

Changing Patterns of Partner Selection among Educated Youth in Rajasthan: Negotiating Tradition and Individual Choice

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ABSTRACT

In India, marriage is generally regulated by families, castes, religions, and kinship and the selection of spouses continues to be the responsibility of parents. But fast-growing education, urbanization, economic development, and growing access to new communication media has greatly affected the way young people think about marriage and their spouses. This study explores the trends in spouse selection by educated youth in Rajasthan, considering the following criteria: age of marriage, educational qualifications of potential partners, occupational aspects, role of parents, individual choice, and views on inter-caste and inter-religion marriages. This research uses primary data collected from 300 educated respondents using an interview schedule. It is found that education has greatly helped youth play active roles in the process of choosing marriage partners while respecting the role of parents and families. Education has brought more preference for the educational compatibility, occupational stability, and understanding as important elements of good marriages. While there is an acceptance of marriages outside of one's own caste and religion compared to prior generations, the traditions associated with caste, religion, and the family's prestige still play a role in the process of marriage. This research is not an example of moving from an arranged marriage to complete autonomy but of a model of mate selection that involves a compromise between personal desires and group-based family interests. This research has implications for sociological research related to marriage and family changes in light of modernization, particularly the role of education in changing mate selection processes.

Keywords: Partner Selection, Marriage, Educated Youth, Rajasthan, Educational Homogamy, Marriage Decision-Making, Modernization.

Introduction

Marriage plays a pivotal role in the Indian society as it controls family formation, maintenance of kinship relations, issues of inheritance, social identification, and interaction among communities. In contrast to many societies in the West where marriage is seen more as an individual affair based on romantic relations, marriage in India used to be rooted in broader contexts of familial responsibilities and collective social obligations. Selection of one's future spouse used to take into account such factors as caste, religious affiliation, family reputation, socio-economic standing, and family ties rather than personal choice of individuals involved. Partner selection was more than an individual decision, but a collective endeavor of a family aimed at preserving social equilibrium and cultural continuity.

During the last thirty years India underwent drastic socio-economic changes. Development of higher education, urbanization, socio-economic mobility, emergence of new forms of communication, and growing interaction between different socio-cultural groups led to the changes in young people's perception of marriage as a social institution. Educational institutions familiarize young people with

various social contexts, foster independent thinking, and give more opportunities for interaction outside kinship circle.

However, even with these developments, marriage in India has not undergone the full transition from family-oriented institution to the one based on individual choice. In the current reality, marriage is a compromise between old traditions and modern needs. Parents still take active part in selecting suitable mates, assessing the background of the families, and verifying cultural suitability. At the same time, educated young men and women insist that their viewpoints should be taken into account while making marital decisions. Thus, the cooperation of the family and individuals becomes one of the distinctive features of the modern Indian marriage.

The situation in Rajasthan makes a perfect illustration for studying these processes. On the one hand, the state has experienced fast educational development and on the other hand, such traditional aspects as the system of castes, kinship relations, and family's role in marriage prevail in the society. Though educational possibilities have significantly increased for the youth, cultural values regarding family honor, religion, and social compatibility still affect the marriage.

Several studies have identified several changes in Indian marriages like increased age of marriage, educational homogamy, acceptance of individual choice, and reduced rigidity of marriage norms. However, many of these studies have focused more on either demographic transitions or on gender inequalities in marriage. Relatively, fewer numbers of studies have considered how education affects the process of choosing spouses among educated youth in Rajasthan. Additionally, most of the available literature focuses on the institution of marriage while neglecting the specific mechanisms of how educational experiences affect the choice and decision-making about the spouses.

This study intends to fill this research gap by considering how the patterns of choosing partners change among educated youth in Rajasthan. This study does not focus on marriage as an institution but looks at the criteria used in choosing life partners and the balance between the individual and parents' roles in the process. The variables include preferred age of marriage, motives of marriage, educational and occupational preference of spouse, role of parents, inter-caste marriage, inter-religious marriage, and autonomy in decision-making.

According to the study, education has failed to displace the institution of marriage with unlimited individualism. Rather, education has paved way for a negotiated partner choice model, whereby young people take part in making marriage choices even as they place great significance on family advice and continuity. This view refutes the simple perception that modernity leads to decline of traditional institutions and points out adaptability of Indian family systems.

