

Well-Being of Married Migrant and Non-Migrant Women of Rural Haryana

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The present study compared the well-being of married migrant and non-migrant women of rural Haryana. It comprised of 80 women from each group (N=160). The mean age of the married migrant women was 17.92 years ($\sigma=2.68$) while that of their non-migrant counterparts was 19.59 years ($\sigma=1.6$). The findings of the study indicated a statistically significant difference between the migrant and non-migrant women in terms of their general health ($t=-2.50$, $p<.05$), happiness ($t=2.10$, $p<.05$), and life satisfaction ($t=2.62$, $p<.01$). Besides, the acculturative stress of the migrant women was found to have a significant correlation with each of these dimensions of their well-being (general health: $r=0.22$, $p<.05$; happiness: $r=-0.28$, $p<.05$; life satisfaction: $r=-0.41$, $p<.01$). Furthermore, acculturative stress also significantly predicted their general health ($\beta=.22$, $p<.05$), happiness ($\beta=-.28$, $p<.05$) as well as life satisfaction ($\beta=-.41$, $p<.01$). Apart from the quantitative data, one-to-one interviews were conducted with the participants and the qualitative data was subjected to content analysis. The objective of the qualitative study was to understand the views of both groups of participants about certain aspects of Haryanvi society, and their married life.

Keywords: Well-Being, Marriage Migration, Migrant women, Well-being, Haryana.

The psychological literature on well-being takes cognizance of socio-cultural factors in influencing an individual's psychological health (Ruiz-Beltran & Kamau, 2001; Holden, McGregor, Blanks & Mahaffey, 2012; Yolal, Gursoy, Uysal, Kim & Karacaoğlu, 2016). Among such factors, the impact of cultural and social challenges induced by migration on mental health has been addressed by a number of theorists (e.g. Hallowell, 1942; Jaco, 1954; Weinberg, 1966; Oberg, 1960). In their World Happiness Report, Helliwell, Layard & Sachs, (2018) also identify migration as having repercussions for both the migrants and the host society. They further highlight the need for considering both international and internal migration through the lens of well-being research.

Migration refers to "a permanent or semi-permanent change of residence, usually across some type of administrative boundary" (Faist, 2000, p.12). Among the various forms of migration, labor migration has been the most commonly researched in India while marriage migration has been relatively neglected (Palriwala & Uberoi, 2008). The latter involves the

movement of one spouse, to join their partner in another area with the objective of family formation (Lievens, 1999).

In majority of the Indian states, the patriarchal nature of our society necessitates the migration of the new bride to her marital home. In the conventionally arranged marriages the bride is, however, familiar with the broad cultural environment of her marital home (Mishra, 2017). In contrast, the cross-region or across-state bride who has been wedded into a culturally different and geographically distant family is unfamiliar with the socio-cultural environment of her marital family. These marriages which transcend the boundaries of language, region, culture, and sometimes that of caste, religion and economic status are widely prevalent in Indian states with a numerical deficit of females in their population.

Cross-regional marriages have been serving as an important social mechanism in these states as well as for the families of the brides who find it difficult to get their daughters married in their native state due to huge demands for dowry. However, everyone seems to overlook

the repercussions that this arrangement has on the bride who is uprooted from her own culture and placed in a different culture.

Although a number of studies have explored the phenomenon of cross-regional marriages through various academic prisms (e.g. Premi, 1980; Kaur, 2004; Ahlawat, 2009; Chaudhry & Mohan, 2011; Kukreja & Kumar, 2013), there has been a paucity of psychological investigation into the impact of long-distance marriage migration on the well-being of cross-region brides. However, globally there have been a number of studies on the impact of migration on well-being (e.g. Vathi&Duci, 2016; Close, Kouvonen, Bosqui, Patel, O'Reilly & Donnelly, 2016). Many of these studies have used acculturation as the broad theoretical framework for examining the link between migration and well-being. Acculturation "...is viewed as an inevitable process human species undergo in an effort to manage and cope with stressors and changes brought upon by migration and by being in a prolonged contact with a new, host culture" (Kuo, 2014, p.17). This process of cultural adaptation has been shown to have a relationship with the psychological health, socio-cultural adaptation, quality of family relationship and acculturative stress experienced by migrants (Yoon et al., 2012, Ward & Kennedy, 2001; Hwang, 2006; Kuo & Roysircar, 2004, Torres & Rollock, 2004). The present research is concerned with the latter.

