

**MARRIAGE IN TRANSITION: A SOCIOLOGICAL EXPLORATION
OF YOUTH PERSPECTIVES TOWARDS MARRIAGE**

*A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Kerala in the Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master of Arts Degree
Examination in Sociology*

SUBMITTED BY

Name : **ARUN VINCENT J**
Exam Code : 56018405
Candidate Code : 56022115005
Subject Code : SO 245

UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF

Dr. NISHA JOLLY NELSON



**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
LOYOLA COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
SREEKARIYAM, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
UNIVERSITY OF KERALA**

2022-2024

DECLARATION

I, **ARUN VINCENT J**, hereby declare that the dissertation titled **MARRIAGE IN TRANSITION: A SOCIOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF YOUTH PERSPECTIVES TOWARDS MARRIAGE** is based on the original work carried out by me and submitted to the University of Kerala during the year 2022-2024 towards partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Sociology Degree Examination. It has not been submitted for the award of any degree, diploma, fellowship or other similar title of recognition before.

Place: Thiruvananthapuram

Arun Vincent J

Date: 09/09/2024

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled **MARRIAGE IN TRANSITION: A SOCIOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF YOUTH PERSPECTIVES TOWARDS MARRIAGE** is a record of genuine work done by **Mr. ARUN VINCENT J**, fourth semester, Master of Sociology student of this college under my supervision and guidance and that it is hereby approved for submission.

Dr. Nisha Jolly Nelson

Research Guide

Department of Sociology

Loyola College of Social Sciences

Sreekariyam, Thiruvananthapuram.

Recommended for forwarding to the University of Kerala

Dr. Nisha Jolly Nelson

Head, Department of Sociology

Loyola College of Social sciences

Sreekariyam, Thiruvananthapuram.

Forwarded to the University of Kerala

Dr. Sabu P Thomas S J

Principal

Loyola College of Social Sciences

Sreekariyam, Thiruvananthapuram.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This dissertation is the culmination of a journey that would not have been possible without the guidance, support, and encouragement of many individuals. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to everyone who helped me bring this project to fruition. First and foremost, I am deeply grateful to my family for their support, love, and constant encouragement for my success. Their belief in my capabilities has motivated me to persevere, even during the most challenging times, and for this, I am forever thankful.

*I owe a special debt of gratitude to my research guide, **Dr. Nisha Jolly Nelson**, Assistant Professor and Head of the Department of Sociology at Loyola College of Social Sciences, Trivandrum. Her insightful supervision and patient mentorship have been instrumental in shaping this dissertation. Dr. Nisha's optimism, confidence in my abilities, and consistent feedback pushed me to strive for excellence and complete this work to the best of my ability.*

*I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to **Dr. Saji P. Jacob**, who was my guide during the initial stages of this research and who recently retired as Principal of Loyola College of Social Sciences. His support and wisdom during the formative phase of my dissertation laid a strong foundation for this work, for which I remain deeply thankful.*

My sincere thanks also go to the esteemed faculty members of the Sociology Department—Dr. Hashim Thadathil, Dr. Andrew Michael, and Dr. Vinumol Devassy. Their invaluable advice, and constant support enriched my research and broadened my academic horizons. I am especially grateful to all of the participants who took the time to share their experiences and insights, without whom this research would not have been possible. I am also grateful to our Librarian, Dr. Sunil Kumar, Mr. George and Mr. Prasanth MS, for providing timely access to resources and ensuring that I had all the materials necessary for my study.

I consider myself truly fortunate to be a student at Loyola College of Social Sciences. This esteemed institution has provided me with an exceptional learning environment and the academic culture and intellectual vibrancy of Loyola have left an indelible mark on me, nurturing both personal growth and a deep commitment to scholarly inquiry. Finally, I extend my gratitude to all those whose names may not appear here, but who have supported me in countless ways throughout this endeavour. Thank you for being part of this journey with me.

Arun Vincent J
MA Sociology

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ABSTRACT

In sociology, under the macro theories, functionalism points to marriage as one of the most significant institutions that is essential to maintaining social balance. However, contemporary Kerala has witnessed a noticeable decline in marriage rates, a trend that significantly impacts the state's demographic profile, particularly in relation to its population replacement levels. This demographic shift signals broader changes in the way marriage is perceived and practiced in Kerala, and raises important questions about the evolving nature of this institution.

This study examines how young people view the practice of marriage in the context of these changing trends. A growing number of youths are reshaping and redefining their understanding of marriage, departing from more traditional perspectives. Exploring these evolving viewpoints is critical to gaining a clearer understanding of youth attitudes toward marriage in contemporary Kerala society. The influence of family and society on marriage decisions is another major topic of this study. Understanding the significance of the functions played by society and the family will enable us to comprehend a number of perspectives on this problem. Additionally, it looks for the key elements that influence young people's decisions to marry. The results of this study will close a knowledge gap in this area by providing answers to often-questioned issues about the current society's reluctance to marriage.

The research employs a mixed-methods approach to gather and analyse data, to ensure a holistic understanding of the subject. The quantitative component of the study is based on a sample of 100 respondents, drawn from various undergraduate and postgraduate colleges across Kerala, representing diverse educational backgrounds. To complement this, qualitative data were gathered from in-depth interviews with 10 representatives, providing detailed insights into the personal and subjective aspects of marriage perceptions among Kerala's youth.

The results indicate that while a significant proportion of today's youth still regard marriage as an important institution, there is a growing reluctance to embrace the responsibilities and commitments that come with it. Concerns related to financial stability and fears of an unhappy marital life, fuelled by contemporary social problems such as dowry deaths and domestic violence, heavily influence these views. The study highlights that the challenges surrounding marriage are not merely individual concerns but are deeply rooted in broader societal issues, including unemployment, evolving gender roles, and continuing social inequalities. By addressing these questions, the study aims to close a critical knowledge gap and provide fresh insights into the perspectives of contemporary youth on marriage.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Marriage has been a social institution that has been considered as the foundation of human society. It has developed over time to reflect cultural, economic, and social changes. While marriage has traditionally served as a framework for procreation, affection, and economic security, modern viewpoints on marriage are growing increasingly diverse. This study tries to analyse young people's changing attitudes and approaches to marriage, investigating the complicated role of cultural expectations, individual aspirations, and changing relationship dynamics.

Traditionally, society has had a tremendous influence on people's marriage decisions. Cultural conventions, religious beliefs, and familial expectations have frequently influenced the age at which people married, their choice of partner, and the nature of marital relationships. These societal forces can be both helpful and limiting, influencing people's sense of self, goals, and willingness to comply with traditional expectations. For example, in many cultures, marriage is regarded as a rite of passage that represents adulthood and societal approval. Parents and elders may urge early marriage to preserve family lineage, economic security, and social standing. However, these pressures can cause conflicts between personal aspirations and cultural expectations, resulting in emotions of responsibility, shame, or even rebellion.

In recent decades, perceptions about marriage have shifted significantly, particularly among young people. The traditional idea of marriage as a lifetime commitment between a man and a woman is being challenged by an increasing variety of relationship forms, such as cohabitation, same-sex marriage, and open relationships. These shifts can be linked to a number of factors, including more economic independence, expanded educational options, and a more liberal social environment. One of the most notable developments is the delay in marriage. In many nations, the average age at first marriage has progressively risen over the last few decades. This delay can be linked to a variety of circumstances, including the pursuit of higher education, career growth, and a desire for personal fulfilment prior to joining a committed partnership. Another significant development is the fall of marriage rates. In some nations, the proportion of adults who are married is declining, while the number of people who remain single or opt to cohabit is increasing. This reduction can be linked to a number of factors, including shifting attitudes toward marriage, increased acceptance of singlehood, and the difficulties of sustaining long-term partnerships in a quickly changing society.

Despite marriage's longstanding attractiveness as a source of companionship and stability, many young people are hesitant to get into committed relationships. Some people may be afraid to commit to long-term relationships owing to fear of losing independence, freedom, or sense of self.

Future uncertainty; Many young people are cautious to make long-term commitments due to economic and societal difficulties. Fear of commitment; some people are hesitant to commit to a long-term relationship because they are afraid of losing their independence, freedom, or sense of identity. Negative experiences; Negative experiences with relationships, either personally or through observation, can make people more hesitant to get into new ones. Changing expectations; as people's expectations of marriage evolve, including a desire for greater equality and cooperation in partnerships, it might become more difficult for them to find compatible spouses. Cultural constraints: social demands to marry at a specific age or conform to traditional gender roles can cause worry and stress in young people. Is marriage necessary? The question of whether marriage is required has become increasingly contentious. Some think that marriage is a necessary institution that establishes a stable basis for families and society. Others believe that marriage is no longer required because people may find companionship, love, and support in a variety of relationships, such as cohabitation, same-sex partnerships, and friendships. The answer to this topic is likely to differ based on individual circumstances, cultural beliefs, and personal ideals. For some people, marriage is a desirable and happy life choice. Others may find it not necessary or even undesirable. Finally, the decision to marry is a personal one that should be made after careful evaluation of each individual's needs, values, and goals.

1.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

While examining marriage through the lens of sociological theories, Talcott Parsons, a well-known structural functionalist, asserts that society is a system of interrelated parts, each serving a specific function to maintain stability and balance. Marriage is viewed as a crucial institution that serves multiple functions, including reproduction, socialization, economic stability and emotional support. However, Robert Merton criticized structural functionalism for emphasising social stability and harmony. He contended that social institutions might also contribute to dysfunction and pressure.

Karl Marx, a seminal figure in conflict theory, stressed the importance of power, inequality, and conflict in forming social structures. He contended that society is defined by class conflict,

with the ruling class exploiting the working class. This viewpoint can be applied to marriage, where power disparities frequently exist between men and women.

Max Weber, another well-known conflict theorist, emphasised the role of status and prestige in creating social relationships. He contended that marriage might be influenced by characteristics such as social class, education, and occupation.

George Herbert Mead, the pioneer of symbolic interactionism, highlighted the importance of symbols, rituals, and common understandings in creating social interactions. He contended that people form and retain their social identities through interactions with others. This viewpoint can be applied to marriage, as people negotiate and shape the meaning of their relationships.

Gender and Marriage: Feminist theories provide a critical examination of the role of gender in determining marriage relationships. Simone de Beauvoir, a feminist philosopher, claimed that women are frequently objectified and marginalised in patriarchal society. This approach is relevant to marriage, where women may confront limited possibilities, unequal power relations, and gender-based violence.

1.3 SHIFTING PARADIGMS OF MARRIAGE IN KERALA

Kerala, a southern Indian state recognized for its distinct cultural legacy, has undergone profound shifts in recent decades. One such transition can be seen in the changing views and approaches to marriage among its young people. Marriage, as a cultural institution, has long played an important part in Kerala culture, establishing social norms, family structures, and individual identities. However, the current marital scene in Kerala is marked by an increasing diversity of viewpoints, impacted by factors such as economic development, urbanisation, education, and shifting societal standards. Traditionally, families in Kerala planned marriages based on caste, class, and economic concerns. Marriage was frequently viewed as a means of reinforcing family bonds, maintaining social hierarchy, and assuring the continuance of the family line. Dowry is a common custom that is still practised in several parts of Kerala. Kerala experienced enormous social and economic upheavals following independence, resulting in a gradual shift in attitudes on marriage. The spread of education, particularly among women, and the rise of the middle class upset long-held conventions and expectations. Women began to express their independence, claiming more authority over their lives and decisions, including marriage. Economic development and urbanisation have also had a significant impact on the marriage landscape in Kerala. Increased educational and opportunities for employment, particularly in urban areas, have resulted in delayed marriage and a rising acceptance of

singlehood. Furthermore, the rise of a consumer culture, as well as the influence of Western media, has led to shifting attitudes about marriage and relationships.

In recent decades, Kerala has seen a significant shift in attitudes on marriage. The old practice of arranged marriages is rapidly being replaced by love marriages, in which people choose their mates based on personal preferences and compatibility. The age of marriage has grown, especially among women, as they pursue higher education and start their careers. Inter-caste and inter-religious marriages have also gained popularity, but with various levels of social rejection. While there has been progress in breaking down caste barriers, obstacles remain, particularly in rural regions.

Despite encouraging developments, the marital environment in Kerala remains complex and multidimensional. Dowry-related violence, forced marriages, and domestic violence are still issues that many women face today. The rising divorce rate and the expanding number of single parents have generated worries about the shifting patterns of family life. On the other hand, shifting attitudes toward marriage create opportunity for greater equality and empowerment. Women are increasingly claiming their rights and challenging established gender stereotypes. The increased acceptance of various relationship forms, including same-sex marriage, is another noteworthy trend.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Marriage, a cornerstone of traditional Kerala society, is undergoing significant change, particularly among the younger generation. While marriage has traditionally been a fundamental element of life in Kerala, marked by strong familial ties and cultural expectations, recent trends indicate a considerable shift in attitudes and behaviours. The purpose of this study is to look into the variables that influence these shifting attitudes toward marriage among Kerala's youth, as well as to examine the broader societal implications of these evolving approaches. Kerala's traditional marriage model, which is frequently defined by planned relationships, early weddings, and a strong emphasis on family and society, is on the decrease. A significant percentage of young people are delaying marriage, preferring cohabitation, or remaining single. This change can be due to numerous sources, including Economic Independence: Women with higher education and careers are challenging traditional expectations of marriage as a primary source of economic security. Changing Cultural Norms: Globalisation, urbanisation, and exposure to diverse cultural influences have contributed to a more liberal and individualistic outlook among young people, leading to a questioning of

traditional marriage norms. **Delayed Marriage and Cohabitation:** The desire of greater education, career success, and personal fulfilment has resulted in a delay in marriage, with cohabitation emerging as a feasible option for many young couples.

In addition to the loss of traditional marriage, Kerala is seeing an increase in alternative relationship patterns such live-in relationships, same-sex partnerships, and open relationships. These trends contradict traditional ideas of marriage as a monogamous, heterosexual union while also reflecting the rising diversity of relationship forms. The changing attitudes on marriage among Kerala's youth have far-reaching implications for society structures. The collapse of traditional marriage has caused changes in family dynamics, with single-parent households and mixed families becoming increasingly widespread.

Women are increasingly asserting their independence and opposing patriarchal conventions, which has had an impact on traditional gender roles as well. Youth in Kerala's views on marriage are influenced by various social factors, including education and economic status. Higher levels of education and independence are linked to more liberal attitudes towards marriage and a willingness to explore alternative relationship patterns. **Cultural Influences:** Media, social media, and exposure to different cultures can all have an impact on how young people perceive marriage and relationships. **Family Values and Expectations:** While family values and expectations continue to play a role in influencing marriage decisions, their influence is diminishing as young people seek greater autonomy and personal fulfilment. **Religious and Spiritual Beliefs:** Religious and spiritual beliefs can influence attitudes towards marriage, with some religions emphasising traditional marriage while others being more open to diverse relationship types.

This study seeks to uncover the facts that impact young people's altering perspectives on marriage, as well as to examine the role that social circumstances play in influencing youth marriage decisions. Understanding these are critical because they have the capacity to influence society structures, family connections, and personal well-being.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The decision to marry or not is complicated and impacted by a variety of personal and societal variables. In many cultures, marriage is still regarded as a crucial life change, a rite of passage that signals adulthood and cultural acceptance. However, an increasing number of young people are challenging the traditional standards around marriage. This transformation is more than just a personal choice; it has far-reaching repercussions for society as a whole. The social

pressure to marriage might be tremendous. Unmarried people frequently experience shame, and even ostracism. This might create a sense of urgency to meet social expectations, even if it means settling for a relationship that isn't satisfying. However, young people are increasingly questioning traditional standards, demanding greater autonomy and fulfilment in their relationships. This transformation represents a shifting perspective on love, intimacy, and partnership.

Marriage, in the context of sociology, is an important social institution that shapes the form and functioning of society according to some theorists. It establishes a framework for transmitting cultural values, forming families, and regulating social connections. Declining marriage rates can have serious effects for society, such as; demographic shifts: Lower marriage rates may contribute to population reduction, aging, and changes in family arrangements. Economic implications: Marriage can result in shared family bills, inheritance rights, and social security benefits. Marriage rates are declining, which can have an impact on these economic arrangements. Social and Cultural Changes: Marriage is frequently associated with distinct cultural norms and expectations. Declining marriage rates may result in changes to these customs and cultural norms.

Sociologists, legislators, and social service providers can get useful insights on the elements that influence young people's attitudes regarding marriage. Research can reveal emerging patterns in marriage attitudes and practices, leading to proactive responses and policy improvements. Inform social policy: The outcomes of such studies can help to shape social policies that benefit young people's well-being and foster healthy relationships. Improve understanding of social change: Researching marriage attitudes can lead to a better understanding of social change and the factors that influence individual and social behaviour. Challenge stereotypes and assumptions: By investigating young people's different experiences and viewpoints, research can assist to dispel stereotypes and assumptions about marriage and relationships.

