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## Impact of Classroom Environment on Students' Science Learning Study on the Importance of Pre-Marital Counselling on Sustainable Family Life in the Context of Sri Lanka (With Special Reference to the Puttalam District)

**A.C. Mohamed Sabri**

*MSW, National Institute of Social Development, Sri Lanka*

**Manjula Wijesekara**

*Senior Lecturer, School of Social Work, National Institute of Social Development, Sri Lanka*

**Abstract:** Marital dissatisfaction affects people of all ages, races and cultural backgrounds and often leads to divorce and conflicts within the family. Both can have negative implications that last for years. Social workers and other allied professionals recognize pre-marital counselling work to ameliorate marital discord and improve marital satisfaction. The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of pre-marital counselling on sustainable family life. The family, either extended or nuclear is the most significant structure in the society. It is found that the concept of family is well maintained and nurtured by society throughout history, in the way of marriage system or other. The families are made by the bond of love of individuals and to provide love to the world. Unfortunately, this significant institution is under the threat of an alarming increase in divorce, family breakage, fear of marriage, discontent of marriage life and it led to

suicide finally. Therefore, this study commenced to identify the causes of family discord and to safeguard the biggest social institution of family. Furthermore, it is also to find a proper solution in order to strengthen the family institution. Interviews of key informants, focus group discussions and questionnaires were used to collect data to support this research. Altogether, fifty individuals were selected for the study and were given a questionnaire to fill, further three Quazies were interviewed for information and several social activists and officers from some NGOs as the participants for focus group discussions. The collected data was analysed using qualitative mixed methods and findings were very much significant for the need of the Pre-Marital counselling.

**Key words:** Pre-Marital Counselling, Sustainable Family Life

## CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

There have been numerous studies conducted over the past few decades that have examined pre-marital counselling to create sustainable family life across the globe, but those studies have placed a special emphasis on pre-marital health screening to lower the incidence of inherited congenital diseases and babies born with malformations. Pre-marital counselling's importance for a healthy family life has not been studied in any of the recent studies conducted in Sri Lanka. Pre-marital counselling has become more popular recently as a means of enhancing married relationships. A novel strategy to stop marital discontent and marriage dissolution is training in marriage preparation. The idea behind is that couples can learn how to establish a happy and secure marriage. The primary goals of this study are to define the pre-marital counselling for younger couples. There is a strong body of research demonstrating the connection between the rising divorce rate in Asia as well as the rest of the world and the lack of understanding about pre-marital counselling. The subheadings that follow will further explain each of the study's key components.

In modern times, the most important aspects of marriage are social, religious as well as legal. Bertrand Russel says that "marriage differs, of course, from other sex relations by the fact that it is a legal institution. It is also in most communities a religious institution, but it is the legal aspect which is essential". (Russell, 1959). Marriage as a physical as well as a moral union is recognized by society as the basis of a family. It may be a sacrament and, in that way, an indissoluble union for this life and hereafter, as in the case of a staunch Hindu or Roman Catholic, or a temporary civil contract for a fixed period as in the case of a Mutaa marriage among the Shia Muslims. But whether a sacrament or a civil contract, the relationship, above sexual satisfaction, is to join two members of opposite sexes for the procreation of legitimate children. In the words of H. M. Stone and Abraham Stone, "While particular marriages may, of course, be entered into for any number of other reasons as family pleasure, social conveniences, financial considerations and similar motives, basically the prime objects of marriage are companionship, sexual intimacy and procreation." (Stone & Stone, 1939) On an individual level, marriage guarantees sex and psychological fulfilment through bearing children, but on a larger communal level, it guarantees the survival of the community and its culture.

A form of treatment called pre-marital counselling aids couples in getting ready for marriage. A solid, healthy relationship between you and your partner can increase your chances of having a happy and secure marriage. Pre-marital counselling can assist ensure this. Pre-marital counselling is a useful tool for getting to know one another better, and this particular kind of treatment is designed to promote more in-depth discussion. Pre-marital counselling, often known as marriage preparation, has been a common practice in many nations of the world during the past few decades. Since the 1970s, the topic of marriage preparation has been the subject of thorough examinations by both religious communities and empirical workshops. Since then, this subject has been the subject of many strong follow-up analyses.

