Sociodemographic Factors Contributing to Marital Stability

S. Priyadharshini\textsuperscript{1} and Rejani Thudalikunnil Gopalan\textsuperscript{2}\textsuperscript{*}

\textsuperscript{1}Institute of Behavioral Science, Gujarat Forensic Sciences University, Gandhi Nagar, Gujarat, India.
\textsuperscript{2}Department of Clinical Psychology, Mahatma Gandhi Medical College and Hospital, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

Authors’ contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author RTG designed the study. Author SP performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Author RTG supervised the data collection and the analyses of the study. Author SP managed the literature searches. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/AJMAH/2019/v17i30166

Received 22 October 2019
Accepted 28 December 2019
Published 04 January 2020

ABSTRACT

Marital Stability is interpreted as whether a couple in a marriage remains together, instead of separating or getting divorced. It is also called as marital longevity or duration of marriage. The objective of the study was to find the relationship between marriage duration and socio demographic variables of married couples in India. Thirty married couples were randomly selected using stratified random sampling. Three groups were formed based on the duration of the marriage such as married for 10 to 20 years, 21 to 30 years and 31 to 40 years. The respondents were asked about their demographic information like age, education, occupation, income and age at marriage. Data analysed with descriptive and inferential statistics. The result indicated a negative correlation between length of marriage and education which means higher the education lesser the length of marriage. The role of education, income and age at marriage on marital stability was discussed and it was concluded that not only socio-demographic factors, but also social and psychological factors to be considered to interpret the marital stability.

*Corresponding author: E-mail: rejanigopal@yahoo.co.in;
1. INTRODUCTION

The Indian family is considered strong, stable, close, resilient, and enduring and has been a dominant institution in the life of the individual and in the life of the community \([1,2]\). Most of the demographic characteristics, socio-religious beliefs and practices influence the nature of the Indian family system and also reflect the changes taking place in it. The Indian family is by and large patriarchal in structure \([3]\). Marriage in India is regarded as one of the most significant life-cycle rituals and is a familial and societal expectation and marriage is regarded not only as a union of two individuals, but also as the union of two families, making them almost like blood relatives. Marriages are religiously, economically, politically, and socially oriented and they are generally arranged by the elders and extended family members and it is perceived as a relationship between two families which are brought together socially \([4,5,6]\) and hence marital stability is important as much as getting married.

Marital stability is an important concept and it is referred as the whether a couple in a marriage remains together, instead of separating or divorcing and Fitzpatrick and Ritchie \((1993)\) discovered that marital success is usually defined as “marital stability” or “marital satisfaction”. Marital satisfaction refers to how marital partners evaluate the quality of their marriage. Marital stability influenced by many factors and many theorists tried to explain it such as process theory, Cascade theory of marital dissolution, and vulnerabilities – stress adaptation model. According to Gottman's Balance Model of Marriage theory \((1994)\), the balance between positive and negative behaviour could be achieved by three different kinds of couples who were able to stay together in their marriages. Gottman classified these couples as volatiles, conflict avoiders, and validating couples. These three groups were named collectively as regulated couples. On the other hand, he classified another two groups of couples, namely, hostile conflict engagers and hostile detached couples, both of whom were not able to continue in successful marriage. These two groups were named non-regulated couples and they could not achieve the required balance between positive and negative behaviour in their interactions \([7]\).

Faulkner \([8]\) stated that demographic, psychological, marital process, gender-based, and life transitional predictors influence marital satisfaction and marital conflict for husbands and for wives over time. According to Olufumilola \([9]\) there were significant combined contribution of communication, age at marriage, in-laws' interference and marital suspicion accounted for the variation of 78.49% in marital stability. It was also noted that suspicion in marriage and communication affect marital stability negatively. Many demographic factors contribute marital satisfaction and marital stability like the couple's education, marriage age, age difference, marriage duration, working women and men, the existence and number of children, the spouse's economic situation, and cross-cultural marriage. The reviews show that numerous variables have relationship with marital satisfaction. \((\text{Kaslow} &\text{ Robinson} [10], \text{Litzinger} &\text{ Gordan} [11], \text{Matsonet} \text{et al.} [12], \text{Timm} &\text{ Kieley} [13], \text{Waldinger} \text{et al.} [14].\)

