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A key ingredient of a successful transition to adulthood is the extent of involvement of the young person in the marriage process or the extent to which they do indeed exercise their right to choose a spouse and to enter marriage with “free and full consent” (CEDAW). While there is a considerable amount of evidence suggesting increases in marital age among young women in developing countries, much less research exists on the terms and conditions of marriage, including the shift towards self-selection of spouse (NRC and Institute of Medicine 2005). Still less research has addressed the effects of these changes on marital relations, gender dynamics and women’s agency in the context of marriage. Available evidence tends to be largely qualitative and mostly unrepresentative.

Drawing on data from a sub-nationally representative study undertaken for the first time in India of key transitions experienced by young people, this paper addresses these gaps. Its aim is to explore, among youth in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu, the extent to which marriages in which young people have played an active role in spouse selection are indeed characterized by closer spousal relations and greater gender equity than those in which spouse selection processes excluded them. More specifically, it examines the following issues: are young men and women who select their spouse more likely to report, following marriage, spousal intimacy than are those who played a more muted role? Are they more likely to practice contraception? Are they more likely to exhibit equitable gender role attitudes and are young women more likely to display agency? And are they less likely to experience (women) and perpetrate (men) physical or sexual violence?

Background

In most of India, the family is mainly patriarchal, patrilocal, and patrilineal, and the region is well known for inegalitarian gender relations (Karve, 1965; Altekar, 1962; Dyson and Moore, 1984). Marriage is typically arranged and the practice of dowry is common in most parts of the country (Karve, 19??). Moreover, even among young people, the majority prefer a parent arranged marriage, both because parents are assumed to have the knowledge and wisdom to make a choice best suited for their child (Medora, 2003) and because it was perceived to provide greater stability and security (Abraham, 2001) than a “love” marriage, that is one in which young people select their own mate.

Most marriages in India are arranged to a greater or lesser extent. At least three types of spouse selection patterns have been indentified (see, for example, Medora, 2003). The traditional arranged marriage is determined entirely by parents and family members with no involvement of the prospective bride or (less often) groom. Second, a more recent adaptation is the semi-arranged marriage, in which parents and family members screen prospective brides/grooms and their family and seek their children’s approval of the mate selected from them. The extent to which youth are permitted an informed choice varies: some

are simply told about a prospective spouse and asked to approve him/her even without ever meeting, while others are allowed to meet each other -- for varying periods and with and without a chaperone -- before giving their consent). Finally, there is “love” marriage in which young people select their spouse independently of their parents and family members (Medora, 2003).

While evidence is sparse, both from India and other settings traditionally characterised by arranged marriages, the available evidence is mixed about whether married youth who have selected their own spouse have more equitable marital relations than those whose spouse was selected by parents and others. For one, marriages in which youth have selected their spouse are asserted to be more companionate and gender egalitarian than family-arranged marriages and loyalties are more likely to be directed toward the spouse than to parents and the extended family (see, for example, NRC and Institute of Medicine 2005; Banerji, Martin and Desai, 2008). A qualitative study conducted in a rural and urban setting of Madagascar notes that marriages marked by self-selection of spouse were more likely than other marriages to involve spousal communication (Binet, 2008). A study in Ankara, Turkey, reported that women who had selected their own spouse were consistently and significantly distinguished from those with arranged marriages in terms of a wider world view, more egalitarian gender role attitudes and greater openness in marital relations (Fox, 1975). A study in Nepal observed that women’s agency, as measured by their decision-making authority and their freedom of movement, is considerably more likely to be observed among women who reported a love marriage; however, this difference is considerably attenuated when contextual factors are controlled (Niraula and Morgan, 1996).

