

RUNNING HEAD: CHANGES AND CHALLENGES IN MARRIAGE...

Major Changes and Challenges in Marriage Today:

Analysis of Yimesgen Molla Marriage and Family Counseling and Training Center

Clients, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

By

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**A Thesis Submitted for the Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement of Masters of Social
Works (MSW) Degree to Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU)**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the dissertation entitled MAJOR CHANGES AND CHALLENGES IN MARRIAGE TODAY: ANALYSIS OF YIMESGEN MOLLA MARRIAGE AND FAMILY COUNSELING AND TRAINING CENTER CLIENTS, ADDISA ABABA, ETHIOPIA submitted by me for the partial fulfilment of the MSW to Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) New Delhi is my own original work and has not been submitted earlier, either to IGNOU or to any other institution for the fulfilment of the requirement for any other programme of study. I also declare that no chapter of this manuscript in whole or in part is lifted and incorporated in this report from any earlier work done by me or others.

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This is to certify that Mr. Admassu Kebede Engidasew, student of MSW from Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi was working under my supervision and guidance for his Project Work for the Course **MSWP-001**. His Project Work entitled **MAJOR CHANGES AND CHALLENGES IN MARRIAGE TODAY: ANALYSIS OF YIMESGEN MOLLA MARRIAGE AND FAMILY COUNSELING AND TRAINING CENTER CLIENTS, ADDISA ABABA, ETHIOPIA**, which he is submitting, is his genuine and original work.

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DEDICATION

This research paper is dedicated to my grandmother W/ro Askale Gobena whom I missed her at the end of my secondary education cycle but fully depended on her remittance to go for my tertiary level education. This is dedicated also to my sister Tsehay Kebede and my brother Demis Kebede whom we lost them in their early ages (25 Years and 9 years respectively). May God rest their soul in eternal peace!

ABSTRACT

This study was aimed at exploring the major changes and challenges the contemporary marital practices has been facing. For this, the researched had review various resources, both published and unpublished, so that the theoretical backgrounds were extracted for better data collection, analysis and interpretation for possible recommendations based on the conclusions reached at.

The study applied quantitative research method, self-administered questionnaires, that consisted of both close-ended and open-ended. The instruments were administered for beneficiaries of Yimesgen Molla Marriage and Family Counselling and Training Center for 58 sample populations who were addressed on available basis. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used both for quantitative and qualitative data analysis with percentage and mean value difference application respectively.

From the respondents, the majority of the participants, i.e., married couples and were living together; or married but separated; or married but divorced; or married but lost their marital partner by death, depicted that the contemporary marital life went through tangible and dependable changes and challenges. Among which prevalence of various types of partnership and marriage formation practices, living with partners before marriage that might end in either marriage or separation (cohabitation), mothers entering to the work force, and singlehood as an alternative to marriage were treated under the key changes marriage today has been facing. Moreover, the key challenges addressed in this study-included lack of conflict resolution skills in marital life; gradual reduction of sexual relationship over time among married couples; lack of communication in marital life; and divorce rate were thoroughly addressed accordingly.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| DECLARATION | I |
| CERTIFICATE | II |
| DEDICATION | III |
| ABSTRACT | IV |
| TABLE OF CONTEMPTS | V |
| LIST OF FIGURES | VIII |
| ACKNOWLEDGES | XI |
| LIST OF ACRONYMS..... | XII |
| | |
| CHAPTER I..... | 1 |
| | |
| 1.0 INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1. Structure of the Report | 1 |
| 1.2. Background of the Study | 2 |
| 1.3. Statement of the Problem | 3 |
| 1.4. Purpose of the Study | 5 |
| 1.5. Objectives of the Study | 5 |
| 1.6. Research Questions | 5 |

1.7. Significance of the Study6
1.8. Delimitation and Limitation of the Study7
1.9. Conceptualization of Important Terms8

CHAPTER II9

2.0. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE9
2.1. Conceptualization of Marriage.....9
2.2. Common Forms of Marital Practices10
2.3. Notable Benefits of Marriage11
2.4. Major Changes in Marriage and Marital Life Today.....13
2.5. Major Challenges to Marriage and Marital Life Today.....21

CHAPTER III.....27

3.0. DESIGN and METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY27
3.1. Research Design27
3.2. Universe of the Study27
3.3. Sampling Methods29
3.4. Data Collection: Tools and Procedures29
3.7. Data Analysis Methods: Processing and Interpretation30

CHAPTER IV.....31

4.0. ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS/FINDINGS31

| | |
|---|-----------|
| CHAPTER V | 81 |
| 5.0. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONs | 81 |
| 5.1. Conclusions | 81 |
| 5.2. Discussions | 81 |
| | |
| CHAPTER VI | 87 |
| 6.0. Social Work Implications and Recommendations | 87 |
| 6.1. Implications for Social Work Practices | 87 |
| 6.2. Recommendations/Suggestions for Further Research | 88 |
| | |
| CHAPTER VII | 91 |
| 7.0. References | 91 |
| 7.1. Books and Articles References | 91 |
| 7.2. Web References | 95 |
| | |
| APPENDICES | 96 |
| | |
| Appendix 1: Self-Administered Questionnaires | 96 |

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure i: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

4.1. Theme 1: Common Forms of Marital Practices

Figure 4.1 (i): Type of Marital Practices Respondents Went Through

Figure 4.1 (ii): More Binding Type of Marriage Practice for Peaceful Marital Life

Figure 4.1 (iii): More Binding Type of Marriage Practice for Peaceful Marital Life

4.2. Theme 2: Major Benefits of Marriage

Figure 4.2 (i): Major Benefits of Marriage

4.3: Theme 3: Major Changes in Marital Practices

Figure 4.3 (i): Major Changes in Marital Practices

Figure 4.3 (ii): Cohabitation of Couples

Figure 4.3 (iii): Age Increase at Marriage and Decline in Birthrate

Figure 4.3 (IV): Mothers Entering to Work Force

Figure 4.3 (v): Parental Arranged Marriage Patterns

Figure 4.3 (VI): Singlehood as an Alternative to Marriage

Figure 4.3 (VI) (a): Single Women to Have Children without a Male Partner

Figure 4.3 (VI) (b): Stay Single until Economically Get Ready

Figure 4.3 (VI) (c): Stay Single Due to Marital Burden These Days

Figure 4.3 (VI) (d): Living Together Without Marriage vis-a-vis Living Together in Marriage and Flexibility to Satisfy Marital Interest

4.4: Theme 4: Major Challenges in Marital Experiences/Life

Figure 4. 4 (i): Conflict Resolution in Marital Life

Figure 4.4 (ii): Sexual Relationships in Marital Life

Figure 4.4 (iii): Communication and Relationships in Marital Life

Figure 4.4 (iii) (a): Relationships with Spouse Vs Parents

Figure 4.4 (iii) (b): Balancing Job Needs Vs Being a Parent

Figure 4.4 (iii) (c): Balancing Marital Relationships Vs Being a Parent

Figure 4.4 (iii) (d): Sharing Common Interests between Spouses

Figure 4.4 (iii) (e): Spouse's Contribution/share for Successful Marital Relationships

Figure 4.4 (iii) (f): Democratic Decision Making for Common Interests between Spouses

Figure 4.4 (VI): Marital Divorce

Figure 4.4 (IV) (a): Divorce Rate in Addis Ababa over the Past Ten Years

Figure 4.4 (IV) (b): High Divorce Rate in Addis Ababa in the Long-Term

Figure 4.4 (IV) (c): Obligation to Remain Married in Unsatisfactory Marital Life

Figure 4.4 (IV) (d): Couple's Stay in Unsatisfactory Marriage Till Death

Figure 4.4 (IV) (e): Divorce after Exhausting the Possible Solutions to Marital Problems
MSW Thesis 2013

Figure 4.4 (IV) (f): Couples Required to Do When no Agreement Anymore in Their Marital Life

Figure 4.4 (IV) (g): Likely of Divorce if Couples do not Have Love Anymore

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ACRONYMS

IGNOU- Indira Gandhi National Open University

MSW – Masters of Social Works

YMMFCTC-Yimesgen Molla Marriage and Family Counseling and Training Center

CHAPTER I

1.0. INTRODUCTION

Some sociological sources predicted that the institutions of marriage and the family would not survive. For example, in 1972, psychologist John has predicted that in 50 years, unless there is some change, the tribal custom of marriage will no longer exist.” He believed marriage would disappear because family standards had broken down. Popenoe and Whitehead (1999) have pointed out that the current marriage trends include fewer marriages, later age of marriage, fewer children, more divorce, more single-parenting families and stepfamilies, more working mothers, a greater need for day care, more child abuse, more spouse abuse, and less connection to kin networks. They have also expressed that marriage and family do continue to survive, despite all the predictions of their imminent collapse.

Ethiopia is one of the conservative countries where marriage is seen as one of the basic social structure for having a happy familial life through performing socially accepted type of marriage. Nevertheless, as the period goes on, globalization and modernization has affected the value the society gives for marital life, especially in cities and big town, including Addis Ababa. This study sought to plead for the marital life and the key changes and challenges of marriage today among couples in Addis Ababa city with particular reference to the clients and beneficiaries of Yimesgen Molla Marriage and Family Counseling and Training Center. The clients of this counselling and training center were addressed on the available sample mode in order to maximize the representation and to increase its reliability and validity.

1.1. Structure of the Report

This research paper is consisted of five chapters where each of these is providing the key perspectives under its respective area. In chapter one, the researcher converses a brief

introductory note and explains the structure of the report, the background of the research, statement of the problem, aim of the study, and objectives of the study. The key research questions, significance of the study, purpose of the study, delimitation and limitation of the study and conceptualization of important terms have also been addressed. Chapter two is the presentation of related literatures from previous research works that includes definition and conceptualization of marriage, common forms of marriage, main benefits of marriage, major changes in marriage and major challenges to the present day marital life. The research method applied in this study has been pointed out and been discussed in chapter three as well as the target population and sample, data collection processes and methods are outlined. The data analysis process, type as well as delimitations and limitations of the study have been elucidated in this chapter. Chapter three, on the other side, details the design and methodology of the research that gives explanations for methods of the study, research design, universe/areas of the study, sampling methodology, the research process, data collection and data analysis methods. While chapter four discusses the analysis and presentation of the results, finding and conclusions, chapter five deals with discussions, implications of the findings/results and suggestions for further exploration of the subject matter for various contexts of social work services providers in Addis Ababa city in particular and the country in general.

1.2. Background of the Study

David and John (2000: 8) defined marriage as the emotional and legal commitment of two people to share emotional and physical intimacy, various tasks and economic resources. Still, marriage has become a private relationship based on personal satisfaction rather than a covenant built on mutual fulfillment and responsibilities. Cherlin (2004) calls this the

individualized marriage. However, he also points out that marriage still has high symbolic significance and, because it is still more institutionalized, it “allows individuals to invest in the partnership with less fear of abandonment” (p. 855) , as cited in Ambert (2005:3).

“Most human beings search for intimate experiences and intimate relationships throughout their lives. Although most individuals are able to establish some type of intimate relationship, it is also common for individuals to have difficulty either maintaining and/or increasing their levels of intimacy over time. As a direct result, many people experience marital problems, and many marriages end in divorce” (Daniel and Barbara (1999), as cited in David and John (2000:5). “In fact, marriage and the family do continue to survive, despite all the predictions of their imminent collapse. Moreover, marriage remains the most popular voluntary institution in our society, with about 85% of the population marrying at least once”, Popenoe and Whitehead (1999), cited in David and John (2000: 6).

This research was initiated to deal with the marriage today and the major changes and challenges couples faced in their marital relationships among themselves. This paper dealt with Yimesgen Molla Marriage and Family Counseling and Training Center clients, located in Kirkos sub-city, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

Marriage differs from other valued personal relationships in conveying a full union of husband and wife—including a sexual, emotional, financial, legal, spiritual, and parental union. Marriage is not the ratification of an existing relation; it is the beginning of a new relationship between a man and women, who pledge their sexual fidelity to one another, promise loving mutual care and support, and form a family that welcomes and nurtures the children that may spring from their union. It springs from the biological, psychological, and

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social complementarity of the male and female sexes: women typically bring to marriage important gifts and perspectives that men typically do not bring, just as men bring their own special gifts and perspectives that women typically cannot provide in the same way. This covenant of mutual dependence and obligation, solemnized by a legal oath, is strengthened by the pledge of permanence that husband and wife offer to one another—always to remain, never to flee, even and especially in the most difficult times (Marriage and the Public Good: Ten Principles, 2008:5).

Betsey and Justin (2007:1) pointed out that the family is not a static institution. In recent decades, marriage rates have fallen, divorce rates have raised, and the defining characteristics of marriage have changed. Increased longevity and declining fertility mean that most of one's adult life is spent without one's own children in the household. The authors added also that the rise in marital formation at older ages, including remarriage, means that many families form with no intention of producing children. Moreover, increases in female labor force participation suggest that household specialization has either declined or, at least taken on a different meaning.

As stated by David H. and John DeFrain (2000:7), pessimists and optimists disagree about how to interpret these trends and what to do about them. The pessimists see recent changes as an indication that marriage and family are in serious trouble and are declining in their significance to society. They believe we need to return to a more traditional value system to curtail these negative trends. The optimists, on the other hand, see recent changes as a reflection of the flexibility of marriage and family and the ability of these institutions to adapt to the increasing stresses of modern life. They believe marriage and the family will survive and thrive.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

The major aim of this study was to comprehend the major benefits of marriage and its changes and challenges that the contemporary marital life encounters among beneficiaries of Yimesgen Molla marriage and Family Counseling and Training Center in Addis Ababa city. This study is aimed also with the implications of the findings on the contemporary marital life among couples in the capital Addis Ababa in particular.

1.5. Objectives of the Study

This research work is aimed at analyzing the major changes and challenges of marital relationships among couples in Yimesgen Molla Marriage and Family, Counseling and Training Center in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Being this said, the main objectives of this study were:

- To find out the type of marital practices being undertaken currently by couples in the study area.
- To explore for the major changes and challenges couples face in their marital relationships
- To examine the extent of the significance of the variables between men and women

1.6. Research Questions

Many sociologist and social worker scholars indicated that marriage is in the process of changing and facing numerous challenges worldwide. Added to this, it was indicated also that the social value the present day society give for the marital life is going through reformations

and changes. With this understanding, the investigator would like to search for these controversial issues with particular reference to the couples in Yimesgen Molla Marriage and Family Counseling and Training Center in the city Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. To proceed with this, the researcher formulated the following three leading questions to be answered at the end of this study.

The major research questions are stated as bellow.

- a) What are the marital practices (municipality, religious or traditional) that the present day couples prefer and why?
- b) What is the attitude of the present day generation towards the merits/benefits of marital life and why?
- c) What are the major changes the contemporary marital life faced as opposed to the old time practices?
- d) What are the key challenges the present day marital life faced and to what extent the variables are significant between males and females?

1.7. Significance of the Study

As marriage, in most cases can appear at least once in the life of the majority of human beings, it would be beneficial to explore how the present day generation perceives it and the key changes and challenges the couples face with particular reference to Yimesgen Molla Marriage and Family Counseling and Training Center, Addis Ababa. Therefore, it would be very essential to study the perceptions of the contemporary couples and the prominent changes and challenges couples face in their marital relationships so that actors in the areas

can get benefit out of it. With this general understanding, this study is expected to come up with the following contributions in areas of marital relationships among present day couples.

- To inform the counseling and training center of the predominant changes and challenges couples face so that it would cultivate its service delivery (social work services) in line with the needs of its clients and beneficiaries in particular and the society in general.
- To advise policy and decision makers to appreciate and incorporate the prevalent changes in marriage into the social services delivery practices accordingly.
- To suggest better ways of addressing the notable challenges the present day couples face in order to make marital life enjoyable.
- To recommend the introduction of marriage counseling (pre-marriage and post-marriage counseling) and training services widely to help couples get sound and sustainable marital life supports.

