

**Significance of Marriage Practices in Kashmir Valley with Special Reference to Srinagar City**

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**Khushboo Jan\***  
**Manzoor Hussain\***

**Abstract**

*Marriage is the deepest and most complex human relations because it is very difficult task for men and women to live a life together when their mindset and culture is different that is why the study is carried out to know why marriage is most important for men and women and their family. The main objective of this research article is to study the importance of marriage among Muslims in Srinagar City. The study was exploratory in nature and random sampling method was used for analyzing the data. For collecting the data a framed schedule was prepared and 50 respondents were interviewed for the purpose of collection of data. The study found that 92 percent are in favor that marriage is most significant not only for the husband and wife and their family but also equally important for whole society.*

**Keywords**

Marriage Practices, Significance, Family, Srinagar City

**Introduction:**

The study of marriage practices has special importance in every religion of the world so in Muslim religion, as marriage in Islam is not considered merely a relationship between a man and a woman; it also serves a wide variety of personal, economic, social and psychological function. It is the only form of socially recognized institution for the procreation and continuation of human race.

Marriage is the closet and most intimate relationship in life. It addresses the two basic needs in the life of human being, that is live and life. A marriage is a legally recognized union between two people, generally a man and a woman, in which they are united sexually, cooperate

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\* Department of Sociology, University of Kashmir, Srinagar, J&K  
Email: [khushoojan00@gmail.com](mailto:khushoojan00@gmail.com)

economically, and may give birth to, adopt, or rear children. The union is assumed to be permanent although it may be dissolved by separation or divorce (Strong & Cohen, 2016). Marriage is the union of two different surnames, in friendship and in love, in order to continue the posterity of the former sages, and to furnish those who shall preside at the sacrifices to heaven and earth, at those in the ancestral temple, and at those at the altars to the spirits of the land and grain (Confucius).

Marriage is one of the oldest socially recognized institutions. "Burgess opines that marriage is a system of roles and is a process through which primary relations are established". Edward Westermarck defined marriage as "a more or less durable connection between male and female lasting beyond the mere act of propagation till after the birth of the offspring" Westermarck stated marriage, "as a relation of one or more men to one or more women which is recognized by custom or law, and involves certain rights and duties both in the case of parties entering the union and in the case of children born out of it." This definition includes polygamy and polyandry and lays emphasis on the rights and duties resulting from the ties of marriage. Thus, Westermarck's definition contains both biological and social aspects of marriage

### **Review of literature**

**Ayalon et al., (2013)** suggested that subjective appraisals of the relationship with spouse play a major role in one's sense of loneliness. In addition, loneliness in men and women shares reciprocal associations. The study revealed that 24 percent and 29 percent of the variability in loneliness reported by married men and women, respectively. The study further revealed that capitalizing and enhancing one's social life might also be beneficial for his or her partner. Any intervention to alleviate loneliness in married couples has to take into consideration their perceived marital relationship as well as the reciprocal associations of loneliness in married men and women. The author's further study examines the association between coping behavior and their relationship satisfaction in older spousal dyads. Examined N = 132 couples age ranged from 53–84 years (M age = 68 years) and found that their dyadic coping strategies a prime indicator of functional adaptation to daily stress in marital context were significantly linked to relationship satisfaction. It is also found in the study that the partner's subjective perception of their spouse's supportive behavior was more strongly linked to their relationship satisfaction than to their self-reported support. Furthermore, individual support perception was more important for marital satisfaction than coping congruency. Overall, the dyadic coping of older adults may serve as an effective tool to stabilize relationship satisfaction

when facing the challenges of older age and long-term marriage. So far as the status of the women is concerned, the dominant role of a man as a bread winner is evident. The women have, however, the right of inheritance in the properties of their parents. The women are mainly confined to the kitchen and in household activities almost throughout the day. The women look after the children and have to entertain her husband after the day's hard work. Though at times, she has to face even physical torture and abuse by the husband if he is unhappy. Elderly woman have some role in family management but it is also under male instruction.

**Arif et. al., (2012)** in their study revealed that the quality of marital satisfaction depends on three dimensions which are Marital Relationship, Marital Adjustment and Marital Intimacy. The study found that marital relationship is the first priority since this dimension has the lowest level of satisfaction, followed by marital intimacy then marital adjustment as the third priority needs to be improved. The study further shows that marital adjustment, mental health and frustration reactions in males and females of middle age showed high level of recreational adjustment as compared to males but males were having better group oriented attitude than females. The study further showed that family functioning; marital adjustment and intimacy in two groups (middle-aged and young spouses) were not significant. For subjects compared by educational status, their mean in family functioning and marital adjustment were significant, but on the intimacy scale they were the same. Evident also show significant positive correlation between marital adjustment and intimacy (0.71), between family functioning and marital adjustment (0.68) and between family functioning and intimacy (0.50), (0.01).

