

Impact of Distance and Caste Distribution on Marriage Field

(Special Reference to The Mewat Region of Alwar District)

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Abstract

The area which have affinal ties with the central village is called a marriage field. In ideal situation a marriage field should be circular. But many social-cultural and physical factors distort the shape, size and extent of marriage field.

In case of a peasant caste village Mehrana. Major factors determined the shape and extent marriage field, these are; caste distribution and distance from the central village.

Meos have a closely knit social organisation where marital linkages are established in close proximity. They prefer to have marital links with known families, living in known places. Due to this feeling 60 percent of marital alliances of Mehrana are established within a radius of 30 kilometres and 96 percent within a radius of 45 milometres.

Keywords: Marital linkages, marriage field, marital alliances, central village, incoming girls, outgoing girls, affinal ties.

General Introduction of Study Area :

The Mewat region is situated in three states, namely; Uttarpradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan. The Mewat region of Alwar districts (Rajastahn) is a part of this whole Mewat region.

Mewat region of Alwar district mainly lies in Tijara, Ramgarh, Alwar, Kishangarh, Kotkasim tehsils.

Mehrana village of Tijara tehsil has been selected for present research work by random sampling.

Mehrana village situated in Mewat region of Alwar district. The village located 27⁰56' North latitude and 76⁰51' East longitude near Tijara town. Climate of Mewat region is subtropical. Mercury touches 48⁰C on some hot days in summer season but the winter season is cool. Temperature goes down to below 2⁰C at some cool nights. Average annual rainfall of Tijara tehsil is 652 mm. Above 90% precipitation being in July to September from Southwest monsoon. Average rainy days in a year 30, this village situated in a plain area, having a fertile loamy soil.

Mehrana is purely Meo village Meo is a muslim peasant caste. The village connected by a gravel road from Tijara town. Haryana border is only ten kilometres far from here.

Hypotehsis :

The major factors determined the shape and extent of the marriage filed,are : caste distribution and distance.

Objective of the study

- (i) To analyse the shape and extent of a marriage field.
- (ii) To understand the relationship between distance and number of martial linkages.
- (iii) To analyse the caste distribution on marriage field.

Methodology

Secondary data regarding to the marital linkages are not available. So, primary data have been collected through door to door survey and interview. The schedule contains direction, distance of affinal village, gotra of affines, age, marriage of year, mode of conveyance etc. The distance between central village (Mehrana) and affinal villages calculated by 'maps distance calculator app'. Through tabulation and mapping prepared a marriage filed of incoming and outgoing girls.

Review of Literature

Distance is an important geographic factor that governs marital linkages in a banal attributeless space. Taking the rule of friction of distance as the principal factor in the flow of migration, Ravenstein formulated the rule of distance decay in 1885.

In the Mewat region of Alwar district as elsewhere in north India, families are patriarchal and patrilocal. Therefore it is only women who migrate from their father's village to their husband's village. In patrilocal system of family, wives stay in their husbands house.

Gould found in his study the phenomena of village exogamy in Faizabad village (1960:480).

Singh, Jaipal (1979), Yadav J. (1981), Khan and Chauhan (1985) and Yadav, Neetu (2009) have also observed the area of no marital migration surrounding the central village in Alwar and Bharatpur districts in Rajasthan.

Chauhan, Abha (2003) discussed marriage rules and customs of Meos of Mewat region.

Dutt *et al* (1981:19) have found the 5-10 miles band to have the maximum number of marriages. While Singh (1970) found in his study in Alwar district, that maximum number of marriages occurs between 10-15 miles distance band.

Introduction

The area which have affinal ties with the central village is called field of marital linkages.

In ideal situation the field of marital linkages should be circular. But in real world, many factors impede the operation of the law of distance decay. Several physical and socio-cultural factors distort the shape, size and extent of the field. Roads facilitate the movement of brides to and from the central village, because road links the central village to the surrounding villages. In the age of cars and buses roads are the important factor that affects the shape, size and extent of the fields of marital linkages. Where the density of roads is higher, there is greater concentration of marital alliances. Some times it seems that field of marital linkages extends along the major roads. As in Indian society, marriages are held within a caste. Caste boundary also plays an important role to determine the shape and size of marital linkages field. For example in the study area -Mehrana, a Meo village, situated on the western boundary of Meo belt. Beyond this boundary there are no meos, therefore Mehrana has no marital alliance in the west. Caste boundary of Mehrana crinkled the field of marital linkages. (Fig. 1)

Marriage Field of Mehrana

Mehrana is a Meo village. It is located at the western boundary of Meo belt in Tijara Tehsil of Alwar district. Sikandra-Bhiwari Mega highway which passes nearby this village, is a dividing line between Ahirs and Meo belt in this locality. There is no Meo village in the west beyond this mega highway. But in the north, north-east, east, south-east and south of Mehrana, there is a dense population of Meos distributed in Alwar, Bharatpur districts of Rajasthan and Gurgaon, Mewat, Faridabad districts of Haryana state. It provides a vast area for marital linkages to Mehrana.

