

Your daughter are getting older

– a study about marriage traditions in Tamil Nadu

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Abstract

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The purpose of this qualitative study has been to generate understanding about young Indian women's lives in general and school experiences in particular, with focus on how it has been affected by current marriage traditions. The marriage traditions have been analyzed from a gender perspective, connected to both conceptions of sexuality and impacts of economical factors. The study has been conducted during a ten weeks Minor Field Study in the region of Tamil Nadu, India, where interviews with seven young woman who had dropped out of school were performed. Analysed with Yvonne Hirdman's theory about the gender system, and previous research on the topic, two aspects of the marriage traditions were crystallized from the empirical data; the sexuality aspect and the economical aspect. The result shows that the marriage traditions have had important effects on the respondents' lives and school experiences. They have not been allowed to interfere with boys, neither in school nor at home, since there is a fear of getting a bad reputation or that will a love affair evolve otherwise. These restrictions have been stronger after menarche. The importance of being able to pay a dowry has also been an important factor within the respondents' lives.

Key words: dowry, marriage traditions, gender-system, menarche

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1. Introduction

This study is the result of a ten weeks field study in Tamil Nadu, a region in south India, where the project Empowerment of textile-workers is runned by a non-governmental organization. After we got in contact with a Swedish organization that cooperates with the organization in India, we got curios about it and decided to go there. The aim when we left Sweden was to conduct interviews for a study about women who have dropped out of school and the reason for them to take part of an empowerment project.

Initially we stucked to that aim but during the analyzing of the interviews a pattern we had not thought of before occurred; how the lives of the participants in the project have been affected by marriage traditions. It appeared to have had a great impact on the respondents' lives and thereby the focus of the study was adjusted. This is what we have found out during our examination of the traditions.

1.1 Problem formulation

My name is Paryaptabeti and that means enough daughters, because if a family has many daughters they need name like this. We had enough daughters, we needed boys. Paryap means enough and tabeti means girl.

The quote from Paryaptabeti, who is from a family with five daughters, illustrates how the situation of families in rural India can be. When she was born as the third girl in the family, her family expressed a need for a boy. After that two more girls were born. The last sister was born when Paryaptabeti was eight years old. Since her mother did not have the financial possibility to stay home with the new born baby Paryaptabeti had to quit school. At the same time the family had to take loan to afford the marriage and dowry payment for the oldest sister. Shortly thereafter the father of the family passed away and the loan repayment had to be solved without him. This meant that Paryaptabeti never got back to school and at the age of thirteen she started working in the garment industry.

This was the first of seven life histories that have been explored within this study and also the first history that illuminated how young Indian women's lives are affected by the marriage traditions in their village; especially when it comes to the groom-specific dowry that is exercised within the

traditions. The groom-specific dowry is the payment of an amount of money from the brides family to the grooms family in connection to an arranged marriage (Lahiri and Self 2007). Paryaptabetis family thought they had enough of daughters, since every additional daughter meant an additional dowry to pay.

Anna Lindberg, who is a member of The Swedish South Asian Studies Network (SASNET) at the University of Lund, has reviewed this tradition and its historical roots. In the article *The historical roots of dowries in contemporary Kerala* she declare how the dowry in recent years have grown in importance virtually in all classes and religious groups, even if there are differences in to what extent. Lindberg (2014) explains the growth of importance as well as the reproduction of the tradition as a result of one main factor within Keralan families: the fear of having an unmarried daughter.

In Paryaptabetis case the obligation of her family to pay a dowry to her sister's husband's family have had a vast impact on her own life. She did not get to finish school, and at her teens she was employed at a textile mill for five years, to earn money for her own futural dowry. This evolves questions about in what other ways the marriage traditions in a village could have an impact on the female inhabitant's lives. What consequences do these traditions have on young women of today?

1.2 Purpose and research questions

The purpose of this study is to generate understanding about young Indian women's lives focusing on how it has been affected by current marriage traditions. The purpose is not to present truths or objective knowledge about Indian women in general but to describe and analyze a few women's experiences to give a deeper understanding about Indian marriage traditions. To immerse the understanding the marriage traditions will be analyzed from the perspective of gender integrated with economical factors.

The questions we aim to answer are:

- What impact have current marriage traditions had in the respondents lives?
- How can the consequences of current marriage traditions be understood according to gender?

- What consequences can be seen in the respondent narratives about their school experiences due to marriage traditions?

1.3 Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study are mainly based on what have been possible to examine within the amount of time that is given for a bachelor thesis. Since the thesis is not written with a comparative ambition the respondents are chosen from a virtually homogenous group. We have chosen to include both married and unmarried women in the age between 18 and 26. Common among all of the respondents have been that they all dropped out of school, have been working in a textile mill and are now taking part in an empowerment project. During the process we found out that the marriage traditions could be analysed from a number of different perspectives, where theories about caste is the most common within previous research. Within the timeframe this was limited to gender and economical factors of the marriage traditions.

2. Research context

In this chapter we will give a description of the context for this study. It starts by a brief description of India and the economic development that have taken place in the country. After that we give a description of the project and the organization where the respondents of this study was recruited from. The last part is a map of Tamil Nadu in India which is the specific region where the research was conducted.

2.1 Indian context

India is a federal republic and a parliamentary democracy. It is also a secular state despite the many religions that are practiced in the country. With over one billion inhabitants India is commonly called the world's biggest democracy.

In the past decades India has developed from being a poor country with small scale agriculture work as main income to become the world's fourth biggest economy that plays an important role in the global economy. Nevertheless, the United Nations estimates that one third of the population is living in extreme poverty. The definition of extreme poverty, according to the World Bank, is to have less than 1,25 dollar per day to live on. India is facing political, economic and social challenges but is in general seen as a tolerant and open society, and a giant democracy (Regeringskansliet 2008).

Rana Haq (2013) argues that women are not equal players in the economic boom, but an effect of it has been a socio-cultural impact of western influences that has challenged traditional values and believes. The Indian women's movement has grown stronger and is now challenging traditional, religious and patriarchal interpretations of women's domestic role, education levels and economical participation. A lot have happened in the urban areas and the changes have been visible in most big cities regarding gender equality. But 70 per cent of India consists of rural areas that still have a long way to go, with a current situation of persistent discrimination at multiple levels (Ibid.).

2.2 The project

“Empowerment of textile workers” is a project that supports women that has been working in the textile industry. The aim is for them to be independent and self-sufficient. By providing one year of training that includes education in tailoring and embroidery, courses in women’s rights and knowledge in agriculture work, the project seeks to provide an alternative future for women. The project started in the beginning of 2012 and have since then been situated in two different villages in Tamil Nadu, South India. In each village the project have organized a help center with sewing machines and employed a teacher from the village. The board of the project is located in Sweden and the project is financed through them.

2.3 The organization

The project is hosted by a non-governmental organization that has been operating in the rural areas of Tamil Nadu during the last 20 years. The organization works with a range of different issues concerning social change. This includes sustainable and environmental friendly agriculture, microcredit programs and public outreach, as well as work to strengthen woman’s positions in the Indian society.

2.4 Map of Tamil Nadu, India



3. Background and previous research

In this chapter relevant previous research concerning marriage traditions and gender as well as other power structures in India will be presented. Further on some of this research will be used to analyse the empirical findings within this study.

To find information that is relevant for this study we have searched for previous research on the specific topic, and continued by brows the bibliography for more sources. We have also searched for scientific articles that are peer-reviewed mainly by using Google Scholar. Key words that we used in different combinations in the search have been; “marriage traditions”, “dowry”, “gender” ,“intersectionality”, “class” and “India”.

