CHAPTER – IV

GANDHI’S CONCEPTION OF INTER-CASTE MARRIAGE

Indian social organization reveals the ancient period of the Indian culture and civilization. Their social organization represents the basic ideas and aspirations of our social thinkers. Their ideas and thoughts are not mere theoretical propositions but they have rather been devised into concrete human conduct and behaviour. These ideals form the traditional bases of the Hindu social organization. The main characteristics of Hindu social organization reveals the caste system. The basis of Hindu social organization is Varna Asharma Dharma.

Ashramas are four in number viz., the Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha, and Sanyasa. These four stages are considered as a kind of schooling and discipline. In Brahmacharya, the individual is enabled to realize the ultimate reality. In Grihastha, the individual is diverted towards a life of duty. Hence the individual is to attain ‘purushartha’ and he/she cultivates Dharma, Artha, and Kama. In the Vanaprastha phase, the individual ignores his / her worldly attachment. He/she gives up his fields of Artha and Kama. Purusharthas are used for the attainment of Moksha. In the Vanaprastha phase, the individual ignores his/her worldly attachment. There Dharma and Moksha become his ultimate aim. In Sanyasa, Moksha occupies the main place. In other words, Ashramas are divisions of human life. These Ashramas represent the individual aspect of social life. According to Hindu Dharma Shastras, it is the duty of every individual to pass through these four stages of life.
Varna Dharma is a division of society into four strata namely Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Shudra. Various duties and obligations have been assigned to four varnas. In Hindu social organization, varna is the main basis of social stratification. According to Hindu philosophy, the ultimate aim of human life is to attain Moksha.

In order to understand the cultural composition of Indian society, it is necessary to explain the concept of caste. The institution of caste has been in existence from earlier phases of Indian history. For a proper understanding of the Indian society it is necessary to analyse the main characteristics of caste system. Since pre-historic times, India has been a country of multi-racial stocks. Races, which came to India at different times, gradually merged in their influence with caste. Purushasukta hymn of the Rig Veda contains a reference to regarding the four varna orders of society.

All along the history of India, in all ages, anti-caste movements were launched; Even then it is as firm as ever. All the people of India, irrespective of their colour and creed are influenced by the caste system. The races in India have rendered their contribution to the origin and the development of caste system. Totemistic rites, exorcism, food taboos and magical beliefs are considered to be the major contributing factors for the development of caste. And, ban on commensality and intermarriage which form the foundation of caste system.

**Types of Marriages :**

Eight important ways of acquiring a mate may be listed on the basis of data reported from tribal India. They are¹.
1. Probationary marriage
2. Marriage by capture
3. Marriage by trial
4. Marriage by purchase
5. Marriage by service
6. Marriage by exchange
7. Marriage by mutual consent and elopement
8. Marriage by intrusion.

**Exogamy**: Almost all the people of various societies prohibit marriage between individuals sharing certain degrees of blood or affinal relationships. This is known as exogamy, i.e., marriage outside the group.

Among the Hindus, people of the same ‘gotra’ are believed to have similar blood and so their inter-marriage is prohibited. Marriage between persons belonging to the same ‘pravar’ is also forbidden among the Hindus especially Brahmins, ‘Pravar’ is a kind of religious and spiritual bond. The Hindu marriage Disabilities Removal Act 1949 has removed all the restrictions regarding ‘gotra’ and ‘pravar’ exogamy.

**Pinda Exogamy**: ‘Pinda’ means common parentage. According to Brahaspati, offspring from five maternal generations and seven paternal generations are ‘sapinda’ and they cannot inter-marry.

**Endogamy**: Marriage within the caste (or) class is known as endogamy. Hence marriages outside group members are prohibited. Hitler had declared an Aryan – Jewish marriage a criminal Act. In India a Brahmin can marry only a Brahmin.

In India endogamy is mostly obligatory. However, now-a-days endogamous attitudes have some what relaxed and softened. Even today, inter-caste marriages are not encouraged. We find some forms
of endogamy like, Tribal endogamy, caste endogamy, class endogamy, sub-caste endogamy and race endogamy.

**Advantages of Endogamy:**

1. Preventing marriage outside the group.
2. Preserves the group’s homogeneity.
3. Protects its prestige and status.
4. Maintains the numerical force of its group.
5. Preserves the purity in the group.
6. Keeps women happy.
7. Fastens the sense of unity within the group.
8. Keeps property within the group.

**Disadvantage of Endogamy:**

1. Limits the sphere of mate selection.
2. Lays emphasis on group feeling, which creates communalism and checks the growth of national unity.
3. Encourages casteism.
4. Encourages hatred and jealousy among different groups.
5. Encourages dowry and bride-price.

In almost all the societies one or the other form of marriage exists. In vedic periods, marriage was left to the mutual choice of the persons concerned. In ‘smriti’ eight kinds of marriage are recognized but only four are said to have a religious character. According to Hindu traditional law, out of the eight forms of marriage ‘Brahma’ marriage is the best.

Hypermamy means the marriage of the daughter in a superior and noble family. It is highly practised in India, if the parents give their daughters in a low family it is regarded a blot upon their family.
Marriage in Hinduism:

According to traditional Hindu Law, marriage is a ‘sacrament’ and not a ‘civil contract’. It is a ‘samskara’ or purificatory ceremony obligatory for every Hindu. The Hindu marriage is considered a union between two joint families rather than between two young people. Manu did not recognize selection by mutual choice as a possible form of marriage. As such in Hindu marriage there is no room for romantic love as the basis of marital selection. The parents are morally obliged to find mates for their children, and the children one expected to accept the parental choice.

Hindu Shastras show bias in favour of the male offspring. If marriage is regarded as a sacrament, there is permission for one offspring. And so, our Shastras describe the first offspring as “duty born”. and all other issues are referred to as “lust born”. For Gandhi there is no distinction between a son and a daughter.

Hinduism regards each as absolute equal of the other. But the reality is not so. One is born for the sake of self-realization. I don’t know whether Hinduism gives the individual the complete freedom to achieve this\(^2\). That is why Gandhi said, the married state is a disciplining process. Life is duty, a testing period. Married life promotes mutual good and also serves humanity. Breaking the law of discipline results in breaking the marriage bond itself. The violation here is moral and physical.

The Bhagavad Gita says, “Whatever leaders of society do, the other will follow”. When democracy seeks to abolish the economical differences between people, the rich have to be self-restrained thereby
leading the poor to a satisfied life. Marriage ceremonies and death rituals force the poor to incur heavy debts due to wasteful expenditure. This waste of national resources can be easily stopped if educated sons of rich parents refuse every form of wasteful expenditure.

