

GENDERING OF THE KINSHIP RELATIONS

Kinship system derived basically from blood ties and marriage relations varying society to society is one of the most important social realms to locate gender relations in a society. Family and marriage are two most important kinship institutions wherein the entire basic human ties are working. These institutions evince variations within the same and differences with other groups, communities and societies. Gender is the one dimension of the relations that constitute these forms of human organization. An inquiry into the gender aspect of the relations within these two socio-cultural institutions will reveal the bases of parity and disparity between men and women in social life.

This chapter is, therefore, aimed to deal with the nature of gender participation in interpersonal and intra-group relations of alliance and descent in family, marriage and caste.

Family

The basic social institution of society, family, reveals the variations in terms of its types of organization, residence, succession, inheritance, authority and size. Along these variations the relations between men and women also show variations. These variations of relations are being analyzed to understand the inherent gender relations. Therefore, three aspects of family affecting gender relations; namely, types of family, gender role in deciding the residence of family and women's freedom for visits to native place are taken up here.

Type of Family

Since people perform gender roles in family, it is important to understand its nature and type for analyzing the gender relations of the (women) respondents as it holds different avenues of freedom of various activities and decision-making, particularly in a patriarchal society. A nuclear family provides a greater leeway to woman than a joint family and, similarly, a conjugal nuclear family offers a possibility for greater participation of women in various activities than a complete (large size) nuclear family. These variations of family are presented here to examine their impact on the status of women in the system of patriarchy. Distribution of the respondents into the types of family is given in the Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Distribution of the Respondents into the Types of Family

Family Types	Sub Types of Family	Number of Respondents (%)
Nuclear	Conjugal Family (husband and wife)	2 (4)
	Husband, wife and unmarried children	27 (54)
	Total	29 (58)
Joint	Husband, wife, unmarried children and husband's father or mother	9 (18)
	Husband, wife, unmarried children and husband's both parents	5 (10)
	Husband, wife, unmarried children and husband's married brother	4 (8)
	Husband, wife, married son and grand sons	3 (6)
Total		21 (42)
Grand Total		50 (100)

The data show that respondents constitute six actual types of family broadly under two analytical types; viz., the nuclear family (58%) of two actual types and the joint one (42%) of four actual types. Of the nuclear families 93.10% consist of the husband, wife and unmarried children whereas 6.90% are the conjugal ones.

Of the joint families, 42.85% consist of the husband wife, their unmarried children and husband's father or mother; 23.80% of the husband, wife, unmarried children and husband's (both) parents; 19.04% of the husband, wife, unmarried children and husband's married brother and 14.28% of the husband wife, married children and grand children.

It is apparent that about three fifths of the respondents belong to nuclear families, which is dominant structural feature of the village. A question, therefore, arises here: In what manner the dominant nuclear pattern of family affects the women's status? Is the nuclear type of family capable enough to do away with the dominance of patriarchy? The Questions are attempted in the following analyses.

Residence of Family

Gender participation in deciding the residence of family reflects the relations between men women in the family of the village. In the patrilineal family any breaking of a joint family affects women's position. A nuclear family makes them free from in-laws' control.

In the village, mostly, within few months/years of his marriage a son separates from his family of origin/orientation to establish his independent household/family. But to establish a separate household most of the women have no role. It all depends upon the husband of a woman to decide whether he wants to live with his parents or not. The Table 4.2 sheds light on the role of the women to decide the residence of their family.

Table 4.2: Distribution of the Respondents into the Types of Role to Decide their Family of Residence by Community, Religion and Caste

Types of Role Determining the Residence of Family	Community, Religion and Caste																		
	Bengali			Hindustani										Oriya	Sant- al	Grand Total			
				Bhojpur Hindu			Bhojpur Muslim	Hindi Speaking			Hindustani Total								
	OBC's	SC's	Total	OBC's	SC's	Total	OBC's	OBC's	SC's	Total	OBC's	SC's	Total	OBC's	ST's	OBC	SC	ST	Total
Own Will	-	-	-	2	-	2 (8.0)	-	1	-	1 (33.33)	3 (13.63)	-	3 (10.0)	-	-	3 (7.89)	-	-	3 (6.0)
Husband's Will	8	2	10 (76.92)	10	5	15 (60.0)	1 (50.0)	1	-	1 (33.33)	12 (54.54)	5 (62.5)	17 (56.66)	2 (40.0)	-	22 (57.89)	7 (70.0)	-	29 (58.0)
In-Law's Will	1	-	1 (7.70)	2	1	3 (12.0)	1 (50.0)	-	-	-	3 (13.63)	1 (12.5)	4 (13.33)	1 (20.0)	-	5 (13.15)	1 (10.0)	-	6 (12.0)
Own and Husband's Will	2	-	2 (15.38)	2	1	3 (12.0)	-	-	-	-	2 (9.09)	1 (12.5)	3 (10.0)	2 (40.0)	1 (50.0)	6 (15.78)	1 (10.0)	1 (50.0)	8 (16.0)
Automatically	-	-	-	2	-	2 (8.0)	-	-	1 (33.33)	2 (9.09)	1 (12.5)	3 (10.0)	-	1 (50.0)	2 (5.26)	1 (10.0)	1 (50.0)	4 (8.0)	
Total	11	2	13 (100)	18	7	25 (100)	2 (100)	2	1	3 (100)	22 (100)	8 (100)	30 (100)	5 (100)	2 (100)	38 (100)	10 (100)	2 (100)	50 (100)

