



Changing Trends In Marriage: A Study Of Matrimonial Advertisements In Newspapers

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ABSTRACT:- India, the land of traditional society is going through the social change in its social institutions. Under the influence of urbanization and the mass communication media significant change has come in the mode of mate selection. Marriage is the beginning of a new way of life for young man and young woman. Making the practical arrangements for the wedding day a great deal of time is required. In India, all these occasions are planned and celebrated with the help of relatives. In this mediator plays an important role in solemnizing marriage. Previously local barber, mid-wife played the role of mediator. In the middle class families, this role was assigned to 'Purohit'. In the modern era, matrimonial advertisement is the new methodology of mate selection. The selection of marriage partner may involve either the couple going through a selection process of courtship or the marriage may be arranged by the couples parents or an outside party a match maker. This paper with the help of secondary data tries to find out the role of new mediator that is matrimonial advertisements in selecting mate.

I. INTRODUCTION

The mass communication media have been geared up particularly in these days of decentralized democracy. The numbers of advertisements are increasing every year. The advertisements have become the foot on the accelerator, the hand on the throttle, the spur on the flank that takes one person where he/she wants to stop and again start for the next. The nature and scope of matrimonial advertisements has changed and enlarged due to new social influence. The content analysis of marriage alliances through advertisements differs from country to country and from situation to situation. Advertisements indicate a diverse social phenomena which is endlessly significant and important from the point of view of the cultural origins of Indian society.

II. METHODOLOGY

Methodology is not concerned with building substantive knowledge, but rather deals with the procedures by which logical research proceeds. In order to give purposeful direction to this study secondary data from newspapers of February and March 2015 of The Tribune and Ajit were collected. The content analyses of matrimonial alliances through advertisements indicate a diverse social phenomenon which is endlessly significant and important from the point of view of the cultural origin of Indian society.

In this study 400 samples i.e. 100 from bridegroom columns and 100 from brides wanted of 'The Tribune' and similarly 200 from 'Ajit' newspapers were randomly selected. The content analysis of the matrimonial alliances through advertisements indicate a clear cut tendency among the advertisers explained as 'desired' and 'personal'. This distinction into 'personal' and 'desired' is purely-based upon the nature of the contents of the matrimonial advertisements. If the advertiser advertises his own particulars or qualities it is indicated as 'personal' and when the advertiser advertises as what exactly he expects from the other party-has been indicated as desired. Though the 'personal and desired' are subjective considerations but for purpose of study they are of great significance. The present study has been divided into four parts. The first part deals with forms of matrimonial advertisements as in north India and briefly the advertisements as mass media. The second part discusses the nature and evolution of the concept of marriage in India. The third part contains the impact of recent social ideas of community life on matrimonial alliances through advertisements with the description of tables. The tables are concerned with some of the most important areas of study as religion, age, qualification etc. The fourth part includes the probable correlations and suggestions. The conclusions are both worked out and inferred.

Advertisement is a very important technique of molding public opinion in modern times particularly in the case of developed nations. The social attitudes, norms and behavior are well conditioned through the media of advertisements. Advertisement serves as the most important vehicle of communication of ideas and opinions. When newspapers are considered to be the "mirrors of the world" advertisements can be viewed as the "channels of mass involvement". In our country, there is a lot of progress made by us on the social side significantly with respect to marriage alliances. Every day we see that the newspaper columns are increasingly filled up with matrimonial advertisements. Advertisement is more or less a conscious induction of ideas and opinions into the people.

The content analysis of marriage alliances through advertisements differs from country to country and from situation to situation. The situation and the nature of the content analysis is varying from generation to generation: particularly in the recent years it is posing a peculiar situation altogether. The reason is that people are becoming more socially conscious and less inhibited from the prescriptions of tradition. Our society is replacing rapidly its old social values with the new and fast changing links. The main reasons are the rapid industrialization, fast mobility of people from rural to urban areas and the growing problems of social adjustments under new situations and conditions. If we look behind to good olden days at that time family alliances were established within a limited caste and sub caste environment. Sometimes, marriage alliances were confined to particular or specific geographical regimes or areas. Family ties and blood relations played a tremendous role. An average rural family depended upon either relatives or friends for this purpose. Sometimes a known midwife or local barber played the role of mediator. In the middle class and above middle class families this role was assigned to 'purohit'.

