



Impact of Marital Status on Mental Health of Working Women

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ABSTRACT

Mental health can be defined as the ability to make adequate social and emotional adjustments to the environment, on the plane of reality. Mental health of working women was assessed in the present study. Marital status of women strongly impacts the mental health and their performance at job. Hence the present study focuses on Impact of marital status on mental health of working women. The study was carried out in Lucknow on the women working in various institutions using stratified random sampling technique. A total of 90 working women were selected from various sectors. Self made questionnaire for the assessment of mental health was used in the present research. Research revealed that marital status has significant impact on the mental health of working women. The multifaceted stress of married working women with responsibilities at various arenas may be the reason for their weaker mental health. Proper counseling time appropriation and meditation may be the best remedies for the improvement in their mental health.

Keyword: mental health, marital status, marital adjustment, working women.

INTRODUCTION

In the present scenario everyone is threatened by increasing population and degraded health status. Health has been always one of the most important dimensions where we need to pay attention. Concept of health extends beyond the proper functioning of the body. It includes controlled emotions with a sound mind. A mentally healthy

Person shows balanced behavior and faces realities of life. (Ramakrishna, 2014)

The expression “mental health” consists of two words mental and health. Health generally means a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (WHO, 1948). Health does not just mean the physical well-being of the individual but refers to the social, emotional, spiritual and

cultural well-being of the whole community. The word 'mental' usually implies something more than purely cerebral functioning of a person. It includes one's emotional affective states. It is the equilibrium in one's socio cultural context that is reflected by the relationship one establishes with others.

Mental health, therefore, means a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. (WHO, August 2014). Mental health has been reported as an important factor influencing an individual behaviour. Women who work outside the home are required to make many socio-familial adjustments that may contribute more stress and anxiety. The problem of stress in women, particularly working women, is an important aspect due to the social and emotional changes. As women are bounded around with various cultural norms and values, working women are expected to make lot of adjustments. So this in turn leads to lot of stress and strain among working women.

Status of women in the society has been changing fast due to multiple factors such as urbanization, industrialization, increased level of education, awareness of rights, and media influence. Now more number of women prefers to be engaged in some kind of employment, so that they can contribute financially to their family. But the attitude towards women especially married women and their role in family has remained the same, as even today taking care of the family and

children is considered as their primary responsibility. A working woman bearing dual responsibility with family and at job cannot discharge her duties equally efficiently; feels tense and continuous tension creates stress which in turn may affect her mental health status. (Panigrahi, *et.al.* 2014)

During middle age many biological and psychological changes occur leading to family conflict and this in turn may generate depression, anxiety, frustration, irritation etc. in these women. The problems of working women are multidimensional and differ from woman to woman.

A person who has good mental health is able to realize his or her own abilities, cope with the stress of everyday life, work productively, and contribute to the community (WHO, 2001). Mental health is very essential component of women's health and is a resource to help women to deal with the depression, stresses and challenges of everyday life. If women have good mental health, they can contribute to the quality of their lives as an individual, as a community, as a society, as a nation in general.

World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that depression will be the second largest contributor to disease burden by 2020, and one in every three women worldwide will be affected by common mental disorders including anxiety and depression. A study on working women, family environment and mental health indicated that there were significant differences in the family environment and mental health of working and non-working women. Mental health scores highlight that

working women are trapped in a situation where they are getting difficulty in coping strategies to deal with it effectively and get mentally uncomfortable. Less freedom, excess of work, high need for motivation and working situations are powerful source of stress among working women. Therefore, adjustment process, emotional balance, tolerance level and some other personality attributes are under great threat, which affect the mental health negatively. If the condition of mental health is good, a woman can perform various responsibilities of her family and understands the complications, tries to solve problems, plan for future and adjustment with others by becoming mentally strong. The interface between the work place and the family life is more stressful for the women who work outside the home and they have to perform both familial as well as professional roles. (Singh *et. al.*, 2005)

The work life balance is directly reflected through the practice at workplace. The work place flexibility is an important factor but limited to the high income and position of women, where as for women who are low earner and have children to look after, it becomes very difficult to establish work life balance. (Devi & Kiran, 2014)

Marital Adjustment

Marital adjustment is a lifelong process; although in the early days of marriage one has to give serious consideration. Sinha and Mukerjee (1990) define marital adjustment as, "the state in which there is an overall feeling between husband and wife, of happiness and satisfaction with their marriage and with each other." It, therefore, calls experiencing satisfactory relationship between

spouses characterized by mutual concern, care, understanding and acceptance.

