



INTER-STATE MARRIAGE MIGRATION AND SOCIO-CULTURAL VALUE SYSTEM IN ROHTAK DISTRICT, HARYANA, INDIA: EVIDENCES FROM THE FIELD

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Abstract

Females contribute to streams of migration mainly for marriage purposes. Rural-to-rural migration forms a large proportion of such migration. Marriage migration depends upon socioeconomic, religious and cultural set-ups. Interstate marriage migration is essentially female-selective and is widespread in areas with low sex ratios. In Haryana, with an extremely low sex ratio of 893 females per 1000 males (National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS) Report, 2019-2021) the pressure of continuing the family tree is so enormous that people, who are not in a position to find a suitable bride locally or within the same state, create a network of contacts in other states and bring brides from different parts of India. Though the phenomenon of such marriages is not new in Haryana (as Jats from Haryana have long been bringing brides from neighbouring states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and distant states like Assam, Jharkhand, Bihar, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal and Maharashtra) yet the implications of present-day long distance, inter-caste and inter-culture marriages are noteworthy in the social context. It is in this context that it seems important to examine such marriages which are not only a product of inter-culture and inter-religion allowances but have also been an outcome of mutual understanding and emotional bonding due to love affairs. This paper thus examines inter-state marriage migration in the context of socio-economic set-up and cultural value system in the state. Qualitative research methods consisting of in-depth interviews, focus groups, note-taking, participant observation etc. were employed in 15 villages out of a total of 147 villages in the district of Rohtak, selected based on purposive sampling for this work. In the interview schedule, both open and close-ended questions were included to avoid subjectivity and ascertain the reality and validity of the data. This study reveals that socio-economic attributes like unemployment, landlessness or possession of small-sized landholding, negligible or no inherited assets, physical deformity, low income, low literacy level etc. of grooms in Rohtak district pose hurdles in arranging matrimonial alliances at the local level or with brides of neighbouring states/districts. Besides these socio-economic factors, cultural value systems and norms like adherence to the rules of khap panchayats; non-acceptance of inter-caste marriages; absence of marriage barter system; and addiction to hukkah or drugs, alcohol etc. prevalent in Rohtak district also determine the marriage institution and make it extremely difficult for the local grooms to arrange brides within the state and therefore compel them to bring brides from the other near/distant states.

Keywords: Marriage Migration, Khap Panchayat, Inter-caste Marriage, Size of landholding

1. Introduction

Empirical studies indicate that the determinants of migration and migration intentions differ for men and women. Typically, men are seen as the primary income earners, while women are expected to contribute to family and parental support (Jong, 2000). Integrating gender into theoretical models of international migration involves more than merely adding a sex variable; it requires a nuanced understanding of how gender roles and expectations influence migration intentions and behaviours (Ellis et al., 1996). This comprehensive approach reveals the complexities of migration within the broader context of marriage and family dynamics, highlighting the interplay between social capital, economic aspirations, and gender-specific roles and expectations. This geographical separation, resulting from historical patterns of migration and non-migration, shapes the social fabric of communities and the capacity for intergenerational support. The implications are profound, affecting not only immediate care needs but also long-term social cohesion and the sustainability of local communities. As migration continues to shape demographic landscapes, understanding these regional variations becomes essential for planning social services and support systems that accommodate the needs of both older and younger populations. Regional disparities in family networks influence the availability of familial support and care, which is crucial for ageing populations. In areas where family members are more dispersed due to migration, the burden of care may fall more heavily on institutional services or specific individuals within the family who remain local. Conversely, regions with denser family networks may experience more robust informal support systems, easing the care responsibilities of individual family members and potentially enhancing the living conditions for all generations. The relationship between marriage and family is often assumed to be straightforward, but with the increasing diversity of family forms in the 21st century, it warrants reevaluation. The expansion of networks contributes to the development of a "culture of migration." Social capital, which includes networks, connections, information, trust, and norms of reciprocity shared by connected groups (Wacquant & Bourdieu 1992; Brisson & Usher, 2005; Woolcock, 1998), plays a crucial role in this culture. In this context, migration is viewed as an accepted and desirable method for achieving social and economic mobility, higher income, or improved lifestyle goals that are often unattainable solely through local resources. Regional variations in access to local family networks have significant implications for future care burdens and the living conditions of both older and younger generations (Lundholm, 2015).