Other available evidence suggests that self-selection is not necessarily associated with greater agency for women or more equitable gender relations. In Sri Lanka, for example, where marriage practices have increasingly involved self-selection of spouse, evidence suggests that the process of self-selection of spouses did not ensure better bargaining power for females or more gender equitable relations (Silva, 2008). Likewise, a study in Nepal noted that even in marriages in which spouses were self-selected, gender relations remained unbalanced, with husbands continuing to exercise control over their wives and partner violence quite prevalent; and natal family support to young women considerably diminished (Ahearn, 2001). Finally, in settings in which marriages are typically arranged, self-selection of spouses has implications in terms of young people’s obligations to their families and the kind of financial and social support they can expect from their parents (Malhotra, 1991).

Setting

Tamil Nadu is an appropriate setting for this study for several reasons. For one, marriage occurs relatively late in Tamil Nadu. For example, 22% of young women aged 20-24 and 8% of young men aged 25-29 had married before the legal age at marriage for women and men, respectively, in contrast to 47% and 32% in India more generally (IIPS and Macro International, 2007). Second, there is evidence that youth in Tamil Nadu do indeed select their own spouse or are given an opportunity to approve spouse selected for them; indeed, one study reports that considerable percentages of young women in Tamil Nadu played an active role in determining the timing of their marriage and choice of their partner (Jejeebhoy and Halli 2005).

Tamil Nadu, located in the southern part of India, with a population of 62.4 million in 2001, ranks sixth in terms of total population among states in India (Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, 2001a). With 44% of the total population living in urban areas in 2001, it is the most urbanized state in the country (Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, 2001c). Tamil Nadu is also one of the most socially advanced states in India. For example, the state ranks seventh

among Indian states in terms of literacy; the overall literacy rate was 74% in 2001, ranging from 64% among females to 82% among males (Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, 2001b). Literacy rates in Tamil Nadu are considerably higher than the national average of 75% for males and 54% for females (Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, 2001a). Life expectancy is higher in Tamil Nadu than in India in general: 67 and 65 years, respectively, for females and males during 2002-06, compared to 64 and 63 years for females and males in India as a whole (Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, 2008). The infant mortality rate was 30 in 2005-06 compared with a national rate of 57. The fertility rate in the state reached the replacement level in the year 2000 (Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, 2006) and the total fertility rate stood at 1.8 in 2005-06, compared with a total fertility rate of 2.7 in India as a whole (IIPS and Macro International, 2007a).

As far as marriage practices are concerned, marriage often takes place among kin and participation in marriage related decisions – if not complete independence in the choice of husband – has been observed in Tamil Nadu (Jejeebhoy and Halli, 2005). Practices differ from those observed in other parts of India in several other ways as well. For example, although the practice of dowry is common, in Tamil Nadu, women themselves appear to have more control over their dowries than is observed elsewhere in the country. Ties between women and their natal families in south India tend to remain close even after marriage; indeed while daughters may continue to receive gifts from their parents and nearest kin even after marriage (see for example, Bhat and Halli, 1999), they do, in turn, provide emotional and sometimes (less frequently) economic support to their parents. Although arranged marriages remain the norm, there is evidence of greater autonomy among recently married women in determining the timing of marriage and choice of partner, a strong positive association between marriage related decision-making and secondary education, and a narrowing of the educational gap between young women and their husbands; indeed, one study reports that while 35% and 45% of young Muslim and Hindu women in Tamil Nadu reported a say in marriage related decisions, just one in six young women, irrespective of religion, had done so in Uttar Pradesh (Jejeebhoy and Halli, 2005).

Study design

The study was undertaken in a total of six states of India, representing different socio-cultural and geographic settings, namely, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. In each state it comprised three phases: a pre-survey qualitative phase, a survey and post-survey in-depth interviews with selected survey respondents. Data presented in this paper are drawn from the survey. The survey focused on married and unmarried young women and unmarried young men aged 15-24 and, because of the paucity of married young men in the younger ages, married men aged 15-29. The study treated rural and urban areas as independent sampling domains and a systematic, multi-stage sampling design was adopted to draw sample areas independently for each of these two domains. In order to avoid potential risks associated with interviewing both women and men from the same primary sampling unit (PSU), interviews were conducted in separate PSUs for female and male respondents. In each PSU, households to be interviewed were selected by systematic sampling. Within each selected household, no more than one respondent was interviewed from one category. In case more than one respondent from a single category was found in the household, one respondent was selected randomly, and no replacement of the respondent selected was allowed.

