

Perception of Inter-caste Marriage among college students in Karnataka.

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Abstract – The caste and religion based discrimination are great obstacles to social developments and motivational progress in India. Marriage as a sacred institution binds the partners in a pious relation. Marriage within the caste endogamy is the general norm of Indian society. When we talk about marriages, which are Inter-caste and inter religious, it seems a taboo to most of the people. However, with the changing time things have changed considerably in the social world of the society. Inter-caste marriage became a part of social reality in the society. Customs and religious practices were so strict and merciless that even sometimes the boy and girl were hacked to death by their parents due to the pressure from their kith and kin and caste associations. We can see Inter-caste marriages taking place mostly in towns and cities. In the country side we have yet to go a long way to see the phenomena of inter-caste marriage becomes a reality. Inter-caste and inter religious marriages even among college students is still not considered in large scale .

Keywords: Caste, inter-caste, religion, marriage, education. .

Introduction

Marriage is a religious sacrament in which a man and woman are bound in permanent relationship for physical, Social and spiritual purpose of dharma, procreation and sexual pleasure. Marriage is the one institution that affects the life of all people in all walks of life. Indian society, particularly Hindu society has been divided on the basis of caste system and religion. The problem of caste system was so deep rooted that it took years for the Indians to come out of that idea. Even today also India is struggling to come out of this social menace. But in order to eradicate the caste system and social discrimination it is important that there should be Inter-caste and inter religious marriages. But people couldn't imagine inter-caste marriages. The caste, creed and culture are the three most important elements, which are kept on the high priority list.

But a marriage between male and female belonging to different caste and cultural backgrounds are termed as Inter-caste marriage. It may be religious, racial, linguistic and geographical differences. However, in the back trip of caste people have realized that a successful marriage is not dependent on factors such as same caste, culture, socio-economic status and religion. It is, on the other, built on the aspects of mutual love, trust, understanding and compatibility. Education new occupation and migration far of places have broadened the periphery of thinking and helped people develop analytical powers. It has not only altered their perception of life, but also of social concerns such as marriage and relationship.

Reddy and others have studied inter-caste marriages, which show the scheduled caste people have exhibited the highest tendency for inter-caste marriages than the other castes. The urban residence, education, employment in modern occupation and middle class economic background have tended to be a set of attributes needed for incidence of inter-caste marriages. He further observes that inter-caste marriage takes place at fairly advanced age (Reddy et.al.1984).

Kapadia (1958) in a study of inter-caste marriages in India, interviewed 513 university graduates to find that 51% parents of the respondents having expressed their willingness to cheer children marrying outside their own caste, while only 1/3 were against this departure from custom. Post graduate students were only moderately in favour of inter-caste marriage (Saroja, 1999). Urbanization, and industrialization have certain effect in braking down the barriers of caste (Prasad, 1957, Banerjee et.al,1978).

Despande (2001) in his study has revealed that resistance from family and society to inter-caste marriage was strong when one of the parties is a Harijan. On the contrary, there was approval to such marriage if the other person was wealthy and had social prestige. Vijay Laxmi (1992) showed that there were significant differences in

income between spouses but woman in mixed marriages had higher income at the time of marriages. Singh (2008) conducted a study on the attitude of the Sikh boys and girls studying in graduate and post graduate classes and found that both PG and UG students preferred inter-caste marriages. Sumangala (1999), has observed that most of college going students wanted inter-caste marriages and there was no difference of opinion between girls and boys. Aneja (2005) has conducted a study on PG and UG students about inter-caste marriage and found that 85% students were in favour of inter-caste marriage. Kanaskar (2011) did a comparative analysis of Inter-caste marriages in rural and urban Nepal. The study recommended two aspects: One, forming societies and NGOs that support and encourage inter-caste marriage; and secondly, discourage the practices of the caste system that avoided inter-caste marriage.

In the backdrop of the studies having revealed the factor about the idea and perception of inter-caste marriage among educated students, an attempt is made here to find out how college students in both rural and urban context in Bagalkot district in Karnataka have framed an idea and perception of inter-caste marriage.

For the present study, Bagalkot district of Karnataka was chosen by lottery method through area sampling. At 10% of the university we have chosen 2624 college students of which 1081 were boys (41.20%) and 1543 girls (68.80%), studying in the final year classes of BA, BSc, B.Com, BBA, BCA, BSW, B.Ed, B.PEd, MBBS, BDS, BAMS, BE, BSc (Nursing), B.Sc (Horti), LLB and Ayurveda various colleges and university, institutions in the district.

