

Indian Matrimony and Social Media in Digital Era: Analytical Perspective

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Abstract:- The institution of marriage holds a deep cultural and societal significance in India, where matrimony is often viewed as a sacred bond extending beyond the couple to include families and communities. Traditionally, the process of finding a suitable partner was handled through community networks, family references, or matrimonial brokers. However, the digital era has brought about substantial changes to this process, with social media playing an increasingly pivotal role. Over the past decade, the proliferation of social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, combined with specialized matrimonial websites and apps such as Shaadi.com and Bharat Matrimony, has transformed the way Indians approach matrimony. These digital platforms offer a unique convergence of tradition and technology, allowing individuals greater autonomy and choice in selecting their life partners while still adhering to cultural values and familial expectations. Social media has not only broadened the scope for partner selection but also provided unprecedented access to information about prospective matches, making the process faster and more transparent. In India, marriage is a significant phase in an individual's life, symbolizing social adulthood. Traditionally, matchmaking in India has been a face-to-face process, heavily reliant on family and relatives, with a strong preference for parental involvement. However, the introduction of technology and social media in the matrimonial space has transformed this traditional, time-intensive process, granting individuals greater autonomy and control over their choices. Today's youth prefer online platforms for dating, seeking greater control in selecting partners. These virtual matchmaking platforms are interactive, offering services and features that attract users. With over a hundred such platforms currently operating in India, many provide similar features, which can sometimes create confusion among users. Trust remains a critical factor in ensuring users feel secure in engaging with such platforms. A lack of trust can lead to decreased user satisfaction, impacting the platform's reputation and revenue. To mitigate this risk, it is essential for online matchmaking platforms to build and maintain trust with both new and existing users. Doing so enhances customer happiness and provides long-term benefits to the organization. This study proposes a Theoretical Framework to address trust issues in virtual matchmaking portals.

Keywords: Indian Matchmaking, Online Matrimonial, Trust, Social Media, Theoretical Framework.

1. Introduction

Marriage in India is a pivotal stage in an individual's life, marking the beginning of social adulthood. Historically, matchmaking has been a process conducted face-to-face with strong involvement from family and relatives, with parental guidance being highly favored. The advent of technology has transformed the traditional matchmaking system, allowing it to be less time-consuming while giving individuals more autonomy and control over their choices. Now, people are no longer confined to relying solely on the recommendations of relatives, friends, or intermediaries. Today's youth are more inclined towards using online platforms for dating, seeking greater autonomy in partner selection. With the internet providing a new avenue for finding life partners, the rise of matrimonial portals has opened up an entirely new world for matchmaking in India. Women, too, are now more comfortable engaging in the online matchmaking process. This shift is largely attributed to factors such as globalization, evolving lifestyles, and changing work environments. Currently, India boasts more than a hundred online matchmaking portals, with major players such as shaadi.com, Bharatmatrimony.com, Simplymarry.com, and jeevansathi.com dominating the market. These virtual platforms offer interactive matchmaking services that attract users by providing a wide array of features and facilities. Users can access vital information instantly and conveniently, benefiting from these services in a hassle-free manner [22].

Social media has not only broadened the scope for partner selection but also provided unprecedented access to information about prospective matches, making the process faster and more transparent. The geographical

limitations that once governed matrimonial alliances are now largely eliminated, as social media connects individuals from various regions, castes, and social strata. This democratization of matchmaking has led to the emergence of new trends, such as the rise of intercaste marriages, which were once less common in India.

However, while social media brings efficiency and wider access, it also presents new challenges. Issues related to privacy, trust, and authenticity of profiles often raise concerns for individuals and families. Furthermore, the evolving role of these platforms invites discussions around the balance between modernity and tradition. While technology facilitates the search for a spouse, it also creates tension between the desire for individual freedom and adherence to social norms. Moreover, the role of social media extends beyond just finding a partner.

