

# Factors involved in Marital Adjustment:

## 1. Wife employment and Marital Adjustment:

Blumstein and Schwartz (1983) had earlier found that individuals, particularly wives, reported increased levels of self-esteem, self-concept, and self-worth were positively correlated with employment.

Previous research on the relationship between wife employment and marital adjustment has produced conflicting results: some investigations report a positive relationship between wife employment and marital adjustment (Burke & Weir, 1976; Hartley, 1978); others suggest a negative relationship (Bean, Curtis, & Marcum, 1977; Gover, 1963); other studies show no relationship (Bahr & Day, 1978; Blood & Wolfe, 1960).

Nathawat and Mathur (1993) did a study in India about marital adjustment and subjective well-being in Indian-educated housewives and working women. Their results indicated that working women had better marital adjustment and subjective well-being. Working women reported high scores on general health, life satisfaction and self-esteem measures & lower scores on hopelessness, insecurity and anxiety whereas the housewives had lower scores on negative affect than the working women.

## 2. Trust and marital adjustment:

Relationships are composed of trust, and sharing of intimate thoughts and feelings. They are built upon trust and sharing and they get stronger from these things (Finkenauer, Kerkhof, Righetti, & Branje, 2009). According to Regan, Kocan, and Whitlock (1998) Trust is one of the most important component of a loving relationship. Also international studies have found trust to be a critical factor in the success of long-term marriages (Roizblatt et al. 1999; Sharlin 1996).

In a longitudinal study, Kristina Moeller and Hakan Stattin (2001) report that adolescents with trustful parental relationships experienced greater satisfaction with their partner relationships in midlife.

## 3. Quality of life and marital adjustment

Psychological Factors: Depression stress (psychological well being)

Lower psychological well-being is a major risk factor for relationship distress. Higher rates of relationship problems have been consistently linked to persons suffering from severe psychiatric disorders, including depression, substance abuse, and anxiety disorders (Bradbury, 1998). Many studies link marital conflict to depression (Beach, Arias, & O'Leary, 1987; O'Leary and Beach, 1990). Although the authors propose a bidirectional causal relationship between marital conflict and depression, they suggest that marital conflict is typically a more powerful contributing factor to depression.

Marital satisfaction appears to be an important factor of psychological well being. Marital distress has been linked with many psychological difficulties especially depression. (KAUSAR ANSARI.. thesis) .

## **4. Belongingness and Marital Adjustment:**

According to Baumeister & Leary (1995) Belongingness might have multiple and strong effects on emotional patterns and on cognitive processes. Lack of belongingness or attachments is linked to a variety of ill effects on health, adjustment, and well-being. In a close relationship there is a need to belong and if that need isn't fulfilled then problems may occur. One of the universal institutions is marriage which is accepted to satisfy the need for belongingness.

## **5. Economics and Marital Adjustment**

Education and income have also been linked to marital satisfaction and marital conflict, with greater levels of education and income predicting greater marital satisfaction and less conflict. Economic stress has a negative effect on marital satisfaction and a positive influence on relationship dissolution (Johnson & Booth, 1990).

Economic strain is directly linked to increased couple disagreements and has direct impact on marital adjustment (Kinnunen and Feldt, 2004). Many researches have been conducted on economic factor in relation to marital adjustment e.g Zedlewski (2002) studied economic factor in relation to family well-being, he found that low family income and limited benefits have negative influences on child and family well-being. Voyandoff (1990) studied economic distress and family relations. Ross & Mirowsky (1992) and Yadollahi (2009) studied that employment of spouses and the sense of control in various types of stressors of marital life. Diener and Diener (2001) investigated that wealth is related to many positive outcomes in life. Gudmunson, Beutler, Israelsen, McCoy & Hill (2007) found that financial problems significantly contributed to lower reported marital satisfaction among married couples. In a study in Finland conducted by Kinnunen and Feldt (2004) concluded that husband's unemployment is strongly associated with his marital adjustment. Couples with better economic resources are maritally adjusted as compared to those who have limited economic resources. Economic hard times increased rate of marital distress. (Blekesaune's 2008)

## **6. Personality and Marital Adjustment**

In a study by Bouchard, Sabourin, & Lussier, Y. (1999) the relationship of various personality traits with marital adjustment was studied. Personality traits studied were neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness. The scale used to measure marital adjustment was dyadic adjustment scale. The results showed that women high in agreeableness and openness were more adjusted. Also males that were high on openness and agreeableness were more maritally adjusted. Husband's openness was positively related to their wives marital adjustment. Open individuals may tolerate and respect differences in behavior and thought of partner which would reduce the number of conflicts and increase the consensus between spouses.