1.8. Delimitation and Limitation of the Study

It is clear that the issues of relationships in marital life would never remain to be the case of Yimesgen Molla Marriage and Family Training and Counseling Center clients and beneficiary community in Addis Ababa but also of all population living in the city. This Counseling and Training Center is selected with the ground that it has relatively wider coverage than the remaining three centers and the general manager was found cooperative to facilitate the learning process for the researcher.

Moreover, due to lack of other organizations which were delivering services in areas of marriage and family in broader perspective and some other extraneous factors, that would be out of the control of the investigator, which would find their way to the finding including the

inappropriate management of the questionnaire by the subjects, being uncooperative and not expressing feelings genuinely may limit the result of the study.

1.9. Conceptualization of Important Terms

- **Couples:** two people sharing lives: either two people who are married and are living together; or two people who were married but divorced; or two people who were married but with one or the other reason widowed.
- **Marital Relationship:** the relationship among couples-married divorced or widowed in their marital life (pre-marital life, marital time and post-marital time).
- **Changes:** alterations, modifications, variations or adjustments made in the present day marital experiences and relationship as compared to previous periods.
- **Challenges:** the major determining factors in the marital relationship among couples in their pre-marital, marital and post-marital times, which influenced their life in one or the other way.

CHAPTER II

2.0. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. CONCEPTUALIZATION OF MARRIAGE

A numerous studies have been carried out in the subject matter of present day marriage and its notable changes and challenges. Based on the review the researcher had in reference to many resources in areas of marriage, different scholars came up with different understanding and conceptualization referring their own settings but most of them do agree that marriage is being carried out since the conception of human being on the earth. In this regard, David and John (2000:4) figured out that marriage is society's oldest and most resilient institutions.

Similarly, Anne (2005: 3) conceptualized marriage as a sexual, economic, and emotional partnership between a man and a woman that is socially and legally sanctioned. The same scholar pointed out that until recently, in all societies of the world, marriage has been at the basis of family formation, that is, of reproduction. Johnson (1999) mentioned also that marriage is an institution, which involves norms dictating the rights and responsibilities of spouses, of society toward them, and of spouses as parents where commitment is a key, multifaceted aspect of the institution of marriage and so is fidelity. The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (1977) stated that when we view the entire range of past and present human societies, marriage can be described as a culturally approved relationships or a union of one man and one woman (monogamy), of one man and two or more woman (polyandry), in which there is cultural endorsement of sexual intercourse between the marital

partners of the opposite and, generally, the expectation that children will be born of the relationship.

Levin (1993); Levin and Trost (1992); and Trost (1993), as cited by Vincent (2002:278), on their side, defined marriage as “a lifelong, legally and morally sanctioned relationship, in which a heterosexual couples became an economically cooperative unit in which they lived together, had sexual relations, and raised children.” Marriage is a social union or legal contract between people that creates kinship. It is an institution in which interpersonal relationships, usually intimate and sexual, are acknowledged in a variety of ways, depending on the culture or subculture in which it is found. Such a union, often formalized via a wedding ceremony, may also be called matrimony (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, n.d). Another researcher, Edward (1991:26) defined marriage as a general term for a social institution that one or more men to one or more women; which is recognized by custom or law and involves certain rights and duties both in the case of the parties entering the union and in the case of the children born of it.”

2.2. COMMON FORMS OF MARITAL PRACTICES

Most of the studies depicted that there are three common types of martial practices. In this regard, the revised family code of the federal democratic republic of Ethiopia, article II classified marriages into three major forms which are civil marriage/status marriages that take place before an officer of civil status when a man and a woman have appeared before an officer of civil status; religious marriage that take place when a man and a woman have performed such acts or rites as deemed to constitute a valid marriage by their religion; and customary/traditional marriage that take place when a man and a woman have performed such rites as deemed to constitute a valid marriage by the custom of the community in which

they live in or by the custom of the community to which they belong or to which one of them belongs. Erin (2007:6-17) in his study, similarly, classified marriage into three major categories: civil marriage that is entered into terms of the marriage act and often entered into at government municipal or other institutions; customary marriage one takes place according to the traditional customs and culture of indigenous people; and religious marriage that is done in terms of religious rites, such as Islamic, Hindu, etc.

Briefly, Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia (n. d) summarized that marriage is usually recognized by the state, a religious authority, or the customary community. It stated also that civil marriage is the legal concept of marriage as a governmental institution irrespective of religious affiliation, in accordance with marriage laws of the jurisdiction.

2.3. NOTABLE BENEFITS OF MARRIAGE

Many scholars in areas of sociology, social anthropology and social works agree that marriage provides many merits primarily for the couples and then to the dependents and the community/society they are living in. According to Laub et al (1998), the institution of marriage contributes to the emotional stability and overall well-being of adults and children; it becomes a very functional institution for society. Coleman (1988) added also that marriage produces a great deal of social capital and serves as an agency of social control. McLoyd (1998), cited in Anne-Marie (2005:22), reflected also that children in married two-parent families acquire more human capital: they drop out of school less, get more education, are less often on welfare than children with only one resident parent or a cohabiting parent. He added also that children are less likely to become delinquent and adult criminals than children with single or cohabiting parents are.

Linda & Gallagher (1999) and Waite (1995, 1998) reviewed various studies that examined the positive effects of marriage on individuals reflected as “Married people lead a healthier lifestyle so that they tend to avoid more harmful behaviours than do single, divorced, or widowed persons; married people live longer than do single, divorced, or widowed persons; married people have a satisfying sexual relationship; married people have more wealth and economic assets because they can pool their economic resources and be more wealthy; and children generally do better raise in a two-parent home so that children from two-parent homes tend to do better emotionally and academically.”

It is stated also in the Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia (n. d) that people marry for many reasons, including legal, social, emotional, economical, spiritual, and religious purposes. These might also include arranged marriages, family obligations, and the legal establishment of a nuclear family unit, the legal protection of children and public declaration of commitment. The act of marriage usually creates normative or legal obligations between the individuals involved. In some societies, these obligations also extend to certain family members of the married persons. In cultures that allow the dissolution of a marriage this is known as divorce.

Similarly, the Marriage and the Public Good: Ten Principles (2008:3) pointed out that marriage plays a vital role in preserving the common good and promoting the welfare of children; it provides order and meaning to adult sexual relationships and, more fundamentally, furnishes the ideal context for the bearing and rearing of the young. It is added that marriage is an important source of social, human, and financial capital for children, especially for children growing up in poor, disadvantaged communities who do not have ready access to

other sources of such capital. Thus, from the point of view of spouses, children, society, and the polity, marriage advances the public interest.

Gemechu and Assefa (2006:252), in their study, depicted that almost all society in the world recognizes the significance of marriage as a source of the foundation of a society, which in turn is the result of many institutions among which one is family. They summarized that every society makes it a point to pay attention to marriage regardless of the technological advancement it has achieved or the geographical location in irrespective of its being rural or urban.

2.4. MAJOR CHANGES IN MARRIAGE AND MARITAL LIFE TODAY

2.4.1. GRADUAL DECLINE IN MARRIAGE

Many scholars in the area agree that the present day generation showed lack of interest for marriage and this gradually affected the society at all. Hogan (1993: 34), cited in Tiina (2009:9) explained that as an institution, marriage has its history, but as time passes, its nature has changed. Kautto (2002) has mentioned, “Getting married and having a child is no longer strongly correlated”. He furthermore mentioned that economic, social, and psychological pressures are listed among the external threats to the institutions of marriage and the family.

In a study by United Church of God, an International Association (2005, 2007), it is shown that marriage has been an exclusive bond between a man and a woman that includes most intimate of acts, the sexual union. The study argued that in recent years this pattern has been changing where some choose to have children apart from marriage and others opt for same-

sex relationships. Nevertheless, even many of those who deviate from tradition still want their relationships to be called marriages and their social units of families.

Supporting the ongoing marriage changes and decline, Vincent & William (2002:284) pointed out that the institution of marriage and family structure in general has changed considerably since the end of World War II. Social trends, legal reforms, and the increased proportion of women in the workplace have contributed to higher rates of divorce and non-marital childbearing. Women's increased economic independence, the advent of modern contraception, and other societal shifts have led Americans to evaluate marriage outside traditional constraints. David & John (2000:163) noted that the popularity of marriage is decreasing. Although most individuals choose to marry at least once, it appears that fewer are choosing to remarry and instead either stay single or choose cohabitation over marriage. They further mentioned that marriage has been on the decline for the last two decades, and it appears that increasingly fewer people will choose to get married or to remarry in future years. Besides, Whitehead & Popenoe (2005), as cited in David & John (2000:164), indicated that the earliest stage in the life cycle of marriage is colored by challenges related to significant contemporary facts.

2.4.2. AGE INCREASE AT MARRIAGE AND DECLINE IN BIRTHRATES

Many scholars agree that the age when the present day generation goes for marriage has been changed. Sporakowski (1980) and McLaughlin, Lichter, and Johnson (1993) in their study pointed out that one of the most important changing issues in marriage has been the increase in the median age at first marriage. They mentioned also that at the beginning of the twentieth century, the median age at first marriage started a decline. Since then, the estimated median

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age has been rising, with especially rapid increases since 1980. Barich and Bielby (1996); Cooney and Hoga (1991) Miller and Heaton (1991) reflected also in their research that people today marry later and may experience a period of cohabitation prior to legal marriage.

The reduction in average annual rate of population growth, which is a global phenomenon, primarily occurred due to reductions in fertility levels. An inevitable outcome of declining fertility rates and increasing age at first birth in most of the countries in the world is a reduction in family size (Freedman, (1995) and (Caldwell, 1993), as cited in Barbara (2005:9). Neither a man nor a woman who has not attained the full age of eighteen years shall conclude marriage (The Revised Family Code; Addis Ababa-Ethiopia, 2000, section two; article 7). The legal age of marriage in Ethiopia is 18 for both males and females, but it is widely ignored. Nationwide, 19 percent of girls were married by age 15, and about half of girls were married by age 18. (Child Marriage Briefing, Ethiopia, Population Council, 2004:1)

2.4.3. MOTHERS ENTERING TO WORK FORCE

The gradual move of mothers from home to work is also believed to be one of the prevalent factors contributing to the trend change in marriage. Floge (1989), as cited in Philip (1999:12), said that change in the family living has been the large influx of married women into the work force. Mothers are entering the work force for reasons both economic and noneconomic. He further explained that noneconomic reasons for employment are also important so that large numbers of women want to work for reasons of personal fulfillment.

The women's movement emphasized equality in education, employment, and income for women. As a result, rather than get married and depend on a husband for income, women earned higher degrees, sought career opportunities, and earned their own income. This economic independence brought with it independence of choice. Women could afford to remain single or to leave an unfulfilling or abusive relationship (Brewster, 2006), as cited in *Marriage and Family Encyclopedia* (n. d: 135). Adams (1976) asserts that two factors, i.e. level of education and professions have important bearings on singleness because they contribute to the scope of independent living and psychological freedom. Being in the higher level of the economic stratum allows single women in contemporary period to enjoy financial freedom and thus the choice of marriage postponement. Rozita & Zaharah, 2009: 9) summarized that gone are the days when marriage is necessary in order to provide economic support for women.

2.4.4. COHABITATION OF COUPLES

In spite of the fact that the researchers in the areas of marriage vary a little with the definition of cohabitation, the anonymously agree that this has become one of the normal trends for the present day generation to go through it ahead of the formal marriage.

Bumpass et al (1991) described cohabitation as a sexual and emotional relationship within the context of living together. It is often seen as entailing fewer responsibilities at the legal, economic, and even emotional levels. Some individuals choose cohabitation because it requires, in their opinion, less sexual fidelity than marriage. It is perceived to be a freer lifestyle than marriage, that is, a relationship not bound by the norm of permanency. It is easier to enter into a cohabitational than a marital relationship because formal ceremonies and

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social recognition are not required. Consequently, at the social level, it is also an easier relationship to dissolve than marriage, especially when there are no children. Anne (2005:3) mentioned that cohabitation is less institutionalized and norms dictating what a proper relationship within this context can be freely interpreted.

Betsey and Justin (2007:10-11) argued that in recent decades, cohabitation has emerged as an important institution, as a precursor to and sometimes as a substitute for marriage. This decoupling of domestic arrangements from the legal (and social) status of relationships raises important new questions for economic analysis of the family, as early models treated marriage and household formation almost identically. In attempting to understand the above notion, Glick (1989); Bumpass and Lu (1998), as cited in David and John (2000:12), pointed out that more than half of all couples in America cohabit before marriage, and cohabitation is becoming more acceptable and the rate of cohabitation has increased eight-fold since the 1960s and onwards. Ann (2001:1) pointed also that male adolescents are still more likely than female adolescents to hold favorable attitudes toward cohabitation prior to marriage, a trend that has held true since at least the mid-1970s. In the United States of America in 1975, 42 percent of male high school seniors agreed that cohabitation was a good idea, versus approximately 28 percent of their female counterparts. In 2001, nearly 64 percent of males agreed, versus only 57 percent of females.

2.4.5. MARITAL DIVORCE

The researched understood that marital divorce has become one of the predominant changes and challenges the contemporary generation faces. In this regard, Clarke & Brentano (2006), cited in Tiina (2009:9) stated:

In the past, marriage was for life. The role of men was to be the breadwinners and the role of women was to be the nurturers of the family. When women started working and getting higher education, they became more independent. The balance between husband and wife changed when, for example, women started bringing their share to the family income. At present, the situation is different. It is impossible to point out a single reason why the relationship possibly ends in divorce. There are various factors that contribute to a divorce including societal changes, economic conditions, ethnic and community characteristics, and individual and relationship qualities – and these factors are interlinked. Societal changes have reduced legal, moral, and social restrictions against divorce.

Giddens (1993) stated that the most striking feature of modern society is the sharp decline of first time marriages and the rapid rise of divorce, with divorce rates in Europe quadrupling from 1960 to 1992. Macionis and Plummer (2008) argued that in the U.K., divorce is found most commonly in young spouses, couples from lower social classes, professionally or economically successful women and finally, remarried people. James (nd: 12), cited in Barbara (2005:10) depicted that sociologists have proposed a number of key explanations for this surge in divorce. Divorce, they argue, is now in a legal sense, easier to accomplish and is also socially acceptable. Similarly, individualism is increasing, with many people more interested in personal satisfaction than putting family first. In a parallel fashion, women are today less dependent on men and have expectations of careers, whereas in previous generations, their aspirations and expectations may have differed.

A study by A Valley Bible Church Position Paper (nd: 1) witnessed that divorce has become very common American society and the church is not immune to its affects. Many Christians

MSW Thesis 2013

pursue divorce and probably all of us have known people who have been divorced. More often than not someone who is in some way connected to our church is heading toward divorce or in the midst of a divorce. Daniel and Barbara (1999), cited in David and John (2000: 5), said, “Although most individuals are able to establish some type of intimate relationship, it is not uncommon for individuals to have difficulty either maintaining and/or increasing their levels of intimacy over time. As a direct result, many people experience marital problems, and many marriages end in divorce.”

2.4.6. SINGLEHOOD AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO MARRIAGE

Even though the duration varies like some decide to stay long; some half of their life and others to the extent of their entire life, singlehood is opted as one of the predominant attributions of life style for the present day generation almost all over the world. For instance, Manning (2007), as cited in an Introduction to Marriage and the Family (10th ed.: 134), argued that though more than 95 percent of American adults eventually marry and only 5 percent of a sample of 1,293 adolescents predicted that they would never marry, more people are delaying marriage and enjoying singlehood. The acceptance of singlehood as a lifestyle can be attributed to social movements—the sexual revolution, the women’s movement, and so forth. In the same manner, David and John (2000:146) pointed out that the life styles of single individuals have changed in recent decades. More people are remaining single longer. Single young men and women are living together without being married – enjoying some of the benefits of marriage without legal or religious commitments and with less stigmatization. Those who delay marriage until they have completed their education and found satisfying work, increase their chances for marital stability.

