EMERGING PATTERNS OF FAMILY FINANCE AMONG YOUNG MARRIED COUPLES

Dr. Rupinder Kaur Ghumman
Associate Professor, Dept. of Family Resource Management,   Govt. Home Science College, Sector ,Chandigarh,India.

Abstract
The money management is becoming very challenging since there have been dramatic innovations in which young married couples receive, hold and spend their money. The present study was conducted to assess the income and monthly expenditure pattern of young married couples and to evaluate the innovative methods used for handling money and finance techniques by them. The young married couples were highly qualified and financially well off. Female respondents were contributing almost equally towards the family income. Non significant difference between gender and expenditure pattern was observed since male and female respondents reported more or less similar kind of expenditure on various items. Both husband and wife were pooling their income in single pot and they were collectively handling money in marriage. The more use of innovative techniques like electronic gadgets for keeping the financial record and debit cards as mode of money transactions shows the emerging patterns of finance practices among young married couples. The marriage money is the basic consumption unit of society. The present study was significant to economy as whole because the increase in individual and family money ultimately increases the total money in the economy. The study proved useful in sensitizing the youngsters towards developing life time habit of frugality and controlling temptation of wasteful consumption. Furthermore the findings can be helpful to evaluate & reform their money management practices and strengthen their financial status.

Keywords: Money Management Practices, Total IncomeYoung Married Couples, Plastic Money.

Introduction
Family is a smallest consumer unit leading to circular flow of income in the economy. It passes through different stages of development. Each stage of life has own values, duty and challenges. Feldman observed, if the marriage partners do not recognize their basic conflicts and endeavor to reduce them in the beginning stage of their marriage; it obscures and complicates their personal relations. During foundation years (upto 4 years of marriage) more goals are formed than later stage of marriage. The improvement of family relationship and setting up of new home are one of the major goals during the stage. The shift from the dependence on parents to the assumption of responsibility of one's own welfare and that of a spouse as well has special significance financially and personally. Young couples are confronted with many financial and managerial problems since their expectations are highest of any age group resulting in high demand for consumer goods and lesser savings. (Seetharaman 2005) The money management is becoming very challenging and innovative because of the earn and burn policy adopted by the youngsters. The young money managers feel encouraged to make more use of consumer credit, installment payments in lieu of cash payments. There have been dramatic innovations in which young married couples receive, hold and spend their money. With rapid development in e-money, new forms of money such as credit & debit cards, cash cards, telephonic & Internet banking are becoming very popular. Furthermore urbanization and increased use of technology has lead to commercialization of plastic money. The increasing use of plastic money calls for better understanding of its operation and management. So it is pertinent to examine the pattern of expenditure and innovative money management practices adopted by young married couples to run their family expenses. Plans must be evolved by an appraisal of all income and essential needs in order to bring the two together and to arrive at a satisfactory plan (Nickell & Dorsey, 2002). In India, little organized information and researches are available in this regard. Hence efforts have been made to study the income pattern, expenditure pattern and other money management practices.

Need & Scope of Study
The Union Territory of Chandigarh has been chosen purposely for the study since it is an emerging outsourcing and I.T. services destination, with modern outlook, changing value system and highest per capita income in the country. Chandigarh ranks first in India in the Human Development Index, quality of life and e-readiness. Moreover being the city beautiful, it is much sought after destination for the youngsters to settle after marriage. Here the young married couples are either earning meager salaries or enormous pay packages. In both the situations they find it increasingly difficult to balance between income and expenditure. The extensive use of plastic money and not keeping the record of the same has added to many day to day problems.

Objectives
- To assess the income of young married couples;
- To ascertain the monthly expenditure pattern of young couples;

- To evaluate the innovative methods used for handling money and finance techniques adopted by them to manage their day-to-day finances.

Sample
The study was conducted in Chandigarh City during the years 2010-2014. In all there were 200 young married couples (100 males and 100 females) who were working and selected from three phases of Chandigarh city equally.

