



1. Mapping the Perceptions and Experiences of Child Adoption in India

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Abstract

Even though the idea of adoption is not new to Indians, it has always been a touchy subject. The adoption industry has seen several advancements, including international adoptions and adopting a boy to perform final rites after a parent dies. In the past, adoption operated within a framework that was parent-focused; today, the emphasis is on providing institutionalized care to children who need homes. To understand how young men and women define family, this paper attempts to map their perceptions of the adoption practice in India. Do ideas like "blood relations" and "purity" still have an impact on a person's adoption decisions? Is the family's decision to adopt an infant an individual or group one? Should a child's adoption be announced openly or kept a secret? Should the adoptive parent tell the child about the adoption? What are the family members' responses to adoption? A thorough examination of the adoption-related literature revealed some deficiencies that were taken into consideration when conducting the study. The results show that there are gender variations in adoption-related beliefs and behaviors, as well as in the anguish and stigma a couple, particularly women, must endure. The question of whether the adoption issue may be seen as a "constellation of emotional forces" is thus addressed by applying a gender lens and psychoanalytic framework to study what unconscious and emotional processes contribute to the thinking, planning, and practice involved in adoption (Hindle and Shulman, 2008). Finally, some policy implications are recommended for all parties involved in adoption.

Keywords: motherhood, adoption, attitudes, infertility, parenthood, psychoanalytic, stigma

Introduction

In history, adoption is not a novel concept. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata both discuss adoption. In Hindu society in the past, adoption was primarily done when a male child was preferred to finish the legalities after the death of a parent. But since then, there have been substantial legal and sociological developments regarding adoption. In the 1920s, the adoption of unrelated children by Indians led to the development of what is now called "institutional adoption." In 1920, the Madras and Bombay Presidency passed the first Children's Act, entrusting the state with the care of destitute and neglected children (Bhargava, 2005) During the 1950s, India emphasized finding homes for orphaned, underprivileged, illegitimate, and surrendered children. These youngsters were institutionalized before being placed for adoption both locally and abroad. Domestic adoption in India only gained popularity in the late 1980s (Bhaskara, 2012). The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act (HAMA) of 1956 made adoption possible for any Hindu. Similarly, the personal laws of India's minorities--Muslims, Christians, Parsis, and Jews--are typically governed by the Guardians and Wards Act (GWA) of 1890. Later, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children Act of 2015 (JJA) made it possible for anybody, regardless of religion, to adopt a kid.

Personal laws cannot be avoided while discussing adoption or gender equality. The Personal Laws (Amendment) Bill of 2010 amended two laws relating to the legal rights of women in adoption: the Guardians and Wards Act (GWA) of 1890 and the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act (HAMA) of 1956. Even in non-Hindu communities, this officially acknowledged the mother of an adopted kid as a guardian. This is a huge advancement for women's rights, and it has recently been utilised by financially independent urban women. However, as previously stated, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act (JJA) of 2000 permits adoption by all Indians, including religious minorities.

The Indian legal definition of adoption is "the process through which the adopted child is permanently separated from his/her biological parents and becomes the legitimate child of his adoptive parents with all the rights, privileges and responsibilities that are attached to the relationship". Adoption creates permanent bonds between the child and the parent(s) who are not biologically related.

According to the Central Adoption Resource Agency) (henceforth CARA), there are 29.6 million stranded, orphaned, and abandoned children in India, of which only 500,000 make it to institutionalised care and only 3000 to 4,000 are adopted annually. There were approximately 16,000 potential parents in India waiting for adoption recommendations as of July 2022, but the number of children legally available for adoption is much lower. Furthermore, there are nearly 260,000 children residing in the country's 7,000 childcare institutions (CCIs).

According to CARA's figures, the number of in-country adoptions has decreased during the last decade. In 2010, there were 5693 in-country adoptions, which decreased to 3374 in 2018-2019. According to CARA's official website, 3374 in-country adoptions were completed in 2018-2019, while 653 inter-country adoptions were completed during the same year (https://cara.wcd.gov.in/resource/adoption_Statistics). According to the Indian Council for Child Welfare (ICCW) figures, 78% of domestically adopted children were girl children and 22% were male children between 2001 and 2009 (Bhaskara, 2012). This suggests that female children are still abandoned or surrendered at a higher rate than male children (Kartik, 2018). These tendencies indicate that complete research on adoption is essential, as a gender-specific component is required.

As a result, I believe it is critical to clarify the necessity to study adoption from a gender perspective for two reasons: the practice of adoption has received little academic attention, particularly from a gender viewpoint, within the discipline of Women's Studies. Even though and secondly, although motherhood and marriage are two themes that impact a woman's life in numerous ways and primarily concern a woman's life on multiple levels: reproductive choice and reproductive technologies, including abortion and surrogacy, and so on, little attention has been paid to the intersectionality of family, parental rights and roles, gay and lesbian rights, the intersection of gender, race, and class, and gender roles. as well as the parents' gender choice in the adoption.