To summarise, the study, *Marriage In Transition: A Sociological Exploration of Youth Perspectives Towards Marriage* is an important endeavour with both academic and societal implications. Exploring the variables influencing young people's marriage decisions can provide useful insights into the changing dynamics of relationships, the expanding landscape of social institutions, and the broader consequences for society as a whole.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Marriage has long been considered a cornerstone of societal stability, yet recent global and national trends indicate significant changes in how young people approach this institution. This literature review examines these evolving perspectives by focusing on key themes: cultural norms and values, the role of gender and family, economic conditions, and the shifting importance of marriage in both global and national contexts. By exploring diverse studies, this review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the forces shaping young people's decisions about marriage, particularly the balance between tradition and modernity, autonomy, and societal expectations.

2.2 STUDIES ON A GLOBAL LEVEL

Marriage Decline and Societal Impact

In many societies, marriage remains essential for family formation and population growth, particularly in countries experiencing a decline in marriage rates among young people. Keshavarz (2018) studied the significance of marriage in Iran, concluding that while personal beliefs influence marriage decisions, social and economic pressures are the primary drivers behind its decline. The study highlighted the broader social ramifications of this decline, particularly concerning population growth and social structure.

Impact of Legal Inequities on Families with LGB Parents

Goldberg (2012) examined the unique challenges faced by children and young adults with LGB parents, particularly the stress and anxiety caused by legal injustices. Despite these challenges, many of these families exhibited resilience and strong familial bonds, emphasizing that while the law holds power, it does not define familial relationships exclusively. The study underscores the evolving concept of marriage, particularly among families with LGB members.

Marriage Education and Cross-Cultural Training

Wei-Jenhuang (2005) emphasized the importance of high-quality marital education in Asian countries, stressing that effective programs should focus on character development, commitment, and conflict resolution. The study highlighted the value of compassion in delivering marital education, which promotes a lasting impact on couples.

Values and Marriage in the Balkans

Petrovic (2015) investigated the values surrounding marriage, gender roles, and family life among students in three Balkan countries. The study found a complex interplay between traditional and modern values, with a clear trend toward individualism and egalitarianism. Students valued love, commitment, and mutual understanding in marriage but retained traditional views regarding gender roles and religious influence, particularly among those with strong religious beliefs. Conventional Principles and Contemporary Trends Balkan students' value systems retain historic characteristics despite the increasing influence of modern ideals. The previously mentioned domains—partnership, family, and gender roles—are perceived as exceedingly delicate and profoundly embedded in cultural customs. The influence of religion on students' perspectives on motherhood, marriage, and families is noteworthy. Traditional views are typically held by those who identify as firm believers and who have fewer tolerance for other religions. Students who have more liberal religious beliefs, on the other hand, are more willing to accept contemporary ideals. Views on Parenting, Marriage, and Families For a marriage to succeed, students typically place a high value on love, commitment, and mutual understanding. Nevertheless, each country has different requirements. Bulgarian and Serbian students place a higher value on healthy sexual relationships, independence, and personal fulfilment than Macedonian students do on conventional elements like income and common values. Students regularly consider family to be the most important aspect of life. Further research is necessary, though, because this emphasis on family runs counter to findings from modern countries where family is frequently viewed as less significant. Turmoil and Modernisation as Values The study's findings indicate that students experience some degree of value instability, as shown by their ambiguous preferences and decisions. However, it is evident from the prevailing tendencies that ideals are shifting towards individualism and egalitarianism. Tolerance for Religion and Gender Roles Religious tolerance and students' views on parenting and gender roles are highly connected. Greater religious tolerance is associated with an acceptance of contemporary gender roles and a belief that parenting is a social duty. In summary The study contests the idea that young people in the Balkans are "lost in transition." It implies that they are actively involved in the shift from traditional to modern values, with a greater focus on egalitarianism, individualism, and contemporary kinds of partnerships.

2.3 STUDIES ON A NATIONAL LEVEL

Caste, Religion, and Marriage Preferences in India

Gudemada (2015) explored university students' attitudes toward marriage, finding that while many supported inter-caste and interreligious unions, actual marriage decisions were still heavily influenced by traditional values. Many students, particularly women, preferred partners from within their own caste or religion, reflecting the ongoing significance of community expectations and parental influence on marriage choices. Matrimonial postings show that many students prefer to marry within their own caste or religious groupings. Even while students may not formally endorse caste and religion, these factors continue to play a significant role in their actual marriage decisions. Particularly among female students, choosing a partner is more likely to follow conventional beliefs and customs, with the belief that marriage is a community issue rather than a personal one. Parental preferences are a major factor in partner selection as well, which frequently results in unions of members of the same caste or religion. In general, students' marital decisions are still influenced by traditional cultural norms and values pertaining to caste and religion, even though exposure to universities may promote some receptivity to non-traditional marriages.

Regional Variations in Marriage Customs

Upadhyay (2007) examined marriage customs across various Indian states, noting significant regional differences in partner selection, marriage age, and dowry practices. Southern states exhibited more autonomy in partner choice compared to the northern regions, where arranged marriages remained dominant. While northern areas like Bihar, Jharkhand, and Rajasthan frequently practise blind marriages, southern states like Tamil Nadu demonstrate greater autonomy in selecting their partners. The reasons for this regional variation include endogamy and isogamy, which are more common in southern states. Very early marriages are declining, according to the report, while regional differences still exist. The average age in several states is lower than the minimum required by law. India has a large dowry culture, with greater rates in the southern states. It impacts both Muslim and Hindu women and rises with education and socioeconomic standing. Increased pre-marital interaction is linked to greater education levels, better economic conditions, and older marriage ages. The study also found that early marriage was declining, although dowry practices persisted, particularly in southern states. To find out whether young autonomy in marriage choices is a direct indicator of more equal and fulfilling marriages, more research is still required.

Traditional and Modern Values in Marriage

Bhale (2013) studied young people's attitudes toward marriage in the Kolhapur area, highlighting the intersection of traditional values and modern aspirations. While young people often viewed marriage as a mental and emotional relationship that transcends caste and religion, family influence and societal pressure still played significant roles in their marriage decisions, particularly for women.

Arranged marriage is still common, even though most young people define marriage as a mental relationship that transcends caste, class, and religion. When choosing a mate, emotional and mental compatibility are crucial, but family influence also plays a big role in marital decisions. Many young people, particularly in SC groups, want to marry beyond their caste, but they are frequently discouraged by social standards, familial pressure, and fears of social rejection. Traditional caste systems are reinforced by gender dynamics, especially for women who have less authority to decide whether to be married. The study emphasises how cultural beliefs, customs, and family dynamics shape young people's perceptions about inter-caste marriage and the difficulties that those who want to overcome these limitations must overcome.

Economic and Social Pressures in Kashmir

Dar (2018) explored the impact of economic and educational changes on young people in Kashmir. The study found that patriarchal norms continued to limit women's options, even as they sought financial independence through part-time work before marriage. Unstable economic conditions and limited job opportunities further complicated the transition to adulthood, especially for young Kashmiris. When young women start working part-time jobs before getting married, it's a sign of both their need for financial security and independence. Patriarchal beliefs, however, emphasise their traditional duties and restrict their options. Young Kashmiris are particularly vulnerable as a result of the global jobs crisis, which has increased unemployment, resulted in lower-quality jobs, and prolonged, more precarious transitions to work. According to the survey, this new generation has distinct goals and interests, such as a desire for government employment, higher education, and evolving marriage customs.

Changing Perspectives on Marriage and Gender Roles

Yadav (2018) noted that both men and women in India were beginning to view marriage as a partnership based on mutual compatibility rather than traditional gender roles. Men became more aware of their domestic responsibilities, while women saw themselves as equal partners

in both financial and household duties. However, gender differences persisted in the importance placed on sexual relations and financial stability within the marriage.

Yadav, (2018) explains the perspectives on marriage are changing. Women see themselves as equal partners in society, while males are becoming more aware of their household responsibilities. Social customs and myths are becoming less significant, and successful marriages are thought to depend on mutual compatibility. Participants think that financial duties and household chores should be divided between the two spouses. Men view sexual interactions as a means of fortifying marital bonds, whereas women place a higher value on their partners' families' financial stability. The results are consistent with earlier research conducted by Bhavana and Roopa (2013), which found notable distinctions between male and female respondents regarding partner selection criteria, marital type, sexual relationships, and particular reasons for happy marriages.

Late Marriage in Bangladesh

Manjur (2023) examined the causes and consequences of late marriage in Bangladesh, emphasizing the influence of socioeconomic conditions, cultural norms, and individual circumstances. The study called for a national dialogue involving government, NGOs, and community members to address the issue, emphasizing the need for education, particularly for women, and research on marriage and its impact on health.

2.4 RESEARCH GAP

While a considerable amount of research has been dedicated to understanding marriage, both globally and nationally, a holistic exploration of youth perspectives on marriage within the Indian context remains underexplored, especially in the state of Kerala. Existing studies often focus on individual aspects, such as the influence of caste, religion, gender roles, or economic factors, but they rarely integrate these components into a comprehensive framework that encapsulates the evolving nature of marriage as experienced by young people.

Many global studies examine marriage trends influenced by modernity, individualism, and egalitarian values, but they do not fully reflect the unique sociocultural intricacies of Indian society. The region-specific experiences present in the Indian setting, particularly in Kerala, differ significantly from the generalized narratives found in Western and some Asian studies. For instance, the Western emphasis on cohabitation and legal recognition of diverse family forms, including same-sex marriages, may not resonate as strongly within the Indian context,

where traditional customs around arranged marriages, family involvement, and religious observances still hold considerable weight.

At the national level, while several studies address regional differences in marriage practices across Indian states, there is still a scarcity of literature that thoroughly investigates the interplay between modern aspirations and traditional expectations in Kerala's youth. National research has primarily focused on aspects like dowry, partner selection, and the impact of education on marriage age, but these studies often remain fragmented, failing to provide a coherent narrative that ties together the evolving perceptions of marriage among the younger generation.

Kerala, with its unique socio-political and cultural landscape, presents an interesting case for studying marriage transitions. With high literacy rates, a strong history of matrilineal communities, and increasing exposure to globalized culture, Kerala's youth are likely to experience marriage in ways that differ from the rest of India. However, little research has been done to capture these distinct experiences, creating a significant gap in the literature.

Furthermore, the current body of research often overlooks the specific challenges faced by young people as they navigate these shifting paradigms, such as the influence of globalization, the impact of digital media on relationships, or the pressures exerted by increasingly delayed marriages. There is also insufficient exploration of how modern perspectives on gender equality, personal freedom, and individual fulfillment influence marital decisions in Kerala.

This study, therefore, seeks to fill this research gap by conducting an in-depth sociological exploration of youth perspectives on marriage in Kerala. By taking into account various influences such as cultural traditions, societal norms, and individual aspirations, this research will offer a clear understanding of how young people in Kerala perceive and approach marriage in an era of significant social transition. Through this lens, the study aims to illuminate the broader cultural transformations underway and the ways in which marriage practices and expectations are evolving in response to these changes.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes various ways that were taken in order to collect and analyse data that was significant to the study. The study's location, research design, sample size and sampling strategy, data kinds, data collection methods, and data management are also addressed here.

3.2 TITLE OF THE STUDY

MARRIAGE IN TRANSITION: A SOCIOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF YOUTH PERSPECTIVES TOWARDS MARRIAGE

3.3 APPROACH OF THE STUDY

This study adopts a **mixed-method research design** to comprehensively explore youth perspectives on marriage, integrating both **quantitative** and **qualitative** approaches. The decision to use a mixed-method approach is driven by the complexity of the subject, where understanding the evolving views on marriage involves not only measuring trends and patterns but also getting into their personal beliefs, social norms, and cultural expectations.

Numbers charts, and other quantitative methods must be used to support the explanations. Simultaneously, obtaining a richer type of data also requires obtaining qualitative data to support the data that has been collected in a quantifiable form. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods enables **triangulation**, where different types of data complement and verify each other. Quantitative findings can be validated and enriched through qualitative insights.

3.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

3.4.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To explore the shifting perspectives of youth towards marriage, focusing on how societal, cultural, and individual factors influence their attitudes, expectations, and practices related to marriage.

3.4.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To assess the extent to which youth today perceive marriage as a necessary institution in their lives.
2. To investigate the influence of societal norms, expectations, and pressures on youth decision-making regarding marriage.
3. To explore youth perspectives on the changing trends and evolving practices within the institution of marriage.
4. To identify and analyze the underlying factors contributing to youth reluctance toward marriage, including cultural, economic, and personal considerations.

3.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

3.5.1 GENERAL RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the different approaches to marriage among contemporary youth?

3.5.2 SPECIFIC RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do today's youth perceive the necessity of marriage, and what are the underlying reasons for their views?
2. In what ways do societal influences impact the decision-making process regarding marriage among young people?
3. What factors contribute to the growing reluctance among youth towards the institution of marriage?

3.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

A Sequential Explanatory Design is used in this study. Sequential explanatory research design is a mixed methods approach that involves collecting and analysing quantitative data first, followed by qualitative data to provide a more comprehensive understanding of a research problem. It is used to investigate complex phenomena that require both quantitative measures and qualitative explanations. This design allows for flexible ontological, epistemological, and analytical perspectives, making it suitable for unpacking complex research problems. The quantitative component establishes the nature and extent of the phenomenon, while the qualitative component provides detailed explanations and justifications. The two components are integrated through analysis and interpretation of research findings, leading to valid

conclusions and recommendations. As the approaches of young minds can't be merely measured and quantified, qualitative data would help in describing beyond the limitations of the measurable aspects of the data and would go deep into the reasons and subjective aspects of the problem.

3.7 SAMPLING

Purposive sampling was employed to gather data for this study. This non-probability sampling technique involves selecting units based on specific characteristics that align with the research objectives. Essentially, participants are chosen “on purpose” because they possess attributes that are crucial for the study. Also known as judgmental sampling, this method relies on the researcher's discretion to identify and select individuals, cases, or events that will provide the most relevant and insightful information.

In this study, purposive sampling was used to target college students from various institutions in Thiruvananthapuram, across different degree programs. A total of one hundred respondents were chosen, ensuring an equal representation of male and female students. This approach ensured that the selected participants were well-positioned to provide accurate and pertinent information, and the balance between genders was maintained. Additionally, qualitative cases were selected based on their relevance to the study's focus, ensuring that they contributed valuable insights to the research.

3.8 TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION

A structured questionnaire was administered using Google Forms to collect quantitative data. This tool included a range of question types, such as multiple-choice, and open-ended questions. Participants provided their responses directly through the online form, which facilitated the systematic gathering of data on their perceptions and attitudes towards marriage. An interview guide was used to conduct semi-structured interviews, consisting of a carefully curated list of questions and topics to explore in-depth aspects of the participants' views on marriage. The guide served as a flexible framework for the interviews, ensuring that all relevant areas were covered while allowing for natural conversation flow and probing of emerging themes. Digital recording devices were employed to capture the responses during the interviews. This method ensured accurate and reliable documentation of the participants' verbal responses, allowing for detailed analysis and interpretation of qualitative data.

3.9 SOURCES OF DATA

Primary Data

The primary data for the study was collected from college students using a structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. This method facilitated the efficient gathering of quantitative data on students' perceptions, attitudes, and approaches to marriage.

Secondary Data

Secondary data was collected through an extensive review of online resources, journal articles, and other scholarly publications. This data provided contextual and background information, supplementing the primary data and offering a broader perspective on existing research and trends related to marriage among youth.

3.10 PRE TEST

A pre-test involves a preliminary trial of the research instruments or procedures with a sample of participants who closely resemble the target population of the main study. In this study, a pre-test was conducted to assess and refine the research instruments and tools. This process helped identify and address potential errors, thereby enhancing the validity and reliability of the research tools.

3.11 AREA OF STUDY

The respondents in this study were from the Thiruvananthapuram district of Kerala. Thiruvananthapuram is more suitable because it has a variety of student representations across Kerala, ensuring representatives from all over the state, especially since the study is specifically on Kerala society and is being conducted among the youth.

3.12 TOOLS OF DATA ANALYSIS

For the quantitative data, statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), which facilitated the identification of trends, patterns, and correlations within the numerical data. The qualitative data was analyzed to provide a deeper understanding and context to the quantitative findings, offering nuanced insights into respondents' perspectives. This combined use of statistical and descriptive analysis enables a comprehensive examination of the research findings, integrating numerical data with rich, contextual information.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the quantitative data using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and Microsoft Excel, and this data is supplemented with qualitative data collected through interviews to provide a more in-depth explanation. The data for the study was gathered from one hundred college students enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate programs in Kerala's Thiruvananthapuram district. At the same time ten students were selected from these hundred respondents and qualitative data was collected from them through conducting interviews. The quantitative data was obtained using a questionnaire created with Google Forms, while the qualitative data was obtained using an interview guide. The questionnaire was written in basic language, making it relatively easy for respondents to complete. The interview guide was likewise based on an explanation of the questions from the questionnaire, and the responses were digitally recorded.

