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## **Social Consequence of Inter-caste Marriage: A Case Study of Itahari, Sunsari**

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### **Abstract**

Marriage is typically understood to be a sexual and financial relationship that is socially accepted, considered to be more or less permanent, and that implies rights and obligations for the married couple and any children they may have. The Eastern Development Region's urban area serves as the basis for this study. For this study, a total of 30 couples were purposefully chosen as respondents. Eight couples were asked to participate in a thorough study using the case study technique in order to obtain qualitative information about inter-caste marriage and its effects on the personal, professional, and social lives of couples. My research has demonstrated that non-Dalit families are more likely to accept a son-in-law than a daughter-in-law. Because of the family's weak familial network, exposure to the outside world, and the presence of power and status in a very important family, which could overshadow the violation of societal standards? Non-Dalit women who were not able to visit their birth homes on special events like Teej, Bhaîtika, and Dasahin felt a loss of kinship relationship because hypogamous marriages are not approved by the natal family.

*Keywords:* social stratification, caste system, marriage, inter-caste marriage

### **Introduction**

Social stratification is a system by which a society ranks categories of people in a hierarchy (Macionis, 2008). The result of social stratification, which is the unequal distribution of rights, benefits, opportunities, power, reputation, and influence among people and organizations, is social inequality. In every society, it is present. The disparity may exist as a result of wealth, status, or power. Societies vary in what constitutes inequality and how it arises (Tischler, 2011). From the lowest to the most complex human societies, social inequity exists in some capacity. The Hindu philosophy and religion, customs and traditions, marriage and family, morals and manners, eating and dressing norms, and jobs and hobbies are all strongly related to caste (Rao, 2021). In the past, the caste system of social stratification was a comprehensive one. A system of reciprocal exchange for goods and services existed. Over time, distinct caste groups' occupations and methods of subsistence changed, and the ancient jajmani system was rendered obsolete (Subedi, 2013).

A caste system, according to Macionis (2012), is a system of social stratification based on ascription or birth. A closed pure caste system prevents little to no social mobility based on individual work because birth alone defines a person's whole future. People spend their entire lives in the rigid categories that have been given to them, with no chance of improvement. The caste system is a strict kind of stratification that determines a person's rank, career, location, and social interactions based on assigned attributes like skin colour or familial identification (Tischler, 2011). Many people think that actual caste systems are only present in India, despite the fact that others have claimed they are also present in southwestern Ethiopia and other parts of Africa (Pankhurst, 1999). Within a general theory of social stratification, caste as a structural phenomenon is viewed as a category of type, similar to other hierarchical structures in many ways. In a similar vein, Berreman (1972) argued that defining caste in terms of its distinctively Indian characteristics eliminates or at least reduces its use as a phenomenon that can be compared across cultures. He preferred to use a broader definition of caste so that a comparable social stratification system found in other cultures might be included.

Endogamy, the hereditary transmission of a lifestyle that frequently includes an occupation, ritual rank in a hierarchy, customary social contact, and exclusion based on cultural notions of purity and contamination are characteristics of the social stratification known as caste. Endogamy is crucial to the caste system and to caste identity, as Dumont (1980) notes, because the caste system regulates rank through ceremonial pollution and cleanliness. According to Berreman (1972), a caste system is similar to a plural society in which distinct sectors are all ranked vertically.

According to Hutton (1946), the caste system serves several purposes for its constituents on an individual, communal, and governmental levels. Ghurye (1950) provides a thorough explanation of caste. He lists the following as the six main characteristics of the caste system: segmental division of society hierarchy of groups; restriction of feeding and social interactions; associated and religious privileges and disabilities of the various sections; lack of an unrestricted choice of occupation; and restriction on marriage.

The overall societal antagonism between Dalits and non-Dalits brought on by inter-caste marriage is explained by Kansakar & Ghimire (2008). They describe the scenario of inter-caste marriages between Dalits and non-Dalits and its effects on the couple's lives as well as their families' and the relationships in their communities. Additionally, if government policies and programs are in favor of couples, inter-caste marriage between Dalits and non-Dalits has the potential to lessen caste-based prejudice. According to Hofer (2004), hypergamy is acceptable and regarded as a lawful form of matrimony as long as caste boundaries between the pure and impure castes or between the touchable and untouchable castes are not crossed. In addition, Caplan (1973) discovered that inter-caste couplings between intermediate castes are rather common as long as they do not connect groups across the "pollution barrier." In the past,

religious institutions that are now mainstreamed into policy in a caste-based society forbade inter-caste marriages with Dalits.

