



Changing Forms of Marriage in Colonial UP

Suruchi Singh

Research Scholar, Department of History, University of Delhi, INDIA

Email: suruchi22singh@gmail.com

Received: 6th August, 2023 *Accepted:* 31st August, 2023, *Published:* 2nd September, 2023

ABSTRACT: Arranged marriage has been an integral part of Indian society for ages. However, its form to a certain extent has changed in the colonial period with the associated changes and reforms in marriage-related practices. This paper seeks to highlight the changes in the institution of marriage among the middle-class Hindu population of United Provinces (henceforth UP). While doing so, it argues that during the period of the early twentieth-century marriage as a social and cultural institution no longer remained simply a private or familial affair in UP, but discussed on public platforms immensely. It got inextricably linked to Hindu community identity assertions. Every aspect of marriage was scrutinized and institutionalized into a new practice. Changing caste and community consciousness among the middle-class Hindu population led to marked modifications in marriage negotiations and cultural festivities. This paper also investigates the inequities that the transformations in the institution of marriage gave rise to and argues that these changes further pushed Hindu women under new patriarchal control.

KEYWORDS: Marriage, Hindu, Caste, Community, Identity, Middle-class, Women, Patriarchy

1. SETTING THE CONTEXT

The present pattern of marriage arrangements and associated cultural festivities are quite different from those of the earlier form. The form, purpose, motives, and function of marriage have continued to change and evolve with the needs of its members, as a result of the shifting conditions of people in a particular community.ⁱ Indian society has been influenced by the colonial rule and its freedom struggle. Colonial presence and subsequent changes such as the growth of urbanization, better means of communication, industrialization, modernization, printing, etc. have brought with it changing circumstances and thinking of the people which have resulted in modifications in the marriage and family systems in the Indian society by the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.ⁱⁱ Arranged marriage has been the common way of marriage in north India amongst the Hindu population for ages and still exercises a strong hold over society.ⁱⁱⁱ However, its form to a certain extent has changed during the colonial period with the associated changes and reforms in marriage-related practices. Scholars have argued that the institution of arranged marriage was transformed in colonial times. Marriage and family forms that it supported had undergone critical transformations in the colonial period.^{iv} Rochona

Mazumdar's work on colonial Bengal sees arranged marriage not as a traditional practice but considers it as very much a part of Indian modernity and modernization.^v Mytheli Sreenivas while focusing on the colonial Tamil region sees marriage and family as a site of multiple visions. Her work stated that while there was a project of nationalizing marriage and family in colonial Tamil in the 1920s and 1930s, there emerged other visions of marriage as represented by the self-respect movement.^{vi} These works show us that the history of marriage and family in India is a ground where multiple visions played, which is largely an outcome of indigenous society's encounter with colonial rule as well as the struggle internal to that society. A singular model cannot be applied to the study of marriage and family in the whole of India. A contextual approach is essential to understand the history of marriage and family. In the specific context of UP, the early twentieth century marked the changing face of Hinduism and the emergence of vibrant Hindu community identity assertions, accompanied by a series of communal disturbances that had a different bearing on questions of marriage and family reformism in this region.

Many works on colonial north India talk about the establishment of colonial rule and the subsequent



emergence of sectarian politics and how the communities 'Hindu', and 'Muslim', gained rigidity and fixity.^{vii} The intersection between gender and communalism has been analyzed only recently. For instance, Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin's work deals mainly with the period of partition and talks about the victimization of Hindu women during partition.^{viii} Works specifically done on colonial UP, such as Charu Gupta's work located the emergence of Hindu communalism in everyday interactions and sites.^{ix} Her work shows how gender became central to Hindu community identity formation in the 1920s and 1930s. It has been argued that control over female sexuality became crucial to project a Hindu identity and nation. Other works show how in the specific context of colonial UP Hindu religious festivals such as Ramlila^x and Holi^{xi} and theater^{xii} came under strict surveillance to project a distinct Hindu identity but marriage never formed the central focus of these works. This paper is an attempt to fill this gap in historical research on UP. It looks at the intersection of Hindu community identity assertions and the institution of marriage as a social and cultural practice. The purpose is to show how changing caste and community consciousness among the Middle-class Hindu population of UP led to changes in marriage negotiations and cultural festivities. It is not to suggest that there were no other factors that contributed to change in marriage practices during the colonial period but here main focus is to highlight the linkage between Hindu community identity assertions and modifications in marriage negotiations and cultural festivities.

On Sources

There is a range of sources on matrimonial laws in colonial India such as parliamentary debates, official correspondence, and newspaper reports. But in exploring marriage as a social and cultural practice, these official debates and colonial archival records provide only a partial picture.^{xiii} To fill this gap and supplement information gleaned from official documents I have extensively used material that belonged to the category of modern print media such as caste association publications, contemporary vernacular journals, and magazines, literature, newspapers, to look for changes that the institution of marriage underwent in the colonial period.