The results of the research have implications for sociological analysis of modernization, change in families, education and marriage because they show how the process of choosing partners among educated youth is becoming more balanced through personal ambitions and social responsibilities. The understanding of this pattern is necessary not only for sociological theory but also for practical work of policymakers and educators.

Literature Review

Marriage is one of the core aspects of sociological study for its relation to both individual autonomy and social institutions. While marriage is a universal phenomenon, the way spouses choose each other greatly differs in different societies and eras. In traditional societies, the selection of a marriage partner is largely dependent on one's family ties, religion, caste, class and reputation. On the other hand, the modern societies give importance to personal choice, compatibility, similar education level and individual independence. The contemporary scholarly literature reveals that developing countries like India cannot be put in either of the two categories. In other words, choosing a spouse becomes a compromise process between traditional family control and growing individual involvement.

The one of the first sociological theories about the changes in marriage was developed by William J. Goode (1963), who claimed that industrialization and modernization lead to the weakening of traditional family power in choosing a spouse. From Goode's perspective, modernization, urbanization and education stimulate individual choice and reduce the role of wider kinship network in choosing a spouse. Nevertheless, further empirical data revealed that changes in marriage are far from being a general trend. In many Asian societies, the modernization changes the criteria.

Assortative mating research offers yet another significant perspective to comprehend the present marriages. Kalmijn (1998) maintains that people tend to marry those with similar educational

background, status at work, cultural value system, and socioeconomic standing. Educational homogamy has acquired particular importance due to the fact that education has great bearing upon communication and economic opportunities and marital stability in the future. The educational background is not viewed as the mere sign of status but as the factor making couples more compatible in their value system, aspirations, and life goals. Thus, education has become one of the most powerful factors influencing spouse choice in contemporary societies.

The interrelationship between education and mate selection has also been studied by Schwartz (2013). The author proves that educational homogamy has increased significantly in many societies in the last several decades. People tend to choose partners with similar educational background since these types of marriages enable having common aspirations and economic partnership. Similar conclusions have also been reached by Smits, Ultee, and Lammers (1998) who state that modernization tends to favor marriages on the basis of achieved statuses, namely education and occupational status.

Nevertheless, even in the context of increased access to education in India, marriage still maintains certain unique institution-specific features. According to Fuller and Narasimhan (2008), higher education has been a major factor affecting marriage expectations among middle-class youth through increased expectation in terms of educational compatibility, career success and personal communication. Still, the approval of parents is a crucial part of the marriage institution in India. As the authors show, educated youth never refuse from any family involvement in the process but seek for more consultations and agreements prior to marriage. Thus, educational expansion appears to change but not substitute traditional marriage institutions.

Further research on spousal selection in India showed that increased education has led to the increased involvement of youth in the process of marriage while at the same time preserving the cultural value of family approval in marriage. Thus, Banerjee, Duflo, Ghatak, and Lafortune (2013) found that although the practice of arranged marriage is widespread in India, educated youth gain more and more power over the final decision to marry as a result of discussions and negotiations with their parents. Thus, marriage becomes a joint decision and not the unilateral act of parental power.

Other dimensions of spouse selection include the practice of inter-caste marriage, which has become an increasingly interesting subject for researchers due to the new social boundaries involved. According to Allendorf and Pandian (2016), educational expansion, occupation, and urban interactions are making the younger generation more tolerant towards inter-caste marriage. However, even in such circumstances, caste continues to play a role in marriage decisions, since it is still closely related to family identity, social ties, and culture. Thus, while education makes people less concerned about castes, it does not remove them from spouse selection.

Also, similar studies by Raymo and Park (2020) reveal that marriage decisions become increasingly personal, while at the same time take into account parental guidance. The researchers' findings show that higher education enhances the involvement of individuals in the process, while preserving respect for their parents' suggestions, especially in countries with family-centered traditions. This view can be applied to India, where marriage includes intensive family involvement despite educational modernization.

Religion is another important element that continues to affect partner choice. The studies undertaken by Pew Research Center (2021) revealed that religion continues to influence marital choices in India, where many respondents express preference for getting married to someone who belongs to the same religious community. While younger and educated individuals are more tolerant toward social diversity, interreligious marriages are not accepted as much as education or occupation compatibility. These results show that modernization affects various aspects of marriage at different paces.

