

Classroom Activities: Re-Arranging Marriage in Mumbai

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Goal: This set of supplementary activities provides a fresh look at the expectations for finding a marriage match in the largest city in India, Mumbai. It is intended to update students' understanding of how arranged and self-initiated marriage practices are developing and evolving in this cosmopolitan area. I have also provided a list of resources for both students and teachers.

These activities are meant to supplement a larger discussion of marriage practices, including terminology, socio-political considerations, economic exchange, and dowry issues. I concentrate here on the types of marriage matches that my field informants shared with me, that is to say, middle to upper-middle class marriages that are a hybrid mix between arranged and self-initiated matches. The dichotomy between "arranged" and "love" matches is a complicated and often false one, since romantic feelings and companionate language is used to refer to their marriage partners.

In general, this module focuses on how arranged marriages can work, rather than on potentially difficult, dangerous, or even tragic issues. There is much material out there to supplement that important perspective as well.

All material used here draws upon interviews conducted in the field in January-February 2013 as well as academic and popular materials.

Included are the following:

1. **Link to power point mini-lecture** on marriage today in Mumbai, India. Free access at SlideShare at <http://www.slideshare.net/lrgonzalez/mini-lesson-plan-on-arranged-marriage>.
2. **Link to power point presentation** given at the annual meeting of the Society for Anthropology in Community Colleges, April 2013 in Austin, Texas. Free access at SlideShare at <http://www.slideshare.net/lrgonzalez/rearranging-marriage-in-india>.
3. **Matrimonial ads** from the Times of India (Feb 2013) with glossary and discussion questions;
4. **Arranged Marriage simulation card game** activity for in-class use that I developed based on "Marriage Meet-Up" events, called "the *shaadi* game;"
5. **Annotated list of online links** to supplements, such as You Tube videos, that may be used in the classroom or for homework assignments;
6. **Annotated list of both ethnographic and popular readings and films** for use with students;
7. **Selected additional bibliography for teachers.**

Suggested Reading: As part of a larger lesson plan, I suggest students read the classic essay by Serena Nanda, "Arranging a Marriage in India" (2000). The author recounts her experience helping a friend go through the process of finding a match for her son. This is a wonderful, personalized look at how marriages are arranged in India. Introductory anthropology students,

who have never-in-a-million-years considered the possibility of arranged marriage, often finish this essay with an entirely new perspective.

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

Nanda published a comprehensive and detailed lesson plan that includes this article through the AAA's General Anthropology Division in 1998 called "Marriage and Kinship in (North) India." The module also contains Indian matrimonial ads from the 1990s, discussion questions to engage students with the themes of the article, a study guide for the excellent ethnographic film Dadi's Family (1981; <http://www.der.org/films/dadis-family.html>), and a short reading assignment and discussion on kinship systems in North India.

If you would like to access the entire module, it will be posted with the Serena Nanda's kind permission on the Society for Anthropology in Community Colleges (SACC) website at www.saccweb.net. Faculty and student access of the module for classroom use is permitted. However, to include hard copies in a "Course Pack" for an entire classroom of students, please email serenananda@verizon.net. In agreement with the publisher there is a small fee (\$1) per copy.

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Matrimonial Ads, The Times of India, Feb 3, 2013: Bride Wanted

WANTED BRIDES



FOR **20's**

AGARWAL

SM for Singhal Btech mba boy 27/160. high salary. email: bmaggarwal12@gmail.com

B'FUL Fair wkg NM girl for Smart Fair Garg gotra MBA 29/5'10" wkg in NCR 27Lpa Caste No Bar M: 9650437722 E: suds83gupta@gmail.com

SM from Dli/NCR Gangal Gotra only son 14.08.85, 10:55 am Delhi, 168cm B.Tech wkg GGN 4.5 Lpa M: 9212170100 Email: rkg8655@yahoo.com

GUPTA NM fair 5'8"/29 B.Tech (IIT) wkg in NCR MNC Pkg>25 lpa Seeks homely bful girl Cast no bar # 09414774460 Em: kgupta1115@gmail.com

WANTED Tall M4 H'some Gupta boy 6', IIT-K, 27/17.09.85 /22.18hrs/ Delhi Pkg. 27L, Mumbai based. #09818999198 Eml: bride4prat@gmail.com

SM 4 Goel NM 27/173 BE (IT) MS (C) from USA wkg in US will be in Mumbai in Jan 2013 Em: nsg585@gmail.com (M) 9167540232

IIT + PhD (USA), 50+ LPA/ 29/ 5'11"/ fair boy. Need V. b'ful cultured girl. evipblr@gmail.com /9742058265 Caste no bar Boy in BLR

