

Marriage Migration and Socio-Economic Condition of Other State Brides in Haryana: A Case Study of Hansi Tehsil

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ABSTRACT

Other-state marriage migration is essentially female selective and is widespread in areas with low sex ratio. In Haryana, with an extremely low sex ratio (877 females per thousand males, as per 2011 census) 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 nexus (network) of contacts in other states and bring brides from different parts of India. This study examines socio-economic attributes including lifestyle, customs, rituals, and behavior, landholding size, annual family income, ration etc. of other-state migrant brides for measuring their adjustment and assimilation in the host society for betterment of their lives. It has been observed that a majority of such brides are poor and they have been brought/bought (*mole ke*) from distant states including Empowered Action Group (EAG) states of Bihar, Assam, Orissa, Uttarakhand, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh etc. The study is based on primary data collected from the tehsil Hansi by conducting interviews and making observations by visiting individual households selected for this purpose.

Keywords: Adjustment, Assimilation, Socio-Cultural, Inter-State Migrant Brides.

INTRODUCTION

Haryana has long suffered from a low sex ratio, a problem deeply rooted in social and cultural practices. Sociologists, economists, and demographers have identified several contributing factors, including female feticide, female infanticide, and the deliberate neglect of girls' health and nutrition (Agnihotri, 1995, 1996, 2000). The state follows a strong patrilineal tradition, where sons are expected to carry forward the family lineage. This preference for male children has led to a skewed sex ratio and a subsequent shortage of brides, a phenomenon acknowledged in local studies (Chowdhry 2005; Mishra 2018).

The intense societal pressure to continue the family line has driven many men in Haryana to seek brides from other states. Those unable to find local wives establish networks to 'import' brides from different regions of India. Traditionally, caste-endogamous marriages are preferred, adhering to the customs of both clan (Got or Gotra) and territorial exogamy. Inter-caste marriages are largely considered taboo, and individual autonomy in choosing a spouse is often overridden in favor of maintaining caste hierarchies (Reena Kukreja, 2018).

Additionally, a lack of education among men has further reduced their chances of finding local brides (Kaur, 2004). The impact of this inter-state migration of brides is significant, as it alters the social structure at the micro level. These marriages, often characterized by cultural disparity, involve women who usually have little say in their selection of a spouse. Many are chosen by their parents, and some are widows, teenagers, or even coerced into marriage by family members or agents.

Kaur (2004) notes that such marriages often lead to the formation of extensive networks, where one marriage paves the way for others. Many brides play an active role in expanding this system by introducing their sisters, cousins, or neighbors to prospective grooms, creating dense social connections.

This paper aims to examine the socio-economic status of migrant brides from other states in Haryana's Hansi Tehsil in Hisar district.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In majority of the Indian states, the patriarchal nature of our society necessitates the migration of the new bride to her marital home. In the conventionally arranged marriages the bride is, however, familiar with the broad cultural environment of her marital home (Mishra, 2017). In contrast, the cross-region or across-state bride who has been wedded into a culturally different and geographically distant family is unfamiliar with the socio-cultural environment of her marital family. These marriages which transcend the boundaries of language, region, culture, and sometimes that of caste, religion and economic status are widely prevalent in Indian states with a numerical deficit of females in their population. Jaat brothers (due to poverty and small landholdings) purchased lower caste women belonging to the sweeper or tanner caste, shared her and maintained a common family (Hershman, 1981, pp. 179–180).

Within the context of Indian society as the number of cross-regional marriages rise it becomes imperative to investigate whether and to what extent the experience of acculturative stress influences the well-being of the cross-region brides. As has been documented in ethnographic studies (e.g., Kaur, 2010; Mukherjee, 2013; Ahlawat, 2016), these brides who have been ‘imported’ to compensate for the deficit of women in the host culture, are living in a situation of multiple disadvantages (Singh, Dangi & Bandyopadhyay, in press).

