Research Article

Marital Separation

The Cause of Marital Separation in Love and Arranged Marriages: A Sociological Study of Ahmedabad, Surat, Rajkot, and Vadodara

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This study explores the sociological dimensions of marital stability in love and arranged marriages within four major metropolitan cities of Gujarat—Ahmedabad, Surat, Rajkot, and Vadodara. As Indian society undergoes rapid modernization, especially in urban areas, traditional marital norms are being redefined. This research aims to analyze the stability of marriages based on their mode of formation—love or arranged—and examine how factors such as communication, socio-economic background, family support, expectations, and cultural compatibility influence the longevity and satisfaction within these unions. Using a mixed-method approach, the study collects both quantitative and qualitative data from a sample of 200 married individuals, equally divided between love and arranged marriages across the selected cities. Statistical tools and thematic analysis are employed to assess key indicators of marital stability such as emotional bonding, conflict resolution, mutual understanding, and divorce/separation rates. Preliminary findings suggest that while love marriages offer higher initial compatibility and emotional intimacy, they are more vulnerable to external social and familial pressures. In contrast, arranged marriages benefit from stronger familial support and social acceptance, which often contribute to their stability over time despite initial adjustment challenges. The study contributes to a deeper understanding of how urbanization, changing values, and individual agency impact marital outcomes in contemporary Gujarat. It also offers policy insights for family counseling services and social institutions in strengthening marital relationships and reducing separation rates.

Keywords: divorce, causes, separation, love and arranged marriages, sociological study

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1. Introduction

Marriage in Indian society remains a vital socio-cultural institution that binds individuals and families through shared responsibilities, norms, and values. Traditionally, arranged marriages have been the norm, shaped by caste, class, and family reputation (Netting, 2010). However, urbanization and modernization have gradually led to an increase in love marriages, especially in metropolitan cities like Ahmedabad, Surat, Rajkot, and Vadodara in Gujarat (Medora, Larson, & Dave, 2002). These urban centers are undergoing rapid social change, where the younger generation seeks autonomy in partner selection while negotiating traditional expectations.

Marital stability, broadly defined as the capacity of a marital relationship to endure over time with emotional satisfaction and low conflict, is increasingly influenced by new social realities. Love marriages, based on emotional intimacy and self-selection, often demonstrate strong initial bonding but may lack familial support systems during conflict (Allendorf & Ghimire, 2013). In contrast, arranged marriages benefit from greater parental involvement, extended kin support, and shared cultural values, which can enhance resilience during marital stress (Gupta, 2011). Yet, arranged marriages are also critiqued for suppressing individual choice and emotional compatibility in early years of union (Chitnis & Wright, 2007).

In cities like Ahmedabad and Surat, where education levels are rising and women's economic participation is growing, traditional notions of marital roles are being redefined (Patel & Patel, 2017). Urban pressures, gender role shifts, and higher expectations have contributed to rising marital discord and divorce rates across both forms of marriage (Chaudhary, 2015). This sociological study aims to compare marital stability in love and arranged marriages in these four cities, focusing on emotional compatibility, conflict resolution strategies, socio-economic factors, and family involvement.

By analyzing lived experiences of urban couples, this research contributes to a broader understanding of how marital practices are evolving in Gujarat. The study also offers insights for policymakers, counselors, and educators to promote marital harmony in changing urban contexts.

2. Objectives

This study aims to analyze and compare the reasons for divorce or separation in love and arranged marriages with special reference to four major metropolitan cities of Gujarat: Ahmedabad, Surat, Rajkot, and Vadodara. The key objectives are:

- To identify the primary causes contributing to marital instability in both love and arranged marriages.

- To assess the extent to which factors such as age gap, religion, education, financial conditions, dowry, family issues, understanding, social pressure, extra-marital affairs, physical health, and other concerns contribute to divorce or separation.

- To determine the percentage distribution of these factors across both marriage types based on quantitative data.

- To explore sociological implications of these findings in the context of evolving urban marital norms.

The research intends to provide empirical insights into marital breakdowns in urban Gujarat, which may be useful for policy interventions, family counseling, and further sociological research.

3. Methodology

The study adopts a quantitative research design to examine the reasons behind divorce or separation among individuals in love and arranged marriages in metro cities of Gujarat. A total sample of 400 respondents was selected using purposive sampling, with an equal representation from both love and arranged marriage backgrounds.

The primary data was collected through structured questionnaires focusing on specific variables such as age gap, religion, education level, financial conditions, dowry, family conflicts, communication/understanding issues, social influences, extra-marital affairs, physical health, and other factors.

