

Cohabitation and the Traditional Family Institution Analysis

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Introduction

The prospect of cohabitation is known as the one form of relationship between two individuals other than the traditional family system. It is observed that in today's society, cohabitation become the common choice for many people when it comes to initiating family associations. It is notable to mention that even though there are some societal considerations on ethical and religious grounds, it still becomes the prevailing trend in society (Stanley et al.). This particular phenomenon is not only limited to American society, nor is it only implied to younger individuals. It is the one growing perspective which undoubtedly comes up with many considerations. This sort of family form is legally supported in the United States of America only in the case of heterosexual couples. The following prospect is applied to all countries except the states of California and Massachusetts. The facets of domestic partnership and civil unions are considered more in the country. These are known as paradigms that offer the necessary form of recognition to partners. There is the existence of many spousal rights which appear in the case of cohabitating heterosexuals, but it is also notable that these rights are considered weak and less as compared to married couples.

The word "cohabitation" is a specific term that is used to explain the specific form of relationship when two individuals live together as an unmarried couple. The association between cohabitating partners is usually characterized as an intimate relationship. The feature of intimacy can be observed in the forms of physical or sexual intimacy, which might appear on a long-term or momentary basis. The overall prospect of the specific term of cohabitation indicates the social scene when many people decide to live in a relationship other than the family form of marriage. Here, the aim is to explore the concept of cohabitation with its different dimensions and how it impacts traditional family institutions in the country.

Discussion

Today, the practice of cohabitation is immensely accelerating in Western countries due to many reasons. Statistics show that more than two-thirds of individuals around the world have unmarried status and live together as partners. The historical background of America indicates that the following practice was not common in the past years. It was considered as an illegal activity in the country in 1970. Citizens of the country started considering this form of family system in the era of 90s. The statistics of the nation in 1994 show that there were almost 4 million couples who adopted the option

of cohabitation in their lives. The number of individuals who live in cohabitated relationships is increasing day by day in the country. Now, it has become a reality in our society that cohabitation is considered a somewhat normal practice of dating (Woods and Emery). It is considered one of the most common forms of union among youngsters in society. It is crucial to mention that this practice is also observed in the case of old citizens as well who adopt it due to many reasons, such as the immense need for family or partnership in their lives.

When it comes to the country's statistics, it is evident that the cohabitation rate is increasing due to a decrease in the marriage rate. Undoubtedly, people are more prone to adopt unmarried status to indulge in intimate relationships. There is evidence of the 18 million individuals in the year 2016 who adopt the option of cohabitation. These numbers show a 29% increase compared to 2007 when 14 million adults were cohabiting in the country (Stepler). It is notable to mention that there is an increasing number of Americans ages 50 or above who are in a cohabitating relationship. 23% of the total cohabiting adults consist of individuals who are 50 years old or above this range.

60% of married couples reported adopting the option of cohabitation before marrying each other. This practice is growing day by day in adults as they believe that it is an effective chance to understand their partner before the conventional form of marriage. The prospect of cohabitation become common in the country, but still, there are some states in which the phenomenon of cohabitation is considered an illegal practice. The occurrence of social change is one of the main factors that increase the acceptance of cohabitation in American society. It is notable to mention that there are still some areas of the country where cohabitation is observed as an illegal act. Mississippi, Michigan, Florida, and Virginia are the states which have laws against the practice of cohabitation. There are many different forms of penalties which apply to individuals who consider cohabitating.

The state of Virginia imposes \$500 fine for the offense as any person lived in a relationship without marriage. There is debate about the establishment of specific laws against cohabitation, but they exist in different states to maintain the superior aspect of marriage. The growing trend of cohabitation in the country proposes the approach to repealing the laws against this practice. A large portion of adults are prone to adopt the option of habitation as they consider it an easy approach to maintaining a sexual relationship with their partners without any legal documentation. Many people consider this to be an effective form of test to prepare themselves for the responsibilities of married life.

There are many social and economic reasons which encourage the phenomenon of cohabitation in American society. The one major reason for the following practice can be identified as the need for money. It is observed that there are an increasing number of young adults in the country who are not financially stable. It became difficult for them to adopt the approach of marriage to fulfil their sexual needs. It seems feasible for the youngsters of the country to adopt the practice of cohabitation as compared to the legal paradigm of marriage or relationship union. The need for housing can be the one significant reason for the adoption of cohabitation for young people (Cohan and Kleinbaum). Another crucial factor that encourages today's generation to cohabit is philosophical aspects. Nowadays, some individuals never believe in the whole concept of marriage. It is considered a difficult

option for them to limit themselves in the legal documentation of marriage.

