

A Study on Etiology of Co-Habitation in Bangalore

Mrs. Suman O.¹, Dr. Jamuna KV², Ms. Janvi Jaiswal^{3*}

ABSTRACT

Cohabitation is the arrangement where people who are not married, usually couples, and they live together. The arrangement between an unmarried man and unmarried women of opposite sex or, in some cases persons of the same sex as well. The relationship can be either short term or a long-term or permanent basis, however either of the two cohabitators can break the arrangement and move out of the relationship whenever they want as there are no such commitments or promises bound towards their relationships. Cohabitation is commonly called as “Living- Relationships”. In this study an attempt has been made to bring forward the factors influencing people to move into Cohabitation and its possible consequences in the society, in the city of Bangalore. A sample size of 74 people was taken from people all across Bangalore irrespective of their Gender and Ethnicity. From this study four major factors were brought forward that are Psychological, Economical, Social & Digitalization Factors. There was a major difference seen in opinion towards Cohabitation when the opinions of people belonging to various age groups were compared, and when the opinion of Male and Female genders were compared. People believe that Bangalore being one of the largest IT hubs is the reason for its increase in populations’ Cohabitation, alongside both the older age group of people and women of the population believed that crime rates are as well increasing due to the increase in Cohabitation.

Keywords: Cohabitation, People’s Opinion, Etiology, Relationship, Bangalore

Cohabitation is a type of arrangement where people who are not married, usually couples, live together. The arrangement between an unmarried man and unmarried women of opposite sex or, in some cases persons of the same sex as well. They are often involved in a romantic or sexually intimate relationship on a long-term or permanent basis, however either of the two cohabitators can walk in and out of the relationship whenever they want as there are no such commitments or promises bound towards their relationships. It can also be defined as an intimate relationship where two people are directly dependent on each other and share duties & responsibilities without being legally married to each other (Hemalatha & Banu, 2018a). Today Cohabitation is a common practice worldwide, However Co-habitation was first started in the European countries of Scandinavian in the 16th century.

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Forensic Science Jain (Deemed- to- be-university) Bangalore, Karnataka, India.

²Programme Head BSc. Forensic Science & Assistant Professor, Department of Forensic Science Jain (Deemed-to- be-university) Bangalore, Karnataka, India.

³Student, Department of Forensic Science Jain (Deemed-to-be-university) Bangalore, Karnataka, India.

*Corresponding Author

Received: July 13, 2023; Revision Received: July 26, 2023; Accepted: July 31, 2023

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The origin of the term comes from the mid-16th century, from the Latin “cohabitare”, from co- 'together' + habitare 'dwell'. Cohabitation is popularly referred to as “Live-in-Relationship” which means the same as an arrangement of unmarried couples living together and sharing their responsibilities and duties as a married couple resembling marriages.

From the mid-16th century most of the western countries have started following this trend and now it is a part of their culture. During the past decades, there has been an increase in unmarried couples cohabiting. Historically, many Western countries have been influenced by various doctrines on unmarried cohabitation. In Central and Eastern Europe, during the decades of 1980 and 1990, there were major changes in the government & the society. The society entered a new era of increased social freedom, less rigid rules, and less authoritarian governments with people with wide acceptance towards lifestyles and living. (Horowitz et al., 2019) They interacted with Western Europe and some became members of the European Union, as a result, the patterns of family life have started to change the marriage rates have declined, and marriage was postponed to a later age with growing co-habitation amongst people, this also led to an increase to births to unmarried mothers. According to statistics in most of Northern and Central Europe, direct marriage has become outdated with over 75% of people into cohabitation, especially those of the younger ages. Whereas in united states around 70% of the unions are into co-habitation. In parts of Southern and Eastern Europe which is traditionally the birth place of co-habitation had low levels of cohabitation, for example, Spain and Russia, nearly half of all unions who have now started with cohabitation in some parts of Europe, that is Italy and Romania the trends of cohabitation are comparatively low around a quarter of unions have only started with cohabitation (Kok & Leinarte, 2015).

