

ROLE OF SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE IN FAMILIES: A STUDY AMONG SPOUSES

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at the analysis of the role of spiritual intelligence in families. . The Integrated spiritual intelligence scale and Family dysfunction inventory were administered to 544 spouses selected for the study. Results showed significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and family dysfunction. And further the results supported the importance of 'education' in determining one's spiritual intelligence and family dysfunction. Implications of these results for 'family apostolate centres' are provided.

Key Words: spiritual intelligence, family dysfunction and spouses.

INTRODUCTION:

Family is the basic unit of the society. It is the haven for the human beings. Human beings are nourished and moulded primarily on the bosom of the family. Family is the psycho-socio-spiritual environment, where the human beings live and grow. Spousal subsystem is the head and mentor of the family system. The integral development of the human being is depends on the health of this psycho-social-spiritual environment. Since spousal subsystem is the head and mentor of the family system; spiritual, emotional, social, intellectual and physical development of its members highly depends on their total personality and formation they give.

Modern scientific researches speak of a new quotient - spiritual intelligence. Spiritual intelligence forms part of our total intelligence. The spiritual writer Evelyn Underhill wrote, 'we cannot say that there is a separate "mystical sense" which some men have and some men have not, but rather that every human soul has a certain latent capacity for God, and that in some capacity is realised with an astonishing richness'. The word, 'spiritual' proposes images of sacred experience and personal reality and the soul as the subjective and personal reality. The word 'intelligence' is stand for 'mind at work', 'analytic problem solving', 'computation' and 'scientific understandings of the working of the external world'. Hence, the term spiritual intelligence may seem as contradictory. But the both, the subjective world, with which

spirituality deals and the objective world, which intelligence seeks to comprehend reside within each and every human being. Researches on spirituality brings the objective to the subjective, the world of science to the realm of sacred knowledge, where the world of science is subject to find the sacred threads that bind and may join to a transcendent reality.

Family is the primary spiritual community for the human being and its atmosphere is important for the growth of the persons. The basic human needs are initially met in the family environment. So family is the first and important place for spiritual development and parents are the primary fosterers. Family is the locus of every individual. Everyone is born and grows as a person in the context of the family. Each one's uniqueness and task is realized and actualized in the context of the family. Family dysfunction can be any condition that interferes with the healthy family functioning. All families experience their unique troubles and problems at some stage or the other. In all fairness, these events should pass. Most families have some periods of time where functioning is impaired by stressful circumstances (death in the family, a parent's serious illness, etc.). Healthy families tend to return to normal functioning after the crisis passes. In dysfunctional families, however, problems tend to be chronic and members do not consistently get their needs met. Dysfunctional family is the family in which the family members fail to function together in a healthy way. Often, the disturbance that upsets the balance of a family occurs within the family system itself. For example, the presence of an alcoholic produces changes in the behavioural patterns of the other family members. The focus of the family becomes the alcoholism. The presence of the other types of compulsive behaviours can similarly affect families. Such unbalanced families do not function well; they are dysfunctional. A dysfunctional family can exist without the presence of alcoholism or other factors such as abuse, divorce and single parent or no parent issues. The risk for the above said obsessions increases due to the operating style of the family. 'Dysfunctional Families' is the 'problem behind the problem'.

Spiritual intelligence helps the people to translate problems and struggles of life in to spiritual issues and to find more gratifying and rewarding solutions to these problems. The contemporary researches evidence that a person's emotional intelligence is a better predictor of future success than a person's IQ and spiritual intelligence is the best predictor of the happiness, serenity, good self-esteem and harmonious and loving relationships. Since family is the system of relationship and parents/spousal subsystem is the mentor of this system, spiritual intelligence of the spouses have salient feature in the family. The researcher thought of possible significant relationship between spiritual intelligence of spouses and family function/ dysfunction. Hence the researcher decided to conduct a study among spouses on role of spiritual intelligence in families.