The caste system in the past placed numerous limitations on the concept of marriage. Since every caste and subcaste is an endogamous community, all marriages between caste members must be inside that caste. The state had a rigorous policy against inter-caste unions, and everyone abided by it. Co-educational institutions frequently import modern education, which promotes inter-caste union and inter-caste mingling. Additionally, it operates as a strong push to eliminate untouchability (Luintel, 2014).

In Nepal, as in many other nations around the world, marriage is a crucial aspect of the family structure (Bennett 1983; Frick 1986; Watkins 1996). In the past, the family has had great control over marriage in Nepal (Barber 2004). The decision to marry and when to marry is made by a person's family (Folmar, 1992). Therefore, inter-caste and interreligious marriages in Nepal seem to be frowned upon by the majority of the population.

Intergroup connections are centred on intermarriage. Intermarriage rates rising are viewed as a sign of different groups assimilating into a culture (Pagnini & Morgan, 1990). Inter-caste marriage creates a small challenge for the remaining family members' marriage arrangements (Hiwale, 2022).

### **Research Problems**

Caste-based hierarchy in Nepal affects the people by constraining them to accept lower positions and conditions of work embedded with oppression and exploitation. On the other hand, caste-based discrimination, be it state or private level, provide a ground for various movements to emancipate the oppressed. Caste is not today what it was before 1950, and it has not become a complete class or replica of it. It is also true that a dominant caste has not necessarily a part of the dominant class ( Subedi, 2014).

The caste system is dynamic and variable. Caste organizations show hybridity rather than fixity and permanence. They are situational. While caste hierarchy among non-Dalits groups is fading, it nevertheless holds sway amongst Dalits and non-Dalits. Due to a variety of recent developments, the caste system (between Dalits and non-Dalits) is also disappearing. One of the social contexts where caste rigidity still effectively rules is inter-caste marriage, while caste hybridity is also progressively growing in this context. The lived reality of daily life runs counter to the Janaajati group's claim that they are caste-free (Luintel, 2014). Inequality and social stratification are still largely maintained in Nepal by the caste system. Hypogamy was subject to severe penalties under the 1854 law code. Marriage partner selection is greatly influenced by caste. But the tendency of inter-caste marriage in society is becoming more and more today. The prevalence of inter-caste marriage has been shown to be influenced by a number of factors, including urban living, education, employment in modern occupations, and

middle-class economic background. Inter-caste marriages are viewed as social outcasts and are typically frowned upon and frowned upon harshly. This study was particularly focused on attempting to address the following research question:

- a. What are the situations of inter-caste couples among diverse social groups?
- b. What are the relationship between the inter-caste couple and their family?

### **Research Objectives**

- a. To know the condition of inter-caste couples among diverse social groups.
- b. To understand the relationship between the inter-caste couple and their family.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study mainly focuses on the current situation of inter-caste marriage and its impact on couples' live, familial relation, and their perception based on the data of sunsari district. The exploratory aspect of the project aims to gather as much data as possible from inter-caste married couples and identify some trends in how such marriages turn out. Not all caste and ethnic groupings are covered in this study. Additionally, it is unable to investigate government-initiated financial incentive policies.

### **Literature Review**

The overall societal antagonism between Dalits and non-Dalits brought on by inter-caste marriage is explained by Kansakar & Ghimire (2008). They contend that people who advocate change and those who embrace the status quo are at odds. They describe the scenario of inter-caste marriages between Dalits and non-Dalits and its effects on the couple's lives as well as their families' and the relationships in their communities. According to Hofer (2004), hypergamy is acceptable and regarded as a lawful form of matrimony as long as caste boundaries between the pure and impure castes or between the touchable and untouchable castes are not crossed. In addition, Caplan (1973) discovered that inter-caste couplings between intermediate castes are rather common as long as they do not connect groups across the "pollution barrier." In the past, religious institutions that are now mainstreamed into policy in a caste-based society forbade inter-caste marriages with Dalits.

