

## **Marital Satisfaction in Dual Earner Family**

Geetanjali Majhi<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bharti Panda<sup>2</sup>

*Research Scholar, Sambalpur University Jyoti Vihar, Burla, Odisha, India Pin:768019*  
*Professor & Head, Department of Home Science Sambalpur University, Jyoti Vihar, Burla, Odisha Pin: 768019*

---

**Abstract:** *In a dual earner family an important feature is the division of work and family life. It emphasises role reallocation in the household and the impact of women's work on their psychological well-being and social status. The dual earner job families are characterized by role overload, work-family pressures and to cope with that situation. In order to prove her proficiency on both the fronts, women are facing the problem of overwork and are often being stressed out of their energy. Further, with both the spouses working, there is also the problem of what is called work to family spill-over and vice versa. Marital satisfaction is a key element of perceived happiness. Marital satisfaction refers to a global level of favorability that individual spouses report with their marital relationship. This paper investigates the marital satisfaction of the dual earner couples. The satisfaction level on various field of both male and female are studied. The significant difference between both male and female of couples in dual earner family has been examined An critical examination has been made on the various field of marital satisfaction to find out if the couple differ significantly or not.*

**Keyword:** *Dual earner family, role overload, work-family conflict, marital satisfaction.*

---

### **I. Introduction**

The dual earner pattern of family life has become more firmly established in the past few decades. In a dual earner family, family lives are organized around two jobs rather than one which necessarily give a different experience to family living. An important feature of the dual earner family is the division of work and family life. The topic of dual earner families have been studied extensively from different perspectives by sociologists, psychologists, educationists, psychiatrists, social workers and other human service professionals. The initial studies in the area discussed the consequences of women's employment on role reallocation in the household and the impact of women's work on their psychological well-being and social status. Recently the attention has been focused on the marital life of dual earner couples highlighting on the quality of marital life and satisfaction from marriage. Empirical evidences suggest that dual earner job families are characterized by role overload and work-family pressures which necessitate a change in the family functioning. Investigating the effects of women's employment on the quality of marital interaction is important not only for marriage theory, but also with regard to the popular concern over the state of the family. The largest area of research on dual earner couples has been studies the impact of women's employment on marriage.

Colonialism and the rise of capitalism in the Indian economy have changed the way of life. The socio-economic demands and various demographic factors have enforced women into the labour force. The number of women with family responsibilities who also work at a paid job has been increasing significantly in the last 20 years and is also expected to keep growing. However one of the common problems of working women in India is over work. She plays the multiple roles of housewife, mother and wage-earner. She constantly attempts to bridge both life pattern, but it may sometime fail, and that leads to anxiety, confusion and conflict. It needs a major changes including a redefinition of roles, reallocation of responsibilities and radical change in familial and societal support for resolution of conflict. The entry of women in the jobs is not accompanied with a simultaneous shift in the social division of labour. Even most of the dual earner women continue to view themselves primarily as homemakers, and their work status did little to alter their sex role orientation (Rajadhyakasha & Smita, 2004, p 1677). Thus, women still consider it their primary duty to look after the household affairs and care for the family, while men find earning for the family as their primary, or may be, the sole responsibility. Women are thus faced with the challenge of playing the dual-role, to excel at home, as well as at the workplace. In order to prove her proficiency on both the fronts, women are facing the problem of overwork and are often being stressed out of their energy. Even then, they find themselves unable to match the expectations at any of the two places. Not only the women, but even men are also faced problem with role-conflict in the present situation. Further, with both the spouses working, there is also the problem of what is called work to family spill-over and vice versa. Again, since the tasks done by women at home for the nurturing of family have been of great significance, their underfulfilment may lead to further problems in the society. While the women have themselves remained dissatisfied and overburdened, the children and elders of the family

may have remained under cared in a dual-earner set up. The problems have found with the coming of the MNC culture of work characterized by long working hours, deadlines, competition, lesser holidays, negligible number of leaves, frequent tours, job transfers, increasing work pressure and so on. This has further posed challenge to the marital quality of the dual-earner couples. Sometimes they even face threatening to the sustenance of a happy marriage.

