

**CHANGING MARRIAGE PATTERNS AMONG
WOMEN IN PASCHIM MEDINIPUR DISTRICT
OF WEST BENGAL (2005 – 2015)**

*Thesis submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University
for award of the degree of*

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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**CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
NEW DELHI
2018**

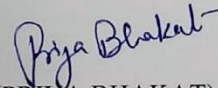


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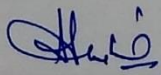
DECLARATION


I hereby declare that the thesis entitled “**Changing Marriage Patterns among Women in Paschim Medinipur District of West Bengal (2005 – 2015)**” submitted by me for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** in **Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi** is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted so far in part or in full, for any other degree or diploma of this University or any other University.

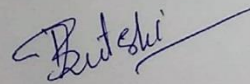

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**Dedicated to
Maa and Baba**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My efforts to accomplish this research commencing with the love, affection, help, guidance and encouragement of a number of people and institutions. Their altruistic contributions deserve to be recalled.

First and foremost, I would like to convey my heartfelt gratitude to my esteemed supervisor Prof. Bupinder Zutshi, Professor of Centre for the Study of Regional Development, School of Social Sciences, JNU who has been always there to support, encourage and advise me. His constant encouragement, remarkable guidance and enthusiastic discussions, always charged me up, throughout my research tenure. Though there have been many ups and downs in my research, his constant faith and confidence in me motivated me to work with renewed zest. There have been times when he pepped me up, calmed me down and commended me for my efforts to bring the best in me. Thank you sir, for being an oasis of constant and untiring support. Above all, I extend my sincere, warmest and heartfelt thanks to you, and wish to seek your continuous blessings throughout my life.

I am also thankful to the other faculty members especially Professor P.M. Kulkarni for his valuable suggestions, Dr. Srinivas Goli for guidance and encouragement in the research, Prof. Anuradha Banerjee and Prof. Bhaswati Gangopadhyay of the Centre for the Study of Regional Development, School of Social Sciences for their valuable suggestions and advice related to my Ph. D research.

I am extremely grateful to the staff members of JNU Library and CSRD Library for their timely rendered assistance in finding out the right materials in right time. I am also thankful to UGC (Junior Research Fellowship) for providing me Fellowship at the needy time.

I will be indebted forever to the unconditional and immutable love of my parents specially my Mother Manju Bhakat, Father Rameswar Bhakat, Brother Mohit Bhakat. Their moral, sympathetic and helpful outlook has been the chief source of inspiration. Their affable advices which were worth a million dollars. Their unconditional support

is deeply cherished. I recall and recollect all this enormous help which they kindly rendered to me, for which, I extend my sincere, warmest and heartfelt thanks to them.

I owe my gratitude to my loving seniors Yatish sir, Bhawona di and Sweta di, Kundan da for their academic and intellectual guidance in exploring the research area, problems and solutions.

I put forth my sense of immense gratitude to Soumen and Arpita for their constant support during my field visit. I am extremely grateful to those who have provided me logistics support during my field survey and would never forget their love and affection. I would also like to thank the M.Phil batch (2015-16) students of population studies for helping in the data collection and compilation from newspapers.

I would be failing in my duty if I do not appreciate and acknowledge the whole hearted support of my friends Dr. Chandra Khemundu, Riju, Mehram, Mehbub, Sonu, Kakoli, Neelu, Rajkumar and Veera who stood by me throughout the most struggling phase of my life in JNU, and kept me motivated by providing me moral support and encouragement whenever my steps faltered. I am deeply indebted to them for their moral support, care and concern.

Last but not the least, I convey my gratitude and thanks to all the persons and institutions, those have overtly propelled me miles to extend my deeds towards this academic horizon. I am at loss for words to thank all those who have stood behind me for the successful completion of my doctoral thesis. Without their cooperation this could not have reached fruition.

PRIYA BHAKAT

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18th July 2018

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Abbreviations

AIDWA	All India Democratic Women's Association
DLHS	District Level Health Survey
DHS	Demographic Health Survey
GDI	Gender Development Index
HDI	Human Development Index
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
MOHFW	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
NCAER	National Council for Applied Economic Research
NES	National Economic Survey
NFHS	National Family Health Survey
OBC	Other Backward Caste
SC	Scheduled Caste
SMAM	Singulate Mean Age at Marriage
SRS	Sample Registration System
ST	Scheduled Tribe
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

CHAPTER- 1

INTRODUCTION

- ❖ **Defining Marriage**
- ❖ **Overview of Marriage Patterns**
- ❖ **Rationale of the Study**
- ❖ **Conceptual Framework**
- ❖ **Objectives**
- ❖ **Research Questions**
- ❖ **Data Source**
- ❖ **Methodology**
- ❖ **Study Area**
- ❖ **Outline of the Thesis**

Chapter 1

Introduction

Marriage, an immemorial institution is found everywhere in some form. Mating patterns are closely related with marriage and with the social structure. The nature of the family relationship in a society is determined by both the marriage as an institution and the institutionalization of mating patterns. “The main purpose of marriage is to establish a family, to produce children and to further the family's economic and social position” (Gupta 1976, p. 75). Primitive societies display an immense array of mate selection processes ranging from forced marriage by capture to mutual love and getting married through elopement.

India is perhaps considered the only sub-continent which provides such a diversity in marriage practice from a closed to an open system, from own caste to inter-religious marriages. The skewed sex ratio at birth as the result of sex-selective abortion in India has led demographers to anticipate that there will be an excess of men in the future who will be unable to marry. Marriage markets, however, are not only structured by demographic factors such as age and sex, but also by factors such as education. Education and employment generally tend to enlarge women's horizons in marriage and creates more opportunities and lifestyles which were previously unavailable. The decision of whom to marry and when to marry are likely to be quite distinct for teenagers dependent on their families than for young adults with education and job experience (Choe, Westley & Retherford 2002). For example, Corwin's accounted urbanization and industrialization for the increasing tolerance towards intercaste and love marriages in a small town of West Bengal. She also pointed that people of younger generation dwelling in urban places and taking up non-agricultural profession are increasingly self-reliant financially and thus are highly advanced in choosing their life partner, or “sway parental consent.” Goode does not argue that urbanization and industrialization in the West have brought a change in different forms of family; rather, he conforms that the family has an important role in the up growth of Western industrialization. “Nonetheless, he believed that although India was shifting toward self-choice marriage, but that the extent of industrialization was inadequate to address the change and that the ideological factors hold greater significance in India” (as cited

by Allendorf 2013). Goode (1963, p. 22) alleges that “no one has yet succeeded in stating the determinate relations between family systems and economic or technological systems.”

“Theories of family change were earlier a part of the modernization theory” (Thornton, 2005; Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Adams, 2010). Urbanization, “industrialization and educational expansion” were assumed to lead an increase in “self-choice marriages” based on “love and affection”, which were seen to befitting with the industrial occupations and urban lifestyle (Nimkoff, 1965; Goode, 1963; Burgess & Locke, 1960). This tradition was reflected in early Indian studies (Corwin, 1977; Ross, 1961). Despite it being currently regarded “as overly static and even obsolete” (Das Gupta, 1997, p. 36), several anthropologists “are still interested in studying kinship patterns”. Although the interest has changed from “delineating complicated marriage rules” to exploring the economic and political context within kinship with a broader perspective of “understanding the social change” (Mensch, Singh, & Casterline, 2005). Ethnographic study of Ahearn (2001) states “the way in which increased literacy and exposure to Hindi soap operas has led to a shift away from arranged and capture marriages toward love marriages in a Nepalese village is an example of this new type of kinship research” (National Research Council. 2005, p. 122).

In today’s India, caste is not what it was once. It is no longer a regarded as a distinct occupational group, inter-dining without any fastidious prevention is often perceived, and people from different caste-hierarchies come in touch or contact one another on a daily basis. Nonetheless, caste remains pertinent when it comes to marriage and, of the many social practices in India that implicate the caste system, marriage is arguably the most central. As Louis Dumont (1980) explains, endogamy is essential to the caste system and to caste identity because of the caste systems’ regulation of hierarchy through ritual pollution and purity. Moreover, while the rules relating to purity and pollution cover many different social contexts, there is arguably no more fundamental way in which pollution can occur than in the context of marriage (Davis 1941).

The sociological theory on homogamy suggests that individuals seek to marry other individuals those are as similar to themselves as possible on the indicators which matter to them (Heer 1974; Johnson 1980; Kalmijn 1991, 1993, 1998; Kennedy 1952; Lieberman and Waters 1988; Mare 1991; Porterfield 1978; Qian 1997; Root 2001;

Spickard 1989), while another sociological theory, caste-status exchange, suggests that some individuals will forsake homogamy if they can enter into a beneficial exchange through marriage. This might involve, for instance, higher-caste individuals who lack wealth seeking to marry lower-caste individuals who are better off financially. Though this theory does not appear to have been tested empirically in India, it has been verified with respect to race, in analogous boundary-crossing contexts, in the United States and a number of other countries. (Davis 1941; Fu 2001; Kalmijn 1993; Merton 1941; Qian 1997; Schoen and Wooldredge 1989). Such findings raise the question of whether caste-status exchange operates in the very marriage markets that Davis (1941) and Merton (1941), the theory's progenitors, thought they were describing when they proposed it over 70 years ago.

1.1 Defining Marriage

Marriage can be recognized by a state, an organization, a religious authority, a tribal group, a local community or peers. It is often viewed as a contract. Civil marriage, which does not exist in some countries, is marriage without religious content carried out by a government institution in accordance with the marriage laws of the jurisdiction, and recognised as creating the rights and obligations intrinsic to matrimony. Marriages can be performed in a secular civil ceremony or in a religious setting via a wedding ceremony. The act of marriage usually creates normative or legal obligations between the individuals involved, and any offspring they may produce. It is argued that a cross-culturally valid conception of marriage must begin with a definition of husband-wife and with a distinction between spouses and lovers.

Anthropologists have proposed several competing definitions of marriage in an attempt to encompass the wide variety of marital practices observed across cultures. Even within Western culture, "definitions of marriage have careened from one extreme to another and everywhere in between". In *The History of Human Marriage* (1922), Edvard Westermarck defined marriage as "a more or less durable connection between male and female lasting beyond the mere act of propagation till after the birth of the offspring." *Western Civilization* (1936), he rejected his earlier definition, instead provisionally defining marriage as "a relation of one or more men to one or more women that is recognized by custom or law". The problem of a satisfactory definition of marriage has vexed anthropologists for decades and has been raised, but not solved,

several times in recent years. Over the period of time it became clear that cohabitation, ritual recognition, definition of sexual rights or stipulation of domestic services each had too limited a distribution to serve as a criterion for all the unions' anthropologists intuitively felt compelled to call 'marriage'.

One of the most frequently mentioned characterizations of marriage was established in 1951 in Notes and Queries. "Marriage is a union between a man and a woman such that children born to the woman are recognized legitimate offspring of both parents" (quoted in Gough 1959: 49). The Notes and Queries definition contains two criteria: firstly marriage is a union between one man and one woman, and secondly it establishes the legitimacy of children. Nuer woman- marriage does not conform to the first criterion but it does to the second. At this point the problem therefore becomes: is a definition feasible which would insist only on the second criterion, that of legitimizing children?

In Europe, Dr Edmund Leach concluded in fact that no definition could be found which would apply to all the institutions which ethnographers commonly refer to as marriage. Instead he named ten classes of rights which frequently occur in connection with what we loosely term marriage, added that 'one might perhaps considerably extend this list', and seemed to conclude that since no single one of these rights is invariably established by marriage in every known society, we ought to feel free to call 'marriage' any institution which fulfils any one or more of the selected criteria.

1.2 Overview of Marriage Patterns

Marriage patterns and family life are changing throughout Asia. The marriage market reflects these changes. Young people are delaying their marriage until their late 20s and 30s, more women are seeking employment after marriage and couples are limiting their family size by having fewer children (Leete 1994; Retherford, Ogawa, and Matsukura 2001). Within Asia, such trends were first observed in Japan followed by South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan. Similar patterns have started emerging in other Asian countries. Similar to the trends observed in the earlier industrialized societies of North America and Europe, Asian countries has shown changes through increasing engagement of women workforce after marriage, later marriage and lower marital fertility. Although in Asia, some form of family life are entirely distinct from the institution of family

evolved in the West. In Asia, cohabitation is only limited to metropolitan cities and childbearing outside marriage is extremely unusual.

Many demographers who have studied the age at marriage in different Asian countries have associated the changes in the marriage process to the increase in female's age at marriage. Specifically, the deviation from arranged marriages to love marriages plays an important role in the delay in age at marriage (Malhotra and Tsui, 1996; Hull, 2002). In Indonesia, the rise in the age at marriage "has come about due to the shift of the locus of marriage decision making from parents to children," which is attributed to the higher educational acquirement among young women (Hull, 2002, p. 8), Boulier and Rosenzweig (1984) using the data from the early 1970s in the Philippines demonstrated "that while the effect of education on age of marriage is exaggerated in models that treat education as exogenous, additional schooling does lead women to marry later" (as cited in Mensch, Singh & Casterline 2005). Brien and Lillard (1994) "show that controlling for the effect of delayed marriage on education, that is, for the potential endogeneity of education, later age at marriage among women in Malaysia is explained in large part by increased enrolment and attainment." It is commonly believed that the process of individual searching of partner is more time consuming than that of parental selection. Additionally, because of the parents concern with preserving the sexual purity, parents involved in spouse selection, marry off their daughters at early age. Young girls are more submissive to their parents and obedient towards parent's decision of mate selection, thus parents prefer to marry off their daughter early (UNICEF, 2001). Other reason for a parent being involved in partner selection for his/her daughter is that in the process of selecting her partner, she may get sexually involved before marriage. Several studies have shown that marriage are more often managed by parents than by the prospective spouses and is taken as an economic decision. There is a tendency among people to marry within similar social group or to marry someone who are similar or close to their social status. Parents marry their daughters in villages where there is less covariance in income with respect to their own village (Rosenzweig and Stark 1989).

In most Asian countries, marriage is customarily viewed as a permanent agreement, and divorce rates, even though rising, are still quite low. Increasing divorce rates may possibly reduce the attractiveness of marriage. Although, divorce is still rare in the traditional societies of South Asia, but in East Asia, yet lower than in most countries of

Western Europe or the United States, divorce rates are rising. Although it is difficult to obtain comprehensive information on divorce rates, but it is estimated that one out of five marriages in China, Japan, and South Korea will end in divorce. In developing countries, where many women do not work outside their homes, marriage is arguably the single most important determinant of a woman's economic future.¹ In these societies, with lower probability of remarrying, awareness of the uncertainty of marriage and risk of divorce may encourage women to obtain good educations and better jobs.

1.2.1 Indian Marriage System

Several studies in India have pointed towards the change in the timing of marriage. According to Bhat and Halli, (1999) the singulate mean age at marriage of females increased from 15.2 in 1951 to 19.0 by 1991 and to 19.7 by 1998-1999 (IIPS and ORC Macro, 2000). However, regional variation is quite evident. Many arguments have been presented to explain the increases in marital age. According to Amin and Cain (1997) the increases in marital age may be attributed to the imposition of a legal minimum age at marriage and to the shift in the education of girls and boys. On the other hand, some would attribute the increase as a result of marriage squeeze rather than as an outcome of increased educational attainment. Bhat and Halli (1999) argued that educational attainment is not advanced enough to be incompatible with early marriage. According to Mensch, Singh & Casterline (2005) "India has begun to face an excess supply of women of marriageable ages because of changes such as declining infant and child mortality and the reduction in numbers of widowers available as maternal mortality declined, as well as because women tend to marry men who are older than them." Another view would argue that increase in age at marriage resulted in both as delay in search for a suitable groom and higher dowries (Caldwell, Reddy, and Caldwell, 1983; Rao, 1993).

Along with arranged marriage India is also characterized by extensive dowries. The most important duty of a father in his lifetime is to marry off his children especially if he has daughters. However, there exist varied regional difference in village exogamy

¹The sample of highly educated females and males, fewer than 25% of matched brides were working after marriage – "Marry for What? Caste and Mate Selection in Modern India" by Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo, Maitreesh Ghatak and Jeanne Lafortune

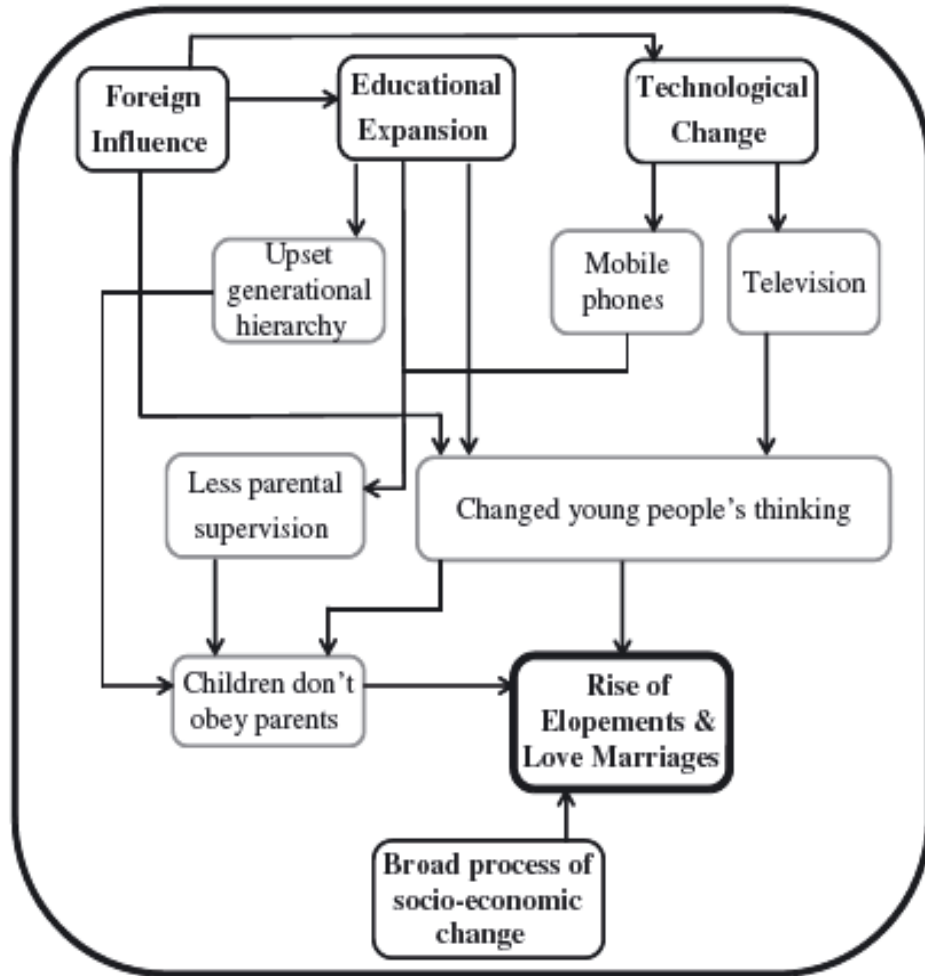
and kin marriage which have been documented in several studies. Among the Hindus, particularly in the northern India, kin marriage is rare. The practice is to marry young girls into families with which previous contact has been limited, which heighten women's powerlessness (Committee on the Status of Women in India, 1973). In the more patriarchal kinship structure in northern India, marriage involves the incorporation of stranger as wives into the family and the resulting village exogamy ensures a break between the natal family and the in-laws family of the woman is married. Yet in contrast, marriage is perceived as a means of strengthening existing community-level bonds in south India, and this is ensured through village endogamy (Karve, 1965).

In a study by Jejeebhoy & Halli (2005), women were asked about marriage negotiations - whether they had participated in the decision on when and whom to marry or selected their own spouses. It was found that for the overwhelming majority, marriages were arranged either by parents alone or with relatives and matchmakers, irrespective of marital duration, region, or religion. There is believe that the celestial forces of the universe determines the fate of everyone, a complex set of forces working around and upon the individual to get married to a person whom one is destined to love. Their life mates are predestined, they are "right for each other" and they are helpless as far as choice is concerned. It is also believed to be good and desirable that critical issues like the choosing of a life partner should be handled by responsible persons of family and kin group. "People typically adhere to marriage-related norms in the name of tradition or romance" (Twenge, 1997). "In addition, the majority of women still take their husband's last name upon marriage, whereas few men consider taking their wife's last name" (Scheuble & Johnson, 2005). However, with economic liberalisation and middle class exposure to global media, subtle differences do emerge, and substantial minorities of women reported being consulted in these decisions or having a say in their marriage decision making. According to Fuller and Narasimhan (2008) research study amongst middle-class Brahmans in Tamil Nadu, south India, it was observed that when choosing a future spouse, young people valued 'personal compatibility' along with education and employment. This suggest an increased emphasis on intimacy in marriage thus blurring the lines between arranged and love marriage (Donner Forthcoming; Fuller and Narasimhan 2008; Parry 2001; Percot 2006; Raj 2003).

In India, caste continues to play a vital role in determining marriage outcomes. People are so much accustomed to the institution, that matrimonial advertisements in newspapers are classified by caste columns, thus making it evident for prospective brides or grooms to find someone from their own caste. “In a recent opinion poll in India, 74 percent of respondents declared to be opposed to inter-caste marriage.” (Banerjee et. al. 2013). However, with the increasing modernization, inter-caste marriages are occurring in India. The National Family Health Survey reports that 13 per cent of its respondents had an inter-caste marriage. Meanwhile, the 2004 Indian National Election Study conducted by the Center for Study of Developing Societies New Delhi, points to the acceptance for inter-caste marriage. In the survey, 40% of Hindu respondents opposed, when they were presented with the assertion that inter-caste marriage should be banned.

Often the Indian society presents a mixture of conventional as well as prestige, traditional and modern and glamour-oriented marital role models with notable changes in the value system. However, economic liberalization has opened up India to global media which has led to increasing questions and ambiguity in the meaning of being a ‘middle class Indian’ and the appropriate place of love and courtship in marriage. The western media available to the upper and middle classes has provoked a kind of deterritorialisation, destabilising Indian notions of intimacy and relationships (Dell 2005 p.194). Arranged marriage and chaste female behavior were traditionally categorised as middle class behavior. But in the popular ‘western’ media, and increasingly in Bollywood stories, romantic spontaneous love affairs are often deemed essential to spouse selection. It is quite probable that with the changing society, ‘romantic ideal’ will permeate the system in the long run. However, whether such changes will be a part of a continuum, i.e. acceptance of the ideals of the modern West or revitalization of the mythological past, preserving tenacity and positive elements of its own against the swaggering forces of change, is yet to be seen.

Figure 1.1
Perception of Respondents on Changing Behavior in Marriage



Source: Keera Allendorf (2013)

1.2.2 Marriage System in West Bengal

Observation and research show that today, Bengali brides are found in almost all parts of the country, especially in the northern region, stretching from Kashmir to Punjab, Haryana, towards the west in Rajasthan and Gujarat and across to Uttar Pradesh (UP) in the north (Kaur, 2010). In a study of cross-regional marriages propelled by spousal shortages in two female deficient states of the country, Haryana and UP, almost 40 per cent of the brides out of a sample of 82 couples, are Bengalis. While Punjab and Haryana also have brides from Kerala, Assam, Bihar, Maharashtra, Tripura and several other states, the Bengalis far outnumber the rest. Put together with the Bangladeshi Bengali brides, marrying cross-culturally and long distance seems to be a predominantly Bengali phenomenon. (Ravinder Kaur). There also seems to be a long

history of out migration of Bengali women (or being pushed out) for marriage – literature from the colonial period describes the presence of brides from ‘the East’ in Punjab (Darling 1925).

One of the basic rules governing marriage among Bengali Hindus is caste endogamy. It is considered as arranged marriages are conventionally acceptable and provide a more solid basis for marital happiness than love alone. Most marriages in the small town of West Bengal proceed according to these rules, but exceptions do occur. “Most love-marriages involve breaking the traditional rules of caste endogamy, but in Mahishadal² they do not appear to cause serious disruption of family ties” (Corwin 1977, p. 31). The possibility of registered marriage without parental consent acts as a legal weapon for young people to get married even if their parents oppose their wish. At the same time, the residential dispersal of family members with increasing mobility in the course of employment, has lessened the effectiveness of united public opposition to the match as an effective negative sanction. Corwin (1977) in his study found that although most marriages among Bengali Hindus continue to be both arranged and caste-endogamous, few members of the urban elite still view inter-caste marriages as an impossibility.

The research that has been done on caste and intermarriage in India suggests that even well-educated, urban-dwelling Indians still largely adhere to traditional caste norms when it comes to marriage. Using data gathered from matrimonial advertisements and interviews with middle-income marriage market participants in West Bengal, Banerjee et al (2009) study the effect of caste and a number of other variables on marriage outcomes. They find a strong choice for within-caste marriage across all castes, but find that the ‘cost’ that individuals pay—by not maximizing their preferences on other attributes—is relatively low. Since the authors focus on marriage outcomes and not preferences, particularly those related to boundary-crossing, they capture the effects of preferences alongside a number of other attributes that inform the eventual selection of the marriage partner. So, for instance, a woman interested in inter-caste marriage, on meeting men outside of her own caste, may not find the educational background, height, or personality of the individuals she meets agreeable. The outcome in such a case looks like a preference against boundary-crossing when in fact this individual may have been

² Mahishadal is an administrative center located about 75 miles southwest of Calcutta. Mahishadal has been functioning as an urban center for over a century, as it served as headquarters for an expanding Raj Estate.

quite prepared to engage in such behavior. By focusing on outcomes rather than preferences, Banerjee et al (2009) are then not able to capture accurately the underlying pattern of preferences for caste related boundary-crossing in the marriage market.

In contrast, Dugar, Bhattacharya, and Reiley (2011) study preferences instead of eventual outcomes in the arranged marriage market in West Bengal. They conduct a series of experiments by placing fictitious matrimonial advertisements for grooms in a leading Bengali language newspaper and observe how brides in the marriage market respond to variations in the reported income-level of these grooms. They find a strong in-group preference among the three groups they examined, which included two upper-caste sub-castes and one scheduled caste sub-caste. Dugar et al (2011) then go on to estimate the amount of income an out-group groom must report before a bride will respond to his advertisement. But both Banerjee et al (2009) and Dugar et al (2011) examine West Bengal and, thus, neither allows for regional comparison, leaving open the question of whether West Bengal is anomalous. This is important because caste, at least traditionally, is quite local in nature and scholars have noted regional variation in caste practices, as well as in caste politics (Bayly 1998; Gupta 1997, 2000, 2005; Rao 1990; Rudolph and Rudolph 1967; Srinivas 1995).

1.3 Rationale of the Study

Age at first union has been immensely studied by demographers because of its close link between age at marriage and the onset of childbearing. Over the years, a number of studies both in developed and developing countries have documented the contribution of changes in the timing of marriage to fertility transitions, (e.g., Casterline, 1994; Coale and Treadway, 1986; Rosero-Bixby, 1996). However, it has been asserted that “weaknesses in the field of nuptiality research stem from its heavy focus on the fertility implications of nuptiality patterns” (Smith, 1983, p. 510). With an urge to study the subject of marriage in a broad manner, Van de Walle (1993, p. 118) asserts that we should care about marriage patterns “in their own right” because understanding “nuptiality change could further the understanding of other social change”. Malhotra (1997, p.118) argues that for those who are interested in studying “family formation, the timing of first union merits investigation not only because it signals the initiation of reproductive life, but also because the marriage process reflects the way family life is organized and functions in a particular culture” and also “because

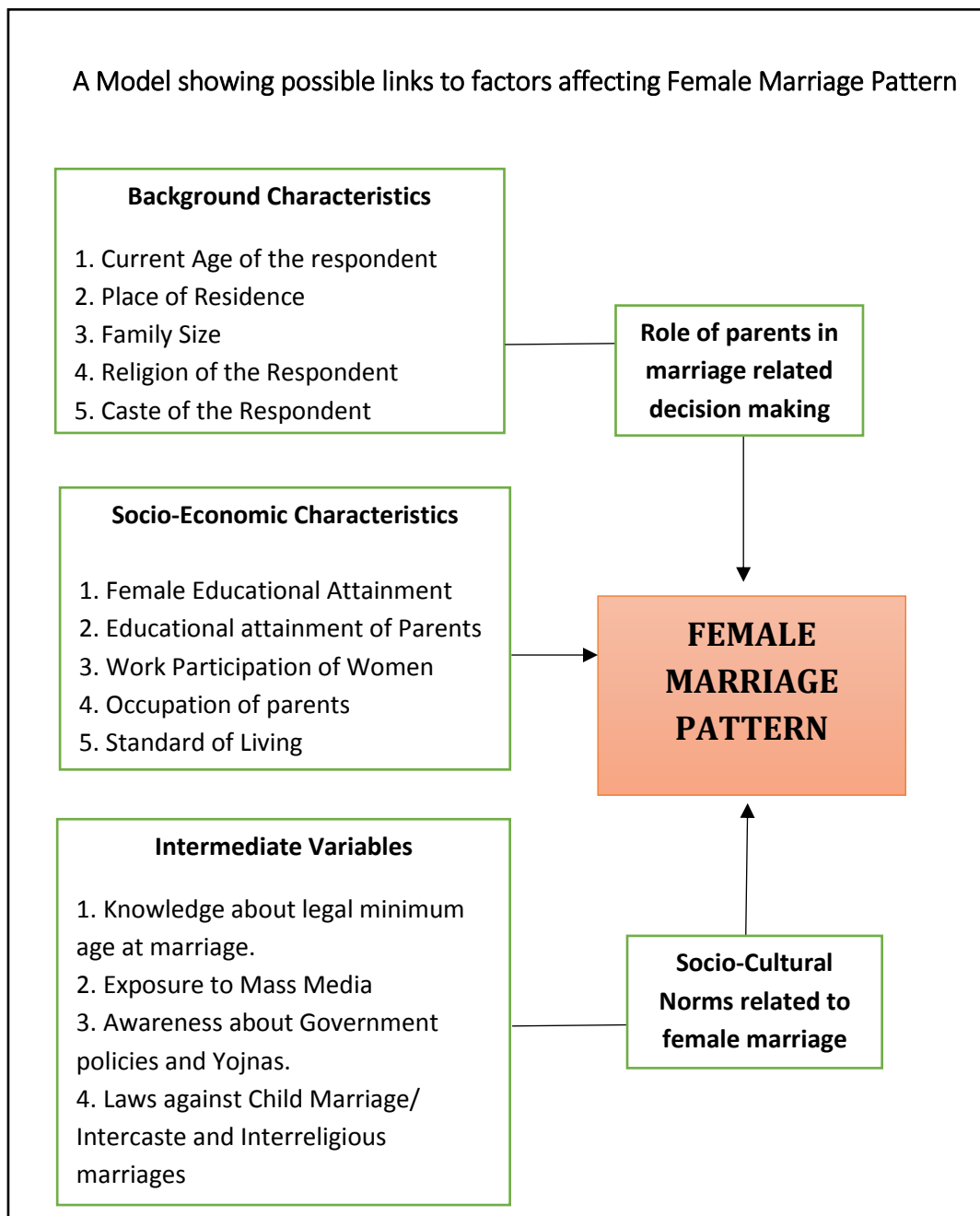
when, who, and how one marries all have implications for gender relations within society.”

The age at marriage for both men and women is highly influenced by several social norms and expectations regarding their roles as parent and spouse. With globalization, urbanization, and rising educational attainment in the developing world, factors as such, the timing of marriage that are plausibly changing should be of considerable pertinence to researchers interested in the transition to adulthood. For example, men are now delaying marriage because of greater expectations about employment stability and job status and to acquire the earthly possessions necessary to form a household, and women are postponing marriage because of shifting gender roles. There is a need to document these changes in patterns of behaviour and identify the potential implications are both for the individuals and for the larger society.

Again studies which explores marriage in India tend to concentrate on arranged marriage at the exclusion of other forms, such as love marriage. Vatuk (1972) and Upadhyya and Vasavi (2006) both studied the cases of intercaste and love marriages amongst middle class migrants in North India and IT workers but their ethnographies solely focused on arranged marriage. Mody (2002) conducted an ethnography of couples who had love marriages in a New Delhi court, postulates that instances of love marriages are ignored by scholars because of the assumptions that love marriages are necessarily illegitimate, unusual and is practiced by the westernised urban deracinated elite. Thus demographers and anthropologists have failed to capture the new and changing marital forms in the present society. Similarly the study of kinship relations, neither in mixed marriage nor in intra-caste marriages in India was found to receive much attention from researchers. Some studies have incidentally touched upon the adjustment of intercaste married couples with their parents and in-laws (Kannan, 1972; Corwin, 1977; Reddy and Rajanna, 1984). According to Landis and Landis, sociologists have examined mixed marriages, not because of the religious implications, but because they are interested in knowing how well such marriages work out from the view point of success and happiness for the couples involved (1950 p.167-8). Thus demographers and anthropologists have failed to capture the new and changing marital forms in the present society.

This study is an attempt to understand the changing pattern of marriage process which begins from the age at marriage to the type of marriage and the role of family in it. The whole process is affected by several factors like role of society, decision making, process of mate selection, dowry, education, wealth status which is further correlated with several attributes. It also captures the prevailing rules of marriage for females in Paschim Medinipur district of West Bengal.

1.4 Conceptual Framework



1.5 Objectives

The major objectives are to study:

1. To study the temporal and spatial variation of female age at marriage in India and West Bengal.
2. To study the significance of caste which remains so strong in Indian marriage market.
3. To analyse the role of parents and youths in marriage related decision making (selection of spouse/meeting the husband before marriage).
4. To study the intergenerational change in marriage pattern and the major socio-economic factors attributable to the changes in Paschim Medinipur district of West Bengal.

1.6 Research Questions

1. Whether the changing marriage patterns in terms of age at marriage, selection of spouse is socially acceptable?
2. Does increase in love marriages is leading to an increase in intercaste and inter religious marriages?
3. Conventional wisdom among scholars of the caste system suggests that all groups prefer endogamy equally. Whether this long-held view is true for the gradually diversifying urban, educated Indian families?
4. Is there any relation between the age at marriage and love/arranged marriages? Again does it also hold for intercaste marriages?
5. Has there been any change in parent's role in decision making regarding their daughters marriage?
6. Does the family structure plays any role in mate selection or marriage related decision making?

1.7 Data Source

This study is based on both primary and secondary source of data. The secondary data gives a broader perspective of the marriage pattern in overall India and West Bengal

and other states. The secondary data are mainly used for macro level analysis whereas primary data are used to depict micro picture.

1.7.1 Secondary Data

Secondary data have been used to show an overall picture of marriage pattern in India and its states. Based on the secondary data on West Bengal, Paschim Medinipur district has been selected as the area of study.

1. Decennial CENSUS: The Indian Census is one of the most reliable source of information on demography (Population characteristics), Economic Activity, Literacy & Education, Housing & Household Amenities, Urbanisation, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Religion, Language, Fertility and Mortality, Migration, Disability and many other socio-cultural and demographic data since 1872. Census provides information on marital status of individuals based on four separate categories. The separate categories are (i) never married, (ii) married, (iii) Widowed and (iv) Divorced or Separated. Information is given separately for males and females by each religious community, residence and classified by different education levels. Census also provides data on age at marriage for both ever-married women and currently married women. It also provides data on duration of marriage. In India direct data on marriage and divorce are inadequate as registration of marriage is incomplete. On the other hand, census of India is conducted once in every 10 years by Registrar General of India and it provides information on various demographic factors like fertility, education, marriage, etc. Hence, census data are the only available source to provide information on entire population by marital status. It provides age-sex specific data on marital status for each census year. Socio-cultural tables have been utilized from the census data (1971-2011) for fulfilling the objectives. Information on marital status was collected for the first time in the 1881 census. From 1881 to 1931, the census of India classified the population into married, unmarried, widowed or widower. No information was collected regarding divorce till 1931 and a divorced person was entered as a widower. In 1941 census, the divorced person was reported separately. In 1951 Census, the marital status of the person was recorded as unmarried, married, widowed and divorced.

2. National Family Health Survey: The National Family Health Surveys (NFHS) are nationwide surveys conducted with a representative sample of households throughout the country. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW), Government of India (GOI), initiated the NFHS surveys to provide high quality data on population and health indicators. The three NFHS surveys conducted to date are a major landmark in the development of a demographic and health data base for India. The country's first National Family Health Survey (NFHS-1) was conducted in 1992-93. The second National Family Health Survey (NFHS-2), conducted in 1998-99. The third National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3) was conducted in 2005-06. NFHS-3 covered all 29 states in India, which comprise more than 99 percent of India's population. It provides data on current marital status, age at first marriage, median age at first marriage. The 2015-16 National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) provides information on population, health, and nutrition for India and each state and union territory. For the first time, NFHS-4 provides district-level estimates for many important indicators.
3. Demographic and Health Survey: The Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) Program is responsible for collecting and disseminating accurate, nationally representative data on health and population in developing countries. Since 1984, The Demographic and Health Surveys Program has provided technical assistance to more than 260 demographic and health surveys in over 90 countries - advancing global understanding of health and population trends in developing countries. More specifically, DHS surveys collect information on fertility and total fertility rate (TFR), reproductive health, maternal health, child health, immunization and survival, HIV/AIDS; maternal mortality, child mortality, malaria, and nutrition among women and children stunted. The strategic objective of DHS Program is to improve and institutionalize the collection and use of data by host countries for program monitoring and evaluation and for policy development decisions.
4. India Human Development Survey: The IHDS (2005) is a nationally representative, multi-topic survey of 41,554 households in 1,503 villages and 971 urban neighbourhoods across India. Two one-hour interviews in each household covered topics concerning health, education, employment, economic

status, marriage, fertility, gender relations, and social capital. Researchers from the University of Maryland and National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) in New Delhi collaborated in designing and fielding the India Human Development Survey 2005. Children aged 8-11 completed short reading, writing and arithmetic tests. Additional village, school, and medical facility interviews are also available. It provides data about marriage practices in women questionnaire.

The India Human Development Survey-II (IHDS-II), 2011-12 is a nationally representative, multi-topic survey of 42,152 households in 1,503 villages and 971 urban neighborhoods across India. These data are mostly re-interviews of households interviewed for IHDS-I (ICPSR 22626) in 2004-05. Two one-hour interviews in each household covered topics concerning health, education, employment, economic status, marriage, fertility, gender relations, social capital, village infrastructure, wage levels, and panchayat composition. Children aged 8-11 completed short reading, writing and arithmetic tests. The IHDS-II data are assembled in fourteen datasets: Individual, Household, Eligible Women, Birth History, Medical Staff, Medical Facilities, Non Resident, School Staff, School Facilities, Wage and Salary, Tracking, Village, Village Panchayat and Village Respondent.

5. UNICEF: Data on percentage of women marrying below legal age across the world and South Asian countries have been explored by data provided by ICRW and UNICEF.
6. Indian National Election Study: The National Election Study in 1967 was the first survey-based national level study of political opinions and attitudes in India. This was followed by another national level study conducted at the time of the 1971 general elections. During the 1980 Lok Sabha elections, while the CSDS designed the all-India survey, the Indian Institute of Public Opinion (IIPO), Delhi conducted the fieldwork. Although strictly not a part of the NES series, this survey can be used to partly fill the gap in the series. During the 1980s, survey research did not figure prominently on the Centre's intellectual agenda, nor was the series taken over by any other institution. This resulted in a long break in the time series data. It was not before the mid-1990s that the

CSDS revived the tradition with the NES (1996). Ever since then the centre has been committed to conducting the study during every parliamentary election. The NES – 1996, 1998 and 1999 were conducted on a panel of respondents and a total of six waves of surveys of a nationally representative sample of the electorate were conducted in a short span of three years. The NES 2004 is the largest social scientific study of the political behaviour, opinion and attitudes of the Indian electorate to this date.

7. Youth data: “The Youth in India: Situation and Needs” is conducted to identify the key transitions experienced by married and unmarried youth in India. The survey was conducted in 2006-07 in six states of India, representing different geographical and socio-cultural setting, namely – Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. The study is being executed by the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai, in collaboration with the Population Council, New Delhi with financial support from the Packard and MacArthur Foundations. Survey included 17362 unmarried women and 11522 unmarried men and 13912 married women aged 15–24 respondents, and in view of the paucity of married men in these age, 8052 married men aged 15–29 were also interviewed.

1.7.2 Primary Data

Primary data has been collected through field survey carried out by the researcher for the purpose of study the changing pattern of marriage and the reasons behind the changes. Primary data has been collected from the 4 blocks of Paschim Medinipur district of West Bengal. An interview schedule was developed for the survey purposes. The draft interview schedules were pre-tested in detail and then finalized for the survey. The researcher carried out the entire field work personally and therefore, in addition to the questionnaire schedules, personal observations recorded by the researcher provide data for this study. The field survey was conducted from Nov 2015 to March 2016.

1.8 Methodology

A research work requires two kinds of methodology: qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative methodology includes the interpretative mode of explanation

while the quantitative methodology includes statistical analysis, cartographic and graphical presentation.

1. Quantitative Methods: Singulate Mean Age at Marriage (SMAM), Cross Tabulation and Binary Logistic Regression.

Singulate Mean Age at Marriage (SMAM)

To examine the variation in marriage pattern, the most commonly used technique Singulate Mean Age at Marriage (SMAM), propounded by J. Hajnal in 1953 has been used. The SMAM is the average length of single life expressed in years among those who marry before age 50. Two assumptions are made in a standard calculation of SMAM. Firstly, nobody will marry under the age of 15 and Secondly, those still never married or single at age 50 will remain so for the rest of their lives. The statistics is calculated from the proportion of males or females single in successive age groups.

$$SMAM = \frac{\left[\left(\sum_{i=1}^{i=7} S_i * 5 \right) + 1,500 \right] - \left[\left(\frac{S_7 + S_8}{2} \right) * 50 \right]}{100 - \left(\frac{S_7 + S_8}{2} \right)}$$

Where S_i equal the proportion of women single in age group i

- i=1 if age group = 15-19
- i=2 if age group = 20-24
- i=3 if age group = 25-29
- i=4 if age group = 30-34

- i=5 if age group = 35-39
- i=6 if age group = 40-44
- i=7 if age group = 45-49
- i=8 if age group = 50-54

Steps for calculation—data in 5-year age groups

1. Sum the percentages single from age group 15–19 through age group 45–49 and multiply the sum by 5 (because of 5–year age group)
2. Add 1500 (i.e. years lived by the cohort before the 15th birthday)

3. Average the percentage single for age group 45–49 and 50–54
4. Multiply the result of (3) by 50 (Equals number of years lived by those who did not marry before age 50)
5. Subtract result of (4) from (2) (Equals number of years lived by those who marry by age 50)
6. Subtract result of (3) from 100 (Equals average percentage married by age 50)
7. Divide result of (5) by result of (6) (Equals Singulate mean age at marriage)

Z-Score

Z-scores are expressed in terms of standard deviations from their means. Resultantly, these z-scores have a distribution with a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. The formula for calculating the standard score is given below:

Calculating the Standard Score (Z-Score)

$$\text{Standard Score, } z = \frac{X - \mu}{\sigma}$$

TERMS:

μ = mean (pronounced 'mu')

X = score

σ = standard deviation (pronounced 'sigma')

Z-scores may also be positive or negative, with a positive value indicating the score is above the mean and a negative score indicating it is below the mean. Positive and negative scores also reveal the number of standard deviations that the score is either above or below the mean. It can be interpreted as below:

- A z-score less than 0 represents an element less than the mean.
- A z-score greater than 0 represents an element greater than the mean.
- A z-score equal to 0 represents an element equal to the mean.
- A z-score equal to 1 represents an element that is 1 standard deviation greater than the mean; a z-score equal to 2, 2 standard deviations greater than the mean; etc.

- A z-score equal to -1 represents an element that is 1 standard deviation less than the mean; a z-score equal to -2, 2 standard deviations less than the mean; etc.
- If the number of elements in the set is large, about 68% of the elements have a z-score between -1 and 1; about 95% have a z-score between -2 and 2; and about 99% have a z-score between -3 and 3

Bivariate Analysis

Bivariate Analysis is one of the simplest forms of quantitative analysis involving the analysis of two variables. It is useful in testing simple hypothesis of association and causalities. Common form of bivariate analysis involves creating a percentage table, computation of simple correlation coefficient or cross tabulation. It shows the combined distribution of two variables, where the data for each variable is in categories. Cross tabulations are only appropriate for data that is in categories; do not use for continuous data (i.e. age in years, household income in thousands, GPA). It shows the spread of responses across the two variables. It is usually presented as a contingency table in a matrix form. Whereas a frequency distribution provides the distribution of one variable, a contingency table describes the distribution of two variables simultaneously.

Binary Logistic Regression

The technique of binary logistic regression is suitable to analyze the relationship between a set of predictor variables and a dependant variable which is dichotomous in nature. The predictor or independent variables may be either categorical or in ratio scale. In a logistic regression model we assume that the P (probability of occurrence of events) is related to the independent variables in the form of logistic function instead of a linear function. The equation used in this analysis is given as follows:

$$\ln [p/(1-p)] = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3 x_3 + \dots + \beta_k x_k$$

where β_0 is constant,

x_1, x_2, \dots are the independent variables,

β_1, β_2, \dots are the coefficients of x_1, x_2, \dots , and

P is the estimated probability

The quantity $P/(1-P)$ is called the odds, and hence $\log \{P/(1-P)\}$ is called the log odds or the logit of P . The logit regression coefficient for a category of variable is interpreted in relation to the reference category; $\{ \exp. (\text{coefficient of a category}) \}$ gives the 'odds ratio', ratio of the odds for the specified category to the odds of the reference category).

Binary Logistic Regression is used to assess the net effects of socio-economic and demographic factors affecting marriage pattern among women. The odds ratios are used to assess the net effects, since ratios higher than 1 indicate that the likelihood of the outcome is greater for the category as compared to the reference category when other factors in the regression are controlled.

