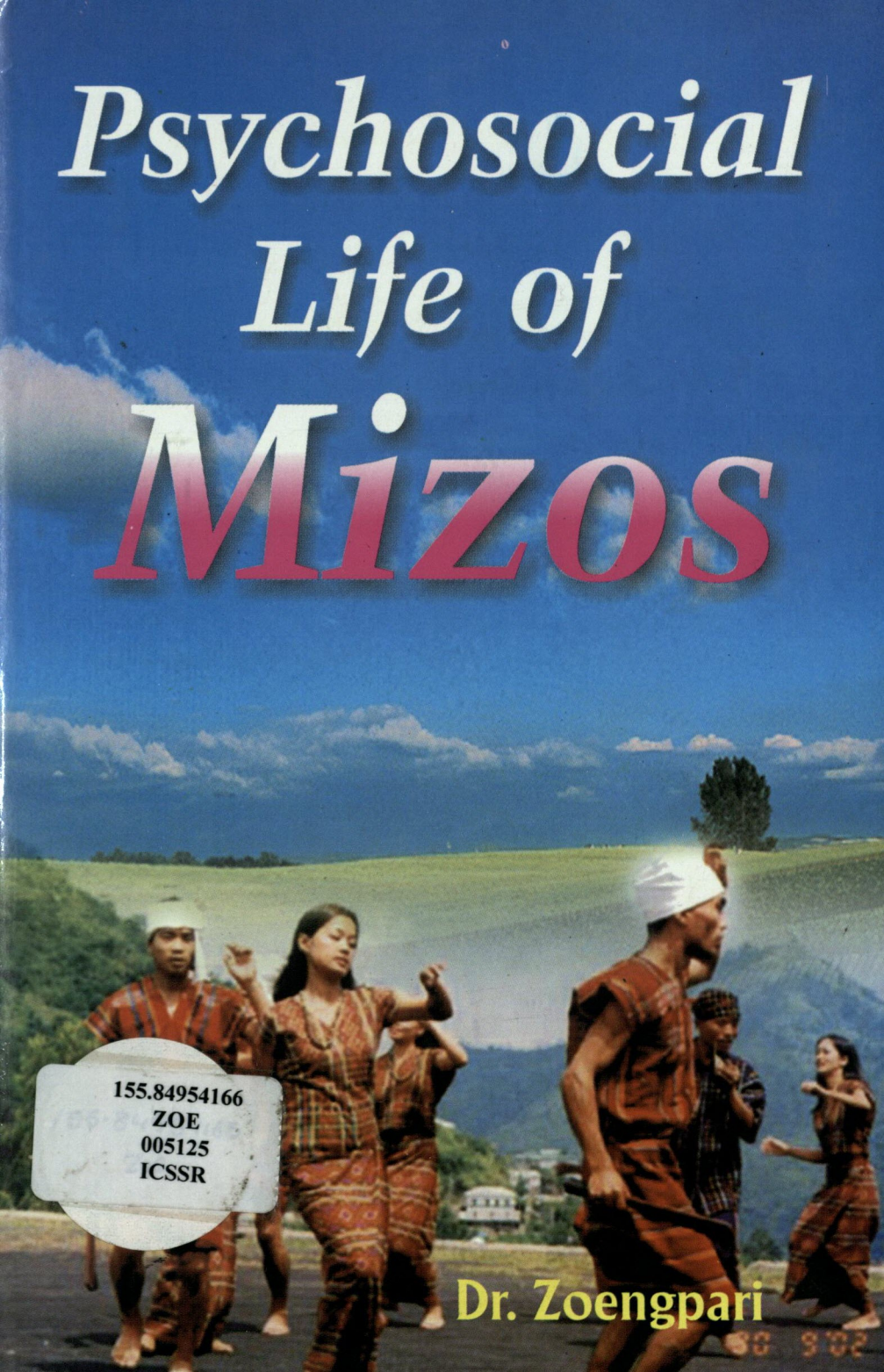
Psychosocial Life of Mizos



Dr. Zoengpari

The principles of Psychology and commonality of issue concerning all aspects, sections and dimensions of human behavior motivate researchers to keep on probing into new and neglected areas. Dr. Zoengpari has attempted to study psychological aspects of life and styles of MIZOS. MIZORAM is one of the 'Seven Sister' states of North East INDIA. It is inhabited by very peace loving and warm people who are traditionally tribal but highly modern in their outlook .They adore Jesus Christ, look forward to higher education and comfortable lifestyle. It is a very sensitive border state and people have to define themselves against drug abuse and HIV infection. Tourism could be exciting venture and industrialization is being awaited. MIZORAM is as inviting as the beautiful waterfalls and hills and welcoming people.

Dr. Zoengpari (born on 19.9.1961) passed High School Leaving Examinations in 1979 and Pre-University in 1981. Graduated with Honours in Psychology (Ist Division) from Bangalore University in 1984, and obtained Masters Degree in Psychology (Ist Division) from North Eastern Hill University in 1989. Qualified the UGC-CSIR sponsored NET Examination in 1993. Was awarded Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology from Mizoram University in 2003 for her research titled "Personality Similarity and Quality of Marital Life among Mizos".

