

# A Study on Traditional Marriage of Kashmir and Attitude of Kashmiri Youth Towards Marriage, Family life and Healthy Living

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**Abstract:** Marriage (nikāh) in Islamic law (sharia), is a legal and social contract between two individuals. It is an act of Islam and is strongly recommended. In Islam Polygyny is permitted under some conditions, but polyandry is forbidden. Economic growth and mass media revolution brought a drastic change in Kashmiri society especially in the field of marriage and family life. Economic prosperity enables people to consume more goods and services and enjoy better standards of living. The traditional marriage system in modern times is disappearing slowly. In traditional marriage system, one requires the families of the future bride and groom to engage in ritual visits and exchange gifts. In general there are two types: civil marriage and religious marriage, and typically marriages employ a combination of both (religious marriages must often be licensed and recognized by the state, and conversely civil marriages, while not sanctioned under religious law, are nevertheless respected). In Kashmir, marriage are performed in various ways and under various religions such as Muslim, Hindu, Sikhs, Christians, etc. In modern times every family member is considered important and is supposed to play his/her role. In this context the present research carried out in Kashmir is designed to study the traditional marriage in Kashmir and approach of Kashmiri youth towards marriage as well as family life. Four hundred unmarried educated youth belonged to the age group of 20- 25 years studying in different academic institutions of Kashmir were selected randomly for the present study. The data was collected by questionnaire cum interview method and the results of the study revealed that majority of the respondents agreed with the statement marriage is essential for human life. Majority of the respondents opined that 20-25 year is the suitable age of marriage. In majority, arranged marriage was preferred by (57.5% male and 63.5% female) respondents, a good percentage of respondents (65.5% male and 57.5% female) were against dowry system and a little percentage of respondents believe that dowry helps in getting good match. Majority of respondents (53.5% male and 41.5% female) gave more importance to career than marriage which results in thousands of youth without marriage above the age of 45 years. The study further revealed that majority of the respondents showed positive approach towards family life, wanted to work more after marriage and majority of respondents had confidence that they could make balance between work and family life after marriage. Majority of the respondents during survey told that adjusting, sacrificing, loving and tolerance are the best qualities to lead a good family life. Finally, balanced diet to manage happy married healthy life and solutions to issue related marital life in traditional as well as in scientific system were discussed. It was suggested that for happy healthy married life one should live a pious life, stop stressing over life, follow health advisory, avoid fast foods, unnecessary fatty diet, deep fried foods, spicy, salty and Junk food.

**Keywords:** Kashmir, youth,, family, dowry, marriage, work life balance, statistics

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Marriage is a sacred undertaking and the major religions of the world believe that marriage is an important part of life and the purpose of marriage is to: unite with someone they love for the rest of their lives, to be faithful and make this sacrament with God's blessing and in God's presence.

It is from the time of Prophet Adam (A.S) that marriage has been an important act in one's life and is one of the main decisions. Christians believe that marriage is a gift from God, one that should not be taken for granted. It is the right atmosphere to engage in sexual relations and to build a family life. Getting married in front of God, in a church, is very important and is a public declaration of love and commitment. Historically speaking, marriage during the Vedic times took place by a variety of methods. The arranged marriages were preferred and the consent of the bride was generally taken into consideration. The researchers were of the opinion that sticking to traditions and placing one's faith on the judgment of one's parents is not such a bad thing, has been proved by the low divorce rates among arranged marriage couples. Kashmiri weddings, without any doubt, are very intriguing and unique. As they say, "Kashmir is heaven on earth" and the wedding in Kashmir are more like a match in heaven! In Kashmir traditional wedding process starts with Manzimyor (a Kashmiri word for matchmaker) who is a person hired to find suitable profiles of guys/girls. The Manzimyor shares the suitable profiles of the eligible brides/grooms with the family in a process called Parche Traavum. The second step after discussion and meeting of the respective sides is the officially announces the wedding. The groom's family adorns the bride with a gold jewellery. The third step is Nishayn (Engagement) in this both the family arranges a grand ceremony and It is mostly organized by the bride's family in which all the close family members, friends are invited and the ceremony is followed by a lavish feast called "Wazwan". The fourth step is Saatnaam in which the family finalizes and officially announces the wedding dates to the family and friends. Saatnaam, again a grand celebration with traditional music and and lavish feast. The fifth step is Malmaenz also known as maun or haldi in which the families start off the main wedding ceremonies with malmaenz. Elder women in families oil the bride's hair and applies haldi to the bride. The sixth step is Maenzraat, the night before the wedding, where the women in family apply mehendi or henna on the bride's hands and feet. The seventh step is Ab Shehrun (Special bridal bath and Namaz) in this in the morning of the wedding day, the bride takes a bath to cleanse himself/herself for the new beginnings. He/She is mostly accompanied by his/her close relatives/friends and after the bath, the bride wears their traditional outfit and offers two rakath. The eighth step is Nikah Khwaani, the most modest one. The priest recites holy verses of Quran and prays for the happiness of the bride and groom. The ninth step is Yini Wol (The feast) in which post wedding, the families, friends, neighbours gather together for lunch and bless the couple. The tenth step is Mehraaz Saal i.e., in the evening, the groom and the baratis are given a royal treatment where they are served food in beautiful big copper plates (trami). The groom is given an extravagant seat made of silk carpets. The women folk welcome groom with traditional songs wanvun.