METHODS:

Procedures and Participants-

To investigate the relationship between spiritual intelligence and family dysfunction 544 spouses, who are married between 1990 and 2010, were taken from the 18 parishes of 6 Syrian Catholic Diocese of Central Travancore. After signing a consent form, participants completed standardised instruments and demographic questions. In terms of demographic qualities of these 544 spouses, male and female were equal in number; that is; 272(50%) were male and 272 (50%) were female. Based on locale spouses are divided in to urban and rural; urban spouses were 148 (27.2%) and rural spouses were 396(72.8%) in number. Breakup of the sample based on duration of marriage were 15.8% under category of up to 5 years, 14.7% were under category of 6-10 years, 33.5% were under category of 11-15 years, 36% were under category of 16-20 years. Distribution of the sample based on the education is as follows: 48 (8.8%) spouses are below S.S.L.C, 219 (40.3%) are S.S.L.C, 152 (27.9%) are P.D.C, 92(16.9%) are U.G and 33(6.1%) are P.G and above.

Objectives of the study-

The aim of the study was to find out the relationship between spiritual intelligence and family dysfunction, to find out whether there is any difference between husband and wife regarding spiritual intelligence and family dysfunction and to test difference among spouses on spiritual intelligence and family dysfunction according to duration of marriage and their educational qualification.

Instruments-

Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale of Yosi Amram (2007) is a well adapted ecumenical scale to know the spiritual intelligence. It contains 22 subscales assessing separate SI capabilities related to Beauty, Discernment, Egolessness, Equanimity, Freedom, Gratitude, Higher-self, Holism, Immanence, Inner-wholeness, Intuition, Joy, Mindfulness, Openness, Practice, Presence, Purpose, Relatedness, Sacredness, Service, Synthesis, and Trust. These 22 subscales are grouped into 5 domains: Consciousness, Grace, Meaning, Transcendence and Truth. ISIS predicted satisfaction with life and correlated with existing measures of spirituality. It has 83 statements in a 6 point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1(Never or almost never) to 6 (Always or almost always) with minimum score 83 and maximum score 498. The 12 item consciousness scale asses the ability to operate with a high level of awareness of one's situation, context, and

intentions in the moment. High scores reflect the higher consciousness. The 19 item grace scale assesses the person's ability to express creatively and the beauty and sensuality uncovered in one's work. Higher scores reflect the high level of grace. The 8 item Meaning scale reflect the experience of deep sense of meaning and purpose from the works and obligations that goes beyond the material rewards and the ability to find meaning even in challenges, pain and suffering. Higher scores reflect the high level of Meaning. The 22-item Transcendence subscale reflects the awareness of a higher self that one listen for guidance. This connection to higher consciousness affords deeper insight and trust. Higher scores reflect the high level of Transcendence. The 22 item Truth subscale reflects the one's acceptance of him/her and the world as it is, with all of its limitations and imperfections. And one remain curious, open and seek to become aware of truth rather than resisting it, even when it may not be pleasant to face. And in working to affect change, one draw on his/her ability to accept what is. Higher scores reflect the high level of Truth. The scale of Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Inventory expressed along the six point scale, the scoring scheme adopted for the scale is as follows. For positive statement the scoring is 6,5,4,3,2, and 1, and for the negative statements, the scoring is 1,2,3,4,5 and 6. Since it as a standardized foreign tool, a study is conducted to know the Reliability. Statistical analysis -Cronbach's Alpha - is done. Value of Cronbach's Alpha for 'Integrated spiritual intelligence inventory' of Yosi Amram is found 0.914, indicates inventory is highly reliable at 91% level, so accepted.

Family Dysfunction Scale is constructed and validated by Jessy Jacob and V. Rajeswari to find out the family dysfunction in 2011. The family dysfunction scale is 84-item self report measure that focuses on married people, their significant relationships, rights and responsibilities. Participants rate items using a 5 -point, Likert -type scale, ranging never (1) to always (5). The family dysfunction scale contains seven dimensions: Biological Reasons (BR), Economical Reasons (ER), Familial Reasons (FR), Interpersonal Relationship (IR), Personality Reasons (PR), Psychological Reasons (Psy R) and Social Reasons (SR). The higher scores on each dimension reflect the higher level of family dysfunction and fewer score reflects the lower level of family dysfunction. The scale for Family Dysfunction expressed along the five point scale, the scoring scheme adopted for the scale is as follows. For negative statement the scoring was 5,4,3,2, and 1, and for the positive statements, the scoring was 1,2,3,4 and 5. To find out the reliability of the scale the investigator re-administered after 3 weeks time. The two sets of the scores are correlated by using the Pearson's Product Moment Coefficient of Correlation to obtain the reliability of the test. The reliability coefficient is found to be 0.84 (84%). It shows that the test is highly reliable.