Every person who marries has specific expectations going into the marriage. These standards are derived from a variety of sources, including our parents, society, books, speakers, and our own beliefs. For instance, a husband might anticipate that his wife will be at the door when he gets home, that she will always be at home and never work, and that they will engage in sexual activity anytime he desires. A wife might anticipate that her husband will accompany her whenever she visits her parents, serve as the family's spiritual leader, and spend Saturdays at home with the family

rather than going out. The current state of marriage must be taken into consideration in order to see the need for pre-marital counselling. Divorce is the solution for people who can no longer handle disagreement. Divorce laws have been changed to make it more accessible. This appears to be the quick fix. Pre-marital counselling appears to be lacking in publicly available problem-solving methods. In order to make place for modern marriage, the idea of traditional marriage is avoided. With the idea that marriage is for life, the popular phrase in a conventional marriage is "for better or for worse."

Pre-marital counselling's main goal is to foster strong relationships and get couples ready for marriage. Instead of trying to force everyone's individuality and independence into a "conformist" mould, the goal is to assist the emotionally immature in maturing. When one values the other as much as or even more than oneself, love can flourish in such a mutually supportive environment. Each couple is helped by the counsellor to comprehend the other and their respective marital roles. The core of pre-marital counselling is gaining knowledge of each other's role images and role relationships.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In the context of the Asia, Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka, the process of Pre-Marital Counselling is very rare. There isn't any research that has been done on this matter. In the recent past a few initiated pre-marital counselling programs in Colombo but it was not effective enough as it had not reached the communities within the sub-urban and the rural area, hence it is important to study the effects counselling on a generalized platform so as to effectively deliver in the most advantageous manner. This dissertation is to analyse and understand the impacts of Marriage counselling and its effects on: (a) Lack of understanding between the couples, (b) the rates of Divorce, (c) Family breakdowns and (d) Gamophobia (fear of marriage).

### **Research Design The philosophical context, research approach, strategy are not written.**

The nature of this study is a mix of the quantitative and qualitative kind. This may be considered as the mixed method approach. This would mean that this study consists of both the use of qualitative and quantitative tools and methods. Further, the researcher adopted descriptive research design, which includes fact-finding investigation with adequate interpretation of facts about the problems. The study tries to identify various aspects of problems. The researcher adopted the designed for describing the objectives of the study.

### **Pre-Test**

Pre-test is the process of advance of the study design after the questionnaire has been prepared. The researcher had done the pre-test among five respondents.

### **Study Population**

This research focuses on studying the impacts of Pre-marital Counselling, and so the samples should be individuals who either have a conflicted or a non-conflicted marriage. The population of the study comprises members from the communities of Puttalam who have and have not been subjected to pre-marital counselling. The population includes both males and females. These participants were selected from semi urban areas. There have been two reasons for the selection of the district. First,

Puttalam is known as a district having the largest number of displaced refugees of war. Secondly, it is Puttalam District to have a considerable number of divorce cases and family breakage relatively to the other districts in the country.

### Sampling Methods and Numbers

A sample count of 50 individuals, equally distributed among both gender (25 males and 25 females), were selected from a range of varying ethnicities and religion. The purposive sampling methods were used to select the participants in order to collect data and form an analysis.

### Data Collection

Data has been collected through three modes i.e. interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions. The participants were interviewed along with getting a questionnaire filled. The questionnaire contained various aspects related to family life and their thoughts on pre-marital counselling. The self-developed questionnaires have been distributed to all 80 participants and they were asked to provide the information on their life by filling the questionnaire.

### Ethical Drawbacks

In light of interviewing the participants, it was made clear that a few participants required counselling as they willingly shared the matters related to their marriage life. The researcher had in prior made preparations to have counsellors on call.

### Results and Discussion

The demographic details obtained from the participants have been filtered to find the factors that affected or supported the outcome. Accordingly, age, religion, current marital and employment status, social class and their having children were considered. Table 1 represents this demographic information.

Table 1: Demographic Information of participants

Demographic Category	Percentage
<b>Age Group</b>	
18-25	02.4%
26-35	42.9%
36-45	38.1%
above 45	16.6%
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	54.8%
Female	45.2%
<b>Family Structure</b>	
Nuclear Family	33.3%
Extended Family	64.3%
<b>Duration of Marriage</b>	
Less than a year	04.8%
1-5 years	23.8%