Furthermore, demographic data from the National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-21) reveal that higher education correlates with the increasing age of marriage, greater involvement in marital decisions, and knowledge of partner compatibility. Increased age of marriage gives individuals time to gain education, build careers, and make informed decisions when it comes to choosing marriage partner. Therefore, education impacts the selection of a spouse indirectly.

The literature review shows that modern-day spouse selection cannot be considered within the framework of mere opposition between arranged marriages and love marriages. Modern-day educational development has led to the appearance of new hybrid types of spouse selection practices where parents give their advice, but youngsters actively choose partners who suit them. Nonetheless, there is a lack of

empirical studies dedicated to the problem of partner selection of educated youth in the context of strong traditions of caste, religion, and family participation in marital choice.

The current study is a contribution to this literature and is devoted to the influence of education on the partner choice process of educated youth with the help of empirical data obtained from Rajasthan. The difference between the current research and previous studies lies in the focus on sociological processes that take place when educated youth chooses his/her future spouse rather than on gender relationships and marriage stability. With the help of theoretical approaches and empirical data, the influence of modernization on marriage was discussed.

Methodology

This study applies a descriptive and analytical research methodology in order to assess the changing trends in partner selection among educated youths in Rajasthan. This research uses primary data based on a structured interview questionnaire that seeks to explore the perspectives of the subjects regarding marriage, spouse selection, participation of families, educational aspirations, job preferences and changing trends in marriages. As the aim of the research was to understand how education affects marital decision making, a quantitative survey was the best methodology to be used for collecting relevant data.

A sample size of 300 educated individuals was selected for the purpose of this study. Respondents were selected from different religious communities, varying levels of education, job and age in order to have a broader understanding of the changing trends in marriages among the educated youths. Sample respondents included members from the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh communities in order to interpret the selected variables comparatively.

The data was collected through interviews conducted face-to-face where the structured interview schedule contained questions pertaining to both demographic and attitudinal issues. In addition to demographic information such as respondent's age, sex, and education level, the questionnaire also contained questions about preference of age at marriage, purpose of marriage, educational qualification of potential spouse, occupation preferences, involvement of family in spouse selection process, personal decision making, attitude towards love marriage, arranged marriage, inter-caste marriage, and inter-religious marriage.

The collected data was then coded, classified, and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Frequency tables and percentages were used to measure the attitudes and preferences of respondents. Later on the quantitative results were then analyzed in light of sociological theories concerning modernization, assortative mating, changes in family, and marriage decision making process. Instead of looking at the statistical results as mere descriptive information, this research links empirical data with sociological theories to analyze their interaction.

Ethics were taken into consideration at every stage of the research. Participation was done on a voluntary basis, informed consent was obtained from all the participants, their responses were kept confidential, and only academic use was made of the responses. Participants were guaranteed that their identities would not be revealed and the information supplied by them would not be disclosed to anyone else.

Despite the significance of the results achieved in the course of the research, there exist some limitations that need to be mentioned. The research has been carried out among the educated individuals residing in Rajasthan and thus reflects sociocultural peculiarities of the region. Hence, the results cannot be extended to other regions of India taking into account different levels of educational development, cultural peculiarities and regional specifics. Still, the research is valuable from the empirical standpoint.

Changing Perceptions Regarding the Appropriate Age at Marriage

Age of marriage can be said to be one of the most important markers of social change since it symbolizes shifting aspirations in terms of education, occupations, and family. Traditionally, people in India got married when they were relatively young based on the custom and social obligations of the family. But growth in the rate of higher education, entry into professional careers, and increased understanding about responsibilities in marriage has affected the thinking of people about the right age for marriage. In educated youth, marriage is considered as a milestone in their lives that comes only after the completion of education and some economic stability.

As is clear from the findings of the survey, the respondents preferred getting married at an early age instead of marrying immediately after adolescence. As far as the appropriate age for marriage of men is concerned, 51.00% (n = 153) thought 21-25 years to be the appropriate age, while 39.33% (n = 118) thought that it was 26-30 years. On the other hand, only 7.67% (n = 23) thought that the appropriate age for marriage was 31-35 years and 2.00% (n = 6) thought that it was after 35 years.