The author has proposed a trust framework, emphasizing that trust is a critical factor in online matrimonial platforms, directly impacting customer engagement and satisfaction. The online environment facilitates the initiation of various transactions. It enables businesses to capture, maintain, and build long-term relationships with their customers. Additionally, it assists consumers in making more informed decisions when selecting from different matchmaking portals. In light of this, researchers have proposed a new theoretical framework aimed at addressing trust issues within online matchmaking platforms.

2. Literature Review

Geeta et al. [1] explored big data analytics techniques to identify fraud patterns in online matchmaking platforms. Their study uncovered fraudulent behavior such as the creation of multiple profiles with identical contact information, addresses, and varying photos and personal details.

Rajpal et al. [2] conducted a survey comparing the popularity and significance of online matchmaking platforms before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors highlighted certain elements that influence customers' choices when selecting online platforms for matchmaking.

Sharda [3] analyzed the traditional Indian methods of matchmaking. He discussed how individuals historically relied on friends, family members, and newspapers for arranging marriages.

Carter et al. [4] compared traditional and modern technology-based matchmaking methods. Their analysis revealed that couples who met online tended to share more similarities compared to those who met through traditional arrangements.

Additionally, some matchmaking platforms like Shaadi.com and BharatMatrimony.com regularly showcase success stories of couples who met through their services. These testimonials build trust among potential users [5].

A firm's good reputation increases the likelihood of customers connecting with it. A company's brand, which could include a logo or celebrity endorsements, can enhance its value in the market [6]. Research indicates that reputation and pricing are directly linked, as customers are often willing to pay higher prices to companies with strong reputations [7,8].

3. Research Gap

The research gap identified by the researcher highlights the challenges and issues associated with online matchmaking platforms. While the impact of technology, digitalization, and the growing popularity of online matrimonial services has been extensively studied, there is a noticeable absence of discussion regarding trust and its key components. Trust is a crucial element in the selection of any website or service. It allows businesses to establish and maintain long-term relationships with their consumers while aiding customers in making informed decisions when choosing matchmaking platforms. To address this gap, the researcher has proposed a theoretical framework that focuses on trust factors specifically for matchmaking portals.

Table 1: Comparison of previous work

Authors	Objective of the Study	Method Used
Rajpal et al. [2]	Analyzed and compared the popularity and importance of	Inferential tests

	online matchmaking platforms before and after COVID-19.	
Krishna et al. [9]	Focused on factors influencing the preference of virtual matchmaking portals over traditional methods.	Ordered logistic regression
Iyer et al. [10]	Examined factors that influenced the significance of virtual matchmaking portals over traditional approaches.	Ordered logistic regression
Rajanikant et al. [11]	Studied the preferences of younger generations when selecting online matchmaking sites.	Conclusive research design

4. Theoretical Framework

The institution of marriage holds a deep cultural and societal significance in India, where matrimony is often viewed as a sacred bond extending beyond the couple to include families and communities. Traditionally, the process of finding a suitable partner was handled through community networks, family references, or matrimonial brokers. However, the digital era has brought about substantial changes to this process, with social media playing an increasingly pivotal role. Over the past decade, the proliferation of social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, combined with specialized matrimonial websites and apps such as Shaadi.com and Bharat Matrimony, has transformed the way Indians approach matrimony. These digital platforms offer a unique convergence of tradition and technology, allowing individuals greater autonomy and choice in selecting their life partners while still adhering to cultural values and familial expectations [23][24]. Social media has not only broadened the scope for partner selection but also provided unprecedented access to information about prospective matches, making the process faster and more transparent. The geographical limitations that once governed matrimonial alliances are now largely eliminated, as social media connects individuals from various regions, castes, and social strata. This democratization of matchmaking has led to the emergence of new trends, such as the rise of intercaste marriages, which were once less common in India. However, while social media brings efficiency and wider access, it also presents new challenges. Issues related to privacy, trust, and authenticity of profiles often raise concerns for individuals and families. Furthermore, the evolving role of these platforms invites discussions around the balance between modernity and tradition. While technology facilitates the search for a spouse, it also creates tension between the desire for individual freedom and adherence to social norms. Moreover, the role of social media extends beyond just finding a partner. Many couples now use these platforms to maintain long-distance relationships, seek marital advice from online communities, and even showcase their weddings through live streams and posts. The public sharing of personal milestones has become a social norm, subtly influencing the perceptions of marriage in India. In parallel, there is a growing discussion around the commodification of marriage in the digital space. With profiles, preferences, and personal information being treated as data points, some critics argue that the process risks reducing human relationships to transactions. This concern opens up questions about the authenticity of relationships formed through digital means and whether they can sustain the values that traditional Indian marriages have upheld for centuries.

