

Annotated List of Links to Supplementary Online Material – YouTube

Matrimonial Ads

1. **Shaadiface.com** <http://youtu.be/mU8bXx8kYpQ> (:31 secs)

ShaadiFace is the video version of the popular online matrimonial service shaadi.com. This video describes the site and how to use it.

Description: “www.ShaadiFace.com is an authentic, matrimonial matchmaking website one step ahead than others; it enables you to find out your right life partner across the world. We provide you the quality service at the right time, by keeping in mind your choice. Since we understand the seriousness of your concern about finding your soul mate.” Published May 21, 2008.

2. **Shaadi.com TV ad** (:43 secs each)
 - a. Groom <http://youtu.be/shLf7-f0NfE>
 - b. Bride http://youtu.be/1QsBh_fLajQ

These television commercials use humor to convince Indian men and women that they should be in charge of their own destiny, i.e. use an online matchmaking site rather than allowing family members to choose for them. Published March 2, 2012.

3. **Bharat Matrimonial ad** <http://youtu.be/TLoM8zPyD6g> (:59 secs)

Humorous ad for another online matrimonial service, this one catering to the global community. *Bharat* is the Hindi word for India. Published September 22, 2010.

4. **Sahi Rishta Matrimonials** (actors)
<http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL998D45ACD1FA676B>

These “matrimonial ads” are actually produced by a company that produces comedic shows online from India (*mainduck*). While sometimes funny and a bit exaggerated, they are similar to actual matrimonial videos that are produced today. Be careful of showing comments to the class while viewing them, as comments can be ugly. There are at least a dozen video ads on this channel; here are some examples.

- a. “Sarika” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4SBQogbbQY> (:50 secs)
“Graduate girl from Jharkhand. Can talk and write fluent English. Want to study further. Not on facebook. Want boy who will love me lots...” Published July 20, 2012.

b. "Harsh"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0m7IEA2ySI&list=LLE7ru452xd4HXWu-IFwQRHw> (1:08)

"BRIDE WANTED for - 26/5'10", handsome, studied abroad, family business. Decent girls, 21/5'4", IQ 80, modern outlook. Send bio-data with front profile ONLY." Published May 5, 2012.

News Clips

1. **Human Interest news piece** on Arranged Marriage of Indians living in Australia
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VUvrCaesLDs> (5:09)

This report shares the experiences of several Indian couples in Australia who have had arranged marriage. It is generally a positive piece with success stories, but does mention one couple that went against their parents' wishes and were threatened with physical harm. Uploaded July 19, 2007.

For discussion with students:

- First, is the divorce rate so low (4% is the number given here) among Indians because arranged marriage always works or because of the social stigma against divorce?
- Secondly, global statistics are given with rates of arranged marriage, yet no definition of arranged marriage is provided to analyze that data. How "arranged" is arranged? If your brother introduces you to, is it considered arranged? Surely 95% of Indian marriages aren't made through matchmakers or parents.
- Finally, the host mentions the decrease in Japanese marriages as likely having to do with Western influence. The connection between Westernization and decrease in arranged marriage hasn't been conclusive. In fact, the rise of a mobile, salaried middle class appears to be more of a change agent than modernization itself, or Western influence.

2. **Human Interest news piece**, Arranged Marriage: Part I http://youtu.be/henmRGf_67k (9:58)

This news report focuses on two stories: a successful arranged marriage among Indian Sikhs and an Indian-American woman who chose her own (non-Indian) spouse, from *Art Fennell Reports* news program in Philadelphia. Uploaded on April 10, 2007.

For discussion:

- The description of the upload states: "An extensive look at Arranged Marriages in India and an Indian-American woman who went against her heritage to marry an American." How are these cultural/ethnic labels being used?
- The host has a much harder time asking questions about culture than the young married Indian-American women has explaining culture. Why does she

say that the warnings about inter-cultural marriage from her Indian extended family didn't apply?

Short Videos

1. **Arranged Marriage: Short Film** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MyJjFsnmN7k> (12 minutes, 7 seconds)

This is a lovely, slow-paced video that shows the first meeting of an upper-middle to upper class pair who are considering each other for marriage. It shows the very practical kinds of questions that they might ask on the first or second meeting while assessing whether their lives might work as a married couple. A notable aspect about the video is that the "boy" tells her that as soon as he saw her, he knew she's the one. This echoes the findings of social science researchers (including myself) who note the emphasis on romantic feelings of love and attraction during the arrangement process.