Wanvun displayed or sung by Kashmiri Muslim women during marriage process of Kashmiri Boy or Girl is referred as Khandar Wanvun (Nusrat and Bilal, 2014). Kashmiri Muslim marriages are full of Wanvun from beginning to the end. In Muslim wanvun, the singing style of wanvun remains almost same in all types of wanvun whether it is Khandar Wanvun, Khatanhal Wanvun or Zarkasay Wanvun irrespective of varied poetry. The Kashmiri ladies sung wanvun in Madhya laya and the swaras in this particular type of singing remains uniform in all the styles. In this type of singing Ga is komal whereas Ga and Re swaras are mostly used in this style in ascending as well as in descending order. In Muslim wanvun only three swaras are used i.e., Sa, Re (Shudh) and Ga (Komal). In every occasion Kashmiri Muslim women start their Wanvun in the name of Allah e.g., in the following lines:

"Bismillah Karith Hemai Wanvune Sahibo Azwalo Sonuyai Rosh Rosh Karsai Posh Wathronui Sahibo Azwalo Soniye"

Nabi Saeban hyota sakhrui Sakhrith aawa ghare sonuyai (In Kashmiri language) Meaning, With the name of God, we begin chorus song, O' Prophet(PBUH) come to ours today, For you laying serene credence of floral welcome, O' Prophet(PBUH) come to ours today, The noble prophet (PBUH) is about to leave, dignified came to our home with a gay.

Composition is like this:

Sa	Re	GaRe	GaRe	GaRe	Sa	GaRe	GaRe	Sa	Sa	-	-
Bis	me	la	ka	-	rith	He	mai	wan	wo	-	nui
Sa	Re	GaRe	GaRe	GaRe	Sa	GaRe	GaRe	Sa	-	-	-
Sa	hi	boa	az	wa	lo	so	oa	nu	ye	-	-

(Generally we hear these lines once groom enters first time in brides home. Aasalamalykum Sanū Mahrāzo Chānū Yin Gah pyov ālamās Eee'n Chānū Yin Gah pyov ālamās).

