

Legal Recognition of Live-In Relationship: An Emerging Trend of Social Transformation in India

Dr. Sangeeta Chatterjee¹

*“The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances;
if there is any reaction, both are transformed.”*

- C. G. Jung²

Abstract

Roscoe Pound, the profounder of Social Engineering Theory has clearly declared that, the function of law is nothing but to serve the society. Truly speaking, law and society have a close nexus between themselves and one cannot be imagined without the other. Primary function of law is to serve the society. Only law has the power to establish peace and tranquillity in the society. As such, law always has the power to bring social change. On the contrary, social change brings legal change and an old law becomes obsolete in a new society. Therefore, there exists a cause-and-effect type of relationship between law and society, wherein change in one side always brings change in the other side. Owing to this contention, law is considered as an instrument of social change.

In this backdrop, a number of legal changes are found in Indian society, which has brought social transformation in India. Legal recognition of Live-in Relationship is one of such emerging trends in India. Since the year 2005, Supreme Court of India has tried to provide legal recognition to Live-in Relationship herein. It has provided many new interpretations to this term for the purpose of protecting interests of the parties engaged therein. Even, the relationship has got limited statutory recognition under the Domestic Violence Act, 2005. No doubt, the legal recognition of Live-in Relationship has brought a new social change in India, but has also brought many new questions along with it. Some of those could be highlighted hereunder. Whether Indian society has practically recognized Live-in Relationship?

¹ LL.M, NET, Ph.D, Assistant Professor, Department of Law, Bankura University, Email – sangeetachatterjeelaw@gmail.com

² QUOTES ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS:,KEEP INSPIRING ME(Last visited on Jul. 25, 2020, 4:30 PM), <https://www.keepinspiring.me/quotes-about-relationships/>.

Whether this legal change has truly brought social change in India? Do we need an express statute on the subject? Whether the rights of the parties to Live-in Relationship could be protected by the Supreme Court Guidelines? Could it be possible to protect those rights in near future?

Hence, objective of the study is to find out the answers of these questions keeping in mind the true spirit of Live-in Relationship in India. Also, the study would like to find out the pros and cons of this relationship in existing Indian socio-legal scenario as well as to provide suggestions for removing the legal challenges thereof.

Keywords: Live-in Relationship, Rights of Parties, Socio-Legal Scenario, Supreme Court

I. Prologue

Society is a composite entity formed by individuals. A vacant land or space without living beings cannot be called a society. People or population is the core element of a human society as well as a state. The four characteristics of a State, i.e. population, territory, government and sovereignty would never be complete without the first element population. Actually, it transforms a vacant territory into a society or a state and only after such conversion there comes the need of other two elements, government and sovereignty. If there is no people, there is no need of law or governance or the king and those become meaningless. Even the democratic form of government is called government of the people, for the people and by the people. Therefore, none of the forms of governments, whether democratic or monarchical, function without people. Here lies the significance of people or population in any given society.

Then comes the question of law, which is a body of principles made and enforced by the state for the purpose of administration of justice. To whom the administration of justice is provided? Obviously to the people. It is beyond doubt, that a vacant land does not need a law without the existence of the people. When people come there, they fight for the ownership of the land and then, there is the need of government, king and justice. Law is an instrument for prevention of anarchism and statelessness. If there are no people, then who can create anarchism? And if there is no anarchism, then what is the function of law? It means, people create anarchism and the birth of law is there to prevent people from creating anarchism, exploitation, oppression and mismanagement. When all these are prevented, a society becomes a just society, which means

justice has reached to every people and only law can bring such a just social order. In this sense, law and people are directly related to each other. People denote society and as such, law and society are directly related to each other.

In this atmosphere of law and society, a number of social institutions are established and flourished, like, family, marriage, kinship, adoption, maintenance etc. Among these, marriage is the most powerful social institution lies at the very root of the creation of family in a traditional country like India. Since the very beginning, the concept of marriage was established only for the procreation of children in order to form a family. In Indian society, there existed joint family concept and marriage was performed to look after the aged family members and to fulfil pious obligations for obtaining merit in the eye of God. There was no conception of performance of marriage only for enjoyment of the parties.

