



## Perceived Marital Satisfaction among Working Couples: A Study of Durgapur, West Bengal

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### Abstract

Marriage is the closest and most intimate relationship in life. It satisfies the two basic needs of an individual that is live and life. Hence, marital satisfaction is an unspoken necessity that requires prevailing for a healthy married life and the job an individual does may have a direct or indirect effect over their marriage in particular and life as a whole. The present study aimed to analyze the level of marital satisfaction among working couples of Durgapur, West Bengal. The study involves 51 male and 51 female working in different private and public undertakings. A between group design with purposive sampling was used for the study. The respondents were administered Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale consisted of 15 items developed by Blaine J. Fowers and David H. Olson. The responses were scored adequately and results analyzed through t-test. The mean values and t ratio on different demographic considerations indicated that there exists no significant difference between two groups of samples, only in Educational Qualification found to have significant difference among partners on their level of marital satisfaction and the remaining demographic antecedents did not indicate any difference between the partners on their marital satisfaction. However, the results also revealed significant differences on two important dimensions of the scale like valid and reliable marital quality and positive descriptions of the marriage. Findings indicated that gender differences moderate how husbands' and wives' family to work conflict relate to husbands' marital satisfaction and vice-versa. The study's implications for working couples are discussed explicitly, taking each demographic dimension under consideration.

**Keywords:** Marital satisfaction, Working couples, Quality of Life, Private and Public Sector.

### 1. Introduction

Have you ever wondered why people marry? Do you think it's just the love they share or is it something much more beyond the love and

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intimacy? What it takes them to decide is to be with someone and spend their rest of the life in a relationship of commitments, mutual bonding, shared responsibilities and meeting each other's expectations. In this present research we are going to find out what marital satisfaction is and how the working couples maintain the balance between their work life and married life to ensure a significant and satisfied marital relationship.

Though every culture has different types of committed relationship which includes formal marriage arrangement between male and female [1], resembling many other psychological constructs [2]. In Western countries studies were conducted specifically to understand marital satisfaction and its correlates [3].

However, marriage in India has a traditional significance, where two people pledge personal commitments to meet their conjugal relationship and loyalty. Marriage signifies a pure bonding among married couples. It ensures a legal agreement among the couples to live together, which is socially acceptable to stay along with each other and carry forward their relationship, family planning, and meeting the needs of one another.

Marital satisfaction is important because it ensures the couple achieves mutual goals in terms of their relationship, responsibilities and improvement in their respective careers. It also helps uplift their living standard, socio-economic growth and individual development. Marital satisfaction is also the cause of mental well-being of a couple.

This study is important in Durgapur, because this city is one of the biggest industrial hubs of West Bengal and was planned as an integrated industrial township. Durgapur was the dream project city of the former prime minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru and chief minister of West Bengal, Bidhan Chandra Roy.

The city is developing; hence, working couples are employed in various Plants, Factories, Organizations, Health Care and Educational Institutes. There is a greater scope for doing this kind of study in the region to understand the

different demographic considerations in relation to the couple's marital satisfaction. Hence, the present study aims to analyze the level of marital satisfaction among working couples of Durgapur, West Bengal.

### Conceptual Framework:

**Marriage:** It is a legally and socially sanctioned union of two individuals, usually between a man and a woman that prescribes the partners' rights and duties and accords status to their offspring (if any). The universality of marriage within different societies and cultures is attributed to the many basic social and personal functions for which it provides structure, such as sexual gratification and regulation, division of labor between the sexes, economic production and consumption, and satisfaction of personal needs for affection, status, and companionship. Perhaps its most vital function concerns procreation, the care of children and their education and socialization, and the regulation of lines of descent.

Moreover, it is a custom where a solemn pledge is mutually accepted by two individuals united in their physical and social relationship to meet their emotional needs, expectations, and desires.

Anthropologists have proposed several competing definitions of marriage in an attempt to encompass the wide variety of marital practices observed across cultures. Even within Western culture, "definitions of marriage have careened from one extreme to another and everywhere in between" [4].

It is important to note that some forms of marriage have been found to exist in all human societies, past and present. Its importance can be seen in the elaborate and complex laws and rituals surrounding it. Although these laws and rituals are as varied and numerous as human social and cultural organizations, some universals do apply.

