

# Investigación joven con perspectiva de género V

Edición y coordinación:  
Clara Sainz de Baranda  
Marian Blanco-Ruiz



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# DO CASTE TRAVEL WITH THE GENDERED BODY?: READING INDIAN (DIASPORA) ONLINE MATRIMONIAL WEBSITE

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## ABSTRACT

Advertisement is not just a business expenditure undertaken in the hope of moving some merchandise off the store shelves, but it is an integral part of modern culture. Indian online matrimonial advertising sites are one of those booming advertising sites attracting many people through their promises and even crossing the Indian borders to include the Indian diaspora living in different parts of the world. The matrimonial sites advertise the profiles of grooms and brides to arrange the marriages of Indians residing inside or outside the country. Matrimonial websites, faster than any traditional matchmaker, filter profiles according to the preferences and choices of the person looking for a partner.

The paper will look beyond the fancy pictures of matrimonial sites and their advertisements to question the social, cultural, economic, and ideological concerns. In this respect, the paper will employ the feminist critique of advertisements to analyze the process of creating an online profile and looking for a recommended profile. The paper will observe the complexity of gender with caste to see the persistence of strong caste-based marriages far from the Indian land among the diaspora. In this regard, two male and female profiles are created on *Jeevansathi.com* to access other existing profiles of brides and grooms. Among many profiles, 50 random profiles are taken for the case study.

**KEYWORDS:** Matrimonial websites, advertisements, Indian diaspora, Caste, Gender, *Jeevansathi.com*.

## 1. Introduction: Matrimonial Advertising Websites

Indian online matrimonial advertising sites are one of those booming sites which are attracting many people to find their partners. According to the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry in India, the online matrimony business is expected to be a \$250 Million business by 2017 (Bhatia, 2014). According to The New York Times, there are over 1500 matrimony websites in India (Sinha, 2015). These matrimonial websites have expanded their business beyond the Indian border among the Indian diaspora.

As these days it is so common among people that when a boy or a girl of marriageable age finds it difficult to get a "suitable match," the apparent questions that people ask are: "Have you tried with the matrimonials?(in plural)," or "You should create a profile in one of the matrimonial sites." This is primarily because "matrimonials" provide wide-ranging options for people to find suitable partners for marriage. Matrimonial websites are becoming increasingly popular and a "modern" way to search for a partner. Hence, the influx of online matrimonial advertisements indicates not only changing social structures and identities but also changing concepts of marriage, love, and gender roles in contemporary India and also outside India among the diaspora.



Traditionally, the wedding proposals of individuals were transmitted through negotiators/brokers and intermediaries between families to arrange marriages. Although love marriages have always been a part of Indian or Indian diaspora society, the preferred process for spousal selection has been an arrangement that may coincide with society's collective preferences (Mody, 2002, 223). Typically, parents use to initiate and mediate the search for a spouse within their kinship networks and ensure compatibility based on caste, education, affluence, horoscope, and physical characteristics. According to Ambedkar, arranged marriages are usually endogamous with the bride and groom belonging to the same caste, reinforcing caste lines (2004, 136).

The information technology revolution in India radically transformed the matrimonial market in the current situation. Matrimonial sites faster than any traditional matchmaker filter profiles according to the preferences of the person looking for a spouse. Unlike the marriage advertisements in the print media, online matrimonial profiles provide much more detailed information about a candidate's age, caste, religion, education, career, family background, complexion, lifestyle, attributes, expectations, and so on, aimed at helping clients select the most suitable and compatible husband and wife. Contacting prospective brides or grooms and expressing affinity becomes much quicker and comfortable in the online space; access to mobile phone numbers, emails, and online chat rooms provide opportunities to get to know and understand one another better.

India's inclusion in the global market economy and a boom in the general media landscape in the 1990s led to a proliferation of online Indian matrimonial sites at the international level. These websites are different from online/Internet dating sites such as OkCupid, Tinder, and Truly Madly. While, via online dating sites, one finds a date, "usually to develop a personal, romantic, or sexual relationship," on matrimonial sites, individuals sign up primarily to find marriage partners. Some of the significant online matrimonial portals are *Shaadi.com*, *Bharatmatrimony.com*, and *Jeevansathi.com*. These portals also appeal much to the Indian diaspora, as marriages through these sites combine the Indian "tradition" of arranged marriage and the "modern" Western notion of love and romance. The online matrimonial technologies transgress geographical boundaries and give some autonomy to candidates in arranging their marriages. Furthermore, because of being outside India, the diaspora has lost access to traditional matchmaking services in its country of origin. In such situations, the

online matrimonial sites provide excellent opportunities to arrange marriage despite being outside the country.

