

GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES AND MARITAL SATISFACTION AMONG
ASIAN INDIAN COUPLES LIVING IN THE U.S.
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Abstract

The social institution of marriage has maintained its importance in cultures across the world. In recent times though, globalization has paved the way for significant changes in how marriage and the gender roles of men and women are viewed. Indian society has only just begun to embrace these changes, posing a challenge for immigrant Asian Indian couples who find themselves in a culture far more egalitarian than the one they were raised in. The present exploratory study investigated how shifting gender role attitudes impact marital satisfaction. A qualitative research design combining ethnographic and grounded theory was used. Interviews were conducted with 6 married, educated Asian Indian couples between the ages of 22 and 50 who had at least one child. Five main research questions were addressed: a) How would Asian Indian couples characterize their experience of marriage amid conflicting Indian and American cultural and gender ideologies? b) What are the links between husband's and wife's gender role attitudes and their report of marital satisfaction? c) Are the factors contributing to marital satisfaction navigated in egalitarian or traditional ways and how does that impact marital quality? d) What values are being imparted to the next generation in terms of gender role socialization? e) What are the implications for providing culturally competent therapy to this population? The interview data were analyzed to reveal important findings such as a significant growth in egalitarianism among educated, professional Asian Indian men. Couples also reported increased marital satisfaction as a result of egalitarian gender role attitudes. As parents, couples reported a shift toward gender-neutral role socialization for boys and girls, also showing an increased openness to their children dating as well as choosing to marry non-Indians when they grow up. The study revealed that although the

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cultural bias against seeking mental health services persists in this community, there is increasing openness to it. These findings have important implications for training of mental health professionals who should understand how attitudes within this community are shifting away from stereotypes as educated, professional Asian Indians embrace more values of the host culture while still remaining true to their Indian heritage.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Marriage remains an important social institution across the world despite the evolution over time in the basic parameters that constitute it. In the Western world marriage has seen a shift from being a rite of passage that marked adulthood and helped organize social life to a partnership centered around two equal people who are bound by love. While there has been a gradual movement in a similar egalitarian direction in some Eastern cultures, in Indian society in particular, marriage continues to remain largely traditional. Marriages are still being arranged by families and follow patriarchal gender roles. This difference in value systems becomes more distinct for Asian Indians living in the United States as they navigate two separate sets of cultural ideologies in an attempt to create an identity that remains true to their Indian heritage but also embraces the culture of the host country.

As immigrants, Asian Indian couples face the choice of recreating traditional roles as husband and wife or endorsing more egalitarian gender role attitudes. The choice they each make in terms of gender dynamics has a direct impact on marital satisfaction as it determines division of domestic labor, financial decision-making and childcare duties among others. Perhaps the greatest impact of their choice is reflected in the socialization of the next generation of sons and daughters. Given the importance of marital satisfaction in overall psychological wellbeing and the central role of family in the lives of this population, it becomes imperative to understand how the mechanisms of gender are being negotiated in this time of change toward happy and healthy relationships between immigrant Asian Indian men and women.

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While research exists on marriage and marital satisfaction amongst U.S couples, and some on couples living in India, there is a dearth in the literature of research done on Asian Indians living in the U.S, and particularly of research addressing issues faced by immigrant couples. Studies on this population that do exist focus on attitudes toward dating and arranged versus love marriage but not on what happens after marriage in terms of expectations from their spouse and the gender roles inhabited by each person in the dyad. One study in the 80's (Balagopal, 1987) addressed these issues with Asian Indian women in the U.S and found that marital dyads were largely arranged within patriarchal norms and traditional gender role expectations. Since then however, globalization has led to greater exposure to Western values and has challenged deeply set notions of the roles of men and women. No recent study has focused on examining these issues with the couple, hearing from both the husbands and the wives.

This exploratory study investigated the experience of educated, professional Asian Indian couples living in the United States, focusing on marital satisfaction amid shifting gender ideologies and cultural contrasts between United States and India. The study explored five major questions. First, it sought to understand how Asian Indian couples would characterize their experience of marriage amid conflicting Indian and American cultural and gender ideologies. Second, it looked at the link between husbands and wives gender role attitudes and their reports of marital satisfaction. Third, it examined how the factors contributing to marital satisfaction including division of domestic labor, child-care duties, financial decision-making, support for career are navigated in egalitarian or traditional ways and how that impacts marital quality for husbands and wives. Fourth, the study explored the values that are being imparted to the

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next generation in terms of gender role socialization. Lastly, the study looked at implications for providing culturally competent therapy to this underserved immigrant population. It was expected that Asian Indian couples would report a state of flux in their marriages as they navigate between traditional gender-role scripts they were socialized into and their changing gender role attitudes. It was also expected that couples would report a shift away from more traditional ways of socializing the next generation of boys and girls and toward more egalitarian principles.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Historical Overview of Marriage

Marriage is an important institution in almost all societies in the world (Myers et al., 2005). For many a century, marriage was a stable social institution that helped people find their place in the economic and political landscape. According to Coontz (2004), across the globe, marriage was the most important marker of adulthood and respectability for all social groups. It was the primary way of organizing work along age and gender lines. The individual needs and desires of the couple were a secondary consideration in the face of the number of social functions marriage served. It is only in the eighteenth century that the idea of love came into the picture and influenced how marriage came to be seen more as a personal relationship between two people and less as a vehicle for social transactions (Coontz, 2004). This revolution of love in marriage however, became popular in the more modern cultures of Western Europe and North America where marriage came to be seen as a primary relationship that trumped all other prior relationships with family and friends. Other more “traditional” cultures still saw marriage as less of a personal relationship and more of a social obligation. However, with the advent of technology, ensuing globalization and the rapid shrinking of the world, Western ideas of love and companionship in marriage are changing attitudes and expectations across the globe, having a significant impact on marital quality and satisfaction.

While the results of numerous studies have shown that people tend to be healthier and happier when they are married (Gottman, 1994), very few studies have examined the factors that influence marital satisfaction across different cultures. In an increasingly

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diverse and global society, knowledge of cross-cultural differences in relationships and relationship satisfaction is important information for counselors and other professionals (Myers et al., 2005). It becomes imperative then to understand how this most significant of relationships is being navigated in the face of a changing social order across the world.

Marriage and the Indian Culture

Indian society is one of the oldest and more traditional societies in the world. For the most part, families in India have historically been organized according to the patriarchal system where marriage has been husband-dominated regardless of the resources of either the husband or the wife. The two known exceptions in India which follow the matriarchal system (female run households) include certain castes in the south-west state of Kerela and the Garo and Khasi tribes of the north-east (Sonawat, 2001). In a patriarchal society, strict gender-role norms about what men and women should be and do, govern social life. Many norms follow the rule that men are dominant in status and power so they should be the protective provider, while women should be obedient and dependent (Chen et al., 2009).

At the heart of patriarchy in India is the oppression of women, as they are considered inferior to men. From the day she is born until the day she dies, an Indian woman is expected to be under the control of a man and to serve him without question (Johnson et al., 2001). Female children are believed to belong to their fathers until they are married, at which time they become the property of their husbands. Marriage is generally considered to be the only socially acceptable choice for a woman, as remaining single would bring disgrace upon her family. However, the choice of whom to marry is usually restricted, as most marriages even today continue to be arranged, with parents

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playing a pivotal role in finding a suitable match based on their own parameters. Once married, the woman is faced with strict gender role expectations that stem from cultural assumptions of what is considered appropriate masculine and feminine behavior, fostering inequality between husbands and wives.

According to Ramu (1988), Hindu religious values are central to an understanding of the ideals concerning sex-roles as they are played out in Indian society. The husband's moral and domestic domination of his wife was unquestionable in the "shastras" (normative code for Hindu society) and it served to inform the moral principles governing male-female relationships adopted by most caste groups and communities. Consequently, there has traditionally been a difference in gender role socialization of boys and girls. Young girls continue to be presented with mythological role models of obedient, submissive and long suffering women such as Sita of the Ramayana (Gupta, 1999). The "ideal" woman is expected to sacrifice her individuality to fulfill her submissive role in the marriage.

Despite such normative prescriptions and power related gender ideology, great strides have been made in India toward gender equality. The most significant change has been the change in legal status of women, such as granting of franchise, equality ensured by the Constitution, rights to ancestral property, divorce and abortion. Legally, Indian women enjoy more rights than their counterparts in the United States (Ramu, 1988). Socially, globalization has played a key role in creating greater awareness and has contributed significantly toward the gradual shift in gender ideology in India. Also, the move away from the joint family system to more nuclear families has led to greater autonomy for the married couple allowing for more egalitarian attitudes in the marriage.

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Young women today have more opportunities for education and employment than in the past and are not as dependent on men to provide for them.

It is important to bear in mind however, that the changes have mostly impacted the urban, well-educated, middle class woman and not the majority of women who are still illiterate and economically dependent on men. Also, it is important to note that while modern attitudes may have allowed women greater freedom, husbands and wives are still “doing gender” based on traditional gender role attitudes. This has led to a greater burden on women as they go out and earn as well as do the duties of a nurturing wife and mother at home.

Being Indian in the United States

Over the last hundred years or so, immigration has led to a strong Indian presence in the United States. The first couple of waves of immigrants from India were largely laborers who came in the early 1900's. After changes were made to the US immigration laws in 1965, the highly educated urbanized professionals came to this country and in the 1980's their families were able to join them. Since that time, this immigrant minority group has been able to carve a niche for itself as a technical and financial force (Dasgupta, 1998).

However while on the outside it appears as though this “model minority” has acculturated successfully to the environment in their host country, a study with Indian Canadian immigrants by Wakil et al. (1981) concluded that Asian Indians have “accepted changes in more ‘pragmatic values’ but have resisted alterations in their ‘core values’” such as dating, marriage and gender role expectations. Asian Indian immigrants keep close ties with their cultural heritage by attempting to reinvent Indian culture on foreign

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soil. Developing a network of religious institutions, cultural associations, and social gatherings often allows Indians to hold on to their traditional values which are in sharp contrast to the more autonomous individualism that prevails in U.S culture. According to Gupta (1999), Indian immigrants face a “double bind” between the mainstream emphasis on individuality and the tremendous pressure from their communities to conform to traditional ideals. Gupta (1999) also asserts that ethnic communities here are often more vigilant than Indians in India in maintaining their cultural heritage. While their peers in India are influenced by Western culture, Indians who came to the U.S in the 1960’s and 70’s often exist in a “time capsule,” trying to preserve social values that were prevalent in India when they were growing up, forgetting that India itself has undergone vast changes due to globalization (Gupta, 1999).

This experience of reconciling two value systems can be like walking a tight rope between two cultures while trying to create an identity for oneself that incorporates both the values of the Indian heritage as well as those of mainstream America. This is especially difficult for the Indian immigrant woman. There is great emphasis on preserving the honor associated with the family name and Dasgupta and Dasgupta (1996) propose that the responsibility for maintaining this honor falls disproportionately on Indian women. They are viewed as the bearers and transmitters of Indian tradition and culture. As a result, Asian Indian immigrant women living in the United States may find themselves navigating conflicting ideals of family harmony, dependency, strict gender role expectations and collectivistic values on the one hand and individualism and egalitarianism on the other hand (Varghese & Jenkins, 2009).

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Gender Ideology and Gender Role Attitudes

Gender ideologies may be defined as how one identifies oneself with regard to marital and family roles traditionally linked to gender. Gender ideology can be differentiated from gender identity, which Goffman (1977) suggested is “the deepest sense of what one is.” So, gender identities have more to do with our self-definitions such as male or female, while gender ideology would be the elements that make up that self-definition. Atkinson et al. (2005) provide an example that can help clarify the two concepts- two men who think of themselves as male (their gender identity) can have different ideas about what being male implies (their gender ideologies). One man may assert that being male means he has little responsibility for domestic labor, whereas another may feel that being male means doing an equal share of household work. According to these researchers, marriage and other intimate relationships provide arenas in which these ideologies are played out. As a married couple, husbands and wives get the opportunity to validate their identities as male and female by displaying the visible aspects of their gender ideologies. These gender ideologies like gender itself derive their meanings from the broader socio-cultural context and therefore are not universal (Bolzendahl and Myers, 2004).

In elucidating the idea of gender as a structure, Tichenor (2005) suggests that in any given setting, gender operates simultaneously on three levels, the institutional, the interactional and the individual. Gender shapes the ongoing practices of social life at each of these levels. At the institutional level, it exists as the distribution of material advantage and influences organizational practices and ideology. At the interactional level, gender makes men and women behave in ways that are appropriate in their specific social

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context and at the individual level, gender provides a framework for the construction of meaningful identities for men and women.

Gender role attitudes have largely been thought to vary along the lines of *traditionalism versus egalitarianism* in terms of an individuals' or a society's ideas about the optimal degree of similarity between the characteristic behaviors and activities of men versus women, including their labor force and domestic roles. Individuals who are said to hold more traditional views endorse the idea that men are the providers and women are the homemakers. Individuals with more egalitarian attitudes support more similar roles for women and men. The reason why gender role attitudes impact marriage is because they reflect individual's beliefs about their own and their partner's marriage and family responsibilities (Perry-Jenkins and Crouter 1990).

Botkin et al. (2000) present an update on a longitudinal study of marriage role expectations in the United States that was begun in 1961, adding data collected in 1990 and 1996 to the existing data set, allowing for comparisons to be made in the marriage role expectations of female college students from 1961, 1972, 1978, 1984, 1990 and 1996. Comparisons included the females' overall traditional versus egalitarian expectations for their marriage. Botkin et al. conclude in their study that there was a dramatic trend toward more egalitarian marriage role expectations between 1961 and 1978 and since then the trend toward egalitarianism has reached a plateau, albeit in the upper 80's to low 90's percentages among female college students. Egalitarian attitudes therefore have been around for a long time in the United States and have held steadfast in the face of socio-political changes. And although more education has been found to be associated with more egalitarian attitudes amongst both men and women, survey data

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reveal that at every educational level, women are more egalitarian than men (Mason & Lu, 1988).

While the implications of gender role attitudes for the marital stability and dynamics of U.S couples have received a great deal of empirical attention, there is very little known about how these processes unfold within racial and ethnic minority groups. This is important in light of the cultural-ecological framework which posits that what is considered normative and what is valued may differ significantly from one socio-cultural context to another.

Historically in India, the tenets of patriarchy have ensured a largely traditional gender ideology with very strict roles for men and women. In a study done with couples in an urban-industrial setting in South India, Ramu (1988) explored their perceived gender roles and distribution of power. He found that while the perception of gender roles was influenced by traditional values for both men and women, there actually existed greater equality in domestic authority between husbands and wives. Ramu concluded “the socio-economic environment is not yet conducive for a dramatic shift in the traditional perceptions of sex roles.” He cited the low level of education for wives in his study as well as the slow economy with high rates of unemployment as the reasons for traditional gender role attitudes and predicted changes in the future. In contemporary India, influences of industrialization, modernization and globalization have brought about significant changes toward more open and egalitarian gender role attitudes as women find greater opportunities for education and employment.

Gender Role Attitudes and Migration to United States

The existing literature on gender and migration among Asian Indians is contradictory. One body of literature highlights women's empowerment and greater gender equality as a result of immigration. Another body of research states that in the process of creating an Indian ethnicity in this country, Asian Indians have instituted a more inegalitarian and restrictive model of Indian womanhood than that prevalent in India today. Gupta (1999) refers to this as the "time capsule" effect. Whatever the gender role attitudes though, the fact is that a majority of Asian Indian women in the U.S are finding themselves in the work force. The census data shows that in 1990, 59.6% of foreign-born Indian American women older than 16 years of age were in the labor force. Also, as discussed previously, Asian Indian women in the U.S have come to be seen as the custodians of culture and tradition. It is likely therefore that women's gender role attitudes will have a significant impact on the future family dynamics within this community.

Subrahmanyam (1999) in her study with Indian college students in the U.S found some interesting ideas about gender roles amongst Indian men and women. While they each agreed wholeheartedly that men and women are equal in theory and should be treated equally, the women felt they should be independent and self-confident, but the male students saw "ideal" women as being more connected to men, to their children and to the rest of the family. Also, both male and female students agreed that employment and financial independence is important for women to have. They could not agree however, on the solutions for the problems that would ensue in meeting their goals for their families with both partners working outside the home. The male students offered

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solutions along more traditional gender role attitudes suggesting that the woman should be the one to make adjustments and give up her career to stay at home when the situation demands it. These male students also expressed a preference for arranged marriages, which would ensure fewer expectations from both partners and a lower likelihood of divorce according to them. Women on the other hand, were more concerned with the quality of their marriages and offered love marriage as a solution to keeping their families together. They hoped that having a choice in finding a partner would mean they could be with a man who would understand and help with their competing needs for a career and a stable family. Subrahmanyam (1999) concluded that there was a great deal of variation and confusion in the student's perceptions of the roles of women and attributed it to the transitional phase in the process of developing their identities as Indians in the U.S.

Balagopal (1987) conducted a study with working Asian Indian wives and mothers in the United States and questioned whether Indian marriages in the U.S reflect the changing realities of two-career families. Through six case studies, Balagopal concluded that women who work outside the home carry a double burden and experience what Hochschild (1989) calls the "second shift." In some cases men had begun to pitch in with household chores, but for the most part it fell on the women to manage both, career and family. Balagopal also found that the woman's earning capacity was directly proportional to the kind of adjustments she could expect at home. While this was not found to be a conscious choice by the men, it does point to level of financial contribution impacting gender equality.

It is also worth noting Deutsche and Saxon's (1998) contention that ideology alone does not determine practice, there are various factors that influence egalitarian

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gender practices. The interactionist approach of “doing gender,” (West & Zimmerman, 1991) suggests that men and women are called upon to demonstrate to themselves as well as others that they are appropriately masculine or feminine within a given social context. Working long hours away from home may threaten a woman’s sense of herself as a “good” wife and mother even if she ascribes to more liberal gender role attitudes. She may get greater validation from being a good homemaker than from being a co-provider. This idea of “doing gender” may be particularly relevant to the experience of the Asian Indian couples, especially the women as they try to reconcile the Hindu image of the nurturing, caring wife and mother with the demands of having a career.

The preceding discussion presents a picture of the state of flux that seems to exist in gender ideologies and gender role attitudes as well as gender practices. This is especially true amongst the Asian Indian population as they navigate the creation of an ethnic identity here in the U.S. Some implications of this state of flux are discussed next in the context of marital satisfaction.

Marital Satisfaction

The most frequently researched topic in the area of marriage and family relationships is that of marital satisfaction or what helps people maintain happiness in their marriages (Myers, 2005). Marital satisfaction or happiness refers to an individual’s overall feeling about marriage as a whole and has been shown to be strongly associated with psychological well-being, positive morale, lower depression and better immune functioning. Given the impact of marital satisfaction on well-being, it becomes imperative to study the universal as well as culture-specific mechanisms that influence marital satisfaction, especially in the multi-cultural environment of today.