A study was undertaken to investigate the marital adjustment, depression and stress among working and non-working married women. The results revealed that non-working married women are better adjusted in their married life than working married women. Depression and stress in their married life also is less in non working women as compared to working married women. The study found that working married women who are above graduation; have to face less difficulties and less depression in their life as compared to married working women who are not highly educated. The study also revealed that depressed women cannot perform their job fruitfully and bear responsibilities effectively. Relationship with spouse is also affected (Hashmi, et.al., 2007)

Education plays an important role in dissolving marital conflict. Educational qualification of working married women affects the level of marital adjustment. As the women who are highly educated are better adjusted in their marital life, Higher education enhances marital adjustment because it improves their communication skill and enables them to talk over their problem or source of conflict, enhances their reasoning ability and ability to logically arrive at solution to conflicts. Proper communication between husband and wife is necessary to adjust better (Slathia Singh, 2014).

Emotional Well-Being

Emotional wellbeing refers to a positive sense of wellbeing which enables an individual to be able to function in society and meet the demands of everyday life; people in good mental health have

the ability to recover effectively from illness, change or misfortune (Mental Health Foundation). In 1998, *the Health Education Authority* defined 'mental health' as the emotional and spiritual resilience which enables us to enjoy life and to survive pain, disappointment and sadness. It is a positive sense of well-being and an underlying belief in our own and others worth.

Emotional mental disorders are a leading cause of disabilities worldwide. Investigating the degree and severity of untreated emotional mental disorders throughout the world is a top priority of the *World Mental Health (WMH)* survey initiative, which was created in 1998 by the World Health Organization.

Emotions are one aspect of a person's health that often gets neglected. But if the emotional health is suffering, physical and psychological health will too. Emotional health is just a term and is consists overall happiness and well being of a women. A women who is working has to perform dual responsibility one at home another at job. Therefore they sometimes feel stressed, unhappy, unsatisfied, worried and anxious and it indicates that emotional health of women is not up to the mark. Focusing on emotional health is not very hard but it may be an adjustment and at will be more enjoyable. If women are emotionally healthy they can make good adjustment in their family, they can make good balance between leisure time and activity time, feel good about themselves and don't suffer from self esteem issues, enjoy living and know the value of fun and laughter, have good relations with others and are contended with their lives.

Children are affected most if their mother is working. Working mothers are unable to give proper care and attention to their children due to job stress. Children of working mothers are deprived of healthy family care that makes children emotionally weak. Thus the personality of children of working women remain less developed. In turn, emotional well being and mental well being of both children and mother do effected. (Singh & Kiran, 2014)

Psychological Well – Being

The concept of "psychological well being" has more importance in the field of Psychology, over the last decade and in recent years psychological well being is the focus of intense research attention. (Diener and Diener,1995).

Psychological Well Being refers as the quality of life of a person. It includes happiness, peace and satisfaction. Ryff (1991) observes that convergence of similar features of positive psychological functioning constitutes the core dimensions of psychological well being.

Marital adjustment and psychological well being among working and non working women, has been studied to explore the nature of marital adjustment and psychological well-being in working and non-working female as well as in their spouses too. The findings suggest that both working and non-working women have similar marital adjustment and psychological well-being. However, the working woman differ in reflecting positive relation with others and personal growth as compared to non-working woman. (Gupta *et.al.*, 2014)

'Psychological well being of Employed Women across Different Organizations' was studied and it is found that working women employed in industries had low levels of psychological well being as compared to women employed in the teaching profession. Women working in the industrial sector have to work for long hours as compared to other profession. Nature of employment also affects the psychological well being of working women. If psychological well being of women is not appropriate they will face a lot of problems related to physical health, psychological heal, emotional health. The study revealed that the women, who are in the teaching profession, have very good psychological well being. An interview with women teachers revealed that they were satisfied with the facilities they get. While the women working in the industrial sector were not satisfied because they got a restricted number of holidays, unhygienic working conditions and inappropriate salary. As far as women working in bank sector and railway clerks were concerned they had job interest. Their psychological health was good as compared to women working in other sectors. (Srimathi, *et.al.*, 2010)

