

A Study of Effect of Education on Attitude towards Inter-Caste Marriage in Rural Punjab, India

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Abstract: Concept of caste is against social justice and equity. Unfortunately, caste is an integral component of Indian society. Marriage within the caste is the general norm of Indian society. However, the process of modernization, democratization and development has brought about nearly 11% out-of-caste marriages. 5.6% were of men marrying women of lower castes while another 5.4% were of men married in upper caste. The predisposing factors are: Heavy dowry demand, Modern education, Secularism, freedom of thought and expression, and Population migration. In this study, a sample of 100 educated students (both boys and girls) and 100 uneducated youths (both boys and girls) from Ludhiana district have been taken. It has been found that educated boys and girls and uneducated boys and girls at few points do not favor inter-caste marriage. While educated boys and girls opine that inter-caste marriage increase the unity of the society, it has been observed that only a few uneducated boys and girls agree with this statement. It has been found that most of boys and girls from educated category confess that inter-cast marriage lessens that economic burden of the parents but uneducated boys and girls go against this opinion.

Keywords: Caste, Inter-Caste Marriage, Education, Punjab, India

I. INTRODUCTION

Marriage – An Institution:

Marriage is a religious sacrament in which a man and woman are bound in permanent relationship for physical, social and spiritual purpose of dharma, procreation and sexual pleasure. Marriage is the one institution that affects the life of all people in all walks of life.

Marriage entails a change in lawful marital status of a person, as said by Timothy Keller, “Marriage has the power to set the course of your life as a whole”.

The Sanskrit word for marriage is ‘Vivah.’ Vi+Vah which literally means the ceremony of “carrying away” the bride to the house of broom.

Aims of Marriage:

Marriage binds the couple not only in his life, but also in the life there after. “For a Hindu women marriage was not an option but an obligation and for her parents, a sacred duty.” Mahabharata says, “The chief aim of marriage is procreation.” K.M. Kapadia says, “Marriage is primarily of the fulfillment of duties; the basic aim of marriage was dharma.” However, for some, sexual pleasure is one major aim in marriage.

Problem Statement:

Concept of caste is against social justice and equity. Unfortunately, caste is an integral component of Indian society, prevalent since the inception of societies and villages. It is a social evil which creates watertight compartments between communities and brings division, hatred and tension among social groups. Marriage within the caste is the general norm of Indian society. However, the process of modernization, democratization and development has brought about many positive changes in Indian society.

About 11% of the total marriages in India takes place beyond the same caste. 5.6% were of men marrying women of lower castes while another 5.4% were of men married in upper caste.

Caste system, religious and racial discriminations act as a bane for progressive India. History reveals that efforts have been made by various social reformers and individuals to make India free from the clutches of caste system, untouchability and racial discrimination.

For years, Indians had an orthodox mindset, they could not imagine inter- caste marriages. Marriages are regarded as the most important social custom and hence, were viewed by reformers as the best means to remove the barrier of caste system. Today in Indian society, though we see inter-caste marriages, but it is mostly a part of city culture. The rural India still have a long way to go.

Justification of Study:

Today, as the secular and co-educational facilities are spreading, traditional society is changing into modern one, its rules and regulations are also changing by keeping pace with them. They like to choose their life partner themselves and at that time they don't take caste into their consideration.

Education is a great liberating and democratizing force cutting across all the barriers of class and caste. It decimates all inequalities imposed by caste or other discriminatory factors.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To find out the attitude of educated youngster towards inter-caste marriage.
2. To find out the attitude of uneducated youngster towards inter-caste marriage.
3. To find out the effect of education on the thinking of educated youngsters towards inter-caste marriage.

Operational Definitions:

Education: "Education is enlightenment. It is an instrument which broadens the thinking of man. It removes ignorance and helps to understand the world. It refines behavior, improves tolerance and increases respect for other religions. It allows a person to differentiate between good and bad and also helps him to understand why they are so.

Attitude: "Attitude" means a tendency by which we accept or reject the ideas.