The caste system in the past placed numerous limitations on the concept of marriage. Since every caste and sub-caste is an endogamous community, all marriages between caste members must be inside that caste. The state had a rigorous policy against inter-caste unions, and everyone abided by it. Co-educational institutions frequently import modern education, which promotes inter-caste union and inter-caste mingling. Additionally, it operates as a strong push to eliminate untouchability (Luintel, 2014).

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control over marriage in Nepal (Barber 2004). The decision to marry and when to marry is made by a person's family (Folmar, 1992). Therefore, intercaste and interreligious marriages in Nepal seem to be frowned upon by the majority of the population

Intergroup connections are centered on intermarriage. Intermarriage rates rising are viewed as a sign of different groups assimilating into a culture (Pagnini and Morgan, 1990). Inter-caste marriage creates a small challenge for the remaining family members' marriage arrangements (Hiwale, 2022). The debates over the relative importance of society and the individual have been reignited by the inter-caste marriage issue. According to Dumont (1980), given "hierarchy," an unique form of social order develops that stifles "individualism," and the "individual" is subsequently absorbed by the social units that surround him or her. However, although appearing to be a personal choice, inter-caste marriage between Dalits and non-Dalits in the Hindu caste system results in social, cultural, and economic rejection of inter-caste married couples by families and society.

In India, 149 inter-caste marriages were investigated by Kannan in 1963. He discovered that inter-caste marriage has just recently been continuously rising and that it has become a significant factor since 1956. The age of the woman at the time of her marriage, the degree of her education, and the freedom granted to her to select her spouse are a few of the crucial elements for inter-caste marriage. Vijay Laxmi (1992) demonstrated that there were large economic disparities between couples. When they got married, women in mixed marriages made more money.

Singh (2008) conducted a study on the attitude of the Sikh boys and girls studying in graduate and post-graduate classes. She had prepared an attitude scale. She distributed the scale to 200 students. She found that both PG and UG students preferred inter-caste marriage. Singh carried out research on the behavior of Sikh boys and girls enrolled in graduate and post-graduate programs. She had created a scale for attitude. She gave the scales to 200 pupils. She discovered that inter-caste marriage was preferred by both PG and UG students.

Inter-caste marriages are viewed as social outcasts and are frequently subject to punishment as a result of defying accepted social mores. Some couples would not be allowed to participate in typical family and societal activities, while other couples could not have access to social networks and relationships. However, some couples could be completely uprooted from their native location (Bishankha, 2013). Marriage partner selection is greatly influenced by caste. But the tendency of inter-caste marriage in society is becoming more and more today.

### **Methods and Materials**

The Eastern Development Region's urban area serves as the basis for this study. In the Koshi Zone of south-eastern Nepal, Itahari is the main city in Sunsari District and a Sub-Metropolitan area. It is situated at the primary intersection for transportation in eastern Nepal.

As the intersection of the north-south Koshi Highway and the east-west Mahendra Highway, it is a town with growing significance. It is a plain area in the country's east that has a tropical climate and is primarily populated by Brahmins/Cheetri, Dalits, and Madheshi. Ithari is a contemporary city with a well-developed modern school system where people from many castes and ethnic groups have settled. The hypergamous and hypergamous individuals/couples are the units of analysis in this study. To select respondents for conducting the in-depth interview, a purposeful sampling approach was adopted. For the purpose of this study, a total of 30 couples were chosen as respondents. The study mainly employed qualitative methods with in-depth interviews of inter-caste married couples due to the small sample size and the impossibility of random sampling. Secondary and primary data are both considered in this study. Data from 30 couples were gathered using an interview. Nine couples were asked to participate in a detailed study using the case study technique in order to obtain qualitative data on inter-caste marriage and its effects on the personal, professional, and social lives of the couples.

### **Results and Discussion**

Regarding this socioeconomic group, it was discovered that 4 Bahun/Chhetri males were married to Pahadi Dalits, 3 Pahadi Janjati men were married to Pahadi Dalits, and only 1 Pahadi Janjati man was married to Terai Dalits. Similarly to this, 3 Pahadi ethnic men married Chhetri/Bahun women, and 4 Bahun/Chhetri men married Pahadi women. Similar to this, it was discovered that 7, 2, 1, and 1 Pahadi Dalit males, respectively, had wed Bahun/Chhetri, Pahadi Janajati, and Muslims, whereas only one Terai Dalit man had wed a Pahadi ethnic. It was discovered that 2 Muslim men had wed Bahun/Chhetri and 2 Muslim men had wed Pahadi ethnic ladies.