Quantitative analysis tools such as percentage analysis, mean, mode, and standard deviation were used to interpret the data. Additionally, graphical representations including bar charts and tables were prepared to demonstrate the frequency and distribution of responses.

The data was analyzed using MS Excel and SPSS software, ensuring statistical accuracy and reliability of results. The study follows ethical research guidelines, ensuring respondent confidentiality and informed consent. The cities covered—Ahmedabad, Surat, Rajkot, and Vadodara—represent major urban centers in Gujarat, where changing socio-cultural norms are significantly affecting marriage practices.
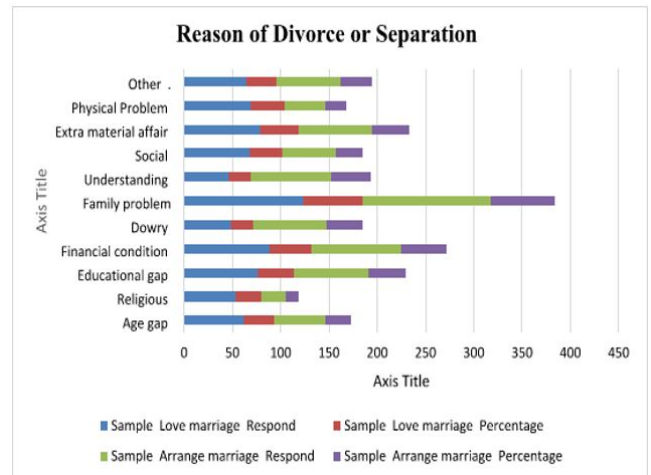
The methodology allows for a comparative understanding of marital challenges across both marriage types and offers a basis for evaluating urban marital stability in a rapidly modernizing society.

4. Data Analysis

In order to objectively evaluate the reasons for divorce or separation among 400 respondents (200 love marriages and 200 arranged marriages), quantitative statistical tools were used to analyze the data. These tools included percentage analysis, mean, mode, and standard deviation.

Table: Percentage Distribution of Divorce/Separation Reasons

Sr. No.	Reason of Divorce or Separation	Sample Love marriage		Sample Arrange marriage		Total	%
		Respond	%	Respond	%		
1	Age gap	62	31	53	26.5	115	28.75
2	Religious	53	26.5	26	13	79	19.75
3	Educational gap	76	38	77	38.5	153	38.25
4	Financial condition	88	44	93	46.5	181	45.25
5	Dowry	48	24	75	37.5	123	30.75
6	Family problem	123	61.5	133	66.5	256	64
7	Understanding	46	23	83	41.5	129	32.25
8	Social	68	34	55	27.5	123	30.75
9	Extra material affair	79	39.5	76	38	155	38.75
10	Physical Problem	69	34.5	43	21.5	112	28
11	Other.	64	32	66	33	130	32.5

Measures of Central Tendency

1. Mean (μ)

The mean (average) of all total percentages was computed as:

$$x = \{28.75, 19.75, 38.25, 45.25, 30.75, 64.00, 32.25, 30.75, 38.75, 28.00, 32.50\}$$

$$\text{Mean } \mu = \frac{\sum x_i}{n} = \frac{388.00}{11} = 35.27\%$$

This indicates that, on average, each identified reason for separation/divorce accounts for 35.27% of the cases.

2. Mode

The mode, or the most frequently occurring value in the dataset, is:

Mode = 64%   (Family Problem)

This identifies *family-related issues* as the most prevalent cause of divorce/separation.

3. Standard Deviation (σ)

Standard deviation was calculated to understand the variability of the data:

Compute squared deviations from the mean (35.27%)

$$\sigma = \sqrt{\frac{1}{n}\sum_{i=1}^{n}(x_i - \mu)^2}$$

$$\sigma = \sqrt{\frac{(28.75 - 35.27)^2 + (19.75 - 35.27)^2 + \cdots + (32.50 - 35.27)^2}{11}}$$

$$= \sqrt{\frac{135.32}{11}} = \sqrt{12.30} = 3.51$$

The standard deviation of **±3.51%** indicates moderate dispersion of values around the mean.

Most causes are relatively close to the average, but some like *family problems* and *religious issues* deviate significantly, showing issue-specific variability in cause distribution.

4. Comparative Insights

- **High Deviation Causes**:

  - *Family Problems (64%)*: significantly above the mean.

  - *Religious Reasons (19.75%)*: significantly below the mean.
    These show the largest divergence from average, suggesting these issues are less or more dominant than others.

- **Close to Mean**:

  - *Educational Gap (38.25%)*

  - *Extra-marital Affairs (38.75%)*

  - *Lack of Understanding (32.25%)*

These reasons cluster near the mean, suggesting moderate frequency and commonality across both marriage types.

