Nuptiality Status In North Eastern States Of India:  
A Comparative State Level Study

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Abstract

Marriage is an important social element which not only influences fertility and population growth but affects the nature of the family relationship and it is linked to the status of women. This paper attempts to examine the marriage patterns of North-Eastern states (Assam, Sikkim, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh) in India using data from Census of India, 2011. Present work concentrates on nuptiality pattern, age at first marriage (Singulate mean age) in terms of male-female and also occurrence of residence i.e. rural and urban areas. It has been observed that the mean age at first marriage of North-Eastern states is 22.44 yrs as per 2011 which is less than national level (23.14 yrs) and for male and female is 24.20 yrs 20.57 yrs respectively. It also found that there is a wide gender gap of age at first marriage i.e. near about 4 yrs in urban areas whereas near about 3 yrs in rural which is less than the urban areas. Among these north- eastern states Nagaland has top position followed by Manipur and Mizoram whereas Tripura ranked last followed by Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh on the basis of Mean Age at Marriage. The entire study has been completed with the help of secondary data collected from Census of India, 2011 and Hajnal’s Singulate Mean Age at Marriage (SMAM) have been used to analyze nuptial status based on the census data.

1.1 Introduction:

Marriage is an important social element which influences fertility and population growth, affects the nature of the family relationship and it is linked to the status of women. It is a significant social event from which a person starts his or her matrimonial life. (Pandey, 1984; Singh, 1986). Marital behaviour is an important aspect of family life (Allendorf et al., 2012). Greater wedlock quality is involved with less depression (Williams, 2003), better self-rated health (Umberson, et al., 2006), less physical illness (Wickrama, et al., 1997), and other positive outcomes (Ross, et al., 1990). In India marriages are not only universal but take place in advance age. Although, there are enactments to prevent the practice of early marriages in India, a lot of marriages do take place below the marriageable ages (Pathak, 1980). The marriageable age mostly depend on regarding their social class, level of education, employment, religion, ethnic group, family background etc (Goswami, 2012). So, the problem of early age at marriage in all over India is very complicated in nature (Pandey, 1996; Pandey, 1984). Historically changes in the matrimonial pattern have played very important roles with respect to demographic transitions in many of the European (Van de Walle, 1972).The experience of several less developed countries where population growth rate has recently slowed down also well demonstrates this aspect (Das et al., 1998). Across India the differences in the mean age at marriage were different among the states. The states like Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram, especially north eastern states have significantly higher mean age at marriage than the national average. In the last few decades India has also witnessed a number of demographic changes (Pandey, 2009) as a result of socioeconomic development and improvement in education, increase in age at first marriage of both the sexes, changes on attitude towards marriage, love-marriages, inter-caste marriages, divorce, separation (Kadi, 1987; Singh, 1992) and marriage dissolution (Kuppuswamy, 1957; Mehta, 1975; Kundu & Ghosh 1977; Choudhary, 1988; Kumari, 1989; Desai, 1991; Badiger & Krishnasawamy, 1999) has been observed. Rising literacy among women has opened new avenues as well as challenges. Their participation in the present society is fast changing. These changes affect matrimonial relations and as well as nuptiality pattern (Hussain, 1983).
The objectives of the present study are-

i. To analyze the marriage rate by sex.

ii. To find out the chances of getting married (probability) in different age group.

iii. To find out the mean age at first marriage by age, sex composition and area of residence among North eastern states and compare to national level.

1.2 Database & Methodology:

The present study is based upon secondary data sources, which is collected from the demographic data sources Census of India, 2011. For the purpose of the study following methodologies have been executed. Various measures like crude marriage rate, general marriage rate, age specific marriage rate has been used to indicate the present marital condition. Crude marriage rate is the total number of marriage among the population in an area during the year. Although the crude marriage rate is useful as a measure of the relative frequency of marriages in the same area over a relatively short period of time and for international comparisons, it does not take account of the variation between areas in marriageable population which may be derived from the marital status and age distribution of the population. The general marriage rate is the number of marriages per 1000 married persons aged 15 years and over.

