The Role of Attachment Style on Preference for Arranged Marriage

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the role attachment style plays in preference for arranged marriage among single, non-married Indians. It was conducted online using a survey company (Survata) with the requirement that participants be interested in an arranged marriage, be between 18-40 years of age and not be married. The survey was accessed through an online link which could be located via any internet browser. Respondents included two hundred and seven respondents, who completed three questionnaires concerning their preference for an arranged marriage, attachment style, and acculturation and religious commitment. Data were analyzed using ANOVA and ANCOVA. The results indicate that attachment avoidance, attachment anxiety, religious commitment and acculturation play some role in arranged marriage preference. The Preoccupied attachment (high anxiety and low avoidance) style has the greatest impact on preference for arranged marriage. Acculturation also plays a role in preference for arranged marriage whereas an increase in religious commitment is correlated with a decline in arranged marriage preference. Attachment avoidance and acculturation to the Indian culture seem to play the biggest individual roles. Further analyses showed that the effect of attachment avoidance on preference for arranged marriage is mediated by acculturation but not by religious commitment. The results did not support expectations that attachment anxiety alone or religious commitment alone significantly predict preference for arranged marriage.
ATTACHMENT AND ARRANGED MARRIAGE

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

The Role of Attachment Style in Preference for Arranged Marriage

By

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ON PREFERENCE FOR ARRANGED MARRIAGE

A THESIS

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THE ROLE OF ATTACHMENT STYLE  
ON PREFERENCE FOR ARRANGED MARRIAGE  
INTRODUCTION  

Little research has been conducted to examine preference for arranged marriage in India in relation to attachment. However, there have been many general studies examining attachment style in many cultures in which arranged marriage is common. In a study of 62 cultural regions across the world, Schmitt et al. (2004), found that a Secure attachment style was the most common attachment style in 79% of cultures studied. However, this did not extend to East Asian cultures, including India, where Pre-occupied attachment style was most common though the authors did not provide a more specific attachment style breakdown. This may reflect cultural norms since these cultures tend to be more collectivist. Collectivist cultures tend to focus on community involvement in decision making, particularly in arranged marriage. In India and many countries across the Middle-East and Asia, parents and other relatives select partners for their children, who in turn must marry the person chosen. Recently “love marriages” have become increasingly common in India (Fuller & Narasimhan, 2008). Love marriages have been criticized by parents and were thought of as risky. As children in India grew up thinking that arranged marriage was the norm, preference for arranged marriage remained high.  

India, like most Asian countries, is quickly westernizing. In India where arranged marriage was for many centuries the norm, culture is rapidly changing and people are changing with it. What used to be considered impractical and risky has lately become the ideal in some areas. There are still large numbers of Indians who prefer an arranged marriage-- up to 90% (UNICEF, Human Rights Council, & ABC News, 2012) despite
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living in more westernized areas. Most importantly, for many having an arranged marriage has become a choice.

It appears that little work has been done to examine whether there are any differences in attachment style related to the degree of preference for an arranged marriage. Attachment style may be relevant to the question of who participates in arranged marriages because of the ongoing Westernization in many parts of India. In terms of relationships, Securely attached individuals are comfortable with intimacy and autonomy, so making an effort to find the right partner will be easier than having an arranged marriage. They tend to rate themselves low in attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance according to the most common measure for attachment style, the Experiences in Close Relationships Scale. Preoccupied attached individuals desire intimate relationships but fear that no one will love them the way they need and so they focus on receiving attention from their partners to maintain their self-worth. They tend to rate themselves high on attachment anxiety and low on attachment avoidance. Such individuals may prefer an arranged marriage because of the intimacy it provides without the struggles of finding the ‘right’ partner that matches their needs. Dismissive individuals, on the other hand, think of themselves as independent and not requiring a relationship, though they may intensely desire a relationship and so avoiding relationships in general may work for them best. They tend to rate themselves low on attachment anxiety and high on attachment avoidance. Fearful attached individuals tend to rate themselves high on attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance. Like dismissive individuals they distrust relationships, but they want relationship intimacy more. Thus they may prefer to have an arranged marriage because of norms more so than desire or
they may avoid relationships entirely. This may lead to situations where parents seek out partners for their children only when their sons and/or daughters are unable to secure a mate themselves. In such cases, understanding the attachment style of such individuals would help to characterize and define the kinds of arranged marriages that occur. Another potential concern is the degree to which Indians become interested in Western culture and whether their identification with traditional Indian values is correlated with preference for an arranged marriage.

Background

Arranged Marriage

In the typical arranged marriage in India, parents decide that they want their children to get married for various reasons including economic and social benefits. Parents then select potential partners for their children and screen these partners for wealth, status, family history, horoscope compatibility, caste, religion and often appearance and meet with the potential partners' families (Fuller & Narasimhan, 2008). They do this through contacts with their friends and relatives and often from newspapers. From then on the families exchange photographs and typically the parents select a few potential partners in which they are interested in and they arrange a meeting. Often parents tell the bride-to-be who to pick and once she picks the groom, the wedding is scheduled. However this isn't always the case today with the advent of social media and Western values. Lately, parents go to websites or social networks to find suitable partners but the custom of using newspapers or magazines to advertise their children in order to find a suitable partner also continues. Another way to go about this process is that the individuals looking for spouses will post profiles of themselves on websites akin to
Dating websites. There will be deep background checks among both parties as is typical for arranged marriages and then the same procedure as before continues with potential partners meeting and parents urging to get a marriage settled. Therefore selection of romantic partners through the arranged marriage method still represents a stable option of mate selection.

