

# Role of Kins in Mate Selection: A Study on Marwari Community

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## Abstract

The Marwaris are the community of merchants and traders who have a tradition of arranging marriage system which is influenced by their kinship network. The study examines the role of kins in the selection of marriage partners and in maintaining the rules of marriage. The study uses the mixed methods approach and has been designed as a descriptive study. The findings of the study show that relatives play a very important role in the whole process of marriage by finding the marriage partner of their children while maintaining the norms of the community. The result also shows that the role of the kins in marriage is essential for providing social welfare and support to the married couple.

**Keywords:** Marwari community, Kinship networks, Rule of marriage, suggestion of marriage proposals, and Ranchi region.

## INTRODUCTION

The kinship networks among the Marwari community in Ranchi play an important role in mate selection by following the rules of marriage. It maintains the system of marriage by selecting the partner according to their preference of marrying in the same subcaste group and by avoiding the practice of sustain taboos in the mate selection. According to Abercrombie definition of Kinship, Kinship is the social relationship collectively deriving from blood ties and marriage ties. [Abercrombie and others, 2006]. According to Lee marriage is the public joining together where a man and women became husband and wife under social regulation [Lee, 1961].

Kinship and marriage systems are less explored areas, especially in the Marwari community. According to Banerji and Deshpande, the husband of a daughter is selected by her parents, family members and extended families where her concern was really taken into consideration in marriage decision [Banerji and Deshpande, 2020]. Even when a woman chooses her partner independently, she often must seek the approval of her parents and family members to maintain good relations with her natal family. [Jeejobhoy et.al, 2013]. At the state level, Jharkhand has the lowest rate of inter caste marriages at 10.3%, despite the strong norms of caste endogamy in the region. [Paul, 2025. Hypergamous marriages have been prevalent among Brahmin and upper caste families. [Paul, 2025. Monogamy is the rule of the community [Sarda, 2016]. The Marwari community originally belongs to Rajasthan region, and they migrated to the Ranchi district of Jharkhand region. Both the states come in the central zone that means they both have some features of Northern and Southern zones along with their unique features that belong to their community and state.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

There were very few studies on the Marwari community, especially in the field of kinship system, an important area of study in contemporary times. Rathi (2014)

Was the first one to study about the Marwari community and about its kinship system. According to Rathi (2014), the Marwaris have the culture of arranged marriage systems and allowed love marriages if it has in the same community but encouraged it. According to him there is not a custom of dowry asking but it was given by the bride's family in the form of different kinds of gifts. [Rathi, 2014]. Sarda (2016) in her study in chickpet district told that there were many educated Marwaris men and women who were inspired by their kins to marry at the age when they achieve their choice of carrier. She also said that among Marwaris, marriages of the children are generally arranged by their parents and family elders, and the community follows the rule of monogamy [Sarda, 2016]. According to the study of Sarda (2016), there is no evidence present of dowry asking by the family members of the groom but variety of gifts are given to the bride by her family members in her marriage which shows that kinship network continues to survive. Karmakar (2022) in her study on Siliguri said that the Marwaris believe that highly educated daughters will not get suitable grooms as there is a dearth of highly educated boys in their community. Marwaris preference for community endogamy which helps in maintain cordial relations among the kinsmen as they are very conscious of their status and money. [Karmakar,2022]. Chauhan 1967, in his study, talked about the significant characteristics of Marwari marriage that they practice jati(caste) endogamy, and strict clan exogamy. Clan is the basis of ranking groups within a caste which give rise to the practice of clan hypergamy [Chauhan1967:35]. Saha (2024) said that ‘as per the capacity of the Marwaris, they expense very high in their marriage ceremonies, which is the means for showing their prosperity, and it also increases the tendency of the dowry system. [Saha,2024].

A few studies have been conducted on topics related to kinship in the Marwari community which indirectly reflect the patriarchal norms of the community. In these studies, the kinship system of Marwari community is study with the socio-cultural aspects which includes the socialization of boys and girls; patriarchal norms within the family; education of children; employment and some characteristics of marriage. [Rathi, 2014; Sarda, 2016; Karmakar, 2022 and Saha, 2024]. No direct study has yet conducted on the roles of kins in mate selection, especially in Ranchi district and type of marriage practice by the community in mate selection of its members.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Kinship is a sensitive area, so it is less touching, especially in the Marwari community in the Ranchi region. The authors who have touched this area have represented the kinship among Marwaris as with family structure; business as their occupation; gender socialization and cultural festival that is practiced by them. In these, they represent the changes that come among the community because of modernization, i.e. the family structure gets evolved from extended family to joint family and there is also emergence of a few nuclear families. They also represent the role and impact of patriarchal norms in the marriage choice of a daughter in the community. Furthermore, their migration affects the role of extended kins in mate selection. Gradual changes in the family structure and impact of modernization, especially in the field of education, are the factors which are majorly responsible for the migration of the community from their native state, i.e. Rajasthan to Ranchi. Marriage forms the bed rock of Marwari culture. [Rathi, 2014].

