

Exploring the Myth of Mixed Marriages in India: Evidence from a Nation-wide Survey

First author: **Srinivas Goli**

Doctoral Student, International Institute for Population Sciences

Govandi Station Road, Deonar

Mumbai-40008, Maharashtra

India

Phone No: 91+9967164322

Email: sirispeaks2u@gmail.com

Second and presenting author: **Deepti Singh**

Doctoral Student, International Institute for Population Sciences

Govandi Station Road, Deonar

Mumbai-400088, Maharashtra

India

Phone No: 91+ 9892167310

Email: dsingh.singh87@gmail.com

Third Author: T. V. Sekher

Associate Professor, Department of Population Policies and Programmes

International Institute for Population Sciences

Govandi Station Road, Deonar

Mumbai-40008, Maharashtra

India

Phone No: 022-42372407

Email: sekher@iips.net or tvsekher@gmail.com



XXVII IUSSP International Population Conference

Busan, Korea, Republic of

26 August - 31 August

Exploring the Myth of Mixed Marriages in India: Evidence from a Nation-wide Survey

Marriages in India are essentially endogamous in nature. The influences of western education and socio-economic transformations have led to enormous change in the existing pattern of choosing one's life partner and marriage practices in India. For the first time, this paper presents a comprehensive empirical assessment of the extent of mixed marriages by analyzing nationally representative data from the Indian Human Development Survey (IHDS, 2005). We consider mixed marriages in the following key aspects: Inter-caste marriage, Inter-religious marriage and Inter-economic group marriage (Inter-class marriage). The trend analyses reveal that the proportion of inter-caste and inter-religious marriages has doubled in the last two and half decades. With the exception of inter-class marriages, the absolute level of mixed marriages is still exceedingly small. Besides, there are substantial variations across the states. Regression analyses show a significant socio-economic differential in the occurrence of mixed marriages. The study reveals that a very few women have the freedom to choose their spouse. These findings assume importance in the context of an increasing number of 'honour killings' in India in the recent years.

INTRODUCTION

Inter-marriages have attracted considerable research attention all over the world since the beginning of the twentieth century. Social scientists have shown keen interest in the study of different forms of inter-marriages. From time immemorial, men and women of different nationalities, race and religion inter-married and lived together (Burma, 1963; Aldridge, 1973; Becker, 1973; Institute for Palestine Studies, 1972). Love marriage couples have historically come to inhabit a social space of powerful moral ambivalence (Mody, 2002). Mixed marriages, which are more frequent these days, are often being considered as one of the most conclusive and objective indicators of degree of assimilation in a multi-racial and a multi-religious society (Coleman, 1994).

Marriage system in India is based primarily on the social system and stratification (Sastri, 1918; Rao, 1982; Saroja, 1999; Netting, 2010; Desai and Andrist, 2011). For hundreds of years, the Indian society has been stratified mainly on the basis of caste. The lower castes are not only socially deprived but also economically discriminated. Efforts by various social reformers and organizations to free India from the clutches of the caste system, untouchability and racial

discrimination had a limited impact. When we discuss Indian marriages with a shade of inter-caste union, it sounds like a taboo to the majority even to this day (Corwin, 1977; Malhotra and Trivedi, 1977; Saroja, 1999).

Similarly, marriage across the religious and economic groups is not a common custom in India. Another important practice of Hindus is the marriage among blood relatives. However, this varies widely for North and South Indian states. In North India, marriage among close blood relatives is virtually prohibited. In contrast, marriage among the blood relatives is a common practice in South India. The attributes of marriage such as 'kin marriage', 'village endogamy' and the difference in the age of spouses, continue to be influenced by region and gender systems¹ (Jejeebhoy and Halli, 2006; Sekher, 2012).

Despite the enormous significance of this nineteenth-century debate, India fostered the importance of civil marriage legislation in a country with contradictory and conflicting 'personal laws' (Mody, 2002). Though India has legalised the inter-caste marriages for more than fifty years back, newly married are still threatening by violent means, often by their own families and village leaders. During the past few years, more than 1000 Honor Killings² were reported from various states, in which young men and women, who got married against the wishes of their families, became victims (Joanne, 2008). The recent rise in the violence shows that the younger generation especially the females are slowly gaining individual freedom in marriage. However, the older generation, still insist on the old ways where marriage is a status symbol and not a bond of emotional love (Uberoi, 2006; Chowdhry, 2007). As a part of an encouraging incentive for inter-caste marriage promotion, the government recently began offering \$1,000 (that is equivalent to a year's salary for a vast majority of Indians) to inter-caste couple. Starting from 2006, smaller cash payments was initiated after Supreme Court gave a ruling in which the

¹ Gender systems are systems of gender roles in societies. A *gender role* is "everything that a person says and does to indicate to others or to the self the degree that one is male, female, or androgynous. This includes, but is not limited to, sexual and erotic arousal and response" (Kramer, 1991). Gender identity is one's own personal experience with gender role and the persistence of one's individuality, especially in self-awareness and behavior. Unlike the western thoughts of gender identity, the ideas of gender identity in India often come from religious traditions (Desai and Andrist, 2011).

