

Impact Of Social Media And Marriage : A Sociological Study

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Introduction

Marriage is one of the most important social institutions that regulates family formation, social relationships, cultural traditions, and social continuity. In every society, marriage has been shaped by social norms, religious beliefs, economic conditions, and cultural values. Traditionally, especially in Indian society, marriage decisions were largely influenced by families, relatives, caste groups, religion, and community traditions. However, with the development of modern technology and the rapid expansion of social media, significant changes have occurred in the nature and functioning of the marriage institution.

Social media has become an important agent of social change by transforming the way individuals communicate, establish relationships, and make decisions regarding marriage. Platforms such as social networking sites, messaging applications, and online matrimonial services have created new opportunities for interaction among individuals beyond traditional social boundaries. These changes have influenced partner selection, relationship formation, family involvement, and expectations related to marriage. The present sociological study focuses on understanding the changing dimensions of social media and its impact on the institution of marriage in contemporary society.

Meaning of Social Media

Social media refers to digital platforms that enable individuals to communicate, exchange information, share experiences, and create social networks through the internet. It has become a major medium of interaction among young people and has influenced various aspects of social life, including education, employment, friendships, and marriage relationships.

Social media has reduced geographical barriers and allowed people from different regions, cultures, and social backgrounds to connect with each other. This increased interaction has created new possibilities for relationship formation and marriage decisions.

Meaning of Marriage Institution

The institution of marriage refers to a socially accepted relationship between individuals that creates family bonds, responsibilities, and social roles. Marriage provides social recognition to relationships and plays an important role in maintaining family structures and cultural traditions. In traditional societies, marriage was often considered a relationship between families rather than only between individuals. Factors such as caste, religion, social status, family background, and economic position played an important role in marriage arrangements. However, modern social changes have gradually increased individual participation in marriage decisions.

Social Media and Changing Marriage Patterns

Change in Partner Selection Process

One of the major changes brought by social media is the transformation of the partner selection process. Earlier, marriage partners were mainly selected through family networks, relatives,

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and community connections. Today, individuals have greater opportunities to communicate with potential partners through social media and online matrimonial platforms.

Young people increasingly consider factors such as education, career, personality, interests, and emotional compatibility while selecting partners. Social media provides a space where individuals can know each other before making marriage decisions.

Increase in Individual Choice

Social media has strengthened individual choice in marriage decisions. Educated youth, especially in urban areas, are becoming more independent in selecting their life partners.

The influence of social media has encouraged a shift from completely family-controlled marriage systems toward a balance between family involvement and individual preference. Personal understanding and emotional connection have become important factors in modern marriage relationships.

Influence on Love Marriage and Inter-Caste Marriage

Social media has increased opportunities for interaction among people from different social, cultural, and regional backgrounds. This interaction has contributed to the acceptance of love marriages and, in some cases, inter-caste and inter-regional marriages.

Although traditional factors such as caste, religion, and family approval continue to influence marriage decisions in Indian society, social media has created opportunities to challenge certain social boundaries.

Changing Role of Family in Marriage Decisions

Traditionally, families had a dominant role in arranging marriages. Social media has changed this role by increasing the involvement of individuals in relationship decisions.

Today, families often participate as advisors rather than sole decision-makers. However, family acceptance remains an important factor, particularly in societies where traditional values continue to influence marriage practices.

Impact on Communication Between Couples

Social media has changed communication patterns among couples. Digital platforms allow couples to communicate regularly through messages, video calls, and online interactions.

This improved communication can strengthen emotional bonds, especially for couples living in different locations. However, excessive use of social media may also create problems such as misunderstanding, lack of privacy, jealousy, and conflicts

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the role of social media in changing marriage patterns.
2. To examine the influence of social media on partner selection.
3. To understand changes in traditional marriage practices.
4. To study the impact of social media on communication between couples.
5. To analyze the positive and negative effects of social media on marital relationships.
6. To understand the changing attitudes of youth towards marriage.
7. To examine the relationship between modernization, social media, and marriage institution.

