

NOTES AND MEMORANDA

MARRIAGE PATTERN OF FEMALES IN INDIA DURING THE DECADE 1951-61*

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Introduction

The extreme pattern of young age marriages for females in India is of great interest not only as a social phenomenon but because of its implications of future births and hence growth of population in India in relation to its economic development. In the absence of a compulsory marriage registration system in India, census and fragmentary surveys are the only sources to provide data on marriages. Agarwala (1962) provided a detailed picture of changing trends in age at marriage in India based on the proportion of 'single' females in different age groups as obtained from different censuses. Kumar (1967) recently has calculated the nuptiality rate for 'single' females in different age groups by using the distribution of the population by marital status obtained from the 1951 and 1961 censuses. However, for estimating the marriage probabilities from only one census for the 'single' females at different ages we need to know only their subsequent history. Knowledge on the conditions of those who are currently married or widowed, may not improve the estimates of marriage probabilities obtained from the proportion of singles in different age groups.

For the study of the changes in the level of fertility and for improving the quality of fertility projections for India's population we need marriage probabilities by single years of age for the females corresponding to each year, beginning from 1951 to 1961. Such probabilities may be useful even for population simulation models.

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