The geographical distance between family members is a long-term consequence of accumulated migration and non-migration by individuals and their relatives. The analysis of early marriage reveals significant negative consequences, driven by factors such as illiteracy, entrenched traditional social structures, poverty, and economic instability. These factors collectively create devastating impacts on the social, physiological, and psychological well-being of individuals, families, and society at large. Nour (2006) has extensively studied the impact of early marriage, particularly in developing countries, noting

that it often leads to poor health outcomes for young girls, limited educational opportunities, and social isolation. Mathur, Greene, and Malhotra (2003) have also discussed how early marriage affects girls' personal development, restricting their autonomy and perpetuating cycles of poverty. Additionally, Jensen and Thornton (2003) emphasize that early marriage often leads to diminished life prospects, as it is typically associated with low levels of education and increased exposure to domestic violence. These studies underline how early marriage, compounded by socio-economic and cultural factors, has far-reaching effects on the individual's well-being and perpetuates a cycle of disadvantage within the community. Moreover, the incongruous gender relations within marriage migration contexts are examined to understand how these disparities manifest and affect women's lived experiences. Inter-caste and inter-religion marriages in India face significant social challenges and stigmas, making such unions difficult for couples to navigate. Traditionally, marriages within the same caste and religion have been the societal norm, and deviation from these norms often attracts social disapproval. However, the processes of modernization, westernization, democratization, and development have begun to bring about positive changes in Indian society, slowly altering perceptions and practices related to marriage.

The decision to migrate is often influenced by the existence of and participation in social networks that connect people across different geographical locations (Phizacklea, 1999). Migration is a complex process driven by a combination of economic, social, political, cultural, and personal factors (Halfacree, 2004). As Indian society continues to evolve, the increasing influence of global cultural trends and internal socio-economic developments are expected to further challenge and transform traditional marriage practices. This ongoing transformation reflects broader changes in societal attitudes towards caste, religion, and the acceptance of diverse family structures. Endogamy, or marrying within one's caste, is often seen as a way to preserve caste purity and maintain the social order. It is argued that endogamy protects women from the discrimination they might face in inter-caste marriages, where they are often not fully accepted and treated differently. The Indian marriage system is deeply rooted in lineage and identity markers, such as individual names, family names, village names, and gotras (clans).

These identifiers are designed to maintain social structures and avoid issues such as congenital diseases by preventing close-knit marriages. Marrying outside of one's caste in India involves several social and cultural implications, particularly for women. Traditionally, women who marry outside their caste are expected to adopt their husband's surname and, consequently, their husband's caste identity. This shift means that women are often seen as leaving their original caste, and their children are typically considered part of the father's caste, following the patrilineal norm. As a result, women do not contribute to the growth or continuation of their birth community, leading to concerns about the erosion of caste identities. However, these traditions have been changing, especially over the past few centuries. Modernization, globalization, and changing social attitudes have started to challenge the rigid caste boundaries and the associated practices. The deterioration of strict

caste-based traditions reflects a broader societal shift towards more inclusive and egalitarian values. In contemporary India, there is a growing recognition of the need to move beyond caste-based discrimination and to foster a more inclusive society. While traditional practices still hold sway in many areas, the increasing acceptance of inter-caste marriages signals a slow but ongoing transformation. This shift is driven by factors such as education, urbanization, and increased social mobility, which are gradually changing the rigid caste-based social fabric. The traditional Indian caste system imposes significant social and cultural constraints on inter-caste marriages, especially for women, ongoing societal changes are challenging these norms. The movement towards greater acceptance of inter-caste marriages represents a significant shift in the cultural and social landscape, promoting a more inclusive and egalitarian society.

It is in this context that the present study examines the role of socio-economic status and cultural value system in inter-state marriages in Rohtak district with special reference to the villages chosen for this purpose by highlighting the deterrents of local matrimonial alliances and factors promoting inter-state marriage migration in the study area.