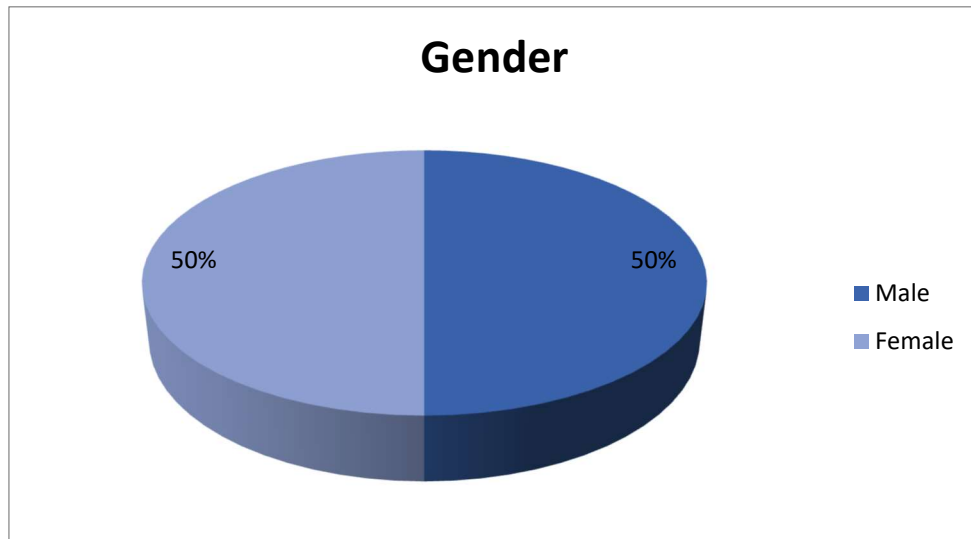
4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The demographic profile provides a general overview of the characteristics of the study's participants. It includes information on various aspects such as age, gender, educational background, socio-economic status, and geographic location, which are crucial for understanding the context and diversity of the sample population. This profile helps to contextualize the findings of the study by offering insight into the population's composition and how it may influence their perspectives and behaviors.

GENDER

The survey aimed to achieve gender parity among college students by ensuring equal representation of both genders. To accomplish this, participants were carefully chosen so that 50% were male and 50% were female. This balanced method enabled a more comprehensive grasp of the topic under inquiry by avoiding any biases or skewed results caused by an uneven gender distribution.

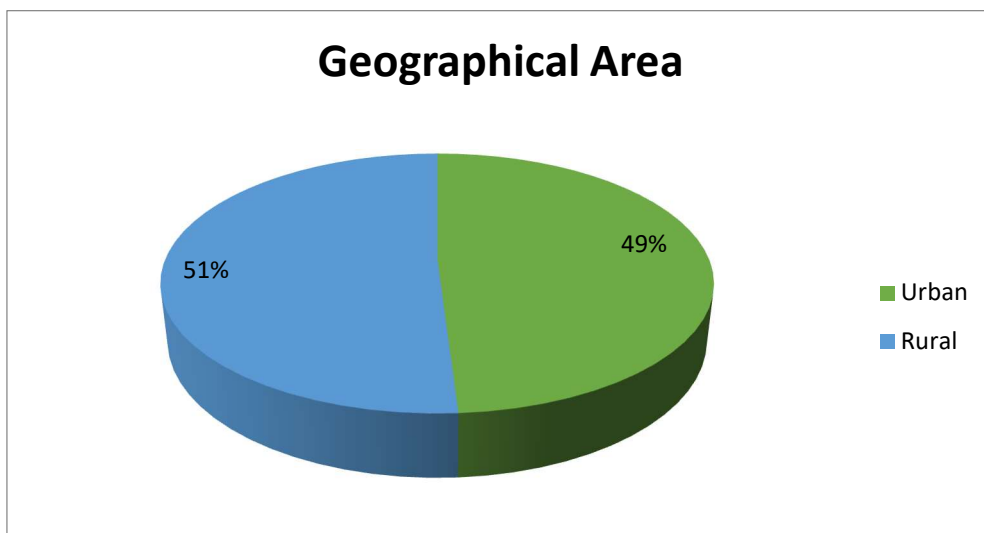
Figure 4.1 Gender Distribution



Geographical Area

The study included participants from both rural and urban locations, with about equal distributions of 51% and 49%, respectively. This balanced representation increases the likelihood that the research findings will be applicable to a larger population, including both rural and urban settings. By bringing in individuals from a variety of geographical places, the study's findings become more generalisable and less likely to be influenced by regional biases or location-specific traits.

Figure 4.2 Geographical Area

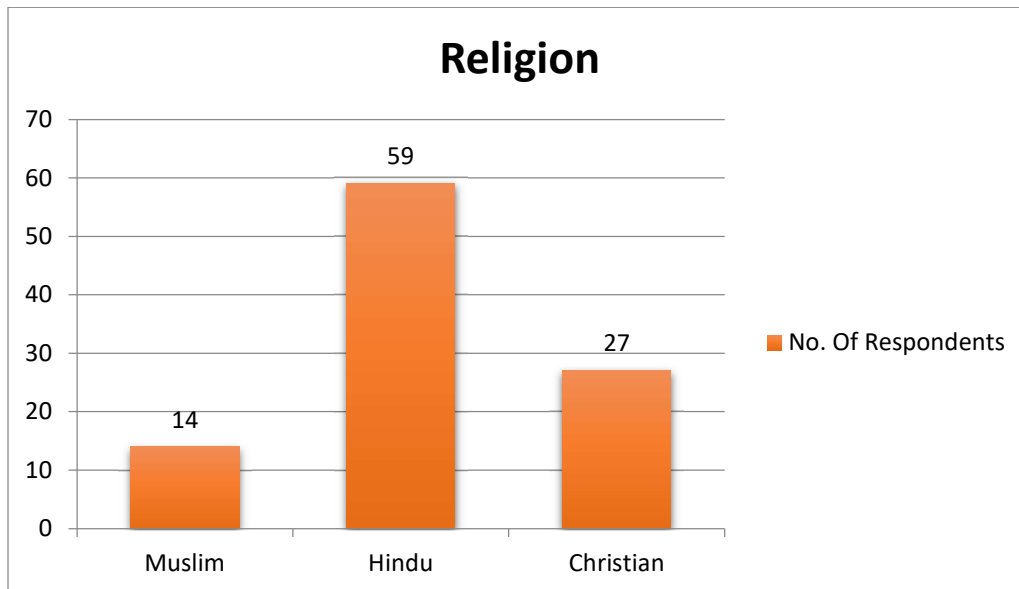


Religious Distribution

The survey data reveals the religious composition of the respondents, reflecting the broader religious landscape of Kerala. The majority of participants identified as Hindus (59%), followed by Christians (27%) and Muslims (14%). This distribution aligns closely with

Kerala's general religious demographics, suggesting that the study's sample accurately mirrors the region's diverse religious fabric.

Figure 4. 3 Religion



The religious composition can influence the perspectives on marriage, as religious beliefs often shape social norms and values. For instance, Hindu, Christian, and Muslim communities in Kerala have distinct traditions and practices related to marriage, which could affect how marriage is perceived and approached by the youth from these backgrounds.

4.3 NECESSITY OF MARRIAGE

Marriage, as a social institution, has traditionally been considered a cornerstone of societal structure and personal fulfillment. However, recent data indicates a shift in how marriage is perceived, particularly among younger individuals.

4.3.1 Importance of marriage in respondents' lives

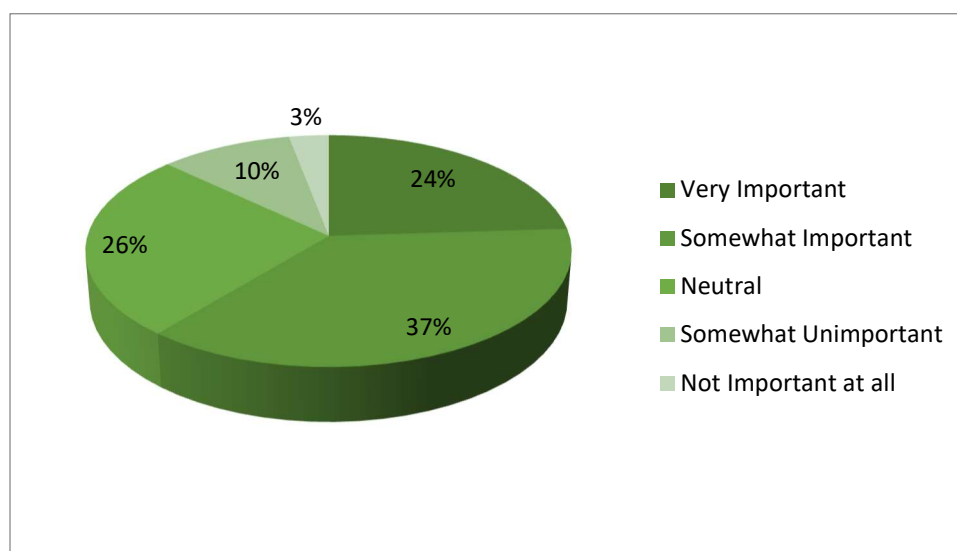
The information points to a change in young individuals' perspectives towards marriage. The importance of marriage is still regarded as important or very important by the majority (61%) but traditional societal expectations are no longer given as much emphasis. Many young people are re-evaluating the role of marriage in their life and investigating alternative relationship models, according to the neutral replies (26%) that were received. The declining numbers of people who think marriage is not important at all (3%), or only marginally so (10%), which

demonstrate the widening range of viewpoints on marriage. This implies that an increasing proportion of young individuals are putting alternative relationship structures, independence, and personal fulfilment ahead of traditional marriage. All things considered, the findings point to a shift away from the traditional focus on marriage as a social norm and towards individualism and personal autonomy. Although many people still value marriage, young adults no longer view marriage as the only or major route to fulfilment. This change is a reflection of shifting expectations for relationships, economic realities, and society ideals.

To substantiate this data, one of the respondent said that, *“Marriage is essential in one's life, but some people thinks that, human beings might become dependent, so at that time a partner becomes necessary for support. In my life, I'd various people who enjoy their marital life with a life partner”*

Another person said, *“In my life, marriage is not very important. I won't support the marriage system. I'm the person who likes to live independently and not ready for a commitment with others. Through marriage, we are supposed to carry many responsibilities. Therefore, I like to be single in my life. So marriage has no importance in my life.”*

Figure 4.4 Importance of marriage in respondents' lives



The above data reflects a persistent value placed on marriage as a significant life milestone and social norm. Despite this, the emphasis on marriage as the primary or sole route to fulfillment is decreasing. The neutral responses (26%) and the increasing proportion of individuals who view marriage as either not important at all (3%) or only marginally so (10%) suggest a growing acceptance of alternative relationship structures and personal autonomy. This shift indicates

that many young people are reevaluating the role of marriage in their lives, considering options beyond traditional models.

The data reflects a broader sociological trend towards questioning and reinterpreting traditional norms associated with marriage. Young individuals are increasingly prioritizing independence, self-fulfillment, and diverse relationship arrangements over adherence to conventional expectations of marriage. This evolving perspective signifies a move away from viewing marriage as a universal social necessity. Instead, it highlights a trend towards individualism, where personal choice and fulfillment take precedence. The changing attitudes may be influenced by broader socio-economic factors, such as evolving gender roles, career aspirations, and economic independence. Personal testimonials reveal this shift further. Some individuals acknowledge marriage as important for its supportive role but express concerns about dependency and the need for personal space. Others reject the institution altogether, preferring independence and freedom from the responsibilities associated with marriage.

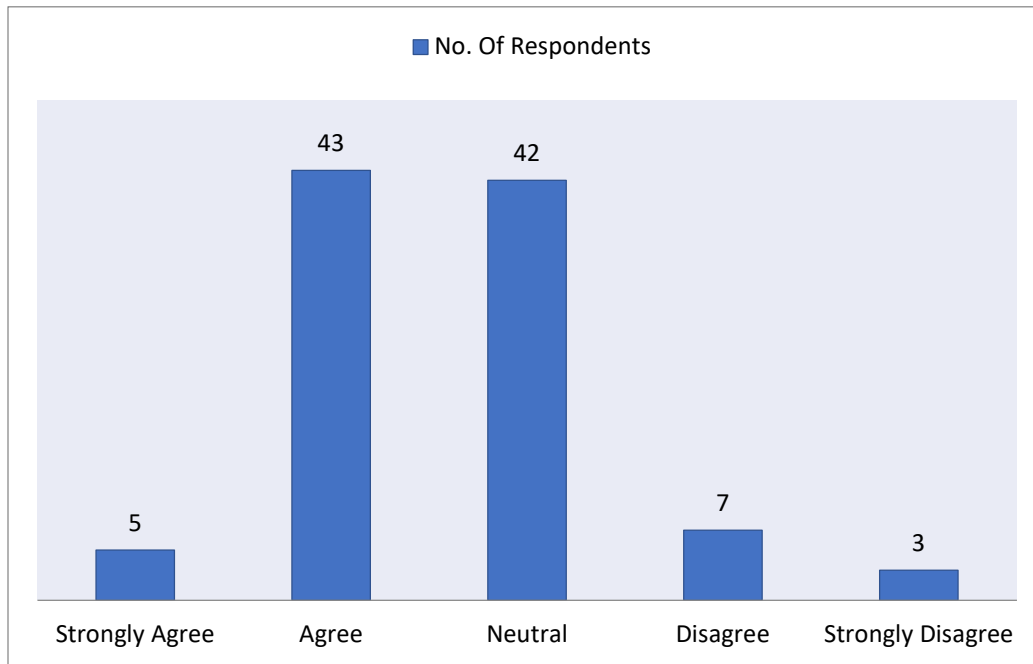
In summary, the data suggests a significant sociological shift in attitudes towards marriage. While the institution remains important for many, there is a growing trend towards exploring and valuing alternative relationship structures and personal autonomy. This change reflects broader societal transformations and evolving expectations regarding personal fulfillment and social norms.

4.3.2 Today's Youth is reluctant towards marriage

Traditional views that once positioned marriage as a central and necessary life milestone are increasingly being challenged. The growing trend indicates a shift towards valuing personal freedom and self-fulfillment over conventional marital expectations.

According to the data a considerable proportion of participants (43%) hold the belief that the current generation exhibits reluctance towards marriage. The neutral replies (42%), which show that many people are neither strongly agreeing nor disapproving with the statement, provide credence to this notion. Although a tiny minority (7%) disagrees with the concept of reluctance, there appears to be broad agreement on this matter based on the combined percentages of those who agree (43%) and have neutral attitudes (42%). This suggests that a common belief among the respondents is that youth are reluctant to get married. The remaining 10%, who are divided into 5% who strongly agree and 3% who strongly disagree, have more extreme opinions.

Figure 4.5 Today's Youth is reluctant towards marriage



This implies that although the general consensus is that today's generation is reluctant to get married, there are those people who are more adamant about either position. All things considered, the data shows that the respondents distinctly believed that the current generation was hesitant to get married. There appears to be a broad consensus on this issue, as seen by the neutral responses and the majority of those who agree with the statement.

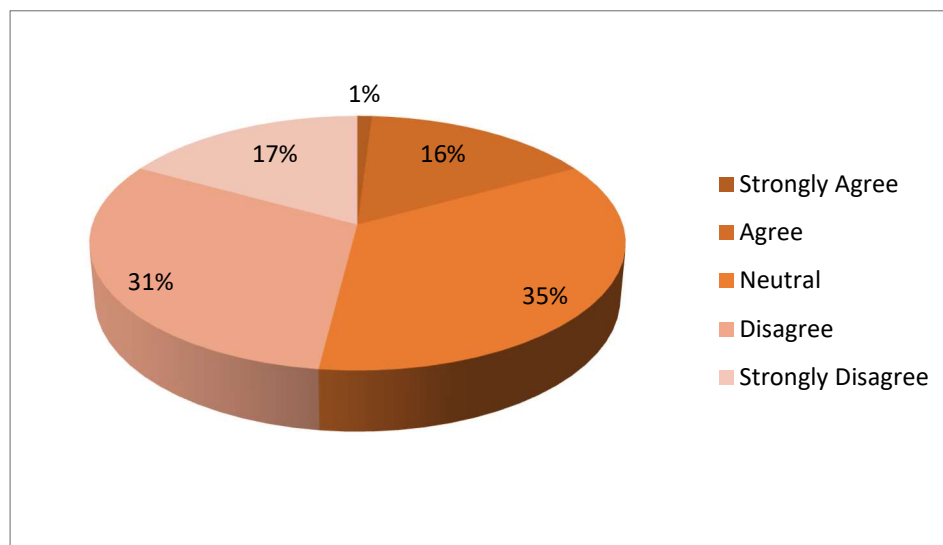
One of the cases responded that, *“Due to contemporary incidents such as domestic violence against women and dowry women are reluctant to marry. More interest in studies and desire to get a job make women averse to marriage. They also hesitate to marry because men have to take responsibility. Modern ideologies like living together affect everyone regardless of whether they are male or female and also contribute to the lack of interest in marriage. Children exposed to constant parental fighting develop an aversion to marriage which may discourage them from marrying in the future.”*

In contrast, another person responded that, *“People in this generation are more educated and knowledgeable. No one can live without depending on someone. If something happens to us, father and mother have passed their time, we need help. Marriage is not just for that. If you look at the current generation, more people are getting married. Similarly, most of the people remarry after the death of the wife or the death of the husband.”*

The survey data highlighting youth reluctance towards marriage reflects a broader sociological trend towards individualism, economic pragmatism, and alternative relationship models. The changing social landscape, influenced by evolving gender roles, economic pressures, and personal experiences, underscores a shift in how marriage is perceived and valued by today's younger generations.