#### **Case 1**

I am Bandana Sharma (anonymous). I did inter caste love marriage to Nabin B.K. (anonymous) in 2065/5/11. I was badly treated by my family, relatives and neneighbours Even in the house of my husband, some problems arise. I was born in an educated family. While I was doing my PCL, I used to meet one youth from another college in tempo. We exchanged our introduction. During that time, I used the tempo to go and return back from campus. During the tuition class prior to the examination, I came to meet the same youth there too. Our introduction and regular meeting made us close friend. One day he had proposed me and I accepted his love. Only after the five days of the germination of our love, I knew he was from Dalits. In the beginning, I was so terrified and also realized that I had made a mistake. But later, I supposed that my mother was one of the woman activists and father politician so they would accept our love relationship. Nabin was introduced to my family too. Frequently came into my house. My parents also knew about our love relationship so they forbade me to go out of the house. Not

only that but also, they banned the use of phones. One day I met Sanjiv and shared everything with him. We decided to get married. Being his wife, I went in his house. After the fourth day of marriage, my family reported to the nearby police office. We were called there and my father mother sisters and relatives were from the side of my father's house. They tried to convince me saying that they would formally marry after a few days. Due to my husband's deep love, I could not leave him. I returned back to his home. Before the birth of my daughter, there used to be communication with my mother and sisters but after the birth of my daughter, it was totally stopped by all.

In this study, I discovered that inter-caste marriages involving Dalits are extremely uncommon at the cross-regional level, namely marriages between pahadi Dalits (hill Dalits) and Madhesi non-Dalit caste Muslims. However, it was shown that inter-caste marriages between Dalits and non-Dalit girls from the pahadi caste (9), particularly those from the Bahun/Chhetri caste, came in second to pahadi janajati. In the same vein, pahadi Dalit men were discovered to have married Bahun/Chhetri and pahadi janajati in large numbers (7). As a result, a large percentage of pahadi Dalit men and women marry members of other pahadi castes and ethnicities. In a similar vein, pahadi Bhaun/Chhetri men were discovered to have wed pahadi janajati in large numbers (4), while Muslim males were discovered to have wed Hindu women.

#### ***Residence of Couple Before Marriage***

An observation was also taken in this regard to determine the extent to which the residence location matters in intercaste marriages. According to observations, 70% of couples came from the same city, while 30% of couples were residents of separate places. The vast majority of couples live in the same neighbourhood. The main determinant of intercaste marriages is also where people live. Typically, it is thought that boys and girls are more likely to become friends if they both live in the same place or if they are neighbours. Their close engagement and regular contact are intended to deepen their intimacy. As they get to know one another's customs, personalities, and natures, their friendship largely develops into love and affection. They ultimately decide to get married. In hypergamous situations, some Dalit ladies are compelled to reside either in their own maternal home or in a rented room and have yet to visit their husband's home and relatives (father-in-law, mother-in-law, etc.).

#### **Case 2**

I am Sangita Subedi (anonymous). I got an elopement marriage to a Dalit (Suman Pariyar) in 2055 and fell in love. I was born into an educated family. We fell in love when I studied in grade 10. Within a year of our love affair, we attained our SLC. When the result was published, he passed the SLC but I failed. On the same day as the result, we decided to get married and so did. Our marriage was not accepted by our family and relatives. We went to the Hilly region and started to live there. Our family tried their best to separate our marriage. They

sent our close relatives (uncle and brother-in-law) and they reported to the Ilaka Police Office Dharan. We returned back to our house after a year from Hill and continued our family life. Even after the marriage, I continued my study. I completed my bachelor’s degree and started to work in Micro Finance. Gradually, contact and meeting with the mother and sister increases but the relationship with the father was still worse. One day I met my father on the way and from that day our communication resumed. After some time, I and my daughter were allowed to my birthplace but later my husband was also welcomed there. Now our relationship is sound.

