

Sociocultural Factors Influencing Marital Satisfaction in Modern India: A Large-Scale Survey Analysis

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Abstract:

This research paper investigates the sociocultural factors influencing marital satisfaction in modern India, focusing on how traditional and emerging sociocultural dynamics shape marital outcomes in the context of rapid societal changes. Utilizing a descriptive, cross-sectional survey design, the study collected data from 2,000 married individuals across various Indian states using structured questionnaires. The methodology included stratified random sampling and data analysis through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to assess the direct and indirect effects of sociocultural variables on marital satisfaction. Key findings indicate that egalitarian gender roles, economic stability, and effective communication significantly enhance marital satisfaction, while urbanization and traditional family structures have complex influences. The study underscores the buffering role of traditional family support against the stresses of modernization. The results highlight the importance of tailoring marital counseling and interventions to regional and cultural specifics, suggesting that policies aimed at enhancing marital satisfaction should consider the broader sociocultural context. These insights are crucial for stakeholders aiming to develop programs that foster healthier marital relationships in a culturally diverse society like India.

Keywords: Marital Satisfaction, Sociocultural Factors, India, Structural Equation Modelling, Gender Roles, Urbanization.

1. Introduction

Marital satisfaction is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by various factors that encompass personal, sociocultural, and economic dimensions. It plays a crucial role in the emotional and psychological well-being of individuals and the stability of families. In diverse and culturally rich countries like India, where traditional practices often intersect with modern influences, understanding the dynamics of marital satisfaction becomes particularly complex and significant.

The concept of marital satisfaction refers to an individual's subjective evaluation of their marriage (Madathil & Benshoff, 2008). This evaluation encompasses various dimensions including, but not limited to, emotional fulfillment, communication quality, sexual satisfaction, and compatibility with the spouse. Research has demonstrated that high marital satisfaction contributes to better mental health, lower rates of depression, and more robust familial relationships (Kallampally et al., 2008).

In the Indian context, marriage is not merely a personal relationship between two individuals but a sacred institution with deep cultural, social, and religious roots. It is closely tied to family values, social

norms, and expectations, which vary widely across different regions, religions, and ethnic groups within the country. The traditional model of arranged marriages, where spouses are selected by family members based on social, economic, and cultural compatibility, still predominates and coexists with love marriages, which are based on personal choice and romantic attachment (Madathil & Benshoff, 2008). Sociocultural factors such as caste, education, family background, and economic status play a significant role in shaping marital satisfaction in India. For example, studies have shown that marital satisfaction in arranged marriages might differ significantly compared to love marriages, primarily due to varying expectations and the degree of acquaintance before marriage (Goud et al., 2022). Additionally, the influence of globalization and exposure to Western lifestyles has introduced shifts in traditional roles within marriages, especially concerning gender roles and the division of labour in household duties (Kallampally et al., 2008).

The relationship between gender roles and marital satisfaction has been a subject of considerable interest. In India, where traditional roles are deeply entrenched, the rapid socio-economic changes and the increasing participation of women in the workforce have challenged these norms and influenced marital dynamics. Research indicates that discrepancies in gender expectations can significantly affect marital satisfaction, where more egalitarian views are associated with higher satisfaction levels (Heidari & Kumar, 2021).

Another critical factor is the emotional and psychological attributes of the spouses. Emotional intelligence, which encompasses the ability to understand and manage one's own and others' emotions, has been found to positively influence marital satisfaction. Couples with higher emotional intelligence levels tend to have better conflict resolution skills, a deeper understanding of each other's emotional needs, and more satisfying marital relationships (Heidari & Kumar, 2021).

Sexual satisfaction is also a vital component of marital happiness. Studies have highlighted its significant impact, noting that sexual dissatisfaction is strongly correlated with overall marital dissatisfaction (Goud et al., 2022). This relationship underscores the importance of physical intimacy as a pillar of marital fulfilment and a critical area of compatibility between spouses.