The main legal function of marriage is to ensure the rights of the partners with respect to each other and to ensure the rights and define the relationships of children within a community. Marriage has historically conferred a legitimate status on the offspring, which entitled him or her to the various privileges set down by the traditions of that community, including the right of inheritance. In most societies marriage also established the permissible social relations allowed to the offspring, including the proper selection of future spouses, etc.

**Marital Satisfaction-**Marital satisfaction can be defined as an individual's attitude toward his or her marital relationship. Understanding marital satisfaction has significant implications for researchers studying relationships and pragmatic

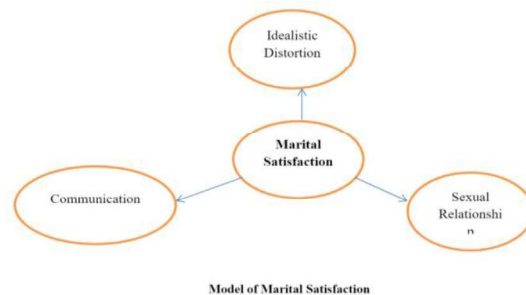
implications for married couples and the professionals who work with them. Among the many contributing factors to marital satisfaction, three main facets are as follows;

- i. How marriages usually progress through the relational lifecycle and the resulting fluctuation of satisfaction
- ii. Enacting routine relational maintenance behaviors, and
- iii. The role of conflict styles as contributing factors to overall marital satisfaction.

Psychologically it is a mental state that reflects the perceived benefits and costs of marriage to a particular person. The more costs a marriage partner inflicts on a person, the less satisfied one generally is with the marriage and with the marriage partner. Similarly, the greater the perceived benefit, the more satisfied one is with the marriage and partner.

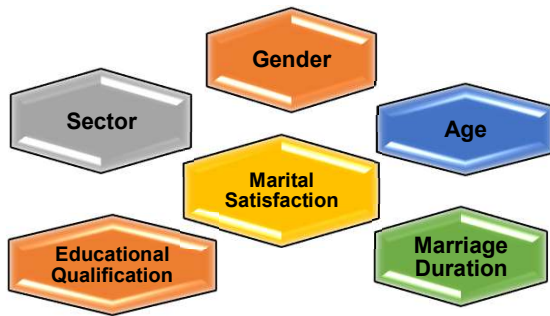
The present study measures the level of marital satisfaction of dual-earner couples where the idealistic distortion is defined as the glorified perception of one individual on their relationship, communication which defines the verbal and non-verbal gestures and mode of expressions towards one another in a relationship and sexual relationship is defined as the sexual intimacy of two partners in the marital relationship. All these dimensions are considered in the present research which has a major effect on the level of marital satisfaction of dual-earner couples. Pankti Shah conducted a study on Adjustment Styles and Marital Satisfaction [5] indicated that for a successful family life and personal growth marital satisfaction is a vital element and various factors can significantly affect marital satisfaction.

### Dimension of Marital satisfaction



In the present study only three dimensions of marital satisfaction like Idealistic Distortion, Communication and sexual relationship are considered. The dimensions of marital satisfaction are taken from the Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale developed by Blaine J. Fowers and David H. Olson (1987) which is administered to the participants of the present research.

**Determinants of Marital Satisfaction:**



**Gender:** It is a socially constructed characteristic if women, men, girls, and boys are referred to as Gender. (WHO, 2002). Further, it has been observed long ago in the literature that gender is a determinant of marital satisfaction [6].

**Age:** The span of the time a person lived or existed (Oxford dictionary). Some studies have doubtlessly studied that age effects on reports of marital satisfaction [7]. Yet, in some studies, age was found to be negatively related to marital satisfaction [8]. Hence, no clear predictions concerning the age-related results can be ascertained from the literature.

**Marriage Duration:** The span of time that partners have spent together, which has resulted in correlating with marital satisfaction [9-10].

**Educational Qualification:** The official confirmation, usually in the form of a degree or diploma to certify a person’s successful completion of his/ her education program is the educational qualification (Statistics Canada, 2021) [11] found that women with higher education have resulted in dissatisfaction in marriages. Utilizing the National Survey of Family Growth data, Heaton [12] round opposite results, that marital dissatisfaction was lower among women who were more qualified. Hence, the findings regarding the relationship between marital satisfaction and education level based on fundamental Western culture are not clear, and question whether such an association exists worldwide.

