



Live-in-Relationships and Socio - Legal Challenges in India

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Abstract

Due to the absence of legal protection for property rights, live-in relationships continue to be socially stigmatised in India, especially in traditional groups. Property rights are usually valued by married couples, and live-in partnerships are not specifically recognised by Indian law. The difficulties that live-in couples encounter may be made worse by this lack of family support. Without legal recognition, issues pertaining to inheritance rights and child custody become complicated. Although it offers some protection against domestic abuse, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act of 2005 can be difficult to apply and enforce. Partners can not have the same financial rights or job benefits as married spouses. Despite these challenges, perceptions about cohabitation are gradually shifting, especially among younger people and in urban areas. Comprehensive legislative reforms are necessary to address the socio-legal problems that cohabiting couples face and to provide them with adequate protection and rights.

Key Words: Rights of Women, Domestic Violence, Maintenance, Inheritance, Lack, Property, Culture.

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1. INTRODUCTION

India is founded on traditional integrity and high moral standards. As the time wheel revolves, values are changing in some way, or more precisely, the rigidity of the values is changing. India is currently adopting liberal culture and getting influenced by Western lifestyles. But its roots are still there; it is only being influenced by Western culture. This may be the reason why such traditional civilisations consider audacious displays of romance, such as live-in partnerships in India, to be splotches. On the other hand, the younger generation seeks to escape the constraints of tradition. The younger generation is heading toward a liberal wonder that challenges Indian society's traditional and ethical conventions, inspired by anything from big-budget blockbusters to small-screen daily soap operas, yet Indians have no problem living in the present. For both men and women, living together is a profoundly personal choice, and the law cannot get involved.¹

Everyone has the right to live in accordance with Article 21, and as cohabitation is a kind of living, there are no legal charges in this regard. Indian law permits cohabitation prior to marriage since it's a private matter and the constitution won't get involved. Now allow me to share one of the interesting facts with you. Cohabitation has a long history in India, a nation that vehemently condemns it. Ancient Indian mythology describe Gandhravvivah as one of the common forms of marriage. In this kind of marriage, the couple secretly treats each other as husband and wife in front of God. Nowadays, the more advanced version of the same is frequently called a live-in relationship. As you can see, the culture of the society that disapproves of it contains traces of this relationship.²

The times have changed, but the sight has not. Couples in the current scenario also wind up living together as a result of parental interference in their personal life. These kinds of relationships are pursued by couples that want complete privacy. They want to live their lives as they see fit. In practical terms, everyone has the right to use the tools available to them to manage their lives.

This liberal way of living is also influenced by the liberal perspective of the generation. Today's generation wants to get to know their partner thoroughly before getting married. And, man, I don't see anything wrong with it. We all have an Indian perspective, guys and ladies, no matter how much Western culture has influenced us. We begin living together with the intention of getting married in the future. Living together prior to marriage is therefore an excellent method to get to know one another. It gives you a clear picture of the person you want to spend the rest of your life with. Given how complex this way of life is, why is it being attacked? However, there are a number of areas that emphasise this's drawbacks. India is growing with a free and positive mindset while maintaining its rich cultural legacy. According to our moral standards, a girl and a

¹ Sakshi Kansal and Shubham Bhargava, "Judicial Interpretation and Change in Status of Live in Relationship in India" 3 *Journal on Contemporary Issues of Law* 10 (2020).

