

Comparison of Marriage Practices in Sikhism in Rural and Urban Areas of Phagwara Region

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Abstract: Marriage is a fundamental institution of Indian society. Marriage refers to a social union agreed upon by the couples to unit as spouses. Focus of the present research was on the comparison of marriage practices of Sikh religion from rural and urban areas. The sample was taken from Phagwara region. Present study focuses on three major areas: - Age of marriage, Mate selection and Dowry system. Self developed questionnaire was used to collect the data. Result of the study revealed that rural area people still believe in the rituals like child marriage and dowry system. On the other hand, urban area people are following the western culture. Urban areas are more develop as compare to rural area, which is the main reason behind the changes coming in the marriage traditions in urban areas. In urban areas, people believe that love marriages are more successful. Moreover, they do not have any fix age for the marriage. However, in rural area people believe in fixed age of marriage 18-20 for girls and 20-25 for boys respectively.

Key Words: Marriage, Marriage practices , Sikhism, Phagwara region,

1. INTRODUCTION:

Marriage is a process in which two persons are involved and they present their relationship publically. It is a meeting of two souls. Marriage is a legal procedure in which a man and a woman become partner officially. Marriage practices vary from region to region and area to area. Every religion has its own way of conducting marriage according to their traditions and customs. Most of the cultures share common traditions and practices while some has unique and specific marriage practices. According to Indian people's belief, a marriage is incomplete without rituals and traditional ceremonies. Marriage is one of the memorable and enjoyable day or time of every couple's life. It is a bond between two people which last till death.

India is a diverse country and every religion follows some customs , rites , rituals and ceremonies. In Sikhism "Anand karaj" is known as wedding ceremony which means "heavenly union". The procedure of "Anand karaj" was introduced by GURU AMAR DASS JI, who was the third Guru in the ten Gurus in Sikhism. Guruji made the rituals of four lavans. In these four lavans bride and bridegroom have to walk around the holy book know as "Guru Granth Sahib Ji". Now Anand Karaj is legal in India from October 1909. However, this wedding ceremony takes place under the instruction of an Amrit Dhari Sikh because they have the complete knowledge of "Anand Karaj". At the time of marriage, like Hindus, Sikhs also prefer to wear Red and Golden coloured clothes in the celebration of the wedding ceremony. Now in India Sikhs passed the Anand marriage bill in 2012. According to that they can register their marriage under Anand marriage Act instead of Hindu marriage Act. As we know that Sikhs do not believe in any kind of astrology, so they consider any day for the marriage ceremony. Mainly the Sikh marriage takes place in the morning time and completed till noon. Moreover, there is a ritual of langer which means lunch in the simple language also takes place in the wedding ceremony. Beside these now-a-days the ritual of 'kurmai' is also held before the marriage ceremony. Some families like to add one other day called engagement before the 'Anand Karaj'.

There is a vast collection of literature on marriage practices in urban and rural areas. As we know that there is diversity in the Indian culture. As a result of which various communities have created their own rules. Mainly these rules are related to gender scripts and age at marriage practices, dowry system, domestic violence, Same-sex weddings and migration of women after marriage and living standard of married women. Many literatures have given reviews about the causes and effects of these traditions. They have both negative and positive aspects which affects Indian society. The main difference in rural and urban marriages is traditions and rituals because in urban areas most of the people are educated whereas in rural areas people are non-educated and develop narrow mindedness. They still believe in old rituals like dowry system and early marriage. The views of different thinkers highlights below:

Sonalde Desai and Lester Andrist(2006). In the article 'Gender scripts and Age at marriage'. It has explained three dimensions of gender. Firstly it defines the economic factors like availability of income, dowry demands, expense related to marriage. Secondly, indications related to familial empowerment. Thirdly, gender performance. Regarding the basics on gender scripts and age at marriage in India, It shows that commonly Indian men and women

get married in the age of 25 and 32. The child marriage has been compressed. In India mainly families are involved in the decision of marriage they preferred to choose their partner which is chosen by family members. The 5% of women get chance to choose their life partner, 66% of the women met their husband only few days ago from their marriage and 78% of women know their husband only for one month or less before their marriage. It simply shows how complex is our arranged marriage system of India.