Though the vast majority of Indians still have arranged marriages, love marriages are increasingly an option. There are costs and benefits for both. With an arranged marriage, there's a lower divorce rate (Allendorf, 2013), it is more socially acceptable, and there is a stronger emphasis on building a family and relational stability. Arranged marriages also have relatively fewer up front economic costs as younger people can focus on their career development rather than searching for a romantic partner (Jain, 2013). Young adults also do not have to spend their money on multiple dates, possibly spanning years, in the hopes of finding a good match. They could instead invest in their educational and professional futures (Jain, 2013). For families whose single children are growing past the child-rearing age, arranged marriages are often a shortcut to grandchildren.

Attempting to have romantic relationships can lead to rejections from potential partners. Rejection can be painful (Kross, Berman, Mischel, Smith, & Wager, 2011) and there are many factors that contribute to processing rejection, including attachment style (Feeney & Noller, 1990). In an arranged marriage system, there's less chance of facing rejection from marital partners because both partners' parents have already made the relationship decision for them. Romantic relationships however are strewn with rejections. It's a
common process in the United States to spend ones twenties going on many dates and having unsuccessful relationships before finding the right partner. Rejection also has its psychological costs. Rejection can lead to a loss of confidence and optimism about oneself (Jain, 2013). Arranged marriages bypass all that trouble by “outsourcing” the responsibility of finding a partner to the parents so that if the other family does not like the potential spouse, then the rejection is sent to the family rather than to the potential spouse. Society and culture offers an added protection of being supportive of arranged marriages and generally frowning upon divorce. This “match made in heaven” cannot be broken and thus potential spouses do not have to risk losing face or self-esteem in relationships.

Most communities in India still favor arranged marriage as the only way to find a partner. For many parents, it is the safe way to assure continuation of the family. It often occurs between families who have previous experience with intermarriage (Mehndiratta, Paul, & Mehndiratta, 2007). By selecting someone who has greater financial prospects, a family may improve their daughter’s position and that of any subsequent grandchildren. In choosing someone from a similar or a higher caste, the family improves their social and economic position. Arranged marriage is also a traditional route focused on tradition. People who have known that their parents and their grandparents have had arranged marriage will want that for their own children and because the culture supports it. The tradition continues outside of India when families who have had arranged marriages in India immigrate to other countries.

Arranged marriages have their costs, such as fewer options to choose partners, and less stability if there’s no compatibility between the partners. In such marriages, the
lack of choice stems from parents choosing their partners for them rather than individuals finding their own partners. Most partners do not see each other before they get married and so there's no time to develop a relationship prior to marriage. Not knowing who their partner-to-be is prior to marriage may make the relationship difficult at first. In addition to the usual pressure of a new marriage there is added pressure in an arranged marriage because if there's no compatibility between the partners, they are stuck with one another for the rest of their lives. These issues are not usually considered in arranged marriages but they become salient after the marriage. There is also the problem of lack of choice in arranged marriages. Autonomy is an important feature in young adulthood. In a culture that stresses arranged marriage, young people are less likely to have knowledge of and experience in dating. Love marriages typically avoid this problem with both partners having had previous relationships which would help them learn about themselves in romantic relationships. In arranged marriage, partners may find themselves wanting to have known others. Some partners may find that their spouses are abusive, which is fairly common in Indian arranged marriages (Coomaraswamy, 2005). This may lead to frequent fighting and fear in the relationship as the partner, usually the woman, finds herself experiencing a lot of stress and the inability to relieve it. For many, this might even be acceptable as they have insufficient knowledge about marriage.

Love marriages, on the other hand, often present different benefits and costs compared to arranged marriage. While there is more choice for people who choose to find a spouse through a love marriage, there is less overall stability. It is less socially acceptable in India. The people who tend to practice love marriages tend to be more westernized and more individualistic. Social and cultural norms therefore have less of an
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impact on them. Arranged marriages are often built with the idea of propagating the family line. Whereas love marriages can also have this as a goal, arranged marriages are almost exclusively built on this premise, and hence the preference for an arranged marriage is heavily dependent on external factors like acculturation, and religiosity. Love marriages are also considered immoral in many parts of India, often punishable by death (Ghosh, 2011). In these “honor killings”, women are representatives of their families and if they go outside the arranged marriage route, they will have insulted the family.

Acculturation and Religious Commitment

Today in India, the social order and rules and expectations have changed in several fundamental ways: there are more women working, there is more western acculturation, lower religiosity, higher incomes for many, and a ban on child marriage. Women have historically been limited in their ability to pursue their education and make economic decisions in India (Jejeebhoy & Sathar, 2001). For a long time women were not as well educated as men, could not find jobs without their husbands’ agreement, had poorer nutrition and were unable to make important decisions in the household (Jayaraman & Chandrasekhar, 2004). This often meant that they were primarily busy with the business of bearing and raising children, of which there were many. There was also high infant mortality and low literacy (Chandrasekhar & Jayaraman, 2011).

Culturally, women were regarded as inferior and this belief continues to this day in many parts of South Asia (Udwin, 2015). Often women are made to quit their jobs and therefore become financially dependent on their husbands during their marriage.