Presently, Dr. Zoengpari is serving as Lecturer, Department of Psychology, Mizoram University, Aizawl, Mizoram. Besides academic pursuits, Dr. Zoengpari is associated with a number of voluntary organisations and is a recognised and practicing Drugs and HIV/AIDS Counselor and Consultant, Facilitator for SASSHAC, India and The Salvation Army Health and HIV/AIDS Services, I.H.Q. London. She has visited a number of countries in the East and West in this capacity.

23 cm Cloth 2006 Rs. 550

ISBN 81-88683-80-9

PSYCHOSOCIAL LIFE OF MIZOS

Dr. Zoengpari

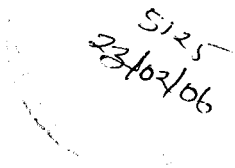
ABHIJEET PUBLICATIONS
DELHI 110 094

ABHIJEET PUBLICATIONS
2/46 Tukhmeerpur Extension
Delhi 110 094
Phone: 22181492, 55698474
e-mail: abhijeet_singh@vsnl.net
abhijeet_singh1@indiatimes.com

PSYCHOSOCIAL LIFE OF MIZOS

First Published 2006

ISBN 81-88683-80-9



PRINTED IN INDIA

Published by J.K. Singh for Abhijeet Publications, Delhi 110094, Lasertypeset by Rajesh Data Services, New Delhi and Printed at Himanshu Printers, Delhi.

Contents

1

Introduction

Marriage has emerged as an important topic in psychology for many reasons. One of the most important is the concern about the increasing rates of divorce and its effects on the quality of life. And this trend is not without consequences, depression and suicide among adolescents and adults are among some of the serious concerns of social scientists, and one reason postulated for these increases is the change in family structure with its attendant high rates of marital dissolution (Klerman & Weissman, 1990). The association between marital discord and the various forms of adult psychopathology, such as alchoholism and depression is now becoming increasingly clear (Beach *et al.*, 1990; Jacobson et al., 1990). Whether discord in marriage harms children more than divorce is now a hotly debated issue (Emery, 1989; Wallerstein & Kelley, 1980). These facts appear to be true for all industrialized countries, e.g., USA, Australia, Canada, West Germany, France, Italy and Japan, (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1990). A host of studies on close relationships (Clark & Ries, 1988; Huston & Levinger, 1978), family therapy (Bednar *et al.*, 1988), on marital interactions (O'Leary and Smith, 1991), pooled with the studies on interpersonal relationships (Clark & Ries, 1988; Berscheid, 1994) provide ample evidences to understand marital quality or satisfaction or adjustment. Among the most venerable and influential traditions in the history

of psychology towards understanding the marriage related perspectives are: psycho-dynamic model (Jacobson & Gurman, 1986; Paolino & McCrady, 1978), the most widely spread approach to treatment (Baucom & Hoffman, 1986; Beach & O'Leary, 1985; Gurman & Kniskern, 1978); social-learning models of marital adjustment (Thibault & Kelley, 1959); cognitive and effective components (Baucom & Epstein, 1990; O'Leary, 1987); the dependency of dyadic observations and the dichotomous nature of outcome variables (Bradbury & Fincham, 1991; Godwin, 1988; Johnson, 1988; Kenny & Kashy, 1991; Montgomery & Duck, 1991; Morgan & Teachman, 1988; Robins, 1990) as well as the effective features of communication (Gottman *et al.*, 1977; Hahlweg *et al.*, 1984a; Schaap, 1984). It is in this perspective the review of literature is selectively sketched in a parsimonious manner to bring forth the genesis and the target research problem of the study.

Social-Learning Models of Marital Adjustment

The roots of social-learning models to marriage find mention in the social exchange theory (Thibault & Kelley, 1959) and it has evolved to encompass not only the behavioural economics of the original interdependence models but also cognitive, mediational, and effective components (Baucom & Epstein, 1990; O'Leary, 1987). The reinforcement model of marital satisfaction (Stuart, 1969) spawned researches into the day-to-day behaviours of distressed and non-distressed married couples. Distressed couples were shown to engage in fewer recreational activities together (Birchler & Webb, 1977), to spent less time together (Williams, 1979), and to rate the time spent together more negatively (Williams, 1979). During their time together, distressed couples exibit a lower ratio of pleasing to displeasing behaviours, with displeasing behaviours able to distinguish to the two groups (Margolin, 1981). Distressed couples have sex one-half to one-third as less often as non-distressed couples.

