

**MARRIAGE AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION:
A PSYCHO-CULTURAL STUDY ON
WOMEN**

Thesis
Submitted for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN PSYCHOLOGY

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**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF CALICUT**

2019

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that no corrections were pointed out by the examiners in the thesis titled "MARRIAGE AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION : A PSYCHO-CULTURAL STUDY ON WOMEN" submitted by Smt. RAMSHIDA. A.P., Ph.D Scholar.

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DECLARATION

I, Ramshida, A. P., do hereby declare that this, "MARRIAGE AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION: A PSYCHO-CULTURAL STUDY ON WOMEN" is a bonafide record of the research work done by me under the guidance of Dr. T. Sasidharan, Associate Professor in Psychology (Rtd.), Department of Psychology, University of Calicut. I further declare that this dissertation has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship, or other similar title of recognition.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Each one of us is the sum total of every moment that we've ever experienced, with all the people we've ever known and it's these moments that become our history. I would like to personally thank each who have been instrumental in building me, taking few names in particular. First and foremost, my supervising teaching Dr.T.Sasidharan who have invested his time and resources showing me another perspective on how to look at life. Words cannot quite equal the experience behind the interactions we had all throughout these years and are the most valuable moments in my life. I consider myself privileged to have been associated with you, Thank you Sir.

I am especially grateful to my friend Ms.Lijiya Manju, K.C., who shared her views all these years critically to make sure I bring out the best out of me, without whose support the entire journey of research would have been different. Participants of the research requires special mention because without their generosity the study would never turn out to be what it is today.

I extend my special thanks to Prof. (Dr.) Baby Shari, Head of the Department of Psychology, University of Calicut for always finding time to shoot thought provoking questions inorder to ensure the quality of work. Thank You, for your smile and deep support during tough times. Prof. (Dr.) K. Manikandan, Dr.Rajani Ramachandran and Prof. (Dr.) C. Jayan have constantly encouraged and provided unstinted support throughout the research period. I am grateful to all teachers who have taught me especially Ms. Jalaja Menon who have been a great support with her timely assistance. Special thanks to Dr. Vijaykumar, Chairperson CSOL, TISS, Mumbai who kept reminding that it is important to be done.

I have met a couple of people during research who have contributed greatly in making choices in my readings: Dr. Sarala Kapoor (Indian Psychoanalytical Society, Kolkata),Dr. A.F.Mathew (Indian Institute of Management, Calicut), Dr.J. Devika and Dr. S. Irudaya Rajan (Professors, Centre for Development Studies,

Trivandrum), Prof. (Dr.) K.N. Ganesh (Department of History, University of Calicut), Dr.K.M. Anil (Department of Malayalam, University of Calicut), Dr. Mini Sukumaran (Department of Women studies) are few among them.

I owe special thanks to Mrs. Dhanalakshmi (typist), Mrs. Ramjoola (Former section officer), Jose (Section officer), Mr.Gokul Raj (Librarian), Mr.Purushothaman (Lab technician) and Mr.Aneesh (Office attendant) for their assistance and always instilling within me that we are a family. I have been lucky to avail library services at different institutions and I am immensely thankful to staffs at CHMK library, department librarians of Sanskrit, Malayalam, History and Women studies at the University of Calicut. Further librarians at Indian Psychoanalytic Society(Kolkata), National library of India(Kolkata), Kerala State Central library (Trivandrum), Dorabji Tata Memorial Library (TISS, Mumbai), K.N.Raj library (Centre for Development Studies), Kerala University Department of Psychology were very kind and provided with all the support during collection of materials.

My conversation with various people during this period has refined my thought and these people hold special position in personal life. Ms.Kavita have been a great support during the writing phase ensuring my space and comfort. Ms.Hafisa who believed in me and offered help at any hour. Faseen, Aparna S. Menon, Ashwathy, Deepa, Shaniba, Lijith Babu, Lajith have constantly reminded to see my work completed. My fellow research scholars and friends at department Abinitha, Divya, Eldose, Vishnu, Sarath, Mary Antony, and Ashalatha. I cherish the discussions and time I have spent with Sumayya, Saliha, Muneer Ali, Mansoor, Nasar and Anaz. A special love to all my juniors especially Shangili, Arathy Sharma, Suhara, Aparna, Greeshma and Gargi. I extend my thanks to research scholars at other departments of Calicut University especially Megha, Dhanya, Vijisha and Divya. I also extend my love and gratitude to two other families of mine, thanks achoye and amma.

Thanks to my parents, Waheeda and Mammed Koya, out of whose beautiful marriage I was born into life, who have always been incredibly supportive and proud of the choices I have made. They have instilled the achievement and

persistence necessary for me to complete this research. They have let me be myself, I am proud to credit my mother for being the most special one, compromising her comforts so that I pursue my dreams. My cousins, aunts, uncles grandparents and co-sisters have been understanding and caring during my ups and downs and made sure to keep me going. Ponumma, wafa, paappa and family deserves special mention as they have incredibly supported me during my absence at home.

I owe my daughter Aiza who patiently waited for the completion of thesis, she has been a great source of inspiration to complete research. I owe special gratitude to my life partner and my best friend, Mr. Niyas who made sure to put me at ease, in order to concentrate on what I am doing. Thank You for being there sharing my responsibilities and for all the little night outs to ensure my happiness.

Ramshida A.P.

*Dedicated to
Sasi Sir*

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GLOSSARY

Anganwadi	:	A type of childcare centre in India
Bride seeing	:	An occasion where officially groom/grooms' family meet bride/brides' family to see the bride
Chanthapennu	:	A name offered by men to women who work outside home
Ezhava, Brahmin, Thiyya, Namboodiri, Nair.	:	Different castes in Kerala
Japthi	:	Sieze
Jyothsyan	:	Astrologist
Kanyadanam	:	Marriage
Kulathozhil	:	A labour which is traditionally taken up by a clan
Malayalees	:	People who speak Malayalam
Mandapam	:	Specially arranged place where marriage occur according to Hindu culture
Mappilapaattu	:	Mappila songs
Marriage squeeze	:	Demographic imbalance in which the number of potential brides does not equal the number of potential grooms so that some will be squeezed out of marriage market
Marumakkathayam	:	Matriliny
Masjid	:	Mosque
Mehr	:	An amount or gift to be given to the bride by bridegroom as per the Islamic law
Murai-mapillai	:	A maternal uncle who hold right to marry his niece in Tamil tradition
Muthalaaq	:	Islamic form of divorce
Muthuvar	:	Ethnic tribal group of Kerala.
Mysore kalyanam	:	A practice in which muslim men from mysore marry women from the Malabar region only to dumb them once the dowry money is spent.
Nattukaranavar	:	Member of locality who has experience and is influential in decision making of that locality

Paniya	:	Ethnic group of India primarily inhabitant of Wayanad, Kozhikode, Kannur and Malappuram districts in Kerala.
Parkankshanikal	:	Special invitation to daughter-in-laws to stay with husband's family
Promiscuity	:	State of having a lot of different sexual partners or sexual relationships
Pudavakoda	:	A symbolic piece of cloth given to the bride on the occasion of marriage
Puthiyappilas	:	Husbands
Ramzan	:	Ninth month of Islamic calendar, the month of fasting
Sabarimala	:	A pilgrimage centre in Kerala
Sambandham	:	“Unregulated” polyandry; a relationship between certain upper caste men with women of lower caste at times married women, child born out of such relations do not possess right over biological father nor his heir.
Sunni, Mujahid, Jamat	:	A religious sect among Kerala Muslims
Thali	:	A symbolic thread tied around the brides neck
Tharavadu	:	Ancestral house
Vydikan	:	Priest

Chapter **1**

INTRODUCTION

“Marriages are made in heaven”, is an adage widely used with a content of belief in it. Nevertheless we see immense relevance attached over a period, parents and family as a whole gets alarmed over marriageable age, Sundays gain undue importance and they scuttle to approach available means such as marriage bureaus and matchmakers which reason why these professional agencies spring up like mushroom. Misalliances and divorce rates attain gossip value from neighbourhood to considerable spaces at newspapers as well.

We see a vast range of people around us- from those who choose partners for themselves, those who desire to get married, who find it hard to reach at ideal match, those who hide themselves for fear of getting married, those who find complete happiness in their marital life to those who find trapped in a relationship, who attempts to relieve themselves from agony and those who shows indifference leaving everything to fate- the cases multiply. Right and left are not only vital in life but these are also turning points, the current scenario of an institution, acclaimed position as a major life event. From where does the rules governing the laws of institutions gets framed? Even when marriage acquires universal institutional position how does a particular time and space determines variations in it? Why does it become so complicated for one to find an appropriate match? Anybody will be forced to ponder over these questions if one happens to hear the details of premarital enquiries and their major criteria for selection or when one happens to go to the Family court trail. A human psyche is a totality of time, history, language, culture and experiences. So the questions which came up would only be answered by addressing these domains.

Investigators in order to know how “marriage” and related words evolved across years went out in search of meaning of words such as

marriage, husband, and wife. Each word have a journey of its own across which it attains different meanings. Here is an attempt to understand its journey and synonyms used for these words. The word “marriage” means action of marrying, entry into wedlock; state or condition of being husband and wife which has in turn originated from old French word *mariage*, which indicates all the meanings of word “marriage” in addition to dowry. *Mariage* found its origin from vulgar Latin word *maritaticum* which in effect have developed from *maritatus* and *maritatre* which means to wed, marry and has its origin from *Latin* word *maritus* which means married men, husband (“marriage”,n.d)

The word marriage means *Kalyanam* in Sanskrit. *Kalyanam* acquires meanings such as *Vivaham* and *parinayam*. Amarakosa states that *vivaham* is a sacred liability which cannot be undone at any time while *parinayam* means *parinayanam* with connotation ‘bringing in’ (Moosad, 1914). Sanskrit English dictionary gives meaning such as blessed, illustrious and propitious. The word husband means lord, master, superior, leader, commander, chief, bearer, protector and supporter (Apte, 2011).The word wife acquires meanings such as lawful wife (Apte, 2011), the one who is mastered by her husband (Moosad,1914), who is to be protected (Namboodirippad, 2006), a woman who have been married to abiding sacrament, the one who is versed in domestic activities (to draw up water from a well for household activities) (Namboodirippad, 2006). To sum up would be to identify that words marriage, husband and wife clearly indicate towards the positioning of men and women into the institution of marriage.

Evolutionary Perspective

To a large extent, humans are designed to live in social groups with other humans and an evolutionary perspective can enhance our understanding of every aspect of personal relationships including love, interdependence,

mate choice, social support, parent–child relationships, and other important family relationships. Each of these relationships has evolved to face different challenges to make sure of survival possibilities in the environment in which they lived (Kenrick, Griskevicius, Neuberg & Schaller, 2010).

Fisher's run away process explains the phenomenon, according to which an evolutionary positive feedback loop gets established between female preferences for certain male traits, and the male traits themselves (Fisher, 1930). Human brain is the most evolved and developed and is applauded for their intelligence, creativity, love for novelty, skills in the form of communication, art, problem solving and so forth (Miller, 1998). While humans were living in groups and if a man approaches a woman during her menses she would reject him but he had an opportunity to approach another. Social life influences women menstrual cycle, if they live in a group after a while they develop a unanimity in the menstrual cycle thereby avoiding men approaching another woman during their menses period. Women choice became powerful and men had to show both physical and mental strength to impress her. Ability in language acquisition and usage, arts, music, literature acted as a means to measure psychological wellbeing (Thomas, 2012). Both the ability to use language in order to communicate and sexual act is labelled with same word "intercourse" which itself is an indicator towards how far they are connected (Thomas, 2011).

Darwin after writing his master work *On the Origin of species*, 1859 became dissatisfied on natural selection theory as he thought it would not alone adequately explain the risk of survival ability in sexually-reproducing species. In sexually reproducing species it is found that heritable traits that helps in competing for sexual mates spreads despite the fact that it is disadvantage for survival. Thus he proposed sexual selection theory during 1871 in *The Descent of man* which subsumed two closely related processes;

intrasexual selection and *intersexual selection*. Intrasexual selection defined as a tendency of members of one sex to compete with one another for access to members of the opposite sex. And intersexual selection, also called epigamic selection was defined as the tendency of members of one sex to preferentially choose as mates certain members of the opposite sex. Darwin called intersexual selection “female choice” because he observed the same pattern throughout animal kingdom (Buss & Barnes,1986; Buss, 1989; Geary, Vigil & Byrd-Craven,2004).Darwin has further stated that at more evolved stages males also exert choice and that sexual selection in human species is limited by cultural practices (Cohen,2010). Evolution therefore is a matter of differential reproduction rather than differential survival (Campbell, 1972).

Each individual has a definite preference for one member over the others, but it is unknown, on what basis we humans make choices regarding what does a man want in a women and what a woman want from a man, a very little is known about the same (Thiessen & Gregg, 1980,Buss, 1985). An individual is a biological output of the chromosomes inherited from his parents, basically half from his mother and another half from his father. So while we ask a question on what a men want from a women and vice versa it’s answer would be to get a better DNA for their offspring inorder to ensure the heritability of their gene throughout generations (Dawkins, 1976). This is why the decision regarding mating ought to be choosy because failures to understand once own mating behaviour is costly, both scientifically and socially. Only those who succeeded to mate successfully in our past became our ancestors. Sexual strategies are evolved adaptive solutions to mating problems (Buss, 2003).

After proposing sexual selection theory during 1871 it did not receive the attention it deserves and was forgotten (Mayr, 1972). Reason behind this neglect was the scepticism against the notion that it was females who choose

to mate and males who exhibit traits to attract females. Virtually all of 20th century psychology, biology, anthropology, palaeontology, primatology, cognitive sciences, social sciences and humanities failed to envision the possibilities put forth by sexual selection in the evolution of human body, mind, behaviour and culture. Psychoanalysis was given the credit on its extensive study on human sexuality. Even though Darwin advocates that males compete harder for mates than females and females choose their mates, across non-human and human species he could not explain why this pattern prevails. It took a century of negligence to this theory and once answered its revitalisation was unbelievable by means of parental investment theory by Trivers (Miller, 1998).

Trivers theory, 1985 proposes that the sex investing more in offspring (typically females) exerts stronger preferences about mating partners, because greater reproductive costs are associated with indiscriminate mating and greater benefits are associated with exerting a choice. These sex differences are found to be universal across cultures (Buss, 1989; Badahdah & Tiemann, 2005). Clutton-Brock cited in Geary, Vigil, & Byrd- Craven (2004) that this pattern is found among 90 percent of mammalian species.

According to Symons (1979) "Men and women differ in their sexual natures because throughout the immensely long hunting and gathering phase of human evolutionary history, the sexual desires and dispositions that were adaptive for either sex were for the others tickets to reproductive oblivion". Eagly and Wood, 1999 and Kenrick, 1994 posits that the evolutionary perspective proposes that men and women have evolved sex-specific cognitive mechanisms from primeval environments that cause them to differ psychologically, thereby predisposing them to behave and make decisions in a sexually differential manner (Shoemaker, 2007). Griskevicius, Haselton, & Ackerman (2001) mention that there is proximate and ultimate explanations

for every behaviour including sexual behaviour. These explanations compliments each other. Proximate explanations are those “closest” to the phenomenon, the immediate triggers for action. Meanwhile ultimate explanation for behaviour explains why those behaviors are favoured, the “ultimate” underlying cause for a particular behaviour (Scott-Phillips, Dickins & West, 2011). For example, for the question why individuals are choosy in mate preferences; the proximate explanation would be for love, sex, pleasure, companionship but the ultimate explanation would be to enhance reproductive success (Mikulincer & Shaver,2007).Two major key implications are that humans and non-humans have acquired ultimate reasons without being consciously aware of the same and second being that the connection between immediate goal and ultimate goal is often indirect and non-obvious (Griskevicius, Haselton,& Ackerman,2001).

The more the female invest in her offspring the more she would be selective in choosing her mate because it is she who has a lot to lose in terms of time, resources and involvement. Meanwhile the little men invest in a mate the more competitive he would be because if he succeeds he gains a lot from mere investment. The only solution for females would be to maximize the investment from male partner beforehand using strategies available (Buss, 2003).

While evolution addressed species as a whole, Freud concentrated on the conscious and unconscious nature of humans. It was Sigmund Freud who emphasizes the importance of once childhood on mate choice. According to Freud for an individual his partner choice is determined by his/her relationship with parents and important others at childhood, which is claimed from statement such as “... the final object or the sexual instinct is never any longer the original object but only a surrogate for it”(Freud,1912/1991).When a couple enters a marital relationship both brings with them their own separate

and private baggage of expectations and misery right from their childhood which has an influence either consciously or unconsciously upon their respective choices

Freud (1914/1991) has stated about two types of marital partner choices (narcissistic type and anaclitic type) based on object choice. In psychoanalysis object choice is the action of selecting a person or a type of person as love object; by object it doesn't mean an inanimate thing but anything through which an instinct seeks to attain an instinctual aim (Colman, 2006). Narcissistic type is when a person's object choice is based on the characteristics of oneself or on a narcissistic ideal of what a person wanted to become. Subtypes are based on what a person was once in the past, what a person is, what a person would like to be and what was once a part of oneself. Anaclitic type of object-choice is when person makes a choice on a love-object to resemble a parental figure, being attracted to people who have the ability to feed, care and protect one. According to him women are inclined to be narcissistic type and men to be anaclitic type (Freud, 1914/1991).

Ego ideal is the inner image of self as how one wants to become. A woman who replaces her original wish for a penis by developing male character traits later on finds those in her love object if these characteristics does not match her femininity. Reich (1953) elaborates the impact of narcissistic injuries in women caused by becoming aware of the difference of the sexes which may lead to a regressive revival of primitive, narcissistic ego ideals. The externalization of such an ego ideal, and its fusion with a love object, represents a form of narcissistic object choice in women.

Beauvior (1949/1997) quotes Freud "The husband is, so to speak, never more than a substitute for the beloved man, not that man himself". Freud in *New Introductory Lectures on psychoanalysis* (1933/1973) states that a girl goes through an essential pre-oedipal phase of attachment towards her

mother and a phase oedipal hostility towards her mother. If she is still deeply attached to her father and her partner choice is based on father model there is strong chance for a happy marriage.

Mittelman (1956) in her chapter *Analysis of reciprocal neurotic patterns in family relationship* mentions about the intrapsychic vicious circle of interpersonal relations that develops among individuals of close intimate relations which are complementary. Five patterns exist; such as one partner would be aggressive and dominant while the other submissive, passive and masochistic; either man or woman play any of these roles and both have an unconscious need for dependence. In another pattern one among the couple would be emotionally detached while the other craves for affection; man would be usually emotionally detached one. When wife becomes demanding it instigates fear in man as a result of which he becomes even more restrained. Third pattern where both the partners would be in rivalry to dominate over the other; both trying to resist each other. Partners are critical on each other often reproaches but feels humiliated and insulted. An unconscious need for love and dependence is characteristic of both. Fourth, one among the couple would be totally helpless and dependent nature while the other is ready to provide support; and the fifth pattern where one partner alternates between periods of dependency and of self-assertion; the other between periods of helpfulness and of unsatisfied need for affection.

Bela Mittelman and Annie Reich has stated about the relevance of unconscious motives on the choices regarding marital partner and the dynamism that enhance its stability. By comparing the marital types mentioned by these authors it is understood that it is a further explanation of the basic types suggested by Freud (Markovic, 2000).

Until now investigators have discussed about the underlying strategies of marriage partner choice across species then a portrayal of individual choice

based on the experiential history of humans, that is his/her childhood is explored. Later investigators concentrated on the relationship between partners. Now to understand better about the sociocultural evolution that has happened in partner choice it is necessary to understand the types/forms of marriages. Different possibilities that existed and still exist in marriages across the world regarding the number of spouses, a person can marry and also based on whom a person can or cannot marry. Marital unions are believed to have undergone several evolutionary stages starting from complete sexual freedom to monogamy. In group marriage more than one man and more than one woman may run a communal household and all the members share the parental responsibility (Briffault & Montagu, 1956/2013). Group marriage is believed to be part of primitive societies meanwhile there are anthropologist who admit group marriage as a very old concept there are few others who do not approve existence of it at any period of time.

Polygamy is the act of marrying multiple spouses at the same time, once widespread practice, has lost its charm considerably and there are countries which have announced its practise as illegal. Two major forms of polygamy are polygyny and polyandry. Polygyny is the term used when a marriage consists of one man and more than one wives. If these co-wives are sisters then it is called sororate polygyny. In comparison to polyandry the incidence of polygyny is high. Polygyny are further seen as an output of basic human biology to mate with numerous partners. Basically polygyny has been supported stating social, economic and health advantages meanwhile feminist clearly see sexist ideas about men and women. Stephanie Coontz has pointed out polygyny to be less about sex than it is about power (Copeland, 2012).

Polyandry is the term used when a women has multiple husbands. Even though at present rare, while compared to polygyny its presence has

been reported in several societies, fifty three societies practising non-classical polyandry has been identified (Starkweather & Hames, 2012). If multiple husbands are related as brothers it is called fraternal polyandry and if not, non fraternal polyandry. In case of fraternal polyandry keeping the ancestral land/property intact without division throughout generation leads to economic benefit (Cassidy & Lee,1989; Stone,1997).

Monogamy is the marriage of a man to a woman. Evolutionary anthropologist viewed it as a recent form of cultural adaptation with lots of economic, social and health advantages to women, men and especially children (Veissiere,2016). Monogamy is further understood as the product of patriarchal society to ensure paternity as well as to pass on their estate.

Apart from group marriage, polygamy and monogamy, there are few possibilities which had its roots strongly in India as well, entitled sorrorate, levirate, filial inheritance and avuncular marriage. Sorrate is a custom in which a husband marries his wives sister after her demise (Murdock, 1949). It is different from sororal polygyny where a man can take his wives sisters' as co-wives while she is alive. Levirate is a custom in which widow marries her brother-in-law. This custom is considered more of a duty wherein a man acquires the responsibility of his deceased brothers heir taking up his status, land and his women (Pans,1992). Filial inheritance, a kind of marriage in which a son or brother of a dead man could succeed to inherit his wife provided it is his co-wife other than biological mother of this son. Avuncular marriage is a marriage between maternal uncle and his niece or between aunt and her nephew and in India especially among Tamil and Telugu speaking people it is common (Levi-strauss, 1949).

There are groups to which marriages are preferred, prohibited, or prescribed. Historically existed later tabooed, is the sexual relations and marriage between close biological relatives such as parent-child and between

siblings and this prohibition exists universally. Meanwhile there are societies which prefer mating to happen between the members of a particular group because they want mates to be from similar background whether it be class, caste, geographical location, educational background. In certain societies these prohibitions and prescriptions are implicit while in others it is explicitly followed (Levi-strauss, 1949). Based on the groups to which a person may or may not marry; exogamy and endogamy.

Exogamy or outmarriage is the custom of marriage to a person outside the group of people to which one belongs. Dumont (1968) states that “ all societies prohibits marriage with certain relatives, but some societies complement this prohibition by prescribing or preferring, marriage being prohibited between those who are children of the siblings of the same sex (parallel-cousins) while it is prescribed between children of siblings of the opposite sex (cross-cousins)”. Exogamy is practised based on the conception that among the group its members are to be considered as brothers and sisters and marriage between them would lead to a progeny who is unhealthy.

Biologically mating is preferred between people who are not genetically related because inbreeding has a higher chance of inborn genetic disorders. Exogamy is a byproduct of the horror of incest because there is an aversion to marry blood relatives (Westermarck,1891/2007) and it originated due to scarcity of women which obliged men to seek wives outside their clans (McLennan,1970).

Endogamy is the practise or custom of getting married to one's own group. While stating one's own it can be class, caste, clan, social or ethnic group, and religion. People prefer to marry within own group because that would strengthen their social ties, giving them a sense of identity, being part of familiar customs, believes, practices, traditions, social values, and norms.

To state types of endogamy broadly, there are caste endogamy, class endogamy, kindred endogamy and village endogamy (“Endogamy”, n.d.).

Srinivas (1962) defines caste locally called ‘jati’ as a “hereditary, endogamous, group which is usually localised. Men and women are usually prone and bound to marry within the caste to which one belongs, at times they even consider the sub castes as well. It is believed to enhance group solidarity and the exchange of resources within the group. A major critic of caste, B.R. Ambedkar saw endogamy at the heart of caste and stressed that inter-caste marriage was one way of ridding India of caste. Prescribed or acceptable circle of endogamy and also the enforcement of endogamy through violence is shifting over time and contexts because earlier sub-subcaste was considered now it is moved to caste, still many parts of India is facing “honour” killing and it is a fact and a reminder of existence of caste endogamy (Abraham, 2014).

Class is the manifestation of economic differentiation (“Marx’s Sociology theory of class struggle”, n.d.). Marriages between different strata of society bring about changes in status. Even though mobility across class is possible humans tend to marry people from same socio-economic background, race, ethnicity, age, and religion such marriages are called homogamy. Homogamy is very much similar to and a form of assortative mating. Assortative mating is a type of sexual selection in which a person chooses a sexual mate with similar genotypes and phenotypes to themselves (Thiessen & Gregg, 1980). Two types of marriages based on the mobility accessible is hypergamy and hypogamy. Hypergamy is the term used when a women marry upward in a socioeconomic hierarchy (Buss, 1985) and reverse that is when a women marry to a man who is lower in status to her is hypogamy (Almanzar, 2016).

Marriage in which people marry close blood relatives which include close kin such as first or second cousins, fathers or mothers’ cousin is called

consanguineous marriage (Agha, 2016). According to Bittles (1994) consanguineous marriage is the most preferred form of marriage in many parts of Asia. Marriages between kinfolk are thus common and there are few noticeable forms of such preferential marriages between fellow members of same lineage but beyond the boundaries of incest. One form is the marriage between cross cousins. A man getting married to either his mothers' brother's or father's sister's daughter is called matrilateral and patrilateral cross-cousin marriage respectively.

In case of village endogamy marital distance between the spouses residence and own house is a matter of concern to families. Physical distance is less preferred and people maintain a pattern where they get married to someone who is close by even at least at a distance wherein they can go meet up their family whenever they wish. Physical location has strong marital assortment and its two major components are neighbourhood and geographical region (Vandenberg, 1972 as cited in Buss, 1985).

Sociocultural Perspective

Inspired from Darwin's work cultural anthropologist has taken a turn towards understanding evolution of human family and marriage along a progressive and gradual development. Family and marriage are two basic institutions which vary across cultures and time. Social structures and economic systems that prevail in particular point of time determine the forms marriage takes as an institution vice versa marriage also influences the economy. Although attempts regarding the empirical evidence of the origin of marriage are scant what is available has been debated by social evolutionist. Most celebrated explanation about the primitive society is that it has passed through an order of primitive promiscuity, polygamy and then monogamy. Maine, Bachofen, McLennan, Lubbock, Tylor, Morgan, Marx, Engels, Briffault, Freud are the proponents of this debate though they had reached

through different inductions. Westermarck, Malinowski, Franz Boas, Levi Strauss are the opponents of this popular notion and advocated the co-existence of each stage, that is, monogamy was the form of marriage that existed right from the primitive period(Cohen, 2010).

Henry Maine in his *Ancient law* 1861 opined that one of greatest revolution is the transition from blood to soil and from status to contract indicates that societies based on kinship was replaced to that based on state. Bachofen in the same year 1861 assert that man's original family structure was matriarchal (Kuper, 1988). McLennan in his *Primitive society*,1865 shares a similar view "succession of primitive promiscuity, mother-right or exogamy leading to father-right having, however been based on wholly different inductions". Lubbock agrees with McLennan that "the change from communal to individual marriage occurred when marriage by capture started" which was proposed in his book *The origin of civilization* published during 1870 (Sinha, 1980).

Engels wrote *Origin of the family, private property, and the state*, 1884 categorizing evolution of society into three stages such as hunting-gathering or savagery, herding-agriculturist or barbarism and civilization. The contributions of these three stages were from the works of Tylor and Morgan. Division of the stages can be summarized as follows: Savagery and barbarism are further sub divided into three segments such as lower, middle and upper. Across each stages humans pass through they have initiated to discover strategies and tools essential for their survival. Each stage has therefore lead to changes in family, marriage, social and political organisation (Engels, 1884).

Savagery: Lower savagery marked by the development of articulate speech. Humans were tree-dwellers. A time where there occurred complete sexual freedom and humans lived as a horde without prohibition, a stage

called primitive promiscuity. No marriages happened and so called agamy. Middle savagery constitutes consumption of fish and utilisation of fire, first forms of weapons was discovered. During this stage a marriage between brothers and sisters prevailed but those between parent and child was prohibited, called consanguinal. Upper savagery achieved hunting by means of bow and arrow. Group marriage continued but taboo was established gradually for sexual intercourse between siblings which was later extended to collateral cousins as well (Engels, 1884).

Barbarism: Lower barbarism known for pottery, middle barbarism for domestication and irrigated agriculture and upper barbarism for invention of iron tools also began to write. Cattles which occupied the position of money was replaced by coins. With increased production demanding labour supply which lead captured war survivors being turned to slaves thus a new group of exploiters and exploited evolved. Marriage pattern during these stages was a loosely formed pair between males and females and during later stage husband-dominated families arouse with practise of polygyny and occasional infidelity enjoyed as their right (Engels, 1884).

Civilization: A period of industry and art. This was the period when a group which has nothing to do with production took charge of exchange of products-called merchants. Land now turned out to be hereditary property rather than of a tribe. To ensure their property, it was passed on to their own heir monogamy became the popular practise (Engels, 1884).

Major critics of the explanation that primitive society developed in a sequence were Westermarck, Malinowski, Franz Boas, Levi-Strauss. Westermarck says "Marriage is rooted in family rather than family in marriage" (Russell, 1929/1991). He defines marriage as "a more or less durable connection between male and female lasting till after the birth of their offspring". He believed that family existed since the origin of earth and

marriage to be monogamous at all periods of time. He tried to elucidate using examples from animals and birds (Westermarck, 1891/2007).

Malinowski speaks in "...I personally, speaking as an anthropologist do not for one moment admit that group marriage has ever been practised in any human society however primitive..." For marriage and family will not degenerate in spite of any legal loopholes and opportunities. He does not resist existence of polygamy rarely but that too is seen as marriage in single pairs, a series of individual contract (Briffault & Montagu, 1956/2013).

Beginning of 20th century was marked by a shift of anthropologist interest from the linear progress of human evolution and that of society to advocating functionalism and structuralism, two major pioneers being Boas and Levi- Strauss respectively. Franz Boas and Claude levi-strauss criticized the evolutionary scheme in a linear progress as they stressed on the heuristic value of ethnographic models to study prehistoric cultures (Cohen, 2010).

Boas was a pioneer within the field of anthropology, pointing out that the individual is only as important as their social group, and that cultural settings affect people differently (even those of the same descent). He states "that each cultural group has its own unique history, dependent partly upon the peculiar inner development of the social group, and partly upon the foreign influences to which it has been subjected". He elaborates to state "it would be quite impossible to understand, on the basis of a single evolutionary scheme, what happened to any particular people" (Boas, 1920).

Levi-strauss focused mainly on the universal features in the thinking of man, which might explain myths, religions, social interrelatedness and systems of kinship (Levi-strauss, 1949). Levi-Strauss states that the distinction of society as having group marriages and promiscuity during 'early' stages of evolution and monogamy as a recent development were the after effects of distorting and misinterpreting data. He observes polygamous families in many

cases as a combination of several monogamous families although the same person plays the part of several spouses and claims that unless there is disparity in population ratio or accumulation of wealth on certain people polygamy is not possible. Levi-Strauss states that marriage is originated by family and it is the group (family, lineage, clan) that exchange wives; always two families are necessary which is ready to exchange-a man and a woman. Anthropologists further claim the existence of family even among lowest savages, hereby declining group marriages, by pointing out the 'give and take' principle based on the division of labour between men and women (Levi-Strauss as cited in Shapiro,1956) and quoted in Leacock that human society is always “at first hand a masculine society” (Leacock,1981).

Women being withheld of property rights after marriage by declaring civil death, a dominant decision of masculine society were the cause of feminists' movements in 19th and 20th century. Feminist movements proceeded, upholding different causes, basically related to the rights of women and her welfare at social, economic, political and many other spheres of life. Woman and her identity which she has defined by herself and by others changed across time within family and society (Ramakrishnan & Venugopal, 1989). Socialist feminism attained strength across world as part of which Marx and Engels (1848) upon reading criticisms against bourgeois marriage wrote *The Communist manifesto*:

“The bourgeois sees his wife a mere instrument for production.....bourgeois not content with having wives and daughters of their proletarians at their disposal, not to speak of common prostitutes, take the greatest pleasure in seducing each other's wives. Bourgeois marriage is, in reality a system of wives in common and thus, at the most, what the communist might possibly be reproached with is that they desire to

introduce, in substitution for a hypocritically concealed, an openly legalised community of women.”

Marx had a problem with the outlook of bourgeois society which look at women as instruments of producing children; a next generation of workers and capitalist, they advocate fidelity meanwhile practise unfaithfully and look at women as sexual objects. They even establish a system of common wives but they attack communist for trying to substitute with free love. Article by Marx and Engels comments that ‘the first division of labour is the division between man and woman based on reproduction’ later Frederick Engels added that the first class differentiation in the history originated with the onset of monogamy based on gender and the first class oppression is done by males on females (Chandra,2006). Engels (1884) argued,

The overthrow of mother right was the world historic defeat of the female sex. The man took command in the home also; the woman was degraded and reduced servitude; she became the slave of his lust and a mere instrument for the production of children... In order to make certain of the wife’s fidelity and therefore the paternity of his children, she is delivered over unconditionally into the power of the husband; if he kills her, he is only exercising his rights.

John Stuart Mill (1869) wrote in “The subjection of women” that marriage is a justifiable custom only if it provides an equal partnership between the couples lest it is just a power trip for men, a feudal operation where husbands the lords and women were the serfs. According to him gender stereotypical roles should be abolished, a girl should marry whom she like or else should have freedom to remain single (Ramakrishnan & Venugopal, 1989).

Beauvoir (1949/1997) states that “one is not born a woman, but becomes one”. Simone de Beauvoir in her Introduction to *The Second Sex* has commented on the social construction of woman as the “Other”. According to her, woman is being considered as the incidental, inessential, and 'other' which is defined and differentiated with reference to man who is always regarded as the subject, the absolute. Therefore woman is forced to live in the conflict between the subject (ego)-who regards the self as essential and the compulsion of a situation in which she is the inessential.

Marriage is the destiny traditionally offered to women by society wherein she is given by certain males to other male. Because families are structured around age and gender, women, men, girls and boys do not experience their families in the same way (Thorne, 1982). Even during the period of sexual freedom for a woman to conceive and deliver a child the society needs the assurance in marriage. The idea of giving herself over to a strange male threatens her, especially due to her strong attachment to family and home. And many of those who decide to marry because it is thing to do, because of pressure put on them, despite their strong resistance internally they end up in marriage where they find it difficult to attain happiness. It is implied in the very nature of the institution, the aim of which is to make the economic and sexual union of man and woman in order to serve the interest of the society, and not to assure their personal happiness (Beauvoir, 1949/1997).

Betty Friedan's book "the Feminine Mystique" (1963) attacked the popular idea of the time that women could only find satisfaction through being married, having children and taking care of their home. Friedan believed that women wanted more from life than just to please their husbands and children. The book said women suffered from feelings of lack of worth as woman depended on their husbands for economic, emotional and intellectual support. Further Firestone as cited in Thorne (1982) stressed on the view that

love is “the pivot of women’s oppression today” as love between man and woman is “complicated, corrupted, or obstructed by an unequal balance of power”. Gayle Rubin pointed out that ‘women are given in marriage, taken in battle, exchanged for favours, sent as tribute, traded, bought, and sold’ that is to say women are trafficked or exchanged. Hagan called marriage, in short as ‘intimate colonisation’ (Finlay & Clarke, 2003).

Women are entitled as earth, mother and Goddess, which is beyond realm that her power was affirmed. Women never entered into a direct and autonomous relation with the man. It was the indepth readings of Marx and Engels which is reported to instigate feminist movements in India during the 1970s. Women’s movement in India can only be understood aligning with the social reform movements, it’s rise understood from early 20th century and issue of gender equality gained importance during the post-independence movement (Ramakrishnan & Venugopal, 1989).

Aligned to reform movements in India and socio-political movements in Kerala feminist movements in Kerala were the need of the hour. Saradmoni (1999) and Arunima (2003) concentrates on the changes in family, notions of property and land rights brought about by the formation of state during 1956 with an intention to reform, lead to subordination of women. Sexuality, gender and caste especially throwing light on the Nair women was under consideration. It is about the transformation of women from a powerful position to private property of man.

Transitions in Indian marriages have been portrayed well by Manu (Vaidhya as cited in Menon, 2012) while explaining eight forms of marriages. During ancient periods community with power had an upper hold over those who were deprived, which they enjoyed in taking women forcefully like a slave and got married to them. Thus marriage by capture, Raksasa is form in which damsel is carried away by fighting or force, women were regarded as

prize of wars. After a period, small groups were left with no option other than to cooperate so as to form bigger communities as it was a means for better survival. Peace and harmony lead to changes in communal norms and *gandharva vivaha* took form. *Gandharva* (marriage by mutual consent) is the voluntary union of a man and a woman with equal love on either part. *Gandharva* marriage was beneficial to the concerned couples community felt that it did not supplement to the welfare of commune, so situation demanded marriage with the involvement of family as well, thus *Asura* marriages. *Asura* (marriage by purchase) in which money is given in return for the damsel and marrying her. After a long period, history of marriage was seen to have interference of religion and marriage was adorned with high status, a religious ceremony. Thus *Brahma*, *Daiva*, *Arsa*, *Prajapatya* gained prominence. *Brahma* (marriage through the gift of the Bride) is a form of marriage in which a man of good qualities is invited to house and is offered daughter who is bedecked in clothes and ornaments. *Daiva* (marriage through gift of bride to the priest) where the bride is offered to the priest at the end of sacrifice as part of sacrifice fee. *Arsa* form of marriage in which after getting a couple of cows from the bridegroom the bride is given to him. *Prajapatya* (marriage by gift accompanied by condition) form in which the virgin is given to the man who approaches father as his duty with a condition to perform religious acts together. Along with these *Paisaca* marriage also joins to be called eight forms of marriage. *Paisaca* is marrying a damsel when she is sleeping or in a slumberous state or under intoxication or insensibility, lying unconscious (Mani, 1975 ; Menon,2012).

Keralites attach utmost significance to married status, and family considers “sending away” its daughters in marriage as primary duty. Prospective partners are arranged considering benefits and priorities may vary over time according to families’ concurrent strategies (Osella and Osella, 2000). We have transformed to monogamous life style recently and it is

evident that our sexual interests were very similar to that of primitive society and tribal cultures (gotra) even during the first half of 20th century (Balakrishnan, 1983). It is almost from mid-20th century to till date that monogamy attained the current fame and position until then different forms of marriage and means of inheritance existed in Kerala and divorce was undergone easily without much societal pressures (Devika, 2008).

Paniya of Wayanad undergoes their courting behaviour for a long period and has to put an extra effort to convince girls' family by bringing in resources he could for her family, so they started opting marriage by capture. In this case capture happens with the permission of girl, couple runs away to forest lives there for three days and returns to attend a panchayat set by tribe where they have to pay a fine for their inappropriate behaviour. Similar is the system followed by *muthuvar* who is usually found living in high ranges, takes the girl for three days into the forest returns to complete marriage function by presenting a bamboo comb. They live in own house after marriage usually following *marumakkathayam*, marries mostly uncle's daughter only (Aiyappan, 1955).

Across Kerala, several forms such as polygamy, sambandham, brothers commonly marrying more than one wives, father marrying a girl who is of his daughters' age in order to let her in marriage were few among them (Balakrishnan, 1983; Sasidharan, 2008). The history of polygyny falls back to the origin of family and concepts such as husband and wife. Transformation from savage life to civilization brought about control in sexual freedom as well, thus work started accumulated, women at home taking care of household and children, men attained public sphere thereby gaining power and status. Men began looking at wife as object of status (Mumthaz, 2008).

Bhaskaranunni (2012) avow that Nair community followed matrilineal kinship system where a woman remains at her residence and the future

generation is traced through mother's line of descent group. Only the eldest son of a Brahmin family was allowed to marry, if not blessed with children would marry again and after three such marriages couldn't prove his fecundity young one's get a chance to marry lest and younger brothers formed liaisons with woman of nair community called *sambandham*. Due to this very fact marriage squeeze existed in Brahmin society and their women were either unmarried, co-wives or widowed.

Along with Nairs, sections of Ezhava until 20th century reforms also followed matriliney. They gave power to senior male member, the *karanavar* who managed economic matters and hold the authority for the same, utilised sexuality of sisters', and their daughters. Primary marriages, *thalikettukalyanam* is the ritual were every girl before reaching puberty is subject to a function wherein a *thali* is tied around, couple is secluded for three-four days followed by ending of the relationship without any further obligations followed by a secondary often polyandrous relationship called *Sambhandam*. Brahmin men had *sambandham* with Nair women and those of Nair men with Ezhava women. Children born out of such relationship were considered legitimate. Neither she nor her child could claim property rights of her husband for he himself hardly claim any as it belongs to Big Brother. Because of its nature of "visited husbands" and "unregulated polyandry" it gained attention of anthropologists and sociologists across the world. (Parameshwarapilla, 1977; Osella and Osella, 2000). *Thirandukulikalyanam* is the term used for the ceremony which was conducted auspiciously in association with the girl becoming biologically mature proving fecundity possibility by menstruation. It is basically an indicator that a woman is available for *Sambandham*. When changes occurred in the forms and patterns of marriage *thirandukulikalyanam* acquired a secret nature meanwhile the marriage ceremony as such became a great event in the family.

Changes in marriage practices in Kerala can only be understood in the light of socio-political reform movements and economic changes. Nair caste associations (later Nair service society) campaigned for marriage and inheritance rights encouraging caste endogamy which influenced Ezhava marriages as well. In parallel European ideological pressures, social reformers and writers such as Chattampi Swamikal and Chandu Menon, and educated ezhavas came to a same platform regarding *sambhandam* as ‘backward’, ‘irrational’ and ‘immoral’. Sree Narayan Guru insisted on inter-caste marriage as a tool towards irradiation of castes. Nayar Act, Indian Hindu Succession Act and Kerala Joint Family System (Abolition) Act were the end to matrilineal system. This period saw a shift to dowried virilocal monogamous marriages (following Christians) and introduction of new marriage ceremonies. With gulf boom it leads to greater mixing of cultures (Osella and Osella, 2000). Marriage ceremonies still includes remnants of old marriage patterns in the form prominence given to maternal uncle (*karanavar*), *thali* and *pudavokoda* (leftovers of *thalikettu* and *sambhandam* respectively) got inculcated on wedding day.

Statement of the Problem

The aim of the present study is to explore women’s experience along the process of marriage, prerequisites, criteria and choice of marriage, and initial years after marriage across a marital longevity of ten years and below (duration 2005-2014) who reside in the locality selected for research in Kerala. To contextualize marriages of recent times by retrospective data collected from the same locality and explore marriage pattern across matrimonial advertisements, matchmakers and bureaus.

The current study is entitled as "MARRIAGE AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION: A PSYCHO-CULTURAL STUDY ON WOMEN".

Need and significance of the study

Society attaches different status to married and unmarried women and along the process women undergo a change in identity as well. At any cost marriage must conclude at the right age, is what parents wish for their girls. Choices one makes becomes detrimental of whole life especially when people as such and society attach unbound relevance to marriage. Failure to understand real and ironical nature of human choices turns out to be costly, both socially and scientifically. The present research is a preliminary exploratory work which is based on the marriages which occurred in a particular geographical locality in Kerala within a marital longevity of ten years and below (duration 2005-2014). Marriages of the preceding generation in the same locality acts as a background for information on marriages of recent times. Thereby attempting to conduct metacognitive study on how and why certain choices are made and factors which attain relevance in marriage.

While going through the reviews in detail the investigator found researches approaching marriage from different disciplines separately, for example anthropological perspectives in marriage, sociological perspectives in marriage and so on, which leaves a knowledge gap to explore psychological perspective incorporating other disciplines. Investigators thereby attempts to gain insights from other disciplines such as sociology, anthropology and history in order to study the institution of marriage.

Usually the most important relationships a woman form is with her parents, spouse, siblings and friends out of which it is only in case of friends and life partner she have a choice. Certain factors leading to choices which does not have importance at other cultures attain unprecedented relevance and becomes independent of the original motives for a given behaviour. By identifying the reason behind choices a change through awareness is possible in decision making, in order to surpass the defective choices that are followed

traditionally. Factors which gets identified in defective choices acts as a presupposing factor in divorces. These information are beneficial to the intermediary who becomes influential in decision making, such as psychologists, sociologists, social workers, and ASHA workers.

Operational Definitions

Marriage: Marriage is a social union or legal contract between a man and a woman that creates kinship.

Social institution: Social institutions are formed by a group with common purpose to attain an order and structure in society thus governing behavior and expectations of individuals according to normative character. Marriage became a social institution through accepting an obligation to rear the child and pass on their personal heir to them. Thus it enters the intimate texture of society and acquires a position beyond the personal feelings of two individuals; husband and wife.

Psycho-cultural: It is by means of social interactions and inter-subjective discourses that a society gets established which in turn creates a culture. Culture exists in symbolic form acquiring different meaning and is dynamic in nature. Therefore culture is contributed by humans and it contributes to his/ her psychological state.

Women: One who identifies both biologically and psychologically as a female.

Research Objectives

1. To explore women's experience along the process of marriage
2. To identify the "readiness" in marriage
3. To explore into the "concept" of men as a marriage partner
4. To analyze modes of premarital enquiry
5. To identify the criterion behind acceptance or rejection of a proposal
6. To analyze "how" and "when" marriage becomes difficult for a women

7. To identify the age at marriage and its role.
8. To explore the initial years of marriage
9. To compare and contrast recent marriages with retrospective data
10. To study the pattern of marriage consummated through matrimonial advertisements, marriage matchmakers and bureaus.

Organization of the Report

Organization of the report is done in five chapters. The delineation of the chapters is given below.

Chapter1 introduction: In this chapter the investigator introduced the concept of study by giving broad to the specific view. It includes the problem under study, objectives of the study significance of the present study, and definitions of key terms.

Chapter 2 review of the related literature: The chapter has given the review of related studies relevant to the study as present study has ample number of reviews. In addition to this, the review helped the researcher to identify the relevant areas of study.

Chapter 3 method: The research design is the blueprint of the research, it includes all the technical information regarding the research like data collection procedure and sampling procedure of each study. The analytical process and ethical consideration for the current study is presented in this chapter.

Chapter 4 result and discussion: This cover the analytical results and discussion of the study. Investigators used different kinds of data from different vantage point of view in order to enrich the categories. The results and interpretation of the first study are taken as a standard for designing the objectives of upcoming studies. The chapter covers the results and discussion according to the objectives explained before.

Chapter 5 summary and conclusion: This chapter deals with the overview of the important aspects of the research by satisfying the research aim and addressing all the research questions.

Glossary: The present study demanded explanations for certain words or specific subject, text or dialects. It is elucidated in another heading called *glossary* in this thesis.

Chapter **2**

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Review of literature is conducted to re-view and acknowledge prior research materials relevant to area under study thus giving a preface and rationale for engaging in a research. It is an ongoing process which starts before the formulation of the problem, a valuable guide to design problem, recognizing its significance, suggesting promising data gathering devices, appropriate study design and source of data. Reviewing helps to prevent duplication of effort and to exclude literature that are not important to approach adopted by researchers and to justify how your findings are related to or fill the gap in between existing body of knowledge.

Review of literature is presented in two categories: theoretical and empirical perspective. Theoretical perspective focuses on theory that has been accumulated in regard to an issue, concept or phenomenon under consideration (Miles & Huberman, 1994 as cited in Rocco & Plakhotnik, 2009). Empirical perspective deals with scientific experiments, surveys and research studies.

Theoretical Perspective

The Family ecology perspective

Humans learn from the environment and live with what it teaches. Family ecology perspective shapes how the natural physical-biological environment, human built environment and social-cultural environment interacts and influences each other, as interdependent parts of the whole (Bubolz & Sontag, 1993, as cited in Lamanna & Reidmann, 2003).

The Family development perspective

The unit of analysis in family development perspective is family itself which is expected to change in predictable ways along the life cycle. The perspective explains why despite growing diversity and broader time frames, there is still a sense of a right time to get married, have children, and get enrolled into a job and so on (Lamanna & Reidmann, 2003).

Family Systems Theory

The systems theory framework looks at family as a whole, the parts of a family make a whole that is more than sum of the parts. Like a system, family tends towards equilibrium and any change whether external or internal in the family environment sets in motion a process to restore equilibrium (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993 as cited in Lamanna & Reidmann, 2003). Within a family there is pressure on changing members to revert to original behaviour and for a change to occur the whole family system should change.

The Structure- Functional perspective

The Structure- Functional perspective views family as an institution, or structure, commissioned to perform some very basic social functions that are organised around vital aspects of group life (Lamanna & Reidmann, 2003). Family and marriage perform certain functions such as a platform for socialization; reproduction; care, protection, belongingness and emotional support; assignment of status; and regulation of sexual behaviours following the norms of legitimacy.

The interactionist Perspective

According to the Interactionist Perspective “family” emerges from the relationships and interactions -talks (verbal and non-verbal), gestures and actions that go on in the families as a result of which individual develops the

concepts of “self” and “identity”. Interactionist work on family life includes studies on how behaviour is negotiated and renegotiated among family members (Hall as cited in Ritzer & Ryan, 2011). Family identities and traditions emerge through interaction as the family identifies itself with the growth of relationships and the creation of rituals (Bossard and Boll 1943; Fiese et. al as cited in Lamanna & Reidmann, 2003).

Symbolic interactionism, a perspective conceived by George Herbert Mead and formalised by Herbert Blumer, is about the role of interpretation and meaning in the social world. Three fundamental premises of the perspective are: (a) Human beings act towards things on the basis of the meaning they ascribe to those things, (b) the meaning of such things, abstract or social objects are derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with others and the society, (c) those meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he/she encounters (Blumer, 1969; Morrione as cited in Ritzer & Ryan, 2011).

