

Marital Disharmony among Working Couples in Metropolitan Life: an In-depth Study in Kolkata City

Nilanjana Ghoshal¹, Mst Tania Parveen², Dr Asraful Alam³

¹Student, Women's College Calcutta, Kolkata

²Assistant Coordinator, Department of Geography (PG), Women's College Calcutta

³ICSSR Post Doctoral Fellow (PDF), Department of Geography, University of Calcutta

Corresponding: alam5asraful@gmail.com³

Abstract: In India, traditionally and from time immemorial, marriage has always been a sacred bond for people of this country. The aim of this study is to explain a socially sanctioned sex relationship involving people of two opposite gender whose relationship is expected to endure beyond time required for gestation. The functional method of the study has been set up on the field-based observation to find out the reasons behind rising of marital disharmony among working couples. But the problem is initially in modern times the concept of marriage is gradually taking a different turn between couples. Hence the focus of this paper is to study the various factors giving rise to marital disharmonies among working couples in urban India and how these discords can be solved so that couples can lead a happy harmonious married life ahead. Survey has been done in the city of Kolkata taking people from various walks of life. As Kolkata is one of the major Metropolitan cities of India it was easier to find people belonging to different professions. The result of this study is every marriage brings challenges in life. Maximum working couples are losing attachment with each other as they have lack of time for each other. Bringing work at home, sharing of parenthood, indifference towards each other, lack of adjustments are the causes for which level of disharmony is increasing.

Keywords: *Economic situations, marital disharmony, marital conflict, and Socio-psychology.*

INTRODUCTION

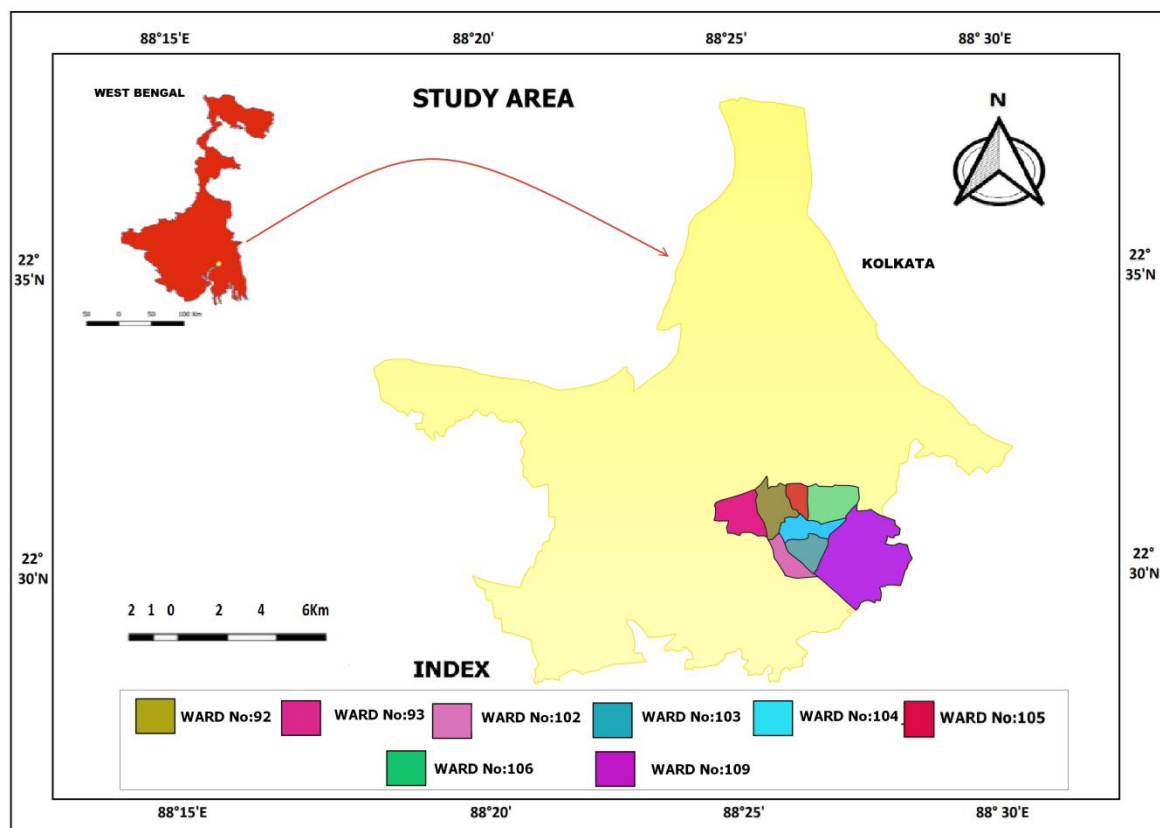
Marriage is one of the universal social institutions that established to control and regulate the life of mankind. The purpose, function and forms of marriage may differ from one society to another but is present everywhere as an 'institution'. Marriage is also known as 'Matrimony' or 'Wedlock'. The word 'marriage' has derived from Middle English word 'Mariage' that first appeared in 1250-1300 CE. This in turn has derived from the old French word 'Marier' which means 'to marry' and Latin 'Maritare' that means to provide with a husband and wife and 'Maritari' meaning 'To get married'. Marriage is a relation of one or more men with one or more women recognized by the law and customs having some rights and duties in case of having children. (Westermarck, 1891) the concise

