

Characteristics of Change in Marriage Customs in the Saudi Society - An Anthropological Study in Al-Hofuf City in Al-Ahsa Governorate – Region

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The study is based on main objective which is observing and analyzing some aspects of change in marriage habits in Hofuf, Saudi Arabia. The objective branches into some sub-objectives which are:

1- The effect of means of communication on the processes of acquisition and cultural representation of marriage customs

2- The impact of expatriate labor on changing marriage habits

3- standing on how education affects changing of marriage habits "for both sexes"

- The study is based on a number of approaches, including: Anthropological approach, its various

tools represented in (observation, observation with participation, in-depth interviews, fieldwork guide, photography), study methodology of local community , folklore methodology. Eight of households were selected representing eight families, two of them represent Bedouin type, three rural type, and three urban type within study community. The study was conducted in Hofuf city in Ahsa governorate in Saudi Arabia.

The study found several results, most important of them are: 1. There are many criteria for choosing a life partner; for the girl who is nominated for marriage, we find that these criteria have changed and differed from those in the past, and it starts to appear criteria, not the criteria of mothers and grandmothers; the criteria of girl education has progressed and so her function, form, external appearance, social and economic status.

2 - Some customs have developed in the stages of marriage that did not exist in the past, such as engagement, its celebrations and ceremonies, its duration, and the emergence of new types of food

and drink that did not exist previously in the wedding feast in the past within the study community.

3- The ability of some habits to stabilize, and persist, which are habits often associated with beliefs, such as Queen (Malaga) (marriage contract), and take care to protect the bride from envy or failure, such as not to announce the wedding date and the wedding night, unless in a late time. A new habit has been introduced to support this belief which is the invention of welcome party , which is a functional substitute for the wedding ceremony in sometimes and othertimes the two ceremonies or parties are being held, the wedding, and then it is done after finishing the honeymoon and the return of the brides from abroad.

4-The evolution of communication means and media, in particular the Internet and what it includes from symbols and meanings, has played a role in changing not only the customs and traditions of marriage, but also changing the style and the way of life of the study community and their view of the

foreign model that has entered with the cultural connection with upcoming multiple cultures into study community, which has been reflected in customs and traditions of marriage, as well as material and non-material culture in community.