² The loose term "Honour Killing" refers to killing of a member of a family by other members due to the belief that the victim has brought dishonor upon the family or community. Honour killings are mostly against girls and women, but have been extended to men. The perceived dishonor is the result of mostly marrying against parental wishes, marrying within the same gotra or outside one's caste or religion. Most of these honour killings are reported from Northern parts of India, arising out of young people marrying without their family's acceptance.

judges termed the high-profile honor killings as acts of "barbarism" and labeled caste system as a curse on the nation (Joanne, 2008). In 2010, the Supreme Court of India also asked the central and state governments to take more preventive measures against honour killings (Helfer, 2011).

With the increasing urbanization, education and employment of women in modern occupations and the emerging middle class have had a strong influence in paving the way for more inter-caste marriages. With the increasing influence of modernization and western education in India there had been a visible change in the traditional marriage practices. Socio-economic development and globalisation of Indian economy has also contributed to the changing trends in the marriage patterns. According to a recent report of the All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA), urban women in India have started to rebel and choose mates outside the 'arranged marriages' and caste commandments (Helfer, 2011). This has led to an increase in incidences of 'honour killings' of young brides and grooms.

However, the literature available on inter-marriages in India is mostly descriptive and not based on any nationally representative surveys with direct questions on mixed marriages (Kannan, 1963; Kapadia, 1966; Corwin, 1977; Meinzen, 1980; Saroja, 1999; Netting, 2010; Das et al., 2011). The National Family Health Survey (2005-06) and Das et al. (2011) indicated that the proportion of inter-caste marriage among Hindus in India is about 10 percent. However, this is based on indirect information about the caste of spouses and has many limitations (IIPS and Macro International, 2007). There is an imperative need to measure the extent and types of mixed marriages by using the large scale survey data.

The present study aims to explore the following questions:

- How common are the mixed marriages in India?
- How far do socio-economic and state factors are influencing the occurrence of mixed marriages and marriage choices in India?

DATA SOURCE AND METHODOLOGY

In this study, we have used the India Human Development Survey (IHDS) data, 2005 to explore the extent of mixed marriages in India. "The India Human Development Survey 2005 (IHDS) is a nationally representative, multitopic survey of 41,554 households in 1503 villages and 971 urban neighborhoods across India. Two one-hour interviews in each household covered health,

education, employment, economic status, marriage, fertility, gender relations, and social capital. Children aged 8-11 completed short reading, writing and arithmetic tests. Additional village, school, and medical facility interviews will be available later. IHDS was jointly organized by researchers from the University of Maryland and the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER), New Delhi. Funding for the survey was provided by the National Institutes of Health, grants 01HD041455 and R01HD046166” (Desai et al., 2009b)

Unprecedented both in any other large scale survey and also IHDS, direct questions on different forms of mixed marriages were asked in the survey conducted in 2005. At all India level, 41, 554 households were interviewed in the survey and questions were asked to currently married women, regarding their husband’s family characteristics. The total number of sample women, who reported that their husband's family does not belong to the same caste as their natal family is 2119. An indirect estimated figure of sample women, married to men other than their own religion is 873. Similarly, the number of women who reported that, at the time of marriage, their husband's family economic status was not equivalent to their natal family is 8,746. At all India level, the sample size in the study is fairly good enough to carry out robust estimates. However, at the state level, the sample size is not adequate enough for multivariate estimates by background characteristics. The multivariate analysis is restricted to national level only (for more details on sample size and sampling procedures see Desai et al. (2010).

In this study, we consider mixed marriages in the following key aspects:

- Inter-caste marriage
- Inter-religious marriage
- Inter-economic group marriage (Inter-class marriage)

IHDS asked the following questions to the women respondents (for details see Desai et al., 2009a)

- Is your husband's family the same caste as your natal family? (yes/no)
- Is the husband’s religious affiliation is different from that of his wife’s?

(Though there was no direct question on inter religious marriage, it was taken from the religious affiliation of husband and wife, as reported in the survey).

- At the time of your marriage, if the wife compared her natal family's economic status with her husband's family, would she say her natal family was same / better off / worse off?

The responses of interviewed women to these questions formed the basis of our analysis. SPSS 15 version of statistical package was used in the analyses. Bi-variate analyses were carried out for India and its states. However, the multivariate analyses are restricted only to all India level, to assess the adjusted effects of socio-economic characteristics on mixed marriages. State-wise analysis has been done to find out the geographical distribution of mixed marriages prevailing in India.