Despite the breadth of research, there remains a gap in large-scale, empirical studies that integrate these diverse factors within the framework of modern Indian society. Many studies focus on specific communities or small samples, which may not accurately represent the broader population. This research aims to fill this gap by conducting a comprehensive analysis of marital satisfaction across various sociocultural backgrounds in India, considering both traditional and contemporary influences that affect marital dynamics.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to inform policymakers and practitioners who work in the fields of family counselling and social welfare. By understanding the nuanced influences on marital satisfaction, interventions can be more effectively tailored to the needs of diverse populations, promoting healthier family dynamics and individual well-being.

In conclusion, the study of marital satisfaction in India offers a unique lens through which to view the interplay of traditional values and modern influences in one of the world's most populous and diverse nations. By exploring this topic, we can gain deeper insights into the factors that contribute to fulfilling marital relationships and the broader social implications of marital satisfaction.

This overview sets the stage for a detailed investigation into the sociocultural factors influencing marital satisfaction in modern India, providing a backdrop for understanding the complexity and significance of this vital aspect of human relationships.

2. Literature Review

The literature on marital satisfaction in India presents a complex interplay of sociocultural, psychological, and interpersonal factors. This section reviews seminal works that have shaped our understanding of this phenomenon, especially focusing on studies relevant to the Indian context.

Samadaee-Gelekholaee et al. (2015) conducted a comprehensive literature review on marital satisfaction among infertile couples, emphasizing the broad range of factors influencing marital dynamics. Their methodological review covered studies from 1990 to 2015, highlighting the significance of demographic factors, fertility assistance methods, psychological health, and socioeconomic support on marital satisfaction. Their findings suggest that understanding these variables is crucial for improving marital satisfaction in couples undergoing fertility treatments, providing a valuable perspective on the multifaceted nature of marital relationships under stress (**Samadaee-Gelekholaee et al., 2015**).

Jackson et al. (2014) explored gender differences in marital satisfaction through a meta-analysis, providing evidence that while general population studies show minimal gender differences in marital satisfaction, significant disparities exist in clinical samples. This study underscores the importance of context in understanding marital satisfaction and points to the need for differentiated approaches in marital therapy (**Jackson et al., 2014**).

In a landmark study, **Bradbury, Fincham, and Beach (2000)** examined the determinants of marital satisfaction over a decade. They emphasized interpersonal processes within marriage, such as cognition, affect, and behavioural patterns, and how these are influenced by broader social and economic contexts. Their call for more large-scale longitudinal research to link marital processes with sociocultural contexts has been influential in shaping subsequent studies on marital satisfaction (**Bradbury et al., 2000**).

Goud et al. (2022) focused on a cross-sectional analysis from Andhra Pradesh, examining the relationship between sociodemographic factors, attachment styles, and sexual satisfaction with marital satisfaction. Their findings highlight the critical role of attachment styles and ongoing conflicts in relationships, contributing significantly to the discourse on interpersonal dynamics in marital satisfaction (**Goud et al., 2022**).

Khezri, Hassan, and Mohamed Nordin (2020) provided a methodological review of the literature assessing the impact of economic status and marital communication on marital satisfaction among women. This review, spanning from 1981 to 2017, underscored the pivotal role of economic stability and effective communication in enhancing marital satisfaction, thus pointing to the importance of these factors in marital counselling and intervention programs (**Khezri et al., 2020**).

Kamal, Tiwari, and Behera (2018) conducted a systematic review on the relationship between personality variables and marital satisfaction. Their review covered research literature published over thirteen years, identifying key personality predictors such as neuroticism, agreeableness, and emotional stability that affect marital satisfaction. This study provides a psychological perspective that complements sociocultural approaches, highlighting the interplay between individual personality traits and marital dynamics (**Kamal et al., 2018**).

Chiş (2022) critically reviewed the literature on the relationships between personality variables, parenting, and marital satisfaction. This review not only explored the direct impacts of personality on marital satisfaction but also the mediating role of parenting styles, offering a more nuanced understanding of how family dynamics influence marital relationships (**Chiş, 2022**).

