



Marital Adjustment and Marital Relationship among Indian Merchant Seamen

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ABSTRACT: Marriage is a society approved way of establishing a family of procreation. Its purposes, functions and forms may differ from society to society, but it is present everywhere as an institution (Jeejan, J, 2003). The quality of marital adjustment is a crucial factor in marital relationships. Work nature of merchant seamen is full of dangerous living conditions and unbearable working conditions Other than that they have to stay away from their family for long period. It results in less quality time with their families. In this study researcher descriptive research design has been adopted for the study and probability sampling method has been used to select the respondents of the study to understand the marital relationship and marital adjustment among the Indian merchant seamen.

Keywords: Indian Merchant Seamen, Marital relationships, Marital adjustments, Marriage

1. INTRODUCTION

In marital relationship alone two human beings enter in to a complete physical, mental and spiritual union with each other. Marriage is a universal institution where the qualities of love, devotion, co-operation and sacrifice are found. It is established by the human society to control and regulate the sex life of man. It is closely connected with the institution of family. In fact, family and marriage are complementary to each other.

We can say that the marriages are celebrated with happiness and begin with high hopes and expectations. It is glorious in the beginning. But this romantic view soon begins to clash with realities. However all marriages pass through the phase of sweet and sour experiences. Partners have to make adjustment. More they are prepared for adjustment better will be the quality of marital life. Good relationship would not come as a result of love alone. It has to be accomplished couples and families should be more realistic about the challenges of living together and cooperating in all areas of life.

Marital Adjustment is the adjustment in the marital life that has many dimensions- adjustment with husband, in-laws, and peers. In all society, marriage is not only the union of two individuals, but it is the union of two family two traditions, two culture etc. So adjustment or coping and getting adapted to married life are more important. Marital adjustment is necessary in child rearing and as the parent is first person to socialize child. The child gets the first lesson of co-operation, tolerance, self-confidence from the family (Mittal and Muktha, 1995).

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Marital quality is defined as how good the marriage is according to the spouse at given point of time. Marriages in which partners say they are happy and satisfied are judged to be higher quality than those marriages in which partners express unhappiness or dissatisfaction. After marriage, couples that emphasize or develop shared personal traits, a common value system, shared leisure activities and joint friends generally have high quality marriages (Tulsi, 2005).

The merchant marine is that part of the maritime trade industry concerned with transporting cargo (and sometimes passengers) from place to place via water routes; it is also known as the commercial shipping industry. Workers on these ships are divided into three crews: the deck crew, which handles navigation and cargo operations, the engine crew, which oversees the generating system that propels the ship, and the steward department, which sees to meals and living quarters. Each crew is commanded by a designated officer. Contrary to what many people think, working in the merchant marine doesn't mean that you sign up for duty in the navy or other military force. The merchant marine is a private industry, although vessels may be obligated to help the military in times of war (Peter, N, 1991).

Merchant mariners usually share their living areas with other crew members. While at sea, they are exposed to all kinds of weather, often cold and damp conditions. Most mid- and lower-ranking workers must stand watch for four hours at a time. Also, fire, collision, and sinking are all possible, so workers must be physically and psychologically prepared for such hazards (Res, H, 1991).

Merchant mariners are away from home for extended periods, but earn long leaves. Most are hired for one voyage, with no job security after that. At sea, they usually stand watch for 4 hours and are off for 8 hours, 7 days a week. Those employed on Great Lakes ships work 60 days and have 30 days off, but do not work in the winter when the lakes are frozen over. Workers on rivers and canals and in harbors are more likely to have year-round work. Some work 8- or 12-hour shifts and go home every day. Others work steadily for a week or month and then have an extended period off. When working, they are usually on duty for 6 or 12 hours and are off for 6 or 12 hours (Mathew, K.T, 2010).

So we can say the job of merchant seamen is a profession which faces dangerous living conditions and unbearable working conditions. Apart from this it makes their family life in problem. A merchant seaman is away from home for long period in this period it is difficult for them even to communicate with family because it depend on weather and job condition. In rough sea only way to communicate is through satellite system it is costly and depends on fluctuations in weather. So in this sea life a person is has to face difficulty in their role as a parent, a partner, an in law etc. This profession faces dangerous attrition rate, studies says that fear of family destruction is the reason for high attrition rate.

Marriage and family is a universal institution and it contains its sweet and sour period. Depends on every stages of life it undergoes fluctuations so that it could withstand the storm and calm weather. In merchant mariners profession role of marital adjustment is very important for better quality of life. Because here an absent parent, partner, in-law, child is supplementing his role, in

this dilemma the support of wife children, parents, in-laws, friends etc is very much necessary. In this study researcher is trying to learn about the marital quality and marital adjustment of Indian merchant seamen.