² Janani G. and Shagun Singhal, "Legal Effects and Consequences of Adopting Live-In-Relationship vis-a -vis Women Rights, Adoption, Children, Inheritance Etc" 2 *Symbiosis Journal* 12 (2012).

boy cannot cohabit before being married. In actuality, there are still some places in the twenty-first century where these relationships are not even taken into consideration. Marriage is the only association that matters to them. People engage in live-in activities because they anticipate falling in love eventually. However, because the partners lack the proper status as legally and ethically bonded couples, society does not acknowledge them. Thus, the idea of living together has both benefits and drawbacks. Again, though, whether or not to participate is a matter of personal choice. But the doors of Indian society as a whole have not yet been completely opened.³

2. LIVE IN RELATIONSHIP IN INDIAN SOCIAL CONTEXT

Living together is a new concept in India. These partnerships have grown commonplace in society due to changing times and people's perspectives, even while there were "unmarried couples," they were rare and weren't called "live in relationships." ⁹ The top court in India has been compelled to take the matter seriously due to the constantly increasing number of these connections.⁴

Recent developments in the field have made it feasible to discuss the impact of these interactions on Indian society. Marriage is considered a sacramental union of two people in India. The concept of a woman and family is still highly prized in many communities across the country. Cohabitation had been discouraged since the British era.⁶

This is no longer the case in major cities like Bangalore, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, and Delhi, but it is less prevalent in rural and semi-urban areas with more conventional viewpoints. While it is not illegal in India, most people think it is strange and hate it. Over 1 billion individuals, or less than 2% of the world's population, may live together. It is difficult to pass any relevant legislation in India due to the country's sectarian structure and lack of popular support.

There are several sensitive concerns raised by the importance of live-in relationships in Indian public life. In terms of Indian culture, it is well known that most Indians live conventional lives. Promoting an unconventional concept like cohabitation would surely make a stir in society and lead to several disruptions. It also challenges the deeply ingrained values of institutions like marriage and the family.

Such acts may jeopardise the status and rights of women, who have already been ignored for generations. Most importantly, young girls are at risk of being mistreated by dishonest males, who then exploit incorrect beliefs to harm their lives and convert them into victims of their lust. Previous Supreme Court decisions have held that not all live-in partnerships are covered under the Prevention of Women from Domestic Violence Act of 2005.⁵

³ K.K. Sanjay, "Live-In Relationship: Laws in India", Legal Service India, available at: <https://www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-10718-live-in-relationship-laws-in-india.html> (last visited on 5 March, 2026).

⁴ Kiran Rawat and Another v. State of U.P. Thru. Secy. Home, Lko. And others, LNINDORD 2023 LUCK 114. Mulla, I Hindu Law 581 (Lexis Nexis Publication, New Delhi, 24th edition, 2021).

⁵ D. Patchaiammal v. Velusmay, 2010 SC 479

Unless the following conditions are satisfied, for example: The women in these partnerships are "not" entitled to any maintenance, and the couples must portray themselves to society as being comparable to marriages.⁶

- They must be of legal marriageable age.
- They must be otherwise qualified to legally get married, even if they are unmarried.
- They had to have lived together voluntarily and shown themselves to the public as spouses for a significant period of time.

Again, the question of what a substantial period of time is comes up. How can one assess the degree to which a cohabitation is similar to marriage? It is more difficult for a woman to favour a man in these situations. These offer certain intrinsic advantages to married couples. For instance, a marriage certificate issued by an authorised legal agency, such as the registrar of weddings, is not only a legal document but also the most important document for managing a variety of legal issues. These legal documents are not in the cohabiting couples' possession, and they will not be provided with legal aid should they require it. Live-in couples only save time and money if they decide to dissolve their relationship at any point in their life, unlike legally married couples who must go through the full legal process provided in the marital law according to which they were married. They don't need to follow any formalities in order to leave each other's life. In that case, their legal rights to residency, property settlement, and child custody are duly established. If a child is born into a short-lived live-in relationship and there is no legal claim to all of these, the child's future is also in jeopardy. Nonetheless, live-in partnerships are becoming more common, and some Indians are open to participating in and supporting them. On March 23, 2010, a three-judge Supreme Court bench consisting of then Chief Justice K.G. Balakrishnan, Deepak Verma, and B.S. Chauhan stated that living together is a fundamental right to life and liberty (Article 21) and that a man and woman living together without getting married cannot be considered a crime. The Supreme Court decided that cohabitation and premarital sex were not prohibited. In 2005, the well-known South Indian actor Kushboo apparently advocated premarital sex in interviews with multiple periodicals, prompting her to seek a special leave petition to dismiss 22 criminal proceedings against her. While postponing its decision, the Supreme Court made this declaration.