Furthermore, three stigmatizing themes need to be addressed because adoption is a delicate subject with a lot of taboos and stereotypes: Adopted children are seen as inferior because of their unknown genetic background and adoptive parents are not thought of as real parents because they are not biologically related to their children, adoptive families are seen as second-best. It is assumed that a biological tie is important for bonding and love (Wegar, 2000). All of these aspects of child adoption must be considered before any policy changes are implemented.

This paper is a modest attempt to bring these elements into focus through empirical investigation within the gender and psycho-analytical framework.

Adoption: A Gender Framework

Adoption is typically the last option for any couple. This is because the preference has always been for a biological child; this preoccupation frequently drives the family towards expensive and time-consuming ARTs, with the mother often bearing the brunt of the pain. From the start, the entire adoption institution looks to be gendered. When a couple is unable to conceive, the wife is humiliated and is continually urged to see a doctor. In extremely rare circumstances, the oldest member of the family requests that both husband and wife see a doctor. The "lacking" is said to be in the woman. When having a biological child becomes impossible, the couple decides to adopt. When conceiving a biological child becomes impossible, the couple pursues adoption. When having a biological child is no longer an option, the couple seeks ARTs, which frequently results in disappointment. This demonstrates that a woman must endure disappointment and embarrassment on numerous levels during the adoption process. After exhausting all other options, the couple settles on adoption. Then, in the midst of all of this, the whole cycle of preference for a particular type of child begins. As a result, when it comes to reproduction, a woman has little control over her own body. I would want to explicitly mention Bertholet (1993) in this work, who faced the existing social and legal milieu, which is slanted towards the biological family and costly artificial reproductive technologies (ARTs) to aid biological reproduction. On a scale of preferred options for starting a family, she prioritizes biological reproduction first, reproductive technologies second, and adoption last. The biological model restricts and stigmatizes adoption because it overvalues reproduction and stigmatizes it. Another noteworthy aspect of Bertholet's feminist approach is how she involves all three parties of the triad—the kid, the birthparents, and the adoptive parent—from building a child-centered argument to addressing the taboos that birthparents must face.

She is also quite critical of the screening procedure for two reasons: ensuring the eligibility of potential adoptive parents and matching the profiles of the child and the parents. This matching technique spreads discrimination based on race, religion, colour, class, caste, and creed. There is a paucity of women's perspectives, concerns, priorities, and understanding when it comes to creating adoption guidelines.

Adoption: A Psychoanalytic Framework

The primary reason for mentioning this framework is to comprehend the complex emotional experiences of children, adults, and families involved in adoption because ideas about unconscious desires, erotic instincts, and critical childhood stages in a person's development have taken center stage in discussions about adoption, particularly its challenges and potential hazards. According to Hindle and Shulman (2008), adoption entails a particular "constellation of emotional forces" that can contribute to the thinking, planning, and practice of all individuals involved in adoption. The second fundamental notion is psychic pain, often known as mental pain,' which refers to how the mind responds to psychic pain and how psychic pain affects the development of the mind, personality, and relationships and has major consequences for his future life, affecting his connections and interactions with others, particularly his adopted family. The third idea is ambivalence, which refers to having feelings of both love and hatred for the same individual. Ambivalence in any relationship can cause anxiety and tension, as well as have long-term consequences for the relationship. The fourth fundamental notion is separating, which refers to an endeavor to keep feelings of love and hate for the same individual separate. This is commonly used to emphasize sentiments of love and dismiss feelings of anger to maintain a healthy relationship. The final notion is about having an understanding of adoption based on emotional experience. It entails being honest in a relationship about knowing someone. According to Bion (1962), this openness and sincerity are necessary for mental growth.

Brinich (1990) defines adoption as a social institution in which some parents do not want or are unable to care for their children, while others seek to care for children but are unable to conceive them. The adopted child must manage these two opposing sentiments towards both sets of parents, complicating the entire process. When these schisms form, they have far-reaching consequences for both the child-parent connection and the child's sense of self. Due to its interest in the unconscious aspects of human psychic functioning that are frequently ignored by other perspectives, using the psychoanalytic perspective to understand adoption is crucial. In addition, a gender perspective provides insight into the intersectionality of the processes and challenges of adoption. The analysis of this paper revolves around these two perspectives.