Among Hindus, the abuse of varna resulted in innumerable castes with unnecessary and harmful restrictions to intermarriage and interdining. The law of varna has nothing to do with these restriction. But, the interest of chastity and hygiene may be the reason behind these restrictions. A Brahmin marrying a Shudra girl or vice versa is not an offence against the law of varna.

Marriage means not merely union of bodies, It is union of souls. If this is so, self-destruction is undervaluing the worth of soul. Self-immolation could only add another to the casualty list but cannot restore the life of the dead.

The aim of the marriage is that of spiritual union through the physical (body). Human love (sex) is a stepping stone to the divine or universal love. So, the everlasting Mira Sang, “God alone is my husband-none else”.

According to Gandhi marriage is a fence protecting religion. As the foundation of religion is restraint, marriage is nothing but restraint. Without restraint there is no self-realization. Self-discipline and self-restraint are essential for self-realization. If body is a temple for self-realization, then there is no possibility for immoral life.
The marriage institution is a fence for Hinduism, and it is considered as Sacrament. Those days, Hindu doctrines strictly insisted only in eight forms of marriages like, Brahma, Deiva, Arsha, Prajapatya, Asura, Gandharva, Rakshasha and Paishacha Vivakam. In Hinduism marriage between any two caste is termed as inter-caste marriage and hence restricted, they were encouraged only to endogamy marriages within the Varna system.

Gandhi believed that "Marriage in Hinduism is one of the four Ashramas. In fact the other three are based on it. But in modern times, marriage has unfortunately come to be regarded purely as a physical union. The other three Ashramas are all but non-existent".

Hindu marriage is considered as sacrament and this concept is based on socio-cultural background of the Hindu religion. Because of this concept divorce is very low in Hindu society.

‘Anuloma’ marriage is a form of intercaste marriage wherein men of higher caste weds women of lower castes. ‘Protiloma’ marriage is also a form of inter-caste marriage in which men of lower caste marry women of superior castes.

Manu and other ancient law-givers prescribed hypergamous (anuloma) marriage under which a man can marry from his own caste or above. Hypogamy (pratiloma), i.e., marriage of a woman to a man from a lower caste is not permitted. Thus, for men, the following marriages are permissible;
Brahmin > Brahmin; Kshatriya; Vaishya, Sudra
Kshatriya > Kshatriya; Vaishya; Sudra
Vaishya > Vaishya; Sudra
Sudra > Sudra

Likewise for women:
Sudra > Sudra, Vaishya, Kshatriya; Brahmin
Vaishya > Vaishya, Kshatriya, Brahmin
Kshatriya > Kshatriya, Brahmin
Brahmin > Brahmin

Monogamy is the general rule, although it is not an obligatory one, it obtains in the same that there is a socially permitted marital relationship with only one person at a time. As long as divorce does not take place, the occurrence of extra-marital relationships are not frequent. One man marries one woman at a time. It produces the highest type of affection and sincere devotion.

The wave of Hindu religious reformist movement in the 19th century, initiated by Ram Mohun Roy (1774-1833) and followed by Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1871), Dayananda Saraswati (1827-1883) Keshab Chandra Sen (1838-1884) and others, led to very significant legislative, social and educational, and political changes. Finally, E.V. Ramasamy (Periyar), Dr. Ambedkar, Sri Narayana Guru and Mahatma Gandhi led a great force to bring about a radical change in the caste system.

Gandhi’s Experiences in South Africa:

Gandhi’s days in Johannesburg, South Africa, as a practising lawyer, drove him to search for a European clerk. For this, he
approached a typewriter agent and that resulted in himself meeting a Scotland based lady called Miss. Dick. The relationship between Gandhi and Miss-Dick went beyond that of an employer and an employee to the level that developed into a filial bondage of father-daughter relationship. Miss. Dick gave Gandhi the ‘respectable responsibility’ of finding her a groom. Gandhi saw to it that, Miss. Dick his clerk, left her job as Mrs. Dick Macdonald.

Henry Pollock, with whom Gandhi shared his phoenix residence, was instrumental in introducing Gandhi John Ruskin’s book “Unto this last”. In return, Gandhi was instrumental in conducting the much overdue marriage of Henry Pollock & Mrs. Pollock, that was betrothed a few years back. Gandhi played the role of a ‘Best-man’ (Friend or relative of a bridegroom who supports him at his wedding) for this couples marriage, which is a perfect ‘inter-racial’ one, having as its protagonists Mr. Henry Pollock a Jew and Mrs. Pollock a Christian. An interesting aspect of this marriage was that in the registrar office of Transvaal where there had been a system of not recognizing the marriages of non-whites i.e. other race people like black etc. For his marriage Henry Pollock would have taken any European for his help, but didn’t do that and he insisted on Gandhi’s presence with him in the registrar office. As expected, on seeing Gandhi the registrar got suspicious and he declined to register their marriage on the ground that he wanted time to ascertain that the couples were whites. This petty reason enraged Gandhi and so he approached the chief magistrate of that office whom he had known already, and got his consent to complete the wedding formalities.

Another co-dwellor of Gandhi in his Phoenix residence was Mr. Albert West. When he left England to his native place to see his parents, Gandhi persuaded him not to come back to Phoenix Ashram
without getting himself married to his ‘would-be’ girl. Gandhi’s persuasion resulted in Mr. West returning with Mrs. Ada West (Devi Behn as Gandhi used to call her) a girl belonging to a shoe-maker family from Leicester. Gandhi had translated the draft ordinance of the Transvaal Government Gazette extraordinary, published on 22-8-1906. “Every Indian, man woman or child of eight years or upwards, entitled to reside in Transvaal, must register his or her name with the Registrar of Asiatics and take out a certificate of registration.”

Mr. Justice Scarle of the Cape Supreme Court gave judgment on March 14, 1913 to the effect that all marriages were outside the pale of legal marriages in South Africa with the exception of such as were celebrated according to Christian rites and registered by the Registrar of marriages.

The Supreme Court ruled that any marriage not solemnised according to Christian rites would no longer be legally recognised in South Africa. Gandhi invited all Phoenix residents to join the Satyagraha. On 23.9.1913 a party of twelve women and four men, boarded a north bound train at Phoenix station and headed for the Transvaal border with the purpose of getting arrested. They were led by Mrs. Kasturba Gandhi. The Phoenix women were taken to Maritzburg jail to serve their sentences. Gandhi, Kasturba and two of their sons (Manilal and Ramdas) were all in different prisons - all at the same time.

