

Pre-Marital Counselling: A Preventive Tool for Preparedness of Marital Life

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ABSTRACT

Premarital counselling practices are gaining importance in the contemporary context. It is considered one of the most effective preventive strategies for preparing individuals for post-marital life. This type of counselling aims to prepare individuals through developmental interventions that address various elements of marital life, including psychological, social, and relational aspects. Marriage as an institution is witnessing significant changes due to the rapidly changing lifestyles and increasing demands of the modern world. Countries such as India are also experiencing a very large population, which adds complexity to family and marital relationships. These factors have contributed to a rising number of relational issues and the weakening of marital bonds. The increasing number of divorces portrays the growing need to strengthen marital relationships in contemporary society. The realities and demands within marital ties have become major concerns for ensuring a satisfied and healthy family life.

The present paper is empirical in nature. The study was conducted with prospective couples who benefited from premarital counselling to learn about marital relationships and prepare themselves for married life. An exploratory method was used to help readers understand the impact and significance of premarital counselling through both statistical and qualitative data. The study also explores the issues addressed in counselling before individuals begin to think about and plan for marriage. Additionally, the paper examines the various processes that participants underwent during premarital counselling sessions. The study found a positive correlation between counselling participation and equitable role negotiation, particularly in relation to decision-making, financial responsibilities, and family adjustment. The paper also emphasises the importance of self-discovery and awareness of personal concerns to ensure future preparedness with greater maturity and understanding.

The findings of the paper highlight the relevance of premarital counselling as a preventive social work intervention in a country

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where limited discussion about marital expectations often leads to conflict after marriage. The study also recommends the integration of premarital counselling into family welfare programmes, educational institutions, and community-based initiatives. The observations of the study further promote the development of healthy and sustainable marital relationships among prospective couples.

Key Words: Pre-marital counselling, preventive tool, need for counselling and role of counsellor

INTRODUCTION:

Marriage is the socially and legally recognised union between individuals. It signifies an obligation between partners who choose to share a social and legal bond and commit to a long-lasting relationship. Marriage serves as an umbrella that encompasses several crucial elements necessary for two individuals to live together successfully. A strong marital partnership is grounded in emotional support, economic cooperation, reproduction, and the fulfilment of mutual needs and responsibilities. However, the institution of marriage varies across societies depending on cultural traditions, historical contexts, and legal provisions. The roots of marriage can be traced to service, mutual support, fulfilment of needs, and reproduction.

Bell, D. (1997) noted that marriage is a dynamic social institution shaped by cultural, economic, religious, and legal transformations over time. Early forms of marriage were primarily associated with survival needs, kinship alliances, and property arrangements rather than romantic love or affection. Murdock, G. P. (1949) defined marriage as “a universal institution that involves residential cohabitation, economic cooperation, and the formation of the nuclear family.” This definition emphasises that marriage is a foundational unit in societies across the world, involving shared living arrangements and mutual obligations between partners. Similarly, Westermarck, E. (1891) described marriage as “a more or less durable connection between male and female lasting beyond the mere act of reproduction until after the birth of offspring.” This perspective highlights the enduring connection between partners and their shared responsibilities toward family formation.

Marriage plays a crucial role in the formation of new families along with structures, roles, and responsibilities. Essentially, marriage represents the establishment of a long-lasting union between two individuals. However, after marriage, couples often face several challenges while fulfilling expectations and adjusting to new responsibilities. These challenges highlight the need for guidance and support to ensure the smooth functioning of marital life.

Communication is one of the most important factors in resolving problems between couples and families. Patterns of communication, expectations, listening skills, and mutual attention are essential for maintaining healthy relationships after marriage. Emotional, social, and financial expectations require couples to understand each other better in the struggle for survival in today's demanding world. Similarly, the division of roles and responsibilities influences individuals' ability to pursue personal aspirations. There are also growing concerns regarding traditional divisions of labour and the increasing demand for egalitarian roles within marriages.

