



Research Paper

Influence of Developmental Idealism on Choices of Marriage

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Caste in today's society is attached to individuals rather than imposed with rigid form within a group or society or community. India is unique with three fundamental pillars composed of the caste system, the joint family system, and the village system. The first pillar, the caste system, is closely adhered through religion, custom and tradition, marriage and family, morals and manner, food and dress habits, occupations and hobbies. The term 'caste' is derived from the Spanish word Caste meaning 'breed' or 'lineage', which is inherently drawn by the members of a family. In Sanskrit words, the caste is named as 'varna', which signifies 'color'. The popular equivalent is 'jati' (Rao, 1990: 290).

Race and color is the base of the varna system in the Vedic Period based on the term 'chaturvarna'. In this doctrine, the Hindu society was divided into four main varnas namely, the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas, and the Shudras. According to Indologists, the phase was necessarily dependent upon the concept of division of labour. People were used to splitting up as a result of anuloma (hypergamy) and pratiloma (hypogamy) practices. Contrary to Indologists, Sociologists viewed the caste system as social stratification in society. As a cultural phenomenon, caste may be viewed as a set of values, beliefs and practices. Most of the scholars gave a defined meaning to the term caste. Among those, Kroeber (1939: 254) defines caste as "an endogamous and hereditary sub-division of an ethnic unit occupying a position of superior or inferior rank or social esteem in comparison with other such sub-divisions". G.S. Ghurye gave reference to caste as not only hereditary and endogamous but also that hereditary memberships have certain rigid restrictions on feeding and social intercourse. Many renowned scholars defined their perceptive of caste as a system and tried to grasp the origin of caste through studying empirical research works. But, I will seek attention to the definition of caste can't reveal the depth of its rigidity. To flash on the argument, I would like to re-interpret Sridhar V. Ketkar's cultivation of caste in his book named 'History of Caste in India'.

Ketkar (1909) suggested not hustling with the talking of the 'origin of the caste system'. Instead, we should talk about various aspects and features of the caste system. Because to dig into the concept of caste as a whole we have to look for the origin of the endogamy, the origin of hereditary occupation and commensality, the association of purity and impurity, the origin of the inter-caste marriage and other various features. However, this paper portrays inter-caste marriage as a bridge from caste as a system into caste as elements. Keeping Arland Thornton's proposition of Developmental Idealism as a primary reference I will reflect upon the changing structure of the caste by adhering to inter-caste marriages, analyze the causes and effects of rigidity and also the adjustment of kin members with the notion of the inter-caste marriage system.

Inter-caste marriage means marriage between males and females belonging to different castes. The marriages of anuloma (hypergamy), a marriage of a boy from a higher caste with a girl from a lower caste were more practised than pratiloma (hypogamy), a marriage of a boy from a lower caste with a girl from a higher caste. In the ancient period, as per the rule of Hindu law, Brahmin parents did not marry their son or daughter with any daughter or son from the Shudra caste. The endogamous norms were active at that time than the exogamous within the caste system. The recent studies on the caste system show a light of hope in weakening the rigidity. This makes it flexible for social interaction and occupation in an urban setting. Corwin (1977) examined 16 love marriages in a survey of 500 town households in Mahishadal, West Bengal. Out of those 18 marriages, 14 were inter-caste marriages. There is a variation of agreements of parents regarding love-marriages and also the adjustments with inter-caste marriages. One of those reactions of the town was, a Kayastha boy married a Brahmin girl, and the boy's father declared him dead and broke all communications. But for his mother and sister, the relationship was still not broken.

Corwin (1977) recorded three incidents of love marriages and one of those in 1968, a Brahman friend who was a businessman and planned to marry a girl he met in the town, a Mahishya student at the college. They further moved to Calcutta for a Registered Marriage with some specific friends for the witness of their marriage. However, the legalization of secular registered Marriage does not require parental consent. This is how the couple went to each other's household to inform about their marriage. Knowing the reality both parties' parents denounced them and started to blame the other's child. A few months later, both of the parents accepted them and the groom continued as a business partner with his father. Moreover, from the 20th Century, the acceptance of inter-caste marriages had been started.

Many sociologists have theorized about variations of family behavior including marriage, fertility, and family structure. Let me distinguish between the urban people's choice and the rural people's choice of marriage based on caste. Those who live in urban areas they are occupied with industrial engagements and thus have full-fledged expectations to choose their spouse. On the other hand, living in rural society, people are mostly tied up with family members even if they want to earn money, the sons are usually tied up with their father or grandfather or uncle in cultivating lands. They don't have such expectations and also the allowance to choose their spouse. However, Arland Thornton propounded certain beliefs and values, termed developmental idealism (DI), as a powerful influence on changing of family structures and behaviors. Developmental idealism originated in the theories of development, models of social change to know how the world works. The original formulation of developmental idealism emerged among northwest European elites. Nowadays, this has been spread across the world from elite to ordinary people through continuous diffusion, colonization, mass media, international tourism and migration (Allendorf and Thornton, 2015).

