

Anxiety Depression and Quality of Life among Working Married and Unmarried Women: A Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT

Background: Anxiety and depression are the most common problems that we face in our daily life and both affect our quality of life. So, the present study was done to assess and compare anxiety, depression and quality of life among working married and unmarried women. **Methods and Materials:** Purposive sampling technique was used for recruiting 100 working women (an equal number of married and unmarried), with their informed consent. The tools used for the present study were Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale, Beck Depression Inventory-II and WHO Quality of Life-Bref for anxiety, depression and quality of life assessment respectively. **Results:** Result shows significant differences in the levels of anxiety, depression and quality of life of working married and unmarried women. **Conclusion:** The present study also concludes that married working women do experience a higher level of anxiety and depression as well as a lower quality of life in comparison to unmarried working women.

Keywords: Anxiety, depression, quality of life, working women

INTRODUCTION

Importance of work is changing due to various conditions. Earlier work was a necessity for survival but today work is not just a necessity but a source of satisfaction. The role of work is changing for women also, instead of being all-time at-home mothers; they are stepping out to achieve new heights, earning their own living and contributing financially to their families.^[1] Women, either married or unmarried, have certain defined roles to accomplish, both in their professional and personal lives. Their status is changing with passing time due to awareness of their rights, education, media, etc. most of the women prefer to be involved in some kind of work, helping them to contribute to their family financially. Thus carrying out responsibilities both at home and at work puts a psychological strain on them. The role of women has been questioned many a time especially in a society like ours. In present society, where the role of women is changing every day, there is a need to address

the importance of working women, their level of anxiety, depression and quality of life. Anxiety is something that every individual experience every day. And a little bit of anxiety is good for everyone but when this anxiety level crosses its limit, it starts affecting the personal, social and occupational life of that person.

Anxiety and depression are the two common terms we use in our day-to-day life. Anxiety is a vague, diffuse feeling of helplessness, accompanied by a feeling of worry, distress and/or somatic symptoms of tension. For a working woman, managing her work and her family make it a little difficult at times to manage, causing anxiety in them. For married and unmarried women, their roles and responsibilities are different. For unmarried women, life is about independence, freedom to live on their own terms, freedom to spend their time as they wish but for married working women, things change. They not only have to manage their own lives but their

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partners too. It becomes a little more difficult for them when they have children, dividing their time appropriately becomes their biggest priority.

It is not just the married women who juggle their lives in between home and work, taking care of children while worrying about work.^[2] Unmarried women have a different type of problems to deal with, especially in Indian culture where getting married is given priority, unmarried women struggles in establishing themselves as independent women and getting married. Unmarried women also go through the worry of not able to find a suitable guy to share their lives with. Level of anxiety and depression is different among them and their reasons are many, to begin with. In addition to this, if they are unable to get a prosperous work environment, their lives are gravely affected.

Anxiety is a common reaction of women when they face conflict regarding the management of their time between their work and family. Constant anxiety or worry may also lead to depression and decreased the quality of life in women. Depression is psychological condition usually caused by various personal, social and occupational factors. Women have more depression because of the burden faced by them in the form of their personal and professional lives. They have to work in two different environments. Home and workplace environment plays important role in shaping the mental health of women.^[3] Not only their workplace environment affects them but their home environment also has some impact on their lives. If the environments are not conducive enough for them, it will start affecting their mental health.^[4,5] Women in comparison to men have different roles to play, especially at home. If men are considered as the breadwinners of the family, women are the caretakers. With the changing time, both men and women are realizing their roles in different areas of life. But in the society like ours, these roles are being explored rapidly and slowly. The type of environment a woman gets influences her quality of life also.

So, the present study was done to assess and compare anxiety, depression and quality of life among working married and unmarried women.

METHODOLOGY

Using of purposive sampling method, 100 working women (equal number married and unmarried) between age 25-45 years were selected from various departments of Aligarh Muslim University. Screening tools for anxiety, depression and quality of life were used and those showing a moderate-to-severe level of anxiety and depression and low level of quality of life were taken for study. Participants were explained about the purpose of the study and how their involvement will benefit us. The written consent for the study was given by the participants, after which above mentioned tools were administered on them.

Tools Used

Hamilton Anxiety Scale (HAM-A): is a 14 item scale rated on 5-points. Each item is scored on a scale of 0 (not present) to 4 (severe), with a total score range of 0–56, where higher the score indicates higher anxiety.^[6]

Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-II): consists of 21 items rated on a 4-point rating. Scores 1-10 are considered normal, 11-16 mild mood disturbance 17-20, borderline clinical depression, 21-30 moderate depression, 31-40 severe depression and over 40 extreme depression.^[7]

WHO Quality of Life – BREF: consists of 26 items among them 24 items are based on a 4 domain structure that is Physical, health, Psychological, Social Relationships and Environment, in addition, 2 items are from the Overall Quality of Life and General Health facet. The items are based on 5 points Likert Scale ranging from very poor, poor, neither poor nor good, good and very good. The higher the score, the higher is the quality of life.^[8]

Statistical Analysis: Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used for data analysis. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (PPMCC) was used to achieve the objectives.

