

Employment as the Determinant of Mental Health and Depression in the Highly Educated Women

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The present study has been designed to investigate the effect of employment on the mental health and depression among the highly educated married and unmarried women. For this purpose a sample of 120 women (60 married and 60 unmarried) were selected in such a manner that 60 respondents were highly educated employed and the 60 were highly educated unemployed, age ranging 21 to 35 years. They were administered Beck's Depression Inventory and the Mental Health Questionnaire by Thorpe, Clarks and Tiegs. The results of the study revealed that both employment and marital status affect the mental health and depression of the women. Employment and marriage both satisfies the economic, emotional and social needs to the great extent. Depression scores of the women were also affected by both the employment and marriage. The result suggests that unemployed and unmarried are more depressed than the employed and married women.

The sense of one's identity or self is an important dimension of individual's personality giving each one of us unique individuality. Both employment and marriage provide the social category and help women to develop a healthy self-identity and realize the potent lies of her unique self.

In the competitive age along with the desire to live comfortably and respectfully the women employment has been very much emphasized with the increasing recognition of the equality of male and female and the raised percentage of women literacy.. Employment gives women more opportunities and choices in many important respects.

But it is not an easy task to get the job. For the better job opportunities the girls take higher education and tries for the job. In this process many girls remain unmarried or the marriage takes place in the later age. There

are many reasons for it as non-availability of the suitable match, dowry demand, high expectations of parents or girls. Whatever may be the reason the girls who do not get married and get the job after the higher studies suffers from mental illness caused by psychological factors in comparison to the girls who get married in time and get job also.

Every person has certain needs. He becomes joyful if his needs are satisfied. There is no doubt that employment and marriage fulfills major needs of the person and provides self-esteem and satisfaction. Self-esteem is strongly related to many variables including satisfaction with one's life (Diener, 1984). In the present study, attempt has been made to study the mental health of the highly educated, employed and unemployed women. Half of them are married and other halves are unmarried.

Mental health has been considered as central to psychological adjustment, personal happiness, and effective functioning. It is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease. Mental health is a relatively enduring state wherein the person is well adjusted, has a zest for living, and is attaining self-actualization or self-realization. It is a positive state and not mere absence of mental disorder. A person is said to have good mental health when he succeeds to maintain harmonious relationship between himself and his environment. There is a continuous struggle between the needs of the individual and his social environment. Every person has certain needs. He becomes joyful if his needs are satisfied. There is no doubt that employment and marriage fulfills many needs of the person.

On the other hand, an individual is sad and dejected when his needs remain unfulfilled. An individual tries to establish the balance between his needs and his capacity for realizing these needs. As long as this balance is satisfactorily maintained, the person remains adjusted and his mental health is retained. But when this balance is lost he drifts towards maladjustment. Shelton (1985) reported the social and psychological impact of interpersonal problems. The unemployed and unmarried had poor mental health than the employed and married. Studying the psychological impacts of unemployment, Eisenberg and Lazarsfeld (1938) found that unemployment deteriorates the self-confidence and independence. Johoda (1982) reported that unemployment had adverse effect on the mental health of the people. Macky (1984) found that unemployed were possessing poor mental health than their counterparts. It is generally agreed that women face mental health problems more frequently. Davar (1995) reported that common mental illness caused by psychological factors is higher in women than men. His analysis further suggests that: (i) unemployed women exhibited

psychiatric symptoms more than employed women, (ii) separated and / or unmarried women are more frequently ill than married women.

In the present study, attempt has also been made to study the depression in the highly educated unemployed and unmarried women. The word depression in common usage means sad, frustrated, fed-up, bored and pessimistic. These moods are sometimes healthy reactions to life events. The mood of depressed person is much lower at his best moments than the mood of normal person at his worst (Chandra Shekhar, 1985). Depression is the state of mind or more specifically a mental disorder characterized by lowering of the individual's vitality, mood, desires, hopes, aspirations and self-esteem. It is a feeling of powerlessness, frustration, inadequacy, guilt and loneliness. It may range from no more than a feeling of tiredness and sadness to the most profound state of apathy with complete psychotic disregard for reality. It can affect people of any age group. Unemployment led to decrease in perceived competence, activity and life satisfaction and increase in depressive effect (Feather & O, Brien, 1986). Negative life events, especially failure in the achievement domain and actual and threatened loss in the interpersonal domain have been found to be particularly cause of depression (Beck, 1987; Champion & Power, 1995; Stader & Hokanson, 1998) If the unemployed woman is highly educated and remains unmarried, then she may definitely suffers from depression. Her aspirations, desires hopes are lowered. She may also feel the lack of support. There are many causative factors for depression like hereditary, personality, family background, stress tolerance, relationship with family and friends, social support, nature of problems and also how the problems are perceived.

Keeping in view the mental health problems of the highly educated unemployed and unmarried woman the present study has been designed.