Mixed marriage is the term typically applied to a marital union of two individuals from a different race or religion. The term mixed marriage can even describe the marriage of a couple, who has different cultural, ethnic or national heritage or backgrounds (Rodman, 1965). In this study, mixed marriage is defined as the marriage between two individuals, belonging to different religions, castes or economic status groups. Since the questions were addressed to women, the inter-marriage estimates in the study are individual based; rather than inter-marriage estimates for marriages. Though, inter-caste and inter-religious marriages, are clearly visible and easy to identify, the same may not be the case with inter-economic group marriages. The perception of the respondents may influence in deciding a mixed marriage of this type. Nevertheless, it points towards a major change happening in a traditional society.

RESULTS

Trends in Mixed Marriages in India

The marriage system in India has experienced a number of changes such as increase in women's age at marriage and the near universal adoption of dowry as a condition for marriage. Both these changes have been attributed to changes in socio-economic factors and demographic conditions of the marriages including the deficit of marriageable women [a phenomenon known as the "marriage squeeze"] (Banerjee, 1999; Uberoi, 2006; Srinivasan and Lee, 2004). However, it is important to know that along with the changing socio-economic and demographic conditions,

political and constitutional efforts, is there any change in the magnitude of occurrence of mixed marriages in India?

In this paper, we have estimated the trends of mixed marriages, during 1981-2005, based on the year of marriage as reported by the respondents (figure 1). The results indicated that both inter-caste and inter-religious marriages in India have nearly been doubled during 1981-2005. The inter-caste marriages rose from 3.5 percent in 1981 to 6.1 percent in 2005. Similarly, the inter-religious marriages also rose from 1.6 percent in 1981 to 2.7 percent in 2005. However, in both cases the absolute size is very low. On the other hand, inter-economic status marriages are more in absolute numbers (27 percent in 2005), but not much change had been observed over the time: less than one percent over the 25 year period. The assessment of trends of mixed marriages suggested that though there are some visible changes, still most marriages in India are largely determined by religious and caste affiliations of individuals.

Mixed Marriages and Marriage Choice by Background Characteristics

Mixed marriages do not occur uniformly across the socio-economic groups. The present study assessed the socio-economic variations in mixed marriages. Table 1 presents the percentage of women marrying outside their caste by their socio-economic background characteristics. The proportion of women married to men outside their caste is highest in the age group 25 to 29 years compared to other age groups. The possible reason could be the women marrying at higher ages are from higher educated and economic status families and have greater bargaining power over the choice of partner compared their counterparts (see also Jauregui and McGuinness, 2003; Banerji and Vanneman, 2011). Results also demonstrate that the greater proportion of women that are opting for inter-caste marriages belongs to urban areas, with higher education, and belongs to households with higher economic status.

Table 1 also displays the results of inter-religious marriages among women by their background characteristics. The proportion of inter-religious marriages is greater among the women of young age group (15-19) than others age groups which decrease with increasing age at marriage. Inter-religious marriages are greater among the women living in urban areas, having higher education, and belonging to families with a higher economic status. Further, results show that such marriages are lowest among Muslims and Scheduled Tribes (ST).

In case of inter-economic group marriages, the results indicate that a great proportion of younger women, in the age group 15-19 are married outside their natal family economic status compared to the older age groups. Similarly, the percentage of women married outside the same economic group is highest among the scheduled tribes (29 percent), followed by scheduled castes (28 percent) and other castes (28 percent). The highest proportion (31 percent) of Muslim women has married outside their bracket of economic status as compared to other religions. On expected lines, a large proportion of women belonging to the poor economic status are getting married to the outside of their equivalent economic status (29 percent) in comparison to women from economically better off households. Mixed marriages are four times higher for women taking decisions alone on their marriage partner compared to decisions made along with parents or parents taking the decision alone. Though, women's choice of spouse is always a greater predictor of mixed marriage, it substantially varies by their socio-economic background.

Table 2 depicts the women's role in making a decision while choosing their marriage partner. Considering the women's age groups, the greater proportion of women in the age group 20-24 years had their own choice in selecting a partner as compared to other age groups. Results reveal that women residing in urban areas and belonging to Christian religion are have greater choice to take decisions on their own in selecting their mate in comparison to others. Education has a strong influence on women's ability to choose their own life partner. The proportion of women taking the decision alone in selecting their life partner is double in 'higher educated' category, as compared to women in 'no education' category. However, this differential is not observed between various economic categories of households with regard to their freedom in selecting life partner.

Results of Logit Regression Model

This section presents the logit analyses (odds ratio) of probabilities of having mixed marriage by different background characteristics (table 3). The results indicate that after controlling for selected background covariates, with reference to the women belonging to 15-19 age groups; it is evident that women marrying outside their own caste will substantially increase with an increase in their age. Compared to rural areas, the odds of women marrying outside their own caste are considerably more in urban areas. Among various caste groups, women belonging to scheduled tribes are more likely to marry outside their caste as compared to other castes. In contrast, other

backward castes and scheduled caste women are less likely to marry outside their castes. Also, with reference to women, who are not educated, the odds of marrying outside their castes increase with the increase in education. As expected, 59 percent of women belonging to rich households are more likely to marry men outside their own caste as compared to women from poor households.