Fieldwork was undertaken in Tamil Nadu between May 2006 and January 2007. A total of 35,880 households were enumerated, of which just 11,569 contained youth eligible for interview. A total of 9,752 young women and men were contacted, of whom, 7,996 were successfully interviewed (1,322 married young men, 1,666 unmarried young men, 2,007 married young women and 3,001 unmarried young women). Response rates for individual interviews were in the range of 76-78% among young men and 84-

87% among young women. The main reason for non-response was that the respondent was not at home, ranging from 24% among unmarried young men to 12% among unmarried young women; 0.5% or fewer respondents refused to participate in the interview.

Data presented in this paper are restricted to married young men aged 15-29 and married young women aged 15-24. A total of 1,322 married young men and 2,007 married young women thus constitute our sample.

Measuring spouse selection and other terms and conditions of marriage

The questionnaire contained a number of questions related to the marriage process and the nature of marital life. Of particular importance here were questions that probed the spouse selection process. Youth were asked whether they had an arranged or “love” (self-selected) marriage; and whether their parents or guardians had approved their choice of partner or had sought their approval of a spouse selected for them and whether they had ever met the partner prior to the wedding. Recognising that spouse selection falls on a continuum, our measure of spouse selection focuses on four groups of married young men and women. A first group comprised those who reported that they played no role in choosing the spouse. The second and third groups reported semi-arranged marriages: in one group, approval had been sought, but they had never met the potential spouse prior to the wedding, in the other, approval had also been sought and, at the same, time, this group reported that they were somewhat or well acquainted with the potential spouse prior to marriage. The fourth group comprised those who reported a “love marriage”, that is, they had selected their spouse on their own, irrespective of whether their parents had approved their choice.

Other variables reflecting the terms and conditions of marriage are also available. These include the age-difference between spouses and whether or not dowry was paid. Youth were also asked about whether they had been aware, prior to marriage, of what to expect of married life; and their feelings about their upcoming marriage (happy, indifferent, anxious, afraid, unhappy); from these, we ascertain percentages who reported lack of awareness about what to expect from marriage and who had approached marriage negatively, that is, with fear, anxiety and/or unhappiness.

Measures of marital relations

The literature has suggested that marital relations are more egalitarian among those who select their spouse independently than those who undergo an arranged marriage without any say in spouse selection. In order to assess the extent to which spouse selection patterns may have influenced marital relations, we focus on four aspects of marital relations: spousal communication and interaction, contraceptive practice, women’s agency and experience/perpetration of physical and sexual violence. A description of each measure is provided below.

Spousal communication is measured by two indicators. Inter-spousal discussion reflects whether youth reported discussing some five matters with their spouse: how to spend money, love, when/whether and number of children to have, respectively, and contraception. We use a dichotomous measure set to equal 1 if the respondent reported discussing all of these matters with their spouse and 0 if not. Spousal interaction is also measured by a dichotomous variable reflecting whether youth had been on an outing with their spouse during the first six months of marriage (to a film, theatre, yatra etc).

Contraception is measured by whether or not youth were practicing a method of contraception at the time of interview.

Agency among young women is measured by their decision-making role, their freedom of movement and their access to resources. Decision-making autonomy is measured by a dichotomous variable indicating whether the respondent had participated in decisions relating to spending money and buying clothes. Access to resources was measured by a dichotomous variable indicating whether the respondent had money saved. Freedom of movement is measured by three dichotomous indicators, measuring, respectively, whether the respondent was allowed to visit unescorted (a) both a friend and the market within the village or neighbourhood; (b) both a friend and a cinema outside the village or neighbourhood; and (c) a health centre.