AGARWAL-BISA

PQM 4m cultured fmly 4 Mglk Garg Boy 6'(5-4-1985,5:11PM Jaipur. BE-IT, MBA-Fin, wkg in Offshore Oil Services Cmpy, Mumbai in Fin Sal:11.5L. Ph: 0184-2200800, 08901324646. E: gargboy85@gmail.com

PQM from Cltrd family for NM H'some fair Bisa-Agarwal boy, 27/5'11" MS (Oxford,UK) BE (DCE), Settled as CTO/partner At Delhi Bsd Start-up Drawing 8 figure, Send BHP at drdevrgupta@gmail.com

SEEKING b'ful match for fair handsome boy 29/175 B.Tech MBA(Top 10 college), Wrkg MNC Mumbai 12 Lac CTC, Reputed and rich family. Email: vivah722@gmail.com

BRIDE wanted for Agarwal/Mittal, Jaipur based, BE/MS (USA), 28/5'10", working in USA, Contact- 9099717807, 7665116874

PQM4 Agarwal H'sm boy 29/5'5" B.tech, MBA Wkg MNC Mumbai 14+LPA father Sr.cl-1 officer 9719573753, 9997031151 Email: sunit101@yahoo.com

AGRAWAL

ENGR /Doc/CA girl for boy 27/5'10" B.E (CS), M.S. (USA) wrkg. MNC USA 09820305914 omdg@yahoo.com 022-28650750 drgupt12@gmail.com

BENGALI

MANGLIK, Bengoli, Brahmin, Fair, Tall. Professional Prahasi Girl For Handsome Boy B.Tech./27/180/ASM at Apple Call 9879087639.

ALLIANCE invited from Beng. Br. girl for fair

BRAHMIN

MUM based h'some SP boy 31/5'6" Ast Mgr in reptd org 8 LPA seeks alliance from PQ slim B'ful Brah girl. BHP to E: alok.ctripathi@gmail.com Contact: 022-28210246.

BHUMIHAR - Brahmin Boy, 31/5'8"/BE+MBA, Smart Fair, Asst. Manager, HCL B'l-ore seeks Prfssnly Qlfd B'ful girl. naveenrai4u@gmail.com 09425511165/09686511700

BRAHMIN Mumbai Fmly Jan 81/5" 8.5" Engaged With Reputed MNC Handsome Salary Seeks Qlfd & Cultured girl Preferred Community BIHAR / UP 9821430946 & abhi9400@yahoo.com

28 yrs/5'7 highly educated Brahmin boy from well settled family in Australia seeks fair beautiful 5'3 to 5'5 non-manglik well educated cultured vegetarian girl. Email: ds.syd1@gmail.com

WANTED Good Looking Tall Fair Girl, age between 24 to 28 Well Educated from Cultured Family for UK Based Boy July 81/182Cm, Tall Handsome, Pursuing MBA from Business School in UK, Well Settled, holding Managerial Post in Top IT Company. British Citizen Interested may Contact sarojraina@gmail.com or 09848486615

KASHMIRI Brahmin Parents for only son, H'Some 17.04.82, 1215hrs, Place of Birth Kashmir/5'9", BS, MBA from USA, having own flourishing Engg business, properties in Hill Stn & Mumbai seek Qlfd match from Slim, Tall, B'ful girl. Son separated in few days from earlier marriage as the girl was found already married. No Liabilities/Issue. (E) Mother: rajni.vaishnavi55@gmail.com

Matrimonial Ads 2013: Groom Wanted

Industrialist family 1983/5'3"
slim, very b'ful, B.Com, CS,
PGDFM, NMIMS (Mum), pur-
suing Executive MBA, IIM
(Lucknow) PQM from high
status family Mb: 09829240803
Em: bhpagarwal@gmail.com

Highly reputed
well known
Agarwal (Bansal)
Family of Mathura
seeks Suitable
match for their
entrepreneur, slim
fair complexioned
daughter having
a alluring
Personality
with a unique
blend of traditional
and modern
traits-24 years
/ 5'5". Looking
from smart tall boy
with a pleasing
personality, sound
education and
high background
in Business,
Job or Profession
Please reply with
biodata and
birth time.

