

Working Women's Perception of Marriage and Family

Neha Ingawale,¹ Gayatri Sawant,² Shree Lakshmi.P.³

¹ Neha Ingawale, Student, M.Sc. Psychology (Counselling), CMR University, Bangalore, India

² Gayatri Sawant, Student, M.Sc. Psychology (Counselling), CMR University, Bangalore, India

³ Dr. Shree Lakshmi.P, Assistant Professor, M.Sc. Psychology (Counselling), CMR University, Bangalore, India.

ABSTRACT

Marriage is considered to be one of the strongest and widely practiced in Indian culture. Till date there are a majority of Indian population that lay their belief and faith in marriage as an ritually at the same time the concept of marriage differs for men and women. The current study majorly focuses on carrying out qualitative research for understanding the perspective of women between the age group 25 to 45 regarding marriage and family post marriage. Through conducting one on one interviews with 60 female participants researchers would intend to know womens insight, ideology and thoughts regarding marriage, factors influencing marriage, family post marriage and work life balance after marriage. The data was collected using purposive and snowball sampling and data was analysed using thematic and narrative analysis. The key findings of the study suggested that most of the women's priorities are both marriage and family at the same time and believe that work life balance plays a crucial role for successful marriage.

Keywords- Marriage, Family, Women's perspective, Mental health

INTRODUCTION

India is considered as a country which is culturally rich and diverse where till date majority of the population's beliefs and ideas are deeply rooted in the customs and traditions. Marriage is one such aspect which still has a great importance and meaning for people living here. Through literature evidence it has been reported that the idea of marriage has changed from time to time. Along with innovation and advancement, exposure to western perspectives, individualization, women empowerment the women's point of view regarding the concept of marriage has changed. It has made women more aware and vocal about their perspectives and thought process where this change has led to an impact on factors such as age of getting married, gender roles in marriage, work life balance after marriage, perspective on starting a family post marriage.

The current study attempts to gain a better understanding regarding the women's perspective on marriage. How in today's age they perceive marriage, what is their idea about getting married and what are the factors that are influencing their decision making regarding getting married. At the same time the study also focuses on understanding women's take on starting a family post marriage, and some of the changes and challenges that they have to face after marriage. Whether parental attitude plays any role in the decision making process of getting married and how culture and tradition affects marriage and marriage related aspects.

Overall the study revolves around getting a deeper understanding about the women's perception of marriage and knowing if there is acculturation that has taken place or know if still there is a blend of adapting new idea's at the same time believing in marriage as an institution by interacting with women and getting an insight into their thought process.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this article the author uses a cross-sectional method to study the perspective of women across three generations. The study tries to understand the perspective of women about marriage and how they experience these relationships in their life across these generations. A qualitative study method was used with six female participants, 2 elderly, 2 adult and 2 teenage women respectively using interviews and thematic apperception test to get a deeper insight about the topic. The results showed that women's perspective about their role in society and marriage are closely linked with their personal values shaped by their experience and family upbringing. The Younger women often shared bold, new ideas about marriage, but these sometimes clashed with their deeper, traditional beliefs, showing an inner conflict. (Carvalho & Paiva, 2009)

In this study the author focuses on how factors like education, age, gender roles, economic background have influence on college women and their desire to marry. It tries to understand how these factors can influence their perspective about marriage. The study was conducted considering that education has a negative impact on desire for marriage whereas age and traditional views can have a positive impact. The study consisted of 449 unmarried college students. The data was collected using a survey method which analyzed each factor. The results showed that education and age had little to no influence while the factor affecting the most the desire to marry was their expectations while entering adulthood. The study also highlighted the role of gender roles and expectations, that women who had traditional views about having children and their spouse had more desire to marry. This shows the influence of personal beliefs and society has on women. (Xu, 2012)

According to Thornton & Freedman (1982) in their paper they talk about how the view about marriage has changed over time within the younger generations and their family accept the decision to stay as a respectable life choice, indicating that marriage isn't considered to be dominant compared to staying single.

Many American citizens show broader acceptance to individuals who chose to stay unmarried, particularly the younger generation. Additionally, there is also less parental pressure for children to get married. Although there is a significant shift in the perspective, the studies also show that over 90% of the participants have a desire to get married at one point in their life, even with the gender roles becoming more equal. Along with that it was also noted that the individuals prefer to get married at a later stage in life, prioritising education and career before getting married. It also talks about how divorce can result in a negative view about marriage and more positive attitude towards single life.