Cultural and value differences may create stress among couples. Issues related to intimacy, relational adjustment, and attitudes toward family life often present challenges for newly married couples. Openness regarding health, reproductive awareness, and personal concerns can also be difficult. Fidelity between partners is another sensitive issue that may sometimes be misunderstood due to behavioural patterns or relationship styles. Additionally, decisions related to having children, personality differences, emotional maturity, and individual traits affect marital stability. Other challenges, such as legal awareness, decision-making participation, the use of social media and technology, trust issues, work–life balance, and past relationship experiences, may create complexities in married life.

Family development is closely linked to the dynamics of marriage. According to Gavazzi et al. (2023), "Family development refers to the dynamic progression of family systems through normative and non-normative transitions, shaped by individual growth, relational changes, and sociocultural contexts." This definition highlights the importance of strengthening family relationships and maintaining balance and well-being among family members. Financial stability also contributes to the development of strong family bonds and greater involvement among members.

The family life cycle perspective provides further insight into family development. Betty Carter and Monica McGoldrick (1999) proposed the Family Life Cycle framework, which conceptualises the family as a dynamic system that progresses through predictable developmental stages. Each stage involves emotional processes and relational responsibilities. The model outlines phases such as leaving home, marriage, child-rearing, launching children, and later life. Each transition requires role adjustments and renegotiation of family boundaries. Stress and dysfunction may occur when families struggle to adapt to these normative transitions. Overall, the family life cycle perspective provides a comprehensive framework for understanding growth, continuity, and resilience within families over time.

In the contemporary context, many of the concerns that arise after marriage can be addressed through premarital counselling. Premarital

counselling helps individuals who are planning to marry become aware of each other's expectations, attitudes, and responsibilities before entering into marital life. It addresses potential family and relational issues that may arise in the future.

Counselling is a professional helping relationship between a counsellor and a client. It aims to help individuals discover problems and find appropriate solutions. Counselling focuses on emotional, social, psychological, and behavioural concerns while promoting self-awareness, decision-making, and personal growth. The counselling process is conducted in a safe, supportive, and confidential environment.

Rogers, C. (1951) defined counselling as "a series of direct contacts with the individual which aims to offer assistance in changing attitudes and behaviour." Similarly, Harold M. Burks and B. Steffre (1979) described counselling as "a professional relationship between a trained counsellor and a client." According to Kaplan et al. (2014), "Counselling is a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals." These definitions highlight counselling as a professional process that supports individuals in developing the ability to cope with life situations. Counselling may take various forms, including individual, family, couple, group, and telephonic counselling.

Counselling may also occur in different situations such as developmental, crisis intervention, facilitative, and preventive contexts. The present paper focuses particularly on preventive and facilitative counselling approaches that aim to promote healthy, peaceful, and sustainable marital relationships.

Clinebell, H. J. (1970) described premarital counselling as an educational and counselling process offered to couples before marriage to help them understand themselves, each other, and the responsibilities of married life. Gottman et al. (2017) defined premarital counselling as a preventive intervention that helps couples build relationship skills, improve communication, and develop strategies for managing conflict before entering marriage. Similarly, Markman et al. (2018) described premarital education and counselling as structured programmes designed to prepare couples for marriage by strengthening communication skills, clarifying expectations, and reducing the risk of marital distress. Johnson, S. (2019) further emphasised that premarital counselling supports couples in developing emotional bonding, secure attachment, and effective relationship patterns before marriage.

These definitions collectively highlight that premarital counselling helps individuals understand post-marital life, build relationship skills, develop coping strategies, manage conflicts, clarify expectations, and strengthen communication. It also reduces distress and supports emotional

bonding and secure attachment. Therefore, premarital counselling can be viewed as a purposeful awareness and preparedness programme that helps individuals learn and explore various aspects of married life. It prepares couples to take on roles and responsibilities and encourages mutual understanding of expectations.