Contact :
bansal.rajesh62@gmail.com

BRAHMIN

SM4 KKB/29.5/5'2"/Fair/
B'ful/Anta/B'dwaj BE/
PGCBM(XLRI) worked Analyst
in US&India, Now BCC/HRD
Consultnt, 8LPA, Father IITian
CEO, brother settled in US,
seek Tetotaler Brahmin pre-
frbly BE & MS / MBA.
#9425301879 E: iidmbpl@gmail.com

NCR family, caste no bar. Re-
spond: wedjoy2013@yahoo.com

ALLIANCE invited from
smart, handsome, BE &
MBA or equiv. Brahmin
boy of status family for
Mumbai based 1983 5' 3"
fair and beautiful, slim BE
& MBA (Fin) working girl
from status family. Email:
rbpandey55@gmail.com
Cell:09920216572

HIGHLY educated, Delhi
based Sharma brahmin family
seeks alliance for a beauti-
ful, smart 5'4"/26 yrs, convent
educated MBA girl, working in
reputed MNC in Hyd., 5 Lakh
p.a. Looking for professionally
qualified, handsome Brahmin
boy, Mumbai, Hyderabad,
Delhi based (preferable). Horo-
scope match needed. Contact:
wrrajeev@gmail.com ;
9910487486 Write Box.No DEL
X231696C Times of India, New
Delhi-110103

An established business
family, owning textile
industries, Tyagi Brahmin
from North India, Settled in
Mumbai, looking for a
suitable match for their
Daughter 25 yrs / MBA /
handling Finance & Mktg in
family owned company.
Invite proposals from
Professionals (Preferably
B.Tech. / MBA from leading
institutes) from educated
families / Business Families.
Please send your profile
with photo at

mukeshtyagi62@
gmail.com
(CASTE NO BAR).

BENGALI

DAUGHTER of Sr. Govt of

Email: ap8267267@gmail.com

RAJPUT girl 24/5'3", B.Tech
(Nirma Uni.) & MBA(IIM S)
Gold Medal, IBanker at
Nomura, Mum, seeks groom
with IAS, MBA, MS, upper class
family. n24groom@gmail.com ,
9825429173

SEEK profesnl, decent, honest,
Mumbai bsd match, capable of
taking gd care of our daughter,
26/5'1" Homoeopathic Dr , pur-
suing MD, . father clean shaven
Sikh, mother Maharashtrian
Brahmin. drsodhi@yahoo.com

SM4 b'ful fair NM 5'7" /87
Born Doctor (Physiotherapist
MPT Ortho) Mumbai based
own practise father Sindhi
Mother Maharashtrian seek
Hindu highly educated boy
Doc/Eng/CA 6 ft Email :
pmpe3r@yahoo.co.in

SEEKING upper middle
class Hindu, Profession-
ally Qualified Boy for
well educated, beautiful,
Brahmin girl 28/5'5" Pre-
sently working with an
MNC at Senior Position.
Our Daughter entered in a
marriage which was ann-
ulled by Court with in
three months according to
Hindu Marriage Act.
Please send biodata /
photograph to Email:
match2313@gmail.com

Mum bsd, rptd ,Hindu
Vankar(SC), invites
proposals fr their
daughter, 83/5'2", BE &
MBA, wkg MNC. Seeks
caste no bar.
hrv1983@gmail.com /
9769517779

DOCTORS

SEEKS Medico/IIT+IIM from
Delhi/Mumbai based family
working in USA 4 B'ful Jan 83
born Gupta medico girl USMLE

Times of India Sunday Matrimonial Ads

Glossary

Unfamiliar terms listed in alphabetical order for Bride/Groom ad excerpts.

BRIDE WANTED

12 lac CTC	Salary reference. Cost to company (gross cost that the company pays you). 12 lac = \$22,222 per year
Agarwal	Regional community in Northern India; also common last name
Agarwal Bisa	Upper caste in Bania society (North Indian Community)
Bengali	Reference to natal place, state of Bengal
BLR	Bangalore origin
Brahmin	Highest of four basic castes in Hindu tradition
Btech	College degree: Bachelor of Technology
Cast(e) no bar	Caste is not an issue in the matchmaking process
Dli/NCR	Reference to Delhi (National Capitol Region)
Father Sr. cl-1 officer	Class 1 officer (Government job classification)
Garg gotra	Ethnicity
GGN	Gurgaon (outskirts of Delhi)
Goel	Common last name, Hindu and Jain community
Gupta	Means military governor (originates from Gupta Dynasty, mainly Bengalis and Gujaratis)
IIT	IIT = Indian Institute of Technology. Like India's MIT or Stanford.
M4	Management Grade 4
Manglik	An astrological "condition" which is believed to be unfavorable to marriages; negative effects may be neutralized with certain practices.
MNC	Multi National Corporation. Refers to someone who works for an international or global firm in India. ("I work for an Indian company." "I work for an MNC.")
No liabilities/Issue	No children or debts from previous marriage
Pkg>25 lpa	Making 25 Lacs per annum (year), 1 Lac = Rs. 100,000 (Rupees) At Rs. 54/\$ = \$1,851 (current conversion rate) So, 25 Lacs = \$46,000 per year
Singhal	North Indian surname

