



## Age Dynamics and Power Relations in Love and Arranged Marriages: A Comparative Study

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This study explores the comparative age dynamics in love and arranged marriages, focusing on how age groups influence marital stability and power relations. Based on a quantitative survey of 400 respondents across Ahmedabad, Baroda, Rajkot, and Surat, the research analyzes the age distribution patterns among divorced couples. Results reveal that early divorces (ages 21–25) are more prevalent in arranged marriages, while middle-aged divorces (ages 36–40) are also higher in arranged settings. In contrast, love marriages show a relatively lower rate of divorce in older age groups. The study uses statistical tools including percentage analysis, mean, mode, and standard deviation.

**Keywords:** love marriage, arrange marriage, relations, indian society

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## 1. Introduction

Marriage has long been a central institution in Indian society, serving not only as a union between two individuals but also as a strategic alliance between families, castes, and communities. In recent decades, however, changing socio-economic dynamics, particularly in urban India, have significantly transformed how marriages are perceived and practiced. Among the emerging areas of sociological interest is the role of age dynamics—both the age at which individuals marry and the age difference between spouses—and how these factors influence marital satisfaction, power relations, and risk of divorce (Allendorf & Ghimire, 2013; Desai & Andrist, 2010).

In the Indian context, marriages broadly fall into two categories: arranged marriages, where families primarily control the selection of partners, and love marriages, where individuals choose their own partners based on emotional connection and compatibility. These two systems differ not only in their mode of formation but also in age-related patterns. Arranged marriages often occur at younger ages, particularly for women, and typically feature larger age gaps between spouses. Conversely, love marriages tend to happen at relatively later ages, as individuals prioritize education, career development, and emotional readiness (Netting, 2010; Gupta, 2011).

Research has shown that age at marriage is a key determinant of marital quality and success. Marriages occurring at too early or too late an age can pose challenges related to maturity, expectations, and life goals (Jejeebhoy & Sathar, 2001). Furthermore, significant age gaps—more common in arranged marriages—have been associated with unequal power dynamics, reduced communication, and dissatisfaction, especially among women. These dynamics are amplified when combined with traditional gender norms that privilege male authority and economic dominance (Chowdhry, 2007).

Urbanization and modernization have contributed to delayed marriages in India, especially among the educated urban middle class. This trend has implications for both love and arranged marriages. In love marriages, partners often meet through educational institutions or workplaces, resulting in relationships formed between age peers.

These unions, although based on mutual affection, may face early-stage conflicts related to financial instability, lack of family support, and career pressures (Medora et al., 2002). On the other hand, arranged marriages may endure for longer periods due to strong familial backing but may also experience mid-life crises or dissatisfaction stemming from suppressed emotional needs and mismatched expectations.

Despite the growing popularity of love marriages in urban areas, arranged marriages remain prevalent, especially among traditional families. Yet, the rise in divorce rates in both systems signals a shift in marital expectations and tolerance levels. Age compatibility, emotional maturity, and autonomy are now being recognized as critical for sustaining relationships. Existing literature underscores that age and marital choice are not isolated variables but interconnected sociological constructs that influence long-term relationship outcomes (Allendorf & Ghimire, 2013; Netting, 2010).

This study focuses on the comparative presentation of age among divorced individuals from love and arranged marriages in four metro cities of Gujarat—Ahmedabad, Baroda, Rajkot, and Surat. Through quantitative analysis of 400 cases, the research aims to understand how age at marriage and age during divorce differ across the two systems, and how these differences relate to marital stability, emotional compatibility, and power dynamics.

## 2. Objectives

This study aims to examine the age distribution of married individuals in love and arranged marriages and its association with marital dissolution. The key objectives are:

- To compare the age groups of individuals in love and arranged marriages in selected metro cities of Gujarat.
- To analyze the age at which divorce or separation is more prevalent in each type of marriage.
- To explore whether age group correlates with early or delayed divorce in love and arranged marriage settings.
- To assess the role of age in influencing power relations and marital stability.
- To provide statistical insights for understanding

- how age dynamics affect the success or breakdown of marriage.