With regard to violence within marriage, questions were posed to young men about perpetration of physical violence and forced sex on their wife, and young women about their experience of these forms of violence perpetrated by their husband at any time during their married life. Perpetration/experience of physical violence covered a range of experiences including slapping, pushing, kicking, beating, choking, burning and attacking the wife with a weapon. Sexual violence reflected whether the woman (wife in the case of men) had ever been forced to engage in sexual relations against her will. Experience or perpetration of violence is measured by a dichotomous indicator, reflecting whether or not the young woman and young man had ever experienced or perpetrated such violence, respectively.

Socio-demographic profile of married youth

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. Gender differences in terms of household economic status and woman's (wife's for young men) economic activity status were mild. Educational attainment levels differed moderately but significantly, with young men somewhat more likely to have attained such milestones as completion of Classes 8 and 10. Given both the study design and age patterns of marriage, married young men were considerably older than married young women and marriage age too was almost five years later among young men than young women: for example, the median age at marriage among young women aged 20-24 was 18, and was 23 among young men.

Spouse selection and other terms and conditions of marriage

The terms and conditions of marriage refer to a whole range of topics including spousal choice, age differences between spouses and financial transfers (NRC and Institute of Medicine, 2005). The *Youth Study* contains information on these issues as well as such factors as pre-marital preparedness for marital life on the one hand, and the feelings with which youth had approached marriage on the other. Table 2 presents the distribution of married youth by spouse selection patterns, as well as by other terms and conditions of marriage.

Findings highlight that parent or family arranged marriages continue to be the norm (Table 2). While 7% and 5% of young men and women reported a family arranged marriage with no say in the choice of spouse, another 17% and 34% of young men and women, respectively, reported that while they were consulted about the choice of spouse, they had approved the spouse without ever meeting him/her. Another 55% and 44% of young men and women, respectively, reported that they had been consulted about the choice of spouse and were able to make a more informed decision, that is, they had been acquainted with the potential spouse. Finally, considerable proportions -- one-fifth of youth -- had selected their spouse independently.

Socio-demographic differences by spouse selection experience were by and large mild (see Appendix Table 1). However, youth who reported an arranged marriage in which their approval was sought were more likely than others to reside in economically better off (wealthiest two quintiles) households. While the median age at marriage did not differ among young women, young men who reported an arranged marriage in which their approval was sought married, on average, two years later than others. Conversely,

those who reported independent selection of their spouse were less likely than others to belong to households in the wealthiest two quintiles; and young men who selected their own wife were less likely, moreover, to have completed high school (Class 10).

Other terms and conditions of marriage suggest that marriage practices remain traditional. There is, for example, widespread adherence to the practice of dowry: well over four in five youth reporting that their marriage comprised financial transfers in the form of dowry. In addition, many youth enter marriage without adequate awareness of what sexual relations imply: indeed, just one-third of young men and significantly fewer -- one-quarter -- young women were aware, prior to marriage, of what to expect of marriage in this regard. Finally, with regard to the feelings with which youth had approached their marriage, gender differences were stark. Fewer than one in ten young men reported such negative feelings as fear, anxiety or unhappiness about marriage; in comparison, over half of young women reported these perceptions.

Marital relations among youth

Marital relations are reported in Table 3. As far as inter-spousal discussion is concerned, just 35% of young men and significantly more -- 53% -- of young women reported discussing all five matters with their spouse (although large proportions reported discussing individual matters, see IIPS and Population Council, 2009, forthcoming). Notably, not all married youth had been on an outing with their spouse: 91% of young men and significantly fewer (81%) of young women reported having been to a film, picnic or other outing with their spouse. As far as contraception is concerned, just 16-17% of young men and women reported practising contraception at the time of interview. Women's agency was limited. Just two-thirds of young women reported decision-making authority; only three-quarters were permitted to move around their own villages or neighbourhoods unescorted and even fewer were permitted to visit places outside the village or neighbourhood or a health centre unescorted; and just one-third had access to savings. Finally, inegalitarian marital relations were evident: as many as 42% of young men reported perpetrating physical and/or sexual violence on their wife, and a similar proportion of young women reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence perpetrated by their husband.