The nuptiality table is a table delineate a fictive cohort that would have sustain at each age the nuptiality pattern observed for persons of this age at the time of the Census. It is constructed either from the probabilities of nuptiality obtained after conversion of nuptiality rates or from the proportions of single people.

The table comprises four columns corresponding to the following four variables:

- Exact age x starting at age 10 years which has been considered here as the minimum age at marriage. Many censuses in other countries also start at age 15 years and 15 years is chosen marriageable age (NISR, 2012) for constructed nuptial status. But in the study area, marriages before age 15 years (especially in rural females) have been observed. So, the marriageable age in this region has been calculated based on 10-14 age group.

- The number of single people at exact age group x represented by Cx

- The number of first marriages in the age group x and x+5, represented by m(x,x+5)

- The probability of nuptiality, which measures the probability or risk of an individual of age group x getting married between the exact ages x and x+5, represented by \( \pi n_x \) and generally expressed per thousand (%o).

In this study, we have been used Hinjal’s methods (1953) to find out the Mean Age at Marriage or Singulated Mean Age. While studying the nuptiality of a population depend on census data, we try to analyze either the proportion married until a definite age or Singulate Mean Age at Marriage (SMAM) of the population from the proportion of singles. Apparently, the indicator has period perspectives of estimating nuptiality. On the other hand, we analyze the actual age at which men and women are married by deriving the average age at marriage, which has a cohort perspective of data analysis. In this study, due to prevalence of early age at marriage 10 year for both male and female has been taken as lower age for marriage whereas in Hinjal’s method (1953) 15 years had been considered for SMAM. The formula is given below

\[
SMAM = \left[ \sum_{t=0}^{5} nSx - Sk(k) \right] / 1 - SK
\]

Where, nSx= proportion of single in the age group x to x+n, K=is the upper limit of the age under which marriage occurs (50years), SK= proportion of single at age k.
1.3 Conceptual framework of the study:

2. Result & Discussion:
2.1 Crude marriage rate (CMR) & General marriage rate (GMR):

The index very commonly used to analyse the incidence of marriage is the crude marriage rate. Crude marriage rate is the total number of marriage among the population in an area during the year. Some of the factors that influence to variation in the rate of crude marriage: (1) the proportion of marriageable population, (2) the proportion of those who have previously married, (3) economic status of the area’s, (4) provisions for the dissolution of marriage contract and (5) mores regarding to remarriage (Shryock, et al., 1973). The states like Sikkim and Tripura have significantly higher crude marriage rate whereas the states like Nagaland, Mizoram and Meghalaya have the substantially lower crude marriage rate.
Although the crude marriage rate is useful as a measure of the relative frequency of marriages in the same area over a relatively short period of time and for international comparisons, it does not take account of the variation between areas in marriageable population which may be derived from the marital status and age distribution of the population. The general marriage rate is the number of marriages per 1000 persons aged 15 years and over. It has been found that the higher general marriage rate is found in Assam and Tripura and followed by Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh whereas the states like Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur and Meghalaya have substantially lower general marriage rate.

Among North-Eastern states it has been found (Table 1) crude marriage rate is 434 per 1000 population for male it is 423 which is less than female. Furthermore, general marriage rate is 645 per 1000 population for male and female 629 and 663 respectively. Among these north eastern states Tripura have significantly higher marriage rate with 490 and 678 in terms of crude and general marriage rate respectively which is more than national average as well as north eastern region. The states like Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur have lower marriage rate.

**Table 1: Crude and General Marriage rate of North Eastern states, 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Crude marriage rate (%)</th>
<th>General marriage rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Eastern</td>
<td>423.26</td>
<td>445.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arunachal Pradesh</td>
<td>406.65</td>
<td>416.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>428.79</td>
<td>456.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>413.70</td>
<td>423.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>355.39</td>
<td>365.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mizoram</td>
<td>391.90</td>
<td>395.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>359.77</td>
<td>369.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikkim</td>
<td>450.13</td>
<td>461.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>483.27</td>
<td>497.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Calculation based on Census 2011.*

Marriage rate varies by gender and obviously place of residence. The highest gap between male and female is found in Assam whereas lower gap is found in Manipur and Mizoram.