Table 3 also displays the odds of logistic regression for inter-religious marriages among women by their background characteristics. It indicates that inter-religious marriages are increasing with the increase in women's age. The inter-religious marriages are more likely to happen among the women who are residing in urban areas, among better educated and those belonged to richer economic status households as compared to their counter-groups. However, by caste, the results indicate that the odds of occurring inter-religious marriage among scheduled castes are substantially higher than other caste groups. Overall, logistic results reveal that improving the socio-economic status of women is positively associated with the occurrence of inter-religious marriages in India.

Likewise, the results of regression analyses demonstrate that the probability of women marrying outside their natal family economic status are less among older age group compared to younger age group (15-19). The odds of marrying outside their natal family economic status are more in urban than in rural areas. By caste groups, women belong to the OBC are less likely to marry outside their economic status in comparison to others. However, the odds of marrying outside their economic status are more among scheduled castes and scheduled tribes compared to women belongs to other castes. As compared with women of Hindu religion, women of Christian and Sikh religions are less likely to marry outside their natal family economic status. However, with reference to no educated women, the educated women are more likely to marry outside their natal family economic status. The possibility of marrying outside one's natal family economic status is less among women in rich and middle economic status as compared with poor women.

Mixed Marriages and Marriage Choices by States

This section presents an assessment of mixed marriages and marriage choices by the state affiliation of women. Table 4 provides the state level estimates of selected types of mixed marriages. The percentage of women who reported that their husbands belong to the caste other

than their own is highest (12 percent) in Punjab, followed by West Bengal (9 percent) and Gujarat (8 percent). On the other hand, inter-caste marriages are lowest in Rajasthan (2 percent), considered to be very traditionalist state in terms of marriage customs³. Overall, among 18 major states of India, only six states show the higher percentage of inter-caste marriages than the national average (5 percent). The percentage of women marrying outside their religion is highest in Punjab and lowest in West Bengal. Furthermore, the results suggest that inter-religious marriages are more among the north Indian states than in the south Indian states. The low prevalence of inter-religious marriages in south India states can be attributable to the existing dominance of cross-cousin marriages. Table 4 also shows the percentage of women married to men from a different economic status across states. The state of Jharkhand with relatively greater proportion of poor and tribal population has indicate the highest percentage of women (43 percent) marrying into families with a different economic status. In contrast, women belong to an economically advanced state like Haryana have the lowest percentage of marriages happening outside of their household economic status.

In India, it is traditionally believed that marriages are not only the union of two individuals, but also between two families. In this context, it is necessary to examine, who takes the decisions regarding the choice of a life partner for a girl in Indian families? Is it girl herself, the parents alone, the parents and girl together or others? Choice of the partner is a critical determinant of mixed marriages. In the present study, we have estimated the mate selection choice for women by states. Gujarat had the greater proportion (12 percent) of women taking decisions alone on selection of their spouses, followed by Assam (9 percent) and Tamil Nadu (8 percent). Punjab shows the lowest percentage of women taking own decisions on choosing their partners. However, parents alone taking the decision for finding a suitable bridegroom for their daughter are highest (92 percent) in Uttarakhand, followed by Bihar (84 percent) and Rajasthan (84 percent). Overall, in the majority of the north Indian states, parents are taking decision alone on the selection of a groom for their daughter and it is substantially greater as compared to the other parts of India. However, the parent's involvement in their daughters marriage is comparatively low in north-east and in eastern parts of India (table 5).

³ India despite the existence, since 1929, of legislation banning it, child marriage continues to be a social reality in India today. The Rajasthan experienced highest child marriages in India in the recent past (Srivastava and Rao, 2006)

The results of a comparative assessment of tables 4 and 5 suggest that except for Gujarat, Assam and Kerala, mixed marriages among other states are not in consistent with marriage choice reported. This could have happened because mixed marriages are more closely associated with cultural factors rather than spatial factors. For example, in the state of Punjab, both inter-caste and inter-religious marriage rates are high and this can be attributed to skewed sex ratios to some extent, resulting in shortage of eligible brides, which forced many males to marry outside their own caste or even from other states. Similarly, in case of inter-religious marriages, Sikhs in Punjab often marry Hindus because of somewhat similar religious customs and practices followed by both religions.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper measures the prevalence and the types of mixed marriages in India, using the nationwide data from IHDS. The study demonstrated a number of significant insights about mixed marriages in India: first, despite the major socio-economic transformations taking place, marriage practices in India are still by and large endogamous. Even now, inter-caste marriages and marriages outside the same economic status groups are not common phenomena. Second, mixed marriages are a typical feature of those who are economically, educationally, culturally advanced and urban oriented, to a great extent. Third, very few women in India have the freedom to select their spouses. Education and economic status are two major factors contributing towards women's choice and freedom in the selection of a spouse from outside their own socio-economic group. Freedom for selecting one's own mate is less among women in the northern and central Indian states. This could be mainly attributed to the poor socio-economic development in general, and low education level of women in particular. The incidents of such mixed marriages may increase with an increase in women's education, labour force participation, modernization and socio-economic development.

