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## A study on changing marriage trends and position of women in the Ludhiana district of Punjab

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### **Abstract**

The present study deals with the changing marriage trends and changing position of women in the Ludhiana District of Punjab. 320 respondents were studied through interview method. More than 50 per cent of the respondents had full choice in selecting their marriage partner. Majority of them consulted their family of orientation in order to resolve conflict with husband. A large number of the respondents favoured late marriage in order to become independent in life. The reason given by nearly 50 per cent of them for the women who remain unmarried in life was to remain burden free by being single. Most of them were not in favour of divorce and if divorced, the reason was not to bow in front of wrong things and wrong deeds of husband and in-laws family. About 70 per cent of the respondents preferred to work outside along with to perform all duties of housewife. Medium status in the society was opined for both working and housewives. All this shows that there had been various changes in marriage which have influenced the views and perception of girls in urban areas.

**Keywords:** Family of orientation, divorce, burden free

### **Introduction**

Marriage is a universal institution. It has survived all the ups and downs and has weathered all the changes of mankind's long existence. It is an institution that permits man and women to the family life. Marriages are sacrament as per our Hindu Scriptures for leading a good and peaceful life and in addition to this full-filling the duties towards society i.e. family and community (Kaur 1992) <sup>[3]</sup>.

The decline in the arranged marriages in India from the year 1970 to 2012 was analysed. The trends in the choice of the mate, the duration before the marriage i.e. the time period the spouse know each other, arrange marriages and inter caste marriages were the various factors considered. Moreover the increase in the selection of marriage partner by women was noticed in this time duration. Although such changes revealed the change occurring in the society but in spite of all such factors arranged marriages were the most prevalent ones in the society. Rather for choosing preferential mate for marriage women participated actively along with her parents (Allendor and Pandian 2016) <sup>[1]</sup>.

Age at marriage is an important component that affects the health of the women, her fertility and the infant and child mortality. Although there is rise in age at marriage but India has witnessed child marriages and even now in the under developed North Indian states there are cases of early marriage. Our Dharmasutras and Smritis reveal that child marriages were practiced and it was said that parents who do not arrange marriage of their daughters by the onset of puberty will go to hell (Bhagat 2016) <sup>[2]</sup>.

Divorce and separation which were practiced in earlier times are socially acceptable and are quite often sought. The married couple prefer less number of children. Few prefer to be childless. Sex matters are openly discussed. Newspapers advertisements are used for searching spouse not only for first marriage but even for remarriage.

Modernization has brought about changes in all spheres of society including the marriage institution. Education, political intervention and various legislative measures and general attitude towards marriage has changed considerably in recent years. The changes have taken place in the selection criteria of marriage partners, aim of marriage, style of celebration of marriage, continuance of marriage, nature of wife husband etc.

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Keeping this in view the study was planned with specific objective of highlighting the changes taking place in marriages and the position of women in society.

### Methodology

The present study was conducted in Ludhiana district of Punjab state as it is more developed from industrial as well agricultural point of view. A total sample of 320 respondents (Women) from urban area were taken. Sample was collected from various urban societies of Ludhiana city. Data were collected personally with the help of the structured and pre-tested interview schedule. The results in the present study have been calculated by applying various statistical tools.

### Results and Discussion

To know about the changes taking place in marriages and changing position of women, the respondents were asked about the extent of choice in selecting the marriage partner, basis of their reasons for early and late marriage, basis of reasons of being unmarried, opinion regarding divorce, opinion of changing role and status of women.

**Table 1:** Distribution of the respondents on the basis of their extent of choice in selecting the marriage partner

Extent of Choice	Total
Full	168 (52.50)
Partial	54 (16.88)
Not at all	98 (30.63)
Average Extent	1.22
S.D.	0.78

Figure in parentheses represent percentages to total.

In the olden times the responsibility of selection of preferential mate was performed by the family and kinsgroup. But with the changing time and due to impact of urbanization, westernization and education the responsibility of selection of mate is done by the marriage partner themselves many a times (Table 1). The data indicates that about two-fourth of the respondents had full choice in selection of their marriage partner whereas 16.88 per cent of them had some (Partial extent of) choice in the total sample. Although this kind of freedom of selection of mate is much more in urban areas in comparison to the rural counterparts this is more in urbans due to more freedom and independence given to the urban youngsters in comparison to the rural ones.

**Table 2:** Distribution of the respondents on the basis of the person consulted to resolve conflict with husband

Person	Total
Mother-in-law	29 (9.06)
Father-in-law	39 (12.18)
Sister-in-law	19 (5.93)
Family of orientation	118 (36.87)
Relatives	20 (6.25)
Friends	43 (13.43)
Family counselor	2 (0.62)
Children	52 (16.25)

Figure in parentheses represent percentages

Conflicts give rise to tension, worries and disturbance in life. To live happily and peacefully one should resolve his/her conflicts with the other person. Data in table 2 exhibits that person consulted by the respondent to resolve

conflict with her husband. About 37 per cent respondents consulted their family of orientation and help from children was taken by 16.25 per cent respondents to overcome conflict with their husband in the total sample. While advice from friends was taken by 13.43 per cent of the respondents and few respondents i.e. 0.62 per cent consulted the family counselor.

