

# LATE MARRIAGE AMONG MUSLIMS OF ANANTNAG DISTRICT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY

Hilal Ahmad Bhat<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Abdul Rashid Khan<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>PhD Scholar Department of Sociology Barkatullah University Bhopal (India)

<sup>2</sup> Lecturer sociology govt Degree College meander J&K (India)

## ABSTRACT

*The trend of late marriage is growing year after year in Kashmir. Individual's social advancement, particularly their higher education attainment and employment status; contribute to late marriage among individuals. Meanwhile, cultural factors, such as traditional roles, arranged marriage, and co residence with older parents, influence the timing of marriage. It is now an established fact that during the last twenty to thirty years, society of Kashmir has increasingly been witnessing the trend of late marriages. This in no way is going to help in building a strong, vibrant social structure and in maintaining the cultural identity within the contemporary challenges of social anarchy being seen in the developed societies. Delaying in any other aspect of socio-economic life can be compensated sooner or later but delaying the marriage beyond its rational age leads to repercussions. There are multiple reasons and factors which have become the cause for ignoring the proper age of marriage. In the present write up, the author would summarize the phenomena of late marriages in Kashmir by trying to explore some of the prime causes responsible for it and its subsequent consequences. The study is based on both primary and secondary data.*

**Keywords:** *late marriage, causes, consequences.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a socially or ritually recognized union or legal contract between spouses that establishes a base for the emergence of family as a vital social institution which in turn becomes the foundation for stable society. Though the practices and rituals associated with it do vary in the varied cultures of the world but there are, of course, certain fundamental principles of marriage which are universally supposed to be followed to make it functional for society in its true sense. Among them is the appropriate age of entering this significant institution which was either too early in the earlier days or is too late in the present era. Over the last decades, marriage and the family have undergone dramatic transformations, both in industrialized and less developed countries. Within recent decades, new patterns have emerged, such as blended families or while divorce rates have increased. During this period, fertility has gone down while voluntary childlessness became more frequent modifying the

distribution of family types among economic and social groups. This transformation has been accompanied by deep value changes and modifications of women's social status and roles in society.

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected through interview schedule on the basis of random sampling. The researcher also collected the information about the socio economic background of the respondent's with the use of techniques and other inputs. The data collected from the various sources was analysed by the simple relevant statically techniques.

The secondary data was also collected from few prominent persons, belonging to Kashmiri culture and welfare organizations, in order to know their views and compare or substantiate them with the findings under the study. Also the data was collected from Census and Government reports, reports by NGO's research and research cells as the background material to develop the context for the study.

## **III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

**Baishali Goswami, 2012.** This paper attempts to examine the scenario of delayed marriage in India using data from different rounds of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS). Keeping in view the limitations of census data and age at marriage as an indicator of timing of marriage, the paper also attempts to explore the impact of select predictors on the likelihood of getting married for females in the age groups 20-24 years and 25-29 years. The findings indicate that the reasons underlying delayed marriage with respect to the 20-24 years age group and the 25-29 years age group differ.

**Steven P. Martin, 2002;** this paper contains two parts. In the first part, it contains the implications of marriage and birth timing for women, couples and children, based on published findings in the Sociological, Psychological, Economic, and Medical literatures. In the second, it contains the descriptive studies on the recent divergence in marriage and first birth timing and supplements them with the descriptive analyses.

Is marrying and having births at a later age a "good" thing for the families that do it, or is it a potentially harmful side effect of other sweeping changes in the life course, such as young women's increasing career orientation and young men's declining earning power.

**Prof. Bashir Ahmad Dabla, 2009,** The study undertaken in 2009 revealed that the late marriage phenomenon was increasing due to poverty, conflict, illiteracy, modernization impact, health abnormality, customs and traditions, caste consideration, dowry in different shapes, waiting for higher education and jobs, and the lengthy search for a proper match. Five years down the line, nothing has changed. "Our customs are too twisted, even if a groom doesn't demand dowry the small requirements before marriage like minimum gold, copperware, sweet boxes, frequent visits to in-laws and wazwans, eidi, winter wishes, special day wishes, Eid e Qurban wishes and other things take a toll on the families," "And as these customs multiply, the chances of annoying the potential of future or present in-laws are higher with disastrous consequences.

**Nusrat Ara; Kashmir's** are marrying later – but not by choice. Standards for spouses and weddings are increasing with education, yet the time and cost to meet them conflict with societal pressure to marry young. In the last 30 to 40 years, the average marrying age rose from 24 to 32 for men and from 21 to 28 for women. Unmarried Kashmir's face a strong stigma in society. "Both the girls and boys families want a wedding with

pomp and show, a grand feast, as well as a large dowry. For this they need money. So they start saving money, it takes time.”