The body of literature reviewed here illustrates the rich tapestry of factors that influence marital satisfaction in India. From the broad sociocultural contexts to the intimate dynamics of personality and

interpersonal relations, these studies collectively enhance our understanding of what affects marital satisfaction.

Despite the extensive research on marital satisfaction, a significant gap exists in the context-specific analysis of how modern sociocultural factors influence marital satisfaction in India. While previous studies have explored demographic, psychological, and traditional sociocultural impacts, there is a notable lack of comprehensive research that integrates these aspects with the rapid socio-economic and cultural transformations occurring in contemporary India. This study aims to fill this gap by conducting a large-scale survey analysis to understand the nuanced effects of modern sociocultural changes, such as shifts in gender roles, urbanization, and increased exposure to global cultures, on marital satisfaction. Addressing this gap is crucial for developing effective marital counseling strategies that are culturally and contextually relevant in modern Indian society.

3. Research Methodology

The methodology section of this research paper describes the research design, data collection source, and analysis technique used to explore the sociocultural factors influencing marital satisfaction in modern India.

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive, cross-sectional survey design to collect data on marital satisfaction across various sociocultural demographics in India. This design was chosen for its effectiveness in capturing a snapshot of current attitudes and experiences across a broad population at a single point in time.

Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to assess various aspects of marital satisfaction in relation to sociocultural changes. The questionnaire included items on demographic information, marital satisfaction scales, and specific questions about perceived sociocultural influences on marital relationships. The source of data and specific details related to the data collection are summarized in the following table:

Data Collection Aspect	Details
Source	Structured Questionnaires
Sampling Method	Stratified Random Sampling
Population	Married individuals residing in urban and rural India
Sample Size	2,000 respondents
Data Collection Period	January 2023 - June 2023
Data Collection Mode	Online and Paper-based Surveys
Geographical Coverage	10 states across India, representing North, South, East, and West regions
Response Rate	Approximately 80%

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), a comprehensive statistical analysis tool suitable for testing hypotheses about relationships among observed and latent variables. SEM was used to identify the direct and indirect effects of sociocultural factors on marital satisfaction, providing insights into the complex interplay of variables influencing marital dynamics in contemporary India.

This method allowed for a robust examination of the pathways through which sociocultural changes impact marital satisfaction, adjusting for potential confounders and mediators.

The research methodology outlined ensures a systematic approach to understanding the multifaceted influences of modern sociocultural factors on marital satisfaction in India, providing a reliable basis for further discussion and analysis in subsequent sections of the paper.

4. Result and Analysis

This section presents the results of the survey conducted to analyze the influence of sociocultural factors on marital satisfaction among married individuals in India. The data collected through structured questionnaires were subjected to Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to elucidate the relationships between demographic variables, sociocultural changes, and marital satisfaction.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic	Percentage (%)	Details
Gender	Male: 48%	Female: 52%
Age Group	20-30: 25%	31-40: 35%
	41-50: 25%	51+: 15%
	High School: 20%	Bachelor's: 50%
Education Level	Master's or above: 30%	
Employment	Employed: 65%	Unemployed: 35%
Region	North: 25%	South: 25%
	East: 25%	West: 25%

Interpretation: The demographic data indicate a balanced representation across gender, with a slightly higher proportion of females. The majority of respondents are within the age group of 31-40 years, predominantly educated at least to the bachelor's degree level, which suggests a relatively educated sample. Employment status shows a majority are employed, which could influence their perceptions of marital satisfaction through economic stability.

Table 2: Impact of Sociocultural Changes on Marital Satisfaction

Sociocultural Factor	Effect Size	P-Value	Impact on Marital Satisfaction
Gender Roles	0.35	<0.01	Positive
Economic Status	0.28	<0.01	Positive
Education Levels	0.22	<0.05	Positive
Urbanization	0.25	<0.01	Negative

Interpretation: Gender roles showing a positive effect size suggest that more egalitarian views on gender are associated with higher marital satisfaction. Economic status and education levels also positively influence marital satisfaction, indicating that higher economic and educational attainment contributes to better marital relations. Urbanization showed a negative impact, suggesting that urban living might introduce stresses that detract from marital satisfaction.

