

The Concealed Issues Submerging the Concept of Marriage- Present and Future Generations

Meera Rajeev Kumar

Assistant Professor, Department of Public Administration, Madras Christian College, Tamil Nadu, India

Email: meerajeev@mcc.edu.in

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1137-1849>

Received: 25-08-2021; Accepted: 17-07-2022

ABSTRACT

The concept of marriage has undergone a transition presently when compared with the past. Norms, customs and traditions have also changed. Attitudes, choices and preferences of individuals contribute to these changes accompanied by education and modernization. Equality of women, social changes, and liberalized economy can be a few determinants contributing to the choices and preferences, yet fertility issues remain a nagging problem after marriage. The present trend highlights late marriages, and stress at home and works front for both genders, contributing to instability in marriages. These being certain issues, on one hand, increase in divorce cases, maintenance and custody of children, single parenting is another set of challenges, on the other hand. Hence, marriages are also riskier and those who embark on this journey are the successful lot. This paper primarily aims to identify the perception of youth about marriage as terminologies such as “Live in relationships”, “Friends with benefits”, etc., are in vogue. Secondly, the objective of this paper is also to study if “mid-life crisis” in both the genders accompanied by emotional, physical and psychological issues can be the causal determinants for various issues in marriage. Thirdly, the paper aims to study the causal effects between marriage issues, family laws and the country’s economy as there is a direct nexus between the three forces using appropriate research methodology tools and techniques.

Keywords: Relationship, Marriage, Mid-life crisis, Economic growth

INTRODUCTION

Many definitions of marriage sensitise the way it is being conceptualized. General definition of marriage states that it is a legally and socially sanctioned union between a man and a woman regulated by laws, rules, customs, beliefs and attitudes. Sociologists state that marriage is a legally recognized social contract between two people, traditionally based on a sexual relationship and implying a permanence of the union. Indeed, sociologists are interested in the relationship between the institution of marriage and the institution of family because marriages

are what creates a family. Marriage according to psychologists mean a social institution where two people commit themselves to a socially sanctioned relationship in which sexual intercourse is legitimated and there is legally recognized responsibility for any offspring as well as for each other.

According to Manu smriti, a wife is ardhagni (half of man) and hence must follow the principles of a man. Satpatha Brahmana says wife is half of husband but man is only half, not complete until he marries. Shastras call Husband as 'bhartri or pati' while a wife is known as 'Jaya'.

Therefore, marriage is considered as a 'socially' established relation or contract that exists today, regulated by customs and laws. Are marriages only to satiate physical and emotional issues prevailing between a man and woman or is it more than that? Almost all the marriages are considered as a legal social contract to satiate their physical and emotional feelings. This is a conventional statement the researcher has found but are the trends changing today? Is marriage being done after live in relationships? Are marriages successful till the end? How are the pre-issues and post issues of marriages dealt with? When adultery is not treated as a crime in India, are there emergence of concepts like "Friends with Benefits", "Petting relationships", etc. These are the questions the researcher was bombarded to do a study on the "concealed issues" of marriage.

Styles of marriage¹

Marriages according to sociologists can be classified as :

- Polygamy
 - Polygyny: A male can have more than one wife. This is further broken into sororal (involves sisters) and non-sororal.
 - Polyandry: A wife can have more than one husband. This is further divided into fraternal (several brother with the same wife). During cultural traditions, the child chooses his/her father or a ritual determines.
- Monogamy: The most common and a straightforward connect between two genders; a man and a woman. This is further classified into straight and serial. In a straight monogamy there is no room for remarriage due to death or divorce. Serial monogamy does allow.
- Group Marriage: Marriages where two or more men and women join together as common spouses and children belong to the group.

¹<https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/marriage/marriage-characteristics-and-types-of-marriage/>

- **Open Marriages:** This type may or may not include both spouses. It allows either party to have sex with someone other than their spouse. This is what is called ‘swinging’ and not considered as infidelity by the couple.

Reports from the UN, Eurostat and the OECD have shown that in many countries marriage rates are declining. It shows that the declining marriage rates are indirectly proportional to the increase in age of people getting married. In Sweden, the average rate of marriageable age was 31 years in the year 2010 while in United Kingdom it was 30 years. In India the average age of marriage in the year 2005 was 20 years. In 2015, the scenario completely changed with Sweden showing 34 years, United Kingdom 32 years while India showing 22 years. There is a stark increase in the age of marriage in the rich developed countries while in India it does not show much difference.