Recent studies draw particular attention to verbal

behaviour in the context of marital problem solving discussions (Baucom & Adams, 1987). Studies indicate that distressed couples make more negative statements (disagreements, criticisms) and fewer positive ones (Gottman, 1979). Distressed couples are more confrontative, complaining and defensive with their spouses than they are with other people (Ting-Toomey, 1983). Moreover, distressed couples reciprocate negative behaviour (each spouse emits negative behaviours contingent on the partner's emission of others) to a great degree than the non-distressed, especially during problem solving communication (Gottman, 1979; Margolin & Wampold, 1981). Because spouses seem, in part, to disagree over the occurrence of daily behaviours in their relationship (Jacobson & Moore, 1981), cognitive features began to be incorporated into the earlier behaviour models of marriage (Arias & Beach, 1987). The cognitive correlates of marital satisfaction have, for the most part, been established through the use of self-reports of people's predilections to make certain attributions and appraisals about their spouses and marriages. Distressed couples are less likely to interpret objectively positive behaviour from their spouses as positive (Gottman *et al.*, 1976). They interpret the intent of their spouse's statements more negatively than they were meant to be (Markman, 1981; Schacter & O'Leary, 1985). More than their non-distressed counterparts, the distressed couples interpret the cause of positive partner behaviours as specific and uncontrollable, the causes of negative partner behaviour as global and pervasive (Fincham & O'Leary, 1983).

A host of studies (Fincham & Bradbury, 1990; Camper *et al.*, 1988; Holtzworth Munroe, 1988; Jacobson, 1985; Baucom, 1987; Baucom *et al.*, 1989 a & b; Bradbury & Fincham, 1990) demonstrate the role of attributions in marriage. Care has been taken to establish the theoretical boundary conditions, measuring devices, samples, and developmental stages of couples studied. Dissatisfied couples make attributions that cast their partners'

behaviour in a negative light. Further, studies suggest that attributions predict changes in marital satisfaction and that attribution influence marital satisfaction rather than vice versa (Bradbury & Fincham, 1990). In these perspectives, researchers have encountered the theoretical construct of attribution in marriage, in imagined interactions and situations of spouses interdependence, especially through perceived purchasing behaviour and capacity, where one partner (spouse) either buys the desired product with his or her spouses consent or against his or her spouses will, or he/she does not buy the product because of their spouses opposition in such a situation; a concern of the affective feature of marital satisfaction. This derives implications from two sources of studies. First, Gottman's (1979); Gottman *et al.*, (1977) extension of his couples interaction scoring systems to encompass affects, as well as encounter the elements of spousal communication to discover the affective features of communication which are indicative of current quality of marriage than were content components (Gottman, 1979; Gottman *et al.*, 1977; Hahlweg, 1984a; Schapp, 1984). Second, the findings that spouses judge love to be a highly valued characteristic of marriage (Broderick, 1981), a measure that correlates highly with marital satisfaction.

Psycho-dynamic Models of Marital Adjustment

The most prevalent tradition in the history of behavioural sciences has been the psycho-dynamic perspectives on marriage, alongside the behavioural and family-system theories of marital literature (Jacobson & Gurman, 1986; Paolino & McCrady, 1978). The psycho-dynamic orientation towards resolving marital conflict is by far the oldest and most widespread approach to treatment (Baucom & Hoffman, 1986; Beach & O'Leary, 1985; Gurman & Kniskern, 1978). However, the vast literature on the theoretical models of marital adjustment associated with the psycho-dynamic orientation provide inferential bases to support its more central tenets.

Studies on the theoretical models of marital adjustment reveal that there are perhaps no tenets more central to psycho-dynamic formulations of marital adjustment than those associated with spouse selection. The psycho-dynamic perspectives hold that people consciously or unconsciously seek spouses who gratify narcissistic needs (Dicks, 1967; Schultz, 1958; Stewart *et al.*, 1975; Winch, 1958). Dynamic repression of these narcissistic needs and their introspection and projection on to potential partners led people to prefer spouses who complement their needs (Mittleman, 1948; Skynner, 1976 p.43; Sager, 1976). There are two points in marriage upon which the need-complementarity hypothesis bears: (i) need-complementarity is thought to exert an influence upon spouse selection; and (ii) it is thought to influence satisfaction in the resulting marriage. The most direct evidence for the existence of need–complementarity in spouse selection is found in behaviour genetics literature devoted to assortive mating (Buss, 1984b; Mascie-Taylor & Vanderberg, 1988; Phillips *et al.*, 1988; Russel *et al.*, 1984, 1986, 1991) and in personality literature concerned with personal environment interactions (Buss, 1984; Caspi & Herbener, 1990; Russell *et al.*, 1984, 1985, 1991). In determining the heritability of psychological characteristics, it becomes imperative to know the extent to which parents can be assumed to be randomly paired with respect to each characteristic. Therefore, behaviour genetics have studied the similarity between spouses on a variety of personality dimensions. They found not complementarity but similarity of need influencing spousal selection. A large body of studies (Buss, 1984a; Mascie-Taylor & Vanderberg, 1988; Phillips *et al.*, 1988; Vanderberg, 1972) observed fairly consistent evidence for similarity of personality between spouses.