**Guney (2011)** in his study revealed an overall picture of the marriage and relationship studies conducted in Turkish culture. According to the results, the studies give the general impression of a well-educated Turkish population living in urban areas. Unfortunately, this situation severely limits the size of the population whose marriage, marital relationships and marital satisfaction were brought to light. Although there are some studies dealing with other populations, they are very few. This handicap may come from the obligation of using self report scales in the studies, which may force the researcher to work with a limited sample. What can be said about the populations constituting a large part of the Turkish community, being poorly educated, living in a rural/urban area, having considerable economical difficulties and suffering from severe marital dysfunctions and psychological disturbances resulting from this pathological marital relationship? With few exceptions, studies on marital and intimate relationships have been conducted in Turkish

universities. The subjects of these studies, typically few in number, were from the university population or university graduates living in cities. Some were found to be at least high school graduates, while the population of Turkey consists of many more primary, middle school graduates.

**Mohammed (2011)** in his study has stated that traditional and unrealistic expectations about marriage and male- female roles and relationships almost always lead to subsequent dissatisfaction. This dissatisfaction tends to exist in proportion to the expectation – the more one expects and the greater the need to have the expectation met, the more disillusioned one is likely to be when the expectations are not realized. He further found that there is more or less a uniform response in favor of divorce irrespective of the age, sex, rural or urban residence, or literacy of the respondents. In recent years, though no scientific study on attitudes towards divorce has been conducted by any scholar of repute, yet it appears from the articles in the popular magazines of women and from a few doctoral theses on his theme that a large number of women as well as men are not against divorce found that 21 per cent of divorces was because of the irresponsible attitude of husbands or wives and the overall average divorce rate among Muslims in the country was 10 to 15 percent.

**Ani et. al., (2009)** in his study observed that Marriage is a sacred institution and the parties to the agreement need to handle it carefully since the success or failure of any marriage has consequences. For a marriage to succeed, the man and wife must patiently adhere and cooperate with each other. The author further found that marriage has become more complicated as it is manifested in high divorce rates and remarriages and many children are not raised in the traditional family unit. He further suggested that marriage may be in crisis if one or more of the four purposes of marriage namely childbearing, sexual satisfaction, companionship and economic satisfaction are not satisfactorily achieved. Crisis is a crucial time, the turning point in a marriage that is a decision moment that varies from person to person according to individual experiences and the way people view situations. The way a particular crisis situation among married couples is handled determines greatly whether marital failure occurs or not. Westlake also added that anything that disturbs the mutual sympathy and love between a husband and wife creates serious tension and if happiness is not attained that marriage is regarded as a failure. Marriage is a social institution buttressed by law, social support and expectations, as well as the potential for spousal support and relationship-specific investments and yet, half of all marriages dissolve. Again, despite the potential benefits of marriage, are clearly not experienced equally or persistently for many marriages as

factors supporting marriages vary across marriage unions and may be absent altogether in some. The absence of supporting factors in a marriage may however signal failure. In a purely African setting, the status of a wife in her husband's family remains shaky and unpredictable until she begets a child. She becomes really secure after the birth of a male child. At this stage she is especially welcome as a responsible housewife in her husband's extended family. The birth of the child gives her the title- wife, prior to this time she may simply be referred to as a wife only in anticipation. This sub-section of this article examines the main factors associated with marriage failure. These factors constitute critical issues that this paper focuses on.

### **Objectives and Methodology**

The main objective of the present study was to study the significance of marriage practices among Muslims of Kashmir in Srinagar City. The other objectives were to understand the importance of *mehar* and marriage documents and age gap between husband and wife among Muslims of Kashmir in Srinagar City.

The study was exploratory in nature. The study includes both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected by using interview schedules. 50 respondents were interviewed about the importance of marriage. The study design which was used was descriptive in nature as the researcher describing the facts occurs at present. Both simple random sampling and multi-stage sampling method were used to select the respondents in different areas of Srinagar City. Due representation has been given to both men and women proportionally in different areas in Srinagar City.