The law related to Cohabitation varies from country to country especially when it comes to the child born out of these relationships. In the country of France, the national assembly 1999 gave legal rights to its citizen for Cohabiting and cohabitators can legally cohabit and enter into a civil agreement without much of hassles, the civil agreement is in the form of a contract between the two people where they can enjoy the rights of a married couple without actually getting married. The legal term for such agreements is “Civil Solidarity Pacts’ (pacte civil de solidarite)”.(Kok & Leinarte, 2015) . In Philippines, cohabitation has a legal meaning which is stated as “to dwell together, in the manner of husband and wife, for some period of time”. The common law for cohabitation is governed by the Philippines Family Code (Article 147 & Article 148). The Family Code of Philippines offers rights to a man and women when independent and capable enough to live their own lives the rights to cohabit as married couples without actually getting married. Scotland has a unique law which states that if due to any reasons the partners split up their relationship and end the cohabitation, the opposite partner can claim for financial support and benefits from his/her partner in the court of law. (Dew, 2021a)

In India, co-habitation is traditionally not accepted, living together without marriage is considered a taboo and is very rare. The society still being conservative considers marriage to be the purest and most scared relationship. the concept of husband, wife and family is the highest most settlement concept of life. The marriage between two people holds down various concepts of marriage patterns, selection of the partners, marriage rituals and customs, correct age for marriage, financial exchanges and investments, and divorce. But recently in the developing years, things are changing fast and couples have started living together in a single household even without being married. Although cohabitation not illegal and is bound and protected by various laws people still tend to look down upon it, settling down and

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family apex is a social institution and followed by all the people irrespective of their caste, creed and religion. However, it can be seen that the attitude towards cohabitation largely depends upon the generation people belong to and their social influences. (Feldman, Babu, 2017)

Indian courts have legalized cohabitation in India with several laws for the people into cohabitation, however there are several criteria for Cohabitation such as:

- 1. The couple should appear as spouses in the society:** The Indian court of Law has officially legalized Cohabitation; however, the citizens and the society are yet to accept these relationships openly. Cohabitation is still looked down by many people and considered to be as taboo and illegal. therefore, the court of law has made it a criterion for the cohabitators to make their relationship appear genuine and akin to marriage so that the societal peace and harmony is maintained without any person having an issue against it.
- 2. Both the partners should be of legal age to marry:** the legal age for marriages for girls is 18 years old and for boys is 21 years old. When two people are cohabiting they tend to look forward towards their future and family plannings, hence the court of law has made it a mandate rule for moving into cohabitation.
- 3. Both the partner should be unmarried:** when two people are cohabiting it shall be of “domestic nature”. A relationship shall only be considered as domestic nature when both the partners are unmarried. when either of the partner is married the relationship is considered to be “out of marriage” relation or external relation, which is not allowed by the court of law.
- 4. Both of the partner should willingly enter the cohabitation without any external force:** Relationships between two people should be by their mutual consents and without any external force. When people are forced into a relationship and mutual consents are not taken it is considered as forceful relationships which are not permitted by the court of law.
- 5. The couple should share household and be living together as per “Domestic Couple”:** cohabitators should be responsible towards each other, cohabitation does not mean couples coming together for spending their weekends together or someday together, they should properly share house hold responsibilities and duties.

There are several laws given by the Indian Legislature for the Cohabiting Couples(Agrawal, 2012):

- 1. Maintenance of female partner:** maintenance under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. Section 125 of the act offers a legal right to maintenance to the female partner both in and out of marriage. In the case of Chanmuniya vs Virendra Kumar Singh Kushwaha in 2011, the Supreme Court gave a judgement that when a man and women are staying together for a long period of time, even if not married the man is bound to pay for the maintenance of the female partner as under the section of 125 CrPC.
- 2. Domestic violence with the female partner or children born out of a live-in relationship:** The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 enforced to protect the women in India from abuse (mental, verbal, economic and physical) marital relationships. Shielding the female partner in co-habitation (a live-in relationship), section 2(f) of the act is applicable for protection to not only married women but women in Co-habitation (living in a relationship).
- 3. Children born out of marriages:** as per the Guidelines Governing the Adoption of Children as notified by the Central Adoption Resource Authority, live-in couples

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cannot adopt a child in India however can have their own child if co-habitation sustains for a longer period of time.