2. Methodology and Sources of Data

This paper draws upon a larger study of inter-state marriages in Rohtak district, Haryana. Qualitative research methods, consisting of in-depth interviews, focus groups, note-making, and participant observation (the researcher stayed with the group of target women for a certain period) were employed in 15 villages in the district of Rohtak. A sample of 15 villages, representing 10 per cent of the total number of villages in Rohtak district (147), was taken for sampling purposes. The number of villages in Rohtak, Meham, Sampla, and Kalanaur tehsils is 59, 37, 24, and 27, respectively. These four tehsils constitute 40, 25, 17, and 18 per cent of the total number of villages, respectively.

Thus, the sample was taken in the same proportion, i.e., 6 villages (40 per cent) from Rohtak, 4 villages (25 per cent) from Meham, 3 villages (17 per cent) from Sampla, and 2 villages (18 per cent) from Kalanaur. Six hundred households identified through the snowball technique were visited for data collection from these villages. In the interview schedule, both open and close-ended questions were included to avoid subjectivity and to ascertain the reliability and validity of the information. The sampled population which has been covered through the interview schedule included 600 inter-state migrant brides and their husbands. The relevant sets of data related to the various socio-economic and cultural aspects like nature of employment, size of land holding, level of education, caste, the prevalence of inter-caste marriage, influence of khap panchayats etc. have been collected from the migrant brides and grooms; anganwadi workers; Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) and members of concerned village panchayats.

3. Results and Discussions

As far as the traditional values are concerned, Haryana with a deep-rooted

connection to its rural and agricultural heritage, continues to attach great importance to its culture, though it is fast changing in the modern-day context. Traditional values such as respect for elders; a joint family system; strong work ethics etc. are highly valued. As agriculture plays a significant role in the state's economy, the farming way of life has shaped many of these values. Haryana's socio-cultural value system is thus a blend of traditional values and modernization and is influenced by its agricultural heritage, religious diversity, and growing urban population. It is important to note that Haryana, like other parts of India, faces social challenges such as caste-based discrimination and unequal access to resources.

Efforts are, no doubt, being made to address these issues through policies and awareness campaigns. Marriage is a sacred institution that reflects the socio-cultural value of the generations of both the bride and the groom. In the Indian state of Haryana, the institution of marriage is significantly affected by the value system and socio-cultural aspects. Caste panchayats (Chowdhry, 2004) are traditional panchayats, which are patriarchal and revivalist in nature; though they have no legal base, they reinforce traditions and norms, especially in marriage practices in rural Haryana. In Haryana, marriages are strictly marked by caste endogamy and gotra exogamy and there are prescribed rules regarding social and spatial distances. Inter-caste and intra-gotra marriages are not only ridiculed and boycotted but sometimes also end with the elimination of both the boy and the girl involved in such an affair. Some of the aspects of the socio-cultural value system and marriage practices in Rohtak include: the prevalence of domestic violence against women; low sex ratio; female feticide; dominance of caste-specific marriage norms etc.

The analysis of the primary data reveals that there are many aspects of socioeconomic status and cultural value systems which affect the institution of marriage in Haryana. Following is a brief discussion of the attributes of socio-economic status and dimensions of cultural value systems which significantly affect the process of such matrimonial alliances in the selected villages.

3.1 Socio-economic Status and Inter-State Marriage Migration

Nature of Employment

In Haryana, employment plays a significant role in shaping marriage dynamics, influenced by socioeconomic, cultural, and gender norms. The interplay between work opportunities, income security and marriage decisions is deeply rooted in both traditional expectations and evolving economic realities. Poor economic conditions, such as landlessness or small-sized landholdings, unemployment, lack of good government or private jobs, and negligible ancestral/inherited property/assets, significantly affect marriage relations. Moreover, these challenges were exemplified by the fact that Haryana, in December 2022, had the highest unemployment rate of 37.4 per cent in India. (Manav, The Print, 11 January, 2023, CMIE, 2023). These factors contributed to the complexities within marriage relations and underscored the importance of addressing economic disparities to

improve the well-being and stability of inter-state migrant brides. This is also evident from the primary data collected through the field survey. It was found that 94.66 per cent of the groom respondents who did not get married in Rohtak/Haryana itself and got married in other states were unemployed. 568 out of 600 such respondents cited lack of employment as the reason for their inter-state marriage. Since employment and job security are one of the major criteria for marriage in Haryana, the unemployed respondents got married in other state/s.