Understanding this background of Indian (diaspora) matrimonial sites, the paper goes beyond the fancy world of matrimonial advertising sites which promise a happy married life. It will look into the social, cultural, economic, and ideological concerns behind the online (diasporic) matrimonial advertisements. In this respect, the paper will employ the feminist critique of advertisements and analyze the process of profile registering and surfing profiles on a matrimonial site. It will do a case study of 50 profiles equally divided based on gender. Specifically, gender and caste will be used as a methodological tool to observe the construction and perpetuation of normative heterosexuality and the persistence of caste-based marriages far from the Indian land among the diaspora. So, the paper's title is itself the research question: Do caste travel with the gendered body among Indian diaspora?

## **2. Theoretical Methodology: Caste and Gender in Indian Marriage**

The research paper will use gender and caste as a category of analysis that enables to identify the double burden on the cross-border movement of a gendered body. Gender and caste are both part of the reality we study and the lens through which we view that reality. Before getting into the case study, defining the terms gender and caste from where the research imparts is vital.

Gender, as delineated by V Geetha, is a social construction where specific and distinctive attributes and roles are allocated to the male and female sexes. Different sets of expectations are imposed on them that are not easily exchanged. Their roles and expectation follow a norm which is practiced repeatedly and subconsciously. Hence, such norms are naturalized and unquestioned over a period of time (2002, 1-3).

Geetha (2002) explains such norms as "a set standard of the typical and ideal male and female behaviour that forms different roles and responsibilities for men and women. These norms are usually based on the patterns of work, mode of feeling and relating, style of clothing, systems of learning and communication, most significantly, access to resources and power" (2002, 5). These norms are, however, not unchanging. Nor are they consistent and uniform. Though, in the time of social upheaval, norms and expectations are often challenged, and even altered. However, as soon as the order is restored in society, older norms re-assert themselves or co-opt according to the transformations (2002, 5).

Thus, norms and expectations that define male and female natures and behaviour are essential components and rest on social and economic systems. These systems, in turn, are informed and shaped by the norms and expectations. Nevertheless, social and economic designs are also influenced by other factors, for instance, caste, religion, language, class, and sexual preferences. This, consequently, influence and shape masculinity and femininity. Geetha also reminds through her text that gender is not a single component on which the discrimination is maintained. One needs to see the complexity beyond gender through multiple perspectives to understand the discrimination and answer the question of this study: Do caste travel with the gendered body among Indian diaspora? So, this case study emphasizes the intersection of caste and gender in the Indian diaspora matrimonial sites.

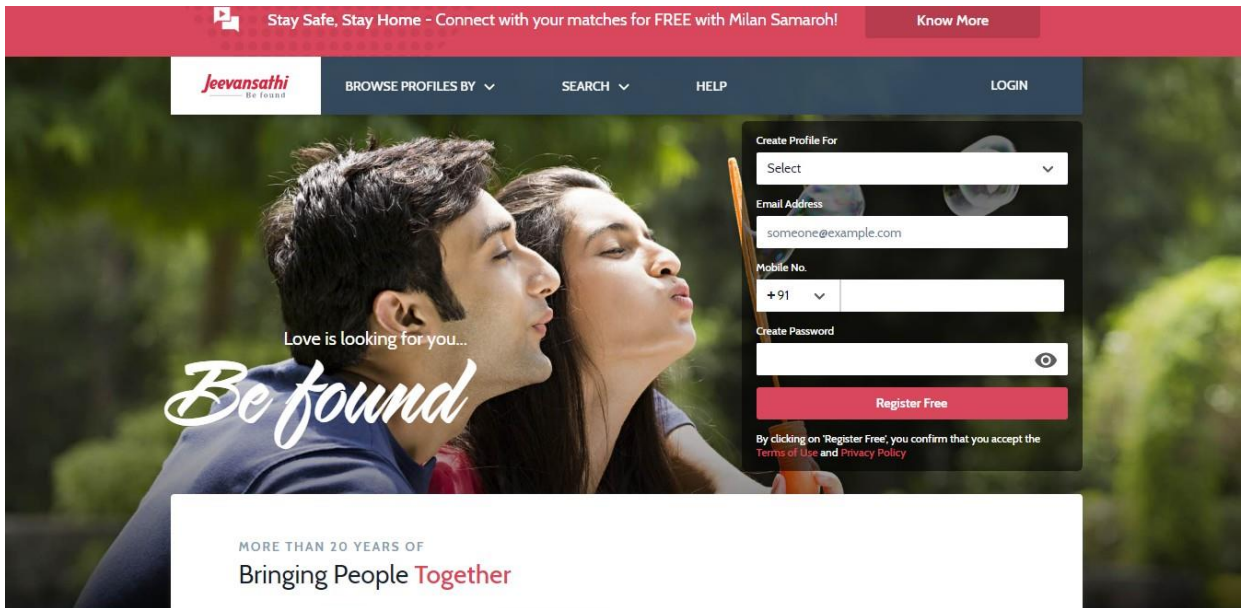
Many critics who have studied gender and caste under one lens, such as B R Ambedkar, claim that caste, class, and gender are inextricably linked; they interact with and shape each other (2004, 143). Uma Chakravarti argues that "caste as a system of discrete units within a larger system of production makes endogamy a crucial element and this, in turn, affects gender" (2018, 26). Chakravarti adds that the structure of marriage, sexuality and reproduction is the fundamental basis of the caste system. Marriage, sexuality, and reproduction are also essential to the way inequality is sustained between two genders (2018, 26).

