

Adversities of Marital Conflict: A Sociological Analysis

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I. Introduction

Marriage as an institution is an ancient one, during prehistoric times, there was nothing called "Marriage". The Caveman simply dragged the woman of his choice to mate with and procreate. Despite the absence of rituals and ceremonies, the caveman was as possessive about his woman as today's husband.

As the world became civilized, human beings realized that primitive ways had to be discarded and a more sophisticated way of mating had to be adopted. This brought about a kind of selectivity and sticking around with one partner, thus developing the system of marriage. Much later, rules and laws of marriage and societal norms began to appear. Monogamy was imposed on men, and women were given legal rights against bigamy but even then she was still the inferior partner and rarely had a say in important matters.

With the passage of time, the very concept and meaning of marriage changed. A large percentage of women joined the workforce and became financially independent. With the break-up of joint families and the advent of nuclear families, the pressure on working couples grew tremendously. An increasing number of marriages ended up in the divorce courts.

Concept of Marriage:

Marriage is one of the universal social institutions. It is closely connected with the institution of family. In fact, family and marriage are complementary to each other. As Gillin and Gillin have said, "Marriage is a socially approved way of establishing a family of procreation" and Westermarck has remarked that "Marriage is rooted in the family rather than the family in marriage".

Broadly speaking, Duncan Mitchell's 'A Dictionary of Sociology' have defined marriage as "a socially sanctioned sex relationship involving two or more people of the opposite sex, whose relationship is expected to endure beyond the time required for gestation and the birth of children."

Marital Problems:

Conflict in marriage is inevitable, whenever two people get together eventually some of the belief system and personal habits of one will annoy the other, regardless of the degree of love. In healthy relationships couples learn to accept and resolve conflict. But in case of unhealthy relationship marital conflicts arise due to several reasons. When there is conflict between role performance and role expectation of the spouses it leads to maladjustment of husband – wife relationships and to marital disruptions.

Causes of Marital Problems:

As the psycho-emotional framework of women tends to slightly differ from men, the reasons why men divorce women also happen to be varied to some extent. It is relatively rare for men to initiate divorce proceedings. As per a recent research, 66 percent of times it is women who initiate a divorce, while for men this figure stands at a comparatively low level of 41 percent. Still it cannot be said that men are not prone to divorce. Various possible reasons why men choose to divorce women due to marital problems are:

- 1. Lack of Commitment:** Sometimes, men do fail to develop a strong sense of commitment and sincerity towards their marriage and spouse. The reasons for this deficiency may vary from person to person. Such an attitude inevitably dilutes the marital cohesion and may culminate in marital conflict.
- 2. Lack of Communication:** In today's busy social and professional setup, spouses rarely get ample time to communicate with each other. People often fail to keep track of their marital life and a sense of disillusionment creeps into their marriage. Many a times, such emotional and psychological cynicism may induce a man to seek divorce.

3. Abandonment: With increased participation of women in the work force, women tend to become more career-savvy and smart. It is not rare for career women to abandon their spouse and other marital responsibilities. Under such circumstances, a man is left with no other option, but to dissolve the marital bond.

4. Emotional Abuse:

Though it is quite rare for men to be victims of physical and sexual abuse because of obvious reasons, yet it is not uncommon for us to come across families where a nagging wife has turned the life of a husband to a virtual hell. Men facing emotional abuse in their marital lives may choose to escape by seeking a divorce.

5. Infidelity

Various studies over the years have established the fact that men are more prone to extramarital affairs as compared to women. In today's cosmopolitan society, it is not difficult for unsatisfied husbands to come across women who are sympathetic and willing to be a part of their lives. Men do often file for a divorce to pursue their new-found love.

6. Inability to Manage Conflict

Contemporary marital relationships are susceptible to much more complexities and emotional upheavals which demand astute management skills on the part of both the spouses. Men being more prone to pursuing career goals are often unwilling or ill-prepared to manage situations of marital conflict, which ultimately end up in a divorce.