Religion played a large part in this history. For the Hindu religion as well as many other religions, arranged marriage is a religious matter with legal consequences (Mody,
Arranged marriage is about devotion for each partner to each other and to God. In such relationships, women had two gods to worship. Her husband was her god and she was to be committed to both him and their God. This maintained the subservience of women because women had to serve their husbands. It was a holy union sanctified by priests; a cultural religious and legal institution. Arranged marriage was a social act where people gave themselves to God and their society. However love marriages were seen as ‘unholy’ because they involved partners who were committing the sin of lust, ‘vasna’ (Mody, 2002). These were selfish acts and more so when they occurred between members of differing religions. Love marriages were considered as secular actions for those not devoted to their religious belief as people married for education and class rather than religious background. Hence, religious commitment was intimately tied to arranged marriage.

However, the old ways are increasingly being cast aside in India. There is now a program termed “Saakshar Bharat Mission for Female Literacy” whose goal is to reduce illiteracy in women. This program did not exist decades ago; it was started in 2009. This push for education has both lowered infant mortality as well as the number of children being born (Jejeebhoy & Sathar, 2001). With more education, women in parts of India such as Kerala have postponed marriage (Jones & Mohamad, 2011). According to the Asia Research Institute, the emphasis on education has led to delays in childbearing because the more educated a woman was, the more opportunity she had to choose a husband and that meant that she married later as “finding a partner who shares their values and expectations” had become difficult (Jones & Mohamad, 2011).

The influence of the West has also affected the movement towards love marriages
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in India (Allendorf, 2013). With the arrival of the British, people who lived under a king and who were generally communal and married based on arrangements set by their families met people who were more politically independent, more individualistic and married based on love (Allendorf, 2013). More and more Indians were exposed to western culture and that started to have tremendous effects on marriage and divorce. This in turn led to dramatic increases in the rate of unmarried children aged 15-19 (25.7% in 1961 to 59.7% in 2001) (Allendorf, 2013). With higher income, there was less of a need for an arranged marriage and this in turn has led to fewer children because of increased use of contraception (Ghimire & Axinn, 2013). The laws have changed as well. Child marriage is now illegal, though it continues in many parts of the region (Bowman & Dollahite, 2013). Though many families still continue child marriage and generally the law often overlooks it, officially child marriages cannot happen. Since those laws have been passed, women have been able to become more independent, more financially stable and more able to engage in romantic relationships. Still the vast majority of people prefer arranged marriage in India. However, due to the vast changes occurring in India at both a social and economic level, more parents are considering their children's input for their arranged marriages (Mathur, 2007). Manjistha Banerji argues that the amount of arranged marriages where women’s consent towards those marriage is growing, though religion still dominates arranged marriage practice (Banerji, 2008). A mix of arranged marriage and love marriage has emerged, termed “semi-arranged marriage”, where parents choose a set of partners and their children meet, date and indicate their preference for a particular partner and the existence of this form of arranged marriage varies from family to family (Banerji, 2008). This is seen as a development towards secular marriage
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but also indicates the importance of the parent-child relationship in marriage choice. The parents may choose to have a standard arranged marriage for their child or let their child choose their own partners depending on, among many other factors, similarity to romantic partner and commitment to religion and culture. Hence the parent-child relationship may be valuable in determining whether the child grows up to prefer an arranged marriage or a love marriage.

Attachment Style

John Bowlby first proposed a theory of mother-infant attachment in the 1940's but it was not published until 1958 (Bowlby, 1958). His work came from clinical treatment of delinquent children during World War II and he noticed that many had suffered separation earlier in their lives. This separation may have influenced their delinquency he thought and further work suggested that the maternal bond was essential to development. Further work on children indicated that parents, mothers as he studied, were a Secure Base from which children could explore the world. For children, the Secure Base was where children could feel safe. The kind of bonds the child had with their primary caregiver impacted their actions around towards the caregiver. He classified children has having either a Secure, Anxious or Avoidant attachment style based these different bonds, these attachment styles. He believed that the attachment bond was so essential that it carried from ‘cradle to the grave’ and affected many aspects of life from friendships to romantic relationships. This effect occurred because children developed “internal working models” in which they combined expectations of themselves and others into a mechanism of interpreting interpersonal experiences which can change through time (Pietromonaco & Barrett, 2000). Bowlby's ideas were further elaborated in a three
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volume set, Attachment, Separation and Loss (Bowlby, 1969) (Bowlby, 1973) (Bowlby, 1980) where he argued that attachment was essential to human survival and that separation and loss carried terrible consequences for the child because that meant loss of a Secure base. His student, Mary Ainsworth, expanded this idea in her experiments with infants.

In Mary Ainsworth's classic studies in attachment, two further attachment styles were proposed: ambivalent-resistant and disorganized. Ainsworth’s studies examined how infants respond to two experimental situations: 1- the parent interacts with a stranger and then leaves, leaving the stranger to interact with the child with the parent soon returning. 2- The child is left alone and then parent comes back. This was set up in the following way: parent and child entered the experimental room, they were alone and the child was allowed to explore independently. Then a stranger came in, talked with the parent, and approached the child and then the parent left. The stranger then interacts with the child, leaves and then the parent comes back. The parent then leaves the child alone. Lastly, the stranger comes in and interacts with the child and then the parent comes back while the stranger leaves. Here the parents served as the Secure Base from which the child could explore. The objective of the study was to see how the children reacted when their parents left and returned, how they reacted to the stranger and how they acted when they were left alone. These children were classified among four attachment style types: secure, anxious-avoidant, anxious ambivalent/resistant and disorganized based on their reactions to the departure and return of their parents, their Secure Base. Secure infants were a little upset when their parents left though not to the degree of anxious children and happy when their parents returned. Anxious-Resistant infants cried when their caregiver or
primary attachment partner left and showed anger when they returned. Anxious-Avoidant infants ignored their parents when they left and ignored them when they come back. Disorganized attachment is a mix of all the previous attachment styles (Ainsworth, 1964).