Caste and the Institution of Marriage

It is by now well established among scholars that the meanings and implications of caste have undergone significant changes in the colonial period.^{xiv} From the late nineteenth century onwards, UP witnessed the emergence of caste cluster consciousness.^{xv} Orientalists' perceptions of native society, official documentation produced by the colonial state machinery, schemes of distribution of power, along with the changing political and economic conditions, changed inter-group relations along communal lines. Contest and competition were stimulated among communities and rewards were government patronage, jobs, and political appointments.^{xvi}

In UP there was a tendency among upwardly mobile caste groups to follow upper caste codes of marriage within their communities and started putting regulations on certain marriage practices and associated festivities to improve their

social status and to strengthen their claims of upward social mobility.^{xvii} Upper and intermediate caste associations advocated the reformation of marriage practices as they affected the status and identity of a caste and became a central focus of caste reform and exclusivity in terms of the other.^{xviii}

From the late nineteenth century, what one notices is that while the internal divisions and differentiations within a particular caste became a matter of relative indifference, affiliation to a caste group was an important mark of identity. This growing inter-group communal feeling among different caste groups from the late nineteenth century, vying for opportunities in contentious scenarios is what headed the changing attitude towards the caste in UP. M.N. Srinivas noted that in the early decades of the twentieth century, there was a horizontal stretch of the caste groups at the expense of their vertical organization.^{xix} Caste reformers in UP were promoting this 'horizontal stretch' and this changing caste consciousness is also clearly visible in marriage negotiations. Various caste conferences and publications point to ways in which marriage should be conducted in their respective castes. Inter-marriage between different subgroups of a caste was promoted and considered as a solution for numerous problems prevalent in the system of marriage alliances such as child marriage, unmatched marriages, unmarried status of marriageable males, widow remarriage, and even dowry.^{xx} Some caste groups in this period were on the move of presenting themselves as an endogamous entity with internal solidarity.^{xxi} Radhe Lal ji of *Mathur Chaturvedi Sabha* held at Gwalior in January 1928, in his speech, made this sentiment visible, where he appealed to his fellow caste brothers to end internal divisions within the *Mathur Chaturvedi Samaj* and to initiate the practice of intermarrying between different subdivisions of their caste. He considered it as the only solution left to save their *jati* from extinction.^{xxii}

The various matrimonial advertisements published in the leading newspaper of the times, *Leader (Allahabad)*, testify to the growing move towards changing marriage negotiations in UP.

Wanted a girl not below 18 years, educated, at least up to matriculation for a sakeena dusre bachelor, age 20, practicing as an advocate. No restrictions against Kayasthas sub-castes/ write to box number 312 care of leader, Allahabad 205^{xxiii}

The phrase 'no restrictions against kayasthas sub castes' indicates the trend towards marriage among various subdivisions of a caste, which is also clearly evident from other matrimonial advertisements published during that period.

Wanted a beautiful and educated girl for an Aggarwal bissa gentleman, age 24, holding good property and doing a nice business. No sub-caste restrictions. Apply to box no. 1724, care of leader, Allahabad.^{xxiv}

The caste publicists not only promoted such marriages but repeatedly appealed to their fellow caste men to marry off their daughters in other regions of the United Provinces to unify their respective castes more firmly.^{xxv} It was

emphasized that the intermarriages between different subdivisions of the caste were in keeping with the ancient Hindu scriptural rules and that would free their caste from danger of extinction in this time of crisis, by removing marriage practices of numerous ills, that had beset under Muslim rule. The pervasive sentiment in all the appeals made by caste reformers in sanctioning intra-caste marriages is the fear of the declining number of their respective caste members.^{xxvi} Caste publications very often cited the progress made by other castes of the Hindu community and what they were lacking in respect to the other. Citing the colonial reportage and progress achieved by other caste associations and conferences, caste reformers urged their fellow caste members to instantly implement the resolutions passed in their conferences held in various parts of the United Provinces to save their *Jati* from extinction.^{xxvii} Another main concern reflected in these appeals highlights the fear of looking culturally backward in the 'era of modernity', and it was repeatedly asserted that progress could only be achieved by changes and reform in existing marriage customs.^{xxviii} Marriage became critical to the Hindu caste identity throughout this period. Such sort of moves in the direction of change is complementary to the process of upward social mobility under process in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Writings of caste reformers suggest that by the period of 1920s, while the internal sub-divisions within each caste became a matter of relative indifference, membership to a particular caste group was an essential mark of identity in contemporary society. This changing nature of caste consciousness put a question mark on other kinds of matches such as marrying in the same *gotra* which is the sub-caste commonality came under direct attack by caste reformists.^{xxix}

Another major concern was with marrying outside one's caste which is considered as horrifying and dangerous to one's caste existence and exclusiveness.^{xxx} Thus in the early decades of the twentieth century, the changing meanings of caste in the United Provinces set certain norms in marriage-related practices regarding whom to marry and whom not to marry which are juxtaposed against other kinds of matches. Intermarriage with persons of other castes came under direct attack and was not allowed or considered as a right match. Especially, the marriage of a woman to a man of a lower caste group came under attack.^{xxxi} The debates around the introduction of civil marriage law in India made this sentiment apparent and highlighted the reservations of the Hindu community against inter-caste marriages. Consequently, the communal hold over the institution of marriage became more intense throughout this period, where execution of choice in marriage and crossing the established community boundaries became a matter of serious concern for the whole community. This in part, is the result of the concern of caste reformists with their declining number, as this sentiment was pervasive throughout the early twentieth-century caste reformist's writings. This fear of declining numbers was associated with the growing communal activism in the United Provinces by the 1920s and 1930s. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Hindus feared that other communities were becoming

stronger and more rigorous, and Hindu activists made it apparent through their propaganda that there was an urgency to increase Hindu numbers. It was also claimed that different castes of Hindus need to behave in a certain way that confirmed known *dharmic* conventions. This sets in motion another trend in marriage arrangements which became visible in the late 1920s when the move towards Hindu unification in UP led to the change in marriage arrangements, although it remained the view of a small minority largely living in urban areas.

