

Changing Marriage Customs Among Brahmins: A Sociological Viewpoint

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Abstract: This research examines the evolving marriage customs within the Brahmin communities situated in Birendranagar Municipality 8, Khajura Tol, Surkhet, Nepal. The main objective of this research is to find out the changing marriage custom among the Brahmin people in the present context and analyze the transformative shifts occurring in marriage traditions, addressing key research inquiries pertaining to changing practices, societal ramifications, levels of satisfaction, and disparities across different generations. To achieve this, a methodologically comprehensive approach is employed, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research methods in this study. The research design encompasses a field survey, enabling the collection of primary data, supplemented by an analysis of secondary data to ensure a thorough investigation. The participant selection process executed through the application of purposive sampling, ensuring representation that aligns with the study's objectives. The findings bring to light notable trends, including a discernible trend towards heightened liberalization, a decline in the practice of dowry, the emergence of novel marriage forms, and a palpable inclination to eliminate the conventional ritual of kanyadaan in pursuit of gender equality. 20 respondents have been chosen in this study. Among them 14 respondents are selected female and 6 respondents are selected male. The synthesis of quantitative data and qualitative insights provides a nuanced understanding of the intricate dynamics underlying these shifts in marriage patterns in study areas. As a contribution to the academic discourse, this study not only furthers our understanding of changing marriage customs but also offers valuable insights into their broader societal implications, thereby enriching the existing body of knowledge in this field.

Keywords: Society, Perceptions, Satisfaction, Changing, Marriage, Customs, Community

1. Introduction

Marriage is a social institution that establishes a legal and authorized union between a man and a woman. It encompasses a set of rules and responsibilities that govern their relationship. Marriage is prevalent in societies worldwide and serves as a framework for regulating sexual relations and defining the roles of husbands and wives.

According to Pandey, marriage is a significant event that garners considerable attention, accompanied by various ceremonies. To comprehend the evolution of marriage rituals, it is essential to understand their origins and the circumstances surrounding them. The term "marriage" refers to a union between a man and a woman that extends beyond procreation and continues until the offspring become self-sufficient. It is clear that mere sexual instinct could not have

established a lasting bond between men and women. Additionally, the aboriginal man did not possess a rudimentary understanding of the ideal love that presently forms the strongest human connection between couples.

Marriage is a universal practice observed in various forms across different societies worldwide. In a typical scenario, an individual is not considered separate from the society, emphasizing the interdependence between individuals and the community. Numerous religions provide detailed teachings on marriage, while Brahmins, in particular, follow endogamous practices. Within Brahmin communities, sub-castes strictly limit marriage arrangements to occur solely within their respective clans or groups.

Mostly Brahmin follow the Kanyadan and sometimes Swayamber marriage practices. According to Kanyadan practices, a man receives a woman in the form of a gift at the wedding time. Marriage ceremonies among the Brahmin are

colorful and attractive. They last for several days with feasts and fun. There are several traditional phases of customs and rituals to be followed before Kanyadaan. [11]

Marriage among Brahman and Chhetris is a faithful rule, yet cheating is very frequently found. [3] Historically, men exhibited a sense of pride in having multiple wives. Among the middle-class landowners, it was not uncommon for individuals to maintain five or six wives simultaneously. Meanwhile, the affluent and influential Ranas often had numerous wives and concubines, sometimes reaching several dozen. In such cases, adherence to caste endogamy rules was not always strictly followed. Polygamous Brahman or Chhetri men would take wives from various ethnic communities such as Gurung, Magar, Tamang, Sherpa, Newar, and others. However, they did not form marital alliances with occupational castes.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Hindu literature, due to its ancient origins, retains remnants of promiscuity that existed in prehistoric times. In Southeast Asia, traditional marriages often follow a phased approach, wherein a young couple initially resides with the bride's parents before establishing their own household. Nepal, a small mountainous country situated between China and India, is a diverse blend of cultures, religions, languages, and traditions. With a population comprising various tribes and ethnic groups, there is no singular wedding style or practice that prevails.

In contemporary society, being unmarried does not carry negative implications, but the responsibility of marriage is emphasized for the girl's father due to concerns about the girl's sexual morality and the associated dowry system. However, Brahman and Chhetri families of higher social standing and education deviate from traditional marriage norms, which are now more prevalent among the peasant class. [3]

In the 21st century, the Brahmin communities have witnessed a shift in their approach to marriage, deviating from traditional rituals and customs. Today's couples prioritize personal desires and individual freedom over conforming to societal expectations. Women, in particular, refuse to live under dominance and are empowered to work and support their families. Unlike in the past, couples now have the legal option to live separately or pursue divorce if they are dissatisfied in their marriage. The prevailing types of marriages are love marriages and arranged marriages, and polygamy is no longer accepted. This signifies a changing landscape where individuals fight for their rights and seek happiness in their unions.