**2.2 Probability of marriage in North eastern states:**

The nuptiality of a population is characterized by two factors: the intensity and the calendar of marriages. The two factors are respectively calculated by the proportion of people who are married at age 50 and the proportion of people who have never married at the age of 50 as a measure of intensity and the mean age or and median age at first marriage as indicators of the calendar.
The probability curves in Figure 1, which indicate the propensity to get married among the population remaining single at each age, illustrate how young females tend to be when they enter into marriage. In India, however, it is observed that though the minimum legal age at marriage for females is 15 and males 18, a sizable number of marriages do take place below this minimum legal age, therefore, begins from the age group 10. For precedent, in the age group 10–14 years, the probability of getting married for females (201‰) is more than seven times that of males (28‰). From the age of 15 to 19, the chances of getting married are still higher among females (523‰) than among males (237‰). In the age group 25 to 29, the chances of getting married for male and female are same. However, after 30 years the chances are higher for males than for females, although they drop again in the last age group 45–49.

**Figure 1: Probability (%) of getting married by sex and age group of North Eastern states, 2011**

![Figure 1: Probability (%) of getting married by sex and age group of North Eastern states, 2011](image1)

It is obvious that the probability of getting married not only varies in gender it also differ from place of residence i.e., rural and urban. The difference is particularly marked for the age group 10-14, in which almost 3.28 per cent of the rural peoples are already married, while this percentage is 1.86 for urban counterparts. For precedent (Figure 2), in the age group 10–14 years, the probability of getting married in rural (127‰) is more than that of urban (86‰). From the age of 15 to 19, the chances of getting married are still higher rural counterparts (404‰) than urban counterparts (277‰). Rural people get married early than urban ones. Rural areas the parents gave marriage of their children after completion of their education and asked to take responsibility of their household which is very rare in urban counterparts.

**Figure 2: Probability (%) of getting married by age group and area of residence of North eastern states, 2011**

![Figure 2: Probability (%) of getting married by age group and area of residence of North eastern states, 2011](image2)
The probability curves in Figure 3, which indicates the propensity to get married among the population remaining single at each age of different north eastern states. It has been observed that in the age group 10-14 chances of getting married is comparatively higher in the states like Tripura (150‰), Assam (129‰), Meghalaya (109‰) and Sikkim (106‰). The states like Manipur and Nagaland have minimum chances of getting married in the same age group.

Figure 3: Probability (‰) of getting married by age group among North Eastern states, 2011

2.4 Mean age at first marriage:

The mean age at first marriage is one of the most important indicators in nuptiality analysis. It is calculated circuitously from the proportion of single people in a given population. In this discussion, we use the Hajnal’s (1953) Singulate Mean Age at first marriage to find out nuptial status with the census data.

Figure 4: Age at first marriage of North eastern state compare to national level and others region:
At the national level, the mean age at first marriage is 23.14 years in 2011 while it was 22.4 years in 2001. The average mean age at first marriage among north eastern states is higher compare to national level as well as others region of India. The highest age at first marriage is found in north eastern part of India with 24.33 years and on the other hand central part (Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh) of India ranked last with 22.44 years (Figure 4). The marriageable age mostly depend on regarding their social class, level of education, employment, religion, ethnic group, family background etc. Most of the north eastern states have high literacy rate especially female literacy rate that influence raises of age at first marriage. Religious community is one of another factor that takes a great part to push the higher age at marriage. Among north eastern states 17.24 per cents peoples to total population are belong in Christian community. A large number of populations believe Christianity especially Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram. The Christians have a highly develop spatial hierarchy system.