Marital satisfaction is a key element of perceived happiness. A growing number of empirical studies are attempting to identify its determinants, as comprehensively surveyed by Bradbury, et al. (2000). Furthermore, the association between marital satisfaction and female employment is likely to be mediated by the way in which the husband and wife participate in housework. In general, the wife's additional work outside the home should require a change in the division of household labor. Correspondingly, frictions caused by the adjustment to the division of labor or a failure to cope with them may reduce the subjective well-being of the married couple. Marital satisfaction is also defined as a mental state that reflects the perceived benefits and costs of marriage to a particular person. The more costs a marriage partner inflicts on a person, the less satisfied one generally is with the marriage and with the marriage partner. Similarly, the greater the perceived benefits are, the more satisfied one is with the marriage and with the marriage partner. Marital satisfaction refers to a global level of favorability that individual spouses report with their marital relationship. Marital satisfaction is often viewed as an individual's interpretation of the overall quality of the marriage or the person's happiness with the marriage.

Now days advancements have been made in the education of women and their economic opportunities, while there has been a decline in conservatism. However, many women are still struggling with the dilemma. Employment will bring economic security, but it may create problems in the family. Problems may include: children of an employed mother may miss her at meal time, she will have less time to entertain relatives and guests, and the pressures of work may be reflected in her dealing with family members, which may in turn disturb the family peace and happiness. It may not be easy for an women to resolve the conflicts resulting from her dual responsibilities- at home and in the work place.

## **II. Objective And Hypothesis**

In the last 30 years, there has been a growing interest in the relationship between shared leisure and satisfaction. In the past, leisure has been treated casually as a factor possibly related to marital satisfaction, but as more research has been conducted, leisure appears to have potential for increasing levels of marital satisfaction. This growth of interest in the relationship between these two variables has been reflected in the measurements utilized in family services, such as the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (Spanier, 1976), the Prepare-Enrich Inventories (Fournier, Olson, & Druckman, 1983), and the Marital Satisfaction Inventory (Snyder & Costin, 1994). Orthner et al. also described the importance of leisure shared with family reported by many adults.

The purpose of this study, is to explore the extent to which there are relationships among the variables of marital satisfaction, couples' leisure patterns, and shared leisure satisfaction in married couples. Researchers have just begun to explore the career and relationship stressors and benefits that shape the life of the dual-career couple. Specifically, attention is now being given to the importance of career and marriage in dual-career couples lives. The purpose of this study was to investigate the career-marriage balance in couples and the affects of multiple factors and strategies on marital and career satisfaction. However, neither study addressed what was problematic about managing work and family. In researching the answer to this question, the major objective to be accomplished, is to examine the relationship between dual earner life style and marital satisfaction,

## **III. Methodology**

In this section we deal with the pilot study, sampling and data collection and the analysis utilized in the study in this section. A pilot survey was constructed and was administered to a sample of twenty dual career couples. The purpose of the pilot was to identify any ambiguous or confusing terminology and to obtain overall reaction to the questionnaire. Ambiguous, confusing items and directions were altered as a result of feedback from pilot participants. Then we generated a list of 200 dual-career couples meeting the study criteria from the professional and social network. Subsequently data were collected from required numbers of dual-career couples for the purpose of details analysis. For this study the Dyadic Adjustment Scale devised by Spanier (1976) is used to measure the dyadic adjustment of couples. This scale has four sub scales such as "Consensus", "Cohesion", "Affection", and "Satisfaction". Participants were asked how they manage the family and career demands. In this scale the couples filled out all response separately without discuss their answer with each other. There are 32 items under this category and the DAS is scored by assigning number of each item. The Responses to questionnaire items were coded and entered on a computer.