3.1 Marriage in India

According to Jejeebhoy, Santhya, Acharya and Prakash (2013) family-arranged marriage are highly prevalent in India. The marriage process within the arranged marriage is characterized by no involvement in the choice of spouse and without the couple meeting before the time of marriage. But a shift from relatives and parents involvement in the selection of marriage partner towards an increasing number of self-arranged marriages has been observed. The authors stretches the importance of the possibility to choose your own partner, non the least from a women’s rights perspective but also to enable a successful transition for young people into adulthood. In India it seems to be more and more common with semi-arranged marriages. This means that the young women has a say in decision making and are given the opportunity to meet her fiancé before the marriage (ibid.).

3.2 Dowry

The Dowry Prohibition Act from 1961 determines that dowry is illegal, but despite of that it is still well-established and in use all over India pursuant to Sobha Nambisan (2005). Parents with daughters are more or less expecting to have to give dowry to the groom’s family at the time for the wedding. The amount is set on basis of their caste, the family’s financial position as well as the financial position of the groom and his family (ibid.). The combination between dowry and the fact that daughters according to tradition moves out of the family’s home, while sons remains and contribute to the family’s living have resulted in a conception that girl have less value than boys

(Nambisan 2005, Utrikesdepartementet 2010). Nambisan (2005) states that dowry is the foundation that leads to daughters being considered a liability by their own parents.

In the article *Daughters or dowries? The changing nature of dowry practices in south India* Sharada Srinivasan (2005) concludes that the concept of dowry has changed in the recent years. Before it used to be a practice for the upper class but is now spread over all classes. This has had negative consequences for the status of women since there are economical strategies attached to the birth of a baby girl. The economical burden that comes with a female child is a more common reason for abortion than the so called son preference. The unequal growth in the country has made the practice of dowry in the lower classes occurring even more often (Diamond-Smith, Luke & McGarvey 2008; Self & Grabowski 2009).

The issue of dowry, hence the interrelation between class and gender dimensions of life in India, is also related to the dimension of sexuality. To be coveted in the matrimonial market the girls' sexuality is controlled by the family, since the family's honor is important to keep if a daughter should be possible to marry away (Abraham 2001).

3.3 Gender roles in India

The definition of gender role is the differences in for example behavior and values between the sexes induced by society. These roles gives different expectations on how a women should act and how a man should act, as well as a definition of how the relation between (the two) sexes should be (Nationalencyklopedien).

In Martha C Nussbaums book *Kvinnors liv och social rättvisa* (2002) she is describing the life conditions of Indian women from different community groups. Even though there are regional and class generated differences between the women, she points out some pervading facts about women's situation. The expected role for women is that they are taking care of the household and the families. To do these duties correctly she needs to be caring and look to others first. The man's role is on the other hand to earn money for the family and thereby insure the survival of it. This is the duty that gives respect and is seen as the most important within a household. Women, who are not doing this, are considered the weakest sex (Nussbaum 2002).

According to Verma and Sharma Mahendra (2005) this gendering starts a lot earlier than with the marriage. Already at an early age girls are restricted by their family to go outside the domestic sphere since they are not supposed to be seen out public and also they need to learn household work in preparation for the role of wife and mother. The reason girls should not be seen out public is tightly connected to the view on girls', as well as boys', sexuality. To keep a family's honor the daughters are kept away from both sexual exploration and sexual harm from others. This is happening alongside the encouragement of boys to explore life outside and thereby become more independent. Verma and Sharma Mahendra (2005) also mean that different characteristics are given to boys and girls. While it is important for a boy to be active, aggressive and taking responsibility of the family, girls should instead be emotional, obedient and sacrifice themselves for others.

3.4 Research about class and caste in India

In contemporary research with an intersectional takeoff there are two recurring power structures that together with the gender aspect are influencing Indian woman's life. The dimension that primarily occurs is the power structure connected to class. According to Kapadia (1995) there is an obvious interrelationship between the dimension of gender and the dimension of class. The economical factors in a woman's life, and the belonging to one or another class, have a huge impact on her possibilities in life. In her research about maids and their relationship to their employers Dickey (2000) shows what important and stable role class takes in India today. The nation is developing and going through an economical growth, but still old ideas about social standing is not changing. One fact that shows the complexity of the relation between the power structures of class/economy and gender is the dowry system.

According to Thomas Hylland-Eriksen (2004) the caste system is closely connected to Hinduism but does also work as a set of rules that structuralize the social organization, the interaction and power in the Indian society. The system divides people into different groups in a hierarchical order which determines who you can marry and what you can work with. In theory it is just as difficult to change one's caste as to change one's gender. Like gender, caste ascribes certain characteristics that are seen as inherent and constant (ibid.). Rebecca Stern (2006) describes the caste system as a way of

inheriting inequality and although the caste system is forbidden in Indian law it is still present all over the country. The combinations of caste, poverty and corruption have had India to struggle to incorporate a functional democracy (Stern 2006). The caste system aggravates the development towards equality and makes economic and social differences harder to conquer (Bayly 2001).

There are approximately 200 million Indians that are considered to belong to the lowest caste, the dalits. Because of severe discrimination and systematical abuse directed towards dalits the Indian government have established a system of positive discrimination to increase the access to higher education and positions in the public sector (Utrikesdepartementet 2010).

4. Theoretical frameworks

This section will describe the theoretical frameworks that have been in use to understand how marriage traditions have had an impact on the respondents' lives. Initially gender theory, with focus on Yvonne Hirdmans gender system theory, will be treated. Thereafter, with reference to Tina Mattsson, the framework is broadened by the theory about intersectionality. Gender theory as well as intersectionality have a social-constructionist approach, and are founded on the thought that reality is socially constructed. The theories have, together with previous research, been used as a frame of reference to interpret the collected data.

4.1 Gender theory

Gender theory is illuminating how femininity and masculinity is culturally created. The keystone in research made from a gender perspective is to problematize the relation between sexes. Focus is to analyze the inferior position of women, without taking it for granted and as determined by nature (Mattsson 2010). It is an extended social constructionist theory, and the original idea was that gender is the "social sex" that denoted the social construction of what was male and what was female, while sex is the biological characteristics such as genitalia and body shapes. This theory describes how we in society have common conceptions about how men and women are and thereby should behave. These conceptions work as a model that is used to understand, interpret and talk about femininity and masculinity (Mattsson 2010).

The professor Judith Butler has had an important impact on how gender theory has been developed. In 1990 Butler criticized the division between a social sex and a biological sex since she noted that the division of two biological sexes is also socially constructed. She said that this division of social and biological sex reproduces the view that there is a natural and unchangeable femininity and masculinity that exists outside the social world (Ambjörnsson 2010).

Yvonne Hirdman (2004) has developed the theory about the gender system. Hirdman (2004) defines the gender system as a network of processes and phenomena which together spawn a hierarchical structure of sexes. The gender system causes the gendered order of today and is built up by two systematical logics. Dichotomisation is one of the systematical logics and is the ruling

logic that being male and being female is two separated things and should not be melded. This rule co-exists with the systematical logic about hierarchy, which stands for the man as normal and universal and the women as the exception. Men are human, women something less than a human and what she does and is valued lower than what a man does and is (Hirdman 2004; Mattsson 2010).

Hirdmans theory about the gender system have been criticised for being too static and that it gives the impression about gender as an unchangeable system. The theory also makes the interrelation between sex and other identity categories such as class, sexuality and ethnicity invisible – it does not problematize how for example black men can be understood in relation to masculinity as a norm, or how the femininity of upper class women can be understood in relation to the femininity of working class women (Mulinari 2007). Hirdmans theory have to be based on a "clean" gender, a gender clean from sexuality, class, generation, and race, to be able to use. The idea of dichotomisation, and the idea of man as norm, makes it impossible to use Hirdmans theory as soon as also other power structures than gender is incorporated in an analysis. In this study Hirdmans gender system theory will be used in combination with other gender theories to be able to elucidate the interaction between gender and other power structures (ibid.).