“Marriage” and the Construction of the Hindu Community

By the period of 1920s Hindu community identity assertions reached new heights in the region of UP. As Vasudha Dalmia and others have shown in their respective studies, UP saw the emergence of vibrant Hindu culture and the new modern face of Hinduism along with increasingly martial and militant public expression of both Islam and Hinduism.^{xxxii} There was an increased need to unify the Hindu community and to regenerate Hinduism with activities of movements like Arya Samaj, Hindu Samaj of Allahabad, Sanatana Dharma Mahamandal, and Sanatana Dharma Sabha. It was the newly emerged middle-class Hindu population who were particularly active in this endeavor. As members of various caste associations and communal organizations that emerged in UP from the late nineteenth century onwards, they emerged as the spokesmen for the whole community. Hindi Print public sphere plays a predominant role in the propagation of the changing face of Hinduism and Hindu identity.^{xxxiii} Hindu writers and publicists such as Madan Mohan Malaviya, and Bhartendu Harishchandra along with others, propagated the urgent need to revitalize Hinduism. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, UP witnessed frequent communal violence and clashes between the two major communities; Hindus and Muslims.^{xxxiv} This outburst of communal conflict was concomitant with an increasingly militant and martial public expression of both Islam and Hinduism.^{xxxv}

The period of the early twentieth century witnessed more militant activism in the activities of Arya Samaj, the Hindu Sabha, and other Hindu organizations, throughout UP. They all initiated an extensive and vigorous propaganda campaign to sculpt a pan-Hindu identity.^{xxxvi} In UP, the Arya Samaj began the Suddhi movement on a much larger scale in 1923 to encourage reconversion to Hinduism and to reinstate lower castes into the Hindu caste system.^{xxxvii} Swami Sharaddhanand made rigorous attempts to convert the Malkan Rajputs of western UP who had converted to Islam in response to the conversion of the Mappillas of Malabar. Following this reconversion drive, Arya Samaj expanded the Suddhi campaign to other regions of the province to win back converts and mostly lower caste communities to Hinduism. In UP, various Suddhi organizations were established in the 1920s; for example, an Acchutodhar society was founded in Allahabad in 1923.^{xxxviii} These organizations emphasized the need for Hindu unity, made several pleas to end all internal divisions within Hinduism, and encouraged the participation of different castes and sects in the work of Hindu organizations. The institution of marriage emerged in the eyes of the reformers as the way to

forge Hindu unity and it was repeatedly emphasized that to strengthen the Hindu fold, marriage arrangements needed to be modified.

These attempts to strengthen and widen the Hindu fold during the 1920s and 1930s were in part the result of increasing concern with demographic politics. Hindu communal forces showed an increasing concern with numbers.^{xxxix} It has been argued that such fears of declining numbers were used by communal discourse to construct myths of the dying Hindu race. Print played a significant role in spreading such myths. The unity and strength of the community defined in terms of its numerical strength became central to communal politics and helped stabilize community identities around new orientations. Hindu communalists of UP in the 1920s and 1930s saw themselves in danger of extinction.^{xl} This tendency, says Pradip K Datta, exists even today and is common sense. He says in the early twentieth century, it received widespread attention among Hindus and was seen as a warning to reform Hindu society to unify it.^{xli}

One of the many reasons given by Hindu reformers for the alleged decline of Hindus was the divisions within the Hindu community based on caste. The implications of census and demographic politics, for questions of gender and sexuality have been explored recently and it has been argued that during this period reformers propagated the need for Hindu widow remarriage to increase Hindu numbers.^{xlii} Largely from the late 1920s onwards, the desire for inter-caste marriages was linked to questions of Hindu population ratios and the need to strengthen the Hindu community better. Hindus were asked to marry off their daughters in another caste as an important move for the overall progress of the Hindus, politically, socially as well and economically.^{xliii} It was asserted that marriages between different castes of the Hindu community could give an advantage to the whole Hindu community by bringing unification within the community in this time of crisis.^{xliiv}

Although attitudes towards the issue of inter-caste marriages had generated immense debates and created ideological differences among the Hindu reformers and revivalists in UP.^{xlv} There had been differences between Orthodox Hindus on the one hand and the Arya Samaj on the other. Orthodox Hindu opinion supported largely by upper-caste *Brahmanical* norms saw inter-caste marriages as an attack on the supposed purity of high-caste blood. Orthodox Hindus stated that if inter-caste marriages were accepted the purity of Hindu blood would diminish. On the other hand, Arya Samajists, the small but influential section in UP, whose certain tenets represented criticism of Hindu society propagated inter-caste as the only solution to reform Hinduism and to regain its lost strength. They did not concede that they were arguing for innovation, they claimed to be restoring the days of the lost past glory under Muslim rule. They pointed out that they were attacking specific social evils to regain the glory of the *Vedas*. They gave evidence from the ancient Hindu texts claiming that inter-caste marriages are valid in the *Shastras*. They advocated that the present caste system is not per the Hindu scriptures, the *Vedas*. Inter-caste marriage is one way to restore the *Vedic* essence and to purify the Hindu religion of its later

distortions.^{xlvi} By the late 1920s, the principle of inter-caste marriage came to be seen as one of the solutions to strengthen the Hindu fold and ensure its solidarity, at least theoretically by a majority of the reformers.^{xlvii}

From the late 1920s one notices a shift in marriage negotiations in UP. There was a shift occurring from the complete rejection of inter-caste marriages to their adoption with the repeated attempts made to unify the Hindu community and to end internal divisions. Inter-caste marriages of Krishna Nehru, Devidas Gandhi, and other members of Gandhi's family were applauded on public platforms.^{xlviii} Although it remained the view of only a minority, the ground reality was much more intense when it came to marriage. But there was surely some change happening in marriage arrangements in this period, as is evident from matrimonial advertisements.