Premarital counselling is gaining increasing importance in the contemporary world. The fast-paced nature of modern life and the growing demands for social, emotional, and economic stability highlight the need for preparedness before entering marriage. As a result, many matrimonial services and institutions have begun to recognise the importance of premarital counselling in sustaining healthy marital relationships.

Brief Review of Literature

Young adults often hold unrealistic beliefs related to romance and mate selection. These beliefs appear to negatively affect satisfaction and the stability of relationships between couples after marriage. Hence, premarital counselling becomes an important tool for prospective couples to critically examine these beliefs, improve communication patterns, and prepare themselves thoroughly for marital roles and responsibilities. Premarital counselling also facilitates deeper self-awareness and mutual understanding between partners. A study by Reed-Fitzke et al. (2020) noted that individuals who participated in premarital counselling found it constructive and beneficial for building healthier relationships by understanding their beliefs and expectations. The study also indicated that individuals showed positive attitudes toward receiving counselling before marriage. Furthermore, premarital counselling helps shape healthier relationship perspectives and reduces the likelihood of marital conflicts through better communication and actual understanding. It also enables partners to understand expectations regarding finances, communication, conflict resolution, and family roles. Thus, premarital counselling functions as a proactive strategy that strengthens relationship quality and reduces the likelihood of marital distress in the future.

Love (1992) referred to the importance of counselling before marriage in helping couples understand values, behaviours, and receive appropriate guidance for a sustainable marital life. Early counselling also helps individuals reflect on their beliefs and expectations for greater well-being. The author emphasised that values shape behaviour and influence how individuals relate within intimate relationships. By discussing moral principles, roles, and interpersonal understanding before marriage, couples can better prepare themselves for the challenges of married life. Indirectly, this highlights the importance of value clarification and guidance as key elements of premarital counselling.

Uneke et al. (2007) discussed mandatory premarital HIV testing in relation to its public health and social significance. The study reported that screening tests and counselling identified 7.8% of individuals as HIV-positive among intending couples referred by faith-based organisations. The findings indicated a notable prevalence of HIV among couples planning to marry. While the article highlights the importance of identifying health risks and encouraging responsible marital decisions, it also raises serious ethical and social concerns regarding mandatory testing. The authors further noted that testing alone may not prevent HIV transmission, as infection may also occur after marriage. In conclusion, the researchers recommended voluntary counselling and confidential testing, accompanied by pre- and post-test counselling, as the most appropriate approach. Premarital counselling combined with voluntary health screening can promote informed marital decisions while protecting individual rights and dignity.

Farley (2011) discussed how premarital counselling is increasingly being recognised as an important preventive intervention that prepares couples for long-term relationship commitments. The paper highlights the growing importance of structured counselling and guidance for couples before marriage. The author emphasised that premarital counselling provides couples with relational awareness and essential interpersonal skills that strengthen marital stability. It was also noted that individuals who participate in educational and preventive programmes tend to experience better relationship outcomes than those who do not. Premarital counselling focuses on predictors of marital success, including communication, commitment, trust, respect for differences, and conflict management. It also encourages discussions about family values and the division of responsibilities.

Shurts (2008) introduced the concept of “pre-union counselling” to address the needs of same-sex couples who were historically excluded from traditional premarital counselling frameworks due to the lack of societal acceptance of such marital relationships. The author emphasised that premarital counselling is a preventive intervention aimed at strengthening relationships and preparing couples for the challenges of married life. The article highlights that counselling before marriage helps partners understand each other better, improve communication, manage conflicts, and discuss expectations regarding finances, family roles, life choices, and intimacy. The author also noted that counselling before marriage can increase marital satisfaction, reduce the likelihood of early divorce, and contribute to long-lasting marital relationships. It further emphasised that couples may face unique social and cultural stressors, particularly same-sex partners who experience heterosexism and a lack of societal support.