Methodology

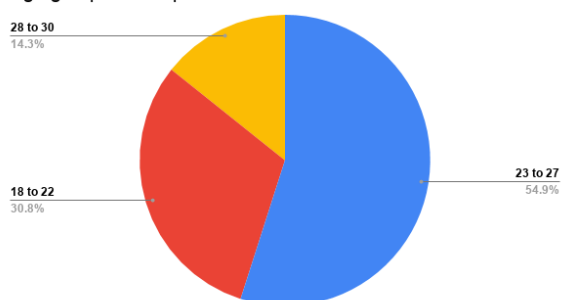
This paper is mainly concerned with exploring the general perception of two religious' communities about the "blood relations" as one's real family, and the major factors or challenges/ hurdles affecting child adoption in India. More precisely, the paper deals with the question, does gender play a role at all levels in the process of adoption? Does the process of adoption affect men and women differently? What are the various stigmas related to adoption? The paper is descriptive and is analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively in the Psychoanalytical and gender framework. An interview schedule was administered to 200 young men and women (180 single respondents and 20 couples including adoptive parents) between the age group of 18 and 45 years from all socio-economic and religious backgrounds through purposive sampling. Looking at the sensitivity of the theme, an in-depth case study for capturing the experiences of adoptive parents and two adoptive daughters (one from within the family and one from CARA) was conducted. The study area was Delhi NCR. The names of the respondents have been changed.

The questionnaire consisted of demographic questions (close-ended) to understand the context of the participants and open-ended questions were used to understand:

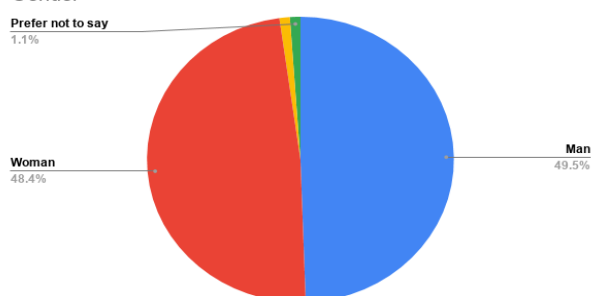
- the reasons why one would adopt or not, the stigma and challenges
- adoption by the LGBTQIA+ community and single parents
- suggestion to improve the social and legal milieu of adoption.

Socioeconomic and Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Age groups of Respondents