4.3.3 Marriage - an outdated institution

Figure 4.6 Marriage - outdated institution



The study found that respondents had a complicated opinion on the concept of marriage. A vast majority (66%) said they were neutral or disagreed with the idea that marriage is an outdated institution. 35% had a neutral opinion, 31% disagreed, and 17% strongly disagreed.

While a lesser percentage (17%) agreed with the statement, the aggregate data suggests that the conventional institution of marriage is still relevant and valued by the younger generation. The data show that, despite some scepticism or ambiguity, the majority of respondents do not consider marriage to be an outdated notion. This implies a sustained regard for the institution of marriage, despite shifting society standards and ideas on partnerships.

A respondent said that, *“We all need family because every child is a social animal through the process of socialisation that occurs within a family. If marriage does not happen, the family will not be there in our future society. It affects badly our society as a whole. Therefore, we*

can't completely say that marriage is an outdated institution. Marriage is safe when two trusted and deeply understood couples get committed instead of focussing on financial security alone.” Another person said that, *“No, In order for one to live a life filled with joy, he or she needs to have a marriage. If he or she faces any trouble regarding health, they can mutually depend on each other. After marriage, when a child is born, he or she will become the next heir of their family.”*

Marriage is often seen as a foundational institution for the socialization of children, providing a stable environment for upbringing and societal integration. This aligns with the functionalist perspective in sociology, which views marriage as serving essential functions for societal stability and continuity, including emotional support, economic cooperation, and child-rearing.

4.3.4 Importance of having children in future

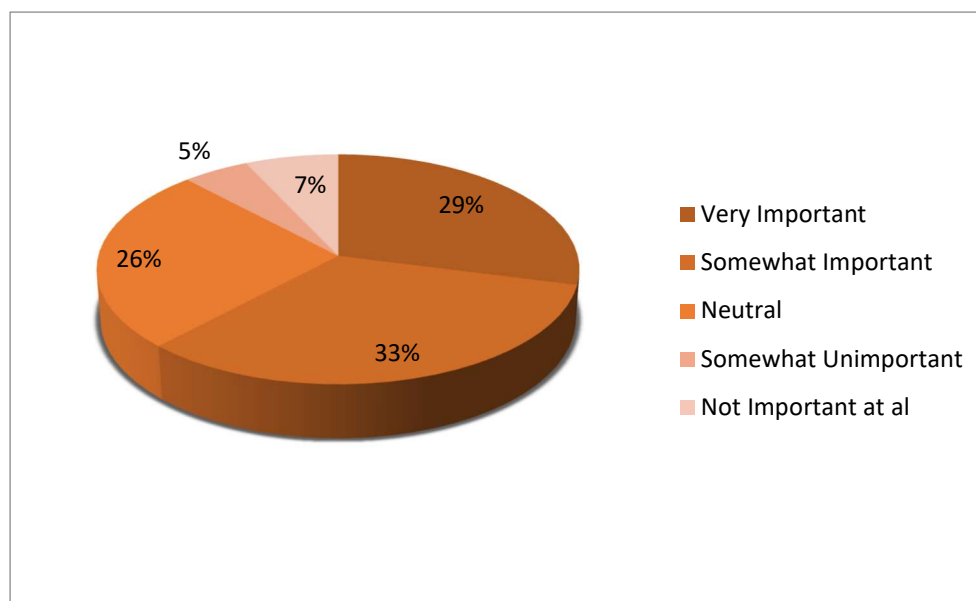


Figure 4.7 Importance of having children in future

From the figure, 33% consider somewhat important, 29% consider very important, 26% has neutral opinion, 7% considers it not important at all and finally 5% considers it somewhat important.

The results show that having children is crucial to a large majority of respondents, many of whom believe it to be absolutely essential. A significant portion of people have neutral or less positive attitudes, which indicates that there are differing ideas on this matter. The findings indicate the lasting importance of traditional views towards marriage, family, and raising

children, but they also suggest that attitudes may shift due to alterations in society, individual experiences, and financial conditions.

One of the respondents said that, *“I don't place much importance on it, as I find managing children to be quite challenging. It's the wrong perception that people marry just to have children. Marriage is about mutual understanding and the sharing of responsibilities between partners. The thought of having children is secondary in marriage, and it depends on the partners' choice.”*

4.4 ROLE OF SOCIETY IN THE DECISION TO GET MARRIED

4.4.1 Type of Marriage practiced by the respondents' parents

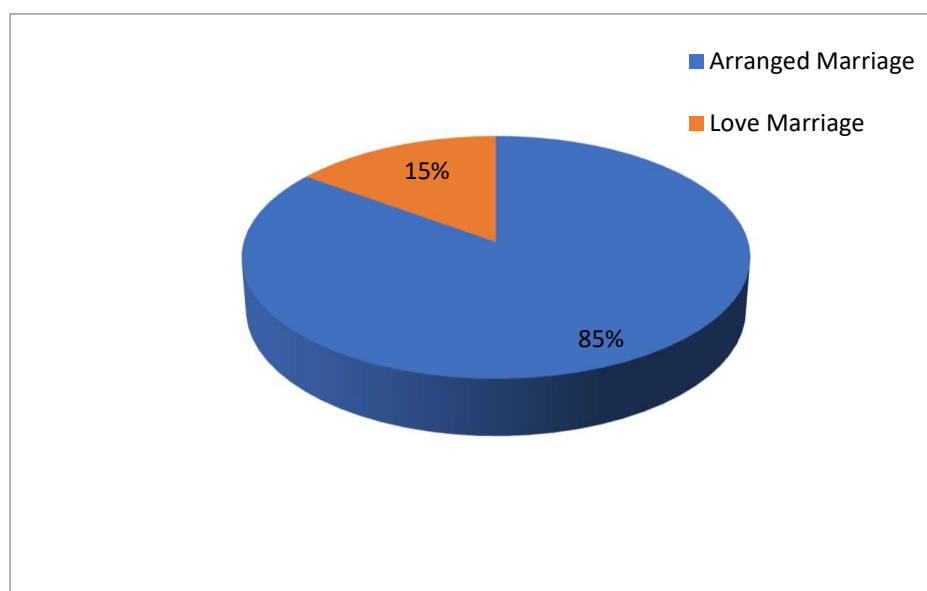


Figure 4.8 Type of Marriage practiced by the respondent's parents

According to the survey the vast majority of respondents' parents (85%) chose the traditional path of arranged marriage, with only a minor percentage (15%) choose for love marriage. This suggests that planned weddings remain a common practice among the parents' generation, implying that cultural and societal standards around marriage have not changed significantly in recent years.

As we know, family is the basic institution from which we all evolved. So, it plays a significant role in shaping our views and perceptions. As it was determined that the majority of the

respondents' parents followed arranged marriage, they wouldn't be able to accept new practices such as love marriages, cohabitation, same-sex marriages, etc. As the same respondents expressed the opinion that their parents have a significant role in the decision to get married, it'll be difficult for them to practice certain ways of marriage.

4.4.2 Influence of Parents

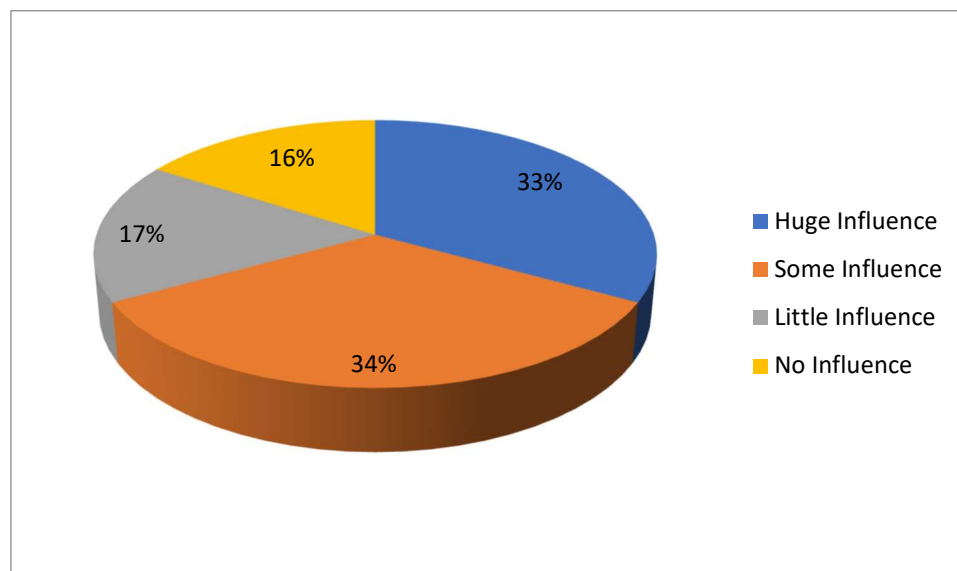


Figure 4. 9 Influence of Parents

According to the data a large majority of respondents (34%) said their parents influence their decision to marry. However, a much bigger proportion (33%) answered that their parents had a significant influence, emphasizing the importance of parental perspectives in marriage decisions. While a lesser minority (17%) said that their parents had little effect, and 16% said their parents had no influence at all.

The obtained data suggests that parental perspectives continue to play an important role in moulding marriage decisions among the younger generation.

One of the respondents said that, *“Any parent has the right or desire to make decisions about many things regarding their daughter/son. Especially, in matters like marriage. Similarly I also consider and give importance to such wishes of my parents.”*

A responded said that, *“I like to make my own decisions in life. I have not authorised it for anyone else. I have the freedom to do so. Because marriage is a personal affair, Parents can comment, but the person has to live. I live the way I like, so I can make my own decisions.”*

4.4.3 Pressure from social circle

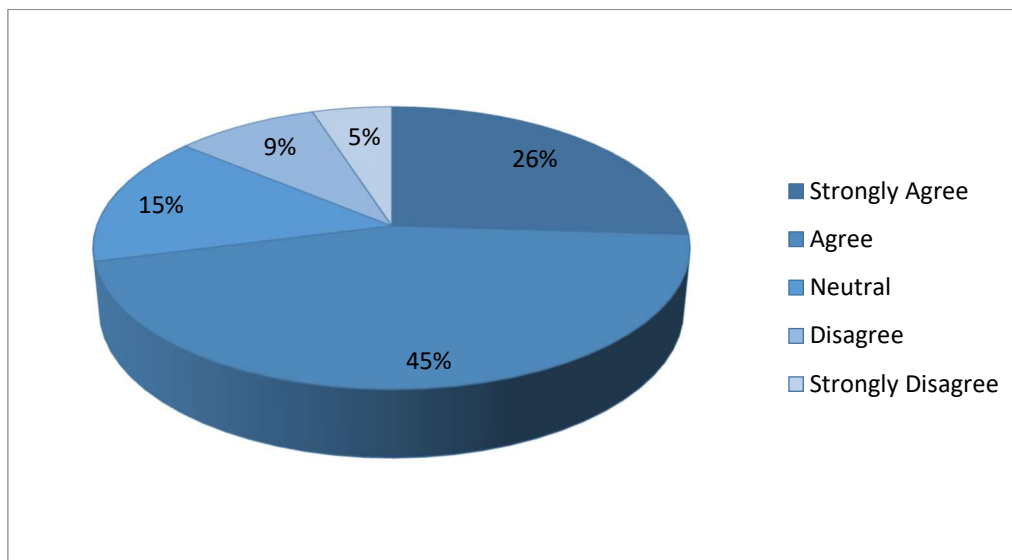


Figure 4.10 Pressure from social circle

The study discovered that a considerable majority of respondents (45%) felt pressure to marry by a given age from their social networks. This pressure was especially intense among 26% of respondents, who strongly agreed with the statement. While a lower minority (15%) had a neutral attitude and 9% disagreed, the aggregate data suggests that cultural expectations and peer pressure have a significant impact on the timing of marriage decisions among the younger generation. Only a small minority (5%) strongly opposed the proposal, demonstrating that the pressure to marry at a specific age is prevalent.

To substantiate the above data, one of the cases responded that, *“Society doesn't pressure to get married but my parents, relatives does”*

Another person said that, *“There is a pressure for marriage in my social circle. They say that when you get older, you won't get a good relationship, and even if you get married, you can try to get a job. For them, marriage is important than our career. When we go to a wedding, we are told that it should be our wedding next. Even if it is a family function, they will ask how old*

you are. Then they will come with new marriage proposals. My parents are also under a lot of pressure.”

4.4.4 Society towards the Idea of Live In Relationships

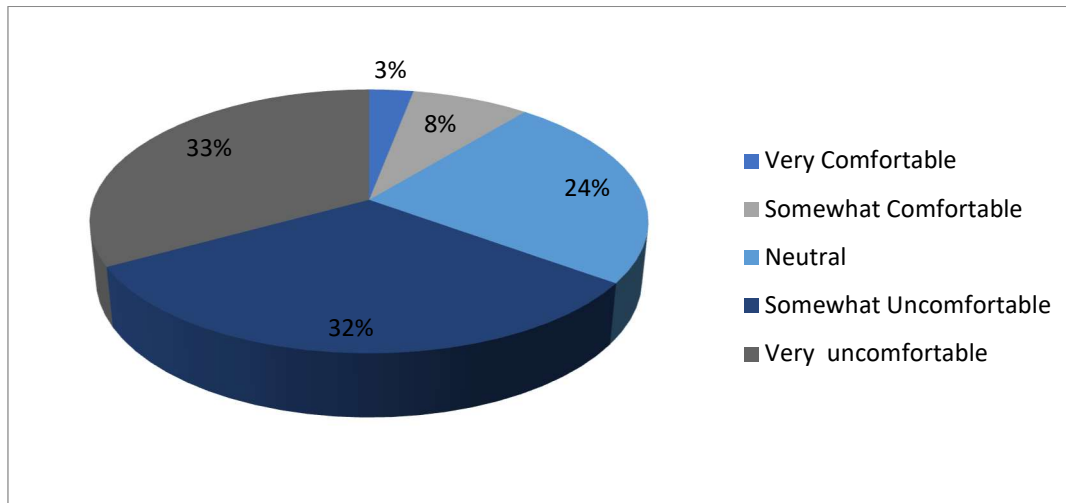


Figure 4.11 Society towards the idea of Live-in-relationships

According to the study, the vast majority of respondents (65%) reported societal uneasiness with the concept of cohabitation. Specifically, 33% said society is extremely uncomfortable with the idea, while 32% said it is slightly uncomfortable. This pooled data plainly shows that society is still generally unprepared to accept cohabitation as a socially acceptable norm. While a lower minority (24%) had a neutral opinion and 11% (8% + 3%) reported some level of comfort with cohabitation, the overall trend suggests that public attitudes about cohabitation are largely negative.

These findings underscore the possible difficulties and stigmas that people may encounter if they chose to pursue cohabitation in a society that is still mostly opposed to the idea.