The marriage stability in India is noticed to be strong and considering the existing literature, it is seen that there has been no research done in India on the relationship between socio demographic variables and marital stability. The current study will be focusing on demographic variables and marital stability.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Objective

The objective of the study was to assess the influence of socio-demographic factors on marital stability.

2.2 Sample Details and Procedure

The research design used in this study was cross sectional design and the sampling method was random sampling method. The Inclusion criteria for sample were (1) Couples should be legally married; (2) Couples should be in marital relationship for minimum of 10 years (3) 10 to 40 years of marital relationship. Exclusion Criteria were (1) Separated, divorced and living together couples, and (2) Physically challenged. The sample consisted of 30 married couples who were selected by stratified random sampling. The research was done as a part of dissertation of M. Phil (Pre-doctoral) Clinical Psychology course, university accepted minimum sample size of thirty.
The samples were selected randomly from the list of married couples provided by the marriage registration office on the basis of years they have been in the marital relationship. In the sample, ten were in marital relationship for 10 to 20 years, ten were in marital relationship for 21 to 30 years and ten were in marital relationship for 31 to 40 years and all were continued to be in marital relationship at the time of study. The present study was conducted in Gandhinagar, Gujarat India in the year 2015. The couples were explained about the research by the investigator and the consent form was signed after agreeing to participate in the study. The questionnaires were given to both husband and wives separately. Confidentiality of data was ensured to the participants.

2.3 Statistical Analysis

SPSS - 17 was used for analyzing the data. Descriptive statistics such as arithmetic mean, standard deviation, percentage, and Pearson correlation as inferential statistics were used.

2.4 Operational Definition

Marital Stability: Marital stability is interpreted as whether a couple in a marriage remains together, instead of separating or divorcing. It is also called as marital longevity or duration of marriage.

Education: It is defined as the level of the highest completed qualification reported for a person in any field of study, or the highest year of school completed, whichever is the higher.

Age: Number of year that have passed since a person’s date of birth.

Occupation: It is a set of job whose main task is characterized by a high degree of similarity. That is, set of jobs with similar sets of tasks are grouped together to form an occupation. Participant current professional occupation.

Manuscript based on the partial data of the original study entitled Mariatal adjustment, love, personal intimacy, personality, dyadic coping, and spirituality on marital stability” is in press.

3. RESULT

3.1 Socio-demographic Details

The following tables present the description of the participants.

Table 1 showed that the overall mean age of participants was 48.96 (10.8) years and the mean age of males was 51.93 (10.8) years and that of females was 46.00 (10.7) years. Males were more educated (14.73 years (3.2)) than females (Mean 12.9 years (2.8)). The overall education level (Mean) of participants was 13.8 (3.0) years of education. It was also found that the males have higher income with mean of Rs.66533.3 and females have comparatively lesser income with the mean of Rs.10333.3 and the overall mean of income of the participants was Rs.38433, which indicated that the sample belonged to middle class economical category. The results also showed that mean age of females at marriage was lesser (22.4 years) than males (26.7years) and the overall years of age at marriage for the group was 24.5 years and the mean duration of marriage as 24.2 years.

Table 2 indicated that the mean age of participants in group 1 was 38.5 (4.1) years and the mean age of males was 41.1 (4.0) years and females was 35.9 (4.3) years. Males had more education than females (16.0 (3.6)vs 13.4 (2.8)) and the overall years of education of the group1 was 14.7 (3.2) years. Mean income as Rs.70300 for Group 1 indicated that the sample belonged to upper middle class. Males had higher income than females (Rs. 64300 vs Rs.600). Age at marriage was found to be lesser for females (22.1 years) than males (25.1years) and that for the group was 23.6 years. Mean duration of marriage for the group was 14 years.