Godliness was attached to marriage so much that, marriage was considered as a sacrament or a holy union, eternal union and indissoluble union. Marriages were considered to be made in heaven and as such, unbreakable by the humans, owing to which there was no concept of divorce. Only after the passing of Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 and the Special Marriage Act, 1954, the concept of sacramental nature of marriage is abolished in India, divorce is recognised and indissoluble union of marriage is disregarded. Therefore, a certain kind of social change is brought in the institution of marriage in India in the post-independence era with the hands of enactment of new laws. Similarly, in the recent period, another new change has emerged in India, which has shaken the very basis of the social institution, called marriage and that is the concept of Live-in Relationship.

Live-in Relationship has questioned the need for life-long social bond of marriage. Now-a-days, modernisation has created a complex social life for us, where many couple are not interested to carry on the burden of marriage owing to adjustments with each other, maintenance of family responsibilities and complex legal formalities for its breakdown. They also feel that, love is not subjected to any barriers and live-in relationship is much reasonable than marriage in the present social scenario of corporate as well as individual oriented life style. The crave for live-in relationship is increasing day by day not

only for men and women, but also for the homosexual couples, whose marriages are not legally recognised in India. This movement has got a new dimension since the year 2005, when Supreme Court of India has created history by providing legal recognition to live-in relationship by way of judicial interpretation. Since then, a new question has emerged, whether statutory recognition of live-in relationship is required in India or not, in order to protect the four corners of this relationship.

In this backdrop, the present study would like to define live-in relationship, analyse the rationality of existing Indian statutes for protecting the rights of the parties engaged therein, judicial interpretation of the issue as well as the merits and demerits of creating such relationship. The study would also like to provide suggestions for the future success of this relationship in India.

II. What is Live-In Relationship?

Live-in Relationship is a union in which couples live together. This type of living arrangement is more commonly referred to as cohabitation or as a common law union. It is mainly the product of western world, but now-a-days it has become popular in Indian society also. It is a kind of emotional and sexual arrangement, where no forceful legal or social obligation is required. It is an alternative to marriage and the people who do not need the social or legal sanction of their love, generally enters into this relationship. It is an emotional bond, a type of contract between two persons of living together which can be ended at any time at the wishes of one of the parties. No ceremony, no social gathering is required for having this relationship and two people can have intimate relationship without getting marriage. Freedom and privacy are two basic elements working under the concept of live-in relationship.

Theoretically, Live-in relationship refers to an arrangement whereby two people decide to live together on a long-term or permanent basis in an emotionally and/or sexually intimate relationship. The term is most frequently applied to couples who are not married but nevertheless live together 'as husband and

wife'.³ In this respect, it is to be remembered that, 'living together as husband and wife' is the pre-condition for validity of live-in relationship in the eye of law as expressed by the Supreme Court of India. If no relationship like husband and wife is found, then it could not be considered as a live-in relationship. Prolonged cohabitation 'as a husband and wife' is the presumption of live-in relationship having the legal recognition like marriage.

III. Reasons for Live-In Relationship

Live-in Relationship is not popular among the ordinary middle class peoples of India owing to their social and moral values, rather it is much prevalent among higher and lower strata of the society. Higher class people do not bother about social or moral criticism and generally enjoy freedom due to their monetary standard. Similarly, lower class people having no monetary freedom may also easily go for live-in relationship in lieu money for having a good standard of living. In a popular Hindi movie, few years back, a certain kind of relationship, called 'Contract Marriage' was shown, which was made in lieu of money. Such a kind of marriage has no recognition in the eyes of law, therefore, it is nothing but a type of live-in relationship. A poor lady in the movie, was forced to go for such relationship owing to her monetary status. Hence, it is clear that, where money matters, this relationship might be entered into disregarding the age-old Indian socio-cultural and moral values. Similarly, it could be entered into owing to other reasons also.

People choose to go for live-in relationship instead of marriage due to the following reasons :-

- They would like to test compatibility for each other before marriage.
- Sometimes they want to establish financial security before marriage.

³ DR.ANAND KUMAR TRIPATHI, LIVE-IN RELATIONSHIP: EMERGING TRENDS IN INDIA AND EUROPE,13, see in DR. BIMALN. PATEL ET AL., LIVE-IN RELATIONSHIP AND SURROGACY: LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND SOCIAL ISSUES(1sted.,2012).

