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## Marital Adjustment and Depression

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### ABSTRACT

Success in marriage is much more than finding the right person; it is a matter of being the right person. Husbands and wives relationship with each other affect the adjustment and mental health of couples. Marital happiness is very strongly linked to mental health. Marital dissatisfaction increases the problem of mental health of married couples. Depression is one of the most prevalent mental health problems. It can be caused by several factors, including interpersonal relationships. In keeping all these views in mind the present study was conducted on 200 women (100 younger and 100 old) in Haryana state. In results, Depression was negatively correlated with marital adjustment. Marital duration affects the marital adjustment. Younger women (less than five years of marriage) are more adjusted in comparison to the older women (more than 5 years of marriage).

**Keywords:** *Marriage, Adjustment, Depression*

Success in marriage is much more than finding the right person; it is a matter of being the right person.

Simple as it seems the notion of marital adjustment is difficult to conceptualize and difficult to measure through empirical research. For both husbands and wives relationship and conflict resolution style impact the satisfaction couples experience over the course of their marriage for the first five years, with conflict resolution style becoming more influential in predicting satisfaction as years pass.

The various factors that impact marital adjustment for men and women can be filtered into eight major domains: communication, sexual relationship, own leisure, division of household tasks, time together, external network and finances (Vangelisti & Huston, 1994). How couples negotiate these various issues impacts the level of marital adjustment for both.

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Marital quality is a dynamic concept as the nature and quality of relationships can change over time (Larson and Holman, 2002). There are number of ways to conceptualize the notion of quality of relationship. Glenn (1998) identifies two major approaches to the measurement of relationship quality; looking at individual feelings of the people in a relationship and looking at the relationship itself.

### *Factors Affecting Marital Adjustment*

Disillusionment in regard to marital satisfaction need not become an issue if wives are able to view their husband's attributes in a way that accurately reflected their husband's self view. When women are able to agree with their partner's self perceived traits and abilities, both reported being satisfied. Other factors that influence marital satisfaction includes: level of intimacy, ability to self disclosure with their spouses, husband's affectional expression and amount of time they spend with each other and communication styles.

**Gender** –A number of differences have been found between men and women's views of quality of their relationships. Locksley (1980) reports that women who expresses more dissatisfaction and frustration with the relationship, are more likely to characterize their relationship as being like two separate people than a couple. Heaton and Blake (1999) argue that as men and women have different roles and see different aspects of relationship (such as the division of labour, parenting and sexual intimacy) in different ways they evaluate them differently.

**Personality traits**- Higher levels of neuroticism or negative affectivity were associated with lower level of initial satisfaction (Karney and Bradbury, 1997). Caughin et.al (2000) argues that trait anxiety affects marital satisfaction through communication processes such as increased negativity in interactions. Attachment insecurity is also associated with the experience of high levels of negative affect, which appears to be both directly and indirectly related to poorer marital satisfaction (Davila et.al, 1998). The personality trait of hostility is characterized by cynical and mistrustful attitudes and a propensity to experience anger and act aggressively. Newton and Glaser (1995) found that higher hostility was associated with greater decrements in husband's and wives marital quality during the first few declining satisfaction in early marriage.

**Physical health** – Burman& Margolin(1992) review findings that show a reciprocal relationship between marital satisfaction and health problems. A decline in health may be associated with a reduction in marital quality, which is influenced by a range of factors such as reduced income, change in division of labour, fewer joint activities or problematic behaviour ( Booth and Johnson,1994).

**Unemployment** – Unemployment is not strongly related to marital satisfaction but is associated with depression and stressful relations, which are predictive of poor marital quality (Kinnune and Pulkkinen, 1998).

**Previous relationship**- Premarital, romantic and sexual relationships have been found to be negative predictors of marital satisfaction (Kelley and Conley, 1987). Premarital cohabitation with someone other than the present spouse is negatively correlated with marital satisfaction and stability (Sets, 1993).

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**Division of labour-** Disagreement over household division of labour is a cause of marital dissatisfaction. Wilke et.al (1998) found that husbands with more conventional attitude may report lower level of satisfaction when their wives are employed. A partner undervaluing your contributions decreases marital satisfaction.