4. **Inheritance of child:** The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, section 16 talks about inheritance rights of children and provides the legal status of legitimacy to an illegitimate child (born out of marriage or co-habitation) for the sole purpose of inheritance. Hence, the children born out of a live-in relationship are also granted inheritance rights.
5. **Custody and maintenance rights of children born out of a live-in relationship:** It is the personal marriage laws that deal with the maintenance rights of children born out of regular marriages, which is applicable to children born out of a live-in relationship as well. section 125, the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, is there for children who cannot claim maintenance under personal laws, as it offers a legal right of maintenance to both the wife, female partner and children.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(Thomas Bradbury, 2020): This blog, led by Thomas Bradbury, a clinical psychologist and expert on intimate relationships and marriage, explored why couples these days seem to prefer testing their compatibility in a shared domestic environment and are more likely than previous generations to enter into a joint cohabitation. a living arrangement without legal restrictions, rather than a marriage. However, contrary to popular opinion, cohabitation tends to be less stable than marriages, and marriages in which people lived together before marriage tend to be less stable than those in which the partners did not live together.

(Rhoades et al., 2009a): This study used a new measure to examine how different types of reasons for living together were associated with individual well-being and relationship quality in a sample of 120 cohabitants heterosexual couples (N = 240). Spending time together and comfort were the strongest approved grounds. Relationship testing has also been associated with higher rates of attachment insecurity and more symptoms of depression and anxiety. There were more men more likely than women to approve of testing their relationships and less likely to approve of convenience as a reason for living together. This study is a comprehensive and quantitative examination of couples' reasons for cohabitation and the correlates of these reasons. She examined the connections between the types of reasons for living together, the quality of the relationship and individual well-being.

(Mosailova, 2014) : This study suggests that existing cohabitation research has overlooked important variables when comparing cohabitation and marriage, and that the success of a marriage that results from cohabitation is primarily related to the level of commitment, intentions to eventually formalise their relationship, level of satisfaction, and overall well-being of individuals rather than the status of their relationship before the wedding. Compared to previous decades, individuals in our society are now more hesitant to enter into marriage and are more likely to try out their relationships through cohabitation before committing.

(Hemalatha & Banu, 2018):The research paper is based on the study of an emerging trend of cohabitation or the idea of live in relationship between the opposite sex which almost resembles a marriage in the recent times. The study was conducted based on the perceptions of students/young adults from Hyderabad and Secunderabad (80, male and female) about live in relationship by using the methodology of purposive random sampling. A questionnaire consisting of 35 questions was used to measure the perceptions which was categorised into 5 categories- positive perception, negative perception, socio-cultural factors, economic and educational factors and the consequences of cohabitation. Results showcase that there are

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particularly no significant differences between the perceptions of both genders where live in relationship is under consideration.

(Bloom & Reddy, 1986): The study aims to analyse the age patterns of women at marriage, cohabitation, and first birth in India, using data from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS). The authors find that there are significant variations in the age at marriage, cohabitation, and first birth across different regions and socio-economic groups in India. They also observe that the age at marriage and cohabitation has increased over the years, while the age at first birth has remained relatively stable. The study suggests that the increase in the age at marriage and cohabitation can be attributed to factors such as urbanization, education, and changing attitudes towards marriage and family. However, the authors note that the persistence of early marriage and childbirth among certain socio-economic groups is a cause for concern, as it can lead to adverse health outcomes for both the mother and child.

METHODOLOGY

The Research method was Purposive Sampling Technique, the sample was the Population Aged between 18 and 50 irrespective of their gender & ethnicity. The sample size consisted of 74, irrespective of gender & ethnicity.

The sample size consisted of 74, irrespective of gender & ethnicity. Inclusive Criteria: Individuals from the age range of 18 to 50 years old with the knowledge to communicate in English. Exclusive Criteria: Individuals above the range for 50 years old. The data was collected using a questionnaire developed with the help of an expert.

The data was collected from the population in Bangalore, using a questionnaire developed with the help of an expert. A questionnaire developed with the help of an expert which contained 31 questions.

The data was concluded as Descriptive statistic- Percentage analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The aim of the study was to study the Etiology of Cohabitation in Bangalore. The objectives of the study were to study the factors leading to Co-habitation, the effects of Co-habitation, whether there is age difference in opinion towards Co-habitation and whether there is gender difference in opinion towards Co-habitation.

