Shifting Paradigms of Mate Selection in Hindu Marriage: A Socio-Statistical Study of Preferences and Aims through Weighted Average Analysis

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Abstract

Marriage has been an important and universal social institution and it is through the process of mate selection that marriage comes into being. Hence, mate selection constitutes an indispensable part of marriage. Being a cultural-universal, marriage as a social institution is known to be present in all cultures in various forms. People choose mates depending upon different criteria. Marriage among Hindus is considered a religious sacrament but with the increasing effects of modernization and globalization, the sacrosanctness of Hindu marriage has changed. In this research, an effort has been made to provide a detailed account of the changing patterns of mate selection in Hindu marriages in general while emphasizing the preferences of mate selection and the aims of Hindu marriage in particular. In this regard, responses of older generation respondents have also been taken into consideration to have an enhanced understanding of the inter-generational variability and changes.

Keywords: Mate Selection, Marriage, Caste, Inter-Generation, Hindu, Aims, Preferences

Introduction

The institution of marriage has not only changed in India but in western societies as well. Marriage in Hinduism has evolved over a period. Along with the changing needs of society, Hindu marriage has undergone several phenomenal changes. The sacramental character of Hindu marriage has now been diluted and has changed to a civil contract. The study is an attempt to understand the recent trends in Hindu marriage in general and preferences of mate selection and its aims in particular. Four main preferences of mate selection like caste, family background, physical attractiveness, and personal achievements (include qualification, occupation, employment, etc.) were taken and analysed along with five aims like religious duty, sexual gratification, procreation, companionship, and social obligation. Therefore, this study exclusively aims to present the analysed data regarding the socio-economic profile of the respondents, their preferences, and aims of mate selection in Hindu marriage between the two different generations. The socio-economic profile of respondents has also been explained in order to get a clear picture of the responses.

In recent times, the concept of Hindu marriage has shifted from its sacramental nature to the contractual one. With the upcoming requirement and demands of its constituent members, the functions, aims, and motives of Hindu marriages have evolved with time. This is accelerated by the explosive social, economic, and cultural changes that have shaped the needs of people. Arranged marriages in Urban India are decreasing and the divorce or separation rate is on the rise resulting in the exploration of new archetypes of sex and relationships. The people are bound to live in the perpetual igneous state of confusion because of the new norms. Singh and Gupta (2020) argued that the whole concept of Hindu marriage has endured sweeping change. The attention has shifted from

holy sacrament to the civil contract duly aided by socio-legal reforms. In India, significant changes have taken place over the past few decades in the institution of marriage. These changes have been caused by the multiplicity of factors like the spread of education, women's emancipation movements, the impact of western culture, social reform movements, industrialization, democratization, socio legislations, the role of media, urbanization modernization, etc. Socio-legal provisions have solved the problems related to marriage.

Review of Literature

The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 declared polygamy as illegal and second marriage could not take place if the first spouse is alive or not divorced. This ended the age-old practice of marrying several women. The aims and purpose of marriage have changed with time. Sharma (2021) highlighted that the contemporary Hindu society gives much importance to the life-long companionship between the couple in comparison to the traditional society where *dharma* was considered as the highest aim of marriage. The priority order today has reversed with *rati* or sexual pleasure at the top followed by *Praja* and *dharma*.

Notable changes have taken place in the aims and purpose of Hindu marriage. Modern youth is giving more importance to individualistic traits in spouse selection. Simpal (2019) highlighted that the purpose, meaning, and significance of marriage have completely changed for the modern youth. The ideologies of modern youth are being reshaped which has affected the institution of marriage in Indian society. The marital love and sexual gratification between the couple have become the main aim behind the marriage followed by procreation. Religious duty has now taken the back seat and companionship has become the prominent aim behind marriage.

Indian Women had significant importance in the Vedic times which later on reduced with the coming up of the modern nation. Altekar (1962) highlighted that Vedic culture reflected the women's role in the mate selection process but with the evolvement of the modern nation, the old concept of Hindu marriage began to change. Indian women in past had no say or they had a negligible choice in the spouse selection. The matchmakers, parents, relatives, and astrologers controlled the whole process. Sharma (2023) contented that love or choice marriages are now replacing arranged marriages with global westernization. A new concept of love cum arranged marriages has come into being which is gaining popularity among the youth.

The remarkable changes are taking place in the practice of mate selection. The choice of mate selection today has become wide enough to allow sub-caste and inter-caste marriages because of the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955. Singh (2022) argued that the Hindu Marriage Disabilities Removal Act of 1946 allowed marriages between sub-divisions of the same caste. Young men and women in modern societies are selecting their spouses themselves or at least aiming their preferences thereby reducing the parent's role in the mate selection process. Individual interests and preferences are been given greater importance than before. The increasing instances of love marriages in India reflect this trend. A Greater decrease in parental control and familial considerations have been seen over time.

Kumar (2023) argued that the changes in the criteria of mate selection were visible. In traditional India, factors, such as religion, caste, family background, and income were considered prominent but in the present modern times' due importance is given to the factors such as education, looks, socio-economic status of the family, earning capacity, intelligence, etc.

Prakash and Singh (2013) found that younger generation at present is giving greater importance to the individual traits like economic potentiality, intelligence, physical attractiveness, trustworthiness, equal temperament over social traits like caste, *gotra,* religiosity, etc. which is in contrast with the older generation that prefers caste, religion, and domestic skills over individual characteristics.

