

**A COMPARITIVE STUDY ON MARITAL QUALITY AMONG MARRIED PERSONS WITH AND WITHOUT
PREMARITAL**

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ABSTROACT

Marriage is a big step in the life of two individuals. Currently, a little over half of all marriages end in divorce. Sadly, persons that marry without having premarital counseling are at much higher risk of divorce and researchers reveal that it affects their marital quality also. . In India marital quality is a topic which spouses rarely discuss openly among themselves or widely addressees in public. The study intends to compare the marital quality among married persons with and without pre-marital counseling. The problem is important because there has been very little effort in India to study the effect of premarital counseling on marital quality. Moreover most of the marital quality study originated in west and have their limitations to be applied in the Indian context. Hence some culturally relevant marital quality study programs are an immediate need.

The research among couples with and without premarital counseling focused on five major objectives such as to analyze the opinion on premarital counseling among the respondents, compare the marital quality of the respondents, understand the influence of the personal variable on marital quality, study the relationship between pre-marital counseling and marital quality and study the personal profile of the respondents. Descriptive research design was used to describing the various factors of marital quality among couples .Researcher used non probability method convenience sampling design for data collection. The universe included 140 members from few parishes in palakkad district Kerala.

Research shows that the respondents who opined that premarital counseling is useful have higher level of marital quality compared with the respondents who opined premarital counseling is not useful. There is a significant difference among the educational qualification of the respondents and their marital quality. The educational qualification increases the marital quality also increases. In order to ensure stability of marital life is vital for the progress of the society and for the balanced development of the children, so premarital preparation and counseling are to be undertaken seriously.

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is the closest and most intimate of human friendships. It involves the sharing of the whole of a person's life with his/her spouse. By the passage of time the divine institution of marriage is under threat and marital problems are on the rise even in India where traditional values and norms are upheld. The ideals of marriage are challenged by the social changes such as industrialization, urbanization and globalization. The new economic policies and media revolution have created new life styles and value systems among Indian couples. Equality in education has resulted in job opportunities for both the spouses. This may further lead to lack of availability and breakdown in communication and intimacy between the spouses. The social and cultural paradigm shifts have affected marriage and family functioning leading to an increase in marriage break downs. To counter such setbacks faced by couples, the pre-marital counseling program have developed. The purpose of pre- marital counseling is the strengthening of couple relationships. In the light of the above situation the pre marital counseling giving importance to the quality of marital life.

Marital Quality

Another dimension of the problem to be investigated is marital quality. Most of the studies on marital quality examined psychological factors and its association with marital quality. The findings indicate that factors associated with marital quality are feelings of security, sexual satisfaction, faithfulness, giving importance, self disclosure and verbal communication. Variables affecting marital quality can be income, lifestyle, children, decision making, leisure, friends and families of origin of mates . Marital quality is the quality of one's physical and psychological needs within marriage. One feels maritally satisfied when she/he feels wanted, needed, approved and complete within marriage. . Kurian's study (1982) done in Kerala observes that people are unwilling for divorce as a solution to marital problems due to social disapproval and unhappiness of children. Here the relevance of the study incepts, marital quality can be enhanced in persons by their participation in pre marital counseling programs.

Importance of Premarital Counseling

Premarital counseling ensures that couples discuss key issues prior to marriage. Couples who get married commit to each other and hope their marriage will last forever. They can get so caught up in the idea of getting married, however, that they may not take the time to discuss their core values and beliefs about marriage and what it means to them. Premarital counseling offers an opportunity for

couples to talk about their beliefs and significant issues with a trained practitioner facilitating these discussions prior to getting married. Research indicates premarital counseling reduces divorce. Premarital counseling is designed to help couples to identify and discuss potential areas of conflict and views on issues such as religion, children, money and sex. Communication and conflict-resolution skills are also explored. The National Directory of Marriage and Family Counseling reports that "premarital counseling reduced the rate of divorce by up to 30 percent." Couples learn problem-solving techniques in premarital counseling.