Although a number of studies have explored the phenomenon of cross-regional marriages through various academic prisms (e.g., Premi, 1980; Kaur, 2004; Ahlawat, 2009; Chaudhry & Mohan, 2011; Kukreja & Kumar, 2013), there has been a paucity of psychological investigation into the impact of long-distance marriage migration on the well-being of cross-region brides. However, globally there have been a number of studies on the impact of migration on wellbeing (e.g., Vathi & Duci, 2016; Close, Kouvonen, Bosqui, Patel, O'Reilly & Donnelly, 2016). Many of these studies have used acculturation as the broad theoretical framework for examining the link between migration and well-being. Acculturation “...is viewed as an inevitable process human species undergo in an effort to manage and cope with stressors and changes brought upon by migration and by being in a prolonged contact with a new, host culture” (Kuo, 2014, p.17). This process of cultural adaptation has been shown to have a relationship with the psychological health, socio-cultural adaptation, quality of family relationship and acculturative stress experienced by migrants (Yoon et al., 2012, Ward & Kennedy, 2001; Hwang, 2006; Kuo & Roysircar, 2004, Torres & Rollock, 2004).

Study Area

The present study pertains to tehsil Hansi in Hisar district of state Haryana. Social set up of villages in Hansi has changed with the time, and this process is continuing. This change is now not on villages level but its link with other states as well as national level through the social association between different communities.

Objective:

To identify the socio-economic attributes of other-states brides.

METHODOLOGY

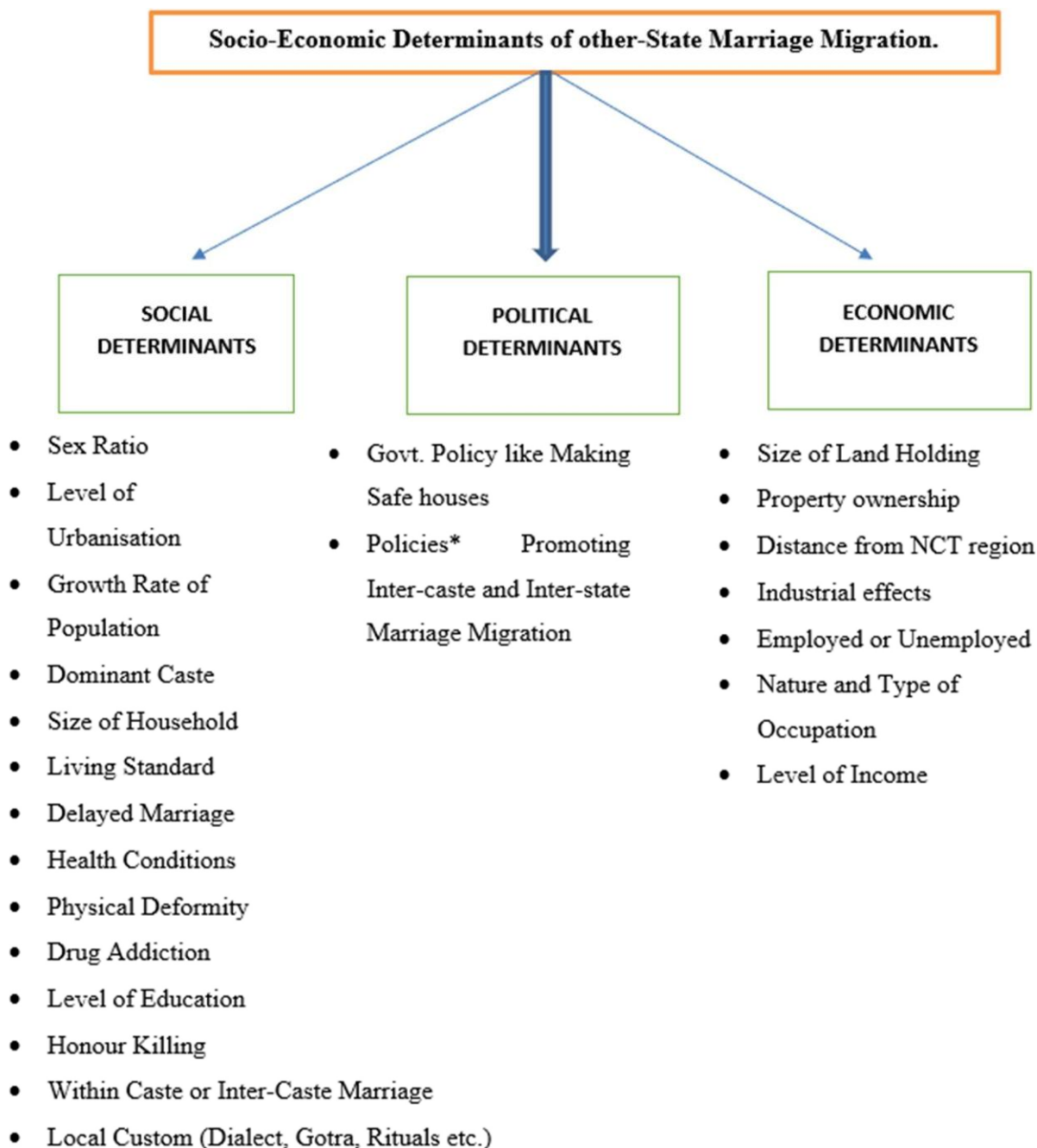
Study is based on primary data. Primary data were collected through the field survey with the help of structured interview schedule. Some information was collected through observation method as well. The data were processed and presented through tables, bar diagrams. The analysis was conducted by interpreting the data and describing the tables and diagrams.