Importance of the Study

This study helps in understanding how technological development is influencing one of the most important social institutions. It provides knowledge about changing family structures, relationship patterns, and the impact of digital communication on social life. The study is useful for understanding the changing values of younger generations and the transformation of traditional marriage practices in contemporary society.

Hypothesis of the Study

A hypothesis is a tentative statement that explains the expected relationship between social media and changes occurring in the institution of marriage. The present study is based on the following hypotheses:

1. Social media has significantly influenced the traditional practices and patterns of marriage in contemporary society.
2. The use of social media has increased the participation of young people in marriage-related decision-making processes.
3. Social media platforms have changed the process of partner selection by providing wider opportunities for interaction and communication.
4. Increased use of social media has contributed to changes in traditional family involvement and decision-making in marriage arrangements.

Review of Literature

The review of literature provides a theoretical and empirical background for understanding the relationship between social media and the changing nature of the marriage institution. Various sociologists and researchers have explained social change, modernization, family transformation, and the impact of technology on human relationships. The following thinkers and studies are relevant to the present research.

Émile Durkheim (1858–1917): Social Institutions and Social Change

Émile Durkheim viewed marriage and family as important social institutions that maintain social order and solidarity. According to Durkheim, social institutions change according to transformations in society. His concept of social solidarity explains that traditional societies are based on collective values, while modern societies emphasize individual choices and personal relationships. This perspective helps understand how social media has contributed to a shift from family-controlled marriage decisions toward individual participation and choice.

Max Weber (1864–1920): Rationalization and Individual Choice

Max Weber explained the process of rationalization in modern societies. According to Weber, modernization encourages individuals to make decisions based on personal choices, rational thinking, and individual goals.

In the context of marriage, Weber's ideas help explain how educated and digitally connected individuals increasingly consider personal compatibility, communication, and emotional understanding while selecting partners rather than depending only on traditional norms.

Anthony Giddens (1938–): Transformation of Intimacy

Anthony Giddens in his work on modern relationships explained that contemporary relationships are increasingly based on emotional satisfaction, equality, and mutual understanding. Giddens introduced the concept of the "pure relationship", where relationships continue based on emotional fulfilment rather than only social obligations. Social media supports this transformation by allowing individuals to communicate, develop emotional connections, and form relationships beyond traditional boundaries.

Manuel Castells (1942–): Network Society Theory

Manuel Castells proposed the concept of the Network Society, explaining how digital communication technologies reshape social relationships and institutions.

According to Castells, modern society is increasingly organized through digital networks. Social media platforms have created new forms of interaction that influence friendship, relationships, and marriage patterns. His theory is useful for understanding how online networks affect partner selection and marital relationships.

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Ulrich Beck (1944–2015) and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim (1949–): Individualization Theory

Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim explained that modern societies are moving towards greater individualization.

Their studies suggest that individuals increasingly make personal decisions regarding education, career, love, and marriage. Social media strengthens this process by providing individuals with more opportunities to interact and choose partners independently.

George Herbert Mead (1863–1931): Symbolic Interactionism

George Herbert Mead emphasized that social relationships are created through communication and interaction.

From this perspective, social media becomes an important space where individuals create identities, communicate meanings, and develop relationships. Online interaction influences how people understand love, marriage, and partnership.

Erving Goffman (1922–1982): Presentation of Self

Erving Goffman explained that individuals present themselves differently in social situations. His concept of self-presentation is highly relevant to social media because people create online identities through profiles, photographs, and posts.

In marriage-related interactions, social media influences how individuals represent their personality, lifestyle, achievements, and social status to potential partners.

Studies on Indian Marriage and Social Change

Indian sociologists have highlighted the influence of modernization, education, urbanization, and globalization on marriage practices.