The age at marriage in itself has seen various changes over time. Yu and Xie (2015) found that younger cohorts of women reveal a global increase in the age at marriage mainly due to urbanization, increase in female education, and female labour force participation. Patel (2021) reasoned that the custom of child marriage in medieval India and early modern periods was quite prevalent. However, after the enactment of the Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1929, which is also known as the Sarda Act, child marriage became an illegal and cognizable offense and the marriageable age was raised to 21 for boys and 18 for girls.

Hindu marriage today has become less stable. Mani (2015) argued that the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 laid down provisions for divorce and re-marriage. According to it, marriage can be dissolved on various grounds of cruelty, adultery, unsoundness of mind, mutual consent, etc. thus challenging the sacramental character of

Hindu marriage. Women no longer bear discrimination and injustice in the name of family honour. In order to break ill-fated marriages, they may seek divorce within the domain of this Act.

The practice of giving gifts to the daughter was considered as a token of love in traditional societies, which subsequently changed into dowry in modern societies. The concept of "*Streedhan*" which was considered as the token of love and affection and was dignified as the essential part of wedding ritual is deteriorated into the evil practice of dowry, over time. Srinivas (1984) put forward his views that dowry in India has gone far beyond the traditional concepts of *Dakshina* and *Streedhan.* Dowry has replaced the concept of bride price. Now, this dowry has become a necessary precondition of marriage. Asking and giving dowry is an illegal offense under Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 and its subsequent amendments but the practice continues unabated.

Prominent changes are observed in the rules of endogamy and endogamy. Traditional societies strictly adhered to these rules of mate selection. Mehta (2018) highlighted that the ex-communication and social ostracization were the punishments given for violating these rules. However, the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 has changed the entire situation. This Act allowed *Sagotra* and *Sapinda* marriages**.** The marriage rites and rituals in India are not followed strictly and rigidly as prescribed by the Vedas. They have become précised due to the shortage of time. The marriage ceremonies are sometimes hastened by asking the priest. The Civil Marriage Act, 1954 has further made rituals even more simple and precise.

Formerly, Hindu marriages required only social and religious approval but now it requires legal sanction as well. Registration in government offices is an important part of marriage under the Special Marriage Act, 1954. The Widow Remarriage Act, 1856 made provisions of remarriage for widows. The number of widow remarriages has remarkably increased in the post-Independence era. The attitude of detestation and antipathy is being replaced by ideas that are more open and generous.

Chastity was one of the most important values connected with the Hindu marriage for boys and girls. Pre-nuptial chastity of boys and girls is reflected in the Hindu *Shastrakaras.* Reddy (2021) argued that the pre-marital and extra-marital relationships were not allowed in traditional societies. Love was the consequence of marriage between husband and wife. Due to changes because of westernization and modernization, there is more openness and flexibility in forming a relationship and choosing partners. Social media has played an important role in facilitating the meeting and interactions between young couples. The anonymity, working together and fewer restrictions of urban life have provided more freedom to the people. In metropolitan cities, some couples have started staying in live-in relationships.

The above discussion put forward the point that prohibition of polygamy, restriction of child marriage, the permission of widow remarriage, and freedom in the choice of mate are healthy signs of progress. Despite all these changes, it can safely be stated that there is no abrupt danger to the institution of Hindu marriage because of the emotional, economical, and psychosomatic security it provides.

Matrimonial advertisements, websites, and marriage bureaus have come up as a new trend or strategy of mate selection in Indian marriages. Sireesha and Devi (1997) indicate that matrimonial advertisements are a new strategy used by relatively wealthy urban educated youth for spouse selection. The big fat Indian weddings in India are a new trend popular among the elite class. However, this trend has caught up in the smaller cities and to the towns and villages as well where marriages are taking place in banquet halls or farmhouses with the provision of new ways of food serving and music playing. Titzmann (2013) focused on the importance of matrimonial websites. According to him, from the late 1990s, Indian matrimonial websites has become a new and prevalent medium for seeking marriage partner in urban India. These websites have millions of users and are progressively important in India's marriage market. It has an economic boon for media producers and marks the new era of matchmaking. Hundal (2015) studied the changes in the mate selection process with special importance to matrimonial advertisements. Urbanization and mass communication has led to various changes in the mate selection process. Indian occasions are said to be incomplete without the presence and guidance of relatives. Mediators in India (friends, *purohits*, astrologers, relatives, etc.) play a vital role in solemnizing marriage. Matrimonial advertisements are the new methodology of mate selection in the modern era. In today's decentralized economy, mass media has geared up the rate of matrimonial advertisements that are increasing every year. It is generally believed that despite many other favourable factors, the matrimonial alliance is bound to cancel if there is a disagreement between the stars (horoscopes).

Area of Study

This study is based on the fieldwork conducted among the Hindu Dogras in the Jammu and Akhnoor tehsils of the Jammu district of the Union Territory (UT) of Jammu and Kashmir. Amongst the 21 tehsils, Jammu has the highest percentage (63.42 percent) of the total population of the district, followed by Akhnoor (16.37 percent). Both Jammu and Akhnoor tehsils are part of Jammu district, which has 84.27 percent Hindu population. The total Hindu population of Jammu Tehsil is 80.98 percent, while that of Akhnoor tehsil it is 94.74 percent. The two tehsils were thus selected as they provide adequate representation to the Dogra Hindu population.