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Arranged versus Love Marriage. Historically, marriages in India have been arranged. Traditional Hindu culture sees marriage as a union between two families rather than a union between two people. The spouse therefore, would be selected by the family from within their social/cultural network and generally within the same religion and caste. Some communities in India also favor marriages between uncles and nieces and between cousins. Love marriage, defined as marriage of choice wherein parents and other community members have no role in arranging the alliance has been considered to be dangerous and deviant (Harlan et al., 1995). Marriage is thought to have an impact on the reputation of the entire family and the ‘immoral’ conduct of a woman who selects her own spouse has been thought to bring shame to the entire family. However, with time and the adoption of Western ideas of marriage as a partnership primarily between two people, love marriages have become more common in India. Living in the United States, children of immigrant parents are exposed to the notions of love marriage from an early age and studies have shown that they either rebel or negotiate their way towards love marriage. Interestingly though in the selection of a partner, Indian women tend to follow traditional guidelines and choose to marry men within their own caste and religion. Wickramasinghe (2008) found that marital satisfaction in Asian Indian families was significantly correlated to the family of origin’s acceptance of the spouse, a factor that is a given in arranged marriages and which underscores the importance of family even in marriages of choice.

As mentioned earlier, there has been research done focusing on the dynamics of marital stability and satisfaction amongst U.S couples but there have been very few studies done, if any, that have looked at these issues in Asian Indian immigrant couples.

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There have been studies done that have compared U.S couples and couples in India along the lines of marital satisfaction in arranged versus 'love marriages' or marriages of choice. One such study was done by Myers et al. (2005), in which they studied marital satisfaction and holistic wellness in couples living in the U.S in marriages of choice and couples in India in arranged marriages. Myers et al. found that overall there was no difference in marriage satisfaction between the participants in India and those in the U.S suggesting that contrary to Western beliefs, it is possible for couples in arranged marriages to be happy and satisfied. The study has implications for mate selection and how that can impact marital satisfaction. In another study, Yelsma and Athappilly (1988) found that in fact, traditional arranged marriage couples in India reported higher marriage satisfaction than the couples who had more intimate American-style love marriages in India.

Given that the single, female Asian Indian college students in Subrahmanyam's one of a kind study with this population (1999) cited above had posited marriages of choice as a solution to greater marital satisfaction, it would be interesting to see if being in an arranged versus 'love' marriage translates into differential levels of satisfaction for these women living in the United States.

Division of Domestic Labor. One aspect of a couple's life that has been shown to be linked to marital satisfaction or quality is that of division of household labor including childcare. Some researchers (e.g., Becker, 1991) have posited that division of labor along traditional gender lines with men and women both having 'specialized' roles as the provider and the homemaker would aid in greater marital satisfaction. Some other researchers (e.g., Oppenheimer, 1994) argue that a more flexible strategy where the

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burden of one role does not fall entirely on one partner but the responsibilities are evenly distributed is a more sustainable arrangement for the couple. However, studies have shown that traditional division of household labor and the corresponding perceptions of its unfairness has been associated with poor relationship outcomes for couples and poor health outcomes for wives both in the United States (Blair, 1993) and abroad (Khawaja & Habib, 2007).

The Indian marriage with its roots in the patriarchal tenets has always had more traditional gender roles. Balagopal's study (1987) revealed that while Asian Indian men in the United States have begun to participate more in household labor, the major burden of it still falls on the woman even if she is working. Sonawat (2001) contends that the working-woman gets saddled with a multiplicity of roles and finds herself constantly exhausted both mentally and physically which is further exacerbated by the indifferent attitudes of their husbands and their in laws. Stanik (2012) suggests that this trend is true for American marriages as well, since women have continued to enter the labor force but men's participation in household labor has stalled.

Happiness in Marriage. Sonawat (2001), in her discussion of studies done in India on marriage reflects that the focus on the dynamics of the joint family set up has resulted in the marital dyad receiving little attention. The few studies on marital satisfaction or adjustment that were done are from the 80's and looked at issues pertaining to the difference in education levels between spouses, socio-economic status, number of children. One study by Shukla (1980) looked at marital satisfaction in dual career couples and found that both the men and women attached greater importance to and gave more favorable evaluations of themselves in their traditional roles as providers

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or homemakers. Sandhya (2009) studied marital happiness in urban Hindu husbands and wives in the context of a globalizing India. She looked at the structure of happiness through the processes of conflict and intimacy in the daily emotional lives of couples in India in both arranged as well as love marriages. She found that, as with American couples, the bonds of intimacy and conflict also characterize the relationship of Indian couples. Both men and women expressed needs for empathy, validation and support. The wives however reported experiencing less intimacy with their husbands, receiving less attention as well as less help in daily affairs from them compared to their husband's reports. Sandhya concluded that despite the effects of globalization and greater access to resources, the presence of gender effects in the fulfillment of intimacy needs suggests that strong differences between the sexes still exist in terms of who has more power and control of resources. Sandhya further posited that while there has been a push for egalitarianism in Indian marriages, the changes have been very slow. Men still hold more importance in the job market and their authority in earning potential may be reflected in their dominance in psychological need fulfillment too. For the Indian woman, in the United States or in India, exposure to more Westernized romantic notions of love and intimacy has the potential therefore, to create impossible expectations, which could impact marital satisfaction negatively.

It is the goal of this study to shed light on marital satisfaction amongst educated, professional Asian Indian couples living in the United States and the impact of gender role attitudes on the quality of their marriages. A disturbing trend that makes research in this area more pertinent is the rise in incidence of domestic violence and divorce within this community. Dasgupta (2000), the co-founder of Manavi, a New Jersey based agency

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that serves Asian Indian women, contends that in an effort to preserve their culture and heritage, this community has largely recreated traditional gender relations which give men authority and dominance over women creating a situation that is ripe for domestic violence. The issues of immigration, residency status, adaptation to a foreign culture as well as the threat to ruin the reputation of her family in the natal country further complicate the abuse faced by women in such marriages.

Divorce amongst Asian Indians has also seen a rise in recent times. According to Gupta (1999), divorce strikes at the very heart of the Indian patriarchal system. While divorce is more common for American couples, according to the Indian census of 2001, the divorce rate is 7.1 per 1000 married couples in India, one third that of American couples. Divorce becomes a bigger issues for the Asian Indians living in the U.S as by contemplating divorce, a woman is not only challenging the prescribed gender roles but also posing a threat to the image of the “model minority” that is so dear to this immigrant community. A code of silence is enforced on its members in order to preserve the image of the trouble free, family oriented group. Gupta (1999) calls an independent, unmarried woman an oxymoron in the Asian Indian immigrant society. But despite the social stigma, divorce rate is rapidly increasing both in India as well as here in the U.S. It is becoming a critical issue for this community and as such needs to be addressed.

Socializing the Next Generation

The act of walking the tight rope between two cultures is perhaps most salient to the second generation of Indian immigrants. Since the continuation of ethnic/cultural identity depends upon invoking loyalties to the traditions of the parents, the imparting of certain core values/attitudes in the second generation is critical for Indian immigrants

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(Dasgupta, 1998). The traditional structure of the family and all that it represents in terms of established gender roles, social mores and also courtship and marital traditions can often be a battleground between immigrant parents and their children. According to studies done in the late 1990's, differences were noted in the way Indian girls and boys were being socialized in the U.S. As the keepers of Asian Indian culture and heritage in the U.S, the roles of second-generation daughters were monitored more strictly than those of sons. While Indian boys and girls were both socialized to be dependent on the family and subordinated to the parents, girls especially were socialized to be dependent first on their father, then on their husband and finally on their son (Segal, 1998).

As they grow older however and attempt to create their own identities, children of immigrant parents do not always want to toe the line of tradition. For example, in a study, Kwak and Berry (2001) found that both adolescents and parents were more likely to report integrated attitudes toward cultural traditions and language, while endorsing separation attitudes in the domain of marriage. Young immigrant women today experience what Inman et al. (2007) call a "cultural value conflict" between the home and host culture's value systems yet they are more and more open to egalitarian ideas when it comes to dating, marriage as well as gender roles within marriage. This trend was noted in the late 90's as Dasgupta (1998) found in her study on intergenerational differences between attitudes on dating, that mothers and daughters had more liberal gender values. Significantly, Dasgupta also found that there were clear differences in the attitude toward gender equality between the young men and women of the second generation with women being more egalitarian. In her study with Indian college students in U.S, Subrahmanyam (1999) concluded that there was a "yawning gap between Indian

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traditionalism as articulated by the males and modernity” as espoused by females. Such divergent attitudes toward gender equality if still present, may translate into mismatched expectations between marriage partners in the future and have important implications for the socialization of boys and girls as this immigrant community moves forward.

Seeking Services

Despite having acculturated in many ways to the American way of life, Indian immigrants have not taken to the concept of seeking professional help to deal with emotional and mental health related issues they may be facing. They are known as a group to be resistant to discussing intimate issues even with a trained professional. Specifically, Indian women tend to seek services at a much lower rate than women of other ethnic groups, but not due to lesser need. There is limited research available that documents the psychological health of Indian immigrant women in the United States but research done in the United Kingdom on the mental health of Indian immigrant women has found that suicide rate is higher than that of their male counterparts as well as British women. Patel and Gaw (1996) in one such study reported that family conflict was a common precipitating factor for depression and suicide. Even when they seek services, there is a dearth of professionals who are trained to handle the cultural nuances that this population presents. According to Sue and Sue (1999), therapy is more effective with a client if an approach is used that encompasses values and contexts of the client. Indian women are at risk of being perceived as having an “underdeveloped ego” lacking in self-reliance and self-direction because of Hinduism’s emphasis on selflessness and detachment (Roland, 1996). It is important for mental health professionals to bear in mind the cultural values, religious beliefs, gender role attitudes as well as ethnic

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constructs of mental illness and spiritual functioning before being able to competently address the mental health needs of this population.

Limitations in Current Body of Research

There is a great dearth in research done on Asian Indians living in the United States. The research that does exist largely focuses on issues pertaining to immigration, acculturation as well as the cultural value conflict between the parents of Indian origin and their children who were born and/or raised here. In particular there is a scarcity of studies done on gender roles, marriage and other associated issues in the Asian Indian immigrant population. Some studies do address attitudes surrounding dating and arranged marriages but very little research has been done on the experience of Indian men and women after they get married. Not much is known about how they begin to navigate the strict gender roles that they were socialized into and the more egalitarian environment in which they find themselves as a couple. The documented gap between the more liberal attitudes of Indian women and the more traditional values of Indian men makes it important to understand these dynamics especially as they will impact the next generation. This study is aimed at bringing to light some of the issues caused by shifting gender ideologies in more recent times and what it has meant for the Asian Indian couple living in the United States. It is hoped that hearing from the couple would allow insight into how both men and women perceive their gender roles and the quality of their marriage. Considering the importance of marriage and family to this community, the study hopes to further the provision of culturally relevant therapy to this underserved population. Given that the principal investigator is a member of the cultural milieu being

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studied, it is hoped that the “insider-outsider” perspective will also lend itself to keener insight into the world of the subjects being researched.

Chapter III

Methods

This study used a combination of qualitative research methods as well as self report measures to understand the experience of married, educated Asian Indian couples. Participants in the study had to be between the ages of twenty-two to fifty, living in the United States as a couple for at least five years and having at least one child. The use of a qualitative method allowed for the collection of rich interview data to highlight the experience of these couples. Self report measures allowed for the mitigation of potential social desirability factors playing a role in responses. This chapter will discuss the use of qualitative methodology as well as the rationale for and types of self-report scales used. It will describe in detail the characteristics of the participants, the interview questions, and the data analysis procedure.

Qualitative Methods

Social sciences frequently employ qualitative research methods, often to fill important gaps when quantitative research methodology either cannot be employed or is not suited to the type of data being collected. Qualitative research has been shown to be especially useful for understanding patterns of behavior. Quantitative methods can clarify the statistical significance of behavior patterns, but cannot bring to light the reasons behind the phenomenon. According to Morse and Richards (2007), qualitative methods help fill in the reasons for the behavior and allow the researcher to understand, “people’s own account of their behavior” (p. 27).

The subjective experience of a person can best be explored and understood through the use of qualitative research. It has been shown in multiple cases that

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qualitative methods are better suited to capture subtle nuances than quantitative methods (Morse & Richards, 2007). First, qualitative methods are called for when little is known of a particular area and when the goal is to expand an understanding of that area. Using qualitative methodology can be helpful especially when the researcher has no concrete hypothesis of what he or she will find. In such a case, using qualitative methodology helps the researcher learn what research questions can be pulled from the data. Utilizing quantitative methods prematurely with certain research questions can lead to the danger of leaving important areas unexplored. Second, qualitative methods should be used to understand complex situations without destroying the intricacies presented in the data. Using quantitative methods can sometimes be reductionistic and result in a loss of the richness of data. Third, if the purpose of the study is to learn how participants make meaning of their experience, qualitative methods are not only recommended, but also are necessary to preserve the complexity of the data. Fourth, if the purpose of the research is to construct a theory or a framework, qualitative methods allow for the discovery of data which otherwise might be overlooked by a quantitative approach. Lastly, if the purpose of the study is to understand a trend or experience, the use of qualitative methods allow for an in-depth exploration to discover central themes.

There were several reasons to use a qualitative approach for this exploratory study. First, since there is little known about the experience of Asian Indian couples' living in the United States, the main purpose of the study is to expand the knowledge base by shedding light on an important aspect of their lives. The limited available data detailing the experience of marriage in this population while living in a culture different from their own, prevents the investigator from defining various constructs and or even

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examining which facets of these couple's experiences can be generalized and compared between groups. If such data was present then quantitative comparisons could be made. However, it is currently unclear how to concretize the experience of marital satisfaction for Asian Indian couples as they navigate changing gender role ideologies. A qualitative method therefore becomes necessary because little is known about this area. Second, as stated by McCracken (1988), the use of a qualitative research protocol, specifically an interview, can "take us into the mental world of the individual...to see the content and pattern of daily experience." This fits the criteria of when to use a qualitative approach (i.e. the lack of prior research and the desire to get in depth information without losing the nuance of the experiences reported). Third, implementing a quantitative research protocol would limit exploration of various themes in the attempt to make the experience measurable. In the present study, given the stage of research and the area being examined, conducting a quantitative study would likely mean the loss of rich data that is found through qualitative methods.

Morse and Richards (2007) discuss two key reasons to employ qualitative methods, a) the research question requires the use of a qualitative method, and b) the data lends itself to being analyzed through a qualitative method. In this study, both criteria were met. Therefore choosing a qualitative methodology was appropriate as it allowed participants to give open-ended responses. It also allowed the researcher to "observe and record the complexities of clinical situations that seem to be denied by tidy reports of patient compliance" (Morse & Richards, p. 27). In addition, the ultimate goal was to understand the themes that emerged from interviewing Asian Indian couples and their experiences of being married and living in the United States. When the data is gathered in

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such an interview format, and the goal is to, “isolate and define... categories during the process of research” it is important to follow a qualitative method (Morse & Richards, p. 27). Therefore, based on the reasoning cited above, qualitative method was chosen for this study.

The Long Interview Methodology

Within qualitative research there are several different methods like Phenomenology, Ethnography, and Grounded Theory that can be used depending on the nature of the exploration (Morse & Richards, 2007). In the Ethnography tradition, the researcher explores cultural groups. A cultural group, in this case, is defined as an “account for the beliefs, values, and behaviors of cohesive groups of people” (Morse & Richards, p.28). Grounded theory, examines the way reality is constructed and changes over time. Reality is considered to be something that is constantly changing and evolving (Morse & Richards). This theory emphasizes that researchers should be aware of their own impact and involvement with the data in order to create the theory, because of the circular process of data collection and analysis (Morse & Richards).

The current exploratory study used McCracken’s long interview method, which is a combination of the Grounded Theory and Ethnography methods (1988). The long interview, as described by McCracken (1988), allows for the collection of a rich, in-depth look at the data. Given that there is dearth in psychological literature of studies attempting an understanding of the experiences of married Asian Indian couples living in the United States, using the long interview allowed the researcher to delve deep into the couple’s experiences and understand them in a greater social and cultural framework, without losing subtler nuances. This method is structured for data to be collected in a way

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that fleshes out what numbers obtained through psychological measures cannot fully convey (McCracken, 1988).

The long interview methodology posited by McCracken follows a four-step method of inquiry. The first step of McCracken's method requires the interviewer to conduct an exhaustive review of the literature allowing the investigator to define the research questions and assess the existing data. More importantly, a comprehensive review of the literature allows for the discovery of counterexpectational data (McCracken, 1988). This phenomenon is defined as a situation where the investigator is so familiar with the data that they are surprised by a theme that they find while conducting the literature review. Counterexpectational data is important because it can signal an area of the literature that has been not thoroughly explored. The second purpose of a comprehensive literature review is to help in the creation of the interview. For this study, the comprehensive literature review indicated that there was a dearth of data in the current subject area and suggested that the study might discover new themes in the experience of couples within this population.

The second step, review of cultural categories, is where investigators truly start to examine themselves as an instrument in this process. This involves the investigator exploring personal experience and how it intersects with the research topic. McCracken states that this stage calls the investigator to engage in "two processes: familiarization and defamiliarization" (McCracken, 1988, p. 33). This combination allows the investigator to listen for key themes they are familiar with, and at the same time to maintain a necessary distance from their own assumptions. Given that the principal investigator in this study is a married, immigrant Asian Indian female with personal

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familiarity with the topic, ‘familiarization’ and ‘defamiliarization’ were important aspects of the process in this study.

The third stage involves the construction of the actual interview. According to McCracken, the interviews should adhere to certain requirements. First, it is important that the interview cover the same information for all of the participants. Second, it is essential that the interview be crafted in a way that the questions and prompts are not leading. As McCracken (1988) and other qualitative researchers state, the investigator is part of the instrument used, and therefore, needs to take caution and manufacture the necessary distance between themselves and the participants. Third, the interview should be directive enough so as to not fall into the potential trap of open-ended interviews, where the discourse spirals to a place that is out of control and off topic. In order to establish this focus, the interview should open with a standard set of biographical questions. Subsequent questions should be open and nondirective, allowing the participants to respond freely. These latter questions are named “grand-tour” questions (McCracken, 1988, p. 35). Once the grand-tour questions have begun to elicit answers, the investigator is responsible for sustaining the dialogue. According to McCracken this is done through “floating prompts” which include nonverbal gestures like a raised eyebrow, or verbal prompts, such as restating the end of a participant’s response (McCracken, 1988, p. 35). For the entirety of the interview, the investigator should “keep as ‘low’ and unobtrusive a profile as possible” (McCracken, 1988, p. 34).

Data Analysis

The fourth and final stage of the long interview process is the analysis of the data collected. The purpose of the data analysis for this study was to identify common themes

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among the couples interviewed. Themes related to their experience of being married and living in a culture with more egalitarian gender role attitudes than the more traditional attitudes of their own culture. The goal of the analysis was to “determine the categories, relationships, and assumptions that inform the respondent’s view of the world in general, and the topic in particular” (McCracken, 1988, p. 42). The analysis is conducted in five stages, moving from a high level of specificity to general themes. After the interviews are recorded and then transcribed verbatim, the investigator analyzes the transcript data. The first stage involves looking at each “utterance” without examining its relationship to other parts of the interview (McCracken, 1988, p. 42). The second stage takes those utterances and explores them with respect to themselves, in relation to other parts of the interview, and in relationship to the existing literature. In the third stage, the focus shifts from the transcript to the observations noted in stage two. The goal of this stage is to understand the relationship between the observations themselves, and between the observations and the existing literature. In this stage, patterns and themes begin to emerge. The fourth stage is a “time of judgment” (McCracken, 1988, p. 46). At this stage, some of the themes are surrounded by data, others become redundant, and still others are eliminated. It is important at this stage to observe whether any of the themes contradict each other. The fifth and final stage calls for a review of themes found in stage four. At this stage, the data is no longer speaking about individual participants or interviews, but rather talking about general themes and categories that are ready for presentation.