Influence of spouse selection experiences on indicators of marital relations

In this section, we explore whether young men and women who had selected their spouse independently had more communication with their spouse and were more likely to have practised contraception than those whose marriage was arranged by parents; whether women who had selected their husband independently were more likely to exhibit agency than other women; and whether they were freer from violence within marriage than women whose marriage was arranged by parents or the family.

In order to assess the influence of spouse selection experiences on these indicators of marital relations, bivariate and multivariate logistic regression analyses were carried out. Tables 4-6 present unadjusted and adjusted odds ratios from individual logistic regression analyses which regress various measures reflecting marital relations on spouse selection experience. The multivariate model presents odds ratios adjusted for such socio-demographic factors as age, years of education, current work status (woman's or wife's), rural-urban residence and household economic status. For the most part, unadjusted and adjusted odds ratios present a similar picture, suggesting that the effect of spouse selection experiences on marital relations are unaffected by socio-demographic factors. Findings, however, suggest a mixed picture.

Table 4 reports the influence of spouse selection experiences on spousal communication and contraceptive practice. Gender differences are apparent. Among young women, spouse selection experiences were clearly associated with spousal discussion and interaction, even after controlling for

socio-demographic factors: those who had selected their husband independently were significantly more likely than those who played no role to report spousal discussion and interaction. In contrast, those who reported that they had an opportunity to approve of a potential spouse selected by their family were no more likely than those who had no such opportunity to report spousal communication, but were significantly more likely to have accompanied their spouse on outings. Among young men, associations were less consistent. Those who selected their spouse independently as well as those who had been consulted and had some contact with their wife prior to marriage were more likely than those who played no role to report spousal communication; spouse selection experiences were unrelated with spousal interaction.

Contraceptive practice at the time of interview was associated with spouse selection experiences – significantly for young men and mildly but in the expected direction for young women. Young men who had selected their spouse independently were twice as likely as those who had no say to report contraception at the time of interview. Among both young men and women, those who reported an arranged marriage in which their views were sought reported contraceptive practices just mildly different from those who had played no role.

Table 5 reports the extent to which agency among young women was influenced by spouse selection experiences, controlling for socio-demographic factors. Compared to those who had no say in who they would marry, young women who had selected their husband independently were significantly more likely to display decision-making authority than those who had no say, and were more than three times as likely as those who had no say to report access to savings. In contrast, although they were mildly more likely than those who had no say to report freedom of movement, differences were not significant.

While young women who had selected their husband independently were more likely to display agency than those who had no say, it is notable that those who were consulted in the choice of husband – irrespective of whether they were given an opportunity to meet their husband before marriage – typically displayed levels of agency that fell in between these two extremes. For example, those who were consulted and permitted to meet their prospective husband before marriage were significantly more likely than those who reported an arranged marriage in which they had played no role to report decision making. At the same time, those who were consulted – irrespective of whether they had pre-marital contact with their husband -- were mildly and insignificantly more likely than the latter to display freedom of movement or access to savings.

Notwithstanding these findings of greater agency, independent spouse selection did not necessarily protect women from spousal violence, as shown in Table 6. For both young men and women, those who had selected their spouse independently were no more likely than those who had no say in the marriage decision to perpetrate or experience violence within marriage. However, young men who had been consulted in the marriage decision – irrespective of whether they had an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the wife-to-be -- were less likely than those who had no say in the marriage decision to perpetrate physical or sexual violence on their wife. Though not statistically significant, young women who had been consulted in the marriage decision were, similarly, less likely than those who had no say in the marriage decision to report the experience of violence.