7. Financial Problems

Many a time, husbands tend to feel that the psychological and emotional satisfaction they get from their spouses fails to be commensurate with the extent of financial sacrifice they are making to sustain their families. Such disparities may sometimes instigate a man to opt for a divorce.

8. Sexual Incompatibilities

Though rarely considered, sexual incompatibility is one of the major causes that provokes men to divorce their wives. A man may fail to get the desired level of sexual gratification or satisfaction from his wife. The resulting frustration and tension may sometimes make way for a divorce.

II. Review Of Literature

On the whole, the literatures shows a dearth of descriptive materials based on empirical findings of day to day life and living experience of couples, very little is available to illustrate how Indian couples live and experienced life in areas like their communication patterns, balance in give and take, decision making styles, values and beliefs that propel them in sustaining this relationship and attitude. Marital relation provide satisfaction to vital human needs like affection, companionship and sexual expression, a good marriage make a person feel adequate, desired, approved and sense of gratitude, which is not available from any other human relationship.

Thangavelu (1975) in her book "**The Samsar Mode of Social Work Practice**", incorporate some of the cultural various of Indian society relevant of marriage such as horoscope, palmistry, dowry, philosophy related to Karma (one's deeds) and dharma (one's duties). These may be helpful for marriage and family practitioners across the country.

Davies PT, & Cummings F. M (1994) in their article "**Marital conflict and child adjustment: an emotional security hypothesis**" studied psychological and emotional security hypothesis that builds on attachment theory is proposed to account for recent empirical findings on the impact of marital conflict on children and to provide directions for future research. Children's concerns about emotional security play a role in their regulation of emotional arousal and organization and in their motivation to respond in the face of marital conflict..

Upadhyay K; Shukla A (1995) in their article "**Identification of important dimensions of marital interaction: the western and eastern perspectives**" in Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology explained Marital research in general, is characterized by conceptual and methodological problems. Majority of such researches only makes global evaluation of marital interaction may have on the quality of marital relationship.

Based upon a review of available published literature and extensive, in-depth interviews with a small sample of married Indian couples, brief discussions are presented, also, it is observed that marital interaction in various cultures is greatly influenced by the position of women in that socio-cultural set up and that

western society is dominated by the concept of individualism while the eastern society is more family oriented.

Statement of the Problem: The marital relation in India is often understood as an ideal homogeneous unit with strong coping mechanisms. However, it is important to recognize that there may be inherent problems within the family. Family is also the source of inequality, exploitation and violence in addition to its idealistic picture of a source of nurturance, emotional bonding and support. But industrialization, together with technological development has brought several new challenges to the family. Since marital relations between the husband and wife and other relatives are a major source of personality development. When the marital disharmony or marital conflicts are present in the family it affects the whole family atmosphere, thus there is an urgent necessity to study and frame policies for stable and happy family.

Objectives of The Study:

- To study the socio-economic background of the respondents.
- To understand the causes of marital conflicts.
- To assess the psycho-social problems of the respondents.
- To know the impact of marital conflicts on children.
- To find out the general family environment.
- To tender suggestions based on findings.

Scope of the Study: The present study is an attempt to describe and understand the general trend to marital disharmony and to replace the possibility of suggesting ways to deal the problem. The study aimed to investigate the marital relationship between husband and wife and on the other hand the psychological causes for the marital conflict and its adverse effects on human personality in particular and the society as a whole.

Limitations of the Study:

1. Due to shortage of time the information is collected from 50 respondents.
2. The study was limited only to the selected counseling centers.

Universe of the Study: The universe of the present study is the beneficiaries of family counseling centers. These beneficiaries are the couples who have marital problems and are getting the services of Family Counseling Center. This study explores on the families with marital conflicts and the selected respondents attending “**The Women Welfare Society Family Counseling Centre, Belgaum**” are taken as the respondents for the research purpose.

Sampling Method and Sample Size: Many couples with marital and family conflicts report to the counseling centers. The numbers of cases like dowry victims, mental and physical torture. Harassment by in-laws and husband, Alcohol addicts, sexual disharmonies attend these centers out of which 50 beneficiaries of the counseling center are preferred as the respondents for the present study.