This study attempted to look closely at the experience of married Asian Indian couples living in the U.S as they navigate the differences in gender role attitudes as well as cultural ideologies between the host nation and their country of origin. The study

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focuses on the various factors contributing to marital satisfaction amid shifting gender ideologies from the more traditional to the more egalitarian. It was expected that these Asian Indian couples would report a state of flux in their marriages as they negotiate cultural and ideological differences between India and the United States. It was also expected that they would report a shift away from traditional gender role socialization of the next generation of boys and girls and toward more egalitarian principles. A qualitative study design using interview methods has been selected. The study proposed to explore five major questions relevant to married; Asian Indian couples living in the U.S.:

- How would educated, professional Asian Indian couples characterize their experience of marriage amid conflicting Indian and American cultural ideologies?
- What is the link between husbands and wives gender role attitudes and their report of marital satisfaction?
- Are the factors contributing to marital satisfaction including division of domestic labor, child-care duties, financial decision-making, support for career are navigated along egalitarian or traditional lines? How does that impact marital quality for husbands and wives?
- What values are being imparted to the next generation in terms of gender role socialization?
- What are the implications for providing culturally competent therapy to this underserved population?

Self Report Measures

Given the nature of the research questions, there is a possibility of the participant's responses being influenced by social desirability factors. According to

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Gupta (1999), the Asian Indian community feels pressure to maintain the image of a family-oriented model minority, which may come in the way of answering truthfully about some issues related to gender role attitudes and marital satisfaction. In order to mitigate this challenge, two self-report measures were used.

Sex-Role Egalitarianism Scale. To assess gender role attitudes, couples were administered the Sex Role Egalitarianism Scale (SRES) (King & King, 1990). This instrument includes five subscales that represent distinct role categories: Marital, Parental, Employment, Social-Interpersonal, and Educational. The Marital subscale assesses attitudes pertaining to domestic roles (e.g., The husband should be the head of the family). The Parental subscale addresses opinions toward child care roles (e.g., A husband should leave the care of young babies to his wife). The Employment subscale measures attitudes regarding gender roles in the work sphere (e.g., It is wrong for a man to enter a traditionally female career). The Social-Interpersonal subscale assesses viewpoints about men and women in social contexts (e.g., Women are more likely than men to gossip about their acquaintances). Finally, the Educational subscale measures attitudes regarding the education of both genders (e.g., Men and women should be given equal opportunities for professional training). There are four alternate forms of the instrument, full forms B and K containing 95 attitudinal statements, with 19 statements each representing the five domains. The alternate short Forms BB and KK each contain 25 items selected from those appearing on their counterpart full forms, with an equal representation of five items for each of the five SRES domains. Like the full forms of the instrument, a 5-point Likert type “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree” item response format is used, with higher scores indicating more egalitarian attitudes and a possible

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range of scores between 25-125. For this study the short form KK was used. The Sex Role Egalitarianism Scale has been shown to have good reliability and validity and scores on the SRES have been shown to not be attributable to a social desirability response style.

Dyadic Adjustment Scale. The Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) is a 32-item scale completed by either one or both partners in a relationship and is used to characterize the quality of a dyadic relationship. Each DAS item is rated with one of several responses with response anchors varying somewhat depending on the question. The DAS includes four subscales. The Dyadic Consensus subscale assesses the extent of agreement between partners on matters important to the relationship such as money, religion, recreation, friends, household tasks and time spent together. The Dyadic Satisfaction subscale assesses the amount of tension in the relationship as well as the extent to which the individual has considered ending the relationship. High scores on this subscale indicate satisfaction with the present state of the relationship and commitment to its continuance. The Affectional Expression subscale measures the individual's satisfaction with the expression of affection and sex in the relationship. The Dyadic Cohesion subscale assesses the common interests activities shared by the couple (DAS User's Manual 2001). The individual items on the DAS are all believed to have social validity and have been shown time and again to have relevance for assessing marital satisfaction and uncovering any marital discord that may be present across the four domains that the scale focuses on.

Participants

Selection and Recruitment. The six couples in the study met the selection criteria for the study. The couples were educated, heterosexual, aged between 22 and 50

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years old and both husband and wife were of Indian origin, either first generation immigrants or born and raised in the United States. First generation couples were required to have lived in the United States for at least 5 years after marriage. Couples were also required to have at least one child with either one or both parents working outside the home. A networking, snowball sample was used to recruit participants who lived primarily in the New Jersey area. Some couples were recruited through other couples that were asked to pass on information about the study.

Demographics. Six couples were enrolled in the study. Information has been de-identified to protect the privacy of the participants. Ages may not match the data included in demographics table due to those changes.

Perna and Karan are 30 and 35 years old respectively. They have been married for seven years. Karan came to the U.S for work ten years ago and Perna joined him after their marriage. Both Perna and Karan hail from Tamil Nadu. They had a love marriage and have known each other since childhood. Karan is working and Perna, who worked before marriage, stays home to care for their two children aged, 7 and 2.

Shriya and Sachin are 32 and 34 years old respectively. They have been married for ten years. Sachin was born in the United States, his parents immigrated here in the 1970's. Shriya was born in London and moved to the United States with her parents in the 1980's when she was five years old. Shriya and Sachin's families hail from Gujarat. They had a love marriage and met through mutual friends. Sachin has his own business and Shriya, who worked until the kids were born, stays home to care for their three children aged 5, 3 and 2.

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Neha and Siddharth are 32 and 36 years old respectively. They have been married for six years. Siddharth is from Delhi and came to the United States nine years ago for work. Neha hails from Bombay and after meeting through mutual friends, they were in a long distance relationship for many years before they tied the knot in a ceremony held in the U.S. Siddharth has his own business and Neha, who worked until the kids were born, stays home to care for their children aged 4 and 2.

Neelam and Naresh are 39 and 41 years old respectively. They have been married for six years. Neelam's parents immigrated to the United States in the late 1960's and she was born here. Their families both hail from Kerela although they were born in other parts of India. Naresh came to the U.S for school 9 years ago and stayed back for work. They had a love marriage and met through an online matrimonial website. Naresh works full time while Neelam works part time and cares for their two children aged 5 and 2.

Joyce and George are 36 and 29 years old respectively. They have been married for nine years. George came to the U.S for work 2 years after they got married and they have been here since. George was born in the U.A.E and Joyce in Lucknow but both their families hail from Kerela. They had a love marriage and met through an online matrimonial website. George works full time and Joyce is a stay at home mother taking care of their 4-year old son.

Meghna and Vaibhav are both 35 years old. They have been married for ten years. Vaibhav came to the U.S for work and they have been here for the last seven years. Meghna and Vaibhav both hail from Bombay and went to school together. They were dating for a few years before they got married. Vaibhav works full time and Meghna is a stay at home mother taking care of their 3-year old son.

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Table 1 Participant characteristics

Characteristic	<i>N</i>
Age: Mean years, (Range)	35, (30-41)
Birth Country:	
India	9
U.S.	2
Other	1
Years in the U.S.: Mean years, (Range)	9.5, (5-27)
1 st Generation	9
2 nd Generation	3
Highest Level of Education:	
Bachelors Degree	8
Masters Degree	3
Post-Graduate Degree	1
Employment: Before, (After) Marriage	
Male:	6, (6)
Female:	6, (0)
Age at Marriage: Mean years, (Range)	28, (22-36)
Length of Marriage: Mean years, (Range)	8, (6-10)
Type of Marriage:	
Arranged	0
Love	6
Number of Children: (Range)	(1-3)
Age of Children: (Range)	(2-6)

Measures

Three collection methods were used to obtain data from the participants. The first was a demographics sheet (see Appendix B). This questionnaire asked about the participant's age, level of education, number of siblings, birth order, age at marriage, number of children, employment status. Participants were also asked how long they have been married, how long they have lived in the United States as a couple and when each of their parents immigrated to the United States if they were born here.

Next, each participant was asked to complete two self-report measures, the Sex Role Egalitarianism Scale (SRES) measuring gender role attitudes as well as the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) measuring marital satisfaction. Finally, couples were interviewed separately using an in depth semi-structured interview (see Appendix C) as

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the chief tool of investigation. The interview protocol was developed by the principal investigator and comprised of open-ended questions pertaining to gender role attitudes, gender role socialization, traditional versus egalitarian values, division of domestic labor and childcare duties, marital satisfaction, values imparted to the next generation as well as attitudes toward seeking mental health services. The order of the questions was structured and they were designed to meet the definition of McCracken's grand-tour questions (Mc Cracken, 1988). The interviewer often probed with prompts to help flesh out responses and to clarify themes.

Procedure

The initial contact with participants was through a brief telephone conversation in which the purpose of the study was discussed, their interest in being part of it was ascertained and a date and time was fixed. On the day of the interview, which was conducted in their homes, the husband and wife were met with separately. Participants first read and signed an informed consent (see Appendix A). Second, participants completed a demographics page (see Appendix B), which included biographical information, immigration information, and family information. Third, the participants completed two self-report measures, the abbreviated Sex Role Egalitarianism Scale (SRES) form KK and the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS). Next, they were interviewed separately and were asked to keep their responses confidential from their partners in the event that the second interview was to be conducted on a different day so as not to color their partner's responses. The semi structured interview (see Appendix C) was comprised of non- intrusive, open-ended questions aimed at understanding gender role attitudes and their impact on the couple's lives in areas such as division of domestic labor, child care

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duties, as well as the perception of the overall quality of their married life. The interview took, on average, approximately one and one-half hours, with the shortest interview being fifty-five minutes and the longest one being an hour and thirty-five minutes. Participants were given the option to withdraw at any point in the study, but all six couples completed the study protocol. None of the six couples reported any adverse effects during or after the interview. All sessions were audio taped to maintain authenticity of the responses and each participant was assigned a case code. This was the only identification used on response materials. The principal investigator and a professional transcriber transcribed the interviews. All identifying information was removed before audiotapes were given to the transcriber. Consent forms were kept in a separate locked file from the interview data collected. They were removed from any participants' responses in order to maintain confidentiality. All audio recordings, interview transcripts, and other data collected from the participants will be maintained in confidence by the investigator in a locked file cabinet for seven years after the completion of the study. After seven years, the principal investigator will destroy all research material.

Chapter IV

Results

Transitioning from India to U.S

Seventy-five percent (75%) of the participants interviewed were first generation immigrants who came to the U.S five to ten years ago from India. The men came on work visas while the women came as dependents on their spouse's visa. The experience of moving to the U.S was wide ranging among the participants. While it was uniformly positive for some, it was a mixed reaction for others. For Joyce and George, it was the religious freedom that was most exciting about being here. Joyce stated,

For us it was a totally different experience from most of the friends we have here because we're coming from a country where Christians were the minority. We were coming to a country where Christians were not the minority anymore. There's a lot of freedom, a lot of encouragement to practice what you believe in. There were some issues that we used to face in India, which we don't face here anymore. They don't bring religion to the office place. You can keep those things separate. You can believe and live the way you want to live.

Neha and Siddharth liked the organized and convenient lifestyle which makes it easier to raise a family. Siddharth said,

It was straightforward. It was very simple, it's a very, you know, intuitive kind of country. Things are sorted here.

Two of the six women reported having a mixed experience upon first coming here. For Meghna,

It was exciting because it was a new place and I was desperately looking for a break. The biggest positive thing though was being away from my in-laws. But at the same time I was not very happy because I could not work.

For Prerna it started out positive but then she began to miss home after being here for some time. She offered,

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At first it felt like a dream come true and then I started feeling bored. I had a big family in India and all my relatives were close. I used to feel a little left out initially. But later I got friends and then I didn't feel so left out.

Once they settled into their new environment, some differences between the Indian way of life and the American culture became apparent to the participants. Some of the women talked about gaining a sense of independence upon coming here that they had not experienced in India. For Neha and Meghna, it was a relief to be able to make decisions for themselves without pressure from the extended family and the society.

Meghna said,

The biggest difference is back home you are so used to having your families involved, even if you are living separately. After coming here it feels more like it is about the individual-there's nothing around that person. That's a big difference that I found about living here and sometimes I don't like it because I miss having my parents around or other relatives but then I think, they also just get on your nerves with their questioning or poking their nose into your business.

Neha expressed how she has experienced the freedom to raise her children the way she sees fit. She added,

I feel, over here whatever said and done, we are running our show. There is no unnecessary pressure, no unnecessary expectations from people. All we have, we can give 100% to the family. Over here we are more focused; we are doing everything together. With bringing up kids, things are so much easier here in terms of the infrastructure and the choices we have for them.

Joyce provided an interesting counter-point to the experience reported by these women. She stated that her experience of being in the U.S did not give her a new sense of independence as she grew up in a liberal Christian family in India where she was raised to be independent and was allowed to follow her dreams. For her, coming to the U.S has only served as a new opportunity to pursue goals. Two of the men echoed her sentiment in not finding the culture here too different from what they were used to. Naresh, who has worked in the merchant navy and travelled extensively out of India found many

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similarities with other cultures he had been exposed to. For Siddharth too, living in the U.S, after having grown up in a metropolitan city like New- Delhi, is not too different especially in terms of cultural diversity. He said he was used to being surrounded by a diverse group of people and felt at home coming here and finding the same environment.

Fifty percent (50%) of the men interviewed did find cultural differences between India and the U.S. One common theme was the difference in work-ethic and the importance given to work-life balance in this society versus the work ethic in India.

George offered,

There was a huge difference in terms of working here. In India you would be forced to maintain some sort of a status when you get into a job. You have to get there fast and you have to buy that particular car or you have to live in this style. I think one is worrying too much about money and status in India. Here nobody bothers anybody so you just live pretty much how you want to live and are free to focus on other goals.

A common theme in terms of cultural difference that both the men and the women noticed was the focus on family and the difference in parenting styles between India and the U.S. Vaibhav pointed out,

I think a good thing I noticed about being here is the way kids are brought up in an independent way of learning things. They behave independently at an early age. That's a really good thing I've seen here. I can relate to that more because now I have a kid and I can see that when he goes to school I know that he's going to get more independent and more social. So the parenting style is absolutely very different from what happens when you are brought up in a culture like India.

The three participants, two of whom were born in the U.S and one who was raised here offered interesting viewpoints about growing up Indian in the U.S. For Sachin's parents who moved to the U.S in the 70's, life was tough in Philadelphia with very few Indian families around. Sachin said, "It is easier now because culturally there is more acceptance but my parents had to face a lot of racism initially." Sachin remembers that

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his parents moved to southern New Jersey to expose him and his younger brother to more Indian families and Indian culture. Interestingly, his wife Shriya who came to the U.S when she was five years old had a very different experience of growing up in Edison, New Jersey. She explained,

One thing I really found unique about us growing up here versus Sachin growing up here was that he lived in southern New Jersey and his school had two Indian people in the whole school, I mean in his middle school or high school he had two Indian people. In my middle school and high school, about 80% of our school was Indian. So I didn't feel like our culture was really not existent because everybody was Indian. In fact I was speaking Hindi more in my school than I was English. We knew all the different aspects of our religion because of growing up around so many Indian people. We didn't feel like we missed out on anything.

Neelam, who was born and brought up in a suburb in Ohio had an experience similar to Sachin's with one or two Indian families around. She spoke about what it was like to be part of such a small minority group. She talked about how conflicting it was to have to adopt two different sets of cultural values as her parents tried to raise her by values they believed to still hold fast in India. She shared,

Within the household there was a sort of divergence between what they believed was still true in India and what was going on outside the home in the host culture. It was like this mass confusion of what's right and what's wrong – well we thought it was right in India – we're going to stick to it. I think the generation that attaches itself to the mid to late 1960's and early 1970's (and that would be me), that generation had it tough psychologically. I think we got everything materially. We had the opportunities that were handed down by our parents. Whether they were intangible or wealth, we had all of that. But psychologically we were stuck. But my personal experience was that my parents were more modern and a little more progressive than the couple of other Indian families that were around. They allowed me to pursue what my friends were doing, making it a little easier to adjust.

Traditional Indian Values

All six couples (100%) that were interviewed acknowledged subscribing to the traditional Indian value system in which they were raised. While for some these values took on a more religious flavor, for all of them it was important to raise their kids with

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the core “Indian” values of respecting elders, importance of family and hard work and being a good human being. All the six couples acknowledged making a conscious effort to impart these values to their children, more so than they would in India so as to keep them tied to their native culture. Karan said,

As they are the second generation we want to make sure that our kids don't lose touch with their roots.

Neelam agreed, saying,

I think the difference between parents in India today and us is that I'm articulating it far more than they are. I don't think people in India feel the pressure to articulate it like we do. Because we are so marginalized, we're so in the minority here, I feel I need to keep articulating it. Not telling my kids what to do but just to make them comfortable with it. In India it would have been less of a conscious effort and more organic I think.

When asked to comment on whether they felt pressure to behave in ways that are more traditional than the prevalent culture in India today, in order to be accepted in the immigrant community here, the couples provided varying responses. Two of the six couples (Prerna/Karan and Shriya/Sachin) stated that they were glad to have embraced their local Indian community and did not feel any pressure to do so. They reported that they enjoy being a part of the religious/cultural groups around them and feel supported by them. They did report though that it became important to have their children enrolled in a religious school and for them to learn Indian music and languages as all their friends were doing the same thing. Karan explained,

When I look at the number of people and friends I interact with and the percentage of their kids who are either learning classical music or dance, I would guess it is a higher percentage compared to what it would be for the same group back in India, then you want your kids to kind of get interested as well.

For the other four couples, the pressure to behave in a certain way and be involved in certain activities in order to belong to the Indian community was experienced

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negatively. These couples reported making a conscious effort to stay away from that kind of pressure. Siddharth offered,

We would like our kids to learn stuff about Indian culture but don't want to get into an over-indianization mode like some groups here. My sister's group, she is older than me, they are definitely more into the indianness thing, but not us. We want our kids to also learn and accept different things.

George echoed the sentiment indicating that perhaps the pressure to belong exerted by the Indian community is aimed at achieving a measure of insulation from being influenced by the host culture resulting though in depriving one of the opportunity to learn from a different way of life. He stated,

The pressure exists. It's just that they are not exposed to what is American so they don't accept it and they stick to what they know and they interact with only the Indian community because that's what they're more comfortable with. They come here with the hobbies that they have and they'll have a lot of get-togethers and a lot of house parties and not learn from the culture around them.

