

A STUDY ON THE DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERNS, STRUCTURE, UTILIZATION AND OUTCOMES OF COUNSELLING SERVICES OFFERED AT PARIVARTHAN COUNSELLING, TRAINING AND RESEARCH CENTRE

This Study pertains to counselling services offered couples and individuals seeking help for relationship issues. Data was collected from the records at the Centre for 2+ year period (January 2005 to March 2007) and analysed using Descriptive Statistics

This Study was a part of the Workshop Presentation on **Couples Therapy in India - Learnings and Challenges** that was presented at the International Conference on Psychology in Mental Health (July 2007) organized by the Department of Mental Health and Social Psychology, at the **National Institute of Mental Health & Neuro Sciences(NIMHANS), Bangalore.**

1. Socio Demographic & Clinical Picture of Clients seeking help for Relationship Problems/Issues

	Age (Average)		Gender		% Previous Counselling Experience *		% Who prefer Female Counsellor **	
	M	F	M %	F %	M %	F %	M %	F%
Ongoing	37.2 yrs	35.6 yrs	43.3%	56.7%	61.5%	82.3%	30.8%	41.2%
Completed	35.5 yrs	35.8 yrs	38.8%	61.2%	21.2%	29.3%	19.2%	36.6%
Drop Outs	33.7 yrs	32.8 yrs	32.2%	67.8%	47.4%	37.5%	31.6%	42.5%
PERCENTAGE	35.4 yrs	34.9 yrs	37.7%	62.3%	33.3%	38.1%	23.8%	38.8%
No Shows	36.9 yrs	31.2 yrs	32.8%	67.2%	15.8%	23.7%	21.1%	51.3%
PERCENTAGE	35.7 yrs	34.1 yrs	36.7%	63.3%	30.1%	34.8%	23.3%	41.6%

90 % of clients who come to Parivarthan are from the middle and upper middle class. The average age of our clientele is in the mid 30's. It is our observation that the expectations of marriage and relationships are changing. Clients are no longer willing to "settle for" status quo in their marriage as has been with the previous generations. This motivates them to come and seek solutions to improve their quality of their relationship. This is either addressed through couple or individual work.

