

NAMAKKAL, July 16, 2012

Educated caste Hindu youth campaign against inter-caste marriages

- M.K. ANANTH
- THE HINDU



A youth going through the 'anti inter-caste marriage' pamphlets that were circulated to them in Namakkal on Sunday. —Photo: M.K. Ananth

“I have known girls (friends and relatives) of our community fall in love with boys from other communities and marry them. It not only affected them but also their families that were pushed to shame from which they were unable to recover even many years after the marriage”, says P. Karthik (22), an engineering professional.

He was among other educated youth who were busy distributing pamphlets at the launch of the ‘Campaign Against Inter-Caste Marriage Movement’ – organised by the Kongu Velala Goundergal Peravai in Namakkal on Sunday. He claimed that boys from downtrodden communities targeted wealthy girls from their community.

His fellow campaigner N. Saravanan (20), a third year B.Tech student, told *The Hindu* that inter-caste marriages cannot be accepted even if the boy is from a well-off family among Forward (FC), Backward (BC) or other caste Hindu communities.

“India is known for its rich tradition that is preserved by communities in the country over the years. Inter-caste marriages will put an end to this tradition”, he added. However, they denied that they opposed inter-caste marriages due to shortage of brides for grooms of that community.

Their friend R. Muthukumar (25), an MBA from Sankari said they were united by the movement. “We are talking to girls in love with youth from other communities and have emphasised the need to protect our tradition. But many girls are deeply infatuated,” he lamented.

State president of the Peravai Pongalur R. Manikandan who presided over the inauguration told *The Hindu* that they launched the movement in April this year after closely observing nearly 900 inter-caste marriages involving girls of their community in the 10 districts in Kongu region in about a year.

He alleged that some political parties and organisations supported inter-caste marriages to gain votes.

“We want to save girls from the sufferings that they would undergo after such marriages. Many girls regret their marriage after experiencing cultural differences in the boy’s house. Sadly, the girl’s family also does not accept them,” he observed.

Mr. Manikandan made it clear that they would not resort to forcible means to prevent inter-caste marriages. “We will campaign in the district headquarters in Kongu region and then focus on village-level campaigns and other awareness programmes among adolescent girls and boys in colleges and schools,” he added.

“Other caste Hindus have also extended their support for our movement and we are planning to jointly organise a mass ‘Anti Inter-Caste Marriage Conference’ in 2014 in Coimbatore,” he added.

While the Government is taking steps to promote inter-caste marriages by providing financial assistance and extending other benefits for those couples, the event that was organised with publicity through newspaper advertisements and wall posters shocked quite a number of people of this town.

Superintendent of Police M. Sathiya Priya said that it was an indoor meeting for people of that community to avoid inter-caste marriages. “Stern legal action will be initiated against persons who try to stop inter-caste marriages as it is an offence”, the SP warned.