Inter-Caste Marriage: It means a marriage between male and female belonging to different castes and sub-castes, having different cultural and sub-cultural groups and backgrounds. It may be religious, racial, linguistic and geographical differences.

Inter-Caste Marriage:

The inter-caste marriage means marriage outside one's own caste. Sociologists have classified the inter-caste marriage into two categories :

1. Hypergamy or *Anuloma*
2. Hypogamy or *Pratiloma*

The predisposing factors are :

1. Heavy dowry demand
2. Modern education
3. Secularism, freedom of thought and expression
4. Population migration

Government also legalized the inter-caste marriage under Hindu-marriage Act, 1955. The Supreme Court held the inter-caste marriages are "national interest" as a unifying factor in a nation where caste system is a "curse". Caste system is a divisive factor which promotes families to murder their own children in the name of "Honor Killing". The judgment, the court said, is to remind that this still is a democratic nation where a person who has reached the age of majority can marry "whosoever he / she likes".

The common important precipitating factors promoting inter-caste marriage are;

1. Cultural Similarity
2. Close Association and Common Experiences
3. Relational Contracts
4. Inefficiency to Institutional Control: The weakening of control of religion, state, family, peers and such other institution reduces restrictions and makes inter-marriages possible. The enacting of 1949 marriages validity Act or the special marriage Act, 1954 easy social contact and a cultural common denominator negate much of the prohibitive impact of conventional control.
5. Urbanization and Industrialization

Thus Inter-Caste marriage is a silent, passive, non-violent but strong protest against social maladies like:

1. Dogma of purity of progeny
2. Doctrine of Superiority
3. Demand of dowry

However, people have realized that a successful marriage is not dependent on factors such as same caste, socio economic status and religion. It is, on the other, built on the aspects of mutual love, trust, understanding and compatibility. Education has broadened the periphery of thinking and helped the people develop analytical powers. It has not only altered their perception of life, but also of social concerns such as marriage and relationship.

Delimitation of the Study:

1. Sample has been taken only from Ludhiana district.
2. 100 educated students (both boys and girls) and 100 uneducated youths (both boys and girls) have been taken.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Deshpande (2001) in his studies revealed that resistance from family and society to inter-caste marriage was strong, when one of the parties is a Harijan. On the contrary, there was approval to such marriage if the other person was wealthy and had social prestige. Higher education and age were favorable factors for inter-caste marriage. Reddy et.al (1989) observed that inter-caste marriages take place at fairly advanced age. Vijay Laxmi (1992) showed that there were significant differences in income between spouses. Women in mixed marriages had higher income at the time of marriages. Singh (2008) conducted a study on the attitude of the Sikh boys and girls studying in graduate and post-graduate classes. She had prepared an attitude scale. She distributed the scale to 200 students. She found that both PG and UG students preferred inter-caste marriages. Sumangala (1999) studied opinions of 200 college-going students on marriage. He observed that most of them wanted inter-caste marriage and there was no difference of opinion between girls and boys. She worked on “The attitude of 21-28 year old post-graduate students at the University of Agricultural Sciences, Karnataka” and found that 64.3% preferred limited mate selection within their caste. 32.4% favored sub-caste endogamy and 11% wished to marry someone from another religion. Aneja (2005) also conducted similar study on PG and UG students towards inter-caste marriage. He found that 85% students in (UG and PG) were in favor of inter-caste marriage. Kanaskar (2011) did a comparative analysis of inter-caste marriage in rural and urban Nepal. The study recommended two aspects – 1. Forming societies and NGOS’ that support and encourage inter-caste marriage and 2. Discourage the practices of the caste system that avoid inter-caste marriage.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Keeping in view the objectives, the survey method was considered to be most appropriate.

Sample:

In the present investigation, Ludhiana district of Punjab was the field of present study. Out of 100 boys, the researcher has chosen to include 50 educated boys (EB) and 50 uneducated boys (UB). Similarly, out of 100 girls, the researcher chose to have 50 educated girls (EG) and 50 uneducated girls (UG).