Wanvun of Kashmiri Muslims and Pandits (Hindus) vary to a greater extent. We know use of Sanskrit and Persian involves difference in musical compositions, ideological themes, symbols and metaphors also. Kashmiri Muslims use Persian words while as Kashmiri Pandits use Sanskrit words. Kashmiri Pandits sing Wanvun in Vilambhit (slow) Lay whereas Kashmiri Muslims sing Wanvun in Madhya Lay (medium speed). Kashmiri Sikh sing Wanvun in Drut (fast speed) t Lay. The eleventh step in traditional Muslim marriage in Kashmir is Ruksati in which after the dinner, the bride finally bids goodbye to her family and embarks on a new journey of life with her husband. The twelfth step is Muhar Tullun i.e., the groom's mother welcomes the bride to her new house and family and lifts the veil from her face. The family members and relatives give precious gifts to the bride and women sing traditional wedding songs. The thirteenth step is Walima (the grand reception), a grand reception followed by a feast held by the groom's family where they invite their friends, family members and their community. The fourteenth step is Khabri Gasun i.e., after few days of the wedding or next day of marriage, the bride's relatives except her parents visit the groom's house to bless them and give gifts to them, mostly cash. The fifteenth step is Phiri Saal i.e., after the wedding, the bride's family invites both the bride and the groom for dinner and treat them with the utmost love and honour. The sixteenth step is Satim Doh i.e., seven days after the wedding, the bride wears seven different colours for seven days and does no household chores. The bride's parents after the seventh day are invite to the groom's place for dinner and the day is called "Satim Doh". The bride after this function goes to her parent's house for a few days. The seventeenth step is Phirraa Khabern i.e., after the bride returns from to her in-law's house, their relatives come to visit them to make sure she is doing well. The marriage traditions of Kashmir are different from other cultures on earth. The traditional marriage among Kashmiri Hindus (Pandits) resemble in cultural activities.

In Islam men and women are encouraged to enter into marriage in order to build a righteous family. Marriage, as a social institution, is essentially a civil contract. And as a civil contract it rests on the same footing as other contracts. Its validity depends on the capacity of the contracting parties, which according to Islamic law, consist in having maturity (bulugh) and discretion. Mutual consent and public declaration of the marriage contract are its essentials. The law does not insist on any particular form in which this contract is entered into or on any specific religious ceremony, although there are different traditional forms prevalent amongst the Muslims in different parts of the world. In principle it has been stressed that marriage should take place publicly. Other members of the society should know of this development. Normally, the Nikah (contract of marriage) takes place at a social gathering where members of both the families and other friends and relatives gather. In the Nikah-sermon the persons known as Qazi in the light of Holy Quran and Sunnah invite the spouses to a life of God-consciousness, purity, mutual love and loyalty and social responsibility. Normally there are atleast two witnesses to this matrimonial contract. There is also a dower (mahr) which the husband pays to the wife and which is far her sole and exclusive use and benefit. After the consummation of marriage, the bridegroom generally holds a feast for the relatives and friends. The actual purpose of these gatherings and feast is to make the events a social function and to let the society know of it and participate in it. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) has recommended the people to hold this celebration with simplicity and to share each other's joy. He (S.A.W) said, the best wedding is that upon which the least trouble and expense is bestowed. Holy Prophet Mohammad (S.A.W) said, Marriage is a part of my Sunnah. Whoever runs away from my path is not from amongst us (Ibn Majah). He (S.A.W) emphasizes the need to choose a righteous or religious partner in life in entering into family or marriage life. The Holy Prophet (S.A.W) says, A women is married for four things, i.e., her wealth, her family status, her beauty and her religion. So you should marry the religious women, otherwise you will be a loser (Bukhari 7/27). With righteous parents, children in the family learn the values of love and compassion, of sacrifice for others, of tolerance, mercy and kindness, and other virtuous or righteous deeds. It is the family that provides the most congenial and fulfillment of the development of human personality based on love and mercy. According to Holy Quran (30:21), And Amongst His





signs is this, that He created for your mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts). Verily in that are signs for those who reflect. Holy Prophet (S.A.W) said, when some one with whose religion and character you are satisfied ask your daughter in marriage, accede to is request. If you do not do so, there will be temptation on Earth and extensive corruption



(Tirmidhi, 3090). The sign of a righteous women is that she obeys her husband in all matters that Islam has permitted to the best of her ability. Islam permits boy and girl to see each other also inquire about the character of each other who intend to marry. What, however, stands out prominently is that marriage in Muslim society is not merely a private arrangement between the husband and wife. It is unfortunate that we have forgotten the right way of being married. The family is a part of the Islamic social order. Prophet Mohammad (S.A.W) says, There is nothing more pleasing to Allah than the house where a marriage takes place, and nothing is more displeasing to him than the house where it is severed