The World Data report² also shows that children are born outside marriage recently and the trend is increasing. Cohabitation rates have increased compared to marriages in many developed countries. The concepts of cohabitation, casual sex and friends with benefits are in vogue that marriage has lost its charm. Many adults feel, if marriage is a dire necessity to satiate their physical and emotional feelings when cohabitation persists. Many children are orphaned owing to cohabitation as the couple feels reluctant to take responsibilities at a very early age, fear of society and career focus. At the same time, single parenting has also become a rage as these families are very diverse in terms of socio-economic background and living arrangements, across countries, within countries and over the time.

These data triggered a curiosity in the researcher to conduct a research over the two groups; Middle Aged Group and the Youth Of Today.

Theoretical dimensions of marriage³

This research paper has procured the two theories for complete elucidation of the concept of marriage.

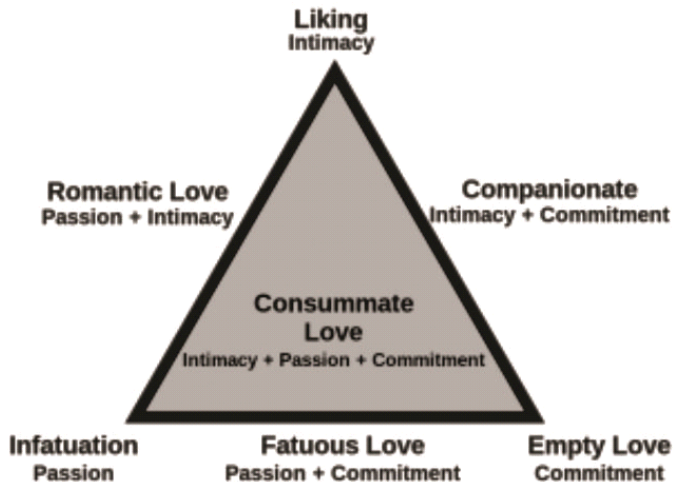
- Duplex Theory of Love
- Gottman Method

Duplex Theory of Love was developed by Robert. J. Sternberg who has given a combination of two theories in this: First is the triangular theory of love and Second is the theory of love. The first one encompasses a blend of intimacy, passion, decision or commitment. He states closeness, connectedness and bond in relationship matters. Romance, physical attraction and

²<https://ourworldindata.org/marriages-and-divorces>

³<https://positivepsychology.com/marriage-fulfillment-lifelong-relationship/>

sex make up the passionate element. Decision or commitment in marriage don't have to happen together and one could also commit to a relationship without admitting their love. Second is the theory of love story wherein Sternberg⁴ says that books, media or the past can also initiate to conceptualize love. These tools induce fantasizing a future relationship.



GOTTMAN METHOD

John Gottman and his wife Julie propounded this theory of Relationship Therapy after studying various relationships for 30 years. They have created seven levels that can promote trust and commitment. Each level speaks about resolving conflicts and increasing love and affection.



⁴Ibid, p, 1-6

Purview of the Research

This descriptive research study purported certain research questions based on which the study was conducted.

1. Are the issues between men and women owe to psychological or physical or emotional problems?
2. How do the generations of people view and accept marriage as?
3. Do the men face the “mid - life” crisis?
4. How do the youth differentiate between cohabitation and marriage?
5. How would both the genders perceive their partners in their lives?

This research samples taken were taken from two sets of the population:

1. Both the genders between the age group of 35 – 46 years
2. Youth between the age group of 21 – 27 years

Two separate structured questionnaires for each group using google forms were prepared and distributed.

The researcher addresses the genders between the age group of 30-45 years as the Middle-Aged Group (MAG) and the age group of 21-27 years as the youth of today (YOT). The MAG was questioned on the issues relating to marriage and the YOT on their perception about marriage. In MAG nearly 57.1% belong to the female population while 42.9% belong to the male population out of which 71.4% belong to the age group of 35 to 40 years and 28.6%, between 41 to 46 years. 78.6% of the population are salaried with 7.1% being self employed and 14.3% being housewives.

In YOT, 72.7% of the respondents are male while 27.3% were female. 54.5% of the respondents were belonged to the age group of 24-26 years while 45.5% belong to the age group of 21-23 years of age.

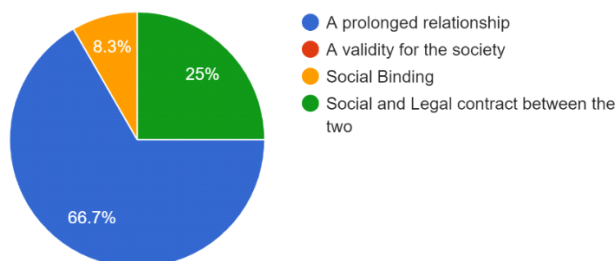


Chart 1: Middle Aged Group (What is marriage?)

