



## Perceptions of Youth toward Live in relationship

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### ABSTRACT

Live-in relationship is an arrangement of living in which the couples are unmarried live together under a same roof to conduct a long-going relationship similarly as in marriage without getting married legally. This form of relationship does not thrust the typical responsibilities of a married life on the individuals living together. The foundation of live in relationship is individual freedom. The study was conducted in Guntur city of Andhra Pradesh using the survey type of research design. The sample consisted of 60 young adults having the age of 20-25 yr. Now a days, many people preferring to go for live-in relationship due to less responsibilities, less commitments, financial problems or benefits, no belief in institution of marriage etc. Perceptions of youth to go for live-in relationship are slowly increasing in India. Female sample had more negative perceptions about live-in relationship than males. Males had more positive perceptions than females about live-in relationship.

**Key Words** Cohabitation, Perceptions, Relationship, Youth.

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### INTRODUCTION

India is known for its democracy and family system. Generally people are very much attached to their families and the top most priority of every ideal Indian is his family. The main reason is the kind of faith and respect people have on marriage. The social institution of marriage is the biggest strength of this diversified country. Irrespective of faith, people regard marriage as an integral part of their lives and believe that moral values and traditions are to be followed and preserved for a healthy society.

Live-in-relationship means a woman living with a man as husband and wife for a reasonable period, without marrying him. In the words of an American Anthropologist "living together at least five days a week for at least three months, not legally or religiously married, yet sexually intimate, with or without the goal of marriage in the future." These relationships are called and stigmatized as socially ambiguous and sexually exploitative relationships. The concept of live-in-relationship is not new in India. In ancient time, it was known as *Maitri - Karar* (friendship agreement) in which

a written agreement was made between the people of two opposite sex that they would live together as friends and look after each other and Gadharva marriage (one of the eight Hindu marriage forms). In this mold of matrimony the both uses to consider each other as husband and wife in front of god and keeps this as a secret. The advanced version of this popularly known as live in relationship. The term live-in-relationship is defined neither in dictionary nor in law. It has been called by various terms, such as living together, shacking up, cohabitation, serial monogamy and living in sin.

There is no specific law to regulate live- in relationships in India and the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 does not recognize such relationships. However, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 recognizes the right of women in a live- in relationship which is 'in the nature of marriage' to receive maintenance/ alimony and protection against any form of abuse. In 2008, the National Commission for Women recommended that women in live- in relationships must be given the right to maintenance under Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973. However, recently

it was observed that it is divorced wife who is treated as a wife, not a woman who hasn't been married and therefore, cannot claim maintenance under Section 125 of CrPC. Partners living together for a long time may have kids together. However, live-in couples are not allowed to adopt kids as per the Guidelines Governing the Adoption of Children as notified by the Central Adoption Resource Authority. In case of dispute with respect to custody of the child, one may consult a Child Custody Lawyer. The present study was carried out to know the positive and negative perceptions of young male and females towards live-in relationship

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

A survey method of research was adopted and the study conducted in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh. The sample of the study was 60 young adults between the age group of 20-25 yr. Among 60 sample 30 were females and another 30 were males. The attitude scale was developed specifically for the present study. The data were collected using the schedule. The collected data were scored, frequencies and percentages were calculated.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Positive perceptions about live-in relationship

The results of present study reveal that nearly 3/4<sup>th</sup> of the male sample (73%) and 40 per cent of the female sample had positive attitude about the statement living together before marriage has a better understanding between the partners. Representative national survey by Oslon *et al* (2007) reported that 66 per cent of high school senior boy's and 61 per cent of girls indicated that it is usually a good idea for a couple to live together before getting married in order to find out whether they really get along.

It was interesting to know that 93 per cent of the male said living together is not against Indian culture whereas only 53 per cent of the female accepted this statement. The respondents justified their perception by saying that in olden India also people used to stay in live-in relationship in the form of *Gandharva* marriage. Majority of the male and female sample (90% and 97%) perceived that live in relationships are like experimenting compatibility between partners. Male respondents (83 %) had the positive perception that instead of

**Table No.1 Positive perceptions about Live –in relationship. N=60**

Sr. No	Parameter	Male n=30		Female n=30	
		F	(%)	F	(%)
1	Living together before marriage has a better understanding between partners.	22	73	12	40
2	Living together without marriage is not against an Indian culture.	28	93	16	53
3	Live in relationships are like experimenting compatibility between partners.	27	90	29	97
4	Instead of lifelong commitment in marriage it is better to have agreement on live in.	25	83	12	40
5	Woman has a choice to bear baby or not in live in relationship.	28	93	30	100
6	Live in relationship is just like way to live a life in our own way.	29	97	20	67
7	It is easy to change the partner in live in relationship.	28	93	27	90
8	There is no legal hassle in live in relationship.	22	73	18	60
9	Live in relationship is best option of knowing each other before biggest commitment of marriage.	28	93	25	83
10	Those who don't believe in live in marriage will go for live in relationship.	30	100	30	100
11	College students or young professionals go for live in relationship to limit their expenses (for example, house rent).	30	100	28	93

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**Table 2. Negative perceptions about live-in relationship.**