Tool
An Interview schedule was used to collect information from young married couples

Analysis of data
The collected data was analyzed and interpreted using relevant appropriate statistical tools viz. frequency tables, mean, standard variation, t-test, association of variables with socio personal profile based on Chi-square test.

Result & Discussions
Socio Economic Profile
- The general information of young married couples revealed that majority of the respondents were of 31 – 41 years of age, post graduate, doing either private or government jobs, belonged to nuclear families and were within 10 years of marriage.
- As regards the mean income per month on the basis of their socio personal characteristics revealed that the mean income of the male respondents was Rs.66,948/- per month where as mean income of the female respondents was little less i.e. Rs.62,868/- per month. So it can be concluded that the young married couples were financially well off and female respondents were contributing almost equally towards the family income. However non-significant differences were reported between the two (p = .518) as shown in the table 1.

Table1. Distribution of respondents according to their mean income:

Pattern of monthly expenditure across young married couples.

Gender	N	Mean Income /month (in Rs..)	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value
Male	100	66948	44914.64	0.648	0.518
Female	100	62868	44178.25		

P-value<0.01=**, p-value<0.05=* & p-value>0.05=ns

To ascertain the monthly expenditure pattern of young married couples, the questions were firstly asked from the respondents regarding their expenditure on various consumption items i.e. food, clothing, housing, education, transport, personal grooming, medical expenditure, paid services, recreation, social and religious. The impact of gender i.e. male & female on the expenditure pattern was studied. It is evident from the table II that the males reported more expenditure per month on education, medical expenses and paid services i.e. Rs.6260, 1806 and Rs.3261 per month respectively. Contrary to the normal expectations, males reported little more expenditure on clothing i.e. Rs.6341 than female expenditure of Rs.6248, supporting the changing trend that the young married males spend no less money on clothing than their female counter parts and were seeing equally well dressed during the study. Interestingly the females reported more expenditure per month on personal grooming i.e., Rs.6697 respectively than males who reported Rs.6417 expenditure/month. It was also observed during data collection that female respondents were generally better dressed and well groomed than male respondents. However the expenditure pattern on food, housing, transport, recreation, social and religious activities were reportedly more or less the same for male and female respondents.

Although there was difference among male and female with respect to their expenditure pattern on different consumer item as depicted in Table II but statically these differences were found to be in non-significant at 5% level of significance.

Research Paper
Impact Factor: 3.029
Peer Reviewed & Indexed Journal

IJMSRR
E- ISSN - 2349-6746
ISSN -2349-6738

Table II: Distribution of respondents i.e. male and female according to their mean expenditure (Rs. /Month) incurred on various consumption items.

Male (M) =100
Female (F) =100

Consumption Items	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value
Food Item	Male	6753	2713.28	0.294	.769ns
	Female	6642	2620.75		
Clothing	Male	6341	3744.25	0.181	.857ns
	Female	6248	3535.83		
Housing	Male	11155	3222.12	0.647	.519ns
	Female	10861	3205.95		
Education	Male	6260.27	4263.05	0.498	.619ns
	Female	5965.09	4117.35		
Transport	Male	4805	4844.12	0.15	.881ns
	Female	4911	5120.25		
Personal grooming	Male	6417.1	4711.71	0.406	.685ns
	Female	6697	5037.59		
Medical expenses	Male	1806	1250.6	1.372	.172ns
	Female	1570	1181.72		
Paid services	Male	3261.11	2599.47	1.012	.313ns
	Female	2903	2390.01		
Recreation	Male	3231	2931.19	0.04	.968ns
	Female	3215	2685.78		
Social and Religious	Male	2663	2584.09	0.21	.834ns
	Female	2586	2589.53		
total expenditure	Male	52659.87	27132.79	0.275	.783ns
	Female	51598.09	27393.76		
p-value<0.01=**, p-value<0.05=* & p-value>0.05=ns					

Methods used for Handling Money

To manage day to day finances in daily life, the couple's participation in other money practices such as methods used for handling income and financial records were evaluated. The choice of a method of handling money gives all members of a family a feeling of satisfaction (Nickell and Dorsey, 2002). The responses have been summarized in the following table.