After a lot of struggle Gandhi got victory. The Indian Relief Bill was passed successfully. In July 1914, the Bill became law. According to that: 

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1. Hindu, Muslim and Parsi marriages are valid.
2. The three pound annual tax on indentured labourers who wish to remain in Natal is abolished and arrears are cancelled.
3. Indentured labour will cease coming from India by 1920.
4. Indians could not move freely from one province of the union to another, but Indians born in South Africa might enter cape colony.

Gandhi’s Views on Marriage:

Gandhi’s ideas and thoughts on inter-caste marriages can be examined and understood only by analyzing Gandhi’s marriage, child marriage, husband and wife relationship, procreation and then sati. So, after analyzing Gandhi’s marriage and child marriage, Gandhi’s ideas on inter-caste marriage can be dealt with.

Marriage should not be underestimated, as it is natural and essential of the four Asharams of Hinduism. Unfortunately in modern times it has come to be regarded simply as a physical union. Girls are not taught about the duties of motherhood. Both Marriage and Motherhood are religious. Only an ideal mother, who undergoes a responsible procreation after fully knowing all her duties, can give birth to a child that will grow to serve the country.\(^\text{13}\)

Gandhi said that he didn’t know the scientific basis for all the restrictions of marriage relationship. According to him, any social usage (custom) that helps the practice of goodness and self-control should have the sacredness (or holiness) of a moral law. He insisted that If the aim of certain prohibitions in marriages is to improve the quality of the offspring, then they should be applied equally to cousins also.
In Gandhi’s enumeration of the conditions for an ideal marriage, the order of importance shall start from the spiritual development. Next comes service and the third importance shall be given to the considerations of family and social order. The fourth and the last place shall be occupied by the mutual attractions or love. Love alone cannot be a reason for marriage. And marriage without love is also not valid. Here, the condition of biological fitness in aiming to produce quality offsprings is the essential aspect of marriage and not merely a condition.

For Gandhi, Interdining, Interdrinking and Intermarrying are not essential for the promotion of the spirit of democracy. If necessary and circumstances warrant the above said customs will require cautious modifications or rearrangements. The restrictions towards inter-dining have to a great extent helped the cultivation of will power and the conservation of certain social virtues.

Woman will be the centre or cause of quarrel if the marriage bond is not stronger without the observance of the law of restraint. Unrestrained men, like the animals will straightway take the road of destruction felt Gandhi.

He further explained that, some communities permit marriage among close relations. Some communities prohibit polygamy and some permit it. In the absence of uniform moral law and the presence of diversity, it is absurd to ask for abolishing all restraint. As we grow wise in experience our morality will gain in uniformity. Even today monogamy is the highest ideal throughout the world and no religion supports polygamy except Islam.
Gandhi considered the re-marriage of virgin widows not only desirable but the expected duty of all parents who have such widowed daughters\textsuperscript{16}.

Marriage restrictions (taboos) vary from region to region based on social usages and divisions. This does not mean that the youth may violate all the established Social customs. They must try converting public opinion to their side. Otherwise they have to calmly and quietly face the consequences of social ostracism.

When a young man of 22 years asked Gandhi whether it is legitimate for him to refuse his father’s words in the matter of marriage, if he did not wish to marry, Gandhi answered him with the support of Shastras and reason. He said that when the children reach the age of mental maturity (discretion), they become their parents friends. They are free from parental dictation. They are bound to consult them. But in a matter so vital as marriage they should respectfully refuse to marry if the match is not to their liking\textsuperscript{17}.

It is wrong to forcibly marry a daughter. It is also wrong to keep the daughters unfit for earning their livelihood. Like epic-famous Draupadi, women should not look for protection to men. They must depend only on their own strength, purity of character and on God\textsuperscript{18}. Gandhi insisted that one’s wife is not one’s property. She is his better half. She should be treated as such\textsuperscript{19}.

Gandhi admitted that there should be no secrets between husband and wife. He said he had a very high opinion of the marriage
Husband and wife merge in each other. These things cannot be regulated mechanically. A liberal-minded husband should respect his wife’s reluctance to share a secret with him.20

Gandhi found that, it is painful to know that in India still there are husbands who treat their wives as their property like their cattle. Wives are beaten like cattle. He was not prepared to accept the judicial approval of such beatings as such it was given by a sessions judge of Madura. According to Gandhi that judgment with regard to the treatment of wives should remind one the age of barbarism.21

Views on Child Marriage:

In January of 1903, with all due ceremony, Lakshmidas had arranged the betrothal of Harilal, then 14 year old, to 11-year-old Gulab, the daughter of old and trusted Gandhi family friends in Rajkot. Lakshmidas, Kasturba, and Gulab’s parents all agreed it was an eminently suitable match. Mohandas had a cordial relationship with her father, Haridas Vohra, a member of the Modh Bania subcaste and a leading lawyer. But they had all underestimated Mohandas’ great aversion to child marriages.22

“On May 2, 1906, Harilal Gandhi, eldest of Kasturba’s sons and almost 18, and Gulab vohra, not yet 15, were united in marriage in Rajkot, India. The elaborate Hindu ceremony was celebrated with the approval and cooperation of the bride’s parents and the groom’s uncles, but without the knowledge or consent of the groom’s parents in south Africa.”23
“In a letter sent to Lakshimidas, Mohandas wrote, “Harilal’s getting married has no meaning for me.” It was one of the last letters that would pass between the brothers for many years.

June 1922, soon after being released from his own six month imprisonment, Harilal visited his father (Gandhi) at Yeravada jail and again brought up the matter of his remarriage. This time, after some argument Gandhi relented - on one condition: “If you find a widow who has as many children as you have”, “and if you both agree to accept each others children as your own, then, I will reconsider the issue.” Said Gandhi.

According to him, violation of marriage laws is the cause of some of the common diseases that are present now. Infanticide, child-marriage and other evils like this are also the result of the violation of marriage laws. The law stipulates that the appropriate age, health and capacity of self-control and desires to have child are the requirements to choose a mate. If marriage bond is regarded as a sacrament by strictly following this law, there will never be an unhappy or miserable occasion. Where marriage is a sacrament, it is not union of bodies but the union of souls that is inseparable even by death. In such a union of souls, the remarriage of widow or widower is unthinkable, improper and wrong. Any union formed without following the true law of marriage should not be called marriage.

