

EVOLVING MARRIAGE CUSTOMS IN THE BRAHMIN AND CHHETRI COMMUNITIES: A CASE STUDY OF BIRENDRANAGAR SURKHET

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ABSTRACT

This study examines changing marriage patterns within the Brahmin and Chhetri communities, focusing on shifts in attitudes toward rituals, gender roles, and social norms. It employed a mixed-methods approach and was limited to the Surkhet district due to financial and time constraints. Samabesi Tole has 129 households and a total population of 640, including 322 females and 318 males. Among these, 92 families belong to the Brahmin and Chhetri communities, with a combined population of 466. Data from both married and unmarried respondents show increased acceptance of remarriage, divorce, and inter-caste unions, along with a growing emphasis on individual choice and gender equality. Traditional ceremonies are increasingly being modified or shortened, blending Nepali and Indian customs influenced by modern trends. While some resist these changes to preserve cultural heritage, many view them as steps toward social progress. Expert opinions differ on whether these shifts divide or unite society, but overall, marriage seems to be a flexible institution shaped by education, modernization, and evolving social values. This study reflects an evolution of marriage customs among marginalized or indigenous groups in Nepal.

Keywords: Marriage Custom, Brahmin Community, Chhetri Community, Vedic

1. BACKGROUND

Marriage is a legally and socially recognized bond between a man and a woman, governed by specific rules and responsibilities. It is a universal institution found in all human societies and helps regulate sexual relationships within the context of husband and wife. According to Pandey (1998), marriage, as a significant life event, naturally draws public interest and is often linked to various rituals and traditions. To fully understand how marriage ceremonies have evolved, one must consider the conditions and context in which the institution of marriage first appeared. These early circumstances influenced the development of marital customs and rituals. A Vedic text states that remaining unmarried is viewed as impure. Religiously, an unmarried person is considered incomplete and not fully qualified to participate in sacred rituals (Altekar, 1997). According to Mair (1972), a husband's rights over his wife can be categorized into two types, using Latin terms: rights in uxorem and rights in genetricem. The former relates to a man's rights over his wife as a domestic and sexual partner, while the latter pertains to his rights over her as the mother of his children. Marriage is a global institution practiced in various forms across different cultures. While most religions provide detailed guidance on marriage, the Brahmin and Chhetri communities follow endogamous practices, meaning they marry within their caste and clan groups. They traditionally do not practice cross-cousin marriage, unlike the Thakuris.

However, the Rana Chhetri have adopted the Thakuri custom of marrying maternal cross-cousins.

According to Bista (1967), Brahmin girls were usually married at a very young age, around ten or eleven, while Chhetri girls typically married once they reached adulthood. Traditionally, it was believed that marrying off a Brahmin girl at age six brought the highest spiritual merit (Punya) to her parents. It was also thought to be easier to locate a suitable groom for a girl aged twelve or thirteen than for one who was older. However, these customs are no longer common among educated people living in urban areas. In contrast, rural communities may question a boy's social status if he remains unmarried into his mid-twenties.

The Brahmin and Chhetri communities primarily practice *Kanyadan* marriage and occasionally *Swayambar*. In the *Kanyadan* tradition, the bride is ceremonially handed over to the groom as a sacred gift. Wedding celebrations among these groups are lively and elaborate, often lasting several days with various rituals, feasts, and festivities. Regmi (1992) mandates the observance of several traditional customs prior to the *Kanyadan* ceremony. Although marriage is ideally based on fidelity among Brahmins and *Chhetris*, Bista (1967) notes that infidelity has been quite common. Historically, men often boasted about having multiple wives. Some middle-class landowners had five or six wives, while wealthier and more influential Ranas had dozens of wives and concubines. Polygamous Brahmin and Chhetri men frequently married women from different ethnic groups, such as Gurung, Magar, Tamang, Sherpa, and Newar, although they consistently avoided marrying women from occupational castes.

