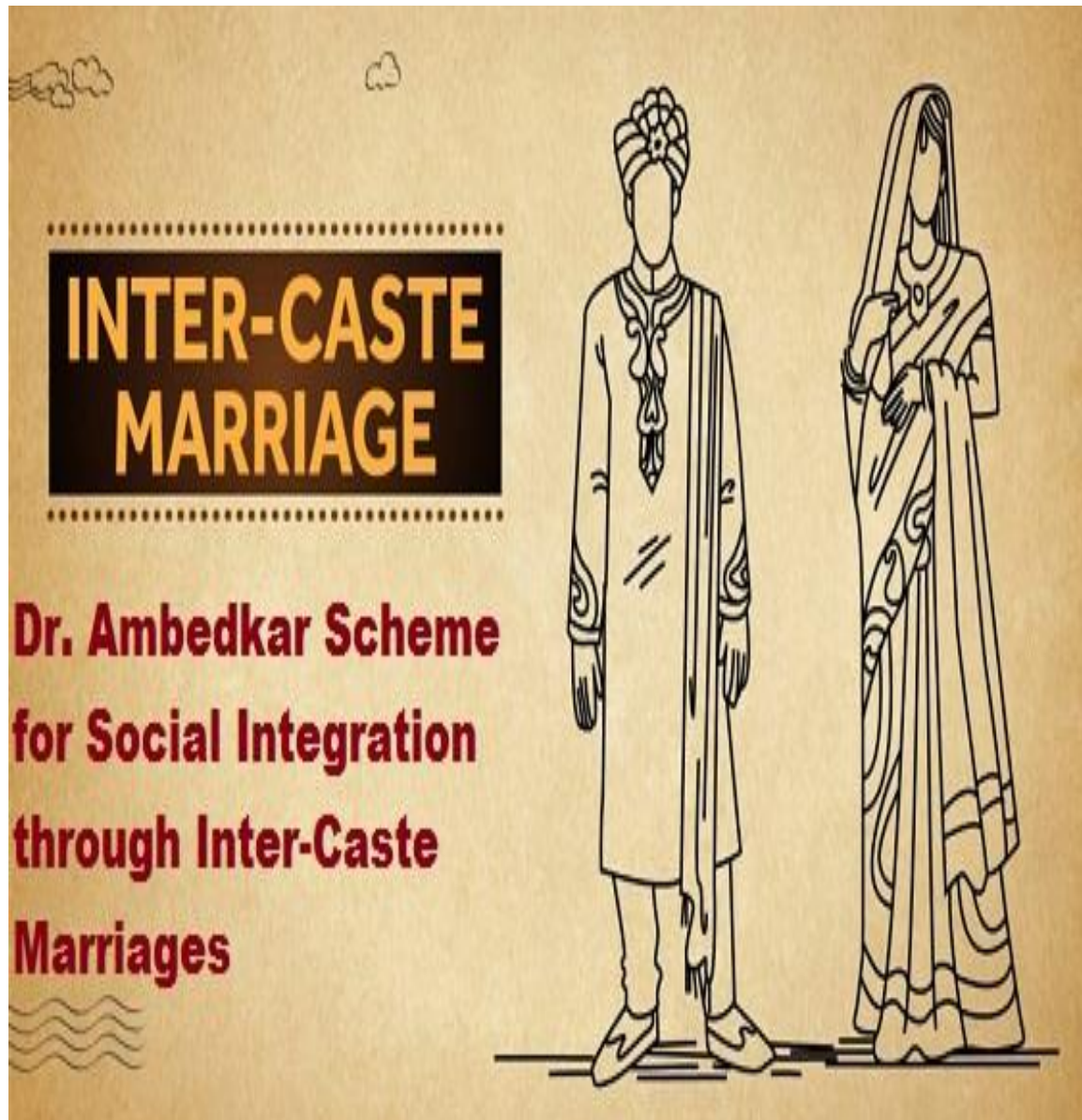


Study on
The Impact of Inter-Caste Marriage Scheme of
Dr. Ambedkar Foundation on the Lives of Beneficiaries



**DR. AMBEDKAR CHAIR IN SOCIAL JUSTICE
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

NEW DELHI

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Chair Professor
Dr. Ambedkar Chair in Social Justice

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ABOUT THE CHAIR

The Scheme of “Dr. Ambedkar Chair” under the aegis of Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India was initiated in 1993 in different Universities and Institutions all over the country to pay tribute and constructive homage to the memory of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. Dr. Ambedkar Chair in Social Justice was set up at Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) in 2004 to translate Dr. Ambedkar’s ideas into practical propositions and policy instruments.

Since its inception, the Chair has been conducting research and capacity building workshops, organizing lectures and seminars on the theme, ‘social justice’ and philosophy of Dr. B.R Ambedkar, focusing on issues such as social exclusion, inclusion and marginalization, highlighting the plight of the disadvantaged. The Chair has produced quality publications and organised inter-chair dialogues to enrich studies on weaker sections, minorities, backward classes with the hope of weaving poverty-alleviation better into public policy.

In the past four years or so the Dr.Ambedkar Chair at IIPA has had the privilege to host eminent scholars to deliver Ambedkar memorial lectures. Among others, Dr.Vinay Sahasrabuddhe spoke on ‘Contextualising the Ideas of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity in New India’, Shri Balmiki Prasad Singh delivered a lecture on ‘Dr. B. R. Ambedkar’s Philosophy of Constitutionalism as an Instrument of JUSTICE, social, economic and political’, Prof. Sukhdev Thorat spoke on ‘Social Justice in the Private Sector’ and Dr. Narendra Jadhav on ‘Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Intellectual Colossus and National Leader.

Besides disseminating the ideas and thoughts of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to students and scholars through seminars, workshops, dialogues and discussions, the Chair undertakes research and prepares course module/ curriculum in the line of Dr. Ambedkar philosophy and thought for sensitizing trainees at IIPA. It also sensitizes people of nearby locality and areas about the relevance of Dr. Ambedkar’s ideas for the betterment of the poor and vulnerable sections of society. The Chair identifies and recognizes the contribution of activist/writers, those who made significant contribution for mobilization of marginalized sections of society and provides platform for sharing their ideas and experiences. The Chair has organized awareness camps to propagate the thoughts and writings of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar among masses.

The project entitled “The Impact of Inter-Caste Marriage Scheme of Dr. Ambedkar Foundation on the Lives of Prospective Beneficiaries” has been undertaken by the Chair as part of the activities for the years 2017-19. The present report is the outcome of the study.

Executive Summary

In India, most Indian families still prefer marriages arranged within their religion and caste. Marriages outside these rigid boundaries have often led to violent consequences. Inter-caste married couples often become targets of severe physical assault, social ostracisation and economic boycott. There have been violent killings of inter-caste married couples, across India. The couples in Inter-caste marriages undergo hard times when their immediate families disown them. Dr. Ambedkar Scheme for Social Integration through Inter-caste Marriages was introduced in 2013 under the aegis of Dr. Ambedkar Foundation (DAF), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The objective of the nation-wide scheme is to extend financial support to the inter-caste marriage couples to help them integrate into the mainstream of life.

The present study entitled “The Impact of Inter-Caste Marriage Scheme of Dr. Ambedkar Foundation on the Lives of Beneficiaries” is to assess the social integration fostered by the scheme. The DAF Inter-caste marriage scheme offers monetary incentive to lower the parental control over the choice of the spouse. There are many studies on the role of incentives in increasing/decreasing the pace of social integration through the medium of inter-caste marriage. Social integration is contextual and there is need for more studies to bring out intrinsic factors behind inter-caste marriages.

Marriages in India are largely endogamous. As per estimates of National Family and Health Survey 4, only 3.4 percent of marriages are between Scheduled Castes and non-Scheduled Castes. The Central government and various State governments and have taken initiatives to promote inter-caste marriages. They have stated that promotion of inter-caste marriages is a measure to integrate historically disadvantaged castes. In order to promote inter-caste marriages, most of the State governments in India have offered cash transfers to couples where one spouse belongs to Scheduled Castes and the other to Non-Scheduled Caste. Each State and Union Territory has discretion as regards the incentive to be offered for the inter-caste marriage scheme.

Inter-caste marriage is now being regarded as an important index or indicator of integration by Dr. Ambedkar Foundation as it is a means for breaking caste barriers. Against this backdrop, the Foundation has been taking all steps to propagate the idea of inter-caste marriage. An incentive of Rs 2.5 lakh was declared for every inter-caste marriage couple, where either the bride or the bridegroom is a Dalit.

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has been funding a centrally Sponsored Scheme where in Central assistance is provided to the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations, towards incentive for inter-caste marriages. A key element of the Central assistance to States is to provide incentive for inter- caste marriages (where one of the spouses is a member of a Scheduled Caste). Almost all the states have instituted scheme for inter-caste marriages. There are many suggestions to improve the scheme implementation so as to accomplish the basic objective of the scheme, namely social integration through inter-caste marriage.

Overwhelmingly, the suggestions from inter-caste marriage couples, from this study, are that implementation gaps need to be plugged. The monetary incentive does not have impact on intrinsic motivation for inter-caste marriage, because it is a post-marriage incentive. It only gives some relief to inter-caste marriage couples, who often face adverse social and economic consequences. Dr. Ambedkar scheme for social integration through inter-caste marriage should target inter-caste marriages between persons belonging to different states, since state-led implementation is limited to residents of the States. Although State governments have been implementing a financial support scheme, almost all the States restrict this scheme to the natives of the State. The quantum of incentive has to be linked to inflation and increase the amount accordingly.

Marriage under State Act should also be accepted without sole emphasis on marriage being solemnized under Hindu Marriage Act 1955. The pattern of inter-caste marriages in India is affected by various socio-economic and demographic factors and there is a significant spatial variation too. Inter-caste marriages are now recognized as the main tool to blur the caste barriers in India, whether urban or rural. The Government should improve the structure of the incentives in this scheme. There is also a need for a positive administrative and policy measure to facilitate the social identity of children born out of the inter-caste marriages. Apart from the financial assistance, in inter-caste marriages, there are many other factors that are overlooked. The more urbanised States (barring Tamil Nadu) displayed a higher rate of inter-caste marriages than their predominantly rural counterparts. It does point out that cities and urban areas are likely to have more conducive conditions for inter-caste marriages.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Inter-caste marriage is considered a serious and bold step in India. In many places, intra-caste marriages continue to be imposed, despite elders being educated and have moved out of their traditional livelihoods. Closely knit caste communities are often aggressive in enforcing this norm. Many a times, inter-caste marriages are frowned upon with violent response. Inter-caste married couples often become targets of severe physical assault, social ostracisation and economic boycott. Even if the couples move away from their parents/ parent-in-laws, the latter become targets and their properties are besieged. The social contacts take a severe dent, isolating the couple and/or their immediate relatives. In such circumstances, inter-caste married couples require financial support to start life afresh.

According to the 2016 National Crime Records Bureau statistics, 77 people were murdered by their families or communities for falling in love or marrying out of their caste. The actual numbers could be much higher. Honour killing is neither new nor rare. The couples in inter-caste marriages undergo hard times when their immediate families disown them. Cash support would be useful in meeting their initial financial needs.

The government introduced Dr. Ambedkar Scheme for Social Integration through Inter-caste Marriages in 2013 under the aegis of Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The objective of the nation-wide scheme is to extend financial support to the inter-caste marriage couples to help them integrate into the mainstream of life.

The present study entitled "The Impact of Dr. Ambedkar Scheme for Social Integration through Inter-caste Marriages on the Lives of Beneficiaries" is to assess the social integration by the scheme of inter-caste marriage.

Objectives of the Study:

- To study the impact of the scheme on social integration
- To identify constraints inhibiting the smooth execution of the scheme to enable effective implementation.
- To make suggestions to widen the outreach of the scheme

Methodology

The study was carried out by administering a questionnaire to the respondents (identified from the beneficiaries in consultation with Dr.Ambedkar Foundation). The respondents were randomly selected from the beneficiaries, who were interviewed and their responses are analyzed.

The study identified 68 beneficiaries from 18 Indian States. There is a variation in the number of identified beneficiaries from each state. Out of 68 beneficiaries, 31 respondents were randomly selected and administered questionnaire of the study. The distribution of 31 respondents varies in different states. The study team met most of the beneficiaries in person, while responses of few were received by email and a couple of them responded over phone. The questionnaire inclusive of 75 questions (yes/no options, open ended questions and questions with multiple options) was administered to the respondents. The questionnaire covered important aspects such as:

- Scheme benefits related to family integration, social integration, family acceptance
- Sustainability of joint family
- Status of inter-caste marriage
- Scheme outreach
- Accessibility of Dr. Ambedkar Foundation
- Procedural difficulties
- Suggestions to improve the scheme

Based on the responses of the beneficiaries, the study report was finalised

Limitations

Though this is a pan-India study and efforts have been made to reach out to all the identified beneficiaries, the study team faced certain difficulties. As the beneficiaries (couples) got married against the wishes of elders and society, largely, they do not have proper residential address. The study team also found that the addresses of the beneficiaries were incomplete. In few cases, they moved out without leaving any forwarding address. Some gave the address of their friends who were reluctant to share the details. In some cases, even the phone numbers of the respondents were changed or found to be wrong. It is important to state that those who could be contacted as part of the study were highly cautious and few were even suspicious to queries. The responses of few beneficiaries who were literate were not completely in sync with the objective of the study and flow of the questionnaire. As a result, some responses are not in congruence with questions.