Trust plays an essential role in society. It's often difficult for individuals to trust without evidence. In the digital realm, trust is a key component that allows consumers to feel comfortable using online platforms. It is the first and most crucial factor when it comes to engaging in any form of online transaction. A lack of trust from customers can result in significant losses, including damage to a company's reputation and reduced revenues. This, in turn, may lead to the loss of potential customers, which could hinder the organization's ability to meet its financial goals. Therefore, it becomes crucial for online matchmaking services to focus on building trust, ensuring customer satisfaction, and boosting organizational performance.

In the age of the internet, websites have become a central means for accessing various types of information. Quality is divided into three parts: information quality, system quality, and service quality. System quality means how well the system works according to the user's needs [13]. The system quality of online platforms is assessed using factors such as accessibility, navigability, usability, and privacy policy [14]. Information quality refers to how clearly the platform presents its content to users. The clarity, relevance, and up-to-date nature of the information provided by a platform contribute significantly to the overall quality of the information [14].

Service quality refers to the level of support offered to users. It includes factors such as reliability, responsiveness, empathy, and assurance [15] [14]. Ahuja et al. [16], for instance, proposed a framework called search, match, and interaction (SMI) for online matchmaking portals. These portals act as intermediaries between families and reduce the time spent in the traditional process of marriage arrangements. Seth [10] also indicated that search, match, and interaction play vital roles in helping users find suitable partners online. These services allow users to filter searches by criteria like lifestyle, religion, body type, and profession, and can include chat, email, or phone interactions to facilitate communication. With multiple methods available for partner selection, matchmaking services offer users a simplified and more efficient way to explore potential matches.

The process of gathering information helps users make decisions based on factors like caste, religion, cultural background, body type, income, and lifestyle. The matchmaking services offer recommendations based on user preferences or prior search results, thereby allowing users to evaluate multiple matches simultaneously. Moreover, these services offer features that enable users to develop relationships before making decisions about marriage. This helps create a space where users can initiate contacts or even arrange meetings with potential partners.

Contextual drivers indicate that online matchmaking platforms emphasize traditional values, thereby reducing the family's responsibility in finding spouses for their sons and daughters [17].

Based on existing frameworks proposed by Delone et al. [13] and Ahuja et al. [16], along with a review of relevant literature, several factors have been identified that influence the trust and selection process in online matrimonial portals.

Table 2: Factors and Subfactors of Online Matrimony

Factors	Sub-Factors	Definition
System Quality	Accessibility	Refers to the website's ability to be easily found using common search tools, allowing users to efficiently access the information [18].
	Navigation	Concerns how easily users can find the required information on the site, including page design, menu organization, and links [19].
	Usability	Pertains to how simple it is for users to retrieve necessary information, taking into account the website's design, menu structure, and site links [14][20].
	Privacy	Describes the degree to which a user's privacy rights are safeguarded. This includes whether the user's data is encrypted during transactions and the transparency of privacy protections in place [18].
Information Quality	Relevance	Refers to how closely the information provided on the website matches the user's needs [14].
	Understandability	Indicates how easily users can comprehend and interpret the information provided, ensuring it is clear and concise [15].
	Richness	Refers to the depth and breadth of the information available on the website, offering detailed content to the user [21].
	Currency	Ensures that the information available on the site is current, with features like the date of the last update being important for verifying its relevance and accuracy [18].
	Empathy	Refers to the level of care and consideration the organization provides to its customers [15].