In contemporary times, the traditional practice of Kanyadaan, where daughters were given away in marriage, has diminished in significance. While men historically had the freedom to marry multiple women, women who underwent Kanyadaan were restricted from remarrying, even in the case of divorce or widowhood. They were expected to endure a life of singlehood, often facing societal disrespect. However, societal attitudes have gradually changed, allowing

married women to remarry and not remain widows for life. Despite this progress, societal satire and criticism still hinder their ability to pursue fulfilling lives in new marriages.

The perception of marriage as the sole means of sexual satisfaction for both genders is evolving. In contemporary society, attitudes towards sex have shifted, with some individuals engaging in sexual relationships based on their personal preferences and age expectations prior to marriage. In the present scenario the marriage customs have been changed in the Brahmin community because of the different factors of society. So, this study focuses on the changing marriage customs which occur in Brahman Society. Here, the researcher delves into the intricacies of the following research questions.

- 1) What are the factors and societal changes that have contributed to the shift in marriage customs within the Brahmin community in the 21st century?
- 2) How does the evolving perception of marriage and the diminishing significance of traditional practices, such as Kanyadaan, impact the empowerment and social status of women in the Brahmin community?
- 3) What are the implications of the changing marriage customs in the Brahmin community on the traditional gender roles, personal desires, and individual freedoms of individuals within the community?

1.2. Objectives

The objective of this research is to find out the changing marriage custom among the Brahmin people in the present context.

2. Literature Review

The sociology of family, a new branch of sociology, examines the evolving social institutions such as family, marriage, and kinship in different societies. It focuses on issues like conjugal disorders, changing traditions, separation/divorce, and individuals choosing to stay single. Marriage is widely accepted and supported in society, providing support, entertainment, and satisfaction to couples. However, in the modern context, families sometimes experience breakdowns. [1]

Girls were married at an advanced age in the Vedic period. The precise age is not stated, but from the Avesta, we learn that maidens were usually wedded at the age of 15 or 16 in ancient Persia. The same was certainly the case in the Vedic period. The very term for marriage, carrying away of the bride presupposed a post-puberty marriage, for it shows that immediately after her mirage, the bride went to her husband's house to live as his wife. [2]

Karki (2014). The giving and taking of dowry as a wedding ritual is said to have become a cultural practice around the mid-nineteenth century. It has been said that from the time a daughter is born, parents are concerned with the problem of providing a dowry and that the dowry has become the most important problem. Families that cannot afford to

provide substantial dowries are said to be forcing daughters to marry elderly men, married men, or illiterate young men to reduce dowry payments.

Prabhu (2000) stated that in dealing with the Hindu Bivaha, we should use the expression “form of marriage” conveniently to denote the method of consecrating a marriage union. Traditionally various types of marriage were practiced in Nepal like Brahma marriage, Prajapatya, Arsha, Daiva, Asur, Gandharva, Rakshas, and Pishacha marriage. The eight forms of marriage that were enumerated are:

1. Brahma: A form of marriage where the father bestows his daughter, adorned with ornaments, to a knowledgeable and morally upright man well-versed in the Vedas, invited by the bride's father himself.
2. Daiva: A form of marriage similar to Brahma, but the daughter is gifted to a priest who performs a sacrificial ritual with proper officiation.
3. Arsha: Father gifts daughter to groom after receiving cows or bulls, adhering to righteousness (dharma) without any notion of selling the child.
4. Prajapatya: A form of marriage where the father offers his daughter as a gift by reciting blessings (mantras) and showing respect to the bridegroom.
5. Asura: A form of marriage where the bridegroom pays money to the father or relative of the bride, implying a transaction resembling the purchase of the bride.
6. Gandharva: A form of marriage where the union is solely based on mutual love and the consent of the bride and bridegroom.
7. Rakshasa: The act of forcefully seizing or kidnapping a girl from her home, involving the bride's capture against her will.
8. Paisacha: A form of marriage where a man seduces a girl who is sleeping, intoxicated, or mentally disturbed through mysterious means.