The psycho-dynamic models of personality adjustment on personality literature provides two sources of variance: the person and the situation and both interact in the determination of behaviour. Studies in this tradition take marriage to be an environment within which people's

disposition are manifested; hence researchers examine the degree to which personality variables influence both spouse selection and marital adjustment. The extents to which people create the marital environment are consistent with their own behavioural predilections and are of interest not only as it reveals important features of people's self-concepts but also as it influences adult personality development. A host of studies (Cattel & Nesselroade, 1967; Heiss & Gordon, 1964; Murstein, 1961; Murstein & Beck, 1972; Winch, 1958) have examined the association between complementarity and marital satisfaction. On the contrary, Meyer & Pepper (1977) found no evidence of an association between need complementarity and marital adjustment as measured by the modified version of the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Scale (Locke-Wallace, 1959). Rather, they observed similarity of spouses need for affiliation, aggression, autonomy, and nurturance to be associated with marital adjustment. This finding held both for differences in intensity on the needs and differences in kinds of needs. The association between spouses' similarity and marital success is in fact, highly replicable (Cattel & Nesselroade, 1967; Heiss & Gordon, 1964; Murstein, 1961; Murstein & Beek, 1972). In contrast, only a few studies support need complementarity hypothesis (Winch, 1958; Winch *et al.*, 1954). These have been questioned on both the theoretical (Levenson, 1964) and methodological (Tharp, 1963) considerations. It could be argued that measures of personality are poor instantiations of 'needs' as conceptualized by psychodynamic theory. However, the Meyer & Pepper (1977) study used a Personality Research Form (Jackson, 1967), a device expressly designed to measure the same Murray's (1938) needs upon which the Winch (1958) theory is based.

A longitudinal perspective on the need-complementarity hypothesis was provided in a study by Bentler & Newcomb (1978). The personality similarity of a sample of newly married couples who four years

later were divorced was compared to that of a group of couples that remained married. Among the couples who remained married, no traits exhibited significant complementarity. Rather, significant degrees of similarity were found in this group, while the divorced couples were for the most part neither similar nor complementary.

The bulk of the evidence now favours positive assortative mating for personality. Rather than differing in their personalities, spouses tend to be similar, and the degree of similarity is positively correlated with their marital satisfaction. Personality can now take its place alongside physical characteristics, cognitive abilities, age, education, religion, ethnic background, attitudes and opinions, and socioeconomic status (Jensen 1978; Vandenberg 1972) as contributors to marital choice. As stated by Buss, "negative" assortative mating in human populations has never been reliably demonstrated (1985, p. 47).

A second major tenet of the psychodynamic formulation of marriage concerns the role each spouse's individual psychosexual development plays in marital functioning. In particular, importance is ascribed to the attachment relationships in spouses' respective families of origin and how "lost aspects of their primary object relations" (Dicks, 1967) are manifest in current marital relationships. Comfortable differentiation from the family of origin and non-neurotic resolution of the various psychosexual conflicts are thought to result in levels of individual functioning that form the foundation of satisfactory marital relations. (Framo, 1976).

Another trend of the psycho-dynamic formulation of marriage concerns the impact of childhood attachment on adult romantic relationships (Feeney & Noller, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1989; Levy & Davis, 1988; Main *et al.*, 1985; Shaver & Hazan, 1988; Shaver *et al.*, 1988). Using fairly literal translations to adult relationships of Bowlby's (1969, 1973, 1982) three styles of infant-parent attachment, it was observed that:

(a) the relative prevalence of these adult styles were similar to those found in childhood, (b) the experience of love for people in the three types of attachment relationships were consistent with expectations based on theory, (c) subjects working models of self and relationships were positively related to attachment styles; and (d) reports of relationships with parents were associated with adult romantic relationships. Levy & Davis (1988), Hendrick & Hendrick (1989) and Feeney & Noller (1990) observed that attachment styles and romantic orientations were associated. In general, securely attached persons endorsed positive relationship characteristics, avoidant attachments are characteristically mistrusting and fearful, and anxious attachments are typically dependent or otherwise needy. Variables associated with childhood relationship with parents were also found to be meaningfully associated with adult romantic relationship.

Recent researches on individual differences pertaining to the adult's orientation to relationships focuses on the extent to which the individual expects to feel secure, to trust and to be trusted within a relationship. Relationship security and the related construct of trust in the responsiveness and beneficent of another in time of need, or expectations that he/she will be a good care-giver has a long history in psychology (Holmes, 1991). The relationship security schema derives implications from Bowlby's Theory of Infant Attachment (1982) for studies on feelings of security in adult relationships. The central feature of the hypothesis (Bowlby, 1982) is the attachment of behavioural systems, which is assumed to be rooted biologically in natural selection, to be manifested in behaviour that keeps the child in close proximity to adult care–takers and thus promote survival, and to have felt security as its goal (Bretherton, 1985). Felt security, which is believed to be experienced subjectively as an emotional bond to another, is theorised to provide the child with a secure base from which the environment may be explored and a safe-haven, should threat occur. The

quality of attachment the child has developed for the adult figure (often the mother and/or the caregiver) evaluates the child's reactions to episodes of separation and reunion with the caregiver. The pattern of these reactions often permits the child's attachment to the caregiver to be classified as secure, insecure/avoidant or, insecure/anxious-ambivalent.