He has said that even before his marriage with Kasturba, as per his community’s tradition two girl children were betrothed to him. Later, Gandhi came to know it was the demise of these ‘betrothed girls’ that led to his marriage with Kasturba. Preliminary agreement
was reached for the betrothal of Mohandas Gandhi and Kasturba in 1876. Perhaps more significant is the fact that the actual wedding did not take place until 1882. Six years after the betrothal, Gandhi married Kasturba at the age of 13.

Mahatma Gandhi narrates in his autobiography the events that happened prior to his marriage with Kasturba. “It is my painful duty to have to record here my marriage at the age of thirteen. As I see the youngsters of the same age about me who are under my care, and think of my own marriage, I am inclined to pity myself and to congratulate them on having escaped my lot. I can see no moral argument in support of such a preposterously early marriage”.

Responding to a question based on the article ‘surfeit of child-marriages’ that exposed the misfortune of the girls of Chaturvedi a sub-caste who practice child marriage, Gandhi replied that such practices can only be termed ‘monstrous’. Quoting scriptures in their favour multiply the difficulties. However, Gandhi believed in Sathyagraha as a sure means of overcoming all kinds of tyranny.

In 1926 Manilal, fell in love with a Muslim woman. Both families knew each other. The following Gandhi’s letter, dated April 3, 1926, reveals all his cautious approach to such marriages. The text of the letter:

“Dear Manilal, I have read your letter to Ramdas. I have also read Fatima’s letter ... You follow the Hindu religion and Fatima follows Islam. Your desire [to marry] is against your religion. It would be like putting two swords in one scabbard. What religion will your children follow? Who will have more influence on them? If Fatima forsakes her religion just for the sake of marriage she will be committing a crime.”
against religion itself ... or is it that both of you have given up your religious beliefs?.

“Your marriage will be a great jolt to Hindu - Muslim relations. That issue cannot be solved by intermarriage. You cannot forget that you are my son. Society will also not forget it. If you go through with this marriage you will not be able to serve your people. I also think that you will be unfit to continue working for Indian Opinion (a weekly journal)”。

“I cannot seek Ba’s consent, she will not give it, her whole life will be embittered ... I have no courage to tell her about this matter. May God show you the right path. Babu’s blessings. Things moved swiftly then. Some two months later, on March 6, 1927, Manilal Gandhi and Sushila Mushruwala were married in Akola.

**Gandhi’s Ideal Marriage:**

Gandhi, advocated, monogamy, on the lines of Ram-Sita (or) Shiva-Parvathi. He said, “My ideal of a wife is a Sita and of a husband Rama. But Sita was no slave of Rama or each was slave of the other. Rama is ever considerate to Sita. Where there is no true love, the bond has never existed. But the Hindu household of today is a conundrum” (Young India, 21.10.1926, p.364). And he further said, “I submit that marriage is a fence that protects religion. If the fence were to be destroyed religion would go to pieces. The foundation of religion is restraint and marriage is nothing but restraint. The man who knows no restraint has no hope of self realization”.

For Gandhi the ideal wife and husband are Sita and Rama respectively. Neither of them is slave to the other. They were known for true love and family bond. But the Hindu household of today is a riddle. Husbands and Wives, when they are married know nothing of
one another. Peace in the majority of Hindu households rests on religious sanction and age-old practices. The husband regards his wife as his property. The wife is only a passive partner. Following the example of Mirabai, the wife has every right to take her own decision and face the consequences when her decision is for a common good. Further Gandhi said that “The marriage of Siva and Parvathi is an ideal marriage. One who wants to wed like parvathi should think of a man like Siva who is free from all passions. It is not parvathi alone that who was destined to get such a husband. Every woman holds that fate in her own hands”28.

According to Krishna Bhatia, “A marriage is a personal and domestic matter, affecting chiefly the two parties concerned and partly their families… Though parents may and should advise in the matter of the choice and ultimate decision must be with the two parties concerned”29.

Indian parliament granted Hindu women limited rights to secure divorce and inheritance of property. The bill had to be withdrawn, but Nehru bid time, and had the satisfaction of seeing the Hindu marriage and inheritance laws amended in 195630.

When a proposal to amend the Hindu code Bill was first placed before the parliament in 1950, Nehru was confronted with opposition within his party… It was finally passed five years later in the form of the Hindu marriage and Divorce Act, The Hindu adoption and Maintenance Act and the Hindu women’s right of succession to property Act. The Dowry Restraint Act was passed in 1961, the last important legal measure enacted during Nehru’s life time31.
Gandhi Views on Sati:

All along Indian history, all the reform movements were working for the wellbeing of the society. In the era of Indian social reform movement right from, the time Ram Mohun Roy published his tract of Sati in 1818, innumerable leaders of India have been concerned with social reform. The Indian social conference came into being in 1887. And the two main problems which the social Reform conference was concerned were the uplift of women and uplift of the Harijans. In 1931, Indian National Congress adopted the Fundamental Rights and duties resolution which incorporated all the social evils and their eradication. (a) prevention of child marriage, (b) promotion of widow remarriage, (c) promotion of womens education (d) promotion of participation of women in public life. Gandhi’s unique approaches for the Harijans led to the formation of Harijan Sevak Sangh in 1932.

Ancients described Sati as love and devotion of lady to her husband combined with selfless service during and after her husband’s life-time. Chaste in thought, word and deed should also be maintained by the lady even after the death of her husband. But, In this context Gandhi believed that self-immolation by the lady is not an enlightenment but an act of ignorance. The soul has no death. It is permanent. It does not perish with the physical body. This has been experienced by countless sages and seers.

Sati is based on the belief that considers marriage as a means of realizing the ideal of selfless and self-effacing service to her husband. And it also means complete merging of the wife’s individuality in her husband’s. So According to him, satihood cannot be proved by simply burning herself to death along with her husband in the funeral pyre. It is a committed and devotional action that starts
from the day of Saptapati ceremony to even after the death of her husband and the whole world through the means of renunciation, sacrifice, self-abnegation and dedication. Such a Sati will not grieve at the death of her husband as the soul to which she is wedded remains immortal. With this belief she will not remarry.

In the present Hindu society, marriage in a vast majority of cases is not a matter of choice. It is believed marriage is necessary as a shield to virtue and as an aid to self-restraint. There are several ideal cases of persons who maintain absolute chastity even in married life. These examples are cited only to stress the point that Sati has no place in the other world but something that has to be lived up to and realized in this world. The average wife who strives to attain the ideal of ‘Sati’ will also be a mother. Hence, she must have knowledge of rearing and bringing up children, who will be the true servants of their country.