Sampling

Married couples have been taken to understand the trends in Hindu marriage. A sample of 50 married couples (25 young and 25 old) was taken for the study comprising of 10 Brahmins, 10 Rajputs, 10 Mahajans, 10 OBC's and 10 SCs. An equal number from each caste group and category was taken for a comparative understanding of the phenomenon. This makes up a total of 100 respondents of which 50 belonged to the younger generation and the remaining 50 were from the older generation (i.e. parents of young married couples). To understand the inter-generational changes and variability, the old generation respondents were deliberately taken along with the young married couples. Thus, a total of 25 families were taken for the study consisting of four members from each family. For example, husband, wife (young generation), respective father, and mother of husband (old generation). Young married couples belonged to the age group of 18-35 years whereas old married couple's age was not demarcated, but they were usually 50 years and above. Interview schedule and observation method were the tools used to collect data. The collected data was then analysed and presented in tables.

Perspective

The present study is conducted from the phenomenological perspective in order to know how people understand and construct the concept of mate selection subjectively and operationalise it in their marriage practices. This study was carried out by taking Berger and Luckmann's notion of "the social construction of reality". Berger and Luckmann (1966) argued that institutions are born when all the members of a social group share habitualized actions. The reality of everyday life is perceived by common sense knowledge of the actors that results in the formation of objective reality. The process of mate selection is institutionalized in Hindu marriages and thus, has become an objective reality in itself.

Research Design and Methods of Data Collection

The present exploratory study is a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative research designs. Exploratory research design is used in studies where it is very little or no knowledge available about the problem being studied. This present study has explored the changes in the trends in mate selection preferences and aims of Hindu marriages.

The study is qualitative, as the subjective experiences of the respondents related to the problem under study have been taken into account. However, the present study also uses quantitative data which is gathered and analysed using statistical tools and formulas to arrive at the concrete results. For the said research, the data has been collected from both primary as well as secondary sources. The primary sources included the first-hand information collected during fieldwork from respondents through methods such as interview schedule and observation. The open-ended, close-ended, and multiple-choice questions were part of the schedule. The secondary sources included related literature such as books, research papers, articles, and reports.

Findings

The socio-economic profile of the respondents provides a background of the understanding of the attitudes and behaviour of people and is considered an indispensable part of social research. Individuals perceive various social aspects differently based on their different socio-economic backgrounds. The data collected is further analysed based on the respondent's background. The special characteristics of respondents such as caste, age at marriage, educational level, occupation, marriage type, family income, mode of mate selection are discussed in this section.

Caste

The concept of caste is deep-seated and inherent in Indian society and is considered a prerequisite in marriages among Hindus. Marrying outside the caste is considered taboo in traditional Indian societies. Ghurye (1969)

highlighted the importance of caste in Indian society and endogamy as an important feature of the caste system. The status and role of the people of Indian society depend on the caste to which they belong. It has important implications on all other social institutions. The caste background affects an individual's performance in all walks of life. Therefore, it is essential to collect the caste background of the respondents. The study has taken five different caste groups, which include Brahmins, Rajputs, Mahajans, OBC's and SC's (though the last two are the constitutional categories consisting of several castes).

Education

The level of education has a great impact on the individual's status and role in society. The educational level of the respondents was classified into six categories such as illiterate, under-matric, matric, 12th (higher secondary), graduate, and postgraduate. The distribution of respondents is shown in the Table given below.

Table No. 1.1

Table Showing the Generation-Wise Educational Qualification of the Respondents

Qualification	Educational Qualification		
	Old Generation	**Young Generation**	**Total**
Illiterate	9	0	9
Under Matric	10	3	13
Matric	11	3	14
12th	10	13	23
Graduate	4	14	18
Post Graduate	6	17	23
Total	**50**	**50**	**100**

Source: The author (primary data)

Table 1.1 indicates that 23 per cent of the respondents were postgraduates out of which, 6 per cent belonged to the old generation while the remaining 17 per cent belonged to the younger generation. Similarly, 23 per cent of the respondents were in the category of 12th (higher secondary) out of which, 10 per cent belonged to the older generation while 13 per cent belonged to the younger generation. The 18 per cent falls in the category of graduates out of which, 4 per cent belongs to the older generation and 14 per cent belongs to the younger generation. The 14 per cent were in the category of matric out of which, 11 per cent belonged to the older generation and 3 per cent belonged to the younger generation. The 13 per cent falls in the category of under-matric out of which, 10 per cent belonged to the older generation and 3 per cent belongs to the younger generation and the remaining 9 per cent were in the category of illiterates, which belongs to the older generation. This indicates that the young generation respondents were more qualified as compared to the old generation.

Table No. 1.2

Table Showing the Caste-Wise Educational Qualification

Qualification Groups	Educational Qualification					Total
	Brahmins	**Rajputs**	**Mahajans**	**OBC's**	**SC's**	
Illiterate	0	1	0	4	4	**9**
Under Matric	4	0	1	3	5	**13**
Matric	2	3	2	4	3	**14**
12th	1	7	5	7	3	**23**
Graduate	2	5	7	2	2	**18**
Post Graduate	11	4	5	0	3	**23**
Total	**20**	**20**	**20**	**20**	**20**	**100**

Source: The author (primary data)

Table 1.2 indicates that Brahmins have the highest literateness among the other caste groups with 55 per cent post-graduates and no illiterates followed by Mahajans (25 per cent), Rajputs (20 per cent), SC's (15 per cent), and OBC's (0 per cent).

Age at Marriage

The legal age at marriage in India is 21 years for boys and 18 years for girls. The average age at marriage of both males and females in India has increased remarkably due to various factors like education, employment, modern values, etc. United Nations (2015) reported that on average, men tend to marry later than women do and the women's age at marriage is highest in Western Europe and East Asia and lowest in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Uecker et al. (2008) concluded from their study that the old generation females were likely to marry early because of lower educational routes, lower family income, and more religiosity. Hundal (2015) points out that the marriageable age in India ranges from 18-23 in females and 21-35 in males and his study reflected the rise in marriageable age in females i.e. 18-32. Vogl (2013) highlighted that cultural and familial factors many a time acts as determinants in marriage. Women are more likely to marry later who have multiple elder siblings due to the birth order preference of marriage.