Oxford Dictionary of Sociology (1994) defines it as “Marriage is traditionally conceived to be legally recognized relationship between an adult male and female that carries certain rights and obligations. “The concept of ‘Divorce’ in India is not new. But earlier cases of disharmony in a marriage was rare. Extreme cases such as unbearable cruelty, mental illness, impotency and infidelity lead to dissolution of a marriage. But with passing years, people have become pragmatic and they face everyday challenges. Most of the couples are now working which was not very common in old times. Concept of joint family has been reduced to nuclear family size. At present, we can see a fast change in the social and family environment. Causes of divorce have taken new dimension with all these passing years. Factors such as daily conflicts and incompatibility even existed earlier but what is new is that the level of tolerance between individuals has slide down while ego clashes have risen to a great extent (Pisharoty, S. B. 2010). A study based on a family court in Mumbai shows that in the year 1995, 2055 couples filed for divorce whereas by the year 2004 the number of divorce cases rose to 3044 in the city alone. Even in Kolkata, there were 1633 divorce cases filed in the year 1966 whereas in the year 2003, the number rose to 2388. It is seen that maximum couples who are filing for divorce are between the ages of 25-35 years (Hindustan Times, 2017). The care eristic attitude of couples towards work leads to lack of communication for which rises misunderstandings. Even temperamental differences get highlighted to be a cause behind marital discords. Hence in India due to changing role of women and other societal changes in the patriarchal society, marital discords takes place among the working couples to a great extent which often leads to breakdown of marriages.

STUDY AREA

As Kolkata is one of the major Metropolitan cities of India it is easier to find people belonging to different professions. Like every other metropolitan city, as the sun rises, the people of Kolkata are running to their respective work places everyday to earn for a better living Kolkata is located at 22° 33′ N, 88 ° 20′ E in the state of West Bengal of eastern part of India. It is located on the east bank of river Hooghly and at 128 km north of Bay of Bengal. As Kolkata is a major city in India and the largest city of West Bengal, people here belong to different occupations. The study area is exclusively Municipal Corporation of Kolkata, mainly in Kasba (Ward No.92), Prince Anwar Shah Road (Ward No.93), Baghajatin (Ward No.102), Santospur (Ward No.103), Garia (Ward No.104), Haltu (Ward No.105), Kalikapur (Ward No.106) and Garia (Ward No.109). The city falls in the physical region of Ganga delta at an elevation ranging between 1.5 to 9 m. covered with alluvial soil along the eastern bank of river Hooghly in north-south direction. As well as the City of Joy the name

itself creates emotions for all those want to explore British colonial charm and its socio- economic, cultural influences on a city organism.



OBJECTIVES

The three objectives have been chosen to fulfil the whole research work. First objective is to assess the level of marital maladjustments among the working couples in the selected study area. Second one is to study the factors influencing marital disharmony and last to find out the socio-psychological and economic situations among the married couples in the study area.

