

## 11 Live in Relationship in the institution of marriage

Live-in relationship refers to an arrangement where unmarried couple decides to live together on long term basis in emotionally and sexually intimate relationship.

### Inclusion in the ambit of marriage:

- According to G P Murdock in Social Structure (1949), "marriage is a universal institution that involves residential cohabitation, economic cooperation and formation of the nuclear family".  
→ Live-in relationships fulfil the criteria for marriage as per this definition.
- Supreme Court in Indra Sarma vs. VKV Sarma (2013) held that live-in relationships would be presumed as valid marriage. But there is no separate legislation for live ins.
- However, mainly it depends on social recognition.  
Eg: Western societies give equal rights to live-in relationship as to marriage. But in India, society doesn't equate it with marriage.

### Reasons Behind Rise:

- Allows couple to test their mutual compatibility before committing to a legal union
- Immense personal freedom without having responsibilities
- Financial independence
- Easy to dissolve the relationship
- To live together if marriage is disallowed

### As a Threat to marriage:

- Traditional society remains fearful as more and more couples today prefer live in relationship.
- They believe that it can dilute the morals & traditions & threaten the institution of marriage.
- But, live in relationships cannot replace marriage. They can never offer the kind of security & emotional fulfilment that a marriage provides.