Discussion

Tamil Nadu's marital transition is considerably more advanced than that observed in many other parts of India. Findings from the *Youth in India: Situation and Needs* study suggest that marital age is considerably higher in Tamil Nadu than in other states and that considerably larger proportions have

selected their spouse independently in Tamil Nadu than in the remaining states in which the study was conducted (19-20% compared to 1-8% in other states, IIPS and Population Council, forthcoming). Indeed, it is clear that marriage practices in Tamil Nadu have evolved from completely family arranged, in which youth had absolutely no say in spouse selection, to family arranged marriages in which the family identifies and pre-screens a potential spouse and youth either play a passive role in making the choice (approving a potential spouse without ever having met him or her) or a more active role in doing so (approving a potential spouse with whom the young person has some acquaintance). Gender differences are apparent with young women more likely to provide passive assent and young men more able to make an informed decision.

Our study sought to explore the implications of independent spouse selection for the quality of marital relations and for gender equity within marriage. There exist few studies in developing countries that have explored these relationships and those that have done so have focused on post-marital sexual behaviour and fertility (see NRC and Institute of Medicine, 2005, for a review). In addition, all the available studies focus on the association from women's perspective. Our study expands on these insights. It explores associations between spouse selection patterns and a diverse set of indicators of marital relations, and it explores these associations from both the perspective of young women and young men.

Findings are mixed with regard to the quality of marital relations. Spousal communication was indeed far more likely to be reported by those who selected their spouse independently than others, so too was contraception among young men and spousal interaction among young women. In addition, young women who had selected their spouse independently were more likely to experience agency, in the form of decision-making authority and access to money than were young women who reported no say in spouse selection and were just mildly more likely to report mobility. This latter finding was also observed in a study in Nepal, and attributed to the likelihood that controls on mobility of women are exercised by the community at large and not just by the family (Niraula and Morgan, 1996). In these respects, our findings concur that independent spouse selection was associated with closer marital relations and greater agency among young women.

In contrast, however, our findings suggest that independent spouse selection did not protect young women from physical or sexual violence perpetrated by their husband. Indeed, findings suggest that it is those who were consulted in the marriage decision who were least likely to perpetrate or experience violence within marriage, significantly for young men and mildly for young women. Indeed, our findings imply that independent spouse selection may deprive young women of the security and built-in support system offered, in times of crisis, by the extended family to those who undergo parent or family arranged marriage, and thereby place them at heightened risk of violence within marriage than family arranged spouse selection practices. (see for example, Abraham, 2001, India; Medora, 2003, India; Rocca et al., 2009, India; Ahearn, 2001, Nepal; Silva, 2008, Sri Lanka; Binet, 2008, Madagascar; Smith, 2008, Nigeria; Song and Luke, 2008, China; Jejeebhoy, Hegg and Santhya, 2009).

In short, our findings confirm that considerable proportions of youth in Tamil Nadu select their spouse independently but provide evidence that independent spouse selection does not unambiguously result in closer and more egalitarian marital relations than family arranged marriage, moreover its influence is not necessarily similar among young men and women. The finding that independent spouse selection has both positive and negative consequences gives rise to at least two recommendations for programmes. First, programmes are needed that inform parents about the role that self-selection plays in enhancing marital relations and the right of young people to make informed marriage-related decisions for themselves; at the same time, parents must be sensitized about the key role that their support plays in mitigating the risk of

marital violence against young women and the need for post-marriage family support, irrespective of the spouse selection experiences of their children. At the level of youth themselves, pre-marital counselling is needed that reinforces the importance of egalitarian marital relations and the right of women to exercise agency and remain free from marital violence.

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Table 1. Socio-demographic profile of married youth by sex, Tamil Nadu

	Young men	Young women
Number	1322	2007
Household economic status (SLI):		
% in wealthiest 2 quintiles	35.0	38.9
Age***		
15-19 (%)	0.2	16.0
20-24 (%)	18.8	84.0
25-29 (%)	80.9	NA
Median age***	27	22
Educational attainment		
Ever enrolled in school (%)***	93.9	90.3
Completed 8+ years (%)***	53.2	61.8
Completed 10+ years (%)*	28.4	32.3
Median years of education	8	8
Woman's economic activity status		
% worked in last 12 months (wife of young men)	21.1	28.5
Marriage age (median)	23.0	18.0

