

Role of Ethnicity in Mate Selection Mechanism among Educated Female in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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ABSTRACT

The present study probes the role of ethnicity in mate selection among educated females in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The data for the study were collected from 278 educated females working in three public sector universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through a pre-tested questionnaire. Results obtained through Chi-Square statistics report a strong tendency of female marrying outside of their ethnic groups. The major role in this respect was played by the female education, their exposure to mass media and less effective role of religion. Marrying outside the ethnic group was found not a problem for both the female from the upper and lower class. More or less same was the case of middle class females despite of security, adjustment, fear of divorce and even death threat to female while marrying outside the family and the ethnic group. The study recommends a positive role of mass-media, educational institutions and religious leaders especially by emphasizing on making balance between marrying in and outside the family and discouraging the patriarchal norms that still influence the mate selection process in one way or the other. Emphasis should also be made to discourage materialistic, idealistic and western oriented tendencies among educated females through promotion of Islamic and cultural teachings about simplicity and humbleness.

Keywords

Ethnicity, Mate Selection, Education

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Introduction

Mate selection is one of the most important decisions in a person's life. It is not a simple but complex phenomenon for every male and female. Before they move for the act of marriage, both have different considerations. The process of mate selection in fact consists of a series of steps where decision regarding mate is made through external characteristics such as appearance, social class or manners, attitude, beliefs and common values (Bee, 1994). Other factors determining mate selection include paternal and maternal preferences that predominantly prevailed more in traditional societies. However, for many people today, romance is now an important determinant in selecting a life partner (Islam, 1992; Frank and Gill, 2002; Rehman, 2002 and Chaudhry, 2004). Though variations in mate selection do exist in various societies; the main philosophy is the reproduction, continuity of family name as explicit elements while sex satisfaction as implicit in nature. Human physical considerations such as age, bravery, beauty are some additional influencing factors (Barbara and David, 1989).

Mate selection, rather getting married in Pakistani context, has been widely perceived a matter of extreme significance in Pakistanis' lives. It is not just an agreement between two partners but an exercise which involves religion and culture as well. The decisions of parents and other family members are considered highly important in this regard. The mate selection yardsticks differ from family to family based on their unique way of thinking (Gulzar and Husain, 2015). Marriage and Family Encyclopedia (2012) U.S Bureau of Census (2002) and Yon (2000) report an increase in inter cultural dating and marriage among college students in Asian countries and US. Change was reported in form of friendship and romantic relationship the members belonging to other cultures such relationships start with the understanding and lead towards marriage. It was mainly due to dramatic socio-economic changes in many of the Asian societies where the trend towards getting married with the male from other culture has been found enhanced increased. The communication sources also influenced the young generation perception about marital role and marriage particularly with members from other cultures. Inductive methods were applied to

compare the perception about marital role among the adults belonging to various South Asian countries and USA. The other major factors affecting the formation of such perception included knowledge about culture, gender, marital relationship through social interaction. Banerjee et al. (2010) mentioned that in India in recent opinion polls a majority of 74% was against inter caste marriages. The sampled population was highly educated and well-off. Strong preference for inter-caste mate selection prevailed in Indian society. Maliki (2009) reported culture plays a moderate role in mate selection in Malaysia. Many of the Malaysian found marrying people from other cultures but not very different from their own. Gross Bard- Shechtman and Fu (2002) and O Larry (2001) reported high rate of inter marriage as the most distinctive characteristic of the people living in Hawaii. Generally, it was prevalent more than the main land USA.

Fu (2000) and Fu and Heaton, (1997) and Labov and Jacobs (1986) explained that in Hawaii, due to their relatively lower socioeconomic status, Pacific Islanders who out married Caucasians or Asians tend to have higher job prestige than Pacific Islanders who in married, while the opposite is true with Caucasians and Asians. There seems to exist a somewhat segregated marriage market where status matching cuts across racial and ethnic group boundaries. In other words, those with very high and very low social status as measured by education and job prestige are isolated and thus are more likely to marry within their groups rather than to marry out. Hanassab and Tidwell (1998) examined the attitude of the young Jewish Iranian regarding inter and intra marriage. The study probes the difference between male and female Iranian selection of a mate. The results report a more liberal attitude among the young Muslim Iranian than the Jewish Iranian. It was attributed to higher acculturation and assimilation of Iranian Muslims in main stream American culture. The trend was liberal towards attitude mate selection whereas at the same time, the ethnic identities made a low degree of effect on inter marriage. The same was the case with respect to the more traditional attitude of mate selection among the more religious Jewish and Muslim Iranians. A strong orientation towards traditional pattern of mate selection was found again among the more

religious. The orientation towards marrying with the mate from same background was found more again among the young adults from religious families. As a whole, dating was considered a significant factor of mate selection among the attitudinal behaviors of the respondent. It has been called a step towards mate selection. Such type of norms were more prevalent among the family with more liberal views regarding sex roles, equality on gender bases and selecting mate by themselves than leaving on parents. Heaton and Albracht (1996) reported socio- political atmosphere of a geographical region exert influence on individual in mate selection. The studies found variation in inter- marriages on the bases of geographical location and time with steady increase in inter marriages in US during the last 50 years. This was attributed to decline in segregation of residence, work place and emphasis on all basic civil rights to all the groups in US, hence resulting in a positive impact on inter-racial marriages. Results are supported by recent census report of having increase in marriages on inter-racial bases from 1980-2000.

