

Abstract

Duration of Search for a Prospective Mate and Its Determinants in Tamil Nadu

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This paper aims to examine the principal factors that influence the duration of search (time lapsed between year of initiation of marriage and year of first marriage) for a prospective mate of 600 ever-married women aged 15-44 drawn from rural (300) and urban (300) areas of Salem district, Tamil Nadu, India. Results based on multiple classification analysis show that controlling for other variables and covariates, consanguinity and women's occupational status have exhibited significant net effects on the duration of search for a prospective mate irrespective of their place of residence (rural and urban areas) and marriage cohort (married during 1987 or before, and 1988-98). Caste background of the women has showed significant independent effect on the duration of search for prospective mate both in rural and urban settings. While women's educational attainment and desired socio-economic traits of the prospective mate have played a moderate and lesser significant role, respectively in influencing the search period for a mate only among the women of past marriage cohort, father's occupation and payment of dowry showed independent effects only in rural areas. Contrary to the expectation, the duration of search for a prospective mate is longer for the women who had three or more siblings in the marriageable ages, but such pattern is noticed only in rural areas and among those who got married recently. Based on the findings some plausible policy implications have been suggested.