Endogamy ritualizes female sexuality as the key to maintain the bounded nature of each group: endogamous marriages have been the primary means by which the separation among different castes is achieved. Each caste is bounded with the ideology of purity and impurity, especially the upper-caste, which continues as a bounded group in order to preserve their caste as a discrete social unit (Chakravarti, 2018, 27). For that purpose, the women of upper caste must be closely guarded and their sexuality should be protected by their fathers before marriage and by their husbands after marriage. Notably, upper-caste women should be protected from the lower-caste men in order to maintain the purity of the upper caste (Chakravarti, 2018, 65). The marriage system and endogamy are prime distinguishing characteristics of the caste system. Intriguingly, arranged marriages are the norm, whereas "love marriages" are considered deviant and dangerous, especially when the love marriages undergo an inter-caste selection of spouses. Hence, any marriage outside the endogamous circle, that is, any violation of the rule of endogamy usually referred to as "outcasting" or is "criminalized" (Mody, 2002; Baxi, 2014).

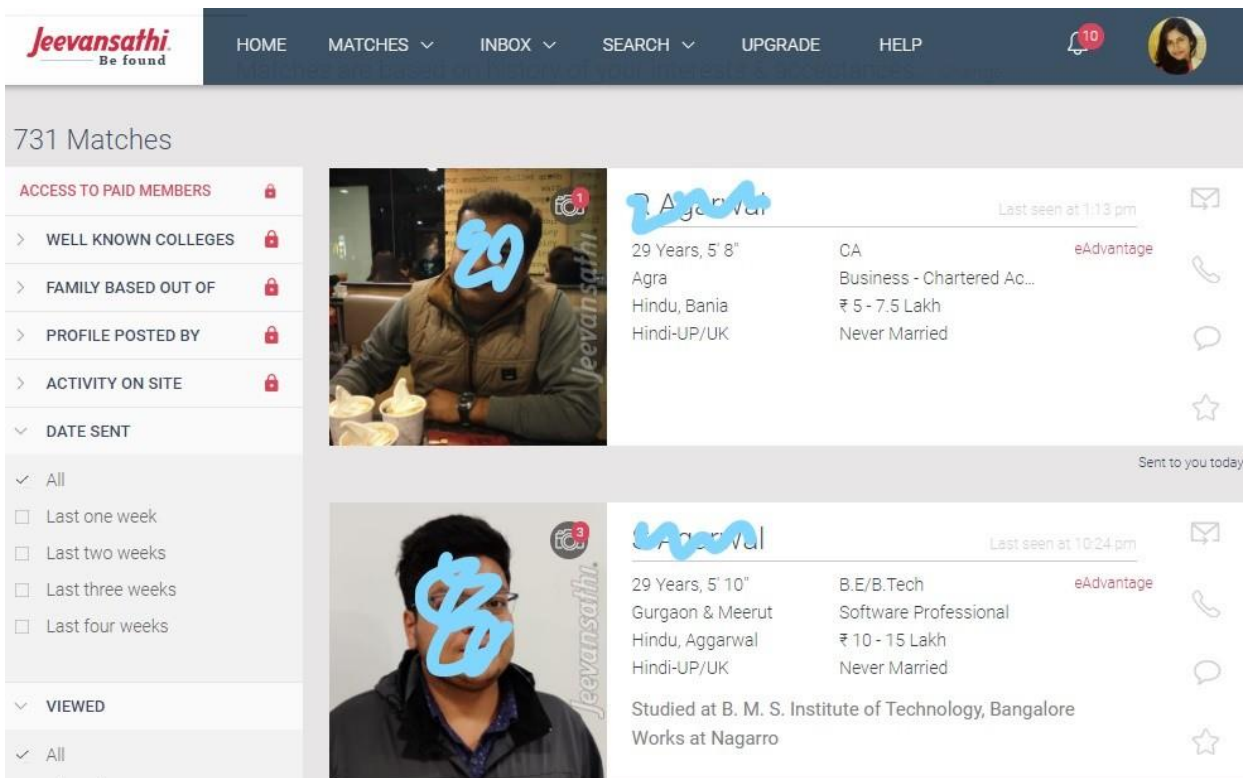
### 3. The Case Study: *Jeevansaathi.com*

