



Why is Marital Discord Increasing among Married Women?

Silan Das*

PhD Research Scholar, Ravenshaw University, India

***Corresponding author:** Silan Das, PhD Research Scholar, Ravenshaw University, Lecturer in Christ College, Cuttack, Odisha, India, Tel: 8984073510; Email: silandas111@gmail.com

Research Article

Volume 4 Issue 1

Received Date: January 05, 2021

Published Date: March 29, 2021

DOI: 10.23880/aeoj-16000143

Abstract

Generally, women in modern India socially, economically, politically and culturally independent. Individualism, secularization and high division of labor get arise to marital discord directly or indirectly. Now we can see in every family and in every marital relationship marital conflict exist. In modern era, due to the impact of modern values and education, modernization, westernization, secularization and industrialization effect the traditional bonds of the marriage. Women are no longer ready to compromise in a marriage after gaining the economic independence. High burden of public and private sphere on women also one of a major factor of marital discord. Socio-economic independence helps the women to break free of bondage of the patriarchal mind set up, dowry torturer, and domestic violence. Now in modern times women are more educated and liberated and asserting of their rights and also get to know how to fight for their rights. Now we can say women are empowered in terms of economically, politically, socially, educationally. But after such kind of empowerment, there is seen marital discord or instability, which affects the family structure, socialization of children, and in the developmental process of the society. This paper going to discuss certain causes of marital discord among working women in Odisha.

Keywords: Marriage; Marital Discord; Domestic Violence; Dowry; Alcoholism

Abbreviations: PWDVA: Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act.

Introduction

In 21st century, India becomes the fast emerging developing country but after that women are continuously struggling to live their life with dignity and honor. Women first came into focus in the development as an object of welfare policies. Till now women are facing many problems in every sphere of life especially domestic sphere. Women in India continuously discriminated and also treated as a commodity or as an inhuman being [1]. The declining sex ratio in India show that the discrimination towards women at the stage of birth to till old age. Now-a-days, Marital Discord rooted from societal norms and economic dependence. In India women are hesitated to report against domestic violence due to social

stigma and patriarchy norms. There is an urgent need for such a law to protect women's right and dignity in our country. There are many facts related to misusing of the policies and laws are coming out, which need to stop for growing a better and healthier society. So we all must give attention towards the issues related to women development for a welfare state.

The system of patriarchy is a historical phenomenon in our society, which encourage the male to oppress the women. This ideology helps us to understand the obstacles and opportunities facing by female in the modern society [2]. Intellectuals and media can go a long way to influence or to get collective consciousness for women development and empowerment. Social development demands the proper rearrangement of institutional structure so that human need (especially women need) are made available in our society. Under this backdrop, this paper tries to evaluate marital

discord among working women in Odisha, in the light of some important gender related indicators.

Marriage as a social duty towards the family and the community. In Hindu culture, marriage as a union between a husband and wife. In Indian society a woman enters into a marriage by holding with her values and beliefs. The impact of westernization, modernization, urbanization and modern education, industrialization, improvement in transport and communication, all these affected the Indian family structure and also the Indian society, which has been transform from traditional to western models. Due to fast changing, the Indian society and family structure has thrown up many new challenges for married couples [3]. The new strains and challenges that have emerged in Indian marriage system, where the life of married women has been going through a change. Nowadays, the educated women are liable to develop a marked tendency to become extraordinarily conscious and egos due to their individual mentality. Many of sociologist were pointed out about the transformation of society from traditional to modern ones and how it increased the pace of change, which affects the whole social system. Nowadays, Indian society experiencing increase rate of domestic violence and marital discord because of generational gap, break down in the moral values, Changes in the rites and rituals, patriarchy system, extra-marital relationship, alcoholism etc. In the modern era, the Hindu marriage system have lost his traditional value systems and aims (i.e. Dharma and Praja) and giving importance to Rati, which means sexual desire. Now marital discord becomes a universal phenomenon [4].