The Marriage and Family Encyclopedia (n. d) described also that during the 1970s, several social factors converged to create a new and more positive recognition of singlehood: more women in higher education, expanding career and job opportunities for women, and increased availability and acceptability of birth control. These societal changes provided women with greater freedom and independence and contributed to a shift in attitudes about the desirability and necessity of marriage. Veroff, Douvan, & Kulka (1981) argued that in the 19th century, the position of unmarried people began to change. They increasingly became involved in wage labour outside the family and often lived in boardinghouses. Research studies conducted by Austrom & Hanel (1985); Frazier et al. (1996); Lewis & Moon (1997), as cited by Jana Darrington, Kathleen W. Piercy, and Sylvia Niehuis (2005:3), have shown that single adults report three primary reasons for being unmarried: personal choice, external circumstances, and personal deficits or self-blame.

2.4.7. PARENT-ARRANGED MARRIAGE PATTERNS

Various sources have pointed out that in a traditional marriage, it is the obvious life style that the parents choose their son or daughter's future spouse with only a little input from the soon to be newly-weds. If either the son or daughter refuses the choice, the parents tend to respect their wishes, and will find someone else. The main motivation factor in such marriages is the happiness of the son or daughter, but the standpoint is that "Parents know best." That said the parents will often exert considerable pressure on their child to marry the person they have chosen, because they do strongly believe that they know best. David and John (2000:154) argued that all societies have created some system for matching individuals for marriage and parenthood. These systems range from the practice of bride purchase, to the selection of a mate the village shaman according to astrological signs, to contractual systems in which a

MSW Thesis 2013

mate may serve as an indentured servant to the bride's parents, to individual choice based on personal attraction and love. In some cultures, couples are matched while they are still infants; in others, the bride or the groom must prove their fertility by producing children before they are eligible for marriage. Although the customs of mate selection vary widely, all perform the necessary function of matching a couple for a marriage and eventual parenthood.

In a brief survey conducted by Population Council Ethiopia (2004:1), it is depicted that parents frequently arrange marriages for their daughters without their input or consent: in some settings it appears that the younger a girl is when she gets married, the less say she has in the choice of her husband. Lee, Stone & Fox (1980), as cited in David and John (2000:155), "Parent-arranged marriages, however, still occur throughout much of the non-industrialized world; up to three quarters of marriages in some cultures may be arranged. Parent-arranged marriages are based on the principle that the elders in a community have the wisdom to select the appropriate spouse. Parents or elders are more likely to base their decision on economic, political and social status considerations – to enhance the family's status and position through their choice. Considerations of lineage and family status are generally more important than love or affection in such decisions, although the parents may take the couples' preferences into account to some extent."

2.5. MAJOR CHALLENGES TO MARRIAGE AND MARITAL LIFE TODAY

2.5.1. DECLINE OF SEXUAL SATISFACTION OVER TIME

The results of past studies that have examined the relationship between duration of marriage and marital satisfaction have been inconsistent, so there is still some debate in the literature as

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to the exact nature of the relationship between duration of marriage and marital quality (Elements & Swensen, 2000:112). However, a well-documented fact about marriage is that marital relationships have a strong tendency to decrease in satisfaction over the first twenty years of the marriage. Most newly married couples report very high satisfaction and any change from that point would probably be in a downward direction (Broderick, 1988:332). A longitudinal study conducted by Huston et al. (1986), found a substantial decline in reported marital satisfaction during the first year of marriage and a study by Glenn (1989a) estimated *that* marital satisfaction as indicated by the percentage of people who claim their marriages are “very happy” decreases steadily for at least the first 10 years and maybe for 25 years or longer (Glenn, 1990:826), cited in Michele (nd: 19).

Satisfying sex life in marriage or relationship is obtained to be one of the most important practices by many scholars. Spanier and Thompson (1984), as cited in David and John (2000:496), wrote the following in this regard. “An unsatisfactory sex life is often associated with divorce. Some divorcing people contend that sex is only the battleground not the cause of the war. But unsatisfactory sex life can be a significant source of stress in a marriage, and divorcing people often talk about their failed sexual relationship.” Douglas (2000:2) expressed in his research finding as “Marriage is not just for sexual relations, of course, but it is a profound means of expressing love and commitment. It is designed to be a physical, emotional, and spiritual union; hence a form of marital validation. Just as a good marriage increases sexual interest, satisfactory sexual relations add soul-binding emotional strength to the marriage couples so.”

Some researchers have consistently found that marriage satisfaction tends to decrease over time. In a longitudinal study of newlywed couples, Lawrence Kurdek (1998), as cited in MSW Thesis 2013

David and John (2000: 386), found that over the first four years of marriage, the marital satisfaction for both males and females dropped each year and at a similar rate. As marital satisfaction dropped, there was an increase in the severity of depression, especially among women.

2.5.2. DIVORCE AND MARITAL PROBLEMS

Shahidullah (1979); Goode (1993); and Shaikh (1998) wrote “Divorce is the final dissolution, leaving both spouses legally free to enter another marriage contract. Divorce is sometimes thought to be the only solution to an unbearable relationship. It frees the spouse and children from a situation, which may be damaging to the entire family. The idea that when a couple has children it will be less likely to divorce is widely accepted in most societies. Even in Western societies a significantly large proportion of divorced couples do not have any living children” (cited in Barbara Markey (2005:9).

David and John (2000:486) added that people do not marry with the expectation that they will divorce, but nearly one in two marriages ends in divorce. Because of its prevalence, divorce is viewed by many as a sign of the breakdown of the family. However, divorce can have a positive outcome, by freeing individuals from painful or difficult marriage that cannot be changed. Family life is a source of stress for many. At the extreme, family life can be shattered by domestic violence, neglect, emotional cruelty, incest, or the abuse of alcohol and other drugs.” Popenoe and Whitehead (1999) indicated “Even though 50% survive, the quality of some of those marriages may be poor and in many lasting marriages, one partner is unhappy, typically, it is the wife who is unhappy than the husband. A respected sociologist, Norval Glenn (1996), as mentioned by the same scholars, predicted that after ten years of

marriage only about 25% of the couples will still be happily married, which a substantial decrease from the past is” (cited in David and John, 2000: 7)

In their study, Frank D. and Steven R (2004:2) argued “it is not wise to stay in a bad marriage for the sake of our children. They pointed out that it is clearly harmful to raise kids in a home that is subsumed by hostility between the parties. A peaceful divorce is better than a warlike marriage. Unfortunately, divorces are rarely peaceful. The mutual hostility between the parents continues after the breakup. For that reason, children of divorce often fare just as poorly as those caught in the crossfire of a miserable marriage.”

2.5.3. COMMUNICATION IN MARITAL LIFE

“The presence of an effective communication pattern is one of the most frequently mentioned characteristics of strong families” Swihart (1988), Brenda and Deborah (1998:3). Besides, Frank. D. and Steven R (2004:2) showed that the biggest myth of all is that communication and more specifically, learning to resolve your conflicts, is the royal road to romance and an enduring, happy marriage.

Communication and conflict resolution skills are predominantly attributed to be the major skills couples should entail to lead a relatively successful life and fight against any problems in marriage life, including divorce. Fowers and Olson (1989), as cited in David and John (2000: 494), have stated as “Some authorities might say that communication problems are the central reason for divorce. Most divorcing people relate how communication, including the ability to resolve conflict and deal with problems, broke down in their marriage. Communication and conflict resolution are interrelated and both are necessary skills in a happy marriage.”

The 2000 research on newly married couples by the Center for Marriage and Family at Creighton University in the United States of America, identified time, sex and money as primary issues causing stress in the new marital system. Couples reported that they did not have enough time for the relationship because they were consumed by careers, social obligations and children. Sex was often not sufficient or satisfying because of lack of time and energy. Money was generally an ongoing source of disagreement or stress. Good conflict resolutions skills around these and other stressors is the greatest predictor of satisfaction in the early marriage. If the newly married are to build well for the future stages of their marriage, the changes presented in early key stage need to result in renegotiation for a special kind of togetherness (Wallerstein, 1995). This interdependence allows good conflict resolution and includes a balance of positive and negative interactions (Gottman, 1994), as cited in Barbara (2005:9).

Anyone who has been married or who has seen a marriage from the inside knows that—despite a couple’s best intentions—conflict is a part of marriage. Conflict inevitably arises between two people who live intimately and who share most everything in life—from their goals and checkbooks to their bedroom and children. At some point, their desires and approaches to life clash, sometimes mildly and sometimes quite harshly (Marriage and Family: Thinking Critically: Chapter 10: 7).

In brief, Frank. D. and Steven R (2004:3) stated “By forcing couples to see their differences from each other’s perspective, problem solving is supposed to take place without anger. This approach is often recommended whatever the specific issue – whether your conflict concerns the size of your grocery bills or major differences in your lifelong goals. Conflict resolution is

touted not only as a care-all for troubled marriages but as a tonic that can prevent good marriages from faltering.”

CHAPTER III

3.0. DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

3.1. Research Design

This study applied a mix of both close-ended and open-ended questionnaires based on the nature of the thematic subject areas wanted to be addressed in order to get in-depth understanding of the responses from the quantitative method as well as triangulation of the responses. Likert-scale questionnaires with five scales (strongly disagree (0), disagree (1), undecided (2), agree (3) and strongly agree (4)) was used in the close-ended type of items while simplified open-ended items were used in areas that need further clarification from the respondents as well as that gave relative freedom to the respondents to express their feeling openly.

Moreover, in order to manage the language barrier, the researcher used the Amharic translation of the questionnaire both for open-ended and close-ended questions that helped respondents gave their feedback genuinely and freely.

3.2. Universe of the Study

Organizations and Counseling and Training Centers implementing or rendering services in areas of marriage, in particular reference to Addis Ababa city, are almost negligible. Those working even for these practices are at their infant stage where getting their cooperation to conduct a research has been unlikely due to the blame that the practices are new and beneficiaries would not like to be known by anyone else except the counselor or the confidential trainer. However, the researcher has assessed the available marriage and family therapy, counseling and training centers in Addis Ababa and has found four centers, namely:

Beria Marriage Counseling and Training Center , located in Bole sub city; Posterity Psychological Therapy and Training Center, located in Kirkos sub-city; Yemider Chew Marriage Counseling and Training Center, located in Lafto sub-city, and Yimesgen Molla Marriage and Family Counseling and Training Center (YMMFCTC), located in Kirkos sub-city.

Among these four Family and Marriage services delivery centers, the researcher has selected the Yimesgen Molla Marriage and Family Counseling and Training Center (YMMFCTC),, located in Kirkos sub-city, based on the relatively broad depth of works and longtime service since it was established in 2004 GC. Yimesgen Molla Marriage and Family Counseling and Training Center initially started its activities at individual level for families, partners/couples and singles to render pre-marital, marital and post-marital counseling services. Gradually, the center started to accommodate group counseling, group trainings and providing additional services like contributing a column to the Ethiopian Addis Zemen Newspaper weekly on regular basis on marriage and family perspectives and once in a week radio program in collaboration with the Ethiopian Radio and Television Agency (ERTA) on relevant topics through inviting different beneficiaries (with live experiences) and professionals from areas of psychology, sociology and other related social and natural science streams. By now, the center has been organizing various trainings, workshops, seminars, panel discussions and other group forums on marriage and family matters at different places and at different times. The center is proving pre-marital, marital and post-marital counseling services for individuals, couples, partners and those who are at the pipeline to select partner and so on.

Based on the above fact, the researched opted for Yimesgen Molla Marriage and Family Counseling and Training Center located in Kirkos Sub-city to fundamentally study for and

analyze the major changes and challenges of marital relationships among couples in Addis Ababa city.

3.3. Sampling Methods

Yimesgen Molla Marriage and Family Counseling and Training Center, located in Addis Ababa city Kirkos Sub-city, has been rendering the services (training, workshops, radio program, group forums ...) for about 450 beneficiaries/client in a year. Consequently, the researched applied convenient sampling method to select 58 clients, taking their willingness to take part in the study and who were interested to contribute in the learning process. Convenient sampling method was applied because the service was open-ended that clients were coming to the center at any time they faced the challenge. As criteria of inclusion, the samples applied for this study were either those who married and were living together, or married but divorced, or widowed. Those singles, who were preparing for the marital relationship, excluded from this study.

3.4. Data Collection: Tools and Procedures

Although a single tool may not help to find a reliable and valid data inclusively and exhaustively, due to convenience for the samples, the researcher of this paper work fundamentally applied both comprehensive close-ended and open-ended questionnaires keeping the objective in mind. An open-ended item was added at the end of some of the close-ended items to give the samples the opportunity and freedom to express their untouched ideas, if any.

The questionnaire consisted of five major thematic areas, which were socio-demographic characteristics; marital processes; Benefits of marriage; major challenges in marital practices; and major challenges in marital experience/life. The later two thematic areas were composed

of six and five sub-thematic perspective respectively under each so as to thoroughly investigate the relevant information, which assisted the study to come up with comprehensive finding that would serve as a leading for further research in the area.

Some previous studies, theoretical perspectives and dissertations worldwide relating to the subject matter were also carefully addressed so as to get a comprehensive analysis and understanding of the major findings.

3.5. Data Analysis Methods: Processing and Interpretation

According to Thomas (2000:113), a cited by Fred Moonga (2007:22), it is stated that combining data collection and analysis to come up with meaningful findings as much as possible is very important. The researcher used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) data transfer software for the data entering and processing in order to analyse and interpret the data through quantitative and qualitative applications to produce the final report of the study. Percentage was applied mainly for the data interpretation of the open-ended questionnaires while inferential statistics, mainly of mean difference, was used for the data interpretations of the closed-ended questionnaires as deemed as necessary.

The questionnaire consisted of both open-ended and close-ended items with pre-coded responses. Due to the nature of service delivery that was on one-by-one come basis the completion of the 58 subject questionnaires took almost a year that allowed the researcher check them carefully. Mean difference and percentage were primarily used to analyse and interpret the data for the close-ended and open-ended items of the research respectively. Besides, Alpha Level was used to calculate the significance of the measurement of the responses between male and female for the close-ended parts of the questionnaire.

CHAPTER IV

4.0. ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS/FINDINGS

The analysis has been divided into four major thematic areas with which each of these consisted of various research questions addressed accordingly. The major thematic research areas in this study included the marital processes that that in turn narrated the type of marriage preferred by the respondents and the more biding and satisfying type of marital arrangement; the ultimate benefits of marriage; the major changes of marital practices which in turn depicted the cohabitation prevalence, age at first marriage, mothers entering to the work force, parental arranged marriage, and singlehood as an alternative to marriage; and the key challenges observed in the contemporary marital life that explained fundamentally about conflict in marital life, sexual relationship, communication, socio-economic security as well as the prevalence of divorce. Inferences and interpretations were pulled out and presented here in this section.

To start with, the socio-demographic characteristic of the respondents was presented as follow. This introductory area of the analysis of this study included the age, gender, religious affiliation, marital status, educational level and that of the average monthly income of the respondents. Consequently, 96.6% (56 out of 58 individuals) indicated their age in the three ranges given: 22.4% (13 out of 58) were less than 31 years; 48.3% (28 out of 58) were between 31 and 40 years; while 25.9% (15 out of 58) were aged above 40 years; and 3.4% (2 out of 58) missed. Among the 58-sample population, 56.9% (33 out of 58) were males; 41.4% (24 out of 58) were females while 1.7% (1 out of 58) missed to indicate the age. The majority of the respondents, 81% (47 out of 58) were orthodox religion followers while

13.8% (8 out of 58) were protestant and 5.2% (3 out of 58) did not show their religious affiliation.

