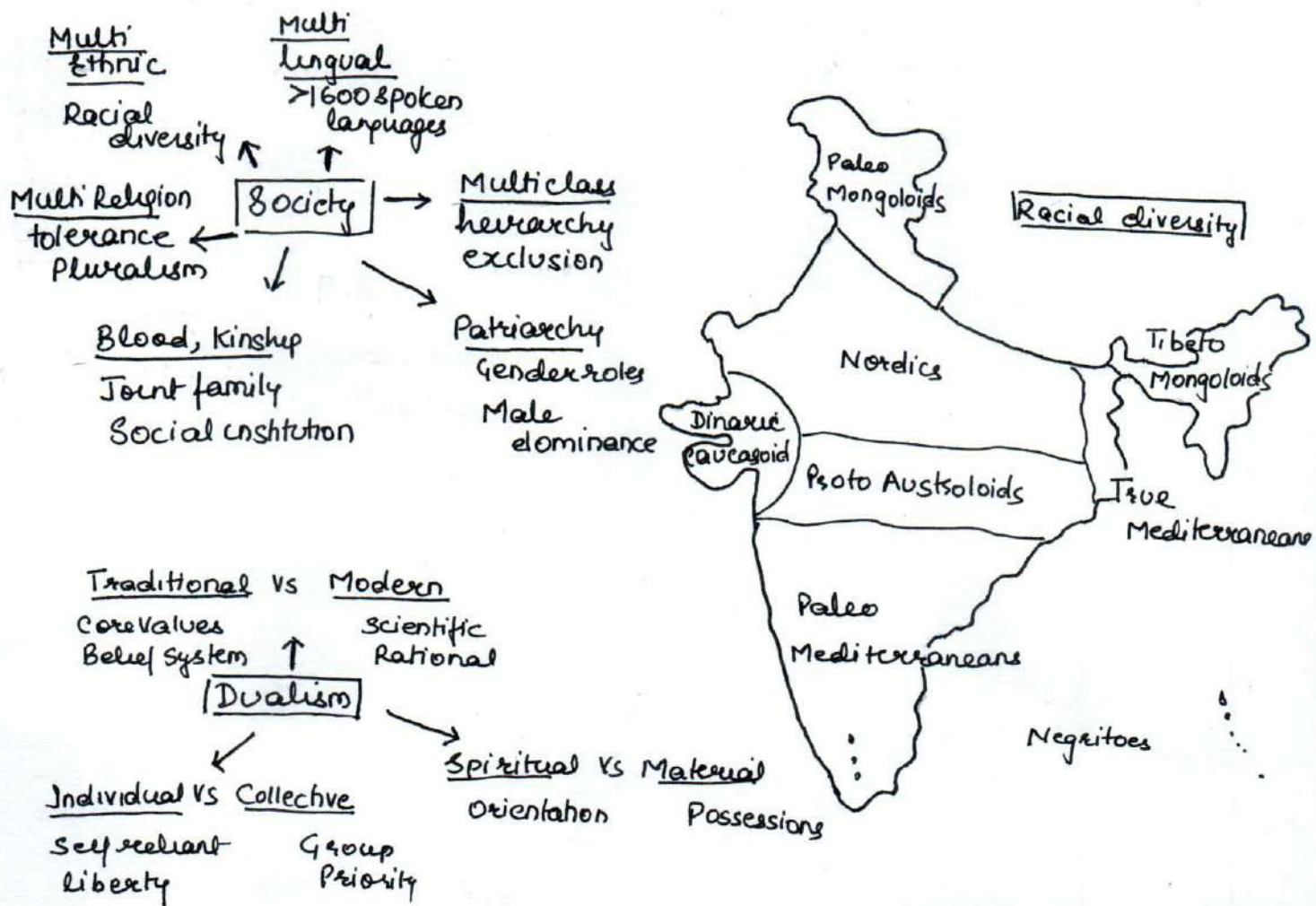


Salient Features of Indian Society

- Indian Society is amalgamation of multi lingual, multi religious, multi ethnic, multi ideological constructs with complex social structure
- Shaped by ethos of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam", it marks great synthesis of cultural heritage and modernity.
- Characteristics of Indian Society -