For discussion:

- Is this an arranged marriage if he has "fallen in love" with her?
- Also, the low divorce rate is mentioned at the end of the film. What are the possible reasons that the divorce rate is so low in India?

2. **Single In India: First Comes Marriage, Then Comes Love** http://youtu.be/V30jOg0_aoo (4:14)

This short set of interviews in a larger series on "being single" focuses on the Indian idea that marriage comes first, then love develops. I like this video for the responses of the Indian people who are confident about their marriage practices. Description: "Liz Tuccillo, writer of Sex and the City and co-author of He's Just Not That Into You, goes around the world to see what single life is like in other countries."

For discussion:

- One interviewee mentions that Indians learn to be happy with what they have, even when they don't have many resources. He implies this may be at the heart of why arranged marriages work. Explain this connection.

Annotated List of Recommended Readings/Films for Students

Non-Fiction

Madan, T. (1974). *The Hindu Family and Development*. In P. Uberoi (Ed.), *Family, Kinship and Marriage in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

This article, written in the 1970s, argues that industrialization and modernization have not broken down the traditional Indian “joint family” as predicted. The level of writing may be high for some community college students.

Seymour, S. C. (1999). *Women, Family, and Child Care in India: A World in Transition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

This full-length ethnography focuses on the changing roles of women in the state of Orissa, India, focusing on the system of arranged marriage and the socialization of girls and women into it. It uses personal stories that illuminate women’s lives, many taken directly from the author’s field notes over thirty years of field trips to the town of Bhubaneswar.

Uberoi, P. (2006). *Freedom and Destiny: Gender, Family and Popular Culture in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

This book draws on popular culture in India – calendar art, Bollywood films, romance fiction – to help understand modern issues of gender and family. For community college anthropology students, I recommend assigning a section of the first chapter, called “Beautyfull Wife, Denger Life” from pages 20-33 (“Re-Thinking the Family”) plus endnotes.

Fiction

Divakaruni, C. B. (1995). *Arranged Marriage*. New York: Anchor Books.

This is a lovely and haunting set of short stories that capture some of the challenges of arranged marriage. You might choose one or several to spark discussion and supplement other readings.

Divakaruni, C. B. (2000). *Sister of My Heart*. New York: Anchor Books.

Although I have read many good novels on the topic of marriage in India, my second choice for this recommendations list must be another by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. This story centers around two girls born on the same day who develop a very special life-long relationship. Their marriages lead them into very different circumstances, however, providing a rich understanding of expectations for wife and motherhood in India.

Nanda, S. a. (2009). *The Gift of a Bride: A Tale of Anthropology, Matrimony and Murder*. Lanham: Altamira Press.

Anthropologist Serena Nanda works her anthropological knowledge of arranged marriage in India into a fun, fictional mystery novel for students. It is plot-driven with twists and turns, but at the same time, filled with educational material. The level of writing may be a bit high for some community college students.

Documentary/Ethnographic Films

Agarwal, S. S. (Director). (2005). *Ordinary Lives* [Motion Picture]. Documentary Educational Resources. 38 mins.

This short film explores the life of one joint family living in a 12x18' home in a Mumbai slum. Arranged marriage is one of the focal issues of the film. The film neither sentimentalizes nor exaggerates slum life but presents this family's issues from an objective, ethnographic perspective. Available from DER at <http://www.der.org/films/ordinary-lives.html>.

Gill, M. C. (Director). (1981). *Dadi's Family* [Motion Picture]. Documentary Educational Resources. 58 mins.

Dadi is the mother-in-law of a joint family experiencing change. Two of her sons have brought their wives to live and work in the family compound, while one has chosen life in the city over the joint family. During the course of the film, we meet his fiancée as she comes to meet the family for the first time and their wedding takes place. This is a rich and moving ethnographic film that explores arranged marriage and life in a joint family. Available from DER at <http://www.der.org/films/dadis-family.html>.

Leslie, D. (Director). (2004). *A Darker Side of Fair* [Motion Picture]. Documentary Educational Resources. 59 mins.

This documentary film focuses on India's "fairness fetish," in which lighter skin is considered more attractive. In the first half of the film, we see that this becomes especially important in arranged marriage, with mostly all candidates seeking a match with fair skin. The film goes on to explore the fashion and media industries' preoccupation with fair-skinned models. While the film raises important questions, the narrator's voice is not an objective one. There are sections in which the narrator's bias makes this anthropologist cringe. However, portions of the film can be used quite successfully in class. Available from DER at <http://www.der.org/films/a-darker-side-of-fair.html>.

