



J.L. Malhotra

# BRIDEGROOMS AND BRIDES

Advertisements in the printed, display or electronic media everywhere are required to follow certain rules and regulations. Had these regulations been permissive, a matrimonial agency must have given an advertisement outside a supermarket in bold letters 'BRIDEGROOMS AND BRIDES' and seen the unending three queues of

1. Parents (of aspirant boys and girls)  
2. Young Boys (aspirants to become bridegrooms)

3. Young girls (aspirants to become brides) who would in most case like to avail the earliest opportunity of marrying their eligible sons and daughters and still more young boys and girls would be keen to marry in the light of their emerging sexual urge even forgetting all norms of the selection process currently inhibiting their decisions. Unfortunately for them all the practice is not going to ease.

Child marriages in India are still common. "Community Marriages" to solemnize marriage of a large number of couples at one session on a particular day are also held in certain areas to facilitate matters socially and economically. Voluntary agencies, religious organisations or the KHAP panchayats do try to impose restrictions that are fair to them. Instances have been quoted when in certain areas the pregnant women had negotiated the marriage of the "to be born child" subject to the serious caste restrictions applicable till the enforcement of the Hindu Marriage Act 1955. The said Act has broadly provided for

1. Minimum age at marriage for both boys and girls (21 & 18 yrs)
2. Laxity in caste restrictions of the aspirants
3. Bar on second marriage in case of living

wife

4. Restriction on marriage in certain categories of relations
5. Nullification of marriage in non-permissible categories or situations
6. Divorce by mutual consent or otherwise
7. Registration of marriage

The provisions are a landmark by itself but the conditions are not binding on would be couples unless the affected party has taken the case to the court of law. The resultant effect being that the child marriages continue to be performed in large number and that the Registration of Marriages is confined to a limited percentage of people only in selected urban areas. With the expansion of education among the next generation, opening of employment avenues for girls, the rising cost of living, higher ambitions in life and media exposure, a growing number of aspirants do not want only a marriage partner but something beyond like:

1. Young age
2. Beautiful features and fair complexion
3. Good height and balanced weight
4. Adequate qualifications and job prospects
5. Adjustable nature
6. Family status, expensive marriage+ dowry

In the urban areas the parents continue to explore chances for best alliances for their children through the formal and informal contacts, media advertisements, websites and the matrimonial agencies. For the low success rate, the obvious reasons are the lack of

1. Good knowledge of Communication
2. Serious efforts



3. Adequate Experience.
4. Ample time
5. Sufficient Finance
6. Negotiated Settlement Process.

The boy and the girl were allowed to discuss any relevant point that they wanted in the adjoining room. They went there and immediately came with a response "we have fixed a meeting outside for tomorrow and will let you know thereafter." Tomorrow the news

came that they have mutually agreed to approve the proposal and that the arrangements for the marriage can now be discussed and finalised. Accordingly the date for the marriage was fixed and the marriage solemnized with great pomp and show. I asked the then "Bridegroom and Bride" a month before as to how they felt now about the choice of their partner made 24 years before? They said "we are 100 % satisfied."