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NAVIGATING LIFE CHOICES: INFLUENCE OF ASTROLOGY IN THE DECISION MAKING OF ADULTS IN CHENNAI CITY

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ABSTRACT

This research, titled "Navigating Life Choices: Influence of Astrology in the Decision-Making of Adults in Chennai City," examines the significance of astrology in major decision-making processes. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study investigates how astrological practices, such as horoscope matching, influence compatibility assessments, family harmony, and the timing of weddings. The findings

reveal that astrology plays a dominant role in shaping financial and marriage decisions, It has a negligible impact on educational and healthcare choices. The emergence of digital astrology offers alternative consultation methods; however, its influence is currently minimal compared to traditional practices. These findings underscore astrology's role as a cultural lens through which individuals navigate life's uncertainties.

Keywords: Astrology, Decision-Making, Adults, Chennai, Marriage, Finance, Education, Healthcare, Digital Astrology, Cultural Beliefs.

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1. Introduction

Astrology is an age-old system. It is believed that the positions of stars and planets at the time of birth plays a significant role in shaping an individual's personality, life events, and the future. Astrologers use birth charts etc, provide insights about one's traits and guide in important decisions, such as marriage, finance, education and health. In the context of marriage, astrology is often consulted to check compatibility, deciding auspicious dates, and planning rituals. Similarly, in financial matters, astrology is used to predict favorable times for investments. Astrology also has its place in education, parents consult astrologers for guidance on their children's academic paths while in health is used to determine the time of birth in case of C section deliveries etc. The digital era is making astrology more accessible by apps and social media bringing this to a wider audience, making astrological services more accessible such as astro talk, livastro, astroyogi etc. yet the traditional methods are still popular. Cultures across the world like China and Western societies, also have the practice of astrology such as zodiac signs and lunar calendars to guide these decisions. The paper is to explore the extent to which astrology determines adults' choices in Chennai. In addition to a discussion on the existence and operation of astrological consultancy, the type of decisions affected by astrology, and the reasons for their appreciation through cultural factors and beliefs, this study explains why there is still attraction towards astrology in that cosmopolitan city.

1.1 THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK - ONE RELEVANT THEORY

The research examines astrology's role, by applying sociological theories to understand astrology as both a personal belief system and a cultural system. Weber's concept of traditional action highlights how astrology unconsciously influences decisions because the actions were carried by generations. Bourdieu's concept of habitus explains how certain practices become internalized due to the environment the individual is in, which will shape the actions unconsciously. The concept of Cultural determinism explains astrology's role as cultural capital, which structures the individual behavior and will legitimise the decisions taken within one's social norms. Together, these theories describe how astrology influences a practice, culturally, that continues to guide decisions and also how it gives validation to that decision.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Jonas Helgertz and Kirk Scott in their 2020 article entitled "The Validity of Astrological Predictions on Marriage and Divorce". In it, they performed a longitudinal analysis of over 65,000 marriages. Their research documents that astrological compatibility does not mark a true difference in marriage outcomes, further casting doubt, in their opinion, on the practical utility of astrology for forecasting marital success.

In her paper titled "Astrology and Decision-Making: An Empirical Analysis, Priya R. Patel (2019)" discusses the uses of astrology in embracing life decisions such as choices related to education and career. Patel's study concludes that although astrology does not determine choice, it perhaps gives reason to one's choices and more often than not provides comfort during times of lack of clarity.

"Peter Hartmann, Thomas P. George, and Adrian Furnham, entitled The Influence of Astrology on Academic Performance (2006)", made a critical conclusion that there is no astrological evidence that makes strong predictions regarding academic or financial success. The conclusions from their findings refute the claim that astrological counseling makes a significant difference in the professional world.

A survey conducted by **Rica Bhattacharyya**, **entitled Majority of Gen Z Seeking Astrological Insights on Digital Platforms**, found that more than half of Gen Z actively seek astrological guidance, especially in relationships. This generation turns to consultations through digital means, and social media is one of the main reasons for their interest in astrology. This

survey highlights the link between digital trends and the increased reliance on astrology for personal decision-making.