Arranged marriages are typical still in some places in rural Nepal with couples only meeting each other on the day of their wedding. However, in most places, there is a slightly modern twist on this tradition as both families set a date before the wedding for prospective brides and grooms to meet and talk. Weddings take place in the cities, especially in Kathmandu, including more love matches though arranged marriages are still in supreme power in the country. [8]

Dr Mishra (1983) stated that one of the important wedding rites is the Bagdan, a Ganesh pooja. The bride's father keeps a coconut, a betel nut and areca nut, sacred thread, and some kernels in a Kalash or pot. He holds the Kalash above his head and declares he is giving his daughter away to the son of whoever the groom's father is. He then hands the Kalash over to his future son-in-law as a spiritual and metaphorical gift for his daughter.

During the Kanyadaan ceremony, the bride is highly regarded and symbolizes great blessings for her parents. The bride and groom sit on a bed provided by the bride's parents, with their legs immersed in a copper or silver vessel. The parents and close relatives of the bride wash the feet of the couple using a small bowl or silver spoon, presenting it as a

gift. Although foot-washing is not commonly practiced today, the ritual is accompanied by the recitation of Vedic scriptures by the bride's family's Brahman priest [3].

3. Literature Review on Changing Marriage Customs

Intercaste marriage also plays a major role in challenging mainstream ideas about marriage. Indeed, to break the caste system it is incumbent that there should be inter-caste and casteless marriages. Intercaste marriage which was not allowed in a family is getting popular in this present context. [12]

The result showed that the proportion of marriages with delayed cohabitation is declining for both males and females, while the age at marriage celebration and cohabitation is increasing for females. Although marriages are delayed, cohabitation is celebrated earlier. The result also suggested that one of the most important mechanisms for the rising age of marriage for males and females is the diffusion of education. [12]

Dowry is the money, goods, or estate that the bride brings to the groom's home in her marriage. It was designed to provide newlyweds security and basic needs but its meaning has changed. Dowry can now be defined as a forced financial and material arrangement to be given by the parents of the bride to the parents of the groom as an essential condition of marriage.

Early widowhood with little possibility of remarriage, particularly in the Indo-Aryan culture, is another curse upon women. More than 1.6 per cent of the female population i.e. 7,000 women were already widowed by 29 years of age in 1991. The risk of widowhood tends to increase with age. Only a small proportion of women are divorced or separated in Nepal. However, this rate has shown an increasing trend, Divorce rates also increase with age. [1]

In most of the girls' cases rather than their parents, their relatives and neighbors are worried about their marriage and pressurize their family members. Relatives and neighbors are more worried than the concerned person about their marriage and the groom. So, this should be changed and parents should focus on making their daughter educated, employed and independent instead of searching for a job holder son-in-law so that they can live their life fully without any limitations that are set by their in-laws and husband. [13]

Marriage registration act, 2028, (2018) Marriage concludes: Except otherwise prohibited to get marriage pursuant to prevailing law, the following male and female may conclude marriage pursuant to this act, In case any of male or female doesn't have husband or wife, one of the male or female has not gone mad, and both male and female have completed the age of twenty.

4. Methodology

A quantitative, as well as qualitative research method, has been used in this study. The primary data related to changing

marriage custom among Brahmin peoples. The survey was done among 20 respondents of study that have been data collected using participant field observation and semi-structured interviews with different generations of people who were available in the family as a sample to know the customs they followed during their marriage. Also, the study was organized with some unmarried people as a sample and find out what they think of marriage and its changing pattern. A general field survey was conducted among 20 respondent which migrated from different geographical locations. The secondary data have been collected through archival document such as book, journal, articles and online document.

5. Result

This study was based upon the data generated from an interview and field survey carried out among the married and unmarried males and females of the Brahmin communities. The survey was done among 20 respondents based on the pre-designed set of questions. The main motive of the questionnaire and interview was to gather information about the perspective of people toward marriage and the change which took place from the ancient period to now. Most of the people showed a positive response towards the change in marriage rituals.

Table 1. Sex Distribution of the Respondents.

S. N.	Sex	Number of Respondents	Percentage of the Respondents (%)	Remarks
1	Female	14	70	
2	Male	6	30	
3	Total	20	100	

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The survey included respondents, with 70% of the participants being females and 30% being males. They cooperatively shared their perspectives. The findings revealed that females perceive marriage as a loving partnership where two individuals choose to spend their lives happily together. They view it as a socially, religiously, and legally accepted ritual that enables cohabitation and reproduction. Participants emphasized the significance of marriage in life, considering it an essential factor and a spiritual bond. They recognized that marriage abides by societal rules and represents society's approval for living together. Overall, marriage is seen as a strong bond, a commitment, and a dedication that establishes a family life.