In many of the gender theories that have been developed until today the connection between gender and sexuality is a central topic. For example Butler describes how the reproductive heterosexuality is an important factor in the gender power system as well as for the construction of sexes. The conception about heterosexuality as something neutral is fundamental in how we construct sexes. In her theory about the heterosexual matrix Butler explicates how heterosexuality is considered to be more natural and more genuine than other sexualities since it is reproductive, it could result in pregnancy and children. Since heterosexuality is presumed to be founded on desire directed towards disparity, disparity is also expected from sexes. Sexes have to be constructed differently, and there are not only rules for *how* to be a man or a woman but also *to* be a man or a woman since these are the only two options. This makes the analyse of sexuality inevitable in the understanding of gender (Ambjörnsson 2010; Mattsson 2010)

5. Method

In this section the approach in this study will be presented. The choice of method in this study is made from a phenomenological viewpoint, which has affected what kind of knowledge that have been produced. In the study the research objects have been considered to be a phenomena that need to be interpreted to be understood rather than objects defined by a true essence in themselves (Bryman 2011; www.ne.se). By using qualitative method we have been able to get the respondents personal descriptions about the marriage traditions and thereby produce social knowledge about the issue. An underlying research aim has been to be able to see the world through the studied women's eyes and thereby see under the surface of the issue of the marriage traditions. Hereunder the considerations attached to the choice of method and sample will follow, including a critical self-reflection on what impact the researchers have had on the outcome.

5.1 Choice of method

To gather empirical material for our analysis we decided to use a qualitative method. The aim of our study is, as mentioned above, to generate a deeper understanding about young Indian woman's educational situation. According to Bryman (2011) research with this type of aims usually use a qualitative method when collecting data. The qualitative researcher has an epistemological perspective where the scientific interest lies in examine a social world's participant's interpretation of that world and by that render understanding (Bryman 2011).

A quantitative researcher might argue that the consequences of the marriage traditions in India would be suitable to explore by collecting hard data, since the outcome would be able to generalize and thereby would really tell something (Bryman 2011). But with the structured interviews that are used to perform a quantitative research we would have to decide what issues that are important to know in Indian marriage traditions before we even met the respondents. The outcome would have been based on our pre-understanding of their situation, and would not show the truth (Bryman 2011). The intention with this study is not to generate general facts about Indian women's experience of education but rather to get an idea about it.

5.2 Interview method

To answer our research questions we conducted seven individual, semi-structured, interviews and

two separated focus group discussions with the same respondents as before. Bryman (2012) describes how semi-structured interviews usually follow an interview guide with topics that covers the purpose of the study and its research questions. But the researcher can be flexible in the sequence of asking questions as well as the method gives the interviewee a great deal of leeway in her answer. Ulla Eriksson-Zetterquist and Göran Ahrne (2011) states that the qualitative interview has a big advantage due to its flexibility that makes it possible for the researcher to adapt the question and the order in which to ask them according to the situation.

Focus group interviews can be defined as group discussions where people meet to discuss different perspectives on a certain topic or subject (Dahlin-Ivanhoff 2011). The respondents of a focus group are selected on basis of a common experience or because they have something in common that are of interest for the researcher. This is a useful method if the researcher is interested in understanding how the respondents reflect and talk about a certain topic, but also why the respondents think the way the they do (ibid.) According to Bryman (2012) focus group interviews require that the researcher relinquish some of the control to the participants which enable them to raise topics that are of importance to them. It also allows the respondents to probe each other's answers and increases the possibility for the researcher to understand why the respondent feel and think the way they do.

5.3 Sample

The sampling of participants in this study has been made by so called purposive sampling. Instead of sampling research participants on a random basis the sampling strategy have been based on the participant's relevance to the research questions (compare Bryman 2011). Based on the initial plan for this study, to examine why young women choose to participate in an empowerment project, the sample of interviewees for this study was made.

A common strategy in qualitative research is sampling of areas and then participants within that area (Bryman 2011). In this study the sampled area is Tamil Nadu in India, where empowerment of women projects are a common occurrence, and the sampled participants are those women participating in the education program "Empowerment of textile workers". As mentioned earlier, our interest was not to make a comparative study between women with different backgrounds like class, education or from rural and urban areas, but to examine the experiences of a seemingly

homogenous group. After conducting the interviews the orientation of the study was adjusted, but the sample of interviewees remained the same since we considered it to be relevant also to the new research questions.

We decided the number of respondents during the time of information collection, this because it was not possible to know when saturation were going to be reached in advance. Eriksson-Zetterquist and Ahrne (2011) describes saturation as the moment when additional interviews no longer generates new knowledge. A strategy to know when that point is reached is to analyze the data in parallel to the interview conducting, which was made within this study.

5.4 Conducting the interviews

The interview sessions took place in the home village of the respondents which was suitable both because of logistic reasons but also because it was a familiar place for the respondents which might have helped to increase their comfort and ease up the interview situation. As mentioned above we did seven individual interviews that were allocated over three days. We started the transcription of the first interviews right away so that we were able to see if something was missing or needed to be rephrased.

As a first step we wanted to get to know each respondent and try to understand as much as possible about their background and social context. We constructed the interview form according to a couple of themes such as “Birth and family”, “Education”, “Work” and “Social factors”, with sub queries to each theme. We borrowed these categories from Atkinson who is referred to in Bryman (2012). They are originally meant to be used within the life history method but we found them to be suitable for our purpose. In addition to them we asked follow-up questions if something needed to be added or clarified. This enabled us to be flexible towards the respondents with the intention to keep focus on the girls own descriptions and understanding of their life instead of us creating what was important and interesting to know out of our own pre-understanding.

In addition to the individual interviews we decided to conduct two focus group interviews with the aim to ask questions that more specific corresponded with the topic of our thesis. We divided the respondents into two groups of three and four. According to Morgan (referred to in Bryman 2008) a common number of respondents for a group interview is between eight to ten people, but if the

aim with the study is to discover the respondents personal views Morgan recommends a smaller group size. Most of the respondents in our study worked for a daily wage which also was a factor that we had to consider because it affected where and when they could take part in the study. The questions that we formulated for the group discussions were made on basis of the previous interviews and were therefore a chance for us to fill the gaps but also to create a discussion between our interviewees concerning their school experiences and aspects that influenced those.

5.5 Implementation of analysis

The data collected within our interviews have been large and multifaceted and the strategy to analyze the data had to be as flexible as the question asking in the semi-structured interviews. There are no well-established rules how to analyze qualitative data, but some broad guidelines about what strategy to use is available (Bryman 2011). The most common starting point of qualitative data analysis is coding. According to Jönson (2010) the purpose of coding is to systematize the data and thereby highlight relations and interesting patterns within it. Usually the coding of interview transcripts, which have been done on this study, is conducted by writing marginal notes which eventually is refined into codes (Bryman 2011). The quality of an analysis is usually higher when the data is sorted in this way (Jönson 2010).

Bryman (2011) gives a couple of considerations to have in mind before and during coding. These are for example to code as soon as possible when data collection has started, partially to avoid being swamped by all data when data collection is finished but also to be able to start the analysis alongside the collecting. During the coding and analysis we tried to assure that the codes we worked with were not describing the same phenomenon, just as Bryman (2011) recommends.