- When the parties are unable to legally marry themselves for reasons like subsistence of previous marriage, same-sex, illegality of inter-racial or interreligious marriages, they go for live-in relationship.
- Living with someone before marriage in order to avoid divorce.
- It is also a way for polygamists to avoid breaking the law.
- It is a way to avoid the higher income taxes paid by some two income married couples.
- People who find little difference between the commitment to live together and the commitment of marriage.
- Some individuals also may choose cohabitation because they see their relationship as being private and personal matters and not to be controlled by political, religious or patriarchal institution.
- Some couples prefer cohabitation because it does not legally commit them for an extended period, and because it is easier to establish and dissolve without the legal costs often associated with a divorce.⁴

IV. Types of Live-In Relationship

Live-in Relationship may be of different types. Research showed that, couples who live together can be, generally, divided into four categories:-

- 1) **Informed:** A couple with clear ideological objections to marriage as an 'institution' who have chosen an alternative form of relationship. These couples are more likely to have a grasp of their legal position and to have made some kind of provision for each other.
- 2) **Uninformed:** People who have made wrong assumptions about their legal position. Particularly vulnerable are those who believe they have some form of rights with regard to shared property or with regard to children.

⁴ BINDURAJAN. T.HINDU MARRIAGE AND LIVE-IN RELATIONSHIP : A WOMAN'S RIGHTS PERSPECTIVE,3, see in DR. BIMALN. PATEL ET AL., LIVE-IN RELATIONSHIP AND SURROGACY: LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND SOCIAL ISSUES(1st ed., 2012).

- 3) **Reluctant:** Those who would prefer to be married but are unable to, either through a partner's inability or unwillingness to marry. With the presence of children there is an additional incentive for a reluctant partner to stay because of the financial pressures involved in leaving.
- 4) **No-Choice :** This overlaps with the previous category, but also includes heterosexual couples too closely related to marry and never-divorced couples. Same-sex couples are also included in this category when there is no other legal option.⁵

Though there are four kinds or types of live-in relationships, but these are not all enough and can also be divided into other types. Moreover, these cannot be divided into water-tight compartments and sometimes one may overlap into the other, like the cases of Reluctant and No-Choice types of live-in relationship.

V. Pattern of Development of Live-In Relationship

The recognition and legal protection of couples living together without traditional marriage differs according to traditions of each country. The pattern of development of this union can be regarded as a four stage process⁶ :-

- ❖ **An unusual habit of a small minority:** It may be found as a habit of a small minority and not accepted by the others, as such it is called an unusual habit. It is also found sometimes among the tribal sections of the society as their custom, who are also minority section of the society.
- ❖ **A prelude to marriage:**As already discussed, it is used by some couples as a precursor to marriage to test their compatibility and to avoid the chances of divorce among them after marriage.
- ❖ **Socially accepted as an alternative to marriage:**Where live-in relationship is socially accepted as an alternative form of marriage, then the parties can enter into such relationship in overwhelming manner and there is no chance of social unacceptance.

⁵TRIPATHI, ,Supra note14.

⁶ Id.

- ❖ **Indistinguishable from marriage in terms of commitment and parenting:** When the parties of live-in relationship are committed to each other regarding love and parenting of the children, then no distinction is found between marriage and live-in relationship. In those cases, there is no need of marriage between the parties.

These are the stages of process or development of live-in relationship in different countries. It should be mentioned in this respect that, the third and fourth stage is found only in the western countries, where social recognition of live-in relationship is existing. Even the second one is also very common in the western society as a precursor to marriage. But, in India, it is not socially recognized and as such, it is practiced only as an unusual habit of a small minority.

VI. Historical Background in India

The phrase 'live-in-relationship' might be a newly coined term in post-modern India, but this relationship can be traced back to the origin of humans i.e. Adam and Eve. They could be termed the first non-married couple in history. As the institution of marriage did not exist then, neither Adam nor Eve was aware of the status of their relationship. In the Vedic period or thereafter, there was no formal recognition of live-in relationship in India, but informal use of the activity was found altogether. Following discussion will clearly explain the scenario.