Expansion in the economic cost of housing is one prominent reason for cohabitation in the country. Sometimes, it becomes difficult for the single individual to bear all the costs of the household, so people adopt the option of cohabitation to attain their sexual needs. Most people perceive it as a convenient option to live with their partners in a cohabiting relationship. Nowadays, it has become a trend for young adults to give their relationships a chance. They adopt the option of cohabitation to test their compatibility and understanding with their partners before marriage (Waggoner). Some people accept the reality that they lived with their partners before marriage, so they become able to sustain good associations in married life by understanding their partners more closely.

People consider cohabitation as the one effective alternative to marriage because it is the feasible approach for those who want to indulge in a same-sex relationship. Cohabitation can be identified as the solution for those individuals who might suffer from the issue of interracial or interreligious marriages. Many individuals consider the option of cohabitation to avoid the violation of law in case of adultery. The imposition of higher taxes in the case of married couples, if they are working, is another crucial reason in the country which encourages people to go for cohabitation as the feasible alternative. People chose to remain unmarried to get rid of the problem of high levels of tax imposition. One can make the inference that many adults in the country adopt the option of cohabitation to avoid economic expenses.

There are many types of research that critically indicate the positive and negative aspects associated with the practice of cohabitation as the alternative approach to the conventional form of marriage. The approach of cohabitation is claimed to be an effective approach to avoid the growing rate of divorce in the country. Most of the time, people adopt this approach to assess their understanding of their partners, which ultimately helps them make more rational decisions about their marriage. Nowadays, cohabitation is known as the one normal approach which is socially acceptable, so it becomes easy for individuals to adopt the approach of cohabitating to delay the practice of marriage for some years.

The accelerating phenomenon of cohabitation ultimately impacts the conventional practice of marriage. As people are more interested in the adoption of cohabitation, the feature of delay is observed in the case of marriage (Copen et al.). Individuals are more interested in enjoying their life in the relationship with their partner in the paradigm of cohabitation than in the traditional form of marriage. The particular approach of cohabitation is acceptable for many people as they believe that it is the one effective chance to avoid the phenomenon of divorce in future marriages. If there is an unstable association between partners in cohabitating, then they eventually decide to separate to avoid the future complications of marriage. There is an increasing rate of individuals who promote the practice of cohabitation before marriage as they perceive that it is an effective approach which positively influences the relationship form of marriage. It can be considered as the necessary paradigm to maintain the sustainability of the traditional form of relationship because it is one effective source of decreasing the divorce rate.

Another argument which is also presented in favour of cohabitation is that it provides financial protection to individuals. There is an observation of many cases in the country where individuals break up their marriages due to financial issues. Cohabitation can be considered as the solution to avoid these sorts of problems (Heuveline and Timberlake). Another reason which indicates that cohabitation immensely influences the conventional form of family is that it is considered an effective practice by many people as it is the source of responsibility development. Individuals in cohabitation become more able to understand their responsibilities towards their partners, which ultimately helps them to maintain healthy married relationships with their partners. The one crucial approach which creates a difference in the approaches of marriage and cohabitation is that in the practice of cohabitation, people are not liable to live with each other till death or under the consideration of any legal document. They feel like free individuals who can develop a relationship whenever they want without any complications, which is common in the case of marriage.

There is evidence from many research studies indicating that although cohabitation has become an accelerating trend in the country, it is still not fully accepted in a social setting when it comes to the approach of family culture. It is observed in many cases that the relationship of the individual with family affects the case of cohabitation. Many people in a social setting are not easily ready to accept the decision of cohabitation in the case of their adult children (Baranowska-Rataj). Another crucial aspect associated with the paradigm of cohabitation is that, in this case, couples delay the facet of childbearing much longer than married couples. This prospect significantly impacts the traditional approach to family formation in the country.

Conclusion

To conclude the discussion about cohabitation, it is crucial to mention that it is the one growing trend in the country which cannot be avoided. Some researchers or sociologists consider it to be the one effective alternative approach to marriage, which is known as the traditional way of family formation. Undoubtedly, the facet of cohabitation comes up with many considerations which impact the overall social paradigm in the country. There are higher chances of splitting the partners in case of cohabitation as no legal document binds them. This particular facet ultimately impacts the approach to family formation or family setting in society. There is another positive side associated with the prospect of cohabitation. It is perceived that the element of cohabitating can help society decrease the number of divorces in the country. Better understanding between partners during the phase of cohabitating ultimately helps them to sustain a strong relationship in marriage. Cohabitation can be considered a feasible option before marriage to ensure a strong bond between partners in the form of a healthy relationship.

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