A few responded telephonically as they were indisposed to meet. There have been violent killings of inter-caste married couples, across India. The study team is not aware of the circumstances being experienced by these couples. Rightly, considering their situation, the team left it to the choice of beneficiaries the way they wanted to be interviewed. Despite efforts, extended time of conversation was not possible and also few responses seem to be tangential. As a result, some of the telephonic interviews could not be completed. A few educated respondents filled up the questionnaire on their own, whose responses are informative, insightful and educative. The research scholars among the respondents gave encouraging responses.

Table: 1 Detail of the Beneficiaries and Sample for the Study

Dr. Ambedkar Scheme for Social Integration through Inter - caste Marriages			
S. No.	States	Identified No. of Beneficiaries	Respondents
1	Uttar Pradesh	5	2
2	Gujarat	3	0
3	Chhattisgarh	1	0
4	Delhi	11	8
5	Bihar	1	0
6	Himachal Pradesh	1	0
7	Haryana	5	3
8	Jammu & Kashmir	1	0
9	Jharkhand	1	0
10	Madhya Pradesh	1	1
11	Rajasthan	1	0
12	West Bengal	2	0
13	Andhra Pradesh	10	2
14	Telangana	6	2
15	Tamil Nadu	11	11
16	Puducherry	2	0
17	Karnataka	2	0
18	Maharashtra	4	2
	Grand Total	68	31

Review of Literature

This study report adds to the literature related to various affirmative action policies for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in India and resultant changes in their economic, political and social status. Inter- caste marriage is considered as one of the most definitive measures of the dissolution of social and cultural barriers and thus a means of social and cultural integration as it is the result of close social interaction between people of two different ethnicities¹.

Internationally, inter-caste marriage is accepted as an integration factor. It is also seen as an indicator of progress in ethnically diverse societies. It is more likely to occur in multicultural societies where there are higher opportunities for social interaction between people of different ethnicities, especially in an urban milieu. This interaction is most likely to happen at educational institutions, training centers and employment locations. Thus, social, cultural, religious factors, institutions, government policies and programs that facilitate access to opportunities for interaction are likely to increase the rate of inter-caste marriage. The approach of Dr. Ambedkar Foundation validates this view.

A study² on multiculturalism in Australia was carried out with an objective to inquire precisely into the terms such as multiculturalism, integration, national identity and assimilation. Rather than focusing solely on economic factors, which dominates official thinking, it draws on a variety of academic disciplines representing linguistics, political science, sociology, political philosophy and demography. This study by delving into other factors, demonstrates the need to consider different factors for understanding and evaluating social integration. In Western world, multiculturalism has become highly controversial and is currently said to be in retreat. The same is the case in Australia, where it was officially adopted. In Australia, national public policy has moved away from ‘multiculturalism’ to ‘integration’, while most State and Territory governments continue their programmes unchanged. However, the need for multiculturalism and integration is growing as population migration continues to Western countries just as social integration in India has become a necessity.

¹ Bean, F and Stevens, G (2003). *America’s Newcomers and the Dynamics of Diversity*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation; Kalmijn, M and Flap, H (2001). ‘Assortative Meeting and Mating: Unintended Consequences of Organized Settings for Partner Choices.’ *Social Forces*, 79: 1289-1312.

² *Multiculturalism and Integration: A Harmonious Relationship*, Edited by: James Jupp, Michael Clyne, <http://doi.org/10.22459/MI.07.2011>

In this book, the Chapter titled “Intermarriage, Integration and Multiculturalism: A Demographic Perspective”, by Siew-Ean Khoo argues that, larger the ethnic community and more concentrated it is in terms of residential location, the more is the opportunity of finding a marriage partner within the community. However, an imbalance in the sex ratio of single people in the ethnic community will affect the supply of potential spouses and can lead to inter-caste marriages. For example, if single men outnumber single women in the ethnic community, some of the men will have to find marriage partners from outside the ethnic community or otherwise remain unmarried. This will increase the inter- caste marriage rate for men than women.

Subhasish Dugar and Haimanti Bhattacharya and David Reiley, in their paper, “Can’t Buy me Love? A Field Experiment Exploring the Trade-off between Income and Caste-Status in Indian Matriomonal Market”, state that a large body of literature depicts that status-based discrimination is pervasive, but is silent on how economic incentive interacts with such discrimination. The status includes social, economic and class. Their study addresses the question of economic incentive through a field experiment. This experiment included newspaper advertisements of potential grooms with a systematic variation in their caste and income and focused on the responses of higher-caste females to lower-caste males. It was found that the females with higher social status show less discriminatory behavior towards males with lower social status but higher income. This implies that good economic status can reduce discriminatory behavior.

Ali Hortaçsu, Sam Il Myoung Hwang, Divya Mathur, in a paper³, analyzed the impact of monetary incentives on inter-caste marriages in India. They found that when marriage markets are symmetric, incentivizing a particular type of marriage raises the welfare of each marriage type and gender. The study noted that a 10,000-rupee increase in the incentive raises the exogamy between Scheduled Caste men and non-Scheduled Caste women by 4 percent in rural India. It reported considerable variation in the size of incentives for inter-caste marriages across time and in different States/Union Territories (UTs). It also observed that the size of the incentives across States/UTs has doubled from Rs.25, 000 in 2000 to Rs.50, 000 in 2016. Geographically, Western States tend to offer higher incentives. The main empirical finding of the study is that the incentives modestly raise the rate of exogamy between SC men and non-SC women in rural areas. The study recommends estimation of the incentives based on non-caste

3. Ali Hortaçsu, Sam Il Myoung Hwang and Divya Mathur, Monetary incentives on inter-caste marriages in India: Theory and evidence, *Journal of Development Economics*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdeveco.2019.102371> (2019).

characteristics like level of education. However, Banerjee et al. (2013) found evidence that a household head would rather marry his daughter to someone from his own caste with no education than to someone with a master's degree from a different caste. Is there a peer effect on inter-caste marriages? How far the marriages between non-SCs and SCs change the attitude or behavior of people towards Scheduled Castes? This paper shows that existence of peer effect justifies receiving monetary incentives for inter-caste marriages in India, especially when its direct effect on the rate of exogamy is modest.

Divya Mathur, in her paper⁴, "What's Love Got to Do with It? Parental Involvement and Spouse Choice in Urban India, finds that stronger financial and kinship ties between parents and sons increase the likelihood of an arranged marriage. Furthermore, when parents are involved in mate choice, sons are significantly less likely to marry college-educated women and women engaged in the labor force. The parental preferences in such cases are predominant. Divya Mathur suggests that if reduction in parental control is incentivized, growth of women is likely to happen. The DAF Inter-caste marriage scheme offers monetary incentive to lower the parental control over mate choice.

Gneezy⁵ and others want economists to broaden their focus while discussing incentives as a tool for social change. Their paper warns about a potential conflict between direct extrinsic effect of the incentives and intrinsic motivations, in the short run and the long run. In the field of education, such incentives seem to have moderate success even when the incentives are well-specified and well-targeted (for example, "read these books" rather than "read books"). A considerable and growing body of evidence suggests that the effects of incentives depend on how they are designed, the form in which they are given (especially monetary or non-monetary), how they interact with intrinsic motivations and social motivations, and what happens after they are withdrawn. Incentives do matter, but in various and sometimes unexpected ways.

On the other hand, one of the key empirical findings, in the paper by Abhijit V. Banerjee, Esther Duflo, Maitreesh Ghatak and Jeanne Lafortune, "Marry for What? Caste and Mate Selection in Modern India", is that there is a very strong preference for within-caste marriage. The implications and cost of wanting to marry within-caste is low. As a result, it concludes that caste

⁴ Mathur, Divya, What's Love Got to Do with It? Parental Involvement and Spouse Choice in Urban India (November 7, 2007). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1655998> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1655998>

⁵ Gneezy, Uri, Stephan Meier, and Pedro Rey-Biel. 2011. "When and Why Incentives (Don't) Work to Modify Behavior." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 25 (4): 191-210.

will remain a persistent feature of the Indian marriage market. However, the methodology appears to be the key here: “We use a unique data set of individuals who placed matrimonial advertisements in a major newspaper, the responses they received, how they ranked them, and the eventual matches. We estimate the preferences for caste, education, beauty, and other attributes. We then compute a set of stable matches, which we compare to the actual matches that we observe in the data.” The methodology appears to be unique in arriving at such conclusions.

The US-based Princeton University conducted a research on 43,201 married Indian couples from all strata of societies⁶ using the data of National Family Health Survey (NFHS-3, 2005-06). It concluded that about 11 percent of the total marriages in India take place between castes (inter-caste). Of the total inter-caste marriages, in 5.6 percent cases women marry men belonging to lower castes. In case of another 5.4 percent cases, the women belong to lower caste but husbands belong to higher castes. There is large spatial variation across the states in the pattern of inter-caste marriages in India. The research revealed that most number of inter-caste marriages take place in metropolitan cities⁷.

The terms like social integration, inclusion and cohesion which are frequently used in the literature relate to social discrimination. These have been defined at the international level⁸ as:

Social Integration: The UN Social Summit approached social integration in terms of goals, principles, and process. The goal of social integration is to create “a more stable, safe and just society for all”, in which every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play. Such an inclusive society must be based on the principles of embracing (not coercing or forcing) diversity and using participatory processes that involve all stakeholders in the decision-making that affects their lives. “Social Integration” is used as a dynamic and principled process in which societies engage to further human development. A successful social integration processes encourage “coming together” while respecting differences, and consciously and explicitly putting great value on maintaining diversity. Social integration represents the attempt not to make people adjust to society, but rather to ensure that society is accepting all people.

⁶ Kumudini Das, Kailash Chandra Das, Tarun Kumar Roy and Pradeep Kumar Tripathy, Inter-caste marriage in India: has it really changed over time? <https://epc2010.princeton.edu/papers/100157>

⁷ <https://www.oneindia.com/feature/in-pics-unknown-facts-about-inter-caste-marriages-in-india/articlecontent-pf4352-1311186.html>

⁸ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/2009-2/practical-strategies-to-promote-social-integration.html>

Social Inclusion: Social inclusion is the process by which efforts are made to ensure equal opportunities that everyone, regardless of their background, can achieve their full potential in life. Such efforts include policies and actions that promote equal access to (public) services as well as to enable citizen's participation in the decision-making processes that affect their lives.

Social cohesion: Social cohesion is a related concept to social integration in many respects. A socially cohesive society is one where all groups have a sense of belonging, participation, inclusion, recognition and legitimacy. Such societies are not necessarily demographically homogenous. Rather, by respecting diversity, they harness the potential residing in their societal diversity (in terms of ideas, opinions, skills, etc.). Therefore, they are less prone to slip into destructive patterns of tension and conflict when different interests collide.

The literature review throws light on different factors that influence social integration across the world. Studies were done on the role of incentives in increasing/decreasing the pace of social integration through the medium of inter-caste marriage. However, there is no conclusion that only incentives can lead to the process of multiculturalism and national integration. Social integration is contextual and there is need for more studies to bring out intrinsic factors behind inter-caste marriages. It is in this context the present study assumes significance.

CHAPTER II

TARGETING AND COVERAGE OF THE SCHEME

Marriages in India are largely endogamous. As per estimates⁹ of National Family and Health Survey 4, only 3.4 percent of marriages are between Scheduled Castes and non-Scheduled Castes. In this situation, various State governments and the Central government have taken initiatives to promote inter-caste marriages. They have stated that promotion of inter-caste marriages is a measure to integrate historically disadvantaged castes. A government order from Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment announcing the funding of Dr. Ambedkar Scheme for Social Integration through Inter-Caste Marriages says:

...Inter-caste marriages can be one of the significant steps to reduce the caste-prejudices, abolish 'untouchability' and spread the values of liberty, equality, fraternity, etc., in the society ...

Similar rationales have been provided for the policy by State governments as well:

The purpose of this scheme is to achieve caste parity in the society ... (Assam)

Scheme objective: As a part of the eradication of untouchability ... (Maharashtra)

Government has been encouraging Inter-caste Marriages for social integration and social reform with a view to eradicate caste system in the Society ... (Telangana)

In order to promote inter-caste marriages, most of the State governments in India have offered cash transfers to couples where one spouse belongs to Scheduled Castes and the other to Non-Scheduled Caste. Each State and Union Territory has discretion as regards the incentive to be offered for the inter-caste marriage scheme.

Inter-caste marriage is now being regarded as an important index or indicator of integration by Dr. Ambedkar Foundation. The problem of caste system is deep rooted in Indian society. In 1936, Dr. Ambedkar had opined¹⁰, "I am convinced that the real remedy is inter-marriage. Fusion of blood can alone create the feeling of being kith and kin, and unless this feeling of kinship, of being kindred, becomes paramount, the separatist feeling — the feeling of being aliens — created by Caste will not vanish. Where society is already well-knit by other ties, marriage is an ordinary incident of life. But where society is cut asunder, marriage as a

⁹ Ali Hortaçsu et al, op.cit.,

¹⁰ Ramanath Jha, Can urbanisation be the panacea for India's caste issues?, 11 April, 2019, <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/can-urbanisation-the-panacea-for-indias-caste-issues-49835/>

binding force becomes a matter of urgent necessity. The real remedy for breaking Caste is inter-marriage. Nothing else will serve as the solvent of Caste.”