Gandhi stressed that whatever he had said about the wife should be applied equally to the husband. Proving their loyalty is common to both. There can’t be different yard-stick for each other. Gandhi said that no one had ever heard of a husband burning himself in the funeral pyre of his decreased wife. So, for Gandhi, it is clear that sati had its origin in superstitious ignorance and the blind egotism of man. “For a husband, his wife is not slave but his comrade, his better half, his colleague and his friend, she has equal rights and duties as her husband”, opined Gandhi. “Satihood is the culmination or highest of purity. This purity cannot be attained or realized by dying. It can be attained only through constant striving, constant immolation of the spirit from day to day.” This is how Gandhi sums up his views on ‘sati’.
Views on Sex:

Sexual act performed solely for the purpose of begetting offspring is not in violation of the ideal of brahmacharya. For this, the story of Vishwamitra and Vasishtha serves as a good example. Sex for mere bodily satisfaction is animal instinct. As millions in this world eat to satisfy their taste buds, millions indulge in the sex for their bodily satisfaction. But the person who wants to lead a spiritual or higher life should practice the ideal of absolute or of married brahmacharya\textsuperscript{33}.

The law of nature is not applied uniformly to all creatures i.e. man and animal. Man has reason, discrimination and free will. Animal knows no distinction between virtue and vice, good and evil. Man, if he follows his higher tendencies becomes far superior to the animal, but when he follows his baser tendencies becomes lower than the animal. Even the most uncivilized races on earth followed some restrictions on sexual relations. If there is no such restriction there would be perfect chaos within twenty-four hours. Man being over-passionate, would not be able control his passion if all restraints are withdrawn. If this is allowed, it will destroy mankind.

Gandhi’s View on Inter-caste Marriage:

Though the Vedas and the Mahabharata are filled with incidents of inter-dining and inter-marriage, these are not a matter of religious regulation. No one can be compelled to dine with any other or contract marital relations, as these are matters of personal choice. Such social habits will get regulated by themselves gradually within the activities of the social system\textsuperscript{34}.

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According to Gandhi, inter-dining and inter-caste marriage are not essential for the promotion of the spirit of brotherhood or for the removal of untouchability. At the same time, a forcible restriction would prevent the growth of any society and linking these restrictions to Varnadharma or caste is biased. (From comments in “Notes” which appeared under heading “Inconsistencies”). By this it is clearly understood that such inter-caste marriage cannot take place by force, but only through mutual consent and willingness.

When questioned whether inter-dining and inter-marriage are necessary for the removal of untouchability, Gandhi’s answer was ‘no’ and ‘yes’. ‘No’, because it was not a part of the Harijan Sevak Sangh’s programme. Further, marrying and dining are matters of individual concern. His answer to the question was also ‘yes’ because Gandhi believed that untouchability cannot constitute any ground for restraint on inter-dining or marriage.

Gandhi believed that, inter-dining and inter-marriage are matters of individual choice. And so said that he can’t spare his time for such propaganda. His movement explained the essentials of religion and claims for the Harijans their equal rights as to any other Hindu.

If an educated Harijan girl marries a caste Hindu, the couple must devote themselves to the service of Harijans. Gandhi said that he would never encourage such marriages that concentrate completely on selfish interests. Such inter-caste marriages may also sometimes result in failure. One Harijan girl with a high character and real worthiness will spread her fragrance far and wide that will do good to both the Harijans and the caste Hindus. If such couple give birth to
useful and good children, then they will be considered as model by the rest of the society. This will also help to remove untouchability. And such reforms, often happen only slowly.

It is also desirable that caste Hindu girls should select Harijan husbands. Gandhi was of the opinion that the marriage of a caste Hindu girl to Harijan is better than that of a Harijan girl to a caste Hindu. He would like to persuade all caste Hindu Girls who are his followers to select Harijan husbands. Gandhi knew it will not be that much easy. It needs a lot of patience to overcome these prejudices. The final test for such mixed marriage is in its capacity to develop the spirit of service in the couples. This will result in the formation of only one and the beautiful caste named Bhangi, which means the reformer or remover of all dirt. Gandhi asked all of us to pray that such a happy day will dawn soon.

Gandhi said that he had not succeeded in marrying off even a single Harijan girl to a caste Hindu after his declaration. One caste Hindu girl who at her father’s wishes had accepted to marry a Harijan lad, was then under training at Sevagram. With the willingness of God, Gandhi hoped the marriage will take place after a short time. Poona, 30-6-1946

On a question of himself repudiating the intermarriage between touchables and untouchables Gandhi replied that, he cannot foresee a society where all mankind will have one religion. As a rule there will be religious bar; people will marry within their religion. The caste restriction is also based on the same rule. And his opposition to
untouchability is for the reason that it limits the field of service. But, marriage is not an act of service\(^{39}\).

Answering a question on abolition of caste and eventual dilution of the occupational monopoly of specific castes, Gandhi replied that he was certainly in favour of inter-caste marriages. When all become casteless, this question did not arise and the monopoly of occupations would go\(^{40}\).

He attended reluctantly the wedding in 1928 of his son Ramdas and a girl, Nirmala, whom he found personally acceptable but who was of the same subcaste; and this was the last such wedding he attended. Three weddings which he later attended between people in different subcastes of his own varna were those of Rukshmani and Banarasilal (1929), Madlasa and Sriman (1937), and Sharada and Gordhandas (1939). None of these were “love matches,” but all of they matches were suggested by family friends\(^{41}\).

That in itself was, for Gandhi, an important, positive feature. In the 1920’s his youngest son, Devadas, and a Brahmin girl fell in love; they had to wait for five years before marrying\(^{42}\). On June, 1933: Gandhi sent blessings to Devadas Gandhi and his wife Lakshmi after this intercaste marriage.

And when in 1947 Gandhi’s grand-nephew Kanu wanted to marry a Brahmin girl (Abha) with whom Gandhi was well acquainted and of whom he personally approved (Bose 1953, 49), he asked them to live apart for a year beforehand, which they did; but he wanted no such delay for his arranged match in 1933 between a reform-Hindu
Brahmin lad (Maruti) and his adopted Harijan daughter, Lakshmi (notwithstanding her biological father’s reluctance)\textsuperscript{43}.