The Indian middle class is mostly benefited through common advertisement methods. The middle class is susceptible to the advertisement medium because it has less inhibitions and is comparatively exposed to the new changes due to pressure of circumstances and necessities. In the matrimonial alliances through advertisements age, caste, status, education, occupation, status of the family, individual income and such other personal attributes and hobbies etc. occupy a very significant place in the social structure of our country. The fact that the traditional methods and modes of marriage alliances have been replaced by the modern techniques of advertisements, is itself a sufficient proof and there is lot of new socialization process going in our society.

Marriage is a universal, social institution and the multiplicity and variety of its forms serves to suggest its indispensability. The evolution of the concept of marriage is a difficult thing to trace for the birth of man is birth of a marriage. Many people defined marriage differently mainly on the basis of their conceptual classification and empirical equipment.

"Marriage may be defined as a relation of one or more men to one or more women, which is recognized by custom or law, and involves certain rights and duties both in case of the parties entering the union and in the case of the children born of it". *Westermarck*.

"Marriage involves the social sanction generally in the form of civil or religious ceremony authorizing two persons of opposite sex to engage in sexual and other consequent and correlated social economic relations with one another" *Majumdar and Madan*

"Marriage is the complex of social norms that define and control the relations of mated pair to each other, their kinsmen, their offspring and society". *Hoebel*

In the recent years we have discovered many changes in the general patterns of matrimonial links and alliances in our country. These changes have a direct bearing on the nature of relationship between man and woman in the general context of family and community life. Marriage enables a man or woman to submerge his or her personality with the personality of the other spouse and in this manner, the need for the renunciation of the ego is felt, and a capacity for it is required. Marriage does not merely fulfill the biological necessity but also serves a socially significant purpose. As our religious ideas are very much influenced by socio-cultural customs and traditions, so our social links and alliances are influenced by fast changing process of socialism.

Since marriage is an important social institution, different social groups have devised their own rules and regulations in regard to mate-selection. The terms exogamy and endogamy refers to these rules. The rules prohibiting marriage between men and women who share a certain degree of blood or official relationship are known as exogamy. The exogamy prevails in different societies in varying degrees. A man must not only seek a wife outside of his own clan, but also must avoid the clans of all the grand parents. Then there are certain relations with whom marriage can be contracted but the degree of nearness differs from community to community. The 'gotra' the 'pravar' and the 'pind' exogamy prevail in the Hindu Society, some tribal groups are covered by village exogamy. Among the Hindus the prevailing practice is to marry outside the 'gotra'. People of the same gotra are believed to have similar blood and so inter-marriage among them is prohibited. Marriage between persons belonging to the same 'pravar' is also forbidden among the Hindus, but especially among the Brahmans 'pravar' is a kind of religious and spiritual bond. People who utter the name of common saint at

religious functions are believed to be members of the same 'pravara'. Among many Indian tribes there is the practice of marrying outside the village. This restriction is prevalent among the Munda and other tribes inhabiting Chhota Nagpur in Madhya Pradesh. In Hindu society marriage within 'Pinda' is also prohibited. Pinda means common parentage. According to Brahaspati, offspring from five maternal generations and seven paternal generations are 'sapinda' and they cannot intermarry. There are number of factors that support exogamy (Kapadia 1966). According to Davis this idea of incest taboo has been derived with the aim of preserving the social order.

Marriage within the caste is known as endogamy. Hence marriages without group members are prohibited. In India a Brahmin can only marry Brahmin and not only that he can marry only a Brahmin of his own sub-caste. Though Sikh religion talks about equality but due to influence of socio-cultural customs and traditions there also exists endogamy. In India following forms of endogamy are generally prevalent. In the first form i.e., Tribal Endogamy, no one can marry outside his own tribe. In the second, Caste Endogamy-marriage should take place within caste. In the third, Class Endogamy- marriage is contracted between people of one class or of a particular status. In the fourth type of endogamy-sub caste endogamy-choice of marriage is restricted to the sub-caste. In the fifth type of endogamy-Race endogamy-people can marry within the race. The various factors behind the social practice of endogamous marriage is the preference of the group's homogeneity, protection of the prestige and status of the endogamous marriage, happiness of women, preservation of the purity in the group and fostering the sense of unity within the group (Jyoti 1983).

In our society the parents and elders take the initiative in the matters of marriage alliances. They take the help of several other social agencies like conservative people among who includes purohits and priests. These marriages are mostly confined to intra-familial relationships. Very rarely they go beyond this because there is less opportunity for a wide social communication. Inter-familial and inter-social marriages based upon the same gotra are ruled out possibilities. This is also sort of limitation from the point of view of religion on social mobility and extra familial matrimonial alliances.