On Table 3, the mean age of participants in group 2 was found to be 47.5 (3.7) years, mean age of males was 50.4 (4.0) years and females was 44.7 (3.4) years. The education level for males was more than females though difference was not huge (15.0 (5.0) vs 14.4 (3.3)). The overall education level of participants in group 2 was 14.7 (3.2) years. The income was higher for males with remarkable difference from females (Rs. 78300 vs Rs.9000) and mean income of the group was Rs.43650 which indicated middle class economical category. The age at marriage was less for females (21.9 (3.1)) when compared to males (27.1 (2.7)) and the group mean was 24.5 (5.8) years and the duration of marriage was 23.3 years.

Table 4 indicated that the mean age of participants in group 3 was 60.8 (6.2) years and the mean age of males was 64.3 (6.5) years and that for females was 57.4 (8.8) years. Same like
groups 1 and 2, education level of males was higher than the female groups, (13.2 (3.2) vs 10.8 (2.1). The overall education level of participants in group 3 was 12.0 (2.3) years. It was also noticed that the males had higher income with mean of Rs.57000 and females had comparatively lesser income with the mean of Rs.16000 and the overall mean of income of the participants in group 3 was Rs.36500, this indicated that the sample belonged to middle class income category. The age of marriage was less for females to males, (22.1 (4.8) vs 25.1 (6.4) and mean age at marriage for the participants in group 3 was 23.6 (4.4) and mean duration of marriage was 37.2 years.

Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviation of socio-demographic details of overall sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N = 30</th>
<th>Age (Years) (Mean &amp;SD)</th>
<th>Education (Years) (Mean &amp;SD)</th>
<th>Income (Rupees) (Mean &amp;SD)</th>
<th>Age at marriage (Years) (Mean &amp;SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>51.93 (10.8)</td>
<td>14.73 (3.2)</td>
<td>66533.3</td>
<td>26.7 (4.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>46.00 (10.7)</td>
<td>12.9 (2.8)</td>
<td>10333.3</td>
<td>22.4 (3.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48.96 (10.7)</td>
<td>13.8 (3.0)</td>
<td>38433.3</td>
<td>24.5 (4.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Mean and Standard deviation of socio-demographic details: Group 1(10 - 20 years of marriage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N=10</th>
<th>Age (Years) (Mean &amp;SD)</th>
<th>Education (Years) (Mean &amp;SD)</th>
<th>Income (Rupees) (Mean &amp;SD)</th>
<th>Age at marriage (Years) (Mean &amp;SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>41.1 (4.0)</td>
<td>16.0 (3.6)</td>
<td>64300.0</td>
<td>25.1 (6.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>35.9 (4.3)</td>
<td>13.4 (2.8)</td>
<td>6000.0</td>
<td>22.1 (4.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38.5 (4.1)</td>
<td>14.7 (3.2)</td>
<td>70300</td>
<td>23.6 (5.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Mean and Standard deviation of socio-demographic details: Group 2 (21 - 30 years of marriage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N=10</th>
<th>Age (Years) (Mean &amp;SD)</th>
<th>Education (Years) (Mean &amp;SD)</th>
<th>Income (Rupees) (Mean &amp;SD)</th>
<th>Age at marriage (Years) (Mean &amp;SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50.4 (4.0)</td>
<td>15.0 (5.0)</td>
<td>78300.0</td>
<td>27.1 (3.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>44.7 (3.4)</td>
<td>14.4 (3.3)</td>
<td>9000.0</td>
<td>21.9 (2.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47.5 (3.7)</td>
<td>14.7 (3.2)</td>
<td>43650.0</td>
<td>24.5 (5.8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Mean and Standard deviation of socio-demographic details: Group 3 (31 – 40 years of marriage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N=10</th>
<th>Age (Years) (Mean &amp;SD)</th>
<th>Education (Years) (Mean &amp;SD)</th>
<th>Income (Rupees) (Mean &amp;SD)</th>
<th>Age at marriage (Years) (Mean &amp;SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>64.3 (6.5)</td>
<td>13.2 (3.2)</td>
<td>57000.0</td>
<td>25.1 (6.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57.4 (8.8)</td>
<td>10.8 (2.1)</td>
<td>16000.0</td>
<td>22.1 (4.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60.8 (6.2)</td>
<td>12.0 (2.3)</td>
<td>36500.0</td>
<td>37.2 (4.4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Details of occupation of the sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public sector</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Marital stability and education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>r= -0.41**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marital Stability</td>
<td></td>
<td>**P&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Occupation of the majority of the sample was belonged to government and private sector (4.41%), 21.7% of the sample worked in private sector and 20 % in Government jobs. Forty percent of the females were housewives.