RESULTS

Socio-demographic Profile

Table 1 show socio-demographic details of working women (married and unmarried)

where the maximum numbers of working women are school teachers falling under the age range of 25-35. Most of the participants were Muslim, belonging from urban areas of Aligarh. The socio-economic status has been taken from Kuppuswamy's Socio-economic Status Scale (analysis not shown).^[9]

Table 1 Socio-demographic Profile

Characteristics	(f)/%
Age (in years)	
25-35	(72) 72
35-45	(28) 28
Marital Status	
Married	(50) 50
Unmarried	(50) 50
Religion	
Hindu	(27) 27
Muslim	(70) 70
Others	(3) 3
Domicile	
Rural	(10) 10
Urban	(90) 90
Family Type	
Nuclear	(35) 35
Joint/Extended	(65) 65
Occupation	
Non-Teaching Staff	(10) 10
School Teacher	(75) 75
University Lecturer/Reader	(15) 15
Socio-Economic Status	
Upper	-
Upper Middle	(84) 84
Lower Middle	(8) 8
Upper Lower	(8) 8
Lower	-

Correlation of Anxiety & Depression with QoL

Table 2 explains the correlation between anxiety, depression and quality of life of married and unmarried working women. Correlation between anxiety and quality of life was found negative which indicates as anxiety increases the quality of life decreases. Similarly, the correlation between depression and quality of life also indicates the same result, i.e. as depression level increases the quality of life

Table 2 Correlation of Study Variables

Variables	Quality of Life of Women	
	Married	Unmarried
Anxiety	-.669**	-.611**
Depression	-.675**	-.676**

** significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

decreases of married working women. Correlation between anxiety and quality of life was found negative which indicates as anxiety increases the quality of life decreases. Similarly, the correlation between depression and quality of life also indicates the same result, i.e. as depression level increases the quality of life decreases of unmarried working women.

Table 3 Comparison of anxiety, depression and quality of life

Variables	Working Women				t	p
	Married		Unmarried			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Anxiety	26.20	1.26	2.98	0.79	107.37	.00001*
Depression	35.64	3.40	3.04	0.83	65.98	.00001*
QoL	1.21	13.81	3.91	8.56	110.55	.00001*

*significant at 0.01 level

Table 3 indicates the difference between married and unmarried working women on anxiety, depression and quality of life. The table also shows the t-value and p-value of both the groups, indicating that in comparison to unmarried working women, married working women have a high level of anxiety and depression and poor quality of life.

DISCUSSION

Women are touching new heights every day through their various accomplishments, be it in the field of teaching or in holding the highest position of the country. Managing their worlds (work and family) beautifully puts a strain on them, causing certain psychological problems in them. Stress, anxiety, depression, etc are common psychological reactions. In present study explores the level of anxiety, depression and quality of life in working married and working unmarried women. The study also aims to explain that who among married and unmarried have more anxiety, depression and poor quality of life.

Various studies have been conducted to explain the levels of anxiety, stress or depression among both married and unmarried women. In a study^[10] explained that the level of depression and life satisfaction is higher in married women as compared with unmarried women. The present study supports the previous study. The findings of the present study show that among married and unmarried women, married women have a higher level of depression in comparison to unmarried women.

A study on married and unmarried police officers, explaining that anxiety, stress and depression are higher in married women in comparison to unmarried women.^[11] The present study supports the previous study, emphasising that married working women experience a higher level of anxiety, depression and lower level of quality of life when compared with unmarried working women. In another study on married women those unemployed women were significantly higher on depression than employed.^[12]

Most of the studies showed higher psychological problems in married working women and lower levels in unmarried working women. The present study too shows the same result but when compared with other studies, it also indicates that unmarried working women have started facing less amount of anxiety or depression. This reduction could be attributed to the changing perspective of society and women's coping mechanisms. It could be expected that in future this level of the psychological problem will keep on reducing among unmarried working women and there is a need to focus on reduction of increasing anxiety, depression and other psychological problems of married working women.

Since the sample size is small, therefore result cannot be generalized. Variables used in the study are few. Future research could be done on a larger population. Various other variables, such as life satisfaction, self-esteem, family relationship etc. could also be analysed of married and unmarried working women.

Limitations: Since the sample size is small, therefore result cannot be generalized. Variables used in the study are few. Future research could be done on a larger population. Various other variables, such as life satisfaction, self-esteem, family relationship etc. could also be analysed of married and unmarried working women.

CONCLUSION

The result of the study indicates that both anxiety and depression has certain negative effects on the quality of life of an individual, where if anxiety or depression increases the quality of life decreases. The present study also concludes that married working women

do experience a higher level of anxiety and depression as well as a lower quality of life in comparison to unmarried working women.

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