Role of Gender on Marital Adjustment and Psychological Well-being among Dual-Employed Couples

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A good marriage not only leads to a happy and contented life, but also generates a sense of well-being. The present study was an attempt to understand marital adjustment and psychological well-being among dual-employed couples. The participants were 100 dual-employed couples selected from Trichur and Ernakulam districts in Kerala. The couples were administered Marital Adjustment Inventory and the Psychological Well-being Scale. The results revealed a significant relationship between marital adjustment and psychological wellbeing, especially in the area of life satisfaction. More wives had better marital adjustment than their husbands, whereas husbands showed better efficiency and mental health.

Keywords: Marital adjustment, psychological well-being, dual-employed couples

Marriage is a commitment with love and responsibility for peace, happiness and development of a strong family relationship. It is the union between families and is an important event in the life of every person, irrespective of caste, creed, religion, or social status. It involves emotional and legal commitments important in any adult's life. Selecting a partner and entering into a marital contract is considered both as a maturational milestone and a personal achievement. Harmony in marriage is a common issue that needs urgent and frequent attention.

Marital adjustment is the state in which there is an overall feeling in husband and wife of happiness and satisfaction with their marriage and with each other. Marital adjustment calls for maturity that accepts and understands growth and development in the spouse. The phenomenon of marital adjustment involves adjustment to mate, sexual adjustment, emotional adjustment, adjustment towards in-laws, and the like. A good marriage not only produces a satisfied life but it also generates a sense of well-being. According to Diener and Smith (1999) psychological or subjective well-being is a broad construct encompassing four specific and distinct components like (a) positive well-being (e.g., joy, elation, happiness, mental health), (b) low psychological distress (e.g., guilt, shame, sadness, anxiety, worry, anger, stress, depression), (c) life satisfaction (a global evaluation of one's life), and (d) situation satisfaction (e.g., work, family leisure, health, finance, self). Arne (1992) found higher psychological well-being among married as opposed to unmarried persons.

Dual employed couples are experiencing renewed attention in the recent years mainly due to the increasing women's labour force participation. Rapoport (1969) defined dual career family as an emergent social unit in which both the husband and the wife hold jobs which are highly salient, have development sequence and require a high degree of commitment. Within the dual-career family, the husband and the wife must negotiate a redefinition of traditional sex roles to cope with the associated stress of their career and family obligations. Previous research reports some factors that are more important in the success within dual career families. Internal factors include the couple's behaviour such as flexibility, relationship, support and mutuality. External factors are those out of family like friendly family career environments, and social supports (Bruse & Mary, 2006). However, Crohan, Antonucci, Adelmann, and Cloeman (1989) suggested that couple participation is associated with feelings of control which can offset pressures.