Symbols related to marriage are important ways in which they attach the meaning to it and how they conceive it by means of interactions that happens within marriage. (“family functions symbolic interactionism”, n. d). People tying knot (*thali*, *meher* based on religious functions) in between marriage, exchange of flowers, attaining husbands name as surnames are few among those symbols which signals long term commitments

Biological theories

Human brains are evolved for social relationships (Kenrick, Griskevicius, Neuberg, & Schaller, 2010 as cited in Mikulincer & Shaver, 2015). Men and women differ in the way they have adapted in the course of evolutionary challenges (Buss & Barnes, 1986) and biological theories posits

that this is accompanied by difference between sexes in the way they process relationship at the cardiovascular, endocrinological, immunological, neurosensory and neurophysiological levels.

Biosocial perspectives

Biosocial perspective argues that humans' evolutionary biology (that is human anatomy/physiology, genetics, and hormones) affects much of human behaviour and more specifically family-related behaviours. Biosocial perspective presumes that human behaviour because they evolved for the purpose of human survival, are both "natural" and difficult to change (Rossi 1984; Udry 1994, 2000 as cited in Lamanna & Reidmann, 2003). Further Sociobiologist points out that biological propensity or predisposition, does not mean that a person's behaviour cannot be influenced or changed by social structure (Udry 1994; Wallace & Wolf, 1999, as cited in Lamanna & Reidmann, 2003).

Research findings such as mate selection might be influenced by olfactory or other cues that signal immunological differences (Wedekind, Seebeck, Bettens, & Paepke, 1995 as cited in Booth, Carver, Granger, 2000), Facial symmetry may be associated with greater immunological competence and increased gene variation, which means that mating with such individuals would increase the chances of infant survival (Gangestad & Buss, 1993; Gangestad & Thornhill, 1998; Grammar & Thornhill, 1994; Thornhill & Gangestad, 1993, as cited in Booth, Carver, Granger 2000) are exemplars of biosocial perspective.

Individualistic and Collectivistic Orientation

In individualist societies, "people prefer to act as individuals rather than as members of groups" on the other hand, in collectivistic cultures "people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups,

which throughout people's lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty" ("the relationship between individualism/collectivism" consultation and harmony needs, n. d). In Eastern collectivistic cultures, marriage is viewed as sacred institution (Marshall, 2008 as cited in Bejanyan, Marshall & Ferenczi, 2014) and the long-established norms and customs leading to establishment of strict standard against those who defy these standards (Netting, 2010 as cited in Bejanyan, Marshall & Ferenczi, 2014). While in Western, individualistic cultures it is generally left to the discretion of individuals to select their own marital partner. In Eastern, collectivistic cultures this process often involve the input of family members to ensure that the partner is a good fit within the family network (Myers et al. , 2005 as cited in Bejanyan, Marshall & Ferenczi, 2014).

The Individual difference approach

Personality plays a significant role in selection of a mate to the way partners perceive, communicate with, and behave with each other. Individual difference approach stresses on the importance of personality traits of each person within a couple. Certain personality traits show predisposition to overreact to negative relationship events (Baucom & Epstein, 1990; Bradbury & Fincham, 1991, as cited in Kurdek, 1998) thus leading to perceptual bias to see few rewards and many costs in marriage (Kurdek, 1991). Demand/withdraw pattern in which one partner desire more closeness and nags or complains regarding the same while the other wants independence throws light on the individual attributes on behaviour (self-influence model) and individual characteristics (relational characteristics) on marital well-being (Caughlin & Vangelisti, 2000). When one among the partners shows less involvement in interdependence thereby lacking to constructively communicate about critical relationship problems (Christensen & Shenk, 1991, as cited in Kurdek, 1998) it is illustrated by spousal discrepancy

approach that large difference in individual characteristics are risk factors for relationship distress (Bentler & Newcomb, 1978; Larsen & Olson, 1989, as cited in Kurdek, 1998).

Social Psychological theories

The self is a product of human exchanges, being created in relation to ‘the other’. This process begins in the early formative years before language acquisition and gets modified and reinforced in the patterns of relationships in years that follow thus creates ‘relational self’ (Benhabib, 1987 as cited in Hart, 1996) or ‘intersubjective self’ (Benjamin, 1988 as cited in Hart, 1996). Social psychologist theorises that men and women differ in the ways to interpret self which is inevitable in relationship functioning (Cross & Madson, 1997 as cited in Kaur, 2016). Chodorow asserts that men develop their ‘core identity’ primarily around the principles of separateness and autonomy, whereas women develop through attachment and relatedness (Hart, 1996). Women are expected to behave communally, perform domestic duties, and men are expected to behave agentially, perform behaviours leading to take hold of responsibility in earning (Kaur, 2016). When it comes to marital relationship there are even more expectations regarding what men and women are supposed to do when they are “husbands” and “wives” (Atkinson, 1987), husbands hold more traditional gender role attitudes than their wives (Bolzendahl & Myers, 2004; Zuo & Tang, 2000 as cited in Marks, Bun & McHale, 2009) and these gender orientation influence expectation on marriage.

Social Learning theory

Social learning theory posits that people modify each other’s behaviour specifically through the rewards and punishments that follow those behaviours (Bandura, 1969 as cited in Johnson & Bradbury, 2015). Applied to

couples, this model implies that in a relationship partners routinely and mutually reward and punish each other's behaviours and, more crucially, that dysfunction develops when maladaptive behaviours are inadvertently rewarded, and adaptive behaviours are punished. Behavioural couple therapy which grew out of social learning theory, was designed to alter the dysfunctional learning that had taken place between partners and to implement a new set of rewards to enhance more functional behaviours (Johnson & Bradbury, 2015).

Self- Expansion Model

Self-Expansion model is fundamental in understanding the cognition and motivation in close relationships. While in close relationships it is noted that small parts of yourself changes to become a little more like partner and vice versa, this phenomenon is better understood by Self-Expansion model. It has two propositions; first is that every individual holds a basic motivation to expand one's potential efficacy to increase their ability to accomplish goals and second, is that people seek such expansion through close relationships in which other's resources, perspectives, and identities are to some extent "included in the self". ("Self-Expansion theory" n. d; Aron, Norman & Aron, 2001).

Compatibility theory of mate selection

Compatibility can mean many things to different people, but the basic elements include values, ideas, habits, preferences, interpersonal and communication styles that have a lot in common. Compatibility does not necessarily mean agreeing on everything all of the time, but simply being able to find ways to reconcile the differences, agree to disagree or compromise. Similarity in interests and marital role preferences are essential ingredients of

compatibility to ensure commitment during courtship and marriage (Levinger & Rands, 1985).

The perceptual problems model

The *perceptual problems model* suggests that the interplay between partners' dispositions gets played out during courtship and that the partners develop feelings and views about each other that reflect the underlying, relatively stable, psychological infrastructure of the relationship (Burgess & Wallin, 1953; Heaton, Albrecht, & Martin, 1985; Huston, 1994; Surra, 1990 as cited in Huston & Houts, 1998).

The Disillusionment model

According to the disillusionment model, early in relationship partners may idealize each other due to romantic feelings and partners' present themselves favourably to each other. This model explains why partners are not attuned to issues of compatibility and may present themselves in a manner that is inconsistent with their actual preferences. However, this idealization can fade as they experience routine daily living (Huston & Houts, 1998; Niehuis, Reifman, Feng & Huston, 2016)

The accommodation model

In close relationships eventually partners, either or both, starts to behave in destructive ways due to the irritable and dissatisfactory experiences of everyday life. Accommodation explains why despite uneasy situations why they continue in such relationships. Accommodation refers to an individual's willingness, when a partner has engaged in a potentially destructive behaviours, to inhibit tendencies to react destructively in return and instead to engage in constructive reactions (Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik & Lipkus, 1991).

The *accommodation model* posits that when problematic dispositions or incompatible desires surface in a relationship they initially create disappointments and antagonisms, but that partners maintain a satisfactory bond by adapting their expectations or otherwise coming to terms with their situation (Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik & Lipkus as cited in Huston & Houts, 1998).

The theory of accommodation process is emerged from typology of response to dissatisfaction in close relationships. Rusbult's typology of responses to dissatisfaction illustrate that we can leave (exit); try to make improvements (voice); patiently wait, hoping that things will improve (loyalty); or just let things fall apart (neglect) when things do not turn good (Rusbult, Zembrodt, Gunn, 1982 as cited in Rusbult, Verette, Whitney, Slovik & Lipkus, 1991). Accommodation is costly for the one partner among the couples who is showing accommodating behaviour as he/she forgoes self-interested behaviour for the good of a relationship (Rusbult, Bissonette, Arriaga, & Cox, 1998).

Interdependence theory

Interdependence theory formulated by Kelley and Thibault (1978) grew out of two classic theories-exchange theory and game theory-both were exceptionally important frameworks for understanding interpersonal relations and group dynamics. Theory states that based on reward and cost associated with interpersonal relationships humans tend to maximize reward meanwhile tries to minimize costs.

Interdependence theory identifies two main processes through which dependence grows; level of satisfaction and quality of alternatives available. Satisfaction level depends on the extent to which a partner fulfils the individual's most important needs. Quality of alternatives refers to the

perceived desirability of the best available alternative to a relationship. Quality of alternatives is based on the extent to which the individual's most important needs could effectively be fulfilled "outside" of the current relationship. High satisfaction and poor alternatives result in persistence of the relationship (Rusbult, Martz & Agnew, 1998). Applying interdependence theory to marital wellbeing suggest that perceiving few rewards and many costs in a relationship results in low dependence, feeling low confidence and security in the partner (Rempel, Holmes & Zanna, 1985 as cited in Kurdek, 1998).

Rusbult Investment Model

Rusbult's Investment Model has been shown to be especially powerful in predicting commitment and persistence across many types of romantic relationship (e. g., marital relationships, lesbian and gay relationships) as well as in friendships and in organizational settings (Rusbult, 1987; Rusbult & Buunk, 1993; Rusbult, Drigotas, & Verette, 1994 as cited in Rusbult, Martz & Agnew, 1998). Emerged from interdependence theory investment model adds another factor to satisfaction level and quality of alternatives, termed investment size, to explain dependence and commitment thereby persistence in relationship despite presence of better alternatives and fluctuating satisfaction. Invested resources presumably enhance commitment because the act of investment increases the costs of ending a relationship, serving as a powerful psychological inducement to persist (Rusbult, Martz & Agnew, 1998; Rusbult, Agnew, & Arriaga, 2011).

Attachment theory

Attachment with primary care givers has a major imprinting on adult romantic and marital relationship throughout life (Ainsworth 1969; Bowlby 1977 as cited in Chung, 2014; Hazan & Shaver, 1994; Shaver et. al, 1988 as

cited in Mikulincer, & Shaver, 2007; Strait, Sandberg, Larson & Harper, 2013). Attachment affects marriage at its foundation: the development of a relationship. Many studies have explored attachment as an explanatory factor in satisfaction with romantic relationships or marriage (Feeney, 1999; Kobak & Hazan, 1991; Meyers & Landsberger, 2002; Paley, Cox, Burchinal, & Payne, 1999 as cited in Chung, 2014).

The central propositions of attachment theory (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Shaver & Hazan, 1988; Shaver et al., 1988 as cited in Fraley & Shaver, 2000) are:

1. The emotions and behaviours that characterize romantic relationships and infant-parent relationships share similar activating and terminating conditions and appear to exhibit the same latent dynamics. Both kinds of relationships involve periods of “baby talk, ” cooing, and sharing of interesting ‘discoveries’ and experiences.
2. The kinds of individual differences observed in infant-caregiver relationships are similar to the ones observed in romantic relationships. When Hazan and Shaver (1987) began their work on romantic attachment, they adopted Ainsworth’s three-category scheme as a framework for organizing individual differences in the way adults think, feel, and behave in romantic relationship often called secure, anxious/ambivalent, and avoidant.
3. Individual differences in adult attachment behaviour are reflections of the expectations and beliefs people have formed about themselves and their close relationships on the basis of their attachment histories (Bowlby, 1969 as cited in Strait, Sandberg, Larson & Harper, 2013; Hazan & Shaver, 1994).

4. Romantic love, as commonly conceived, involves the interplay of attachment, caregiving, and sex. Beyond the usual features that attract one person to another (similarity to one's actual or ideal self, complementarity to one's needs and traits, physical appearance, and social status); attachment security is a valued resource that people, regardless of their own attachment style, look for in potential romantic partners (Chappel & Davis, 1998; Klohnen & Luo, 2003as cited in Mikulincer, & Shaver, 2007).

Marital enhancement through cognitive self-disclosure

Edward Waring theory posits that marital intimacy improves quality of the couple's relationship and enhances the couple's functionality as a family. And he believes that the best way to increase interpersonal intimacy is through cognitive self-disclosure. Waring's definition of intimacy includes eight different dimensions: conflict resolution ability, degree of affection and emotional closeness between partners, cohesion of couple's commitment to marriage, communication of sexual needs, identity of each partner, compatibility between partners, autonomy, and expressiveness. Cognitive self-disclosure involves revealing one's needs, ideas, attitudes, beliefs, and theories regarding a relationship; it makes the partners known to each other and develops self-awareness, thereby providing a platform for rectifying negative feelings for each other which results in distance between couples in conflict (Waring, 1988 as cited in Leeuw, 2015).

Triangular theory of love

Research based theory developed by Sternberg, holds that love can be understood in terms of three components that together can be viewed as forming the vertices of a triangle; intimacy, passion, and commitment. Intimacy is the emotional side of love; passion refers to drive that lead to

romance, attraction, and desire for sexual interaction; commitment is the cognitive aspect of love. These three components generate eight kinds of love when considered in combination. Absence of all three components leads to nonlove situation. Presence of just intimacy and absence of other components results in liking, presence of only passion results in infatuated love and empty love emanates from the commitment in the absence of other components. Romantic love derives from a combination of intimacy and passion; companionate love from combination of intimacy and commitment; fatuous love from combination of passion and commitment. Consummate, or complete love, results from combination of all three components (Crooks & Baur, 2014; “duplex theory of love”, n. d).

Longitudinal theories of marriage

Longitudinal studies focus on collecting new information on their participants along duration of time and are best method to study how key life transitions such as marriage change the course of a persons’ life. Relationship change over time as both partners mature and develop as an individual. One major study over the life course is a U-shaped association characterized by high marital happiness in the early (or preparental) years of marriage, a decline in marriage happiness during the middle (or parental) years and a rise in later (or postparental) years (Cherlin, 1996; Gelles, 1995; Spanier & Lewis, 1980 as cited in VanLaningham, Johnson & Amato, 2001). This curvilinear pattern is most accepted even by the cross-sectional studies but it does not mean that an alternative pattern doesn’t exist. There are couples who take pride in parenthood and who attains a sense of accomplishment with the parenthood (Saxton, 1990).

Karney and Bradbury Vulnerability-Stress-Adaptation Model

Vulnerability stress adaptation model, a theoretical framework emerged out of four fundamental theoretical perspectives such as social exchange theory (Levinger, 1965 as cited in Kaur, 2016), attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969, as cited in Kaur, 2016), crisis theory (McCubbin & Patterson, 1982 as cited in Kaur, 2016) and behaviour theory, postulates on the dynamism of marriage. According to the VSA model, individuals bring vulnerabilities to their marriages that may take the form of personality traits (e. g., neuroticism) and/or experiential factors (e. g. , parental divorce). Such vulnerabilities are expected to be relatively stable. Marriages are also impacted by stressful events (e. g., loss of a job) and circumstances (e. g., poverty, chronic illness) that can occur due to chance factors, spouses' vulnerabilities, and/or adaptive processes. Finally, adaptive processes represent interactions between spouses that evolve as couples respond to stress and are conceptualized as behavioural exchanges that may be positive or negative in valence (e. g., conflict management skills, partner support). This model thus brings together personality, family variables and life events into an integrated framework. Links among vulnerabilities, stressors, and behaviours, both adaptive and maladaptive, are expected to lead to changes in marital satisfaction and dissatisfaction and, ultimately, marital stability and instability (Langer, Lawrence, & Barry, 2008)

Gottman's Balance theory of Marital Dissolution

According to Gottman (1993, 1994 as cited in Carrere, Buehlman, Gottman, Coan & Ruckstuhl, 2000), perception is one of the three domains (perception, physiology, and behaviour) that individually and together act as interactive thermostats in marriage. In this "core triad of balance" theory, Gottman has proposed that each of the three domains has the potential for balance, a homeostatic set point associated with harmony in the marriage.

Each of the domains has a negative threshold that, when exceeded, results in increased instability within the marriage. Because these three domains are interactive and overlapping, changes in one domain can cause repercussions in another domain.

Marital longevity and marital health strongly dependent on the couples' ability to balance their interactions there by outnumbering negative interactions by positive interactions; such interactions are called "regulated". In case if negative interactions dominate it leads to unhappy marriages and is a strong predictor of separation and divorce (Gottman, 1993).

Seven principles proposed by Gottman, that should be in a marriage in order to make it successful: enhance love maps (the more familiar about your partner better the intimacy), nurture fondness and admiration, turn towards each other instead of away, let partners influence each other, solve solvable problems, over gridlock (Gridlock normally happens when a partner has a dream for their life and they do not feel that dream is being addressed or respected by their spouse), and create shared meaning (Gottman & Silver, 2000 as cited in Leeuw, 2015;Gottman & Silver, 1999). Gottman identified trust and commitment as pillars of Sound relationship house where the above mentioned seven principles form the floor of the house (The Gottman institute, 2014 as cited in Leeuw, 2015).

The Five Love languages

Gary Chapman developed the five love languages stressing on the importance of communication in relationships. His theory suggests that each individual has their own way of feeling they are loved or what he calls, their love language. Chapman describes five different love languages, it can be words of affirmation, acts of service, receiving gifts, spending quality time, physical touch. Beauty of relationship lies in learning partner's love language

and communicating in a way that speaks to their love language (Chapman, 2013 as cited in Leeuw, 2015).

Demographic approach

Demographic-opportunity theory views the distribution of the population by sex, as well as by other pivotal demographic and social characteristics such as age, race, and social class, as a defining characteristic of social structure. A fundamental premise of demographic-opportunity theory is that the likelihood of forming inter-group associations, including cross-sex associations such as marriage, is determined to a substantial degree by the number of available out-group members with whom such associations can be formed (Blau, 1977, 1994 as cited in South, Trent & Bose, 2016).

While looking into local marriage market, availability of appropriate partner is altered by fertility rate, mortality rate, migration, skewed sex ratio and related factors. Age, religion, education, economic and familial background, place of residence are few characteristics which are crucial to mate selection. Less preference for girl child (Clarke, 2000; Pande & Astone, 2007 as cited in South, Trent & Bose, 2016) selective abortion (Arnold, Kishor & Roy, 2002; Hvistendahl, 2011 as cited in South, Trent & Bose, 2016) and discriminant approach in girl child care (Oster, 2009 as cited in South, Trent & Bose, 2016) in the long run would lead to marriage squeeze.

When women are scarce, and women lack structural power in society, men will use their own superior structural power to constrain women's familial autonomy and agency. In predominantly patriarchal societies like India, women's numerical scarcity will lead to diminished power in personal and household decision-making. Women will be highly valued for their traditional roles as wives and mothers and young women will have little if any opportunity to interact with their prospective husband prior to the wedding (South, Trent & Bose, 2016) having not participated directly in the marital

search, young women will experience at most an abbreviated courtship period and many will not have even met their betrothed prior to marrying him (Desai & Andrist, 2010). In such a situation which has been brought out by fertility decline there is a possibility that female make sure of getting the best partner thus waiting for it, and males will be left with no option other than to improve their status. Debate goes on whether women scarcity in marriage market is good for her in particular.

It is contended that the marriage squeeze against women was particularly intense in India because mortality decline, in addition to age structural changes, drastically reduced the number of widowers in the population who once accounted for about one-fifth of the annual supply of bridegrooms especially to lower economic status in each caste never married category (Bhat & Halli, 1999).

Marriage migration is by far the largest form of migration in India and is close to universal for women in rural areas. If parents view having an unmarried daughter as costly, they will search hard to marry her off, covering a wider area, and will accept lower quality matches. In the South, marriage migration is 63% in Kerala. Women appear to be marrying closer to their natal home in the sense of fewer hours of travel recently (Fulford, 2015).

Exchange theory

Choices about behaviour are based on rewards and costs that the behaviour has for them. Behaviour becomes exchange when the actions of one individual enter into the reward and costs of another individual. Exchange theorists pay attention to the exchange of rewards and costs between participants in a relationship or family unit and the idea of bargaining, market, and resources in relationships. Such transactions form and stabilize a relationship or group. Applications of exchange theory include the study of

the choice of marriage partner, the quality of the marriage relationship, marriage bargaining, and separation and divorce (Cheal as cited in Ritzer & Ryan, 2011; Thibaut & Kelley 1959; Sabatelli & Shehan, 1993; Brehm, Miller, Perlman & Campbell 2002 as cited in Lamanna & Reidmann, 2003).

Whether or not relationships form or continue depends on the rewards and costs they provide to partners, so given a choice individuals would choose relation which is most rewarding or least costly. In romantic or marital relationships, the resources to bargain besides money are physical attractiveness, personality, family status, skills, emotional supportiveness, cooperativeness, intellect, originality and so on. Individuals also have costly attributes such as irritability, demandingness, ineptitude, low social status, geographical inaccessibility and so on. Decision making within a marriage as well as a decision to divorce is affected by the relative resources of the spouses. People without resources or alternatives to a relationship defer to the preferences of others and are less likely to leave the relationship (Lamanna & Reidmann, 2003). Whether an unhappy couple divorces or remains married can be analysed in exchange terms (Van Yperen & Brunk, 1990; Sprecher & Schwartz, 1994; Brehm et. al. 2002 as cited in Lamanna & Reidmann, 2003).

Equity theory

Equity theory is based on the assumption that individuals are motivated by their desire to be equitably treated in their relationships. It holds that one will compare his or her perceived ratio of inputs to outputs to that of a comparable other. Adams' equity model (1965) consists of four essential postulates: (1) perceived inequity creates tension in an individual (2) the amount of tension is proportional to the magnitude of inequity (3) created tension motivates to reduce tension (4) strength of motivation to reduce inequity is proportional to the perceived inequity (Webster & Rice, 1996). Resource theory argues that "the balance of power will be on the side of the

partner who contributes the greatest resources to the marriage”(Blood and Wolfe, 1960 as cited in Webster & Rice, 1996).Traditionally marriage attributes more power to men as breadwinner and unless women perceive inequity it is less likely to create marital conflict (Blair & Johnson, 1992; Greenstein, 1996; Hochschild & Ann, 1989 as cited in Kaur, 2016).

Feminist perspective

A theme that unifies feminine perspective is that male dominance in family and society is oppressive to women, a theme that has been overlooked before. They throw light on family based on conflict perspective which states that not all of a family’s practices are good; not all family behaviours contribute to family well-being; what is good for one family member is not necessarily good for another (Lamanna & Reidmann, 2003). Almost always available resources can also be a means by which one individual gain power over other Basically feminist theory holds three premises: an internal stratification occur in family life, in which men receives more benefits than do women; husband-wife relationship is identified as power relationship were husband dominates wife; ideological legitimisation of gender inequality are held to be responsible for the acceptance by women of their own subjection (Cheal as cited in Ritzer & Ryan,2011). In feminist theory, wives are seen as subordinated, economically dependent are deferent (Johnson, 1988 as cited in Finlay & Clarke, 2003). Age difference between couples (where man is older than woman) allows men to maintain a dominant status in a patriarchal marriage- important for those who hold traditional patriarchal values.

Economic perspective

Economic theories think over utility-maximizing model of marriage where an individual utility is in being compared between being single and being married. An interdependence occur between couples due to gendered

division of labour, which enhances desirability on marriage, but with increased female independence and job opportunities marriage loses its charm (Becker, 1973, 1974, 1991 as cited in Xie, Raymo, Goyette, Thornton, 2003). Becker's (1973) 'female independence hypothesis' proposes that economically independent women are reluctant to marry. Becker's theory of marriage contains two models: demand and supply model, optimal sorting model; both sharing commonalities. Both the models consider individual as rational optimizers and make analogy between marriage and firms, both address problems of allocating men and women into matches and gives importance to market for facilitating this sorting into matches. While optimal sorting model focus on sorting result, demand and supply model emphasize process (Grossbard, 2006). Little empirical support for Becker's hypothesis have been found, it is thought as the co-existence of increase age at marriage, proportion increase of never marrying, increased cohabitation and women's rising employment and decline in marital stability led to assumptions. There are immense empirical support for women's economic prospect and marriage formation. Gender role attitudes have changed across time and changing family environment demands dual income, from both men and women. Oppenheimer (1988) on the other hand states that economically independent women delay marriage in order to marry assortatively. Raymo & Iwasawa (2005) reason non-marriage or delayed marriage among highly educated females to unavailability of proper match especially while preferring a hypergamic relationships.

Empirical Perspective

Human mate preference

Human mating behaviour was a rarely explored area so was an area of interest to David M. Buss and his colleagues and thus decided to work on it. The nature of mating desires, the role of culture, whether it exerts an influence powerful enough to override the evolved preferences if at all it exists, whether certain sex differences are characteristic of all people in all culture were questions which arose. Initially Buss verified the most obvious of predictions of sex differences in mating preferences by means of administering questionnaires and interviewing married adults and unmarried college students. Once verified he thought, if mating preferences has been a product of evolutionary history then it must be found universally and so decided to extend his study by incorporating about fifty collaborators within duration of five years into thirty-seven cultures located on six continents and five islands and a sample size of 10, 047. Respondents were included irrespective of their educational status, religious groups, racial groups, ethnic groups and political systems (capitalist to communist to socialist). Age group varied from fourteen to seventy. To explore more domains he launched fifty studies again. To conclude about his findings would be to realize disturbing features of human mating, that is human would compete for mate and along the process would derogate and deceive members of opposite sex and would subvert own partner (Buss, 2003).

Buss and his collaborators studied sex-difference in mate selection which has been predicted as a result of parental investment, sexual selection, human reproductive capacity and difference in certainty in paternity versus maternity. Results suggest that females weigh greater importance on the financial stability, ambition and industriousness, a cue towards resource acquisition meanwhile male value youth and physical attractiveness in

females as cue towards high reproductive capacity, both the results show a sex-difference across cultures. Across all the 37 countries males prefer to mate with somebody younger than himself and females older than them. The age difference preference closely indicates that males prefer females with fertility rather than reproductive value. Males value chastity in females than vice versa but the same trend is not seen across all cultures thus showing the influence of ecological, mating systems and cultural difference on the value exerted on chastity (Buss, 1989).

Despite clear evidence for sex difference in mate selection those traits did not show the highest rated or ranked characteristics for both sexes. Both sexes ranked kind-understanding and intelligent higher than earning potential and physical attractiveness across all 37 samples, suggesting that species-typical preferences are more important than sex-linked preferences (Buss, 1989).

By analysis the data collected throughout decades around 57 years from 1939 to 1996 study looks into generational stability and changes occurred. Traits such as mutual attraction and love, education and intelligence, sociability, and good looks have made an upward lift in value at the same time refinement, neatness, and chastity have undergone a decrease in valuation across generation for both men and women. Irrespective of period men maintained their higher premium on good health, good cook and house-keeper, and good looks and women placed a higher premium on ambition and industriousness, similar educational background, and good financial prospect (Buss, Shackelford, Kirkpatrick, & Larsen, 2001).

O'Boyle and Dawson (2012) conducted a quasi-replication study on mate selection which has a history of 66 years starting from Hill & Christensen study conducted during 1939 followed by five replication study by other authors, at least one per every decade. The study is about an enquiry

into the traits one seeks in mates that varies across time. Traits which maintained their position in preference irrespective of gender difference across years are trustworthiness, attraction, good personality and good health. Traits which showed a forward leap in preference are intelligence and good looks.

Indian Sample from the 1984 study of 37 culture international mate selection studies was compared to the data collected during 2009, basically a study on one quarter of century. Mate preference based on mutual attraction and love remained invariant. Sex difference in mate preference remained consistent according to the evolution-based study, females preferring cues to resource and males preferred cues to fertility but across years a slight increase in preferred age at marriage is seen and it comes in alliance with the actual age at marriage from Indian demographic data. During 1984 preferred age for men was 27.30 years and 23.04 years for women whereas during 2009 men preferred at 28.34 years and women at 25.29 years. A slight decrease in preferred age difference were Indian women preferred 4.19 year difference during 1984 it has lowered to 3.33 years by 2009, but in any case, Indian men prefer a mate younger to them and women prefer older than themselves. Emerged change in mate preference across this time period among Indian sample for both sexes is that they attach importance in ambition-industriousness, creative-artistic, good cook and housekeeper (Kamble, Shackelford, Pham, & Buss, 2014)

Satheeshan (1976) postulates that as humans' losses its charm with neighbourhood relationships, couples seek warmth and emotional security entirely on each other. A childhood ensuring affection and emotional satisfaction is not the only success secret to good marital relationship similarity in terms of region, race, and education indeed matters. Females

usually tend to marry those who are better educated compared to self out of a belief of meeting their requirements.

Mate preference is largely dependent on attraction one feels for the other which in turn is based on many factors such as cues to resources, reproductive value, physical appearance, socioeconomic status, childhood experiences (Thomas, 2008). Hingst, Hyman, and Salmaon (1985) establish that father care is positively related to feminine dimension of sex-role identification among humans, which in turn is related to higher sexual satisfaction in later life. Childhood experiences would play an important role in shaping mate preferences, and parental models may guide partner choice in terms of personality traits (Gyuris, Jarai, & Bereczkei, 2010). Higher levels of physical affection and positive attitudes about sex in the family-of-origin are linked to higher overall sexual satisfaction (Bridges, 2000). Sita daughter of King Janaka was married to Ram after he could abide the demand placed by Janaka of bending the bow. The selection of Ram was exemplary because Sita did not choose her husband independently, but collaborated with her father in the selection (Pache, 1998).

Birds and humans share many similarities in the language development pattern. Similar to humans among finches they live like a couple for a larger period as well. Male finches teach their male child to sing at a very small age and they use their singing talent to attract their female counterpart. Even though female finches do not have the ability to sing they grow hearing their brothers singing (taught by father) and memorizes it. Later their choice on partner is based on who would sing exactly like father finches. Singing talent is taken as the ability to provide good gene (Kathiran, 2016).

History of marriage

Family as a social unit is evolved to present form due to the need for inheritance of private property in accordance to the social and political environment of the society. Human thoughts, beliefs, emotions are conditioned according to the sociocultural and political context in which one survives, so human relations are tuned accordingly. Human as a social being are buffered in the family unit which ensures him/her the security and belongingness required (Narayanan, 2008; Sumalatha, 2008).

A history of one lakh fifty thousand years of hunting life along the human evolution has left some remarks on the humans. While men found resources by means of hunting to provide women it also acted as an exhibition of his skills to take care of his partner. Women definitely counted on hunting skills, in addition to this the whole act connect to another strong information, that women while compared to men is in need of iron content in her body to a larger amount as she loses it along the process of menstruation, gestation, delivery, lactation and meat is the second most available form of iron (Thomas, 2011).

Marriage across societies has developed as a means for controlling sexual freedom, to ensure the reproductive security of children and depends on the existence of society. While in Tamil Nadu uncle gets married to niece, among Muslims brothers' children get married to each other which is not seen among Hindus, ancient Egypt and Hawah kings used to get married to their own sisters, Eskimos are forced to fight with nature for a living due to the environmental condition that existed and accordingly marriage customs evolved. Inappropriate sex ratio lead to marriage squeeze and accordingly the custom related to marriage was unusual, fixing marriages even before birth between parents, fights in the name of women, marriage by capture, polyandry, wives are even kept as pawn. (Aiyappan, 1955).

Nair community are known for their human resource as they serve as army officials to the local rulers of the state. Nair community followed matrilineal inheritance, children born out of *sambandhan* belonged to the matrilineal residence. Even though Nair women had freedom not to abide monogamy there was a subliminal rule to undergo *sambandham* only with a man who belongs to upper caste. *Sambandham* is the kind of male-female relationship that existed, and these came under legal consideration during 1898 with the matriarchy marriage act established at Madras. Nair marriages were brought under act with atleast a partial right for inheriting fathers' property. *Sambandham* and Nair marriages of present society shares a similarity as both consists of handing over *pudava* (cloth) to the girl, the existence of *pudavakoda* till date is a remnant of largely celebrated *sambandham*. In addition to *pudavakoda* the customs seen in other communities such as exchange of flower garments, hand rings and tying wedding chain over bride's neck entered Nair marriages (Parameshwarapilla, 1977).

Irrespective of the regional difference that exists in the customs and rituals maintained during *thalikettukalyanam* there are some similarities in the basic features among different castes of Hindu community across Kerala. The person who ties the knot (*thali*) is fixed on the basis of horoscope matching. Earlier function continues for a period of four days with music, dance, food festival creating auspicious atmosphere in the presence of hymn. Major function tying knot happens at night on the third day, chosen man comes with his kinsmen and folk sitting on top of elephant and it is dutiful on the part of girl's family to welcome according to the status adorned. Fourth day the function ends with the head of *tharavadu* tearing a piece of cloth into two and the relation between those who tied knots, ends with no further obligations (Parameshwarapilla, 1977).

Ezhava marriages follow a mixture of pattern seen among the three out of the eight types of marriages mentioned in smriti's- arsha, brahma and prajapatya- Poojas, homam and hymn being part of it. Brothers getting married to a single woman were a pattern mostly found at certain localities of South Malabar and North Kochi, it was considered as a pride in itself to have the maximum number of relationships. The term used for actual marriage by matriarchy of North Malabar is *sambandham*, *kalyanam*, and *mangalam*. Relatives of groom including mother-in-law, sister-in-law, and uncles go to brides house gives *pudava* and take her to his home; presence of groom was not a must. Social reform movements under SreeNarayana Guru brought about changes in Ezhava lifestyle as a result of which *thirandukulikalyanam*, *thalikettu* were considered as extravagance and unnecessary during the early decade on twentieth century. He insisted change in marriage function by making it simple without leaving poojas and hymn, in the mediation of bride's father who gives in hand both groom and bride (*kanyadanam*). Exchange of garments, tying knot (*thalikettu*), circumambulate around the *mandapam* and a feast for those who attends marriage remained irrespective of changes adopted in other systems. Wearing new dress and jewellery remained an unwritten rule (Velappan, 1977). Later with imitation towards the Brahmanical system was those marriages which happened in the presence of a *vydhikan*, irrespective of the fact that the so called *vydhikan* is actually a scholarly personality, marriage was considered auspicious in his presence (Aiyappan, 1955).

Second half of 20th century in India witnessed a boom through industrialisation which leads a shift from rural to the urban areas in search of better living, changes brought about by Land Reform Bill and Agrarian Relations Bill added to their decision. Urban life changed their attitude towards life and white-collar jobs were looked into with much more

importance than it ever had, joint family slowly got replaced by nuclear family (Ashttamoorthi, 1983).

Among tribes (*adivasi*) marriage unions happened without much rituals but nowadays with those who take initiative to arrange sponsored mass union they arrange it following religious rituals there by bringing in a structured form (Mumthaz, 2015). Though there are different stories for the origin of life in Andaman Island it has a clear history for why the population of Andamanese is very low in two digits. Thus, the relevance of marriage within Andaman community which happens after a decade or more is above our expectation and for another marriage to happen it would take atleast another ten years because the eldest of the kid available is at early childhood. (Manjullalayam, 1979).

Among the barbarian Andamanese sexual freedom existed until they get married. Once parents recognize that a liking exists between a boy and a girl, his family forwards marriage by means of a third person. Marriage function commences at night wherein bride and groom sit face to face, an elderly of the tribe recites advices for a fruitful marital relationship, later groom is made to sit on bride's lap, friends' dance and rejoice. Meanwhile couple move towards a hut and lives there and thereafter their identity is husband/wife of so and so for few periods. Matrilineal system prevails and so their children is brought up as child of all mothers (Aiyappan, 1955; Manjullalayam, 1979).

Nambiar (1979) states that the population of Andaman is as diverse as that of India that we call it a miniature form of India. Keralites migrated mostly to Andaman during early decades of 20th century especially *mappilas* of Malabar after Malabar riot and they were unaware of the changes in lifestyle of Malabar *mappilas* which was brought about by education and gulf boom. It was a task in itself for officials to manage *mappilas* of Andaman.

They have lost hope in life but with passing time officials managed to bring back their family and thereafter they changed totally.

While looking into marriage system which existed in Lakshwadeep, the age at marriage for males were in between 17-20 and those of females was between 9-12 years. Nikah, a function where bride's father gives his daughter in hand by holding groom's hand and he takes a vow to take care of his wife mostly occurred at bride's home, few conducted it at masjid. *Mehr* is provided in the form of money with the highest amount of rupees 22 to 30 by those who hold highest status and lowest gave rupees three to six. *Mehr* exists still in the form of money but the amount has risen to highest around five thousand rupees (Gopinath, 2000). Matriline system prevalent in island gives authority and power to females and property rights is inherited along the matrilineal lines. Husband is obliged to make payment towards maintenance of wives which form part of marriage contract, upon its breach wife has full freedom to divorce. Divorce is not a disqualification and they are having an equal opportunity for remarriage, widow remarriage is also entertained (Vijayakumar, 2006)

Mohamad (2010) primarily aimed at finding out the relationship between sociocultural variables and persistence of matrilocality among Mappila muslims of North Kerala. To assess the status of women in matrilocality system and to reveal its influence on the status, to assess economic prosperity attained by community on system, and also to enquire into how mappila muslims practise matrilocality with intensity and how far they have modified with present extended nature. Only negligible number of participants showed willingness to change their residence to husband thus showing adherence to existing system, even among those who move towards nuclear settlement prefer to reside in area dominated by matrilocality residence. Willingness of husbands to visit their wife's household daily strengthens the

system and wives visit their husband's house only on special occasions like 'get-togethers'. But they are not interested to live there overnight, except on special occasions in which wives are invited for the same (*parkankshanikkal*). Respondents aspire to marry their daughters who follow same system, but percentage of mother's who are willing to follow the system in case of their son is comparatively bit low; overall responses indicate that they stand for perpetuating their traditional family form. Women at *tharawads* spent time by interacting among themselves, visiting relatives and receiving them by creating occasions of getting together. Among the data meagre percent of divorce indicate marital satisfaction among the partners. While men attain advantage in terms of financial assistance to trade and business from in-laws, children receive care and protection from maternal side. Source of income for maintenance of *tharawad* is from *puthiyappilas* who are mostly gulf migrants, group living is advantageous especially for those who are living on daily wages. This group living is a major means of imbibing religious practices collectively and passing it on to younger generations. Thus, study indicates that factors such as status enjoyed by female members and religious life, entrepreneurship and gulf migration of male members, and economic independency of component families are giving a proper anchorage to matrilineal family system.

Azad (2015) studied emerging patterns of marriage among Muslims using four independent variables such as education, religious observance, income and residence each having their independent influence on marriage. With increasing education and age people marry late also while compared to first generation those belonging third generation is found to marry late. Urban born respondents and high-income group marry late compared to their rural born and low-income group counterparts, thus socioeconomic background brings in attitudinal changes among Muslims. Even though dowry is favoured more by first generation, it is gaining popularity in Muslim marriages, with an

exception among those who perform religious observance strictly. Low income groups and rural respondents are practising more of dowry system and it is among them that domestic violence is more prevalent. With increasing education women is found to oppose polygyny. It is found that divorce rates are high among the educated female and uneducated male's respondents, religiously indifferent respondents, rural born respondents and lower income group of male and higher income group of females. The acceptance of family planning among educated, higher income group and urban born respondents is high. Love marriage is a less preferred form of marriage amongst Muslims though a very few cases in third generation. With passing generation Muslim men are found to change their attitude towards their wives which is seen in the involvement of men in household works. It is found that not only educated males allowed their wives to work, but uneducated males also allowed their wives to work outside in the third generation.

Usually religious leaders of both Muslim and Christian community view women as second citizen. Even while political groups develop out of religious affiliation, they form separate wing for women, they measure men and women as unequal (Karassery, 2009). Chandran (2009) opines that even during the period of feminist movements women are considered as secondary to men by the reform activists as well.

In an article answering a controversial statement by a renowned religious Sunni leader of Muslim community, the statement goes like this; polygyny is acceptable because men cannot have sexual relation with his wife during menstruation and it takes around 5 to 8 days of every month. Author quotes Quran statements in order to reply. "if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, marry women of your choice, two or three, or four; but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one, or that which your right hands possess. That will be

more suitable, to prevent you from doing injustice”. Another statement goes like this “you will never be able to do justice between wives even if it is your ardent desire”(Karassery, 2008).

By citing newspaper report of a Muslim man who out of anguish wrote *muthalaaq* in a letter from abroad. After his return wanted to join his family and how the local religious leaders interfered into his personal life stating and misusing Quranic verses. Author insists on how Indian law have stood for women especially in cases of divorce and related issues in case of Muslim men (Karassery, 2003). IPC 494 of Indian law declares that marrying another woman in the presence of a wife is punishable by imprisonment, penalty or both (Karassery, 2008).

Menon (1981) conducted a case study on lives of Muslim women in Kerala and stated that customs related to marriage do not provide women a voice in selection of partner, they face early marriage (thus hinder opportunity of education), ritualization of *mehr*, polygamy (compared to older times polygamy is decreasing, with upper age group and lower income level people practising it mostly), arbitrary divorce by men, attitude towards widow and her remarriage. Reminiscence of these is seen since time immemorial. Dowry which has no basis in Quran or tradition of Prophet has gained popularity.

Among Keralites in contradiction to other states it was Brahmin society which entered English education lately, non-Brahmins and Christians attained English education and entered government jobs which ensured financial security there by ending in nuclear family. Along with English education men imbibed Victorian patriarchal nature which demanded women to remain at home thereby losing the freedom they enjoyed during *marumakkathayam*. Women following this were considered as feminine and even during 21st century the unwritten rule is to follow this thereby withholding friendship with opposite gender (Gangadharan & Maya, 2010).

In Kerala a transformation from *marumakkathayam* to *makkathayam* can in turn be viewed as a transformation of power from single men, that is *karanavar* to many men thus leading to a diminution of power from single authority to many units termed family with a man leading it. It was colonial education which inspired men to react against the system thus confirming monogamy. With monogamy masculinity gained higher strength and men's characteristics such as socioeconomic status, occupation, physical appearance, colour, education gained market value to determine the dowry they received (Ushakumari, 2008).

Women in Marriage

A look into the past of Malayali women displays her presence as a dasi at palaces, devdasi at temples, second or third wives, early widows, restricted under maternal uncles rule at illams, wives without rights in *sambandham* and so on (Mumthaz, 2015). Nineteenth century India rendered women to private life, women especially belonging to upper caste Hindu and Muslim community faced difficulty. New-born girls were either killed or estranged, girls were married at very young age, age gap between the couples were huge, polygamy and sati (wife killing herself by jumping into husbands cremation fire) was common, widowhood was unbearable. It is under such circumstances that by passing age of consent bill during 1891 British Government raised minimal age to 12 at which a girl could live with their husband (Anand, 2010).

During early decades of twentieth century unmarried women rarely enjoyed freedom and their unmarried status is looked into with sympathy later own they were treated as a burden irrespective of whether the system is *marumakkathayam* or *makkathayam*. They were not allowed to interact with other men and were subject to maltreatment by husband and family, left with no option other than to sacrifice and suffer as they lack financial security.

Women with financial security also suffered from men who in the long run exerted patriarchal powers on their partners (K. L. P, 2017). Even when *marumakkathayam* is said to provide women more liberation in a way it is the decision of men to keep the women who own property and can reproduce at home (Mumthaz, 2012). Unnithiri (1999) mentions that Manusmrithi insists couples to praise and keep themselves happy because it is necessary to please wives so that they are willing to conceive child.

Across Kerala during early decades of 20th century there is popular saying on women as born into *tharavadu* and *chanthapennu*, distinguished into those holding behaviour of being in an ancestral home or into market. Basically, those women who stood for themselves and despite the hindrance from society made a living for her family was considered as loud as in a market and those who succumb to the patriarchal norms as those with qualities (Devika, 2009).

Author brings into light the way along the history women have been underrepresented. Even in situations which lead to progress such as widow remarriage that too of a Brahmin women the initiative taken by the concerned women who showed courage and willingness to step out of societal norms is not discussed but the male who became the mediator for the same, V. T. Bhattathiripaad is been celebrated (Anandi, 2000).

An exploration into the possibility of autonomy, gender justice, companionate partnership, shared life activities and fairness in human relations through civil life orientation which is brought about between partners of self-choice marriages. Self-employed and manual labourers, low income groups are those who seek non-traditional marriages, thus showing political and ideological commitment by staying away from celebrations overcoming presuppositions of premarital life. It is partners belonging to Muslim community who are chased after marriage mostly, thus community

shows greatest resistance to self-choice marriages. A sense of belongingness and the sensitivity to recognise the other as the same as one's self gives the partners chances to see through their experiences, actions and emotions, where in both are always treated as equal partners during concrete life situations. High compatibility and enhanced gender justice is evident from the majority around 98 percentage stating that they love partner and are loved by the partner also they share same vision towards life, disproving androcentric vision share and take responsibilities of each other and their children. It is couples who belong to higher social strata who showed gender discrimination in child rearing and mostly those of Muslim community who were reared so during their childhood. The economic independence of the partners of self-choice marriages has significant influence on their decision-making capacity. Majority need no consent from their counterpart to spend money, showing high level of relative autonomy of the partners through economic independence. The partners of self-choice marriages are highly autonomous and they act independently of their counterparts at times of necessities (Shobha, 2006).

Author conducted a survey using questionnaire among 2119 (1611 males and 508 females) who belong to different regions of Kerala and in between age group 15–70 to get their views on marriage system, contraception, prostitution and so on. Results related to views on love and arranged marriages are discussed in detail. Among the males 53.7% of males prefer love marriage, 33.5% prefers arranged marriage and 12.8% views that both has its own advantages and disadvantages. Among the females 22.2% prefer love marriage, 66.6% prefers arranged marriage and 11.2% views both as having its own ups and downs. Among respondents those who have done love marriages, those who were forced to leave their lover out of parental compulsion and those are dissatisfied with partner through arranged marriage prefer love marriage. Supporters of arranged marriage and love marriages

give their own suggestions on how arranged marriage provides emotional, financial and social support also how sensible would be decisions made by elders, they further criticize love marriage leads to loss newness and insecurity coming with it. On the other hand, love marriages are thought out as a means of social reform, abolishing dowry and most importantly as the choice regarding one's life is personal and it brings responsibility for each other's decision and deeds (Nair, 1985).

Eravangara (2007) analyses Malayalam film by Adoor Gopalakrishnan titled "*Naalupennungal*", four different stories depicting lives of four women who strives to maintain their identity despite the patriarchal societies power pressures on them. Amongst these stories one strong character is portrayed in "kanyaka", kumari who is a self-reliant woman taking care of her elderly parents by working in agricultural fields. She was married to a merchant who is an epicure and is involved in his own business. Out of his insecurity whether his sterility issues would be shared to outsiders by his wife and to safeguard his masculinity he proceeds towards character assassination of his own wife. Story ends where Kumari opens up to her father that inspite of being married she is still a virgin.

During the 75th anniversary of a novel titled *Aphantemakal* which paved social relevance in pre-independent Kerala society Namboodiri uprising movement, author analyses its present relevance. Novel depicts the plight of younger brothers in Brahmin families due to the right of primogeniture and the emotional and legal contradictions resulting from its system of inheritance. Daughter born out of *sambandham* of Namboodiri men and Nair women faces rejection from a Namboodiri man who being practical during the cultural context of the novel ends up marrying a woman of own caste. Novel points out a possibility in the long run of inter-caste marriage as a tool in social reforms. Title of the novel itself is a bold attempt to place

“aphan” as father. *Adukkalayilninnu arangathekku*, 1930 and *Marakkudaykullile mahanarakam*, 1931 are two other bold attempts of the time in the form of dramas to unveil live of Namboodiri women (Vijaykrishnan, 2008). Writer expresses his concern over the existing pattern of Namboodiri community which took a drastic step along the years against the customs that existed within it, in the occasion of 75th year of the drama named “*Adukkalayilninnu Arangathekku*” (Vijaykrishnan, 2005).

It is society alone that is working and the changes on the surface level of society brings repercussions on the individual lives, basically society triggers human life. Events that occurred and occur at societal level leaves a remark on personal lives for centuries (Anand, 2013).

Womens' job entry

Women going for education and occupation increased because by the end of 1920s the financial crisis which affected the whole world impacted Keralites as well also increased birth rate, decreased death rate, decline of joint to nuclear family, increased dowry left no other option than both gender putting effort to make a living (Devika, 2009). A concern over women delaying marriage arose which is evident from the *thiruvithamcore* census commissioner 1930s census report that within a decade it will lead to decline in population growth (Devika, 2011).

It was during the early decades of 20th century itself that women even from upper caste with financial difficulties started entering into occupation, they had to face obstruction and fight their way out. Men feared that women would learn the behaviour similar to market place (*chanthapennu*). Women’s interaction with men at job place was looked out suspiciously with prejudice by both genders. Even men of their own homes used to follow women at job place during 1930s. Gradually unwritten rules regarding how to dress, stand,

walk, talk, smile and body language at job place evolved (Devika, 2009) and her silence and discipline was considered as her adornment. Even when women work, she was expected not to work on streets so does women entering policing had to face rejections during 1940s (Devika, 2011).

Women's participation in job sector at Kerala in comparison to other states is very low according to survey reports. Women whose occupation is considered as not feminine face rejection in the marriage market, female advocates initially face rejection. Even among couples who are equally educated and hold position in job sector after delivering baby women are seen to draw the position of housewife thereafter. Education and occupation are affected by the institution of marriage (Ushakumari, 2008). Employed women of these days are also not enjoying freedom, their occupation definitely has a place to play in marriage market (Mumthaz, 2012).