Service Quality	Reliability	Represents the organization's capability to consistently deliver the promised service accurately to its customers [15].
	Responsiveness	Refers to the organization's readiness and willingness to provide prompt assistance to customers in resolving issues and offering support online [15].
	Assurance	Indicates the level of expertise and knowledge that the organization's staff possess to effectively complete tasks and provide quality service [13].
Contextual Drivers	Search	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Religion and Social Background [17]. Work and Lifestyle [17]. Complexion and Body Type [17].
	Match	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> User can pursue multiple matches simultaneously [17]. Suggestions based on previous searches [17]. Filtering based on user criteria [17].
	Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharing of phone and email addresses [17]. Built-in chat services [17].
Competitive Advantage Drivers	Cost	As an economic consideration, users base their decision on the price of the service [7,8].
	Firm Reputation	firm's good reputation increases the likelihood of customers connecting with it [6].
	Success Stories	stories foster trust among users [5].

Through a review of two frameworks and relevant literature, we identified factors that affect trust and the choice of online matrimonial platforms. One of the factors influencing customers preferences is cost. As an economic consideration, users base their decision on the price of the service. To demonstrate credibility and reliability, websites like shadi.com and bharatmatrimony.com often highlight stories of successful couples who met through their platforms. Such stories foster trust among users. Research by economics suggests a strong link between price and reputation, with customers showing a greater willingness to spend more on services with higher reputations.

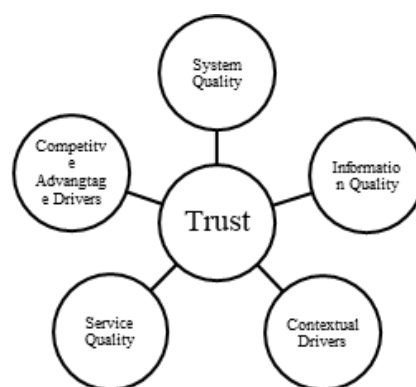


Figure 1: Holistic Trust Framework for online Matrimonial Services: Key Quality and Drivers

5. Conclusion

The influence of social media on matrimonial platforms has been transformative, changing the way people approach the process of finding a life partner. Traditionally, matrimonial services were localized and driven by family involvement, offering limited choices. However, the advent of social media has opened a broader, more dynamic space for individuals to explore potential matches across various cultures and regions, creating a more

global perspective on relationships. Social media platforms provide insights into a person's lifestyle, interests, and social connections, allowing individuals to make more informed choices. By offering a glimpse into one's daily activities, personality, and values, these platforms enable potential partners to establish a stronger sense of understanding even before initiating formal conversations. Features such as mutual connections, shared interests, and common online activities can serve as a foundation for relationship-building. This level of transparency can promote trust but also brings concerns around privacy and the possibility of misrepresentation. Moreover, the social validation inherent in platforms—such as likes, followers, and online engagement—can sometimes distort reality, influencing people's perceptions of a potential match based on superficial indicators rather than genuine compatibility. The pressure to align with societal expectations, driven by social media, may overshadow personal preferences and values when making such significant decisions. Despite these challenges, social media has become an essential tool in the modern matchmaking process. It allows individuals to cross-reference profiles from matrimonial sites, validate the authenticity of the information presented, and ensure a better fit. Ultimately, the integration of social media with traditional matrimonial practices provides users with a blend of personal agency and family involvement, marking a new era in the pursuit of life partners. These virtual matchmaking platforms are interactive, offering services and features that attract users. With over a hundred such platforms currently operating in India, many provide similar features, which can sometimes create confusion among users. Trust remains a critical factor in ensuring users feel secure in engaging with such platforms. A lack of trust can lead to decreased user satisfaction, impacting the platform's reputation and revenue. To mitigate this risk, it is essential for online matchmaking platforms to build and maintain trust with both new and existing users. This Theoretical Framework address trust issues and by following this, organization can enhance customer happiness and provides long-term benefits to the organization.

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