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1. Multi lingual Society

- India with second highest number of languages in world (after Papua New Guinea), strongly projects this plurality.
- Spoken languages belongs to different linguistic families
 - Indo-Aryan - North and Western India, with Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Punjabi, Sindhi. It includes 75% of total Population
 - Dravidian - Southern India, with Kannada, Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu. It includes 20% of total population
 - Sino tibetan - NE and NW India with Sikkimese, Ladakhi, Sherpa, Bodo, Manipuri, Tipra
 - Austic (Munda or Kol group) - Central, NE region, Khansi, Mundari, Santhali, Nicobarese.
- Linguistic reorganisation between 1956-66 of states reflected linguistic diversity
- Constitution of India recognised 22 official languages under 8th schedule.
- Classical languages - recognised by MoCulture, involves criteria - rich literary tradition, antiquity and historical significance. 11 classical languages
 - Tamil, Sanskrit, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, Odia
 - Marathi, Pali, Prakrit, Assamese, Bengali (added in 2024)

- Challenges/Issues of multilingualism

→ linguistic diversity enriches nation's culture but with multiple challenges

- a) Increase in regionalism, with erosion of national feeling
- b) barrier in governance and administration due to complexity and cost involved
- c) work force mobility due to requirement of proficiency in local language
- d) Communication gap and sectarian fragmentation
- e) language attrition - with dominant language marginalising regional / tribal languages

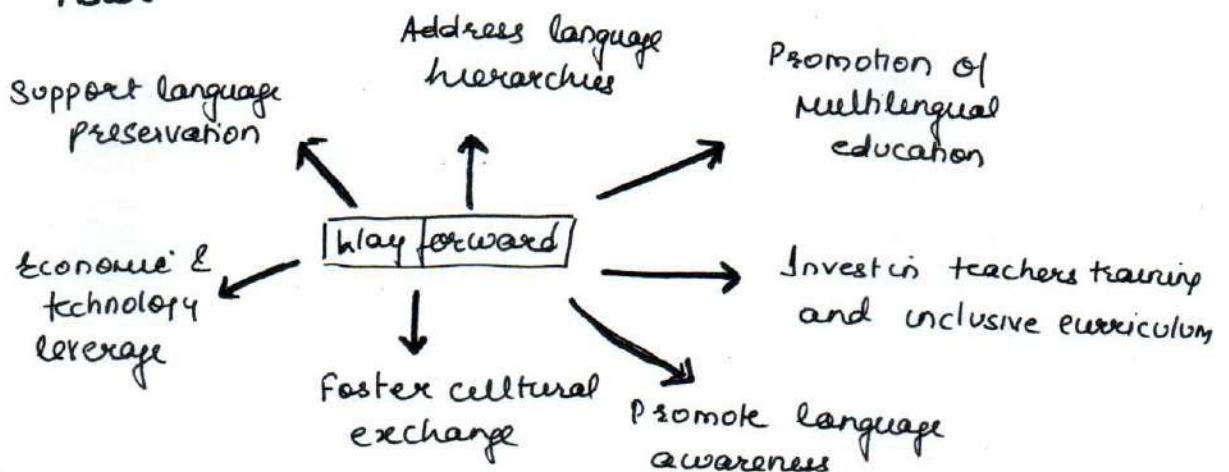
↔

Endangered Languages (197)

Gt Andamanese
Koro (Azunachal)
Gondi
Balti
Asur

Lost Language

Aka BO of
Gt Andaman



2. Multi racial society - Tribal Communities

- With intermixing of different races, ethnic diversities with tribal identities specify this characteristics.
- Indian diverse tribal population - called Schedule Tribe as per the Constitution or Adivasis
- These have rich cultural heritage and unique social structure.
- Accounting for approximate 8% of total population tribal societies are classified on the basis of
 - Permanent traits
 - Acquired traits
- Permanent traits includes region, language, traditions
 - more than 85% of tribal population lives in central India
 - in terms of share of state's population NE states (except Assam) have >30% share of tribal pop'n
 - Sino-Tibetan and Austric are the major language families of tribal people
 - physical racial terms - Mongoloids, Australoids, Negrito - dominantly relates to tribal Pop'n
- Acquired traits includes mode of livelihood and extent of incorporation into Hindu society
 - livelihood involves primitive as PVTGs having pre-agri level of technology - Jarawas to mainstreamed - Nagas & Mizos
 - assimilation includes both positive inclination or resistance.