Sexuality

Author writes about Paul Landis, sociologists and the three stages of sexual attraction; friendship, love and sexual experience. Male and female vary in their pattern, while male straight away jump into second and third stages females prefer a warm friendship in order to be sure before her commitment (Satheeshan, 1976). On the other hand, Fisher (1998) states three stages of romance: lust, romantic attraction and attachment, these stages have corresponding neural circuits which can function independent of each other and also at aggregate level. While stating independently it means that humans can feel lust without attraction and attachment, similarly it explains why among couples with years of marital longevity attachment remains even in the absence of lust and attraction.

Intimacy is a core phenomenon in marriage (Giddens, 1992). Couples attain intimacy through opening up about themselves sharing their deepest

secrets but in the ancestral marriage system it is rarely possible that a marriage is built based on intimacy. Brain scanning studies in humans proves that the presence of a loved one leads to increase in the level of oxytocin. Mate selection is followed by an emotional state which is formulated by the monoamine neurotransmitters such as dopamine, norepinephrine, serotonin and phenyl ethylamine (Thomas, 2008).

Couples understand that sexuality is important to good marriage and they at times take initiative for understanding others' preferences, an attempt called as performing desire. It is women, who mostly take initiative to reduce marital conflict, enhance intimacy and facilitate spouses' well-being. Husbands mostly prefer their wives to take initiative in terms of performing desire (Elliot & Umberson, 2008). Now it's a matter of communication, among the two components agreement (similarity in preferences among couples) and understanding (accurate perception of the partner's preferences). Wives are seen to demonstrate greater understanding of their husbands' sexual preferences than husbands did of their wives (Ross, Clifford & Eisenman, 1987).

Complaining about sexuality especially from the part of women is considered as less feminine (Sumalatha, 2008) as women are expected to abide the sexual double standard framing. A frame where men and women are seen as sexually different, with men stereotyped as sexually assertive and women stereotyped as sexually passive (Crawford & Popp, 2003 as cited in Elliot & Umberson, 2008). Perspectives on love and sexuality changes in accordance with social changes. Inventions in science and technology definitely bring about information's about our body and mind which opens up opportunity for explorations in love, lust, attraction and sexuality (Thomas, 2008). In an interview Balachandran Chullikkadu opines that love is essential

element between monogamous couples for the existence of institution of family (Chullikkadu & Devika, 2004).

Sexual life was always thought off as a secret life and silence as its adorn to maintain social norms. It is during 19th century when sexuality and power gained utmost importance that this silence grew to its peak (Foucault, 1990). Author recollects his experience on how the Christian teachings take on sexuality as sin affected his adolescence and youth. Even married couples bear this sinful attitude towards sexuality because sexual intercourse without the intention for childbirth is taught as evil. This has affected the family life of couples leaving no space for communication regarding their sexual interest leading to conflicts between them. Author doubts that Christian morality has influenced Hindu community as well and wonders how a community that celebrated sexuality (evident from sculptures in temples) changed (John, 2005). A thought on sexuality without the intention for reproduction as sinful was itself equivalent to castration (Sumalatha, 2008).

Men reason their readiness to marry to settle and begin a family, which is made easier from the dowry they receive, and they gain a bonus of enjoying sex daily. On the other hand, girls are brought up with a notion that sex is sinful right from childhood and their own experiences or those reports from newspaper make it even harder for majority of them to enter into a sex life. Lack of marital readiness leads to conflicts in the wellbeing especially in the initial years of marriage (Gangadharan, 2006).

Like any other phenotypic characteristics such as height and weight individuals' intelligence, artistic choice, sexuality do vary and that is absolutely normal. Visual stimulation is a major means of sexual attraction and thoughts and as and when a person mostly in his/her adolescence realizes her choice goes through gender confusions and gender nonconformity. It is a very tough journey and it becomes even worse when society has a tagged

approach towards them, majority among the homosexuals manage to remain invisible. Situation will not remain the same when they are forced to marry as is evident from depression, divorce and suicidal rates. Homosexuals who marry a girl/boy spoils their own as well as another person's life. Manavendra Singh Gohil, a royal member of Gujarat palace has opened up in an interview on how his marriage despite being gay became disastrous as he went under depression and ended up in divorce (Kumar, 2009).

To know about sexual life of society ask straight away to a sex worker, Nalini Jameela, in her interview discoursed that around seventy percent of men approaches her to seek help in matters related to sexuality, few talks about their failures in marital relationship. The major queries from the part of men would be regarding how to sexually satisfy their wife and those include of middle aged people as well who have already lead a long marital longevity. Jameela opines lack of communication between couples regarding sexual matters as major reason behind dissatisfaction among couples (Jameela & Dileepraj, 2005; Jameela, 2017). Across past twenty-five years Keralite men shows a major difference in the attitude and approach towards women. Unlike men of late 1980s men these days have become forceful, exerting power despite their unwillingness. Also she notices that men of lower economic class usually behaves well without demands, those of middle class have sex and leaves but those of upper class becomes rough on bed (Jameela, & Dileepraj, 2005). Influence of adult films is evident from misconceptions regarding sexuality. They prefer women who are older than themselves. Jameela (2017) always prefers men older than herself. Jameela is astonished to see men half her age who doesn't hesitate to approach her while she recalls that around twenty five years back those who are less than five years showed disapproval and approached another sex worker who is younger to them. Similar to unwed mothers, women who are estranged by their husband face

disparagement by society, such women are viewed as easily available or as those who invite men to their bed (Jameela, 2017).

Nineteenth century saw society as having a public sphere and a private sphere, the patriarchal society solemnized men belong to public and women to private sphere involved in reproduction and child care. Victorian attitude on female sexuality viewed them as either asexual (repressed) or as nymphomaniac both contradictory to each and not addressing the real issue. And this is where we should understand why Kuriyedathu Thathri at the same time was viewed both as bold to rebel existing system and as a nymphomaniac who executed prostitution (Sheeba, 2004) and can be thought as a prelude to what Nalini Jameela had to undergo in her life.

Kuriyedathu Thathri is a chapter in herself in the history of Kerala, even after a century less is known and more yet to unravel. Before the period of Namboodiri reformation Thathri had led a life, which can be called as a rebellion against the system among them, where only eldest among the brothers marry that too they can take many wives. By the time they die they leave behind very young girls even smaller than their daughters as their widows. These widows were forced to live a tough life and any mishaps in their behaviour especially related to maintaining chastity were treated with *Smarthavicharam*, a legal proceeding under the royal rule. These are enforced in order to ensure that child of any lower caste is not born out of a Brahmin lady (Vijaykrishnan, 2004).

Kuriyedathu Thathri's life has always been either seen as a victim of patriarchal society or as an effort by her body to resist the existing system, it has never been explored as mere expression of sexuality and sexual choices. Thathri was prosecuted for alleged sexual relation with sixty four men including her husbands' eldest brother, her own father, uncle, sister's husband, cousin and so on. Except for few who forcefully had sex with her

and few based on circumstances rest all was a return for the favour they offered her, such as playing Kathakali, teaching music, giving books etc. It was the first among *smarthavicharam* where all sixty four accused along with her was punished by declaring social isolation (Sheeba, 2004).

Endogamy

Across Asia and Africa consanguineous or close kin marriages are the most preferred form. In India it is common among states of South. Kin endogamy is favoured among Muslim communities (Bittles, 1994; Agha, 2016). Endogamy is followed and marriage is arranged through relatives at West Bengal as well (Sarkar, & Mukherjee, 2010). Consanguineous marriage provides a protective role providing a shield on the survival of marriage when compared to marriage between unrelated couples (Saadat, 2015).

Culture determines the value attached to certain things such as keeping power and authority with men, importance on chastity, love affairs considered as immoral, relevance of lineage, comfort brought by familiarity, villagers' perception towards exogamy, over importance given to physical appearance of girl and income prospects are benefits allotted to endogamy. Women's experience from consanguineous marriage is that they had to abandon their education, underage marriage and early maternal age, parents showed interest in equipping girls in domestic skills to decorate affinal family (Agha, 2016). Endogamous and exogamous family type maintain low age at marriage across countries (Carmichael, 2011). Consanguineous marriage in urban areas result in early marriage, rural people in hope of better living arrange marriage towards urban areas but those born and brought up in urban area prefer partner from there itself (Sheela & Audinarayana, 2003).

Caste system had a clear role of being gendered and it is through endogamy caste is born and perpetuated. Endogamy and hypergamy are

acceptable, at the same time hypogamy (women marrying man of lower status) was totally unacceptable (Abraham, 2014). While *Sambandham* was seen as hypergamy it did not go well with the idea of controlling women's sexuality to maintain caste purity (Abraham, 2014). Answering an article addressing the identity crisis faced by children born out of inter-faith marriages (*Mishra vivaham*) author states that children born out of marriage which is within the religion but between different caste especially out of the *sambandham* faced harder times. They were untouchable to their own father and was secluded from being heir to their father. Later State had to interfere bringing into law the right to become successor even if born out of inter caste marriage (Karassery, 2007).

Abraham (2014) narrates into the endogamous relationship and changes in its enforcement with context and time. There is a varied response towards non-endogamous relation happening at distant region and at local level. Example would be Haryanvi men taking brides from Kerala and Liaison of Thiyya women with British men. The inappropriately named "honour" killings at Haryana was a result of holding one's status as high, caste dignity and above all patriarchal male power, resulted in disproportionate sex ratio ended up Haryanvi men to import brides from far away states such as Assam and Kerala. Brides were brought without dowry or other marriage expenses from North Payyanur of Kannur district Kerala, provided they are vegetarians and fair.

Liaison of Thiyya servant women with British men lead to mixture of blood and it was easily identifiable from the hair, eye and skin colour of the child born out of it. They were excommunicated and even after three to four generations this event was raised especially during the occasion of marriage alliances. Even the Thiyya gentlemen married to such *tharavad* had to face discrimination. But later during 1920s and 1930s family with "white

connections” were reincorporated into community reasoning their decision to stay in the caste while they had opportunity to convert to Christianity also their class due to their occupation added benefits. Still the stain of white blood remained in social divisions, being mocked at and in some other occasions white connection was boasted about. What is evident is that endogamy is tied to power and social status at local level –in the domestic, village, or caste and it is less about the purity of blood (Abraham, 2014).

Marriages in Kerala even in present society do not think of forming alliance with people from other castes apart from one’s own and it is evident from the matrimonial advertisements which begins with the Nair beauty, Ezhava beauty and so on, and hardly do we see verbatim such as Dalit beauty. Marriage can be used as a tool to treat and erradicate inter caste enmity and also the black devil of society, the dowry system in the long run. People from intellectual lot such as Kumaran Ashan, Sahodaran Ayappan, Sree Narayana Guru have always tried to promote inter caste marriages. It is really upsetting to see marriage bureaus which endorse same caste marriage in the name of Sree Narayana Guru (Shreekumar, 2009).

Kalmijn (1998) points out to the flaw in marriage pattern studies. In case of endogamy if two groups do not marry between them it does not mean both groups show closure. Along with that local marriage market, residential area, group size exectra will determine opportunity for endogamy. Highly educated people of minority group show a tendency towards less endogamy as their education provides them opportunity to interact with members of other groups. It is “Third parties” which holds an exerting power to foster endogamy by means of group identification and group sanction.

Even while Caste endogamy is strictly followed by all caste groups across India based on the horoscope matching and dowry age at marriage increases or decreases (Sheela & Audinarayana, 2003). Where economic

growth tends to decrease discrepancy people prefer to cross caste boundary if they benefit from exchange both status wise and economically. While compared to upper caste people from scheduled caste have shown more preference, that is higher the caste, education or socioeconomic status the less likely they prefer boundary-crossing. Among upper caste while people from lower and lower middle income preferred boundary-crossing in case of scheduled caste socioeconomic status is inversely proportional to it. Among scheduled caste people belonging to upper income showed interest to marry up. With increasing age one is more likely to prefer boundary-crossing. From the qualitative interviews with prospective brides it is evident that given a choice to decide they would prefer boundary-crossing (Ahuja & Ostermann, 2015).

Sikh community is known for their enforcement of customs and rituals; they prefer early marriages and procreation soon after emphasizing on a male offspring. Pioneer Sikh immigrants to America faced a great restriction from law, considered as undesirable invaders, no citizenship, no rights on land and had to live enforced celibacy. This ended up in forcing them to marry in proximity and children born out of such mixed marriages adopted mother's culture leaving behind patriarchal societal cultures of Sikh men their third generation completely adopted American culture and got acculturated (Gonzales,1987). While marriage acts as a tool in enforcing caste endogamy it can also act to eradicate it.

North Indian kinship and marriage systems based on village exogamy compared with South Indian systems of cousin marriages have led to lower rates of female seclusion and a more favourable sex ratio for women in South India than in the North (Dyson and Moore, 1983 as cited in Rew, Gangoli & Gill, 2013).

At Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu, irrespective of differences in ceremonies and customs based on religion, region, caste there are some generalization in the way socially marriage is arranged, caste and religious endogamy sacramental form followed, and the flow of economic resources. It has further led to abolishing prescribed bridegroom (*murai-mapillai*) system instead they are given token of acknowledgement. Men have power to choose, selection criteria are basically based on reputation, health, appearance, property, education and employment. Financial status of groom should be higher than bride. Girls' behaviour is utmost valued and for boy his as well as his relative's character is enquired because of the fear of any improper behaviour being 'in the blood'. Illness (physical or psychological) and handicaps becomes exclusion criteria in marriage market (Meinzen, 1980).

Age at marriage

Age at marriage has been of interest to demographers as a means of fertility studies (reducing total reproductive span by increase in age at marriage thus curtailing fertility rate), population control measures, economic development and many more aspects of the overall development of a Nation ("Age of Indian brides rising, but many still marry at ages younger than the minimum set by law", 1987; Karkal & Rajan, 1989). There has been a deliberate attempt to raise it to avoid forced sex and to decrease birth rate (Dandekar, 1974; Gulati, 1976). Marriage is considered as synonym to conception (Manju & Sasidharan, 2019) so age at marriage has to be understood on a vaster canvas.

Marrying off daughters at puberty is the universality of marriage in India (Dandekar, 1974; "Age of Indian brides rising, but many still marry at ages younger than the minimum set by law", 1987). Even though at a very low pace age at marriage is showing an upward trend (Dandekar, 1974; Singh, 1974; Bloom & Reddy, 1986; Desai & Andrist, 2010). It took 70 years to get

an increment of 4 years from 12 to 16 years during mid-twentieth century (Dandekar, 1974). The average age at marriage for women has risen from 13.0 years (during 1901-1911) to 18.4 years (1971-1981).

Child marriage has been common in India, most of the religions in India are converts from Hinduism and ancient Hindu scriptures followed that girls should marry before puberty and it is a necessity as soon as they attain menarche (Agarwala, 1957). Child marriage has been practised irrespective of religion across centuries and legally it has been abolished as a result of social reform movements during the nineteenth century (British Government passing act during 1890). Despite it been legally addressed it is practised with severe consequences on the physical, psychological and social wellbeing of the girls (Cheekkilode, 1985).

The Sarda Act of 1929 fixed the marriage age of boys at 18 and girls at 14. By 1949 the marriageable age of the girl was raised from 14 to 15. The Child Marriage Restraint Act of 1978 revised upwards the age of the girl to 18 years and those of boy 21 years (Karkal, & Rajan, 1989).

India is listed in the twenty countries which conduct child marriages and forty percentages of the child marriages around the world happens in India. Even when legal age at marriage in India is eighteen majorities around fifty percent happens before eighteen. In comparison with other developing countries, India has one of the lowest ages at marriage (Karkal, & Rajan, 1989). Marriage age is low in northern and central part of India while compared to South India. The analysis is a micro level investigation into the influence of mate selection process on female age at marriage, sample collected from both rural and urban areas. Marriage initiation is seen after girl attains menarche by parents in mostly consulting girl. Higher age of groom than bride is universal. (Sheela & Audinarayana, 2003; Sarkar & Mukherjee, 2010).

With a decline in child marriage, age at marriage is likely to have become more compressed that is women mostly marry between the ages of 14 and 25, with a particularly tight clustering between ages 17 and 19, showing far less dispersion than observed in other societies (Desai & Andrist, 2010).

Traditional Indian family structure maintains a décor keeping elders of the family to rule and control others and status of the family was maintained by controlling the sexuality of the women as well. For the same women was sent in marriage as early as possible, her control was transferred from father to husband and later to son (Karkal & Rajan, 1989). Non-cooperation movement followed by civil disobedience movement which shook India brought women into public discourse definitely had an impact on the personal lives and is seen in conjugal relationships as well. Age at marriage arose especially among the middle-class women with an expectation of sound progeny born into a free nation which lead to higher mean age during the Independence period (Hatekar, Kumar, & Mathur, 2009).

The overall median age for men raised from 22 to 22.8 years and from 18.4 to 19.2 years during the period 2001-2011. In rural areas median age for men rose from 21.5 to 22 years and those of women from 18.1 to 18.9 years and among urban men it rose from 23.9 to 24.5 years and women show an increment from 19.3 to 19.9 years. With higher education median age at marriage increases. The mean age at marriage of males and females are 24.73 +_0.19 and 17.55+_0.20 years, respectively (Sarkar & Mukherjee, 2010).

Education (Singh, 1974; Meinzen, 1980; Bloom & Reddy, 1986; “Age of Indian brides rising, but many still marry at ages younger than the minimum set by law”, 1987), urban residence (Bloom & Reddy, 1986; “Age of Indian brides rising, but many still marry at ages younger than the minimum set by law”, 1987), income, employment, (Meinzen, 1980; “Age of Indian brides rising, but many still marry at ages younger than the minimum set by law”,

1987), inability to meet dowry demands (Meinzen, 1980) are some of the factors that have led to higher age at marriage while low level of industrialization, poverty, thought on unmarried status as disgraceful, parents finishing off their duty (Dandekar, 1974; Sabur, 2014), negative correlation between age at marriage and physical appearance (Burgess, & Wallin, 1944) are some of the factors that lead to early marriage. The same is the case regarding education and urbanization in four Latin American countries such as Mexico, Costa Rica, Columbia and Peru (Balakrishnan, 1976) China, Singapore and Japan as well (Jones & Gubhaju, 2009). While more educated women face difficulty in finding a desirable partner and the proportion of singlehood is higher for educated women the trend is inverse in case of men. Less educated men are found with higher proportion in singlehood as education is directly related to income prospects thereby playing a role in marriage market. This pattern is seen in China, Singapore and Japan as well (Jones & Gubhaju, 2009). An exploration into female's own capacity for autonomous decision making among lesser developed countries along a period of 1950 to 2005 states that even though a minimal but a change is happening across decades. With increasing education and urbanization female age at marriage is found to increase and spousal age gap declines (Carmichael, 2011).

Marriage pattern has changed showing two patterns: one a sustained change such as seen in East and South east Asia and other showing hesitance to rise age, typical of South Asia. Sri Lanka has attained a later marriage age while Bangladesh maintains early marriage. Influence from patriarchal society, delay in marriage viewed as a failure from the part of men (fathers and brothers) to identify a suitable groom, increasing age leading to difficulty in finding partner thus ending up giving more dowry, lack of acceptance for unmarried girl are some factors which hold early marriage as universal in Bangladesh. While in Sri Lanka urbanization, education, and employment rate

are few factors which has lead decisions to be more individualistic reassuring personal choices rather than being collectivistic (Caldwell, 2005). Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, Nepal and Bangladesh have shown delay in raise in age while compared to India (“Age of Indian brides rising, but many still marry at ages younger than the minimum set by law”,1987).

Report by UNICEF, 2012 regarding age at marriage among married women between 20-24 states that majority of marriages before legal age happens in Malappuram (34.8%) and least in Pathanamthitta (0%) among the districts of Kerala (Sulfath,2013). Marriage pattern within a community is determined by the culture which is sustained within it and the local communities around it has nothing to do with it (Bloom & Reddy,1986).

While Mean age at marriage in Kerala is 20. 87 which is much above the mean while compared to all India mean 17. 89, proportion getting married before age 16 is much lower in Kerala even below that of all India proportion (Desai & Andrist, 2010). When all- India mean was 13 years it corresponded to 17.3 years in Kerala which shows that women in Kerala enjoyed a better status. Spread of Christianity emphasized education and celibacy leading to high age at marriage or no marriage at all while spread of Islam stressed on declining age at marriage. Weakening of matriarchal system and spread of female education took place simultaneously. Usually education is thought of as a determinant of higher age at marriage but in case of Kerala higher age at marriage came much prior to female education, because it is higher age that insisted parents to keep their girls in schools or colleges as awaiting centre for matrimony. Mere increase in age without female education do not reduce population from Kerala experience it is evident that a combination of factors is essential to attain the same (Gulati,1976).

Time period between 1891-1951 was looked based on the regional difference in the mean age at marriage and it was found that Kerala then

called Travancore- Cochin maintained the highest female age at marriage and in case of males second highest mean age at marriage (Agarwala,1957).

Desai & Andrist (2010) found that marriage is part of the gender scripts in households. Study overwhelmingly supports the contention that the youth tends to prefer a later age for their marriages as compared to the parents' actual age of marriage (Rao & Rao,1979). Balakrishnan (1976) study of female age at marriage and some of its correlates such as education in the rural and semi-urban areas of four Latin American countries such as Mexico, Costa Rica, Columbia and Peru show that ideal age at marriage are greater than actual age for all groups also with increasing education this is greater. With a background of urban life and education female shows a greater tendency to marry late.

A trend in age at marriage across three generations was studied and found that a clear discrepancy exists between their desire and action regarding the age at which they have arranged their daughter's marriage. They marry them at an early age out of the circumstances within the family and society, liability, concern on availability of suitable partner, and dowry consideration (Singh,1974). According to Todd's typology of family type Southern India has asymmetrical community family and that marriage is determined by customs, so neither parents nor children has a say in marriage decision (Carmichael, 2011).

To sum up studies on age at marriage would be to detail Goswami (2014) who attempted to explore the temporal change in marriage pattern at India and the reason behind it, its effect on different aspects of gender relations, and to examine impact on fertility decline in India. Its pattern for the period 1971-2001 reveals that the age at marriage increased only marginally, especially female age. A trend which implies that in order to achieve universal higher age at marriage individual attention has to be paid

towards backward groups. Spread of education beyond primary level is found to accelerate nuptiality transition in India leading to delayed marriage and in turn to fertility decline. Indian society is showing a strong sense of adhering to familial system attuned to cultural context showing regional variations as well. Cultural factors exert more influence in determining age at marriage females who have higher age at marriage. Fertility transition brought by selective son preferences might bring about shortage of brides which may bring about positive changes in marriages and family by relaxing inter-caste and inter-state marriages or by the reduction of dowry demanded and it would be mostly happening at lower strata.

Age difference

A wide study using World Fertility Survey data across 28 countries shows that except very few all prefer women to be younger than men and countries which have an academic atmosphere bestowing higher status to women have less age difference whereas those with patriarchal kinship structure have higher inter-spousal age difference (Casterline, Williams, & McDonald, 1986). Average spousal gap is 7 years at West Bengal (Sarkar & Mukherjee, 2010). Average age difference among Indian sample is three years (Buss, 1989). The lesser the age difference between couples the better would be the bonding between them is one observation. A survey conducted among *kalashala* students reports they recommend age difference should not be greater than five years (Satheeshan, 1976).

Conventional wisdom exists regarding what is acceptable or ideal when it comes especially to the age difference between spouses. Certain choices exist in age difference because certain age difference is adopted widely while few others are avoided. The popular notion that males should be elder than their wives prevail but if that age difference is disparate it is not much encouraged as it underlines a prohibition of incest taboo (Vera,

Berardo, & Berardo, 1985; Casterline, Williams & McDonald, 1986). Vera, Berardo and Berardo (1985) through their study proves wrong the popular notion that age dissimilar couples are mostly found among upper class and that with increasing age disparity marital quality diminishes. According to them age disparity between couples is even more common among lower class.

In Kerala scenario men are married to women who are younger to them, so while men enter middle age with insecurities of losing their charm and strength their wives would still be at early adulthood. Initially men try to hide their sexual incapacities from wives. Later they start blaming women of being unattractive or indifferent. Once men stop denial, they start thinking about their inability to satisfy wife at the same time they would have intense desire to hold back the sexual power. There are men who think about the possibility of wife to have an affair with younger men, their own interest during adolescence to elderly women intensifies these thoughts. Even though girls suffered from marrying elderly, middle aged men benefitted from this, a marriage of middle age to adolescent (Sasidharan, 2008).

Wedding Arrangements

Wedding days are often condemned as a day for showing off one's social status and opines that upper class and educated should set an example by avoiding extravagance (Hridayakumari, 1996). Across times wedding invitation letters have undergone a great change. While earlier invitations were supposedly done on behalf of grandparents and uncles of both paternal and maternal side now it has modified by adding on invitation from parents as well. Also, number of verbatim is reduced and invitations printed in English as a status quo. Though invitation letters are increasing in its accessibility it still is a must for parents/relatives to personally hand over the invitation letter (Rameshkumar, 1985).

Dowry

Dowry existed during pre-colonial period, managed by women it had a power to support them during emergency in nineteenth century. With British rule which prohibited women from acquiring property it attained a form where dowry was given during marriage and husbands took hold of it (Nithya, 2013; Chatterjee, 2018). The price model of dowry sees dowries as transfers between families (Anachalam and Logan, 2008 as cited in Nithya, 2013). Among Upper castes of Bengal in order to attract men with government services it emerged and later it spread towards other Northern states. It diffused to South India among urban, educated, upper castes and slowly got deep-rooted in rural areas, lower castes and other communities such as Christians and Muslims (Rao, 1993). Thus, dowry acquired universality across all castes through a process termed ‘sanskritization’; an adoption of upper caste behaviours by lower castes in order to attain higher social status (Srinivas, 1972).

It is during the mid-20th century among all communities, dowry in the name of “*varavila*” gained popularity in Kerala (Devika, 2008; Lindberg, 2001, Osella and Osella, 2000, Uyl, 1994, Billig, 1992, Kodoth and Eapen, 2003 as cited in Kodoth, 2006). *Varavila* is an amount given to groom in accordance with his status. Unmarried women were tabooed with low status in the society which in turn made it compulsory for bride’s family to arrange marriage even after paying huge dowry (Devika, 2008).

Nilayamkode (2005) mentions that during mid-twentieth century Namboodiriillangal (namboodiri homes) being taken away as possession in return of debt (*japthi*) became common incident. Namboodiri homes were under debt mainly due to the dowry system prevalent during those times. Writer recalls that during her own marriage dowry was around ten thousand rupees which was a huge amount then.

Thulaseedharan (1978) conducted a survey among 400 college students on the dowry system. Results are interesting while 96% of girls were completely against it, 4% belonging to upper and upper middle class find no mistake in giving dowry to get an appropriate partner. Only 30 % of males do not prefer dowry at all (out of which 22% high class, 6% single child or has no sisters to lend in marriage, rest 2% belongs to low class but does not approve dowry system), 20% do not prefer dowry provided wives are employed and rest 20% declared they would only marry if they get dowry (reason behind their decision to pay the debt caused for education and other purposes, to pay to get into a job and most importantly to arrange money for their own sister's marriage).

Women marked by a combination of poor, social, economic and normative gender attributes, which restricted their access to patriarchal norms of femininity were relegated to the margins of marriage market (Kodoth, 2006). Dowry is directly related to the socioeconomic status of the family and those families which can't meet dowry demands finds its way by selling earnings of their whole life. Situation becomes worse if a parent has more girls and at the end of it, family becomes bankrupt/debt. These are the context in which we find suicides and murder related to dowry, delayed marriages and spinsters. The awareness on the effort behind a marriage makes it hard for a girl who is undergoing a difficult marriage, whether it is sexual or physical harassment, to break out of wedlock and so they choose to suffer especially if they have siblings. There are even cases where parents are forced to arrange their daughter's marriage with someone who is either elderly, divorcee, or whose character is not proper thereby showing an adjustment which later on leads to marital conflicts (Thulaseedharan, 1978; Devika, 2008). Divorce brings about changes in the social status especially in case of females they are less accepted. They are left with no choice if unemployed to make a living

which explains why many remained married despite the difficulties faced (Narayanan, 2008).

Sharadakutty (2012) shares experience which leads girls to end up in life risking situations as an aftermath of unnecessary social customs followed during wedding and pregnancy thereafter. Bride's family are expected to take expenses and serve grooms family with expensive gifts which many can't fulfil and suffer very badly both physically and psychologically. Further author underlines the role the State should take for the betterment of women after marriage, she also criticizes the way girls are brought up instilling gender stereotype stating, "You are supposed to go and live in another house".

According to the bequest theory of dowry, while sons obtain their inheritance upon the death of the parents, daughters receive their share of the family wealth at marriage (Suranet.al, 2004 as cited in Nithya, 2013). Among Christians and Brahmins, girls would not have access to their familial heir after marriage so they would be given money and gold accordingly during their wedding. This system evolved as dowry and people of other communities also started to adopt the same system (Velappan, 1977).

Bargaining dowry based on groom's job reaches its peak if it's a doctor, engineer, bank officer, later on employed abroad/gulf received the same status (Ashtamoorthi, 1983). Higher the position of groom's family higher would be the dowry demands (Billig, 1992). Highly educated girls are supposed to pay high dowry in order to arrange marriage with an equally efficient and educated boy (Ushakumari, 2008). Matrimonial advertisement is a clear indicator for preferences to attain high profile groom by providing heavy dowry as a status quotient as well as for personal gains (Thulaseedharan, 1978).

Dowry is often looked upon as the by-product of competition between women folk to attain men with resources. Unlike older times it is not ascribed status but the achieved status in terms of education, occupation and income that adds to groom price, dowry as an investment to better future of daughters in the long run (Kaur, 2012). Sabitha (2013) discusses how marriage has transformed from a custom to a performance where media, gold and ornament dealers, other merchant groups related to marriage gain along the marriage celebration.

Initial Years of Marriage

Mother-in-law

Fashiya (2017) explored psychosocial predictors of marital well-being using variables such as relationship quotient, emotional competence, Big-Five personality, Interpersonal sensitivity, Money management ability, and In-law interaction issues among married people to study the relationship, predictive and moderating effects of these variables. Major findings of the study are; as emotional competence increases marital well-being increases; high relationship quotient and ability to manage money lead to marital well-being; as interpersonal sensitivity increases there is an increment in intimacy, concern for relation and overall marital well-being; as In-law interaction issues increased there was a decrease in marital well-being. Marital well-being was best predicted by relationship quotient, interpersonal sensitivity, conscientiousness and In-law interaction issues; emotional competence and conscientiousness had a moderating effect on the relationship between marital well-being and other study variables such as relationship quotient and In-law interaction issues; intimacy, concern for relation and commitment were more among those participants who were newly wedded; as number of children increased marital well-being also increased; and participants between age

group 20-30 experienced highest and those between 50-60 age least in marital well-being.

Biju Abraham (2010) found that a significant correlation exists between variables under study such as stress tolerance, altruistic behaviour, spirituality, emotional adjustment, couples love, happiness, money management ability and marital satisfaction. Amongst these eight variables researchers extracted three factors by means of factor analysis which are marital contentment, moral integrity and emotional endurance.

Rittenour and Kellas (2015) used attribution theory to interpret mother-in-laws behaviour. While daughter-in-laws who are satisfied with mother-in-laws tends to make external attribution of mother-in-laws behaviours, dissatisfied daughter-in-laws tended to make more internal attributions. The degree of similarity between couples regarding mother-in-laws behaviours predicted greater marital satisfaction. Even though the most literature studies are on conflict and broad range in the quality of relationship, many are good with “high affection and little or no conflict” (Merrill, 2007 as cited in Allendorf, 2006). Turner, Young, and Black (2006) stresses on the necessity of both mother-in-law and daughter-in-law to perceive each other as “being part of the family”.

Sandel (2004) posits that any attempt by daughter-in-law is viewed as violating the societal hierarchy thus challenging the authority of elders meanwhile the motive behind their behaviour would be unintentional. Culture demands Indian daughter-in-laws to provide more care for their mother-in-laws but deep-inside they do not feel the closeness nor attachment towards them (Datta, Poortinga, & Marcoen, 2003).

An exertion of power and control over daughter-in-laws is demonstrated by means of controlling freedom of movements, intrusion into

personal choices, passage of derogatory comments on natal family members (Rew, Gangoli & Gill, 2013). Most of the time wrong is not identified as questionable. Even the legal understanding in India on mother-in-law initiated violence as a conflict between women or dowry related, rather than as a form of gender based violence against women (Gangoli & Rew, 2011).

When in-laws' issues are focused mostly it is mother-in-laws who is seen central to issues, rarely does father-in-law come into picture, the over protective mother does not like to share her son with anybody not even with his wife. The sexuality enjoyed by young people is always a problem for middle aged because they are facing a decline in all areas where they once ruled especially in sex life. Sending own children to earn a living to faraway places such as gulf can be read as intentional in this context (Sasidharan, 2008).

Long distance relationship

Bryant, Cogen and Meehan (2004) posit that even in long-term marriages, conflicts in extended family relations will erode marital stability, satisfaction and commitment, over time. While compared to people of other states Keralites are economically on better situation even though less people are seen working hard in agricultural fields and factories, major source of income flow in as gulf money (Mumthaz, 2012).

During 1970s and 1980s Kerala found a means of living by migrating to Gulf countries mostly Dubai. But it gave birth to husbands and wives who were in distress and few among had to attain professional help. *Kathupaattu* is a type of *mappilapaattu*, its content is in the form of a letter sent by wives of muslim gulf migrants which includes the pain and suffering, both physical and psychological a wife undergoes while she has to live apart from her husband for years (Jameel & Tharameel, 2008). Intrusion of gulf into

Malayali family resulted in economic boom but the separation from family especially among couples have altered sex life and definitely changed the inner life of Malayalees. Marriage passes through storm and strain caused by this separation and their short duration of reunions are meant mostly to satisfy their bodily needs. It is the memory of collected moments created during these vacations which give lives to their separation. Author doubts when body gratify awaited pleasures where does love stand a position (Mohamad, 2005; Baradwaj, 2006).

There is a term called “gulf syndrome” coined to describe the peculiar circumstances experienced by Gulf expatriate families in Kerala a situation which creates ‘virtual widows’ and expatriates who face social and psychological issues as they live apart from dear and near ones (India’s ‘Virtual widows’ suffers as husbands seek work in the Gulf, n.d.). Job related emigration has led to extramarital relationships and exogamy. Survey regarding premarital relationship and the increasing divorce cases throws light on noticeable changes in the family with the increasing economy and power structure brought by it (Mohamad, 2005).

Matrimonial Advertisements

While looking previous researches on matrimonial advertisements it is seen that studies are broadly categorized into either comparing ads placed by males and females, testing the hypotheses of status/attractiveness exchange theory, comparing ads by heterosexuals and gay/lesbians/bisexuals or analysing the presentation of self in advertisements (Smith & Stillman, 2002).

Analysis of matrimonial advertisements have put forth a notion which goes in line with the evolutionary hypothesis that males offer status and females offer physical attractiveness in return (Davis, 1990; Sabur, 2014; Gil-Burmann, Pehiez & Sanchez, 2002) employment, intellectual status and

valued commitment in a relationship as cues to status (Davis, 1990). There is no difference based on sex of preferred mate in terms of the trade-off between physical appearance and personality; homosexuals are similar to their heterosexual counterparts in mate preference strategies, sex-typical (Lawson, James, Jansson, Koyama & Hill, 2014). In contrast to this there is a study which states that gender interacts with sexual orientation to determine partner choice (Smith & Stillman, 2002) that bisexual women offer and request more physical traits from female partner. Bisexual women demand physical traits might be because they want to make a choice worth going against cultural norms.

Personal ads analysis concentrating on race specific differentials brings out a result in contrary to status/attractiveness theory in African American samples. African American women are less confirming to tradition due to the socioeconomic historical conditions prevailing in their cultural context. They even though offer physical attractiveness does not seek financial success in men. Author reasons that it might be because of high age of single women or lack of success in market pool that lead to adjustment in demand. (Stack, 1999). Similarly, in contrast to prior research study based on “female seeking male” ads found that ads with successful and ambitious women attracted more responses than slim and attractive featuring ads which was posted by the researchers in internet bulletin boards. This result was surprising to the researchers as well and they reason the results obtained perhaps be on the population who are mostly above middle class and educated men active on internet (Strassberg & Holty, 2003).

Young women prefer men older than themselves, with an age difference that decreases as their own age increases; in contrast, men prefer women younger than themselves, (Sabur, 2014) and the age difference they seek increases as they get older (Oda, 2001; Thiessen, Young, & Burroughs,

1993; Kenrick, & Keefe, 1992; Gil-Burmann, Pehiez & Sanchez, 2002). Older women and women with children in previous marriages face disadvantage in marriage market. They become non-traditional in exchange by providing financial status and preferring men despite their age, for them it is not necessary that men are older than women (Steve, 1996). Irrespective of gender those who had more to offer demanded more from their prospective partner. As age increases women decrease their demands as well (Gil-Burmann, Pehiez & Sanchez, 2002).

The content of advertisements under analysis is stating either own or desired characteristics of the advertisers. People usually announce their age group rather than the desired age of partner. Majority of advertisers belong to mid-twenties, both bride and groom category. There is a strong preference of horoscope and star matching among Hindu community (Hundal, 2015).

In an exploration into the marriages of three generations the first generations couples did not see before marriage, their opinion not consulted, it was completely familial decision. Second generations same pattern followed but rarely romantic relationships sprouted and in third generation major changes with prospective bride/groom exerting choices even while children choose partner parents had clear criteria for acceptability. Loss of parents leads to expedite marriage as it is considered disadvantageous in marriage market. Age, beauty, educational qualification, occupation, personal reputation and family background are considered by the middle class to be the most important factors in choosing potential partners. There is rise in ideal age at marriage of women 23-27 and men between 25 and 35. Men taller than women necessity (Sabur, 2014).

In studies that compares advertisements between samples taken from India and those of New York and America resident an evident fact is that while Indian sample emphasize on social attributes such as caste and religion

and personal attributes such as education and profession (Ryali, 1998) and family background, region of origin, and skin color to be important in mate selection (Siddiqi & Reeves, 1989). New York samples and American samples prioritize similarity in language and interests as holding cultural identity, assuring a sense of belongingness, thus assimilation and acculturation to their culture (Siddiqi & Reeves, 1989; Ryali, 1998). Skin colour has aesthetic meaning in India while in American culture it is viewed as racial connotation also there eligible candidates among the small population is minimal so it is more of a criteria in India than in Indians in America (Siddiqi, & Reeves, 1989).

“Vadhuvine aavashyamundu” a story by M. T. Vasudhevan Nair depicts the way matrimonial advertisements were used as a means to prank on people who have considered it seriously as a platform for matchmaking across Kerala. It demonstrates how during the initial periods of gaining popularity matrimonial advertisements faced difficulty in finding a market value. During 1970s matrimonial advertisements were considered as a bad omen because it was thought as opted by those who do not have kindred to take up responsibilities. But with Hindustan Times, Times of India, Indian Express finding out market value there appeared newspapers for that purpose alone at Hyderabad named Marriage Chronicle (Ashttamoorthi, 1983).

Ashttamoorthi (1983) analysed matrimonial advertisements at Kerala concentrating on the verbatim used in ads. It's a world of men who are handsome, tall, and smart, women are described as beautiful, fair, slim. Exchange of horoscope thereafter photographs are common in men's buyers' market. Bride seeing ceremony completely depends on the family's decision when and where to meet. Advertisements which prefer convent educated, talent in singing, offering job excetra were found rarely. Widower prefer either a divorcee or a widow but without children. Author has done analysis

on the advertisements that are published in Mathrubhumi weekly and found age at which ads are posted and their corresponding frequency as well. 42% in between age 25-30 and 37% between 20-25 and 3% below 20 years among girls and 42% in between age 30-35, 38% between 25-30 and less than 1% between 20-25 years among boys.

Beena (1988) analysis of matrimonial advertisements published on a Malayalam newspaper for three consecutive years conclude that it is educated lot belonging to Hindu community who utilize newspapers for finding a match, mostly for females. Ramshida and Sasidharan (2015) analysed content of advertisements of seven leading Malayalam newspapers of a single day and found that males exchange their financial stability in return for the physical appearance offered by female advertisers.

When looking into the preferences in occupation along the marriage market it is seen that it is the cultural meaning attached to it rather than the economic status of an occupation that determines occupational homogamy (Kalmijn, 1994). Professionals and qualified people prefer equally qualified partners. Government employees prefer mostly government employed partner, whereas others holding high occupational status prefer feminine characteristics such as beautiful, well cultured, adjustable and homely (Hundal, 2015). Certain jobs have more value compared to others in marriage market and there are even situations where proposals are forwarded on a condition where bride's family would meet the expenses of groom's further education. These trends are only seen among upper class and upper middle class (Thulaseedharan, 1978). Actresses and nurses were viewed as debauched even during second half of twentieth century (John, 2005).

Anupama (2008) describes how even educated and independent women face rejections in marriage market, how even a liberated woman is expected to be feminine by putting an example of newspaper matrimonial

advertisement. “Wanted bride, fair and good looking, post graduate or above, working or willing to work, god fearing, music loving, home loving, domestically well trained”. Under these circumstances Gangadharan (2006) suggests that it is feasible to adopt the dating and affair before marriage as a means of marriage intermediation a common practice across the world and then arrange it in the presence of family and relatives, a midway approach. South Asian Women residing at Britain exert their agency by negotiation, manipulation and persuasion thereby finding a midway between traditional cultural practices and personal choices (Pande,2014). Despite the industrialization and modernization which lead to emphasize on individual values over group values in marital decision making reflection of communal/social arrangement is evident from analyses of matrimonial advertisements (Ryali,1998).

Pache (1998) mentions that marriage fairs organized by lower-and middle-class families belonging to Maheshwari caste took maximum effort to find a potential mate for their children of marriageable ages, taking initiative to criticize and spread awareness against dowry and unnecessary expenses, to convince parents to set aback economic background so as to focus on the compatibility of partners and individual choices. But these marriage fairs can also be seen as a means of enforcing endogamy because it was people belonging to same caste who participated. The first fair at Indore during 1987 a ground-breaking step as it defends the taboo for a girl to be exposed also a boy’s family admitting that he could not attract a partner yet. A catalogue of potential candidates with their profile was circulated and it was useful for further references, details of family members especially of paternal and maternal uncles as well given in it. These fairs can be seen as alternative to matchmaking.

Matchmakers

Matchmakers initially begins for fun later gets involved in it when people start approaching them. Weddings are occasions to meet more people where next one proposal matching gets in motion. Mostly homogamy. Majority was arranged marriages using social networks, marriage mediators and websites rare phenomenon as it was considered as lack of individual social networks (Sabur, 2014). Marriage intermediators /brokers came into the scene, they fixed their fee according to the gold and dowry given and received this amount from both parties. *Jyothsyan* is the person in marriage market fixing dates of each events but now considering the facilities of those to attend wedding Sundays are preferred date for marriage (Velappan, 1977).

Summary of Review

A review on existing literature on marriage reveals that it has been studied under a broad spectrum by academicians belonging to different domains such as litterateur, demographers, anthropologists, evolutionists, historians, sociologists, psychologists, feminists, and even more. Majority of studies in the area of marriage includes studies related to sex roles (Bernard & Sollie, 1987; Isaac & Shah, 2004; McGovern & Meyers, 2002; Peterson, Baucom, Elliot & Farr, 1989), gender studies (Jackson, Miller, Oka, & Henry, 2014; Dasgupta & Basu, 2011; Elliot & Umberson, 2008; Schoenfeld, Bredow & Huston, 2012), religion (Perry, 2015; Schramm, Marshall, Harris & Lee, 2012; Suneetha, 2012; Agnes, 1996), race (Broman, 1993; Miller & Kail, 2016), cultural studies (Furdyna, Tucker & James, 2008; Chung & Kim, 2014; Cheng, 2010; Fisloglu, 2001; Kline, Zhang, Manohar, Ryu, Suzuki & Mustafa, 2012). Studies related to the importance of variables such as communication, attachment, self -esteem, sociability, relationship between members in the family, occupational stress, marital satisfaction, marital conflict, adjustment patterns, life span studies are surplus in number. For the purpose of fulfilling

the objectives of current study only those reviews relevant to the present research is acknowledged.

Review of literature chapter is presented into theoretical and empirical perspective, while theories related to marriage, its formation, maintenance, and dissolution are discussed in theoretical framework, the relevance of the institution of marriage in society, the position it holds along the history and the status of women across decades are detailed in empirical perspective. Basically enquiring about the collective cultural decision and the individual choices in matrimony.

Chapter **3**

METHOD

Method

Humans are social beings who by means of social interaction create a culture. Each culture shares a set of meanings and symbols. The moment culture is viewed in symbolic system it becomes interdisciplinary in nature. While considering marriage as a social institution it is not possible to understand adequately from a single discipline, it requires taking different perspectives and integrating it to reach a comprehensive knowledge. Thus current research in psychology embraces the fields of sociology, anthropology and history-basically the four major domains of social sciences.

As researchers belong to psychology background it was demanded by the study to fill the knowledge gap which existed regarding other disciplines and for the same researchers utilized the expertise by continuously interacting with the subject experts, research scholars and students. By guided assistance from them, researchers were directed towards books and review materials; readings and discussions headed towards further in-depth readings. Information gained by these means along with the discussions with fellow research scholars at the department of psychology was instrumental in designing the current research. As a beginning, current research used an inductive approach by means of grounded theory.

By minimizing the distance between researcher and participants, researcher intended to study marriage from the perspective of participants themselves. In order to gain a true understanding of participants' world, researcher entered the locality under study, lived there, and gathered data by means of participant observation and semi-structured interview in the first slice of data. It is by gaining insights from this slice, and discussions with

subject experts and scholars of other disciplines that researcher designed further slices of data collection.

Grounded theory

Grounded theory studies usually are initiated from general research interests such as identifying views or perspectives on a topic or investigating processes or phenomena of interest within their local contexts and settings, and from there arriving at insights and explanatory schemes that are relevant to (“grounded in”) real-world problems, a previously under researched topic area, or both (Henwood & Pidgeonas cited in Camic, Rhodes, & Yardley, 2003).

Data collection, coding and analysis takes place simultaneously, it requires a movement backwards and forwards during research process to reflect upon the collected data and the emerging categories; both leaving remarks on each other. It demands the involvement and unending commitment from a motivated researcher who is expected to get immersed in the area under study in order to observe the actor’s environment and the interactions and interpretations that occur (Goulding, 1999). For the same what is required of a researcher is theoretical sensitivity, a set of characteristics and skills in researchers, many of which comes with experience, which comes into play as they produce codes and categories.

A category is a conceptual element of the theory and property is the conceptual element of category; category and property are concepts indicated by data. Researcher interacts with the data, which are constantly modified by the emerging ideas by asking questions, comparing between evolving categories and looking for opposites. (Glaser & Strauss, 2006).

Researcher by analysing the data in the field and using the emerging concepts from that analysis decides where to sample from next. Thus

sensitivity to emerging concepts drives the way that data are collected, in a sampling process called theoretical sampling. It is a sampling strategy in which participants are selected to further explore ideas that the researcher is developing from data already collected thus clarifying certain questions to ensure all possibilities from a data. (Gordon- Finlayson as cited in Forrester, 2010).

In theoretical sampling it is possible to approach using different kinds of data from different vantage point of view in order to enrich the categories or to develop its properties. As categories emerge from data through analysis the researcher has freedom to decide about where and how to gather additional data. These different views are called “Slices of data”. Initially researcher approaches participants who are accessible later on as concepts starts developing further individuals, places, situations, and contexts are explored so as to strengthen their findings. Different slices of data are either used as different modes of knowing by comparative analysis to explain and integrate, or as a test of each other while it is comparatively analysed (Glaser & Strauss, 2006).

Memo writing places a crucial role all throughout analytical process and are document of the researchers’ thoughts. It varies in content and conceptualization depending upon the phase at which research progresses. Content of memos can be anything from insights, guesses, modifications, explanations, grouping of categories, to or comparisons. Memo informs what the code is about and provides the pivotal step of breaking the categories into components and elaborating the codes (Lawrence & Tar, 2013).

Process of theoretical sampling continues until categories are fully developed and ceases to find new details, ideas, insights or properties to be added to categories how much ever data you have gathered. Data collection ends at a point when the categories are saturated.

Investigators began research with a broad objective to explore womens' experience along the process of marriage. For this purpose investigators began data collection at an 'amsom' located in a village and interviewed women who got married during the period 2005-2014. This data of recent marriages comprises the first slice of data. Marriages' of recent times can be understood in the light of a past that tends to perpetuate itself. In this context the second slice of data considered are women belonging to the same locality aged fifty and above. Results obtained from the field were validated by conducting a focus group discussion among the natives of the locality. Post scripts formed a major resource of happenings in the field. The pattern of marriages pursued through matrimonial advertisements, matchmakers and bureaus formed the third, fourth and fifth slice of data.

Slice 1

Sample: The selection of a portion of the finite population with a view to draw conclusion about the universe or population is known as sampling (Wilkinson & Bhandarkar, 2000; Battaglia, 2008). In India at an administrative level states are divided into many districts, which is further divided into taluks and taluks are divided into panchayats. In each panchayat there are many villages and every village based on population are divided into amsoms. A village constitutes two to eight amsoms. Amsom is basically partition of Indian villages, and one such amsom was selected according to researcher's convenience for research. Convenience sampling also called as opportunity sampling is a non-probability sampling technique useful when target population is defined in terms of very broad category (Alvi, 2016). The primary selection criterion relates to the ease of obtaining sample, which in turn is related to the cost of locating elements of population, geographic distribution of the sample and obtaining interview data from the selected elements (Battaglia, 2008)

Government of India has launched National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) as an attempt to provide equitable health service to all. Every village is envisioned to provide trained female health activist who will be called ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist). They are trained to work in between Public health system and community. The general norm will be one ASHA per 1000 population (Eruthickal, 2016).

The total population of the amsom selected consists of 8302 (4152 females and 4150 males) residing in 1698 houses amongst which 269 householder is females. At the amsom selected for research under the primary health centre there are eight ASHA workers based on the geographical distribution. Researchers have randomly selected two areas (from the eight ASHA workers, which had equal probability for being chosen as sample) which comes under two different ASHA. Inclusion criteria for sample selection were all those married women with a marital longevity of ten years and below (duration 2005-2014) who reside in the locality selected for research.