Matrimonial websites are visually appealing to their visitors with their attractive pictures and tag lines such as "Jeevansaathi: Bringing People Together," "Love is looking for you ... Be found." Besides, many video advertisements run on television persistently to take its viewers to a promising world of marriage. *Jeevansaathi.com* is one of such matrimonial sites that are popular among Indians and Indian diaspora to find a suitable spouse. "Jeevan" means "life," and "sathi" means "friend" or "partner"; hence, "Jeevansaathi" means "life partner." The company Jeevansaathi was founded in 1998 by Sanjeev Bikhchandani, executive vice chairman of Info Edge India. Later, the company is shared among three partners (Business Today, 2014). In 2016, its logo "Be Found" campaign won a bronze award in the "Services: Other" category of The Advertising Club's EFFIE awards (Effie 2016 results, 2017). *Jeevansaathi.com* uses the customer to customer (C2C) business model. Although the website has a free list, search, and express interest and accepts other expressions of interest, users have to pay to get contact details. It assures hundred-percent privacy by allowing the profile creators to control who can see the profile and pictures with advanced privacy settings. As per the website, each profile is verified by them through the documents on age, address, and income etc.

There are many other matrimonial advertising sites, such as *BharatMatrimony.com* and *Shaadi.com*. The profiles were registered on three advertising sites *Jeevansaathi.com*, *shaadi.com*, and *BharatMatrimony.com*, the most recommended matrimonial sites, but received more interest from diaspora on *Jeevansaathi.com* in a shorter period (Wedgate, 2021). Hence, for this study, *Jeevansaathi.com* is comparatively more accessible and faster than the other two mentioned matrimonial sites. In this paper, the further research study was based on the data taken from *Jeevansaathi.com*. The below-given picture is the first page of *Jeevansaathi.com*, where one can see a "perfect and good-looking happy couple" enjoying themselves on a sunny day. Indeed, *Jeevansaathi.com* advertisements promise the same to its visitors. It invites its visitor to make a profile so that one can "be found" because "love is looking for you."



<https://www.jeevansathi.com/>



<https://www.jeevansathi.com/>

These two profiles have been taken from the website to show how the profiles appear on the websites. Since the site was accessed through the female profile, two male profiles popped up as suggestions. In these advertisements, the name is optional; age, height, current place of residence, religion, caste, education, job, salary, and marital status are mentioned. After clicking on the profile, a tab with detailed information about the person will emerge to the visitor.

Although the data collected from the profiles are considered to be public, substantial precautions are taken during the data collection process to ensure that no personally

identifiable information is retained. In this research study, the minimal data required are collected to study the relationship of personal attributes associated with gender and caste discrimination. This process intentionally excluded data such as photos, contact details, and interactions with other users. The massive risk from this research is the loss of individuals' privacy. Keeping in mind the privacy of the individuals, the collected data are anonymized.

For the case study, two profiles of two different genders were created on *Jeevansathi.com* and two other matrimonial sites. Since the responses were fast and more on *Jeevansathi.com*, so the preferred website for further study was *Jeevansathi.com*. In the additional step, I used my identity to create a matrimonial profile and asked the favor of my male friend to permit me to make a male profile on his name and identity. His name, phone number, photos, and other details were used to create a male profile and access other female profiles. So, this research can also be seen through an auto-ethnographical perspective because it was not limited to the data taken and analyzed. It was the research in which our identity was put out on the digital platform as unmarried male and female profiles, looking for a bride and a groom. Hence, I, too, was going through a different experience of being a researcher and at the same time being researched. Notably, only male and female profiles could be made on the advertising site because there was no other option to elect in the category of gender. Hence, while making two profiles, it was out and loud that the matrimonial site is a space for heterosexual people to find their spouses.

Primarily, my concern was to observe the structure of the profile registration form. The registration questionnaire was available only in the English language; the questions were short and straightforward to be more user-friendly. After registering into the matrimonial sites, I started segregating the profiles that sent interest based on their residence. The profiles sent by Indian diaspora living outside Indian land were retained for the study.