1. To find out whether employment is the determinant of mental health and depression in the highly educated married and highly educated unmarried women.
2. To find the effect of marital status on the mental health and depression of highly educated employed and highly educated unemployed women.

It has been hypothesised that

1. The mental health of highly educated employed (married) women will be better than mental health of highly educated unemployed (unmarried) women.
2. Highly educated employed (married) women will have less depression than the highly educated unemployed (unmarried) women

Method

Sample:

The present study was carried out on a sample of 120 women subjects. All were highly educated whose educational qualification is from post graduation to the PhD degree. 60 subjects of the sample were highly educated employed and the 60 were highly educated unemployed women (Trying for the job) with the age ranging between 21-35. Among the highly educated 60 employed women 30 were married and 30 were unmarried. Similarly, among the highly educated 60 unemployed women 30 were married and 30 were unmarried. Unmarried subjects were selected from P.G. Girls hostel and Workingwomen hostel of Jodhpur and married subjects were also selected from the Jodhpur town.

Tools:

1. Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) (1961) by Beck, Robins & Book was used to measure depression. This inventory is a multiple-choice self-report measure of cognitive, affective, behavioral and somatic aspect of depression.
2. Mental Health analysis questionnaire by Thorpe Clark and Tiegs (1959) was used to measure the mental health of the woman.

Results

Table1: Mean, SD and t-value for the scores of depression of highly educated employed (n=30)and unemployed women (n=30) in married and unmarried groups.

Group	Status	Mean	SD	t-value
Married	Employed	8.26	4.12	2.68 *
	Unemployed	10.54	5.06	
Unmarried	Employed	9.50	4.22	5.50 **
	Unemployed	11.82	5.81	

** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05

Table 2: Mean, SD and t-value for the scores of mental health of highly educated employed and unemployed women in married and unmarried groups.

Groups	Status	Mean	SD	t-value
Married	Employed	152.46	20.11	.23
	Unemployed	151.16	22.56	
Unmarried	Employed	152.2	13.22	4.46**
	Unemployed	137.26	11.57	

** p < 0.01

Discussion

The present study aimed at investigating the effect of employment and marital status on the mental health and depression of the highly educated women. The data collected was analyzed by calculating t test for employed and unemployed women. The hypotheses are supported by the results of the present study to a great extent.

Table 1 shows that there is significant difference between the highly educated employed married women and unemployed married women with regard to the depression. The obtained t-value is significant at 0.01 level. The results suggest that the unemployed married women are more depressed than the employed married women. Unemployment may lead to decrease in perceived competence, activity and life satisfaction and decrease in

depressive affect. Another observation from Table-1 is that highly educated unemployed unmarried women showed significantly more depression compared to highly educated employed unmarried women ($t=5.50, p<0.05$). It indicates that unmarried and unemployed women are more depressed than the employed unmarried women. Marriage satisfies the desires, hopes and aspirations of the individual to the great extent. Unmarried unemployed women may have the feelings of loneliness, frustration, dejection that may cause depression in them. Moreover they are not married which also enhances their depression.

Table-2 indicates that there is no significant difference between the highly educated employed married women and unemployed married women with regard to the mental health. The obtained t-value .23 is not significant at any level. This shows that married women are satisfied having good mental health. It can be said that marital status satisfies their emotional, social, economic needs to the great extent thereby keeping them mentally healthy. They are successful in maintaining harmonious relationship between themselves and their environment. Table-2 further shows the significant difference between the highly educated employed unmarried women and unemployed unmarried women in their mental health. ($t=4.46, p<.01$) This shows that mental health of employed unmarried women is better than the mental health of unemployed unmarried women. Due to employment or career they satisfies their economic and social needs to some extent.

Results indicate the negative effect of unemployment on the mental health of unemployed unmarried women. Unemployment led to decrease in perceived competence, activity and life satisfaction and increase in depressive affect. Their self-confidence is deteriorated. They have the feeling of powerlessness, frustration and inadequacy. After being highly educated they

are neither employed nor married So unmarried unemployed women are sad and dejected as their personal, economic, emotional and social needs remain unfulfilled. Their desires, hopes, aspirations and self-esteem are lowered. They face difficulty in maintaining harmonious relationship between themselves and the environment.

Conclusion

Today a fundamental issue and concern for the society is how to help the women in their self-worth and identity, their individuality, their ability to self actualize so that they may have good mental health and do not suffer from the depression. Will economic empowerment help women achieve self-growth? How a working educated women views herself and her own life? In India the growth, development and inner experiences of women are tied to socio-economic factors also. Results of the present study support the view that along with the employment, marital status or marriage at the right time is also essential. Both employment and marriage generates self-actualization that is a creative potential and constructive personality variable that could contribute tremendously to human development, especially in enhancing mental health. No doubt, it will be logical to expect that gainful employment is likely to bring a change in the quality of life of these women. But, marital status or marriage at right time is also essential because this status satisfies many needs.

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