



Technical Paper

Role of Education in Inter-Caste Marriages of Women from Scheduled Castes in India



Ravindra S. Medhe *

Department of Geography, School of Earth Sciences, Central University of Karnataka, Kalaburgi, India.

Abstract

Scheduled Castes (SC) is a group of deprived castes in India. Traditionally, people belongs to these castes are socio-economically exploited and untouchables. The present study analyses the role of education in decision of inter-caste marriages for social cohesion. The relationship between education of bride, parents and parents-in-law with number of inter-caste marriages was calculated using data compiled by India Human Development Survey (2011). The study shows no direct and robust relationship between education and inter-caste marriages. Educated brides lead for inter-caste marriages and educated parents support in this decision, but negative relationship was observed for education of parents-in-law with number of inter-caste marriages. Educated parents-in-law show no acceptance for inter-caste marriages of their shoots. The freedom of choice to bride show key role in formation of inter-caste marriages which shows wide state-to-state variations. Education improves the capabilities of a person to decide their own. Therefore, we have large scope to create bases for inter-caste marriages and social change through enlightenment and education.

Article history

Received: 20 December 2017

Revised: 15 December 2018

Accepted: 15 February 2018

Keywords

Women;
Inter-Caste Marriage;
Education;
Scheduled Caste.

Editor(s)

M. A. Siddiqui

1 INTRODUCTION

The marriage is an essential institution to maintain caste and clan structure of the society in India. This system is fully based on social system and stratification. Generally, marriages in Hindu system perform different families within a socially restricted boundary of castes (Jauregui *et al.*, 2003). Only few marriages cross these strict boundaries of caste, clan, religion, region and tradition. Inter-caste marriages are always denied (Gopalkrishnan *et al.*, 2007; Chauhan, 2008; Bidner *et al.*, 2015) and these families are out-casted in this situations (Köhler-Rollefson, 2017). Small clan and sub-castes are ensuring the traditional marriage rules and denning mobility for marriages from one social group to another (Hajeeh *et al.*, 2009; Singh, 2017).

North Indians prohibite marriages within close blood relatives however, South Indian marriages are within close blood relatives with commom practice. The attributes like 'kin marriage', 'village endogamy', and age of spouses vary by region and gender systems (Agha, 2016).

In 19th century, enormous significance was focussed on civil marriage legislation with contradictory and conflicting 'personal laws' (Goli *et al.*, 2013). This vice of awariness is slowly gaining the individual freedom to grils for marriage. However, older generations are still insisting the old traditional way of marriage for status symbol with bound of emotions.

Indian Governmets, various Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), some personalities, etc. are promoting inter-caste marriages through incentives and advertizements for youths (Dalmia, 2004). Growing urbanization, education, number of middle- and elite-class society supporting inter-caste marriages. Globalization and Western impact on education and culture in India show visible changes in the traditional marriage practices. Some of the personalities have started to rebel and choose mates outside the caste-, clan-, religion- and tradition- based marriage system. However, reported inter-caste marriages were only 5.82% in 2011 (Ray, 2017).

* Author's address for correspondence

Department of Geography, School of Earth Sciences, Central University of Karnataka, Kalaburgi, India.

Tel.: +91 7406541928 (M)

Emails: ravindramedhe@gmail.com (R. Medhe -Corresponding author)

<http://dx.doi.org/10.21523/gcj5.18020203>

Boys and girls who preferred inter-caste marriages are threatened with violence, mainly by their own families and leaders even after seventy years of legalization of new marriage laws. Thousands of honor killings of young women and men are reported in last few decades from various states of India (Goli *et al.*, 2013). Many families are also victimized for this cause.

Indian marriages are arraigned based on caste with notion of purity and hierarchy of caste. Upper castes believe that the lower castes are impure. The status of scheduled castes is considered comparatively inferior for occupation, education, social hierarchy, cultural, religious and political practices (Chouhan, 2013). Typically, woman from a higher caste marrying a man from a lower caste isn't supported by own family and society however, the families from lower castes encourage woman to marry with man from upper caste (Self and Grabowski, 2008). Even mythology shows 'death punishment' to the lower caste male for marrying with upper caste female (Tarikere, 2017).