The paper tries to understand the Marwari community of Ranchi by understanding the role plays by the community kins in the process of mate selection by following the rules of marriage and form of marriage of the community in detail. Under this framework, the community is a culturally preservative community. ‘With respect to the Marwaris, marriage is just not a union between two people but is a union of two families.’ [Sarda,2016]. Marriages are generally “arranged in nature but love marriages are also accepted” only when it is in the same community and the process of both starts with matching of “kundali” which is an astrological birth chart of the bride and groom by a Pandit. [Rathi, 2014]. Marwaris preference for community endogamy which helps in maintain cordial relations among the kinsmen. [Karmakar ,2022]. Marwari practice jati(caste) endogamy, and strict clan exogamy. [Chauhan,1967].

Kinship is the universal institutional which plays an important role in the process of individual socialization, and which also maintained of group solidarity especially through the process of marriage system. Strauss (1969) has given the rules of marriage followed by the kins the community. According to Strauss, “neither fraternity” (a group of people who share the same work or interests) nor paternity (the fact of being father of a child) “can be put forward as claims to a wife, but that the sole validity of these claims lies in the fact that all men are in equal competition for all women, their respective relationships bring defined in terms of the group, and not the family”. ‘This rule has advantage for individuals, since, by obliging them to renounce a limited or very restricted share in the women immediately available’ and it is also true that it is checked by the demands of customs. “By recognizing the privilege, the group has exchanged the elements of individual security which accompany the rules of monogamy for a collective security arising out of political organization”.

Strauss (1969) also told that, “marriage rules do not always merely prohibit a kinship circle, but occasionally also fix one within which marriage must necessarily take place, under pain of the same scandal as would result if the prohibition itself were violated. There are two cases to be distinguished here: on the one hand endogamy, or the obligation to marry within an objectively defined group; an on the other hand exogamy. True endogamy simply represents the exclusion of marriage outside the culture, which itself is conceived of in all sorts of ways” [Levis Strauss, 1969].

Karve (1994) has examined the kinship organization of the whole India by dividing it into 4 zones i.e. 1) Central zone which includes the state of Rajasthan, Gujarat,

Maharashtra, MP & UP. As it is in the centre, it gets influenced by the customs and the kinship rules of both the zones. Like Maharashtra, here, both the cross-cousin marriage and levirate in the southern and northern Maharashtra zone respectively. Gujarat and Rajasthan follow the four generational rules of marriage, i.e. the marriage can be performed between the couple who have the gap of 4 generations from both father and mother side. 2) Northern zone which includes the state of Punjab, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir and Bihar. In these regions they follow the rule of 7:5 i.e. seven generation from father side and five generation from mother side and the daughter has to play different role in their native house as the daughters of the house and in their in laws house i.e. as the bride of the house. 3) Southern zone which includes the states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, part of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh. It is totally differed from the northern zone as it not only allowed cross-cousin marriage but also preferred it. The bride lives more freely in their in laws house. 4) The Eastern zone which includes the eastern zones.

## METHODOLOGY

This study applies the mixed method design to examine the role play by the kins in the process of mate

selection among the Marwari community of Ranchi to fill the gap present in the current knowledge. This includes the independent collection and analysis of two parts of data from the theoretical pattern: 1) Qualitative data derived from interviews. 2) Quantitative data derived from scheduled questionnaires with semistructured and open-ended questions. The findings are analyzed manually to calculate the percentage and mode from the data collection through questionnaire and the interview get analyzed through narrative and descriptive analysis to generate greater understanding. The author has, therefore, used the mixed method approach to know: a) The closeness of kins involved in suggesting marriage proposals; b) The rules and form of marriage follow by the kins in the marriage.

This is a descriptive study which lead into a planned wider study in Ranchi district, Jharkhand, India. The objective of the study is to examine the role plays by the kins among the Marwari community in the process of mate selection by following the rules of marriage. This study was conducted from 17 March 2026 to 9 April 2026 on a sample of 41 married Marwari couple living in Ranchi. Purposive sampling was used to select the respondents on the basis of their marital status. In terms of gender distribution there were 15 males and 26 females married respondents. The sample included a teacher, housewives, businessmen, businesswomen, and an officer employed. The age range of married people's samples varied from 25 years to 75 years. The study used scheduled close-ended questionnaires and semi-structured and face-to-face interviews as tools for data collection to examine the role of kins in mate selection among the Marwari community in Ranchi. Data are collected only after the author had stated the objectives of the study to the respondents and received their consent to carry out the questionnaire and interviews. As the nature of the kinship is sensitive, the collection of data was carried out by respecting their privacy. The respondents were scheduled questionnaires and interviewed in their homes only.