by divorce. The main objective of marriage, aside from human reproduction is love, mercy, mutual respect, justice, emotional well being and spiritual harmony (Quran, 30:21). Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) said, when a man marries he has fulfilled half of the religion, so let him fear Allah regarding the remaining half (Tirmidhi, 3096). In another Hadith Holy Prophet Mohammad (S.A.W) said, Among the Muslims the most perfect, as regards his faith, is the one whose character is excellent and the best among you are those who treat their wives well (Tirmidhi, 628,278). Women is recognized as a full and equal partner of man in the procreation of humankind. In Islam the righteous wife is considered as the sign of paradise for her husband on earth. The Messenger of Allah (S.A.W) gave glad tidings to those righteous women that obey their husbands, he (S.A.W) said, if the women offer prayers five times a day, protect their honour and chastity and remain faithful to her husband, she may enter paradise by whatever gate she desires (Taghreeb ul Tarheeb). Marriage was simple in the days of Prohet Mohammad (S.A.W) and was affordable to all, but at present situation is different. Finding the right spouse has become harder than ever before. We usually use the word gift for something that we give voluntarily to a person we like. Dowry, what is usually defined as a 'gift' given along with the bride by a bride's family to the bridegroom, is used as a tool of coercion and greed in modern societies. Generally, the price of dowry is set higher than the bride's family can afford. In Islam, in contrast, it is the man who pays the mahr (dower) to the women unless the women chooses not to take it (Quran, 4:4). Culture that demand dowry from the bride's family are actually practicing the opposite of what Allah has commanded. Islam guides us at every step of our daily life. If we would truly follow the teachings about marriage in Islam, no male or female would face any kind of problem in their marriage. In Indian social system family is regarded as the basic as well as the oldest institution. Marriage is the central point of social organization and the permanent and eternal institution of every society in the world. Kashmiri family like other families across the world has undergone drastic changes in the structural, functional, role relationship and values. The most prominent causes of change are urbanization, modernization, liberalization and increased education of women folk. Family relationship is considered to be the building blocks of any society and despite the multitude of changes the family in Kashmir continues to provide strength and stability. Kashmir is proud of its heritage of nurturance, love cum passion, self- lessons, tolerance, generosity and understanding in family life. The last two decades has seen a tremendous drift in morals and values existing in our society due to drastic changes in economic prosperity and the Internet revolution that has exposed people to social trends prevalent across the globe. In the light of above discussion and literature available (e.g., ref. 1-11), an attempt was made to study the approach of educated youth towards marriage and family life in Kashmir valley.

## II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

In this paper well-develop pre-tested questionnaire was used to collect the information from the sample of 400 (200 male, 200 female) educated youth selected randomly via online/offline mode from different parts of Kashmir valley using stratified random sampling technique. The respondents under study were explained the purpose of study to get their consent. The questionnaire was designed to get awareness about factors affecting happiness of youth in Kashmir. The sample size was computed using (Cochran, 1977)

$$n = \frac{Z_{\alpha}^2 P (1 - P)}{d^2}$$

Here, we choose  $p=0.5$ ,  $Z_{\alpha} = 1.96$  and  $d=0.05$ . That gives the sample size  $n \sim 384$  and we decided to take  $n = 400$ . The data collected using questionnaire cum interview method was tabulated, analyzed and interpreted statistically using appropriate statistical tools. The statistical software SPSS (version 20) was used for analysis of data.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 depicts results on essentials of marriage. It was observed that majority (89.5% male and 92.5% female) of the respondents agreed that marriage is essential for life. Further, majority of respondents (87.5% male and 93.0% female) agreed that marriage is a social contract. Most of the respondents (57.5% male and 64.5% female) opined that marriage is essential for life so that somebody will be there to take care in future. It has been found that majority of the respondents (69.5% male and 72.5% female) gave their opinion that 21-25 year is the suitable age of marriage for an individual. The respondents in majority (53.5% male and 41.5% female) gave first priority to career after completing





education. This in one of the main reason we have thousands of youth above 45 years of age without marriage as educated youth don't get any good job soon. Most of the girls understudy feel that freedom would be affected by marriage as they have to work according to the moods and instructions of their husband and in laws so delay their marriage. Majority of respondents (96.5% male and 98.5% female) reported that marriage is better than living-in relationship and very little percentage liked to be single for a longtime then to be married.