In the profile registration: a lengthy questionnaire was filled where questions from different aspects were asked. First, I was asked to upload three of my photos. Then, the "marital status" and the options were "never married," "awaiting divorce," "annulled," and "widow". Then, the date of birth and necessary details such as "name," "gender" (female and male), "height," "religion," and "mother tongue" were asked. Through these questions, the website assumed my sexual identity and orientation. It was followed by the "caste," "sub-caste," and "sect," and in that, a list of caste, sub-caste, and sects was given to choose. This question was put under the category of mandatory, which means one cannot complete the form without indicating his/her



caste. Intriguingly, there was also an option of "caste no bar," which meant that one is open to all caste, and while filling the form, I ticked the option of "caste no bar," so that I could receive profiles outside the caste I mentioned (below the picture has been provided). In the next section, some other questions related to "country living in," "city living in," "annual income" and "profile managed" by (self, parents or siblings) were asked. Then, there was a section called "About me"- where the details about the person, family, and education were asked. In the following section, the questions regarding education and career were asked. Apart from that, "family status," "family income," "family type," "family value (orthodox, conservative, moderate, liberal)" was also filled. In the next section, lifestyle was to be provided such as dietary habits, drinking habits, smoking habits, pet preference, owns a house or car, residential status outside India, body type (slim, average, athletic and heavy), complexion (very fair, fair, wheatish, very wheatish and dark), blood group, questions regarding any disability, HIV, Thalassemia. In the further section, I filled out my likes- about food, sports, movies, fashion, books, music, and free time hobbies.

In the form, all the questions were worthy of further analysis. Still, I limited to the questions where gender and caste could be used as a category through which we could view the socio-cultural and economic agenda of the matrimonial advertisements. However, in this study, the other aspects also juxtapose with gender and caste which could be further studied.

The image shows a registration form for a matrimonial website. The form is titled "mandatory\*" and includes the following fields:

- Bride's Name \***: Shilpi Gupta. There is a "Show to All" button with a gear icon. Below the field, it says: "If you wish to hide your name from others, click on settings icon and choose the setting".
- Date of Birth \***: 13 Dec 1989.
- Mother tongue \***: Hindi-Bihar/Jharkhand.
- Religion \***: Hindu.
- Caste \***: (Empty field). Below it is a checkbox labeled "Caste no bar (I am open to marry people of all castes)".
- Are you manglik?**: (Empty field).
- Horoscope match is necessary?**: (Empty field).

On the right side, there is a sidebar titled "WHY REGISTER" with the following benefits:

- Lakhs of Genuine Profiles
- Many Verified by Personal Visit
- Secure & Family Friendly
- Strict Privacy Control

For the study, 50 profiles are taken that advertised their desire and expectation for a bride or a groom. In those, 25 profiles are of males, which are accessed through the female profile, and 25 profiles of females, which are accessed through the male profile. The data are collected from May 25 to May 30, 2020. Another limitation of this study is that profile creators could remove the profiles at any time after they find a suitable spouse for themselves. In the data given below, complete names and the photos of the profiles are not provided in order to maintain the privacy of the visitors of the matrimonial website (*Jeevansathi.com*).

#### 4. Survey

Name of male profiles	Profile managed by	Profession or salary expected	Other expectation	Body type	body color	Caste
A Kumar (USA)	parents	not mentioned	Well read, independent, full of life, values family.	Not mentioned		Aggarwal
U G (USA)	parents	Income between 20,000\$ to 200,000\$		Slim, Athlete, Average	very fair, fair, wheatish	Bania
A Gupta (Netherland)	self	independent		Slim, Athlete, Average	very fair, fair, wheatish	Brahmin
ZTUX2881 (USA)	parents	professionally qualified	A healthy blend of traditional and modern culture,	Slim, Athlete, Average		Agarwal
A Vashisht (Spain)	parents	professional	Good family background	Slim, Athlete, Average		Brahmin Saraswat
A Dalmia (Luxembourg)	parents	not mentioned		Slim, Athlete, Average	very fair, fair, wheatish	Aggarwal, Bania
A Goyal (USA)	parents	not mentioned	Educated, family-oriented, good looking			Aggarwal
P Agarwal	parents	career oriented	Family and career-oriented, modern	Slim, Athlete, Average	very fair, fair, wheatish	Bania, Agarwal
YTVW8545 (USA)	parents		Social person		very fair, fair, wheatish	Bania, Agarwal
N Goyal (London)	parents	Salary- 25,000 \$ or more.	Tall, Beautiful, good looking, well-educated, and family-oriented.			Bania.