2. Qualitative Methods: Primary data has been gathered through qualitative techniques like in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with a range of stakeholders including youth, parents, community leaders, local people, panchayat members, officials, social workers government officers and eminent personalities of the locality. The interview and FGDs covers a various range of issues:

- The importance of marriage and the factors determining the age at marriage of young people.
- The role of youth in family and marriage decision-making.
- Role of religion and caste structure in taking marriage decisions.
- Knowledge about and adherence to marriage laws.
- The causes and consequences of child marriage and intercaste/interreligious marriages.

1.9 Study Area

Paschim Medinipur, popularly also known as Midnapore West is one of the most famous district of West Bengal (WB) owing to its geographical location, longest human history and dynamic socio-cultural nature. Geographically, Paschim Medinipur district is located in the southernmost part of West Bengal. It was disintegrated from the erstwhile Medinipur district and created on 1st January 2002. From the better administrative point of view, the district is further divided into four Sub-divisions, 29 blocks and 8 municipalities. Until then Medinipur district of West Bengal had been the

largest district of India. The present form of Paschim Medinipur district is situated between 22° 57' 10" and 21° 36' 35" North latitude and between 88° 12' 40" and 86° 33' 50" East longitude.³ It is one of the peripheral districts of the states and bordered by various (inter-state) districts of West Bengal, Odisha and Jharkhand. Bankura and Purba Medinipur district of West Bengal borders the northern side and south-eastern side of Paschim Medinipur respectively. Similarly, both Mayurbhanj and Balasore district of Odisha lies on the western side of the district while Singhbhum district of Jharkhand lies on the eastern side of the district.

The history of Paschim Medinipur is inextricably interlinked with that of erstwhile Medinipur district, with which it shares its language, lifestyle, heritage and climate. It represents regional diversity in terms of physiographic, agro-climatic characteristics, social composition, economic development, etc. Geo-morphologically, the district can be again sub-divided into three major parts, viz. Chotonagpur Flanks in the western part with hills, mounds and rolling lands, alluvial plain of the eastern part with recent deposits and finally Rahr Plain with lateritic uplands in the middle part. Nevertheless, it is hilly in the north-western part but represents low basins in the south-east and eastern most. Dense dry deciduous forest in the west is replaced by semi-aquatic vegetation of marsh lands in the east. It has barren lateritic, non-arable lands in the west and north-west, which gradually turn into highly productive alluvial soil areas in the central and eastern part. Owing to its hilly and low basins both in western and eastern side, it is vastly drought-affected dry areas in the west and highly wet flood-affected areas in the east. More importantly, though the Paschim Medinipur district is away from the sea, the natural calamities for instance, cyclone hits frequently in October and November every year.

Table 1.1
Administrative information of Paschim Medinipur District

	Paschim Medinipur
No. of Sub-divisions	4
No. of Municipalities	8
No. of Blocks	29
No. of Wards	136
No. of Police Stations	28
No. of Gram Panchayats	290

³ See: District Human Development Report, Paschim Medinipur, 2011© Development & Planning Department Government of West Bengal

No. of Inhabited Villages		7580
No. of Gram Sansad		3086
Area (Sq. Km.)		9786
No. of Family Welfare Centers		35
No. of PHCs		82
Percentage of Mouza Electrified		76.79 (5742)
Health Care Institutions	Numbers	977
	Beds	5.2 (4858)
Primary School (2016-17)		8014
Upper Primary School (2016-17)		828
BPL families as per RHS		44.53

Source: Government of West Bengal, Statistical Abstract & WBSEDCL, CMOH, Department of Health, Govt. of West Bengal, Zilla Parishad, Paschim Medinipur, Publications of 2001 Population, Census Power Dept., B.A.E.& S., Econ. Review (WB), DISE (2016-17)

According to the Census of India 2011, the district, which has more than 57 lakhs people lives in a small area of 9295.28 Sq. km. It ranks 14th in terms of size in India which is roughly equal to the United State of Missouri. There has been an increase in population from 2001 with a percentage change of 13.86 per cent. The density is more than 636 people per square kilometre and a majority of the population resides in rural areas. The average literacy rate of Paschim Medinipur has increased to 78.00 in 2011 as compared to 70.41 in 2001 and male and female literacy is 85.26 and 70.50 respectively. With regards to Sex Ratio in Paschim Medinipur, it stood at 966 per 1000 male in 2011 as compared to 961 in 2001 census. Around 11.58 per cent of the population falls under the age group of 0-6 population compared to 14.48 percent children population in 2001.

The district is also famous for its cultural diversity. Out of the total population in the district, 18.05 per cent are Scheduled Caste (SC) and 14.87 per cent are Scheduled Tribes (ST). Among the different tribal groups and non-tribal groups, uniqueness in social and cultural diversity make the district identical and indistinguishable rich and it represents unswervingly across the different blocks in the district. The western block of the district is mainly dominated by the abode of primitive tribes while most of the other areas are inhabited by mixed groups of castes i.e. all castes of the mass society. In 2011, Hindus accounted for 85.5 per cent of total population of this district, which was higher than that of the whole the State (70.54 per cent). Conversely, percentage share of Muslims in this district was lower (10.5 per cent) than the State average (27.10 per cent).

Some indicators of Paschim Medinipur vis-à-vis the whole of West Bengal

- ❖ Paschim Medinipur is the 2nd largest district of West Bengal, first being South 24 Parganas. It is followed by Bardhaman and Bankura.
- ❖ As per Census 2011 data, Paschim Medinipur (966) has the 2nd highest sex ratio among all the districts in West Bengal. Darjeeling ranks 1st with a sex ratio of 970. It is followed by Hugli (961) and Murshidabad (958).
- ❖ With 19.1 per cent scheduled caste population, Paschim Medinipur ranks 14th in West Bengal. The SC population is highest in Koch Bihar and lowest in Kolkata in 2011.
- ❖ In terms of Scheduled Tribes population, Paschim Medinipur (14.88 per cent) holds 5th position after Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Puruliya and Dakshin Dinajpur

Table 1.2
Social, Economic, Demographic and Health characteristics of West Bengal and Paschim Medinipur district

	WEST BENGAL	PASCHIM MEDINIPUR
Demographic Characteristics		
Total Population 2011	91276115	5913457
Percentage Change (2001-11)	+13.84	+13.86
Percentage Male Population	51.28	50.87
Percentage Female Population	48.72	49.13
Total Area	88752	9368
Density (per sq./km)	1029	631
Sex Ratio	950	966
Child Proportion (%)	11.59	11.58
Male Child Proportion (%)	11.56	11.60
Female Child Proportion (%)	11.63	11.56
Child Sex Ratio	956	963
Percentage Rural Population	68.13	87.78
Percentage Urban Population	31.87	12.22
Percentage of women (20-24 age group) marrying before 18 years	41.6	52.1
Sex ratio at birth	960	862

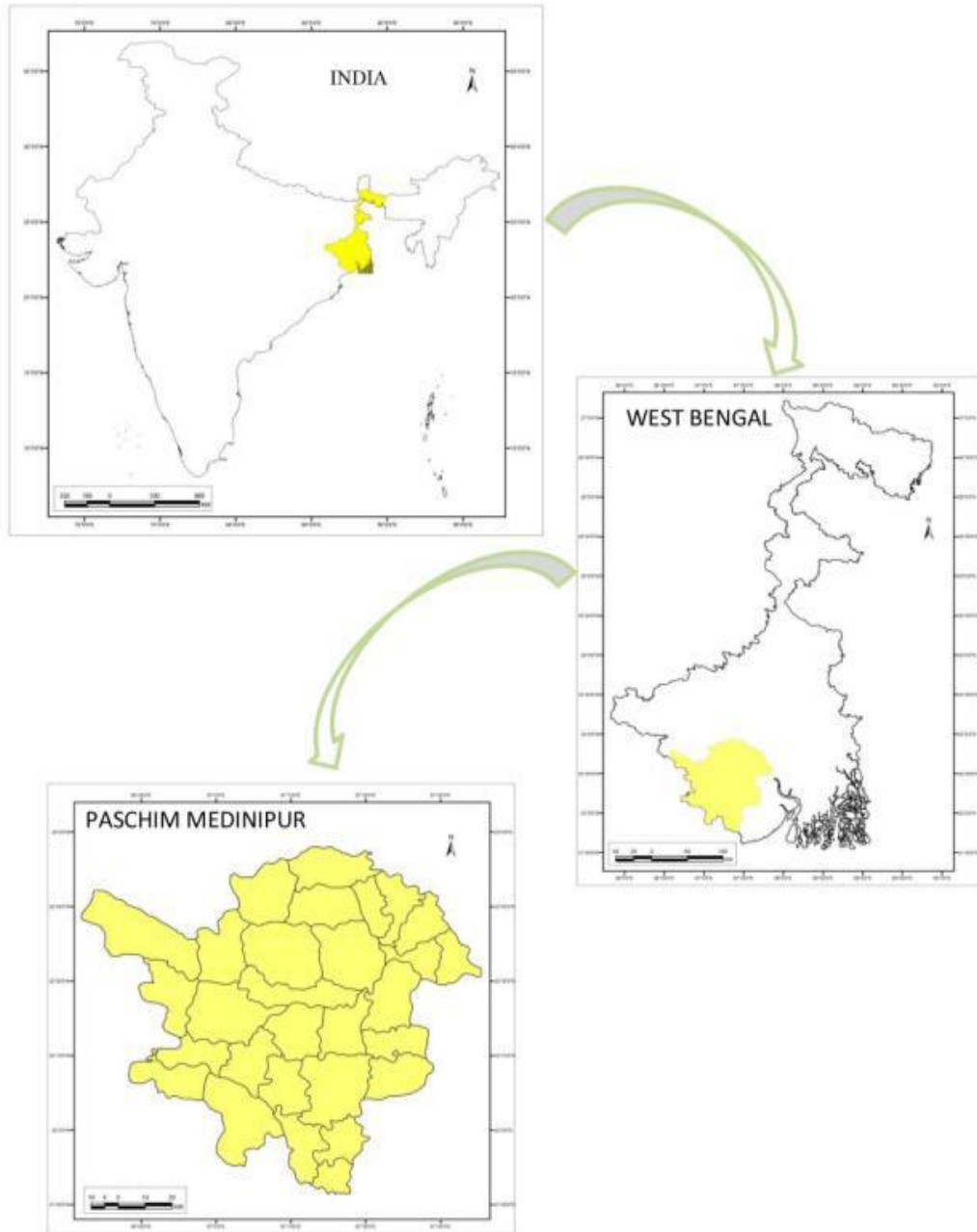
Total unmet need for family planning (%)	7.5	4.8		
Mothers who had at least four antenatal care visits during pregnancy (%)	76.5	84.0		
Institutional births (%)	75.2	77.7		
Social Characteristics				
Percentage of SC Population	23.51	19.08		
Percentage of ST Population	5.80	14.88		
Percentage of Hindu Population (2011)	70.54	85.5		
Percentage of Muslim Population (2011)	27.01	10.5		
Others	2.20	3.5		
Literacy (%)	76.26	78.00		
Male Literacy (%)	81.69	85.26		
Female Literacy (%)	66.57	70.50		
Economic Characteristics				
Total Worker	34756355	2509159		
Percentage of Male workers	76.9	70.0		
Percentage of Female workers	23.1	30.0		
Percentage of Main workers	73.9	60.2		
Health Characteristics				
IMR (Per 1000 live birth)	32.0 (2011)	27.94		
MMR	266	94.41 per 1 lakh		
TFR	1.7 (2011)			
Mean age at marriage (females)	19.2**	19.4**		
Life Expectancy (2001)	Male	65		65
	Female	69		67
	Value (2006)	Rank	Value (2004)	Rank
Human Development Index (HDI)	0.642	22	0.62	7
Gender Development Index (GDI)	0.622	24	0.55	5

Source: Government of West Bengal. Economic Review, 2007-08, Census of India, 2001 and 2011, DLHS 4, Ministry of Finance, Govt. of India. (11307), Jansankhya Sthirata Kosh

**DLHS-4 reference period is from January 1st 2008 to survey date

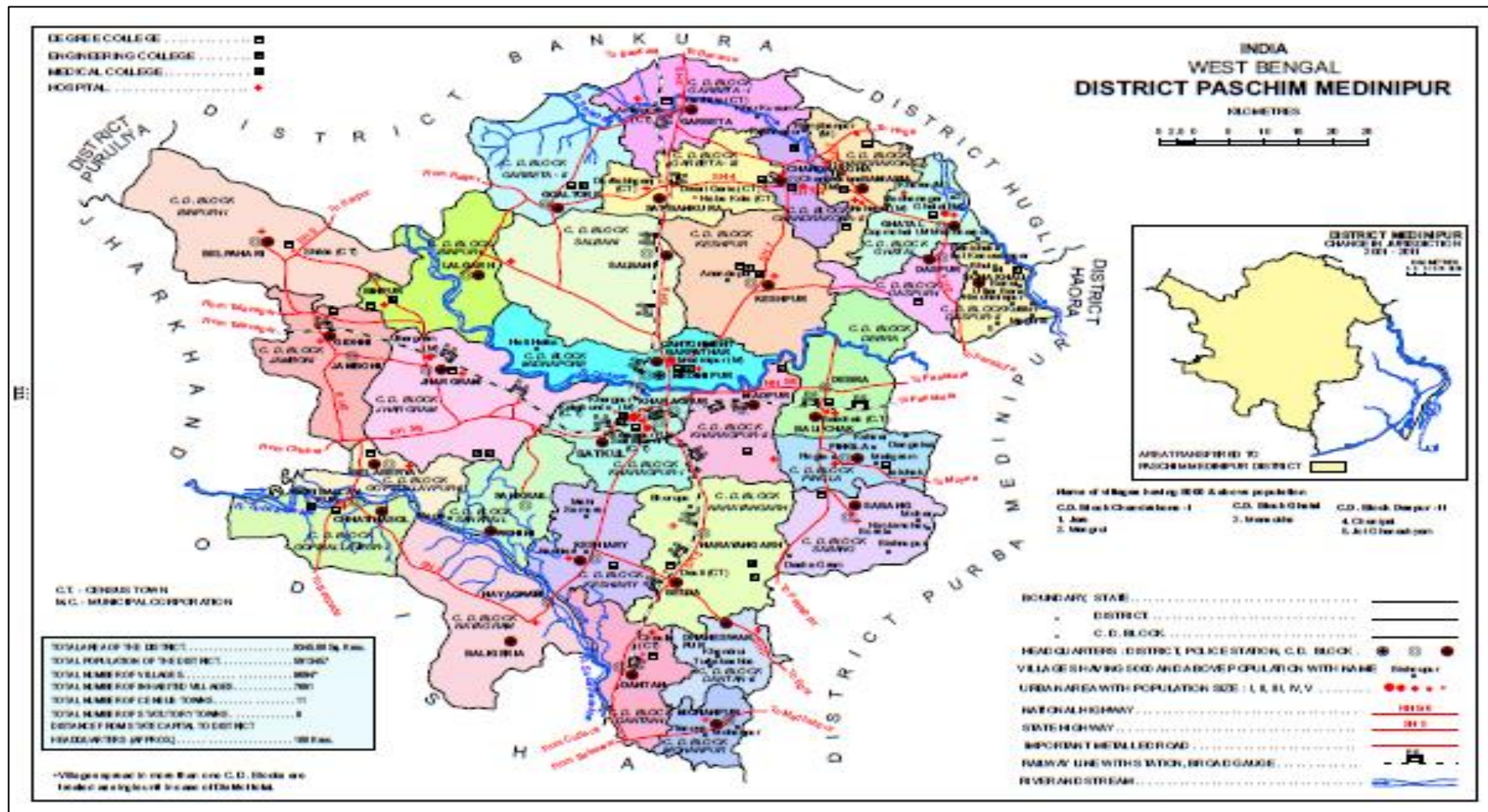
Map 1.1

LOCATION MAP OF STUDY AREA



SOURCE: NATMO, KOLKATA, 2014

Map 1.2
Block Level Map of Paschim Medinipur District



Source: District Census Handbook, Census of India 2011

According to DLHS 4 data Paschim Medinipur ranks 7th with a mean age at marriage for girls 19.4 and 39.2 52.1 per cent marrying below legal age. As per NFHS 4 data, 52.1 per cent of the women aged 20-24 years married before 18 years of age. The Census 2011 shows that 3 districts of West Bengal – Dakshin Dinajpur, Maldah and Birbhum falls under the category of high incidence of child marriage with more than 6 per cent of girls in the age group of 10-17 are married. Child marriage is also prevalent in the urban areas of the state though the more urbanised and also literate districts like Kolkata (13.1 per cent) have a lesser incidence of child marriage. The practice of child marriage is strongly rooted in gender inequality of our culture in particular, the discrimination against girls in matters of education, employment, sexuality and sexual behavior In a survey by the Centre For Women’s Development Studies among 900 tribal women of Medinipur district “it was revealed that insecurity and rising expenses are forcing mothers who themselves married after the age of 18 to marry off their daughters before 18” (as cited by Ghosh & Kar, 2010)⁴.

Paschim Medinipur comprises of three subdivisions and 29 blocks. A Social Development Index was calculated on the basis of literacy, urbanisation, percentage of schools, percentage of workers, safe drinking water, electricity facility, and percentage of hospital bed⁵. Map 1.3 presents the block wise level of social development in Paschim Medinipur district. The blocks have been categorised in 5 sub-groups- very high, high, moderate, low and very low). It was found that among the 29 blocks, 3 blocks fall under ‘very high’ category, 7 blocks fall under ‘high’ category, 5 blocks fall under ‘moderate’ category, 9 blocks fall under ‘low’ category and 5 blocks fall under ‘very low’ category.

The Social Development Index is highest in Ghatal (52.11) followed by Medinipur (50.63) and Chandrakona (49.42). It is lowest in Nayagram (36.03) followed by Gopiballavpur-I (36.71) Binpur –I (37.23), Sankrail (37.73) and Binpur –II (38.92). Five C.D. blocks – Mohanpur (45.01), Jhargram (44.35), Garbeta-III (44.71), Garbeta-I (43.5) and Kharagpur-I (42.69) has shown moderate level of Social development Index.

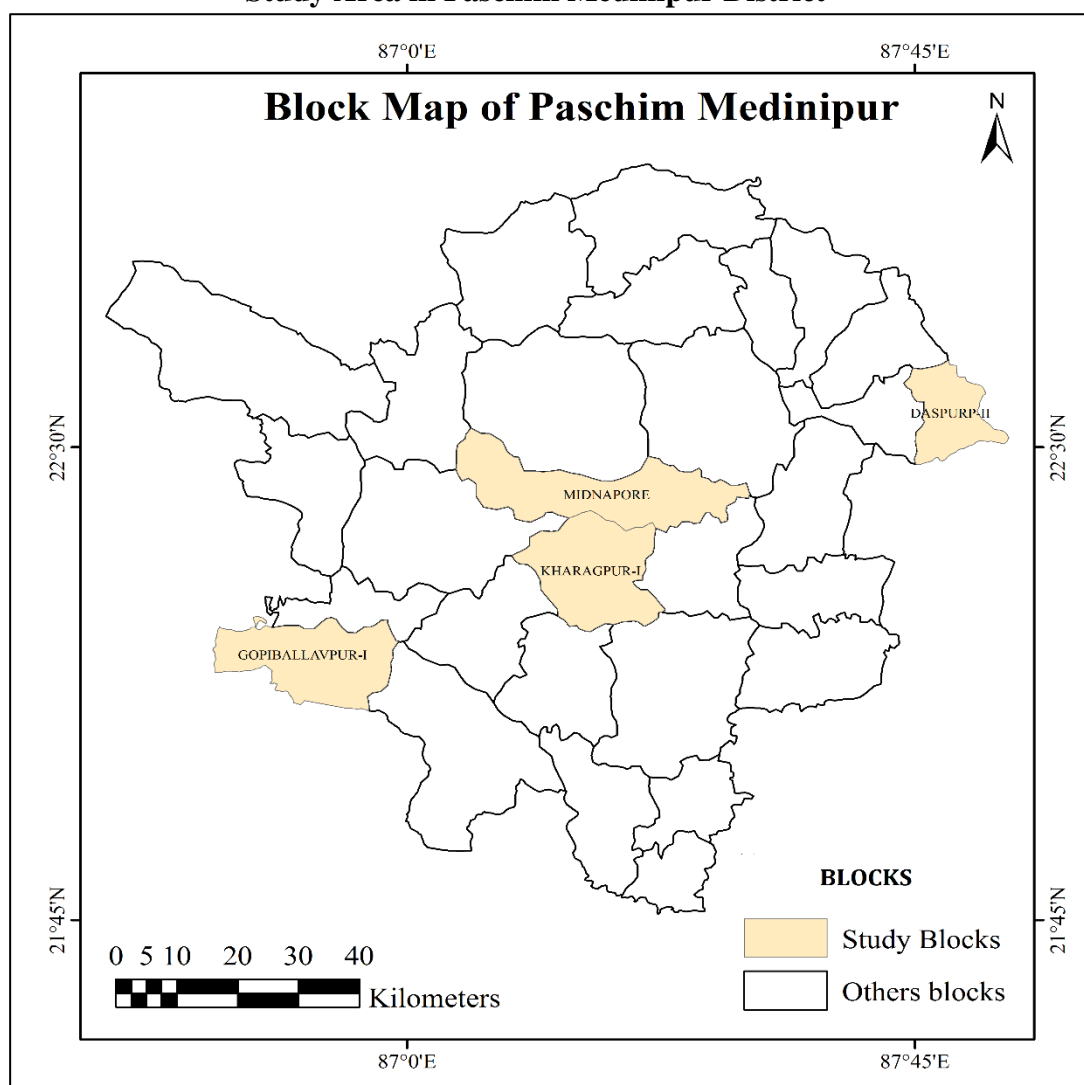
⁴ Quoted in Rajalakshmi (2005:14)

⁵ Source: Samanta R. (2015)

1.9.1 Selection of Blocks

For detailed survey 4 C.D. Blocks have been selected on the basis of stratified sampling. The Z-score method has been used for making a composite index for delineation of C.D. Blocks. Important variables taken into consideration are Sex Ratio, Female Literacy, Urbanisation, Female work participation rate to total female population. Based on the composite index scores, 2 block having high score have been selected: Kharagpur I and Daspur II and 2 block having low score have been selected: Midnapore and Gopiballavpur I. Based on socio-economic characteristics, it is found that Kharagpur I is the most urbanised block and Daspur II has highest female literacy. Midnapore and Gopiballavpur I has high percentage of SC and ST population.

Map 1.4
Study Area in Paschim Medinipur District



1.9.2 Selection of Villages

For selection of villages from selected blocks, female literacy rate, and caste composition were the main parameters. First, all the villages of each selected blocks have been arranged in ascending order on the basis of female literacy rate and by the percentage of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population. Finally, two villages have been selected on the basis of higher and lower percentage of literacy rate and presence of considerable number of both Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population.

Table 1.3
Selected villages for Sample Survey

C. D. Block	Villages
Kharagpur - I	1. Andaria
	2. Deisa
	3. Kalaikunda (CT)
	4. Kharagpur Rly. Settlement (CT)
Gopiballavpur - I	1. Jharapara
	2. Ghora Pincha
	3. Sukamara Sol
	4. Kamalasal
Midnapore	1. Kanandihi
	2. Goaldanga
	3. Kangalganj Patna
	4. Rainchak
Daspur - II	1. Sonamui
	2. Jot Keshab,
	3. Sona Khali
	4. Dubrajpur

1.9.3 Selection of Households

As 480 households is the targeted sample size, about 30 households has been surveyed from each villages. It has been observed that the sample village settlements were

distributed on caste and religious lines. Each caste and community was found living in their specific para/basti which is generally known through the surname of the caste and religious community. The whole village that has been selected for the purpose of survey has been visited, and on the basis of that a rough sketch has been made with important information as location of settlement or household of the various caste and religious community along with number of households. In selecting various caste and religious communities attention has been paid on the sub-caste diversity, other backward caste (OBC) and other (general) caste. Muslims were also found to belong to OBC and other caste (general) category. Hence 30 households as a sample have been selected from different groups and sub groups (caste, religion) as proportionate to their total population. This was followed by house listing in which households with size 3 or 4 has been selected. This was done to ensure the proper selection of married women based on their age group.

1.9.4 Selection of Individuals

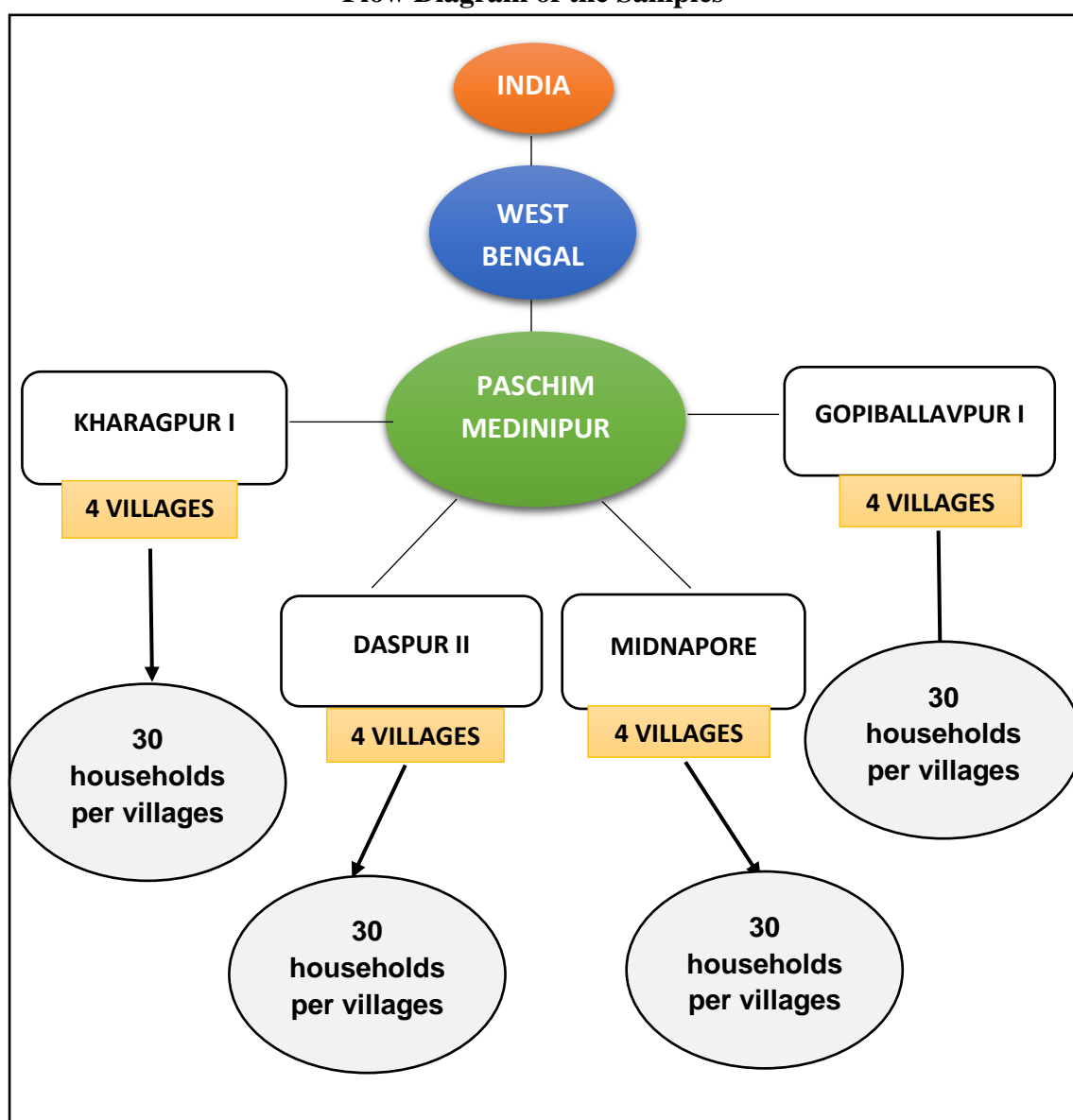
One ever married women from each household was interviewed. As the sample size was 480, it was ensured that equal number of women from each age group to be selected for proper analysis of changing marriage patterns. Hence 240 women of age group below 30 and 240 women of age group above 30 were interviewed in the survey. As cases of intercaste and interreligious marriages are less, snowball sampling was used for identifying the couples.

Table 1.4
Sample Design

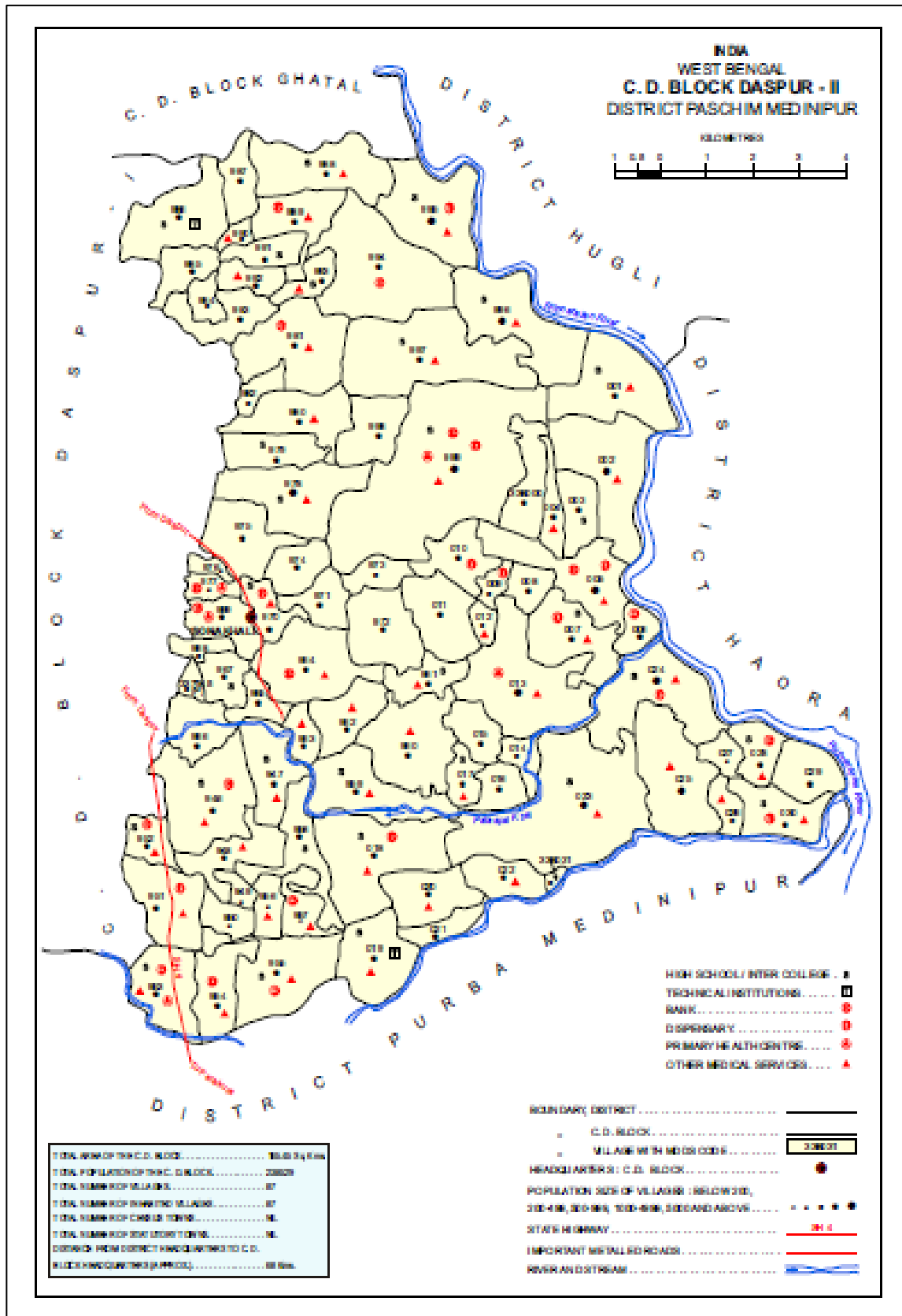
Stages	Units	No. of units	Total Sample households	Basis for selection
1.	Districts	1	480	Women marrying below legal age.
2.	CD Blocks	4	120 per block	On the basis of level of developmental indicators

3.	Villages	16 (4 villages per blocks)	30 per village	Female literacy rate, caste groups
4.	Households	30 per village	30*16 = 480	Random sampling based on the household size.
5.	Individual	1 ever married women from each household were surveyed Snowball sampling was used for intercaste and interreligious marriages.		

Figure 1.2
Flow Diagram of the Samples

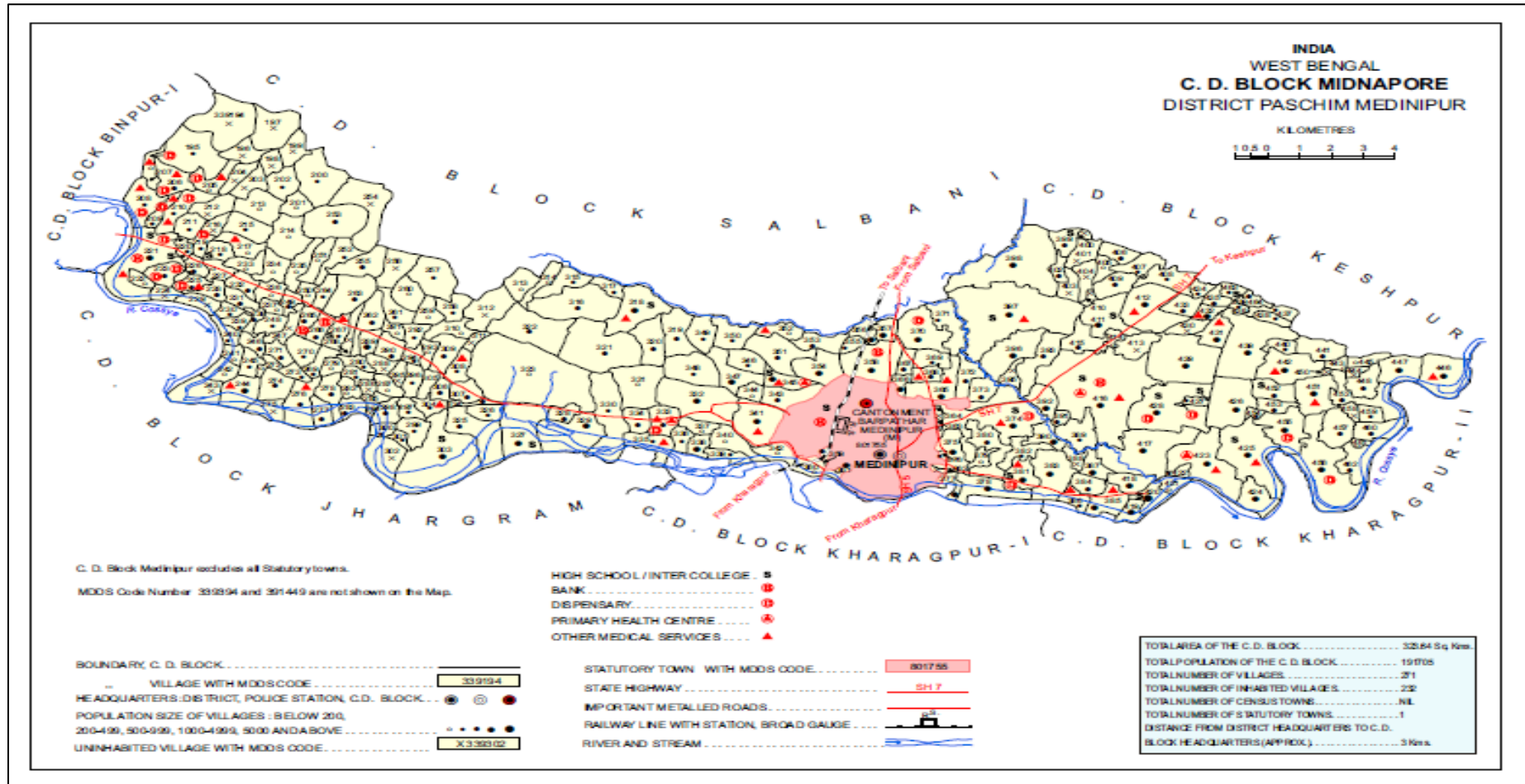


Map 1.5
C.D. Block Daspur - II of Paschim Midnapore District



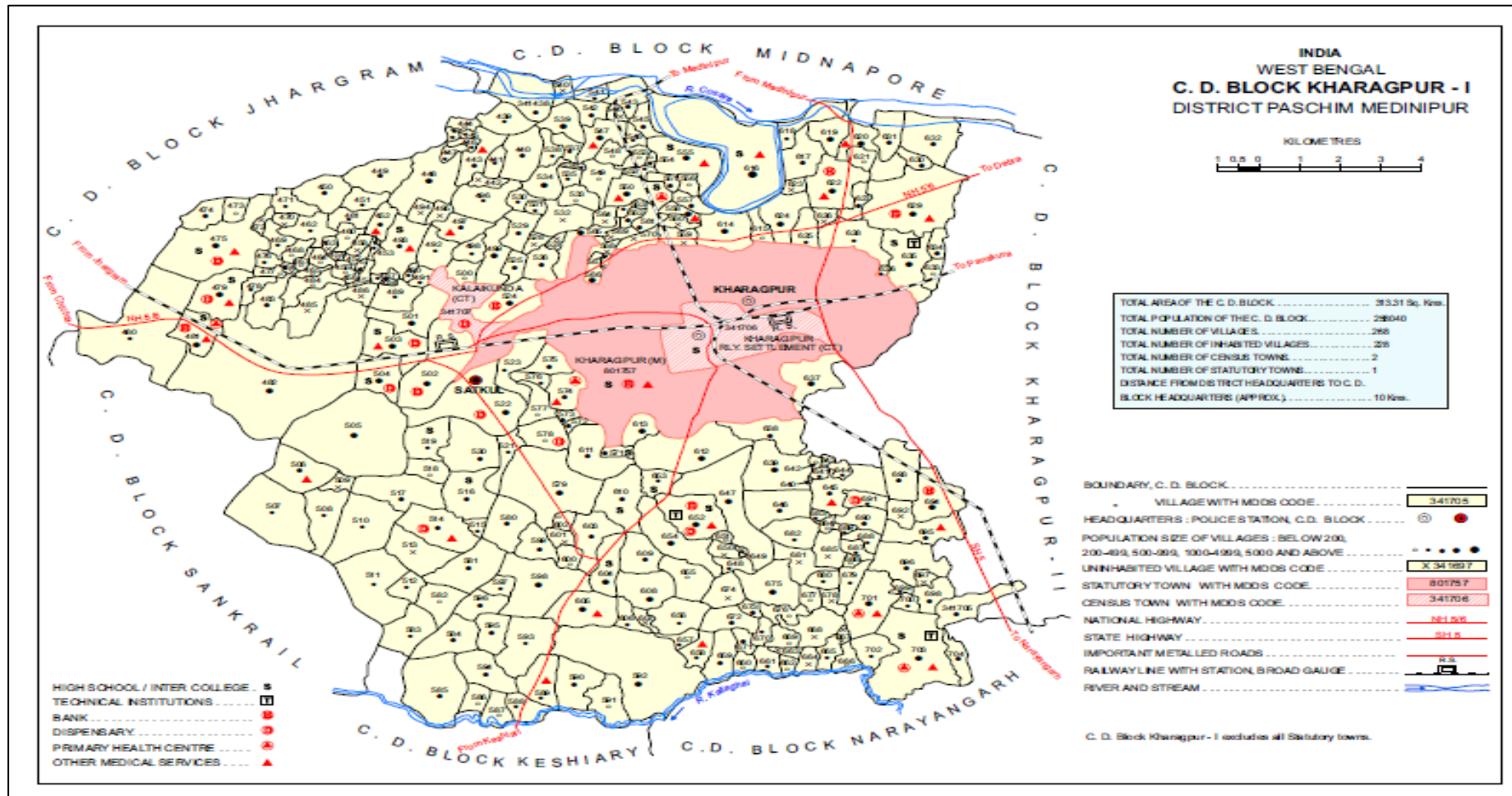
Source: District Census Handbook, Census of India 2011

Map 1.6
C.D. Block Midnapore of Paschim Midnapore District



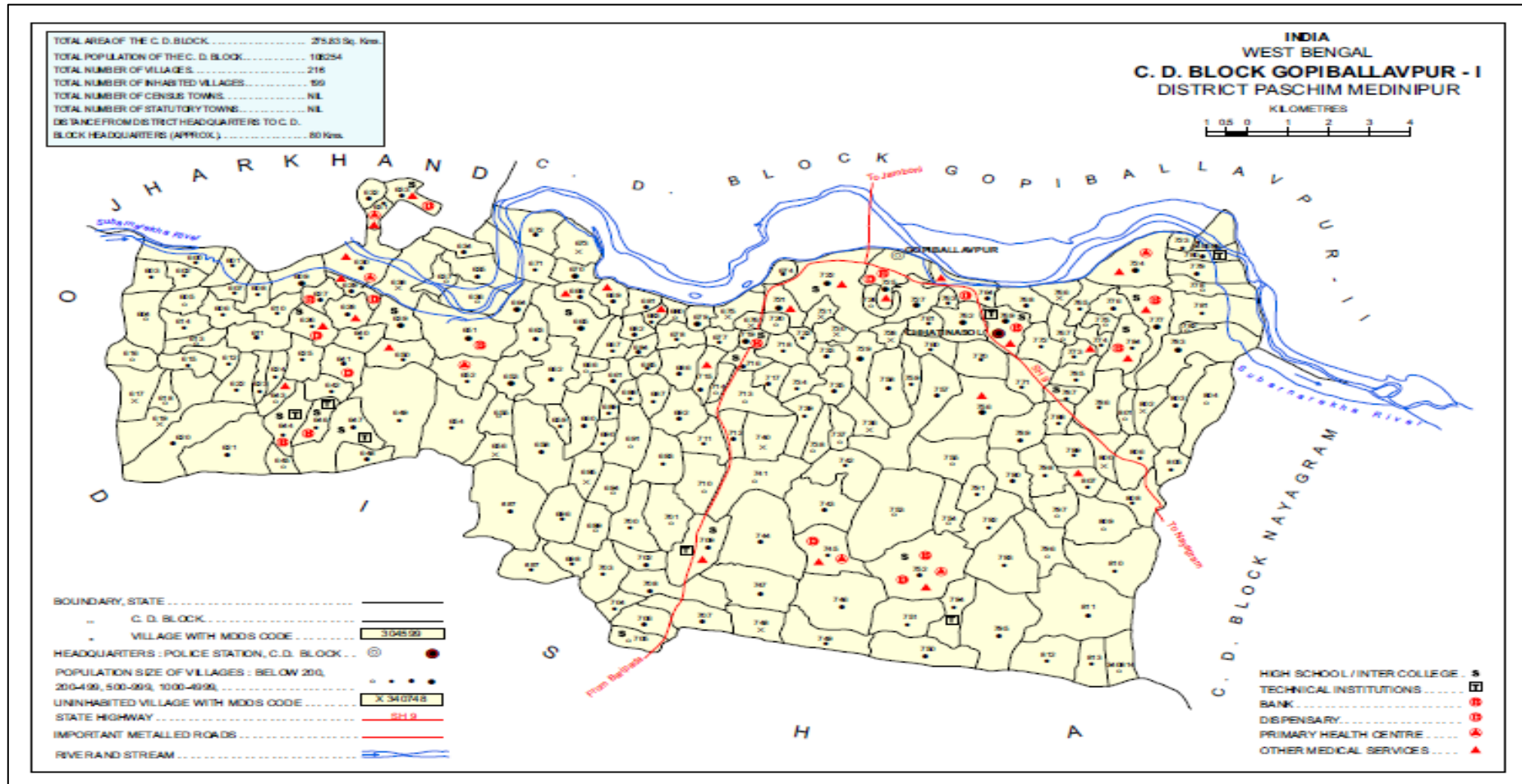
Source: District Census Handbook, Census of India 2011

Map 1.7
C.D. Block Kharagpur - I of Paschim Midnapore District



Source: District Census Handbook, Census of India 2011

Map 1.8
C.D. Block Gopiballavpur - I of Paschim Midnapore district



Source: District Census Handbook, Census of India 2011

1.10 Outline of the Thesis

The thesis is organised into seven chapters.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

The first chapter is introductory in nature and provides the background and rationale of the study, the objectives, key hypothesis, conceptual framework and detailed information on the study area and sample size and discusses the methodology applied in the study and the chapterisation of the thesis.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

The second chapter deals with the review of literatures.

Chapter 3 – Marriage pattern in India

The third chapter deals with data analysis of the overall marriage pattern in India and West Bengal based on secondary data.

Chapter 4 – Marriage related decision making in India

The fourth chapter deals with role of parents and youth in decision making in marriage process.

Chapter 5 – Mate selection through advertisement

The fifth chapter studies the preference of mate selection as predicted in matrimonial advertisements from different newspapers in India.

Chapter 6 – Marriage pattern in Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal

The sixth chapter deals with the changing marriage pattern in West Bengal and the socio-economic determinants affecting age at marriage and marriage pattern. It also deals with various case study of intercaste marriage and love marriage in Paschim Medinipur district of West Bengal.

Chapter 7 – Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

Finally the last chapter discusses the summary of the study, provides some recommendation from the perspective of policy and program and concludes by identifying some areas for future research.