Topics covered in pre-marital counseling

Compatibility - With spouse and future in-laws

Expectations - About work-family balance, careers, household responsibilities, time spent together.

Communication -With spouse, parents, in-laws

Conflict Resolution - How to deal with big and small problems, financial matters, constant bickering, meddling in-laws, etc.,

Intimacy and Sexuality - Frequency of sexual relations, making time, making love versus just sex.

Long-Term Goals - Personal, family, and career -Marriage preparation will teach the couples how to deal with these issues so that they don't become toxic to their relationship. But counseling isn't only about identifying problem areas, it's about celebrating their strengths as a couple.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

✚ **Allendorf (2012)** Drawing on a uniquely large number of items on marital quality, this study explores the determinants of marital quality in Chitwan Valley, Nepal. Marital quality is measured with five dimensions identified through exploratory factor analysis, comprising satisfaction, communication, togetherness, problems, and disagreements. Gender, education, spouse choice, and marital duration emerge as the most important determinants of these dimensions of marital quality. Specifically, men, those with more schooling, those who participated in the choice of their spouse, and those who have been married longer have higher

levels of marital quality. By contrast, castes, occupation, age at marriage, and number of children have little to no association with marital quality.

- ✚ **Randolph (2012)** An engagement is an ideal time to strengthen a relationship and prepare for a healthy, happy marital relationship, according to research on premarital counseling. This window of opportunity can even last through the first six months of marriage. Premarital counseling can reduce the risk of divorce by 30 percent. It can also help couples manage the stress of wedding planning. Premarital counseling presents an opportunity for couples to identify and resolve differences that can later cause conflict, understand each other at a deeper level, and learn skills that can help their marriage last a lifetime.
- ✚ **Schumn WR (2006)** Center for Marital and Family Studies at the University of Denver Findings of their research that included a broader study population in regard to race, income and education were indicated that premarital counseling is beneficial for a wide range of couples and helps reduce the odds of divorce.
- ✚ **Fields (2000)** “Premarital counseling and or education is a therapeutic couple intervention that occurs with couples who plan to marry.”
- ✚ **Chrone and Plhakova (2000)** noted that marital quality and marital adjustment (especially emotional and sexual factors) were greater in men than in women. They also propose that religious beliefs positively influence marital quality.
- ✚ **Bradbury and associates (2000)** states that “marital quality is not merely a relationship characterized by the absence of dissatisfaction. It is an evaluation in which positive features are salient and negative features are relatively absent”.
- ✚ **Gordon (1999)** elaborated the association of couple’s cognitions about marriage and their communication patterns with marital adjustment. He observes that communication skills and quality are positively associated among non-distressed couples, but are negatively associated among distressed couples.

- ✚ **Wright (1992)** Research indicates that premarital counseling plays a vital role in building strong marriages when it is properly done since, in any endeavors, dreams and goals not backed by concrete plans and preparations can result into failure and marriage is no exception claims.
- ✚ **Senediak (1990)** “premarital counseling is a skills training procedure which aims at providing couples with information on ways to improve their relationship once they are married.”

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

PILOT STUDY

The researcher formulated the problem after having discussion with the research supervisor. Then she had discussions with the some of the experienced counselors in the field of premarital counseling. These discussions with the research supervisor and counselors encouraged her to move further in her research on the selected research problem.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are;

- To study the personal profile of the respondents.
- To analyze the opinion on premarital counseling among the respondents.
- To compare the marital quality of the respondents.
- To understand the influence of the personal variable on marital quality.
- To study the relationship between pre-marital counseling and marital quality.

UNIVERSE

All the items under consideration in any field of inquiry constitute a universe or population. The universe included members from few parishes in palakkad district Kerala.