Table 2. Respondents of marital status.

S. N.	Respondents of Marital Status	Percentage of the Respondents (%)	Remarks
1	Married	10	
2	Unmarried	10	
3	Total	20	

Source: Field Survey 2023

The survey included both married and unmarried individuals, and it revealed that while most females

supported certain changes, they were still inclined to maintain cultural traditions such as bowing to their husband's feet and taking responsibility for their husband's tasks. The majority of respondents emphasized the importance of marriage as a means to share life's challenges. However, a few participants expressed negative views, considering relationships as self-centered and solely focused on fulfilling personal desires.

5.1. Changing Patterns of Marriage in Brahmins People

Marriage patterns in Nepal are undergoing significant changes, encompassing Brahmins as well. Brahmins can be divided into two categories: orthodox and liberal families, based on their acceptance of marriage rules. Orthodox Brahmins, despite their high level of education, do not approve of inter-caste marriages. They adhere to the rules prescribed by Manusmriti and the Legal Code of 1854 enacted by Jung Bahadur Rana, which emphasize clan exogamy and caste endogamy. On the other hand, liberal Brahmin families do not restrict or discourage their children from marrying based on their personal preferences.

Brahmins, particularly the Tagadhari, who have been followers of the Vedic religion since ancient times, have traditionally practiced Vedic rituals. The Vedic religion places importance on four types of marriage: Brahma, Daiba, Arsha, and Prajapatya. These marriages involve performing Vedic rituals such as prayers and offerings to various deities, seeking their blessings. Key rituals, including kanyadana (giving away the bride), saptapadi (seven vows), and lajahom (offering of puffed rice), are conducted in front of a sacred fire, as fire is considered the supreme deity. Thus, a marriage is deemed incomplete without the presence of a consecrated fire, and these rituals symbolize an unbreakable bond.

Marriage, a Brahmin woman becomes a part of her husband's gotra (clan) and there is no ritual in Aryan society to bring her back to her father's gotra. Furthermore, societal emphasis is placed on parental agreement, reflecting respect and responsibility towards one's parents. Additionally, Brahmins always remain mindful of their caste and gotra, considering them as important aspects of their identity.

However, the younger generations of today are increasingly independent and often unresponsive to their family's expectations. They perceive the traditional marriage rituals as lacking significance and possess a short-sighted perspective. They believe that gotra (clan) and caste hold no meaning when deeply in love with someone. Many engage in cohabitation and establish relationships before formal marriage, a practice prevalent in Mongoloid societies. Ethnic groups are now adopting Brahmin culture and customs, aspiring for a cultured society, while Brahmins, in turn, emulate Mongoloid culture. The primary catalyst behind this shift is the younger generation of Brahmins seeking freedom and rejecting the rigid boundaries of purity and pollution.

The cohabitation trend poses significant challenges for women and society as a whole. Initially, couples may live together as siblings and eventually transition into an unofficial husband-wife relationship without formal marriage.

When a woman becomes pregnant, the male partner often abandons her, leaving her solely responsible for the consequences. Instead of finding happiness in their cohabitation, these relationships create hardships for women.

In the present context, traditional folk songs or "Lok Dohori" are being replaced with different Hindi item songs like "Munni Badnam Hui" or "Sheila Ki Jawani," as well as other English songs. During marriage ceremonies, the customary four-hour rituals accompanied by four pandits have given way to a changing trend where the rituals are condensed into a shorter duration with a single pandit. Nowadays, people perform four rounds of the sacred fire instead of the traditional seven rounds.

5.2. Changes That Are Found in the Marriage Pattern of Brahmins

With reference to interviews conducted, numerous changes in marriage patterns in the present context have been highlighted. In most cases, families no longer play a significant role in the selection of their children's partners. There is a lack of interest in adhering to lengthy marriage rituals, despite each event holding its own significance. Court marriages have gained popularity, wherein the marriage certificate does not incorporate the girl's gotra (clan), symbolizing a physical but not ritualistic union. Although couples engage in rituals during the marriage ceremony, they often display carelessness in their practical lives.

