

Research Paper

An Empirical Study on Marital Satisfaction between Arranged and Self Marriage Couples in Bangalore

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ABSTRACT

We all are pretty familiar with the term Marriage. If we go by the classical definition it is a social practice to bind men and women in a respectful relationship by rituals, customs and laws. With change in society and its value system, the concept of marriage has been changed. It has taken a broader shape. In the olden days, only Arranged Marriages were given weight age in the society, where as Self Marriages were contemplated as sins. Now if we look at our society, we can see a coexistence of both the marriage equally.

The present study was taken up with an aim to compare the marital satisfaction between Arranged and Self marriage couples in the Bangalore region. A sample of 110 respondents was taken which included 55 Arranged Marriage couples and 55 Self marriage couples. It was observed that Marital Satisfaction was high for Arranged Marriage couples compared to Self marriage couples.

Keywords: *Marital satisfaction, Self marriage, Arranged Marriage, Cooperation, Mutual Trust*

Stephanie Coontz (2006) “*What marriage had in common was that it really was not about the relationship between a man and the woman. It was a way of getting in-laws, of making alliances and expanding the family labor force*”. Marriage is an important institution which prevails in all the societies of the world. Marriage does not only mean union of two human beings but it is a union of two personalities, their likings, disliking and their families. A study done by Epstein and Guttman (1984) revealed that 90% of the human beings get married at least once in their life time.

Talking about the Indian context, during the earlier days Arranged Marriages were more common. But with the influence of the western culture, Self Marriages gained popularity. Irrespective the kind of marriage i.e Arranged or Self Marriage, statistics indicate that marital satisfaction has become a cord of concern. With high expectation

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Received: December 22, 2017; Revision Received: January 22, 2018; Accepted: February 14, 2018

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from the society and family members, people are trying to find out ways to maintain marital satisfaction. Marital satisfaction does not depend on the number of years a couple spends with each other, but it depends on the quality time they spend with each other.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A study done by Snyder and Lopez (2005) revealed that if people are happily married they practice less stress and anxiety. As per Martin (2007), deciding upon a marriage and various factors affecting the relationship and adjustments in marriage should be considered as a development process and not just any other life event. The marital liaison has to go through emotional, physical and psychological phases as it does not exist in vacuum. Patrick, Sells, Giordano, and Tollerud (2007) revealed that a U-shaped pattern is seen in most of the marriages where couples have high levels of marital satisfaction in the early years of marriage, then experience a decline after the birth of the children, and later have again see an increase in their marital satisfaction when the children leave home.

Peleg (2008) revealed that marriage longevity also place a crucial role in the marital satisfaction. Marriage longevity is directly proportional to family satisfaction. Gender also plays an important role in the marital satisfaction and adjustment. A study done by Guo and Huang (2005) stated that men claimed to have higher level of Martial satisfaction compared to women. Rogers and Amato (2000) compared the couples married between 1981 and 1997 with the couples married between 1964 and 1980 and concluded that as the married couples start staying with each other for a long time, the marital conflicts lessen down.

Survey done by Levenson, Carstensen and Gottman (1993) narrated that men and women did not differ significantly in terms of marital satisfaction. A study done by White and Edward (1990), evolved with the fact that absence of children had a positive impact on the martial happiness Work done by Yelsma and Athappilly (1988) conducted a survey by comparing the marital satisfaction between Arranged and Self marriage couples in India and USA and found that couples of Arranged Marriage in India are far more satisfied than Self marriage couples in USA.

Yuji, K., Junich, T., Ikuo, D. and Masanori, I. (2004) analyzed the marital satisfaction level between arranged and Self marriage females in china. Various variables were taken into account viz dominant role in mate choice; dating husband prior to marriage, number of romances degree of feeling in love when married etc. Irrespective of the marriage endurance, it was seen that females with Self marriage were more satisfied compared to arranged ones. A study done on 206 couples from Israel by Shachar (1991) disclosed that marital satisfaction does not depend on the kind of marriage only (arranged or self).

To know the marital system and satisfaction in Pakistan, a study was conducted by Zahed (2003). 3 categories of marriage were taken into consideration i.e Arranged Marriage, partially Arranged Marriage and love marriage. The result specified that marital satisfaction

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level was high for the arranged married couples compared to partially arranged and love marriage couples. Work done by Xiaohe and Whyte (1990) observed that marital satisfaction level was quite high for the females who preferred Self marriage over Arranged Marriage. A study conducted in Nepal by Allendorf and Ghimire (2013) observed that marital satisfaction was higher for couples who opted for Self marriage. Madathil and Benshoff (2008) did a survey on Marital Satisfaction dividing the sample into 3 categories : Arranged Marriages in India, Self Marriages in US and Arranged Marriage couples living in United States. Various variables were taken into consideration viz loyalty, love, shared values, financial security etc. The study revealed that marital satisfaction was quite high for Arranged Marriage couples living in United States compared to Arranged Marriages in India and Self Marriages in US. Arranged Marriage couples living in United States gave lot of weightage to love whereas Self marriage couples gave loyalty the utmost importance. It was also observed that lot of preference was given to financial security by Arranged Marriages couples in India and Arranged Marriage couples living in United States as financial security and lack of debt are key cultural values for Indians. A study done by Kerkmann *et al.*, (2000) confirmed a positive co-relation between marital satisfaction and financial security.