The above brief review highlights the need for premarital counselling in contemporary society. It emphasises the issues that should be addressed before marriage and illustrates how counselling promotes self-awareness, clarifies expectations, strengthens relationships, and encourages open communication. In a fast-changing world characterised by complex social issues, ethical concerns, and increasing lifestyle expectations, marital conflicts, separation, and divorce are becoming more common. Therefore, premarital counselling plays a significant role in strengthening marital relationships and preserving the stability of marriage as a social institution.

Theoretical Framework:

Preventive Counselling Theory guided the present study. The central theme of this theory is the early identification and prevention of potential problems before they become severe. The concept was developed by Caplan in the field of mental health practice. Preventive counselling focuses on developing individuals' ability to cope with challenges, improve communication, and prepare for significant life transitions.

The theory is highly relevant to the present study, as premarital counselling helps intending couples understand and learn about expectations, roles, conflict management, emotional adjustment, and other issues that may arise after marriage. By equipping partners with prior knowledge and relationship skills, preventive counselling can reduce or lessen marital conflicts. It also enhances marital satisfaction and promotes stable relationships. Thus, premarital counselling functions as a proactive preventive intervention that prepares couples for a healthier and more sustainable marital life.

Methodology and Aims:

An exploratory research method was adopted for the study. Seven intending couples who participated in premarital counselling were considered as respondents for the study. Each couple attended the premarital counselling sessions together. The study was empirical in nature. The participants belonged to nine different blocks of Ahilyanagar District. All the participants were planning to marry their intended partners within a period ranging from one to six months or more.

Qualitative and quantitative data were collected through interviews, focused group discussions, and observations of the participants for the purpose of analysis.

To understand the impact of premarital counselling on intending couples, specific aims were identified before the study. These aims served as guidelines to restrict and focus the study on analysing particular aspects

of premarital counselling. The article analyses various elements covered for awareness under premarital counselling in order to enhance knowledge about issues and concerns related to a healthy marital life. The paper also examines the need for preventive interventions to promote a happy and satisfying post-marital life. Furthermore, the researcher attempts to understand the role of premarital counselling in preparing intending couples for married life.

Elements of Pre-marital Counselling:

Premarital counselling is highly important for individuals intending to get married. It initiates a process of learning about oneself and one's partner to prepare for the adjustments required in married life. It helps individuals understand several aspects that they need to be aware of in order to deal more effectively with marital situations and develop appropriate relational skills. In this way, these components are vital for strengthening marital bonds and ensuring a long-lasting relationship. The following elements were identified through the study:

Meaning and Expectations: All the participants reported that they *"were made aware of the historical background and meaning of the concept of marriage."* The counselling sessions also highlighted the various roles and responsibilities that individuals need to undertake for a healthy and successful marital life, depending on traditions, personal capabilities, needs, and situational circumstances. Participants also emphasised that mutual commitment toward each other is highly important for building and sustaining relationships.

Communication Skills: Communication is a crucial element in any relationship, as the quality of relationships often depends on how individuals communicate with each other. In the present study, participants recognised communication as an important means of open conversation between partners. One participant noted that *"communication helps partners understand each other's likes, dislikes, and behavioural patterns."* The findings indicated that communication plays a significant role in resolving both minor and major issues in marital life. Effective communication, along with active listening and understanding, was considered essential for maintaining satisfaction and happiness in married life. Participants also emphasised the importance of respectful communication to avoid hurting each other's feelings.

Conflict Resolution and Problem-Solving Skills: Marital life often involves conflicts over both minor and major issues. Conflicts may arise at any time between partners; therefore, couples need to develop conflict resolution and problem-solving skills. Participants reported that it is important to acquire strategies to address disagreements effectively and rebuild harmony in relationships. One participant mentioned that *"conflict*

management abilities are essential for maintaining long-lasting marital relationships.” Hence, developing such skills helps couples address issues constructively and continue their relationship with mutual understanding.

