

Intergenerational Differences in the Concept of Marriage Among Dogra Brahmin Females (Mothers and Daughters)

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ABSTRACT The present research investigates the intergenerational differences in the concept of marriage among Dogra Brahmin mothers and daughters. The sample of the study consists of 20 mothers and their 20 daughters. Random sampling technique was employed to select the sample from various localities of Jammu (Jammu and Kashmir State). Interview guidelines were used to get in-depth information from mothers and daughters. Results reveal that the concept of marriage among two generation varies. Though the concept differs still the daughters are not ready to change or rebel. They will follow their parents wishes and they know that their parents are not going to accept inter-caste marriage or love marriage though they are aware that many of the problems of Indian Social system like casteism, dowry, bride burning will be over come.

INTRODUCTION

Custom of marriage is the most widespread institution of human society. Since the pre-historic period up to the present age, marriage had remained the backbone of human civilization. Therefore institution of marriage occupies a very important place in human society. Marriage is considered as sacred contract in most religions. In the Indian tradition and philosophy, marriage is holy act confirmed by all the ceremonies and ritual accompanying it. It is also believed to be an irrevocable bond between the man and woman who enter the secured alliance. It had been sanctified in several cultures as a spiritual and functional relationship between man and woman leading to the birth of children and building a family. The Hindu ideal of marriage is essentially a fellowship between a man and woman who seek to live together in creative partnership for the pursuit of great objects of life. Two personalities merge on ideals, purposes, attitudes, possibilities, habits, friendship, aversions and prosperity have becomes the base for the emotions which bond the two personalities, love stimulates, facilities and reinforce each other in progressive integration. Thus marriage is the union of soul and body so closely and so firmly established that one expects that it will lasts as long as life lasts. Jain (1988) also agreed that marriage was essential for every individual.

With the advent of modernization and globalization many concepts have undergone change. Marriage too, as an institution has been largely effected but in India it is still surviving though structural changes in concepts have taken place. Hence it is interesting at this time to understand the changes in concept among the orthodox Hindus especially the Dogra Brahmins who still carry the pre-modernization beliefs like purity and prohibition with them especially the women folk who seems to have been left behind by the development. The aim of the study is to see whether the change has really occurred. The girls these days are exposed to new ideas and have an opportunity for higher education and occupations previously considered men's domain. No longer is the female just a child-producing machine. Now she supports the family planning and performs many roles at the same time. There is an ardent need to give new definitions to concepts of masculinity and femininity and also their respective roles. Thus the study will make a minor attempt to define what exactly has changes in the domain of marriage and related concepts.

METHODOLOGY

The sample of the study was Dogra Brahmin women (n=20) and their marriageable daughters (n = 20) of the Jammu city of Jammu district of Jammu and Kashmir State. Mothers were in the age group of 35-50 years and their daughters were in the age group of 18-25 years.

Controlled Variables:

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1. *Caste Group*: Only Dogra Brahmin families were selected.
2. *Residence*: Mothers should be the resident of urban area of Jammu city.
3. Mothers must have a daughter of marriageable age.

Sampling Technique: 100 Dogra Brahmin families fulfilling the criteria were identified from various localities falling within the municipal limits of Jammu city. These families were randomly arranged in serial order and every 5th family was selected. Thus the sample of 20 families was selected.

Tools for the Study: Interview guidelines were used to get the in-depth information about the respondent. The interview guidelines have items seeking information regarding background information, age at marriage, age difference between partners, inter-caste marriage, decision making about mate, dowry and divorce.

Data Analysis: The content of the interview was then carefully scrutinized and the data was analyzed keeping the objectives in view.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 reveals that the median age of the mothers is 41.5 years and the median age of the daughters are 21 years. Median educational qualification of the mothers is secondary whereas the median educational qualification of the daughters is higher secondary. It was found that all the mothers are housewives and their daughters are students.

Result reveals that according to both mothers and daughters' marriage is a sacrament, a necessary custom essential for getting respect in the society, to procreate, to fulfill sexual desire, to fulfill all other desire to enjoy life but still difference in views of mothers and daughters can be attributed to social change. According to mothers, marriage is a security but according to the daughters it is an imposition and a lottery where future happiness is uncertain. Daughters have very dreamy expectations from marriage

Table 1: Background information

Information	Median
Age of the mothers	41.5 years
Age of the daughters	21 years
Educational Qualification of the mothers	Secondary
Educational qualification of the daughters	Hr. Secondary

not based on reality.

