

Marital Maladjustment among Working Women of Sri Muktsar Sahib : A Sociological Study

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ABSTRACT

All the time within the society and relations, human beings have to change themselves to various roles. No doubt all the human beings in their life try hard to achieve health and happiness in various spheres of life that is personal, social, economic, and marital. Success and accomplishment in these spheres lead to contentment in life, while insufficiency of these things lead to frustration and disappointment which adversely affects the health of the persons involved. One of the most important relationships between a man and women is marriage. The adjustment and marital relationship are major challenges in most of the families especially in Punjab where people are not open-minded. This study aimed at finding out causes of marital maladjustment faced by working married women. A sample of 100 women is selected randomly. Their age ranged between 18 to 45 years. They belong to middle and high socio-economic status. Results indicated that the main cause of marital maladjustment was the dual responsibilities of working women that creates pressure and stress in their life. Burden of work both at home and at work place has made them machines, with no moment for the fulfillment of their personal needs. Moreover interference of in-laws especially by the mother-in-law, problems related to sex, alcohol usage and unending demands made by the family members are also responsible for maladjustment within the relationships of some married women. The findings of the results furthermore show that the working married women have to face more health problems like cervical pain, weakness and depression in their married life because of added responsibilities of job.

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is one of the most important commitments that an individual makes in his/her life. A successful marriage not only gives satisfaction in life but also generates a respectable status to an individual. In contemporary society, selecting a partner for marriage has become a tough task. However to make adjustment after marriage and to make it a success is the hardest job. There is no doubt that marriage means a kind of commitment which brings a man and woman together for

developing strong and healthy family relationships with each other based on love and responsibility. All the marriages are generally aimed at happiness. Marital adjustment is that kind of state in which the husband and wife are satisfied with their marriage and with each other. But as people in our society have different preferences and expectations in their life and they marry by taking into account these expectations. Some of these expectations will be realistic whereas some of them not viable. In order to adjust well within the marriage, there is a call for maturity through which an individual tries not only to understand his/her partner but also to accept him/her by taking into consideration their needs. Growth and development of strong relationships always rest upon such philosophy that brings peace as well as happiness in the life of married persons. On the contrary, if this maturity is not practiced then conflict and maladjustment in relationships is inevitable.

Marital maladjustment refers to a state of accommodation which is realized in diverse areas where conflict may exist. Nowadays a substantial number of women are entering into remunerative jobs. Working women in various professions like bank employees, doctors and professors have to spend more time at their work place and are more indulge in activities related to their vocation. Such a women has to play dual roles- role of a mother, housewife and a daughter-in-law and secondly, the role of an employee. There is a high demand of time and energy to perform all these roles in perfection. Employed women before going to job perform their household chores and at the end of the day, loads and loads of work are again waiting for them. Although the salary of the women is a significant contribution to families' income but somewhere her employment affects her health and also her family relationships. They have a smaller amount of time to fulfill their family responsibilities which may lead to maladjustment. In such situations, she is liable to face stress and problems of adjustment with other family members.

Srivastav, Singh and Nigam (1988) in their study reveal the effect of certain demographic characteristics such as age differences, duration of marriage, education, occupation, socio-economic status, and number of children on marital adjustment. The study indicated that age difference between husband and wife extremely contributed towards marital adjustment. Secondly, differences in educational level of the spouses were more apparent in the maladjusted couples. Shukla (1988) in his work found that as compared to the single career couples, more of the dual career couples expected that the husband and the wife should be about equally

responsible for the provider and the housekeeper roles. He evaluated the wives more favorably in the provider role and the husbands in the housekeeper roles. It is interesting, though, that in both the groups, wives derived greater happiness in their marriages when they were satisfied with the housekeeper role and evaluated their husbands favorably in the provider role. Husbands, on the other hand, attached greater importance to satisfaction with and a favorable evaluation of themselves in the provider role and their spouses in the kinship roles. Thus, the working woman ends up playing a multiplicity of roles.

Objectives of the study

1. To find out the causes of marital maladjustment among the married women.
2. To find out the impact of marital maladjustment on women.

