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# **STUDY ON MARITAL ADJUSTMENT AND DOMESTIC HARMONY AMONG INTER RELIGIOUS COUPLES AND SAME RELIGION COUPLES.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper is aimed at comparing marital adjustment and domestic harmony between inter-religious/ inter caste couples and same religion couples. Marriage play a important role in every individuals life and if we talk about inter religious marriage then pehaps it becomes more challenging. This research has been conducted on 60 couples (30 Inter Religious and 30 Same Religion Couples). Further Domestic Harmony questionnaire and Marital adjustment questionnaire had been administered on them. Significant difference has been found on Marital Adjustment between male and female participants of inter religious couples. No significant gender difference had been found on rest of the variables among same and inter religious couples. Further inter religious couples scored significantly higher than the same religion couples on Domestic Harmony. Though no significant difference is evident on Marital adjustment among same and inter religious couples. Findings of this paper reveal, usually there are not much difference on most of the variables, in fact inter religious couple have scored higher on domestic harmony than same religion couples.

**KEYWORDS:** Interreligious/ inter-faith couples, Marital adjustment, Domestic harmony

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The 'no religion, all love' philosophy has been advocated by Indian Legislature through Special Marriage Act, 1954. This has allowed couples to register their inter-faith marriages under this act and bravely live in the society and start their family. Under this same act, inter- caste marriages have also been acknowledged and given their due respect. Despite religious diversity and caste based social structure, this act is evolving the Indian society out its rudimentary ideologies. As more inter-religious marriages are being solemnized, the cultural and religious boundaries are being diffused. The couple also undergoes stages of internal turmoil and adjustment as do the families of both the parties. The social resistance is yet another ordeal that the inter-religious couple faces. However, the cost of such a bold decision lays heavy on them as there are accounts of people feeling isolated and having to cut off from their religious roots or from their family itself.

Being a collectivistic culture, India doesn't deem two people bonded in matrimony, rather it binds two culture, families and its sentiments. In inter-religious marriages, the religious sentiments, rituals and culture become the focal point of most conflicts. Furthermore, the upbringing of two different faiths clash together which calls for adjustment. The patriarchal society of India eventually puts the greater onus of adjustment and adaptation on to the female gender. Even though anti-religion-conversion laws are present to protect and retain the religious roots of the two parties, the marital adjustment and social adaptation process carry complexities that contribute to conflicts in personal preferences. It is to be considered that the religious identity is hewn within the personal identity of the individual in India which also bears the burden of the historical animosity and pain between religions. In this context, this study seeks to address marital adjustment and domestic harmony among couples in inter- religious marriages.

### **1.1. Marital Adjustment**

Marital adjustment refers to understanding and cooperation between the two partners so that they lead a strong, better and happily married life. Marital adjustment is subjective and depends on each individuals and their compatibility. Upbringing plays a very important role in marital adjustment. Inter-religious couples face myriad issues throughout starting from the rituals and extent of religious accomodations taking place in the wedding ceremony and whose family may get excluded from the ceremony altogether (Riley, 2013). In a longitudinal study conducted by Hwang et al. (2021), it has been found that inter-religious marriages have lower marital satisfaction as compared to same-religion couples over a span of 17 years. Their marital satisfaction kept going lower with similar rate of change in same-religion couples. In older couples, religious differences have been found to decrease marital happiness (Schafer & Kwon, 2019).

## **1.2. Domestic Harmony**

Domestic harmony refers to how couples as well their family members live together with love peace and harmony. The words domestic and harmony have been studied independently. The meaning of the term "domestic," according to Oxford dictionary, denotes the running of household and corresponding family relations. "Harmony" relates to, according to Oxford dictionary, in positive psychology, harmony is measured a person cost, which refers to "compatibility and accord in feelings, actions, relationships, opinions, interests, etc." (Lopez & Snyder, 2009). Harmony has been studied in both the intrapersonal and interpersonal contexts by positive psychologists, particularly in its relation with happiness and subjective well-being. Clifton and colleagues (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001; Clifton & Anderson, 2002;