It was established in the *Payal Katara v. Superintendent of Nari Niketan*⁷ case that anyone, male or female, might cohabit without getting married if they so desired. Additionally, the Apex court has reiterated that children born out of such partnerships are legitimate and have their parents' property rights, but not the right to ancestral property, under Section 16 of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955. In actuality, all of these developments are beneficial and useful. The growth of these kinds of partnerships is common in India, a country that is quickly developing. Before getting

⁶ Dr. Paras Diwan, I Family Law, 259 (Allahabad Law Agency, Allahabad, 8th edition, 2022).

⁷ *Payal Katara v. Superintendent of Nari Niketan*, AIR 2001 All 254

married, living together allows people to devote adequate time to their jobs and personal growth. Freedom, respect for uniqueness, and ease of separation are some advantages of cohabitation.⁸ The frequency of live-in couples has definitely had an impact on current Indian public life, and the changes are easily noticeable, even if this is a novel idea and Indian society differs greatly from that of developed and other growing nations. In order to handle and address this issue by averting future disagreements and controversies, the State must carefully consider it and take the necessary steps.⁹

3. LIVE IN RELATIONSHIP-CHANGING THE FABRIC OF SOCIETY

Living together has become commonplace in our country these days. While some people found it easy to adapt to new circumstances, others had to push themselves. Millions of happy, carefree couples now live together without a marriage licence; decades ago, there were very few such couples. One movie that helped spread awareness about this style of life was "Salaam Namaste."¹⁰

Why do couples continue to live together without being married, considering the social structure of our society's opposition? When a girl and a guy fall in love, why can't they embrace the social institution of marriage? Most young people say that it's always simpler to end a bad relationship than a disastrous marriage. In order to determine whether they are a good fit, give each other ample time to live together.¹¹

In order to determine if they can make a lasting transition, many young people these days are moving on to live together for a few months before getting married. Since the Supreme Court recently ruled that cohabitation is lawful, the legitimacy of such couples has somewhat increased. These kinds of relationships have always been scrutinised by a moral brigade that would stop at nothing to make them feel uncomfortable and wrong, even if our country's educated class and metropolitan areas have welcomed this transformation.¹²

In addition to all of this, insecurity is a major problem in these kinds of relationships. Couples don't know what the future holds when they first start dating. Some argue that a female-male bond is too holy to be replaced by cohabitation. When people don't hold each other accountable,

⁸ Bharath, Aditya. Socio Legal Aspects of Live-in Relationship: An Analysis. 7 Mar. 2018, available at: www.linkedin.com/pulse/socio-legal-aspects-live-in-relationship-analysis-aditya-bharath.

⁹ Ibid,

¹⁰ Dr. Ujwala Bendale, Rashmi Dubey, Anuradha Girme, et.al., "Live-In-Relationship Vis-À-Vis Sanctity of Marriage", Live Law, Dec. 10, 2021, available at: <https://www.legalindia.com/live-in-relationship-amonghindus-reincarnation-of-marriage> (last visited on Jan. 1, 2026).

¹¹ Bendale, Dr. Ujwala, et.al. "Live-In-Relationship Vis-à-vis Sanctity of Marriage." SSRN Electronic Journal, Elsevier BV, 2022. Crossref, doi:10.2139/ssrn.4001839

¹² Bendale,DrU, Dubey R, Girme, A. Live-In-Relationship vis-à-vis Sanctity of Marriage. SSRN Electronic Journal Elsevier BV; 2022. Available At: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4001839>.

the already widespread usage and throw customs of society tend to increase. But it's crucial to keep in mind that what makes a partnership beautiful is dedication and responsibility.¹³

