A SURVEY ON THE ATTITUDES OF INDIAN WOMEN BOTH

SINGLE AND MARRIED ON INDIAN ARRANGED MARRIAGES

_____

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Behavioral Sciences Department

De La Salle University

_____

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Bachelor of Arts

_____

by

Meena Hemandas and Ma. Teresa Rodriguez
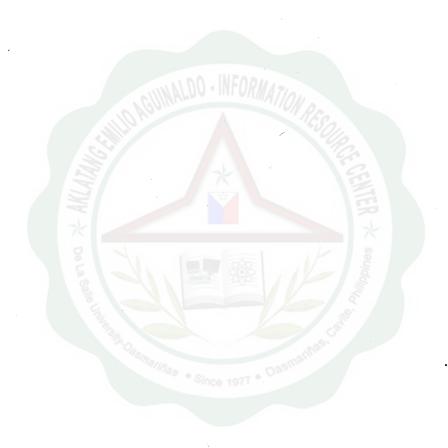
October 1977

TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPENDICES

                  Indian Women

         I-B - Questionnaire for Married
                  Indian Women

         2-6 - Computation

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is an ancient, venerable and universal institution. It has weathered all the vissicitudes of mankind's long existence. It is not likely to become obsolete because it changes in response to basic social and economic conditions. As it changes, parts of the old are carried along as new elements develop. From one point of view, this contributes to the strength of the institutional structure. However, from another point of view, it produces problems.

Sociologically, marriage "is an institution admitting men and women to family life, that is, to living in the intimate personal relationship of husband and wife for the primary purpose of begetting and rearing children." (Bogardus, 1948).

Marriage then as a sociological concept and as the universal social institution may be defined as a socially approved "union of one or more men with one or more women with the expectation that they will play the roles of husband and wife." These roles are almost always similar to matter in whatever type of culture people have in various societies. (Burgess, 1963)

The road to marriage is lined with a variety of impediments, requirements, preliminaries and ceremonials which are downright discouraging if its objectives were not so compelling. It is seldom that one can find a

society that simply allows a couple to pair off and immediately start 'houseplaying'. Marriage is too important for such casual arrangement. Marriage is the approved social pattern whereby two opposite sexes can form a family. It involves not only the bearing of children and rearing of children but also a host of other obligations and priveledges affecting a good many people. Every society had developed particular patterns for guiding marriage.

Various pressures and controls operate to regulate the choice of a marriage partner. There are two types of norms regarding the selection of spouses: the endogamous and exogamous factors. Exogamy requires a person to select a marriage partner from outside a defined social group, such as the nuclear family. Endogamy is a rule of marriage that requires a person to marry from within his own social class, ethnic group, race, religion, etc. The Indian society which this paper attempts to study, follows the endogamous system for the selection of spouses.

The most common form of mate choice in the Indian society is the arranged pattern which can be described as a procedure wherein the parents of a girl or boy seek a husband or wife for their son or daughter as soon as he or she is of marriageable age. This is usually found wherein the kin group is strong and important.

When marriages are arranged, younger women have

generally less to say than their elders. Motives for
marriages under an arranged pattern would include factors
such as bride price and the reputation of the kin group.
The bride price which refers to the dowry system, is a
system originated the olden days, which cash and other
personal possessions are given to the bridegroom and
his family. This came about because property was never
given to the women and was exclusively for the male heirs.
Thus the dowry system enables the women to have something
from their parents. However, this is settled according
to the means of the bride's family. Absolute free choice
of mate where parental approval is unnecessary, is rare
when viewed in a worldwide perspective, but as societies
modernize the "romantic" ideal seem to become more
accepted. Historically, in most of the societies of the
world, this includes the eastern and western civilizations,
the needs of the individual have been achieved as part
of the overall need of the family unit. Therefore, when
a young person reached the marriage age, the selection of
the mate was primarily determined by factors important
to the family and the values emphasized were often socio-
economic.

Nevertheless, most societies are constantly in a
state of relative tension. Each society can be thought
of as a host to two kinds of forces: those that seek to
promote change and those that try to maintain a status

quo. These forces are locked in perpetual combat, the former trying to throw the latter off balance, to gain the ascendency and the latter trying to prevent this form happening.