Hazan and Shaver (1987), inspired by Bowlby's Theory (1982), observed definite association between adult romantic love and childhood attachment in adults who were participating in a survey study of their most important romance to indicate which of the three levels of classification patterns of child's attachment best described their feelings. Each paragraph was intended to be an adult analogous of the three strange situation classifications, its content designed to determine whether the individuals typically feel comfortable, becoming close to, trusting, and depending on others. Whether the individual endorsed the secure paragraph, or one of the two insecure paragraphs, was regarded as a reflection of the individuals' attachment style, and that endorsement was found to be associated with the individuals' report of experience in his or her most important romantic relationship and beliefs about romantic love. Studies corroborate the endorsements of the paragraphs, or self-classification by one of the many variants of this procedure (Simpson, 1990; Collins & Reed, 1990) associated with other self-reports, including retrospective memories of childhood and family events, memories of experience in past romantic relationships, and reports of experience in current relationships, as well as with scores on a variety of beliefs, attitude and personality (Shaver & Brennan, 1992) scales. A number of studies in these perspectives deserve mention (Mikulineer and Nachshon, 1991; Simpson *et al.*, 1992; Shaver & Brennan, 1992; Sroufe *et al.*, 1990; Shaver & Hazan, 1993).

A final tenet worth exploring emerges not as an explicit component of any psycho-dynamic theory about marriage, but rather as an implicit mechanism through

which interpersonal factors bear on the inter-personal marital situation. Specifically, individual levels of neuroticism (broadly defined) are thought to influence the adjustment of the couple. These therefore constitute a target of and satisfaction for, individual rather than couples psycho-therapy. A large number of studies provide corroborative evidences (O'Leary & Smith, 1991, p. 197).

The role of attribution in close relationships (especially in distressed marital relationships) has received much scientific attention. This focuses on cognitive and affective behaviours in marital relationships and represents a departure from behaviouristic approach that emphasised observation and coding of couples behaviour in interaction, often as they discuss their marital problems (Weiss & Heyman, 1990). However, the model was heavily criticised on counts of the code of ethics. Be it so, discrepancies between out-siders' interpretation of the interaction and the meanings the interactants themselves made of it, led to the development of cognitively oriented models to guide research on marital communication. The contextual model of marital interaction (Bradbury & Fincham, 1989) addressed to the cognitive and affective processes of communication events in interaction. Noller & Guthrie (1991), Noller & Ruzzene (1991) also emphasized the role of cognition and affect in interaction. Their investigation of accuracy and bias in decoding of non-verbal messages between spouses, judgements of partners affect and intentions during interaction, as well as attributions of the causes of the partners behaviour demonstrate that distressed spouses have difficulty in identifying their partners affect, goals, and intentions during conflictual interactions, and tend to put the worst possible interpretation on their partners motives.

Studies evince an association between attributions that cast the spouse's behaviour in a positive or negative light and the relationship satisfaction. There are evidences to suggest that negative attributions are casually attributed in keeping relationships happy or unhappy (Bradbury

& Fincham, 1990), particularly in reference to the attributional processes on actual interaction in marital and other ongoing relationships (Fincham & Bradbury, 1991, 1992). Fletcher & Fincham (1991) incorporated into the Bradbury & Fincham's (1991), contextual model, made the distinction between automatic and controlled processing to better account for attributional processes as they occur in interactions.

The general schemas and prototypes in the structure of private experience towards a recognition that human beings bring meaning and organisation into almost every new encounter in the physical or social environment deserve mention in furtherance of the target research problem of the study. Most cognitive theorists tend to emphasise consciousness and organised meaning structures such as schemas and scripts as a private feature of personality, but do not preclude the possibility that many of our plans and anticipations become so automatic that they uncontrol too rapidly for us to notice them in the flurry of events. In this regard, studies focus on the clinical implications of shortcomings in human judgement like selective attention, confirmatory biases, egocentric biases, availability and representativeness, and heuristics, and that the shortcomings have been characterized as inevitable products of schematic processing (Lebow & Gurman, 1995).

Among others, the mate selection literature is one of the largest in the relationship area (Surra, 1990), and several studies indicate that men are more likely to report that physical attractiveness (particularly a function of youth and health) is important to them while women are more likely to emphasise economic status factors. Buss (1989) finds support for this general hypothesis. Feingold (1992) observed that the largest gender differences in self-reports of desired attributes in a mate are obtained for cues to resource acquisition (status ambitiousness), with women more likely than men to value these characteristics. Studies also indicate that

women report physical attractiveness as less important to them than men do (Feingold, 1990). One can predict this gender pattern in mate preference from perspectives that considers the universal lower status and power of women (Howard *et. al.,* 1987).

Sprecher (1989) asked men and women how attracted they were to an opposite-sex about whom they had read and then asked them to identify the characteristics that attracted their feelings of attraction. The ambiguous effect (that men put greater emphasis on physical attractiveness and women on earning potential) was found even though the results of the experimental manipulation revealed that both men and women were more influenced by physical attractiveness than by any other characteristics. Stevens *et al.,* (1990) found that newly weds' physical attractiveness and educational attainment were significantly correlated, but after statistically controlling for the tendency to many similar others, the more attractive women were more likely than the less attractive to be married to men who were highly educated and thus presumably of higher economic status. Feingold (1990) observed that the effect sizes associated with men accorded more weight to physical attractiveness than women are larger in self-report than in behavioural research paradigms, and ascribed to some of the factors that may produce artifactual gender differences in mate preference studies that rely on self-report.

