Socio-Economic Status and Physical Attractiveness in Mate Selection Choice

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Abstract- Selection the ideal mate is the most confusing process in the life of most people. To explore these issues to examine differences under graduates socio-economic status have on their preference of marriage partner selection in terms of their personality traits, socio-economic status and physical attractiveness. A total of 770 respondents participated in this study. The respondents were mainly college students studying in final year degree in professional and non professional courses. The result revealed that the respondents socio-economic status significantly influence preferences in marriage partners selection in terms of personality traits, socio-economic status and physical attractiveness.

I. ABOUT THE STUDY

Mate selection criteria have long been a topic of interest for family research and social psychologists. Earlier status of socio-economic characteristics figure prominently in mate choice. In pre industrial society socio-economic status was a curial determinant of the living conditions of individuals and families. Most predominantly, socio-economic status determined the access to economic resources,' thereby reflecting group-specific differences in the standard of living in terms of nutrition, housing and vulnerability to economic hardship. This individuals and families of higher socio-economic status generally had better living conditions than those of lower socio-economic status. Socio-economic conditions had implications for demographic behaviour. It had considerable implications on differences between different socio-economic groups in terms of fertility, marriage and migration .

Socio-economic status in pre-modern society was determined by a range of different factors, socio-economic status attainment could be linked to individual achievement, through investments in education, training and network. These are the kinds of factors that we often assume to be dominant in contemporary societies. One means of accessing economic recourses, network, or social prestige in the absence of inherited assets could have been through marriage by finding a spouse from a higher socio-economic status (Dribs & Lundh, 2006).

Partner selection is potentially one of the most important factors contributing to socio-economic status and mobility besides the individual's own socio-economic origin. The real transformation of modern love is that ranking mates for material and social assets is now incorporated into unconscious structures of desire. Lilouz (1997) noticed that it was the entry of women into the labour force throughout the 20th century that shook the foundations of marriage. Basically in the 70s, economic reformation and feminism, with new possibilities for economic independences from men, more women were free to leave unsatisfying marriage, which also meant they tended to make more demands on the ones they choose to stay in.

Much of the research on mate selection or partner preferences has focused on the perceived desirability of various personality traits (e.g. intelligence, openness') or other individuals attributes (e.g, social status, physical attractiveness). In fact, several studies have found that women's emphasis on potential mete's economic resources increases rather than decreases with the elevation of women's socio-economic status. (Townsend, 1989; Wiederman & Allgcier 1992; see also, Todosijevic, Ljyubinkovic & Arancic, 2003).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A Consideration of several studies suggests that men and women will emphasize different characteristics when considering a potential partner. The mores of American culture force men and women to select mates of similar culture, religious background socio -economic status, common values, age education, ideal images and physical attractiveness. People value socio-economic status as a means to predict one's ability to provide for their young ones. The ability and willingness to provide their resources are traits, that have been correlated with high male value. Human males can and to provide a range of resources for the female before, during and after she has produced an offspring. This can include food, shelter and protection from other males. Female would have evolve preferences for males who had good financial prospects, were older than themselves, had higher social status, and who displayed hard working and industrious characters as these are clear signs of resources acquision (Mamasan,2005). Hatifield and Rapson (1996) in their study cross-cultural prospective of love and sex find that women value more than men, marriage partners who posses status, who had good financial prospects and who are ambitious and industrious. Supporting this view Khallad Jordian female college students show greater interest in positional marriage partners who exhibit economic ability and commitment. This finding further indicated that women's differential preferences for resources and commitment related attributes were mainly determined by socio- economic status.

Gage and Hancock(2002), in their study of college students revealed that students of middle class as well as the higher class primarily choose those who are of their own socio –economic status to date or marry. Also the study revealed that those of high socio- economic status have previously preferred those of either the same or lower socio-economic status. It was also found that in their data that both males and females prefer those of a

relativity equal social class to themselves to those of lower or higher socio-economic classes. Feingold (1992) noticed that women accord more weight than men to socio-economic status, as women prefer marriage partners that will be able to take care of them financially.

South, (1991) examined, data collected from over 2000 respondents in the united states, data collected was used to examine socio-economic demographic differentials in the stated willingness of individuals to marry persons with various social, economic and demographic characteristics, it draws an exchange and marriage marked theories to develop hypotheses age, race, sex and socio-economic resources of respondents, respondents stated willingness to marry persons outside the normative age range. Who have been previously married, who already have children who are of a different religion and race, who have relatively high or low earning and education, and who are not physically attractive.

In another Study, Westman, (1999) noticed that financial success level was the most important variable sought by university students, in potential marriage partner from the data gathered from university students using a questionnaire covering background information, the self perceives mating success scale, and a materialism scale developed by Richins and Dawson and a computer survey indicating interest in a coffee date, party date, and a dinner with target individuals who varied by attractiveness level.

In fact, several studies have found that women's emphasis on potential mates economic resources increases rather than decreases with the elevation of women's Socio-economic status (Townsend, 1989; Wiederman & Allgcier, 1992; see also Todosijevic , Ljubinkovic, & Arancic. 2003). In a study by Townsend (1989) conducted , no woman preferred a spouse to have a lower Socio-economic status or income than she did, where as men seek women for their outward appearances.

In studies by Walster, Aronson, Abrahams and Rottmann, (1966) and by Sewell, Bowen and Lieberman, (1966) showed high Correlations existed between a date partner's physical appeal and linking for the other. Their studies slowed that personality as measured by the M.M.P.T. (Masculinity-femininity and social introversion scales) and I.Q, are not better predictors of mate selection preferences than physical beauty. Personality characteristics figure prominently in unstructured nominations of what people want in a mate (Langhorne & Secord, 1955).