Traditionally, marriage was regarded as a religious sacrament with having many religious rites and rituals (Homa, Panigrahana, Satapadi, Kanyadan etc) were performed at the time of marriage occasion. Marriage is a greatest occasion for an individual's life, which brings with it many responsibilities and duties for both men and women [5]. The marital rites and rituals which were performed with the help of "Vedic Mantras", but today the meaning of Hindu marriage have been lost its sacramental character. And many of traditional rites and rituals have been avoided. Now marriage is conducted by civil courts. This contractual nature has led to many kinds of marital discord or marital conflict [6]. There are many negative effects due to failure of marital relationship such as suicide, depression, mental illness, mental disorders etc.

Dissolution of Marital Relationship

This paper focus on the causes of marital discord among working women in Odisha. The concept of women empowerment that has recently experienced a great deal of social change. Marriage is highly valued not only for the husband and wife but also for their extended families. So in

this case how the marital conflict affects the entire family system and also to the development process of the society [7]. The rate of marital dissolutions increasing day by day, due to preference of divorce and separation.

In the advance modern society, people are encouraging endogamy rules and prohibit exogamy marriage i.e. outside one's own group marriage. Till now in India marriage are practicing between the members of the same Varna, Caste and sub-caste marriage. Hindu marriage act 1955, encourage the Inter-group marriage or Exogamic rules of mate selection. It also prohibited the intra-group marriage and relaxed socially and legally in mate selection [8]. Many legal services and opportunities have been provided to the inter-caste marriage, but people fail to maintain it, because people observe their own religious values or traditions as superior than anything. So that it affects to create the disharmony in the family structure and the socialization process of the children. In the modern era, the contradictory mind setup of the people between the traditional patriarchy system and modern secular mind setup create problems between husband and wife in the family structure. It creates misunderstanding and disturbances in the family structure for which marriage breakdown take place. The concept of Dowry is also a main cause of marital discord. According to Max Radin, defines dowry is the property, in which a man receives during his marriage either from his wife or from her family. In the earlier days, during marriage time the parents of a bride gave their daughter the ornaments and jewels as a token of their love and affection. But latter days this system has taken the form of dowry i.e. giving by the bride family and taking by the groom family [9]. This system becomes a social evil. Although some legal restrictions have been made to control it, but till now it have not become effective. Still now this system continues for which many types of marital discord or conflict seen in the family structure.

In Traditional period the parents had dominance over their children in all fields of life, especially in case of marriage. Whereas marriage was observed by taking the advice or opinion of their parents. But today, because of impact of modern education and western culture, the young boys and girls get a chance to choose their own life partners. They are more interested in love marriages in which the parents have little role to play. Both husband and wife having their own secular values [10]. Now-a-days, women become more independent economically, socially, emotionally and psychologically, where they try to take their own decision independently for which individualism take place. Hindu marriage was regarded as a religious sacrament, which has lost its stability in modern society. The rate of divorce and extra-marital relationships are increasing day by day. Before women were thinking about marriage as a bond for seven lives. So that they obviously compromised with the relationship,

but now due to socio-economic independence of the women, there is change in the stability of marriage. For which divorce and extra-marital relationships become an everyday phenomenon and it increasing day by day. Now marital discord is an everyday social and universal phenomenon. Generally, women in modern India socially, economically, politically and culturally independent. Individualism get arise to marital discord. Now we can see in every family and every marital relationship, it seen marital conflict or discord. Now in modern society, due to the impact of modern values and education (modernization), westernization and industrialization it breaks all the traditional bonds of the marriage. Women are no longer ready to compromise in a marriage after gaining the economic independence. Socio-economic independence helps the women to break free of bondage of the patriarchal set up. Now in modern times women are more educated and liberated and asserting of their rights. We can say women are empowered in terms of economically, politically, socially, educationally. But after such kind of empowerment, there is seen marital discord or marital instability, which affects the family structure, socialization of children, and in the developmental process of the society. As per Jennings [11] in his article "Marital Discord and Subsequent Marital Dissolution: Perceptions of Nepalese Wives and Husbands", described how marital discord influences marital outcomes in settings with low personal freedom and limited access to independence, by using a sample of 674 couples from the Chitwan Valley Family Study in Nepal. The impact of marital discord directly effect on the rate of marital dissolution, the findings of his study determine that both spouses' perceptions of discord are important for marital outcomes, even in settings where the costs of marital dissolution are relatively high.

