, I will be referred to a local social service agency by the researcher.

I understand that the returned Basic Background Information/Demographic Information Form and the interview tapes and transcripts will be kept by the researcher in a locked cabinet located in an office in the Department of Family and Child Sciences at The Florida State University. I understand that only the researcher will have access to the forms and the tapes and that they will be erased and broken into pieces by May 1, 2009.

I understand that I have been given the right to ask and have answered any inquiry concerning the study. Questions, if any, have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that I may contact Ms. Maitri Chand at The Florida State University, Department of Family and Child Sciences, Sandels Building 240, (850) 921-0772 x 337, E-mail mc04j@fsu.com if I have any questions about the study. I understand that if I have any questions about my rights as a participant in this research, or if I feel I have been placed at risk, I can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Committee, Institutional Review Board, through the Vice President for the Office of Research at (850) 644-8633 or by E-mail at jth5898@fsu.edu. If I have questions about this study, I can contact Dr. Robert E. Lee, the research advisor for the study, by phone at (850) 644-1412 and by E-mail at relee@mail.fsu.edu. My

concerns or questions can also be mailed to Dr. Robert E. Lee at 240 Sandels Building, Department of Family and Child Sciences, College of Human Sciences, The Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL 32310.

I understand that group results will be sent to me upon my request.

I have read and understand this consent form. I give my consent to participate in the above study by signing the bottom of this consent form and by returning the Basic Background Information/Demographic Information Form. A copy of the signed Consent Form will be provided to me for my records by the researcher.

Participant's Signature

Witness Signature

Date

APPENDIX B

Response Code # : _____

BASIC BACKGROUND INFORMATION/DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
FORM

Age _____ Gender: M F Date: _____

Number of Times Married: _____ Length of Current Marriage: _____

Number of Children: _____

#	Age of Child	Gender M/F	Relationship (biological child, step-child, adopted child)
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

Are You Currently Employed Outside Your Home? Yes No

What is Your Job Description? _____

What Working Hours Do You Keep? _____

What days of the week do you work? _____

Total *Monthly* Household Income: ___ 0 – 25,000 ___ 75,001 – 1,00,000
 In Indian Rupees ___ 25,001 – 50,000 ___ 1,00,001 – 1,50,000
 ___ 50,001 – 75,000 ___ Other: _____

Years of Education:

___ Some High School (12th Grade)

___ Completed High School

___ Some College

___ Bachelor's Degree: Specify - _____

___ Master's Degree: Specify - _____

___ Diploma: Specify - _____

Other: Specify - _____

On a scale from 1 to 10, 1 being 'Secular' and 10 being 'Very Religious', where would you place yourself?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
 Secular Very Religious

APPENDIX C

List of Questions to Help Guide the Open-ended Interview

Questions regarding beliefs about the institution of marriage:

1. What do you believe about the institution of marriage in general?
2. What does “marriage” mean to you personally?
3. Why would/should someone in India get married?
4. Why would/did you get married?
5. What do people in general expect to get from or get out of marriage?
6. What would you expect to get from or get out of marriage?
7. What is required of men and women in general to stay married?
8. What would be required of you, to stay married?

In addition, open-ended prompts will be used to facilitate the interview as things are uncovered. An example is as follows:

Interviewer: “You said, ‘if the couple is not happy’. What does that mean? Could you tell me more about that”?

APPENDIX D

SCRIPT FOR INTRODUCING THE STUDY TO POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

Hello/Namaskar,

My name is Maitri Chand and I am a doctoral candidate studying at the Florida State University. I am majoring in Marriage and Family Therapy. I am collecting data for my dissertation and was wondering if I could talk a little more about it to you and to request you to be a participant in my study.

I am trying to explore what Hindu couples today think about the institution of marriage and divorce. I will not ask you to comment on any think specific about your marriage if you don't want to. What I am trying to understand is people's belief about these two institutions today. Would you be interested in participating? Should I continue to explain more about the study? (If potential participant says 'no', the researcher will thank them for their time so far and leave). If the participant expresses an interest, then the researcher will continue.