The four major dimensions which were identified were Social, Economical, Psychological & Digitalization. Each dimension consisted of various questions which would bring out the major causes and factors leading to Cohabitation, and also help in formulating various people's opinion towards Cohabitation. The questionnaire was formed and administered using Google Forms, and data from various age groups were collected.

The data was analysed using percentage analysis. Each of the question's results were formulated into –“yes, no or maybe” and percentage of each response was calculated. The sum total of all the questions response percentage were done and average response percentage was considered for each of the dimensions.

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Table 1: Showing peoples opinion on different dimensions with respect to Cohabitation.

SR. NO.	DIMENSIONS	SAMPLE SIZE (N)	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	TOTAL
1.	SOCIAL	74	41%	37%	22%	100%
2.	PSYCHOLOGICAL	74	40.8%	40.6%	18.6%	100%
3.	ECONOMICAL	74	50%	20%	30%	100%
4.	DIGITALIZATION	74	53%	34%	13%	100%

The social dimension in relation to cohabiting couples explores views on items like societal status and personal background of individuals, also ideas like lack of commitment, success in marriages, parents' approval, taboo revolving around cohabiting and increased crime rates. The survey undertaken shows that 41% of the people agree to the dimension of social life as an affecting factor in cohabitation rates. 37% had no solid opinion to base upon however 22% were in strict denial of the items covered under social dimension for cohabitation.

The psychological dimension in regards to cohabiting couples is also evaluated. It explores physical abuse, emotional outlook, anger issues and mental health in general. The study also compares items based on behaviours of cohabiting couples like impulsive decisions, future planning and peer pressure and commitment issues. The recorded response showcases 40.8% of the sample size agreeing that these items affecting the relationship. However, 40.6% had neutral views regarding the above and 18.6% were in denial of the dimension affecting cohabitation.

The economic dimension for cohabitation covers items like salary or employment status, daily expenditures and family responsibilities. Questions based on the economic dimension show results where 50% people agree that the above factors affect cohabitation and 30% did not have defined opinions and views, whereas 20% were at a disapproving standpoint.

Digitalization as a dimension in affecting cohabitation trends is considered where items like growth in IT sector, increased usage of social media, online platforms and dating sites were evaluated. Alongside other factors involved like risk of betrayal, online fake personalities. Results from the survey show that 53% people agree that digitalization has its effect on couples in general and 34% had mixed opinions in context to different items evaluated. However, 13% of the sample population disagree to this dimension bringing changes to the trend of cohabitation.

Table 2: Opinion of various age group of the population towards influence of factors for cohabitation.

SR	QUESTIONS	18-25 AGE GROUP			26-40 AGE GROUP			41-50 AGE GROUP		
		SA	A	D	SA	A	D	SA	A	D
1.	IT Sector	53.2%	38.3%	8.5%	61.1%	27.8%	11.1%	44.4%	44.4%	11.1%
2.	Employment Status	68.1%	27.2%	4.3%	66.6%	22.2%	11.1%	66.7%	22.2%	11.1%
3.	Pre-married Life	63.8%	25.5%	10.6%	38.9%	44.4%	16.7%	33.3%	22.2%	44.4%
4.	Migration	42.6%	36.2%	21.3%	72.2%	22.2%	5.6%	66.7%	22.2%	11.1%
5.	Emotional Support	66.0%	29.8%	4.3%	72.2%	22.2%	5.6%	55.5%	22.2%	22.2%
6.	Lack of Communication	57.4%	38.3%	4.3%	33.4%	44.4%	22.2%	66.6%	-	33.3%
7.	Parents Approval	17.0%	53.2%	29.8%	5.6%	44.4%	50.0%	11.1%	22.2%	66.7%
8.	Social Acceptance	23.4%	42.6%	34.0%	11.1%	38.9%	50.0%	11.1%	44.4%	44.4%
9.	Physical Abuse	21.2%	44.7%	34.1	27.8%	55.6%	16.9%	33.3%	44.4%	22.2%
10.	Crime Rates	12.8%	48.9%	38.3%	33.3%	27.8%	38.9%	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%

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A comparison among the opinion of different age group was done, which shows data such as all the age groups a great IT sector employment status of individual, Premarital life, migration, emotional support and lack of communication where the major causes behind people moving into cohabitation.

