CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A complicated individual phenomenon like marriage, with very strong familiar and social interlocks can be studied from different angles and at different levels. Numerous studies have found that the process of union formation happens in a systematic way. The pattern of marriage is undergoing some discernible changes throughout the world. It has played a major role in determining the growth rate of population through its linkage to marital fertility.

Historically changes in the nuptiality pattern has played very significant role with respect to demographic transitions in many of the European countries (Van de Wale, 1972). The experience of several less developed countries where population growth rate has recently slowed down also demonstrates this aspect (Das et al., 1998).

The changes increases in respect of marriage age and age at consummation of the marriage and the resultant reduction in proportion of women remaining in married state are directly linked to fertility and thus determine the future trend of demographic transition.

In India, major shifts have been observed in the age at marriage. This work attempts to examine the scenario of marriage in Uttar Pradesh state of India. The age of female at the time of marriage is very important due to many reasons. These reasons depend on many factor such as social, economic, and demographic changes in population.

From a rigorous numerical point of view, it is not always possible to match precisely the men and women in the usual marrying ages because of the frequent imbalance between the sexes. In this respect, the increasing mobility of people in the developed societies of today has enlarged the groups within which unions are established; socially isolated groups, or isolates, as demographers call them, are disappearing. This is probably one of the causes of the rise in nuptiality witnessed in certain countries; in other instances the increased mobility has mainly resulted in a considerable reduction of the number of consanguineous marriages.
1.1 Situational Analysis of Nuptiality in India

Adolescent women comprise a sizable proportion of India’s total population. Although these young women have much in common, the characteristics that influence the likelihood of becoming a wife and mother at a young age—their family’s values and socioeconomic status and their own goals and expectations, which are shaped by their educational attainment and the extent of their exposure to the mass media—vary substantially according to whether they live in urban or rural areas and where in the country they live. There are more adolescents in India today than ever before. According to the law and age at marriage for females in India (Pathak, K.B. (1980))[5], near the beginning of study period, 1992, India had 38 million adolescent women; by 2005, that number had grown by nearly half, to 50.5 million (Pathak, K.B. (1980))[5]. The three states with the largest female adolescent populations—Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh—together account for one-third of all adolescent women in the country, with nearly 16% of the total living in Uttar Pradesh alone.

Within most states, 15–19-year-old women now make up at least 10% of the state’s population. An earlier start to a general decline in fertility is evident in the three low fertility states of Goa, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, as adolescent women account for a smaller proportion of the total state population in those three states (8–9%) than they do elsewhere (10–13%)[6]. Young women’s marital and reproductive behaviors are conditioned by where they live, and most adolescents still live in rural areas. Fewer than three in 10 women aged 15–19 currently reside in urban areas. That proportion has increased, on average for the country as a whole, by an annual rate of about 1% (i.e., the percentage residing in urban areas rose from 25% in 1992 to 28% in 2005)[7]. However, the pace of urbanization has varied from state to state. It was most rapid in the northeastern state of Arunachal Pradesh, where the proportion of adolescent women residing in urban areas increased by 6% each year. As expected, urban adolescent women are generally better off economically than their rural counterparts: Only 27% of the former group live in households in the lowest three wealth quintiles, compared with 79% of the latter group. As of 2006 (Report on Population projection, Government of India, 2006)[7], 28% of all 15–19-year-old women were members of scheduled tribes or castes, groups that have historically been socioeconomically disadvantaged; the proportion was higher in rural areas than in urban areas (31% vs. 22%).
However, membership of rural/urban area does not necessarily correlates with socioeconomic disadvantage, since proactive action policies designed to address caste-based discrimination appear to have had a measure of success in many areas. In addition, because the complex caste designations and definitions vary across states, and some states have reclassified segments of their population, the proportions belonging to a scheduled tribe or caste should be interpreted with caution. Education enhances women’s ability to interpret and act on those messages. Throughout the world, higher levels of educational attainment are consistently associated with higher status for women, related delays in marriage and desire for and achievement of smaller families. Over the past decade and a half, Indian women have achieved substantial educational gains: Nationally, 63% of 15–19-year-old women had at least six years of education in 2006, compared with just 45% in 1993. The increase was proportionately even greater in rural areas, where the starting point was far lower; the proportion of women aged 15–19 having at least six years of schooling rose from 35% to 55% in rural areas, compared with an increase from 72% to 81% in urban areas. Many remain to be done, however, to enable India and its individual states to meet the second Millennium Development Goal of universal primary school education.