RESULTS:

To assess the relationship between spiritual intelligence and family dysfunction, coefficient of correlation analyses were utilized. The correlation (r value) between spiritual intelligence and family dysfunction is measured as -0.498 at 1% level of significance. Hence, it is concluded that there is significant relationship between dysfunction in the family and spiritual intelligence of spouses. This indicates 49.8% negative relationship between family dysfunction and spiritual intelligence at 1% level of significance. The negative relationship implies that increase in spiritual intelligence would be resulted in decrease of family dysfunction and vice versa. Table 1 represents the summary of the analysis.

Table: No. 1

Coefficient of Correlation for Significant Relationship between Dysfunction in the Family and Spiritual Intelligence of the Spouses

| <i>Variables</i> | <i>Sample</i> | <i>Spiritual Intelligence</i> |
|---------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Family Dysfunction</i> | 544 | -0.498** |

Note: ** denotes significant at 1% level

Chi square test is used to find out the association between the level of spiritual intelligence and level of family dysfunction. Since P value for the test is found to be less than 0.001, it is concluded that there is association between level of spiritual intelligence and level of family dysfunction. Based on the row and column percentage, it is inferred that the spouses have low level of spiritual intelligence have high level of family dysfunction. Table 2 shows the summary of the analysis.

Table No.2

Chi Square test for Association between Level of Spiritual Intelligence and Level of Family Dysfunction

| Level of Spiritual intelligence | Level of Family Dysfunction | | | Total | Chi-square Value | P value |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------|------------------|----------|
| | Low | Average | High | | | |
| Low | 12 (8.5) [8.8] | 59 (41.5) [22.1] | 71 (50.0) [50.7] | 142 | 125.324 | <0.001** |
| Average | 52 (19.8) [38.0] | 146 (55.5) [54.7] | 65 (24.7) [46.4] | 263 | | |
| High | 73 (52.5) [53.3] | 62 (44.6) [23.2] | 4 (2.9) [2.9] | 139 | | |
| Total | 137 | 267 | 140 | 544 | | |

Note: 1. The value within () refers to Row Percentage
 2. The value within [] refers to Column Percentage
 3. **Denotes significant at 1% level

t test is used to know the difference among husbands and wives, difference among rural and urban spouses with regard to spiritual intelligence and family dysfunction. The P value obtained for the difference between husbands and wives on spiritual intelligence and family dysfunction was greater than 0.05. Hence, it is concluded that there is no significant difference between husbands and wives with respect family dysfunction and Spiritual intelligence. Based on average score of overall dysfunctional family inventory, female spouses show slightly higher in dysfunctional family inventory, but not significant at 5% level. Based on average score, of overall spiritual intelligence inventory, the husbands are slightly higher in Spiritual Intelligence than wives, but not significant at 5% level.

The P value for the overall family dysfunction and spiritual intelligence is less than 0.01. Hence it is concluded that, there is significant difference between urban and rural spouses with respect

to overall family dysfunction and spiritual intelligence. The close observation of the mean scores reveals that, the mean score of family dysfunction of rural spouses is greater than the mean score of urban spouses and the mean score of spiritual intelligence of rural spouses is less than that of urban spouses. Hence it is inferred that rural spouses have high family dysfunction and low spiritual intelligence when compared to urban spouses

The tables 3 & 4 give the summary of analyses.

Table No.3

Student t test for Significant Difference between Husbands and Wives
with Respect to Family Dysfunction and Spiritual Intelligence

| Variables | Gender | | | | t value | P value |
|--|---------|-------|--------|-------|---------|---------|
| | Husband | | Wife | | | |
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | |
| Overall Dysfunctional Family Inventory | 148.60 | 42.14 | 151.96 | 45.95 | 0.891 | 0.373 |
| Overall Spiritual Intelligence | 334.21 | 51.86 | 333.11 | 51.35 | 0.248 | 0.804 |