**Registration of Marriage**

Couples cannot be legally regarded as husband and wife unless their marriage is recorded. It was discovered that couples who received both moral and material support from their parents and who were also well-educated, financially secure, and possessed some authority and reputation in society, registered their marriages. The results show that 25 out of 30 people (83.33%) registered their marriage, whereas 5 people (16.66%) did not

**Case 3**

My name is Rima Rai ((anonymous). I’m 30 years old. I dot inter caste marriage to my neighbour Prabin B. K (anonymous). After one year’s love affair. I used to engage in my household activities after completing my +2. Nearer to my house there was one shop of goldsmith. In the process of visiting to shop, I fell in love with the owner of the shop Prem. it was after one year of our love affair, a discussion of marriage took place in his. We returned back to our home after 4 months of living there. Though my birthplace and house were nearer, our communication was stopped for a year of my marriage. When my daughter was five months, my grandmother accepted our marriage and called us. With the support of my grandmother, my parents also finally accepted our marriage then our visit also started.

**Major Occupation of Couple**

An occupation is an employment that is performed for a regular salary. It has been used inexplicably to denote either real performance or a prior structure that directs human performance. Social status is usually determined by a person's occupation. People who work in the same field often have similar levels of social benefits and disadvantages, as well as similar life prospects.

**Table 1**

*Types of Occupation of Inter-caste Couples*

| Types of occupation         | Men |         | Women |         |
|-----------------------------|-----|---------|-------|---------|
|                             | No. | Percent | No.   | Percent |
| Small business              | 10  | 33.33   | 3     | 10.00   |
| Working in the Golf Country | 4   | 43.33   | -     | -       |

| Types of occupation | Men |         | Women |         |
|---------------------|-----|---------|-------|---------|
|                     | No. | Percent | No.   | Percent |
| Private sector      | 5   | 16.66   | 5     | 16.66   |
| Government job      | 3   | 10.00   | -     | -       |
| Teaching            | 1   | 3.33    | 4     | 13.33   |
| Agriculture         | 4   | 13.33   | 3     | 10.00   |
| Housewife           | -   | -       | 13    | 43.33   |
| Wage labor          | 1   | 3.33    | 2     | 6.66    |
| NGO                 | 2   |         |       |         |
| Total               | 30  | 100.00  | 30    | 100.00  |

*Note.* Data are based on field study, 2023.

It shows that, out of the 30 respondents, the majority of husbands (33.3%) worked in the private sector, followed by the migrant labor force in the Gulf nation (16.1%), and agricultural (13.3%). Similarly, participation in daily wage labor, education, and police non-governmental organizations was 10%, 6.6 percent, and 3.3 percent, respectively. 43.3 percent of spouses worked at home, 16.6 percent worked in the business sector, and 13.3 percent were teachers. The wife's participation in business, agriculture, and non-profit organizations was also 10%, 10%, and 6.6 percent, respectively.

#### **Age Factor and Inter-Caste Marriage**

It has found that women were between the ages of 16 and 28 and men ranged in age from 17 to 32. In this study, the maximum age of marriage for a husband and wife was found to be 32 and 28 years old, respectively. The minimum age for marriage was determined to be 17 for the husband and 16 for the wife. The average married age of a husband and wife was 22 and 19 years, respectively, according to the age factor in marriage. According to this survey, the average age of an inter-caste couple was 20 years for the husband and 18 years for the lady.

#### **Case 4**

My name is Shyam Rasaili (Anonymous). I got intercaste to Sita Karki (Anonymous) in 2045. We weren't accepted from her house after our marriage. We were introduced since our child age as our house was closer to each other. I am one member of Nepal Police. We fall in love during the time of arrival in home in my holidays. Our relation spread among our neighbors and relatives of Gita prepared to marry her to another boy. I came back and eloped Sita to Kathmandu. None of her family supported us rather they tried to separate us time and again. At the beginning, we tried to convince our family, relatives and neighbors but none of them gave positive response. Finally,, we were inspired to do some positive task and show all of them. After the four years of our marriage, normal communication and visit started to her family. It was mainly with her only. Even after my marriage I stayed away to my family on the

process of job so I didn't face such problems. After my retired life, i started to live in society. Now, I'm one of the social activists.

### ***Inter-caste Marriage, Family and Social Relation***

Of course, social and familial ties bind all people together, and inter-caste marriages between castes at different levels of the hierarchy have an effect. The acceptance of inter-caste marriage by various social and religious groups is discussed in this section. Additionally, it emphasizes how inter-caste unions lessen untouchability.