Table 2 shows that majority (70%) of the mothers are married in the age group of 17 – 19 years. 60 % of the mothers prefer that their daughters should be married at the age of 23 – 25 years. Most of the daughters (40%) prefer the age at marriage is in the age of 23 – 25 years. No differences are found as they all agreed that girl should be mature before marriage. More than half of the mothers (60%) prefer that the age difference between the life partners should be 5 – 7 years where as more than half of the daughters (55%) prefer that the age difference should not be more than 1 – 3 years. Chi-square reveals that there is significance difference among

Table 2: Difference in concept about marriage and their related concepts

S. No.	Marriage	n = 20	%	χ^2
1.	Age at Marriage			
A	Mothers Age at Marriage			
i	7 – 19 years	14	70	
ii	19 – 21 years	4	20	
iii	21- 23 years			
iv	23 25 years	2	10	
v	25 and above			
B	Preferred Age for Daughters			
I	19 – 21 years	2	10	
ii	21- 23 years	4	20	
iii	23 25 years	12	60	
iv	25 and above	2	10	
C	Opinion of Daughters for Age at Marriage			16.6
I	21- 23 years	5	25	
ii	23 25 years	8	40	
iii	25 and above	7	35	
2	Age Difference Between Spouse			
A	Preferred for daughters			
i	7 – 5 years	12	60	
ii	5 – 3 years	6	30	
iii	3 – 1 years	2	10	
B	Preferred by Daughters			19.4
i	5 – 3 years	8	40	
ii	3 – 1 years	11	55	
iii	Same age	1	5	
3	Attitude Towards Love, Inter-Caste, and Inter-Religion Marriage			
A	Attitude Towards Love Marriage	Mothers	Daughters	
i	Favor	2	17	
ii	Against	18	3	22.6
B	Attitude Towards Inter-Caste Marriage	Mothers	Daughters	
i	Favor	2	20	3
ii	Against	18		36
C	Attitude Towards Inter-Religion Marriage	Mothers	Daughters	
i	Favor		11	
ii	Against	20	9	15.2

the two-generation's views. 18 mothers are not in favor of love and inter-caste marriages where as 17 daughters are in favor of love marriages and all the daughters are in favor of inter-caste marriages. All the mothers are totally against for the inter-religion marriages whereas 11 daughters are in favor of the inter-religion marriages. This shows that there is significance difference among the attitude of the old generation and the young generation.

Results indicated that there is no difference in the views of mothers and their daughters regarding the decision-making in any family matters. Mothers feel that daughters must have right to give decision while selected the life partner or any family matters. As for as dowry concern, results found that majority of the mothers viewed out that dowry must be given as a security and a share in the parental property but most of the daughters said that dowry is a social evil and it give rise to gender discrimination and crime against women. Regarding divorce, most of the daughters feel that as educated women, it is right to separate legally if the marriage does not work but many mothers are in favor not taking the divorce in any condition or discrepancies. But both views agree that after divorce there is no respect for a woman in the family as well as in the society.

Results reveal that the attitude of the mothers and their daughters were totally different but majority of the daughters said that they know that their mothers should believe in old traditions, still they do not rebel or do anything against their will.

DISCUSSION

Marriage is very important event in life of women. Marriage is a social and biological necessity. In the present study, views of mothers and their daughters are same as they think that marriage is a sacrament and necessary both for boys and girls because it is only after marriage women get respect in the society but daughters have very dreamy expectations from marriage. In this study Dogra Brahmin being conservative in nature still adhere to age-old customs and marriage for them is essential. According to the mothers and daughters views, the age between

23 – 25 years when a girl physically, mentally and emotionally mature, can understand the real meaning of marriage. Previous study conducted by Raheja (1978) and Uplaonkar (1995) found that 22 – 26 years were the ideal age for marriage of a girl and boy. Sharma (1978) indicated that 20 – 25 year were the ideal age for girls as she is supposed to be mature and 25 – 30 years were the ideal age for boys so that he is settles in his job. According to the mothers in this study that marriage is a understanding between two partners and there should be 4 – 5 years age difference between them so that they can respect each other but according to the daughters marriage is for love, affection and enjoyment so the age difference of the life partner should not be more than 2 – 3 years. Chowdhary (1988) concluded that partners with greater age difference are likely to experience more adjustment problems than partner with lesser age difference. Views of the mothers in the present study too reach the same conclusion. Attitude of the mothers about marriages were religious or traditional based they are not in favor of love, inter-caste and inter-religion marriage. They still believe in old traditions and customs but the daughter's views are totally different. Raheja (1978) studied that too older generations were more conservative in their views of love, inter-caste and inter-religion marriages. It was found in this study that younger generation were not against for these types of marriages but they prefer that parents wishes and not go for any of these if pressure for caste/ religion endogamy is there. According to the mother's views, dowry means the kind of items or gifts, which parents provide to their daughters at the time of marriage, so that she can lead her life comfortably and successfully but daughters are not in favor of this type of social evil. Mothers attitude regarding divorce is not positive as they think that in our Indian society divorce is not considered good and it lowers down the respect of the woman in the society whereas daughters think that divorce should be taken if the situation are not according to you because now they are also educated and want to spend their life according to their own choice. Research conducted by Hate (1988) and Kumari (1988) studied that majority of the respondents felt that women exercising their right to divorce indicated

a healthy development and improvement in their status and also favored divorce as a better solution to save oneself from a life of torture or lack of adjustment and faith between the spouses or ill treatment from the in-laws. The present study reveal that no doubt the concept of two generation is totally different about the marriage and their related areas but still daughters feels that their parents are right whatever they done for them is good for our future. This was revealed in a work on Dogras of Jammu by Sharma (1999). The adolescents were ready to compro-mise with their parents, especially the daughters, in areas of education, vocation and mate selection especially in low and middle socio-economic strata. It was also reflected in parental expecta-tions where parents want 'obedience' as the utmost required quality in their children (Sharma, 1999).

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