Possible cultural differences in a romantic love are also of interest (Dion & Dion, 1988). Several theories hypothesize that Western individualist culture to be more conducive to romantic love than collective cultures. Sprecher *et al.,* (1992) observed remarkable similarities among American, Russian, and Japanese experiences in love in hetero-sexual relationships, and Hatfield & Rapson (1987) argue that romantic love is virtually universal, occurring at all ages and times across cultures. Anthropologists provide cross-cultural data that support Hatfield and Rapson's (1987) view on romantic love and relationships (Jankowiak & Fisher, 1992)

Beach & Tesser (1988) examined several aspects of pre-marital and extra-marital relationships often associated with love and discussed the implications of individuals with higher order schema of commitment and opined that they may afford attention to certain aspects of relationship situation, for the kind of information about the relationship that will be sought for the interpretation of ambiguous relationships, and for the individual behaviour that may result in confirmation of his or her commitment schema. Important gender differences in love schemas are suggested by studies that continue to find that men hold more romantic beliefs than women do (Sprecher & Metts, 1989; Frazer & Esterly, 1990). Hendrick (1988) offered a generic measure of relationship satisfaction that is applicable to many types of relationships, including substantial correlation at least one longer measurement of dyadic adjustment. Most of the measures of relationship qualities focus on the marital relationships, and the products of even those often not comparable (Craene *et al.*, 1980). These assertions are universally described for elaboration of the theoretical constructs.

Research on marital quality has produced only a modest increment in understanding of the cause and consequences of marital success (Glen *et al.*, 1990, p. 818); where success is viewed as satisfaction in an intact marriage. Because most studies of satisfaction correlate the measures that have been obtained at a single point of time, however, stability is not examined. In this regard, several longitudinal studies of marital success deserve mention (Huston, 1986; Huston & Vangeliste, 1991). Studies reveal that both husbands and wives early satisfaction appears to produce spousal behaviour that reinforces their initial levels of satisfaction; when husbands were initially satisfied, their wives maintained relatively high levels of affectional expression, and when wives are dissatisfied early, their husbands come to behave more negatively. Results also documented

significant decline in love and marital satisfaction over the first five years of marriage and indicated that much of the decline in satisfaction in the early stages of marriage that was previously attributed was with the advent of parenthood and with advancing age. Glenn (1989) strikes an additional pessimism on hetero-sexual relationships by estimating that marital success decreases monotonically with length of marriage, for the first ten years and perhaps for as long as twenty-five years. However, the data does not conform to the expectations of the psycho-dynamic and social-learning models of marital adjustment (O'Leary & Smith, 1991). The reminder of the assertions on the patterns and types of relationships in marital quality (or satisfaction or adjustment) serves as basis for theorization of the target research problem of the study.

Other related studies pertaining to marriage deserve mention. Studies reveal about the 'decline of family values' (Lambert, 1995), rise in the mean age of first marriage; (Abercrombie et al., 1994; Coleman & Salt, 1992) rise in the proportion of births registered by unmarried parents (Abercrombie et al., 1994; Coleman & Salt, 1992; Wilkinson, 1994), cohabitation and pre-marital sex (Abercrombie et al., 1994; Coleman & Salt, 1992; Lees, 1993; and Wilkinson, 1994), the pragmatic perspective that marriage as traditionally expressed, a male as breadwinner and a female as homemaker is becoming less possible to sustain due to changing patterns of work (Hackstaff et al., 1993; Wilkinson, 1994). Among others, the group of people on whom most recent attention has been focussed is known as 'generation x', usually meaning the white British and North American population born between 1961 and 1971, aged 24-34 in 1995 (Coupland, 1991). Most social scientific investigation into marriage and 'Generation x' begin from the premise that these statistical trends indicate an entire generation's aversion to marriage or to the commitments which marriage usually entails. First, there is the pragmatic perspective

which includes the view that marriage is no longer necessary, and cohabitation and pre-marital sex are so common (Abercrombie et al., 1994; Wilkinson, 1994). This pragmatic perspective also allows that marriage as it is traditionally expressed, in terms of a male breadwinner, a female as homemaker, is becoming less possible to sustain due to changing patterns of work (Hackstaff, 1993; Wilkinson, 1994; Lawes, 1999). So the pragmatic account holds that while marriage itself is fundamentally unchanged, research (typically in the form of large-scale surveys in Western cultures) show that it is lately out of keeping with contemporary social and economic reality.

A second perspective points a new individualism among members of 'Generation x'. By this account, the nature of marriages have changed, it now centres not on what might be called 'commitment' or family values' but on personal gratification, realised through a new cultural ideal of romantic love (Baker & Emery, 1993; Smith, 1995). By this alternative account (which is substantiated by more or less scientific research), Generation x-ers do not marry to fulfil some kind of duty or because wedlock is the proper place to start having children but because they expect it to make them happy, and they divorce when their expectations are not fulfilled.

Something these two seemingly different perspectives share is the treatment of marriage as a singular entity that exists independently of the conversations that are held about it. So, what marriage is may be seen as stable and currently out of fashion or it may be seen as having undergone a recent change, but either way the institution of marriage remains essentially unitary. What might be expected of marriage, then, is a certain consistency within individual accounts of marriage, that is, a person will be either 'for' or 'against' marriage.

