

Mate Selection Preferences among college students in rural and urban areas in Karnataka. A study in Sociology of Marriage and Family.

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Abstract – Marriage is the basis of fundamental social relations. It promotes constituting a family which is the basic unit of human organization. Marriage is the bonding between people by social union or legal contract. Marriage is when two people have a wedding ceremony to exchange vows before god and their family. Different cultures have their own concept of marriage. People enter into marriage for different reasons. These reasons may include social, economical, religious, emotional or legal reasons. This study was designed to explore the preferred characteristics of mate selection among college students. Using simple random sampling, 2624 college students were selected of which 1081 boys and 1543 girls studying only in final year degree in colleges in sampled study area of Bagalkot in Karnataka through questionnaire. The study being exploratory in nature, findings are presented in simple percentages. The findings show a trend of homogamy among college students in mate selection. However, there is consistency observed with the prior researchers. The influence of family structure, functioning and prospects are the preferences for a potential mate seeking found on a highly dominated factor.

Keywords: Marriage, Mate Selection preference family structure, Homogamy.

Introduction

A family is a common experience to every human being in his or her lifetime. One of the significant relationships that individuals build in their lives is the marital. Marriage is the union of two eligible male and female. This union is not just physical, but also spiritual and mental (Brown, 2009). Marriage is one of the most important and faithful choices of both men and women. Many studies indicate that selecting a mate is one of the

most important decisions that individuals make in their lifetime (Abdullah et al, 2011; Brown, 2009; Buss et al, 2001; Maliki, 2009; Neustadter, 2012; Regan, Lavin, Sprechers, Christopher, & Cate, 2000). Various factors influence this process such as age, physical characteristics, educational background, parental influence, religion, socio economic status, residential origins, etc (Bee, 1994, Maliki, 2009; Alavi, et al., 2014). Studies reveal that university graduates have more specific criteria of mate selection (Abdullah et al., 2011; Buss, 1989; Buunk et al., 2002). Among various characteristics of desired spouse, physical attractiveness and physical appearance so to say looks are more dominant traits of expectation (Furnham, 2009; Li, et al., 2003). For many others, financial and socio-economic status are significant (Badahdah and Tiemann, 2009; Regan, et al. 2003; Townsend and Wasserman, 1998).

Criteria of mate selection are different in different of cultural and societies. Selecting a marriage partner is a culturally defined process (O'Neil 2006).

Studies reveal age similarity as another factor considered important especially by educated class. Because it is assumed that people of same age have some level of understanding and exposure to the world (Glenn, 1992 and 2001). This age similarity also enhances emotional satisfactions of couples maintaining kindness and understanding, intelligence, and an excellent personality (Bus and Barnes, 1986). Educational background is another important criterion in mate selection (Maliki, 2009, O'Neil, 2006). Graduates prefer to marry someone with good educational background like themselves Maliki (2009). Marrying partner with lower educational background could cause challenges, while similar educational background result in similar attitudes, values and behavior among spouses (Acitelli, Kenny, & Weiner, 2001).

Religion is an important criterion for selecting mates (Badahdah & Tiemann, 2009; Maliki, 2009). Religion and political powerfully relate to individual's values and beliefs (Furnham, 2009). Religion is significant for potential mates to have religious beliefs (Maliki 2009). According to Maliki, students preferred to marry within their

religious group. Religion can be a binding force for those with the same religion to get married.

India is traditionally a patriarchal and feudal society where caste, family traditions and religion have more influences on mate selection process. Cultural traditions do not encourage young adults to make their marital decisions independently rather arranged marriages are still order of the day (Hamid et al, 2011). Caste, sect and propinquity are more important considerations (Banerjee et al, 2010). William J. Goode in his seminar work on family writes about the mate selection process resembling vegetable market which emphasizes very clearly on how mate selection behavior is represented like in case of shopping vegetable in market. Perhaps it is this aspect of which needs to be explained empirically.