Clifton & Nelson, 1992) who have introduced the harmony theme in Clifton Strengths Finder describe harmony as "a desire to find consensus among the group, as opposed to putting forth conflicting ideas" (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001; Lopez, Hodges, & Harter, 2005). Recent work by Hai (2017) ascribes 5 dimensions to domestic harmony that contribute to positive environment in home. Aggression-less communication, trust and respect in the relationship where individuality is nurtured and decision making in collaborative with openness to address issues are key factors in promoting domestic harmony. Similarly, during scale development by students of China for domestic harmony, opposite indices were considered like undertaking housework vs refusing housework, sharing time vs self-isolation, help seeking vs avoidance, support providing vs indifference and getting along vs conflict (Zhan & Wang, 2021).

## **2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The incidences of inter-religious marriages in India is lesser than in western countries. (Allendorf et al., 2016). In such marriages, couples tend to face problems due to different religious beliefs which lead to higher divorce rates. (Sewenet et al., 2017). The emotional challenges especially in Christian inter-faith marriages have tremendous impact on the couple and their families (Schwartz, 2020). In case of inter-faith marriages in Muslim communities, the couples have to face conversion of religion, issues in socialization of the children and cultural assimilation. (Farooq & Shah, 2023). Some cultural strategies used in marital adjustment are open communication, compromise and respecting cultural differences especially during the cultural interaction and issues in family (Pakarati et al., 2023). Furthermore, interfaith couples tend to engage in accommodative communication revolving around religious differences along with marital differences (Colaner et al., 2023) and constructive conflict can help in such matters with deep acceptance (Knight et al., 2019). However apart from religion, spirituality can provide common ground for inter-faith relationships (Kusner et al., 2014; Dollahite et al., 2018). Built on this context, it has been found that resilient inter-faith relationships use the similarities to build their marriage (Shoaf et al., 2022). Couples can identify common goals and assign new purpose in this inter-faith marriages (Dollahite et al., 2019).

### **2.1. RATIONALE**

The literature review indicates that there has been attempts to compare the marital satisfaction in same-religion and inter-religious marriages, but a closer look on the marital adjustment and domestic harmony is required, especially in India. The present research is conducted with the purpose of understanding the difference between inter religious couples and same religion couples in India.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

The present study extends on the marital adjustment and domestic harmony in inter-religious marriages as compared to same-religion marriages where the gender differences are also taken into consideration.

### **3.1. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the study is to compare domestic harmony and marital adjustment among inter religious couples and same religion couples .

### **3.2. OBJECTIVE**

To compare marital adjustment and domestic harmony between inter religious couples and same religion couples.

### **3.3. HYPOTHESIS**

1. There will be no significant difference between males and females of same religion Couples on marital Adjustment
2. There will be no significant difference between males and females of same religion Couples on Domestic Harmony
3. There will be no significant difference between males and females of inter religious Couples on Domestic Harmony
4. There will be no significant difference in over all comparison between same religion and inter religious couples on Marital Adjustment.
5. There will be no significant difference between same religion and inter religious couples on Marital adjustment .
6. There will be no significant difference between same religion and inter religious couples on Domestic Harmony.

**3.4. RESEARCH DESIGN :** Comparative research design

**3.5 SAMPLE SIZE :** 60 (30 Inter-religious + 30 Same religion couples)

**3.6 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE :** Purposive Sampling

**3.7 DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIABLES**

- Independent Variable : Inter religious couples and same religion couples
- Dependent Variable: Marital adjustment and domestic harmony

**3.8 DESCRIPTION OF THE TOOLS**

Following questionnaires were used for data collection:

**3.8.1 Domestic Harmony**

Domestic Harmony questionnaire was developed by Dr. Manju Agarwal . In this questionnaire 50 questions were given, some questions are positive and some are negative. For positive statements scoring is 1, 2 , 3,4 and for negative statements scoring is 4,3,2,1.

