

Live-In Relationship and its Impact on Family and Marriage System: A Sociological Study of Delhi-NCR

**Abstract of
Thesis**

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Abstract

A live-in relationship refers to a situation where two individuals, regardless of their gender, live together in a mutually consensual and sexual relationship. Live-in relationship is one of the sociocultural phenomena which is trying to impact the structural character of Indian society.

The concept of live-in relationships has gained prominence in contemporary Indian society as a non-marital cohabitation arrangement between partners. This thesis examines the emergence and prevalence of live-in relationships in India and explores their implications on various aspects of Indian society.

Thus, it becomes important for us as sociologists or at least as the concerned/functional members of this society to dig deep down enough to know all about this social phenomenon including its origin, its structuring and formation, its pros and cons, its impact on already present institutions and so on. In other words, the precise statement of the problem or issue is about what perception live-in partners have and what perception a normal person holds regarding a live-in relationship. The issue further delves into the period of cohabitation, and the impact of a period on live-in couples. It further explores the possibility of the convenience of live-in cohabitation as compared to the institution of marriage. It calculates the impact of external important societal agencies like religion and ceremonies, gender, caste, etc. It finally deals with any constitutional support and rights for the said couple.

As a researcher, the first step toward ascertaining the above-mentioned objectives is to first introduce the mentioned topic along with its well-acknowledged definition, including the instances of it in Indian society, current ongoing trends, the factors emphasizing or mitigating the phenomenon including the influence on the Indian youth from the western civilizations, the need as human being, etc. It must be underlined that differentiating it with the current acceptable institution dealing from the cohabitation of a couple viz. marriage is also very important since it will tell us about what utility the live-in is fulfilling in current society. Once the comparison is done, the live-in relationship's significance and multifarious aspects can easily be discussed.

For all steps discussed in the previous paragraph, one must go through an extensive literature review related to this subject. However, a bottleneck one will face while going through the literature review is that the topic in itself is taboo, especially in Indian society where marriage is the sanctity and holds a very prestigious place in society. Due to this, literature in the form of secondary data will be rarely available. However, despite this shortcoming, for the sake of importance, this thesis carries for society, whatever literature was available was included. To abridge the gap of shortcomings mentioned earlier, we must take into account multiple theories related to cohabitation and live-in relationship from different studies done by different sociologists.

Introduction

The introduction provides an overview of the topic as discussed above, outlining the rise of live-in relationships and their significance in the Indian social context. It highlights the research objectives and the relevance of the study in the present societal landscape.

Objectives of the Study:

The primary focus of this research study is to analyze the influence of live-in relationships on both families and society, specifically within the context of Delhi NCR. The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine the socio-economic background of the partners involved in live-in-relationships, including factors such as age, education, religion, caste, occupation, income, and other relevant characteristics.
2. To assess the awareness and attitudes towards live-in relationships.
3. To investigate the socio-psychological dynamics, familial connections, and sexual relations within live-in partnerships.
4. To explore the impact of live-in relationships on various aspects, including family dynamics, marriage, and children born from such relationships.
5. To evaluate the influence of live-in relationships on sentiments, love, mutual care, personal security, and other personal aspects affecting the partners involved.

6. To probe into the attitudes of live-in partners towards marriage, social and cultural norms, socio-psychological connections, sexual relationships, and related aspects.

Research questions:

The research questions of the study are:

- How do people perceive live-in relationships?
- Does cohabiting couples have a shorter staying period than married couple?
- What are the factors which make it more convenient to opt for Live in rather than marriage?
- Does religion and the importance of ceremonies plays any role in people's affiliation towards live-in relationship and marriage
- Is there any awareness related to laws related to live-in relationship in the special context of women and children?

Research Method:

It is observed that a significant portion of sociological research studies relies on surveys to explore solutions to social problems. Consequently, the present study adopts the exploratory research design method. In this particular research work, the researcher conducted surveys among 150 live-in partners residing together in Delhi NCR through Snowball sampling.

Historical and Cultural Context

This section delves into the historical and cultural aspects surrounding marriage and relationships in India. It analyzes the traditional social norms, religious influences, and family structures that have governed Indian society for centuries. By understanding the historical perspective, we can better appreciate the social changes and the shift towards accepting alternative partnership models.

Rise of Live-in Relationships

This section examines the factors contributing to the rise of live-in relationships in India. It discusses the impact of globalization, urbanization, and changing values on individuals' attitudes toward commitment and marriage. Additionally, the influence of media, literature, and popular culture on shaping perceptions of non-traditional relationships is explored.

Motives and Demographics

The study explores the motives and characteristics of individuals choosing live-in relationships over traditional marriages with special emphasis on Delhi NCR region. It investigates factors such as economic independence, career aspirations, and personal autonomy that influence people to opt for cohabitation. The demographics of cohabiting couples are also analyzed, focusing on age groups, educational backgrounds, and socio-economic status.

Legal Perspectives

This section provides an in-depth analysis of the legal framework governing live-in relationships in India. It reviews relevant laws, precedents, and court judgments to ascertain the rights and protections available to cohabiting partners. The study also identifies legal ambiguities and gaps that may affect the rights of individuals in such relationships.

Impact on Family Dynamics

The thesis explores the impact of live-in relationships on traditional family structures in Indian society. It investigates the reactions of family members to cohabitation, examining generational gaps and intergenerational conflicts. The study also assesses how these relationships affect the dynamics between parents, children, and extended family members.

Social Perception and Stigma

This section analyzes the broader social perception of live-in relationships in Indian society. It examines the stigma attached to cohabitation and the challenges faced by couples in dealing with societal judgments and stereotypes. The study explores public opinion, media portrayals, and religious views on non-marital cohabitation.

Gender Dynamics and Women's Empowerment

The thesis critically evaluates the impact of live-in relationships on gender dynamics in India. It examines how these arrangements influence women's social status, economic independence, and decision-making power within the household. The study also highlights examples of women who have found empowerment and freedom through live-in relationships.

Challenges and Opportunities

This section identifies the challenges and opportunities presented by the prevalence of live-in relationships in India. It discusses issues such as property rights, social security, and the psychological well-being of partners. Additionally, it explores how cohabitation can offer an alternative to traditional marriages, providing individuals with greater agency in their personal lives.

Conclusion

The conclusion synthesizes the findings of the study and reflects on the broader implications of live-in relationships in Indian society. After a thorough study of given subject and data collected from 150 respondents from Delhi –NCR, it may be concluded that live-in relationship is relatively a new concept for Indian society which is yet to be assimilated to the traditional family and marriage system. In the prevailing circumstances when the urban Indian society is on thrust hold of various socio-economic changes, more research studies are needed to explore and understand transition at micro level.

Keywords: live-in relationships, cohabitation, Indian society, Delhi NCR region, marriage, family dynamics, legal perspectives, gender dynamics, women's empowerment, social norms.