As Al-Baldawi (2002, p. 271) says, "The encounter with new culture...requires a reconstruction of the individual internal schema in order to adapt to these changes and to find ways for better integration," and as has been seen across several studies, for many individuals this process of cultural adaptation is stressful. It is referred to as acculturative stress (Berry, 2005), and "...is characterized by negative behavioral and emotional reactions attributable to the process and experience of adjusting to a new cultural milieu" (Kuo, 2014, p.22).

Within the context of Indian society as the number of cross-regional marriages rise it becomes imperative to investigate whether and to what extent the experience of acculturative stress influences the well-being of the cross-region brides. As has been documented in ethnographic studies (e.g. Kaur, 2010;

Mukherjee, 2013; Ahlawat, 2016), these brides who have been 'imported' to compensate for the deficit of women in the host culture, are living in a situation of multiple disadvantages (Singh, Dangi & Bandyopadhyay, in press). However, there has been a paucity of empirical research on their psychological well-being status. The present study attempts to address this existing gap within the psychological literature, and it focuses on the cross-regional brides of rural Haryana.

Objectives:

- To compare the Well-being (WB) levels (Life satisfaction, Happiness, General Health) of married migrant and non-migrant women
- To examine the role of acculturative stress as a predictor of WB variables among married migrant women and
- To develop an understanding of the perceptions of the married migrant and non-migrant women about Haryana and certain aspects of their married life.

Hypotheses:

- There will be a significant difference in the WB scores (Life satisfaction, Happiness, General Health) of the married migrant and non-migrant women.
- Acculturative stress will be a significant predictor of WB of the married migrant women.

Method

Sample:

Through purposive sampling, 160 participants (80 married migrant and 80 non-migrant women) belonging to fifteen villages (Mundlana, Chidana, Durana, Jhawra, Bhusana, Nahara, Nahri, Dher, Katalpur, Shamdi, Chara, Kansala, Humayunpur, Madinaand Asan) of the districts of Rohtak, Jhajjarand Sonipat of the North Indian state of Haryana were made a part of this study. The married migrant and non-migrant women were matched on two criteria, namely, equal number of women belonging to the two categories from every village, and approximately same duration of marriage for both these groups of women.

Characteristics of the Participants - The mean age of the migrant and non-migrant women was 17.92 years ($\sigma = 2.68$); and 19.59 years ($\sigma = 1.6$) respectively. While the migrant women were between 14 – 36 years of age, their non-migrant counterparts were aged between 17 – 23 years. Among the migrant women, 47.50 % were uneducated while among the non-migrant women 15% were uneducated. With respect to the duration of their marriage, 53.75 % of the migrant women were married for less than a year while 46.25% of them were married for more than a year. The married migrant women who were a part of the present study hailed from West Bengal (42.5%), Bihar (17.5%), Assam (11.2%), Jharkhand (10.0%), Orissa (8.8%), Himachal Pradesh (5.0%), Maharashtra (3.8%), and Kerala (1.2%). Among the other significant socio-demographic patterns observed in the present study was the higher mean age (32.76 years) and higher illiteracy status (33.75%) of the husbands of the married migrant women as opposed to their non-migrant counterparts (mean age of husband = 22.87 years; uneducated = 7.50 %).

Measures

The standardized questionnaires used in this study included the following:

General Health Questionnaire – 12 (GHQ - 12) (Goldberg & Williams, 1988) - The 12-item version of the General Health Questionnaire was used in the present work as a screening instrument for the presence of psychological health issues in the participants. It has both positive and negative items and the total scores can range from 0 to 36. A higher score indicates poor health. It has a Cronbach's alpha (α) of 0.76 (Sriram, Chandrasekhar, Isaac & Shanmugham, 1997).

Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener, Emmons, Larsen & Griffin, 1985) - This 5-item self-report measure assesses an individual's life satisfaction, on a 7-point rating scale. For each item, participants rate the extent to which they generally feel satisfied with their life. It has been reported to have a Cronbach's alpha (α) of 0.78 in Indian setting (Singh, Duggal Jha & Suri, 2013).

Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999) - The SHS is a 4-item scale of global subjective happiness. This scale has a high internal consistency (α) of 0.85 (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999).

Social, Attitudinal, Familial, and Environmental Acculturative Stress (SAFE) (Hovey & King, 1996) – The 16-item SAFE scale measures acculturative stress in four contexts: social, attitudinal, familial and environmental. The response options for the SAFE scale is based on a 4-point Likert scale and it has a Cronbach's alpha (α) of 0.76 (Hovey & King, 1996).

These four measures were translated to Hindi following the standard method for test translation. Firstly, two bilingual experts translated the original English version of these scales into Hindi. Secondly, the Hindi versions were back-translated into English to verify the content similarity of the translated and original version of the scales. After resolving the discrepancies, the translated versions were re-verified. Apart from these measures, a demographic information sheet and semi-structured interview schedule were also prepared in Hindi. The latter included questions regarding the aspects of Haryanvi society that the participants liked and the problems being encountered there, relation with their in-laws, their expectations from the marriage, their opinion about women migrating to Haryana for marriage, views related to preference for the male child in Haryana and other such pertinent questions about their personal likes and dislikes with a view to gain a nuanced understanding of the socio-psychological views held by the participants.

Procedure

The married women of these villages who were willing to participate were made a part of the study after obtaining their consent. They were requested to fill in a demographic information sheet followed by a set of psychological tests. The average time taken for test completion ranged between 30-45 minutes for each participant. Besides the standardized measures, a semi-structured interview schedule was framed based on the information derived from a pilot

study (Singh & Dangi, 2011). The responses of the participants to the interview questions were audio-taped for which permission had been obtained prior to the interview.

Results

This study followed a mixed-methods approach using both qualitative and quantitative methods. For the quantitative data - descriptive statistics, correlation and regression analysis, and t-test (independent sample) was conducted using SPSS version 20.

Table 1. Comparison of the WB of migrant (n=80) and non-migrant women (n=80)

Dimensions of PWB	Participants				t-value (df = 158)
	Non-migrant		Migrant		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Life satisfaction	22.86	5.10	20.29	7.15	2.62**
Happiness	18.85	3.28	17.52	4.56	2.10*
GHQ	8.69	2.67	10.02	3.97	-2.50**

Note. *p< .05, **p<.01

The WB levels (Life satisfaction, Happiness, General Health) of the married migrant and non-migrant women were compared using independent t-test. The level of life satisfaction of the non-migrant women was found to be comparatively higher than the migrant women (t = 2.62, p<.01). They also scored better in the measure of happiness (t = 2.10; p<.05) and in the overall GHQ (t = -2.50; p<.05). The significant mean difference between the two groups, with the migrant women exhibiting poorer scores in each of the WB dimensions provides support for the first hypothesis.

The correlation between acculturative stress and the WB variables among the married migrant women was also computed and their acculturative stress was found to have a significant negative association with their scores on life satisfaction and happiness, and a significant positive association with their scores on the GHQ.

Table 2. Correlation between Acculturative stress, Life Satisfaction, Happiness, GHQ and its dimensions among the migrant married women (n = 80)

Variables	Life satisfaction	Happiness	GHQ
Life satisfaction	1		
Happiness	0.34**	1	
GHQ	-0.43**	-0.41**	1
Acculturative Stress	-0.41**	-0.28*	0.22*

Note. *p< .05, **p<.01

Table 3. Regression analysis with acculturative stress (predictor variable) as the predictor of life satisfaction, happiness, GHQ and its dimensions (explanatory variables)

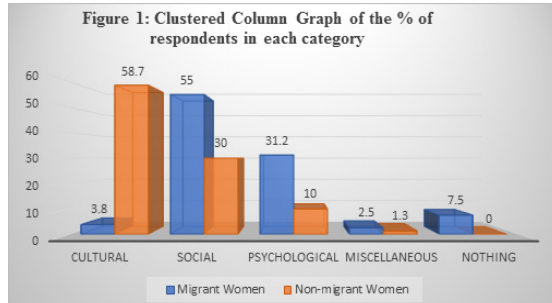
Variable	β	R ² change	Adjusted R ²	F-ratio
Life satisfaction	-0.41	0.17	0.16	16.19**
Happiness	-0.28	0.08	0.07	6.64*
GHQ	0.22	0.05	0.03	3.88*

Note. *p< .05, **p<.01

Multivariate regression analysis was used to examine if the level of acculturative stress (AS) significantly predicted the WB levels of the married migrant women. The results indicated that AS significantly predicted life satisfaction (β= -.41, p<.01), happiness (β= -.28, p<.05), as well as general health (β= .22, p<.05), thus providing support for the second hypothesis.

