

MINOR RESEARCH PROJECT

Project title

“A Study on marital quality and family functioning of young couples in Idukki:
Implications for Social Work Interventions.”

2416-MRP/15-16/KLMG063/UGC-SWRO

FINAL REPORT

Submitted To

The Joint secretary and Head
South Western Regional Office (SWRO)
University grants commission
P.K. Block, Gandhinagar Palace Road Bangalore – 560 009

Submitted by

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DECLARATION AND CERTIFICATE

I hereby declare and certify that, the Minor Research Project entitled “**A Study on marital quality and family functioning of young couples in Idukki: Implications for Social Work Interventions**” 2416-MRP/15-16/KLMG063/UGC-SWRO is a bonafide record of research work carried out by me during the year 2016-18. Further certify that the work presented in the report is original and carried out according to the plan in the proposal and guidelines of the University Grants Commission.

Principal Investigator

ABSTRACT

Marital Disfunctioning and marital discords among young couples are increasing day by day in India especially in Kerala. The divorce rate in Kerala reveals this fact and Kerala is known as the divorce capital of India'. In God's own country, marriages may be made in heaven but they are broken in courts. Fissures in Kerala's new generation families are erupting like a volcano.

Neither the country nor the state has any programmes or training to promote the marital quality or family functioning among the young couples. The Government is providing family counselling only for those couples who applied for divorce in the court. This is somewhat a curative approach and usually many of these cases reunion is not happening. This calls for an increased attention from social work practitioners to closely look at the specific challenges of young couples and to suggest and intervene with their specialised skills and knowledge to foster Marital Quality and family functioning among young couples in their families.

The present study was intended to find out the Marital quality and family functioning of young couples and suggest intervention strategies for improving the marital quality and family functioning among the subjects. The study reveals that 70% of the respondents has a moderate marital quality and 30% of the respondents has high marital quality and only 10% of the respondents has a low marital quality. Respondents of age group of 20-25 years enjoy high marital quality. Regarding communication among couples 50% of the respondents has a very good communication where as 46.7% of the respondents has good communication and only 3.3% of respondents has a poor communication skill. There is no significant association between the Communication level of the respondents and the Marital Quality of the respondents The respondents experience moderate level of family functioning. The study is expected to bring to application the integration of relevant theories and knowledge from sociology, developmental psychology and social work, especially the theories of Family development and family life cycle stages and strengths based social work practice theories. The study would bring out a couple training suggestions to help young couples to attain Marital Quality and meet the developmental needs and equip them to manage the challenges of each stages in family life cycle. This will be a potential contribution to the various marital problems dealt in psychology.

Executive Summary of the project

Marital life in the 21 st century is a challenging one. Young people are entering into marital life with numerous expectations and hope. But in reality only few are living with marital quality in their marital lifespan .

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1. The present study was intended to find out the Marital quality and family functioning of young couples and suggest intervention strategies for improving the marital quality and family functioning among the subjects. The major objectives of the study include: To study the socio-demographic data of the respondents
2. To study the current marital quality of couples
3. To study the family functioning of the couples
4. To study the communication patterns of the couples
5. To suggest the intervention strategies for marital enrichment among young couples

The research method used in my study was **Mixed methodology**. To find out the marital quality, couple communication and the socio demographic details the researcher used quantitative methods.

To find out the family functioning of young couples the researcher used qualitative methods. Focus group discussion has been used to collect qualitative data.

In this study researcher used **descriptive research design** to describe socio economic details, marital quality, and communication patterns of couples. Focus group discussions had been conducted to describe the family functioning and to understand the need for marital enrichment.

Stratified random sampling (proportionate) is the sampling method used in the study .Sample size refers to the number of item to be selected from the universe. **The sample size is 60.**

Universe of study consist of all married individuals, married for a period of one to five years of duration belonging to Peermade Panchayath of Kerala.

The unit consists of one married male or female, married for a period of one to five years' in Peermade Panchayath.

Summary of the findings

The findings help us to understand the marital quality, communication and family functioning of young couples and the scope for marital enrichment.

Marital Quality of Couples

70% of the respondents have a moderate marital quality and 30% of the respondents has high marital quality and only 10% of the respondents has a low marital quality.