History reveals that efforts have been made by various social reformers and individuals to get rid of this social menace which reinforces untouchability and social discrimination in the society. However, over time, there is a perceptible change and inter-caste marriage is becoming a part of the society.

About the Scheme

Dr. Ambedkar Foundation initiated ‘Dr Ambedkar scheme for Social Integration through Inter - Caste Marriage,’ in 2013 to strengthen the resolve of couples who have taken a bold step to defy social norms by performing inter-caste marriages. The intent behind such marriages is to foster national integration through social integration. Against this backdrop, the Foundation has been taking all steps to propagate the idea of inter-caste marriage. To achieve this objective, the Government has declared Rs 2.5 lakh as incentive to every inter-caste marriage couple, where either the bride or the bridegroom is a Dalit. Earlier, the scheme was meant only for such couples whose income does not exceed Rs 5 lakh per annum. However, in a big push to encourage inter-caste marriages, the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment decided to open the scheme for all with no income limitation. Many states that have similar schemes also do not take into consideration income limit of the couples.

Eligibility Criteria

Dr. Ambedkar Foundation is implementing the scheme from the year 2014- 15 onwards, with a target of 500 couples at the national level. There is no State-wise restriction on the number of beneficiaries. However, care is being taken to ensure nationwide representation among the beneficiaries. The mandatory requirements for the release of incentive are: -

- Either of the Husband or Wife should belong to Scheduled Caste category.
- The application should have the recommendation of a sitting MP/ MLA/ District Collector and the same should be forwarded to the Foundation by the State Government along with the requisite documents like copies of the marriage certificate under Hindu Marriage Act 1955, caste certificate of the husband/wife, who belong to SC category, joint bank account etc.
- The marriage should be registered under the Hindu Marriage Act 1955.
- It should be the first marriage of the couple.

- If the State Govt. has already paid incentive to the couple for inter-caste marriage they are not eligible for the further assistance from the Foundation.
- The proposal will be treated as valid if and only if it is submitted within one year of the marriage.

Key features of the scheme:

1. **Encouraging the practice of inter-caste marriages** - Indian society can only develop and progress if the curse of caste inequality is removed. The implementation of this program is a step towards achieving this goal. Such incentive schemes will encourage younger generation to take progressive steps.
2. **Assisting young couples with money** - Couples who opt for inter-caste marriages are generally shunned by their families due to the rigidity of the caste system in India. They often face hardships, but with the incentive under the scheme, couples no longer need to worry about facing financial adversity during the initial days.
3. **Funded by the Central government** - All operational activities and financial requirements of this welfare scheme will be met from the funds of Central Government.
4. **Bringing equality among all castes** - The main aim of this scheme is to accord equal respect to all castes and eliminate caste related prejudices.

Dr. Ambedkar Scheme for Social Integration through Inter-Caste Marriages

Objectives
To appreciate the socially bold step of an inter-caste marriage taken by the newly married couple and to extend financial incentive to the couple to enable them to settle down in the initial phase of their married life

Amount of Incentive
The incentive for a legal inter-caste marriage is Rs. 2.5 lakh per couple. The eligible couple will receive an amount of Rs. 1.5 lakh after approval of the application into their joint account. The remaining Rs. 1 lakh will be kept in a fixed deposit for a period of 3 years. This amount will be released to the couple along with the interest accrued thereon on 3 years of sanction of incentive by foundation.

Eligibility

- One of the spouses should belong to a Scheduled Caste and other should belong to a non-Scheduled Caste
- The marriage should be valid as per law and duly registered under the Hindu Marriage Act 1955
- Proposal for incentive must be submitted within one year of marriage
- No incentive for second or subsequent marriages
- A couple who have already received incentive from a state or UT government is not eligible again

Extent of Incentive

- Incentive to be provided to 500 marriages in one year
- Physical target for each state is fixed in proportion to the percentage share of SC population as per 2011 census
- Rs. 25,000 would be released to the district administration for organizing a program in which the incentive can be handed over to the couple

How to Apply?
The proposal in the given format should be recommended by either the sitting MP/ MLA or District Collector and submitted to the foundation by State Government/ District Collector/ Deputy Commissioner

5. **Total number of beneficiaries** - The Central Government offers this grant to a total of 500 couples every year. These couples will be selected from all States and UTs based on the percentage of SC population in each of these areas.
6. **Monetary grant for the couple** – Every eligible couple will stand a chance to receive a grant of 2.50 lakhs from the Central Government. This grant will be awarded in two separate installments.
7. **Wedding Ceremony by District authority**– It will be the responsibility of district authority in each State or Union Territory to arrange a formal mass marriage ceremony. The respective department from Central Government will dispatch Rs. 25,000 per marriage in favor of the local administrative body towards expenses. (as per Gazette notification of the Ministry dated 16th October 2017)

Dr. Ambedkar Inter-caste Marriage scheme, to provide monetary incentive to at least 500 such inter-caste couples per year, did not take off as per expectations. In 2014-15, merely 5 couples were given the incentive and 72 couples in 2015-16¹¹. However, in 2016-17, of the 409 proposals received, approval to sanction the incentive was given to only 74 couples. An amount of Rs.147.50 lakhs and Rs.250.50 lakhs for the years 2016-17 and 2018-19 was released to 59 and 120 eligible couples respectively¹²as incentive. The thin coverage indicates the need to spread awareness about the scheme. In addition, there is need for faster approvals to access the benefits of the scheme. This would increase the confidence of the couples who approach the government for availing the scheme.

In order to avail the incentive under the scheme, the pre-condition is that it should be the first marriage of the couples and registered under the Hindu Marriages Act, and the proposal should have been submitted within a year of marriage. The couples also have to submit their Aadhaar numbers and details of their Aadhaar-linked joint bank account.

The Government considers encouraging inter-caste marriages as one of the means to reduce caste prejudice and caste-based discrimination. However, the dedicated scheme of the Dr. Ambedkar Foundation is gathering steam in implementation. The government has eased the norms in a bid to find more takers for the scheme.

It has been decided to continue the aforesaid scheme from 2017-18 to 2019-20 (end of cycle of 14th Finance Commission) with an amendment in a component of the scheme i.e. inter-caste

¹¹ <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=133473>

¹² Annual Report 2016-17, Ministry of Social Justice

marriage where one of the spouses is a member of Scheduled Caste. The incentive amount given by the Central government has been uniformly made Rs. 2.5 Lakhs for all States/UTs. On production of certificate of marriage registration to the competent authority in the State/ UT, this amount will be deposited by the implementing Department of the State/UT, in a fixed deposit, jointly in the name of the couple (the first name being of the woman) in a Government/Nationalized bank, for a lock-in period of three years without the facility for its premature encashment. The expenditure on the incentive amount in addition to Rs. 2.50 lakh, if provided by State/UT, would not be shared under the scheme and will be borne by the concerned State Government/UT Administration itself. In reply to a question, the Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment clarified that this incentive is supplementary to what is already being given by the State governments¹³, with details as under.

Sl.No	Financial year	No. of couples applied	No. of couples given incentive	Percentage
1.	2015-16	554	54	9.7
2.	206-17	711	67	9.4
3.	2017-18	582	136	23.3
4.	2018-19	493	120	24.3

Source: Lok Sabha Q and A on 3rd December, 2019: Dr. Ambedkar Scheme for Social Integration through Inter-caste Marriages

There is steady progress in the coverage of the scheme every year. Minister has assured that the target of 500 is only indicative.

Among the States which have received funds for inter-caste marriages under the Dr Ambedkar Scheme for Social Integration in 2019, Andhra Pradesh tops the list. In 2017-18, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment received 789 applications¹⁴, of which 152 were from Telangana. According to data with Dr Ambedkar Foundation, a total of 92 couples have benefitted from the scheme till September, 2019. The data shows that an amount of Rs.2.30 crore has been sanctioned so far. About Rs.87 lakhs has been sanctioned for 35 beneficiaries from Andhra Pradesh, followed by over Rs.40 lakh for 17 couples from Delhi. While Telangana has received over Rs.32 lakh for 13 couples, over Rs.27 lakh has been sanctioned for 11 couples from Tamil Nadu. From Karnataka, four applications were approved, and 3 applications each have been approved from the States of Maharashtra and West Bengal.

¹³ <http://164.100.24.220/loksabhaquestions/annex/172/AU2363.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Hyderabad/inter-caste-marriages-show-upward-trend-in-telangana/article22341839.ecemore-in>

This scheme did not become popular, despite the high incentive amount of Rs 2.5 lakh which is higher than what was provided by some State governments. Only about 19 couples received benefit in 2015¹⁵. In 2016-17, only 59 couples received the incentive against a target of 500. As per a government press release¹⁶, only 126 couples benefitted under the scheme in three years against a target of 1500 in three years.

The study makes clear there is no congruence in information on the number of beneficiaries and the incentive received from different sources. This indicates lack of coordination and consistency of data. Thus, there is a limitation on the secondary source of data in order to bring out a clear cut trend analysis of the progress of the scheme.

Lack of awareness and stringent criteria are usually cited as the reasons for less than 10% achievement under the scheme. Subsequently, government eased norms by removing the income ceiling and the stipulation that State government has to forward the proposal. While most States have specified that the scheme applies only to its residents and not migrants from other States, direct implementation of the scheme by Dr. Ambedkar Foundation would be of help to such couples, wherein partners belong to different States. In such a case, it can incur a name of inter-caste, inter-State marriage scheme.

Since its inception, the scheme has fared very poorly in its implementation¹⁷. As against an annual target of 500 couples, merely five were given the sum in 2014-15. In 2015-16, only 72 of the 522 couples who applied were approved, while 45 of the 736 applications were cleared in 2016-17. In 2017, of the 409 proposals received, only 74 couples got approval. The low approval rate is often due to the fact that the couples didn't meet all the pre-conditions.

The proposal needs to be recommended by an MP, MLA, or District Collector. Most of the proposals come from few states such as Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Maharashtra. The target for each state is fixed in proportion to its share of Scheduled Caste population, though states are allowed to exceed their targets. Accordingly, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Rajasthan are allowed to submit the maximum proposals. The scheme's stated purpose is to counter the Hindu practice of marrying on the "traditional grounds of *jatis* (castes) and *up-jatis* (sub-castes)". The idea is derived from the teachings of Babasaheb Ambedkar, who

¹⁵ <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=133473>

¹⁶ <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/mbErel.aspx?relid=163259>

¹⁷ <https://www.financialexpress.com/india-news/modi-government-push-for-inter-caste-marriages-offers-rs-2-5-lakh-for-marrying-dalit/962848/>

held that caste and endogamy (custom of marrying within one's own community) are the same. He had noted that, "prohibition, or rather the absence of intermarriage — endogamy, to be concise — is the only one that can be called the essence of caste" and advocated "fusion" through intermarriage (exogamy).

Special Marriage Act, 1954

The incentives for inter-caste marriages are usually linked with Hindu Marriage Act 1955. Many states insist that couples solemnize marriage under this act. However, some beneficiaries point out that there is a need to include marriages under Special Marriages Act as also one of the eligibility criteria

The Special Marriage Act, 1954 is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted to provide a special form of marriage for the people of India and all Indian nationals in foreign countries, irrespective of the religion or faith followed by either party. This Act has proved to be beneficial for the NRIs, because it provides for the appointment of diplomatic and consular officers as marriage officers (registrars), for solemnizing and registering marriages between citizens of India, in a foreign country. The Special Marriage Act 1954 is applicable throughout India, except the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The main reason behind the enactment of the Special Marriage Act was to provide a special form of marriage for the people of India and all Indians residing in foreign countries, irrespective of the religion or faith followed by either party, to perform the intended marriage. According to the Act, the bride and the groom are free to observe any ceremonies for the solemnization of their marriage, provided they complete certain formalities that are prescribed for the marriage, by the Act.

Important clauses of the Act are:

The Special Marriage Act states that a marriage between two persons can be legalized, only if the following conditions are satisfied at the time of marriage¹⁸:

- Neither of the two has a spouse living, at the time of the marriage.
- Neither of the two is incapable of giving a valid consent to the marriage due to unsoundness of mind.
- Neither of the party has been suffering from mental ailments to such an extent, that they are unfit for marriage and the procreation of children.

¹⁸ <https://www.lawctopus.com/academike/inter-caste-inter-religious-marriages-social-legal-issues/>

- Neither party has been subjected to recurrent attacks of epilepsy or insanity.
- At the time of marriage, the groom should be of twenty-one years of age and the bride should be of eighteen years of age.
- Both the parties are not within the degrees of prohibited relationship; provided where a custom governing at least one of the parties permits a marriage between them, such marriage may be solemnized, notwithstanding that they are within the degrees of prohibited relationship.
- If the marriage is solemnized in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, both parties should be the citizens of India, domiciled in the territories to which this Act extends.
- When a marriage is intended to be performed in accordance with the Act, the parties of the marriage shall give notice in writing, in the Form specified in the Second Schedule to the Marriage Officer of the district, where the marriage is going to be solemnized.
- The marriage shall be solemnized after the expiration of thirty days of the notice period that has been published under sub-section of the Act.
- At least one of the parties going to perform the marriage should have resided for a period of not less than thirty days, immediately preceding the date on which the notice for marriage is issued to the registrar.
- The marriage officer is bound to display the notice of the intended marriage, by affixing a copy to some conspicuous place in his office.
- If the marriage officer refuses to solemnize the intended marriage, then within a period of thirty days of the intended marriage, either party can prefer to appeal to the District Court, having the office of marriage officer in its local limits of jurisdiction. The decision of the District Court, regarding the solemnization of the intended marriage, shall be final.