In modern era, Job satisfaction is one of the prominent issues as it represents the mental satisfaction of an individual. Job satisfaction represents the degree to which a working person enjoys his job. As far as job satisfaction of nurses across the working sector is concerned, nurses in government hospitals achieve higher job satisfaction than nurses in private hospitals. Job satisfaction is an indicator of work life balance

and mental health of working women. (Jahan &Kiran, 2013)

Physical Well-Being

A state of physical well-being is not just the absence of disease. It includes lifestyle behavior choices to ensure health, avoid preventable diseases and conditions, and to live in a balanced state of body, mind, and spirit.

Physical and psychological prerequisite of functioning in relation to working ability and general subjective well-being among office workers is being studied in Finland and results indicate that office worker who are considered as manual workers face the challenges of musculoskeletal and mental symptoms in seeking to maintain their work ability and general subjective well being. High intensity of musculoskeletal symptoms had the greatest negative effect on the working ability of office workers. As far as psychological prerequisite of functioning is concerned self confidence, mood and working ability is responsible for maintaining general subjective well being of working people. Among various environmental factors, mental stress at work had an association with working ability. (Sjogren-Ronka, *et.al.*, 2002)

A study conducted on occupational stress of women workers involved in construction work, chikankari work and sanitary work revealed that sanitary workers are much affected by physical, physiological and biomechanical stress among all the workers. The author suggested that regularized working patterns have to be implemented in unorganized sector to improve the working conditions and minimize the level of stress of

women. The author also proposed that ergonomic interventions may be made to improve the quality of life of women involved in unorganized sectors. (Aadya & Kiran, 2013)

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The WHO Global Burden of Disease Study estimates that mental and addictive disorders are among the most burdensome in the world and their burden will increase over next decades. (World Mental Health Survey Initiatives, 2014)

In Global Scenario, the situation of professional women has changed dramatically. Women have expanded their career aspirations. They are no longer confined to traditional female fields such as education or nursing. We have seen the integration of women into previously male dominated fields such as teaching, medical, army etc. (Vijayasekar et al. 2014)

Evidence from the *WHO* suggests that nearly half of the world's populations are affected by mental illness with an impact on their self-esteem, relationships and ability to function in everyday life. An individual's emotional health can also affect physical health and poor mental health can lead to problems such as substance abuse.

The sense of one's identity or self is an important dimension of individual's personality giving each one of us unique individuality. Women and stress is holding a relationship of much interest over the last two decades. As more and more women enter the work force; they are increasingly exposed not only of the same work environment as men, but also to unique pressure created by multiple roles and conflicting expectations.

Mental health can be seen as an unstable, continuum where an individual's mental health may have many different possible values. Mental wellness is generally viewed as a positive attribute, such that a person can reach enhanced levels of mental health, even if the person does not have any diagnosed mental health condition.

A mentally healthy person is social because he conforms to the laws and customs of the community in which he lives and through which he find the fullest development and satisfaction of his personality and the greatest measure of freedom.

Maintaining good mental health is crucial for women to live a long and healthy life. Good mental health can enhance their life, while poor mental health can prevent them from living an enriching life.

Objective:

- To assess the impact of marital status on mental health of working women.

Hypothesis:

- Marital Status do not have significant impact on the mental health of working women.