Since, marriage is sharing life with another, it is natural to have different criteria and expectations of roles (Celik, Halmatov, Halmatov, & Soricam, 2012). So partner selection is important in establishing the foundation of family, which sometimes affects marital satisfaction. Therefore, identifying certain mate selection criteria among college students becomes important.

In order to identify the mate selection preferences criteria among college students in both rural and urban areas in Karnataka, using simple random sampling about 2624 college students of whom 1081 boys and 1543 girls, studying in the last year of their first degree like BA, BSc, B.Com, BBA, BCA, BSW, B.Ed, B.PEd, MBBS, BDS, BE, BAMS, B.Sc (Nursing) B.Sc (Horti) LLB, and Ayurvedic studies, in Bagalkot district of Karnataka. Since the study area of Karnataka in particular India is too big, Bagalkot district was chosen for sampling area. Responses were gathered to series of items by administering through questionnaire. Simple percentages are used to present data and analyze the data.

This study is mainly objected towards exploring the expectations and desires of college students about their ideal mate, who could be and the effects of their various background characteristics on choices of mate selection among the respondents.

Results:

As said above there were 2624 college students covered under the study.

The frequency and percentile distribution of the respondents' gender details show that a majority of them are female (58.80%) while male constituted about 41.20%. These days a large number of girls opt for higher education. This has given rise to the termination of higher education in Karnataka. The study area of Bagalkot has a total number of 12,675 enrolled college students studying in the final year degree classes during the academic year 2016-17 (about 20.70% of the total college students). Through many colleges affiliated to different universities in the region. The respondents were asked to indicate their preferences of a mate by selecting criteria on different aspects while doing so. The details given are presented below.

Table:1 Criteria considered important in Mate Selection

Desired Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Caste		
Important	1565	59.64
Not Important	1059	40.36
Age		
Older (Female)	1265	48.21
Younger (Male)	931	35.48
Should of the same age	428	16.31
Skin Complexion		
Fair skinned	1387	52.86
Whitish coloured	544	20.73
No importance given	693	26.41
Height		
High tall is preferred	1301	49.58
Should be moderately tall	718	27.36

Shortened preferences	605	23.06
Physical Attractiveness		
Handsome/beautiful	905	34.49
Medium attractive	867	33.04
It is ok with moderate fitness	852	32.47
Education		
Should be equally educated	1587	60.48
Better (Female)	501	19.09
Better (Male)	536	20.43
Socio-Economic status		
Higher	918	35
Lower	819	31.20
Equal	887	33.80
Family Background		
Should better	1021	38.91
Moderate/equal	809	30.83
It is ok of low	794	30.26
Family preferences		
Highly tradition observed	1127	42.95
Moderate traditionally observed	987	37.61
Should be modern	510	19.44
Religion		
Important	1520	57.93
Not important	1104	42.07
Occupation		
Important	1721	65.59
Not importance	903	26.41

Details in the above table 1 show the result which indicate that 65.59% of the respondents have that occupation is the most important factor followed by education with 60.48% as accomplished attainments in mate preferred. About 59.64% have indicated caste; while 57.93% have indicated religion are preferred in a mate selection. About 52.86% have indicated good complexion which is closely followed by appearance with 49.58%. Among female respondents about 48.21% of them have preferred little elder partner them themselves, while 35.81% male respondents preferred younger partner them themselves. About 42.95% have preferred mate from family which is traditionally. Newly 38.91% of respondent have considered being important in terms of family background socio-economic status. Generally physical attractiveness is also taken on important but for only for 34.49% of the respondents.

Discussion:

The findings of the study showed that in mate selection, both male and female prefer to select parameters who have got education. Most of the college students are likely to select future spouse who can provide security and better financial status, since most of the preferred a professional person who could have high level of education. Therefore education seems to play as an important factor in selecting a mate for both males and females. (Maliki 2009) showed that education background plays an essential part in future mate selection in most societies. In most surveys conducted, women are reported to prefer mate with higher education and even mates with the same educational qualifications as theirs.

