
AGE OF GETTING MARRIED: A MAJOR FACTOR FOR DIVORCES IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

One of the most noticeable demographic trends in the Indian population has been the gradual increase in the age at first marriage. The most common pattern in marriage is based on the spouses' commonalities in terms of social status, degree of education, employment, religion, ethnic group, family background, and so on. It is not an exception in India. In India, marriage is still mostly a family affair dictated by traditional norms. The leading rates of divorces in India had led us to this research to find the correlation between delayed marriages and attitude towards marriage, marital satisfaction and quality of marriage. This research investigates the link between the factors that cause marriage to be postponed. The sample comprised of 30 married couples, who had their first marriage at the age of 30-40 years. The tools employed are General Attitudes Towards Marriage Scale (Park & Rosen, 2013), Kanas Marital Satisfaction Scale (Schumm et al., 1983) and Quality Of Marriage Index (Norton, R. 1983). The findings of this study provide information that will help us better understand the factors that influence millennials' marriage divorces.

Keywords: Delayed Marriage, Divorce, Marital Satisfaction, Quality of Marriage

INTRODUCTION

Marriage

Marriage is regarded as a sacred link between two people in India, and it holds a major role in the social institutions of the civilised world. It is a religious sacrament as well as a social compact. Marriage, matrimony, union formation, or wedlock in India is a religious tradition in which a couple is bound in a permanent relationship for the purposes of dharma, procreation, and sexual pleasure on a physical, social, and spiritual level (Shivani Gupta, 2015). There is no single definition that encompasses all types of human marriage. As a result, a variety of definitions and explanations have been provided.

According to *Lundberg*, Marriage consists of the “rules and regulations which define the rights, duties, and privileges of husband and wife, with respect to each other.”

Malinowski says that marriage is a “contract for the production and maintenance of children.”

And According to *Anderson and Parker*, “Marriage is the sanctioning by a society of a durable bond between one or more males and one or more females established to permit sexual intercourse for the implied purpose of the parenthood.”

In India, the most common pattern of marriage is picking comparable partners, i.e., partnerships based on socioeconomic class, level of education, employment, religion, ethnic group, family background, and so on. In India, marriage is still mostly a family affair dictated by traditional norms. Nonetheless, the aforementioned criteria play such a significant influence in this respect that they together decide even the time of marriage.

Late marriage

The difficulty of finding "the ideal person" to marry may generate a lot of stress and uncertainty in the minds of young men and women. Another reason why some people put off getting married is that they have become emotionally close to their parents and find it difficult to break away from them. Women's liberation movements have also raised awareness that a woman can find fulfilment in a variety of ways other than marriage. The difficulty of finding "the ideal person" to marry may generate a lot of stress and uncertainty in the minds of young men and women. Another reason why some people put off getting married is that they have become emotionally close to their parents and find it difficult to break away from them. Women's

liberation movements have also raised awareness that a woman can find fulfilment in a variety of ways other than marriage. Age at marriage is not a suitable criterion for studying delayed marriages in a nation like India, where marriage is universal. Rather, it would be more reasonable to investigate the influence of specific elements that might explain why males and females are more likely to remain single or married at a certain point in time.

According to recent studies, the association between age at marriage and marital instability is substantially negative until the late twenties, after which it flattens off (Lehrer, 2008).

Furthermore, an analysis of 2001 census data clearly shows that marriages remain mainly confined to higher ages for those who have been married for the last nine years prior to the census (i.e. married between 1992 and 2001), as opposed to those who have been married for twenty years or more prior to the census. One key topic is whether the current trend of growing older ages at marriage has any ramifications for marital stability. Numerous studies have found that those who married at a young age are more likely to divorce later in life (Castro-Martin and Bumpass 1989; Bumpass et al. 1991; Lehrer 1996; Teachman 2002). As a result, it's critical to investigate India's delayed marriage trend.

Divorce

“A court or other competent entity that legally dissolves a marriage.”

Despite rising divorce rates, just 1.1 percent of women are divorced, according to a UN study titled "Progress of the World's Women 2019-2020: Families in a Changing World." Women in metropolitan areas make up the biggest share of divorcees in India.

Divorce with Mutual Consent is a type of divorce where both parties agree to the divorce.

When a couple agrees to divorce, the courts will accept a divorce with mutual consent under Section 10A of the Indian Divorce Act, 1869, which requires the pair to be separated for at least two years and that they have not been living together as husband and wife during that time.