However, a number of anti-governmental organisations have voiced significant resistance to the debate over whether or not cohabitation should be allowed in our country. Twenty-two lawsuits were filed against South Indian actress Khushboo when she promoted premarital sex a few years ago. However, this foreign culture has started to permeate India's cities as public opinion has shifted and become more liberal.¹⁴

The idea of live-in relationships – where couples decide to live together without being married – has grown in popularity recently and is frequently seen as a major change in social standards. The social fabric is being altered by this trend in a number of ways¹⁵:

- **Shifting Perceptions of Marriage:** Conventional perspectives on marriage are being challenged by cohabitation. Nowadays, some people would rather evaluate compatibility and lay the groundwork for a long-term commitment before getting married.
- **Change in Social Acceptance:** Although cohabitation was traditionally discouraged, cultural perceptions are changing. Nowadays, cohabitation is seen by many as a legitimate and acceptable option for couples, especially in urban and more progressive areas.
- **Delay in Marriage:** As live-in relationships become more common, marriage is frequently delayed. Before agreeing to formally establish their relationship by marriage, couples may decide to live together for a considerable amount of time.
- **Individual Autonomy:** The value of individual autonomy is emphasised in live-in partnerships. Without the legal restrictions of marriage, couples may feel more at liberty and adaptable in their personal lives¹⁶.
- **Effect on Family Dynamics:** Family dynamics are impacted by the acceptability of cohabitation. As younger generations accept alternative relationship forms, families may need to modify their expectations and customs.

¹³ Rai, Nitansh. "Live-in Relationship among Hindus: Reincarnation of Marriage." Legal India: Find Legal News, Articles, Tips and Ask Query., 17 Mar. 2016, www.legalindia.com/live-in-relationshipamong-hindus-reincarnation-of-marriage.

¹⁴ Pallavi Gusain, and Poonam Rawa. Domestic Violence in Live-in Relationship: A Judicial Discourse. www.dehradunlawreview.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Paper-7-Domestic-Violence-in-Live-In-Relationship-A-Judicial-Discourse.pdf. Last visited on - 10 April 2026.

¹⁵ Socio Legal Aspects of Live-in Relationship: An Analysis. www.lawfinderlive.com/Articles1/foot1?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1. Last visited on: 30 March 2026.

¹⁶ Live-in Relationships Covered Under Domestic Violence Act: Kiren Rijju." The Hindu, 23 Dec. 2022, www.thehindu.com/news/national/live-in-relationships-covered-under-domestic-violence-act-kirenrijju/article66293547.ece.

- **Legal Implications:** Different countries and areas have different laws regarding cohabitation. Laws in some jurisdictions could not acknowledge these connections, which could cause problems with inheritance, property, and other legal issues.
- **Economic Factors:** Living together may have an impact on a couple's ability to handle money, divide duties, and make future plans. Depending on the people involved, this can be both a good and difficult element.
- **Social Stigma:** Although attitudes are changing, live-in relationships may still be stigmatised in some areas or conservative nations. People may be emotionally and socially impacted by this stigma¹⁷.
- **Effect on Children:** Living together without getting married may have an impact on how children are raised and perceived. The children's experiences may also be influenced by societal perceptions about family structures.
- **Rethinking Relationship Norms:** Living together helps to reconsider how society views relationships and family structures. This continuous change calls into question the accepted notion of what makes a committed and legitimate partnership.

It's crucial to remember that different cultures, geographical areas, and personal beliefs have different effects on how cohabitation affects society as a whole. The ways that live-in relationships are viewed and incorporated into the larger social framework will change along with societal standards.