Currently, fewer than half of adolescent women in Bihar and Jharkhand in the East, and in Rajasthan in the North, have been to school for at least six years. On the other end of the spectrum, Goa in the West, Himachal Pradesh in the North and Kerala in the South had already virtually met the primary school completion goal for 2015 as of 2006, with 92–98% of 15–19-year-old women receiving this much schooling. Although till date, marriage is universal in the Indian context, there are certain shifts observed in the age at marriage, i.e., a consistent increasing trend in respect of mean and median age at marriage over cohorts born since 1916 for males and since 1921 for females [8].

However, the aggregate figures relating to mean and median age at marriage show only minor changes in the age at marriage. Moreover, an analysis of 2001 census data clearly shows that for those who have been married for the last nine years preceding the census (i.e. married during 1992-2001), marriages remain mainly confined to higher ages as compared to those married for twenty years or more preceding the census. Hence, it is important to look into the pattern of delayed marriages in India. Even though it is almost impossible to come up with a general conclusion regarding the changes in respect of any of the marriage related parameters particularly in the context of a heterogeneous country like
India, an attempt has been made in this study to analyze the patterns of delayed marriages in India across different sections of the female population. The most conventional indicator used for assessing the timing of marriages is age at marriage. As of now there exist several quantitative studies related to age at marriage in India. Unfortunately, all of these research efforts seem hampered by the variety of Indian marriage customs, paucity of data, misreporting of age and recent changes in marriage patterns. Moreover, age at marriage, as an indicator in itself, has certain limitations.

The basic limitation is when used at the aggregate level (mean or median age at marriage), it takes all marriages into account rather retrospectively while ignoring the timing of marriage. Besides, it takes into account persons who are already married. For example, while identifying the determinants of age at marriage, what is basically done is to assess the impact of a set of predictors at different levels on age at marriage, for those who are already married, whatever be the age at marriage. Thus it considers those persons also in the larger pool who are married, albeit, at a higher age or in other words, those who have delayed their marriage. Hence, in a country like India, where marriage is universal, age at marriage is not a sufficient indicator for analyzing delayed marriages. Rather it would be logical to examine the impact of certain factors that may explain the likelihood of females remaining unmarried or married at a particular point of time. The present work is an attempt in that direction.

1.2 Nuptiality pattern in Uttar Pradesh:

In Uttar Pradesh, marriage age increased by 1 year during 1901-1951 and by 1 year per decade thereafter. 33% of females aged 10-14 years were married in 1971, but under 1% were married at this early age in 1992-1993. A similar sharp decline occurred among females aged 15-19 years; by 1992-1993 only 40% were married at this early age. The difference in ages between men and women has remained at around 4 years [9].

The three states with the largest female adolescent populations—Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh—together account for one-third of all adolescent women in the country, with nearly 16% of the total living in Uttar Pradesh alone. Among these, Uttar Pradesh being the most populous and having almost lowest level of the mean age at marriage in the country received increasing attention to know what is happening to the age at marriage especially among females at the individual level. So there is need to have a detailed picture of
the age patterns of marriage in these states. Women in Uttar Pradesh tend to marry at an early age (Singh S & Samara R (1996)[10].32% of women age 15-19 are already married, and an additional 8% that they were married but “gauna” has yet to be performed.

1.3 Nuptiality pattern in rural population of Uttar Pradesh:

Rural areas lagged behind urban areas in the shift to a later marriage age. The median age at first marriage among illiterate females in the aged 25-29 years was 14.4 years, and it was 20.4 years among females with a high school degree. In rural areas of Uttar Pradesh, marriage age varied by region. In rural areas, almost half of women age 15-19 have already married. Older women are more likely than younger women to have married at an early age; 57 percent of women who are now age 45-49 married before they were 15, compared with 20 percent of women age 15-19. Although this indicates that the proportion of women who marry young is declining rapidly, 62 percent of young women age 20-24 in Uttar Pradesh still marry before reaching the legal minimum age of 18 years. On average, women are more than four years younger than the men they marry.