Wanted a match for a Kayastha girl, age 15 years, well-brought-up, educated, and handsome. No caste restrictions.^{xlix}

Wanted a cultured, handsome, healthy, educated, high school or inter preferred bride for a young graduate of 23 years, of Nationalist views belonging to a very respectable family of Srivastava dusare. The young man is settled in life, has brilliant prospects, and holds advanced social values. No sub-caste or caste restrictions.^l

The attempts of Arya Samaj and the Hindu Sabha to strengthen and unify the Hindu community were given a militant organizational basis through the Sangathan movement. This movement sought to instill manliness within Hindus to counteract the negative effects of their long period of emasculation.^{li} It promoted the collective defense of the Hindu community against what was portrayed as a Muslim invasion and projected as Muslim oppression in the past. It was claimed that the restoration of an imagined former virility and manly power of Hindus may bring about the revitalization of a "Hindu" nation. The Sangathan movement created a self-image of Hindus at war with 'the other', the Muslim population, in which Hindus replied in defense with bravery, power, and a heroic martial spirit while 'the other' allegedly attacked with rapacity and aggressiveness. Sangathan activities in UP disseminated rumors and tales about Muslims abusing or defiling Hindu women and kidnapping both women and children to convert them to Islam throughout the 1920s and 1930s.^{lii} Certain cultural stereotypes, such as the Muslims' "high sexual appetite, life of luxury, lecherous behavior, and religious fanaticism," were developed during this time, frequently using the figure of the woman and occasionally lower castes to foster a stronger sense of identification with the Hindu community, though for different reasons.^{liii} In the context of UP, it has been argued that during the period of 1920s and 1930s, even day-to-day contact of Hindu women with Muslim men was perceived as a serious threat to the Hindu community identity and patriarchal order which led to the emergence of a new set of patriarchal guidelines for Hindu woman.^{liiv} There was greater control over female sexuality during this period in UP. In such a communally charged atmosphere, inter-religious marriages were perceived as a great threat to the project of Hindu unity. Crossing

communal boundaries became much more problematic. Inter-religious marriages became a matter of martial activism on public platforms and further hardening of communal boundaries.^{lv} They were condemned in print as an offense to the whole Hindu community. Central to this was the fear of female agency in matrimonial relationships, leading to a condemnation of such women who brought shame to their community by eloping with men of other communities, particularly Muslims.^{lvi} The declaration by the woman to be not Hindu, to marry the man of her choice is criticized. Not only marriages of choice were often portrayed as kidnappings and abductions rather a woman who married like this was seen as leading an unhappy and painful life.^{lvii} Women were constantly depicted as vulnerable and as victims in constant need of surveillance and protection. The female individual agency in matrimony was consistently and completely denied. Those who challenged community norms by marrying outside it were condemned on public platforms and served as an example to others.^{lviii}

Cultural Reform and the Hindu Marriage

Hindu religious festivals and processions became a site of contestation throughout the 1920s and 1930s in UP. For instance, attempts were made by communal and nationalist organizations to make Ramlila a vehicle for the expression of Hindu identity and nationalism. Consequently, there were concentrated campaigns against the perceived vulgar, indecent lower caste features such as mimes, popular songs, acrobatics, and the use of abusive language in the processions.^{lix} Nita Kumar has noted that from the 1920s onwards Nakkatayya Ramlila of Benaras came under attack and Hindu reformers and revivalists made attempts to subordinate and control lower castes festivities associated with it to impose a version of upper caste Hinduism and Hindu practices which were thought to be pure, progressive and respectable.^{lx} The drive for reforming significant Hindu religious festivals such as Ramlila indicates that Hindu reformers and revivalists attempt to claim the key Hindu festivals for the expression of Hindu sectarian identity. Attempts to cleanse Hindu culture were not only confined to Ramlila, Holi,^{lxi} and Nautanki,^{lxii} too became targets of reformism in UP during the early twentieth century. These various studies have shown how religious festivals have emerged as key sites for Hindu self-assertion. Celebrations of festivals at public platforms not only attained new scales but also given a changed content.

The concern with public morality and respectability in the 1920s and 1930s was not simply focused on proper celebrations of religious festivals as reformers also made a series of attacks on prevalent marriage practices among Hindus of UP. Their efforts involved attempts to cleanse Hindu marriages of vulgarities such as the dancing of Muslim girls and others.^{lxiii} Marriage was monitored and rethought to match new rhetoric of respectability and distinct Hindu identity to create the image of an ideal Hindu marriage. The middle class was culturally adjusting and responding to new tastes influenced by Western culture with a drive towards modernization and civilization. Upper castes along with the intermediate castes advocated marriage reforms to enhance their status and to be counted

as civilized and respectable people. The reformists endeavored to modernize Hindu marriage were seeking the past to look for changes which made marriage a site of multiple visions.

The period saw cultural criticism of marriage-related practices such as dowry, show of excess money in marriage festivities, and wasteful expenditure that the practices of Hindu marriage seem to have fallen prey to. The European bourgeois ideas of thrift that were gaining currency around this time in UP were also initiated in matters related to marriage. Reformists talk about the return to ancient Hindu tradition and spirituality as the only solution left to such excess in the form of marriage expenditure. Use of excess money and show in marriage festivities were condemned as fraudulent, excessiveness, and a sign of backwardness and uncivilized behavior. Marriage expenditure was not the only concern among the reformers rather the talk of excess ran over from the sphere of money to other aspects of marriage. The second major concern was women's conduct during marriage festivities. How women carried themselves in such a key public event as marriage became a matter of caste and community identity. Their conduct at marriage festivities must be a display of sincerity and their spiritual status in Hindu society.