For the factors of social acceptance and parents' approval all the three age groups disagree with it and for and for factors of physical abuse and crime rates it was seen that the younger generation didn't accept that physical abuse and crime rates are a part of habitation but the middle generation and the older generations results that they believe in cohabitation leads to physical abuse and increase in crime rates.

Table 3: Opinion of male and female population towards influence of factors for cohabitation

SR	QUESTIONS	MALE			FEMALE		
		SA	A	D	SA	A	D
1.	IT Sector	40.9%	45.5%	13.6%	59.6%	32.7%	7.7%
2.	Employment Status	63.7%	27.3%	9.1%	69.3%	25.0%	19.3%
3.	Pre-married Life	45.5%	36.4%	18.2%	57.7%	26.9%	15.4%
4.	Migration	40.9%	45.5	13.6%	57.7%	25.0%	17.3%
5.	Emotional Support	50.0%	36.4%	13.6%	73.0%	23.1%	3.8%
6.	Lack of Communication	54.5%	31.8%	13.6%	51.9%	36.5%	11.5%
7.	Parents Approval	13.6%	50.0%	36.4%	13.5%	46.2%	40.4%
8.	Social Acceptance	18.2%	31.8%	50.0%	19.2%	46.2%	34.6%
9.	Physical Abuse	18.1%	54.4%	27.3%	28.8%	42.3%	28.9%
10.	Crime Rates	13.6%	27.3%	59.1%	57.7%	26.9%	15.4%

The survey utilises purposive sampling through which we derive the results and data for male and female respondents separately.

Both male and female strongly agree having similar views on many dimensions like employment status, parents' approval, social acceptance and lack of communication in regards to cohabiting couples and live in relationships. However, there is an obvious indifference observed when it comes to exploring dimensions like IT sector, pre married lifestyle, migration and physical abuse.

Also there is a drastic difference between the beliefs of men and women, when observing results of dimensions like emotional support, and crime rates regarding cohabitation.

Major Findings of the Study:

There are some of the major findings of the study such as the survey shows the growing IT sector and stable financial background or employment status strongly plays an important role for people's reason to move into cohabitation. Majorly, the people agreed that cohabitation provides the explore premarital stages and also provide emotional supports to each other. The factor of migration of peoples strongly affects cohabitation and it's found that many people who have migrated into Bangalore are into cohabitation, as migration plays an important role lack of communication / adjustment with the family as well affects the factor of cohabitation, where people want to move out of their own house and stay in habitation.

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“Modern day parents may view cohabitation as a natural and acceptable step” but these view wear only approved by 13% of the total population, with majority of people disagree to it, on the similar basis, majority of the respondents said that co-habitation is still not accepted as a part of the society. On the statement of “Physical abuse being common during cohabitation” majority of the respondents agreed to it, with about only 25% people disagree to it. While talking about increase in crime rates, majority of the people choose not to keep any opinion and shoot as neutral, whereas on the other side the result where higher on disagree.

CONCLUSION

Cohabitation is an intimate relationship where two people are directly dependent on each other and share duties & responsibilities without being legally married to each other. In India, co-habitation is traditionally not accepted, living together without marriage is considered a taboo and is very rare. But recently, things are changing fast and couples have started living together in a single household even without being married. The aim of the study was to study the Etiology of Cohabitation in Bangalore. Bangalore as a city has a wide range of people staying here from all parts of India. The study has brought forward four major causes for people to move into Cohabitation, that is Psychological Factor, Social Factor, Economical Factors & Digitization. The social factors such as success in marriages, parents’ approval, taboo revolving around cohabiting and increased crime rates were the major findings of the study. The psychological factor included anger issues, impulsive decision, future planning and peer pressure and commitment issues whereas the economical factors found were salary and employment status, daily expenditures, day to day lifestyles and family responsibilities. The digitalization factor showed increase in usage of social media, online platforms and dating sites were the major highlights of the study. A difference in age opinion towards cohabitation and difference in gender opinion as well was found.

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Acknowledgement

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Suman, O., Jamuna, KV, & Jaiswal, J. (2023). A Study on Etiology of Co-Habitation in Bangalore. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 11(3), 1355-1363. DIP:18.01.130.20231103, DOI:10.25215/1103.130