Scott Fulford, October (2013). This article talks about basics on 'The puzzle of marriage migration in India. How many India women have migrated to their husband's home after marriage? It has also discussed about its causes. In which India there are 300 million women, who have migrated after marriage. The importance of migration is that equalization of geographical distribution. In India when daughter becomes above 18 years. Their parents start to search for a partner for her who can belong to her village or father from her home. A rural woman mainly goes to rural areas after marriage and urban women go to urban areas. That marriage is not related to the geographical sex ratio. Parents take the decision of their children's marriage. The main consequences of the migration are harder to discuss. The women lose their personal independence and most of them suffer from violence. It also breaks down the bargaining power of women, which also affects the upcoming generation. 41% of women say that they are not allowed to visit their birth place or they have come back on the same day. In India most of the men live at their birth place but only the few women do that.

Rawal Priyanka and his colleagues (23, September 2014). This journal is of 'Practice of Dowry and Domestic violence'. Problem of dowry demands is very common in which India. It is 21st century the people are still narrow minded and they follow the rituals of dowry system. As we know that in most of the states of India women are fully dependent on their family members and their husband for full filling their necessities. The researcher had studied forty cases of dowry demand and domestic violence in UP. The women who are suffering from these problems are commonly from rural areas, lower income family and early aged. Most of the arranged marriage conducted in India has problems of dowry and violence. In this way it is important to abolish dowry evil from our society. It is very necessary for the rights of women.

Ruth Vanita (2010). The article is based on 'Same-Sex weddings, Hindu traditions and Modern India'. It is news regarding same-sex weddings and joint suicide cases. In these cases the common thing is that, they all are non-English speaking couple and lower income groups. In India there are lots of areas in which people do not aware of the terms like Gay and Lesbians and they only have desire to marry under the traditions and customs made in their culture. People in these areas know that they have to marry with their opposite sex and have to live with their partner forever. The main reason behind the suicide cases in these organizations which always forced the people to take steps like this.

K.G Santhya and his colleagues (2010). This journal is 'Associations between early marriage and young women's and reproduction Health outcome'. Basic of early marriage and the young women's living standard. His mainly conduct the study five rural and urban areas of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and Rajasthan. The survey focused on the married women aged 15-29 was undertaken in 2001-2010. His using the questionnaire method and easy describe. But urban and rural areas a lot of different between women and their spouses was greater. Who had married in the aged 15-20 then for these who had married is aged 20-29. Especially in which area of Bihar and Rajasthan of rural areas women who's married in aged of early they do not know how to manage the household.

Srinivas goli and his colleagues (March- April 2013). This journal is more focus on comparative study on family "Exploring the myth of mixed marriage in India : Evidence from a nation-wide survey". In this is basic on the caste, family and marriage system in India. The human development survey (IHDS) data collected 2005 to the extent of mixed marriage in India. In Indian society mostly people create a problem when young generate to get marriage of inter caste and mixed marriage. In this study main three keys aspects- (inter-caste, inter-religious and inter-economic group marriage or inter-class). His mainly conduct the study of both areas in rural and urban. It is data was undertaken in 2005-2011 and using the method of interview and asked the questions related to family, married life, caste based or economic status group. It is only the impact of western education and economic diffusion are responsible for the changes in marriage practices.

Parveen kaur (2011). This article mainly talks about basics on norms, resources and marital power. "A study of Sikh household in Malaysia". This study is utilizes a primary data set gathered through a survey questionnaire. This is basically conducting to (197 Sikhs) households from the metropolitan urban and rural areas of Perak, Malaysia. The state of Perak since the highest percent (24% or 10,550) of Sikhs in Malaysia resided there and another fact is the highest 33% of all Sikhs who lived in rural area in Malaysia resided in Perak. The total number of Sikh population in Malaysia is very small (44,815- the population of housing census of Malaysia, 1991). Mainly it has provided an examination of the relationship between norms, resources and decision-making in the understands of marital power relations in the Sikh households. This study shown that there are different categories of resources, where resources can be labelled as a cultural and a resource variable based on its exchange value.

Dr. (Mrs) Manjit hunda (2015). This journal is more focus on the "changing trends in marriage: A study of Matrimonial Advertisements in Newspaper". This research is mainly focus on the four things. Because these four things are the main reason that's why marriage practices are changing to now a days. (Education, occupation, traditional orientation, complexion and other appealing attribution) Age at marriage and Mate of selection. The Hindu

act of 1978, abstracted the age at marriage is Minimum for boys 21 and for girls 18 years respectively. In this study 400 samples, 100 from bridegroom columns and 100 from brides wanted of 'The Tribune' and similarly 200 from 'Ajit' newspaper were randomly selected. At the end, analysis of marriage alliances through advertisement differs from country to country and from situation to situation. But this study is based upon the secondary data tries to the find out the role of new mediator that is matrimonial advertisement is selecting mate.

