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Research Paper



Marital Satisfaction among Newly Married Couples: A Post COVID Pandemic Study in India

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ABSTRACT

Marital satisfaction is a mental state that reflects a person's perceptions of the rewards and expenses of marriage. The more costs a marriage partner imposes on a person, the less content that person is with the marriage and the marriage partner in general. Similarly, the larger the perceived benefits, the happier one are with his or her marriage and marital partner. The present study tried to examine the level of marital satisfaction among married couples in Karnataka state. For the present study, the researchers adopted an experimental research design to identify marital satisfaction among married couples. Researchers used the ENRICH Marital Satisfaction (EMS) Scale to explore marital satisfaction. The result highlights that most respondent couples have low marital satisfaction levels for various reasons. However, the researchers suggested appropriate counselling and family environment enrichment activities to improve marital satisfaction among married couples.

Keywords: Marital Satisfaction, Marriage Life, Counselling, Family Environment

arriage is a Social institution and unique relationship shaped by social rules and customs that influence people's development and self-realization (Ersanl & Kalkan, 2008). Meeting the need for love and being loved, meeting biological, social, psychological, and motivational needs, bringing new generations into the world, gaining a place in society, feeling safe and protected, cooperation, having confidence in the future, pride in one another, and healthy sexual life functioning are all functions of marriage. Despite changing dimensions and contents, family and marriage remain communities' basic units (Sharma, 2013). In many countries, marriage is the institution where closeness and fellowship exist and where children are raised in a secure environment that allows sexual activity and emotional development (Yavuzer, 2012). As the number of divorces has risen, understanding the structure of marriage and the interactions between spouses has become more important (Günay, G. et.al, 2019). Larson and Holman (1994) found three predictors of marital quality and stability. They define marital quality as "a subjective assessment of a couple's relationship". "Intact or not intact" is how marital stability is defined. Background and contextual factors, individual traits and behaviours, and couple interactional processes

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predict marriage quality and stability (i.e., traits). Larson calls them the Marriage Triangle. Jeffrey Larson (2003)'s Marriage Triangle highlights these three dimensions and their interactions. Marital satisfaction reflects a person's perceptions of marriage's benefits and costs. The more a marriage partner costs, the less happy a person is with the marriage and the partner. The bigger the perceived benefits, the happier one is with their marriage and partner.

Marital satisfaction is a popular measure of a marriage's happiness and stability. Marriage success and satisfaction are more important than marriage itself. Hawkins defines marital satisfaction as a couples overall contentment, satisfaction, and joy. It's crucial to personal happiness and family success. Marital happiness requires taste compliance, personality awareness, behavioural guidelines, and relationship patterns. Marriage contentment affects physical and mental health, life satisfaction, career success, and social communication because it is most couples' primary source of social support and a protective factor against psychological and physiological illness.

Covid-19 Pandemic Era and its impact on marital relationships

The Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has spread worldwide, leading to a global pandemic. Common characteristics of the acute stage of the disease are fever, dry cough, dyspnea, gastrointestinal symptoms, and anosmia with or without ageusia (Mehta et al., 2021). Many consequences could be noticed due to COVID-19 pandemic. Mental health problems, as well as physical disabilities, have been observed in people who recovered from COVID-19. Citizens are at an increased risk of mental disorders like depression due to Identifying patients most likely to need assistance due to physical and psychiatric symptoms can have implications for long-term support policies. COVID-19's home quarantine and lockdown affected family well-being. Parents had more housework and childcare responsibilities after schools and businesses closed. household workload, role confusion, and irrational environmental demands lead to parental burnout (Mousavi S. F., 2020). COVID-19 home quarantine and lockdown affected family well-being and challenged parents' parenting abilities (Mangiavacchi et al., 2020). Schools and businesses closed, leaving parents with housework and childcare (Farré et al., 2020). According to Alon et al. (2020) and Hupkau and Petrongolo(2020), housework, childcare, and teaching stress parents, especially mothers. Stress can cause depression, anxiety, burnout, and parent-child dysfunction (Mather et al., 2014)(Flouri et al., 2018). COVID-19's lack of control, household workload, role confusion, and irrational environmental demands have led to parental burnout (PB) (Vinayak and Dhanoa, 2017)(Mikolajczak et al., 2018).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Sayehmiri, K et al. (2020), Couples with high neuroticism had low marital satisfaction. Personality traits are consistent over time and can predict a person's marriage behaviour. They can also be linked to a better, healthier, and more stable marriage. Myers, Madathil, and Tingle (2005) studied 45 Indian arranged marriages, and US choice marriage statistics were compared. Satisfaction was unaffected by marital variables. Both groups differed on 9 of 19 well-being scales.