M. N. Srinivas studied social change in Indian society through concepts such as **Sanskritization** and modernization. His work explains how social practices, including marriage customs, change due to wider social influences.

Research on Indian families shows that although caste, religion, and family approval remain important, educated youth increasingly participate in marriage decisions. Social media has further accelerated these changes by expanding social interaction.

Table No. 1: Distribution of Respondents According to Regular Use of Social Media Platforms

To get the information about Distribution of Respondents According to Regular Use of Social Media Platforms information was received.

Sr. No. Response Number of Respondents Percentage (%)

1	Yes	85	85%
2	No	15	15%
Total		100	100%

Interpretation

The above table shows the regular use of social media platforms among the respondents. Out of 100 respondents, 85% reported that they regularly use social media platforms, while 15% stated that they do not use social media regularly. The findings indicate that social media has become an important part of daily life, especially among educated youth and students. Regular use of social media provides opportunities for communication, information sharing, education, entertainment, and building social networks. It also plays an important role in shaping modern social relationships and influencing attitudes towards various social institutions, including marriage. The respondents who do not regularly use social media may have limited access to digital technology, less interest in online platforms, or personal preferences for traditional methods of communication. Overall, the data suggests that social media has a significant presence among respondents and acts as an important medium of social interaction in

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contemporary society. Its increasing use may influence changing patterns of relationships, communication, and marriage decisions.

Table No. 2: Distribution of Respondents According to Frequently Used Social Media Platforms

To get the information about following Distribution of Respondents According to Frequently Used Social Media Platforms information was received.

Sr. No.	Social Media Platform	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	WhatsApp	35	35%
2	Instagram	25	25%
3	YouTube	15	15%
4	Facebook	10	10%
5	LinkedIn	5	5%
6	Matrimonial Websites	8	8%
7	Other	2	2%
Total		100	100%

Interpretation

The above table presents the distribution of respondents according to the social media platforms they frequently use. Out of 100 respondents, WhatsApp is the most commonly used platform, with 35% of respondents using it regularly. This indicates that WhatsApp remains an important medium for communication, information sharing, and maintaining social relationships. About 25% of respondents reported using Instagram frequently, showing the popularity of visual-based social networking among young people. YouTube is used by 15% of respondents, mainly for information, education, entertainment, and learning purposes.

Around 10% of respondents use Facebook, while 5% use LinkedIn, mainly for professional networking and career-related activities. Matrimonial websites are used by 8% of respondents, indicating that digital platforms are gradually becoming relevant in the process of searching for marriage partners. Only 2% of respondents reported using other social media platforms. Overall, the findings show that communication-based and entertainment-oriented platforms dominate social media usage. However, the use of matrimonial websites suggests that digital technology is also influencing traditional social institutions such as marriage by providing new opportunities for interaction and partner selection.

Table No. 3: Distribution of Respondents According to Daily Time Spent on Social Media

To get the information about Distribution of Respondents According to Daily Time Spent on Social Media information was received.

Sr. No.	Time Spent Daily on Social Media	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Less than 1 hour	15	15%
2	1–3 hours	45	45%
3	3–5 hours	30	30%
4	More than 5 hours	10	10%
Total		100	100%

Interpretation

The above table shows the daily time spent by respondents on social media platforms. Out of 100 respondents, 45% of respondents spend 1–3 hours daily on social media, which represents the largest group. This indicates that social media has become a regular part of their daily communication and social interaction. About 30% of respondents spend 3–5 hours per day on

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social media, showing a high level of engagement with digital platforms for purposes such as communication, entertainment, education, and relationship building.

Around 15% of respondents use social media for less than 1 hour daily, indicating limited dependence on digital platforms. Only 10% of respondents spend more than 5 hours daily on social media, suggesting excessive use among a smaller group. The findings indicate that most respondents use social media for a moderate amount of time. Regular exposure to social media may influence their attitudes, social behavior, interpersonal relationships, and perceptions regarding marriage and family institutions. The increasing time spent on digital platforms reflects the growing importance of social media in contemporary social life.