4. CHALLENGES BEFORE THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE

The adage "Marriages are made in heaven" is a common one. This suggests that in the past, marriages were associated with some form of divinity and were believed to be determined by God. However, this old proverb is no longer relevant in the context of our contemporary, modern society. The general view of marriage among our young people is changing. It is still unknown, but, if we would embrace this changing trend given our current state of societal development.¹⁸ Since ancient times, marriage has been seen as a sacred social institution. Its importance goes far beyond the union of two souls. Lord Rama's adoption of "ekpatnivrata," also known as "maryadapurushottam," is the most adored and idealistic topic in the Ramayana.¹⁹ Only a tiny percentage of the ancient Hindu upper classes still find Lord Rama's qualities admirable.¹⁹ Sadly, our young people are shifting away from the antiquated institution of marriage and toward cohabitation. These partnerships can last as long as they find purpose in them, but they can stop on their own volition as soon as they sense their partner's suffering. This is a result of the demands of contemporary life, a discernible weakening of moral principles, and an incapacity

¹⁷ Ibid,

¹⁸ Ms. Daksha Sharma, Live-In Relationships – A Threat to The Institution of Marriage, Madras Law Journal - Criminal (Journal Article) 2009 4 MLJ Cr1 21

¹⁹ Bendale, Dr. Ujwala, et al. "Live-In-Relationship Vis-à-vis Sanctity of Marriage." SSRN Electronic Journal, Elsevier BV, 2022. Crossref, doi:10.2139/ssrn.4001839

to manage the obligations that come with a long-term partnership that are inherent in the institution of marriage, particularly among Indian Hindus.

It is only a mockery of marriage as a long-standing social institution and custom. Living together is therefore a "act of escapism" that allows you to swiftly leave your partner if you find that the relationship has soured. However, this kind of thinking is never adopted by Indian culture, which only promotes moral qualities like love, compassion, understanding, trust, patience, and tolerance.²⁰

In the past, a woman was essentially given to a man as property, usually as part of a social, political, or business deal. In ancient and mediaeval India, there were many marital connections, and these alliances did have a big impact on how the kingdoms would develop. Many Rajput kings, such as Jodha Bai's father, Raja Bharmal of Aamer, forged political and matrimonial alliances with the Mughals in order to maintain the territorial integrity of their kingdom. The meaning has somewhat evolved throughout time.

Marriage is now viewed as a sign of a man and a woman's mental, physical, and social compatibility.²¹

Hindus were granted respect for the institution of marriage by the Hindu Marriage Act of 1956. Customary law pertaining to marriage was first codified. Any two Hindus may marry if the following conditions are satisfied, according to Section 5 of the Hindu Marriage Act:²²:-

- a) Neither party had a spouse at the time of the marriage;
- b) At the time, neither party got married, if
 - is unable to provide a valid consent because of mental illness; or
 - They have a mental disorder of a kind or severity that renders them unsuited for marriage and childbearing, even tho they are capable of giving a valid consent; or
 - has frequently gone thru periods of insanity.
- c) The bridegroom was twenty-one years old and the bride was eighteen when they got married.
- d) The parties are not in a banned relationship unless marriage between them is permitted by each party's culture or use.
- e) The parties are not Sapindas of one another unless their customs or usage permit a marriage.

²⁰ Live-in Relationships Covered Under Domestic Violence Act: Kiren Rijju." *The Hindu*, 23 Dec. 2022, www.thehindu.com/news/national/live-in-relationships-covered-under-domestic-violence-act-kirenrijju/article66293547.ece

²¹ Bendale, Dr. Ujwala, et al. "Live-In-Relationship Vis-à-vis Sanctity of Marriage." *SSRN Electronic Journal*, Elsevier BV, 2022. Crossref, doi:10.2139/ssrn.4001839

²² Ms. Daksha Sharma, *Live-In Relationships – A Threat to The Institution of Marriage*, *Madras Law Journal - Criminal (Journal Article)* 2009 4 MLJ CrI 21

Hindus consider marriage to be both a sacrament and a transaction. It is a sacrament because of the emphasis on performing customary rites and ceremonies, such "Saptapadi." Furthermore, this section is a contract since it deals with the partners' capacity to establish an alliance for marriage. As per the verdict in "*Anand Prakash v. Ramadevi*," the "shuddhikaran" rite was necessary for the priest to perform the marriage. The mere fact that a man and a woman live together does not usually grant them the status of husband and wife.²³

It is crucial to remember that although having children is the aim and concept of marriage, cohabitation is an exception rather than the rule. A man and woman in such a relationship will never consider procreation to be necessary. Legality is conferred to children born out of a legally recognised marriage.

