

Psychological Wellbeing, Perceived Social Support and Self-esteem Among Rural and Urban Homemakers

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The study aims to assess psychological wellbeing, perceived social support, and self-esteem among rural and urban Homemakers residing in Karnataka. A sample of 126 Homemakers with 64 Homemakers from rural areas and 62 Homemakers from urban areas participated in the study. Ryff's Scales of Psychological Wellbeing, Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, and Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale were utilized for data collection. Inferential statistics were performed based on normality of the data to assess the differences in psychological wellbeing, perceived social support, and self-esteem. The results revealed that there was no significant difference in psychological wellbeing, perceived social support, and self-esteem among rural and urban Homemakers.

Keywords: Psychological Wellbeing, Perceived Social Support, Self-esteem, Homemakers, Rural, Urban.

Homemakers play a major role in management of household, family wellbeing, and overall growth of the communities, globally. The traditional gender roles and responsibilities of Homemakers have been redefined over the decades with modern development and accessibility to diverse opportunities in terms of education, economy, and lifestyles. However, Homemakers in India, are often unrecognised despite their efficiency and competence and often struggle with lack of autonomy. The present study was conducted to assess various constructs of mental health among Homemakers of rural and urban areas as it can be functional in evaluating socio-cultural aspects and in turn promoting the overall wellbeing of Homemakers.

Psychological wellbeing involves feeling good and being able to live a functional life. Psychological wellbeing is about managing negative or painful emotions rather than experiencing positive emotions alone. When the negative emotions prolong for a long time and intervene with functioning of life, there

is a decline in wellbeing. Previous studies revealed significant differences in psychological wellbeing among males and females with males responding higher than their female counterparts and overall urban residents showed higher scores (Huque, 2023; Rashid, et al., 2018). Among Homemakers and working women, the latter showed slightly higher levels of psychological wellbeing. (Choudary, 2017; Singaravel et al., 2024; Sinha, 2017). Singaravel et al., (2017) noticed specific-domain score differences with higher score of autonomy among working women while Homemakers scored higher in self-acceptance. Homemakers experience various negative adversities throughout life and adapt coping styles to overcome these experiences. Mir. S and Naz. F (2017) found a significant negative correlation between spousal psychological abuse and psychological wellbeing and a significant negative correlation between avoidance coping strategies and psychological wellbeing.

Women in general, both Homemakers and working women show significant desire in receiving social and emotional support from their respective family and social systems (Choudary 2017; Priya, 2021). Sidney Cobb defined Perceived social support as information leading the subject to believe that he is cared for and loved, esteemed, and a member of a network of mutual obligations (Cobb, 1976). Perceived social support of an individual impacts his or her way coping with stress during the face of adversities.

Stress Buffering Model by John Cassel and Sidney Cobb (1976), Functional Support or the available perceived social support is considered to play an important role in buffering high degree of stressors individuals may experience. Cassel (1976) believed that through consistent social communication, emotional support and assistance, evaluation of their actions and social appraisal, the impact of the stressful conditions can be mitigated. Previous researches, although limited, found that perceived social support and domestic violence show significant impact on mental health of the Homemakers (Khizer, et al., 2020) and score of perceived social support by significant others during child birth was higher when compared to support from friends and families (Zamani et al., 2019). According to Cohen (2003) Emotional support and esteem support specifically contribute to higher perceived social support irrespective of the type of stressor the person is undergoing and despite of coping techniques required to overcome the situation (Corr & Matthews, 2012).

Morris Rosenberg (1965) defined Self-esteem as an individual overall evaluation of self. According to Sedikides and Gress (2003), It is the subjective view of one's own self-worth, feelings of self-respect and self-confidence, and the positive or negative attitude towards self (Sharma & Agrawal, 2015). Factors like age, type of family,

number of children, and education impact the self-esteem of Homemakers with it being higher when they belong to joint families which is also associated with their quality of life and in turn effects their perceived health (Jayachitra, 2021). Susilawati et al., (2021) discussed the self-esteem of women in regards to with role as wife, mother and child, and outlined that as mothers, women play a crucial role in child-rearing and early education. As wives, they are expected to support their husbands and maintain household harmony. The study also touches on the role of women as daughters, emphasizing the importance of equal educational opportunities for girls. Research revealed that educated Homemakers experience lower self-esteem when compared to working women (Soomro et al., 2013).