Table No. 4: Distribution of Respondents According to Main Purpose of Using Social Media

To get the information about Distribution of Respondents According to Main Purpose of Using Social Media information was received.

Sr. No.	Main Purpose of Using Social Media	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Academic purpose	20	20%
2	Communication	35	35%
3	Entertainment	20	20%
4	Professional networking	10	10%
5	Relationship building	15	15%
Total		100	100%

Interpretation

The above table presents the main purposes for which respondents use social media. Out of 100 respondents, 35% of respondents use social media mainly for communication, indicating that digital platforms have become an important medium for maintaining contact with friends, family members, and social networks. About 20% of respondents use social media for academic purposes, showing that online platforms are useful for educational information, learning materials, and knowledge sharing. Another 20% of respondents use social media mainly for entertainment, such as watching videos, accessing online content, and leisure activities. Around 15% of respondents reported relationship building as their main purpose, which indicates that social media provides opportunities for developing personal relationships and interactions. About 10% of respondents use social media for professional networking, including career development, job opportunities, and professional communication.

The findings indicate that communication is the dominant purpose of social media use among respondents. However, relationship building through digital platforms also shows the growing influence of social media on personal relationships and social institutions, including marriage and family relationships.

Table No. 5: Distribution of Respondents According to Opinion on Importance of Social Media in Modern Social Life

To get the information Distribution of Respondents According to Opinion on Importance of Social Media in Modern Social Life information was received.

Sr. No.	Opinion	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Strongly Agree	40	40%
2	Agree	35	35%
3	Neutral	15	15%
4	Disagree	7	7%
5	Strongly Disagree	3	3%
Total		100	100%

Interpretation

The above table shows the opinion of respondents regarding whether social media has become an important part of modern social life. Out of 100 respondents, 40% strongly agreed that social media has become an essential part of contemporary society, while 35% agreed with this statement. Thus, a total of 75% respondents expressed a positive opinion about the importance of social media in modern life. About 15% of respondents remained neutral, indicating that they may recognize the importance of social media but are uncertain about its overall impact. Only 7% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed, showing that a small proportion of respondents do not consider social media as a significant part of social life.

The findings indicate that social media has become a major medium of communication, information exchange, and relationship building among people. Its growing influence has affected various social institutions, including marriage, by changing patterns of interaction, partner selection, and social relationships. The data reflects that most respondents accept social media as an important element of modern social life.

Table No. 6: Distribution of Respondents According to Opinion on Social Media and Individual Role in Selecting Marriage Partners

To get the information about Distribution of Respondents According to Opinion on Social Media and Individual Role in Selecting Marriage Partners information was received.

Sr. No.	Opinion	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Strongly Agree	35	35%
2	Agree	40	40%
3	Neutral	15	15%
4	Disagree	7	7%
5	Strongly Disagree	3	3%
Total		100	100%

Interpretation

The above table presents the opinion of respondents regarding whether social media has increased the role of individuals in selecting marriage partners. Out of 100 respondents, 35% strongly agreed and 40% agreed that social media has increased individual participation in marriage partner selection. Thus, a total of 75% of respondents expressed a positive opinion about the influence of social media on personal choice in marriage decisions.

About 15% of respondents remained neutral, indicating that they consider social media as having some influence but believe that other factors also play an important role. Only 7% disagreed and 3% strongly disagreed with the statement. The findings indicate that social media has contributed to a shift from traditional family-controlled marriage decisions towards greater individual involvement. Through social networking sites and online matrimonial platforms, individuals can communicate, understand potential partners, and make more informed choices. However, the continued importance of family, cultural values, and social norms shows that marriage decisions are still influenced by both modern and traditional factors.

Table No. 7: Distribution of Respondents According to Opinion on Whether Social Media Encourages Love Marriage Among Educated Youth

To get the information about Distribution of Respondents According to Opinion on Whether Social Media Encourages Love Marriage Among Educated Youth information was received.

Sr. No.	Opinion	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Strongly Agree	30	30%
2	Agree	40	40%
3	Neutral	15	15%

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Sr. No.	Opinion	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
4	Disagree	10	10%
5	Strongly Disagree	5	5%
Total		100	100%

Interpretation

The above table presents the opinion of respondents regarding whether social media encourages love marriage among educated youth. Out of 100 respondents, 30% strongly agreed and 40% agreed that social media encourages love marriage among educated youth. Thus, a total of 70% of respondents expressed a positive opinion about the influence of social media on love marriage. About 15% of respondents remained neutral, indicating that they are uncertain about the direct influence of social media on marriage choices. Meanwhile, 10% disagreed and 5% strongly disagreed, showing that a smaller section of respondents does not consider social media as a major factor promoting love marriages. The findings suggest that social media provides greater opportunities for communication, interaction, and relationship development among educated youth. Increased exposure to different people, cultures, and ideas through digital platforms has contributed to changing attitudes towards love marriage. However, traditional factors such as family approval, caste, religion, and social values continue to influence marriage decisions in many communities. Overall, the data indicates that social media is playing an important role in transforming marriage patterns by increasing individual choice and acceptance of modern relationship practices among educated youth.

Table No. 8: Distribution of Respondents According to Family Acceptance of Relationships Developed Through Social Media

To get the information about Distribution of Respondents According to Family Acceptance of Relationships Developed Through Social Media was received.

Sr. No.	Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Easily	20	20%
2	With some difficulty	45	45%
3	Rarely	25	25%
4	Never	10	10%
Total		100	100%

Interpretation

The above table presents the opinion of respondents regarding family acceptance of relationships developed through social media. Out of 100 respondents, 45% reported that families accept such relationships with some difficulty, indicating that although social media-based relationships are becoming common, family approval often requires time and discussion. About 20% of respondents stated that families accept relationships developed through social media easily, showing increasing acceptance of digital interactions among some sections of society. Around 25% of respondents reported that families rarely accept such relationships, while 10% stated that families never accept relationships developed through social media. The findings indicate that family acceptance of social media-based relationships is gradually increasing but remains influenced by traditional values, social norms, caste, religion, and concerns about online trust and security. Many families continue to carefully evaluate relationships formed through digital platforms before accepting them.

Overall, the data suggests that social media has introduced new forms of relationship formation, but family approval continues to remain an important factor in the marriage institution, particularly in traditional societies.

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Table No. 9: Distribution of Respondents According to Opinion on Whether Excessive Use of Social Media Negatively Affects Marital Relationships

To get the information about Distribution of Respondents According to Opinion on Whether Excessive Use of Social Media Negatively Affects Marital Relationships information was received.

Sr. No.	Opinion	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Strongly Agree	35	35%
2	Agree	40	40%
3	Neutral	15	15%
4	Disagree	10	10%
Total		100	100%

Interpretation

The above table shows the opinion of respondents regarding whether excessive use of social media negatively affects marital relationships. Out of 100 respondents, 35% strongly agreed and 40% agreed that excessive use of social media can negatively affect marital relationships. Thus, a total of 75% of respondents believe that excessive social media usage may create problems in marital life. About 15% of respondents remained neutral, indicating that they are uncertain about the direct impact of excessive social media use on marital relationships. Only 10% of respondents disagreed with the statement, suggesting that they do not consider social media overuse as a major cause of marital problems. The findings indicate that although social media improves communication and connectivity, excessive dependence on digital platforms may create issues such as reduced personal interaction, lack of attention towards partners, privacy concerns, jealousy, and misunderstandings. Overall, the data suggests that the impact of social media on marriage depends largely on the manner and extent of its use. Responsible and balanced use of social media can support healthy relationships, while excessive use may negatively influence marital harmony.

Table No. 10: Distribution of Respondents According to Major Negative Effects of Social Media on Marriage

To get the information about Distribution of Respondents According to Major Negative Effects of Social Media on Marriage information was received.

Sr. No.	Negative Effect	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Lack of privacy	25	25%
2	Trust issues	35	35%
3	Misunderstanding	20	20%
4	Time wastage	15	15%
5	Other	5	5%
Total		100	100%

Interpretation

The above table presents the major negative effects of social media on marriage relationships as perceived by respondents. Out of 100 respondents, 35% identified trust issues as the major negative effect of social media on marriage. This indicates that online interactions, lack of transparency, and doubts regarding digital communication may affect trust between partners. About 25% of respondents considered lack of privacy as the main problem, showing concerns related to sharing personal information, online activities, and privacy protection. 20% of respondents reported misunderstanding as a major negative effect, suggesting that digital communication may sometimes lead to confusion and conflicts between couples.

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Around 15% of respondents identified time wastage as a negative impact, indicating that excessive social media use may reduce quality time spent between partners. Only 5% of respondents mentioned other problems, such as addiction, emotional distance, or online conflicts. The findings indicate that although social media provides opportunities for communication and relationship building, its excessive or improper use may create challenges in marital relationships. Maintaining trust, privacy, and balanced digital usage is essential for healthy marital life.

Table No. 11: Distribution of Respondents According to Opinion on Whether Education and Social Media Influence Modern Marriage Decisions

To get the information about Distribution of Respondents According to Opinion on Whether Education and Social Media Influence Modern Marriage Decisions information was received.

Sr. No.	Opinion	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Strongly Agree	35	35%
2	Agree	45	45%
3	Neutral	12	12%
4	Disagree	8	8%
Total		100	100%

Interpretation

The above table shows the opinion of respondents regarding whether education and social media influence modern marriage decisions. Out of 100 respondents, 35% strongly agreed and 45% agreed that education and social media play an important role in influencing modern marriage decisions. Thus, a total of 80% of respondents expressed a positive opinion about the influence of education and social media on marriage choices.

About 12% of respondents remained neutral, indicating that they believe other social and cultural factors may also influence marriage decisions. Only 8% of respondents disagreed, suggesting that a small section does not consider education and social media as significant factors in changing marriage patterns. The findings indicate that education increases awareness, independence, and decision-making ability among individuals, while social media provides opportunities for communication, interaction, and access to information. Together, these factors have contributed to changes in partner selection, expectations, and attitudes toward marriage among educated youth. Overall, the data suggests that education and social media are important agents of social change that are transforming traditional marriage practices and encouraging greater individual participation in marriage decisions.

Table No. 12: Distribution of Respondents According to Influence of Traditional Factors on Marriage Decisions

To get the information about Distribution of Respondents According to Influence of Traditional Factors on Marriage Decisions information was received.

Sr. No.	Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Strongly	50	50%
2	Sometimes	30	30%
3	Rarely	15	15%
4	Never	5	5%
Total		100	100%

Interpretation

The above table presents the opinion of respondents regarding whether traditional factors such as caste, religion, and family background continue to influence marriage decisions. Out of 100

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respondents, 50% of respondents stated that these traditional factors strongly influence marriage decisions, while 30% reported that they influence decisions sometimes.

About 15% of respondents believe that traditional factors rarely influence marriage decisions, and only 5% stated that such factors never influence marriage decisions. The findings indicate that although social media, education, and modernization have brought significant changes in marriage patterns, traditional social factors continue to play an important role in Indian society. Caste, religion, family reputation, and social background remain important considerations, particularly during arranged marriage decisions. Overall, the data suggests that the marriage institution is experiencing a combination of traditional and modern influences. While individuals have gained more freedom and opportunities through education and social media, traditional values and family expectations continue to shape marriage choices.

Table No. 13: Distribution of Respondents According to Opinion About the Impact of Social Media on Marriage

To get the information about Distribution of Respondents According to Opinion About the Impact of Social Media on Marriage information was received.

Sr. No.	Opinion	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	It has a positive impact	35	35%
2	It has a negative impact	20	20%
3	Both positive and negative impacts	45	45%
Total		100	100%

Interpretation

The above table shows the opinion of respondents regarding the impact of social media on marriage. Out of 100 respondents, 45% of respondents believe that social media has both positive and negative impacts on marriage, indicating that they recognize its advantages as well as challenges. About 35% of respondents consider social media to have a positive impact on marriage. They believe that social media improves communication between couples, helps in understanding partners, provides opportunities for partner selection, and strengthens relationships through regular interaction. Around 20% of respondents feel that social media has a negative impact on marriage. They associate it with problems such as trust issues, privacy concerns, misunderstandings, excessive use, and reduced personal interaction between couples. The findings indicate that social media is a significant factor influencing the modern marriage institution. Its impact depends on the way individuals use digital platforms. Balanced and responsible use can support healthy relationships, while excessive or improper use may create conflicts. Overall, the data suggests that social media has become an important social force that is transforming marriage practices, relationship patterns, and expectations in contemporary society.

Table No. 14: Distribution of Respondents According to Measures Needed for Healthy Relationships in the Digital Age

To get the information about Distribution of Respondents According to Measures Needed for Healthy Relationships in the Digital Age information was received.

Sr. No.	Measures	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Digital awareness	25	25%
2	Respect for privacy	20	20%
3	Better communication	30	30%
4	Family understanding	20	20%
5	Other	5	5%
Total		100	100%

Interpretation

The above table presents the opinions of respondents regarding measures required for maintaining healthy relationships in the digital age. Out of 100 respondents, 30% of respondents consider better communication as the most important measure for maintaining strong relationships. This indicates that effective and honest communication plays a significant role in building trust and understanding between partners. About 25% of respondents believe that digital awareness is necessary, highlighting the importance of responsible use of social media, online safety, and understanding digital behavior. 20% of respondents selected respect for privacy, showing concerns regarding personal boundaries and confidentiality in online interactions. Another 20% of respondents emphasized family understanding, indicating that family support and acceptance continue to be important factors in maintaining relationships, especially in the context of marriage. Only 5% of respondents suggested other measures, such as emotional understanding, trust, and balanced use of technology. The findings indicate that healthy relationships in the digital age require a combination of responsible technology use, mutual respect, effective communication, and family support. Social media can positively influence relationships when it is used with awareness and balance.

Conclusion

The present study concludes that social media has emerged as an important factor influencing the traditional institution of marriage. The rapid growth of digital communication has brought significant changes in the way individuals interact, develop relationships, and make decisions regarding marriage. Social media has expanded opportunities for communication beyond geographical, cultural, and social boundaries, allowing individuals to participate more actively in choosing their life partners. The study reveals that marriage patterns are gradually changing from a family-controlled system towards a more individual-oriented approach. Young people today give greater importance to personal choice, emotional compatibility, mutual understanding, education, and career goals while making marriage decisions. Social media platforms and online matrimonial services have supported this transformation by providing wider opportunities for interaction and information sharing. Social media has also contributed to changes in traditional marriage practices by encouraging greater acceptance of inter-caste, inter-regional, and cross-cultural relationships among certain sections of society. Increased education, urbanization, modernization, and economic independence have further strengthened these changes. However, the influence of social media on marriage is not entirely positive. Excessive use of digital platforms may create challenges such as privacy issues, misunderstandings, lack of trust, unrealistic expectations, and conflicts between partners. Therefore, responsible and balanced use of social media is necessary for maintaining healthy relationships. The study also highlights that traditional factors such as family values, caste, religion, cultural beliefs, and social norms continue to influence marriage decisions, especially in Indian society. Social media has not replaced traditional marriage systems but has transformed and modified them according to changing social conditions. In conclusion, social media acts as an important agent of social change that is reshaping the institution of marriage. It has created new possibilities for communication, partner selection, and relationship formation while also presenting new challenges. The changing dimensions of marriage reflect the broader process of modernization and technological transformation in contemporary society.

Suggestions

1. Promotion of Digital Awareness:

Individuals should be educated about the responsible use of social media, especially regarding online relationships, privacy, and personal information sharing.

2. Balanced Use of Social Media:

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Couples and young people should maintain a balance between digital communication and face-to-face interaction to develop healthy and stable relationships.

3. **Strengthening Family Communication:**
Although social media increases individual choice in marriage decisions, family discussions and mutual understanding should continue to play an important role.
4. **Encouragement of Responsible Partner Selection:**
Individuals using social media and online matrimonial platforms should verify information about potential partners and make decisions carefully.
5. **Development of Digital Relationship Education:**
Educational institutions and social organizations should provide guidance about online behavior, digital ethics, and healthy relationship practices.
6. **Respect for Cultural Values and Individual Choice:**
Society should maintain a balance between traditional cultural values and the increasing importance of personal choice in marriage decisions.
7. **Protection of Privacy and Security:**
Users should be aware of privacy settings, online safety measures, and the risks associated with sharing personal information on social media platforms.
8. **Promoting Gender Equality in Marriage Decisions:**
Social media should be used as a tool to support equal participation of both men and women in relationship and marriage-related decisions.
9. **Further Sociological Research:**
More studies should be conducted to examine the long-term effects of social media on marriage stability, family structure, and changing social values.
10. **Awareness About Online Risks:**
Society should create awareness about online fraud, fake identities, misinformation, and emotional exploitation in digital relationships.
11. **Support for Healthy Marital Relationships:**
Couples should use social media positively for communication, emotional support, and maintaining relationships rather than allowing it to create conflicts.
12. **Encouraging Responsible Digital Culture:**
A responsible digital culture should be developed where technology supports social relationships while respecting traditional values and human emotions.

Limitations of the Study

1. **Limited Geographical Area**
The study is restricted only to **Bhandara District**. Therefore, the findings may not represent the social media usage patterns and marriage-related changes in other districts or regions of Maharashtra.
2. **Limited Sample Size**
The study is based on responses collected from a limited number of 100 respondents. A larger sample size covering more villages, towns, and different social groups could provide more comprehensive results.
3. **Dependence on Respondents' Opinions**
The study mainly depends on information provided by 100 respondents through questionnaires. Personal opinions, experiences, and attitudes may influence the accuracy of the collected data.
4. **Limited Representation of Rural and Urban Differences**
Bhandara District includes both rural and semi-urban areas, but variations in internet access, digital literacy, and social media usage between different locations may not be fully represented.

5. **Changing Nature of Social Media**

Social media platforms and their influence are continuously changing. The findings represent the situation during the period of study and may vary with future technological developments.

6. **Difficulty in Measuring Relationship Changes**

Changes in marriage patterns, partner selection, and family relationships are complex social processes. It is difficult to measure the complete impact of social media on these aspects through a limited sociological study.

7. **Cultural and Traditional Factors**

Marriage decisions in Bhandara District are influenced by factors such as caste, religion, family background, and local traditions. Separating the exact influence of social media from these traditional factors is challenging.

8. **Digital Literacy Differences**

Differences in education level, age, and access to smartphones and internet facilities among respondents may affect their understanding and use of social media.

9. **Limited Focus on Specific Social Groups**

The study does not deeply examine variations among different caste groups, economic categories, and communities within Bhandara District.

10. **Time Constraint**

Due to limited research time, the study focuses on selected aspects of social media and marriage institutions rather than covering all dimensions of social transformation.

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