Table No.4

Student t test for significant difference between Urban and Rural spouses
with respect to Family Dysfunction and Spiritual Intelligence

| Variables | Locality | | | | t value | P value |
|--------------------------------|----------|-------|--------|-------|---------|----------|
| | Urban | | Rural | | | |
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | | |
| Overall Family Dysfunction | 140.17 | 44.58 | 154.06 | 43.34 | 3.300 | <0.001** |
| Overall Spiritual Intelligence | 349.41 | 51.63 | 327.77 | 50.34 | 4.430 | <0.001** |

**Denotes significant at 1% level

Analysis of variance is utilized to find out the difference between duration of marriage and educational background of the spouses with respect to family dysfunction and spiritual intelligence. The P value of the ANOVA for Significant Difference between Duration of

Marriage of Spouses with respect to Family Dysfunction and Spiritual Intelligence is greater than 0.05. Hence it is inferred that there is no significant difference between duration of marriage of spouses with respect to family dysfunction and spiritual intelligence.

The P value of ANOVA for Significant Difference between Educational Qualification of Spouses with respect to Family Dysfunction and Spiritual Intelligence is less than 0.01. Hence it is inferred that there is difference between the educational qualification of the spouses with respect to the family dysfunction and spiritual intelligence. So to know the exact difference, Post Hoc Analyses of Duncan Multiple Range Test is done. Based on Duncan Multiple Range test, the spouses with UG and PG educational background have less family dysfunction and high spiritual intelligence when compared to the other groups. And the spouses, whose educational background is below SSLC, have higher levels of family dysfunction and low levels of spiritual intelligence. The tables 5 & 6 give the summary of the analysis and mean plots give the impact of educational background of the spouses on family dysfunction and spiritual intelligence.

Table No.5

ANOVA for Significant Difference between Duration of Marriage of Spouses
with respect to Family Dysfunction and Spiritual Intelligence

| Dimensions of DFI | Duration of the Marriage in years | | | | F value | P value |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------|---------|
| | Up to 5 | 6-10 | 11-15 | 16-20 | | |
| Family Dysfunction | 147.74 (37.12) | 150.55 (47.79) | 148.93 (46.25) | 152.54 (43.47) | 0.323 | 0.809 |
| Overall Spiritual Intelligence | 326.07 (51.98) | 327.93 (54.87) | 335.59 (52.84) | 337.53 (48.53) | 1.407 | 0.240 |

Note: 1. Value within bracket refers to SD
2. Value without bracket refers to Mean