The second form of approved marriages are free-will marriages. These marriages get the social sanction and family approval only in such cases where there is a common caste. Even otherwise free will marriages are approved and given legal sanction provided a boy or a girl attains particular age or maturity from the point of view of law. In the earlier Acts of Hindu marriage 15 and 18 years were stipulated for a girl and boy respectively. In the later years this was changed to 18 and 21 years. The reasons given are that the real maturity and responsibility will dawn upon a boy or a girl only when they are fully grown up from the emotional levels to the rational realities.

Marriage by registration is one of the most approved forms of the present day society. A boy and a girl can go to an office or Registration Authority of Marriage and mutually agree to declare before the Registrar of marriages their conscious willingness to marry each other and live together. The Government of India and the State Governments have provided such offices as per the population and its requirements throughout the country. The fundamental rights of a citizen which are however rooted in free-will choices are given full scope under the Protection of The Marriage Act of Registration of 1941.

The fourth form of approved marriage which is widely accepted now days is the marriage through advertisements. Marriages through Advertisement may be of two forms again:

(a) Advertisements on behalf of parents and elders

(b) Advertisements on behalf of the persons concerned without the knowledge of their parents or elders. Generally this kind of advertisements as fair complexion, higher education, employment and status of the family etc. are taken into consideration. Marriage through advertisements rarely tends to cross the linguistic barriers and caste restrictions. Even some families would not prefer boys and girls from far off regions and states.

"The great art in writing advertisements is the finding, out of a proper method to catch the reader's eye; without which, a good thing may pass over unobserved, on lost among commissions of bankrupt." Joseph Addison

Our Indian society is rooted in the traditional religious background although much of the new socialization has been witnessed. In fact, the Indian middle class is mostly benefited through common advertisement methods. The middle class is more susceptible to the advertisement medium because it has less inhibitions and is comparatively more exposed to the new changes due to pressure of circumstances and necessities. In case of advertisements on the male personal the advertisers are very particular about caste, sub-caste as in many cases sect and sub-sect is also given whereas in the cases of females personal hardly they have given sub sect. However in female 'desired' maximum percentage requirement is suitable match or teetotaler, vegetarian, well settled match. In male 'desired' in maximum advertisements is required beautiful girl. A suitable job and higher education count a lot. Family status and family history are also never neglected as condition in the advertisements.

This part is based on tables. These tables are based on random sampling of the matrimonial advertisements of both the males and females from 'The Tribune' and 'Ajit'. The first table shows the number of advertisements from the February 2015 and March 2015 newspapers of the Tribune. Though the sex ratio i.e. number of females per thousand males in India is 927 whereas in Punjab 882, then also numbers of advertisements for Bridegrooms wanted are 853 whereas brides wanted are only 619.

Table-I : Comparison of Bridegrooms and Brides Wanted			
BRIDEGROOMS WANTED The Tribune (February)		BRIDES WANTED The Tribune (March)	
HINDU		HINDU	
Brahmin	134	Brahmin	76
Rajput	48	Rajput	25
Mahajan	6	Mahajan	1
Khatn	69	Khatri	54
KhatriArora	73	Arora	84
Arora	38	Saini	11
Saini	28	Sood	8
Sood	3		
SIKH		SIKH	
Sikh	106	Sikh	118
Jat Sikh	120	Jat Sikh	101
Sikh Khatri	22	Sikh Khatri	17
Ramgarhia Sikh	30	Ramgarhia Sikh	24
VAISH/JAIN	94	VAISH/JAIN	87
MUSLIM	3	CHRISTIAN	2
SCHEDULE CASTE/ BACKWARD CASTE	10	SCHEDULE CASTE/ BACKWARD CASTE	5
OTHERS		OTHERS	
NRI	19	NRI	50
Physically challenged	3	Physically challenged	2
MISC	46	MISC	42
Widow	3	Widow	3
TOTAL	853	TOTAL	619

Age is one of the important characteristics of human beings. It does not only determine an individual's physical and mental maturity, but also depict his/her life experiences. In early times, child marriages were very common. The orthodox Hindus adopted child marriage as a counter measure to the sexual freedom that prevailed among the indigenous people of India. Manu raised the marriageable age to 12 years which Parashara had decreased it at 8 to 10 years. It was laid down that a bridegroom of 24 years should marry a girl of 8 years, a man of 30 to a girl of 12 years' (Nair 1978). The "Hindu Act of 1978 restricted the minimum age at marriage for boys 21 and for girls 18 years respectively (Gupta 1996).

