

CHAPTER - III

**THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND
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1) SELECTION OF THE PROBLEM :

The main motivation to take up the present study of intercaste marriages came from personal experiences of the researcher as she herself has contracted intercaste marriage. It is also true that the researchers' interest in this study was further enhanced by the fact that the topic under consideration remains one of the least attended areas of empirical investigation. A brief review of literature on this topic presented in the last chapter indicated that the studies on intercaste marriages are very few. Therefore, scholars like Reddy and Rajanna (1984-85 :10-12) have invited our attention to the fact that, " there is need for more studies to generate data and perceptions necessary for proper appreciation of issues involved in intercaste marriages." The presented study is an attempt in this direction.

The present study deals with the intercaste marriages; it attempts to highlight the social background of marital partners and marriage related experiences which they encountered.

2) OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY :

The objectives of the present study were as follows :

- 1) To study the socio-personal background of the respondents.
- 2) To study the factors/circumstances leading to intercaste marriages.

- 3) To study the problems faced by the marital (intercaste) partners after selection of their mate but before their marriage.
- 4) To study the problems being faced by married (intercaste) couples and their family members.

3) SCOPE OF THE STUDY :

The study was confined to the 23 couples who had contracted intercaste marriages. All the respondent couples were from Kolhapur District of Maharashtra State.

4) SELECTION OF THE SAMPLE :

Sampling is one of the initial and important stages in any social investigation. An attempt to estimate the total number of couples who had contracted intercaste marriages in the Kolhapur District was unsuccessful. When enquired in the office of the Registrar of Marriages responsible for recording of registered marriages, we were told that the office authorities do not record castes of the spouses and hence we could not get information about the number of intercaste marriages. Again, when we contacted Kolhapur District Social Welfare Office operating the incentive scheme for promotion of intercaste marriages, the office authorities provided us a list of couples (recorded during 1979-80 to 1992-93) who had

contracted intercaste marriages and applied for incentive. We did not use this list as a sampling frame for the present study because we were not in a position to get representative sample from the list. The authorities clarified that in this office we record those cases who apply for incentive. All the intercaste married couples are not eligible for getting incentive. The couples having contracted intercaste marriage and having at least one partner (either husband or wife) belonging to one of the ritually low castes, (such as SC/ST/NT/OBC) are eligible for getting the incentive. Again, only some couples apply for such incentive and most of the cases (especially economically well-off couples) do not even apply for such incentive. Thus, it was not possible to get comprehensive list of couples, who had contracted intercaste marriages in the Kolhapur District. Again Panchayat Samiti Offices also do not keep record of the intercaste marriages. Thus, it was not possible to define the exact size of the population to be studied under the study, and thus our attempt to estimate the total number of couples who had contracted intercaste marriages in the Kolhapur District was unsuccessful.

Initially our purpose was to understand the phenomenon of intercaste marriage in the industrial-urban setting. However, we could not get the data as we desired. We were unable to secure a list of couples who had contracted intercaste marriages classified

in terms of rural-urban setting, because such data were not available with the offices we contacted. Therefore we were compelled to follow the procedure mentioned below to select the sample for the present study.

In the beginning the researcher was knowing four couples who had contracted intercaste marriages. They provided information about some other such couples. Thus, with the co-operation of the couples contacted, the new names and even introduction to some of these couples were available. Thus we could prepare a list of 30 couples who had contracted intercaste marriages; out of these 23 couples were respondents for the present study. The similar method was also adopted by Kannan C.T. for his study, because he too faced the similar difficulties. Kannan (1963: vii-viii) notes, "there is, at least in India, no established highway for research in this field, and there are no records or sources from which one can make available the names and addresses of persons who have married outside their caste. The register maintained in the office of the Registrar of Marriage is, unfortunately, inadequate for this purpose. For the register records only the civil marriages (either only or performed after the religious marriages) and all intercaste marriages are not necessarily civil marriages. This register further, does not indicate the caste of the parties. Initially, this investigation was started with just half-a-dozen names of individuals who had accepted partners

outside their caste. But, with the remarkable co-operation of the couples contacted, new names and even introduction to some of these persons were available."

5) INTERVIEW SCHEDULE : TOOL FOR DATA COLLECTION :

Keeping in view the objectives of the study, interview schedule was prepared for collecting the relevant data. Each spouse was interviewed separately.

6) DATA COLLECTION :

Initially, all the 30 couples were contacted and they were convinced about the importance and purely academic nature of this investigation. Out of these 30 couples, 5 couples denied to extend co-operation for their interviews for the present study. Out of remaining 25 couples, we could obtain interview data from 23 couples and two couples were left uninterviewed because they were out of station for a long period, during data collection period. The data for the present study were collected during October 1993 and April 1994. Data collection period was longer because in case of many respondents interview dates and timings were required to fix for more than twice or thrice. However, finally all the 23 couples extended their co-operation and almost all the interviews were conducted at the homes of the respective couples.

Thus the present study is based on the interview data obtained from 23 couples from Kolhapur District (Maharashtra) who had contracted intercaste marriages.

7) ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION OF DATA :

The data collected with the help of interview schedules from 23 couples (46 individual respondents) who had accepted marital partners outside their parental castes are presented, analysed and interpreted in the next chapter with the help of simple statistical technique such as percentage and by giving relevant references to the earlier research studies carried out in India.

: REFERENCES :

- 1) Kannnan C. T. " Intercaste and Inter-comunity Marriage in India, Allied Publishers, Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1963.
- 2) Reddy and Rajanna Intercaste Marriage : A study, Social Welfare, Vol. 31, No.1, April 1984-85, p.p. 10 to 12.

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