Gender



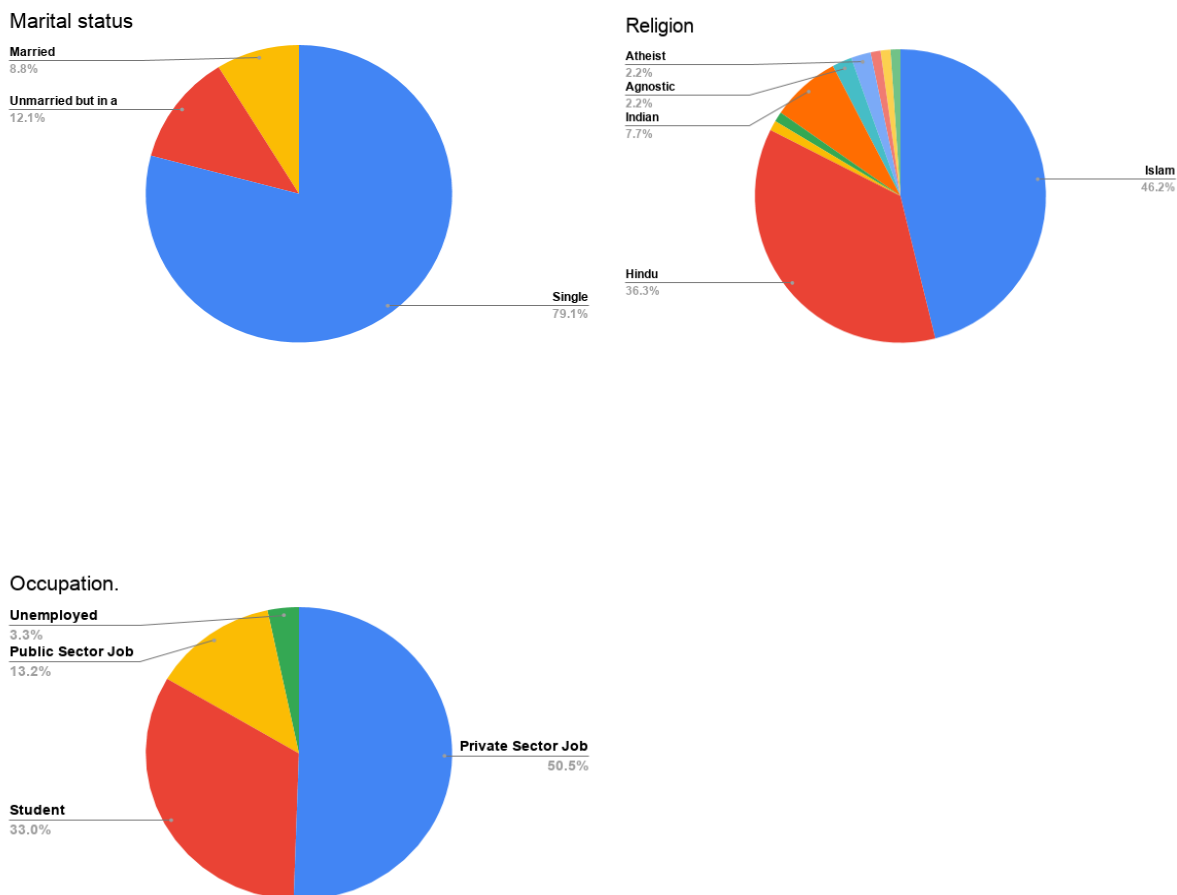


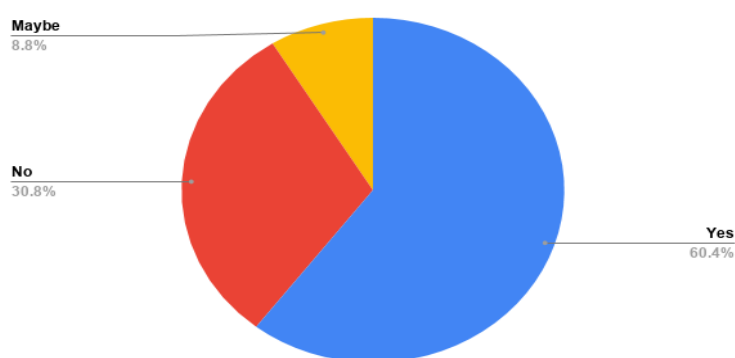
Fig 1: Socioeconomic and Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Perception and Experience of Adoption: Respondents’ View

Childlessness refers to a couple's inability to conceive or give birth to a live child during their marriage. Losses experienced by infertile couples include those connected to their relationship, social position, physical and mental health, self-worth, self-respect, safety, and self-confidence. Women, on the other hand, are more likely to feel alone, unhappy, guilty, and violent because they believe they are to blame. Psychological aspects include emotional tension, discomfort, trauma, and anxiety (Lavania, 2006). Respondents were asked to share their thoughts on

adoption and the causes of adoption while keeping this in mind. When the respondents were asked if they know anyone who is/ has adopted, 60.45% were in favour of adoption and said that only those couples should pursue adoption who can't have biological kids. These respondents preferred adoption over Invitro fertilization (IVF) and having one's own - biological children as they stated that the population of India is already uncontrollable. Nevertheless, adoption is still considered as a 'backup'. 30.8% were against it and 8.8% had no say in it.

Figure -2: Opinion of respondents about adoption



The next query was to know the reasons for their preference for adoption. Most of the respondents (56.4%) used words like “noble cause”, “kindness”, “compassionate act” and a “good gesture” inability to conceive biologically, because of expensive and complicated ARTs, for same-sex couples, single-parent, encourage the development of orphaned and poor children. Moreover, it will also keep the population in check. Interestingly, a gendered understanding was also visible in some responses. Javeria and Mohan, aged,40 and an adoptive parent, opine, “Adoption should be considered both in the interests of the child and the parents. She further says, “Preference must be given for a girl child because, in a country like ours, they are abandoned the most based on the gender.” This reflects that a person should be generous enough to consider adopting. Others called it a suitable “option” or “alternative” for couples who can't conceive.

Some respondents (33.4%) said that adoption is a complicated issue and one needs to be financially, mentally, and emotionally prepared before adopting, and 10.2% of respondents had no opinion regarding this matter.

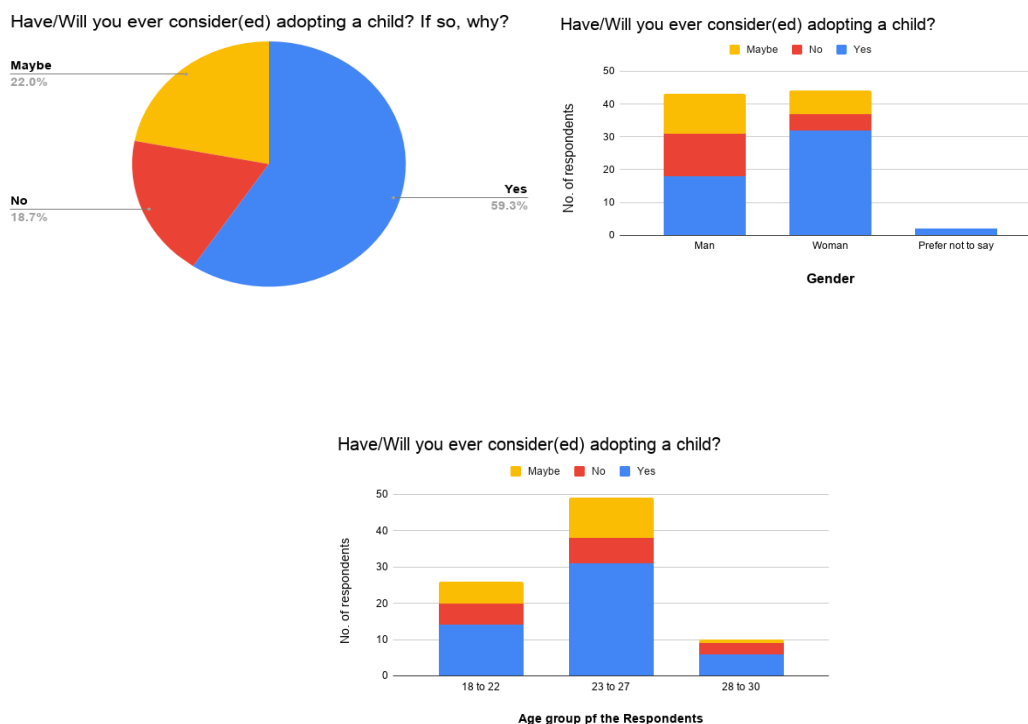
All these responses reflect that there is an occurrence of responses other than the two traditional ones- inability to conceive and to help the needy. Respondents were open to unconventional family patterns and had new reasons to think about adoption. There was also an element of transcending beyond the boundaries of gender and marriage in these responses. Most important the respondents who listed “inability to conceive biologically” stated, “When the wife is not able to conceive”. This reflects a huge unawareness amongst the masses about men also being responsible for childlessness and gender bias.