Research Techniques and Tools Used:

Source of Data: To elicit information from respondents, a structured interview schedule was prepared. This interview schedule was finalized after a pretest, discussion with project guide and also keeping in view the objectives of the study. Interviews were conducted in Family Counseling Center. To elicit the responses the researcher has carefully used the communication skills. The secondary data were collected through books, journals, articles, published and unpublished thesis, social work magazines, documents, and Internet etc.

Processing and Analysing Of Data: The Complete interview Schedules were scrutinized, verified, edited and arranged serially. The data collected was fed in to the personal computer for processing and analyzing the data and to draw the conclusions

Analysis and Interpretation

Table No. 1 Age-wise Distribution of the Respondents

Sl.No	Age (years)	Frequency	Percentage
1	Below 20	01	02
2	21 to 30	18	36
3	31 to 40	22	44
4	Above 40	9	18
	Total	50	100

Source : Field Survey

Table No. 1 shows the age-wise distribution of respondents. It can be seen that 02 percent are below 20 year of age, 36 percent are in age group of 21 to 30. 44 percent are in 31 to 40 years and 18 percent are above 40 years of age. It is considered as middle age. Only one respondent is found in the below 20 yrs., age group and 18 respondents i.e. 36 percent are belongs to 21 to 30 age group, while 18percent respondents are in the above 40 years. So it is derived that majority of the respondents fall either in the age group of 21 to 30 or 31 to 40.

Table No. 2. Sex-wise Distribution of the Respondents

Sl.No	Sex	Frequency	Percentage
1	Male	15	30
2	Female	35	70
	Total	50	100

Source : Field Survey

The above Table No. 2 reveals the gender-wise distribution of respondents. The respondents who have reported to the counseling center are recorded according to their sex, here its understood 70 percent of the respondents are females and remaining 30 percent are males. So it reveals that women are more victimized by their husbands or in-laws.

Table No. 3. Religion-wise Distribution of the Respondents

Sl.No	Religion	Frequency	Percentage
1	Hindu	41	82
2	Muslim	03	06
3	Christian	02	04
4	Jain	01	02
5	Other	03	06
	Total	50	100

Source : Field Survey

Other : Includes Buddhists and Sikhs.

Religion-wise distribution of respondents is shown in Table No. 3, out of the total respondents 82 percent are Hindus, 6 percent are Muslims and 4 percent are Christians, 2 percent are Jain and remaining 6 percent of them belong to other religion like Buddhism and Sikhism. It is seen that marital problems exists in all religions. Since Hindus are majority community in India, obviously more number of cases is in the Hindu category.

Table No. 4. Education-wise Distribution of the Respondents

Sl.No	Education	Frequency	Percentage
1	Illiterate	6	12
2	Primary	8	16
3	Secondary	17	34
4	College	18	36
5	Other	1	2
	Total	50	100

Source : Field Survey

The above analysis reveals that literate respondents are higher than illiterates. It shows that 18 respondents i.e. 36 percent of the respondents are degree graduates, 12 percent are illiterates, 16 percent have completed secondary education. As majority of the respondents are literate and educated they are aware about the family counseling centers and thus they are availing the assistance of such centers to overcome their difficulties.

Table No. 5 Nature of Family

Sl.No	Type	Frequency	Percentage
1	Joint	27	54
2	Nuclear	18	36
3	Extended	5	10
	Total	50	100

Source : Field Survey

The above table shows that 54 percent of the respondents are living in joint families and remaining 36 are from nuclear type and only 10 percent families have extended one. However, it is notable that the problem is found to be there in joint families. This could be due to more family members and its traditional nature creating a type of generation gap and lacks understanding.