SAMPLING DESIGN

Sampling may be defined as the selection of some part of an aggregate or totality on the basis of which a judgment or inference about the aggregate or totality is made. It is the process of obtaining information about an entire population by examining only a part of it. The researcher used non probability method convenience sampling design for data collection. In the method of convenience sampling the fraction of the population being investigated it is selected neither by probability nor by

judgment but by convenience. The researcher selected 70 respondents who are undergone premarital counseling and 70 respondents who are without undergone premarital counseling. Hence in this study the researcher selected a total of 140 samples.

TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION

The researcher had constructed a questionnaire for the purpose of data collection it was constructed with the following components

- 1) Personal profile
- 2) Opinion on premarital counseling
- 3) Level of marital quality

The first part of the tool was meant to elicit responses relating to their personal profile which includes age, gender, educational qualification, occupation, nature of residential area, type of family and months and years in married life.

The second part of the tool analyses the respondents opinion on premarital counseling the questions prepared by the researcher itself and it contains the variables such as opinion about role of premarital counseling on couples interaction, adjustment, understanding, knowledge regarding sexual life, detailed information regarding marital life, personality development, skill in family budgeting, social aspect of marriage, clarification in partners expectation and ability in collective decision making. The section had ten questions on a three point format with options like agree = 3, disagree =2, no opinion =1.

The third part of the tool measures the level of marital quality of life through a scale developed by Dr. Indira Jai Prakash, reader, Department of Psychology, Bangalore University, Bangalore. The maximum score possible in this scale was 60 and minimum score was 0. Content wise, the scale sampled social, emotional, interpersonal and sexual sources of satisfaction in marriage. The split-half reliability correlating odd even items applying Spearman-Brown formula was 0.94. Test – retest reliability was found to be 0.77.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

Data was collected with the help of questionnaire. Researcher collected 140 samples studies. Prior permission was obtained from the vicars of the parishes.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Analysis of data involved a number of closely related operations that are performed with the purpose of summarizing the collected data and organizing these in such a manner that they will yield answers to the research questions. The researcher used “Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)” to compute the collected data. Simple tables, two –way tables, independent t-test, ANOVA and Spearman’s Rank Correlation were used to analyze the data.

DIFFICULTIES EXPERINCED

- Lack of time was a limitation for establishment of a good rapport with respondents.
- As the marital life is highly personal and confidential, the respondents afraid of transparency about their problem.
- Some of the respondents were less interested in the research and hence some refused first to return back the questionnaire.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The data was collected at only from Palakkad district, so generalization of the results was not possible to other districts.
- The data was collected from Christian community; hence the inferences cannot be generalized to other communities.
- It was a time bound study conducted for an academic purpose only.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE CONCEPTS USED**Marital quality**

In this study marital quality refers to the contentment experienced by married individuals at a given points of time in the areas of communication, intimacy, sexual needs, income, lifestyle, parenting, decision making, leisure, friends and families.

Premarital counseling

Pre-marital counseling is a course prepares couples for the marriage and lifetime commitment they are making. It ensures the partners have a strong, healthy relationship and giving a better chance for a stable and satisfying marriage.

Married Persons

Persons who are married and in this study they are not couples.

FINDINGS**A. PERSONAL PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS**

- Just above one third of the respondents (35.70%) were belongs go to the age group of 39 – 48 years.
- More than half of the respondents (57.9%) were females.
- Just more than half of the respondents (53.6%) were completed their college education.
- More than one third of the respondents (37.1%) were belongs to the house wife category.
- More than one third of the respondents (40.7%) reside in urban area and almost same percentage (40.0 %) of the respondents is from rural area.
- Majority of the respondents (68.6%) were belonging to the nuclear family.
- Just more than one third of the respondents (34.3%) completed more than 15 years of married life.

B. LEVEL OF KEY VARIABLE**Level of Marital Quality**

- More than one third of the respondents (39.3%) having high level of marital quality.