In this paper the author talks about the notable changes that took place in roles of women in the 20th century and how these changes have affected couples therapy, even with the little acceptance of feminist principles addressing gender dynamics and power in a marriage. This paper uses a theoretical method by analysing the existing literature by using thematic analysis. The results show that couples therapy often fails to address issues related to gender and power dynamics, further it is also noted that feminist ideas are less incorporated in therapy which would help to solve these issues and that therapy models should ensure fairness and gender equality in the future (Rampage, 2002)

Here the author emphasizes that the number of working women has increased over recent years which has caused significant changes in their quality of life, especially after getting married. This study tries to investigate these changes on a deeper level. The researchers applied the McNemar test to evaluate the significance of changes in women's Quality of Life after marriage. This method is specifically designed to compare related data sets, making it suitable for analyzing how marriage affects individual women's experiences. The results reveal that women could manage their stress better after marriage due to emotional support provided by their partners. along with that the negative impact includes, less personal freedom including hobbies and self-care. Many women often struggle with depression and stress trying to balance their work and responsibilities at home. Overall, it was observed that most of the women were happy with their marriage and looked at these changes as normal aspects of adjusting towards a married life. (Kaur et al., 2012)

This study talks about how being married or having children affects women's views on their work and family life, including their mental health, job satisfaction, work focus, home life, and responsibilities. The study consisted of 148 female clerical workers, giving a view of women having office-based jobs. Using a statistical method, the author studied the differences between married and unmarried women, as well as between women with and without children, to

understand how these factors affect their work and family experiences. The study found that married women tended to have higher incomes than unmarried women, which may contribute to greater job satisfaction and well-being. However, women with school-age children experienced more pressure due to the added demands of balancing work and family responsibilities. While there were no major differences in other areas like job satisfaction or mental health, the findings highlight the challenges women face in managing multiple roles. The study suggests that career support and counseling should take these factors into account. (Crozier-De Rosa & Mackie, n.d.)

Here the author Kalra et al. (2024), discusses the importance of marriage in society which shapes an individual's personal life as well as the communities and takes into consideration factors such as the changing social norms, economic conditions, and cultural values have affected the way individuals perceive marriage today. the sample consists of 100 male and 100 female participants, aged between 20 - 40 years residing in Delhi NCR, considering their career

often has an effect on their personal and interpersonal life. A comparative study was conducted using survey methods through google forms, targeting individuals from various working sectors like MNCs, schools, hospitals, etc. Most participants were aged 26–30, well-educated, and from nuclear families and belonging to Hindu or Christian backgrounds. Majority of the participants worked in the private sector and had modest incomes, which may affect how they view marriage. Cultural preferences were clear, with many favoring partners of the same caste or religion. Statistical analysis showed men had a more positive attitude toward marriage than women, but factors like age, education, and family type didn't significantly influence these attitudes.

According to Ünver & Demirli (2022), the roles of men and women in society have changed significantly over the years. In the past, their responsibilities were very distinct and separate, but today they have become more equal, mainly because both men and women are now educated and employed. As a result, they have begun to share family responsibilities more evenly. This was a qualitative study that aimed to understand the experiences and perceptions of the participants. The researchers used semi-structured interviews to collect primary data, and participants were selected through the snowball sampling method. The sample included 20 individuals (10 married couples), all of whom were highly educated, employed, and had children. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive analysis. However, this study highlights that even though both partners contribute financially, household duties are still not equally divided. Women continue to take on most of the domestic work, which reflects that traditional views on gender roles still persist.

A qualitative study was conducted with 57 women who were part of a marriage programme. The data was collected by taking one-on-one interviews with the participants. The key findings of the study stated that the majority of the participants (85%) were willing to get married whereas there were participants who felt marriage challenging due to complexity in attitude of marriage, fear of commitment, anticipated fear of divorce. Along with this one of the major reasons for not getting married was unable to find an accurate partner for marriage (Manning. W. el. at, 2012).

According to a qualitative study conducted in California state university with 10 single women where structured face to face interviews were taken to understand their point of view regarding marriage it was noted that majority of the women had both liberal as well as traditional mindset related to marriage across religions. The study mentioned that women have more traditional view points about marriage until starting the family. Lastly the study suggests that mental health professionals and social workers must have awareness and knowledge about women's perspective of marriage (Natalia. M, 2014).

A cross-section study was conducted in India for understanding how the age related patterns about marriage has changed over the last 12 years. The major evidence of the study stated that 65.9 % of women were married by the age of 18 in 1992-93 whereas in 2019-20 only 23.2% women were married by the age of 18. The study mentioned that major reasons for decline in marriage and increase in age were high level of education, financial independence, influence of mass-media at the same time getting married at a later age also impacted the fertility pattern of the women (Singh. M. et.al, 2023).

METHODOLOGY

Aim of the Research

The research aims to study the women's (aged 25 to 40) perspective on marriage and family .

Research Design

The study uses qualitative design to understand the perspective of women related to marriage and family.

Sample

The target population for this study were women between the age group 25 to 40 who were married or unmarried working in various fields coming from diverse cultures.

60 female participants between the age group of 25-40 years from different fields from metro and 2 tier cities having diverse cultures were invited to participate in the study based on their availability. Purposive and snowball sampling was used for this research.