Table No. 6: Causes of Marital Conflicts **N = 50**

Sl. No	Causes	Response	
		Yes	No
1	Educational Gap	4 (8%)	46 (92%)
2	Economical Problems	3 (6%)	47 (94%)
3	Addiction of Spouse	13 (26%)	37 (74%)
4	Suspicious nature of spouse	16 (32%)	34 (68%)
5	Dowry	7 (14%)	43 (84%)
6	Tension of work load	1 (2%)	49 (98%)
7	Career of women	2 (4%)	48 (96%)
8	Impaired Sexual Relationship	10 (20%)	40 (80%)
9	Sexual Commands of others family member from wife	0 (0%)	50 (100%)
10	Mental & Physical Harassment by in-laws	14 (28%)	36 (72%)
11	Difference of opinion	5 (10%)	45 (90%)
12	Extra Mental Affair of Spouse	14 (28%)	36 (72%)
13	Mental illness of spouse	4 (8%)	46 (92%)
14	Age gap between you and spouse	0 (0%)	50 (100%)
15	Ago Problems	5 (10%)	45 (90%)
16	Some other causes	8 (16%)	42 (84%)

(Figures in bracket indicate percentage)

Source : Field Survey

As disclosed by the respondents Table No. 6 reveals the causes of marital conflict. Naturally there cannot be one single cause for marital conflict there may be several inter-woven factors like personal factors, interpersonal or family factors. The data shows that the respondents have given multifaceted reasons.

Educational gap (8%) is found to be a negligent factor as only an insignificant number constituted in this category. Similarly economic problem (6%), tension of work load (2%), career of women (4%), sexual demands from family members of the difference of opinion (10%), and age gap (0%) are not found to be major causes. However, addiction of spouse (26%), suspicious nature of spouse (32%), dowry (14%), mental & physical harassment by in-laws or husband (28%), extra marital affair (28%), seem s to be the dominant causes. It is notable that one single reason cannot be a cause as in families' combination of factors influence the interpersonal relationship and ending up in conflict.

Table No. 7 Psychological Impact of Marital Conflict **N = 50**

Sl. No	Psychological Impact	Response	
		Yes	No
1	Always losing their temper	32 (64%)	18 (36%)
2	Become openly angry on each other	22 (44%)	28 (56%)
3	Feeling of anxiousness	44 (88%)	6 (12%)
4	Have fear while talking with spouse	22 (44%)	28 (56%)
5	Feeling of stress / depression	17 (34%)	33 (66%)
6	Emotionally disturbed	43 (86%)	7 (14%)
7	Always thanking about the conflicts	44 (88%)	6 (12%)
8	Feeling of frustration	27 (54%)	23 (46%)
9	Feeling of isolation	26 (52%)	24 (48%)
10	Lose Confidence	34 (68%)	16 (32%)
11	Feeling of Insecurity	36 (72%)	14 (28%)
12	Feeling of restlessness	24 (48%)	26 (52%)
13	Inferiority Complex	26 (52%)	24 (48%)

Source : Field Survey

Note : Figures in the brackets shows percentage

Table No. 7 shows the psychological impact of marital conflicts, 64 percent of the respondents always lose their temper, 88 percent feel anxious and 86 percent are emotionally disturbed while 88 percent respondents always surrounded or think about the conflicts and 72 percent of respondents feel insecure.

Other psychological problems of the respondents are frustration (54%), feeling of isolation (52%) feeling of restlessness (48%) and inferiority complex (52%).

The analysis makes it apparent that respondents are affected by variety of psychological problems both during and after the conflicts.

Table No. 8. Psychological Impact on Respondents Children N = 36

Sl. No	Psychological Impact	Response	
		Yes	No
1	Whether they have enough time to spent for their children	25 (69.44)	11 (30.55)
2	Children are regular for the school	30 (83.33)	6 (16.66)
3	Conflicts affect on children's school performance	16 (44.44)	20 (55.55)
4	Children are not getting adjusted with family environment	24 (66.67)	12 (33.33)
5	Children asking about the conflicts	22 (61.11)	14 (38.89)
6	Couples explain children about the conflict	9 (25.00)	27 (75.00)
7	Respondents awareness about the adverse impact of conflict on children	32 (88.89)	4 (11.11)
8	Whether they displays their anger on children	14 (88.89)	22 (61.11)
9	Children are emotionally disturbed	23 (63.89)	13 (36.11)
10	Children are victims of quarrel	20 (55.55)	16 (44.44)

Source : Field Survey

Note : Figures in the brackets shows percentage

Data regarding impact of conflict on children disclosed here nearly 70 percent of them have time to spend with children. It can also be seen that 83.33 percent of their children are regular to school.