Methodology:

In the present study self made questionnaire was used to collect the information regarding the mental health of working women. A total of 90 working women were selected from Lucknow district. The data was collected purposely from two categories; married working women and unmarried working women. Sampling technique adopted in the present study is stratified random sampling. Information was collected using

interview method. The data was coded, tabulated and analyzed using the SPSS (version 20). T test

was used for the statistical analysis of the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Consequence of Stress

Items	Married		Unmarried		t	P value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Repeated disturbing memories, thoughts, or image of stressful experience.	2.10	0.81	2.22	0.42	0.76	0.44
Repeated disturbing dreams of a stressful experience.	1.67	0.64	1.56	0.50	0.79	0.43
Suddenly act or feel as if stress experiences were happening again.	2.14	1.82	1.56	0.50	1.64	0.10
Feel very upset when something reminded you of a stressful experience from the past.	2.67	1.53	1.22	0.42	4.79**	0.00
Physical reactions.	2.33	1.50	1.00	0.00	4.59**	0.00
Avoid talking about stressful experiences	3.67	1.29	3.78	1.15	0.38	0.70
Avoid stressful situations.	3.10	1.31	3.78	1.15	2.33*	0.02
Memory Loss	2.24	0.87	1.33	0.48	5.04**	0.00
Loss of interest in things that you used to enjoy.	2.29	0.63	2.00	0.67	1.91*	0.05
Feel distant or cut off from others.	2.24	1.02	1.67	0.83	2.55*	0.01
Feel emotionally numb.	2.33	1.09	1.89	0.75	1.92*	0.05
Feel as if your future will be cut short.	2.29	0.77	2.00	0.67	1.66	0.09
Trouble falling or staying asleep.	1.57	0.49	1.56	0.50	0.13	0.89
Feel irritable or having angry outburst.	2.67	0.71	2.78	0.80	0.65	0.51
Difficulty in concentration.	2.38	0.79	2.33	0.48	0.29	0.77
Being super alert or watchful on guard.	2.29	0.88	2.44	0.69	0.82	0.41
Feel jumpy or easily startled.	2.24	1.42	1.22	0.42	3.63**	0.00
Difficulty on your work.	1.76	0.42	1.56	0.50	1.97*	0.05
Difficult to take care of things at home.	1.90	0.68	1.89	0.75	0.09	0.92
Difficult to get along with other people.	1.38	0.65	1.44	0.69	0.41	0.68
Total	42.95	8.12	37.22	2.48	3.58**	0.00

It was revealed from Table1 that married working women had more difficulty in managing their work and family as compared to unmarried working women. It was also observed that married working women have stressful job experience

because they had to make balance between their family and job. In the other case, unmarried working women have less stressful experience because they were only focused on the job. The result obtained on the consequences of stress

revealed significant differences among married and unmarried working women. Married working women had to face a lot of problem like difficulty on their work, taking care of things at home, loss of interest in things, feeling emotionally numb, avoid talking about stressful situation and feeling cut off from others. Whereas, In the case of unmarried working women, consequence of stress was very optimum. Due to job stress married working women were highly affected by physical problems, they were easily startled and they did not want to remember any type of stressful experience from the past.

Occupational stress results from the complex interactions between large systems of interrelated variables. A study conducted on "Occupational stress among bank employees" revealed that private bank employees had high occupational stress due to role ambiguity, role conflict, under participation, powerlessness, low status, strenuous working condition than nationalized bank employees. Thus, the nature of job and working conditions are responsible for level of stress that employees faced in various sectors. (Niharika & Kiran, 2014)

The finding of the result was not supported by the study of Palner and Mittelmark (2002) that focused on difference between married and unmarried men and women in the relationship between perceived physical health and perceived mental health. Married people reported significantly better mental health that unmarried people at all levels of perceived physical health ($P < 0.000$).

The mental health of working women is affected by many internal and external factors. The selected demographic variables have impact on mental health status. There was a positive and significant relationship of age with perception of reality, integration of personality, group oriented attitude and overall mental health of working women. (Mankani et.al.,2012).

The results of the present study are supported by the study of (Mangaleswaran. R, 2012) about the adjustment problems among married police personnel and stated that women face greater adjustment problems in various dimensions of adjustment health, home, self, emotional and social feature. Among all the adjustment problems their home adjustment problem was found to be very high.