In the 21st century, marriage practices among Brahmins and *Chhetris* are evolving, and many no longer strictly observe all the traditional rituals their ancestors followed. Marriage is now viewed as a lifelong partnership, where both individuals are expected to support each other through life's joys and challenges. However, today, Brahmin and Chhetri families of decent standing and education do not adhere to the traditional marriage rules, which are now mostly common among the peasant class (Bista, 1967). According to Altekari (1997), women in the past were not allowed to choose their marriage partners freely. A few years ago, the government even offered incentives to couples who entered into such marriages. The norms around sexual morality reflect a society's ethical values and help us understand how much men were willing to be held to the same standards they set for women (Altekari, 1997). Additionally, marriage was once considered the accepted way for both men and women to fulfill their sexual desires. But this perspective is changing in modern times as attitudes toward sex evolve. Today, some people have sexual relationships before marriage, influenced by their age and shifting social norms. The main goal of this study is to explore the perspectives and impacts of changing marriage practices in the current context among the Brahmin and Chhetri communities and to analyze how marriage patterns are transforming within these groups.

2. OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this study is to examine changing marriage patterns within the Brahmin and Chhetri communities, focusing on shifts in attitudes toward rituals, gender roles, and social norms.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE STUDY

The sociology of family, a branch of sociology, studies how social institutions like family, marriage, and kinship change across different societies. It looks at important issues like marital conflicts, divorce, and lifelong singlehood that come up as traditions change. Although marriage remains a widely accepted and supported institution-offering support, companionship, and fulfillment-modern families often face challenges that can lead to breakdowns or separations (Acharya, 2006).

No society allows marriage without certain rules about who can marry whom, based on exogamy (marrying outside a group) and endogamy (marrying within a group). Sexual relationships between close relatives, such as parents and children or siblings, are nearly universally forbidden; this is known as the incest taboo. Many cultures extend these restrictions beyond immediate family to prevent potential genetic disabilities in offspring. In some places, like China and parts of India, these bans are so strict that even marriage between people sharing the same surname is forbidden (Prabhu, 2000). Overall, marriage customs are crucial in preventing sexual relations between parents and children across societies.

In Nepal, many traditional Vedic Hindu pre-wedding customs are still strictly observed, especially among the Brahmin and Chhetri communities. Various tribal groups have specific marriage traditions rooted in their culture. According to an older Sutra, even if a girl dies unmarried, her body should only be cremated after a formal marriage ceremony. During the Sati period, widows were expected to appear like newlyweds when accompanying their deceased husbands for cremation. In the Vedic era, girls were generally married after puberty, around 15 or 16 years old, similar to practices in ancient Persia described in the Avesta. The word “marriage” itself implied that the bride would move to her husband’s home immediately after the wedding. (Altekar, 1997). Families that cannot afford substantial dowries are said to pressure daughters into marrying older men, married men, or illiterate young men to reduce dowry payments (Karki, 2014). Prabhu (2000) noted that men should avoid marrying girls with certain physical traits (like reddish hair, extra limbs, or excessive body hair) or negative qualities such as poor health, undesirable behavior, low social status, or family problems. Furthermore, girls without brothers were considered less desirable because of beliefs about fertility.

Pandey (1998) describes various traditional Vedic Hindu marriage ceremonies, especially common among Brahmin and Chhetri groups. The process begins with Betrothal (Vagdanam), where the bride is officially promised to the groom. An auspicious wedding day is then chosen, often without strict reliance on astrology; in ancient times, love and mutual attraction were central to this decision. A few days before the wedding, the *Mrdaharana* ceremony involves bringing earth or clay-a tradition not found in ancient scriptures. Arranged marriages still prevail in many rural parts of Nepal, where couples often meet for the first time on their wedding day. However, in most areas, this tradition has evolved, with families arranging meetings between the bride and groom before the wedding. In urban centers like Kathmandu, love marriages are becoming more common, though arranged marriages still dominate culturally (Nadya, 2015). The practice of arranged marriage is deeply rooted in Nepali society. Most are organized by