More than one half of them opined that conflict is affecting the performance of children. A good number of the respondents i.e., 66.67 percent expressed that children are not getting adjusted with family environment. More than 60 percent viewed that children used to ask about conflict. However, three fourths of them said they do not explain to children.

On asking whether the respondents are aware about the adverse impact of conflicts on children here 88.89 percent express that their conflict have and adverse impact of their children's personality. Many of them said they display their anger on children rather unknowingly. Around 64 percent of the respondents agreed that children are emotionally disturbed and 55 percent feels that they get victimized in the quarrel.

III. Summary And Conclusion

The research article entitled “**Adversities of Marital Conflict: A Sociological Analysis**” is undertaken to have an insight into the problems of marital conflict. On the basis of the study conducted on the beneficiaries of receiving counseling service for their marital problems. The study is summarized as follows:

Majority of the respondents are in either in the age group of 21 to 30 or 31 to 40. The study shows that family counseling centers are mostly attended by educated class of people as most of the respondents are educated and there is less representation of the illiterate class.

However, it is notable that the problem is found to be there in joint families. More number of respondents are having joint family, it could be due to more family members and its traditional nature creating a type of generation gap and lack of understanding between in-laws The present articles have also revealed various factors or causes of marital conflict and it was observed that marital conflict have multifaceted reasons like Educational gap, economic problem, tension of work load, career of women, difference of opinion.

However, addiction of spouse, suspicious nature of spouse, dowry, mental & physical harassment by in-laws or husband, extra marital affair seems to be the dominant causes. It is notable that one single reason cannot be a cause as in families' combination of factors influence the interpersonal relationship and ending up in conflict.

Marital conflicts have direct or indirect impact on an individual's personality mostly the impact is psychological in nature, in the present study it is exhibited that majority of the respondents have psychological impact like they always lose their temper, feel anxious, emotionally disturbed, always surrounded by the sense of conflict and feel insecure they also have feeling of frustration and loneliness thus developing lack of confidence and inferiority complex.

Apart from the spouses in conflict the children in the family too suffer and it have lot of impact on their growth and personality. The psychological trauma they come across disturbs their well being and

development. On the basis of in-depth discussion with the respondents it is realized that the children are unable to get adjusted with the family environment and always ask about the cause of conflict. The children are emotionally disturbed by this as in the fit of anger even they are scolded without and reason. The respondents too are aware of the fact that such conflicts have an adverse effect on children as they too are victimized. The most surprising revelation of this study is the school attendance of the children of the respondents, here its expressed that their children are regularly attending their school class and are quite regular, this might be due to lack of love and affection in the family and disturbed families, the children are more comfortable in their schools.

Suggestions:

Following are the suggestions specified in the light of findings of the study;

- ❑ The marital problems generally occurs due to unfulfilled basic needs, misunderstandings, alcohol addiction, dowry demand, ego problems, difference of opinion. Thus all the above complaints disturb the entire family. In order to avoid the above circumstances it is necessary to develop understanding, sympathy, as sense of humor and attitude of give & take.
- ❑ Counseling can play an important role to improve mutual understanding and healthy relationship.
- ❑ Family issues should not be discussed in front of neighbors, friends or any.
- ❑ Due to role conflict marital conflicts occur, awareness of role and responsibilities and its performance is and essence of preventing marital conflict.
- ❑ Social work techniques like crises intervention; community intervention etc. can be applied. Non-governmental organizations must be involved in this process.
- ❑ Family organization programs should be conducted to prevent family disorganization..
- ❑ The counseling centers should concentrate on the improvement of Inter-personal relationship. Marital therapy & family therapy should be used for it.
- ❑ Awareness & adjustment pattern can be explained to the couples through pre-marital counseling.
- ❑ A social worker can help these families or couples by playing role of facilitator, & a guide.

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