Gandhi even went to the extent of saying that, the Ashram will not help to arrange a marriage between members of the same sub caste. But, the Ashram will encourage the persons who seek his mate outside his own sub caste\textsuperscript{44}.

There are no restrictions on interdining in the Ashram. However, no propaganda in favour of interdining will be done outside the Ashram “(In the Ashram) there are no restrictions in indertining and all ashramites sit to dinner in the same line. But no propaganda in favor of interdining is carried on outside the Ashram”\textsuperscript{45}.

Harijan Sevak Sangh, a pioneer organisation was founded by Gandhi in Feb,1933 for the removal of the problem of untouchability through transformation of attitude. They adopted a number of constructive programmes as the means towards this goal. The membership for the Harijan Sevak Sangh was restricted exclusively for Caste -Hindus alone. This Sangh didn’t have any Harijan member. Gandhi was strict in this rule of not accomodating Harijan’s into this sangh because he wanted the Caste - Hindus to do penance for all the sins they have committed against the Harijans in the past.

Gandhi’s changed his views on interdining and intermarriage since early 1920: A diligent follower or student of Gandhi’s writings will find it difficult to reconcile with his latest writings about intercaste dining and intercaste marriage. But the mode of life in the ashram and his practice have not changed. Gandhi believed that still the
restriction imposed by oneself upon interdining and intermarriage is an act of renunciation of the flesh. But he considered that the sentence ‘self-imposed restriction against intermarriage and interdining is essential for a rapid evolution of the soul; as an apt one, in the place of the sentence starting with ‘prohibition’. Gandhi said, “I should ... say, ‘self-imposed restriction’ against intermarriage and interdining is essential for a rapid evolution of the soul.”

His views on interdining and intermarriage evolved further, thus:

In the varna system there should be no prohibition of intermarriage or interdining. It should be left to the choice of the individual and there should not be any compulsion. If the law of Varna Ashrama Dharma is observed there would be naturally a tendency for people to restrict the marital relations to their own varna.

For all practical purposes in Hindu society, caste and varna are the same thing. Relying on the restrictions on interdining and intermarriage in varna model it will be justified with regard to caste also. A question was directed toward Gandhi, with the context content being like this: The act of seeking the help of the shastras for the removal of untouchability and caste is like washing ‘mud with mud’. Answering this question, Gandhi said that, if varna is an integral part of the Shastras how a person who rejects varna can be called a Hindu. Further as there is no aversion for him to do interdining or intermarriage and if such restrictions are supported by Shastras then he may not call himself a Hindu.

The case of Radhamadhab Mitra marrying a Harijan girl strictly according to Hindu rites with Brahmin priests was taken for discussion,
for which Gandhi answered in affirmative, congratulating Radhamadhab on his courage in breaking through the rock of caste superstition. He also wished expected the other young men should follow Radhamadhab’s way. He wished them for a happy life. He also advised Shri Radhamadhab to arrange for proper education for his ‘not-so educated’ wife. In the same year there took place in this immediate circle, and with his approval, an inter-varna wedding between a Brahmin woman (Dr. Saundaram) and Shudra man (G. Ramachandran), and another between a Harijan woman (Indumati) and a high-caste Hindu man (Dr. A. G. Tendulkar, President of the Goa Congress).

Ten years later he said, that his earlier or previous views on interdining and intermarriage were based on general Hindu public sentiments and not based on the congress workers or congressmen’s sentiments. But, these men have to abolish untouchability from every part of their life.

Gandhi received a letter seeking to perform a marriage at Sevagram Ashram. For this Gandhi expressed his willingness to perform the same at Sevagram Ashram but with a precondition that the ‘would-be’ ‘bride’ Manorama who was 17 at that time, should wait for another two years before she faces the wedlock. Gandhi’s intention behind his precondition to delay the marriage by two years was considered as his method of training the bride and groom.

A question on the congress program for the abolition of untouchability and the inclusion of interdining and intermarriage with Harijans, received from Gandhi an answer that for congressmen there
is no opposition to dining with Harijans. “We all have to become Harijans, without which we will not be able to purge ourselves completely of the taint of untouchability”. So, he recommended all the boys and girls of Sevagram Ashram to have one of the parties in their marriage as Harijan. There is no real difficulty in this. All that is needed is a change of outlook. (The Hindustan Standard, 1946, 5/i)

[Q.] “Does the Congress program for the abolition of untouchability include interdining and intermarriage with Harijans?” [A] “So far as I know the Congress mind today, there is no opposition to dining with Harijans. But speaking for myself, I have said that we have all to become Harijans today or we will not be able to purge ourselves completely of the taint of untouchability. I, therefore, tell all boys and girls who want to marry that they cannot be married at Sevagram Ashram unless one of the parties is a Harijan. I am convinced that there is no real difficulty in this. All that is needed is change of outlook”.

On giving the criterion for such marriage, Gandhi suggested a married man to get his son or daughter a Harijan groom or Harijan bride, as the case may be. “At a meeting of the ‘Harijan Sevak Sangh’ which he had founded in 1932, Gandi was asked how best to further the cause of intercaste marriage :

[Q.] “What is your criterion in this respect?”
[A.] “Are you married?”
[Q.] “I happen to be.”
[A.] “Then, have you an unmaried son or daughter? If you have one, get him or her Harijan for bride or a bridegroom, as the case may be, in the spirit of a sacrament”53.
And he later said, ‘Mixing up the problems of untouchability and of too many sub castes would affect the success of both. So, I haven’t included intermarriage and interdining with untouchables an integral feature of removal of untouchability programme’.

“In your recent correspondence with Sri Shyamlal you have said that caste ought to go root and branch if untouchability is to be completely eradicated. Then, why do not you make anti untouchability work part of a wider crusade against the caste system itself? If you dig out the root, the branches will wither by themselves?

It is one thing for me to hold certain views and quite another to make my views acceptable in their entirely to at large. My mind, I hope, is ever growing, ever moving forward. All may not keep pace with it. I have therefore to exercise utmost patience and be satisfied with hastening slowly. As you must have seen from my preface to a recent Navajivan Publication of my writings on Varna Vyavastha. I am wholly in agreement with you in principle. If I live upto 125 years. I do expect to convert the entire Hindu society to my view.

Can the members of the Sangh refuse to interdine with the untouchables? Have your views on this question undergone any change?