Scenario of Other-State Marriages in Tehsil Hansi

Marriage in India is a deeply rooted institution that serves as a moral and ethical bond, uniting not just two individuals but also their families. While the meaning and perception of marriage have evolved over time, it continues to hold significant social importance.

Family plays a crucial role in Indian society, closely intertwined with religious and cultural sentiments. As inherently social beings, humans thrive in companionship rather than isolation. Marriage provides a life partner and confidant, offering emotional support and helping individuals navigate life's challenges. While marital status alone does not determine cultural adjustment in a new environment, it can facilitate the process and ease difficulties.

This paper research gathered data from a substantial number of married individuals, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of their socio-economic status and characteristics. Key factors examined include age, caste, education level, occupation, income, previous marital status, family structure, and various forms of identification, such as ration cards, Aadhaar cards, voter IDs, bank or post office accounts, and other assets.



* e.g., Mukhya Mantri Samajik Samarasta Antartjatiya Vivah Shagun Yojna

Source: Prepared by Research Scholar

Findings

Primary Survey of the villages in tehsil Hansi revealed that other-state marriages are prevalent in all the categories in the villages i.e., General, OBC and SCs. Number of other-state marriages in each category was different. Other-state marriages have resulted in change in the social set up of the village over the time and the process of change in social fabric is continue. Change in the social set up caused by other- state marriages is taking place not only in the village but also in the state. Scenario of other-state marriages in the villages is evident from the table given below. This change is reflected in terms of intermixing of foods habits, cultural aspects and many other dimensions. Brides from other state bring the culture of their native places to Haryana and they also learn the culture of Haryana.

Other-state migrant brides in Haryana often face complex social challenges, shaped by economic disparities, cultural

differences, and gender dynamics. These marriages are primarily driven by the skewed sex ratio in Haryana, leading families to seek brides from other states, particularly from economically weaker backgrounds.

The social conditions of inter-state migrant brides in Haryana are shaped by economic deprivation, cultural differences, and patriarchal norms. While some brides manage to integrate and lead stable lives, many face difficulties related to financial dependence, social isolation, and limited rights. Addressing these challenges requires broader societal changes, including gender sensitization, financial empowerment, and improved legal protections for migrant brides.

Table 1.1: Residential Background of the Brides

States and Country	Respondents	Percentage
Maharashtra	2	1.67
Arunachal Pradesh	3	2.50
Madhya Pradesh	7	5.83
Himachal Pradesh	4	3.33
Assam	9	7.50
Chhattisgarh	8	6.67
Uttarakhand	11	9.17
West Bengal	8	6.67
Rajasthan	5	4.17
Bihar	23	19.16
Uttar Pradesh	40	33.33
Total	120	100.0

Source: Data Collected by Research Scholar through Field Survey Sept. 2023

Table 1.1 presents the distribution of respondents based on their native states before marriage. This dataset represents the number of survey respondents from various states in India, along with their respective percentages of the total 120 respondents.

