

## Levels of Self Esteem and Depression among the Married Employed and Unemployed Woman: A Comparative Study

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** The status of women in the Indian society is now able to lead a more independent lifestyle. But women in Indian society are not completely free from custom due to social structure. An attempt was made to compare certain need related to self-esteem and depression of women who are employed and unemployed. **Material and Method:** It was a cross-sectional comparative study. Using convenient sampling of fifty samples; 25 participants were the married employed women and 25 married unemployed women were drawn from J.P Nagar, Jaya Nagar and Koramangala at Bangalore. **Result:** Employed women have significantly higher self-esteem than unemployed women and the majority of the in employed women were having less depression than unemployed status. **Conclusion:** Married women who are not employed outside the home experience poorer self-esteem than employed married women. Some unemployed married women cope better and even find the source of satisfaction in the alternative lifestyles that they adopt but employment outside the home has positive impact on self-esteem of women.

**Keywords:** Depression, self-esteem, married women, employment

### INTRODUCTION

In scientific, statistical and other objective use, the female is the neutral contrastive term to male has pointed out that women who possess both positive feminine and positive masculine characteristics and secure sex-role orientation are most able to actualize their potentials. Women who have pride in their femininity and are independent and assertive as well as nurturing and sensitive are likely to achieve interpersonal and creative.<sup>[1]</sup> Our Indian culture tells us that it is a “waste” of talents and brain to stay home and raise children, but something deep in souls tell us it is meaningful, beautiful and even challenging.<sup>[2]</sup> The development of women in India has been at the centre stage of development planning since Independence. However, in 1980's women were recognized as a separate

target group and given the rightful place in development planning by including a separate chapter viz., women and development in the sixth plan document. Major programme implemented by the Government in the area of women development is for the prevention of atrocities against women.<sup>[3]</sup>

Women's personality develops after marriage in the sense of maturity, wit and wisdom and not in the sense of knowledge as an academic endeavour.<sup>[4]</sup> The first lesson an expectant mother learns is patience then flexibility and adaptability. Other important qualities that a mother learns in the process of a child rising include agility, leniency, surrender, justice and impartiality, appreciation of individuality and uniqueness of the people etc.<sup>[5]</sup> The qualities

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that married women acquire naturally as the result of child-bearing and child-raising. Mothers are indeed more 'affluent' than non-mothers.

Employed married women with jobs or careers find it more and more difficult to cope with work and their families at once. A woman has a set of family's responsibilities at home and job responsibilities and datelines which cause stress and fatigue that then lead to the deterioration of the couple's relationship.<sup>[6]</sup> The workload of responsibilities and practical tasks is just huge for most of the women. Now, women who are also trying to run a career at the same time obviously come up with relationship obstacles and be under great stress, while working in two different environments married women suffer more than men from symptoms of depression. The double roles they play are simply too much for most women to endure. A plausible reason could be that there are other factors that contribute to a woman's work orientation such as a vocational maturity, self-efficacy, personality, and religious orientation.<sup>[7]</sup> Rather, features such as the quality of roles, available financial resources, children and spouse characteristics, and job characteristic which influence the effect of multiple roles in working women.<sup>[8]</sup>

A pertinent question that arises here is whether women are happier and better adjusted by relinquishing their traditional role or by combining the two roles. Adjustment at home with both roles-working at home and out-depends on their personality, family relationships, types of their job, satisfaction in marriage, and the support from their adjustment to their role.<sup>[9]</sup>

For the married women to become unemployed are due to the family duties also contribute to the unemployment-insurance gender gap.<sup>[10]</sup> According to research by the National Council of Women's Organizations in Washington, women who quit their jobs due to family responsibilities are also unlikely to collect an unemployment check. Women are also more likely than men to leave their jobs due to sexual harassment or domestic violence. In unemployed women with traditional gender role it have been found to be more other-oriented attitudes than employed women who are more self-oriented believing in

self-growth also. This clarifies employed women being higher on commitment than unemployed women.<sup>[11]</sup>

### **Self-esteem among Married Employed Women**

The employed women who did not get support from their spouses or family differ significantly on self-esteem. The nature of the relationship between multiple roles and health is exceedingly complex. Social scientists contend that the number of roles alone does not account for the beneficial impact of multiple role involvement for women. Rather, factors such as the quality of roles available financial resource job characteristics social support multiple roles involvement for working mothers.<sup>[7]</sup> Fulltime housework involves more autonomy, more interruptions, greater physical effort, more routine, fewer time pressures and less responsibility for matters outside one's control than paid work.<sup>[11]</sup>