**Table 1:** Information's on essentials of marriage from the studied population

S. No.	Characteristics	Variables	Gender	Percentage (%)
1	Marriage is essential	Agree	Male	89.5
			Female	92.5
2	Marriage is a social contract	Agree	Male	87.5
			Female	93.0
3	Purpose of marriage	Some body to take care in future	Male	57.5
			Female	64.5
4	Suitable age of marriage	21-25 yr	Male	69.5
			Female	72.5
5	What is your priority after education	Career	Male	53.5
			Female	41.5
		Marriage	Male	15.0
			Female	31.0
		Both	Male	31.5
			Female	27.5
6	Advantages of being single than to be married	Yes	Male	11.5
			Female	8.5
7	Marriage is better than living in relationship	Yes	Male	96.5
			Female	98.5

The data presented in Table 2, reveals that data on information on preference of marriage shows that most of the respondents (57.5% male and 63.5% female) preferred for arranged marriage. Further, majority of respondents (83.5% male and 80.5% female) respondents believe that freedom affected on marriage as people do not took it much serious as was taken earlier. In response to statement i.e., Dowry must be given to get perfect match, majority (65.5% male and 57.5% female) respondents were against giving dowry. It is unfortunate that in practical field we don't avoid dowry. The biggest proof is increased number of unmarried youth as due to dowry system and increased expenses in marriage it is difficult for a common youth to get married on time. The results of our study are in partial agreement with the earlier studies (e.g., Rabita, 2012).

**Table 2:** Preference of marriage in the studied population

S. No.	Characteristics	Variables	Gender	Percentage (%)
1.	Choice of marriage	(a) Love marriage	Male	7.5
			Female	3.0
		(b) Arranged marriage	Male	57.5
			Female	63.5
		(c) According to the situation	Male	16.5
			Female	22.0
		(d) Love with arranged	Male	18.5
			Female	11.5
2.	Freedom affected on marriage	(a) Yes	Male	83.5
			Female	80.5
		(b) No	Male	16.5
			Female	19.5



3.	Dowry must be given to get perfect match	(a) Yes	Male	10.0
			Female	14.0
		(b) No	Male	65.5
			Female	57.5
		(c) No Idea	Male	24.5
			Female	28.5

Table 3 revealed information on attachment towards family life. It was found that cent percent of respondents had affinity towards family, majority of respondents (male=96.5, female=97.5) showed interest for family in future and majority of respondents (male=73.5, female=85.5%) like to live in nuclear family. In case of having own child after marriage cent percent respondents want their own child. It was interesting to note that 80% respondents were aware of their family role and responsibility and 76% of them wanted to dependent on parents and husbands for decision regarding children and money. Similar finding was also observed by Bhavana et.al. (2015).

**Table 3:** Attachment towards family life in the studied population

S. No.	Characteristics	Variables	Gender	Percentage (%)
1.	Family affinity	Yes	Male	100
			Female	100
2.	Interested for family in future	Yes	Male	96.5
			Female	97.5
3.	Types of family to live in	Nuclear family	Male	73.5
			Female	85.5
4.	Interested to have our own child	Yes	Male	100
			Female	100
5.	Prefer to stay in joint family after marriage	Yes	Male	77.5
			Female	59.5
6.	Aware of family role and responsibility	Yes	Male	85.5
			Female	87.5
7.	Decision regarding children and money matters	Yes	Male	92.5
			Female	95.0

The data in Table 4 showed information on opinion of youth between work and family life balance. It was surprising to note that majority (male=96.5%, female=92.5%) of respondents had positive approach towards work after marriage and around half of the respondents had strong will power to balance work with family life. In crisis period (90.5% male and 82.5% female) respondents opined that they would take their spouse and in-laws into confidence to solve their problem. The results are in agreement with the earlier study by Rabita (2012).

