



RESEARCH NOTE

Analysing the impact of marriage on women's behavior and self development in Uttar Pradesh, India

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Abstract

Marriage is a relation between man and woman to have legitimate sex and legitimate children but above these goals it is to give mutual support and contribute to mutual success. In India the impact of marriage on women can be more visible than that of men because Indian woman has to leave her parents home and move into her husband's home after marriage. This means a complete change of environment. This study sought to trace some of the main features of the impact of this change among 250 married women of Uttar Pradesh. In particular it sought possible answers to questions such as the right age for the marriage and to evaluate the changes in behavior of the women after marriage. It was found that marriage age after 25 was better for the self development of women, that marriage did develop women to become more responsible, that there was behavioral change of woman after marriage, and that married women perceived a greater satisfaction with life. Nevertheless for further empowerment married women should acquire better skills in decision making, communication and problem solving.

Keywords: age of marriage, behavioural change, change of environment, impact of marriage on women, Indian society, self development

Introduction

Marriage is an institution which admits men and women to family life. It is stable relationship in which man and woman are socially permitted to have children; the right to have children implying the right to sexual relations. Mazumdar (1951) defines marriage as "a socially sanctioned union of male and female or as a secondary institution devised by society to sanction the union and mating of male and female, for purpose of (a) establishing a household, (b) entering into sex relations, (c) procreating and, (d) providing care for the offspring."

According to Hunt (1940) "Marriage is the approved social patterns whereby two or more persons establish a family." As per Lowie (1956) marriage denotes those unequivocally sanctioned unions which persist beyond sensuous satisfaction and thus come to undermine family life. Marriage is a relation between man and woman to have legitimate sex and also to have legitimate children but above these factors it is a strong bonding to take care, to give support and to contribute in the success of each other. It is true that marriage has its impact on both the parties whether the man or the woman.

In India the impact of marriage on women can be noticed better in comparison to man because Indian woman has to leave her parents home and to go to her husband's home after marriage. This means the complete change in all the aspects.

In the ancient society marriages are compulsory and are considered one of the most important social events which every one should have to make. With the passage of time there are various changes in the social structure of modern society, same with the marriage. It is always a matter of debate among the different class of people that what should be the right age of marriage? Some say an early marriage gives a girl time to settle according to environment while other say that the right age of marriage for girl is after 25, when they are grown enough to take there decisions and make judgment. The second question which comes into light is the changing pattern observed in the woman behavior, before and after the marriage. It has been witnessed that there are cases of stress and suicides. In some cases women leave their husband's house while in some cases they file for divorce. The problem lies somewhere in perception and behavior of women and all those who surrounds and suggests her. Some thinkers in India believe that if the marriage is done at an early age many of these problems can be easily resolved. The present paper is an attempt to know the right age of woman for marriage so that she can adjust herself in new family conditions.

The prime objective of this study is to evaluate the behaviour of Indian woman on the basis of their marriage. In this an attempt is made to find out the right age for the marriage, analyze and evaluate the factors like level of participation and satisfaction which they get by family, responsibility carried by them, approach towards work, sharing of knowledge and also the change in behavior after marriage.

Materials and methods

Methods

Primary data were gathered from a field survey involving the administration of questionnaires and 251 married women in Uttar Pradesh who were married before 1990. The random sampling technique was employed. For data analysis, the statistical Chi square test was used.

The hypotheses of the study were fourfold:

- H₁ :- Marriage age after 25 is better for development of woman
- H₂ :- Marriages make woman more responsible and developed.
- H₃ :- There is change in the behaviour of woman after marriage
- H₄ :- Married woman are more satisfied about life

Study area

The area of the study spanned the boundaries of state of Uttar Pradesh, India (Figure 1). Uttar Pradesh is bordered by Rajasthan to the west, Haryana and Delhi to the northwest, Uttarakhand and the country of Nepal to the north, Bihar to the east, Jharkhand to the southeast, and Madhya Pradesh to the southwest. Its total area is 93,933 square miles (243,290 km²) equal to 6.88% of the total area of India, and is the fifth largest Indian state by area. There are 70 districts in this state.