ZRTT7599( USA)	both	well qualified				Brahmin.
UTX7904 (USA)	self	not mentioned		Average		Brahmin.
P Nawalgaria (Spain)	self	independent				Aggarwal
S V Murari (Canada)	self	not mentioned				Brahmin
P (Germany)	self	not mentioned	Family-oriented	Average	fair	Kayastha.
N K Gupta (Canada)	self	not mentioned				Gupta, Gahoi
A. Anshumal (Paris)	self	Carrier oriented				Kurmi.
M Kumar (France)	parents	not mentioned	European citizen, Indian, Hindu girl, adjustable, caring, open-minded, good looking, and confident.			Brahmin
R Shrivastava (Denmark)		not mentioned	Hindu			Kayastha
A. Vaishya			Decent looking, fun-loving, cheerful, and happy girl.	Slim, Athlete, Average	very fair, fair, wheatish	Gupta
ZYTX6043 (USA)		not mentioned	Simple, educated, cultured, and working girl, adjusts in the family, respects elders, and takes care of the family. Supports her partner with mutual understanding and believes in family values.			Aggarwal Gupta

M Goel (USA)	self	well qualified	Well qualified, intelligent, stand by me in every situation.	Athlete, Average, heavy	wheatish brown, wheatish , fair, very fair	Bania, Aggarwal
A Varshneya (USA)		not mentioned		Slim, Average, Athletic,	fair, very fair	Gupta Aggarwal
A. Aggarwal (USA)	self	not mentioned				Aggarwal, Brahmin
A. Kumar (London, UK)	self	not mentioned	Someone expressive, humble and easy-going, with broad exposure and preferably some international or multi- culture exposure.	Slim, Average, Athletic,	wheatish brown, wheatish , fair, very fair	Bania

<b>Name of female profiles</b>	<b>Profile managed by</b>	<b>Profession</b>	<b>Other expectation</b>	<b>Body Type</b>	<b>Body Color</b>	<b>Caste</b>
S. Srivastava (USA)	Parents	Income	Kind, compassionate, ambitious, honest, and with a good sense of humor.	Not mentioned		Kayastha
A (YZXS8765) (USA)	Parents	Income		Not mentioned		Kayastha, Ambastha
A Nigam (USA)	Parents	Income		Not mentioned		Kayastha
S Jain (USA)	Parents	Income		Athlete, Average	Very fair, fair, wheatish	Digamber, Aggarwal
I Sinha (USA)	Parents	Working in USA		Athlete, Average	Very fair, fair, wheatish	Kayastha, Srivastava
ZUAT7765 (USA)	Parents	Working in USA		Athlete, Average		Srivastava
S Mohan (USA)	Self	Carrier oriented	values family	Not mentioned		Hindu, Kayastha
R Shruti (Singapore)	Parents	Not mentioned		Not mentioned		Kayastha
P Bharadwaj USA	Parents	Not mentioned		Slim, Athlete, Average		Brahmin
A Sharma (USA)	Parents	Income		Not mentioned		Brahmin

YTSW4830 (USA)	Parents		Smart, educated family-oriented from India	Not mentioned		Kayastha
A Bhatnagar Canada	Parents	Income		average	Very fair, fair, wheatish	Kayastha
K Sharma USA	Self	Not mentioned		Not mentioned		Brahmin Sharma
S Sharma USA	Parents	Doctor	Simple and respectful	Not mentioned		Brahmin
XZRX7589 USA	Self	Income	Understands her and treats her family as his own.	Not mentioned	Very fair, fair, wheatish	Brahmin
YVYA2249	Self	Income	Independent, smart and in the USA	Not mentioned		Brahmin
A Dogra USA	Self		Modern	Average Slim, Athlete	Very fair, fair, wheatish	Brahmin
A Vashistha USA	Parents	Income		Slim, Athlete, Average	Very fair, fair, wheatish	Brahmin
I Sharma USA	Parents	Income		Not mentioned		Brahmin
YZAT 5231 USA	Parents	not mentioned		Not mentioned	Very fair, fair	Brahmin
S Shukla USA	Both	not mentioned		Not mentioned		Brahmin
ZUVW6065 USA	Parents	doctor	Indian origin settled in USA	Not mentioned		Brahmin
ZYZ0359 USA	Parents	not mentioned	Indian Vegetarian, teetotaler Brahmin boy	Average and Athlete	Very fair, fair	Brahmin
ZZSY3739 USA	Parents	not mentioned		Not mentioned		Brahmin
V Srivastava USA	Parents	not mentioned		Not mentioned		Kayastha

## 5. Observation and Analysis

Coming to the survey, twenty-five male profiles were received or visited (which were sent as suggestions by the website) through the female profile. Fourteen out of twenty-five male profiles mentioned the body type and body colour of the bride they desire to marry whereas, only ten out of twenty-five profiles mentioned the body type and color of the male they desired.

The body type which was mostly indicated was "slim," "athlete," and "average" out of the four options, which included "heavy" as well. The other factor which juxtaposed with the body type is body colour or complexion. The form provided five options such as "very fair," "fair," "wheatish," "very wheatish," and "dark." Among those five options, most of the profiles of the males filled "very fair," "fair," and "wheatish" in their preferred colour of their brides. Besides, the boys described themselves as "average" or "athlete" and "wheatish" or "fair." Hence, neither male nor female mentioned "heavy" as body type, and "dark" and "very wheatish" in their desires, nor they mentioned the same for themselves.