Inter-caste marriage is an indicator of social cohesion and education play crucial role in formation of inter-caste marriages. Education is powerful tool for upward social mobility, which can help to improve social status of person and family with inclusive society to reduce socio-economic disparities (Chauhan, 2008). Traditionally, people from SCs didn't have rights of education, prestigious jobs, and dignity. However, after 19th century they have come into mainstream of education, social, economic and political process. Therefore, present study focuses on the analysis the role of education in the decision process of inter-caste marriages in SC women of India. The present work will be helpful to decide structure and approaches of education for Indian society.

2 DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The study analyses the description performance of education in the decision of marriages in deprived castes of SC category women in India. The information about the education was procured from India Human Development Survey (IHDS) (2011). This is a multi-topic panel survey of 42,152 households in 384 districts, 1420 villages and 1042 urban neighbourhoods across India. Most of these families had interviewed for IHDS-I. Both studies cover all states and union territories of India except Andaman/Nicobar and Lakshadweep. Two one-hour interviews in each household included health, education, employment, economic status, marriage, fertility, gender relations, and social capital. IHDS jointly organised by researchers from the University of Maryland and the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), New Delhi. IHDS II data has been used eight variables for the analysis, these are women's education, state-wise distribution of inter-caste marriages, father's education, mother's education, mother-in-laws education, and father-in-laws education,

how long women knew husband before marriage and who choose groom to respondents. Data collected from 42,152 households, and the un-weighted frequency of received data of eligible women was 39523 included all category women. Data regarding women from SCs has dragged for 8415 sample families.

The analysis uses data from IHDS-II survey of eligible women: a questionnaire addressed at a nationally representative sample of individuals aged 16 to 70 years living in India, of all marital status. The main group of women from SCs was also analysed. Correlation analysis was performed to understand the relationship between the variables.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Distribution of Inter-Caste Marriages in SCs

About 4.54% of marriages (state wise average) in SCs were reported inter-caste with wide state wise variations (Table 2). Meghalaya, Dadra Nagar Haveli, Tripura and Kerala are the major union territories and states show the inter-caste marriages as 100, 33.33, 23.47 and 17.29%, respectively. Inter-caste marriages weren't reported in Chandigarh, Madhya Pradesh, Goa and Pondicherry. Assam is showing 9.61 percent inter-caste marriages though SC population of the state was 7.15%.

3.2 Education and Inter-Caste Marriage

The relationship of inter-caste marriages with education of married women, bride's father, her mother, her mother-in-law and her father-in-law was analyzed for find the role of education of intimate relatives in decision of inter-caste marriages. Couples in 0-7% inter-caste marriages have studies up to secondary (12th) level and 13.52% couples learned up to second-year post-secondary (12+2) (Table 3). No inter-caste marriage reported for education of boys and girls up to first-year post-secondary (12+1).

Education of bride, her father and mother shows positive significant correlation with number of inter-caste marriages as 31, 6 and 3%, respectively (Table 1). Nevertheless, education of father-in-law and mother-in-law shows negative significant correlation with number of inter-caste marriages.

Table 1. The relationship between education of brides and relatives with inter-caste marriages

Variables	Correlation
Bride	0.3177
Father	0.0628
Mother	0.378
Father-in-laws	-0.618
Mother-in-laws	-0.3154

3.3 Education and Choice of Groom

The decision on choice of groom is crucial in the process of marriage. Parents and other relatives selected 74.65% grooms without concern of the bride. Only 4.75 % grooms had chosen by girls. In the selection of groom by the girl herself, the highest rate (26.92%) is in first-year post-secondary (12+1) (Table 5). The most inter-caste marriages held in second-year post-secondary (12+2) class. The majority of inter-caste marriages happening when girls choose their partner by own. Positive correlation (53%) observed between education

and decision on choice of groom. Parents' education of bride's parent and choice of the groom is also showing a positive correlation (61%). Very high negative correlation was estimated for inter-caste marriage with education in traditional way of marriage. It is notable that only higher education does not positively correlate with inter-caste marriages. Traditional marriages aren't allowing daughters for independent decision and give more importance to the caste. However, new generations of educated brides are prefers independent decision of marriage with no essential criteria of caste in the process of selection of life partner.