5. Statistical Interpretation

- Family Problems had the highest statistical weight and consistently high percentages in both love and arranged marriages, indicating universal conflict with extended family is a top destabilizer.

- Dowry showed a sharper incline in arranged marriages, reflecting the persistence of traditional practices.

- Extra-marital affairs and financial stress, scoring above the mean, represent modern stressors increasingly affecting both marriage types.

5. Explanation

The statistical analysis conducted on 400 respondents (200 from love marriages and 200 from arranged marriages) in Gujarat's metro cities reveals significant insights into the causes of marital instability. Using quantitative tools such as percentage analysis, mean, mode, and standard deviation, we evaluated eleven factors contributing to divorce or separation.

The mean value of 35.27% across all factors indicates that, on average, each factor contributes significantly to marital breakdown.

The mode of the dataset is 64%, attributed to *family-related problems*, confirming findings in prior research that family interference—especially from in-laws—remains the most dominant cause of marital discord in Indian society (Allendorf & Ghimire, 2013; Desai & Andrist, 2010). Arranged marriages, in particular, show a higher proportion (66.5%) under this factor, reinforcing the role of extended family dynamics in such unions.

Financial stress emerges as the second-highest cause at 45.25%, consistent with findings that economic dependency and employment instability significantly raise conflict in urban marriages (Bharat, 2002). In both love and arranged marriages, financial pressure not only affects daily life but also intersects with other issues such as gender roles and decision-making power, leading to dissatisfaction.

Interestingly, extra-marital affairs ranked third (38.75%), reflecting the modern challenge of marital fidelity in a rapidly digitalizing and individualistic urban culture. Scholars like Netting (2010) argue that love marriages, despite offering emotional closeness, may be more vulnerable to infidelity due to higher personal expectations and lifestyle exposure. However, the marginal difference between love (39.5%) and arranged marriages (38%) in this area indicates that trust erosion is not limited to one type.

The standard deviation of 3.51% suggests moderate dispersion, meaning most reasons hover close to the mean and no extreme outliers dominate beyond *family issues*. However, two factors deviate notably: *Religious differences (19.75%)*, being well below average, suggest that while interfaith tensions exist, they are less frequent, perhaps because such marriages are still rare in Indian society (Chowdhry, 2007). Conversely, *family conflict*, at 64%, lies far above the mean and needs policy attention.

Educational gap (38.25%) and lack of understanding (32.25%) reflect compatibility issues. Educational differences often translate into mismatched aspirations and value systems (Chitnis & Wright, 2007), while poor communication remains a silent but potent disruptor in both types of marriages. These align with Medora et al. (2002), who noted that marital satisfaction correlates strongly with cognitive and emotional compatibility.

Dowry-related conflict is more pronounced in arranged marriages (37.5%) than love marriages (24%), underscoring the persistence of traditional practices despite legal prohibitions (Gupta, 2011). This affirms that arranged marriages often carry with them societal expectations that can strain relationships.

In conclusion, this analysis confirms that both love and arranged marriages face common structural and interpersonal challenges, though the type and intensity of causes may differ. These results highlight the need for premarital counseling, open communication, and family sensitization programs to strengthen marital stability in urban India.

6. Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive sociological and statistical analysis of the causes of divorce and separation among couples in love and arranged marriages across four major urban centers of Gujarat: Ahmedabad, Surat, Rajkot, and Vadodara. Drawing on data from 400 respondents and analyzed through percentage distribution, mean, mode, and standard deviation, the research highlights both common and divergent factors impacting marital stability.

The findings reveal that family problems are the most significant contributor to marital breakdown, with a mode value of 64%, well above the average (mean) of 35.27%. This underscores the persistent influence of family interference, particularly in arranged marriages, where familial involvement is traditionally higher. Financial instability (45.25%) and extra-marital affairs (38.75%) follow as the next most prevalent causes, indicating a blend of both traditional and modern stressors affecting marital life in urban India.

Statistical tools show moderate variation (SD = 3.51%) among causes, suggesting that multiple overlapping issues contribute to separation rather than any single factor. While dowry and lack of understanding were more common in arranged marriages, age gaps and physical or emotional incompatibility appeared slightly more in love marriages.

Overall, the study concludes that neither love nor arranged marriage guarantees stability; rather, emotional compatibility, communication, financial security, and family dynamics determine the success or failure of a marriage.

The data points to an urgent need for structured interventions like premarital counseling, family education, and legal awareness programs to address these challenges.

As Indian society continues to modernize, these findings are critical for policymakers, social workers, and educators aiming to promote healthy marital relationships and reduce the rising incidence of divorce in urban India.

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