Table 1 Surveyed Respondents (Grooms): Socio-economic Status and Inter-State Marriage Migration

Sr. No	Indicators of Socio-economic Status	Number of Respondents	Per cent
1	Unemployment	568	94.66
2	Landlessness or Small-Sized Landholding	551	91.83
3	No Inherited Assets	558	93
4	Low Level of Education (Up to High School)	449	74.83
5	Age Factor (30+)	475	79.16
6	Physical Deformity	121	20.16
7	Low Level of Income	403	67

Source: Based on Field Survey (October 2023-April 2024)

In the study area, traditional and economic factors converge to create barriers in the local marriage market. Unemployment, lack of land and inherited assets, low level of education, delayed marriage etc. are the most dominant factors driving individuals toward inter-state marriages, reflecting the importance of financial stability, social status, and education in marriage decisions (Table 1). Families and individuals who face difficulty in finding local matches due to the above-mentioned reasons are often pushed to seek alliances across state borders, where expectations may differ. It is important to mention here that many of the respondents were affected by more than one factor which compelled them to marry outside the state.

Size of Landholding

Haryana is predominantly an agrarian society where land ownership is a crucial indicator of wealth and status. Families with no land or small-sized landholding face significant challenges in securing marriages within the state, as land ownership is often linked to financial stability. 91.83 per cent (Table 1) of the groom respondents indicated this as a key factor, suggesting that families with no or limited agricultural assets are more likely to turn to inter-state marriages, where the bride's family may not consider the ownership of land as an essential criterion for marriage purposes.

Inherited Assets

In Haryana's traditional society, inherited assets provide long-term financial security, making men with such assets more desirable in the marriage market. Without inherited assets men are often seen as less stable, pushing families to seek alliances outside the state, where poorer families might be contacted for matrimonial alliance. The absence of inherited assets, such as inherited property or wealth, affected 93 per cent (Table1) of the groom respondents' ability to find marriage partners locally.

Level of Education

In Haryana, where educational qualifications are becoming increasingly important for both jobs and social status, men with low levels of education struggle to find suitable local brides. Inter-state marriages, often with families in less economically developed regions, might offer more flexible expectations regarding education. The primary data revealed that a low level of educational attainment, particularly when limited to high school or below, affected 74.83 per cent (Table 1) of groom respondents and persuaded them to inter-state marriages. Education plays a critical role in employment opportunities and socio-economic mobility.

Age Factor

In Haryana, as in many parts of India, there is a cultural preference for younger grooms, and men who delay marriage, often due to late employment or educational pursuits, may find themselves with fewer local options. Inter-state marriages become a viable alternative for older men, where age may not be as critical a criterion for marriage. In the present study, 79.16 per cent (Table1) of groom respondents in 30-plus age group highlighted the challenges in finding local marriage partners.

Physical Fitness

Physical appearance and good health are traditionally considered important in the marriage market and men with physical deformities may face rejection from local families. While this factor is not as dominant as unemployment or small-sized landholding, it still drives some families to seek inter-state marriages where expectations might be more flexible or influenced by other compensating factors like personality or income. The respondents in the present study who cited physical deformity as a factor were suffering from low levels of physical deformities like broken limbs, short height, etc. They did not get any marriage offer locally and opted to get married outside the state. Though physical deformity was a less notable factor, affecting only 20 per cent (Table 1) of the respondents in the present study.

Level of Income

Income is a key determinant of marriage suitability, especially in regions where

dowry and economic contributions are a major consideration. Families with low incomes struggle to find local marriage prospects, as they might not be able to meet the financial expectations associated with such marriages. This drives individuals to seek alliances outside the state, where financial expectations might be less rigid. Income disparities in Haryana, compounded by rising costs of living and dowry demands, make it difficult for families with lower incomes to secure local marriages. Inter-state marriages can provide more accessible alternatives for these families. In the present study, 67 per cent (Table 1) of the groom respondents revealed that their annual income was less than Rs one lakh which became a major hindrance in arranging brides from the local area and they were forced to get married in another state.