Studies provide evidence for relationship between Psychological Wellbeing, Perceived Social Support, and Self-esteem. There is a positive correlation between Perceived Social Support and Psychological Wellbeing (Koirala, R. 2019). Ikiz and Cakar (2010) in a study conducted on adolescents found a positive relationship between Perceived Social Support and Self-esteem. Hence the study aims to explore the distribution these variables among Homemakers of rural and urban areas to gain deeper understanding of the socio-cultural of mental health and wellbeing. The significance of the study is that it helps to bridge the research gap by comparing the distribution of psychological wellbeing, perceived social support, and self-esteem among rural and urban Homemakers. The studies mentioned above studied majorly focused on comparing working and non-working women, there was limited literature available that studied rural and urban Homemakers in terms of psychological wellbeing, perceived social support, and self-esteem. The aims to contribute to limited research studies addressing Homemakers

and their experiences in terms psychological wellbeing, perceived social support, and self-esteem in Indian context.

Objectives

1. To examine the difference in psychological wellbeing among rural and urban Homemakers.
2. To examine the difference in perceived social support among rural and urban Homemakers.
3. To examine the differences in self-esteem among rural and urban Homemakers.

Method

Sample

The study participants are two groups of Homemakers, rural Homemakers, and urban Homemakers belonging to Raichur district, Karnataka. A total sample of 126 homemakers with 64 belonging to rural areas and 62 from urban areas were included in the study with purpose sampling technique with criteria being, Homemakers in long- term marriage of 10-15 years, living with their spouse and with education qualification of at least SSLC.

Tools

Ryff's Scales of Psychological wellbeing (SPWB) (Ryff, 1989), 18-version item was used to measure psychological wellbeing of the participants. This 6-point Likert scale which measures psychological wellbeing in six dimensions including autonomy, personal growth, environmental masteries, relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance.

A 12-item self-report, *Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support* (MPSS) (Ximet et al., 1988) was used to measure perceived social support of the participants. It is a 7-point Likert that measures perceived social support in three subscales; support from family, friends, and significant others.

Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale developed by Morris Rosenberg (1965) was used to measure self-esteem of the participants. It is a 10-item question survey scored with 4-point scale.

Results

The Mann Whitney U test revealed that there was no significant difference in overall wellbeing of the sample (U= 1770.000, p= .296). Among PWB subscales, Autonomy revealed to show significant difference among group 1 and group 2 (U= 1447.000, p= .008). There was no significant difference found for subscales environmental mastery, self-acceptance, positive relations, purpose in life, or personal growth (See Table 2). The results of overall Perceived social support suggest that there is no significant difference in overall support among the groups (U= 1659.500, p=.113). There was no significant difference noticed for subscales of support from family, friends or significant others (See Table 3). The Independent t test results of comparison of self-esteem (t=1.15, p= 0.251) suggest that there is no statistically significant difference among rural and urban Homemakers (See Table 4).

Table 1. Total mean and standard deviation for Psychological Wellbeing, Perceived Social Support, and Self-esteem

Variables	N	M	SD
Autonomy	126	16.02	3.247
Envi Mast	126	15.58	2.902
Personal growth	126	16.34	2.904
Positive relations	126	14.48	4.145
Purpose in life	126	13.21	3.863
Self-acceptance	126	15.37	3.053
Overall PWB	126	90.55	12.347
Sig Other	126	21.80	6.569
Family	126	21.63	6.510
Friends	126	19.63	6.674
Overall PSS	126	63.06	17.182
SE	126	29.1	3.24

Note. M= mean, SD= standard deviation.

Table 2. Mann-Whitney U test results for Psychological Wellbeing among Rural and Urban Homemakers

Variables	Domicile	N	Mean Rank	U	p
Autonomy	1	64	71.89	1447.000	.008*
	2	62	54.84		
	Total	126			
Envi Mast	1	64	65.64	1847.000	.499
	2	62	61.29		
	Total	126			
Personal growth	1	64	61.47	1854.000	.521
	2	62	65.60		
	Total	126			
Positive relations	1	64	65.20	1875.500	.595
	2	62	61.75		
	Total	126			
Purpose in life	1	64	68.12	1688.500	.147
	2	62	58.73		
	Total	126			
Self-acceptance	1	64	61.52	1857.500	.532
	2	62	65.54		
	Total	126			
PWB	1	64	66.84	1770.000	.296
	2	62	60.05		
	Total	126			