Nazia narrates, “In a traditional adoption situation, a couple who is unable to conceive tries assisted reproductive technology (ART), and when that also fails, decides to adopt. A preference for blood relationships is still discernible in this situation. Both paths have not been easy, even though families and close friends have generally been supportive in both circumstances. However, this acceptability only extends to adoption and is viewed as a "second option"—a blessing to free the couple (mother) from the burden of infertility”. She further says, “It is the woman whose fertility is under question, not the men, it is the woman who suffers from social stigma, isolation, and depression, not the men. Even after adoption, she is not free from social stigma.”

Considering Adoption in the Future: Perception and Experience of the Respondents

When inquired if they have ever thought of adopting a child themselves, reasons for that, and whether gender and age play any role in this consideration. The majority of respondents i.e. 59.3% said “yes”, a significant 22.0% said “maybe” and the remaining 18.7% said “no”. The responses of “maybe” and “no” are significant enough to be discussed. There was consistency in responses listed under “maybe” as most of those read, “If I cannot conceive a child of my own, then I will think of it”. Reasons under “no” varied- some said that their religion prohibits it, some said they already have a biological child, others said that they do not want a child at all and one respondent said that as a queer woman, she can’t think of attaching another “taboo” to her life.

Fig-3 and Graph-1&2: Considering Adoption in the Future: Perception of the Respondents



The data was further analysed with two independent variables: Gender and Age of the respondents. A stark difference in the gender-specific opinions can be observed. As the above Figure and Graph explains, more women were open to the idea of adopting in the future in comparison to men. When we look at the age of the respondents and their opinion about adoption, the chart explains that more respondents from the age group of 23 to 27 years were open to the idea of adopting in the future. This shows that the majority of young think positively about adoption but there is also hesitation when it comes to translating their opinions into behaviors.

Seema, aged 35 married for 10 years narrates “convincing the family and the husband to adopt is very difficult. The husband thinks his manhood is challenged and the family thinks the fault is with the wife. In this situation what option does a woman have? She further stated, “Adoption is not an individual or couple’s choice alone rather it is a family or social issue, even if you want to adopt, there is pressure from the family especially on women to visit shrines, to observe various rituals, try ART (even if it fails), rather than going for simple adoption. If permitted, it is with a rider to keep it secret”.

Adoption: Religion or Patriarchy

Since the sample of this study consists of Muslims mainly, it is important to mention the Islamic view on adoption. According to the Quranic verse S.33. A.4-6, adoption in the strict sense is forbidden by Muslim law. However, a close reading of this verse reveals that adoption is not mentioned at all. The Prophet meant that if a man called the son of another man "his son," this would complicate normal and natural relationships if it were interpreted too literally. As per the Prophet's statement, Allah considers it more reasonable to address a man by the name of his biological father. The Prophet hasn't expressly forbidden adoption. The creation of a false relationship at the expense of or termination of a real blood relation is what is intended. Theology of the Prophet is based on the presumption that a natural son already exists. It should be mentioned that adoption is a widespread practice among several Mohammedan classes in various parts of India, including Ajmer¹, Kashmir², Bombay³, Madhya Bharat⁴, and Mahavatan in Rajasthan⁵. As was previously mentioned, when the Prophet adopted Zayd, it seems that he was aware of the adoption custom.

Adoption is not covered under the Shariat Application Act, 1937, Section 2. To interpret this section, however, one may refer to rulings in *Maulvi Mohd. v. Mahboob Begum*⁶ and *Puthiya Purahil Abdurahiman Karnavan v. Thayth Kancheentavida Avoomma*⁷, where it was decided that the omission of certain topics, like adoption, over which a lawful custom could regulate and be binding on the parties, does not imply that it is improper.