Broad sociological analyses of the state of modern marriage are paralleled by accounts from anthropologists and psychologists who are interested in culturally

determined cognitive schemas or cultural models of institutions such as marriage (Quinn, 1987; Quinn & Holland 1987). These cultural models are thought to be constructed by social groups, and they are hierarchically filed and stored in the psyche of the group members, from whom the details of such models can be elicited. It is on this basis that Naomi Quinn makes claims such as our folk psychology of human needs, "certain needs... can only be fulfilled by other people. It is expected that the person one marries should fulfil most, if not all these needs". Once again, because the members of a given culture or community are presumed to share single model of marriage, we are led to expect (and work such as Quinn displays) substantial consistency within and between peoples' accounts of marriage and marital behaviour. Participants may differ in terms of the attitudes to marriage that are expressed in their accounts, but marriage itself—a culturally (not individually) manufactured and therefore relatively stable social object composed of a number of mostly consistent 'underlying assumptions'—is common to all.

Any single investigation of marriage can be claimed to leave some questions unanswered. Conventionally, the inevitable limitations of individual studies are compensated for through the aggregation of their findings. To the extent that institution of marriage is treated as fundamentally coherent and 'the same' for members of a generation, community or culture, a vital foundation of meaning is established for superficially disparate analyses of attitudes to marriage, statistical trends in weddings and divorces, cognitive models of marriage, and so on. It is the basic sameness or unity that allows us to see independently and methodologically conducted research of different kinds as having useful bearings on each other. Ultimately, these varied kinds of discoveries can be understood as representing different sized units of knowledge which can be combined, using a positivist principle of 'accumulative fragmentalism' to form an

accurate and comprehensive micro- and macro- level understanding of marriage 'as it really is'. Unfortunately, the implied unity of marriage as a social-psychological entity, which should make it easy to amass coherent body of knowledge from different reports, actually makes it very difficult. A problem is created whereby incompatible or even contradictory conclusions about marriage can be reached, each comfortably supported by empirical evidence. These conclusions must then be decided between or reconciled.

Satisfying and stable marriages appear to be increasingly rare in the highly industrialized cultures (Glenn, 1998). Concern over the apparently dismal state of contemporary marriage has stimulated a good deal of research on the causes of marital dysfunction (Bradbury, 1998). In trying to understand what causes marriages to deteriorate, some researchers have focused on relationship development following marriage, whereas others have focused on trait and relationship skills that individuals bring to the marriage with the assumption that some characteristics can be traced to the family of origin and has led to the belief that marital discord and satisfaction are transmitted across generations. Consistent with the notion of intergenerational transmission, research indicated that parental divorce increases the risk that offspring will see their own marriages end in divorce (Amato, 1996; Bumpass et al., 1991; Feng et al., 1999; Glenn & Kramer, 1987; Wolfinger, 1999). If divorce is transmitted across generations, then it seems likely that marital discord is similarly transmitted. This conclusion appears to be premature. However, marital discord increases the likelihood of marital dissolution, not all divorces are preceded by a long term pattern of overt conflict between partners, and some continuously intact marriages are chronically discordant. (Amato & Booth, 1997; Heaton & Albercht, 1991).

Several bodies of research are consistent with the notion that marital quality is transmitted across

generations. Some studies have relied on cross-sectional data to examine the correlation between peoples' evaluations of their own and their parents' marriages. In general, adults who report that their parents were unhappily married tend to report a relatively high number of problems in their own marriage (Amato & Booth, 1991; Belsky & Isabella, 1985; Booth & Edwards, 1990; Overall et al., 1974). Because negative affect primes individuals to recall unpleasant events, people in unhappy marriages are likely to exaggerate the number of problems in their parents marriages, resulting in an overestimate of the association between parents' and offspring's' marital quality.

A second group of studies has focused on the transmission of marital violence across generations. This literature suggests that adults who were exposed to violence between parents while growing up are likely to be physically aggressive—or to be victimized—in their own intimate relationships (O'Leary & Cascardi, 1998). Because violence is an indicator of poor marital quality, these studies are consistent with the notion that marital quality is transmitted across generations. However, all these studies are cross-sectional and, hence are vulnerable to problems of common-method variance. Battered wives may be more likely than other wives to recall incidents of marital aggression while growing up, irrespective of the actual level of aggression in their families of origin.

Other studies have examined the associations between parental divorce and offspring's' marital quality. Some studies show that individuals with divorced parents report less marital happiness, more marital problems, and a greater likelihood of divorce in their marriages (Glenn & Kramer, 1987; McLeod, 1991; Tallman et al., 1999). Other studies however fail to show associations between parental divorce and offspring's marital quality (Amato & Booth, 1997; Feng et al., 1999). In these perspectives, studies by Caspi & Elder, (1988), Feng et al., (1999), Conger et al., (2000) deserve special mention.

