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EVERYDAY CHALLENGES IN MARITAL LIFE

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ABSTRACT
Marriage is often regarded as a union of love and companionship. It is a cornerstone of the social structure and it acts as a fundamental social institution. But this important social institution is facing a variety of challenges in everyday life. These issues are multifaceted and complex. This research paper analyses the complex challenges which the couples face daily. This paper synthesises theoretical insights to explore such challenges of marital life with implications for intervention and future reserch.
KEYWORDS: *Marital life, Challenges, Everyday, Complex, Society*

INTRODUCTION

Man is the crown of the creation. According to the great world philosopher; Aristotle, man is a social animal. Man lives in society and ends in society. Society can't run without civilization. Civilization cannot stand without culture. At the same time, culture encompasses various institutions. Hence all these four are correlated.

Society may be defined as a large group of people who live together in an organised way (Parsons,1951). Society is a social organism with a harmonious structure and function (A Comte, 1830-1842). Now we will discuss about civilization which has been defined and explained by various scholars in various ways. The civilization is the final and most external phase of a culture's life cycle, characterized by urbanization, rationalization and eventual decline (O Spengler,1912). Civilization is a organised form of human group life that arises in response to challenges from the environment, emphasizing creativity and adaptability as keys to survival and development (AJ Toyanbee,1934- 1961). Moreover it can be noted that the civilization is a society that is characterized by it's advanced development and organisation . Now we will be discussing about what is culture?Culture encompasses the shared beliefs , values, practices, norms and symbols that define a particular society or group (L Diamond, 2006). Moreover we can define Culture as a set of beliefs, values and practices which are common for the members of a particular society. Now it's turn to talk about institutions. Institutions by definition are the more enduring features of social life (Giddens,1984). Institutions are the stable patterns of behaviour that define, govern and constrain actions (Oxford Bibliographies,2013). These are the established structures which organise social life. In our society, we can see, there are numerous social institutions like family, religion, school, economy etc. But among all,the institution of marriage stands one and unique.

OBJECTIVES

- To analyze the common challenges faced by couples in everyday marital life.
- To examine the factors contributing to marital satisfaction and dissatisfaction.
- To explore the causes and impact of marital conflicts.
- To understand the approaches and strategies couples use to address and overcome marital challenges.
- To suggest practical interventions and recommendations for improving marital harmony and satisfaction.

MARRIAGE: AN OVERVIEW

Marriage is an important social institution. To enter into family life, the institution of marriage is the first step. Marriage is a complex social institution that has evolved over centuries, serving as a fundamental social structure. This institution has a rich history. Marriage is a legal or social contract between individuals that creates kinship.In this institution both sexual and intimate relationships are acknowledged . Such a union may be called as Matrimony while the ceremony that marks it's beginning is called as Wedding. Marriage is a relatively permanent bond between permissible mates (RH Lowie,1920). Marriage is a contract for the production and maintenance of children (B Malinowski,1929). Marriage is a stable relationship in which a man and a woman are socially permitted to have children (HM Johnson,1960). This social institution has a large number of biological, mental, Sociological, emotional as well as psychological significance. It regulates and validates sexual relationship between individuals. It also satisfies the sexual desires of humans through the process of reproduction. Sociologically,it serves as the foundation of family structure. It also play a vital role in shaping norms and values. Again,it offers mental and emotional support through a sense of companionship and support. Despite of all the significance, this leading social institution is facing various complex challenges today.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Marital challenges can be explored, analyse and experienced using various theroritical perspectives. Such lenses are the Conflict theory, the Functional theory, the Symbolic interactionism theory and the social exchange theory. The conflict

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theory highlights power imbalances and inequalities in married life. The functional theory focuses on the functions which marriage fulfills individually and socially. The third theory talks about couple's interactions and interpretations. The social exchange theory shows the cost and benefits of staying in the relationship . All these theories are having their own advantages and limitations. Apart from these, there are two more theories which will be very useful in analysing the concerned issues. These models are the Enduring dynamics model and the Emergent distress model (Huston et al,2001). The former model says that due to the stable patterns of interaction and communication between the couples; the institution of marriage brings long-term outcomes. The later model posits that marital dissatisfaction arises over time due to the gradual accumulation of negative and toxic interactions.

KEY CHALLENGES

(i) Breakdown in interpersonal communication - Good communication and mutual discussion are the cornerstone of a happy and successful marriage life . But these communications are disrupted due to various issues like avoidance of sensible and important discussion, ineffective conflict resolution mechanism, male and female communication patterns etc. Conversations avoidance remains one of the most frequently cited challenge in marriage (Malone Colon,2007). Poor communication manifests conflicts and lack of emotional adjustment (Uwom-Ajaegbu et al 2015). Gender differences in conversations further complicate the issues,with women are the more likely to initiate conversations and men are prone to withdraw from problem discussion.