Keeping in mind the aforementioned norms and practices, as well as the judgements, respondents were asked if religion influences adoption decisions or if it is a patriarchal

1 Abdullah Khan v. Sunda, 11 J.C. 670.

2 Mst. Khatgi v. Abdul Razzaq, AIR 1977 J & K 44; Mohd. Akbar Bhat v. Mohammad Akhoon, AIR 1972 J & K 105.

3 Ayubsha Amirsha Jamadar v. Babalal Mahabut Danawade, AIR 1938 Bom 111.

4 Abbasali Shah v. Mohammad Shah, AIR 1951 Madhya Bharat 92

5 Abdul Hakim & Ors. V. Gappu Khan, S.B. CSA No. 115/1950- decided on 22.12.1954.

6 AIR 1984 Mad 7.

7 AIR 1956 Mad 244.

institution, and the responses varied. 40% of respondents stated religion had no bearing on their decision, while 30% said it does. However, a considerable number of respondents, 25%, thought that social elements are more essential than religion, while the remaining 5% did not comment. A couple of them even mentioned Shabnam Hashmi's case. Even if some of them who presented religious explanations were educated, they were unfamiliar with the passages of the Quran and the Shariat Act. Those who negated explained the childlessness more in terms of trauma, depression, and isolation a woman goes through for not having a child is more social than religion.

Hasina, aged 36, married for 12 years narrates, "Being Muslim I was under the constant pressure of my husband's second marriage, almost every month, I was asked whether I conceived, taken to all shrines and doctors. I knew whose fault was but neither I nor my husband dared to disclose it due to the so-called "shame on masculinity". I was not taken to any family function due to the tag of "childlessness" and I went into depression. Looking at my condition, the issue of second marriage reoccurred but my husband took the stand to adopt a child which was vehemently disapproved based on religion and there was pressure to adopt a child from within the family which we refused. We adopted a baby girl through a government agency and now she is 16 years old".

Sarita, aged 42, married for 14 years, adopted a baby boy two years back after exhausting all the options of a biological child narrates, "Nobody ever questioned the fertility of a man not even a man is ready to accept, leave alone disclosing it to her parents or relatives. I was under constant pressure to conceive but after an investigation, we were told the problem of lesser sperm count and movement of sperm but did not disclose it. We decided to adopt but the condition was a baby boy and we waited for two years. I was instructed to pretend my pregnancy and was sent to a distant relative place and after three months came with the baby" Why there is so much stigma related to masculinity and adoption? And Why it is the woman who suffers without none of her fault?

When asked about the taboos that the respondents have heard/faced regarding adoption, the majority of respondents (64%) stated not own blood, legitimacy, revealing adoption might lead to the child hating his adoptive parents, and negative attributes of the child for birth parents. Another 28% of respondents stated the social stigma attached to the adoptive parents as they

are very often condemned, humiliated, and stigmatized as 'barren', infertile, and someone who is having a default, followed by 10% who consider adoption solely as an act of charity

Abha and Vikram, 42, and Sughra and Azim, 43 adoptive parents of a baby girl shared the same experience of social stigma, stereotypes, and negative approach of the family and community. Both women were tagged as "barren" "infertile" and inauspicious". When they adopted the child, the question of legitimacy, purity of blood, and Khandan, were raised, and they were asked to keep the adoption secret, and no celebrations. But both the couples celebrated and said if any couple faces any problem in getting a biological child, they must adopt a child, it really gives you inner satisfaction, never bother about society, and it will never stop criticizing you.

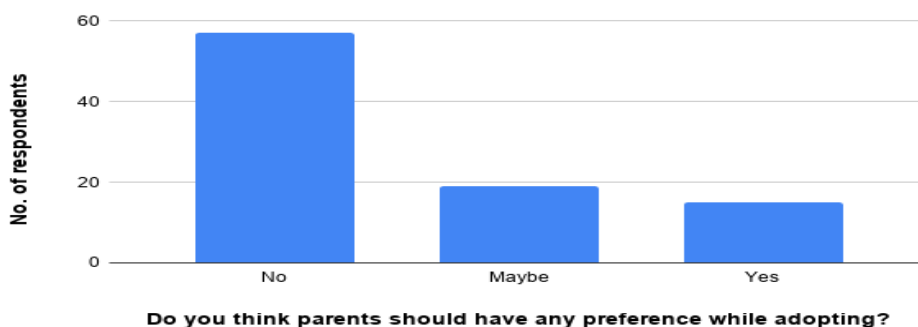
Gulnar, aged 43, a housewife who adopted a daughter right after her birth from her brother-in-law shares, "Keeping adoption a secret from an adopted child is a difficult task. She had to stop meeting a lot of relatives who tried to humiliate or tell her daughter about her adoption. She says that no factor should matter much when you are doing a noble deed out of pure, selfless love and care for a child".

These taboos and stereotypes reflect that Indian society irrespective of religion, still holds on to concepts like 'purity' and 'legitimacy' which are more social than religion. It also reflects the inner conflicts of the adoptive parents as stated by Hindle and Shulman (2008) "constellation of emotional forces" which most of the adoptive parents go through before and after adoption.