People now prioritize feasts, drinks, and parties over customs and traditions. The trend of blending Nepalese and Indian wedding cultures is on the rise, with pre-wedding ceremonies such as Mehendi, Haldi, and sangeet taking place. The mother of the groom no longer receives the traditional Janti (ceremonial procession) when her son brings the bride home after completing the marriage rituals. Nowadays, mothers themselves participate in Swoyambar (bride choosing) and Janti. There is a growing concern about dowry and acquiring assets from the bride's family. The practice of a bride wearing the traditional thulo tilhari (ornament) around her neck for sixteen days, until the completion of the sohradine sahit (post-wedding rituals) and her return from her father's home, is no longer followed. Additionally, it is observed that some girls from the bride's side consume alcohol, which is considered impure in the Brahmin community.

In the Hindu system, if marriages are believed to be made in heaven, it stems from the notion that celestial bodies influence major life events through stars, planets, and moons. Strong devotion to astrology and ritual aspects of the Vedas, Holy Scriptures, reinforces this belief system. A Pandit (priest) determines an auspicious date or Subha Sahit, taking into account the influences of celestial bodies on the bride and groom based on their birth dates and times. Fixing the date concludes a lengthy and intricate process that involves activities like matching kundalis (birth charts) and comparing ancestral lineages (gotras) of the couple. Marriages within the same gotra, spanning up to five or six generations, are considered impure and unhealthy.

In the 21st century, Brahmins no longer adhere to every ritual and tradition of marriage as their ancestors did. Marriage is viewed as a lifelong relationship, where partners support each other through joy and sorrow. However, today's couples are less willing to compromise their desires, and women are no longer willing to live their lives under dominance. Previously, married women were confined to household duties within the confines of their homes, but now they are free to work and earn independently, showcasing their capabilities and leading their families.

The marriage ceremony commences with Swoyamvara, meaning "Choosing the Groom by the Bride." In the past, the bride had the right to select a groom from among many suitors, rather than solely accepting her parents' choice, which is more common today. Various rituals are performed at the mandap, with the priests conducting worship (puja). The couple takes their wedding vows as directed, while a white cloth called "lagangantho" is tied around them before they circumambulate the holy fire seven times. Fire is considered a witness to the sacred matrimony, purifying their union and protecting them in the future. By circling the fire seven times, the couple pays homage to the seven great sages, who, in mythology, are believed to be the progenitors of human beings on earth. However, in the present time, most couples only circle the holy fire three times.

5.3. Society's Impact and Future Desires for Marriage Customs

Societies hold a significant role in facilitating diverse changes, and the Brahmin community is experiencing multiple transformations that greatly impact its culture. The erosion of cultural values and the potential disappearance of the distinctive Brahmin identity are becoming evident. Presently, inter-caste marriages are highly favored, posing challenges to the preservation of pure Brahminism in the future. Marrying within the same lineage, known as "gotra," has already shown harmful consequences for future generations.

Experts offer differing perspectives on the unfolding changes within the Brahmin community. While one argues that these changes lead to fragmentation, another believes that evolving marriage patterns foster social cohesion by expanding social relationships. Acceptance of relatives from different castes through inter-caste marriages contributes to the minimization of caste-based discrimination.

In a conversation, Garima Sharma (change name), a respondent, highlighted the anticipation of future changes. She is a newly married 21 years old woman. She was educated. She emphasized the importance of prioritizing the interests and choices of daughters. Garima expressed a strong desire to eradicate the dowry system while maintaining cultural values. She also emphasized the need to limit extravagant displays of wealth and ensure equal opportunities for individuals from various social classes to arrange their children's marriages without undue pressure.

The majority of respondents expressed a desire for equal rights for females, in parity with their male counterparts. They

believe that all family members are equal, and therefore, inter-caste marriages, including marriages with individuals from lower castes, should be respected and accepted. If individuals choose not to enter into any relationship, they should have the right and respect to live alone or seek divorce.

The importance of fair treatment between spouses in marriages was emphasized. Despite being referred to as a man's "better half," wives should be regarded as equals by both family members and society. Respondents noted the burden of household work often falls on wives, while their concerns are neglected by husbands. To address this, it was suggested that all females should have access to quality education and the opportunity to lead respected lives in society.

Both males and females should fulfill their responsibilities, regardless of whether they belong to the husband's or wife's family, and actively participate in household activities. While wives tirelessly ensure their families' satisfaction throughout the day, husbands take pride in earning money outside the home. Respondents stressed the significance of providing females with opportunities to pursue their aspirations and establish themselves in life.