Table 2. Inter-caste marriages in SCs (%)

State	Marriages	Population
Jammu and Kashmir	3.28	7.38
Himachal Pradesh	0.62	25.19
Punjab	3.05	31.94
Chandigarh	0	18.86
Uttarakhand	4.04	18.76
Haryana	4.5	20.17
Delhi	3.41	16.75
Rajasthan	9.11	17.83
Uttar Pradesh	2.19	20.7
Bihar	9.42	15.91
Sikkim	7.12	4.63
Tripura	23.47	17.83
Meghalaya	100	0.58
Assam	9.61	7.15
West Bengal	3.63	23.51
Jharkhand	5.71	12.08
Orissa	5.02	17.13
Chhattisgarh	0.38	12.82
Madhya Pradesh	0	15.62
Gujarat	6.48	6.74
Dadra Nagar Haveli	33.33	1.8
Maharashtra	2.75	11.81
Andhra Pradesh	4.73	16.41
Karnataka	4.14	17.15
Goa	0	1.74
Kerala	17.29	9.1
Tamil Nadu	4	20.01
Pondicherry	0	15.73
Total	4.54	16.63

Table 3. The relationship between education of persons and choice of groom

Variables	Correlation
Bride	0.538
Bride and parents / other relatives	0.615
Parents / other relatives alone	-0.8318
Others	0.3167

Table 4. Education and inter-caste marriages

Education	Married Women (%)	Father (%)	Mother (%)	Fathers-in-law (%)	Mother-in-law (%)
Illiterate	4.09	4.52	4.48	4.54	4.44
1st class	1.01	0	0	4.28	0
2nd class	5.48	5.45	6.93	1.77	9.05
3rd class	2.9	5.32	3.53	3.01	3.14
4th class	4.22	1.08	2.51	5.81	3.07
5th class	7.33	6.32	5.02	4.79	2.04
6th class	4.68	5.63	4.45	5.61	11.58
7th class	3.39	4.41	6.41	5.47	10.47
8th class	5.22	4.37	4.47	3.75	7.65
9th class	3.67	7.26	2.22	2.52	6.79
Secondary	5.08	3.69	9.98	5.91	10.64
11th Class	4.89	0	0	0	0
Higher Secondary	4.12	2.97	8.32	2.2	5.2
1 year post-secondary	0	0	0	0	0
2 years post-secondary	13.52	13.53	0	0	0
Bachelors	2.54	6.33	0	2	0
Above Bachelors	9.33	0	100	0	0
Total	4.54	4.55	4.55	4.47	4.55

3.4 Bride Know Husband before the Marriage

It is a very important to know each other before the marriage. Meghalaya shows 100% inter-caste marriages (Table 6) and the bride knows her groom more than one time. Dadara Nagar Haveli shows 100% bride in inter-caste know groom from more than one year and shows highest inter-caste marriages (33.33%). Therefore, relationship of bride with groom before marriage is

important for more inter-caste marriages in the society. Arunachal Pradesh and Goa show bride seen her groom on the wedding day. About 70.11% couples were seen partner on the wedding day. 11.62% brides and grooms knew each other before one month from the marriage and 7.47% in more than one month but less than one year. About 4.39 % couples were know each other from more than a year and 6.42% since their childhood.

Table 5. Education and choice of groom

Education	1	2	3	4	Total
Illiterate	2.39	16.39	81.04	0.17	100
1st class	6.02	10.91	83.06	0	100
2nd class	4.4	15.49	80.12	0	100
3rd class	3.02	28.54	68.44	0	100
4th class	3.35	21.26	75.03	0.36	100
5th class	6.54	17.99	75.38	0.09	100
6th class	11.89	22.99	64.12	1	100
7th class	4.8	28.8	66.41	0	100
8th class	4.68	23.67	71.65	0	100
9th class	11.45	30.57	57.79	0.19	100
Secondary	8.97	23.92	66.9	0.21	100
11th Class	2.79	35.63	61.57	0	100
Higher Secondary	4.89	30.78	63.93	0.41	100
1 year post-secondary	25.92	22.95	51.13	0	100
2 years post-secondary	15.33	21.87	62.8	0	100
Bachelors	11.79	23.82	64.39	0	100
Above Bachelors	7.86	33.19	56.93	2.01	100
Total	4.75	20.42	74.65	0.19	100

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Bride | 3. Parents / other relatives alone |
| 2. Bride and parents / other relative | 4. Others |

3.5 Decision of Choice

Decision of marriage in India mostly (74.65 %) made by parents (Table 7). Only 4.75% girls chose their groom with large disparity. Dadara Nagar Haveli is showing 100% marriages made based on brides' choice whereas Goa showing 100% decision made by parents.