1.4 Definition of the problem:

In India the age of marriage is different in all states if we compare the age of female at the time of marriage, we find that the age is low in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. In these state, early marriage is very common, there are nearly 50% of girls who get married under the age of 18 (Bloom 1982[11]).But as we go towards the southern part of the country we find that here the marriage age of girls are relatively high in comparison to these states. In this project, we will mainly target to the rural area Uttar Pradesh. This is the most populous state of India and level of marriage age is almost lowest. This gives rise to many questions e.g. why do early child marriages happen in Uttar Pradesh? There could many possible reasons for this situation, which need to be address rigorously. Nevertheless early child marriage affects the girl’s education, their employment and demographic population changes. We would like to focus on the past & present scenario of nuptiality in the proposed study.

Analysis of the age pattern of nuptiality is of great importance for demographers. Parametric models that describe the age pattern of first marriages are valuable tools in demographic
research, as they can also be used for indirect estimations of fertility, as well as for projection purposes.

The Coale (1971)\textsuperscript{[12]} and the Coale-McNeil (1972)\textsuperscript{[13]} models are classical tools widely used for describing nuptiality patterns. Hobcraft and Trussell 1980\textsuperscript{[14]} have investigated the accuracy of these models in describing nuptiality. However, recent studies (Kaneko 2003, 2005) argue that country-specific nuptiality standards are often required, since the global standard schedule—derived from Swedish data—might be inappropriate for some populations. It is crucial to identify the country-specific shape of nuptiality schedules when one is interested in predicting fertility by birth order. To this end, Kaneko (2003, 2005)\textsuperscript{[15]} suggested the use of the Generalized Log Gamma model (GLG), which is an improved adjusted version mathematically identical to the Coale-McNeil model, to describe the age pattern of first marriages and of births.

However, in recent years considerable variation has been observed in the pattern of marriages using datasets of populations from several countries. Liang (2000)\textsuperscript{[16]} observed that in Chinese data a bulge was apparent at the early ages of the first marriages distribution. The new pattern of age specific marriage curves reflects heterogeneity in behaviour concerning first marriages. Liang (2000) made the plausible hypothesis that marriages may come from two different groups. This heterogeneity may be associated with many factors such as educational level, social status, and religion. Thus population groups exist with different demographic characteristics regarding marriage, which can be further explored if appropriate data are available.

This study examines nuptiality status in rural U.P., with particular reference to changes in marriage age over time and an analysis of territorial differentials at the level of States and the smaller administrative units such as districts. In India systematic analysis of nuptiality patterns and trends is handicapped by a lack of adequate data. Information on age, sex, and marital status distribution obtained from the censuses was used to study nuptiality. Estimates of mean marriage age have been derived that are fairly reliable for making cross country comparisons of marriage age and for measuring inter-regional and inter-religious and caste group differences in age at marriage. A limited amount of direct data on marriage age has also been obtained through demographic surveys conducted in various parts of the country. In recent years, the Sample Registration System has produced some data that shed light on the prevailing socioeconomic and regional differentials in nuptiality patterns. A review of Hindu
religious literature indicates that child marriage came to be practiced in India somewhere around the beginning of the Christian era. Due to varied religious, social, and cultural pressures, the practice of child marriage, particularly of females, found increasing acceptability with the result that there was a decline in average marriage age. By the early 19th century, infant marriage, particularly of girls, became quite popular. This exposed the females to a larger fertile period and also to the period of highest fertility (Bongaarts, J., and G. Feeney. 1998)\textsuperscript{[17][18]} Thus birth rates were very high. With the advent of railways, post and telegraph improved health services and other scientific advancement in the fall of 19\textsuperscript{th} century & early 20\textsuperscript{th} century, the death rate of the country started falling rapidly. The year 1921 is known as the year of big divide. To achieve an effective control over the population problem facing our country it is crucial to study Nuptality pattern in rural population of Uttar Pradesh, Situational analysis of nuptiality in India.