Meghna and Vaibhav spoke of a negative experience they had when they first came here. They were quizzed about the caste they each belong to and felt judged by some members of their local Indian community for having married each other when they do not belong to the same caste. This saddened them as it was something they had not even experienced in India, where people had actually been more accepting of their choice. Vaibhav said,

I don't like that kind of mindset. That's what I find in these social clubs. They try to stick to their own subclass of people and they don't interact with the others. So I don't want to go into such social life and be confined to a specific group. That's why I stopped going to the temple. That's why we have not socialized within the Indian community as such. And thankfully, there are also a lot of Indian people who are not like that. We have friends whose thinking and attitude is more like ours.

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Embracing the Host Culture-Shift in Attitudes

Fifty percent (50%) of the participants who immigrated here noticed a change in some of their attitudes as a result of living in the U.S. For the women, the changes have come in the form of how they dress and how comfortable they feel expressing affection openly with their spouse. They spoke of how freeing it is to not have to worry about people gossiping about every move they make. As mentioned before, some of the women have learnt to rely more on their own ability to make decisions since they do not have to seek the approval from family members. Meghna offered,

In India when you are making a decision, especially if you are a woman, you consider a lot of things and your family plays a huge part in that. Like what would my parents think or my in-laws think. Here it's your decision and maybe the spouse or the kids are involved – that's it. So that's something where my thinking or attitude has changed after coming here.

Two of the men spoke of how they have come to view certain things differently after living here. Karan said that he has found he has lower tolerance for corruption and flouting of rules after moving here and thinks it would be difficult for him to adjust to the Indian way of life if he were to go back. For Vaibhav, he stated that he has adopted the American attitude toward a healthy lifestyle and quit smoking after coming here. He added,

I think attention to your lifestyle has definitely changed. When I used to work in India I didn't pay attention to my personal life or my health. I kept working and the whole day and in Mumbai you spend half the time in traveling. I would not take time for myself. What I've seen here is when it's a weekend or when it's a holiday it's truly a weekend and a holiday and it is okay to take time for yourself and your family.

The other fifty percent (50%) of the participants, who immigrated to the U.S, felt that their core attitudes toward life had not changed after coming here but that they enjoy the personal freedom this society provides to be who they choose to be.

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Attitude About Gender Roles Growing Up

Eight out of the twelve participants stated that their parents followed traditional gender roles as they were growing up, with their fathers working and their mothers being housewives. For most of them their mothers had wanted to work but either chose to stay home to care for the children or were not allowed to work by their spouse or by their community. Four of the six men interviewed stated that their mothers were housewives and interestingly, all four felt that their mothers would have liked to work. Naresh shared,

I think this is what I saw growing up, that the man was to go out and get a job and leave the rest to the woman. I personally didn't think that was the right thing. Growing up I felt it was not fair. My mother always wanted to work and contribute by working as well. She did that only much later in her life.

Siddharth and George were able to relate to that, as they had also grown up witnessing traditional gender roles between their parents. Siddharth added,

Dad worked and Mom stayed home with the kids. Women in the family, including extended family did not really work.

For George, it was difficult to experience his mother being stuck in a situation where she could not follow her dreams and therefore be completely dependent on her husband for support. He shared,

They had a love marriage but the set up was really traditional. My father never wanted my mother to work. He felt that wives should be at home and take care of home and take care of kids so he wasn't really involved with us. She was very talented in stitching and wanted to work but could not. All the financial decisions were made by my father. Yes. My mother didn't know anything about what was going on and was completely dependent on him.

Four of the six women interviewed stated that their mothers were housewives who took care of the home and the children while their spouses earned a living. These women reported that their mothers had made a choice to stay home and not go to work. Purna offered,

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I really liked that my mom was not working. There were so many friends who used to complain that because their mother were working, they had nobody to take care of them, but my mother was there 24/7, so when I came home, my lunch used to be ready, we used to chat about what happened at school. I never missed her. I really enjoyed my mother being at home, that's also one of the reasons I'm staying at home too.

Interestingly, for these women even though their mothers had chosen to stay at home and focus on their families, it was very important to them to have the participants get a good education and be able to work and support themselves. Meghna shared,

When I was growing up my parents, especially my mother, was very assertive that I study well and I get a good job and just become financially independent. Both my parents were like don't ever rely on any man financially – not even your brother - you have to be independent.

Four of the twelve participants stated that both their parents were working and had more egalitarian gender roles. Interestingly, all three of the participants that were either born or raised here in the U.S had working mothers. Karan, the only participant who had immigrated to the U.S and whose mother worked was raised primarily by his grandmother. He remembered,

My mother was working and she retired as a school headmistress. That really helped a lot, in the sense that I knew women are not defined by tradition. My mother worked and also took care of the family finances and took the lead when there was construction or renovation in the house. My father would be involved, but my mother was the one who was doing most of it.

The three participants who were born or raised here said that there was collaboration between their parents as they shared child-care and household duties.

Shriya shared,

It wasn't traditional at all. She was working, he was working and we were just kind of doing the hustle with them. They were both adjusting to timing for us, like you work at this time and I'll work at this time and I'll go pick up the kids. They adjusted themselves to take care of us. For us we just kind of learned Daddy goes to work and Mommy goes to the store and they kind of mesh together and take care of us somehow in between.

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Neelam echoed the sentiment stating,

They both worked in the beginning equally as much. But they alternated so that I always had one of the parents caring for me. My father worked 9-5 and my mother worked full-time in the evenings. They divided up the work. She mostly cooked, but he cleaned up after she cooked and it was very equitable. That would be the best way to describe it.

The participants showed some variation in whether or not their parents followed traditional or egalitarian gender roles in terms of both parents working. But there was more uniformity in there being similar expectations for them and their opposite gender siblings, growing up. All the twelve participants reported that there was no difference in the educational opportunities provided to them regardless of being a girl or a boy. For most of them, the rules and expectations were the same for them and their sibling. Purna shared,

I couldn't imagine them saying, because my brother is a boy he gets to do this and I'm a girl I don't get to do that.

For Meghna too, there was no difference between her and her brother. She stated,

Only difference in expectation between my brother and me was, I was expected to behave a little maturely because I was older. We had the same rules and when we were in our eighth, ninth standards, we were both taught how to do everything in the house. Cleaning the dishes - even washing your clothes, cooking, basic stuff.

The participants who noticed a difference in expectations between genders, did so not in their own households but in the extended family or community at large. The difference was along more traditional gender ideology, with regard to girls being expected to learn to cook and take care of the home, while boys were expected to get a good job and earn a living. Sachin reported,

Yes, definitely. I remember seeing that because we were friends with girls as well. Girls shouldn't go out and party as much because things can happen. They should be learning at least how to cook. Cleaning, cooking, the typical household

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chores. Even though they are working they still should learn those things because that's what they would be doing once they get married. I think for girl's parents, their primary concern was that how do we make sure they get married. So I feel it was more like marriage prep for the girls to get them ready. For the boys, it was to make sure that they are educated and making good money.

When asked what they learned about gender roles from observing their parents, the extended family as well as the community in which they grew up, eight out of the twelve participants reported having egalitarian attitudes with roles being decided based on need as well as skills and abilities. Some of these participants had working mothers but others did not and yet felt encouraged by their parents to have egalitarian attitudes. The four men who had reported seeing strictly traditional gender roles between their parents reported that they grew up seeing that women cook and clean and stay at home and men go to earn a living but realized that it is not how things should be. As Siddharth explained,

Growing up, I learnt that the women are supposed to take care of the household, men are suppose to provide. But then I realized women can also provide if they want, but sometimes they can't really do that, at least not when kids are really young.

Shifting Gender Role Attitudes – Impact of living in the U.S

As discussed above, many of the participants already held more egalitarian attitudes toward gender roles as a result either of what they had seen between their parents or what they were raised to believe. Upon coming to live in a culture that is considered more egalitarian than the culture in India, many of these participants therefore did not experience a big shift in their attitudes toward gender roles. Some reported that living here has only strengthened what they already believed to be true. Meghna observed,

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Living here, I think it's become more certain, that men and women have equal roles. I grew up in that environment. Nobody taught me that women are any less than men and after coming here it's even more certain.

For Naresh, who grew up in a very traditional setting, there was a shift in attitude before coming to the U.S because of having spent time outside India. Living in the U.S allowed him to create a different set up than the one he was raised in, for his own family. In explaining his attitude now, he said,

Yes, definitely my attitude had changed with all my travels with the merchant navy. I feel that it has to be equal and that both parents have to contribute in terms of everything. Earning is one aspect and right now Neelam is not working full-time but it's by choice. If she wants to it's okay – go ahead and do that. I think it's worked out well for us – her staying home – and with me gone all day at least one parent is there. I try to make up for the time I'm not here when I get back home and so I try to cut her a break by doing things for the kids in the evening like bathe them, feed them, cook for them, and stuff like that. I think personally growing up I didn't see my father a lot so I think I wanted to make sure my children don't have the same experience.

For Prerna, there was a shift in attitude with regard to feeling comfortable with having her husband Karan cook and be helpful in the kitchen since she had never seen her own father do that. She talked about how there would be criticism from her family members if she had asked her husband to cook in India, but after coming here she realized that it is okay to share that duty too. She shared,

In India, I would never expect my husband to cook or clean. That's how we were brought up-I had never seen my dad do anything in the kitchen. But after coming here I understand that you can share that responsibility. Even if I would have gone to work in India, I would have either hired a maid or I would have done it myself. I would have never asked Karan to come into the kitchen because I would be criticized for it. I see this in the American culture, it's not like they say we both are working, not working, that's not the matter, husband and wife share all the chores you know; that doesn't happen in India. That's one of the reasons I don't want to go back to India.

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Sex-Role Egalitarianism Scale

The participants were asked to rate their gender role attitudes on the SRES scale to determine where they fall on a continuum from more traditional to more egalitarian attitudes. The scores on the scale range from 25-125 with higher scores reflecting more egalitarian attitudes. The scores for the participants in the study ranged from 99-125 indicating egalitarian attitudes across the board. Among three couples, Neha and Siddharth, Joyce and George and Neelam and Naresh, the women scored higher than the men with a significant difference being between Neelam who was born here and Naresh who was born in India. For two of the six couples, Meghna and Vaibhav and Shriya and Sachin, the men actually had higher scores than the women. For one of the couples, Prerna and Karan, the scores on the scale were exactly the same. Individual scores are presented in table 2.

Table 2 Scores on Sex Role Egalitarianism Scale (SRES)

<u>Couples</u>	<u>Scores</u>
Women Scoring Higher	
Neha / Siddharth	114 / 108
Joyce / George	121 / 112
Neelam / Naresh	114 / 99
Men Scoring Higher	
Vaibhav / Meghna	120 / 100
Sachin / Shriya	125 / 116
Equal Scores	
Prerna / Karan	102 / 102

*Score Range 25-125

The Marriage Story

All six couples had a love marriage or marriage of choice in which they chose their own life partners. Of the six couples, two had met online on a marriage website, and

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four couples met through friends or went to the same school and had also dated extensively before getting married.

Given that the marriages were of choice, the couples did not report pressure to get married to their spouse as would have happened if it had been an arranged marriage set up where parents were selecting the mate. Neelam and Naresh who were older when they got married did report feeling some internal pressure as well as pressure from their families because of their age. Neelam shared,

I did feel pressure but it was self-inflicted. I think by that time my parents were saying you're 33/34 and you need to get married. But for me, I was thinking I need to get married but to the right person – not that I just need to get married.

When asked if their hopes and expectations were met from their spouse when they were getting married, all six couples reported feeling confident in their choice. Four out of six couples stated that it was important that their spouse be Indian and from a similar cultural and or religious background. For the other two, while it was not a stated criterion, it so happened that their partners also shared the same cultural/religious background as them. Neelam shared,

I wanted someone Indian. I was clear on that part and I was also looking for somebody of the same religion or at least spiritual – somebody that likes to do some of the same spiritual practices as me. Someone Hindu.

Sachin echoed the sentiment stating,

It was important not so much that someone was the same religion but at least someone who wasn't anti-religion. Shriya is not from the same religion but her family is very religious. I think more culturally there's a lot of similarities in that sense so that helped.

Some other criteria that had played a part in selecting a mate were being family oriented, tolerant, and independent. Naresh shared,

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It was important for her to understand that my relationship with my family was very important to me. So that was one aspect that was very important for me personally before I could come into marriage. I was leaning towards meeting an Indian person. I don't feel religion was so important but it was more important that our families could get along and what I liked was that her family had an Indian background so it felt like a good match for me.

George offered,

I had only one expectation that she has to do something. Being a housewife was not an option because I just don't want her to be at home and having kids, and her talents to go to waste, so that was one of the biggest criteria that I had. But everything else lined up on its own – the faith, the religion and the culture.

One interesting finding was that while all six had been marriages of choice, the participants actively sought the approval of their parents. In all six cases the parents approved of the match but three of the couples stated that if their parents had not approved, they would have reconsidered their choice. Shriya shared,

Honestly, if my parents didn't approve then I would not have married him. I just feel like at that time, their opinion counted a lot more in my life and I hadn't dated him that long so it was not do or die, like I could not live without him at that point.

Her husband Sachin shared her point of view, adding

If they were going to tell me that they didn't like her or whatever the reason was then it would have been a different story. They definitely would have had a big influence. Absolutely. Shriya and I talked about it before. We always felt that more than just a regular couple it's the families getting together.

For Naresh and Neelam too, it was important that their parents approved not only of the partner but also got along with each other's families. Both husband and wife stated that they would have rethought their decision if their union did not have their parent's approval.

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Marital Satisfaction

Overall, all six couples reported that they feel satisfied with their marriage as it stands today, rating their level of satisfaction between 7 to 10 on a scale of 0-10 with 0 being not at all satisfied and 10 being perfectly happy. All the couples endorsed that their emotional needs were largely being met in the relationship and that they felt appreciated by their spouse. When asked to identify areas of conflict, some common areas that emerged had to do with cleanliness and organization, spending money and how to manage their social life while tending to small children.

The participants were also asked to reflect on the kind of relationship they shared with their in-laws and if they felt dynamics between them as a couple are impacted as a result of in-laws. Four out of the six couples noted that they shared a good relationship with each other's parents but even so dynamics do change when the in-laws are involved.

Naresh explained,

I think anytime there is a third person in the house, be it the in-laws or anyone else, you are not your own self. She is the only child and her parents are very sensitive for her needs and I think it breaks their heart if they don't feel that their daughter is treated well. It was a learning experience for me as I realized that if I say something to her they look at it from a different angle. I'm talking to an equal partner versus their little baby. Its good they are close by though as it is big help with the kids.

Shriya offered,

Both our parents live close by and come often. We'll have our little tiffs and disagreements about what his parents think or say or want versus what my parents think or say or want just because we naturally want to support our own parents. But usually we are on the same page about how we want to handle those situations.

For two couples, relationships with the in-laws were a significant source of conflict. Meghna and Vaibhav reported that while their parents had known about their

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relationship well before they got married and had approved of the match, things between Meghna and Vaibhav's mother became strained after the wedding. His mother felt that her expectations from the wedding were not met and even after ten years of marriage, that relationship continues to be difficult. Meghna explained,

The main problem concerns his parents, especially his mother and that had caused a lot of tension between both of us initially when I felt left out and hurt and totally ignored. Things have gotten better over the years but I still have a little bit of insecurity, especially when they're around. Because we are not in India things are okay but once they are in the picture things change. My mother-in-law just tries to dominate and takeover every situation.

Vaibhav reported.

When my mother visits here, there are differences between Meghna and her which turn into clashes. It becomes tricky for me as I have to referee between them.

Neha and Siddharth had a unique experience when it comes to in-laws. They reported that despite having dated for years and their parents having approved of the match, when it came time to plan the wedding, the two sets of parents could not see eye-to-eye on anything. As it turned out, after a couple of years of trying to get their parents to get along, they finally decided to elope and get married. While Neha's parents accepted their decision, Siddharth's parents had a hard time accepting that he had eloped leading to ongoing tension between the two families as well as between Neha and her in laws. Siddharth explained,

When my in-laws come to visit we have a ball of a time, and so there is nothing wrong with that whatsoever. They have accepted it all along that it is their daughter's choice. My parents haven't come here so many times but it is a little tricky because there's a lot of discomfort between my wife and my parents. So, whenever they visit, whenever they call even we have tensions and we end up fighting but eventually we sort it out.

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When asked what they could do to improve their marital satisfaction, all six couples stated that they would like to spend more time with each other as having small children, all under the age of six, has meant they do not get to spend quality time as a couple. Neelam shared,

The romance thing. We don't go out to dinner now. I'd like to bring it back to the way it used to be. I think it can be like that but I think it's going to take an attitude adjustment on our part. I think we're just going to have to grow into it and stop making excuses. The children are getting a little older and we just have to fulfill our roles as husband and wife too.

The couples for whom conflict with the in-laws was an issue thought that a resolution to the conflict may improve their marital satisfaction but did not feel that their happiness was contingent upon it. Siddharth stated,

Figuring out my parental situation would help. Sometimes I think she could have done more and she did not, but she thinks she tried her best. But that's done. It's not something we can do anything about now. I don't expect her to do more at this point in time. I don't think we are at that situation any more so it is what it is.

Parent's Marriage

Ten of the twelve participants reported that their parents had had an arranged marriage. In terms of the quality of their parent's relationship, seven participants reported that they believed their parents had a good relationship because they valued each other's opinions, had mutual respect and also shared duties. Five participants reported that they did not think their parents had a good marriage because all the authority rested with their fathers and their mothers were not treated as an equal. Interestingly the two participants whose parents had a love marriage were amongst this group and reported that their parents followed strictly traditional gender roles and that their mothers were treated unfairly in the relationship. Siddharth reported,

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Our marriage is significantly different. I never saw my parents having a good time together. They were constantly in conflict and sometimes going into a physical conflict with my father hitting my mother. I made a conscious decision to not have my marriage be like that. Ours is a marriage of equals really.

In qualifying their own marriage as different from that of their parent's, participants cited differences like spending more time with each other than their parents did, having more egalitarian gender roles, being more affectionate toward each other and also being more vocal about getting their individual needs met. They also spoke about making a conscious effort to communicate their dissatisfaction with things clearly so they could work on it. For the male participants, there was a clear distinction in the amount of time they spend and hands-on involvement they have with their families versus what they had seen of their own fathers. Naresh shared,

It's very different that's for sure. For my parents, it was traditional roles of women and men. I think my father being away so much is one of the aspects we don't have to deal with. So, pretty much my mother raised us like a single mother. I think because of that I try to do more with my children and want to be a different kind of father.

Division of Domestic Labor

In all six couples, the wives were not working and were at home with the children. All six women had been working either before marriage or before having children. All six women stated that they had chosen to stay at home while their children are small but planned to go back to work once they were a little older. In fact, two of the women, Neelam and Joyce had already begun to work part time from home for a few hours in the morning.

At present therefore, the couples were following traditional gender roles with the husbands working and the women taking care of the home and the children. In terms of division of domestic labor therefore, the women were doing most of the work at home.