Note: * gender difference was significant at $p \leq 0.05$ level; ** gender difference was significant at $p \leq 0.01$ level; ***gender difference was significant at $p \leq 0.001$ level

Table 2: Spouse selection experiences, married young men and women, Tamil Nadu

	Young men	Young women
Number	1322	2007
Spouse selection practice (%)***		
Family arranged marriage, no say in choice of spouse	7.2	4.9
Family arranged marriage, consulted in choice of spouse, no pre-marital contact	17.4	33.6
Family arranged marriage, consulted in choice of spouse, pre-marital contact	55.3	43.8
Independent selection of spouse	20.1	19.5
Payment of dowry (%)		
Marriage involved dowry payment*	83.8	87.6
Spousal age difference (%)***		
Husband 5 or more years older than wife	40.5	68.4
Pre-marital awareness of what to expect of marriage (%)***		
Respondent knew what to expect of marriage	34.8	23.8
Negative feelings about marriage (%) ***		
Respondent felt fear, anxiety or unhappiness about marriage	6.3	53.9

Note: * gender difference was significant at $p \leq 0.05$ level; ** gender difference was significant at $p \leq 0.01$ level; ***gender difference was significant at $p \leq 0.001$ level

Table 3. Marital relations by sex, Tamil Nadu

	Young men aged 15-29	Young women aged 15-24
Number	1322	2007
Spousal discussion Discussed all 5 topics with spouse***	34.6	52.8
Spousal interaction*** Went to a film, theatre, picnic, yatra	90.9	80.6
Contraception Currently practising	15.7	16.9
Decision-making On spending money, buying clothes		67.6
Mobility Within village/neighbourhood Outside Health centre		77.7 29.7 17.4
Access to resources Has savings		30.6
Physical and sexual violence experienced(W)/perpetrated(M) physical violence** sexual violence*** Any of above	34.3 14.7 41.7	27.0 25.3 42.1

Note: * gender difference was significant at $p \leq 0.05$ level; ** gender difference was significant at $p \leq 0.01$ level; ***gender difference was significant at $p \leq 0.001$ level

Table 4: Effect of spouse selection experiences on marital communication and contraceptive practice: logistic regression, odds ratios

	Young men (N=1322)		Young women (N=2007)	
	Unadjusted OR	Adjusted OR	Unadjusted OR	Adjusted OR
Spousal discussion: % who discussed all five matters¹				
Family arranged marriage, no say in choice of spouse	R	R	R	R
Family arranged marriage, consulted, no contact	1.183	1.116	1.074	1.001
Family arranged marriage, consulted, pre-marital contact	2.129*	1.984*	1.289	1.034
Independent selection of spouse	1.842*	1.897*	1.884*	1.160*
Spousal interaction: % who went with spouse to a film, picnic yatra				
Family arranged marriage, no say in choice of spouse	R	R	R	R
Family arranged marriage, consulted, no contact	0.872	0.864	2.172**	2.322**
Family arranged marriage, consulted, pre-marital contact	1.357	1.376	2.060**	1.984*
Independent selection of spouse	0.845	0.859	2.621**	2.774***
Contraceptive practice at time of interview (%)				
Family arranged marriage, no say in choice of spouse	R	R	R	R
Family arranged marriage, consulted, no contact	1.087	0.889	0.955	0.792
Family arranged marriage, consulted, pre-marital contact	1.564	1.329	1.242	1.031
Independent selection of spouse	2.145*	2.088*	1.617	1.477

Note: * difference was significant at $p \leq 0.05$ level; ** difference was significant at $p \leq 0.01$ level; *** difference was significant at $p \leq 0.001$ level

¹money, love, when/whether and number of children to have, contraception

Table 5: Effect of spouse selection experiences on young women’s agency: logistic regression, odds ratios