2.1 OBJECTIVES

- To analyze the level of influence of astrology among the individuals.
- To explore how astrology has an impact on aspects like marriage, finance, education, and health in the influence of the decision-making of individuals.
- To study the contemporary astrology techniques.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A qualitative descriptive research methodology has been placed to study the influence of astrology in the decision-making aspects of their lives in the Chennai city. The sample size of the study is 120. The sampling unit for the study was all individuals belonging to the age group above 20 in the Chennai city. An in-depth structured interview method was employed and used for the data collection with each interview for 20 to 30 minutes. Additionally, there were a few keynote interviews which include a vice principal of a private college in Chennai, a head of a department of a private college and an astrologer and other personalities which served as the special case studies for the study. Convenient sampling was equipped for the study to ensure for a more reliable responses from the respondents. The study had 74 females and 46 males.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

I. Level of influence of astrology among the individuals

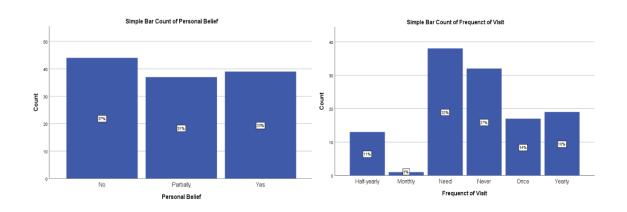
Disbelief towards astrology is significant for a main section of the respondents, examining its importance and relevance in the society. Another section of the respondents are partial believers of astrology, who find a sense of value in its predictions without completely relying on it for making all decisions. A significant number of respondents strongly believe in astrology considering it as a trustworthy soured to make decisions and understand their life experiences.

Another important perspective of the practicality of astrology where nearly 46% of the respondents claim that astrological predictions are practical and useful while another group

believe its not useful. This depicts astrology's role in the decision making of individuals in the society.

Case Study 1 - The case study of a young woman is used to justify this interpretation. She was told that she would suffer from leg ailments due to Shani dasha as advised by her astrologer. She was staunch believer of god and astrology but didn't expect the advice to become true. As a remedy, she began lighting sesame oil lamps and conducted Shani puja on Saturday to safeguard until the dasha completes.

"The search findings revealed the association of belief in astrology with cognitive, personality, and psychological factors such as thinking style, self-concept verification, and stress. Case studies on "fortune-telling addiction" have conceptualized it as a possible behavioural addiction and have reported symptoms such as distress, cravings, and salience". (Abhilasha Das, 2022)



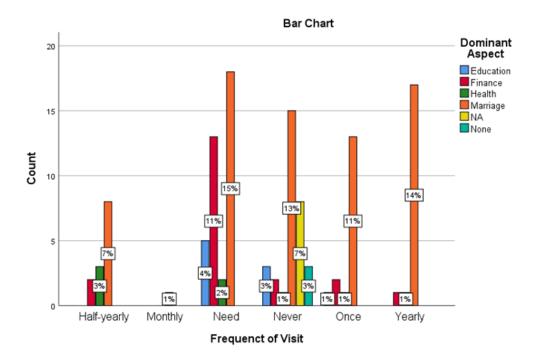
The major number of respondents consult astrologers mainly while deciding major life decisions like marriage and difficult times. Another group visit astrologers on regular basis including monthly and yearly visits. Similarly a major group have also claimed that they don't visit astrologers and don't believe in astrology. Need based visits are the major reason individuals visit astrologers. This variation in behaviour can related to the concept of traditional action by Max Weber. This concept primarily depicts on how an individual values and behaviours are derived through traditional practices and beliefs. In this study, majority of the respondents consult astrologers for major life decisions and difficult times depicting on how the traditional inclination towards astrology for guidance influence individual in the contemporary society. The varying degrees of habitus can be witnessed with the regular and

yearly visitors to astrologers where a limited group are closely inclined towards astrology on a daily basis. Contradicting to this, nearly 27% of respondents say they never visit astrologers due to lack of scientific backing in astrological predictions and their inclination towards science and modern traditions.