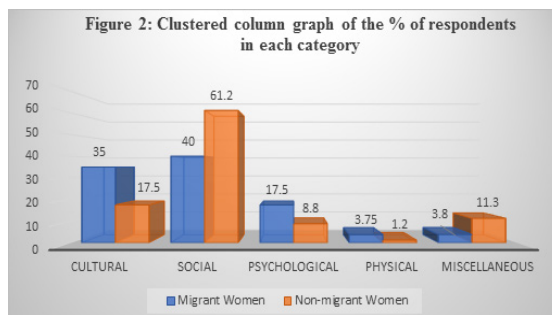
Qualitative Study: For analysis of the qualitative data, the audio-taped responses of all the participants was firstly transcribed in English and then subjected to content analysis. Their responses were coded and categorized, and the percentage of responses was calculated thereafter. The number of responses against each category was divided by the total number of participants and multiplied by 100 to get the percentage of responses. This was followed for all the categories. Results in this section are presented question wise:

Q. - What do you like about Haryana?



The responses of the participants to this question were coded into five categories: cultural, social, psychological, miscellaneous, and nothing. For the migrant women, the cultural domain included life-style, while for the local Haryanvi brides, it included life-style, dressing style, festivals, and language. It was the cultural dimension which majority of the local married women seemed to like the most about Haryana. For the cross-region brides, on the other hand, the social dimension seemed to hold greater value. It included escape from dowry, hard-working people, and living jointly. For the non-migrant women, apart from living jointly and hard-working people, the social dimension also included good people. The third code derived from this question was 'psychological'. It comprised of gratification of basic needs, escape from daily life hassles, and secure future for one's children – for the migrant group, and being 'relaxed and calm-minded' – for the non-migrant group. The miscellaneous category included open and clean environment and less pollution. A few migrant women of the present sample even said they did not like anything about Haryana.

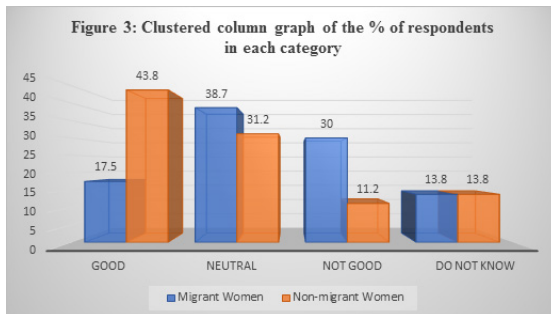
Q. - What difficulties are you facing in Haryana?



In response to this question both groups of married women seemed most dissatisfied with certain social aspects of Haryana. For the migrant women it included rampant alcoholism, being made fun of, imposition of restrictions, lack of social support, behavior (disrespect, selfishness, jealousy, cruelty), superstitions, rigid sex roles, discrimination (racism, casteism), and marginalization by the majority. While for the non-migrant women it included rampant alcoholism, behavior (jealousy, disrespect), superstitions, discrimination (sexism), dowry, imposition of restrictions etc. The next aspect of Haryana that was disliked by both the groups of women was - 'cultural' which included the language and dressing style of Haryanvi society. While the local women found the language abusive and lacking in affection, the migrant women had difficulty in speaking the local tongue and found the language to be impolite. With respect to the dressing style, responses of both the groups were reflective of their dissatisfaction with the ghunghat (veil) that a Haryanvi woman has to wear. The next category was 'psychological' and consisted of psychological issues these women were encountering in Haryana. For the migrant women it included unhappiness, adjustment issues, alienation, helplessness, anxiety, pessimism, non-acceptance, homesickness, dependence, disturbing dreams, and intricate differences in religious practices. The non-migrant women reported the dependence fostered by the in-laws on the daughter-in-law as being the major issue. Thus, the psychological issues of the migrant married women were more as compared to their non-migrant counterparts. Similarly, their physical health also seemed to be poorer, characterized by a loss of appetite, stress, body-ache, insomnia, and tiredness. While for the non-migrant women it included lack of appetite, and insufficient food vis-à-vis the work-load. The final category (miscellaneous) included climate and facilities (water, electricity, bathroom, transportation, markets) for the migrant and only facilities (water, electricity, transportation, schools, hospitals, jobs) for the non-migrant women.