**Table 4:** Information on work and family life balance among the youth understudy

S. No.	Characteristic	Variables	Gender	Percentage (%)
1	Like to work more after marriage	Yes	Male	96.5
			Female	92.5
		No	Male	3.5
			Female	7.5
2	Balance work with family life	Very well	Male	42.5
			Female	47.5
		Try to balance	Male	36.5
			Female	29.5
		Don't know	Male	21.0
			Female	19.0
3	In case of any crisis in family	Will take parent's support	Male	7.5
			Female	17.0
		Will take friend's support	Male	2.0

		Female	10.0
	Will talk to my partner and in-laws and try to solve the problem	Male	90.5
		Female	82.5

The data presented in Table 5, revealed information on opinion on maintaining quality in family life. It was found that majority of respondents (88.5% male and 93.5% female) opined that pre-marital training on family life is required before marriage. Further, it was interesting to observe that majority (86.5% male and 72.5% female) of respondents opined to try to their spouse understand if their spouse and in-laws abuse which shows existence of Kashmiri culture and tolerance till now. Majority of the respondents understudy told that adjusting, sacrificing, loving and tolerance are the best qualities to lead a good family life.

**Table 5:** Opinion on maintaining quality in family life

S. No.	Characteristics	Variables	Gender	Percentage (%)
1.	Pre-marital training necessary for family life	(a) yes	Male	88.5
			Female	93.5
		(b) no	Male	11.5
			Female	6.5
2.	Response in case your spouse and in-laws abuse	(a) Tolerate and adjust	Male	8.5
			Female	6.5
		(b) Try to make them understand	Male	86.5
			Female	72.5
		(c) Take the support of parents	Male	5.0
			Female	9.5
		(d) Take the support of police and law	Male	1.0
			Female	13.5
3.	Qualities to lead a good family life	(a) Sensitive and responsible	Male	15.5
			Female	13.5
		(b) Adjusting and sacrificing	Male	42.5
			Female	36.5
		(c) Think first about myself only	Male	1.0
			Female	2.5
		(d) Loving and tolerant	Male	41.0
			Female	47.5

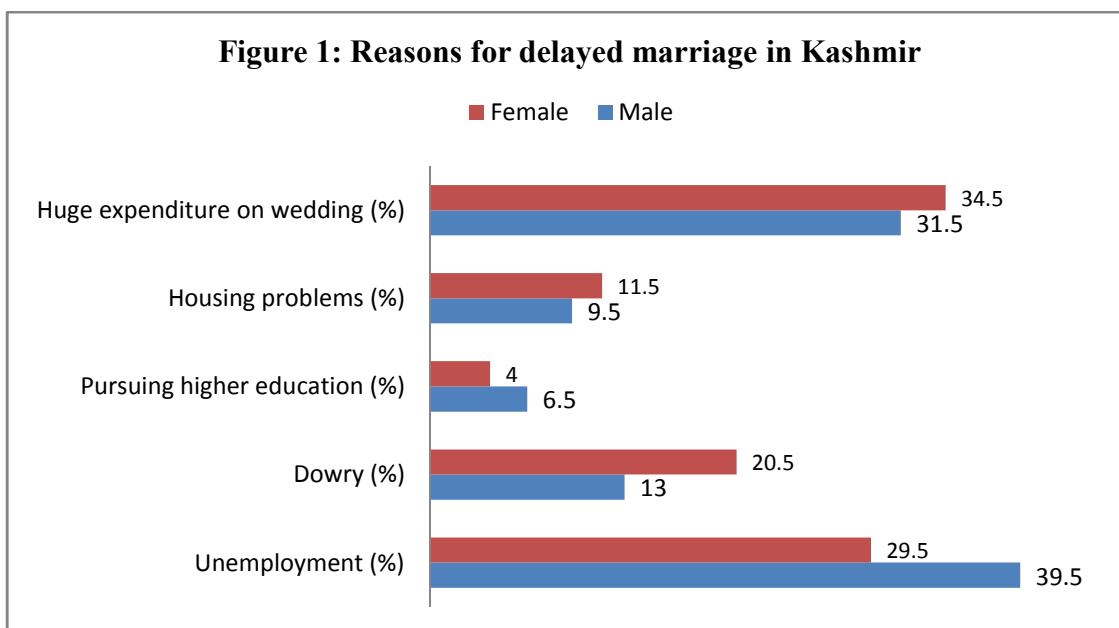
Unluckily, late marriages have become a normal practice nowadays in our society. Delayed marriages cause a serious threat to the social structure of our society because it degrades the society morally. There are multiple reasons for delayed and late marriages. One among the major reasons is job seeking and higher education as it takes years together to complete the studies and get job. After get job their choice for marriage become complicated e.g. in certain cases well settled girls prefer spouse of their own standard and choose boys who earn either equal or more than them. Similarly boys choose young and educated girls for marriage. Unemployed boys in particular have to struggle to get suitable matches. Dowry system has become relatively expensive than past, which leads to delayed marriage in poor as they tend to collect materialistic things for marriage. Poverty is a main cause of late marriage, Islam emphasizes simple marriage with little expenses and declares simple marriage as a blessed marriage. In addition to this, during match finding process people do not look for a Seerat (inner beauty and character) in their spouse but focus on caste, income, academic qualification, family background, preferences for religious sects, rural-urban differences and other such things. Girls don't want to get married in a joint or large family setup. While examining the problem of late marriage, there are two categories of people, rich and poor and poor are the real victims. Girls belonging to rich category tend to focus more on economic independence and for that they pursue higher education and find job while as, marriage is their second preferences. Unfortunately many girls ruin their lives in the name of feminism. Now speaking about the poor as well as middle-class category, they are always eager to get their daughters married but financial crunch becomes a