Procedure

The sample size selected for the study belongs to the age group of 25 to 30 years. Women following into this age group were selected for further research where there was a structured interview that was conducted with each participant in order to understand their perspective regarding marriage and family. A structured questionnaire was created which consisted of 10 open ended questions focusing on the participants insights and thoughts about

marriage and family after marriage. Once the questionnaire was created a pilot study was conducted on 5 participants to check the efficiency of the questionnaire. Based on the feedback received through the pilot study modifications were made in the questionnaire. Then the data was collected by conducting one on one interviews with the participants through online and offline mode. Lastly the received data was analysed simultaneously using narrative and thematic analysis.

Data Analysis

Collected data was analyzed using thematic and narrative analysis. The recorded data was coded and themes were extracted through the responses received from the participants. The subject data was identified and common patterns and themes were extracted related to their experiences.

RESULTS

Table 1

Women's perspective about what is marriage means to them

Data (Quotations)	Keywords	Codes	Themes	Conceptualization
Marriage is like a companionship which is for life that provides love, support and trustful bond throughout the life.	companionship, lifelong, love, support, trust	enduring emotional bond	Lifelong emotional connection	Marriage as a secure and enduring partnership

Marriage is friendship; there is healthy dependency and you have a person to share your highs and lows.	friendship, healthy dependency, share	emotional intimacy, mutual support	Companionship and support	Emotional co-dependency in marital bond
Marriage is a symbiotic relationship in which mental, emotional, physical, and financial needs are met.	symbiotic, mental, emotional, physical, and financial	interdependence, holistic fulfilment	interpersonal fulfilment	Balanced partnership fulfilling all dimensions
Marriage means to have a partner with whom you can share your life and start a family.	partner, share life, family	life partnership, shared responsibility	Family building and commitment	Marriage as foundation for family and support
Marriage is a lifelong commitment, responsibility and requires adjustments for it to work.	lifelong, commitment, responsibility, adjust	mutual adjustment, sustained effort	Commitment and effort	Adaptation and responsibility in relationships
Marriage consists of passion, intimacy and a sharing and caring bond with the partner.	passion, intimacy, sharing, caring	emotional and physical bonding	intimacy and bonding	Integration of emotional and physical connection
Marriage is like having a second home; it is a lifelong partnership.	second home, lifelong partnership	comfort zone, partnership	Security and companionship	Marriage as emotional sanctuary

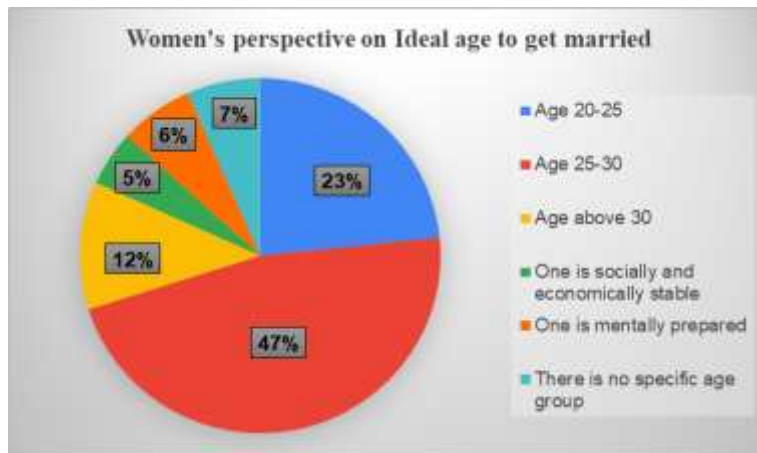
As per the responses received from the participants, many women perceive marriage to be a stable and long-lasting partnership that offers love, support, and trust throughout one's life. Several participants shared that it involves a balanced and complete fulfillment of mental, emotional, physical, and financial needs, along with emotional closeness and mutual support. For some, marriage also serves as a safe and comforting second home, providing emotional security and warmth.

Participants generally view marriage as a partnership built on friendship and healthy dependence, where both partners share life's joys and challenges, adjusting with dedication and hard work. Building a family together is seen as laying the foundation for lasting relationships and strong family support.

Moreover, a number of women believe that marriage brings together emotional and physical bonds to keep love alive by combining passion, closeness, and care.