With over 200 million inhabitants as of 2011, it is the largest Indian state by population with Hindi being the official and most widely spoken language. Uttar Pradesh is the second largest Indian state by economy, with a GDP of US\$18.73 million). Agriculture forms a significant part of the state's economy. Though long known for sugar production, the economy is now dominated by the services industry. The state's economic progress is exemplified by its advancement in telecommunication systems.

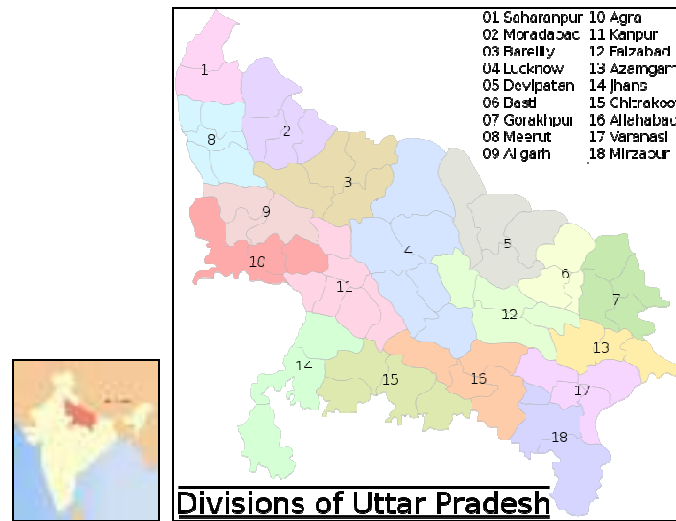


Figure 1. The study area

Uttar Pradesh has a combination of a large population and a high population growth rate. For instance, for the decade 1991-2001 its population increased by over 25.8%. In 2011 Uttar Pradesh was also the most populous state in India, with a population of 199,581,477 million. With a ratio of 689 people per km², Uttar Pradesh’s population density is much higher than that of many other states in the country. However, its sex ratio of 898 women to 1000 men 2011 for the year 2011 was lower than the national figure of 933 (Indian Population Census 2011).

About 80% of Uttar Pradesh population in 2011 is Hindu, while Muslims make up around 18.5% of the population. The remainder consist of Sikhs, Buddhists, Christians, and Jains. Most people in Uttar Pradesh speak a dialect of Hindustani, which in written form is referred to as Urdu and Hindi. In addition to Hindustani, a large number of other dialects exist.

Results

All four hypotheses had been tested on the basis of chi-square test.

$$X^2 = \sum \left[\frac{(O - E)^2}{E} \right]$$

Hypothesis One:

- H₀ :- Marriage before 25 is better for development of woman
- H₁ :- Marriage age after 25 is better for development of woman

The critical value of $X^2 = 3.841$ at $\alpha = 0.05$ and Degree of Freedom = 1. Since calculated value of $X^2 = 1274.693$ which is more than the critical value hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, thus concluding that marriage age after 25 is better for development of woman (Table 1).

Table 1. Marriage age

MARRIAGE AGE	Less than 21	Between 21-25	Between 26-30	Between 30-35	Above 35
Number of respondents	51	62	78	40	20

Hypothesis Two:

- H₀ :- Marriage makes woman irresponsible and stagnant.
 H₂ :- H₂ :- Marriages make woman more responsible and developed.

The critical value of $\chi^2 = 9.488$ at $\alpha = 0.05$ and Degree of Freedom = 4. Since calculated value of $\chi^2 = 93.965$ which is more than the critical value; hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, thus concluding that marriage makes woman responsible and developed (Table 2).

Table 2. Changes in women’s behaviour

	CHANGES IN WOMEN’S BEHAVIOUR (%)	
	BEFORE MARRIAGE	AFTER MARRIAGE
Taking responsibility	69	31
Fear of being punished	43	57
Safe approach towards work	29	71
Helping others	36	64
Sense of certainty for result	63	37

Hypothesis Three:

- H₀ :- There is no change in behavior of woman after marriage.
 H₃ :- There is a change in behavior of woman after marriage

The critical value of $\chi^2 = 7.815$ at $\alpha = 0.05$ and Degree of Freedom = 3. Since calculated value of $\chi^2 = 94.552$ which is more than the critical value hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, thus concluding that there is a change in behavior of woman after marriage (Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3. Trust of woman before marriage

TRUST OF WOMAN BEFORE MARRIAGE (%)	
Mother	90
Father	3
Brother	2
Sister	4
Other	1

Hypothesis Four:

- H₀ :- There is no change in the level of satisfaction due to marriage.
 H₄ :- Married woman are more satisfied in life

Table 4. Trust of woman after marriage

TRUST OF WOMAN AFTER MARRIAGE (%)	
Husband	51
Mother	32
Mother in law	14
Sister in law	2
Others	1

The critical value of $\chi^2 = 9.488$ at $\alpha = 0.05$ and Degree of Freedom = 4. Since calculated value of $\chi^2 = 108.005$ which is more than the critical value hence, the null hypothesis is rejected, thus concluding that married women are more satisfied in life (Table 5).