	Young women (N=2007)	
	Unadjusted OR	Adjusted OR
Decision making: % making decisions on spending money and buying clothes		
Family arranged marriage, no say in choice of spouse	R	R
Family arranged marriage, consulted, no contact	1.548a	1.487
Family arranged marriage, consulted, pre-marital contact	2.620***	2.407***
Independent selection of spouse	2.081**	2.122**
Freedom of movement: % who were permitted to visit unescorted:		
The market or a friend’s home within the village/neighbourhood		
Family arranged marriage, no say in choice of spouse	R	R
Family arranged marriage, consulted, no contact	0.612	0.611
Family arranged marriage, consulted, pre-marital contact	1.268	1.315
Independent selection of spouse	1.848*	1.780
A friend’s home or place of entertainment outside the village/neighbourhood		
Family arranged marriage, no say in choice of spouse	R	R
Family arranged marriage, consulted, no contact	0.663	0.640
Family arranged marriage, consulted, pre-marital contact	0.939	0.900
Independent selection of spouse	1.113	1.066
A health centre		
Family arranged marriage, no say in choice of spouse	R	R
Family arranged marriage, consulted, no contact	0.716	0.660
Family arranged marriage, consulted, pre-marital contact	0.880	0.816
Independent selection of spouse	1.277	1.153
Access to savings: % who had money saved		
Family arranged marriage, no say in choice of spouse	R	R
Family arranged marriage, consulted, no contact	2.080a	2.025a
Family arranged marriage, consulted, pre-marital contact	2.230*	2.055a
Independent selection of spouse	3.368**	3.414**

*Note: * difference was significant at $p \leq 0.05$ level; ** difference was significant at $p \leq 0.01$ level; *** difference was significant at $p \leq 0.001$ level*

Table 6: Effect of spouse selection experiences on experience (young women) and perpetration (young men) of violence within marriage: logistic regression, odds ratios

	Young men (N=1322)		Young women (N=2007)	
	Unadjusted OR	Adjusted OR	Unadjusted OR	Adjusted OR
Experience (W)/perpetration of (M) physical or sexual violence (%)				
Family arranged marriage, no say in choice of spouse	R	R	R	R
Family arranged marriage, consulted, no contact	0.561*	0.517*	0.742	0.742
Family arranged marriage, consulted, pre-marital contact	0.598*	0.576*	0.671	0.730
Independent selection of spouse	1.190	1.114	1.102	1.060

*Note: * difference was significant at $p \leq 0.05$ level; ** difference was significant at $p \leq 0.01$ level; *** difference was significant at $p \leq 0.001$ level*

Appendix Table 1: Socio-demographic profile of married youth by sex, Tamil Nadu

	Young men				Young women			
	Extent of self-selection				Extent of self-selection			
	None	Some, no contact	Some, contact	Self-selected	None	Some, no contact	Some, contact	Self-selected
Number	95	232	725	270	69	684	870	384
Household economic status (SLI): % in wealthiest 2 quintiles	31.0	36.0	39.2	23.7	34.8	40.0	44.1	26.0
Age								
15-19 (%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	17.3	14.1	16.1	18.7
20-24 (%)	27.0	18.9	13.7	30.0	82.7	85.9	83.9	81.3
25-29 (%)	73.0	81.1	86.3	69.0	NA	NA	NA	NA
Median age	26	27	27	26	21	22	22	22
Educational attainment								
Ever enrolled in school (%)	89.2	95.7	93.9	93.8	93.3	88.8	92.1	88.2
Completed 8+ years (%)	46.6	50.9	57.0	47.0	60.6	57.8	65.3	61.6
Completed 10+ years (%)	30.0	26.0	31.2	22.0	23.7	27.2	37.1	32.3
Median years of education	7	8	8	7	8	8	8	8
Woman's economic activity status % worked in last 12 months (wife in case of young men)	17.2	26.8	17.9	26.4	32.1	28.5	26.2	33.2
Marriage age (median)	22.0	24.0	24.0	22.0	18.0	18.0	18.0	18.0