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## MARITAL SATISFACTION: A STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF AIZAWL DISTRICT OF MIZORAM



Lalpawimawha<sup>1</sup> and Laltanpuui Ralte<sup>2</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

The term "marital satisfaction" refers to an individual's subjective evaluation of the marital relationship. Stone & Shackelford stated that factors such as personality, attention and attachment, intimacy and affection and number of offspring are related to marital satisfaction. As is well known, each person has their own trait and personality that effects / influences how they behave and act. Emotional instability, low intellectual capability, low consensus and cohesion of either of the couple as well as the personality whether introverted or extroverted have a direct influence on marital satisfaction. Proper care and attention for each other would also minimize the possibility of infide-

### ABSTRACT

*Marital satisfaction is one of the main mental issues in Mizoram and many other parts of the world. It is related to age, occupation, gender, age of marriage, length of marriage, working status and number of offspring. There have been no previous studies conducted on this subject in the state. The data used is primary data collected from a sample size of 704 by well-trained researchers and this article illustrates the broad pattern of marital satisfaction level. Marital satisfaction level in males (100.73) is higher than in females (98.74), which is also significant at 5% level. Married people between the ages of 34-39 years have been found to experience the highest marital satisfaction level, and it is also significant at 5% level. The study also indicates that the satisfaction level is highest in an individual having more than or equal to 6 children. Those who got married between 28 - 33 years of age are more satisfied than others, and the highest level of satisfaction was experienced between the 10<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> year of marriage. Satisfaction level is also higher in males than in females, in cases where only the husband is working.*

**KEYWORDS** :gender, marital satisfaction, profession, spouse.

### Short Profile

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lity in a marriage. Dissimilarity and disharmony in marriage are also factors that can lead to a low level of marital satisfaction and infidelity. The number of offspring that a couple has also affects the marital satisfaction level.

According to Olson & Defrain, a healthy marriage and family can be a valuable resource during difficult times and on the contrary, it might be continuous problems. Family consensus and cohesion gives intimacy and attachment to all members of families. On the other side, conflicts are a usual thing that happens in a married life. An ideal marriage is a mutual relationship between husband, wife and all of the family members;

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helping each other during household task, mutual respect, mutual understanding, having successful children, mutual commitment, attachment and intimacy, similarity in philosophy of life, religion, value, attitude, etc. A strong family foundation positively affects a couples' life. Young shows several adjustments needed by couples in a married life -role in daily life, relationship with other family members, friends and sexual life. When adjustments between couples in a marriage cannot be made, there is a high risk of stress in life.

Marital satisfaction is a complex process that has over time been thought to be influenced by many factors, including education, socio-economic status, love, commitment, marital communication, conflict, gender, length of marriage, the presence of children, sexual relations and the division of labor. It is also confirmed that children from happy families, will be more successful in academic achievement, emotional stability and discipline. Both men and women who live in a happy marriage, show better quality of mental health, better quality of life, better physical health, job and academic success, healthy sexual life and also there is no evidence of violence in marriage. According to Olson & Defrain conflicts in a marriage, if it continues can lead to divorce. There are many reasons that can lead to divorce, such as, high level of stress, materialism, low quality of marriage, lack of togetherness etc. Contemporary married couples are faced with many challenges that require renegotiation of previously taken-for-granted marital roles and expectations in order to achieve more intimate, companionable and committed marriages.

Moves toward more gender equality have impacted on marital expectations. Both men and women enter marriage with higher expectations of interpersonal communication, intimacy and sexual satisfaction. If expectations from marriage have increased, then one can assume that a more satisfying marriage is the ultimate goal to be achieved by these increased

expectations. Given the widespread societal concern about the high divorce rate, it is important to understand factors that may contribute to marital satisfaction. In order to develop interventions that would benefit couples who are suffering from marital distress, who are considering divorce or who simply want their personal relationship needs to be fulfilled.

#### OBJECTIVES:

- 1.To determine the marital satisfaction level of an individual having a spouse (wife/husband).
- 2.To study the marital satisfaction level of a married individual (wife/husband) with respect to gender, age, bread-earner, length of marriage, number of children, age at the time of marriage and profession.

#### METHODOLOGY:

The present study is based on primary data. Information is collected using pre-planned structured questionnaire containing personal information like age, occupation, gender, age at marriage, length of marriage, bread-earner, number of children and 22 questions with 6 – point Likert's scale. A sample size of 704 was identified for the collection of data by simple random sampling without replacement from amongst married individuals (wife/husband) in Aizawl District during January to March, 2015. Five researchers were trained and were not made aware of the study hypothesis prior to collection of data. The total score of an individual is considered as response variable. An individual having a spouse (wife/husband) within the reference period are taken into consideration. Level of marital satisfaction is classified into three category viz., low satisfaction level, medium satisfaction level and high satisfaction level. An analysis of the findings shall be made by using Statistical techniques like t-test and F-test by R-software version 2.10.1.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

Table 1: Total score of marital satisfaction with respect to gender.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	SE	95% Confidence Interval		t-value	P-value
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
male	352	100.73	14.954	0.797	99.16	102.30	1.788	0.074
female	352	98.74	14.638	0.780	97.20	100.27		
Total	704	99.73	14.820	0.559	98.64	100.83		

To study the level of marital satisfaction based on gender, 704 married individuals were interviewed by the researchers. The empirical data collected was analysed to assess the difference in satisfaction level between married males and females. Table 1 shows that the mean of the male marital satisfaction level (100.73) is

higher than that of females (98.74) with standard deviations 14.954 and 14.638. Since the p-value is 0.074, which is greater than 0.05. It is not significant at 5% level. Thus, we can conclude that gender hardly has any impact worth mentioning in regards to the marital satisfaction level.