CHART 1

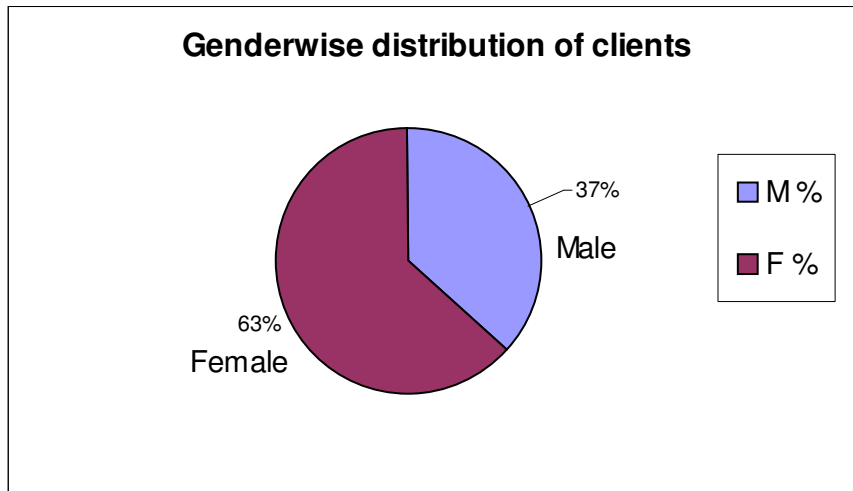
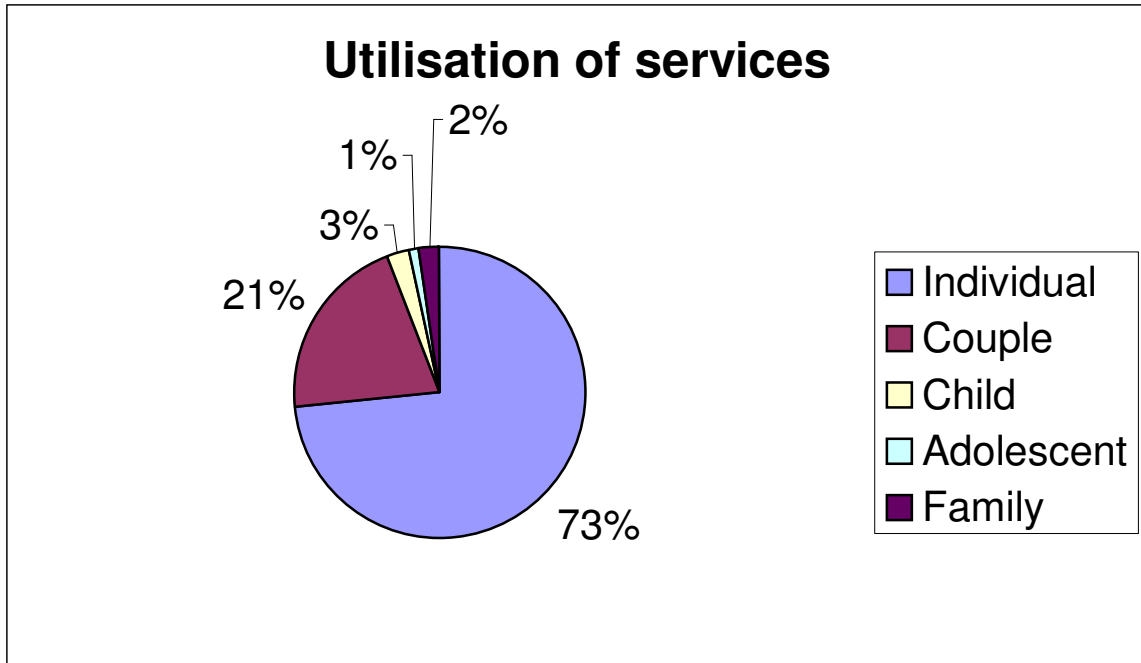


Chart 1 indicates that we have more female than male clients. These numbers tie in with our experience in our counselling sessions where we see that the responsibility for keeping the family together and their well being largely appears to rest or is assumed by women.

II. UTILISATION OF SERVICES

This chart depicts the nature of counselling services provided and how they are utilised.

CHART 2



We offer individual sessions to our couple clients when there is a need for some individual issues to be addressed. Our study also showed that more than one fourth of our couple clients made use of this service.