Note. 1= rural areas, 2 = urban areas. *P< .05

Table 3. Mann-Whitney U test for Perceived Social Support among rural and urban Homemakers

Variables	Domicile	N	Mean Rank	Statistics	p
Sig Other	1	64	67.81	1708.000	.175
	2	62	59.05		
	Total	126			
	1	64	66.47		

Family	2	62	60.44	1794.000	.352
	Total	126			
Friends	1	64	69.35	1609.500	.067
	2	62	57.46		
	Total	126			
PSS	1	64	68.57	1659.500	.113
	2	62	58.27		
	Total	126			

Note. 1= rural areas, 2 = urban areas. P> .05

Table 4. Results of Independent t test for Self-esteem among rural and urban Homemakers

Variable	Domicile	N	Mean	t	p
SS	1	64	30.41	1.15	.251
	2	62	30.74		
	Total	126			

Note. 1=rural areas, 2 = urban areas. P> .05

Discussion

The results suggests that geographical location alone cannot may not be a determinant role in defining overall psychological wellbeing of Homemakers among rural and urban areas. The similarity in psychological wellbeing among rural Homemakers and urban Homemakers may be attributed to the comparative environments that has been created for Homemakers, regardless of urban and rural settings, with respect to their gender roles, responsibilities within the family, and cultural expectations. A similar trend was observed among young adult population of rural and urban areas with psychological wellbeing effected income rather than geographical location (Sharma, S. S., & Sahu, K., 2014). One possible explanation for slightly significant difference in Autonomy relates to Ryff's definition of Autonomy which is the sense of independence and self-governance rural Homemakers experience in domestic roles and the difference in how rural and

urban Homemakers experience autonomy. Homemakers in rural areas hold control and power in household matters, such as decision making over goods and expenditure, children education and marriage (Desai & Andrist, 2010). However, their autonomy is limited to fewer resources and comes with age and experience. In contrast, urban Homemakers although may be educated and are exposed to more opportunities, they may experience identity conflict due to limited household decision making and community engagement. They have limited autonomy in decision making due to higher dependency on spouse due to complex urban lifestyle.

There was no significant difference in social support Homemakers perceive from Significant other, Family, and Friends. This reason could be factors like family dynamics, cultural involvement, and community engagement in both rural and urban areas in different formats. As discussed in the beginning of the paper, women in general women in general, show significant desire in receiving social and emotional support from their respective family and social systems (Choudary 2017; Priya, 2021). Research suggests that social support is fundamental for wellbeing and physical health and the nature of the women's social relationships makes is especially important for them (Bedrov & Gable, 2022). Women have the higher tendency reach out to closed ones for support and advice when they are under stress. Even though there wasn't noticeable difference among both the groups, rural Homemakers scored slightly higher on overall social support and in subscales when compared to urban Homemakers. One explanation could be the fact that Homemakers of rural areas have closer relationship with extended family and more consistent interaction with their community when compared to urban Homemakers.

Previous research also reveals that self-esteem is influenced by factors like personality traits, social support, and personal accomplishments (Ortho & Robins, 2014). These results can be understood by that fact Homemakers in general have more define gender roles and often find homemaking fulfilling. Homemakers also associate their self-esteem in terms of their role as wife, mother and child (Susilawati et al., 2021). They often enjoy taking care of family members, managing household expenses and looking after children which makes them feel efficient and confident in their skills and capabilities. Additionally, women may experience self-esteem based on their closer social relationships and community interaction, which as explained by Corr & Matthews (2012), result in higher perceived social support, especially, the esteem support. Moreover, other factors like age, family type, education and number of children also impact their self-esteem and must be addressed in further research (Jayachitra, 2021).

Conclusion

The study aimed to examine if there were any significant difference in psychological wellbeing, perceived social support, and Self-esteem among rural and urban Homemakers. The results may suggest that geographical location alone cannot determine the differences in psychological experiences of Homemakers in rural and urban areas. Further research addressing factors like education level, age, family type and income will provide a wider perspective on operations that may influence psychological wellbeing, perceived social support, and self-esteem among rural and urban Homemakers. The study may be helpful to understand various cultural factors that contribute to women's mental health and can be used to

design community-based interventions for women. Mental health programs and policies can be implemented to enhance awareness and improve accessibility of mental health services, especially in rural areas. The study provides further scope in research to explore various other aspects associated with these variables and offers a future basis for longitudinal studies. The limited sample size and confined geographical location may reduce the generalisability of the findings.

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