DATABASE AND METHODOLOGIES

The present study is based on primary data generated by a comprehensive survey of Dual Career Couples around the city of Kolkata. Here the term Dual Career Couples mean; married partners who are both engaged in some professions. The survey was carried out during February 2019. The database is a source of research support which helps to fulfil the research work. The present study is based on both secondary and primary source of data. The present study based on a questionnaire survey, observation method and GPS survey. A well-detailed questionnaire has been used to survey to find out and assess the level of disharmony among the working couples. Secondary data has been

collected from the review of literature mostly from books and journals. Random purposive sampling has been implemented at the time of the door to door survey. For the analysis of conflicts in a marriage, 95 percentage dual Career Couples have been surveyed. These respondents belong to different walks of life and are actively pursuing their career. A significant number of couples belong to teaching/research profession i, e. 25 percentage, while 17 percentage of the respondents are in banking sectors, 13 percentage of the respondents are engaged in the government sector, 20 percent of married professionals are hailing from IT sectors whereas 6 percentage of respondents belong to the medical profession, 17 percentage of the respondents are in private sectors whereas 6 percentage are self-employed. It has been seen from the survey that maximum couples' profession does not match with each other. They belong to different jobs and there are very few couples who pursue the same careers. The study is based on the terms of the evolutionary method of both qualitative and quantitative process. The data collected were analysed to understand the level of disagreements and why the level of disharmony is rising between the couples. Even suggestive measures have also been discussed so that disharmonies between the married working couples are reduced and they can lead a happy married life in future. The statistical methods have been used to justify the result of the study.

DISCUSSION

The survival of society depends upon the biological reproduction. Marriage is engrained in the family rather than the family in marriage. The institution of marriage has its roots in the ancient histories of almost all cultures and societies. It is the fundamental and universal institution which organizes social life. The development of civilization provides cultural legitimacy to the biological reproduction process. Marriage, family, kinship and even the notion of remarriage are the outcomes of such cultural legitimacy.

The Indian society is getting used to the idea of a dual career family and the independent career focus of each partner in the dual-career marriage presents newer challenges. It has been that partners in marriage give career more importance compared to their marriage relationship. There is no doubt that greater education and career focus of women have brought about greater financial autonomy and a sense of power for women. Now women are equally participating with men in taking family decisions. As both couples are now economically independent, the level of adjustment has got reduced and it hardly takes time for both to walk out of the marriage if things don't work properly. (Joseph, S. and Inbanathan, A. 2016).

MARITAL STATUS

Marital status also known as Civil Status. The distinct options that describes a person's relationship with a significant other. The marital status of the respondents in this survey has been divided into 3 parts.

MARITAL STATUS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS (IN%)
MARRIED	68.42
SEPARATED	14.74
DIVORCED	15

Table1 **BASED ON PRIMARY SURVEY, 2019**

Table:1 shows that 68.42 percentage of the respondents are married, 14.74 percentage of the respondents are in separation while 15 percentage of the respondents are divorced. Hence, percentage of married couples are more than the separated and divorced ones.

LEVEL OF CONFLICT AMONG THE MARRIED COUPLES

Conflict in a marriage is unavoidable. It occurs due to daily family interactions that sometimes results into difference of opinions leading to rise in arguments and heated exchange (Pathan, Z. A. 2015). This is very common among the couples. Conflicts are a part of relationship but they need to be sorted out between the couples before creating negative impacts in the relationship. For a better study, the level of conflict has been classed into three parts i.e.

LEVEL OF CONFLICT	NO. OF RESPONDENTS (%)
LOW	41.05
MEDIUM	13.68
HIGH	14.74

Table2 **BASED ON PRIMARY SURVEY, 2019**

From the table 2 it can be interpreted that 41.0 percentage of the respondents have low level of conflicts with their spouse among low as points of disagreements are rare and even if it occurs, problems get solved easily, 13.68 percentage of the respondents face medium level of conflict with their spouses as arguments happen every once or twice a week between them and 14.74 percentage of the respondents have reported of having high level of conflict with their spouses as arguments happen on a daily basis leading to misunderstandings and judgemental behaviours.

FACTORS INFLUENCING MARITAL CONFLICTS

Conflicts in a marital relationship are inevitable. In a marriage conflict occurs when the needs, desires or decisions of spouses diverge and doesn't get settled with mutual understandings. In this study of dual career couples, it has been observed that both the individuals have high expectations from each other which if not met deteriorates the quality of the relationship. Conflicts due to household issues brings strain to the couples, especially on women.