Causes of Marital Discord

Alcoholism and Domestic Violence

Now-a-days, Alcoholism otherwise known as alcohol-use-disorder is a general problem in our society. It means uncontrollable consumption of alcohol [12]. In medical term, it is considered as a disease. There are various causes of alcoholism in our society, such as: childhood incident which affects badly, childhood trauma, psychological trauma, peer pressure, difficult upbringing and childhood, easily availability of alcohol, showing off in front of friends, spending most of the times with alcohol addicted person etc. There are many disadvantage or effects of alcohol consumption, such as, it hampers both physically and mentally of the drinker, alcoholism can cause cancer in any parts of the body mainly in kidney, liver, and stomach etc., it also hampers the digestive system of the body, alcoholism can also create depression, behavioral change and increase mental stress etc [13]. This can effect on their personal life directly i.e. family

and socialization of a children etc. The negative effects of alcoholism not only effect on the drinker, but also on their partner and other family members, then it leads to ultimate violence. Recent data suggest that approximately one child in every four in United States is exposed to alcohol abuse. Family problems co-occur with alcohol problems include, Violence, Marital conflict, Infidelity, Jealousy, Economic insecurity, Divorce, Fetal alcohol effect. Drinking problems may negatively effect on marital and family functioning. Thus, drinking and family functioning are strongly related or reciprocally linked with each other. Today alcoholism is common problem among couples that need for marital therapy, counseling and alcohol treatment [14].

Effects of Alcohol Abuse on Marital Relationship

- **Marital distress:** Alcohol abuse increases the feelings of marital distress in the family. As per study show, the rate of marital distress is higher among alcoholic married spouses than unmarried individuals.
- **Anger:** Marital satisfaction is related strongly to a couple's ability to communicate each other effectively. But excess alcohol use is associated with more negative and aggressive communication, which create anger in the relationship.
- **Psychological distress:** Alcohol abuse also increases the psychological distress in the family. An adult's alcohol abuse also is related to children's increased social, emotional, behavioral, and academic problems, which, in turn, leads to more stress in the family and less marital satisfaction [15].
- **Increase the Risk of Divorce:** Many research study show that divorced or separated men and women are three times more likely to be alcoholic or they have an alcohol problem than normal spouses. Alcoholism and marriage both are interconnected. Alcohol problems are direct effect to increase rates of marital violence, poor communication, and feelings of marital distress that lead to a greater risk of divorce. Alcohol Abuse directly effect on the rate of divorce [16].

Dowry and Domestic Violence

Dowry system means transfer of money, property and other valuable assets of bride's family to the groom's family on the occasion of marriage. Dowry Becomes tradition of our society. The custom of dowry is mostly common in Hindu cultures which is strongly encourage by our society.. Domestic violence is arise because of dowry demands. Dowry payments are another manifestation of the patriarchal structure in India. There is strong interconnection between domestic violence and dowry. This cultural practice deeply rooted in many Indian communities. Dowry is a one of the evil practices that are prevalent in our society. violence against women, including killings the bride, bride burn and acid attacks etc

