

**Changing Marriage Patterns and its impact on life style of people in
Kashmir: A case study of rural Kulgam**

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Abstract

Marriage is an institution which admits men and women to family life. It is a stable relationship in which a man and a woman are socially permitted to have children implying the right to sexual relations. The relationship is defined and sanctioned by custom and law and includes not only guidelines for behaviour relating to sex but also things for example the particular way labour is to be divided and other duties and privileges. Children born of marriage are considered the legitimate offspring of the married couple and this legitimacy is important in matter of succession and inheritance. Thus marriage is not only a means of sexual gratification but also a set of cultural mechanisms to ensure continuation of the family. Among Hindu's marriage is considered as a socio-religious duty and has mainly three aims that are dharma (duty), praja (progeny) and rati (pleasure). And among Muslims marriage is considered as an obligation which must be fulfilled by every Muslim. But this institution underwent various changes as a result of factors like cultural, which includes growth of democratic ideals and decline of religious orthodoxy. As marriage of man and woman was arranged in societies through go-between or match maker that exists between two families but this too has changed nowadays as it is based on consent of both and sometimes people make use of

social networking sites in getting married. Majority of marriages are arranged by parents or elders on behalf of and/ or with the consent of the boy and girl involved in marriage. But nowadays mate selection is not done by parents this have given rise to love marriages as compared to arranged marriages. Many of the marriage customs and rituals of the Muslims are similar to those of Hindus. Thus customs like smearing of turmeric (Haldi) and ring ceremony are found among Muslims too which were not earlier performed in Muslim marriages. This study undertaken in village Shurat of district Kulgam is primarily based on primary data and secondary data can be used also whenever and wherever necessary. The main objectives are to assess change in terms of mate selection i.e. are people performing arranged marriages more than love marriages, rites of marriage i.e. are people making use of the above rituals and customs in marriages and use of go-between in marriages in village Shurat among the Muslims.

Keywords: *Institution, Consent, Networking, Orthodox, Permitted*

Introduction

Marriage is a universal phenomenon in Indian society referred to as the legal union of persons of opposite sexes constituted by acts, process and ceremony and the legality of this union may be established by civil, religious or other means recognized by the laws. It provides suitable atmosphere for socialization by maintaining cultural continuity and biological continuity of the society through procreation (Van de Walle, 1972). Marriage is amongst the most significant cultural, biological and social aspect of human life that can affect the family and reproductive changes and is affected by changes in communities. Family formation and marriage process changes due to socio-economic conditions (Abbasi-shavazi, et al, 2009). In the past, due to strengthening ethnical solidarity and under the

influence of kinship networks, the process of marriage was arranged by more significant others including parents who used to choose spouses for their children based mainly on the interests and considerations of the family. However, it seems that pattern of marriage has changed from a traditional one, planned and selected by parents, to modern one where autonomy and role of individual in marriage has increased (Choe et al, 2005). There have been noticeable changes in the patterns of marriages throughout the world. It is very important in shaping the growth rate of a population through its connection to marital fertility (Van de Walle, 1972). Less developed countries are also experiencing slowdown in population growth rate exhibit changes in marriage patterns (Das et al, 1998).

Characteristics of Marriage

- i. Universality: marriage is a universal institution as found in all societies.
- ii. Relationship between man and woman: it indicates relationship between one or more men to one or more women.
- iii. Marriage bond is enduring: it indicates a long lasting bond between husband and wife. It rejects relationships with prostitutes or any other sexual relationship which is viewed as casual and not sanctioned by custom or law.
- iv. Marriage requires social approval: a union of man and woman becomes a marital bond only when the society gives its approval.
- v. Marriage is associated with some civil and religious ceremony: marriage gets its social recognition through some ceremony. This ceremony may have its own rites, customs, rituals formalities etc.

vi. Marriage creates mutual obligations: it imposes certain rights and duties on both the husband and wife. Both are required to support each other and their children¹

Basic steps involved in marriage in Kashmir

According to Islam, marriage is simple and easy affair and it depends on the consent of both male and female partners who are getting married. Two essential elements of Muslim marriage are the acceptance (Qubul) and the consideration (Mahr). In Kashmir marriage of a Muslim couple has to pass through three stages. In first stage, visit by parents or sisters along with go-between called “Manzum your” is performed to the family of opposite partners in Kashmir. This visit determines the suitability of match between bride and bridegroom, social status, economic and family background. After this visit if both parents and close relatives get satisfied then consent is taken from both boy and girl and their marriage is settled. Gifts are exchanged which consists of some ornaments or cash or both and sweets. The second stage is formalising the marriage by a valid ceremony or betrothal called “Nishani” in Kashmir. At this stage Nikah Nama makes marriage contract, which is written document on consideration of a specified amount of money to be paid preferably before the consummation of marriage. The marriage deed of the couple is signed by the Vakils or Sureties. The Molvi or Qazi reads Khutba or sermon before the audience on this occasion. During the sermon Molvi talks about obligation and responsibilities of the couple and importance on the sanctity of marriage under Muslim Personal Law. At this stage ornaments, garments and other gifts are presented also. Tea party or lunch is given to guests. After the Nikah Nama is settled marriage becomes binding on the both sides. So date of marriage is fixed between two families through a written document called

¹ The content has been taken from <https://oscareducation.blogspot.com/2013/06/meaning-and-characteristics-of-marriage.html>