The data reveal that 70% respondents at present reside in a given type of family because of her husband's and parents- in- law's will, i.e., 58% by husband's will and 12% by father-in-law's will. Of the respondents 8% reside in the nuclear families as the parents of their husbands have died; the sisters are married away and the brothers have separated after marriage, whereas 10% respondents live in the present family by the will of theirs and their husbands. Only 6% of the respondents have the residence of family determined by their own will. In all 16% respondents have a say in determining the residence of family. This becomes clear from the following case studies.

Case I

Bharati Bawri living in joint family does not like to separate her son's family. Though her family's income is not sufficient she wants to live with all of her married and unmarried children.

This instance shows to what extent the women are immersed in the traditional joint family values in the rural setting.

Case II

Salima Bibi, 70 years, lives in a joint family consisting of her husband and married and unmarried children. After her retirement from a permanent garden work she has given her job to her elder son. Now he is morally bound to live with them and provide them food.

This indicates how much the elders depend on their male children for social and economic security and care.

Case III

Anupama Yadab, 35 years, has a conjugal family. Her present family of residence is due to her own will. Her husband's parental house is in Silcoorie Tea Estate. Their marriage was the consequence of a love affair. So, her parents-in-law did not like her. On the other hand, Dewan is her parental village and her parents have died a few years ago. She requested her husband to stay with her in Dewan. He agreed to her request. But on festivals, marriages, etc. they visit Silcoorie to participate.

This points that the marital deviance of the youth leads to a forced nuclear family of residence with its loose connections with the joint family.

Except a few cases, after marriage of a girl her residence generally depends upon the will of her husband and his family. It is closely related to economic condition of male spouse. Almost the entire village depends upon minimal cash income that is not sufficient to maintain a joint family. In both, joint and nuclear, families the women are subordinate to their husbands and they never terminate their kinship relations whether they live in joint or nuclear family. Among them formal and informal visits to affinals and cognates is an important feature of life. Maintaining of their affinal and cognatic links is largely determined by the factors like economic condition, regional and

extra-regional dispersal of kins, nature of relationship between bride-givers and bride-takers on dowry, inter-caste or inter community marriage and absence of parents or siblings (brother/sister).

Visit to Natal Home

For almost all respondents including even those who have married in Dewan itself it is impossible to visit their natal home without permission of husband and / or parents in-law. They cannot visit their natal homes alone and some males have to accompany them. Only old and those women who are married in Dewan itself can visit their natal homes alone. This is practised because in their view a woman going alone, or even with kids, to her parents will lower the status / prestige of her husband and his family. This is shown in the Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Distribution of the Respondents into the Types of the Accompanying Male to Visit Natal Home by Linguistic Community, Religion and Caste

Types of the Accompanying Male to Visit Natal Home	Community, Religion and Caste																		
	Bengali			Hindustani										Orhya	Sant-ali	Grand Total			
				Bhojpuri Hindu			Bhojpuri Muslim	Hindi Speaking			Hindustani Total								
	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	ST	OBC	SC	ST	Total
Husband	7	2	9 (69.23)	10	5	15 (60)	1 (50%)	-	-	-	11 (50%)	5 (62.5)	16 (53.33)	3 (60%)	2 (100)	21 (55.26)	7 (70.0)	2 (100)	30 (60%)
Husband or Father / brother	2	-	2 (15.04)	4	2	6 (24.0)	-	-	1 (33.33)	1 (18.18)	4 (37.5)	3 (23.23)	7 (40.0)	2	-	8 (21.05)	3 (30%)	-	11 (22%)
Own Children	1	-	2 (15.04)	-	-	-	1 (50%)	1	-	1 (33.33)	2 (9.09)	-	2 (6.66)	-	-	3 (7.89)	-	-	3 (6%)
None with Old or Native Women	1	-	1 (7.70)	4	-	4 (16.0)	-	1	-	1 (33.33)	5 (22.72)	-	5 (16.66)	-	-	6 (15.78)	-	-	6 (12%)
Total	11	2	13 (100)	18	7	25 (100)	2 (100)	2	1 (100)	3 (100)	22 (100)	8 (100)	30 (100)	5 (100)	2 (100)	38 (100)	10 (100)	2 (100)	50 (100)

The data indicate that 60% respondents visit their natal homes while accompanied by their husbands, 22% by their husbands or brothers/fathers and 6% by grown-up children whereas 12%

respondents comprising 2% old women and 10% native (Dewan's) women visit their native homes alone.

