

Adolescent Boys Attitude towards Marriage and Family Formation in Indian Rural Setup

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Social scientists have become interested in the study of marriage age in India, mainly for two reasons –firstly, with regard to the population problem in general and population education in particular and secondly, for analyzing the process of change taking place in marriage and the family (Patel, 1982). A number of attitudinal studies have also been published on this topic. Attitude entails an existing predisposition to respond to social objects which in interaction with situational and other dispositional variables guides and directs the overt behaviour of the individual (Shaw and Wright, 1967).

In the light of the changing rural Indian situation. This chapter attempts to study the attitudes of marriage and family formation among teenagers. Norms regarding marriage vary from society to society, region to region, religion to religion based on educational, social and economic conditions of population. Very few studies have been conducted in this direction in India (Murthy, 1993). In the present study several concepts such as: ideal age at marriage for boys and girls, sources of decision-making on the choice of bridegroom, type of bridegroom, type of person treated as a wife, ideal age differences between spouses, ideal interval between first marriage and first conception, ideal birth interval between successive births (closed birth interval) have been to assessed.

The present research work is primarily intended to study the perceptions of Adolescent boys on marriage and family formation. The study is framed with the following objectives:

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- i. To study teenager's knowledge about ideal age at marriage and family formation.
- ii. To study the influence of background characteristics in determining the desired Age at Marriage by Adolescent Boys

SAMPLE FRAME AND SIZE

The respondents for the present study have been Teenage boys, in the age group 16 –19 years (later adolescent boys). A sample of 400 teenagers was considered as an optimum sample for the study. The selection of sample was confined to one district namely, Chittoor. Chittoor District was chosen for the reason that it belongs to one of backward regions of Andhra Pradesh, India namely Rayalaseema and for reasons of proximity and financial constraint on the part of researcher. Chittoor district has higher literacy rate (49.75 according to 1991 census) compared to the other districts of Rayalaseema.

The second stage of selection of sampling was made at the mandal level. Therefore, all the mandals were listed out from the Chittoor district and at random two mandals, namely, Pakala and Gangadhara Nellore, were selected. In the third stage all panchayaths from these two mandals have been separately listed out and five panchayaths each were again selected at random. Out of these panchayaths, household with teenage boys has been listed out. Systematically 40 Hindu adolescent boys have been selected from each village. Muslim teenagers were found only in two panchayaths from each mandal. All the muslim teenagers in these four panchayaths were (Fig. 2)

Data Collection

For the collection of data from teenagers a questionnaire/ Schedule was developed. The researcher himself collected the data from the respondents.

Analysis of data

The data obtained/ collected in the questionnaire/schedule were edited and entered into the computer in a spreadsheet format of SPSS., two way tables were prepared. Statistical techniques such as chi-square, and logistic regression were performed to understand the determinants of desired age at Marriage by adolescent boys.

Conclusions:

The Hindu and Muslim boys respectively preferred between 24 and above and 21 to 23 years as ideal age for marriage for boys, whereas their opinions were almost similar for the ideal age of girls (between 18 to 20 years). With regard to ideal age between spouses half of the communities preferred 3 to 4 years difference. Half of the Hindu boys opined that their choice and elders choice should prevail in decision making with regard to bride selection, whereas half of the Muslim boys left it to the elders choice. The Hindu boys desired a bride known to them before marriage while Muslims desired a new one as a bride. With regard to mate selection the teenagers of both the communities preferred good character, good family background and personality.

They had good knowledge about procreation, that is, union of male and female. The ideal first birth interval was two years for both the communities. A similar inter birth interval of two years was desired by both the communities. With regard to the benefits of having long birth interval, two-fifths of Hindus and Muslims said that the child protection was easy and it was good for mother and child. Though, Muslims also had the same view but a quarter proportion of them had no reasons to offer.

Teenagers of both the communities preferred two children as ideal irrespective of sex. Further, they desired to have at least one son and one daughter. Those who preferred only one child had given the reasons that they could bring them well, provide

better education and fulfill future needs of children. With regard to teenagers who preferred more than two children had given reasons that children could help in house keeping, earn money for the family and support each other. The reasons given for preferring son center around earning money, old age security and funeral ceremony in the case of Muslims, whereas funeral ceremony, old age security, earning money and family lineage were preferred by the Hindus. Reasons for not preferring girl children were: expensive to bring them up, providing dowry and protecting them till marriage.