◎ **MaitriKarar**

In Gujarat, people of two opposite sex used to enter into a written agreement to be friends, live together and look after each other and in which woman had no right to exercise any claim on the man during or after the relationship beyond friendship, was known as 'MaitriKarar'. The man in such relationships was always married and the woman was a single woman who was also responsible for the sustenance of her parental family. When the story of maitrikarar blew up in the media many years ago, it was declared illegal.

◎ **GandharvaVivah, E.g.Dushyanta – Shakuntala**

In Gandharva's form of marriage, a man and a woman mutually decide to live together. This neither involves the family of the couple nor a particular ritual to solemnize the marriage. It is just a verbal commitment without any marital rituals, witnesses, and family participation. The marriage of King Dushyanta and Shakuntala is an example of the history of this class of marriage.

◎ **Bengal Sadar Courts in 1817**

Even this arrangement of GandharvaVivah got legalized in some of the Bengal Sadar Courts in 1817. By the time passes, people started forgetting this arrangement, and hence it is no more in existence.⁷

The truth is that provision similar to the Live-in relationship was prevailing in India, not from the colonial time but, its roots go to medieval history. Hence, it would be wrong to say that it was a new concept introduced by the British or adopted by the influence of the west.⁸

VII. Legal Definition of Live-In Relationship

Live-in Relationship is not legally defined in any of the Indian statutes. It is only under the auspices of the Supreme Court of India that, live-in relationship has got legal recognition in India. In the case of *D. Velusamy v. D. Patchaiammal*⁹, The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India has observed that, the relationship which is in the nature of marriage will be only recognized under the concept of live in relation. The Court has opined that merely spending few weekends or one-night stand would not make domestic relationship.

⁷ UJJAWALSATSANGI & PANKAJ SEVTA, MARRIAGE AND LIVE-IN RELATIONS : TWO FACES OF THE COIN – A STUDY OF INDIAN SCENARIO, 50, see in DR. BIMALN. PATEL ET AL., LIVE-IN RELATIONSHIP AND SURROGACY: LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND SOCIAL ISSUES (1st ed., 2012).

⁸ Id.

⁹ D. Velusamy v. D. Patchaiammal, A.I.R.1809 S.C. 2005(India).

In that case, the Supreme Court has prescribed Four Tests for validity of live-in relationship. Those tests are:-

- ❑ Legal age to marry.
- ❑ Qualify to enter legal marriage.
- ❑ Must be unmarried.
- ❑ Voluntary cohabitation as being akin to spouses should be for considerable period of time.

According to the Supreme Court, all the essential elements for solemnization of a valid marriage should be present in case of live-in relationship. Therefore, the parties should have the legal age to marry, they should qualify the other criteria for entering a legal marriage, must be unmarried and should have voluntary cohabitation between them similar to spouses for a significant period of time, so that, existence of marriage like situation can be easily presumed from their relationship. In the absence of these elements, validity of live-in relationship could not be proved before the courts and protection of the rights of the partners therein could not be possible.

VIII. Live-In Relationship When Permissible

The permissibility of live-in relationship is granted in the case of *S. Khushboo v. Kanniammal*.¹⁰ The Apex Court has said in the case that, there is no law which prohibits Live-in Relationship or Pre-marital Sex. It is a part of Right to Life and Personal Liberty of a man and woman and their living together without marriage is not an offence. It is also held that, it is a part of Right to live with dignity under *Article 21* of the Indian Constitution and a woman, though living in a live-in relationship, she is also entitled to a dignified life. But it is permissible only in unmarried major persons of heterogeneous sex. Otherwise it would amount to adultery. The apex court in that case, only allowed the live-in relationship of heterosexual persons and not the homosexual persons, the reason might be the existence of *Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860*. Moreover, on the basis of the decision in *D. Velusamy* case in 2005, a legally

¹⁰ S. Khushboov.Kanniammal (2010)5 S.C.C. 600 (India).

valid live-in relationship should satisfy all the conditions of a valid marriage. Therefore, the conditions which amount to adultery in case of a valid marriage, should also be called adultery in case of live-in relationship. Hence, the apex court has defined the four corners of live-in relationship, outside of which the case would become adultery.