Research Methodology

The respondents purposively selected to study the causes of marital maladjustment among families with employed women across different educational levels were drawn exclusively from city Muktsar. In order to collect data from employed women for the present study, a list of higher educational institutions was made. Then from that list, an ideal sample of those colleges was drawn that had around six to seven hours of work schedule for the employees. The colleges finally selected were Government College, Sri Muktsar Sahib and Guru Nanak College for girls, Sri Muktsar Sahib. A total sample of 100 working women was selected randomly. Both educated and uneducated women working in low grade jobs were selected for data collection and their age ranged between 18 to 45 years. Data collection was done through the aid of a questionnaire containing two sections. Section A tapped personal data while section B elicited information on the main causes of marital maladjustment and its impact upon the women.

Results and Findings

The causes of marital maladjustment reported by the respondents in the present study are the following:

Dual responsibilities and work pressure

The respondents in the present study revealed that there is a lot of pressure these days from all corners of life, increased use of amenities once thought luxury items now becoming things for

daily use that has resulted in the need for both the partners to contribute more and more economic resources in the marriage. Earlier women in our city worked inside the home only. She was confined to the activities like cleansing of the house, looking after daily household chores, giving adequate care to the children, preparing meals on time and checking laundry within the four walls of home. But today more and more women want careers. They want to be full partners with their husbands in the world of work and expect their husbands to be full partners in the household.

Majority of the working respondents' center on the idea that although in the present society, many wives and husbands have embraced the trend toward egalitarianism in marriage but the things are not so easy within families of a city like Muktsar which is backward. Here people have a mindset that woman is meant for household tasks only. She has to perform all the household chores at any cost and no relaxation is given here even to the working women's to take rest. One respondent said that, *"for marriages to work best, each one of us have to work both as a paid and non-paid worker, paid work when we work in terms of job and non-paid when we bears the responsibility of a house care-taker. To do all this on regular basis is difficult and may result somewhere in depression, unhappiness and low self-esteem. Many times result of overburdened work both at home and in the outside world led to several problems of marital maladjustment within the family relations."*

Thirty two percent respondents were such who believe that their dual responsibilities and burden of work has made them restless. They get up early in the morning around 4 or 5 O'clock to complete their household work. After coming from work around four or five in the evening, nobody entertains them and they work like machines as such from dawn to dusk. One respondent said after doing such a hard work, *"my husband frequently complains that you do not give attention to the family and these daily complaints are creating mess in our married lives."* Similarly, Hochschild (1989) assert that married working women have to pay second shift at home. According to Tripathi & Bhattacharjee (2012) married working women are overburdened with household chores along with jobs.

Interference of in-laws

No doubt the relationship with in-laws laid the foundation of marriage in most of the marriages. In Indian society, marriage is not only between two persons but also between two families.

Conflict with in-laws creates strain in couple's marital happiness. In the present study, twenty four percent women assume that the interference of their in-laws in their married life is mainly responsible for their awful adjustment within the family. The working women complained about the interference of their in-laws in their household work which ultimately results in unhealthy relationships not only with in-laws but also with the husband and children's within the family. Three cases from Guru Nanak College for girls were such who reported that they are taking divorce from their husband because their in-laws never let them happy in their married life. One lady working as an assistant there has a son and she is living with her parents from the last three years in the hope that one day her husband will come and regret on the mistake that he made in his life. She revealed the secret of her life that her mother-in-law is bossy in nature and rules on everyone within the family. She said, "*My mother-in-law complains about me to my husband and sometimes uses false statements in order to agitate my husband against me. She spoiled the life of her only son without any reason*". She also revealed that her husband used to beat her with rod and sometimes with stick on the advice of her mother in order to correct her in the household affairs. And after suffering too much the pain given to her by her mother-in-law, one day she left the place with her son. It was found in the present study that areas which are backward like Muktsar, people don't live their life happily and they make the life of the people around them hell.