Objectives

- To compare the overall marital satisfaction between Arranged Marriage couples and Self marriage couples

Hypothesis

Ha: There is no significant difference in Marital Satisfaction between Arranged and Self marriage couples.

Questionnaire Used

Since the research aimed to discover couples view about their marital satisfaction, the anonymous nature of the questionnaire was followed. Questionnaire included both open and closed ended question. Closed ended questions included a total of 15 questions based on SERQUAL, asking respondents to indicate on the likert scale of 1-5 about their marital satisfaction level, **where 1 indicated “strongly disagree” and 5 indicated “strongly agree”**.

The questionnaire included the areas, which to a large extent measure the marital satisfaction like communication, financial Management, Conflict resolution etc among the Arranged and love marriage couples. The questionnaire was distributed to a non probability sample of 150 respondents from Bangalore city. Out the lot only 64% responded. 13% respondents did not fill the form completely whereas 23% responded did not revert back. The sample size for the present study is 110 respondents which included 55 Arranged Marriage couples and 55 Self marriage couples.

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Group Statistics

Table 1

	TYPE OF MARRIAGE	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q1. I wish my partner was more willing to share his/her feelings with me	Arranged Marriage	55	2.82	1.553
	Self marriage	55	2.40	1.382
Q2. I am very satisfied with how my partner and I talk with each other	Arranged Marriage	55	3.33	1.428
	Self marriage	55	2.20	1.161
Q3. We always agree on how to spend our money	Arranged Marriage	55	3.53	1.303
	Self marriage	55	2.47	1.359
Q4. I am satisfied with our decisions about how much we should save	Arranged Marriage	55	3.71	1.286
	Self marriage	55	2.62	1.557
Q5. We are both aware of our major debts, and they are not a problem for us	Arranged Marriage	55	4.07	1.052
	Self marriage	55	2.65	1.404
Q6. Use of credit cards have been a problem for us	Arranged Marriage	55	4.00	1.122
	Self marriage	55	3.09	1.456
Q7. In order to end an argument, I usually feel my partner understands me	Arranged Marriage	55	2.49	1.359
	Self marriage	55	3.69	1.169
Q8. When discussing problem, I usually feel my partner understands me	Arranged Marriage	55	3.87	1.156
	Self marriage	55	2.35	1.280
Q9. When we have a disagreement, we openly share our feelings and decide how to resolve our differences	Arranged Marriage	55	3.75	1.265
	Self marriage	55	2.55	1.412
Q10. I am happy about our financial position and the way we make financial decisions	Arranged Marriage	55	3.64	1.445
	Self marriage	55	2.33	1.320
Q11. I am happy about how we make decisions and resolve conflicts	Arranged Marriage	55	3.44	1.259
	Self marriage	55	2.45	1.230
Q12. I am very happy with how we manage our leisure activities and the time we spend together	Arranged Marriage	55	3.82	1.056
	Self marriage	55	2.73	1.312

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Q13.I have never regretted my relationship with my partner.	Arranged Marriage	55	3.51	1.260
	Self marriage	55	2.36	1.192
Q14. I am dissatisfied with my relationship with my in-laws	Arranged Marriage	55	3.33	1.454
	Self marriage	55	2.60	1.355
Q15. I feel very good about how we practice our religious beliefs and values	Arranged Marriage	55	4.25	.645
	Self marriage	55	2.16	1.358

Table 2

<i>Group Statistics</i>					
	TYPE OF MARRIAGE	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
OMS_AVG	Arranged Marriage	55	3.5697	.37969	.05120
	Self marriage	55	2.5770	.35142	.04738

Table 3

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
				F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
		Lower	Upper							
OMS_AVG	Equal variances assumed	.837	.362	14.230	108	.000	.99273	.06976	.85445	1.13101
	Equal variances not assumed			14.230	107.359	.000	.99273	.06976	.85444	1.13101

DISCUSSION

Table 1 provides group statistics of 2 groups namely, Arranged Marriage Couples and Self marriage Couples. On analyzing each statement, following analysis can be calculated. It is evident that Self marriage couples have a high mean of 3.69 for the statement **“I wish my partner was more willing to share his/her feelings with me”** (Q1). The mean score of 3.33 is higher for Arranged Marriage couples for the statement **“I am very satisfied with how my partner and I talk with each other”** (Q2) as compared to Self marriage couples. The statement **“We always agree on how to spend our money”** (Q3) is found to have high mean of 3.53 for Arranged Marriage couples. **“I am satisfied with our decisions about how much**