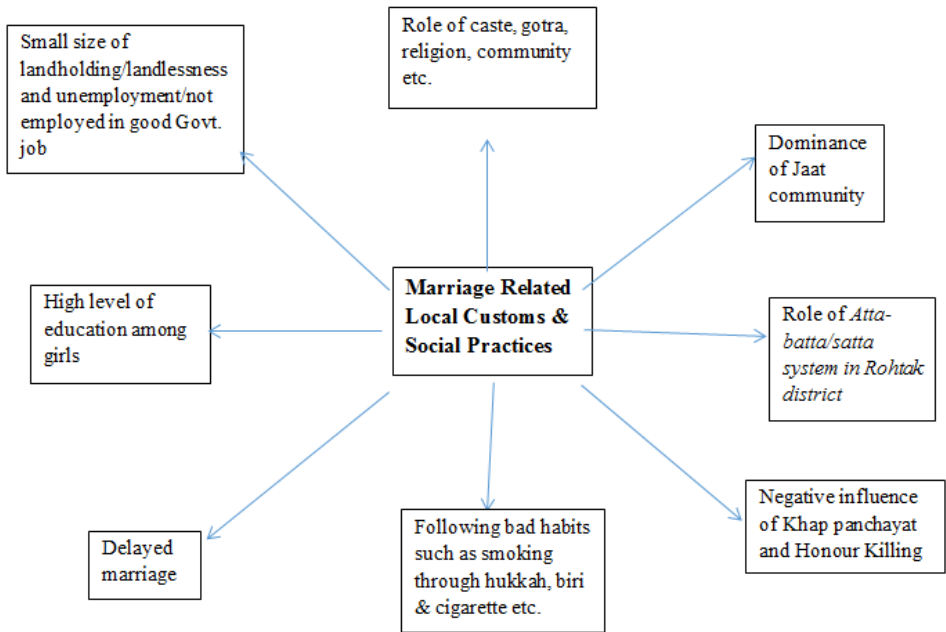


Figure 1 Surveyed Respondents: Factors Affecting Socio-economic Status and Inter-State Marriage Migration

Source: Based on Field Survey (October 2023-April 2024)

3.2 Cultural Value System and Inter-State Marriage Migration

Kaur (2012) observed that there are two reasons: poverty and dowry, for a cross-regional bride to migrate for marriage from Bengal or other such states. Data shows that most women married out are from poor rural or urban working-class families. They are frequently forced into marriage with less prosperous males who may also have personal shortcomings and family disadvantages, such as being older, having previously been married, being alcoholics, being widowers with numerous children, or having some sort of physical impairment. Haryana stands as an epitome of gender inequality and patriarchy,

with a cultural fixation on honour, often culminating in diverse forms of violence against women, both within as well as outside the home (Gill, 2017). Another important form of violence against women is the purchase of women from other states. The brides who are brought from other states find it very difficult to acclimatize themselves in a new socio-cultural setup (Dheer, Deccan Herald, 2019). Some studies also indicate that such brides also become the victim of domestic violence and exploitation (Bajwa, The New Indian Express, 9 September 2019). The sex-ratio scenario in Haryana shows disturbing trends. Daughter aversion and son preference are expressed through the rampant use of sex-selective technologies leading to abortions, neglect of female children, and female infanticide (Sudha and Rajan 1999; Ahlawat 2013). The aversion for daughters could also be linked to inheritance rights of property, as the dominant landowning caste groups are strictly against girls' share in property (Ahlawat 2012).

Numerous cases are being reported in print and electronic media about young couples who have eloped or sought police protection committed suicide or were killed in the name of 'family honour' and, in extreme cases, asked to tie a rakhi (holy thread) and enter into sibling relationships. In such a situation, where the universality of marriage is the norm, restrictions on marriage and marriage squeeze become increasingly significant resulting in a limited choice of mate selection.