Adjustment and Emotional Maturity: Living together with individuals who have different personalities can be challenging for married couples. Adjustment is an important element that contributes to long-term marital stability. Individuals need to understand personal differences and demonstrate emotional maturity through both verbal and non-verbal communication. One participant stated, “I agree that fulfilling emotional needs and making adjustments are key to developing deep relationships.” Thus, emotional maturity and the ability to adjust play a vital role in building strong marital relationships.

Financial Responsibilities and Planning: Financial literacy and budgeting are essential components of family life. Saving and financial planning help families meet various needs and ensure economic stability. Participants reported that “*financial stability is very important and contributes to the well-being of family members.*” Joint financial decision-making was also emphasised as an important aspect of marital life.

Sexual Relationship and Reproductive Health: One of the important characteristics of family life is reproduction and the possibility of raising children. The counselling programme helped participants understand the importance of intimacy between couples after marriage. Issues related to sexual relationships and expectations were discussed to ensure a healthy marital life. Participants indicated that “*concerns related to sexual life and expectations were discussed, which helped clarify many aspects of personal life.*”

In-law Adjustment and Family Relationships: Participants were introduced to the expectations of family members, particularly those of in-laws, and the adjustments required in extended family settings. They also learned how to integrate themselves into the family structure while respecting cultural values, morals, and traditions.

Gender-Based Roles and Equality in Marriage: Participants learned about gender roles and the importance of marriage equality. They discussed responsibilities related to family life and household tasks. One participant noted that “*mutual respect is highly necessary in the family.*” Such understanding helps strengthen family relationships through love, care, and affection.

Parenthood and Child-Rearing Expectations: Participants were made aware that parenthood is an important aspect of family life. Counselling sessions addressed readiness for parenting and family planning so that couples can prepare themselves to meet future expectations related to raising children.

Legal Rights and Responsibilities in Marriage: Participants also learned about various legal aspects of marriage, including rights, procedures, institutional services, and responsibilities. This knowledge helps couples strengthen their marital bond from a legal perspective and ensures a more secure and stable marital life.

The above issues were discussed and addressed during the counselling sessions to promote awareness and prepare couples for a healthy family life. Premarital counselling encourages partners to develop understanding, compromise when necessary, and work together to make their marital life more meaningful and fulfilling.

Need of Preventive Interventions for Preparedness:

Marital life largely depends on a deep level of understanding and a high degree of maturity between partners. The marriageable age also plays an important role in developing the necessary maturity for appropriate thinking and behaviour. Preventive interventions create opportunities for developing and deepening individuals' understanding of marital roles, responsibilities, and important life decisions. The following diagram illustrates the need for preventive interventions and the various components required to strengthen marital relationships after marriage.

The above chart indicates ten core elements required for preventive interventions to strengthen marital life as a preparedness strategy. Realistic expectations are an important factor in marital life. Participants indicated that 71.47% believed that developing realistic expectations is necessary in preventive interventions, whereas 28.53% felt that it was not highly necessary.

Participants also emphasised the importance of strengthening communication skills to make couple relationships more enriching. About 83.21% of the participants stated that communication skills need to be strengthened, while 16.79% felt that this was less necessary.

In order to prevent marital conflicts, participants highlighted the need for preventive strategies. Around 63.36% believed that learning conflict prevention strategies was necessary, whereas 36.64% felt that such measures were less required, as conflicts may arise occasionally over minor issues. Similarly, 74.76% of the participants stated that preventive strategies are effective for learning about marital roles and responsibilities, while 25.24% felt that these strategies were less necessary. Emotional maturity was also considered a vital component of marital life. Approximately 82% of the participants believed that preventive interventions should help individuals understand emotional behaviour, expression, and coping mechanisms, whereas 18% felt that it was not as necessary.

Economic management is another important aspect of family life to ensure stability and satisfaction. About 47.47% of the participants believed that encouraging responsible financial management is necessary, while 52.53% felt that it was not as essential in the present situation.