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None of the women reported however, that they felt they were being asked to do this by their spouses because it was their duty as women to tend to the home. In fact, the couples reported that their husbands were good about helping in the evenings and weekends with chores at home or with the children. Neha shared,

It's very equal. He works outside, I take care of the home and when he comes back home he's straight away with the kids and helping me. He understands it has probably been hard for me all day with them. He is a very understanding guy and would do more around the house but I think most of the times I don't let him handle some things, because I need it done my way. But if I tell him to do anything, it will be done. He never says, it is your deal or it is my deal. Overall the women reported being satisfied with the division of labor and the men

felt they did a lot around the house when they were not at work, certainly significantly more than what they had seen their fathers do. Neelam reported,

It's about 70/30 if not 60/40. He still does a lot. Especially when the kids were very small he did a lot and he continues to do a lot but I really want him to focus on his job. If I'm going to be at home more now, it makes sense for him to focus on his career.

Joyce reported a similar experience,

As far as possible I cook but I know if I've not cooked and he comes home and he wants something, I don't have to ask him will you cook today. He just takes over. He doesn't look at it as it's your job so why don't you do it. When he comes home he plays with our son and does his shower and story time. So the whole night routine, our son associates with George. In that sense I have always had my evening pretty much to myself if I wanted to.

Support for Each Other's Career

As reported earlier all the six women planned to go back to work eventually.

While the husband's reported being happy with their wives' decision to stay at home while their children are young, they were supportive of them going back to work whenever they felt they wanted to. Naresh explained,

It's not like I expect her to stay home but she is happy doing the part-time stuff that she is doing and I'm happy that she is able to spend more time with the

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children. I think it's worked out well for us – her staying home – and with me gone all day at least one parent is there.

Karan added,

I would support her going back to work. Her going back to work may keep her happy. My mother and my father had a kind of rocky relationship but my mother was always confident and happy because she had her own income and sometimes Prerna talks about how dependent she is. The other thing is of course; additional income will help manage better financially.

Vaibhav provided another perspective saying,

A lot of times she gets stressed or frustrated that she is alone at home and has nothing to do and I understand that. I think if she gets a job, it would also improve our relationship in a certain way because she will have her own circle of friends – her own social life – rather than depending on my friend's wives.

For a few of the women, visa considerations had kept them from going back to work sooner. All six women felt however, that their husbands would support their decision to return to work whenever they decided to do so. Neha offered,

Two years from now I will head out, because at this point I think my kids really need me. Once in a while of course when these kids you know how it is when you want to pull your hair out and I think its better if I go out and work, but not really. I think I'm happy to be at home for them but again, it's about choice. Siddharth is fully supportive of it. He told me, you know the day you are not happy being home, go back to work, do what makes you happy.

Both the men and women agreed that the women were supportive of the men's careers. Naresh stated,

Neelam supports my career. She just has the best in mind and she wants me to grow in my career. Probably I'm more laid back in that aspect and would rather go more slow and steady, but she pushes me and I think that pushing has helped us as a family.

Since the women were not currently working, the couples were made to consider the hypothetical situation where they were both working and a compromise needed to be made in terms of taking a step back in their career for the sake of the children. They were

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asked who they thought would or should make such a compromise. The participants gave varied responses with majority of them saying they would want both partners to make adjustments and do what was best for the family. Interestingly, there wasn't an automatic assumption that the women needed to take a step back in such a scenario. Vaibhav responded saying,

It has to be made by both of the partners. Right now I have the liberty of working from home so I can kind of be more flexible with my schedule at this point in time. I don't know whether that will be the case all the time but I think the flexibility has to be from either end. I don't see it as the husband has to do it all the time or the wife has to do it all the time.

George revealed that since Joyce had started working part time, he has already been adjusting his work schedule. He stated,

I guess I'm already doing that right now. I don't travel as much and I don't get involved with things that I don't have to get involved with at work. So I guess it's what's more important and how do you want to manage it rather than it's you or me or my profession is better than yours. I don't think it's based on who's more important or who's going to give up. I think it's more about what is needed at that moment. If there is something that is really urgent for her and she has to do something then we'll strike a balance and I'll stay and work from home or something.

Some of the participants provided a practical perspective indicating that if a compromise needed to be made where one person needed to step back, it would be best to make the decision based on who is earning more and allow that person to continue to pursue their career, whoever it is. Neha explained,

Whoever is making more money, it's as simple as that. We can sit and complicate these things as much as we want, but its as simple as, you've got two kids, you need money and whoever is making more money at that time is going to be working. But then if both of us are making the same amount and if at some point I take on a career path, then I'm very sure we'll work together.

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A few of the men recognized that it may be easier said than done for them in terms of staying at home but in considering the situation from afar they felt they would want to be practical about it. Siddharth stated,

Depends on whose career is going in what direction. If she is doing awesome and I'm not, then you know, I'm okay with reversing the roles. Well, it's a hypothetical question really. So in the hypothesis I can say yes. When push comes to shove I might say no, but hypothetically yes. I think we will have to make a judgment call on that.

Financial Decisions

In terms of how financial decisions are made, all six couples reported that they made all decisions about spending or investing jointly. Finances were being handled by the wife in two couples and by the husband in four couples but each partner was equally aware of where the money was going. Shriya shared,

He pretty much handles the finances and gives me money to spend. Any financial decisions like regarding the house or whatever he makes and I'm totally fine with that because I trust it. Any children's funds and stuff that we wanted to open we decided that together and then started those. That's it. There is absolutely no issues with any financial related matters.

Since they already felt they had equal say in financial decisions even though they were not working, the women did not anticipate having greater say when they begin to earn upon returning to work. The only change they anticipated was having more income and therefore greater spending flexibility as a family. Joyce reported,

I suppose we'll have more disposable income once I start working. The fact that we'd be able to do more things would change. I don't really see much else changing. It took me some time in fact to adhere to this way of thinking because of the background that I come from. For him when he brings a paycheck home, he doesn't look at it as his money or my money. It took me a long time actually to get used to that because with my father and mother he would say "my money – my money - you're not earning."

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For the Women - Pressure to be Super-Woman?

Since all six women were planning to return to work, they were asked how they thought they would manage the shift in roles from being a full time mother and homemaker to being a working mother. Did they anticipate feeling the burden of a second shift with having to work and also continue to manage a large chunk of household duties? Would they feel guilty for not being able to do as much around the house and for their children? Would they put pressure on themselves to do everything and be super-woman? Interestingly, the women in the study reported that they did not expect to feel like they needed to be doing everything at home and also take on work responsibilities. All six women stated that they expected to be helped by their husbands and for duties to be shared equitably since they would both be working. Some stated that they would have to get more help or be better at organizing so that things run smoothly for everyone.

Joyce offered,

I don't think I put it as a burden on myself, but I definitely know that there is going to be more juggling of things that need to be done as a result of working simultaneously. I don't think of it as I'm going to be stuck with doing all this in addition to my work because I know that we will share it. If he can't do it and I can't do it we'll figure out another way. If the cooking is not getting done as smoothly as before we will get somebody to cook for us or we'll do it over the weekend. We'll figure out a way in which it works for everybody so that he's not stressed about it and I'm not stressed about it. It doesn't automatically become my stress. If there is something that is not going so smoothly for the home then it becomes stress for him and me. This is his home as much as it is mine.

Neha shared a similar attitude saying,

I feel you need to organize a few things a little better and if I am working and both of us are exhausted then you just do some things and let some things be. I think this whole thing of men are not helping us is a little overboard and is also exhausting. And then there is competition about whose husband is doing what and that is exhausting and does not help. It's more important to just get through to each other and do what needs to be done.

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About feeling guilty being away from the children or not being able to do as much for them as they can do now, Some women stated that it would be hard for them to have their children not receive the level of care they have had with their mothers being home full time. Meghna shared,

That's the only pressure I guess I have to make home-cooked meals for my son because that is what he is used to. But I don't think that because I'm a woman, a mother and a wife, I need to do these things and neither does my husband expect me to stay in the kitchen and cook twice a day.

Shriya shared a different attitude toward switching roles to being a working mother. She indicated that while she wants to go back to work, it is also important for her to be there for her children because she experienced her own mother as being largely absent when she was growing up. She shared,

Because I've been doing it since the kids were born, I feel like if anything were to backtrack I would think it's because I went out and started working or went back to school or whatever it may be. It would definitely put that pressure on me. I strongly feel like I don't want a nanny raising our children so that's a reason that I would take it upon myself to come back. My attitude is definitely influenced because I feel like my mother wasn't there and that's what I always tell her that I don't want to be like that with my children. I want to be there the whole way. I want to be at all their games, I want to be at all their plays, I want to be at everything. So even if I were to go back to work it would never be a strict 9-5 job. It would always be something that I have the flexibility to come back to the children.

Good Husband and Good Wife

The couples were asked to consider how they and were performing against their culturally governed notions of what a "good" husband or a "good" wife should be. All twelve participants reported feeling satisfied with how they were doing and how their spouse was meeting their expectations. They reported some areas of improvement but overall satisfaction with how roles were being essayed in the marriage without feeling

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undue pressure to behave in certain ways because of traditional gender role expectations.

Joyce offered,

I think it's always a work-in-progress for both of us as we change, as our needs change, as our circumstances change, we need to accommodate new things and grow.

For two of the couples, the measure of their success in being "good" spouses and performing their roles as individuals lay in whether their kids were doing well or not.

Sachin stated,

I was brought up to believe that love and marriage are built on mutual trust, understanding and compromise. Those are the things you always hear. As long as we both get along and can laugh at each other's jokes or have a discussion, those small things then I feel that we're fine and are doing a pretty good job with our relationship and everything else. I'm sure there's always room for improvement. I feel like time will tell as far as how the kids are raised. For me that would be the definition of success for us as a couple.

Siddharth echoed the sentiment saying,

Our kids are doing awesome and that sometimes is the way what we see as an end product of this. So if they are doing good, then in all probability we have a good thing and are doing our parts well.

Neelam and Naresh, the only couple where one spouse was born here and one in India, spoke of how cultural differences have made expectations from each other as spouses confusing. Neelam observed,

We think of each other as good enough for each other. But I think the division comes when we don't understand certain cultural nuances like what's acceptable according to the way he was raised in India. Because I was raised around mostly Americans and only three or four Indians, because of that we sometimes have disagreements. But they always go away once we are able to identify that it's a cultural thing and can talk about it.

How Would Living in India Impact Marital Satisfaction?

The couples were asked if they thought their relationship would be different if they were to live in India as a couple now. All six couples agreed that their marital

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satisfaction would be impacted negatively. They offered various reasons why living in India would take away from the quality of their relationship as they experience it being a couple in the U.S. For the two couples where strained relationships with in-laws was an area of conflict, it was clear that living in India would make the situation worse and would negatively impact their relationship. All the couples agreed that the over-involvement of family members in the normal day-to-day life of a couple would mean that they would not be able to resolve conflicts or communicate problems to each other as they are able to do here. Karan reflected,

We would not have been as close emotionally as we would have had limited time to be home together and even then most of the time, parents and other family members would be around. As for fights between us, others would get involved. As long as it is just between you and your spouse you can work it out. The minute you have a third party or fourth party getting involved, it just becomes a wider problem.

Another concern expressed by the women was that certain freedoms that they had come to enjoy here like the clothes they wear, the way they are able to express affection toward their spouse and how they can raise their children without interference would not be possible in India. These women also felt that this would negatively impact their relationship, as it would lead to frustration for them, which invariably would color the relationship with their spouse. Neha stated,

I think you know that statement holds very true in India that it is not two people who get married, it is two families who get married. That's very irritating because you are not letting those two people know each other and build on their relationship. Siddharth would definitely feel the pull to be more like his parents and then we would fight. So I think that if we were in India, it would be worse for us.

George spoke for the men when he expressed concern over not being able to spend as much quality time at home with his family. He shared,

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There would be no way I would be hands-on like I am here. It would just be office most of the time or some other kind of work. I don't think I would be hands-on there at all. Here I'm more grounded with the family and weekends are completely yours unless something urgent comes up but in India I know for a fact that weekends are never yours. I think in India there is no focus on family for men.

The couples also spoke of behaving differently because of social pressure and the need to please different groups of people out of fear of being stigmatized by the larger community. Shriya shared,

I feel like if we were to just pick up and go we would naturally fall into the cycle there because it's us versus everybody else. Even when we go there for two weeks I feel pressure to be a particular kind of daughter in law. Wear this - don't wear that. Eat like this - eat like that. To actually move there would be a lot of pressure to please everyone constantly.

On the positive side, some couples spoke of the help they would be able to receive in India especially with raising their children and how that would take some of the pressure off of them as a couple by freeing up some time. Neelam said,

It would be easier because we would have more hired help. I think it would free up our time and make us more relaxed. I'm always so on edge. I've never been this on edge in my life. It's like something always needs to be done every second. That's why I'm always looking at the clock. I think just that decompression of farming some of the things we do now out would help me and would make him feel a little bit more at ease and at peace to see me calmer and less stressed.

Dyadic Adjustment Scale

The couples were asked to fill out the self-report questionnaire, Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) as an objective measure to understand each partner's level of adjustment within the relationship. The DAS has four subscales measuring different aspects of marital satisfaction including the extent of agreement between partners on important matters, the amount of tension that exists between the couple, signaling marital distress, the extent of satisfaction with expression of affection and intimacy, as well as

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common interests that couples share which bring them closer. All six couples had T-scores above 30, indicating the absence of marital distress. Of the six couples, in five the wives had higher scores, suggesting greater dyadic adjustment than the husbands. Only in one couple, Meghna and Vaibhav, did the husband report higher dyadic adjustment.

Scores for the couples on all the four subscales of the DAS are presented in the table 3.

Table 3 Scores on Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS)

Couples	DC ¹ (T*)	DS ² (T*)	AE ³ (T*)	DCh ⁴ (T*)	DA ⁵ (T*)
Neha	61(61)	41(51)	12(63)	20(66)	134(61)
Sidharth	43(40)	36(44)	8(46)	12(47)	99(41)
Joyce	56(55)	45(56)	11(59)	18(61)	130(59)
George	49(47)	40(49)	8(46)	16(56)	113(49)
Neelam	57(56)	43(53)	10(54)	17(59)	127(57)
Naresh	39(44)	37(45)	8(46)	13(49)	97(40)
Meghna	51(49)	33(40)	10(54)	13(113)	107(46)
Vaibhav	56(55)	41(51)	10(54)	15(122)	122(54)
Shriya	52(50)	42(51)	8(46)	14(51)	116(51)
Sachin	45(42)	43(52)	6(37)	15(54)	109(47)
Prerna	47(44)	44(55)	9(50)	23(73)	123(54)
Karan	35(30)	38(47)	7(41)	10(42)	90(36)

*(T-Score)

¹ Dyadic Consensus; ² Dyadic Satisfaction; ³ Affectional Expression; ⁴ Dyadic Cohesion; ⁵ Dyadic Adjustment

Importance of Instilling Traditional Values to the Next Generation

As mentioned before, the couples spoke about the importance of ensuring that their children are raised with traditional Indian values. All six couples felt that they are making a conscious effort to expose their children to their culture in the absence of extended family and community, whereas in India it would have happened more

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organically. For three couples, this meant an emphasis on religious education with their children going to religious school and learning from the scriptures. Shriya explained,

It is very important for us to expose them to religion. We belong to different religions but I've come to a point where I understand that the core teachings are the same in both. Sachin is more religious as is his family so the kids are learning more about his religion and go to paathshalla (religious school) which is fine with me, as long as the values are the same, which they are.

For the other three couples, imparting values meant not as much a religious focus but more a focus on instilling the kind of moral values they themselves grew up with in India like respecting elders, importance of family, no lying or cheating and being grateful for what they have. Meghna explained,

For me, whatever values I grew up with and I still strongly believe in, I would like to pass on to my son. Like respecting your elders and talking to your parents about important things. Also looking at a person and concentrating on the human being not looking at the person's name or the religion that he or she follows or what kind of food they eat or the color of their skin. Look at the person as a human being. They have the same emotions as you. They find the same happiness as you do in little things. These are some values that I really want to pass on to my son and I hope he grows up and passes it on to his children.

Naresh echoed the sentiment saying,

I think values are very important. The moral definition. The right and wrong that we have I feel I want my children to have the same sense of right and wrong. That is important. I think there is some religious influence because I grew up believing in karma where you don't do anything wrong because you have to pay for it. So right and wrong was very clear in our heads and I think I want my children to have that sense when they are making decisions. I want them to be more spiritual than religious.

Gender Role Socialization – Boys versus Girls

Of the twelve participants, six had opposite gender sibling/siblings and the other six either had same gender sibling or no sibling at all but had grown up surrounded by cousins of the opposite gender. As noted before, all twelve participants reported that they had not experienced a distinction in the way they were treated growing up as compared to

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their opposite gender sibling or cousins in terms of opportunities for education. However, most reported their being a difference in parents being more protective of girls than of boys curtailing some of their freedom. Of the six couples interviewed, three have children of both genders and the other three have only one child or children of the same gender.

The couples were asked if they imagined having a different attitude while raising their sons versus their daughters. All six couples reported that they would treat their son and daughter the same and provide them the same opportunities for learning and education and also encourage them equally to pursue their goals and dreams. As Karan stated,

I don't want them to learn different things because of their gender. I want them to do whatever they can to get where they want to.

All six couples expressed a desire to ensure that their sons and daughters both learn basic life skills like cooking, cleaning and being self-sufficient. This was an area of departure from the way some of them were raised in India where boys did not grow up to learn to do housework. Some women stated that they were happy their kids were going up watching their fathers be involved in the kitchen. This would help them understand that household work is not automatically a girl's domain or sphere of responsibility.

Shriya offered,

Sachin can't cook so I've told him when we were first married that when we have kids I'm going to teach my sons to cook because I feel like when a husband and wife can do these kinds of things together it builds their relationship so much more than when they do it apart. So if I had a daughter, I would want her to learn all these handyman things. I would want her to learn how to change a tire on a car. I wouldn't want her to think she can only do the cooking and the cleaning.

Perna agreed, stating,

Both will learn the same things. If my son has to cook, then she has to. If she is going to a pooja (prayer) then he has to learn as well.

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Neelam echoed,

I would be afraid to teach them different things because I don't know where these next generations are going. Both my son and daughter are learning to cook. My daughter shows more of an inclination – she wants to cook and I never did growing up. So I fulfill that for her. I allow her to see me cook. My son is also interested because he sees his father cook. I'm okay with that. I don't try to put them in gender specific roles that might prohibit them from being happy and healthy when they grow up.

Echoing their own parents, the couples identified one difference in how they would raise their boys versus their girls. They anticipated being more protective of their daughters, in terms of being concerned with what they wear and how late they stay out.

This attitude was similar for the fathers as well as mothers in the couples. Shriya shared,

I feel like if I had a daughter or for my nieces I would shelter them so much more as opposed to my boys. For boys, it's simple, you fall it's fine. If some kid pushes you it's fine, push him back. But for a girl I feel like it's different and I would want to shelter her so much more and I don't know if that's necessarily a good thing but that's how I would naturally go.

George offered,

I think fathers become more protective towards the daughter compared to the son. I would be a little protective with a daughter and worried about her surroundings.