*Adult Romantic Attachment*

Bowlby’s and Ainsworth’s ideas have been extended to adult romantic relationships to help explain them. There has been much research on adult romantic attachment (Fraley & Shaver, 2000) and it stems from Bowlby’s idea of a Secure Base. Hazan and Shaver (1987) applied the development of a Secure Base to adult relationships in which the romantic partner became a Secure Base. Internal Working Models were being used to predict actions and interpret information from their Secure Base, their romantic partner. They found Ainsworth’s attachment styles in adults when they showed that Avoidantly attached individuals did not want very much physical and emotional intimacy though they tended to be jealous of their partner (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Avoidant individuals should then see their partners as avoidant as well. Anxiously attached individuals will feel worried about losing their romantic partners and will spend hours fretting. Avoidantly-attached individuals will worry very little about their romantic partners because they do not rely on their partners and they expect them to leave. Kim Bartholomew found that the three main Attachment styles were insufficient to explain her results as Attachment avoidance could not be a singular pattern of Attachment but two and this meant that there were four main attachment styles where there were once three. They could be classified on two dimensions Attachment Anxiety and Attachment Avoidance. According to Kim Bartholomew’s study, the Secure individual (low
Attachment Anxiety and Attachment Avoidance is "comfortable with intimacy and autonomy" (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991) and the Preoccupied person (high anxiety, low avoidance) constantly worries about his or her relationship. The Dismissing individual (low Attachment Anxiety, high Attachment Avoidance) does not like intimacy and tends to be "counter-dependent" (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). The Fearful individual fears intimacy and avoids relationships (high Attachment Anxiety and high Attachment Avoidance). The concept of Attachment Style is important because it posits that we fall into several patterns of responses based on early experiences and extends the idea to adult relationships.

*Attachment style and Arranged Marriage*

Attachment style may be relevant to the question of who participates in arranged marriages among those who still live in India because of the ongoing Westernization of many parts of India. These ongoing changes have led to more and more people choosing their romantic partners as opposed to their parents doing it for them. This choice however has its costs and benefits as described earlier and Attachment Style may influence whether the individual has a high or low preference for arranged marriage. Age and the ability to find a romantic partner with whom to have children may be influenced by attachment insecurity as well. Religious commitment may also influence preference for arranged marriage as affiliation with one's religion may reflect an individual's desire to follow or reject the custom of arranged marriage. This may lead to situations where parents seek out partners for their children when their sons and/or daughters are ready for marriage. Another potential difference is to what degree Indians affiliate with Western culture and whether identification with Indian culture is correlated with preference for an
arranged marriage. High attachment avoidance may be related to an aversion for arranged marriage as they may want to avoid any kind of marriage.

Hypotheses

The purpose of this study is to systematically examine the relationship between Attachment Style in Indians and their attitudes toward arranged marriages. The independent variables are attachment style, acculturation, and religious commitment. It was expected that higher attachment anxiety and low avoidance (preoccupied attachment style) towards previous, current, or future romantic partners will predict an increased preference for an arranged marriage (Hypothesis 1). Since arranged marriage has been an integral part of Indian culture, the closer participants from India feel towards their originating cultures, the higher their preference for arranged marriages whereas lower acculturation will lead to decreased preference for arranged marriages (Hypothesis 2). A third hypothesis was that higher religious commitment predicted a higher preference for arranged marriages (Hypothesis 3). A fourth hypothesis (Hypothesis 4) was that the relationship between Preoccupied Attachment and preference for arranged marriage will be mediated by religious commitment and acculturation.

METHOD

Participants

This data was collected from only Indian participants who were interested in arranged marriage through Survata, a survey company. Survata is a market research firm that provides access to respondents in 17 countries. Two-Hundred and Seven self-identified Indians were recruited (177 men and 30 women). Participants' age ranged from 18-86 (\(M=25.1353, SD=6.10117\)). Most participants had some college experience
and had an average age of 25 (see Table 1). Participants were paid $3 each for completing the questionnaires. Descriptive statistics on gender, income and education were also done. These statistics are presented in Table 1. Most participants’ parents were also employed (84.5%) and the largest group (33.8%) was making less than $20,000.

Procedure

Participants from the consumer panels completed a basic set of questions examining their gender, age, religion, country of origin, education, employment status, and income. They also indicated their preference for an arranged marriage on a 1-5 scale with 1 being no preference and 5 being high preference. Lastly, they completed three scales: the Experiences in Close Relationships Scale, the Religious Commitment Inventory, and the Multi-Dimensional Inventory of Asian and Arab Identity Scale.

Experiences in Close Relationships Scale: The Experiences in Close Relationships Scale (Brennan & Shaver, 1998) is a common measure used to assess attachment style in romantic relationships. It was a 7 point 36 item Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. It measures attachment style across two dimensions: anxiety and avoidance. Internal consistency reliability is reported to be 0.90 (Sibley, Fischer & Liu, 2005). The scores reflected attachment style (where participants fall along two axes: anxiety and avoidance). Attachment style was measured from a 1-7 Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree including such questions such as “I’m afraid that I will lose my partner’s love” (item #1), and “My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away” [item #14]) (See Appendix B).