III.   HYPOTHESIS

The purpose of this study is to examine that what influence does respondents socio-economic status have on their preferences of marriage partners in terms of personality traits, socio-economic status and physical attractiveness.

IV.   METHODS

Research design:
This is a survey study that made use of the descriptive survey design.

V.   PARTICIPATIONS

Participants in this study were 770 undergraduates, studying in final year degree of professional and non-professional from various degree colleges in Bagalkot city, Karnataka. The respondents consisted both male and female students within the marriageable age.

VI.   MEASURES

Data was collected by administering the questionnaire titled "Mate selection preferences among college students in Bagalkot" designed by the researcher for the participants. Questionnaire included a list of various traits or characteristics adopted from earlier study. It was designed to obtain data on such variables as personality triats socio-economic status and physical attractiveness.

VII.   PROCEDURE

The questionnaires were administered to the participants in their respective colleges. Participants were voluntary and anonymous and each students completed his/her questionnaire at an individual desk with the help of concerned lecturers. The questionnaire was collected on the same day of administration rom each college. The data collected was appropriate statistical methods.

VIII.   RESULTS:

Table 1: Table Showing the social background of the respondent's family.

Caste/ Religion	No. of respondents	Percentage
Lingayat	217	28.18
Maratha	027	03.51
Brahman	060	07.79
Vyshya	13	01.69
Adikarnataka	025	03.25
Adidravid	034	04.42
kshatriya	019	02.47
Kurub	079	10.26
Valmiki/Nayak	030	3.90
Not mentioned	110	14.28
Others	156	20.25
Total	**770**	**100.00**

The results indicated that a majority i.e. about 28.18% belongs to lingayat community. It may be due to the fact that this area is lingayat dominant region. About 20.25% belongs to others and about 14.28% respondents have not motioned their caste/ religion they belongings. It indicate that they are emerges from various parts of the Bagalkot and outside Bagalkot for education purpose.

Table II : A table showing the respondents family occupation/ profession

Family's occupation Profession	No. of respondents	Percentage
Agriculture	280	36.36
Trade / Business	213	27.66
Artists	009	01.18
Religious services	012	01.56
Public / Private service	209	27.14
Others	47	6.10
Total	770	100.00

The results showed that about 280 (36.36%) respondents belongs to agricultural family. It is followed by Trade/ Business and Public/ private services in the 2nd and 3rd order respectively. If we collapse these two, we find that about 54.80% of the respondents would belongs to other than the agriculture. It is because of the fact that the research area is comprised with both rural and urban areas.

Table III : A table showing the economical status of the respondents family

Family Annual income from all sources	No. of respondents	Percentage
Upto Rs. 25,000/-	105	13.64
Upto Rs. 50,000/-	165	21.43
Upto Rs. 100000/-	205	26.62
Upto Rs. 200000/-	112	14.54
Upto Rs.350000/-	101	13.12
Upto Rs. 500000/-	082	10.65
Total	**770**	**100.00**

The above results showed that the respondents belongs to various income groups. Majority i.e. 205 (26.62 percent) have annual income of Rs. 1,00,000/-, which indicates their average level of economic conditions. Uncertain rainfall, low wages might have been to such economic conditions.

Table IV: A table showing the consideration of the respondents family profession and status at the time of selecting a marriage partner.

Sl. No	Respondents family profession	Family status at the time of selecting mate						Total	Percentage
		Coming from rich family	Having a political background family	Coming from services background family	Having equal status family	Below my family status	No. special preference		
1.	Agriculture	96	09	14	110	25	33	287	37.27
2.	Trade/business	85	04	10	100	08	31	238	30.91
3.	Artists	02	00	01	03	00	02	008	01.04
4.	Religious services	04	00	01	04	01	04	014	01.82
5.	Public/private service	69	03	11	87	05	14	189	24.55
6	Others	09	00	03	09	04	09	034	4.41
	Total	265	16	40	313	43	93	770	100

The results showed that on collapsing sl. No. 1, 2 and 5 columns the respondents indicated that they prefer, at the time of selecting a mate, those of relatively equal or higher social class to themselves.

Table V: A table showing the respondent's indicating their preferences in selecting marriage partner

Preferences	No. of respondents	Percentage
Education	120	15.58
Family status	215	27.92
Economic stability	184	23.90
Physical Attractiveness	141	18.31
Personality traits	91	11.82
Common interest	19	2.47
Total	770	100.00

The result showed that significant majority of the respondents have said that family status is preferred. Family still holds its importance. It is followed by economic stability, physical attractiveness, education, personality traits and common interest in that order. Family status may include position of the family in the community, character of the members, and the family's interaction with other families. Income stability is the next important factor. By it, they mean the income stability, which more or less provides them with a similar type of environment and living. Also physical attractiveness and education equally occupies in selecting a marriage partner by the respondents.

The results showed that the respondent's who are of high socio-economic status preferred to marry from that group those from medium socio-economic group also prefer to marry from that group.

IX. CONCLUSION

Research showed that socio-economic status significantly influences preferences in marriage partners' selection in term of personality traits and marriage partners' socio-economic status.

This implicate that the more similar people in their values background and life goals, the more likely they are to have a successful marriage. People who share common background and similar social networks are better suited as marriage partners than people who are very different in their background and network. The possibilities of marital satisfaction are greater if people marry within their own socio-economic status. Partners experience more stress in heterogamous unions. There is a tendency for couples to enter into homogenous marriages with respect to education.

It is thus concluded that our respondents do not significantly differ in preferences in marriage partners selection in terms of personality traits, socio economic status and physical attractiveness. There is substantial evidence in mate preferences predicted that men value physical attractiveness and youth to a greater degree than women whereas women ore more concerned in economic status to greater degree than men.

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