Dadara Nagar Haveli shows the highest (33.33%) inter-caste marriages. Assam (30.47%), Sikkim (27.31%), Pondicherry (22.22%), Tripura (15.92%), Kerala (11.09%) are the important state show freedom to brides for choice for the groom. Majority of North states aren't considers opinion of girls in the decision choice. Southern states are at least considering views of girls in selection of grooms.

Table 6. Bride know husband before the marriage (%)

State	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Jammu & Kashmir	72.89	7.57	7.9	4.85	6.79	100
Himachal Pradesh	30.3	7.56	30.36	27.11	4.67	100
Punjab	84.98	5.74	4.43	3.26	1.58	100
Chandigarh	65.15	0	21.17	13.68	0	100
Uttarakhand	63.61	4.49	24.54	6.64	0.72	100
Haryana	90.53	2.71	2.94	3.17	0.65	100
Delhi	75.7	12.13	10.27	1.9	0	100
Rajasthan	92.03	2.33	2.79	1.22	1.63	100
Uttar Pradesh	90.47	1.95	2.38	1.85	3.35	100
Bihar	97.16	2.26	0.58	0	0	100
Sikkim	72.69	5.94	0	7.12	14.25	100
Arunachal Pradesh	100	0	0	0	0	100
Tripura	86.85	2.01	7.12	4.02	0	100
Meghalaya	0	0	100	0	0	100
Assam	18.65	49.7	7.83	21.04	2.78	100
West Bengal	68.48	11.03	12.09	5.43	2.98	100
Jharkhand	82.69	13.1	0.93	1.96	1.31	100
Orissa	61.39	24.07	8.74	4.02	1.78	100
Chhattisgarh	35.07	16.67	38.68	3.54	6.05	100
Madhya Pradesh	82.79	2.72	6.84	6.4	1.25	100
Gujarat	51.08	13.82	23.27	6.85	4.98	100
Dadra Nagar Haveli	0	0	0	100	0	100
Maharashtra	84.33	4.38	1.92	5.33	4.04	100
Andhra Pradesh	56.84	22.42	1.52	2	17.21	100
Karnataka	26.45	38.35	9.24	4.54	21.41	100
Goa	100	0	0	0	0	100
Kerala	25.35	32	24	13.42	5.99	100
Tamil Nadu	43.77	16.76	10.51	6.45	22.51	100
Pondicherry	0	44.44	22.22	11.11	22.22	100
Total	70.11	11.62	7.47	4.39	6.42	100

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. On wedding day | 4. More than one year |
| 2. Less than one month | 5. Since childhood |
| 3. More than one month but less than one year | |

Table 7. Decision of choice (%)

State	1	2	3	4	Total
Jammu & Kashmir	1.5	20.66	77.84	0	100
Himachal Pradesh	11.8	26.77	61.44	0	100
Punjab	1.56	6.56	91.87	0	100
Chandigarh	13.68	0	86.32	0	100
Uttarakhand	1.27	18.54	80.19	0	100
Haryana	3.07	14.37	82.19	0.36	100
Delhi	3.47	20.01	76.13	0.39	100
Rajasthan	0.95	9.01	90.04	0	100
Uttar Pradesh	1.44	11.2	87.36	0	100
Bihar	1.48	22.5	76.02	0	100
Sikkim	27.31	0	72.69	0	100
Arunachal Pradesh	0	100	0	0	100
Tripura	15.92	10.65	73.43	0	100
Meghalaya	50	50	0	0	100
Assam	30.47	50.63	14.69	4.21	100
West Bengal	8.2	14.35	76.92	0.52	100
Jharkhand	6.7	15.7	77.61	0	100
Orissa	5.33	15.46	79.21	0	100
Chhattisgarh	2.95	12.3	84.75	0	100
Madhya Pradesh	1.5	8.96	89.54	0	100
Gujarat	4.46	37.91	57.63	0	100
Dadra Nagar Haveli	100	0	0	0	100
Maharashtra	2.82	42.05	55.14	0	100
Andhra Pradesh	2.91	14.7	82.21	0.18	100
Karnataka	5.88	22.77	71.35	0	100
Goa	0	0	100	0	100
Kerala	11.09	46.62	42.28	0	100
Tamil Nadu	8.42	40	51	0	100
Pondicherry	22.22	55.56	22.22	0	100
Total	4.75	20.42	74.65	0.19	100

