

Better late?

Thirty is the ideal age for marriage say many youngsters these days. *BT* finds out more

A RECENT AC Nielsen survey pointed at how drastically the concept of marriageable age had changed across urban India. According to the survey, youngsters said the 30s were just right to take the plunge. Some 79 per cent of Indian youth said so as against the global figures of 77 per cent. Also, marriage was a life goal for only 53 per cent. And more men (76 per cent) than women (64 per cent) believed it's for keeps.

In Bangalore, there were some interesting opinions. The young prefer getting married only after they're settled in a career. Though experts say 30 is not such an ideal age, it's an individual choice, and it differs from person to person.

Dhruvi Reddy, a student, says she can't see herself getting married at 22-23.

"Twenty-six is better. After my current



studies, I want to do my MBA. Alongside, I'll be working too." However, 30 may be too late, she says. "By then, you are set in your habits, so you may not be as adaptable."

Krishna Kumar, a 19-year-old student, says the ideal age for men should be after 28. But 30 or even 32 is fine. "By then, you're done with your studies and settled in your career." He wouldn't want to marry early; he wouldn't be ready for that responsibility.

Meera Ravi, counsellor, says getting married in the 30s may mean that you are not very open to the adjustments that marriage entails. "It's tougher for girls because, whether you like it or not, it's they who have to move into the husband's house or live with his family."

Apart from this, what about sexual needs, she asks. Plus, for girls, there are medical problems associated with delayed motherhood. For men, a late

marriage may mean that marriage, fatherhood and career stagnation may occur at the same time. So pressures come to a head simultaneously. In addition, she says, both men and women who become parents late in life find they have no energy or patience to handle their children.

But marrying too early has its drawbacks too, says Meera Ravi. "A girl may resent the fact that she hasn't studied enough or taken up a career; she may not be mature enough to be a mother at 21-22. Likewise, a young man may not be responsible enough to be a father at 24-25."

Sociologist KG Gayathri Devi says the age for marriage is an individual choice.

However, sociologically, the boy is expected to be at least two-three years older than the girl. He's also expected to earn more than the girl. In such cases, it may help if the boy marries late.

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Why it's happening

Hema Ravichandar, strategic HR advisory, sees two very interesting trends in the professional workforce. "While the

marrying age for women is increasing, for men it has probably stayed the same or gone down marginally. The reasons are

simple. Women are coming into the workforce, raring to go and

want to put in some strong years on their resumes before they get into the mommy track! This means two things - delayed marriages and starting of families.

For men, higher disposable incomes are coming earlier and so they are ready to settle down sooner. Also, as old India meets new India, filial pressure to ensure an arranged marriage for male offspring may also hasten the entire process!"