Similar trends could be seen when asked about the appropriate age at which women should marry. The highest number of responses (51.00%; n=153) was about the age range of 22-25 years, followed by 30.67% (n=92) of those respondents who found 26-29 years an appropriate age at which women should get married. Only 16.33% (n=49) favored women marrying at the age of 18-21 years, while only 2.00% (n=6) of the respondents thought that marriage after the age of thirty would be the most appropriate time for women to marry.

From the above statistics, it is evident that educated people now prefer marriage after attaining a higher level of maturity rather than earlier, i.e., when one is still unmarried. Higher education, having a job, and emotional maturity were some of the common conditions considered as necessary for a fruitful marital life.

These observations are supported by demographic data from National Family Health Survey-5 (2019-21), which indicates a gradual trend of rising age of marriage among educated populations in India. Education leads to delayed marriages by promoting individuals' longer engagement in education and work before marriage. Similar conclusions have been reached by Jones (2010) and Raymo & Park (2020), according to which educational expansion in Asia has changed the pattern of marriage through the growing link between education, career, and family formation.

However, the results obtained do not completely support the idea of modernization expressed by Goode (1963). While it is clear that education promotes postponing marriage until the accomplishment of educational and career goals, participants did not propose delaying marriage indefinitely. On the contrary, they were inclined to marry when being ready to enter a marriage. Therefore, educational modernization has altered the timing of marriage but not its social significance.

Objectives of Marriage among Educated Youth

It is very helpful in understanding the value system of marriage when one tries to understand what educated young individuals mean by their idea of the objective of marriage. Marriage has had many social, religious, economic, and cultural roles to play in the society of India in the past. While the process of modernization has broadened people's aspirations, marriage has continued to retain its close association with family continuity, social legitimacy, and community life. Therefore, the current study has analyzed the perception of the respondents about the objective of marriage.

Based on the results, it was found that 43.33% (n=130) thought that marriage has religious and social duty as its main objective, which is the highest frequency of responses. The second largest number of respondents (33.00%, n=99) considered that marriage has family continuation as its primary objective. Another 15.00% (n=45) of the respondents perceived marriage as having social respectability as its primary objective while only 4.67% (n=14) of the respondents considered satisfaction of sexual needs as the objective of marriage.

These results clearly reveal that the educated youth still considers marriage an important social institution in spite of the growing educational modernization. Religious and family responses predominate, which shows that traditional cultural values influence the attitude towards marriage even for such highly educated people. This means that marriage is considered by youth not only as an individual union but as an institution which performs certain social and cultural functions.

Nevertheless, the fact that relatively small number of young men and women consider marriage a union based on purely biological and individual reasons shows that the educated youth evaluates marriage using much wider social and moral criteria. It should be mentioned that these results contrast to the situation in most Western countries where companionship and individual happiness often play the key role in marriage definition.

The findings of the study seem to support the views of Mandelbaum (1970) and Shah (1998) who suggested that Indian marriage has roles beyond the conjugal relationship since it builds up kinship ties and maintains continuity within generations and stability within the community.

These findings thus suggest that modernization does not essentially affect the social meaning of marriage for educated young people. It is evident from the findings that far from giving up their traditional roles, respondents are now increasingly blending their cultural roles with personal ambitions, thereby proving that modernization through education makes them adapt rather than replace the institution.

Changing Social Values and Marital Aspiration

Marriage still holds a very central place in Indian society due to its several social, cultural, religious, and family roles. Though modernity, education, and urbanization have affected the perception of the new generation, marriage still holds high value as a social institution. Knowledge about respondents' perception regarding the purposes of marriage gives us information about how traditional values have been kept or altered by educated youth in Rajasthan.

The results show that religious and social obligation is still the primary purpose of marriage among the respondents. About 43.33% (n = 130) still regard marriage as an act of religious and social obligation. The second highest number of respondents (33.00%, n = 99) regards marriage as continuation of family line which reflects the importance of family inheritance and continuity in Indian society. Relatively lower number of respondents (15.00%; n = 45) sees marriage as an instrument of acquiring social prestige, while a very low percentage of respondents (4.67%, n = 14) regards meeting of their sexual needs as a basic objective of marriage.

The preponderance of religious and family-related goals reveals that education has not changed the significance of marriage in society at all. On the contrary, the respondents continue viewing marriage as an institution that reinforces social ties, meets the cultural requirements, and maintains family continuity. This means that, despite growing education and knowledge of the modern world, traditional beliefs about marriage still persist in the minds of educated people.

