

A Study on Depression among Working and Non-working Women of Gujrat, Pakistan

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Abstract:

The present study is aimed to explore the level of depression among working and non working women. Sample of the study consisted of 100 working and 98 non-working married women who were recruited through purposive sampling technique. The working mothers were various post holders in different private and government organizations. Non-working women were only housewives/house makers. Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) was translated in Urdu to assess the level of their depression. Data was analyzed on SPSS V. 17. The result showed that non working women have more depression tendencies as compared to their working women counterparts. However factors like family system, education, monthly income, number of children, and age appeared to be associated with depression of the participants. Further the results indicated that women working as managers and lawyers were more depressed than teachers, lecturers self-employed and doctors.

Key words: Depression, Working and Non-Working Women, House makers

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Introduction

The term woman is usually used for an adult girl. Womanhood generally refers to the period after the age of 18 years in the life of a female. Woman is the great creation of God, a multi-faceted personality with the power of benevolence, integrity, adjustability and tolerance (Ghadially & Rehana 1998). The lives of women of current era are much different than the older days (Hoffman 1986). They are going to expand their lives to include a career while maintaining their traditional roles. Mothers may work in an office for six to eight hours but their work does not end there. After finishing office, a mother comes home and takes care of her children, husband, and house. Her office as well as home responsibilities make a very demanding schedule (Rapaport & Rapaport 1972).

On the other hand there are lots of benefits of working besides being a homemaker that it seems to be a mistake to be a stay at home mother. However the decision to be a house wife or working lady may depend on factors such as financial situation, work availability, children's age, partner support, work passion, education and health (Kessler & MacRae 1982). Working women can utilize their abilities and skills not only for them but for their family and society as well. Rich experiences out of the home may consist of intellectual stimulation, problem solving, and handling challenge. These experiences are the source to enhance their self-esteem, self-confidence and sense of satisfaction. They have their own income, which offers independence, security and freedom. Working women can meet the financial needs of their family in case of husband's health or marriage failure. Along with financial distress the housewives may experience lack of satisfaction, boredom and feelings of worthlessness. These problems become serious as their children get older. Enveloped up in their own lives, children assert their independence and husbands are busy with their careers. At this point in life non working women may find the empty nest

traumatic indeed, whereas working mothers with rewarding careers have ample chances for positive reinforcement outside the home. Working women have also been found to promote higher level of independence in their children as it is impossible for them to solve every problem due to their absence, so their children tend to become more independent and better problem solvers.

It is also true that multiple roles are good for women's mental health. Generally the employment has positive psychosocial effects on women either as a safe-guard against stress or as a primary source of well-being. In short, the paid jobs help to reduce depression in life; however, working women may experience work related stress that may lead to depression.

Field (1964) compared non-working and working mothers on measures of mental health, self-esteem, and mother role. He found that working women had better mental health as well as reported less depression. Almost similar results have been mentioned in another study by Anderson in 2009. Similarly, Al-Modallal, Abuidhail and Sowan (2010) reported that depressive symptoms experienced by working women have been rarely observed in studies. The results of their study showed that the causes of women's depressive symptoms are imbedded in their social and familial environment, rather than only their jobs.

In major depression individuals' daily routine life is disturbed because of experiencing severe mood changes. Although we all may suffer depression from one time to another in our lives, this is only temporary. The person reports loss of interest and pleasure in the activities which used to be enjoyed previously as well as having a disturbed appetite, sleep and motor functioning, loss of energy, feelings of worthlessness and guilt, impairment in thinking and concentration with the report of suicidal ideation and suicidal attempts (American Psychological Association 2000).

According to Beck (2006) depression is because of faulty or maladaptive cognitive processes. The physical and emotional symptoms are a consequence of the thinking patterns that Beck assumes to be the contributor of the disorder. Beck suggests that depressed people have unrealistically negative ways of thinking about themselves, their future and their experiences. He suggests that the inner life of depressed people is dominated by a set of assumptions that shape conscious cognitions. These predictions lead ultimately from the messages we receive from parents, teachers, friends, and other significant people (intentional or not; we infer them from the way these people behave and talk to us).

By the year 2020, depression is predicted to be the second most important cause of disability throughout the world among other various causes like back pain, diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, cancer etc. (WHO, 2000). Gadit and Mugford (2007) reported the prevalence of depression in three major cities of Pakistan: Karachi (36%), Lahore (53%) and Quetta (44%). Kausar (2012) found 10% prevalence of psychiatric disorders in the general population of Jalalpur Jattan, District Gujrat, out of which Major Depression was the most reported disorder. The ratio among women (79%) was significantly higher than men (21%). According to Iowa (2007) depression is the most common disorder which affects the women twice than men. The above discussion and facts can explain the significance of the present study that attempted to explore the depression level among female of a peri-urban area like Gujrat.