Thus, it is evident that traditionalism which is the unwillingness to change customs, values, beliefs and norms conflicts with modern societies which view changes as stimulants to development. The urge for the development and willingness to change are not equally present in all peoples. Some cultures then would value novelty positively, which is true of technologically advanced civilizations like those of the West. On the other hand, people in technologically less advanced lands are reluctant to change or unable to change. This is so because the wisdom of tradition carries more weight among them, and the cries of "new" and "better", may set people on guard rather than stimulate their desire to experiment on new things. In every human being and society, motivations to change are opposed by resistances to change. The change inhibiting factors that determine these motivations and resistances are cultural, social and psychological. The cultural barriers include basic values of the group, its conception of the right and wrong, the nature of the articulation of the elements of the culture, the fundamental "fit" or integration of its parts and the overriding economic

limitations. Social factors are found in the nature of the social structure of the group, the prevailing type of family and the relationship of its members, caste and classfactors and the locus of authority in familial and political units. Still other barries that are psychological in nature include group motivations, communication problems, the nature of perception and the characteristics of the learning process. (Foster, 1965)

To capsulize this, it is clear that development can take place within the cultural context of the people, utilizing their own behavior patterns, and value orient- ations and this is compatible with the theory that traditionalism, not tradition is a barrier to modern- ization. (Weiner, 1966) Traditions are subject constantly to reinterpretation and modification, and as such constitute no barrier. (Weiner, 1966) Social psycho- logists and other behavioral scientists maintain that while the process of modernization involves change in technology, in social systems, in political and economic institutions and in the attitudes, values, and behavior of people. Whether such changes in people are the cause or effect of technological advancement is not explicitly known. It remains a fact that they are important because beliefs and attitudes of a people play a significant part in determining how readily modernizing trends will

spread.   (Guthrie, et al. 1970:1)

Thus societies that are attracted to new things would then develop an iconoclastic attitude towards tradition, since they would feel that, sometimes, sticking to tradition impedes further growth and development of the individual as well as that of society itself. Since life styles and environment are dynamic, it influences changes in an individual's attitudes, tastes, values, and behavioral patterns. This creates situations wherein people have to choose between tradition and personal satisfaction to the point that they run the risk of bearing the consequences. Some cultures impose terrible sanctions if people deviate or don't comply with the norms. People would then cope up with the conflict by following the traditional norms of their culture. On the other hand, some people may oppose tradition and decide for themselves as what is right or wrong.

This study is therefore looking at how traditional values apply in modern societies. The deeply rooted tradition of India which is that of the pre-arranged pattern of marriages is an example.

I.   Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study then, was to find out the attitudes of the Indian women residing in the Philippines, specifically Manila on arranged marriages. This included both girls who are single and those who

are married.

It also attempted to find out if married women prefered this practice more than the single ones.

Furthermore it investigated the matter of acculturation which is the influence that one culture has on another. In this case it focused on the influence of Philippine culture, its values, traditions, etc. on the personal attitudes of Indian women both single and married as to arranged pattern of marriage in an urban setting - Manila.

Limitation of the Research

The biggest limitation in this research was that a random sampling was not utilized. This is because there was no way of securing a list of the Indian women, both single and married residing in Manila. Besides, the population size of the Indian Community in Manila is approximately 2,000. This includes the whole family. This seems to be a relatively small population size. Therefore, a purposive sample was used to make the research feasible and all eligible women were included in this study.

II. Significance of the Problem

Tradition and change are two processes that go together but do not necessarily conflict with each other. These two phenomenon are influenced by acculturation

(one culture exerting influence on the values of another culture) and modernization of the 20th century; in an urban setting which is that of Manila. Tradition persists because of the stability of cultures and changes occur because cultures are dynamic. However, conflicts do arise between tradition and personal values, since there are some norms and cultural traditions that are incongruent with individual values. Sometimes changes too may occur but may not always be constructive. Thus people most probably would cope up with the pressures of tradition and change by arriving at compromises. This paper attempted to investigate how much persistence of tradition or change is present today particularly the Indian pre-arranged practice of marriages in the urban setting of Manila as a result of the influence of acculturation and modernization. This aspect of how tradition- alism conflicts with modern societies is the prime signi- ficance of this study.