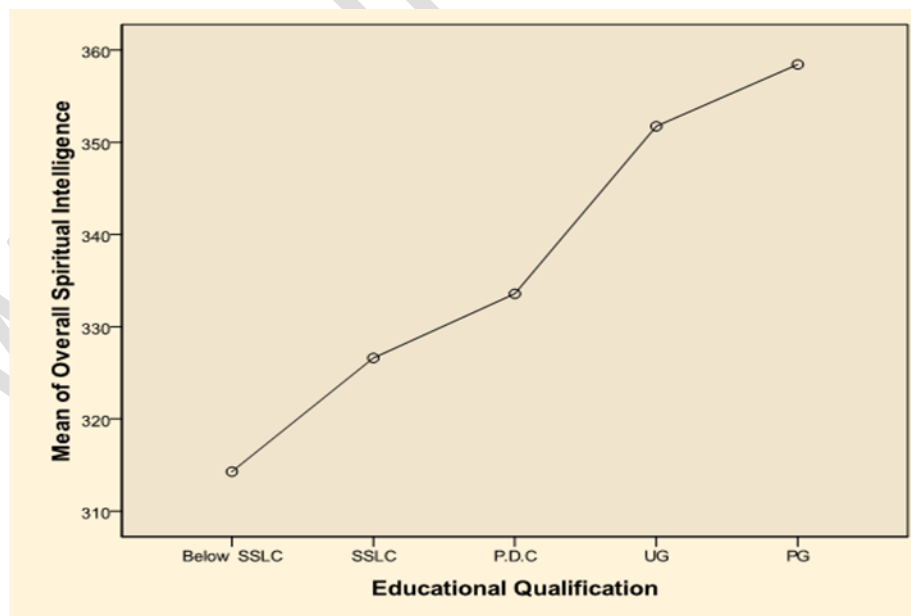
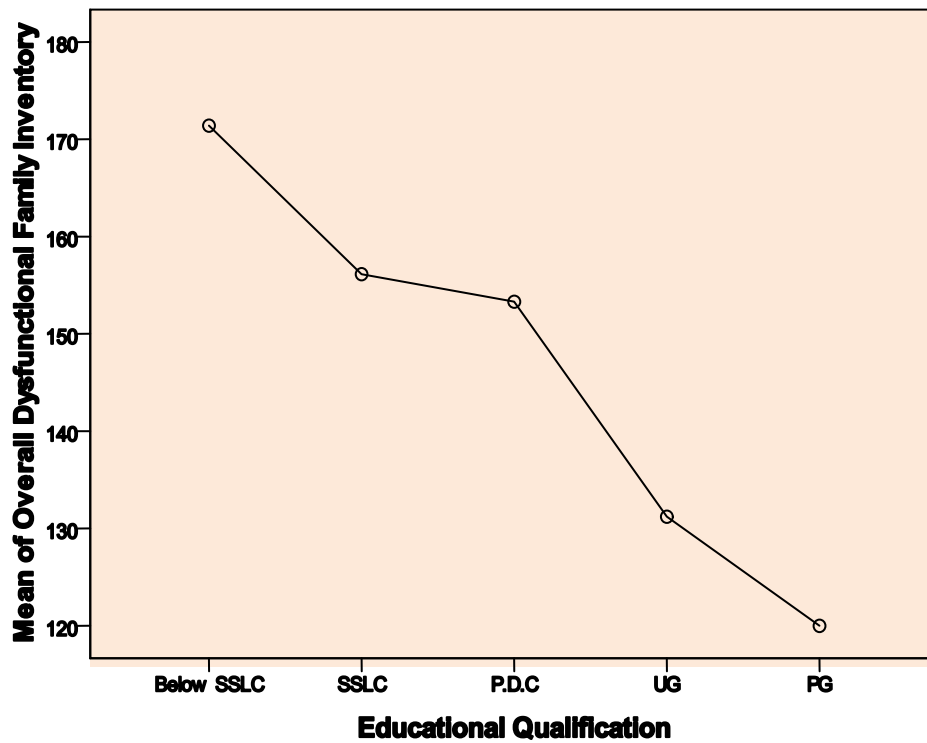
Table No.6

ANOVA for Significant Difference between Educational Qualification of Spouses with respect to Family Dysfunction and Spiritual Intelligence

| Dimensions of DFI | Educational Qualification | | | | | F value | P value |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------|----------|
| | Below SSLC | SSLC | P.D.C | UG | PG | | |
| Overall Family Dysfunction | 171.40 ^c (53.82) | 156.13 ^b (45.47) | 153.30 ^b (42.46) | 131.21 ^a (30.37) | 120.00 ^a (23.70) | 13.182 | <0.001** |
| Overall Spiritual Intelligence | 314.29 ^a (48.29) | 326.62 ^{ab} (50.67) | 333.58 ^b (47.68) | 351.75 ^c (49.35) | 358.45 ^c (63.73) | 7.830 | <0.001** |

- Note. 1. Value within bracket refers to SD
 2. ** Denotes significant at 1% level
 3. Different alphabet denotes significance at 5% level using DMRT

Figure No: 1&2
Mean Plot for Family Dysfunction and spiritual Intelligence
based on the Educational Qualification of the Spouses



DISCUSSIONS:

The study revealed that 84.5% of the spouses under the study experienced on an average and above average level family dysfunction and 82.96% of the spouses experienced an average and below average level of spiritual intelligence. The conclusion that one can reliably make, from the statistical facts stated above, is that though the spouses are from same community and with the same spiritual formation backgrounds, a great difference is observed in the acquiring of differentiation of self and spiritual intelligence. And hence, it can be reliably concluded that they are experiencing various levels of family dysfunction. It indicates the inadequacy of programmes offered to the families to build necessary skills for the improvement of families, and the failure of the spouses in implementing the instructions and the exercises in their daily lives, as well as the insincere and dishonest spiritual practices. It also points out the lack of follow up programmes for the families.