Literature Review

Hopcroft and Bradley's (2007) reviewed the studies conducted in twenty nine countries and found that the level of depression is significantly higher in women than in man. Gadit and Mugford (2007) also reported the association between gender and depression. Similarly Lalongo et al. (2004), Adewuya, Ola

and Aloba (2007) reported that women were approximately two times more likely to have depression than men. Gender differences in depression were also investigated by Poongothai, Pradeepa, Ganesan and Mohan (2009) and the results of their study showed that 16% women suffered from depression as compared to 14% in men. Increasing age in both gender and low income were also associated factors.

Similarly Hussain, Creed and Tomenson (2000) investigated the prevalence of depression and social stress in Pakistan. They found that the prevalence of Depressive disorder was 44%, out of which 25.5% were men as compared to 57.5% women. Further, low education level, maximum number of children, chronic health problems, housing difficulties and financial problems were significantly associated with depression. Kausar (2012) and Jadoon et al. (2010) also concluded that women are more depressed than men.

Soomro, Riaz, Naveed and Somro (2012) conducted a research to compare the level of depression of the non working women and the working women. This research hypothesized that there is a significant difference in the level of depression of the non working women and working women of Bilal Colony Karachi. The purposive sampling procedure was used for data collection. The results indicate the houses hold average income of the non working women was more as compared to working women but the level of depression was much more in the non working women. The non working women were found to have higher number of children as compared to working women. Having more average number of children was one of the factors of depressions among non working women because they have the burden of handling more babies. The working women were found to have a supporting hand for this. The non working women were less educated as compared to working women, which was another cause for being depressed because education gives better understanding of life and vision. Similarly Dudhatra and Jogsan's (2012) objective of his research was to

find out the mean difference between non-working and working women in mental health and depression. The total sample consisted of 80 women. Results showed significant difference in mental health and depression with respect to both non-working women and working on mental health and depression.

Hashim, Kurashid and Hassan (2007) conducted a research aimed at exploring the relationship between marital adjustment, stress and depression. Sample of the study consisted of 150 non-working and working married women. Their age ranged lie between 18 to 50 years. Dyadic Adjustment Scale (2000), Stress Scale (1991) and Beck Depression Inventory (1996) were used. Results illustrated significant high relationship between marital adjustment, stress and depression. The findings of the investigation also showed that working married women have to face more problems in their married life as compared to non-working married women. The results further indicated that highly educated working and non-working married women can perform well in their married life and they are free from depression as compared to non-working and less educated working married women.

Women are playing a vital role in the economic and social development of the nations all over the world. On the basis of above findings of different researches, the significance of the current study is evident in Pakistan where women make almost 52% of the population.

Research Methodology

This exploratory study was aimed to explore the depression among working and non working women of Gujrat city.

Population, Sample and Sampling Technique

Population consisted of all working and non working women of Gujrat City. Purposive sampling technique was used. An inclusion criterion was only married working and non-working

women. Sample for present study consisted in 100 working women and 98 non working women.

Pilot study

Pilot study was conducted to estimate the reliability of the instrument. The responses of the 15 working women and 15 house wives were also observed on the Urdu translated instrument of Beck depression inventory. Pilot study also indicated minor modification in the language of the instrument which was done.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study were to:

- Compare the level of depression in the non working and working women.
- Find the demographic variables playing important role in the level of depression of the working and non working women.

Research Instrument

For the present study Beck depression inventory was used. Inventory consisted of 21 items. Each item has four statements representing the feelings of the person. For each item only one statement could be chosen. Scoring is based on the severity of feelings. Beck depression inventory is in English language. The researcher translated the inventory and three experts of relevant field estimated its validity. Pilot study helped to refine it further. The final study was administered to 100 working and 98 house wives and estimated its reliability again. The internal consistency of the pilot study is 0.78 and of final study it is 0.95. BDI covers different elements of three Dimensions named as Negative attitude to self, Performance impairment and Somatic complaints (Table No 1).

Negative attitude to self	Performance impairment	Somatic complaints
Sadness	Self-criticalness	Loss of energy
Pessimism	Crying	Change in sleep pattern
Past failure	Agitation	Change in appetite
Loss of pleasure	Loss of interest	Concentration difficulty
Guilty feelings	Indecisiveness	Tiredness or fatigue
Punishment feelings		Loss of interest in sex
Self-dislike		
Suicidal thoughts or wishes		
Worthlessness		
Irritability		

Table 1- Three dimensions of BDI and their elements

Questions of the Study

- Is there any difference in the level of depression between working and non-working women?
- Does the monthly income of working woman affect their depression?
- Is there any role of family system in the depression level of working and non working women?
- Does the different type of job of working women play any role in the level of their depression?
- Does the children number affect the level of depression of the women?
- What is the nature of relationship of women education and age with depression?