Figure 1

Women's perspective on ideal age to get married



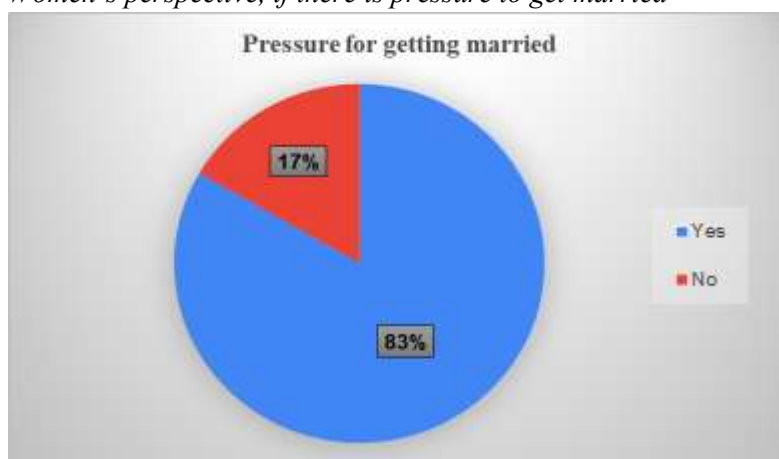
Based on the collected responses, most participants believe the ideal age to get married is between 25 and 30 years, reflecting 47% of the respondents. A smaller group, 23%, feels 25 years is the best age, while 12% consider marriage after 30 as ideal.

Some responses emphasized social and economic stability (5%) and mental preparedness (6%) as more critical than the specific age. 7% of the participants stated that there is no specific ideal age marriage should happen whenever the individual feels ready and understands the concept of a lifelong partnership.

A few participants noted biological factors for family planning, suggesting ages 23–28, while others highlighted that ideal age can vary depending on mental maturity, life experience, and personal circumstances. Several also suggested that early to mid-twenties (23–27) could be suitable for biological reasons or cultural norms.

Figure 2

Women's perspective, if there is pressure to get married



When asked if there is social pressure on women to get married, **83% of respondents answered "Yes,"** indicating that a significant majority of women feel there is indeed societal pressure if one doesn't get married.

Conversely, only **17%** of respondents stated **"No,"** suggesting that while some women may not feel this pressure, it is a clear concern for the majority.

This data underscores the persistent social expectations surrounding marriage, especially for women, and highlights the ongoing relevance of addressing gender-based pressures in discussions about marriage

Table 2

Women's perspective, if marriage is mandatory

Data (Quotations)	Keywords	Codes	Themes	Conceptualization
Yes, marriage is mandatory for both female and male.	mandatory, both genders	social expectation, normative belief	Cultural normativity	Marriage as a universal social requirement
Marriage is mandatory because woman is the most important human in continuing the race of humankind.	mandatory, woman, humankind	biological role, traditional reasoning	Reproductive justification	Marriage for continuation of lineage
Marriage is important for safety, security and support.	safety, security, support	emotional/physical safeguarding	Stability and protection	Marriage as protective structure
Marriage is necessary for love and stability.	love, stability	emotional fulfillment, relational need	Emotional sustenance	Marriage as foundation for emotional well-being
Marriage is important because it completes us; everyone needs a companion and stability at the end of the day.	completes us, companion, stability	human need for belonging	Companionship and emotional grounding	Marriage as identity-fulfilling partnership
Marriage is not mandatory; it's a personal choice.	not mandatory, personal choice	individual freedom, autonomy	Personal agency	Marriage as optional and subjective choice
Marriage is not mandatory because some may prefer living alone throughout life.	not mandatory, prefer alone	solitude preference, lifestyle choice	Alternative life preferences	Marriage not required for fulfillment
No, marriage is not mandatory because today women are capable enough to take care of themselves and carry out their duties.	self-sufficient women, duties	gender equality, independence	Empowerment and autonomy	Marriage not essential due to women's self-reliance

No, marriage is not mandatory because today women are self-sufficient and they may not be ready for lifelong commitment.	self-sufficient, not ready, lifelong commitment	independence, commitment hesitancy	Autonomy and modern values	Prioritizing freedom over traditional roles
No, marriage is not mandatory because women have career and spiritual goals more important than getting married.	career, spiritual goals, not mandatory	prioritization of goals	Self-actualization	Marriage deferred or replaced by individual aspirations
It completely depends on the individual's perspective.	individual's perspective	subjectivity, personal choice	Relativism in belief systems	Fluidity in marriage perceptions

As per the responses received from the participants, many women perceive marriage as a cultural norm and a universal social expectation. They see it as mandatory for both men and women, viewing it as crucial for fulfilling emotional, physical, and social needs. Some believe that marriage is essential for continuing the human race, offering safety, security, and support. It is seen as a foundation for emotional well-being and a source of companionship and stability that completes one's life.

Table 3

Women's perspective, if life changes after marriage

Data (Quotations)	Keywords	Codes	Themes	Conceptualization
Yes because there are a lot of responsibilities and expectations	Responsibilities, expectations	Increased burdens	Shifts in Responsibility Post-Marriage	Yes because there are a lot of responsibilities and expectations
Yes as the priority changes, there is change in environment and lifestyle	Priority, environment, lifestyle	Life adjustment	Changing Priorities and Lifestyle	Yes as the priority changes, there is change in environment and lifestyle
Not only women's but also man's life changes	Life changes, both genders	Mutual life transformation	Gendered Experiences of Change	Not only women's but also man's life changes
Yes because women need to maintain balance between family and career	Balance, family, career	Work-life balance struggle	Gender Roles and Balancing Acts	Yes because women need to maintain balance between family and career

It changes as there is change in roles or identity. Women may face pressure to adjust the careers	Roles, identity, pressure, career	identity shift and career compromise	Role Transitions and Identity Struggles	It changes as there is change in roles or identity. Women may face pressure to adjust the careers
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However, several participants emphasized that marriage is a personal choice rather than an obligation. They shared that some women prefer living alone or feel they are not ready for lifelong commitment, valuing personal freedom and self-sufficiency. Many women highlighted that they are capable of caring for themselves and may prioritize career or spiritual goals over marriage. These views reflect a shift towards individual autonomy and modern values, with a recognition that marriage is no longer universally mandatory.