Nearly 66.7% of the MAG sample have considered marriage as a prolonged relationship while 25% consider that as a social and legal contract and 8.3% as a social binding.

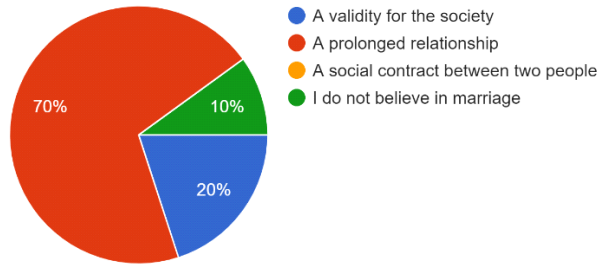


Chart 1a: Youth of Today (What is marriage?)

Nearly 70% of the youth feel marriage is a prolonged relationship while 20% state that it is just a validity for the society and 10% do not believe in marriage.

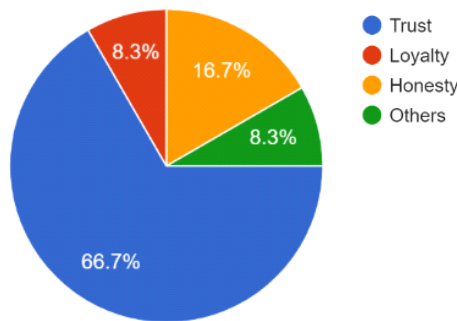


Chart 2: Middle Aged Group (What is required in a marriage?)

66.7% of the MAG sample size have stated that trust determines the closeness between a husband and wife with loyalty and other factors such as love and respect gaining 16.6%. 16.7% consider honesty as also an important factor.

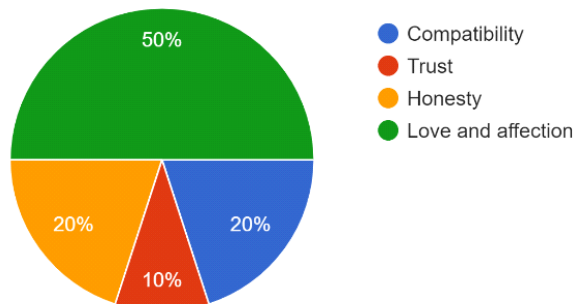


Chart 2a: Youth of Today (What is required in marriage?)

The youth of today of nearly 50% express love and affection as a requisite for a successful marriage while 40% give importance to compatibility and honesty while 10% state trust as a requisite.

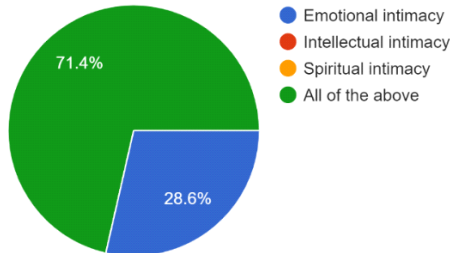


Chart 3: Middle Aged Group (Needs for a successful marriage)

Nearly 71.4% of the sample study have stated that emotional, intellectual, and spiritual intimacies are required for the marriages to sustain while 28.6% have chosen only emotional intimacy.

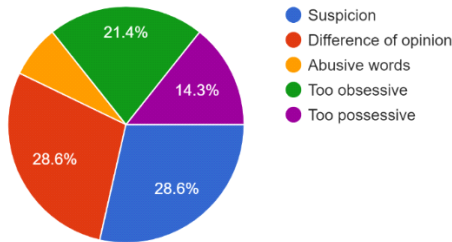


Chart 4: Middle Aged Group (What causes issues in marriage?)

The chart shows that nearly 28.6% of the sample state that suspicion and difference of opinion are the causes for anger. This group has states that one’s ego can also cause issues between a husband and wife. 21.4% feel that either of them is too obsessive and 14.3% being too possessive while 7.1% are the ones who feel being abused can create problems.

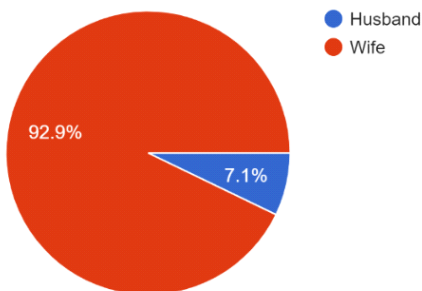


Chart 4: Middle Aged Group (Who cares more for family emotions?)

When it comes to responsibility 48.2% have mentioned that both husband and wife are responsible and 92.9% feel that it is the wife who cares more for family emotions. It is also to be noted that 23.1% of them have also stated that it is the wife who is more responsible.

