

Mate Selection: A Sociological Exploration

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Abstract

Mate selection in the social world is an interesting area of study among social scientists and sociologists. Mate selection is embedded with factors such as social background, race, colour, status, political ideology, traditions and customs, religious rules, and other aspects. This paper seeks to understand mate selection by focusing on select tribal communities of North-East India. On the basis of the information, the paper argues mate selection is a complex process of selection governed and guided by various factors, such as customary rules and practices, and religious persuasions or denominational regulations, etc.

Keywords: Mate selection, Students, Community, Denomination, Customary.

Introduction

Knowledge of the history of development of human kind requires understanding of mate selection. The etymology of the English word selection is derived from the Latin word *sēlēctiō* meaning the act of choosing or selection. Selection means an assortment of things from which a choice can be made of the person or thing chosen or selected. In this paper, the word selection indicates choice of person. One of the aspects in the social life of human communities has been social companion or social reproduction. Social reproduction is a process of continuity of human generations. The natural process of social reproduction is carried out by male-female bond or union. For the two social actors to be

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together they would have to fulfil some conditions: they know and accept each other and are accepted by respective families or it can be an arranged relationship carried out by families. We can broadly refer to this kind of human interaction and human relationship as an aspect of mate selection.

Mate selection can be said to be a personal affair of social actors and households or families. The issue of finding and selecting mate extends beyond the boundary of households. In India many local and national newspapers and internet sites do provide advertisement under matrimonial columns with regard to mate selection. Information on the kind of mate required provides in such columns can be categorized into follows:

Case – 1: Shri XAY, Hindu, Ezhava, age 35 years old, and Mechanical fitter; seeks suitable bride in good family of the same caste.

Case – 2: JBK Hindu (Orthopedic), tall, Ayilyam, Kadagam, Fair and slim; seeks bride Slim, Fair, Doctor and from Affluent family, and Hindu caste no bar.

Case – 3: ZOZ, Christian, Professor of Science, medium height; seeks Christian, convent educated, minimum post-graduate degree and working, caste no bar.

These types of matrimonial advertisement can also be found in other part of the world also. Vreede – Destuers (1969: 105) says that two types of matrimonial advertisements were common in Europe (Italy and France) in the 1960s. One is the case inserted by the person himself / herself which will be more or less like this: “a teacher 42 years, with one child, widow; seeks and would marry reliable civil servant, preferably teaching profession, Age between 45-50 years, region immaterial”. The second one used to be advertisement inserted by the person’s parents and it read more or less as follows: “Parents, with a view to a son’s marriage, Roman Catholic, healthy, serious, educated; seeks and would like

to correspond with girl's parent, about 30, finished notorial studies, and including all qualities regarding liberal profession and country life”.

Mate selection has received much attention among anthropologists, sociologists and social scientists. According to Hollingshead (1950) the reason has been due to ‘the question of who marries whom is of perennial interest’. Goode (1987:51) also highlighted that ‘marriage sets in motion a host of consequences in which many kin are concerned, not just the husband and wife. In all societies complex rules guide the process of mate selection and eventual marriage’. Similar views can be observed from the works of Lee and Stone (1980:319): ‘All cultures contain provisions for some relationship between adults of opposite sexes which may be designated by the term marriage...’. However, the processes by which marriages are contracted and the criteria for mate selection vary widely across cultures. In most contemporary Western cultures, mates select one another directly, and do so primarily according to factors reflecting interpersonal attraction. But this is not the case, of course, in all cultures. Mate-selection systems vary from culture to culture.

In the background of this understanding, an attempt is made in this paper to understand mate selection in tribal communities of North-East India. The empirical assessment was drawn from the educated young people of five tribal communities. The objective of the paper is to find-out from students whether the customary rules and denominational rules are taken into account or any other factors determine mate selection in tribal communities. Information was collected on the basis of fieldwork conducted from 2009 to 2010. The total number of respondents interviewed was 300 students (i.e., 150 each male and female) from five different tribal societies (namely Ao, Garo, Khasi, Kuki and Mizo) of 60 youth each. The students hailed from five States (namely Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura) and were pursuing their undergraduate, post-graduate and research degrees in various fields in

different educational institutions of Meghalaya. Majority of the questions formulated in the interview scheduled were close-ended and very few questions were open-ended.