## DATA ANALYSIS

As per the study used the mixed method approach, data was collected in two phases (Zeng and others, 2009). The responses that were made based on the results of the questionnaire part led to the making of questions for Collecting data for the interview phase. The final interpretation and analysis are based on the results of both parts of the study. The interview analysis is conducted to provide explanation for findings from the questionnaire analysis part. In this study, questionnaires get analysis this was to quantify the closeness of the kins in suggesting marriage proposals that were associated with the maintenance of rules and forms of marriage by the kins through descriptive analysis. “Both quantitative data and qualitative data are combined to create consolidated data sets and integrated into a coherent whole in the mixed methods approach” (Zeng and others, 2009).

## DISCUSSION

The role of kins among the Marwari community with respect to marriage system in Ranchi has been analyzed on the parameters of suggestion of marriage proposals and maintaining rules of marriage.

### Suggestion of Marriage Proposals

The data revealed that although love marriage is not encouraged but allowed by the family members and near kins in some cases. There was a total of 14.63 percent of the people were having love marriage only by taking permission of their near kins and family members, and the rest 85.37 percent of the people were having arranged marriage that were suggested by their kins. In arrange marriage, the marriage proposal given by close relative is 51.43 percent, the distant relative is 8.57 percent, the community

elders are 17.15 percent, the family friends are 20 percent and by the other intermediary is 2.85 percent. The role played by the kins in the suggestion of marriage proposal is very important with 54.29 percent, important with 20 percent and neutral with 25.71 percent in arranged marriage.

**Table 1: Suggestion Of Marriage Proposals by Kins**

| Marriage Proposals Given by the Kins | Their Role in Percentage | Kins Important in Marriage Proposals | Importance of Kins in Percentage |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Close Relative                       | 51.43%                   | Very Important                       | 54.29%                           |
| Distant Relative                     | 8.57%                    | Important                            | 20.00%                           |
| Community Elders                     | 17.15%                   | Neutral                              | 22.71%                           |
| Family Friends                       | 20.00%                   | Not So Important                     | 3.00%                            |
| Intermediator (Broker)               | 2.85%                    | No Role                              | 0.00%                            |

## Maintaining Rules of Marriage

According to the data, there were some marriage rules that are practiced and maintained by all subcaste of the Marwari community which are Marwari Baniya (90.24 percent), Marwari Brahman (4.88 percent) and Marwari Vaishyas (4.88 percent). Despite of the taboos of practice marriage in same gotra and between close kins, there were also a major taboo that was practiced by all the members of the community and it is a taboo that the marriage cannot be practiced between two houses where daughter of one house will become a daughter in law of another house i.e. exchange of daughters (aatasata in their language) is strictly prohibited in the community. Only the Marwari Brahman practice village exogamy and gotra exogamy in which they practice marriage by leaving 3 gotras that are the gotra of their father i.e. their own gotra, the gotra of their mother, and the gotra of their maternal grandmother.

The respondents have stated some important point in this study that the proposal come from the kins who are the common relative of both the parents which means that the kins were known the person somehow directly which is an important reason for maintaining the marriage by both the couple and the family as a sacred bond. This ensures that the marriage alliances would take place within the same community and between the kins who are related to each other as a far relative. This results that the daughter not going to a stranger family but comparatively somehow knowing the family. They also stated that the role of kin in finding and suggesting the proposal for marriage within the same subcaste has its own importance that it maintains their culture, and it is easy to adjust for the person in the family. The taboo of marriage practice between the two families who get directly related by one marriage (aatasata) so that it maintains their newly created relationship and by this they also avoid the dispute that maybe occur by bride giving at the same family. It is practiced by the kins so that the person who get married can make his / her own new identity with respect to their marriage irrespective of their past. They also told that joint family is not only the part of their culture but also deeply related to marriage, as it provides social security and the overall betterment to both the newlywed couple and the existing family and this is the reason that the kins giving the preference of getting married of their children in the joint family.

## CONCLUSION

The author has contextualized this study within the framework of the kinship system among the Marwari community that has contributed to the marriage rules and its patterns for the children of their community. The study suggests that among the Marwari community, the kins play an important role in the mate selection of their children by following sustain rules of marriage which are not only important for maintaining their unique culture but also very importantly to ensure the betterment and welfare of the couple and the family as it provides a strong social bonding and support to them which is require for having a good and peaceful life of the people.

## LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Due to limited time and money, only certain areas of Ranchi district of Jharkhand were selected for the study. The method of Purposive sampling was used to collect data from those couples who were willing and available as to be the part of the research as respondents. Since the data is only collected from Ranchi district and the total number of the respondents couples was small so it would be difficult to generalize about the community as it may vary with respect to other parts of the country.

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