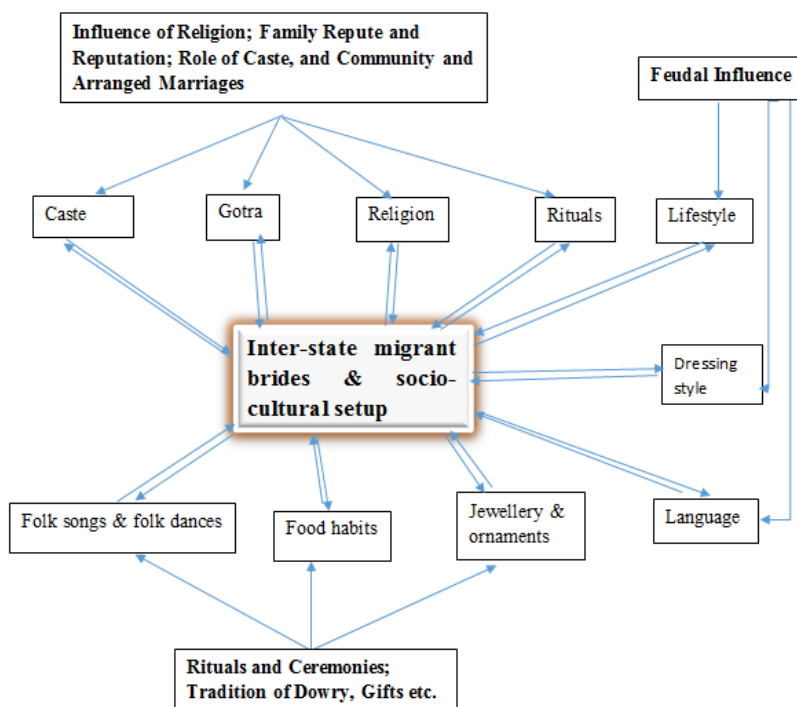


Figure 2 Surveyed Respondents: Marriage and Socio-Cultural Value System

Source: Based on Field Survey (October 2023-April 2024)

The prevalence of social practices can vary significantly from one region to another and is influenced by a wide range of factors, including culture, tradition, religion, and socio-economic conditions. Social practices can also change over time due to evolving societal norms and government policies. Here are some examples of prevalent social practices in Rohtak: like behaviour of local people, local customs; honour killings; the role of khap panchyat; *atta-batta/satta system* (barter system) in marriages; drug addiction; delayed marriages etc (Figure 3).