Overall, rapidly changing socio-economic and cultural values, in conjunction with the impact of western education and economic diffusion are mainly responsible for changes in marriage practices, in India. Mixed marriages carry a critical change in demographic composition and outcomes. The socio-cultural assimilation of communities through mixed marriage can lead to a better integration of society as marriages in India, endowed with religious, social, and economic

importance, reflect the ideals of a society. The retention or modification of marriage customs in India, therefore, shows the reflection of changes occurring in society.

Mixed marriages are of larger interest, not only from a sociological point of view, but are also of a demographic relevance. Initially, the demographic signs of a mixed marriage appear in coming generations mainly through the classification of the children born out of such marriages. Second, in general, the population indicators in India are largely determined by socio-economic and cultural factors mainly based on caste, religion and economic status; based on this presumption it raises the questions like, what will happen to demographic and health outcomes, when we discover that parents differs in the socio-economic and cultural background?

Nevertheless, there is a need to encourage such mixed marriages to break the barriers prevailing among communities, which affect the socio-economic progress of Indian society. Due to the strong prevalence of religion and caste identities in Indian society, even among the educated and middle class, the large scale occurrence of mixed marriages across communities is a distant possibility. However, within the same caste and religion, marriages across the economic strata are more likely to happen, with an increasing upward mobility of individuals on account of education and occupational choices. Mixed marriages can be promoted as a critical indicator of socio economic integration in a society.

REFERENCES

- Aldridge, D.P. (1973). The changing nature of interracial marriage in Georgia: A research note. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 35, 641-642.
- Becker, G.S. (1973). A theory of marriage: Part I. *Journal of Political Economy*, 81(4), 813-46.
- Banerjee, K. (1999). Gender stratification and the contemporary marriage market in India. *Journal of Family Issues*, 20, 648.
- Banerji, M. and Vanneman, R. (2011). *Does Love Make a Difference? Marriage Choice and Post-Marriage Decision-Making Power*, Working Paper No. 14, India Human Development Survey (IHDS), University of Maryland.
- Burma, J.H. (1963). Interethnic marriage in Los Angeles, 1948-1959. *Social Forces*, 42, 156-165.

Chowdhry, P. (2007). *Contentious Marriages, Eloping Couples: Gender, Caste, and Patriarchy in Northern India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Coleman, D.A. (1994). Trends in fertility and intermarriage among immigrant populations in Western Europe as measures of integration. *Journal of Biosocial Science*, 26, 107-136.

Corwin, L.A. (1977). Caste, class and the love-marriage: Social change in India. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 39(4), 823-831.

Das K., Das K.C., Roy T.K. and Tripathy, P.K. (2011). *Dynamics of inter-religious and inter-caste marriages in India*, Population Association of America, Washington DC, USA.

Desai, Sonalde. (2008). *Caste in 21st Century India: Competing Narratives*. India Human Development Survey Working Paper No. 12.

Desai, S., Dubey, A., Joshi, B.L., Sen, M., Shariff, A. and Vanneman, R. (2009a). *India Human Development Survey: Design and Data Quality*. University of Maryland, College Park, MD.

Desai, S., Dubey, A., Joshi, B.L., Sen, M., Shariff, A. and Vanneman, R. (2009b). *India Human Development Survey (IHDS) [Computer file]*. ICPSR22626-v2. University of Maryland and National Council of Applied Economic Research, New Delhi.

Desai, S., Dubey, A., Joshi, B.L., Sen, M., Shariff, A. and Vanneman, R. (2010). *India Human Development: Challenges for Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Desai S. and Andrist L. (2011). Gender Scripts and Age at Marriage in India, *Demography*, 47 (3), 667–687

Helfer, S. (2011). Honour Killings in India. Retrieved May 15, 2011, from http://articles.nydailynews.com/2011-05-15/news/29566907_1_hindus-and-muslims-mothers-strangling-daughters

IIPS and Macro International (2007). *National Family Health Survey-3, 2005-06*, India, International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai.

Institute for Palestine Studies (1972). Mixed Marriages in Israel. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 1 (4), 139-140.

Jauregui, B. and McGuinness, T. (2003). Inter-community marriage and social change in contemporary India. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 26(1), 71-85.

Jejeebhoy, S. and Halli, S. (2006). Marriage patterns in Rural India: Influence of socio- cultural context. In C.B. Lloyd, J.R. Behram, N.P. Stromquist and B. Cohen (Eds.), *The changing Transition to Adulthood in Developing Countries* (pp. 172-199), Washington DC: The National Academic Press.