Of the Bengali 69.23% respondents visit their natal homes with husbands, 15.04% with their husbands or brothers or fathers and 7.70% each either with their children or alone. Of the Hindustani 53.33% respondents (60% of the Bhojpuri, 50% of the Bhojpuri Muslim and none of the Hindi speaking) visit their natal homes with their husbands, 23.33% (24% of the Bhojpuri and 33.33% of the Hindi speaking) with their husbands or fathers/brothers and 6.66% (50% of the Bhojpuri Muslim and 33.33% of the Hindi Speaking) with their children whereas 16.66% (16% of the Bhojpuri Hindu and 33.33% of the Hindi Speaking) have their natal homes in Dewan. Of the Oriya respondents 60% visit their natal homes with their husband and 40% visit either with their husband or with father or with brothers. 100% of the Santal respondents visit their natal homes with their husband

The above analysis indicates that the females have a very little say in the affairs of family organization wherein the relations are maintained through male line. These illiterate women have no right to their paternal property and have less occupational access and mobility from the very inception of the village. Kaushalaya Kahar, 32 years old, has nostalgic memories of a visit to her natal home. She has visited her natal home in Sonari of Tripura only once in last 17 years of her marriage in Dewan as her economic constraints do not permit her any frequent visit.

Marriage

Marriage for Indian women is in general considered as their destiny. It is closely related to the dignity of parents and family in the tea garden setting. Therefore, arranged or negotiated marriage is a normal phenomenon wherein main focus is on virginity and caste of the girl. Choosing life partner by a youth himself or herself is scandalous and shameful for both the families. The parents consider it a deviant behaviour on the part of the spouses and it lands the concerned families in the trouble to face caste panchayat, to pay fines and to give feast to the caste members.

Age-at-Marriage

The prevailing conception of marriage generally leads to an early marriage of girls in the village, which is obvious from the Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Distribution of the Respondents into the Groups of Age-at-Marriage by Linguistic Community, Religion and Caste

Groups of Age- at- Marriage	Community, Religion and Caste																					
	Bengali			Hindustani											Oriya		Santal		Grand Total			
				Bhojpuri Hindu			Bhojpuri Muslim		Hindi Speaking			Hindustani Total										
	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	ST	OBC	SC	ST	Total			
12-14		-	2 (15.38)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 (50%)	2 (5.26)	-	1 (50%)	3 (6%)			
15-17	5	2	7 (53.84)	12	5	17 (68%)	1 (50%)	1	-	1 (33.33)	14 (63.63)	5 (62.5)	19 (63.33)	4 (80%)	1 (50%)	23 (60.52)	7 (70%)	1 (50%)	31 (62%)			
18-20	3	-	3 (23.07)	4	2	6 (24%)	1 (50%)	1	1	2 (66.66)	6 (27.27)	3 (37.5)	9 (30%)	1 (20%)	-	10 (26.31)	3 (30%)	-	13 (26%)			
21-23	1	-	1 (7.70)	2	-	2 (8%)	-	-	-	-	2 (9.09)	-	2 (6.66)	-	-	3 (7.89)	-	-	3 (6%)			
Total	11	2	13 (100)	18	7	25 (100)	2 (100)	2	1	3 (100)	22 (100)	8 (100)	30 (100)	5 (100)	2 (100)	38 (100)	10 (100)	2 (100)	50 (100)			

The table shows that 62% respondents have married in the age group of 15-17 years followed by 26% in the age group of 18-20 years whereas 6% each married in the age group of 12-14 and 21-23 years.

In the age group of 15-17 years there married 53.84% of the Bengali, 63.33% of the Hindustani (68% of the Bhojpuri, 50% Bhojpuri Muslim and 33.33% of the Hindi speaking), 80% of the Oriya and 50% of the Santal respondents; in the age group of 18-20 years- 23.07% of the Bengali, 30% of the Hindustani (24% of the Bhojpuri Hindu, 50% of the Bhojpuri Muslim and 66.66% of the Hindi speaking) and 20% of the Oriya respondents; in the age of 21-23 years -7.70%

of the Bengali and 6.66% of the Hindustani (8% of the Bhojpuri Hindu) respondents and in the age group of 12-14 years- 15.38% of the Bengali and 50% of the Santal respondents.