For at least a year, the spouses should be apart

The couple must be able to demonstrate that they are unable to live together.

Custody, support, and property rights for children must all be agreed upon.

An worldwide study has found that couples who marry beyond the age of 30 divorce more frequently than those who marry in their 20s, signalling a significant shift in divorce trends. According to the statistics, the likelihood of having a divorce rises by 5% per year beyond the age of 32.

THE HINDU MARRIAGE ACT, 1955

Conditions for a Hindu marriage.—A marriage may be solemnized between any two Hindus, if the following conditions are fulfilled, namely:—

- (i) neither party has a spouse living at the time of the marriage;
- (ii) at the time of the marriage, neither party— (a) is incapable of giving a valid consent to it in consequence of unsoundness of mind; or b) though capable of giving a valid consent, has been suffering from mental disorder of such a kind or to such an extent as to be unfit for marriage and the procreation of children; or (c) has been subject to recurrent attacks of insanity ^{1 ***;}]
- (iii) the bridegroom has completed the age of 2 [twenty-one years] and the bride, the age of 3 [eighteen years] at the time of the marriage; (iv) the parties are not within the degrees of prohibited relationship unless the custom or usage governing each of them permits of a marriage between the two; (v) the parties are not sapindas of each other, unless the custom or usage governing each of them permits of a marriage between the two.

Registration of Hindu marriages

(1) For the purpose of facilitating the proof of Hindu marriages, the State Government may make rules providing that the parties to any such marriage may have the particulars relating to their marriage entered in such manner and subject to such conditions as may be prescribed in a Hindu Marriage Register kept for the purpose.

(2) Notwithstanding anything contained in sub-section (1), the State Government may, if it is of opinion that it is necessary or expedient so to do, provide that the entering of the particulars referred to in sub-section (1) shall be compulsory in the State or in any part thereof, whether in all cases or in such cases as may be specified, and where any such direction has been issued, any person contravening any rule made in this behalf shall be punishable with fine which may extend to twenty-five rupees.

(3) All rules made under this section shall be laid before the State Legislature, as soon as may be, after they are made.

(4) The Hindu Marriage Register shall at all reasonable times be open for inspection, and shall be admissible as evidence of the statements therein contained and certified extracts therefrom shall, on application, be given by the Registrar on payment to him of the prescribed fee.

(5) Notwithstanding anything contained in this section, the validity of any Hindu marriage shall in no way be affected by the omission to make the entry.

Divorce

(1) Any marriage solemnized, whether before or after the commencement of this Act, may, on a petition presented by either the husband or the wife, be dissolved by a decree of divorce on the ground that the other party—

1 [(i) has, after the solemnization of the marriage, had voluntary sexual intercourse with any person other than his or her spouse; or (ia) has, after the solemnization of the marriage, treated the petitioner with cruelty; or (ib) has deserted the petitioner for a continuous period of not less than two years immediately preceding the presentation of the petition; or] (ii) has ceased to be a Hindu by conversion to another religion; or

2 [(iii) has been incurably of unsound mind, or has been suffering continuously or intermittently from mental disorder of such a kind and to such an extent that the petitioner cannot reasonably be expected to live with the respondent. Explanation.—In this clause,—
(a) the expression “mental disorder” means mental illness, arrested or incomplete development of mind, psychopathic disorder or any other disorder or disability of mind and includes schizophrenia; (b) the expression “psychopathic disorder” means a persistent disorder or disability of mind (whether or not including sub—normality of intelligence) which results in abnormally aggressive or seriously irresponsible conduct on the part of the other party, and whether or not it requires or is susceptible to medical treatment; or]

(2) A wife may also present a petition for the dissolution of her marriage by a decree of divorce on the ground,—

(i) in the case of any marriage solemnized before the commencement of this Act, that the husband had married again before such commencement or that any other wife of the husband

married before such commencement was alive at the time of the solemnization of the marriage of the petitioner: Provided that in either case the other wife is alive at the time of the presentation of the petition; or

(ii) that the husband has, since the solemnization of the marriage, been guilty of rape, sodomy or 1 [bestiality; or]

2 [(iii) that in a suit under section 18 of the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, 1956 (78 of 1956), or in a proceeding under section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974) (or under the corresponding section 488 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 (5 of 1898), a decree or order, as the case may be, has been passed against the husband awarding maintenance to the wife notwithstanding that she was living apart and that since the passing of such decree or order, cohabitation between the parties has not been resumed for one year or upwards;

(iv) that her marriage (whether consummated or not) was solemnized before she attained the age of fifteen years and she has repudiated the marriage after attaining that age but before attaining the age of eighteen years.