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we should save” (Q4) statement has the highest mean score of 3.71 for Arranged Marriage couples compared to Self marriage Couples. The statement **“We are both aware of our major debts, and they are not a problem for us”** (Q5) had higher mean of 4.07 for arranged married couples in comparison to Self marriage couples. **“Use of credit cards has been a problem for us”** (Q6) statement portrays a high mean of 4.00 for Arranged Marriage Couples. The statement **“In order to end an argument, I usually feel my partner understands me”** (Q7) has earned a high mean of 2.82 for Arranged Marriage couples. **“When discussing problem, I usually feel my partner understands me”** (Q8) statement shows a high mean of 3.87 for Arranged Marriage couples in comparison to Self marriage couples. The statement **“When we have a disagreement, we openly share our feelings and decide how to resolve our differences”** (Q9) has a high men of 3.75 for Arranged Marriage couples.

On comparing Arranged Marriage couples with Self marriage couples for the statement **“I am happy about our financial position and the way we make financial decisions”** (Q10) it is observed that that Arranged Marriage couples have a higher mean value of 3.64. **“I am happy about how we make decisions and resolve conflicts”** (Q11) has a high mean value of 3.44 for Arranged Marriage couples. The statement **“I am very happy with how we manage our leisure activities and the time we spend together”**(Q12) also reflects a high mean of 3.87 for Arranged Marriage couples. **“I have never regretted my relationship with my partner.”** (Q13) statement is found to have a high mean for Self marriage couples. **“I am dissatisfied with my relationship with my in-laws”** (Q14) has a high mean of 3.33 for Arranged Marriage couples. The statement **“I feel very good about how we practice our religious beliefs and values”** (Q15) has a high mean of 4.25 for Arranged Marriage couples compared to Self marriage couples.

Table 2 and Table 3: An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the overall Marital satisfaction between the Arranged and Self marriage couples. There was a significant difference in the scores for Arranged Marriage couples (M=3.56, SD=0.379) and Self marriage Couples (M=2.57, SD=0.351); $t(108) = 14.23$, $p = 0.000$. These results suggest that Overall Marital satisfaction is high among the Arranged Marriage couples compared to Self marriage couples, thus rejecting the Null Hypothesis.

The analysis clearly shows that mean is high for all the statement in case of Arranged Marriage couples expect for the statement **“I wish my partner was more willing to share his/her feelings with me”** where it is observed that Self marriage couple feel that after marriage , there is a change in each other’s behavior. They feel that before marriage the openness was more. This is attribute to the fact that after marriage females feel that their spouse take them for granted and do not spend much time with them hence they feel that there partner does not share their feeling with the better half.. they feel that though both of them stay together but the quality amount which used to spend more marriage was reduced which ultimately leads to the feeling that their better half does not share their feelings.

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Major difference is observed in the religious beliefs among the arranged and love marriage couples. The satisfaction level is quite high for Arranged Marriage couples in comparison to Self marriage couples for the simple reason that it is very difficult for any human being to accept and adapt to a different religious belief and values. Generally, people prefer to remain grounded with their own culture, religious beliefs and values. But for people, who opt for Self marriage, need to accept and adapt to a different religious belief and values which at times create difference of opinion among the couples. They also find it difficult to maintain their relationship with their in laws hence adding more marital dissatisfaction among them. Difference in religious beliefs does not end up after marriage but they become active after the birth of the child. Religious and its beliefs become a point of conflict between the couples and end up playing tug-of-war for the child's religious upbringing.

Difference of opinion could also be seen between arranged and Self marriage couples when it comes to discussing a problem and understanding each other. Arranged Marriage couples feel that they can sense a lot of maturity from their partners when it comes to discussing a problem or to end up an argument. In Arranged Marriages initially do not know each other and hence they take time to understand each other. This in turn helps them very slowly understand their better half hence reducing the level of argument and problem.

CONCLUSION

Working towards Marital Satisfaction is not a herculean task. Marriage is a team work where both need to understand their roles and responsibilities. They need to be more tolerant while handling tough issues which are generally source of discrepancy and frustration. In order to grow and coagulate a relationship, couples need to take out time for each other.

To sum up, irrespective Arranged or Self marriage Marital satisfaction can be achieved among the couples by

- Spending quality time with each other.
- Being loyal towards each other.
- Maintaining a clean communication with each other.
- Sharing the financial burdens.
- Respecting each other's families

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How to cite this article: Raina P & Maity T (2018). An Empirical Study on Marital Satisfaction between Arranged and Self Marriage Couples in Bangalore. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, Vol. 6, (1), DIP: 18.01.033/20180601, DOI: 10.25215/0601.033