Religious Commitment Inventory: This scale measures religious commitment. It was developed by Worthington and Colleagues and features a 10-item measure yielding
two subscales: intrapersonal religious commitment and interpersonal religious commitment. It utilizes a Likert scale ranging 1 (not true of me) to 5 (totally true of me). According to the study examining its validity and reliability, Worthington et al. found that after a test-retest reliability was 0.87 (Worthington et al., 2003, p. 87). Cronbach's alpha for this measure was 0.96 (Worthington et al., 2003, p. 90). The Religious Commitment Inventory is a Likert 1-5 10 item scale measures questions along two subscales: interpersonal religious commitment and intrapersonal religious commitment. Like other Likert scales, scores are composites with Items 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8 referring to the intrapersonal religious commitment subscale and items 2, 6, 9, and 10 referring to the interpersonal religious commitment scale (See Appendix B).

Multi-Dimensional Inventory of Asian and Arab Identity Scale: This is a relatively new measure used to assess how Indians feel about belonging to the Asian community. This scale was adapted from the Multi-Dimensional Inventory of Black Identity Scale by Sellers et al. (1997) and it measures identity along several dimensions: centrality, private regard, public regard, assimilation, humanist, minority and nationalist. Accordingly, across these dimensions, the Cronbach's alpha ranged from “.60 (Private Regard) to....79 (Nationalism)” (Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997, p. 810). They reported high internal and external validity. This survey will be found in appendix B. The Multi-Dimensional Inventory of Asian and Arab Identity is another 20 item scale Likert scale (1-7) that is analyzed along several dimensions: centrality, private regard, public regard, assimilation, humanist, minority and nationalist. Questions such as “Being South Asian has very little to do with how I feel about myself” evaluate centrality and some questions will be reverse scored. Like other Likert scale based measures, the
results come from a composite of all scores indicating to what degree do participants do have in each of the seven categories. See Appendix B

RESULTS

To answer the question of whether attachment style, acculturation and religion played a role in preference for arranged marriage, descriptive statistics were calculated to yield general information on how many participants had each of the four attachment styles. Descriptive statistics were also calculated to provide information on the average ratings for acculturation and religious commitment. The descriptive statistics for preference for arranged marriage, attachment anxiety, attachment avoidance, religious commitment and acculturation is shown in Table 2. A median split was performed on both attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance and the participants were categorized on those two variables to yield four discrete attachment categories: Secure (low anxiety, low avoidance), Preoccupied (high anxiety, low avoidance), Dismissive (low anxiety, high avoidance) and Fearful (high anxiety, high avoidance). The percentage of participants classified into each of the four attachment styles is presented in Table 3. The most common attachment style was Dismissive (31.4%), with the others being Preoccupied (29.47%), Secure (21.26%) and Fearful (17.87%). The distribution of participants that had a preference for an arranged marriage did differ by attachment style $\chi^2 (3, N=207) = 72.54, p=<.0001$ indicating that the Dismissive and Preoccupied styles were more prevalent than the other two styles.

Preference for arranged marriage had a mean of 3.45 and standard deviation of 1.143, indicating that participants were moderately in favor of an arranged marriage. Most participants were also moderately anxious ($M=3.98$, $SD=1.09$) and moderately
avoidant ($M=3.49$, $SD=.88$) on measures of attachment style. They were also moderately religiously committed ($M=26.62$, $SD=11.31$) and highly acculturated to Indian culture ($M=97.27$, $SD=21.55$) as expected.

To test the first Hypothesis that attachment style was related to preference for arranged marriage, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of attachment style on preference for arranged marriage across the four attachment categories: Secure, Preoccupied, Dismissive and Fearful. There was a significant effect of attachment style on preference for arranged marriage, $F(3,207) = 6.615$, $p<0.001$. Hypothesis 1 was that attachment style was related to preference for arranged marriage. The Preoccupied attachment style had the most effect on preference for arranged marriage ($M=3.03$, $SD=1.01$) when comparing the results between the attachment styles. The more Preoccupied attached the respondent was, the more likely they preferred arranged marriage. Post hoc comparisons using Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean score for the Secure attachment style ($M=3.64$, $SD=1.20$) was significantly different from Dismissive attachment style ($M=3.17$, $SD=1.01$) or Fearful ($M=3.03$, $SD=1.01$) but was not significantly different from the Preoccupied attachment style ($M=3.87$, $SD=1.01$).

Taken together the results show that attachment styles do have an effect on preference for arranged marriage and that the effect is strongest among the Preoccupied group in alignment with the predicted result for Hypothesis 1.

To test the hypothesis that increased acculturation is related to preferences for arranged marriage (Hypothesis 2), a bivariate correlation was calculated and showed that there was a significant relationship between acculturation and preference for arranged marriage ($r=.289$, $p<.01$). Higher ratings for acculturation were correlated with higher
ratings for preference for arranged marriage. This finding supports Hypothesis 2.

To test the hypothesis that increased religious commitment would be related to increased preference for arranged marriage (Hypothesis 3), a bivariate correlation was calculated and indicated that there was a significant negative relationship between religious commitment and preference for arranged marriage ($r = -.210, p < .01$). This is contrary to Hypothesis 3 in that increases in religious commitment are related to decreases in preference for arranged marriage rather than increases in preference for arranged marriage.