Review of Literature on Mate Selection

It is generally understood that social actors with common interests may likely be more attracted to one another than those with opposite interests. In the context of mate selection, whether or not this sort of general assumption can be taken as true is difficult to say. Writings on mate selection are very many, this paper we have limited to a few of them. In the survey conducted by Christensen (1947:88), both male and female students 'tend to emphasize about the same things when it comes to picking a partner for marriage, and they both pay most attention to such personality traits as dependability and emotional maturity. Males, however, look somewhat more to such things as youthfulness in relation to self, attractiveness and popularity, home-making ability, non-smoking, and agreeableness of disposition. Females, on the other hand, show themselves to be generally choosier and to give greater emphasis to such things as financial ability, education and ambition, similarity of backgrounds, prospects for normal children, and chastity'.

Prince (1961:57) showed that male students do receive suggestions from parents with regard to mate selection. The author further noted that the 'most frequently received suggestions that male students receive was to marry someone: (1) within your religious faith, (2) who will be a good wife and homemaker, (3) who has a good family background and (4) who has a pleasing disposition and personality. For women it was to marry someone: (1) with good financial prospects, (2) within the same religious faith, (3) who has a pleasing disposition and personality and (4) who has a good family background'. According to Coombs (1969:295) people may select mates and 'marry those of the same race, religion, ethnic background and social situation'. However, in the case of Mainland China, during the Cultural Revolution, Huang (1972:124) said that,

‘in the selection of a mate, leaders often directed the youth of Mainland China to avoid bourgeois values and to uphold socialistic enthusiasm’.

However, a recent study on mate preference in post-Mao China, (Buss et al 2001) pointed that men give importance to ‘good looks’ and women gave importance ‘good financial prospects and ambition, and industriousness’. According to Jankowiak (1989:80) ‘Chinese men consistently prefer a sexually attractive wife; desire sexual intercourse more frequently than their spouses; assume the primary responsibility for initiation of sexual intercourse; and are more inclined to seek partner variety. On the other hand, women’s criteria in mate choice differ from men in their emphasis on status over physical attractiveness; concern with the preservation of beauty; preference to deemphasize men as objects of sexual gratification and instead to stress the quality of their relationship...’

In the works of Hudson and Henze (1969: 774) on mate selection, 18 personal characteristics were identified and tested among college students of selected campuses in United States and Canada. These personal characteristics include Dependable character; Emotional stability; Pleasing disposition; Mutual attraction; Good health; Desire for home-children; Refinement; Good cook-housekeeper; Ambition-industriousness; Chastity; Education-intelligence; Sociability; Similar religious background; Good looks; Similar educational background; Favorable social status; Good financial prospect, and Similar political background. It was observed that out of the 18 characteristics, college students gave more importance to dependable character and good health; and men were also categorical on virginity of women.

Korson (1969:165) states that, ‘mate selection in Pakistan is based on the traditional norms of individual responsibility to the family and, through marriage, to contribute to the alliance of two families, extending and reinforcing the influence of both’. This is to show that individual has limited choice. Among the Malay peoples

the system of mate selection is based on their customary beliefs and practices. In the study of a Malay village, Strange (1976:562), showed that, 'As a youth approaches marriageable age his parents evaluate possible mates for him. If the parents have a particular girl in mind, the lad's mother approaches the mother of the girl. If they have no one in mind, a woman who is competent at match-making is asked to look for appropriate possibilities. Parents whose daughter is nearing marriage-able age may similarly seek a match-maker. However, it is far preferable for females to receive offers than to have offers made on their behalf'.

In India and among the Hindu population, caste is important when it comes to mate selection. Mate selection is usually arranged. Other factors taken into consideration include *Jati* endogamy meaning, selecting and marrying a mate from the same *Jati* rank; secondly *Gotra* exogamy (prohibited relations or equivalent to clan) and varying degrees of prohibited relations with patrikins and the feminal kins; and some villages in India do also follow village exogamy, selecting mate from outside one's own village (Dumont 1988, Mayer 1986).