**Sector:** Job sector is one of the prevailing antecedents of marriage satisfaction as one of the types of research indicates that marital satisfaction has a significant positive relationship with work life balance where gender and type of marriage did not play a role in this context [13].

**2. Review of the Literature**

The present study systematically reviewed previous research to establish antecedents and consequences of marital satisfaction across society and culture. Marriage age can be an essential and underlying factor in creating marriage consequences [14] which are determined according to specific environmental, economic, and cultural circumstances in any society [15].

Jones et al. (2011) investigated the association between spousal attachment, mindfulness, and marital satisfaction. The outcomes showed partial support for the mediating impact of spousal attachment on the association between Marital Satisfaction and trait mindfulness [16].

Rehmani, et al. (2011) in a meta-analysis found statistically significant but still very slight gender differences in marital satisfaction between the spouses, where wives were less satisfied than husbands. Anyhow, the moderator analyses revealed that the difference was because of the inclusion of clinical samples. The non-clinical community-based respondents had no significant gender differences among couples. In addition, moderator analyses notified that there were no gender differences when the levels of Marital Satisfaction of husbands and wives when dyadic data was compared [17].

Fatimah (2012) conducted a study on Malaysian couples, showing that marital relationship is the first priority since this dimension has the lowest level of satisfaction followed by marital intimacy and adjustment [18].

Employment and adequate income earned by the man is correlated to a better quality of life, and those men who did not have a permanent job or were unemployed over the last year were more prone to life separation [19] and a lower marital satisfaction [20]. Moreover, a woman’s job along with a man’s occupation and income can help improve the quality of life and some dimensions of marital satisfaction [21].

Communication is one of the most important factors for family survival, stability, and growth. Unfamiliarity with communication skills and the inability to solve harmful family interactions and issues are among the important factors in the etiology of marital dissatisfaction [22].

The sexual need has long been one of the most controversial human needs, and has occupied the human mind and affected human behavior in all periods throughout history, even when there was no culture and civilization as we know it today [23]. In the family and marriage system, desirable sexual relationship [24] and sexual health are necessary and acceptable [25] and two of the most potent predictors of marriage stability and success [26].

Moreover, it seems that numerous factors play a role in marital satisfaction. The couple's personality, level of mutual understanding, intellectual maturity, sufficient mental balance, economic factors, computability, sexual satisfaction, love, and passion are among the most important factors in creating a satisfactory life. In the present study, effective factors in marital satisfaction were categorized in demographic variables along with the measured dimensions of Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale.

### Research Questions:

Present research interest in marital satisfaction among working couples arises from the previous literature in the area of concern that posed the following research questions regarding married couples of different parts of Durgapur, West Bengal.

- How do Idealistic distortions differ in working couples?
- How does Marital Satisfaction, such as Communication and Sexual relationship, differ among working couples?
- Is there any difference between males and females on demographic dimensions such as age, Duration of marriage, Educational Qualification and Job Sector on marital satisfaction?

### Objective of the study:

The major objective of the study is to analyse the level of marital satisfaction among working couples of Durgapur, West Bengal. Further, the following are the sub-objectives.

- To determine the level of Marital Satisfaction on the Idealistic Distortion dimension of marital satisfaction among working couples.
- To evaluate the level of marital satisfaction on marital satisfaction dimensions such as communication and sexual relationship among working couples.
- To analyze the difference between couples concerning their marital satisfaction on demographic dimensions such as Gender, Age, Duration of marriage, Educational Qualification, and Job Sector.

## 3. Method

### Participants:

The present research sample consisted of 102 married couples, including 51 Males and 51 Females. They were randomly selected from different parts of Durgapur, West Bengal. The data

was collected from couples working in different Private and Public institutes and organizations located in Durgapur. The study's methodology was designed systematically, keeping in view its lofty objectives. In the present research, five demographic dimensions such as Gender, Age, Duration of marriage, Educational Qualification, and Job Sector, have been considered. Religion, Number of Children, Economic and Social Status of the respondents have been excluded.