To get a clear picture, the sample has been classified into four main categories. The first category includes respondents from the age category of less than 18 years; the second category includes respondents in the age group of 18-25 years; the third category includes respondents in the age group of 25-30 years and the last category includes the respondents in the age group 30-35 years. The distribution of respondents in these four age categories of age at marriage is shown in the table below.

Table No. 1.3

Table Showing the Gender and Generation Wise Age at Marriage

Age at Marriage					
Age Groups	**Old Generation**		**Young Generation**		**Total**
	Male	**Female**	**Male**	**Female**	
Less than 18 Years	0	2	0	0	2
18-25 Years	4	20	1	13	38
25-30 Years	18	2	13	10	43
30-35 Years	3	1	11	2	17
Total	**25**	**25**	**25**	**25**	**100**

Source: The author (primary data)

Table 1.3 clearly shows that the majority of respondents i.e. 43 per cent belonged to the age category of 25-30 years in which, 20 per cent (18 per cent Males and 2 per cent Females) were from the old generation and 23 per cent (13 per cent Males and 10 per cent Females) were from the young generation. The respondents who were in the age category of 18-25 years is 38 per cent out of which, 24 per cent (4 per cent Males and 20 per cent Females) belonged to old generation and 14 per cent (1 per cent Males and 13 per cent Females) belonged to the young generation. The respondents who were in the age group of 30-35 years is 17 per cent out of which, 4 per cent (3 per cent Males and 1 per cent Females) belonged to the old generation and 13 per cent (11 per cent Males and 2 per cent Females) belonged to the young generation. The remaining 2 per cent were under the age category of less than 18 years out of which, all belonged to the old generation females. The Table highlighted that the age at marriage has increased subsequently over time and males generally marry late as compared to females. Socio-legal provisions, increase in educational levels and employment were the main reasons behind this increase in the age at marriage.

Average Age at Marriage

The average age at which an individual gets married is defined as the average age at marriage. According to the 2011 Indian census data report, the average age at marriage for males is 22.5 years and for the female is 18.6 years. Prakash (2011) found that the younger generation shows an increase in the mean age at marriage due to the

specific traits desire. Mehta (2020) highlighted that the age at marriage has increased for both men and women over time. The average age at the marriage distribution Table for various caste groups is presented below.

Table No. 1.4

**Table Showing the Average Age at Marriage of the Respondents in Percentage**

Caste Groups	Average Age at Marriage in Percentage		Percentage Increase in Average Age at Marriage with respect to Old Generation
	Old Generation	**Young Generation**	
Brahmins	24.6	27.9	13.41
Rajputs	25	26.7	6.8
Mahajans	24.1	26.5	9.96
OBC's	24	25.5	6.25
SC's	22.6	25.3	11.95
Total	**24.06**	**26.38**	**9.64**

Source: The author (primary data)

The average age at marriage between old and young generations in different caste groups is shown in Table 1.4. The data reveals that the total of the average age at marriage in the case of the older generation is 24.06 per cent whereas it becomes 26.38 per cent in the younger generation. Brahmins revealed the highest increase in the average age at marriage that is 13.41 per cent; SC's with 11.95 per cent; Mahajans with 9.96 per cent; Rajputs with 6.8 per cent and OBC's with the least increase i.e. 6.25 per cent. Higher educational achievements, greater occupational standards, higher income levels, modernization, etc. were the main reasons for Brahmins showing the highest increase in average age at marriage whereas OBC has revealed a minimum increase in average age at marriage because of low education, low occupation standards, and low-income levels. In general, the younger generation shows a 9.64 per cent increase in the age at marriage with respect to the old generation mainly due to the above-mentioned reasons.

Figure No. 1.1
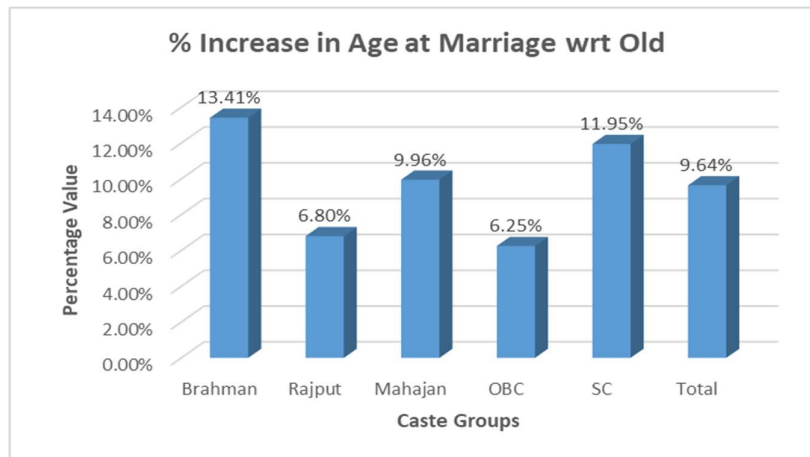
Figure Showing the Graphical Representation of the Average Age at Marriage
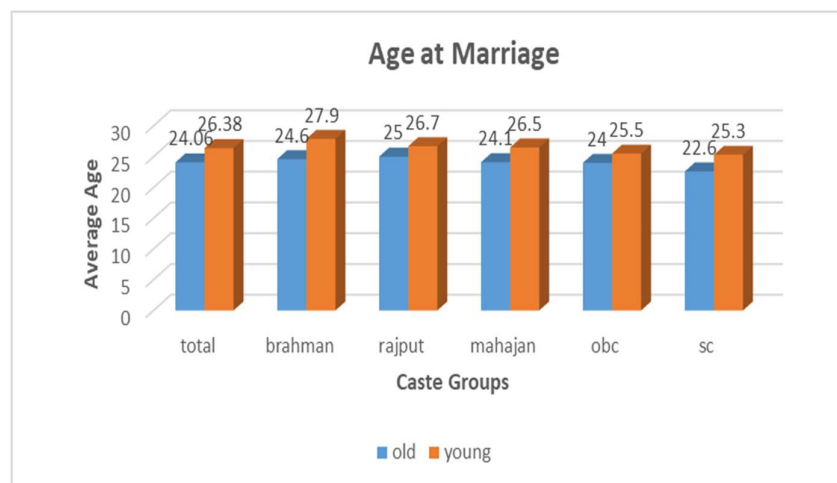
Source: The author (primary data)