Married couples are respected and seen as responsible community members. Since the beginning of time, the institution of marriage has represented love, tolerance, patience, responsibility, and concern. Thus, "family," another important social institution, is made possible. In contrast, a live-in relationship is a transient arrangement that has emerged in the modern period, where a couple stays together for as long as they choose. As a result, it is considered one of the pillars of society. This attitude has become popular with the so-called educated and enlightened sectors of our society, who prefer to live according to their own whims and fantasies without making compromises or adjustments. Because a live-in relationship is by its very nature temporary, a lack of commitment will inevitably force it to terminate.²⁴

Furthermore, cohabitation is not a common practice in our culture. If someone did that, their relationship with their parents and the community would surely be damaged. It is indisputable that women still lag far behind men in terms of social conventions, disorderly behaviour, and the main role that men still play in marriage, even tho they have become more independent in today's society. Such informal cohabitation is not permitted for women in India due to their social status. They would face discrimination and social disapproval wherever they went. Therefore, this custom of cohabitation puts Indian women's security and stability in jeopardy. Unlike marriage, which encourages long-term emotional investments in the partnership and provides stability and permanency to the individual's life, people in these kinds of relationships are only motivated by pleasure rather than sadness. As a result, he or she starts to submit to society. Social researcher Barnett Brickner asserts that "being the right mate does not come merely thru finding the right mate but thru being the right mate." Therefore, compared to the sacred connection of heavenly marriages, a live-in relationship has several drawbacks.²⁵

In Section 3(f) of the Domestic Violence Act, 2005, the term "Domestic Relationship" was first defined as a relationship between individuals who live or have lived together in a shared household at any point in time, whether they are related by consanguinity, marriage, adoption,

²³ Live-in Relationships Covered Under Domestic Violence Act: Kiren Rijju." The Hindu, 23 Dec. 2022, www.thehindu.com/news/national/live-in-relationships-covered-under-domestic-violence-act-kirenrijju/article66293547.ece.

²⁴ Bendale, Dr. Ujwala, et al. "Live-In-Relationship Vis-à-vis Sanctity of Marriage." SSRN Electronic Journal, Elsevier BV, 2022. Crossref, doi:10.2139/ssrn.4001839

²⁵ Anand Prakash v. Ramadevi, 1998, HLR Page 149 (P&H)

or are family members living together as a joint family. As a result, this Act has given women who are in these kinds of relationships and are victims of domestic abuse at the hands of their male partners a stronger foundation. The judiciary has made an effort to provide protection to women in such partners. On October 10, 2008, the Maharashtra government approved a proposal that would grant the status of wife to a woman in such a relationship for a "reasonable period" and amend Section 125 of the CrPC to include a woman who lives with a man like his wife for a reasonable period of time. In order to accomplish "women empowerment" in a practical sense, the Act aims to give women a strong foundation. Women in such relationships are currently prohibited from requesting child maintenance, alimony, or a portion of the property. Therefore, the aforementioned Bill was proposed to safeguard the women's financial interests. However, does this proposed Act meet the needs of a society that still relies on the conventional marriage system? It is not possible to protect women in such relationships in a nation like India, where the majority of people are still devout religious believers and where customs and cultural values are highly valued.²⁶

Additionally, on January 18, 2009, the Supreme Court approved the Maharashtra Government Act by ruling that long-term cohabitation was legally recognised as marriage. Additionally, the term "illegitimate" will no longer apply to children born out of such relationships. They will have the same standing as any other married child. Additionally, on 2.5.2009, the Supreme Court, led by the Bench of MR. ARIJIT PASAYAT, J. and MR. A.K. GANGULY, J., ruled that the Dowry Prohibition Act would also apply to cohabitation, thereby reinforcing the existence of such institutions in our society.

