

Relational Commitment across Gender and Duration of Marriage

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Abstract:

Commitment is often described as the intention to work on the relationship and feel psychologically attached to it (Rusbult, 1983). It can appear from within the individual i.e. personal dedication or it stems from the internal or external aspects of the relationship (children, money, investments in terms of time, sacrifices) i.e. constraint commitment. The present study aimed to examine the nature of commitment in Indian marriages through its demographic correlates gender and duration of marriage. Data from 268 married individuals showed that out of two kinds, constraint commitment stood out both in gender as well as duration of marriage. Men were high on constraints, specifically on morality of divorce. Men showed a sense of moral obligation to continue the relationship irrespective of the obstacles that come in between. With respect to duration of marriage, constraint commitment in first five years of marriage was less than both the categories of duration i.e. 5-10 years and 10-15 years of marriage. On the other hand, a statistical significant difference was found only among gender on personal commitment. Specifically, women showed a greater relationship agenda than men, i.e. a personal desire to continue the relationship. Both the genders aimed to continue the relationship but in different t forms of commitment. The findings

reveal an important facet of marital relationships in Indian context that can certainly be worked for a healthy and prolonged marriage.

Key words: Marriage, commitment, personal dedication, constraint commitment, gender, duration of marriage.

Abundant literature on marital relationships has consistently focused on whether the couple is satisfied or not. However, change is the most constant thing in marriage. Relationship goes both uphill and downhill with time. Satisfaction does not remain steady, instead it relatively ebb and flow over the course of relationship. If couples rely only on satisfaction for the success of the relationship, marriage would dissolve pretty rapidly.

In fact, data from NSFH (National Survey of Family and households) showed that two out of three unhappy married adults surveyed in late 80s who avoided divorce or separation ended up happily married five years later. Waite, Browning, Doherty, Gallagher, Luo and Stanley (2002) used focus group method with the same NSFH data to show that those who rated their marriage unhappy, many of them were happier not because their problems decreased or got resolved but they endured and obstinately outlasted them. With time, their conflicts and stress eased. Therefore, the questions remains: what is it that keeps couples in relationships even when they are dissatisfied? It is likely to be commitment.

Commitment

Commitment has shown to be an integral and contributing component of a relationship. Research has shown commitment to be associated with willingness to sacrifice and experiencing greater satisfaction in sacrificing which in turn is related to positive outcomes like low relationship distress, stability and better physical health (Stanley & Markman, 1992; Stanley,

Whitton, Sadberry, Clements, & Markman, 2006, Van Lange, Rusbult, Drigotas, Arriaga, Witcher, & Cox, 1997).

Commitment is the intention to maintain a relationship and feel psychologically attached to it (Rusbult, 1983, p.102). According to Schoebi, Karney and Bradbury (2012), it is the behavioral intent to work on a relationship or not rather than psychological attachment that influences the decision of dissolution of marriage. Commitment is therefore, not an outward and transient phenomenon that helps in keeping a relationship, but rather it flows in different forms throughout the relationship urging individuals to invest, sacrifice and compromise for the marriage. Most of the theories on commitment have backgrounds from Interdependence theory and social exchange theories. Interdependence theory posits that relationships persist because of the interdependence between the two partners that results from the level of satisfaction one gets and quality of alternatives outside the relationship (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Rusbult (1980) proposed an Investment model as an extension of interdependence theory and added individual investments that one make to the level of satisfaction and quality of alternatives in a relationship. Investment model proposed that commitment grows from interdependence. As couple begins to form couple identity, they move from acting for self interest to joint preferences and goals and outcomes, transformation of motivation. Thus, a state of being committed to a partner is having a sense of “we-ness” with future (Stanley, Rhoades & Whitton, 2010).

Commitment can be both personal dedication and constraints towards the relationship (Stanley & Markman, 1992). Personal dedication is the desire to maintain and improve the quality of the relation for mutual benefits of both the partners. The desire to not only continue and improve quality in a relationship but also to sacrifice for it, to invest in it, to associate personal goals to it, and to look for partner’s welfare and not just one’s own (Stanley & Markman, 1992).

Constraint commitments on the other hand, are the external or internal forces that constrain individual to maintain a relationship regardless of their personal dedication. These constraints favor relationship stability by making termination of a relationship more economically, socially, personally or psychologically costly (Stanley & Markman, 1992).

Two people become one and they are ought to share a future, hence a number of reasons such as years spent together, children, home, money or even attitudes and behavior of family and society that urges one to stay together. As time passes, these become intertwined to the relationship and more investments mean more constraints. Constraints are the major factor in determining the stability in a marriage. In fact, constraint commitment is one of major reasons why people stay in an abusive relationship. In contented marriages, such constraints may help to wither fluctuations in marital satisfaction and happiness (Stanley & Markman, 1992; Rusbult, 1983). Constraints do not have negative connotation until and unless personal desire to continue the relationship ceases. Once the personal desire ceases, individual may feel stuck in a relationship because of such constraints. Couples who are contented see such constraints like children, shared property, assets as source of joy and investments (Stanley, Rhoades & Whitton, 2010).

Marriage and its associated factors such as commitment are assumed to follow a trajectory throughout the relationship length. As because marriage is made up of emotions, adjustments, sacrifices, and satisfaction which tends to fluctuate over time.

According to Patrick, Sells, Giordano, and Tollerud (2007), a U-shaped pattern for marital quality over marital length was stated by a number of studies. First years of marriages may be characterized by more flexibility in adjustments, romantic expression of love, and marital happiness but these attributes do not suffice for long term

marriages and half of them end in divorces. Since fewer barriers to leave the relationship forcing them not to leave the relationship (Amato & Hohmann-Marriott, 2007), such spouses become vulnerable and reactive to negative information about the partner and engage in more negative communication behavior (blaming, criticizing) rather than positive ones (forgiving, agreeing). (Bradbury & Karney, 2010).

In later years, when the couple turns into a family unit and settle in familial roles, there are more barriers to leave the relationship. It is unlikely that constraints such as children, home, money, and security would not lead the spouse to think twice before ending a relationship. Some relationships, thus navigate their way to success by enduring the stressors and some even end if the stressors were high and they could not endure the distress. But the point remains that constraint can help fade stressors by enduring and putting effort to repair the relationship. Duration of the relationship is thus, an important factor in determining how the relationship unfolds in terms of commitment. And commitment certainly is predictive of relationship success.

The Present Study

This study aims to examine how commitment surge through different duration of marriage and across gender among married adults. Indian marriages are a religious and social event. They have a deeper sense attached to them. It is considered eternal – till deaths do us apart. Most of Indian marriages are pragmatic by nature i.e. formally chosen and arranged by parents, in fact still 90 % of all Indian marriages are arranged (Gautam, 2002). Yet, according to a report by Hindustan Times, January 4th, 2015, the divorce rate in India which was just 1 in 1,000 ten years ago, has risen but is still relatively low, 13 per 1,000 - as compared to the US average of 500 per 1,000. Lower rate of divorces is indicative of many factors playing role such as societal pressure as divorce is still

frowned upon in India. Typical marital problems reported in Indian context includes domestic violence, alcohol abuse, infidelity, problems due to spousal expectations, problems indecision making, child rearing, family (in-laws) originated problems and issues related to equality and capability (Mittal, 1998). Since marriages in India are bound through cultural and family obligations (Yelsma and Athappilly, 1988), the role of constraints such as children, financial support, moral pressures of living through the thick and thin with the spouse cannot be undermined. For the present study, we intend to look for patterns of commitment across three marital lengths, early years (0-5 years), middle years (5-10 years) and late years (10-15 years). Although marital relationships on an average, last as long as 50 years, we wanted to study how commitment starts to deflect in the early, middle and late years of marriage when the “honeymoon period” ends and typical marital stressors (struggling with differences in personalities, settling in familial roles, geographical relocations, alterations in social network and transition to parenthood) come into picture. According to Markman, Floyd, Stanley, and Jamieson (1984), each stage of marriage has its own challenges. There is difference between newlyweds and those who have spent years together see and act in a marital relationship.

Gender is also supposed to influence commitment in marriage. Men and women see marriage differently. Much of the research has also indicated gender differences in romantic relationships. Women have been stereotypically associated with having stronger feelings and expression of love and commitment more than men (Balswick, 1988; Fabes & Martin, 1991; Pines, 1998). Moreover, women are more inclined to use mating strategies for long term, indicating them to be more romantically involved (Buss & Schmitt, 1993; Kenrick, Sadalla, Groth, & Trost, 1990; Peplau, 2003).

However, on the contrary, some studies have in fact found the opposite that men hold more romantic beliefs that

one should marry for love and love is eternal (Cunningham & Antill, 1981; Peplau & Gordon, 1985; Sprecher & Metts, 1989; Medora, Larson, Hortacsu, & Dave, 2002). Speculating reason for such findings, Dion & Dion, (1985) suggested that men tend to have more economic freedom to choose their partner on the basis of love (Dion & Dion, 1985).

Thus, the primary goal of the present research was to study the demographic correlates (duration of marriage and gender), of marriage that can help in knowing the course of commitment.

One the basis of the above rationale, following three objectives and hypotheses are framed:

Objectives

- To study the difference between the durations of marriage on the measure of constraint commitment.
- To study the difference between the durations of marriage on the measure of personal commitment.
- To study gender differences on the measures of constraint and personal commitment.

Hypotheses

- There would be a significant difference between the durations of marriage on constraint commitment.
- There would be a significant difference between the durations of marriage on personal commitment.
- There would be a significant gender difference between males and females on personal and constraint commitment.

Method

Sample

For the present study, a sample of 268 married people, 135 women and 133 men were the participants of the study. The

age ranged from 25-48 years and the mean age was 33 years. Purposive and snow ball sampling techniques were followed for the current research.

Measure

- **Demographic information-** A demographic sheet containing information regarding participant's age, gender, religion, occupation, duration of marriage, type of marriage, number of children (if any), and family type was provided along with the scale.
- **Commitment Inventory** - The Commitment Inventory (Stanley & Markman, 1992) is a widely used 55-item self-report measure designed to assess two aspects of relationship commitment: constraint commitment and personal dedication. The C.I. uses a 7-point Likert scale to measure commitment. The C.I. showed good reliability with coefficient alphas ranging from .79 to .94. Additionally, the C.I. showed good concurrent validity with various commitment measures, including Rusbult's measure of commitment (Stanley & Markman, 1992). For the present study, only morality of divorce, social pressure and structural investments were used for constraint commitment and sub dimension of relationship agenda, couple identity, and satisfaction with sacrifice were used for personal commitment. The internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) for three measures of constraint commitment is 0.688. According to George and Mallery (2003), reliability coefficient value above 0.6 is acceptable. Whereas, for three sub dimensions of personal commitment, Cronbach' alpha is 0.80.

Statistical analyses

Keeping in view the design of the study and the objectives, the obtained data was analyzed using Factorial ANOVA. For the

present study, we wanted to examine the effect of the groups, gender and duration of marriage on each dependent variable, personal and constraint commitment independently; hence the choice was factorial ANOVA. The current work has two independent variables with different participants, hence a two way ANOVA is applied. Effect sizes were calculated for each independent variable on dependent variable.

The test for normality, examining standardized skewness and Shapiro- Wilks test indicated the data were statistically normal for constraint commitment $D(268) = .996$, $p > 0.05$ and for personal commitment $D(268) = .974$, $p > 0.05$. The test for homogeneity of variance was not significant, Levene $F(5, 262) = 1.943$, $p = 0.09$ for constraint commitment, and for personal commitment Levene $F(5, 262) = 1.810$, $p = .111$, indicating that this assumption underlying the application of the two-way ANOVA was met.

Results

Table 1: Demographic information of the participants

<i>Demographic information of the participants</i>		<i>N=(268)</i>	<i>f</i>
Religion	<i>Hinduism</i>	175	65.2%
	<i>Muslim</i>	73	27.2%
	<i>Christianity</i>	14	5.2%
	<i>Others</i>	6	2.2%
Occupation	<i>Business/entrepreneur</i>	4	1.5%
	<i>Engineer</i>	35	13.0%
	<i>Academician</i>	81	30.2%
	<i>Banker</i>	29	10.8%
	<i>Executives (Private sector)</i>	43	16.1%
	<i>Manager/HR manager</i>	15	5.6%
	<i>Medical professionals</i>	10	3.7%
	<i>Research Scholar</i>	13	4.8%
	<i>Lawyer</i>	4	1.6%
	<i>Homemakers</i>	34	12.7%
	Duration of marriage	<i>0-5 years</i>	110
<i>5-10 years</i>		81	30.2%
<i>10-15 years</i>		77	28.7%
Kind of	<i>Love marriage</i>	48	17.9%

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marriage	<i>Arranged marriage</i>	166	61.9%
	<i>Both (love and arranged)</i>	54	20.1%
Family Type	<i>Nuclear</i>	152	56.7%
	<i>Joint</i>	116	43.3%

The sample comprised of mostly individuals from the teaching background (30.2%) followed by Private Sector employees (16.1%), followed by Homemakers (12.7%), engineers (10.8%). Along in lines with the previous reports, our sample also had higher number of arranged marriages (61.9%) than, love marriages (17.9%) followed by love cum arranged marriage (20.1%). With respect to duration of marriage, the percentage of people falling in 0-5 years were (41.1%), followed by 5-10 years (30.2%) and 10-15 years (28.7%) years.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for the measure constraint and personal commitment

<i>Duration of marriage</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Constraint Commitment</i>			<i>Personal Commitment</i>		
		<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D</i>	<i>N</i>
<i>0-5 years</i>	<i>Male</i>	85.57	13.07	66	94.63	14.78	66
	<i>Female</i>	83.39	10.34	51	101.17	12.40	51
<i>5-10 years</i>	<i>Male</i>	91.33	11.05	33	98.00	16.06	33
	<i>Female</i>	87.85	15.21	40	103.85	14.06	40
<i>10-15 years</i>	<i>Male</i>	90.61	11.39	34	100.61	13.31	34
	<i>Female</i>	85.70	12.36	44	98.63	12.32	44
<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	88.29	12.39	133	97.00	14.86	133
	<i>Female</i>	85.46	12.63	135	101.14	12.96	135

The above table reveal that the males were higher on constraint commitment (M= 88.29, SD =12.39) as compared to females (M = 85.46, SD = 12.63) whereas, females showed greater personal commitment (M = 101.14, SD = 12.96) than males (M = 97.00, SD = 14.86).

Table 3: ANOVA summary table on the measure of Constraint Commitment (CC)

<i>Source</i>	<i>Type Sum of Squares</i>	<i>III df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>Gender</i>	787.173	1	787.173	5.124	.024*
<i>Duration of marriage</i>	1317.090	2	658.545	4.286	.015*

<i>Gender * duration of marriage</i>	86.302	2	43.151	.281	.755
<i>Error</i>	40251.900	262	153.633		
<i>Total</i>	2064619.000	268			

$p < 0.05^*$, Dependent variable, CC.

Results from two way ANOVA indicated a significant main effect of gender on the extent to which an individual feel constrained in the relationship, $F(1, 262) = 5.124$, $p < 0.05$, $w^2 = 0.02$. This indicates that male and females have different levels of constraints in the relationship. Specifically, males showed more constraints ($M = 88.29$, $SD = 12.39$) while females felt lesser constrained in the relationship ($M = 85.46$, $SD = 12.63$).

A significant main effect of duration of marriage was also obtained on constraint commitment $F(2, 262) = 4.286$, $p < 0.05$, $w^2 = 0.02$. This indicates that constraints in a relationship vary with the duration of marriage. A post hoc analysis test was carried out to see the difference between the three.

However, a non-significant interaction effect gender* duration of marriage was obtained on constraint commitment, $F(2, 262) = 0.281$, $p = .755$, $w^2 = 0.001$.

Table 4: Post hoc analysis for dependent variable constraint commitment (CC)

	<i>(I) duration of marriage</i>	<i>(J) duration of marriage</i>	<i>Mean Difference (I-J)</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>95% Confidence Interval</i>	
						<i>Lower Bound</i>	<i>Upper Bound</i>
<i>Bonferroni</i>	<i>0-5 years</i>	<i>5-10 years</i>	-4.8007*	1.84869	.030	-9.2551	-.3464
		<i>10-15 years</i>	-3.2222	1.81184	.229	-7.5878	1.1433
	<i>5-10 years</i>	<i>0-5 years</i>	4.8007*	1.84869	.030	.3464	9.2551
		<i>10-15 years</i>	1.5785	2.01847	1.000	-3.2849	6.4419
	<i>10-15 years</i>	<i>0-5 years</i>	3.2222	1.81184	.229	-1.1433	7.5878
		<i>5-10 years</i>	-1.5785	2.01847	1.000	-6.4419	3.2849

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

A bonferroni Post hoc test revealed that the constraints were lesser in 0-5 years and spurted in 5-10 years with a mean difference ($M= 4.880$, $SD= 1.85$), significant at $p>0.05$ level. There was no statistical difference obtained between 5-10 years and 10-15 years of marriage.

Further, in order to specify which constraints are indicative of the difference between males and females, we further tested the difference between three constraints, morality of divorce, Social pressure and Structural investments.

A preliminary analysis testing assumption of normality (Shapiro- Wilk test) and were found to be violated for the two dimensions. It was found to be significant for social pressure ($p=0.0001<0.05$) and structural investment ($p=0.04<0.05$), hence violated, while for morality of divorce, assumption of normality was met ($p=0.06>0.05$). However, "Large samples will give rise to small standard errors and so when sample sizes are big, significant values arise from even small deviations from normality, it is more important to look at the shape of the distribution visually and to look at the value of the skewness and kurtosis statistics rather than calculate their significance" (Field, 2009, p.139). According to Field (2009) z scores can also be computed by dividing the skewness and kurtosis scores with standard errors and their significance levels can be checked at the desired level. A threshold value of ± 3.29 is suggested for z scores (Field, 2009; Tabachnick & Fidell 2001). In the present case, the z scores of dimensions of constraint commitment, morality of divorce ($z=0.97$), social pressure ($z=2.83$) and structural investments ($z=1.42$) were well below the threshold value. Thus, we proceeded with further analysis.

The Levene's test of homogeneity, both the dimensions social pressure and structural investments were not significant $F(1, 266) = .299$, $p = .585$; $F(1, 266) = .235$, $p = .629$ respectively, but morality of divorce could not meet the assumption of homogeneity, $F(1, 266) = 6.532$, $p = .011$. Field (2013) recommends using Welch test as an alternative for obtaining F-

ratios and robust method for testing group difference if the assumption of homogeneity of variance has been violated. Liu (2015) stated that Welch test performs best with three group heterogeneity data, normal, equal or unequal sample sizes. Since our data was fairly normally distributed, but non homogenous partly, we proceeded with Welch test.

Table 5: Results of Welch Tests to compare groups on types of constraint commitment

Dimensions	Gender	Mean	SD	Statistic	df1	df2	p value
<i>Morality of Divorce</i>	<i>Male</i>	28.84	6.13	15.004	1	254.772	.000
	<i>Female</i>	25.54	7.70				
<i>Social Pressure</i>	<i>Male</i>	32.30	5.96	2.107	1	265.289	.148
	<i>Female</i>	33.34	5.75				
<i>Structural investments</i>	<i>Male</i>	27.14	5.05	.831	1	265.924	.363
	<i>Female</i>	26.57	5.22				

Results from Welch test indicated that there was significant effect of gender on morality of Divorce, $F(1, 254.77) = 15.004$, $p < 0.001$. Specifically, men ($M=28.84$, $SD= 6.13$) had higher mean than women ($M=25.54$, $SD= 7.70$). This indicates that for men, it is morally not right to end a relationship so easily. Men are more morally committed than women in a relationship.

Table 6: ANOVA summary table on measure of Personal commitment (PC)

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<i>Gender</i>	761.902	1	761.902	3.973	.04*
<i>Duration of marriage</i>	421.492	2	210.746	1.099	.335
<i>Gender * duration of marriage</i>	932.654	2	466.327	2.432	.090
<i>Error</i>	50245.996	262	191.779		
<i>Total</i>	2684035.000	268			

$p < 0.05^*$, Dependent variable, PC.

Results from two way ANOVA indicated an overall non significant effect of gender as well as of duration of marriage on the extent to which a person feels personally dedicated to the

spouse, $F(1, 262) = 1.099$, $p > 0.05$, $w^2 = 0.0001$ and $F(1, 262) = 3.973$, $p > 0.05$, $w^2 = 0.0002$ respectively.

Further analysis was carried out with the three dimensions of personal commitment. The Levene's test of homogeneity of variance was non-significant for all the three dimensions of personal commitment, Relationship agenda $F(1, 266) = .936$, $p = .334$, Couple identity $F(1, 266) = .459$, $p = .499$ and Satisfaction with Sacrifice $F(1, 266) = .008$, $p = .930$.

Table 7: Results of Independent sample t test to compare groups on types of personal commitment

<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>
<i>Relationship Agenda</i>	<i>Male</i>	34.57	7.34	2.21	.02*
	<i>Female</i>	36.71	4.74		
<i>Couple Identity</i>	<i>Male</i>	32.14	4.92	1.34	.18
	<i>Female</i>	32.99	5.43		
<i>Satisfaction with sacrifice</i>	<i>Male</i>	30.27	5.17	1.78	.07
	<i>Female</i>	31.42	5.40		

Results showed that males ($M = 34.57$, $SD = 7.34$) showed greater relationship agenda than females ($M = 36.71$, $SD = 4.74$). This difference was statistically significant $t(266) = 2.21$, $p < 0.05$; it represented a small sized effect $r = .13$.

Discussion

The current findings partially harmonize with the existing research that commitment varies with gender and length of marriage. Marriages in India are obligatory, lifelong commitment and divorce is still disgraced upon (Amato, 1994; Bose & South, 2003; Myers, Madathil, & Tingle, 2005). Couples have to keep up even in the face of unmanageable marital distress. And this is pertinent to both men and women. Our findings revealed that both the gender showed difference in terms of commitment styles, however, they both pointed out to a same direction i.e. to continue the relationship. Men were

more morally constrained towards the relationship. In lay terms, marriage according to them is a once in a lifetime commitment. (Im) Morality of ending a relationship reflects in that marriage should be continued no matter how many rough encounters couple may face during the marital course. Morality is synonymous to moral commitment. Moral commitment (not measured as a separate unit in Stanley and Markman scale (1992) but a component of constraint commitment), entails moral obligations to stay married. One has personal obligation that results from promise to stay together and consistency beliefs about the relationship (Johnson, Caughlin & Huston., 1999, p. 161).

Men are stereotypically associated with low commitment, infidelity, but on the contrary, literature has also shown men tend to hold more romantic beliefs that one should marry for love and love is eternal (Garcia & Carrigan, 1998; Medora, Larson, Hortacsu, & Dave, 2002. On the other hand, predominance of women divorcing and separating at much higher rate than men, data from 2005-2006 National Family Health Survey-3 (International Institute for Population Sciences, India and ORC Macro Calverton, 2007) reported that 0.3% women were divorced, 0.8% separated and 0.3% deserted; whereas for men 0.1% were divorced, 0.3% separated and 0.2% deserted is a reality. Commitment has to be vindicated through gender roles in Indian marriages.

Marriages in India have specified roles for a man and woman to be played. Man earns and woman takes care of the household. Upon globalization, marriages have undergone changes and had given women empowerment and economic independence to voice against dissatisfaction in a relationship. Many may chose to leave and many may endure. Nonetheless, marriages in India are still complicated, intertwined with the family system and societal norms. In fact, the quality of the relationship of an Indian woman depends on the warmth and support she receives from the spouse and extended family

members (Allendorf, 2012). This can further be supported by the theoretical perspective from Kohlberg theory of moral development (1969), women represent morality of care while men emphasize morality of care and justice equally (Donenberg and Hoffman, 1988), Gilligan (1982) elucidated that women represent morality of care because they define themselves through others and their relationships while men separate themselves from the world and it is morally imperative for them to respect rights to life and self fulfillment. Constraints though could not be understood without taking into account personal commitment in the relationship. Our result for personal commitment, were significant for the gender, women showed greater personal commitment specifically in terms of relationship agenda. Relationship agenda is the degree to which a person wants the relationship to continue over time (Stanley & Markman, 1992). As said above, women define themselves through others and their relationships, and a women with a contented family and spouse is considered as endowed upon and complete in Indian context, hence desire to see relationship continue over time reflects commitment. Moreover, when women represent her through others, it is likely that she would make efforts in it and thus see the relationship as personal entity. Women are more sensitive to relationship difficulties. They monitor their relationship more closely and become aware of the relationship problems sooner than men and initiate relationship discussions (Thompson & Walker, 1991). Men, in contrast, are more likely than women to withdraw from discussions of relationship problems (Gottman, 1994). They would less likely to know reason of divorce. Perhaps, this could be the reason why men do not readily want to leave the relationship. India represents a collectivistic culture, marriage is essentially obligatory to be happy as two. Thus, we expect a greater sense of we-ness and interdependence in Indian couples which helps in persisting marriages through personal desires or moral obligations.

Another finding complemented the literature presented before; constraint commitment was lesser in the first five years of marriage and spurted in the next five years. Newlyweds have fewer barriers that restrict them in a relationship even if their satisfaction is high (Amato & Hohmann-Marriott, 2007). Gradually, when investments, sacrifices, shared possessions and children starts consuming places in the couple's life, constraints increase and binds individual more complexly.

Commitment cannot be measured as a single unit. Personal and constraint both are equally important when examining the relationship quality as well as stability. Taken together, the present findings reaffirm the value of commitment embedded in the marital relationships. Looking at it through the lenses of gender and length of relationship will yield better couple outcomes. Future research can deepen its endeavor taking such aspects into account.

Limitations and Suggestions

The obvious limitation was the cross-sectional design of the study, however, looking at the nature of the concept; future researchers should focus on the longitudinal design to grasp more developmental changes in a relationship. In addition, the present study was confined to only two cities of India; the replication of similar studies in different parts of India would ensure generalizability of the findings. Assessment of another demographic correlates such as parenthood and type of marriage can also add new dimensions to the whole concept of commitment and marriage. Lastly, Qualitative methodology would have given depth to the findings of the study thus, providing a more holistic picture.

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