Kim, Martin, and Martin (1989) and Levine and Henessy (1990) found that personality factors differentiated stable from unstable marriages. Stable marriages were more similar in intelligence, protension, radicalism, tender-mindedness, mutual trust, acceptance, enthusiasm, and genuineness. Personality factors that reduce the likelihood of stability and satisfaction have included the lack of warmth and extraversion (Levine & Henessy); passive-aggression (Slavik, Carlson, & Sperry, 1998);

borderline pathologies (Paris & Braverman, 1995); bipolar disorders (Peven & Schulman, 1998); feelings of insecurity, unfairness, depreciation, and powerlessness (Begin, Sabourin, Lussier, & Wright, 1997); disagreeableness, emotional instability, inconsiderateness, and physical abuse (Botwin et al., 1997; Kosek, 1996; Shackelford & Buss, 1997); depression (Cohan & Bradbury, 1997; Davila & Bradbury, 1997; Fals-Stewart, Birchler, Schafer, & Lucente, 1994); neuroticism (Karney & Bradbury, 1997; Russell & Wells, 1994a; Russell & Wells, 1994b); tension, anxiety, worry, and suspicion (Craig & Olson, 1995); hostility, defensiveness, and aggression (Heyman, O'Leary, & Jouriles, 1995; O'Leary, Malone, & Tyree, 1994; Newton, Kiecolt-Glaser, Glaser, & Malarkey, 1995); and negative affectivity leading to negative attributions (Huston & Vangelistic, 1991; Karney, Bradbury, Fincham, & O'Sullivan, 1994).

Individual personality traits have also been linked to couples' relationship functioning for both men and women. Personality traits of neuroticism, anxiety, and emotional instability have been shown to impair relationship functioning and reduce relationship satisfaction (Watson & Clark, 1984). Additionally, personality characteristics of agreeableness and expressiveness have been referred to as individual protective factors, which may enhance marital satisfaction (Bradbury, Campbell, & Fincham, 1995).

## **7. Communication and Marital Adjustment:**

Communication is necessary for human growth and development also it serves as the essential foundation for marital success and is the facilitating process for an enduring marriage that is satisfying (Robinson & Blanton, 1993). Communication within relationships is an important factor, if there isn't communication the relationship suffers. The relationship between marital communication and adjustment is a strong one (Murphy & Mendelson 2004). Gottman (1995) in his book indicated that communication could be both productive and destructive to relationships as unhappy couples tend to criticize, disagree, complain, put down, and use excuses and sarcasm. Unrewarding communication patterns lead to the development of relationship distress (Markman, 1979). In contrast, happy couples with marital stability and satisfaction are more likely to use active listening skills, agree, approve, assent, use laughter and humor (Fisher, Giblin, & Hoopes, 1982) and possess character virtues of self-restraint, courage, and friendship (Fowers & Olson, 1986). Gottman (1995) has suggested that satisfied couples maintain a five-to-one ratio of positive to negative exchanges in interactions

Gender also plays an important role in couple communication as there are gender differences in verbal and nonverbal communication with men tending to be more dominant in their interactions and women being more submissive (Tannen, 1990).

Emmers-Sommer (2004) studied the effect of communication quality and quantity indicators on satisfaction in relationships. A key term in the study was quality time; this refers to focused, uninterrupted time spent with children, partners, friends, and significant others. Another key term used in the study was quantity time; this refers to frequency of communication or contact. For individuals to reach relationship satisfaction they have to examine the quantity and quality of their disclosures with their partners. Emmers-Sommer (2004) found that quality of communication predicts both relationship

satisfaction and intimacy. The quantity of communication, however, was not a predictor for relationship satisfaction.

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