are arises due to dowry demand. In some cases, dowry death and bride burning as a result of the husband's dissatisfaction with the dowry payment, which was given by bride's family. Some study show that mostly newly married brides suffer from domestic violence in the form of harassment, physical abuse or death when she is thought to have not brought enough dowries with marriage. Some cases end up in suicides by hanging, self-poisoning or by fire. In dowry deaths, the groom's family is the perpetrator of murder or suicide [17]. According to Indian National Crime Record Bureau, in 2012, 8,233 dowry death cases were reported across India, or dowry issues cause 1.4 deaths per year per 100,000 women in India. Now it is a significant social issue in India. Dowry deaths in India are not limited to any specific religion, and it is found among Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others. The ratio of dowry deaths is about the same as the ratio of population in India by religions. The Dowry Prohibition Act 1961, which prohibits the acceptance of a dowry, "as consideration for the marriage", where "dowry" is defined as a gift demanded or given as a precondition for a marriage. Gifts given without a precondition are not considered dowry, and are legal. Asking or giving of dowry can be punished by an imprisonment of up to six months, or a fine [18]. It replaced several pieces of anti-dowry legislation that had been enacted by various Indian states. Under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 (PWDVA), a woman can file the case against dowry harassment. . People take dowry for maintaining social status. The major disadvantages of Dowry system in the Indian society create marital discord and domestic violence in the family. Whereas the bride's family who generally belong to middle and low-class have to face the bitter-side of dowry. Bride's family sometimes loses all their property and money. In many cases, bride becomes mentally affected. Sometimes, either the bride or her parents also commit suicide due to this evil dowry system. The effects of dowry system are so horrible, where women were emotionally torture and divorce are seen. In India, the dowry system puts great financial strain on the bride's family. Dowry system leads to many social evil or crime against women, e.g. emotional abuse, dowry deaths, domestic violence etc [19]. In 2006 NFHS (National Family Health Survey) study reported sexual violence to be lowest against women in the 15-19 age group, and urban women reporting 6 percentage lifetime prevalence rate of sexual violence, whereas 10 percentage of rural women reported experiencing sexual violence in their lifetime. Education plays a vital role in women's life, where record signify that women experienced less sexual violence than previously. And also report shows that DV among women was far higher than middle class families. Patriarchy and Domestic Violence: India is purely a patriarchal society, where women are dominated by men.. In this social system men hold primary power, predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of private property. Many patriarchal

societies are also patrilineal, meaning that property are inherited by the male lineage. The effect of Patriarchy system within the social sciences and humanities become a hot debate. Feminist theory defines patriarchy as an unfair social system that enforces gender roles of both men and women [20]. It also determines the social mechanism that evokes male dominance over women. Most of the research articles determined that patriarchy system as a vital cause of marital conflict, where male dominated on female and the conflict arises. Even today some people follow this rigid system in the Indian family. The main reason of this marital conflict i.e. the husband with high masculinity and the wife with high femininity living in one roof. Both traditional and modern traits are valued in Indian women; and sex differences are mainly along the lines of greater autonomy for men. There are three main features of the patriarchy system in India that affect women's activity: marriage, active discrimination or abuse (marital or extramarital), and diminished women's assistance through limited economic opportunity and limited opportunity for independence [21]. From the above facts, we get to know that there is a clear relationship between strong patriarchal familial structures and limited capability of women, which are strongly correlated. These are the main reasons of marital discord.

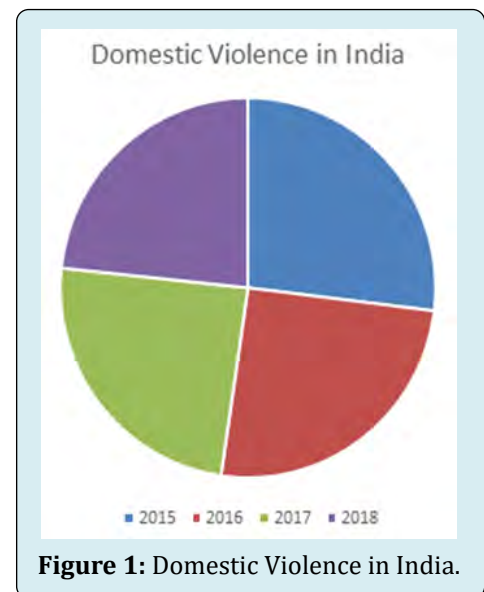


Figure 1: Domestic Violence in India.