Even among tribal communities of North-East India such as Ao, Mizo, Kuki, Garo and Khasi there are social norms and rules with regard to mate selection. According to Jamir and Lanunungsang (2005:193) among the Ao tribe, the mate selection between the sexes is permissible only when the boy and the girl are adults, and 'according to the practice a boy must be able to do all sorts of household works. He should prove his capacities and ability to independently manage a household and raise food and cash crops in the jhum field'. Secondly, the authors also pointed out that the boy cannot marry a girl from the same clan, because clan exogamy is strictly observed; and also the boy or the girl cannot marry any person from the maternal side for three generations or any other person if in case there is any trace of kinship with the maternal side. Among the Mizo tribe (Lushai) the prohibitions in mate selection are not many (Shakespeare 2008, and Malsawma

2002). As Malsawma (2002:49) explains, The Lushais have wide views as to matrimony. A young man is not hampered in his choice by any table of prohibited degrees, nor is his choice confined to any particular family or clan; in fact, he can practically marry any woman he chooses except his sister or his mother. There is, however, a certain amount of prejudice against first cousins on the father's side marrying, but the reason generally given for this is that when a girl's parents have to consider the question of her marriage they naturally try to dispose of her outside the family, in order that her price may increase the wealth of the family, nor merely transfer it from one brother to another. I have, however, been told that girls object to marrying their 'brothers.'

Gangte (1993:78) observes three ways of mate selection among the Kuki. These are as follows: (i) 'marriage by arrangement is the most popular type in the olden days. This type of marriage is sometimes done mainly due to the consideration of a preferential form of Mother's brother's daughter marriage; (ii) by mutual consent or love. A boy and a girl may fall in love, ask their parents to give consent to their nuptials. Such a situation often results in formal negotiation of parents and relatives of the boy and the girl; and (iii) getting a wife by elopement. When a boy and a girl fall in love and when their parents or either of the parents raise strong objection to union, or when there appears a third person in between the boy and girl, who is likely to stand in their way'.

Sangma (1981:192-193) states that the rules governing mate selection among the Garo is 'regulated by exogamy' meaning, 'according to the law of exogamy, no marriage contract may be made between persons belonging to the same clan. Thus, a Sangma is not allowed to marry a Sangma, a Marak cannot marry a Marak, nor can a Momin marry a Momin and so on'. The author further elaborated that, 'Members of any *ma'chong* of a clan can marry members of any *ma'chong* of another clan. But if the members of the same *ma'chong* adopt different clan names, they still cannot marry as they belong to the same *ma'chong*, and as members of

the same *ma'chong* they are brothers and sisters. Therefore, if they marry, they would be committing an act of incest. Thus, in the last resort, it is *ma'chong* which determines marriage contracts'.

Among the Khasi tribe, there was no age bar, if the young man has shown development in his thinking and reasoning, and physically can take upon himself hard labour and responsibility. Young women has also shown development in her thinking and reasoning, and can carry the domestic management, care and of children and family. It is the young man who has to enter into familiarity with the young woman he has eyed upon, and visits the young woman residence (Sawian 1995). Khasi customary rules provide whom you cannot enter into mate selection such as members of same clan (clan exogamy), any person for three generations from paternal side, avoiding mother's brother offsprings and any person with traceable kins relations from paternal side (Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council 2005, Kharkongngor 2004).

Another aspect that has to be taken into consideration for a proper understanding of the empirical illustration is the entry of modern organisations in tribal communities. Colonial annexation of North-East India (Syiemlieh 1989) implanted the modern-bureaucratic system of political administration and the entry of religious organisations. Srinivas pointed –out that, 'during the early days of the East India Company the entry of European missionaries into India was banned; this ban was lifted in 1813 when the British Parliament permitted them to enter the country under the new system of licensing. This eventually threw the entire subcontinent open to missionaries activity' (1988:47). The Welsh Missionaries, the Baptist missionaries, the Catholic Church and other Christian denominations entered, established their missions and initiated both religious and secular activities in North-East India. Over generations tribal people opted for the change from indigenous faith to Christianity and under various denominations. Christian denominations have their own rules with regard to mate selection.

It should be noted that Christian denominations have their own marriage rules; however, it was interesting to note that Christian denominations did not do away with the marriage rules of Khasi society. Christian denominations adopted and integrated societal marriage rules in their denominations. Secondly, in India Christian denominations have the legitimacy to formalized marriages under 'The Indian Christian Marriage, Act, 1872'.

There are varied views on mate selection and this could be one of the major reasons that explain not having or developing an adequate theory on mate selection. However, on the basis of varied views, mate selection can be broadly classified as having more than one constituting elements. Such elements can be classified into different categories as follows: (i) Personality (meaning good physical features, trust, stability, good looks, good education, etc.); (ii) Family and kinship (meaning family background, aspects of prohibited relations, permissible relations etc.); (iii) Religion (meaning the same faith or same denomination); (iv) Economic considerations (like class, employment, income, etc.); (v) Ethnicity or Race considerations; (vi) Caste considerations (meaning hierarchy and ritual status); and (vii) Culture such as traditions, norms and customs. The seven elements put together provide the social framework on mate selection; and the social framework on mate selection seems to act as the guide for individuals in society. In the case of this paper, the social framework on mate selection serves as the working definition.