**Parental divorce-** Parental divorce is associated with lower marital quality among married offspring ( Amato and Booth,1997). Parental divorce is strongly related with marital problems and marital instability. Adult children of divorced parents are more likely to fear that their marriage will be in trouble. It is strongly correlated with poorer communication and problematic behavior (Bradbury et.al 2000).

### *Marital Adjustment and Mental Health*

Marital happiness is very strongly linked to mental health. Kurdek(1988) reports that high levels of depressive symptoms at marriage are linked to low initial marital quality and that increases in depression are accompanied by decreases in marital quality. Dehle and Weiss(1998) found that lower initial marital quality predicted greater subsequent depression and also initially higher depression scores predicted greater declines in marital quality three months later. Anxiety disorder has been found to be associated with poorer marital quality (McLeod, 1994).

Depression is one of the most prevalent psychological disorders. Depression can be caused by several factors, including interpersonal relationships. Inter-personal relationships are the relationships between individuals and the reactions and emotions of each individual expressed directly and discreetly to each other. One of the most important social causes for depression is a stressful marriage. When a marriage is not working well it turns into a stressor, which often causes depression among females and leads males to alcohol abuse. Stressful marriage is the leading cause for depression among women (Whisman, 2001). Women genetically predisposed to stress are three times more likely to develop depression than women not genetically predisposed.

If one partner suffers from chronic depression, it is very likely that the other partner will develop depression as well. Even when the depressed partner overcomes this depression, it is common to relapse if he or she has an unsatisfying marriage. Marital distress can also occur if the distressed partner's behaviour triggers negative effects in the spouse. In the large proportion of couples experiencing marital distress , at least one partner is clinically depressed, adding even more stress to other partner( Mc- Cullough,2003). In short the stress generation model of depression can help to explain the two way relation between marital discord and depression. Marital distress can lead to depression and depression can lead to marital discord.

If marriage in general affect personal adjustment in a positive fashion, it is likely that well-adjusted marriages lead to well-adjusted lives. If psychological adjustment is a composite of the

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adjustment in various aspects of life (i.e. family, work, health etc), high marital adjustment leads to high psychological adjustment. This relationship provides an important policy implication of marital adjustment. Well-adjusted marriages may reduce health services costs, involving both physical and mental health.

Mohd Shoaib Mir, Mohammad Amin Wani, Dr. R. Sankar (2016) 200 subjects equally divided into two groups on the basis of gender (male and female) further these two groups were also divided into two more groups on the basis of family type (single family and joint family). Marital Adjustment Questionnaire (MAQ) constructed and standardized by Dr. Pramod Kumar & Dr. Kanchana Rohatgi was used for data collection. Mean, standard deviation and t-test were applied for statistical analysis. Results reveal that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of marital adjustment among love marriage and arranged marriage subjects. Kanchan Sabre (2016) conducted a study on a sample of 120 women (nuclear family=60 & joint family=60) purposively selected. The measure used for data collection was Pramod, K.; Kanchana, R. Marital Adjustment Scale. The data was analyzed by computing Means, SD, & t-test. The results revealed that there was a significant difference in marital adjustment among women of nuclear and joint families. The women belonging to nuclear showed higher levels of marital adjustment as compared to women of joint families.

### *Objective of the study*

1. To see the correlation between marital adjustment and depression among women's
2. To see whether duration of marriage affects marital adjustment of women's
3. To see whether duration of marriage affects depression level of women's

### *Hypotheses*

1. There will be negative correlation between marital adjustment and depression level
2. The duration of marriage will affect marital adjustment
3. The duration of marriage will affect depression level among women's

### *Sample*

A sample of 200 married women's was taken from Hissar city on the basis of availability. The sample was divided into two groups according to marriage duration: younger couples (having marriage duration between 1 to 5 years) and older couples (having marriage duration between 5 to 10 years).

### *Tools used*

1. **Marital Adjustment Questionnaire** - Marital Adjustment Questionnaire by Pramod Kumar and Kanchana Rohatgi (1976) was used. This questionnaire consists of 25 Yes-No type items. The split half reliability of the test was found to be .70 while the test-retest reliability was found to be .84. The validity of the test was around .71.

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- 2. Beck Depression Inventory** -Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-II) given by Aaron D. Beck was used. This BDI-II was a self report measure and consists of 21 items. The reliability and validity of this test was very high i.e. .93.

### *Procedure*

First of all the married women were contacted. Then they were made comfortable and a good rapport was established with them. After that they were given Marital Adjustment Questionnaire and Beck's Depression Inventory to fill. Instructions written on the test were made clear to them. They were made convinced that their responses will be kept confidential so that they will give honest responses. When the subjects finished both the tests they were taken back. The subjects were thanked for their cooperation. After this the scoring was done with the help of manual. Raw scores were obtained and appropriate statistical tools were used to analyze the data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The objective of present study was to see the relation between marital adjustment and depression and to see the role of marriage duration on marital adjustment and depression among women's. For this a sample of 200 females was taken out of which 100 women's were younger couples having marriage duration between 1 to 5 years and 100 women's are older couples having marriage duration between 5 to 10 years. To fulfill the objective Marital Adjustment Questionnaire and Beck's Depression Inventory were used. The raw scores were derived and put to statistical analysis. The tests were used as per the objectives formulated. The results are given below:

*Table 1 Mean , S.D and Correlation between Marital adjustment and Depression*

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	Correlation
Marital adjustment	200	19.28	3.85	-.788**
Depression	200	10.36	8.48	

\*correlation significant at .05 level

\*\*correlation significant at .01 level

As the first objective of the study was to see the relation between Marital adjustment and Depression Pearson r was used. From table 1 it is clear that correlation coefficient was -.788 that is highly significant at .01 level. The negative correlation indicates that better will be the Marital adjustment lesser will be Depression level or poorer will be the Marital adjustment higher will be the Depression level. From the results it is clear that the first hypothesis "There will be negative correlation between Marital adjustment and Depression" got accepted. Similar results have been reported in 11 correlational studies conducted under the period of 1977-1993. The results highlighted that 50% of couples seeking marital therapy have significant depression.

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The second objective of the study was to see the role of duration of married life on both of variables i.e. Marital adjustment and Depression. To fulfill that objective t test was applied. The results are shown below:

**Table 2.1 Mean, S.D and t-value on Marital adjustment among younger and older couples**

Marital adjustment	N	Mean	S.D	t-value
Younger couples Marriage duration 1 to 5 years	100	26.86	2.75	4.91**
Older couples Marriage duration 5 to 10 years	100	17.97	4.15	

From the above table(2.1) it is clear that younger couples (i.e. females having shorter marriage duration of 1 to 5 years) were having better marital adjustment with mean of 26.86 as compared to older couples(i.e. females having longer marriage duration of 5 to 10 years) with mean of 17.97. The t value of 4.91 indicated significant difference between both groups on the dimension of marital adjustment. It might be because in initial stages of married life both of the partners did not pay much attention to negative events. But with increase in time duration the negative events like verbal and physical aggression, criticism, blame etc got added up that in turn results in lower marital adjustment. So from the results it is clear that duration of marriage has negative effect on marital adjustment.

**Table 2.2 Mean, S.D and t-value on Depression level among younger and older couples**

Depression level	N	Mean	S.D	t-value
Younger couples marriage duration 1 to 5 years	100	7.05	6.64	4.62**
Older couples marriage duration 5 to 10 years	100	13.09	8.89	

Similarly, on the dimension of depression younger couples were having lower score i.e. mean of 7.05 as compared to older couples who were having the mean of 13.09.(Table 2.2) The t test was applied to see the significance of difference between both the groups(younger couples and older couples). The t value of 4.62 indicated significant difference between both groups. It means that older couples were having more depression than the younger couples. It might be because of the fact that with time duration the negative events got added up that would result in increase in depression level among older couples. From the results discussed above it is clear that second hypothesis of the study got accepted.

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### *Conflict of Interests*

The author declared no conflict of interests.

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