Research Methodology

The present study explores the role of ethnicity in mate selection in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The data for the study were collected from three educational institutions i.e. University of Peshawar, the University of Agriculture, Peshawar and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University, Peshawar. According to official record of the three institutions, there were 661 educated female employees with a break up of 242, 85 and 214 respectively. The main reason of the selection of the three institutions was getting information from females belonging to diverse areas, environment and cultures. Data were collected from female teachers and females working on different posts in the selected universities. Though a large sample size gives better results but due to time and human resource constraints, a total of 278 sampled respondents were selected for data collection through sampling procedure designed by Sekaran (2003). The sample size within each educational institution was determined through the proportional sampling method. However, the samples from each of the selected area were picked through lottery method of simple random sampling.

The study was based on both the primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through a pretested questionnaire which was developed on the basis of study objectives, research questions, conceptual framework and other required information. A team of three investigators was hired and trained on the questionnaire. All the important sections of the tools of data collection were thoroughly discussed with the intention to obtain accurate and quality data. The whole task of data collection was carefully monitored by the researcher herself and this exercise took about 03 months.

After collection, the data was edited and entered into computer. The data was processed and analyzed through SPSS where the basic results were drawn through frequencies and percentages (Ullah and Muhammad, 2020; Ullah et al., 2020). Further, in order to assess the association between the dependent variable and independent variables, Chi –Square and Fisher Exact tests were also used.

Results and Dissscussion

This section describes the results after the analysis of data. It starts with the description of the perception of sampled respondents about physical characteristics in connection with selecting mate for marriage and followed by measuring the association between the dependent variable i-e the mate selection with the independent variable i-e Ethnicity.

Ethnicity of Mate

In connection with the perception of sampled females about the ethnicity of mate, table 1 discloses that 85.3 percent sampled respondents told that they would like to marry with a person from their own ethnic group but for, 67.3 of the cases percent told it is difficult for females to adjust in another culture after marriage. Furthermore, 59.4 percent sampled respondents expressed that our community does not accept male partner from another ethnic group. In addition, 57.6 percent of the sampled respondents believed that there is fear of divorce among marriages outside ones ethnic group. There is less security for females who marry outside their ethnic group was expressed by 58.3 percent of the respondent's sampled respondents. Marriage outside ethnic group is not a major consideration

for upper class families told by 54.7 percent of the respondents. In a Study by Fu (2000) and Fu and Heaton, (1997) and Labov and Jacobs (1986) explained that in Hawaii, due to their relatively lower socioeconomic status, Pacific Islanders who out married Caucasians or Asians tend to have higher job prestige than Pacific Islanders who in married, while the opposite is true with Caucasians and Asians. There seems to exist a somewhat segregated marriage market where status matching cuts across racial and ethnic group boundaries. In other words, those with very high and very low social status as measured by education and job prestige are isolated and thus are more likely to marry within their groups rather than to marry out.

Pre-conceived ideas about a specific ethnic group affect mate selection mentioned by 49.3 percent sampled respondents and fear of death is present if you marry outside your ethnic group respectively. It is difficult to live with a male from your own ethnic group than another ethnic group disclosed was by 40.3 percent respondents. In lower class ethnic groups do not consider ethnicity as a major factor for choosing a mate perceived by 34.9 percent respondents. Parents have allowed females to marry outside their ethnic group viewed by 33.5 percent sampled respondents. Result was in line with the findings of Maliki (2009) states that culture plays a moderate role in mate selection in Malaysia. Many of the Malaysian found marrying people from other cultures but not very different from their own. Generally, Malaysians were liberal in accepting the mate with previous marriage. The tendency towards accepting a female with children from previous marriages was found more among males than females. During this process, the role of age was considered moderate but more important for males. On the other hand, age was more valued by Nigerian students studying in Malaysia. The results as a whole were called good for all those who intended to get married and select mate with different cultural areas and characteristics.

