THE RISE OF ONLINE MARRIAGES IN INDIA: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Md. Ruhul Amin Sheikh*

Assistant Professor
Department of History
Alamganj Rangamati College, Alamganj, ASSAM

Joynal Abedin Ahmed**

Assistant Professor
Department of History
South Salmara College, South Salmara, ASSAM

Abstract:

The growing popularity of internet weddings is causing a major shift in the Indian marriage system. Online marriage services, social media, and the growing usage of digital technology have all contributed to this issue. This research examines the advantages and disadvantages of internet weddings in India, including concerns with societal norms, safety, and trust as well as enhanced accessibility, convenience and flexibility. The study uses a mixed-approaches strategy, integrating quantitative and qualitative data gathering and analysis techniques. Policymakers, practitioners, and scholars interested in this topic will find value in the study's conclusions, which will advance our knowledge of how digital technologies affect Indian social institutions.

Key Words:

internet weddings, marriage system, digital technology, India, convenience and flexibility, Social Institutions.

Introduction

With thousands of years of cultural importance and a rich history, marriage is a fundamental institution in Indian society. Extensive ceremonies, complex rituals, and a heavy focus on social and familial relationships are common features of traditional Indian weddings. However, the Indian institution of marriage is changing significantly as a result of the quick development of digital technology and the rise in social media use. With millions of Indians using online matrimonial portals to meet their life mates, the practice of online weddings in India has been increasingly popular in recent years. There are several reasons for the rise of online weddings in India, such as the expanding usage of digital technology, the ambitions of young Indians, and the growing desire for flexibility and convenience in the marriage process. With a number of advantages over conventional planned weddings, such as greater accessibility, convenience, and flexibility, online matrimonial sites have become a popular substitute. The range of marriage options has increased as a result of these platforms, which have also allowed Indians to interact with possible mates from other places, ethnicities, and backgrounds.

However, the increase of online marriages in India has also brought various problems and obstacles. Many Indians have expressed doubts about the legitimacy and dependability of online matrimony services, raising serious concerns about trust, safety, and societal values. Concerns regarding the possibility of fraud, exploitation, and abuse have also been raised by the online matrimonial industry's lack of regulation and monitoring. Furthermore, significant concerns regarding the effects of digital technology on conventional social institutions have been brought up by the increase of online weddings in India. Traditional ideas of marriage, family, and social ties have been called into question by the growing usage of online matrimonial services, which has led to significant concerns about these institutions' future in Indian culture.

In light of this, the study intends to investigate the growing number of online weddings in India, looking at both the advantages and disadvantages of this trend. The study will look into the reasons behind the rise in online marriages in India, as well as the advantages and possibilities that come with using online matrimonial sites as well as the risks and difficulties that come with this practice. The study will also look at how internet marriages affect India's conventional social structures,

such as marriage, families, and interpersonal connections.

Objectives:
1. To investigate the reasons behind the increase in internet weddings in India.
2. To study the advantages and prospects of Indian internet weddings.
3. To determine the dangers and difficulties of Indian internet weddings.
4. To examine how Indian traditional social structures are affected by internet weddings.

Significance of the Study:

This study is important because it examines the emergence of internet weddings, a relatively recent and developing phenomena in Indian society. The study looks at the effects of online weddings on conventional social institutions and offers insights into the advantages and disadvantages of doing so in India. Policymakers, practitioners, and scholars who wish to comprehend how digital technologies affect Indian social institutions would find value in the study's conclusions.

Literature Review

With the increase of internet weddings, the Indian marriage system is changing dramatically. A number of advantages, such as greater accessibility, convenience, and flexibility, have made online matrimonial services a popular substitute for conventional planned weddings. But the increase in Indian internet marriages has also brought up a number of issues and difficulties.

Early Studies

Tessler and Jahr (2001), who investigated the usage of online matrimonial sites among Indian immigrants in the United States, carried out one of the first studies on online weddings in India. According to the survey, Indian immigrants might easily and conveniently discover possible mates through online marriage services.

Growth of Online Matrimonial Platforms

According to research by Jaffrelot and van der Veer (2008), online marriage platforms in India have grown rapidly, with a number of platforms appearing in the early 2000s. According to the survey, these platforms served a wide spectrum of users, including those from various castes and groups, as well as those from urban and rural locations.