The locality considered for study had a distinguished tradition of coir industries which have now, over the years has declined tremendously. Of late gulf emigration for job purpose is a major source of income. The locality has progressed and is evident from the facilities available, such as four schools, Anganwadi, government primary health centres, three medical clinics, laboratory, post office, two political party office, and a cultural centre were people gather to read. People in general are found to be cooperative and productive towards the welfare of the locality. The population of the locality is an amalgamation of Hindus, Muslims and Christians as is quite evident from the number of temples and masjids.

To elaborate on sample, there constitute a total of 555 houses which belong to area covered by two ASHA workers. Investigator personally went

into each house to interview participants who met inclusion criteria. It was very difficult for the researcher to find out the number of marriages of girls that occurred in the concerned locality across a period of 2005-2014. Using documents and individually enquiring, it was found that a total of 244 marriages occurred during the period. Except for the 18 who are eligible for study but showed resistance, or lives at a distance and/or abroad rest 226 who met inclusion criteria participated in the research. In short, 226 participants from 555 houses.

The number of houses included in the current research is 187 out of 555 houses. These 187 houses are further categorised on the basis of number of marriages consummated. Number of houses with single marriage was 154, number of houses with two marriages was 28, and those with three and four marriages are 4 and 1 respectively.

Gaining access to the field

To present the most nakedly honest document about the experience of data collection and to insert a witnessing self into the narrative it is important to describe the researcher's entry to the field. Once decided on collecting data from a particular geographical location, recognizing the importance to feel the place, researcher decided immersion as the best way. To get acquainted with the people of that locality the researcher stayed at the location and as part of the general etiquette began to mingle with the people around. The little chats with fellow walkers during her morning walks turned out to be fruitful because researcher herself felt comfortable being a part of new locality. As days passed by, the smiles given were returned and later more of females and children took initiative to come forward and get introduced to the new member of their locality. While elderly men got to know that researcher belong to psychology background they requested to conduct an interactive session for the adolescent' of that area.

By taking prior appointment from the researcher venue, date and time was fixed making sure of the convenience of both researcher and participants. It is to be noted that those sessions were requested exclusively for adolescent girls. Around twenty five participated in the sessions which were based on games from theatre of oppressed background.

Theatre of oppressed is a form of theatre credited to the Brazilian activist Augusto Boal who has been greatly influenced by the work of Paulo Freire. He wanted to create a form of theatre where the people become active and they explore, show, analyze and transform the reality in which they are living. Theatre of oppressed enables to rediscover our potential for creating change-both for ourselves individually and in the context in which we live and work (Boal, 2005). It is most meaningful when it is rooted in communities and their issues. Through a series of exercises, games, techniques and drama forms the aim is to understand social reality to be to change it. Researcher adopted the games which are apt to the locality and gave group based activity in order to be self-reflexive.

On the first day of session, researcher introduced herself to the participants and talked about the guidelines to be followed during the sessions in order to create a transparency between researcher and participants. The session of a particular day can be divided as warm-up activity, main activity, debrief and closure activity. The purpose of warm-up activity was to provide easiness between researcher and participants and also amongst the participants. Main activity was conducted by dividing the participants into groups, these activities took around an hour each. Participants comfort was the priority and so the researcher made sure that they get enough time to reflect upon, also they were set free to clarify their queries. Debriefing was necessary as it is the participants who have to share what they are thinking and feeling. Participants were requested to come forward and share their

experiences. Closure activity was intended to bring an end to the session. These sessions continued for five hours with intervals as and when required on Sundays for a month. After a month sessions were discontinued as it was the month of final examination of participants.

Even though the interactive sessions were conducted in demand of the people, it turned out to be really helpful to the researcher, as it enhanced her bond and reach to the public. Participants while conducting group activity portrayed some of their day to day life experiences which were informative to the researcher as it threw light on the finer details of the people at the locality. The participants on the last day of the session showed initiative to do something for the locality keeping up group morale. While thinking about their wish to do something for their place it struck researchers attention that an area beside the river bank which used to be a boat house has turned out to be a place engulf with shrubs and people frequently dump household wastes there. Participants were more than happy to clean the locality and by seeing their initiative elderly people has maintained the area thereafter. By then researcher has become familiar to the people and they have shown courtesy to invite her for the weddings at the locality. Researcher herself has become part of the place, feeling and looking like one among them eventually felt it important to visit the critical patients and to attend the death ceremony. Along the process of getting acquainted with the people of locality researcher started mingling with the people who are already in close association with the natives. Those who lived their life in the locality and who have known their place closely as part of their job as well, Anganwadi teachers and postman. Anganwadi teachers were informative regarding the total population and interaction with postman helped her to find out the exact geographical border of the location. The map of the locality is appended (Appendix I). The whole process took around two to three months meanwhile researcher had started

approaching houses by conveying her identity as a researcher, her need to talk with married women, basically the purpose of her research.

Mode of Data Collection

1. Semi-structured interview: Kvale (1996) defines research interviews as “attempts to understand the world from the subjects’ point of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples’ experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations”. It is basically about using communication to throw light on the complex inner life of thoughts and experience as it is key way in which we can understand our own and others’ worlds.

In the present research investigators embraced Semi-structured interview as it is pertinent to the purpose of the study to elicit first-hand information from the participants. Semi-structured interviews provide the participants enough space to disclose their experience without researcher prompting what to tell. A list of open-ended questions was prepared in advance keeping in mind what to ask the participants so that they open up about their life experiences, termed interview schedule. It was not necessarily used in every interview nor was a particular decor maintained in terms of order of questions. It was used as a guide during interviews, additional questions picked up during interviews were intentional in order to ensure completion of interview. Participants once interviewed were contacted again in order to clarify contradictions in the data or to collect more data on topics that appear important. It was essential especially in cases of first few interviews as interview schedule was re-examined taking insights from the interviews collected until then. At times same questions were asked again and interviewer was cautious about the logical correctness of the answers provided. After conducting certain number of interviews researcher conformed to terminologies used by participants; dialect, accent, normal

conversational style as it was obvious that they would be comfortable and fluent using their normal language, and as expected it facilitated data collection (Appendix II & III).

2. Participant observation: Participant observation is a process in which the observer's presence in a social situation is maintained for the purpose of scientific investigation (Schwartz & Schwartz, 1955). Researcher would try to understand participants world as they understand it, rather than those outside world might imagine it to be (Bogdan, 1973). To be authentic about the observations made from the field, researcher made sure to get immersed into their day-to-day interactions so as to understand them from their own normal network of social interactions. The way researcher got immersed into the field is described in detail under the title 'gaining access to field'. Researcher was vigilant about the marriage ceremonies and transactions related to it occurring in the field and were part of it so as to add a practical and concurrent dimension to it. Participant observation involves not only gaining access to the field and building rapport, but provides a rich account of written notes on what is been observed. Systematic and detailed field notes were kept along with memo writing about everything the researcher sees, thinks and feels important about the field and the participant's gestures and expressions.
3. Documents: A few documents related to marriage were cross checked to get an idea about the population of the locality and the number of marriage that occurred during the period considered under study. Survey reports taken by Anganwadi teachers, ASHA workers, marriage registers at then gramapanchayat and those stockpiled at masjid were considered for research.

4. Post scripts: Even after data collection investigator was in touch with the participants and frequent interactions sharing their life events still continues. Post script is about the major incidents in their life post data collection period.

Procedure: Establishing a proper rapport was inevitable and researcher took keen interest to make participants feel good about been part of the study, ensuring them confidentiality while taking verbal consent. Those who showed unwillingness were not compelled and were left out of the study. With those participants who became part of the research a kind of relationship got established and it still continues.

Beginning with general conversation it soothingly entered interview zone, varying considerably in length (from 45 minutes to two hours) depending on the phase at which interview was carried. A maximum of four to five participants were interviewed on a daily basis. During early data collection phase researcher concentrated more on collecting information, participants were free to disclose their stories but as categories emerged duration of interview reduced and interview gained a structured form. But in case of emergence of any new category or property, researcher took time to elaborate on it. Most of the participants talked candidly with the researcher about their personal experiences, some even expressed their gratitude for providing an opportunity to express concerns, queries and vent out, a few even communicated that at times it is necessary to have someone to openly speak out without worrying about consequences.

As emergence of categories gained momentum, researcher took a break from the field in order to reflect on what is happening in the data and to identify the properties and categories that is developing, which was essential during theoretical sampling. As data collection proceeds, collection, coding

and analysis happened simultaneously. Data collection ended after categories got saturated.

Slice 2

Investigators by conducting retrospective study attempts to understand the change in the pattern of marriage across years and if possible to describe the cause of such changes. It is hypothesized that the information which evolves out of the present study will act as a preface for better understanding of marriages of recent times and is expected to contextualize our research findings.

Sample: The retrospective data on marriages were collected from married women aged fifty and above who have marital longevity of 35- 65 years (Appendix IV). For the present study data has been collected from the same locality from which investigators have already collected Slice of data 1. All married women aged 50 and above belonging to area under a ASHA worker was considered for study. Out of 63 eligible excluding those who showed unwillingness investigators collected sample from 55, a sample size in proportion to population size.

Mode of data collection:

1. Semi-structured interview: Investigators maintained an informal approach to data collection, giving priority to participants' feelings and by not intervening in between their talk unless their topics turn out to be totally irrelevant for research purpose. Investigators kept an interview schedule to guide the topics to be covered but these pre-set questions were not asked in same order. The Interview guide provided space for on the spot improvisation, how to work in and phrase questions on the various topics (Appendix V & VI).

2. Participant observation: The participant's observational role is not hidden but 'kept under wraps'. It is not seen to be the main reason behind the presence of researcher in the field (Coolican, 2013). In the present research, participating in the day to day life activities informally in the natural setting of participants, investigators were part of the context being observed. Being part of them enhanced rapport building and eased interview. Investigators either kept descriptive field notes or jotted down major notes and later elaborated from field so as to avoid the risk of forgetting important details.

Procedure: Investigators met women who are aged 50 and above, ensured their marital longevity and then introduced self and the intension of visiting them. It was mandatory to reveal purpose of visit because the concept of interview and research as such is novel to participants. There were few who had shown reluctance to participate, out of their ignorance/fear of what exactly is going to happen and investigator could surpass it by interaction. Investigator could see from the smile on the participants face that a least expected question had given them another chance to ruminate on few memories which they themselves had forgotten with time. Researcher by now from the experience gained and mastery acquired in using native accent of the locality could easily establish rapport with participants. The kind of affection and genuine interest participants rendered definitely has moved the investigator.

With this set of participants interviewing took more time because it is based on recounting of lived events and allows the researcher to visualize participants' social world and to reach at a deeper layer by asking question regarding this world and its meaning. The time taken for a single interview varied from one to two hours. Interviewing required a skilful intervention as

participants frequently showed a tendency to talk about everything related to their life events. Clarifying, paraphrasing and probing assisted in interview.

Interview began by collecting information about certain significant life events such as date of marriage or years since their marriage has occurred, their present age and the age at which they married, age difference between spouses, number of children, and the age at which they have delivered their first child. As the conversation developed between investigator and participants categories related to marriages such as the mode of marriage intermediation, whether their partner is someone known/ unknown to them, dominant decision maker in proceeding with a proposal and many more factors evolved. Each interview data were transcribed immediately using verbatim used by participants.

Among the fifty five participants, four women have remarried and another one has married thrice, in the following description of analysis investigators has considered their existing marriages. The detailed description of their prior marriages is discussed when and where it is essential.

Focus Group Discussion

After reaching saturation in Slice 1 and 2 of data's, investigator decided on to conduct a focus group discussion so as to elicit data under group dynamics and to communicate to the people of the locality about the categories emerged from their area, to get feedback on result. A focus group is an informal discussion among selected individuals about specific topics (Beck, Trombetta, & Share, 1986). It is especially useful in examining interpersonal processes and social understanding of a phenomenon in a group.

It facilitates data collection from participants by means of interaction between participants rather than between an interviewer and participant. Focus group discussions vary from interview mostly in the role of the

researcher and the relationship with participants. In an interview a researcher adopts the role of an “investigator” while in a focus group discussion, the role is that of a “facilitator”.

Focus group discussions are preferred among a sample size of 6-12, recruiting to group discussion should be considering similarities in terms of characteristics or interests. Focus groups thus constitute co-located people so the setting of discussion should be suitable to the convenience of participants. Convenience and comfort of the participants are viewed with utmost importance while fixing the date, time and place of discussion. Standard duration of focus groups is usually between one to two hours.

When the discussion starts, the role of facilitator is to communicate about the topic to be discussed in a sensible way. Facilitator should be skilled enough to probe participants to answer and should have pre-planned thought on what to ask and how to succeed in conducting focus groups. The quality of question asked can bring about a considerable change in the kind of information obtained. Flexibility is the core strength of focus groups as there is no hard and fast rule on how to conduct or to analyse focus group discussions.

When a participant discusses their perspectives, focus group facilitator should be able to skilfully manage group dynamics so as to foster development of ‘natural’ conversations and discussion. A group discussion can bring out the best from participants by means of stimulation, brainstorming, synergy and spontaneity. Focus group discussion is selected for present research based on the assumption that people find it easier to disclose personal experiences in a context in which these experiences can be shared in front of people who are similar to them.

Sample: Sample of the present study consists of eight married women belonging to the age group 18-65 residing at the locality, each one had different marital longevity.

Mode of data collection: Members who participated in focus group discussion were met personally in advance, topic of research and purpose of the study was communicated so that participants can come prepared on what to talk. Considering both facilitator and participants' convenience a date, time and venue was fixed. A day before discussion facilitator gave a reminder call and assured their participation.

Venue decided within home territory was fixed by considering a sufficient balance between professional setting and an ambience of informality, comfortable setting and seating arrangements were assured in advance. Semi-circular seating arrangements made it comfortable as facilitator and participants can see each other.

Focus group discussions began with a casual conversation between facilitator and participants getting introduced among themselves, even though participants were familiar to each other as they belong to same locality. Facilitator then debriefed about the research work carried out in their locality so as to bring all the participants into a common realm of knowledge about the work. Participants were encouraged for self-disclosure and experience sharing. Facilitator guides the proceedings in an unobtrusive and subtle way, intervening only to direct the discussion towards a productive end widening range of coverage. Facilitator ensured on specificities and eliciting in-depth responses. After overcoming the initial hesitance to initiate discussion it was found that all participants were very enthusiastic opening up in their normal language, cracking jokes and free to clarify any doubt regarding their content. It took around two hours to terminate the session.

Recording the data: The discussions were audio taped as it was impossible for facilitator to manually observe, listen and facilitate at the same time. To supplement the audio recording and to note down gestures field notes were written. Focus group discussions were then transcribed from audio tapes. It was important to know the details of participants' responses as a whole and every content of discussion because interaction process is integral to the way that particular content is produced.

Slice 3

Gaining insights from first two slices and the information acquired by means of reviewing from disciplines such as psychology, sociology, anthropology and history and concerned subject experts investigators designed other slices for data collection. First two slices has provided ample information about the marriage choices and criteria behind them, marriages on a large scale is found to commence through social networks which constitutes close relatives, neighbours and acquaintances. What lacks is the details regarding marriages that is consummated through matrimonial advertisements, matchmakers and bureaus that reason the selection of slice 3, 4 and 5.

Slice 3 of data collection was planned as an extension of another study conducted by investigators which examined the marital preference by analysing the content of matrimonial advertisements of seven leading Malayalam newspapers of a particular day carrying matrimonial advertisements which found that male advertisers exchange financial security for the physical appearance offered by female advertisers (Ramshida & Sasidharan, 2015). Slice 3 of data consists of two sets of sample.

Sample 1: Comparison between advertisements posted by prospective brides and grooms across decades (an advertisement each by male and female of

every decade) from 1940's to 2010's. Basically eight ads each, posted by male and female advertisers.

Sample 2: Comparison between the content of matrimonial advertisement posted of a particular day in the year 1985 and 2015.

Procedure: All the three studies were formulated from the investigators curiosity to identify the period during which matrimonial advertisements were put in print media for the first time in Kerala. This curiosity gradually developed and the investigators decided to concentrate on the matrimonial advertisements appeared and appearing in a single Malayalam newspaper here, Mathrubhumi. Investigators initially took the consent from the concerned officials so as to refer to archives and went in by person, from page to page throughout years of newspaper editions to identify newspaper advertisements. It was surprising to realize that newspaper advertisements were placed in, though only two and rarely three advertisements per year, even during 1930s provided Mathrubhumi has begun their first edition and publication during 1923.

The first set sample of Slice 3 consists of eight ads each posted by both males and females advertisers and to identify the change in pattern of marital preferences and an understanding of the evolution of matrimonial advertisements. Investigator after asking advertisements posted during a daily of 1985 and 2015, initially found out the major categories which emerged and the preferences of advertisers, and difference between these across a thirty years gap.

Slice 4

Sample: Snowball sampling also called chain sampling, is an approach for locating information-rich key informants or critical cases (Patton, 1990). It is used to get an access to population that are not easily available, and so is

conducted in stages. Initially people with requisite characteristics are identified and interviewed, these people in the next stage act as informants to identify others, and the chain continues. It was basically about obtaining one matchmaker and asking him/her to recommend others who would meet the purpose and repeating the same until the categories emerged out of data undergo saturation. Sample size was 18 (10 males and 8 females) recommended informants found by means of snowballing.

Mode of data collection:

Unstructured/In-depth interview: Also called informal or conversational interviewing, it proceeds without a predetermined set of questions so as to remain as open and adaptable as possible to the interviewee's nature and priorities; during the interview the interviewer goes with the natural flow. It allows respondents to let them express in their own ways and pace, while interviewer has a clear idea regarding the focus and goal of interview. To be precise, it is more like a conversation in a controlled manner which is skewed towards the interests of the interviewer (Gray, 2009). Unstructured interview is used when a researcher has enough of information about his area of inquiry but still remains open to any information coming his way and is ready for revision by respondents (Patton, 2002; Fife, 2005).

Procedure: Amid all the slices of data, the most difficult to attain was from the marriage matchmaker. Difficulty was not in finding the sample because snowballing reduced the effort but difficulty arose in eliciting data from the resistance shown by them. Even though researcher by means of snowballing found twenty nine matchmakers only eighteen participated. Among eleven, few straightaway disallowed to participate, their decision was totally respected, others agreed to participate and fixed the appointments confirming venue. On the day of interview, at times after reaching venue few participants tactically found their way out and gave reasons which sounds genuine, when

these repeated more than twice with the same participant researcher straight away told them they always have option not to cooperate and it's totally fine. Thus, sample size reduced to eighteen.

Gaining trust and establishing rapport was crucial to the success of interview, interviewer redirected as and when required while conversation fell short of purpose without effecting the continuity. An immense amount of negotiation and tactics were required in certain situations right from how to present oneself to improvise on the quality of conversation. Certain interviews were remunerated as it was essential to access them. On an average, interview took around 45 to 90 minutes. Brief notes were written during the interview and soon after the session interviewer sat down to elaborate on it.

Slice 5

Irrespective of the mode in which a marriage is contracted- assisted, arranged or through love marriages- it has a lot to tell about the preference pattern of both prospective brides and grooms. Definitely bureaus have a lot to contribute to our understanding of preferences in mate selection/ choice because they on a daily basis meets people belonging to different sectors whether it be in religious believes, castes, customs, and geographical locations.

Sample: Sampling procedure embraced by investigator to identify the pattern of marriages that are occurring by means of bureau registration was purposive sampling. Also known as judgemental, selective or subjective sampling, purposive sampling relies on the judgement of researcher when it comes to selecting the units (example, people, cases/organizations, events, pieces of data) that are to be studied ("Purposive sampling", n. d.). It is widely used for identification and selection of information-rich cases or individuals or group of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a

phenomenon of interest, and with limited resources (Patton, 1990; Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Sample size of present research is 13 matrimonial bureaus, as collection of data ends when categories emerged got saturated.

Mode of data collection:

Semi-Structured interview: Interview session proceeded in a manner in which interviewer asked more open-ended questions so as to generate a discussion with an interviewee. (Appendix VII & VIII).

Procedure: For the purpose of interviewing investigator met staffs of bureau personally and conveyed them the purpose and relevance of the study. Unlike data collection of Slice 1, 2 and focus groups, it was difficult to convince three participants among the thirteen, as they doubted about the authenticity of the investigator, finally after showing identity proof they were relieved. The way you present oneself leaves an impression about yourself, so investigators made sure to be gentle and showed genuine interest to receive their consent. Once rapport established, assuring confidentiality, interview session progressed, investigator could find that bureaus staffs were rather friendly, cooperative and very informative.

Open-ended questions were prepared by using the experience acquired from the field where Slice 1 and 2 data collection occurred. Questions relevant to bureau such as registration mode in bureaus, the common strategy used by bureau for attaining appropriate matches were added appropriately.

Data Analysis

The method used for data analysis is method of constant comparison. Method of constant comparison is a process in which the meanings of all categories are compared and contrasted with each other, both within and across cases. It leads to Constant refinement of the category system as a

whole; that is initially different categories having the same meaning are collapsed into single category, on the other if found different meaning within a category it can lead original category to split which later gets renamed codes (McLeod, 2001).

Joint data collection, coding and analysis are underlying operations in grounded theory and all three are intertwined from the beginning to the end of the study and so is it called cyclical. Investigator had to cycle backward and forward between the field to gather information and analysis table to gather more information.

Once data started gathering investigator read through the interview transcripts line-by-line, sentence-by-sentence, paragraph-by-paragraph, and page-by-page. After repeated reading it was set for coding process which is the building block of theory. Coding can take the form of a straightforward category label or a more complex one such as a metaphor for example (Miles & Huberman, 1994 as cited in Lawrence & Tar, 2013).

Open coding is basically about getting familiarized with the data, by breaking it down into parts, examining it closely, and comparisons are carried out for finding similarities and differences, conceptualizing and categorizing it. Codes formed have its own meaning and relevance. Investigator continuously interacted with the data by asking questions within, such as ‘what does the data mean?’, ‘what is the basic social psychological reason behind incidents in the substantive area?’, ‘What is the reason or causal conditions for happenings?’, ‘Who are people involved and what is their role?’, ‘When?’, ‘Who?’, ‘How long?’, ‘Where?’, ‘How much?’, ‘What else is the data trying to communicate?’.

Investigator at this stage of analysis by making use of memo compared events, happenings, actions, interactions narrated in the transcripts and then

properties conceptually similar in nature or those related in meaning were grouped under abstract concepts termed “categories”. Categories were appropriately titled at times in-vivo codes were used, actual words used by the participants. This is the time when coding gained momentum and gets focused, investigator got to know which concepts are important to answer own questions and require deeper analysis and those that need not be given further attention.

Next investigator moved towards axial coding, where dynamic interrelationship between categories were sort thus trying to re-build the data which was fractured in open-coding. Data is interacted for higher level of abstraction by means of trial and error clustering between categories. Investigator relates between the categories and found that certain core categories emerges which is caused by factors in certain contextual (time, place and duration) and intervening conditions (social, political and cultural environment) also they exist as a consequences of certain conditions or they are the cause themselves. Axial category is formed in cause and effect relationships, means-ends relationships and as explanatory argumentative form.

Theoretical coding (selective coding) is a phase of coding were investigator made sure about the core categories, as it is important to confirm the potential to explain the phenomenon under study as a whole apart from core categories. The main feature of core categories are that it appears frequently in the data, holding a depth of explanatory power to relate to all other categories and is sufficiently abstract.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical consideration is sensitive element all throughout the research process. It is vital for a researcher to understand that by entering into a field for study purpose and accessing data from participants they are making an inquiry to the personal and emotional life of the participants. It is important to carry out data collection in the most efficient manner but it is equally important to acknowledge the value of time and information the participants has passed on to researcher.

In the current research, informed consent was reached by verbally conveying each and every participants' about a general purpose of study. Voluntary participation was given priority and participants were free to withdraw from the study in accordance to their choice. During collecting data from marriage matchmakers even after giving consent to participate and fixing venue, date and time while participants did not show up for interview it was interviewer who reminded them of their right not to participate.

Privacy and confidentiality was ensured by giving participants the choice of venue in case of focus group discussions and marriage matchmakers. While slice 1 and slice 2 data collection occurred at home after conveying purpose of study, investigator made a general conversation with the members of home because it was important to reach at ease before officially beginning data collection. Once participants who belong to inclusion criteria are met investigator made sure rest of the family members are not around and for the same researcher clarified their queries in advance. Confidentiality is maintained all through the presentation of thesis by not citing the personal details of participants relating to their identity.

Slice 1 and slice 2 data collection took a long period and across the period even though researcher took break from the field a relationship was

established between the participants and people of the field. So researcher made sure of conveying the departure from the field and chose a slow withdrawal from field ensuring participants researchers' facility as and when required. Those who want to, were given freedom to contact researcher any time and the relationship with the participants still continues. This is how researcher is still in access to the participants and post script has developed.

Reciprocity is another ethical code- researcher is giving back certain information as an acknowledgement for the time and effort provided by the participants. It is keeping this along with the validation purpose that focus group discussion was designed. Focus group discussion began after debriefing about the results from Slice 1 and Slice 2 data and proceeded on to listen about what participants had to tell so as to avoid researcher's bias.

Chapter **4**

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research began with a broad objective to explore women's' experience along the process of marriage. It began with the decision on which slice of data is to be considered by gaining insights from intense reviewing and discussions with experts and research scholars from different disciplines such as psychology, history, anthropology, and sociology. The major category which emerged out of each Slice of data is presented in the most comprehensive manner in this chapter. Results are presented in the order of Slices and a summary of discussion is presented thereafter. Slice 1 sample constitutes 226 married women with a marital longevity of ten years and below (duration 2005-2014) who reside in the locality selected for research.

Marital Readiness

Investigators enquired the marital readiness of participants by raising a question "did you ever feel it was the right time to get married?". Majority responses belonged to those who did not think seriously about marriage but while family insisted on getting married and expressed their concerns, they felt they shall get married, "*it's all up to what my parents are thinking, I trusted on their wisdom in choosing a mate*". It is along the process of marital enquiries and 'bride seeing' when things do not turn in favour, thereby facing rejections for the first time, it becomes difficult to deal with the situation. Due to apprehensions, even those who did not think of marriage showed readiness and passed statements such as "*I developed a desire that my marriage should be fixed somehow as soon as possible*", "*Earlier I had certain concepts about the groom, but while mismatches created hassles I withdrew my demands*". There were a few participants who despite craved a delay in marriage but seeing the effort and tension of their parents, reluctantly adhered to parental decisions. It is their love for parents which overpowered their own choices.

Next major discourse was on how badly they wished they could delay marriage at least for a while as they were not ready for a commitment. Strong statements from the part of participants throw light on how far the matter of marital readiness is neglected in our society. P5 (participant number 5, hereafter participants would be named along with the data number) is one among the participants who in despair stated “*yet I don’t think it is time to be married*”. Very few even expressed their joy while they faced rejections at marriage market as they anticipated to complete their studies. Listen to few other comments:

I don’t think it was the right time to get married, it could have taken time

Girls at my age are just getting prepared for marriage and here I am taking up responsibilities

I was married off too early

How I wished I could pursue a career

I kept weeping begging, not to marry

Wanted to complete studies

Had a strong fear towards marriage especially caused due to bitter experiences in marriage of near and dear ones

Participants who showed readiness for marriage had mentioned how the preparation got tacitly framed within themselves. Not only were they emotionally and psychologically equipped for a transition because of the loving treatment they received from their parents, while a few who lacked this affection had thought of marriage as a means to escape from the pitfalls of life.

Marriage is essential in life and will occur once, age wise it's apt time

Has always dreamt of marriage and life after it

Education completed/ enrolled to job, next thing is to get settled

It's not necessary that good alliances always comes our way

Colleagues of my age got married already and people have already started whispering on why there is a delay in my case

Tours, travels and freedom gained through marriage is what I want

Marriage was inevitable, I was in need of a support

Next group belongs to those who got married as situations demanded of them to do so, far before they were ready for it. Grandparents wish to see their marriage before death, being the first child of their ancestral home, first born to the family, single child, same sex siblings, sitting idle at home after completion of schooling, decisions undertaken by maternal or paternal uncles as situations demands so and they finish off their responsibility as soon as possible explains few situations. Along with all the above mentioned situations are those who wanted to get married but never expected it would ever happen.

Concepts about Groom

The choice of a relationship partner (mate choice) is governed by priorities, asked about the desirable qualities in a mate, interviewees responses varied from having “no concepts” about a future mate to well-defined set of preferences. Twenty seven percentage (61) of participants did not specify any preference. There are numerous examples to illustrate the way

participants had explained their story but investigators would start with three short quotes from the interviewees.

P47, aged 19 at marriage said:

It was during my vacations after plus two my relative brought this alliance... First alliance and I was least prepared for marriage. At that age it was not my priority, so did not even bother to think about a partner nor had a dream about marriage. One day my mother came up to tell me, next day I would be introduced to a groom's family. They came, saw me, gave chocolates and left. I was not given an option other than to state whether I liked the guy or not. Males at home and elderly men within the family are usually decision makers. I was left confused and tensed.

This is the story of the majority within twenty seven percentage mentioned above, with slight differences where their parents take prior consent by letting their daughters know that they (parents and other family members) are up with marriage alliances. Both father and mother or either one among them, come up to daughters and convince them stating, it is not necessary to end up in good alliances all the time, so once sure about a good alliance, we should not deny it.

While P47 was least prepared for marriage and adhered to parental wish, slowly adapting to the situation, similarly there are many participants who have easily shown willingness to get married even though they have not developed their mate preferences nor have ever thought about the characteristics of partner to be. They belong to the group who are well aware of the fact that after a particular age they would be married off, acknowledging the prevalence of marriage in society and following the

prescribed script happily or unhappily. P111, married at 17, said ‘I knew it [marriage] was coming’ and asked about her experience she replied:

.... there was enormous pressure on parents especially because I have a younger sister too, who is growing up. At whatever age, you are expected to marry and you'll be married off, so even though not prepared for it and least aware of what marriage is in actual sense, you get prepared by then to succumb to parental decisions....

There is yet another repertoire of participants who wanted to marry as they believed in concept of normality to marry at prescribed age but did not expect to marry. Asked about desired qualities in a mate they revealed about their situation at home- death/illness/absence of father figure, irresponsible males at home regarding taking initiative for marriage, or lacking the criteria essential to meet marriage market. P 93 despite wanting to marry feared that none would marry her. P 93 married at 23 said:

...being youngest of the nine siblings and death of father during infancy, I have seen mother taking up family responsibility all these years. Financially my brothers also could not support us, as they had their own family. My dark complexion has made it even tougher situation for my mother. A family backed off from a fixed alliance without conveying a reason for their act. I always thought, I probably would not get married because I am not someone who meets the beauty standards. I believe only those who are capable and attractive deserve to dream...

Among seventy three percentage of participants who had desired characteristics they search for in a future mate, there were certainly some traits that they do not want to find during the spousal search. Characteristics

that are commonly desired and undesired in a male partner are presented below:

Desired characteristics in a male partner can further be distinguished into physical traits, personality traits, family traits, and occupation traits. Physical traits constitute those related to height, weight, and physical appearance. Among those participants who had specifically mentioned about height, they prefer males who are taller than themselves; either a major height difference is preferred or those with a height according to themselves is preferred. It must specifically be taken into consideration that none of the participants (among total 226) is married to a male shorter to them. Provided all the desired characteristics and how much ever difficult it is to find a perfect match, a male partner shorter than a female is not even considered an option either by family or the prospective bride.

When they mention about height and weight they do not prefer people at extremities, either too tall or too short is neither appealing nor those who are heavy built or lean is preferred. There is a clear disinterest towards lean skinny looking and also towards plump and clumsy body type. From the verbatim of participants it is understood that males with vigour, strut gait, and good physique are chosen easily, to put in one word mesomorphic body type is mostly preferred which is taken as a strong indicator of health. They have specified their dislike for fat, aloof and withdrawn males who are generally thought off as lazy and unskilful. Preferences vary according to the body type of prospective bride as well.

Physical appearance is mentioned by a very few who had lightly shown preference by stating that it should match one's own physical appearance. Preferences in skin complexion varies from fair to dark, in both cases handsomeness is recommended. They have further emphasized on

necessity of their partner to be smart, able-bodied, well dressed and need not be over stylish.

While compared to physical traits, cluster of preferences weigh high on personality traits as majority of participants who had concepts about groom had pointed towards personality. In accordance with the level of importance investigators has arranged personality traits. Good character, loving, caring and friendly nature, kind and understanding, intelligent, trustworthy, well behaved, mature, giving equal respect and freedom, mutual understanding, sincere, sharing, accepting, independent, considerate, responsible, supportive and readiness to correct are among them. Preference for husbands who are like father, brother and sisters' husband are strong. Father is a strong prototype of how they expect their husband to be. Statements such as *loving as a father, accepting me as myself wholeheartedly, matching my thoughts, someone with whom one can completely open up, should have a point of view and own opinion, should be able to complete me and fulfill my wishes* pictures their concerns on identity after marriage. For some, marriage is a means to gain freedom from being tied to home, they expect their husbands to grant them freedom and take them along to explore world, by means of tours, travels and shopping.

Further they expect a man to be masculine and it's expressions are preferred, statements such as *must have a thick moustache; strong and controlling nature; should be able to invest a mannish feeling within me; not necessarily be expressive but should be loving; should not be henpecked nor flirtatious to others; while meeting during 'bride seeing' ceremony we have to feel that this person has certain qualities rather than him trying hard to create an impression; it's important that he likes my character and looks rather than my choices; he has the right to correct me; benevolent person who provides even before I demand my needs.*

Males are expected to be providers of family in terms of financial security. While females with economic resources prefer males with resources matching their financial status. Those of low financial status mention *“it’s not about money and power when it comes to marital relationship, even if financially low, men should have willingness to take care of his family and ensure day-to-day living”*. In general, tendency of females to prefer males with socioeconomic status higher than themselves is seen to prevail among the participants of the locality. Neither too rich nor too poor males acquire favourable position among the candidates.

Education and occupation are thought essential, only very few stressed on education but occupation is thought as a must. Males without a job are not considered as an eligible candidate in the marriage market also a clear preference for government job is seen among participants. There still exists a mixed feeling towards gulf jobs, some like it, while others had mentioned a dislike towards it. Professional or well celebrated job scenario is not a must but a regular job ensuring ability to meet the requirements is a compulsory. A minimum of eight participants demanded a willingness to let them pursue job and an equal number asked not to be forced to take up a job. A single female belonging to nursing career has exerted her wish that her partner should understand the nature of her job.

Participants under study visualizes about life after marriage, husband’s natal household and partner’s behaviour towards their family. Most demanded familial trait of spouse is that should belong to an ancestral home (physically present or not) which has an establishment of culture, value and virtues in order to hold relationships close. Basically males are expected to maintain the decency and decorum of a person of noble birth. They expect their partners to be cooperative and mingle well with in-laws, siblings and relatives; who take care of them as own family. There is a favouritism towards talkative and less

talkative men but in either case they have to be thoughtful about their families' emotions. They prefer a small natal household for husbands and a comfortable family atmosphere providing space for coalescence.

While desirable characteristics are addressed it is equally important to pay attention towards undesirable characteristics in a partner. Undesirable characteristics developed out of their prior life experiences, especially seeing mothers, sisters or significant others' marital relationship. Statement from one participant would substantiate this: *unlike my father, should be efficacious*. Investigators would like to present a few statements by participants, in order to give a view of undesirable characteristics: *He should not hurt; should not get involved in unnecessary issues; think before act; No bad habits such as alcoholism and addiction; Flirtatious nature in character and extravagance is a negative preference; should not be henpecked*.

Similar Versus Dissimilar

Another concern which arose while inquiring about the concept of groom was regarding preference for a mate who is similar/dissimilar/a combination of similar and dissimilar characteristics to the participants. Responses from participants demanded exploration into reasons behind their choices. Among 161 responses a total of seventy seven participants preferred a mate who is similar to self. Marital choice is based on similarity in physical characteristics, personality traits and social attitudes.

It would be fun if there are similarities and soothing to hear from others that we look alike

It's easy especially during initial years of life to adjust with a partner without fear as similarity acts as a buffer, to avoid a feeling of change happening in life

Similarities bring in a feel that partner is just like our father/brother

It enhances the ability to mingle and be a part of in-law family, in-laws can also identify with daughter-in-laws character if it is similar to their son's nature.

If similar in characteristics and interests it would be easy to understand each other, will be able to understand other person's point of view and feelings

Life becomes easy, there wouldn't be much difference in opinion, can easily reach at decisions and avoid conflicts within family

I am introverted so a similar person can only understand me

If similar in characters such as communication style, expressiveness, attitudes and opinions about life it would be better.

Only a person who thinks like me will be able to understand me.

Twenty six participants prefer wedded to persons who are completely different from themselves. The baseline of their reason is a strong dislike for their character which they believe need correction. Irrespective of whether they possess or not, certain traits are desirable. So by preferring a partner who possess them they complement their needs.

How can one see self within husband?

Should be emotionally stable and be able to manage my emotions

Should be correcting me while I go wrong

I know what kind of a person I am and my limitations as well, so I needed a better person

Needed somebody who is smart, mature, practical, and efficacious unlike me who is immature, careless and dormant

I don't want my partner to be like me, he should be better in all aspects

At times I hate my character

There are far more responses, fifty five of them who prefer a partner with few similarities while at the same time should vary in certain other characteristics. They prefer dissimilar characteristics at the same time they seek few similarities between them, the question lies where the margin lies between similarity and dissimilarity.

If alike in all aspects there wouldn't be fun, and if extremely different from each other again it leaves no space for fun

If alike will fight over

It's better to explore and evolve over similarities and differences

A mix of similarity and variation in characteristics is needed for developing adjustment

There should exist a space for knowing better so as to bond well

Complementing strengths and weaknesses

Someone who does not carry traits which I don't like within myself

I'm close to my parents and must be able to continue that relationship

Known Versus Unknown

For a question regarding preference for kind of family, known or unknown or a little known, responses display a short canvas of criteria behind acceptance of a marriage proposal. Within the locality under study, marriages occur between families and it is important to recognize what kind of families gets involved with each other. Reason behind why participants show a choice towards either known/unknown/ a little known family is given in detailed in the following paragraphs.

Advantages of getting married to known family are to reduce adjustment issues because marriage as such brings about a transition at grass root level especially in case of virilocal residence. Known family can be defined as a situation where either the bride herself or her parents or siblings has interacted with the prospective groom's family and known them personally for a while. Few selected statements among eighty one participants are presented:

Getting married to a known family assists marital enquiry as we can make use of social ties to ensure character of groom and his family

Choice of known family avoids risks and further complications

It makes initial days post wedding comfortable, brides and grooms family can bond well

Marriage between relatives formed out of already existing marriages is a means to strengthen relationships and extended families

Prior experiences within family, of marrying to an unknown family

Accepting limitations such as loss of father/mother at childhood, irresponsible males at home, financial issues, and concerns over physical appearance

Knowing scenario at home such as conflict between family members over property, divorces/separation of siblings or significant others at home is important

Second marriages cannot take risk

Important to know impairments, if any

Equally important is to comprehend why people prefer being married to unknown family. Even while compared to those who preferred known or a little known family those who favoured unknown family is less in number (thirty six), they have strong reasons to substantiate their choices:

If known family there is no fun left, novelty essential

If known partner it's difficult to accept as husband after considering as a brother

Marriage to unrelated families helps in establishing new familial line and extension of family network

In-law family need not know issues at our house

In case conflict arise between couples, it will easily reach others

If known some or the other issue will arise, during fights can point out to misdemeanours of partner or her family stating

earlier you people were like this. Basically in marriages between known family partners carry baggage of prior notions with them

If known, in case of some issues it will affect already existing relationships

In case of marital conflicts and dissolutions it would be easy for others to interfere to reach at a solution if it is unknown family

Majority, around ninety one participants has favoured a family which is a little known prior marriage because they believe it would ease transition to wifehood and provide ample space for exploration due to novel situation. A summary of their statements are given below:

It is difficult to think of a closely known and interacted person as husband

It is okay if families are familiar to each other but prospective partners should not know each other

It's always better to know something about in-laws family background and character because it gives solace

Rather than being at extremities (known/unknown) it's safe to choose from families with assurance given by marriage intermediators thereby leading to establishment of new familial bonds

Husband's family need not know our familial disputes

If known family they might get to know about our familial drawbacks and if totally unknown might get into trouble

It's better to proceed with alliances after knowing about impairments and limitations

Age at Marital Enquiry

Table 1

Age at marital enquiry

Age groups	Frequency
18-20	128
21-25	68
26-30	2
31-35	1
Unknown	9
Total	208

While investigators analyzed the data it is seen that parents are major decision makers regarding family formation behaviors and it is them who initiate marital enquiry. Here the investigator considered the age at marital enquiry intending to find out the standard age at which marriage enquiry begins in the present society. The table above is written excluding 18 love marriages and the column unknown indicates that nine participants who could not recall at which age their marital enquiry began. Majority of the participants come under the age group of 18 – 20. From this data, it is evident that the age at marriage was considered in parallel to permissible legal age at marriage for women. So as a prerequisite marital enquiry begins immediately after attaining legal age. The investigator considered the age at marital enquiry as an essential variable because it determines the age at marriage.

Modes of Marriage Intermediation

The bringing together of two parties in marital relationship is a herculean task as it involves thin threads between likes and dislikes usually for matters initially thought off as irrelevant. Each family has their own precedence on choosing the mode of intermediation based on trust and prior experiences. Two hundred and eight participants had their marriage arranged by someone other than themselves. Investigators has taken keen interest to identify the medium through which marriage mediation mostly happen in the locality under study.

The 'other' who has been instrumental in bringing together of families can be anyone. From the data it is seen that most of the alliances was proceeded by informal means of intermediation. A variety of social networks play prime role, including relatives, friends, acquaintances, neighbours, workplace contacts. Arranging marriage between family members of already existing marriages is also common. Usually while parents think that a girl is of marriageable age they would make use of above mentioned social ties and extend out for alliances which meet their demands, if any.

Apart from relatives, friends and acquaintances other option is to approach marriage brokers. The reason why marriage brokers are considered last option is because of the popular notion that they are untruthful, so it is seen that parents speak to marriage brokers whom they personally know well or those recommended by significant other persons. Even while twenty nine families had approached marriage brokers under tense situations only thirteen got engaged by these means. It was under exceptional conditions that participants' families approached marriage brokers such as delayed enquiry due to financial liabilities, mismatch caused by horoscope, continuous rejections at 'bride seeing' so prefer marriage from distant places. Out of this thirteen alliances eight were prearranged by marriage brokers who belonged

to the locality itself. Rarely did these marriage brokers neither demand their fee nor approached intermediary as profession, and in case if family members stressed on taking money as a token of love it is a minimal amount. Results show that bureaus and matrimonial sites were approached by only three and two families respectively.

Love Marriages

Eighteen participants chose a love match amongst which twelve are married to the same locality under study. While five participants mentioned about being in geographical proximity, seeing each other regularly they developed a liking for each other, among them one eloped and returned. Another two felt sorry for the guy who kept proposing many a times, putting effort to continuously impress them. Four others met their respective partners at job place interacted with each other and fell in love, two among them were widows with a child each and they are the ones who knew they did not have an option other than elope and return after marriage. There is one more participant who ran away with her lover. It was her third marriage and his first, she knew society won't let her do it including his parents as he was six years younger to her, they married and returned. Other participants were those who found match in classmate, cross-cousin, neighbours friend, and the like.

It is understood that among the eighteen participants four eloped, got married and returned, rest fourteen participants took time to convince their family and then had all the proceedings of proper arranged marriage including 'bride seeing' ceremony. Initially nine participants faced strong resistance from parental side including three participants who eloped. P13 and P208 were really close to their parents, must say that they were pampered one among children they possess. Both fell in love with those with a large difference in financial status which was not acceptable for their parents. P131 said her parents were in apprehension thinking about her younger sisters, as

love marriage might affect their better future. P 128 understands her parents, everyone at locality knew her future mother-in-laws character. It would definitely be a tough situation for them. They, while she stood adamant, feared she would run away with him, leaving her to destiny they approved. P44 waited two years to convince his family for wedding just because it was not their choice. P189 was reluctant to reveal details, it took six and half years for his family to accept them.

Duration of enquiries

Table 2

Duration of marital enquiries

Duration	Number
Less than six months	103
Six – twelve months	15
One-three years	67
Four-six years	13
Seven – ten years	1
Above ten years	4
Unrevealed	5
Total	208

The main aim of this query was to find out a standard time duration taken by family to reach at fixing an alliance. Here the investigators considered the 208 participants those who had arranged marriages excluding eighteen love marriages. From the table, it is evident that 103 participants had undergone marital enquiries for a period of less than six months, within this 103, 22 participants marriage got fixed within weeks and another 29 within a month. Next major group is about 67 who reached at a match within one to three years of enquiry. Even when marriage is thought off as a herculean task in this locality, a vast majority of marriages gets fixed within a short duration

and this is made possible by joint effort of family, friends and acquaintances. A girl who is of marriageable age is thought as responsibility of the society as a whole. Affirming this notion is feelings of many participants who communicated that *“that’s how it is. After an age we are looked at with sympathy, in case of delay in marriage. So people in the locality make it a point to facilitate marital enquiry”*.

Gap between enquiry and fixing

Age norms regarding expected age for marriage created a chaos in the lives of those participants who had not shown marital readiness. Even among those who showed readiness or maintained a neutral attitude towards marital timing, the way a proposal is carried out and ‘bride seeing’ ceremony, along the process of fixing a marriage, created emotional uproar.

Very few participants has taken ‘bride seeing’ and related ceremonies as essential in marital enquiry and part of life. Unlike others they have taken things calmly either because they were not aware of its seriousness or bothered about it or because for them marriage is a means to get out of the familial issues. In any case these participants hoped marriage will happen at an appropriate time.

Investigators went into the nuances of the emotional state of participants between matchmaking and getting fixed. They explicitly expressed agony and frustration undergone. Few stated they fell short of words to express their feelings and how they wished that somehow it got fixed at the earliest, as delays and rejections from the part of the grooms’ families left them disturbed. They have conveyed how much they hated to be kept as a display object during ‘bride seeing’ and remembered how they used to breakdown after it. When parents demanded prospective brides to be well-dressed it raised heartbeats and as time scheduled for ‘bride seeing’

approached it reaches its peak. In case 'bride seeing' ceremony was not preplanned situation worsened. A feeling of uneasiness persists while asked to talk with the guy who comes to meet for the first time. They feared rejections from the grooms' families because it left them ashamed, as members who mediated this meeting would know this, and their parents' apprehension increased. Reasons given for rejections left them astonished, shocked, and hurt. It enhanced their appearance anxiety.

It was even embarrassing to see parents in pain, not to mention about the situation when a fixed alliance gets dropped. At times they were able to leave it to fate. Parents were told not to enquire so as to avoid the consequences associated with it. But while thinking about family situations such as financial issues, siblings growing up, effort mother of who single handedly brought them up left them with no option other than to cooperate. When there is a delay they and parents compromised with the concepts regarding groom and his family. In case of Hindu marriages the general trend was that a groom's family should take initiation and this caused further delays.

Unwillingness to marry

Forty five participants have expressed their wish for a delay in marriage while their family was seriously involved in marital enquiries. A majority of twenty eight participants wanted to complete their studies and among them few dreamt about pursuing higher studies as well. A girl who completed her graduation knew that after marriage she would not be allowed to work so she wanted to fulfil her wish to work at least a year prior wedding. Two participants stated that their age mates are free following their dream and why marry early. Another two participants witnessed their sisters' marital life due to mother-in-law issues and feared to get married hoping a delay, one among them got support from her sister who strongly stood by her resisting

marriage at young age. Five participants mentioned about their strong fear and apprehension about marriage. Two participants did not want to get married as they could not think about leaving their home after marriage. Another two knew about financial issues at home and wished it got resolved prior marriage. Two participants wished to get married in own home which was under construction so prioritized it. Horoscope mismatch delayed elder sister's wedding so while parents thought about the younger ones marriage she demanded to attend her sister's wedding.

Willingness to marry

For a probe "What made you think about getting married?" raised by investigators, two hundred and thirteen participants responded. Out of this fifty eight participants averred they didn't think about marriage and this result was supported by another thirteen participants who conveyed that decisions were taken by elders at home and they went along the flow. Eighteen participants claimed that they did not, until marriage, think about it.

Next was a group of participants who thought about getting married. Twenty three participants avowed that they believed to have attained nubility and so were willing to get married. Eight participants felt it was the right time to get married as they had completed education and those who wanted to work had got into a job. Two participants always wanted to get married as it was their dream and other two felt that the proposal which came their way was a perfect match as they approved of husbands with government jobs. One participant felt that marriage would occur at right time and left it to destiny.

Equally important were those participants' statements who reached at a position to get married and thought about it after a situation arose. Thirty two participants stated that they felt it was necessary to get married when there was a delay. Another twenty three never thought seriously about marriage but

while rejections occurred along the process of marital enquiry, had to undergo as 'bride seeing' ceremony, felt it should occur at the earliest. Six participants thought it should fall at the right place when many proposals came their way. Three participants were prepared to get married as proposal came from known families at nearby localities. While ten participants wished for their marriage, seeing their parents in tension, two rushed witnessing their friend's marriage, another two participant twin sisters got married and could not bear the frequent enquiries related to fixing marriage by people at the locality. Four participants knew that having same-sex siblings is a disadvantage in marriage market, so it's essential to get married one by one. There was one participant each from the following situations who thought about getting married; to get out of familial financial issues, death of father and younger sisters growing up, as a means to restrain oneself from taking up menial job, felt would be left alone single as age was already thirty plus. One girl was willing to marry, her only demand, to complete her studies. Another had to decide on getting married because her mother could go for pilgrimage only after completing her duties.

Pre-matrimonial enquiries

Investigators probed on the pre-matrimonial enquiries conducted for participants, regarding who took initiative for enquiries, under what circumstances enquiries were conducted, how many alliances were considered for each participant, how many 'bride seeing' ceremony each participant was subjected to, under what circumstances alliances were rejected. There were a few among the queries which came under pre-matrimonial enquiries.