4.4.5 Religious Influence

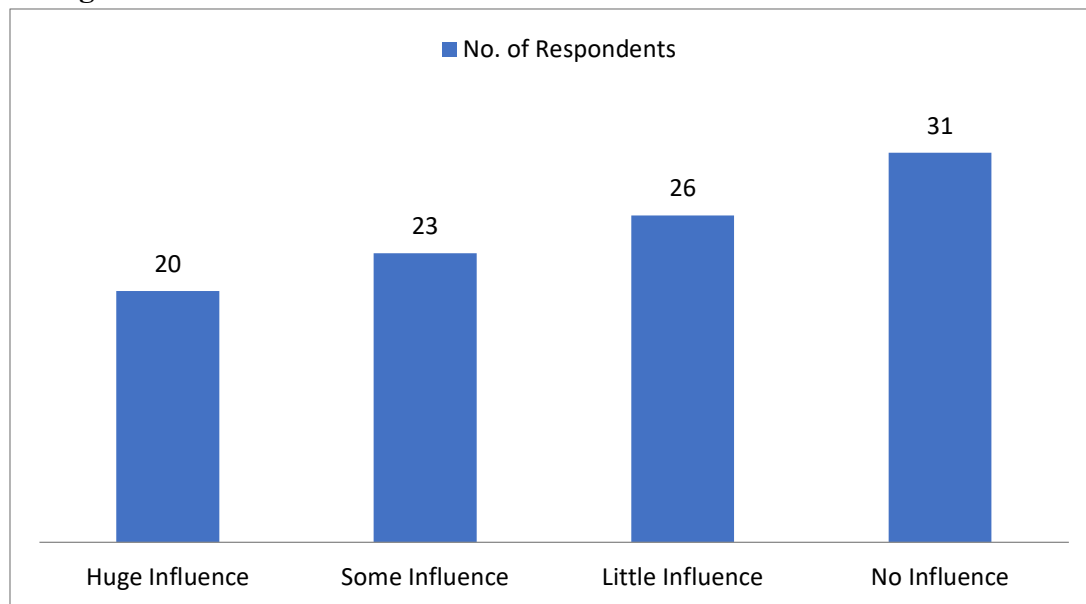


Figure 4.12 Religious Influence

The study found that a significant majority of respondents (79%) stated that their religion had either no influence or only a limited influence on their decision to get married. Specifically, 31% stated that religion played no role, while 26% and 23% reported little or some influence, respectively. This suggests a notable shift toward a more secular approach to marriage and relationships, where personal choices and individual preferences are increasingly valued over religion. Only 20% of respondents said religious views had a significant impact on their marital decisions.

The higher percentage reflects an increasing trend among younger generations to prioritize personal autonomy and values over traditional religious obligations in the context of marriage. The study's findings indicate a cultural and societal trend toward a more secularized perspective of partnerships, with religious concerns playing a smaller role in shaping marriage decisions. A respondent said that, *“No, religion has no influence on my decision to get married. At the same time, my family may pressurize me to choose a partner according to the same religion or caste. But in my personal opinion, love has priority over religion.”*

4.5 RECENT VIEWS TOWARDS MARRIAGE PRACTICES

The study highlights a marked shift in cultural attitudes towards marriage, particularly among the younger generation. The preference for love marriages over arranged marriages—53% versus 32%—demonstrates a significant departure from traditional practices. This shift reflects broader societal changes and evolving cultural values.

4.5.1 Ideal type of marriage

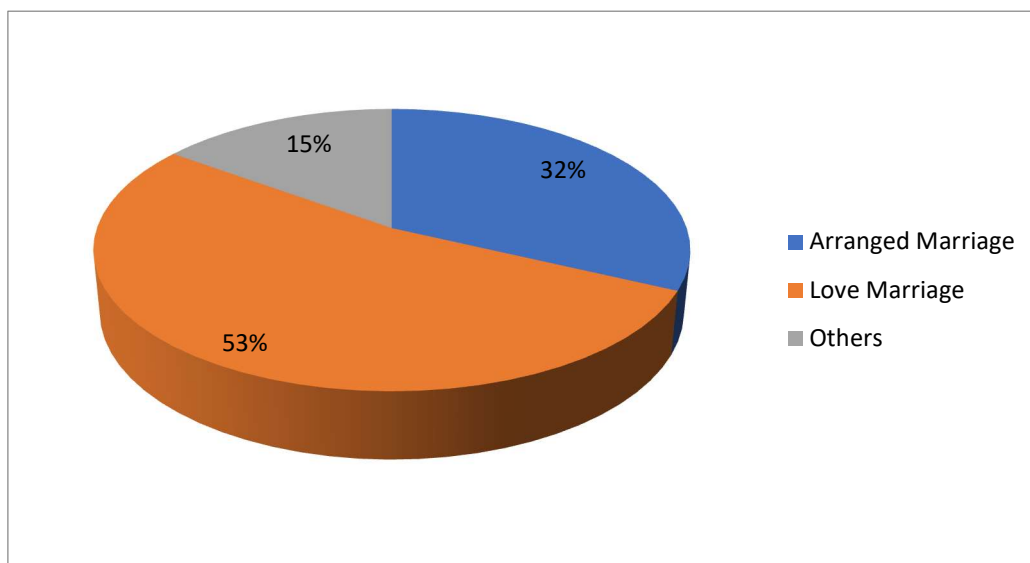


Figure 4.13 Ideal type of Marriage

The study found a dramatic shift in cultural attitudes on marriage, with the younger generation expressing a strong preference for love marriages. The majority of respondents (53%) believed love marriages to be the ideal type of marriage, while only 32% thought arranged weddings were ideal.

This strong preference for love marriages represents a shift away from traditional norms and a greater emphasis on individual choice and romantic love in the context of marriage. The data indicates a significant change in societal views on marriage, with love marriages becoming increasingly accepted and preferred over arranged marriages. This shift reflects a broader cultural and societal evolution towards greater individual autonomy and personal choice in matters of relationships and marriage.

One respondent said that, *“I cannot see any marriage as a model marriage. Whether it is an arranged marriage or a love marriage, marriage is a mutual agreement between people.”*

A respondent said that, “I would prefer a love marriage because love marriages enable us to select partners according to our wishes, and arranged marriages also include selecting partners according to the wishes of our parents. Love marriages help to build familiarity with the person whom we marry so that we can understand them more deeply.”

The study’s findings on marriage preferences reflect a significant cultural shift towards valuing romantic love and individual choice. This shift is indicative of broader societal changes, including modernization, globalization, and evolving cultural norms. The preference for love marriages over arranged marriages highlights a move towards greater personal autonomy and a redefinition of marriage as a partnership based on mutual affection rather than traditional social expectations. This evolution in marital ideals demonstrates the dynamic nature of cultural practices and the impact of social change on personal and collective values.

4.5.2 Likeliness to consider arranged marriage

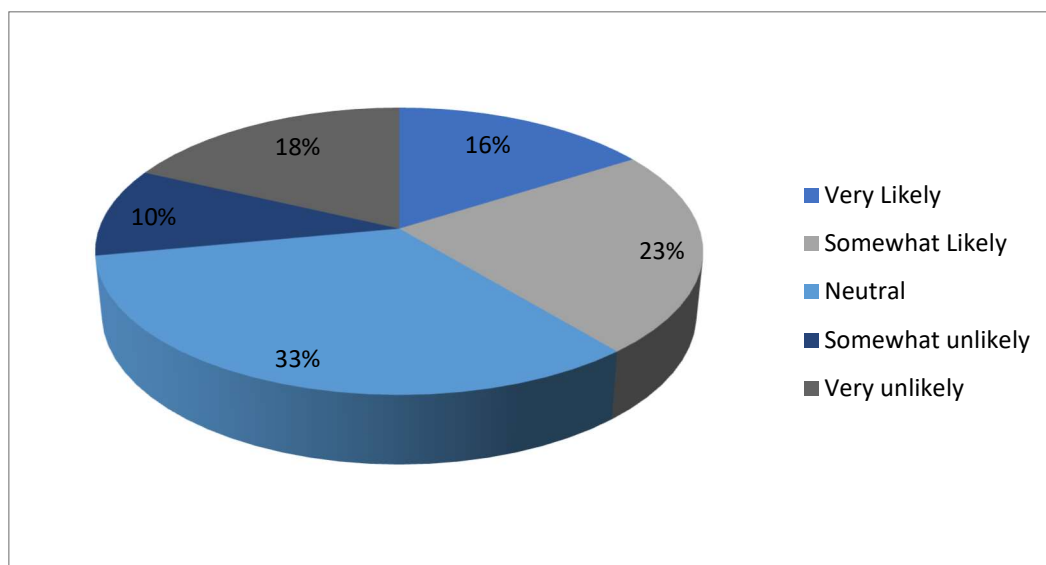


Figure 4.14 Likeliness to consider arranged marriage

The study found that respondents had a different perspective on the topic of arranged marriage. A significant majority (66%) expressed neutrality or some level of scepticism regarding the notion. Specifically, 33% were neutral, 23% were rather unlikely to consider arranged marriage, and 18% were extremely unlikely. While just 26% reported some openness to arranged marriage, the overall data suggests that the traditional practice of arranged marriage is losing popularity among the younger generation.

Respondents' unwillingness to consider arranged marriages reflects their growing preference for personal choice and passionate love in marriage selections.

A respondent commented that, "According to me, marriage is not a sacred and purely religious thing in our contemporary society. Arranged marriage is also not safe in our current society because of certain dowry-related violence, domestic violence, etc. Love marriage and arrange marriage have their own risk factors where these kinds of violence exist. The only advantage of arranged marriage is the support from family, but the married women in many houses also face miserable conditions. Arranged marriages have also become a commodity in our society, where dowry systems exist. It is just the exchange of women for money (dowry). Therefore, we cannot support arranging marriage as a safe one."

4.5.3 Importance of large traditional wedding ceremony

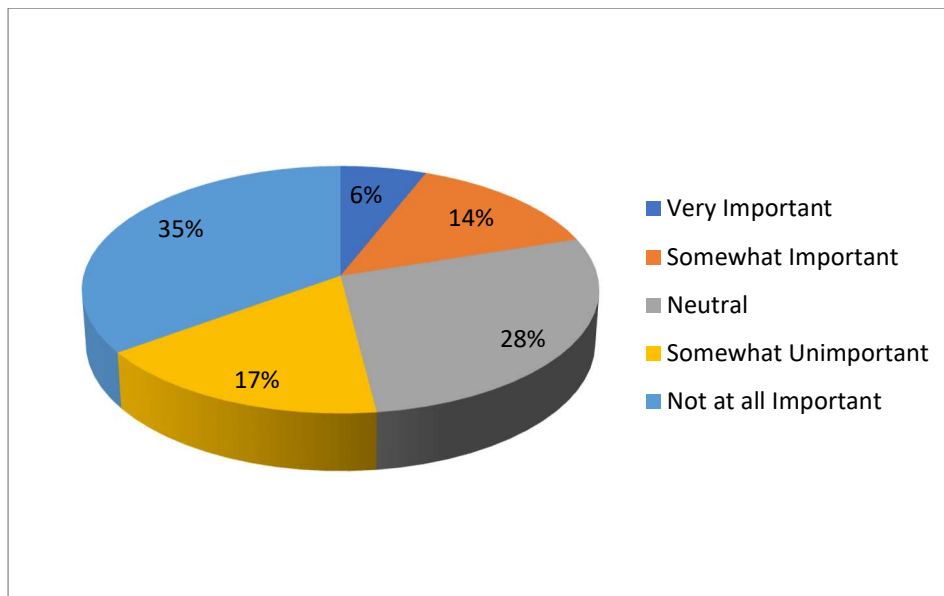


Figure 4.15 Importance of large traditional wedding ceremony

The study revealed a significant shift in attitudes towards traditional wedding ceremonies among the younger generation. A majority of respondents (35%) indicated that having a large, traditional wedding ceremony is not at all important to them. This suggests a growing preference for smaller, more personalized celebrations or alternative wedding formats. While a smaller percentage (28%) held a neutral opinion, 17% expressed some level of importance and 14% expressed small level of unimportance for traditional ceremonies and finally only a

6% expressed it as very important, the overall trend indicates a decline in the significance of large-scale, traditional weddings.

The data suggests that the focus is shifting towards meaningful and personal experiences rather than adhering to societal expectations and norms related to weddings.

One of the cases said that, *“I love traditional wedding ceremony but at the same time, I wish that it shouldn’t become a burden for my family...”*

Another person made an opinion that, *“If a huge traditional marriage is planned, a lot of budget is needed for it. It may sometimes be a waste of money. So, there is no need to spend a huge amount of money on a single-day function. If the same amount is saved in banks, it will be useful as long-term capital. The large traditional wedding ceremony is totally irrelevant.”*

4.5.4 Idea towards cohabitation

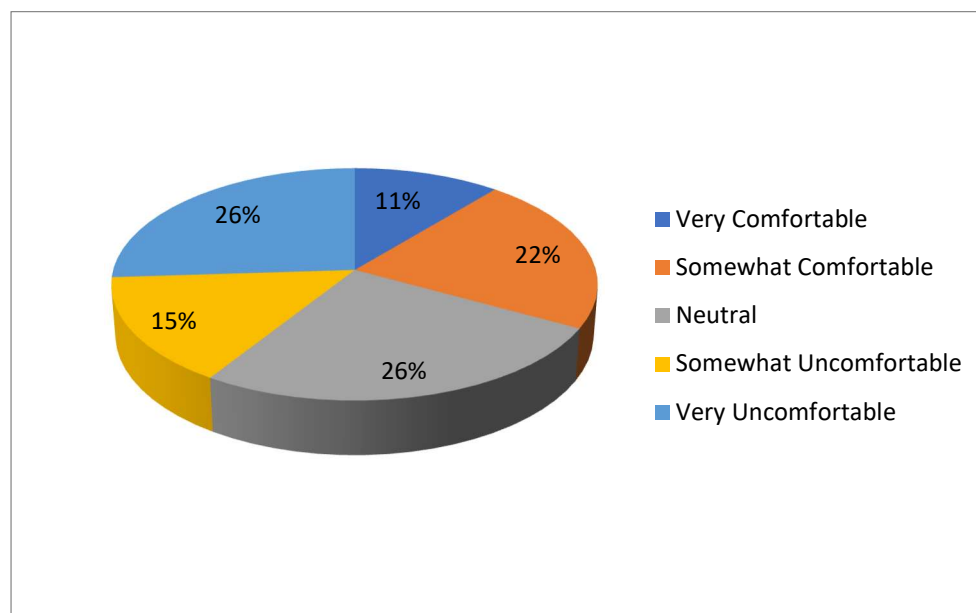


Figure 4.16 Idea towards cohabitation

The study revealed a complex perspective among respondents regarding the concept of cohabitation. A significant majority (52%) expressed either neutrality or some degree of discomfort towards the idea. Specifically, 26% held a neutral opinion, while 26% were very uncomfortable and 15% were somewhat uncomfortable.

While a smaller percentage (33%) expressed some level of comfort with cohabitation, the overall data suggests that societal attitudes towards cohabitation remain predominantly neutral or negative. The increasing acceptance of cohabitation as a precursor to marriage or as an alternative to marriage is evident, but the data also highlights the ongoing societal resistance to the concept.

One of the cases said that, *“I am very uncomfortable with the idea of live in together. It lacks commitment, responsibilities, and temporary. It can lead to exploitation.”*

Another person said that, *“Live-in relationships are fine until the occurrence of emotional attachment between partners. There won't be any rules or restrictions on living in relationships, and there will also be no control over others. Live-in relationships have negative impacts too, like unwanted pregnancies. There should be a proper agreement between partners without any complications for each other. There would not be any support from parents, either. It is good, but it also has negative impacts on our society. According to me, living in relationships is fine but also has complications.”*

4.5.5 Role of religion in selecting future spouse

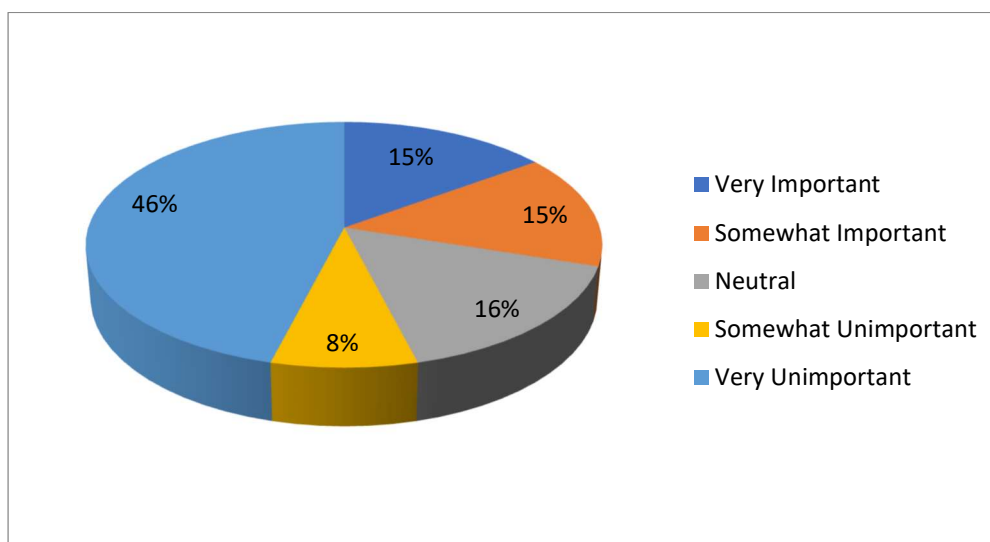


Figure 17 Role of religion in selecting future spouse

The study found a considerable shift in attitudes toward inter-caste and inter-religious marriages among the younger generation. The majority of respondents (46%) said it didn't

matter if their future partner comes from different caste or religious background. This demonstrates a rising acceptance and openness to marrying people from various cultural and religious backgrounds.

While a lower minority (15%) still believed it was critical for their partner to be from the same background, the overall findings show a significant fall in the importance of caste and religion as factors in marriage decisions. This movement reflects a larger societal trend toward greater inclusion and acceptance of varied relationships, as well as an increased focus on individual choice and personal compatibility in marriage.