Figure No. 1.2

Figure Showing the Percentage Increase in the Age at Marriage with respect to the Old Generation

% Increase in Age at Marriage wrt Old

Source: The author (primary data)

Type of Marriage

Indian society was primarily associated with arranged marriages and love marriages were limited. However, the modern education, western values, and employment has led to the evolution of a different kind of love or choice marriages in India. The modern youth is bending more towards the choice marriages in comparison to the arranged marriages but still arranged marriages are more prevalent. Hamon and Ingoldsby (2003) explained that Asia, Africa, and the Middle East still govern family-arranged marriages where matchmaking is the prerogative of family. Mathur (2007) found that the probability of women having arranged marriages in Mumbai is positively correlated with lower education, living in a joint family, and having traditional values and lifestyles. Rubio (2014) came out with the finding that the factors such as education, employment outside the household, and urbanization are positively correlated with the worldwide decline in arranged marriages. Hortacsu (1999) found that working women with higher educational levels are more likely to go for couple-initiated marriages. The type of marriage has been categorized into two main categories; arranged marriage and love or choice marriage. The distribution of the respondents in this regard is presented below in a tabular form.

Table No. 1.5

Table Showing the Type of Marriage of the Respondents

| Type of Marriage | Marriage Type | | |
	Old Generation	**Young Generation**	Total
Arranged	50	28	**78**
Choice	0	22	**22**
Total	**50**	**50**	**100**

Source: The author (primary data)

Table 1.5 reveals that 100 per cent of the old generation respondents and 56 per cent of the young generation had arranged marriages whereas 44 per cent of the young generation respondents and 0 per cent of the old generation respondents had choice marriages. The table shows that 78 respondents had arranged marriages out of which 50 belong to the older generation and 28 belong to the younger generation while the 22 young generation respondents had choice marriages out of which none belong to the old generation. This clearly shows that 44 per cent of the younger generation had choice marriages and 56 per cent had arranged marriages. This increase in the choice of marriage is primarily due to modernization, co-education, modern values, the role of media, greater freedom of mate choice, and more female participation in the workplace.

Occupation

Occupation affects the role, behaviour, lifestyle, and conduct of an individual in society and is considered an important indicator of socio-economic status and family stature. The occupational status of the respondents has been classified into six categories such as unemployed, self-employed, government service, private service, business, and labourer. The distribution of the respondents according to their type of occupation has been shown below in the following Table.

Table No. 1.6

Table Showing the Caste-Wise Occupation of the Respondents

Occupation	Occupation Table					Total
	Brahmins	**Rajputs**	**Mahajans**	**OBC's**	**SC's**	
Unemployed	5	7	6	9	8	**35**
Self-Employed	1	0	2	0	1	**4**
Government Service	10	9	0	2	3	**24**
Private Service	1	2	4	4	4	**15**
Business	3	2	8	2	3	**18**
Laborer	0	0	0	3	1	**4**
Total	**20**	**20**	**20**	**20**	**20**	**100**

Source: The author (primary data)

Table 1.6 reveals that 35 per cent of the respondents were unemployed; 24 per cent were in government service; 18 per cent were in their business; 15 per cent were in private service; 4 per cent were self-employed and the remaining 4 per cent were labourers. As far as government service is concerned, 50 per cent among the Brahmins, 45 per cent among the Rajputs, 15 per cent of the SC's, 10 per cent of the OBC's and 0 per cent of the Mahajans were in government service. Regarding unemployment, 25 per cent among the Brahmins, 35 per cent among the Rajputs, 30 per cent among the Mahajans, 45 per cent among the OBC's and 40 per cent among the SC's were unemployed. The respondents belonging to the labour class were only in OBC and SC categories with 15 per cent among the OBC and 5 per cent among the SC.

Monthly Family Income

Income is measured as the most essential variable in defining the socio-economic prestige of an individual in society. In this study, the family income has been divided into five categories like the first category involves monthly family income in the range ₹10000-20000; the second ranging from ₹20000-30000; the third ranging from ₹30000-40000; fourth ranges from ₹40000-50000 and the last category involves monthly family income above ₹50000. A total of 25 families were taken for the study in which, each taken caste group represent five families making a total of 100 respondents. This means that one family comprises of husband, wife, husband's father, and mother making four respondents. The distribution of family income per month is presented in the table below.