The fact that 33% of the respondents considered the continuity of family as the main goal once again proves the persistence of family as the primary social institution in India. Inheritance and kinship relations have always been connected with family continuity in the past. Even educated people see marriage as the only acceptable institution for maintaining family identity and culture across generations.

Interestingly enough, only 15.00% of the respondents viewed marriage as a way of securing social prestige for themselves. Such a relatively small proportion indicates that educated youth is distancing itself from status-focused views of marriage and paying more attention to its social and familial functions. Furthermore, the fact that only 4.67% viewed marriage as an act of satisfying their sexual urges indicates that the respondents view marriage as being associated with important social roles rather than with biological drives.

Such results are consistent with the sociological insights into marriage provided by Mandelbaum (1970), according to whom marriage in India constitutes a joining of two families rather than just a joining of two individuals. In addition, Shah (1998) suggested that marriage in India plays crucial roles in kinship organization and social continuity. In more recent research, Jeffrey and Jeffrey (2020) suggested that the process of educational modernization has expanded individual expectations from marriage but did not change its role in Indian society. These views are strongly supported by the current results because educated youth manages to combine educational modernity with tradition..

Under the premises of modernization theory, the findings indicate that the value accommodation but not the value substitution has taken place through educational growth. As the individuals have come to realize the need for compatibility, mutual understanding, and active participation in the choice of their partners, they still view marriage as a legitimate institution based on such values as family obligation, religion, and culture. Thus, the change that has occurred in educated youth must be interpreted as the process of negotiated modernization.

Individual Choice, Family Participation and Changing Marriage Decision-Making

Choice of partners for marriage is the most visible sign of changing family relationships in modern India. The traditional approach to partner selection is based on the full involvement of parents and other senior relatives whose decisions were not often influenced by the wishes of young boys and girls. However, nowadays young men and women receive higher education, move up career ladders and socialize more often which contributes to their growing involvement into marriage decisions. Nevertheless, family approval is still regarded as an important element of the choice process especially in traditional cultures like the one of Rajasthan.

Thus, the results obtained show that educated youth prefer the shared method of partner choice as opposed to the full control from parents' side or total freedom. The majority of young respondents (51.00%; n=153) chose the combination of personal choice and consultations with friends and relatives. 30.67% (n=92) of the surveyed respondents preferred individual self-choice. Meanwhile, 16.33% (n=49) thought that both individuals and their parents should participate in the choice. Only 2.00% (n=6) of respondents chose the option when parents could choose spouses without any personal involvement.

It is clear from these results that educational expansion has changed the mechanism of spouse selection into a process of participation in decision making. The fact that more than half of the respondents chose the option of consultation instead of total independence shows that educated youth does not oppose the authority of their parents but rather tries to find a balance between personal choice and parental influence. Such results mean that modernization promotes dialogues between generations and does not lead to conflicts between traditional values and modern ones.

The willingness to make decisions collectively is associated with changes in the educational process, which helps to gain confidence, independence of thoughts and communication skills, while at the same time valuing family relations. Education allows individuals to come in contact with different social groups, evaluate potential spouses independently and state their preferences with regard to marriage. At the same time, respondents recognized the role of their parents' experience in evaluating family background, compatibility and marital stability. Thus, selection of a spouse becomes a process of negotiation where personal and collective interests function together.

This research is consistent with the studies by Fuller and Narasimhan (2008), who claimed that education had influenced marriage negotiations by increasing the scope of discussion and consultations rather than getting rid of the parent's role. In the same way, Banerjee et al. (2013) showed that educated families tend to use mixed models of spousal choice by involving parents to make introductions and letting young people choose. These results are consistent with the conclusion that an educated person prefers cooperation of generations rather than pure individualism or pure parental dictatorship.

Also, these findings coincide with the idea of transformation of intimacy proposed by Giddens (1992) that modern relations become more and more dependent on communication, negotiations and comprehension. Yet unlike Western countries, where individual autonomy plays the main role in the process of marriage formation, the participants of the study kept respecting the role of families. Therefore, educational modernization helped make the process of decision making democratic without undermining the significance of family institutions.

In summary, the findings show that there exists a mixed form of choice making process in spouse selection amongst educated youth in Rajasthan. Personal choices are becoming more and more important; however, the counsel and approval of parents also offer cultural and social justification. Education has not replaced the traditional marital institutions, but has rather transformed these institutions in a way that has made consultation, cooperation, and joint responsibility for spouse selection paramount.