parents, with help from relatives and matchmaker priests, except in some metropolitan areas where couples select their partners independently. Even in arranged marriages, the bride and groom often have the final say to accept or reject the match (Khatiwada, 2008). While arranged marriages remain significant, love marriages are gradually gaining acceptance. On the wedding day, the groom, along with relatives, neighbors, and other guests, calls the Janti, departs from his home after participating in Sagun, an auspicious meal, and heads to the bride's house or wedding venue, often accompanied by a music band. Upon arrival, the ceremonies continue extensively. The marriage is officially valid when the groom applies *Sindoor* (vermilion) on the bride's forehead. The ceremony concludes when the bride's father or brother formally bids her farewell. According to Dr. Mishra (1983), an important ritual called *Bagdan* involves a Ganesh puja, where the bride's father places sacred items like a coconut and betel nuts in a pot (Kalash), which he then hands over to the groom as a symbolic gift, marking the formal transfer of his daughter to the groom's family.

Intercaste marriage also plays a significant role in challenging mainstream ideas about marriage. Indeed, breaking the caste system requires the existence of inter-caste and casteless marriages. Intercaste marriage, which was once not permitted within families, is becoming more common today (Sharma, 2008). For example, a Brahmin family suggested their daughter meet a Magar's son for marriage. They liked each other and valued each other's character more than their castes, so they got married. This was an arranged inter-caste marriage fully supported by both families. Inter-caste marriage can also be arranged (Koirala, 2021). The age of marriage for women is rising, and so is the number of women who will never marry. Caltabiano & Castiglioni (2008) stated that, although the median age at marriage in Nepal is increasing, it remains lower than in other regional countries. Their analysis underscored alterations in the chronology of life events and the intervals between them, pinpointing factors that affect the timing of transitions to cohabitation and initial sexual intercourse in Nepal. The results showed that the rate of marriages with delayed cohabitation is decreasing for both men and women, while the ages at marriage and cohabitation are increasing for women. Although marriages are happening later, cohabitation is often occurring earlier. The findings also suggest that one of the main reasons for the rising age of marriage in both men and women is the spread of education.

Ojha (2072) identified several factors that increase the likelihood of divorce. Marrying at a very young age (between 15 and 19 years) is a significant factor. Additionally, a short period of acquaintance before marriage, particularly less than two years, or a brief engagement of under six months, or occasionally no engagement at all, can contribute to marital instability. Divorces are more common when the marriage faces disapproval from relatives and friends or when there is a significant difference in backgrounds between partners. Differences in religious faith and failure to participate in religious services also negatively impact marital stability. Educational attainment plays a role, with incomplete education—such as leaving school before earning a diploma or degree—being associated with higher divorce rates. Furthermore, an urban background and disagreements between spouses over their roles in the marriage are associated with increased chances of divorce.

The girls' relatives and neighbors, not the girls or their parents, often worry about their marriage and pressure the family to find a groom. This external concern frequently outweighs the girl's own feelings. Thapa (2022) argues that this mindset needs to change. Instead of focusing on finding a son-in-law with a stable job, parents should prioritize their daughters' education, employment, and independence. Doing so enables girls to live fulfilling lives without the restrictions often imposed by in-laws or husbands, fostering their self-reliance and empowerment. Additionally, the Marriage Registration Act, 2028 (2018), permits marriage between a man and a woman if neither is already married, both are mentally sound, and both have reached the legal age of twenty unless prohibited by other laws.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Study Site

Birendranagar, located in Surkhet, serves as the capital of Karnali Province. The study was conducted in Samabesi Tole, which is in Ward No. 4 of Birendranagar Municipality. A total of 50 respondents, who come from different geographic regions but currently reside in Samabesi Tole, were selected as the study sample.

4.2. Research Design

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to examine how marriage traditions have evolved among the Brahmin and Chhetri communities from ancient times to the present.