The positive consequences of women's employment in large-scale studies are likely to be obtained only for those women who regard their paid work role as a significant source of self-fulfilment.<sup>[12]</sup> However, even in less selective samples, employed mothers appear to be psychologically healthier than mothers who are not employed.<sup>[13]</sup> It is important to understand whether holding multiple roles increases or reduces psychological risks. The role of a paid worker is a source of self-esteem, self-identity, social rewards, but is also a source of stress for women under conditions of role conflict and role overload. Employment brings self-esteem and independence.<sup>[14]</sup>

### **Self-esteem among Married Unemployed Women**

Adult global self-esteem only fluctuates due to major life changes or severe traumatic events impinged upon the individual like becoming unemployed or divorced.<sup>[10]</sup> Self-esteem is generated through compensation for effort and that an individual's sense of ability could contribute positively to a sense of self.<sup>[15]</sup> Self-esteem concerned with the effect of unemployment. Unemployed women assess self-esteem by financial deprivation, number of alternate roles, and use of social support. Financial deprivation, alternate roles and social

support each had a main effect on self-esteem. Loss of role identity has been shown to be a major contributor to lowered self-esteem during unemployment.<sup>[16]</sup>

### **Depression among Married Employed Women**

Depression can occur in women without family histories of depression, and women from families with a history of depression may not develop depression themselves. Genetics research indicates that the risk for developing depression likely involves the combination of multiple genes with environmental or other factors. Many factors contribute to the unique picture of depression in women from reproductive hormones to social pressures to the female response to stress.<sup>[17]</sup>

During the past several decades, the rate of participation in the labour force among married women with children has increased steadily in our Indian society. This trend coincides with an increase in the rate of reported psychological consequences of married mothers in the workforce. Indian married women have significantly now numbers worked outside the home this identifies that might intervene and identify coping strategies for women managing multiple roles.<sup>[4]</sup>

Lower rates of major depression have been found among married women.<sup>[18]</sup> Thus, there appears to be little support for the view that being married is uniquely a source of depression among women. Employed women are less depressed than housewives.<sup>[19]</sup>

Stress for married women of combining work outside the home with family roles, suggesting that married women experience more demands and conflicts when they combine family responsibilities with paid employment. This is a factor in the increased risk of depression among employed women.<sup>[20]</sup> Evidence does exist of an increased risk of depression symptoms and diagnosed depression among employed women combining marital and parental role although employment outside the home appears to moderate the risk of depression in women, married women who are employed full time may still be more vulnerable to depression especially if employment is combined with childcare responsibilities.

### **Depression among Married Unemployed Women**

Unemployed women would be more depressed than their employed counterparts and further that the distress of unemployment would be reflected in elevations in cortisol values among those who were out of work.<sup>[21]</sup>

Stress associated with the housewife role has been implicated as a factor in the higher levels of depression among married women.<sup>[20]</sup> Other Canadian studies have also reported a tendency for unemployed married women to report higher levels of depression symptom: Health and Welfare Canada and statistics.<sup>[22]</sup> Thus, though the housewife role may not be more stressful, there is some evidence, albeit mixed, that housewives experience higher levels of depression symptom than do married women. One interpretation of these finding is that absence of paid employment serves to increase the housewives vulnerability to stress.<sup>[23]</sup>

As well, depressive symptom levels generally are found to be higher in the unemployment than the employed, implies that the parental role may be an important source of stress for women.<sup>[24]</sup>

The present study was conducted to find out the differences among the married women employed and unemployed on the levels of depression and self-esteem.

### **MATERIAL AND METHOD**

A stratified convenient sampling technique was used for the selection of the sample. The sample consisted of 50 married women, 25 married employed (professional or non-professionally employed) and 25 married unemployed women (those who had never taken up a job after marriage and not helping in the family business). In the age range of both employed and unemployed of 30-50 years, with educational qualification of degree and post graduation. The setting for the study is J.P Nagar, Jaya Nagar and Koramangala at Bangalore, India and a sample of 25 married employed women were drawn from various organizations in these areas.

**Tools Used:** Socio-demographic Data Sheet – a self-prepare interview schedule by the researcher for the purpose of the study. It has items to collect information such as age, education,



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