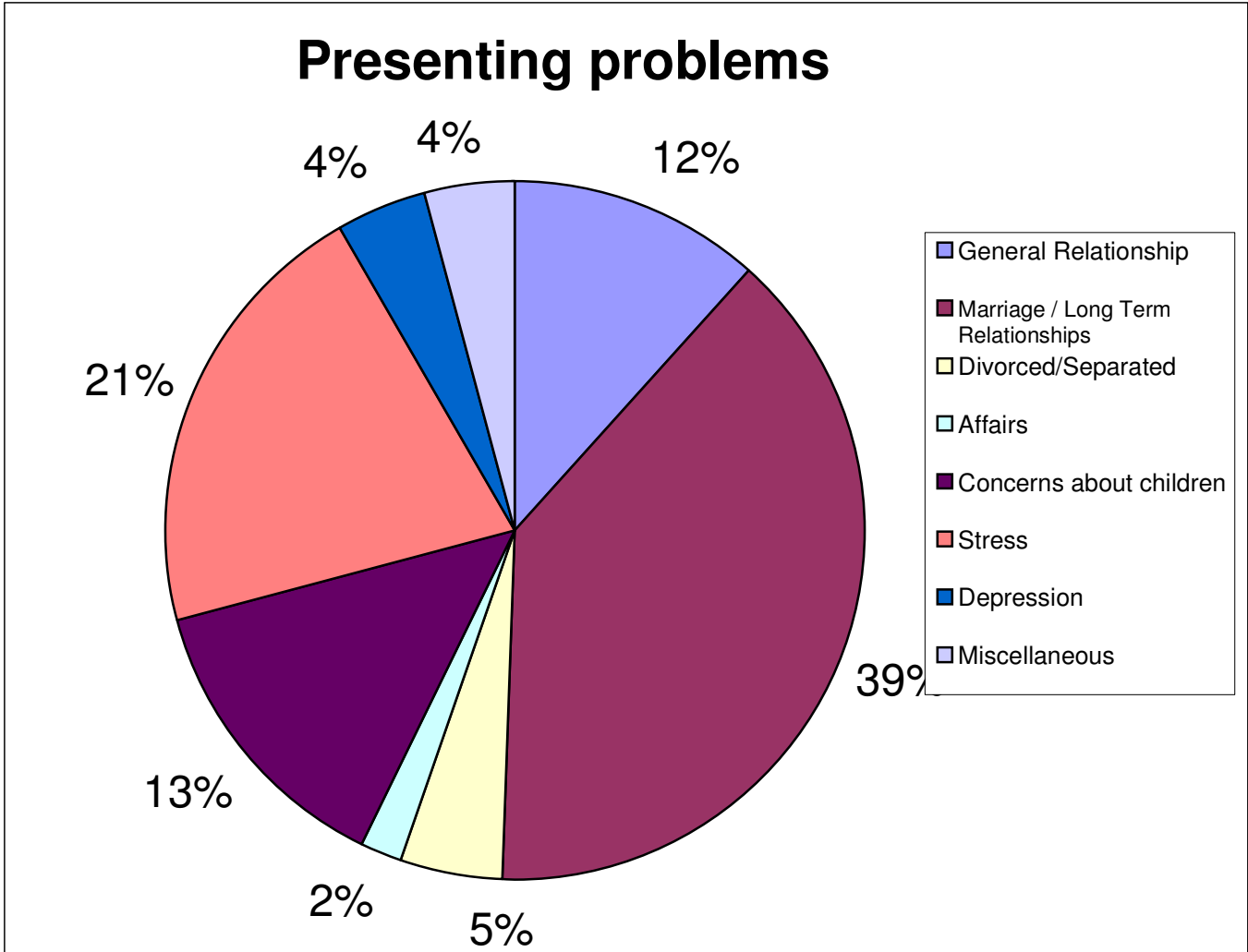
III PRESENTING PROBLEMS:

Chart 3 depicts an analysis of the presenting problems of all the people who contacted Parivarthan.

We have used Multiple Coding for the Presenting Problems Data.

The presenting problems were grouped into commonly understood codes as represented on the chart