4.3. Universe and Sample Size

Samabesi Tole has 129 households and a total population of 640, including 322 females and 318 males. Of these, 92 households belong to the Brahmin and Chhetri communities, with a combined population of 466. The study focused on people from different generations within these households to examine their marriage customs. Additionally, some unmarried individuals were included to understand their views on marriage and how trends are changing.

4.4. Sampling Procedure

A general field survey was conducted with 50 participants, representing about 10% of the target population. These individuals came from diverse backgrounds, including migrants from Kalikot and Dailekh, as well as permanent residents of Surkhet. The sample included people from different generations within families to understand the marriage customs they followed, along with some unmarried individuals to gather their perspectives on the changing nature of marriage. The study used a purposive sampling method, in which participants were deliberately selected based on the specific needs of the research. This non-probability sampling technique relies on the researcher's judgment to choose individuals most relevant to the study. Since the focus was on understanding marriage customs within the Brahmin and Chhetri communities of the selected area, only respondents from these groups were included, making it unnecessary to sample from other communities.

4.5. Methods of Data Collection

The survey was carried out at the household level using a structured questionnaire with 11 mostly objective questions focused on quantitative data. Topics included age, the marriage

process, satisfaction with marriage, its importance, observed changes in traditions, and expectations for future shifts. The questions aimed to highlight qualitative aspects of marriage customs and how they have changed, rather than personal opinions or subjective judgments. Additionally, expert insights were gathered through interviews—one via phone with a cultural expert and another face-to-face with a university teacher from Midwestern University. Their responses were later compiled via email to ensure no key points were missed. To support the research, various secondary sources such as books, articles, journals, research papers, and online resources were reviewed. These sources provided context and depth, especially in the literature review, making the overall study more comprehensive and accessible. To ensure reliability and validity, primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with a cultural expert and a teacher, then organized in Excel for creating charts and analyzing the results.

4.6. Data Processing and Analysis

This study employed purposive sampling, selecting both married and unmarried individuals to examine the qualitative aspects of marriage customs. Data were analyzed by identifying key themes and organizing them into categories and sub-themes. A summary of major findings was developed based on this analysis. Expert interviews were included to reinforce the results and offer additional insights. Visual tools such as charts and graphs were used to present data patterns clearly. A descriptive approach was applied to explain the findings, enabling the researcher to effectively illustrate the evolving trends in marriage practices with both qualitative insights and visual representations.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1. Male and Female Perspectives on Marriage

Among all respondents, 70% were female and 30% were male, including both married and unmarried individuals who participated voluntarily.

Table 1: Respondents by Sex

<i>Sex</i>	<i>Number of Respondents</i>	<i>Percentage of the Respondents (%)</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
Female	35	70	
Male	15	30	
Total	50	100	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The survey revealed females' views on marriage as a bond based on love, where two people choose to share life happily. Marriage is seen as a socially, religiously, and legally recognized ritual that unites a man and woman to live together and raise a family. Many described it as an important social custom and a crucial life stage. Some viewed it as a spiritual or sacred connection marking a significant life transition. Others believed marriage is a societal rule allowing men and women to live together. Overall, marriage is regarded as a strong commitment and a foundation for family life. The survey of 15 males showed that marriage is seen as a social and legal union based on mutual understanding, love, and support. It unites two individuals to

share life's joys and challenges, forming a bond of commitment, security, and responsibility essential for a shared personal and family life.

5.2. Responses of married vs unmarried people

This figure illustrates the views of both married and unmarried individuals in Brahmin and Chhetri communities regarding the evolving patterns of marriage.

