CHAPTER-II

OBJECTIVES
AND METHODS
2.0 OBJECTIVES AND METHODS

2.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are:

- To analyse the changing system of value and choice in selecting the spouses for their children and to get an insight into the problems of marriage in Bengali Hindu families in West Bengal.

- To identify the prospects and constraints of settling the present generation of young people in good matrimony.

- To investigate the change of importance of the traits mentioned in the advertisements in case of both brides and grooms and to evaluate the impact of such marriages on the society.

- To guide the parents of brides and grooms in the mate selection process with the information regarding change in trends.

- To observe the social mobility in the middle class Bengali Hindu families in West Bengal and thus to point out class promotion through marriage.

- To observe intention of employed brides in preferring unemployed grooms.

- To observe intention of both the bride seeking and groom seeking parents in connection with the dowry culture.
• To observe the continuity of the old culture of 'Kösthi bichar'
• To observe the choices as well as demands of working girls in selecting their spouses.

2.2 SAMPLING

To make a successful completion of the study, things like dates, days, newspaper etc. which have been selected are based on enough justified reasons. The reasons are mentioned below against each such selection.

2.2.1 WHY IS 'ANANDABAZAR PATRIKA' SELECTED ?

The area of study being West Bengal with a special attention to the Bengali Hindus, Anandabazar Patrika, a leading Bengali daily is selected. Besides this, the reason for the selection are as follows:

• The highly circulated Bengali daily is Anandabazar Patrika. According to the report of Audit Bureau of Circulation, it's present circulation is over 7 lacs.
• Different classes of people and even the people of different walks of life of Bengal and even abroad prefer to publish matrimonial advertisements in this newspaper.
• Anandabazar Patrika specially gives enough scope for publication of matrimonial advertisements mainly on Sundays.
• It is one of the oldest Bengali dailies still surviving. Hence, it will help a lot in comparative study undertaken here.
• The number of cases found during my study from this 'Patrika' is really satisfactory. The number of cases will definitely minimise the percentage of error in my study.

2.2.2 WHY ARE THE YEARS 1951, 1971 AND 1991 SELECTED?

The years 1951, 1971 and 1991 have been selected because it has been found in course of the study that 20-year gap between any two of them may be safely taken to represent a generation gap. In the 50’s and 60’s, girls were given in marriage usually at an early age, preferably in their teens. Naturally, twenty-year margin may be taken as sufficient basis for calculating change of trends and patterns in matrimonial alliances.

What is more, the above mentioned three years are remarkable also in another aspect. India won her independence in 1947 which therefore has a historic significance. New ideas came into vogue, new trends were set in, new approaches and techniques were adopted. But, on the top of everything, a grim after-effects of partition were felt all around. The
religious basis of partition had its own tragic effect. Innumerable streams of uprooted people of the then East Pakistan came into West Bengal and almost played havoc in the social, political and economic life of the state. We can have a look on the table mentioned below for a clear conception:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table : 2.01</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THE NUMBER OF REFUGEES MIGRATED TO WEST BENGAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPTO 31.12.1954*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. As per census of December 1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The refugees joined in the refugee camp between January 1951 to April 1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The refugees migrated to West Bengal between May 1952 to October 1952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The refugees migrated to West Bengal between November 1952 to October 1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The refugees migrated to West Bengal in 1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So, new problems regarding the rehabilitation cropped up. There were also various problems of their eventual adjustments into our society. Naturally, problems of values, employments, marital alliances came up and posed a new challenge to the people. The problems began right from the day of partition in 1947. In the midst of all these challenging problems, awakened India adopted in 1950 her constitution of Sovereign, Democratic, Republic assuring all citizen of quality in the eye of law irrespective of class, community and gender. With these dreams of an ideal society and hopes of

* UDBASTU : Hiranmoy Bondyopadhay
gradual fulfillment of the same, the decade came to a close. And a new
decade began in 1951. The new government was then trying to strengthen
their administrative set-up. The impact on the attitude of the people of free
India in respect of matrimonial contacts is naturally expected to be reflected
in advertisements published at the time.