CHAPTER- 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

- ❖ **Forms of Marriages**
- ❖ **Marriage Practices in India**
- ❖ **Changes in the Marriage System in India**
- ❖ **Constitutional Provisions**

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Marriage is a social institution in which women and men from diverse race, region and nationalities intermarried and lived unitedly (Aldridge, 1973; Becker, 1973). It is a dualistic phenomenon “in which were revealed many basic similarities of character structure and epigenetic crises,” and the need for partner is equal for each other. (Moss 1977, p. 293). As a cultural phenomenon, it is considered as a legally recognised relationship which sanctions permanent union between partners with certain rights and obligations. Bachrach, Hindin, and Thomson (2000, p.4) defined “marriage as a legally and socially recognized union, ideally lifelong, that entails sexual, economic, and social rights and obligations for the partners.” Larson and Holman (1994) described marriage as the most important and fundamental human relationship. Stahmann & Hiebert (1987) defined marriage as the primary means of establishing a family relationship for rearing the next generation.

The marriage institution plays a very important role in functioning of the society as through the institutions of marriage a family is born and with several families comes the society. It exhibits strong universalities across time and cultures, but also vary in significant ways. Every society has a different ethos and norms which are followed in marriage. Variation might arise due to several factors of environmental conditions which includes cultural norms, social and political institutions and economic system. Historically, in most cultures, married women had very few rights of their own, being considered, along with the family's children, the property of the husband; as such, they could not own or inherit property, or represent themselves legally. In Europe, the United States, and other places in the developed world, beginning in the late 19th century and lasting through the 21st century, marriage has undergone gradual legal changes, aimed at improving the rights of the wife. These changes included giving wives legal identities of their own, abolishing the right of husbands to physically discipline their wives, giving wives property rights, liberalizing divorce laws, providing wives with reproductive rights of their own, and requiring a wife's consent when sexual relations occur. These changes have occurred primarily in Western countries. In India, marriages are typically arranged and primarily based on the social system and stratification (Desai

and Andrist, 2011; Netting, 2010; Saroja, 1999). It is still seen as an association of two families and not just a union of the husband and the wife (Banerji, Martin, & Desai, 2008, Rao and Rao 1982). Yet with the new era of change and transformation from the past to present and to the future, marriage practises and people's perception of marriage have undergone tremendous changes. Beginning from the weakening of traditional values, state policy, rise in women's education levels and labour force participation, and the spread of Western ideas and norms are some of the reasons attributed to the changes.

In the last half century in Asia, marriage patterns have changed drastically. Among other countries in Asia, where universal marriage still remains the norm, India and China have shown considerable increase in age at marriage (*Das & Dey 1998; Feng & Quanhe 1996;*). “

In many South-east Asian countries, especially in their urban centres, universal marriage for women seems to be crumbling and non-marriage gaining prominence” (*Jones 2005*). Mixed marriages 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). In the 21st century, there continue to be controversies regarding the legal status of married women, legal acceptance of or leniency towards violence within marriage, traditional marriage customs such as dowry and bride price, forced marriage, marriageable age, and criminalization of consensual behaviours such as premarital and extramarital sex.

2.1 Forms of Marriages

The expression “forms of marriage” normally refers to the four major forms of marriage such as — Monogamy, Polygamy, Polyandry and Group Marriage — as mentioned by anthropologist Malinowski. But in the context of the Hindu Marriage System the expression “forms of marriage” denotes “the method of consecrating a marriage union.” The Laws of Manu outline eight types of marriage that existed in ancient Hindu life. The first four forms of marriage were known as Prashasta forms which is regarded as approved or desirable forms of marriages and the last four forms of marriage were known as Aprashasta forms, which are regarded as disapproved or undesirable forms of marriages.

1. Brahma marriage: In this form of marriage, the father of the girl respectfully invites the bridegroom at his residence, worships him and offers him the girl as his wife along with a pair of fine clothes and ornaments etc. Here the father does not accept any consideration in exchange of bride and does not select the bridegroom with a view to augment his own profession etc. A widow could not be remarried under this form of marriage.
2. Daiva marriage: In Daiva marriage the girl is married to a priest during a sacrifice. After waiting for a reasonable period for a suitable man for their daughter, when the parents do not find anyone for their girl, they go looking for a groom in a place where a sacrifice is being conducted. Here the girl is groomed with ornaments and married to a priest. According to the Shastras, Daiva marriage is considered inferior to Brahma marriage because it is considered bad for the womanhood to look for groom. In this marriage holy yajna is performed and to perform the yajna, a number of priests are invited. In this marriage some articles, clothes etc., are donated, unlike Brahma Marriage.
3. Arsha marriage: Arsha means 'Rishi' or 'Sages' in Sanskrit, and thus an Arsha Marriage is a marrying a girl to a Rishi or Sage. References from Dharmasastras tell us that in Arsha marriage, the bride is given in exchange of two cows, received from the groom. The girl is generally married to an old sage. The cows, which were taken in exchange of the bride, shows that even the groom do not have any remarkable qualities. According to Shastras, noble marriages had no monetary or business transactions. Therefore, this kind of marriage was not considered noble.
4. Prajapatya marriage: In this form of marriage, bride's father decorates the bride with colourful attires and after worshipping her, offers her to the bridegroom, making a recitation to the effect that they together may act religiously throughout and prosper and flourish in life. In this marriage it is not necessary that the bridegroom is bachelor.
5. Asura Marriage: Also known as Rite of the Asuras (Demons), in this form of marriage the bridegroom receives a maiden after bestowing wealth to the kinsmen and to the bride according to his own will.

6. Gandharva Marriage: A Gandharva Marriage is one of the eight classical types of Hindu marriage. This historic marriage tradition from the Indian subcontinent was based on mutual attraction between a man and a woman, with no rituals, witnesses or family participation. The marriage of Dushyanta and Shakuntala was a historically-celebrated example of this class of marriage.
7. Rakshash Marriage: This is more like a fairy tale. According to Rakshasa marriage, the groom fights battles with the bride's family, overcomes them, carries her away and then persuades her to marry him. This is not considered as the righteous way to woo a girl for marriage, because forcible methods are used by the groom to tie the wedding knot.
8. Paisach Marriage: According to the Manusmriti, to have sex with a woman who is helpless, sleeping or drunk is called paisach vivah.

Diversified sects of Muslims and Christians view marriage as a civil contract as opposed to a sacrament. Unlike other religions, Islam is a strong advocate of marriage. Muslim Marriage or Nikah is held as a legal civil contract between a man and a woman carried out on the basis of ijab-o-qabool. Ijab is a proposal from one party and Qubool is acceptance from other. According to Sharia law, this contract is considered as integral to a religiously valid Islamic marriage that legalises sexual relation between man and woman to produce children. The contract is never permanent and can be broken at the will of husband and wife. There is no place of celibacy in Islam like the Roman Catholic priests & nuns. The Prophet has said "There is no Celibacy in Islam". The Muslims, at least theoretically, permit polygamy according to Islamic law; however, they prefer monogamy. As opposed to Hindu and Christian communities it is customary that the boy's party initiates a marriage proposal (see Kapadia, 1966: 209-214; Kurian, 1974: 357-358, 1975). As an important institution, marriages are of three types in Islam:

1. Valid or Sahih: According to Hanfi jurists Muslim Marriage can be three types. In case marriage is free from all sort of defects and infirmity, perfect in every respect and absolutely valid, it is called Saheeh. It confirms with all the requirements laid down by the Shara for the marriage;

- The existence of proposal and acceptance

- Presence of the witnesses
 - A competency to the contract of marriage
 - Fitness for marriage
2. Void Marriage: A void marriage is one which is basically un-lawful. If the marriage performed violates the prescribe prohibitions and norms namely affinity, fosterage, consanguinity etc., it is declared void. A void marriage does not confer any rights or obligations on the parties. The children of the union are declared illegitimate.
 3. Irregular Marriage: A marriage becomes irregular whose basis is sound but such marriage is unlawful due to the non-observation of some formalities. If this formality is fulfilled after marriage it becomes regular for example the marriage with a fifth woman can be regularized by divorcing one of the former four wives.

2.2 Marriage Practices in India

2.2.1 Age at Marriage

According to human rights advocates, marriage prior to age 18 contravenes the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which defines 18 as the end of childhood, and thus marriage before that age as child marriage. In addition, very early marriage is said to undermine other rights guaranteed by the Convention, including the right to be protected from physical abuse and sexual exploitation, and the right not to be separated from parents against one's will (Population Council, 2002). The fact that laws have been modified in so many countries suggests that the increased discussion of early marriage among human rights advocates and the publicity generated by various United Nations conferences have had an impact on global norms governing early marriage of women (UNICEF, 2001).

In some countries, the increase in the legal age at marriage may simply reflect the fact that women are delaying marriage. In that event, the law is simply catching up with the change in behaviour. Yet changing views about women's roles would seem to be a factor in the rising age at marriage. It is observed that those who have marriages arranged by their parents tend to have early marriages, and those who choose their own

spouse tend to have late marriages. Education is said to give young women greater influence over the timing of marriage and choice of marriage partners (Jejeebhoy, 1995). Waiting for a later marriage gives an individual more opportunity to meet a spouse on his or her own, without assistance from parents. Moreover, waiting for a later marriage also gives individuals more opportunity to experience the same nonfamily activities that we predict will increase the chances they participate in the choice of their spouse. Thus, both age at marriage and spouse choice may be codetermined, and, in fact, one can observe neither age at marriage nor spouse choice without the other also occurring.

Many theorists argue that exposure to new ideas through media plays an important role in shaping individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and values (Caldwell 1982; Janowitz 1981; Macfarlane 1986; Mc. Quail 1985; Thornton 2005). The growth in indigenous feminist movements, coupled with a more globalized media where women not only feature more prominently than in the past but where more attention is given to the situation of the "girl child," is likely to have undermined traditional norms. Others argue these ideational changes have important consequences in individuals' demographic behaviours such as choice of marriage partner, age at marriage, age at first birth, birth spacing, and number of children (Caldwell 1982; Caldwell et al. 1983; Lesthage 1983; Macfarlane 1986; Preston 1989; Thornton 2001, 2005).

Caldwell, Reddy, and Caldwell (1983) argued that parents are unwilling to postpone marriage beyond the teenage years because of the increased cost of dowry for older brides, an issue that is also said to be a concern for poor parents in Bangladesh (Amin, Mahmud, and Huq, 2002). Yet there is little quantitative analysis of the association between the costs of dowry and age of marriage of women or, more broadly, on poverty as a factor in the timing of marriage. Researchers interested in age at marriage of women have rarely investigated whether an association exists between the time when women marry and their economic circumstances or those of their family. The study by Abbasi and colleagues (2002, p. 33) in Iran is an exception. They attribute the increase in female age of marriage between 1986 and 1996 to the rise in the cost of living after the revolution and the deteriorating economic situation. They suggest that "young people tend to delay their marriage until they get a job," but they don't indicate whether both young men and young women are entering the labour force or just young men.

Bhat and Halli (1999) argue that the rise in the mean age at first marriage in India is due to the marriage squeeze. They contend that given the low levels of schooling, it is not the increase in educational attainment that has led to a rise in age of marriage, at least not in a mechanical sense. Rather the deficit of eligible men may induce women to stay in school. Caldwell and colleagues (1983) also maintain that the delay in marriage and the decline in age differences between spouses in South India are a function of the marriage squeeze. As do Bhat and Halli (1999), they predict an increase in the education of girls as Indians become more “accustomed to unmarried girls beyond the age of menarche” (Caldwell, Reddy, and Caldwell, 1983, p. 361). To the degree that an association exists between age of marriage of women and increased schooling in India, these researchers would claim that the delay in marriage, caused by a deficit of eligible men, has been the catalyst for the expansion in female education, rather than the other way around, as is conventionally argued. Whether a marriage squeeze affects age of marriage, age differences between spouses, dowry demands, and educational attainment of young women throughout South Asia clearly merits further investigation.

2.2.2 Mate Selection in Marriages

Marriages in Hindu areas of South Asia have a long history of being arranged by parents and the parental family, with no involvement of the husband and wife-to-be in the choice of the spouse (Banerjee 1984; Berreman 1972; Majupuria and Majupuria 1989). In fact, numerous Hindu religious doctrines prohibit the involvement of young people themselves in the choice of a spouse, appealing to both spiritual and social reasons (Majupuria and Majupuria 1989; Banerjee 1984; Berreman 1972). However, during the period of British colonization of the Indian subcontinent, Hindus began to interact with people who had vastly different beliefs about marriage—people who believed spouse choice should be based on love, and that two individuals to be married should choose each other freely and independently (Macfarlane 1986; Smith 1973; Tilly and Scott 1978; Tsuya and Choe 1991; Whyte 1990). Caldwell (1982) argues, “Power in economic decision-making usually means power in demographic decision making” (p. 161). In particular, this power may include more freedom for children to choose their marriage partners.

Lewis (1979) and Moss (1977) have stressed on three stages of factors while emphasising on theories of mate selection in the past decade. The first stage deals with the social or background factors such as religion, social class, education and occupation. Homogamy (or similarity) prevails in this stage. The second stage is the stage of complementarity as it considers the level of personality variables. A more elusive third level has been abstracted from the psychoanalytic and object-relational literature (cf. Moss and Lee, 1975). Peter Giovacchini found that “the psychopathology of the married person is identical or equivalent to that of the spouse” (cited in Moss and Lee, 1975, p. 399). Bowen (1978) concluded that “people pick spouses who have the same levels of differentiation” (p. 377).

Despite the now-widespread prevalence of individual-choice love marriage, arranged marriages are still quite common in large parts of the world, including South Asia (Caldwell 1982; Caldwell et al. 1983; Dyson and Moore 1983; Fricke 1986; Macfarlane 1986; Malhotra 1991). Previous studies of mate selection indicate that individuals whose daily activities are more organized outside of the family before marriage are more likely to participate in the choice of their marital partner (Fricke and Thornton 1991; Goode 1970; Macfarlane 1986; Thornton, Chang, and Lin 1994; Thornton and Fricke 1987). Singh and Samara (1996) theorize that women in urban areas are exposed to modern values encouraging later marriage and are less likely to be under the influence of kin who control the timing of marriage and choice of spouse. In more educated families living in urban areas parents even allow young couples to meet their prospective spouse 2-3 times before taking the decision to get married. Increasing involvement of young people in their marriage exhibit the growing significance on understanding and affection among the boy and the girl as a criterion for spouse selection (Fuller and Narasimhan 2008; Srivastava 2007).

Previous studies of education and attitudes in Asia indicate that schooling fosters an independent outlook in children, which may include more positive attitudes toward individuals choosing their spouse (Thornton, Chang, and Sun 1984; Thornton and Lin 1994). Exposure to school is also thought to broaden a girl’s perspective on the world, increasing her aspirations; opening up alternative opportunities, for example, to work; and providing her with a more Western outlook on life, which can include wanting to have a greater influence on the choice of her husband (Lloyd and Mensch, 1999).

Education also may give parents—because of a daughter’s enhanced income earning potential—a strong rationale for postponement of marriage (Lindstrom and Brambila Paz, 2001). Finally, the marriage search process may be lengthened with more years in school because of a general tendency for women to seek higher status men (Lloyd and Mensch, 1999).

2.2.3 Arrange and Love Marriages

Throughout the ages, arranged marriages have been common and even practised largely in this contemporary world. As a matter of fact, most of the marriages all over the world are arranged by the parents or by the intermediary (Penn, 2011; Mitchell, 2004; Mackay, 2000; Holmes-Eber, 1997; Meekers, 1995). “A parts of Africa, Asia and the Middle East, a significant proportion of all marriages are arranged” (Applbaum, 1995). In western cultures, it is believed that marriage decisions are made up by the individuals getting married (Schwartz & Scott, 1994). However, in India, there is a belief that “matches are made in heaven”, thus before any arrangement, astrologers examine the compatibility of couples by looking at the horoscope of both the partners (Moreno, 1988). Although “there is palpable evidence that on this earth we have marriages where the partners find each other (autonomous marriages) and marriages where the partners are selected for them by a third party typically their parents (arranged marriages)”, scientists remain curious of knowing “how the heavenly angel’s formula works”. Thereupon social scientist from several disciplines have attempted to study the intricacies of arranged marriages. “In fact, to commemorate 1994 as the international year of the family, the UNESCO commissioned a large study on the changing family in Asia” (Batabyal, 2001)

In arranged marriages, parents while looking for a match for their daughter or son considers several factors like caste, family reputation, economic status and in general character of the groom or brides family. It is observed that to maintain homogamy, early marriage is preferred. Marriage at an early age obstructs individual freedom and “is further linked with another structural pattern in which the kinship rules define a class (caste, sub caste, regional group) of eligible future spouses” therefore eliminating “the chances of an unmarried adult to disregard a link with his or her kin group and caste.” Donner (2002, p. 87) mentioned that along with the family reputation parents are also worried about the “unpredictability of emotions and the insecurity of a match based on

attraction rather than careful choice by experienced elders” which may create several complications for the couples in the nearby future. This suggests that there is some ambivalence towards a marriage initiated by young people and perhaps some signs that parents are increasingly unable to demand that their sons and daughters marry someone exclusively of the parents’ choosing.

However, love is still not considered as a requirement for arranged marriages. It is considered that in arranged marriages, love, affection and emotion develops over time. Previously Americans “were willing to marry without love” but recently almost all of them “see romantic love as a precondition for marriage” (Sprecher et al., 1994; Kephart, 1967) and perhaps are more demanding when it comes to love. In Western cultures, youth are liberated “from family attachments thus permitting the individual to fall in love; and love becomes a substitute for the interlocking of kinship roles. The structural isolation of the Western family also frees the married partners' affective inclinations, that they are able to love one another” (Parsons, 1949, p. 187-189). Such a pattern is absent in the Indian family system. Donner (2002) states that in Indian arranged marriages, selection of spouse depends on more important determinants than mere attraction. "First comes marriage, then comes love" as said by Indians.

Nonetheless, the changing reaction of parents towards love marriages points towards the increasing acceptance of love marriage among middleclass Indians. A generation back, a love-marriages signified permanent alienation from the families. However, with increase in education and westernisation of culture, the probability of a love-marriage being socially unacceptable has declined. In an ethnographic study, Donner (2002) found that middleclass parents in Kolkata “were willing to accept a love marriage if the couple come from the same caste, and they will celebrate it in a similar fashion to a ‘normal’ arranged marriage” (as cited in Twamley, K. 2014, p. 9). Mody (2008) added that either such marriages are portrayed as marriage arranged by parents to the society or this marriages are hardly celebrated (Caplan, 1984).

Gupta & Singh, (1982) in their “study involving 50 couples from India suggests that love in love marriages decreases somewhat over time but love in arranged marriages grows over time and that love in arranged marriages may ultimately surpass the love that occurs in love marriages” (as cited in Epstein, Pandit, & Thakar, 2013; p. 341). Yelsma & Athappilly (1988) analysed the satisfaction level of “Indian arranged married

couple” and “American companionate married couples” and found that arranged marriage couples in India are more satisfied in their relationship compared to the companionate married couples in U.S. However a similar study found similar marital satisfaction among the couples in India and U.S, yet pointing that in India, "love is expected to grow as the spouses learn more about each other as the years go by" (Myers, Madathil, & Tingle, 2005, p. 187). Another study by Madathil & Benshoff (2008) found “that the satisfaction level of Indians living in arranged marriages in the U.S. is substantially higher than the satisfaction levels of both Indians living in arranged marriages in India and Americans living in love marriages in the U.S.” (as cited in Epstein, Pandit, & Thakar, 2013; p. 341)

2.2.4 Intercaste Marriages

Inter-Caste marriage is a term used in South Asia and Middle- Eastern countries for a marriage where the couples are from two different social groups e.g. different races, clans or castes. It is related to exogamy, where marriages is allowed only outside of a social group and opposed to endogamy, arranged and forced marriages. Peterson defined inter-religious marriages as "marriages between any two people from such diverse religious backgrounds that their differences in religious values are possible causes of conflict" (1964:219). Historically, the socioeconomic progress in India continues to suffer from the inflexibility of a rigid caste system and caste-based discriminations (Omvedt, 2013). Indian marriages with a shade of inter-caste union sounds like a taboo to the majority even to this day (Corwin, 1977; Malhotra and Trivedi, 1977; Saroja, 1999). Inter religious marriages were rare and met with ostracism and excommunication. Even inter-caste marriages with in the Hindu religion were prohibited. Traditionalism, lack of education, physical and social isolation, and absence of favourable social legislation combined to oppose exogamous marriage, in 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 systems (Jejeebhoy and Halli, 2006; Sekher, 2012). Blunt (1931) observes that the hypergamous marriages are practiced by almost all Hindus. There is enough evidence in ancient Indian literature to show that hypergamy was an accepted' form of marriage. The Brahmins were allowed to marry women of all other lower Varnas including Sudras. In fact the early Hindu Scriptures enumerate two types of marriages, which are properly

described as intercaste marriages. The society allowed the anuloma and the pratiloma marriages under certain social circumstances. Anuloma marriage is a hypergamous one which allowed the marriage of woman from a lower varna with a man from a higher varna while pratiloma marriage (hypogamous) allowed the woman from a higher varna to marry a person from a lower varna. Of the two types of marital practices, “anuloma” and “pratiloma”, anuloma marriage was considered preferable to pratiloma marriage. Pratiloma marriage was very much discouraged and even condemned.

Contrary to expectations held for the generations after independence, rising levels of economic development and education in India did not result in the disappearance of caste-based loyalties in social life. The scholarship that explains the continued resilience of caste boundaries has put forward three principle arguments. One view argues that the continued relevance of caste identity is rooted in the practices of refashioning, whereby lower ranked groups have adopted new names, customs, and practices for the purpose of moving up the rank ladder (Srinivas 1962). Another view contends that by classifying themselves as separate ethnic groups, caste groups have redefined divisions among themselves (Jaffrelot 2003). Where the state has recognized these differences in their census enumeration (Dirks 2001), or in affirmative action policies to compensate for past discrimination or persistent economic and social backwardness, it has assisted in this process. Still others situate the persistence, and even enhancement, of caste divisions in the culturalization of caste. Instead of representing descent-based disparity, this perspective argues, the institution of caste is being viewed as a site of multicultural coexistence.

The research that has been done on caste and intermarriage in India suggests that even well-educated, urban-dwelling Indians still largely adhere to traditional caste norms when it comes to marriage. Using data gathered from matrimonial advertisements and interviews with middle-income marriage market participants in West Bengal, Banerjee et al (2009) study the effect of caste and a number of other variables on marriage outcomes. They find a strong choice for within-caste marriage across all castes, but find that the “cost” that individuals pay—by not maximizing their preferences on other attributes—is relatively low. Since the authors focus on marriage outcomes and not preferences, particularly those related to boundary-crossing, they capture the effects of preferences alongside a number of other attributes that inform the eventual selection of

the marriage partner. So, for instance, a woman interested in inter-caste marriage, on meeting men outside of her own caste, may not find the educational background, height, or personality of the individuals she meets agreeable. The outcome in such a case looks like a preference against boundary-crossing when in fact this individual may have been quite prepared to engage in such behaviour. By focusing on outcomes rather than preferences, Banerjee et al (2009) are then not able to capture accurately the underlying pattern of preferences for caste related boundary-crossing in the marriage market.

In contrast, Dugar, Bhattacharya, and Reiley (2011) study preferences instead of eventual outcomes in the arranged marriage market in West Bengal. They conduct a series of experiments by placing fictitious matrimonial advertisements for grooms in a leading Bengali language newspaper and observe how brides in the marriage market respond to variations in the reported income-level of these grooms. They find a strong in-group preference among the three groups they examined, which included two upper-caste sub-castes and one scheduled caste sub-caste. Dugar et al (2011) then go on to estimate the amount of income an out-group groom must report before a bride will respond to his advertisement. But both Banerjee et al (2009) and Dugar et al (2011) examine West Bengal and, thus, neither allows for regional comparison, leaving open the question of whether West Bengal is anomalous. This is important because caste, at least traditionally, is quite local in nature and scholars have noted regional variation in caste practices, as well as in caste politics (Bayly 1998; Gupta 1997, 2000, 2005; Rao 1990; Rudolph and Rudolph 1967; Srinivas 1995).

Ross (1961) observed that nearly two-thirds of men favour intercaste marriages while women favour it less. Most of them qualified their answers by saying that the couple must be financially self-sufficient. Shah (1964) asked the students whether they would marry within their own caste or outside. More than one-third (35 percent) expressed readiness to marry outside their caste. It is interesting to find that a majority of them would do so provided their partners are of higher status level than theirs. Gore (1968) found that nearly nine out of ten were not in favour of intercaste or inter-sub caste marriages. In addition, some studies have noted a widening of caste boundaries amongst the middle classes so that some inter-caste marriage is permissible (Pache Huber 2004; Corwin 1977; Donner 2002). Corwin (1977) argues that these inter-caste marriages are only tolerated when they fit within the local social ranking, i.e. only those

of a similar status can marry one another. On the whole, though the literature points to a preference for a parentally arranged marriage within the same caste or sub-caste group. The practice of bride dowry is still prevalent, despite a law passed in 1961 which banned the practice (Bradley and Tomalin 2009).

2.2.5 Acceptance of Mixed Marriages in Indian Families

Researches were also taken up to study the reaction of the natal families to intercaste marriage as this is an important and immediate consequence of such a marriage. The reaction of the parents reflects to a certain extent the reaction of the society and therefore the approval or disapproval of the society can be better understood in the background of the reaction of the parents. The favourable or adverse reaction of the natal family also makes for or mars the happiness of the new family to a great extent. One of the factors which creates this conflict is the breach of the norms of morality involved in such marriages. According to Hindu tradition, marriage between the teacher and the taught is unimaginable. The relation between a teacher and his student is considered to be identical to that between the father and his daughter; nay, it goes even beyond that, when a student is made to believe that the teacher is identical to God. In view of this, sexual relation between the two is naturally considered reprehensible. The older generation with deep rooted faith in the traditional norms cannot itself lend its support to the marriage, which the youngsters contraction their own accord. Thus, while the children ignore the tradition, the parents are weighed down with it and the consequence is conflict.

The probable reason for the poor adjustment with parents-in-law, parents and kins (including only parents and parents-in-law) among mixed married respondents could be that during the first few years of marriage they might have not been very well accepted by parents and parents-in-law. Main reasons pointed out by mixed married respondents covered by case-studies were that, in many cases, the marriage took place without the knowledge of either both sets of parents or one set of parents. Many a time such marriages came as a shock to both sets of parents. The different caste/religious and cultural background of the child-in-law might have been very difficult for both sets of parents to accept.

Another probable reason for non-acceptance of mixed married respondents by their parents-in-law, may be that their in-laws might have had some other girl, whom they wanted to bring as their daughter-in-law. Similarly parents of respondents might have had some boy in their mind, whom they wanted to be their son-in-law. Some parents-in-law might have thought that, they have lost the expected dowry and were hence had the negative attitude towards their child-in-law in the initial years of marriage of their child.

Similar may be the reasons for parents to accept their daughters' mixed marriage. They might have been able to overcome their initial negative feelings after being convinced by relatives and friends over a period of time regarding the futility of such negative attitudes. Their non-acceptance might also have been lessened, when their daughter married a boy whose socio-economic status was good and when their daughter was very happy in her married life. Respondent reported that she was able to achieve good kinship relations, because she converted herself to their caste and whole heartedly accepted her share of responsibility of looking after her in-laws. Another reason for improved in-law relations could be that, their parents-in-law might have been convinced by their relatives and friends that such marriages are very common in these days and opposition to accept their daughter-in-law and son could be of no use. These results are in conformity with the studies conducted by Kannan (1972), Corwin (1977) and Reddy and Rajanna (1984). These studies found that in many cases, parents and relatives whose reaction was unfavourable at first had become cooperative later. This is because, even though the mixed married respondents had lower mean adjustment scores for previous adjustment with kins and parents-in law, they improved to such an extent that the present mean adjustment scores of mixed married and intra-caste married respondents were found to be almost similar. But in case of adjustment with parents, mixed married respondents started with a very low previous adjustment score than the intra-caste married respondents. Even though they improved to a considerable extent at present, they were not able to reach the level of intra-caste married respondents in terms of adjustment with parents. As already discussed the probable reason for this could be that, to start with mixed married respondents had very low previous adjustment score with parents as compared to intra-caste married respondents and being married outside their caste, during first few years of their years of marriage they might have been busy in establishing themselves in their mixed marriage and trying hard to get adjusted with

their parents-in-law family. Because of these two reasons they might have not been able to exert as much effort in improving relations with their parents as they did in improving their parents-in-law relations.

The case studies focused on the in-laws relationship revealed that, the in-law relationship was good, when wife makes an effort to please her in-laws. This was found to be very important factor among mixed married respondents. Their initial poor in law relationship was found to improve at present due to their conscious efforts to please their in-laws, i.e. by converting themselves to the caste of their in-laws taking responsibility of looking after their in-laws, etc. It was found from the case-studies that the reasons which led to poor in-law relation were the non-acceptance and/or the ill-treatment of respondent by her in-laws and respondent's intense dislike for parents-in-law, especially dislike for mother-in-law. However, no broad conclusion can be drawn due to small sample size and few case-studies conducted. Moreover there are very few studies either to support or contradict the present results. More research in same area needs to be conducted to clarify the hazy picture of mixed marriage and to remove misconceptions if any, regarding kinship relations in mixed marriage.

2.3 Changes in the Marriage System in India

Regarding the rules of endogamy, marked changes have taken place. The rates of inter-caste marriages are increasing day by day. Due to various factors such as secularisation, urbanization, industrialization, and education etc. people are changing their attitude towards inter-caste marriage and they are becoming tolerant of intercaste marriage. A number of Acts have been passed to facilitate inter-caste marriage. In 1949, the Hindu Marriages Validity Act was passed which declares, no marriage between' Hindus shall be deemed to be invalid or ever to have been invalid by reason only of the fact that parties thereto belonged to different religions, castes, sub-castes or sects. The Special Marriages Act, 1954 has enabled marriages between caste and religions. The inter-caste marriages have been legalised by Hindu Marriage Act, 1955. Although there is no general approval of inter-caste marriages and these marriages have not become common in Hindu society, the number of inter-caste marriages is increasing. A significant change in this regard appears to be a general weakening of the barriers existing between the sub-castes of a caste.

The effectiveness of unified public disapproval as a negative sanction is decreasing as educated youth become more residentially mobile in response to the demands of employment. It is not unlikely that an inter-caste couple will reside in a separate household simply because the male's occupation requires permanent residence far from his family home. The chances that an educated couple will reside separately are increasing due to the increasing competition for jobs considered suitable for college graduates. Most of the females involved in "love-marriages," inter-caste or otherwise, have had a fair amount of education. Families that send their daughters to college tend to be: progressive in outlook; least likely to attempt drastic measures to prevent a "love-marriage" from taking place; and most likely to accept such a marriage as a fait accompli.

There appears to be an increase in number of mixed marriages in Indian Society. According to Corwin (1977), the main reason for increase in the number of mixed marriages, is the legalisation of secular registered marriages, a part of Hindu marriage Act, 1955, which does not require that, the partners who enter mixed marriage identify themselves by caste and also does not require parental consent. This has provided a psychological weapon with which the parties concerned can counter parental opposition. Other reasons according to Gordon (1964), are the result of general weakening of contemporary family and religious ties, as well as the possession of similar educational, economic and social backgrounds by different castes.

Inter faith and inter-caste marriages may go a long way in bringing about social and national unity in India. These marriages are still rare and looked upon with suspicion and contempt in India, despite the fact that the Constitution of India, social legislation (for instance, the Special Marriage Act, of 1954), and the policy and programs of the various governmental bodies are meant to promote such unions. It is argued that marriage should be in the same caste and community and who so ever dare for the inter-caste marriage face the consequences in terms violence, social boycott, family boycott, and death of the boys and girls. Kannan stated in 1962 that "just twenty five years ago, instances of inter-caste marriages were very few; and those individuals who dared to marry outside the caste had to undergo truly great hardships" (1963: Preface). (Kannan, C. T. 1963 Intercaste and Intercommunity Marriages in India. Delhi: Allied Publishers.) During the past few years, more than 1000 Honour Killings 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 such violence supports the perspective that the younger generation (especially 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 were initiated after the Supreme Court gave a ruling in which the judges termed the high-profile honor killings as acts of 'barbarism' and labelled 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). 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.

The Government should improve the structure of the incentives granted to the couples registering under this act and availing the incentive. The legislature should make an amendment in this act for the protection of the couples marrying under the special marriage act, to protect them religious believers who think they have committed a sin by marrying inter-caste. The procedure and registrars made under this act should also be simplified and can be given adequate appreciation / incentives to promote the inter-caste marriages as well help the couples coming to the Registrar's office for the marriage under this act.

In our country, in the long run, mixed marriages in larger numbers may result in a new generation, which is immune to caste feelings, thus helping in creating a really secular society. Even though intercaste marriages are found to be increasing, there are no statistics available to point out, a definite increase in the percentage of mixed marriage. For example Reddy and Rajanna (1984) stated that, the records of office of the Registrar of Marriage in Warangal District showed that the number of intercaste marriages recorded with the official agencies averaged a mere seven in the district with 18.7 lakh

population, during the period of 6 years, i.e. from 1974 to 1980. They opine that, even granting that all intercaste marriages in the district were not officially recorded, this number is indicative of the very negligible scale of their incidence. According to them, there appears to be no perceptible trend of increase in mixed marriages. There may be many reasons for this. Apprehensions prevalent among people regarding kinship adjustment in mixed marriages would explain this to some extent. It is believed that mixed marriages weaken the relationship of concerned couple with their natal families and calls for a number of adjustments on the part of young and inexperienced couple (Kannan 1972). Hence a careful study of intercaste and inter-religious marriages would reveal how far these apprehensions are true. It is only in the light of such empirical studies that a proper judgment on the desirability versus undesirability of mixed marriage can be passed. In the light of prevalence of such apprehensions there is a need to compare mixed married and intra-caste married respondents regarding their kinship adjustment. To every such marriage social stigma is attached, making it difficult for the couples to survive. Recently the process of modernization, westernization, democratization and development has brought lots of positive changes in Indian society. Notwithstanding the opposition, the rate of inter-religious and inter-caste marriages is steadily increasing in India, facilitated by factors such as spread of education internal migration, industrialization, urbanization, and social-psychological changes.

In today's society intermingling between people from different castes is happening at different forums, be it for education, be it professionally. Thus it should not be a matter of grave consequence when marriage arrangements also involve such intermingling. The Special Marriage Act mandates certain pre-conditions essential for any marriage to be solemnized under this law. This legal provision is indeed a massive step towards a 'broad-minded society'. Hindu Law has no stringent provisions regarding inter caste marriage as such, however Muslim Law clearly does.

The discrimination on the basis of caste and religion are like a halt to the progress of India. For centuries Indian society has been divided on the basis of caste system and religion. The problem of caste system is so deep rooted that it will take a number of years for the Indians to come out of that idea. When it comes to marriage between different castes and communities then it is like a taboo for most of the people. But when

it comes to inter-religious marriages, Islamic laws prohibit them. The main reason behind the enactment of the Special Marriage Act was to provide a special form of marriage for the people of India and all Indians residing in foreign countries, irrespective of the religion or faith followed by either party, to perform the intended the marriage. According to the Act, the bride and the groom shall observe any ceremonies for the solemnization of their marriage, provided they complete certain formalities that are prescribed for the marriage, by the Act [xvii].

The links among social change, the social organization of families, and family-formation processes have been of central interest to social scientists for some time. Because marriage is fundamental to both the social organization of families and the formation of families, the study of marriage has received great attention in this research literature. Moreover, as social scientists discovered the many different forms of marriage processes around the world, the study of how social change promotes changes in marital processes became a central focus of research (Goode 1970; Thornton 2001, 2005; Thornton and Lin 1994). In fact, perhaps no transition in marital processes has been more closely studied than the transition from arranged marriage, with the choice of spouse determined primarily by parents, to love marriage, with the choice of spouse determined primarily by the individuals to be married (Caldwell, Reddy, and Caldwell 1983, 1988; Goode 1970; Rindfuss and Morgan 1983; Thornton, Chang, and Lin 1994).

2.4 Constitutional Provisions

The Constitution of India guarantees equal rights for every citizen irrespective of caste, class, gender, race, region etc. The Fundamental Rights are enshrined in Part III of the Constitution from Article 12 to 35 are justiciable in court of law and binding upon the state. They uphold the equality of all individuals and the dignity of the individuals. These FRs are guaranteed by the Constitution to all persons without any discrimination in the sense that they are most essential for the holistic development (moral, intellectual and spiritual) of the individual. For instance, Article 14 of the Constitution provides equality before law and equal protection of law as a fundamental right. In the same way no discrimination can be practiced on the grounds of religion, race caste, sex or place of birth. Article 17 abolishes ‘untouchability’ and forbids its practice in any form. Due to impact of modern education, technology, migration from rural to urban and the role of social media in the society promotes inter-caste marriage among the new generation

in recent years. However, the old generation or cohort and their attitude owing to illiteracy and traditional belief system still affecting particularly in the rural areas as caste system deeply infectious to every sections of the society. Freedom of religion is also equally provided to all persons under Article 25 to 28 of the Indian Constitution to promote all religions affairs and inter-religion marriage without any discrimination. Though these patterns are changing incessantly in recent times, most importantly these changes required more attentiveness to occur in every community. Since the role of inter-religion marriage is a major key instrument to obliterate the existing system and play a significant role in bringing equal status and opportunities to all religious groups in the society. It also helps to assess the effect of programmes and policies executed by law and the government as well.

2.4.1 Marriage Act

The introduction of Hindu Marriage Disabilities Removal Act, 1946 was enacted with a view to confiscate undeniable infirmities and distrusts under Hindu Law in respect of marriages between Hindus. According to this Act, various sub-divisions of same caste or the same 'gotra' or 'pravara' must belong to make validate of marriage under the Hindu Religion. However, due to complicated in various sub-divisions of same caste and same gotra this Act could not impact more in the society. Consequently, the Special Marriage Act, 1954 was introduced and came into force from 1st January 1955 to provide a special form of marriage to all including Non-Residents of Indians (NRI) irrespective of their religion or faith followed by either party, to perform the intended marriage. And also, 'sagotra' marriages were also not prohibited under this Act despite the olden ages time. This Act contains 51 sections divided into eight chapters. Under the Act, any two persons can get married irrespective of their religion. In brief, this Act provides for validity of marriage irrespective of castes and religious restrictions. To validate the marriage under this Act can be found mainly in Monogamy, Age limit and unsound mind either party. More importantly, this Act expressly acknowledged the importance of marriages between the Hindus and Non-Hindus both in India and Indian's residing in foreign countries.

Due to its accommodative approach towards promoting sagotra and inter-caste marriage therefore, it has made significant changes in the society. Other provisions under the Special Marriage Act, provides related to separation and divorce, which is

also relevant sections taken as a mechanism for this study. Such different sections are however, dealt with different aspects. For instance, section 23 deals with Judicial Separation whereas sections 27 provides for the grounds of divorce. On the other hand, section 28 deals about the divorce by mutual consent between the spouses. Based on the above different provisions and sections of the special marriage Act, this Act is highly recognized as one of the successful enactment in the 21st century. However, still there is many gap, issues and challenges need to be tackled in the present context.

Due to strong caste hierarchy, intercaste marriage, elopement, pre-marital relationship are perceived as a symbol of huge dishonour to the family reputation thus leading to honour based violence. The Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Act, 2006 makes the provision for protection of individual rights of human beings and the constitution of a National Human Rights Commission, State Human Rights Commission and Human Rights Courts for better protection of human rights of individuals. Law Commission of India in its Report No. 242 of 2012 has recommended a suggestive Legal Framework for proposal of bill entitled 'Prevention of Interference with the Freedom of Matrimonial Alliances (in the name of Honour and Tradition)'. However, honour killings are carried out without any fear of law and police officials have got no idea to tackle the problem and add to that the government's casual way of dealing with such a serious crisis. The government institutions are rarely held accountable for failure, and rife with bureaucratic apathy. To attain a genuine deterrent for perpetrators of honour crime will require a more better-trained police, more judges and more efficient court. It is the need for society to look deep within and work to root out the evil of honour crime from our mindset.

CHAPTER- 3

MARRIAGE PATTERNS IN INDIA

- ❖ **Overview of Female Marriage in India**
- ❖ **Trends in Age at Marriage in India**
- ❖ **Trends in Intercaste Marriages in India**

Chapter 3

Marriage Patterns in India

Marriage can be recognized differently by a state, an organisation or a religious authority. It can also be recognised by a tribal group, a local community or peers. In India, marriage is viewed as a sacrament, which is believed to be settled in heaven and performed on earth. In many modern societies, it is viewed as a contract which begins with a government issued license and can end with the government issued writ of divorce. In other word it is called as civil marriage or court marriages which take place without irrespective of any religious affiliation. Marriage can be ended through divorce or dissolution of marriage. Monogamy refers to a marriage which restricts the individual to one spouse during their lifetime or at any one time. Under this system, at any given time a man can have only one wife. It is the universal form of marriage and is prevalent in all-modern industrial societies. Polygamy is not well accepted in many societies and is considered against law. However, it is practised in many culture and civilizations all over the world. Forced marriages are considered illegal in some jurisdictions. In legal terms, most sovereign states and other jurisdictions limit marriage to two persons of opposite gender in the gender binary. Several countries and some other jurisdictions have legalized same-sex marriage since 2000.

The third chapter deals with the marriage patterns in India with special focus on West Bengal. It captured the details of the prevalent age at marriage, intercaste and interreligious marriages in India. The chapter is based on the analysis of secondary data from Census, National Family Health Survey, India Human Development Survey and survey data from India 2004 National Election Study.

3.1 Overview of Female Marriage in India

In India marriage institution differentiates from the institution of marriages in western culture. It differs based on the diversity of Indian marriage customs and by the possibility that Indian marriage patterns have changed over time. Childhood marriages and two-stage marriages are on decline thus there is a rise in age at marriage and further increase in age at cohabitation and age at first birth. Education has played a major role

to generate new social norms that tend to displace norms derived from traditions. Although age patterns of marriage in India do not have close resemblance to western marriage patterns but age pattern of cohabitation and first birth do. Although the incidence of arranged marriages continues to be high in India and more importantly accepted without any difficulty as a legitimate way of finding a mate, in the modern period there is an inexorable rise of so-called “love marriages” (i.e. self-arranged marriages on the basis of choice of prospective spouses which are not guided by parents or family members at initial stage). It is mainly with the expanding social reform and female emancipation that accompanied literacy and economic growth which brings in gradual demise of arranged marriages in India.

3.2 Trends in Age at Marriage in India

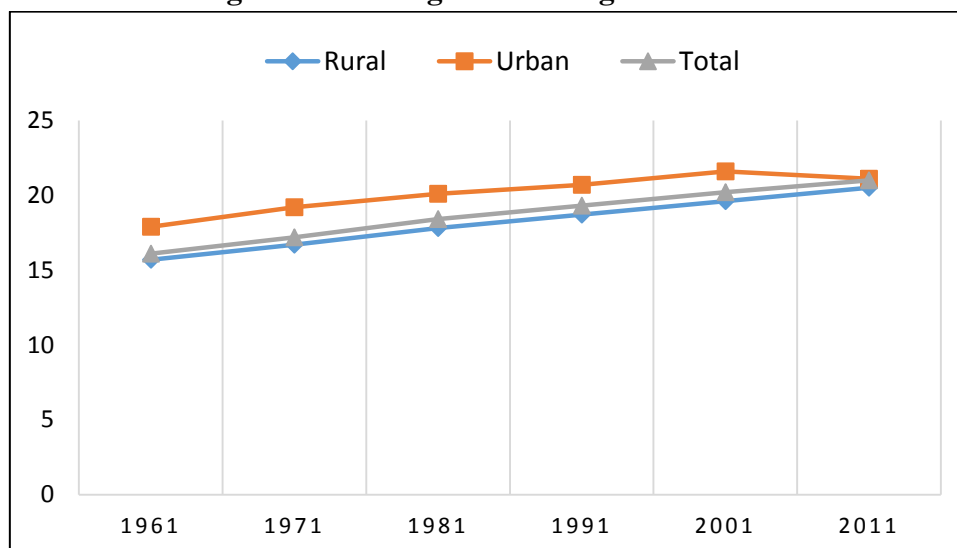
3.2.1 Temporal Variation in Female Age at Marriage

According to the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW), “India is one of the 20 countries in the world – including Niger, Bangladesh that still practice child marriage”. Over the decades, there has been influential research focused on the prevalence, causes and consequences of child marriages. Recent period has shown marked changes in the social attitude towards early marriage and a reversal of the long prevalent downward trend in age at marriage. According to 2011 census, it is observed that, at the national level, the proportion of currently married women to total number of women is reported to be 49.9 per cent as against 47.7 per cent in Census 2001. The proportion of widowed has increased from 6.4 per cent in Census 2001 to 7.4 per cent in Census 2011 for females. However, child marriage is still rampant in India, with almost one in every three married woman having been wed while she was still under the age of 18 years. About 69 percent of young women between the ages of 20 and 24 are married and only about 3 per cent of women age 30-34 were unmarried according to the Census of India, 2011. According to the SRS (2010) data, only 12.2 percent of Indian women remain unmarried at the end of the prime marrying years, broadly taken as 20-29 years, and 1.8 percent of Indian women remain unmarried by the time they reach the age of 35 years (Srinivasan et. al. 2015). *See Appendix*

However, the prevalence of child marriage among the youngest adolescents has decreased and the age at marriage has increased gradually over the last few decades.

As seen in figure 3.1, the Singulate Mean Age at Marriage (SMAM) has increased by one year per decade from 1961 – 2011. Based on Census 2011 data, SMAM for females in India in 2011 is 21 years. It has increased from 15.7 in 1961 to 20.5 in 2011 in rural areas and from 17.9 in 1961 to 21.1 in 2011 in urban areas of India.