### Instruments:

#### Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale:

Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale developed by Blaine J. Fowers and David H. Olson was used to assess the level of Marital Satisfaction of dual-career couples [27]. The EMS Scale consists of 15-items, comprising two dimensions: Idealistic Distortion (5 items) and Marital Satisfaction scales (10 items). Idealistic Distortion assesses couples' perception on their relationship in a glorified manner, whereas Marital Satisfaction represents marital relationships such as communication and sexual relationship. Each item of this scale was rated on 5 points rating scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree with a score of 1 to 5 (1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Moderately Disagree, 3 =Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 =Moderately Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The Reliability of the scale was found to be "test-retest reliability" assessed on 115 participants over 4 weeks and the Cronbach's Alpha for internal reliability and reliability coefficient over time was .86, and the Validity of the scale was measured as concurrent and construct validity, correlation of .73 and .71 respectively.

### Procedure and Analysis:

In the present study the data have been collected through Google form. The questionnaire has been prepared and sent to the respondents through E-mail wherein they have been requested to respond on each item of the scale and submit the Google sheet electronically. After getting responses from the respondents, an Excel sheet generated for further data processing. t – test was used through SPSS to analyze the mean difference between two group of respondents based on their demographic variables under consideration

## 4. Results and Discussion:

The Mean and SD in the case of males was found to be 18.16 and 4.13 while in the case of females the Mean and SD was found to be 16.67 and 5.06 respectively for Idealistic Distortion. The t – value between the two Means was found to be 1.63, which was not significant at 0.05 level. Similarly, the Mean and SD in the case of males was found to be 32.69 and 7.49 whereas in the case of females



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30.00 and 8.04, respectively, for Marital Satisfaction. The t- value was found to be 1.75, which is not significant at 0.05 level. Further, the Mean and SD in the case of males was found to be 50.84 and 10.96 while in the case of females Mean and SD was found to be 46.67 and 12.37 respectively for overall Marital Satisfaction. The t- value was found to be 1.81, which is not significant at 0.05 level.

**Table 1: Means, SDs and t – value of Males and Females on Idealistic Distortion, Marital Satisfaction and Overall Marital Satisfaction.**

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig.
Idealistic Distortion	Male	51	18.16	4.13	1.63	0.15 <sup>NS</sup>
	Female	51	16.67	5.06		
Marital Satisfaction	Male	51	32.69	7.49	1.75	0.55 <sup>NS</sup>
	Female	51	30.00	8.04		
Overall Marital Satisfaction	Male	51	50.84	10.912.3	1.81	0.30 <sup>NS</sup>
	Female	51	46.67	7		

NS=Not Significant

The results obtained in table 1 indicate that both males and females do not differ significantly on Idealistic Distortion, Marital Satisfaction, and Overall Marital Satisfaction. The finding revealed that both males and females perceive their marriage in a similar glorified way with equal Idealistic perseverance. Similarly, both genders did not perceive Marital Satisfaction with different angles which clearly point out that both male and female couples have similar levels of Marital Satisfaction. Researchers have also observed that since both males and females are working couples, their needs, desires and expectations are similar with respect to their married life so they do not differ on the degree of their Marital Satisfaction.

In Table-2, the Mean and SD in the case of age below 45 was found to be 17.32 and 4.68 while in the case of age above 45 the Mean and SD was found to be 17.93 and 4.67 respectively for Idealistic Distortion. The t – value between the two Means was found to be -0.47 which was not significant at 0.05 levels. Similarly, the Mean and SD in the case of age below 45 was found to be 31.25 and 7.97 where as in the case of age above 45 were 31.87 and 7.33 respectively for Marital Satisfaction. The t- value was found to be -0.28 which is not significant at 0.05 levels.

**Table 2: Means, SDs and t – value of Age Below 45 and Above 45 on Idealistic Distortion, Marital Satisfaction and Overall Marital Satisfaction.**

Variable	Age	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig.
Idealistic Distortion	45 and below	87	17.32	4.68	-0.47	0.88 <sup>NS</sup>
	Above 45	15	17.93	4.67		
Marital Satisfaction	45 and below	87	31.25	7.97	-0.28	0.71 <sup>NS</sup>
	Above 45	15	31.87	7.33		
Overall Marital Satisfaction	45 and below	87	48.57	11.90	-0.37	0.78 <sup>NS</sup>
	Above 45	15	49.80	11.68		

NS=Not Significant

Further, the Mean and SD in the case of age below 45 was found to be 48.57 and 11.90 while in the case of age above 45 mean and SD was found to be 49.80 and 11.68 respectively for overall Marital Satisfaction. The t- value was found to be -0.37 which is not significant at 0.05 levels.