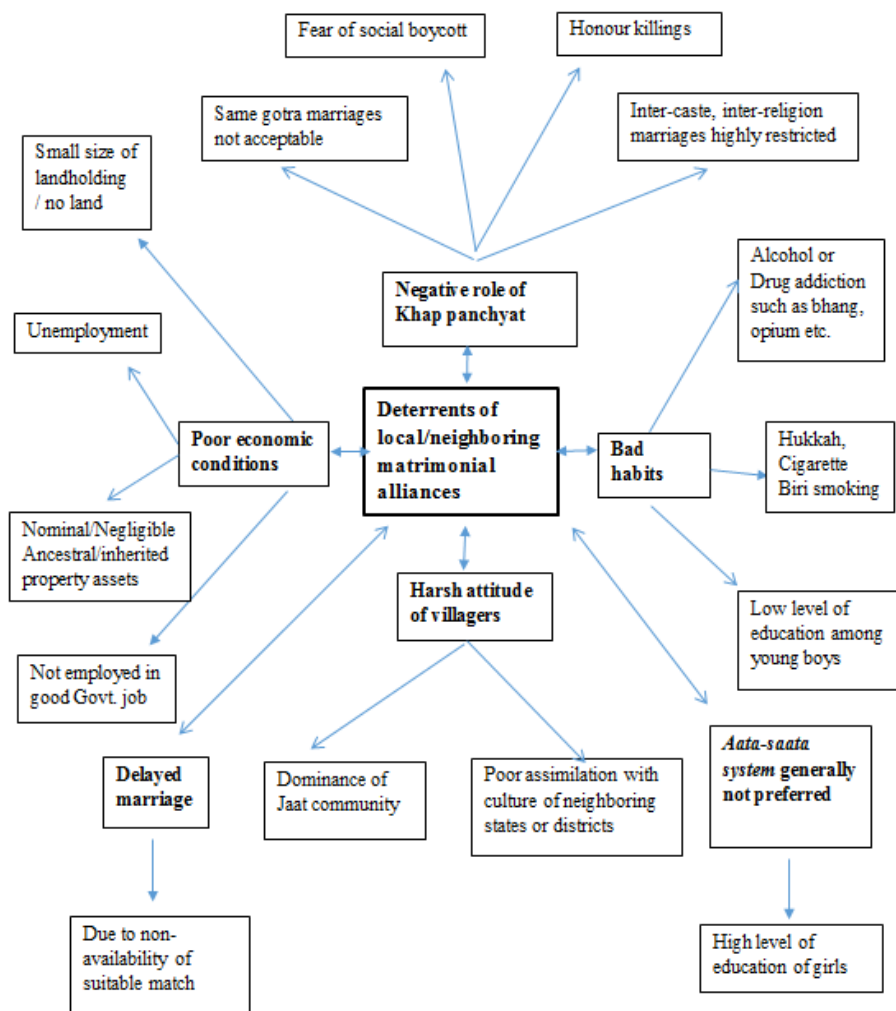


Figure 3 Surveyed Respondents: Deterrents of Local/Neighboring Matrimonial Alliances

Source: Based on Field Survey (October 2023-April 2024)

The state of Haryana is endowed with cultural richness and is undergoing social changes, with an emphasis on education, gender equality, and economic development. Rohtak, a district in the state of Haryana, has a cultural value system and marriage-related practices that reflect the broader culture of the state. This section discusses the inter-state marriages in Rohtak district in the light of the cultural value system.

3.3 Reputation of the Family Khap Panchayats and Regulation of Marriages

Marriages are often seen as a reflection of the family's social standing and there is a desire to maintain a positive image in the community. Caste continues to be a significant factor in marriage decisions in Rohtak. Generally speaking, families prefer arranged marriages within their caste or community, adhering to traditional social hierarchies. Inter-caste marriages, however, becoming more common, especially in urban areas, may face societal resistance in some cases. The religion of the families involved plays a significant role in marriage-related practices. Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim wedding ceremonies in Rohtak, follow, to a large extent, their respective religious customs and traditions. Same-caste marriages in Haryana are deeply entrenched in the region's cultural and social fabric, where maintaining caste purity and upholding family honour is paramount. These marriages are driven by the tradition of endogamy, which ensures that families marry within their caste to preserve their social status, lineage, and cultural values. Khap Panchayats, influential caste councils in rural Haryana, play a significant role in enforcing same-caste marriages and often oppose inter-caste unions, sometimes using social sanctions or even violence to maintain these norms.

Khap Panchayats, a type of caste council in Haryana, exemplify the powerful and discriminatory cultural norms prevalent in the state. The term "Khap" refers to the territorial divisions within the Jat caste, organized into exogamous patrilineal clans (gotras). Members of the same gotra are considered united by ties of putative consanguinity and a sense of brotherhood (bhaichara). Historically, Khaps were formed by male elders of the village community and continue to command universal respect, basing their judgments on life experiences and accumulated wisdom (Chowdhry, 2007). These Panchayats regulate marriages in villages based on caste, gotra, and the village of the marrying couples. Marriages that violate the norms set by the Panchayats incur the wrath of these councils, impacting both the couples and their families. This practice also highlights a violation of constitutional norms, including the fundamental right to life and liberty. 85 per cent of the total respondents from the field survey admitted the supremacy of Khap panchayats. They were not willing to overrule the dominance and norms of khap panchayat and to marry in other castes within the same state. That is why inter-caste marriages with brides from other states are more prevalent in Rohtak than in other parts of the state.

3.4 The dominance of the Jaat Community and the Denial of Inter-Caste Marriages

Historically, the Jat community in Rohtak has had a significant presence and influence, especially in rural areas. Some remnants of the feudal system, where landlords

wielded power and influence over the local population, can still be observed in certain regions. The socio-cultural value system and marriage-related practices in Rohtak reflect a mix of tradition and modernity. While arranged marriages and traditional customs remain significant, there is also a noticeable shift towards more individual autonomy and choice in marriage decisions, particularly among the younger generation influenced by changing social and economic dynamics. Some of these values are inherent in the old. Some of these socio-cultural values may include caste, gotra, religion, lifestyle, and rituals (Figure 3). Arranged marriages are prevalent in Rohtak, as they are in many parts of India. In these marriages, families play a significant role in selecting a suitable partner for their children. Compatibility in terms of caste, religion, social status, and family background is often given considerable importance. Mutual understanding, personal rapport and affinity among the partners (spouses) are seldom considered. Rohtak is one such district in the state which is dominated by the Jaat community and is set apart due to their harsh vocal expression (*Lathmare*). A commonly used local proverb, *Ek Rohtaki 100 kotaki barber hai* (meaning one person of Rohtak equals one hundred persons with sticks in their hands), testifies to the harsh attitude of the dominating Jaat community and thus hinders the establishment of marriage relations with the other castes or religions. In the present study, 97 per cent of the respondents belonging to the Jaat community opted to follow the local norm and not to get married in another caste within the state. This is one of the major socio-cultural value systems or norms which leads to inter-state marriages in Rohtak district.