In the second half of the survey, among twenty-five profiles of girls which were visited or received interest by the male profile, the females mentioned themselves "slim" and "fair" or "athlete" and "wheatish" and only ten out of twenty-five profiles mentioned the body type and colour of the male they desired. There too, the desired body was "very fair," "fair," or "wheatish," and "average" or "athlete," and no one mentioned "heavy" or "dark."

These demands of some specific body type and colour in the matrimonial advertisement are not naïve expectations but have a social, cultural, and economic construction. The body of a female and a male is desired to be in a particular shape and colour. As we refer Foucauldian idea of docile body, he argued that "the classical age discovered the body as object and target of power. It is easy enough to find signs of the attention then paid to the body- that is manipulated, shaped, trained, disciplined, which obeys, responds, becomes skillful, and increases its forces. A body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed, and improved (2017, 136). Likewise, the marriageable body, either of a male or a female, is scrutinized by socio-cultural and economic factors to fit into the categories of a particular shape and size ("slim," "athlete," and "average") and particular color ("very fair," "fair," "wheatish"). If we see the numbers then definitely, women's body is more vulnerable than men's.

Moreover, the repetition of these requirements in all advertisements has normalized "slim," "average," and "athlete" bodies among both the gendered bodies. The other option, such as "heavy," which is also present in the options, is not desired by the

males, nor it is mentioned in the profiles of the females, and the same is applied to the male ones. The body, which is "heavy," even tries to avoid mentioning the size of the body. Hence, the body, which is "heavy" or "not slim," needs to train itself to fit into the normalized category or leave the box untouched. Analogously, the colour of the body, which is "not very fair," "fair," or "wheatish" become socially less desired. According to the survey, the female body which has traditionally been a victim and is still scrutinized more based on such bodily social norms.

Further, eighteen out of twenty-five females have written their choices in the profession of the groom they want to marry. In their profiles they specified the words like "good income," "well-settled outside India," medical doctor or corporate employee. Contrarily, only eight out of twenty-five profiles indicated the word related to profession such as "well qualified," "carrier oriented" or "independent." Notably, fifteen out of twenty-five male profiles mentioned some indispensable points which they are looking for in a wife, such as, "simple, educated, cultured and working girl, adjusts in the family, respects elders, takes care of the family and supports her partner with mutual understanding and believes in family values" and "a healthy blend of traditional and modern culture." On the contrary, most of the females are expecting a "caring, understanding husband" apart from their profession.

Here, we see the difference in the expectation from both the genders where specific and distinctive attributes and roles are allocated to the male and female sexes. In this regard, Geetha aptly exhibits that behaviours are cultivated among adults from the beginning of their age, and they are trained to follow a particular role scribed by the society (2002, 5). As we see in the anticipation, a male should be professionally sound and caring towards her spouse whereas a female is expected to be caring towards the whole family, supporting and prioritizing the family of the husband. It is true that there has been a shift in the roles of male and female due to changing norms, time and location of Indians outside their country.

Intriguingly, males are required to be caring and loving towards their wives and women should be professionally active as well. However, this shift has burdened the women double with an expectation of being traditional in their thoughts who fulfill their families' desire with priority and at the same time, they should go out and earn as "modern" women. This double burdening is the result of changing norms with time. Geetha argues that norms of masculinity and femininity are, however, not unchanging. Nor are they consistent and uniform (2002, 5). It demonstrates that norms and expectations have been challenged. However, it is also true that the new challenges have been put forward with alteration.

In the next section of the survey, we see the intersection of caste and gender in the matrimonial sites and how it double marginalizes the women even in the digital platform like matrimonial site. In his study, Rajadesingan has argued that the youngsters are more open to the inter-caste marriage, and they look for their life partners outside their caste as well (2019, 393). However, in this study, it has been found that the new diaspora generations mention their caste while filling the form as it has been made mandatory to fill the caste. In that way, while looking for a partner on the website, it automatically filters the caste and shows the profiles from that particular caste or caste of the same status. In spite of filling the option of "caste no bar," the options will be suggested from that particular caste or caste of the same status.