5.6 Methodological considerations

The terms validity and reliability is commonly used to assess the quality of studies within the quantitative research. According to Bryman (2011) a number of people have tried to modified these terms in different ways to suit the qualitative research, while others mean that the qualitative research needs to be evaluated and valued out of totally different criteria's. One of the main critics towards the use of the quantitative terms in the qualitative research is that the criteria's presuppose that it is possible to reach one true and absolute image of the social reality.

Two alternative criteria's that Guba & Lincoln (referred to in Bryman 2011 pp. 354) have suggested, that have the potential to measure the quality of the qualitative study, are "trustworthiness" and "authenticity". The criteria of authenticity are focusing on consequences and practical results due to the social research. We can only speculate in what (if any) consequences this study has had and that is why we will focus on the term trustworthiness to examine the quality of this study. The criteria of trustworthiness are divided into four sub criteria's; credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

The first sub criteria, credibility, are equivalent with the term internal validity. According to LeCompte and Goetz (referred to in Bryman 2011) internal validity usually is a strength in qualitative research. The internal validity is the measurement of whether there are compliance between collected data and the theoretical inferences made out of them (Bryman 2011). The method chosen for this study is adequate to the study's aim, which will assure relatively high internal validity. The aim is to create a comprehension of young Indian women's view on marriage, and the qualitative method enables us to do so. The credibility of this study is also being assured through transparency. We have tried to accomplish this by letting the reader of the study follow the process and by clarifying our choices and how we been reasoning, but also noted the weaknesses (see e.g. 5.7 Benefits, shortcomings and difficulties with the method).

The second criteria, transferability, can be compared with external validity, which usually is seen as a weakness in qualitative research. The external validity measures the degree of generalizability of the research outcomes (ibid.). The inability to generalize the research outcomes is one criticism towards qualitative research, but the qualitative researchers note the possibility to do so called moderatum generalizations, and to generalize the findings to theory instead of a specific population (Bryman 2011). The qualitative research tend to focus on what is unique in one specific context, the aim is the depth rather than the breadth. One way to achieve transferability is with detailed descriptions which enable the reader to judge if the findings are possible to transfer to other situations (ibid.). We have tried to fulfill this by describing the context surrounding this study and by giving as much information as possible within the limitation for number of pages allowed.

The third criteria, dependability, parallel with reliability and seek to have a critical perspective on

the study from the researchers' point of view. When it comes to the dependability within this study there is possible strengths as well as weaknesses. Since two students have conducted this study the internal reliability will have to be considered. Internal reliability is achieved when all researchers conducting a corporate study agree about how to interpret the data, what is seen and heard in the interviews (Bryman 2011). To achieve this we have had continuously discussions about the findings and ahead of the analysis agreed about what theoretical concepts that been the most important. According to Jönsson (2013) the reliability of a study increases when more than one researcher analyze the data, as well as when the interviews are recorded and transcribed which also have been done in the study.

The fourth criteria is confirmability that aims to highlight the impossibility of complete objectivity in social research, but in the same time assure that the researchers personal values and theoretical perspectives do not influence the conduct of the research as well as the result. To accomplish this we have reflected around our own position and our pre-understandings (see 5.9 Self-critical reflections).

5.7 Benefits, shortcomings and difficulties with the research

Since we did not have a common language with the respondents we used an interpreter during the interviews. As a result of our limited network in the area the interpreter was one of the employees from the organization that runs the project. In one way this may have affected the respondents answer in a negative manner but it is also possible that the respondents felt that they could talk more freely because our interpreter was a woman and someone that they met before and had a relation to. The need of using an interpreter also contributed to slow things down and it became harder for the respondents to freely tell us about their lives. In one way this stands in contrast to the fundamental idea of the qualitative research that has the aim to gain deeper understanding of a certain context and also illuminate the perspective of the respondents. Is it possible to achieve this without sharing the same language?

When being depending of an interpreter there is also the risk of misconceptions and it has been hard to assure that we got the answer translated correctly, as well as the questions we asked. When transcribing the interviews we could see that our interpreter sometimes translated the

answer given from the respondents and then clarified them to us. There was also times when she explained things for us, for example the reason for a certain opinion expressed by the respondents or customs that was common in the village. This can be seen as a disadvantage in the study and we have tried to take this into account while analyzing the material. But it was also a big help for us to have a close contact with someone that was familiar with the milieu. With her we could discuss and get clarifications if it was needed.

During both the individual interviews as well as the focus group interviews we used recording devices so that we later could transcribe the English parts of the interviews. We did not have access to the kind of equipment that would let us film the focus group discussion and eased the transcription work so instead we asked our interpreter to start each translation by saying the name of the person that been speaking. We both took notes through all the interviews so that it would be easier to keep track during the transcription.

Because of illness we encountered the drop-out of one respondent during the last focus group interview, so instead of conducting the interview with three of the respondents there were only two.

Another small hassle occurred when it came to where to be during the interviews. It was hard to find a place where we could be totally uninterrupted and parts of the recording material have been hard to transcribe.

Another factor that could have had an impact on the study is the fact that the project that we have recruited our informants from is financed by a Swedish organization. This could have caused the participants to link us to the organization which could have had an effect on the interview situation. The foundation of the interview situation are in one way already a cause for power imbalance, the researcher are the one who formulate and ask questions, and are thereby in control over the conversation. According to Aspens (2011) it is important that researchers are aware of this and reflect about it to be able to create an interview situation that eases the interview.

5.8 Ethical considerations

The ethical considerations for this study are based on the principles of *The Swedish research council* concerning research ethic. The four main demands; information, consent, confidentiality and responsible use of data are a concretization of requirement for protection of the individual. These demands states all individuals safety from exposition and that no one should be humiliated, physically or mentally hurt, or insulted in the frame of research (Vetenskapsrådet 2013).

As the four principals constitutes, we informed the respondents in advance about the purpose of the study and that their participation was voluntary. This also means that they had the right to decline to answer any question and also that they could end their participation in the study at any time. We asked for permission to use a recorder during the interviews and clarified that the information only will be used to this specific study. Furthermore the respondents have been guaranteed confidentiality in the result of the study, which we accomplished by giving them fictive names and also chosen not to name the organization, project or the exact place where the study been conducted.

5.9 Self-critical reflexivity

As being mentioned before it is not possible to accomplish complete objectiveness in social science research. Instead we have had to be aware and reflect upon our values, preconceived ideas and positions as outsiders and how this has affected the study. It is also important to recognize that we have influenced the research participants merely by our presents, as well as the respondents had their own baggage that altogether shaped the research process (Bryman 2011). The findings in this study are interpreted through us and are not a precise version of the social reality studied. Unavoidably the research has been affected by the fact that we are two white, Western, female researchers and during the gathering of information it became clear that we had preconceptions that did not correspond with the reality of the respondents. This we had to bear in mind so that we did not impose our opinions on them. Therefor it has been essential to constantly reflect upon our role which also is a way to reduction the risk of tendencies to “westernize” the research.

5.10 Division of labor

During the working process for this study we have worked together as far as possible. We developed the interview guide together, and both of us participated in all the interviews. The transcription of the interviews had to be done individually, but afterwards both of us took part also of the written version of the interview we did not transcribe. To be efficient in the work we have at some points divided the writing between us, but then we have been working side by side and the analysis have been done together with continuous discussions in between us. Both of us are to the same extent responsible for what have been written in this study.

6. Presentation of informants

In this part we will introduce the respondents that participated in the study. Their names are all fabricated to ensure the anonymity.

Asha is 26 years old. She is married since one year back and is now living in her mother in laws house. Before that she was living with her mother, her younger brother and her younger sister. The father left the family when Asha was 10 years old and got married to his second wife. Since then the mother was the only one taking responsibility for the children. After finishing 8th standard Asha went to work in a textile mill for 5 years. Today she is pregnant with her first baby.