Problems related to sex

Marriage is a reciprocal relationship entered into for the satisfaction of a multiple desires, chief among which are sexual satisfaction. A vigorous and harmonious sex life is one of the cornerstones of the temple of love and marriage, while relative or absolute impotence of the husband and frigidity of the wife are highly important causes of marital discord. In the present study, few respondents disclose the harsh truth that their husband forcibly performed unusual activities with them which somewhere hurt their feelings. And in such situation, frigid wife fails to satisfy her partner. In one case, the lady reveal that her husband is not less than an animal because he has no feelings for the other person to whom he is involved. He always thinks of his own lust and he sometimes beat her whenever she makes opposition against the wish of her husband in doing oral sex or like that. She made a statement here, "*no man like my husband ever appreciates union with a woman who re-mains unmoved and listless in his arms and all this lead to enmity or even intense hatred within relations. Here educated and employed women have awareness about their*

rights and when something odd happen to them against their wish and rules, problem arises and the result will be lack of adjustment within such married relationships. As men have options in the outside world so these fear of lady forces her to perform what she never wanted to do otherwise.” One respondent at the age of 35 years who belonged to a well-off family revealed the same problem of her husband and she is living with the husband just for the sake of her son’s right over the his father’s property, otherwise their relation is partially dead from within. Approximately eighteen percent respondents in the present study are suffering problems of this kind.

Overuse of alcohol and drugs

Alcoholism is the most important cause of maladjustment in most of the families. Respondents in the study reported that men who drink often are likely to abuse their wives more than non-drinkers. And the problem of adjustment arises automatically in their life because when their drunken husband returns home after wasting money on drinks, he demand sex and food in anger. And wife when criticize him or make him aware he use violence in return. So this is the daily routine in some families that women receive abuse and guilt from the husband when he is under the influence of alcohol and drugs. One respondent claim that women in this area has no desire and life and they do not have control over their reproductive rights. Children’s are not getting good education. Alcohol has ruined their homes as there is no saving. Approximately twelve percent respondents consider use of alcohol and drugs to be the major cause of maladjustment within their family and relation.

High age gap between the spouses

Many respondents reveal that the high age gap between the spouses is also responsible for maladjustment within the relations. It was found that many women who have the age difference of seven or eight years from their partner are finding difficulties in adjustment with the husband. Their tastes, nature and ambitions in life are totally different from each other. Difference in so many aspects of their life is creating difference in their relation also. A highly educated woman discloses the truth that her husband wants her to leave the college as full time housewives are better than the working women. She believes that her husband does not want her to be in contact with the outside world. She said, *“may be in the coming future, I will leave this college..... my husband fights a lot over this issue. My mother-in-law also agitates him. She says that working*

women are considered as bad in character as they learn new system from the environment". Eight percent respondents consider this as the major cause of maladjustment in their married life. So if the age gap between the spouses is higher then it becomes sometimes difficult to convince the partner for good things and all these situations makes them non-adjustable with each other.

Educational difference between the spouses

The present study reveals that disparities in educational attainment between male and female partners may also generate higher rates of marital maladjustment. One respondent said that men use violence to expand power and authority within a relationship in which the woman's level of education is higher. It was found that Indian women with a higher level of education relative to their partner are more likely to experience physical intimate partner violence. And the result of such behavior is that their relations are not good with each other, more stress and conflict is ruining their relations. Around six percent of the respondents reported educational difference between the spouses to be the major cause of maladjustment between husband and wife.

In the Punjabi culture, females take over all family responsibilities as family is their first priority. Their whole routine revolves around the needs of the family members only. Hence, they have less time for group oriented activities as compared to males. If female is employed outside home, the condition even worsens as she has to squeeze on to her personal time to create balance between job and the family. Working females have to play dual roles as they are employed outside the house. They bear more responsibilities as compared to males; adjust their time and energy in order to provide comfort and resources to the children's, husband and in-laws. They indulge themselves not only in household activities but also in religious and social activities. They seek contentment and recreation out of all these activities performed and makes adjustment accordingly. They always have an inner feeling to spend quality time with their spouse, take care of and satisfy sexual needs of the partner. They have concern and feel responsible for needs of the family members and for smooth functioning of the family, they are able to make equal role distribution among the family members. They try to maintain balance between family and society.