Preference in Adoption

Leathers et al. (2012:892) stated that "little research has focused on factors that predict adoption or influence adoptive parents' decision to adopt" wishing to adopt a child of a specific gender, age, religion, or physical appearance. Child adoption practices in the country are not uniform. The desire for infants is one of several personal preferences that influence the selection of the child to be adopted. Hence, the respondents were asked to express their views on the preference for adoption.

Do you think parents should have any preference while adopting (regarding the age, sex or religion of the child)?



Graph-3: Preference in Adoption

The above graph clearly shows, that around 58% of the respondents had no preference for gender, age, religion, or physical appearance during adoption and stated that it is a humanitarian act and any kind of preference would amount to discrimination, it is an act of emotional and psychological satisfaction for both adoptive parents and the child, should be aligned with the parent’s needs and desires. Nevertheless, it is interesting to mention that preference based on gender was significant as can be seen from the chart below that 49% of the respondents had no specific preference, and interestingly, 20% preferred a baby girl as compared to 15% who preferred a baby boy.

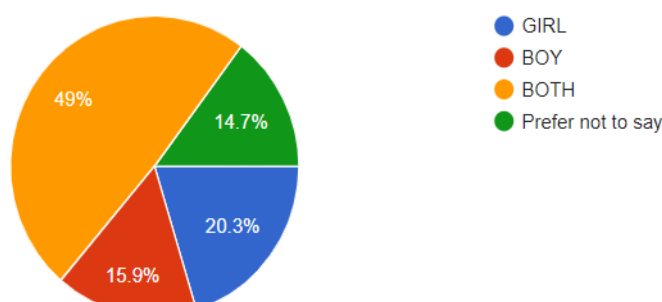


Fig-4: Preference in Adoption

LGBTQ as Adoptive Parents: Respondent’s View

An increasing number of adult lesbians and gay men are adopting children. Nonetheless, there is still debate in the USA and other countries regarding lesbian and homosexual individuals adopting children. In these discussions, several points have been brought up. For example, how

well-suited are lesbian and gay individuals to be adoptive parents? Are adopted children of lesbian and gay parents developing in a healthy manner? In adoptive families where the parents are lesbian or homosexual, what elements support healthy family dynamics? In light of all of these inquiries, respondents were invited to share their thoughts on LGBTQ+ people adopting children.

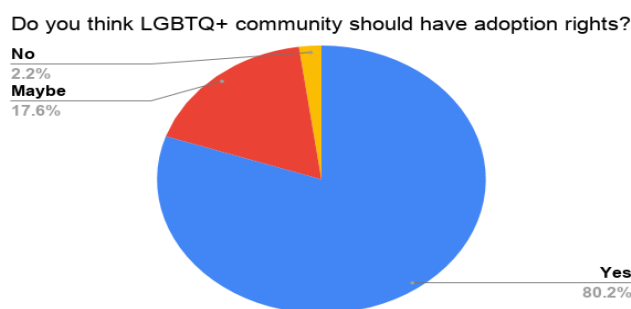


Fig-5: LGBTQ as Adoptive Parents: Respondent's View

The above Figure clearly shows that most of the respondents were in favor of LGBTQ+ community having adoption rights. This reveals that a large chunk of today's young generation is open to the idea of same-sex couples and transgenders and non-binary people parenting children.

Saloni, a queer, aged, 35 said, "For some people, especially some members of the queer community, adopting a child is the only alternative to start a family. And when they are denied their last option, it is an exploitation of their right to decide for themselves." These responses suggest that the young generation is more nuanced of diverse kinds of families and is open to unconventional modes of family. However, this research is limited to 100 respondents, and further exploration and separate research on a large scale are required in this area.

Age of Adoptive Parent: a Barrier to Adoption

The conditions laid in India for adoption mention the age limit for single parents is restricted to less than 55 years, adoptive parents cannot have a cumulative age of more than 110 years, the age of the parents as of the date of registration should be as per CARA guidelines in order to be eligible for adoption. So, the respondents were asked to express their opinion

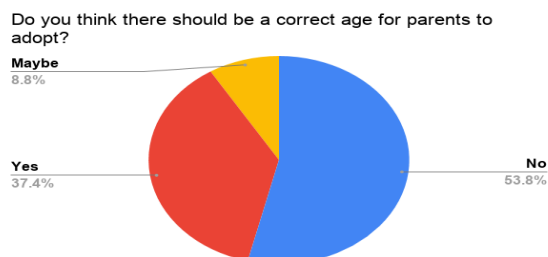


Fig-6: Views regarding Age of the Adoptive Parent

The above Figure shows that the majority of the respondents felt that age should not be a barrier to adoption and believed that as long as they are physically and mentally sound and are ready for parenthood. Physical, mental, financial, and emotional stability for the proper upbringing of the child is more important than age.

Respondents who supported this stated that old people may not be physically active to look after the baby and might have a shorter life span. This might lead to the child suffering twice from the loss of his parents.