Special Marriage Act is basically the legislation formalized to give validity to few specific marriages which are declared as void or voidable under the provisions of various personal laws. Due to this feature of the Act, it is one of the most secular laws in civil matter of an individual. This step can further help in strengthening harmony between various castes and religions.

Central Assistance to State Governments for Inter-Caste Marriage Incentives

Inter-caste marriages were encouraged by various reformers, even before India became independent. In Independent India, various politicians and law makers encouraged inter-caste marriages. With welfare becoming prominent in Indian governance systems, state support for inter-caste marriage became significant. State governments did provide financial support to couples of inter-caste marriage. The Central Government also gave financial assistance as this became a scheme for promotion of casteless society, reducing untouchability and social discrimination. Over a period, central assistance was availed by many States. It is pertinent to review and analyse state-specific inter-caste marriage scheme implementation by various states so as to identify gaps and make suggestions.

The central assistance has been extended to states for many years now to encourage inter-caste marriages. It is a 50 percent share. The other 50 percent share comes from State Government funds. As per data collected by Central government (NFHS 4), 11 percent cases have been registered under inter-caste marriage annually. In some states like Tamil Nadu, Meghalaya, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh 95 percent people get married within their own community. It was also found that 80 percent of couples from Kerala, Goa, Punjab and Sikkim get married within their own communities.

In 2006, Rajasthan government was the first State to incentivize inter-caste marriages under the *Dr. Savita Ben Ambedkar Inter-caste Marriage Scheme*. This scheme offers financial help to couples who want to marry outside their caste. Initially, the incentive was Rs.50, 000 which was increased to Rs. 5 lakhs subsequently. However, this incentive was misused as a corrupt method of making money by few persons. There was an increase in the number of fake marriages and divorces under this inter-caste marriage scheme. To curb such fake marriages, Rajasthan government brought in additional criteria. The age of the couple to receive the incentive was restricted to 35 years, and the couple would be entitled to only half the incentive money. The remaining would be kept as fixed deposit in a joint account in a nationalized bank and could be claimed only after 8 years of marriage, to ensure the continuity of marriage during the period of claim.

State-wise Incentives for Inter-caste Marriage		
S. No.	States	Incentive Amount (Rs.)
1	Rajasthan	5,00,000
2	Uttar Pradesh	50,000
3	Gujarat	50,000
4	Chhattisgarh	50,000
5	Uttarakhand	50,000
6	Bihar	50,000
7	Himachal Pradesh	50,000
8	Haryana	50,000
9	Sikkim	20,000
10	Jharkhand	25,000
11	Madhya Pradesh	2,00,000
12	Bihar	50,000
13	Goa	1,00,000
14	Punjab	50,000
15	West Bengal	30,000
16	Kerala	50,000
17	Andhra Pradesh	50,000
18	Telangana	50,000
19	Tamil Nadu	50,000
20	Assam	10,000
21	Karnataka	50,000
22	Maharashtra	50,000
23	Odisha	50,000
24	Chandigarh	50,000
25	Delhi	50,000
26	Puducherry	50,000

Source: Compiled from various sources

Encouraging Inter-Caste marriages is one of the ways by which the Government aims to reduce caste prejudice and caste-based discrimination. The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment has been funding a centrally Sponsored Scheme where in Central assistance is provided to the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations, towards incentive for inter-caste marriages, where one of the spouses belongs to a Scheduled Castes. This scheme was part of the implementation of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of atrocities) Act, 1989.

A key element of the central assistance to States is to provide incentive for inter- caste marriages (where one of the spouses is a member of a Scheduled Caste). The quantum of incentive amount was decided by the state government. It was between Rs 10000 and Rs 500000 in various states. Rajasthan announced the highest incentive for an inter-caste marriage (Rs 5 lakh) followed by Rs 2 lakh in Madhya Pradesh and Rs 1 lakh in Goa. Most other states provided Rs 50,000 as incentive. West Bengal, Jharkhand, Sikkim & Assam provided less than Rs 50,000 as incentive

for an inter-caste marriage. From 2017-18, central assistance became uniform with an incentive of 2.5 lakhs across India.

The Government of India released assistance¹⁹ to the States to the tune of Rs.29.71 crore in 2013-14, Rs.42.22 crore in 2014-15, Rs.51.08 crore in 2015-16, Rs.54.06 crore in 2016-17, Rs.78.48 crores in 2017-18 and Rs.120.02 crores in 2018-19 (anticipated). Government data also indicates that 15,711 beneficiaries were covered under the scheme in 2014-15, 14,681 in 2015-16, 17,263 in 2016-17, 21,349 in 2017-18 and 15,567 in 2018-19 (anticipated). Maharashtra received the highest amount of central assistance during this period and it is also the state having most of the beneficiaries under the scheme. Karnataka is next to Maharashtra in availing central assistance. In a 5-year period, an estimated 18,000 odd couples have benefitted from this scheme in the state of Maharashtra between 2014-15 and 2018-19. Though Rajasthan provides the highest quantum of incentive, only 1,796 odd couples have benefitted from the scheme between 2014-15 and 2018-19. Bihar received only Rs 1 lakh as central assistance in 2014-15 under this scheme and the State did not seek a single rupee of central assistance in subsequent years²⁰.

State-wise Central Assistance Released under Inter-caste Marriage Scheme											
S. No.	States/ UTs	Central Assistance released (Rs. In lakhs)					No. of Beneficiaries				
		2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
1	Andhra Pradesh	121.00	265.00	191.00	362.50	1,625.00	440	1,292	1,221	1,221	1,300
2	Bihar	1.00	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
3	Chattisgarh	15.00	40.00	50.00	75.00	-	80	170	142	205	240
4	Gujarat	125.00	125.00	250.00	250.00	1,000.00	483	491	667	558	800
5	Goa	11.00	18.00	20.00	20.00	40.00	10	16	12	20	32
6	Haryana	100.00	100.00	196.95	300.00	600.00	249	359	465	608	NA
7	Himachal Pradesh	61.10	95.50	143.50	91.00	-	345	NA	364	401	380
8	Karnataka	542.85	609.00	730.80	1,406.00	3,125.00	1,555	2,041	2,145	4,353	5,000
9	Kerala	675.00	460.00		414.38		2,131	NA	1,466	2,271	1,437
10	Madhya Pradesh	154.50	100.00	304.41	550.00	812.50	361	405	561	620	650

¹⁹ www.factly.in

²⁰ Op.cit.,

11	Maharashtra	1,415.00	1,500.00	1,193.35	1,697.50	1,802.50	4,283	3,405	3,134	5,766	1,442
12	Odisha	200.00	250.00	450.00	250.00	600.00	802	558	2,214	1,086	600
13	Punjab	Nil	125.00	200.00	250.00	-	NA	NA	500	1,000	NA
14	Rajasthan	500.00	928.50	820.00	1,100.00	625.00	370	304	284	338	500
15	Tamil Nadu	Nil	Nil	78.15	244.25	-	2,292	4,088	1,249	1,346	NA
16	Telangana	132.00	178.00	568.89	397.63	1,257.50	1,188	784	1,212	641	1,006
17	Uttar Pradesh			-	30.00	-			45	-	NA
18	West Bengal	108.00	250.00	139.85	285.00	300.00	993	725	1,407	756	2,000
19	Sikkim	Nil	7.50	12.00	15.00	15.00	NA	16	80	100	100
20	Daman & Diu	0.50	0.50	Nil	-	-	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
21	Delhi	5.50	5.50	15.00	-	25.00	6	3	3	3	10
22	Puducherry	35.00	50.00	32.60	100.00	125.00	100	24	72	36	50
23	Chandigarh	20.00	1.00	10.00	10.00	50.00	23	NA	20	20	20
	Total	4,222.45	5,108.50	5,406.50	7,848.25	12,002.50	15,711	14,681	17,263	21,349	15,567

Source: Compiled from Parliament Questions and Answers, including Statement in Rajya Sabha Unstarred Question No. 1370 for 19.08.2013, by Dr. T.M.Seema, regarding 'Incentives for inter-caste marriages'

Challenges – at the Implementation Level

Most States in India have this inter-caste marriage scheme, either as a share in central scheme, or announced on their own. The criteria of eligibility vary for each State. The government of Assam and that of Goa have respectively stated on their websites that the cash awards will be granted to the couples in which one of the spouse is from non-scheduled, general caste. Government of Haryana requires that inter-caste couples who have been married for less than a year can be the beneficiary of the policy, whereas the government of Kerala requires that inter-caste couples can apply for the incentives one year after marriage. Government of Sikkim requires that the brides should be between 18 and 30 years old, and the grooms between 21 and 35 years old (but in case of remarriage, an age up to 40 may be allowed). In Kerala, the monetary incentives are awarded to inter-caste couples only if their combined income does not exceed Rs.40,000 per annum. States like Haryana, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan also have similar schemes. Bihar pays Rs.1 lakh to couples who married out of their caste²¹.

²¹ <https://www.thebetterindia.com/112460/inter-caste-marriage-incentives-financial-aid-government/>

As a part of the study, state-wise analysis of central assistance for inter-caste marriages as per the availability of data is given below:

Odisha

In Odisha, between 2010 and 2016, 4100 couples who married outside their caste received these cash incentives. The couples can use the money to purchase land or household things. Odisha government doubled its incentive amount from ₹50,000 to ₹1 lakh, which will be given to couples irrespective of their economic status.

Haryana

Haryana gives an incentive of Rs.1.01 lakh to a Scheduled Caste (SC) man or woman who marries a Non-Scheduled Caste woman or man. By 2017, Haryana has provided financial aid of about Rs.1 crore to 161 couples, under the *Mukhya Mantri Samajik Samrasta Antarjatiya Vivah Shagun Yojana*.

Himachal Pradesh

In Himachal Pradesh, financial incentives under the scheme was enhanced from Rs.25, 000 to Rs.75, 000 in 2013.

Maharashtra

Maharashtra government is contemplating an Inter-Caste Marriage Act with an objective of providing financial support to inter-caste couples and also to give them priority in employment. The Government Resolution (GR) 2010 increased the amount under the scheme from Rs.15,000 to Rs.50,000, to encourage inter-caste marriages.

Goa

Goa has raised incentives under Inter-caste Marriage Scheme by Rs 1.5 lakh for registered couples. This is probably for inter-caste marriages between different castes. However, a couple will get Rs 2.5 Lakh as an incentive, in an inter-caste marriage if one of the spouse is from Scheduled Caste (Dalit). Earlier, the State Government was providing Rs.1 Lakh under *Antar-Jatiya Vivah Yojana* (Inter-caste Marriage Scheme). Only those couples who have registered their marriage under the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 or Special Marriage Act, 1954 would be able to take scheme benefits.

Gujarat

In Gujarat, under *Dr.Savita Ambedkar Inter-Caste Marriage Encouragement Scheme* an aid of Rs.1 lakh is provided for inter-caste marriage, if one of the couple belongs to a Dalit community. Of this, Rs.50, 000 comes in the form of National Savings Certificate, while the rest is given in the form of household articles. The scheme is not applicable where one partner belongs to a scheduled caste and is non-Hindu. In 2019, 175 couples from Ahmedabad alone were given Rs.97.50 lakh under the scheme.

Inter-caste Marriage Scheme in Gujarat

- The scheme was implemented by the Education and Labour department since October 28, 1974, to support marriages between savarna Hindus and Harijans, with a purpose “to eradicate untouchability and encourage inter-caste marriage”
- In 1981, it became compulsory for one of the spouses to be from Gujarat. Migrants had to prove that they had been living in Gujarat for at least five years. Even widows and widowers till the age of 35 years who did not have children were covered.
- In 1987, it was amended to exclude those who were non-SC but married to an SC from other schemes for SC but their children remained eligible.
- Till November 1995, the financial assistance was Rs 10,000 (Rs 7,000 as small savings and Rs 3,000 as household expenses). This was raised to Rs 15,000 (Rs 10,000 as small savings bond). In December 1998 it was raised to Rs 30,000 (Rs 20,000 as small savings bond).
- In April 2000, it was renamed as Dr Savitaben Ambedkar Intercaste Marriage Encouragement Scheme and the assistance was raised to Rs 50,000 (Rs 25,000 each for small savings bond and household expenses). The state government’s GR also added more conditions that the marriage should be registered, claim made within two years of wedding, one of the couple must be a resident of Gujarat.
- In February 2017, marriage to Jains/Jain Baniya and Buddhists was covered. This was after Jain community was declared minority in 2014 by the Centre.
- In April 2018, the amount was increased to Rs.1 lakh (Rs 50,000 each in small saving bond and cheque for household expenses).

However, several people who tried to access the benefits complained that district-level officials sought an affidavit showing a No Objection Certificate (NoC) from the bride's parents as one of the mandatory documents. Officially, an affidavit is one of the many documents (including a marriage certificate) that has to be submitted, though not mandatory.

In his letter to the Chief Minister, MLA Jignesh Mevani, from Vadgam sought the removal of contentious clause from the application forms. He stated that "in a highly patriarchal society such as ours, where you could be killed over inter-caste marriages, we should not even be asking couples to provide a NoC from parents, as those tying the knot are adults and know what they are doing.". However, it was clarified by officials that an affidavit was sought to collect data regarding inter-caste marriages that had parental consent, to encourage social harmony. "The couples are entitled to the scheme's benefits even if that column is not ticked or the affidavit is not submitted. The only reason for the column is for us to understand the pace of social integration," said an official.