Table 5. Respondents' level of satisfaction with life

RESPONDENTS' LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH LIFE					
MARRIAGE AGE	Less than 21	Between 21-25	Between 26-30	Between 30-35	Above 35
Before marriage	27	39	36	27	7
After marriage	24	23	42	13	13

Table 6. Respondents' admitting facing problems after marriage

RESPONDENTS' ADMITTING FACING PROBLEMS AFTER MARRIAGE (%)					
MARRIAGE AGE	Less than 21	Between 21-25	Between 26-30	Between 30-35	Above 35
Before marriage	81	87	79	72	58
After marriage	19	13	21	28	42

Table 7. Respondents' confidence that they can solve problem arising from marriage

RESPONDENTS' FEELING THAT THEY CAN SOLVE PROBLEM ARISING FROM MARRIAGE (%)					
MARRIAGE AGE	Less than 21	Between 21-25	Between 26-30	Between 30-35	Above 35
Before marriage	92	89	80	74	70
After marriage	8	11	20	26	30

Discussion

Given that marriages in India are treated more as a social event than a private matter of an individual the study had revealed that there are behavioural changes in women after marriage. There are several reasons for these behavioral changes. The most distinct and important one is change in the environment whereby after marriage Indian woman had to leave her house and settle to a completely new environment where she had to make adjustments with the new set of family members. Every individual had a different pattern of behavior therefore in the new environment woman had to make adjustments. The following summary may be drawn from the study pertaining to the impact and implications of the change of the women's environment after marriage:

1. Approximately 69% of respondents claimed that they take responsibility before marriage while 31% admitted to taking responsibility after marriage (Table 2).
2. Approximately 43% of women claimed that they suffered punishment before marriage when they performed tasks as compared to 57% who claimed experiencing punishment after marriage (Table 2).
3. Approximately 29% of women were of the view that they adopted safe approach towards work before marriage while 71% did that after marriage (Table 2).
4. Approximately 36% and 54% of woman before and after marriage respectively stated that they managed to help others (Table 2).
5. Approximately 63% and 37% of women before and after marriage respectively professed that they were confident of the certainty about the results of decision and actions they had taken (Table 2).

6. Approximately 90% women trusted their mother before marriage while after marriage only 32% of woman still put their faith in their mothers as compared to 51% in their husbands (Table 3 and 4).
7. The level of satisfaction rose when marriage was contracted between 26-30 years of age while this decreased in the case of marriage above 30 years of age (Table 5).
8. Approximately 42% of women faced problems after marriage in age group 35 and above while 13% woman faced problems when marriage took place after 21-25 (Table 6).
9. Approximately 30% of women aged above 35 perceived that they could solve problems after marriage as compared to only 8% of those of the age group before 25 (Table 7).

Conclusion

Marriage has changed the living environment and thus the behavioral patterns of Indian women. This means it is imperative that they sharpen their adaptive capabilities such as by developing new skills to help them cope and manage their new life challenges. Education should play an important role in the development of Indian women and they should try to do courses that can make them more and skillful and savvy in decision making. Communication would also play a major pole in solving the women's problems. They could learn effective communication so they could communicate their problems to the right persons or parties rather spilling the beans at random and indiscriminately. Exposures to new ways of problem management and problem solving would go a long way to alleviate the women's conditions.

It may also be concluded from the study that marriage of women should be made according to the educational level of the woman rather than the economic level of the family. It was observed that women who were married into the family who have the same educational level were happier. Marriage should be considered more of uniting rather than breaking the society. There should be mutual respects between the families. The field evidence showed that married couples who lived in extended family were happier and suffered less stress compared to those who lived in nuclear family.

References

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