Geographic

Isolation
Distinctiveness

Political

Paradoxical
Organisation
Demography + Monarchy

Social

Cohesive Structure
Kinship
Egalitarian
Endogamy

Cultural

Customs, folklore
belief system
Ancestral spirit
Oral tradition

Economic

Communal ownership
Traditional practices
Nature centric

**Tribal
Characteristics**

+ve Impacts

- Improved accessibility & availability of education & health care
- Grown Economic Opportunities
- Reduced exploitation
- Increased awareness and Political Consciousness

-ve impacts

- Loss of cultural identities
- Displacement & land alienation
- Environmental Degradation
- Social inequalities
- Erosion of traditional Occupation

**Impact of
Modernisation**

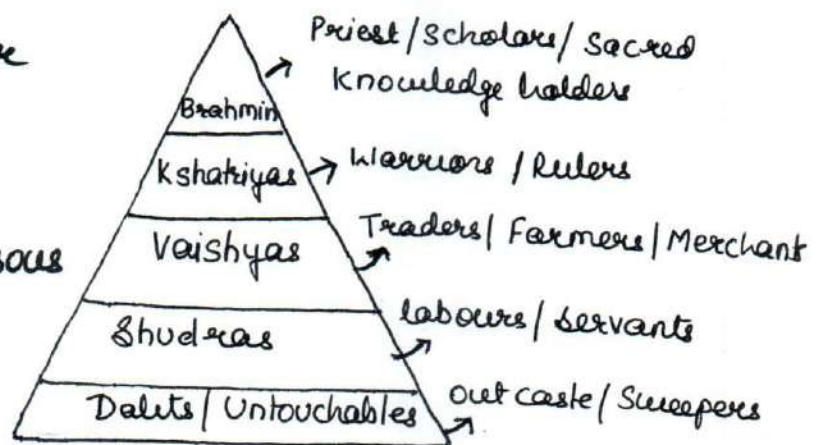
Though orient
towards preserving
fundamental
tribal identity
have yielded

3. Multi hierarchical - Caste System.

- Caste system is a social hierarchy primarily associated with Hinduism, with deep historical roots.
- It is hereditary endogamous group having common name, traditional occupation, culture, status and rigidity in matters of mobility.
- It forms single homogenous community, of broad institutional arrangements — Varna Jati

- Varna - refers to four broad categories of hierarchy.

- Jati - refers to numerous subcastes within Varnas



Caste (Varna) Hierarchy

Segmental division of society

- Caste acquired by birth
- Cannot be changed
- Only expelled

Endogamy

- Marriages within cast
- Important for perpetuation of Caste System

Hereditary Occupation

- tradition link to occupation
- limited mobility scope

Features

Hierarchy / Untouchability

- clear ladder of command
- upper castes as Brahmins
- dalits as impure / polluted