The maximum advertisements of their own particulars have been given by the age groups of 27 to 29 years i.e., 43% males and 42% females in The Tribune and 32% males and 24% females in Ajit as shown in Table II.

Sr. No.	Age Category	The Tribune				Ajit			
		Personal		Desired		Personal		Desired	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1.	21-23	-	8	-	-	2	8	-	2
2.	23-25	2	12	-	4	2	16	-	1
3.	25-27	7	24	-	4	16	22	-	-
4.	27-29	43	42	-	-	32	24	3	-
5.	29-31	21	8	-	-	18	15	-	-
6.	31-33	2	5	-	-	12	4	-	-
7.	33-35	11	1	-	-	6	8	-	-
8.	35-37	4	-	-	-	6	3	-	-
9.	38-40	6	-	-	-	5	-	-	-
10.	40+	4	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
	Total	100	100			100	100		

Whereas, if we look at the desired age from the advertisers side only 4% from 'The Tribune' and 3% from 'Ajit' have given. In this desired particulars i.e. bride wanted above 25 years of age and between 25 to 27 years have been given by the Age group 38-40 years and 40+. Whereas, the demand of a girl of age group of 21 to 23 has come from the side of the parents for their only son.

III. EDUCATION

Education is considered an important variable only for widening mental horizon of the individual but also it helps him to make use of rational and scientific approach to different problems. Education is the consciously controlled process whereby changes in behaviour are produced in the person and through the person within the group. 'It is the means through which it brings the change in the behaviour of man. Its main function is the transmission of the cultural heritage. But this is not its sole and primary purpose, it is also the enrichment of experience as a basic for the development of new social patterns adopted to modify the changing cultural patterns whereby they need. Besides this, education also provides situations, at all age levels but within the maturity and ability of the individual to stimulate a creativeness of mind which can explore new horizons and bring the vision of the future into a living reality.' (Brown 1961).

Table III gives the classification of the academic qualification of the advertiser. 'There were few advertisements in which the advertiser had not given his or her qualification and nor desired. Only those advertisements were selected in which at least 'personal' qualification has been clearly mentioned whereas in the case of desired it has been written 'well qualified, educated match'. Maximum advertisers are post-graduates in the field of medicine, management etc. few along with their academic qualification has also given convent educated and in 'desired', fluently English speaking. There are many advertisements of those who wish to settle abroad in those cases maximum have demanded professionally qualified spouse. Other than the mentioned qualification includes L.L.B., B.Tech, P.G.D.C.A., C.A., B.A.M.S.

Sr. No.	Academic Qualification	The Tribune				Ajit			
		Personal		Desired		Personal		Desired	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1.	10+2	4	-	-	-	3	-	-	-
2.	Graduate	10	8	-	-	8	12	-	-
3.	Post Graduate	30	32	-	8	24	36	18	-
4.	M.B.B.S.	12	16	18	8	24	29	20	9
5.	Other Medicos	16	4	12	12	21	5	-	-
6.	Engineering	24	4	24	-	16	-	4	-
7.	Ph.D.	4	J	-	-	-	-	-	-
8.	Others (educated but not specified)	-	23	26	12	4	18	-	-
	Total	100	100			100	100		

IV. OCCUPATION

'Most of man's activity is spent towards earning livelihood and other activities. Besides a source of income occupation of man is a good clue to various aspects of his personality. Man's status in society and style of life depends upon his occupation.' (Maclver and Page 1962).

'Occupational conditions cannot be isolated from economic conditions. If occupation is the source of income, income is the outcome of an occupation. The economic position determines the purchasing power of man as well as his style of life and thinking.' (Victor, 1964).

Money plays a main role in modern society. In the maximum advertisements for the bridegrooms wanted it is written well settled boy from a status family. If the person is on government job especially in teaching the desirability from the other hand is also same. Whereas in the case of businessman, doctors, engineers, desirability is of a beautiful, well cultured, homely, adjustable, bride. Profession and occupation greatly influence the matrimonial alliances in every country. Settled occupation provides a confidence to youthful talents. Commonly a male is supposed to be an earning member whereas a female is dependent counterpart. The table IV shows that the occupation/profession of 100% males is clear whereas only 25% females of 'The Tribune' advertisements and 18.5% of Ajit are professionals. In this case desired proportion of the male counterpart is clearly indicated. The table IV shows the desirability for business more as it provides maximum salary profits when compared with government jobs. Only 33% of advertisers have mentioned regarding income like Rs. Eight lac per annum, income in five figures. The socio-metric picture of the society reveals to us two aspects. The one section would prefer to enter into alliance with a young prospective male. These people have ideas of constancy and stability of a profession. On the other hand there are some people who would like to choose the prospective male mates who are settled in private firms and business.