Lastly, to test the hypothesis that acculturation and religious commitment mediated the relationship between attachment style and preference for arranged marriage, a One-way ANCOVA was conducted with Attachment Styles as the independent variable and preference for arranged marriage as the dependent variable, controlling for acculturation and religious commitment. There was a significant effect of attachment style on preference for arranged marriage after controlling for acculturation and religious commitment $F (5,202) = 2.76, p < .046$. When comparing the results between attachment styles, the Preoccupied attachment style had the most effect on preference for arranged marriage ($M=3.87, SD=1.01$). A further One-way ANCOVA was conducted with Attachment Styles as the independent variable and preference for arranged marriage as the dependent variable, controlling for acculturation but not religious commitment. There was a significant effect of attachment style on preference for arranged marriage after controlling for acculturation $F (4,203) = 2.906, p < .036$. A further comparison of the results between attachment styles again did not change the effect of Preoccupied Attachment Style on preference for arranged marriage ($M=3.87, SD=1.01$).
DISCUSSION

The current study investigated the extent to which mostly young, single Indian men who preferred arranged marriage varied in their attachment style (anxiety and avoidance) religious commitment and acculturation. The purpose of the study was to understand some of the factors that may motivate people to choose an arranged marriage in an India where people are increasingly seeking out their own partners. Using several statistical methods it was found that attachment style was a predictor for preference for arranged marriage. Interestingly, the percentages of people in the four attachment categories of Secure, Preoccupied, Dismissive and Fearful did not match the percentages in the literature where seventy percent of people were characterized as having a Secure attachment style (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). In the current study, the percentages for each of the categories were 21.26%, 29.47%, 31.47%, and 17.87% respectively. This may be merely a function of the current sample as no previous research reports similar findings. The current sample included only individuals who indicated a preference for arranged marriage.

With regard to the first hypothesis, the results showed that the Dismissive Attachment group was the most prevalent attachment style among people with a preference for arranged marriage 31.40%. Though there is no research on the topic, this finding contradicts previous research on attachment styles of people in their twenties (Feeney, 2002). It may be that single people in their mid-twenties are more concerned about getting a job and developing a career than marriage. With such people, an arranged marriage makes sense as it takes away from the worry of finding a romantic partner and leaves more time for personal development.
As expected from Hypothesis 2, acculturation was significantly correlated with preference for arranged marriage. The reason for this may be that acculturation would signal association with Indian familial cultural values and this is backed up by some evidence from other cultures (Raz & Atar, 2005). It also makes logical sense. People who see themselves as Indian and respect the rites and rituals of Indian culture would naturally be expected to prefer one of the major rituals of that culture.

In contrast to the expected results of Hypothesis 3, where religious commitment was predicted to be positively correlated with preference for arranged marriage, in the current study, religious commitment was not a significant predictor for preference for arranged marriage. This is in sharp contrast to previous research (Madathil & Benshoff, 2008; Myers, Madathil, & Tingle, 2005). For these mostly twenty-something participants, religion was not a consideration that affected their choice. The participants in the current study may have thought about their religion in determining whether to further pursue an arranged marriage but according to the current findings, that is not as important factor as the literature indicates.

In contrast to the expected results of Hypothesis 3, where religious commitment was predicted to be positively correlated with preference for arranged marriage, in the current study, religious commitment was not a significant predictor for preference for arranged marriage. This is in sharp contrast to previous research (Madathil & Benshoff, 2008; Myers, Madathil, & Tingle, 2005). For these mostly twenty-something participants, religion was not a consideration that affected their choice. The participants in the current study may have thought about their religion in determining whether to further pursue an arranged marriage but according to the current findings, that is not as important factor as the literature indicates.

The current study featured participants who were involved in business to business partnerships and contributed data to a survey company in exchange for monetary compensation. Such a group may not be representative of people in India much like the participants for other online services such as mTurk because these participants have had the time to possibly search out and take the current survey. This may result in self-selection bias as the individuals who may have found the survey uncomfortable decided not to participate or opt out of the experiment before they could receive payment. Evidence cited by Kevin Wright indicates that this self-selection bias may lead to false
conclusions about the results (Wright, 2005). This can be resolved through direct replication of the study. Another study would remove this limitation by going directly to India and seeking out a more representative sample. The problem of a poor representative sample is also evident in the current study since it consisted mostly of male respondents. This biases the results in such a way so that the results cannot be generalized to both genders. This is a serious problem since women tend to be most affected by an arranged marriage (Udwin, 2015) and future research should look more closely at how attachment style affects preferences for arranged marriage among.

Further, questions that were not asked included whether participants were meeting regularly with members of the opposite sex and how often, which may have affected their marriage preferences. Having previously met with members of the opposite sex may affect how these young people see relationships and may affect how they see themselves within their traditions. The acculturation and religious commitment scales tried to control for that. Other questions that might be included in future research should explore nonromantic relationships between opposite sex people. Other important questions include questions about caste, perceived social status and whether participants had ever considered if they had a choice in wanting a traditional marriage or a love marriage. These are all important questions, as they pertain to the process of arranged marriage (Gupta, 1976).

Future research should include participants who do not have a preference for an arranged marriage and explore how attachment style affects them. The current study included only individuals who had a preference for arranged marriage. The study is limited by this because it does not address the reasons why people in a country which
overwhelming prefers arranged marriage, would go against the cultural norms.

The nature of the respondents having access to the internet is also an important limitation. As it is clear that not everyone has access to the internet, especially in a country with as broad a socio-economic range as India has. This reflects economic disparities, and it is important to note that the respondents were not as poor as to not have regular access to the internet. The alternative would be to replicate the study by going to India and recruit participants face-to-face. However, those who do have access to the internet may be more subject to Western influences through media and thus serve as an ideal population to study arranged marriage preferences.