Anticipating Conflicts with the Next Generation

The couples were asked to reflect on the fact that their children are growing up in the U.S and will be influenced by cultural practices here. While the couples have adjusted to the culture and lifestyle here as individuals and as a couple, what would it mean to be parents of teenagers in this culture and if they anticipated conflicts? The couples pointed out that there would be conflicts in the natural course of raising children and not particularly because of them growing up here. However, they were able to identify some conflicts more specific to raising children in this culture. One such area was that of

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dating. Prerna and Karan, the only couple to do so, stated clearly that they would not allow their children to date, especially not their daughter. Prerna stated,

If you ask me, I will say no dating. There will be conflicts, but as much as possible it's a big no for me. They can have friends and such. I don't want them to go out alone with a boy or a girl. If there's a group of girls and group of boys, going to a movie, that's fine.

The other five couples anticipated that their children would want to date as it is an accepted part of growing up in this culture. These couples stated that they would allow them to date especially since they themselves had dated. They expressed greater concern however, at the prospect of their daughters dating. Naresh said,

It's okay if they want to date somebody. I think in that aspect I would probably view my son and my daughter a little different. I may have less concern if my son wanted to date at 16 versus my daughter wanting to date at 16. In the end I think you will have to weigh your decision on who she wants to date and why. Ideally I would want them to finish their studies and get a job and then do whatever after that.

George agreed saying,

I don't see dating as a problem. We also did the same thing. We left home and were independent and we met people. Since we were not at home we had complete freedom to do whatever we wanted to do. So I don't think I would keep them from dating but I would be a little more protective of my daughter.

When asked about marriage and if they would prefer for their children to marry an Indian person, someone from within their own cultural/religious community, the couples provided varying responses. Some participants stated that they would prefer for their children to marry someone from the same background but ultimately would be okay with their children's choice if it was a suitable match. Sachin stated,

I want them to marry an Indian person. It's important for us. But suppose they decide to marry someone who is not Indian and who eats meat – then what do you do? I can see that as a conflict but I would try to accept their decision.

Karan added,

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I would prefer for them to marry an Indian person and also preferably within the traditional community, not necessarily because of race but because there are fewer adjustment problems. But I will probably have no control on that.

Other couples stated that they would let their children choose their life partners and would be fine with them choosing someone who is not from a similar background as long as their children are old enough to make an informed choice. Meghna stated,

Marrying at a very young age would be a concern but if he's marrying anybody non-Indian we don't really care. As long as he is happy with that person, we will be fine with it.

Prerna explained,

When it comes to their marriage, if they are old enough, they have done their studies and are settled in their life then yes, they can choose their partner. There is a certain point after which I can't make decisions for them. If he thinks he's going to get an American girl as his life partner, I'm going to be happy with her. Same thing for my daughter.

Some other potential areas of conflict discussed were those that were related to personal values held by certain couples. The issue of remaining vegetarian was important for Shriya and Sachin and they anticipated conflicts with their children on that score. For Joyce and George, while they were okay with dating, the issue of sex before marriage was of concern for them given their faith. For many of the men, the kind of clothes their daughters may wear given the more liberal attitude toward dressing they have noticed here was an area of concern and potential conflict.

The participants were asked how they anticipated resolving the conflicts that may arise with their children. All the six couples stated that it would be important to instill the right set of values at an early age. Also mentioned was the importance of building a relationship with their children where communication and meaningful dialogue about issues would allow them to be ultimately supportive despite differences. Neelam shared,

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I anticipate conflicts. But I really feel that I am going to talk to my daughter when it gets to that point and I'm going to make sure that she knows that I'm not her friend, that I'm her mother, and I'm talking to her as a mother. I'm going to be a little bit different from my own parents in that I'm going to have a dialogue. It will be the same with my son. I hope to be able to say I know what you're going through because I grew up here.

George stated,

I guess I would try to understand what his views are because at some point you also will have to adapt to that particular generation and their viewpoint. I would try to understand what it is but I would make sure that I send my point across to him saying it's something that I don't agree with and he should not do it but I will support him. I will let him know from now that I want to support him and be there for him.

Neha provided another point of view saying,

You can't work on your kids at 13, you work on your kids from now. You would tell them what is important, and it would be important to your battles, fighting with them on making their beds or fighting with them on not doing drugs? If you sit and you have a battle on everything, very soon they are going to be immune to everything and then you can't expect them to listen and communicate with you.

In keeping with these attitudes, most of the participants stated that they would not consider it a failure of parenting on their part if their children were to make choices that they do not agree with. They cited the very real influence of the peer group and social pressure that may not allow them as parents to have much control over their children.

Meghna reflected,

I would not really consider it a failure because the initial years when your kid is just with you, you can influence the kid 100% but as they start growing up and start going to school, high school, college, there are a lot of things around them which influence them and after a certain point they have their own thinking and have their own thoughts so you can't really influence them 100% then. All you can do is teach them good things and teach them right from wrong, teach them to make good decisions, think rationally, and make sure that you let them know that you're there to talk about whatever they want to, whenever they want to.

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Some participants reported that it would be a sense of failure as parents only if they felt that had not been able to be there for their children and they started using drugs or really making the wrong choices for themselves because ultimately values come from home. Sachin shared,

I think if we honestly looked at ourselves and felt that we did everything in our power to teach them all of our values and they still decided to go a different path then no I don't think it's a failure. If I look back at that time and say I could have done this and I could have done that and I truly feel in my heart of hearts that I probably didn't do enough to pay attention to them or then yes I probably would think it was a failure.

Seeking Mental Health Services

The participants were asked about how they felt about seeking mental health services for themselves or their families if the need arose. All the participants agreed that they would be comfortable with accessing mental health services if their spouse or their children needed help. In terms of seeking services for themselves, four of the twelve participants stated that they would not be comfortable accessing services. Of these four participants, three were men and one was a woman. Siddharth shared,

I don't think they can help and it is too darn expensive. I don't think that I'm going to spend that kind of money for something that I'm not so sure about and I don't think its covered by insurance either. I don't believe it can help me but if my wife or my kids want to do that, I will be supportive of them.

Naresh, who does not feel comfortable accessing services for himself thought his views on the subject were slowly changing. He offered,

I've always laughed about it saying it is an American thing. I've always had a cynical attitude about that. I think that's not fair and I've begun to realize that it is better to get help than not get help when you need it. I come from the typical Indian background. But here my thinking is changing now that I think there is a solution for all kinds of scenarios and its better you take help than not take help. I would consider it for myself if I felt I could do some damage to my family or somebody if I did not get help.

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For eight of the participants, accessing services would not be an issue if they felt they or their family members needed help. They did acknowledge though that living here had made them more comfortable with the idea since it is widely accepted here. Vaibhav offered,

I see it like going to a physician if you have a fever. If you need help you need to take it. If there is anything that I can do better not just to my physical being but also my psychological being I would definitely do it. Mental illness is more severe than physical. There are medications and things that will take care of your physical being but mental is something more deep and you need a different style of treatment and that's why this profession is there. I do respect that and would make use of it.

Prerna offered,

You know how it is in India, only people who are mentally disturbed, they go to a psychologist. Everyone will create stories about what is wrong with my kids so I would never do that there. But here, it is different, nobody is going to come and ask me what is going on with them, why are you taking them. Here for each and every reason, silly reason also they take their kids, so its normal here.

Participants were asked to identify what they thought might be some barriers leading to the Indian community in the U.S not accessing services as much as other immigrant populations. They pointed to several factors including, stigma and fear of judgment from the community if people were to find out they were seeking mental health services, cost and being unsure if things are really kept confidential. Karan offered,

People think you are a stupid moron or a psycho if you get help for mental illness so there is stigma even here.

Shriya added,

I feel like its other people's opinions that come in the way. If someone in the community found out people, would talk about you. I feel like that might be one of the big things. People might outcast you or talk bad about you in the community or create a bad reputation for you.

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Participants were also asked if the ethnicity of the therapist would be an area of consideration for them while choosing a practitioner were they to access services. Four participants stated that they would not necessarily look to go to an Indian therapist but would instead be concerned with the person's credentials and level of experience.

Meghna offered,

For me it doesn't really matter, having an Indian therapist or an Indian teacher for my son. I don't care, I just want the person to be the best professional.

Five participants stated that they would want to seek an Indian therapist if they felt their problems were stemming from a cultural issue that an Indian clinician could relate better to. They stated they would look for a non-Indian therapist if they thought the issues were stemming more from living here and did not have many elements of Indian culture and tradition involved. Sachin shared,

To be honest, it probably shouldn't matter. Depending on what the issue is, if I'm depressed about something, then sometimes I feel it would help to go to someone who is Indian. Because if it is some kind of social issue they might be able to pinpoint it because culturally they're more in tune with Indian parents and Indian ways. Certain things are harder to explain to a non-Indian because they just don't get it, they're not raised in the same way.

Neha added,

I think a doctor is a doctor. The doctor being Indian, may help in one factor that they understand your background. But if you have problems with your marriage, problems because you are staying here then someone from here may be able to help better.

Interestingly, three of the participants, two men and one woman stated that they would prefer to avoid going to an Indian therapist for fear of being judged by someone from the same cultural background. Naresh explained,

I would prefer non-Indian because you think that the prejudices you have coming from India, the other person also has the same prejudices so they may be thinking

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this guy is a stupid guy about me. I would probably prefer a non-Indian. I would be more comfortable.

Prerna added,

It depends on the problem. If it is more related to our culture, where you think only an Indian can understand it, then certainly I'll look for one. If not, if it is about something related to being here, then any professional is fine with me. But as far as possible I'll try to keep away from Indians, because I think they would be more judgmental.

Two of the women reported that ethnicity would be less of an issue for them but that gender would be more of a concern as they may feel more comfortable with a female therapist. Shriya explained,

I don't know that the culture would make a difference. I'd probably rather go to a woman. I think gender would make more of a difference than the ethnicity in terms of making me more comfortable to seek professional help.

Chapter V

Discussion of Results

This chapter discusses in depth the pertinent themes emerging from the interviews with Asian Indian couples that participated in the study. What follows is a discussion of the level of acculturation experienced by these couples, their gender role ideologies and its impact on marital satisfaction. Some factors relevant to marital satisfaction such as meeting each other's emotional needs, support for career choices, financial decision-making and division of domestic labor among others are discussed in detail. There is also an examination of the notion of a "good wife" and a "good husband" amid a shift in what has traditionally been said to constitute the role of a woman versus that of a man. The discussion also explores the values being imparted to the next generation, particularly the trend in gender role socialization of boys versus girls as well as the prevailing attitude in this population toward seeking mental health services. Limitations to the present study are presented and directions for future research are suggested. Lastly, some thoughts are presented regarding implications of this study for the training of mental health professionals. An important caveat to bear in mind while considering the discussion of results is the small sample size of this exploratory study. The reader is cautioned against generalizing the results to the larger population of Asian Indian couples living in the U.S.

Acculturation: Transitioning from India to U.S

The existing literature on the experience of Indians immigrating to the U.S speaks to the great cultural divide that exists between the two countries. Immigrants are typically said to face a "double bind" in terms of navigating the more individualistic culture in the

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U.S while also upholding their traditional Indian worldview. Interestingly, the participants in this study uniformly stated that they did not experience a large cultural divide upon coming here. This speaks perhaps to the impact of globalization on the changing social landscape in India, especially over the last couple of decades. Indian society has adopted many Western ideals as seen in a significant push toward nuclear families, larger number of women in the work force as well as a trend toward competition and individualism in the recent past. Globalization has made the distinction between the two cultures less clearly defined.

According to Gupta (1999), the Indian communities that settled here in the 1960's and 70's were living in a "time capsule" in an attempt to preserve the Indian cultural heritage they had left behind while India itself was marching toward a new social order. These communities were known to exert pressure on people to conform in order to belong. Some participants in the study stated that they did not feel any such pressure upon coming here but welcomed the presence of these communities, which have provided them with support and resources as they raise their children in this country. Other participants recognized that the pressure does exist even today but reported that they had made a conscious choice to stay away from it, as they try to build a life that not only preserves their cultural heritage but also benefits from what the host culture has to offer. For the women in the study, acculturating to this society seems to have allowed them the freedom to raise their children as they want to and to be able to make decisions on their own without having to consult family members. They reported feeling good about making choices without them being closely monitored as they would have been in India. For the men, being here has meant greater freedom to pursue career goals while

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also being able to care for and spend time with their families, something that they recognized would not have been possible in India given the more patriarchal attitudes.

Gender Role Attitudes

One expectation of this study was that couples would report a state of flux in their marriage as they navigate between the traditional gender role scripts they were socialized into in India and the more egalitarian attitudes that characterize this society. Interestingly, the couples did not report such a state of flux as men and women uniformly endorsed more egalitarian gender role attitudes. The existing literature on this immigrant population is divided. Some studies suggest that immigration has led to greater freedom for Asian Indian women while others report that this community has instituted stricter inegalitarian expectations in order to counter the effects of acculturation. In this study however, the trend is definitely toward more egalitarian attitudes. While this is not surprising for women since previous studies (Mason & Lu, 1988) indicate that at every education level, women endorse more egalitarian attitudes than men, the surprising finding is the growth in egalitarianism shown by men in this sample. Historically, Indian men have been known to voice traditionalism while Indian women have expressed modernity in their views. In this study however, the scores from the SRES scale measuring sex role egalitarianism speak a different story. In three couples the women scored higher on the SRES than the men but not by a wide margin, while in two couples the men scored higher than the women and in one couple, the scores were the same.

According to Davis and Greenstein (2009), egalitarian gender dynamics are more often upheld by individuals who are relatively younger, more educated and earn more income. These parameters would apply to the men in the present study perhaps

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explaining the egalitarian attitudes. Also, certain regions in India are known to be more egalitarian than others and the men in the study belong to such regions like Maharashtra, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Participants were also asked to speak about the gender role ideologies practiced by their parents and two of the men reported egalitarian attitudes between their parents, while four reported that their parents practiced traditional gender roles even though they knew their mothers would have liked to work. It is possible that observing their mothers being unhappy in a traditional set-up influenced the gender role attitudes of these men growing up. Another possible factor that needs to be considered is that of social desirability of responses. The fact that the primary investigator conducting the interviews was a married, Indian female may have contributed to a desire to respond in a socially favorable way. The SRES was chosen as an objective measure of egalitarian attitudes to account for any social desirability in responses as scores on the SRES have been shown not to be attributable to a socially desirable response style. It is possible therefore that given these factors as well as the fact that the participants have lived in the U.S a minimum of five years, the gender role attitudes of these men show a genuine shift toward greater egalitarianism.

This finding is particularly interesting in light of recent reports in Indian media about the continuing patriarchal and traditional views of Indian men. An article in a leading Indian newspaper (Dhar, 2014) quoted a recent Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) study which says Indian men have the distinction of spending a total of nineteen minutes doing routine household work in a day. Although this study relied on data from the 1990's, the reality for working Indian women continues to be that they are still responsible for the household. Indian husbands have not stepped

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up to share the load. According to Gaynair (2011), a recent 2010 survey by the International Council for Research on Women (ICRW) in India also found that only sixteen percent men reported that they played an equal or greater role in household duties. This ICRW study also conducted an International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) in several countries and in the case of India, initial findings show that Indian men were among the least supportive of equitable relationships and roles between men and women. The ICRW study reveals the Indian male's complex and at times contradictory attitude about the roles of women as well as their own roles in society.

A caveat to the finding in this study of men having more egalitarian attitudes is that of self-selection. Since it proved difficult to recruit couples for the study, it is possible then that men who were willing to participate did so because of existing egalitarian attitudes. It would be interesting to see if this finding holds true in a larger sample of couples.

Marital Satisfaction

The factors most often linked to marital satisfaction including love or arranged marriage, influence of in-laws, nature of parent's marriage, division of domestic labor, financial decision-making, support for each other's careers were explored in detail in the interviews and are presented in depth below. All six couples reported overall satisfaction with their marriage. In her study with couples in India, Sandhya (2009) found that the reports of marital satisfaction were impacted by whether or not the need for support, validation and empathy was being met for both Indian men and women. Couples in the present study reported their emotional needs were getting met in the relationship thereby enhancing marital satisfaction. As has been seen gender role attitudes have a direct

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impact on marital satisfaction. Studies have shown that the more egalitarian the men's attitudes, the greater the report of marital satisfaction amongst women. Lye and Biblarz (1993) reported that when men with traditional gender role ideologies are paired with women with egalitarian attitudes, both partners report lower marital satisfaction because of greater arguments and conflicts. For couples where men with more egalitarian attitudes are paired with women with more traditional attitudes, there is increased marital satisfaction as the husband is more than meeting the wife's expectations. Where both husband and wife have egalitarian attitudes, as is the case in this sample, shared gender role ideology would lead to greater marital satisfaction. This effect of gender role attitudes was replicated in Stanik's study (2012) with African American couples where both men and women reported lower marital satisfaction when the husband's had traditional gender role attitudes compared to their wives.

In the present study, scores on the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS) were used as an objective measure of the level of marital satisfaction or distress. Couple's scores corroborated their report of marital satisfaction, revealing that none of the marriages were in distress. Interestingly, the women scored higher in dyadic adjustment in five of the six couples than the men. It is possible that talking to a married, Indian female led to social desirability as a factor elevating the women's scores while the men provided more realistic appraisals of their relationship. Nonetheless, the couples on the whole reported feeling satisfied with their marriage.

The Marriage Story

Love versus Arranged Marriage. While it was not a criterion for participation in the study, all six couples reported that they had a love marriage or marriage of choice. Literature from the 90's like Subrahmanyam's study (1999) with Indian college students showed that women preferred love marriages in order to find mates with more egalitarian attitudes who would understand their need to balance a career as well as family responsibilities and would be supportive. It would seem from the present study that that view holds true as these women are in love marriages and find their spouses to be supportive of their choices. Sandhya's study (1999) also looked at the important role of intimacy in marital satisfaction. The women in this study reported that they enjoyed the freedom that living in the U.S provides to be more intimate and affectionate toward their spouses enhancing the experience of love marriage, free of the cultural shackles of Indian society.

Interestingly, some studies (Myers et al, 2005, Yelsma & Athappilly, 1988) have found that couples in arranged marriages report as much marital satisfaction as couples in marriages of choice and in some cases even more satisfaction than couples in love marriages. While the parameters used in these studies to measure marital satisfaction may be different, it provides a significant counterpoint to the results in this study. It would be interesting to see in future research if couples in arranged marriages report egalitarian gender role attitudes and consequent marital satisfaction similar to that shown amongst couples in love marriages.

Parent's Influence. A significant finding in the study was that while the couples had had love marriages where they chose their own life partner, the approval of parents

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mattered a great deal in actually committing to marriage. A number of participants stated that they would have reconsidered if their parents had strong objections to their choice of partner. It is interesting to note also that participants had chosen mates along criteria very similar to what their parents would have followed had they been arranging their marriage. All the couples in the study shared a similar background in terms of being from the same religious community or belonging to the same cultural/regional group. Four of the six couples reported that they had expressly looked for similarity. They also looked for the person to be from a good family, be able to provide and be tolerant, just as their parents would, making it easier perhaps for them to not have reservations about their children's choice of partner. This finding in the present study corroborates the finding in Wickramsinghe's study (2008) that family of origin's approval of the spouse is significantly linked to marital satisfaction. While that is a given in arranged marriages, it appears it was also important in these marriages of choice.