The Gujarat government raised the incentive amount to Rs 1 lakh in 2018, from Rs.50, 000, which led to increase in beneficiaries from 502 in 2017-18 to 711 in 2018-19. The expenditure

by the Gujarat government also went up from Rs.31.7 crore to Rs.46.48 crore. As per the Gujarat Government Resolution (GR), this is part of an initiative to “eradicate untouchability and encourage inter-caste marriage between *Savarna Hindus* and Scheduled Castes”. In February 2019, the Gujarat government expanded the scope of the scheme earlier limited to marriages between “*Savarna Hindu*” and SC, to where one of the spouse has to be a Hindu “except SC caste”. From April, 2019, in six months, as many as 314 beneficiaries were registered and availed benefits worth Rs 2.71 crore disbursed by the State government’s Social Justice and Empowerment Department.

Gujarat government raised its target from 500 couples a year (set in 2015-16) to 1,000 in 2016-17, and 1,250 in 2017-18. Within Gujarat, Ahmedabad district reported the highest number of couples having availed this scheme, i.e. 960 of the state-wide total beneficiaries of 2,854. Ahmedabad’s former collector Vikrant Pandey attributed the “exceptional” response to the scheme to the “smooth processes”. The district tops in the number of beneficiaries. The claims are cleared on a fast track without pendency. The awareness levels are certainly high but the positive attitude of couples who married outside their caste also act as a motivation for others. The financial assistance works as a settling amount initially which is followed by the social acceptance,”²².

Telangana

In Telangana, 210 couples applied for the scheme in 2017 as against 170 in the previous year. In 2011, the number of inter-caste marriages was just 54; it increased to 87 in 2012. The number of inter-caste marriages that got State support was 105, 97 and 110 in 2013, 2014 and 2015 respectively. In 2011, the State increased incentive for inter-caste marriages from ₹10,000 to ₹50,000²³.

Among the couples who received the incentives, 47% couples were those with one spouse being BC and the other Dalit. Nearly 14% of the marriages were between Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes. The marriages between other Caste and Dalits were only 3% of the total figure. The officials shared that only few people apply for inter-caste marriage incentive because of rules and conditions. The scheme insists that the couple should marry under Hindu Marriages

²² <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/gujarat-more-inter-caste-couples-avail-of-aid-under-ambedkar-scheme-6149499/>

²³ <https://www.pmawasyojana.co.in/telangana-inter-caste-marriage-incentive-scheme/>

Act-1955 to be eligible for the incentive. A recommendation letter from MLA, MP or Collector is mandatory.

Telangana spent Rs.1.76 crores in 2014-15, Rs.4.71 crores in 2015-16 and Rs.30 lakhs in 2017-18, towards construction of community halls under promotion of inter-caste marriages and erection of Ambedkar Statues. The purpose of such diversion of funds to construction, rather than giving cash benefits to couples, is not explained. According to statistics, while 1,009 couples availed its benefits in 2016, the numbers dropped sharply to 641 in 2017 and a mere 276 in the first 9 months of 2018. “The scheme is not target oriented, rather, it is demand oriented. If they perform the marriage, then they can approach us and we will readily award them,” said P. Karunakar, Director (FAC), Scheduled Caste Development Department. However, in 2017, it set a target of 2,860 couples; in 2018, the target was 1,910 couples.

In 2018, Nalgonda district, of Telangana, (where a person Mr.Pranay was killed for inter-caste marriage) has the highest number of recipients of the scheme. With 69 couples receiving benefits here, the district is way ahead to Hyderabad where it is zero. The activists suggest that insistence of certificates from marriage registration offices and not considering Arya Samaj marriage certificates could be a reason for not being able to access the scheme. Inter-caste marriages have to be registered under the Special Marriage Act. The registrar’s office will put up the names and photographs of the couple on the notice board for 45 days to give room for objections if any. “This discourages many couples as there is a lack of privacy,” says advocate Anita Shalabh.

Though the Government of India, in December 2017, asked State governments to increase the incentive from Rs 50,000 to Rs 2.5 lakh, Telangana has not done it so far. Though the Department of Social welfare has extended proposals to the finance department, the amount is yet to be increased. However, newspaper reports in November, 2019, suggest that Telangana government has enhanced cash incentive for inter-caste married couples (where one spouse belongs to Scheduled Castes) from Rs 50,000 to Rs 2.5 lakh as per the Centre’s directions. A Government order substantiating this is yet to be put in the public domain.

Then situation in Telangana since 2017 shows a decrease in the government's support to the inter-caste marriages, which is a platform for the creation of a caste-free society. The Telangana Backward Classes (BC) Development Department had not paid inter-caste marriage incentives to the beneficiaries, who got married during 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 financial years. In 2016

-17, in Nizamabad district, 65 youth belonging to upper castes had married BC community persons. Despite a release of Rs 9.82 lakhs to the district for inter-caste marriage couples, BC Department had paid only Rs.4.60 lakh to 46 couples. The remaining 19 couples did not get the benefits. Beneficiaries said that their applications are pending in Zilla Parishad (13 applications) and District BC Welfare Department (6 applications). In the same district, SC Development Department had sanctioned Rs.25.5 lakhs to 51 inter-caste couples in 2018-19. In 2019-20, 20 applicants married to SC community persons are waiting for the release of funds.

Many couples, who are married outside their castes, during 2017 -18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 are not willing to apply for the incentives as they are vexed with delay, red- tapism, corruption and negligence .

Jharkhand

In 2012-13, in the State of Jharkhand, only 12 applications have been submitted. This appears better than previous years, such as 2007-08 and 2008-09, as there were zero applications. Most of the applications were from the rural areas. Lack of applications from urban areas is attributed to secrecy behind such marriages. In general, lack of awareness is being cited by the State authorities as the reason. However, as per declared procedure, inter-caste married couples have to visit the District Welfare office with all the necessary documents. With the need for secrecy, and the fear surrounding such marriages, this stipulation could be a barrier for them to apply for the financial support under the scheme. Interestingly, this State which has reportedly started this Scheme, in 2002, does not appear to have received any central assistance, as per the Annual Reports of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

Karnataka

In 2015, Karnataka government has increased the quantum of financial assistance for the inter-caste couples. Until then, financial assistance was Rs.1 lakh only. This was raised to Rs 3 lakh, depending on the eligibility of the candidates. A woman belonging to any of the Scheduled Castes and wishing to marry a non-SC man could be granted Rs 3 lakh. Earlier, such a couple was eligible for only Rs.1 lakh. Similarly, a man belonging to a Scheduled Caste community and marrying a non-SC woman would now be given Rs.2 lakh, increasing the earlier amount of Rs.50,000.

Punjab

In Punjab, 925 applications were pending in 2018. While the Union government has released its share of Rs. 3.65 crores for the 2017-18, cash-strapped state government is struggling to meet the expenditure. The largest number of beneficiaries is awaiting their money in SBS Nagar (111), followed by Gurdaspur (100) and Muktsar (84). SBS Nagar District Welfare Officer (DWO) Rajinder Kumar said: “We have been sending the record every year to the higher authorities and are waiting for funds.” Gurdaspur DWO Sanjeev Manan said no grant was disbursed to beneficiaries after 2011-12.

Between March 2000 and March 2013, the department had received 392 applications, of which only 121 cases were settled. In Hoshiarpur alone, 271 cases are pending. Punjab Government says that the Centre did not give its share after 2007. The central share of Rs.1.23 cores was released for the year 2011-12.

Under the scheme, in Punjab, one of the spouses has to be from an SC community. The applicants can apply for grant within a year of their marriage. A cheque of Rs 20,000 is paid to the couple and the remaining Rs 30,000 is given in the form of National Saving Certificates. However, the cash benefit was raised from Rs 25,000 to Rs 50,000 only in 2011. Also, earlier the scheme was meant only for couples whose income did not exceed Rs 5 lakh per annum but this condition of upper income limit was scrapped.

The beneficiary couple should be citizens of India and either husband or wife should be from the Scheduled Caste, besides being permanent resident of the respective state. The grant is one-time, for the first marriage only. Claimants can apply within a year of marriage. Attested copy of the genuine SC certificate and self-declaration of not having received the incentive before are required. The District Welfare Officer (DWO) will verify the details and put the case before the Deputy Commissioner concerned along with recommendation. The DC will sanction the amount, which the DWO will draw and deposit in the couple's joint account.

West Bengal

In West Bengal, government has increased the incentive under the scheme from Rs.30,000 to Rs.50,000 in 2013. Before the rise in the incentive, 119 couples have been given the cash incentive, in 2012-13.

Bihar

In Bihar, in 2014-15, 252 couples, in 2015-16, 254 couples, in 2016-17, 271 couples and in 2017-18, 435 couples availed the grant. The scheme, started in 1979, is meant only for Hindus and those availing the scheme have to register their marriage legally. Sensing the poor response to the scheme, Bihar government in 2015 enhanced the amount from Rs.50,000 to Rs.1 lakh. Only Rs 5.27 crore was spent, out of Rs.13 crore allocated for the scheme from 2015-16 to 2017-18, indicating challenges in implementation of the scheme. Bihar's capital city, Patna has seen highest number of inter-caste marriages with 40 marriages reported in 2014-15, 49 marriages in 2015-16 and 50 marriages in 2016-17. In other districts, such marriages ranged between 2 to 12 on an average in the same period, even as Nalanda district, reported only 36 inter-caste marriage from 2014 to 2017-18. Social welfare officials, however, feel the number of inter-caste marriages in the state could be higher as many marriages are not reported as couples do not come forward to avail the grant under scheme for various reasons.

Andhra Pradesh

In Andhra Pradesh, a new bride-centric welfare scheme '*Chandranna Pelli Kanuka*' (Marriage gift) was started in April, 2019. Under the scheme applicants have to enroll on the website, or mobile app, 15 days prior to marriage. *Chandranna Pelli Kanuka* was slated as a single desk for Marriage-Related Incentive Schemes (MRIS) being administered by various departments of the State government. Under this, financial assistance of Rs.75,000 was proposed to the bride of either Scheduled Caste (SC) or Scheduled Tribe (ST) community marrying a groom of a different caste; Rs.50,000 to a backward class bride for an inter-caste marriage; and Rs.1 lakh if either or both the bride and bridegroom are physically challenged. The SC bride who marries SC boy would get Rs.40,000 as a gift and Rs.30,000 if a backward class girl marries a backward class boy. The Government has allocated Rs.100 crore under this scheme. An institution by name *Kalyana Mitra* was planned to ensure effective processing of applications and payment of incentives to the brides in time.

Subsequently, name of the scheme was changed to “*YSR Pelli Kanuka*”, and the incentives enhanced, with effect from April, 2020, as per Andhra Pradesh Government Order, dated 16th September, 2019. With enhancements, Rs.1,20,000 (from Rs.75,000) is proposed to be paid to the bride of either Scheduled Caste (SC) or Scheduled Tribe (ST) community marrying a groom of a different caste; Rs.75,000 (from Rs.50,000) to a backward class bride if she goes in for an

inter-caste marriage; and Rs .1.5 lakh (from Rs.1 lakh) if either or both the bride and bridegroom are physically challenged.

It can be surmised from the above review that almost all the states have instituted scheme for inter-caste marriages, probably in response to the growing socio-cultural interactions within the specific states. There are serious variations and gaps in implementation across states. However, the efficiency of scheme implementation seems to be improving gradually as each state is developing and reforming the eligibility criteria and mechanisms of implementation. It is observed that there is diversion, underutilization, under – allocation and non-allocation of funds as the case may be in each state.

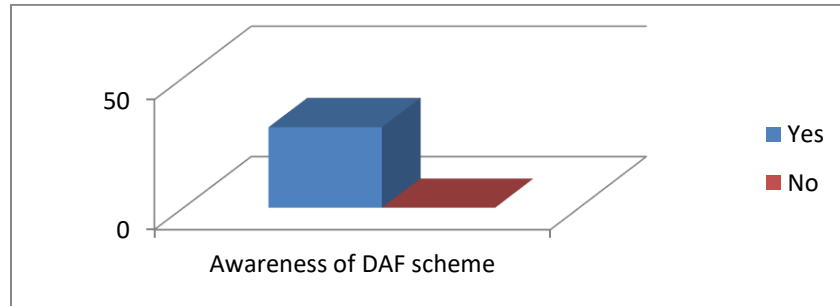
CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

After analyzing the information gathered through questionnaire, administered to the respondents, an analysis of the responses was done. Many responses have been in congruence with the objective of the scheme in fostering social integration through inter-caste marriage. There are many suggestions to improve the scheme implementation. Given the small sample size and responses, a question-answer type of analysis is presented below.

Coverage of scheme and awareness levels:

Q.9. Increasing awareness levels regarding benefits has been one of the demands of the beneficiaries of the inter-caste marriage scheme. It was found from this study that all the respondents in the selected States were aware of the benefits under the scheme by the DAF.