Future studies should also compare both Indians from India and Indians living in the West to compare and contrast what psychological factors might differentiate them regarding preference for arranged marriages. One study examining marital satisfaction among people in arranged marriages found no differences in couples living in the United States and India (Myers, Madathil, & Tingle, 2005). As there are no differences in satisfaction post marriage, there may be no differences in the psychology of those who are going to have an arranged marriage in either country. However this must be examined more closely as there may be differences between those who want an arranged marriage and those who actually have them. Also, there is evidence that people continue to have similar rates of arranged marriage when they move to countries in the West as in their own native countries (Coleman, 2004)

CONCLUSION

The current study is one of the first few which examined how preference for arranged marriages may be affected by attachment style, acculturation and religious
commitment. It was found that attachment does play a role in preference for arranged marriage, particularly those high on attachment anxiety and low on attachment avoidance (the Preoccupied attached group) in line with Hypothesis 1. It was also found that acculturation plays a role as well because the more affiliated a participant was with their traditional Hindu culture, the more likely they were to follow its norms and this is in line with what was predicted in Hypothesis 2. Religious commitment however was not a significant predictor for preference for arranged marriage (hypothesis 3).

With India's (already massive) population and economy booming, it is increasingly becoming exposed to the West. People of marriageable age are increasingly able to choose whether they want to go through the stable traditional route of an arranged marriage or take a risk and have a Prēma vivāha (love marriage). Attachment research can help understand the factors that go into this choice, perhaps the biggest choice of a person's life.
References

Ainsworth, M. (1964). Patterns of attachment behavior shown by the infant in interaction with his mother. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly of Behavior and Development, 1*(10), Patterns of attachment behavior shown by the infant in interaction with his mother.


Brennan, K. A., & Shaver, P. R. (1998). Attachment styles and personality disorders: Their connections to each other and to parental divorce, Parental death, and perceptions


attachment and arranged marriage

Table 1

*Overall Sample Demographics*  
(n=207)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Value</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age in Years</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>18-86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>25.14</td>
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<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>6.10</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>85.51%</td>
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<td>Female</td>
<td>14.49%</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
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</tr>
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<td>Some High School</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Some College</td>
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<tr>
<td>College Graduate</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Some College</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>College Graduate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>College Graduate</td>
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<td><strong>Parental Marital Status</strong></td>
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<td>Married</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unmarried</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
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</table>
Attachment and Arranged Marriage

Note $SD =$ Standard Deviation
Table 2

*Descriptive Statistics for Survey Scores*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
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<td>Attachment Anxiety</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attachment Avoidance</td>
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<td>5.56</td>
<td>3.4914</td>
<td>.88238</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious Commitment</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>50</td>
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<td>11.31003</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acculturation</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>97.2705</td>
<td>21.55089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preference for Arranged Marriage</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.4493</td>
<td>1.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

*Attachment Style Groupings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attachment Style</th>
<th>% of Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secure</td>
<td>21.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoccupied</td>
<td>29.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dismissive</td>
<td>31.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fearful</td>
<td>17.87%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX A

Text for Informed Consent-provided on page 1 of the online Survey:

Title of Study: Attachment Style Differences in Indian Adult Preferences for Arranged Marriages

Principle Investigator: Sanjay Advani

Introduction:

You are invited to participate in a research study examining the role attachment style relates to how much someone wants to engage in an arranged marriage. You were selected as a possible participant because you chose to participate in Survata's panel in exchange for cash.

If you decide to participate, indicate below that you want to take part in the study. If you choose not to participate, you will be taken to another webpage. If you chose “yes,” follow the instructions to begin the study. In this study you will be asked to fill out a series of questionnaires about attachment the Experiences and Close Relationships Scale, religious commitment, acculturation and attitudes about love along with some basic demographic questions. The entire session will take about 30 minutes to complete. Cash benefits accrue to you for answering the survey, and your responses will be used to help understand how attachment relates to preference for an arranged marriage. There are minimal risks associated with this study and they are not expected to be any greater than anything you would encounter in everyday life. You may become bored or tired when completing this survey. If you do become tired, feel free to stop at any time. Data will be collected via an online link provided by Survata; no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third party (e.g. your employer). Confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. We advise you not to respond to this survey on an employer issued device.

You will not be linked to any presentations. We will keep who you are anonymous according to the law. Only the PI and the student assistant will know you are in the study.

Your decision to participate or not will not affect your future relationship with Survata. If you decide to participate, you are free to stop at any time; you may also skip questions if you don't want to answer them or you may refuse to return to the survey. Please feel free to ask any questions regarding this study. You may contact me, Sanjay Advani, at advanisl@mail.montclair.edu (or my faculty advisor, Dr. Peter Vietze of the Department of Psychology at Montclair State University, at vietzep@mail.montclair.edu)

Any questions you may have about your rights may be direct to Dr. Katrina Bulkley, Chair of the Institutional Review Board at Montclair State University at reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu or 973-655-5189
Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,
Sanjay Advani
Department of Psychology
Montclair State University
advanisl@mail.montclair.edu
APPENDIX B

Please indicate on the following scale by circling, how much would you prefer to be in an arranged marriage: Not at all (1) Somewhat (2) Moderately (3) Mostly (4) Totally (5)

Please note that if you are not interested in an arranged marriage at all, do not continue with the survey.