Results

Data was entered and analyzed in SPSS V 17. The data was not normal therefore non parametric tests were administered. First, second and third questions were answered by running Mann Whitney on working status, Family system and monthly income of working women (see table 2).

Factors		Mean Rank	U-value	Z-value
Working Status	Working	69.58	1.90	7.37***
	Non Working	129.32		
Family System of Working women	Nuclear	65.28	618.0	3.94***
	Joint	41.28		
Family System of Non working women	Nuclear	51.61	1.05	0.872
	Joint	46.65		
Monthly income of working women	40 – 50000	54.68	919.0	1.85
	51 – 60,000	43.68		

Table 2 Mean Comparisons of the depression level of participants

It is evident from the Table 2 that there is a significant difference between the depression of working and non working women U (1.90); Z (7.37). Mean Rank shows that non working women have higher level of depression. The values of U (618.00) and Z (3.94) indicate that the family system is playing a significant role in the level of depression of the working women whereas it is not significant for the non working women - U (1.05); Z (0.87). Further the monthly income of working women does not contribute in their depression.

Table no 3 is showing the answer of question no 4.

No. of Children	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	df	Sig
0	109.38	14.99	4	.005
1	81.58			
2	84.55			
3	106.20			
4 & above	125.81			

Table 3- Analysis of variance of the depression among women on the basis of their children number

Table 3 showed that the children number plays a significant (Chi- Square, 14.99; Sig .005) role in the depression of both of the sample. Mean Rank shows that the married women who have no child and those have four or above children have more depression.

The answer of Question no 5 is showing by Table No 4.

Working Profession	Women	Mean Rank	Kruskal Wallis Chi-Square	df	Sig
Management		91.61			
Lawyer		92.00			
Teacher		31.95	45.31	4	.005
Lectures		54.00			
Doctor		37.31			
Self Employed		55.69			

Table 4- Analysis of variance of depression level of working women on the basis of their type of profession

It is observed from Table 4 that the type of the job of working women plays a significant role in depression - those women who are lawyers and managers have a higher level of depression.

Age	Mean Rank	Kruskal Wallis Chi-Square	df	Sig
21-25	68.44	12.96	4	.011
26-30	103.17			
31-35	112.17			
36-40	90.86			
41-45	117.76			
Total				

Table 5- Analysis of variance of depression level of working women on the basis of their age.

Table 5 indicates that there is a significant difference in the level of depression among women according to their age. The mean comparison reflects the higher depression level after 40 years.

Factors	Correlation
Education	-.0317 ***

Table 6- Relationship of education and age with the depression of participants

The negative correlation value in above table indicates that the lower the education level of the women, the higher the depression. (Table 6)

Discussion

In the present study it was observed that there is a significant difference in the level of depression among working and non working women. The results indicated that non working women reported higher level of depression. The literature review described the fact that working women are generally involved in many tasks simultaneously and they had some time for making friends and enjoying leisure time. On the other hand the major responsibilities of non working women are housekeeping and child care that make them bored. Eventually this boredom leads toward the feelings of self-worthlessness which further may cause stress and depression. The present results are consistent with the earlier findings of Soomro, Riaz, Naveed and Soomro (2012), Dudhatra and Jogsan (2012); Hashim, kurashid and Hassan (2007); Rapaport and Rapaport (1972) and Apter (1985).

The results also showed that there was a relationship between age and depression. The depression level reaches its highest level around the age of forty five. The average age of women in this study was 33 for working and 28 years for non-working women. The mild level of depression around late 20s would be quite alarming and it can be harmful in future. Vimala and Madhvi (2009) also found that there was a relationship between age and depression - if a women had depression in early age she might have more chances of having severe depression in older age.

Further it was observed that the working women who lived in nuclear family system reported higher depression than those from joint family system. Because in joint family system the relatives may help the working mothers in child raising and household work, whereas there is no significant difference in the level of depression of non-working women living in family systems because they have to raise as well as to do household work themselves. The same routine of their lives may lead them

to depression.

Moreover the results also showed that the number of children is an associated factor of depression. The women having no child as well as having four and above are more depressed than the women with one, two or three children. The reason might be the financial and emotional burden of more children. Obviously the children are dependents on their parents and the more the children the more money and energy they need to be raised. Those women who have no child may be depressed as they feel lonely and insecure because in Pakistani culture children are considered to strengthen the marriage relationship in a positive way.

The type of job of the women was also found to be important in their depression. Women who worked as managers and lawyers found to be higher scorer on BDI as compared to teachers, lecturers doctors and self-employed. Managers and lawyers have to deal with new challenges almost every day. The major parts of their jobs consists in public dealing.

The negative correlation has also been observed between the educational level of women and depression which means the higher the educational level the less the depression. There are many other associated factors like general home environment and income of the educated women. However it is known that educated women can manage their homes, stress and depression in a better way.

In short, the working status is not the only factor that leads towards depression but there are other environmental factors that also play a significant role in the depression of women.

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