Edha is 19 years old and have finished 9th standard in school before she went to work in a textile mill for one year. Today she is living with her family, consisting of her father, her mother, one older sister and one older brother. Edha describes her family as economically challenged since her father is an alcoholic, and they have borrowed a lot of money.

Viji is 24 years old and since two years she is staying together with her husband and daughter in her mother in laws house. She grew up with her father and mother, both agricultural workers, and four siblings. In school she finished 8th standard before she had to quit due to the family's economic situation. When she was 18 years old she went for work in a textile mill, when her marriage was arranged she quit that work.

Jerani is 18 years old and lives together with her family just outside the Village. There are seven members in her family. Besides Jerani there are her father and mother, who both are doing agricultural work, and Jeranis two older and two younger sisters. She went to school until she was 15 years old, then she finished 9th standard and went for work in a textile mill. She was working there for two years.

Jivah is 18 years old, she quit school at the age of 15, just before she was about to complete 8th standard. Then she went to work in a textile mill within a scheme for two years. Now she is staying with her parents who both are working in the agricultural fields in the village. Her younger sister and younger brother is also staying in her house.

Paryaptabeti is 23 years old. She is married since six months and is now living in her mother in laws house. Before that she was living with her mother and four sisters. Her father died when Paryaptabeti was 8 years old. Because of the family's money loans she had to go to work in a textile mill for seven years in the age of 13. In school she has finished 3rd standard.

Talika is 20 years old and is staying with her parents and four sisters and brothers. At the age of 15 she quit school, because of economical factors in her family, and started working in a textile mill. There she worked for three years before she went back home to her family. Now her parents don't allow her to finish school since she is supposed to get married soon.

7. Result and analysis

In this chapter we will present and analyze the results we have found in the empirical. The analysis will be written together with the result, and divided into two main parts according to the pervading themes that have occurred in the material. Since both of the themes that the analysis will be based on are strongly connected to the phenomenon arranged marriage, we will start by explaining the arranged marriage from the respondents' perspective. Further on we will present the sexuality aspect of marriage and analyse how the fear of getting a bad reputation as well as the division between boys and girls have had an impact on the respondents possibilities to move freely and go to school. In the final part of the analysis we will explain how the economy aspects of marriage, with focus on the tradition of dowry, have had an impact on these possibilities. When we refer to and describe the participants in the study we use the words respondents and interviewees. They will also be referred to by their "names".

7.1 The arranged marriage

One of the most important factors in the respondents' lives as well as in their educational experiences is, as mentioned earlier, connected to the phenomenon arranged marriage. All of the interviewees, both the ones that already are married and the ones that still are unmarried, had or expected to have their marriage arranged and set up by the parents. This means that the parents, or other relatives of the respondents will find a suitable husband for them to get married to. Love marriage, which could be seen as the contrary to the arranged marriage is not considered a decent option. Most of the respondents talks about love marriage as something that generate problems to one's life. About choosing her own partner to marry Asha says that "that will hurt the parents and that's not good". This harmonize with the common dictum from the respondents that after a love marriage you cannot count on getting help from your family if you need it. This could be interpreted as if a love marriage leads to possible exclusion from the original family. In the following quote Edha argues for why it is better to let her parents decide who she will marry.

Edha: Her mother and her brother will choose the life partner. It is better if they chose if some problems will show then they will rectify it and take care.

Us: why won't they be able to help if there's problem in love marriage?

Edha: It is better because her brother got married in love marriage but he met an accident and died. The wife has two children but still it is not accepted in the family. Another girl

went with the boyfriend, but they separated and now she got married to another man, her family forced her. So why would you take that risk? Better to stay with parents' choice.

About marriage Jivah says: "A lot of time I don't want to get married, but it's their responsibility as a father and mother to send me to the boy so that will happen later". She describes her parents future arrangement of her marriage as their responsibility as parents. There is no other way for Jivah to get married, and she has to get married. This can be understood as if arranged marriage is taken for granted and the view of it as something obvious is inherited from generation to generation. In the next quote Viji explains why she prefers arranged marriage:

Viji: In that age of marriage, 20-25, we cannot choose the boys character, we are only looking at some things on the boys and not all the things. But if the parents select they will analyze and ask others about his behavior and things like that. So that is better I feel.

There are a lot of traditions connected to the procedure of arranged marriage, where one of the most highlighted within the respondents narratives were the tradition of dowry. Dowry is the gift, or payment, that is given from the bride's side of the family to the groom's. It is prohibited by Indian law since 1961, but is still most operative and as you shall see, it has had big effects on the respondents' lives (Nambisan 2005).

7.2 Sexuality aspects of marriage

In this chapter we will present the findings that are related to what we call the sexuality aspects of marriage. Based on the analysed material it will describe what influence ideas of sexuality, puberty and the concept about the sexes have had on the respondents lives as well as on their school experiences. Based on what is found in the study the chapter is divided into five sections concerning the importance of good reputation, impact of puberty, division of the sexes, sexuality and effects on the school participation.

7.2.1 Importance of chastity

Almost all of the respondents in the study described the importance for them as girls to keep distance to the boys in their surroundings. Through the interviews a number of examples of how

they are expected to behave occurred, all from walking past a man with their head bend to not talk to any guy and stay inside. The reason for this was explained to be both because their parents did not approve of love marriage, but also because the risk of society spreading rumors. The following quotes are a part of the discussion during one of the focus group interviews.

Mostly they don't like the love marriage, that is one reason the parents don't prefer that we talking with the male.

It is the society, they are afraid of the society. If we are talking with someone else then we'll just friendly want to talk with the family but they don't understand what the real situation is. They think that joined together this man and this girl now they are making love and they are having affairs. So they are always afraid of that, and the society is talking like that so the parents are afraid of that so they said after 14 it's better to keep quiet and it is not allowed to go outside.

The possibility that love and attraction would arise between a girl and a boy which could lead to an unwanted marriage, seen from the parents' point of view, is prevented by keeping a close eye on the daughter and limiting her freedom. The families reputation is also at stake and the risk of society spreading rumors are something that many of the interviewees define as a motive of the rules. The risk of getting a bad reputation is connected to what Abraham (2002) as well as Srinivasan (2005) points out about the current marriage traditions. While love marriage is unwanted families usually wish to get their daughters married away, and consider the arranged marriage to be a social insurance. Since the family's honor is important to keep if a daughter should be possible to marry away, the restriction of girls is high (Abraham 2002; Srinivasan 2005). From the respondents this was described as a way of the parents caring and doing what is considered the best for the girls. As Talika puts it;

Talika: It is not good, parents are controlling us and that's good because it's for us. I understand why my mother is very strict on that, what my mother is doing is correct.

Something that is very obvious through the interviews are that behavior like being calm, stay around the house and taking decisions for one selves have a close connection to gender. An example is Asha statement of the different rules for girls and boys.

Asha: It is not so free to the women to go outside but the man can go. Here they say that women and girls should stay at home, they don't go outside to play and chat but if a boy goes outside and enjoy that's okey.

This pattern of division in the way to behave and what physical space you belong to can be understood as an expression of much defined norms concerning the sexes, which will be examined more closely in the section *Divided according to sex*. While daughters are not permitted to move around, sons are free to go and come back as they like without ask for permission from, or inform, the parents. The limited ability for the respondents to move freely outside the house and the village is also shown in Paryaptabetis statement about families in general:

Paryaptabeti: We always have to respect the parents, the parents only decided what they are doing so only that thing they are allowed to do. And if they want to buy something from the shop, for example a dress, they cannot get. The mother or father they will only go to the shop and buy for them. It is opposite to the boys everything, if the boys they want to buy some clothes for them they ask their mother or the father and they are giving, and he is taking and buying himself. And whenever he wants he will go outside freely and sometimes he never inform to the parents, he will go and come back.