#### **IV. SUMMARY**

1. Many people like to begin their careers, travel, and do other things that they wish to do prior to settling down, getting married, and having children. Other people simply wait for the right person to come along. A long dating relationship or engagement will allow the couple to continue to begin to know each other prior to tying the knot, allowing each person ample time to decide if a marriage is right for the couple.
2. The person spent time preparing for a profession that requires many years of education, training, and certification: and chose not to marry before finishing they felt ready when they were established.
3. The person didn't meet the right person until later in life.
4. The Person had other family obligations that curtailed their social life; for example caring for a disabled or chronically ill relative.
5. The person preferred not to commit to marriage when they were younger; perhaps they focused on work, or preferred short term relationships, or moved/travelled often. Then they felt ready to marry.

Apart from the above reasons, we observe a dangerous and destructive trend among some sections of well adjusted youth who are deliberately skipping or unnecessary delaying their marriages arguing that they want to enjoy the life for longer period without shouldering the responsibilities of their marriage and family. This is absolutely a shocking trend and can be termed as “social extremism”. They have misunderstood the concept of life and represent the practical translation of misleading persian quote attributed to the Mughal kings -‘Babar ba aesh koosh ki aalam dubara neest’ (enjoy Babar, the life shall not come again). This is actually seen in some western and American countries, where the trend has already occupied its space in their societies which surely results in death of family.

#### **V. CONSEQUENCES OF LATE MARRIAGE:**

In this generation, late marriage is no longer a rare issue. Due to lots of reasons such as high education of women or the economic pressure, more and more people tend to have late marriage. Although late marriage is a personal decision, it brings some negative effects

Late marriage brings negative effects. This causes people hardest to coordinate the living style and habit with each other. Also, this let parents have bad communication with their children and delay their stages of life. So, it is better not to have late marriage to avoid these negative effects.

1. The worst effect is the generation gap because this affects the development of the children.
2. Late marriage is not good for the society and the family. They may have generation gap with their children. Besides, that when the parents nearly to retire but their children still need to go to school. They still need to spend money on the children with income.
3. Late marriage is a big problem despite of the high risk of children suffering Down syndrome. The crux of generation gap is lack of communication. Even though in a small age range family, the generation gap will still happen when there is not communication.

Apart from the above, late marriages become the main cause for “waywardness” in society and inevitably attack its moral fabric. When marriages are delayed in the young age where one swims with wheels and walks with air, and rides with the wind and sleep in the clouds. This is the age of real stress and storm. That is why in Islam marriage is considered half-faith (eemaan) which prevents the believers from the immodesty and immorality. The multiple reasons and impacts of this social issue need to be identified and disseminated in society. The academics and members of civil society with the active cooperation of media do have an important role to deliver on this front as they have been doing in relation to the evil child marriages.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

Kashmir is on brink of social precipice as the trend of late marriages in Kashmir for the past 10- 20 years or so is taking a heavy toll on the very social fabric in Kashmir. Acute poverty, unemployment, dowry, modern education and the about two decades of conflict are some of the major reasons for late marriages in Kashmir. The trend has reached catastrophic heights during the past few decades and is somehow a result of broken social fibre and ever-widening gap between the genders. It is also a result of the chaos that has crept in Kashmiri society due to unrest of past few decades. A recent study conducted by Kashmir University reveals that the tendency has had devastating costs like psychiatric problems, suicides, drug addiction, pre and extra marital affairs, sex scandals and a spiral in divorces. The study further reveals that the decrease in population at family level, mental depression, increase in suicide rate, encouragement to immoral activities and pre-marital sex are some of the consequences of late marriages. The actual age of marriage in Kashmir has risen to 31 years in male and 27 in female category respectively. The desirable age of marriage in Kashmir used to be 23 years in male and 20 years in female category before onset of militancy in 1989. The socio-economic and politico-educational developments in Kashmir had drastic changing impact on the practices, rituals, values and norms of marriage especially related directly to late marriage. According to conservative estimates, there are thousands of boys and girls in Anantnag alone who have either crossed or are about to cross the marriageable age. As unemployment is on the rise in Kashmir, most of the helpless souls are dependent on their parents and the very realisation of being a burden on their families is preventing them from marrying and shouldering additional responsibilities. The trend of late marriages in Kashmir for is also taking a heavy toll on the children of these couples, including genetic disorders like the Down’s syndrome. A recent study conducted by Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) revealed different genetic disorders were found among the Kashmiri population possibly due to late marriages with maternal age of the patients higher. Down’s syndrome seems to be occurring at a higher frequency in the progeny of those persons who marry late. Kashmir being predominantly Muslim society, it is the responsibility of religious scholars to make the masses aware, particularly the parents, and present the evil consequences of unending cycle of late marriages. The study revealed that due to unemployment 83% youth were not able to marry at a proper age. 62% percent respondents revealed that due to ill traditions the marriage becomes very crucial. 72% revealed that due to higher education a person is not able to marry at a proper age. 57% respondents due to lack of interest of their parents they were not able to marry at a suitable age.

## **VII. SUGGESTIONS**

- Media should highlight the ill effects of late marriage, so that that people may get aware about the ill effects of late marriage.
- Parents should encourage their children to marry at a proper age.
- Government should make some financial assistance to poor and unemployed youth at the time of marriage.

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