**3.8.2 Marital Adjustment Questionnaire**

Marital adjustment questionnaire was constructed and standardized by Pramod Kumar and Kanchana Rohatagi in department of psychology at university of Jodhpur. In this questionnaire 27 questions were given related to marital life. There are two column one for yes and one for no , mark yes if agree with the statements and marks no if disagree with the statement. It has a split half reliability of 0.49 and has high correlation co-efficient with 0.71 with Singh’s Marital Adjustment Inventory. Inclusion criteria- 5-10 years of married life

**4. RESULT AND INTERPRETATION**

**Table 1.0 Comparison between males and females of same religion(Domestic harmony)**

Group	N	M	SD	t - value
Males	30	188.3333	9.26370	.854
Females	30	185.900	11.81276	

Not Significant at 0.05 level of confidence

- Table 1.0 is showing gender difference among same religion couples on marital adjustment .
- Mean and SD Of Male participants are 188.3333, 9.26370 while mean,SD of females are 185.900,11.81276 and t – value is .854 which is not significant at 0.05 level of confidence .
- Thus null hypotheses is accepted .

**Table 2.0 Gender differences same religion couples (Marital adjustment)**

Group	N	M	SD	t - value
Males	30	18.5333	2.14530	.325
Females	30	18.7000	1.57896	

Not significant at 0.05 at level of confidence

- Table 2.0 is Showing Gender Difference among Same Religion Couples on Marital Adjustment .
- Mean And SD of male participants are 18.5333 and 2.14530 while Mean and SD of females participants are 18.7000 and 1.57896 . t – value is .325 which is not significant at 0.05 level of confidence .
- Thus null hypothesis accepted .

**Table 3.0 Gender differences in the inter religious couples(Domestic Harmony)**

Group	N	M	SD	t - value
Males	30	176.3000	16.33517	.343
Females	30	177.6333	14.96774	

Not significant at 0.05 level of confidence

- Table 3.0 is showing gender difference among inter religious couples on domestic harmony .
- Mean and SD of male participants are 176.3000,16.33517 while Mean, SD of females are 177.6333,14.96774 and t – value is .343 which is not significant at 0.05 level of confidence .
- Thus null hypothesis is accepted .

**Table 4.0 Gender differences inter religious couples (Marital Adjustment)**

Group	N	M	SD	t - value
Males	30	18.2667	1.43679	2.479*
Females	30	19.1667	1.17588	

\*2.479 Significant at 0.05 level of confidence

- Table 4.0 is showing gender difference among inter religious couples on marital adjustment .
- Mean and SD of male participants are 18.2667 and 1.43678 while Mean and SD of female participants 19.1667 and 1.17588. While t – value is 2.479 which is significant at 0.05 level of confidence .
- Thus null hypothesis is rejected.

**Table 5.0 Overall comparison between same and inter religious couples (Domestic harmony)**

Group	N	M	SD	t - value
Inter religious couples	60	187.1107	10.59596	4.354*
Same religion couples	60	176.9667	15.54759	

Significant at 0.05 level of confidence

- Table 5.0 is showing over all comparison between same and inter religious couples on domestic harmony .
- Mean and SD of inter religious participants are 187.1107and 10.59596 while Mean and SD of same religion participants are 176.9667and 15.54759. t – value is 4.354 which is significant at 0.05 level of confidence .
- Thus null hypothesis is rejected.

**Table 6.0 Overall comparison between same and inter religious couples (Marital Adjustment)**

Group	N	M	SD	t - value
Inter religious couples	60	18.6167	1.86939	.350
Same religion couples	60	18.7167	1.37892	

Not significant at 0.05 level of confidence

- Table 6.0 is showing over all comparison between same and inter religious couples on marital adjustment .
- Mean and SD of inter religious participants are 18.6167,1.86939 while Mean and SD of same religious participants are 18.7167,1.37892 and t – value is .350 which is not significant at 0.05 level of confidence .
- Thus null hypothesis is accepted.

**5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

It is evident from table 1.0 that compares domestic harmony between males and females of same religion, the Mean score of same religion Male participants is 188.333.and same religion female participants is 185.900. It reveals that marital adjustment is higher in females as compare to males. While the obtained SD scores of same religion male participants is 9.26370 and female participants is 11.81276 which are differencing from each other to some extent and t – value is .854 which is not significant at 0.05 level of confidence .Thus the null hypothesis is accepted. However the previous researches have found that that men experience greater marital satisfaction than women in same-religion marriages (Fowers, 1991; Rosen-Grandon, 2004).

