

Marital Preparedness, Marital Satisfaction and Economic Status

Amiteshwar Ratra and Praveen Kaur

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, Indian women were prepared for accepting marital roles like, adapting according to in-laws value system, taking up voluntarily responsibility at in-laws home, to consider husband as god and accept his verdict as final, to accept restrictions on her own behaviour. In today's dynamic world women's role expectations from society and role relations are also radically changing for she is becoming more aware due to the influence of mass telecommunication and education. Woman's time for preparation for life after marriage has drastically reduced. Either immediately after studies she is married or finishes studies, joins some vocation and gets married. She hardly gets time for preparation. It is critical for every married couple to establish a mutually satisfying marital relations, adjusting to pregnancy and parenthood along with fitting into the kin network (Duvall, 1977). The difficulty in adjustment arises because every individual has an independent ideology and distinct set of reasons for all questions that matter due to varied life situations. The education, the preparation and life perceptions vary with economic status also. Here an attempt is made to study the impact of one's preparation for marriage to their marital satisfaction in different economic groups.

Objectives

1. To study the marital preparedness of women belonging to three economic groups.
2. To examine inter-relationship between marital preparedness and marital satisfaction.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Participants

The mean age of respondents selected for the present study was 27.60 years. These women belonged to Delhi and Hissar and had married span of 1-5 years. 300 married women belonging 100 each to the three economic groups, low (per

month family income below Rs. 10000/-), medium (per month family income between Rs. 10000-20000/-) and high (per month family income above Rs. 20000/-) were selected randomly.

Tools

- Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale (1986).
- A pre-tested questionnaire was used to gather information regarding various aspects of marital preparedness like attitude towards marriage, marital knowledge, marital apprehensions and fears, marital expectations from husbands and in-laws.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Duncan's Multiple Range Test was used to examine the mean differences in marital preparedness of women belonging to different economic groups. The correlation between these variables and women's marital satisfaction was also obtained.

Duncan's multiple range test shows significant differences in the women's attitude towards marriage in the three income groups. Women belonging to middle ($M=27.08$) and high income ($M=27.23$) groups had more positive attitude towards marriage than the low income group respondents ($M=25.50$) (Table 1). Further, it was seen that respondents from low income group had significantly higher marital apprehensions and fears ($M=14.56$) and the higher income group ($M=12.48$) had the least. With regard to knowledge about marital life low income married women ($M=26.40$) obtained significantly lower score than the other two groups. Expectation in marriages play another pivotal role. Respondents from middle income group had significantly lower marital expectations from husbands ($M=85.43$) in comparison to respondents from low income group ($M=89.76$) and high income group ($M=89.17$). As regards expectations from in-laws low income group women obtained significantly higher score than the other two groups.

As regards marital satisfaction Duncan's multiple range test shows that respondents from

Table 1: Mean differences in marital preparedness and marital satisfaction of women belonging to different economic groups.

			N=300		
Sr. No.	Variables	Range	Income groups		
			Low	Middle	High
1.	Attitude towards marriage	17-34	25.50 ^B	27.08 ^A	27.23 ^A
2.	Marital apprehensions and fears	10-20	14.56 ^A	13.04 ^B	12.48 ^B
3.	Marital knowledge	17-34	26.40 ^B	28.53 ^A	28.79 ^A
4.	Marital expectation				
a)	From Husband	24-96	89.76 ^A	85.43 ^B	89.17 ^A
b)	From in-laws	22-88	1.47 ^A	78.55 ^B	78.88 ^B
5.	Marital satisfaction	3-15	8.39 ^B	10.22 ^A	10.20 ^A

Values with different superscript differ significantly at P<0.05.

Table 2: Correlation between marital preparedness and marital satisfaction of women.

		N=300	
S. No.	Preparedness variables	Marital satisfaction	
1.	Attitude towards marriage	0.67**	
2.	Marital apprehensions and fears	-0.76**	
3.	Marital knowledge	0.70**	
4.	Marital expectations		
a)	From husband	-0.008	
b)	From in-laws	-0.09	

** significant at 0.01 level

low income group (M=8.39) had significantly lower marital satisfaction in comparison to respondents from middle (M=10.22) and high income (M=10.20) groups.

Correlations between marital satisfaction of women and their pre-marital preparedness for marriage shows that positive correlations existed between attitude towards marriage and marital satisfaction; marital knowledge and marital satisfaction, with $r = 0.67$ and 0.70 respectively, significant at 0.01 level (Table 2). These results indicate that with increase in positive attitude towards marriage and marital knowledge, there is an increase in the marital satisfaction among women. Marital satisfaction is negatively correlated with apprehensions and fears (-0.76) and with marital expectations from husband (-0.01) and in-laws (-0.09). The results indicate that marital apprehensions and fears are inversely related to marital satisfaction. However negative but statistically not significant correlation existed between marital expectations from husband and

in-laws and marital satisfaction.

Married women belonging to low income group were less satisfied in their marriage than the other two income groups is supported by Conger and Elder (1994) who reported that, low income group had lower marital satisfaction as they had to face more stress situations. The poor woman faces various hardships in life, which decreases marital satisfaction. It is further found that low income group women had low positive attitude towards marriage, less marital knowledge, greater marital apprehensions and fears, higher marital expectations from both husband and in-laws. All these together affect her satisfaction level. Economic stress leads to poor images of married life has been reported by Glenn and Kramer (1987) and to more marital conflicts by Conger and Elder (1994). All these together make them to develop negative attitude towards marriage. Kajal (1996) reported for middle income group having more liberal attitude towards marriage but realistic ideology than the other economic classes.

Thus, the results show that marital knowledge and positive attitude towards marriage lead to marital satisfaction. Higher apprehensions and fears produce negative impact on the married life. Further differences are evident with regard to marital preparedness and marital satisfaction in various income strata. Positive attitude towards marriage and higher marital knowledge leads to higher marital satisfaction.

KEYWORDS Marital Preparedness. Marital Satisfaction

ABSTRACT To explore pre-marital preparedness and marital satisfaction of women. 300 married women, in the married span of 1-5 years were interviewed. The results indicated the impact of pre-marital preparedness on marital satisfaction of women. Compared to middle or high income group, low income group women had lower attitude towards marriage and less marital knowledge while higher marital apprehensions and expectations. Low income group women had lower marital satisfaction. Positive attitude towards marriage and higher marital knowledge lead to higher marital satisfaction. While, inverse relationship exists between marital apprehensions and marital satisfaction, and, also between marital expectations and marital satisfaction.

REFERENCES

- Conger, R.D. and Elder, G.H. (Eds.): *Families in Troubled Times: Adapting to Change in Rural America* Aldine, New York (1994).
- Duvall, Evelyn Mills: *Marriage and Family Development*. Harper Collins, USA (1977).
- Glenn, N.D. and Kramer, K.B.: *The marriages and divorces*

- of the children of divorce. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, **49**: 811-825 (1987).
- Kajal, Poonam: *Emerging Trends in Parent-Child Relationship and Family Life Styles in Middle Income Groups*. M.Sc. Thesis, CCS Haryana Agricultural University, Hisar, Haryana, India (1996)
- Kansas: Kansas Marital Satisfaction Scale. In: D.J. Canary and L. Stafford: Relational maintenance strategies and equity in marriage. *Communication Monographs*, **59**: 243-267 (1992).

Authors' Address: Amiteshwar Ratra and Praveen Kaur, Department of Human Development and Family Studies, CCS Haryana Agricultural University, Hisar 125 004, Haryana, India