Regarding life after marriage, most women expressed that it brings significant changes in responsibilities and expectations. They noted that marriage demands adjustments in priorities, environment, and lifestyle. Some participants stressed that not only women, but men too experience these shifts. Many women shared that balancing family and career becomes more challenging, and there can be pressure to adjust career paths or roles. These insights highlight the complex interplay between gender roles, identity transitions. The results underlines that marriage brings about important shifts that require continuous effort to manage responsibilities and maintain balance.

Table 4

Women's perspective about starting family after marriage

Data (Quotations)	Keywords	Codes	Themes	Conceptualization
Having children after marriage depends on one's future goals and career expectations.	future goals, career expectations	personal aspirations, timing decision	Career and life planning	Parenthood influenced by individual life trajectory
It is the woman's choice whether to have children or not.	woman's choice, children	reproductive autonomy	Autonomy and choice	Empowerment through reproductive self-determination
Starting a family after marriage is not mandatory.	not mandatory, starting family	voluntary parenthood	Rejecting societal norms	Redefining traditional family expectations
It should be truly a woman's choice because she knows when she is ready physically, emotionally, and socially.	readiness, physical, emotional, social, woman's choice	holistic preparedness, agency	Informed decision-making	Motherhood requires full-spectrum readiness
Starting a family after marriage brings a lot of happiness and a sense of motherhood to women.	happiness, motherhood	emotional fulfillment, maternal identity	Positive emotional experience	Parenthood as a meaningful, fulfilling choice

Having children after marriage is a personal choice, not an obligation. As a woman, I believe it should come from mutual readiness, emotionally, physically, and financially rather than societal expectations.	personal choice, mutual readiness, not obligation	shared decision, non-coercive choice	Partnership and mutual agreement	Parenthood as a consensual and thoughtful process
Parenthood comes with a lot of responsibility and one should go for it only when both the parents are physically, mentally, and financially ready.	responsibility, readiness, both parents	joint preparedness, parenting responsibility	Responsible parenthood	Parenthood rooted in shared accountability and capacity

The participants shared that starting a family after marriage depends on individual future goals and career plans. They highlighted that having children should be a personal choice for women, reflecting reproductive autonomy and the freedom to decide based on one's own aspirations and readiness.

Many women emphasized that starting a family is not mandatory and should not be driven by social expectations. It should come from a genuine sense of preparedness—physically, emotionally, and socially. For some, having children after marriage brings happiness and a sense of fulfillment, but they believe it should be a shared and thoughtful decision between both partners.

The participants also highlighted that parenthood carries significant responsibilities and should be approached when both parents are fully ready and capable—mentally, emotionally, and financially. Overall, these insights show a strong focus on autonomy, mutual decision-making, and readiness in shaping decisions about parenthood after marriage.

Table 5

Women's perspective about the ideal age to have children.

Data (Quotations)	Keywords	Codes	Themes	Conceptualization
Ideal age range for having children is between 25 to 30 years.	ideal age, 25-30	early to late 20s, optimal childbearing age	Preferred age range	Most believe the ideal age to have children is 25 to 30 years.
Early 30s or 30-35 years is a good time.30-38, Within 30 is best. Latest could be 35-37	early 30s, 30-35	early 30s, biological window	Alternative range	Some consider the early 30s a suitable age for having children.
There's no specific ideal age, it depends on the couple's emotional, mental, and financial readiness.	no ideal age, readiness, personal decision	readiness, personal choice, flexible	Individual readiness	Emotional, mental, and financial readiness is seen as more important than a specific age.

Before 30 as per biological clock, Below 30 to avoid complications	biological clock, health, complications	biological considerations, health concerns	Biological considerations	Biological readiness and avoiding complications are important to some.
Adoption or surrogacy as alternative options that lessen the pressure of biological timing.	adoption, surrogacy, alternatives	adoption, surrogacy, flexibility	Alternative paths	Adoption and surrogacy offer flexibility for those facing biological or personal limitations.
I have lived in Jharkhand and Pune. People have had kids since they were 18-19... but from an urban background, I feel it's different.	social context, family background, location	social influences, cultural differences	Social influences	Perspectives are shaped by cultural and social background.