Table 2: Marital Status of Respondents

<i>Respondents by their Marital Status</i>		<i>Remarks</i>
Married	25	
Unmarried	25	
Total	50	

Source: Field Survey 2024

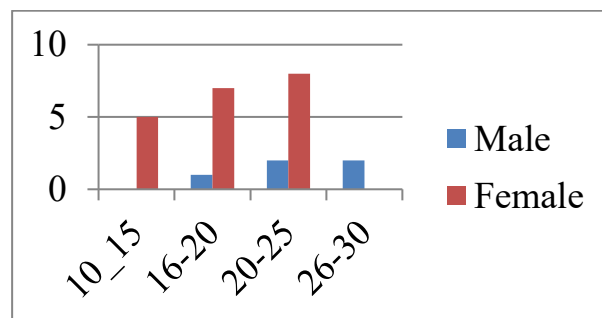
The survey showed that most women support change but still maintain traditional customs, believing marriage is necessary for sharing life's challenges. At the same time, a few see relationships as self-serving and unfulfilling.

5.3 Perceptions of Respondents by Marital Age

The figure shows that no male respondents were married before age 15. Of the five married males, one got married before age 20, two married after age 21, and the remaining three after age 26.

Table 3: Age of Marriage by Gender

<i>Married Age</i>			<i>Remarks</i>
<i>Age at marriage</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	
10-15	0	5	
16-20	1	7	
21-25	2	8	
26-30	2	0	



Source: Field Survey 2024

Many women who married early lacked understanding of love and marriage, often entering into marriage after their first period. They experienced difficulties in their in-laws' homes. Most early marriages happened before age 20, frequently love marriages. Today, education and premarital relationships help couples better understand their responsibilities, leading to more stable and informed marriages.

5.4. Perceptions of Changing Marriage Procedures

It indicates that 98% of respondents believe many changes are happening in marriage rituals.

Table 4: Perceptions on the Implementation of Marriage Procedures

<i>People who believe the procedure is changing or not</i>	
Is Changing	49
Is not Changing	1
Total	50

Source: Field Survey 2024

According to the data, 98% of respondents acknowledged significant changes in marriage trends. One respondent noted that high marriage costs now prevent some people from marrying. Unlike in the past, child marriage and forced unions—such as marrying someone solely because of physical contact—are no longer practiced. Today, couples often live together before marriage, and parental approval comes later through rituals like *Tika Phukai*. Older generations believed in marrying daughters before menstruation for spiritual reasons, but now legal and societal norms have shifted. Love marriages, inter-caste, and low-caste marriages are becoming more accepted. Traditional elements like carrying the bride in a *doli* have been replaced by cars. Arranged marriages often turn into love marriages as couples meet beforehand. Modern weddings tend to be more expensive and are influenced by Western culture and social media. The core meaning of marriage seems to be fading, with less emphasis on rituals and more on display. However, mutual consent and freedom have increased for both partners.

5.5. Perceptions regarding widowhood, divorce, singlehood, and remarriage

The following figure illustrates the number of people who support remarriage and divorce, as well as those who do not support them.

Table 5: Respondent Views on Remarriage and Divorce

<i>Perception towards widowhood, divorce, staying single, and remarriage</i>		<i>Remarks</i>
Support Divorce and Remarriage	47	
Does not support divorce and remarriage	3	
Total	50	

Source: Field Survey 2024

The survey found that 94% of participants support women's right to divorce, remain single, or remarry, viewing it as essential to independence. While remarriage is gradually gaining acceptance among educated urban Brahmin and Chhetri families, rural areas still resist. Changing marriage norms now permit inter-caste unions and foster greater mutual understanding. Although 6% of respondents oppose changing traditional marriage norms, insisting that marriage is a lifelong commitment, expert interviews revealed that widow remarriage remains stigmatized, especially for dependent women. Divorce rates are increasing due to education, foreign influence, and long-distance separations from overseas employment.

Orthodox beliefs continue to view extramarital affairs as taboo, contributing to relationship breakdowns and divorces.

5.6. Importance of getting married

Everyone has their own perspective on marriage. The following figure shows why they support it and why some believe it is not important at all.