I will collect data by inducting an interview. I will audio record the interview and later transcribe it. At the end of the interview, as a way to express my gratitude and appreciation, I will provide a reimbursement of INR 200.00 to you for your time. At this time I would like to ask you a few questions to see if you would meet the recruitment criteria for the study. Do you follow the Hindu faith? Are you currently married? Have you been married for 10 or more years? (If the responses to all the questions is 'yes', then the researcher can proceed. If not, then the researcher will explain why the person cannot be interviewed and thank them for their time so far).

The researcher will read the Informed Consent Form out loud, explain the contents in detail (about confidentiality, reporting results, and storing the data), and answer any questions the participants might have regarding the study. The researcher will then ask the participant to complete the Basic Background Information/Demographic Information Form. After this, the researcher will ask, "Is this a convenient time for you to be interviewed"? If it is, the researcher will then set-up the audio recording equipment and begin the interview, and if it is not, then the researcher will schedule another day and time to return to the home of the participant to conduct the interview. After the interview, the researcher will thank the participant and give them the envelope with the reimbursement amount of INR 200.00 in it.

APPENDIX E
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

Office of the Vice President For Research
Human Subjects Committee
Tallahassee, Florida 32306-2742
(850) 644-8673 . FAX (850) 644-4392

APPROVAL MEMORANDUM

Date: 3/20/2007

To: Maitri Chand

Address: 162 Crenshaw Dr. Apt. # 16. Tallahassee, FL 32310
Dept.: FAMILY & CHILD SCIENCE

From: Thomas L. Jacobson, Chair

Re: Use of Human Subjects in Research
Exploring the Stable and Changing Beliefs of Middle Class (Urban) Hindu Couples in New Delhi about Marriage

The forms that you submitted to this office in regard to the use of human subjects in the proposal referenced above have been reviewed by the Secretary, the Chair, and two members of the Human Subjects Committee. Your project is determined to be Expedited per 45 CFR § 46.110(7) and has been approved by an expedited review process.

The Human Subjects Committee has not evaluated your proposal for scientific merit, except to weigh the risk to the human participants and the aspects of the proposal related to potential risk and benefit. This approval does not replace any departmental or other approvals, which may be required.

If you submitted a proposed consent form with your application, the approved stamped consent form is attached to this approval notice. Only the stamped version of the consent form may be used in recruiting research subjects.

If the project has not been completed by 3/13/2008 you must request a renewal of approval for continuation of the project. As a courtesy, a renewal notice will be sent to you prior to your expiration date; however, it is your responsibility as the Principal Investigator to timely request renewal of your approval from the Committee.

You are advised that any change in protocol for this project must be reviewed and approved by the Committee prior to implementation of the proposed change in the protocol. A protocol change/amendment form is required to be submitted for approval by the Committee. In addition, federal regulations require that the Principal Investigator promptly report, in writing any unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risks to research subjects or others.

By copy of this memorandum, the Chair of your department and/or your major professor is reminded that he/she is responsible for being informed concerning research projects involving human subjects in the department, and should review protocols as often as needed to insure that the project is being conducted in compliance with our institution and with DHHS regulations.

This institution has an Assurance on file with the Office for Human Research Protection. The Assurance Number is IRB00000446.

Cc: Robert Lee, Advisor
HSC No. 2007.333

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
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Education

Doctor of Philosophy May 2008

Florida State University-College of Human Sciences

Department of Family and Child Sciences-Marital and Family Therapy

Tallahassee, Florida

Master's of Arts May 2004

University of Houston-Clear Lake-Human Sciences and Humanities

Marital and Family Therapy

Houston, Texas

Bachelor's of Arts (Fine) May 1993

Maharaja Sayaji Rao University

Faculty of Fine Arts-Art History

Baroda, Gujarat, India

Refereed Publications

Chand, M., Koshy, M., & Lee, R. E. (2005). What AAMFT approved supervisors get paid. *Contemporary Family Therapy, 27*, 275-279.

Other Publications

Chand, M. (2007). Effective Parenting 101: Structure, boundaries, and consequences. *Relationship Matters: Building the Bridge to Healthier Children Through Stronger Couples, 3*, 2-3.

Chand, M. (2007). The importance of fatherhood: What do fathers contribute to children's wellbeing? *Relationship Matters: Building the Bridge to Healthier Children Through Stronger Couples, 2*, 1-2.