roadblock in their desire. Girls of this sect of society are the actual victims. Due to unrealistic standards set for marriage, girls belonging to poor families cross the ideal marriageable age.

Firstly, marriage on time is the need of hour for every male and female. Young couple are more compatible and adjustable to change than people who marry late. Late marriages end up in a family issues and divorce. Secondly, people who are financially good should help poor parents to get their daughters married. This is a social responsibility of all to stop the alarming trend of late marriage.

The data presented in Figure 1, revealed that majority of the male respondents understudy reported that the main causes of delayed marriage in Kashmir are unemployment (39.5%), followed by huge expenses on wedding (31.5%), followed by dowry (13.0%), followed by housing problems (9.5%) and pursuing higher education (6.5%). Further, the female respondents under study were of the opinion that the main causes of delayed marriage in Kashmir valley are huge expenses on wedding (34.5%), followed by unemployment (29.5%), followed by followed by dowry (20.5%), followed by housing problems (11.5%) and pursuing higher education (4.0%). It is sad to inform that more than 50000 women have crossed the marriage age due to any cause mentioned above. Jammu and Kashmir has the highest proportion of unmarried persons within the age bracket of 15 to 29 years, among all states and union territories, according to a government survey. According to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation's 'Youth in India 2022' study, J&K has a higher percentage of 29.1 percent of young people (aged up to 29 years) who are not married than the national average. The recent study revealed that it is the highest percentage reported by any state or union territory in India.



In group discussion the respondents were told about living healthy married life and how to solve marital issue using traditional treatments. In case after marriage of 1-2 years women is unable to conceive even after repeated attempts, it can be heart-wrenching. In Kashmir infertility problems in both males and females have been on an unbelievable rise. The infertility in females often results from hormonal imbalance brought about by health conditions e.g., PCOS, Endometriosis, Hyperandrogenism. The incidences of infertility are also relatively higher in individuals (both males and females) suffering from obesity, diabetes, thyroid problems, stress, anxiety, and related problems. The youth under study were encouraged to adopt Unani approach to deal with infertility issues. It was found that lifestyle habits (such as sleeping pattern, substance abuse, sedentary life sans any exercise or physical activities) and dietary practices contribute immensely towards the reproductive health of an individual. The researchers found that leading an unhealthy or sedentary lifestyle or eating unhealthy foods often results in an accelerated built up of toxins in the body which disrupts the balance between the four humors (Dum or blood, Sauda or black bile, Balgham or Phlegm, Safra or yellow bile). More than often, this disruption affects the reproductive health of an individual making it difficult for a woman to conceive. The Unani medicine system used in India since ancient

times (as early as the 11th century), has truly been a savior for millions of couples who had given up all hopes of embracing parenthood naturally and safely without any complications or side effects (as often seen in the case of conventional treatment). It is a matter of concern that infertility is a growing problem in Kashmir during last two decades. The researchers discussed the following with the respondents under study:

(a) *Ilaj Bil Ghiza* (Dietotherapy): Time and again, Unani has stressed the importance of healthy and nutritious eating in dealing with infertility. The food that one eats can play a pivotal role in improving the quantity as well as the quality of the sperms and the eggs. With healthy eating, one also needs to lead a more relaxed and active life. Meditation, mild to moderate exercise and physical activities also work wonders to restore the hormonal balance.