By fulfilling these objectives, the study contributes to the broader understanding of how age and autonomy intersect with marital patterns in evolving urban societies of India.

### 3. Methodology

This research is based on a quantitative research design involving a sample of 400 respondents selected from four metropolitan cities of Gujarat: Ahmedabad, Baroda, Rajkot, and Surat. Each city contributed 100 samples—50 males and 50 females—equally distributed between love and arranged marriages.

Data were collected using structured questionnaires focused on age at marriage and divorce. Respondents were categorized into five age groups: 21–25, 26–30, 31–35, 36–40, and above 40. The study focused on divorced individuals to identify patterns related to age and marital dissolution.

The data was analyzed using quantitative analysis tools, including:

- Percentage analysis to show distribution across age groups
- Mean and mode to understand central tendencies
- Standard deviation to measure variation
- Bar charts and tables for graphical representation

The research ensures confidentiality and adheres to ethical standards in data handling. The methodology allows for a comparative and statistically sound analysis of age-related patterns in marital outcomes across love and arranged marriage systems in urban Gujarat.

### 4. Data Analysis

The sample of 400 respondents was equally divided between love and arranged marriages (200 each). The age group distribution of divorced individuals in both categories is presented in the table below:

**Table:** Age Distribution among Divorced Individuals

Sr No	Age Group	Love marriage		Arranged marriage	
		Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
1	21 to 25 Years	30	15	40	20
2	26 to 30 Years	46	23	43	21.5
3	31 to 35 Years	38	19	37	18.5
4	36 to 40 Years	42	21	45	22.5
5	Above 40	44	22	35	17.5
	Total	200	100	200	100

#### Statistical Summary

- **Mean (Love Marriage):**

$$\bar{x}_{\text{Love Marriage}} = \frac{f_1x_1 + f_2x_2 + f_3x_3 + f_4x_4 + f_5x_5}{\sum f_i}$$

$$= \frac{30(23) + 46(28) + 38(33) + 42(38) + 44(45)}{200}$$

$$= \frac{690 + 1288 + 1254 + 1596 + 1980}{200} = \frac{6808}{200} = 34.04$$

- **Mean (Arranged Marriage):**

$$\bar{x}_{\text{Arranged Marriage}} = \frac{40(23) + 43(28) + 37(33) + 45(38) + 35(45)}{200}$$

$$= \frac{920 + 1204 + 1221 + 1710 + 1575}{200}$$

$$= \frac{6630}{200} = 33.15$$

- **Mode:**

Highest percentage in love marriage: 26–30 years (23%)

Highest in arranged: 36–40 years (22.5%)

- **Standard Deviation (approx.):**

$$\sigma = \sqrt{\frac{\sum f_i(x_i - \bar{x})^2}{n}}$$

#### Standard Deviation for Love Marriages (approx.)

$$\sigma_{\text{Love Marriage}} = \sqrt{\frac{30(23 - 34.04)^2 + 46(28 - 34.04)^2 + \dots + 44(45 - 34.04)^2}{200}} = 6.68$$

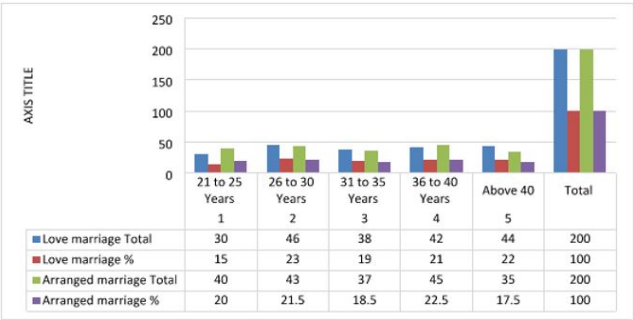
#### Standard Deviation for Arranged Marriages (approx.)

$$\sigma_{\text{Arranged Marriage}} = \sqrt{\frac{40(23 - 33.15)^2 + 43(28 - 33.15)^2 + \dots + 35(45 - 33.15)^2}{200}} = 6.59$$

### 5. Graphical Insights

- A **bar chart** shows a higher frequency of early divorce (21–25 age group) in arranged marriages.

