



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Sociology

MARRIAGE SYSTEM: PATTERN AND CHANGE AMONG THE KORAMAS OF KARNATAKA

KEY WORDS: Mate selection, Child marriage, Korama community, Residence.

Yamanappa T Bhjantri

Teaching Assistant, Department of Sociology, Haveri University, Haveri

ABSTRACT

Marriage is one of the basic needs of society. Marriage system is found in every society, though the forms of marriage vary from one society to another. Marriage is generally regarded as a civil contract, not a religious sacrament; therefore religious solemnization does not take place everywhere. However, contract with Hindus has invested this religious solemnization with a prestige value in the eye of the tribes people; and numerous are the instances in middle India, where the tribe folk have their traditional marriage ceremony as well as some imitation of the Hindu ritual marriage". Korama community is one of the scheduled castes in Karnataka. They are traditional musicians; basket and broom makers. The present paper elaborating about pattern and change of Marriage system among Korama community, which includes; the aim of marriage, process of mate selection, child marriage, marriage ceremony, rules of marriage and residence, widow remarriage etc..., Researcher has collected information through primary and secondary data. The basic materials for this paper come from the primary data collection method, through the participant observation and interview schedules. The sample has been chosen from the 50 villages of Belgaum district of Karnataka. By using simple random sampling method 500 respondents were chosen for the present study.

INTRODUCTION:

Marriage is one of the basic needs of society. Marriage system is found in every society, though the forms of marriage vary from one society to another. Regarding marriage among the tribes of India, Majumdar and Madan (1992:74) said that, "The manners in which mates can be acquired are many in tribes of India. Marriage is generally regarded as a civil contract, not a religious sacrament; therefore religious solemnization does not take place everywhere. However, contract with Hindus has invested this religious solemnization with a prestige value in the eye of the tribes people; and numerous are the instances in middle India, where the tribe folk have their traditional marriage ceremony as well as some imitation of the Hindu ritual marriage".

Keeping the above in mind, the aim of marriage, process of mate selection, child marriage, marriage ceremony, rules of marriage and residence, widow remarriage etc, are being summarized in the present study of Koramas of Karnataka. Korama community is one of the scheduled castes in Karnataka. They are traditional musicians, basket and broom makers.

The present paper elaborating about pattern and change of Marriage system among Korama community, which includes; the aim of marriage, process of mate selection, child marriage, marriage ceremony, rules of marriage and residence, widow remarriage etc..., Researcher has collected information through primary and secondary data. The basic materials for this paper come from the primary data collection method, through the participant observation and interview schedules. The research study is conducted at Belgaum district of Karnataka state.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To know the pattern of marriage system among Korama community.
2. To pinpoint the changes occurred in marriage system of Koramas.

METHODOLOGY:

The researcher adopted a simple random sampling method to study the problem.

Universe of the Study:

According to the Census of India 2011, the total population of Belgaum district is 47, 78, 439 of which male and female are 24, 27, 104 and 23, 51, 335 respectively. And the Total population of Scheduled castes in Belgaum district is 5, 77, 418 which

consists of 2, 89,096 male and 2, 88,322 female. Among the Scheduled castes of Belgaum district, Korama population is estimated to be around (10% of the total SC population) 57,700. (Source: Registrar General of India, Census 1991)

The Sample:

A simple random sampling method has been adopted for selecting the sample. Keeping eye on the present research and duration of the study, the respondents are selected from five villages of each taluks of Belgaum district. The data is collected from 500 respondents (head of households).

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

Child Marriage System:

Table No-1: Child marriage system practice

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	4	0.8
No	496	99.2
Total	500	100

Table No-1 reveals that, the 99.2 per cent of the respondents are against the child marriage system and they oppose it, only 0.8 per cent (4 respondents) of the respondents followed child marriage system. Since the Koramas of Belgaum district of Karnataka are aware of the demerits of child marriage system practice, almost all the respondents are against to practice of child marriage system.

Age limit of marriage:

The researcher noticed that, there is no appropriate age limit of marriage for boys and girls among Koramas.

