

Mental Health among Working and Non-Working Women in Nepal Kavita Thapa*

Abstract

With the globalization and industrialization women started coming out of their traditional roles and started taking jobs in different sectors. But they are expected to fulfil their responsibilities as a wife, mother and daughter-in-law before they go to work. This puts a lot of pressure on women's health and well-being as she has to juggle between her personal and professional life. Both working and non-working women have different sets of responsibilities. Even non-working women are all the time on their toes to fulfil the demands and requirements of the family members. They often suppress their desires and are never appreciated for their commitment and dedication they show towards their family members and this impact their mental well-being. The purpose of the research is to study the mental health of working and non-working women. The sample was collected from Butwal, Nepal and consists of 50 working and 50 non-working women. The instrument used was Mental Health Inventory (MHI) by Veit and Ware. T ratio was applied on the data and the result indicated that working women had better mental health than the non-working women.

Keywords: Mental health, working, non-working, women, Nepal

In Hindu culture women are known as Janani and worshipped as grih laxmis (wives). According to Manusmriti when women are not honoured at their home, the family will not get any reward of the rites performed. All this shows the importance of women in the society. They are equally important in a society as men are. In earlier times the exclusive work of married women was to take care of the household. The men used to be the provider of the house who used to look after the financial and other needs of the family members. Females used to cook, clean the house and look after the children. For financial and other needs they have to depend upon their husband or in-laws.

But the time has changed now; women are coming out of their traditional roles and are working in different sectors. They are financially independent and can take their own decisions, however before leaving for the workplace they have to fulfil their responsibilities at home like cooking, cleaning the house, getting children ready for the school, looking after the needs of the elders and they also have to reach the workplace on time. All this puts a lot of stress and tension and ultimately affects their mental health.

Both working and non-working women have certain responsibilities which they need to fulfil irrespective of their status. Also, non-working women hardly receive the recognition and respect they deserve for their relentless efforts and dedication towards their family. They often suffer in silence as nobody caters to their emotional needs and mental wellness.

Today mental health became one of the pivotal health issues around the globe. Mental health means when a person is mentally, physically and emotionally sound. He/she can handle daily life challenges and make a positive impact on society. Mental health in the Indian subcontinent is a neglected area and it is poor in the countries that are underdeveloped such as Nepal.

Currently more than 1 million people in Nepal are having mental health crisis (WHO). The main reason can be attributed to the lack of awareness among general masses and the prevailing attitude towards mental health. Many people still believe that prayers and performing rituals or going to faith healers can help in dealing with mental health issues. Many families and individual do not seek help of the professionals due to societal stigma.

In Nepal a less percentage of women are employed and most of the women are involved in the domestic work like cooking, cleaning, taking care of children which is not considered productive but rather it is treated as one of the responsibilities and duties of being a housewife. No one appreciates how diligently a woman handles all the responsibilities. Sometimes women become the victim of domestic violence and often fall prey to the frustration and aggression of their husband or in-laws. All this impacts their mental health.

This study is important in Nepali context because the investigator found out that both working and non-working women experience problems. Each role has positive as well as negative aspects. Research on mental health among working and non-working women in Nepal is sparse. Further, it will help in creating awareness among the policy makers, institutions and organizations who are working towards the mental health of women so that timely diagnosis and intervention can be provided to them.

Chen & Lin (1992) conducted a study in Taipei that analyzed the daily life demands, social support, life satisfaction, and health among working women and housewives. The sample consisted of 444 women. It was revealed that working women have higher level of depression than housewives.

Sarwar (1994) conducted a study on marital adjustment and depression among working and non-working. Study revealed that working women were more prone to depression than non-working women

because they have to fulfil their responsibilities at home and at workplace too.

Akhtar Iqbal (2004) assessed the anxiety among working and non-working women in Pakistan. 100 women participated in the study, out of which 50 were working women and 50 were non-working women. It was found out that non-working women have high level of anxiety as compared to working women.

GH Kholasezadeh(2010) compared the mental health of housewives and working women in Iran. Out of 300 women, 150 were housewives and 150 were working women. The result indicated that working women have better mental health than housewives.

Revati R.Dudhatra (2012) examined the mental health and depression among working and non-working women in Rajkot, India .A total number of 80 women were selected for the study. The finding indicates that women who were housewives have better mental health and low level of depression compared to working women.

R.V Mankani (2012) investigated the mental health of working and non-working women in Karnataka, India. The sample consisted of 90 working and 90 non-working women. It was reported that working women have better mental health than housewives.

Ashabahen C.Tadvi (2014) examined the mental health of working and non-working women with regard to area of residence in Gujarat, India. The sample consisted of 120 women. The result indicated that there was no significant difference in mental health of working and non-working women.

Kiraben Vaghela (2014) studied the mental health of working and non-working women in Ahmadabad, India. A total number of 60 women participated in the study, out of which 30 were working women and 30 were non-working. The result revealed that working women have better mental health than non-working women.

Neharshi Shrivastava (2014) explored the mental health among working women and housewives in Jammu & Kashmir, India.100 women were divided into two groups. One group consists of 50 working women and another group had 50 non-working women. It was found out that housewives have better mental health than working women.