Figure 3.1
Singulate Mean Age at Marriage for Females



Source: Census of India

Table 3.1 shows the SMAM for females based on National Family Health Survey (NFHS) data from 1992-93 to 2005-06. It is found that there is a sudden decrease in Singulate Mean Age at Marriage (SMAM) for females in NFHS 2 (1998-99). Moreover, it remained constant for females in urban areas. The SMAM for rural areas and urban areas for female has shown a minimum difference of 2 years. It is mainly due to the difference in level of socio-economic development. However, it has further increased in NFHS 3 for both rural and urban areas.

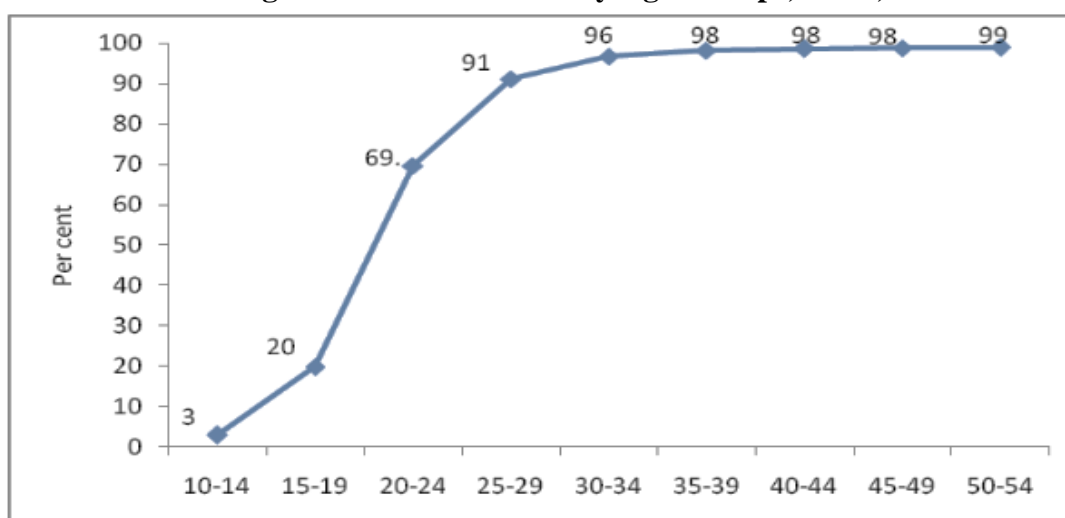
Table 3.1
Temporal Variation of SMAM for Females in India

YEAR	SMAM FOR FEMALES		
	Rural	Urban	Total
NFHS 1	19.3	21.5	20.0
NFHS 2	19.0	21.5	19.7
NFHS 3	20.3	22.4	21.3

Source: Computed from NFHS data

Even today the tradition of marriage is looked upon as a religious and community obligation and not as means of achieving personal happiness, still has a mass hold in India. The society even today does not approve of the state of being unmarried. A look at the figure 3.2 shows the typical age pattern of marriage among females. It is revealed that almost 3 per cent of marriages took place in the age group 10-14 which sharply rose to 20 per cent in the age group 15-19 and 69 per cent by age 24. More than 90 per cent of the females got married by age 29 and only 1 per cent remained spinsters at the end of their reproductive life (by age 50).

Figure 3.2
Percentage of Females Married by Age-Groups, India, 2011

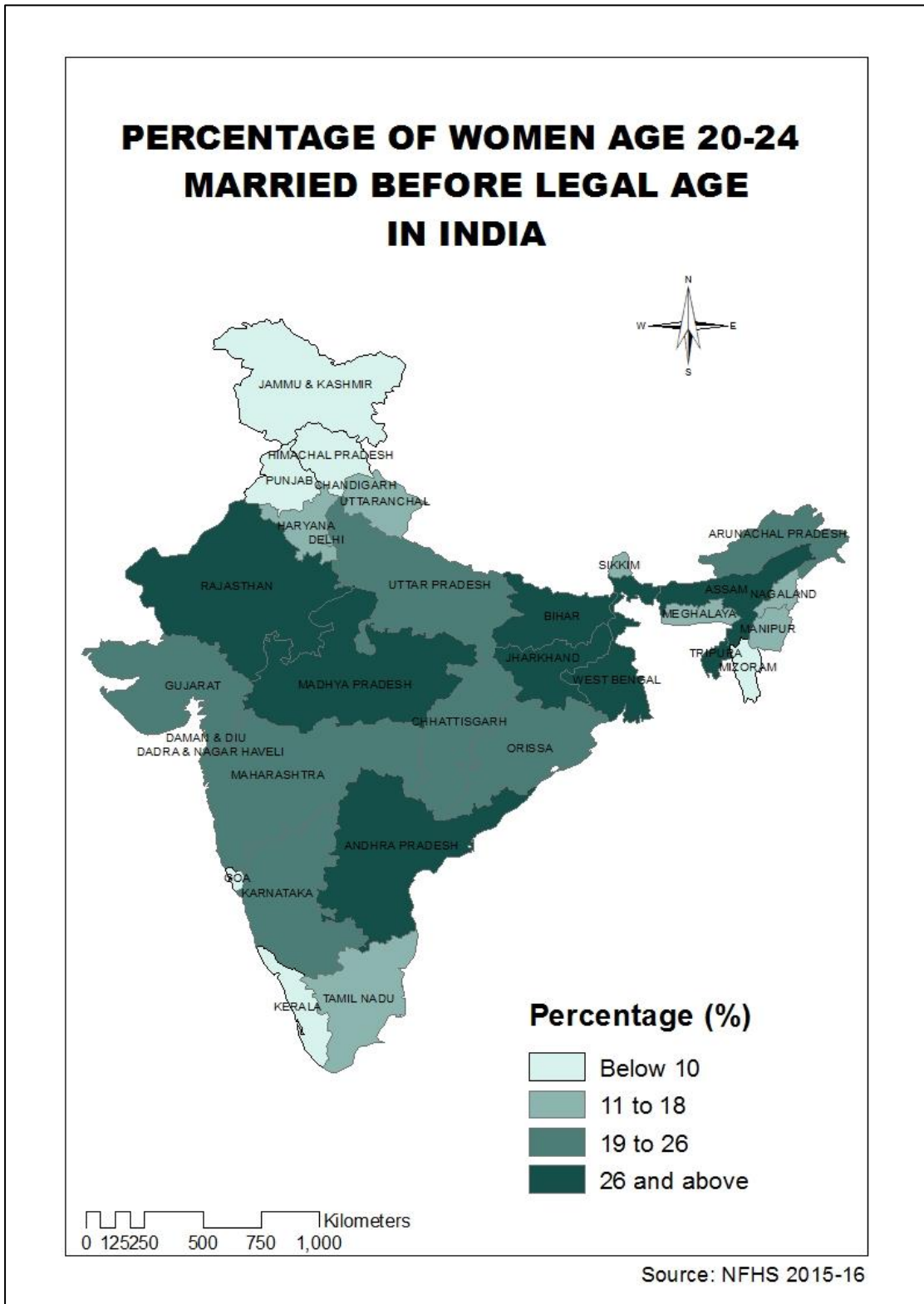


Source: Bhagat, R. B. (2016)

3.2.2 Spatial Variation in Female Age at Marriage in India

As of other demographic parameters, like fertility and mortality, marriage also shows a marked variation across regions. Based on NFHS data, Map 3.1 shows the percentage of women age 20-24 years married before the legal age at marriage. The median age at first marriage for women age 20-49 increased from 17.2 years in 2005-06 to 19.0 years in 2015-16. At national level, there has been a decrease of women age 20-24 years married before the legal age at marriage by 20.6 percent. It has decreased from 47.4 percent in 2005-06 to 26.8 in 2015-16. State-wise analysis shows that West Bengal (40.7) has the highest number of women age 20-24 years married before age 18 years followed by Bihar (39.1), Jharkhand (38.0) Rajasthan (35.4) and Andhra Pradesh (32.7). About one-third of women in Rajasthan, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, and Tripura (33% each) and Telangana (31%) marry before reaching the legal minimum age at

Map 3.1



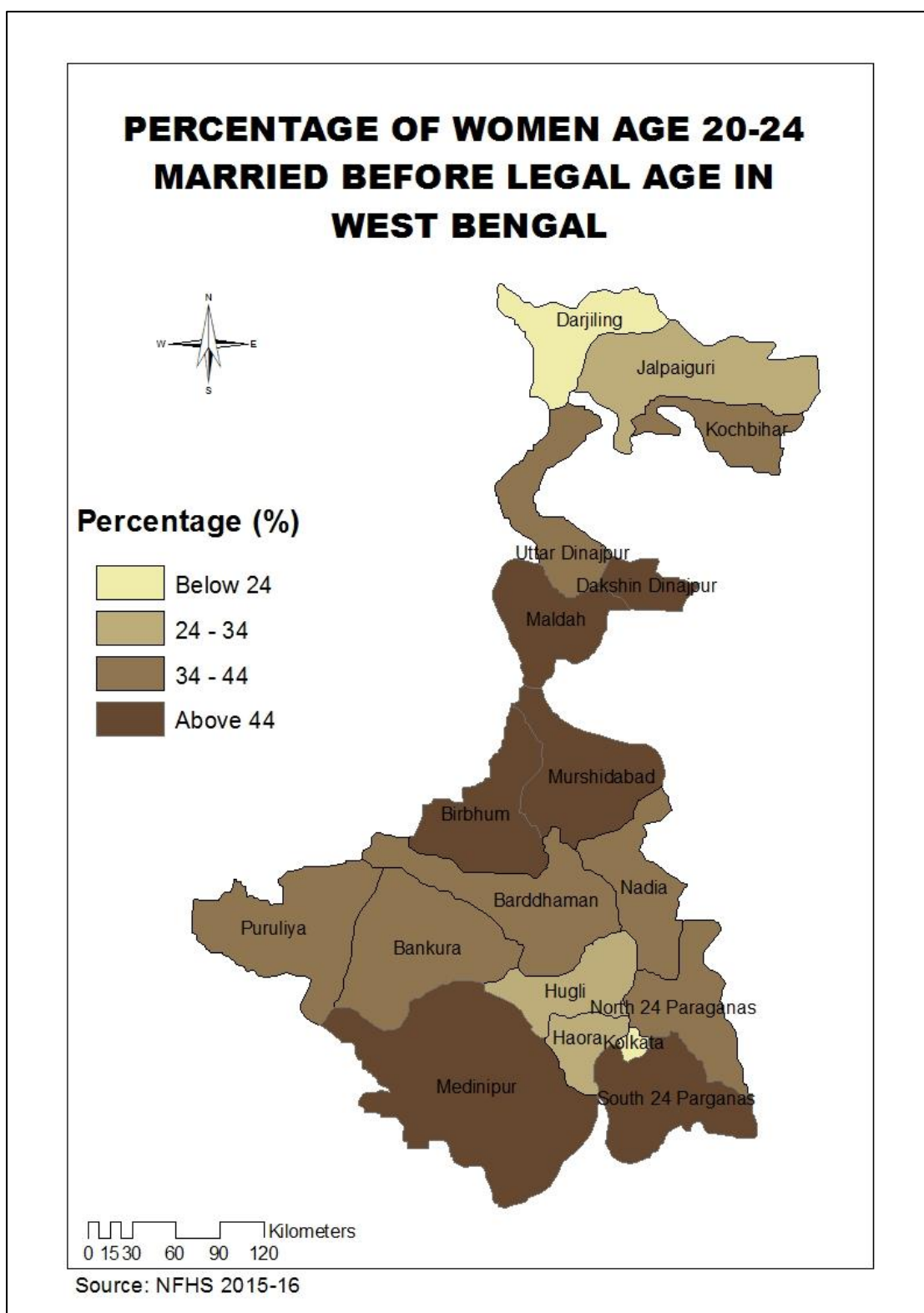
marriage. States having lowest percentage of women age 20-24 years married before age 18 years includes Kerala (7.6) and Punjab (7.6). Other states showing lower percentage of women age 20-24 years married before age 18 years are Himachal Pradesh (8.6), Jammu and Kashmir (8.7) and Goa (9.8).

Considering the percentage decrease of women age 20-24 years married before age 18 from 2005-06 to 2015-16, it was found that the maximum decrease is found in Uttar Pradesh (37.4) followed by Chhattisgarh (33.7), Rajasthan (29.8) and Jharkhand (25.2). States showing minimum decrease are Manipur (0.4), Goa (1.9), and Himachal Pradesh (3.7). However, the percentage of women age 20-24 years married before age 18 is low in these states and varies from 8.6 to 13.1 percent. West Bengal having the highest percent of women age 20-24 married before 18 years shows a decrease of 12.6 percent from 53.3 in 2005-06 to 40.7 in 2015-16. The question lies to whether the age at marriage for females, specifically in the states where the demographic transition is yet to be completed, will continue to see further postponement to late 20s and beyond; or whether the marriage timing for females in India will plateau at 21-22 years indefinitely (Srinivasan et. al. 2015). There are considerable difference in the age at marriage in rural and urban areas in India. Among rural areas, it is high in West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Rajasthan whereas in urban areas, it is high in West Bengal, Tripura, Bihar, Jharkhand and Rajasthan. Contrastingly Goa, Haryana and Sikkim shows higher percentage of child marriage in urban areas compared to rural areas.

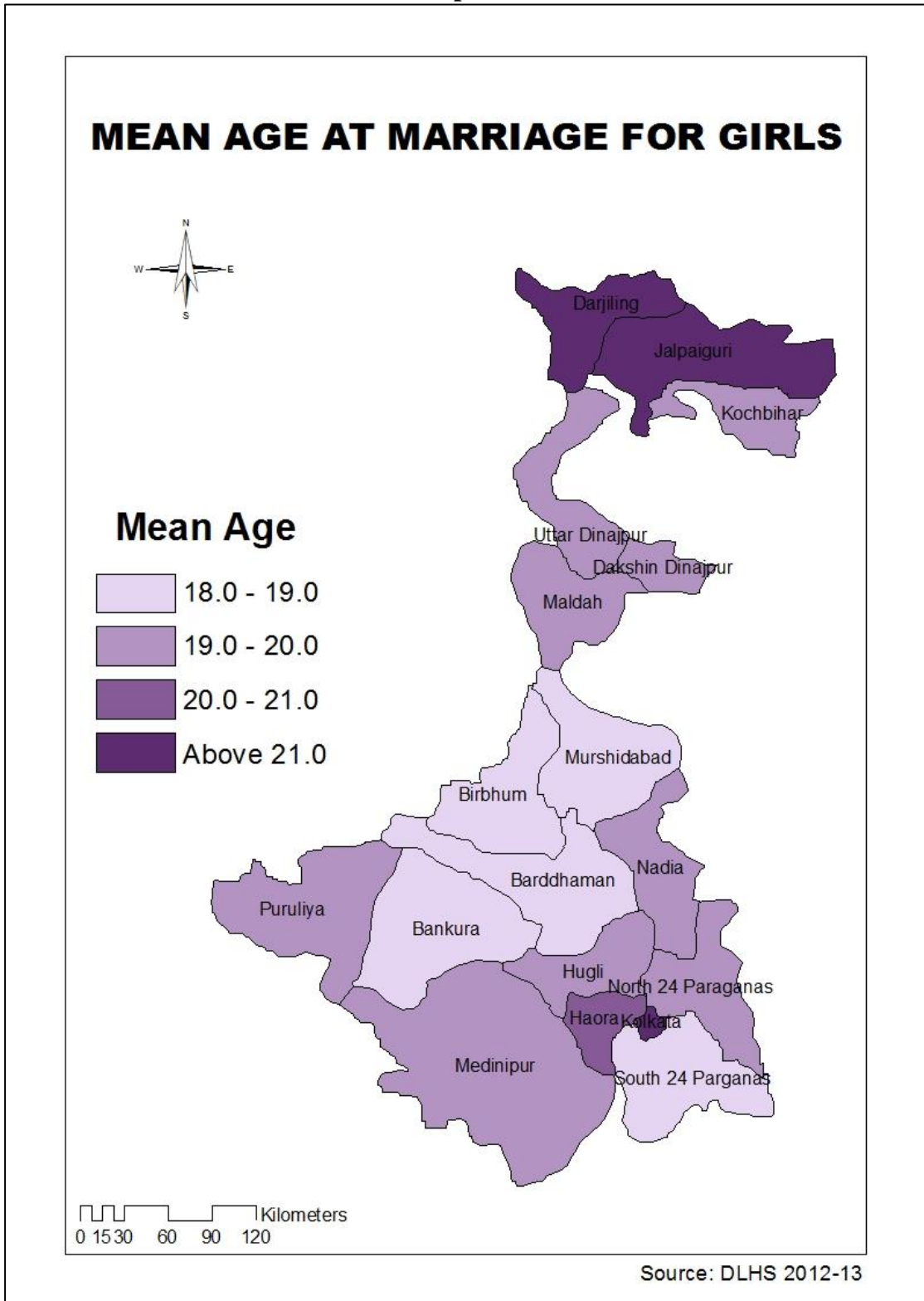
3.2.3 Spatial Variation of Female Age at Marriage in West Bengal

About two-fifths of women marry before reaching the legal minimum age at marriage in West Bengal. The National Family Health Survey (2015-16) data provides a more detailed figure of the prevalence of child marriage in West Bengal. Forty-two percent of women age 20-24 years got married before the legal minimum age of 18, down from 54 percent in NFHS-3. Analysis of the data show that among the 19 districts of West Bengal, Malda is considered as one of the least developed state of West Bengal and shows the highest prevalence of child marriage followed by Murshidabad, Paschim Medinipur and Birbhum. Both Maldah (51.3) and Murshidabad (66.3) having high concentration of Muslim population signifies higher prevalence of child marriage in

Map 3.2



Map 3.3



Muslim dominated areas. Kolkata being fully urbanized shows the lowest percentage of child marriage which is followed by Darjeeling. A detailed study of the percentage of women aged 20-24 years married before age 18 years (percent) in 19 districts of West Bengal shows that the prevalence of child marriage is low in urban areas compared to rural areas. Above 50 per cent of the marriages in rural areas of Maldah, Murshidabad, Birbhum, Paschim Medinipur and South 24 Parganas are child marriages. In the urban areas, North 24 Parganas with 30.1 per cent shows the highest prevalence of child marriages.

The median age at first marriage is 18 years among women age 20-49 years in West Bengal. According to the DLHS 4 data, mean age at marriage in all the districts of West Bengal is above 18 years. The highest mean age at marriage is found in Kolkata. Darjeeling stands second highest mean age at marriage followed by Jalpaiguri. Predominance of Christian population in North Bengal is one of the most important factor leading to delay in marriages. All the district has shown an increase in the mean age at marriage. However, some districts have recorded mean age at marriage below 18 in rural areas.

3.3 Trend in Intercaste Marriages in India

India is still by and large a traditional society with rigid caste system and marriage within the caste is the general norm of the society. Despite legal approval, Indian society forbids inter-caste/interreligious marriage (Mohapatra, 2017). The practice of within caste endogamy is one of the most resilient caste based practices till date as there has been no upward trend in the rate of inter caste marriages over the past four decades (Ray, 2017). At an individual level, inter marriages are considered as a revolt in Indian society. It is more consequential for women since they adopt the caste of their husbands. Mohapatra (2017) finds that even many educated youth strongly oppose inter-caste marriage today and this does not augur well for our society. However, considering the process of spouse selection, we need to consider the institution of marriage system in India as majority of marriages are arranged by the parents, and the spouses barely know each other before marriage (Ray, 2017).

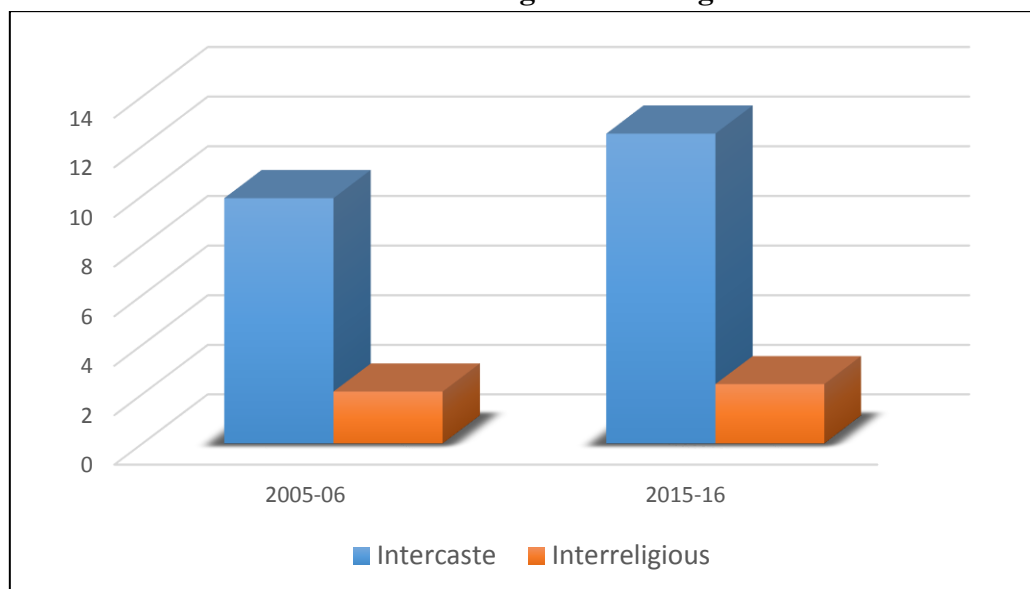
3.3.1 Temporal Variation of Intercaste and Interreligious Marriages in India

The demise of the caste system is not imminent but caste relations are not set in stone. With time, caste boundaries have become weaker in the public sphere. The force of the caste in marriage selection is gradually loosening over time with the recent process of modernization, democratization and development with concomitant increase in educational qualification. But the changes are triggered by love relationship and confined to urban area only. Genetic studies show that the practice of intercaste marriage was common in the Indian subcontinent until 1,900 years ago when it disappeared. With the advent of industrialization and urbanization, there will be a decline in arranged marriages and with the decline in arranged marriages, there will also be a decline in the importance of attributes like group identities and statuses of the two families (Allendorf and Pandian 2016). Helfer (as cited in Goli, Singh & Sekher (2013) stated that 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.

NFHS a nationally representative sample survey collects information about caste of the husband and wife during the survey. This study analyses caste information of 46321 Hindu couples. Caste system is mostly prevalent among Hindus though this information was also collected from other religious groups. The couples belonging to other religious groups have been removed from the analysis though their caste information is also available. The information collected on caste is grouped into three categories namely Scheduled Caste (SC), Other Backward Classes (OBC) and Others (which includes all the higher castes). The ascending order of class hierarchy in India is ST, SC, OBC and Others. If a woman belonging to higher caste marries to a man belonging to lower caste and a woman belonging to a lower caste marries to a man of higher caste, then it is considered as inter-caste marriage. In other words if a women marries to a man other than her own caste is considered as an inter-caste marriage. Similarly all the religions are divided into 5 categories namely Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Sikhs and Others. If a women marries a man of different religion is considered as Inter-religious marriages. Figure 3.3 shows the percentage of Intercaste and inter religious marriages in India. It

is found that in a gap of 10 years, intercaste marriages have increased by 2.6 points and interreligious marriages have increased by only 0.3 points.

Figure 3.3
Intercaste and Interreligious Marriages in India



Source: NFHS 3 and 4

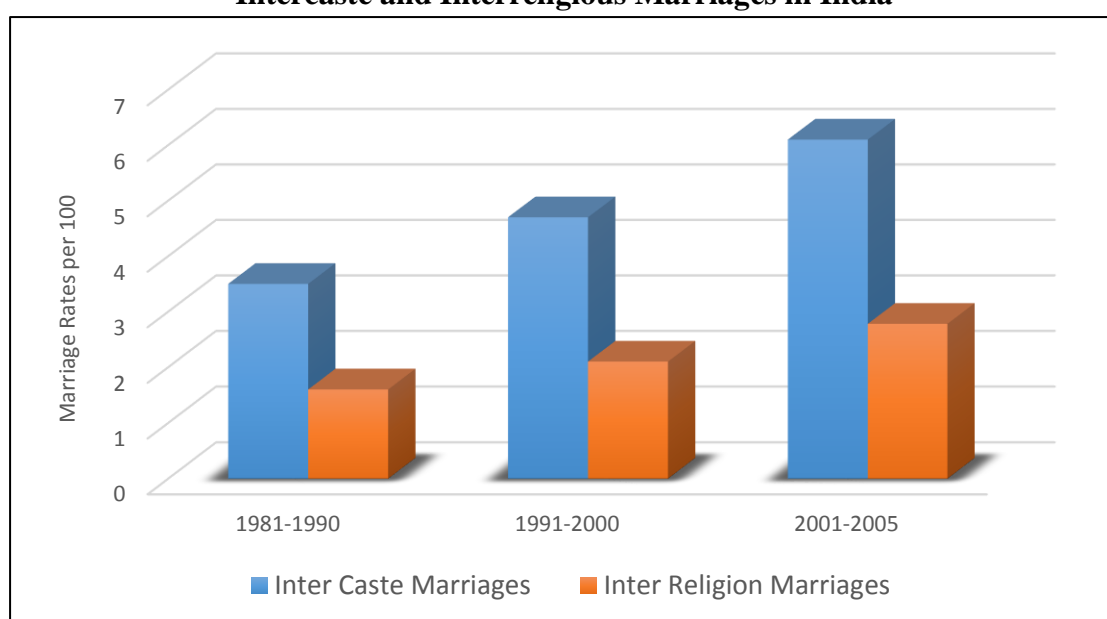
The India Human Development Survey (IHDS), conducted by the National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER) and the University of Maryland covers over 42,000 households (2005-06) and 41,554 households (2011-12), representative by class and social group. Dr. Sonalde Desai, a demographer and Professor of Sociology at the University of Maryland said that as questions on caste in India are some of the most complex questions, “IHDS took a simple approach and asked women whether their natal family belongs to the same caste as their husband’s family, allowing to bypass the complex issue of defining what caste means and get subjective perceptions from the respondents”.⁶

Inter-caste marriage annihilates our obnoxious caste system, unites diversified India, enriches our culture and strengthen our secularism (Mohapatra, 2017). The trends of mixed marriages has been estimated, during 1981-2005, based on the year of marriage as reported by the respondents (figure 3.4). The results indicated that both inter-caste

⁶ Rukmini S (November 13, 2014). Just 5% of Indian marriages are inter-caste: survey. Retrieved from <http://www.thehindu.com/data/just-5-per-cent-of-indian-marriages-are-intercaste/article6591502.ece>

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. 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.

Figure 3.4
Intercaste and Interreligious Marriages in India



Source: Goli, S., Singh, D., Sekher, T.V. (2013)

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

3.3.2 Spatial Variation in Intercaste Marriages in India

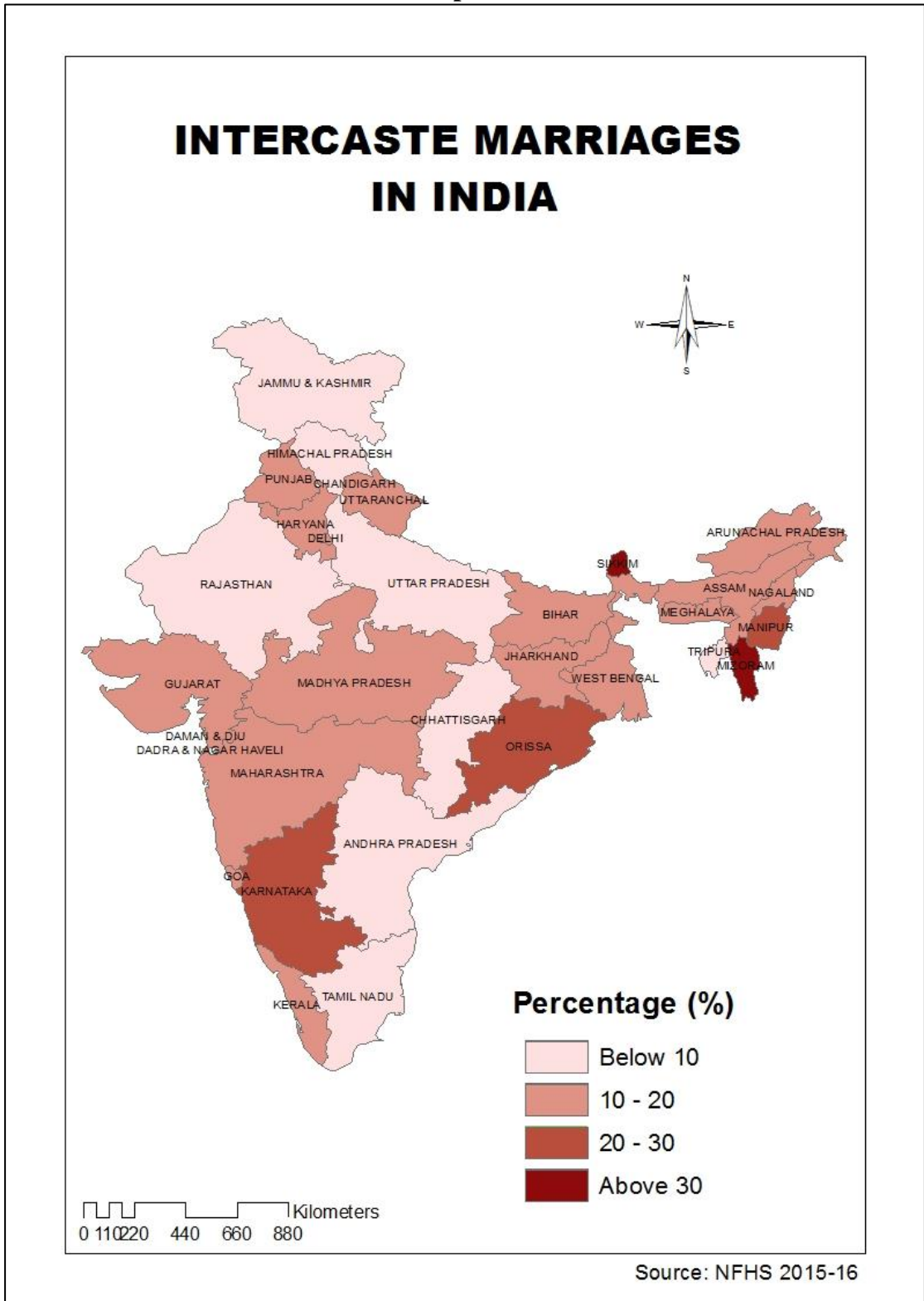
There is significant spatial variation in the pattern of inter-caste marriages. According to NFHS 3 data, inter-caste marriages was high in Goa, Meghalaya, Punjab, and Kerala. This states have significant Christian population compared to other states. According to 2011 census data, Meghalaya has 74 per cent Christian population, Goa has 25 per cent Christian population and Kerala has 18 per cent Christian population. Again this states are among the socio-economically developed states. Inter-caste marriage is low in the socioeconomically backward states of India namely Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. However, it is also low in 2 southern states of India – Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. It is lowest in Jammu and Kashmir. The

states having moderate to high inter-caste marriages are Haryana (17.16 per cent), Manipur (18.33 per cent), Tripura (17.81 per cent), Maharashtra (17.79 per cent) and Karnataka (16.47 per cent).

According to NFHS 4 data, intercaste marriage is highest in Mizoram (50 percent), followed by Sikkim (33 percent), Karnataka (27 percent), Manipur (22 percent), Odisha (21 percent) and Arunachal Pradesh (18 percent) and lowest in Chhattisgarh, Himanchal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir. With a gap of 10 years the pattern of intercaste marriage has changed from Christian dominated states to states with high tribal population. West Bengal shows 9.5 per cent of intercaste marriage in 2005-06 which has increased by 3.2 per cent in 2015-16. It is expected that the incidence of such inter-caste marriages will increase with the degree of modernization and socio-economic development. It is expected that with more development and education, the force of caste factor becomes weak and thereby increases the incidence of inter-caste marriages. There is need to glorify, give media exposure and encourage such marriages in order to reduce the caste barrier prevalent in Indian society.

India will require long time yet to come when the marriage system in India will be completely free of caste discrimination. However, there is a need to look at the reason behind inter caste marriage in states with low sex ratio. “The sex ratios of Punjab, Haryana and Delhi are 895, 878 and 868 respectively, making it transparent that these states are in desperate need of brides from elsewhere” (Kaur, 2010, p.16). It has been argued that this low sex ratio of females has created difficult for men in Haryana and Punjab to get local brides which has in tum led these men to seek brides from poorer states like Assam, West Bengal, Bihar, and Kerala. Poverty of the source state is said to be the push factor which has motivated these women to enter these marriages. Women from these states are from poor families who cannot afford to marry their daughters locally due to obnoxious dowry demands. Men from Haryana marry these women without any dowry in fact the groom bears all the expenses of the wedding and at instances even compensates the bride's family monetarily.

Map 3.4



For centuries, marriage has been an important mechanism through which the hierarchical caste system has reproduced itself. Individuals are born into a caste, generally marry someone within their own group, and then go on to have children who do the same. Openness to intercaste marriage signals the weakening of caste boundaries. A direct estimate of inter-caste marriages in India by IHDS (2011-12) shows that only five per cent of Indians said they had married a person from a different caste. This often results in the casual observation that caste drives matrimonial choices. The proportion being marginally higher for urban over rural India. There was no change in this proportion from the previous round of the IHDS (2004-05). Christian-dominated Mizoram where 87 per cent of the population is Christian – has the most inter-caste marriages in India. Meghalaya and Sikkim followed Mizoram, with 46 per cent and 38 per cent respectively. The three north-eastern states were followed by Muslim-dominated Jammu and Kashmir (35%) and Gujarat (13%). In contrast to that, in Madhya Pradesh almost all (99%) people were married in their own caste, followed by Himachal Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, both at 98 per cent. IHDS-II surveyors also asked respondents: “Do you know anyone in your community who has had an inter-caste marriage?”⁷ As many as 27 per cent of respondents said they knew people in their communities who married outside their caste and the percentage rises to 36 per cent in cities.

Table 3.2
State wise Percentage of Inter-Caste Marriages in India

States	Inter Caste Marriage	
	2004-05	2011-12
Jammu & Kashmir	29.2	34.4
Himachal Pradesh	2.0	1.9
Punjab	12.2	12.6
Chandigarh	5.3	6.6
Uttarakhand	3.5	5.8
Haryana	3.3	6.8
Delhi	5.5	4.3
Rajasthan	1.7	4.4
Uttar Pradesh	5.2	4.5
Bihar	3.1	9.7

⁷ Salve, P. and Tewari, S. (2016, May 11). Mizoram Has Highest Number of Inter-Caste Marriages in India With 55% Retrieved from <https://thewire.in/uncategorised/mizoram-has-highest-number-of-inter-caste-marriages-in-india-with-55>

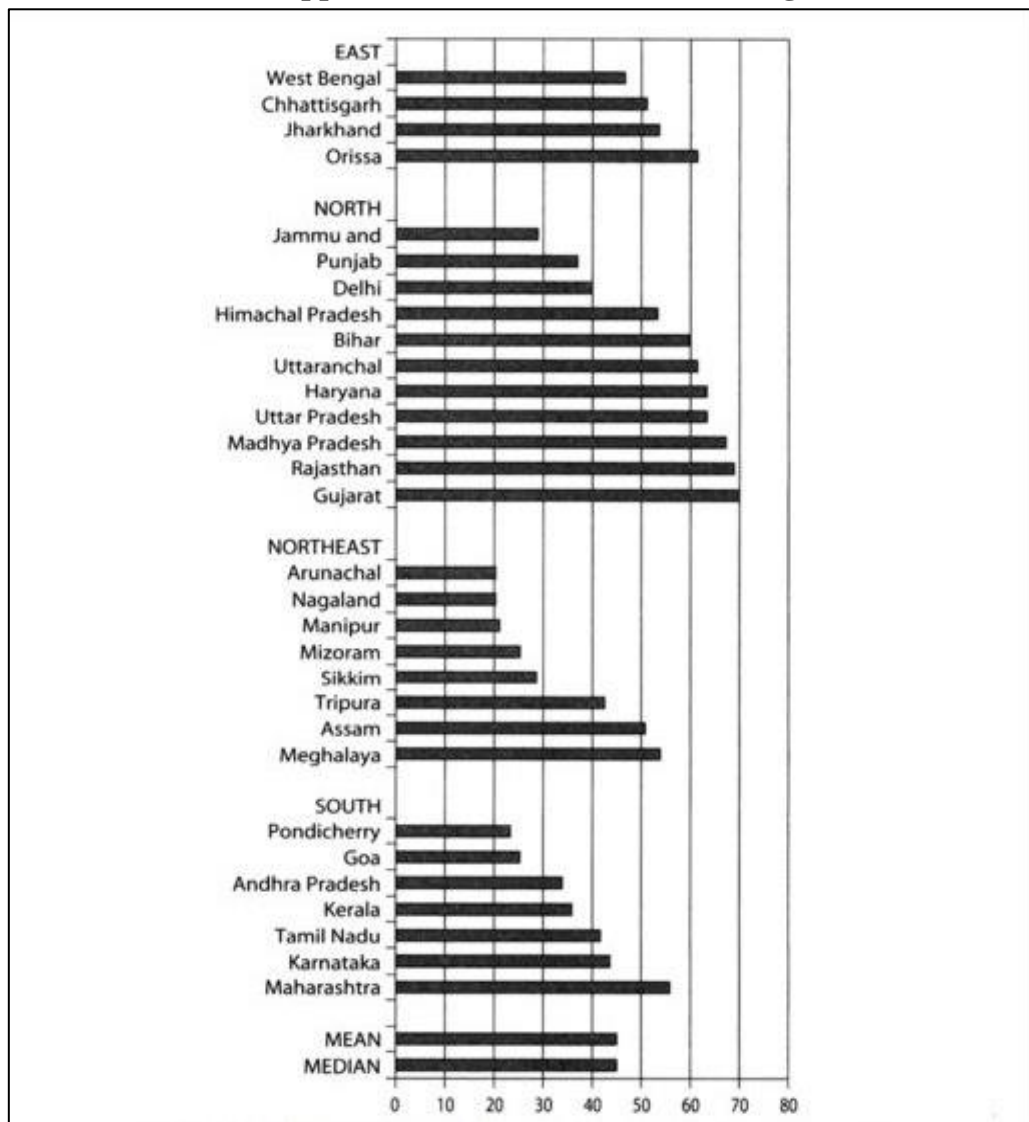
Sikkim	27.5	37.9
Arunachal Pradesh	6.4	4.3
Nagaland	11.6	10.4
Manipur	4.2	6.2
Mizoram	45.9	54.9
Tripura	7.4	12.2
Meghalaya	37.1	46.8
Assam	6.3	5.7
West Bengal	9.3	6.1
Jharkhand	5.4	9.5
Orissa	3.3	4.1
Chhattisgarh	2.2	2.0
Madhya Pradesh	0.9	0.9
Gujarat	8.2	12.5
Daman & Diu	7.4	12.5
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	3.0	5.7
Maharashtra	2.8	3.1
Andhra Pradesh	2.8	3.7
Karnataka	1.8	2.0
Goa	11.3	11.6
Kerala	4.6	6.2
Tamil Nadu	2.2	4.5
Pondicherry	3.8	5.1
India	5.0	5.4

Source: India Human Development Survey (IHDS)

Evidence increasingly suggests that interest in intercaste marriage is higher than the actual reported rate mainly due to the stigma associated with it (Ahuja & Ostermann, 2016). Although an expression of matrimonial interest does not necessarily translate into a marriage, in the context of caste, even considering an inter-caste match is transformative. After all, to consider someone as a life partner, they have to be first acknowledged as socially acceptable. The 2004 Indian National Election Study (NES) conducted by the Center for the Study of Developing Societies surveyed 27189 citizens, stratified across states, and asked questions about ethnic boundaries. Of particular interest, respondents were asked if inter-caste marriage should be banned, 40 per cent of Hindu respondents opposed it. Nationally, 51.4 percent of respondents “fully” or “somewhat” disagreed with the statement, which is strikingly finding of the extent to which Indians disfavour endogamy. Urban residents were less enthusiastic, with 53

percent disapproved of a ban. There is substantial variation across Indian states – for example ranging from a low of 20.2 percent of citizens agreeing with the statement about caste boundaries in Arunachal Pradesh to a high of 69 and 70 percent in Rajasthan and Gujarat, respectively⁸.

Figure 3.5
State-level Support of Bans on Intercaste Marriage in India



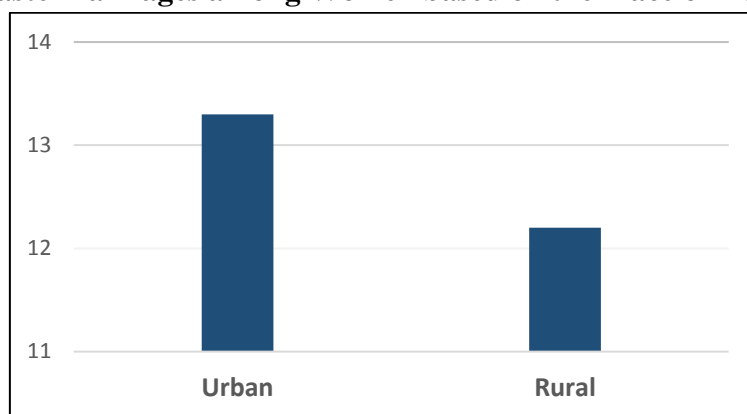
Source: Survey data from India 2004 National Election Study (N = 27,189); percentage of respondents saying “Fully Agree,” or “Somewhat Agree”; stratified random sampling was carried out at the state level with samples sufficiently large to make cross-state comparisons. Further details on the sampling strategies employed are available at <http://www.ceri-sciencespo.com/archive/sept04/methodo.pdf>.

⁸ Amit Ahuja, “Why caste matters less in urban India by Amit Ahuja; published on July 19, 2016 <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/why-caste-matters-less-in-urban-india/article8871456.ece>

To better understand the motivations that drive interest in intercaste marriage, Dr. Amit Ahuja and Dr. Susan Osterman studied the preferences of Dalit (untouchable) and upper caste women in the urban, middle-class arranged marriage markets in three large Indian states: Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu. The study found that the taboos against intercaste marriage are stronger for women than men. Out of the 1,070 women studied, 62 per cent were willing to look beyond their own caste to find suitable matches. 71 per cent of Dalit women expressed interest in intercaste matches. Among upper caste women, only 54 per cent did the same. Women approached the marriage market with a view to upgrade either their economic class or caste status. But like any other market, the marriage market works on the principle of exchange; to get something, one has to be able to offer something in return. The study also found that among upper caste women, lower middle and middle-class women were more likely to respond to the two out of caste interests than their wealthier counterparts. Similarly, a lower caste woman from a wealthy family could aspire to a higher caste status by leveraging her class status. Among Dalit women, the wealthier women were more likely than lower middle and middle-class women to respond to the two out-of-caste matrimonial interests. It was discovered that among upper caste women, 52.1 percent responded to an interest from a backward caste groom and only 28.7 percent responded to an interest from a Dalit groom with an almost identical profile.

Various socio-economic and demographic factors also affect the pattern of inter-caste marriages in India. Figure 3.6 shows the percentage of intercaste marriage of women based on their place of residence. It is perceived that urbanization undermines caste. Young people in urban middle class India are no longer limiting their search for marriage partners within their own caste. The relative anonymity of an individual's identity in a city makes it difficult for rules of purity and pollution to be observed and enforced in the public sphere. Fewer activities are then mediated by an individual's caste identity. Urbanization will continue to increase and by 2030, 40 per cent of Indians are predicted to live in urban areas (Das et al. 2011). However, the gap between the percentage of women going for intercaste marriage in rural and urban areas is very low, which points towards several other factors affecting intercaste marriages among females.

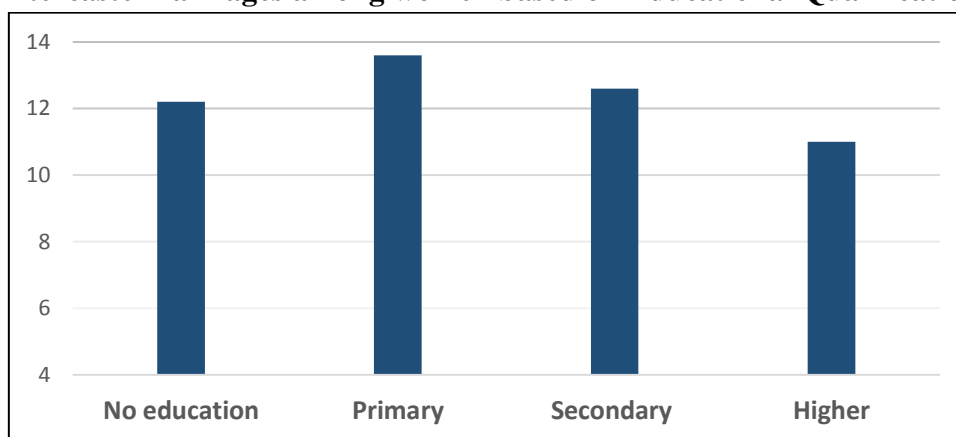
Figure 3.6
Intercaste Marriages among Women based on the Place of Residence



Source: NFHS 4

Normally it is perceived that education has positive effect on inter-caste marriages. But it is found that women with higher education are more interested in same caste marriage. It is found that 12.2 per cent of women with no education and 13.6 per cent of women with primary education has gone for intercaste marriage in comparison to 11.0 per cent of women having higher education.