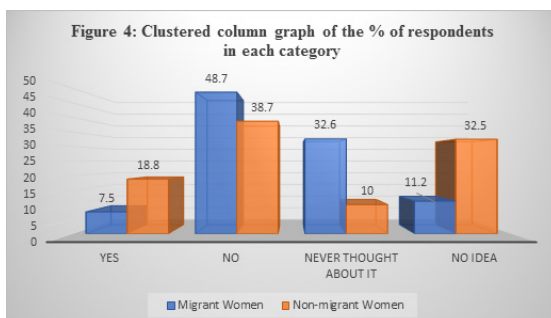
Q. - How is your relationship with your in-laws?

Majority of the non-migrant women of the present sample had a good relationship with



their in-laws. While, majority of the migrant women reported having neither a good nor a bad relationship with their in-laws. Their responses were indicative of their reluctant to disclose their relationship with their in-laws. There were, however, some migrant women who openly spoke about their poor relationship with their marital family. They said that they felt unloved, unaccepted and were at the receiving end of everyone’s taunts. Even amongst the non-migrant group, some said they felt unloved and disrespected, and had frequent quarrels with their mother-in-law. Another group of responses were coded as ‘do not know’ – it includes responses such as ‘ask my in-laws, I do not know’ (mere sasuralwalo se hi puch lo, mujhenahipata).

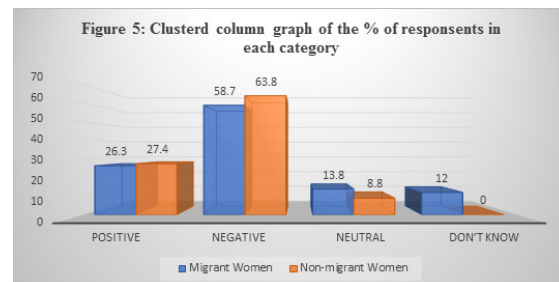
Q. - Did your married life meet your expectations?



The response seemed to be a resounding ‘no’ for the majority in both the groups. Some migrant women said they never thought they would get married in Haryana, while others spoke about how they had hopes of getting married in a good family where they would be respected and accepted, and not treated like an outsider. For the non-migrant women, on the other hand, an employed and well-earning

husband is what they had expected, however, their expectation seems to have remained unfulfilled. However, the few migrant women who reported their wishes had been fulfilled, attributed it to the gratification of basic needs in the marital family, an employed husband, peace, happiness, and respect. The non-migrant women whose marital expectations had been fulfilled, reported ‘an employed husband’ and ‘good family’ to be the cause. In the migrant group, some said their marriage had happened so quickly that they never had the time to think about what they wanted from a marriage.

Q. - Do you want women from other states to come to Haryana on account of marriage and what advice would you offer them?

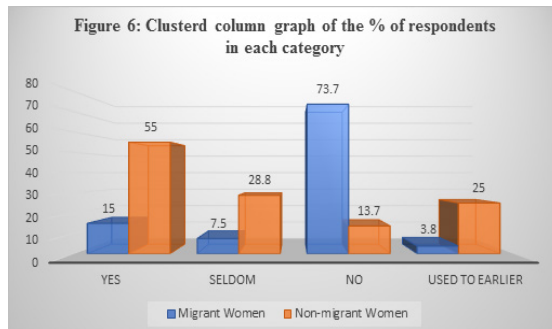


Majority of the women in both the groups were not in favor of women migrating from other states into Haryana. The reasons of the two groups however differed. The reasons provided by the migrant women were grounded in their experiences, while for the non-migrant group some seemed to have a negative attitude toward cross-region brides. The former group opined that cross-region brides have to face a lot of difficulties in Haryanvi society – they might be made fun of, taunted at, have to engage in a lot of work, will not like the distant behavior of the people in this society towards them, and will be too dependent on their in-laws financially, and so on. The non-migrant group, on the other hand, said that even after investing money on these cross-region brides they do not know for how long they will stay. Many of them cannot adjust and either run back home or continue staying here unwillingly.