Caste wise, in the age group of 15-17 years are married 60.52% of the OBC, 70% of the SC and 50% of the STs and 34.2% of the OBCs; after attaining the age of 18 years are married 30% of the SCs 5.26% of the OBCs; in the age group of 12-14 years are married 50% of the STs and in the age of 21-23 years are married 7.89% of the OBCs respondents.

The disparities of women appear clearly when the respondents' age-at-marriage is compared with that of their male counterparts. It is shown in the Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Distribution of the Respondents' Male Counterparts into the Groups of Age-at-Marriage by Linguistic Community, Religion and Caste

Groups of Age-at-Marriage	Community, Religion and Caste																		
	Bengali			Bhojpuri Hindu			Bhojpuri Muslim	Hindi Speaking			Hindustani Total			Oriya	Santal	Grand Total			
	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	ST	OBC	SC	ST	Total
15-17	-	-	-	2	-	2 (8.0)	-	-	-	-	2 (9.09)	-	2 (6.66)	-	-	2 (5.26)	-	-	2 (4%)
18-20	4	1	5 (38.46)	5	2	7 (28.0)	-	-	1 (33.33)	1 (33.33)	5 (17.24)	3 (37.5)	8 (26.68)	3 (60.0)	1 (50%)	12 (31.57)	4 (40%)	1 (50%)	17 (34%)
21-23	4	1	5 (38.46)	5	3	8 (32.0)	2 (100)	2	-	2 (66.66)	9 (40.90)	3 (37.5)	12 (40.0)	1 (20.0)	-	14 (36.84)	4 (40%)	-	18 (36%)
24-26	2	-	2 (15.38)	4	2	6 (24.0)	-	-	-	-	4 (18.18)	2 (25.0)	6 (20.0)	1 (20.0)	1 (50%)	7 (18.42)	2 (20%)	1 (50%)	10 (20%)
27-29	1	-	1 (7.69)	2	-	2 (8%)	-	-	-	-	2 (9.09)	-	2 (6.66)	-	-	3 (7.89)	-	-	3 (6%)
Total	11	2	13 (100)	18	7	25 (100)	2 (100)	2	1	3 (100)	22 (100)	8 (100)	30 (100)	5 (100)	2 (100)	38 (100)	10 (100)	2 (100)	50 (100)

The data show that 34% male counterparts of the respondents have married in the age group of 18-20 years; 36% in the age group of 21-23 years; 20% in the age group of 24-26 years; 6% in the age group of 27-29 years and 4% in the age group of 15-17 years.

38.46% of the Bengali male counterparts, 26.68% of the Hindustani (28% of the Bhojpuri Hindu, 33.33% of the Hindi Speaking), 60% of the Oriya and 50% of the Santal have married in the age group of 18-20 years; 38.46% of the Bengali; 40% of the Hindustani (32% of the Bhojpuri Hindu, 100% of the Bhojpuri Muslim, 66.66% of the Hindi Speaking); 20% of the Oriya and 50% of the Santal married in the age group of 24-26 years; 7.69% of the Bengali, 6.66% of the Hindustani (8% of the Bhojpuri Hindu) married in the age group of 27-29 years and 6.66% of the Hindustani (8% of the Bhojpuri Hindu) married in the age group of 15-17 years.

31.57% of the OBCs male counterparts, 40% of the SCs male counterparts and 50% of the STs male counterparts of the respondents married in the age group of 18-20 years; 36.84% of the OBCs and 40% of the SCs married in the age group of 21-23 years; 18.42% of the OBCs, 20% of the SCs and 50% of the STs married in the age group of 24-26 years and 5.26% and 7.89% of the OBCs married in the age group of 15-17 and 27-29 years respectively.

The above data reveal that 68% respondents and 38% of their male counterparts married before attaining the legal age of marriage, that is, 18 and 21 years respectively and 32% respondents and 62% of their male counterparts married after attaining the legal age of marriage. Therefore, the range of age for marriage of females is in-between 12-23 years whereas for males it is in-between 15-29 years. The upper and lower age limit for the females is much lower than that for the males.