Table No-2: Age limit of marriage for Boys

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Below 18	4	0.8
18-24	251	50.2
25-30	220	44
Above 30	25	5
Total	500	100

Table No-2 reveals that, the 50.2 large major per cent of the respondents opine that 18 to 24 year is the ideal age for boy marriage. 44 per cent of the respondents said 25 to 30 year is the age limit for boy marriage. 5 per cent opines above 30 years is the age limit for boy marriage. 0.8 Per cent of respondents opines below 18 years is age limit for boy marriage. Since the Koramas of Belgaum district of Karnataka

are aware of the demerits of early marriages, almost all the respondents opined to get the marriage of their boy children after reaching the 20 years and above.

Table No-3: Age limit of marriage for girls

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Below 18	4	0.8
18-24	462	92.4
25-30	30	6
Above 30	4	0.8
Total	500	100

Table No-3 reveals about the age limits for getting marriage of girl. 92.4 per cent of the respondents opine that between 18 to 24 years is the ideal age for girl marriage. 6 per cent opine, between 25 to 30 years is ideal age for girls marriage only 0.8 per cent opine below 18 years is age limit for girl marriage. The respondents are aware of demerits of early marriage, almost all the respondents prefer to do marriage of their daughters after reaching 18 years or above.

Widow Re-marriage:

According to Edgar Thurston (2001), "Widow re-marriage is permitted among Korama (Korava) community". But Table No-4 shows that 73.6 per cent of the respondents were not in favor of widow re-marriage, only 26.4 per cent of the respondents support widow re-marriage.

Table No-4: Support to Widow re-marriage

Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	132	26.4
No	368	73.6
Total	500	100

The researcher observed that, the respondents are against the polygyny. 95 per cent respondents answered negatively to support polygyny. Only 2 per cent of the respondents support polygyny for the reason of first wife not having children and another 3 per cent support polygyny for the reason of sickness of first wife.

Traditional Marriage System:

The researcher observed that, all the respondents follow traditional marriage system.

Table No-5: Reasons for following traditional marriage system

Reason	Frequency	Percentage
Blood relation will grow	310	62
Rite & Rituals performed	120	24
Belief in customs	70	14
Total	500	100

Table No-5 reveals that 62 per cent of the respondents follow traditional marriage because they believe that by following traditional marriage system, relationships will grow. 24 per cent respondent follows because of rites and rituals performed. Because of customs belief another 14 per cent respondents follow traditional marriage system.

Marriage ceremony of Koramas:

In Koramas of Belgaum District, marriage ceremony goes up to 3 days. During the Korama wedding the bride and the bridegroom are associated with turmeric paste and then bathe. In the evening, bride and bridegrooms sit facing each other and the fringes of their garments are tied together, after a holy thread (kankana) is tied on their wrists. On the following days, a branch of a Jambolana or Banni tree is fixed with a pole on a small dais in front of the bride's house, and pots are deposited on a bed of rice spread near it. The ritual of kanya dhare is performed by bride's parents to bridegroom and his parents. Then the bridegroom ties the thali (a string of yellow coloured threads or a string of small

block beads), around the bride's neck. This is followed the rite of nalugu in which the newly married couple offer flowers, sandal, turmeric paste and betel to each other. Many of the nomadic Korama do not conduct a formal wedding. After consulting an astrologer, the bridegroom goes to the bride's house and after exchanging gifts, a feast is arranged to mark the end of the ceremony. The perfection of the marriage takes place just after completion of marriage rituals. The whole ceremony is conducted under the guidance and a blessing of sacred specialist (priest) belongs to lingayat jangama community. The dowry is also practiced by Koramas of Belgaum District. This is usually in the form of cash, land, rings, gold ornaments etc. If the marriage happens to be among very close relatives, there may not be much dowry transactions.

Marriage Rules:

The Korama community adheres to its marriage rules. There are rules forbidding the selection of spouses from one's own group.