Reproductive health awareness between partners is also important, as one of the goals of marriage for many couples is to have healthy children. In the study, 69.96% of the participants indicated that awareness about reproductive health is necessary as a preventive measure for adopting a healthy family life, while 30.04% believed it was less necessary. Adjustment between couples and family members contributes to a happy and satisfied family life. In this study, 91.11% of the participants emphasised the importance of understanding various aspects of adjustment, whereas 8.89% felt that such facilitation was less necessary. Promoting gender equality has become an important concern in marital relationships over the years. In the analysis, 76.26% of the participants supported the promotion of gender equality in relation to roles and responsibilities, while 23.74% did not fully accept the need for greater understanding of gender equality. Strengthening marital stability is another crucial aspect of family life. A majority of participants (88.05%) reported the need to learn various strategies for maintaining stable marital relationships, while 11.95% considered it less important.

As depicted in the above chart, the study highlights that preventive interventions for achieving a happy, satisfied, and well-prepared marital life are highly valued. The various elements identified through quantitative analysis demonstrate that learning, understanding, and awareness are effective strategies for strengthening and enriching marital relationships.

Roles of Pre-marital Counsellor:

Premarital counselling is carried out by a number of marriage bureaus, individual counsellors, and through special counselling camps. However, in the present context, it is necessary to have qualified, trained, and experienced counsellors to guide intending couples before marriage. The following roles of counsellors were identified through the study as crucial in premarital counselling.

Counsellors play the role of facilitating open communication between two individuals who intend to marry. They help couples learn about each other and discover their personal characteristics, expectations, and perspectives. The counsellor encourages individuals to engage in serious and honest discussions about their expectations, values, and concerns related to married life. Providing guidance is another vital role performed by the counsellor during the premarital counselling process. Counsellors help couples understand the various roles and responsibilities that need

to be undertaken in marital life. They assist couples in exploring how effectively they can manage these responsibilities while fulfilling their duties and demonstrating commitment toward family life. Counsellors also assess compatibility and relationship dynamics between partners. They help couples understand and explore differences in values, beliefs, and personality traits that may exist between individuals and their families. This understanding enables couples to build stronger relationships and develop mutual respect. Another important role of the counsellor is educating couples about problem-solving and improving communication patterns. This guidance helps couples manage conflicts more effectively and address disagreements constructively through appropriate skills and strategies. Counsellors also create awareness about emotional adjustment and psychological readiness required for married life. Resource management is another significant aspect of marital life. Counsellors emphasise the importance of financial literacy and responsible financial management. They guide couples in understanding the role of financial resources, the importance of stable income, savings, and the appropriate use of resources to meet family needs. Counsellors also act as informers by providing awareness about sexual health, intimacy, and family planning respectfully and educationally. This helps couples develop a healthy understanding of marital relationships and reproductive health. In addition, counsellors assist intending couples in achieving better adjustment with family members, including relationships with in-laws. They also act as promoters of mutual respect, gender equality, and shared decision-making within marital relationships. Furthermore, counsellors function as preventive facilitators for couples. They help identify potential issues at an early stage and guide couples in developing strategies to maintain healthy, stable, and long-lasting marital relationships.

Overall, participants in the study acknowledged that these roles of counsellors were highly beneficial in helping them address potential issues and prepare for future marital life.

Discussions:

Pre-marital counselling is gaining significant visibility in the contemporary world. It has taken up an important preventive and preparatory role in ensuring a long-lasting marital life. It addresses the psychological, social, financial, and relational demands of married life. The study examines that participants were found to have improved communication, mutual understanding, equitable roles, appropriate negotiation, and learning about each other, which remains a central focus. Areas such as common decision-making and shared responsibilities are other aspects that the study noted couples should take care of in marriage. Pre-marital counselling helps intending couples develop realistic expectations

in the context of rapidly changing lifestyles and rising conflicts before tying the marital knot. It was found that well-planned and structured, issue-based sessions foster self-awareness, develop understanding, improve maturity, and encourage adjustment in marital and family relationships.