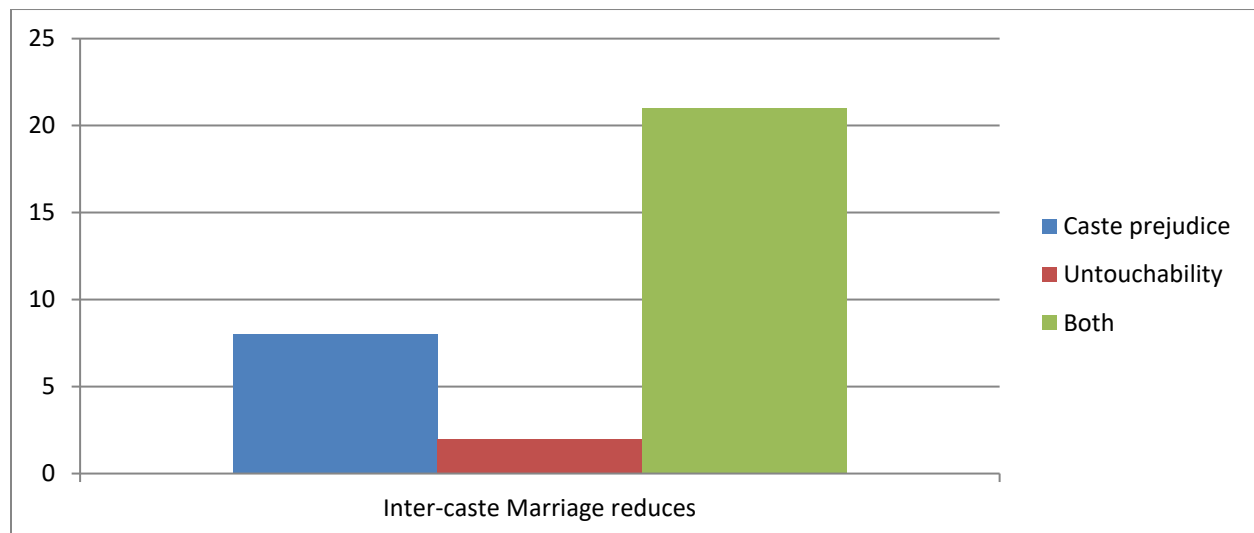


Q.10. It is observed that almost all the respondents except one respondent are aware of the scheme that it is being administered by Central Government.

Q.11. All the respondents agreed that they received incentive for inter-caste marriage from Dr. Ambedkar Scheme for Social Integration through Inter-caste Marriages. However, one respondent from Maharashtra added that they received incentive from State Government as well.

Q.12. Almost 59% of the respondents did not get any assistance for applying to this scheme, indicating that it was done by themselves. Most of them are educated, which could be the reason for applying without any assistance. A few did receive assistance from social activists and some from the administration itself. None has mentioned assistance from social reformers.

- Q.13. To get married, 80% of the respondents did not take help from any organization. They married on their own volition and most probably with the help of friends.
- Q.14-15. All the respondents except one couple got the cash incentive sanctioned under the scheme. To a subsequent question which asks for reason for not receiving the incentive, the couple did not cite any particular reason. Yet, to a later question this couple agreed that they received Rs.1.50 lakhs, indicating some inconsistency in their response.
- Q.16. Out of all the 31 respondents, only 83% received the incentive of Rs.1.50 lakhs.
- Q.17. Out of them, only 61% agreed that they received the 2nd instalment of Rs.1 lakh as well. Interestingly, 2 others informed that they received Rs.1.50 lakhs as second instalment. This response is probably due to confusion.
- Q.18. 16 of the respondents claimed the balance amount is due from Dr. Ambedkar Foundation. Such a response indicates that either they are not aware of the scheme details fully. Or, they might be under the impression that the fixed deposit of Rs.1 lakh is a pending amount.
- There is inconsistency from a few respondents about the amount they received in two installments
- Q.19. One of the objectives of the scheme was to encourage inter-caste marriages to reduce caste prejudice and untouchability. 68 % of the respondents thought that with inter-caste marriage, both caste prejudice and untouchability will lessen, while 26% thought that it will diminish only caste prejudice. The remaining felt that only untouchability will diminish with inter-caste marriages.



- Q.20. 68% opined that with inter-caste marriage, liberty, fraternity and equality will be promoted, while 29% thought only equality will be promoted.
- Q.21. 97% were categorical that social integration is fostered through inter-caste marriages.

Profile of Beneficiaries/ respondents

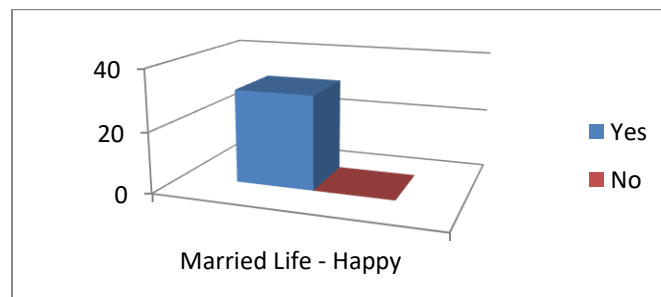
Q.22. *Education Profile:* 39% of the respondents are graduates, 25% are post graduates and the remaining either had school level education or are illiterate.

Q.23. *Employment Status:* 29% of respondents claimed their employment as labour. About 16.1% are self-employed and few of them are students, pursuing Ph.D or post-graduation.

Q.24-25. The spouses of beneficiaries are also educated. 45% of them are graduates, while 35% post-graduates. Among the spouses, 25% remained as home makers/ house wives. Self-employment as well as labour as occupation was also reported.

Q.26. 45% of the couples were below 30 years. Another 38% of them are below 25 years. 13% are below 35 years. Only one couple reported their age as above 35 years.

Q.27. As per their occupation profiles, these couples seem to be struggling to establish themselves. Yet, all of them reported a happy married life. This is significant, bearing in mind the stress they undergo due to 'distance' from their parents and the struggle to stay independent, financially.



Family

Q.28-29 Economic status: At the time of marriage, 52% of the respondents came from middle class background, while 45% from poor background. Among them 70%

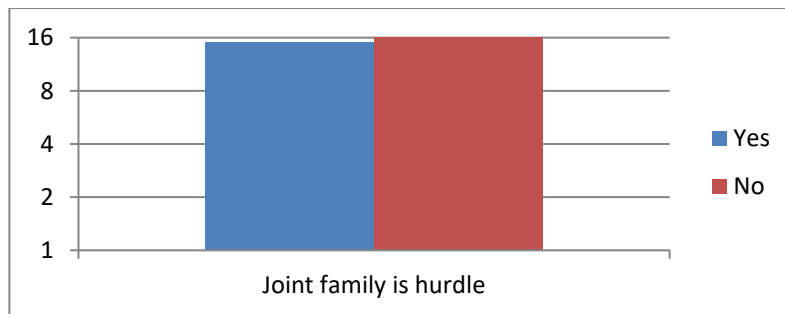
reported that their current economic status, after marriage, is middle class and 29% reported still being in poor class status.

Q.30. 61% of the respondents reported that they are from a nuclear family. Surprisingly, another 35% reported as joint family. This could mean that 35% inter-caste marriage couples have been accepted by either side of their parents.

Q.31-32. Parents' education: 61% of the respondents reported their father's education was school level. In case of 51% of the respondents' mothers had school education, while 32 % mothers are illiterate.

Q.33-34. Parents'-in-law education: 55% of fathers-in-law had school education, 26% are illiterate, and 16% did graduation. 39% of mothers-in-law had school education, an additional 38.7% are illiterate and 10% are holding a degree.

Q.35. When asked whether joint family is hurdle to inter-caste marriage, it was almost a tie between yes and no, among the respondents. 48.3% said that it is a hurdle, while 51.6% said no.



Q.36. Those who affirmed that joint family is a hurdle, gave a variety of reasons, including: conservative thinking, rigid mindset, religious beliefs, lack of education and clash of opinions as each person in the family has an individual perspective. In one case, as the couple were adamant, their families had to accept them despite being conservative. Social status can be a factor in accepting the inter-caste marriage. A lot of immediate relatives chose not to attend the wedding or keep any further relations because they could not get convinced. Some are more traditional and believe in old customs based on caste system thus restricting their acceptability of inter-caste marriage.

- Q.37. To a question, whether there was an inter-caste marriage in the family before, 32% replied yes and 67% said no. Interestingly, 29 % (of the 32%) reported they got incentive under Dr. Ambedkar Scheme for Social Integration. Most probably the respondent was encouraged by the previous experience to take the bold step of inter-caste marriage, with an assurance that the life with a chosen partner need not be curtailed by lack of funds.
- Q.38. About 55% of the respondents reported that no incentive was received. However, this response probably includes no such marriage has taken place. “No” has been answered by persons, who responded that there was no inter-caste marriage earlier in the family.
- Q.39. Among the respondents, 54.8% reported that there was opposition in the family towards inter-caste marriage. Significantly, 41.9% reported no opposition to their marriage.
- Q.40. Since each respondent had a unique response, wherein establishing a commonality was not easy, their responses to a question about opposition to their marriage are being reproduced below:
- “My wife being educated convinced my father-in-law by making him aware of caste and its origins.”
 - “We were ready to face opposition and adamant in our position as I am against caste prejudice”.
 - “Joint family does not accept inter-caste marriage”.
 - “We depended on Periyar inter-caste marriage Centre, Tamil Nadu, which provides shelter to couples like us”.
 - “We sought the help of the police”.
 - “My father filed a case against community elders in District court of Jhansi”
 - “We got married, despite opposition from my father-in-law”
 - “I remained determined even though a few relatives objected. I waited for 5 years for my father’s elder brother’s response. I told my family that the boy is decent and after my brother met him my family agreed to the marriage”.

- “There were fights in the family regarding our intention to marry and we experienced mental torture and fear from relatives who threatened us, but still we married”.
- “Initially, I agreed to my relative’s opposition to our marriage. But, when my aunt suggested that I can marry a *Yadav* or *Jat* but never a *chudaa* (SC), that’s when I decide firmly to marry” .
- “I tried to convince my grandfather not to judge based on his caste, instead talk with him to ensure that he is a good human being. My family was still not convinced, and said that they could have found a much better match. My grandfather got me married because I was firm. Ultimately my family agreed though many kept aloof”.
- “Even though my family was supportive, wife’s family was against our marriage. They were concerned about giving their daughter to a family with a different caste background. But we were stern in our decision and moved ahead with our wedding. Now everyone is happy.”

The responses indicate that the couples had to face many complications to marry. The problem is largely due to rigid mindset and ingrained caste based societal norms preventing the family members and relatives to accept the marriage.

Q.41. When the respondents were asked about the reasons for opposition to the marriage, 51.6% mentioned all the reasons listed (fear of social ostracism, loss of social prestige and respect, social stigma, and loss of social capital).

Q.42-43. Surprisingly, 77.4% of the respondents said their family supported him/her for inter-caste marriage. This response is not in sync with the earlier responses. To a subsequent question as to whose supported they received, 29% said that entire family including mother, father, brother, sister, etc. A few did not respond, while a few others identified a single relative, mother, father or sister.

Q.44. To the question asking who opposed the marriage, 38.7% did not answer and 22.5% said none (probably indicating opposition from outside and not within the family).

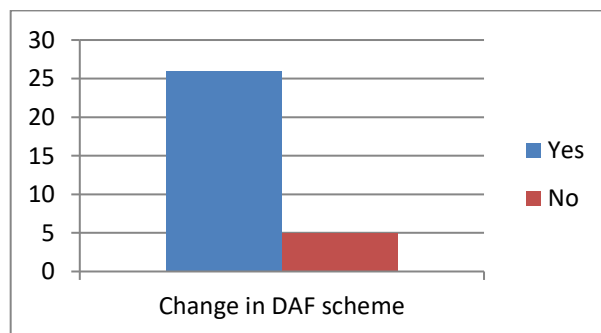
Responses relating to Society

- Q.45. With regard to the question on how they were treated by the society, at the time of marriage, 41.9% responded that they were treated as equals. However, 38.7% said they were not treated as equals.
- Q.46. Post-marriage, currently, 80.6% reported that they were treated as equals. 10% felt alienated after the marriage, while a few were non-committal.
- Q.47. Common facilities (transportation, hotel and playground) were availed by 80.6% after marriage. However, 19.3% respondents did not avail them.
- Q.48-49. 58.06% said they did not face discrimination on account of inter-caste marriage in the society. Yet, 38.7% said they did face discrimination. Not many answered about their response to such discrimination. A couple was not invited to family functions. One couple said they no longer care, since they are convinced that they are right.
- Q.50-52. 80.6% of the respondents said that their children did not face any discrimination. Of course, most couples do not have children yet. None agreed that their children are being discriminated. Hence, there was no answer to the question as to where do the children face discrimination.
- Q.53. Almost 84% of the respondents agreed that urban areas are more encouraging/inclusive in comparison with rural areas towards inter-caste marriage. One respondent, however, was not sure because 'in urban areas too people are literate but not educated', implying that inter-caste marriage may not be acceptable.
- Q.54. 61.2% opined that both education and social interaction play important role in making the urban areas more cooperative than rural areas.
- Q.55. 93.5% felt that metropolitan cities are more inclusive rather than other cities, with respect to inter-caste marriages.