Joanne. (2008). Inter-caste marriage: India's knotty problem. Retrieved November 30, 2008, from <http://www.stophonourkillings.com/?q=fr/node/3230>

Kannan, C.T. (1963). *Inter-Caste and Inter-Community Marriages in India*. Bombay: Allied Publishers Private Limited.

Kapadia, K.M. (1966). *Marriage and Family in India*. India: Oxford University Press.

Kramer, L. (1991). *The Sociology of Gender: A Text Reader*. New York: St. Martin's.

Malhotra, S.P. and Trivedi, H.S. (1977). Caste- hierarchy and inter- caste relations in an arid zone village. *Indian Journal of Social Work*, 38(4), 12-20.

Mody, P. (2002). Love and the law: Love-marriage in Delhi. *Modern Asian Studies*, 36(1), 223-256.

Meinzen, R.S. (1980). Norms and realities of marriage arrangements in a south Indian town. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 15(27), 1137-1144.

Netting, N.S. (2010). Marital ideoscapes in 21st-century India: Creative combinations of love and responsibility. *Journal of Family Issues*, 31(6), 707-726

Rao, P. (1982). *Marriage, the Family and Women in India*. Printox: South Asia Books.

Rodman, H. (1965). Mate selection: Incest taboos, homogamy, and mixed marriages. In Hyman Rodman (Ed.), *Marriage, Family, and Society: A Reader*. New York: Random House.

Saroja, K. (1999). Inter-caste marriage and social dynamics in India: A critique. *The Journal of Social Work*, 60(2), 183-192.

Sastri, A. Mahadeva. (1918). *The Vedic Law of Marriage or the Emancipation of Woman*. New Delhi: Asian Educational Services.

Sekher, T.V. (2012). Rural demography of India. In L. J. Kulcsar and K. J. Curtis (Eds.), *International Handbook of Rural Demography*, Washington DC: Springer.

Srinivas, M.N. (1957). Caste in Modern in India. *Journal of South Asian Studies*, 16(4), 529-548.

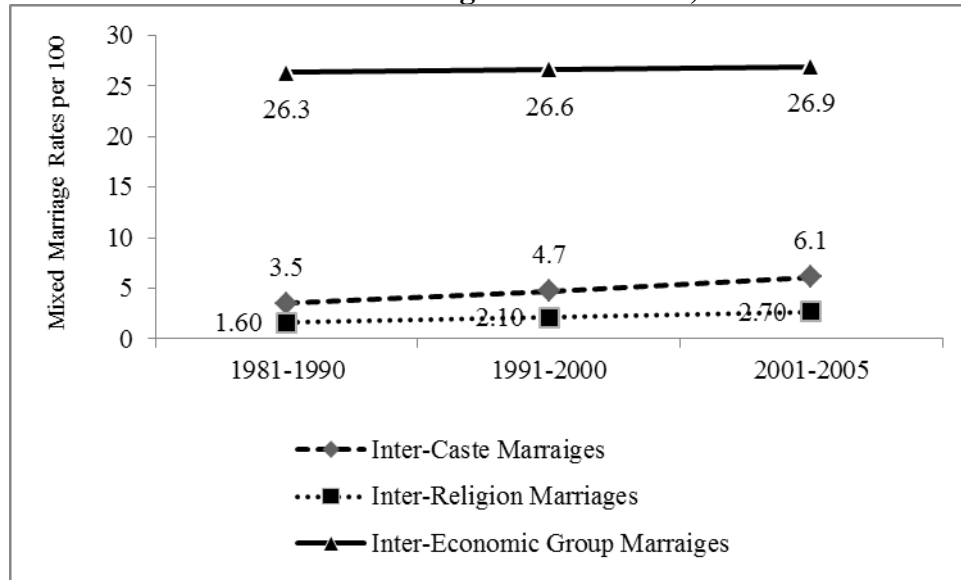
Srinivasan, P. and Lee, G.R. (2004). The dowry system in Northern India: Women's attitudes and social change. *Journal of Marriage and Family*; 66, 1108-1117.

Uberoi, P. (2006). *Freedom and Destiny: Gender, Family, and Popular Culture in India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Srivastava A. and Rao, J. (2006). *Early Marriage: A childhood interrupted* unicefIndia.
http://www.unicef.org/india/child_protection_1536.htm

Figure 1.

Trend in Mixed Marriage Rates in India, 1981-2005



Note: The trends in mixed marriage rates were indirectly estimated from year of marriages as reported by the respondents. We have excluded the marriages happened prior to 1981.

Table 1.