Bourgeois ideas of thrift and the Institution of Marriage

The middle class of UP faced growing economic insecurities as the colonial presence changed existing social and economic relations.^{lxiv} Huge marriage expenditure was no longer within the means of a middle-class urban household that emerged under colonial conditions. Dowry became an issue of target and was seen as a misrepresentation of the ideals of Hindu marriage.^{lxv} Various caste associations took the lead in launching a critique of prevalent marriage practices of the use of excessive money in marriage proceedings as corruptive.^{lxvi} *Mathur Chaturvedi Sangathan Mahasabha* held at Firozabad in December 1928, passed resolutions against excess in marriage and condemned it as against the genuine religious sentiments and ancient Hindu spirituality, stating that 'it would be wrong to blame the British government for our financial problems, as there are certain factors for our economic conditions that we can solve, which are internal to our society. We by our foolishness and backwardness made such marriage customs that are harmful in economic terms.^{lxvii} It was repeatedly claimed that if changes were needed, they had to come from within. A process of criticizing families in print for their greed was adopted by the caste associations and publications, as in the same Mahasabha it was said that 'rich members of our caste must not waste money in wedding festivities and must take into consideration other poor caste fellows. Huge expenditure is not only harmful to the families of the parties getting married but also to the caste as a whole in economic terms. Instead, it was asked to invest money on educational endeavors to uplift one's caste and nation.' It is acknowledged that the need of the time is to change certain marriage-related practices in the name of spirituality. Overwhelming concern with money in the form of wasteful expenditure and pomp was viewed as destroying the spiritual content of a Hindu marriage. Repeatedly from the

beginning of the twentieth century, such critiques were made through print.^{lxxviii} *Mathur Chaturvedi Sangathan Mahasabha* held at Mathura in January 1926, passed several resolutions related to wasteful expenditure in marriages. Some among them are as follows: the Groom's side must not stay at the bride's place for more than three days as opposed to the earlier custom of five days; a resolution was passed to put a stop to the custom of Gauna; the need to set a limit on the amount spent on food, jewelry, and clothes in wedding ceremonies was also emphasized.^{lxxix} Another writing Aadarsh Vivah- 'An Ideal Wedding' applauded a wedding ceremony held at Sabarmati Ashram of Jammalal ji Bajaj's daughter Kamla where Mahatma Gandhi gave a speech on what an ideal Hindu marriage should be like. Criticizing the contemporary practice of pomp and show in marriage ceremonies Gandhi saw it as destroying the spiritual and religious content of a marriage which is the sole purpose of an ideal Hindu marriage. 'In such pomp and show we forget about the religious sentiment behind the institution of marriage. Expending such a huge amount of money on marriage festivities is also not considered good for the poor for whom it became a burden. People had to take loans to marry off their daughters. Songs and dancing during marriage festivities are seen as moving away from the real aim of a Hindu marriage, which is that marriage is a religious duty and should be conducted only with religious ceremonies. Such is an ideal marriage.'^{lxxx} Excess is equated with vulgarity and good taste is matched with respectability, sincerity, civilizational behavior, and spirituality. In brief, these writings point towards what an ideal Hindu wedding ought to look like. The passion for money was seen as destructive of the social fabric of family, caste, and nation. The element of spirituality over material greed was emphasized by the reformists' writings. They found support for their criticism from a resource that they named Hindu tradition or the past. Given that a return to the Hindu traditions of the past was no longer possible, reformers sought to renovate the present by articulating a critique of some of its foundations. The new rhetoric of taste regarding marriage was established on these critiques. Faced with marriages, which according to the reformers were displays of excess, they proposed ways of infusing marriages with spirituality or sincerity, by adopting European ideals of thrift to create an image of an ideal marriage. Ironically British values of thrift were adopted here to reform marriage practices.

Women Conduct at the Hindu Wedding

Sumanta Banerjee has remarked how during the colonial era, women played a crucial role in the urban Bengali bhadralok's process of cultural homogenization, which led to attacks on women's popular culture and leisure activities. To create a new middle-class woman identity that is now to be defined in opposition to women from lower castes and classes, feminine forms of entertainment came under close surveillance.^{lxxxi} In the context of UP, Charu Gupta highlights how Hindu women's conduct became central to Hindu identity assertions and came under attack.^{lxxxii} In UP, the custom of singing *Galis* or *Garis* during wedding festivities was prevalent among all castes of Hindus.^{lxxxiii} Women of the bride's side sing these songs addressing the

groom and his mother and sister. The mother-in-law and sister-in-law of the new bride are targeted and several mocking remarks are made about them which are considered as provocative and illicit.^{lxxxiv} The groom's family was abused and ridiculed. In some of these songs, the new bride is advised about the ways to carry themselves with her in-laws and how to dictate terms over other females of the new family. *Galis* sung during marriage festivities came under severe attack and various caste associations and their publications took the lead in this endeavor. Concerns were expressed about Hindu women's conduct during marriage festivities. The critique was linked to the civilization discourse of refinement and respectability that was underway during this period. Any deviation from respectable and civilized behavior is seen as a threat to new norms of Hindu middle-class respectability and status. Prevalent marriage customs such as singing *Galis* in a Hindu wedding are condemned as a sign of uncivilized and lower caste behavior. They began to be labeled as vulgar, corrupt, and indecent, especially for a high-caste middle-class Hindu wedding.^{lxxxv} Women who participated in these songs have turned into uncultured, bawdy, uncontrollable, and frivolous. Throughout the early twentieth century, women were constantly reprimanded for transgressing respectable boundaries through these songs. Singing sexually provocative songs in such a crucial public event as marriage is seen as against the image of reformed Hinduism that informed the new imagination of a Hindu wedding. *Khatri Hitkari sabha* of Agra asked Khatri women not to sing *Galis* at marriages for it was a sign of stupidity, shamelessness, and uncultured behavior. It also remarked that the singing of *Galis* at their weddings was fast being abolished and it also hoped that other castes would follow suit.^{lxxxvi} Marwaris too expressed their concerns about singing obscene songs in their wedding festivities. It was claimed that to raise high on the ladder of civilization the need of the hour is to stop such marriage practices. Caste reformers appealed to the readers via print to immediately pass resolutions to stop such shameful practices through their respective caste associations and to punish those who defied these resolutions.^{lxxxvii} Not only do the prevalent marriage practices need to be stopped but new ones have to replace them. In an article published in Chaturvedi, *Gaaliya* was asked to put an end to the shameful practice of singing *Galis* during marriage festivities and instead place such obscene songs and poems by contemporary revolutionary poets in Hindu marriages.^{lxxxviii} Another reformist writing asked to sing spiritual songs at such a dharmic event as marriage.^{lxxxix}