- In contrast, love marriages show greater stability in older age groups (above 40).



The graph indicates different patterns in age-related divorce trends, with love marriages showing later-life stability and arranged marriages facing mid-life dissolution more frequently.

## 6. Explanation

The comparative analysis of age groups in love and arranged marriages reveals significant patterns in the age-related dynamics of marital dissolution. The findings highlight age not just as a demographic variable but as a sociological factor influencing marital stability, power relations, and timing of separation.

Among arranged marriages, the highest percentage of divorce occurs between 36–40 years (22.5%), followed by 26–30 years (21.5%). This trend may indicate that traditional marriages, which often emphasize early union based on family decisions, face issues as couples mature and individual aspirations evolve. This supports prior research by Desai & Andrist (2010), who noted that age-related expectations in arranged marriages can create long-term dissatisfaction when not matched with personal growth.

In love marriages, the highest divorce frequency is in the 26–30 age group (23%), reflecting relationships that may have formed during or shortly after higher education or early career stages. Couples in this bracket often experience stress due to role adjustment, economic strain, or familial disapproval (Allendorf & Ghimire, 2013). However, interestingly, love marriages show a higher stability in the older age group (above 40) with a 22% representation versus 17.5% in arranged marriages. This implies that those who choose partners later in life through personal autonomy may develop more sustainable relationships, perhaps due to better emotional maturity and compatibility (Netting, 2010).

The standard deviation values suggest a moderate spread, with arranged marriages displaying slightly more variability in age at divorce. This could be due to the fact that arranged marriages often follow rigid social expectations, leaving less room for negotiation when conflicts arise.

The mode difference—36–40 in arranged marriages vs. 26–30 in love marriages—suggests that love marriages face early challenges, whereas arranged marriages encounter issues later, possibly due to long-standing repressed dissatisfaction or changing family dynamics (Chowdhry, 2007).

Power dynamics also differ with age. In arranged marriages, the age gap often favors male dominance, which can cause issues in mid-life when women seek autonomy. Love marriages, by contrast, may be more egalitarian, especially among same-age couples, reducing power struggles but increasing vulnerability to compatibility issues if expectations are unmet early on.

The city-wise uniform distribution across Ahmedabad, Baroda, Rajkot, and Surat allows us to generalize that these patterns are consistent across urban Gujarat. The findings suggest a transition in marital norms: while arranged marriages are still prevalent, their long-term sustainability is increasingly challenged by evolving social and gender norms.

In conclusion, age is a powerful determinant of marital success or breakdown, interacting with marital type, autonomy, and emotional maturity. The evidence underscores the need for premarital counseling and awareness programs that factor in age-related dynamics.

## 7. Conclusion

This study concludes that age plays a significant role in shaping the outcomes of both love and arranged marriages. Using data from 400 respondents equally divided across four urban cities in Gujarat, the research identified clear patterns in the timing of divorce related to age groups.

The highest rate of divorce in arranged marriages occurred between 36–40 years (22.5%), while in love marriages, it was highest in the 26–30 age group (23%). These findings suggest that love marriages tend to encounter instability earlier, likely due to early emotional bonding and career transitions,

while arranged marriages see more mid-life separations, often tied to long-term unmet expectations or power imbalances.

Moreover, the higher stability in older love-married couples (22% above 40) implies that when individuals marry later and by choice, relationships are often more stable. This contrasts with arranged marriages, where societal pressures and family decisions dominate partner selection, which may later lead to dissatisfaction.

The statistical measures—mean, mode, and standard deviation—provided a clear picture of the distribution, with love marriages exhibiting a more consistent trend and arranged marriages showing slightly more variance in age-related divorce timing.

In terms of sociological implications, the study emphasizes the need to rethink how age and marital choice intersect. Delaying marriage until emotional and financial maturity, combined with personal autonomy in partner selection, may improve marital outcomes.

These findings are valuable for educators, counselors, and policymakers interested in improving family wellbeing. Awareness and counseling programs that address age compatibility, emotional preparedness, and mutual expectations are essential for building stronger and more resilient marital bonds in contemporary Indian society.

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