Table III: Distribution of respondents according to methods used for handling money according to socio personal characteristics

socio personal characteristics	Category	Pools his/her earnings in a single pot	Maintain Separate Purse	Fifty Fifty system	Partial Contribution	Total	Pearson Chi- Square	p-Value
		No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)		
Gender	Male	57(57.0)	16(16.0)	21(21.0)	6(6.0)	100(100.0)	.354	.950ns
	Female	53(53.0)	18(18.0)	23(23.0)	6(6.0)	100(100.0)		
Age	<= 30.00	41(46.1)	13(14.6)	26(29.2)	9(10.1)	89(100.0)	12.92	.044*
	31.00 - 40.00	64(62.7)	20(19.6)	16(15.7)	2(2.0)	102(100.0)		
	41.00+	5(55.6)	1(11.1)	2(22.2)	1(11.1)	9(100.0)		
Occupatio	Govt. Job	40(55.6)	11(15.3)	15(20.8)	6(8.3)	72(100.0)	11.92	.064ns

Research Paper
Impact Factor: 3.029
Peer Reviewed & Indexed Journal

IJMSRR
E- ISSN - 2349-6746
ISSN -2349-6738

n	Private Job	48(61.5)	9(11.5)	15(19.2)	6(7.7)	78(100.0)	
	Business	22(44.0)	14(28.0)	14(28.0)	0(0)	50(100.0)	
Education	<=Graduate	23(54.8)	8(19.0)	8(19.0)	3(7.1)	42(100.0)	
	Post Graduate	78(59.1)	24(18.2)	25(18.9)	5(3.8)	132(100.0)	14.49 .025*
	Ph.d.	9(34.6)	2(7.7)	11(42.3)	4(15.4)	26(100.0)	
Type of family	Nuclear	76(55.1)	20(14.5)	35(25.4)	7(5.1)	138(100.0)	4.57 .206ns
	Joint	34(54.8)	14(22.6)	9(14.5)	5(8.1)	62(100.0)	
p-value<0.01=**, p-value<0.05=* & p-value>0.05=ns							

It is clear from the table III that irrespective of gender, age, occupation, education type of family maximum respondent reported that they pooled their earnings in a single pot and out which expenditures were done collectively. Thus both husband and wife were collectively handling money in marriage, which is a good money management practice. The Value of Chi-square test revealed significant difference in methods of handling money with regard to age and education. The second popular method of handling money in marriage is through 'fifty fifty' system which is reported by 21% males, 23% females and also in the age, occupation and education categories 29% respondents less than 30yrs, 22% respondent more than 41 years; 21% in govt. job, 19% in private job, 28% business respondent; 19% graduates, 42% post graduates respondent; 25% respondent belonging to nuclear families reported the same system i.e. Fifty-Fifty system. It is also evident from the table that third and fourth method of handling money is reported to be maintaining 'separate Purse' and 'partial contributions' respectively.

Innovative Methods Used For keeping Financial Records
Financial records are essential tool in keeping an account of total planned expenditure and the actual expenditure made. These are essentially the written records, which can be referred easily at any point for cross checking the family finances and for future spending plans. Such records if maintained in family can point out the possible areas where reduction can be made in spending. It is evident from the table III that among young married couples (45% males and 46% females) the most popular method used in keeping the money records are electronic gadgets viz. laptop, tablets and swanky smart cell phones. They reported that different files in these gadgets can be accessed at any time anywhere in the world. Furthermore, the details of money transactions when made through debit or credit cards or net-banking are immediately received on mobile phones. Hence such messages become part of their financial records. It is further found in the study that the other forms of keeping financial records in order of the popularity were Daily Diaries, Receipt and cash book. However young couples found these methods to be non practical and traditional.