Selection of Spouse

The early marriage of girls indicates the increasing suspicion of the caste and parents on account of weakening of their traditional control over the younger generation in view of the process of occupational changes. In the process people remain away at the place of work for a certain period and this naturally gives more independence to their youngsters for interactions with peers and decision making in their life. This is true for all classes and castes in the society. As a result almost all the girls have married through arrangement by parents. This is clearly shown in the Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Distribution of the Respondents into the Modes of Spouse Selection by Community, Religion and Caste

Modes of Spouse Selection	Community, Religion and Caste															Grand Total			
	Bengali			Hindustani										Oriya	Santal				
				Bhojpuri Hindu			Bhojpuri Muslim		Hindi Speaking			Hindustani Total							
	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	ST	OBC	SC	ST	Total
By Parents	11	1	12 (92.38)	13	6	19 (76%)	2 (100)	1	1	2 (66.66)	16 (72.72)	7 (87.5)	23 (76.66)	4 (80%)	2 (100)	31 (81.57)	8 (80%)	2 (100)	41 (82%)
By Relative	-	-	-	1	1	2 (8%)	-	-	-	-	1 (4.54)	1 (12.5)	2 (6.66)	1 (20%)	-	2 (5.26)	1 (10%)	-	3 (6%)
By Oneself	-	1	1 (7.20)	4	-	4 (16%)	-	1	-	1 (33.33)	5 (22.72)	-	5 (16.66)	-	-	5 (13.15)	1 (10%)	-	6 (12%)
Total	11	2	13 (100)	18	7	25 (100)	2 (100)	2	1	3 (100)	22 (100)	8 (100)	30 (100)	5 (100)	2 (100)	38 (100)	10 (100)	2 (100)	50 (100)

The data show that 82% respondents married to a spouse of their parents' choice, 12% to a spouse of their own choice and 6% to a spouse of their relative's choice.

92.38% of the Bengali, 76.66% of the Hindustani (76% of the Bhojpuri Hindu, 100% Bhojpuri Muslims, 66.66% of the Hindi speaking), 80% of the Oriya and 100% of the Santal respondents married to a spouse of their parents choice; 6.66% of the Hindustani (8% of the Bhojpuri Hindus) and 20% Oriya married to a spouse of their relatives choice and 7.20% of the Bengali, 16.66% of the Hindustani (16% of the Bhojpuri Hindus and 33.33% Hindi Speaking) respondents married to a spouse of their own choice. 81.57% of the OBCs, 80% of the SCs and 100% STs married to a spouse of their parents' choice.

The discrimination against women in the mode of spouse selection can be clearly explained when the respondents' mode of spouse selection is compared with that of their male counterparts. It is shown in the Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Distribution of the Respondents' Male Counterparts into the Modes of Spouse Selection by Community, Religion and Caste

Modes Of Selection of Spouse	Community, Religion and Caste																					
	Bengali			Hindustani										Oriya	Santal	Grand Total						
				Bhojpuri Hindu			Bhojpuri Muslim	Hindi Speaking			Hindustani Total											
	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	SC	Total		OBC	SC	Total	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	ST	OBC	SC	ST	Total			
Parents	2	1	3 (23.07)	5	2	7 (28.0)	-	-	1	1 (33.33)	5	3	8 (23.72)	3	5 (37.5)	26.68	2	2	9 (23.68)	4	2	15 (30.0)
Parent & himself	5	1	6 (46.15)	10	3	13 (52.0)	2 (100)	2	-	2 (66.66)	14	3	17 (63.63)	3	17 (37.5)	56.66	2	-	21 (55.26)	4	-	25 (50.0)
Relative	1	-	1 (7.69)	-	1	1 (4.0)	-	-	-	-	-	1	1 (12.5)	1 (3.33)	-	-	-	-	1 (2.63)	1	-	2 (4.0)
Self	3	-	3 (23.07)	3	1	4 (16.0)	-	-	-	-	3	1	4 (13.63)	1	4 (12.5)	13.33	1	-	7 (18.42)	1	-	8 (16.0)
Total	11	2	13 (100)	18	7	25 (100)	2 (100)	2	1	3 (100)	22 (100)	8 (100)	30 (100)	5 (100)	2 (100)	38 (100)	10 (100)	2 (100)	50 (100)			

The table reveals that 50% respondents' male counterparts have married to a spouse of their parents' as well as own choice, 30% to a spouse of their parents' choice, 16% to a spouse of their own choice, and 4% to a spouse of their relative's choice. Therefore, in all, 66% respondents married to a spouse of their own choice.

46.15% of the Bengali, 56.66% of the Hindustani (52% of the Bhojpuri, 100% of the Bhojpuri Muslims and 66.66% of the Hindi speaking) and 40% of the Oriya male counterparts of the respondents married to a spouse of their parents' as well as own choice; 23.07% of the Bengali, 26.68% of the Hindustani (28% of the Bhojpuri Hindu and 33.33% of the Hindi speaking), 40% of the Oriya and 100% of the Santhal married to a spouse of their parents' choice; 23.07% of the Bengali, 13.33% of the Hindustani (16% of the Bhojpuri Hindu) and 20% of the Oriya married to a spouse of their own choice and 7.69% of the Bengali and 3.33% of the Hindustani (4% of the Bhojpuri Hindu) married to a spouse of their relative's choice.