A responded stated that, *“Personally, it doesn’t matter if my future partner comes from another caste or religious background. But my family and society won't accept the selection of partners from other religious backgrounds.”*

4.5.6 Use of online dating services

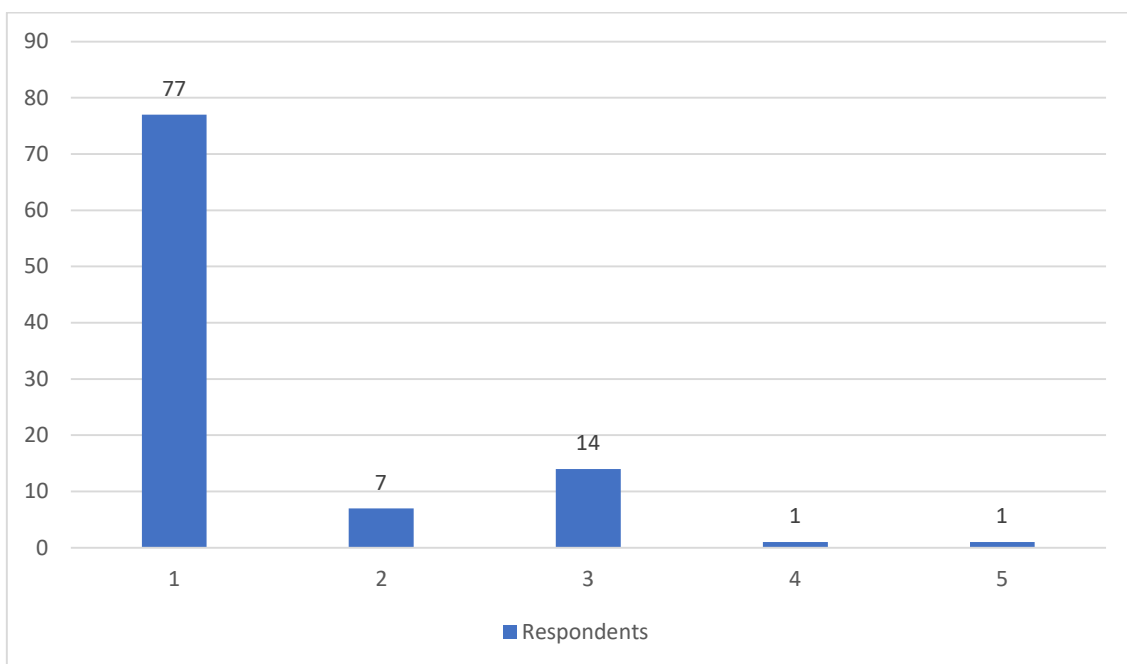


Figure 4.18 Use of online dating services

The study revealed that online dating apps are not widely used among the respondents. A significant majority (77%) reported never having used such apps, while only a small percentage (23%) indicated any level of usage. This suggests that traditional methods of finding partners, such as social connections and family introductions, remain prevalent among the study's participants.

The data indicates that online dating is not a dominant method of finding romantic partners for the majority of respondents. While a small percentage do use online dating apps, the low usage rates suggest that traditional dating methods still hold a strong preference among the study's participants.

One of the cases said that, *“I have very negative opinion on dating apps because it is unsafe to interact with a stranger and it may lead to various negative consequences.”*

4.5.7 Idea towards same sex marriages

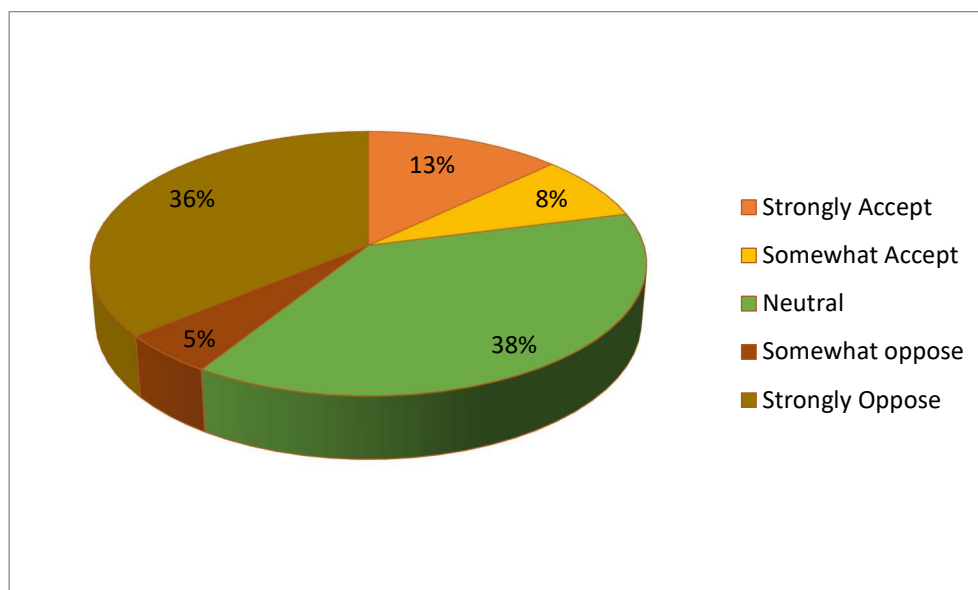


Figure 4.19 Idea towards same sex marriages

The study found that respondents had a complicated perspective on the concept of same-sex marriage. A vast majority (79%) indicated neutrality or some level of resistance to the concept. Specifically, 38% were neutral, 36% strongly opposed, and 5% slightly opposed same-sex marriages.

While a lower proportion (21%) showed some level of acceptance, the aggregate data suggests that social opinions towards same-sex marriage are still primarily hostile or neutral. The 13% who strongly accept and the 8% who somewhat accept show that same-sex marriage is becoming slightly widely accepted. However, the research also highlights the continued cultural hostility to the concept, particularly among a sizable proportion of respondents. The findings point to a steady shift in society attitudes, with an increasing proportion of people

becoming more accepting of same-sex marriage. However, the research emphasises the importance of ongoing societal conversations and education to encourage greater understanding and acceptance of various relationship patterns.

One of the cases said that, *“I am considering it as okay and it's completely personal choice. But if it is promoted through media, the children may be influenced by those and try to imitate it and thus will create negative consequences.”*

Another person said that, *“I'm personally not accepting same-sex marriages. I'm not against those who are practicing same-sex marriages. Apart from marriage, I think strong friendships lead to same-sex marriages. And at the same time, I don't consider it a marriage and I think same-sex marriage eradicates the issue of inequalities between men and women and would get more opportunities and equality as the same sexes.”*

4.5.8 Role of Age while selecting partners

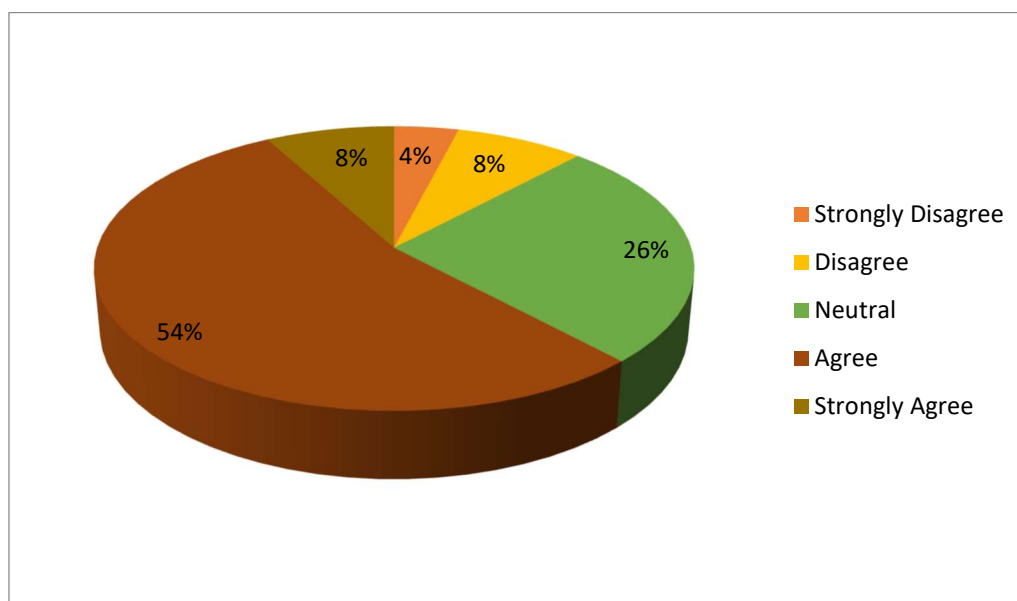


Figure 4.20 Role of Age while selecting partners

The survey found a significant shift in attitudes on age disparity in partnerships, with the younger generation showing a clear preference for partners who are the same age as them. The majority of respondents (54%) agreed that young people nowadays prefer partners of similar ages, showing a shift from historic standards in which older men were frequently married to younger women.

While a lower minority (26%) had a neutral opinion, 8% strongly agreed, and another 8% disagreed, the aggregate data indicates that age discrepancy is becoming less important in marriage decisions. This movement reflects a broader societal trend towards greater equality and mutual respect among partners, as well as an increasing emphasis on individual choice and personal compatibility in relationships.

A case responded that, “Age differences seem to be decreasing nowadays. Those who know each other more than their age are getting married. Then it might become the same age. I think people of the same age do not marry selectively.”

4.5.9 Importance of finding a romantic partner before marriage

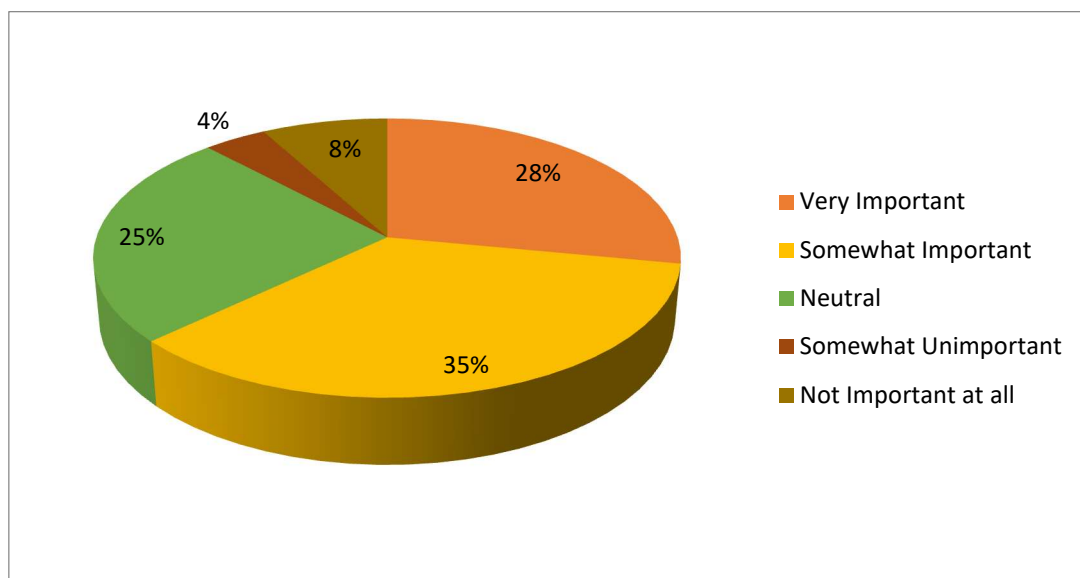


Figure 4.21 Importance of finding a romantic partner before marriage

The information sheds light on the differing opinions of how crucial it is to find love before getting married. Finding a lover before getting married is important to a big majority of respondents (63%) who said it was either extremely important (28%) or moderately important (35%). This implies that many people still find value in the conventional conception of marriage as the uniting of two people in a loving relationship. Nonetheless, a sizeable minority (29%) stated indifferent views, indicating that they lack strong feelings regarding the issue. This could be due to a number of things, including individual marriage ideals, cultural shifts, and personal experiences. Moreover, a minor portion (12%) either thought it was not significant at all (8%) or that it was just marginally unimportant (4%).

This implies that some people might not place as much importance on finding a romantic partner before being married, for a variety of reasons, including different perspectives on relationships, unique situations, or a desire for independence. In general, the information shows a range of viewpoints regarding the significance of finding a romantic partner prior to marriage. A considerable minority of respondents had more neutral or less positive opinions, even though the majority of respondents think it is important or very important. These differing viewpoints draw attention to the richness and diversity of personal experiences and opinions about marriage and relationships

4.5.10 Gender Roles

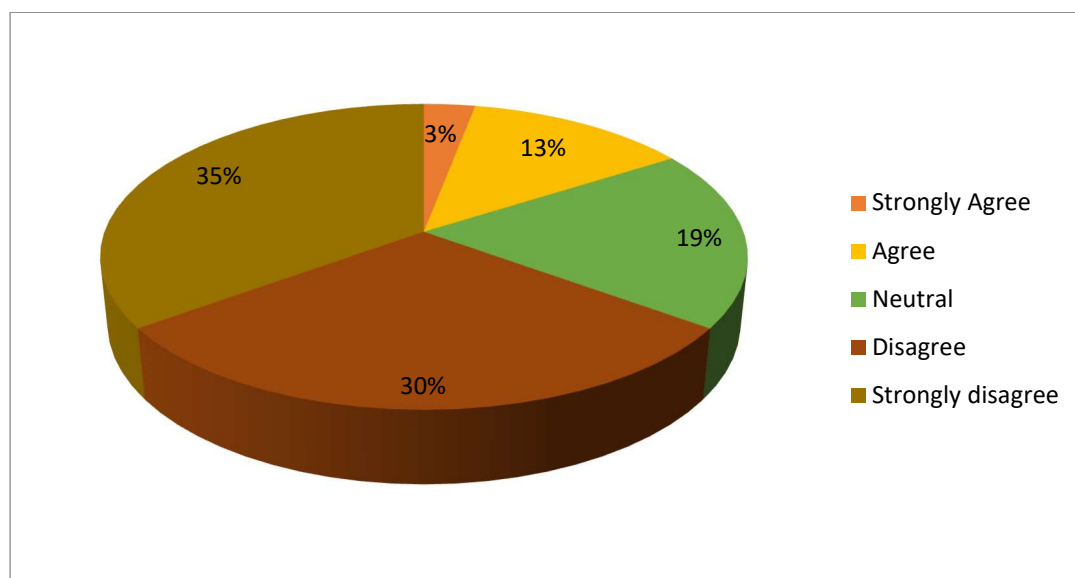


Figure 4.22 Gender Roles

The study found a considerable shift in younger people's opinions towards traditional gender roles. The majority of respondents (68%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with the idea that partners should conform to socially created gender roles. Specifically, 35% strongly disagreed and 30% disagreed. This demonstrates a growing tendency for more egalitarian relationships in which partners are not restricted by traditional gender norms.

While a lower minority (32%) reported neutrality or agreement with the idea of adhering to conventional gender roles, the aggregate data shows a clear trend of confronting and rejecting these standards. The findings point to a greater emphasis on gender equality, personal liberty, and the rejection of stereotypes in partnerships.