IX. Live-In Relationship of Homosexual Persons

When the Supreme Court of India has legally recognized the live-in relationship in 2005, it has only allowed such kind of relationship among the heterosexual persons, but with the passage of time, situation has changed and now the court has legally recognized the consensual adult sex among the two homosexual persons. Therefore, now the live-in relationship of homosexual couples is also allowed. In the case of *Justice K. S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (24th Aug 2017)*¹¹, the Supreme Court has recognized that the Constitution has guaranteed the Right to Privacy as an intrinsic part of the Right to Life and Personal Liberty under *Article 21* of the Indian Constitution. The judgement was interpreted as paving the way for the eventual decriminalization of homosexuality in India. On the basis of this decision, the Supreme Court in *Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India (6th Sep 2018)*¹² case has found that, criminalization of sexual acts between consenting adults has violated the Right to Equality guaranteed by *Article 14* of the Constitution of India and has therefore, overruled the decision in *Suresh Kumar Koushal v. Naz Foundation (11th Dec 2013)*¹³ case. The court has held that "*the choice of whom to partner, the ability to find fulfilment in sexual intimacies and the right not to be subjected to discriminatory behaviour are intrinsic to the constitutional protection of sexual orientation*". However, other portions of *Section 377* relating to sex with minors, non-consensual and non-vaginal sexual acts remain in force as a punishable offence.

Finally, this *Navtej* case has created a history in the sphere of homosexual sex in India breaking the long chain of considering it as an objectionable activity and punishable offence. This case has also legalized homosexual live-in relationship

¹¹ Justice K. S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India, (2017) 10 S.C.C. 1 (India).

¹² Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India, W. P. (Crl.) No. 76 (2016) (India).

¹³ Suresh Kumar Koushal v. Naz Foundation, (2014) 1 S.C.C. 1 (India).

in India. Though homosexual live-in relationship is not legally recognized in 2005 or 2010, but now it is recognized after the decision in 2018. It is a kind of paradigm shift in the field of legalization of live-in relationship in India.

X. Legal Protection of Live-In Relationship in India

Though live-in relationship has got legal recognition under the auspices of the Indian judiciary only and still there is no express statutory protection of this relationship in India, but a number of Indian legislations have given implied protection to the rights of the parties to live-in relationship. Those legal provisions are discussed below :-

● **Section 114 of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872**

Section 114 of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 says that, the court may presume the existence of certain facts on the basis of circumstances. With the application of this section, the court can easily draw the contention of 'presumption of marriage' in case of prolonged and continuous cohabitation between the parties as husband and wife. Whenever that is proved, live-in relationship will get the legal status and the female partner will get the status of wife.

● **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005**

Section 2(f) of the Act defines 'domestic relationship' which includes the term 'relationship in the nature of marriage' within it. The phrase 'relationship in the nature of marriage' used herein is wide enough to include a 'live-in relationship' within its ambit. As per *Section 2(f)*, the Act has not only applied to the married couple but also the 'relationship in the nature of marriage'. *Section 2(a)* of the Act defines 'aggrieved person' as 'any woman who is, or has been, in a domestic relationship with the respondent and who alleges to have been subjected to any act of domestic violence by the respondent'. A woman in a domestic relationship can claim remedies in the occurrence of physical, mental, verbal, or economic abuse. The abused women have been granted several rights and protections under this Act. If the magistrate is convinced of any domestic violence, he can pass orders prohibiting the

accused from indulging in activities that affect the victim. Therefore, this Act is the only law which provides express statutory protection to the female partner of live-in relationship.

◎ **Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961**

This Act does not expressly applicable in cases of live-in relationship and the court has held that, dowry is a label for demand of money in cases of marriage and as live-in relationship is not a formal or ceremonial marriage, no question of dowry is involved therein.

◎ **Maintenance under Hindu Marriage Act, 1955**

According to *D. Velusamy* case, four essential requirements must be fulfilled in order to get legal status of the wife by a female partner of live-in relationship as well as to get maintenance. Therefore, if those pre-conditions are fulfilled, a female partner of live-in relationship will get maintenance under this Act.