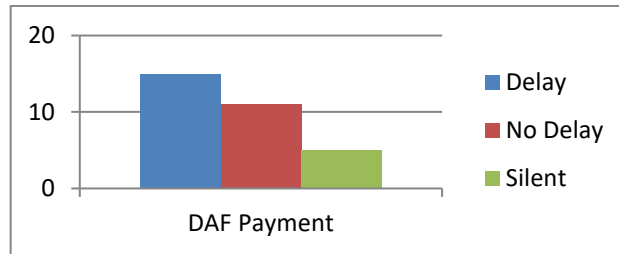
- Q.55 All the respondents agreed that inter-caste marriage is a means for social change.
- Q.56. 58% of the respondents informed that they faced problems due to inter-caste marriage. However, 35.4% responded that they did not face problems.
- Q.57. Significantly, 48% respondents faced both social and economic difficulties, because of inter-caste marriage and only 20% responded about economic difficulties as the sole problem.
- Q.58. When asked which social factor is crucial coming in the way of inter-caste marriage, 20% felt social ostracism, while another 20% felt that lack of education, social ostracism and caste system together constituted social difficulties. About 60% did not answer clearly.
- Q.59. When probed about the kind of economic difficulty they faced, 29% listed unemployment as a crucial factor. 20% did not answer, while 26% identified low income and unemployment as the factors for economic difficulties faced by them.

Questions Pertaining to the Scheme

- Q.60. 83.8% opined that Dr.Ambedkar scheme for Social Integration through inter-caste Marriages requires changes. 16.1% said no to any changes in the scheme.



- Q.61. 48.3% said there was delay in payment of incentive by DAF, while 35.4% said that there was no delay. There was no response from the remaining.



Q.62 When asked about whether they knew about a similar scheme, 41.9% responded 'yes', while 58% said that they do not know.

Q.63. When asked about at which level change is proposed, 9.6% said at organizational level, 35.4% at procedural level, 35.4% at both organizational and procedural levels, while 16.1% thought none of these.

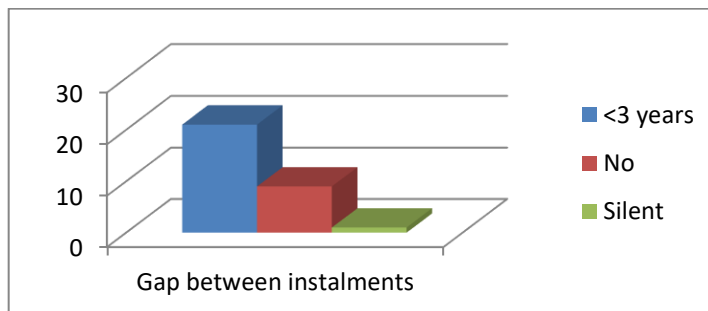
Q.64. To the question whether amount should be given at a time or in two installments, 48.3% felt that amount has to be given at a time instead of 2 instalments. However, 51.6% said no to this proposition.

Q.65. Regarding the necessity of an affidavit for being legally married, 90.3% felt that affidavit is necessary for being legally married, 6.4% did not agree.

Q.66. Overwhelmingly, 96% agreed that online application will help in improving the scheme.

Q.67. About 89% felt the existing procedure for getting incentive is a time consuming process.

Q.68. 67.7% opined that the procedure for getting second instalment as fixed deposit for 3 years with Dr. Ambedkar Foundation is acceptable and convincing. However, for 32.2% respondents this was not so.



Q.69. When asked about reduction of gap of 3 years between first and second instalment, 67.7% wanted reduction, while 29% said no to such proposition.

Q.70. Everyone agreed that provision for getting the incentive, in installments, should be online.

Q.71. 87% of the respondents agreed that the campaign led by Dr.Ambedkar Foundation is successful, in bringing attitudinal change in the society About 10% did not agree.

Open-ended Questions: Responses

Q.72. **Suggestions for improving the scheme:**

- The paper work should be reduced.
- Instead of insistence on Hindu Marriage certificate, the incentive could be open to all
- It is advisable to make the scheme online to avoid cumbersome procedures and simplify the application process
- Lot of awareness about the scheme needs to generated so that many deserving couples avail the benefits of the scheme
- The employees at the disbursing/ approval agency have to be properly trained so that they are courteous and respond positively.
- Periodic updates to applicants over registered phone numbers will increase their faith in the scheme
- It is suggested to increase the incentive amount to Rs.5 lakhs, or link it to inflation rate as the present incentive is less.
- It is better to give financial assistance as one-time settlement than in installments
- The scheme instead of targeting only 500 beneficiaries annually should increase its coverage.
- The documentation preparation and submission is a very tedious process, a lot of energy, time and money goes into filling all details. Procedures are time-consuming and quite confusing to uneducated persons. Beneficiaries should receive money at least within one year of submitting applications
- The person/office which issues marriage certificate should take initiative to create awareness about the scheme. Appropriate posters should be displayed at the marriage office, so that people get to know about this scheme.
- A brochure could be made to facilitate the filling of application process and indicating the type of documents required for accessing the scheme
- There should be a designated place or one stop centres, where all the relevant forms could be submitted in one place.

- The processing time for the release of amount should be lessened. Money should be released sooner as couples are in dire need of money, to settle. This would reduce their dependency on others.
- This scheme should also include others as well i.e. the BC (Backward Classes- e.g. Yadavs) as the word suggests inter-caste i.e. between castes
- The money is received in a joint account and there is no option for either /or. In case any technical or other complication, the amount will be received only by the primary beneficiary/account holder. There should also be an option to split the amount equally into both the accounts of the couple.
- A minimum amount should also be given along with the incentive money for setting up a house with basic requirements as initial few months are too difficult for such couples.

Q.73. Difficulties faced:

- It is quite unfortunate that for some it took one year to prove that marriage under Hindu Marriage Registration Rules, Uttar Pradesh, 1973, is under Hindu Marriage Act, 1955.
- The bureaucrats in Bihar are too much casteist and lethargic
- Some respondents expressed that it took two years for verification process. The expenses involved in going around offices to collect certificates and verification process discourages the couples to access the scheme
- Most of the problem is at SC Corporation. Employees of SC Corporation do not respond properly (this seems to be about central assistance wherein proposals are routed through state SC corporations).
- In some cases, branch managers are not facilitative
- As there was no updated information on registered mobile number, the beneficiaries had to check the progress of the documents/file movement in their offices.
- The non-Hindi speaking couples faced language problem in communicating with DAF staff
- Some respondents experience problems in getting second installment.
- Lot of corruption. Had to pay bribes (this seems to be about central assistance.)
- Some experienced high anxiety, with less or zero funds to run a family.
- The procedures to submit the application are time consuming. Some respondents faced difficulties in submitting the documents at the right place. They were not aware of the process and the subsequent steps as there were no clear guidelines.

- Some expressed lack of support from different sections in society. One has to struggle a lot in getting letter of recommendation by local MLA/MP. The local representatives already have their built in biases and would never sign. In some cases, MLAs could be approached only through mediators to whom respondents had to pay bribes to get the work done. The Foundation should let go these procedures which are so dependent on the societal agreement/disagreement.
- Meeting different people in power to get the recommendation takes a lot of time. Some had to take leave from the office for this. After approvals, it took almost a year to get the first installment.
- Some expressed that they didn't face any difficulties since they work closely with the MLA. This implies that things are easy for people with good network and contacts in government offices.

Q.74. Reduction in caste prejudice and untouchability:

- The scheme certainly has a positive impact in reducing caste prejudice and untouchability. If two different caste people live together, they start mutually respecting each other's culture, emotions and values. This can lead to change in mindset, develop progressive thinking which would help in addressing concerns like untouchability.
- A positive change is visible in educated families who are not rigid about superstitions and religious beliefs. The change is evident more in urban than in rural areas.
- Normally, people who do inter-caste marriages face lot of discrimination in society. This scheme certainly gives a push to the newly-wed couple who have taken a strong decision in life to settle.
- Inter-caste marriages will help to break the prevailing rigid societal norms. It is important to make people to look beyond caste.

Q.75.Social Integration:

- The scheme has considerably contributed to social integration keeping aside subjective issues. The respondents though faced stiff resistance initially by family members were gradually received well by them. They shared that they will do every possible thing to encourage such marriages and inculcate the spirit of social integration and cohesion amongst their children

- The beneficiaries stated that inter-caste marriages promoted the values of fraternity and solidarity among people belonging to different castes. Such marriages remove distinctions among members of society and add value to human life .

Suggestions:

Some respondents gave lot of suggestions to improve the reach and effective implementation of the scheme:

- Social media could be used to create awareness.
- It is better not to keep three years gap for next installment. It should be disbursed within a year.
- Recommendation from Members of Parliament is not an easy task, as there will be delays in procuring an appointment. The possibility of a letter from government officials should also be explored.
- Special financial assistance may be extended to the unemployed couple to sustain themselves as they require more support.
- To enable social acceptance, celebrations and small functions need to be organized. Political leadership should encourage inter-caste marriages. This scheme should be popularized locally to increase societal acceptance.
- It is noted that for a couple based in Delhi and residing in JNU, though accessibility to DAF was not a problem, it took 2 years to avail the financial assistance of the scheme. There is a need to simplify the process as there are complications in application and verification.

Findings

- In a patriarchal family, it is not easy to have clarity of thought especially for women. According to a respondent, being away from family and in a highly rational atmosphere such as University proved helpful.
- Economic status matters in inter-caste marriage. It was noted that if the SC (bride/bridegroom) is in a good position, resistance is not aggressive.
- The family background (economic and social status) can have a positive impact in the acceptance phase in inter-caste marriages. In a patriarchal family, the mindset is rigid and biased.
- If the boy is from upper caste, the problem is comparatively less. The resistance is less in bride's family, but more in the groom's family. This may be due to prevailing patriarchy.

- Caste seeds are sown in religious scriptures. A strong religious belief is a major hurdle. If it were only a social problem, it would have been solved long back. In Indian society, religious ideology sets standard for classifying humans.
- Education and social network of parents also plays a significant role in acceptance, or resistance to inter-caste marriage. However, it does not mean rigid caste attitudes are restricted only to illiterate families.

Suggestions to Ambedkar Foundation

- As some of the respondents gave a feedback that their documents were missing at the Foundation. The document maintenance has to be improved
- Some shared that personnel working at the Foundation are not very encouraging and appreciative but instead sarcastic in conversations. The staff should be sensitive and empathetic in their communication with the beneficiaries
- The application process has to be simplified so that even the illiterate can avail the scheme.

Overwhelmingly, the suggestions of inter-caste marriage couples from this study are that implementation gaps need to be plugged. They feel that their struggle to change social norms, should be abetted and strengthened. This monetary incentive does not have impact on intrinsic motivation for inter-caste marriage, because it is a post-marriage incentive. The social odds are huge enough to demotivate extrinsic motivation to enter into an inter-caste marriage irrespective of monetary incentive.

Despite the struggle and time lapse in getting the incentive, the couples are happy that financial aid granted by scheme frees them from burdening friends and well-wishers. It also helps in making a fresh beginning without having to worry about day-to-day expenses.

Recommendations

The key recommendations for efficient delivery of this scheme based on the specific inputs given above include:

- Dr. Ambedkar Foundation should take up awareness programs, at the block level on a nation-wide scale for better implementation of the scheme.
- This scheme should target inter-caste marriages between persons belonging to different states, since state-led implementation is limited to residents of the states.

- The scheme should encourage online system of registration of application and approval process.
- Prior registration should also be considered for persons with the intention of marrying a person from other castes, especially scheduled caste or tribes.
- Bride-centric financial assistance should be worked out.
- Secondary support can also be enabled, through convergence of central schemes, related to employment, loans, subsidies and start-ups.
- Recommendation from MPs should not be insisted upon. Since none of the political parties have a positive policy towards inter-caste marriages, an endorsement from elected political party leaders appears to be very difficult.
- Marriage under State Act should also be accepted without sole emphasis on marriage being solemnized under Hindu Marriage Act 1955.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

India continues to be a traditional society with rigid caste and religious system. Caste and religion play a very important role in the lives of people, especially in the selection of partners in marriages. For most, it is difficult to think of marriage in another caste. However, caste as a factor in selection of partners is gradually getting diluted over time. It is estimated that about ten percent of the marriages in India are reported to be inter-caste marriages.

The pattern of inter-caste marriages in India is affected by various socio-economic and demographic factors with a significant spatial variation. There seems to be higher inter-caste marriages in socio-economically developed states such as Punjab, Haryana, Assam, Maharashtra and Karnataka than in states like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan. However, even within the so-called progressive States, there are wide variations.

Marriages are regarded as the most important social custom and hence, viewed as the best means to remove the barrier of caste system. Inter-caste marriages are now recognized as the main tool to blur the caste barriers in India, whether urban or rural. The Government should improve the structure of the incentives in this scheme.

It was suggested that a special law is required for the protection of the couples marrying across caste or religion. The legislature should make an amendment to Special Marriage Act, 1954, for the protection of the couples marrying under its provisions. The procedure for incentives should also be simplified. There could be additional appreciation in terms of incentives to help the couples in establishing themselves, economically and socially.

When the marriage is inter communal for example Hindu marrying a Muslim, Hindu marrying a Parsi, or Christian or any other combination, the maternal and the paternal succession has complications which deserve attention and resolution. There are even cases where some people have approached courts to get clarity on the issue of succession, especially on the maiden name, surname and caste itself. A positive administrative and policy measure can facilitate the social identity of children born out of the inter-caste marriages. Apart from the financial assistance, in

inter-caste marriages, there are many other factors that are overlooked. These include protection from the families, emotional and mental counselling along with legal help.