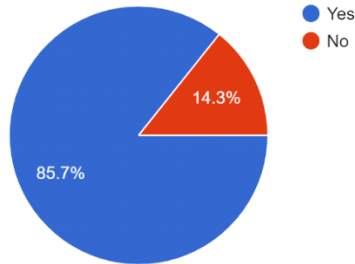


Chart 5: Middle Aged Group (Is physical intimacy required for a successful marriage?)

Physical intimacy in relationships for 85.7% of the study is found to be important while 14.3% have responded negatively.

Around 60% to 70% of the youth feel books and media do influence the married lives. 45% to 90% of the youth are aware about the terms such as “live in relationship”, “Friends with benefits”, “Petting partners”, etc. The study however reveals that nearly 70% of the youth feel that their partner should be a virgin yet they do say that aspect will not affect their life in future. When questioned about divorces, they provide a clarity in thoughts that dissatisfaction in marriage, lack of understanding and respect, improper communication, haste, lack of selflessness and over possessiveness without giving them their space could be the reasons for failure in marriage.

The youth however feel that marriage is a sacred union with companionship, fulfillment and love, and should happen with the clear consent and conscience of both partners. The youngsters are clear that marriage must happen only if one is interested or willing to take responsibility for the entire life.

They prefer to treat their spouses as a companion and provide all the space required to ensure there exists a long-term relationship.

Concealed Issues in Marriage

Marriage is an indispensable part in one’s life. In the olden days, the bride married the groom without having a say and went by the words of the parents, thus living a life of adjustments and compromises. Women had to bear a child within six months beyond which she loses respect in the family and is subdued. Men had a chance to remarry but women were deprived of that as their conscious and the cultural opinions differed.

Over the period of time, the situation has entirely changed from women taking up challenging and inevitable roles such as administrative officers, entrepreneurs,

Theoretical Implications

Through the study it is revealed that nearly 30% of the respondents have stated that marriage is only a social binding or a social contract. It is this group of people who would face the mid-life crisis as they are likely to be critical in relationship, defensive, and stonewalling.

The Duplex theory clearly states that for a prolonged relationship, passion and intimacy are important while Gottman provides plans to resolve conflicts such as building love maps over the years, express fondness and admiration, compromise and adaptation, solving solvable problems possible.

The youth today are well aware about the issues of marriages by observing various case studies and are well balanced about leading a good life. They are sure to treat their partners with respect, care and compassion, providing the space they require. Yet, from the study it is understood that nearly 25% of them have felt that live in relationships would have been better before marriage and there always prevails a comparison of their spouse with their lovers in the past. This can actually lead to a lot of problems in marriage.

In spite of the usage of various terms, there are many youngsters in India who are matured to understand the drawbacks of cohabitation. The upbringing, culture and traditions of the Indian people are quite different from other countries.

Marriage has a direct relationship with the national economy. Married people have better physical health, more financial stability and greater social mobility. Marriage contributes to more economic stability, less child poverty, and higher median family income in every state.

Hence, from the study it is understood that youngsters do prefer marriage as an important phase in their lives and also intend to take steps to sustain life long.

Life is a journey between two souls that come from nowhere but conjoin together to form a good family imparting life skill, sharing love and affections and teaching the traditions and customs to the future generations. A good family will always boost the country's spirit. A child is an asset to the country's economic growth provided if the child is provided with good education and his skills encouraged.

To conclude, *“Good marriages are not something that you find. It is something you make, and you have to keep on making it”*.

REFERENCES

- Ashley Crossman, “Key take aways in marriage”, <https://www.thoughtco.com/marriage-3026396#:~:text=Updated%20November%2001%2C%202019,sexual%20bond%20of%20some%20kind>.
- Chris. M. Wilson, Andrew. J. Oswald, “How does marriage affect physical and psychological health?
- Ellie Lisitsa, “An Introduction to the Gottman Method of Relationship Therapy, <https://www.gottman.com/blog/an-introduction-to-the-gottman-method-of-relationship-therapy/>
- Esteban Ortiz and Max Roser, “Marriages and Divorces”, <https://ourworldindata.org/marriages-and-divorces>
- Kori. D. Miller, “Marriage Psychology and Therapy: The Science of Successful relationships”, <https://positivepsychology.com/marriage-fulfillment-lifelong-relationship/>
- OER Services, Developmental Psychology, <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-hccc-ss-152-1/chapter/relationships/>
- Puja Mundal, “Marriage: Characteristics and types of marriage”, <https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/marriage/marriage-characteristics-and-types-of-marriage/6177>

How to cite this article: Rajeev Kumar, M. (2020). The concealed issues submerging the concept of marriage: present and future generations. *SOCRATES*, 8(2), 103–112. Retrieved from <https://www.socratesjournal.com/index.php/SOCRATES/article/view/477>