Data has been collected from the college students studying in final year, by using questionnaire. The specially designed questionnaire was administered to each of student with the help of the class teacher. Details collected are partially used for the purpose of present write up on the issue of inter-caste marriage.

The procured details about the background details of the respondent college students are has given here under.

Table-1 Frequency of the family background of the respondent.

Variables	Respondents	Frequency			Corresponding Percentage		
		High	Medium	Low	High	Medium	Low
a) Family Social Position							
i) Boys	626	175	253	198	27.96	40.42	31.62
ii) Girls	949	283	365	301	29.82	38.46	31.72
b) Family Economic Status							
i) Boys	110	31	45	34	28.18	40.91	30.91
ii) Girls	152	45	60	47	29.61	39.47	30.92
c) Family tradition & Culture							
i) Boys	94	27	38	29	28.72	40.43	30.85
ii) Girls	117	33	47	37	28.20	40.18	31.62
d) Family occupations							
i) Boys	169	49	69	51	28.99	40.83	30.18
ii) Girls	224	67	86	71	29.91	38.39	31.70
e) Family Education							
i) Boys	82	27	32	23	32.93	39.02	28.05
ii) Girls	101	31	41	29	31.69	40.60	28.71
Total	2624	768	1036	820	29.27	39.48	31.25

This table shows the percentage distribution of family background of the respondents, that the family social position, socio-economic status, family traditions and culture, family occupation and family education all are found having almost equal in percentage distributions. But overall the results showed about 1021 (38.91%) of the respondents belong to medium class. About 820 (31.25%) respondents belongs to low class and about 783 (29.84%) respondents belong to high class status. It might be that the respondents came from both rural and urban areas.

Table 2: perception of respondents about inter-caste marriage.

Response	Male		Female	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1. A higher caste boy marrying a low caste girl.	105	9.71	86	5.57
2. A lower caste boy marrying a higher caste girl.	00	00	9	0.58
3. Both boys & girls caste of similar level	203	18.79	360	23.33
4. No caste preference	773	71.50	1088	70.52
	1081	100	1543	100

This table shows that the male respondents 9.71% (105), expressed their views for inter-caste marriage preference indicating higher caste boy to marry a low caste girl while no respondent of the respondents viewed that lower caste boy marry higher caste girl. About 18.79% (203) respondents views that both boys and girls should be of similar level of caste, and about 71.50% (773) respondents expressed, they do not have any caste preference. Similarly about 5.57% (86) girls participants views that for inter-caste marriage preference a higher caste boy should be marry a low caste girl. About 0.58% (9) views that lower caste boy should marry higher caste girl. About 23.33% (360) views that both boy and girl's caste should be of similar level and about 70.52% (1088) respondents do not any caste preference. It shows that the perception of the college students is found largely to not have any preference for inter-caste marriage. Gage and Hancock (2002) in their study of 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 either to date or to marry.

Summery and conclusion

Caste plays a very important role in the selection of mate for marriage. It is difficult to think of marriage beyond one's own caste. The feeling of self superiority might be basically responsible for rejection of inter-caste or inter religious marriages. It might be due to the notion of family and caste purity. Generally respondents family might have thought about the differences in families background. So for as religion and culture are concerned, it might be afraid of the problems created by inter religious or caste marriage. Again it might be an attempt to avoiding the problems like quarrels, lack of family integrity and the possibility of divorce etc.

But it is noticed that the caste in mate selection is gradually losing over time. This change in the marriage pattern is a very recent phenomenon due to the impact of modernization, socio-economic development and globalization of Indian economy. Bhavana and Roopa (2013) in one of their study found that there is significant difference found between male and female perception that the concept of marriage, social expectation and changing trends in marriage.

With the spread of higher and professional education, both among males and females from both rural and urban areas inter-caste marriage find great favour amongst the younger generation. Respondents showed low degree of acceptance of inter-caste marriage regardless of ethnic group, caste and social class, despite the fact that the youth's perception of inter-caste marriages is increasing. The present study indicates that the respondents responses are fairly favourable gives by their perception inter-caste marriage. It has been found that educated boys and girls favour inter-caste marriages, which might increase the unity of the society and it might help eradicate dowry and various other ill practices in Indian society.

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