Introduction:

Marriages in INDIA:

Marriage is deemed essential for virtually everyone in India. In India there is no greater event in a family than a wedding, dramatically evoking every possible social obligation, kinship bond, traditional value, impassioned sentiment, and economic resource. In the arranging and conducting of weddings, the complex permutations of Indian social systems best display themselves.

Essentially, India is divided into two large regions with regard to Hindu kinship and marriage practices, the north and the south. Additionally, various ethnic and tribal groups of the central, mountainous north, and eastern regions follow a variety of other practices. These variations have been extensively described and analyzed by anthropologists, especially Irawati Karve, David G. Mandelbaum, and Clarence Malone.

Broadly, in the Indo-Aryan-speaking north, a family seeks marriage alliances with people to whom it is not already linked by ties of blood. Marriage arrangements often involve looking far afield. In the Dravidian-speaking south, a family seeks to strengthen existing kin ties through marriage, preferably with blood relatives. Kinship terminology reflects this basic pattern. In the north, every kinship term clearly indicates whether the person referred to is a blood relation or an affinal relation; all blood relatives are forbidden as marriage mates to a person or a person's children. In the south, there is no clear-cut distinction between the family of birth and the family of marriage. Because marriage in the south commonly involves a continuing exchange of daughters among a few families, for the married couple all relatives are ultimately blood kin. Dravidian terminology stresses the principle of relative age: all relatives are arranged according to whether they are older or younger than each other without reference to generation.

On the Indo-Gangetic Plain, marriages are contracted outside the village, sometimes even outside of large groups of villages, with members of the same caste beyond any traceable consanguineal ties. In much of the area, daughters should not be given into villages where daughters of the family or even of the natal village have previously been given. In most of the region, brother-
sister exchange marriages (marriages linking a brother and sister of one household with the sister and brother of another) are shunned. The entire emphasis is on casting the marriage net ever-wider, creating new alliances. The residents of a single village may have in-laws in hundreds of other villages.

In most of North India, the Hindu bride goes to live with strangers in a home she has never visited. There she is sequestered and veiled, an outsider who must learn to conform to new ways. Her natal family is often geographically distant, and her ties with her consanguineal kin undergo attenuation to varying degrees.

In central India, the basic North Indian pattern prevails, with some modifications. For example, in Madhya Pradesh, village exogamy is preferred, but marriages within a village are not uncommon. Marriages between caste-fellows in neighboring villages are frequent. Brother-sister exchange marriages are sometimes arranged, and daughters are often given in marriage to lineages where other daughters of their lineage or village have previously been wed.

In South India, in sharp contrast, marriages are preferred between cousins (especially cross-cousins, that is, the children of a brother and sister) and even between uncles and nieces (especially a man and his elder sister's daughter). The principle involved is that of return--the family that gives a daughter expects one in return, if not now, then in the next generation. The effect of such marriages is to bind people together in relatively small, tight-knit kin groups. A bride moves to her in-laws' home--the home of her grandmother or aunt--and is often comfortable among these familiar faces. Her husband may well be the cousin she has known all her life that she would marry.

History Casteism in India

Perhaps there is no other nation in the world that is openly and shamelessly as racial as India. To be born in upper caste is a matter of pride whether the family to which the person belongs deserves it or not. A number of Indians who visit the foreign countries often complain about being treated differently on the basis of their skin colour, accents and caste. They themselves overlook what they have been doing back at home. Even the Indian political parties thrive and succeed by appealing to this base emotion of India.
The caste system has been the bane of the Hindu Society for centuries. The Hindu caste system was a clever invention of the later Vedic society justified by a few law makers. A caste is a division of the society based on the occupation and family. Hindu caste system traditionally is categorised in Brahmins, Khatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras, Chandalas. The caste system was based on the birth and as it was inherited. The caste rules were enforced strictly through the fear of political and religious authority. The success of the system depended on the performance of the duties of the prescribed for each caste. The rules varied from caste to caste. Women were expected to assist their husbands in observing the caste rules. The caste system prohibited the intercaste marriages as they would be a sign of decline of the dharma and that was the very reason why the caste system was devised. The law books allowed certain types of marriage as an exception rather than rule. Marriages between a higher caste men and lower caste women were less objectionable than Marriages between sudra males and higher caste females. The first three castes enjoyed distinct advantages in the society compared to the shudras whose job was to serve the three upper caste and live like fourth class citizen. The laws were discriminatory in the matters of rewards and punishment. The laws prescribed lighter punishments for the higher castes than the lower castes who had technically hardly had any recourse against the former in the criminal cases.

**Todays Scenario on Casteism in India**

After independence, Indian Constitution guaranteed equal status and the fundamental rights to all the classes of the people. Practice of untouchability was officially declared as a serious crime, punishable with servere penalties. Provisions were made to identify and protect the lower castes from exploitation and the ill treatment. The physical castesim to some extent has been reduced in urban India but rural India still has a glimpse of the castesim. There is still an existence of communal groupism which still makes intercaste marriages difficult for the couples who opt for a intercaste love marriage.

**Intercaste marriages in India**

Marriage may be in the same caste or it may be inter caste. Marriages within the same caste mean that both boy and the girl belong to the same community. Intercaste marriage means girl and boy are from different castes where one member belongs to lower caste. Inter-caste marriage is legal in India. Such marriages are sanctioned by the Special Marriage Act 1954 and are also permitted under The Hindu Marriage Act 1955. But still in India number of
inter caste marriages is very less. India is a country where caste and religion rules not democracy. I am sure if survey is done Majority Indians will agree that we need more inter caste marriages but in reality they will never allow their own kids to marry inter caste girl. Today also Indian society does not accept such couples who marry inter caste. Society including family members punishes them. Society ostracizes and discriminates against couples in inter-caste marriages. Honor Killing is nothing but a punishment to boy and girl for marrying inter caste. We need a law which will give death punishment to every person who attends the Khap Panchayats which gives order to kill the boy and girl and kill them. Intercaste marriages are often crippled with unique challenges that are actually associated with maintaining barriers. Experts claim that it is a natural tendency of people to create barriers in their minds and also around them. With more globalization and increase in educational facilities, there is great change in the views of people. As modernization has affected every section of society, inter caste marriages have also received acceptance from the people in urban and modern societies. There has been wide change in the social scenario. Parents and relatives of the lovers have been coming up with more open minds with wide acceptance of marriages outside their own castes. But in some regions which lack exposure to the education and modern society culture, things have remained unchanged. There are still oppositions by the members of different castes if they encounter any incident of inter caste marriage. These societies need some change of views so that young hearts could unite and live happily. A good relation needs understanding and devotion from boy and girl to blossom. If there are malpractices like caste system, then there will be unhealthy marital relations which increase the rate of divorces and mutual misunderstandings.

The Law for the Intercaste Marriages in India

The main reason behind passing the Special Marriage Act, 1954 was to provide a special form of marriage for the people of India and all Indian nationals in foreign countries, irrespective of the religion or faith followed by either party. The Act originated from a piece of legislation proposed during the late 19th century.

The Special Marriage Act, 1954 replaced the old Act III, 1872. The new enactment has 3 major objectives:

1. To provide a special form of marriage in certain cases,
2. to provide for registration of certain marriages and,
3. to provide for divorce.

When foreigners want to marry an Indian, or there is an intercaste marriage within Indians, this is the only act that comes to their rescue. With the changing scenario of the country, women liberalization, and the change in society has made it necessary to laws to adapt with the change.