ANALYSIS ON DISAGREEMENT IN MARITAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COUPLES HAVING LEVEL OF CONFLICTS

For a better understanding, the causes of disagreements among the couples have been divided into nine areas.

TYPES OF CONFLICTS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS IN %
DIFFERENCE OF OPINION	10
LACK OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING	17.89
LACK OF TIME	35.79
BRINGING WORK AT HOME	14.74
INTERFERENCE OF IN-LAWS	11.58
SHARING PARENTHOOD	9.47
SHARING HOUSEHOLD ACTIVITIES	2.1
ADDICTIONS	5.26
SPENDING TIME WITH FRIENDS	8.42
OTHERS	25

Table3 ***BASED ON PRIMARY SURVEY, 2019***

From Table 3, it can be interpreted that maximum conflicts are occurring between couples because they have lack of time for each other due to their work pressure (35.79 percentage), Other factors involved in occurrence of conflicts between couples are lack of mutual understanding (17.89 percentage), bringing work at home (14.74 percentage), interference of in-laws (11.58 percentage), difference of opinion (10percentage), sharing of parenthood (9.47 percentage), spending time with friends (8.42 percentage), addictions (5.26 percentage), sharing of household activities (2.1percentage) and other causes (25 percentage) such as petty family issues, differences in personality and more.

MAJOR CAUSES BEHIND HIGH LEVEL OF CONFLICTS

CAUSES	NO. OF RESPONDENTS (IN %)
LACK OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING	45
COMMUNICATION GAP	32
SPOUSE'S INVOLVEMENT IN EXTRA-MARITAL AFFAIRS	14
INTERFERENCE OF IN-LAWS/RELATIVES	20
OTHERS	24
REASON	NO OF RESPONDENTS (IN %)
WANT THE MARRIAGE TO WORK	35.71
FOR THE SAKE OF THE SOCIETY	28.57
FOR THE SAKE OF THE CHILDREN	21.42
OTHERS	7.14
NO RESPONSE	7.14

Table4

BASED ON PRIMARY SURVEY, 2019

From the table4 it can be interpreted that a high level of disagreements occurs between couples as there is a lack of mutual understanding between them (45 percentage). Other causes include communication gap (32 percentage), interference of in-laws/relatives (20 percentage), spouse's involvement in extra-marital affairs (14 percentage) and other reasons (24 percentage).

By the result of the survey it has been seen that some respondents still want the marriage to work out (35.71 percentage), Some stay under the same roof for the sake of society (28.57 percentage) and their children (21.42 percentage). Finally, respondents have got other personal reasons (7.14 percentage) for which they can't take decision dissolving their marriage and hence end up staying together.

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT DUE TO OCCURRENCE OF CONFLICT

Conflicts are part and parcel of a married life's person. Whether the level of conflicts are low or high, couples go through sort of psychological impacts after having exchange of heated arguments (Choi, H. and Marks, N. F. 2008).

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACTS	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS
SLEEP DISTURBANCES	13
IRRITABILITY	29
SADNESS	37
FRUSTRATION	19
DEPRESSION	8
NO RESPONSE	14

Table 6 **BASED ON PRIMARY SURVEY,2019**

Table 6 shows the various psychological impacts that couples go through after having disagreements with their spouse. From the survey, it has been found that respondents mainly suffer from sadness (37 percentage), irritability (29 percentage), frustration (19 percentage), sleep disturbances (13 percentage) and depression (8 percentage) after having conflicts with their better half.

MARITAL BREAKDOWN AND DIVORCE

Marital breakdown refers to the process where the relationship between the married couples erode and ordinarily, they cannot restore their relationship (Ramchandrapa, S.2012). It is very wrong among people that divorce is the final way of terminating a marriage. There are mainly four types of marital breakdowns -dissertation, separation, annulment and divorce

ANALYSIS ON BREAKDOWN OF MARRIAGES

In this survey mainly two types of marital breakdowns are taken into account-Separation and divorce.

TYPES	NO. OF RESPONDENTS (IN %)
SEPARATED	43.33
DIVORCED	56.67

Table 7 **BASED ON PRIMARY SURVEY,2019**

The table 7 shows that in the survey, 43.33 percent of the respondents stay in separation while 56.67 percentages of the respondents are divorced.