2. OBJECTIVES :

- To find out the factors that lead to change to bring marriage practices among Sikhs in Phagwara (Punjab).
- To compare and analyse the marriage practices in rural and urban areas of Phagwara (Punjab).
- To analyze the changing dimension of rural-urban marriage practices in Phagwara (Punjab).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Sample

The study in hand comprised of 40 families (20 rural and 20 urban). Sample was selected from rural and urban area of Phagwara, Punjab by using Purposive sampling technique. In these 40 families, 20 families from rural area (Gandhawa and Autholi) and 20 families from urban area (Guru harbonid nagar and Adarsh nagar) in Phagwara, distt-Kapurthala have been taken for data analysis.

Measures

For the purpose of the study self developed questionnaire comprising of 30 questions on marriage practices and rituals was used. The questionnaire comprised of all types of question which are related to marriage rituals and tradition, social issues, religious patterns and customs .

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was taken from all the participants of the study and they were assured of the confidentiality that would be maintained throughout the study.

Procedure

Keeping in mind the objectives of the study researcher selected the sample from rural and urban areas.. Then scale was distributed among the sample. General instruction had been given to them before distributing the questionnaire. The investigator also ensured that the information given by them will be kept confidential and would be used only for the research purpose

4. FINDING & ANALYSIS:

In the present era , sikh marriage rituals and practices are changing day by day. It is found that some reasons for changes in Sikhism marriage rituals and practices in urban areas specially are; modern education , job opportunities of male and females influences of western life style, constitutional legislations, concept of love marriage , register marriage , inter cste and inter religion marriages etc.

Through the study researchers found following changes in marriage practices in rural and urban area of Phagwara in Punjab:

1. What is marriage?

Rural Area		Urban Area	
No. Of Male	No. Of Female	No. Of Male	No. Of Female
12	8	9	11

Table.1 shows the number of males and females who are giving their different views about marriage.

The viewpoint of the rural and urban people about marriage is totally different from each other. Most of the people opine that marriage is an official relationship in which two persons are involved. Other says that it is a striking relationship between two souls. People lives in urban areas said that marriage is a legal process and contract between two persons.

2. What is the correct age of marriage for boys and girls?

Percentage of girls & boys	Age of boys	Age of girls
Rural	21-28	18-24
Urban	21-30	18-26

Table 2, shows that there is very little difference between the age of marriage for boys and girls. As per the constitution of India , People in rural and urban follow the pattern of 18-21 years but still people in urban areas believe that marriage must take place after 25 years of age.

3. Which marriage is more successful in your religion?

Area	No. Of Arranged Marriage	No. Of Love Marriage	No. Of Same-sex Marriage
Rural	17	3	None
Urban	14	6	None

Table 3, It is clear from table the both the societies follows arrange marriage but love marriages are more in urban area. In addition to this, none of them believe in same sex marriage. Moreover, children have trust in parent's decision and if they will face any problem in their married life in the future, their parents are there to solve and handle it.

4. Is it right to meet your life partner personally before marriage?

Area	Agree	Disagree
Rural	13	7
Urban	18	2

Table 4, depicts that meeting life partner before marriage is acceptable in urban area.

5. How many people prefer arranged marriage or love marriage and why?

Ans: Most of the people prefer arrange marriage in both urban and rural as they believe parents are more experience to take decision regarding married life.

6. In your religion, do the boys and girls parents choose the mate?

Area	Yes	No
Rural	20	None
Urban	16	4

Table 5, shows that in Sikhism parent's choose life partner for their children.

7. What type of relationship you have with your in laws?

Ans: Relationships vary from person to person. It is concluded from data that 80% of the people (urban and rural) say that they have very good relationship with their in-laws. Only 20% people have problem with their in laws because their in-laws are instinctive and very conservative. Another reason of bad relations can be misunderstanding between family members.

8. What expectations a girl having from his mate after marriage?

Ans: Most of the people believe that after marriage girl need love and trust from his mate. They also expect understanding, respect, honesty and loyalty from her partner. Apart from this, girls are expecting from her mate that he should able to do hard work so that he can fulfil her basic needs easily. Moreover he has a great sense of compassion that he can handle each and every situation easily and peacefully.

9. Is trust is a noteworthy part of married life?

Area	Yes	No
Rural	20	None
Urban	20	None

In Table 6, As it is well known that trust play immense role in married life. It creates a great bounding in every couple. For each and every relation it is most important thing. As it is a significant element, every person whether rural or urban 100% agree with the fact that trust is an important part of married life.