Table 2: Total score of marital satisfaction with respect to age groups

Age Group	N	Mean	SD	SE	95% Confidence Interval		F-value	P-value
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
19-24	54	98.37	18.011	2.451	93.45	103.29	5.429	0.000
24-29	83	96.65	15.018	1.648	93.37	99.93		
29-34	94	93.88	15.142	1.562	90.78	96.98		
34-39	89	103.92	16.122	1.709	100.53	107.32		
39-44	89	101.93	14.745	1.563	98.83	105.04		
44-49	82	98.76	12.397	1.369	96.03	101.48		
49 above	213	101.57	13.038	0.893	99.81	103.33		
Total	704	99.73	14.820	0.559	98.64	100.83		

To assess the difference in marital satisfaction and to find out which age group has the highest satisfaction level, an empirical study was conducted based on interview and was analysed. Table 2 shows that the mean satisfaction level is highest among the higher age groups, that is, between the age of 34-39 years with standard deviation 16.122, while it is the lowest among 29-34 age group with standard deviation 93.88, it is also significant at 5% level since the p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05. This shows that age is a major factor in determining

the marital satisfaction level of married couples.

Table 3: Total score of marital satisfaction with respect to number of children

No.of childrens	N	Mean	SD	SE	95% Confidence Interval		F-value	P-value
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
0	55	104.11	10.978	1.480	101.14	107.08	5.978	0.000
1	121	96.93	16.494	1.499	93.97	99.90		
2	156	98.38	14.540	1.164	96.09	100.68		
3	189	102.34	14.402	1.048	100.27	104.41		
4	85	95.08	13.386	1.452	92.20	97.97		
5	70	99.26	14.408	1.729	95.82	102.69		
= 6	28	108.46	15.574	2.943	102.43	114.50		
Total	704	99.73	14.820	.559	98.64	100.83		

On conducting an interview with the help of questionnaires to study the co-relation between the level of marital satisfaction and the number of offspring that a couple has, it was seen that marital satisfaction level is highest when the number of children is more than or equal to 6 with standard deviation 2.943, and

marital satisfaction level is lowest when the couple have 4 children with standard deviation 13.386 as shown in Table 3. Since p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05, it is significant at 5% level. Hence, number of children also has significant impact on the level of marital satisfaction.

Table 4: Total score of marital satisfaction with respect to age of marriage

Age at marriage	N	Mean	SD	SE	95% Confidence Interval		F-value	P-value
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
18-23	185	98.31	16.023	1.178	95.98	100.63	6.580	0.000
23-28	258	97.60	13.814	0.860	95.91	99.30		
28-33	224	103.67	14.460	0.966	101.77	105.57		
33-38	26	95.58	11.649	2.285	90.87	100.28		
38 above	11	103.27	15.793	4.762	92.66	113.88		
Total	704	99.73	14.820	0.559	98.64	100.83		

Table 4 shows that an individual who got married at the age between 28-33 years are found to have more marital satisfaction than those of other ages with standard deviation 14.460, while marital satisfaction is the least among those who got married between the age of 33 – 38 years with standard deviation 11.649. And the p-value is 0.000, which is much less than 0.05. Hence, it is significant at 5% level. This shows that there is a co-relation between

maturity at the time of marriage and marital satisfaction level.

Table 5: Total score of marital satisfaction with respect to period of marriage.

Period of marriage	N	Mean	SD	SE	95% Confidence Interval		F-Value	P-value
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
0-5	198	98.31	16.222	1.153	96.03	100.58	2.590	0.025
5-10	128	97.43	16.763	1.482	94.50	100.36		
10-15	42	104.38	13.904	2.145	100.05	108.71		
15-20	53	100.68	15.452	2.122	96.42	104.94		
25-30	96	99.27	10.485	1.070	97.15	101.40		
30 above	187	101.74	13.375	.978	99.81	103.67		
Total	704	99.73	14.820	.559	98.64	100.83		

A study on the marital satisfaction level of couples at different periods of their married life shows that the period of marriage is significantly related to satisfaction level since the p-value (0.025) less than 0.05. Table 5 shows that marital

satisfaction level is highest between the 10th to 15th years of marriage with standard deviation 13.904 and is the lowest during the 5th to 10th years of marriage with standard deviation 16.763.

Table 6: Total score of marital satisfaction with respect to bread-earner.