DURATION OF MARRIAGE

Life after marriage is completely different and it's then coupled face various problems in their day to day life. Troubles start arising between them and a time comes in life when they no longer able to

handle their relationship. Even after many years of marriage, there are cases where couples end marriages due to rising of disagreements between them.

DURATION OF MARRIAGE	NO. OF RESPONDENTS IN %
LESS THAN 1 YR	3.33
1-5 YRS	66.66
5-10 YRS	16.67
10-15YRS	3.33
15-20YRS	3.33
MORE THAN 20 YRS	3.33

Table 8

BASED ON PRIMARY SURVEY,2019

From the table8, it can be interpreted that a maximum number of marital breakdowns are happening at the stage when couples are married for 1-5 years. In this survey 66.66 percentage of the marriages have failed at a very early stage, 16.67 percentage of the marriages have ended at the duration 5-10 years. Less marital breakdowns have taken place when marriages are less than 1 year,10-15 years,15-20 years and more than 20 years. Only 3.33 percentage of such cases have taken place.

REASONS BEHIND BREAKDOWN OF MARRIAGES

Reasons behind marital breakdowns are never the same. (Amato, P.R. and Previti, D. 2003). In this survey, respondents have given various reasons which lead to ending their marriage.

REASONS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS IN%
INTERFERENCE OF IN-LAWS	23.33
EXTRA-MARITAL AFFAIR	46.67
LACK OF ADJUSTMENT	16.66
SEXUAL DISSATISFACTION	20
ADDICTIONS	6
PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HARASSEMENT	13.34
OTHERS	33

Table 9

BASED ON PRIMARY SURVEY,2019

Table 9 shows that 46.67 percent of the marriages have ended as spouses got involved in extra-marital affairs, 23.33 percentage of the marriages have ended due to the interference of in-laws, 20 percentage of the marriages have ended due to lack of sexual satisfaction,16.66 percentages of the marriages have broken due to lack of adjustment, 13.34 percentage of the marriages have ended due

to physical and mental harassment that the respondents had to face from their spouses, 6 percentage of the marital breakdowns happened as spouses had severe addictions be it smoking, or alcohol and rest 33 percent of the marriages got dissolved due to various other reasons such as lack of commitments, ego clashes, personality differences and many more.

IMPACT ON MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH AFTER BREAKDOWN OF MARRIAGE

The happiness gained after getting into a marital bond becomes end when the marriage doesn't work anymore. People go through various traumas that affect both their health and psychology after going through marital breakdown (Vitelli, R. 2015).

CATEGORIES	NO. OF RESPONDENTS IN%
SEVERE DEPRESSION	56.67
DEVASTATED	13.33
FRUSTRATION	26.67
SADDNESS	26.67
HAPPY	6.67
INSOMNIA	40
SEVERE WEIGHT LOSS	20
LACK OF DESIRE TO EAT	13.33
OTHERS	10
NO RESPONSE	33

Table 10 **BASED ON PRIMARY SURVEY, 2019**

The table10 shows that 56.67 percentage of the respondents went through severe depression after the end of their marriage, 13.33 percentage of the respondents were completely devastated and also had lack of desire to eat that affected their health, 26.67 percentage of the respondents went through frustration as well as sadness as they could not save their marriage, 40 percentage of the respondents had insomnia, 20 percentage of the respondents had severe weight loss that was negatively affecting their health, 10 percentage of the respondents faced some other sort of impact on their health both physical and mental, 33 percentage of the respondents did not want to respond to the psychological and health impact they faced after the dissolution of their marriage. Surprisingly, 6.67 per cent of the respondents reacted positively that they were quite happy after the marriage got ended as they were

quite pissed off with the relationship and couldn't take it more. Hence, the marital breakdown did not affect them in any way.

CONDITION OF THE RESPONDENTS AFTER GOING THROUGH MARITAL BREAKDOWN

An end to a relationship breaks a person at the beginning emotionally but with every passing day as the pain heals, this breakdown makes that person the strongest one on earth. No matter how much the reality is hard, but a person must move forward in life.