The paucity of research following brides and grooms forward in marriage over more then just a few years has created an informational vacuum about the early marital roots of distress and divorce (Bradbury, 1998; Kurdek, 1998. Social scientists conducting longitudinal research on marriage generally proceed by testing intuitively plausible hypothesis about the interpersonal origins of distress and divorce. Much of the recent work has been based on social learning theory (Kenny & Bradbury, 1995), which focuses on emerging conflict and negativity as the key ingredients of marital failure. Such research emphasizes the behaviours couples enact when they seek to resolve their conflicts, yet research based on retrospective reports of the causes of divorce draw attention to the importance of the loss of romance, disillusionment, and similar themes that have yet to be systematically studied with prospective, longitudinal studies. These contrasting lines of research undergrid three models: (a) the disillusionment model, (b) the emergent distress model, and (c) the enduring dynamics model which provides different explanations of how some marriages succeed and others fail. The three models are attempted to be described in a parsimonious to make lucid the plausible hypothesis about the interpersonal origins of distress and divorce.

The *disillusionment model* focuses on the prevailing view of courtship behaviour. This view portrays partners as blissful, optimistic lovers who are careful to behave in ways contrived to sustain their romance and are motivated to attend to each others' virtues rather than shortcomings (Huston et al., 1986; Miller & Holmes, 1993). As a consequence, suggested Brehm (1992), "people fall in love with their own imagined constructions rather than with the concrete reality of another human being" (*p.*103). In courtship, such idealism may be the product of both imagination and impression management: individuals not only perceive their mate in an idealized fashion but also govern their own behaviour in such as

way as to leave their partner with a favourable impression. Partners who develop romanticized illusions may maintain them by sidestepping important differences or burying their anxieties through exaggerated displays of affection, setting themselves up for eventual disillusionment (Huston, 1994; Miller, 1997). Studies reveal that illusions about ones' partner may be more difficult to maintain after the wedding, because increased interdependence makes character management more challenging (Swann et al., 1994), and couples whose illusions are more an embellishment on fact rather than pure fantasy may be able to maintain some idealization, which may in turn, promote marital quality (Murray & Holmes, 1993; Murray et al., 1996). Spouses who enter marriage with more pronounced romantic illusions, however, may find them untenable and become disappointed. Orbuch et al., (1993) found that newlyweds whose accounts of their courtship had strong positive romantic themes became less happy early in marriage compared with couples whose accounts were equally positive but lacked romantic elements. In a number of studies where formerly married spouses, were asked why their marriage ended, the causes identified were loss of interest in the relationship, diminished love, and loss of affection (Buehlman et al., 1992; Kayser, 1993; Kitson, 1992; Weiss, 1975).

The *emergent distress model* presumes that newlyweds begin marriage as affectionate lovers. This model suggests that people do not expect to maintain such extraordinary levels of love and affectional expression: thus, some abatement of positive feelings and behaviour is not, in itself, distressing. Instead, the emergent distress model posits that rises in conflict and negativity corrode relationships (Bradbury et al., 1998). In fact, the prevailing view among marital scholars is that "the positive factors that draw people together—love, attraction, perceived and actual similarities, trust, and commitment—are indicative of marital choice, but not marital success,

instead, how couples handle differences is the critical factor" (Clements et al., 1997, p. 352). Social learning theorists such as Jacobson & Margolin (1979) have argued that the seeds of distress are sown by the emergence of the partners' negative behaviour. Perhaps the best documented finding derived from the application of social learning theory to marriage is that the expression of negative feelings- particularly if they are not situated in a constructive problem-solving context—undermines marital satisfaction (Gottman, 1994; Huston & Chorost, 1994; Noller et al., 1994).

The expression of negativity weakens satisfaction, which, in turn, amplifies spouses' propensities to express further negative feelings (Huston et al., 1986; Huston & Vangeliste, 1991; Jacobson & Margolin, 1979). Gottman's (1994) analysis of distressed marriages suggests that if distress intensifies, spouses stonewall each other, withdraw, and turn more contemptuous. Once spouses decide their conflicts are intractable, they may reduce their interdependence (Rusbult, 1993) and begin to think seriously about leaving the marriage.

The *enduring dynamics model,* variously referred to as the perpetual problems model (Huston, 1994; Huston & Houts, 1998), the maintenance hypothesis (Karney & Bradbury, 1997), and the enduring dynamics model (Caughlin et al., 2000), presumes that certain interpersonal patterns are established during courtship and maintained throughout the course of the marriage. This model in contrast to the disillusionment and emergent distress models, builds on data showing that problems in relationships arise initially in courtship and continue into marriage (Huston, 1994; Markman et al., 1993; Noller & Feeney, 1998). A large number of studies reveal that partners who love each other and mutually affirm each other during courtship are more likely to sustain a satisfying marital bond (Huston & Houts, 1998; Veroff et al., 1995). In these perspectives, a number of recent studies by Aron & Aron (1997), Aron et al., (2000), Glenn

(1998), Hughes (1997), Reis, (1994) and Surra & Hughes (1997) provide more insightful reasoning on marital discord

In the light of the various models and approaches pertaining to the measurement, plausible hypothesis about the psychological, sociological, and cultural determinants of quality of marriage, intergenerational inheritance of marital quality pooled with the interpersonal origins of distress and divorce, the objectives of the present study are outlined in the chapter to follow.