23.68% of the OBCs, 40% of the SCs and 100% of the STs married to a spouse of their parents' choice; 55.26% of the OBCs and 40% of the SCs married to a spouse of their parents' as

well as own choice; 18% of the OBCs and 10% of the SCs married to a spouse of their own choice and 2.63% of the OBCs and 10% of the SCs male counterparts of the respondents married to a spouse of their relative's choice.

It appears that regarding marriage 92% respondents and 34% of their male counterparts have no choice but to accept the parents' choice. Therefore, a girl may not like a spouse but her parents may select him for her. This system prevails among all the communities irrespective of caste and religion. The parents generally condemn the choice of girls saying *chomok dakha bhulla nai chalbe* ... means a girl always wants a handsome spouse but this is not enough for her survival. But the male counterparts have a greater choice of spouse selection to the extent that they approve even their parents' choice of spouse for them. In view of this attitude the cases of caste exogamy and inter-community marriages are rare only. This appears in the Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Distribution of the Respondents into the Types of Marriage by Community, Religion and Caste

Types of Marriage	Community, Religion and Caste																					
	Bengali			Hindustani											Oriya		Santal		Grand Total			
				Bhojpuri Hindu			Bhojpuri Muslim		Hindi Speaking		Hindustani Total											
	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	ST	OBC	SC	ST	Total			
Within Community/Caste	11	2	13 (100)	15	7	22 (88%)	2	1	1	2	18	8	26 (66.66)	5	2	34 (89.47)	10	2	46 (92%)			
Outside Community/Caste	-	-	-	3	-	3 (12.0)	-	1	-	1	4	-	4 (33.33)	-	-	4 (10.53)	-	-	4 (8%)			
Total	11	2	13 (100)	18	7	25 (100)	2 (100)	2	1	3 (100)	22 (100)	8 (100)	30 (100)	5 (100)	2 (100)	38 (100)	10 (100)	2 (100)	50 (100)			

The above data show that 92% respondents married within their own community and caste and 8% marriages are inter-caste and inter-community marriages.

100% of the Bengali, 86.66% of the Hindustani (88% of the Bhojpuri Hindu, 100% of the Bhojpuri Muslims and 66.66% of the Hindi speaking) and 100% each of the Oriya and Santhal married within their own community and caste. 13.33% of the Hindustani (12% of the Bhojpuri Hindu and 33.33% of the Hindi Speaking) married outside the community and caste. Therefore, the inter-caste/community marriage took place only within the largest (Hindustani) community and that too is a limited phenomenon.

All the respondents who married within community/caste had marriages arranged by their parents and relatives. And the one case of intra-community/caste marriages is related to love affair.

All the marriages out side the community are related to love affair, which create a lot of problem in their respective communities. The parents of both, the boys and girls, had to approach to their respective caste panchayats that decide by imposing fines and feasts.

Dowry

Marriage in Indian society is closely related with dowry. Here in Dewan also dowry plays an important role in marriage. The Table 4.9 sheds light on the dowry given at marriage.

Table 4.9: Distribution of the Respondents into the Types of Dowry Incidence at Marriage by Linguistic Community, Religion and Caste

Types of Dowry Incidence	Community, Religion and Caste																			
	Bengali			Hindustani											Oriya	Santal	Grand Total			
				Bhojpuri Hindu			Bhojpuri Muslim	Hindi Speaking			Hindustani Total									
	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	ST	OBC	SC	ST	Total	
Given	7	2	9 (69.23)	13	5	18 (72%)	2 (100)	1	1	2 (66.66)	16 (72.72)	6 (75%)	22 (73.33)	3 (60%)	2 (100)	26 (68.43)	8 (80%)	2 (100)	36 (72%)	
Not given	4	-	4 (30.77)	5	2	7 (28%)	-	1	-	1 (33.33)	6 (27.27)	2 (25%)	8 (26.33)	2 (40%)	-	12 (31.57)	2 (20%)	-	14 (28%)	
Total	11	2	13 (100)	18	7	25 (100)	2 (100)	2	1	3 (100)	22 (100)	8 (100)	30 (100)	5 (100)	2 (100)	38 (100)	10 (100)	2 (100)	50 (100)	

The above table indicates that of the respondents 72% were given dowry and 28% were not given any dowry.

Community wise, 69.23% of the Bengali, 73.33% of the Hindustani (72% of the Bhojpuri Hindu, 100% of the Bhojpuri Muslims and 66.66% of the Hindu speaking), 60% of the Oriya and 100% of the Santhal were given dowry and 30.77% of the Bengali, 26.66% of the Hindustani (28% of the Bhojpuri Hindu and 33.33% of the Hindi Speaking), 40% of the Oriya were not given dowry.