Table No. 1.7

Table Showing the Monthly Family Income of the Respondents

Caste Groups	Family Income					Total
	Below ₹20000	**₹20000-30000**	**₹30000-40000**	**₹40000-50000**	**Above ₹50000**	
Brahmin	0	0	1	1	3	5
Rajput	0	0	3	0	2	5
Mahajan	0	0	1	4	0	5

OBC	1	2	1	1	0	5
SC	1	1	2	0	1	5
Total	**2**	**3**	**8**	**6**	**6**	**25**

As far as monthly family income is concerned, 32 per cent of the families fall in the income category of ₹30000-40000; 24 per cent fall in the category of ₹40000-50000; again 24 per cent fall in the income category of above ₹50000; 12 per cent of the families fall in the category of ₹20000-30000 and the remaining 8 per cent families fall in the income category of ₹10000-20000. The caste wise financial status follows the order Brahmins > Rajputs > Mahajans > SC's > OBC's.

Mode of Mate Selection

This is one of the most important aspects of marriage partner selection. Earlier, parent's had the major say in partner selection and children had almost no say in it. This criterion is now changing wherein children have the major say in the partner selection process. Parental involvement in mate selection is being reduced and the young generation many times, marry even without their parent's permission. Mathur (2007) conducted a survey of youth in Mumbai city and found that 71 per cent of respondents in the marriageable age were of the view that parents and family members should select their partner for them whereas 18 per cent of the view of self-selecting their partner with parental involvement and the rest 11 per cent preferred self-selection without parental involvement. Sandhya (2013) found that 63.91 per cent of respondents prefer parents to select a partner for them while 16.27 per cent pointed out that their parents have permitted them to select their spouse. She further highlighted that the participation of daughters in arranged marriages is also increasing. However, with the increase of modern values and western education, parents willingly permit their children to select their spouses. Shrishta (2012) pointed out from her study that educated parents who themselves are open to western ideas let their children select their partner.

This study has divided the modes of mate selection into four main categories such as self-choice with parent's consent, self-choice without parent's consent, parent's choice with self-consent, and parent's choice without self-consent. The mode of mate selection distribution Table is presented below.

Table No. 1.8

Table Showing the Caste and Generation Wise Mode of Mate Selection of the Respondents

Mode of Mate Selection

	Self-Choice with Parent's Consent		Self-Choice without Parent's Consent		Parent's Choice with Self Consent		Parent's Choice without Self-consent		
Caste Groups	Old	Young	Old	Young	Old	Young	Old	Young	Total
Brahmins	0	2	0	0	2	8	8	o	**20**
Rajputs	0	5	0	1	1	4	9	0	**20**
Mahajans	0	4	0	2	1	4	9	0	**20**
OBC's	0	2	0	2	0	6	10	0	**20**
SC's	0	3	0	1	1	6	9	0	**20**
Total	**0**	**16**	**0**	**6**	**5**	**28**	**45**	**0**	**100**

Source: The author (primary data)

Table 1.8 reveals that 90 per cent of the old generation respondents had no say in partner choice i.e. only parent's choice was considered in partner selection (parent's choice without respondent's consent) while only 10 per cent had their say (parent's choice along with respondent's consent) in it. The 56 per cent of the young generation respondents were in the favour of parent's choice with self-consent. The 32 per cent of the young generation

respondents had self-choice with parent's consent in partner selection. The remaining 12 per cent of the young generation respondents preferred self-choice without their parent's consent in partner selection. Moreover, none of the respondents from the old generation preferred self-choice marriage, and not any of the respondents from the young generation preferred parent's choice without self-consent in spouse selection. Here, the parent's choice with self-consent and parent's choice without self-consent belongs to the category of arranged marriage while self-choice with parent's consent and self-choice without parent's consent belongs to choice marriage.

PREFERENCE ANALYSIS

Weighted Average is the statistical method used in data analysis in which the data values are given different weights based on the relative importance rather than treating each item equally. Jones and Smith (2020) highlighted that the weighted average is more descriptive than the simple average in which the final number reflects the relative importance of each observation. Before the final calculation is made, each number in the data is multiplied by the arbitrarily assigned weight based on its importance. Thus, in the weighted average, each value is multiplied by an assigned weight, which is then added and divided by the total assigned weight.

The formula for calculating weighted average

i= specific term in data.

In addition, each term has a weight associated with it that need to account for.

Scllitto and Burgess (2005) used and explained the weighted average method which involves assigning a weight for each observation against the value of criteria which is then added and then divided by the sum of weights assigned. There is a formula for finding out the rank in MS-Excel. The syntax of the excel rank function is RANK (number, ref, [order]).

Where 'number' is the value whose rank needs to be found, 'ref' is the list of numeric values to rank and 'order' is the number that specifies how rank values. If it is '0' then values are ranked in descending order and if it is '1', the values are assigned in ascending order

In the case of preference value calculation, four preferences of mate selection were taken i.e. caste, physical attractiveness, family background, and personal achievements (includes qualification, job, etc.) and the respondents were asked to rank their preference, a number, from 1 to 4 according to their importance. The responses were collected and the preference values were calculated. It is quite clear and obvious that first preference being the most preferred and fourth being the least. Thus, it is clear that 1st preference is four times more important than the 4th preference. Therefore, 1st preference is assigned a weight of 4, 2nd assigned weight 3, 3rd with a weight 2, and 4th preference with a weight 1. The last preference is assigned with the least weight.

Let us take an example of how to calculate a definite value for the attribute 'Caste' in old Out of the total old generation Brahmins, 6 respondents gave 1st preference to caste, 1 respondent gave 2nd preference to caste, 1 gave 3rd preference, and 2 respondents given 4th preference to caste. So, 1st preference is assigned with a weight of 4, 2nd with weight 3, 3rd with weight 2, and 4th with weight 1. Here, the total weight count is 10.