Among those migrant women who were in favor of women migrating here for marriage from other states, the reasons included - unlike their native states, here they will not be required

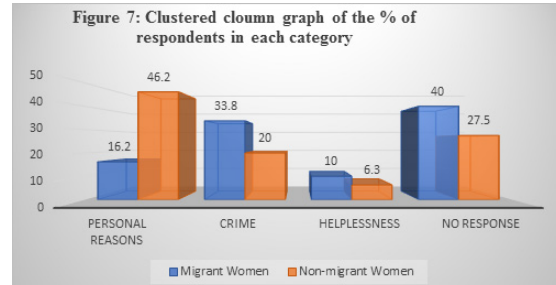
to pay dowry, gratification of basic needs, and getting the company of other cross-region brides who are already living in rural Haryana. The non-migrant women in favor of these marriages said there will be an exchange of cultural traditions and values if such women come to their villages and it is good for the poor women of other states who can get good food like ghee and milk in Haryana. They expressed their full sympathy for such brides and said they would treat them with respect. However, as one migrant woman cautioned, they should verify the information about the to-be-groom and his family before taking any decision.

Q. - Do you enjoy taking part in other activities apart from your daily activities?



Majority of the migrant women did not enjoy participating in recreational activities – some of them reported that their day was spent doing household and other work allotted to them, and there was no time left for recreational activities. Even among the non-migrant group, those who said they did not enjoy any activities other than their daily life activities, too much workload seemed to be the reason. Further, among them some even said they did not have any hobbies. Besides, some women from both the groups reported they enjoyed other activities before marriage. However, at their marital home they are only engaged in work and would prefer to sleep in the little free time that they get. Only a few migrant women said 'yes' to this question, and these women enjoyed cooking new dishes, sewing and stitching. Among the non-migrant group, on the other hand, majority responded in the affirmative to this question and the activities they enjoyed were similar to the migrant women.

Q. - What is your opinion about aborting female fetuses in Haryana?



The responses of the participants to this question were coded into four categories – personal reasons, crime, helplessness and no response. For the non-migrant group, personal reasons seemed to be a primary justification. The responses of both the groups under 'personal reasons' broadly included – a male child ensures continuity of the family line; poverty; when a woman delivers a boy her status in the family is elevated; the respect given to one's male child is high in the family; parents may not get share in land and property if they don't have a male child; and the expenditure in raising a female child is high. Some of the participants, however, had a progressive attitude and considered sex-selective abortion to be a crime. To them, children regardless of their sex are gifts of God, and both male and female children have equal rights to see the world. Some even said that both males and females are equal, and that if they are given an opportunity, girls can excel in all spheres of life. Some of the participants also implicated a sense of helplessness on the part of the women opting for sex-selective abortion. The women from both the groups, whose responses fell under this category, said that the in-laws often force the daughter-in-law to go for an abortion of the female fetus. The woman who bears a female child knows she has to bear the taunt of her in-laws and society, and may thus decide to abort the pregnancy. There were however several participants who chose not to respond to this question.

Discussion

The findings of the present study indicate that there are statistically significant differences between married migrant and non-migrant

women in terms of their life satisfaction, happiness, and general health. The cross-region brides of rural Haryana are living with poor general health, low level of happiness and life satisfaction that may be attributed to their difficulties in adapting to the new culture. Further, their acculturative stress was not only found to correlate significantly with these dimensions of well-being but also found to be a significant predictor of these dimensions.

Aligned with the findings of the present study on acculturative stress is the systematic literature review of Lee & Kim (2017). They found acculturative stress to be a risk factor for the psychological health of women from Asian countries (China, Vietnam, Philippines) who had immigrated to Korea for marriage. The studies of Gil, Vega & Dimas (1994), and Krueger & Chang, (2008) also highlight the link between acculturative stress and psychological as well as physical health outcomes. Another work relevant to the present research is that of Nowok, van Ham, Findlay & Gayle (2011). They investigated the impact of internal migration on the happiness level of labor migrants. Their study sample showed a decline in their happiness level before migration. The researchers interpreted this decline to be a result of the stress experienced by the individuals in anticipation of the adaptation issues they might face in the new culture. However, the participants eventually shifted back to their baseline level of happiness.