From the data, it was evident that marital enquiries were initiated by parents mostly while they feel their child has reached nubility. Seventy seven participants has reported on parents being the primary investigators, in most of the cases it was mothers who showed urgency to begin matrimonial

enquiries. They were even more vigilant if there was more than one daughter who approached. Equally strong was the involvement of progenitors (both maternal and paternal uncles) in each stage of matrimonial enquiries. While in sixteen cases it is they who came to fathers to instigate matrimonial enquiries. In another nineteen cases while fathers were not around due to emigration, being irresponsible, separated, divorced or dead it was they who took up the responsibilities.

In another sixteen cases it was the mothers who were initiated by means of social networks, to arrange matrimonial enquiries. Absence of the father or his withdrawal from responsibilities, brought situations where mothers came to the forefront. P209 stated that as her father was careless about family matters, her mother had turned out to be pillar to herself and her brother. It was by means of stitching that she managed to bring them up. While alliances started coming at marriageable age it is she who took initiative to enquire using her kin network and then right from invitation to wedding day she managed, financially as well. P2 remembers how her mother (mother to five including three girls) asked her father who is addicted to alcohol and gambling, to leave their house, as she knew as far as he was at home not even a good proposal would come their way nor would they receive financial support from people in the locality. Brothers were also seen to initiate enquiries in ten cases.

A special mention was required in forty nine cases where neither parents nor progenitors had thought about marriage enquiries but just because a proposal came their way from kith and kin, parents took up and proceeded with it. In such cases either parents obediently listened to their suggestion and considered the proposals or without offending convinced relatives that it required time as they felt their daughter are too young to be married or convey their distress as they were financially not prepared. After few alliances were

not taken up parents felt doubtful and became awful, thinking whether they were mistaken by not proceeding with proposals. They became cautious and feared they would later repent on their decisions, so in order to avoid it decided to proceed with alliances.

These were the first layer of people who were included in matrimonial enquiries, next comes set of relatives including grandfathers, brother-in-laws, sisters, maternal aunts, affinal family, mothers and fathers extended family members are among them. In case of joint family every one shares their part. Two participants stated “*we lacked a responsible person to initiate a marriage, so it was the populace who took the position of a father figure*”.

Number of pre-marital enquiries

Investigators asked participants about the number of marriage alliances their parents have enquired formally. While majority recollected in numbers how many proposal they were subjected to, there were fifty seven participants who could not recall in number so they have put in words stating “*many. . so does not remember in numbers*”. Apart from those who could not genuinely remember, those who faced rejections also had reluctance to reveal exact number so they ended up saying “many”. Keeping aside these participants along with eighteen love marriages investigators would like to concentrate on minimal marital enquiries and its frequencies.

Sixty four participants confronted single marital enquiries. Fourteen with two enquiries, twenty two with three marital enquiries, twelve and six participants handled four and five enquiries respectively. Which means a total of hundred and eighteen participants had undergone five proposals only. It accounts to more than half the number of participants.

Number of bride seeing

Table 3

Number of bride seeing

Number of bride seeing ceremony	Frequency
1	69
2	18
3	25
4	12
5	7
6	10
7	1
8	5
9	-
Around 10-30	10
Around 30-50	15
Numerous	36
Total	208

At the locality it is mostly after receiving a positive reply during ‘bride seeing’ ceremony parents’ starts enquiring about grooms’ whereabouts. So frequency of both number of ‘bride seeing’ and marital enquiry goes hand in hand. Majority, about sixty nine participants were subjected to only a single ‘bride seeing’ ceremony.

Reluctance to tell the number of bride seeing

Apart from those who do not genuinely remember the exact number of bride seeing as they have undergone numerous ‘bride seeing’ ceremony, there were participants who did not reveal the number due to their own reasons. Participants who did not like to disclose their financial issues and also those who due to their financial liabilities did not expect would ever marry was not

in a state to remember such minute nuances as it is not a matter of their concern. It was understood that participants who have faced several rejections thus had late marriages and who had typically internalized the reasons behind these rejections showed reluctance to open up about their experiences related to 'bride seeing'. Participants who had already developed a false notion about themselves as physically unattractive or those who had reached at such a conclusion due to their experiences of marital rejections, found it hard to recall their 'bride seeing' experiences.

Reflexive rejections

Reasons behind rejecting a proposal can be anything, from weirdest of reasons to mismatches between family and spouses-to-be. In any case, it is essential for investigators' attention to understand the thin line between reflexive rejections, rejections after an enquiry, or after enquiry and 'bride seeing', and getting rejected after fixing through proper engagement.

There were definitely few instances where family and bride herself rejected certain proposals. Rejection occurred so spontaneously that there was no hope for a second thought. Here are few examples from data reasoning on what basis they reached at their decisions. Predominant choice is being born into a noble family. If not born into noble family, males faced rejections. While emphasizing nobility they intend, respectable family and behaving in a well-bred manner. Being religious is associated with assurance in character and so it is encouraged.

Geographical distance between the families was another matter of concern. If too far in vicinity from each other's homes they underwent rejections. If the locality of groom's family was beach side or an area where previously communal riots or calamities had occurred, the bride's family made sure not to proceed with the proposal. P125 belonged to below poverty

line, faced rejection because her home was located to the interior and was small in size. Many alliances were enquired but father was adamant that spouse should be physically fit, looking healthy and active in nature. Also parents did not prefer marriages from geographical distances. Father once told *“Even though we were financially backward we don’t prefer beachside, it won’t work”*. There should be adequate water supply at the locality. From what has been conveyed to researchers it was understood that certain localities to which sisters/cousin sisters’/ other girls had been sent in marriage from family, faced a difficult marital life, people generalizes these experiences and reject them reflexively.

Males face reflexive rejection if they look unhealthy. While stating unhealthy they mean too lean body type, inactive, without vigour, aloof and withdrawn. Immediate disqualification occurs if he is shorter than girl. Males are expected to look capable of dealing with day-to-day living. He should have a proper job, jobless males do not even come under a criteria eligible for wedding. Locality in which he works is again important, beach side is not preferred and people still carry stereotype towards certain places such as Mumbai and instantaneously rejects proposals. His family should be complete, presence of mother is important, and his sisters should not overrule family. It should not be a huge family with large number of members as it becomes difficult for daughter-in-laws to manage the family.

Reason behind rejection after an enquiry

After an initial enquiry about the prospective groom and his family many proposals got rejected, reason remains mostly those stated for reflexive rejections. In addition there were few strong indicators towards rejection such as negative feedback about the prospective groom or his family, especially about their characters and background. In case of doubt about family member’s character and their inappropriate behaviours brides’ family avoided

risk by either direct rejection or goes for affirmation by enquiring again. A single case was rejected because groom's fathers' occupation did not meet family status, as he was a porter. A history of drug abuse, elope, illegal relationship and misbehaviours of any other member of family turned out to be interruption.

In case of Hindu family, horoscope match is indispensable part of a marriage, at times other rejection factors are neglected in order to confirm wedding especially in case of horoscopes proclaiming difficulty in finding an appropriate match. It is important to understand how far horoscope matching has gained popularity and remain a priority among people of the locality.

Individual traits of prospective grooms such as education and physical appearance were considered by very few participants for rejection as it did not meet their expectations. Four participants rejected after knowing that groom's family would not allow her to complete her studies. Two rejections each occurred because alliances were initiated in between really close relatives and in between families lying in same locality without a noticeable geographical distance.

Rejections after 'bride seeing' ceremony

Unlike rejections which occurred reflexively and those after an enquiry, rejections after taking another step; 'bride seeing' ceremony had an emotional bearing for the prospective partners as well. It took a struggle in itself for majority to undergo a 'bride seeing' procedure, rejections after that are mostly related to personal characteristics and factors related to structure of home and family.

Girls of the locality under study faced rejections mostly based on their overall physical appearance. By physical appearance prospective grooms and their family members expects girls to be physically attractive, healthy looking

and without any deformities. Most rejections were based on not meeting the criteria in physical attractiveness. For criteria's such as height and weight they followed a cultural stigma of being in the middle spectrum, both high and low is not preferred. Very tall girl, especially when taller than boy is not accepted at all. Similarly too short girls found it hard to find a match. Overweight or over lean body type girls were most likely to face rejections. Obese females were disadvantaged in the marriage market. Dark skin colour often bore an undesirable physical feature in nature and attained strength as rejection criteria.

Father figure is indispensable when it comes to girls' marriage. Father himself or a brother who could take up the role of a father figure is important in inviting marital relationships. Girls who lack a father figure due to death, separation, and divorce, faced rejections along with those whose fathers' did not take up family responsibility as providers or who were drunkards or unable to play their role due to undesirable health conditions such as being bedridden. Lack of males at home due to above mentioned conditions and others, if any turned out to be a sure indicator of rejections. Presence of a brother turned out to be a saviour at times of absence of father figure. Presence of brother was pivotal in cases of family where number of siblings gendered female was high. Bridegrooms' family specifically had mentioned their preference for family with at least a male child. If number of girls of a single couple is more than two they are seen to face rejections stating "*while the groom visits the in-law's family there is not even a brother to receive him and give company*", "*in any case the groom met a difficult situation financially in future it was essential of a brother-in-law to give a backing*". Equally important was the presence of a mother for a girl because absence of which questions the upbringing.

Girls have even faced rejections because they were educated (probably a graduation or post-graduation) or because they have mentioned their decision on pursuing a job. It is noted that a female nurse faced rejections because of the nature of her profession. Aversion towards nursing was evident from participant's recall of experience from parents and family while expressed a desire to opt nursing as a career option and how everyone discouraged thinking about it's disadvantage in marriage market.

When it's said a mismatch between the families it is mostly related to socioeconomic status, as it is a potential factor to determine whether a marriage proposal will halt or proceed. Maximum number of rejections after a 'bride seeing' ceremony had occurred due to mismatch in the financial status of families. To put in short words it would be, girls without economic resources who lost value in marriage market. Homelessness, small house, lack of proper path towards house which makes it difficult for a car to reach at courtyard, and location of house towards riverside where few among said reasons which point towards financial difficulties. Five participants faced rejections because of the thought process that water could not be consumed as they lived beside the river.

Few rejections occurred without an explicit reason, groom's family did not give reasons and a few pointed out towards people in the locality. Eventhough minimal in number but are involved in breaching marriage proposal, their presence at one point became such an issue that hoardings appeared in locality, warning punishment once caught.

A look into reasons stated by bride's family after 'bride seeing' indicates how much a male is expected to take up provider role in terms of economic resources. He is rejected if he looks unhealthy, slender body type is thought as unproductive. Height and weight is expected to be in accordance with that of female, too tall or too short is not preferred. Along with outlook

equally important is his job profile. A job which does not provide enough status and means to family turns out to be irrelevant. Mismatch in education, occupation and socioeconomic status has caused bride's family to decline from proceeding. Just seven in number, but they have expressed their dislike after talking to prospective groom as they felt that their match would not work out, an instinctive and insightful means of reaching at a decision. Few other causes of rejections were preference of gulf or non-gulf, hurry from groom's side towards marriage which they could not afford as they required time to arrange function, and excess dowry demands.

Dissolution of engagement

Twenty three participants' family had dropped a marriage proposal from proceeding after fixing it officially. Maximum of six alliances were dropped due to further enquiries which ended up as groom or his family were identified to be misbehaving and two among these six, were found to be involved in illegal activities, rest four participants did not know exact reason but it ended from the bride's side. A common thing found in such cases is that grooms' family showed a hurry towards marriage, which created suspicion.

A single proposal was cancelled by groom's family just a week before marriage which created havoc at her home as they did not give a proper reason rather stated that prospective groom's brother-in-law did not approve of this proposal. Bride-to-be was emotionally broken down and it ended up in fixing another proposal in a hurry, thus creating psychological disturbances after marriage leading to treatment. Another proposal was dropped by bride herself as his family was a huge one, around eleven siblings and their family living together. She said "I cannot take up responsibility of household work for such a huge family".

Four proposals were dropped due to the involvement of third party; anonymous false call to groom's family stating that he was in love with the prospective bride which the groom believed and without further clarification dropped it. Another case were a girl's proposal with speech and hearing disability, was dropped due to miscommunication from a person who convinced the groom that she had severe hearing loss than conveyed to them. And in third case someone called up groom's family and told that bride's family is famous for their misconduct with their neighbourhood, a fourth alliance got dropped as bride's elder sister's reason for divorce was misguided by people in the locality.

Two proposal were dropped by mutual consent as grooms' family showed over urgency meanwhile brides family required time to arrange finances for marriage. Another two proposals were dropped by bride's family due to excess dowry demands which they could not meet, it is to be noted that these families were willing to give dowry but the amount demanded was inaccessible. Though just one in number but it requires mention as bride's family rejected a proposal from the same geographical locality as they found it awkward as women (his mother) spoke demanding dowry, meanwhile men at home remained silent.

Parents has fixed marriage between cross cousins but after growing up looking at each other as siblings they took a decision not to abide them. Both together convinced parents about their situation and declined marriage. Another proposal was dropped by bride's father as prospective groom met with an accident and for his treatment and surgery, marriage was delayed for a year. Even after waiting for a year there were health issues and his family requested to postpone it for another six months which was not acceptable and thus cancelled it.

An alliance each were declined due to following reasons: during bride seeing ceremony girl was asked to walk and talk in order to make sure she is healthy, she was further asked to put on weight as well and groom requested to see her again to clarify his doubts regarding match, this created tension at bride's home regarding willingness of groom to marry her. Bride's family called up to dissolve the proposal. In another case there was already confusion regarding whether bride-to-be is taller than groom so after confirming it decided to disperse. Physical disability of girl was not a problem for groom but when his family saw her they decided to drop engagement. After fixing the proposal, groom's family got to know there was a huge discrepancy between the families regarding socioeconomic status and so they withdrew from engagement.

Marriage alliance breakers –statements

Investigators made an inquest into how marriage alliance breakers managed to interfere into marriage proposals as during data collection period participants and their parents have exclusively conversed about such practices with despair. There were speculations as to who could be the culprit but none was yet identified. Their presence was identified when many families had similar experiences; groom's family would be leaving fully satisfied after initial set of meetings giving assurance of proceeding and one fine day they would back off without giving proper reasons. Similarly five girls had undergone 'bride seeing' ceremony after proper enquiries and then they disappear without a reason. Few participants specified that they were not aware whether their alliances had been cancelled due to interference of third party because for many it remained unidentified.

Such people have mostly targeted brides' family and individual members. In three cases they informed groom's families that bride belong to a family of characterless background. In another three cases brides' father was

accused of irresponsible nature and in two cases father has already passed away due to over drinking, by informing it grooms' family backed off. Father's extramarital affair was communicated which is a mishap, father's job nature interfered provided he is no more. If a girl has a disability or illness these people hyped it and it has occurred in four cases.

A common strategy used by them is to call up groom's family as a well-wisher and with assurance convinces them that he has been in love with prospective bride, three such cases has been reported. There were even incidences in which people in the locality caught and questioned him, left him beaten up. Commonly they commented about bride's family as homeless.

An easy way to interfere is by proclaiming "*it's better to enquire properly, we cannot give assurance about their character*", "*we do not have idea about them as they are settlers at this locality*". Such statements are found to be really successful as groom's family would not be ready to take a risk and might not put correct effort to clarify such doubts infused in them. Even worse is the situation if already an alliance has been dropped after engagement, such people make it a point to converse about it without a proper information about how and why it occurred.

Guests during bride seeing

'Bride seeing' is a ceremony where in groom and family comes to meet bride and her family officially to reach at a conclusion whether they should proceed with a proposal. Depending on family it varies at which stage of proposal enquiry a bride seeing ceremony occurs. Mostly after an initial enquiry on prospective groom and bride and their corresponding families marriage mediators (can be any one from a relative to official marriage intermediary) arrange a 'bride seeing' ceremony. At times it is bride seeing which occurs first and later if mutual liking between prospective couples

parents will proceed with enquiries and engagement. Ninety five percentage of 'bride seeing' occurred at bride's residence rest five percent from some parks or shopping malls. It is the groom and his family who visit the bride's family for the ceremony and thus the name "*pennukaanal*" in Malayalam which translates to 'bride seeing'. Investigators asked about who exactly comes during 'bride seeing', excluding four participants who have eloped two hundred and twenty two participants had undergone bride seeing ceremony. Out of 222 participants, 137 participants met with their prospective partner who came with their beloved friends or cousins or elderly males at home. In any case it is prospective groom who comes directly to make choices. On the other hand 54 participants had to undergo multiple number of bride seeing. First it was ladies at home including mother-in-law, sister-in-law, grooms maternal and paternal aunts, grandmothers and cousin sisters who came to scrutinize 'the girl'. If she passed their inspection, the groom came to make a final decision. Similarly another 31 participants observed by males at in-law house other than the prospective groom. It can be father-in-laws, uncles, cousins and brother-in-laws. It is after their initial selection process that a boy and girl meets.

Marriage criteria and choice

Right from childhood, participants have been brought up in a framework, telling them one day they will be send in marriage. They are consciously or unconsciously tamed to be a wife and a daughter-in-law. For marriage to ensue at right time, with the right family, participants were told to be prepared by taking care of their body and appearance. At times without the instruction of parents, participants themselves have taken initiative to maintain health and beauty. Here is a look into how far participants themselves and their family have been sensitive regarding such matters.

Popularly words “fair” and “beautiful” are used interchangeably as synonyms and so did participants believe themselves as unappealing if they are dark skinned. Investigators have met participants who have grown with a notion of being ugly. There were a few, even though rarely who felt obnoxious about self and internalized the reason for rejections, such false notions has rooted strongly within them. Being underweight was a matter of concern and evident from self-description as “*I look dry*”. Personal interest in body weight and weight loss concern most often relates to concern over physical appearance and health. If girl looked huge than expected of her age it became a reason for rejections.

Looking good prior wedding was seen as extremely important because in case of girls, beauty acquired a vital role to attract marriage proposals. So factors which did not suit cultural appearance norms were taken with due concern and thought out to be changed prior wedding. The necessity to change in accordance to beauty ideals is considered relevant depending upon the importance participants and their family attach to these. There were participants who had shown immense apprehension regarding their looks, skin colour, and height-weight concerns but did not take a step to improvise. They were those who lost hope without putting effort or those who could not take any, due to their circumstances. One participant took a stance to marry a fair men as she was dark. In any case it was found that they had developed a sense of worthlessness which arose from rejections caused on the basis of bodily appearances.

Six participants each had reported on how they concentrated on appearance-enhancement and body fitness prior wedding. They recalled on their try outs at night, applying handmade facial mixtures to increase skin tone, and how they avoided taking vehicles to small distances in order to walk. They had further arranged little morning walks.

When asked if anyone had told them to lose weight or take care of health and enhance themselves, participants poured their heart out. They were insisted by parents especially mothers, sisters and close relatives to be conscious about health. Thirteen participants were asked to reduce weight in order to reach a notion of 'ideal body weight'. Another sixteen were asked to gain weight, as looking skinny is a disadvantage in marriage market. Four participants had told how their mothers' took care of their hair uttering "*girls should take care of hair*". Payal still remembers how her relative yelled at lapse to treat facial acnes, which left her crying. Few parents at locality insisted their girls to dress up well during the period of marital enquiries. Diya recalls her mother warning to avoid sun and to use umbrella in order to preserve skin colour. Diya is just one among many who has received similar comments.

When parents out of concern passes statements such as "*why don't you take care of your body*" it kind of inculcate a sense of lacking among participants thereby reducing their self-esteem. Twenty participants have mentioned how much they were concerned about their body while their parents showed apprehension regarding the same. Even when parents did not directly express their concern over daughters physical appearance or complexion they could sense their feelings and it left them disturbed. These participants fell short of words to communicate how they felt while seeing their parents especially mothers in despair thinking about them. In addition girls who grew up lacking father figure has explicitly internalized it's pain and was seen to show major concerns over beauty.

Few mentioned how from childhood they had carried emotional baggage related to physical appearance which arose due to the comparisons made by parents and significant others to girls of similar age. Also comments such as participant are unlike parents and have similarity in traits and features

to some other relative created tension and affected their confidence from childhood. Due to fact that, they looked much mature than their age, people brought alliances to little girls which enhanced parental concerns. Four participants recollected their memory on how their mother asked to regularly apply facial creams while marriage alliances did not work out.

Apart from those who already had an inferior thought about themselves, it was really awful to notice those participants who become conscious about their body and appearance while a delay occurred in marriage. Twenty participants were found to be in this category. Even while marriage proposals does not end up in tying a knot due to other reasons they were seen to blame themselves and internalize a share of reason, thus ending up in worrying and taking decisions without a second thought. Meanwhile if proposal enquiries came across by seeing prospective bride from outside or at occasions, it was found to instil a sense of self confidence and well-being.

Beauty

The word “beautiful” encompasses an umbrella term for the people in the locality. It means a prospective bride is expected to be within a cultural appearance norm related to height and weight, fair skin, long black hair, an attractive body and facial features, and youthful appearance. Being ‘beautiful’ brings in boom and bane at the same time. Forty nine participants had undergone such situation as girls who were apt according to beauty ideals did not have to face many a ‘bride seeing’ ceremony and their alliances gets fixed mostly in the first proposal. Meanwhile these forty nine participants included those who were not prepared for marriage and also those whose parents did not think about marital enquiries. But when the proposal came their way, seeing a girl at public gatherings, it instigates parents to take up marital enquiry seriously and then it became a task in itself to fix marriage. Another seven had overtly stated how much they wished to complete their studies but

as proposal came parents proceeded without their consent. There were two participants whose marriages got fixed within family during childhood because grooms' family could not afford to lose a beautiful bride for their son.

To what extent beauty ideals interfered into participants life, was evident from their testimonials. P131 had undergone a delay of four years to find a match because of a combination of low financial background and less appealing beauty ideals. Eight participants indicated how because of precocious body type people in the locality brought alliances and insisted their parents not to delay. Slender body type, facial acne were certain disqualifications which these girls internalized, as a result of which P100 carrying an inferiority complex lead to take a stubborn decision for perfect mismatch testifying "this is what I am, and so this is what I deserve".

Beauty acts as a major means to surpass other ineligibilities a girl faces in marriage market. Twenty five participants belonging to financial backward conditions, three could avoid dowry as grooms' family had only condition that girl should look good, two having illness another two participants whose father passed away, mishaps at family, unfavourable familial situations such as father's illegal relationship and second marriage, mother's suicide are few incidents to exemplar those who enjoyed the benefit of 'being beautiful'. Participants who thought they would never enter a marital life because of their family situations related to financial backwardness could easily outdo it. A family who relocated to this locality after residing years out of station was worried about finding a partner as they were unfamiliar could outdistance this disadvantage because girl was good looking.

There were certain participants who utilized this opportunity to play their card and exert their choices. If proposal came their way seeing a girl, it instilled a confidence within the girl and parents. In such cases it is found that parents did not show a rush, took time and fulfil demands of themselves and

their daughters. Five participants who had same-sex siblings knew that it was a major disadvantage in locality but it did not hinder nor cause delay in marriage as they were physically attractive. Beautiful girls could bring into reality their minimal choices such as getting married to same locality, completed their studies, preference of partner belonging to government job sector.

Repercussion of excess importance laid on beauty and its apparels had left an irrevocable influence over marital decision making on the part of parents and the prospective brides as well. When family including parents sense a low value at marriage market they become vigilant and cautious which prompt them to reach at a decision at the earliest. From the responses apparently twenty participants had been married without proper enquiries or meeting the demands they once had for marriage, because at some point both prospective bride and her parents reaches at a mindset to somehow attain a result for the effort put by them for long period. Comments put by another eight participant, underline that it is important for marriage to befall.

Nineteen participants had confronted situations were their parents and family begin marital enquiry early, even before average nubility in locality and are seen to panic while a proposal does not work out. Excess pressure sensed manipulates a kind of readiness to marry among participants and it is explicit from the 'Yes' given for reason other than the original one. Parents usually prefer less geographic distance between two families which form affinal relationships but here four participants were willing to form alliance at long distance as well. Also when parents uphold a feeling that their daughters are less desirable they prefer being married to known family most likely within family.

Dowry is a major negotiator in marriage market as it leads many families to arrange their daughter's marriage. Twelve participants family

offered dowry in the context of delayed marriages or put another way, adhered to dowry demands due to their internal conflict of lacking desirability in marriage market. At times they settle down marrying with higher age difference. Compromising dreams and basic demands, girls are even married to a proposal which have been earlier rejected in another case marriage was arranged to a guy who is undergoing second marriage. Horoscope matching is one major criteria among Hindu community but under these circumstances certain families have reserved it provided unless it is essential for groom's family.

Skin Tone

P35 had a delayed marriage while compared to the nubility at the locality because she did not look attractive, dark skinned and financially low. She ended up marrying disabled man who showed reluctance to take up family responsibilities as she was not left with many options. P58 faced continuous rejections due to her dark skin and lean body type but finally married a person whose proposal was earlier dropped due to some unknown reason. After three years the same proposal was proceeded giving them two lakhs dowry provided groom belonged to bride's extended family.

Above cited two cases portray how and to what extend complexion took decisional role in participant's marital choices. Skin tone mostly became instrumental in fixing marriages thereby playing a pivotal role in marital choices and life as such. It can be a saviour and a curse at the same time. Investigators would like to present situations at which "being fair" became desirable and undesirable for the participants and to what extend "being dark" impacted participants' life.

Girls with fair complexion had an advantage to attract more alliances (seventeen participants) and they can overcome obstacles faced by other girls.

Fourteen participants acknowledged that because people preferred fair complexion their low financial status did not hinder into marital enquiries. They were subject to less 'bride seeing' ceremony and within a short span the marriage got fixed. Those people who are adamant about their choice for fair complexion, do not enquire much about family background and loosen their demands. Further parents were found to be relaxed in two cases even when there is a delay also, girl was seen to exert her choice. Girls with fair complexion were seen to express a desire for similarly fair complexion. Other major disadvantages such as health issue, death of father, relocated residence to this particular locality, father's extramarital affair and second marriage could be easily dealt. Nursing is thought as a career with low marriage market value and one nurse who outshined barrier had an added advantage of being fair.

There is an obsession towards "fair" skin and beauty was defined along this dimension. Being fair skin is curse for those who are not prepared to marry but while continuously alliances came parents out of their anticipation decides to proceed with appropriate one, thereafter they gets into serious enquiries. Seven participants had reported their experience related to this. In case a girl is dark in complexion her saviour would be her financial background and if she lacks both, it is an extremely difficult situation to confront. Parents get alarmed, start enquiring marriage proposals at early ages and get rejected. Proclamations such as "*a girl like me who is dark skinned and least appealing is not eligible to dream*" is an aftermath of internalizing reason for rejections as related to inadequacies of self. There were four participants who belonged to this category. Similarly a combination of fatness and dark skin made it tough for three participants.

Fixed proposal- known vs unknown

Humans make use of all means of kinship network formed by consanguinity, affinity and adoption for pre-matrimonial enquiries as we have seen already. Now it's essential to know whom we prefer to marry. Do we choose a totally unrelated individual over someone with whom we share some kind of relationship?. The range of relationship can vary in degree from acquaintance to close relatives.

Investigators went through 208 participants excluding love marriage (18 participants) and looked into whom they have married, did they relate to each other by any means. These 208 participants either share close relations, distant relations, affinity, share common friends or family, acquaintance which came by means of relatives and neighbours. Forty five participants got married to totally unknown family.

Thirteen participants are found to marry close relatives. Marrying close relatives includes maternal parallel cousin (P109), paternal cross-cousin (P164), aunt's grandson (P68) and the like. Four got married to distant family members itself and ten are married within affinal relationships, that is relationship formed out of already existing marriages.

Maximum number of marriages happens by means of relatives who take up the role using their acquaintance to find match, forty eight of them. To make it clear, there would be a trace of relation for the sake of assurance or a relative who is trustworthy would mediate between these families and brings back the kinsmanship. P149 states that her husband's proposal was brought by her mother's cousin who reminded us of our relationship with this family.

Thirty two participants got married through acquaintance. Like families have a brief idea of each other and try to figure out whether relation will work out (P155), a third person who knows both families(P175, P180).

Equally strong is the proposals which came through friendship line, thirty three of them. Twenty two participants were married by means of networks at neighbourhood, either a relatives' neighbour or affinal relatives neighbourhood or neighbours taking initiative to proceed with alliances of their acquaintances.

Caste

The present data constitutes people belonging to a particular locality married within the duration of 2005-2014, investigators while collecting data enquired 555 houses could find that each and every marriage which investigators have seen occurred under religious format. Among the seventy five participants who believe in Hinduism except for one who showed upward caste mobility as she fell in love with a man who belong to upper caste along the hierarchy rest all have married to the same caste. While investigator asked why they did not prefer inter-caste marriage especially when there is a delay due to horoscope mismatch they replied, *“that’s how it is”, “it’s obvious”, “we cannot think of marrying to another caste because there are lot of difference between us and people belonging to other castes”, “thiyya is a minor population while looking geographically so most of the time proposal gets fixed within extended families, sharing similar life style and systems are easy rather than getting into entirely different caste”*.

Considering this unique case investigator found that P220 had a tough situation to surpass. P220 belonged to below poverty line category, house located inside fisheries colony to the interiors without proper way to their home and her home was too small almost wreck. She qualified all criteria which ensured delayed marriage at its market as far as seen in the locality and her parents were well aware of it. She met her partner from her father's ancestral home both developed a liking. Despite belonging to upper caste he convinced his parents to visit her home but seeing their atmosphere they

backed off. He took a strong stance, it is her not her home that I am getting married to. But her father was totally against this proposal and it was without his approval her mother and grandmother proceeded with this proposal because of intercaste marriage. P220 detailed it was a blessing in disguise situation.

“...it was a strange situation. My mother and grandmother kept worrying about our financial issues. They always thought I am too immature to deal effectively with surroundings. They would never let me to a distance because it would be difficult for them to come and enquire about my state. In this case they were sure that he would take care of me as they knew he generally works hard to make a living”.

Data constitute 151 family who believe in Islam. People following Islam at locality are organized into either sunni or mujahid religious groups. In number there is a clear inclination towards sunni at the locality and there exists explicit preference for partner from same religious groups. Among 151 except four participants (P178, P194, P131, P223) rest all have married to the same religious groups to which they belong. P194 had mujahid inclination prior wedding but while investigator asked her religious group initially she told mujahid and then immediately corrected saying *“write sunni otherwise he (husband) will remark are you still mujahid or what”*. P178 faced a situation on her wedding eve. As her family belong to mujhid group they brought a mujahid religious leader to perform her nikah. It was not acceptable for grooms' side as the mosque authorities belonging to sunni group showed disagreement. It became a big issue and resolved it by performing nikah by a sunni leader.

Apart from thirteen participants who found their love from Hindu community rest 62 participants were married considering horoscope

matching. Families at locality are generally in favour of horoscope matching. Ideal Hindu marriage in locality happens when there is matching on horoscope after exchanging it between families. If a girl has an issue in horoscope, they waited until a proper match comes their way which causes a delay in marital enquiry for younger siblings as well. .

Families which thoroughly trust on horoscope are at ease if there is a delay in marriage in accordance with the statement at horoscope. They hold a faith that it will occur at the right time. P203 knew that many alliances are enquired at a time but as per horoscope it was not the period for marriage to occur. While her husband's proposal came it was the right time as per horoscope so proceeded without hesitation. But in case of those who prefer horoscope matching but does not hold a strong belief usually gets disturbed if there is a negative issue in horoscope. P146 had faced immense number of bride seeing ceremony around 35 for above three years. She wished her husband should have a regular job and good character without bad habits. While frequently faced rejections based on horoscope she said "*I became totally fed up of enquiries that I wished somehow horoscope should match. Later I reached at a point to reduce my demands, its fine even if his job is a small scale one, provided partner should take care and love me. Somehow marriage should occur that was the sole prayer*". When there is a delay in fixing, due to horoscope mismatch though very few families have even shown willingness to proceed despite mismatch provided groom's family does not have compulsion on horoscope.

Geography of the marriage market

Equally important is the question "where do the girls at locality get married to", "is there any preferences to certain regions geographically" and to address these investigators collected information regarding spouses' geographical location and the distance in kilometres between birthplaces and

calculated the travel time. Rather than choosing at random people at locality has shown a clear preference pattern towards getting married to same locality.

Among 226 participants under study it is found that 42 participants had got married to the same locality. People who chose to marry in the same locality validate their decision saying it gives a feeling like home, to be around people who share same language and dialect, similar habits, customs, rituals and religious practices. In short they claim that culture does not change. It is effortless to find and finalize a partner from same locality and is further a matter of relief for parents to see their daughters nearby.

Remaining 184 participants were put under attention, and among this 133 participants were married to a distance of seventeen kilometres and lower which means a road travel of thirty minutes and below. Another 42 participants were married to places which take around half-an-hour to one hour and remaining nine participants marital distance was between one to four hours. Highest travel distance of four hours is covered by two participant's rest of the participants among this nine travel in between one to two hours to reach their spousal location.

Investigator well-thought-out under what circumstances participants get married to distance against the general tendency to marry at same locality or really close. For the same investigators went through the interview data of participants who were married to travel time of two hours and more. It constitutes of four participants. P40 had faced rejections due to her nursing profession. There exists a general impression against nursing as it involves night shifts and this is what exactly stated by grooms' family for not proceeding alliances. This alliance happened due to chance factors, her current mother-in-law, a healthy women suddenly collapsed and was hospitalized for a month where she happened to work. This lady was soul to her family and her illness traumatized whole family. She demanded her son to

settle down as soon as possible. Seeing P40 every day, she felt it would be a perfect match as she would take care and nurse her like a good daughter-in-law. That's how the story of this marriage began.

P6 is an entirely different scenario. Participant could not walk right from her birth and after undergoing recurrent operations with the aid of walker boots she walked for the first time at the age of seventeen. At the age of twenty, parents initiated marriage enquiry as they were well aware of difficulty to find a match. Proposals ended up after 'bride seeing' ceremony and few were dropped by the interference of marriage alliance breakers. A fixed proposal which brought in a great deal of happiness unfortunately backed off. Fifteen years passed away her elder brother took a firm decision unless she got married he would not begin a family. This was the most painful situation as relatives blamed her and she felt guilty of being a burden to her family. She declared " *he (brother) should get married lest she would kill herself*". A year after his marriage a proposal from Mysore came through marriage broker of a married man who wish to marry from Kerala as his wife could not conceive. Groom came saw her and very next day in the absence of his family, a small function marriage occurred. Next day he left to Mysore, within a period of two years of marital longevity he hardly visited her thrice and disappeared. P6 thus gets added to the victim of "*mysore kalyanangal*". Post data collection investigator came to know that P6 had undergone divorce, all she wished was a healthy man who would take care of her and give a child of her own.

The above written journey of participants indicates that marriage to a distance is not a random choice. In fact it occurs at certain set of conditions which leaves them no choices. Marriage market as such is greatly controlled by physical appearance, financial status and adherence to set of rules followed since decades. From the marital distance of participants it is obvious that there

is clingy tendency towards geographical or spatial homogamy. It requires an exploration into why people at locality choose to marry within the locality and how they manage to do so.

Forty two participants married to the same locality and while investigators examined the distance between these spouse's location, it was seen that only nine were located at greater than one kilometres distance. This would mean rest thirty three is located within a kilometres distance. Amid thirty three participants seven resided within quarter kilometres and eleven within half kilometres.

The figure forty two includes twelve participants who have found their love, out of which seven families took initiative to arrange their marriages and other four eloped, got married and returned home. Keeping aside the twelve participants who chose their love, investigator here inspect into the nuances of geographical assortative mating.

Participants benefitted from getting married to people in the locality because as they would live close by they can meet their parents frequently, those who had lost either of their parents (four) disclosed that they sense safety and security by proximity. Similar is the case with a parent who lost their son during accident, they wished to see their daughter frequently or other children married to bit far so at least one child remains at a close distance. Parents of another four participants who faced rejections due to the over importance placed by grooms' family on physical appearance preferred alliances from close by.

Four participants who had ambition to pursue education and complete it preferred those who are willing for the same, preferably those who are educated as well. So they looked into surroundings first, why take a longer path if their demands could be satisfied close at hand with minimum

inconvenience. Due to bad experiences of elder sisters married to other places participants grabbed alliances from same locality.

Trust is the most important factor especially on the marriage mediators who gives assurance knowing both families character. A girl who had undergone divorce and later twice had to withdraw from engagement could not take risk so chose within locality. There was again individual gain in the part of mother-in-law who preferred virilocal residence so if married to same locality unlike elder daughter-in-law the girl would stay back home.

Eleven participants among thirty (excluding love marriages) under discussion knew their partner from childhood onwards, they had interacted with them and share childhood memories, within this three are close relatives and remember growing up in same ancestral home. They included maternal parallel cousins and paternal aunt's grandson. Four participants got married within family, three participants' families knew each other closely, three knew that prospective groom belongs to so and so family and have seen them once in a while.

Geographical homogamy was ensured by the influence of social group as well. There is a colloquial folk axiom at locality; girls should not sit at home after an age. Axiom meant to avoid delay in marriage after attaining nubility. A spinster was looked at with sympathy. There are number of participants whose marriages have been expedited by involvement of people in the locality. Such is the cases of a few who get married in the locality itself. If nubile girls and boys are around people in locality take initiative to arrange it, especially if financial status is low, thinking at least one among the girls at home attains marital life. There was reluctance from the part of three candidates because the alliances were too close and familiar, so they couldn't think of them as life partners but conveniences overpowered their choices.

Engagement

A day will be selected considering the convenience of both families to sit down and talk about fixing the date of marriage. It is taken with due respect and a small function is arranged at mostly the grooms' family. In the locality 66 percentage of participants engagement function took place at the grooms' home, eight percentage at brides' home, 19 percentage, without a function, just through words they gave assurances, and rest at an auditorium or at astrologers' centres. The function happens in the presence of kindred mostly progenitors from both families. Mostly less than fifty people meet up discusses about further demands and dates related to marriage functions. At times representative from religious institutions offer prayers for respective families' well-being.

As mentioned above kindred at the function includes fathers' of marriage candidates, male siblings, brother-in-laws are treated with special consideration meanwhile uncles from paternal and maternal side have power sometimes higher than parents themselves in taking decision, other close relatives and people from neighbourhood. There were even occasions at which uncles from both sides solely take decisions especially if the father has passed away, eloped, irresponsible or is an emigrant. In twenty eight cases it was the paternal and maternal uncles, who took the key role. One most important consideration while fixing a date would be, the availability of leave for potential groom especially in case if he lives abroad for occupational purpose. Eighty seven participants marriage date was fixed by considering their grooms' leave (87 out of 110 gulf emigrants). The groom of four participants wanted to get married along with their siblings, so the dates were fixed accordingly. In such cases it brings great difficulty to brides' family to arrange wedding at short notice. One participant conversed how difficult it was for her to get married within days, especially on the same day on which

her groom's marriage was already fixed with another girl who happened to run away with her lover. Further brides' and grooms' fathers, brothers and brother-in-laws convenience is taken into consideration.

Dowry demands

Investigators questioned whether any payments existed between the families during the occasion of marriage. From the responses of participants investigators comprehended that dowry is looked at as almost a common phenomenon which has been part of marriage. It could be anything from money, gifts, land that got transferred from brides' family to grooms family. It existed in disguised forms even after marriage for a period of time, in the name of gifts during different occasions, as a result of which a girl's marriage gives financial, emotional and physical issues to the parents. For instance, a mother of five including three girls (P2, P4 are sisters) at one point decided and asked her alcoholic husband to leave the family because she was well aware that his presence at home would hinder marital enquiry and also would restrict the financial support from affluent people in locality during wedding. Such are the expenses during and after a wedding.

Nineteen percentage (forty participants) of arranged marriages at locality ensued with payment in the form money. Two participants below fifty thousand, thirteen in between fifty thousand and one lakh, fifteen participants gave one to two lakhs in dowry, rest of the participants did not know how much their parents have invested. Money and gold together were demanded in certain cases. One family asked for a car. Nineteen families were insisted, at the engagement function, to provide gold to the prospective brides, a few pinpointed on the gold given to their elder daughter-in-law or daughters in a slightly instigating manner. Others around seven families straight away insisted "*provide gold in a proper manner so that we do not get insulted among our kindred*". There are rather a few who added ingratiation during

demanding “. . . *it is not for us. In future it is going to benefit your son-in-law and daughter itself*”. P186 were asked to hand over land towards son-in-law as dowry but her parents showed resistance and instead gold was given to their daughter which was after marriage sold by groom to buy a vehicle and own a shop. P193 mentioned that thirty cent of land was transferred as dowry to her husband’s name prior wedding and after marriage it was sold and the amount was invested in her bank account.

Time gap between bride seeing- marriage

Time gap between ‘bride seeing’ and marriage is instrumental for prospective brides to get prepared initially, accepting changes in life events. This is substantiated by statements from them regarding the confusions which occurred after engagement.

Table 4

Duration between bride seeing and marriage

Duration	Number	Frequency
Within days	11	5%
Less than six months	155	75%
Six-twelve months	37	18%
1-3 Years	5	2%
Total	208	

Data discussed in the above table excluding the eighteen love marriages in the locality, among these 208 participants, seventy five percentage of participants got married within a duration of six months after ‘bride seeing’ ceremony. This occurs, taking into consideration mostly, the convenience of men at home. Grooms’ leave availability, fathers, brothers and uncles’ accessibility becomes so crucial that five percentage gets married

within days. Eighteen percentage got a year between bride seeing ceremony and marriage to get transformed and deal effectively with the situation.

Confusion after engagement

A total of eighty seven participants have opened up about what it meant to accept a transition from singlehood to wifhood. Premarital worries and woes experienced brought in a bucket of questions within them. It was reported to accelerate with every passing day attaining its peak a week or two prior wedding. Seventy out of this eighty seven was concerned about being shifted to a new atmosphere, being surrounded with new family (3), leaving own home (27), apprehension about adjustment skills (6), feared transition and kept weeping for weeks (3), confused and stressed at the same time (16), and if marital distance was large it worried them. There were four who were constantly in alarmed situation and as a result of which, lost weight. They had anticipation on how to behave during the virilocal residence. P66 spent their childhood at same home until nine years, and then living at same plot married to her close relative still she worried “*will things be the same after marriage*”. Participants who saw their sisters’ difficult marriage, were in apprehension thinking about their life after marriage. For some, equation at home after marriage changes and it leaves tension. P78 lost her only brother in accident and was greatly concerned about her parent’s situation after her marriage. There were four participants who strictly wanted to complete their studies so they did not want to get married and was totally in despair after engagement.

Marital jitters are high for those who are used to remaining at home, without forming a social network nor interact with others. If there is a very less gap between fixing and marriage date participants were found to get on their nerves, especially in case of marriages which occur within days. Five such participants had expressed how badly they were affected and could not

enjoy their wedding day. P103 got to know about proceeding with alliances lately and was in a shock because it was too early for her to accept it.

Apart from the anticipation, there were participants who doubted their decision. P144 was one among three who could not recollect their groom's face and was in a tough situation to convince their parents. As many proposals happened simultaneously and were subject to 'bride seeing' ceremony, these participants found it difficult to identify their groom while parents communicate about fixing it. P144 could not think of moving to another family so didn't want to get married. So while the prospective groom made a visit she did not bother to look at him. While she claimed that she didn't want to get married as from whatever she could recall, he looked unhealthy and shorter and seeing this her younger brother fainted. After engagement she saw him at a distance and when her brother gave her some assurance, she gained relief. Even then she checked her height difference while tying the knot during the wedding.

P20 got engaged during her graduation period and her prospective groom had tenth standard education. He did not pursue higher education, this left her in suspicions. She felt whether the difference in academic qualification affected their marital life. Later she consoled herself that even though he was not highly educated, he did have a general knowledge and finally it is what matters. P11 who remained a spinster for a while and had a delayed marriage to a distant locality, due to her rejections based on appearance, had a mixed feeling after engagement. P182 took a decision to go forward with the current proposal, against her progenitors wish. They were against this alliance as they felt the groom looked unhealthy, without vigour. Two participants were tensed because after engagement, their prospective grooms' did not keep in touch with them unlike others in locality who had the opportunity to be in contact through phones. So they feared whether their

prospective grooms' actually liked them. Another two participants wanted to back off from the engagement because grooms' family demanded dowry at the last moment. P131 had a tough time because it was her decision to marry him, as she was in love with him. Being the eldest of four siblings including two younger sisters, her parents and relatives were against this alliance because they felt love marriage would defame the family and affect the younger sister's marriage. It took her a fight and pleading of around six months to convince her family, she was literally locked up during the period. After all this, the groom's family with his approval demanded fifty thousand as pocket money and three hundred and twenty gram gold as dowry. She found it difficult to express in words how she felt hearing that, she wanted to back off. It was too late and finally her parents had to sell her ancestral property to arrange the wedding.

Financial assistance

Marriage, as a function, involved a whole lot of economy in terms of meeting basic expenses, publicising the ceremony, exchanges between the families (if any) and series of functions related to wedding. It was not possible for everyone to meet such needs equally every time. Participants did not have an idea of total expenses for wedding but were vigilant about the means by which their parents and relatives have managed their weddings. While sixty four participants stated that their parents were already cautious and were ready as their daughters were nubile, rest due to constraints to meet growing demands related to wedding have taken financial assistance from available sources, a few have even relied on more than one source.

A major means of gaining access to finance was by borrowing it (eighty eight in number) next to it comes which is granted by both maternal and paternal uncles who take up financial responsibility as their duty (thirty three) and in another thirteen cases it is maternal uncles who has alone

preceded with the wedding. The next category was special as there was a common tendency seen in this locality, people, especially affluent in the locality, took up girls' marriage as their responsibility as well and showed enthusiasm to provide financial assistance. It was thought as a shared responsibility and thirty participants benefitted from it. A few participants who worked as servants at households received eighty gram gold from their family.

Again there was a trend in the locality called handling of envelope, an envelope with cash which each family can afford is given. Those who gives envelope gets in return same amount or more from family which received it while they arrange their children wedding. This flow of money is a big relief to accumulate money for the wedding as reported by thirty eight participants. Fourteen opted for bank loans, three sold their homes, six received financial assistance from their brother-in-laws, five families sold the land they owned. Seven participants stated that they liked every family they also had some financial crisis during wedding, four shared that their parents did not share matters related money so does not know how they could arrange it.

It needed a special mention that among these participants' forty nine families still had not come out of the financial burdens created during weddings. They are repaying amounts to settle financial liabilities even after years. P20 was in agony while she testified that it took her parents four years to repay the loan taken for her marriage. P187 second among three siblings ended her education in the ninth standard because she knew her family wouldn't be able to afford it, her younger brother after his tenth had started doing jobs. Two years earlier her elder sister got married, as it was the first marriage at her home and father passed away due to cancer, people in the locality especially affluent ones, helped them financially even then they had to borrow money. Before they could repay the amount P187 marriage got

fixed unexpectedly. Again they had a hurdle and this time they could not expect help from people in the locality. So the debt amount increased. P187 whispered in vain “*debt, lifelong debt*”.

P84 had a delayed marriage enquiry at the age of 22 while compared to those happening at locality because financial liabilities caused by two of her elders sister’s wedding within ten years duration are still not over. So her parents could not think of affording another financial crisis. Meanwhile she completed her post-graduation. P116 belongs to a financially backward family, having two elder sisters married and a younger brother. After degree her progenitors took initiative to enquire, while her parents were at a laid back situation because of financial liabilities. Proposals got rejections from groom’s side because of being financially low. Her husband’s marriage was already fixed and they were all set for marriage which was when his fiancé told that she was in a relationship with another man. Blessings in disguise his proposal came to P116 their only demand was to conduct marriage on already fixed date that was within a week. As bride’s family was not prepared they had to borrow from all resources and were still in debt even after three years. But what she feels was she could avoid a huge dowry because of this situation.

Father roles

The role of fathers needed a special mention. Participants had mentioned about struggle in the part of parents especially fathers’ in order to bring a family for their daughters. While investigators had mentioned the role of father in marriage, how far the absence of father or irresponsible fathers have intervened into marital decision making, we here try to acknowledge all the fathers of participants under study, who have spent a life time for their family. Especially forty five among them who have migrated to abroad mostly Arab countries in order to make a living. Longer is the duration as emigrant

larger is their financial liabilities. Here are few lives of those who have dedicated for their family:

P207 eldest among two sisters, even though many proposals came their way her parents was not ready to take up as they were not financially prepared. Later they feared good proposals won't come their way and started taking proposals seriously, second one got fixed. Marriage was extended for more than six months in order for her father to attend it, all these years he was working for this purpose.

P31, second in birth order among five children to her parents which includes four girls. While investigator asked for a delayed marriage enquiry at age 26 which is inappropriate to nubility at locality, she replied:

I had a late marriage because after elder sister's marriage there were financial liabilities and in order to resolve those father left abroad. He did not return for ten years at a stretch. He was in touch with the family through letters and phone calls, yet he could not manage finance. It was a tough time. So it took ten years after his return to think of her marriage.

P219 youngest to two elder brothers, she wanted to complete her degree but after marriage had to leave it incomplete. Being good at studies her wish was to undergo teacher training course but her father refused to enrol as the centre was at a distant place. Even though there was time, as she was the only girl among the three, her father wished to settle back home as soon as possible after completing his accountability in his work. He lived his whole life at abroad still could not earn as much as required and had to sell their property to arrange her wedding.

Investigators had presented the above cases to portray the range of input made by fathers in the locality so as to provide financial support especially for their daughters' marriages.

Population at locality

While going through the data participants certain statements regarding the populace of the locality caught the investigators' attention. A summary of their statements was presented below:

“...at our place, when there is a girl's marriage it is taken up by whole people. Those belonging to affluent families contribute financially and those who cannot afford financially make sure of their presence to arrange wedding and its related functions. Also such people contribute according to their capacity by providing money in an envelope as a gift which gets returned on other occasions. Even if not returned it's not an issue because what everyone think is that marriage should happen at an appropriate age. Girls who are not left in marriage after an age are looked in with sympathy”

Forty eight participants had mentioned about the assistance offered by people at locality. There were no restraints on the basis of religion, irrespective of religion everyone helps each other at wedding occasions; physically, emotionally and financially. P226 belonged to a family with 12 members and out of which only two earning members (maternal uncles). As she lost her father during childhood, four members including herself, mother and two younger brothers did matrilocal residence. After a point her mother felt she had to contribute to family financially so she started working as a servant in nearby homes. P226 also joined her mother as a servant and contributed as far as she could and dreamt of a better life after wedding. A

delayed marital enquiry at 23 age and fixed first proposal itself brought by broker with a dowry demand of one lakh and 200 grams of gold. As the populace very well knew of their financial crisis, they managed to collect money which was equivalent to buy 120 gram gold which was a huge amount. So it would not have been possible without support from populace still she had a tougher life ahead because of mother-in-law issues.