Caste wise, 68.43% of the OBCs, 80% of the SCs and 100% of the STs received dowry and 31.57% of the OBCs and 20% of the SCs received no dowry.

Dowry giving is quite common in Dewan and any marriage solemnized without dowry is either related to love affair or poor economic condition of both the spouses. Of the Bhojpuri Hindu and Hindi speaking respondents, the parents of male demand cash money for *Tilak*, a **kind of betrothal ceremony**, on selecting a female for him. If the parents of the female agree to fulfil the demand then only the ceremony is held. In addition to the demand of cash, they demand in kind like TV, cycle, utensils, chairs, table, clothes, bed, etc. at the time of marriage. Now the Bengali community has also adopted the *Tilak*. Though the Oriya community has not adopted *Tilak*, they also demand in cash and kind at the time of marriage. Among the Muslim dower is given at the time of *Nikah*.

Dowry given at the time of her marriage does not improve the position of women in Dewan. This is perceptible from the data shown in the Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Distribution of the Respondents into the Kinds of the Impact of Dowry on Their Position in Family by Community, Religion and Caste

Kinds of the Impact of Dowry	Community, Religion and Caste																					
	Bengali			Hindustani											Oriya		Santal		Grand Total			
				Bhojpuri Hindu			Bhojpuri Muslim	Hindi Speaking			Hindustani Total											
	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	SC	Total	OBC	ST	OBC	SC	ST	Total			
Received Normal Treatment	7	2	9 (100)	12	5	17 (100)	2 (100)	-	1 (50%)	1	15	5	20 (95.23) (100%)	3 (100)	2 (100)	25 (96.15) (100)	8 (100)	2 (100)	35 (97.22)			
Received Special Affection	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1 (50%)	1	-	1	-	-	1 (3.85)	-	-	1 (2.78)			
Total	7	2	9 (100)	12	5	17 (100)	2 (100)	1	1	2 (100)	16 (100)	5 (100)	21 (100)	3 (100)	2 (100)	26 (100)	8 (100)	2 (100)	36 (100)			

The data show that none but one respondent irrespective of caste and community have got any special treatment from their parents-in-law and other relatives of husband's family on account of the dowry given at their marriage. One Robidas (Hindustani) woman received in dowry from her parents a large amount of cash (20 thousand rupees) in *Tilak* and the items like TV, radio, cycle, chair, table, dressing table, bed, almirah, utensils, clothes, gold and silver jewellery and other things on her marriage. Therefore, her parents-in-law show special affection to her and give her relaxation in domestic work.

Dowry in cash and kind that is given according to a family's economic condition generally becomes the property of husband's family and the wife has no right over the dowry given by her parents. Husband and father-in-law can sell these commodities without consulting her. Dowry prevailing in the comparatively rich families and the phenomenon of dowry-giving and dowry-taking is considered a status symbol among the villagers.

Polygyny

Though Hindu Marriage Act 1955 has made the practice of polygyny illegal but even then four cases of polygyny are found in Dewan. In all the four cases the second marriage of men has been the result of a love affair. The cases are discussed here to understand the phenomenon of polygyny in the village.

Case I

Kanhai Bawri, 35 years, primary educated, permanent tea garden labour, has married twice. First, when he was 20 years old he married a woman of the Mali caste and got three children from her. Then, in the age of 30 years he married to a woman of the Rajbangshi caste/community. The wife stated that she is Nomita Bawri (Mali), illiterate, casual tea garden labour of Dewan, who fell in love with Kanhai and ran away with him ten years ago. Since then she has been living with him. Her parent-in-law went to the Bawri Caste Panchayat. The Manjhe (head of the panchayat) agreed to accept the couple in the caste fold if the parents-in-law paid a penalty of Rs.1001/-; provided a feast to all caste members and performed the rituals like **Satyanarayan Katha** and **Sindur Dan**. In the rituals a Brahmin performs the puja (worshipping) of Lord Satyanarayana and thereafter the husband smears vermilion on his wife's forehead in presence of the Manjhe and caste panchayat members. Since till date they could not gather money to perform the rituals, their formal (ritual) marriage is yet to take place. They are outcastes, though the villagers accept them as the husband and wife and their children as the legal issues.

After five years of her marriage she heard from the villagers that her husband was in love with a Rajbangshi girl. She wanted to prevent him from the second marriage. On the question she quarrelled with him many times and received bad beating. Despite her protests he married to the second wife five years ago. Since then her co-wife is living with her. After his second marriage she cannot even approach caste panchayat because they are outcaste. As she has no economic means for the survival of herself and children, she has to adjust with the situation.