Civil and Religious disabilities

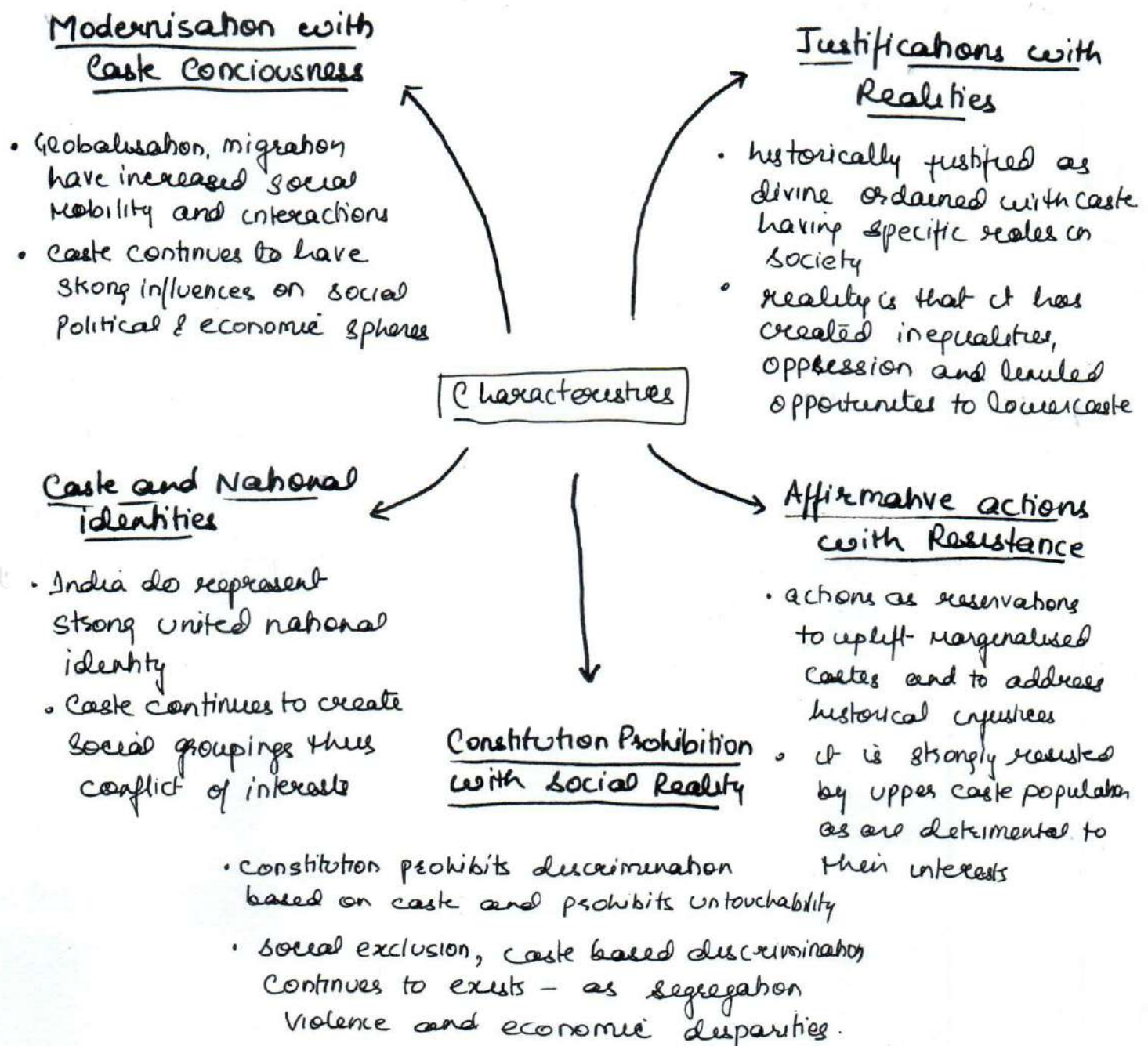
- Restrictions - speech, dressing, dining, rituals to marriage

Factors causing transformation of caste system

- Traditional caste system have transformed itself in last few decades - generating more fluid characteristics. This is due to multiple factors -
 - a) Sanskritization - the process where lower caste people adopt rituals, practices of higher castes to improve their social status - as vegetarianism and ketotalism.
 - b) Westernization - people adapting to western culture due to advancement of education, communication technology, occupational change, food habits, dressing sense and manners.
 - c) Industrialisation & Urbanisation - growth of urbanisation due to industrialisation, with resultant migration to cities - having less caste rules.
 - d) Modernisation - have induced flexibility in social hierarchy due to its scientific outlook, rational attitudes, higher living standards and broader view point - with intercaste marriages.
 - e) State Role - social legislation to protect marginalised sections, affirmative actions, land reforms, Universal Adult Franchise, eradication of untouchability.