A Hindu endeavor to produce an idealized and harmonious representation of Hindu marriage emerged at the beginning of the 20th century by selectively adopting folk components. The need to create an authentic and unified Hindu culture and identity was the driving force behind these reform endeavors. In response to the social and cultural interaction with the West, they were concerned to create a clear and respectable Hindu identity for themselves and, in part, to set themselves apart from others, such as the lower classes and castes. The middle class fostered reformism to promote an idealized view of Hindu marriage by claiming the superiority of Hindu culture.

Conclusion

By the early twentieth century, the changing caste and community consciousness led to marked changes in marriage negotiations which is evident in the matrimonial advertisements printed in the leading journals and newspapers from UP. For instance, the prevalent way of arranging marriage gave way to new forms such as intra-caste marriages now have become an accepted norm. A second major change is the growing acceptance of inter-caste marriages as a part of the greater project of Hindu unity that was underway during this period in the region of UP. Certain norms in marriage-related practices were set

regarding whom to marry and whom not to marry which are juxtaposed against other kinds of matches. These changes under which lay new patriarchal regulations show that the communal hold over marriage became more intense by the early twentieth century in UP as a result of which, execution of choice in marriage and crossing the communal boundaries became a matter of serious concern and activism. Marriage during this period emerged as an occasion of Hindu self-assertion. The period also saw a series of appeals made by reformers to change marriage-related festivities to create an image of an ideal Hindu marriage, one marked with spirituality and sincerity, to assert a respectable Hindu identity.

ⁱAmiteshwar Ratra et al. *Marriage and Family in Diverse and Changing Scenario* (New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications Pvt Ltd., 2006), 4-14.

ⁱⁱDipesh Chakrabarty, "The Difference: Deferral of (A) Colonial Modernity: Public Debates on Domesticity in British Bengal," *History Workshop* 36 (1993):1; Judith E. Walsh, *Domesticity in Colonial India: What Women Learned When Men gave them Advice* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2004).

ⁱⁱⁱThe term arranged marriage is used here at the level of generality as marriages that are negotiated by families with or without the consent of individuals getting married.

^{iv}Partha Chatterjee, *Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993), 14-75, 116-134; "The Nationalist Resolution of the Women's Question," in *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History*, ed. Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1989), 233; Tanika Sarkar, *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation: Community, Religion and Cultural Nationalism* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001).

^vRochona Mazumdar, *Marriage and Modernity: Family Values in Colonial Bengal* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2009).

^{vi}Mytheli Sreenivas, *Wives, Widows, Concubines: The Conjugal Family Ideal in Colonial India* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 68-93.

^{vii}Works such as these deals with emergence of Hindu communalism under colonial rule, to name a few among them-C.A. Bayly, "The Pre-History of 'Communalism'?" *Religious Conflict in India, 1700-1860*, *Modern Asian Studies* 19 (1985): 177; Gyanendra Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006); Sandria B. Freitag, *Collective Action and Community: Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

^{viii}Ritu Menon and Kamla Bhasin, *Borders and Boundaries: Women in India's Partition* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1998); Urvashi Butalia, *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India* (Delhi: Penguin Books India, 1998).

^{ix}Charu Gupta, *Sexuality, Obscenity, Community: Women, Muslims and the Hindu Public in Colonial India* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001).

^xNita Kumar, *The Artisans of Banaras: Popular Culture and Identity, 1880-1986* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988), 189-195.

^{xi}Ibid.

^{xii}Kathryn Hansen, *Grounds for Play: The Nautanki Theatre of North India* (New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1992), 100-110.

^{xiii}Importance of vernacular sources for historical enquiry has been highlighted by Anjali Arondekar, "Without a Trace: Sexuality and the Colonial Archive," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 14 (2005):10; Charu Gupta, "Writing Sex and Sexuality: Archives of Colonial North India," *Journal of Women's History* 23 (2011):12.

^{xiv}Bernard S. Cohn, *An Anthropologists among the Historians and Other Essays* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987), 224-54; Susan Bayly, *The New Cambridge History: Caste, Society and Politics in India from the Eighteenth Century to the Modern Age* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 97-144; Lucy Carroll, "Colonial Perceptions of Indian Society and the Emergence of Caste(s) Associations," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 37 (1978): 233 and "Caste, Social Change and the Social Scientist: A Note on the Ahistorical Approach to Indian Social History," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 35 (1975): 63 ;Nicholas B. Dirks, "The Invention of Caste: Civil Society In Colonial India", *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice* 25 (1989): 42; also *Castes of Mind: Colonialism and the Making of Modern India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

^{xv}For study of caste in UP see, n Kayasthas of North India see Lucy Carroll, "Caste, Community and Caste(s) Association: A Note on the Organization of the Kayastha Conference and the Definition of a Kayastha Community," *Contribution to Asian Studies* 10 (1977):3; William Rowe, "The new Cauhans: A Caste Mobility Movement in North India," in *Social Mobility in the Caste System in India*, ed. J. Silverberg (The Hague Mouton: 1968), 66.