Whereas about 12.18 per cent respondents took help of their father-in-law and about 10 per cent respondents consulted their mother-in-law and a few respondent (i.e. 5.93 per cent) consulted their sister-in-law to resolve her conflict with her husband.

**Table 3:** Distribution of the respondents on the basis of their reasons for early and late marriage

Reasons	Total
<b>In favour of early marriage</b>	
Religious belief	10 (3.13)
Caste	6 (1.88)
Prestige issue	19 (5.94)
Social custom	31 (9.69)
Easy adjustment	26 (8.13)
<b>In favour of late marriage</b>	
To become independent	148 (46.25)
To acquire better education	144 (45.00)
Less procreation	54 (16.88)

Figures in the parentheses represent percentages to total

Everyone who gets married whether early or late have their own specified reasons. Some had to bow in front of their social economic factors while others give more preference to career and education. Table 3 highlights that respondents who were in favour of early marriage gave the reason social custom and easy adjustment as the factors due to which female should marry early. About 6 per cent respondents consider prestige issue and about 3.13 per cent feel religious belief as the reasons for early marriage.

On the other hand 45 per cent of the respondents stressed better education and nearly 47 per cent respondents favoured late marriage so as to become independent before marriage. With changing times late marriage are preferred so that youngsters could become independents attain good education and need of less procreation.

**Table 4:** Distribution of the respondents on the basis of reasons of being unmarried

Reasons	Total
Singleness is better	161 (50.31)
Disinclination to assume the responsibility	105 (32.81)
Fear of transferring genetic disorder	30 (9.37)
Disappointment in love affair	96 (30.00)

Figures in the parentheses represent percentages to total

Different opinions are expressed for being married / unmarried. It is evident from the table 4 that respondents visualized that some people liked to be single (i.e. 50.31 per cent) so that there is no burden upon them i.e. they consider that singleness is better. While one third of the respondents in the total sample opined that disinclination to assume the responsibility of marriage was the reason for remaining unmarried. About 30 per cent considered disappointment in love affair as their reason to remain single in life. Whereas the fear of transferring genetic disorder was considered by 9.37 per cent of the respondents.

**Table 5:** Distribution of the respondents on the basis of their opinion regarding divorce

Particulars	Total
<b>In favour of divorce</b>	
Yes	60 (18.75)
No	260 (81.25)
<b>Reasons for divorce</b>	
Separation is better than pain	17 (28.33)
One should not bow in front of wrong things	29 (48.33)
For better future of the children	14 (23.33)

Figures in the parentheses represent percentages to total

Divorce indicates and to the marriageable life of a person. In early times this word 'Divorce' was considered end of life. But now with the changing times the attitude of people has changed and this phenomena has taken a new shape. Table 5 depicts that majority of the population i.e. 81.25 per cent were not in favour of divorce in the total sample. But even then 18.75 per cent respondents preferred divorce. They considered that separation is better than bearing pain. Out of 18.75 per cent respondents who favoured divorce about 49 per cent of them opined that they should not bow in front of wrong deeds and demands of their husband. While 23.33 per cent of the respondents in the total sample felt that for better future of their children one should divorce their husband in case of unhappy married life and nearly 29 per cent respondent visualized that through divorce, separation is better than bearing pain.

**Table 6:** Distribution of the respondents on the basis of opinion of changing role and status of women

Particulars	Total
<b>Opinion</b>	
To work outside, not to perform the duties of housewife	2 (0.63)
Not to work outside	96 (30.00)
To work outside along with to perform all duties of housewife	222 (69.38)
<b>Status</b>	
<b>Working</b>	
High	78 (24.38)
Medium	110 (34.38)
Low	52 (16.25)
<b>Housewife</b>	
High	42 (13.13)
Medium	150 (46.88)
Low	48 (15.00)

Figures in the parentheses represent percentages to total

With the changing scenario of the urban families women have to work outside home and along with that they had to do household chores as well. According to table 6 majority of the women i.e. nearly 70 per cent opined that women should work outside along with to performing all duties of the household. Whereas 30 per cent of the respondents expressed the view that women should not work outside. While 0.63 percent respondents expressed the views that women should not work outside.

The same table 6 indicates that about 34.38 per cent of the respondents viewed that working women have medium level of respect and status in society but 24.38 per cent respondents said that working women had high status as compared to 16.25 per cent respondents who opined that working women had low status in society. While as per the

respondents 46.88 per cent said that housewives have medium status in society.

### Conclusion

Change is the law of nature. Nothing is static in the world. Changing are taking place in the institution of marriage. Increase in divorce/separation cases is disturbing the whole social fabric. There is an increase in age at marriage as the new generation is becoming career conscious. There is an increase in the individualistic attitude and the concept of family is changing. Women are much aware about their rights and at same time feels that it is though marriage is necessary but their should not be obligation to marry at any fixed age. They now prefer to work outside and support their husbands so as to have better future of their families.

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