Weighted Average or Score = X1W1+X2W2+X3W3+X4W4/W1+W2+W3+W4

= 6×4+1×3+1×2+2×1/4+3+2+1

=31/10

(WA) =3.1

The Caste attribute percentage of old generation Brahmins = 3.1/10×100 which comes out to be 31 per cent.

This method is used for calculating the value of preferences of mate selection i.e. Caste, Physical Attractiveness, Family Background, and Personal Achievement for different Caste groups (Brahmins, Rajputs, Mahajans, OBC's and SC's) in both old and young generations. The different values calculated in percentage are arranged below in the tabular form. The rank of preferences of mate selection in different caste groups is also calculated using the excel formula.

Table No. 2.1

Table Showing the Generation Wise Preferences of Mate Selection Values of Brahmins in Percentage and their Ranking

Preferences of Mate Selection	Preference Value of Brahmins in Percentage		Brahmin Ranking	
	Old Generation	Young Generation	Old Generation	Young Generation
Caste	31	15	1	4
Physical Attractiveness	20	18	4	3
Family Background	26	29	2	2
Personal Achievements	23	38	3	1

Source: The author (primary data)

Table No. 2.2

Table Showing the Generation Wise Preferences of Mate Selection Values of Rajputs in Percentage and their Ranking

Preferences of Mate Selection	Preference Value of Rajputs in Percentage		Rajput Ranking	
	Old Generation	Young Generation	Old Generation	Young Generation
Caste	38	25	1	4
Physical Attractiveness	18	26	3	2
Family Background	21	16	2	3
Personal Achievements	23	33	4	1

Source: The author (primary data)

Table No. 2.3

Table Showing the Generation Wise Preferences of Mate Selection Values of Mahajans in Percentage and their Ranking

Preferences of Mate Selection	Preference Value of Mahajans in Percentage		Mahajan Ranking	
	Old Generation	Young Generation	Old Generation	Young Generation
Caste	36	13	1	4
Physical Attractiveness	21	26	3	2
Family Background	23	24	2	3

Personal Achievements	20	37	4	1

Source: The author (primary data)

Table No. 2.4

Table Showing the Generation Wise Preferences of Mate Selection Values of OBCs in Percentage and their Ranking

Preferences of Mate Selection	Preference Value of OBC's in Percentage		OBC Ranking	
	Old Generation	Young Generation	Old Generation	Young Generation
Caste	39	17	1	4
Physical Attractiveness	20	33	3	1
Family Background	29	21	2	3
Personal Achievements	12	29	4	2

Source: The author (primary data)

Table No. 2.5

Table Showing the Generation Wise Preferences of Mate Selection Values of SCs in Percentage and their Ranking

Preferences of Mate Selection	Preference Value of SCs in Percentage		SC Ranking	
	Old Generation	Young Generation	Old Generation	Young Generation
Caste	40	18	1	4
Physical Attractiveness	20	19	3	3
Family Background	22	27	2	2
Personal Achievements	18	36	4	1

Source: The author (primary data)

Modern Youth is shifting more towards individualistic traits in mate selection rather than the collectivistic social traits and personal preferences have become a phenomenon of considerable importance. Sireesha and Devi (1997) found that the family-related characteristics in mate selection are now taking the back seat and individual-related preferences such as occupation, personal achievements, education, nature, etc. are given significant importance. However, this has never challenged the importance of family-related criteria such as caste and family background. Ghimire et al. (2006) reflected that the respondents with higher educational attainments have greater autonomy in decision making mainly due to their greater economic role within the family. Chauhan (2007) concluded from the study that despite various changes in mate selection, the traditional element like caste is still upholding its fist, primarily in arranged marriages in India. In recent decades, the physical attractiveness value in mate selection has scrambled up the ranking.

The above Tables and Figures present the percentage value of preferences of mate selection in Hindu marriage in two different generations (old and young) along with their potential rank values. Four preferences of mate selection were taken for the study [caste, physical attractiveness, family background, and personal achievements (job, occupation, economic aspect)]. It is evident that the old generation respondents regardless of the five taken caste groups (Brahmin, Rajput, Mahajan, OBC, and SC), have given greater importance to the caste attribute in the mate selection process while the young generation respondents out rightly favoured personal achievement trait of mate selection in marriage. The younger generation respondents have given greater importance to personal achievements where the achieved status of an individual is given utmost importance as compared to the ascribed status. The caste attribute of mate selection is least preferred among the young generation

respondents whereas it is the most preferred, in the case of the old generation. Personal achievement trait is least preferred among old generation respondents with little variation in Brahmins, in which physical attractiveness is the least preferred trait, which shows that the old Brahmins are somewhat more concerned about personal achievements as compared to physical attractiveness.

It is clear from the above Tables (2.1 to 2.5) of preferences of mate selection that the old generation preferred caste attribute the most while the young generation preferred personal achievements. The old generation SC's stands highest in the caste rigidity as compared to the other caste groups because of lower education and occupation while the young generation Brahmins stands top in the personal achievement value in comparison to the other castes because Brahmins were more educated and occupied higher occupational stature in the society.

Thus, the caste attribute of mate selection ranked top among the old generation respondents while the personal achievement trait ranked top among the young generation except OBC's. The young generation OBC's come out with an exceptional variation as they favoured physical attractiveness the most and thus gave the highest-ranking to the physical attractiveness trait.

AIMS ANALYSIS

The same statistical method is used for calculating the value of aims for different caste groups in both generations. In this case, five preferences were taken and similarly, 1st preference is five times more important than 5th preference. So, 1st preference is assigned with a weight of '5' and so on the 5th preference assigned with a weight of '1'. The highest weight '5'is assigned to the 1st preference as it is considered to be most important. Here, the total weight count is 15.