Heffner, K et al. (2004) 85 newly married and 31 older couples married with an average of 42 years of age couples were compared. Satisfaction was unaffected by marital variables in either group. Both groups differed on 9 of 19 well-being scales. Researchers studied the relationship between spousal support satisfaction and emotional, cortisol, and blood pressure

reactions to conflict in 85 newlymarried and 31 older couples. Couples had a 30-minute conflict conversation while cortisol was tested; post-conflict, newly married blood pressure was monitored. Newlywed wives are more satisfied with the partner support they receive, they demonstrate smaller increases in negative affect and smaller changes in cortisol in response to marital conflict.

Faulkner and colleagues (2005) suggest socialising wives to care for themselves and their marriage. Their relationship interpretations may be more accurate than their husband's. Faulkner and colleagues recommend educating both genders about role differences, expectations, and marital satisfaction. Nayana & James (2017) studied Indian marriage satisfaction. From 60 repondents 8, 25-year-old married couples were included. Measured the marital satisfaction by adopting Kansas Marital Satisfaction scale and Communication styles Inventory. They found that communication styles and nonsexual intimacy affect marriage satisfaction. Both love and arranged marriages were equally satisfying. According to Velmurugan and Maheshwari (2015), marital satisfaction influences family and personal growth. Coherent and satisfying couple relationships are required for fulfilment and growth (Azeez, 2013). Personality, job, child rearing responsibilities, sexual satisfaction, and communication all have an impact on marital happiness. In India, women's employment and dual roles have an impact on marital satisfaction. The purpose of this study is to investigate marital satisfaction among Tiruchirappalli Southern Railways employees. assesses the marital satisfaction of women working for Tiruchirappalli's Southern Railways. Descriptive research and convenient sampling were used to interview 56 people. marital satisfaction tool developed by Brinda Amirthraj and Indira Jai Prakash was used (1985).

Purpose of the Study

The unexpected occurrence of infectious disease of COVID-19, the coercion of people into home quarantine, in addition to hearing the news of daily deaths, preventing people from holding mourning ceremony for lost loved ones, closing schools and businesses, and the resulting economic pressure on low-income groups, and so on, caused anxiety and seeing an uncertain future ahead(Mousavi SF, 2020). This study attempts to specifically address the need to look into marrital satisfaction among newly married couples during post-COVID period. While taking into account the limitations in terms of information on marital satisfaction and its relationship to romantic intimacy, gender differences, communication styles and cultural differences, it still gives the earlier findings enough weight.

Objectives of the present Study

The objectives of this study were to look at the level of marital satisfaction among the respondents, and to find the best way to improve marital satisfaction through changes in lifestyle based on the result.

The hypothesis of the Study

H₁: There would be a significant difference in marital satisfaction with respect to gender.

METHODS AND MATERIAL

For the present study researcher adopted exploratory research design, to identify the marital satisfaction among married couple. The study was conducted post pandemic Covid-19. The married couples from the State of Karnataka were the universe of the study. Krejci and Morgan's sampling size technique was adopted to finalization of sample size, hence, 300 samples were selected by adopting purposive sampling technique. For ethical consideration

the researchers have sought oral inform consent by giving proper information about the study and all the private information such as names, place any other kinds of identity of the respondents kept confidential.

Instrument

In order to explore the marital satisfaction among young couples during post pandemic, the researchers used ENRICH Marital Satisfaction (EMS) Scale. The ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale (EMS) is a five-point scale for marital satisfaction. It measures satisfaction on two dimensions: marital satisfaction (MS) and idealized distortion (ID). The higher scores on the MS represent higher levels of marital satisfaction, while the lower scores indicate dissatisfaction.

Statistical Analysis

SPSS 2.0 was used for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistical technique and Analysis of variance statistical technique was used in order to get significance among the variables.