→ Paradox of Indian Caste System -

While officially deemed as incompatible to modern ideas of equality - Caste system - continues to have significant influence on social structure and individual lives. The characteristics of this paradox includes



4. Multi Social Institutions —

- Social institutions are established set of social norms, values, beliefs and roles that organises and regulate human behaviour within society.
- Kinship, family denotes main micro level of social institutions

- Kinship — forms system of social relations that connects individuals through

Blood ties
(Consanguineous kin)

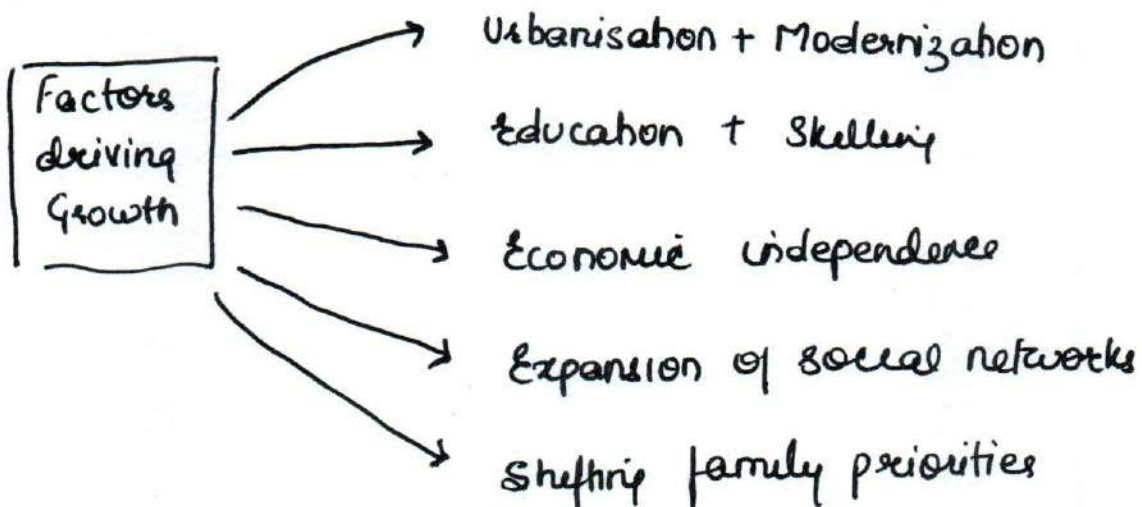
Marriage
(Affine kin)

Adoption

- It encompasses broader range of relationships immediate and extended family and fictive kin (people not related by blood or marriage but are treated as family)
- as basic social institution with universal nature it provides
 - Framework for social organisation
 - defining roles and responsibilities
 - obligations within communities
 - has role in inheritance, support and cultural practices
- Primitive societies involves stronger kinship than modern societies.

- c) Evolving role of family from absolute control over marital decisions to more supportive and consultative
- d) Change in criteria of spouse selection emphasis is more on compatibility, education, career, than caste, religion
- e) Increasing agency of women from accepting and submissive to active decision making in spouse selection
- f) Other changes -
- legal & social shift in same sex relationships involving decriminalisation since 2018 - though same sex marriage is yet to gain legal recognition
 - live-in relations legalised by Supreme Court
 - increasing singlehood
 - fluid marriages with decreased stigma around divorce.

- Inter caste and religion marriages



Marriage - defined as a socially acknowledged and approved sexual union between two adult individuals

- this affinal kinship involves under range of people as extended family
- multiple criteria can be applied to classify types of marriages

a) Based on spouse selection - $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Endogamy (within one caste)} \\ \text{Exogamy (outside caste)} \end{array} \right.$

b) Based on number of partners

Monogamy

at a given time Only
One partner

Serial

re marriage
after death/
divorce

Straight

re marriage
not
allowed

Polygamy

multiple partners at
a given time

Polygyny

one man
married
to >1
Women
(Gonds)

Polyandry

One woman
married to
>1 man
(Todas)

