Arranged Marriage card game: “the shaadi game”

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**Goal of the game:**

Play goal: To find a match for your son/daughter while using the “guidelines to a successful marriage match” (from ethnographic research).

Pedagogical goal: To help students understand the basic process of arranging a successful match by becoming “parents” seeking a match for their son/daughter.

**How many students:**

Would work best with 40 or under, but will work with any sized group given enough space.

**Time needed for explanation and play**:

35-45 minutes

**Materials needed:**

Set of Introductions cards (all cards may be laminated to reduce waste)

Set of Negotiations cards

Set of Twist cards

Ranking sheets with maps on back (may also be laminated)

Name tags/post-its for numbers

(For laminated ranking sheets, you will need to provide 10 dry-erase markers. For non-laminated ranking sheets, students should carry a pen or pencil.)

**How it works:**

1. Introductions: Students get into pairs and are handed an Introductions card per couple. This first card specifies important basic characteristics of their family.
2. Each pair is given tags with numbers such that each member of a pair has the same number (from 1-10). This will be used for ranking purposes.
3. Half of the pairs are parents of boys, and half are parents of girls. The boys’ parents stand along the wall and the girls’ parents will move at intervals of 30 seconds, as in “Speed Dating.” This is the “Marriage Meet.” (Note: This “Marriage Meet” is specified as “Caste No Bar,” therefore Caste is not included in the Introduction card characteristics.)
4. Only the boys’ parents get ranking sheets, with a map of India on the back.
5. Using the characteristics on the Introductions card, boys’ parents will rank the girls’ parents up to the tenth pair. The closer the pairs’ characteristics are to one another, the higher the ranking should be. [Ranking is done by the boys’ parents to represent the (still) unequal status that the boys’ family has over the girls’ family.]
6. Once the game begins, the boys’ parents will choose a numbered ranking from 1-10 for each item on the girls’ parents’ card, corresponding to the number of the pair. That is, for pair #1, the boys’ parents will choose a numbered rank from 1-10 for Religion, Region, Language, etc. (The map of India should be used in calculating the rank for region; i.e. the closer the families are, the higher this rank should be.) Every 30 seconds, the girls’ parents move to the next set of boys’ parents, to be evaluated again.
7. Totals of each family’s rankings will determine pairs. Only ten pairs are ranked to minimize the time needed for the exercise in class.
8. Negotiations: Boys’ parents read off their highest ranking, and sit with the girls’ parents in groups of four. The second set of cards is handed out, the Negotiations cards. This set has demands (boys) and expectations (girls). Both pairs get a set of Negotiations cards.
9. Pairs get 5 minutes to negotiate the match with one another. Then, pairs are asked to evaluate the match: Will they go through with it? Or will they reject it? Each pair is allowed 1 minute to discuss their final decision. Those who do not find a match are “out.”
10. The Twist: For groups who decide to pursue the match, Twist cards are given out. Twist cards give a surprise to each group of four (i.e., the son gets a job in America and wants to take the bride; the girl has a boyfriend and wants a love match; you find out the family has misrepresented itself; you discover family mental illness, etc.)
11. Final discussions take place (1-2 minutes). If all four members of the group agree, then the match is made. If only one pair wants the match, but the other pair rejects it, they will not have made a match.
12. Post-activity discussion:
    1. Why did some matches succeed and some fail?
    2. What were the most important elements in making your decisions?
    3. What did you learn about the process of arranging a marriage?