10. Is physical affection among couple is significant after marriage? What is your opinion?

Area	Yes	No
Rural	18	2
Urban	12	8

The above table 7. shows that 90% of the people are agree with the statement that physical affection among couple is necessary after marriage. They believe it is important to enlarge their families and it is the only thing which one can share with their spouse after marriage which can't be share by anyone else. Physical intimacy requires one to talk to each other about intimate and emotional things which married couple can't share with anyone.

11. According to you, what is the meaning of Anand karaj and where does a Sikh wedding take place

Ans: Most of the people state that Anand Karaj is the marriage ceremony in which wedding couple obtain promises walking around Guru Granth Sahib Ji which are basically known as Lavan. According to Sikh people, their marriage ceremony is incomplete without Anand Karaj. It is mandatory for Sikh people accomplish their marriage ceremony in front of Guru Granth Sahib Ji, whether it is at their home or Gurudwara. Most of the responders said a person from another religion can marry in the Gurudwara Sahib and there is no restriction related to this, but only those people can marry in Gurudwara Sahib who have faith and respect for Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

12. What is the role and status of women in the Sikh religion?

Ans: Most of the people say that in Sikhism women's role and status is equal to men. Most of the women enjoy good status and equal opportunities in Sikh religion. In Sikhism women and man are equally depend upon each other. Women have the admiration in Sikh religion.

13. Is astrology or horoscope is an issue in Sikhism?

Ans: There is no question of astrology and horoscope in Sikhism because they only believe in Guru Granth Sahib Ji and in this holy book it is written that "Karam Karo te Fal di Isha Na Rakho. It means do your work and never think

about fruits of that work. So a person belongs to Sikh religion whether rural or urban never believe in astrology because it is a form of taboo in their religion.

14. What is Dowry system?

Ans: Now a days the definition of dowry is changing. Rural people of Phagwara region define dowry in terms of money. Urban people say that dowry is system in which at the time of marriage girl parents gave some gifts to their daughter with their own wish. Some NRI people from the same region think that dowry is nothing but the education of girls. They just want that the girl should be highly qualified and capable of doing job in another countries also.

13. Is it right to give dowry to groom's family?

Area	Agree	Disagree
Rural	11	9
Urban	20	None

Table 8. In Urban area people have different perspective and they are up to date with the real situations, so they don't believe in giving dowry to the groom's family. As we know that rural people are narrow minded and they are still keep on following the old rituals like dowry but as you can see in the table that there are about 45% of the people living in rural areas don't believe in giving dowry. So it means that the thinking of the rural people are also changing with the changing scenario.

14. Is dowry system is still continuing in Sikh tradition?

Area	Agree	Disagree
Rural	12	8
Urban	4	16

Table 9, shows that Most of the people living in rural areas are agree with the statement but some of them don't believe in dowry. But in urban areas only few people are agree with the statement that dowry system is still continuing and the rest of the people believe that dowry system is now hardly found in Sikh traditions. The outlook of the people are changing towards the issue like dowry system.

15. Is height and complexion is an issue in Sikh marriage?

Area	Yes	No
Rural	7	13
Urban	10	10

Table 10 shows, Now a day's looks of a person matters alot as compare to thoughts and nature of the person. In urban area, 50% of the people believe that height and complexion is an important factor for mate selection. But on the other hand near about 70% of the rural people opine that height and complexion does not matter for selection of mate. Rural people still believe simplicity.

16. Is the different between the education of the groom and the bride is narrowing?

Area	Yes	No
Rural	12	8
Urban	10	10

From table11, It is clear that that 50% of the people living in urban areas are completely agree with the statement and on the other hand, it is very appalling to see that 65% of the rural people are agree with the statement.

17. Getting married again after divorce is the practice that indicates the impact of western urban influence?

Area	Yes	No
Rural	17	3
Urban	12	8

Table 12, shows that After a divorce, getting marry is a result of westernization urbanization and most of the people agree with the statement because now a days, rural and urban people are mostly educated and with the changing scenario their thinking and mind set is also undergoes a change.

18. Is level of education of girls and boys is an issues in your religion?

Area	Yes	No
Rural	9	11
Urban	5	15

Above table13 shows that most of the people believe that education hardly matters for them instead there main focus is on the status of the person when they think about marriage in their religion.

19. What is Child marriage?

Ans: According to the respondents whether rural or urban, child marriage is an ancient tradition in which parents marry their children who are below the age of 18. So the outlook of the people in relation with child marriage had undergone a change. From these different viewpoints of the people of Phagwara region, the age limit of child marriage

which is earlier 13 or 14 years now change to 18 years which is the basic age of marriage for girls as an adult for both rural and urban people.