Unfortunately these women have no recognition in their families. No one asks them about their health, rest and other type of comforts. After doing so much from daytime to hours of darkness, their work goes unrecognized. Some respondents in the present study reveal that their whole

salary will be taken by them and after working so hard, nobody asks them that you take this much money and buy a new suit for yourself. Problems like depression, frustration, weakness in body, cervical problem, backache and body ache are some of the general problems these working women are facing. In the present study, women report the following symptoms:

1. Constant sad, worried, or "empty" mood
2. Loss of interest or gratification in activities, including sex
3. Agitation, bad temper, or excessive crying
4. Feelings of guiltiness, worthlessness, helplessness, hopelessness, pessimism
5. Decreased vigor, tiredness, feeling "slowed down"
6. Difficulty in concentration, remembering, or making choice and judgments
7. Headaches, digestive disorders and cervical pain

Thus, it is deduced in the present study that married working women suffer from more health problems like general weakness and bad temper. Frustration, anger and resentment are the part of working women's lives because they are overburdened with dual responsibilities. Middle class working women travel in public transport to go to college, try to manage family budget in limited amount and prepare meal for their own. Managing workplace and family problems, taking care of children's, husbands and in-laws from dawn to dusk without taking break are some of the major issues that married working women of different socio-economic status are facing in this city. All these factors are playing significant role in making them psychologically unwell. Similarly, Vermeulen & Mustard (2000) argue that working women are more prone to job stressors due to assuming multiple roles. They face different quality and intensity of work stressors in their life.

Conclusions and Suggestions

Marriage has always been regarded as the most important institution in our society. It is a chord that binds two people that is a husband & a wife together in a close relationship with each other. It also binds their families in such a way that though not linked by blood or being strangers for ages they become closest of relatives. But after marriage there comes a new set of expectations, responsibilities and duties along with rights not only for the couples but also for the families involved & here the problem begins. If the couples and their families are able to manage up with

the new promising set of subsistence, the marriage turns into paradise but if they not succeed, it leads to marital maladjustment which ultimately leads the couple to the court for separation. The present study reveals that working married women face greater marital problems in adjustment. Their attention is diverted because of working in two different situations. Working women because of their added responsibilities of job may suffer from more severe causes of maladjustment at home or in the office, while on the other side they have to take care of the children, husband, and in-laws and perform other domestic duties. Interference of in-laws, sex related problems, alcohol usage and unending demands made by the family members are also responsible for maladjustment within the relationships. They cannot give proper concentration to their marital lives and this cause marital maladjustment. Problems like depression, frustration, weakness in body, cervical problem, backache and body ache are some of the general problems these working women are facing.

In the contemporary society, the ideas of 'femininity' suffocate women's creative side who is educated and talented. They assume that they are more than just mothers and wives. Like men, they are also creative beings. And a working career is what gives them a sense of being and purpose – an identity that is enriching. It is not easy to say that one thing will suit all women, but one thing may be comprehensive that woman must be allowed the opportunity to judge what things will make them cheerful. An atmosphere which conditions women to think of themselves only as beings of reproduction will suppress their personalities and lead to a chaos of their identities.

For dealing with the problem of marital maladjustment among married couples, a paper on family adjustment or marital adjustment should be introduced at the graduation level in all the education streams to prepare the young ones for their duties and responsibilities after marriage. Its syllabus should effectively focus on the importance of marriage and problems related to it like adjustment or behavior. The syllabus of the paper should also be renewed from time to time according to the need of the society. In some cities like Muktsar, there are no counseling facilities for the people and at times wrong guidance is being given to the people by the friends and relatives to make their situation even worse. Counseling centers should be made available for the couples to solve their marital problems after marriage. Moreover, parents of both husband & wife should realize that the couples have their new roles and set of responsibilities after marriage and therefore they should not interfere much in their lives.

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