Sr. No.	Profession/ Occupation	The Tribune				A it			
		Personal		Desired		Personal		Desired	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
1.	Government	16	18	20	75	14	8	21	11
2.	Engineers	24	4	24	-	16	-	4	-
3.	Doctors	12	16	18	8	24	29	18	9
4.	Businessmen	24	-	12	-	31	-	23	9
5.	Bank Employee	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6.	Defence	4	-	4	-	6	-	4	-
7.	Other Officials/ Teachers	18	12	4	-	8	-	-	-
8.	Employed not specified	-	-	8	-	1	-	-	14
	Total	100		100		100			

Matrimonial alliances based of such links are **less** secure but more prosperous in nature. This however indicates the nature of social attitudes governing the guardians of the mates.

V. TRADITIONAL ORIENTATION

The average person in India is directly conditioned by the diverse religious components like the star and the horoscope. The theory of pre-destination and future life are dominant concepts in India. It is stated that the fate of each individual is governed by a star of heavens. Most of the marriages are based upon the particulars of star and horoscope. It is generally believed with respect to matrimonial links that if there is a disagreement between the two stars they are bound to be cancelled in spite of many other favorable factors. A manglik girl/boy is supposed to be married to manglik boy/girl. There have been 22% of the male and 21% of the female advertisers who have demanded 'Kundli' especially of Hindu religion and given there own time and date of birth in the advertisements.

VI. COMPLEXION AND OTHER APPEALING ATTRIBUTES

Complexion is commonly ascribed to the colour attributes of a person. Sometimes it serves as a colour bar or a complex with the people. Complexion is observed more with respect to females than males. Impression is an inward feeling. Impressions are analysed in sociology into likes and dislikes. Impression is a general overall behaviour which sometimes lasts longer. Other appealing attributes includes varied behaviours, tastes and talents in general. The expression used by advertisers for bride were attractive, beautiful, smart, good looking and general qualities like, cultured, decent, soft spoken, etc. whereas for grooms handsome, sophisticated, dynamic were used. About 25 percent had conditioned that groom should be teetotaler, vegetarian.

NO BARS

'No-bars' implies the absence of any barriers or restrictions by way of caste, sub-sect and language. In the scale of matrimonial alliances under 'no bars'. We come across advertisers who care more for education and status family. In many advertisements 'caste no bar' is given because people are more concerned about the good family and the mate.

The sense of social change is particularly stronger today than ever before. It is needless to mention that the advertising techniques are fast improving from generation to generation. They have become powerful mediums of social change and transformation. There are certain definite numbers among the matrimonial advertisers who are afraid of social norms, inhibitions and taboos. Such advertisers are however reluctant to disclose their true identities and mention only the number of their post-box for correspondence. The concept of marriage and the concept of family are inter-related. The concept of marriage changes with the changing beliefs and norms of the people and society. The study indicates that people living in metropolitan areas find it easy to advertise and get the match settled. The caste restrictions in this particular strata of society are not so rigid. The marriage patterns and the choice of spouses are affected considerably. The social attitudes, norms and institutional behaviours influence the marriage patterns. In our society there is a clear cut understanding about the desirability of boys with respect of matrimonial matches. For instance I.A.S. boy is readily solicited than other services and even business these days. One thing which has been noticed in these advertisements is that in maximum advertisements well qualified and beautiful bride is required by the parents of boy or the boy himself. They have not demanded fair complexioned girl. These are the advertisements given from the girl's side which mention fair, slim girl.

The impact of recent social ideas of community life and social living on the present day matrimonial alliances is more conspicuous particularly in the context of growing liberal education and also in the background of free influences of the popular advertisements. In India the marriageable age ranges from 21 to 35 in males and 18 to 23 in females but from table II it seems that there is rise in marriageable ages in females i.e. 18 to 32. One of the reasons behind this is that now women too are working and due to higher education as shown in table women reach this age. The other factor is that people wish to approach marriage carefully and with an understanding of its implications and who have grown up to the point of being able to fulfill the many kind of responsibilities that come with marriage. The content analysis of marriage alliances shows that the inclination of the spouses and also the desires of their parents are towards the well-settled occupations and professions.

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