The marriage field of Mehrana has semi-circular shape. Caste boundary distorted the circular shape of the marriage field. North-south extent of marriage field is about 100 kilometers. The east-west extent is 45 kilometers in northern half and 60 kilometers in southern half. (Fig. 1)

The Meo society follows caste endogamy custom, so caste boundary in the west checks the extension of marriage field. It is the reason that east-west extension of marriage field is lesser than north-south. The north, north-east, east and south-east extension of marriage field mainly affected by distance decay rule. But some cultural differences with Bharatpur region are also discourages marital ties in the east and south-east.

Table : 1

**MEHRANA
(A Meo Village)
Distance and Marital Linkages
(2012-13)**

Distance (Kms.)	Incoming Brides	Outgoing Brides	Total
0 - 4	0	0	0
4.1 - 5	0	5	5
5 - 15	17	20	37
15 - 30	82	59	141
30 - 45	56	50	106
45 - 60	6	1	7
60 - 75	3	0	3
75 - 90	0	0	0
90 and above	2	0	2

Based on data collected during field survey

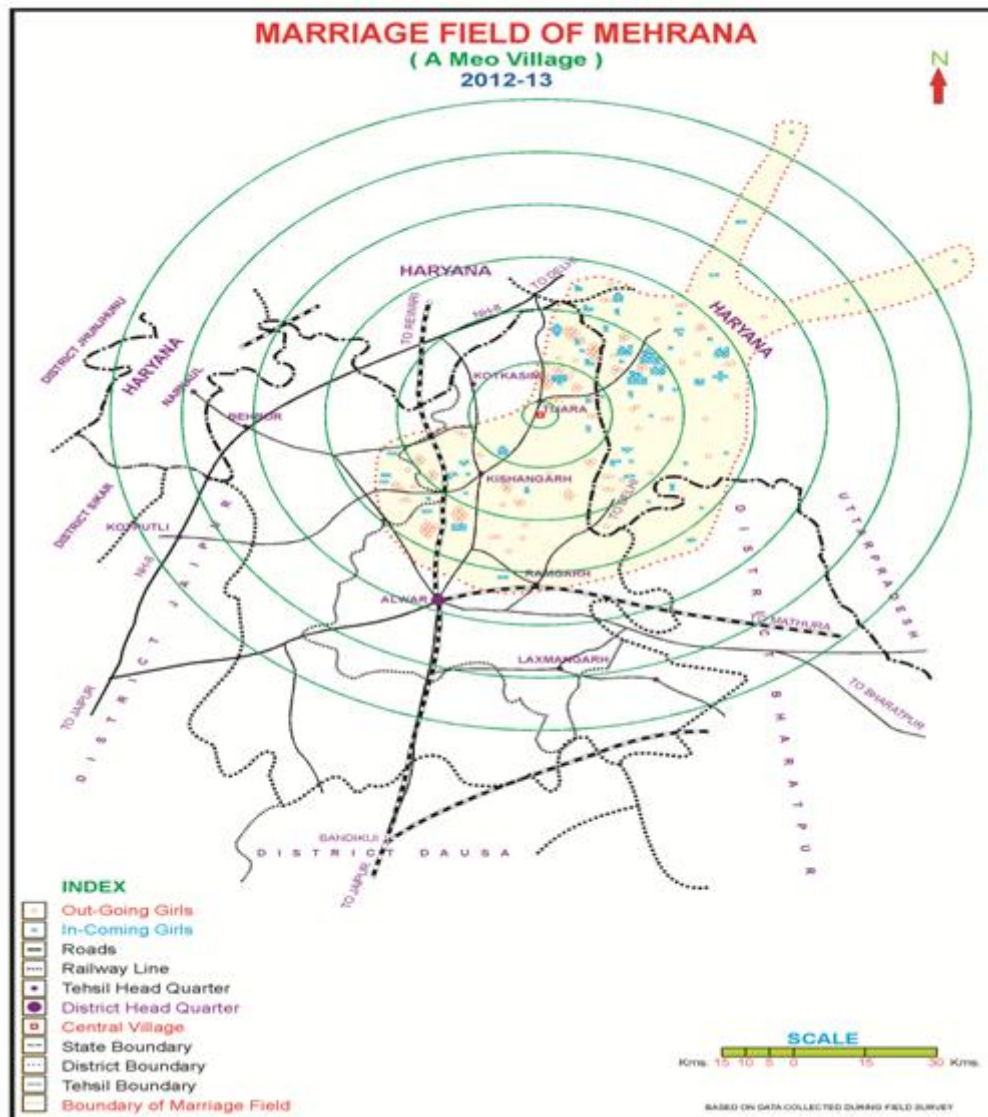


Fig. 1

The Meos have a closely knit social organization, where marital ties are established in close proximity. They prefer to have marital links at places, where both families know each other. Due to this feeling 60% of marital alliances of Mehrana are established within a radius of 30 kilometers and 96% within a radius of 45 kilometers (table 1)

Conclusion :

In case of Mehrana village, caste boundary distorted the circular shape and checked the extent of marriage field in the West. Due to distance factor 96% marital alliances are established within 45 kilometres. The shape and extent of the marriage field of Mehrana is determined by two major factors, these are : caste distribution and distance. Thus it is proved that the hypothesis "the major factors determined the shape and extent of the marriage field these are, caste distribution and distance" is found correct.

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