Tool:

The investigator used a self made tool (questionnaire) to measure the attitude of educated and uneducated youngsters toward inter-caste marriage.

Table. 1**Questionnaire For Inter-Caste Marriage:**

Name..... Educated/Uneducated
Sex: (Male / Female).....

Instruction: Given below are a few statements. Read every statement very carefully and put a tick mark against any item you feel best.

Sr.no	Statement	Yes	No
1.	Society discourages inter-caste marriage.		
2.	Inter-caste marriage increases the unity of society.		
3.	Inter- caste marriage is preferable because the economic burden in arranged marriage is too heavy for most of the parents to bear.		
4.	Inter-caste marriage is the only solution to the evil of dowry system.		
5.	Inter-caste marriage will help in bringing social change		
6.	Agencies and govt. should support inter-caste marriage		
7.	Inter- caste marriage is the step towards the modernization.		
8.	Inter- caste marriage would not be successful as both partners have grown in the different cultures.		

IV. MAJOR FINDINGS

Education has direct bearing on the attitude of the youths towards the inter-caste marriage.

1. It has been found that educated boys and girls and uneducated boys and girls at few points do not favor inter-caste marriage.
2. While educated boys and girls opine that inter-caste marriage increase the unity of the society, it has been observed that only a few uneducated boys and girls agree with this statement.
3. It has been found that most of boys and girls from educated category confess that inter-cast marriage lessens that economic burden of the parents but uneducated boys and girls go against this opinion.
4. The educated boys and girls feel that inter-caste marriage can eradicate dowry system while uneducated category of youth does not agree fully
5. Social change is the ideal of society .most of educated boys and girls consider inter-caste marriage to be an instrument to bring social change while the uneducated boys and girls do not agree with this.
6. A majority of educated boys and girls opine the different agencies and government should support inter-caste marriage while uneducated boys and girls go against this view.
7. It is surprising to note that very few educated boys and girls and very few uneducated boys and girls agree with the statement that inter-caste marriage is a step toward the modernization of the society.
8. Both the educated and uneducated groups agree that co-educational institutions encourage inter-caste marriage but while educated boys and girls recommend co educational study , the uneducated boys and girl opine that children should not study in co-educational institutions.
9. While majority of educated boys and girl think that untouchability will go by will go by inter-caste marriage, very few uneducated youths agree with this.

10. Educated youths agree that inter-caste marriage lessens the possibility of divorce but uneducated youth go against this statement.
11. While majority of educated boys and girls are of the view that inter-caste marriage ends in happiness, majority of uneducated youth are of the view that inter-caste marriage ends in unhappiness.

Educational Implications:

Marriage is most important part of life affecting all aspects of an individual's life including mental, physical, social and economical. So, it should be performed very carefully .it is necessary that the college student and their parents should have objective attitude towards inter-caste marriage.

Table. 2

Q.No	Educated girls		Uneducated girls		Educated boys		Uneducated boys	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	82%	18%	74%	26%	92%	8%	82%	18%
2	74%	26%	22%	78%	74%	26%	18%	82%
3	86%	14%	38%	62%	88%	12%	42%	58%
4	84%	16%	46%	54%	88%	12%	52%	48%
5	88%	12%	36%	64%	90%	10%	40%	60%
6	88%	12%	22%	78%	92%	8%	12%	88%
7	36%	64%	20%	80%	24%	76%	22%	78%
8	26%	74%	82%	18%	16%	84%	80%	20%

Parents must understand and support the views of their children. it will lead to healthy relationship among them. The teacher by acting as a friend and a guide is able to perform this duty well in providing a healthy way to their students.

The present study has great social implications. A specialized guidance service should be provided to the students at different stages of life.

Suggestions for Further Studies:

The investigator suggests the following problems for further research in this specific area-

1. The same study can be done on the larger sample.
2. Attitude of student related to different religions may be studied.
3. Attitude of student on the basis of socio-economic status toward inter-caste marriage may be studied.

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