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SUB-DOMAIN: 7. STRESS, ANXIETY AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

## PANEL TITLE:

### SOCIO-LEGAL STATUS OF LIVE-IN RELATIONSHIPS IN INDIA

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## ABSTRACT

'Live in relationship'- the terminology is contested but has remained in the colloquial usage. It is symbolised to describe a) Heterosexual and now includes Gay couples sharing intimate and long-term relationship; b) two individuals in an extramarital relationship. There is no law that prohibits premarital sex. And a man and woman living together or having premarital sex cannot be considered as an offence. India witnesses a rise in live in relationship after the judgment of Hon'ble Supreme court and High court considered such relationship to be legal. However, such relationships are not bound by sacred vows of sanctioned marriages by various customs. The ground of the live in relationship is debated, criticized its acceptance varies from society to society. In recent decades, it is observed that young couples in India are gradually becoming open and many are accepting it as a matter of personal choice. Change in technology, social media platforms, dating apps have led to popularize the concept. However, non-marital status of the partners leads to several complications. As there is no specific law that addresses the issues of live-in partners and many such couples experience alienation and isolation within the community and often get distant from their families. Though the social dynamics of India has changed considerably, particularly in urban areas, recent cases of murders of two young financially independent and educated young women by their live-in-partners in Delhi have raised serious concerns about safety of individuals in these relationships. There is no law as such for Live in relationship. The judiciary depends on the existing laws to protect and safeguard the interest of the victim.

There are several questions that ought to address as these relations challenge the institutions of marriage and family and demand greater flexibility in law to provide protection in these relations. Several assumptions are rife in the popular media that leaves room for discussion at a scholarly platform examining its sociological contours.

**Keywords:** live-in partner, legitimacy, mental health

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