Quality of Marriage

A person's marital quality relates to how happy or satisfied they are in their relationship (Reynolds et al, 2014). Marital Quality has been linked to both conflict (Stanley, Markman, & Whitton, 2002) and social support (Schaap, Buunk, & Kerkstra, 1988, p. 209) and has been demonstrated to be connected with both conflict and social support (Schaap, Buunk, & Kerkstra, 1988, p. 209). (Acitelli & Antonucci, 1994; Brunstein, Dangelmayer, & Schultheiss, 1996). Often, the terms "marital quality" and "marital satisfaction" are used interchangeably, however marital quality is defined as "a worldwide appraisal of the marriage along numerous dimensions, including good and negative elements of marriage" (Fincham & Bradbury, 1987). (e.g., support and strain; Burman & Margolin, 1992; Fincham, Beach, & Kemp-Fincham, 1997; Slatcher, 2010) As a result, excellent marriage quality is often operationalized as high marital satisfaction. (Robles and colleagues, 2014). In a half-century of studies on the issue, the biggest social predictor of marital stability and marriage quality is age at marriage (Monahan 1953; Moore and Waite 1981; Teachman 1983; Larson and Holman 1994). According to research, postponing marriage appears to be linked to greater marital stability and higher marital quality (Martin, 2002). Because couples who marry in their late twenties and thirties are more mature,

financially stable, have more time to choose a highly matched mate, and are well educated, they are more likely to have a successful marriage.

General Attitudes towards Marriage

In recent years, there has been a movement in Indians' attitudes around the age of first marriage. Adults also choose to put off marriage and, in some circumstances, relationships entirely in favour for more freedom, independence, and a concentration on their education and jobs within society, as well as to meet their personal needs as individuals before marrying. 2011 (Davis-Fine). There has also been a shift in how young guys are seen. They don't want to be responsible for a family on their own. They now think that their wife has to be educated and employed. This appears to be the new standard for a secure and long-lasting marriage. All of these shifting attitudes and beliefs are contributing to the growing trend of postponing marriages.

Marital Satisfaction

Marital satisfaction, according to the Encyclopedia of Social Psychology, is a mental state that reflects a person's perceptions of the advantages and costs of marriage. Male and female preferences, as well as the distribution of features in a person's marriage market, all influence marital pleasure. Only a few research have looked into the impact of age on marital satisfaction (see Schmitt et al., 2007). Lee (1977) discovered a link between marital pleasure, spouse marital role performance, and age at marriage. (Shahabad et al., 2019) backed this up with their findings, claiming that as people become older, marriage happiness rises. This clearly reveals that marriages in their late twenties and thirties had higher marital satisfaction than those in their early twenties and thirties.

Methodology

Aim – To study the relation between delayed marriage, marital satisfaction, attitude towards marriage and quality of marriage in married males and females.

Hypothesis – There will be a significant relationship between marital satisfaction, attitude towards marriage and quality of marriage in couples who got married in their thirties.

Sample – The sample consist of 30 married couples

The subjects were selected by the following inclusion and exclusion criteria

- Females between the age group of 27-37 years and Males of age group of 30-40 years at the time of marriage.
- Participants With Working knowledge of English language
- Participants in their first marriage

Design of the study – a correlation research design was employed.

Variable	Attitude towards marriage	Quality of marriage	Marital satisfaction
Attitude towards marriage			
Quality of marriage			
Marital satisfaction			

Measures of the study –

Kanas Marital Satisfaction Scale (Schumm et al., 1983)-

It was developed by Schumm et al. (1983) was used to assess marital satisfaction of the couple. The KMSS is a short and precise measurement with three questions: “How satisfied are you with your husband/wife as a spouse?,” “How satisfied are you with your marriage?,” and “How satisfied are you with your relationship with your husband/wife?” Each item on the KMSS has a possible score ranging from one to seven. Cronbach’s alpha for the KMSS has been reported as .84 (Schumm et al., 1985) and .96 (Jeong, Bollman, & Schumm, 1992). Test-retest reliability was .71 (Schumm et al. 1983). Regarding validity, couples scoring in the distressed range on the KMSS also scored in the distressed range on the RDAS and DAS. Alpha coefficient, as a measure of internal consistency, is found to be .79 in the present study.