Table -1 Importance of Ethnicity in Mate Selection

S.#	ETHNICITY	YES	NO	Don't Know
1	You would like to marry with a person from your ethnic group.	237(85.3)	31(11.2)	10(3.6)
2	Ethnicity is not a major preference in mate selection nowadays.	103(37.1)	151(54.3)	24(8.6)
3	Ethnicity has been replaced by wealth and status of male in mate selection.	134(48.2)	133(47.8)	11(4.0)
4	It is difficult to live with a male from your own ethnic group than another ethnic group.	112(40.3)	134(48.2)	32(11.5)
5	Parents have allowed females in your family to marry outside their ethnic group.	93(33.5)	150(54.0)	35(12.6)
6	Pre conceived ideas about a specific ethnic group affect mate selection.	137(49.3)	54(19.4)	87(31.3)
7	Marriage outside your ethnic group is not a major consideration for upper class families.	152(54.7)	77(27.7)	49(17.6)
8	In lower class ethnic groups do not consider ethnicity as a major factor for choosing a mate.	97(34.9)	125(45.0)	56(20.1)
9	There is less security for females who marry outside their ethnic group.	162(58.3)	70(25.2)	46(16.5)
10	It is difficult for females to adjust in another culture after marriage.	187(67.3)	52(18.7)	39(14.0)
11	There is fear of divorce among marriages outside ones ethnic group.	160(57.6)	78(28.1)	40(14.4)
12	Your community does not accept male partner from another ethnic group.	165(59.4)	77(27.7)	36(12.9)
13	Fear of death is present if you marry outside your ethnic group.	137(49.3)	94(33.8)	47(16.9)

Association between Ethnicity and Mate Selection

Ethnicity is another consideration in mate selection in the traditional countries like Pakistan. People generally prefer to marry within their ethnic group in order to make their marriage and ethnic group strong. Table-2 reports a significant association of mate selection with the statements describing that you would like to marry with a person from your own ethnic group ($p=0.006$). At the same time, it was not a major preference nowadays ($p=0.000$). Females stated that it is difficult to live with a male from their own ethnic groups than other ethnic group ($p=0.002$) and their parents have also allowed to do so ($p=0.000$). The results are supported by Banerjee, et. al (2010) who mentioned that in India in recent opinion polls a majority of 74 percent was against inter caste marriages. The sampled population was highly educated and well-off. Strong preference for inter-caste mate selection prevailed in Indian society. Bahr et. al (1981) reported that intersect marriages are happily taking place due to prior

understanding of partners. In earlier days they were successful but after children some, issues arises due to socialization factors, problems such whose sect the children would follow.

In connection with marrying outside ones ethnic group was not a major consideration of upper (0.002) and lower class ($p=0.000$) families despite of the security ($p=0.020$), adjustment (0.000), fear of divorce (0.000) and even death ($p=0.004$). This was supported Marriage and Family Encyclopedia (2012) U.S Bureau of Census (2002) and Yon (2000) report an increase in inter cultural dating and marriage among college students in Asian countries and US. Change was reported in form of friendship and romantic relationship the members belonging to other cultures such relationships start with the understanding and lead towards marriage. It was mainly due to dramatic socio-economic changes in many of the Asian societies where the trend towards getting married with the male from other culture has been found enhanced increased.

The table as a whole reports a strong tendency of females towards marrying outside their ethnic group due to their education, exposure to mass media and less affective role of religion. Females

found preferring male from other ethnic groups despite having security and other issues including adjustment, divorce and fear of death.