Findings of the Study

Three hundred students were interviewed and their response was tabulated. Their views or opinions were collated for the purpose of providing proper explanation with regard to the study. One of the observations that can be pointed out as the limitations of the study is the issue of 'no response' or no opinion from respondents on some of the questions. From the tabulated data it was found that the 300 students were from the states of Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and

Nagaland. Some of the students came from the villages or the rural areas and some from the urban areas. According to the data out of 300 students, 42 percent (125 persons) were from the rural areas and 58 percent (175 persons) were from the urban areas. On the issue of religious persuasions, out of 300, majority of them were followers of 13 Christian denominations, that is, 97 percent (292 persons); only 2 percent were followers of indigenous faith; one student was a follower of Hindu faith; and two of them did not mention their religious affiliation. Out of the 292 followers of Christianity and affiliated to 13 denominations, majority of them were Baptist. Then comes the followers of Presbyterian and Catholic Church, and the rest were affiliated to other denominations (table -1). One can say that majority of students were followers of Christianity.

Faith	Number	Percentage
Presbyterian	65	21.66
Catholic	33	11.00
Baptist	171	57.00
Church of God	5	01.66
Seventh Day Adventist	2	00.66
Christ National Church	1	00.33
Church of North India	1	00.33
Ministry of Reconciliation	1	00.33
United Pentacostal Church	1	00.33
Evangelical Church	6	02.00
Unity Church	1	00.33
Pentacostal	4	01.33
Salvation Army	1	00.33
Hindu	1	00.33
Indigenous Faith	5	01.66
No answer	2	0.66
Total	300	99.99

Source: Survey conducted by the researcher

In the case of age-group, out of 300, majority of them, 73.66 percent (221 persons) falls under 19 to 24 years of age; followed

by 21 percent (63 persons) in the age between 25 to 30 years; only 4 percent (12 persons) was between 31 to 35 years of age. Only 0.6 each (2 persons) were above 35 years of age and those who did not provide the age (table-2). If we club together the age group of 19 to 30 years of age they formed the majority.

Table - 2 Distribution of Students' Age-Wise		
Age	Number	Percentage
19-24	221	73.66
25-30	63	21.00
31-35	12	4.00
36-40	2	00.66
NA	2	00.66
Total	300	99.98
Source: Survey conducted by the researcher		

Shillong for over a century has been the educational hub for students from other parts of North-East India and it attracts fairly large number of them in pursuit of education at various levels. This is the reason that colleges and universities in Shillong do get students from various parts of North-East India and from other part of India. In the study (table - 3), students pursuing under-graduate courses comprised of 42 percent (127 persons), percentile at the post-graduate level was 33 percent (99 persons), and those pursuing research degrees was 25 percent (74 persons).

Table - 3 Educational Distribution of Youth		
Education	Number	Percentage
Under –Graduate	127	42.33
Post-Graduate	99	33.00
Research Scholar	74	24.66
Total	300	100.00
Source: Survey conducted by the researcher		

It should be noted this paper concentrated on few aspects of mate selection and the data presented in the proceeding description has its own limitations. However, the information from the field has brought out some interesting social anthropological insights on the subject matter under discussion. Although, there were students who did not provide any information, from those who shared the information, majority of them identified clan exogamy as an important rule for consideration at the time of mate selection. They also added dimensions of customary rules of mate selection including avoiding of primary kins as mate. Tribal endogamy was also reflected as an aspect of mate selection by majority of students. On the issue of cross-cousin mate selection, the students of Kuki community pointed out that the practice prevails in their community and it is taken into account in mate selection (table-4). This showed that in general, clan exogamy, prohibited relations, and tribal endogamy is taken into account at the time of mate selection. The particular practice of cross-cousin in mate selection cannot be generalised among all the tribal communities.