2. Method

2.1 Statement of Problem

In choosing a marriage partner, both men and women are guided to some extent by a concept of an ideal mate built up during adolescence. The more the individual must readjust with reality, the more difficult the adjustment to the mate will be marital adjustment is one of the most difficult adjustment young adults must make. During the early years of marriage, the couple normally must make major adjustment to each other, to members of their families, their friends. While these adjustments are being made, there are often emotional tensions and thus it is a stormy period. After adjusting to each other, their families, and friends, they must adjust to parenthood. This increases the adjustment problems if it comes while the earlier adjustments are being made. There are many areas where adjustability is required. The chief areas are economics, in-law relationship, social activities, recreation, associating with friends, religious life and training and discipline children. All the couples face problems in these areas. The couples that are happy have met the problems, with in these areas. Their marriages are successful because they have accepted the task of adjusting to each other's view point. They have arrived at the working arrangements.

Marital adjustment as long is in a popular topic in studies of family, probably because the concept is believed to be closely related to the stability of a given marriage. The marital adjustment is not only the merging of two different personalities. For the peaceful marital life both couples should be bound on these areas of adjustability. But due to many reasons like job nature, economic problem, stressful life situation, etc many couples fails to fulfill these requirements in marital life. The merchant seamen come under this category due to their job nature. In seamen carrier, they are both continuous and fractured and often step out of step with lives at home. The impact of routine absence on couple and family relations identify how work patterns and extended absence lead to temporal desynchronize and fragmentation of the life course. This lack of temporal harmony posed a challenge to family relations. A seamen carrier and a stable family life are seemingly in compatible consequently, many seamen either for sake of family life abandon life at sea, for normal pattern of family life. Disruption of normal home life and marital harmony are cited as the major causes of high attrition rate among merchant seamen. A merchant seaman has many limitations in the marital life due to the nature of job. The earlier period where they are mostly required by presence they are absent. It creates in problems in mate adjustment, in law adjustment, financial adjustment etc. It develops as the time moves. Majority seamen leave the job after ten years of experience for the sake of family. Therefore these factors set forwarded for the present study

2.2 Scope of Study

The Merchant seamen are a working group, differing from other vocations due to their peculiarities in job nature itself. This job nature has its consequence in their relations and

obligations as a member of family. But this group is away from the attention of all researches. Even though the Seamen in all aspects have many identified and unidentified needs and problems they are not yet considered by shipping companies and outer world. The major scope of my study is that there were no much previous studies conducted in this field.

The shipping field which is one of the oldest carriers from decades is now facing many problems; less experienced staff because as compared with other professions there is large amount of job withdrawal after initial years of carrier. It results consumption of time, money of shipping company in training, new recruitments and occurrence of accidents due to less experienced staff. This also results in the decline of the professional quality and development. The increasing number of divorce cases is also reported among seamen also a challenge to this profession. The shipping companies are still unnoticed about these facts. This study will be a notice to the knowledge of governmental bodies and shipping companies about these realities and to maintain the efficiency and commitment of their staff by considering their health, marital life and their duties to home and society.

2.3 The Area of the Study

The universe of study is Indian merchant seamen working in foreign ships operating from Mumbai with special reference to Pensiluar & Oriental shipping company, which has its home port in Southampton, United Kingdom. This shipping Company is mainly focused on cruise lining. There is almost 1100 crew members belong to different nationalities working in a vessel. In this 400 Indian crew is there and among them 250 are married. The researcher is focusing on the marital adjustment of the Indian Merchant Seamen

2.4 Objectives of study

The general objective of the study is to understand the marital adjustment of Indian merchant seamen working in foreign ships. The specific objectives are as the following:

- To study about the financial management among couples.
- To study about in-law relation in family.
- To study about the role of physical proximity in marital adjustment.
- To study about the emotional attachment and mutual understanding for the familial wellbeing
- To study about child rearing and mutual understanding.

2.5 Research Design

A descriptive research design is used because the researcher is trying to describe the marital adjustment of seamen community and how it differs from individual to. Study wants to portray the characteristics of a group. As the descriptive research design, describes the different factors in marital adjustment in relation with merchant seamen.

2.6 Sampling

Probability sampling is used. In this simple random sampling is used. The respondents' are picked up from Indian merchant seamen working in foreign ships. The sampling size is 100 respondents.

2.8 Method and Tools of Data Collection

The data collection is based on primary method and secondary method. In primary method data is collected through questionnaire the researcher collects data from the Indian merchant seamen working in foreign ships. And in secondary method data is collected through books, journals, articles, newspaper, and internet.