The majority of the respondents, 84.5% (49 out of 58) indicated that they were in their first marriage. It followed by 5.2 (3 out of 58) who were reported they were separated and then by cohabiting, divorced and remarried each with 3.4% (2 out of 58). The majority of the respondents indicated also that their educational level was first degree and above, 41.4% (24 out of 58) while it was followed by diploma holders, 25.9% (15 out of 58); then by grade 10/12 completed, 20.7% (12 out of 58) and then by certificate level which was 3.4% (2 out of 58) and 1.7% (1 out of 58) missed to indicate the educational level he/she was in. Finally, 27.6 (16 out of 58) reported that their average monthly income was at the range of 1000 and 2000 Ethiopian Birr (ETB), followed by those earned 2000-5000 ETB monthly, 24.1% (14 out of 58); 20.7% (12 out of 58) earned greater than 5000 ETB; 8.6% (5 out of 58) earned between 500 and 1000 ETB while 10.3% (6 out of 58) earned from other means and 8.6% (5 out of 58) did not reported their monthly average income.

Figure i: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

| Age | | | Sex/Gender | | | Religious Affiliation | | |
|-----------------|-----------|---------|------------|-----------|---------|-----------------------|-----------|---------|
| Age Group | Frequency | Percent | Sex | Frequency | Percent | Category | Frequency | Percent |
| < than 31 years | 13 | 22.4 | Male | 33 | 56.9 | Protestant | 8 | 13.8 |
| 31-40 years | 28 | 48.3 | Female | 24 | 41.4 | Orthodox | 47 | 81 |

| Above 40 years | 15 | 25.9 | Total | 57 | 98.3 | Others | 3 | 5.2 |
|------------------|-----------|---------|-----------------------|-----------|---------|----------------|-----------|---------|
| Total | 56 | 96.6 | Missing | 1 | 1.7 | | 58 | 100 |
| Missing | 2 | 3.4 | Total | 58 | 100 | | | |
| Total | 58 | 100 | | | | | | |
| Marital Status | | | Educational Level | | | Monthly Income | | |
| Marital Category | Frequency | Percent | Level | Frequency | Percent | Category | Frequency | Percent |
| Cohabiting | 2 | 3.4 | Grade 10/12 Completed | 12 | 20.7 | 500-1000 birr | 5 | 8.6 |
| First Marriage | 49 | 84.5 | Certificate | 2 | 3.4 | 1000-2000 birr | 16 | 27.6 |
| Separated | 3 | 5.2 | Diploma | 15 | 25.9 | 2000-5000 birr | 14 | 24.1 |
| Divorced | 2 | 3.4 | Degree and above | 24 | 41.4 | > 5000 birr | 12 | 20.7 |
| Remarried | 2 | 3.4 | Read and write | 4 | 6.9 | Others | 6 | 10.3 |
| Total | 58 | 100 | Total | 57 | 98.3 | Total | 53 | 91.4 |
| | | | Missing | 1 | 1.7 | Missing | 5 | 8.6 |
| | | | Total | 58 | 100 | Total | 58 | 100 |

4.1. Theme 1: Common Forms of Marital Practices

When we view the entire range of past and present human societies marriage can be described as a culturally approved relationships or a union of one man and one woman (monogamy), of one man and two or more woman (polyandry), in which there is cultural endorsement of sexual intercourse between the marital partners of the opposite and, generally, the expectation that children will be born of the relationship (International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 1977), cited by Gemechu B. and Assefa T. (2006:1)

Most scholars in the area argue that there are three common forms of marital practices that generation is following. For instance, Erin (2007: 6) classified marriage into three major categories: civil marriage, customary marriage, and religious marriage. Besides, the Revised Family Code of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, article II classified marriages into three major forms, which are civil marriage/status marriages- religious marriages, and customary marriage.

With this theoretical background, the researched had included these three common types of marital practices into the questionnaire and why the respondents preferred one. Added to this, this thematic area consisted of key questions, which type of these marital practices, were more binding and satisfactory. Accordingly, 36.2 (21 out of 58) respondents went for the religious marriage; 31% (18 out of 58) formed their marriage through civil marriage practices; while 20.7% (12 out of 58) with customary/traditional marriage system; and 5.2% (3 out of 58) did not show for what type of marital practices they went for.

When respondents asked why they selected the type of marriage type their went for, for instance, 77.8 (14 out of 18 those answered they formed their marriage with civil type)

reasoned out that it was the preferred type by the society and helped the couples trust each other and also it was legally binding than others. 33.3% (3 out of 12 those who answered they formed their marriage through customary/traditional type) mentioned that this type of marital practice was the common among the society they were living in; helped them feel trusted each other and it was the right option for them. Lastly, though the prevalence for the reasons given was not that much differential, most of the respondents, 42.1 (8 out of 21 though formed their marriage through religious type) stated that they went for the religious marital practices because it was the respected type and helped them see and balance their spiritual and secular life practices with the help of God. Some of them mentioned that religious marriage is more binding, satisfying and helpful to understand each other and even solve difference patiently taking the marital responsibilities and the value the society gave for the partnership through marriage. They told that marriage is not an easy task to dissolve easy but required commitment and courage between the partners as well as other individuals around the couples' life (children, parents, friends, and so forth). See figure 4.1 (i) shown below.

Figure 4.1 (i): Type of Marital Practices Respondents Went Through

| Marital Ceremony | Frequency | Percent | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|--------------------------------|-----------|---------|---------|--------------|
| Civil marriage | 18 | 31.0 | 32.7 | 32.7 |
| Customary/traditional marriage | 12 | 20.7 | 21.8 | 54.5 |
| Religious marriage | 21 | 36.2 | 38.2 | 92.7 |
| Municipality & Religious | 4 | 6.9 | 7.3 | 100.0 |

| | | | | |
|---------|----|-------|-------|--|
| Total | 55 | 94.8 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | 3 | 5.2 | | |
| Total | 58 | 100.0 | | |

As to the open-ended questions the subjects were asked for which type of the three marital practices would be more binding and would help lead a peaceful and stable marital life, the majority of them, 55.2% (32 out of 58) declared that the religious practice would be helpful while this followed by those who went for civil marriage, 13.8% (8 out of 58). In this case, 25.9% (15 out of 58), a figure that could not be neglected, showed that, as far as there was a clear understanding and commitment between the couples, all forms of marriage were same and legally binding before law, in case needed. Besides, 5.2% (3 out of 58) did not reflect their preference which type could be better and was binding for peaceful and stable marital life. See figure 4.1 (ii) shown below.

Figure 4.1 (ii): More Binding Type of Marriage Practice for Peaceful Marital Life

| Types of Marriage | Frequency | Percent | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|--------------------|-----------|---------|---------|--------------|
| Civil marriage | 8 | 13.8 | 14.5 | 14.5 |
| Religious marriage | 32 | 55.2 | 58.2 | 72.7 |
| All are the same | 15 | 25.9 | 27.3 | 100.0 |
| Total | 55 | 94.8 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | 3 | 5.2 | | |
| Total | 58 | 100.0 | | |

This basic thematic area ended with the question for the respondents to tell on what type of marital practice would be more satisfactory in marital relationship. Consequently, the majority of them, 87.9% (51 out of 58) depicted that the most satisfying type of marriage should be the one where both the husband and the wife had jobs and both take care of the house and children while the same subject, 10.4%(6 out of 58) mentioned that it does not matter either the husband or the wife provides the household finances as far as it feeds the family and there is respect between the couples. 1.7 (1 out of 58) missed to reflect neither of the options given. See figure 4.1 (iii) below.

Figure 4.1 (iii): More Binding Type of Marriage Practice for Peaceful Marital Life

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|--|-----------|---------|---------|--------------|
| One where the husband provides finances for the family and the wife takes care of the house and children | 3 | 5.2 | 5.3 | 5.3 |
| One where the husband and wife both have jobs and both take care of the house and children | 51 | 87.9 | 89.5 | 94.7 |
| One where the wife provides finances for the family and the husband takes care of the house and children | 3 | 5.2 | 5.3 | 100.0 |
| Total | 57 | 98.3 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | 1 | 1.7 | | |
| Total | 58 | 100.0 | | |

4.2. Theme 2: Major Benefits of Marriage

Malinowski and Robert L. (nd), sourced from the webpage: www.sociologyguide.com, argued that marriage is one of the universal social institutions established to control and regulate the life of humankind. They added also that it is an institution with different implications in different cultures. Its purposes, functions and forms may differ from society to society but it is present everywhere as an institution. Westermarck (nd) in 'History of Human marriage' defines marriage as the more or less durable connection between male and female lasting beyond the mere act of propagation until after the birth of offspring.

The Final report of the Roman Catholic-Lutheran-Reformed study commission (1971-1977: 8) stated:

We can therefore speak of three aspects or dimensions of marriage. These are three aspects of its significance or its function. The first aspect shows the married couple in its own life, its history, and its fate. The second aspect brings the family as such into sharper focus: children are an expression of both the nature of the institution and of personal love; they add nothing alien to the marriage but rather enlarge it to the other dimensions. Lastly, the third aspect throws the limelight on the importance of marriage for society. Marriage represents the living cell, the fundamental element of both civil society and of the religious community. These three dimensions mark the living expression of marriage, and its significance as going far beyond mere individual interest.

To measure if the theoretical perspectives given by various scholars with regard to the common benefits of marriage, the subjects were provided with four key Liker scale questions. As it has been seen from figure 4.2 (i) below, a total of male respondents (32 out of 58) with

average value of 3.32 and female respondents (23 out of 58) with average mean value of 2.9 indicated that marriage is still beneficial for the society at all. The overall mean value for the major variable (“Benefits of Marriage”) 3.15 which implied that both male and female respondents have favourable attitude/opinion towards the subject matter. The mean difference is 0.42, which statistically is not significant that in turn conformed that both male and female groups have similar positive/favourable view or opinion towards the main subject matter; i.e., they favoured for the stated advantages of marriage than stay unmarried. See figure 4.2 (i) shown below.

As seen in the figure 4.2 (i) below, both the male and female respondents expressed that their marital life provided them happiness, love, respect, honesty, mutual help, sharing life burden, and so forth that they could not get from other types of relationships at all. In a study by Jana D, Kathleen W, and Sylvia N (2005:12), it has been pointed out that marriage is often described by the participants of this research as a source of companionship, a way to end their lonely single status where companionship encompassed the notions of spousal friendship, a sense of safety with a partner, giving and receiving support, and lots of love.

Figure 4.2 (i): Major Benefits of Marriage

| Responses/Items | Sex | N | Mean | SD | df | Sig (2tailed) | Alpha level | Decision |
|--|--------|----|------|-------|----|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Overall, I am much satisfied with my marital life right now. | Male | 32 | 3.34 | .902 | 53 | .154 | 0.05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 23 | 2.91 | 1.311 | | | | |
| Thinking about my family life so | Male | 32 | 2.81 | 1.256 | 53 | | | Significant |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------|----|------|-------|----|------|------|-----------------|
| far, I would say it has happened as I expected it would. | Female | 23 | 2.09 | 1.379 | | .048 | 0.05 | |
| My marital life is the most important social capital to me at this time. | Male | 33 | 3.42 | .708 | 54 | .065 | 0.05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 23 | 2.96 | 1.147 | | | | |
| Marriage provides companionship (i. e. love, respect, honesty, mutual help, sharing life burden, etc) that is missing from other types of relationships. | Male | 33 | 3.70 | .467 | 54 | .749 | 0.05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 23 | 3.65 | .573 | | | | |
| Average | Male | 32 | 3.32 | .691 | 53 | .055 | 0.05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 23 | 2.90 | .919 | | | | |

4.3: Theme 3: Major Changes in Marital Practices

When I reviewed many literatures and researches conducted on the major changes marital life faced today, most agreed that a lot had happened among which the attitude of the generation towards marriage which in turn included marital practices, cohabitation of couples (either to get married or separate if they do not agree), age increases at first marriage and decline of birth rates, mothers entering to the work force, change in parental arranged marriage patterns, and staying single instead of getting married have been the major cases in this regard. Each of these variables has been examined as follow respectively for the subjects attended in this research work.

One of the major areas that some literatures depicted it has been going through changes has been the marital practices that the contemporary generation faced. Seven Likert scale questions were provided to the respondents that have been shown in the figure below (Figure 4.1 (i)). Consequently, the total overall mean value for the major variable (“Changes in Marital Practices”) is 2.15 where the male respondents (27 out of 58) with an average value of 2.2, and female subjects (20 out of 58) with an average value of 2.1 favoured that the current marital practices have been showing changes among the contemporary generation. The mean difference between the male and female respondents is 0.09 (2.19-2.0) that is not statistically significant which implied that both the male and female respondents have almost similar opinion towards the subject matter (Changes in Marital Practices). See figure 4.3 (i) shown below.

Figure 4.3 (i): Major Changes in Marital Practices

| Questions/Items | Sex | N | Mean | SD | df | Sig (2tailed) | Alpha level | Decision |
|--|--------|----|------|-------|----|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Some people say that the present institution of marriage is becoming old-fashioned. | Male | 33 | 1.85 | 1.278 | 54 | .845 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 23 | 1.78 | 1.166 | | | | |
| Some people say that there is only one true love for each person. | Male | 33 | 2.42 | 1.300 | 54 | .434 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 23 | 2.70 | 1.222 | | | | |
| The marital status of most adults living in Addis Ababa has been decreasing for the past 10 years or so. | Male | 28 | 2.29 | .937 | 46 | .447 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 20 | 2.05 | 1.191 | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------|----|-------|-------|----|-------|-----|-----------------|
| People should stay married to their spouses for the rest of their lives: | Male | 33 | 3.12 | 1.193 | 53 | .164 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 22 | 2.59 | 1.593 | | | | |
| Marriage is only a legal contract that can easily be dissolved. | Male | 33 | 1.73 | 1.420 | 53 | .403 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 22 | 1.41 | 1.297 | | | | |
| Marriage is a sacred act that cannot easily be dissolved. | Male | 33 | 2.91 | 1.466 | 53 | 1.000 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 22 | 2.91 | 1.509 | | | | |
| It would be nice if it succeeded, but I refuse to do any more than I am doing now to keep my marital relationship going. | Male | 31 | 1.32 | 1.137 | 51 | .882 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 22 | 1.27 | 1.279 | | | | |
| Average | Male | 27 | 2.190 | .3119 | 75 | .520 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 20 | 2.100 | .6288 | | | | |

The other variable that the contemporary marital process faces has been the cohabitation of couples for various reasons. Related to the prevalence and basics of cohabitation, various sources noted that it is becoming acceptable as an alternative to marriage, especially in the Western countries. British demographer Kathleen Kiernan (2002), as cited by Andrew J. Cherlin (2004:3), wrote that the acceptance of cohabitation is occurring in stages. He further mentioned that in stage one, cohabitation is a fringe or avant-garde phenomenon; in stage two, it is accepted as a testing ground for marriage; in stage three, it becomes acceptable as an alternative to marriage; and in stage four, it becomes indistinguishable from marriage.

In a survey conducted by “The Institute for the Study of Civil Society: www.civitas.org.uk” (nd:1), it was indicated that families have changed in the last several decades that instead of getting married, many people are living together or ‘cohabiting’. It was added also that some of these cohabitating couples eventually get married, many of them break u and very few stay together as cohabitants for long.

Based on the various theoretical background different scholars in the area versed with regard to cohabitation of couples, as shown in figure 4.3 (ii) below, the total/overall mean for the major subject (“Cohabitation of Couples”) is 1.98 that the male respondents (32 out of 58) with an average value of 2.36 and the female counterparts (22 out of 58) with an average value of 1.42 have showed their preference to cohabitation (living with their partner before marriage for various reasons as reflected in the four items/questions with five scales. From this inference, it has been shown clearly that there has been significant difference between male and female respondents in favouring cohabitation with a mean difference of 0.94 (2.36-1.42). As a result, the male groups showed more preference for living with partners before marriage (in cohabitation) so that they could be able to test and examined each other so that they could decide whether it would be relevant to go for marriage or not. See figure 4.3 (ii) shown below.

Figure 4.3 (ii): Cohabitation of Couples

| Responses/Items | Sex | N | Mean | SD | df | Sig (2tailed) | Alpha level | Decision |
|---------------------------------|------|----|------|-------|----|------------------|----------------|----------|
| Living together before marriage | Male | 32 | 2.19 | 1.330 | 52 | .051 | .05 | Not |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------|----|------|-------|----|------|-----|-------------|
| would improve a couple's chances of remaining happily married. | Female | 22 | 1.50 | 1.102 | | | | Significant |
| A couple will likely be happier in their marriage if they live together first in cohabitation. | Male | 32 | 2.34 | 1.405 | 52 | .011 | .05 | Significant |
| | Female | 22 | 1.41 | 1.054 | | | | |
| It is a good idea for a couple to live together before getting married as a way of trying out their relationship. | Male | 32 | 2.47 | 1.545 | 52 | .008 | .05 | Significant |
| | Female | 22 | 1.41 | 1.098 | | | | |
| Living together first is a good way of testing how workable a couple's marriage would be. | Male | 32 | 2.44 | 1.523 | 52 | .008 | .05 | Significant |
| | Female | 22 | 1.36 | 1.217 | | | | |
| Average | Male | 32 | 2.36 | 1.387 | 52 | .009 | .05 | Significant |
| | Female | 22 | 1.42 | .998 | | | | |

Various sources explained that the age at first marriage has been increasing while the fertility rate has been decreasing in this millennium. Robert C (n.d: 9) pointed out that since the mid of 1970s both the mean age at first marriage, birth and the average age at childbearing have increased continuously.

Similarly, (Lesthaeghe, 2001) said:

The postponement of births is one reason for decreasing or low fertility, either because there is insufficient recuperation time at higher ages, because of increasing sub fecundity or because postponement easily leads to renouncement

MSW Thesis 2013

once a particular lifestyle without children or with a small number of children has been adopted.

In summary, an article on Child Marriage by Population Council Ethiopia (2004:1) depicted that the legal age of marriage in Ethiopia is 18 for both males and females, but it is widely ignored. It was told also that nationwide, 19 percent of girls were married by age 15, and about half of girls were married by age 18.

Figure 4.3 (iii) below shows the four sub-main variable this study treated under this variable. These included age at first marriage or sexual relationship, average age at first childbirth, the average age for the man to get married first, as well as the average age for the women to get married first. As it has been seen from the table below, 48.3% (28 out of 58) respondents showed that their age at their first marriage was greater than 24 years; followed by 41.4% (24 out of 58) participants indicated their age first marriage was between 18 and 24 years. Besides, 3.4% (2 out of 58) indicated their age at first marriage was below 18 years while 6.9% (4 out of 58) did not show their age at first marriage.

On top of these, the majority of the participants, 74.1% (43 out of 58) showed that the average age for the man at his first marriage should be greater than 21 years; 3.4 (2 out of 58) showed that it should be under 21 years while 1.7 (1 out of 58) accepted that it should be 21 year; but 19% (11 out of 58) did not reflect the preferred age for the man for his first marriage. Moreover, 74.1% (43 out of 58) respondents mentioned that the current age for the woman to get married first should be greater than 18 years; 5.2 (3 out of 58) responded that it should be under 18 years; the same figure of participants, 5.2% (3 out of 58) reflected it should be at the age of 18 years. 13.8 (eight out of 58) participants did not mention the median age for the woman to get married first.

Figure 4.3 (iii): Age Increase at Marriage and Decline in Birthrate

| Age at first marriage/relationship | | | Age at first birth of a child | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------|---------|-------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Age Range | Frequency | Percent | Age Range | Frequency | Percent |
| < 18 years | 2 | 3.4 | Below 18 years | 2 | 3.4 |
| B/n 18 & 24 years | 24 | 41.4 | B/n 18 & 24 years | 24 | 41.4 |
| >24 years | 28 | 48.3 | >24 years | 28 | 48.3 |
| Total | 54 | 93.1 | Total | 54 | 93.1 |
| Missing | 4 | 6.9 | Missing | 4 | 6.9 |
| Total | 58 | 100 | Total | 100 | 100 |

| Average age for a man to marry first | | | Average age for a woman to marry first | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|---------|--|-----------|---------|
| Age Category | Frequency | Percent | Age Group | Frequency | Percent |
| Under 21 years | 2 | 3.4 | Under 18 years | 3 | 5.2 |
| Age 21 year | 1 | 1.7 | Age 18 year | 3 | 5.2 |
| > 21 years | 43 | 74.1 | > 18 years | 43 | 74.1 |
| Don't know | 11 | 19 | Don't know | 8 | 13.8 |
| Total | 57 | 98.3 | Total | 57 | 98.3 |
| Missing | 1 | 1.7 | Missing | 1 | 1.7 |
| Total | 58 | 100 | Total | 58 | 100 |

Various sources confirm that today women participate almost equally with men in the work force out of home unlike the years before 1960. Cultural shifts occurred during the 1960s that heralded great change for the notion of work and family, and consequently the notion of stay-at-home motherhood. Gone was the expectation that women of a certain background and

class would stay at home to raise children, and in its place was a greater gender egalitarianism (Thornton and Young D 2001), cited Rose M and Diana B. (2010:3). On the same way, Casper and Bianchi 2002), cited by Rose M and Diana B (2010:4) argued that there are now more acceptances of women raising children and working out side of the home concurrently. They concluded that consequently, over the past 40 years, women's employment outside of the home has been steadily on the rise, especially among women with young children.

In this study, respondents were given 4 Likert scale measurement questions wherein, as indicated in the figure/table below, the overall mean value for the major variable ("Mothers Entering to Work Force") is 3.44 where total of 32 out of 58 male respondents with an average value of 3.46 and a total of 23 out of 58 female respondents with an average value of 3.41, assured that mothers should go out of home, get educated and employed so that they would be confident enough to lead their life as the men do. As shown in the table below, the mean difference is 0.05 (3.46-3.41) which statistically is not significant that in turn implied that both female and male respondents favoured the women's active participation to the work out of home. See figure 4.3 (iv) shown below.

Figure 4.3 (iv): Mothers Entering to Work Force

| Responses/Items | Sex | N | Mean | SD | df | Sig (2tailed) | Alpha level | Decision |
|--|--------|----|------|------|----|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| More mothers of young children working outside the home are more self-dependent. | Male | 33 | 3.52 | .712 | 54 | .702 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 23 | 3.43 | .843 | | | | |
| Women should go out, are | Male | 33 | 3.61 | .556 | 54 | .776 | .05 | Not |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|--------|----|------|-------|----|------|-----|-----------------|
| educated, employed and earn their living independently. | Female | 23 | 3.65 | .647 | | | | Significant |
| Educated and employed women have good self-confidence as compared to those not educated to decide on their marital preference. | Male | 33 | 3.18 | 1.044 | 54 | .437 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 23 | 3.39 | .891 | | | | |
| Married educated and employed women have better power as compared to those not educated to decide on their birth and number of children they want to have. | Male | 32 | 3.50 | .672 | 53 | .172 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 23 | 3.17 | 1.072 | | | | |
| Average | Male | 32 | 3.46 | .589 | 53 | .776 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 23 | 3.41 | .647 | | | | |

The goes true for the trend change of parental arranged marriage pattern in the generation today. For instance, Gavin W(2010:5) mentioned that the history of arranged marriage reflected trends in gender and inter-generational relations where traditional arranged marriage placed considerable power in the hands of parents, and in particular the father. Gavin further explained that the weakening of the system of arranged marriage reflects a deed level of the abdication of this power by the older generation and in particular by male of older generation. Garvin argued that also that the remarkable developments in education, increasing

urbanization and involvement of women in economic activities outside the household have contributed for the parental arranged marriage patterns among the contemporary generation.

Anthropological literature on kinship patterns examines marriage as cornerstone of kin and caste relations (Oberoi, 1998) and a few other studies have examined individual attitudes towards arranged and love marriages and the socio-cultural milieu that explains and perpetuates the system of arranged marriages (Medora, 2003). Medora (ibid) explained also that marital relations are associated with the type of marriage- self-arranged marriages are considered more egalitarian than parent arranged ones. In the latter, since kin-members play an important role in the spouse selection process, husband-wife relationship is de-emphasized. Fox (1975: 188-189) suggests greater emphasis is placed on the individual's vertical linkage with and responsibility to antecedent relatives and his progeny.

In this study, the respondents were given five Likert scale measurement type of questions. As indicated in figure 4.3 (v) below, a total of 30 out of 58 male respondents, with average value of 2.07; and a total of 20 out of 58 female participants with an average of 1.87, responded to this variable. The overall mean value for the major variable ("Parental Arranged Marriage Patterns") is 1.99 which is nearest to the mid value of the scale (undecided-2) that implied neither male nor female groups showered firm stand in favoring or not favoring the major subject. The mean difference observed is 0.2, which is not statistically significant which in turn, implied that both male and female groups had similar undecided preference towards the subject matter. See figure 4.3 (v) shown below.

Figure 4.3 (v): Parental Arranged Marriage Patterns

| Responses/Items | Sex | N | Mean | SD | df | Sig (2tailed) | Alpha level | Decision |
|--|--------|----|------|-------|----|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Getting parental agreement is one of the most important criteria for me to prepare for marriage. | Male | 33 | 2.30 | 1.185 | 52 | .712 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 21 | 2.43 | 1.248 | | | | |
| My parents have selected my spouse and arranged me for my marriage. | Male | 30 | .97 | .928 | 49 | .678 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 21 | .86 | .910 | | | | |
| Parent should have their role in selecting mate for marriage or partnership | Male | 32 | 2.16 | 1.051 | 52 | .009 | .05 | Significant |
| | Female | 22 | 1.36 | 1.049 | | | | |
| Parental involvement in arranging someone for marriage or partner helps to minimize or avoid upcoming challenges couples may face in their marital life. | Male | 32 | 2.22 | 1.211 | 52 | .134 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 22 | 1.68 | 1.359 | | | | |
| Parental involvement in | Male | 32 | 2.72 | 1.143 | 52 | .232 | .05 | Not |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------|----|------|-------|----|------|-----|-------------|
| arranging marriage would expose especially underage girls for danger in their life, including birth problems and death. | Female | 22 | 3.09 | 1.065 | | | | Significant |
| Average | Male | 30 | 2.07 | .593 | 49 | .271 | .05 | Not |
| | Female | 20 | 1.87 | .688 | | | | Significant |

Figure 4.3 (VI): Singlehood as an Alternative to Marriage

Many sources in areas of marriage and family mentioned that the current generation takes singlehood as one of the alternatives instead of getting married. Robert Cliquet (nd: 2) stated that first marriage continued to be postponed and so did age at first birth. He further mentioned that more young people left the parental home to live some time on their own before cohabiting or marrying. This resulted in an increasing number of single person households of young adults.

It has been pointed out also that people may remain single for a variety of reasons, including: financial and emotional or physical health issues, stress in the family, time constraints, education, career, personal preferences, advanced age, social fears or love-shyness, and even living in a society or locality where there are not enough people of the sex one is attracted to. Certain careers and positions require that people remain single. Sometimes, this is coupled with celibacy or chastity, either for secular or for religious reasons, such as priests, nuns and monks in certain faiths. Some single people, however, regard and appreciate solitude as an opportunity, Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Single_person.

Participants of this research work were provided with four open-ended questions revolving purely around singlehood as alternative to marriage. Each of these responses has been narrated below respectively. For the question respondents were given if single women could have children without a male partner, the majority of the participants, 58.6% (34 out of 58) mentioned that though women might have economical capacity to bring her child up and nurture properly, the society does not accept for unmarried women to have a child without a formal partner which in case could impact also for the children who come to this world in this aspect. On the contrary, 20.7 (12 out of 58) participants of the study responded that as far as the woman has the capacity to bring up her child properly, it should be left free for her to have the freedom to have a child from anyone whom she likes without marriage or without having male partner formally. Besides, as indicated in the table below, 19% (11 out of 58) participants did not mention their stand in this regard while 1.7% (1 out of 58) subject was missed. See figure 43 (vi) below.

Figure 4.3 (VI) (a): Single Women to Have Children without a Male Partner

| Responses/Items | Frequency | Percent | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|--|-----------|---------|---------|--------------|
| Once they can nurture their child, it is not hard enough for women to have children without marriage and even the society does not oppose this, as this is the time of modernization | 12 | 20.7 | 25.5 | 25.5 |

| | | | | |
|---|----|-------|-------|-------|
| Even though women can have the capability to nurture a child properly economically or in other aspects, the society does not accept for unmarried woman to have a child before (without) marriage. Even this has negative impact of the life of the children born, in case. | 34 | 58.6 | 72.3 | 97.9 |
| Others | 1 | 1.7 | 2.1 | 100.0 |
| Total | 47 | 81.0 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | 11 | 19.0 | | |
| Total | 58 | 100.0 | | |

Figure 4.3 (vi) (b) below shows that the majority of the participants, 62.1% (36 out of 58) favoured to have good financial background both for the male and female partners before they go for their marriage while 12.1% (7 out of 58) people mentioned that once the couples have good background of love and attachment as well as marital commitment, having enough money before marriage should not be a case as they can make it after they come together. 5.2% (3 out of 58), on the other hand, mentioned that in a condition where the two partners are committed for their marital life, it does not matter if either of them has financial income to get married and then both come together and lead their life accordingly. Twenty point seven percent (20.7%) (12 out of 58) participants did not show any of their feedback in this regard (they are missed). See figure 43. (vi) (b) below.

Figure 4.3 (vi) (b): Stay Single Until Economically Get Ready

| Responses/Items | Frequency | Percent | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|-----------------|-----------|---------|---------|--------------|
|-----------------|-----------|---------|---------|--------------|

| | | | | |
|--|----|-------|-------|-------|
| To have a good life, it is necessary for both partners to build themselves with enough economic background before they get married. | 36 | 62.1 | 78.3 | 78.3 |
| As far as there is clear understanding and respect between the two partners and one of them has enough income, they can marry and in case it is necessary they can generate additional income in common. | 3 | 5.2 | 6.5 | 84.8 |
| Once the two partners considerably love each other and have decided to get marry, having enough money before marriage would not be a criteria as they can nurture together in their life. | 7 | 12.1 | 15.2 | 100.0 |
| Total | 46 | 79.3 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | 12 | 20.7 | | |
| Total | 58 | 100.0 | | |

As indicated in figure 4.3 (vi) (c) below, 32.8% (19 out of 58) participants indicated that a human being needs someone who shares his/her burden in this world. These groups witnessed that getting married should be part of life with all of its ups and downs while 27.6% (16 out of 58) respondents showed that in spite of the fact that marriage requires its own preparation and commitment, those who want to marry should form it and be ready to shoulder the responsibilities. Besides, 8.6% (5 out of 58) participants of this study witnessed that continuation of generation is the outcome of marriage so that people should marry and shoulder the responsibilities and burden that it could bring to life. Moreover, 1.7% (1 out of

58) respondents came up with a feedback that marital life is a means to satisfy life and also a means to safeguard oneself from various sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS while 6.9% (4 out of 58) participants showed that if people do not have enough financial background and they do not want to shoulder the responsibilities of marital life, they better remain single. Finally 22.4% (13 out of 58) did not reflect their feedback on this item. The overall feedback showed that though marital life would have much to shoulder, a single person could not execute them alone and hence getting married has been favoured. See figure 4.3 (vi) (c) below.

Figure 4.3 (vi) (c): Stay Single Due to Marital Burden These Days

| Responses/Items | Frequency | Percent | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|---|-----------|---------|---------|--------------|
| In spite of the fact that marriage requires its own preparation and responsibilities, those who want to marry should marry and face the challenge and carry the burden accordingly. | 16 | 27.6 | 35.6 | 35.6 |
| Human being needs someone who shares life burden in all aspects, including sexual interest as a result he/she should get marry and enjoy the gift of life. | 19 | 32.8 | 42.2 | 77.8 |
| Continuation of next generation is one of the outcomes of marriage and people should marry and execute their natural responsibilities. | 5 | 8.6 | 11.1 | 88.9 |

| | | | | |
|---|----|-------|-------|-------|
| Getting married and have regular partner (spouse) in one of the means to satisfy sexual interest and safeguard from any unsafe sex being faithful so that this also protects from STDs, including HIV/AIDS. | 1 | 1.7 | 2.2 | 91.1 |
| Once the partners do not have enough financial background and the anticipated marriage burden, it is preferable to remain single at all. | 4 | 6.9 | 8.9 | 100.0 |
| Total | 45 | 77.6 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | 13 | 22.4 | | |
| Total | 58 | 100.0 | | |

It has been argumentative also that unmarried people who live together are more flexible to satisfy their personal needs than those who are married and living together. As depicted below in figure (4.3 (vi) (d)), 32.8% (19 out of 58) participants pointed out that those couples married and living together had better opportunity to share life burden and lead life together in consultation with each other than those who were unmarried but living together that 20.7% (12 out of 58) participants favoured for. On the other hand, 12.1% (7 out of 58) respondents of this study indicated that although some people would like to remain single due to the fear to shoulder responsibilities and think that they could satisfy their needs as opposed to those married and living together, in reality it would be unlikely for them to satisfy their needs as required while 5.2% (3 out of 58) participants responded that those partners living together without formal marriage did not have legal background in case any misunderstanding could

occur and if they want to go for separation and share of the resources. Besides, 12.1% (7 out of 58) gave irrelevant responses while 17.2% (10 out of 58) did not mention their thinking with regard to this specific item. In general, from this analysis, the majority of the respondents showed that those couples living together with formal marriage have better flexibility and understanding to satisfy their needs and interests as opposed to those who are living together but do not marry formally. See figure 4.3 (vi) (d) below for reference.

Figure 4.3 (vi) (d): Living Together Without Marriage vis-a-vis Living Together in Marriage and Flexibility to Satisfy Marital Interest

| Responses/Items | Frequency | Percent | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|--|-----------|---------|---------|--------------|
| Even though some people remain unmarried because they do not want to shoulder any responsibility at any level, it is unlikely to satisfy their interests as compared to those who have married | 7 | 12.1 | 14.6 | 14.6 |
| Those who married and live together have great opportunity to respect each; lead life together in consultation and shoulder life responsibilities in common than those unmarried at all and capable to satisfy their interests accordingly | 19 | 32.8 | 39.6 | 54.2 |

| | | | | |
|---|----|-------|-------|-------|
| Those who are living unmarried can easily satisfy their life than those married; they can lead their life in freedom at various levels. | 12 | 20.7 | 25.0 | 79.2 |
| Those who are living together without formal marriage do not have any legal background in case misunderstanding is created which could lead to sharing of resources. Even they do not have good relationship. | 3 | 5.2 | 6.3 | 85.4 |
| Irrelevant responses | 7 | 12.1 | 14.6 | 100.0 |
| Total | 48 | 82.8 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | 10 | 17.2 | | |
| Total | 58 | 100.0 | | |

4.4: Theme 4: Major Challenges in Marital Experiences/Life

As witnessed by various sources above under theme 4.3 (Major Changes in Marriage Today), the marital life today has been affected also by many challenges with which the key areas would be addressed in the following sub-sections of this thematic area. This study would address only four key sub-thematic areas that the contemporary marriage would be facing as major challenges although a number of actors could also be taken care of. These included marital conflict resolution skills; reduction of sexual satisfaction over time in marital life; communication in marital life and the recurring divorce rate that the current generation has been facing which each of these has been narrated below respectively.

To start with, marital conflict and its resolution skills could be considered to be one of the major challenges that the contemporary marital life would face. As written by many sources, marital conflict is associated with important family outcomes, including poorer parenting (Erel & Burman 1995), poorer child adjustment (Grych & Fincham 1990), problematic attachment to parents (Owen & Cox 1997), increased likelihood of parent-child conflict (Margolin et al 1996), and conflict between siblings (e.g. Brody et al 1994), as cited by Frank D. and Steven R. (1999:3)

A study on “Marriage, Sex and Family Counseling” (2008:10) stated that the success of any nation depends largely on the quality of the family units that constitute the nation where it is essential that its members are adequately prepared for the challenges of family life especially as related to marriage, sex and effective interpersonal relationship.

To measure the level of marital conflict and the respective resolution skills among couples, the sample subjects of this study were provided with seven Likert scale questions in which the summary of the results has been depicted below. As seen in figure 4.4 (i) below, a total male respondents of 32 out of 58 with an average value of 2.48 have favored the presence of close communication and discussion with their partner when any misunderstanding or conflict occurred in their marital life with their female partners while a total female participants of 22 out of 58 with an average value of 2.5 mentioned also that they had good ways of resolution any disagreement happened in their marital life with their male partners. The overall mean value for the major variable (“Conflict Resolution in Marital Life”) is 2.90 that resulted in that both male and female respondents have favorable attitude towards the subject. The mean difference observed is 0.02 (2.48-2.50) that implied there had no significant difference between the males and females participants in assuring the availability

of close and better way of understanding and common ways of resolving marital conflict in their life. See figure 4.4 (i) shown below.

Figure 4.4 (i): Conflict Resolution in Marital Life

| Responses | Sex | N | Mean | SD | df | Sig (2tailed) | Alpha level | Decision |
|---|--------|----|------|-------|----|------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| The way disagreements settled with my spouse or partner in our relationship are fully satisfactory. | Male | 32 | 2.88 | 1.040 | 52 | .498 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 22 | 2.68 | .995 | | | | |
| My partner and I have very different ideas about the best way to solve our disagreements so that I usually give up too quickly. | Male | 32 | 1.66 | 1.066 | 53 | .137 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 23 | 2.13 | 1.254 | | | | |
| When we have serious disputes over unimportant issues with my partner, I would do anything to avoid the conflict/dispute. | Male | 33 | 3.15 | 1.228 | 54 | .827 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 23 | 3.22 | .902 | | | | |
| When we begin to discuss a disagreement over an important issue, we begin to understand each other's feelings reasonably quickly. | Male | 33 | 3.12 | .992 | 54 | .656 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 23 | 3.00 | 1.000 | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------|----|------|-------|----|------|-----|-----------------|
| When we begin to discuss a disagreement over an important issue, my spouse seems more interested in justifying his/her own point of view rather than in understanding mine. | Male | 33 | 1.76 | 1.275 | 54 | .957 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 23 | 1.74 | 1.214 | | | | |
| When we begin to discuss a disagreement over an important issue, my spouse blames me for any of my feelings of frustration or irritation as if they were mostly my own fault. | Male | 33 | 1.79 | 1.219 | 54 | .617 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 23 | 1.96 | 1.261 | | | | |
| We solve our marital problems/conflicts through discussion between us | Male | 33 | 3.12 | .992 | 54 | .215 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 23 | 2.74 | 1.287 | | | | |
| Average | Male | 32 | 2.48 | .424 | 52 | .892 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 22 | 2.50 | .536 | | | | |

Many scholars in areas of marriage and family argue that sexual satisfaction and marital relationships between couples decline gradually. In a longitudinal study conducted by Huston et al. (1986), it has been stated that a substantial decline in reported marital satisfaction during the first year of marriage and a study by Glenn (1989a) estimated *that* marital satisfaction as indicated by the percentage of people who claim their marriages are “very happy” decreases steadily for at least the first 10 years and maybe for 25 years or longer (Glenn, 1990:826), cited in Michele (n. d: 19).

Besides, a survey conducted by Chien Liu (20012:1) on “Quality of Marital Sex Decline with Duration” pointed out that:

The frequency of marital sex declines with marital duration, net of the age effect (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Call, Sprecher, & Schwartz, 1995; Greenblat, 1983; Jasso, 1985; Kinsey, Pomeroy, & Martin, 1948; Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin, & Gebhard, 1953; Masters, Johnson, & Kolodny, 1992; Trussell & Westoff, 1980; Udry, Deven, & Coleman, 1982). According to the typical explanation given to this phenomenon, the declining frequency of marital sex is due to the loss of novelty (Blumstein & Schwartz, 1983; Call et al., 1995; James, 1981). This is often referred to as the “honeymoon effect,” meaning that the frequency of marital sex decreases because the satisfaction with marital sex declines with marital duration.

As shown in figure 4.4 (ii) below, the participants of this study were given seven Likert scale questions with regard to the sexual relationship each partner had with his/her partner and the level of satisfaction over time. The total male participants of 27 out of 58 with average value of 2.79 and total female participants of 16 out of 58 with an average value of 2.62 have indicated that they had good sexual relationship with their respective male/female partners. The overall mean value for the major variable (Decline of Sexual Relationships in Marital Life”) is 2.73 that showed both male and female respondents had favourable attitude towards the subject matter. The mean difference observed is 0.17 that is not statistically significant which implied that both male and female respondents witnessed that their sexual relationship with their partners declined gradually over time. See figure 4.4 (ii) shown below.

Figure 4.4 (ii): Decline of Sexual Relationships in Marital Life

| Responses | Sex | N | Mean | SD | df | Sig (2tailed) | Alpha level | Decision |
|--|--------|----|------|-------|----|------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| I am not satisfied with the frequency of sexual relations with my spouse/partner. | Male | 31 | 3.42 | .672 | 49 | .098 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 20 | 3.05 | .887 | | | | |
| I am not satisfied with the quality of sexual relations with my spouse/partner. | Male | 31 | 3.42 | .672 | 46 | .561 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 17 | 3.29 | .772 | | | | |
| Our sexual relationship and satisfaction has gradually been diminishing since we got married. | Male | 31 | 1.42 | 1.148 | 49 | .300 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 20 | 1.10 | .912 | | | | |
| My spouse/partner sometimes makes sex with me without my consent. | Male | 31 | 1.26 | .893 | 48 | .844 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 19 | 1.32 | 1.157 | | | | |
| My spouse does not prepare me for sexual gratification physically through kissing, warming up and mutual feelings. | Male | 28 | 3.25 | .844 | 45 | .228 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 19 | 2.89 | 1.150 | | | | |
| My spouse does not give me a | Male | 29 | 3.31 | .761 | 47 | .037 | .05 | Significant |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------|----|--------|--------|----|------|-----|-----------------|
| considerable amount of affection and expresses love feelings to me openly. | Female | 20 | 2.60 | 1.536 | | | | |
| Having fulfilling sex life is the most important matter for a married person. | Male | 32 | 3.72 | .457 | 50 | .259 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 20 | 3.55 | .605 | | | | |
| Average | Male | 27 | 2.7989 | .36585 | 41 | .133 | .05 | Not Significant |
| | Female | 16 | 2.6250 | .34944 | | | | |

Figure 4.4 (iii): Lack of Communication Skills in Marital Life

Swihart, Brenda and Deborah (1998:3) stated that the presence of an effective communication pattern is one of the most frequently mentioned characteristics of strong families and marital life. A survey by DOUGLAS E (2000:2) on “Improving Sexual Communication in Marriage” depicted that marriage is not just for sexual relations, of course, but it is a profound means of expressing love and commitment. It is designed to be a physical, emotional, and spiritual union; hence a form of marital "validation." He added that also Just as a good marriage increases sexual interest, so satisfactory sexual relations add soul-binding emotional strength to the marriage. Married couples involved in home dialysis must deal not only with the technical procedures for the treatment of kidney failure, but also with the “emotional aspects of living with a chronic disease in a marital relationship.” She mentioned also that partners in a successful marriage handle this when they talk to each other (Mary J, 1975:1).

In view of the above theoretical background and other sources, the researcher of this study provided his participants with six open-ended questions where they were supposed to reflect

their feeling freely against communication in their marital life. These six itemised questions revolved around the relationship with his/her spouse in comparison with his/her parents; balancing job requirements (either domestic or out of home), balancing marital relationship with being apparent; common decision making and sharing common interest between partner in order to lead a cohesive and strong life in marriage. These analysis has been given below based on the responses collected form the participants accordingly.

Figure 4.4 (iii) (a) below indicates that the majority of the participants, 42 out of 58 (72.4%) pointed out that they had good relationship both with their spouse and their parents which was full of respect, responsiveness and common understanding. However, 8.6% (5 out of 58) respondents mentioned that their spouses gave much attention to their parents so that they lacked accountability and transparency including resources management in their marital life while 5.2% (3 out of 58) participants showed that they had medium level of communication and relationship with their spouses as their spouses sometimes inclined to their parents. Added to this, 1.7 % (1 out of 58) participants gave irrelevant response while 12.1% (7 out of 58) respondents did not mention anything in this regard, as indicated in the figure below. See figure 4.4 (iii) (a below).

Figure 4.4 (iii) (a): Relationships with Spouse Vs Parents

| Responses/Items | Frequency | Percent | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|--|-----------|---------|---------|--------------|
| It is good which is full of respect, responsiveness and common understanding | 42 | 72.4 | 82.4 | 82.4 |

| | | | | |
|--|----|-------|-------|-------|
| As my spouse gives more attention to his/her parents, sometimes it lacks accountability and transparency, including resources allocation to his/her parents. | 5 | 8.6 | 9.8 | 92.2 |
| It is medium level that sometimes my spouse gives more priority to his/her parents without my consultations | 3 | 5.2 | 5.9 | 98.0 |
| Irrelevant responses | 1 | 1.7 | 2.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 51 | 87.9 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | 7 | 12.1 | | |
| Total | 58 | 100.0 | | |

An item was presented for the respondents to show how they would balance their job (that could either be domestic or out-of-home) and being apparent that has been tabulated below in figure 4.4 (iii) (b). From the table below, it has been seen that the majority of the respondents, 72.4% (42 out of 58), depicted that balancing job and parental requirements would be very essential though the additional burden when children got born would have great impact on the relationship with spouses. Besides, 12.1% (7 out of 58) participants mentioned that so as to have better life at home, partners should balance the requirements of job business and personal responsibilities as a parent. From the total 58 participants, 3.4% (2 out of 58) gave irrelevant response while 12.1% (7 out of 58) refrained from expressing their feedback for this specific item. See figure 4.4 (iii) (b) shown below.

Figure 4.4 (iii) (b): Balancing Job Needs Vs Being a Parent

| Responses/Items | Frequency | Percent | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|--|-----------|---------|---------|--------------|
| Balancing job and being a parent is quite important though the additional burden when children get born has a great impact on this relationship. | 42 | 72.4 | 82.4 | 82.4 |
| To have a positive and responsive life at home, partners should balance the requirements for business and the personal responsibilities as a parent. | 7 | 12.1 | 13.7 | 96.1 |
| Other responses | 2 | 3.4 | 3.9 | 100.0 |
| Total | 51 | 87.9 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | 7 | 12.1 | | |
| Total | 58 | 100.0 | | |

One of the key items presented for the participants under the sub-thematic area of communication in marital life was for them to reflect their feedback with regard to balancing the marital relationship and being a parent. In this regard, 58.6% (34 out of 58) participants showed that despite the fact that bearing children could bring additional responsibilities for the partners, it would be essential to balance the marital relationship with the spouse. Similarly, 15.5% (9 out of 58) respondents mentioned that to have peaceful and respected marital life, the spouses should give due attention to their relationships properly while 10.3% (6 out of 58) participants witnessed that mothers showed more tendencies to give more eyes to the children than their partner in marital life; 1.7% (1 out of 58) respondents showed that the situation the partners living in should govern to what areas more attention would be

given; and 1.7% (1 out of 58) gave irrelevant response while 12.1% (7 out of 58) participants missed to reflect their view in this specific item. See figure 4.4 (iii) (c) shown below.

Figure 4.4 (iii) (c): Balancing Marital Relationships Vs Being a Parent

| Responses/Items | Frequency | Percent | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|---|-----------|---------|---------|--------------|
| Balancing your marital relationships and being a parent is necessary though the bearing of children could create additional burden for the partners. | 34 | 58.6 | 66.7 | 66.7 |
| Though it is very crucial to balance marital relationship and being a parent, mothers have more tendencies to give more attention to the children than their parent (spouse). | 6 | 10.3 | 11.8 | 78.4 |
| It deems necessary to balance the marital relationship and being apparent in life in order to have peaceful, respected and to form a happy and prosperous family at all levels. | 9 | 15.5 | 17.6 | 96.1 |
| There is time when it is required to balance the marital relationships and that of being a parent. It depends. | 1 | 1.7 | 2.0 | 98.0 |
| Irrelevant responses | 1 | 1.7 | 2.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 51 | 87.9 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | 7 | 12.1 | | |
| Total | 58 | 100.0 | | |

With regard to sharing common interest between spouses in order to have better relationship in their day-to-day life, the majority of the respondents, 87.9% (51 out of 58), as depicted under figure 4.4. (iii) (d) below, mentioned that it would be very important to share common interest between partners in their marital life which would help them resolve any misunderstanding and lead a fruitful life while 12.1% (7 out of 58) participants missed to show up their view in this specific item. See figure 4.4. (iii) (d) below.

Figure 4.4 (iii) (d): Sharing Common Interests Between Spouses

| Responses/Items | Frequency | Percent | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|---|-----------|---------|---------|--------------|
| It is very important to share common interests between spouses to help support and encourage each other in their day-to-day life because this helps the spouses understand each other, share feelings and shoulder common interests at all levels. Besides, sharing common interests between spouses helps support and encourages each other in their day-to-day life helps deal with differences professionally but in some cases it demands personally decision by either of the parties. | 51 | 87.9 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Missing | 7 | 12.1 | | |
| Total | 58 | 100.0 | | |

For the question provided on their specific contribution for the success of the spouses for their marital relationship with their partners, as indicated below under figure 4.4 (iii) (e), more than half of the respondents, 51.7% (30 out of 58), showed that they would accomplish their share of responsibilities; 15.5% (9 out of 58) participants reflected that for their marital relationship to succeed, they would look for sustainable means of income generation means; 10.3% (6 out of 58) respondents mentioned that they always looked for immediate alternative solutions for common understanding and respect when difference happened instead of running for blaming each other; and 12.1% (7 out of 58) participants showed that they gave proper respect and pride for their spouse and children in order to keep positive familial relationship; but 10.3% (6 out of 58) subjects missed to reflect their view in this regard. See figure 4.4 (iii) (e) shown below.

Figure 4.4 (iii) (e): Spouse's Contribution/share for Successful Marital Relationships

| Responses/Items | Frequency | Percent | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|---|-----------|---------|---------|--------------|
| My share in order to ensure my marital relationship succeeds is that I usually execute my responsibilities with full fledge and accomplish all my roles responsively. | 30 | 51.7 | 57.7 | 57.7 |
| When difference happens, I always attempt to look for alternative solutions through listening, respect and mutual understanding rather that rushing for blaming my spouse at any level. | 6 | 10.3 | 11.5 | 69.2 |

| | | | | |
|---|----|-------|-------|-------|
| In order to ensure that familial income is sustainable and makes that family capable of fulfilling day-to-day interest, I look for alternative means of income generations. | 9 | 15.5 | 17.3 | 86.5 |
| I give proper respect and pride for my spouse and children so as to keep positive familial relationship at all level. | 7 | 12.1 | 13.5 | 100.0 |
| Total | 52 | 89.7 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | 6 | 10.3 | | |
| Total | 58 | 100.0 | | |

Last but not least, participants of this study were give a question to show if democratic decision making existed in their marital life and if that could help have pleasant conversation in their relationship. As a result, as shown below in figure 4.4 (iii) (f), the majority of them, 70.7% (41 out of 58), witnessed that couples should make any familial decisions with active participation of each partner and if possible children so that they live a life with respect, understating ad shared responsibilities. On the same way, 15.5% (9 out of 58) participants of the study reflected that making decisions democratically between the spouses enables them shoulder more responsibilities and could lead eternal marital life sustainably. See figure 4.4 (iii) (f) shown below.

Figure 4.4 (iii) (f): Democratic Decision Making for Common Interests between Spouses

| Responses/Items | Frequency | Percent | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|-----------------|-----------|---------|---------|--------------|
|-----------------|-----------|---------|---------|--------------|

| | | | | |
|--|----|-------|-------|-------|
| It is necessary that spouses should have the opportunity to make decisions in consultations between them so as to reach at fertile ends and have sustainable good relationship and mutual understanding. | 41 | 70.7 | 82.0 | 82.0 |
| Making common decisions democratically between the spouses enables them shoulder more responsibilities and able to lead eternal marital life. | 9 | 15.5 | 18.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 50 | 86.2 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | 8 | 13.8 | | |
| Total | 58 | 100.0 | | |

Figure 4.4 (iv): Marital Divorce

One of the key arguments among scholars in areas of marriage and family in the modern society would be the rapid and increasing divorce rate as opposed to the years before 1960s. In this regard, Giddens, 1993), as cited in Barbara (2005:10) witnessed that the most striking feature of modern society is the sharp decline of first time marriages and the rapid rise of divorce, with divorce rates in Europe quadrupling from 1960 to 1992. Similarly, Daniel and Barbara (1999), cited in David and John (2000:5), argued that “Although most individuals are able to establish some type of intimate relationship, it is not uncommon for individuals to have difficulty either maintaining and/or increasing their levels of intimacy over time. As a direct result, many people experience marital problems, and many marriages end in divorce.”

Divorce rates in Western countries rose very substantially – with more than a doubling of the

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general divorce rate – in the two decades between 1960 and 1980 (Jones, Asari & Djurtika, 1994), as cited by Gavin W (210:12).

Based on these theoretical premises, the participants of this study were given five open-ended questions where they could express their feeling freely without any restriction unlike the close-ended items. The major thematic areas of these questions revolved around obligation of partners to remain married even though they would not be happy with their marital life; partners should divorce after they would exhausted all possible solutions to remove the disagreements between them; as well as the steps couples would take in case they would not agree anymore in their marital life. The feedback obtained have been narrated and presented as follow for the respective five items accordingly.

For the question respondents given on the great obligation of people to remain married even if they are not satisfied, 46% (27 out of 58) respondents mentioned that in a situation where a possible solution could not be found for the disagreement between partners and there was unresolved problem that could exist long, the couples should go for divorce and look for another way of life as the world is full of options and other chances. While 19% (11 out of 58) respondents depicted that divorce would have great negative impact on the life children in particular and the family in general, it would be highly advisable to maintain the first marriage through an attempt to resolve gaps professionally; 3.4% (2 out of 58) participants mentioned that for these couples formed their first marriage through religious ceremony (Orthodox), a the stream does not allow for divorce but remain married for life by resolving the observable familial challenges. Finally, many participants, 31% (18 out of 58) did not reflect their view I this regard. See figure 4.4 (iv) (a) below.

Figure 4.4 (iv) (a): Obligation to Remain Married in Unsatisfactory Marital Life

| Responses/Items | Frequency | Percent | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|---|-----------|---------|---------|--------------|
| Where there is no mutual respect and understanding between the couples (spouses) and there is no opportunity of deciding familial issue in common and in case there is unresolvable problem in the relationship, the couples should get divorced. | 27 | 46.6 | 67.5 | 67.5 |
| For those who committed their first marriage in religious streams and as this does not allow for second marriage, it is hardly easy to get divorced but remain in marriage for life by resolving observable familial problems. | 2 | 3.4 | 5.0 | 72.5 |
| As divorce has great negative impact on the life of children and the family at all, it is advisable to maintain the first marriage by resolving any gaps through professional ways. | 11 | 19.0 | 27.5 | 100.0 |
| Total | 40 | 69.0 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | 18 | 31.0 | | |
| Total | 58 | 100.0 | | |

Participants, as opposed to the above item, were presented with a question whether people should not stay in an unsatisfactory marriage until death and the result has been narrated and depicted as below. The majority of the participants, 56.9% (33 out of 58) confirmed that once

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the couples tried all the best to finally resolve their problems but the disagreement persisted in, the couples should get divorced and might have remarried with another partner who would satisfy their marital needs. On the other hand, 29.3% (17 out of 58) participants stressed that couples should remain married though they might have faced problems but attempt to resolve them professionally, as getting divorced could affect the children in particular and the family in general. However, 13.8 (8 out of 58) respondents were missed to reflect their view for this specific question. See figure 4.4 (iv) (b) below.

Figure 4.4 (iv) (b): Couple's Stay in Unsatisfactory Marriage Till Death

| Responses/Items | Frequency | Percent | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|--|-----------|---------|---------|--------------|
| The couples (spouses) should attempt to resolve their problems at any level and remain married as getting divorce has great negative implication on the life of the family in general and on the life of children in particular. | 17 | 29.3 | 34.0 | 34.0 |
| One the couples have tried all their best to resolve their problems and in case the problem persists without any solution, it is advisable for them to get divorced. Moreover, once the couples are sure that their marital life is full of dissatisfaction and up and downs although they have tried much to resolve, it is good for them to divorce and get remarried with someone who can satisfy their life. | 33 | 56.9 | 66.0 | 100.0 |

| | | | | |
|---------|----|-------|-------|--|
| Total | 50 | 86.2 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | 8 | 13.8 | | |
| Total | 58 | 100.0 | | |

For the question subjects of this study given with regard to the divorce option lastly after the couples exhaust all alternatives to their marital problems, the majority of them, 74.1% (43 out of 58) respondents showed that family would be one of the major institutes that demand high commitment and care so that couples should maintain their marital life through solving problems professionally, this group confirmed that in case the problem could not be resolved but persisted in for long time and if it could affect the life of the whole of the family member, the couples should summoned their relationship with divorce and go for other alternatives. On the contrary, while 8.6 % (5 out of 58) of the respondents confirmed that if the couples formed their marriage through Orthodox religion ceremony, divorce has not been permitted but to remain married until death though minimizing marital differences between the partners; 15.5% (9 out of 58) participants did not reflect their view in this regard. See figure 4.4 (iv) (c) below.

Figure 4.4 (iv) (c): Divorce After Exhausting the Possible Solutions to Marital Problems

| Responses/Items | Frequency | Percent | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|---|-----------|---------|---------|--------------|
| Those who have committed their marriage by religious affairs are not allowed to get divorced at any level but they have to maintain their marital life by minimizing they difference they have. | 5 | 8.6 | 10.2 | 10.2 |

| | | | | |
|---|----|-------|-------|-------|
| Family is one of the key institution which demand high responsibility and care, couples should make the necessary preparation in order to maintain their marital life forever. However, in case there are unresolvable issues, which cannot not be resolved but persist in their life that affect their and children's life, the have to get separated and see other possibilities of life. | 43 | 74.1 | 87.8 | 98 |
| In case the couples (spouses) do not match in sexual interest and matters, this would be the basic ground for divorce. | 1 | 1.7 | 2.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 49 | 84.5 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | 9 | 15.5 | | |
| Total | 58 | 100.0 | | |

With regard to what couples should do in case they do not agree any more in their marital life, as shown in the figure below, a total of 43.1% (25 out of 58) participants of the study pointed out that as remaining married had great positive impact on the life of children in particular and for the family in general, couples should try all the best to maintain their marital status until the end of their life. On the contrary, 27.6% (16 out of 58) respondents agreed that after couples tried all of their best to avoid their marital problems but could not resolve it, including sexual incompatibility, they should separate or divorced and look for other opportunities. However, 17.2% (10 out of 58) participants mentioned that couples when

faced marital problems, they should visit professional family and marriage counselling institutions in order to get better guidance and maintain their marital relationship positively; 12.1% (7 out of 58) participants witnessed nothing in this regard but have been missed. See figure 4.4 (iv) (d) below.

Figure 4.4 (iv)(d): Couples Required to Do When no Agreement in Their Marital Life

| Responses/Items | Frequency | Percent | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|--|-----------|---------|---------|--------------|
| They have to attempt all possibilities and means so as to resolve the problems exist between them and maintain their marital life forever till the end of their life. This would have much positive contribution for the life of the family in general and for the children in particular. | 25 | 43.1 | 49.0 | 49.0 |
| They have to regularly visit professional marriage counselors and have to internalize the advices given for them in order to maintain their marital relationship at all. | 10 | 17.2 | 19.6 | 68.6 |
| Once they have tried all their best in order to resolve the differences they have between them, including sexual incompatibility, it would be the last option for them to get legally divorce and look for other opportunities. | 16 | 27.6 | 31.4 | 100.0 |
| Total | 51 | 87.9 | 100.0 | |

| | | | | |
|---------|----|-------|--|--|
| Missing | 7 | 12.1 | | |
| Total | 58 | 100.0 | | |

Finally, the participants were given a question on the likelihood of getting divorced if the couples do not love each other anymore, the majority of them, 55.2% (32 out of 58) mentioned that once they formed their marital relationship through orthodox religious ceremony, they would not get divorced but would try to resolve their problems systematically but remain married until the end of their life. On the contrary hand, 27.6% (16 out of 58) respondents reflected that though divorce might affect the life of children and family at all and if the couples tried all of their best to avoid the tangible marital problems but could not succeed, it would be preferred for the couples to get divorced. Besides, 17.2% (10 out of 58) participants did not reflect any of their view in this regard. See figure 4.4 (iv) (e) below.

Figure 4.4 (iv) (e): Likely of Divorce if Couples Do not Have Love Anymore

| Responses/items | Frequency | Percent | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|--|-----------|---------|---------|--------------|
| Once we are married through religious affiliations and we love to stay together by resolving the differences we have, I prefer to remain married with my spouse though we do not love to each other. | 32 | 55.2 | 66.7 | 66.7 |

| | | | | |
|--|----|-------|-------|-------|
| Although divorce is bad and affects the life of the family as well as the children, if any, once the couples have tried all their possibilities to resolve the problems they have with regard to mutual love, including sexual incompatibility, they have to get divorced. | 16 | 27.6 | 33.3 | 100.0 |
| Total | 48 | 82.8 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | 10 | 17.2 | | |
| Total | 58 | 100.0 | | |

CHAPTER V

5.0. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1. CONCLUSIONS

From the outset, the main purpose of this study was to analyze the major type(s) of marital practices; key benefits of marriage; major changes and challenges in the contemporary marital activities and life among beneficiaries of Yimesgen Molla Marriage and Family Counseling and Training Center (YMMFCTC) in Addis Ababa city. With this intention, the researcher formulated the following major leading questions to be answered at the end of the study.

- a) What are the marital practices (municipality, religious or traditional) that the present day couples prefer and why?
- b) What is the attitude of the present day generation towards the merits/benefits of marital life and why?
- c) What are the major changes the contemporary marital life faced as opposed to the old time practices?
- d) What are the key challenges the present day marital life faced and to what extent the variables are significant between males and females?

Based on the findings reflected above, the following conclusions were deduced and summarized.

- 1) As summarized under section 4.1, theme 1, figure 4.1 (i) above under the analysis chapter, the common type of marital forms that relatively greater respondents mentioned

was the religious marriage form (36.2%) that was followed by civil marriage practice (31%) while the last was that of customary/traditional marriage system (20.7). In this case, those who went for the religious marital practices mentioned that it was the respected type was more binding, satisfying and helpful to understand each other and even solve difference patiently taking the marital responsibilities and the value the society gave for the partnership through marriage.

- 2) As shown under section 4.2, theme 2, figure 4.2 (i) above under analysis and presentation of results chapter, it has been clearly shown that even though the practical importance of being married has declined, its symbolic importance has remained high. Most of the subjects of these study, both the male and female groups, expressed that their marital life provided them happiness, love, respect, honesty, mutual help, sharing life burden, and so forth that they could not get from other types of relationships. They pointed out also marriage as a source of companionship enabled them build spousal friendship, a sense of safety with their partner, giving and receiving support.
- 3) Based on section 4.3, theme 3 above under the presentation of results chapter, most of the respondents mentioned that the attitude of the present generation towards marriage has showed a notable changes among which marital practices, cohabitation of couples (either to get married or separate if they do not agree), age increases at first marriage and decline of birth rates, mothers entering to the work force, change in parental arranged marriage patterns, and staying single instead of getting married have been the major areas.
- 4) As depicted under section 4.4, theme 4 above under the analysis and presentation of results chapter, the majority of male and female respondents, examined under the different areas, witnessed that the present day marital practice has faced numerous challenges among which conflict and misunderstanding between couples; gradual decline

of sexual satisfaction and marital relationships over time; as well as lack of communication skills that could lead easily towards separation, including divorce which was uncommon in the previous years.

5.2. DISCUSSIONS

This study was meant to find out the major changes and challenges the contemporary marital life faced. It sought to discover perceptions and understandings of couples who were married and living with their spouse; or married but separated; or married but divorced; or married but lost the spouse in dearth; or lastly married but widowed, who were receiving counselling and training services from Yimesgen Molla Marriage and Family and Counselling Center (YMMFCTC) in Addis Ababa how they perceive marriage and its benefits from different perspectives; which type of marital forms they preferred (municipal/civil, religious or traditional)and why; what the major changes that marital life today faced; as well as what the present day challenges of marital life. Besides, the study was aimed at measuring the significance level against each of the above variables between male and female respondents.

The study was motivated by the personal observations of the researcher's practical motivation in the subject matter, colleagues and the theoretical that various literatures sources pointed out. Reference was made to various organizations and counselling centers in Addis Ababa city working for marriage and family issue which these variables were inseparable. Due to the absence of more diversified organizations working in these thematic areas, the researched opted to select Yimesgen Molla Marriage and Family Counselling and Training Center (YMMFCTC) with a justification that it had relatively better breadth of tasks and years of

services. For this reason, those beneficiaries mentioned above (married and living with their spouse; or married but separated; or married but divorced; or married but lost the spouse in dearth; or married but widowed) who were receiving basic services from the opted center were targeted for this study. The study mainly focused on four major and leading questions that included: what the marital practices (municipality, religious or traditional) that the present day couples preferred; what attitude the present day generation showed towards the merits/benefits of marital life; what the major changes the present day marital life faced as opposed to the old time practices; as well as what the key challenges that marital life today faced and the extent to which the variables were significant between males and females under each of the above four leading questions formulated at the beginning of the study to be answered at the end of the end of this research work.

From the socio-demographic characteristics presented under the analysis and presentation of results chapter above, from the total 58 sample subjects, 56.9% (33 out of 58) were males while 41.4% (24 out of 58) were female respondents; but one subject missed to indicate the sex he/she belonged to. Most of the respondents ranged between 31 and 40 years old and were also in their first marital life (84.5%). Moreover, 41.4% responded that they possessed first degree and above in their educational level, the majority of the respondents, 81% (47 out of 58) were Orthodox religion followers.

This paper work was consisted of four major thematic areas which revolved around the common forms of marriage, major merits of marriage, major changes the marriage today faced, and the key challenge areas of the contemporary marriage. Overall, this study had a total of 67 self-administered questionnaires consisted of both close-ended and open-ended items, were presented to these 58 sample subjects who either were married and were living with their partner; or married but separated; or married but divorced; or married but lost their

MSW Thesis 2013

partner by death; or widowed, among which 18 items were open-ended, 43 were close-ended (Likert scale types), while the remaining 6 were close-ended but given options for the respondents to choose from the given alternatives.

Although the intensity varied from subject matter to the other, most of the participants showed that the contemporary marriage has been unlike of the previous years, especially after the 1960s. Pessimists in areas of family and marriage argued that recent changes are indications that marriage and family are in serious trouble and are declining in their significance to society (David H. and John D; 2000:7).

The respondents of this study indicated also that in spite of the fact that the significance and social acceptance of marriage has been declining, especially in the Western world, still the importance of it has not totally been neglected but has remained very important for the peaceful family development. Living together before marriage (cohabitation) that would either end in separation or marriage has been becoming quite common among the generation today. Besides, a few respondents depicted that remaining unmarried or singlehood as an alternative to marriage has also been taken as one of the means for the generation to set aside the familial and marital responsibilities and commitments. Marital conflicts were mentioned by most respondents that could lead to divorce, which was seen as a bad practice among many of the societies in previous years but now has been taken as an easy practice and better way once the partners, could not solve their problems anymore. Most respondents witnessed also that sexual satisfaction and marital relationship would be declining over time while some indicated also that age at first marriage has been increasing among the contemporary generation. Parents have been losing also their power to arrange marital bondage with a partner whom the spouse could not know her/his partner until the day that the ceremony would be arranged. Finally, the phenomenon that mothers entering to the work force has

impacted also the marital relationship between men and women in this generation which women have been getting more financial/economic power through having their own sustainable income they depend on. Last but not least, except in a few areas like cohabitation where male respondents favored the major variable (“Cohabitation of Couples”), in most of the subjects, both male and female groups depicted similar attitude towards the respective research questions used in this paper.

CHAPTER VI

6.0. SOCIAL WORK IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICES

Social work is a very diversified and sometime complex practical profession where it requires more tact, accountability, commitment to the extent of sacrificing much of time. In this case, it would be unrealistic that the finding of this study, held in one small training and counselling center would be summative and conclusive that would generally be applicable universally in the city Addis Ababa. It is assumed that the limitations with regard to getting a more re diversified organizations and centers working on marriage and family issues in Addis Ababa would have narrowed the scope of the findings and results.

Furthermore, it is believed that there would have been extraneous factors which were out of the control of the researcher and other limitations of this study so that it would be hardly easy to confidently take a stand which type of the two methods applied (quantitative and qualitative or combination of these) would be the best to get more reliable and valid result that would be more conclusive and might be applicable to other locations of the city Addis Ababa as well as other big cities and towns in the country especially regional ones like Nazareth, Bahir Dar, Hawassa , Mekelle, and other too where the researcher believes that the issue of marriage has been one of the social perspectives/capitals that has been undergoing observable changes and challenges which should have been talked in order to have healthy, productive and responsive generation that would take and shoulder more responsibilities, including marital responsibilities.

Moreover, the lack of interest and commitment by some respondents and their ignorance as regards to the various thematic areas of the study and to address all of the items indicated both in the close-ended and open-ended questionnaires thought also to affect the findings of this study, especially under the open-ended questionnaires. As a result of this, it could indicate to a larger extent that the results were fragile and not conclusive, though it was attempted to collect and correlate more close responses under one thematic feedback.

6.2. RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The researcher of this study would like to suggest for future investigation on the subject matter minimizing the effect of the extraneous factors that were out of control that were mentioned under the implications section above. These included but not limited to issues like the absence of more diversified organizations and centers working on marriage and family issues with better scope; applications of other quantitative and qualitative research methods; conducting the study on people with more diversified population; and with subjects who would be interested and committed both for the close-ended and open-ended items of the questionnaires. The study may have been adequate in combining methods but I would suggest other qualitative methods interviews both for service recipients and service providers, observations to the service delivery on the ground, and so forth.

Besides, in the light of the findings and conclusions, the following key recommendations were forwarded.

- 1) Marital life needs to be more reliable and common understanding and familial commitment between the couples should be strengthened. Couples should understand also that marital life should not be assumed a place where everything always goes

smoothly but it should be understood that the life could have, of course has, many ups and downs in terms of shouldering the responsibilities. As a result of these and other factors, conflict may arise between the couples that should be taken as normal and acceptable. However, when misunderstanding goes more bitter and harsh, the couples should seek for professional support from scholars, including social workers, working in the area. In this regard, Lasiele A and et al (2008:10) mentioned that one of the helping professions that focus on providing such services is counseling. In addition, counseling training equips professional counselors with knowledge and skills required to assist clients to adjust effectively in their society and live happily.

- 2) Couples should have frank and close communications and sharing of any marital issues between them and they should look for remedial actions commonly in democratic way of decision making. To support this, DOUGLAS E. (200:1-2), in a study on Improving Sexual Communication in Marriage stated that marital relationship requires patience, understanding, and a willingness to share and shoulder many aspects of marriage, including sexual relationship which when the life cycle adds years, the complexities of lives and physical changes may affect the sexual responses,
- 3) It is realistic also to recommend that the present day generation should be well equipped with the requirement of marital life before getting into it without preparation in terms of socio-economic, mental and physical perspectives. This should be talked if institutions and organizations working on marriage in particular and familial issue in general are promoted to have active roles in this regard. Added to this, the counselling and training center this study took place should also widen its horizon/scope so that it should work with other institutions working on similar areas so that lessons would be shared among

them for the betterment of the life of married couples in particular and the society in general.

- 4) Finally as stated above, he believed that a lot of extraneous factors had influenced the result of his study badly either directly or indirectly. As a result of these and other factors, the results obtained in this study might have not been conclusive but would serve as a clue for further investigation by any interested social work activists.

CHAPTER VII

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Self-Administered Questionnaires

Questionnaire: Major Changes and Challenges among Couples in their Marital Experiences/Life

Purpose: I am Admassu Kebede, student of masters of social work (MSW) at the Indria Gandhi National Open University being given in collaboration with St. Mary University College in Addis Ababa. The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect relevant information about the major changes and challenges couples face in their marital experiences/life. For this, your genuine responses are very helpful to collect adequate information about the above phenomenon in Yimesgen Molla Marriage and Family Counseling and Training Center. Please take your precious time and complete the questionnaire accordingly. In order to participate in this study you must be either married and living with your spouse; or married then divorced; or married then separated; or married then widowed.

As a participant in this study, you will not be asked for your name or any identification code to keep confidentiality. Therefore, it should not be possible to link your responses to a questionnaire. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any time, if you feel uncomfortable. You may ask any questions during or immediately following the completion of the questionnaire. In case of any inconveniency, please contact me with phone number 0911-183558 or 0920-816766 (personal) or 0115-546669. Thank you for your participation and help with my research.

Directions: Read each of the following items carefully encircle/ write the one you think is correct for you.

I. Socio- Demographic Characteristics

1. Your age is: _____.
2. Gender: A. Male B. Female
3. What is your religious affiliation at the moment?
A. Muslim B. Protestant C. Orthodox D. Catholic E. Don't know F. Other, _____.
4. Which best describes your current marital status?
A. Cohabiting (living with my partner in an intimate relationship) B. Married (first marriage)
C. Married then separated D. Divorced E. Remarried F. Widowed
5. Your educational level is:
A. Grade 10/12 completed B. Certificate C. Diploma D. Degree and above E. Read & Write F. Illiterate
6. Your monthly income is (on average):
A. Less than 500 ETB B. 500-1000 ETB C. 1000-2000 D. 2000-5000 ETB E. More than 5000
F. Others (specify): _____

II. Marital Processes

1. Which type of marital ceremony have you got married with your spouse at your first wedding and why?
A. Civil marriage: Why? _____.
B. Customary/traditional marriage: Why? _____.
C. Religious marriage: Why? _____.

D. Other (specify): _____.

2. Which type of marriage is more binding for you to have peaceful/stable marital life with spouse?

A. Civil marriage B. Customary/traditional marriage C. Religious marriage D. All are the same

3. What kind of marital relationship do you think is the more satisfying way of life?

A) One where the husband provides finances for the family and the wife takes care of the house and children

B) One where the husband and wife both have jobs and both take care of the house and children

C) One where the wife provides finances for the family and the wife takes care of the house and children

D) Other (specify): _____.

III. Benefits of Marriage

1) Overall, I am much satisfied with my marital life right now.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

2) Thinking about my family life so far, I would say it has happened as I expected it would.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

3) My marital life is the most important social capital to me at this time.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

- 4) Marriage provides companionship (i. e. love, respect, honesty, mutual help, sharing life burden, etc) that is missing from other types of relationships.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

IV. Major Changes in Marital Practices

A. Marital Practices

- 1) Some people say that the present institution of marriage is becoming old-fashioned.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

- 2) Some people say that there is only one true love for each person.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

- 3) The marital status of most adults living in Addis Ababa has been decreasing for the past 10 years or so.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

- 4) People should stay married to their spouses for the rest of their lives:

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

- 5) Marriage is only a legal contract that can easily be dissolved.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

6) Marriage is a sacred act that cannot easily be dissolved.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

7) It would be nice if it succeeded, but I refuse to do any more than I am doing now to keep my marital relationship going.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

B. Cohabitation of Couples

1) Did you live with your current spouse before you got married, someone else, or have you done both?

A. Ever lived with partner B. Lived with spouse C. Lived with both current spouse and someone else D. Lived with someone else E. Never lived with partner

2) Living together before marriage would improve a couple's chances of remaining happily married.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

3) A couple will likely be happier in their marriage if they live together first in cohabitation.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

4) It is a good idea for a couple to live together before getting married as a way of trying out their relationship.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

2. Women should to go out, get educated, employed and earn their living independently.
- A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree
3. Educated and employed women have good self-confidence as compared to those not educated to decide on their marital preference.
- A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree
4. Married educated and employed women have better power as compared to those not educated to decide on their birth and number of children they want to have.
- A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

E. Parental Arranged Marriage Patterns

- 1) Getting parental agreement is one of the most important criterions for me to prepare for marriage.
- A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree
- 2) My parents have selected my spouse and arranged me for my marriage.
- A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree
- 3) Parent should have their role in selecting mate for marriage or partnership.
- A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

- 4) Parental involvement in arranging someone for marriage or partner helps to minimize or avoid upcoming challenges couples may face in their marital life.
- A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree
- 5) Parental involvement in arranging marriage would expose especially underage girls for danger in their life, including birth problems and death.
- A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

F. Singlehood as an Alternative to Marriage

- 1) Do you think single women can have children without a male partner and why?
_____.
- 2) What do you think someone should do to stay single until he/she is ready economically and why? _____.
- 3) Do you think people, these days, should stay single for their life due to the burden marriage would bring on them and why? _____.
- 4) Do you think people living together without getting married are more flexible to fulfill their interests as compared to those married and aerie living together?
_____.

V. Major Challenges in Marital Experiences/Life

A. Conflict Resolution in Marital Relationship

1. The way disagreements settled with my spouse or partner in our relationship are fully satisfactory.
A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

2. My partner and I have very different ideas about the best way to solve our disagreements so that I usually give up too quickly.
A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

3. When we have serious disputes over unimportant issues with my partner, I would do anything to avoid the conflict/dispute.
A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

4. When we begin to discuss a disagreement over an important issue, we begin to understand each other's feelings reasonably quickly.
A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

5. When we begin to discuss a disagreement over an important issue, my spouse seems more interested in justifying his/her own point of view rather than in understanding mine.
A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

6. When we begin to discuss a disagreement over an important issue, my spouse blames me for any of my feelings of frustration or irritation as if they were mostly my own fault.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

7. We solve our marital problems/conflicts through discussion between us.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

B. Decline of Sexual Relationships/Satisfaction Over Time in Marital Life

1) I am not satisfied with the frequency of sexual relations with my spouse/partner.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

2) I am not satisfied with the quality of sexual relations with my spouse/partner.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

3) Our sexual relationship and satisfaction has gradually been diminishing since we got married.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

4) My spouse/partner sometimes makes sex with me without my consent.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

5) My spouse does not give me a considerable amount of affection and expresses love feelings to me openly.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

6) Having fulfilling sex life is the most important matter for a married person.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

7) My spouse does not prepare me for sexual gratification physically through kissing, warming up and mutual feelings.

A. Strongly Agree B. Agree C. Undecided D. Disagree E. Strongly Disagree

C. Communication and Marital Relationships

1. Do you think you have close relationship with your spouse compared to your parents and why? _____.

2. What do you think of balancing your job and being a parent and why? _____.

3. What do you think of balancing your marital relationships and being a parent and why? _____.

4. Do you think sharing common interests between spouses helps support and encourage each other in their day-to-day life and why? _____.

5. What is your share to see your marital relationship to succeed and why? _____.

6. Do you think couples should make common decisions democratically for pleasant conversations in their relationship (with both of us active participation and hearing each other) and why? _____.

E. Marital Divorce

1) Do you think people should feel no great obligation to remain married if they are not satisfied? Why? _____.

2) Do you think people should not stay in an unsatisfactory marriage till death? Why? _____.

3) Do you think most people get divorced lastly only after they try solutions to their problems in their marriage? Why? _____.

4) What do you think of couples should do when they don't agree anymore in their marital life? Why? _____.

5) How likely would you get divorced if you and your spouse did not love each other anymore? Why? _____.

Thank you for your cooperation and participation!!!!