

## Punjab Villages Pass Resolutions Against Same-Village Marriages



A number of village councils, known as panchayats, across Punjab are passing resolutions that discourage marriages between young men and women from the same village. The move stems from concerns that such unions are leading to violent disputes and family feuds, disrupting social harmony within the community.

The resolutions, passed in villages across districts like Faridkot, Moga, and Mohali, have taken a firm stance against intra village marriages. The panchayats argue that these weddings create tension and are sometimes a factor in public altercations, family breakdowns, and, in some instances, violent incidents.

In a recent case in Ghal Kalan village in Moga district, a woman was reportedly assaulted after her son married a girl from the same village, against a resolution that had been previously passed. In another instance in Galwatti village, a couple who married in 2016 and later returned to the village faced a social boycott. This led the couple to file a court case, alleging harassment.

The resolutions have also requested that the government take action. Some panchayats have demanded that the state government enact a law to ban marriages within the same village. They believe that an enforceable law would help reduce crime and promote social stability in rural areas.

These local bodies, however, lack legal authority to enforce such dictates. The Supreme Court of India has previously ruled that resolutions from village panchayats have no legal standing, especially when they interfere with the personal lives of adults. This stance has been echoed by state authorities, with police officials emphasizing the constitutional right of adults to marry who they choose.

Despite the legal limitations, the panchayats are pushing ahead, appealing to neighboring villages to adopt similar measures. The resolutions often include stipulations that couples who marry against the village's wishes and anyone who assists them will face social boycott. A police official in Faridkot noted that disputes from same-village marriages have become more common, with over 30 such complaints annually in the district.