Bread-earner	N	Mean	SD	SE	95% Confidence Interval		F-value	P-value
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
husband	434	100.92	15.024	.721	99.51	102.34	4.611	0.010
wife	177	98.70	14.308	1.075	96.58	100.82		
both	93	96.14	14.227	1.475	93.21	99.07		
Total	704	99.73	14.820	.559	98.64	100.83		

The bread-earner is the husband or the wife also have a significant impact on the marital satisfaction, marital satisfaction level is higher when the husband is the sole bread-earner with standard deviation 15.024 and the least satisfaction is seen in cases where both the spouses are working with standard deviation 14.227. However, the degree of difference in the marital satisfaction level is found to be negligible as can be seen from Table 6. Since the p-value is 0.010, which is less than 0.05 it is significant at 5% level and hence can be concluded that there is significant difference in the marital satisfaction level depending on who is the bread earner in the family viz. husband, wife and both.

Table 7: Total score of marital satisfaction with respect to Profession.

Profession	N	Mean	SD	SE	95% Confidence Interval		F-value	P-value
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Teacher	117	102.92	14.413	1.333	100.28	105.56	10.192	0.000
Medical	47	90.34	11.024	1.608	87.10	93.58		
Driver	23	88.74	8.142	1.698	85.22	92.26		
Clerk	126	96.73	15.091	1.344	94.07	99.39		
Officer	136	101.46	13.833	1.186	99.11	103.80		
Self-employed	255	101.56	15.169	.950	99.69	103.43		
Total	704	99.73	14.820	.559	98.64	100.83		

Table 7 shows that couples with either or both of the spouses who are teachers have higher satisfaction level than those employed in other sectors with standard deviation 14.413. This is followed by those who are self employed (i.e. businessmen, carpenter, etc) with standard deviation 15.169. This is also significant at 5%

level ( $p < 0.000$ ), and hence can be concluded that there is significant difference in the marital satisfaction level of people in different professions. Marital satisfaction level is seen to be lowest among those working as drivers with standard deviation 8.142.

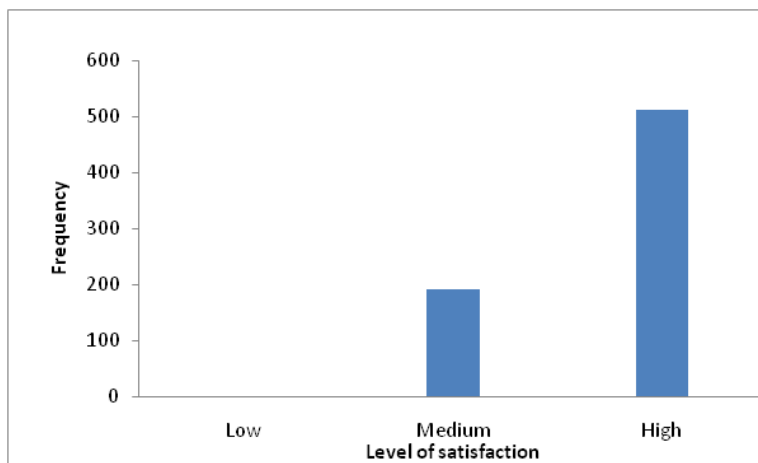
Table 8: Marital satisfaction level.

Level of satisfaction	No. of individuals	Percent
Low	0	0.00
Medium	193	27.41
High	511	72.59
Total	704	100

The above Table No.8, shows that of all the respondents who were interviewed, one person, that is, 0.78 % was in low satisfaction level, while for 23. 26% the satisfaction level was medium and

75.97% of them were highly satisfied with their married life. This can also be seen in the Figure below.

Figure 1: Level of marital satisfaction.





The effect of gender on marital satisfaction cannot be ignored, since it comes into play in regards to many factors relating to marital satisfaction. However, the main purpose of this study is to consider whether gender itself contributes to marital satisfaction. The research result suggests that men report higher levels of marital satisfaction than women and that women's experiences of marriage are more negative than those of men. The study on the effect of the period of marriage on marital satisfaction suggests that the maximum satisfaction is in the period between the 10th to 15th years which is in contrast to the findings of previous research in other locations outside the country which suggests that marital satisfaction declines over the first 10 to 20 years of marriage and then increases again in late adulthood and retirement. An examination of the factors that may contribute to this decline is an area for further study.

Children play an enormously significant part in the lives of many married couples and the influence of children on their parents' lives and on their marital relationship cannot be ignored, whether it be positive or negative. Some studies have suggested that the presence of young children in the home negatively affects marital satisfaction in many ways. This has been attributed to the reduction or lack of time that the couples have to spend together with more children around.

#### CONCLUSION:

It may be concluded from the study that a number of factors influence the marital satisfaction level of married couples, though to different extent. The study suggests that the profession of a person has a considerable influence on the level of marital satisfaction that a person can attain. Most married couples are found to have a high satisfaction level in regards to their marital life. The age-old system of males being the bread-earner still appears to have its mark as families with male spouses as the bread-

earner have higher satisfaction level than when females or both spouses are earning. Maturity level of the couples is also found to have its impact on the level of marital satisfaction as can be seen from the higher level of satisfaction among the higher age groups. There are scopes for further research to explore the factors to enable explanations on the reasons for the impacts that various factors have on marital satisfaction for future researchers.

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