- ^{xvi}Shekhar Bandyopadhyay, *Caste, Culture and Hegemony: Social Dominance in Colonial Bengal* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2004)- 144-190.
- ^{xvii} *Ibid.*
- ^{xviii}“Kayastha Jati pe ek Aitihāsik Drishti,” *Chand*, August 1934; “Malaviya Samaj ki Samasyaye,” *Chand*, November 1933, 151-55; “Aggarwal Samaj ki Pragati,” *Chand*, May 1934, 227; “Manoranjan: Marwari Ankh,” *Chand*, November 1929, 273.
- ^{xix}M. N. Srinivas, *Collected Essays* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 201- 220, 221-235
- ^{xx}Benarsidas Chaturvedi, “Hamare Jaatiye Prashan: Jan Sankhya ka Haas,” *Chaturvedi*, November 1925, 20; Rajnikanth Sastri, “Kanyakubja aur Biswa Pratha,” *Chand*, April 1931, 250.
- ^{xxi}“Upjaaityo mai Vivah,” *Chand*, May 1926, 222; Khadakjeet mishr Raibahadur, “Chaturvediyo ke Gotra,” *Chaturvedi*, April 1926, 22; Govindnarayan Mishr, “Jati mai Foot,” *Chaturvedi*, January 1921, 6.
- ^{xxii}“Sabhapati ka Bhaasan,” February 1928, *Chaturvedi*.
- ^{xxiii} *Leader*, February 13, 1928.
- ^{xxiv} *Leader*, December 26, 1922.
- ^{xxv} Lashkar Srimathur Chaturvedi Mahasabha Sabhapati Sriman Radhelalji ka Bhaasan,” *Chaturvedi*, January 1928; “Kayastha Jaati pe ek Aitihāsik Drishti,” *Chand*, August 1934; “Malaviya Samaj ki Samasyaye,” *Chand*, November 1933, 151-55.
- ^{xxvi}Sribhagwandas ji Chaturvedi, “Badle ka Prashan,” *Chaturvedi*, May 1926, 6; Sriyuth Mainpuri, “Jeene marne ka Sawaal,” *Chaturvedi*, April 1926, 24; “Marwari Jati mai Samaj Sudharak: Marwari Ankh,” *Chand*, November 1929, 195.
- ^{xxvii}“Mathur Chaturvedi Sangathan Mahasabha, Firozabad: Sabhapati ka Bhasan,” *Chaturvedi*, December 1927, 9.
- ^{xxviii}Jainarayan Vyas, “Humara Marwari Samaj,” *Chand*, November 1927, 68; “Parde ko faad fekho,” *Chaturvedi*, October 1926, 5.
- ^{xxix}Harnarayan ji, “Samgotra Mai Vivah,” *Chaturvedi*, June 1925; Madan Mohan ji Tiwari, “Nai Soojh,” *Chaturvedi*, July 1926; “Aggarwal Samaj ki Pragati,” *Chand*, May 1934, 227.
- ^{xxx}Legislative debates around introduction of civil marriage in India clearly highlight the reservations of native population against marriage outside one’s own caste. Home Department, Judicial A Branch, May 1921, nos. 111-115, National Archives of India (henceforth NAI).
- ^{xxxi}*The Tafrih*, Lucknow, 28 June 1911; *Hindustani*, Lucknow, 14 August 1911, Native Newspaper Report, United Provinces, NAI; Similar sentiments also expressed in *The Trishul* (Benaras), *Vaidic Sarvaswa* (Allahabad), *The Jadu* (Jaunpur), *Awaja-i-Khalq* (Benaras), *Anand* (Lucknow), *Saadharma Pracharak* (Kangri Bijnor), *Nigamagam Chandrika* (Benaras), *The Kshtrya Mitra* (Benaras), Native Newspaper Report, United Provinces 1911, NAI.
- ^{xxxii}Vasudha Dalmia, *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions: Bharatendu Harischandra and Nineteenth Century Banaras* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2010); Sandria B. Freitag, *Collective Action and Community: Public Arenas and the Emergence of Communalism in North India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); Christopher Jaffrelot, *Hindu Nationalism- A Reader* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2007), 64-69.
- ^{xxxiii}*Ibid.* For details on Hindi Print Public Sphere see Francesca Orsini, *The Hindu Public Sphere 1920-1940: Language and Literature in the Age of Nationalism* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- ^{xxxiv}Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India 1885-1947* (Chennai: Macmillan Publishers India Limited, 2011), 233-237; Gyanendra Pandey, *The Ascendancy of Congress in Uttar Pradesh 1926- 34: A Study in Imperfect Mobilization* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978), 114-127.
- ^{xxxv}Peter Hardy, *The Muslims of British India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 61-91, 168- 197; More details in Francis Robinson, *Seperatism among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces Muslims 1860-1923* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).
- ^{xxxvi}Jaffrelot, *Hindu Nationalism*, 10-14, 79-84
- ^{xxxvii}Pandey, *The Ascendancy of the Congress*, 115-117; Freitag, *Collective Action and Community*, 230-241; for details on Suddhi movement see, R.K. Ghai, *Suddhi Movement in India: A Study of its Socio- Political Dimensions* (New Delhi: Common Wealth Publishers, 1990).
- ^{xxxviii}Nandini Gooptu, *The Politics of the Urban Poor in Early-Twentieth Century India* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 223-226.
- ^{xxxix}Charu Gupta, *Sexuality, Obscenity, Community: Women, Muslims and the Hindu Public in Colonial India* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2001); Arjun Appadurai, “Numbers in the Colonial Imagination”, in his *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 114.
- ^{xli}Information gleaned from Gupta, *Sexuality, Obscenity, Community*, 307-309; Pradip K. Datta, “Dying Hindus Production of Hindu Communal Common Sense in Early 20th century Bengal,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 28 (1993): 1305.
- ^{xlii}*Ibid.*
- ^{xliii}*Ibid.* 298-319.
- ^{xliiii}“Antarjaatiye Vivah,” *Chand*, August 1933, 473; Home Department, Judicial A Branch, May 1921, nos. 111-115, NAI.
- ^{xliiv}Home Department, Judicial A Branch, May 1921, nos. 111-115, NAI.
- ^{xliiv}Legislative Department, Assembly and Council A Branch, December 1923, nos. 55-67 p. 1-22, NAI