Table 2.0 is showing gender difference among same religion couples on marital adjustment .The Mean score of same religion Male participants is 18.5333.and same religion female participants is 18.7000 so it is revealing that marital adjustment is higher in females as compare to males. While the obtained SD scores of same religion male participants is 2.14530 and female participants is 1.57896 which are differencing from each other to some extent and t – value is .325 which is not significant at 0.05 level of confidence .Thus null hypothesis is accepted.

Table 3.0 is showing gender difference among inter religious couples on domestic harmony .The Mean score of inter religious Male participants is 176.3000 and inter religious female participants is 177.6333 so it is revealing that domestic harmony is higher in females as compare to males. While the obtained SD scores of inter religious male participants is 16.33517 and female participants is 14.96774 which are differencing from each other and t – value is .343 which is not significant at 0.05 level of confidence .Thus null hypothesis is accepted .

Table 4.0 is showing gender difference among inter religious couples on marital adjustment .The Mean score of inter religious Male participants is 18.2667 and inter religious female participants is 19.1667, so it is revealing that marital adjustment higher in females as compare to males. While the obtained SD scores of inter religious male participants is 1.43679 and female participants is 1.17588 which are differencing from each other to some extent and t – value is 2.479 which is significant at 0.05 level of confidence .Thus null hypothesis is rejected .

Table 5.0 is showing over all comparison between same and inter religious couples on domestic harmony .The Mean score of inter religious participants is 187.1107 and same religion participants is 176.9667 so it is revealing that domestic harmony is higher in inter religious couples as compare to same religion couples . While the obtained SD scores of inter religious couples is 10.59596 and same religion couples is 15.54759 which are differencing from each other and t – value is 4.354 which is not significant at 0.05 level of confidence .Thus null hypothesis is accepted.Table 6.0 is showing over all comparison between same and inter religious couples on marital adjustment .The Mean score of

inter religious participants is 1.86939 and same religion participants is 1.37892 so it is revealing that marital adjustment is higher in same religion couples as compare to inter religious couples . While the obtained SD scores of inter religious couples is 1.86939 and same religion couples is 1.37892 which are differencing from each other to some extent and t – value is .350 which is not significant at 0.05 level of confidence .Thus null hypothesis is accepted.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to examine the difference between inter religious couples and same religion couples towards domestic harmony and marital adjustment. After thorough analysis of the data, it has been found that inter religious couples and same religious couples have very different attitude towards domestic harmony and marital adjustment. There is significant difference between inter religious couples among marital adjustment which can we see in the table 4.0. Same religious couples has less domestic harmony and marital adjustment in comparison to inter religious couples. This is quite contrary to the assumption of the difference in religion leading to marital dissatisfaction and challenges. An in-dept qualitative analysis is warranted to delve into the intricacies of marital adjustment and domestic harmony achieved by the participating couples. However, it is evident that females are acknowledging the need for marital adjustment in marriage irrespective of same religion or inter-religion marriage. This paper did not show any significant difference in both parameters for inter-religious and same religion marriages, which may indicate a progressive society. Marital satisfaction and domestic harmony being subjective measures, the data is not assumed to be free from bias. This is because the marriage as an institution is riddled with societal pressure of being maintained despite challenges. It can lead to under-emphasis on the discord and dissatisfaction to show a good image. On the other side, inter-religious couples who may be living separate from their individual families may be enjoying open-mindedness and freedom with less compromise on religious identity and customs. This may be contributing to less contrast with same religion marriages and greater domestic harmony.

### 6.1 Limitations

1. Sample size needs to be increased so that the differences of mean can be checked for significance.
2. The socio-demographic parameter regarding joint family, moving out of the in-laws family and living with in-laws is to added to understand the impact of in-laws and cultural interference on the domestic harmony and marital satisfaction of inter-religious couples.
3. This study couldn't provide much information regarding the distinction between same religion and inter-religious marriages which is why a qualitative study is recommended.

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