The social menaces of untouchability and caste have infected the society since a long time. However, this is not a legacy that should be continued for centuries. In the 21st century, substantial efforts are needed to eradicate this social stigma so that Indian society can stand at par with other advanced developing nations of the world. The inter-caste marriages is a practical way to ensure that caste interaction becomes a reality and caste differentiation is removed.

Encouragement of Inter-caste marriage has been one of the tools of Indian governance systems to usher in multiculturalism, eradicate untouchability and facilitate social integration. The State governments have also been implementing a financial support scheme for such marriages. The Central assistance has been part of these efforts. Dr. Ambedkar Foundation has been identified as one of the institutional facilitators for this incentive. While awareness about the inter-caste marriage scheme and the mechanisms that deliver this incentive is in nascent stages, gaps have been identified in its implementation at Central and State level.

Almost all the States restrict this scheme to the natives of the State. However, the migrants residing in a particular State are not eligible for the incentive. This particular eligibility condition becomes a hurdle for a couple belonging to two different States and living in the third State. Further, if a couple belonging to two different States and residing in their respective states want to marry each other, the eligibility also can be a barrier. The scheme being implemented by Dr. Ambedkar Foundation can overcome this hurdle. This central institution can override this 'resident' barrier and can facilitate marriages between two individuals belonging to different States, irrespective of where they are residing. This would encourage inter-caste marriages between two individuals belonging to different castes without geographical and residential barriers.

There is confusion about the implementation of inter-caste marriage scheme with regard to the role played by the Central and State Governments about respective share in the incentive, processing, hierarchy and delivery. Clarity is required in terms of central assistance, or supplementary support by the Central government and implementation of the scheme by DAF.

Amit Ahuja, of the Department of Political Science at the University of California, states that “urbanisation undermines caste”. According to a study²⁴ in 2011, it was found that inter-caste marriages were the highest in the western region (17 percent). The more urbanised States (barring Tamil Nadu) displayed a higher rate of inter-caste marriages than their predominantly rural counterparts. For example, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Punjab and Haryana that are more urbanised States reported 17.7 percent, 13.7 percent, 16.5 percent, 22.5 percent and 17.3 percent inter-caste marriages; whereas Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh reported 4.7 percent, 8.6 percent, 2.3 percent and 3.5 percent inter-caste marriages respectively. This is a welcome sign and it does point out that cities help inter-caste marriages. Respondents in this study agreed that urban areas are likely to have more conducive conditions for inter-caste marriages. Education is another factor that has been flagged by the respondents. In fact, it was noted that if one of the spouses is highly educated, resistance to marriage is lower in such instances.

In this study, respondents emphasized that cities and towns provide more opportunities for inter-caste marriages. Studies across the world confirm that globally many societal changes happened because of urbanization and education. Urban atmosphere and campus life in Universities enable greater contact among individuals belonging to a diverse set of social groups. Such contact may lead to inter-caste marriages. It was mentioned that as urbanization brings people together geographically, education tends to reduce their social distances²⁵. Urbanization brings about profound social changes in values, norms, attitudes, behavioral and lifestyle patterns by increasing interactions between people of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds²⁶ (Parrillo, 2008). Education often lowers prejudice, gives an exposure to individuals, not only to people from other social and economic conditions, but also to new ideas and viewpoints. Besides, people with similar education background tend to work together as per their current work requirements and the interactions among people of comparable education are also increasing regardless of their other social traits. Due to the increased educational and occupational opportunities, members of racial minority groups today have more potential mates available from the dominant groups. However, high levels of educational attainment are not always associated with increased inter-caste marriage²⁷.

²⁴ Op cit, Princeton University

²⁵ Colter Mitchell, Xuaning Fu, Tim B. Heaton, and Cardell K. Jacobson, Urbanisation, Education and Racial Intermarriage in Brazil, *International Journal of Contemporary Sociology*. 2010 Oct; 47(2): 273–294.

²⁶ Parrillo Vincent N. *Diversity in America*. 3. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press; 2008.

²⁷ Op. cit., Colter Mitchell et al

In some cases, depending on the age at which they marry, incomplete education and unemployment can push the couple into lower economic status who are forced to start life with lesser than what they were used to. This can strain their relationship as well. Physical violence, ostracisation and the trauma caused by rejection of their parents and siblings can increase stress to unprecedented levels. Some solace is possible from friends and sympathetic acquaintances. Post-marriage monetary incentive gives some relief to inter-caste marriage couples, who often face adverse social and economic consequences.

However, from this study, it is apparent that couples require some more support. Some respondents wanted some rehabilitation support, such as providing soft loans for education and livelihood generation. Entrepreneurship incentives, offered by governments, can include these couples, with suitable modification in eligibility criteria. Since government is committed to encourage inter-caste marriage, it may consider this as one of the social means to development. In order to integrate such couples into social and economic mainstream, governments as a principle can include them in numerous development schemes. Coordinated action between Central and State governments is required to facilitate such integration. Studies have reinforced that monetary incentives do have a positive effect on exogamy.

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Survey Questionnaire

Personal Details

1. Full Name-..... Name of Spouse.....
2. Age (self) -..... Age of Spouse
3. Gender (self).....Female/Male.....Gender (Spouse).....
4. Religion (self).....Religion (Spouse).....
5. Caste (self).....Caste (Spouse).....
6. Education (self).....Education (Spouse).....
7. Occupation (self).....Occupation (Spouse).....
8. Annual Income (self).....Annual Income (Spouse).....
- Present City –.....State (self).....State (Spouse).....
- Locality of the City-Urban.....Rural.....
- Your Native Place.....
- Mobile No (self).....Mobile No (Spouse).....
- Email ID (self).....Email ID (Spouse).....
- Address-
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Questions related to Dr Ambedkar Scheme for Social Integration through Inter-caste Marriages

9. Do you know about Dr Ambedkar Scheme for Social Integration through Inter-caste Marriages?
a) Yes
b) No
10. Do you know this scheme is assisted by Government of India?
a) Yes
b) No
11. Have you received any incentive for inter-caste marriage from the following?
a) State Govt/UT Administration
b) Dr Ambedkar Scheme for Social Integration through Inter-caste Marriages
12. Did you get any assistance in the applying for the Scheme? If yes, by?
a) Social activist
b) Reformers
c) Administration
d) Media
13. Did you get married with the help of any organization (Mass Inter-caste marriage) in the District/States?

- a) Yes
- b) No

14. Have you received the incentive from Dr. Ambedkar Scheme for Social Integration through Inter-caste Marriages?

- a) Yes
- b) No

15. If no, what are the reasons?

- a) Not aware of this scheme
- b) Implementation of the scheme is not citizen friendly
- c) Did not apply for incentive within one year of marriage
- d) Received incentive from the state Govt./UT Administration
- e) You did not get married under Hindu Marriage Act 1954
- f) None of them

Other Reasons.....

16. If yes, how much did you get from Dr. Ambedkar Foundation as incentive for legal inter-caste marriage by first installment?

- a) 1.50 Lakh
- b) 1.00 Lakh
- c) None of them

17. How much amount you got from Dr. Ambedkar Foundation as incentive for legal inter-caste marriage by second installment?

- a) a)1.50 Lakh
- b) 1.00 Lakh
- c) None of them

18. Is any balance amount due as incentive pending with Dr. Ambedkar Foundation?

- a) Yes
- b) No

19. With inter-caste marriage, what do you think will reduce?

- a) Caste-prejudice
- b) Untouchability
- c) Both

20. Which of these get promoted due to inter-caste marriage?

- a) Liberty
- b) Equality
- c) Fraternity
- d) All

21. Do you think inter-caste marriage helps in sustaining social integration?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Personal questions

22. What is the level of your education?

- a) School b) Pre-degree c) Degree d) PG
- Any Other.....

23. What is your occupation?

- a) Labour b) Govt. c) IT sector d) Self employed e) Retired f) Business
- g) Service Profession (Doctor, Engineer and Advocate)

Any Other

24. What is the level of your spouse's education?
 a) School b) Pre-degree c) Degree d) PG
 Any Other.....
25. What is your spouse's occupation?
 b) Labour b) Govt. c) IT sector d) Self employed e) Retired f) Business
 h) Service Profession (Doctor, Engineer and Advocate)
 Any Other
26. At which age you got married?
 a) below 18 years
 b) below 25 years
 c) below 30 years
 d) below 35 years
 Any other.....
27. How is your married life?
 a) Happy
 b) Unhappy

Questions related to the family

28. What was your economic status at the time of marriage?
 a) Rich
 b) Middle class
 c) Poor
29. What is your present economic status?
 a) Rich
 b) Middle class
 c) Poor
30. What is the type of your family?
 a) Nuclear
 b) Joint
 c) Extended
31. What is the level of your father's education?
 a) School b) Pre-degree c) Degree d) PG
 Any Other.....
32. What is the level of your mother's education?
 a) School b) Pre-degree c) Degree d) PG
 Any Other.....
33. What is the level of your father –in law's education?
 a) School b) Pre-degree c) Degree d) PG
 Any Other.....
34. What is the level of your mother-in law's education?
 a) School b) Pre-degree c) Degree d) PG
 Any Other.....
35. Do you think joint family is a hurdle for inter-caste marriage?
 a) Yes
 b) No
36. If yes, please explain how:
37. In your family, has any one of your family got married inter-caste legally?

a) Yes

b) No

38. If yes then did he/she get incentive from Dr Ambedkar Scheme for Social Integration through Inter-caste Marriages?

a) Yes

b) No

39. Did you face opposition in the family on your inter-caste marriage?

a) Yes

b) No

40. If yes, what was your response?

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41. If yes, what is the prime reason of their opposition?

a) Fear of social ostracism

b) Fear of loss of social prestige and respect

c) Social stigma

d) Fear of loss of social capital

e) None of them

f) All

42. Did your family support you for inter-caste marriage?

a) Yes

b) No

43. If yes, then who supported you actively in the family?

a) Mother

b) Father

c) Brother

d) Sister

e) Brother-in-law

f) Sister-in-law

g) All

h) None of them

44. If no, which member of the family opposed your marriage ardently in the family?

a) Mother

b) Father

c) Brother

d) Sister

e) Brother-in-law

f) Sister-in-law

g) All

h) None of them

Questions relate to the society

45. How did the society treat you at the time of your marriage?

- a) As equal
- b) Not equal
- c) Alienated

46. How does society treat you presently?

- a) As equal
- b) Not equal
- c) Alienated

47. Do you avail common facilities (transportation, hotel and playground)?

- a) Yes
- b) No

48. Do you face any discrimination on account of inter –caste marriage in the society?

- a) Yes
- b) No

49. If yes, what are your responses?

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50. Do your children face any discrimination?

- a) Yes
- b) No

51. If yes, what are your responses?

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52. If yes, where do they face discrimination the most?

- a) School
- b) Friends circle
- c) None of them

53. Do you think urban areas are more encouraging/ inclusive than rural areas in terms of inter-caste marriage?

- a) Yes
- b) No

54. If yes, which factor plays an important role in making the urban areas more cooperative than rural areas?

- a) Education
- b) Social interaction
- c) Both
- d) None of them

Any other

55. Do you think metropolitan cities are more inclusive rather than other cities?

- a) Yes
- b) No

55. Do you think inter-caste marriage is a means for social change?

- a) Yes
- b) No

56. Did you face any problem due to your inter-caste marriage?

- a) Yes
- b) No

57. If yes, in which way, you have faced difficulties?

- a) Social
- b) Economical
- c) Both

58. If social, which factor is more crucial?

- a) Lack of Education
- b) Social Ostracism
- c) Caste system
- d) All
- e) None of them

Any other.....

59. If economical, which factor is more crucial?

- a) Low income
- b) Unemployment
- c) Only i) and ii)
- d) Only ii)
- e) None of them

60. Should there be any change in the schemes of Dr Ambedkar Scheme for Social Integration through Inter-caste Marriages?

- a) Yes
- b) No

61. Is there any delay in the payment? Why?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Reason

62. Do you know of any similar scheme?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Details:

63. Which level you propose any change?

- a) Organizational level
- b) Procedural level
- c) Both
- d) None of them

Any other

64. Should the amount be given at a time instead of two installments?

- a) Yes
- b) No

65. Is it necessary to make an affidavit for being legally married?

- a) Yes
- b) No

66. Do you think online application will help in improving scheme?
 a) Yes
 b) No
67. Do you think the existing procedure for getting incentive is a time-consuming process?
 a) Yes
 b) No
68. Is the procedure for getting the second installment as fixed deposit for three years with the Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, acceptable and convincing to you?
 a) Yes
 b) No
69. Do you think the gap in the releasing of first and second installment should be less than three years?
 a) Yes
 b) No
70. Should the provision for getting all amounts of incentive be online?
 a) Yes
 b) No
71. Do you think the campaign led by Dr. Ambedkar Foundation, to bring in attitudinal change in the society through communal harmony and brotherhood, through assistance for inter-caste marriage, successful?
 a) Yes
 b) No
72. If yes, do you have any suggestions to improve it further?

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73. What are the difficulties in receiving the incentive from Dr Ambedkar Scheme for Social Integration through Inter-caste Marriages?

74. Inter-caste marriage is an important means to reduce caste prejudice and untouchability in the society. If you agree, explain?

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75. Can inter-caste marriage achieve social integration? If yes, how?

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***This Questionnaire is for the purpose of evaluation of the above scheme. All the information will be used only for research purposes and will be kept confidential.**