PRESENT STATUS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS IN %
BUSY WITH WORK LIFE	48
HAPPILY MARRIED	16.67
IN A RELATIONSHIP	27
BUSY RAISING CHILDREN	30
NEVER WANT TO SETTLE	17
OTHERS	20

Table 11 *BASED ON PRIMARY SURVEY, 2019*

Table 11 shows that the respondents reacted differently about their present status of life after their marital breakdown. Total 30 percentage of the respondents remain busy with their work-life as it helps them forget about the reality for the time being, 17 percentage of the respondents are again in a relationship, 10 percentage of the respondents are happily married again and are enjoying their new phase of life, 19 percentage of the respondents who are parents busy raising their children as for them their future is really important, 11 percentage of the respondents never want to settle in life again, 13 percentage of the respondents have given other answers to heal their marital breakdowns such as going out for small vacations, hanging out with friends, associating oneself with orphanages and old age homes and giving most of their time thereafter work and many more.

CHANGING TREND OF THE CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE-INTRODUCTION TO LIVE-IN-RELATIONSHIP

Live-in-relationship is an arrangement in which unmarried young couples live together for life long that resembles like a marital bond. In other words, live-in-relationships can be defined as a cohabitation whereby two people decide to live together permanently in both emotionally and sexually intimate relationship. It is also known as common law marriage. But it doesn't mean that couples are bonded into a civil marriage contract. The concept of live-in-relationships has been

welcomed quite heartily especially by the young generations of our society. People now believe in knowing each other well before committing for a lifetime bond so that marital breakdowns become lesser in number (Ermisch, J.F. 2000).

ANALYSIS ON RESPONDENTS' VIEWS TOWARDS THE CONCEPT OF LIVE-IN-RELATIONSHIP

As people in our society have mixed views regarding live-in-relationships, a study has been made to see people's mentality regarding the rising trend of this concept.

RESPONDENTS' VIEWS ON LIVE-IN	NO.OF RESPONDENTS (IN %)
BETTER TO GET MARRIED	24.1
NOT A COMMITTED RELATIONSHIP	12.58
BETTER TO KNOW EACH OTHER BEFORE MARRIAGE	36.68
AGAINST INDIAN TRADITION	9

Table 12 *BASED ON PRIMARY SURVEY,2019*

From the table 12, it can be interpreted that 36.68 percentage of the respondents should know each other well before marriage and hence they give a thumbs up towards this approach, 24.1 percentage of the respondents prefer couples to get married as the commitment remains stronger, 12.58 percentage of the respondents opined that it is not at all a committed relationship, therefore it has both positive and negative impacts on the relationship, 9 percentage of the respondents discourages this concept as it is against our Indian traditions. Hence, we get mixed reviews regarding the rising concept of live-in-relationships where for some couples should know each other well before committing for a lifetime relationship whereas for some couples should get married as marriage makes the relationship much stronger.

CONCLUSION

From all over the study, we conclude that earlier the rate of marriages used to be successful as there was a smaller number of working women. But now as both men and women are independent of their fields and have strong economic backgrounds, no one is ready to make compromises and adjustments (Jain, M.1994). Some of the major findings behind disharmony in a marriage include the couple's lack of time for each other, communication gap and misunderstandings as both live in

separate places due to work purpose. It has also been found out that individuals remain married and share the same roof with their spouse even after knowing that they are involved in an extra-marital affair for the sake of their children and society. Studies have shown that cases of separation and divorces are mostly seen among couples who are newly married or are in a marital bond between 1-5 years. Finally due to a rise in trend in number of divorce cases, the Indian society, especially the new generation has become quite open to the concept of live-in-relationship as according to them it helps to know each other well before getting into a marital bond as they are able to find out if they are compatible with each other or not. Conflicts arise in every relationship but sorting it out with a cool mind makes the marital bond stronger. Some suggestive measures to lead a happy married life are mutual understanding, adjustments, proper communication, giving enough time to each other, loyalty and finally love and trust. If some of the faulty habits such as ego clashes, misunderstandings, communication gaps are kept aside, marriage is always going to work at the best way. Breaking a marriage is easy. It hardly takes time but staying in a marriage and dealing with all the situations together no matter how tough things can make a bond more beautiful and purer (Trehan, B.2016).

"A happy marriage doesn't mean you have a perfect spouse or a perfect marriage. It simply means you have chosen to look beyond the imperfection in both."-Fawn Weaver

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