II. Impact of astrology on aspects like marriage, finance, education, and health in the influence of the decision-making of individuals.

Marriage is the dominant aspect for respondents seeking astrological consultations which was followed by finance which accounted for 17% of the respondents to gain advice for making decisions on property and investments. Consultations related to education and health remain a minimal reason for respondents to seek astrological advice.

This finding can be correlated with the concept of habitus by Pierre Bourdieu. Consulting astrologers for marriage related decisions has been a practice deeply rooted in the society. This practice has been internalised even in the contemporary society. The cultural relevance of astrology in this society can associated with this practice continued by individuals.



While making decisions related to marriage, astrologers are majorly consulted for analysing the compatibility between the partners due to the reliance of positioning of celestial bodies for joyful connections.30% of the respondents believe in personal choices rather than astrological compatibility. Decisions related to marriage timing and family balance are majorly

not consulted through astrology. The importance of astrology in marriage depicts traditional and cultural beliefs and customs that rely on prediction and celestial bodies for maintaining marital relationships. This aligns with Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus, as consulting astrologers for marriage-related guidance reflects deeply embedded cultural norms. These practices have been internalized within the social fabric, making it a routine aspect of decision-making. Astrology becomes a regular tool in life choices, particularly in crucial areas like marriage, where cultural expectations and family traditions play a strong role in shaping individuals' behaviour.

"I am considering transfer in my job to a new location, when I considered this decision to the astrologer her said that my line of fate to mercury is often linked to movement which makes the change of place a good idea", says a respondent.

Career guidance and long-term goals related education are decided through astrology by a small group of respondents. Similarly, a smaller section seek astrological predictions for stream selection and academic performance of an individual. Contrasting to this the majority of the respondents express their denial of astrological relevance in making decisions related to education and insist on individual talent and hardwork.

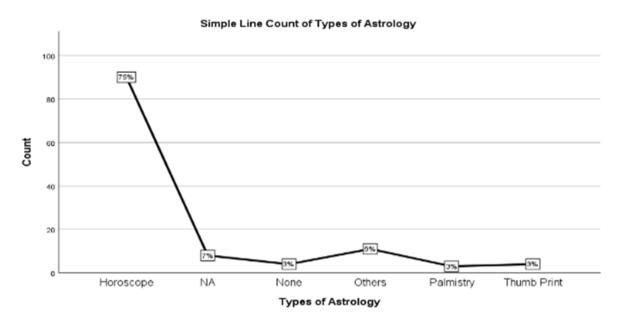
Decisions related to finance portray a similar statistic to that of the data from education. The majority of the respondents show their disbelief in astrology for making financial decisions. However,21% of respondents consult astrologers for major investments like vehicles and buying property. A smaller group also showcase their reliance on astrology for predictions on future income and beginning new ventures. Traditional practices like the usage of Panchanga calendar for auspicious time, portray the mixture if contemporary financial decision and cultural beliefs.

Case Study 2- In order to construct a prosperous education for his son, a 47 year old man had consulates an astrologers advice. The predictions declared that the son would initially opt for the science stream with an increasing interest towards Arts and predicted his decline in idol worship in the beginning of his twenties. The son later studied a fashion course in his undergraduate and showcased an shift in spiritual beliefs and practices true to the astrologers predictions.

For decisions related to health, the majority of the respondents do not seek astrological consultation. However a smaller group seek consultation for physical illness, pregnancy and chronic illness. The auspicious time for the delivery the baby is predicted through astrology for

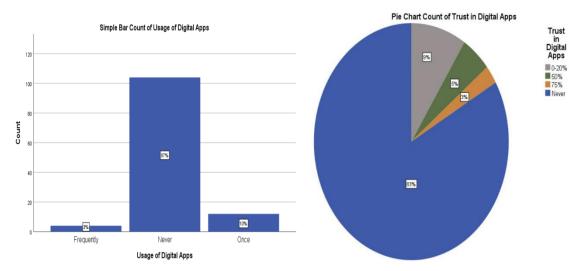
a prosperous beginning for the infant and the parents. Unresloved and prolonged ailments affecting individual is also consulted and predicted through astrology. This perfectly brings out how cultural beliefs intermingle with important events in life, because families usually try their best to time their activities to correspond to auspicious times as viewed under astrology, especially during such tumultuous times as COVID-19.