The other set of quantitative findings of the present study include the analysis of the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants. It revealed that in addition to having a lower level of well-being, the majority of the married migrant women were uneducated (47.50%). Moreover, a substantially higher percentage among the migrant women (51.25%) also reported being below the legal age for marriage. Although a similar trend of being married below 18 years of age was observed among the non-migrant women, they were far fewer in number (10%). The presence of child marriage among the participants of the present sample indicates that this social malady is still existent in rural Haryana. The higher prevalence of child marriage among the cross-regional brides might also have been a contributory factor for their lower well-being.

It remains to be investigated in future studies.

The qualitative findings of this study also provide important insights and further highlights the psychological distress being experienced by the married migrant women in Haryanvi culture. The participants spoke about a wide range of psychological issues being encountered by them – including but not limited to - unhappiness, adjustment issues, a feeling of alienation, helplessness, anxiety, pessimism, homesickness, and disturbing dreams. Most of them also said they did not enjoy any recreational activities and attributed it to the lack of time for themselves in their marital home. However, it is not only their psychological but also subjective physical health that showed a decline in the new culture. They reported a loss of appetite, stress, body-ache, insomnia, and tiredness. Consistent with the present findings, the presence of psychosomatic complaints and feelings of psychological distress among immigrants, have been previously noted by Al-Baldawi (2002) in his qualitative study on thirty-two immigrants living in Sweden. These participants reported feeling anxious, tired, irritable, having nightmares, headaches, stomach troubles and several other such psycho-somatic and psychological complaints which he referred to as 'migration-related symptoms.'

The qualitative findings of the present work also highlight a few of the plausible causes of the distress being experienced by these women in rural Haryana. For example, some of them reported that they were not allowed to interact with the other migrant women in the villages and all their movements were kept track of by their husbands and in-laws. This is because there was a constant fear among their in-laws that they may run away, thus wasting the money invested in them for the marriage. In this context, one married migrant woman of the present sample described her situation as being held hostage. The lack of trust of their marital family becomes apparent from such narratives, and this along with the discriminatory treatment meted out to them was only aggravating their distress in the unfamiliar culture. In her ethnographic study, Ahlawat (2016) also observed the in-laws showing a discriminatory attitude toward their migrant daughter-in-law. While the daughter-

in-law who hailed from Haryana was allowed to step out of the home unattended and could interact with the other women in the village, a lot of restrictions were imposed on the daughter-in-law who had been brought from a different state.

Another common narrative that emerged from the majority of the interviews with the migrant women of the present sample was that they had no source of social support in the new culture. Besides, they were not even allowed to visit their native place. Social support has been found to moderate the relationship between acculturative stress and psychological adjustment in a new cultural milieu (Jibeen & Khalid, 2011). In their systematic review on the risk and protective factors for the mental health of married immigrant women of Korea, for example, Lee & Park (2017) identified social support to be a protective factor. Absence of social support, on the other hand, is associated with psychological distress, as was found by Jibeen and Khalid (2010) in their study on Pakistani immigrants in Canada. Thus, the lack of social support in their geographically distant and culturally unfamiliar marital home has consequences for the well-being of the cross-region brides of rural Haryana.

Despite being widely prevalent, cross-regional marriages do not receive the same respect that is given to the conventional marriages in Haryanvi society. This lack of respect is reflected from the narratives of the cross-region brides who reported being treated as 'purchased commodities' that could be made to do as much work as their in-laws deemed fit. Further, many said they felt disrespected and unaccepted. While several others said, they were constantly taunted at in the new culture. Their difficulties in speaking and understanding the local Haryanvi dialect seemed to be a cause of being taunted at. Adaptation issues arising from one's difficulty in communicating in the local language has been identified as a major stressor for those migrating to a different culture (Nabi, 2014). In their study on married immigrant Korean women, Kang, Kang, Park & Son (2016) found a significant association between the difficulty in speaking the local tongue and symptoms of depression. However, this is contrary to the findings of Ryu (2016) and Kim & Kim (2013) who did not find poor

language ability to be a significant predictor of depressive symptoms. Although language difficulties may not be associated with the onset of psychopathology, it may act as an obstacle in adapting to the host culture (Lee & Park, 2017).