Results Obtained clearly indicates that Marital Satisfaction is not related to the Age of the couples as the difference found is not significant, meaning the difference that exist through the data are negligible and have no statistical significance. The results can be interpreted in context with similar work and social culture of the working couples of Durgapur who usually spend maximum time together and have positive personal and professional relationships throughout their career.

Table-3 shows that the Mean and SD in the case of Marriage duration below 20 was found to be 17.15 and 4.76 while in the case of Marriage duration above 20 , the Mean and SD was found to be 18.71 and 3.95 respectively for Idealistic Distortion. The t – value between the two Means was found to be -1.26, which was not significant at 0.05 level. Similarly, the Mean and SD in the case Marriage duration below 20 was found to be 30.72 and 7.99 where as in the case of Marriage duration above 20 was found to be 34.47 and 6.38 respectively for Marital Satisfaction. The t- value was found to be -1.82, which is not significant at 0.05 level. Further, the Mean and SD in case of Marriage duration below 20 was found to be 47.87 and 12.06 while in the case of Marriage duration Above 20, mean and SD was found to be 53.18 and 9.66, respectively, for

overall Marital Satisfaction. The t- value was found to be -1.71, which is not significant at 0.05 level.

**Table 3 : Means, SDs and t – value of Marriage duration Below 20 and Above 20 years on Idealistic Distortion, Marital Satisfaction and Over all Marital Satisfaction.**

Variable	Marriage duration	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig.
Idealistic Distortion	Below 20	85	17.15	4.76	-1.26	0.43 <sup>NS</sup>
	Above 20	17	18.71	3.95		
Marital Satisfaction	Below 20	85	30.72	7.99	-1.82	0.57 <sup>NS</sup>
	Above 20	17	34.47	6.38		
Over all Marital Satisfaction	Below 20	85	47.87	12.06	-1.71	0.62 <sup>NS</sup>
	Above 20	17	53.18	9.66		

NS=Not Significant

On the basis of obtained results, it can be interpreted that the perception of marriage and its value in working couples' lives are highly important, and marriage duration has no aftereffect on their bonding. The duration of marriage in this context brings more satisfaction to their relationship, which is indicated in both the Marital Satisfaction scale and, though the result is not significant but mean value yielded that marriage above 20 years have a greater satisfaction level among dual career couples.

**Table 4: Means, SDs and t – value of Educational Qualification of Undergraduates and Post Graduates on Idealistic Distortion, Marital Satisfaction and overall Marital Satisfaction.**

Variable	Educational Qualification	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig.
Idealistic Distortion	UG	58	16.40	5.32	2.60	0.00 <sup>**</sup>
	PG	44	18.75	3.19		
Marital Satisfaction	UG	58	29.47	9.38	2.87	0.00 <sup>**</sup>
	PG	44	33.82	4.11		
Over all Marital Satisfaction	UG	58	45.86	14.18	2.95	0.00 <sup>**</sup>
	PG	44	52.57	5.94		

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level

The Mean and SD in the case of Educational Qualification Undergraduate was found to be 16.40 and 5.32 while in the case of Post Graduate, the Mean and SD was found to be 18.75 and 3.19 respectively for Idealistic Distortion. The t – value between the two Means was found to be -2.60, which is significant beyond 0.01 level. Similarly, the Mean and SD in the case of Undergraduate was found to be 29.47 and 9.38 where as in the case of Post Graduate it was found to be 33.82 and 4.11 respectively for Marital Satisfaction. The t- value was found to be -2.87, which is significant at beyond 0.01 level. Further, the Mean and SD in case of Undergraduate was found to be 45.86 and 14.18 while in the case of Post Graduate the Mean and SD was found to be 52.57 and 5.94, respectively, for overall Marital Satisfaction. The t-value was found to be -2.95, which is significant at beyond 0.01 levels.