The second wife, Swaranalata Bawri (Rajbangshi) of Dhayani Basti, 22 years, primary school pass, 1 km. from Dewan, stated that Kanhai used to visit her village for work. He allured her saying that he was an orphan who had four bighas of land, permanent labour job in the garden and a beautiful quarter. She fell in love and fled away with him. When they came here in Dewan she found him already having a wife with three children. She regrets to have committed a blunder in her life. Now she has a child and nowhere to go. She is living as a maidservant. Her co-wife did not permit her to enter kitchen. And for a little mistake in work her co-wife beats her badly. She never saw her parents after her marriage. For them she is already dead. She knows that her family is outcaste and on the birth of her child no villager visited them.

Case II

Sipul Bawri, 50 years, middle school educated, carpenter, had the first marriage arranged by his parents at the age of 22 years. After getting three children when he was 35 years he married another woman. His second wife has two children.

Ranuka Bawri, 42 years, illiterate, permanent labour from Palarbond Tea Garden is the first wife. In the age of 16 years her parents chose Sipul as her spouse. He is a permanent tea garden labour having six bighas of land. After eight years of their marriage suddenly she came to know from her neighbours of her husband going to marry again. When she asked him about his love affair he quarrelled and beat her. He married to the woman and brought her home. Her parents when knew about his second marriage came to Dewan and complained to the caste panchayat that met at her house. The panchayat found her husband guilty and asked him to give his permanent work to her (the first wife) and also accepted his second wife in the caste provided he paid a penalty of Rs 2001/-. Accepting the decision he gave his permanent work to her and paid fine also. Since then her co-wife started to living with her.

The second wife, Puspa Bawri, 36 years, illiterate, is a housewife from Dewan who fell in love with Sipul when she was 19 year old. She was aware of Sipul's first wife and three children.

But he assured her of his capacity to maintain two wives and their children at a time. So, she married to him without any hesitation. Her husband earns for her. She believes that her co-wife is cheater as she snatched her husband's permanent work. She shows the jealousy in the polygynous families.

Case III

Kanchan Bhuyan, 40 years, primary school pass, is a permanent tea garden labour who was married first at the age 18 years and got four daughters. Then he married to another woman when he was 35 years old. His second wife has two sons.

The first wife, Rah Bhuyan- 35 years, illiterate, casual labour of Dewan Tea Garden, got married to Kanchan by her parents at the age of 13 years. They spent 14 years of their married life together and got four daughters. But few years ago he suddenly brought a girl by marriage. After his second marriage she sought justice from the caste panchayat. But her husband was the secretary of Bagan Panchayat at that time and the members of the Bhuyan Caste Panchayat did not dare to go against him as to ask him for giving his permanent job to her. The panchayat decided to accept his co-wife also as a legal wife and demanded only a feast for permitting **Sindur Dan**. He promised to the caste panchayat to continue his responsibility for the first wife and her children as well. She had no way but to accept the *decision of the panchayat*. Now her husband visits her house once or twice in a week and sometimes gives her money, wheat, vegetables, etc. He lives with his second wife in a nearby house.

The second wife, Protima Bhuyan- 25 years, illiterate, native of from Barthal Tea Garden village and casual labour at Dewan Tea Garden, fell in love with Kanchan a few years ago. Though she knew that he was married and a father of four daughters, she decided to marry considering him a good person. Her parents were strongly opposed to her decision and they cut off all their relations with her. Despite this all, she married to him and the panchayat recognized the marriage.

Case IV

Candan Tanti is 36 years old, illiterate, casual/wage labour at others' houses or farms. He married first time at the age of 20 years and second time at the age of 28 years.

The first wife, Protima Tanti, is 31 years, illiterate, permanent labour of the garden. Her parents married her to Chandan at the age of 15 years. After seven years of her married life, her husband fell in love with another woman. She tried her level best to prevent his second marriage but failed. One day he brought the woman and married to her. She approached the panchayat that imposed fine and feast for permitting **Sindur Dan**. Now her co-wife is living with her but they have separate kitchens.

The second wife, Shailo Tanti, 25 years old, illiterate, casual labour of the Dewan garden fell in love with Chandan, though knowing that he is married and a father of two children. She married to Chandan because she loves him and her co-wife is not good. She does not behave with him properly.

Thus, it reveals that in Dewan Tea Garden village, polygyny is not cognizable offence and caste panchayats do not take note of it until plaintiff formally informs. A panchayat imposes penalty to the polygynous man for recognizing his second wife. The panchayats also ask a man to provide food and clothes to his first wife and her children.

In sum, the patriliney, caste endogamy, polygyny, early and negotiable marriage and practice of dowry have contributed to the women's dependency and low status as compared to men in the family and society in the tea garden village.