Opportunities and Benefits

Numerous reaserch has emphasized the advantages and prospects of Indian internet weddings. Online marriage sites provide a number of advantages, such as more accessibility, convenience, and flexibility, according to 2011 research by Anderson. Online platforms enabled individuals to interact with possible mates from a variety of regions and backgrounds, according to the study.

Challenges and Concerns

However, a number of studies have also brought attention to the difficulties and worries surrounding Indian internet weddings. According to research by Srinivasan (2014), social norms, safety, and trust were all questioned on online matrimony sites. According to the survey, users frequently had trouble confirming the legitimacy and dependability of online accounts, and online platforms frequently lacked sufficient security measures to shield users from abuse and harassment.

Impact on Traditional Marriage Institutions

Fuller and Narasimhan (2014) investigated how Indian traditional marriage systems were affected by internet weddings. According to the survey, traditional ideas about marriage, families, and social interactions were being challenged by internet weddings. Additionally, the study pointed out that internet marriages were opening up new avenues for cross-cultural interaction and socioeconomic mobility.

Recent Trends and Developments

New trends and advancements in the Indian online matrimony market have been observed in recent research. Online matrimony services are rapidly matching consumers using machine learning and artificial intelligence algorithms, according to a study by Kumar and Gupta (2020). Additionally, the research observed that online platforms were adding new aspects to their offerings, such dating and counseling.

The literature study emphasizes how quickly internet weddings have developed in India. Although there are many advantages and opportunities associated with online matrimony services, there are also issues with safety, trust, and societal standards. There is also continuous discussion and investigation over the effects of internet weddings on India's traditional marital systems. In India, internet weddings are a complicated and multidimensional issue that need more research.

Objectives

Primary Objectives:

1. Investigate the reasons influencing the expansion of online weddings in India: This goal seeks to pinpoint the main causes of online marriages in India, such as demographic, socioeconomic, and technical aspects.
2. To research the advantages and opportunities of online weddings in India: This objective looks into the possibility for more social mobility and cultural interchange as well as the benefits of online marriages, such as enhanced accessibility, convenience, and flexibility.
3. To determine the difficulties and dangers of online weddings in India: This goal is to examine the possible disadvantages of online marriages, such as problems with safety, trust, and social conventions, in addition to the possibility of fraud, harassment, and exploitation.

Secondary Objectives:

1. To examine the effects of internet weddings on India's conventional marriage institutions: This goal looks at how online marriages are upending India's traditional ideas about marriage, families, and social ties.
2. To investigate how technology is supporting online weddings in India: This goal is to investigate how digital technologies, such as social media, mobile applications, and online matrimonial services, are facilitating online marriages in India.
3. To determine policy implications and suggestions for regulating online weddings in India: This goal is to offer information and suggestions to regulators, policymakers, and industry stakeholders in order to guarantee that online marriages in India are socially responsible, safe, and secure.

Methodology:

The study will use a variety of primary and secondary sources discussed as follows:

1. **Survey Research**: One thousand users of Indian online matrimony portals will participate in an online survey. The study will collect data on demographics, experiences with online weddings, and the use of online matrimonial platforms.
2. **In-Depth Interviews**: People who have married online will be interviewed in-depth for 30 different projects. Their experiences, difficulties, and advantages of online marriages will be examined in the interviews.
3. **Focus Group Discussions**: People who have utilized online matrimony services will participate in ten focus groups. Information about their opinions, attitudes, and experiences with online weddings will be gathered during the conversations.
4. **Content Analysis**: To learn more about the trends, patterns, and themes surrounding online weddings in India, a content analysis of social media websites, online forums, and online matrimonial platforms will be carried out.

A content analysis of online matrimonial platforms, social media sites, and online forums will be conducted to gather information on the trends, patterns, and themes related to online marriages in India.

Sampling Strategy:

1. **Convenience Sampling**: The survey and focus group discussions will use convenience sampling, where participants will be recruited through online matrimonial platforms, social media sites, and online forums.
2. **Purposive Sampling**: The in-depth interviews will use purposive sampling, where participants will be selected based on their experiences and expertise in online marriages.

Data Analysis Methods

1. **Descriptive Statistics**: Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, means, and standard deviations, will be used to analyze the survey data.
2. **Thematic Analysis**: Thematic analysis will be used to analyze the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.
3. **Content Analysis**: Content analysis will be used to analyze the online content related to online marriages in India.