FINDINGS AND DIS	SCUSSION			
Table No. 1 Socio-den	nographic Background of the resp	ondents		
Particulars	Response	Frequency	Percent	
Gender	Male	202	67.3	
	Female	98	32.7	
	Total	300	100	
	18 to 25 Years	32	10.7	
	25 to 30 Years	101	33.7	
Age	30 to 40 Years	84	28.0	
-	40 to 50 Years	45	15.0	
	50 Years and Above	38	12.7	
	Total	300	100	
	PUC	48	16.0	
	Degree	47	15.7	
	Master Degree	43	14.3	
Education	Engineering	75	25.0	
	Medical	3	1.0	
	Master Degree and Above	70	23.3	
	Diploma	14	4.7	
	Total	300	100	
Home Ownership	Own	206	68.7	
•	Rent	61	20.3	
	Leased	33	11.0	
	Total	300	100	
Type of Family	Joint	50	16.7	
	Nuclear	205	68.3	
	Extended	45	15.0	
	Total	300	100	
Monthly Income	Below Rs. 20,000	118	39.3	
•	Rs.20,000 to Rs.25000	108	36.0	
	Rs.25000 to Rs.30000	54	18.0	
	Rs.30000 to Rs.35000	18	6.0	
	Above Rs.35000	2	.7	
	Total	300	100	

Source: Primary

The above table shows the socio-demographic background of the respondents, with the age groups of 25 to 30 years old accounting for the biggest percentage (33.7%), 30 to 40 years old (28.0%), 40 to 50 years old (15.0%), and 50 to 60 years old (12.7%). Educational backgrounds of the respondents highest i.e. 25.0 percent of them have completed an engineering course followed by 23.3 percent of respondents who have earned a master's degree, 16.0 percent of respondents who have completed their pre-university education, and remaining 15.7 percent of respondents who have earned a bachelor's degree. 68.7% of those surveyed reside in their own home, 20.3 percent who rent their homes and only 11.0 percent who lease their homes respectively. The majority of respondents (68.3 percent) live in nuclear families, followed by joint families (16.7 percent) and extended families (15. percent). The study found that 39.3% of the respondents were earning below Rs. 20,000 per month, followed by 36.0% of the respondents' monthly income was between Rs.20,000 to Rs.25,000, 6.0% of them had income bracket between Rs.30,000 to Rs.35,000 and remaining 0.7% were earning above Rs. 35,000 in a month.

Table No.2 level of Marital Satisfaction as per ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale

Statement	M	Sd
The couple understands each other perfectly	2.45	1.14
Not pleased with the personality characteristics and personal habits of	2.64	0.95
the partner		
Very happy with handling role and responsibilities in marriage	2.38	1.03
Partner completely understands and sympathizes with every mood	2.38	1.02
Not happy about communication and feel partner does not understand	2.44	1.07
Relationship is a perfect success	2.06	1.21
Happy about their decisions and resolve conflicts	2.30	1.05
Unhappy about financial position and the way make financial practice	2.05	1.11
decisions		
Have some needs that are not being met by relationship	2.41	1.27
Very happy with how manage leisure activities and the time spend	2.68	1.18
together		
Very pleased about how express affection and relate sexually	2.85	1.16
Not satisfied with the way each handle their responsibilities as parents	2.70	1.20
Have never regretted relationship with partner, not even for a moment	1.58	1.08
Dissatisfied about relationship with parents, in-laws, and/or friends	2.33	0.96
Feel very good about how each practice our religious beliefs and	2.12	0.93
values		

Source: Primary

The mean value of the marital satisfaction of married couple respondents shows that highest mean value i.e. 2.85 for very pleased about how express affection and relate sexually, followed by 2.70 mean value for not satisfied with the way each handle their responsibilities as parents, 2.68 mean for very happy with how manage leisure activities and the time spend together and least mean value with 1.58 for have never regretted relationship with a partner, not even for a moment could be seen in the table.

Table-3 The Level of Marital Satisfaction of the Respondents

Level of Satisfaction	Frequency	Percent	
Very Unsatisfied	46	15.3	
Unsatisfied	117	39.0	
Moderately Satisfied	116	38.7	
Satisfied	21	7.0	
Very Satisfied	0	0.0	
Total	300	100	

Source: Primary

The above table explores that level of marital satisfaction among respondents, it shows that highest i.e., 39.0% of the respondents were unsatisfied and 15.3% of the respondents were very unsatisfied with their marital life, followed by 38.7% of the respondents were moderately Satisfied, and remaining only 7.0% of the respondents were satisfied with their marital life.