“Saat Nama”. The final stage is taking bride to bridegrooms home where she starts her new phase of life with her husband. This ceremony is celebrated with grand feasts where neighbours, relatives and friends are invited. The bridegroom along with his friends seated in well decorated car marches towards his in laws house and women folk sings song called “Wanwun”. These guests along with bridegroom are entertained with a grand feast and return back with bride after given warm welcome by the parents and relatives of bride. The departure of bride from his parents is a touching scene and is reflected in melodious and deep Wanwun of women folk. In consummation of marriage, Mahar is the consideration and according to Islam Mahar should be decided with respect to economic conditions of the bridegroom. But in Kashmir, it is governed by customs depending on the social position, family background and castes of the bride and bridegroom. The bride is received with enthusiasm, zeal and joy at in laws house. She is taken into a well decorated room where her veil is lifted by her mother in law and gives gifts. It is called as “Moher Tulewin” in Kashmir. The bride also presents ornaments or cash to her mother in law called as “Hash Kant”. At bridegrooms home bride remains for five days or seven days after that both are invited by bride’s parents to a feast known as “Fir-Saal” (Census of India, 2011). But nowadays there exists lot of changes in patterns of marriage and village Shurat is of no exception.

Objective of the study

To study changing marriage patterns in village Shurat.

Methodology

Observation and schedule were used as techniques of data collection for studying changes in marriage patterns in the village. For this study a sample of 50 male and 50 female respondents of three age groups; 20-25, 25-35 and 30-35 through

purposive sampling have been selected. Respondents were asked some questions related to patterns of marriage and responses were written by researcher. Then percentage analysis was used to study the changes and quantitative data was presented in the form of tables to display findings as of the following order:

Table1: Change in Mate Selection

Age Group	Male Respondents					Female Respondents				
	Arranged Marriage	%	Love Marriage	%	Total	Arranged Marriage	%	Love Marriage	%	Total
20-25 years	15	30	35	70	50	20	40	30	60	50
25-30 years	10	20	40	80	50	17	34	33	66	50
30-35 years	20	40	30	60	50	22	44	28	56	50

SOURCE: Field Work, 2018.

Table 1 shows change in mate selection male and female respondents in village Shurat of district Kulgam. Data in table reflects that in all age groups percentage of love marriage is high as compared to arranged marriage which clearly explains that marriage is decided by individuals than the parents who in traditional society played key role in arranging marriages of their children.

2. Change in Rituals like Haldi and Ring Ceremony

Table 2.1: Change in Haldi

Age Group	Haldi in Male Respondents					Haldi in Female Respondents				
	Yes	%	No	%	Total	Yes	%	No	%	Total
20-25 years	2	4	48	96	50	17	34	33	66	50
25-30 years	12	24	38	76	50	25	50	25	50	50
30-35 years	0	0	50	100	50	33	66	17	34	50

SOURCE: Field Work, 2018.

Table 2.1 shows change in ritual like Haldi ceremony in village Shurat among male and female respondents. This ceremony used to be part of Hindu marriage and was not performed earlier in Muslim marriages. Through data it reveals the fact that Haldi ceremony is performed in marriages of Kashmir more among females than males.

Table 2.2: Change in Ring Ceremony

Age Group	Ring Ceremony in Male Respondents					Ring Ceremony in Female Respondents				
	Yes	%	No	%	Total	Yes	%	No	%	Total
20-25 years	42	84	8	16	50	40	80	10	20	50
25-30 years	45	90	5	10	50	43	86	7	14	50
30-35 years	40	80	10	20	50	40	80	10	20	50

SOURCE: Field Work, 2018.

Table 2.2 shows change in ring ceremony in village. Data in table shows that more respondents from both males and female are in favour of ring ceremony which was not earlier part of marriage.

3. Change in Dress pattern in marriage

Table 3.1: Change in Dress

Age Group	Suit wore by Male Respondents					Pant Coat by Male Respondents				
	Yes	%	No	%	Total	Yes	%	No	%	Total
20-25 years	2	4	48	96	50	50	100	0	0	50
25-30 years	5	10	45	90	50	49	98	1	2	50
30-35 years	7	14	43	86	50	45	90	5	10	50

SOURCE: Field Work, 2018

Table 3.1 shows dress worn by male respondents during the marriage ceremonies in village. Data in table clearly explain the change that pant coat is more used as compared to simple suits.

Table 3.2: Change in Dress

Age Group	Simple Suit wore by Female Respondents					Lehangas wore by Female Respondents				
	Yes	%	No	%	Total	Yes	%	No	%	Total
20-25 years	7	14	43	86	50	45	90	5	10	50
25-30 years	5	10	45	90	50	47	94	3	6	50
30-35 years	10	20	40	80	50	50	100	0	0	50

SOURCE: Field Work, 2018

Table 3.2 shows dress worn by females in their marriages in village. Through data it clearly reflects the change that Lehangas are more used in marriage functions than simple suits.

Table4: Change in Go-between existing in Marriages

Age Group	Go-between existing in Marriages Male Respondents					Go-between existing in Marriages Female Respondents				
	Yes	%	No	%	Total	Yes	%	No	%	Total
20-25 years	9	18	41	82	50	8	16	42	84	50
25-30 years	11	22	39	78	50	13	26	37	74	50
30-35 years	18	36	32	64	50	6	12	44	88	50

SOURCE: Field Work, 2018

Table 4 shows existence of go-between in marriages among both female and male respondents. Data in table clearly reveals the fact that in present marriages middlemen does not interfere in settlement of marriage relationship between boy and girl in village.

Conclusion

Marriage as a universal institution is present in all societies and Kashmiri society is of no exception. But in present society there underwent lot of changes in patterns of marriage in Indian society and same is found in village Shurat. Main factors responsible for these changing patterns are modernization, industrialization, impact of the west and education. These changes were not performed in earlier marriages but now these are becoming important part of Muslim marriages.

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