P36 lost her father during adolescence, has four sisters and one brother. Girls after an age went to the neighbourhood for assisting in kitchen work and thereby supported the family. The populace knew their financial issues and it was them who stood as father figure right from initiating marital enquiry to the day of wedding. Similar is the case with P12 who got married at 30 years. She stated “ *it was the populace who arranged marriage and its due to their kindness our day-to-day needs were fulfilled. We are indebted to them for our lives*”.

Above described cases are extreme cases who belonged to below poverty line were populace has taken over whole responsibility and made sure that they could gather whatever they can to help the family. It was not necessary that helping hands were offered only to families which faced extreme financial difficulties. Populace had been instrumental at many occasions irrespective of the financial status of the family. A financial crisis could occur to anybody irrespective of whether they belong to below poverty line, above poverty line 1, above poverty line 2 or above poverty line 3. Such was the case with P111 who did not ever expect her marriage to occur at the age of seventeen. Just because an acquaintance at the locality told the mother about a guy with a good character they enquired about it. Within a week, two levels of ‘bride seeing’ ceremony and engagement happened. All she prayed was her partner should behave well. She was young, did not know what marriage was all about and was least prepared. In the period between

engagement and marriage she was tensed about leaving home. Meanwhile her parents were not aware of her mental agony but were concerned about arranging funds. It was the populace who took care to support the family as far as possible.

The role played by the people in the locality requires special mention, using all means to support the needy family financially by approaching people in the neighbouring locality as well, those who worked abroad especially in the gulf. A collective approach towards gaining financial access is more obvious in case of below poverty line.

Different is the situation with family belonging to above poverty line 1 and 2 status. In case of people who belonged to above poverty line 1 the situation was bit different because they had access to populace as well as extended family who were mostly better in financial backup. Above poverty line 2 status group found it difficult to reveal about financial crisis, it was viewed as insult to the proclaimed familial status. So they mostly borrowed from within the family and supports from uncles (paternal and maternal) were crucial. It did not mean that people belonging to above poverty line 3 group do not meet an emergency. When the marriage get fixed within a short duration or at unexpected time and if they met difficulty they too prefer to sell property or deal within family like support from uncles than letting people know their crisis.

Wedding Arrangements

Wedding invitations are letters formally inviting the recipient to attend the wedding. It in a way instigates the reader to follow the act of attending the wedding. Mostly it was parents, especially fathers of prospective brides in the at locality who make personal visits with invitation letters. In case, due to circumstances they are not able to meet personally, they make it a point that

significant others from family, meet invitees' representative of brides parents. They are mostly maternal and paternal uncles. Brothers, cousin brothers, brother-in-laws come next in priority list. Families at a distance or when parents can't personally meet, phone calls are used as substitutes. In extreme cases mothers, grandmothers and populace who took up wedding responsibilities are also seen to offer invitation. Those who cannot afford to meet expenses of invitation letters use mouth-to-mouth communication.

The wedding eve and wedding day are two important days of wedding. Parents make it a point to invite families from both paternal and maternal side along with affinal relationships. Friends, acquaintances and neighbours are equally important as family members. While investigators during data collection period attended few weddings it was surprising to note how far the mingling between neighbours make it hard to believe it at which home weddings are occurring. Wedding home and homes adjacent to it are open to guests, sometimes food was served at the courtyards of neighbourhoods. Populace move around to arrange wedding and serving food. Wedding invitations were given to neighbouring houses even at distances. There were participants whose invitations were given to around two fifty houses around the locality. On the whole maximum invitees from neighbourhood and locality were from around fifty to hundred homes. Financially low families provide more invitations so as to receive financial assistance in the form of envelope.

Number of attendees at a wedding varies, maximum invitees in number are five hundred to thousand. Hundred and one weddings had a population in between five hundred and thousand. Then in between thousand to thousand five hundred. Those who couldn't afford limit it within five hundred keeping it to first circle of close relatives and really close neighbourhood below

twenty five houses. Six participants reported that their weddings were attended by three thousand to four thousand guests.

The number of days involved in a wedding depends on how much family is willing to invest in, also on the demands made by grooms' family. The common trend in the locality was wedding eve, wedding day and two feasts one at brides' and grooms' home each. This is the pattern followed by most majority at the locality but number of functions increase in proportion to financial status also on the attitude towards weddings. The shorter and sweeter or magnificent the wedding, the hosts decides. Except four rest all the weddings under study has occurred at their residence.

Wedding day is mostly lived in present with a hope about future holding tightly the nostalgic moment of pasts. The line mentioned is a summing up of how participants under study felt on their big day. The importance prospective bride give for the wedding day is equally important for their parents as well, and each one of them hold a dream of their own to arrange the day. Investigators spotlight on the arrangements prior wedding and who is behind the big day.

Taking into consideration a single wedding at the locality, it is found that prior wedding parents, maternal and paternal uncles, brothers, sisters, brother-in-laws, cousins (parallel and cross-cousins) meet up some day to discuss about events and its arrangement. In the locality, three important arrangements are regarding, setting a bedroom for the bride, ornaments in the form of gold and proper food. Apart from parents it was mostly maternal and paternal uncles who invest financially as well. A wedding is taken up as a collective responsibility and at each stage prior, on the wedding day and post wedding every one contributes to their part. There would be variations in functions exhibition depending on the financial status each family holds. Females at home including bride herself, mothers, sisters, sisters-in-law and

aunts were mostly involved in decisions regarding dress and ornaments for the wedding functions.

Gold given

Table 5

Gold given in marriage

Gold in sovereigns	Frequency
10-30	88
30-50	75
50-70	25
70-90	11
90-110	6
110 -130	3
Unknown	13
Total	221

Above mentioned table shows gold given, in the form of ornaments, to the participants on their wedding day. Parents at the locality share a common dream about their daughters' wedding, to see her bedecked in jewellery provided they could afford it or not. Participants had similarly recalled how they wished variations in jewellery prior wedding. They have in alas spoken to investigators about their misconception regarding marital life which lacked one's view point on life after marriage and how much they were swept off by the shining gold.

Obsession towards gold make it a tough situation for parents in the locality especially belonging to below poverty line and also to those who once belonged to high-birth but due to financial crisis could not afford to maintain the status and fame they have always enjoyed. Marriages were often occasions for display of power and status, so to avoid disgrace brides' family

take up more responsibility, often more than what they can fund, finally ending up in borrowing, loans, selling land or home thus leaving no means for living. Shoddier the condition, if the family had more of same-sex siblings. P53 sold their home, brought a small house which was at the vicinity of daughter's husband home in order to provide gold during wedding.

Bride on wedding day

Looking good on wedding day was a matter of concern for females in general, does this apply to participants under study? How did the bride get prepared for her big day in terms of appearance and who was her support system during wedding?. Apart from those participants who constantly had to face rejections during 'bride seeing' and whose parents were anxious about their looks, rest all were at ease, not bothered about brides' appearance. Seventeen participants approached beauty parlour once prior wedding in order to look good on the day. Among them three participants dressed up with their assistance on the wedding. Two participants mentioned that it was grooms' family who brought beauticians to dress them up. It was the participants who were located at neighbourhood, who approached the beauty parlour. They said while they saw others on wedding day dressed well, they also preferred to opt for beauty parlours prior to the wedding.

The participants spoke about the events and the couple of emotions on her wedding. An emotional dance happened between participants and her parents as it was not an easy transition in life. Until the day of wedding due to the involvement and rush seen on arranging wedding they are not much affected, but on the wedding day, participants mentioned what it meant to be experiencing 'the moment'. Almost everyone stated that wedding day passes in minutes because most of the time they are blank addressing invitees and moving according to the instructions given by others. Brides had a great emotional support from the females at home, including her mother, sisters,

aunts, grandparents and close relatives. Few shared that while they felt totally out of world they look up to their mothers.

Wedding day issue

Along the process of data collection investigator noticed certain issues which arose on the day of wedding and would like to view it. Four such cases has been reported. P1 is married to a boy who lost his father at 12 years and was sent with his younger brother to orphanage. He grew up there until his mother remarried at the age of sixteen and re-joined his family but could not get along with stepfather despite being caring. He left with his brother to live with his grandmother and great grandmother. Grown out of such situations, he did not blend well with people casually. Participant's family, unaware of his character, on the wedding night, for purely purpose of fun mocked him and demanded money, lest the bride would not be send to his room. These funny segments at times cross the limit. In this case even though bride's cousin demand was in a subtle manner the groom got irritated and reacted. Her voice shivered while she shared how difficult it was for her to enter bedroom on her first night, because she feared his reaction.

P22 was married to her father's uncles grandchild living in the same locality under study. On wedding day while his friends came for lunch at her place, they sprayed a foul smelling coloured water on people at the bride's home. Elders at her place asked them to get out and obviously it became an issue, while females of groom's side visited her home in the evening, they took her along with them but resisted to have food at their place. Bride stayed at groom's home in contrast to their plan, bride's mother fell unconscious and was admitted in the intensive care unit, which left P22 in tears.

P135 strongly rejected proposal that came during higher secondary education and was stubborn about not to marry young. But during graduation,

she liked a proposal after seeing the groom which her parents didn't approve due to financial mismatch. She demanded to see him, as she could not recall his face due to tension. Unlike other girls in the locality she convinced her father and brother and met him personally and talked properly. After engagement they continued to meet. On the day of wedding eve at his home while P135 started crying stating "*I want to go back to my home. Please take me and leave me at my place*". At this point her husband lost his cool, because he did not try to understand her situation, as for him she had mingled well with his family prior wedding. Finally his mother and sisters managed the situation well.

P178 had a very difficult beginning as a wife. Nikah, the major function in muslim marriages were the girl was given in marriage to her husband. For this single, most religious function the priest is either arranged by bride's or groom's family. In P178 case, as her family belongs to mujahid cult, they took their priest to the sunni dominant area of groom's family, which created a great issue and ended up with the involvement of the elders at locality. The very next day after wedding, as the bride wore a single ornament which did not belonged to her, she returned it back. It again fuelled the issue, her husband's silence hurted her the most while their distant relative kept questioning on her free will to return it, without taking their permission. The issue would not arise if her husband took a stance, this thought still gives her pain.

Initial Years of Marriage

Initial years of marriage are crucial to the overall well-being of individual and marital life as well. Participants reportedly had to meet a couple of goals during initial years including getting to know each other and their priorities, interests and behavioural patterns which required investment both physically and emotionally. Along the journey both men and women

were expected to share their body and mind, willingness for same is a prerequisite. As years pass by they learn to deal with expectations, allocate resources and manage relationships with in-laws failing which has resulted in conflicts between spouses.

Participants under study had revealed their experiences during initial years of marriage apart from 58 participants who had difficulty during initial years. Among the fifty eight participants who explicitly reported about being in crisis at various levels of marriage, what mattered was lack of preparedness and ignorance on marital life. Differences in traits had upset their expectations, childlessness and relationship at a long distance due to emigration had affected compatibility. Dissatisfaction created due to mismatch in preferences in education and job related factors has impacted couple relationship. In certain cases due to communication of faulty information between families by marriage mediators, spousal relationship had turned into conflict. Another major dimension which arose from participants responses is the quality of relationship between mother-in-laws and daughter-in-law.

Prior wedding, each person has different notions about sexual intercourse. There were six participants who took time to adjust to sexual life after marriage. They took months to involve in sexual relation as sex was thought off as a forbidden act, was too young to marry and it occurred in a hurry, forget about sexuality, it took months to accept their husbands.

Another issue which developed between couples after marriage was childlessness and delay in conceiving which had also been linked to long distance relationship. P14 blames messages which were misunderstood, created clashes in her long distance relationship. There were many instances where participants had stated that while the spouse was living apart they talked or chat over phone and fought over silly matter. It was due to their

physical absence and pain of separation which instigated clashes, complaining that one or the other partner ceased to love the other. This is even worse while participants stay back at their husbands' home while he was abroad.

P1 communicated that because they rarely lived together due to the nature of his job (a month or two in a year) they were not blessed with a child. P114 fought over childlessness as she had a problem with conceiving and he blamed her for not taking treatment while she already had problem with menstruation, ended up in separation for a period over one year and later re-joined. P110 feels why she had to work, felt worthless at her husband's home without a child for it had been eight years. P193 was shocked when her husband asked her to leave marriage and live her way as he had minimal sperm count. She did not leave him but the husband, day-by-day showed possessiveness and did not let her go out of her home. P214 and P217 was blamed for below average height and maternal aunt's sterility as a hereditary influence for delay in conception respectively.

Looking into the characteristics of husbands; P131 got married to her love after a fight to convince her people. Few days prior wedding, her husband's family demanded dowry which was a blow on her head. It was demanded with her loves acquiescence, she wanted to back out from this alliance but could not, because it was too late and it was her decision to choose him. It was difficult for her to put into words how she felt and continued feeling. P178 faced a situation on the wedding day and immediately after that on following days which was created by a distant family member who had got to do nothing with this family. She was upset about the stand taken by her husband because his point of view, could have avoided the issue. This incident left a scar on the relationship.

P58 was upset on husband being inexpressive which leaves little space for interaction meanwhile he does his responsibilities, P35 faced rejection

because of her financial backwardness and dark complexion, married to a guy with physical disability he does not take up familial responsibility which hurts her. P222 had financial issues during initial years. P4 constantly fights between and re-join with her husband. P23 and P36 suffered from husbands' doubts regarding infidelity both these couples had several times moved back to birthplace, P23 within a duration of eight months of marital longevity had reached a separation and then consulted a psychologist. Basically she was taken to psychologist, while he had a problem. P36 had a fair-complexion child and her husband doubted his gene stating how such a child is born to a dark couple apart from this he most of the time remained aloof without taking up familial responsibility.

P6 became a victim of 'mysore kalyanam', physical disability left her without choice and his absence after two or three visits left her in agony. She kept waiting for him and he did not turn back. P153 came to know that her husband had extramarital relationship with an elderly lady in the locality and was living separated. P134 has a supportive mother-in-law who remarried an Arab but made sure her son out of her first marriage did lead a fine family. But her husband was twice caught under illegal acts and jailed. By then P134 hated him, could no longer sleep with him, she could not even tolerate his smell. She hated his touch as well. Relationship turned abusive. After his second imprisonment he showed initiative towards betterment of their relationship which gives P134 a great hope.

We have already seen participants who married for financial security as they expect their spouse to provide them. So money can even be thought as part of many reasons behind why people marry. But mostly participants marry for many other reasons and financial security does not become much of a consideration, but with passing years being married for a while financial support becomes a necessity especially while rearing a child. Financial support

to the participants is a matter to be studied because mostly all participants are unemployed and those working are only in single digits.

Investigators enquired participants on how they meet their daily needs. Four participants hearing it wonderingly asked back; “*why do I need money?*”. Two hundred and seven participants has reported on who supports them financially after marriage and how they manage their day-to-day needs. One hundred and forty eight participants said it was their husbands who directly provide financial assistance, in fifty three cases husbands lent money to their mother and it was them who gave money to daughter-in-laws, three participants were supported by father in laws, and four stated that nobody provided them with money. In a single case P174 participant was deeply in fury because her husband did not take care of her needs and has bad habits. It is still her parents who is giving money for her needs after a marital longevity of more than a year and her dissatisfaction in marital life was evident from her statement “*its always better to get divorced before conceiving*”. Investigator could notice only a single couple who was sharing their financial responsibilities, P77 and her husband, both were teachers.

Out of the fifty three participants who stated that it is their mother-in-law who provide them financial support, eighteen was unhappy about it. P120 was married at the age of 19, eight years of marital longevity till date her husband handed over his money to mother-in-law and it's she who carried out financial management at home. P120 was upset about the dominant nature of mother-in-law who took over her lives decisions. She never voiced her needs and so her husband did not realize it. She expected her husband to understand and provide even before she demand.

The issue with mother-in-law meeting financial demands rather than having a direct access to it is combined with many other issues, these daughter-in-laws have with the in-law family. So while we mention

unhappiness due to lack of access to resources, it requires explanation on issues during initial years of marriage and along the period especially on the life at the in-law residence.

Seventeen participants has commented on their difficulty to deal with in-laws, especially mother-in-laws and sister-in-laws, the issues between them varies from participants difficulty to properly interact with them to mother-in-laws being overly intruding into couples privacy and making decisions for them, basically controlling couples lives. P7 found it difficult to openly interact with her mother-in-law because she knew her nature of being upfront was viewed as inappropriate behaviour. P55 had a suffocation at in-law place as they do not interact with the daughter-in-law and are stringent.

P29, P44 and P160 had a complaint on their husband being over dependent and had a diffused identity with their mother and sisters. They felt that their husbands priority is their family. P44 life was unstable until they had a child. P160 has a feeling of being cheated as her husband has provided wrong information regarding his education on bureau site. Believing a graduate they proceeded and after fixing marriage came to know he has only matriculation. Her gold was taken for unknown purpose within days of marriage. She feels both their characters and lifestyle are entirely different as she is brought living abroad, something has to be similar in order to get along. Took a gasp and uttered "*I had a child, at totally unexpected time*".

P121 and P143 complaints about their mother-in-laws who are sturdy, controlling and intruding into their personal matters. P121 is upset that even after eight years of marital longevity as her husband does not understand her needs, she has to wait for her mother-in-law for her and her children financial needs as well. P143 fed up of her mother-in-law said "*it's his love that takes this marriage forward*". P97 stated her mother-in-law behaves well while her son lives abroad but when he comes back she starts to interfere into their

private space, does not let them live in a single room, if her husband took her abroad she follows them. P97 could not manage this and left to her place, separated for a while. But she loved her husband after re-joining she became pregnant and now her marital life was stable.

P221 had a tough journey since childhood, abandoned by grandfather, her mother a victim of mysore wedding and father left them while she was in her mother's womb. P221 did not see her father, not even a photo. After tenth standard she could not continue education and along with her mother went to neighbouring houses as servant. This marriage proposal was enquired by communicating all their issues to males at groom's family. While females came to see her they did not like their house or the locality as it was inside fisheries colony. Rather than dropping the proposal they forwarded towards marriage demanded dowry as well. Meanwhile P221 and her family was unaware of their dislike. Right from the first day of marriage mother-in-law ridiculed her stating "*who would treat my son at your place. You don't have a father nor a brother to interact*". On the other hand her gold was taken on third day of her wedding so as to arrange his sister's wedding.

P63 could not stand the temper tantrums thrown by her father-in-law who for no reason makes life tough for her as well. Her husband has been brought up inside home, fearing he would end up in wrong path, so he remains aloof. He fears his father. But he loves her and often shown willingness to stay at their place. It was rejections based financial backwardness and physical appearance that led to marriage at distance. Knowing her difficulty her brother responded "*if you are facing any difficulty you are free to come back home any time. We would love to take care of you as far as possible*". She uttered "*it is just for my husband that I stay there for a while otherwise I would not go there*".

P223 and P226 shared similar experience from their mother-in-law. They are supposed to take all household works and by the time they entered bedroom they would be tired and just want to sleep. It hampered the relationship between husband and wife, even though their husbands knew their mothers character they never took a stand for their wives which hurted them. P223 at one point told her mother-in-law “*you keep your son with yourself and I am leaving this house*”. She recollects how her husband was inexpressive during those days and now owning this house he has at least started to talk properly and express himself. Relationship with the mother-in-law is still fraught which became tough while they met.

There were certain cases where wrong information was handed over by marriage mediators which created tension between couples. In case of P27 who had psychological issues prior wedding, a relative who brought this alliance, did not communicate to groom’s family which created tension between the family, P73 felt cheated while she came to know that her husband education and profession were not the same as conveyed to them, it became so difficult to share her bed with him during initial years and hated him, even his smell. Later with passing years and with his effort, things became better. There were other instances where false information regarding prospective groom’s character and age left a tiff between couples.

Five participants prior wedding was given assurance about completing education or pursue job and after marriage while either husband or their family members did not permit it they feel heavy hearted. Two participants had difficulty thinking about their parents situation to manage dowry especially when they failed to arrange it prior wedding. In case of love marriages, without parental consent after marriage, if families had not come into terms with each other, it left a pain to participants.

What happens to gold?

While participants' responses display the relevance for gold at the locality there came up anguish on how grooms' family had utilized gold for their individual purposes, a few participants still do not know what exactly happened to the gold given to them, after all the strain taken by their parents. Investigators probed about what is done with the gold they received after marriage. Out of the ninety nine participants responded five were unaware about what happened to it, twenty eight participants knew that it had been taken for groom's needs but were again unaware about the purpose it served. Seventeen assure that it was used to own a land as a property, twenty one used it to construct their house, eight invested it in business, six kept it in the bank as loan property, eight participants husbands used it to go abroad to make a living, two for payment of huge amount to get into posting. Renovations of house, to own a vehicle, to arrange groom's sister wedding were other necessities. One participant returned her gold to her father for his needs. Mostly participants wondered what was done with it when it was taken within few days even before a proper relation gets post wedding between families. P160 expressed her agony stating within ten days of her marriage her gold around 800 grams of gold has been taken for unknown reason which lead to the beginning of conflict between the couple. She demanded separation and conveyed to the investigators that she lives for her kid.

Remarriages

Six participants in the data were remarried and another two were married to men who were remarrying. While looking into under what circumstances women in the locality got divorced and remarried investigators found that two participants were cheated on by not conveying that the guy were mentally retarded. While one decided to stay married the other participant immediately moved towards divorce.

P86 was married to an aristocratic family in their locality itself, the groom had difficulty to engage in sexual relationship and she was treated as a servant in his home. While they demanded divorce his family threatened her family stating she would not be able to remarry and it will affect her younger sisters' wedding as well. For them family status was most important.

Two other participants were widowed with a child each. They remained unmarried for years after which they met a guy in the locality and developed relationship with them. Both these couples eloped because they knew it was not acceptable, especially for grooms' parents to marry a widow. After getting married, they returned home and it was understood that these women faced rejection from their husbands' family, as they had no other option than to let them live in their home but the friction remained.

A single case requires special mention because P80 was married thrice, first marriage was an arranged one at the age of 17 to a person 11 years elder. He blamed her of being immature and his sister was of an abusive character which she could not tolerate any longer. After a marital longevity of five years, they ended up in divorce, worked at a shop as a sales girl which is when she met the second guy during a function and both belonged to the same age. They became close to each other and decided to marry. They secretly got married but did not stay together. But slowly she realized that he showed hesitation to publicize their wedding. One fine day a divorce notice came and she was totally devastated. After their divorce, her only aim was to get married before he did and asked her brother to arrange marriage within four months lest she would run away with someone. Meanwhile she was active on facebook and met a guy belonging to same locality. After few months of contact hearing her story, he insisted on marrying her. She tried to advise him stating that she had enough of her life experiences, had lost her youth and health but finally eloped to get married.

Initially we had mentioned about two participants who got married to remarrying men, here we were exploring into its reasons. P6 is the case we have already mentioned, physically handicap so enquired for around fifteen years and finally is a victim of mysore wedding. P69 had a sister divorced at home. The reason behind her divorce was trivial which lead to rejections during P69 marital enquiry, along with the size of home and location which was to the interior, without a proper path for vehicles to reach courtyard. Finally while a proposal got fixed, the guy met with an accident and was submitted to a series of surgeries. They waited a year and while his family demanded further delay, her father backed off. Under these circumstances a good proposal came, though the man was already divorced, they proceeded with it.

Demographic

Age at marriage

Table 6

Age at marriage

Age groups	Frequency
18-20	96
21-25	103
26-30	17
31-35	4
36-40	1
41-45	0
46-50	1
Unknown	4
Total	226

The table revealed that the age of marriage of the participants was not too early and too late. Majority of the participants got married within the age

of 25 years. A few of them underwent a delay in marriage. Those had genuine reason for their delayed marriage like beauty, finance, and horoscope.

Age difference

Table 7

Age difference between spouses

Age difference	Frequency
0	2
1	1
2	3
3	8
4	23
5	31
6	45
7	34
8	22
9	14
10	16
11	8
12	6
13	5
14	1
15	1
Unknown	6
Total	226

The majority of participants shared an age difference of six years. Twenty five percentage of participants had an age difference of five and below while seventy five percentage had the age difference of eight and below.

Time of the first conception

Table 8

Time of first conception

Time period	Total
Less than 6 months	66
6-12 months	36
1-3 year	62
3-6 year	7
6-9 year	3
Total	174

The main aim of this query was to find out duration between marriage and time taken by the participants to conceive their first child. Here the investigators considered the participants those who had children. From the table, it was evident that sixty six participants conceived their first child within six months of their marriage. And the next major part of the participants conceived between one to three years. A vast majority of participants were really happy about conceiving and they have thought of conception as a process, that naturally follows marriage. So while they conceived during initial months after marriage, they have expressed their joy and were excited about it. One hundred and twenty six participants had said they were expecting to conceive, this was even stronger for those whose husbands had to leave abroad for job purpose. Forty eight participants conceived during a totally unexpected period and among them twenty four stated that even though unexpected pregnancy after knowing it they were pretty happy about it.

The investigators then focused on participants who do not have a child, Fifty two of them, because of the impact of their childlessness on participants'

marital life. A vast majority of participants maintained a long distance relationship as their husbands worked abroad and it was seen that nine husbands cancelled their job abroad meanwhile thirteen took their wives with them in order to find a solution for childlessness. Among fifty two childless participants, a majority, 17 of them, were newlywed within a short span of marital life, another ten participants with a marital longevity of around one year and above were pretty cool about childlessness stating “*there is enough time, we have just begun our life*” yet because of constant enquiries from family and relatives try to stay as far as together in case of long distance relationships. Another eleven participants with marital longevity two years and above had started to feel tense, their disturbance resulted towards consultation. They had either settled back at home town or taken their wives with them abroad for the purpose of conceiving.

Then comes twelve participants with marital longevity of four years and above who have shared extreme array of experiences, from feeling helpless concentrating on medication to the extend that it has effected emotionally, physically and socially. Frequent medication had effected the female body as well, resulted in weight gain due to hormonal intake. Participants’ belonging to this group has avoided public occasions in order to escape from societal pressures. P200 a trained dancer dropped her passion and her job abroad in order to concentrate on treatment alone. P114 constantly fought with her husband and one fine day, it resulted in separation for more than a year after which families interfered to re-join them. P193 reported that her husband insisted on leaving him as he was diagnosed with problem, she decided on to stay back and support him but day by day he was becoming possessive and did not let her move outside home. P167 fed up of treatment and decided to stop further medication. Investigators portrayed these cases in order to throw light on the range of issues childlessness has brought into participants lives.

Number of children possessed

Table 9

Number of children

Number of children	Frequency
1 child	101
2 children	62
3 children	11
Total	174

Investigator asked participants about the number of children they possess. By deducting 52 participants who have not been blessed with children, 174 participants have in total 258 children. Among these 258 children, the proportion of boys is a little higher than girls. The number of boys is 139 and the number of girls is 119. In this particular data, there was one pair of female identical twins.

Educational qualification

Table 10

Educational qualification

Educational qualification	Frequency
Matriculation and below	47
Plus two	Complete 40 Incomplete 7
Diploma	23
Degree	Complete 48 Incomplete 20
Degree with additional courses	16
Post-graduation	Complete 10 Incomplete -
Post-graduation with additional courses	9
Professional courses	6
Total	226

From the table it is clear that the participants in general were pursuing education. Some of them were unable to complete it and investigators went into details of their academic journey. Schooling of vast majority occurred in the higher secondary aided school in the locality itself. While investigators mentioned diploma participants' choice is on teacher training courses, courses related to computer application, ITI, autoCAD. Bachelor of education and post graduate diploma in computer application were most widely adopted additional courses after graduation. A participant each has undergone health inspector course, secretariat assistant course and higher diploma course after their graduation. Bachelor or master's in education is the most preferred course done after post-graduation.

Participants are mostly seen to complete graduation but there is a dip in the frequency of those who opt for higher studies. While going through data it was found that out of 48 graduates twelve participants had fought their way to convince their parents to complete at least degree prior wedding. Majority of graduates (36 participants) knew that after degree their parents would initiate wedding alliances and was prepared for it. P185 recalls:

"... It was soon after my degree, I have joined bachelor of education every weekend while I come home there would be bride seeing ceremony. Everyone told me that it is time to get married, elder sister also got settled. My age mates also got married.... "

For some education is a saviour while parents can't meet financial demands of marriage they manage to complete at least graduation. There were few from financially low background who dreams of supporting own family after getting into whatever job they can after completing basic qualifications. There were few who did not have the situation to dream of completing at least

high school and they view marriage as a means to escape from personal shortcomings.

P100 voiced herself and took a stern decision that unless she completed her graduation she was unwilling for marriage. P173 recollects:

“during my second year degree alliances started popping up. My father and brother was willing to proceed which is when I demanded to complete studies. it was obvious, a known fact that after degree we will have to get married. Marriage date was fixed in accordance to completion of my graduation. After one and half years she gave birth to a child so as of now I am not thinking about a job but would love to complete B. Ed and take up a job. ”

Out of the twenty participants who could not complete graduation investigator gets an impression that they regrets being unable to do so and it is explicit from the thirteen responses. P39 was not allowed to study after matriculation because her father feared of sending her daughter to distance which caused her a loss of a year, she convinced him and re-joined the next academic years. She out of despair commented *“I loved to study but after marriage my priorities changed”*. P68 stated *“studying was my passion, had to discontinue. I will make sure that my kids study well”*. P73 found it hard to adjust to her husband (could not share a room with him) during the initial years of marriage as she found that there was a miscommunication by a third person involved in marriage and her sole demand for an educated man was not fulfilled.

While participants choose their profession there was interference seen from the part of parents, P184 was passionate about nursing career but her mother convinced her to choose teacher training course over nursing asserting

“nursing is a profession which men usually do not prefer so it might interfere with marriage enquiries”. P184 case was one among three participants who reported their parents disagreement on choosing nursing as a career. P104 was forced to study Arabic course after matriculation despite she wanting to pursue other course, after which she lost her friends as they moved on and her interest in studies declined.

Participants belonging to category degree with additional courses, post-graduation, post-graduation with additional courses and professional courses were mostly found to raise a voice to fulfil their demands in attaining equally educated men. There were twenty eight participants who managed to get married to educated men. They are further seen to assert their personal choice, P180 told her father during her wedding preparation *“provide me with whatever you can during wedding and that is enough, you have taught me so long which in itself is a big thing”*.

It occurs mostly with teachers that they prefer partners from the same profession as was seen from seven couples who had undergone teacher training courses whether it was bachelors or masters. Participants from professional courses were found to prefer those from same professional background as seen among engineers in our study. Participants’ pursuing job or related job in long run was second thought but they were seen to prefer same educational background.

Further investigators found that in case of educated daughters, parents first look around for educated men in the locality itself and if found a match directly spoke to the family, both brides and grooms family considered it as a privilege as was seen in one among such cases P102 familiar families at walkable distance arrange marriage between their educated children from same academic background. Having said that educated girls especially postgraduates had found it difficult to find an appropriate match and underwent delayed marriages, which is why they looked for educated men in

the locality first. P210 faced rejections continuously stating that she was over educated.

Above paragraphs mentions about participants who wanted to educate themselves, now investigators would like to discuss those who did not wanted to continue studies and marriage was seen as an escape. P11 was one among those six participants who viewed herself as lucky as she became pregnant soon after marriage, lest her husband would have forced her to complete her studies.

Occupation

Participants under study were rarely seen to work after marriage, only twelve amongst which six teachers, two office staffs and a few participant as lab technicians, physiotherapist, field worker, and multimedia faculty. Post wedding twenty nine participants had discontinued from their profession. They have stopped working either because they felt taking a break, no longer needed a job, couldn't manage household with a job, had a kid who needed attention, husbands or in-laws not willing to send, or were currently focusing on treatment to conceive. P52 pleaded with her parents that she needed to work at least a year prior to wedding as she had studied putting effort for so long. Due to financial liabilities as part of her elder sister's wedding her parents could not afford another function which created a gap for her to work.

Out of twenty nine, sixteen participants strongly desired to join back work places. Nine among this sixteen discontinued because they had kids who requires attention as it was their sole responsibility. Those who worked prior to the wedding included teachers, nurse, graphic designer, lab technicians, receptionists, accountant, salesgirls and the like.

P74 worked four years prior wedding as she had a delayed wedding. After marriage while she demanded to work but her husband convinced her stating "*these days it's difficult to conceive. So it's safe to have a baby first. Later we will plan a gap between second child and you can try for job*". P116

worked four years as medical shop accountant and was happy that she could contribute to her financially backward household. She was deeply hurt that her husband did not let her continue job, *“husband says he is trying to find a job for me. I know that’s just a pretension, giving me false promises”*. P210 said her husband was completely fine with the idea of working, preferably a government job but hates her taking night shifts as receptionists, so she dropped her job.

Considering the job sector to which participants’ husbands belonged, a vast majority of hundred and ten participants’ work abroad. While we say abroad it clearly indicates towards gulf countries. When there was a financial crisis first thing that came to their mind was to obtain a visa, for the same, they made use of all social networks. Gulf boom was predominant in this locality and it got established this way.

Next major occupation was in the private sector and those related to daily basis. These jobs vary from those that made use of river in the locality; fishing, sand business to tailoring, driving, electricians, painters, own business and so on. Seventeen of them worked in government sectors, some as teachers, advocate, police, defence and court clerks.

Socioeconomic status

From the data we had seen that apart from six missed responses, rest two hundred and twenty participants has communicated to which category they belong, below poverty line and above poverty line based on their ration cards. And again this above poverty line (APL) group was divided into APL1, APL2 and APL3 in increasing order of their financial status by taking into account participants’ individual responses and verifying with a committee of three whom investigators identified from locality for reassurance. Seventy two participants belonged to below poverty line, and numbers belonging to APL1, APL2 and APL3 are 69, 46 and 35 respectively. The type of family to which they belonged was enquired, whether nuclear, joint or functional joint,

results reveal that the majority belonged to nuclear family which explained why number of marriages was less in proportion to number of marriages during 2005-2014. Initially it was joint families and then they started building homes in the very plot leading to a cluster of relatives living at geographical proximity, which explained how people of same socioeconomic status are residing at vicinity like a colony of affluence and poverty.

While keenly observing the results from this locality it is seen that people have shown a clear preference for those who are located nearby, geographically and families which are a little known to them. Does this preference for similarity in physical characteristics, personality traits, attitudes, opinions which participants with a conceptual hold, exist in case of socioeconomic status? Do people belonging to the same financial status marry amongst themselves or is there any mixing up between the economic level happening due to marriages?. Investigators during the interview, asked about the match between the couples' families in terms of their financial status.

There arose three categories; men and women belonging to the same socioeconomic status getting married, men high on status getting married to girl belonging to low socioeconomic status and vice versa. One hundred and fifty out of 226 participants were married to men higher than themselves in resources. A strong tendency where women marry upward in economic hierarchy was seen among our participants. Put in another word men prefer women lower than themselves in financial status. Men are supposedly the providers and while marital enquiries proceeded it was the financial security of the prospective groom and his family which is taken into account. We have seen from the data that men faced rejection if they did not belong to a family with ancestral home, characters with uneven habits and joblessness. Unhealthy looking men were also rejected in marriage market. These factors were strong indicators of financial status and substantiate why women were married to family higher in socioeconomic status.

Forty six participants had married people who were similar to themselves in financial status; among them those belonging to low economic level opted similar family, putting into their verbatim “*all we want were people who are similar to ourselves in all aspects, modest and economical in nature*”. This forty six participants included affluent families as well and they too preferred equally affluent family as they stated “*we prefer family which matched our status*”.

Thirty participants were married to families which were lower to themselves in financial status. This number is minimal while compared to the predominant tendency of the locality where one hundred and fifty (66 %) got married to men of higher social class, so investigators looked under what circumstances did they take such decisions. Five participants fell in love with men belonging to lower status and marriage was arranged subsequently according to their choice, so under such situations there couldn't be a preference in terms of status, it just happened. Four marriages, each happened because either their father or mother held a belief that if married to a man higher in status than themselves, they would not take care of their daughters adequately. In two cases, one among their twin sisters, got married and for matching the horoscope and for education, their marriages got delayed, so while proposal meeting criteria apart from financial status came they proceeded. A girl who had psychological disturbances and underwent treatment was married to financially lower class and her sister because of the same reason faced rejections and was married to lower than themselves in social class provided family belonged to high-birth. Four families gave stress to prospective grooms' educational qualifications (such as advocate, lecturer) and character. So did not bother about status.

One participants, each, who faced rejections due to physical disability, speech and hearing impairments, horoscope mismatch and body type were married without looking into status match. Two participants who were educationally qualified wanted equally qualified men so did not consider

status match. Two sisters got married to men lower in status because their mother was vigilant of marriage as there were three girls who did not share much age difference. Elder's sisters marital issue being married to far put a thought that marrying to nearby by assuring character is must, second marriage so prioritized character of family and the groom-to-be, mother died and father immediately married to his ex-girlfriend so as far she was concerned she wanted a family and in one case lack of proper enquiry and miscommunication from the part of mediator led to a difficult marriage, resettled after a long period of emigrants life. So they feared that they would not be able to attract alliances and did not stress on status match where other situation which led to marrying men who were lower than themselves in terms of financial status.

Post Script

Post script is about getting piece of information even after the event has occurred. Till date investigators were in touch with the participants under study and constantly share life events. Post data collection investigators had been to the field and interacted with the participants' couple of times, quality time spend with them was cherished for life. Investigators had been part of weddings and house-warming at the locality accepting the invitation from the populace even after withdrawal from the field. Participants of theatre of oppressed session during gaining access to field got married and had kids. Participants who conveyed their pain due to childlessness and emotional turmoils in the couple relationship had been blessed with child, P114 were one among them.

Four participants had decided to complete their education and had taken guidance regarding higher studies. Two among those, who dropped job after conceiving, had re-joined their occupation. Few couples under long distance relationship have decided to stay together and moved to abroad. Three participants were under the process of constructing own house at the locality under study itself.

Few participants who had difficult situations during the period felt free to contact investigators and vent their emotions. P36, P23 and P112 had separation and recently has re-joined their husband and his family after both family intervened with the help of third parties including psychologists, while P36 felt cheated because her husband still had not divorced his first wife, breaching the contact during wedding, P23 complained her husband being doubtful about fidelity and misbehaved to her, P112 had fought over husband who was not taking responsibility of households. P153 accused her husband of extramarital relationship and was still separated. P6 victim of mysore wedding got divorced, P80 divorced and married for the fourth time, in case of P63 husband had psychological issues and very recently suicided and P132 who found love after widowhood was found dead at her husband's home.

Slice 2

Slice 2 constitutes participants from the same locality, from which slice 1 data has been collected. Fifty five married women aged fifty and above with a marital longevity of around 35-65 years participated by providing data by means of semi-structured interview along with participant observation.

Investigators began by collecting information about certain significant life events such as date of marriage or years since their marriage has occurred, their present age and the age at which they married, age difference between spouses, number of children, and the age at which they had delivered their first child. As the conversation developed between investigators and participants domains, related to marriages such as the mode of marriage intermediation, whether their partner was someone known/ unknown to them, dominant decision maker in proceeding with a proposal and many more factors evolved.

With regard to the means of marriage intermediation, almost every alliance had been initiated by family members, close relatives, someone who knew both families and so on. Rarely do we see any other institutionalized

sophisticated means of marriage intermediation. It was very soothing to hear that the start of a relationship happened in between a casual talk wherein fathers might be telling their concern about child of marriageable age and then a sudden question hits back asking for the other person's son/ daughters hand in marriage. In many cases decisions regarding marriage were taken so spontaneously that marriage commenced within a fortnight. Whether it was a right way to carry out was debatable but marriages occurred with less expenses and complications.

While an alliance happened within a circle of acquaintance or relation it was quiet natural that marriage comes about within the same locality. Out of the 55 marriages the number of couples who belong to the same locality was quiet high. It is about 23 couples whose native place is within the set locality and it was to be noted that amongst 23, 18 couple's homes was located within distance of one kilometres. Except for another seven couples whose native places was at distance a which requires a travelling period less than one and half hours, rest 25 couples was located nearby, located at less than 5 kilometres distance, that is a travel time of ten minutes. Few places among this, 25 lot are along the both sides of a river where they could reach by means of water craft. Proximity by means of geographic location was evident from this data.

How far these couples knew each other, were they related to each other, was there any kind of prior contact with the partner, these were the kind of enquiries from the investigator thereafter. Nineteen marriages had occurred within the family itself, of which fifteen prospective brides knew the grooms just a glance from away, or had an idea that this person might be her partner for life. Rarely did they share information about prospective bride/ groom other than a glance.

Marriages between the parallel cousins were not seen, but a preference for marriages between the cross-cousins was obvious from the representation of four such marriages. One love marriage stood separately, they had met from work place, were deeply in love and ended up in register marriage without the consent of parents. Seven marriages occurred because people belonging to these localities were familiar with each other.

While it was seen that nineteen marriages were within the family, their association was quite close like from the same joint family (*tharavadu*) or marriages occur from the already existing marriages, for example, a girl was married to her brother-in-law's brother, that is both sisters were married to the same house. Another example would be, Uncle's brother-in-law is taken as groom. By means of marrying within an already existing marriage, we could see a kind of forceful strengthening of extended family ties.

Number of alliances enquired for marriage purpose was very minimal. Twenty seven women were married to the very first alliances that came their way, because those days parents or significant others were least bothered about choosing the best among the options. For them if they had a first impression they proceeded with the first alliances itself. Certain reasons for rejections, if any, would be misbehaviour of boy, and there were cases where people in the locality purposefully interrupted, especially if that person wished to marry her. There were few instances when the girl was rejected because she did not have a mother or father, death of parents used to be a disqualification then.

Marriages during those days were mostly happening within family, as we had seen from the data so far, did there exist a formal bride seeing ceremony was to be known. Yes, it did exist but rarely. Majority of the cases were without any kind of such ceremony. It's just the words between male parents, brothers (direct and indirect) and uncles who were usually assigned authority to make final decisions during those important functions which

leads to marriage. *Nattukaranavar* words were considered as verdict. Only in nine cases did prospective bride and groom meet before marriage and it is to be noted that it happened only in Hindu marriages. In the rest of the cases, usually either in-laws, grooms uncle or aunt, or other female relatives came to see the girl.

There were few other instances where grooms used to see their prospective bride without her consent or knowledge, unfortunately girls never got a chance during those days to meet their groom. There are verbatim stating that “*if I would have met him before marriage I would definitely have denied marrying him*”, “*I used to think of running away or hiding somewhere while I see my husband*”. These statements came as a matter of fact that these girls were married during a very young age without their willingness. They became aware of their own marriage only after overhearing the dialogues of elderly females who had come home to attend the ceremony. Never did the elderly feel it essential to enquire about girls’ willingness.

The engagement mostly occurred at grooms place with a small get together followed by fixing the date for marriage. Marriage was a simple function with important few, family members, neighbours and people belonging to the localities. Marriage took place in their own houses, In certain cases due to financial issues, it would be maternal uncles who took up the whole responsibility of arranging marriage, giving gold to girl and marriage occurred at his house. Very few Hindu marriages took place in the temple.

This retrospective data of age of marriage would reveal the changing situations in the institution of marriage over a period of time. Table 1 shows the age at which our participants got married during those days and their corresponding frequencies.

Table 11

Age at marriage of retrospective data

Sl. No.	Age	Frequency
1	10-14	13
2	15-19	36
3	20-24	2
4	25-29	4
Total		55

From the above table it is seen that the age range between which marriages happened during early days was 10-29 years. Most of the Muslim marriages occurred at young ages while compared to Hindu marriages. If at all, age of marriage was above twenty, it was merely due to the financial issues and in case of Hindus there was custom that a girl should be asked in marriage rather than parents search for eligible bachelor. While analysing those cases with delay in marriage, according to then standards, here after everyone had a story of their own. Either absence of proposals, divorce and remarriage at later years, financial issues, lack of initiative taken from significant others and so on.

Table 12

Present age

Sl. No.	Present age	Frequency
1	50-55	11
2	56-60	12
3	61-65	14
4	66-70	8
5	71-75	9
6	76-80	1
Total		55

Table 13

Age difference between spouses

Sl. No.	Age difference between spouses	Frequency
1	1	1
2	3	1
3	4	4
4	5	2
5	6	5
6	7	5
7	8	5
8	9	6
9	10	7
10	11	3
11	12	7
12	13	6
13	15	2
14	17	1
	Total	55

While coming to age difference between partners, all men are of age higher than women. Age differences range from 1- 17 years. Majority around thirty two participants were married with an age difference of nine and above. A girl was sent in marriage with an age difference of one year because her parents found her to be unattractive and she was married to her uncle's son (cross-cousin) without his consent. This had affected the marital wellbeing of this couple and resulted in the guy marrying another lady. To report another case with age difference low (three years), groom's elder brother ran away with a women out of wedlock and this has determined his life because parents were vigilant and conducted his marriage at the age of twenty two. By stating these examples investigators intend to say that low age difference was not a common phenomenon those days it occurred due to chance factors.

Women who had spoken to the investigators had unanimously put across that those days once a girl got her first menstruation, family as such got disturbed, because it was time to find a match for her as soon as possible. Basically occurrence of first menstruation was considered as a signal for commencing marriages.

Table 14

Classification based on menarche in relation to Marriage

Before Menstruation	After Menstruation	Total
15	40	55

From the table above it is clear that while 15 were sent in marriage before the occurrence of menstruation, 40 were married after their physical signs of maturity. If at all a delay in marriage occurs, as mentioned earlier, it was mainly due to financial backwardness and in case of Hindus a girl should be asked in marriage rather than her parents finding a match. In case of wedding prior menstruation they were not forced to bed with husband and she was allowed to be with other females in the house.

Table 15

Age at first delivery

Sl. No.	Age	Frequency
1	15-19	40
2	20-24	9
3	25-29	4
Total		53

From the above table it is clear that women delivered their first child at young ages. As per the data, majority of the women delivered their child at the age range of fifteen to nineteen years. Among the fifty five women there

were two who did not have children out of existing wedlock. One of the two, had a single child from her earlier marriage, also her husband of present wedlock had estranged her. The other woman who was married at the age of ten even before menstruation never had it all through her life. So it was her biological conditions that lead to infertility. From the reports of women of those days infertility was a very rare phenomenon in the locality and absence of menstruation being the single reason behind it.

Table 16

Place of Child birth

Place of Child Birth		
At home	At hospital	Total
33	20	53

Thirty three participants had delivered their first child from home itself. From the conversation with these women investigators could consolidate that those cases with complications were initially taken to hospital only if they felt folk medicine or midwives were inadequate. Also families, with financial issues as well, restricted themselves opting delivery at home thus opting hospitals only during emergencies. Slowly people started recognizing the better possibilities and safety, and thus more people started approaching hospitals.

Table 17

Number of children

Sl. No.	Number of children	Frequency
1	0	2
2	1	3
3	2	7
4	3	16
5	4	14
6	5	2
7	6	7
8	7	3
9	8	1
Total		55

The number of children ever born to our participants during their reproductive lifetime and their corresponding frequencies were displayed in the above table 17. Thirty participants had three to four children.

In between the conversations our participants started stating about the initial years of their marriage. There were even those who hadn't seen their husbands even after their wedding nights. During those days, Muslim marriages occurred at night, and it took a whole night for treating each other's family. So only on the second day would the married couples be able to stay together. It was considered shameful to stay back at the bride's home. So husbands usually approached them late night and left to his home early morning. It took days to see the faces of their husbands with whom they had already spent their nights. They spoke about incidences from their life. These turned out to be valuable information about how far could they transform themselves into the role of a wife. From their responses, investigators could categorize into three types. Table 18 demonstrates their frequencies.

Table 18

Initial years of marriage

Smooth transition to wifhood	Initial years of marriage			Total
	Neutrality	Negative domination		
34	13	8		55

First category comprises of those who had a smooth transition towards wifhood. They were too young to understand the relevance of marriage institution and with passing of time, slowly got adapted to wifhood. This category had the maximum number with thirty four out of, fifty five data. Next category comprises of those who had both positive and negative life experiences and they constituted thirteen in number. Third category was those who had domination of negative experiences in their marital life and they were eight in number.

Among the cases stating the hatred and fear towards their husbands during early days of marriage, gradually with time hatred diminished at least in some cases. A girl has swollen her gold hand ring out of her hatred to be in bed with the man who was stranger to her. Girls during those days were taken to diviner thinking that their reluctance to stay with husbands were psychological issue or those inflicted by bad spirit. Investigators personally felt that those days nobody was conscious about the preparedness required to share herself with another person nor did things go smoothly by giving ample time. This reluctance for sexual intimacy from the part of girls often lead to marital issues, estrangement initiated by husbands and it became a task in itself for her parents and significant others to resolve such issues.

Further they had stated that they lived with a belief they were destined to be with him, whether they like him or not, for rest of their life. When asked whether they had any kind of concept about their husbands to be, investigator got unanimous answers with a smile on their faces, *“what do we expect at that age, we didn't even know we are married or what is meant by marriage. The male authorities at home and locales will decide upon and we accept it as our destiny”*.

The major problem of those days was to adapt to the never ending poverty, issues related to dowry and ill-treatment from the part of in-laws. Misbehaviour from the part of husband and his habits of drinking has further lead to marital dissolutions. Of the fifty five cases studied there are four females with second marriages and a single case wherein she was married thrice. Divorces during those days occurred due to either girls reluctance/fear for sexual intimacy at very young age, misbehaviour from the part of husband/ in-laws or because the husband has estranged.

Investigators found that while none of the Hindu marriages demanded dowry, half of the Muslim marriages occurred with dowry. Dowry was mostly in the form of money itself, from Indian rupees sixty to rupees four thousand which is a huge amount during those days. High amount was granted in dowry in cases were the groom had a better occupation and status in society.