At one time I did say that interdining was not an essential part of the campaign for the removal of untouchability. Personally, I was for it, Today I encourage it. In fact, today I even go further, as a perusal of my recent preface to which I have already referred would show.
Excerpts taken from Gandhi walking tour diary; states: "He was certainly in favour of intercaste marriage\textsuperscript{56}. His ultimate aim, "the final test of every marriage is how far it develops the spirit of service in the parties. Every mixed marriage will tend in varying degrees to remove the stigma attached to such marriage. Finally there will be only one caste known by the beautiful name ‘bhangi’, that is to say, the reformer or remover of all dirt. Let us all pray that such a happy day will dawn soon\textsuperscript{57}.

He declared that, "I therefore tell all boys and girls who want to marry that they cannot be married as Sevagram Ashram unless one of the parties is Harijan. I am interested, If at all in a caste Hindu marrying a Harijan. For, if we wish to observe Varnashrama Dharma, we should all belong to one caste, i.e., of Harijans"\textsuperscript{58}.

Gora is one of the Gandhian followers in India. Though a Brahmin, he was one of the few in caste-ridden Andhra Pradesh to permit his daughter to marry a Harijan. In fact, all his children were encouraged to marry outside their caste.

According to Nehru, everyone in India should marry outside his or her community. And he wrote, "Marriage should be based on a complete understanding and a perfect union of minds"\textsuperscript{59}.

**Inter Religious Marriage:**

When Gandhi was questioned on the views with regard to favouring marriage between Indians professing different religions, he replied that such marriage was a welcome event if it took place. From this view, marriage was a sacred institution. And so there must be
mutual friendship, either party having equal respect for the religion of the other. There was no room for conversion. Hence the marriage ceremony could be performed by priests belonging to either faith. But this could come about only when the communities had shed their mutual enmity and cultivated equal regard for all religions of the world. Further Gandhi said that he did not believe in civil marriages, but he welcomed the institution of civil marriage as a much needed reform to clear the way for inter-religious marriages.

Gandhi views were that “Marriage Outside one’s religion is different from that of marriage outside one’s caste. There is no moral objection to such unions. But he did not believe that these unions can bring peace. That is why he has said then, “So long as the relations between the Hindus and Muslims are indifferent, any attempt to promote their unions will result in a great disaster. Based on some exceptional cases of Hindu-Muslim unions that live peacefully, no one should go for a general advocacy”.

In 1942, Gandhi, defended Indira Nehru’s engagement with Feroze Gandhi (a Parsi). Gandhi opposed religious conversion for the sake of marriage. According to him, religion is not a dress that can be changed at one’s wish. But in the case of Firoz Gandhi there is no question of change of religion because he has been an inmate of the Nehru’s family for many years. He has nursed Kamala Nehru in her sickness. He was very helpful during Indira’s illness when she was in Europe. Their mutual attractions have resulted through the path of intimacy and friendship.
Answering a question whether he is in favour of inter-religious marriage and the ceremonial procedures that such marriage should undergo, Gandhi admitted that initially he was not in favour of such marriages but, later he started welcoming such events. His only condition was that such connections should not be a mere product of lust. If it is based on lust, then it is not at all a marriage; rather it is an illicit intercourse. Marriage is a sacred institution. There, is no need of conversion to happen. Religions of both should be equally respected. Marriage ceremony can be performed by the priests belonging to either faith. This will happen only when mutual enmity between communities is wiped out\textsuperscript{62}.

For a question how it is possible to maintain one’s separate religious identity after a inter-religious marriage and his opinion on civil marriages, Gandhi replied that he had under his observation men and women professing different religions and each following his or her own faith without any controversies erupting. As to civil marriage he did not believe in them but he welcomed the institution of civil marriages as a much needed reform for the sake of reform\textsuperscript{63}.

When he was asked about the religion to which the children of the parents of inter-religious marriage belong Gandhi replied that it depends upon the way of life lived by their parents. The difficulty crops up when there is a serious difference arising between the parents as to the upbringing of the children\textsuperscript{64}.

In the early years of his mahatmahood, Gandhi favoured the caste system, and considered the four divisions to be fundamental, natural and essential. In 1920, he wrote in Young India, that prohibition against inter-caste marriage and inter-dining is essential for the rapid evolution of soul.

“Restriction on inter-caste dining and inter-caste marriage” he declared on 04.11.1932 “is no part of the Hindu religion – Today, these two prohibitions are weakening Hindu society”

An intimate experience probably helped to change his mind. In 1927, Gandhi’s youngest son Devadass fell in love with Lakshmi, the daughter of C. Rajagopalachari and wished to marry her. But, Rajagopalachari was a Brahmin and Gandhi a Vaisya and Gandhi objected to the inter-caste marriage as well as to the love match. So, they waited, painfully, until they were married with pomp in Poona on 16.06.1933 in the presence of both joyous fathers.

In subsequent years Gandhi refused to attend any but inter-caste marriages. Indeed, having broken with Hindu orthodoxy, he travelled further and further away from it until he was able to say in the Hindustan Standard of 04.01.1946, “I therefore tell all boys and girls who want to marry that they cannot be married at Sevagram Ashram (to which Gandhi moved after he left Sabarmati) unless one of the parties is an untouchable”.

He had thus gone full circle from utter disapproval of inter-caste marriages to approval of only inter-caste marriages, and then to the climax of horror for orthodox Hindus: Caste – outcaste marriages with
his personal blessing. That he should nevertheless have had a growing following among Hindus is part of the miracle of Gandhi and a tribute to the tolerance of Hindus in the midst of their intolerance.

Important social legislation in Pre and Post Independence of India:

In 1829 on Act Prohibiting Sati was passed.
Hindu Widow Remarriage Act of 1856.
Hindu Succession Act, 1956.
The Female infanticide prevention Act of 1870.
Special Marriage Act of 1872.
Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.
The Dowry Protection Act, 1985.
Human Rights Declaration Year, 1993.
Department of women and child development, Govt. of India.
Women Development Corporation was formed.

The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 abolished all caste restrictions as a necessary requirement for a valid marriage. Thus, for the first time the Hindus of all castes have the same rights with respect to marriage; inter-caste marriages are now valid. According to the Hindu Law till 1955 polygamy was allowed. The Hindu Marriage Act was passed in 1955 enforcing monogamy and permitting judicial separation and divorce.
To Sum Up:

All of Gandhi’s marriage related ideas have been analysed so far. Based on all these views we can get a clear understanding of Gandhi’s views on inter-caste / mixed marriage related opinions that are dealt below:-

Gandhi’s ideal husband and wife were Rama and Sita. Marriage in Hinduism is one of the four Ashramas, On which all the other three Ashramas are based. But according to Gandhi, in modern times marriage has unfortunately come to be regarded purely as a physical union. The other three Ashrama are but non-existent. For him marriage is a Sacrament institution.