C. RESPONDENTS OPINION ON PREMARITAL COUNSELING

- Vast majority (89.2%) respondents agreed that premarital counseling have a good role in making family life adjustable.
- Higher number of the respondents (83.57%) opined that pre marital counseling helps to develop good interaction among couples.
- Very majority of the respondents (81.43%) agreed that premarital counseling helps to increase understanding between couples.
- Very majority of the respondents (80%) believed that pre marital counseling provides more knowledge regarding sexual life.

- Majority of the respondents (64.29%) accepted that premarital counseling provides a detailed knowledge regarding marital life.
- Majority of the respondents (67.14%) opined that premarital counseling helps to develop the couple's personality.
- More than half of the respondents (57.86%) agreed that premarital counseling helps to develop the skill in family budgeting.
- Nearly three fourth of the respondents (75%) reported that premarital counseling helps the couples to understand the social aspect of marriage clearly.
- Majority of the respondents (60%) opined that pre marital counseling helps to clarify the partner's expectations.
- Vast majority of the respondents (82.14%) believed that premarital counseling helps to develop the collective decision making skill among couples.

D. INTERLATIONSHIP BETWEEN KEY VARIABLES

Marital quality among respondents who undergone premarital counseling

- Just less than half of the respondents (47.1%) have high level of marital quality.
- (35.7%) of the respondents has low level of marital quality.
- (17.1%) of the respondents has moderate level of marital quality.

Marital quality among respondents without premarital counseling

- Just more than one third of the respondents (37.1%) have moderate level of marital quality.
- Another one third (35.7%) have high level of marital quality.
- (27.1%) respondents have low level of marital quality.

COMPARISON ON MARITAL QUALITY AMONG RESPONDENTS

T-test was applied to find out the difference between the marital quality and respondents participation in premarital counseling, the test reveals that the respondents who participate in premarital counseling have higher level of marital quality than respondents who does not participate in premarital counseling.

INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL VARIABLE ON MARITAL QUALITY

- There is no significant difference among age and marital quality of the respondents.
- There is no significant difference among the gender and marital quality of the respondents.
- There is a significant difference among the educational qualification of the respondents and their marital quality. The educational qualification increases the marital quality also increases.
- There is no significant difference between the occupation and marital quality of the respondents.
- There is no significant difference among the habitat of the respondents with regard to their marital quality.
- There is no significant difference among type of family of the respondents with regard to their marital quality.
- There is no significant difference among years in married life and marital quality of the respondents.

RELATION BETWEEN RESPONDENTS OPINION REGARDING PREMARITAL COUNSELING AND MARITAL QUALITY

Karl Person's coefficient of correlation was applied to measure the correlation between the respondent's opinion on premarital counseling and marital quality; there is a positive relation between opinion on premarital counseling and marital quality among the respondents.

SUGGESTIONS

- The government should take special care in assuring a premarital counseling training for each and every persons who engaged for marriage through professional counselors.
- Marital quality is decreasing day by day, this is a matter of serious concern. In order to reduce it, it is necessary to spread proper general awareness regarding the importance of premarital counseling programmes .
- Social workers can help the married persons to maintain good rapport with family as well as society

- Presently pre-marital counseling programmes are conducted only in certain religion and castes; it can be conducted in institutional level for all the couples for better marital quality.
- One of the reasons for the failure of marriages is poor money management. Hence more areas on family budgeting can be covered in premarital counseling programmes.
- Parents of the partners play an important role in the marital life of the partners, so sessions for the parents can be included in premarital counseling to understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Interaction among partners build up the quality of marital life, hence more sessions for interaction among partners can be provided.
- A married life is highly associated with the spiritual basement; hence more sessions on importance of spirituality in marital life can be included.

CONCLUSION

The culture and society of a nation is very much affected by the way the families live in that country. Family life is important; we can build the relationship in a family and make it stronger by giving some structured premarital counseling classes to the partners and help them to increase their marital quality. . Premarital counseling programmes are the one of the best way we can bring the engaged couples closer to each other and lead a good quality of marital life.

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