Demographic Information:

__ Male
__ Female

Age: (Please write down your age):

Religion: (Please write down your religion):

Religion of Mother: (Please write down your religion):

Religion of Father: (Please write down your religion):

Country of Birth: (Please write down your country of birth):

Country of Birth of Mother: (Please write down your mother's country of birth):

Country of Birth of Father: (Please write down your father's country of birth):

Country of Nationality (Please write down your country of your nationality):

How long have you been in this country:

__ 0-6 Months
__ 6 Months-1 Year
__ 1 Year-5 Years
__ 5 Years of longer
__ Born in India

Education:

__ Some High School
__ High School Graduate
__ Some College
__ College Graduate
__ Graduate Degree

Parents' Education

Mother:

__ Some High School
__ High School Graduate
__ Some College
__ College Graduate
__ Graduate Degree
__ Unknown

Father:

__ Some High School
__ High School Graduate
__ Some College
__ College Graduate
__ Graduate Degree
Unknown
Other Guardian: (Please note the relationship):
___ Some High School
___ High School Graduate
___ Some College
___ College Graduate
___ Graduate Degree
___ Unknown
Presently Working
___ Yes
___ No
Are your parents currently working?
___ Yes
___ No
Income:
Family Income:
___ Less than $20,000
___ $20,000-$30,000
___ $30,000-$40,000
___ $40,000-$50,000
___ $50,000-$75,000
___ $75,000-$100,000
___ Over $100,000
Personal Income:
___ Less than $20,000
___ $20,000-$30,000
___ $30,000-$40,000
___ $40,000-$50,000
___ $50,000-$75,000
___ $75,000-$100,000
___ Over $100,000
Are your parents married, divorced, other? (Please circle which one)
If your parents are married, how long have they been married: Please indicate the number of years of the marriage?
If your parents are divorced, how long have they been divorced? Please indicate the number of years of the marriage:
If your parents have another kind of relationship, Please indicate the number of years of the marriage:
Are your parents in an arranged marriage?
___ Yes
___ No
Are you currently arranged to be married to someone?
___ Yes
___ No
Should you already be arranged to married to someone, how long have you known? Please indicate the number of years that you have known:
APPENDIX C

Experiences in Close Relationships Scale

Instructions: The statements below concern how you feel in emotionally intimate relationships. We are interested in how you generally experience relationships, not just in what is happening in a current relationship. Respond to each statement by clicking a circle to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement with 1 being 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree.

1. I'm afraid that I will lose my partner's love.
2. I often worry that my partner will not want to stay with me.
3. I often worry that my partner doesn't really love me.
4. I worry that romantic partners won't care about me as much as I care about them.
5. I often wish that my partner's feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him or her.
6. I worry a lot about my relationships.
7. When my partner is out of sight, I worry that he or she might become interested in someone else.
8. When I show my feelings for romantic partners, I'm afraid they will not feel the same about me.
9. I rarely worry about my partner leaving me.
10. My romantic partner makes me doubt myself.
11. I do not often worry about being abandoned.
12. I find that my partner(s) don't want to get as close as I would like.
13. Sometimes romantic partners change their feelings about me for no apparent reason.
14. My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.
15. I'm afraid that once a romantic partner gets to know me, he or she won't like who I really am.
16. It makes me mad that I don't get the affection and support I need from my partner.
17. I worry that I won't measure up to other people.
18. My partner only seems to notice me when I'm angry.
19. I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.
20. I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner.
21. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners.
22. I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners.
23. I don't feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners.
24. I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.
25. I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close.
26. I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner.
27. It's not difficult for me to get close to my partner.
28. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner.
29. It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need.
30. I tell my partner just about everything.
31. I talk things over with my partner.
32. I am nervous when partners get too close to me.
33. I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners.
34. I find it easy to depend on romantic partners.
35. It's easy for me to be affectionate with my partner.
36. My partner really understands me and my needs.
Religious Commitment Inventory

Instructions: Read each of the following statements. Using the scale to the right, CIRCLE the response that best describes how true each statement is for you. Not at all (1) Somewhat (2) Moderately (3) Mostly (4) Totally (5)

1. I often read books and magazines about my faith.
2. I make financial contributions to my religious organization.
3. I spend time trying to grow in understanding of my faith.
4. Religion is especially important to me because it answers many questions about the meaning of life.
5. My religious beliefs lie behind my whole approach to life.
6. I enjoy spending time with others of my religious affiliation.
7. Religious beliefs influence all my dealings in life.
8. It is important to me to spend periods of time in private religious thought and reflection.
9. I enjoy working in the activities of my religious affiliation.
10. I keep well informed about my local religious group and have some influence in its decisions.
APPENDIX E

The Multi-Dimensional Inventory of Asian and Arab Identity-Multidimensional Black Identity Inventory (Sellers et al., 1998) - adapted for this population

Instructions: Respond to each statement by clicking a circle to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement with 1 being 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree

1. Being Indian has very little to do with how I feel about myself.
2. Being Indian is an important part of my self-image.
3. My destiny is tied to the destiny of other Indians.
4. Being Indian is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.
5. I have a strong sense of belonging to Indian people.
6. I have a strong attachment to other Indian people.
7. Being Indian is an important reflection of who I am.
8. Being Indian is not a major factor in my social relationships.
9. I feel good about Indian people.
10. I am happy that I am Indian.
11. I feel that Indians have made major accomplishments and advancements.
12. I often regret that I am Indian.
13. I am proud to be Indian.
14. I feel that the Indian community has made valuable contributions to this society.
15. Overall, Indians are considered good by others.
16. In general, others respect Indian people.
17. Most people consider Indians, on the average, to be more ineffective than other racial groups.
18. Indians are not respected by the broader society.
19. In general, other groups view Indians in a positive manner.
20. Society views Indians people as an asset