Caste is also dominant factor in mate choice. Caste plays very important role in the selection of mate for marriage. It may be marrying into one’s own caste which provides certain advantages like the feeling of belonging social status, group membership, social relationship which are carrier, if one is married in the same caste. On the whole it can be seen that castes both at the top and at the bottom as well as those who are trying to improve their social status are keen on confining their marital relations only to their own caste, excepting for few people who are insignificant in their numbers (Chintamani, 1973).

When it comes to personality traits it was revealed that boys and girls have high preference on a partner with trustworthy. Being understanding, earning, responsible and sincere are also considered. These personality traits are pointers of a healthy and a faithful relationship that is why they are the essentials building a strong and intimate relationship with the potential mate. It is argued that man have high preference on personality characteristics which they can nurture a compatible relationship with (Geory, D, vigil J & Craven, J.B. (2003).

Complexion is also an important factor for selecting a ideal spouses. In a prospective wife qualities like good character, ability to manage a home, religious disposition, etc, and fair, complexion, a degree with similar intellectual interest and beauty are looked for by man (Kurian, 1981). In addition that physical health body structure, weight, dentition height and complexion are some of the many important factors in mate selection (Maliki A.E. 2009).

Physical appearance is also considered as an important factor in marriage partner choice, this is so because respondents are all undergraduate with good characteristics are more adaptable and much acceptable in a family. This reflected in the study of maliki (2009) that good character trait such as supportiveness emotional characteristics, and personality traits predominate physical attractiveness. This is for the reason of a person who possess as good characteristics will bring better marriage than those of who are just physically attractive.

Age similarity is another factor considered important by the respondents, female tend to marry older male and the male to marry younger female this is so because person born within the same age range will have the same formative experience than those born several years apart Glenn (2000) studies revealed that the desire for similarity in age becomes greater in modern societies, because intimacy and companionship are much more salient goals in relationships in modern than in most traditional societies.

Religion is important that individuals who have desire to marry should have the same religious belief since differences in religious belief may be a descriptive force in their marriage life, while religious could be a binding force to hold marriage together for those with the same religious belief. Levi Strauss (2006) studies support this fact, that people are so particular about the demographic characteristic of their prospective spouse.

Family status may include position of the family in the community, character of the members, and the family interaction with other family Gage and Hancock (2002), in their study, college students revealed that students of middle class as well as the higher class primarily choose those who are of their own socio-economic status to date or marry in fact several studies have found that women's emphasis on potential mates economic resources increased rather than decreases with the elevation of women's socio-economic status (Town Send, 1989; wiederman & Allgier, 1998; see also Todosijivic, Ljubinkovic & Aronncie, 2003).

Family status includes background of the family in the community, character of the members of the family in the community, character of the members the family's relation and interaction with other families. Family also acts, acts as a controlling factor for its members including the mate one is to marry so choosing a particular type of family, along with the mate, one ensures more or less a quick adjustment to the new partner and more security for one self. That reveals family position, caste family background, education preferences rather than personal characteristics are still the major factors which are considered important in mate criteria (Agor wala, 1993; Mathew, 1966, Khan and Yawners, 1971; Singh and Jha' Seeman; 1972; Sharma, 1979; & Rao 1978).

Culture is moderate level of criterion of mate selection among respondents. So respondents may marry people from another culture, but not very different from their own. Hatfield,e.rapson, R.L.(2006), study reflected that cultural values is an important factor affect one's mate preferences.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, that the present study we have been able to identify several new desired characteristics of expected mate that are ranked as highly important by the respondents indicating that marry older criteria as pursued by earlier mate seekers are not longer silent in case of college students, to whom the study addressed the influence of family structure, functioning and prospectus are the preference for a potential mate seeking is a highly dominated factor.

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