The Religious Duty Value Calculation of Old Generation Brahmins

Out of the total old generation Brahmins, 6 respondents have given 1st preference to the aim (religious duty), 4 respondents have given 2nd preference to religious duty and none of the respondents has given 3rd, 4th, or 5th (last) preference to the religious duty.

Applying formula; $(WA) = X_1W_1 + X_2W_2 + X_3W_3 + X_4W_4 + X_5W_5 / W_1 + W_2 + W_3 + W_4 + W_5$

$= 6 \times 5 + 4 \times 4 + 0 \times 3 + 0 \times 2 + 0 \times 1 / 5 + 4 + 3 + 2 + 1$

$= 46/15$

$(WA) = 3.067$

The Religious Duty value in percentage age of old generation Brahmins = $3.067/10 \times 100$ which comes out to be 31% after rounding off. Similarly, the values of sexual gratification, procreation, companionship, and social obligation are calculated for different caste groups in both generations. The calculated values are presented below in tabular form along with the ranks obtained for different aims of Hindu marriage in two generations using an excel formula.

Table No. 3.1

Table Showing the Generation Wise Aim Values of Brahmins in Percentage and their Ranking

Aims of Hindu Marriage	Aim Value of Brahmins in Percentage		Brahmin Ranking	
	Old Generation	Young Generation	Old Generation	Young Generation
Religious Duty	31	14	1	5
Sexual Gratification	9	15	5	4
Procreation	19	18	4	3
Companionship	21	30	2	1
Social Obligation	20	23	3	2

Source: The author (primary data)

Table No. 3.2

Table Showing the Generation Wise Aim Values of Rajputs in Percentage and their Ranking

Aims of Hindu Marriage	Aim Value of Rajputs in Percentage		Rajput Ranking	
	Old Generation	Young Generation	Old Generation	Young Generation
Religious Duty	30	11	1	5
Sexual Gratification	11	18	5	4
Procreation	19	19	3	3
Companionship	23	32	2	1
Social Obligation	17	20	4	2

Source: The author (primary data)

Table No. 3.3

Table Showing the Generation Wise Aim Values of Mahajans in Percentage and their Ranking

Aims of Hindu Marriage	Aim Value of Mahajans in Percentage		Mahajan Ranking	
	Old Generation	Young Generation	Old Generation	Young Generation
Religious Duty	32	10	1	5
Sexual Gratification	7	15	5	4
Procreation	19	22	3	2
Companionship	25	32	2	1
Social Obligation	17	21	4	3

Source: The author (primary data)

Table No. 3.4

Table Showing the Generation Wise Aim Values of OBCs in Percentage and their Ranking

Aims of Hindu Marriage	Aim Value of OBCs in Percentage		OBC Ranking	
	Old Generation	Young Generation	Old Generation	Young Generation
Religious Duty	31	8	1	5
Sexual Gratification	12	25	5	2
Procreation	16	18	4	3
Companionship	19	32	3	1
Social Obligation	22	17	2	4

Source: The author (primary data)

Table No. 3.5

Table Showing the Generation Wise Aim Values of SCs in Percentage and their Ranking

Aims of Hindu Marriage	Aim Value of SCs in Percentage		SC Ranking	
	Old Generation	Young Generation	Old Generation	Young Generation
Religious Duty	32	9	1	5
Sexual Gratification	9	20	5	3
Procreation	23	23	2	2
Companionship	18	33	4	1
Social Obligation	18	15	3	4

Source: The author (primary data)

The above Tables (3.1 to 3.5) show the percentage value of aims of Hindu marriage in the two different generations along with their rank values. Five aims of Hindu marriage were taken for the study (religious duty, sexual gratification, procreation, companionship, and social obligation). It is evident that old generation respondents regardless of castes taken, value the religious duty attribute the most whereas the young generation respondents predominantly favours companionship attribute the most in Hindu marriages. Thus, the religious duty aim ranked top among the old generation whereas the companionship attribute ranked top among the young generation. The old generation gives the highest rank to religious duty attribute because for them traditions are important which need to be preserved and maintained. The young generation gives the highest rank to the companionship because of their higher educational levels, occupation, freedom of choice in partner selection, and shift in the orientation from collectivistic to individualistic orientation.

Irrespective of the different caste groups, the old generation respondents favoured sexual gratification the least because of much bending towards traditionalism whereas the young generation respondents favoured religious duty the least primarily due to the spread of modernity, westernization, and education.

Conclusion

The data presented in this study portrays the trends in mate selection regarding the aims and preferences, which significantly vary in both the young and old generations. It may be concluded from the findings and the analyses of the available data from the respondents that the young generation is influenced by westernization and modern values where old orthodox thinking and behaviour have lost their importance considerably. The age at marriage has increased with respect to the old generation in which Brahmins had the highest increase of 13.34 percent. The comparison between the old and young generations has been presented to obtain a clear picture of trends in the inter-generational variability. The findings of this study show that trends in preferences and aims have almost retreated. Significant differences were observed in preferences and aim in both young and old generations. The trait (religious duty), which was considered as the most preferred among the old generation, is now being preferred the least by the young generation. The main reasons behind this trend were; more swift towards modernization and westernization, increase in educational levels and employment, change in the society's way of thinking from traditional to modern, increase in the importance of achieved status as compared to the ascribed, role of mass media and changes in the patterns of living. This nevertheless means that the caste attribute has lost its importance in urban societies. It still plays a role in mate selection but not similar to the earlier times. In the case of arranged marriages, caste plays a major role but its role is being reduced in the case of choice marriages.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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