Quality Of Marriage Index (Norton, R. 1983)-

It is a six-item measure of global satisfaction. The QMI was developed in part as a response to the DAS, which Norton (1983) described as confounding relationship satisfaction with the determinants and consequences of relationship satisfaction. Respondents reply to 5 questions such as, “We have a good relationship,” and “Our marriage is strong,” on a 7-point scale and one global item, “The degree of happiness, everything considered, in your marriage,” on a 10-point scale. The QMI correlates strongly with the DAS (Heyman et al., 1994) and consists of a single factor (Norton, 1983). QMI scores tend to be negatively skewed, and Norton (1983) provided a transformation for normalizing QMI scores.

General Attitudes Towards Marriage Scale (Park & Rosen, 2013)-

It was developed to access and measure overall positive and negative attitudes towards of the institution of marriage. The scale was developed to also access the attitudes of both married and non-married individuals. It focuses on personal and global levels of idealized beliefs, fears and doubts towards marriage. The scale includes 10 items regarding feelings (positive attitudes, negative attitudes, fears and doubts) towards an individual’s current or future marriage. (E.g. marriage is a “good idea”). Every question is presented with a 5 –point Likert scale, ranging from, (1) Strongly Agree, (2) Agree, (3) Neither Agree nor Disagree, (4) Disagree, (5) Strongly Disagree.

Results

Variable	Mean	SD	Marital satisfaction	Quality of marriage	Attitude towards marriage
Marital satisfaction	17.014	5.1275	1	.758***	.568***

Quality of marriage	38.945	8.8896		1	.590***
Attitude towards marriage	45.233	12.2684			1

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.00 level.

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

The above table indicates that there is positive correlation between Marital satisfaction and quality of marriage ($r = 0.758$, $p < 0.00$), Marital satisfaction and attitude towards marriage ($r = 0.568$, $p < 0.00$), Quality of marriage and attitude towards marriage ($r = 0.590$, $p < 0.00$).

Discussion

The fall and delay in first-time marriage has been one of the most noticeable shifts in Indian culture over the last 20 years. "It used to be that marriage was the first step into maturity. It is now frequently the last." Their priorities have shifted, as has been noted. Increased emphasis on women's education, maturity effects, cohabitation tendencies, and career-focused persons, among other factors, make marriage a later life choice. In a culture like India, where marriage is more of a social event, it's crucial to research the factors that influence delayed marriage.

In the present research, correlations between various variables of delayed marriage i.e marital satisfaction, quality of marriage and attitude towards marriage were examined. The findings demonstrated the following outcomes:

There is a significant correlation between marital satisfaction and the quality of one's marriage. Often, the terms "marital quality" and "marital satisfaction" are used interchangeably, however marital quality is defined as "a worldwide appraisal of the marriage along numerous dimensions, including good and negative elements of marriage" (Fincham & Bradbury, 1987).

(e.g., support and strain; Burman & Margolin, 1992; Fincham, Beach, & Kemp-Fincham, 1997; Slatcher, 2010) As a result, excellent marriage quality is often operationalized as high marital satisfaction. 2014 (Robles et al.) Life satisfaction and marital quality were also found to have positive and substantial associations (etinkaya & Gençdoan, 2014).

There is also a significant positive correlation between attitude toward marriage and marriage quality. Previous study backs up this assertion (Lev-Wiesel, R., & Al-Krenawi, A. 1999). As previously said, a high-quality marriage is a sign of a person's pleasure and fulfilment in life. As a result, this would reinforce and deepen people's attitudes about marriage. Similarly, there is a significant relationship between satisfaction toward marriage and marital satisfaction, as evidenced by previous research (Li et al., 2017; Broderick & O'Leary, 1986; Bakhtiyari, 2019). This means that higher marital satisfaction is linked to a more positive attitude toward marriage, and vice versa. This is because if a person has a good attitude about marriage, he or she will strive hard to make their marriage succeed, resulting in higher marital satisfaction.

Conclusion

The results suggest that the couples who got married at their early thirties and forties have high levels of marital satisfaction, a more positive attitude towards marriage and better quality of marriage. Hence the null hypothesis was accepted.

This can be due to the maturity affect and does means that the couples who delay their marriages to early 30s and 40s are less likely to get divorced due to these factors.

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