Below is a detailed explanation: Total Respondents: 120 individuals participated in the survey.

Highest Representation:

Uttar Pradesh has the highest number of respondents (40), making up 33.33% of the total. Bihar follows with 23 respondents, contributing 19.16%.

Moderate Representation:

Uttarakhand accounts for 9.17% (11 respondents). Assam has 7.50% (9 respondents). Chhattisgarh and West Bengal both have 6.67% (8 respondents each).

Madhya Pradesh has 5.83% (7 respondents). Rajasthan has 4.17% (5 respondents). Himachal Pradesh has 3.33% (4 respondents). Arunachal Pradesh has 2.50% (3 respondents). Maharashtra has the lowest representation with 1.67% (2 respondents).

Key Observations:

Uttar Pradesh and Bihar together contribute over 52% of the total respondents. States like Maharashtra and Arunachal Pradesh have minimal representation.

Table 1.2: Demographic Features of Groom Family's

Demographic Features	Types	No of Respondent	Percentage
Type of ration card	APL	27	22.5
	BPL	84	70.00
	No Ration Card	9	7.50
Type of Family	Nuclear	113	94.17
	Joint	7	5.83
Type of House	Kucha	8	6.67
	Semi Pucca	85	70.83
	Pucca	27	22.50
Tot. No of Family Members	Below 5	113	94.17
	5-10	6	5.00
	Above 10	1	0.83
Size of Landholding	No land holding	23	19.17
	Below 2	83	69.17
	Above 2	14	11.67
Annual Family income	Below 1 Lakh	97	80.83
	1-2 Lakh	18	15.00
	Above 2 Lakh	5	4.17
Total		120	100

Source: Data Collected by Research Scholar through Field Survey Sept. 2023

Table 1.2 provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of families from which inter-state brides originate. This dataset provides an overview of the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of 120 respondents. Below is a detailed explanation of each category:

Type of Ration Card

APL (Above Poverty Line): 27 respondents (22.5%) hold an APL ration card. BPL (Below Poverty Line): 84 respondents (70.00%) hold a BPL ration card, indicating a significant portion of low-income households. No Ration Card: 9 respondents (7.50%) do not have any ration card, which may affect their access to subsidized food and essential goods.

Type of Family Structure

Nuclear Family: 113 respondents (94.17%) live in nuclear families, indicating a predominant trend toward smaller family units. Joint Family: 7 respondents (5.83%) belong to joint families, which are relatively less common in this group.

Type of House

Kucha (Temporary or mud house): 8 respondents (6.67%) live in kucha houses, showing limited housing stability. Semi Pucca (Partially concrete house): 85 respondents (70.83%) live in semi-pucca houses, the most common type in this group. Pucca (Fully concrete house): 27 respondents (22.50%) have pucca houses, indicating better living conditions.

Total Number of Family Members

Below 5 members: 113 families (94.17%) have fewer than 5 members, suggesting a strong prevalence of small households. 5-10 members: 6 families (5.00%) fall in this range. Above 10 members: Only 1 family (0.83%) has more than 10 members, showing that large families are rare.

Size of Landholding

No Landholding: 23 respondents (19.17%) do not own any land, indicating landlessness. Below 2 Acres: 83 respondents (69.17%) have small landholdings, showing that the majority are small-scale landowners. Above 2 Acres: 14 respondents (11.67%) own more than 2 acres of land, a minority in the dataset.

Annual Family Income

Below ₹1 Lakh: 97 families (80.83%) earn less than ₹1 lakh per year, indicating a high level of economic hardship. ₹1-2 Lakh: 18 families (15.00%) have a slightly higher income. Above ₹2 Lakh: 5 families (4.17%) earn more than ₹2 lakh, making up a very small percentage.