Figure 3.7
Intercaste Marriages among women based on Educational Qualification

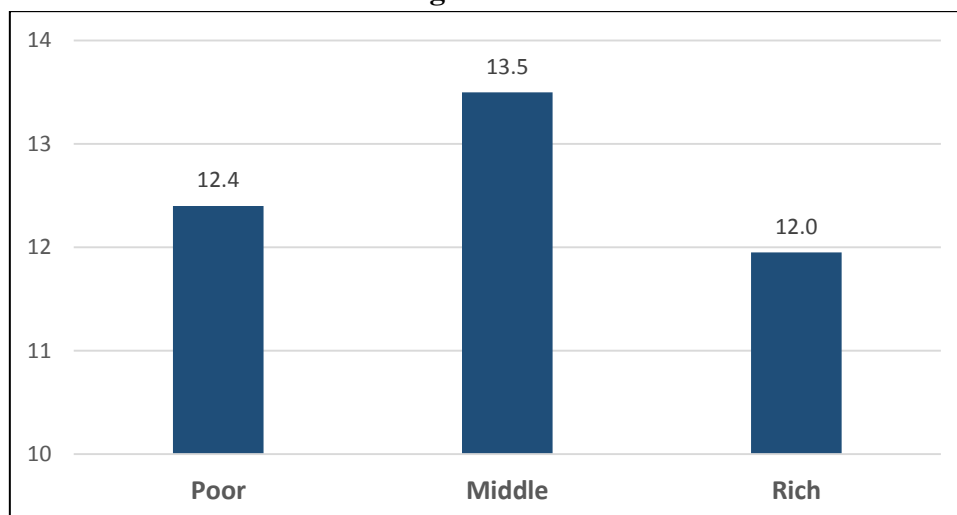


Source: NFHS 4

Wealth index of the women is another important factor affecting intercaste marriages among women. Driven by a desire for upward mobility, a significant number of people in the marriage market consider crossing caste boundaries. Figure 3.8 shows the percentage of women going for intercaste marriage is high among the middle class women and low among the women belonging to rich class. It can be said that a middle-class upper caste woman can use her higher caste status to improve her class status by

considering marriage to a wealthier lower caste man. However, the stigma associated with lower caste matches ensures that discrimination against them remains strong.

Figure 3.8
Intercaste Marriages based on Wealth Index



Source: NFHS 4

Another important aspect is the changing perception of people. Several enabling factors and a fierce ambition for upward mobility will increase interest in inter-caste marriage in the ranks of the urban middle class. Social outcomes do not necessarily reflect people's actual preferences and are an unreliable indicator of social attitudes, as illustrated by Ahuja and Ostermann (2015) the case of black and white marriages in the United States. "Even as the percentage of black and white marriages remains less than 1 per cent of all marriages in the United States, the social acceptance of black and white marriages has shifted dramatically. When, in 1958, Gallop asked respondents for the first time if they approved of blacks and whites intermarrying, only 4 per cent of those surveyed did. By 1978 this number had risen to 33 per cent, in 2002 it stood at 60 per cent, and by 2013 the figure had further jumped to 87 per cent. Among blacks, 96 per cent approved of a black and white marriage, while among whites the approval rate stood at 84 per cent. In short, low intermarriage rates may or may not imply low interest in or approval of intermarriage" (Ahuja and Ostermann, 2015 p. 372).

3.4 Inter Religious Marriages

India has a diverse culture, and religion and caste are an integral part of our society and largely follows the traditional marriage system within the community. Although, the institution of marriage system in India for all religious groups are similar however, marriages in a different religion are almost a taboo in India. The Special Marriage Act allows for a special form of marriage, irrespective of the religion, yet the percentage of interfaith marriage is miniscule. Only 2.4 per cent of Indian marriages are inter-religious marriage which has increased by just 0.3 percentage in a gap of 10 years.

According to the NFHS 3 data, highest percentages of inter-religious marriages were found in north eastern states of India (Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Manipur and Meghalaya). Other states include Punjab (7.3 per cent), Jharkhand (5.6 per cent) and Andhra Pradesh (4.7 per cent). Cumulative analysis of states shows that inter religious marriages are higher in western states of India (3.4 per cent) followed by southern states of India (3.2 per cent), northern states of India (2.2 per cent) and eastern states of India (1.3 per cent). West Bengal (0.3 per cent), Chhattisgarh (0.6 per cent), Jammu and Kashmir (0.7 per cent), Rajasthan (0.7 per cent) and Madhya Pradesh (0.8 per cent) are the states showing percentage of inter-religious marriages below 1 per cent.

Map 3.5 shows state wise per cent distribution of inter religious marriages in India. According to NFHS 4 data, Manipur (9.4 per cent) shows the highest percentage of Interreligious marriages. Manipur is followed by other north eastern states – Sikkim (6.7 per cent) and Arunachal Pradesh (6.5 per cent). However, both this states have shown decline in the percentage of interreligious marriage by 1.4 per cent and 2.7 per cent respectively. The southern states of India have also shown higher percentage of interreligious marriages – Andhra Pradesh (6.2 per cent), Telangana (4.6 per cent), Kerala (3.5 per cent) and Tamil Nadu (3.2 per cent) and Karnataka (2.4 per cent). Most of the northern states - Jammu and Kashmir (1.1 per cent), Chhattisgarh (1.2 per cent), Orissa (1.2 per cent), Bihar (1.3 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (1.4 per cent), Rajasthan (1.5 per cent), Haryana (1.6 per cent) and Uttaranchal (1.6 per cent) have shown percentage of interreligious marriage below national average. Most of this states fall under EAG (Empowered Action Group) states. West Bengal, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Goa and Manipur shows an increase in interreligious marriage for more than 1 per cent.

Map 3.5

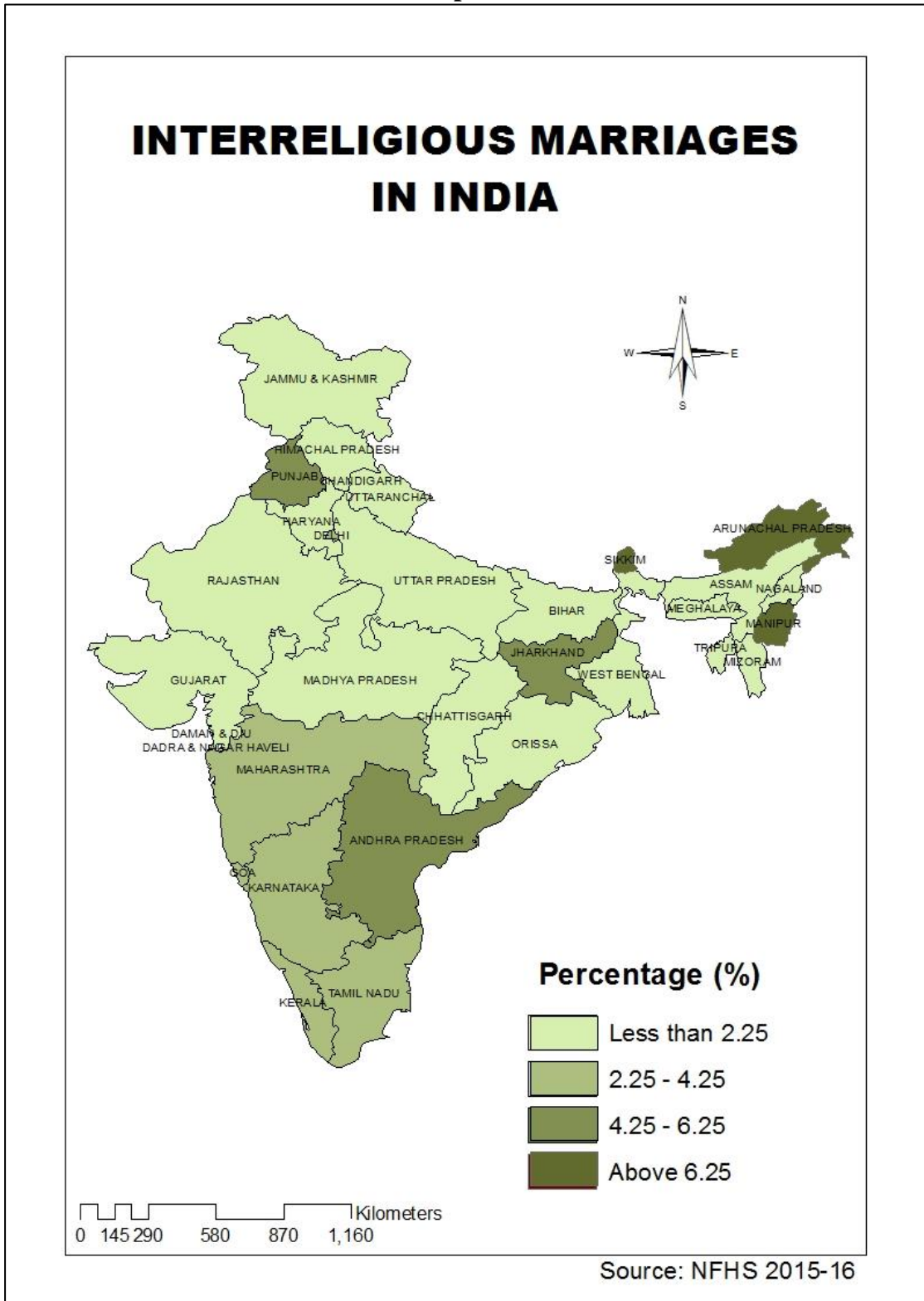
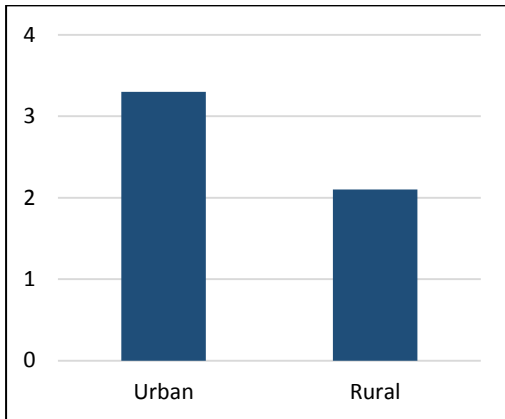
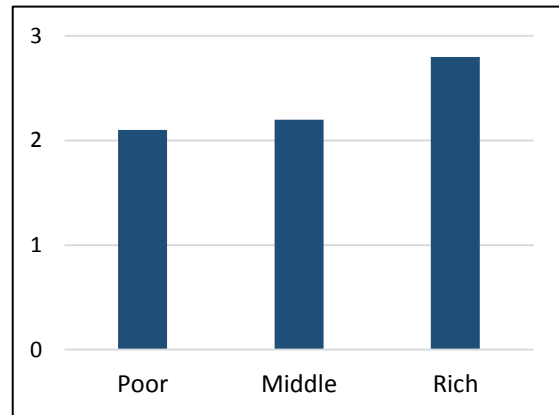


Figure 3.9
Interreligious Marriages among Women based on their Place of Residence



Source: NFHS 4

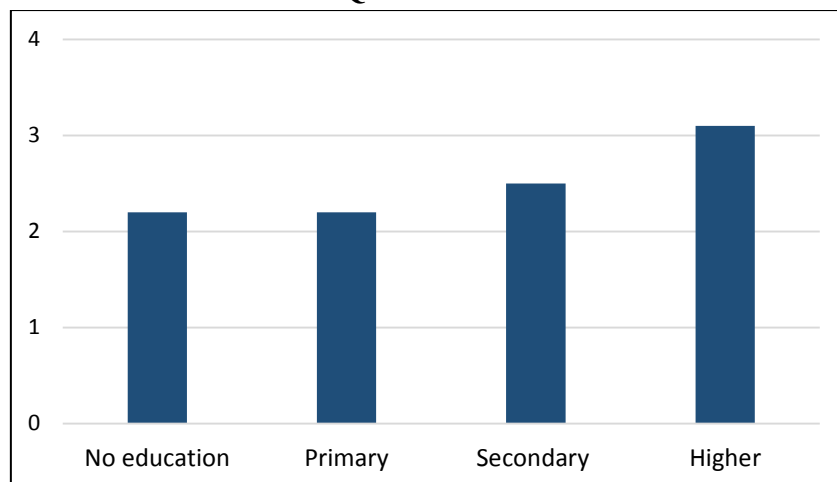
Figure 3.10
Interreligious Marriages among women based on their wealth index



Source: NFHS 4

The percentage of interreligious marriages has also been analysed on the basis of place of residence, educational qualification of women and her wealth index. Figure 3.9 shows that similar to intercaste marriages, interreligious marriages are more common in urban areas. Unlike intercaste marriages, interreligious marriages are more among women from rich class and is also proportional to the educational qualification of women.

Figure 3.11
Interreligious Marriages among Women based on their Educational Qualification



Source: NFHS 4

3.5 Discussions

Child marriage is a violation of a girl's rights as it compromises efforts to reduce gender based violence, advance education, overcome poverty and improve health indicators for girls and women. Early marriage followed by early motherhood is linked with higher total fertility rates. It poses increased risk of maternal or neonatal morbidity and mortality. In most cases partners are often older and more sexually active thus putting their wives at increased risks of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS. Many household surveys clearly shows that under age marriage affects the nature of interaction with the husband and also reduces the ability of the woman to take independent decisions. The proportion of women reporting domestic violence is higher among those who married early compared to those who married later (International Institute of Population Sciences and Population Council 2008d). Evidence suggests that marrying at an early age in some parts of the world leads to increased rate of divorce (*Jones, 1992; Vanden Heuvel and McDonald, 1994*). From the perspective of a policy, there are reasons for considering the issue of early marriage and early childbearing carefully.

Traditionally, marriage outside caste has not found social approval. Families still police marriages through the threat of humiliation, boycott, and, in extreme cases, honour killing. Beyond the family, caste-based political parties and caste association leaders stand to lose influence if caste boundaries weaken; they are opposed to intercaste marriage. But theirs is a losing battle. As honour killings continue to be reported across the country. The Indian state must act to protect individual freedoms to marry against such backlash. As of now, some states have encouraged intercaste marriage by providing cash rewards to intercaste couples. To add to these incentives, it can also provide these couples preferential access to government programs. By acting swiftly against the threat of honour killings and its instigators, it will deter such acts. Public campaigns in favour of intercaste marriage will also lower its barriers. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar devoted his life to reflect deeply and movingly on the caste system and its maladies. In 1936, he had the following to say on caste divisions and marriage: "I am convinced that the real remedy is inter-marriage. Fusion of blood can alone create the feeling of being kith and kin, and unless this feeling of kinship, of being kindred, becomes paramount, the separatist feeling—the feeling of being aliens—created by caste will not vanish. Where society is already well-knit by other ties, marriage is an

ordinary incident of life. But where society is cut asunder, marriage as a binding force becomes a matter of urgent necessity. The real remedy for breaking caste is inter-marriage. Nothing else will serve as the solvent of caste.” Dr. Ambedkar’s observation had a simple message: rules of caste and marriage were socially constructed, and what societies can build, they can also undo.

CHAPTER- 4

MARRIAGE RELATED DECISION MAKING IN INDIA

- ❖ **Role of Parents and Children in Marriage Related Decision Making**
- ❖ **Decision on Selecting the Partner**
- ❖ **Meeting their Husband before Marriage**
- ❖ **Marriage related Decision Making among Youths of India**
- ❖ **Factors Affecting Marriage related Decision Making among**

Chapter 4

Marriage Related Decision Making in India

Assuming that individuals make a decision to marry, two other decisions then have sociological relevance - "whom to marry" and "when to marry" (Moss, 1965). Marriage process needs to be understood in its own right since it not only signals the initiation of reproductive life but also because it reflects the way family life proceeds. Moreover when, whom, and how one marries, all have implications for gender relations within society (Mensch et al, 2005). This chapter deals with women autonomy in marriage related decision making in India. This chapter is based on secondary data – Indian Human Development Survey (IHDS) and the Youth in India: Situation and Needs. The IHDS data asked women respondent about the selection of husband and their decision in getting married. Along with new sample of 2134 households, IHDS II data re-interviewed 83 per cent of the both the original and split families living in the village which were interviewed in IHDS I. The Youth data was conducted in 6 states of India. It provides evidence at state level on the magnitude and patterns of sexual and reproductive practices in and outside marriage, and related knowledge, decision-making and attitude among youth. The survey covers 13,912 married young women aged 15–24 in India.

In India, marriages complied with the principle of Hypergamy and in consideration of the social and economic status of the spouses, they are mostly arranged. Caste, Natal charts gotra, family background, financial status of the groom, appearance character of the bride and the bridegroom are the most important facets of arrange marriage. The willingness of the parents and blessings of elders are important considerations in arranged marriage. Ross puts it as in India "love was not necessary as a basis for marriage selection, nor was courtship a necessary prelude for testing the relationship" (1961, p. 251).

4.1 Role of Parents and Children in Marriage Related Decision Making

Usually individuals' in westernized societies are free to select their own spouses. But it is believed that selection of marital partner's individually based on self-predilection and physical attraction "is cross-culturally and historically a quite rare phenomenon, and has often been considered as decidedly the wrong basis for the choice of a spouse" (Bunk 2015, p.100). In several societies, the choice of a marriage partner is predominantly decided by his or her parents (Apostolou, 2007). Even among the Hunter and gatherer society, 96 per cent of the parents play a crucial role in determining whom their offspring will marry (Apostolou, 2007), like among the aboriginals in Australia, marriages are predominantly arranged (Burbank, 1995) and among the Kung Woman of South Africa, parents and other close relatives arrange first marriages and, if the children are still young, subsequent ones as well (Shostak, 1983). Walker, Hill, Flinn, & Ellsworth (2011) attempted to reconstruct ancestral marriage practices and found that arranged marriages are inferred to go back at least to first modern human migrations out of Africa. Arranged marriages are even more common in agro pastoral societies and such marriages have traditionally been prevalent in many Asian and Middle Eastern countries (Bunk, 2015). It continue to happen among many immigrant societies. Menon (1989) studied that near the end of the 20th century, about half of the Indian immigrants in the US had arranged marriage Buunk, Pollet, and Dubbs (2012). Even in Japan, 25-30 per cent of marriages are arranged (Kinjo, 1990). However, even in love marriages, parents often pressurize their children to select mates with similar upbringings, thus consequently most of the love marriages end up like an arranged marriage (Applbaum, 1995). It is evidenced that parental engagement in choice of mate of their offspring is a normal pattern across human cultures throughout history. It strongly varies across different cultures based on its association with the level of collectivism in a culture. Buunk, Park, & Duncan (2010) found that parental influence is high among the Muslim dominated countries and in general, in collectivistic societies in comparison to West European countries. Thus it implies that influence of parents on the choice of mate selection is probably one of the crucial aspect in the human ancestral environment, and may also have been an influential force in the course of human evolution (van den Berg, P., et al, 2013).

There are several reasons behind parents trying to control over mating of their children (Buunk, Park, & Dubbs, 2008) and it is easily viable when the children are financially liable to their parents or dependent for food and protection or in cases where parents can use physical forcefulness over their children to impose their wishes (Apostolou, 2007). Buunk, Pollet, and Dubbs (2012) argued that parent tries to “maintain the in-group homogeneous and want to prevent fragmentation of this in-group”, thus controlling the preference of their child to search for a “potential mate of their children will contribute to family and group cohesion, and that their grandchildren are socialized in a culturally appropriate manner” (Buunk, 2015 p.101). A major reason for parents to be bothered is that the mates of their children should belong to the same social, ethnic, and religious background. For example, a Hindu women from UK indicates that her parents would never accept a son-in-law from a different background or not of the same caste or culture as theirs (Bhopal, 1997). It is high among the immigrants, as they are more prone to choose members of the majority group or with the members of other ethnic groups due to constant contact with them.

Although sharing approximately half of their parent’s genes, children always do not share the same/identical genetic interests. Specifically, parents show a stronger preference than their offspring for qualities such as educational level, social class, ethnic and family background whereas children shows strong preference for attributes such as physical attractiveness, sense of humor and creativity (Perilloux, Fleischman, & Buss, 2011; Apostolou, 2008a,b, 2011; Dubbs & Buunk, 2010; Buunk, Park, & Dubbs, 2008). Moreover, parents prefer in-laws with good family background as it will be favourable for parents in establishing an alliance and/or increasing their social status through the marriage of their children (Buunk et al., 2008). Again the sex of the child determines the probability of parent’s acceptance as parents are more concerned about their daughter’s choice of mate. It is proven that parents are more restrictive for their daughter and gives less freedom to them in choosing their mating partner in comparison to their son (Faulkner and Schaller, 2007; Perilloux, Fleischman and Buss, 2008; Wight and Henderson, 2006). It is also reported that a daughter's consent is not always considered a prerequisite for a marriage to proceed, and the females are usually reported to submit to their parents' wishes.

Parental influence on selection of mate would be of little significance, if the preference of both parent and children are in compliance with each other. Not surprisingly, second-generation immigrants indicates that conflicts with their parents in the realm of dating and marriage are common when it comes to children choosing a spouse independently (e.g., Lalonde, Hynie, Pannu, & Tatla, 2004; Hynie, Lalonde, & Lee, 2006; Dugsin, 2001). It is noted that in several instances, parents use psychological means to convince their children. They may advise their children on traits that are expected in a mate. Or in some instances, older parents may use their age and poor health to sap the marriage which is not of their choice. Other methods that modern parents use to persuade their children in mating selection include: “cajolery, persuasion, appeals to loyalty, and threats” (Sussman, 1953, p. 80). Several evidence from different countries shows that with a rise in self-arranged marriages, there has been relative change in the role of parents in mate selection. Such a shift has been observed in India as well (see, for example, Banerjee, 1999; Jejeebhoy & Halli, 2005), although family-arranged marriage continues to dominate (Desai & Andrist, 2010; Kaur, 2004).

Considering the universal nature of Indian marriage, little has been studied about the role of young people themselves in the decision making process of their own marriage. This autonomy impacts other spheres of young people’s lives, as individuals as well as partners in marriage such as in decision making, self-confidence, contraceptive use, etc. is poorly understood (CPOP, 2005). What is available on marital process, in Indian context, is mainly on marital age, consequences of early marriage such as early pregnancy and childbirth, dowry and violence within marriage (Jejeebhoy and Sebastian, 2003a; Jejeebhoy and Sebastian, 2003b; ICRW, 2003) but qualitative studies, to a certain extent, do throw light on marital decision making process (see for example Santhya, 2003; Haberland et al, 2001; George 1997). Recent evidence points to the fact that, of late more girls and boys are being involved (Jejeebhoy & Halli, 2006), but factors or characteristics that encourage involvement of youth in their spouse selection and the impact of such involvement on their married life are poorly understood.

4.2 Decision on Selecting the Partner

The traditional normative pattern of Indian marriage does not provide much opportunity to the prospective spouses to participate in the decision-making process of

their own marriage. In many cases, they never see each other until the wedding day. A majority of young men and women in India are abided by the social norms and acquiesce to the social disciplines of traditional life. “Indian arranged marriage and family values” against “western style love marriages” has thwarted efforts to comprehend the nature of individual desire and the choice of marriage partners (Shalini Grover, 2007). As *Kalidasa*, the Indian poet, remarked that "young people seek pleasures" (Auboyer, 1965), the Hindu system regarded mate selection by self-choice as undesirable and feared that freedom of choice might upset the process of adjustment of the bride in her new family. Modern law and legislation on marriages recognise free choice marriage but the weight of custom and tradition associated with the reproduction of the caste system works severely against it. Yet, the conditions of modernity such as law and rights, changes in the political economy and the emergence of urban cultures at marked variance from rural cultures have no doubt a bearing on the possibility of aspirations for change in the private lives (Kalpagam, 2008).

Choice of the partner is a critical determinant of mixed marriages. Taking into account the sociological status of male and females in Indian society, it is important to study the decision making power of females when it comes to choosing her life partner. The question lies that is it the girl herself choose her life partner or does she decides it together with the decision of her parents or is it just the parents who decide on whom their daughter should get married to? The below table gives an estimate of state wise percentage of mate selection choice for women. The IHDS II survey in 2012 covered over 34,000 women between the ages of 15 and 81 across rural and urban areas of 34 Indian states and Union Territories. It is observed that only 5 per cent of women reported to have had sole control over choosing their husbands which remains constant from 2005-06 and 73 per cent of the women reported that their parents or relatives alone chose their husbands, which was 57 per cent in 2005-06.

Table 4.1
State wise Percentage of Women who had say in choosing their Husband and their Decision Making on Marriage Partners, 2005-06

State	Had any say in	Who took the decision in selecting your partner? (in percentages)
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	choosing their husband	Respondent herself	Respondent along with parents / Other relatives together	Parents/relatives alone
Jammu & Kashmir	28.10	3.0	22.3	71.5
Himachal Pradesh	59.60	8.60	10.20	80.60
Punjab	35.00	0.60	0.60	61.30
Chandigarh	60.00	1.40	4.30	94.20
Uttarakhand	45.50	1.10	11.60	87.30
Haryana	8.20	2.20	56.30	40.60
Delhi	37.70	2.60	30.40	66.30
Rajasthan	7.20	0.60	16.10	83.10
Uttar Pradesh	11.50	1.60	22.40	75.60
Bihar	5.30	2.80	13.80	83.30
Sikkim	78.00	1.20	1.20	94.00
Arunachal Pradesh	61.20	5.10	10.30	82.90
Nagaland	27.50	34.40	35.90	18.80
Manipur	0.00	89.10	3.30	7.60
Mizoram	3.10	95.10	0.00	3.30
Tripura	16.80	11.20	35.80	52.00
Meghalaya	13.60	82.10	13.00	4.90
Assam	70.70	11.50	50.00	35.90
West Bengal	64.30	7.80	24.40	65.10
Jharkhand	21.90	6.20	16.90	76.60
Orissa	23.60	6.10	22.60	71.30
Chhattisgarh	9.00	1.70	59.80	38.50
Madhya Pradesh	10.00	1.00	39.50	59.00
Gujarat	23.80	10.00	78.00	11.60
Daman & Diu	90.00	15.60	62.20	20.00
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	66.70	0.00	96.30	3.70
Maharashtra	50.30	2.30	32.20	64.90
Andhra Pradesh	61.50	4.40	27.80	67.70
Karnataka	57.10	4.80	65.40	29.40
Goa	16.70	10.90	76.70	10.90
Kerala	93.10	6.00	60.10	33.30
Tamil Nadu	62.80	6.90	48.50	44.50
Pondicherry	88.60	7.80	50.60	41.60
Total	25.00	5.00	37.20	57.20

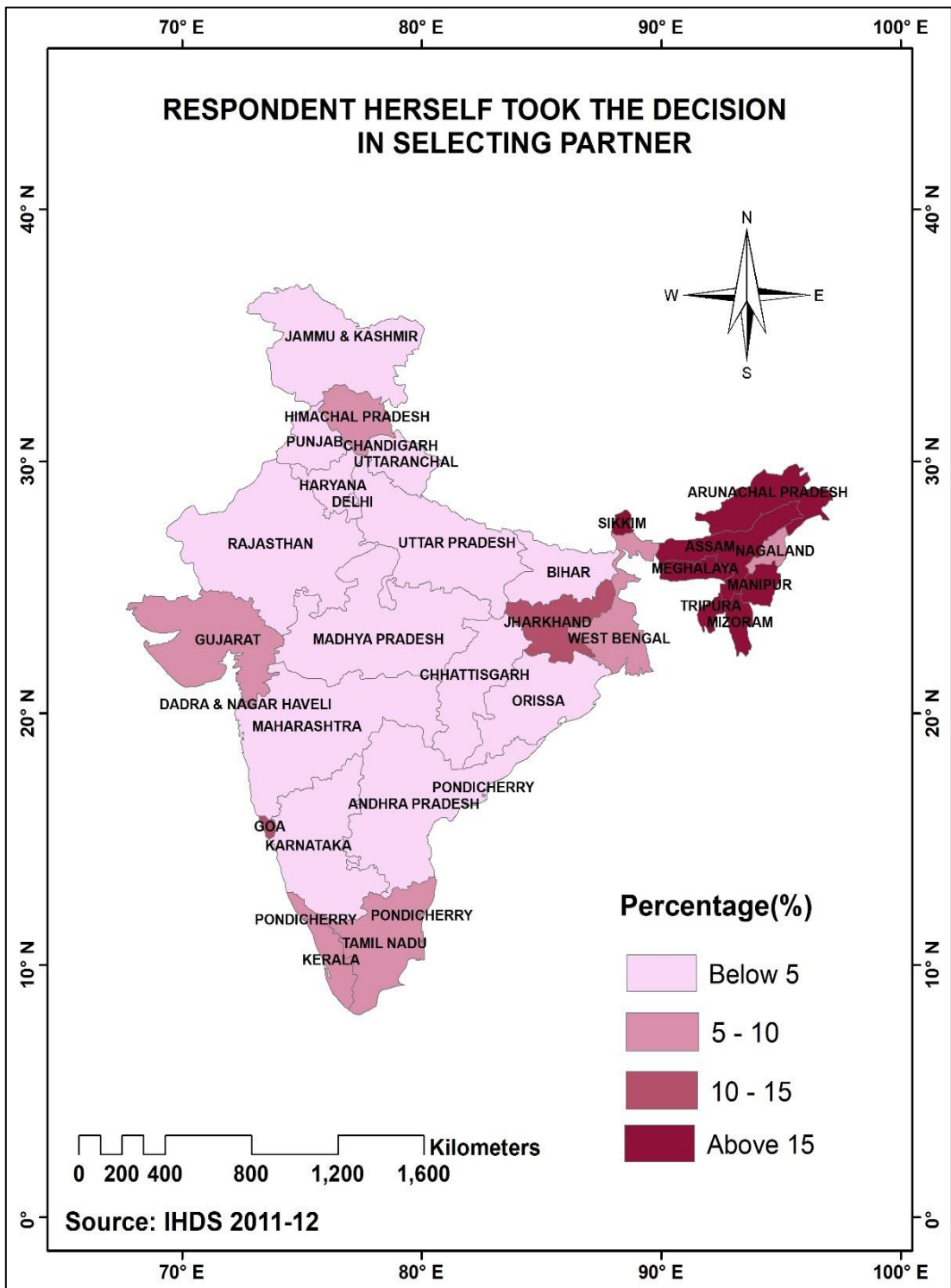
Source: IHDS 2005-06

Table 4.1 shows that the percentage of women choosing their partner herself is higher in North-Eastern states of India like Mizoram (95.1 per cent), Manipur (89.1 per cent), Meghalaya (82.1 per cent), Nagaland (34.4 per cent) and Assam (11.5 per cent). Exceptionally Sikkim (1.2 per cent) and Arunachal Pradesh (5.1 per cent) shows low percentage of women choosing her partner independently. All other states shows that women has less freedom to choose their husband and at national level, only 5 per cent women choose their marriage partner which is quite low. Punjab and Rajasthan shows that only 0.6 per cent of women had chosen her husband herself. This states are followed by Madhya Pradesh (1 per cent), Uttarakhand (1.1 per cent), Chandigarh (1.4 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (1.6 per cent), Chhattisgarh (1.7 per cent), Haryana (2.2 per cent), Maharashtra (2.3 per cent), Delhi (2.60 per cent), Bihar (2.80 per cent) Jammu & Kashmir (3.0 per cent), and Karnataka (4.8 per cent). Only Gujarat (10 per cent), Daman & Diu (15.60 per cent) and Goa (10.90 per cent) shows comparably higher percentage of women choosing their husband herself.

It was also observed that the decision of selecting marriage partner by parent along with the respondent was higher in Gujarat (78 per cent), Goa (76.7 per cent), Karnataka (65.4 per cent), and Kerala (60.1 per cent). This states are further followed by Chhattisgarh (59.8 per cent), Haryana (56.3 per cent), Assam (50.0 per cent), and Tamil Nadu (48.5 per cent). At national level only 37.2 per cent of parents have consulted their daughter in selecting their marriage partners.

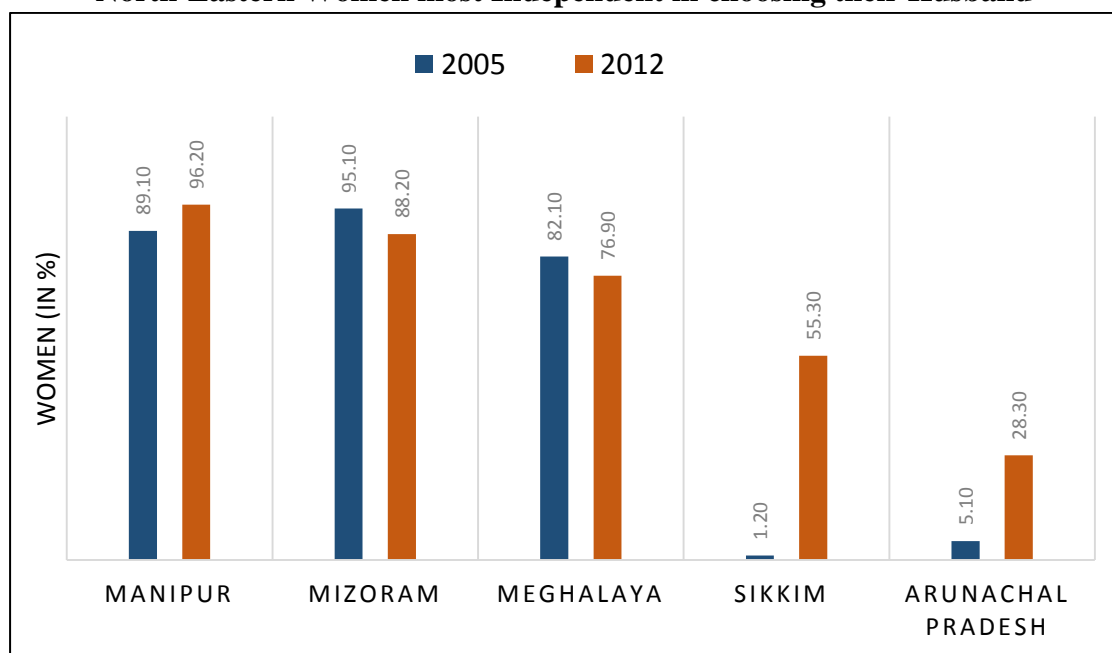
Most of the states shows maximum percentage of parents have selected marriage partner for their daughter without her consultation. At national level 57.20 percentage of the parents alone took the decision of choosing the husband for their daughter. It has been found that in Chandigarh and Sikkim, about 94 per cent of the decision are taken by parents alone without any consultation with their daughter. However, it slightly decreases for Uttarakhand (87.3 per cent), Bihar (83.3 per cent), Arunachal Pradesh (82.9 per cent), Himachal Pradesh (80.6 per cent), Rajasthan (83.1 per cent), Jharkhand (76.6 per cent) and Uttar Pradesh (75.6 per cent). Even in the National capital, Delhi around 66 percentage of the parents alone chose marriage partners for their daughters. The data clearly points towards the strong prevalence of arranged marriages in India.

Map 4.1



Map 4.1 shows the percentage of respondent selecting their partner herself based on IHDS II data. The map portrays that more women take part in choosing their own husband in north-eastern and southern states of India as compared to northern India. Most of the northern states - Punjab (1.1 per cent), Jammu & Kashmir (1.2 per cent), Bihar (1.2 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (1.3 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (1.4 per cent), and Uttarakhand (1.6 per cent) shows below 2 per cent of women taking decision in selecting their partner. Except the North-Eastern state only Himachal Pradesh (10 %), Goa (10.10%) and Jharkhand (13.70%) shows higher percentage of women taking decision in choosing their partner. All other states shows below 10 percent of women having the freedom to choose partner by herself. Although there has been a slight increase in the percentage of respondent taking decision in selecting their partner, however the percentage is meagre. It has been observed that among all the states in India, women in North-eastern states are more independent in choosing their husband.

Figure 4.1
North-Eastern Women most Independent in choosing their Husband

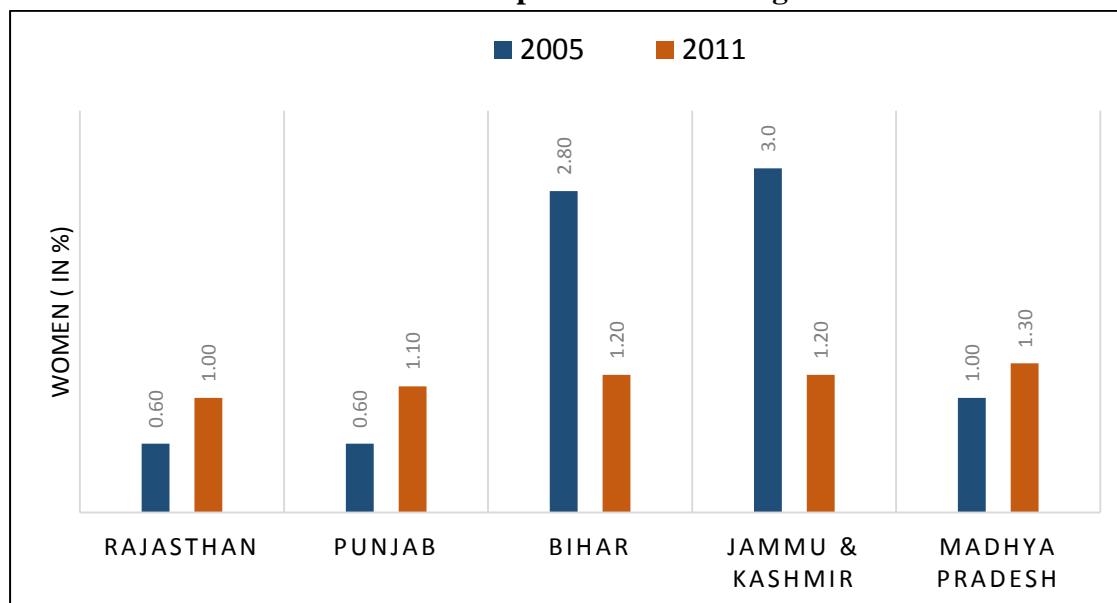


Source: IHDS 2005-06 and 2011-12

In a vast country like India, cultural backgrounds, religions and traditions vary widely and the extent of discrimination against women also varies from one societal stratum to another and from state to state. The percentage of women taking decision selecting their husband along with their parents is comparatively high in Tamil Nadu (47 per cent),

Gujarat (41 per cent), Maharashtra (40 per cent) and Kerala (38 per cent). It is also high in Nagaland (87 per cent) and Assam (47 per cent). A cross sectional study of the data shows that unlike north-eastern and southern states, women in northern India are least independent in choosing their husband. Figure 4.2 shows the percentage of women independently choosing their husband in North India.

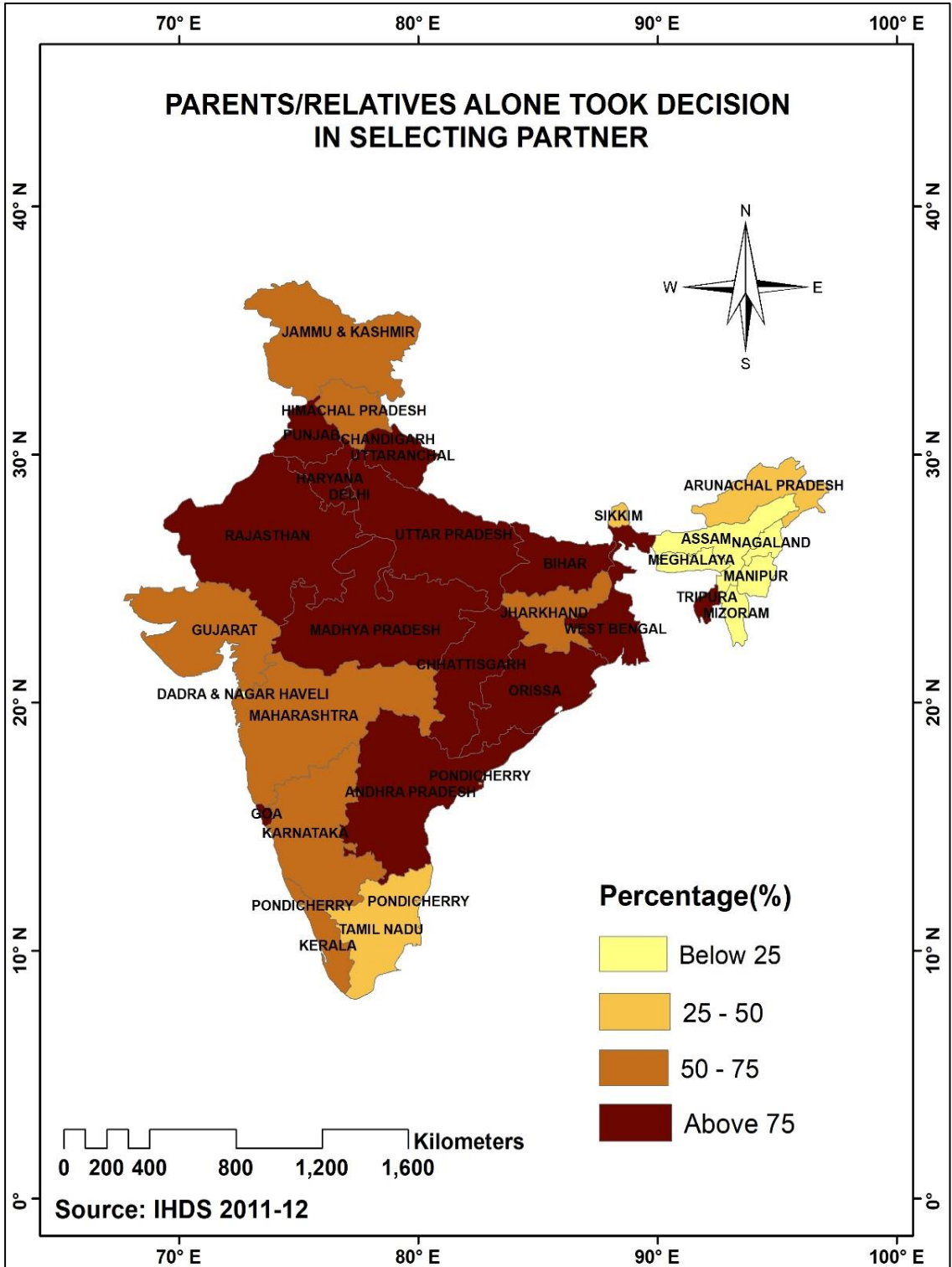
Figure 4.2
Northern Women least Independent in choosing their Husband



Source: IHDS 2005-06 and 2011-12

Analysing the data on the percentage of parents taking the decision in selecting partner for their daughter without consulting them, it is found that 73 per cent of parents do not consult their daughter about their marriage. It is high in northern states of India which shows that some areas are more inclined to gender bias than others. The persistence of strong patriarchal society in North Indian states leads to high level of discrimination against women. Women are considered inferior to men and incapable of taking important decisions in life. Map 4.2 brings out the percentage of parents/relatives who alone took the decision in selecting partner for their daughter. In Punjab 92 per cent of the parents alone have taken the decision of selecting partners for their daughter, which is followed by Madhya Pradesh (91.5 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (88.3 per cent) and Rajasthan (87.4 per cent). Even in Goa and Karnataka, about 86.7 per cent of the parents have alone selected partner for their daughter. It is comparatively less in Tamil Nadu (55 per cent) and Kerala (54 per cent).

Map 4.2



4.3 Meeting their Husband before Marriage

A women's freedom to make decision depend on where she lives in India, A women power to make decision regarding marriage are not only correlated with literacy at state level or the sex ratio but social norms, which might differ by state in diverse Indian societies. The bias against a women power to make decision regarding marriage can end if women's education is accompanied by social and economic empowerment. Cultural climate also plays a role, in case of north Indian state, there is no doubt a more rigid patriarchal culture that is hostile to women's sexual autonomy and this may be less in the North-Eastern states of India.