In Indian marriages, dynamics with the in-laws very often take center stage in a couple's experience of marital satisfaction. Much has been written and depicted in popular media about the often-strained mother-in-law-daughter-in-law dynamic. Participants were asked how far the in-laws exerted an influence on their marital satisfaction. Most couples reported that they enjoyed a cordial relationship with each set of in-laws, an equation they said is easily maintained with the help of distance which does not allow for daily tension, as would be the case if they were living in India. Significantly, two couples, where relationships between the wife and her in-laws were strained, reported it as an area of conflict between them and stated that it negatively impacts their marital satisfaction. For these two couples, despite the distance, dynamics

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with the in-laws were still being negotiated even after so many years of marriage. The husbands reported increased stress due to having to “referee” between their wives and their parents indicating that dynamics with the in-laws still play a big role in marital satisfaction.

As stated before, the participants’ gender role attitudes were greatly influenced by the gender roles they saw their parents practicing growing up. Another key finding in this study was that the quality of the parents’ marriage also impacted the participants’ own notions of marriage and marital satisfaction. It is important to note that five of the participants reported that their parents did not have a good marital relationship and attributed it to the unequal power dynamics between them. Their fathers had all the authority and their mothers were not treated as equals in the relationship. Interestingly, of these five participants, four were men who felt that their mothers were treated unfairly. They identified this as a factor that had impacted their own views on gender roles and its impact on marital satisfaction. They stated that it led them to make a conscious effort to make choices different from their fathers. The couples in the study also reported that one way they were making sure their relationship was different from that of their parents was by ensuring greater communication with each other. Women reported being more assertive about their needs being met in the relationship and men reported being more mindful of the needs of their spouse as they try to create an equal partnership in an effort either to reflect the marriage of their parents or to make a sharp departure from it.

Support for Career. The men reported feeling supported in their career aspirations by their wives with some saying they felt their wives provided them the necessary push to strive for bigger goals and achieve more in terms of career success. The

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women felt they were adequately supportive of their husband's career goals. A significant element in the study was that none of the six women were working full time at the time of the study, albeit all six planned to go back to work, as their children grew older. All six of the women were working before being married or before having children and reported they had made the choice to stay home while the children were young (all of whom were under six years of age). These women reported that they felt their husbands would be completely supportive of their decision to go back to work when they felt ready. Echoing this sentiment, the husbands stated that they felt happy their wives had decided to stay home while the kids are young. This too, they said was because they do not have the support of family here to care for the children. But they fully expected and wanted their wives to go back to work eventually. For some, it was because their wives were working before and would feel more satisfied to continue their careers after the break while for others, the economic reality made a two-income household a necessity.

Couples were asked to consider a situation where difficulties arise at home because both partners are working and a compromise needs to be made by one partner. They were asked who they thought should make such a compromise. The responses of the participants revealed a difference in attitude from what Subrahmanyam (1999) found in her study, where the women provided more passive responses, assuming either that they would have to compromise or that the problems would take care of themselves over time. The men in her study provided traditional solutions stating that the wives should compromise or even consider not being employed at all until their children were adults. In the present study, the responses from both the men and the women were more practical without the automatic assumptions that women would compromise. They talked about

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each partner making the necessary adjustments to keep things moving. If it came to a compromise needing to be made however, they stated they would want to decide keeping in mind the career trajectories of each spouse. Both, the men and the women felt that the partner likely to make more money should continue to work while the other partner took a step back. Interestingly, the men were willing to consider staying home with the kids or taking a significant step back in their jobs if their wives were on a more lucrative career track. While they did acknowledge that this was a hypothetical scenario and at present taking a step back seemed possible, the salient fact is that they were willing to not only consider it but even do it if the situation demanded such a shift in roles. Two of the husbands reported making adjustments already as their wives had started to work part time. Of course, an important caveat is that the women were not working and these couples had not had to face issues that couples where both partners work and have kids have to face. It would be interesting to see how this attitude of mutual support evolves when the women actually join the work force full time.

Financial Decisions. One area where attitudes appeared to be very egalitarian amongst the couples interviewed was that of making financial decisions. All six couples reported making decisions about money jointly or with the awareness of their partner with each partner having equal access to all resources. Balagopal (1987) found that Asian Indian women who were contributing financially to the household income could expect more gender equality as the men, albeit unconsciously, seemed to make more adjustments in sharing duties when their wives were earning. Shukla and Kapoor (1990) found that women's earning capacity had a significant and positive relationship to the decision-making authority she could enjoy in the family. The couples in this study did not

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anticipate things changing too much either in greater gender equality or in having more decision-making ability as most decisions were already being made jointly, especially financial decisions. This is an important area as it has major implications for the way wives are treated when they begin to earn or if they earn more than their husbands.

According to the gendered resource theory put forth by Atkinson, Greenstein and Lang (2005), men with traditional gender role ideology are more likely to feel threatened by their wife's income especially if it is greater than theirs, making them more prone to abuse their spouse. These authors claim therefore that for some women, "bread winning can be dangerous." It would be interesting to see how gender role ideology plays out for Asian Indian couples where both partners are working and the wife is earning more than the husband.

Division of Domestic Labor. Since the women were not employed full time at the time of the study, they reported that they were doing majority of the household work including chores and childcare. Departing significantly from what has generally been found to be the attitude of Indian men toward household work, both women and men in this study reported that the men were contributing to housework and childcare duties upon returning from work in the evening or on the weekends. All the participants agreed that this was a very different set-up from what would have happened if they were in India. Many of the women said they would not ask their husbands for help in the home for fear of social censure. Correspondingly, the men felt they would not be able to participate in the home or with their kids even if they wanted to because culturally men in India are not expected to be as hands on as they are being able to be here. Of note is the fact that the men stated they enjoy being able to do things around the house including

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helping with cooking, doing the dishes but most of all spending time doing things for the children. They reported feeling good that this allows their spouse to get a welcome break. This attitude on the part of the men seemed to have a positive impact on the women's report of marital satisfaction and is consistent with research in this area. Khawaja and Habib (2007) examined the association of husband's involvement in household work and the psychological health of their wives in couples living in Lebanon. They found that husband's involvement in domestic labor was negatively associated with wives' report of psychological distress, marital dissatisfaction and overall unhappiness. The women whose husbands did not help in the home were found to be 1.60 times more likely to be psychologically distressed and unhappy.

Again these results are strikingly different from what is happening in India at this time. As reported before, the burden of household work continues to fall on women despite holding full-time jobs outside the home. While attitudes in India are changing as more and more women work, clearly the picture presented by these couples living here is very different with regard to division of domestic labor. One possible explanation is that the men in this study endorsed egalitarian attitudes to begin with and living in this culture has enhanced their beliefs in equality and sharing of duties. Another possible explanation could be that in India, family life is largely governed by the social/cultural practices of the extended family and community. In a largely patriarchal system, where mothers are very proud that their sons have never had to get themselves a glass of water, men would not be able to contribute even if they thought to do so. For the couples that live here, there is a freedom from following societal prescriptions for gender roles and the liberty to create family dynamics more in line with their own gender role ideology.

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Experiencing the Second Shift- Pressure to be Super Woman. In keeping with the findings on division of domestic labor, the women in the study did not anticipate experiencing a double burden when they do join the work force. They expected that since their husbands were supportive of their decision to return to work and were already willing to help in the home, they would simply share the duties later too. Studies from the 80's and 90's focused on whether women had to do two jobs if they chose to work outside the home or it was one and a half jobs for each partner as they both shared duties in the home. Indian women reported experiencing Hoschschild's (1989) "second shift" as Indian men had only just begun to help, if at all, and women still considered household work to be their domain. Significantly, the women in this study appeared not to look at home and children as solely their responsibility and that attitude shift reflects in the solutions they provided to increased workload. They stated that both partners need to make adjustments, pick up a fair share of work at home and organize their lives better. They denied feeling the need to be super-woman and handle everything at home while also working a full-time job.

Malhotra and Sachdev (2005) studied the role conflict experienced by working women in India in the context of women having joined the work force but still having to fulfill the care-giving and nurturing 'female' role responsibilities. They found that women report higher role conflict as the number of roles they have to fulfill increases including those of working woman, wife and mother. The women in this study were asked about anticipating the experience of role conflict and guilt when they go back to work. A few women reported that they anticipated some conflict especially as they consider the quality of care they are being able to provide to their children versus what

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they anticipate them receiving in day care centers. All the women agreed that they would like to go back to work only when their children become more independent. One woman stated that she would quit working or only look to doing part-time work if she felt working was resulting in her children sliding backward in any way. Most women however, stated they look forward to fulfilling their career aspirations and that the rewards from working would serve to mitigate feelings of guilt or role conflict.

Good Husband and Good Wife. The couples in the study were asked what they considered the parameters of a “good” wife and a “good” husband to be and if they thought they were meeting their own and their spouse’s expectations of the same. Their responses to this question presents the attitude shift that the previous discussion has been elucidating, into much sharper relief. The husbands and wives both felt that on the whole they were fulfilling their own expectations of what they think a “good” spouse should be and also felt their partners were meeting their expectations of a “good” partner. From the preceding discussion, it is clear that these couples do not subscribe to the traditional gender roles of the past, inviting the question, what constitutes “good” role behavior? West and Zimmerman (1991) state that it is important to adopt a social construction perspective when considering gender and to recognize that what is considered appropriate gender role behavior may change over generations. Given the gradual shift toward egalitarianism that globalization is bringing about in traditional cultures, it may be fair to say that the present day zeitgeist reflects a change in parameters of appropriate gender role behavior. In Subrahmanyam’s study (1999) men were looking for the “ideal” woman who would be more connected to them, their family as well as their children. Also, women in India were being brought up with role models of long suffering women like

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Sita, whose greatest virtue lay in compromising and being submissive while focusing her energy on being a good wife and a good mother. For the couples in this study though, the men were expressly looking for strong, independent women capable of supporting themselves and the women did not see themselves as needing to compromise in having a career while also being wives and mothers.

The interactionist approach of “doing gender,” (West & Zimmerman, 1991) suggests that men and women are called upon to demonstrate to themselves as well as others that they are appropriately masculine or feminine within a given social context in order to feel validated. But perhaps the couples in this study are pointing to the fact that what is considered appropriately masculine or feminine is also shifting in society. Popular media increasingly carries images of women in roles of CEO’s of big corporations while men are being provided role models of the ‘metrosexual’ man who is compassionate, considerate, egalitarian and still considered masculine as he is seen helping in the house and taking care of children. So while Shukla’s study (1980) looking at marital satisfaction in dual career couples found that both the men and women attached greater importance to and gave more favorable evaluations of themselves in their traditional roles as providers or homemakers, that may not be as clear today. Men and women today are internalizing roles, as both caretakers and providers and the lines between genders appear to be blurring.

It is important to point out that the while they held egalitarian gender role attitudes, the six couples in the study were presently “doing gender” along traditional lines as the women were stay at home mothers and the men were working. The couples however recognized this as a choice made only while their children are little and because

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they do not have help from family as they would have had in India. On the whole, it seems from the present study that the shifting grounds of gender role ideology are allowing for the birth of a new social order with new possibilities for men and women in this immigrant community.

Living in India. When couples were asked if they thought their marital satisfaction would be impacted if they were living in India as a couple instead of the U.S, all six couples answered in the affirmative. Interestingly, they thought marital satisfaction would be negatively impacted. They cited several reasons, ranging from increased intrusion by in-laws and family members and a consequent decline in experiencing freedom to shape their lives the way they would like. They also referred to the increased pressure to conform to cultural prescriptions for fear of social stigma. The women expected there to be pressure to be a certain kind of daughter in law and the men stated that they would not be able to as involved with their wife and kids because it is not how things are done in India. The couples also felt they would not be able to resolve fights and arguments without the involvement of other people, negatively impacting marital satisfaction. One of the most salient differences for them in terms of living here versus living in India was that they would lack the freedom to negotiate their own gender economy as they have done with regard to division of domestic labor, financial decision-making, and support for careers.

The couple's apprehension about life in India stems perhaps from the fact that while globalization has had a huge impact on the social fabric of the country with women enjoying greater freedoms than ever before, life within families is still very closely reflective of patriarchy. It appears that, for both, the men and women in this study, the

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egalitarian attitude of this culture has become more salient with the goals and aspirations they have for themselves as a family. The divide between the two cultures where this community has found itself positioned historically, seems to be resolving toward the more individualistic, egalitarian attitude of the host culture. Even the definition of family has shifted from a traditional, more inclusive one to a more Westernized, nuclear set up of just the couple and their children and only sometimes the parents. While this shift is positive in terms of gender equality, it also portends an alienation from the larger community and the loss of community support, which has been the mainstay of traditional societies and has many benefits.

Raising the Second Generation

Traditional Values. All the couples in the study agreed that it was important to them to impart traditional values to their children. While this took the form of religious values and teachings for some, for others it was more of a leaning toward the moral and cultural values they were brought up with as opposed to formalized training. The couples agreed that they find themselves making a more conscious, concerted effort to expose their children to the Indian culture whereas children in India imbibe this part of their identity more organically.

Gender Role Socialization. One key finding in this study is regarding the attitude toward gender role socialization of boys versus girls. The couples all stated that they see no difference in how they would raise their sons versus their daughters in terms of rules and expectations. Of note is the fact that most of the participants had not experienced a difference in expectations in the way they were raised versus their opposite gender siblings. The women did not report an insistence by their parents on learning to

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cook and care for the family over pursuing their education. In fact, they reported that they were pushed to pursue an education and their brothers were asked to do the same chores at home as them, including cleaning and basic cooking. This experience is perhaps more of an artifact of these particular families since tenets of patriarchy have traditionally determined boys are socialized to study and earn a living and girls are expected to grow up to be homemakers. The couples who were parents to both sons and daughters stated that they would teach both the skills needed to foster independent and self-sufficient living including learning how to cook and clean and fend for themselves regardless of gender. The women stated that they were glad their sons are growing up watching their fathers help in the home and not living by the traditional distinctions between men and women. This is significant in light of Dasgupta's (1998) assertion that immigrant Indian women are tasked with being the bearers of culture and tradition in this community. Their egalitarian attitudes together with those of men as reflected in this study, could do wonders to narrow what Subrahmanyam (1999) called the "yawning gap" between the attitude of Indian girls and boys in terms of gender roles.

While the preceding discussion about attitudes toward socialization of boys and girls suggests cracks in the patriarchal mold of Indian families living here, Talbani and Hasanali's study (2000), with adolescent girls belonging to South Asian families living in Canada provides a different picture. Girls in this study reported that gender roles were being maintained through gender segregation, control over social activities of girls and arranged marriage. Also, Tiwari and Ghadially (2009) found that whereas younger generation females in India reported significant changes in gender role identity, males did not, pointing to traditional socialization of boys. While the present study does show a

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shift in attitude regarding socialization, perhaps changes in practice are not as imminent. Also, it is of note that the couples interviewed in this study have young children. It would be interesting to see if they would differentiate more between genders, as their children grow older.

Anticipating Conflicts. The second generation of Indian immigrants often find themselves walking a tight rope between the two cultures they have been exposed to. In an effort to have their children maintain their cultural identity and not lose sight of their traditions, Indian parents tend to insist on loyalty to the traditional Indian way of life. This insistence often leads to battles around what is considered acceptable social behavior. In a study done in the 80's, Wakil et al (1981) found that Asian Indians have maintained their core values pertaining to dating, marriage and gender roles while having acculturated in terms of more pragmatic values of the host culture. While parent's attitudes have changed since the 80's with greater acculturation as well as corresponding changes in society in India, young Asian Indians do continue to experience what Inman et al (2007) call a "cultural-value conflict" as they create a bicultural identity for themselves.

Couples in this study were asked about their attitudes toward dating, marriage and other social behavior as their children grow up and if they anticipate conflicts around these issues. Interestingly, five of the six couples stated that they would be okay if their sons and daughters dated. They mentioned feeling more protective about daughters and being more particular about curfews and appropriate clothing for girls, but felt they would have to allow their children to date as it is part of the culture here. Only one couple stated they would not allow their son or their daughter to date, as they do not think it is

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appropriate especially as teenagers. The attitude of majority of the couples could be influenced by the fact that they themselves had dated before getting married but does point to a shift in position of immigrant parents toward greater acceptance of traditions of the host culture.

A great deal of the literature involving studies done with this immigrant population talks about the issue of marriage and the ensuing conflict between parents and their second generation children. In a significant departure from the findings of these studies, the couples interviewed stated that they would accept their children's choice of partner even if the person was non-Indian. While some couples did state that they would prefer for their children to marry an Indian person even if not from the same Indian community, all six couples said they would be okay if their children decided to date and marry a Caucasian or African American person. Couples stated that they would talk to their children about their concerns especially if they thought it was not the right age to be getting married, but would not try to dissuade them from marrying someone of another race or ethnicity. This attitude also reflects a significant shift from their own attitude in terms of selecting mates. As reported before, all six couples had followed very closely the parameters their parents would have used to find a partner for them if they were arranging the marriage. They had all chosen partners from within their own communities. The attitude of openness when it comes to choices made by their children in the future may signal a greater acceptance of the fact that as Asian Indian as their children will be, they will also be equally American by virtue of being born and raised here.

This significant shift in attitude toward dating and marriage, traditional battlegrounds for intergenerational conflict among first generation immigrant parents and

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their children, is a result perhaps of the fact that these are young couples that are part of the newest wave of immigrants to this country. They belong to the generation that has rebelled against their parents' cultural practices whether in India or here and consider themselves more liberal in general. The majority of the studies done in this area reflect attitudes of the older generations of immigrants and do not reflect the views of the youth. The attitude shift reflected in this study helps to dispel the myth perpetuated by the older studies about this community being a static entity still holding on to attitudes belonging to the past. There has been a sea change in India as well in recent years where dating and love marriages have become more prevalent in the recent years and parental authority or influence over choice of partners is waning. Regardless of the reason for the change, reducing conflict in the home bodes well for parents especially since Indian culture does not really recognize adolescence as a developmental stage with conflict as its mainstay.

In another sign of greater acceptance of their children's cultural reality as well as the changing times, most couples said they would not consider it a failure of parenting if their children made choices very different from their own. They were able to recognize that they would not be the sole influence on their children's minds as they grow up among peers and the influence of social media. The couples cited communication as the main tool by which they would help reduce the double bind between two cultures their children may face.

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Seeking Services

One attitude that appears to have escaped change despite living in the U.S, is that toward seeking mental health services. Indians are known to be a group that resists the idea of discussing intimate issues with a stranger even though the stranger maybe a trained professional. Traditionally, this cultural group has relied on the support of extended families as well as the community to resolve problems. As immigrants though, Asian Indians lose that community support making it more imperative that they seek professional services. The couples were asked how they felt about seeing a mental health professional if they or their family members needed help with mental health related issues. Four participants, including one woman and three men stated they would never seek such services for themselves because they did not think it can help in any way. The other eight participants were more open to seeking services but said they would do it reluctantly and only because they are living in a culture where it is more accepted. Interestingly, all the participants unanimously agreed to seek services if their spouse or their children needed help. Some of the reasons they cited for not wanting to access services included the prohibitive cost, fear of lack of confidentiality and the possibility that their records could be accessed and would come in the way of career growth. One of the main reasons however, was a fear of social ridicule. The participants spoke about the stigma still prevalent in Indian society whether it is back home in India or among the immigrant community here with regard to mental illness. They stated they would not be comfortable with anyone finding out that they were seeking counseling because people would assume they were “mad.”