**N=60**

Sr.No.	Parameter	Male n=30		Female n=30	
		F	%	F	%
1.	Live in relationship will affect the relationship with parents.	26	87	29	97
2.	Live in relationship is destroying the Indian culture and ethical values	15	47	20	67
3.	People are using the live in relationship only for physical enjoyment.	12	40	29	97
4.	Live in relationship is just like a testing ground for marriage.	28	93	20	67
5.	In live in relationship only the loss is for female (if the male partner leaves the relationship).	20	67	30	100
6.	Male always get acceptance of society after live in relationship but female suffer a lot against society.	22	73	30	100
7.	Higher rate of separation will be there in live in relationship compared to marriage.	26	87	30	100
8.	Live in relationships effect on children's personality development.	24	80	29	97
9.	In live in relationship couples are likely to experience infidelity within the relationship than married couples.	21	70	27	90
10.	Live in relationship couples suffer many financial losses as their unions are not recognized with the same legal and financial benefits as those who are legally married.	12	40	25	83
11.	Live in relationships can't match the legal rights, social recognition and emotional support that provided by a marriage.	19	63	30	100
12.	Live-in relationship couples are less happier than married couples	22	73	26	87

lifelong commitment in marriage it is better to have agreement on live in. All the female young adults said there is choice for women whether bear a baby or not but in marriage it is compulsory to give birth to baby.

Though freedom is the main motto behind live-in relationship, 23 per cent of the women felt that women in live relationship can't live the way she wants. There are restrictions in live-in relationship and only 3 per cent of the male sample felt the same. Both male and female sample had positive opinion that there is no legal hassle in live-in relationship. They can easily walk out or move on if they are not comfortable with each other but it is not same in the constitution of marriage. All the selected sample

perceived that those who don't believe in live in marriage will go for live in relationship. Majority of the female and male (93% and 100%) said college students or young professionals go for live in relationship to limit their expenses. Compared to women, male respondents were having positive perceptions towards the live in relationship.

### **Negative perceptions about live-in relationship**

Majority of the selected sample believe that live in relationship will affect the relationship with parents. Most of the Indian parents believe that marriage is very sacramental where man and woman committed and promise each other that they will love, support and care each other in the ups and downs of life.

### **Indian culture and ethical values**

Half of the male sample and 20 females (67%) accepted that live in relationship is destroying the Indian culture and ethical values. And remaining were contrary.

### **Trial before marriage and physical enjoyment**

Majority of the females (97%) felt that people are using the live in relationship only for physical enjoyment whereas only 40 per cent of male felt the same. Compared to females (67%), male (93%) believe that live in relationship is just like a testing ground for marriage. Bumpass and Sweet (1990) found that women are more likely to co-habit only once and that with person they subsequently marry; men are more likely to cohabit with a series of partners. A study by Galena *et al* (2009) found that men are more likely than women to endorse testing their relationships and less likely to convenience as a reason for cohabiting.

### **Female is the sufferer and affects the children's personality**

The entire female sample perceived that in live in relationship the loss is only for female only. Male always get acceptance of society after live in relationship but female suffer a lot against society and higher rate of separation will be there in live in relationship. Rabbiraj (2014) in his study reported that encouraging live-in-relationships in the existing circumstances will invite problems like bigamy, multiple partner relationships which will destroy the social fabric of Indian country. The status of the women in such relationship is not that of a wife and lacks social approval or sanctity. Sharma (2013) studied on live-in relationship, live-in relationship is in vogue these days. Young generation, especially males, do not take this relationship very seriously, and desert their partners. Thus end up in frustration, anger and depression which lead to suicide in the end. The main sufferer is the child born out of this relationship. Live in relationships effect on children's personality development: 24 males and 29 females responded that the live in relationships may effect on children's personality development.

### **Financial losses and no legal benefits**

Most of the sample felt that the couples in live in relationship are likely to experience infidelity within the relationship than married couples. Majority of the females (83%) perceived that couples suffer many financial losses as their unions are not recognized with the same legal and financial benefits as those who are legally married. It is interesting to know that all the female sample were having negative perception regarding live-in relationship that live-in relationship doesn't give emotional support and social recognition. More than half of the male sample also had the same feeling. Majority of the male (73%) and female (87%) believe that live-in relationship couples are less happy than married couples. Qualitative reports of problems in cohabiting relationships: comparisons to married and dating relationships by Hsueh and Kristen (2009) explains the top 5 areas considered most problematic by cohabiting individuals were problems in specific areas of their current relationship, individual problems, general communication, arguments, and emotional affection-distance.

### **CONCLUSION**

Respecting the human rights is the integral part of Indian democracy. The idea of live-in-relationships may seem to be very unique and appealing but in reality the problems likely to arise are many and challenging. Encouraging live-in-relationships in the existing circumstances will invite problems like bigamy, multiple partner relationships which will destroy the social fabric of this country. The status of the women in such relationship is not that of a wife and lacks social approval or sanctity. The chances of exploitation of women in such relationships will be in rise due to the absence law. One of the studies reveal that the chances of couples begetting children are very less as couples usually prefer not to have children. On the other hand, couples having children and not continuing the relationship will adversely affect the interest of the children due to lack of love and parental care.

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The study reveals that nearly 3/4<sup>th</sup> of the male sample(73%) has positive attitude about the living together before marriage has a better understanding between the partners and only 40 per cent of the female sample were positive about live in relationship. It is good to live before marriage to understand each other better. Sex is not only the prime reason to live together but the other factors like how we take care of each other *viz*, compatibility. Hence, the need of the present scenario is to educate and enlighten the younger generation about the importance of marriage and family relationships.

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