Table 4.2
State wise Percentage of Women who have met their Husband before Marriage,
2005-06

State	Have met their husband before marriage
Jammu & Kashmir	39.20
Himachal Pradesh	36.90
Punjab	14.20
Chandigarh	76.80
Uttarakhand	16.70
Haryana	5.70
Delhi	42.60
Rajasthan	9.40
Uttar Pradesh	11.30
Bihar	5.40
Sikkim	98.80
Arunachal Pradesh	97.40
Nagaland	96.90
Manipur	100.00
Mizoram	93.40
Tripura	25.30
Meghalaya	93.40
Assam	59.90
West Bengal	17.50
Jharkhand	18.60
Orissa	24.10
Chhattisgarh	22.00
Madhya Pradesh	9.20
Gujarat	32.90
Daman & Diu	51.10

Dadra & Nagar Haveli	44.40
Maharashtra	24.70
Andhra Pradesh	64.10
Karnataka	75.10
Goa	74.20
Kerala	81.00
Tamil Nadu	65.40
Pondicherry	49.40
Total	34.10

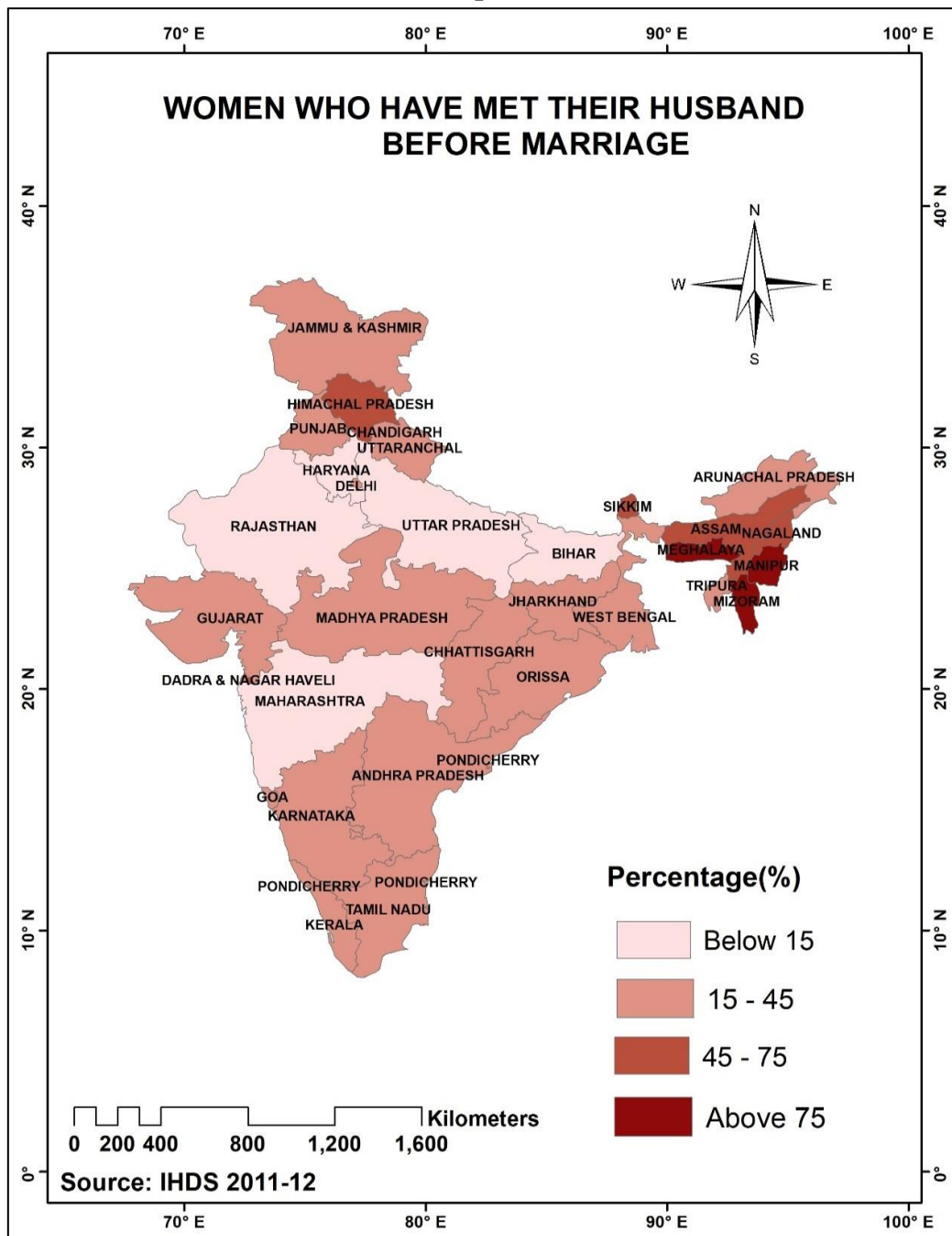
Source: IHDS 2005-06

Table 4.2 explain the percentage of women who met their husband before marriage in 2005, which is significantly high in north-eastern states of India. Manipur (100 per cent), Mizoram (93.4 per cent), Meghalaya (93.4 per cent), Sikkim (90.8 per cent) Nagaland (96.9 per cent), and Arunachal Pradesh (97.4 per cent) shows higher percentage of who met their husband before marriage. On the other hand, the percentage of women who had met their husband before marriage was lowest in Bihar (5.4 per cent) followed by Haryana (5.7 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (9.2 per cent), Rajasthan (9.4 per cent), and Uttar Pradesh (11.3 per cent). Variation has been observed across southern states of India. Kerala with 81 per cent of women meeting their husband before marriage stands 1st among the southern states of India followed by Karnataka (75.1 per cent), Goa (74.2 per cent), and Tamil Nadu (65.4 per cent) and Andhra Pradesh (64.1 per cent). In Union Territories percentage of women meeting their husband before marriage is high in Chandigarh (76.8 per cent), Delhi (42.6 per cent), Pondicherry (49.4 per cent), Daman & Diu (51.1 per cent) which may be attributed to the urbanised culture.

Map 4.3 shows that as per IHDS II data, more women met their own husband before marriage in north eastern and southern states of India as compared to northern India. About 75 per cent of the women surveyed said that they had met their husband for the first time on the wedding day, however, wide variations exist across states. For example, in Manipur, all women had met their husband before their wedding day, whereas only 6 per cent of women in Bihar have met their husband before the wedding day. It is followed by 8.1 per cent in Maharashtra, 11.2 per cent in Uttar Pradesh, 12.1 per cent in Haryana, 15 per cent in Rajasthan and 20 per cent in Madhya Pradesh. It is 100 per cent in Mizoram and Manipur and is followed by Meghalaya (96.5 per cent), Nagaland (60.7 per cent), Sikkim (51.2 per cent) and Assam (45.7 per cent). In other

parts of India only Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat are exception which has shown higher percentage (63 per cent) and (43.5 per cent) respectively. The data clearly features the process of arranged marriages in India, where most of the decision is taken by the family member and the about to be bride unaware of her partner meet each other for the first time for the purpose of getting married.⁹

Map 4.3



⁹ Abhijeet Kumar (2017) 65% Indian women literate, 5% have sole control over choosing their husband Retrieved from: <http://www.samacharlive.com/Business/65-indian-women-literate-5-have-sole-control-over-choosing-their-husband>

Table 4.3 brings out the role of women in the decision making of marriage partner based on background characteristics. Categorized on the basis of age groups it is found that women in the age group of above 25 years have shown higher percentage in choosing their husband individually in comparison to other age groups. The figure is in compliance with several literature pointing toward the fact that one of the major reason to marry off the daughter at an early age is because it is thought that girls are submissive in nature and compliant to the parents in mate selection when they are young (UNICEF, 2001b). Table 4.3 also reveal that women residing in urban areas more actively take part in the decision of choice of spouse inn comparison to rural areas. It is also high among Christian women in comparison to other religious groups.

The level of education strongly influences women's ability to participate in the decision making of marriage partner. Results shows that 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 a life partner. Delhi, the national capital of India with a literacy rate of 86.21 per cent (higher than the national average of 74.04 per cent) shows that only 2.09 per cent women reported they had sole control over choosing their husband, whereas Meghalaya with a lower literacy rate than Delhi (74.43 per cent), ranks third from the top in terms of women who said they had sole control over choosing their husband (76.9 per cent). Thus it implies that the rigid patriarchal society of North India plays a significant role is deciding women autonomy regardless of the level of education.

Table 4.3
Percentage of Women taking part in the Decision Making of Marriage Partner
by Background Characteristics, India 2011-12

Background Characteristics	Who took the decision of choosing the bridegroom			
	Women alone	Women along with her parents	Parents alone	Others
Age at marriage				
15-19	4.7	29.3	65.6	0.4
20-24	6.2	32.2	61.2	0.4
25-29	6.4	34.8	58.2	0.6
30 & above	6.4	37.2	56.2	0.2

Place of residence				
Urban	6.2	42.2	51.3	0.3
Rural	4.8	32.9	61.8	0.5
Caste				
SC	6.2	33.5	59.6	0.7
ST	10.8	47.1	41.2	0.9
OBC	5.5	34.9	59.3	0.3
Others	6.4	38.8	53.1	1.7
Religion				
Hindu	6.2	40.5	52.6	0.7
Muslim	5.5	40.7	52.7	1.1
Christian	15.5	45	39.2	0.3
Sikhs	2.9	43.2	53.5	0.4
Others	9.1	33.9	56.8	0.2
Education				
No Education	3.6	27.5	67.1	1.8
1-5 years	4.8	37.4	56.1	1.7
6-10 years	6.4	41.4	51.7	0.5
11-15 years	7.9	45.5	46.1	0.5
Economic Status				
Poor	3.6	34.7	61.3	0.4
Middle	4.7	37.5	57.3	0.5
Rich	6.5	38.6	54.3	0.6
Total	4.2	33.5	61.8	0.5

Source: IHDS 2011-12

4.4 Marriage related Decision Making among Youths of India

An analysis of youth data collected in 6 states of India shows that except for Tamil Nadu all other states have shown that above 90 percent of the marriages are arranged. Percent of love marriage in Rajasthan is significantly low for both married men and women (below 1 percent). Parents seeking opinion of their wards about their like and dislike of the boy/girl has shown higher percentage than regarding their opinion about the preferred age at marriage. Interestingly it is found that marriage partner according to respondent's choice is higher for married women than married men in states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Jharkhand. However, choice of partner considering both parents and respondents choice is comparatively low in all the states.

Although gender gap is wide but majority of the respondents approved the girl/boy chosen by their parent and very few disapproved their parent's choice.

Considering parent's response to the choice of respondent shows that there is almost an equal distribution of parents who agreed and parents who disagreed. Among the upper classes, parents being slightly liberal about caste endogamy have started accepting love marriages from slightly other caste provided the youth are equivalent in terms of job and education. However, if the variation is large in terms of altogether separate caste or different religion, parents generally do not approve of such marriages this could even lead to separation in the family. A wide north-south differentiation has been highlighted as 20-30 percent of the respondent in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh knows their spouse very well before marriage which is only 2-3 percent in Bihar and Rajasthan. Unlike northern states, southern states are characterized by isogamy (status equity between the bride's family and the groom's family) and endogamy (marriage between cross cousin and close relative). Thus it could be one of the factor explaining the familiarity about their spouse before marriage in southern states as compare to northern states. When questioned about their feeling of getting married, it was observed that only a few percentage of youths were unhappy about getting married. However, difference in feeling has been noticed across gender as most of the men are excited about getting married while women are anxious/scared. Hence it could be stated that thought the process of mate selection varies across different societies, the major concern faced by Indian youths is to "determining which situation ideally fits their lifestyle and at the same time making sure parents and relatives are content." An online article about Indian arranged marriage cites that "Marriage is a lottery, whether it is a love marriage or arranged. All you can do is get a 'sense' of what the person is like and a gut feeling for whether you want to give it a try or not. I met my husband alone only once and agreed to marry him. I trusted my parents, a woman told to *The Times*".¹⁰

4.5 Factors affecting Marriage related Decision Making among Youths

Table 4.4 shows the result of logistic regression analysing the respondent role in selecting the partner for marriage. Age at marriage shows a significant relationship with

¹⁰ Jeffrey Hays (2008), *Arranged Marriages in India*. Retrieved from: http://factsanddetails.com/india/People_and_Life/sub7_3d/entry-4172.html

the choice of partner. Keeping all the variables constant, it is found that women married at 18 and above age are more likely to give their opinion regarding the partner selected for marriage. Similarly men married at age 21 and above are more likely to select their partner compared to those men married below the legal age. Respondent from rural areas are less likely to give their opinion regarding selection of marriage partner. Apparently except for Muslims, respondents from other religions are 1.59 times (married men) and 1.71 times (married women) more likely to have a strong opinion in choosing their partner for marriage compared to Hindus. Again men belonging to General and OBC category and women from OBC category are more likely to have a choice in partner selection compared to the SC and ST category. However, neither religion nor caste shows any significant association with youth's decision in choice of partner. Increase in mother's education level have a significant and positive relationship in selection of marriage partner. Involvement in economic activity prior to marriage confer autonomy for boys in selection of their spouse. Similar findings are found among men who discussed with their parents issues of friendship, romantic relationship and other growing up issues are 1.41 times more likely to have their opinion which selecting their partner compared to men who does not discuss with their parents. Similarly women are 1.35 times more likely to have their opinion in selection of spouse compared to them who does not interact with their parents. Goode is convinced that India exhibits a number of changes in family relations and concludes that "even in mate selection choices, the winds of change may be felt, and there is a movement in the direction of giving greater freedom to the young. This change is especially important because the Hindu arranged marriage was the keystone to all the other family patterns that characterized Indian society for so long" (1963 p.207-208).

Table 4.4
Logistic Regression Analysis showing Factors Affecting Youth's Participation in Choice of Partner for Marriage

Variables		Odds Ratio	
		Married Men (MM)	Married Women (MW)
Age at Marriage of the respondent	Below 18 [®]		
	18 and above		1.74***
	Below 21 [®]		
	21 and above	1.79**	
Place of Residence	Urban [®]		

	Rural	0.70*	0.87*
Religion of the respondent	Hindu [®]		
	Muslims	0.41	0.62
	Others	1.59	1.71
Caste of the respondent	SC [®]		
	ST/VJNT	0.47	0.38
	OBC	1.56	1.17
	General	1.51	0.67
Mother's education	No schooling [®]		
	1-7	1.86**	1.08***
	8-11	1.35***	1.60***
	12 & Above	1.72***	2.96***
Work Status of the respondent	Before marriage [®]		
	After marriage	0.52*	1.03
	Both before and after marriage	1.16	1.11
Interaction with parents (friendship, romantic relationship, growing up issues)	Never [®]		
	Sometimes/Often	1.408***	1.346**

Source: Computed from IHDS 2011-12

Note: 1. [®] is the reference category in the logistic regression.

2. *** is the coefficient which is significant at one percent level of significance.

3. ** is the coefficient which is significant at five percent level of significance.

4. * is the coefficient which is significant at ten percent level of significance.

Findings reiterate the fact that traditional custom of early age at marriage especially for women continues in India. Over 90% of the marriages are arranged and though the young people, with wide regional disparity shown in participation of youth in marriage related decision making. However, Tamil Nadu shows some discrepancy with reference to the age at marriage and involvement of youth in selection of spouse. Study says that more men than women, are being involved in marriage related decision making. Most of the marriage takes place with the approval of the parent. But a trend of involving youth in selection of spouse could be seen as half of the parents agree to the boy/girl selected by their wards. This again holds true as majority of youth approves the partner chosen by their parents and very few rejects their parent's choice. However a clear north-south difference could be seen as above 75 percent of the marriages in Bihar, Jharkhand and Rajasthan are taking place between two almost strangers meeting on the

wedding day which is comparatively less in southern states. The practise of endogamy (marriage between close relative and notably cross cousin), and isogamy (status equity between the bride's family and the groom's family) in southern states could be a probable reason behind such results.

Higher age at marriage and mother's education appeared as a significant and positive determinant in allowing son/daughter's participation in selection of partner. Interaction with parents brings in more autonomy in spouse selection among youths. Findings emphasise the need for programmes for, not only young people's education but also to improve that of their parents, especially mother's. Although the role of youth in marriage related decision making has gained more acceptances, research is yet to be fully established in studying the casual link between their autonomy in marriage related decision making and its impact on later marital life which could strengthen inter spouse relationship through better interaction and communication and contribute to better sexual and reproductive health of the married couples.

4.6 Discussions

Marriage is a social necessity in India and marrying children is the primary responsibility of parents. This chapter looked into the role of parents and youth in mate selection in different states in India. Finding shows wide regional disparity in marriage practises and the role of parents across different states. One of the important finding shows that most of the women first meet their future husband on the wedding day. The percentage is comparatively less in southern part of India because of the practise of cross-cousin marriages and marriages among close relatives. Women with higher independency in mate selection in north-eastern states have also shown higher percentage of women who have met their husband before marriage. The probability of meeting the husband before marriage is significantly high among women with higher education qualification and better economic condition. The probability also increases with the increase in age at marriage. However, both men and women residing in rural areas are less likely to meet or know their spouse before marriage. Little to higher level of interaction with the spouse before marriage is found among the couples belonging to Christian and Scheduled Tribes category. Based on youth data, it was found that unlike men, females are worried about their marriage. This is probably because of the arranged

nature of marriage and limited knowhow about her natal family which is often geographically at a distant place and complete ignorance about her husband.

Another important finding is that the women in the north-eastern states are most independent in choosing their spouse and it is least among the women in northern states of India. However, researches reiterate that choosing a mate is not only limited to a women independently choosing her spouse, but to a certain extent her choice is affected by her parents. Studies suggest that due to parental influence on choosing mate from similar background, youth are often hesitant in undertaking an interethnic relationships. However, as children and parents and offspring have distinctive choice of mates, the parents' choice may not be always acceptable to their children. It is fact that the major cause of disagreement among the parent and offspring lies in the distinct choice of spouse selection. Various other research work has also been done to study the parent-offspring conflict over mate choice to prevent marriages outside the community, in the case of beauty and attractiveness of the spouse, for the preference over family background etc. Trivers (1974) argued that parents generally place more significance to the family background of the in-law in comparison to their offspring. However, the offspring may select a good looking spouse with limited financial prospects. In such a case parents may use indirect means to undermine and eventually break up such marriage. "In the settings where marriages are typically arranged, self-selection of spouse has implications in terms of young people's obligations to their families and the kind of financial and social support they can expect from their parents" (Malhotra, 1991). Parents may threaten to discontinue any financial help or perhaps inheritance rights if their offspring decides to proceed with the marriage. To understand this conflict, and consequently the evolution of human mating, it is necessary to identify the specific areas of disagreement between the two parties.

Furthermore, there are little information on whether the married women who have selected her spouse independently have more equitable marital relation than those women whose spouse was selected by her parents and others relatives. Though the present trends show an increase in the percentage of involvement of women in mate selection, more research will help draw a more complete picture on the casual link between their autonomy in marriage related decision making and its impact on later marital life which could enhance gender related equitable relationship and ultimately marital satisfaction.

CHAPTER- 5

MATE SELECTION THROUGH ADVERTISEMENTS

- ❖ **Growing Importance of Matrimonial Advertisements**
- ❖ **Analysis of Matrimonial Advertisement**
- ❖ **Details of Sample Advertisements**
- ❖ **Analysis**

Mate Selection through Advertisements

Marriage has been designated as a provision for some relationship between adults of opposite sexes across all cultures (Reiss, 1976 p.36-44), and "practically all societies consider married life the most normal and desirable type of existence for adults" (Linton, 1936 p.174). However, the criteria for mate selection and the processes by which marriages are contracted vary widely across cultures. The criteria employed in the selection of spouse also vary according to the type of mate selection system. Where mate selection is autonomous, interpersonal attraction or 'romantic love' is likely to be considered the primary or only culturally legitimate basis for marriage (see Udry, 1974 p.131-132). In most contemporary Western cultures, mate selection has as its goal individual happiness based on the concepts of romance and individualism for which mates select one another directly, and do so primarily according to factors reflecting interpersonal attraction. Rosenblatt and Cozby (1972) found that cross-culturally, autonomous mate selection is positively correlated with "impractical" selection criteria such as idealization of and affection for the prospective spouse. But this is not the case, of course, in all cultures.

This chapter studies the mate selection system as predicted in different newspapers in India. This chapter is based on primary data collected from different newspapers in India. A total of 1500 sample advertisement has been collected from 5 different newspapers. It has been collected from different region-specific newspapers as to give a clear picture of overall India. Statistical techniques and bivariate analysis have been used to find out the factors affecting mate selection in India.

Mate-selection systems may vary from 'autonomous' (Reiss, 1976), in which individuals select their spouses, to 'arranged', in which some other party, usually parents or family elders, select and negotiate for spouses for their marriageable children. This variable is not a dichotomy since there are many gradations between the extremes, and probably no empirical systems which fully satisfy all conditions of either ideal type (Goode, 1959). Instead, parents exercise differential amounts of control over the mate-selection process in different systems. In an arranged marriage the parents

investigate the woman's background before initiating the talk between the elders in the families. They want to ascertain that the woman's family is of the same class, is of comparable financial status and is of good reputation among the class elders. In Indian culture, if the man's mother is satisfied, a composed friend who may be a relative to the woman's family is consigned and has the difficult task of revealing this interest to the woman's parents. Whereas, in the Chinese culture the father has a dominant voice in the choice of the wife for his son (Lev-Wiesel & Al-Krenawi, 1999). If the woman's parents are happy that the prospective groom's family will take care of their daughter, a meeting is arranged. At this meeting the woman and man meet, if he likes her and the parents like each other, the parents will finalise the date for the engagement and the wedding (King, Whyte & Xiache, 1990). In systems with arranged marriages, important criteria are more likely to involve subsistence skills, family alliances, economic arrangements between families, health, and the like (see also Stephens, 1963; Coppinger and Rosenblatt, 1968).

The world seems to be moving towards the idea of free choice in marriage, although this is more a euphemism than an accurate appraisal, since, love is not invariably the goal of marriage. Data from Africa, India, Israel, and Malaya indicate some concomitants of freedom of choice: later age at marriage, higher educational levels, higher socioeconomic status or promise of such status, and urban living (Matras, 1973; Strange, 1976). Arranged marriages are undergoing a major transition, given the impact of modernisation on basic social values and institutions. However, the rate of change is not necessarily rapid and seems to be related to the rate of industrialization. In Turkey, three-quarters of the marriages in one study were still arranged (Fox, 1975). India presents some additional factors which have retarded the change. There is a belief that there is only one predestined mate who is to share reincarnated lives. Hence, supervision by parents is essential to avoid mistakes (Gupta, 1976). The result is compromise and an increasing number of 'semi-arranged' marriages. These are 'love marriages' in which parental approval is obtained before marriage, but the pretense of traditional match-making and rituals of engagement are presented to the world (Corwin, 1977). The amalgamation of both love and arranged marriage practices has been cited in several studies and particularly documented in popular Indian cinemas (Uberoi, 1998, 2006; Kapur, 2009). Inroads have also been made in exploring the narratives of Indian youths (Netting, 2010). It is yet to be understood whether the notion of love-

cum-arranged marriage exist within the diaspora. Given the hybridised nature of love-cum-arranged and the Indian diaspora, it seems likely that this form of marriage would appeal to diasporic members. This type of marriages blur the line between the arranged marriage according to Indian tradition and romantic notions of love marriage that align with post-modern western conceptions of marriage (Tuxen, 2013). This amalgamative process also brings up the multifaceted identities of women who face particular gendered familial expectations surrounding marriage in the Indian diaspora (Samuel, 2010).

5.1 Growing Importance of Matrimonial Advertisements

There has been several changes in the process of seeking bride and bridegrooms in arranged marriages. Due to increased urbanization personal knowledge regarding the availability of suitable partners for marriage becomes exceedingly limited. The newspaper is seen as an adequate medium for contacting a large number of people than would be possible if reliance is placed upon personal knowledge. From the early years of twentieth century, marriage advertisements appeared in periodicals and newspapers in large numbers and on a regular basis (Majumdar, 2004). In cities, the search for partners differs from the one in villages. People in the middle-class shift from family and caste networks to friends and professional networks, and rely on technology. The rationale behind this practice seems to be that if information about a large number of people is available, then the chances of acquiring a suitable partner are greater. Another option emerged with technological development is matrimonial websites. Matrimonial websites for people of Indian ancestry first emerged in the late 1990s (Shako, 2004). These websites have since become a multi-million dollar industry and continue to experience growth in both India and its diaspora (Jha & Adelman, 2009, p.70-71). Matrimonial websites capitalise on the dispersion of Indians and the gradual breakdown of communities as a consequence of migration, both within and particularly outside India. Gopalkrishnan and Babacan suggested that ‘one of the main problems of diasporic communities is the loss of the traditional matchmaking services and the opportunities that exist ... in the homeland’ (2007, p.516). Matrimonial websites stimulate the creation of a ‘global marriage market’, thereby providing a platform for families and individuals to locate a suitable partner through links from different corners, regardless of geographical location.

Adams and Ghose (as cited in Tuxen, 2013) posit that matrimonial websites play an important role in the facilitation of a global Indian marriage market as they expedite contact “between two or more continents, but they may also slow assimilation in [Western cultures] by inhibiting marriages across ethnic or subethnic lines” (2003 p.431). Matrimonial websites thereby ensures that Indians within the diaspora “are able to marry someone from the same cultural background” (Lakha, 2006 p.387) thus multiplying the probability of “a ‘suitable match’ [as] one with the right geographical-genetic origins”, which perpetuates matchmaking along traditional criteria (Adams & Ghose, 2003: 431). A ‘shopping effect’ is developed by the matrimonial websites, which channels people into selecting partners based on different criteria’s such as religion, profession, education, complexion, and so forth (Jha and Adelman, 2009). Furthering this logic, Jha and Adelman argue that it withstands the possibility for “people to discover attraction in the course of interacting with a potential mate” (2009, p.71). Additionally, Gopalkrishnan and Babacan (2007) contend that in India relationships formed matrimonial websites “continue to exist around some basic guidelines of what will and will not be acceptable to parents” (p. 517). A study of more than 10,000 matrimonial advertisements that appeared across major national dailies between 1970 and 2010 found that the requests for within-caste proposals fell from 30 percent for the decade of 1970-80 to 19 percent for 2000-10¹¹.

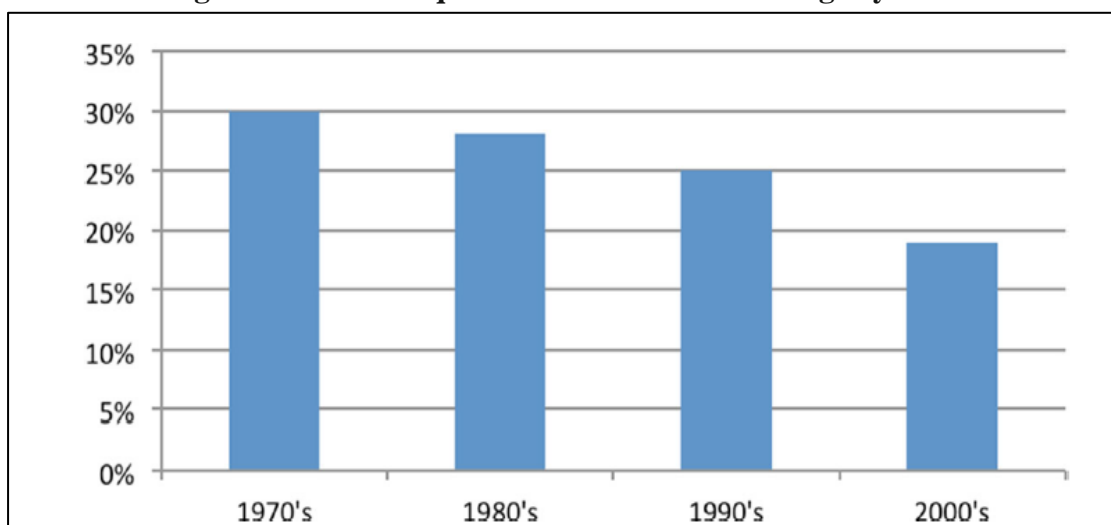
Although modernisation has promoted women's empowerment through education, economic autonomy, political power and legal reforms, gender discrimination is evident in the marriage market.¹² Physical beauty, in terms of height and skin colour, clearly started becoming very important, to the detriment of ‘accomplishments’ or talent. Adjectives like ‘pretty’ and ‘virgin’ gave way to terms such as ‘tall and fair’. Working women came to stay, and income (the higher the better) became a virtue to be flaunted. During this decade, men put great emphasis on their background, their family, and the part of the world they were settled in, or wanted to settle in. As a positive change, women have started being specific about the kind of work their men should be doing. Besides, in advertisements for grooms, the demand of an ‘only son’ has shown

¹¹ *India in Transition (IIT)* is published by the Center for the Advanced Study of India (CASI) of the University of Pennsylvania. © 2016 Center for the Advanced Study of India and the Trustees of the University of Pennsylvania. IIT articles are re-published in the op-ed pages of *The Hindu: Business Line*.

¹² Nitin Jugran Bahuguna. ‘The marriage market’, *The Hindu Business Line*. Retrieved on Nov 05, 2004

a rising trend. This suggests a kind of evasion for the bride from living with the pressures related with the power structures of an extended family. Also the fact that the family inheritance is sure to accrue to the ‘only son’ (one’s husband) is a definite advantage in today’s urban context. Nonetheless, caste, region and family have retained their importance as far as brides is concerned throughout the timeframe of the study.¹³ However, caste has also remained an important consideration for grooms. In arranged marriages the parents, on the basis of their caste or socio-economic status, select the prospective spouse. In a systematic study of over 10,000 matrimonial listings placed in four major Indian newspapers from 1970 to present shows that interest in within-caste marriage is decreasing over time. More specifically, the number of requests for within-caste marriage partners declined over the study period. As figure 5.1 shows, 30 per cent of listings from the 1970s contained a specific caste request, while this number fell to 19 per cent in the first decade of the 21st century. These findings raise an important question: Why are some people more interested in intercaste marriage than others?

Figure 5.1
Endogamous Caste Requests in Matrimonial Listings by Decade



Source: Ahuja and Ostermann, 2015

In the modern societies the ‘modern arranged’ marriages is slightly different in that the couple meet via an arranger who is in a position of authority such as a colleague, when the introduction occurs at the workplace or elsewhere and they like each other, the man has to ask for permission to court the woman from her parents and usually that ends in

¹³ See note 12

a proposal. The criteria by which the prospective brides are selected by the arranger might be based on the criteria given by the family of the prospective groom. Later the parents decide on the engagement and the wedding, which usually gives the woman and man more time to get to know each other (Flanigan, 2002)

The fifth chapter aims to study the preference of prospective spouse through the content of the matrimonial advertisements given in different newspaper of India. Matrimonial advertisements were taken from 5 different newspaper – Dainik Jagran, The Hindu, Ananda Bazar Patrika, Hindustan Times and The Times of India covering north, south and east India. Data for the paper was gathered in 2015 covering 6 months matrimonial advertisements. Most of the advertisement are put on Sunday under special section in the newspaper. Ananda Bazar Patrika provides advertisements in Bengali from people mostly belonging to West Bengal, Dainik Jagran provides advertisement in Hindi from people mostly belonging to north India, The Hindu provides advertisement in English from people mostly belonging to south India, whereas the Hindustan Times and The Times of India contains advertisements from persons belonging to all parts of India.

Table 5.1
Sample for the Study of Matrimonial Advertisements

Sl. No.	Name of Newspaper	Language
1.	Dainik Jagran	Hindi
2.	The Hindu	English
3.	Ananda Bazar Patrika	Bengali
4.	Hindustan Times	English
5.	The Times of India	English

5.2 Analysis of Matrimonial Advertisement

The advertisements inviting matrimonial correspondence are classified advertisements and hence contain maximum information in minimum space. The style of the advertisements is therefore, factual and straightforward (e.g., graduate match for a healthy engineer drawing Rs.....etc.) and sometimes cryptic (e.g., Wanted suitable match, good looking, belonging..... caste, educated, etc.). However, the information provided vary considerably from minutely detailed specifications to very vague and general ones. In some cases, the advertiser gives detailed information about himself/herself and mentions explicitly the qualities required of the partner, in other very little

information about the advertiser is given but is given a detailed inventory of qualities desired in the partner. In yet other cases detailed information about the self is given, but the qualities desired in the partner are left unspecified. These differences result in a lack of uniform reporting of all the advertisements. The information given about the advertiser and the qualities required of the partner differs from advertisement to advertisement. Thus we find in some advertisements that there is a mention of physical appearance, age, income, occupation, caste, etc. of the advertiser, while in some others phrases like "A wealthy industrialist invites applications..., etc." are used. These differences also result in a lack of uniform data. Despite these difficulties, certain significant trends are discernible from a content analysis of the matrimonial advertisements. Some example of the advertisements are given below:

Reputed well-settled Jat Sikh family from Punjab seeks handsome, well-settled/ professionally qualified Jat Sikh match from USA/Canada/India for their very fair, slim, very beautiful and well-cultured daughter. Oct. 90, 5'-8.5", BDS, MBA (Healthcare) from US, now working with top Hospital in Tricity. Father Senior Government Officer. Please respond with biodata/family details and recent pics. (Published in The Tribune, Jan 21, 2018)

A Business class, very rich and influential family invites alliance for their Daughter, 27, (M.S. General Surgery), Kavara Naidu, good-looking, smart girl from smart, Graduate boy, below 30 from a decent, rich family, preferably Doctors. Only serious inquiry reply with complete Bio-Data and horoscope: The Hindu, Chennai - 600 002, India (Published in The Hindu, February 14, 2000).

5.3 Details of Sample Advertisements

The sample consists of 1500 advertisement out of which 50.4 percent are looking for a bride, and 49.6 percent are looking for a bridegroom. Data covers 40 percent advertisers from north India, 33.9 percent from south India and 26.1 from east India. Based on marital status, 87.9 percent of advertisements are placed for/by the never-married person, 10.7 advertisements are placed for/by the divorced person and 1.4 percent advertisements are placed for/by the widowed person. Among 1500 sample

advertisement, 63.6 percent advertisers are Hindus, 12.5 percent are Muslims, 9.7 percent are Christians and 14.1 percent from other religion. Eighty-six percent of advertisers are looking for bride/groom from own religion, 3.9 percent included other religions also and 10.5 percent did not mention anything about their preference in religion. Considering the important role of caste in our marriage market, it was found that 52 percent of the advertisers have specified their caste as general, 20 percent have specified as OBC, 13.2 as SC and only 0.2 percent have specified their caste as ST. However, 14.2 percent of the advertisers have not mentioned their caste in the advertisement. Again 75.7 percent of the advertisers are strict with their choice of bride/bridegroom as they are seeking for prospect from same caste. About 17 percent have mentioned about their caste preference which also includes other castes. However, 7.3 percent did not mention about any specific caste requirement.

Table 5.2
Percentage Distribution of the Sample Advertisements

Variables		Percent	Total Sample
Looking for	Bride	50.4	756
	Bridegroom	49.6	744
Region	North India	40	600
	South India	33.9	508
	East India	26.1	392
Marital Status	Never Married	87.9	1319
	Divorced	10.7	161
	Widowed	1.3	20
Religion	Hindu	63.6	954
	Muslim	12.5	188
	Christian	9.7	146
	Others	14.1	212
Religion required	Own religion	85.6	1284
	Other religion included	3.9	58
	Not mentioned	10.5	158
Caste	SC	13.2	198
	ST	0.2	3

	OBC	20.4	306
	General	52	780
	Not mentioned	14.2	213
Caste required	Own caste	75.7	1136
	Other caste included	16.9	254
	Not mentioned	7.3	110
Age	Not mentioned	0.6	9
	Up to 25	10.7	161
	26-30	49.5	743
	31-40	32.9	494
	40 and above	6.2	93
Height	Not mentioned	21.8	327
	Less than 5.0	0.9	14
	5.0-5.5	51.4	771
	5.5-6.0	20.8	312
	Above 6.0	5.1	76
Colour Stated	Fair	74.7	1120
	Not mentioned	25.3	380
Colour required	Fair	31.2	468
	Not mentioned	68.8	1032
Education Qualification	Not mentioned	13.7	206
	Higher Secondary	0.4	6
	Graduation	22.6	337
	Post-Graduation	54.1	812
	Above post-graduation	6.9	104
	Others	2.3	35
Education Qualification Required	Not mentioned	75.5	1132
	Higher Secondary	0.4	6
	Graduation	9.1	137
	Post-Graduation	10.9	164
	Above post-graduation	3	44

	Others	1.1	17
Profession Stated	Government	25	375
	Private	46.3	695
	Business	7.3	110
	Others	7.6	114
	Not mentioned	13.7	206
Profession required	Government	19.7	296
	Private	4.7	71
	Business	2.7	41
	Others	2.3	35
	Not mentioned	70.5	1057

Source: Computed from the primary data

5.4 Analysis

There is a popular belief that it is only those persons who cannot get married in the normal course due to physical deformities, advanced age, etc. i.e., who are less eligible for marriage, resort to placing advertisements in the newspapers. But a glance at the qualifications and characteristics of the advertisements disproves this notion. In selecting a bride, parents continued to consider the girl's family background, economic position, family reputation, general character, and lately her education, and adaptability. (Kurian 1974, Shah 1961). In selecting a bridegroom, parents of bride in addition consider health, looks, education, earnings, job or job prospects. The most recurrent factors in the advertisements are: caste, religion, occupation, salary (income), age, personal appearance and family background. However, this doesn't mean that all of the factors are mentioned in all of the advertisements. An analysis of the above factors will throw light upon the criteria used in the selection of spouses. The most preferred qualities (i.e. the advertiser's self-description) and the most desired qualities in the order of frequency of listing are as follows:

Table 5.3
The Most Preferred Qualities in the Advertisements (The Advertiser's Self-Description)

Female		Male	
Caste	85.4	Caste	86.1
Religion	99.7	Religion	98.8
Complexion	76.2	Complexion	40.7
Job	47.3	Job	95.2
Education	67.5	Education	88.1
Total Sample	616	Total Sample	627

Source: Computed from the primary data

Table 5.4
The Most Desired Qualities in the Advertisements

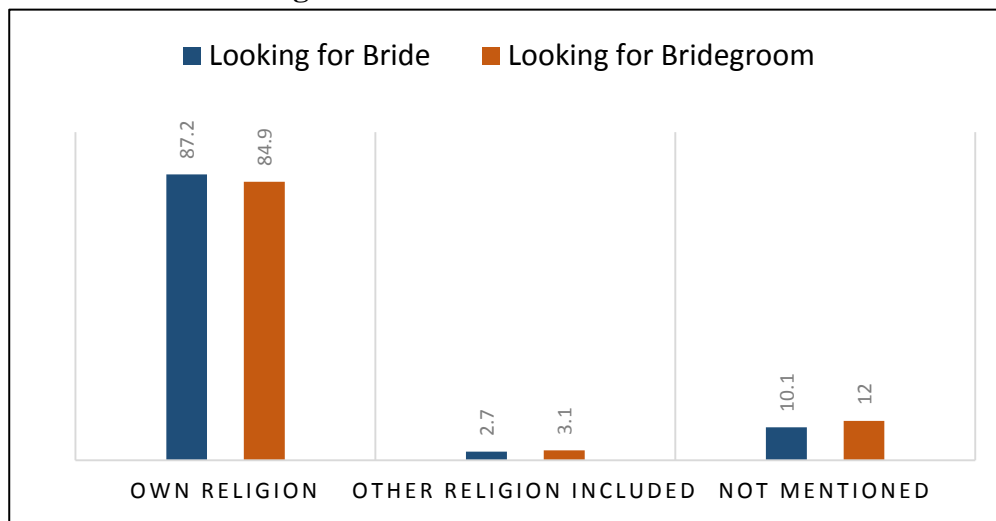
Want from Bride		Want from bridegroom	
Caste	88.3	Caste	85.5
Religion	97.9	Religion	98.0
Complexion	74.8	Complexion	37.5
Job	11.2	Job	95.0
Education	27.0	Education	81.9
Total Sample	627	Total Sample	616

Source: Computed from the primary data

5.4.1 Religion

Indian families thrive on customs, traditions, and marriage within the same caste and same religion is the rule of the land of the Indian society. To every such marriage, social stigma is attached, making it difficult for the couples to survive. Religion has also been a very dominant influence in marriage, choice of marital partner and cohabitation. Recently the process of modernization, westernization, democratization, and development has brought lots of positive changes in Indian society. “The Special Marriage Act mandates certain pre-conditions essential for any marriage to be solemnized under this law. This legal provision is indeed a massive step towards a broad-minded society.”

Figure 5.2
Religion Preference in Advertisements



Source: Computed from the primary data

Based on the advertisements it was found that 87.2 per cent male specified their preference of bride in the same religion and 85 per cent female specified their preference of bridegroom in the same religion. Categorised on the basis of region, it was found that north Indians are more specified about religion of the prospect as compared to south and east Indians. About 61.8 per cent of advertisers from south India have mentioned about their preference for same religion, 16.7 per cent have included other religions too and 21.6 per cent have not mentioned any specific requirement of religion. A cross-sectional analysis of the advertisement shows that percentage of people not mentioning their requirement for religion have actually specified their religion thus indicating their preference for bride/bridegroom in own religion.

Table 5.5
Preference of Religion in Different Regions of India

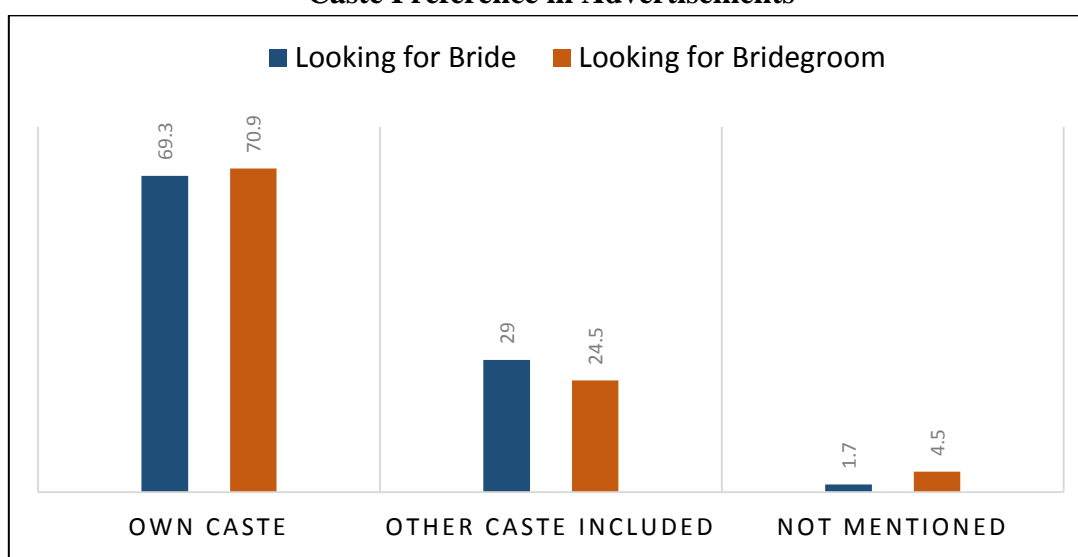
		Region		
		North India	South India	East India
Religion specified	Hindu	81.2	82.9	92.5
	Muslim	6.6	9.5	6.0
	Christian	1.3	5.9	0.5
	Others	10.9	1.7	1.0
Religion Required	Own religion	82.7	61.8	65.5
	Other religion included	10.3	16.7	13.0
	Not mentioned	7.0	21.6	21.5

Source: Computed from the primary data

5.4.2 Caste

Caste columns on the matrimonial pages in newspapers and on matrimonial websites are a strong reminder of the relevance of caste in the private sphere. The policing of marriage, especially of women, by family and community members and sometimes by caste councils, is indicative of caste system's continued hold on Indian society. Specifically looking into the advertiser specifying their caste, it was found that there is not much variation whether looking for bride or bridegroom. It is almost same for all caste groups and those who have not mentioned their caste. Almost 70 percent of the advertisement seeks for bride/bridegroom in own caste. Only 25-30 percent of the advertisement who prefer mate from different caste also. However, most of these advertisement are provided in cases of divorced or widowed advertisers.

Figure 5.3
Caste Preference in Advertisements



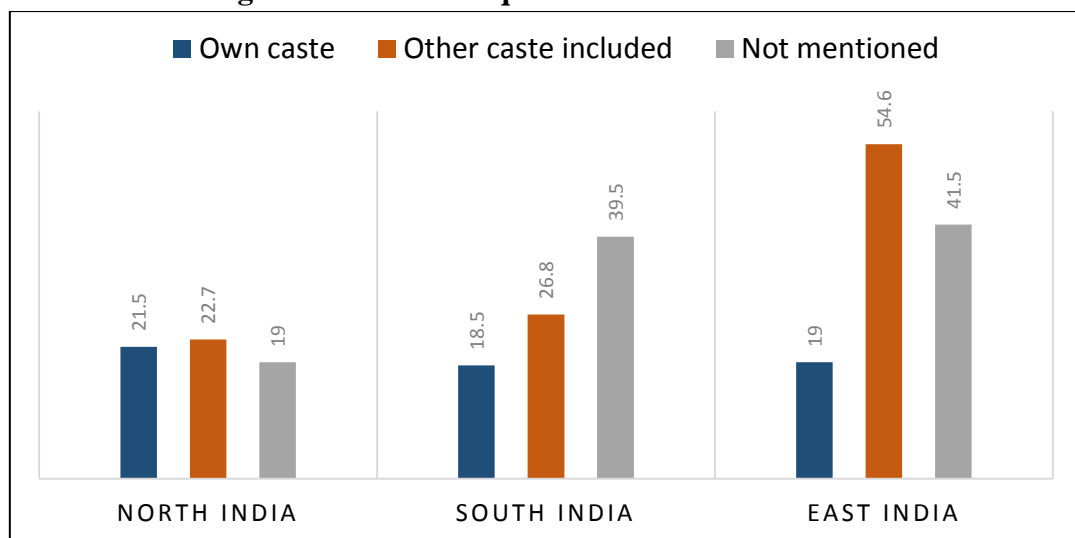
Source: Computed from the primary data

Yet, even taking into account this empirical evidence, “there are reasons to believe that social change, though limited to small segments of the Indian population, is occurring” (Ahuja & Ostermann, 2015, p.3). The taboos on inter-caste marriage and dining are being softened is further indicated from evidence obtained in 1950 by Professor B. Kuppuswamy, Chairman of the Psychology Department at Mysore University, who conducted, under the auspices of UNESCO, a study of caste attitudes among 591 college students in Madras State. Professor Kuppuswamy found that attitudes toward inter-caste marriage were impressively liberal. Approximately half of the Brahmins and

four-fifths of the non-Brahmins approved of marriage outside of caste; furthermore, twenty-nine percent of the Brahmins and fifty-five percent of the non-Brahmins sanctioned an individual's right to marry "anybody," implying marriage to untouchables as well as to high-caste persons, to Muslims and Christians as well as to members of the Hindu faith. About four out of five students in the entire sample indicated they would be willing to dine with "anybody," regardless of caste or religion.

Categorised on region-wise caste requirement for mate selection, it was found that north Indians are stricter about their caste while looking for bride/bridegrooms. Most people in the Northern states prohibit marriage between persons of similarly named clans and extend this rule to several other related clans, such as of mother's clan, mother's mother clan, and father's mother clan. The people bearing these clan names may be living several hundred miles away, however, but are usually thought to be related. From this point of view, then, the ideal mate for any person could also be a stranger, an outsider, but an individual related to him in distant terms or imagined way. A person living across a state belonging to one's caste has a greater chance of being an eligible prospective mate than a person belonging to some other caste living next door. Caste is thus an extended kin group and, at least theoretically, membership in which is related through various kinds of kinship ties. Nowadays the newspapers frequently highlight the growing incidents of high/low caste confrontations and violence in north India which have both caste as well as class dimension.