Significant negative relationship is found between family dysfunction and spiritual intelligence. Therefore family dysfunction can be reduced by increase of spiritual intelligence. It is found that the male and female partners do not show any significant difference in family dysfunction, and spiritual intelligence and their dimensions. In the case of family dysfunction, the above facts assure and support the existence of family dysfunction in all families, because the husbands and the wives filled the same questionnaire separately. The level of spiritual intelligence and the similarity in the levels of spiritual intelligence between the male and female partners of Syrian catholic community shows the inadequacy of the inputs giving to them and the less involvement of the spouses in assimilating what they are getting.

The results show a high level of 'family dysfunction' and a low level of "spiritual intelligence' among the rural spouses. It might be the consequence of high alcoholic consumption and related problems among the rural male partners, low socio economic and educational status. It calls for more attention to the rural spouses in terms of awareness sessions, training programs, exercises and follow-up. Though the urban spouses show significant difference (high) from the rural spouses in their 'family dysfunction', from the study, it is found that most of them still suffer from considerable 'family dysfunction'. Hence, an appropriate intervention for the urban spouses is also needed.

It is found that the spouses, with U.G and P.G educational background and with still more qualifications, show low level of 'family dysfunction', high level of 'spiritual intelligence'. It reveals the importance of higher education to build "spiritual intelligence" and 'family function'. Again it is to be noted that though the highly educated spouses are different from their counterparts, still to a large extent they are also experiencing 'family dysfunction' and its consequences. It reveals the need of the improvement of the curriculum with reference to goal-setting and integrated growth of mind, heart and the basic values of life and practical knowledge to understand the various dimensions of a family life and skill related to living together as a functional family.

The study reveals that the spouses, across various stages of family life and different number of children have no significant difference in their 'family dysfunction', and 'spiritual intelligence', which implies their age, period and experience of family life do not contribute for the development of the skills needed for a good 'functional family life', and 'spiritual intelligence'. This brings out the necessity of goal setting and development programs according to the stages of family life.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following ideas are recommended for the consideration

- ❖ Conduct the marriage and the family enrichment programmes for spouses, specifically with reference to building up of 'spiritual intelligence' to transform the families into healthy and functional families. The spouses are to be encouraged and facilitated to participate so as to derive the benefits and grow as mature and responsible spouses.
- ❖ Have a 'family renewal and renovation team' to attend to the problems and needs of the families in time.
- ❖ Include the 'programmes based on spiritual intelligence and family function' in the premarital training courses.
- ❖ Conduct the programmes based on 'spiritual intelligence' and for the spouses of different marital stages or family cycle.

- ❖ Start a telephone 'HELPLINE' to provide facility for those spouses who need very urgent help and those who cannot travel or find time to attend the organized programs.
- ❖ To develop separate programmes for 'rural spouses' and 'urban spouses' to improve the 'spiritual intelligence and differentiation of self' so as to improve the family function.

CONCLUSION:

The family is an intermediate institution between individuals and society, and nothing can completely take its place. In the words of Blessed Pope John Paul II, the Pope of the families, "as the family goes, so goes the nation, and so goes the whole world in which we live". Again, according to his words, 'to maintain a joyful family, requires much from both the parents and the children. Each member of the family has to become, in a special way, the servant of the others' (Pope John Paul II, 1998).

Spirituality and spiritual intelligence have their greatest application and most profound relevance in day to day activities. Understanding the spiritual style as well as the spiritual strengths and limitations will help human beings to see them more clearly and improve their intra / interpersonal relationships. In an increasingly complex and materialistic world, understanding spirituality will provide new kind of tool for coping better with challenges of practical life. As psychological insights illuminate unique dimensions of individual differences with respect to personality, spiritual insights can illuminate unique dimensions of sacred and ineffable experience and thereby enhance opportunities for personal growth. The application of spiritual intelligence create unprecedented moral choices, which will improve the quality of the relationships with oneself, one another and with the world we live.

The family is itself based primarily on a deep interpersonal relationship between husband and wife, sustained by affection and mutual understanding. The family is a necessary good for peoples, an indispensable foundation for society and a great and lifelong treasure for couples. It is a unique good for children, who are meant to be the fruit of the love, of the total and generous self-giving of their parents. Therefore the society, government and ecclesial community have an important role to play, as networks of support, encouragement and spiritual nourishment which

can strengthen the cohesiveness of the family and a helping hand for the growth of families especially in times of trial or difficulty.

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