◎ **Maintenance under Section 125 of Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973**

Section 125 of the Cr.P.C. deals with the maintenance of 'wife' under the Act and defines the term 'wife' as : 'wife includes a woman who has been divorced by, or has obtained a divorce from her husband and has not remarried.' Therefore, the section does not expressly include a female partner as a wife within its scope and ambit. In 2003, the Malimath Committee on Reforms of Criminal Justice System, has recommended an amendment of the word 'wife' in *Section 125, of the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973* to include 'a woman who is living with a man for a reasonable period'. Again in June 2008, The National Commission for Women has made a recommendation to the Ministry of Women and Child Development to include a live-in female partner for the right to maintenance under this section. Supreme Court in *Chanmuniyav.VirendraKumar Singh Kushwaha*¹⁴ case, has interpreted this section in the light to those recommendations and

¹⁴ Chanmuniyav.Virendra Kumar Singh Kushwaha,(2011)1 S.C.C. 141(India).

has awarded maintenance to the female partner of the live-in relationship. But, no concrete amendments have been made so far on the issue.

◎ **Rights of Children Born Out of Live-In Relationship**

The status of children born out of live-in relationship is also a debatable issue. *Section 16 of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955* provides legitimacy to all children born out of annulled Hindu marriages. Likewise, *Section 24 of the Special Marriage Act, 1954* provides legitimacy to all children born out of annulled inter-religious marriages. Similarly, *Section 21 of the Divorce Act, 1869* provides legitimacy to all children born out of annulled Christian marriages. Therefore, there is no doubt that, if live-in relationship is not recognized as a marriage, then also the children will be legitimate and will inherit their parents' property. But they are not entitled to ancestral property. If the relationship satisfies the requirements of a valid marriage, the children will be entitled to all the rights of property and succession like any other children of a valid marriage considering the innocence of the children.

XI. Advantages of Live-In Relationship

Live-in Relationship may have the following advantages:-

- ◎ It is convenient for career oriented women as their freedom of personal activities continues without any interference and pressure of commitment.
- ◎ Such relationship is easier to enter and exit rather than marriage as it does not have any formalities or customary rites.
- ◎ Absence of huge monetary involvement unlike ceremonial marriage is another advantage.
- ◎ Absence of dowry is the next benefit.
- ◎ Easily breakable nature which is contrary to the marriages having stringent divorce laws.

- ⊙ Beneficial for the homosexual persons whose marriages are not yet legally recognized.

XII. Disadvantages of Live-in Relationship

Apart from the advantages of live-in relationship, it has certain disadvantages, like:-

- ⊙ Due to the absence of formal concept of husband and wife, there is absence of bonding between the parties in many cases.
- ⊙ Abandonment of each other is easily possible by the parties which makes the women ultimate sufferers.
- ⊙ It may lead towards the promotion of adultery in the society by destroying the social cohesiveness.
- ⊙ Absence of specific laws on maintenance, succession, guardianship etc. makes the women and children ultimate sufferers.
- ⊙ The 'reasonable' time after which the parties will be treated as husband and wife is unclear.
- ⊙ Live in relationship is individualistic unsuitable to typical Indian family oriented conception.

XIII. Suggestions for Future Betterment

Keeping in view the above disadvantages, the following suggestions may be provided for better future of live-in relationship in India:-

- ⊙ Concrete law is required on the issue.
- ⊙ Rights of women in such relationships should be secured.
- ⊙ Rights of children born out of such relationships should be protected.
- ⊙ Rights and responsibilities of parties involved therein should be clarified.

- ◎ The reasonable time limit after which parties in live-in relationship could be treated as husband and wife should be cleared.
- ◎ Rights of homosexual couples having live-in relationship should be clarified and protected.

XIV. Epilogue

Live-in couples are largely found from professions, like entertainment, modeling and media. If relationships are becoming more cross-cultural, they are also more contractual now leading to more clear-cut expectations from each other. Few people opt for these relationships because they do not believe in marriage. Hence, it has become a very feasible option for some couples. Though Indian society has theoretically recognized Live-in Relationship, but has not practically accepted it. Social non acceptance may become the main reason for failure of legal recognition. Therefore, this legal change has brought only partial social change in India, because just a minor section of the society has started practicing this relationship. In order to define the four corners of live-in relationship, we need an express statute on the subject. The rights of the parties to Live-in Relationship could not be protected by the Supreme Court Guidelines in the totality unless and until an express statutory recognition including social acceptance of the relationship is there. We hope for the better protection of those rights in near future. Finally, it is not easy to establish this relationship as a countervailing factor to marriage in India owing to the typical traditional socio-cultural atmosphere in India.