7.2.2 Menarche and its connection with marriage

The most significant way that the sexuality aspect of marriage traditions have been affecting the respondents lives is expressed by the limitations that followed by the respondents entering puberty. In one of the group interviews the participants were discussing about quitting school. After puberty neither of them has gone to school since the parents were not allowing them as grown up girls to go there.

Group interview: Yes after puberty mostly we stop education. So when we are grown up, we come to puberty then they don't allow to send us to school.

Entering puberty is seen as the beginning of womanhood, it puts an end to the phase of childhood

in the girls' lives and results in reduced freedom. The restrictions are partly a way to protect the girls as well as a way to protect their, and the families', reputation. According to Thirunavukarasu and Simkiss (2013) it is a common view all over India that menstruation is something unclean, therefore the behavioral restrictions are extra severe. It can be manifested in inability to attend places of worship, school and family functions, there can also be certain food that the girls are not allowed to eat and it is not accepted for them to take a bath. These practices are based on societal attitudes, norms and gender imbalance (ibid.)

The following quote by Asha is an illustration of this phenomenon:

Asha: Before I was 15 I have some male friends but after 15 I cannot talk with the boys and it is not common to talk with male friends [...] With girl children we can touch and talk and hug like that, but the boys we can't touch after 12 because after puberty we don't touch male persons, even fathers and brothers like that. [...] Parents and village people are very keen about that so I also kept quiet after 12.

When becoming adolescent the girls are taught to keep distance to the males around them, both physically by not touching and hugging, but also by ending previous friendships. In the group discussion between Paryaptabeti and Talika concerning the time when they entered puberty they explained it like this "Paryaptabeti said 16 and Talika said after 14-15 like that it started. So it is different the behaviors of the parents and the expectation". Menarche is expressed as a turning point where the expectation and pressure to behave in a certain way forces the girls to adapt according to those.

As mentioned before regarding the rules of conduct the respondents explain them as a kind of prevention for bad reputation and as their parents way of caring. Low social status that could become the consequence of a rumor might also jeopardize their prospects to get married. During the individual interview with Jivah she specified this with an example from her time as teenager when she was not allowed to follow her parents and siblings to social events. On the question if this was because she is a girl she answered: "Yes and grownup, after fifteen they don't allow much outside. They don't want to show to others the girl before marriage."

Abraham (2001) explains this restricting of young girls as a cause of the importance of preserving a girl's virginity and, in connection to this, the fear of hurting a girl's reputation. A woman is not seen to have a sexuality while men are referring to sex as "Taking pleasure from a woman's body". The reason that the respondents have been kept at home is not the view that they are so sexually active that it is dangerous for boys to letting them out, but the view that boys are dangerous. The one who is presumed to be the one that needs to be protected is hence kept inside.

Ananthakrishnan and Nalini (2002) as well as Srinivasan (2005) indicate that the main priority in a girl's life after attending puberty is to get married. The first-mentioned authors underline the difficulties in generalizing the information from the study because it has been conducted in one specific socio-cultural context and the structures of gender discrimination can appear different even within a small geographical area (Nalini 2002). However was the age aspect of marriage a factor that also occurred through the interviews that we conducted and the respondents described the shame in staying unmarried above a certain age. Asha who got married at the age of twenty-five describes the reactions from society:

Asha: By the time I was not married everyone said your daughter are getting older, and how are you able to get married? At that time I felt very sad, how am I going to get married? When I got married my mother celebrated very grandly and I was happy about that. But people say she is getting older and so because it is not that common for twenty to get married. It is twenty - twenty-two, before twenty they got married usually the relatives. When it comes to twenty-five, for her it is a very long time so everyone says at that time she felt very sad.

This quote shows the pressure on families to marry off their daughters in an early age and the embarrassment for the girls that is not married yet. This does not increase the incentive to keep the girls in school, in particular not in correlation with the economical aspect of marriage. Srinivasan (2005) point out that since marriage is important in securing caste purity and property control, parents throughout history have tried to assure marriage as early as possible.

The results from the demographical study *Female age at marriage in India: trends and determinants* shows that the average age to get married have rose from 15,6 years in 1951 to 20,0

years in 1993 and thereby that girls are getting married later and later (Das and Dey 1998). When it comes to school enrollment this could be seen as a positive development, since this could increase the possibilities for the girls to finish their school. Noting that it is not only marriage, but also their entry into puberty, that make families keeping girls out of school, there are research results that contradict that this positive development will be reflected in girls access to school. According to Bagga and Kulkarni (2000) the average age at menarche have decreased with 6 months per decade the last three decades. In relation to what we earlier have written about menarche and school attending, this could have lead to consequences of reduced possibilities for girls to finish their school.

7.2.3 Divided according to sex

The fact that the respondents have experienced a more restricted freedom than boys in their surroundings could be seen as a result of the current gender system, where men are superior and women are inferior. While boys are free to move outside the house and village, girls are seen to have a need of protection and thereby they need to stay at home. The possibilities for boys and girls are distinctly different, which could be understood by the theory of dichotomization. Hirdman (2004) describes dichotomization within the gender system as the process that divides the sexes into two essentially diverse beings. What is female and male should not be mended, which is a fundamental part of the process in constructing the gender system (ibid.).

The logic that separates male from female is consistently structuring peoples' lives, chores, places and characteristics, in a gendered order. According to Hirdman there are a dialectic interrelationship between duties, places and characteristics which affect the expectations on men and women (ibid.). The differentiation is constructing a power dimension where one kind of human is defined in relation to what another kind of human is not. A consequence of the division between men and women is that men are made the norm and women are made the aberrant. As Hirdman puts it; men are the positive and women are the negative. It is the conception of discrepancies that legitimizes the structure as well as enables the reproduction of it (ibid. 2004). These two quotes reveal how the gendered division of labor is interrelated to the conception that a women's place is in the domestic sphere:

Talika : We had three girls and mother, we divided our work like washing the vessels is one girl, and sweeping is one girl and cooking is another girl and taking the water is mother or someone else. And I have a small brother and he never does the work, any work. And the father he also never works.

Jivah: we need to work at home, like domestic like sweeping, washing like that. [...] They never do the men in the houses, this is only women's work.

When the respondents answered the question about what would be different if they were a boy the interrelationship between duties, chores and characteristics also was illuminated. Many of the respondents said that as men they would provide food and security for the family. In opposite of today it would be possible for them to stay within the family after marriage and therefore they would have studied harder and finished school. Out of this it is possible to make the conclusion that it lays within the male role to have the economical responsibility of the family, while women are meant to take the responsibility of the home and the children.

Asha: If I were a boy I would study a lot and I took the whole responsibility of the house like a marriage to my younger sister and learn my brother grand manners and I wouldn't send my mother to the field, I take care of everything in my responsibility.

7.2.4 Correlation between gender and sexuality

According to Mattsson (2010) the construction of sexes is co-existing with the construction of sexuality. The assumed heterosexuality is based on the existence of two different sexes – the man and the women – who attract each other because of their differences. The basic idea is that just as on a magnet - opposite attract. These opposites, or dichotomisations, are also including a diversity of sexual power. Within the heterosexual desire, which is the attraction between men and women, it is assumed that men are the ones who are attracted and woman the ones who are attracting. The male role is active while the female role is passive (Abraham 2001; Marston & King 2006).

This correlation between gender roles and sexuality was also manifested by the respondents. As mentioned earlier several of the women who was interviewed talked about their limited ability to

move freely as they liked. Because they were female and their reputation could be threatened if interacting with boys they had to stay inside their house. This quote from Jerani illustrates this:

Jerani: So you should be away from them, that's why we are always away from them.