Table 6: Respondents' Views on the Importance of Getting Married

<i>Importance of getting married</i>	<i>No. of Respondents</i>
Marriage is Important	40
Marriage is not important.	10
Total	50

Source: Field Survey 2024

Approximately 80% of respondents see marriage as crucial for companionship, emotional support, family building, and maintaining generational continuity. They regard it as a sacred bond between two souls. Conversely, 20% believe marriage is not essential, prioritizing personal freedom, independence, and individual happiness over societal expectations, and emphasizing that life fulfillment does not necessarily rely on being married.

5.7. Observed Marriage Procedures

The survey showed that most respondents, both married and unmarried, described various traditional wedding rituals they had experienced or observed. Common practices included giving a glass bead necklace (pote) to the bride, performing *kanyadaan*, applying sindoor, and taking seven rounds around the mandap. Other customs mentioned were engagement (magni), farewell to the daughter (chhorianmaaunu), rice pot filling (paathibharne), foot washing rituals (godhadhune), and symbolic acts like lajahom and sautaphalne (bride kicking a stone). Cultural elements such as janai supari, purwang, lagan writing, and swayambar were also highlighted. Some also noted unique traditions like the wife touching her husband's feet or relatives hiding during the sindoor application.

5.8. Role of society in the change of Marriage Procedures

The survey showed different views within the same community about societal attitudes toward changes in marriage customs. Some respondents felt their society is open and supportive of evolving traditions, while others believed their community resists such changes. Many agreed that increased education and awareness have empowered individuals to make personal choices about marriage, resulting in greater acceptance of both arranged and love marriages. A participant noted that societal behavior is influenced by appearances on social media, with people often copying others to gain attention, sometimes promoting extravagance. Overall, society plays a key role in shaping and adapting marriage rituals, and many traditional practices have changed with the general public's acceptance.

5.9. Changing patterns of Marriage in the Brahmin and Chhetri society

According to interviews with a cultural expert and a Mid-West University lecturer, marriage patterns in Nepal, especially among Brahmins and Chhetris, are undergoing significant change.

These communities are now divided into orthodox and liberal families. While orthodox groups still follow traditional rules rooted in *Manusmriti* and the 1854 Legal Code, emphasizing caste endogamy and rituals like *kanyadana*, *saptapadi*, and *lajahom* around the sacred fire, liberal families are more flexible, allowing inter-caste and love marriages. Historically, Brahmins and TagadhariChhetris adhered to Vedic rituals and strictly maintained caste and gotra boundaries. Once a woman married, she became part of her husband's gotra permanently. However, modern youth often reject these norms, prioritizing love over tradition and disregarding caste and gotra considerations. Cohabitation before marriage has become a more common influence in Mongoloid societies, which both ethnic groups are now adopting. This shift has led to social challenges, particularly for women, who often face abandonment in live-in relationships. Additionally, cultural practices at weddings are becoming more modernized: long ceremonies with multiple priests are being shortened, and Bollywood or Western songs are replacing traditional folk music. Even sacred rituals like taking seven rounds around the fire are reduced to four. The younger generation's desire for freedom and rejection of rigid customs is reshaping the traditional concept of marriage in Nepalese society.

5.10. Transformations in Brahmin and Chhetri Marriage Patterns

Interviews reveal significant changes in marriage patterns today. Families now play little role in mate selection, and couples prefer shorter, simpler ceremonies or court marriages, which legally unite them but often lack traditional rituals like the assimilation of the bride's gotra. Modern weddings focus more on parties and feasts, with increasing influence from Indian customs such as Mehendi and Sangeet. Traditional practices like dowry, strict dress codes, and ritualistic observances are less followed. Younger couples prioritize personal desires over rigid customs, with women seeking independence beyond traditional domestic roles. Astrology and ritual remain important in Hindu marriages, where auspicious dates are chosen based on celestial alignments, and prohibitions against marrying within the same gotra persist. However, many rituals are now abbreviated—such as circling the sacred fire fewer times—and some married women no longer wear sindoor or mangal sutra, traditional symbols of marriage. The blend of love and arranged marriages is common, with couples often choosing partners before informing their parents. Overall, while marriage is still viewed as a lifelong bond, modern couples adapt traditions to fit contemporary values and lifestyles.