A similar result was found in a study conducted by Rika Fatimah (2012) in "Improvement on Marital Satisfaction by using Quality Approach" The Marital Satisfaction Index (MSI)has shown that marriage relationship has the highest number with 21% at the lowest level or less level of satisfaction. Marital intimacy followed with 17.9% and marital adjustment with 8.1%. This condition is consistent with the result shown in the measure of problem occurred as marital relationship with 19.3%, marital intimacy with 17.9 then followed by the least problem occurred in marital adjustment with 7.8%.

H1: There would be a significant difference in marital satisfaction, with respect to gender

of the respondents

		Level of Satisfaction				Total	
		Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Moderately Satisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	
Gender	Male	29	80	78	15	0	202
		9.7%	26.7%	26.0%	5.0%	0%	67.3%
	Female	17	37	38	0	0	98
		5.7%	12.3%	12.7%	0%	0%	32.7%
		46	117	116	21	0	300
	Total	15.3%	39.0%	38.7%	7.0%	0%	100.0%

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.86.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.603ª	3	.896
Likelihood Ratio	.599	3	.897
Linear-by-Linear Association	.285	1	.593
N of Valid Cases	300		

The chi-square result, x^2 =.603, df=3, p=.8960.5, clearly demonstrates that there was no significant relationship between respondents' gender and marital satisfaction. The level of marriage life satisfaction was the same for both male and female respondents. Therefore, it is rejected that there would be a major variation in marital satisfaction based on gender. According to the results of the current study, respondents in Karnataka are dissatisfied with

their married lives. The following elements were suggested by researchers as ways to boost marital pleasure.

The similar results found in a study conducted by Guo & Huang also showed that the mean of marital satisfaction score was higher in men than women and. In contrast to these results, Amato is expressed that satisfaction and happiness were similarly equal in men and women (Amato PR, Booth A, Johnson DR, et al., 2007).

In another point of view, the results of Bakhshi et al. & King et al. have shown that marital satisfaction in women is positively associated with aging. To be more precise, one of the most influential factors affecting marital satisfaction is sexual satisfaction.

Need for Social Work Intervention

Premarital counselling may be connected with better levels of marital satisfaction. The real nature of the correlations between couples counselling and marital satisfaction, as well as the relationship between premarital counselling and couples counselling, could not be determined in this study. The results of this study cannot be applied to the larger population of married couples. As a result, it will be critical to do further study, evaluate prior research, and apply the findings while dealing with couples.

In order for social workers to move couples towards a successful marriage, there needs to be a focus on communication. A lack of and inadequate communication has been identified as one of the major reasons for couples to experience conflict (Amato & Previti, 2003). Through communication intervention tactics with couples, social workers could teach and encourage successful, acceptable, and helpful language. Social workers can advocate premarital therapy and marriage preparation courses to address communication patterns proactively. Social workers can provide these services in a faith-based or secular setting to reach a greater community and actively avoid future conflict. Premarital counselling was found to be useful for individuals who participated in this study. Fourteen of the fifteen individuals who attended premarital counselling assessed their marriage satisfaction as high. Social workers could use this development to provide premarital counseling to couples in order to promote more satisfying marriages. With this knowledge, social workers can use this as a motivator to strengthen relationships and avoid divorce and all of the burdens that come with it.

Conclusively, there are a lot of different steps that social workers can take to promote happy and supportive marriages. Their ability to provide, encourage, advocate and collaborate with other premarital counseling providers can assist in targeting a higher population of couples. As for couples counseling, social workers can continue to support the impact of couples counseling, as well as provide judgment-free settings where couples feel comfortable and willing to discuss their areas of concern as an alternative to divorce.

CONCLUSION

Marital issues are widespread that significantly affect a lot of other facets of life. As a result, it is essential to keep resolving the problems in order to enhance the married couple's growth as well as their surroundings and way of life. Analysis of the current state of marriage institutions themselves is required in order to make improvements. In response to the need for assessment, the researcher suggests a novel method of assessing marital institutions that places a strong emphasis on satisfaction issues. The degree of marital satisfaction increases as the performance level. We may be better able to decide the

appropriate course of action for development with this knowledge about each respondent's level of satisfaction. Additionally, based on the degree of satisfaction, our research has recommended a range of improvement activities. Social workers assist families in strengthening their bonds and coping with unpleasant situations such as divorce, illness, or death. They assist families in the counseling process by assisting them in identifying difficulties, setting goals, and finding solutions to their problems. They may also advocate legal action in a crisis situation, such as neglect, substance misuse, or violence, such as having children temporarily removed while the parents work through their troubles.

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Conflict of Interest

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