Attitudes towards Inter-Caste and Inter-Religious Marriage

Inter-caste marriage is one of the most obvious examples of changing marital attitudes because it breaks the old tradition of caste endogamy which has been prevalent in India since ancient times. While on the one hand, constitutional values emphasize the importance of equality and liberty, caste plays a crucial role in determining people's choices in regard to marriage due to family, kinship ties and social norms. Nevertheless, the development of education has brought people from different social layers into close contact, leading to the growing tolerance towards inter-caste unions in contrast to the situation in the past.

According to the results of the survey, almost equal number of respondents took sides on this issue. Thus, slightly less than half of the respondents (49.00%; n = 147) supported the idea of inter-caste marriage, while the remaining half of the respondents (51.00%; n = 153) were against such marriages. The results imply that education has promoted a certain level of tolerance to caste diversity, despite the persistence of traditional values in determining one's marital preferences.

A community-wise attitude analysis further brought out variation in attitudes towards inter-caste marriage. The Hindus appeared more tolerant of inter-caste marriage compared to the respondents from other communities, yet tolerance and rejection of such marriages was common among all. These results

suggest that education does not automatically reduce caste consciousness but works towards gradual change of the old traditions of marriage.

These results are in line with Allendorf & Pandian (2016), according to which education and urban life have created possibilities for inter-caste marriage while at the same time decreasing the rigidity of caste-related social distance. However, family approval still remains a significant factor in marriage choice. In the same manner, according to Srinivas (1966), modernization erodes some functions of caste institutions without entirely displacing them in the marriage institution.

The attitudes towards interreligious marriage were more cautious. Respondents appeared to be more hesitant about interreligious marriage compared to intercaste marriage. Religion plays an important role as a sign of identity, culture and family traditions. Therefore, respondents saw interreligious marriage as an activity requiring negotiations between individual preferences and family expectations.

These findings are in broad agreement with those from the Pew Research Center (2021) who found that while younger and educated Indians display somewhat higher tolerance of social diversity, most of them are in favor of marrying within their religions. The level of education promotes diversity acceptance but does not remove religious concerns from the choice of a partner.

Overall, the findings suggest that marriage for educated individuals has become more negotiable and less conformist. While the scope of interactions has become broader thanks to education, the role of families' approval in the decision-making process remains significant.

Conclusion

A gradual but marked transformation is taking place in the realm of marriages in educated youth in Rajasthan. It can be seen from the results obtained from the current study that growth in education has affected the procedure of selecting spouses through increased involvement of youth in decision making about marriage, through emphasizing on education and occupation and through developing flexible attitudes towards traditional norms of marriage. Nonetheless, these trends do not point to the weakening of family as a social institution. On the contrary, they indicate the process of adaptation through which aspirations of individuals and expectations of families come together.

From the empirical results it can be concluded that the respondents have liked marriage to occur at a time when the persons had attained their educational and occupational maturity; 51.00% of the respondents considered the age group 21-25 years to be the appropriate period for males and 51.00% considered the age group 22-25 years for females.

In a similar vein, respondents still considered marriage as one of the social institutions of great importance. The two most commonly mentioned objectives of marriage were religious and social duty (43.33%) and continuing the family (33.00%). The results show that modernization has transformed expectations about marriage but did not diminish its cultural value.

The data on inter-caste marriage confirm the presence of continuity and change in marital practices as well. Although 49.00% of respondents agreed to such marriage, more respondents (51.00%) still disagreed with it. This confirms that the growth of educational attainment has brought about greater flexibility but did not eliminate the influence of traditional norms.

In general, the results provide evidence in favor of sociological approaches to modernization which consider it as the process of adaptation of existing institutions. Education has increased chances for the involvement of an individual in the process of partner choice, made people prefer compatibility and rational choice of a future spouse, and introduced greater flexibility in attitudes toward traditional marriage. On the other hand, parents' opinions, cultural affiliation, and the consent of the family still play their role in choosing the partner.

This research is important for the sociology of marriage because it shows that changes in marital partner selection practices of educated people cannot be perceived as a transition from tradition to modernity in a straightforward manner. Rather, the findings highlight the negotiated nature of the change where education increases one's choices but also retains the crucial role of family and marriage.

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