Chand, M. (2007). Ten romantic ideas to keep your relationship vitalized and exciting. *Relationship Matters: Building the Bridge to Healthier Children Through Stronger Couples, 1*, 1-2.

Chand, M. (2006). Busting myths about marriage and relationships. *Relationship Matters: Building the Bridge to Healthier Families Through Marriage, 2*, 1-3.

National Presentations

Chand, M., Hayes, M. & Lee, R. E. (October, 2006). *Indian families' beliefs of marital and couple relationships*. Poster presented at the annual conference of the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy, Austin, TX.

Barlow, L., Lee, R. E., McWey, L. M., Chand, M., & Shriner, M. (October 2005). *Technology in the MFT track: Training with the newest technology Landro play analyzer*. Presentation at the annual conference of the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy, Kansas City, MO.

Professional experience

Children's Home Society

Tallahassee, FL

Counselor IV, Post Adoption Marital Enrichment Program

2006-present

Provide in-home therapy following the Gottman Model of couple's therapy, client recruitment, program promotion, and overseeing grand operations on a federally funded grant for special needs adoptive families.

Counselor IV, Family Connections

2006-present

Conduct clinical intake assessments and family therapy.

Florida State University

Tallahassee, FL

Teaching Assistant, Department of Family and Child Sciences

2006-2007

Sole instructor for 2 laboratory sessions in FAD 4601, Foundations of Counseling, delivered designated lectures and assisted instructor with overall class management.

Research Assistant, Jump Start Program and Parental Involvement Project

2005-2006

Provided subject recruitment, conducted focus groups, transcribed and analyzed the qualitative data for project funded by the Knight Foundation.

Teaching Assistant, Department of Family and Child Sciences

2005-2006

Maintained records, reviewed journal, and evaluated written assignments of undergraduate students in FAD 4805, Practicum in Family and Child Sciences.

*Florida State University
Center for Marriage and Family Therapy
Graduate Assistant
2004-2005*

Assisted in the revision of all forms and procedures within the Center, managed all data entry of client information and records, conducted all in-take interviews, scheduled follow-up appointments, supervised payment collection and budgeting, provided crisis management and general oversight of the operation of the Center.

*Teaching Assistant, Department of Family and Child Sciences
2004-2005*

Sole instructor for one section of FAD 2230, Family Relationships: A life-Span Developmental Approach, developed and delivered all lectures, evaluated student progress on assessments, and handled student concerns.

*Florida State University
Center for Marriage and Family Therapy
Marriage and Family Therapy Supervisee
2004-2006*

Provided therapy to families, couples, individuals, and families participating in the Supervised Visitation Project.

*DePelchin Children's Center
Clear Lake, Houston, TX
Marriage and Family Therapy Intern
2002-2003*

Provided therapy to families, couples, individuals, children, and groups.

*McAdams Jr. High School
Dickinson, TX
Marriage and Family Therapy Intern
2002-2003*

Provided therapy to families, children, and groups, developed and delivered anger management curriculum for boys and healthy choices for girls as part of clinical groups.

Professional Service

Tallahassee Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

Tallahassee, FL

2006-2007

Student/Associate Representative to Board of Directors

Tallahassee Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

Tallahassee, FL

2006-2007

Student Liaison Officer

FSU Marriage and Family Therapy Graduate Association

Tallahassee, FL

2005-2006

Treasurer

University of Houston-Clear Lake

Family Therapy Student Association

Houston, TX

2003-2004

Vice President

UHCL Family Therapy Student Association

Houston, TX

2002-2003

Treasurer

Professional Certifications and Trainings

Trained in Disaster Mental Health Services

Certification in HIPPA Compliance

Certification in CPR

Awards and Honors

- o Kappa Omicron Nu Honor Society (2006-present)
- o Outstanding Graduate Student in Marriage and Family Therapy (2004)
- o Betty Martin King Family Therapy Scholarship for Academic Achievement (2003)
- o UHCL University Endowment Scholarship (2003)
- o Jones Scholarship in Human Sciences and Humanities (2002)

- o Family Therapy Scholarship (2002)
- o Excellence in Leadership Award, Family Therapy Student Association (2002)
- o Certificate for Outstanding Academic Performance (1999)