All people prohibit marriage between individuals sharing certain degrees of blood or final relationships. This is known as exogamy that is, marriage outside the group. "Caste endogamy" is the universal principal in Indian Social System. One must choose the life partner from his own caste. Thus, "Caste endogamy" and "Clan exogamy" are the two important rules of marriage among Koramas of Belgaum District. In the past, those who violated the customs of the community were excommunicated from the caste. All the respondents answered against the inter-caste and inter-religious marriages.

According to Nanjundayya and Iyer, (1928), Korama people practice endogamy at community level. Formerly, there were several subgroups at the occupational level which were endogamous in character. But now days that restriction has disappeared. The Korama are exogamous at the clan level. Cross-cousin marriage is very common. Among Koramas, the age for marriage is 18-24 for Koramas girls and 18-30 for Koramas boys. Normally, the father of a girl starts the negotiation. Monogamy is the recognized type among Koramas. A few cases of polygyny occur. Permission of the first wife is always obtained for the second marriage. The mangalasutra is the symbol of marriage. Prior to Independence, bride-price was prevalent which has now been replaced by varadakshina (dowry). "It was a binding custom among the Korama that the first two daughters of a woman must be given to her brother on a reduced amount of tera, to be married by either himself or his sons." The Korama are patrilocal and decent is patrilineal. Divorce is permitted on grounds of adultery, barrenness or maladjustment. A widow may remarry but without tera.

Clans and sub-clans:

There are four sub-clans (gotras) among the Korama, they are Kavadi, Satupadi, Mayandragutti and Manapadi. Formerly, marriage alliance was restricted only to two sub-clan they are Satupadi and Kavadi, as the Mayandragutti was treated as part of Kavadi and the Manapadi, as part of Satupadi. The names of these sub-clans have a ritual significance with a distinct division of labour. The Kavadi sub-clans men folk used to take water in two pots hung at the two ends of a bamboo pole and carried to temples to wash the temple and idols. The Satupadi used to decorate gods and goddesses with flowers and other decoration items. Similarly, the Mayandragutti men used to adorn the deities with ornaments and the Manapadi used to sing and dance in praise of the deities. Divisions of the community based on occupations are: Dabbe Korama, Uppu Korama, Kunchi Korama and Sonai Korama. Other divisions of Korama based on professions are, Bhajantri (musician), Pachai-kutti (tattooing), Uri (settled in village) and kalla (thieving). The Dabbe Koramas are also called Kukke Korama who, apart from splitting bamboo, follows other occupations.

The Korama feel themselves superior to the Adi Karnataka, Meda and Adi Andhra in the social hierarchy.

MAJOR FINDINGS:

1) Researcher observed that, there is no appropriate age of marriage for boy and girls. But majority (more than 90%) of Koramas opined that, the age for marriage is 18-24 for Koramas girls and 18-30 for Koramas boys

2) Regarding the mate selection 95 percent of the respondents have opined that, marriage should be arranged by elder with the consent of the parents concerned.

3) Four cases of child marriages were found in the field study.

4) Only 26.4 percent of the respondents support widow re-marriage and 95 percent of the respondents are against polygamy.

5) The marriage ceremony of Koramas of Belgaum district goes up-to 3 days. The dowry system is the still present in study area.

6) "Caste endogamy" and "clan exogamy" are the two important rules of marriage among Koramas of Belgaum district.

7) Among Koramas there was no scope for inter-caste and inter-religious marriages.

CONCLUSION:

The present study shows the pattern and changes in the marriage system of Koramas of Karnataka. Researcher observed that, there is no appropriate age of marriage for boy and girls. Regarding the mate selection according to Koramas, marriage should be arranged by elder with the consent of the parents concerned. Child marriage system partially disappeared, Koramas are against to polygamy. They still follow traditional marriage system; the marriage ceremony of Koramas goes up-to 3 days. The dowry system is the still present in study area. "Caste endogamy" and "clan exogamy" are the two important rules of marriage among Koramas. Among Koramas of Karnataka there was no scope for inter-caste and inter-religious marriages.

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