One of the respondents stated that, *“I am not interested in following the gender responsibilities constructed by society. In my opinion, after marriage, partners should divide their responsibilities, mainly financial and household chores, in an equal manner.”*

4.6 REASONS BEHIND THE RELUCTANCE TOWARDS MARRIAGE

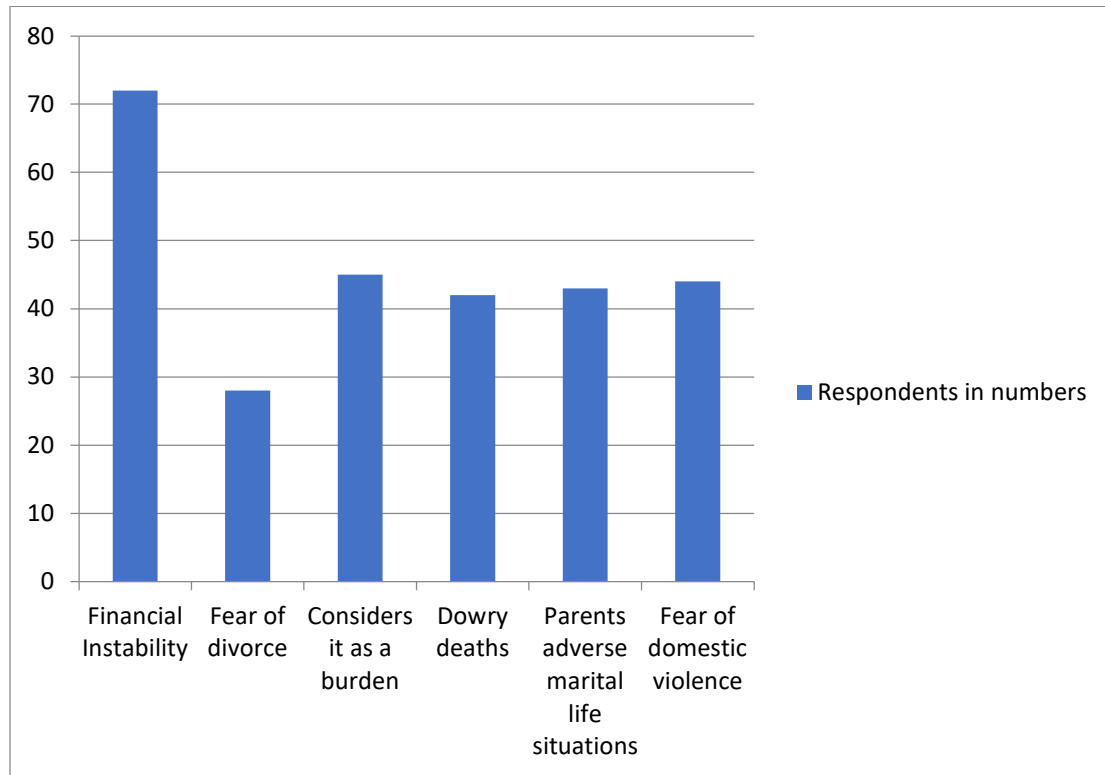


Figure 4. 23 Reasons behind reluctance to marriage

The information sheds significant light on the possible reasons why young individuals might be reluctant to get married. With 72% of respondents citing financial uncertainty as a major factor, it was the most commonly cited concern. This implies that delaying marriage decisions is largely due to financial worries. This can be an indication of a desire for autonomy and personal development. Notably, 45% of respondents said they thought marriage could be a hardship. This implies that their judgements can be influenced by worries about the difficulties and obligations that come with marriage. Various other factors were also mentioned, such as fear of domestic violence (44%), bad experiences from parents' marital life (43%), deaths from dowries (42%), fear of divorce (28%), problems with trust and fear of commitment, lack of interest in relationships, lack of sincerity, fear of extramarital sex, emotionally unavailable partners, gender stereotypes, and unequal responsibilities.

The fear of domestic violence (44%) and negative experiences from parents' marital life (43%) reflect the impact of historical and cultural contexts on current attitudes. Experiences of domestic violence and unhealthy marital dynamics in previous generations can profoundly influence contemporary views on marriage.

The concern about dowries (42%) and fear of divorce (28%) highlights ongoing issues related to traditional practices and legal uncertainties. Dowry systems and divorce rates can affect perceptions of marriage and influence decisions about entering into or avoiding marriage.

Observing negative marital experiences or witnessing domestic violence can shape individuals' perceptions of marriage, making them more cautious or hesitant. This aligns with the symbolic interactionist perspective, where personal experiences and social interactions significantly influence individual attitudes and behaviors.

These various worries draw attention to how complicated and multidimensional young people's hesitation to get married is. Overall, the data reveals a complex interplay of factors influencing young people's decisions about marriage. While financial instability and a lack of life experiences are prominent concerns, other factors such as fear, negative experiences, and societal issues also play a significant role. Understanding these factors can help policymakers, social workers, and individuals address the challenges and concerns related to marriage and relationships.

From a functionalist perspective, marriage serves various social functions, such as reproduction, socialization, and economic stability. The reluctance to marry due to financial uncertainty and perceived hardships reflects a perceived disruption of these functions, highlighting the need for societal adjustments to support stable marital relationships.

The reluctance towards marriage among young people reflects a complex interplay of financial, emotional, and social factors. Sociologically, this reluctance can be attributed to a combination of economic pressures, changing gender roles, and negative personal experiences. Understanding these factors provides valuable insights for addressing the challenges related to marriage and relationships, and for developing policies and support systems that align with contemporary values and needs.

4.6.1 Financial independence

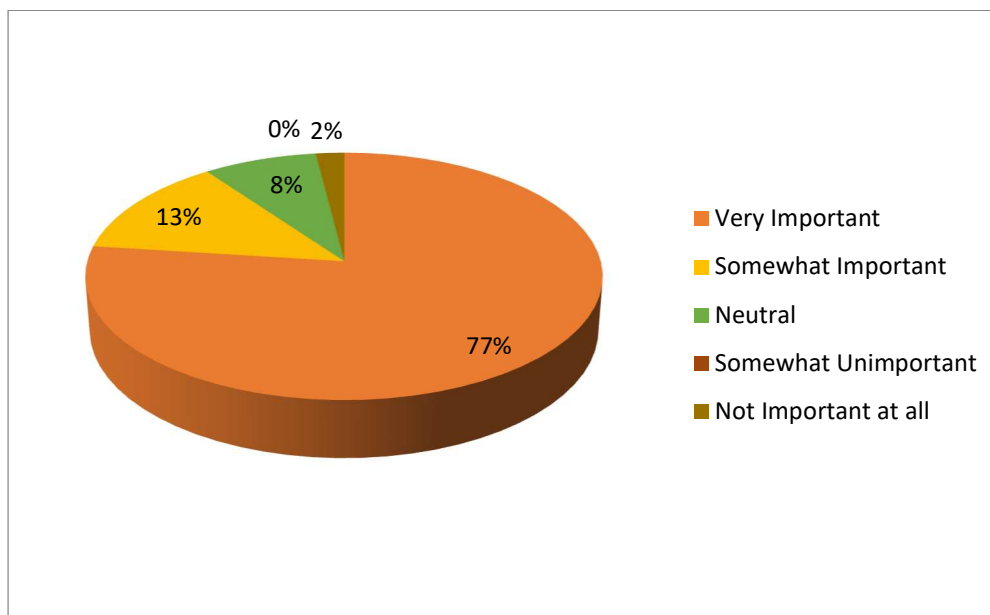


Figure 4.24 Financial Independence

According to the data, financial independence is a highly valued aspect in young people's relationships. The vast majority of responders (77%) thought it was extremely important, with 13% thinking it was moderately important. This underscores the immense importance of financial stability as the foundation of a good and long-lasting relationship. The results also point to a shift in gender roles, with women desiring financial liberty and independence and men seeing the value of shared financial responsibility. This is most likely impacted by societal changes and an increasing number of women entering the job.

Furthermore, the emphasis on financial independence could reflect the growing economic challenges and uncertainties that individuals and families confront. . The analysis emphasises the importance of financial education and preparation in marriages, as they can assist couples navigate financial issues and make informed financial decisions.

One of the respondents said that, *“Financial independence is a crucial factor in one's personal life. Even after marriage, it is highly important because if we want to attain a particular financial need, we should request money from our partner, and as a result of that, we become obliged to the partner and become submissive towards them. My primary priority is to fulfill my desires.*

4.6.2 Marriage as a burden

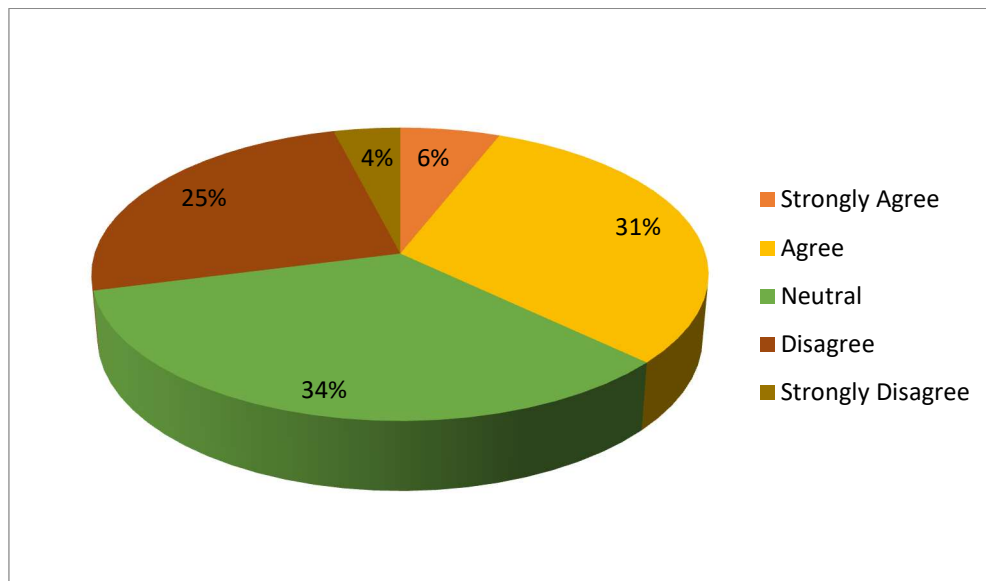


Figure 4.25 Marriage as a burden

A significant portion (34%) expressed a neutral opinion, indicating that they do not have a strong stance on the matter. However, the remaining respondents were more divided. Approximately 31% agreed with the statement, suggesting that they perceive marriage as a source of stress or constraint. This could be attributed to various factors, such as relationship challenges, societal expectations, or personal experiences. On the other hand, 25% disagreed, indicating that they view marriage as a positive and fulfilling experience. This group may have had positive experiences or hold different perspectives on the institution of marriage.

A smaller percentage, 6%, strongly agreed with the statement, suggesting that they have had particularly negative experiences with marriage or hold strong beliefs about its burdens. Conversely, 4% strongly disagreed, indicating a strong positive view of marriage and its benefits.

Overall, the data suggests that while a significant number of people do not have a definitive opinion on whether marriage is a burden, there are varying perspectives on the matter. Some individuals perceive marriage as a source of stress or constraint, while others view it as a positive and fulfilling experience. These differing perspectives highlight the complexity and diversity of individual experiences and beliefs regarding marriage.

A case stated that, " People often feel that marriage is a burden. It could be because they have had various experiences in their own lives. But, in my perspective, it is not a burden if the

responsibilities are shared equally by both partners. If it is not shared equally, which is usually evident in the current society, marriage is definitely a burden.”

The divergence in perspectives regarding marriage highlights the role of marriage as a site of negotiation and conflict between traditional expectations and contemporary desires. Some individuals continue to view marriage as a positive and fulfilling institution, perhaps influenced by cultural and social norms that promote marriage as an ideal state of being. However, others see it as a source of constraint or stress, indicating that modern marriage is fraught with tensions as individuals seek to balance societal expectations with personal autonomy, career ambitions, and individual goals.

Marriage is not just a private relationship but is deeply embedded in societal structures and expectations. The perception of marriage as a burden can be linked to societal pressures, such as the expectation to marry at a certain age, have children, and conform to specific roles within the household. These pressures can create stress, leading individuals to view marriage as more of an obligation than a choice. The neutral stance of 34% of respondents suggests that many individuals may be grappling with conflicting societal messages about marriage, reflecting the ongoing negotiation between tradition and modernity.

The concept of individualization, proposed by sociologists such as Ulrich Beck provides a useful framework for understanding why some people view marriage as a burden. In late modernity, individuals are increasingly focused on personal development, autonomy, and self-expression. Marriage, which traditionally involves compromise, shared responsibilities, and the subsuming of individual interests for the collective good, may therefore be seen as at odds with individualist values. For those who prioritize individual freedom and career ambitions, marriage can feel restrictive and burdensome, particularly if they encounter unequal sharing of domestic and emotional labor.

The perception of marriage as a burden can also be understood in light of the economic and social risks associated with marriage, particularly in contemporary capitalist societies. Marriage may be viewed as a financial strain, with the associated costs of weddings, housing, and raising children creating economic pressure. Additionally, the risk of divorce, which can lead to financial instability, emotional trauma, and social stigma, may also contribute to the perception of marriage as a burden. The 6% who strongly agree that marriage is a burden may

have experienced these risks firsthand, leading them to develop particularly negative views of the institution.

The case provided highlights the importance of egalitarian relationships as a potential solution to the perception of marriage as a burden. If responsibilities within marriage are shared equally, the perception of burden may diminish. This suggests that shifts towards more equitable partnerships, where both partners contribute equally to household duties, emotional support, and financial responsibilities, could mitigate the negative views associated with marriage. This aligns with broader sociological trends advocating for gender equality in all spheres of life, including intimate relationships.

Marriage plays a critical role in the social reproduction of norms, values, and roles within society. The diverse responses suggest that while marriage remains a significant social institution, its role in reproducing traditional gender roles and societal expectations is being challenged by new generations. Young people's discomfort with traditional responsibilities associated with marriage, as evidenced by the data, points to a potential transformation in the institution itself, where marriage may increasingly become more individualized and egalitarian. In summary, the perception of marriage as a burden reflects broader societal shifts toward individualization, challenges to traditional gender roles, and the negotiation between personal autonomy and social expectations. Marriage remains a contested institution, with its meaning and significance varying widely across different segments of society.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study primarily describes the diverse approaches of youngsters to the concept of marriage. It also attempts to understand how youth perceive marriage, the role of society and family in the decision to marry, contemporary trends in marital practices, and a few other reasons why young people are hesitant to marry. This survey was conducted among college students in the Thiruvananthapuram district. Because many students from all across Kerala come to Thiruvananthapuram for education, the Thiruvananthapuram district would be an excellent place to learn.

The study's findings indicate that young people's attitudes on marriage are shifting. They have a distinct viewpoint on marriage, and their thoughts appear to be more developed. According to the data, young people today view marriage as a fairly necessary component of their lives. They also acknowledge that today's youth are hesitant to embrace the concept of marriage, but they also regard marriage as one of the most important institutions. The findings also highlight the critical impact of society in the decision to marry. Parents are thought to play an important role in deciding to marry, and they are constantly confronted with their children's decisions. A large proportion of respondents stated that they felt enormous pressure from society to marry at a specific age.

In terms of contemporary marriage trends and practices like as live-in partnerships and same-sex marriages, both respondents and society appear to reject these views. Respondents believe that society strongly opposes new marriage practices or alternatives to marriage. And the majority stated that their religion plays no influence in deciding their future spouses, but their parents opposed the idea of selecting companions from other castes or religions.

According to the data, the youth are somewhat against arranged marriages and instead opt for love marriages. At the same time, the majority of respondents were unfamiliar with or had never used online dating applications or services. And, one of the primary reasons individuals are hesitant to marriage is financial stability. There were many other causes described in this study

.

Overall, today's youth are somewhat hesitant about marriage, but the findings do not indicate that they are wholly opposed to it. This chapter clearly describes the fundamental worries about marriage among young people, as well as all other significant aspects of marriage.

5.2 MAJOR FINDINGS

MARRIAGE IS IMPORTANT

The study found that young people strongly agree on the importance of marriage. While a small number of respondents said marriage was insignificant, the vast majority said it plays an important part in their lives. This finding was substantiated with qualitative data, which highlighted the value and significance of marriage in the respondents' personal lives. However, a minority of individuals expressed worries about marrying. These people expressed a desire for independence and reluctance to accept the responsibilities that are associated with marriage. They indicated that they were not ready to accept the various obligations and commitments that marriage involves.

TODAY'S YOUTH IS RELUCTANT TOWARDS MARRIAGE

The survey discovered a general reluctance among today's youth to marry. While most respondents recognised this broad tendency, they frequently distinguished their own personal perspectives from those of their peers. Despite the fact that the younger generation is generally reluctant to marriage, many people expressed an interest to marry. However, a significant proportion of respondents were unsure about the reluctance of the youth in general. Qualitative research suggested that various factors contribute to this hesitation, including socio-cultural issues such as domestic violence and dowry, the pursuit of education and employment, and the obligations that come with marriage. Furthermore, the emergence of alternative relationship models, such as cohabitation, has further altered attitudes about marriage, leading to decreasing interest.

MARRIAGE ISN'T OUTDATED.

According to the report, teenagers still do not view marriage to be outmoded or old-fashioned. Only a minority of respondents agreed that it is outmoded. Based on this observation, we may conclude that the institution is still accepted and valued by the majority of the youth. According to the qualitative data, respondents value marriage since it is a venue for socialisation, and

youth understand that marriage is necessary for the survival of the family. They are also aware of the critical role that families play in sustaining social stability.

HAVING CHILDREN IN THE FUTURE IS CRUCIAL.

The vast majority of respondents said that having children in the future was vital. Only a small fraction believes it is unimportant. Through this, we can conclude that the majority of respondents believe that having children is vital for future living in society and are not hesitant to do so. Meanwhile, a large proportion of respondents expressed a neutral stance, indicating that young people's attitudes about having children are altering. The qualitative data helped to fill the gap in respondents' neutral opinions. Some respondents stated that having children is difficult and increases their obligations. Despite the other comments, today's young. Even based on the other responses, today's youth are more hesitant about responsibilities than the concept of marriage.

PARENTS HAVE INFLUENCE

According to the replies provided by the young, parents have a significant influence on the decision to marry. Only a small percentage of respondents said they had no or little influence. Even from the qualitative statistics, it is clear that the youth value and accept their parents' decisions regarding their weddings. Some believe that every parent has the right to make significant decisions for their children, such as marriage. Meanwhile, a minority of people value individual choices and are unwilling to grant parents complete autonomy.