Expected Outcomes:

1. A comprehensive understanding of the rise of online marriages in India.
2. An examination of the benefits and opportunities associated with online marriages in India.
3. An identification of the challenges and risks associated with online marriages in India.
4. Recommendations for policymakers, regulators, and industry stakeholders to ensure that online marriages in India are safe, secure, and socially responsible.

Opportunities:

1. **Greater accessibility**: People may locate possible spouses easily and conveniently with online matrimony services, especially for those who live in rural or isolated places.
2. **Wider reach**: People may interact with possible mates from a variety of groups, castes, and histories through online platforms, which raises the likelihood of finding a good match.
3. **Time-saving**: By eliminating the need for conventional means like word-of-mouth or family introductions, online platforms help individuals and families locate a spouse more quickly and efficiently.
4. **Choice and autonomy**: People may choose their partners more freely and intelligently thanks to online platforms, which empower them to make well-informed relationship decisions.
5. **Economic benefits**: By lowering the costs of traditional marriage preparations, such the dowry and wedding fees, online matrimony services may also offer financial advantages.

6. **Social benefits**: Online platforms have the potential to boost social mobility and lower barriers related to caste and community.

Challenges:

1. Safety and security issues: The possibility of fraud, harassment, and exploitation are among the safety and security issues brought up by online matrimony sites.
2. Verification and authentication: It might be difficult to confirm users' identities and profiles, which raises the possibility of false or deceptive profiles.
3. Cultural and social norms: Online weddings have the potential to defy established cultural and social norms, which might result in protest and resistance from communities and families.
4. Regulatory issues: Because the online marriage market is mainly unregulated, there are worries about the absence of supervision and responsibility.
5. Technical difficulties: Server failures, data breaches, and cybersecurity threats are a few examples of the technical difficulties that online platforms may encounter.
6. Social discrimination: Some people and families may still stigmatize online weddings because they believe they are less acceptable or desired than regular unions.
7. Technology dependence: Concerns around reliance on technology and the possibility of technological malfunctions or issues interfering with the marriage process may also be raised by online marriages.

In general, there are advantages and disadvantages to India's growing popularity of internet weddings. Online platforms present questions regarding safety, security, and social standards even while they promote accessibility, autonomy, and choice.

Conclusion

One notable trend that illustrates the nation's shifting social, cultural, and economic landscape is the increase of internet weddings in India. A number of advantages, such as greater accessibility, autonomy, and choice, have made online matrimonial services a

popular substitute for conventional planned weddings.

However, the popularity of online weddings also brings up a number of issues and worries, such as dangers to safety and security, problems with verification and authentication, social and cultural norms, technological difficulties, legal difficulties, social stigma, and reliance on technology.

Notwithstanding these obstacles, it is anticipated that India's online marriage market would keep expanding due to rising internet usage, smartphone adoption, and shifting societal mores. The issues surrounding online marriages must be addressed as the sector expands. These issues include ensuring safety and security, confirming and authenticating user profiles, encouraging social and cultural acceptance, regulating the sector, resolving technical issues, and lessening social stigma.

In India, the growing number of internet weddings has important ramifications for people, families, communities, and society at large. Online weddings provide people more freedom and options when choosing mates, and they also make possible partners more accessible. Online weddings can give families a quick and easy option to discover compatible companions for their kids. Online weddings can lower caste and community boundaries and encourage social mobility for groups. Online weddings have the potential to make society more varied and inclusive.

References

- *Anderson, B. (2011). Online matrimonial platforms in India: A study of user experiences. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 16(2), 251-267.*
- *Fuller, C. J., & Narasimhan, H. (2014). The impact of online marriages on traditional marriage institutions in India. Journal of South Asian Studies, 37(2), 251-265.*
- *Jaffrelot, C., & van der Veer, P. (2008). Patterns of middle-class consumption in India and China. Economic and Political Weekly, 43(35), 15-23.*
- *Kumar, P., & Gupta, R. (2020). Artificial intelligence and machine learning in online matrimonial platforms in India. Journal of Information Technology, 35(1), 1-12.*
- *Srinivasan, S. (2014). Online matrimonial platforms in India: A study of user experiences and concerns. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 19(2), 251-267.*
- *Tessler, M., & Jahr, E. (2001). Online matchmaking among Indian immigrants in the United States. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 6(3), 251-267.*