In *"Payal Sharma v. Nari Niketan"*, the Court noted that, in its opinion, a man and a woman can live together even if they are not married, while releasing the petitioner, a 21-year-old woman, in a habeas corpus case. Although society may view something as "immoral," it is not "illegal." The crucial point that needs to be asked is how the Court could accept a live-in relationship that society views as immoral as lawful. Even if these kinds of partnerships existed in some form in prehistoric civilisation as well, history attests to the fact that civilisation did not develop until the institution of marriage was established. The courts' implicit acceptance of cohabitation in society is peculiar. The goal may be to safeguard women in these kinds of relationships, but doing so could compromise society's most important interests and be very harmful in other ways.²⁷

To sum up, cohabitation is only a process of trial and error. For instance, we go to a store, try on different clothes, decide which one fits us, and throw away the others. It is crucial to emphasise that, in this case, clothes would not be angry after being rejected because it is a material object, but a human being would as they are an embodiment of emotions. One philosopher once said that "human beings are the greatest victim of emotions," thus we should be conscious of the intensity of separation anguish and the psychological trauma that a couple in a live-in relationship goes thru after a split. This concept is merely a replica from the West. In India, the institution of marriage—which is still revered in our society—is not yet given the same respect as

²⁶ Ms. Daksha Sharma, *Live-In Relationships - A Threat to the Institution of Marriage*, Madras Law Journal - Criminal (Journal Article) 2009 4 MLJ CrI 21³⁰AIR 2001 All 254.

²⁷ Ibid,



informal partnerships like cohabitation. Therefore, granting legal status to cohabitation would be objectionable to anyone who thinks that the institution of marriage is still significant and essential to preserving India's social fabric. The rich and robust culture and customs of our lovely country are well known. The relationship between a man and a woman in the context of marriage is intimately related to the moral values and traditions of our country. Therefore, in order to protect and stabilise the lives of young people and their offspring, every effort should be made to strengthen the institution of marriage. As a result, the burden of expanding the nation and preserving its renowned culture falls on the youth of the nation, who are the source of vitality and the pioneers of constructive change.²⁸

5. CONCLUSION

The universe in which Indian society lives is particularly peculiar, as seen by the rise of such relationships in urban areas in recent years. Such behaviour is still discouraged in many of the country's cities and villages. A clearer and more complete picture of India Rather than a few large cities, rural India will sustain this. In India, an unrelated male and female partner can only be in one kind of partnership. The aforementioned special bond is called "marriage," which is more of a sacrament and divine concept and has long been observed as a ceremony. The Indian population is therefore ignorant of the concept of cohabitation due to all the religious rites and ceremonies. In certain parts of Gujarat, the concept of a live-in relationship, or *maitrayakarars*, is a well-known phenomenon that has been noted by the courts and carried out in records. But this concept is essentially different from the live-in idea. Due to a lack of commitment, contempt for social ties, and intolerance in relationships, the sacrament has been replaced by planned marriages, love marriages, and finally cohabitation.

The Hindu Marriage Act considers the legitimacy of such marriages and provides the succession and property rights of children born thru them. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act also provides some consolation to individuals who have been harmed by the mistreatment of cohabiting women. The Supreme Court of India went one step further and clarified the position of these links in the Indian context by issuing important verdicts, particularly in 2010.

However, there is an urgent and pressing need in the Indian context to acknowledge such relationships thru legislation that confines their scope by giving both parties rights and creating obligations with duties. Therefore, the fundamental framework of Indian society's traditions should be taken into consideration when enacting laws pertaining to cohabitation.

²⁸ Bansal, Rohit. "Live -In Relationship in India." Research Gate, 1 July 2022, Available at: www.researchgate.net/publication/362175274_Live_-Last visited on - 7 May 2026.