

Marital Choice as an Indicator of Marital Agency in India



8 September 2023
11AM - 12PM (SGT)
(ZOOM)

Session chaired by: Dr Kriti Vikram
(CFPR Steering Committee Member &
Department of Sociology and Anthropology)

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In the study, my team and I conducted a cross-sectional analysis of survey data from women aged 18-30 from a rural area of Maharashtra, India (N=1192). The survey included measures of woman's decision-making regarding timing of marriage and mate selection, developed from prior research and expert input. We evaluated construct validity of these measures by testing their associations with other norms that restrict women and girls autonomy at time of marriage, including arranged marriage, child marriage, purdah, and dowry. We found that 15.5% of women report that they were primary decision-maker on marital partner, and 9.4% report they were primary decision-maker on marital timing analysis. Final decision-making control over mate selection was negatively associated with arranged marriage, child marriage, and dowry. Final decision-making control over timing of marriage was negatively associated with these same outcomes and purdah. These findings indicate that our marital agency measures are valid and may be useful as a proxy indicator of forced marriage.

THE SPEAKER

Professor
**Anita
Raj**



Anita Raj, PhD, is the Executive Director of the Newcomb Institute at Tulane University, the oldest and largest academic institute in the country focused on gender equity research and training, and is a Professor at Tulane School of Public Health. She has published approximately 300 papers on gender equity in health and development.