

# Study of changing marriage pattern in rural Nepal

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This study examines the changes in marriage and family in Thaiba village of Nepal. Marriages in this setting were done earlier and virtually arranged by the parents in traditional pattern until very recently. The change in social, economical and educational institutions has stimulated a sharp increase in the participation of individuals in the selection of spouse and increase in age at marriage. The main theme of this research is to explore change in attitude towards marriage and family by emphasizing effect of education on age at marriage and freedom in spouse choice. The study also briefly deals with decision making, caste exogamy, family size and traditional views on marriage. The present study has tested primarily two hypotheses. Firstly, girls from socio-economically sound family are more likely to marry later. And secondly education leads later age at marriage and more freedom in mate selection.

For generating information both primary and secondary sources have been used for the study. The major tool developed to conduct the survey is questionnaire. The data is collected from 91 married and unmarried females from 16 to 60 years old. The questionnaire covers mainly those features of marriage and family life which are thought to change. The survey includes socio-economical and educational status of the respondents and their parents, age at marriage, mate selection criteria, type of marriage, opinion towards caste exogamy, family formation etc.

This study has pointed out that educated and socio-economically well-off parents are found giving more importance on the education for their children. Respondent's education and their father's education have observed a significant effect on age at marriage. It is found that the age at marriage is higher for those respondents whose fathers are literate compared to their illiterate counterparts. Similarly, the respondents from the prosperous families are found marrying in later age. Likewise it is noticed that respondent's own education has a significant effect on age at marriage. The effect was stronger for the women who have higher education.

The results are in consistent with the fact that parent's socio-economical and educational status positively affects daughter's education and education in turn positively affect women's age at marriage and freedom in mate selection. The key factors shaping the new pattern of age at marriage and spouse selection are observed due to the expansion of educational attainment, urbanization, employment opportunity and access to media.