3.2 Results of Correlational Analysis

Table 6 showed a significant relationship between education and marital stability for the entire sample. There was negative correlation found between education and marital stability which indicates that higher the education lesser the length of marriage.

4. DISCUSSION

Socio demographic factors are fruitful in predicting divorce and marital stability [15]. In the present study the relation between age, education, occupation, age at marriage, income, duration of marriage and marital stability were analysed. Females were having less education and less income and got married at younger age compared to males when whole data is considered which were consistent across three groups too. It can be explained in terms of socio cultural factors that males are considered to be bread winner for the family in India and thus get scope for more education and opportunity to work. Females got married at lesser age than males which also might have hampered further education.

Among all the socio demographic factors studied, only education was found to be influenced significantly on marital stability i.e. education is negatively correlated with marital stability. The relationship between the education and marital stability can be due to the financial dependence of women on men as indicated in the data that the income of the females were less and forty percent of the females were housewives. Employment and adequate income earned by the man is correlated to better quality of marital life [16] and it was noticed in the current study that all males had jobs, income and the main earning member of the family which might have contributed to the marital stability. Most of the families in the study belonged to middle class economic category and many studies found positive correlation between marital satisfaction and economic situation [17].

It is observed from the data that the mean age at marriage of the sample was 24.5 years with 22.4 for females and 26.7 years for males which is considered to be the suitable marriage ages and related with higher marital satisfaction as reported by studies (Strong, De vault ch, &Cohen, 2011). It is socially acceptable fact that a woman should be 2–4 years younger than a man in married relationship which is also noticed in the sample [18].

Going with the present finding that all of the socio demographic factors except education have weak relationship with marital stability, there is a claim that socio demographic factors do not fully reveal the actual influence on marital stability [19].

5. CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

From the present study, it can be concluded that there is no significant influence of couple’s socio-demographic factors on marital stability except education which was negatively correlated to marital stability. Many factors including social norms, religious believes, culture and value system affect the marital stability which were not considered in the present study and small size further limits the generalization of the findings. Many studies focused on the reasons for divorce but not many studies explored the factors sustaining the marriage, in other words marital stability especially in India where marital stability is found to be higher compared to other nations. Hence the present study is a stepping stone towards a major understanding of the factors related to marital stability in Indian couples which will also throw light on understanding marital stability at large in other cultures too. Future studies in this direction could give more importance to social and psychological factors with emphasis on both quantitative and qualitative analysis by using increased sample size.

CONSENT AND ETHICAL APPROVAL

The research was carried out after the ethical clearance of the university board and participant consent has been collected by the authors.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

REFERENCES

7. Sevinç Çırağ Karadağ. Main approaches to marital dissolution journals.manas.edu.kg › mjsr › oldarchives › Vol07_Issue13_2005
18. Moosavi R. Mate Selection; comparative study between factors in Islam with accepted criteria by the youngs of Kerman. Islām va Pazhūsheshhāye Tarbiyat. 2012;4,141–64.

© 2019 Priyadharshini and Gopalan: This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Peer-review history:
The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
http://www.sdiarticle4.com/review-history/53299