McDonald, H. and C. de Neuville (Directors). (1997) *Saheri's Choice: Arranged Marriages in India [Motion Picture]. Films for the Humanities and Sciences. Distributed by Films Media Group. 27 minutes.*

Unfortunately, due to cost, I have not been able to preview this film. It looks like an ideal candidate for an arranged marriage lesson plan, however, especially for a discussion of non-urban areas (takes place in rural area of New Delhi). From the Films Media website: "This program examines the custom of arranged marriages in India. It follows the story of Saheri and her family as they confront the reality of an impending marriage that was arranged when she was barely six years old. An overview of the custom presents it as common among all castes, although many Indians today view the practice in a negative light. Education, family wealth, and astrological compatibility are examined as important in determining with whom the marriages are arranged. In one case, the issue of dowry leads to the suicide of a young female marriage prospect. Severe penalties for breaking engagements are discussed along with divorce negotiations should the marriage fail. This is a candid glimpse into contemporary Indian society."

http://ffh.films.com/id/10250/Saheris_Choice_Arranged_Marriages_in_India.htm

Popular Films

Monsoon Wedding (2001) Comedy-Drama-Romance

Directed by Mira Nair, 114 minutes.

IMDB entry: www.imdb.com/title/tt0265343/

"A stressed father, a bride-to-be with a secret, a smitten event planner, and relatives from around the world create much ado about the preparations for an arranged marriage in India." (IMDB) This is a good film to show in class for all of the complex family expectations it illustrates. There are many sympathetic characters; the viewer gets a sense of the perspectives of a number of different people regarding marriage. Set in India.

Bend It Like Beckham (2002) Comedy-Drama-Romance

Directed by Gurinder Chadha, 112 minutes.

IMDB: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0286499/?ref=sr_1

The athletically-talented daughter of orthodox Sikh immigrant parents rebels against her parents' traditionalism by joining a soccer ("football") team. Although the main story centers around a girl's passion for soccer, the context revolves around traditional vs. modern gender roles, marriage prospects, and her sister's impending wedding. Set in Britain.

Hum Aapke Hain Koun (1994) Bollywood Romantic Comedy-Drama-Musical

Tr. "What Am I To You"

Directed by Sooraj R. Barjatya, 206 minutes.

IMDB: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0110076/?ref=sr_1

"The film tells the story of two Indian families and the relationships between them, celebrating Indian culture using modern production values." (Wikipedia) This is one of the highest grossing films of all time in India. It is much loved for being a wholesome love story about arranged marriage, with very likeable characters. Note: This is a typical Bollywood film, and as such, lasts over three hours. You might select scenes from the film to view if you do not have time available in class, or purchase a copy for your library and assign it as homework. In Hindi, with subtitles. Set in India.

Selected Bibliography for Teachers

These are additional sources that can help contextualize a discussion of arranged marriage in India.

Bose, B. ed. (2002) *Translating Desire: The Politics of Gender and Culture in India*. New Delhi: Katha.

Courtright, P.B. and L. Harlan (1995) *From the Margins of Hindu Marriage: Essays on Gender, Religion, and Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hankeln, M. D. (2008). *India's Marriages Re-Arranged*. Saarbrucken: VDM Verlag Dr. Muller.

Kolenda, P. (1985) *Caste in Contemporary India: Beyond Organic Solidarity*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

Nanda, S. (2000). "Arranging a Marriage in India." In P. R. Devita (Ed.), *Stumbling Toward Truth: Anthropologists at Work* (pp. 196-204). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

Nanda, S. (1998) *Neither Man nor Woman: The Hijras of India*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Puri, J. (1999). *Woman, Body, Desire in Post-Colonial India: Narratives of Gender and Sexuality*. New York: Routledge.

Ramdya, K. (2012). *Bollywood Weddings: Dating, Engagement, and Marriage in Hindu America*. Lanham: Lexington Books.

Sharma, U. (1984) "Dowry in North India: its consequences for women. In R. Hirschon, ed. *Woman and property: woman as property*. (pp. 62-74) London: Croom Helm.

Stone, L. and C. James (2005) "Dowry, Bride-Burning, and Female Power in India." In C.B. Brettell and C.F. Sargent (Ed.), *Gender in Cross-Cultural Perspective* (pp. 310-320). Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson/Prentice Hall.

Uberoi, P. (Ed.). (1993). *Family, Kinship and Marriage in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.