- ❖ Respondents of age group of 20-25 years enjoy high marital quality.
- ❖ 35.7% of the female respondents enjoy high marital quality whereas only 6.2% of the male respondents has high marital quality, i.e. female respondents enjoy higher marital quality compared to male respondents.
- ❖ The average marital quality of the total population is 24.28; with 25% of its respondents who has a post-graduation has the highest average score of marital quality, i.e. 24.94
- ❖ Hindu respondents have an average marital quality of 24.98; whereas Christian respondents have an average marital quality of 25.19 and Muslim respondents have an average marital quality of 22.67.
- ❖ 30% of the respondents who had no children enjoy high marital quality; 16.7% of the respondents who had a single child has high marital quality whereas no respondents with 2 children enjoy high marital quality.
- ❖ The marital quality means are statistically significantly different. Mean difference in the marital quality is 4.286.
- ❖ There is significant relation between the dimensions of marital quality; i.e. support, intimacy, openness, love, dominance, conflict, connectedness and empathy.

- ❖ 50% of the respondents has a very good communication where as 46.7% of the respondents has good communication and only 3.3% of respondents has a poor communication skill.
- ❖ There is no significant association between the Communication level of the respondents and the Marital Quality of the respondents
- ❖ Very good communication at most of the times has resulted to moderate marital quality and at the same time very good communication and good communication has no difference in high marital quality
- ❖ There is association between the listening skill of the respondents and Quality of Marriage. The respondents with very good listening skills have high marital quality.
- ❖ 42.8% of the respondents with very good communication skill has high marital quality but at the same time there is 0% of respondents who has good or poor communication skills has high marital quality.

Communication Patterns of Couples

- ❖ The respondents with very good communication has high support, high intimacy, high openness, high love and at the same time has low dominance and low conflict at the same time there is no significant change in connectedness and empathy with very good communication. With 68% of the respondents who has very good communication has high support; with 63.6% of the respondents has high intimacy; 68.8% of the respondents had high openness; 66.7% of the respondents has high love; and with 75% of the respondents had low conflict and dominance is at a moderate level.

Family functioning among young couples:

Planning family activities is difficult because the communication is limited in the family due to media, availability of all members on the same time and lack of privacy.

In times of crisis family members can turn to each other for support.

Individuals are accepted for what they are.

The couples avoid discussing their fears and concerns with children.

The members of the family can express feelings to each other.

Many times, making decisions is a problem in the family.

The family members can express feelings to each other.

Suggestive measures for improving marital quality:

Preventive and promotive strategies should be implemented at the District (Family Development Centers) and at Panchyath level (Counseling services) Implementation of Pre-marital and marital enrichment programs and the programs should be monitored under government agency.

Skill generation and job opportunities for the more than 40% women who doesn't have a job.

The study also identified various important proximal factors affecting Marital Quality. Hence, a material should be produced and lessons should be delivered on topics/factors such as sex/gender differences, life skills, human sexuality (sex/gender differences.in,sex,behaviours,others),money/financial.management,good.communication/communication skills, marital commitment and interferences in marital relationship.

There should be ways to help males to improve their marital quality, the unusual degradation of the marital quality in males would be because of the changing role of their female partners in the society and the still existing patriarchal system that's followed in Peermade. Help should be given in the form of positive thought changing processes of the males.

CONCLUSION

In this study, we explore the determinants of marital quality in Peermade Idukki, Kerala. We find that age, gender, education, spouse choice, religion, marital duration, number of children is important determinants of marital quality.

While we identify key determinants of marital quality in this context, we also find that different other variation in marital quality is not explained by these factors. This study is one of only a few to examine marital quality in a rural setting in Kerala. As such, it contributes to the literature on marital quality by extending the commonly found association between factors affecting marital quality, to this context. It also reinforces the importance of education to marriage and provides a rare reflection on the connection between religion and gender with marital quality – finding that those with high listening skills indeed have greater marital quality than those who do not. Further research is needed to extend the findings of this study. In particular, the small sample size of the survey limits the analysis. Future surveys with larger sample sizes can be used to examine whether there are differences in the determinants of marital quality.