Table 3: Influence of Family Dynamics

Family Dynamics	Effect Size	P-Value	Impact
Extended Family Living	-0.15	<0.05	Negative
Number of Children	-0.10	<0.05	Negative

Interpretation: Living with extended family and having more children are associated with lower marital satisfaction. This could be attributed to increased household tensions or diluted couple intimacy due to broader family involvements.

Table 4: Modern vs. Traditional Marriages

Marriage Type	Marital Satisfaction Score	P-Value
Modern (Love-based)	82	<0.01
Traditional (Arranged)	76	<0.01

Interpretation: Modern love-based marriages report higher satisfaction scores compared to traditional arranged marriages, indicating that personal choice in spouse selection might lead to higher satisfaction levels.

Table 5: Regional Differences in Marital Satisfaction

Region	Average Satisfaction Score	P-Value
North	75	<0.01
South	80	<0.01
East	70	<0.01
West	78	<0.01

Interpretation: Marital satisfaction varies significantly across different regions, with the South exhibiting the highest scores and the East the lowest. This variation could reflect regional differences in cultural practices and economic conditions.

Table 6: Effects of Urbanization and Traditional Values on Marital Satisfaction

Factor	Path Coefficient	P-Value	Indirect Effects
Urbanization	-0.18	<0.01	Mediated by stress and lifestyle
Traditional Values	0.24	<0.01	Mediated by family support

Interpretation: Urbanization negatively affects marital satisfaction, mediated by increased stress levels and lifestyle changes that accompany urban living. Conversely, adherence to traditional values has a positive impact, mediated by strong family support systems that are typically more robust in traditional settings. This suggests that while urbanization brings economic and social opportunities, it may also introduce factors that strain marital relationships unless mitigated by supportive traditional structures.

Table 7: Moderating Role of Communication in Marital Satisfaction

Communication Quality	Moderation Effect	P-Value	Impact on Satisfaction
High	0.40	<0.01	Enhances positive effects of sociocultural adaptability
Low	-0.25	<0.01	Amplifies negative effects of sociocultural stress

Interpretation: The quality of marital communication significantly moderates the effects of sociocultural factors on marital satisfaction. High-quality communication enhances the positive impacts of sociocultural adaptability, facilitating better adjustment and greater satisfaction. In contrast, poor communication amplifies the negative effects of sociocultural stressors, leading to lower satisfaction levels. This finding underscores the critical role of effective communication in mediating the complex influences of changing sociocultural dynamics on marital relationships.

Overall SEM Analysis Interpretation:

The SEM analysis indicated that the direct and indirect pathways from sociocultural changes to marital satisfaction are significantly influenced by individual and interpersonal factors such as communication quality, stress levels, and the supportiveness of family structures. The model fit indices (e.g., RMSEA, CFI, TLI) were within acceptable ranges, suggesting that the hypothesized model adequately fits the data.

This comprehensive analysis allows us to understand not only the isolated effects of individual factors but also how these factors interact within the broader sociocultural framework of modern India. These insights are crucial for developing targeted interventions aimed at enhancing marital satisfaction, particularly in rapidly urbanizing societies with evolving marital norms and structures.

The results from this large-scale survey analysis provide a nuanced understanding of how modern sociocultural factors influence marital satisfaction in India. The study highlights the importance of considering both individual and systemic factors in marital counseling and social policy-making, particularly in contexts undergoing rapid sociocultural change. Future research should continue to explore these dynamics, focusing on longitudinal data to track changes over time and interventions that can effectively address the identified challenges.

5. Discussion

This section discusses the implications of the findings from the analysis of sociocultural factors influencing marital satisfaction in modern India, integrating these results with existing literature to offer a comprehensive understanding of the field.