The level of education significantly impacts the Marital Satisfaction of dual-career couples, as the results highlighted that undergraduate couples are less satisfied with their marriage than postgraduate couples. The reason behind such difference may be attributed to their future professional goal attainment, and efforts put more on career affairs than personal affairs. It may also be pointed out here that postgraduate couples can find more career opportunities, resulting in low stress in their professional life compared to undergraduate couples; hence post graduate couples found to have more Marital Satisfaction than their counterparts.

**Table 5: Means, SDs and t – value of Job Sector in Private and Public on Idealistic Distortion, Marital Satisfaction and Over all Marital Satisfaction.**

Variable	Sector	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig.
Idealistic Distortion	Private	82	17.45	4.56	0.17	0.81 <sup>NS</sup>
	Public	20	17.25	5.17		
Marital Satisfaction	Private	82	31.43	7.50	0.22	0.29 <sup>NS</sup>
	Public	20	31.00	9.36		
Over all Marital Satisfaction	Private	82	48.88	11.32	0.21	0.33 <sup>NS</sup>
	Public	20	48.25	14.00		

NS- Not Significant

The Mean and SD in the case of Job Sector - Private was found to be 17.45 and 4.56 while in

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the case of public sector, the Mean and SD was found to be 17.25 and 5.17 respectively for Idealistic Distortion. The  $t$  – value between the two Means was found to be 0.17 which was not significant at 0.05 levels. Similarly, the Mean and SD in the case Private sector was found to be 31.43 and 7.50 where as in the case of public sector was 31.00 and 9.36 respectively for Marital Satisfaction. The  $t$ - value was found to be -0.22 which is not significant at 0.05 level. Further, the Mean and SD in case of Private sector was found to be 48.88 and 11.32 while in the case of Public Sector, the mean and SD was found to be 48.25 and 14.00 respectively for overall Marital Satisfaction. The  $t$ - value was found to be 0.21 which is not significant at 0.05 levels.

The results in Table 5 revealed that the job sector (Private/Public) has no significant effect on Marital Satisfaction among dual-career couples. It can be interpreted as since both husband and wife is earning their livelihood and are engaged in professional activities hence, they better understand each other professional limitations and respect each other's professional life irrespective of sector involved. This understanding and respect create values to their personal life beyond their job sectors and help them live happy married life.

### 5. Conclusion and Suggestions

The purpose of the present study was to assess the level of marital satisfaction among working couples of Durgapur, West Bengal based on specific demographic antecedents like Gender, Age, Marriage duration, Educational Qualification and Sector. Data analysis revealed that among all the demographic antecedents, only Educational Qualification found a significant difference among partners on their level of marital satisfaction. The remaining demographic antecedents did not indicate any difference between the partners' marital satisfaction. It was found that Postgraduate partners perceived their marital satisfaction better than their undergraduate counterparts. The previous studies examining educational level and its effect on marital satisfaction extend contradictory findings. For instance, (Janssen et al., 1998) revealed that highly educated women had a higher rate of marital dissatisfaction, whereas Heaton (2002) found contradictory results wherein Marital Dissatisfaction was lower among women who were more educated. Therefore, the present finding can be attributed to the cultural difference and other professional aspects that create the such difference between the partners in their perception of marital satisfaction.

Researches conducted on marital Satisfaction with respect to Gender, Age, Duration of marriage, and job sector provides a mixed response to the current

findings. Specifically, it was suggested in previous works that the satisfaction in men were more with their marriages as compared with women in both Western and non-Western cultures [28,29]. However, in the previous literature, no precise predictions concerning age-related patterns of the results can be derived. The period that the spouses spent together has been found to correlate with marital satisfaction [30].

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that there is a need to focus on employee marital satisfaction and providing them with all the necessary support at work to improve their family life. An acceptant atmosphere at home and sharing in Household responsibilities by both partners may also benefit their marriage well-being, family, and life satisfaction at large. Therefore, the findings suggest that both partners should equally concentrate on their personal and professional life and give the edge to personal aspects to balance their work life and try to develop a suitable atmosphere which can positively influence their marital satisfaction.

As the present investigation was conducted only on a small sample of working couples of Durgapur, West Bengal, hence, to widen its scope, a study on a larger sample across west Bengal can be conducted to give a larger picture of the status of Marital satisfaction. Further, studies on couples belonging to different religions, socio-economic backgrounds and other demographic variables can also be planned and carried out.

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