- Changes in Marriage System - Structural & Functional

- Evolution of marriage system in India since ancient times with colonial period reforms, have generated range of new characteristics -

a) rising age of marriage

b) changes in form of marriage Hindu Marriage

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- Inter caste and faith marriages can be both challenging and rewarding

Promotes equality & social inclusion

- Social harmony
- Cultural integration
- Inclusive Mindset

Broadens Perspective and understanding

- Promoting secularism
- Spreading awareness

Rewards

Reduces Caste/religion Prejudices

- breaking traditional barriers
- more accepting societal setup

Promotes fulfillment

- happiness
- contentment
- lead life as perceived

Reduction of transmitting Genetic defects

Social Stigma & Ostracization

- expulsion from social events
- community backlash
- termination of social support network

Family Opposition

- strained relations
- emotional distress
- honour killings

Challenges

Financial Constraints

- withdrawal of economic support
- withdrawal of inheritance
- creating financial vacuum

Cultural differences

- adjustments to different practices
- parenting conflicts
- impact on children identities

Way forward -

- Promoting social awareness to challenge traditional caste based beliefs
- Strengthening legal protection to deter violence and discrimination against inter caste couples
- Support and encourage individual preferences
- Addressing psychological trauma.

Legalising Same sex Marriages

Union between two Homogenous sex involves debates and discussions of legalising - Under Special Marriage Act

Arguments against

- Gendered terminologies
- Legislative sanction
- Limited rights to privacy
- Adoption of Children
- Legal and social security

Arguments in favour

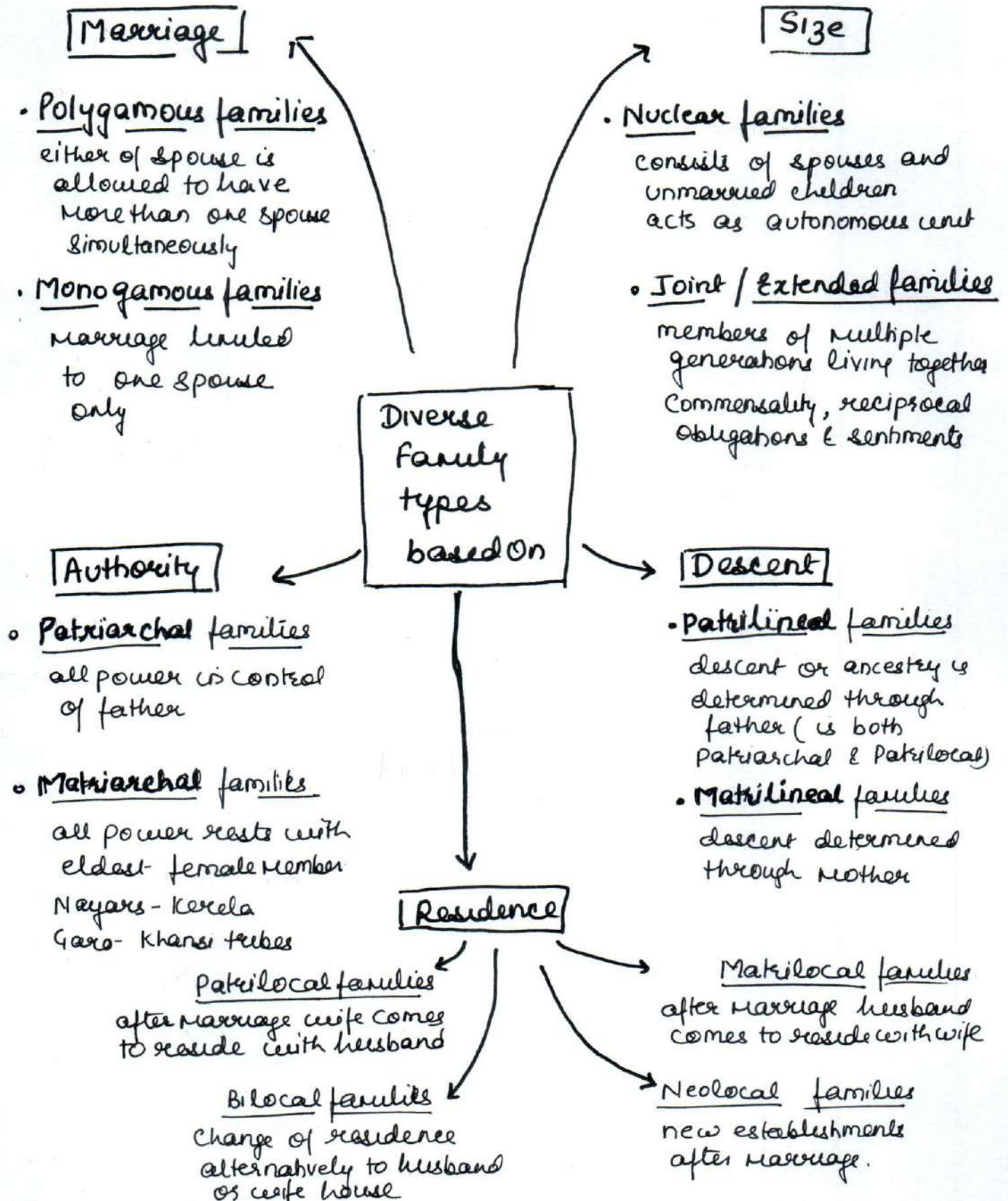
- Cohabitation as fundamental right
- No absolute concept of gender
- Recognition of human dignity
- Evolving social Morality
- Decriminalisation of Section 377