Key Observations:

A majority of respondents (70%) fall under the BPL category, reflecting economic vulnerability. Most families (94.17%) are nuclear, suggesting a shift away from joint family structures. Housing conditions vary, but semi-pucca houses (70.83%) are the most common. Small family size is dominant, with 94.17% having fewer than 5 members. Land ownership is limited, as 69.17% have less than 2 acres, and 19.17% are landless. Most families (80.83%) earn below ₹1 lakh annually, indicating financial constraints.

Economic Conditions

The economic conditions of other-state migrant brides in Haryana are largely shaped by their backgrounds, financial dependence, and limited opportunities for economic participation. These women often come from marginalized communities and enter marriages that offer little financial security or independence. The economic conditions of other-state migrant brides in Haryana are characterized by financial dependence, limited employment opportunities, and economic vulnerability. While some women gradually integrate into their new households and achieve financial stability, many remain trapped in poverty with little control over their financial future. Addressing these issues requires policy interventions, such as financial inclusion programs, skill development initiatives, and social protection measures for migrant brides.

Table 1.3: Basic Amenities of the Brides

Type of amenity	Respondents	Percentage
Aadhaar Card	117	97.50
Voter Card	61	50.83
Bank/post office account	113	94.17
Debit card	8	6.67
Mobile phone	40	33.33
No any card	3	2.50

Source: Data Collected by Research Scholar through Field Survey Sept. 2023

Table 1.3 provides insights into the possession of identification documents by the respondents, including Aadhaar Card, Voter Card, bank/post office account, debit card, and mobile phone. This table provides insights into the availability of essential amenities among 120 respondents. Here's a detailed breakdown of the findings:

Aadhaar Card

117 respondents (97.50%) possess an Aadhaar card, making it the most widely available document. This high percentage indicates strong government identification coverage among the surveyed group.

Voter ID Card

61 respondents (50.83%) have a Voter ID, which is significantly lower than Aadhaar card ownership. This suggests that nearly half of the respondents may not be registered voters or have not obtained their voter cards.

Bank/Post Office Account

113 respondents (94.17%) have a bank or post office account, indicating high financial inclusion. This suggests that most respondents have access to formal financial services, possibly benefiting from government schemes like Jan Dhan Yojana.

Debit Card

Only 8 respondents (6.67%) have a debit card, despite 94.17% having a bank account. This indicates limited digital banking usage, possibly due to low awareness, lack of trust, or difficulties in obtaining/using debit cards.

Mobile Phone

40 respondents (33.33%) own a mobile phone, which is relatively low. This suggests that a majority (66.67%) do not own a mobile phone, which can limit their access to digital services, communication, and financial transactions.

No Any Card

3 respondents (2.50%) do not have any official identification or financial access, indicating extreme exclusion from government services and formal systems.

Key Observations:

Aadhaar coverage is nearly universal (97.50%), showing the success of Aadhaar enrolment. Voter ID ownership is significantly lower (50.83%), which might impact voting participation. Financial inclusion is high (94.17%), but actual usage of banking services (debit card ownership) is very low (6.67%). Mobile phone access (33.33%) is relatively low, which may hinder digital transactions and communication. A small percentage (2.50%) remains completely excluded, highlighting the need for targeted interventions.

CONCLUSION

This paper provides an overview of the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents in the study of inter-state marriage migration in Haryana. The findings reveal that most brides in Haryana come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and diverse states across India. A significant proportion belong to lower castes and economically weaker sections, with many marrying at a young age.

The involvement of mediators and agents is common, and many brides are financially dependent on their husbands and in-laws. While some have limited autonomy in making personal purchases, others can occasionally buy items for themselves. This data highlights the socio-economic dynamics and evolving marriage practices in Haryana.

The majority of respondents originated from Uttar Pradesh (29.10%), Bihar (23.03%), and Rajasthan (20.89%), making these states the largest contributors of brides to Haryana. Smaller proportions of brides came from West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Assam, and Chhattisgarh. States like Arunachal Pradesh and Maharashtra had minimal representation.

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