Particulars	AO		MIZO		KUKI		GARO		KHASI		TOTAL		Total	%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
Clan exogamy and tribal endogamy	26	28					13	23	20	25	59	76	135	45.00
Primary kins prohibited and tribal endogamy			25	26	12	18	9			3	46	47	93	31.00
Cross-cousin					10	6					10	6	16	05.33
No opinion	4	2	5	4	8	6	8	7	10	2	35	21	56	18.66
Total	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	150	150	300	99.99

Source: Survey conducted by the researcher

In most societies in general and tribal communities in particular the issue of incest is considered the most important dimension in descent or alliance relations. Majority of students were of the

view that in tribal communities the mate selection has to be and must ensure the avoidance of any incestuous relations. Incestuous relations are not acceptable by families and society. Persons committing incestuous relations are ostracised and outcast from families and village councils, and excommunicated in the case of Christian denominations (Table- 5).

Particulars	AO		MIZO		KUKI		GARO		KHASI		TOTAL		Total	%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
Socially ostracized and outcast by families and clans	19	18	3	5	9	11	11	9	13	16	55	59	114	38.00
Punishment by village councils	3	3			4	1	2	2	1	1	10	7	17	5.66
Excommunicated by the denomination		3			2		5	1	2	2	9	6	15	5.00
Hardly such cases	2	2	18	15	6	1	2	7	5	1	33	26	59	19.66
Looked down or stigma			2	3	1	7		3		2	3	15	18	6.00
No answer	6	4	7	7	8	10	10	8	9	8	40	37	77	25.66
	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	150	150	300	99.98

Source: Survey conducted by the researcher

Another dimension related with mate selection was the issue of who select the mate in tribal communities. In the study majority of students said that the individual with the consent of his/her family selects the mate. Meaning that the individual has the opportunity to make the choice and subjected to consultation and acceptance by his /her family. There were those who pointed out that the individual choice has been the basis of mate selection in tribal communities. The data also showed that in tribal communities families do not select mates without the consent of adult children (Table-6).

Table – 6														
Individual /Familial and Mate Selection														
Particulars	AO		MIZO		KUKI		GARO		KHASI		TOTAL		Total	%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
Individual selection	4	3	22	20	3	6	12	9	19	20	60	58	118	39.33
Individual and familial selection	23	22	7	9	27	24	13	20	8	8	78	83	161	53.66
Familial selection		4		1			1	1			1	6	7	2.33
No answer	3	1	1				4		3	2	11	3	14	4.66
Total	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	150	150	300	99.98
Source: Survey conducted by the researcher														

In the study we have also acknowledged that tribal communities have been interacting with other tribal communities or other communities from outside North-East India. Such interactions has also led to mate selection from outside one's own community and no longer restricted only from within. The students were queried on this issue. Most of them accepted that mate can be selected from another community. However, students argued that the in-marrying person should accept and follow the customary practices of the spouse (in the case patrilineal tribal communities that of the man and in the case of matrilineal communities that of the woman), and suggested the assimilation of in-marrying persons. Some students were of the opinion that the acceptance of the in-marrying person would also depend on changing of faith to that of the faith of the spouse. There were, of course those who did not agree with mate selection from outside one's own tribal community and preferred tribal endogamy. A small group of young people viewed the issue as matter of individual choice (table-7).

As discussed in the preceding discussion that respondents hailed from tribal communities and majority of them were Christian by faith and belonging to various Christian denominations. The issue of mate selection cannot be separated from religious persuasions. Out of the total number of respondents interviewed a good number of them said that they cannot decide on the issue whether

Particulars	AO		MIZO		KUKI		GARO		KHASI		TOTAL		Total	%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
Accepted, but the in-marrying person should follow the customary practices and faith of the spouse	25	26	22	19	30	26	12	16	16	20	105	107	212	71.00
Not accepted			4	5			12	12	7	5	23	26	45	15.00
Individual choice		1		5		1	1	1	2		3	8	11	03.66
No answer	5	3	4	1		3	5	1	5	5	19	13	32	11.00
	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	150	150	300	99.99

Source: Survey conducted by the researcher

they preferred from the same denomination or from a different denomination. Among the respondents who gave their opinions or views there were two sets of arguments: One set of argument was from respondents who felt that it is preferable to select mate from the same denominations; and another set of students who preferred the selection of mate from any Christian denominations (table -8).

Particulars	AO		MIZO		KUKI		GARO		KHASI		TOTAL		Total	%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
Preferably from the same denominations	4	6		7	3	3	4	15	11	3	22	34	56	18.66
Preferably Christian denominations	15	16	22	16	26	16	8	8	5	12	76	68	144	48.00
No restrictions			1			3					1	3	4	1.33
Cannot decide	11	8	7	7	1	8	18	7	14	15	51	45	96	32.00
Total	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	150	150	300	99.99

Source: Survey conducted by the researcher

The data highlights the significance of faith and mate selection in tribal communities.

