

Published: November 19, 2014 12:19 IST | Updated: November 19, 2014 15:55 IST

Arranging a marriage: how India does it

RUKMINI S.



Photo: A.M. Faruqui

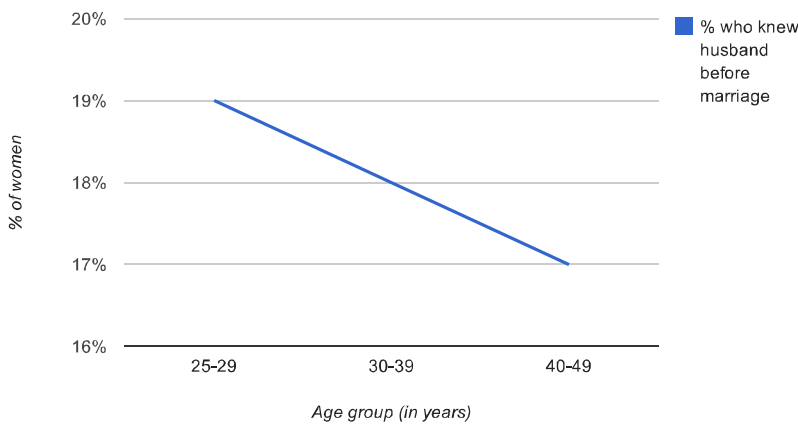
The Hindu

New numbers shed light on what the typical Indian marriage looks like

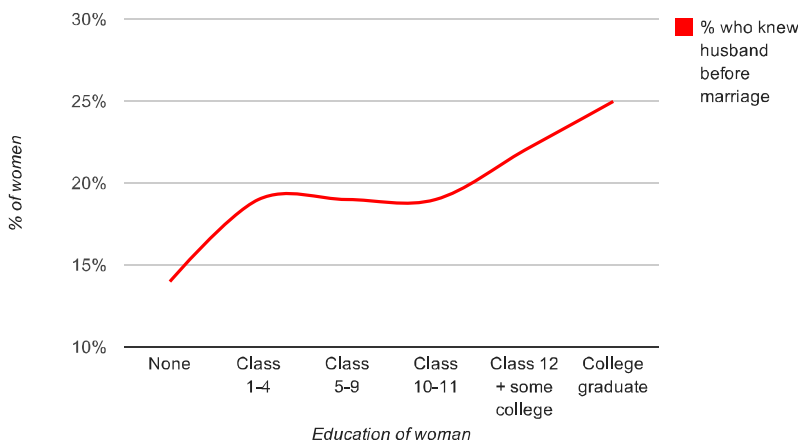
I wrote last week on inter-caste marriage and how just [five per cent](#) of women in the National Council for Applied Economic Research's (NCAER) pan-India survey said that theirs had been an inter-caste marriage. The numbers got me thinking about arranged marriage which is another facet of marriage in India that we have very little data on.

The same round of the NCAER (2011-12), which I have advance access to, asked women if they knew their husbands before marriage. Around 18 per cent said that they did. The proportion is slightly higher for younger women and for those with more education. It's highest in Himachal Pradesh (56%), the northeastern States (50%) and Kerala (40%).

By age



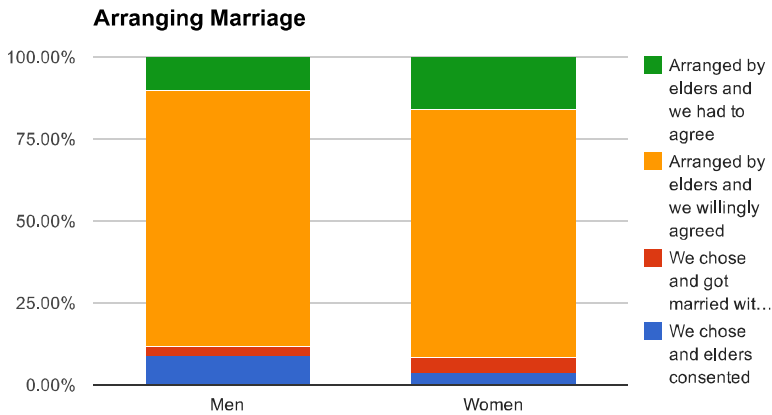
By Education



NCAER also asked women how many of them had a say in their marriage, something [I wrote about](#) earlier this year, and 60 per cent said that they did. We looked at those numbers in a [detailed infographic here](#).

But neither knowing your husband before marriage nor having a say in your marriage necessarily makes it a “love marriage”. So I turn to a new survey that asked the question directly.

The International Centre for Women (ICRW) and United Nations Population Fund (UNPFA) surveyed 9,205 men and 3,158 women for a study on masculinity and intimate partner violence which [I wrote about last week](#). The survey covers eight States only – Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Gujarat and Maharashtra – but says that its sample is census-representative in those States. This survey directly asked men and women if theirs was an arranged marriage. Here’s what they answered.



Between arranged marriages that the man and/ or woman consented to and arranged marriages against their will, nearly 90 per cent of marriages in these States were arranged.

It’s interesting also to note the difference in the responses of men and women. The questions were not addressed to pairs of husbands and wives, and it looks like men are slightly more likely to perceive “agreement”, either of the couple or of elders, in the finalising of a marriage than women are.

So an arranged marriage, fixed by family elders, and consented to by the couple, would appear to be the most typical Indian marriage.

Keywords: [arranged marriage in India](#), [National Council for Applied Economic Research](#), [The International Centre for Women](#)

A blog that explores happenings in the realm of data and provides insights into the world we live in. Ultimately, people matter, not the numbers.



[DATADELVE](#)

Printable version | Nov 20, 2014 11:59:21 AM | <http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/blogs/blog-datadelve/article6614330.ece>

© The Hindu