The study indicates that pre-marital counselling is effective in preventing several issues and concerns that may arise after marriage. This intervention acts as a preparedness strategy to strengthen marital stability. It also promotes healthy and positive relationships and supports the sustainability of families in contemporary society.

A brief review of past literature indicates that unrealistic expectations about romance can damage the marital bond. Unclear marital roles and instability in relationships after marriage may lead to dissatisfaction among couples. The study centres on strengthening family life through pre-marital counselling by addressing issues such as expectations, the need for communication, conflict management, and self-awareness. It was observed from the literature that pre-marital counselling works as a preventive intervention and prepares couples to accept the roles and responsibilities of marriage while adopting healthy communication patterns. The study also noted that such counselling helps develop positive relationships and enhances the skills required for life after marriage. Most importantly, it was observed to help reduce marital conflict and divorce. Another aspect identified in the literature is that pre-marital counselling helps couples recognise the need for different medical tests in order to ensure a healthy and disease-free life.

The Preventive Counselling Theory proposed by Caplan (1964) is highly relevant in understanding potential issues, problems, and concerns before they worsen or become severe. The theory suggests that pre-marital counselling acts as a proactive intervention strategy for prevention. It equips individuals with knowledge, develops skills, and improves attitudes to promote stable and conflict-free relationships. Thus, the study becomes reliable through both secondary and primary data that bridge the gap and highlight the need for pre-marital counselling in the present era of rapid social change. The data examined and highlighted the necessity of several elements that should be considered under pre-marital counselling for prevention and preparedness.

Most participants (83%) prioritised the need to strengthen communication skills for marital life. The highest proportion (91%) of participants emphasised the importance of learning various adjustment strategies. Around 80% noted the value of stability techniques for family life. A large number of participants (76%) highlighted the importance of gender equality. For instance, financial management was observed as relatively less essential, as other factors may help address issues related

to economic requirements. The findings portray variability in perceived priorities among couples.

Finally, the study underscores the vital role of trained counsellors in facilitating open conversations, guiding problem-solving processes, promoting mutual understanding, and developing mature behaviour for marital life. The research data demonstrate that pre-marital counselling effectively equips couples with knowledge, coping strategies, and skills that enhance marital satisfaction and stability. Counselling services and facilities need to be strengthened in the present context, especially for couples intending and preparing for marriage.

Several issue-based counselling services are offered through government and non-profit organisations. Every couple intending to marry should ideally obtain a certificate confirming that they have undergone counselling together or attended at least some essential sessions to learn about various aspects of married life. Religious institutions involved in the process of marriage can also contribute significantly by providing counselling to such couples, which may have a positive impact. Required medical tests should also be promoted through pre-marital counselling to identify and address various health concerns. There is a need for trained counsellors and the establishment of counselling institutions to meet this demand. Thus, providing, accepting, and following the teachings and learnings of counselling will work as a preventive tool and preparedness strategy for a successful marital life.

Conclusion

The present research highlights the significance of premarital counselling as an effective preventive intervention. It helps strengthen marital relationships and serves as a guideline for preparing intending couples for marital life with greater hope and clarity. The study data indicate that counselling enhances self-awareness, communication, conflict resolution, emotional maturity, financial planning, and adjustment to family dynamics in couples' future lives. Participants also recognised the importance of understanding partner expectations, the need for gender equality in sharing roles and responsibilities, reproductive health awareness, and legal obligations towards each other. The role of trained counsellors in facilitating discussions, providing guidance, and promoting mutual respect was found to be critical for the successful outcomes of pre-marital counselling. In conclusion, premarital counselling emerges as a proactive strategy that fosters healthy, stable, and satisfying marital relationships while reducing the likelihood of conflict and divorce, which are major obstacles to a long and successful marital life for couples. Counselling has a huge scope in the field of premarital life for intending couples.

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