1. Respondent herself
2. Respondent and parents / other relative
3. Parents / other relatives alone
4. Others

4 CONCLUSION

The marriage is an essential institution to maintain caste and clan structure of the society in India. Marriages in India are fully based on stratified social system. Only very few girls and boys are crossing these boundaries for marriage. Education is key parameter of positive changes for social welfare. However, the study shows no direct and robust relationship between education and inter-caste marriages. Educated brides lead for inter-

caste marriages and educated parents are supportive in this decision, but negative relationship observed for education of parents-in-law and inter-caste marriages. Educated parents-in-law show no acceptance for inter-caste marriages of their shoots.

Indian parents are very traditional and rigid for selection of grooms for their daughters because of stratified caste structure. Northern states are more traditional and rigid for the selection provides no choice

for girls to select their life partner. Comparatively, Southern states consider views of girls in choice of groom. It is remarkable that freedom to girls for selection of groom promote them for inter-caste marriages. Nevertheless, traditional parents choose groom from their caste without consideration of views of daughters. It means that educated new generations are ready to cross the boundaries of caste structure for marriages, but older generations are resisting for social improvements for human welfare.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author confirms no conflicts of interest.

REFERENCES

- Agha, N., 2016. Kinship in rural Pakistan: Consanguineous marriages and their implications for women. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 54, 1-10. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2015.10.005>
- Berthoud, J., 1978. *Joseph Conrad: the Major Phase*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bidner, C. and Eswaran, M., 2015. A gender-based theory of the origin of the caste system of India. *Journal of Development Economics*, 114, 142-158. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2014.12.006>
- Chauhan, C. P. S., 2008. Education and caste in India. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 28(3), 217-234. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02188790802267332>
- Chouhan, P., 2013. A study on literacy and educational attainment of scheduled castes population in Maldah District of West Bengal, India. *Journal of Geography and Regional Planning*, 6(1), 19-30.
- Dalmia, S., 2004. A hedonic analysis of marriage transactions in India: estimating determinants of dowries and demand for groom characteristics in marriage. *Research in Economics*, 58, 235-255. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rie.2004.03.002>
- Divyaranjani, R. and Rajasekar, D., 2017. Case study on inter caste marriage in urban and rural areas of Andhra Pradesh: patterns and causes faced by women. *International Journal of Research*, 04(08), 706-715.
- Fontaine, X. and Yamada, K., 2014. Caste Comparisons in India: Evidence From Subjective Well-Being Data. *World Development*, 64, 407-419. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2014.06.025>
- Goli, S., Singh, D. and Sekher, T. V., 2013. Exploring the myth of mixed marriages in India: Evidence from a nation-wide survey. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 44(2), 193-206.
- Gopalkrishnan, N. and Babacan H., 2007. Ties that bind: Marriage and partner choice in the Indian community in Australia in a transnational context. *Identities*, 14(4), 507-526. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10702890701578498>
- Hajeesh, M. and Lairi, S., 2009. Marriage Partner Selection in Kuwait: An Analytical Hierarchy Process Approach. *The Journal of Mathematical Sociology*, 33(3), 222-240. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00222500902953620>
- Jauregui, B. and McGuinness, T., 2003. Inter-community marriage and social change in contemporary India: Hybridity, selectivity and transnational flows. *Journal of South Asian Studies*, 26(1), 71-85. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/085640032000063995>
- Köhler-Rollefson, I., 2017. Purdah, purse and patriarchy: The position of women in the Raika shepherd community in Rajasthan (India). *Journal of Arid Environments*, 149, 30-39. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaridenv.2017.09.010>
- Ray, T., Roy-Chaudhuri, A. and Sahai K., 2017. Whose Education Matters? An Analysis of Inter Caste Marriages In India. Indian Statistical Institute, Delhi, India.
- Self, S. and Grabowski, R., 2008. Modernization, inter-caste marriage, and dowry: An analytical perspective. *Journal of Asian Economics*, 20(1), 69-76. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.asieco.2008.07.001>
- Singh, D. K., 2017. Inter-Caste or Inter-Religious Marriages and Honour Related Violence in India, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 6(6), 69-73.
- Tarikere, R., 2017. Inter-caste Marriage and Shakta Myths of Karnataka. *Economic & Political Weekly*, 52(42-43), LII.