In general, walnuts, green leafy vegetables, salmon, oysters, raspberries, blueberries, eggs, bread (whole grain), flax seeds are known to improve the condition of infertility in both the sexes. For men, citrus fruits, garlic, pumpkin seeds, tomatoes, carrots, berries, red peppers contribute significantly to deal with infertility and related problems. For women, the fertility boosting food options include eggs, milk, yam, nuts, and lean meat and poultry. One is also expected to avoid or reduce the intake of coffee, alcohol, processed foods, saturated and trans fats, simple carbohydrates, soy products, tofu, fish with a high mercury content (King Mackerel, swordfish, shark, to name a few).

(b) *Ilaj Bil Dawa* or Pharmacotherapy: The use of Unani medicines (comprising of herbal concoctions and formulations) have been path breaking in dealing with a myriad of fertility problems including low libido, sperm and egg mortality and morphology, enhancing the sperm count. Some of the herbs often used in treating infertility include *Withania somnifera*, *Nigella sativa*, *Sida cordifolia*, *Asparagus adscendens*, *Tribulus terrestris*.

(c) *Ilaj Bil Tadbeer* or Regimental Therapy: Elevated levels of toxins in the body can immensely interfere with the fertility in both men and women. *Ilaj Bil Tadbeer* is a detoxification process that goes a long way to cleanse the body of the harmful toxins.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

Marriage is a social contract because different social customs and traditions are observed in the institution of marriage and family life. It is the legal union of a couple as spouses and the basic elements of a marriage are: the parties' legal ability to marry each other, mutual consent of the parties, and a marriage contract as required by law. The study revealed that majority of respondents (89.5% male and 92.5% female) agreed that marriage is essential for life. Further, majority of respondents (87.5% male and 93.0% female) agreed that marriage is a social contract. It has been found that majority of the respondents (69.5% male and 72.5% female) gave their opinion that 21-25 year is the suitable age of marriage for an individual and in majority (53.5% male and 41.5% female) gave first priority to career after completing education. This is one of the main reason we have thousands of youth above 45 years of age without marriage as educated youth don't get any suitable employment soon. It was encouraging that the respondents in majority (57.5% male and 63.5% female) preferred traditional way of marriage in Kashmir i.e., arranged marriage and majority (65.5% male and 57.5% female) respondents were against giving dowry. It is noticed that in practical field situation is somewhat different. The majority (male=96.5%, female=92.5%) of respondents had positive approach towards work after marriage and around half of the respondents had strong will power to balance work with family life. The love and affection of the family members was a source of great strength to the participants of the our study. Further, in crisis period (90.5% male and 82.5% female) respondents opined that they would take their spouse and in-laws into confidence to solve their problems. The discussion with respondents revealed that in Kashmir due to complex customary approaches people mostly neglect the scientific concerns that instead of marrying and starting a family in their 20's, most of the people put off such commitments until their 30's even to 40's where the probability to conceive becomes very small. Experts in majority agree, that a woman's fertility drops sharply and by her late 30's she is about 30% less fertile than her early 20s. Although latest scientific techniques like IVF could help there but being very costly methods of treatment these can't be made trend in the poor societies like ours. In Kashmir there is a need to engage the print and electronic media, civil societies and religious scholars to spread awareness among common people related marital issues and do away with the misconceptions regarding the traditional as well as modern scientific techniques

available. Thus it can be concluded that as marriage is an institution which binds two individuals, two families and is a medium to attach

other members of the family, it should not be neglected. The young generations should be educated regarding importance of family life and marital issues so that there will be peace and prosperity in the society in general.

#### V. LIMITATION OF STUDY

To get more information on the topic under study, it is suggested that a similar study for a large sample size may be conducted and comparison may be made among respondents on the basis of gender, residence, family status, parents education etc

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