III. Contemporary astrological techniques



Nearly 75% of the respondents prefer horoscope for astrological consultation. However, a smaller group believe in other types of astrology including numerology, astrology and parrot astrology. Thumbprint astrology and palmistry are the least preferred types of astrology while another section of response showcase their irrelevance and disbelief towards these types of astrology.

"In thumb print astrology they mostly predict our past accurately not our future. Thus, I go to horoscope astrology as they predict our future better when compared to the other types of astrology", says a respondent.



The larger section of the respondents portray their decreased usage and lack of trust towards digital astrology. Nearly 87% of the respondents, have stated that they do not use digital astrology apps, while there are groups where a few have used it once and a few are regular users. The increased inclination towards traditional practices of astrology and cultural attachment is showcased through this data.

Lack of awareness about these apps is major cause for the lower usage of these apps, majorly the older population who are not advanced in technology usage. Moreover, credibility and accuracy of these apps are questioned by the majority of the population. The respondents have stated that they prefer traditional practices as they are more reliable and individual based predictions can be acquired rather than an auto generated prediction.

The lack of trust over these apps can be correlated to the fundamentals of digital astrology and the inability of these apps to showcase results similar to traditional astrological practices. The personal touch gained in traditional forms of astrology cannot be experienced through these online apps. The feeling of community built with astrologers who are consulted through different generations in a family are also a challenging factor to the usage and preference of digital astrological apps.

Case Study 3 - A 20 year old Christian girl had a strong inclination towards the usage of digital astrology apps which increased her belief in astrological predictions with her believes without any issues. She had stated that the predictions had shaped her educational and personal beliefs, potaying the divergence to modern astrological practices from traditional ones.

5. SUGGESTIONS

Positive Aspects- The positive view of the respondents to Astrology is deeply rooted in culture, fostering pride in generational continuity.

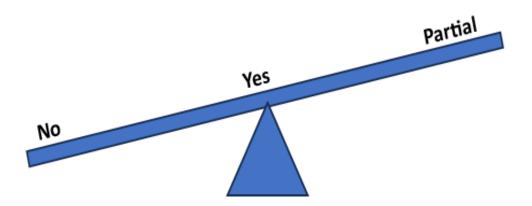
- Astrology is deeply rooted in cultural and family traditions, fostering pride in generational continuity.
- Many view astrology as intertwined with religion, offering divine guidance and solutions like pariharams to address challenges.
- Personalized advice in astrology appeals to individuals, helping them align decisions with perceived destiny.
- For some, astrology is a spiritual tool, attributing strong cosmic or planetary influences to their lives.
- It is often perceived as a preventive measure to avert disasters, avoid financial losses, and enhance success by addressing planetary influences.
- Previous successes credited to astrological advice reinforce faith in its utility.

Negative Aspects - The negative perspective of respondents to astrology reflect it as superstition, especially when it conflicts with personal beliefs or logic. So, they believe hard work and effort matters over astrological influence.

- Some respondents regard astrology as superstition, especially when it conflicts with personal beliefs or logic. They emphasize effort and hard work over astrological influence.
- Concerns arise over fake astrologers exploiting people for money without genuine insights.
- Vague predictions and a lack of specific outcomes lead to dissatisfaction and mistrust.
- Digital astrology apps and generalized online horoscopes lack the personal connection of traditional readings, diminishing their effectiveness.