When asked about their stake in adoption by single parents, 74.3% of the respondents were in favour saying that adopting a child would fill the gap of the loneliness of a single person's life, they have the right to adopt, and they are capable for the upbringing of the child. 23.5% were against this idea and stated that a child needs both parents, for proper upbringing of the child care of both parents is required, while 2.2% were undecided on this issue.

Awareness of Acts and Procedures of Adoption in India

Regulation 5 of CARA states the eligibility criteria for prospective adoptive parents wherein it says that "they shall be physically, mentally, emotionally, and financially capable, they shall not have any life-threatening medical condition and they should not have been convicted in the criminal act of any nature or accused in any case of child rights violation". Further, there are several agencies and steps⁸ that follow before adoption. Hence, the respondents were asked to

⁸ Registration- Prospective adoptive parents need to get registered with an authorized agency; Home Study and Counseling- a social worker for the registration agency, will visit the prospective adoptive parent's home to do a home study; Referral of the Child- the agency shall intimate the interested couple whenever there is a child ready for adoption; Acceptance of the Child- Once the parents are comfortable with a child, they will have to sign a few documents pertaining to the acceptance of the child; Filing of Petition- All necessary documents are submitted to a lawyer the adoptive parents will have to visit the court and sign

name at least one agency⁹, one Act,¹⁰ and two steps for the adoption of a child. The data reveals that the majority 40.2% of the respondents were unaware of the one agency (CARA), two steps (registration, filing the petition,), and Acts (JJ Act), 23.8% were aware of the agencies (CARA and SARA), two Acts (HAMA and JJ Act), and three steps (Registration, home study and filing of petition) and 36% were aware of all the procedures and Act as per their faith and citizenship rights, especially the adoptive parents and the younger generation of students.

When asked whether they would decide on adopting a child in the future, the majority of the respondents favored it, mostly women in the age group of 25 to 37, and were intolerant towards any kind of discrimination based on gender, age, and religion of adoptive parents. They also emphasized making the process of in-country adoption easier and less time-consuming.

A narrative from the adopted children: Namita and Samina (name changed)

Namita, aged 19, and Samina, 20, are college students in professional courses and both parents are in service. Both came to know their adoption after completing 18 years. Samina (adoption was done under the JJ Act) and Namita (Under HAMA). Both admitted that they never thought of getting parents like theirs who always stood by them all through their schooling and choosing their careers. They further said. “Their biological parent would not have given them so much love and care. On a few occasions, relatives tried to misguide them but they were firmed. Both admitted that they would never like to look for their biological mother and gave the benefit of the doubt saying she might have some problems. They are happy and continue their study. Lastly, they said, “We want to show that adoptive children and parents are as good as biological children and parents. We do not have any regret”.

Conclusion and Recommendations

To conclude, it can be said that the adoption of a child who is not biologically related to their parents is by no means a recent phenomenon. Adoption is still a preference for the formation of a family. The paper highlights the attitudes of the younger generation of India about the various issues related

the petition in front of the court officer; Pre-Adoption Foster Care- the adoptive parents can take the child to a pre-adoption foster care center and understand the habits of the child from the nursing staff before taking the child home.

⁹ Central Adoption Resource Agency (CARA), State Adoption Resource Agency (SARA), Specialised Adoption Agency (SAA), Authorised Foreign Adoption Agency (AFAA)

¹⁰ Hindu Maintenance and Adoption Act (HAMA), Guardian and Ward Act (GAWA), and Juvenile Justice Act (JJ Act)

to adoption, their attitude, and perceptions related to the factors and the rights of adoption of the LGBTQ+ community and single parents. Gender preference among the parents has reduced to some extent. The majority of the respondents show qualities like care, concern, and kindness to love an adopted child are above all boundaries set by the society. Largely, the respondents were unaware of the laws and procedures related to child adoption. The adoption rights of the LGBTQ+ community were undisputedly, favoured by the majority of the respondents and any kind of discrimination is unacceptable. It is encouraging to know that for the young population of our country, labels like gender, religion, and age don't matter much when it comes to caring. Hence, it can be said that the current situation shows a hopeful picture but there is still a wide scope for improvement in the way it is conducted and perceived by society. The analysis was done more from a psychoanalytic framework to show that inner thoughts, conflicts, and desires contribute to the entire issue of adoption. A gender analysis helped to locate the areas where bias/discrimination prevails and needs to be addressed by all stakeholders.

Some recommendations were given to make adoption smoother and easier such as an increase in transparency; making the process easier, speedier, and more feasible, strengthening the process of background checks, reworking the laws to avoid any kind of discrimination based on gender, age, religion, etc. awareness about adoption laws, demystifying taboos, stereotypes, and stigmas around adoption, strict measures regarding the prevention of exploitation post-adoption and stringent laws along with thorough background checks and post-adoption checks can be implemented to cater to this problem. It is important to keep track of the child's physical and mental health and well-being. This can be done through a regular visit by the post-adoption worker to maintain a life storybook.

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