Cultures are diverse. Every society has a diff- erent way of life, customs, social institutions, beliefs, values and traditions. Thus people tend to think that their culture is superior to others. This is known as the principle of ethnocentricism. Since ethnocentric biases are so deeply engrained in everyone that even when a man is sensitive to the philosophy of cultural relativity, he would still easily be a victim of evaluat-

ing others using his own culture as a frame of reference. Therefore, it is important to enlighten and acquaint the readers about the arranged pattern of marriage, thereby providing the necessary information which would generate insights as to the uniqueness and complexity of the Indian culture. Thus, a knowledge of the Indian culture would minimize ethnocentric biases and an effort toward developing tolerance of cultural differences should permeate among individuals as an essential value when exposed to different cultures.

Furthermore, this is also a relevant topic since one of the criteria of this study is a single Indian girl residing in Manila and this tradition of arranged marriages is predominantly followed in the Indian society all over the world including families living in the Philippines and in this case particularly Manila.

III. Hypotheses

This study offers a number of hypotheses:

Ho: Single Indian girls residing in Manila are not in favor of arranged marriage.

Ha: Single Indian girls residing in Manila are in favor of arranged marriages.

Ho: Indian women who have undergone arranged marriages are not in favor of this practice.

Ha: Indian women who have undergone arranged

marriages are in favor of this practice.

Ho: There is no significant difference with regards to the preference of arranged marriages between single Indian girls and married Indian women.

Ha: Indian married women would prefer arranged marriages more than the single Indian girls.

Ho: There is no significant difference between the way Indian girls residing in Manila perceive Philippine culture as compared to the way they perceive the Indian culture.

Ha: There is a significant difference between the way Indian girls residing in Manila perceive Philippine culture as compared to the way they perceive the Indian culture.

Marriage in the Hindu context is the merging of two family lines; a venture that requires physical, emotional and mental compatibility. An arranged marriage is a procedure wherein the parents of a girl or boy seek a husband or wife for their son or daughter as soon as he or she is of marriageable age.

Single girls were inclusive of ages ranging from 15-23 years. Their attitudes as to whether they are agreeable to arranged marriage were measured by questions like:

1) Are you personally in favor of arranged marriages?

2) Do you believe that arranged marriages generally turn out successful?

3) Is parental consent an important factor in your choice of mate?

4) Do you want arranged marriages to be done away with?

5) Is it important to marry someone of your own nationality, religion, race, ethnic group, social class?

6) Are you in favor of love marriages? Do you believe that love is a vital to success in marriage?

To find out if Indian married women are in favor of this practice we asked questions like:

1) Are you personally in favor of arranged marriages?

2) Do you believe that arranged marriages generally turn out successful?

3) Were your expectations of your choice of mate and of marriage fulfilled or were you disillusioned?

4) Would you want your children to go thru this pattern of marriage with some modifications?

5) Is it important to marry someone of your own nationality, religion, race, ethnic group, social class?

6) Given a chance, would you consent to go thru an arranged marriage again?

Among Hindus, the daughters get married as young as 20 years old. Furthermore, the young ones were chosen since they would be a convenient sample and it would be easier to compare them with the single ones. They are

more educated and have more ideas to offer.

We also compared the responses of the single and married subjects as to the preferrence of this arranged marriage practice based on their answers to the above questions.

In addition to this, we examined the process of acculturation with regards to the way Indian girls perceive the Philippine culture as compared to their own. Certain questions were asked to obtain the necessary information such as the following:

1) Living in the Philippines, mixing with Filipino people and acquiring some of their attitudes and values, do you wish you could:

    a)   be as free as them and move around without ruining your reputation, or

    b)   would you like to preserve Indian tradition?

2) Do you find it difficult to adjust to Philippine culture? Does it conflict with your own culture?

3) How do you take care of situations wherein your friends invite you to parties and you know that your parents will not permit you?

The variables in this study are: the single and married groups of Indian women; a comparison on the attitudes of the two groups towards the arranged pattern; and how Indian girls perceive Philippine culture as compared to the Indian culture in an urban setting - Manila.