Socioeconomic background of family does not have much to do with marriage decision because majority of the families during those days where of low economic status whether it be males or females family. Due to financial issues sometimes marriage commences with the help of people in the locality. Even then females were marriage to males of better economic position compared to girls. Everywhere there was poverty and people managed their living by means of utilizing the natural resources from the localities. The

locality was rich in coconut trees and they found a living by using fibre to make rope out of it.

Major occupation of those days were jobs of daily wages such as working in stationary shops, hotel employees, fisherman, toddy bars and few were even unemployed. There were exceptionally four who belonged to railway, teacher, doctor and upper division clerks from this locality, who obvious had to fight their way to reach these positions. Places to which men folk relocated for job was Bhellari (Karnataka), Bangalore, Mumbai, Ceylon and gulf countries. Majority have moved to Bhellari. They lived apart for a long duration as their men had to relocate for job purpose.

Hindu marriages occurred by means of tying a knot (thali) existed along with exchange of clothes. Also in contradiction to current scenario, Hindu marriages occurred without giving much relevance to horoscope matching. People belonging to the same community participated in marriage, rarely did a Hindu attend a muslim wedding and vice versa. Even if they attend marriages of another religion they make sure that they do not have food from that house. Even though there were people who were against this practise, it continued.

Focus Group Discussion

Participants met a group of eight participants who belonged to the age group 18-65 after fixing in advance venue, date and time. The Facilitator had met each of these participants during Slice 1 and 2 data collection and so began with casual conversation and initial introduction was given to the participants. After making sure participants were comfortable and had mingled for a while investigator started debriefing about the work carried out in their locality. They were asked to put forward their point of view and experiences regarding the study.

Initially it was difficult to elicit responses but once a single participant opened up, later others joined them. Here investigators would like to present the result which has been articulated through focus group discussion in addition to what had already been presented in Slice 1 and Slice 2. Mostly participants talked about the differences in the marriage pattern during earlier decades and recent times as participants belonging to a wide age group were present.

Marriages of women aged fifty and above happened within a fortnight or few days mostly first proposals enquired, small functions at night, to an unknown, unseen husband. They do not have an open communication with their partner nor do they personally interact during initial years of life. They were brought up teaching to respect husband and his family as next to God, which inculcated a sense of fear in them. Groom staying at brides home is considered as shameful. With time they get transformed into wifehood, husband takes the role of a projected father figure. Unlike today dissolution after engagement and love marriages is rare phenomenon. Death of a partner left them widowhood for life, especially in Hindu community but among Muslims women were married to dead husband's brother and men to wives' younger sister.

Meanwhile marriages of present days were celebrated having number of functions, and couples prior wedding get ample time to interact and know each other. Couple interacts and spend time with each other before and after marriage as well which cannot be thought during earlier times. Fathers' family are treated well with utmost importance during Slice 1 and 2. Unlike participants of slice 2, participants of slice 1 had choices and the voice to reject proposal and demand their preference. Further participants of Focus groups unanimously raised their concern over divorces.

Slice 3

From the preliminary analysis of sixteen advertisements (one advertisement each of males and females of eight decades), it was understood that matrimonial advertisements had undergone dramatic transformations in its language, forms, patterns, choices, positioning in newspaper and most importantly in the space allotted by newspaper for matrimonial. There was a shared notion among the commoners of Kerala that matrimonial advertisements occurred as a needful act from the parents of prospective bride/groom in order to compensate when there was a lack of initiative from the people concerned to take responsibility of a marriageable son/ daughter in the family. The prevailing system in Kerala during earlier decades gave priority and power to take major decisions of the family in the hands of progenitors. Maternal uncles were assigned authority to carry out alliances for the marriageable son/ daughter in the family. It took decades of social and technological change, which paralleled with industrialization, for the acceptance of matrimonial advertisements as common marriage intermediation form.

Advertisements of matrimonials first appeared in the form of acknowledging those who have attended their children's marriage from the part of parents. Along with this a column stating that children are getting married started in advertisements, also certain photographs of married couple started appearing. Parallel to this matrimonial advertising began.

While analysing the data, the frequency of appearance of matrimonial advertisements, its seen that until 1985s, matrimonial were posted on any day of a week whether it is Monday, Tuesday or Saturday didn't matter, unlike today were advertisements are inserted only on Sundays. Also if we divide a newspaper into quadrants, and observe the position of appearance of matrimonial, its seen that until 1955 matrimonial was placed in third and

fourth quadrants irrespective of column. In 1955 it acquired its position in second quadrant and later years it occurred in first quadrants during 1965 and 1975s. During 1985 matrimonial ads occupied half a page (first two quadrants) space. In 1995, a full page space was allotted for matrimonial and in the following years we have witnessed an increase in the pages allotted for matrimonial advertisements alone.

The number of advertisements which were posted per day has tremendously increased reaching a peak during 2005 and then a decline in the number is noticeable during 2015. This pattern is followed in both male and female advertisers. During 1945-1985 period the number of advertisements were mostly posted by males and then a change in pattern from 1995 onwards where female advertisers outnumbered male advertisers.

The language in which advertisements were inserted has implication because it serves to make a linguistic connection between the advertiser and the reader. The text or content of matrimonial should be in the best possible way, conveying the advertisements during initial decades were mostly in sentence forms and it was a task in its own way to identify the gender to which the content is meant. Further there were certain advertisements which were so abbreviated that the receiver (reader) could not even identify the gender of advertisers. The economy of the advertisements, is a deciding factor because it is paid per word.

Now while considering the change in preferences in prospective spouses across these decade, there exist a similar pattern in both genders in certain criterions, at the same time a major difference in the pattern of female and male advertisers is also established across these years. During the earlier decades the male advertisers were mostly from out of state, especially from Madras, Calcutta, Bombay and Delhi. They might have migrated out of their encumbrances in order to meet their living or else to get placed in well-to-do

professions. Out of the above mentioned four cities, advertisements mostly came from Madras, which in itself is information that Keralites have migrated or eloped to nearest metro cities. Advertisements were mostly inserted by people residing out of state shows that the very practise of matrimonial advertising has evolved from adopting it from metro cities.

It is noteworthy that advertisements were mostly inserted by the educated and elite class. Naturally, educated and well placed Keralites of earlier decades were in need of arranging marriage within a short time span while they return home they might have adopted newspaper advertising as a means of finding an apt alliance in accordance with their education, demands and status quo, as in Kerala compared to present time educated family is located in diverse geographical location. Advertisements stating “this advertisement is for wider choices” are an extinct phenomenon in today’s newspaper. Further during early decades, advertisements were inserted only by higher castes, especially Nairs.

The characteristics mostly mentioned by advertisers remained same across decades. Age, education, caste, occupation, income were the characteristics mentioned frequently by decades ago. Even though grooms mentioned the physical characteristics they preferred in prospective brides, rarely do they mention about their own outlooks. Advertisements of 1995, 2005, and 2015 had a dominant increase in the importance of physical characteristics. Height, description of beauty, preferences in their partners physical attributes were certain among them. Male and female advertisers of earlier decades portray what they prefer in their partner’s without mentioning about themselves. Unlike earlier decades, advertisers of twenty first century are more specific and particular about the characteristics they are looking for in prospective spouses.

Sample advertisement seeking male and female during earlier decades is presented below:

Bride wanted;

Wanted a well-educated young fair tall well- built Malayalee Bride from North or South Malabar, (preferably Thiyya) for a young businessman with public activity and an annual income of about Rupees 15000. Apply: Post Box number: abcx, Madras. (1939, February).

Proposals invited from parents of various girls below 25, good looking, sec. trained for a warrior youth of a noble family, manager-teacher, well settled in life. Apply: Post Box Number: 98534, C/o Mathrubhumi, Calicut. (1965, April).

Groom wanted;

Wanted a bridegroom for a Nair lady of 30 years well trained in domestic duties and belonging to a respectable family. Apply: Post Box Number: 1234, C/o Mathrubhumi, Calicut. (1947, August).

Wanted Ezhava youth, M.Sc/M.Com, Engineer/ Doctor for Nurse 28 (now on short leave) employed in New York. Apply sharp with full details to Post Box Number: 934, C/o Mathrubhumi, Cochin. (1965, April).

Advertisements were earlier posted by unconventional educated people who were hoping for an evolutionary change in the existing social scenario. This is evident from the verbatims commonly seen in advertisements of earlier decades such as person with humanitarian values, progressive mentality, believer of socialism and who is not superstitious, being rational.

Bride wanted:

Business minded Brahmin youth of 30 desires to marry a fair, rich and moderately educated virgin widow from a respectable Brahmin family from any sub-section. Apply to: Box No.156, C/o Mathrubhumi, Calicut. (1949, August).

Rarely could we expect these terms in advertisements of present days and further to our surprise we see the increasing number of advertisements demanding horoscopes, astrological matchmaking, specifically mentioning preferences in same caste, class, and if possible in the same occupation.

Sample of advertisements of recent times;

Bride wanted;

Ezhava boy, 29 years, Utrattathi, 5'4'', Ernakulam, B. tech, TCS Mumbai, seeks alliance from parents of qualified/employed girls, phone number:75893 (2015, April)

Groom wanted;

Beautiful Nair girl, 27/164 cm, DOB:19. 10. 1987, 3. 20 PM, ayilyam, B. tech, Upper middle class from Trissur, chova in 8th column, 3. 5 dosham, Contact: 568 (2015, July)

It is also seen that earlier while people tried to portray their uniqueness, today advertisements mostly mention the commonalities they possess. This trend in matrimonial advertisements is a tendency to regress from unconventionality to conventionality in marriage partner selection.

While grooms state about their income directly prospective brides usually mention about their fathers or brothers income and the property they

own during the earlier decades. Advertisements of recent periods indirectly mention about their financial stability without stating income.

Now while, concentrating on the age at which prospective brides posts their advertisements, it is seen a definite decline in the age. While at earlier decade females approaching thirties showed interest in advertising, nowadays those approaching mid-twenties shows a rush in market of matrimonial. Further the verbatim which was used to describe the female attributes have changed considerably. Females were expected to behold the family responsibility and so forth the terms such as domestically trained and skilled remained until 1975s. Proclaiming as beautiful and as fair still continues to be an attractive strategy to exchange physical attractiveness for the financial stability offered by males.

A common practice for both male and female advertisers was that Mathrubhumi would provide them with a post box number corresponding to their advertisement and they could collect the proposals from the concerned office. By 2005 this system completely elapsed with the widespread use of mobile and internet facilities. People these days do not bother about the confidentiality rather they give priority to the purpose of attaining a perfect match on a one-on-one basis by directly communicating with their clients.

Second sample of Slice 3 was intended to compare between the content of matrimonial advertisement posted on a particular day in the year 1985 and 2015. Investigator collected a single Malayalam newspaper with matrimonial advertisements of the year 1985 and 2015 and went for detailed analysis. While 55. 88% were male advertisers during the year 1985, the majority of advertisements 57. 25 % were females advertisers during 2015. Age ranges of male advertisers were between 26-35 and between 24-48 during 1985 and 2015 respectively. While females age range was between 20-45 and 19-48 during 1985 and 2015 respectively. There is a substantial decrease in the age

at which both males and females take initiative to insert advertisements, people these days get married at an earlier age.

Earlier during 1985 it was only educated and preferably people belonging to higher caste who have posted advertisements, by now matrimonial have captured enough space to attract people irrespective of their education, class and caste.

While it came to occupation males during 1985 were more of seekers, that is they spoke about their own occupation as well as mentions preference for brides with occupation, by 2015 males are mostly announcer type by just mentioning about their occupation. This trend is just the opposite in female advertisers, they have turned from announcers to occupation seekers by specifically mentioning grooms belonging to particular occupation.

Now with regard to the personal characteristics, irrespective of gender and era advertisers have mentioned about beauty and fairness. Male advertisers earlier did not mention about their skin tone later turned announcers but now they declare themselves as fair along with their preference for fair bride. Females continue to be announcers irrespective of decades that passed. Regarding beauty, male advertisers who were earlier announcers have now changed their strategy of mate attraction by being seekers. Females have kept their strategy constant by announcing self as beautiful irrespective of time duration. To put it together, males have turned to be seekers from announcer status with regard to skin tone and beauty stature whereas females have continued to be announcers. Regarding the financial prospects male advertisers have remained to be announcers of the stability they possess irrespective of whether it be 1985 or 2015.

Slice 4

Analysis of unstructured interview with marriage matchmakers demonstrates ample evidences on how they have reached at this profession, the strategies adopted by them to make a match, fees structure, marital criteria and choices of their clients and the like. Each matchmaker has a story on how they ended up in this career, four participants worked as real estate brokers and two among them still continues, there are two who tried their luck at gulf countries as it did not work well joined this career, others are those who were into company labourer, mason, mechanic dropped those and pursued matchmaking. Rest of the participants have purely reached this career at a chance, either because they found their friends family, neighbours, relatives or acquaintances in difficulty to find a match for their children they help them out and with passing time they gained satisfaction out of it and continued. This include one who took years to find a match for daughter due to horoscope so decided to help others out. Meanwhile one participant in between began a bureau, dropped and returned to matchmaking as it caused financial loss.

Participants of slice 4 constitutes of those who have a network across Kerala, to those who concentrate on a particular locality of district or particular religion or those who deals with high profile weddings only. Reason behind their decision to form their cluster depends on their accessibility, financial benefits and choice. Experience of matchmakers under the study range between two to thirty five years, dealt with many proposals and have fixed cases beginning with single digit to around seventy proposals. Nine participants have dropped arranging Hindu weddings because horoscope mismatch causes additional delay even after matching all other criteria so it takes greater effort which requires time.

Eighteen matchmakers including ten males and eight females, except for three females who do not cash rest all has taken matchmaking as a profession at some point or the other. Fees per alliance range from five thousand to rupees in lakhs. It depends on the concerned parties, some without claiming provide enough and more money at others matchmakers prior to wedding keeps their demands. At some localities it is as per the gold given in sovereign to the bride, a percentage of total amount. On the other hand some matchmakers do not particular state their fee, they leave it the concerned parties, in addition at every meeting they are supposed to give travel expenses. In case if girls faced rejections and marriage occurred after a delay around ten percentage of gold given is provided as fees. There are at times cases if extremely poor and matchmakers are convinced of their situation, they do not cash them.

Matchmakers are mostly approached by people knowing their service, also those family which has successfully found a perfect match through concerned matchmakers suggest them and through acquaintance. After getting a party usually matchmakers talk to them regarding their preferences and priorities. An initial data is collected regarding their financial and family status, nobility, education and physical appearance. After mingling with parents matchmaker states that it is an intuition, they sense a match between some cases and passes on addresses, after which it is internal matters between concerned parties to enquire, they give a primary impression that family and marriage candidates are well behaved and belong to high birth. Later parties demand a bride seeing (call it first level) and if turns favourable matchmakers' roles ends there. At times groom and bride would give positive reply but when families meet, it turns off.

Matchmakers share such experiences:

A girl underwent two rounds of bride seeing including groom who flew down to meet her. In the third round in front of a group of relatives chocolates and gifts including gold were given. Finally when his only sister came to see her she didn't like bride-to-be and called off wedding.

In yet another case:

A single child to an affluent family, while prospective groom's mother came to see she could not accept the fact such a rich and beautiful girl then why is her family willing for this proposal. Finally she called up matchmaker and asked "does that girl have any issues, psychological disturbances or health issues. They are perfect in every sense then why would they prefer an alliance with us?"

Matchmakers recall of certain families who do not get satisfied with any alliances and with them after a period of time they do not keep in contact.

Certain months in a year meet the most number of weddings especially vacations (April-May) and vacations of gulf countries (June–September) as relatives have to join wedding. Least number of weddings during fasting, seasons of concerned religions and accordingly matchmakers are met for discussions of alliances.

Preferences

Female's physical appearance is influential in making it easy at enquiry. Fair skin is the single most demand of Muslim male on the other hand males of Hindu community prefer facial features. Height and weight should be appropriate neither too short nor too tall is preferred. Parents'

occupation and status, presence of father and brothers are positive. It is only educated men who usually prefer educated or pursuing occupation. Even then an occupation which demands mingling with men and taking night shifts are not preferred.

Males with proper occupation preferably permanent job is valued. Hindu families have special passion towards government sector. Professionals prefer partners from other professional fields, because they feel if both partners are equally busy it would be difficult to manage family.

Irrespective of gender character, family background, physical appearance and geographical proximity was preferred. Matching caste and horoscope was a must, its gained major relevance with passing years. Caste mobility was to upper caste especially to find homogamy in education and financial status. Truly religious people concentrate on religiosity. Educated people preferred educated families. Religious groups such as Sunni, Mujahid and Jamat preferred families from their own groups, rarely did exchanges happen.

Preference in age difference declined over age. Undoubtedly matchmakers has stressed on the fact that boys these days marry early which resulted in decreased age difference, an age difference less than six is most preferred. Unlike past where an age limit of eight was minimum people these days do not hesitate to proceed with low age difference provided they meet all other criteria. Matchmaker avow "*children these days usually compare their partner with their age mates partner and thus a trend towards younger and good looking partners took a boom*".

Rejections

Males faces rejections in marriage market if they do not have an occupation, bad character, habits, family background, death of mother,

inappropriate behaviour, involvement in illegal activities, aloof and withdrawn nature, locality of home or occupation at coastal areas. Earlier males physical appearance was not a matter of concern at all but these days matchmakers see an increasing rejections based on looks; pot belly, hair loss, dark skinned and obesity are negative indicators.

When it comes to females a major drawback is increasing age. In Muslim community age 25 and above it's difficult to find a match at times few opt remarrying men as they don't have other choice and among Hindu community aged 30 and above it becomes difficult along Malabar areas. Christian girls marry late, they are given property share during wedding so their choices are wider. Highly educated girls it's difficult to find appropriate match. Being overtly expressive and taking up responsibility is not appreciated at marriage market as they are tagged as mature and over smart. Meanwhile irrespective of religion females marry comparatively late along Trissur to Trivandrum districts of Kerala. These places enquiry begins only after twenty two and gives much more importance to education and occupation of females. A history of diseases or other issues at home for concerned candidate, parents or significant others lead to dissolution of marriage.

Character of parents, their occupation and income are major considerations. Financial backgrounds, size of home, route to home are considered. Absence of either or both father and mother due to death, separation or remarriages is a major pitfall. Matchmaker affirm "*a girl whose parents got divorced and remarried twenty years back and formed a beautiful family faced rejection continuously because of that reason*". Presence of brother is considered with major relevance. Girls belonging to same-sex siblings (lack of brother) is equally facing rejections averring "*There must be a brother-in-law to mingle at home also if groom faces a financial crisis in*

future it is they who can be a support system”, or they decline alliance stating “that won’t work out”.

It is people belonging to financially low background who stresses on brothers and dowry demands. Even those who had difficulty to arrange own daughter wedding takes dowry to repay debt while their sons get married. While minority directly demands mostly others instigate them stating the gold they have given to their daughters in wedding. In either way purpose is same. A place at Calicut district stands different taking a clearly opposition on dowry and gold, their emphasis is on character, looks, occupation and most importantly nobility, a good room for newlyweds is compulsory, that’s it.

While females accept males with disability, especially in financially low background, there is no chance for a male to marry female with disability, forget about disability minute details like loss of single finger leads to rejection, fair and beautiful girl with a birthmark on her face had delayed marriage.

Regarding a single girl, child matchmakers unanimously state they had difficulty to find a match earlier as they were tagged as pampered and won’t be adjusting to husbands’ home. But this has changed with passing time, are thought of as financially sound as no other sibling would share property, also no other responsibility such as younger sister’s wedding. Single child these days found difficulty to match their educational status.

Irrespective of gender there is tag towards people who are new-rich and non-native as they are thought off as lacking authenticity and kindred respectively. Malappuram and calicut are neighbouring districts but show resistance to take alliances from towns of each districts as they feel cultures won’t match. A medium characteristic rather extreme in case of height, weight, socioeconomic status receives well at marriage market. Irrespective of

religion girls find it difficult to re-enter marriage market after divorce which increases with a child in first marriage, In case of Hindu and Christian community remarriage is rare.

Matchmakers are highly concerned and reported about the increasing number of alliances which gets dissolved after engagement. Phone contacts provide ample time to understand each other's character and if found, over controlling or on receiving bad reviews, both families do not take risk. Marriage candidates and their parents are extremely vigilant about the news that comes on media and evaluation above prospective groom prior wedding which occurs through phone contacts and intermittent meetings at times turns out to be highly negative. Further they have communicated about their assistance provided in love marriages, either of bride or grooms family would be convinced with their child and needs a mediator, who can arrange a meeting, so they call up on matchmakers.

Marriage Alliance Breakers

Matchmakers unanimously avow that presence of marriage alliance breakers is seen across Kerala irrespective of districts its concentrated more to rural areas, fed up of their interruption boards warning them punishable is seen everywhere. They do so if they have any personal grudge or jealousy. They are mostly understood as aged people who do not have other engagements. Statements such *“we see her moving out early morning and return back home late evening. God knows where she has been to”*, *“what do we say it's better you enquire about character”*, *“that girls proposal has already dropped after fixing it with another family”*, *“that girl has some or the other problem, we can't give assurance”*, *“characterless family”*, *“they do not have nobility”*, *“they have turned affluent recently, don't know their source”* leaves them doubt so does not proceed, taking a risk. To avoid them, certain matchmakers insist parties to enquire at mosques, church and temple

concerned authorities. Even matchmakers are unaware of educated candidates' character while they study outside their hometown so in order to be at safe space, matchmakers insist on enquiring personally.

Deceitful

Matchmakers state their apprehension over clients who are dishonest with them, providing inappropriate, inadequate and false information. Regarding marriage candidate parents or a significant person becomes deceitful while giving initial details on age (tells at times greater or lesser than real age, from two to five years), education (would be incomplete or lesser than stated), occupation, psychological issues if any, health issues such as skin diseases, mishaps of family, parents' divorce/separation/ remarriages/ extramarital relationships, earlier affairs, presence of children from first marriage in case of second marriages, real reasons behind divorces, horoscope issues. But few matchmakers state as these days people are vigilant of fraudulent cases, so they enquire properly, rarely did they fall on wrong cases, then if there was any fault in their own family people did not put effort to enquire well. Among eighteen participants four were of the opinion that, for an occurrence of a good event such as wedding it is acceptable to unravel certain least harmful matters that directly has nothing to do with current wedding and so they have kept certain matters to themselves.

Matchmakers were aware of the image people held about them, they know few among them who kept lying and giving hope to parents who were already in fury and take money from them in the name of travel expenses at each visits. Participants shared their concern over people losing faith over them due to such incidents. Further they had identified frauds who take their identity, approach a locality enquires about residents there and cheats them. Matchmakers worry about losing reputation due to such frauds who could be

quiet dangerous. They mentioned that with increasing online bureau they were losing their market.

Slice 5

While going through the information provided by the bureau staffs, investigator could realize that major domains that emerge were the registration formalities in setting up a bureau, fee structures and forms of bureaus, rate of registration, advertising strategy of each bureaus, preferences in mate selection, risk factors and few others that come along. The following paragraphs are arranged accordingly.

Investigation into the existing scenario of marriages through bureau requires collection of information regarding the origin of bureau. Investigator enquired about the existence of any common association for co-ordinating and welfare of bureaus across Kerala. With the primary investigation into these enquiries it was evident that marriage bureaus have a history of above twenty five years. Kerala State marriage bureaus and agents association had been set up for the welfare of marriage intermediators. None of the bureaus coming under this study has a membership under this association and it was found that each bureau was maintaining a courtesy not to interfere into others' business.

With regard to the procedure of governmental registration of marriage bureaus, investigators could find discrepancy in the answers provided by different bureau staffs therefore investigator proceeded with Right to information act. In accordance with the Right to Information Act 2005, currently Kozhikode Corporation D & O Licence for Urban Local bodies schedule does not recommend licensing for marriage bureaus. For attaining more clarity investigator met an advocate to understand the process of bureau registration under Kerala Government. According to him, any institution

which has payment scheme for their service is supposed to take trade licence from the concerned health department under D & O rule. Bureau might not have been listed under this set of institutes. That is why Right to Information states registration for bureaus as unnecessary. For publishing the profiles of prospective brides/ grooms domain registration is not necessary because before submitting profiles customers agree to the disclaimer put by concerned bureau and so it becomes a commitment between client and the institute. There is no separate registration for titles of bureaus. So it was difficult to find the exact number of bureaus across Kerala.

A major concern reported by almost all concerned staffs was the presence of a scandal focused on marriage market which acts with brilliance in between the bureaus and their customers in order to profit without any expense by sending fake matrimonial profiles in return of money payable by post. This definitely led to a negative impact on the trustworthiness, credibility and authenticity of bureaus. Certain bureaus have undergone financial loss thereafter. Increasing autonomy, desirability to remain spinster, and increasing living together relationships too is a concern of bureau because this has an impact on their market value. There are customers who after commencing marriage does not pay the service charge and try to delay it, bureau staffs states they very well know how to approach them. Further they stated that with increasing community, religion, region and profession based bureaus they face tough competition in their field as high registration of that particular commune is quiet natural. Staffs recollect that even marriage brokers come to bureau without revealing their identity and register a profile so that they can attain as many databases as possible.

To register personal details, each bureau consists of a form which is expected to be filled by the concerned prospective bride / groom or their parents, it depends on the bureau. Along with this filled form a photo of

prospective bride/groom and horoscope (If required) is attached. It was a bit startling to note that except for two bureaus none demand identity proof or the legal certificates in case of divorcees to ensure whether it is a genuine applicant. Bureaus have unanimously reported that with increasing years the number of registration for remarriages has tremendously risen.

Form which is to be filled in by applicants consists of personal details such as age, height, weight, complexion, religion, caste, sub caste, educational qualifications, occupation, income, parent's occupation and income, and details about siblings (asks number of brothers and sisters). Apart from this certain bureaus were keen to know about the blood group, disability (if any), proposed share for bride/groom, sector of occupation (private or government or others, details of business), interest in inter-caste/ inter-religion marriage, castes with which marriage alliance can be considered. Investigators infer that these matters gain importance in marital preferences and so is reflected in its entry in registration forms. Regarding the fees structure, every bureau keeps its own packages and leniency offers with the festive seasons. For a year of marital enquiry there are bureaus which demand from below five hundred and rupees in lakhs. A model of the form is appended (Appendix IX).

Number of registrations per month depends on the offers provided during festive seasons as there is leniency in service charges. There are seasonal variations, rate of registration decreases depending on sanctity during the month of fasting, corresponding to each religion. For example during month of pilgrimage to Sabarimala and ramzan period. As reported by staffs they did not maintain a tabular monthly frequency of registration and even if it existed it would be in the head office.

From the number of registration it is evident that in Hindu community it was mostly boys who registered while compared to girls. According to the

existing system in Hindu marriages parents or significant other from males' family is expected to find a match and approach her family. Parents of a Hindu girl find it inappropriate to call up boys' family and talk about alliance. This substantiates high registration of Hindu males.

While registering for females generally their parents show reluctance to submit photograph and this is even more while uploading photos in bureau's online sites. They have reported a fear to let their daughters' identity in public as they think people from acquaintance might see photos and get an impression that their daughters lack the quality to find appropriate match and this has led them to approach bureaus. At the same time, males find it difficult to reject a proposal after directly seeing a girl so they prefer to look at their photo first and if found pleasing they are willing to directly meet the girl. Bureau staffs have specifically stated that peoples such preconceptions makes it difficult for them to proceed with proposals because it is difficult to convince such parties.

Advertising Strategy

Advertising in newspapers about their concerned bureaus has been carried out since 1990s. Among the thirteen bureaus, six of them give a common advertisement about bureaus. They do not advertise individual profiles. Rest seven bureaus approach newspapers for individual applicants. Advertisement of an individual who has approached bureau for a partner gains its presence in newspaper either when it is a case with all criteria to attract many proposals so that bureaus get ample data base or if that case has been pending for such a long time that it becomes essential. Candidates for marriage who lack criteria to attract partners gain space at newspaper advertisements after enquiring through bureaus for an ample period of time, such candidates advertisements are published more than once after an

interval, despite it being demanded by candidates' family. Most of the bureaus admit that an individual advertisement, without personal details and addressing bureaus, is a major source of database sailing and gaining. No separate charge is demanded for this service. Two bureaus reported that they take permission for advertising in their registration form itself and the rest doesn't consider it necessary as they do not disclose their personal details. It is noteworthy that they choose newspaper wisely, by considering the applicants religion and inserted it in the newspapers with subscribers mostly of concerned religion. If bureaus hold own online sites, every case is displayed so as to attract more cases.

Preferences

Characteristics commonly stated by bureau staffs irrespective of differences in candidates so that they can attract positive responses are that he/she belongs to reputed family with good background, has own house and facilities related to it also has a good job. There is a combination of characters in a single individual which would naturally lead to increase in the number of alliances approaching them as stated by staff. Such characters are: Physical attractiveness, good family background, highly qualified, and those who have less demands.

Males in general prefer females belonging to respectable family background. While coming to physical appearance males of Hindu community prefer girls with good facial features rather than fairness, which is the single most priority of Muslim men. Lack of financial prospects and education does not become a barrier in getting a match for Muslim females as fairness can surpass these requirements usually stated. While men of Hindu community prefer educated girls and some do specify preference for government employed and also have shown preference for teaching and

banking sectors. Professionals usually prefer professionals itself irrespective of community. Meanwhile bureau staff have reported that men have a general tendency to choose women without career and job aspiration irrespective of community atleast as seen per their clients.

Females on the other hand prefer males with education and reputed job, good family background and most importantly financial stability; basically former criterions indicating towards the latter. Mostly it is parents who speak up for females and among the Hindu community, a special preference for government employed males that too of higher ranks, are noticed. While Hindus don't prefer businessman Muslims don't have aversion towards business personnel.

Horoscope matching becomes a major criterion in Hindu marriages irrespective of genders. Horoscopes with predictions such as possibility of delay in marriage if it doesn't happen within a time period, chances of second marriage, infertility create a sense of fear. Bureau staff account that lead to increase in registration.

When it comes to marriages in Hindu community irrespective of gender and caste people usually shows preference for upper caste there by leading to caste mobility. At times men of upper caste shows willingness to marry women of lower caste provided women have a job of good reputation. Even when marriages happens with caste mobility and by declaring caste no bar occurs, investigators could find a range of preference across which caste mobility occurs. For example Brahmins would consider Nairs, while Nairs would consider Thiyya, but would not opt for caste of lower ranks.

Preference for people belonging to same geographical locations at least to same district is noteworthy, irrespective of gender. There is a general dislike from people of other districts to get married to districts like Wayanad,

Idukki which belongs to hilly areas and this is evident from their discourse. Males usually after a long delay to find a match show willingness to proceed with enquiries to hilly areas. They bring in women from hilly areas but shows denial to send their daughters/ sisters to these areas in marriage.

We have seen people's preference for partners from same geographical location, preferably from the same district or neighbouring districts. This preference is confirmed by the rate of registration and the responses of natives towards proposals of people who has relocated from other districts for the purpose of education, occupation and other reasons. They initially enquire in their native places and if there is a delay approach bureaus. These people have no other option for marriage intermediation as they stay away from relatives but people of native place reject their proposals and reason this rejection stating that they lack source for enquiry about these immigrants. This is exactly what happens with proposals of Malayalees who have relocated to neighbouring/ other states like Karnataka and Tamil Nadu as well.

Rejections

While going through the data investigators were surprised to note that certain factors related to day to day living turned out to be risky holding a negative impact for the successful occurrence of a marital union. These are complex, diverse and interactive factors and that no single factor can be isolated as the most significant or important reason for withholding the marriage proposal.

First with regard to males, their personality characters are deterministic and they are put into eligible category only if they are devoid of drinking and smoking behaviour. Every bureau has stressed on the requirement of a job preferably a permanent reputed job. Government officials have a great position in the marriage market. It is found that business loses its charm in the

marriage market as it has a risk for loss/ flop at any time. Occupations such as male nurses, private drivers, auto drivers, medical representatives, sales executive, stationery, road side businesses, carpenter, and daily wages are facing the threat of rejection in marriage market.

Educated girls demand at least a graduate so it becomes difficult for an undergraduate male to find his match. Staffs of bureau have unanimously conveyed that they these days they try to avoid registration from less educated men as it finally turns up as if bureaus are not taking proper initiative. Professionals and highly educated make sure that they get a partner with similar profiles so it takes time and with increasing age it becomes more difficult to get an appropriate match.

Physical appearance of men which was not a matter of importance in the past decades is gaining relevance. Males with less appealing features, hair loss, protruding stomach and heavy weight find it difficult to get a match. Geographic location at which they reside becomes another pitfall especially when it is towards beach side. Apart from this marriage alliance breakers give false information about the boy and his family to females' family and vice versa while they approach for enquiry.

Bureaus staff has revealed that they do not register cases of people with disability as it is difficult to attain a suitable match. A single bureau amongst the thirteen run ability matrimonial (for differentially able) as a free service with their own agenda for popularity. Usually disabled male prefers able females because they expect their partners to take care of them. They reason by stating that they need children without disability.

A look into factors which turns out to be risky for female as reported by bureaus specifies increasing age as a matter of concern. Females belonging to Hindu community with age 30 above, Muslims with age 23 and above find

it very difficult to find suitable match. There are reported cases of muslim girls opting second marriage despite being their first marriage just because they are being considered as age over. Unless or until girls get married, they continue studying and with increasing academic credentials and increasing age it become difficult to get equally qualified boys. Weight and height also at times turn out to be determining factors as girls with heavy body type and too tall, take time to find an appropriate partner. Dark complexion is another matter for delay in marriage. Bureau staffs mostly try for a direct meeting between the parties in cases of females with dark complexion because they hope for a union by chance factor. Females with disability have more difficulty, than of males, to get a partner.

A financially low family finds it difficult to get an alliance. Also families with a history of frequent fights or improper background which might be caused by any significant other in the family have a residual impact on wellbeing of family. Geographical location of family especially if it is to coastal areas affects the frequency of proposals and the possibility to end up in marriage is very low. There are instances wherein whole family relocates to another area until they are done with the marriage of those who are of marriageable age. There are even cases in which rejections occurs as they do not have a proper path towards their home.

People do state families with girls only as a strong negative indicator as they think prospective bride's sisters would become their responsibility in future. It was heart-breaking to hear that eldest among the girls only family usually adjust without giving importance to her personal choices so that they don't become a burden for parents. In girls only family if they are financially high or are really fair and beautiful wedding bells ring bit more easily. . A family without significant men of authority to enquire alliances finds it

difficult to find a match. Irrespective of gender both males and females have always shown dissatisfaction to proceed with new-rich families.

It is essential that a girl should have a brother of her own and it's always better that her father is alive. Both fathers' and brothers' job is a positive indicator to proceed with the wedding. Fathers job such as auto drivers, mason, daily wage jobs, restaurants, wine bars; basically those jobs with low profile according to public make it tough to get through the proposals, even if girls are highly educated her fathers' job continues to be a criterion for proceeding with the wedding. If female's father is a drunkard it surely affects his daughter's marriage.

Single children are treated with mixed feeling in the matter of marriages. There is a common notion that single child will be brought up with extra care basically pampered to an extent, that it becomes difficult to live and adjust with them. Parents of males who approach bureaus share the same notion with the bureau, staffs and they at times do not prefer single child. As reported by bureaus, at times parents of single children, show hurry rather than required, to send their child in marriage, there are few others who sit along and take enough and more time to decide on the right person to come their way. While compared to preceding years negativity towards accepting single child alliances has definitely reduced.

Regarding the occupation of prospective bride our grooms-to-be and his family has certain rules of their own. Certain families are adamant about their decision to find out a government employee which causes delay in marriage. Nurses, dance – music teachers, fashion designing, beauticians, journalists, police, advocates, females working at Chennai and Bangalore and all those job that require night duty are the categories of jobs which makes it less desirous for males. Males working in Kerala do not prefer females

working outside the State. This might be because of issue to relocate as reported by staffs. Even males belonging to advocate and police profession does not prefer females from their own profession leaves investigators astonished.

The Nair community has a history of matriarchal system and is reminiscent as reported from the conversation of bureau staffs. Fathers of Nair girls after being informed of a proposal, take a decision only after consulting with their wives. While Nair males father reason their defiance for a particular proposal, they point out that the female's father is not the decision maker and this stand of his has turned off their decision to proceed with alliance.

Reason for delay in marriage in some cases, has been blamed on fathers' by bureau staff. Cases like this might be a rare instance but as a researcher it is essential to mention that bureau staffs have noticed certain parents especially fathers who do not show genuine interest in letting their child in marriage. This is more common among fathers of females with occupation as revealed by bureau staff. They register personal details in bureau and without fail renew the registration on time, this cycle continues for years, when a suitable alliance approaches they do not take initiative to proceed and reason their rebuff with worthless explanations.

In certain castes with low population if marriage does not commence at particular age it becomes difficult to find a suitable match, with increasing education and professional credentials it becomes even more difficult.

Across past few years bureau staffs have noted an increase in the number of cases which do not end up in marriage even after commitment through engagement. They specify that after engagement or even before prospective bride and groom start to communicate with each other. While

they get to know each other they feel incompatible and decide not to proceed with marriage.

Deceitful

From time immemorial humans believe trust is the core of any relationship. We learn we can trust someone, and share our lives with them, because we believe they do what they say they are going to do. Damaging another person's sense of reality is immoral and it is even seen in marriage intermediation. In marriage alliances it is often reported by bureau staff that there are few people who do not portray their real self, they deceive certain significant facts about self which in future can be detrimental in the lasting of their relationship.

Males primarily try to state their age about two to five years lesser than their original one. There are few who never turn thirty. There are people who either hide their horoscope or produce fake horoscopes by extra paying those astrologers who show readiness for the same. They do not hesitate to tell lies about their educational qualification and occupation. By stating they own a business while in reality they might just be an employee, lying about the job as permanent and by giving wrong information about salary scale they do succeed in getting married.

In cases of second marriages males, they reason divorce into three category: health issues, psychological imbalance and extramarital affairs or elope. These are the sole reason given by males in general, the real reason behind divorces are not clearly mentioned. If males bear children in their first marriage their are a few who are deceitful regarding this matter, they proceed for second marriages without letting the other party know about this. There are few misdemeanours who without legal divorce, even at the phase of separation, proceed for second marriages.

Irrespective of gender both males and females side, they try to conceal any pitfalls in family backgrounds also they try not to open up about the history of inapt deeds from the part of significant people in the family. While coming to cases of females they also state their age lesser than their original also they try to create an ambience that they belong to financially stable family.

Discussions

Holman and Li (1997) stated that marriage readiness is the ability of a person to improve mate selection process. While we mean marital readiness it includes physical, psychological, emotional and sexual readiness. Marital readiness in this study indicates towards a need to be addressed prior wedding. As far as locality is concerned people have not given due importance to marital readiness whether it be candidates themselves or their parents. Majority of participants were those who did not think seriously about marriage prior initiation of marital enquiry and get along with it easily. In case of a minority who showed readiness, include those who have imbibed an age related norm regarding marriage so they were prepared by that age. There are others who felt a necessity to get married as situations instigate them to take such a decision.

Irrespective of whether participants developed marital readiness or not, majority had a concept about their prospective groom, desirable and undesirable characteristics in a mate. Highly valued desirable characteristics were related to personality traits, which focuses on providing nature of men, he should be caring, loving, giving, and understanding. Being industrious and vigorous is in high demand. Emphasize on personality traits clearly points onto the instrumental role behaviour expectation on males. This comes in line with the findings of Buss (1989) that human females have evolved species-typical psychological mate preferences for males who display cues for

resources and resource acquisition. Men may compete for elevation in hierarchies, and women tend to favour high-status men (Symons, 1979; Trivers, 1972).

At the same time they have specifically expressed their disinterest for men who are flirtatious. Men with flirtatious nature, built a fear that their partner can lure someone out of existing relationship or can have clandestine affairs with anyone. Demanding men who are not flirtatious is a defensive mate guarding strategy against sexual treachery (Buss, 2003). A dislike towards henpecked men and a clear preference for men who are loving but has it all at heart shows an evident preference for men who match “masculinity stereotypes”, which means they prefer men who are able to generate a feeling of manliness within them, both physically and personality wise.

When data as a whole is considered participants have shown a clear preference for men who dominate themselves, in every aspects related to physical, personality and economic level. Women search for cues that let them identify men with resources and willingness for investing in them, personality, physique, commitment being few among those cues, and economic capacity remains as the most direct cue. Cues towards good health is a strong indicator of good genes as well (Buss, 2003).

By preferring men who dominate themselves they look towards who are either above themselves or equivalent. If at all a deviance is shown, a preference for men lower in status than self (hypogamy), it has a specific context to reason it. Thus it indicates towards how men and women share concept on how they should act and behave. Basically, society has a shared concept about how a male should be irrespective of gender; here it is females who demand men to be hierarchically higher than themselves in height,

weight, socioeconomic status and the like. Thus marriage gradients are a societal standard that determines who marries whom.

There is a popular notion that opposites attract (heterogamy) but data emphasize a tendency to marry who are similar (homogamy) in nature when it comes to appearance, educational attainment, values, beliefs, and attitudes. Participants prefer a person with similarity in character and familial background so as to enhance a positive rapport during initial years and thereby a likelihood of relationship enhancement. A positive relationship exists between attitude similarity and attraction (Smeaton, Byrne, & Murnen, as cited in Feldman, 1998). Similarity is reinforcing (Hendrick & Seyfried as cited in Feldman, 1998) as it confirms our worldview, it provides knowledge about others' traits and leads to inferences that others will like us (Feldman, 1998). The tendency to choose someone similar to oneself as a mate is so pervasive that a term is coined "assortative narcissism" (Thiessen as cited in Buss, 1985).

They have specifically stated that a man who is similar to them, would easily generate a feeling of father or brother like, put it other way, they prefer men who are like their fathers so it would be easy to get along with their partners. The best or most typical example of the concept "husband" is prototypical father. Freud (1925/1991) postulates that recognition of anatomical distinction between sexes forces a girl to reach at "penis-child" equation. "She gives up her wish for a penis and puts in place of it a wish for a child: and with that purpose in view she takes her father as a love-object".

Participants have shown a preference for known family and a little known family over unknown family. A preference for unknown family is minimal in number, a reflection of which is shown in above paragraphs where similarity is chosen over dissimilarity. While participants state a little known they mean to say it is not necessary for them to personally interact with the

prospective groom but parents should have an idea of his family. Again a matter which is of concern is that whether well-known or a little known, main criteria is family should have a prior idea of grooms' family. It ensures a trust during transition to wifhood, also participants prefer groom's family to know their limitation if any in order to avoid disputes in long run. Levi- Strauss as cited in Shapiro (1956) explains that while marriage happens between two families they do not prefer completely novel families nor do they prefer relations in blood line, they tend to find out similarity in variation. Mostly strengthening of kindred is intentional during marriage.

Until now investigators have discussed about the concepts about a prospective groom and his family, next inquiry is into the prerequisites of marriage and the way it is pursued. Most of the participants under study has been married to the first proposal enquired. Whether they were prepared for it or not was not considered and there were participants who had difficulty to admit to the procedure for their own reasons. These include those who desired to complete education or pursue job, feared to get married, could not think of leaving home, financial liabilities at home and few related. Apart from this, one strong reason for unwillingness to get married is the experiential history of participants, parents, their sisters or significant others in marriage. By seeing life of others at their surroundings participants learn to be vigilant, Operant conditioning at work; consequences determines the possibility of occurrence of behaviour.

Apart from those participants whose alliances were initiated by parents and significant others at family, there were many who were subject to 'bride seeing' as a proposal comes their way. In such cases what happens is that while girls reach nubility or even before that, while populace feels that she is of marriageable age they start bringing in alliances. Even though initially parents resists saying it is too early or their own reasons later they encounter a

post decisional dissonance which creates a disequilibrium thereby leading to seriously taking up proposals.

While concentrating on others who were subjected to many 'bride seeing' ceremony they have expressed their anguish and helplessness to be displayed especially in front of women at grooms' family. Why do some undergo many bride seeing and some few?. What differentiates between most and least bride seeing ceremony?. The answer to these questions lies in the responses provided by participants. Socioeconomic status is one major factor which determines the value of a girl in the marriage market. Participants belonging to low socioeconomic status had to undergo bride seeing above average. Equally difficult is for girls who do not meet the cultural appearance norm in physical attractiveness and body type. Both underweight and obese girls had to undergo laborious and painstaking task of bride seeing and rejections. This includes those who look slightly older than their age due to their body type (precocious). Girls with height had a delay to find a match. This result spills over into article Gendering colour: Identity, Femininity and Marriage in Kerala by Philips (2004) which states that a fair skin, plump body type and black hair are attractive indicators for women among most South Indian communities. Too thin body is thought to reduce chances of marriage as thinness and dark skin are viewed as expressions of sufferings and rejections, and are often associated with the impoverished lower classes (Egnor as cited in Philips, 2004). Female height correlates negatively with the response rate to self-advertising (Pawlowski & Koziel as cited in Pawlowski, 2003). Overweight and obese women are disadvantaged in marriage market (Puhl & Heuer as cited in Bove & Sobal, 2011).

Absence of males at home who could take up responsibilities was another drawback, this include absence of brothers as well. If prospective bride has only sisters as her siblings it was a major pitfall. Marriage prospects

of a girl are influenced by the marital status of her sisters or the type of marriage of sisters. The character of concerned parties and cultural background is assessed where character of mothers and all other females of family are enquired during marriage proposals. Illness, disabilities, divorces/separation, and death of important figures within the family or for concerned girl resulted in dissolution of marriage proposal and so increased number of bride seeing. Manusmriti details that one should not marry women who has reddish hair, redundant parts of body, without hair or excess hair, one who often fall sick especially skin diseases, leprosy, and epilepsy. Further wise men should not marry women without brothers and whose parents are not socially well known. Manu insists on marrying beautiful, with good names, graceful gait, moderate hair, soft limbs and small teeth. (Yajnjavalkyan as cited in Guptannair, 1990; Nair as cited in Ayyappa Panicker, 1987). Debates continue to date on the period of origin of Manusmriti but unanimously it is acknowledged to be Before Christ, a text dated far back still continues to substantiate the findings of this study in itself indicate towards how far indigenous social and moral categorizations are followed.

Highly educated girls and those who had their own perspective and concepts regarding a mate took time to select a mate. More educated women face difficulty in finding a desirable partner and the proportion of singlehood is higher for educated women (Jones & Gubhaju, 2009). Education has been widely acknowledged as one of the major determinants of the postponement of family formation processes (Corijn & Klijzing, as cited in Martin-Garcia, Seiz & Castro-Martin, 2017).

Certain combinations of above mentioned factors make it even more meticulous and unpleasant situations for finding a mate. But variations in this combination can bring about wonderful results and there are participants

among our data who has enjoyed its benefit. Those girls could easily undergo bride seeing ceremony with minimal number as they are those despite being low at economic status looked beautiful. Fair Skin colour plays a card in favour of girls. Fair skin and beauty are inseparable as defining elements of feminine gender descriptions (Philips, 2004). Men seeks attractive women as mates not simply for reproductive value but also a signal of status (Buss, 2003). Indigenous people around the world were reported to have similar standards of beauty so there is a possibility of universality of facial attractiveness across cultures (Darwin as cited in Penton-voak & Perrett, 2000). Once the groom is blown by their physical appearance they have taken initiative to surpass the deviance in financial status, cross-class marriages. In certain other cases wealthy groom's family bring in a criteria that they do not prefer a proposal from wealthy match as they think girls from high financial background might not blend with their family, instead demand girls who are fair and good looking with a good character. While those who faced a delay in marriage due to horoscope mismatch they after a while are seen to compromise in their demands.

Looking into those girls who have undergone minimal bride seeing ceremony they share a common trait, that is they are well known at the locality for their modest behaviour, they are those who abide with elders without questioning authority and known to be born into nobility. These findings closely stand for the laws of Manu which suggest women to be less talkative, composed and unlike "men" (Nair as cited in Panicker, 1987). Silence and discipline are thought as adornment to a women (Devika, 2011) and reminisce of caste system is attached to ancestral home (*tharavadu*), women who adheres to familial norms and stay at *tharavadu* are thought with sanctity and those who work at market who interacts with people as impure (Devika, 2010). In addition to this it is found that girls who are born into financially well-off family easily get a match without struggle from a

similarly wealthy family. In cases where a family finds a match within family networks mostly it would be first proposals and gets fixed easily. There are very few cases wherein due to extreme financial issues they do not go for further enquiries and confirms first or second alliance which comes their way. Apart from financial issues there where cases where father does not take up responsibility or has abandoned family or second marriage after mother's death and it becomes an obligation for maternal or paternal relatives to send them in marriage. In such cases people in the locality along with these relatives find a match without detailed enquiries, so mostly it would be the first proposal.

Beauty and skin colour are so important in marriage market that those faced rejections feels dejected and has internalized the reasons towards being physically unattractive. Women who are turned down after bride seeing ritual, tends to take the refusal as an indicator of their unattractiveness (Philips, 2004). It influences marital decision making; less enquiries, lower demands, larger marital distance, and readiness for dowry.

Until now we have discussed about the readiness and the pattern of premarital enquiries, now investigators intend to discuss about the marital criteria and choice of the fixed alliance. Majority of the participants were seen married to known family; it can vary in range from close relatives to acquaintance, this result goes in parallel to their preference to get married to little known families. While looking into numbers to which participants are married to in terms of relationship between brides and grooms family it is seen that participants do show a clear dislike towards a completely unknown family.

Participants while preferring known family has seen to get married to the same locality to which they belong, or a majority to a distance of less than half an hour travel time. Such is the preference for cultural proximity which is

ensured by meetings that occur through family parties, religious and caste organizations, and friendship networks. Thus geographically assortative mating is fostered by socially assortative matings (Ekamper, Poppel & Mandemakers, 2011). People tend to marry others who are in close proximity, and those who are nearby tend to be similar to oneself (Buss, 2003). Situational influence on attraction are enhanced by proximity that is, the degree to which people are geographically close determines who we like (Feldman, 1998) and familiarity, by repeatedly exposed to a person we tend to evaluate in a positive manner called mere exposure theory (Borstein as cited in Feldman, 1998). Being in vicinity reduces the inconvenience to find a partner is explained by Principle of minimal effort (Coleman, as cited in Ekamper, Poppel & Mandemakers, 2011) thus ensures cultural similarity (Byrne as cited in Kalmijn, 1998). Preferences for cultural similarity are stronger than for economically attractive spouses (Kalmijn, 1998).