6-10 years	09.5%
11-15 years	16.7%
16-20 years	11.9%
21-25 years	09.5%
Above 25 years	02.4%
<b>Monthly Income</b>	
No Income	16.7%
Less than Rs.10,000	00.0%
Rs.10,000 – Rs.15,000	02.4%
Rs. 16,000 – Rs 20,000	00.0%
Rs. 21,000 - Rs. 30,000	11.9%
Rs. 31,000 - Rs. 40,000	50.0%
Rs. 41,000 - Rs. 50,000	11.9%
Rs. 51,000 - Rs. 60,000	00.0%
Rs. 61,000 - Rs. 70,000	07.1%
<b>Spouse's Age Group</b>	
18-25	04.8%
26-35	33.3%
36-45	50.0%
above 45	11.9%
<b>Spouse's Family Structure</b>	
Nuclear Family	73.8%
Extended Family	23.8%
<b>Spouse's Educational Status</b>	
Illiterate	00.0%
Primary level	00.0%
Up to secondary level	14.3%
Advanced level	35.7%
Graduate	28.5%
Vocational /Professional	16.7%
<b>Spouse's Occupation</b>	
Unemployment	23.8%
Government	33.4%
Private	19.0%
Business	04.8%
Self-employment	09.5%
Other	02.4%
<b>Spouse's Monthly Income</b>	
No Income	23.8%
Less than Rs.10,000	00.0%
Rs.10,000 – Rs.15,000	00.0%
Rs. 16,000 – Rs 20,000	00.0%
Rs. 21,000 - Rs. 30,000	09.5%
Rs. 31,000 - Rs. 40,000	28.6%
Rs. 41,000 - Rs. 50,000	07.1%
Rs. 51,000 - Rs. 60,000	00.0%
Rs. 61,000 - Rs. 70,000	02.4%
More than Rs. 70,000	04.8%

<b>Do they have Children</b>	
Yes	76.2%
No	23.8%
<b>Number of Children</b>	
One child	23.8%
Two children	19.0%
Three children	26.2%
Four children	02.4%
Above four children	02.4%
No children	23.8%

The most important details in this text are the responses to the question 'What were the situations where you had met your spouse before your marriage?' A large number of respondents (42.9%) had claimed to have met under the supervision of family at a family setting, while the lowest number of had met at other uncategorized settings (2.4%). 83.4% had had a conversative relationship with their spouse before their marriage, while 9.5% had not had such a relationship. Additionally, 33.4% of the respondents had expected to have 'happiness and joy', 19% had no expectations, 14.2% had expected a satisfactory life with many compromises, and 26.2% felt that being properly educated could stop family breakage and divorce. Table 4.19 shows that a good part of the group (64.3%) had thought of marriage as a 'Good and joyous matter', while an equal percentage (14.3%) seemed trepid or was generally looking for a significant other.

Marriage is a bond formed of unconditional love and understanding, with 45.2% of respondents believing it to be an important and necessary life, 23.8% to have thought it to be important and necessary, 14.3% to have believed it to be living with understanding and forming an effective family life, and 2.4% to have disagreed with the statement. The extent of allowance made in incorporating desires for the occasion of the wedding was also discussed, with 47.6% agreeing that their desires were taken into consideration, while 4.8% confirmed that it was not. Respondents were also asked their opinion on their life post marriage, with 42.8% having answered their life to be joyous, 14.8% saying it was challenging, 2.3% claiming to be unhappy.

Respondents to the question 'What form of changes did take place in light of their marriage?' have informed to have become happier, experienced an increase in responsibilities and challenges, and overcome conflicts. When asked their opinion on Pre-marital counselling, 47.6% claimed it was important and necessary, 14.3% replied that it should be encouraged, 2.4% deemed it not necessary, and 21.4% claimed it had resulted in a happy life. The general opinions shared by the respondents were to learn to understand compromise and practice patience, and to choose a partner who meets their needs, desires and thoughts.

## **DISCUSSION**

This study examines the value of pre-marital counselling (PMC) in fostering closer bonds, determining the primary reasons for family dissolution, examining social and cultural perspectives on PMC, and examining the viability of potential PMC implementations in Sri Lanka. The most crucial fact to be considered is that the young community should be guided properly in order to build a

happier and healthier community. Males were more interested than females in the community, while females contributed 54.8%. Family types were divided into nuclear, extended, and minor. People from different time spans responded differently to pre-marital counselling, with newly married couples feeling it is important and helps them find a better partner. The seven separate categories based on the community's or people's educational degree are the most crucial information in this literature.

Those with only a primary education do not differ significantly in that regard, and even those with some education (secondary level) did not contribute as much as we had anticipated. The most significant facts are that people's daily routines vary based on their line of work and that everyone was interested in the study. The participants' monthly incomes were further divided into nine groups depending on their respective wage ranges, with those earning between \$31,000 and \$40,000 contributing 50% of the total and those earning less than \$10,000 not answering at all.