Way forward - Mass awareness about LGBTQ+ community to promote equality and acceptance. Gender neutral terms legal reforms and collective efforts.

Family -

- It is the first and most immediate social environment to which child is exposed.
- It is characterised with -
 - Universality - indispensable part of individual and society
 - Socially sanctioned - norms and relationships
 - Common habitations - household
 - Emotional support - to & fro for each member
 - Kinship nomenclature - through female/male lineage
- Functions of family
 - a) Procreation - reproduction and rearing of children
 - b) Socialization - first institution to provide socialization
 - c) Shelter provider - comfort, protection and peace to members
 - d) Economics - consuming & production unit for well being
 - e) Education - of social attitudes and habits to children
 - f) Religion - spiritual training and needs transferred through generations.
- Types of family

There are multiple criteria to classify family types wherein Joint and Nuclear family systems are dominant in rural and Urban India respectively.



Transition of Indian Family structure and function

- Multiple factors have been inducing changes in family set up in India

- a) Urbanisation and industrialisation - generating nuclear families with neolocal residence
- b) Legislative measures - as Child Marriage Restraint Act, Hindu Marriage Act, Hindu Succession Act, Widow Remarriage Act have impacted families
- c) Financial independence of women
- d) Westernisation - values as rationalism, individualism, equality, democracy.
- e) Fluid nature of family due to professional commitments

⇒ New family forms in contemporary society

- Single Parent family
- Same Sex family
- Childless family
- Blended/ step family
- Transnational/ long distance family
- Foster/ adoptive family

5. Multi religious - religious pluralism and diversity -

- Remarkable religious diversities - involving both Indigenous and Exogenous religions
- While Hinduism - along with Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism are indigenous -
- Christianity and Islam have exogenous characteristics
- Constitutional Secularism - declares India a secular state, freedom of religion with equal respect and protection for all religions
- Religious pluralism is beyond existence of diversity by positive engagement and inclusion

⇒ Indian Multiculturalism and Pluralism - Unity in Diversity

	<u>Multiculturalism</u>	<u>Pluralism</u>
<u>Idea</u> →	co-existence of diverse cultural groups within society	- ensures equal participation and influence of all groups in society
<u>Goal</u> →	do not focus on assimilation with no dominant culture	- often emphasis on integration with dominant culture
<u>Focus</u> →	addresses power imbalances between different groups	- ensures that all groups have equal access to power
<u>Emphasis</u> →	Cultural preservation diversity and celebration of differences	- Equality participation and democratic values