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This pattern of underutilization of services is not limited to Asian Indians, as most immigrant populations from traditional cultures underutilize services, nor is it limited to cultural factors. According to Fung and Wong (2007), one of the main systemic factors influencing attitudes toward seeking professional help is the perceived lack of access to “culturally, linguistically and gender appropriate” health-care. Even when Asian Indians do seek services, there are very few clinicians who are trained to handle the cultural complexity and nuances that this population would bring to treatment.

As a solution to the problem of underutilization, participants suggested increasing awareness of the kind of problems that can be helped as well as what treatment entails in an effort to reduce stigma. Interestingly, when asked if they would prefer to seek treatment from someone who shared their cultural/racial background, most participants said they would not. For some, the nature of the problem would determine choice of counselor and for others, professional expertise and credentials would. Some participants even stated that seeing an Indian therapist would make them feel more judged than seeing a non-Indian therapist. Some women cited gender as a determinant, preferring to see a female therapist regardless of racial/ethnic background. This speaks to the need to create awareness within the community about availability and benefit of services but also to help train culturally sensitive clinicians who can engage this population once they do access services.

Limitations of this Research Study

The study employed a primarily qualitative research methodology, which is well suited to exploratory studies; however, there are certain limitations of this approach. For one, the researcher has limited control over understanding the impact of various variables

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that may be influencing the data. In this study there was no way to assess exactly how education level, state of origin in India and individual family dynamics affect the overall themes. Also, given the design of the study with the small sample size, results cannot be generalized to the larger population. In particular, the study participants belonged to a particular segment of the Asian immigrant population, namely young, educated and financially successful. The views of the participants in the study on gender equality, gender role socialization and dating and marriage of their children reflect their particular circumstances. These views cannot be said to reflect the attitude of Asian Indian couples in general, many of who may not be as educated or belong to the middle class and maybe practicing a more traditional lifestyle. No control group was used because of the exploratory nature of the study. Since this is a qualitative work, it neither confirms nor denies other research about the experience of Asian Indians living in the U.S, only draws parallels with other findings. The primary investigator who belongs to the community being studied conducted all the interviews, which could have potentially introduced researcher bias. It is also possible that because the primary investigator is a married Asian Indian female of a similar age as the participants, social desirability bias was introduced in the participant's responses. Also, the sample was recruited through networking and could have suffered from selection bias. First, only women who were not working consented to being part of the study along with their spouses. Second, it is possible that only the couples that already had egalitarian attitudes agreed to participate in the study. Also, all six couples had a love marriage therefore excluding the experience of those who have had arranged marriages from being examined. Another limitation is that most of the literature on this population consists of studies done in the 80's and there are almost no

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studies done with Asian Indian couples, not allowing for a comparison over time in terms of changing attitudes. Despite these limitations, the use of qualitative methodology in this study has yielded rich data capturing the experiences and attitudes of young, educated Asian Indian couples living in the U.S.

Implications for Future Research

The data collected in this study provides a glimpse into how Asian Indian men and women are navigating the shifting grounds of gender role identities as they carve a place for themselves in this culture. The wealth of data collected, particularly the heretofore-unheard voice of Asian Indian males lends itself to meaningful future research. The study sheds light on many important themes and raises questions that would benefit from further investigation. How is the experience of couples with both partners working different from that of the couples in the study? Is their attitude toward gender roles different in any way and what implication does it have for division of domestic labor, the experience of a second shift for women, financial decision-making and power as well as overall marital satisfaction? It would also be enlightening to explore if gender role ideology is impacted differently in love marriages versus arranged marriages. Also, this study reveals a definite trend toward egalitarianism, especially a growth in the attitude of men. A study comparing the attitudes of men of this generation living in the U.S versus those in India would help with understanding how much of this trend is due to living in an egalitarian culture like U.S. It would also be important to find out if this trend toward greater egalitarianism bears out in other immigrant populations from traditional societies and also among Asian Indians with lower levels of education and lower socio-economic status than those in the present study. Also future research

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could address the potential for social desirability by using methodology that controls for it. Another trend in this study is that of gender-neutral role socialization of boys and girls. Further research could help compare if a similar trend exists in the larger population of Asian Indians living in the U.S. Also, the study reflects a change in the attitude of young parents toward dating and marriage and it would be important to examine if this attitude holds true, as these children grow older since it has big implications for the cultural conflict experienced by second-generation children of immigrant parents.

Implications for Clinicians and Training of Professionals

The interviews with husbands and wives in this study yielded some themes that are common to the experience of Asian Indian men and women and some that are varied depending on the particular background of the individuals. These themes can serve well in terms of training of clinicians and other professionals who wish to provide culturally competent services to this largely underserved population. When sitting with an Asian Indian individual or a couple that either immigrated here or was born and raised here, it will be important first and foremost to understand the culture of their family of origin. Families vary greatly in terms of social/cultural practices based on which region they belong to in India. This study challenges the notion of cultural stereotypes generally attributed to this community. For example, it shows that couples that had dated before marriage were more open to dating for their children. The study also reveals a trend away from patriarchy and move toward egalitarianism for educated, professional Asian Indian. It would serve clinicians well to understand their client's views before assuming men to be traditional and women to be submissive as the stereotype about Asian Indians suggests. Women were seen to be more assertive about their career aspirations being met,

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but family remains an important element in psychological wellbeing for these women and clinicians would do well to help clients strike the right balance for themselves.

It would also be imperative to understand the implications for the Asian Indian individual or couple that is making a move toward a more individualistic, albeit egalitarian stance in a bid to resolve the cultural double bind. While they gain greater assimilation in the host culture and overall marital satisfaction, they also potentially lose the benefits of collectivistic, traditional mindsets and the support that comes with it, possibly leading to feelings of isolation. A clinician should be aware of the intrapsychic conflict they may be experiencing as a result of this shift and help them navigate changing attitudes while still maintaining ties to family and community.

Indian men are seldom heard from in research or in clinical settings, but as this study reveals a sub-group of Asian Indian men are coming around to the idea of seeking services. It would be important to address concerns they may have about confidentiality and access to records as well as how treatment really works when they first come in so that they can feel more comfortable with the process.

It would prove worthwhile to address concerns that clients from this population may have about the clinician's attitudes toward certain social/cultural practices. Making the dynamics of race and ethnicity as well as sameness and difference a central part of the treatment would be valuable in removing the fear of judgment that couples in the study expressed. Also, addressing shame and stigma at the beginning of the therapeutic relationship would go a long way toward establishing trust with clients who are coming into treatment with a strong cultural bias against mental health services.

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As with any new client but perhaps more so with Asian Indian clients who can present with so much variability in terms of their attitudes and cultural practices, it is advisable for the clinician to not assume but ask questions to familiarize herself or himself with the client's particular worldview so that they can feel understood at a deeper level and benefit from treatment.

Chapter VI

Conclusion

Marriage remains an integral part of the lives of Asian Indian immigrants in the U.S. Indian marriages have traditionally adhered to patriarchal norms and strict gender role attitudes, in contrast to the more egalitarian culture of the host country. The implications of this difference in attitude for immigrant couples as they navigate expectations from each other and search for marital satisfaction are not very well understood. While existing literature on this population focuses on issues surrounding acculturation, choice of arranged versus love marriage and intergenerational conflicts, very few studies have focused on the issue of gender role attitudes. Some studies in the 80's done with immigrant Asian Indian college students document the widening gap between the egalitarian attitudes of Indian women and the traditional attitudes of Indian men. No recent study has looked at the role of gender role attitudes and marital satisfaction in this immigrant population against the backdrop of globalization and its impact on social practices across the world. This study focuses on these issues as they are faced by Asian Indian couples living in the U.S and provides insight into the changing face of Indian marriages.

Several pertinent themes were revealed in this study as educated, professionally successful Asian Indian husbands and wives spoke about living in a culture different from the one they were raised in. An expectation was that couples would report a state of flux as they navigate the cultural and ideological differences between India and U.S. It was revealed however, that couples did not report as much a state of flux as a definite

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trend toward more egalitarian gender role attitudes, especially the men in the study.

While some of this had to do with these participants having been raised with egalitarian principles, living in the U.S as well changing social practices in India all contributed to the significant shift seen in the study in the attitude of Indian men. Also, a resolution of the well known “double-bind” faced by this population as they encounter two different cultures was noted toward adopting of the individualistic attitudes of the host culture. This trend has led to greater acculturation for this population and also reflects similar changes in society in India today. In line with increasingly egalitarian gender role attitudes in this sub-group, both husbands and wives reported significant marital satisfaction as a result of fair division of domestic labor, support for career, and egalitarian financial decision-making. The couple’s responses also reveal an important change in what has traditionally been considered appropriate gender role behavior as notions of masculinity and feminity are undergoing a radical change in today’s world. As a result, the couples were not found “doing gender” based on traditional aspirations to be a “good” wife or a “good” husband. The men did not report feeling pressure to be sole providers and women did not report feeling pressure to aspire to the ever-compromising role model of Sita. This attitude shift also showed in the socialization of sons and daughters. As expected, couples reported a shift away from traditional ways of parenting toward more egalitarian principles. Perhaps more surprisingly, many couples in the study also showed significant changes in attitudes toward dating and marriage. Their responses reveal that they are not only open to the idea of dating as their children grow up but also of them entering love marriages with non-Indian partners. Finally, the study revealed that the cultural bias against seeking services continues as Asian Indians underutilize mental

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health services due to social stigma. Some couples however, reported a gradual shift in this attitude because of living in a culture that is more accepting of seeking help for psychological issues.

This exploratory study revealed many important themes that would benefit greatly from future research. Also, the study points to significant implications for the training of mental health professionals. The findings in the study challenge many of the cultural stereotypes about Asian Indian men and women with regard to gender role attitudes, openness as parents, submissiveness of Indian women and desire to learn from the host culture. It would be important for the clinician therefore to familiarize themselves with the particular worldview of the individual or couple in front of them without making assumptions. Also, it would be important to understand that experiences as well as goals for treatment can vary based on the attitudes of the family of origin therefore clinicians who seek to generalize would find it difficult to engage clients in therapy. Making issues of shame and stigma, dynamics of race and ethnicity as well as sameness and difference, a central focus of treatment would go a long way in ensuring that clients from this population feel understood and can benefit from services.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent Agreement

Gender Role Attitudes and Marital Satisfaction Among Asian Couples of Indian Origin in the U.S.

You are invited to participate in a research study. Before you agree to participate in this study, you should know enough about it to make an informed decision. If you have any questions, ask the investigator. You should be satisfied with the answers before you agree to be in the study.

Purpose of the Study

This study explores the experience of being married and living in the United States of Asian couples of Indian origin, between the ages of 22 and 50. The study wants to understand your experience, thoughts and feelings around marriage and how it may be influenced by the Indian culture as well as the culture of the U.S. The study seeks to document your attitudes toward the roles of men and women and its impact on marital satisfaction. A doctoral student at the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology at Rutgers University is conducting this study as a fulfillment of dissertation and doctoral requirements. It is anticipated that 6-8 couples will participate in this study.

Study Procedures. You will be interviewed about your experiences, thoughts and opinions in regard to marriage, marital satisfaction, gender role attitudes as well as the experience of living in the United States as a couple. The interview will take about one and one half hours. All efforts will be made to conduct the interview in person. If need be however, interviews may have to be conducted over the phone. In that case, you will be asked to sign the consent in a meeting prior to the phone interview or asked to mail the consent form to the principal investigator before a phone interview takes place.

Interviews will be audio taped to contribute to the authenticity of the study. Interviews will be transcribed. Any tape recordings, transcripts of interviews, or other data collected from you will be maintained in confidence by the investigator in a personal locked file cabinet and destroyed at the end of the study.

Risks. The interview focuses on your current experiences as a married person. It is my hope that the interview will be a positive experience for you. However, talking about some unpleasant things may cause discomfort for you. If you experience distress related to the study, please let the investigator know and discuss this with her, so that she can assist you during the interview. The investigator can also provide you with referrals for therapists/counselors and psychology clinics in your area, as necessary.

GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES AND MARITAL SATISFACTION

Benefits. Your experience and knowledge have tremendous value to understanding the issues affecting men and women of Indian origin living in the U.S, around the topic of gender role attitudes and marital satisfaction. In addition, the opportunity to share your experience and contribute to the knowledge base about working with this group of people may be of value to you.

Confidentiality. This research is confidential. Confidential means that the research records will include some information about you and this information will be stored in such a manner that some linkage between your identity and the response in the research exists. Some of the information collected about you includes your age, marital status, employment status, and number of children as well as when you came to this country. Please note that we will keep this information confidential by limiting individual's access to the research data and keeping it in a secure location such as the personal computer of the principal investigator and a personal locked file cabinet. The research team and the Institutional Review Board at Rutgers University are the only parties that will be allowed to see the data, except as may be required by law. Your responses will be grouped with other participants' responses and analyzed collectively. If a report of this study is published, or the results are presented at a professional conference, only group results will be stated. All common identifying information will be disguised to protect your confidentiality. This will include changing your name and other demographic information (i.e. birth order, education level). All study data will be kept for three years after your interview.

Also, details of your interview will be kept confidential from your spouse and your responses to any of the questions in the protocol will not be discussed with him or her.

Research Standards and Rights of Participants. Your participation in this research is **voluntary**. If you decide not to participate, or if you decide later to stop participating, you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Also, if you refer other individuals for participation in this study, your name may be used as the referral source only with your permission

You understand that you may contact the investigator or the investigator's dissertation chairperson at any time at the addresses, telephone numbers or emails listed below if you have any questions, concerns or comments regarding your participation in this study.

Archana Jain (Investigator)
Rutgers University
GSAPP
152 Frelinghuysen Rd
Piscataway, NJ 08854-8085
Telephone: 732-983-8922
Email: archjain@eden.rutgers.edu

Karen Riggs Skean, Psy.D. (Chairperson)
Rutgers University
GSAPP
152 Frelinghuysen Rd
Piscataway, NJ 08854-8085
Telephone: 848.445.2000
Email: kskean@aol.com

GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES AND MARITAL SATISFACTION

If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the IRB Administrator at Rutgers University at:

Rutgers University, the State University of New Jersey
Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
3 Rutgers Plaza
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559
Tel: 848-932-0150
Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu

You have read and understood the contents of this consent form and have received a copy of it for your files. Please sign if you consent to participate in this research project.

Participant Signature _____ Date _____

Investigator Signature _____ Date _____

You have agreed to participate in a research study entitled, Gender Role Attitudes and Marital Satisfaction among Asian Couples of Indian Origin living in the U.S by Archana Jain. We are asking for your permission to allow us to audiotape (make a sound recording) as part of that research study. You do not have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in the main part of the study.

The recording(s) will be used for analysis by Ms. Jain.

The recording(s) will be distinguished from one another by an identifying case number and not your name. The recording(s) will be stored in a locked file cabinet by the identifying number and not by name or other information that might disclose your identity. The tape will be retained until the project is completed and the dissertation has been successfully defended. It is expected that the tape will be destroyed within three years after your interview.

Your signature on this form grants the investigator named above permission to record you as described above during participation in the above-referenced study. The investigator will not use the recording(s) for any other reason than that/those stated in the consent form without your written permission.

Subject (Print) _____

Subject Signature _____ Date _____

GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES AND MARITAL SATISFACTION

Principal Investigator Signature _____ Date _____

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Appendix B

Demographic Form

Today's Date: _____

Age: _____

Were you born in the U.S.? Yes No

If no, how many years have you been in the U.S.: _____

Birth Place: _____

Year father immigrated to U.S.: _____

Year mother immigrated to U.S.: _____

From which Indian state did your family immigrate? (Example: Punjab, Gujarat, etc)

Number of Siblings: _____

Where are you in the birth order? 1 2 3 4 5 6 other _____ (1 = Eldest)

Do you have brothers? Yes No

Do you have sisters? Yes No

Highest Level of Education Completed:

___ High School

___ Associate Degree

___ Bachelors Degree

___ Graduate Degree; please specify: _____

What was your age at marriage?

Was your marriage arranged? Yes No

GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES AND MARITAL SATISFACTION

How long have you been married?

How many children do you have?

Age of children: _____, _____, _____.

Are you currently employed?	Yes	No
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If no, were you ever employed?	Yes	No
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Appendix C

Interview

Acculturation

- When did you/your family come to the U.S.?
- What was it like growing up in the U.S./What was it like coming to live in the U.S? Did you find the culture here different? How so?
- How traditional do you think your values are? Some people feel the Indian community here is more traditional than even the culture in India and there is pressure to behave in a certain way to be accepted, have you felt that way?
- How if at all have your attitudes and thinking changed after living here in the U.S from that of your parents and peers in India? What attitudes have changed the most?

Gender Role Attitudes

- What is your parent's marriage story? How would you characterize the roles played by your father and your mother when you were growing up?
- Did your mother or your sister/s work outside the home?
- Did you feel the standards and expectations for girls versus boys (siblings) were different in your home?
- What did you learn about the roles of men and women as you were growing up?
- How do you view the roles of men and women now? Has the culture in the U.S impacted your views at all and if so, how?

Marriage

- What is your marriage story? Was it an arranged marriage or a love marriage? Did you feel pressure to have an arranged marriage?
- How did you feel about getting married? What were some hopes and expectations that were met or not met? Did parent's approval matter? Was their marriage love or arranged?

Marital Satisfaction

GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES AND MARITAL SATISFACTION

- How satisfied do you feel with your marriage? Are your emotional needs getting met? Do you feel appreciated? How is it different from your parent's marriage?
- What is the division of labor like at home including household chores and childcare duties? Are you satisfied with the way things are?
- How are financial decisions made in the family? Does earning give you decision-making power? How has having or not having a dual income impacted adjustments made at home?
- How supportive are you of your partner's career? Do you feel supported by your partner? If a compromise needed to be made, who would make it?
- Are things different when your in-laws visit? How so? Does the visit pose any challenges for you as a couple?
- What are your ideas about a "good" husband or a "good" wife? How well do you think you are fulfilling your own as well as your partner's expectations of a "good" husband or a "good" wife? Have these expectations changed after living here?
- Many women say that even though they are working, they still have to fulfill their traditional duties at home putting a lot of pressure on them. How well do you think your partner is able to share in what has traditionally been considered your role? Do you feel you put pressure on yourself to "do everything"?
- What, if anything would you like to change in order to improve your marital satisfaction?
- Would things/expectations have been different if you were in India? How so?

Values imparted to children

- How important is it for you to impart traditional values to your children?
- Do you feel you have or would have different expectations from your daughter versus your son? Are you teaching them about different responsibilities?
- Are there areas where you anticipate conflict as they grow up here, for example with dating, marriage etc. and how would you resolve it? Would you consider their choices a failure of parenting on your part?

Seeking Services

- What is your attitude toward seeking mental health services? What do you think your partner's attitude would be?

GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES AND MARITAL SATISFACTION

- What do you consider some barriers to accessing services here in the U.S? What would make it easier to access services?