The positive impact of egalitarian gender roles on marital satisfaction, as identified in our study, aligns with the findings of Jackson et al. (2014), who noted minimal gender differences in marital satisfaction in non-clinical samples. This similarity underscores a global trend towards more egalitarian relationships correlating with higher marital satisfaction. Our findings extend this insight into the Indian context, suggesting that as Indian society evolves, so too does the impact of traditional gender roles on marital dynamics.

The negative influence of urbanization on marital satisfaction found in this study contrasts with the traditionally positive portrayal of urban life offering better economic opportunities and social freedoms. However, it corroborates the work of Bradbury et al. (2000), who emphasized the importance of

sociocultural contexts in understanding marital satisfaction. The stress and lifestyle changes associated with urbanization can strain marital relationships, highlighting the need for supportive interventions in urban settings.

Moreover, the significance of strong family support systems in enhancing marital satisfaction, particularly in traditional settings, resonates with the findings of Kamal et al. (2018), who pointed out the importance of family dynamics in marital relationships. Our study builds on this by linking these support systems to positive effects in the face of sociocultural changes, thus filling a gap in the literature by quantifying how traditional values can buffer the stresses of modern life.

The moderation role of communication in marital satisfaction is particularly significant. High-quality communication mitigates the negative impacts of sociocultural stressors and enhances the positive effects of adaptability. This finding is crucial for marital counseling strategies, suggesting that improving communication skills in couples could be a focal point for interventions, especially in urbanized settings where stressors are more prevalent.

The differential impacts of sociocultural factors across various regions within India also suggest that localized approaches to marital therapy and counseling might be more effective than one-size-fits-all strategies. Tailoring interventions to specific regional cultures, economic conditions, and prevalent social norms could increase the effectiveness of these programs.

The comprehensive analysis provided by this study addresses a critical gap in the literature by exploring how modern sociocultural changes influence marital satisfaction in a rapidly changing Indian society. By highlighting the complex interplay of sociocultural factors, individual personality traits, and interpersonal dynamics, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of marital satisfaction in the context of global cultural shifts.

Moreover, the findings have significant implications for policy-making, suggesting that policies aimed at improving marital satisfaction should consider the broader sociocultural context and the specific needs of different demographic groups. For instance, policies that promote gender equality and support family-friendly work policies could help mitigate some of the negative effects of urbanization and modernization on marital satisfaction.

In conclusion, this study enriches the body of literature on marital satisfaction by providing detailed insights into the effects of modern sociocultural changes on marital dynamics in India. It offers a robust framework for future research and lays a foundation for targeted interventions designed to enhance marital satisfaction in diverse sociocultural settings.

6. Conclusion

This research investigated the influence of sociocultural factors on marital satisfaction in modern India, revealing several key insights into how changes in gender roles, urbanization, and traditional values shape marital dynamics. The findings confirm that more egalitarian views on gender are positively correlated with marital satisfaction, supporting the notion that as India moves towards more progressive gender norms, marital satisfaction improves. Conversely, urbanization presented a negative impact on marital satisfaction, attributed to increased stress and lifestyle changes that often accompany life in urban settings.

Significantly, the study highlighted the buffering role of traditional family support systems, which help mitigate the adverse effects of these stressors, illustrating the continuing importance of extended family in the Indian social fabric. Communication emerged as a critical factor, with high-quality marital

communication found to enhance the positive effects of sociocultural adaptability, while poor communication exacerbated the negative impacts of sociocultural stresses.

These findings carry substantial implications for both policy and practice. For policymakers, there is a clear indication that supportive interventions are necessary to help couples navigate the challenges of modern urban life. For practitioners, enhancing communication skills within couples presents a practical approach to improving marital satisfaction. Moreover, the study suggests that interventions need to be sensitive to regional variations and tailored to the specific cultural contexts of different Indian states to be most effective.

In conclusion, this research fills a significant gap in the literature by mapping the complex ways in which modern sociocultural changes impact marital satisfaction in India. It not only adds depth to our understanding of how individual, interpersonal, and sociocultural factors intertwine but also provides a foundation for future studies and interventions aimed at fostering healthier marital relationships in a rapidly evolving society.

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