Us: what should the boys do?

Jerani: they enjoy with the girls, they want to sit and talk.

Us: so parents don't tell the boys to avoid the girls?

Jerani: yes, this is only for the girls child, not for the boys.

7.2.5 To keep girls and boys apart in school

The division between girls and boys is not only happening at home. It is also reflected on how the school is organized, both in the physical structure within the classrooms, with a separate line for girls and one for boys, as well as the work that is done by the students. There is a clear division in who should conduct duties like sweeping the classroom, watering plants and getting water. Edha explains how also the break time was controlled by the teacher:

Edha: The break time I was playing, the girls would play 2-3 games and not with the boys because the teachers didn't allow that. The teachers didn't allow the girls to talk to the boys either. [...] Only once with the presence of teacher we were combined and playing together and they watched us, only at that time I played with the boys.

Edha describes how she once during her time in school played together with the boys, but that was after the decision made from the teacher. Otherwise the interaction between the girls and boys was strictly limited by the teachers of the school, the children were not allowed to either talk or play with children of the opposite sex. When asking about the reason for these rules two of the respondents said:

Talika: they are controlling the persons because maybe they both will have a love affair, if that comes then it is a big problem. Because if the girl or the parents complains then it's not good. [...] The school teachers, the master, look so that they don't talk. So he says why are you talking to a boy, you are a girl so don't talk to boys.

Asha: That is one parent that did complain about boys and girls who are talking separately

after the class hours and that will effect in the future. Because here people don't accept the love marriages and love affairs like that. So if they are talking then they think that if they go for love affairs it is a bit difficult to separate them.

Again the regulations concern the possibility that a girl and a boy would fall in love with each other. The two quotes express that love affair is seen as a big problem and that it is not accepted to get married out of love. Furthermore the respondents' quotes states that it is the teachers and school masters obligation to prevent this from happening. Most of the respondents said that they have grown up without any male friends, but Talika does have one male friend from school. This is how she describes the relationship with him:

Talika: there is a limit with a male friend when sharing and discussing because I only chat with him about the education things like if I have some doubts or need clarifications. I don't cross that limit, because with girls I can chat other things like cinema and house problems and but that is not possible to discuss with the boys, that is not good. I stopped my education but whenever I meet him I asked about his education and he responses what he is studying. So only education I talk with him.

This quote clarifies what kind of limitations there is in having a relationship with a male friend, that there are boundaries for what you are allowed to talk about and not. Talika expresses this by explaining how she only discusses things regarding school and that it is not possible to talk about everything in the same way as with her female friends.

As it is exposed in the former descriptions of how the respondents schools have been organized, the educational experiences of the studies' respondents is framed by the same heteronormative logics that the marriage are. Just as Abraham (2001) notes in the article *Redrawing the Lakshman Rekha: Gender differences and cultural constructions in youth sexuality in urban India* the view is that the vulnerable girls have to avoid being harmed by the sexuality driven boys.

7.3 The economical side of the relationship between marriage and education

As mentioned earlier the second aspect of the arranged marriage, as it has come out in the interviews, is the economical aspect. This side is highly affected by the fact that there is a dowry

attached to the tradition of arranged marriage in India. In this chapter we will show how the economical aspect is displayed in the interviews, and how it is affecting the respondent's life in general and school life in particular.

First of all it is important to clarify that it is not an option for most families to refuse to pay the dowry when it is time for marriage, although the phenomenon have been prohibited since the 1960's. It is a tradition that still is ongoing and has an important role within the marriage. Talika explained that:

If you say to your bridegroom that you won't give jewelries, they won't come for marriage. So it is not possible.

Money has a big part in marriage, but how has this affected the respondents' lives? We have found out three themes that could explain this relation; opportunity cost, climbing the social ladder and moving to mother-in-law. This is what we found:

7.3.1 Opportunity cost

The concept of opportunity cost is belonging to the school of national economics and describes the value of something that must be given up to acquire something else. Hence, how much would you have won if you invested your money in something else than you are doing today? By choosing one alternative, when you cannot afford more, you also loose a potential gain (www.businessdictionary.com). In the natal families of the respondents the opportunities to choose have been between 1) let their daughter finish school and 2) take their daughter out of school and let them work instead and thereby be able to pay a dowry. The opportunity cost of letting the girls finishing school is the monetary earnings they would do as workers and the opportunity cost of taking them out of school and let them work is the knowledge they would earn as students. These two quotes from Paryaptabeti shows how this is expressed in reality:

Paryaptabeti: Both my two sisters said that because of the family situation, we are all girls and we have to save some money for the future and for marriage, they also wanted to work on the field and earn some money.

Paryaptabeti: when we are women we are really sad. Because we have to give a lot of jewels for the marriage and that is a big problem for us. [...] And education wise, education wise they won't send their child for higher education because then they have to spend a lot of money.

In Paryaptabeti's case, as well as for most of the other respondents, the opportunity cost for letting the girls finishing school was too high. The family could not afford the loss of their daughter's salary in exchange of her increased knowledge. This accord with UNICEF's statement that one of the main reasons for child work is because of economic factors, the families cannot afford to keep the child in school in order to survive. In a report from UNESCO, "*Education for all: Is the world on track?*" (2002), the indirect costs of letting children go to school are mentioned as another important factor. Even if the children do not contribute with an income to the family, sending them to school is a loss in workforce within the household that can be used as a substitute for household members that have grown old (ibid.). An example of this is showed in Paryaptabeti's narrative regarding how she had to quit school to take care of a younger sibling:

When I studied the second standard, I had my last sister, the young one was born but my mother needed to work to get some money so mother asked me to take care of the child. I said that I wanted to go to school but my mother said it is not possible cause she wanted to earn some money for the family. Then my father also went for agricultural work, and then we could survive. So six months I quit school.

Paryaptabeti was taken out of school when she was eight years old to babysit her newborn sister which made it possible for her mother to take a paid job. In order to survive the family had to organize the days like this. This narrative corresponds with UNESCO's report that states that "All such cost and income differences are perceived more acutely, the lower the income of the households concerned" (2002, pp 144).

7.3.2 Climbing the social ladder

The connection between education, marriage and economy, expressed through the tradition of dowry was a common topic through the interviews. The degree of education seems to be of great

importance when it comes to whom to get married – or from what class the one you will marry will be. Edha and Asha talks about it in this way:

Edha: I am not educated, that's why the boy who marry he will also be uneducated [...] how could I expect educated person, when I am uneducated? If he is educated I am scared cause maybe he become proud and rude.

Asha: Yes it depends on the education, if I educate more a different marriage will be. He's also uneducated now but an educated man would be employee at a company or the government but he is also agricultural.

This takes us back to the theory of opportunity cost. In addition to what earlier have been said about it one way to see the opportunity cost is that letting one's daughter finishing school have the opportunity cost to not have any money for a dowry. And the opportunity cost for taking a daughter out of school is that the level of the dowry will increase. Put it this way the choice of the parents is understandable, since taking a daughter out of school leads to both money earning and a constant dowry level. Lahiri and Self (2007) writes that the groom-specific dowry, which refer to the dowry that is given to the grooms family just as it is for the respondents, usually is rising in correlation with the man's educational level. A more educated man, or a man with a higher socio-economic status, can demand a higher dowry. Jerani says:

But when it comes to now when I only finished 9th standard I prefer better someone in same stage. If he is well educated, then it becomes problem for me. [...] they expect more, and I don't know how I am satisfied with that. Maybe when it comes to dowry and everything, the expectations will be high, that's why I am afraid so it's better.