20. Do you think that NRI marriage is common in your area?

Area	Agree	Disagree
Rural	15	5
Urban	17	3

Table 14, Most of the people living in rural and urban area are agree with the fact that NRI marriage is very common in their area. Because they believe that near about 75% of the families living in their area are at least having one of the family member from their family in foreign country and many of the families are settled down there and hardly visit India for 2 or 3 months is a year.

21. Caste as a principal of endogamy is losing its important more in urban than rural area?

Area	Yes	No
Rural	11	9
Urban	15	5

According to table 15, both rural and urban areas people says that, caste is common issues now a days because caste system should not be there so that all castes mix so much that is no caste left.

22. do you want mother-in-law part of your married life ?

Area	Yes	No
Rural	8	12
Urban	12	8

Above table shows are contradictory to both the areas. In Urban areas girls do not want that Mother-in-law should interfere in there personal life. However, Girls in rural area want tht in family mother in law should be there.

23. Is it right to have family planning for career reasons?

Area	Yes	No
Rural	18	2
Urban	20	0

Above table reveals that in both the areas people give more importance to career reasons. Both rural and urban people think that it is right to plan their family because they will have to face physical complications if they get late in planning their family.

24. For women study after marriage is a good or a bad decision?

Ans: People living in both rural and urban areas say that this thing is very good if a girl continues studies after marriage. She must be independent, which is very good for the upliftment of the girl.

5. MAJOR FINDINGS:

The important observations and findings are as follows :

Now a day sikh marriage rituals and practices are changing through the study researchers found that some reasons for changes in marriage practices are modern education , westernization, urbanization and many more. Through our study we found that main rituals and practices are facing drastic changes, these are as follows:

1. Rokka
2. Shagun/ engagement
3. Sangeet
4. Vatna / Haldi
5. Chura / Saint

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Appendix

Questionnaire (Comparison of marriage practices in rural and urban area of Phagwara region)

Q1. Basic information.

Name -	Gender- Male / Female	Religion-
Occupation-	Age-	State / Country-
Address-		

Q2. What is marriage?

Ans-

Q3. What is the correct age of marriage for boys and girls?

Ans- For boys- () For girls- ()

Q4. Which marriage is more successful in your religion?

Ans- (a) Arrange marriage (b) Love marriage (c) Same-sex marriage

Q5. Is it right to meet your life partner personally before marriage?

Ans- (a) Yes (b) No

Q6. What is your preference, arranged marriage or love marriage? why

Ans-

Q7. How many children do you have?

Ans-

Q8. In your religion, do the boys and girls parents choose the mate?

Ans- (a) Yes (b) No

Q9. What type of relationship you have with your in laws?

Ans-

Q10. What expectations a girl is having from his mate after marriage?

Ans-

Q11. Is trust is a significant part of married couple?

Ans- (a) Yes (b) No

Q12. Is physical attachment among couple is crucial after marriage? What is your opinion

Ans-

Q13. According to your, What is the meaning of Anand Karaj?

Ans-

Q14. Where does a Sikh wedding take place?

Ans-

Q15. Can Sikhs marry someone from another religion in the Gurudwara sahib?

Ans-

Q16. What is the role and status of women in Sikh religion?

Ans-

Q17. Is astrology or horoscope is an issue in Sikhism?

Ans-

Q18. What is dowry system?

Ans-

Q19. Is it right to give dowry to groom's family?

Ans-(a) Yes (b) No

Q20. Is dowry system is still continuing in Sikh tradition?

Ans-

Q21. Is height and complexion is an issue in Sikh marriage?

Ans- (a) Yes (b) No

Q22. Is the difference between the education of the groom and the bride is narrowing?

Ans- (a) Yes (b) No

Q23. Getting married again after divorce, is the practice that indicate the impact of western urban influence?

Ans- (a) True (b) False

Q24. Is level of education of girls and boys is an issue in your religion?

Ans- (a) Yes (b) No

Q25. What is child marriage?

Ans-

Q26. Do you think that NRI marriage are common in your area?

Ans- (a) Yes (b) No

Q27. Caste as a principal of endogamy is losing its important more in urban to rural area?

Ans-

Q28. Socking as this may seem some girls just don't want a mother-in-law?

Ans-

Q29. Is it right to have family planning for career reasons?

Ans-

Q30. For women study after marriage is a good decision or a bad decision? Why

Ans-