3. Results and Discussion

In general the merchant seaman has good marital adjustment and has joint financial management and they have well in law adjustment, they respect each other's family members. The merchant seaman considers home management and responsibility to children as a joint responsibility. The emotional attachment even though in the absence of seamen in family is good

- More than half (56) of the merchant seamen has good Marital adjustment and just above one fourth (26) has very good marital adjustment.
- In age of the respondents, it is clearly stated that in merchant seamen 78 % belong to early adulthood. There is a tremendous decrease in merchant seamen in late adulthood it shows the quitting of job by large numbers.
- It is found that most of the population belongs to newly married group .About 47 % belong to this group. And there only two percentage of population who has marital years more than 16 years. It is founded that it is for the sake of family life the seamen is quitting the job, because as the number of years in marital life increases there the number of job quitting merchant seamen increases
- More than half of merchant seamen (58%) have shipping working contract with in three to six months.
- 60 % of merchant seamen have less than ten years of experience in shipping field. Most of them resign the job before retirement. A seaman wants to be in job for ten to fifteen years.
- One of the major finding is that most of the merchant seamen (61%) belong to low income group that is about majority of population has below one lakh salary.
- It is founded that physical proximity is highly mentioned in the study. Even though the seamen away from home utilize maximum to be joined together. Majority(90%) of the respondents said they are fully enjoying and satisfied in sex
- 84% of seamen's In-law relation is good. And it is founded that in-law relation is good in joint family than those seamen belong to nuclear family. The seamen and family is more joined with in-laws in joint family.
- It is founded that financial management is a joint responsibility of couples in seamen family. More than half (54%) of respondents opted that they are worried about family expenditure.
- Emotional attachment and mutual understanding is high among the seamen couples. Because of their absence in home their understanding to partner is high.82 % opted that they feel miserable in the absence of each other.
- 88 % Merchant seamen consider looking after children and number of children should have is a joint responsibility and joint decision.
- Majority (82%) of merchant seamen believes in family planning.

- In merchant seamen respondents in early adulthood had founded more sexual satisfaction than other age group.
- It is founded from study that there is significant relation between income and mutual understanding of couples. With high income mutual understanding is also high.
- It is founded that the seamen who have three to six months duration of shipping contract are less involved in family responsibility than the seamen with more than six months working contract.
- In the study it is founded that with the increase in age there is increase in mutual understanding in sex.
- In the study it says that mutual confidence and trust is more on newly married seamen than on others.

The above mentioned findings carry the inter relational variables involvements in marital adjustment of Indian merchant seamen in foreign ships. The financial management among couples, In-law relation in the family, role of children, physical proximity, emotional attachment and mutual understanding play an important role in study.

Most young people enter in to marriage convinced that they are already well adjusted and they will not have the difficulties in getting along with each other. Adjusting is a conscious deliberate learning process to understand accept and change. In marriage, there is always some tension because marriages involve the relationship of two persons of opposite sex. When there is continuous and never ending process In marital relationship alone, two human beings enter in to a complete physical, mental spiritual union with each other. Marriage is a universal institution where the qualities of love, devotion, cooperation, sacrifice are found

4. Conclusion

The marital adjustment and marital quality is similar to each other in various aspects. In marital relationship alone two human beings enter in to a complete physical, mental and spiritual union with each other. Marriage is a universal institution where the qualities of love, devotion, co-operation and sacrifice are found. It is established by the human society to control and regulate the sex life of man. It is closely connected with the institution of family. In fact, family and marriage are complementary to each other. For a seafaring carrier had to face routine absence from home, lack of communication etc .The marital adjustment meant the integration of the couple in a union in which the two personalities are not merely merged, or submerged, but interact to complement each other for mutual satisfaction and achievement of common. The Marital Adjustment has its base on emotional attachment and the absence of couples does not have an effect on marital quality. There are many areas where adjustability is required. The chief areas are economics, in-law relationship, social activities, recreation, associating with friends, religious life and training and discipline children. All the couples face problems in these areas. The couples that are happy have met the problems, with in these areas. Their marriages are successful because they have accepted the task of adjusting to each other's view point even if they are able to be with each for short period. They have arrived at the working arrangements.

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How to cite this article:

APA

Paul, N. (2017). Marital Adjustment and Marital Relationship among Indian Merchant Seamen. (A. Paul, Ed.) *Journal of Social Work Education and Practice*, II(1), 31-38.

MLA

Paul, Nisha. "Marital Adjustment and Marital Relationship among Indian Merchant Seamen." *Journal of Social Work Education and Practice* II.1 (2017): 31-38.

Chicago

Paul, Nisha. "Marital Adjustment and Marital Relationship among Indian Merchant Seamen." Edited by Arun Paul. *Journal of Social Work Education and Practice* II, no. 1 (2017): 31-38.