**Percentage of Women Had Mixed Marriage by Background Characteristics,
India, 2005**

Background characteristics	Percentage of women married to outside the caste ²	Percentage of women married to outside their religion ³	Percentage of women married outside the economic status group	Percentage distribution of married women (15 – 49 years) (n=41554)
Age at marriage				
15-19	3.9	2.8	31.8	2.8
20-24	4.3	2.3	27.0	13.8
25-29	5.5	2.0	27.2	25.6
30& above	5.1	1.9	27.7	57.8
Place of residence				
Rural	4.7	1.8	27.5	64.3
Urban	6.0	2.9	27.9	35.7
Caste				
OBC	3.8	3.7	26.6	39.2
SC	4.5	2.8	28.1	20.1
ST	6.1	1.1	29.3	8.2
Others	6.8	1.2	27.6	32.5
Religion¹				
Hindu	NA	1.5	27.3	80.7
Muslim	NA	0.6	30.6	11.5
Christian	NA	3.5	26.5	3.3
Sikhs	NA	3.2	17.5	2.4
Others	NA	-	32.2	2.1
Education				
No Education	4.3	1.8	26.4	43.4
1-5 years	5.8	2.0	29.7	16.6
6-10 years	5.2	2.3	28.3	28.9
11-15 years	6.0	2.8	25.6	11.1
Economic Status				
Poor	3.9	1.8	28.9	36.7
Middle	4.6	2.3	27.3	18.8
Rich	6.4	2.4	26.4	44.6
Mate Selection				
Respondent herself	16.5	5.3	30.5	4.0
Respondent and parents together	4.9	1.2	29.4	29.9
Parents alone	4.1	0.8	24.4	46.0
Others	8.1	1.1	39.0	20.1
Total	4.9	2.21	27.5	100.0

Note: 1). NA: Not Applicable

2). Inter-caste marriages are not estimated for all religions because the caste system in India is more predominant among Hindus compared to other religious groups. The categorization of castes in non-Hindu religious groups is a complex phenomenon, though it exists to a limited extent.

3). Inter-religious marriage information is not directly given in IHDS data. We have estimated this indirectly from religion of the wife and husband, by following the line number of the spouse in the questionnaire.

Table 2.

**Percentage of Women with Their Decision Making On Marriage Partner by
Background Characteristics, India, 2005**

Background characteristics	Who took the decision on choosing your bridegroom			
	Women alone	Along with parents	Parents alone	Others
Age at marriage				
15-19	3.2	29.4	66.8	0.5
20-24	5.8	32.1	61.6	0.5
25-29	5.7	33.8	60.1	0.5
30& above	4.6	35.2	59.6	0.6
Place of residence				
Rural	4.9	31.9	62.8	0.5
Urban	5.3	39.9	54.1	0.7
Caste				
OBC	4.4	33.9	61.4	0.3
SC	5.1	32.5	61.8	0.6
ST	10.5	37.6	51.2	0.8
Others	4.2	34.45	60.65	0.7
Religion				
Hindu	4.9	34.2	60.5	0.4
Muslim	3.4	32.9	62.7	1.0
Christian	14.8	43.3	40.3	1.5
Sikhs	1.7	34.6	63.7	0.1
Others	10.7	30.1	58.4	0.8
Education				
No Education	4.1	29.7	65.9	0.4
1-5 years	4.9	33.9	60.6	0.6
6-10 years	5.9	38.1	55.3	0.7
11-15 years	7.6	43.8	47.9	0.7
Economic Status				
Poor	4.8	32.8	62.0	0.4
Middle	4.8	32.6	62.2	0.5
Rich	5.3	36.2	57.9	0.6
Total	4.9	33.8	60.7	0.5

Table 3.

Logistic regression estimates (odds ratios) for selected mixed marriage indicators by background characteristics, 2005