Apart from the difficulties in communicating in the new culture, adapting to the intricate differences in the religious practices between their own and the new culture also created conflicts for the migrant women of the present sample. One migrant woman said that in Haryana fewer religious festivals are celebrated as compared to her home state, and whenever she talks of worship and prayers, her marital family tells her that work is the best worship of God. These differences hurt her long-nurtured religious beliefs.

The other significant findings from the qualitative data that relate to the well-being of these women are the reluctance of the majority of the migrant women to talk about their relationship with their in-laws. Even for the few of those who did talk about their relationship with their marital family, the quality of the relationship was poor. Although the marital family had themselves made the choice of bringing home a bride from a different state, they did not treat her respectfully. The lack of acceptance in the new family coupled with the difficulties in cultural adaptation elevated their distress, so much, so that majority of them said they were not in favor of women migrating to Haryana from other states for marriage. In contrast to the cross-region brides, the local Haryanvi women had the full support of their marital family and were treated with respect not only by their in-laws but also by their community at large.

Another significant finding that demands immediate attention is that despite sex-selective abortions being illegal and being a primary factor responsible for the deficit of females in the state, the majority of the local Haryanvi women provided justifications for such a practice. Their justifications were, however, rooted in their 'helplessness'. As many of them said, in most cases, it was not a decision taken by the daughter-in-law, rather a family decision that was imposed on her. It appears that despite experiencing a male marriage squeeze, many

families in rural Haryana do not want to recognize and address the underlying cause. Socio-psychological interventions addressing this issue of sex-selective abortions and negative attitude toward the female child are warranted.

Directions for future research:

The present work is not without its limitations. While the quantitative aspect of this study specifically addresses general health, life satisfaction and acculturative stress, several other facets of cultural adaptation and well-being have not been addressed. Besides, perceived discrimination, physical health issues, psychological distress, poor relationship with one's in-laws and a lack of interest in recreational activities emerged as important themes from the qualitative work that need to be addressed in further detail.

However, its findings have significant implications for future research on cross-region brides. The results of the present study indicate the need for addressing the well-being of these women who have migrated to Haryana on account of marriage. Context-specific intervention studies that aim at enhancing their well-being and ensure their smoother transition in the new culture can be one way forward. These interventions can incorporate culture-specific practices of the host society that have been found to be positively associated with well-being. For example, satsang has been found to be efficacious in enhancing the well-being of rural women of Haryana (Singh, Jain & Singh, 2013). The incorporation of such relevant practices can not only help in enhancing their well-being but also increase their familiarity with the host culture.

Apart from intervention studies that aim at addressing their well-being (e.g. Singh et al., in press), it is important to take cognizance of the facilitators and inhibitors of their well-being in the new culture, that might have implications for policy-making. Such findings can not only provide directions for designing interventions but also have implications for developing social initiatives geared towards migrant women. It is also important to document the psychological resources that can help these women in adapting to the new cultural set-up.

Another direction for future research would be to look at the marital satisfaction of the married migrant women and to examine the impact of acculturative stress on their relationship with their spouse. Majority of the studies documenting the implications of migration on well-being have been cross-sectional in nature. Future longitudinal studies on the migrant population, specifically cross-region brides can help ascertain the long-term impact of migration on their well-being and their overall aging experience.

Conclusion

While the socio-demographic trend of migration continues to increase, it is likely to have ramifications for the well-being of the migrants, as well as the members of the host society. However, there is a dearth of research that explores the well-being of 'marriage migrants', who are in most cases women. In India, cross-region or across-state brides comprise a special category of marriage migrants. The present study analyzed the well-being of across-state brides of the North Indian state of Haryana. The findings indicated the presence of acculturative stress, and lower levels of happiness and life satisfaction among them. Further, the qualitative study also showed the presence of self-reported physical health problems. This necessitates further studies to document their psychological and physical health status. Moreover, the authors also call for initiatives to develop and deliver interventions that address the acculturative stress being encountered by the cross-region brides. Overall, long-distance cross-regional marriage migration has repercussions for the well-being of these women who have migrated to a new culture for marriage, often involuntarily.

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