Indeed, it has been noticed that the profiles made by the parents look for the bride or groom from the same caste. The young generation too, maybe unintentionally, carries their caste in their profiles even though the matrimonial site, *Jeevansathi.com*, offers an option of choosing "caste no bar." Consequently, each caste looks for the partner within the same caste. The marriage within the same caste continues and is normalized outside India as well. The digital and other modes of connection of Indians with Indian diaspora also keep them closed in the caste-based marriages. The questions rise here, why mentioning caste is so crucial that it is mandatory in the online matrimonial forms?, why after crossing the border one carries the norms of the homeland that is, marrying within the same caste? The marriage on the basis of caste is a typical and traditional norm of India, however, according to the study; digital media also continue the same tradition of marrying within same caste. The digital connection of Indians with Indian diaspora keeps them closed in the caste-based marriages even after leaving the country. Chakrawarti (2018) exerts that in an endogamous marriage, caste and gender interact with and shape each other, as the structure of marriage, sexuality, and reproduction is the fundamental basis of the caste system. It is also fundamental to the way inequality is sustained between genders (2018, 64-65). S. J. Tambiah writes "marriage is at the heart of Hindu society. It is... the most important event in a man's life; it is in the forefront of Hindu consciousness; and it is a focal point of the social system. A man's caste is first of all decided by the status of his parents, and subsequently maintained or modified by his own marriage and sexual encounters" (1973, 223). Hence, women in an endogamous marriage carry the lineage of caste. This in turn requires that women must be faithful to their caste. In order to secure the purity of the caste, they should be protected from the other caste men, especially lower caste men who can pollute the higher caste women by having sexual relation with her. Hence in a marriage, father ritually hands over the daughter and her sexuality

to a man of his caste with who she can ensure the purity of their caste. Apart from that, women should be brought from a family of equal status who carries similar family values of being a submissive wife and a caring mother (Chakravarti, 2018, 70). Coming to the matrimonial sites, marrying within the same caste ensures the purity of the sexuality of women and the lineage of the caste. Women should also carry the values of being domesticated and caring wives, daughter-in-laws and mothers because the burden of purity relies on them. At the same time, they should be “modern” earning women with a perfect body shape and color to satiate the husband’s desire.

## **6. Conclusion**

Online matrimonial sites contain millions of advertisements. Any individual, searching for a product (groom or bride) anywhere in the world, can make a profile to attract its viewers. The digitalization of Indian matrimonial sites has connected the Indians and the Indian diaspora globally. Most of the registered people do not know who all have created the profiles and with whom they are connected through online matrimonial sites. At the same time, they know them because they are one among them, a compatible groom or bride or parents of groom or bride. Hence, the matrimonial sites become a medium to show the loyalty and love towards country, people, culture, religion, caste and community. Certainly, the online matrimonial sites for Indian diaspora open the door to connect with their people, talk with them and find the one with who s/he wants to marry. Notably, the search for the partner is carried through filtration based on caste, class, body shape, colour, location etc.

The profile creator him/herself adheres to the professional ideologies, institutional knowledge, and assumptions of the others who are making profiles or visiting their advertisements. We see that the questions asked in the form are generalized and normalized for its visitors. Fascinatingly, most of the questions asked already have their answers in the options; the groom or bride does not go beyond the fixed responses. As per the study, most of the questions are centered upon the gender, caste, and class-based ideology where the victimization of an individual cannot be seen through one perspective. Instead, it needs to be seen with multiple lenses.

Online matrimonial market has boomed after 1998 and become a profit making market. Most of the matrimonial websites started their market from India and spread their offices in many neighboring countries and in some far way countries such as USA and Canada where most of the Indian diaspora are residing. Inspired in these companies, more matrimonial websites have been created outside India, for example in USA, which serves local Indian diaspora living in USA.

However, when we see any online Indian (diaspora) matrimonial advertisement, it should not be merely seen as the platform to find a life partner. Instead, one should doubt the questions asked in the form and expected in the other's profile. Also, it is not us who are searching for the bride or groom but it is the website that filters and gives us options and from there, we buy one. As we see the matrimonial websites and their advertisements continue to propagate and arrange hetero-normative marriages within the same caste.

In the survey, we compared the body type, body color, professions and other expectation mentioned in the search for a bride or a groom. It is observed that men and women both are moving towards achieving a perfect trained marriageable body; however the difference was seen in number between male and female. Men are desired to be professionally active whereas women should be professional and domesticated as well, where their family life and values should be prioritized in front of their professions. We have seen in the analysis that the central function of marriage is to procreate; it is the children born of such a normative marriage who maintain and reproduce the social order. Both the hierarchical relations of caste and the immortality of the male line as well as of ancestors, thus rest on marriage practices. Consequently, women within marriage are the carrier of the caste. The caste based matrimonial sites are the result of the fear of the contamination of caste (upper-caste) by the lower caste not only inside the country but also outside the national borders. Matrimonial websites do not only serve to find partner but to ensure the continuity of purity of the caste. The digital platform not only connects the diaspora with Indians for love, nostalgia, and root search but also serves to continue the purity of caste based Indian marriage system. Hence, when women cross the border after marriage or marry Indian diaspora then their gendered body also carries the caste with them.

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