SOCIETY HAS A CRUCIAL ROLE

A large number of respondents stated that society had a significant influence over marriage practices. It also demonstrates that there is pressure within their social circle to marry at a specific age. The respondents reported feeling pressured when exposed to their social circle since society constantly pressures people to marry fast. It was discovered that the parents are also under significant pressure in this area.

SOCIETY AGAINST COHABITATION

According to the respondents' perspectives, society is extremely uncomfortable with cohabitation. As data is collected among youth, the concept of society from the standpoint of

youth is exposed. We can deduce from this that Kerala culture has not yet moved to the concept of cohabitation, and the majority of people are still resistant to new marriage norms.

RELIGION – NO INFLUENCE

According to the findings, religious beliefs and caste have little influence on how people choose relationships. At the same time, a minority group agrees that religion and caste play a role in determining their partners. In contrast, according to the qualitative data, respondents stated that religion and caste do not matter to them, but their parents do care about their future spouse's religion and caste. Finally, the youth prioritises love over religion or caste.

LOVE MARRIAGE AS IDEAL

A considerable majority of young people believe that love marriage is the best marriage practice, and some believe that planned marriage is also great. This suggests that young people are shifting their attitudes on marriage away from traditional norms. Love marriages are preferable because respondents believe it allows them to choose companions based on their preferences. Some of them believe no marriage is ideal.

ARRANGED MARRIAGE DECREASING POPULARITY

The data clearly shows that a large proportion of young people are opposed to arranged marriage. A small percentage of respondents continue to accept arranged marriages, however the statistics received from respondents show a significant shift in attitudes regarding arranged marriages. This means that the conventional practice of arranged marriage is losing appeal among young people. According to the qualitative data, arranged weddings involve concerns such as domestic abuse, dowry issues, and so on, and female respondents are particularly hesitant to participate in them. They are also aware of the benefits of arranged marriage, such as familial assistance, yet women continue to live in awful situations within households.

LARGE TRADITIONAL MARRIAGES ARE UNIMPORTANT.

A significant shift can be noted in that today's youth place less emphasis on large traditional marriages. Nonetheless, some of the youth believe it is important. It obviously implies that young people are less concerned with cultural expectations of traditional marriages, and instead are more individualistic and value personal choices. According to the qualitative data, the main

issue of the young people is the budget that is spent on such a large conventional wedding, which most of them perceive to be less significant.

DISCOMFORT TOWARDS COHABITATION

According to the report, even young people are opposed to or feel uncomfortable with the idea of cohabitation. Only one-third of respondents showed some comfort with the idea of cohabitation. It is apparent that adolescents have not yet adapted to the concept of cohabitation, and only a small fraction of young people accept it. According to the study's other findings, society has an important influence in influencing young people's attitudes towards cohabitation. According to the qualitative data, the majority of respondents are highly uncomfortable with the idea of cohabitation due to a lack of commitment and obligations. The youth are also aware of the advantages and disadvantages linked to it.

ONLINE DATING SERVICES

According to both qualitative and quantitative data, the majority of respondents were oblivious or lacked understanding of online dating apps, and the vast majority had never used one in their lives. According to the research, traditional techniques of locating partners are still widely used when picking partners. Among those who are aware of online dating services, many have a negative attitude towards it due to its risky nature and bad effects.

SAME-SEX MARRIAGES

Only a minority of respondents support same-sex marriage customs. A large proportion of young people are unable to accept same-sex marriages. This demonstrates that even the younger generation has yet to accept the reality of same-sex marriages, while just a small percentage of respondents expressed acceptance. According to the qualitative data, adolescents believe it is ok, but if it is encouraged, it may have an impact on future generations, and they do not consider it a marriage practice.

MARRIAGE BETWEEN SAME-AGED PARTNERS.

The results show that young people prefer companions who are the same age as them. A small percentage argues that this is not the case. This suggests that the traditional habit of age

difference between men and women, with the male being older than the female, is losing popularity among young people. It encourages equality and mutual respect among the spouses.

PREMARITAL ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP – NECESSARY

According to the findings, the majority of the young people in this study believe it is vital for them to have a romantic relationship before marrying. Only a small number of people think it irrelevant. This signifies a change away from the old social stigma that having love relationships before to marriage is wicked. Most young people now consider it normal, if not essential to their lives. It obviously suggests a restructuring of social reality in the context of Kerala society.

GENDER ROLES

The study's findings challenge the established socially constructed gender roles that continue to be practiced in society. The majority of the young people in this survey oppose traditional gender roles and demonstrate a progressive attitude towards gender equality. According to qualitative research, young people are willing to divide roles in their families after marriage. As a result, the current generation broadly accepts equality and is willing to share their responsibilities as partners.

REASONS BEHIND THE YOUTH'S UNWILLINGNESS TO MARRY

Lack of Financial independence: It is the primary reason that young people are afraid to marry. A huge proportion of young individuals stated that they are hesitant or postpone marriage owing to financial difficulties. Especially females are cautious to rely on their partners to meet their personal needs in life. So, both men and women view financial stability as one of the primary reasons for reluctance to marry or postponing it.

Responsibilities: Another key reason for young people to postpone marriage is the responsibilities that come with it. As society evolves, people, particularly young people, become more individualistic, and they are not prepared to accept the duties of marriage, which they find difficult. They reject the customary habit of marrying at a certain age and believe that one can live a life without marriage.

Fear of domestic violence: It is a major concern for today's young, as domestic violence is frequently reported in Kerala society. It is a major reason why youth, particularly females, are apprehensive to marry. They value personal freedom more than patriarchal statutes imposed by society.

Dowry deaths: are another topic that is frequently covered in the media. It causes fear in the youth, making them afraid to marry. Respondents reported greater anxiety about dowry difficulties in arranged marriages, which is consistent with the findings of the same study. It suggests a compelling need to change the societal construction of the idea of dowry.

Adverse life events in parents marital life: have a significant impact on youth and influence their decision to marry. Domestic violence, dowry troubles, and financial concerns all cause trauma in some children's lives, which greatly affects their future and leading them to decide not to marry.

5.3 SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings from the study, the following suggestions can be provided:

Since lack of financial independence is a major deterrent for young people considering marriage, there is a need to implement programs that promote financial literacy and independence among youth.

Young people are moving away from traditional gender roles, suggesting a growing preference for equality in marriage. To support this trend, marriage preparation programs, media campaigns, and family counseling should focus on promoting gender equality, shared responsibilities, and mutual respect in marriage. Encouraging equal partnership within marriage can help address concerns related to responsibilities and balance the burden across both partners.

Fear of domestic violence and dowry-related concerns are significant deterrents to marriage for young people, especially women. It is crucial to strengthen legal measures against domestic violence and dowry practices, ensuring effective enforcement and protection for victims. Simultaneously, awareness campaigns targeting both youth and families should promote healthier relationships and educate them on the legal consequences of domestic violence and

dowry demands. These campaigns should challenge societal norms and highlight the importance of respect and dignity within marriage.

With increasing acceptance of love marriages and growing interest in alternatives such as cohabitation, policymakers and society should consider being more inclusive of different relationship models. Although society largely remains resistant to new forms of marriage, education, and media can help shift perceptions by normalizing non-traditional relationships.

Young people today face a range of uncertainties about marriage, relationships, and career paths. Establishing comprehensive guidance services that address these concerns holistically can be beneficial. Career counseling combined with relationship advice can help youth balance their personal and professional lives more effectively, helping them feel more confident in their readiness for marriage.

Educational institutions and media can play a vital role in reshaping attitudes towards marriage by promoting models of healthy, respectful, and equitable marriages. Programs should focus on communication skills, conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, and mutual respect to help youth build strong, healthy relationships.

By implementing these suggestions, society can better address the concerns and reservations that young people have regarding marriage, while promoting healthier and more progressive attitudes towards relationships and family life.

5.4 CONCLUSION

A lot of societies around the world consider marriage an essential component in one's life; it is necessary for the procreation and existence of life on earth, and it is an important institution that gives birth to a family, which plays a huge role in the socialisation process. This study focused on studying the approaches to marriage among the current youth in Kerala society. From the entire study, it was understood that most of today's youth still consider marriage as important in their personal lives, and the study shows an emerging shift in the attitudes towards marriage among the youth. The youth started to accept the alternative ways of marriage, especially cohabitation. But from the findings, it was clear that the youngsters are mostly against the idea of cohabitation, as they consider it unauthorised or it involves a lack of commitment in relationships. From the respondents' point of view, the society was also found

to be opposed to the idea of same-sex marriages, and it implies that the society consisting of the youth is also not away from the socially constructed traditional norms and values that exist in the society. The prime reasons for the reluctance of today's youth are financial stability, dowry deaths, responsibilities, domestic violence, etc.

Overall, this study, “Approaches to Marriage Among Youth”, succeeded in figuring out the current attitudes among the youth towards marriage. As the replacement level of the population in Kerala is found to be in a declining state, this study was really a demanding one in the current scenario. Through analysing the responses of the youth, we can observe that most of the youngsters aren't expressing reluctance towards marriage, but there is an emerging condition that a considerable portion of them are against this concept for valid reasons such as financial stability, dowry deaths, domestic violence, etc. From the qualitative data, it was found that most of these issues were concerns raised by the female respondents in the study.

5.5 FUTURE SCOPE OF STUDY

The findings from the study on approaches to marriage among youth offer numerous avenues for a further inquiry. A more in-depth examination could look into the particular elements that influence today's youth's unwillingness to marry. For example, studies may look into the relationship between financial independence and delayed marriage, and see how much financial stability influences the decision to marry. Gender does play an essential role in this context, thus it would be clearer if the data was collected and analysed by gender. It can provide more specific information on how each gender perceives the concept of marriage. Furthermore, the study might look into how societal pressures and cultural expectations shape young people's attitudes about marriage. Understanding the precise socio-cultural variables that lead to the reluctance to marry allows discovering potential areas for intervention and support. Furthermore, the effect of adverse life experiences in parents' married lives on children's attitudes towards marriage could be a promising field of study. Investigating the psychological and emotional aspects that impact a young person's decision to marry in light of their parents' experiences could provide useful insights into intergenerational transmission of beliefs and behaviours. Finally, the study might look into the changing environment of marriage, such as the growing acceptability of same-sex marriages and the rising popularity of cohabitation as an alternative to traditional marriage. By researching these evolving tendencies, academics can acquire a better grasp of the shifting cultural and societal norms that influence today's youth's views and behaviours towards marriage.

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APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How much importance marriage has in your life?
 - i. Very Important
 - ii. Somewhat Important
 - iii. Neutral
 - iv. Somewhat unimportant
 - v. Not important at all

2. Today's generation is reluctant towards marriage. Do you agree with the statement?
 - i. Strongly disagree
 - ii. Disagree
 - iii. Neutral
 - iv. Agree
 - v. Strongly agree

3. To what extent do you agree with the statement "Marriage is an outdated institution"?
 - i. Strongly disagree
 - ii. Disagree
 - iii. Neutral
 - iv. Agree
 - v. Strongly agree

4. How important is it to you to have children in your future marriage?
 - i. Very Important
 - ii. Somewhat Important
 - iii. Neutral
 - iv. Somewhat unimportant
 - v. Not Important at all

5. What type of marriage was practised by your parents?

- i. Arranged marriage
- ii. Love marriage
- iii. Other:

6. How much influence do your parents have on your decision to get married?

- i. Huge Influence
- ii. Some influence
- iii. Little influence
- iv. No influence

7. Do you believe that there is a pressure to get married by a certain age in your social circle?

- i. Strongly disagree
- ii. Disagree
- iii. Neutral
- iv. Agree
- v. Strongly agree

8. How comfortable do you think society would be with the idea of living together before marriage?

- i. Very Comfortable
- ii. Somewhat Comfortable
- iii. Neutral
- iv. Somewhat Uncomfortable
- v. Very Uncomfortable

9. How important is financial independence for both partners before marriage?

- i. Very Important
- ii. Somewhat Important
- iii. Neutral
- iv. Somewhat Unimportant

v. Not Important at all

10. How comfortable are you with the idea of cohabitation (living together) before marriage?

i. Very comfortable

ii. Somewhat Comfortable

iii. Neutral

iv. Somewhat uncomfortable

v. Very uncomfortable

11. Today's youth consider marriage as a burden. Do you agree with the statement?

i. Strongly disagree

ii. Disagree

iii. Neutral

iv. Agree

v. Strongly agree

12. Do you think that today's youth are reluctant towards marriage because of the responsibilities associated with it?

i. Strongly disagree

ii. Disagree

iii. Neutral

iv. Agree

v. Strongly agree

13. How important is it for you to have a large traditional wedding ceremony?

i. Very Important

ii. Somewhat Important

iii. Neutral

iv. Somewhat unimportant

v. Not important at all

14. Do you think that the partners should follow the gender roles those are constructed by the society after marriage?

- i. Strongly disagree
- ii. Disagree
- iii. Neutral
- iv. Agree
- v. Strongly Agree

15. How important is it for your future spouse to be from the same caste/religion background as you?

- i. Very Important
- ii. Somewhat Important
- iii. Neutral
- iv. Somewhat unimportant
- v. Not important at all

16. How much influence do your religious beliefs have on your decision to get married?

- i. Huge Influence
- ii. Some Influence
- iii. Little Influence
- iv. No Influence

17. How much influence do you think your financial situation will have on your decision to get married?

- i. Huge Influence
- ii. Some Influence
- iii. Little Influence
- iv. No Influence

18. How much do you think your educational attainment will have on your decision to get married?

- i. Huge Influence
- ii. Some Influence
- iii. Little Influence
- iv. No influence

19. How important is it for you to find a romantic partner before marriage?

- i. Very Important
- ii. Somewhat Important
- iii. Neutral
- iv. Somewhat unimportant
- v. Not important at all

20. On an average scale of 1(never) to 5(always), how often do you use online dating apps/services?

- i. 1(Never)
- ii. 2
- iii. 3
- iv. 4
- v. 5(Always)

21. How likely are you to consider an arranged marriage?

- i. Very Likely
- ii. Somewhat likely
- iii. Neutral
- iv. Somewhat unlikely
- v. Very unlikely

22. How accepting are you of same sex marriage?

- i. Strongly accept
- ii. Somewhat accept
- iii. Neutral

- iv. Somewhat oppose
- v. Strongly oppose

23. Compared to previous generations, do you think that people today are getting married at a later age?

- i. Strongly disagree
- ii. Disagree
- iii. Neutral
- iv. Agree
- v. Strongly agree

24. Do you think that young people today are selecting partners with same age?

- i. Strongly disagree
- ii. Disagree
- iii. Neutral
- iv. Agree
- v. Strongly agree

25. Do you believe there are expectations from society to follow a certain timeline for relationships (e.g., getting engaged, getting married, having children, etc.) in your social circle?

- i. Strongly disagree
- ii. Disagree
- iii. Neutral
- iv. Agree
- v. Strongly agree

26. What do you consider as the ideal type of marriage?

- i. Arranged marriage
- ii. Love marriage
- iii. Living together/cohabitation
- iv. Other:

27. What do you think would be the reasons why young minds are reluctant towards the practice of marriage? (Please choose multiple options given below)

- i. Financial instability
- ii. Lack of life experiences
- iii. Fear of divorce
- iv. Consider as a burden
- v. Dowry deaths
- vi. Negative experiences from parents marital life
- vii. Fear of domestic violence
- viii. Others.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Today's generation is reluctant towards marriage. Do you agree with the statement?
2. Marriage is necessary for a fulfilling life. Do you agree with the statement?
3. How important is marriage in your life?
4. How important is it to you to have children in your future marriage?
5. How important is financial independence for both partners before marriage?
6. To what extent do you agree with the statement "Marriage is an outdated institution"?
7. How comfortable are you with the idea of cohabitation (living together) before marriage?
8. How comfortable do you think society would be with the idea of living together before marriage?
9. Today's youth consider marriage as a burden. Do you agree?
10. Do you think that today's youth are reluctant towards marriage because of the responsibilities associated with it?
11. How important is it for you to have a large traditional wedding ceremony?
12. Do you think that the partners should follow the gender roles those are constructed by the society after marriage?
13. How important is it for your future spouse to be from the same caste/religion background as you?
14. How much influence do your parents have on your decision to get married?
15. How much influence do your religious beliefs have on your decision to get married?
16. How much influence do you think your financial situation will have on your decision to get married?
17. How important is it for you to find a romantic partner before marriage?
18. How often do you use online dating apps/services?

19. How likely are you to consider an arranged marriage?
20. How accepting are you of same sex marriage?
21. Compared to previous generations, do you think that people today are getting married at a later age?
22. Do you think that young people today are selecting partners with same age?
23. Do you believe that there is a pressure to get married by a certain age in your social circle?
24. Do you believe there are expectations from society to follow a certain timeline for relationships (e.g., getting engaged, getting married, having children, etc.) in your social circle?
25. What do you consider as the ideal type of marriage?
26. What do you think would be the reasons why young minds are reluctant towards the practice of marriage?