Naturally, in this context the year 1951 takes a special importance.
Something of the old habits and practices still remain and yet clearly all
things are on the move. So, 1951 seemed to be the fittest starting point of my
survey in regard to a vital social matter of the time. The collected data also
go to confirm the rightness of the choice. Standing at the threshold of the
closing decade of a dependant India and the beginning of the first decade of
independence I thought, I could look before and after and have an
appropriate background for my survey of social forces of the time,
especially, in regard to marital alliance of youths of the state.

When we come to 1971, we find the beginning of another epoch. For
the first time in the history of the state the congress was out of power and the
United Front Government was established in 1967. The character of the new
Government was quite different from that of the earlier one. It’s socialistic
out look, leftist leanings, its stress on the economic uplift of people, its
revolutionary zeal brought about a change in the atmosphere of the country
and raised new expectations in the hearts of people. But after 25 months’
rule the United Front Government was dismissed and the Presidential Rule
was imposed. Around 1969-70, the murmurs of naxalite stir were in evidence.

The year 1971 opened the dark clouds in the horizon. Congress came back to power and dark days of Naxalite killing of innocent people began. Bloodshed, murder, encounter with Police became a regular feature of the day. A whole generation came to be involved in it willy-nilly and profound changes followed in their social, political and economic outlook.

In addition to all this, a terrible influx of refugees in West Bengal from the then East Pakistan took place in 1971. The barbarities of Yahia administration in East Pakistan drove lacs of people out of East Pakistan into West Bengal. This is evident from the following facts:

- Mr. M. Hussain Ali, the chief of the Pak Deputy High Commission at Circus Avenue, Calcutta which had been lately named Bangladesh Deputy High Commission said, *'Thousands of panic stricken Hindus and Muslims had crossed the border into India. Indians have given them food, shelter and medical help'*.

- Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India visited various refugee camps in West Bengal in May 15-16, 1971 and declared in the Parliament: *Has Pakistan Yuddha-O-Swadhinata: Krittibas Ojha*
The right to drive 50 to 60 thousand people out of their hearts and homes at the points of bayonets? This situation has become intolerable for us.**

- The President of the new State of Bangladesh sent wire to the organisers of the World Muslim Conference at Zedda on June 25, 1971: "More than sixty lakhs of people have been compelled to take refuge in India as a result of inhuman barbarities of Pak army".**

Naturally, the year 1971 has been selected for it is expected to give a clue.

The year 1991 is taken into account to evaluate the present condition of the Bengali Hindu Society in West Bengal and a comparative study of the three years will be made. The attitude of the advertisers will be clear.

2.2.3 WHY ARE SUNDAYS PREFERRED?

Sundays are preferred in view of getting greater number of advertisements. It is true that the number of matrimonial advertisements

** Yuddha-O-Swadhinata: Krittibas Ojha
published in Anandabazar Patrika is definitely greater than that of any other Bengali daily published on Sundays.

It is not possible to conduct a study covering all the Sundays of each of the three years. Huge data may at any time create trouble. Error may be increased. Hence to avoid such contingencies the matrimonial advertisements of only two Sundays per year are taken into account.

2.2.4 WHICH SUNDAYS ARE PREFERRED?

Considering the social superstitions, the last Sunday of the Bengali month Chaitra and the first Sunday of the Bengali month Baishakh are selected for the study. Now question may easily arise in this context. In Hindu custom, people generally do not prefer the months Bhadra, Ashwin, Kartic, Poush and Chaitra as the months of marriage. Hence, maximum number of marriages take place in the corresponding months i.e. Agrahayan, Magh and Baishakh. With a view of serious and accurate study of a reasonable number of samples, the month of Baishakh is taken into account among these three months.

The persons eager to arrange marriage in the month of Baishakh, generally start negotiation in Chaitra. Hence, the last Sunday of Chaitra is selected with an intention of having maximum number of advertisements in matrimonial columns.
Again, the superstitious people who avoid Chaitra, negotiates for matrimonial purposes in Baishakh. So, the first Sunday of Baishakh is also selected for this research work. Thus, the number of advertisements on each of the two days is expected to be maximum. The dates are mentioned in the table given below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>English Calendar</th>
<th>Bengali Calendar</th>
<th>Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01.</td>
<td>08.04.1951</td>
<td>Chaitra 25, 1357</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02.</td>
<td>15.04.1951</td>
<td>Baishakh 01,1958</td>
<td>Do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03.</td>
<td>11.04.1971</td>
<td>Chaitra 28, 1377</td>
<td>Do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04.</td>
<td>18.04.1971</td>
<td>Baishakh 04, 1378</td>
<td>Do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05.</td>
<td>14.04.1991</td>
<td>Chaitra 31, 1397</td>
<td>Do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06.</td>
<td>21.04.1991</td>
<td>Baishakh 07, 1398</td>
<td>Do</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The dates taken under consideration for study.