#### **Case 5**

My name is Hari Lamsal (anonymous). I got married to Sita Bishwokarma (anonymous) after a one-year-long love affair. Once, I knew that one of the landless Dalit families migrated to the nearby land of my home for farming. I introduced myself to the girl who was in that family. After that during the time of returning back to my home, we kept our physical relationship and also developed our love relationship. Our love relationship was known by our family and neighbours too. We ran from there and tied in the marital relationship in a temple in Dharan. We started to live in Itahari. After our marriage, my family burnt the house of that Dalit family. We faced problems living in Itahari too and decided to live separately for a while. I left my wife in her family but later my family made her leave the house not only that but also they made me stand in the police on the case of girl trafficking police released us after inquiry as we were husband and wife, my family, relatives and society warned as not to be there any longer. We didn't go to the house of my wife even till six years of our marriage. In the beginning, it was difficult to get a rented house to live in due to my Dalit wife. During the birth of my daughter, no priest came to the naming ceremony (baptism). We faced great problems during her delivery. I tried my best to improve my relationship but failed. They tried to end my relationship with my family giving me a share of parental property. Now I do have not any relation to my family and relatives.

#### ***Family and Inter-caste Marriage***

In the Nepali context, social support includes simple communication with family, friends, neighbours, and other relatives; advice on domestic matters; feeling respected in the family; sharing and caring for one another; and providing moral and material support in times of need. Cultural support includes invitations to celebrations and participation in religious activities.

Only 5 out of 19 couples—including hyper- and hypergamous ones—responded positively to the question of whether non-Dalits accepted their marriage, while 8 (42.1%) claimed they were not. However, 31.57 percent were just partially accepted. Most couples that received family approval belonged to Pahadi Janjati. Just a very small number of situations

(Brahmin/Chhetri) where the height caste family allowed marriage with the Dalit family were discovered. Some couples, on the other hand, were only partially rejected by non-Dalit households. In certain situations, the bride or groom was permitted to visit and stay at home, but they were not permitted to enter the kitchen or family society room.

**Table 2**

*Accepted of Inter-caste Marriage by Non-Dalits Family*

| Response           | Frequency | Percent |
|--------------------|-----------|---------|
| Accepted           | 5         | 26.31   |
| Not accepted       | 8         | 42.1    |
| Partially accepted | 6         | 31.57   |
| Total              | 19        | 100.0   |

*Note.* Data are based on a field study in 2023.

Inter-caste marriages (between members of a high caste and Janajatis) and inter-religious unions (between Muslims and Hindus) both involved 100% of the couples reporting that their parents approved of their union. There would not be a significant issue preventing Muslims from accepting inter-caste marriage if married ladies accepted Islam as their faith. Inter-marriage between Brahmin/Chhetris and Janajatis is found very positive. Shyam Ghimire from Itahari - 4 and Reema Shrestha from Morang district are very close friends during their +2 study in Sajeela higher secondary school, Sundapur - 9, Morang. Later on Shyam proposed to Reema but she did not accept it due to inter-caste issues.

**Case 6**

I was born into a simple family. One day, while going to work in the agricultural field of my neighbour. I met Rana Bahadur B.K. He was one of the Dalits nearer to my house. But I was from a Brahmin family. After a week of our meeting, he proposed to me. His proposal was accepted. We got marriage in 2060 and moved to Sindhuli from Ramechhap without informing anyone. We were contactless with our family after our marriage. After two years of our marriage, my uncle came and tried to separate our couple. We directly rejected his effort. Still, I remember the events of Sindhuli where our landlord kicked out us of his house since he knew about our inter-caste marriage. We went to Itahari. There is the house of his sister. We started to live in the Sukumbasi (Haves not) area. We have made one small house there. My husband has a small business. I work in-house. After my marriage, we haven't gone to my birthplace. It is 13 years without any communication to my parents. But there is normal phone communication to my sisters since few years.