Even while participants prefer less marital distance they do not prefer marriage to beach side although locality under study is geographically close to beach. A clear dislike towards men and family who has a bloodline from beach side is communicated. Prospective groom/bride are rejected if their or parents job are related to beach side. The dislike towards occupation at beach side or those related to fishing in general is more attached to cultural status of occupation, even well-bred mannered behaviour, educational status or the economic status do not attain ability to overpower cultural stigma attached to it. A folk memory sustains across generation, a notion that it is highly unlikely to attain good partner from such an area. Cultural meaning attached to an occupation is strong indication towards its preference rather than economic status (Kalmijn, 1994).

Educational qualification of participants were enquired and it was found that there were participants who desired to complete studies but after

marriage their priorities changed, next are those who could not complete studies after marriage and are upset about it and third are those participants who did not want to continue education for them marriage is not a matter of concern. A few participants made sure to complete education prior to wedding as they were sure that it would not be possible after marriage. As far as occupation is concerned those who worked prior wedding were found to remain housewives post wedding. Amongst them majority still aspire to pursue jobs. Education and occupation are affected by the institution of marriage (Mumthaz, 2010). Conception and delivery position them as house wife (Ushakumari, 2008).

Majority of participants were least bothered about transition to wifehood, they have taken things lightly after engagement but there were few who had a tough situation while wedding day approached. Majority was prepared by the time of wedding day because they were getting married to known family or little known family at proximity which required a minimal effort to accept the change. While coming to those who feared getting married, their apprehension was regarding change in what was expected or those caused by dissimilarity from what they desired.

Age at marriage in this study comes parallel to age at enquiry and mostly happens soon after prescribed legal age, which is facilitated in cases of marrying with least number of marital enquiry and least bride seeing. Eighty eight percentage of participants are seen to be married by the age of twenty five. Age is a major cue towards potential mates' reproductive value and fertility. Male preference for females of age just under 25 years implies that fertility is valued more than reproductive value (Short, 1976 and Anderson, 1986 as cited in Buss, 1989).

Age difference indicates that participants have shown a clear preference for men older than themselves. Buss and his collaborates (1989)

conducted study on human mate preference across 33 countries (including India) encompassing 37 cultures gives a result that age difference among these countries shows that men in all these countries are higher in age compared to women.

A wedding is mostly an arrangement which is conducted by parents and close kinfolks including maternal and paternal uncles. Financial assistance apart from them is by means of borrowing, loan, selling property and those which is supported by populace. Fathers have a great role in terms of financial inputs along with brothers who does it in their absence, similarly progenitors acquire a great position in arranging niece wedding right from enquiry to wedding day and functions thereafter. The predominance of maternal and paternal uncle in conducting marriage can be sorted back to the influence of matiliny (Abraham, 2014). Wedding arrangements vary, according to financial status, people below poverty line are offered support from affluent families at locality to a greater extend. While compared to marriages across Kerala wedding at locality happens in a lighter manner without taking assistance from professional beauticians, at home in the presence of their dear and near ones.

People who had difficulty during initial years had difficulty to get along with partner as they were not prepared for a sexual life. Farah and Shahram (2011) reveals sexual skill training has significant effect on positive feeling towards spouse, marital relationship, conflict resolution style and total marital satisfaction. Further long distance relationship had created disharmony between them, especially when they desire for a child but due to lack of vacation, they do not live together for a considerable period of time. Even though marital longevity is increasing rarely do they stay together meanwhile societal pressure enhances apprehension on childlessness. This issue is further ignited if they have a tough relationship with mother-in-law

which in turn affect couple relationship. There were participants who reported that their relationship with partner was unstable until they had a child. Further participants complain their mother-in-laws to be over controlling and intruding, they expect support from their husbands. Rittenour and Kellas (2015) focused on studying daughter-in-laws receiving hurtful messages from mother-in-law; under-and-over involvement, personal attacks, and hurt communicated to or through a third party. Perceived interpretation of mother-in-laws behaviour as similar has positively predicted marital satisfaction. Dowry related issues, false communication of preferences by mediators and unfulfilment of promises regarding completing education or pursuing occupation creates emotional turmoil. Participants who developed hatred towards their partner have reported to have an issue with his smell as well. The sense of smell apparently has important implications for human sexual behaviour (Schaal & Porter as cited in Rikowski & Grammer, 1991). Widowhood, deceiving regarding physical and mental health, and sexual issues has been the reason behind divorce and remarriages.

Slice 2

While compared to participants at locality within a marital longevity of ten years (Slice1) those participants aged fifty and above (slice 2) were married at very young age mostly even before menstruation. Males taller, higher in socioeconomic status and aged higher than themselves are preferred. A higher age difference than Slice 1 is seen. In case of couples with less age difference it has happened with genuine reason. They did not have any idea about what marriage is and it's after or on the wedding day they realize that it is happening. So the concept of marital readiness does not arise here. Majority has seen their husbands on or after wedding day, so there does not exist a question of concept about groom or life after marriage. Many of the elderly

couples had not seen their partners until the wedding day (Philips, 2004; Sabur, 2014).

Similar to Slice 1 data, here participants are married to the first proposal which comes their way, the only difference being it happens in a less constructive manner without a formal structure. First impression about the prospective groom and the reliance on information provided about his family becomes instrumental in fixing marriage. Decision making is reached spontaneously. Majority of marriages happens within family and 'bride seeing' where groom and bride meet each other is a rare phenomenon. Few had just a glance of their groom as they grew up in same locality. In short, marriages are seen as a social arrangement between two families with the involvement of populace.

Rejection of proposal, if any happens in case grooms' character is not upto the mark which is communicated by well-wishers. Absence of father figure and lack of a brother is a matter of concern in marriage market now and then. Loss of father leads to delay in marriage (Sabur, 2014). Unlike marriages of present day's beauty, skin complexion and horoscope do not hold importance. Delay in marriage mostly happens in cases of financial backwardness and lack of significant people for marital enquiry.

Wedding arrangements are usually conducted within a short while with minimal expenditure and initiated by maternal and paternal uncles. Progenitors hold major position in marital decision like today along with '*nattukaranavar*'. During initial years of marriage as participants had no idea about marital life and sexual intimacy, they entered to marital life with fear but gets along the flow because they were brought up teaching the sanctity of wedding and the respect one should offer husband and his family. Only a minority had shown extreme adjustment issues. Major problem post wedding was related to dowry, poverty and in-laws; their conflict was resolved by

interference from people within family and locality. They come to convince newlyweds by advice.

Major means of living is utilising resources at locality and undergoing occupation at daily wages. Unlike marriages of today men in the locality have relocated for job towards places of neighbouring states, emigration to gulf countries was a rare phenomenon.

Subsequent to marital age participants have possessed children at young ages itself. Unlike participants of Slice 1 who has delivered at hospitals participants here opted delivery at homes with the assistance of midwives and only in case of emergency they left to hospitals.

While going through the narration of participants one important thing that strikes investigators is that marriages those days were more of a social arrangement. Major decision makers are either the head of the family or *nattukaranavars* or maternal/paternal uncles. Choices, preferences, likes, dislike of neither the brides nor grooms were considered. People during those days did not even think it necessary to incorporate desires of those who are getting married. Families' reputation, primary impression about grooms' character and his family, succession and extension of family ties were the matter of concern.

Focus Group Discussion

During Focus group discussion even though participants focused on wedding pattern during earlier decades and recent time's investigators noted certain similarity within those variations. Decision making after marital enquiry happens at an impression in both slice 1 and 2. While asked what made you choose this particular male over other to slice 1 participants they do not have an answer rather they trusted own intuition and a few representative heuristics. The same is the case with slice 2 participants' parents who chose

on their behalf. The only difference being participants at slice 1 take decisions by considering other prospects such as financial and family background as well. This is to say that we never choose our mates at random nor do we require conscious planning or awareness (Buss, 2003). Kanheman (2011) describes about two systems of mind; system 1 and system 2. System 1 as effortlessly originating impressions and feelings that are the main sources of the explicit beliefs and deliberate choices of System 2. Slice 2 data has a domination of system 1 while slice 1 considers system 2 as well. Even though the decision regarding the person to marry is taken spontaneously as in system 1, it is important to note that the concerned person has evolved strategy to match a set of reference points which is understood to be the reason behind preferences/tendency to marry hypergamous.

While considering marriages of slice 2 data it is seen that, whom ever comes as husband, girls are found to easily project their notions of male (prototype his father) towards husband. Apart from father their liking towards significant males such as teachers, neighbours and others from family also gets projected on to husband, an unconditional acceptance. Slice 1 participants also see father as a prototype of husband, but as they are getting married after growing up they also tend to be evaluative of them.

Another matter which evolved out of focus group discussion is the prevalence of sorrorate and levirate system of marriage at the locality around fifty years back among Muslim community which is not seen during recent times. Sorrorate is the case where a husband after his wife's demise marries her sister and levirate a woman married to brother-in-law after husband's demise.

Slice 3

Keralites took a considerable time period to accept matrimonial as a means of marriage intermediation and hold a special position though even today other means of intermediation has their own unique space in the market. While looking into the history of matrimonial advertisements it began as the residents migrated to metro cities adopted this approach in order to find the best possible partner within a short time span. This data substantiate the fact that people who relocate to and from other places finds difficulty to find a match as seen in Slice 1 data as they themselves and others think about them as lacking kindred leaving them with option other than to approach advertising or matchmaker or bureau. Earlier people belonging to elite class were those who advertised but now it carries an impression that those who have low market value approach matrimonial advertisements.

There is an increase in the number of advertisers until 2005 and then a decline in the number is noticed by 2015. Earlier while advertisers were mostly males now female advertisers have outnumbered males. While concentrating on the age at which prospective brides and grooms inserted matrimonial, it is seen a definite decline in the age. These days even before mid-twenties they pop-up in matrimonial. Initially only educated, high caste people advertised later on matrimonial turned out to be a space where irrespective of caste and class everyone approach this medium. Advertisers of past thirty years have shown more interest in physical characteristics with giving overemphasizes to beauty and fairness. Language in which advertiser communicate to the receiver (reader) has become sharp and direct, may be because of the increase in rate per word for advertising.

From the overall analysis, it is understood that advertisements were earlier adopted by those who thought unconventionality to bring about a revolutionary change. Verbatim seen in advertisements of those periods such as persons with humanitarian values, who believe in socialism substantiate investigators viewpoint. But those of today give prominence to the similarity

in caste, class, region, and occupation. This trend in matrimonial is a reflection of tendency to regress from unconventional to conventional in human partner selection.

Slice 4

Matchmakers are mostly those who accidentally came across this career alongside trying success in other careers such as real estate, few who carried it as a passion without payment was also met. They entered this field by arranging dear and near ones weddings providing birds- eye-view over weddings across Kerala. Matchmakers initially gets involved in it for fun or accidentally and then at some point take up as career (Sabur, 2014). It is a major means of living, concentrating on particular religion, locality and most easily on high profile weddings. Irrespective of gender and religion; financial and family status, nobility, education and physical appearance rules marriage market. It is matchmakers who after listening to demands of concerned parties passes address of likely match, their decision making occurs at intuition.

Preferences of males and females on their partner is exactly the same as seen in Slice 1, males prefer females with physical appearance matching ideal cultural norms, their parents and brothers occupation and income are also important. Jobless males losses their charm at marriage market. Irrespective of religion occupational homogamy is enforced in case of educated people. Slight difference in skin tone preference is found in this analysis between males of Hindu and Muslim community; while Hindus prefer facial features Muslim male stresses unbounded on fair skin tone.

The reasons for rejecting males and females at marriage proposal, matchmakers affirm the same as mentioned in Slice 1. In addition they have mentioned how age plays a major role in market value depending on locality of marriage. To the locality where investigators collected data during Slice 1 and the district to which it belong nubility is reached early while compared to capital of Kerala and its neighbouring districts which values immensely on

educational and occupational prospects of females, by the time marital enquiry begins in these places girls are married off at Malabar. Based on religion also girls marriageable age differs Muslims marry early compared to Hindus and Christians. Results of age at marriage mentioned by matchmaking allies with Slice 1 and 2. Age difference between couples has declined over period meanwhile caste, religion and horoscope have gained importance over years.

Non-native of the locality finds difficulty to find match, they are those who relocated from other districts because they have their relatives at their native places which validates our finding at Slice 1 that kindred is most valued and used during marital enquiries. Statements given by marriage alliance breakers are exactly in the same pattern as in Slice 1. Geographical proximity is highly looked after if not around the residence at least within the district, weddings between districts happens very rarely those who demand the best out of wider opportunities. Again in such weddings there are kinship ties and homogamy on status, education and the like.

Re-entry of females to marriage market is a tough situation especially with increased age and if they possess a child from first marriage. Once divorced both male and female re-enter the marriage market with different status, age, assets, liabilities and preferences (Buss, 2003). During remarriages males prefer lesser age difference. Males' preferences for relatively younger females should be minimal during early mating years, but should become more pronounced as the male gets older (Kenrick and Keefe, 1992).

Matchmakers have conveyed about clients who provide false information regarding personal details and also about fake brokers which according to them has reduced their reputation and has given online bureau a better opportunity to establish.

Slice 5

Mode of marriage intermediation in Slice 1 and 2 is mostly by taking advantage of kindred, rarely do they approach bureau as a possibility and is evident from data with only two bureau registrations. Earlier bureaus were found to be secular in nature but now it has in it caste specific, religion and region focused bureaus as well. There are even bureaus which address divorces, remarriages and physically disabled candidates separately. Bureaus while meeting parents states that the concerned party is shown their best match in terms of marriage candidates and attributes such as family background, character and status match. They make sure not to convey criteria which reduce value at marriage market, because at times in contrast to their judgement unexpected parties find a match between them.

Preferences of prospective brides and grooms are detailed in bureau analysis. In common irrespective of gender, reputation and its indicators such as own house, occupation and socioeconomic status, beauty acts as beneficial. Age has a major role in marriage market, desirability increases in case of younger aged. Similar to slice 1 and 2 males personality traits are weighed preference and in case of females medium height and weight, beauty, fair skin complexion are desirable characteristics. Geographical proximity is preferred, in case of difficulty they keep a baseline of within the district to ensure cultural similarity. Girls are not send to hilly areas. Location of home towards coastal areas is negative indicator. Girls younger in age, height, socioeconomic status are preferred. Father absence (death, separation or illness), lack of brothers, same-sex siblings (sisters), character of parents and their job are detrimental.

Males in general are found to prefer females without a job, with education there is a slight difference seen. Men feared that women would learn the behaviour similar to market place (*chanthapennu*) (Devika, 2009). Highly educated and independent women also gets rejected at marriage market as they are though as deprived of “domestically trained homely

nature” (Anupama, 2008). It is professionally qualified men who prefer professionals. While females prefer educated, working men. As girls are more educated these days they keep a preference of minimum degree as a qualification for their partner, which brings a tough situation for less educated males, marriage squeeze brought about by inability of preferred criteria. This explains why males belonging to occupation attached with less status and those continuing family labour (*kulathozhil*) is least preferred in marriage market. Certain occupations are attached with status decline in marriage market; girls belonging to nursing, dance-music teachers, beauticians, salesgirls are among them. Advocates, police, social activists are others who faces rejection. A tendency to view women’s interaction with men at job place suspiciously with prejudice by both genders during early 21st century (Devika, 2009) presence of which is seen till date. Women whose occupation are considered as “masculine” face rejection in the marriage market, female advocates (Ushakumari, 2008). Hindu families prefer governmental sector and has shown an aversion towards business which has high value among muslims.

Caste mobility occurs in situations where there is delay in marriage or when the candidate is high profile occupation, even then there is a boundary across which differences in caste is not preferred. Resistance to marry at large variation across caste has its root in laws of Manu (Nair as cited in Panicker, 1987). In certain caste with low population educated females are least preferred. Bureaus staffs identify clients being deceitful in matters of age, horoscope, familial pitfalls, and reasons behind divorces.

Chapter **5**

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The word “marriage” is plain but the kind of reality to which it is attached in day-to-day life is vaster than life. Etymology throws light on the canvas on which the word ‘marriage’ acts as a signifier towards immense levels of meaning it takes in human life. Marriages acquired different forms along the evolution of humans, across sociocultural and historical context. Investigator by acknowledging such changes intend to explore into the experience of women at marriage as it gets influenced and modified as an institution in accordance with the culture.

Statement of the problem

The aim of the present study is to explore women’s experience along the process of marriage, prerequisites, criteria and choice of marriage, and initial years after marriage across a marital longevity of ten years and below (duration 2005-2014) who reside in the locality selected for research in Kerala. To contextualize marriages of recent times by retrospective data collected from the same locality and explore marriage pattern across matrimonial advertisements, matchmakers and bureaus.

The current study is entitled as "MARRIAGE AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION: A PSYCHO-CULTURAL STUDY ON WOMEN".

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Marriage: Marriage is a social union or legal contract between a man and a woman that creates kinship.

Social institution: Social institutions are formed by a group with common purpose to attain an order and structure in society thus governing behavior and expectations of individuals according to normative character. Marriage became a social institution through accepting an obligation to rear the child and pass on their personal heir to them.

Thus it enters the intimate texture of society and acquires a position beyond the personal feelings of two individuals; husband and wife.

Psycho-cultural: It is by means of social interactions and inter-subjective discourses that a society gets established which in turn creates a culture. Culture exists in symbolic form acquiring different meaning and is dynamic in nature. Therefore culture is contributed by humans and it contribute to his/ her psychological state.

Women: One who identifies both biologically and psychologically as a female.

Research Objectives

1. To explore women's experience along the process of marriage
2. To identify the "readiness" in marriage
3. To explore into the "concept" of men as a marriage partner
4. To analyze modes of premarital enquiry
5. To identify the criterion behind acceptance or rejection of a proposal
6. To analyze "how" and "when" marriage becomes difficult for a women
7. To identify the age at marriage and its role.
8. To explore the initial years of marriage
9. To compare and contrast recent marriages with retrospective data
10. To study the pattern of marriage consummated through matrimonial advertisements, marriage matchmakers and bureaus.

Need and significance of the study:

Society attaches different status to married and unmarried women and along the process women undergo a change in identity as well. At any cost marriage must conclude at the right age, is what parents wish for their girls. Choices one makes becomes detrimental of whole life especially when people as such and society attach unbound relevance to marriage. Failure to understand real and ironical nature of human choices turns out to be costly, both socially and scientifically. The present research is a preliminary exploratory work which is based on the marriages which occurred in a particular geographical locality in Kerala within a marital longevity of ten years and below (duration 2005-2014). Marriages of the preceding generation in the same locality acts as a background for information on marriages of recent times. Thereby attempting to conduct metacognitive study on how and why certain choices are made and factors which attain relevance in marriage.

While going through the reviews in detail, the investigator found researches approaching marriage from different disciplines separately, for example anthropological perspectives in marriage, sociological perspectives in marriage and so on, which leaves a knowledge gap to explore psychological perspective incorporating other disciplines. Investigators thereby attempts to gain insights from other disciplines such as sociology, anthropology and history in order to study the institution of marriage.

Usually the most important relationships a woman form is with her parents, spouse, siblings and friends out of which it is only in case of friends and life partner she have a choice. Certain factors leading to choices which does not have importance at other cultures attain unprecedented relevance and becomes independent of the original motives for a given behaviour. By identifying the reason behind choices a change through awareness is possible in decision making, in order to surpass the defective choices that are followed

traditionally. Factors which gets identified in defective choices acts as a presupposing factor in divorces. These information are beneficial to the intermediary who becomes influential in decision making, such as psychologists, sociologists, social workers, and ASHA workers.

Research Method

Methodology	Slice I	Grounded theory
	Slice II	
	Slice III	
	Slice IV	
	Slice V	
Time Horizon		Cross sectional
Data collection technique	Slice I	Semi-structured interview, participant observation, documents and post-scripts
	Slice II	Semi-structured interview, participant observation
	Slice III	Matrimonial advertisements
	Slice IV	Unstructured/in-depth interview
	Slice V	Semi-structured open-end interview
Sample	Slice I	226 married women
	Slice II	55 married women aged fifty and above
	Slice III	18 matrimonial advertisements, an advertisement each of male and female across decades
		Matrimonial advertisement of a day each; year 1985 and 2015
	Slice IV	18 Matchmakers (10 males and 8 females)
	Slice V	13 Matrimonial bureaus

Inferences from the Study

Investigators by conducting this research intended to explore into the women's experience along the process of marriage thereby throwing light on the rational and irrational thought which interplay in the institution of marriage. While looking into data irrespective of period, whether it be in marriages of recent times or retrospective data, neither participants nor their parents consider the necessity to acknowledge marital readiness prior wedding. They considered marriages as a natural event which is supposed to occur/occurs at an age which is determined by a norm. Even then they had clarity in preferences on what is desirable and undesirable in a mate. Men with age, height, weight, and socioeconomic status higher than themselves is preferred.

Men with providing nature, industrious and vigorous preferably like own fathers are on high demand. "Father" is prototype of a prospective husband. Clear dislike towards men with flirtatious nature and a favouritism towards men who matches masculinity stereotype emphasizing men who dominate themselves in physical, personality and economic level. On the other hand men are found to prioritize beauty and health, which indicates towards an exchange between physical attractiveness of women to financial security offered by men happening in marriages.

Meanwhile participants prefer partners who are similar to themselves in character, attitudes, beliefs, and values, a tendency towards assortative mating. Similarity in familial and cultural background is ensured by getting married to someone who is geographically located at nearby locality. Getting married to a person similar in attitude, values and beliefs correlates with majority marrying to a known family, both marriage candidate and family prefer a little known family. Adding on to this is a factor that most majority of alliances are brought by immediate circle of relatives whom the candidate

themselves and their parents trust the most. Majority of the participants got married to the first proposal which came their way. Preparedness or lack of preparedness and decision making regarding marriage is strongly influenced by the experiential history of significant others in marriage. 'Bride seeing' ceremony is prerequisite of marital enquiries; participants mostly got married to the first proposal that was brought by trustworthy intermediary or from known family. Low socioeconomic status, lacking criteria to meet cultural appearance norm in physical attractiveness and body type such as precocious or slenderness and dark skin are factors which leads to delay in marriage. Absence of males at home, including father and brother, marital status of sisters or the type of marriage of sisters, character of concerned parties and cultural background is assessed including occupation of parents, history of illness, disabilities, divorces/separation, and death of important figures within the family or for concerned girl resulted in dissolution of marriage proposal and so increased number of 'bride seeing'. In addition, locality of home or occupation if related to beach side leads to rejection reflexively. Highly educated girls and those with occupation which demands mingling with opposite sex and taking up night shifts faced difficulty in marriage. Provided these disadvantages certain variations in combinations of factors can bring about change in marital decisions. Fair skin and beauty are seen to surpass other disadvantages in marriage and those who lack this criteria had less enquiries, lower demands, larger marital distance, and showed readiness for dowry.

While looking to fixed alliance, majority of the participants were seen married to known family; it can vary in range from close relatives to acquaintance, and goes in parallel to their preference to get married to a little known families. Marriages are arranged by parents and progenitors at home without assistance of professional agencies in arrangements, attended by

people at locale irrespective of religion and families from paternal and maternal lines and affinal relatives.

Initial years in marriage are marked by a transition from womanhood to wifehood which demands skills in managing relationships at different levels. Lack of preparedness for a sex life, long distance relationships, childlessness, tough relationship with mother-in-laws, dowry related issues, false communication of preferences by mediators and unfulfilment of promises regarding completing education or pursuing occupation creates emotional turmoil between partners. While stating lack of preparedness in marriage it is essential to understand that a girl who shows initiative to get married or those who are reluctant to get married are treated with similar reaction; as belonging to a variant group. But one fine day, she is supposed to share her space and privacy with another individual, which is least addressed by the society as a whole.

Age at marriage of participants of retrospective data are much earlier while compared to those of recent marriages mostly even before attaining menstruation and age difference higher than those of marriages of recent times. During those periods decision making regarding partner is taken spontaneously by males at home based on first impression such as the concerned boy looks after his mother and sisters, trusting mediators, prospective partners mostly does not meet prior wedding. Family reputation, succession and extension of family was a matter of concern. In short, marriages are seen as a social arrangement between two families which is effectuated by the involvement of populace and *nattukaranavar*, unlike recent marriages *nattukaranavar* had a crucial role then. Beauty, skin complexion and horoscope did not possess the importance it attained during marriages of present days. Delay in marriage rarely occurs and only in cases of financial backwardness and lack of significant people for marital enquiry. Major

problem post wedding was related to dowry, poverty and in-laws; their conflict was resolved by interference from people within family and locality who advices. Delivery of child happens mostly at home except those which required professional assistance.

There are different means available presently in order to arrange marriages apart from those which are conducted by utilising kin networks and affinal relations, including matrimonial advertisements, marriage matchmakers and bureaus. But they are less preferred among participants under locality while it has attained considerable relevance among other parts of Kerala.

Matrimonial advertisements gained popularity after men mostly elite class educated adopted it after seeing it at their job places in metrocities. Now more of females at mid-twenties utilises its facilities, irrespective of educational status, class and caste people approach matrimonial, still it carries an impression that those who lack market value approach matrimonial advertisements. Beauty and fairness has shown a sharp increase in its value at marriage market, also people have become more stringent in their preferences with regard to opting partner from same religion, caste, class, region and occupation, matching horoscope has turned out to be a major criteria.

In addition to the preferences mentioned at primary data marriage matchmakers and bureau staffs have avowed that girls younger in age has more desirability and a favourable condition at marriage market, with increasing age they face a decline in number of options. Based on region and religion criteria vary, towards South Kerala females marry comparatively at later ages. Muslims marry at young age while compared to Christians and Hindus. Males in general are seen to prefer females without a job but with education there is a change in preferences. With increasing number of educated females, males without a graduation however well-bred faces

difficulty to find a match. Age difference has declined over years but religion, caste and horoscope has gained importance. Non-native of locality or districts finds difficulty as they lack kindred. Caste mobility occurs when there is delay in marriage or attractive criteria such as an occupation even then it does not happen with large differences across boundaries. Marriage alliance breakers succeed in generating doubt about characters of concerned candidate and their families similar to those found in primary data. Re-entry to marriage market brings about variation in status and it is even more difficult with a child from first marriage especially in case of females. Both matchmakers and bureau staff faces difficulty as there are clients who are deceitful regarding personal profiles such as age, occupation, horoscope, familial issues and reasons behind divorces in case of remarriages.

While looking into data as a whole, five slices in total there is clear preference seen among women to choose a partner who is similar in attitudes, values and beliefs, who belong to known family and who is hierarchically higher in physical, personality and economic traits. Marriage market as a whole is predominantly ruled by socioeconomic status and physical appearance; were an exchange happens between men and women regarding them. Across decades marital preferences have turned out to be conventional but within this conventionality an unconscious, unwritten and shared rule regarding whom to choose as a partner is prevalent.

Suggestions and Limitations of the Research

Investigators began the research with a broad objective to explore women's experience along the process of marriage, concentrating on the phenomenon as a whole. Every factor which came out of the study deserves individual attention and few among them has attained cardinal position. These factors can be studied in detail in further researches. It is further possible to study patterns of marriages based on the difference in terms of religion and

caste. Love marriages can be explored in detail. Legal policies and acts which exists in favour of marriage and protection of marriage can be brought under scrutiny by a research. While investigators concentrated on married women it is equally important to study unmarried women as well, which in itself is another research. Studies on divorces can be carried out concentrating on women who have taken a decision not to remarry, on those who wish to remarry but could not manage to, on those who unwillingly adhered to societal pressures and remarried and on those who happily remarried. Status change while remarrying especially while women already have a child out of their first marriages are few other domains which can be explored in detail.

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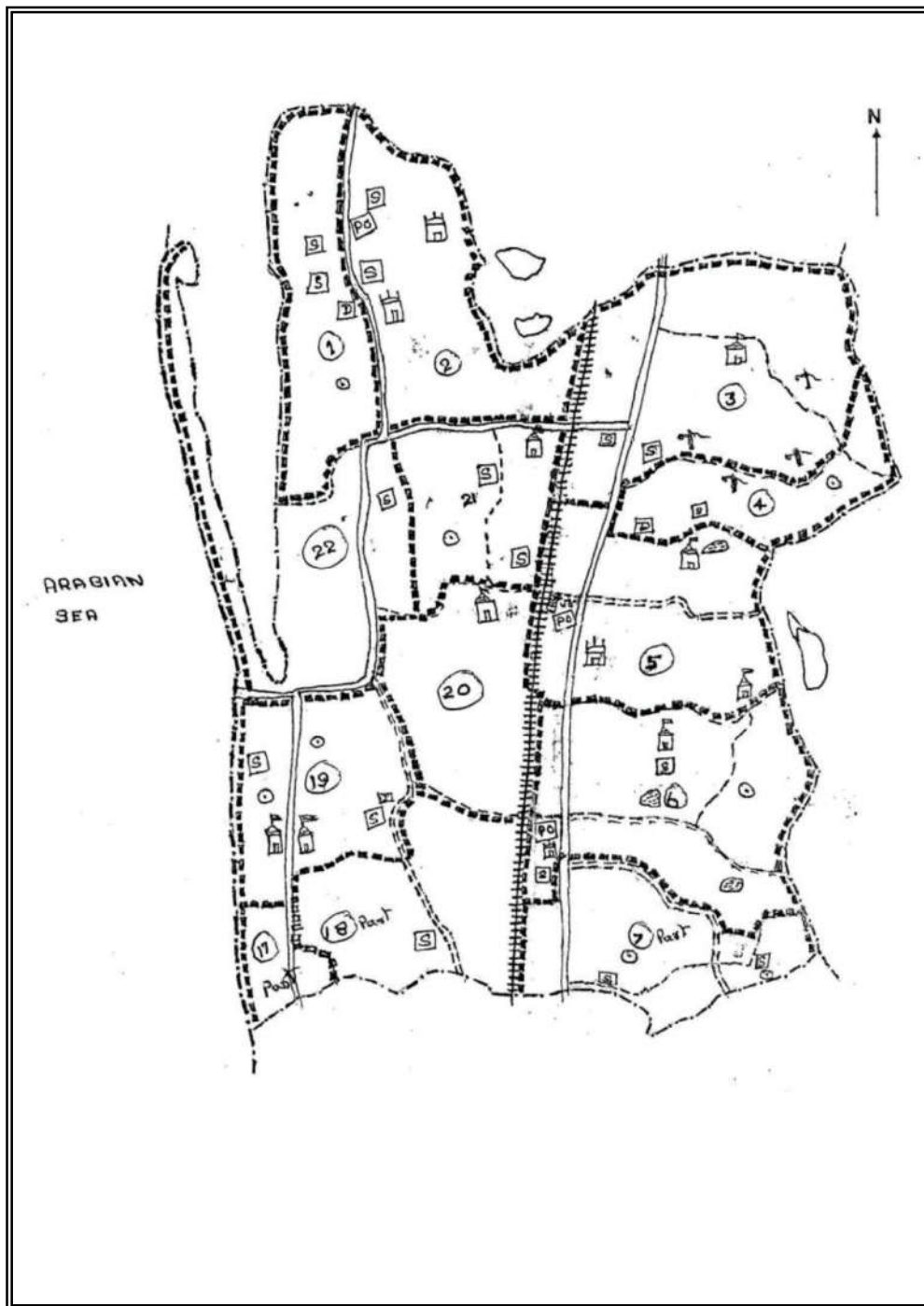
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I
GEOGRAPHICAL MAP OF THE LOCALITY



Appendices

- 1 കല്ലുപ്രായം ആയെന്ന് എപ്പോഴാണ് തോന്നി തുടങ്ങിയത്? സ്വയം തോന്നിയതാണോ?
- 2 പ്രതിശ്രുതവരനെ കുറിച്ചുള്ള കാഴ്ചപ്പാടുകൾ എന്തൊക്കെ ആയിരുന്നു?
- 3 ആദ്യത്തെ കല്ലുപ്രായലോചന ഏത് പ്രായത്തിൽ ആയിരുന്നു?
- 4 ആർ മുഖേനയാണ് കല്ലുപ്രായ ലോചനകൾ വന്ന് തുടങ്ങിയത്?
- 5 എത്ര പെണ്ണു കാണലിന് വിധേയമായി?
- 6 എത്ര ആലോചനകൾ എന്തൊക്കെ കാരണങ്ങൾ കൊണ്ട് മുടങ്ങി?
- 7 എത്ര കാലം ആലോചനകൾ നടന്നു?
- 8 ഇപ്പോൾ നടന്ന കല്ലുപ്രായം എന്തിന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ ആണ് ഉറപ്പിച്ചത്? അതിന്റെ കഥ എന്താണ്?
- 9 ഏത് പ്രായത്തിലായിരുന്നു വിവാഹം?
- 10 സ്വന്തം വീട്ടിൽ നിന്ന് എത്ര അകലെയാണ് ഭർത്താവിന്റെ വീട്?
- 11 കല്ലുപ്രായത്തിന് മുൻപ് ഉണ്ടായിരുന്ന ചടങ്ങുകൾ എന്തൊക്കെ ആയിരുന്നു? എങ്ങനെ ഒക്കെ ആയിരുന്നു?
- 12 സാമ്പത്തിക ആവശ്യങ്ങൾ എന്തൊക്കെ ആയിരുന്നു?
- 13 സാമ്പത്തിക സഹായ മാർഗങ്ങൾ എന്തൊക്കെ ആയിരുന്നു?
- 14 വിവാഹത്തിന്റെ ആദ്യകാലങ്ങൾ എങ്ങനെ ആയിരുന്നു?
- 15 എപ്പോഴാണ് ഗർഭിണി ആയത്? ആഗ്രഹിച്ചിരുന്നുവോ?

APPENDIX III
SEMI – STRUCTURED INTERVIEW
SCHEDULE
(SLICE 1 ENGLISH)

The following interview is conducted purely for research purpose. Information provided would be kept confidential. Your answers would not be judged into “right” or “wrong” category.

Personal Details:

1. Name :
2. Address :

3. Age, Date of Birth :
4. Date of marriage :
5. Religion :
6. Caste :
7. Education :
8. Occupation :
9. Husband’s Age :
10. Husband’s Education :
11. Husband’s Occupation :
12. Number of children : Boy Girl
13. Type of family :
14. Number of members in the family :
15. Number of members in the family aged 60 and above:
16. Number of members in the family aged 15 and below:
17. Number of earning members in the family:
18. Economic status : APL/BPL

Appendices

1. When or at what age did you first think of getting married? Was it your own feeling?
2. What were your concepts about prospective groom?
3. How old were you when you received your first proposal of marriage?
4. Through whom did you get the proposals?
5. How many 'bride seeing' ceremonies did you undergo?
6. How many of the proposals failed to materialize and why?
7. How long did the enquiry for marriage occur?
8. On what basis was this marriage of yours fixed? Can you brief us about it.
9. At what age did you get married?
10. How far is your husband's house from yours?
11. What were the different ceremonies prior weddings? Can you briefly describe them?
12. What were the financial needs associated with marriage?
13. What were the different ways you got financial support?
14. How were the initial years of marriage?
15. When did you first get pregnant? Did you long for it.

APPENDIX IV
MARITAL LONGEVITY
(SLICE 2)

Serial number	Marital longevity	Frequency
1	35	2
2	36	3
3	37	3
4	38	3
5	39	2
6	40	7
7	41	2
8	44	2
9	45	2
10	46	3
11	47	4
12	49	1
13	50	5
14	51	2
15	52	1
16	53	2
17	54	3
18	56	2
19	57	1
20	58	2
21	59	1
22	60	1
23	65	1
Total		55

APPENDIX V
SEMI – STRUCTURED INTERVIEW
SCHEDULE
(SLICE 2 MALAYALAM)

ഗവേഷണ ആവശ്യാർത്ഥം നടത്തുന്ന അഭിമുഖമാണ്. നിങ്ങൾ നൽകുന്ന വിവരങ്ങൾ രഹസ്യമായി സൂക്ഷിക്കുന്നതാണ്. ഗവേഷണ ആവശ്യത്തിനല്ലാതെ മറ്റെന്തിനും ഈ വിവരങ്ങൾ ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്നതല്ല. നിങ്ങളുടെ ഉത്തരങ്ങൾ 'ശരി', 'തെറ്റ്' എന്ന വിഭവവിധിയിൽ വിധേയമാക്കുന്നതല്ല.

1. എത്ര വയസ്സായി?
2. എത്ര വർഷമായി കല്ലുറപ്പാക്കി കഴിഞ്ഞിട്ടുണ്ട്?
3. കല്ലുറപ്പാക്കിയതിനുശേഷം ആരെന്ന് എപ്പോഴാണ് തോന്നിത്തുടങ്ങിയത്? സ്വയം തോന്നിയതാണോ?
5. ഭർത്താവുമായി എത്രവയസ്സിന്റെ വ്യത്യാസമുണ്ട്?
6. എങ്ങനെയാണ് കല്ലുറപ്പാക്കി നടന്നത്?
7. ഇതല്ലാതെ മറ്റ് ആലോചനകൾ വന്നിരുന്നോ?
8. സ്വന്തം വീട്ടിൽ നിന്ന് എത്ര അകലെയാണ് ഭർത്താവിന്റെ വീട്?
9. വിവാഹത്തിന്റെ ആദ്യകാലങ്ങൾ എങ്ങനെയാണിരുന്നതെന്ന്?
10. എത്ര കുട്ടികൾ ഉണ്ട്?
1. എപ്പോഴാണ് ഗർഭിണി ആയത്?

APPENDIX VI
SEMI – STRUCTURED INTERVIEW
SCHEDULE
(SLICE 2 ENGLISH)

The following interview is conducted purely for research purpose. Information provided would be kept confidential. Your answers would not be judged into “right” or “wrong” category.

1. What is your present age?
2. How long have you been married?
3. When or at what age did you first think of getting married was it your own feeling?
4. What is the age difference between you and your spouse?
5. Can you tell a little bit about how your marriage was arranged?
6. Who took responsibility (initiative) for arranging your marriage?
7. Did your family considered other proposals other than this?
8. How far is your husband’s residence from your’s?
9. How was your initial years of marriage?
10. How many children do you bare?
11. At what age did you conceive?

APPENDIX VII
SEMI – STRUCTURED INTERVIEW
SCHEDULE
(SLICE 5 MALAYALAM)

ഗവേഷണ ആവശ്യർത്ഥം നടത്തുന്ന അഭിമുഖമാണ്. നിങ്ങൾ നൽകുന്ന വിവരങ്ങൾ രഹസ്യമായി സൂക്ഷിക്കുന്നതാണ്. ഗവേഷണ ആവശ്യത്തിനല്ലാതെ മറ്റൊന്നിനും ഈ വിവരങ്ങൾ ഉപയോഗിക്കുന്നതല്ല. നിങ്ങളുടെ ഉത്തരങ്ങൾ 'ശരി', 'തെറ്റ്' എന്ന വിലയിരുത്തലുകൾക്ക് വിധേയമാക്കുന്നതല്ല.

2. കേരളത്തിൽ ബ്യൂറോകൾ വന്ന് തുടങ്ങിയിട്ട് എത്ര വർഷം ആയിക്കാണും?
3. കേരളത്തിൽ എത്ര ബ്യൂറോകൾ ഉണ്ട്? എന്തെങ്കിലും സംഘടന ഉണ്ടോ ഇവയ്ക്ക്?
4. ബ്യൂറോ ആരംഭിക്കുവാൻ ഉള്ള പ്രക്രിയ എന്താണ്?
5. വിവാഹാവശ്യർത്ഥം ബ്യൂറോയിൽ രജിസ്റ്റർ ചെയ്യാൻ എന്താണ് ചെയ്യേണ്ടത്? അതിനുള്ള ഫീസ് എത്രയൊക്കെ ആണ്?
6. വർഷത്തിൽ ചില മാസങ്ങളിൽ മാത്രം രജിസ്ട്രേഷനിൽ വ്യത്യാസങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടാവുന്നതായി ശ്രദ്ധിയിൽപ്പെട്ടിട്ടുണ്ടോ?
7. പ്രധാനമായിട്ട് എന്തൊക്കെ മാനദണ്ഡങ്ങളാണ് മുന്നോട്ട് വെക്കാറ്? ഇതിൽ ആൺ-പെൺ, മത വ്യത്യാസങ്ങൾ ഉണ്ടോ?
8. എന്തെങ്കിലും കാര്യങ്ങൾ മറച്ചുവെക്കുന്നതായി നിങ്ങളുടെ ശ്രദ്ധിയിൽപ്പെട്ടിട്ടുണ്ടോ? ഉണ്ടെങ്കിൽ എന്താണ്?
9. കല്യാണാലോചനയുമായി ബന്ധപ്പെട്ട് നിങ്ങൾ പൊതുവായി പറയുന്ന ആമുഖങ്ങൾ എന്തൊക്കെയാണ്? വ്യത്യസ്തമായി എന്തൊക്കെയാണ് കൂട്ടിച്ചേർക്കാറ്?
10. എപ്പോഴൊക്കെയാണ് കല്യാണങ്ങൾ നടക്കാൻ ബുദ്ധിമുട്ടുണ്ടാവാറ്?
11. എന്തൊക്കെ കാരണങ്ങളാലാണ് മുടങ്ങാറ്?
12. ന്യൂസ്‌പേപ്പർ പരസ്യം കൊടുക്കുവാൻ എപ്പോഴാണ് തീരുമാനിക്കുന്നത്. അതിൽ എന്തൊക്കെയാണ് സൂചിപ്പിക്കുകയും സൂചിപ്പിക്കാതിരിയ്ക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നത്?

APPENDIX VIII
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW
SCHEDULE
(SLICE 5 ENGLISH)

The following interview is conducted purely for research purpose. Information provided would be kept confidential. Your answers would not be judged into “right” or “wrong” category.

1. How long it has been since the establishment of bureaus in Kerala?
2. Do you know the appropriate number of bureaus at Kerala? Do they have any associations for its welfare?
3. What are the registration formalities in setting up a bureau?
4. What are the procedure for registration in a bureau for marriage purpose? What is the fees structure?
5. Have you ever noticed variation in the rate of registration during certain months?
6. What are the preferences put forward by marriage candidates? Does that show any difference based on gender and region?
7. Have you ever noticed candidates or their family being deceitful? If so, on what matters?
8. How do you generally introduce proposals between family and what additions do you make particularly?
9. Describe the conditions that taken out to be risk factors in marriage?
10. What are the reasons behind rejections?
11. When does a bureau advertise a particular candidates profile? What are the factors that are included and excluded while advertising?

APPENDIX IX

BUREAU REGISTRATION FORM (SLICE 5)

Password:

മാര്യേജ് ഇൻഫർമേഷൻ സെന്റർ

N.B.: രജിസ്ട്രേഷൻഫോമും ഫുൾസൈസ് ഫോട്ടോയും ഓഫീസിലേക്ക് തിരിച്ചയക്കാതിരുന്നാൽ യാതൊരു കാരണവശാലും തുടർന്ന് സർവ്വീസ് ലഭിക്കുന്നതല്ല.

ഫ്രാഞ്ചസി ഏരിയ:.....

ഫ്രാഞ്ചസി കോഡ്:.....

Reg. NO:

DETAILS OF CANDIDATE

Region:

1. വിവാഹാർത്ഥിയുടെ പേരും മേൽവിലാസവും Candidate's Name & Address : ജില്ല District :		വെബ്സൈറ്റിൽ പേരും ഫോട്ടോയും കൊടുക്കാൻ സമ്മതമാണ്. Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">സ്ത്രീ Female</td> <td style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">പുരുഷൻ Male</td> </tr> </table>		സ്ത്രീ Female	പുരുഷൻ Male	Pincode: <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>	
സ്ത്രീ Female	പുരുഷൻ Male				
2. പുനർവിവാഹമാണെങ്കിൽ വിശദീകരണം : In Case of divorce/ remarriage, please give details (വിവാഹമാധ്യസ്തന്മാരുടെ സാന്നിധ്യത്തിൽ വിവാഹമാധ്യസ്തന്മാർക്ക് സർവ്വീസ് ലഭ്യമാകുന്നതല്ല.)		Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Widowed <input type="checkbox"/>			
3. ഫോൺ നമ്പർ Phone Number		Resi:	Off:		
		Mobile:	E-mail:		
4. മതം Religion:	ജാതി Caste:	ഉപജാതി Sub Caste:			
5. വയസ്സ് Age:	ജനന തീയതി Date of Birth:				
6. ഉയരം Height:	തൂക്കം Weight:	നിറം Colour:	രക്തഗ്രൂപ്പ് Blood group:		
7. ശരീര പ്രകൃതി Physical appearance	മെലിഞ്ഞത് Lean	ഇടത്തരം Medium	തടിപ്പത്ത് Fat		
8. ശരീരീക ന്യൂനതകൾ ഉണ്ടെങ്കിൽ പൂർണ്ണ വിവരം If there is any physical deformity please give details:					
9. വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ യോഗ്യതകൾ : Educational qualifcations:		പ്രൊഫഷണൽ ഡിഗ്രി ഡിഗ്രി സ്ഥാപനത്തിന്റെ പേര്	വിഷയം		
10. ജോലി Job	സർക്കാർ Govt:	പ്രൈവറ്റ് Private	വീദേശം Foreign		
			ബിസിനസ്സ് Business		
			കൃഷി Agriculture		
11. ഔദ്യോഗിക മേൽവിലാസം : Designation & Official Address:					
12. വിവാഹാർത്ഥിയുടെ പ്രതിമാസ വരുമാനം : Candidate's monthly income:					
13. വിവാഹാർത്ഥിയുടെ വീട്ടിൽ എത്തിച്ചേരാനുള്ള വഴി കൃത്യമായി വിവരിക്കുക : Direction to reach Candidate's residence:					
14. രക്ഷാകർത്താവിന്റെ / പിതാവിന്റെ പേരും, ജോലിയും : Father's or Guardian's Name & Occupation:					
15. അമ്മയുടെ പേരും, വീട്ടുപേരും, ജോലിയും : Mother's Name, Family Name & Occupation:					

16. യോജിക്കാവുന്ന മറ്റ് സമാനജാതികൾ ഏത്: Similar Castes with whom marriage alliance can be considered?						
17. മിശ്രവിവാഹത്തിന് താല്പര്യമുണ്ടോ Interest in inter-caste/inter-religion marriage?						
18. സഹോദരങ്ങൾ Brothers & Sisters						
സഹോദരി Sister				വിവാഹിതർ Married		
സഹോദരൻ Brother				വിവാഹിതർ Married		
19. വരൻ/വധുവിന്റെ കുടുംബസ്വത്ത് (Bride/Groom's Individual Assets)				ഇടത്തരം	ഇടത്തരത്തിന് മുകളിൽ	താഴെ
വസ്തു	വാഹനം	മറ്റുള്ളവ	ആകെ ആസ്തി	Middle	Above Middle	Below
				ഉയർന്ന സാമ്പത്തികം Financially well placed		താഴ്ന്ന സാമ്പത്തിക സ്ഥിതി Low placed
20. വരന്റെ വ്യവസ്ഥകൾ/വധുവിന് നൽകാൻ ഉദ്ദേശിക്കുന്ന ഷെയർ Groom's basic demands/Proposed share Bride:				Cash	Gold	Property
						Total
21. വരൻ/വധുവിനുണ്ടായിരിക്കേണ്ട യോഗ്യതകൾ Bride/ Groom's Basic Requirements						
a) വിദ്യാഭ്യാസ യോഗ്യത Educational Qualifications						
b) പ്രായപരിധി Age Limit		മിനിമം Minimum		മാക്സിമം Maximum		
c) വിവാഹത്തിന് മുൻഗണന കൊടുക്കുന്ന ജില്ലകൾ District Preferred						
d) നിറം Colour:		ഉയരം Height:		ശരീരപ്രകൃതി Physical appearance:		
e) ജോലി Occupation:		വിദേശകേസുകൾ Overseas Employees		ബിസിനസ്സ് Business		
		ഗവ. ജോലി Govt. Job	കൃഷി Agriculture	പ്രൈവറ്റ് ജോലി Private Job		
i) പുനർ വിവാഹിതരെ താൽപര്യമാണെങ്കിൽ If divorcees are preferred, describe conditions:						
22. നിർദ്ദേശങ്ങൾ Instructions:						
<p>ഇതിൽ തന്നിരിക്കുന്ന വിവരങ്ങൾ യാഥാർത്ഥ്യവും സത്യസന്ധവും ആണെന്ന് ഞാൻ ഉറപ്പു നൽകുന്നു. വിവാഹ നിശ്ചയത്തിനുശേഷം ഞാൻ സ്ഥാപനത്തിന്റെ സേവനപ്രതിഫലമായ സംഖ്യ തന്നുകൊള്ളാമെന്ന് വാഗ്ദാനം ചെയ്യുന്നു.</p> <p>The details furnished above are true and correct to my knowledge. I here by agree to pay a sum of Rs..... being the fee for your services as soon as the marriage proposal is finalised.</p> <p>ഞങ്ങളുടെ മകന്റെ/മകളുടെ വിവാഹപരസ്യം പത്രത്തിൽ കൊടുക്കുന്നതിന് ഞങ്ങൾക്ക് സമ്മതമാണ് <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>(ഞങ്ങൾ മുഖേനയോ അല്ലാതെയോ വിവാഹം നടക്കുകയാണെങ്കിലും അല്ലെങ്കിലും അഡ്മിഷൻ ഫീസ് തിരികെ ലഭിക്കുന്നതല്ല.)</p> <p>സ്ഥലം Place:</p> <p>തീയതി Date:</p> <p>വിവാഹാർത്ഥിയുടെ പേരും ഒപ്പും Candidate's Name & Signature</p> <p>രക്ഷാകർത്താവിന്റെ പേരും ഒപ്പും Parent's Name & Signature</p> <p>ജനന തീയതി :..... ജനന സമയം :..... നക്ഷത്രം :..... ശർഭശിഷ്ടദശ :..... പാപദോഷം :..... ഗോത്രം :..... ചൊവ്വാദോഷം <input type="checkbox"/> ശുദ്ധം <input type="checkbox"/> ദോഷം <input type="checkbox"/> മദ്ധ്യം <input type="checkbox"/></p>						
ഗ്രഹനില		അംശകം				