Moreover, in South Asian countries marriage customs vary to follow caste, religion, and locality. Concerning developmental idealism, I bring the note of Swami Vivekananda's message where once he confirmed to one of his disciples about the 'samaj samskara'. He praised the custom of intermarriage as necessary for Indian society. Until and unless our society is not practising the intermarriage custom, the nature of society will be fragile gradually. Inter-caste marriages did exist in South Asia but were rare and stigmatized. T.N. Madan (1965) in his study of the Pandits of Rural Kashmir recorded that a marriage between a high-caste Brahmin man and a lower-caste woman was demeaned. The villagers refused to accept food from the woman and also never visited the house after the marriage. So, this kind of stigma, ostracism, and honor killing is still now continuing. From the recent year's report of The Times of India (2020), the bride had been kidnapped by her parents and relatives in post-inter-caste marriage in Tamil Nadu. The bride-groom filed a case against his in-laws for kidnapping his wife. Police investigation went on and found in CCTV footage that the bride was forcibly taken. But she told cops that she left with her parents on her own to convince for their happily married life.

Therefore, these are such cases still found in today's society with globalized, liberalized, and modernized perceptions and developments. Despite the globalized world, certain factors do vary from person to person, because development must come through the eyes of an individual. Allendorf and Thornton (2015) used the other theory to analyze their study, which is the reasoned action theory. With the evaluation of Thornton's developmental idealism theory, the behavioral pattern of individuals is examined. That is how the reasoned action theory is divided into two main schemas which will give a glimpse of the influence of developmental idealism on individuals. Those schemas are beliefs and values. The former conveys the cognitive statements of the way the world works like most people marry within the same caste, which is a belief. The latter defines the positive or negative evaluations of a specific concept or behavior of society. Liking the inter-caste marriage and disliking the nuclear family pattern are both values.

Thereby, values and beliefs are often changed with the flow of education. So, through common sensual, education plays a vital role in the selection of spouses and breaking the aspect of rigid inter-caste marriage. But, studies from Nepal indicated that educated people are greater endorsed with developmental idealism. There are people with higher education who are less likely to have inter-caste marriages. Educated people are less hasty in selecting their spouses. Rather they are more concerned with pleasing their parents, community members and also seek to lead a flawless life in society (Allendorf and Thornton, 2015: 281). Thus, schooling may inculcate attributes of self-control and long-term planning. In contrast, Ghurye (1961: 204) maintained that today education breaks many individual's bonds of caste and prepare them for mutual love marriages.

However, other than the educational factor, many factors could endorse the influence of developmental idealism in terms of marrying inter-caste. Firstly, migration is a factor that leads to developing contact with a neighbor which gradually grows to some extent leading to marriage. Secondly, industrialization is a phenomenal growth with modern sophisticated industries. Thirdly, this causes another factor, urbanization, which is a phenomenal growth of towns and cities, which let the rural-based people chase for a better opportunity and thus started to move from agricultural to industrial activities. Fourthly, recreational activities, such as games and cultural programs, bring a variety of people together to participate or simply for being a spectator (Rao, 1990: 339; Ahuja, 1993: 222).

In 1955, M.N. Srinivas presented a paper 'Castes: Can They Exist in the India of Tomorrow?' at a national seminar on "Casteism and Removal of Untouchability" in Delhi. After this in 1999, he delivered a lecture in different titles in Bangalore, Delhi and Kolkata on the passing away of the caste system. The published version contains the title 'An Obituary on caste as a system' and further expanded as "While caste as a system is dead, individual castes are flourishing" (Shah, 2007: 3). Indian society is endorsing the idea of breaking all the rigid bridges of caste to give a broader space to the marriage institution. Under westernization and modernization, such inter-caste marriages are rapidly changing in urban areas but changing very slowly in rural areas. Hence, I emphasize the problem of caste rigidity in terms of inter-caste marriages are changing either slowly or rapidly, but Indian people need more centuries to grasp the western pattern of lifestyle. Somewhere down the line, a compromising factor remains awake in between the relationships of parents and their children. Time is now for accepting without arguing with children's preferences. To indulge ourselves in Arland Thornton's developmental idealism every individual's behavioral pattern required to be freed up by interacting with each other irrespective of castes, creed, gender, sex and race. Apart from these, educational qualification, income level, professional choices and many other factors resist most individuals to develop communication. Without solidarity and knowing an individual's caste, the rigidity must go downward at a slower pace.

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