On the issue of taking into account two sets of mate selection rules, respondents felt that tribal communities have made adjustment and avoided strain between customary rules and denominational rules. It should be noted that maintaining customary rules of mate selection was about ensuring the rule of clan exogamy, avoidance of primary kins, prohibited relations and incest taboo. Christian denominations have integrated these kinship rules of tribal communities. Some respondents pointed out that the issue of strain can be seen only when the denominational aspect was made to be the most preferred model of mate selection (Table – 9).

Particulars	AO		MIZO		KUKI		GARO		KHASI		TOTAL		Total	%
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
No conflicts because both rules are followed	20	17	21	25	21	22	10	14	19	12	91	90	181	60.33
Yes there are conflicts when denominational preference considered more important	1	3	2	4	4	5	9	9	3	7	19	28	47	15.66
Don't know	2	4	3		2	3	5	4	6	4	18	15	33	11.00
No answer	7	6	4	1	3		6	3	2	7	22	17	39	13.00
Total	30	150	150	300	99.99									
Source: Survey conducted by the researcher														

Having described the primary data, the study has taken into cognizance that it has its limitations. However, one can draw some useful insights from this study. It is apparent that mate selection is not an absolute free choice of individuals. Individuals may find their own mate or may also take the opinion of their domestic groups or families. Their choice of a mate is within the boundary of social

restrictions such as clan exogamy and prohibited relations are to be observed by individuals at the time of mate selection. Secondly, the societal regulations related with any kind of incestuous relations has been seen as a social norm that have to be complied or cannot be disobeyed. Refusal or non-compliance to social norms means deviant social action, and as such punished by way of ostracisation; stigmatisation and excommunication from the community.

The issue of looking for a mate from the same tribe or tribal endogamy is another feature and it may be may not be mandatory but preferred. However, on the aspect of taking a mate from outside the community or group, opinions differ. Some think that mate selection from outside one's own group is not an issue at all, provided the in-marrying person get assimilated into the group of the male spouse in the case of patrilineal descent or into the female spouse in the case of matrilineal descent. Another important dimension of mate selection is the aspect of faith or religious denominations (in the case of Christian faith). Denominations have their own rules of marriage and it is expected that members are supposed to follow and uphold such rules at the time of mate selection. It should be pointed out at this point that Christian denominations have also included the societal rules. Coming back to the issue, the community gives young people some free choice in mate selection, however, parents or family members may advise or may try to influence their children to select mates from one's own denominations or religious persuasions. At times such instances lead to strain or conflict in mate selection, when the choice of the children and the preference of parents or family members differ.

In contrast, some argued that the religious factor may not be such an issue in mate selection provided the societal rules are observed. Two adults (male and female) belonging to two different religious persuasions or denominations is socially acceptable, if both parties complied with the societal norms, values and practices of mate selection. It is also true that such couples may face some difficulties only with their respective denominations for example on

matters related with baptism of children and other restrictions that may be imposed on them. At this point one can summarise by saying that in communities where more than one rules of mate selection exist, the process of mate selection can become complex. However, mate selection in tribal communities seems to provide both the individual and the collective a choice for mate selection and this choice is governed by societal norms and values, and by the rules of religious organisations. In another way, mate selection can be seen as a complex combination of compliance to clan exogamy and prohibited relations, preferred tribal endogamy, preferred religious or denominational endogamy.

Conclusion

It can be observed that mate selection is intricately link with personal, social institutions, ethnicity, etc. Thus, one can say that mate selection is a complex process of human interaction and relationship where multiple factors may influence or may determine social actors (both males and females) of communities in selecting a partner, and some of the factors may accentuate more than others in the final stages of the selection. It should also be noted that based on this study we may tentatively say that compared to other considerations, societal rules on mate selection have an overbearing influence on the members of the communities or groups without exception. Societal rules ensure that social actors do not act contrary to customary norms, values and practices. Religious or denominational rules also do have their conditions on mate selection; however, such rules may not be adopted or followed by one and all. It will not be that strict as in the case of compliance to societal rules. Secondly, tribal endogamy is preferred over a mate from outside the community. Thirdly, cross-cousin marriage cannot be generalised as a common practice of mate selection. Lastly, whether or not, other considerations like status, education, colour, sentiment, occupation, personal traits, physical aspects, etc., have an influence on the process of mate selection requires further investigation

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