***Acceptance of Marriage as per Social Groups, Religion and Region***

As discovered, the majority of non-Dalits opposed inter-caste unions with Dalits. Inter-caste marriage is seen differently by different social and religious groups, as well as by

different regions, depending on the period and circumstance. The majority of couples were found to be accepted by Pahadi Janajati, while high-caste (Brahmin/Chhetri) people were found to be more orthodox and were far less likely to consent to accept the inter-caste marriage. Similarly, lower-class acceptability of marriage with a Dalit was higher than lower middle-class acceptance. Similarly, compared to urban areas, Pahad and country areas had a higher rate of marriage refusal.

#### **Case 7**

My name is Ranju Bharati. I was born in 2042. I was born in a Hindu family. After the completion of my higher secondary level education. I started to work as an office assistant in a computer-related office. The head of the office was one from the Muslim community. His name was Quyamudin Miya. Slowly love relation was developed between us. After three years of love, we got a love marriage in 2063. My family didn't accept our marriage for two years. Since I was grown up in a Hindu family and my husband's family was Muslim, we faced religious problems in the beginning. It is the pattern to follow the Muslim religion who ever got married to a Muslim so I also followed Muslim.

#### ***Ways to make good Family Relations: Couples Perspective***

The experiences and perceptions of inter-caste couples with regard to marriage are mixed. Some couples, in spite of several issues and the rarity of couples, are happily wed to the person of their dreams. Families who lived in the same village were unable to communicate with one another no matter where or how they came into contact. Non-Dalit families avoided interacting with Dalit families due to humiliation and issues with social standing, while Dalits themselves were too afraid to speak. Interestingly though, it was discovered that some parents talked in private. The majority of couples in this situation noted the importance of social campaigns to educate non-Dalit individuals about the caste system and the pervasiveness of feelings of superiority and inferiority based on caste hierarchies.

#### **Case 8**

My name is Mina Khatiwada (anonymous). When I was 16 years old, I got a chance to go to the city and take a photo. In the process of taking photos, I introduced myself to the owner of the photo studio. One day he proposed to me for marriage as we had already been in love. I decided to get married to him as he had good economic conditions. We got marriage in 2040 B.S. Only after 15 days of our marriage, I knew that he was Dalit. In the beginning, I thought I had made a mistake but slowly I wished there wouldn't be any wrong in our marriage due to his sound income. I was a boy cut from my family after my inter-caste marriage. The process of visiting my father's house also stopped my marital relationship. After four years of our marriage, normal communication with my mother and sister started. After our marriage, in the family of my husband also problems were raised. It was the second marriage of my husband

so. I didn't have support from both the family. I tried suicide in 2051 due to mental and psychological problems. But slowly I consoled myself and moved ahead.

### **Dual Standard of Non-Dalit Parents**

When their son or daughter married a Dalit, non-Dalit parents experienced social disgrace. They attempted to end their relationship with their daughter or son in order to maintain their reputation and gain respect from society. In particular, hypogeous family members would stage a ceremonial performance to declare their daughter dead for them after making every attempt to end their marriage and separate them. They stopped communicating with the couple and forbade their other family members from conversing with them. They did this in an effort to demonstrate their purity by adhering to the caste system that their ancestors had adhered to. Nonetheless, some parents were ready.

### **Conclusion**

This study investigates the state of intercaste marriage in Eastern Nepal at the moment. It is predicated on data gathered from 30 intercaste couples in the Sunsari district. It has been shown that inter-caste marriage is becoming more prevalent across many social groupings. Inter-caste marriage occurs frequently between Muslims and Hindus, as well as between Pahadi Dalits and Pahadi Bahun/Cheetri, Pahadi Janajati and Pahadi Bahaun/Chetri, as well as Pahadi Bahan/Chhetri and Terai Janajati and Dalit. However, the so-called upper Caste and Janjati marriage is typically supported by the family and community. Yet family and society do not approve of marriages between Dalits and Non-Dalits. Caste hierarchy is the primary cause of this type of disparity. It has been discovered that non-Dalit families accept sons-in-law more than daughters-in-law. Because of the family's weak kinship network, exposure to the outside world, and the presence of power and position in a highly influential family, this could overshadow the violation of social norms. Non-dalit women who were not able to visit their birth homes on special events like Teej, Bhaitika, and Dasahin felt a loss of kinship relationship because hypogamous marriages are not approved by the natal family. Even the loving care of their family during those times was unable to ease their loneliness. They experienced cultural rejection and lost their biological family's social support.

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