### **Results and discussion**

#### **Significance of Marriage among Muslims**

Marriage is universal among the Muslims as it discourages celibacy. Islam has almost made it compulsory. Prophet Mohammad also stressed that married life is preferable to unmarried life. Both the main sects within Islam called "*Sunnis*" and "*Shias*" consider marriage almost as obligatory. Marriage among Muslims is regarded not as a religious sacrament but as a secular bond. According to Roland Wilson (1941), "Muslim marriage is a contract for the purpose of legalising sexual intercourse and the procreation of children". According to S. C. Sarkar (1948), "Marriage among Muslims is not a sacrament but purely a civil contract". Muslim marriages not only have a religious significance but in Muslim society it is considered as a religious duty. It is devotion and an act of "*Ibadat*" [or religious duty]. It is believed that a person who does

comply with it is rewarded in the next world, and he who does not, commits a sin. Hence, Jang (1952) has maintained that "*Nikah*", though essentially a contract, is also a *devotional* act. Marriage is highly valued and regarded as being half of one's faith according to saying of Mohammed. Why marriage is important it is being highlighted in the given tables suggested by the different respondents in the study area.

**Table 1: Marriage as an important aim in life**

S. No.	Theme	Response	Number	Percentage
1.	Do you consider marriage an important aim in life?	Yes	46	92.0
		No	4	8.0
Total			50	100.00

**Source:** Field work, carried out in 2021

In every society, marriage is an important event of life, both for male and female. To this query, as to whether marriage is or is not an important aim in life, 92 percent i.e., 46 respondents replied in the affirmative while for 8 percent i.e., 4 respondents do not consider marriage as an important aim in life.

**Table 2: Fixation of Mehr**

S. No.	Theme	Response	Number	Percentage
2.	Do you consider fixation of <i>Mehr</i> essential for marriage?	Very important	41	82.00
		Somewhat important	6	12.00
		Partially important	3	6.00
Total			50	100.00

**Source:** Field work, carried out in 2021

The purpose of *Mehr* is to provide wife with the independent financial security whereby this amount becomes his exclusive property. Table 2 depicts that 82 percent (41) respondents are of the opinion that *Mehr* is very important for marriage, while 12 percent (6) respondents consider *Mehr* somewhat important for marriage and 6 percent (i.e., 3) respondents consider *Mehr* partially important for marriage.

The marriage document is an official declaration that states that two people are married. In 2006, the Supreme Court made it mandatory to register the marriage for safeguarding the women's rights.

**Table 3: Compilation of Marriage Documents**

S. No.	Theme	Response	Number	Percentage
3.	Do you think that compilation of marriage document at the time of marriage is necessary?	Yes	44	88.00
		No	6	12.00
Total			50	100.00

**Source:** Field work, carried out in 2021

Marriage certificate is important for applying a passport or an bank account with a new surname post wedding. Table 3 depicts that 44 respondents i.e., (88 percent) consider compilation of marriage documents necessary at the time of marriage while 50 respondents i.e., (12.5 percent) consider it not as necessary.

**Table 4: Age gap between Husband and Wife**

S. No.	Theme	Response	Number	Percentage
4.	Is an age difference between husband and wife acceptable if husband is much older?	Yes	38	76.00
		No	12	24.00
Total			50	100.00

**Source:** Field work, carried out in 2021

The Table 4 depicts that a majority of respondents i.e., 38 respondent (76 percent) do not accept much age gap because with the large age gap between husband and wife experience clashes, misunderstanding and arguments and the biggest difference in their thinking can be one of the biggest drawback and 12 percent i.e., 24 respondents accept age gap between husband and wife because one of the partner in the marriage will always be mature and will keep marriage away from crumbling.

In this context , it was found that out of 50 respondents, 47 respondents, i.e. 94 percent respondents agree that married partners should be equal in decision making powers whereas 3 respondents i.e., 6 percent did not consider that married partners should be equal in decision making power.

**Table 5: Decision making powers**

S. No.	Theme	Response	Number	Percentage
4.	Do you think married partners should be equal in decision-making power?	Yes	47	94.00
		No	3	6.00
Total			50	100.00

**Source:** Field work, carried out in 2021

### Conclusion

Marriage is a sacred duty in Islam, imposed upon everyone who can afford it. It is a permanent civil contract made between two persons of opposite sex, with a view to mutual enjoyment, procreation and legalizing of children. The contract of marriage also confers some rights and duties on both the parties, which they are expected to observe faithfully for a happy and prosperous life. The study found that the majority of respondents are in favor that marriage is most significant not only for the husband and wife and their family but also equally important for whole society. Marriage is highly valued among Muslims and Islam advocates marriage as the foundation for families and channeling the fulfillment of a base need and a companionship.

### Suggestions

- Marriage has become day by day increasingly important for every section of society as marriage may have wide range of benefits including individual's economic wellbeing, mental and physical wellbeing of the children so it is to suggest that marriage should be done at an appropriate age by every individual.
- Marriage is one of the important decisions in life when people decide to get married they think of having lovely family and raising their children together.

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