Figure 5.4
Region wise Caste Requirement in Advertisements



Source: Computed from the primary data

5.4.3 Complexion

Physical attractiveness is also another important desirable attributes when looking for a potential mate. Mandelaum (1970 p.101-105) in his survey of Indian society notes, apart from the “explicit” rules of marriage such as endogamy or exogamy, “fairness of skin” and a woman’s general appearance are among the “implicit rules of the game for maneuvering for family advantage” (as cited by Philips 2004). India’s population is naturally brown but fair skin is considered to be the most important attribute a woman should have to be recognized as good looking and beautiful. Additionally, fairer skin remains social marker of ‘aristocratic heritage and class allegiance’ (Goon and Craven, 2003). In a sunny country like India, women consciously avoid getting out in the sun in order to protect their skin from darkening and maintaining the lightest skin colour possible (Sequeira, 2005). Fair skin becomes extremely important, especially when it comes to looking for partners for marriage (Gorke 2014). Indians' obsession with fair skin can be seen in matrimonial ads asking for fair-skinned brides. Chatterji (as cited by Gorke 2014) states that “the most frequent description for the wanted bride that can be observed in those matrimonial ads reads as follows ‘beautiful, slim, fair, convent-educated girl’. In fact, on most of the matrimonial websites, advertisers are asked to mention their complexion in the given categories ranging from very fair – fair – wheatish – wheatish medium – wheatish brown – dark” (Sequeira, 2005). Dussault (as cited by Gorke 2014) provides an interesting quote in an article¹⁴ which points out that complexion becomes a vital issue for marriage

“If caste is less of a criterion for finding a life partner in contemporary India, fairness of the skin – mostly the woman’s – remains a sure value on the marriage market, sometimes even more prized than professional skills or wealth. This explains why women take so much effort to lighten their complexion.”¹⁵

A cross-tabulation of the advertisement shows that 50.2 percent of advertisement put by the girl or her family stated their complexion as fair, and 20.7 percent of the advertisement put by the boy or his family stated their complexion as fair. The recurrent mention, for instance, of the beauty of a girl may often be factual exaggeration, and

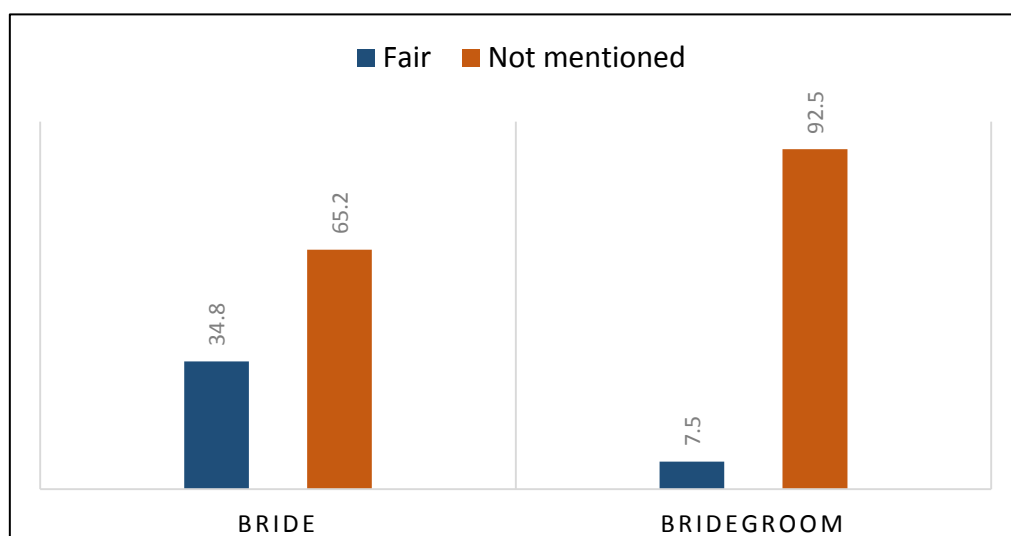
¹⁴ The article has been taken from the internet version of The Hindu Business Line

¹⁵ <http://www.blonnet.com/life/2006/02/24/stories/2006022400290400.html>

therefore misleading to those who search the columns of matrimonial for an attractive candidate which conveys the social importance of these attributes.

Culture contributes to women’s behavior of skin-lightening in the sense that women feel that fair skin is highly valued in Indians society. The fact that dark-skinned India women are subordinated and discriminated against by being less appreciated than those with lighter skin merely supports this notion. Just as Fallon (1990) states, it is not only that wed develop our body image in terms of cultural standards but also in terms of how important other members of the cultural group think it is to match this standard of fair skin. But as culturally defined categories, it also encodes values and ideas about position and privilege in their myriad manifestations in specific cultural contexts. “Women featuring a darker complexion are apparently so often rejected that skin-lightening seems to be the last resort to find a husband” (Gorke 2014). Most of the Indian women are trying hard to conform to their standards of cultural beauty through skin lightening. As even in dowry transactions ‘skin colour’ as an index of beauty is symbolically associated with health and moral qualities and acts as one set of symbolic markers articulating social location, female gender identity and the marriageability of women. Beteille (1968 p.175) has noted that “while there is a clear preference for light-skin colour in almost all sections of Indian society, it is difficult to say how far this preference influences social action,” and that “the most concrete expression of it is to be found in the choice of marriage partners.”

Figure 5.5
Preference of Skin Colour in Advertisements



Source: Computed from the primary data

Figure 5.5 shows the demand for seeking fair complexion bride/bridegroom. Around 42 per cent of the advertisement have mentioned their preference for fair colour requirement among which 34.8 percent are looking for fair brides and it applies on men too as 7.5 percent are looking for fair bridegrooms. According to a 2012 survey by matrimonial website jeevansathi.com, the bias doesn't just exist, but goes across genders – 71 per cent women prefer fair men when it comes to marriage, the survey claims. A news report quoted a senior executive from the portal as saying that 65-70 per cent of men on these sites mention their skin colour as fair.¹⁶

5.4.4 Job/Wealth

The naive notion that Indian society is a "pure" caste system over-looks the important fact that a class system is in process of development. Even as it now exists, the social order is a combination of caste and class. Yet the two are not altogether compatible. As the society increasingly assumes the character of an open-class system, caste is destined to decline. These observations does not intend to convey the notion that caste is rapidly waning; on the contrary, it is still a going concern and will be for a long time. Marriage alliances within the jati (caste or sub-caste) reinforce kinship and family ties and cause a sort of evolution of the class system. Class generally determines future marital alliances within the caste.

The exchange theory focuses on the social assets and liabilities that each partner brings to a relationship (Wolf, 1996). According to exchange theory, the choice of a partner depends on the perception that the assets and liabilities of the partner are roughly equivalent to one's own assets and liabilities. Exchange theories have frequently been used to account for both homogamy and the departures from it. One of the clearest statements is in Benokraitis, (2005) where Edwards employed an exchange theory-utility maximization perspective to explain homogamy through four interconnected propositions:

- a) Marriageable persons seek partners who will maximise their rewards from marriage.

¹⁶ Collin Rodrigues (2015). India's unfair obsession with fair skin, its impact on relationships Retrieved from: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/sex-and-relationships/india-s-unfair-obsession-with-fair-skin-its-impact-on-relationships/story-cbkOW7ZShgbR10i5yfvIXI.html>

- b) Persons with equivalent resources are most likely to maximise each other's rewards, because each is likely to reject those with fewer resources.
- c) Couples with equivalent resources are most likely to have similar characteristics.
- d) Marriages are likely to be homogamous.

Recognising that couples with equivalent resources need not be similar with respect to all characteristics relevant to marriage choice can extend Edward's explanation. Their overall equivalence could result from a balance of pluses and minuses in different areas. In terms of an arranged marriage the criteria for selection will include concerns such as socio-economic status of the prospective spouse and his/her family, health, beauty, strength and temperament of the spouse. Equitable gift exchange and bride wealth is also important when choosing a mate in arranged marriages. The families want to maximise their rewards from the marriage. In an arranged marriage, factors such as religion and caste are also significant when a partner is to be selected, however, in autonomous marriages the criteria of selection depends on feelings that the individuals have for each other but they also look at the resources that each of them bring to the relationship.

Table 5.6
The Profession Stated and the Profession Required during Mate Selection

	Profession stated		Profession required	
	Bride	Bridegroom	Bride	Bridegroom
Government Employee	9.1	35.1	8.1	61.5
Private Sector	11.7	47.3	3.7	25.7
Business	2.1	10.4	0.3	5.2
Other	1.8	5.4	2.1	2.6
Not Mentioned	75.3	1.8	85.8	5.0

Source: Computed from the primary data

5.4.5 Education

There are many reasons why education is implicated heavily in marriage patterns. The first set of reasons concerns the working of social propinquity and opportunity. High schools, colleges, and universities are efficiently designed institutions for propagating

homogamy with respect to educational attainment. Students are segregated formally by educational level in classrooms and often are segregated informally by educational level in settings such as residence halls or campus libraries. The process of educational attainment also sorts the population along characteristics such as socioeconomic background, general intelligence, and values and attitudes, which also may play a role in marriage choices. Furthermore, in modern industrialized societies, high educational attainment is the entrance requirement to prestigious and well-paying occupations. Research emphasizing a Marxist perspective (Wright and Perrone 1977), a dual-economy framework (Kalleberg, Wallace, and Althausen 1981) or a human capital or "functionalist" approach (Duncan, Featherman, and Duncan 1972) shows consistently that a major determinant of income is education. Because education is a reliable and stable indicator of future economic status, it is a significant characteristic to be considered in choosing a spouse. The operation of these factors results in a very strong association between spouses' educational characteristics (Rytina, Blau, Blum, and Schwartz 1988; Stevens and Schoen 1988).

G. Stevens et al (1990) in his study found that highly educated people tend to have highly educated spouses. Results also strongly suggest that that homogamy is the major theme in the story of attractiveness and education in marriage markets: (un)attractive women tend to marry (un)attractive men," and a parallel situation occurs with economically relevant characteristic the variable "educational attainment" is treated as a proxy for income or for economically relevant characteristics.

The table 5.7 presents the educational qualification stated and required during mate selection. Most of the advertisement, looking for bride, stated the qualification of the bridegroom and in requirement mentioned about seeking well qualified bride. While stating the qualification, advertisers have mentioned the degree (for example MBBS, MBA, M.tech) and not the level of qualification. Education is generally considered to be emphasized more heavily by women than by men in assessing the relative merits of the prospective spouses because of the traditionally heavier emphasis on men's economically relevant characteristics (DiMaggio and Mohr 1985; Leslie 1982; Nock and Rossi 1978). An associated reason may also be that the variance of men's income is greater than that of women's income; thus economically relevant characteristics such

as education presumably are of greater consequence to women than to men in assessing the relative merits of the prospective spouse.¹⁷

Table 5.7
The Education Stated and the Educational Requirement during Mate Selection

	Education stated		Education required	
	Bride	Bridegroom	Bride	Bridegroom
Higher Secondary	4.0	0.8	0.8	0.0
Graduation	15.2	17.9	29.7	32.4
Post-Graduation	61.7	16.7	8.3	23.5
Above Post Graduation	8.1	15.8	0.1	14.9
Others	1.9	42.7	1.1	1.1
Not Mentioned	11.0	6.1	60.0	28.1

Source: Computed from the primary data

5.5 Discussions

The analysis brings out three major results. Firstly, the marriage patterns and the choice of spouses are seen to have been affected considerably over time. There has been a shift from decline in traditional match maker towards the rise of marriage advertisement. The very fact that some persons have resorted placing advertisements in the newspapers might be interpreted as deviance from the tradition. Preference has shifted from physical attributes of the bride and economic assets of the bridegroom to the intellectual and economic characteristics of the bride and personality-related attributes and career prospects of the bridegroom. Details of life style, living arrangement have been mentioned by attributes like non-smoking and non-drinking habits. However, income, caste and family have retained their importance throughout in the marriage market.

India has progressed significantly as the number of inter-caste marriages are rising. However this is still not accepted very well by people at large and the preference continues towards caste homogamy. The hard core of the system, caste endogamy in marriage, is remarkably resistant to change. This resistance to change lies partly in the

¹⁷ Wives' education may also be important for men, however Leibowitz (1974; cited in DiMaggio and Mohr 1985), for example, suggests that men's health and well-being are associated with their wives' educational attainment

functionalship that exists between family and caste. The family, especially joint family, is the mechanism which carries out and enforces the caste rules governing marriage. Although the youth of today are quite receptive to the idea of inter-caste/ inter-religion marriage, the real impediment is in altering the mind set of family elders. There is a pressing need to widen our outlook and get rid of all prejudiced and pre-conceived notions of the society. Without endogamous marriage groups could not maintain their separate identity and the whole system would therefore collapse. That is why orthodox Hindus are so relentlessly opposed to inter-caste marriages and so scrupulous about selecting spouses for their marriageable children. If young men and women were at liberty to select their mates, as in the West, caste boundary lines would undoubtedly be crossed by large numbers of lovelorn youth. Despite the easing of marriage rules associated with the decline in the role caste plays regulating behavior, it would be wrong to suggest that intermarriage is today regularly met with equanimity. Not only does such a marriage mix caste identities, requiring redefinitions of identities, it also mixes ethical backgrounds, doubly separating the intercommunity couple and their children from parents and kin.

The description of personal appearance, too, shows that the male is less interested in describing himself than in describing the woman he wants. The females reinforce this pattern by giving a highly descriptive account of themselves in the matrimonial. It certainly appears from the comparison that in North India, as well as in South India, the same class of people advertises in the newspapers, and that, contrary to popular belief, it is not so much those in need of a “last resort” who advertise, but rather the urban, educated middle-class, and people of marriageable. Considering the matrimonial ads/ profiles as resume in the marriage market, love, relationship, and understanding are never considered as an element in prospective marital alliance (Meyer, 1953) which opens a wider scope for further research in success and failure of arrange marriage institution.

CHAPTER- 6

MARRIAGE PATTERNS IN PASCHIM MEDINIPUR DISTRICT OF WEST BENGAL

- ❖ **Terms Used in the Study**
- ❖ **Profile of the Study Area**
- ❖ **Background Characteristics of the Respondents**
- ❖ **Arranged Marriages**
- ❖ **Love Marriages**
- ❖ **Inter Marriages**
- ❖ **Changes in Female Marriage Patterns**
- ❖ **Discussions**

Chapter 6

Marriage Patterns in Paschim Medinipur District of West Bengal

The sixth chapter documents the changes in mate selection and marriage pattern among women in Paschim Medinipur. It is based on primary data collected through field survey in Paschim Medinipur district of West Bengal. Experiences of two cohorts has been analysed to explore the changes in mate selection and marriage pattern. It also analyses the factor deriving the changes. It will also include the background characteristics of the respondents interviewed and their marriage details. As mentioned in first chapter, the study has been conducted in 4 blocks of Paschim Medinipur district - Kharagpur I, Daspur II, Midnapore and Gopiballavpur I. In Kharagpur I respondents from Kharagpur Rly. Settlement (CT) and Kalaikunda (CT) have been surveyed as this are the only block having urban population according to Census 2011. Quantitative analysis of the data has been done with the help of different statistical techniques. The main statistical methods used in the study are univariate analysis to compute the frequencies of various dependent and independent variables and bivariate analysis like cross-tabulation to see the gross effect of various predictor variables on response variables. To analyse the net effect, binary logistic regression have been used.

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 interclass 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. Again in many cases women wanted their husband to answer some of the questions. Thus the perception of the respondent also deviated because of the presence of her husband during the interview.

6.1 Terms used in the Study

Arrange marriage – Question was asked on the type of marriage. Respondent saying that they came to know about their husband through their parents or some mediator was considered arranged marriage.

Love marriage – When asked about choosing husband if the respondent said that she choose her husband, then it was asked whether it was a love marriage or arranged. Cases where the women said that it was an arranged marriage but they were in courtship/romantic relationship before marriage has also been considered as love marriage.

Inter caste marriage – Question was directly asked if the caste of the husband differs from her own caste.

Inter religious marriage – Question was directly asked if the religion of the husband differs from her own religion.

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

6.2 Profile of the Study Area

Table 6.1 brings out the demographic characteristics of the study area. Of all the 4 blocks studied, only Kharagpur – I has urban population. Among the blocks Daspur-II has the highest average literacy rate and Gopiballavpur-I have the lowest average literacy rate. Female literacy rate is highest in Daspur-II and followed by Midnapore and lowest in Gopiballavpur – I. Male literacy rate is highest in Daspur II and lowest in Gopiballavpur-I. All the block shows high male literacy rate in comparison to female literacy rate. The sex ratio in all the blocks does not show much difference, however, a comparative analysis shows that highest sex ratio is found in Kharagpur– I and lowest sex ratio is found in Gopiballavpur – I.

Table 6.1
Demographic Characteristics of the Study Area

Name	Total	Rural	Urban
Total population			
Daspur - II	238529	238529	NA
Midnapore	191705	191705	NA
Kharagpur - I	258040	165961	92079
Gopiballavpur - I	108254	108254	NA
Literacy rate			
Daspur - II	85.62	85.62	NA
Midnapore	70.48	70.48	NA
Kharagpur - I	77.06	74.24	81.97
Gopiballavpur - I	65.44	65.44	NA
Male literacy rate			
Daspur - II	91.59	91.59	NA
Midnapore	78.43	78.43	NA
Kharagpur - I	84.29	82.51	87.41
Gopiballavpur - I	75.11	75.11	NA
Female literacy rate			
Daspur - II	79.41	79.41	NA
Midnapore	62.24	62.24	NA
Kharagpur - I	69.60	65.65	76.41
Gopiballavpur - I	55.26	55.26	NA
Sex Ratio			
Daspur - II	959	959	NA
Midnapore	966	966	NA
Kharagpur - I	968	964	976
Gopiballavpur - I	951	951	NA

Source: Census 2011

Table 6.2 shows the demographic characteristics among the religious groups in each block. About more than 80 per cent of the households are headed by Hindu population in the selected blocks whereas Muslim headed households are less than 10 per cent. Remaining are the households with Christian and others religious groups.

Gopiballavpur- I has the highest Hindu population following Daspur-II. Midnapore has the lowest Hindu population corresponding with Muslim population, which is noticeably high from the other selected blocks. In case of Christian population it is highest in Kharagpur-I and lowest in the Daspur-II.

Among religious category Christian population has the highest average literacy rate following Hindu and Muslim population. The highest literacy rate has been found in Christian population of Daspur-II and the lowest literacy rate can be found among Hindus from Gopiballavpur-II. Only Daspur-II shows the highest literacy rate in each religious group; Hindu, Muslim and Christian population.

Table 6.2
Block wise Religious Population

Name	Hindu	Muslim	Christian
Religious population			
Daspur - II	92.80	7.04	0.02
Midnapore	71.74	25.58	0.07
Kharagpur - I	89.05	8.22	1.51
Gopiballavpur - I	97.85	0.70	0.37
Literacy rate based on religious population			
Daspur - II	85.80	83.33	91.18
Midnapore	71.25	69.58	80.18
Kharagpur - I	77.76	66.07	83.24
Gopiballavpur - I	65.44	65.55	68.11
Sex Ratio based on religious population			
Daspur - II	959	959	1438
Midnapore	974	943	938
Kharagpur - I	968	950	1086
Gopiballavpur - I	951	1046	1005

Source: Census 2011

Lining to the conventional notions, on an average, Christian population has the highest sex-ratio following Hindu and Muslim population. The highest sex-ratio can be found in Daspur-II among Christian population. Midnapore has shown lowest sex ratio among

the Christian population whereas Muslim population from Gopiballavpur-I block has considerably high sex-ratio.

Among the selected blocks, Gopiballavpur-I has the highest SC population and the second highest is in Midnapore showing 19.53 per cent of SC population. Rural areas follow the same pattern as the total SC population in different blocks having highest concentration is in Gopiballavpur-I followed by Midnapore, Kharagpur-I and Daspur-II. Table 6.3 showing block wise sex-ratio of SC population depicts that Kharagpur-I has the highest sex-ratio among different blocks while Gopiballavpur-I has the lowest among them. Apart from that, rural sex-ratio follows the same pattern as total sex-ratio with small difference in the highest sex-ratio of Kharagpur-I block.

Table 6.3
Block wise Scheduled Caste Population

Name	Total	Rural	Urban
Scheduled caste population			
Daspur - II	12.54	12.54	NA
Midnapore	19.53	19.53	NA
Kharagpur - I	17.99	20.31	13.82
Gopiballavpur - I	27.18	27.18	NA
Literacy rate of SC population			
Daspur - II	72.41	72.41	NA
Midnapore	63.88	63.88	NA
Kharagpur - I	68.76	67.21	72.72
Gopiballavpur - I	57.63	57.63	NA
Sex Ratio of SC population			
Daspur - II	973	973	NA
Midnapore	987	987	NA
Kharagpur - I	1003	996	1022
Gopiballavpur - I	957	957	NA

Source: Census 2011

Literacy rate in SC population is quite moderate. Daspur-II had the highest literacy rate with 72.41 per cent followed by Kharagpur-I, Midnapore and Gopiballavpur-I. Rural

SC population shows the same pattern with highest literacy rate in Daspur-I block. Kharagpur-I is the only representation of urban literacy rate of SC population with literacy rate of 72.7 per cent.

The table 6.4 reveals that among the selected blocks, Gopiballavpur-I has the highest ST population and lowest ST population is observed in Daspur – II. Since most of the ST population are concentrated mainly in rural areas, thus Kharagpur-I shows only 2.59 per cent ST population in urban areas. Rural areas follow the same pattern as the total ST population in different blocks having highest concentration in Gopiballavpur-I followed by Kharagpur-I, Midnapore and Daspur-II showing negligible ST population.

Table showing block wise sex-ratio of ST population depicts that Midnapore has the highest sex-ratio among all the blocks while Daspur - II has the lowest among them. Urban sex-ratio can be found in kharagpur-I and has the sex-ratio of 978. Apart from that, rural sex-ratio follows the same pattern as total sex-ratio in all the four blocks.

Table 6.4
Block wise Scheduled Tribe Population

Name	Total	Rural	Urban
Scheduled Tribe population			
Daspur - II	0.25	0.25	NA
Midnapore	17.67	17.67	NA
Kharagpur - I	16.45	24.14	2.59
Gopiballavpur - I	34.01	34.01	NA
Literacy rate of ST population			
Daspur - II	51.25	51.25	NA
Midnapore	53.46	53.46	NA
Kharagpur - I	59.00	57.88	77.20
Gopiballavpur - I	54.07	54.07	NA
Sex Ratio of ST population			
Daspur - II	976	976	NA
Midnapore	1007	1007	NA
Kharagpur - I	1003	1005	978
Gopiballavpur - I	983	983	NA

Source: Census 2011

Literacy rate in ST population is quite moderate and hovers around 50-55 per cent. Kharagpur - I had the highest literacy rate with 59 per cent points followed by Gopiballavpur – I, Midnapore and Daspur - II. Rural ST population shows the same pattern with highest literacy rate in Kharagpur-I. Kharagpur-I is the only representation of urban literacy rate of ST population with literacy rate of 77.2 percent.

6.3 Background Characteristics of the Respondents

The percentage of women surveyed and their background characteristics has been given in the table 6.5. Married women across all age group has been covered in the survey. As the area of survey is mostly having rural population, thus 74 per cent of the respondent belong to rural areas. Of the total respondent surveyed, 60 per cent are Hindu, 29 per cent are Muslim and 11 per cent Christian. Based on caste category, 39 per cent belong to general caste, 21 per cent belong to Scheduled Caste (SC) and 14 per cent belong to Scheduled Tribe (ST) categories. Most of the Muslims surveyed belong to OBC category. Around 42 per cent of the respondents have not qualified matric exam. Major reason for school dropout includes menstruation problem and no toilet facility in schools. Thirty three per cent of the respondent are higher secondary passed. Some among them are enrolled for bachelor degree courses or some technical education.

Of 458 women surveyed, 29 per cent of them are working which includes women engaged in all primary, secondary and tertiary sector. Among the working women, 14 per cent are working as government employee (nurse, teachers, college professors and public sector employee). Other working women includes women working in the field, some in business mainly in the town area – tailor, tiffin services, works in parlour, some gives tuition classes to small children. Twenty four per cent of the surveyed women are married below the legal age of 18 years. Again 91 per cent of them are currently married. There were few cases of divorce and separated but in most of the cases it was found that the respondent does not want to speak about their divorced life or their daughter being divorcee. Again in some cases, it is love marriages in which the couple has eloped from their home to get married but have returned back after 2-3 years of marriage. There were also cases of domestic violence in which the respondent have separated their daughter because of her in-laws family asking for more dowry. Few

respondents came up and said that her husband was not supportive so she has filed for divorce and staying with her parents.

Table 6.5
Background Characteristics of the Respondents

	Percent	Number
Age group		
Below 18	20.8	95
18 – 28	25.2	115
28 - 38	31.3	143
Above 38	22.7	104
Place of residence		
Rural	73.9	338
Urban	26.1	120
Caste		
General	38.8	178
SC	21.1	96
ST	14.0	64
Other caste	26.1	120
Religion		
Hindu	60.8	278
Muslim	28.4	131
Christian	10.8	49
Education		
No education	3.8	17
Below Matric	42.6	195
Higher secondary pass	33.0	151
Graduate	13.5	62
Post Graduate	7.1	33
Work status		
Working	28.8	132
Not working	71.2	326
Job		
Government	14.3	19
Private	11.7	16
Business	26.0	34
Others	48.0	63
Family type		
Nuclear	71.5	327
Joint	28.5	131
Education of Father		

No education	1.4	6
Below matric	46.2	166
Matric passed	43.5	245
Secondary and Higher	8.9	41
Education of Mother		
No education	31.4	144
Below matric	46.1	211
Matric passed	14.1	65
Secondary and Higher	8.4	38
Age at Marriage		
Below 18	24.6	113
18-25	55.7	255
Above 25	19.7	90
Current Marital Status		
Widow	1.4	6
Divorced	2.8	13
Separated	4.2	19
Married	91.6	420
Duration of Marriage		
Less than 10	43.7	201
More than 10	56.3	257

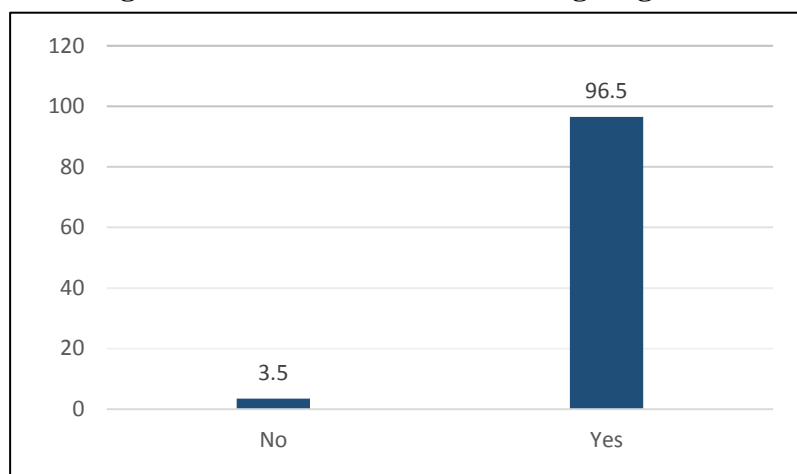
Source: Field Survey data

6.3.1 Age at Marriage based on the Background Characteristics

The table 6.6 shows the percentage of women married below 18 years of age based on the background characteristics. The field survey data shows that 24.6 percent of the women surveyed are married before the legal age at marriage. However, the age at marriage could be misreported due to several reasons – most of the older women does not remember their exact age when they got married. Question was also asked to know if the respondent is well aware of the legal age at marriage for girls. It was found that most of them are aware of it. It could be understood during the survey that fearing the consequences of child marriage, many said that they got married after 18 years of age. Not much variation has been found in the age at marriage of different castes, however, it is comparatively lower in ST. The joint families have shown higher percentage of child marriage compared to nuclear families. Education of father has not shown much change in the age at marriage, however, highly educated mothers shows direct influence of the age at marriage of their daughter. Contrastingly, working mothers have shown

higher percentage of child marriage. It could be because of the sample of working mothers which includes higher number of women engaged in agriculture and small business. It has also been found that child marriage is high among poor families. Thirty six per cent of women belonging to poor families are married before 18 compared to 19 per cent in middle and 17 per cent in rich families.

Figure 6.1
Percentage of Women aware about the Legal age at marriage



Source: Computed from field survey data

Table 6.6
Age at Marriage based on the Background Variables

	Below 18	18 and Above
Caste		
General	23.5	76.5
SC	28.8	71.2
ST	10.6	89.4
Other caste	16.3	83.7
Religion		
Hindu	38.4	61.6
Muslim	49.7	50.3
Christian	11.5	88.5
Education		
No education	23.3	76.7
Below Matric	18.5	81.5
Higher secondary pass	17.2	82.8
Graduate	12.1	87.9
Post Graduate	4.8	95.2

Work status		
Working	11.4	88.6
Not working	24.9	75.1
Job		
Government	9.2	90.8
Private	10.7	89.3
Business	11.1	88.9
Others	8.7	91.3
Family type		
Nuclear	12.1	87.9
Joint	35.4	64.6
Education of Father		
No education	37.6	62.4
Below matric	37.7	62.3
Matric passed	29.0	71
Secondary and Higher	23.5	76.5
Education of Mother		
No education	33.6	66.4
Below matric	32.3	67.7
Matric passed	29.8	70.2
Secondary and Higher	13.4	86.6
Occupation of Parents		
Father working	26.6	73.4
Mother working	31.4	68.6
Economic status of natal family		
Poor	35.8	64.2
Middle	19.1	80.9
Rich	17.7	82.3
Economic status of in-laws family		
Poor	21.4	78.6
Middle	20.7	79.3
Rich	15.3	84.7

Source: Computed from field survey data

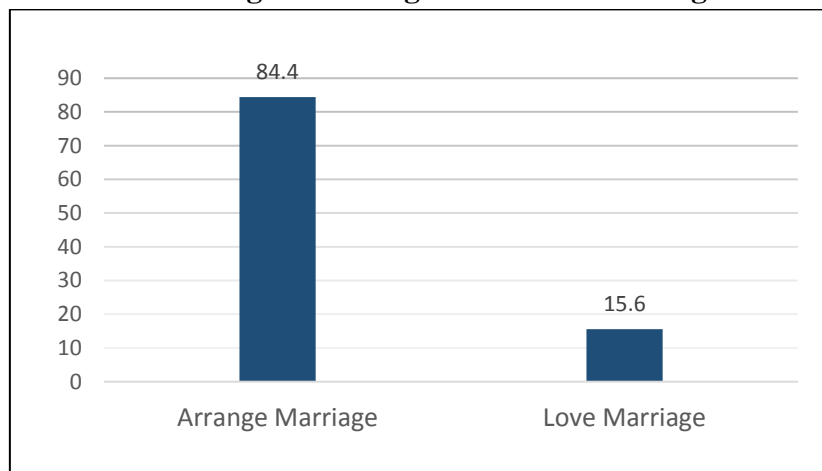
6.3.2 Type of Marriages

Based on the field study, it was found that most of the marriages are arranged by the family and only 15 percent of the marriages are love marriage. Respondents were also asked if they had any say in their marriage, in which 36 percent of the women said

that their opinion was considered while getting married. When asked in details it was found that in several cases the opinion was just limited to information of marriage given by the parents about them getting married.

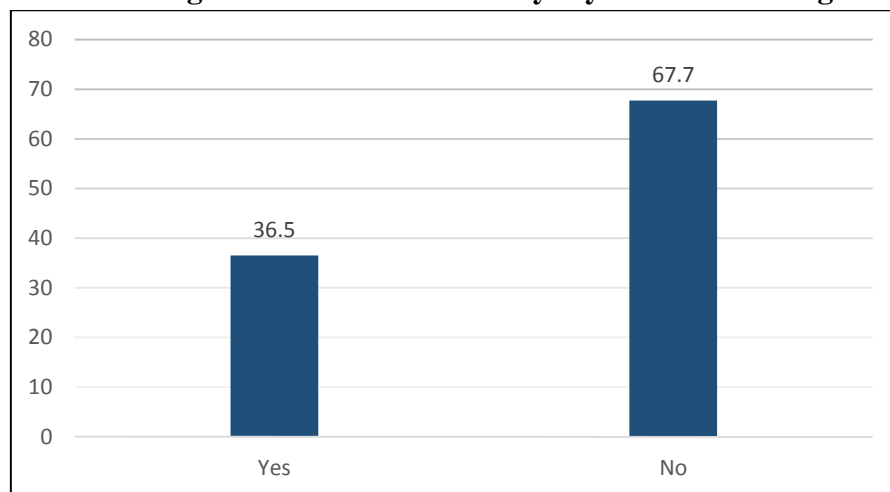
Most of the decision were taken by elders in my family. Why would they ask me about marriage? Whatever they decided I am happy about it. (Hindu woman, Dubrajpur, Daspur II)

Figure 6.2
Percentage of Arranged and Love marriage



Source: Computed from field survey data

Figure 6.3
Percentage of Women who had any say in their Marriage

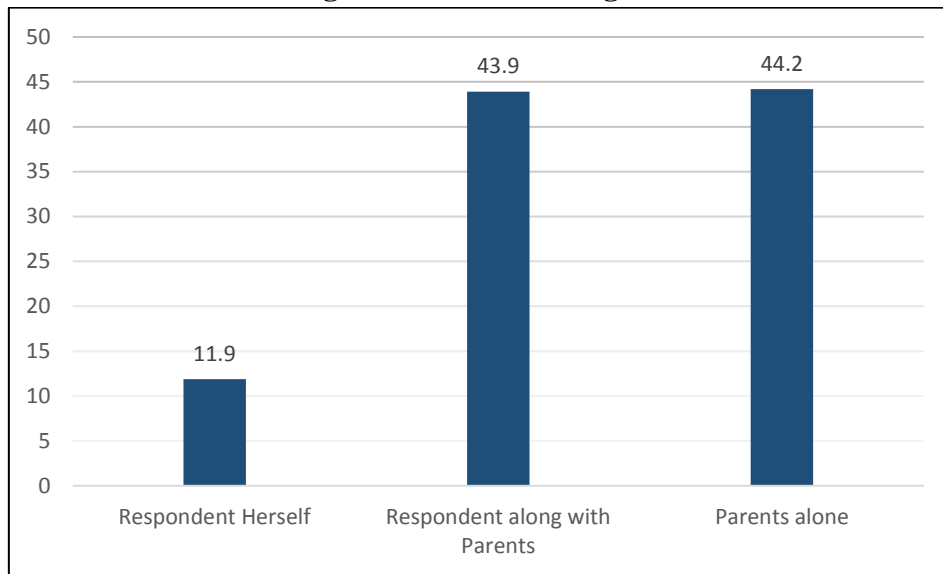


Source: Computed from field survey data

Figure 6.3 shows the percentage of women taking decision in choosing her husband. About 12 per cent of the women said that they selected their husband themselves. Almost equal percentage of women said that they selected their husband along with their parents and parents alone selected their husband. This is clearly indicative of the

fact that in majority of the cases, marriages are arranged by parents/elders. The figure of 44.2 per cent may well be an underestimate and many women who said that they chose their husbands themselves may essentially have negligible roles to play in the decision making process (Ray et. al. 2017).

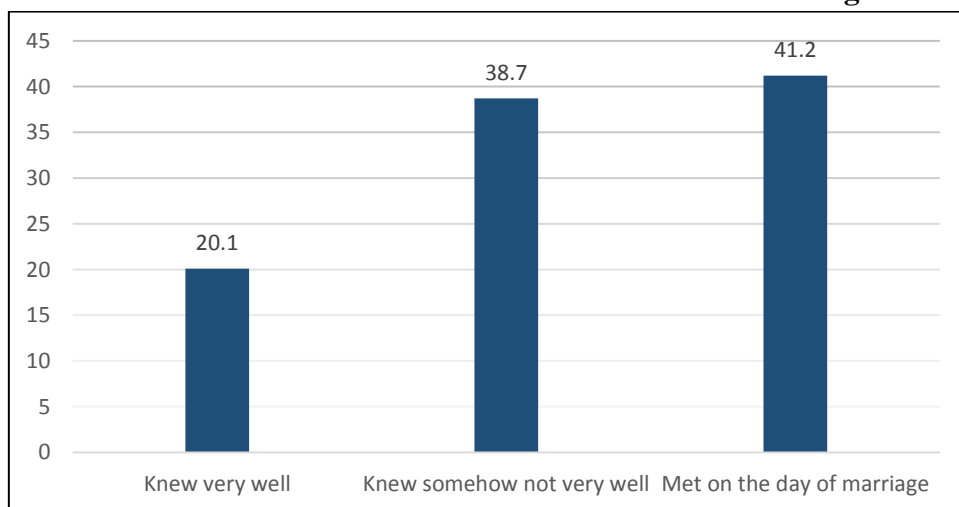
Figure 6.4
Women taking decision in choosing their Husband



Source: Computed from field survey data

Figure 6.5 shows the level of interaction with husband before marriage. It was found that around 41 per cent of the women have met their husband on the day of their marriage and only 20 per cent of the women knew their husband very well.

Figure 6.5
Women Interaction with their Husband before marriage



Source: Computed from field survey data

6.4 Arranged Marriages

The process of fixing an arranged marriage goes through various levels of decision making. This study captures some of the levels through field data analysis. In the process of mate selection, it was found that out of the total arranged marriages, 63 per cent of them were fixed through the information given by the relatives. Around 32 per cent of the marriages has been fixed through newspaper or online advertisements. Other source includes marriages fixed by both the family themselves and marriages fixed with the brother of sister's husband. About 77 per cent of the women said that their parents did not consult with them while fixing their marriage. It has also been found that most of the decisions has been taken by the parents. 87 per cent of the women agreed that some form of dowry has been paid during marriage. Dowry was mainly in the form of cash, jewellery, car/bikes and other home furnishing goods. Some also said that dowry was given during marriage and even after marriage.

In arrange marriages it is necessary that you have to pay something in dowry. Without dowry, who will marry my daughter (Hindu SC woman, Kamalashol, Gopiballavpur I)

Table 6.7

Characteristics of Arranged Marriages among Females in Paschim Medinipur District

		Percentage (N=387)
How did your parents look for your husband	Newspaper/Online	31.8
	Relatives	63.9
	Other sources	4.30
Did your parents ask you when you wanted to get married?	Yes	22.6
	No	77.4
Who took the decision in selecting the partner	Respondent herself	5.2
	Respondent along with parents	33.1
	Parents alone	61.7
Type of family of husband	Joint	14.4
	Nuclear	85.6
Economic Status of in-laws family	Same	60.3
	Better	31.1

	Worse	8.6
Gap between age of husband and wife	Below 5	32.8
	5-10	48.6
	10 and above	18.6
Have any kind of dowry being paid	Yes	87.3
	No	12.7

Source: Computed from field survey data

6.5 Love Marriages

Out of the 15 per cent love marriages, 34 percent of the women eloped from their family to get married because of unacceptance by the family. In many cases the couples have eloped from their home and later also got socially married when the family accepted their relationship. For such instances, only the first way of marriage has been considered in the study. However, data shows that 72 per cent of the marriages were accepted by the family as parents and relatives attended the marriage. 9 per cent of the women said that they are no more in relationship with their in-laws family and 5 per cent said that they do not have any contact with their parents after marriage. In case of no relationship or occasional contact, it was verified from the respondent if it is because of marriage or any other reason. Another important observation is that most of the women did not want to disclose about their elopement, however, further details on marriage ceremony brought out the real picture.

My family does not contact me even after 12 years of our marriage (Brahmin women, Kalaikunda (CT), Kharagpur)

It took time for our family to accept us. Even after they accepted us, there was no social ceremony. (Muslim women, Rainchak, Midnapore)

Table 6.8
Characteristics of Love Marriages among Females in Paschim Medinipur District

		Percentage (N=71)
How did your marriage took place	Social Marriage	42.1
	Court Marriage	24.2

	Eloped from family	33.7
Type of family of husband	Joint	4.7
	Nuclear	95.3
Who attended the marriage	Parents	18.9
	Friends/Close relatives	8.80
	Both parents and relatives	72.3
Contact with your in-laws	Regular	17.3
	maintain normal relationship	52.1
	contact during festivals and family occasions	21.3
	no relationship at all	9.30
Contact with your parents	Regular	34.6
	maintain normal relationship	47.4
	contact during festivals and family occasions	13.3
	no relationship at all	4.7
Economic Status of in-laws family	Same	35.9
	Better	44.2
	Worse	19.9
Gap between age of husband and wife	Below 5	67.6
	5-10	28.5
	10 and above	3.9

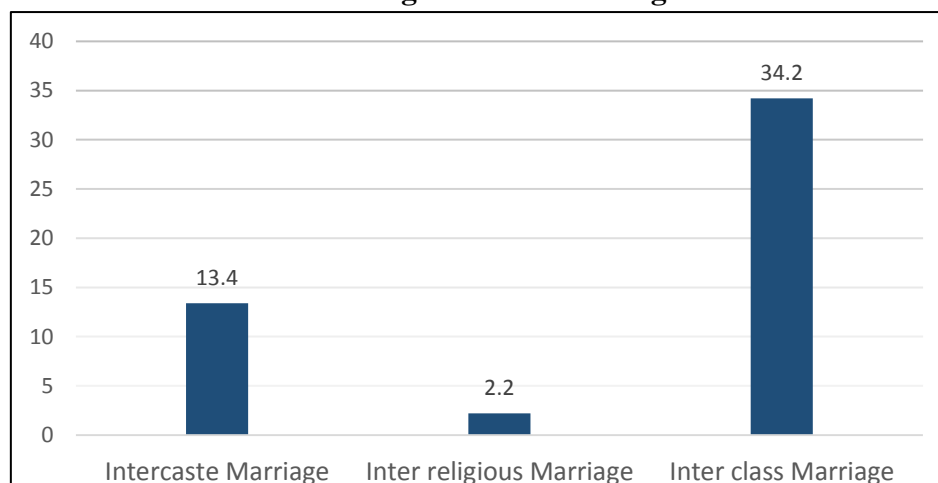
Source: Computed from field survey data

6.6 Inter Marriages

The figure 6.6 shows the percentage of inter marriages occurred in the study area. The percentage of inter marriages have not been classified on the basis of arranged and love marriages. It was found that 13.4 per cent of women have gone for inter caste marriages. Only 2.2 per cent of the married women have gone for inter-religious marriages. However, about 34.2 per cent of women have had an inter-class marriages. Most of the inter-religious marriages were among Hindus and Muslims. It was observed that women who have undergone interreligious marriages preferred their husband to answer the questions when asked about the details of their marriage and about their family.

Respondents were asked about their parent’s response to their marriage. It was found that in many cases, the parents initially did not favour the marriage but later on accepted the relationship. They might have been able to overcome their initial negative feelings after being convinced by relatives and friends over a period of time regarding the futility of such negative attitudes. Thus, only the first response of parents has been considered for the study.

Figure 6.6
Percentage of Inter Marriage



Source: Computed from field survey data

It was better for us to accept the marriage and unacceptance would be of no use as my daughter has already married without our knowledge (Hindu women, Goaldanga, Midnapore)

It was found that almost 80 per cent of the parents were not in favour of the love marriage underwent by their daughter. Only 3.7 per cent of the parents favoured intercaste/interreligious marriages. It is found that 89 per cent of the intercaste marriages are love marriages and only 10 per cent of intercaste marriages are arranged which further decline to 1.2 per cent in case of interreligious marriages.

Ray et. al. (2017, p. 14) states that “the Modernization Theory, as mentioned earlier, predicts that there will be a decline in arranged marriages leading to a decline in caste endogamy. This implies that inter caste marriages would usually be ‘love’ marriages

and thus the involvement of parents would be minimal, at least at the decision making stage”¹⁸.

It was observed that 24 per cent of the women favours intercaste marriage and almost 7 per cent of women favours interreligious marriages. Most of the women having love marriage said that religion was not an issue as they have selected their partner from their own religion. Almost 93 per cent of the women said that they would not like to marry in different religion being it love or arranged marriage. Interreligious marriage is more consequential for women since they adopt the religion of their husbands. Women in favour of inter marriage qualified their answers by saying that the couple must be financially self-sufficient. It is interesting to find that a majority of them would do so provided their partners are of higher status level than theirs. It holds similar to the inter marriages surveyed in this study as only 5 per cent of the women have gone for intercaste marriage in which husband does not belong to the same class/better class economically. These results are in conformity with the studies conducted by Ahuja and Ostermann (2015) in which “women approached marriage with a view to upgrade either their economic class or caste status”. Respondents also reported that their parent’s non-acceptance of their marriage was less, if their daughter married a boy whose socio-economic status was good.

Table 6.9
Perception towards Love/Intercaste/Interreligious Marriages

		Percentage
Parents Reaction in love marriage	Favourable	17.3
	Unfavourable	82.7
Parents Reaction in intercaste/interreligious marriage	Favourable	3.7
	Unfavourable	96.3
Intercaste Marriage	Love	89.4
	Arrange	10.6
Inter religious marriages	Love	98.8
	Arrange	1.2
Respondents perception towards inter marriage	Favour Intercaste	24.1
	Favour Inter religious	6.8

¹⁸ Banerji et al. (2013) use the term “love” marriages to refer to self-arranged marriages wherein couples choose their own partners with little or no inputs from their parents.