5.11. Impact of the changes on Society

Every society influences various changes, and in Brahmin and Chhetri communities, these shifts have significantly influenced cultural values. The distinct identity of Brahmins and Chhetris is gradually fading. Increasing acceptance of inter-caste marriages suggests that in a few decades, finding "pure" Brahmins and Chhetris might become difficult. Marriages within the same "gotra" are believed to cause problems for future generations. One expert argues that these societal changes are causing fragmentation within Brahmin and Chhetri groups. At the same time, another believes that changing marriage patterns are actually strengthening society by expanding

social relationships, promoting acceptance of relatives from different castes, and reducing caste-based discrimination.

5.12. Desired Future Changes in Marriage Customs

According to respondents and experts, many hope to see positive changes in marriage customs in the future. They emphasize prioritizing daughters' choices and eliminating the dowry system while maintaining cultural values. They wish for all social classes to be able to marry off their children without pressure. Equal rights for women and acceptance of inter-caste marriages, including with lower castes, are strongly supported. People should also have the freedom to live alone or get divorced if they choose. Respondents stressed that although wives are often called a man's "better half," both partners should be treated equally and share household responsibilities. Women should have access to quality education and opportunities to lead fulfilling lives. Some highlighted the unfairness in ritual roles, where daughters cannot perform their parents' death rites but must perform their in-laws', with in-laws prioritized over birth families. Practices like Kanyadaan, which limit daughters' rights, were criticized and suggested for change. Many believe daughters-in-law should be treated like daughters, not servants, to foster better family relationships. However, some respondents prefer traditional marriage customs and oppose changes such as inter-caste marriages, aiming to preserve ancestral rituals. Overall, change is accepted as part of society, reflecting evolving values, though opinions vary widely.

6. CONCLUSION

Among the respondents, 70% were female and 30% male, including both married and unmarried individuals who participated cooperatively. No males married before age 15; among the five married males, one was married before age 20, two after age 21, and three after age 26. There were more unmarried females than males due to sample composition. A vast majority (98%) acknowledged changes in marriage rituals, while 2% were unfamiliar with marriage culture. Forty-seven out of 50 supported remarriage, divorce, and the right to remain single, while three opposed divorce and remarriage, believing marriage should be lifelong regardless of circumstances. Opinions on marriage's importance varied, with 80% valuing it highly and 20% less so. Views on societal acceptance of changing marriage customs were mixed. Experts disagreed: one saw changes causing fragmentation in Brahmin and Chhetri society, while the other viewed them as expanding social relations and reducing caste discrimination.

In the current Brahmin and Chhetri communities, traditional rituals are less strictly observed. Marriage is regarded as a lifelong partnership, but now couples often prioritize their personal desires, with women seeking independence beyond traditional domestic roles. Celebrations tend to emphasize feasts and parties, blending Nepali and Indian customs like Mehendi and Sangeet. Dowry practices still pose concerns, though they are decreasing, and some traditional rituals are no longer performed.

Survey responses revealed diverse opinions in society regarding cultural changes in marriage. Many believe marriage should be founded on mutual respect and shared responsibilities, criticizing the notion that wives should only handle household chores.

The conclusion emphasizes that, although modern influences have changed wedding customs, traditional Brahmin and Chhetri weddings still hold cultural importance. Respondents mostly support ongoing changes, including the abolition of dowry and women's empowerment. Education and awareness help foster more liberal attitudes, with marriage increasingly seen as a union based on love and mutual commitment. The survey also identified emerging practices like couples living together before marriage, reflecting broader cultural shifts. Views on rituals such as Kanyadaan are changing, with many advocating for gender equality in family roles. Experts have differing opinions on whether these changes divide or unite society, but overall, marriage continues to evolve in response to social dynamics. The researcher focused on a small area due to limitations. This study suggests that marriage customs are evolving among marginalized or indigenous groups in Nepal.

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