Many participants shared that the ideal age to have children falls between 25 and 30 years, considering it the best window for early to late 20s as the optimal childbearing age. A few also mentioned that early 30s, particularly up to 35 years can be a suitable time, reflecting an alternative but acceptable range.

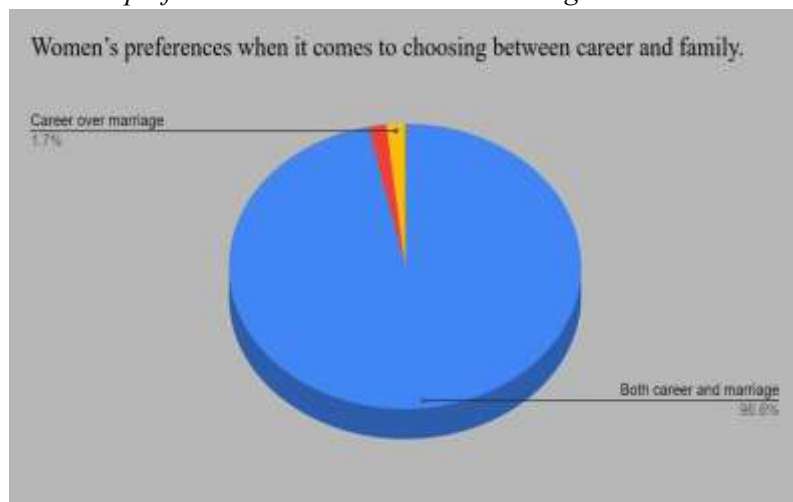
However, several respondents emphasized that there is no fixed or ideal age to have children. They believe that the decision should depend more on the couple's emotional, mental, and financial readiness rather than a strict age bracket. For some, biological factors are important, and they suggested having children before 30 to avoid health complications or challenges associated with age.

Adoption and surrogacy were also mentioned as flexible alternatives for those who may not be ready or able to have children in the typical biological window. Additionally, social and cultural backgrounds were noted as influential in shaping views on the ideal age, with some differences in opinion based on location and upbringing.

To sum up, these insights highlight a balance between traditional age-based preferences and a more modern view that prioritizes individual readiness and diverse pathways to parenthood.

Figure 3

Women's preferences when it comes to choosing between career and family.



When asked whether they would choose career, marriage, or both, **96.6%** of respondents expressed a clear preference for **balancing both career and marriage**, highlighting the importance of pursuing a fulfilling personal life alongside professional growth.

Meanwhile, **1.7%** of the respondents stated a preference for **marriage over career**, and another **1.7%** said they would choose **career over marriage**.

This overwhelming majority underscores a shift in priorities for women, aiming to integrate both personal and professional aspirations rather than prioritizing one over the other.

Table 6

Women's views on work-life balance challenges after marriage

Data (Quotations)	Keywords	Codes	Themes	Conceptualization
Most work-life balance is difficult for married women as they have to handle household chores, childcare, and in-laws' expectations along with work responsibilities.	work-life balance, married women, household, childcare, in-laws	domestic burden, gendered roles	Challenges in balance	Traditional roles and added responsibilities make work-life balance difficult for married women.
Cultural and social norms expect women to prioritize home over career, adding pressure and guilt. Women are expected to take up major responsibilities of looking after her family. Society treats women as machines and expects them to do household chores even after a hectic day at work.	societal expectations, home responsibilities, cultural norms	gendered roles, societal expectations	Traditional expectations	Social and cultural norms create pressure on women to balance home and work.
Supportive husbands, cooperative families, and good communication, work-life balance can be managed.	supportive partner, family support, communication, cooperation	partner and family support, open communication	Supportive strategies	Family and partner support help women manage work-life balance.
It's not so difficult if women plan well, set priorities, and manage their time effectively.	planning, prioritization, time management, mindset	planning, positive attitude	Balance through planning	Planning and mindset help women manage work and home.
Whether it's difficult or not depends on if the family and partner are supportive and helpful or the work situation.	family, partner, job profile, depends	conditional balance, family situation	Conditional balance	Work-life balance depends on family support and personal situation.
India's work culture with long hours and stress also contributes to challenges in balancing work and home.	work culture, long hours, India	work culture, societal factors	Wider context: India's culture	India's work culture with long hours adds to work-life balance challenges.

Cooperation with other family members and sharing household work makes it easier to balance home and job.	cooperation, shared chores, supportive family	cooperative approach, shared load	Shared responsibilities	Cooperation and shared household duties help women manage work and home roles.
It's not difficult because women are strong, smart, and willing to ask for help when needed.	strong mindset, smart, manage, ask for help	positive outlook, self-management	Positive outlook	A positive attitude and self-management enable women to balance work and home roles.
Not sure as they have not been in this situation.	not sure, no experience	uncertainty	Lack of experience	Some uncertainty exists due to lack of direct personal experience.