- ^{xlvi}Home Department, Judicial Branch, 1928, nos. 133-I/A, NAI.
- ^{xlvii}“Jatipati Todak Sanstha,” *Chand*, January 1923, 274; “Jatibhed or Sarkar,” *Chand*, 1926, 364; “Antarjaatiye Vivah Pratha ki Aavyashakta,” *Chand*, September 1935, 525.
- ^{xlviii}Govardhaan Lal Gupt, “Aadarsh vivah: Antarjaatiye aur Antarptraantiye Vivah,” *Chand*, December 1933.
- ^{xlix}*Leader*, February 6, 1928.
- ^l*Leader*, January 24, 1935.
- ^{li}For more details on activities of Sangathan movement and its intersection with gender question in early twentieth century UP see Gupta , Sexuality, Obscenity, Community, 223-239 and “Articulating Hindu Masculinity and Femininity: 'Shuddhi' and 'Sangathan' Movements in United Provinces in the 1920s,” *Economic and Political Weekly* 33 (1998):727.
- ^{lii}*Ibid.* 239-259.
- ^{liii}Gooptu, *The Politics of the Urban Poor*, 225-228.
- ^{liv}Gupta, *Sexuality, Obscenity, Community*, 239-259.
- ^{lv}“Unprecedented Communal Interest”, *Leader*, September 21, 1938.
- ^{lvi}Dharmpatni Sridhar ji mishr, “Var ki Khoj,” *Chand*, December 1927, 267-270.
- ^{lvii}*Ibid.*
- ^{lviii}Amrit Lal ji Bhatiya, “Visesh vivah Vidhan,” *Chand*, January 1928, 341-46.
- ^{lix}Nita Kumar, *The Artisans of Banaras: Popular Culture and Identity, 1880-1986* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988), 189-195.
- ^{lx}*Ibid.*
- ^{lxi}*Ibid.* 104, Nandini Gooptu, *The Politics of the Urban Poor in Early-Twentieth Century India* (UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 238-240.
- ^{lxii}Kathryn Hansen, *Grounds For Play: The Nautanki Theatre of North India* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 1993), 104-108.
- ^{lxiii}Vindyavasini Prasad, “Hindu Vivaho mai Vaishyao ka Naach,” *Chand*, December 1934, 280.
- ^{lxiv}C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazars: North Indian Society In the Age of British Expansion, 1770-1870* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992), 427-457; Gupta, *Sexuality, Obscenity, Community*, 140-151; Sanjay Joshi, *Fractured Modernity: Making of a Middle Class in Colonial North India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 69-80.
- ^{lxv}Many leading journals published from UP such as *Chand* criticized practice of dowry throughout this period. Sri Mohanlal Nehru, “Hindu Vivah ki Rashmo mai Parivartan,” *Chand*, November 1933; Sri Thakur Prasad ji, “Dukhiya Baalika,” *Chaturvedi*, October 1928, 35.
- ^{lxvi}“Jatiye Bhoj,” *Chaturvedi*, November 1925, 8.
- ^{lxvii}“Mathur Chaturvedi Sangathan Mahasabha,” *Chaturvedi*, December 1928, 9.
- ^{lxviii}Kanaujiyo ka Byah,” *Chand*, July 1931, 234; Lashkar mai Srimathur Chaturvedi Mahasabha ka Prastham Vaarshikutsav: Sabhapati Srimaan Radhelal ji Chaturvedi ka Bhaasan, *Chaturvedi*, February 1928.
- ^{lxix}“Chaturvedi Mahasabha,” *Chaturvedi*, April 1926, 21.
- ^{lxx}“Aadarsh Vivah,” *Chaturvedi*, October 1926, 5.
- ^{lxxi}Sumanta Bannerjee, “Marginalization of Women’s Popular Culture in Nineteenth century Bengal,” in *Recasting Women: Essays in Colonial History*, ed. Kumkum Sangari and Sudesh Vaid (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1989), 127.
- ^{lxxii}Gupta, *Sexuality, Obscenity, Community*, 87-95.
- ^{lxxiii}*Ibid.*
- ^{lxxiv}*Ibid.*
- ^{lxxv}“Humari Baraate: Sampadkiye Vichaar,” *Chaturvedi*, June 1928, 14.
- ^{lxxvi}Other caste too shows similar concerns, “Manoranjan: Marwari Ankh,” *Chand*, November 1929, 273; Other castes too passed similar resolutions and expressed their concerns with prevalent marriage customs among their communities, “Kanaujiyo Ke Vivah mai Gaali Gaan, Kanaujiya Ankh,” *Chand*, September 1930.
- ^{lxxvii}Vrindavan, “Striyo mai Gaaliyo ki Pratha,” *Chand*, January 1934, 380.
- ^{lxxviii}Shri Dharampal ji Chaturvedi, “Gaaliya,” *Chaturvedi*, December 1928, 25; “Chaturvedi Samaaj se kuch nivedan,” *Chaturvedi*, May 1926.
- ^{lxxix}Srimati Prabhavati Devi, “Samaj or Striya,” *Chaturvedi*, August 1918, 17.