She tells that if she found a man that is from a higher educational level than she is it would bring problem for her. Such a man, or his family, would probably ask for a higher dowry which would be a challenge for Jerani and her family. She is even afraid of that scenario. According to Lahiri and Self (2007) it is two mechanisms within the dowry system that creates the gender bias in education. The first one is the fact that the possibility to earn more money from the dowry increases with a higher educational level on sons but not on daughters. This ends up in that a larger proportion of male children get to finish school than the proportion of female children.

In addition to this there is the mechanism that girls' higher education is not considered as valuable in the dowry setting, so even if a girl is educated, and thereby is able to contribute more to the family cash, she needs to pay more in dowry to an educated man than to an uneducated. Her education does not do a positive difference in her original family nor in her in-law-family. The writers describes it as a lack of co-ordination between the families and point out this as the main factor in gender biased education access (Lahiri and Self 2007).

7.3.3 Moving to mother-in-law

Another part of the marriage tradition that indirectly is related to the tradition of dowry is the fact that after marriage the women is moving to the man's, or mother-in-law's, house. When talking about the ability to attend an embroidery course in the neighbor town Talika stated:

Talika: My mother said that after marriage you are going to earn money to your husband's family so why I should send you?

This statement from Talika confirms Lahiri and Self's (2007) theory about what is causing the gender differences in school enrollment. The way the marriage and the connected traditions are designed gives a number of incentives to educate your sons but fewer incentives to educate your daughters. This cohere with Nussbaums (2002) main theory about the current gender differences in literacy rate as well as in school-fulfillment in India. The most important fact that are causing the gender differences is that girl children (or young adults) are married away. Since girls at some point will leave their natal family, and not contribute to the family's income, they are not considered worth spending money for formal schooling. This illuminates how the patriarchal systems, together with financial needs, co-operate to impact on a girls chance to education.

Furthermore the move to another family at the time of marriage is affecting girls' access to school not only because of economic factors but also because of the presence of dichotomization of gender. With the different expectations on women and men on where they should be, what they should do and how they should act follows different expectations also after marriage. Our respondents all made clear that it is a women's task to take care of the household. This started already as daughters within a family, in some cases where brothers as well as fathers had no

responsibility for taking care of the laundry or cooking, and also continued after becoming a wife. The three quotes here below shows this chain of female duties:

Talika: We had three girls and mother, we divided our work like washing the vessels is one girl, and sweeping is one girl and cooking is another girl and taking the water is mother or someone else. And I have a small brother and he never does the work, any work. And the father he also never works.

Group interview: When we were small then only our mother washed, then after puberty the girls we have to do it ourselves but for the boys the mother is doing that work until marriage. After that the wife will do.

Paryaptabeti: All the household work like cooking, taking care of the animals and watering, this things at the household work I do and my husband is doing the repair work or if anything happens in the motor or light bulb or fan he do the repair work.

This is just a couple of examples among others where the dichotomization between the sexes has been distinctly emerging in our interviews. All the respondents described a gendered division of labor. While the respondents, who all are women, were taking care of duties such as sweeping, clothes washing and cooking the male members of their family were doing electrical repairing, plowing and shoveling soil. The connection between this and the fact that girls are enrolling school in a smaller extent than boys is that as a girl it is more important to learn how to take care of a household, which will happen within a family's house and not during lessons in school, than to for example learn how to count and read. To be able to compete on the marriage market you need skills of household work rather than of knowledge earned from school (Nussbaum 2002).

7.4 Summary of the analysis

In the study we have explored former textile workers experiences of the current marriage traditions in their village. Focus has been to examine how these traditions have had an impact on their lives in general and their school situations in particular. Based on the collected empirical data we examined how gender factors and economical factors within the marriage traditions correlate to each other. The empirical data indicated that there is two aspects of how the marriage traditions are affecting

girls lives: the aspect of sexuality and the economical aspect. Both of these aspects decreases the incentives for letting a girl finish her school, but increases the incentives for letting a boy finish his school.

In the aspect of sexuality the most emerging factor in the marriage traditions has been the connection between gender, sexuality and age. In the respondents' statements about the marriage system, it occurred pattern of how the current gender system in the respondents' village is constructed. One part of the gender system is founded on what Hirdman (2004) describes as the dichotomisation between the sexes. The dichotomisation is shown through the respondents narratives are affecting their lives and school situation.

Throughout our interviews the topic "separation of boys and girls" was recurrent. The interviewees have not been allowed to have almost any contact with boys during their childhood, and have not had the same expectations on them either. The duties within a household as well as in school have been different, and the way of acting have also been restricted differently where the respondents have been less free than their male peers. We have understood this as an expression of how the logic of dichotomisation is consistently structuring peoples' lives, chores, places and characteristics, in a gendered order.

In the study it has become clear that a conception within the marriage traditions is that the respondents have to be protected from men's sexuality. The respondents have been restricted in who to talk to and where to be in order to keep their and their family's good reputation intact. Since the family's reputation is at risk if something sexually happens to a daughter, a majority of the respondents were taken out of school at the age they entered puberty. At that point the importance of getting married overcomes the importance of getting an education, and the marriage should happen at an as early age as possible.

The purpose of this study has also been to render understanding about how the power structures of class, together with the power structure of gender, are expressed in the marriage traditions. The respondents have declared that they had to quit school because of economical factors, in which the ability to pay a future dowry (or the loan for an already paid dowry) have had an important role.

We have compared this fact to previous research about the dowry system in India and found out two mechanisms within the dowry that have kept the respondents out of school. These mechanisms are that the possibility to earn more money from the dowry increases with a higher educational level on sons but not on daughters, and that girls' education not is considered as valuable in the dowry setting, so even if a girl is educated she needs to pay more in dowry to an educated man than to an uneducated.

Analysed with the conception opportunity cost this is understood as if the opportunity cost for letting the respondents finish school have been the monetary earnings they would have done as workers while the opportunity cost for taking them out of school and let them work was the knowledge they would earn as students. At the same time letting the respondents finishing school had the opportunity cost to not have any money for a dowry, and the opportunity cost for taking them out of school was that the level of the dowry would increase.

8. Final discussion

What have been discovered within this study when it comes to the economical and the sexuality aspect of marriage traditions is limited to the research sample and is not generalizable to all young women in Tamil Nadu or India. But there are differences and similarities between the narratives that can be described from theory about for example gender and sexuality.

It might occur as if the respondents within this study are helpless victims of society that are not free to anything at all. A gender theorist like Hirdman might argue that what appear to be autonomous choices to for example quit school, made by the individual, are in reality limited by power relations and norms. Though are the power structures that exist and create inequality usually more apparent on a structural level than on an individual level since the individual level is more complex. Individuals with all their similarities and differences make the structural pattern hard to see, and we mean that it is important to problematize this further.

The previous research about marriage traditions, the dowry system and gender discrimination in India that has been in use in this study is mostly made with a quantitative method and have generalizable results. To apply them on our data have not been a challenge for us, the pattern of discrimination is quite obvious. But on a personal level, from the respondents' point of view, the marriage tradition and the consequences of those were not discussed in a negative manner.

The respondents in this study have not seen the restriction of their interaction with boys as a limitation, but as something that is good for them and one among others of a parent's duty. The fact that a girl needs to quit school to earn money for her dowry and thereafter be married away could from outside be interpreted as an assault against her. But the respondents in this study gave a more complex description of it. For example is it described as an expression of the parents' caring, and the respondents have been not only accepted this but also considered it to be for the best. This could be seen as an expression of how societal norms is internalized and neutralized, but also an expression of the dynamics between societal and individual level.

Suggestion for future research is to examine how young people resist traditions surrounding marriage, for example by marry out of love or refuse to pay dowry.

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