3.5 Aata Saata or Marriage Barter System

Traditional Gender Roles continue to influence marriage practices in Rohtak. Generally speaking, the custom is that the bride will move into the groom's family and accept all household responsibilities. However, these roles are gradually evolving, especially in urban areas, with more women pursuing education and careers, even after their marriage. *Aata Saata* (matrimonial barter system) involving the exchange of brides is followed, in some districts such as Kaithal Karnal, Jind, Kurukshetra, Sirsa, Fatehabad of Haryana. Aata Satta is more than just an exchange of women from two families or clans; it rather establishes the shadow of mutual threat across marriages. This system of marriage, however, is not prevalent in Rohtak district, because in Rohtak, the female enrolment ratio in higher education is higher as compared to the males. In 2019-2020, the female enrolment ratio in Rohtak was 107.37 per cent while it was 89.15 per cent for males (All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) Report, 2019-2020). As more females pursue higher education than males, in Rohtak they tend to avoid the *Aata Saata* system because of the mismatch of educational qualifications of prospective brides and grooms. 52 per cent of respondents in the study area also admitted the avoiding the *atta satta* system because of social reasons.

One of the respondents, aged 37 years, belonging to the Jaat community revealed the situation of *Atta-Satta* in the following words:

“Though there was a girl in my close family who could have been a potential match for me my family members decided not to accept this arrangement as the practice of marriage barter is not prevalent in this area. My family argued that such an arrangement would lead to negative comments and a loss of social respect in both the village and society. Such an argument led to the decision to seek a bride from Bihar, a distant state to avoid potential backlash from the community.” This reflects the strong influence of social expectations and reputation in determining marriage decisions in traditional settings.

3.6 Nonacceptance of Smokers and Alcoholics as Grooms

Haryana is one of the top 10 states using intoxicating substances (Govt. of India, 2019). A large number of young boys in Haryana are into the bad habit of smoking (through hukkah, biri cigarettes etc). Are not considered suitable for matrimonial alliances. Alcohol addiction is another factor responsible for not letting young boys get married within the state. Men who get addicted to alcohol, smoking and other types of intoxicating substances, thus, lose the opportunity to get married within the same state or locally as the family members of marriageable girls usually take care of such things before marrying their daughter. As it becomes difficult to find suitable matches locally or from neighbouring states or districts for men who are addicted to alcohol, smoking and/or other types of intoxication; agents /families from distant states are contacted to identify suitable brides for such young men. Primary data collected in the present study revealed that 58 per cent of the total groom respondents were regular smokers and/or drug addicts and were, therefore, married to brides belonging to other states.

4. Conclusion

This paper attempts to identify and analyse inter-state marriage migration in light of socioeconomic status and cultural value systems in selected villages in Rohtak district in Haryana. The findings reveal that socio-economic factors like unemployment, landlessness or small-sized landholdings, non-availability of inherited assets, physical deformity, low income and low level of education are noteworthy deterrents in arranging brides locally or from neighbouring states for prospective grooms in Rohtak district. Similarly, value systems and norms including adherence to the rules of Khap Panchayats, non-acceptance of inter-caste marriages, absence of marriage barter system and addiction to drugs and alcohol, prevalent in the district, also determine the marriage institution and force many young boys to get married in other states. Socioeconomic status and cultural value system of Haryana in general and Rohtak in particular thus hinder inter-caste marriages within the state and at the same time it does offer opportunities to explore marriage options beyond the boundaries of the state. The implications of such inter-state, inter-caste and sometimes inter-religion marriages need to be explored further to understand the living conditions and health status of such inter-state migrant brides who might be facing challenges about adjustment and assimilation in the new socio-economic and cultural set-up.

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