Conclusion

Nowadays, Gender issues regarded as a significant issue in the developmental policy and planning. Marital discord becomes a serious issue which arises because of cultural stereotypes, which need to change the discriminatory mindset up of the person, which passes from generation to generation [22]. However, there is need a serious rethinking to reform in the family setup. The deconstruction of gender and women while on the one hand, an acknowledgement of

multiple and distinct social identities of women and their often contradictory political interests yet on the other, is vastly confusing. Women consider as in marginalized positions with little or no access to power, which have to change [23]. The state even when it appears to be democratic, progressive and proactive, seemingly offering space to women for renegotiating rights and privileges, in actuality implements policies and programs that have strong shades of capitalist and patriarchal control and women's concerns are at best incorporated in a superficial and fragmented manner.

References

1. Andrisani PJ (1978) Job Satisfaction among Working Women. *Journal of Women in Cultural and Society*, the University of Chicago Press Signs 3(3): 588-607.
2. Ansari Mr, Hamid (2011) Gender Equality is Crucial for Smart Economics. *Convocation Address, University News* 49(43): 22-30.
3. Arora N (2014) A Social Perception towards Women Entrepreneurs In India-From Perception To Reality. *A Peer Reviewed International Journal* 1(2): 44-49.
4. Becker GS (1981) *A Treatise on the Family*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
5. Bem SL (1993) *The Lenses of Gender: Transforming the Debate on Sexual Inequality*. Yale University Press, New Haven Connecticut.
6. Monica GD, Chen LC, Krishnan TN (1996) *Health, poverty, and development in India*. Oxford University Press, pp: 369.
7. DeKeseredy, Schwartz (1997) *Theoretical and Definitional Issues in Violence against Women*. Rutgers University Press.
8. Flood M, Fergus L (2008) *An assault on our future: The impact of violence on young people and their relationships*. White Ribbon Foundation Sydney.
9. Haralambos, Holborn (1980) *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*. New Delhi.
10. Domestic Violence in India
11. Jennings E (2014) Marital Discord and Subsequent Marital Dissolution: Perceptions of Nepalese Wives and Husbands. *J Marriage Fam PMC publication* 76(3): 476-488.
12. Joshi MM (2002) *The Protection from Domestic Violence Bill*. Government Bill Number 133.
13. Kishwar M (2005) *Laws against Domestic Violence*.
14. Martin LS, Amy OT, Kuhu M, Ruth M (1999) Domestic Violence in Northern India. *American Journal of Epidemiology* 150(4): 417-426.
15. Mohanty RN (2002) *Understanding Social change*. Cuttack Odisha.
16. Morgan, Chadwick (2009) *Key issues in domestic violence*. Australian Institute of Criminology Canberra.
17. Domestic Violence. *National Family Health Survey* 3, pp: 494-519.
18. Panda P, Agarwal B (2005) Marital Violence, Human Development and Women's Property Status in India. *World Development* 33(5): 823-850.
19. Schrijvers J (1993) *The Violence of Development: A Choice for Intellectuals*. New Delhi 69(3): 63.
20. Stanley J, Tomison AM, Pocock J (2003) Child abuse and neglect in Indigenous Australian communities. *Child abuse prevention issues Australian Institute of Family Studies Melbourne* 19: 32.
21. UNICEF (2000) *Domestic Violence against Women and Girls*. Innocenti Digest 6 United Nation International Children Emergency Fund, pp: 1-29.
22. Vlachova, BIASON (2005) *Women in an Insecure World Violence against Women Facts, Figures and Analysis*. Geneva, pp: 335.
23. DeKeseredy, Schwartz (1997) *Theoretical and Definitional Issues in Violence against Women*. Rutgers University Press, pp: 3-21.