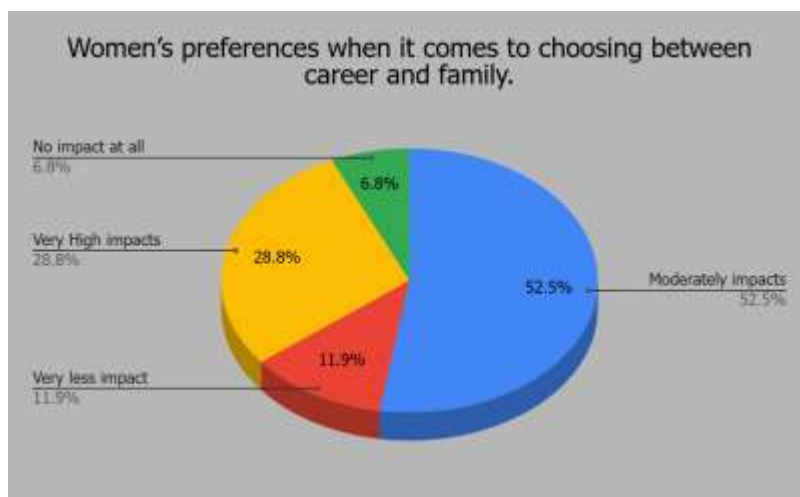
Many married women face challenges in balancing work and home due to the combined demands of household chores, childcare, in-laws' expectations, and work responsibilities. Traditional norms push women to prioritize family, adding pressure and guilt. However, supportive husbands, cooperative families, and open communication can make it easier to manage.

Planning, prioritization, and a positive attitude also help. For some, whether work-life balance is hard depends on family and job context. India's long working hours add another layer of difficulty. Nonetheless, many women believe their strength, smart planning, and willingness to seek help make them capable of balancing both roles. Some uncertainty remains for those without personal experience.

In conclusion, these perspectives show the importance of family support, shared responsibilities, and personal determination in achieving work-life balance for married women.

Figure 4

The impact of parents' attitudes and beliefs on women's ideas about marriage and having children.



When asked about the influence of their parents' attitudes and beliefs on their own ideas about marriage and having children, the majority of respondents (**52.5%**) reported that their parents' beliefs **moderately impact** their views.

A significant portion (**28.8%**) indicated that their parents' attitudes have a **very high impact**, suggesting strong parental influence in shaping these life decisions.

Meanwhile, **11.9%** of respondents stated that their parents' attitudes have **very little impact**, and **6.8%** said there was **no impact at all** on their perspective.

This data highlights the enduring role of family influence in shaping individual choices about marriage and family, while also reflecting a degree of autonomy among those who felt less parental impact.

Table 7

The influence of culture and traditions on women's perspectives about marriage.

Data (Quotations)	Keywords	Codes	Themes	Conceptualization
Culture and traditions strongly shape how women view marriage, setting expectations for commitment, roles, and family duties.	culture, traditions, roles, expectations, commitment	shaping roles, social expectations	Culture and traditions shape roles	Culture and traditions define the expectations and roles women have in marriage.
Cultural beliefs often create pressure on women to prioritize home and family, adding emotional guilt and a sense of burden. Culture has ruined the concept of marriage. It has burdened this beautiful relationship with flaws like dowry and toxic masculinity. It's very influential in insidious ways because it treats women as outsiders.	cultural burden, emotional guilt, social expectations	pressure on women, patriarchal expectations	Negative impact of culture	Cultural beliefs create pressure and burden for women in marriage.
Although culture has an impact, women believe marriage should be about personal choice and readiness, not just following traditions blindly. Following culture and traditions but not misbeliefs.	personal choice, readiness, flexibility	individual agency, personal readiness	Personal choice versus tradition	Marriage should be driven by personal readiness, not just cultural norms.
Supportive upbringing and exposure to liberal families made women see marriage as an option, not something which is mandatory.	upbringing, family background, liberal view	family influence, upbringing	Family and upbringing shape views	Upbringing and family environment influence how women perceive marriage.
Culture and traditions are beautiful when respected and adapted to changing times, but should be questioned when they impose unfair roles.	respect, adaptation, challenge, balance	cultural respect, questioning traditions	Balanced approach to culture	A balanced view sees the beauty of traditions but questions them when needed.

Belief that culture and traditions are important guides when one feels lost but they also recognize the need for modernization, combining both old and new culture positively in our life.	cultural guide, modernization, combination	positive view, evolving culture	Cultural appreciation and evolution	Culture is seen as a helpful guide but should evolve with modern needs.
Uncertainty or feeling that culture's impact is moderate, shaped by where they live or their family practices.	unsure, moderate impact, depends	uncertainty, context-specific view	Mixed or unsure views	Some respondents are unsure or see culture's impact as moderate and context-dependent.
Culture and traditions have become contradictory to modern values, causing internal conflict. Everyone needs to be mature and educated enough to make these choices and culture should not have any role in it.	contradiction, modern values, personal conflict	conflicting views, modern vs traditional	Contradictions and modern challenges	Conflicts arise when traditional views do not match modern perspectives.
Culture and traditions shape arranged marriages and social pressure to marry, adding complexity for women. It dictates the idea that marriage is an utmost necessity for a woman...which is totally wrong. We have a 100% impact of culture and tradition on our perspective of marriage as there's a social burden on us.	arranged marriage, social burden, necessity	social pressure, cultural mandate	Social burden of cultural expectations	Cultural norms in arranged marriages add pressure and challenges for women.