6. RECOMMENDATION

6.1 IMBALENCED SOCIETY BASED ON BELIEF IN ASTROLOGY



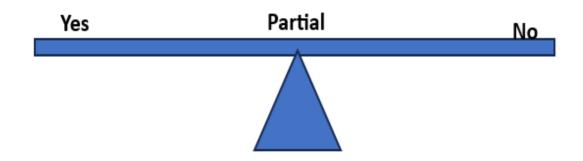
This image may be considered as mirroring an imbalance in social belief toward astrology. It does appear to rest on the side of "No," but what that points to is the fact that while many would acknowledge their rejection of astrology, this doesn't represent complete or decisive disapproval, so there isn't a 100% tilt.

Balance- The scales tip over to "No," but just barely. That is how, even when scepticism or dismissal of astrology generally pervades discussion in the street or in science, people don't actually go all the way to fully dismiss it. They may yet continue entertaining astrological ideas in an informal or personal setting.

Implicit support of astrology: The "Partially" presumes that though people may reject the notion of astrology as any form of valid practice, such individuals still may grant partial credibility to some aspects of it or regard it as trivial amusement and introspection. The swaying on one side creates the impression that society's negation of the existence of astrology is not as strong as it seems. Many would say "No" in public but privately are part of it to some extent by reading their horoscope or talking about astrological signs.

Therefore, such an in-balance picture manifests a society in which astrology may not be officially embraced but still dominates people's belief and practice in more personal or informal ways and thus turn out to be a nuanced "No" instead of a full rejection.

6.2 INTEGRATING RATIONALITY AND ASTROLOGICAL EXPERTISE IN DECISION MAKING



In the current evidence-driven and rational society, astrology is still of paramount importance in a culture, particularly in countries like India. Though it may guide man to some extent on uncertainty in life, it must keep pace with modern societal needs and integrate rational decisions. Astrology should be looked at as something that will support its age-old culture with the present requirements. Trained and educated astrologers provide structured advice that respects both astrology's legacy and contemporary logical reasoning, ensuring its relevance in a scientifically oriented world.

6.3 Astrology and Rationality: Why Rationality Completes Astrology

Applying rationality to astrology also ensures that decisions made over a life-changing matter were not just based on astrological talk. Rationality teaches people to apply the breadth of consideration when making decisions. Areas such as finance and health can be best guided through decisions involving scientific knowledge and practice. For example, astrology could advise auspicious dates for the launch of a new business or investments, but rationality demands that they take an analysis of trend and other risks in the markets and other economic indices. This is how decisions are well-rounded, both intuitive yet re-thought decisions.

But, it is even more poignant where health issues are concerned. Astrology might be a temporary psychological salve or at least reduce tension; medical advice will not be replaced by astrology, though. Trained astrologers sensibly knowing the difference would push patients toward appropriate medical care and use astrology to provide emotional support. Health decisions are thus soundly based on scientific fact, not on astrology.

6.4 Keeping Tradition while being Modern

Bringing together astrology with rationality allows the culture's past traditions to be kept but simultaneously promotes the acceptance of modern morality. Astrologies become a part of many people's great culture, and dismissing such views entirely could have people alienated who find comfort and meaning in its practice. Rationality ensures that it does not misrepresent the use of astrology but guards against harmful or overly dependent use of non-verified predictions.

This blending represents a more general approach by society in embracing its traditional values but challenging its minds. This integration of the old with the new thus opens the door for individuals to honor their history while making informed thoughtful decisions regarding their lives. By so doing, such individuals will begin taking more holistic approaches to decision-making - approaches honouring their past while seeing them equipped for the future.

7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, astrology remains an influential force in adult life in Chennai, particularly in areas such as marriage, finance, education, and health. Generational and educational differences also shape beliefs. The older generations remain more traditional, while the younger adults are skeptical. The rise of digital platforms has reshaped astrological engagement, blending tradition with modern accessibility. Balancing astrological insights with rationality ensures that traditional beliefs can coexist with contemporary values. Integrating rationality with astrological expertise, particularly through experienced and formally trained astrologers, ensures informed decisions while balancing traditional beliefs with modern values.

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