It is found that there is statistically significant association between method used for financial records with age & occupation variables. However no statistically significant association between methods used for financial records with gender and education of respondents was found.

Table IV:Distribution of respondents according to the method used for keeping financial records

Socio Personal Characteristics	Category	Electronic	Daily Diary	Cash Book	Receipt Record	Total	Pearson Chi- Square	p-Value
		No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)		
Gender	Male	45(45.0)	32(32.0)	16(16.0)	7(7.0)	100(100.0)	.106	.991ns
	Female	46(46.0)	30(30.0)	17(17.0)	7(7.0)	100(100.0)		
Age	<= 30.00	35(39.3) 39.3%	31(34.8) 34.8%	12(13.5) 13.5%	11(12.4) 12.4%	89(100.0) 100.0%	15.724	.015*

Research Paper
Impact Factor: 3.029
Peer Reviewed & Indexed Journal

IJMSRR
E- ISSN - 2349-6746
ISSN -2349-6738

	31.00 - 40.00	53(52.0)	26(25.5)	21(20.6)	2(2.0)	102(100.0)		
	41.00+	3(33.3)	5(55.6)	0(0.00)	1(1.11)	9(100.0)		
Occupation	Govt. Job	32(44.4)	20(27.8)	14(19.4)	6(8.3)	72(100.0)	17.64	.007**
	Private Job	36(46.2)	32(41.0)	4(5.1)	6(7.7)	78(100.0)		
	Business	23(46.0)	10(20.0)	15(30.0)	2(4.0)	50(100.0)		
Education	<=Graduate	18(42.9)	11(26.2)	9(21.4)	4(9.5)	42(100.0)	10.16	.118ns
	Post Graduate	59(44.7)	43(32.6)	24(18.2)	6(4.5)	132(100.0)		
	Ph.d	14(53.8)	8(30.8)	0(0.00)	4(15.4)	26(100.0)		
p-value<0.01=**, p-value<0.05=* & p-value>0.05=ns								

Innovative Modes of Money Transactions
Different kinds of money transaction are popular among young married couples in Chandigarh city. The use of plastic money is gaining popularity among them. It is clear from the table IV that 63% males and 62% females predominately used cash money transaction whereas the credit as a mode of money transaction was 'Never' used by 55% males and 43% females. Similarly the credit cards were "sometimes" used by 48% males and "Always used by 47% females. The debit cards were reportedly 'always' by 70% males and 81% females as their mode of money transaction. From data given in table, it can be concluded that among majority of young married couple's cash and debit cards are the most popular modes of money transactions whereas they hesitate in the use of 'credit & credit cards'. These figures show that young married couples played safe and indulged in good money management practices.

Table V: Distribution of respondents according to their frequency observed in different modes of money transactions:

Mode of Money transactions	Category	Always	Sometimes	Never	Total
		No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)	No. (%)
Cash	Male	63(63.0)	35(35.0)	2(2.0)	100(100.0)
	Female	62(62.0)	26(26.0)	12(12.0)	100(100.0)
Credit	Male	9(9)	36(36)	55(55)	100(100.0)
	Female	20(20)	37(37)	43(43)	100(100.0)
credit cards	Male	19(19)	48(48)	33(33)	100(100.0)
	Female	47(47)	30(30)	23(23)	100(100.0)
Debit cards	Male	70(70)	8(8)	22(22)	100(100.0)
	Female	81(81)	11(11)	8(8)	100(100.0)

Conclusions
The young married couples were highly qualified and financially well off. Female respondents were contributing almost equally towards the family income. No significant difference between gender and expenditure pattern was observed. Both husband and wife were pooling their income in single pot. Thus they were collectively handling money in marriage. The more use of innovative techniques like electronic gadgets for keeping the financial record and debit cards as mode of money transactions shows the emerging patterns of finance practices among young married couples.

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