Table 2: Impact of marital status on mental health of working women

Items	Married		Unmarried		T	P value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Feeling of Stress	6.48	1.51	6.56	1.67	0.22	0.82
Consequences of Stress	42.95	8.12	37.22	2.48	3.58**	0.00
Emotional Problem	22.8	2.34	21.44	3.78	2.08*	0.04

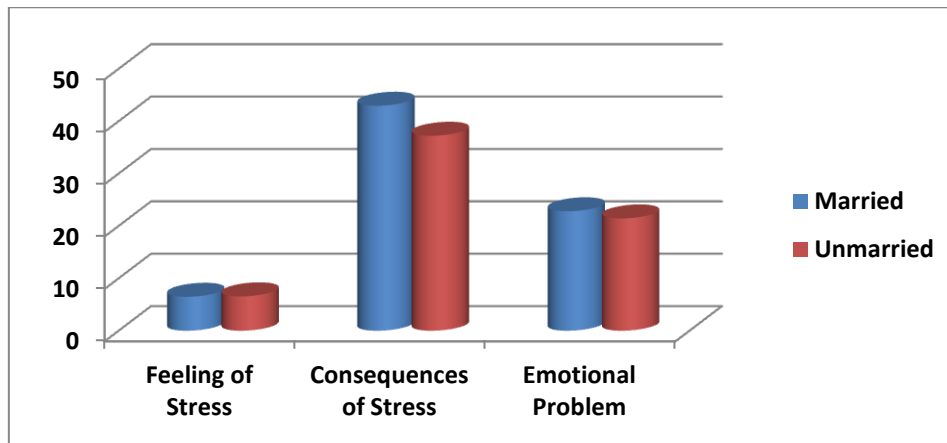


Fig. 1 Impact of marital status on mental health of working women

This study was intended to find out the impact of marital status on mental health of working women. The data from Table 2 clearly showed the significant effect indicating consequence of stress on mental health of married and unmarried working women. Married women received high mean score than unmarried working women. From the above table, it can be said that unmarried working women were less affected by job stress. The table also revealed significant effect of emotional problem among working women. Unmarried working women had better emotional health than married working women.

The results of the present study are at par with the study of Slathia (2014) who reported working married women face greater adjustment problems. When working married women are compared to non-working married women it was found that working married women faces marital adjustment problems in a great degree to that of non-working married women. The findings of the study indicate that working married women have to face more difficulties in their lives as compared to non-working married women. The author also conclude that working women because of the added responsibilities of job may suffer from

more severe causes of maladjustment at home or in the office, while on the other side they have to take care of the children, husband, and in-laws and perform other domestic duties.

Ojha and Rani (2004) reported no significant difference between mental health of working and non-working women. Goel et.al.(2013), conducted a study on marital adjustment and mental health among bank employees and doctors during middle age (40-55years) in Delhi and found that there was not much difference in the marital adjustment and mental health of Bank employees and Doctors. It can be assumed that bank employees and doctors are very ambitious; career oriented and spends more time outside the family. So, they have to make adjustment within the family responsibilities and work roles. This can have an impact on their marital adjustment and mental health. The author also found that females were having better marital adjustment than males.

The marital status has an impact on women's mental health and work conditions. Results indicate that unmarried working women have better mental health than married working women. The findings of the research reveal significant difference of consequence of stress and emotional

problem among married working women and unmarried working women.

A study on marital adjustment and resource management of working women among different income groups concludes that majority of working women were able to achieve good relationship (highly satisfactory) in their marital life. As income of working women increased, their level of marital adjustment increased. As co-earners they are also capable of managing family finances. However, income level of working women has little to do with their ability to manage money matters in the family. Similarly working women are capable of time management and make it a way of life. There exists positive correlation between handling domestic affairs and income group to which working women belong. This study establishes, beyond doubt, the fact that women are capable of managing both domestic duties and job obligations with aplomb. For a woman, there is no inherent conflict between career and marital bliss. (Kumari, 2011)

CONCLUSION

The status of working women has performed impact on their mental health and significant difference among working and non working women are apparent due to the dual stress among working women. International studies may be carried out especially for working women, which may include meditational technique to avoid stress in their life. Healthy life style, positive outlook, marital bliss, proper planning at home and work may reduce the stress and enhance the mental health of working women. The findings of this

research are very useful to identify various dimensions of mental health of working women, their physical wellbeing, emotional wellbeing, and mental wellbeing.

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