2.3 IMPORTANCE OF CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MATRIMONIAL ADVERTISEMENTS

Zimmerman in 1976* has suggested that the phenomena of matrimonial advertisements is not a random, wierd ‘thing’ happening in India. In fact, it is India’s answer to the need of a ‘creative minority’ that the country needs to steer the country and help solve its problems.

Matrimonial advertisements can be compared to a 'placement office' where people register in the hope of finding a position commensurate with their qualifications. And when viewed in this context the entire phenomena of matrimonial advertisements seems to gain a new significance. The practice of matrimonials has grown tremendously since Independence (Reyes – Hockings 1966)**. In the recent past one sees an increase in the popularity of matrimonial advertisements all over India and some newspaper (i.e. The Statesman) that until recently did not include marriage advertisements in their classified columns have begun to do so.***

The following event which took place in the office of the Hindusthan Times is enough to establish the importance of classified advertisements in newspapers. Mr. B. G. Vergis, the eminent journalist, was then the Editor. Once misunderstanding arose between him and the Manager ( Advertisement). The misunderstanding ultimately took such a serious form that Mr. Vergis decided to resign. But the Manager was then silent. Later, he only uttered : So long the classified advertisements are available, the newspaper will be the least affected. This highlights the supreme importance of classified advertisement, so far as the newspapers are concerned.

There are also other points of importance which should be borne in mind:

***: Man in India : Page 198; December 1980.
• The newspaper houses can have cash in hand from the classified advertisements.
• Small space is provided and maximum gain is enjoyed by the newspaper houses.
• Direct public contact can be maintained.
• The advertisers can avail themselves of the opportunity of getting wide range of circulation at a minimum cost.
• Among the classified advertisements specially the matrimonial advertisements are performing a social responsibility in the matter of arranging marriages. Here, newspapers are acting as 'mediators' as well as 'communicators'.
• A competition among the advertisers is also evident from the 'box' and 'shaded' classified advertisements.

Basically, what we see today, the ideology of the newspaper houses is changed. Frankly speaking, they have become business houses, So, each and every 'house' is trying first to be strong financially. And advertisements are one of the main sources of income of a newspaper house. It is also known to the media-men that in most cases the newspaper houses give priority to the advertisements, both display and classified, than the news. We are all accustomed to the event that the News Editor always tries to know the latest position of a page regarding space from the advertisement department and
then arranges news-articles accordingly. Thus the attitude of a newspaper house at the present day is more of a profit making than what it was in pre-independent India.

Due to rapid urbanisation and westernisation, people have shifted from their surrounding to new places for jobs, business and education, where they settle down more or less permanently. In such an unknown place it becomes very much difficult for them to get suitable partners by traditional methods i.e. with the help of 'Match Maker'. This inclination towards newspaper advertisements is definitely due to gradual increase in the rate of educated people. That's why people are now taking help of the newspapers to select suitable partners. So, matrimonial advertisements have become very much popular as well as very much effective in our society.

So, it must be admitted that the decision of providing enough space for publication of matrimonial advertisements is really praise worthy. In words the advertisers express their preference and the newspapers reach it to the wider public, even abroad, very quickly. Thus, the 'house' indirectly gives satisfaction to and receives best wishes of the advertisers. It is also an asset of the business house.
2.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

During the study some questions related to the subject have automatically appeared in mind. To find out suitable answers the questions the present researcher tried to follow an investigative work. The target is not only to find out exact answer to the queries but also to guide the parents properly for selection of a suitable mate. The research questions and hypothesis in this relation are given below:

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Is there any change of values during the three generations taken under consideration in connection with the mate selection process?
2. Are the parents still conservative as they were in the 50s?
3. Is there any implication of the Marriage Registration Act during the last decade?
4. What is the impact of women education or women higher education in our society?
5. Is the 'marital age', both for brides and for grooms changing with the interest in higher education?
6. Is there any change in profession of grooms found during the three generations?
HYPOTHESIS
The main hypothesis of this study are as follows:

1. Preference of grooms with better family background and education is giving way to his richness and income.

2. In place of beautiful and homely brides, preference is shifting to employable or already employed brides.

2.5 PROCESSING OF DATA

The subject of study is found very much interesting. And so far as knowledge of the present researcher is concerned, no such work has yet been done in West Bengal for getting such a Doctoral Degree from Calcutta University. So, special attention and care have been given to conduct survey. Each of the advertisements of the six Sundays i.e. 08.04.1951, 15.04.1951, 11.04.1971, 18.04.1971, 14.04.1991 and 21.04.1991 are affixed on individual rectangular cards. The advertisements found are mainly of three types:

- Male Advertiser i.e. Groom seeking Bride.
- Female Advertiser i.e. Bride seeking Groom and
- Advertisements from Institutions and Match Makers.
Besides these 'single advertisements' there are also 'multiple advertisements'. These advertisements are found of Six types. Such as:

- One bride and one groom seeking one groom and one bride respectively.
- Two brides seeking two grooms.
- Two grooms seeking two brides.
- Three brides seeking three grooms.
- Three grooms seeking three brides and
- One bride and two grooms seeking one groom and two brides respectively.

Each multiple advertisement is converted into single advertisements and thus each single advertisement is considered as 'a single case' or 'a sample' for study. This can be explained in the following ways:

Example : I Where one bride and one groom seeking one groom and one bride respectively, the advertisement is scanned into two cases. Such as:

Case I One bride seeking one groom.
Case II One groom seeking one bride.

Example : II Where one bride and two grooms seeking one groom and two brides respectively, the advertisement is scanned in three cases, Such as:
Case I  One bride seeking one groom.
Case II  One groom seeking one bride and
Case III One groom seeking one bride.

Thus the other multiple advertisements are also scanned in two or three single cases as per requirement.

Accumulating the ‘single cases’ and the ‘multiple cases’ converted to the ‘single cases’, a net result is framed which is considered as the ‘study material’ consisting of 1953 samples. The exact number of ‘female advertised’ cases i.e. ‘bride seeking for groom’ and ‘male advertised’ cases i.e. ‘groom seeking for bride’ are included in the study material.

Each sample is again scanned on the basis of ‘supplied data’ and ‘preferred data’. In ‘Square Sheets’ various columns are prepared under each head of ‘supplied data’ and ‘preferred data’. The columns have been prepared on physical features (consisting of height, complexion, appearance, health etc.), regional background, present place of residence, place of service, age, educational background, extra-curricular activities, marital status, liability if any, status in family, family status, family structure, genealogical background (caste), religion, marriage (registered or social), dowry if any, occupational background, income and assets. The columns of the square sheets are filled up by the facts emerged from ‘supplied data’ and ‘preferred data’. From the data relevant tables are prepared.
During preparation of tables attention is given to the columns ‘total cases’ and ‘mentioned cases’. ‘Mentioned cases’ again divided into three columns i.e. ‘only own’, ‘only other’ and ‘both’.

‘Only own’ includes the informations given by the advertisers of ‘himself’ only.

‘Only other’ includes the informations given by the advertisers of the ‘other’ only.

‘Both’ includes the informations given by the advertisers both for ‘himself’ and for the ‘other’.

For example:

I. A bride seeking for groom mentions her age 30 years. Here, the advertiser’s information is of ‘only own’ category.

II. A groom seeking for bride prefers 24 years. Here, the advertiser’s information is of ‘only other’ category.

III. A bride seeking for a groom mentions her age 24 years and prefers 30 years’ groom. Here, the informations are under ‘both’ category.
Year wise tables are prepared primarily consisting of the above mentioned three categories of 'mentioned cases' and on the basis of these tables some more tables are prepared for the interest of a constructive analysis to observe the changing scenario of marriage preferences among the Bengali Hindu middle class families in West Bengal. And thus depending upon the findings the present researcher will try to draw a conclusion as accurately as he could.

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