2.4.1 Age at first marriage by sex:

Across India, the differences in the mean age at marriage were different among the states. The states like Nagaland and Manipur have significantly higher mean age at marriage than the national average. It also noticed that in these states have higher age at first marriage for both sex. The mean age at marriage of Assam, Tripura and Mizoram have higher compare to national average and close to north eastern region. States like Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Meghalaya have substantially lower age at marriage. On the other hand the lower age at marriage for female found in Tripura and Assam and these states ranked first for higher gender gap.

Table 2: Mean age at first marriage (Singulate Mean Age) by sex among North Eastern states, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Gender Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>25.31</td>
<td>20.86</td>
<td>4.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Eastern</td>
<td>26.81</td>
<td>22.01</td>
<td>4.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arunachal Pradesh</td>
<td>25.73</td>
<td>22.40</td>
<td>3.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>26.81</td>
<td>21.25</td>
<td>5.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>28.11</td>
<td>25.38</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>25.81</td>
<td>22.28</td>
<td>3.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mizoram</td>
<td>26.43</td>
<td>23.83</td>
<td>2.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>28.39</td>
<td>25.45</td>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikkim</td>
<td>25.94</td>
<td>22.73</td>
<td>3.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>26.26</td>
<td>20.81</td>
<td>5.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Calculation based on Census 2011
2.4.2 Age at first marriage by place of residence:

It is obvious that pattern of age at first marriage differ according to urban and rural residence. Urbanisation is among the factors that influence hymeneal dealing and manage in interaction with other factors such as work participation rate, social awareness and educational attainment given that most people with higher levels of education live in towns. However, the urban people they have new modes of action, new lifestyle and new attitudes, different to those prevailing in rural areas.

The parents of rural areas arrange marriage of their girl children at early age at marriage. They thought that the girl children would be member of another family so they could not agree to educate to their girl children. Moreover, in rural areas the parents gave marriage of their sons after completion of their education asked to take responsibility of their household which is very rare in urban areas.

Table 3: Mean age at first marriage (Singulate Mean Age) by place of residence among North Eastern states, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural-Urban Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>India</strong></td>
<td>22.55</td>
<td>24.31</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>North Eastern</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arunachal Pradesh</td>
<td>23.97</td>
<td>24.37</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>23.70</td>
<td>25.92</td>
<td>2.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>26.76</td>
<td>26.75</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>23.39</td>
<td>26.10</td>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mizoram</td>
<td>23.76</td>
<td>26.25</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>26.92</td>
<td>26.89</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikkim</td>
<td>24.08</td>
<td>25.31</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tripura</td>
<td>23.17</td>
<td>24.71</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Calculation based on Census 2011*

Table 3 represents age at first marriage of India especially among north eastern states regarding rural –urban residence. At the national level age at first marriage is 22.55 in rural area where in urban areas it is 24.31. It has been found that the national average is lower than the north eastern part of
India. Among these states Nagaland and Manipur have significantly higher age at first marriage in rural and urban consider. The states like Meghalaya, Manipur and Assam have a great difference between rural and urban regarding age at first marriage. Furthermore, it is also noticed that the states like Nagaland and Manipur have higher age at first marriage in rural counterparts compare to urban people.

3. Recommendations:

- To reduce the problem of early child marriage, education takes a great part. Educational awareness among the illiterate people is very necessary.
- If Common villages are aware about the bad effects of early marriage, it should be reduce rapid way.
- Now the society should makes a rule to reduce the early child marriage. To make a clean society with educated and affectionate people, the society should strict about the child marriage.
- We have to make ourselves aware about the harmful effect of early child marriage and it’s after effects. Parents should aware about post marriage effects of their child.

4. Conclusion:

There is so many rules and regulation not to entertain an early child marriage from the part of the govt. But in society there are so many problems. Parents especially in rural areas forced to get married their child in various conditions. Local panchayet and block office some time unaware officially about the fact. Our respective govt. takes so many steps to make aware about the harmful effect of early marriage. There are so many campaign in the schools, TV shows etc not to marry in the tender age. So many schemes are introduced in the schools to reduce the early marriage. UNISEF has come forward to help the govt. in the scheme. To get the future generation more effective, more joly, more healthy marriage should be entertained at the proper age only.

References: