



CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE AND MARITAL SATISFACTION OVER DIFFERENT PHASES (21-45 YEARS)- A CASE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The concept of marriage according a person is an important aspect of one's subjective feeling of marital satisfaction. Every individual has a framework about marriage and that impacts how they view the events that occur in their marital life. When people have high expectations from their marriage and if that's not met, they might find their marriage unsatisfactory & it changes with each phase of one's marriage. This study focuses on people's concept of marriage before and after marriage & how those concepts and expectations impact their marital satisfaction. In this study, we would interpret the influence of the concept of marriage on the marital satisfaction of an individual with the help of a case study.

Keywords: *Concept of marriage, Marital satisfaction, Case Study*

INTRODUCTION

Everyone has their own unique perception towards the concept of marriage. The concept of marriage changes over time and situations. The concept of marriage varies based on two aspects;

[1]Gender difference

[2]Phase of marriage

*Before marriage

*After marriage

The developmental issue in this period would be one's concept of marriage which differs from the reality of marital life. Everyone dreams for an ideal marital life with full of happiness and enjoyment, though the reality differs. Marriage is a thing which is done for the sake of society such that one would be recognized socially. People say that marriage is the union of two families, two souls and so on but actually marriage is a combination of many responsibilities towards one's marital life.

Though someone lives in a fantasy world, the reality comes in front of them over their marital life. When someone realizes the meaning of marriage, they tend to develop a sense of disappointment towards their life. After some years, one would feel a emptiness in their life, they feel lonely, they experience a lack of care and attention from their family, they start leading their marital life on the basis of adjustment for the sake of their children, culture and society. Due to the differences in their concept of marriage, they develop a state of dilemma, disappointment, frustration, anxiety, stress and depression. Over every stages of marriage, men and women tend to change their concept of marriage which is also accompanied by psychological disturbances.

Concept of marriage- Carl Rogers:

Carl Rogers (1972) sees the present-day changes in marriage as a positive trend towards greater freedom of the spouses. Rogers believed marriage is a failing institution. He stated that when a married couple learnt to see each other as separate persons, with separate as well as mutual needs and interests, then there develops a healthy and enriching relationship.

Carl Rogers gave two basic concepts of marriage (1972),



1) A tight fence, limited freedom, roomy comfortable box, a magic box, romantic box, resolving the difficulties in their relationship.

2) Exciting exploration of new avenues, each is given freedom and encouragement to develop their full potential.

Stages of marriage (Sari Harrar & Rita DeMaria):

Stage one: Passion: This is the honeymoon stage, where attraction and intimacy keep a married couple together which later leads to long-term commitment. But it often seems as short-lived as passing cloud' by one or two years, most couples have lost those initial feelings.

Stage two: Realization: In this stage, the honeymoon period ends people starts have certain realization. Different values and disagreements mark a new phase of the marriage, where people start understanding the flaws of each other and try accepting each other.

Stage three: Rebellion: There are couples who successfully pass through the realization stage and lead a happy marital life but when the self-interests take over the joint marital goals, new problems arise. And when this happens, power struggles and conflicts create a tacky situation.

Stage four: Cooperation: Over time, marital life becomes more complicated. With more responsibilities and commitments, marriage takes on a business-like personality where both tries to satisfy all the necessary needs of the family and children.

Stage five: Reunion: For couples with children, the cooperation stage lasts 10 to 20 years then suddenly it is over. The disillusionment and distance of middle age need to be managed; the roles and expectations of the marriage need recalibrating.

Stage six: Explosion: While the other six stages tend to occur in order, the Explosion stage can happen at any time in a marriage though it happens most as them pass through their 40s and 50s. Along with personal crisis, the marriage can be a source of happiness or pressure of new roles, new limitations and new fears.

Stage seven: Completion: In the Completion Stage, as stability and security takes over and they enjoy each other and the life they have created.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

The present study aims to demonstrate the influence of the concept of marriage on marital satisfaction of an individual.

Research Design

- Qualitative research design
- Case Study

Methodology

Qualitative Inquiry Approach

A case study is an itemized investigation of a particular subject, like an individual, bunch, place, occasion, association, or wonder. A case study research configuration normally includes subjective strategies, yet quantitative techniques are now and then likewise utilized.



Selection of Research Subjects/ Sample

Sample sizes for Qualitative investigation are for the most part a lot more modest than those utilized in quantitative examinations as the qualitative investigations focus on clarifications as opposed to measurements. The spotlights on frequencies are less significant in the subjective examination as it focuses around portraying the abstract encounters as opposed to summing up speculation. An enormous number of tests could likewise make the investigation tedious and illogical thus subjective examinations utilize less information.

The total sample size selected for the present study is a 41-year-old female currently residing in Coimbatore. Informed consent was acquired before starting the data collection.

Sampling Technique

The sample was collected using convenience and purposive sampling. Other inclusions and exclusion criteria are as follows.

Inclusion Criteria

1. Married women reported issues in their marital satisfaction.
2. Voluntary Participation

Exclusion Criteria:

1. Presence of any health problems which has given rise to currently studied aspects.
2. People who don't want to participate in the study.

Procedure

The participant who met the inclusion and exclusion criteria was chosen for the study. Before beginning the investigation, the participant was clarified about the study, and informed consent was obtained to ensure that the participant will take an interest in the study and give their participation.

The member was told about:

- The motivation behind the study
- The measure of time needed for the interest.
- The content of the study that it incorporates questions identified with the individual encounters of the members.
- The truth that one can pull out whenever.
- The information will be kept confidential.

An in-depth interview was utilized with open end questions to evoke the data from the participants. An in-depth interview was utilized as this kind of information assortment helps in investigating the suppositions, points of view, and encounters. The information was gathered through verbal discussions and non-verbal perspectives were additionally considered.

In the wake of gathering the information, the member's experience is investigated to procure information expected to comprehend the connected perspectives that fill the need of the examination. The subsequent advance is to remove huge articulations – a cycle called horizontalization. After horizontalization, every one of the huge assertion's implications is detailed. The interaction is rehashed across each member's information and the implications are assembled. The researcher then clarifies the subsequent subjects into a rich depiction of the marvel under examination (literary portrayal). These



topics are then decreased to a fundamental construction that offers a clarification of the conduct (how it was capable) of organized depiction.

CASE PRESENTATION

Mrs. Y is a 41-year-old female who is a home maker. Her family is a joint family and Erode is her native place. Her family consists of five members- her husband, mother-in-law and two children. She belongs to a middle-class family. Her husband is doing business. Her elder child is studying in a college and younger one in a school. She had completed her DMLT course at Cochin.

She got married at the age of 20 years. She was not allowed to do her masters only because her husband has studied only DME. She was an intelligent student during her school and college days. She got married at a very young age such that she couldn't even get time to plan her life. Before her marriage she expected and dreamt for a fancy and a beautiful life without any obstacles. In the initial period of her marital life, she felt that her marital life was so fun-filled one without any struggles.

Then the stage of realization came in which she got to know the difficulties in the marital life. She faced a lot of problems such as in-law issues, money issues in her family. After the adding up two kids, there came the problem of arguments, conflicts due to the need of extra income to take care of the kids. At the 7th year of her marriage, there was many family crisis and issues with her spouse and she stood at the verge of termination of her marital life. After a gap of few months, her marital life came to a normal state on the basis of the element called '*adjustment*' for her children.

Due to the changes in her concept of marriage over 20 years of her marital life and related issues, she has developed a state of extreme anger and frustration. She has become very emotional and starts crying even at a small thing.

After 20 years, now she could feel a state of empty nest in her marital life. She feels that she is in lack of care and attention from her family members. Due to recurrent money crisis and family issues, she has gone to a state of depression and anxiety. Sometimes she fears that she will die soon before her family gets into a normal status. She has also ended up in poor health status due to her anxiety towards her marital life and family status.

One or the other way, her human development as an healthy individual has been restricted by her marital life. Though she says that now her marital life is going well, in the period of her 20 years of her marital life she has lost her self. She could have been a successful person in her career if she had planned her life better. She always goes with her family's decision in every situation. She has forgotten to give importance to what she feels or what makes her feel happy about.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Phase I- Before marriage:

Before marriage, most women develop a bunch of expectations more of unrealistic one. Mrs. Y also had many expectations like she would live an ideal life full of happiness and fun. At the age of 20 years, Mrs. Y got married.

Excerpts from the subject interview are given below:

"...I could marry the person I love..."

"...Things will be fun and great..."

Phase II- After marriage:

Stage One- Passion:

In the initial period of her marital life, she felt that her marital life was so fun-filled one without any struggles. Then the stage of realization came in which she got to know the difficulties in the marital life.



Her marriage was a love marriage and so she had to face the anger of her in-law family. She faced a lot of problems such as in-law issues, money issues in her family.

Excerpts from the subject interview are given below:

"...It all started well and I was happy.."

"...Though everyone was angry and I was content with my decision..."

Stage Two: Realization:

Then the problem of differences in values and views started. After the adding up two kids, there came the problem of arguments, conflicts due to the need of extra income to take care of the kids. Her husband had lost his work and the family has gone into a very poor financial status.

Excerpts from the subject interview are given below:

"... We argued all the time.."

"... We were short of money at most of the months..."

Stage Three: Rebellion:

At the 7th year of her marriage, there was many family crisis and issues with her spouse and she stood at the verge of termination of her marital life. There were lots of conflicts between her and her spouse due to their controversy in family income. After a gap of few months, her marital life came to a normal state on the basis of the element called '*adjustment*' for her children.

Excerpts from the subject interview are given below:

"...I no longer want to be in this prison..."

"...I feel like running away..."

"...My children were my only consolation..."

Stage Four: Cooperation:

They were changing their residence for the sake of their children's education and they felt hard to bear these allowances and due to this, a routine state of conflicts and arguments has been started. After 20 years, now she could feel a state of empty nest in her marital life. She feels that she is in lack of care and attention from her family members. Due to recurrent money crisis and family issues, she has gone to a state of moodiness and anxiety. Sometimes she fears that she will die soon before her family gets into a normal status. She has also ended up in poor health status due to her anxiety towards her marital life and family status.

Excerpts from the subject interview are given below:

"...No matter how much we try we always falls short..."

"...I feel exhausted most of the times..."

"...I may not be around at the time when things get better..."

CONCLUSION

The concept of marriage of everyone is unique though it may be a realistic or unrealistic one. If a person's concept of marriage relies more on realistic expectations, they may lead them to a better marital life which would avoid unnecessary disappointments. When a person develops more of unrealistic expectations, when those expectations fails after marriage, it creates a sense of dilemma (Is their idea or action of marriage is right or wrong), disappointments (Their spouse is not as they have dreamt), frustration and anger (why do their marital life is not an ideal one?, why there is lot of arguments and conflicts in their marital life?, how to handle the plenty of family responsibilities?)

When a person starts complaining about his marital life, he/she tend to develop a sense of hatred towards their marital life and their spouse which would be accompanied with many psychological issues such as



stress, anxiety and depression and health issues due to unhealthy practices such as the use of alcohol and drugs and smoking. One must understand the meaning of marriage and accept the reality of one's marital life. One should be able to accept the different values, opinions and views of their spouse. One should be made aware of the crisis over the stages of marriage and one must develop a state of adjustment over every stage of marriage such that one can lead a healthy growth and human development in his life.

Suggestions and Recommendations

Once someone is made aware of their condition, they can try solving their issues. I made her aware about the issues related to her marital life and made her understand that condition is quite common in this developmental stage. She has been in this state of mind for more than 10 years and so it was difficult for her to change her mentality. Though it was difficult, she tried to change her point of view. She stopped thinking negative like she may die before family comes to a normal status. She tries not to cry in every small thing and tries to be strong. In the period of 20 years of marital life, she had lost herself for which I had recommended her to engage herself into some work. Now she is stitching clothes in which she had a long-time interest from her childhood days for her self-satisfaction and happiness.

LIMITATIONS

Limitations in the present study could be a stepping stone for the future expansion of the study. However, the major limitations are addressed below.

- One limitation is related to the samples of the study. Though the study is a single subject study more samples could give more ideas on the selected area of study. The time consumption of the interview method is also a limiting factor in the sample size.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

- More case studies could be included to have a profound idea of the selected study areas and support the said conclusion
- Quantitative aspects of research could be used to verify the data.

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