**IV. Review Of Literature**

Most research over the past two decades has focused on the term marital quality rather than marital satisfaction. Marital quality is defined as a multidimensional concept that includes “happiness with marriage, the frequency of shared activities, and thoughts or actions that may lead to divorce” (Amato, Johnson, Booth, & Rogers, 2003, p. 5). In the present study, marital satisfaction refers to a global level of favorability that individual spouses report with their marital relationship (Roach, Frazier, & Bowden, 1981). Hughes and et.al, (1992) showed that non-specific job and family incompatibility decreased marital companionship and increased marital tension. The problems have also multiplied with the breaking up of the joint family and the concomitant withdrawal of support system within the family. However this may have accorded greater independence to many of the working couples. A rethinking over some issues of significance is imperative in this context. Bradbury et.al., (2000) stated marital satisfaction as a general sense of favorability toward the marital relationship. According to Amato et al., (2003) most recently, spouses’ satisfaction is seen as just one component of the multidimensional concept of marital quality.

According to Frisco & et al., (2003) it is often found that perceived inequality in the division of household labor is negatively associated with reported marital satisfaction, especially for wives. It should be noted, however, that both the division of household labor and its subjective assessment are strongly dependent on the social context. Furthermore, Greenstein (2004) found out the association between marital satisfaction and female employment is likely to be mediated by the way in which the husband and wife participate in housework. In general, the wife’s additional work outside the home should require a change in the division of household labor, as by. Correspondingly, frictions caused by the adjustment to the division of labor or a failure to cope with them may reduce the subjective well-being of the married couple.

Claxton and Perry-Jenkins (2008) have found similar results; the more leisure hours or any type of time one spent with their partner, the healthier their relationship . The dual-career lifestyle deviates tremendously from the traditional couple. Even though the number of dual-career couples are steadily increasing and their lifestyle becoming more common (Raley et al., 2006), many women and men still struggle with internalized messages that support prescribed gender roles. This discrepancy can still be detected in current research on marital satisfaction and the division of household labor. Role overload and conflict are issues that dual-career couples frequently encounter throughout the course of their marriage (Stevens et al., 2007). The dualcareer couple is engaged in constant negotiation between at least three commitments: his career, her career, and maintaining a meaningful marital relationship. Many terms have been used to describe the bidirectional impact of marriage and career: role strain, role permeability, spillover, stress contagion, stress crossover, family-to-work and work-to-family conflict or spillover (Dilworth, 2004) and work-family strains (Marshall & Barnett, 1993). These terms imply that most spillover affects are negative and as a result research has largely focused on the problems that arise when stress is carried over from one domain into another (Kinnunen, Feldt, Geurts, & Pulkkinen, 2006; Stevens et al., 2007). Largely due to their perceptions about the unequal distribution of household labor, women with children report more family-to-work conflict than do men (Mennino, Rubin, & Brayfield, 2005; Stevens et al., 2007). A limited amount of research has been devoted to studying the positive impact of work on family and family on work. Research that has focused on the positive affects have used the terms positive spillover (Stevens et al., 2007).

It should be noted, however, that both the division of household labor and its subjective assessment are strongly dependent on the social context. National-level gender equity or gender ideology in society is often used as a reference, especially by married women, when determining an appropriate division of housework, and it mediates the effect of perceived fairness on marital satisfaction (Fuwa, 2004; Greenstein, 2009). According to the study by Siti Nor Yaacob & Rumaya Juhari (2010) it has revealed that low support received from husband, family members/relatives and supervisor might increase perceived conflict between work and family.

**V. Results Of Analysis**

In this table all the four aspects of DAS has been taken and the scores of males and females in each aspect has been compared. It is related to assessment of global marital satisfaction.

**Table: 1**

ASPECTS	SEX	MEAN	SD	N	t	df	p(0.05)
DYADIC CONSENSUS	M	58.65	13.01	200	3.93	398	1.97
	F	57.25	12.28	200			
DYADIC SATISFACTIION	M	41.09	14.06	200	0.63	398	1.97
	F	40.87	9.72	200			
DYADIC COHESION	M	19.305	3.86	200	0.83	398	1.97
	F	19.145	3.42	200			
AFFECTIONAL EXPRESSION	M	9.895	1.08	200	1.79	398	1.97
	F	9.65	2.64	200			

## VI. Summary And Discussion

The effect of sex difference has been examined on all the four aspects of dyadic adjustment scale. From the above table we found the results for all the four aspects of DAS Scale, i.e Dyadic Consensus, Dyadic Satisfaction, Dyadic Cohesion and Affectional expression. The table indicates that Husbands and wives differ insignificantly in all aspect. And in that male scored little higher than female. But in case of dyadic consensus both male and female differs significantly. In that case male scored more than female and the difference is a significant one. It is the degree to which the respondent agrees with partner. Husband and wife differ significantly with regard to various responses. They did not have the same response in respect to a particular factor. One is not agrees to the other in regard to a particular factor. They did not have similar views.