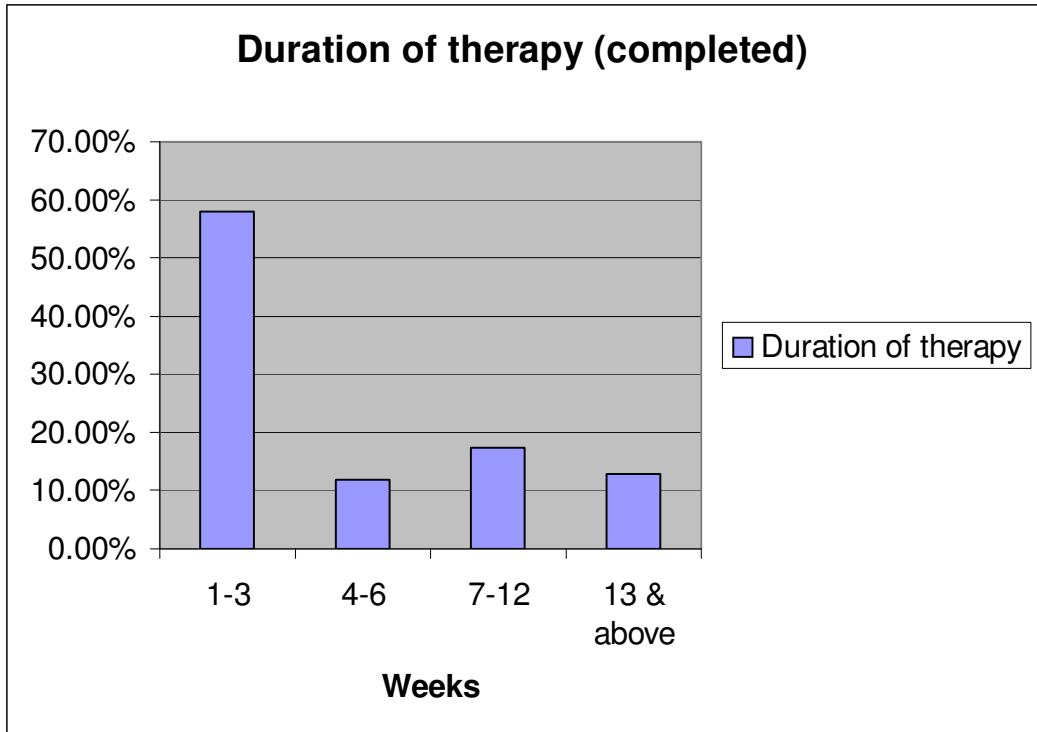
CHART 3



A comparison of information between chart 2 and 3 indicates that though the number of children who came to the Centre were less (3.7%), we note that 16% of the adult population present with issues concerning their children.