Table-2 Association between Ethnicity and Mate Selection

Statements		Mate Selection Mechanism				Chi-square
		Yes	No	Don't Know	Total	
You would like to marry with a person from your ethnic group.	Yes	121(43.5)	114(41.0)	2(0.7)	237(85.3)	14.618 p=0.006
	No	27(9.7)	4(1.4)	0(0.0)	31(11.2)	
	Don't know	5(1.8)	5(1.8)	0(0.0)	10(3.6)	
	Total	153(55.0)	123(44.2)	2(0.7)	278(100.0)	
Ethnicity is not a major preference in mate selection nowadays.	Yes	73(26.3)	28(10.1)	2(0.7)	103(37.1)	22.384 p=0.000
	No	71(25.5)	80(28.8)	0(0.0)	151(54.3)	
	Don't know	9(3.2)	15(5.4)	0(0.0)	24(8.6)	
	Total	153(55.0)	123(44.2)	2(0.7)	278(100.0)	
Ethnicity has been replaced by wealth and status of male in mate selection.	Yes	74(26.6)	60(21.6)	0(0.0)	134(48.2)	3.620 p=0.460
	No	71(25.5)	60(21.6)	2(0.7)	133(47.8)	
	Don't know	8(2.9)	3(1.1)	0(0.0)	11(4.0)	
	Total	153(55.0)	123(44.2)	2(0.7)	278(100.0)	
It is difficult to live with a male from your own ethnic group than another ethnic group.	Yes	66(23.7)	46(16.5)	0(0.0)	112(40.3)	16.619 p=0.002
	No	70(25.2)	64(23.0)	0(0.0)	134(48.2)	
	Don't know	17(6.1)	13(4.7)	2(0.7)	32(11.5)	
	Total	153(55.0)	123(44.2)	2(0.7)	278(100.0)	
Parents have allowed females in your family to marry outside their ethnic group.	Yes	61(21.9)	32(11.5)	0(0.0)	93(33.5)	27.960 P=0.000
	No	83(29.9)	67(24.1)	0(0.0)	150(54.0)	
	Don't know	9(3.2)	24(8.6)	2(0.7)	35(12.6)	
	Total	153(55.0)	123(44.2)	2(0.7)	278(100.0)	
Pre conceived ideas about a specific ethnic group affect mate selection.	Yes	80(28.8)	57(20.5)	0(0.0)	137(49.3)	7.997 p=0.092
	No	33(11.9)	21(7.6)	0(0.0)	54(19.4)	
	Don't know	40(14.4)	45(16.2)	2(0.7)	87(31.3)	
	Total	153(55.0)	123(44.2)	2(0.7)	278(100.0)	
Marriage outside your ethnic group is not a major consideration for upper class families.	Yes	92(33.1)	60(21.6)	0(0.0)	152(54.7)	16.424 p=0.002
	No	43(15.5)	34(12.2)	0(0.0)	77(27.7)	
	Don't Know	18(6.5)	29(10.4)	2(0.7)	29(17.6)	
	Total	153(55.0)	123(44.2)	2(0.7)	278(100.0)	
In lower class ethnic groups do not consider ethnicity as a major factor for choosing a mate.	Yes	67(24.1)	28(10.1)	2(0.7)	97(34.9)	28.892 p=0.000
	No	70(25.2)	55(19.8)	0(0.0)	125(45.0)	
	Don't know	16(5.8)	40(14.4)	0(0.0)	56(20.1)	
	Total	153(55.0)	123(44.2)	2(0.7)	278(100.0)	
There is less security for females who marry outside their ethnic group.	Yes	98(35.3)	62(22.3)	2(0.7)	162(58.3)	11.623 p=0.020
	No	39(14.0)	31(11.2)	0(0.0)	70(25.2)	
	Don't know	16(5.8)	30(10.8)	0(0.0)	46(16.5)	
	Total	153(55.0)	123(44.2)	2(0.7)	278(100.0)	
It is difficult for females to adjust in another culture after marriage.	Yes	102(36.7)	85(30.6)	0(0.0)	187(67.3)	24.902 p=0.000
	No	38(13.7)	14(5.0)	0(0.0)	52(18.7)	
	Don't know	13(4.7)	24(8.6)	2(0.7)	39(14.0)	
	Total	153(55.0)	123(44.2)	2(0.7)	278(100.0)	
There is fear of divorce among	Yes	92(33.1)	68(24.5)	0(0.0)	160(57.6)	16.413

marriages outside ones ethnic group.	No	46(16.5)	32(11.5)	0(0.0)	78(28.1)	p=0.003
	Don't know	15(5.4)	23(8.3)	2(0.7)	40(14.4)	
	Total	153(55.0)	123(44.2)	2(0.7)	278(100.0)	
Your community does not accept male partner from another ethnic group.	Yes	94(33.8)	69(24.8)	2(0.7)	165(59.4)	2.291 p=0.682
	No	41(14.7)	36(12.9)	0(0.0)	77(27.7)	
	Don't know	18(6.5)	18(6.5)	0(0.0)	36(12.9)	
	Don't know	18(6.5)	18(6.5)	0(0.0)	36(12.9)	
	Total	153(55.0)	123(44.2)	2(0.7)	278(100.0)	
Fear of death is present if you marry outside your ethnic group.	Yes	71(25.5)	66(23.7)	0(0.0)	137(49.3)	15.234 p=0.004
	No	63(22.7)	29(10.4)	2(0.7)	94(33.8)	
	Don't know	19(6.8)	28(10.1)	0(0.0)	47(16.9)	
	Total	153(55.0)	123(44.2)	2(0.7)	278(100.0)	

Conclusions and Recommendations:

Mate selection is an important step towards formation of a family. A sound footing of both the marriage and family depend on selecting an appropriate mate for both males and females. A change in selecting mate from other ethnic group was found. Ethnicity was not the major preference among the sample respondents because it is difficult to live with males from own ethnic group and their parents also allowed them to choose despite the in security, adjustment, divorce and fear of death issues.

A strong tendency was found towards self-selection and love marriages. Females were also found interested in a males belonging to nuclear families, exogamous type of marriages and outside one's ethnic group. This has enhanced the chances of separation and divorce. This should be addressed through making a balance between old and new traditions to make realistic decision on the bases of ones' class, group, ethnicity, religion and other realities of life.

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