Culture and traditions significantly shape women's perceptions of marriage, setting expectations around roles, commitment, and family duties. Many women feel these cultural norms place undue pressure on them, promoting emotional guilt and reinforcing patriarchal practices like dowry and toxic masculinity. This influence often turns marriage into a burden rather than a personal choice.

Despite this, several women emphasize the importance of personal readiness and willingness, advocating for a balance between respecting traditions and rejecting outdated or harmful beliefs. Upbringing and exposure to liberal values further shape views, allowing some to see marriage as optional rather than mandatory.

Some women appreciate culture as a guide in uncertain times but stress the need to modernize and adapt traditions to evolving societal values. Others express internal conflict when cultural expectations clash with modern beliefs. For a few, the impact of culture varies based on their environment or family practices.

Altogether, culture is seen as both an influential guide and a source of social pressure, particularly through arranged marriages and expectations that marriage is a necessity for women. The need for critical thinking, education, and personal maturity in navigating these cultural influences is strongly emphasized

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study closely align with what's already been observed about how marriage continues to be seen as a cornerstone of social life. It's not just about tradition; it offers emotional stability, mutual support, and a way to meet both personal and societal needs. Similar to earlier observations, many women in this study described marriage as a partnership built on friendship and shared responsibilities, emphasizing how important emotional closeness and practical cooperation are in keeping a relationship strong.

When it comes to the ideal age for marriage, most women saw 25 to 30 years as the right window. This suggests a shift away from traditional early marriages and highlights a growing focus on personal readiness, financial stability, and mental preparedness. This pattern is in line with what other studies have found, where education and career aspirations often shape when women feel ready to marry.

The study also brings out how, despite evolving mindsets, societal and family pressures to marry still loom large. Many women acknowledged marriage as a cultural norm and a social expectation, but they also emphasized that personal choice and a sense of readiness are key. This nuanced balancing act between respecting tradition and making room for modern values captures the complexity that's been noted in earlier qualitative research.

The dual roles women juggle, balancing work and family life came through as another big theme. The challenges of managing a career while taking on household duties and emotional labor were echoed by many, resonating with what's been found before: despite women's growing presence in the workforce, domestic responsibilities still aren't fully balanced. Supportive partnerships and open communication were seen as vital to managing these challenges, underscoring that gender equity in marriage is essential, even if it hasn't been fully achieved yet.

Parenthood was also seen in a more personal light. For many, having children wasn't an automatic expectation, it was a decision that needed to feel right emotionally, mentally, and financially. This aligns with how reproductive autonomy has become more central in modern times. Participants were also open to alternatives like adoption or surrogacy, pointing to a broader acceptance of diverse paths to building a family, another shift seen in more recent studies.

Finally, how women were raised and what they saw in their parents' marriages still shapes their views, but there's a growing sense of independence, too. This finding reinforces what earlier studies have noted that traditional family values continue to matter, but personal agency is becoming more important. Ultimately, the study shows that while cultural and social expectations around marriage remain strong, women's views today reflect a thoughtful blend of tradition, personal choice, and evolving social norms.

CONCLUSION

This study offers a nuanced understanding of how women today perceive marriage, shaped by their personal values, family upbringing, and evolving cultural and social expectations. Rather than merely adhering to traditional norms, many women view marriage as a partnership built on respect, trust, and mutual growth. While cultural and familial influences still play a significant role in shaping these views, there is a clear movement towards prioritizing individual autonomy, readiness, and emotional preparedness. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of viewing marriage not as an obligatory milestone, but as a significant and personal choice, approached thoughtfully and in alignment with one's aspirations and sense of self.

Key findings:

1. Most women see marriage as a stable, supportive partnership built on friendship and mutual respect.
2. The ideal age for marriage is seen to be 25–30 years, though many also value mental and emotional readiness over strict timelines.
3. Social pressure to marry remains significant, felt by 83% of respondents.
4. Parenthood is viewed as a personal decision rather than an obligation, with many emphasizing mutual readiness and diverse paths like adoption or surrogacy.

5. A large majority (96.6%) strive to balance both career and marriage, rejecting the idea of prioritizing one over the other.
6. Cultural norms are influential, shaping perceptions and adding pressure, but many women advocate for personal choice and adapting these norms.
7. Family beliefs have a moderate to strong influence on women's perspectives about marriage and parenthood.

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