Gandhi was married to Kasturba in his thirteenth age. Earlier he was betrothed thrice. He was told that the first two girls chosen for him had died in turn after betrothal. The third one happened in his seventh age and that culminated into a marriage after six years. Gandhi could recollect the exorbitant marriage expenses. And the faint recollection of his childhood marriage made Gandhi to view it as a 'waste of substance and time'.

Gandhi was instrumental in materializing the marriages of Miss. Dick, his typist, with Mr. Macdonald, Henry Pollock with Mrs. Pollock and Mr. Albert West with Mrs. Ada West (Devi Behn as Gandiji used to call her). Here Mrs. Ada west was girl belonging to a shoe - maker family from Leicester, is a point to be noted. But when Harilal Gandhi, oldest of Kasturiba's sons and Gulab vohra were united in marriage on 1906, Gandhi termed it meaningless.
Gandhi’s major role in making the south African authorities to pass the Indian Relief Bill made the Hindu, Muslim and Parsi marriages performed in south Africa Valid. On 26.02.1919 Gandhi wrote to the Indian social reformers elaborating his views on inter-caste marriages and Patel Marriage Bill. On 30.05.1919 Gandhi wrote to viceroy’s private secretary on marital administration in Punjab. On 09.05.1921 Gandhi attended marriage of Sarup Kumari Nehru (Vijayalakshmi) with R.S.Pandit.

In June 1922, when Harilal visited his father to get (Gandhi at yeravada) get consent for his remarriage, Gandhi permitted him under the condition of finding a widow who has as many children as Harilal has and that they both should agree to accept each others children as their own. In 1925 on a question of himself repudiating the intermarriage between touchables and untouchables Gandhi had replied that he could not foresee a society where all mankind will have one religion. Gandhi attended reluctantly the wedding in 1928 of his son Ramdas and a girl, Nirmala of the same subcaste. This was the last such wedding, Gandhi attended.

Three weddings which he later attended were between people of different sub castes but of same varna. That were those of Rukmani and Banarasilal (1929) Madlasa and Sriman (1937) and Sharada and Gordhandas (1939).

In the 1920’s Gandhi’s youngest son, Devadas, and a Brahmin girl fell in love with each other. Gandhi, after initial reluctance, asked then to remain contact less for a few years. And this culminated into a marriage in 1932. Gandhi grand nephew Kanu was married to a
Brahmin girl, Abha. In 1933 Gandhi arranged for a marriage between a reformed Hindu Brahmin lad Maruti and his ‘adopted daughter Lakshmi’ despite her biological father’s reluctance.

Gandhi termed the practice of child marriage as ‘monstrous’, But according to him a Brahmin marrying a Shudra girl or vice versa is not an offence against the law of Varna. Later Gandhi declared it as a principle not to arrange any marriage between members of the same sub caste, and every Ashram member was encouraged to seek his mate outside his own sub caste. Gandhi didn’t include inter-marriage and inter-dining within untouchability removal programme as he felt that would affect the success of both. The Harijan Conference at Agra (1933), passed a resolution admiring and appreciating Gandhi’s great sacrifice for the cause of the amelioration of suffering of the and inter downtrodden. The conference also believed that without inter-caste marriage and inter-dining untouchability cannot cease to exist. Gandhi earlier believed that the self imposed restriction against inter-marriage and inter-dining is essential for a rapid evolution of the soul and is an act of renunciation of the flesh. Around 1935 Gandhi said that there should be no prohibition of intermarriage or inter-dining. Gandhi also said that there is no aversion for him to do inter-dining or intermarriage and if such restrictions are supported by shastras then he may not call himself a Hindu.

According to Ambedkar the real remedy to casteism is inter-marriage, whereby fusion of blood will take place, resulting in all getting the feeling of kith and kin. Ambedkar stated that the Hindus observed caste not because they are inhuman but they are ‘religious’. Thereafter in 1932-37 Gandhi displayed a cautious approach in advocating inter-caste marriage. Gandhi even requested to violate one’s mother’s order if she is against the practice of such inter-caste marriage.
In 1940, the case of Radhamadhab Mitra marrying a Harijan girl strictly according to Hindu rites with Brahmin priests received an affirmative congratulation from Gandhi for breaking through the rock of the caste superstition. He also wished that other young men should follow Radhamadhab’s way. He also advised Shri. Radhamadhab to arrange for proper education for his 'not – so – educated' wife. In the same year there took place in this immediate circle, and with his approval an inter-varna wedding between a Brahmin Woman (Dr. Saundram) and Shudra-man (G. Ramachandran), and another between a Harijan Women (Indumati) and a high-caste Hindu man (Dr. A.G. Tendulkar, President of the Goa Congress).

Gandhi also welcomed the marriages between Indians professing different religions. But the marriage ceremony could be performed by priest belonging to either faith. But this could come about only when the communities had shed mutual enmity and cultivated equal regard for all religions of the world.

In 1942, Gandhi, defended Indira Nehru's engagement with Feroze Gandhi (a Parsi). He said, “I have been and I am still as strong an opponent of either party clinging to religion for the sake of marriage. Religion is not a garment to be cast off at will. In the present case there is no question of change of religion

Further Gandhi said that he did not believe in civil marriage but he welcomed the institution of civil marriage as a much needed reform to clear the way for inter-religious marriage.
Further Gandhi’s intention behind his precondition to delay proposed marriages by two years was considered as his method of training the bride and groom. Gandhi recommended all the boys and girls of Sevagram Ashram to have one of the parties in their marriages as Harijan (Low Caste). Gandhi informed that he would persuade all caste Hindu girls coming under his influence to select Harijan husbands. For those members of Harijan Sevak Sangh who had married already, Gandhi suggested to get their son or daughter a Harijan groom or Harijan Bride, as the case may be.

So, according to Gandhi marriage being an arrangement not only for procreation but also an institution that helps in developing ideal future generations, bondage between like-minded people of any different castes, inter-caste marriage is desirable; Further a marriage between a Caste-Hindu and a Harijan naturally leads to the destruction of castes. Happening of such marriages leads to an equal and casteless society. It can be said that, It is for this reason of changing the pathetic condition of the Harijans, Gandhi advocated inter-caste marriage as a tool and also as the only way to attain a ‘harmonious Hindu society’.

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