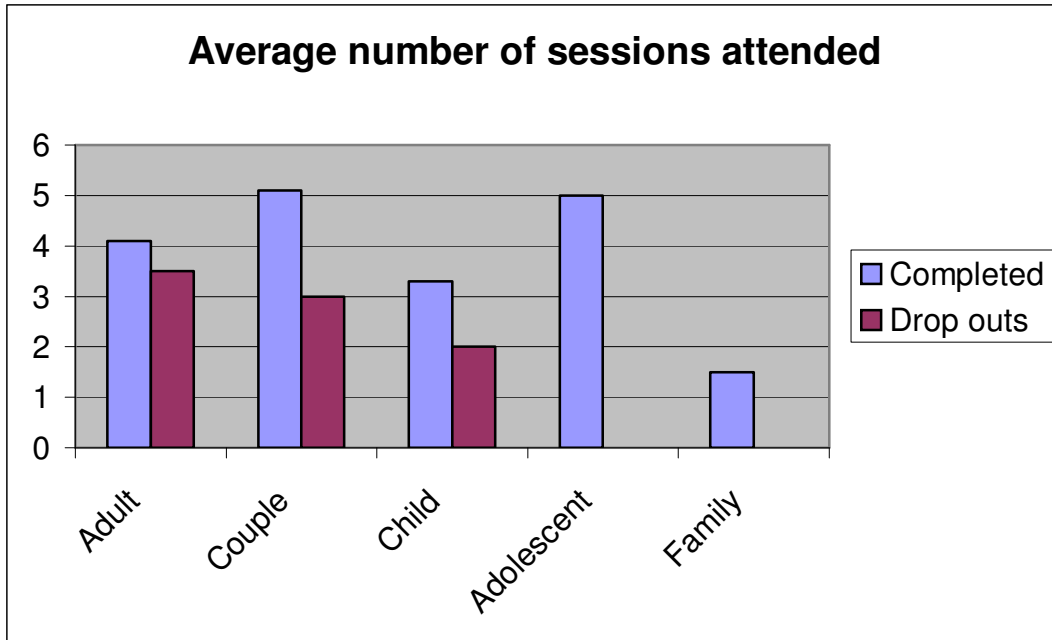
IV THERAPY STRUCTURE

CHART 4



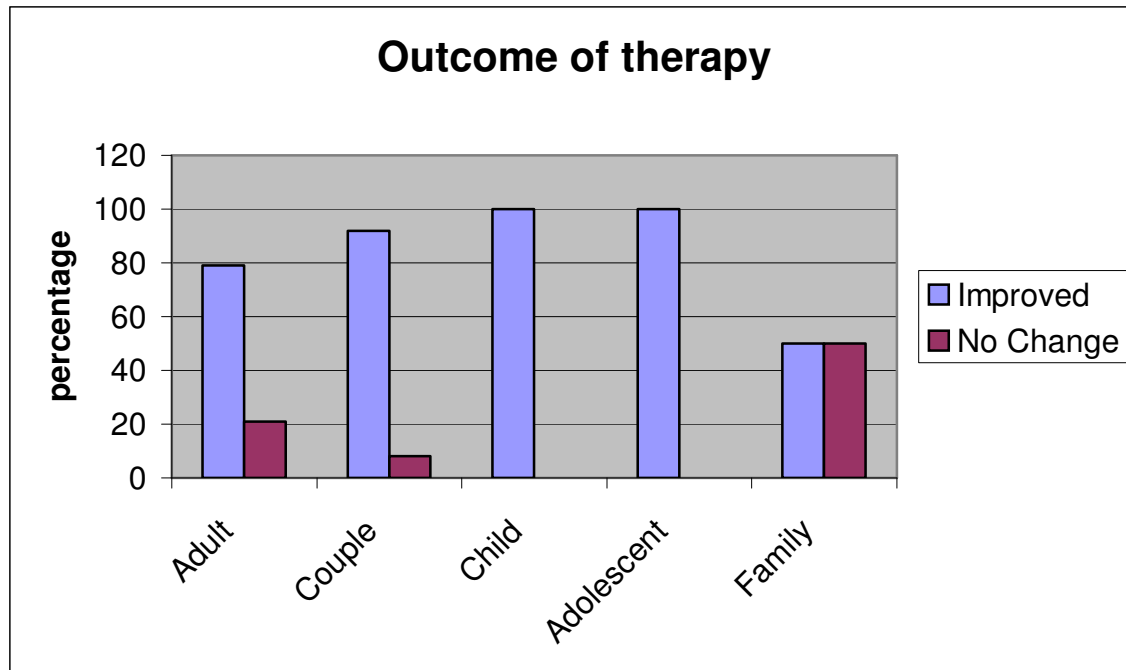
The bar chart depicts the average duration of counselling in weeks as sessions are usually held at weekly intervals. Though a majority of the clients were seen for a period of 1-3 weeks there is a significant number who committed to therapy of 7 weeks and above.

CHART 5



An observation from this Chart is that with our adolescent clients we do not have any dropouts and the average number of sessions they attend is amongst the highest. Our understanding of this is that for the adolescent being listened to by an unbiased adult might be a new experience. Also the location of the centre being away from the environment that they live/study in probably adds to their comfort level that confidentiality will be maintained.

V OUTCOMES OF COUNSELLING



The outcome of counselling is shown as: 'Improved' or 'No Change' was based on some indicators from the clients and the observation of the counsellor.

From clients:

- When the client reports improvement.
- When the contract entered into is completed with some resolution of the issue

From counsellor's observation

- When the client assumes ownership of the problem
- Defines changes s/he is experiencing
- When clients use language that indicates a critical understanding of the patterns/problem
- When they are able to make decisions where previously it has been a problem.

VI THEMES & PROCESSES

1. **Relational Perspectives:** Some individuals seek counselling for relationship difficulties believing that the problem originates in either oneself or the other, missing the relational perspective of how they impact each other.

2. **Sense of Self:** For clients who come as a couple or as individuals, one of the common issues noticed was the lack of the individual's sense of self.

3. **Gender/Patriarchy & Cultural Context:**

- The importance of adhering to tradition
- Belief Systems in a patriarchal society
- A significant lack of independent decision making ability, prior to marriage
- Internalised societal expectations based on:
 - *Gender
 - *Sexuality
 - *Fear of family / societal exclusion

CONCLUSIONS

- The counselling process helps the client in understanding and getting clarity on issues, equipping them to make informed decisions or choices towards finding their own solutions.
- Though counselling is still a more recent mental health service, it is affirming to see the Centre fulfilling the need for a user-friendly and affordable service for a multicultural and multilingual society.