(ii) Financial Disputes – It is an extensive source of marital conflicts. Disparities in spending time, income imbalance and unspoken expections about financial roles, contribute to tension (Kerkmann et al,2000). Notably financial burden indirectly affects marital quality by reducing emotional and psychological availability. Financial issues are not only a practical concern but also a symbolic one, reflecting much greater issues of power, trust and values (Dakin and Wampler,2008). Studies also reveals that financial disagreements are strong predictor of marital dissatisfaction and divorce (Scoy, 2012).

(iii) Sexual and intimacy gaps – Marriage as an institution fulfills and regulate and biological, mental and emotional needs of humans. It regulates and validates sexual relationship between the partners. It also satisfies the sexual desires of humans through the process of reproduction. So, physical and emotional intimacy are crucial yet frequently neglected in married life. Challenges in this domain arises from mismatched libidos, lack of emotional connections and taboos on sexuality (Van Pelt,2000). Sexual and intimacy dissatisfaction can be a cause of broader marital problems that undermines relational stability (Faulkner et al,2005).

(iv) Children upbringing – Parenthood brings new difficulties into marital life. Disagreements over parenting styles, discipline and education can weaken the marital bonds (William Toliver,2010).The demands of children often decrease the opportunities for the couples to nurture their relationships leading to increased conflicts and issues (Van Laningham et al,2001).Negotiating roles and scheduling regular couple time can control these challenges.

(v) Intercultural Value Conflicts – As we know, marriage is a union of two persons belonging to different families and cultural backgrounds, thus intercultural conflicts are quiet common. Nearly 40 percent of the intercultural marriages in particular face a number of challenges related to differing beliefs, traditions and expectations (Engidasew,2018). Conflicts over religions politics and extended family involvement can create a continuous sources of tension (Annals of Human and Social Sciences,2023). Couples in cross-cultural marital knots, often benefit from therapy to navigate these difficulties.

(vi) Exogenous Stressors – Lack of flexible work arrangement, long working hours and job insecurity reduce couple's capacity for relationship maintenance (Gold,2006). Modern couples face tremendous complexities in balancing work and family responsibilities. External stressors like health issues and social isolation; trigger marital challenges (Brannock et al 2000). These issues can be addressed by stress management strategies such as mindfulness, meditation and shared hobbies.

(vii) Gender based marital disputes – Gender is a socially desinged definition of men and women. It is different from sex. Gender is based on the tasks, functions and roles attributed to men and women in society, public and private life. They are time specific and interchangeable. In marriage life , gender based issues are also seen. Reaserch explains that men and women experience and respond to marital difficulties differently. Men often feel marginalized in decision making particularly regarding parenting (Cao,2001). Women are more likely to initiate the divorce, showing higher sensitivity to relational dissatisfaction (Cao,2001). Women also complain about higher level of emotional neglect and unequal domestic labour (Ayub and Iqbal,2012).

STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS

The challenges in Marital life need to be address as family is theost basic social institution. Addressing marital challenges needs a multi-faceted approach. To keep the glory of this institution alive,we have to take various measures and have to adopt strategies for effective interventions. Few of such solutions are discussed below.

(i) Therapy model – Couples therapy, financial counselling and learning programs on communication and conflict resolutions have shown efficacy in promoting and improving marital conditions (Malone Colon,2017).The

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couple therapy focuses on communication skills which helps partners navigate conflicts strongly. Financial counselling aware couples about monetary goals and reduce financial conflicts (Kerkmann et al,2000).

(ii) Cultural Competency training – Such training across different norms and traditions may be a booster in this domain. Such training should be tailored to the specific needs of the couples. Notwithstanding to this, various policies can help to control and address the marital issues. Few such measures are:-

- Workplace flexibility policies to alleviate time constraints (Gold,2006).
- Community support programs for intellectual couples (Engidasew,2018).

SUMMARY

While this paper address various marital challenges but we may not generalize these complexities at a universal level. Marital challenges are highly individualalised; influenced by various factors such as culture, personality and socioeconomic status. A more delicate approach would differentiate the challenges faced by diverse populations. The study also not sufficiently account for how the overlapping identities (race, sexuality etc) influence the marital challenges. Adopting an intersectional approach is essential for capturing the distinct experiences of groups like LGBTQ+ who may face unique forms of adversities in their marital sphere. While various theoritical perspectives are discussed,this research paper could be benefited from a more integrative generalized recommendations for interventions to address the challenges faced by particular couples. For interventions to be truly effective, they should be reflecting each couple's unique context and the specific pressures they are experiencing.

CONCLUSION

Marital challenges are complex and multi-faceted,rooted in communication patterns, financial domain,value and cultural context and outsider stressors. Some problem may remain stable over time but their impact intensifies when left unaddressed. By active communication, coperative flexibility and shared adaptability; couples can transform everyday's marital challenges and difficulties in to an opportunity for growth and development.

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