GROOM WANTED

Bansal	North Indian Surname
Biodata and birth time	Birthtime is relevant for the astrological matching. Biodata is basic info (height, etc.)
Bsd match	Eg. Mumbai/Delhi based
CA	Chartered Accountant (a business degree)
Convent-educated	Attended Catholic school
Mathura	North Indian city in Uttar Pradesh
PGCBM (XLRI)	Post Graduate Certificate in Business Management
Rajput	Caste reference, descendants of the warrior community
Sharma Brahmin	Subcaste and Caste reference
SM4	Senior Management Grade 4
Teetotaler	Someone who abstains from alcohol
Vankar	Hindu caste found in the states of Gujarat and Rajasthan in India. "Vankar " means weavers and traders of clothes.

Discussion Questions

1. How are these matrimonial ads different from the personal ads we are familiar with in the U.S., either in the paper or online?
2. What are some differences you can find between the Brides Wanted and Grooms Wanted ads?
3. What kind of references to physical attributes are included?
4. How do these ads reflect the goals and expectations for marriage practices in Mumbai, India?
5. If you compare the 1991 ads from the Nanda module with the 2013 ads, what similarities and differences do you notice?

(Note: These questions are based on Serena Nanda's original "Marriage and Kinship in (North) India" teaching module, available with the author's permission on www.saccweb.net.)

Arranged Marriage card game: "the shaadi game"

Goal of the game:

Practical goal: To find a match for your son/daughter while using the "guidelines to a successful marriage match" (below; 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.

Materials needed:

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

Set of Negotiations cards

Set of Twist cards

Maps of India

Ranking sheets – should be printed with map on back (may also be laminated)

Name tags

(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. Students get into pairs and are handed an Introductions card. This first card specifies important basic characteristics of their family.
2. They are also given tags with numbers such that each pair has the same number. This will be used for ranking purposes. Only the boys' parents get ranking sheets, with a map of India on the back.
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 move at intervals of 30 seconds (?), as in speed dating. This is the "Marriage Meet." This Marriage Meet is specified as "Caste No Bar," therefore Caste is not included in the Introduction card characteristics.
4. Using the characteristics, 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.
5. Ranks are chosen from 1-10 for each item on each girls' card that corresponds to the number of the pair. That is, a numbered rank will be chosen from 1-10 for Religion, Region, Language, etc.
6. Totals of each family's rankings will determine pairs. Only ten pairs are ranked to minimize the time needed for the exercise in class.
7. 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.
8. 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.”

9. For groups who decide to pursue the match, Twist cards are given out. Twist cards give a surprise to each group of four.
10. 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.
11. Post-activity discussion:
 - a. Why did some matches succeed and some fail?
 - b. What were the most important elements in making your decisions?
 - c. What did you learn about the process of arranging a marriage?

Guidelines to a Successful Marriage Match (i.e. “rules of the game”)

INTRODUCTIONS CARDS

1. Ideally, both families should be from the same community (i.e. religion, natal region, language). (Note: Sometimes a girl may specify that she does not want to marry a boy from her community, but this is less common.) The map of India, printed on the back of the Ranking Sheet, should be used in calculating the rank for region; i.e. the closer the families are, the higher this rank should be. However, any state outside of a families’ natal state will decrease the ranking considerably.
2. Since this game assumes caste is “no bar” at the marriage meet, the father’s profession may be used as an indicator of class. Ideally, due to the goal of hypergamy, girls’ families wish to marry “up,” that is, marry into equal or higher circumstances.
3. There are no “right or wrong” matches, only a sincere wish on the part of all involved to create a long-lasting and successful match, the fundamental idea being that more similarities between families makes it more likely the match will succeed in the long-term.

NEGOTIATIONS CARDS

4. All aspects of the Negotiations cards are those practical considerations that should be worked out before a successful match is made. Each family has expectations for their child’s marriage, and the goal with these aspects is to negotiate what is most important to your family and your children’s future success.

TWIST CARDS

5. It is up to the “parent” pairs to decide whether they can live with this new development, or whether they will begin the process again to look for a new match for their child. Again, there are no right or wrong answers, but each pair should be able to defend their decision.

the shaadi game
RANKING SHEETS

[illegible]

the shaadi game
RANKING SHEETS

[illegible]