The wife's employment may create a problem in adjustment at work as well as in her family. Any illusion about her being a super woman is bound to be frustrating for her and painful for her family. These concerns and risk are real. Still , more family in India are greatly in favor of having job of both parents , primarily it is economically beneficial for them, making them financially stable and independent in case of mother .Working gives dignity and a higher status to the women in India. Furthermore employed women feel satisfied that they are contributing something to the welfare of their family and society.

Our analyses emphasize that correlates of marital satisfaction vary by gender. Men and women's marital satisfaction is positively associated with housework and emotion-work satisfaction and women's status-enhancement work. Marital satisfaction is also a product of complex household labor relations. Household-labor relations for women are influenced by her gender ideology, degree of economic dependency, number of hours she spends in the paid labor force, and the number of children in the household.

## References

- [1]. Rajadhyaksha, Ujvala and Smita, Swati, 'Tracing a Timeline for Work and Family Research in India' in EPW, April 24, 2004, pp 1674-1680.
- [2]. Bradbury, T. N., Fincham, F. D., & Beach, S. R. H. (2000). Research on the nature and determinants of marital satisfaction: A decade in review. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 62, 964-980.
- [3]. Spanier, G. H. (1976). Measuring dyadic adjustment: New scales for assessing the quality of marriage. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 38, 15-28.
- [4]. Amato, Paul R., David R. Johnson, Alan Booth, and Stacy J. Rogers. 2003. "Continuity and Change in Marital Quality between 1980 and 2000." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 65:1-22.
- [5]. Hughes D., Galinsky E., Morris A., 'The effects of job characteristics on marital quality: specifying linking mechanisms', *Journal of marriage and Family*, Vol. 54, 1992, pp 31-42.
- [6]. Frisco, M. L., & Williams, K. (2003). Perceived housework equity, marital happiness, and divorce in dual-earner households. *Journal of Family Issues*, 24, 51 - 73.
- [7]. Greenstein, Th. N. (2009). National context, family satisfaction, and fairness in the division of household labor. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 71, 1039 - 1051.
- [8]. Claxton, Amy and Maureen Perry-Jenkins. 2008. "No Fun Anymore: Leisure and Marital Quality Across the Transition to Parenthood." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 70:28-43.
- [9]. Raley, Sara B., Marybeth J. Mattingly, and Suzanne M. Bianchi. 2006. "How Dual are Dual- Income Couples? Documenting Change from 1970 to 2001." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 68:11-28.
- [10]. Stevens, D. P., Minnotte, K. L., Mannon, S. E., & Kiger, G. (2007). Examining the neglected side of the work-family interface: Antecedents of positive and negative family-to-work spillover. *Journal of Family Issues*, 28(2), 242-262.
- [11]. Dilworth, J. E. (2004). Predictors of negative spillover from family to work. *Journal of Family Issues*, 25(2), 241-261.
- [12]. Marshall, N. L., & Barnett, R. C. (1993). Work-family strains and gains among two-earner couples. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 21(1), 64- 78.
- [13]. Orthner, Dennis K. 1975. "Leisure Activity and Marital Satisfaction over the Marital Career." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 37:91-102.
- [14]. Kinnunen, U., Feldt, T., Geurts, S., & Pulkkinen, L. (2006). Types of work- family interface: Well-being correlates of positive and negative spillover between work and family. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 47(2), 149-162.
- [15]. Mennino, S. F., Rubin, B. A., & Brayfield, A. (2005). Home-to-job and job- to- home spillover: The impact of company policies and workplace culture. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 46(1), 107-135.
- [16]. Fuwa, M. (2004). Macro-level gender inequality and the division of household labor in 22 Countries. *American Sociological Review*, 69, 751 - 767.