D.Aruna Jyothi (2016) examined the mental health and depression among working and non-working women in Tirupati, India. The sample consisted of 40 working women and 40 non-working women. It was revealed that non-working women have better mental health and low level of depression as compared to working women.

Digna.I.Machchhar (2017) assessed the mental health and depression among working and non-working women in Gujarat, India. 80 women participated in the study, out of which 40 were working women and 40 were non-working women. The result revealed that non-working women have better mental health and low level of depression than working women.

Chitradevi B.Singh (2018) analysed the adjustment and mental health in working women and non-working women in Gujarat, India. 80 women were taken as sample for the study, out of which 40 were working and 40 were non-working women. It was found out that non-working women have good mental health and better level of adjustment than non-working women.

Sapna (2018) examined the mental health status among working and non-working women in Meerut, India. The sample consisted of 60 working women and 60 non-working women. It was revealed that there was no significant difference in the mental health of both the group.

Mohammad Raza Tammanaeifar (2019) explored the mental health and life satisfaction among employed and unemployed women in Iran. 240 women were divided into two groups. One group consists of 120 employed women and other group consists of 120 unemployed women. The result indicated that employed women have good mental health and higher life satisfaction as compared to unemployed women.

Sonia Sharma (2019) compared the mental health and occupational adjustment among professional working and non-professional women in Punjab, India. The sample consisted of 100 professional women and 100 non-professional women. It was found out that professional women have good mental health and better occupational adjustment than non-professional women.

Zeeshan Maqsood (2019) assessed the depression among working and non-working married women in Pakistan. 50 working and 50 non-working married women were taken as a sample for the study. The result revealed that working women have high level of depression than non-working women.

Prabhjyot Kour (2020) explored the stress and mental health of working and non-working women in Jammu, India. The sample was divided into 50 working and 50 non-working women. The result indicated that working women have better mental health and low level of stress as compared to non-working women.

Abha Khuntley (2021) explored the mental health among working and non-working women in Raipur, India. The sample was divided into 30 working and 30 non-working women. It was found out that there was no significant difference among both the groups with regard to their mental health.

Objectives

- To study the mental health of working and non-working women.
- To compare the mental health of working and non-working women.

Hypotheses

- 1) There would be significant difference in mental health among working and non-working women.

- 2) Level of mental health of working women would be significantly higher than the non-working women.

Method

Sample

According to the objective of the study 50 working and 50 non-working women were selected for the study from Butwal, Nepal.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria for working women

- Married women
- Age group of 20-50 years.
- Working more than 2 years.

Exclusion criteria for working women

- Pregnant women
- History of any mental health condition

Inclusion criteria for non-working women

- Married women
- Age group of 20-50 years
- Housewife

Exclusion criteria for non-working women

- History of any mental health condition
- Pregnant women

Tools

The instrument used was Mental Health Inventory (MHI) developed by Veit and Ware in 1983. It consists of 18 items. Cronbach’s alpha for the MHI is .93 for the full-length version and .82 for the abbreviated form.

Results and Discussion

Data was analysed using SPSS software. T ratio was applied to measure the difference between both the groups.

including a loving spouse and in-laws at home and a supportive employment environment.

Non-working women stays at home and had a lot of leisure time but still it affects their mental health as they are financially dependent upon their husband or on in-laws and have no upper hand in the decision making process. On the other hand working women are financially independent and they can make their own decision. This plays an important role in maintaining one’s good mental health.

Further even in the 21st century no one appreciates the chores done by the housewife’s. It is still considered as one of their duties. As a result, it causes a lot of tension and discontent among non-working women. Sometimes non-working women become the easy target of their husband or in-laws’ frustration and aggression which leads to violence against them and it ultimately impacts their mental health.

Conclusion

From the study it can be concluded that the mental health of working women was good compared to the non-working women.

Limitations

The study was done on a very limited part of the working women and non-working women.

Teachers, government employees, and nurses were among the working women included in this research. Other professional women including physicians, engineers, advocates, bankers, etc. should be the subject of future studies.

The present study was confined to only Butwal. It is suggested to carry out the similar study in different districts and cities of Nepal.

Studies on other variables like marital adjustment,

Table 1 Showing Mean, SD and t values

Variables	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error mean	t value
Mental health of working women	50	73.08	11.73	1.66	5.14
Mental health of non – working women	50	59.72	14.17	2.00	

The result shows that the t-ratio is significant at both the level i.e. 0.05 and 0.01.

The current study investigated the mental health of working and non-working women. The findings of the study suggest that working women reported good mental health (M=73.08 and SD=11.73) as compared to the non-working women (M=59.72 and SD=14.17). The result of the present study supports the findings of the study conducted by Prabhjyot Kour (2020) and Mohammad Raza Tammanaefar (2019) which indicated that working women had good mental health as compared to non-working women. The result can be attributed to the home and workplace ambience in influencing the mental health of the working and non-working women. Good mental health can be attributed to a variety of factors,

locus of control, psychological well-being should be carried out.

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