Intercaste and Interclass marriages	Same	49.7
	Better off	45.5
	Worse off	4.8

Source: Computed from field survey data

6.7 Changes in Female Marriage Patterns

The table 6.10 shows the changes in female marriage patterns in Paschim Medinipur district. To show the change in marriage patterns the ever married women have been divided into two age cohorts, over 30 years of age (n = 245) and 30 years and under (n = 235). The table shows that women marrying below age 18 years of age has decreased by 5.8 points and women marrying above 22 years of age has increased by 6.8 points. Comparing the changes in the type of marriages, it has been found that 10.2 percent of the married women of age 30 and below have gone for love marriage. The percentage of arranged marriages have decreased by 11 points and love marriages have increased by 5 points. Almost 7 per cent of the married women and 1.7 per cent of married women of age 30 and below have had intercaste and interreligious marriages respectively. A comparison of marriage patterns for both the cohorts shows that intercaste and interreligious marriages have increased by less than 1 point. However, interclass marriages have decreased by 3 points. It also shows that although percentage of divorced are increasing, the percentage of seperated has decreased by less than 2 points.

With an increase in urbanisation and limited information from relatives, the process of mate selection has shifted from family and caste networks to friends and professional networks, and rely on advertisements through technology. It is found that around 20 per cent of the arranged marriages have been finalised through advertisement which shows an increase by 9 per cent when compared between the two cohorts. In the process of selection of spouse, 7.7 per cent of the women of age 30 and below chose their spouses in contrast to 4.2 per cent of women aged above 30 years. Respondents choosing their own husband has increased by 3.5 points and with parents have increased by 13 points. Parents alone choosing husband for their daughters have decreased by 23 points. The percentage of women who had any say in their marriage had also increased by 16 points. The age gap between the husband and wife has also decreased as the age gap of husband and wife below 5 years has increased by 6.2 points and age gap of 10 years and above has decreased by 13 points. Interestingly it has been found that there has

been a shift in preference for good job and better health of the spouse by 29 and 17 points respectively. However, the question on preference does not give a clear picture as most of the responses were based on present demand while looking for a husband for a woman. Most of the woman in the later cohort were child when married and were not aware of the aspect their parents have considered and in some of the arranged marriages, women were not involved in the decision making thus were unaware of the preferences of their parents/family.

Table 6.10
Changes in Female Marriage Patterns

		Percentage of ever Married women	
		30 years and under (n = 235)	Above 30 years (n = 245)
Age at marriage	Below 18	7.5	13.3
	18-22	8.8	16.4
	Above 22	30.4	23.6
Type of marriage	Arranged	36.5	47.9
	Love	10.2	5.4
Inter marriage	Intercaste	7.28	6.12
	Inter religious	1.7	0.5
	Inter class	10.3	23.9
Marital Status	Divorced	1.73	0.20
	Separated	1.33	3.17
Selection of mate	Advertisement	20.4	11.4
	Relatives	27.4	36.5
Choosing Husband	Respondent herself	7.7	4.2
	Respondent and Parents together	28.7	15.2
	Parents alone	10.3	33.9
Any say in marriages	Yes	26.5	9.8
	No	20.2	43.5
Age gap between husband and wife	Below 5	10.5	4.3
	5 to 10	19.8	19.3

	10 and above	16.4	29.7
Preferences	Education	75.3	56.2
	Job	77.1	47.9
	Caste	87.9	93.4
	Religion	95.3	96.8
	Family background	87.7	84.2
	Health	42.3	25.3

Source: Computed from field survey data

The table 6.11 shows the result of binomial logistic regression. It shows that with the increase in the age at marriage the likelihood to go for love marriage or intercaste marriage also increases. Similarly women residing in urban areas are more likely to go for love marriage or intercaste marriage in comparison to women residing in rural areas. Among the religious groups, it was found that Muslims are less likely to go for love marriage in comparison to Hindus, however, Christians show more likelihood to go for love marriage in comparison to Hindus. Controlling other variables in the model the educational attainments of women appeared to be a significant and positive control variable in the model. Women with higher education show higher likelihood to go for love marriage or intercaste marriage. With reference to the family structure, women living in joint families are less likely to go for love marriage or intercaste marriage. Women with highly educated parents show more likelihood to go for love marriage or intercaste marriage.

Table 6.11

Odd Ratios of Factors Affecting Love Marriages and Intercaste Marriages

	Love marriage		Intercaste marriage	
	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.
Age at marriage				
Below 20 ^o	1.000		1.000	
20-30	1.025**	0.048	0.201	.625
Above 30	2.826*	0.098	1.375***	.001
Place of residence				
Rural ^o	1.000		1.000	

Urban	1.230**	0.013	1.021***	0.000
Caste				
General [®]	1.000		1.000	
SC	1.108	0.345	5.730	0.981
ST	0.963	0.629	0.474	0.460
Other caste	1.671	0.518	2.881	0.339
Religion				
Hindu [®]	1.000		-	-
Muslim	0.347**	0.004	-	-
Christian	3.270***	0.000	-	-
Education				
No education [®]	1.000		1.000	
Below Matric	2.437	0.862	0.718	0.717
Higher secondary pass	1.500**	0.038	1.442	0.496
Graduate and above	2.437**	0.046	1.937**	0.012
Work status				
Working [®]	1.000		1.000	
Not working	0.667	0.274	0.399	0.751
Family type				
Nuclear [®]	1.000		1.000	
Joint	0.037***	0.000	0.155***	0.000
Education of Father				
No education [®]	1.000		1.000	
Below matric	1.161	0.461	1.375	0.316
Matric passed	1.833	0.321	1.982	0.296
Secondary and Higher	1.776*	0.065	1.396	0.143
Education of Mother				
No education [®]	1.000		1.000	
Below matric	2.914	0.870	1.337	0.658
Matric passed	1.603	0.551	0.492	0.370

Secondary and Higher	3.623***	0.000	2.509	0.116
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Source: Computed from field survey data

Note: i) [®] is the reference category in the regression

ii) * is the coefficient which is significant at 10 per cent level of significance

iii) ** is the coefficient which is significant at 5 percent level of significance

iv) *** is the coefficient which is significant at 1 percent level of significance

The table 6.12 presents the odd ratios of factors affecting women decision making in their marriages. Controlling all other factors, results reveal that women marrying at higher age have higher probability to choose her husband herself and have say in their own marriage. Similarly women residing in urban areas are more likely to choose her husband herself and have any say in their own marriage compared to women residing in rural areas. Christian women shows higher likelihood to have any say in their own marriage as compared to Hindu women. Women having completed their graduation and higher education shows significantly higher probability to choose her husband herself and have any say in their own marriage. Controlling all the factors, non-working women shows less likelihood to have any say in their own marriage. Similarly women in joint families shows significantly less probability to choose her husband herself and have any say in their own marriage compared to women living in nuclear family. Parents educated above secondary and higher education has more probability to allow her daughter to choose her husband herself and have any say in her own marriage.

Table 6.12

Odd Ratios of Factors Affecting Women Decision Making in their Marriages

	Any say in marriage		Respondent herself choose her husband	
	Exp(B)	Sig.	Exp(B)	Sig.
Age at marriage				
Below 20 [®]	1.000		1.000	
20-30	1.854**	0.017	1.760*	0.054
Above 30	3.202**	0.011	1.560***	0.000
Place of residence [®]				
Rural	1.000		1.000	
Urban	3.180**	0.004	1.113*	0.081
Caste				

General [®]	1.000		1.000	
SC	0.298	0.336	0.842	0.415
ST	1.963	0.491	0.885	0.733
Other caste	0.159	0.183	0.677	0.189
Religion				
Hindu [®]	1.000		1.000	
Muslim	0.196	0.817	0.329	0.226
Christian	2.099**	0.040	0.850	0.398
Education				
No education [®]	1.000		1.000	
Below Matric	0.479	0.847	0.665	0.138
Higher secondary pass	0.784	0.113	1.172	0.470
Graduate and above	1.192**	0.010	2.101*	0.096
Work status				
Working [®]	1.000		1.000	
Not working	0.257**	0.003	0.182	0.653
Family type				
Nuclear [®]	1.000		1.000	
Joint	0.285**	0.014	0.103***	0.001
Education of Father				
No education [®]	1.000		1.000	
Below matric	0.874	0.672	0.796	0.373
Matric passed	1.272	0.235	0.784	0.481
Secondary and Higher	1.254***	0.000	2.531	0.775
Education of Mother				
No education [®]	1.000		1.000	
Below matric	0.047	0.589	0.557	0.383
Matric passed	0.711	0.336	1.611	0.529
Secondary and Higher	1.208***	0.000	1.389**	0.024

Source: Computed from field survey data

Note: i) [®] is the reference category in the regression

ii) * is the coefficient which is significant at 10 per cent level of significance

iii) ** is the coefficient which is significant at 5 percent level of significance

iv) *** is the coefficient which is significant at 1 percent level of significance

6.8 Discussion

Findings indicates substantial changes in marriage patterns in terms of age at marriage, process of mate selection, economic aspect of marriage and the trends in divorce. The change in age at marriage has been largely explained by the increased role of schooling or the time taken in completing education or training or becoming established in a non-agricultural job. Other than that marriages are also delayed with the finding means to meet the ever-mounting dowries and the increasing educational and occupational heterogeneity in the society, which means delay in finding a suitable groom.

Although most of the marriages are still arranged by parents, the proportion of self-selected marriages is increasing in recent years (Nanda et al., 2014). The manner in which women meet their spouse have changed over the time. Spouse selection has shifted from family arranged marriage towards love marriage which is in conformity with the family. Economic progress and the new patterns of educational and lifestyles changes are major factors playing a profound role to change the pattern of marriages.

Traditionally arranged marriages placed considerable power in the hands of parents, particularly in the head of household. With the passage of time, the decision maker in mate selection has changed from parents to the concerned parties themselves. Parents have started consulting their children before the final decision of marriage. In the case of daughters this means little more than informing them. Greater autonomy has been observed among recently married women in determining the timing of marriage and choice of partner. Klass says that during the fifties "free choice" consisted "solely of the fact that . . . both boy and girl are introduced to each other before the marriage and each has the right to veto the proposed match" (1961 p.111). Today, however, free choice means more than that the final decisions have been transferred from the older to the younger generation. Unlikely several cases of elopement has been observed in the field survey which, incidentally, show the ineffectiveness of parental authority and the inability to resist the parental insistence.

The aspects of mate selection have become more 'modern' or westernized like mate selection process are increasing through matrimonial advertisement. Given the rise in village exogamy: a more heterogeneous society in terms of both education and wealth have made it more difficult to arrange an appropriate match and it is necessary to search through a larger population. Matrimonial advertisements through newspaper and online

websites has widened the geographical pool of selection. Most couple have also shifted their preference towards good health of the prospective spouse.

The percentage of divorce rates have also increased considerably, however, divorce and separation is handled differently in different caste and religious groups. Earlier people remained in disharmonious marriages because of the social stigma, for the sake of children or to maintain family honour (Jones, 2010). In the field study, it was found that in many cases, married couples split up through separation, which may not be followed by legal divorce.

CHAPTER- 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

- ❖ **Summary of the Findings**
- ❖ **Policy Imperatives and Suggestions**

Chapter 7

Summary and Conclusion

Marriage patterns reflect the basic difference in the status of women from different regions and communities (Karve, 1965). “As the world is getting smaller, globalization is bringing about the trade of cultures and ideologies. There has been a significant change in the attitude towards marriage system especially in the developing countries. Studies have observed changes in the attitude and perception towards traditional norms of marriage, rise in self-selected marriages and increase in divorce/separation (Kadi, 1987; Singh, 1992).” In the past few decades, marriage system in India has experienced significant changes as a result of rise in education and employment and socio-economic development.

There has been a significant improvement in mean age at marriages for women. The SMAM for females rose by 3.2 years in the last four decades. For females in North India, it rose by 4.3 years and for females in south India by 2.6 years from 1971 to 2011. Teenage marriages have declined and the proportion of unmarried women in the age group of 35-39 years has increased. The southern region is having an almost double the proportion of single women in the age group of 35-39 years than the northern region. In India universal marriage remains the norm. Although there has been a decline in the proportion of ever married females in the age group of 15-19 years, it is still high in some parts of the country. Over the period of four decades, child marriage has decreased with the advancement of women’s education and provision of economic opportunities for girls and their families. Again raising awareness of the negative health outcomes of early marriage and promoting civil, sexual and reproductive health rights for women has also lead to decline in child marriage not only in urban areas but also in rural areas.

In developing countries like India, divorce is considered highly stigmatizing and an undesirable event (Choudhary, 1988). In spite of the difficulty in getting divorce/seperated, marriage dissolution is increasing. Other studies have also found that, despite the stigma attached to divorce in Indian society, divorce rates are on the rise, although it is lowest compared with developing countries (Gore, 1968; Singh, 1988). The number of divorced or separated women per 1000 ever married women has

reached 9.7 in 2011 from only 6.5 in 1991. All the states from the southern region are experiencing high rate of marriage dissolution. However, the northern region is also experiencing an increase in divorce rates from the first two decades of twenty-first century. Legal divorce is more prevalent in urban areas however, separation is more common in rural areas. With the growing pressure of workaholic environment in households, couples hardly get time to share their thought and affection with each other leading to incompatibility in marriage. Divorce and separation is the major consequence of such growing incompatibility and dissatisfaction. Despite the current increase in number of divorces, the percentage of re-marriage among divorcees have also increased indicating towards a change in the pattern of marriage.

Inter marriages is an indication of social transformation from traditional society to modern. It have always been of large interest, both from a sociological point of view and of demographic relevance. Genetic studies shows that the practice of intercaste marriage was earlier common in India until 1,900 years ago when it disappeared. Ambedkar's observation had a simple message: rules of caste and marriage were socially constructed, and what societies can build, they can also undo. India is still more or less a traditional society largely determined by its cultural and socio-economic factors. Religion, caste and economic status of the family play a very important role in the selection of mates in marriages and in India marriages are more likely to happen within the same caste, religion and economic strata. There is large scale occurrence of intra-caste and intra-religious marriages, even among the educated middle class, which is attributed to the strong prevalence of caste and religious identities in Indian society. Nonetheless, with an increasing upward mobility of individuals on account of education and occupational choices, marriages across the economic strata are more likely to happen within the same caste and religion. A direct estimate of intercaste marriage from IHDS data shows that only 5 percent of Indian marriages are in intercaste.

“Marriage is a powerful indicator of caste's relevance in the private sphere. This is particularly true in light of the strict policing of marriage, especially of women's marriages, by family members, local communities, and, at times, rural caste councils. Honour killings¹⁹ are the most extreme form of this policing” (Ahuja and Ostermann,

¹⁹ According to a widespread tradition, women are vested with honour by their families and communities; a woman's sexual behaviour then has broad ramifications. By marrying into a lower caste,

2015). With the changing economic status of women and progress towards gender neutral society, cases of honour crimes are also rising. In a male dominated society, honour crimes against women are considered less serious than other murders because they arise from long standing cultural traditions and are thus deemed appropriate or justifiable. An assertion of right to marry according to their choice or any kind of adulterous behaviour by a woman or pre-marital relationship are widely known causes of violence against women in most of the countries. Honour killings is one of India's most widespread and tenacious forms of gender violence arising from women seeking greater independence and exercising her choice of life. It is described as the incident of violence and harassment caused to the couples intending to marry outside the caste or religion or having married against the wishes of the community or family members²⁰. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) statistics indicate an enormous spike in the incidents of honour killing across the country. Although least recognised, honour killings are mostly reported from the states of Haryana, Rajasthan, Punjab, U.P and Bihar. There has been a more than 800 percent increase in murders committed in the name of honour. While the figure was 28 in 2014, it has jumped to 251 in 2015.²¹

7.1 Summary of the Findings

The introductory chapter, i.e. introduction, forms the base of entire research. It includes various components of the research study and starts with explaining marriage as an institution found everywhere in different patterns and then presents the rationale behind studying marriage patterns and the objectives of the study. Further it deals with the conceptual framework and methodologies used in relation to the changing marriage patterns. This introductory chapter also incorporates the research questions, selection of the study area, and database including secondary as well as primary data collected through questionnaires including qualitative inputs from FGDs and in-depth interviews. This chapter gave a brief description of Paschim Medinipur district through its administrative, demographic, social and economic characteristics. The sample selection

a woman can be said to bring dishonour to her family and/or community, a shame that can only be remedied through her death.

²⁰ Law Commission of India in its Report No.242 of 2012 at 1.

²¹ Naina Sharma (2017, May 27) Spike in Honour Killings: Need a New Law to Save Young Couples. Retrieved from <https://www.thequint.com/voices/blogs/law-to-stop-honour-killing>

of the study has also been elaborated along with the presentation of the sample size of the study.

The second chapter highlights the existing literatures and researches on marriage patterns in India and abroad. Literature review has been carried out in a thematic and chronological order to understand the various dimensions, components and their interconnections. Through this literature survey, changes in marriage patterns has been explained and association and connection have been established between factors such as caste, religion, education, women's autonomy and empowerment, and other socio-economic factors which have an effect on marriage. Based on the literatures, the conceptual framework has been formulated for comprehensive understanding of the entire phenomenon in its totality.

The third chapter deal with the first objective of the study. It describes the temporal and spatial changes in marriage patterns in India and West Bengal. It is observed that there has been a decrease in the percentage of women marrying below legal age. However, the percentage of intercaste and interreligious marriages remained the same. The urban and the sub-urban environment has given birth to a fascinating mix of traditional and new female and male role models among the affluent middle class. It is because of modernisation and the influence of Western culture, arranged marriages are becoming less popular and common, especially in urban areas. Similarly, marriages based on the couple's choice, often crossing caste and/or religious boundaries are becoming more common. Although the force of the caste in marriage selection is gradually loosening over time with the recent process of modernization, democratization and development with concomitant increase in educational qualification, but the changes are triggered by love relationship and are confined to urban area only.

The fourth chapter has thrown light on the role of youth and parents in mate selection. In the present modern society, parents are taking opinion of their children about their marriage plans. It is found that with increase in female literacy and labour force participation, parents hold more importance to the expectations and desires of their daughter. However, the acceptance of love marriages is limited to only when the spouse comes from similar social-economic and cultural background. Finding shows wide regional disparity in marriage practises and the role of parents across different states. One of the important finding shows that most of the women have first met their husband

on the wedding day. Little to higher level of interaction with the spouse before marriage is found among the couples belonging to Christian and Scheduled Tribes category. Another important finding is that the women in the north-eastern states are most independent in choosing their spouse and it is least among the women in northern states of India. However, researches reiterate that choosing a mate is not only limited to a women independently choosing her spouse, but to a certain extent her choice is affected by her parents.

The fifth chapter studies the marriage market in India through matrimonial advertisements. About 1500 matrimonial advertisements from 5 different newspapers were studied. It was previously believed that those persons who cannot get married in the normal course due to physical deformities, advanced age, etc. i.e., who are less eligible for marriage, resort to placing advertisements in the newspapers. But it was proved wrong with a glance at the qualifications and characteristics mentioned in the advertisements. In selecting a bride, parents continued to consider the girl's family background, economic position, family reputation, general character, and lately her education, and adaptability. In selecting a bridegroom, parents of bride in addition consider health, looks, education, earnings, job or job prospects. The most recurrent factors in the advertisements are caste, religion, occupation, salary (income), age, personal appearance and family background.

The primary study in the sixth chapter has described a number of changes among the female in Paschim Medinipur district of West Bengal. It brought out evidences of rising age at marriage, shift towards own choice (love) marriages which effect the number of occurrences of intercaste and interreligious marriages. Attention has also been focused on the behavioural changes and acceptance of society towards the present changing marriage patterns. This chapter brought out the cultural content of traditional families, and their relationship to other cultural elements such as caste and religion, have changed enormously. It was found that people are still guided by conventional thoughts, belief and ideologies which are reflected in their behaviour.

Overall the study concludes that arrange marriage being highly prevalent in Indian society, caste and religion play an active role in selection of spouse. Parents consider marrying their children as one of the most important responsibility of their life, thus in many society, child marriage is still prevalent mostly among the girls. With an increase

in educational level and women empowerment, it is found that they are actively participating in the decision making of their life – when to marry and whom to marry. Although at a slow pace, but rise in intercaste/interreligious marriages and its acceptance by the family members hints towards an equal society without any discrimination. However, with growing awareness, preference of mate selection has shifted from the traditional norms towards more practical aspects of living.

7.2 Policy Imperatives and Suggestions

Child marriage is equal to the heinous crime, so it cannot be termed as marriage and it is simply selling of the girl child to others. Similar to it is violence in the name of honour. India already has a series of laws and other mechanisms in place designed to stop child marriage and protect couples from honour crime. The problem is that existing laws are rarely enforced. Reforming the laws is, in many ways, only a cosmetic solution as the government has stated that after discussions and consultations only, the decision to enforce a new legal framework will be taken, and further not specifying the timeline which a concern as cases are filed in courts in multitudes. The Indian court system is clogged with several cases of child marriage and honour killing. In view of this, more attention should be given by all including state and civil society to promote inter-caste marriage and foster to bring equality in the society. Thus, the following remedial measures and suggestions would help in bringing more changes in vicissitude, transformation and create conducive environment in the society. It also provides more opportunities and stimulates the couples to break caste walls.

- Various constitutional and legal provisions have been put in place to deal with the problem of child labour and child marriage. It is true that the percentage of child marriage has dropped over the years. Yet it is equally true that this institution still exists. Due to the influence of parent's, girls are unable to dare to deny and simply get married to an older person. Consequently, the future of the girl child is filled with anger and frustration and anger. It simply happens just because of the parent's involvement in such rituals as an age old custom and their belief in several superstitions and dogmas. It directly or indirectly impacts the marriage system. As the family never allows their child to get marry to the other caste and community thus promoting caste rigidity in the society. Thus, all the citizens should join hands to abolish this practice to make India a

better place to live in and there is a need to promote intercaste marriage and eliminate the rigid caste system.

- Due to traditional belief system and illiteracy, many parts of Indian society still believe that same caste marriage is purity for them. This social stigma attitude can be eschewed through various awareness programmes. Lack of awareness is also one of the major cause not to expansion and increase of intercaste marriage. Thus, role of TV, cinema, media especially social media and newspaper should be given more space in providing awareness programmes related to intercaste marriage especially in the rural areas. At the same time, different social segments and agencies should participate in spreading awareness programme. This will give a message to each segment of the society about breaking barrier of caste discrimination.
- Education has been playing significant role in the development process by imparting among the people and the values correlated to it. Education plays a significant role in changing society and brings holistic development of an individual. In short, education is a preservative, consolidating, establishing and creative force. It is the powerful instrument of overall change. Thus, various courses from school to university should be introduced in promoting intercaste marriages. Besides, concrete curriculum related to intercaste marriage need to be added in the school, college and university books. The benefits and advantages of intercaste marriages should be taught to promote intercaste marriage and annihilate caste system.
- Due to various issues and challenges such as caste, religion, family and traditional belief system, still many parts of Indian society is segregated on the basis of caste and religion. In view of this, many state governments have implemented various incentives programmes for promoting intercaste marriages. In recent past, central government also introduced in a big push to encourage inter-caste marriages involving Dalits, the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment decided to open the scheme for all with no income cap. As per this, the one-time incentive of Rs 2.5 lakh can now be availed by all couples where either the bride or the bridegroom is a Dalit. Further it has increased to rupees five lakhs of which fifty percent will be provided at the

duration of marriage. The rest of fifty percent amount will be made as a fixed deposited in the couples name. After eight years the remaining amount will be credited to the couples given account due to prevent false marriage. However, this scheme is limited only on Dalits bride or groom and not open for all other caste, due to this reason, somehow, intercaste marriage rate is not swiftly increasing. Because majority of the population is belongs from general caste including other backward caste groups. Therefore, incentive and other welfare programmes related to intercaste marriage should be opened for all caste groups to annihilate caste based discrimination.

- In order to avail the incentive and other awards or rewards, the procedural system of various schemes should be easy and accessible in every nearest locality i.e. at least Block level. So that, various poor couples especially from the rural areas will get motivate to intercaste marriage in the name of getting money and avail this opportunity. Due to the inaccessibility, long distance and lengthy procedure for applying incentives and other benefits, also some time discourage intercaste marriage for the reason of surviving and not getting any support from the family initially. Thus, with in a short span of time money should be disbursed to their Aadhaar-linked joint account. This quick process will disseminate positive message to the society and boost other boys and girls from different communities and further they will also get interested for the same. However, incentives should be given to the first marriage couples, and it should be registered under the Special Marriages Act.
- To preserve the honour, family members decide to kill their daughter just because she dared to disobey her parents and decides to marry a man of her wishes but from another gotra or outside her caste. Now as it seen that the boy and girl both are killed. In this context, the study found that, the reason why honour killings continue to take place is because of the continued rigidity of the caste system. Because of their traditional belief system and the fear of losing their caste status, they commit this heinous crime. On the other hand, the mentality of people has not changed due to lack of awareness and they just cannot accept that marriages can take place in the same gotra or outside one's caste. Thus, many boys and girls are not able to feel safe and security to venture

intercaste marriages. Though both boys and girls from different community are interested to each other, however, they are unable to get married as per their choice of life partner due to safety issues. As a result, intercaste marriage rate is not successfully promoting in one hand and honour killing is increasing on the other hand. It is mainly because the existing rules and formal governance has not been able to reach the rural areas and justice has been delayed to many such couples. Thus, providing safety to the girls or boys should be given priority by the state through stringent laws and regulations with immediate decisions against the strikers. Through this, honour killing can be stopped and meanwhile, swiftly fosters intercaste marriage in the society later than sooner. Civil society groups, Government officials and NGO's and many more are working to improve the evil situation. Some part of India remains deeply conservative. To change this arena requires a revolution in thinking and viewing the fundamental relationship between men and women.

7.3 Scope for Further Research

Various studies in the past explored the transition in marriage pattern. The present study explores the marriage patterns and changes in marriage patterns among successive cohorts of women in Paschim Medinipur district of West Bengal. There is further scope to assess the causes and consequences of inter marriages (inter-caste and inter-religious marriage) or in its boon and bane. Other studies could be taken up on government steps for the inter-caste and inter religious married couples in which one could analyse the status of the scheme of the social security and shelter for the inter-caste marriage couples in India and the problem faced by this couples while living in a society. Based on the changing pattern of arranged and self-choice marriage in India, an area of interest for future research has developed on studying the comparison of different types of marriages in different cultures, their marital satisfaction level and the significant divorce rate in this marriages. There are several factors determining the consummation of pre-marital relationships. As very less has been explored on relationships outside marriage, research can be taken up to identify these factors. Further one could also look into the significant effects of Second Demographic Transition on the changing pattern of marriage in India.

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APPENDIX-I

APPENDIX - I

Table A1
Percentage of Females remaining Single in different Age Groups in India
1961-2011

Year	Age Groups (year)							
	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54
1961	29.2	6.0	1.9	1.0	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.5
1971	43.7	9.5	2.3	1.0	0.8	0.6	0.5	0.5
1981	55.9	14.0	3.3	1.2	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.4
1991	64.3	17.0	4.2	1.8	0.9	1.0	0.7	0.8
2001	75.2	23.0	5.7	2.2	1.3	1.2	0.9	0.9
2011	80.1	30.4	8.8	3.3	1.8	1.4	1.2	1.2

Source: Srinivasan and James (2015). Calculated from the Sample Registration System (SRS) 2010 data

Table A2
Mean Age at Marriage in Paschim Medinipur District

District	DLHS 4		DLHS 3
	Rural	Total	Total
Bankura	18.0	18.5	17.9
Bardhaman	17.8	18.7	19.1
Birbhum	19.6	18.5	17.4
Dakshin Dinajpur	17.6	19.4	18.1
Darjeeling	21.0	21.5	20.7
Haora	19.7	20.3	19.5
Hugli	19.0	19.7	19.4
Jalpaiguri	20.4	21.4	20.1
Koch Bihar	18.6	19.9	18.4
Kolkata	NA	23.4	21.2
Maldah	17.5	19.2	17.3
Murshidabad	18.0	18.3	17.0
Nadia	18.3	19.3	18.8
North 24 parganas	17.6	19.8	19.3
Paschim Medinipur	18.0	19.4	18.2
Purba Medinipur	18.9	19.0	18.3
Purulia	17.9	19.5	17.7
South 24 Parganas	18.9	19.0	18.4
Uttar Dinajpur	18.2	19.4	18.1

Source: DLHS 3 and 4

Table A3
Women Age 20-24 years married before age 18 years (percent) in India

STATES	NFHS 4			NFHS 3
	Urban	Rural	Total	
Andhra Pradesh	26.3	35.5	32.7	
Arunachal Pradesh	18.7	25.5	23.5	42.0
Assam	23.9	33.9	32.6	38.0
Bihar	26.9	40.9	39.1	60.3
Chandigarh			12.7	
Chhattisgarh	14.8	23.5	21.3	55.0
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	27.0	27.8	27.5	
Daman & Diu	28.4	18.2	25.4	
Delhi	13.1		13.0	22.7
Goa	14.8	2.7	9.8	11.7
Gujarat	17.2	30.7	24.9	38.7
Haryana	19.6	17.8	18.5	39.8
Himachal Pradesh	7.2	8.8	8.6	12.3
Jammu & Kashmir	4.2	10.3	8.7	14.4
Jharkhand	21.1	44.3	38.0	63.2
Karnataka	17.9	27.0	23.2	41.2
Kerala	7.7	7.5	7.6	15.4
Madhya Pradesh	16.6	35.8	30.0	53.0
Maharashtra	18.8	31.5	25.1	39.0
Manipur	11.0	14.3	13.1	12.7
Meghalaya	7.8	19.3	16.5	24.5
Mizoram	7.1	17.0	10.8	20.6
Nagaland	9.3	15.8	13.3	21.4
Orissa	19.5	21.7	21.3	37.2
Punjab	6.9	8.1	7.6	19.7
Pondicherry	10.9	10.2	10.7	
Rajasthan	20.3	40.5	35.4	65.2
Sikkim	16.1	13.6	14.5	30.1
Telangana	15.7	35.0	25.7	
Tamil Nadu	13.0	18.3	15.7	21.5
Tripura	25.6	34.8	32.2	41.0

Uttar Pradesh	11.3	24.9	21.2	58.6
Uttarakhand	12.2	14.8	13.9	22.6
West Bengal	27.7	46.3	40.7	53.3
India	17.5	31.5	26.8	47.4

Source: National Family Health Survey (2005-06) and (2015-16)

Table A4
Women age 20-24 years married before age 18 years (percent) in 19 districts of West Bengal

District	NFHS 4		
	Urban	Rural	Total
Bankura	-	40.3	38.3
Bardhaman	27.1	48.8	40.1
Birbhum	-	53.9	52.0
Dakshin Dinajpur	-	46.0	44.4
Darjeeling	18.2	21.9	20.4
Haora	20.3	32.6	24.4
Hugli	26.1	34.6	31.9
Jalpaiguri	-	33.9	32.7
Koch Bihar	-	41.6	41.2
Kolkata	13.1	-	13.1
Maldah	-	56.0	54.8
Murshidabad	-	58.0	52.6
Nadia	-	42.5	40.5
North 24 parganas	30.1	42.1	36.0
Paschim Medinipur	-	52.7	52.1
Purba Medinipur	-	44.0	43.1
Purulia	-	38.6	38.3
South 24 Parganas	-	54.1	49.7
Uttar Dinajpur	-	40.4	39.1

Source: National Family Health Survey (2015-16)

Table A5
Percent Distribution of Intercaste Marriages in India

State	Total inter caste marriages		Percentage change
	2005-06	2015-16	
India	9.9	12.50	2.60
Delhi	11.6	18.40	6.80
Haryana	17.3	18.00	0.70
Himachal Pradesh	10.6	7.10	-3.50
Jammu and Kashmir	1.9	8.70	6.80
Punjab	22.5	18.60	-3.90
Rajasthan	2.3	9.60	7.30
Uttaranchal	8.4	10.60	2.20
Chhattisgarh	3.2	6.40	3.20
Madhya Pradesh	3.5	13.20	9.70
Uttar Pradesh	8.6	7.50	-1.10
Bihar	4.7	10.80	6.10
Jharkhand	12.1	16.10	4.00
Odisha	13.9	21.00	7.10
West Bengal	9.5	12.70	3.20
Arunachal Pradesh	18.2	18.60	0.40
Assam	16.8	11.80	-5.00
Manipur	17.8	22.30	4.50
Meghalaya	25.0	17.80	-7.20
Mizoram	-	50.00	-
Nagaland	15.7	14.00	-1.70
Sikkim	13.9	33.50	19.60
Tripura	18.4	9.00	-9.40
Goa	28.4	16.60	-11.80
Gujarat	13.7	17.60	3.90
Maharashtra	17.7	18.30	0.60
Andhra Pradesh	7.6	9.30	1.70
Karnataka	16.5	27.10	10.60
Kerala	21.3	13.60	-7.70
Tamil Nadu	2.6	7.10	4.50
Telangana	-	7.90	-

Source: NFHS 3 and 4

Table A6
Percent Distribution of Inter Religious Marriages in India

State	Inter religious Marriages		Percentage change
	2005-06	2015-16	
India	2.1	2.40	0.3
Delhi	2.2	2.90	0.7
Haryana	1.9	1.60	-0.3
Himachal Pradesh	1.5	2.20	0.7
Jammu and Kashmir	0.7	1.10	0.4
Punjab	7.3	4.60	-2.7
Rajasthan	0.7	1.50	0.8
Uttaranchal	1.9	1.60	-0.3
Chhattisgarh	0.6	1.20	0.6
Madhya Pradesh	0.8	1.40	0.6
Uttar Pradesh	1.3	2.20	0.9
Bihar	1.2	1.30	0.1
Jharkhand	5.6	5.50	-0.1
Orissa	1.0	1.20	0.2
West Bengal	0.3	1.60	1.3
Arunachal Pradesh	9.2	6.50	-2.7
Assam	2.1	1.80	-0.3
Manipur	7.6	9.50	1.9
Meghalaya	6.7	2.10	-4.6
Mizoram	1.2	0.50	-0.7
Nagaland	1.5	0.70	-0.8
Sikkim	8.1	6.70	-1.4
Tripura	2.7	1.80	-0.9
Goa	1.3	3.20	1.9
Gujarat	1.8	1.70	-0.1
Maharashtra	3.7	3.20	-0.5
Andhra Pradesh	4.7	6.20	1.5
Karnataka	2.8	2.40	-0.4
Kerala	2.1	3.50	1.4
Tamil Nadu	1.6	3.20	1.6
Telangana	-	4.60	-

Source: NFHS 2005-06 and 2015-16

Table A7
State wise percentage of Women who had say in choosing their Husband and their Decision Making on Marriage Partners, 2011-12

State	Had any say in choosing their husband	Who took the decision in selecting your partner? (in percentages)		
		Respondent herself	Respondent along with parents / Other relatives together	Parents/relatives alone
Jammu & Kashmir	45.70	1.20	28.40	70.40
Himachal Pradesh	67.30	10.00	22.60	67.40
Punjab	42.20	1.10	6.70	92.20
Chandigarh	63.50	3.20	12.90	83.90
Uttarakhand	53.70	1.60	17.20	81.20
Haryana	24.00	3.70	13.90	82.30
Delhi	34.70	2.10	21.30	76.50
Rajasthan	11.70	1.00	11.50	87.40
Uttar Pradesh	15.30	1.40	10.20	88.30
Bihar	12.40	1.20	20.50	78.30
Sikkim	82.10	55.30	4.90	39.80
Arunachal Pradesh	53.10	28.30	25.40	44.90
Nagaland	-	8.20	87.80	4.10
Manipur	-	90.10	6.10	2.50
Mizoram	-	88.20	5.90	5.90
Tripura	51.20	15.90	7.90	75.70
Meghalaya	100.00	76.90	15.40	7.70
Assam	63.20	27.50	47.10	21.40
West Bengal	75.40	9.60	13.20	76.50
Jharkhand	45.50	13.70	13.20	73.00
Orissa	7.20	4.10	17.30	78.60
Chhattisgarh	47.70	4.60	12.90	82.40
Madhya Pradesh	21.70	1.30	7.20	91.50
Gujarat	55.80	5.10	41.70	53.00
Daman & Diu	63.20	2.00	59.20	38.80
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	62.50	5.10	81.40	13.60
Maharashtra	44.70	1.90	40.00	58.10

Andhra Pradesh	84.50	2.00	17.00	80.90
Karnataka	70.20	3.90	26.80	69.00
Goa	74.50	10.10	3.20	86.70
Kerala	71.30	6.60	38.40	54.80
Tamil Nadu	86.80	7.00	47.70	45.10
Pondicherry	84.20	9.20	52.00	38.80
Total	41.90	5.00	21.80	73.00

Source: IHDS 2011-12

Table A8
State wise Percentage of Women who have met their Husband before Marriage, 2011-12

State	Have met their husband before Marriage
Jammu & Kashmir	33.50
Himachal Pradesh	63.00
Punjab	33.70
Chandigarh	56.50
Uttarakhand	35.20
Haryana	12.10
Delhi	23.00
Rajasthan	15.00
Uttar Pradesh	11.20
Bihar	6.50
Sikkim	51.20
Arunachal Pradesh	22.50
Nagaland	60.70
Manipur	100.00
Mizoram	100.00
Tripura	19.60
Meghalaya	96.50
Assam	45.70
West Bengal	18.30
Jharkhand	30.60
Orissa	24.00
Chhattisgarh	38.70
Madhya Pradesh	20.00
Gujarat	43.50
Daman & Diu	50.00
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	51.70

Maharashtra	8.10
Andhra Pradesh	34.60
Karnataka	22.60
Goa	35.00
Kerala	37.50
Tamil Nadu	37.50
Pondicherry	16.30
Total	25.00

Source: IHDS 2011-12

Table A9
Selection of Blocks through Composite Index

Sl. No.	NAME	Sex Ratio		Female Literacy		Female Worker		Urban Population		Composite Index	Rank
1	Binpur - II	983	0.92	46.67	-1.25	40.76	0.96	0.00	-0.25	87.81	12
2	Binpur - I	957	-0.25	47.56	-1.13	38.23	0.77	0.00	-0.25	84.94	17
3	Garbeta - II	959	-0.19	53.99	-0.27	36.08	0.60	0.00	-0.25	89.95	10
4	Garbeta - I	949	-0.61	53.03	-0.40	25.11	-0.27	0.00	-0.25	76.61	20
5	Garbeta - III	947	-0.70	55.32	-0.10	32.18	0.29	4.21	0.39	91.60	8
6	Chandrakona - I	958	-0.20	60.47	0.59	16.05	-0.98	0.00	-0.25	75.69	21
7	Chandrakona - II	954	-0.41	56.32	0.04	11.87	-1.31	0.00	-0.25	66.25	29
8	Ghatal	973	0.47	62.08	0.80	12.78	-1.23	0.00	-0.25	74.65	23
9	Daspur - I	1017	2.45	64.51	1.13	24.81	-0.29	0.00	-0.25	92.36	7
10	Daspur - II	1043	3.68	70.69	1.95	11.59	-1.33	0.00	-0.25	86.34	15
11	Keshpur	953	-0.44	54.51	-0.20	14.45	-1.10	0.00	-0.25	66.97	28
12	Salbani	961	-0.06	52.18	-0.51	33.57	0.40	0.00	-0.25	85.32	16
13	Midnapore	949	-0.62	47.79	-1.10	24.39	-0.32	0.00	-0.25	69.89	26
14	Jhargram	957	-0.27	51.72	-0.58	37.76	0.73	0.00	-0.25	89.12	11
15	Jamboni	961	-0.09	53.31	-0.36	39.34	0.85	0.00	-0.25	92.80	6
16	Gopiballavpur - II	947	-0.69	49.59	-0.86	27.26	-0.10	0.00	-0.25	74.95	22
17	Gopiballavpur - I	942	-0.93	42.37	-1.82	30.80	0.18	0.00	-0.25	70.34	25
18	Nayagram	979	0.74	40.57	-2.06	56.64	2.21	0.00	-0.25	97.84	5
19	Sankrail	971	0.39	52.92	-0.42	38.15	0.76	0.00	-0.25	91.57	9
20	Kharagpur - I	949	-0.62	61.12	0.68	16.49	-0.94	35.45	5.10	117.28	2
21	Kharagpur - II	965	0.11	55.48	-0.07	28.34	-0.01	0.00	-0.25	83.60	18
22	Debra	975	0.56	62.54	0.87	33.39	0.38	4.78	0.47	103.00	4
23	Pingla	934	-1.28	68.37	1.64	46.45	1.41	0.00	-0.25	116.34	3
24	Sabang	943	-0.91	67.26	1.49	53.51	1.97	0.00	-0.25	123.07	1

25	Narayangarh	958	-0.19	59.29	0.43	24.39	-0.32	3.06	0.21	86.87	14
26	Keshiary	959	-0.18	55.20	-0.11	32.60	0.32	0.00	-0.25	87.57	13
27	Dantan - I	961	-0.08	53.65	-0.32	15.85	-0.99	0.00	-0.25	67.86	27
28	Dantan - II	952	-0.47	62.74	0.89	15.33	-1.03	0.00	-0.25	77.21	19
29	Mohanpur	960	-0.12	63.98	1.06	8.14	-1.60	0.00	-0.25	71.21	24
	AVERAGE	962.62	0.00	56.04	0.00	28.49	0.00	1.64	0.00	86.17	
	SD	21.970	-42.81	7.503	-6.47	12.731	-1.24	6.625	0.75	-22.91	
	Total	955	-0.35	64.42	1.12	22.82	-0.45	0.00	-0.25	87.32	

Table A10

Distribution of Married Men and Married Women in the Involvement of Marriage Process and Related Decision Making

Marriage Characteristics		Tamil Nadu		Andhra Pradesh		Maharashtra		Rajasthan		Bihar		Jharkhand	
		MM	MW	MM	MW	MM	MW	MM	MW	MM	MW	MM	MW
Age at marriage	Below 18	0.8	28.9	9.4	66.2	3.2	36.5	37.7	75.9	28.7	82.0	24.4	80.6
	18 - 21	25.7	58.7	32.4	29.2	29.1	55.4	34.0	19.1	34.2	15.3	34.1	15.9
	Above 21	73.5	12.4	58.2	4.6	67.7	8.1	28.3	4.9	37.2	2.7	41.6	2.7
Knowledge about legal age at marriage	Boys	95.7	87.9	94.2	86.4	97.1	87.7	92.4	79.1	90.6	74.7	85.9	60.9
	Girls	98.9	97.0	94.4	87.3	97.2	92.5	92.1	80.3	91.0	77.6	86.5	63.6
Type of marriage	Arrange	79.6	80.8	94.0	91.6	94.9	94.2	99.5	99.2	97.9	97.8	93.9	90.9
	Love	20.4	19.2	6.0	8.4	5.1	5.8	0.5	0.8	2.0	2.2	6.1	9.1
Parents asked	Preferred age at marriage	76.5	56.8	67.1	21.3	59.7	28.2	17.4	14.4	23.5	5.7	31.8	9.5
	Like the girl/boy	90.4	80.8	93.4	76.3	95.5	60.1	39.7	37.6	50.0	17.8	70.6	36.0
Choice of partner	Respondent choice	46.8	64.5	29.2	46.5	44.2	59.3	11.4	7.7	23.9	20.7	29.4	62.1

	Parent's choice	51.7	33.3	26.3	40.6	32.6	33.3	63.6	90.1	61.5	76.8	67.6	36.4
	Both	1.5	2.2	44.4	12.9	23.3	7.4	25.0	2.2	14.7	2.4	2.9	1.5
Involved in decision making	Approved the girl/boy chosen by parents	54.4	85.5	50.0	90.3	57.3	86.9	46.2	63.3	44.6	57.9	68.1	55.6
	Said no to boy/girl chosen by parents	11.9	21.1	15.8	11.2	17.7	15.1	1.6	11.6	9.8	3.5	9.5	7.0
Parents response for girl/boy chosen by respondent	Agreed	52.8	56.5	47.0	64.1	54.3	54.6	42.9	44.1	40.3	63.1	64.6	68.3
	Disagreed	44.2	42.1	47.0	35.5	40.4	42.0	50.0	55.9	50.0	36.9	30.3	30.3
	No response	3.1	1.4	6.0	0.5	5.3	3.4	7.1	0.0	9.7	0.0	5.1	1.4
Interaction with spouse before marriage	Meet on wedding day	21.2	36.1	44.8	44.2	51.4	61.0	83.3	83.1	88.5	91.7	76.8	78.7
	Know somewhat	40.8	32.0	31.6	29.2	35.8	24.7	14.4	12.9	7.6	5.2	15.5	11.9
	Know very well	38.0	31.9	23.6	26.6	12.8	14.3	2.3	3.9	3.9	3.2	7.6	9.4
Feeling about getting married	Excited	77.0	31.1	53.3	19.2	72.2	33.3	63.7	21.6	50.4	10.9	53.2	18.2
	Nothing special	16.9	15.1	39.0	23.7	21.8	25.3	29.8	24.8	38.1	18.7	31.4	14.8
	Anxious/Scared	5.2	53.3	6.9	56.2	4.7	35.0	5.8	51.6	10.1	68.4	12.4	63.9
	Unhappy	0.9	0.4	0.8	0.9	1.3	6.4	0.7	2.0	1.4	2.1	2.9	3.0

Source: Youth in India Situation and Needs 2006-2007

Note: MM - Married Men (15-29), MW - Married Women (15-24), NA – Not Applicable

APPENDIX-II

Appendix – II

Selected Photographs taken during the Field Survey



Interview with a widow respondent living with 3 son and their families



Interview with respondent who is currently married with a children



Interview with respondents from Goaldanga village in Midnapore block



Interview of respondent from urban areas in Kharagpur block