Some respondents observed disparities in rituals and expectations placed upon daughters and daughters-in-law. While a daughter is not allowed to perform her parents' death rituals, as her brother does for 13 days following their parents' demise, she is required to fulfill all the rituals associated with her husband's parents. In our society, in-laws are consistently prioritized, and daughters are often taught to prioritize their in-laws over their own parents. Several respondents expressed disapproval of the practice of Kanyadaan, as it restrains females from performing rituals for their natal family, as brothers do. They called for change, advocating for equal rights for all girls, comparable to their brothers.

The respondents acknowledged the mistreatment of daughters-in-law by Brahmins and Chhetriyas, who often view them as mere domestic laborers. They emphasized the need to change this mindset and treat daughters-in-law as daughters. Such treatment discourages them from remarrying. They believe that marriage should occur through mutual agreement and acceptance from society and family.

However, not all respondents embraced the changes that have taken place in marriage rituals. They feel that these changes have diminished the charm of marriage. They wish to see the charm of marriage restored to its ancestral significance and consider the preservation of traditions and rituals as vital for future generations. Some respondents proudly asserted that wives should solely focus on household activities.

Others acknowledged that societal acceptance is crucial for change to occur. They believe that society filters which cultures should be followed and which should be discarded. Consequently, societal norms and practices may vary between different communities. A few respondents expressed a preference for the old culture over the present one.

6. Discussion

This study examines changing marriage patterns among

Brahmins in Nepal based on interviews and field surveys with 20 respondents. The findings reveal a positive response towards evolving marriage rituals. Orthodox and liberal Brahmin families exhibit different views on inter-caste marriages, with younger generations challenging traditional practices.

The significance of intercaste marriages in challenging conventional notions of marriage is highlighted. It is crucial for breaking the caste system to promote inter-caste and casteless marriages. Despite being traditionally discouraged, intercaste marriages are becoming increasingly popular in the current context [12]. Cohabitation presents challenges for women, and wedding customs have shifted towards blending cultures. Intercaste marriages impact Brahmin identity, and opinions differ on whether these changes foster cohesion or fragmentation. Respondents advocate for eradicating dowry, equal rights for women, and equitable treatment of spouses. Preservation of traditions and societal acceptance are also important factors. Overall, the study provides insights into the dynamic nature of marriage customs and aspirations within the Brahmin community.

7. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study examines changing marriage patterns among Brahmin individuals in Khajura Tol, aiming to understand perception, investigate influencing factors, and explore the evolving pattern within the community. Using purposive sampling, both quantitative and qualitative research designs were employed. Findings show a trend towards more liberal marriages with women seeking independence, while societal support and expert opinions on the effects of these changes vary. Equality and understanding between partners are emphasized for successful marriages.

Traditional Brahmin weddings are influenced by modern demands, with support for change and the eradication of dowry. Marriage is becoming more liberal, emphasizing freedom, love, and girls' choices. Decision-making involves kin, the state, and intermediaries. Social and economic changes impact arranged marriages at younger ages. Cultures have diverse marriage interpretations. A new form resembling Mongoloid culture involves couples living together independently. Perception of Kanyadaan is changing for gender equality. Interviews show varying views on tradition's impact. The researcher concludes that are as follows:

7.1. Marriage Patterns

- 1) Orthodox Brahmins adhere to caste endogamy and clan exogamy, while liberal Brahmins allow marriage based on personal preferences.
- 2) Vedic rituals traditionally practiced by Brahmins emphasize various types of marriage ceremonies.
- 3) Younger generations challenge these traditions, prioritizing love and personal freedom.

7.2. Cohabitation Trend

- 1) Cohabitation poses challenges for women, often leading to hardships when the male partner abandons them after pregnancy.
- 2) Couples prioritize feasts, drinks, and parties over the significance of customs and traditions.

7.3. Societal Impact

- 1) Inter-caste marriages are becoming more prevalent, but there is a risk of diluting Brahmin identity and cultural values.
- 2) Opinions differ on whether these changes foster social cohesion or fragment the community.

7.4. Changes in Marriage Customs

- 1) Respondents express the desire for the eradication of the dowry system and equal rights for females.
- 2) They emphasize equitable treatment of spouses, equal opportunities for education and personal growth for women, and elimination of disparities in rituals and expectations placed upon daughters and daughters-in-law.

7.5. Recommendation

Local governments should respect individuals' freedom to choose their preferred form of marriage while upholding legal requirements. Modern cultures tend to favor their own marriage practices, but diversity should be respected. People should have the freedom to choose their partners, and society should accept remarriage and individual choices. Respect for personal autonomy and happiness is essential, without imposing on others.

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