Factors	Women married outside their castes ⁴		Women married outside their religions ⁵		Women married outside their economic groups		Women taking decision alone on mate selection	
	Exp β	S.E.	Exp β	S.E.	Exp β	S.E.	Exp β	S.E.
Age at marriage								
15-19 ®	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
20-24	1.15***	0.0027	1.25**	0.0013	0.82***	0.0011	1.76***	0.0027
25-29	1.47***	0.0026	1.38**	0.0014	0.84***	0.0011	1.78***	0.0027
30& above	1.34***	0.0025	1.39**	0.0017	0.87***	0.0010	1.48***	0.0026
Place of residence								
Rural ®	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Urban	1.10***	0.0009	1.34***	0.0004	1.04***	0.0005	1.00***	0.0009
Caste								
Others ®	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
OBC	0.60***	0.0017	0.49***	0.0012	0.99***	0.0009	1.32***	0.0020
SC	0.78***	0.0018	1.54***	0.0018	1.09***	0.0010	1.67***	0.0021
ST	1.21***	0.0021	0.89	0.0009	1.13***	0.0011	3.16***	0.0022
Religion								
Hindu®	1.00				1.00		1.00	
Muslim	1.68***	0.0011	NA	NA	1.24***	0.0006	0.81***	0.0015
Christian	2.06***	0.0018	NA	NA	0.95***	0.0012	2.43***	0.0016
Sikhs	1.96***	0.0023	NA	NA	0.59***	0.0018	0.34***	0.0053
Others	0.73***	0.0029	NA	NA	1.18***	0.0012	1.58***	0.0019
Education								
No Education®	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
1-5 years	1.24***	0.0011	1.01	0.0025	1.18***	0.0005	1.29***	0.0011
6-10 years	1.98***	0.0010	1.04	0.0010	1.15***	0.0005	1.59***	0.0010
11-15 years	1.94***	0.0015	1.14*	0.0017	1.03***	0.0008	2.09***	0.0014
Economic status								
Poor®	1.00		1.00		1.00		1.00	
Middle	1.12***	0.0031	1.03	0.00023	0.92***	0.0014	0.76***	0.0026
Rich	1.59***	0.0031	1.32***	0.0025	0.85***	0.0013	0.77***	0.0026
Mate selection								
Respondent herself	1.00		1.00		1.00		NA	NA
Respondent and parents together	0.233***	0.077	0.285***	0.058	0.842***	0.056	NA	NA
Parents alone	0.249***	0.073	0.279***	0.056	0.659***	0.055	NA	NA
Others	0.600**	0.235	0.604*	0.175	1.378*	0.155	NA	NA

Note: 1). ® reference category, S.E.: Standard Error, significance levels: *** p<0.001; ** p<0.01; * p<0.05

2). NA: Not Applicable

3). S.E.: Standard Error

4). Inter-caste marriages are not estimated for all religions because the caste system in India is more predominant among Hindus compared with other religious groups. The categorization of caste groups in non-Hindu religions is a complex phenomenon, though castes do exist to a limited extent.

5). Inter-religious marriage information is not directly given in IHDS data. We have estimated this indirectly from religious affiliation of the wife and husband by following the line number of spouse as given in the questionnaire.

Table 4.

Percentage of Women had Mixed Marriages in Major States of India, 2005

States	Percentage of women married outside the caste	Percentage of women married outside their religion ¹	Percentage of women married outside their economic status group	Sample of married women (15 – 49)
Andhra Pradesh	2.8	4.9	24.2	2435
Assam	6.3	2.1	18.1	1017
Bihar	3.1	1.2	17.0	1430
Chhattisgarh	2.2	0.6	34.0	1175
Gujarat	8.2	1.8	33.7	2198
Haryana	3.3	1.9	10.9	1618
Himachal Pradesh	2.0	1.5	36.7	1372
Jharkhand	5.4	5.7	43.3	924
Karnataka	1.8	2.8	38.0	4021
Kerala	4.6	2.1	16.5	1731
Madhya Pradesh	1.9	0.8	25.9	2805
Maharashtra	2.8	3.7	28.0	3368
Orissa	3.3	1.0	42.0	2064
Punjab	12.2	7.8	13.7	1683
Rajasthan	1.7	0.7	18.3	2485
Tamil Nadu	2.2	1.6	20.3	2203
Uttar Pradesh	5.2	1.3	22.7	3512
Uttarakhand	3.5	1.9	32.2	458
West Bengal	9.3	0.3	40.0	2380
India	5.1	2.1	27.6	41554

Note: 1. Inter-religious marriage information is not directly given in IHDS data; therefore, we have estimated this indirectly from the religious affiliation of the wife and husband, by following line number of spouse as given in the questionnaire.

Table 5.

**Women and their Decision Making on Marriage Partners by States of India,
2005**

States	Who took the decision in selecting your partner? (in percentages)			
	Respondent herself	Respondent and parents together	Parents/relatives alone	Others
Andhra Pradesh	5.1	25.9	69.0	0.0
Assam	9.7	52.7	34.7	2.9
Bihar	2.1	13.4	84.4	0.1
Chhattisgarh	1.3	50.3	48.4	0.0
Gujarat	11.7	77.5	10.5	0.4
Haryana	2.1	53.7	42.8	1.4
Himachal Pradesh	8.0	9.0	82.6	0.4
Jharkhand	5.9	19.2	74.6	0.2
Karnataka	5.6	61.8	32.3	0.4
Kerala	6.3	57.3	35.8	0.6
Madhya Pradesh	0.9	40.7	57.8	0.5
Maharashtra	2.9	32.8	63.7	0.6
Orissa	5.5	21.0	73.5	0.0
Punjab	0.4	38.5	61.1	0.0
Rajasthan	0.6	14.9	84.3	0.1
Tamil Nadu	8.1	51.2	40.5	0.2
Uttar Pradesh	2.1	21.2	76.4	0.3
Uttarakhand	0.9	6.9	92.1	0.0
West Bengal	7.9	26.5	63.8	1.8
India	5.0	34.2	60.3	0.5