The focus group participants discussed the importance of Pre-Marital Counselling and the pros and cons of it. They emphasized the importance of communication between the spouses, as it was believed to be the root of many family related problems. They also pitched their thoughts on third party interferences, which can lead to divorce due to the involvement of the in laws or parents in the marriage life. They argued that it would be more efficient to provide Pre-marital Counselling as opposed to Post-Marital Counselling, as it is advantageous to know the inner workings of a married life.

Pre-Marital Counselling should be handled discretely in order to avoid hurt feelings, and that self-awareness and individual differences are an important factor in marriage. Additionally, the married and non-married participants both emphasized the opportunity to prepare for what is ahead of them and how to face the many challenges and conflicts alike in order to maintain and excel in one's marital union. A firm regret was expressed by many married participants that this opportunity was not present to them before their vows, as it could have given them the tools to carry out an even more effective marriage life.

Finally, the key informants who were interviewed consisted of three Quazies, the judges who inquire Divorce cases, Family Counsellors, therapists and social activists who elaborate their views and experience at the interviews regarding Pre-Marital Counselling, family breakage and Divorce. According to their views there are many reasons for the breakdown of families and marriages. These reasons include lack of understanding, lack of communication, no knowledge on family life, forced marriages, no planning on the future of the marriage, and no prior plans as to how to construct their lives. Lack of understanding is essential for a happy and lasting marriage, while lack of communication can lead to major setbacks. No knowledge of family life can lead to disappointment and hostility, and forced marriages can lead to an early breakage.

Married couples should have a strong economic and livelihood plan as to how they are going to steer their marriage life. Involvement of the in-laws and marriage based on sex and intimacy should be avoided. Marriage based on sympathy should not be built on the base of sympathy, and marriage for personal gains should not be made for material or status or wealth. Marriage is often encouraged to combat sickness and avoid medical reasons. However, it can lead to a variety of issues, such as marriage for parents' honour, marriage without the approval of the bride, marriage without

consideration of qualification/status/class/etc., marriage based on abuse, and long-distance marriages.

Pre-Marital Counselling (PMC) is an important tool for couples who are waiting to be married and to lead family life. However, the study found that most people were reluctant to share their opinion in this regard. Additionally, not every couple may be able to access the pre-marital counsellors due to time and money constraints. People can get help from books, DVDs and the internet, as well as from authentic professionals in the stated field. PMC offers a safe and separate place to both of partners to discuss their issues more precisely and their role in the betterment of the relation, but it may lead to hurt feelings. Additionally, expectations or goals for the future may lead to some short-term conflicts which may ultimately turn into disasters.

Pre-marital counselling is an important part of a healthy relationship, and can help couples identify the resources to turn to when faced with challenges. Therapists may choose to see each partner individually, or consider them as a single unit. When considering as a unit, both partners can discuss most issues together and explore ways to cope with their issues and any other possible challenges. Couples can also develop a plan of action to utilize in the time of the need, which may include turning to different resources, seeing counsellor, or seeking for spiritual guidance from a professional in the stated field. Pre-marital counselling has taken place even in religious institutions back in history, but now an increasing number of non-religious couples are also seeking for a guidance of some sort. This is a good sign that pre-marital counselling can be a positive beginning for a healthier relationship. These issues can lead to divorce due to conflicts and unresolved issues. Women who find themselves or their children being abused tend to break away from the abuse pattern and seek assistance.

## **CONCLUSION**

Pre-marital counselling is an important tool for couples to discuss their current issues and plan for the future. It can help them set financial or family planning goals and find ways to get those goals accomplished. It can also help them focus on healthy goals and relationship strengthening ones. Additionally, talking with someone who has been married for a long time can provide them with tested advice and essential encouragement. Finally, PMC counsellors ask a lot of questions when they work with engaged couples.

Pre-marital counselling is a great way to learn more about a partner's responses to critical and ethical situations. It is a safe and suitable space for individuals to share things or information that they are nervous or upset about in sharing with their partners, and can be particularly helpful if one or both of the individual in the couple has/have been in failed relationships of some sort before. It is for all couples, inclusive of those who were in a romantic relationship prior to the marriage, as conflicts can arise if they do not discuss their life after marriage and the challenges and conflict that arise from it. Counsellors can help bring out important and useful information that a partner might have been reluctant to share even with the other partner, and provide growth opportunities while helping new couples learn more about each other. It is also a great way for a marriage and family therapist to help others and build their client base more efficiently.



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