



Are Professional Women really satisfied?- "A Comparative study on Psychosocial aspects of Indian working women

KEYWORDS

Psychosocial, Indian working women, family and career issues.

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ABSTRACT Objective-To assess the psychosocial aspects and level of satisfaction of Indian women.

Study design- A questionnaire based study was conducted in the Dept. of Obs. & Gynae. on 510 women to assess their psychosocial aspects. They were divided into four groups (according to modified kuppusswami classification) professionals, semi-professionals, unskilled workers & housewives. Observed data were analyzed using spss software by chi square test.

Result & Conclusion- Age at marriage & child bearing was significantly affected by the professional choices made by women. Approximately 12.15% of women left their jobs after marriage due to family factors and gave priority to their family over career. When Psychological satisfaction regarding family life & career was compared between different groups, it was found that semi professional group was highly satisfied and unskilled workers were least satisfied, while the professional group which is considered as cream of society and thought to be most satisfied was actually found less satisfied than semi professional groups.

Education definitely gives independence, financial security, social recognitions as an employed citizen in society and home, but higher education with professional skill and achievement will not proportionately increase the level of satisfaction, either career wise or family wise, because professional excellence and in sight to deliver every aspect of life with excellence always counteract with the environment assistance which adversely affect the psychological aspect in many professional women.

INTRODUCTION

There has been dramatic change in work/ personal/ family life of Indian women in 21st century. Social norms in India have shifted dramatically from the expectation in last century that woman's primary roles were to revolved around the private domestic sphere as mother and wife, but now their roles have broadened to include work and career also.

Working woman's problem are mainly of three types environmental, social and psychological and they are mainly due to practical difficulties of combining the dual commitment.

We have conducted a questionnaire based study on 510 women to assess their psychosocial aspects and compared it with non-working Indian housewives.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Approximately 700 questionnaires were distributed among consenting adult women in obs & gynae Dept. including patients, female attendants, working staff including doctors & nurses, over a period of one month with the help of a study coordinator. The purpose of the study and any doubts in the questionnaire were clarified by the study coordinator.

Women were given to complete the 25 items (approximately 10 min) questionnaire consisting mostly of closed ended questions where participant should select from multiple choices. To ensure confidentiality, participants returned completed questionnaire to the study coordinator,

who then gave all the data to primary investigator.

A targeted sample size of 510 completed surveys was selected to appropriately identify the psychosocial aspects of Indian women. 190 women either didn't returned the questionnaire or completed it properly.

The questionnaire was designed to be used as a non validated tool to collect information about the psychosocial aspects of their lives, work & family issues.

Subjects were divided into four groups (according new modified kuppusswami socioeconomic classification¹⁾ considering their professions, education and income). Group 1 comprised of professionals like doctors, engineers, teachers while group 2 had semiprofessionals like nurses & clerks. Subjects in group 3 were unskilled workers, working as housemaids, group 4 had housewives.

The observed data were analyzed using spss software 16.0 by chi square method. P value of <.05 was considered significant.

RESULTS

In our study group 1 (professionals) had 180(35.29%) subjects, group 2(semi professionals) had 111(21.76%) subjects, group 3(unskilled workers) & 4 (housewives) had 67(23.13%) & 152 (29.80%) subjects respectively.

Among the 510 subjects, majority (51.17%) were in 31 – 40 yrs age group. Among the housewives majority (46.7%) were in the same age group. All the subjects in profession-

al category had professional qualification while majority of the housewives (78.98%) had Postgraduates / Graduate degree. Majority of the Professionals were in the upper Socioeconomic class (95%) all the unskilled workers were in the lower Socioeconomic Class, among the housewives majority were in the Upper middle Class (73.68%).(table I).

All the unskilled workers and Housewives were married while 23.33% of Professional workers were unmarried. There is a significant association between marital status and professional working status ($p < 0.0001$).

Almost all unskilled workers & housewives had marriage at less than 30 yrs of age while in a significant proportion of Professionals, (27.22%) and Semi Professionals. (27.02%) workers marriage was delayed (more than 30 yrs of age). This difference was statistically significant $P < 0.0001$.

All Unskilled workers and housewives had conceived in less than 30 yrs of age whereas professionals and Semi Professionals had delivered their first child at more than 30 yrs of age (42% & 37.03% respectively). This difference was also statistically significant. (Table II)

Among the Professionals 90.10% had delayed their marriage due to academic / career reasons, whereas 09.89% had delayed marriage because of social factors while in Semi Professionals & Housewives marriage was delayed mainly due to social factors.(table III)

Among the Housewives (40.78%) had left their jobs after marriage due to family factors. Majority of Professionals continued their jobs for career satisfaction (67.22%) whereas among Semiprofessional and Unskilled workers reasons for continuation were mainly financial. (Table IV)

Level of satisfaction regarding career & family was highest among the semiprofessional group (81.98 % & 72.07 %) whereas level of satisfaction regarding career was low among unskilled workers & Housewives. Level of satisfaction regarding family was high among Housewives (80.92%, but low among Unskilled workers (40.29%). Among the professional group 65.55% subjects were satisfied with their family life, but only 43.33% were satisfied with their career achievements. This was statistically significant ($p < 0.0001$). (Table V)

DISCUSSION

Various studies^{2,3} demonstrate that women's adult lives have become increasingly complex with the multiple dimensions of biology, family and work interacting and influencing each other and variations as to life choices and the timing of major career and family events.

Some women defer marriage and children until well established in their careers. Others may marry young and simultaneously establish career identities and roles as wives and mothers. Some women focus on career and choosing to remain single or childfree.

In our study age at marriage and child bearing was significantly affected by the career. Among the professionals a significant proportion was unmarried and marriage and childbearing was also delayed due to factors related to their job/ career.

Women's biologic clocks and greater limitation on fertility to their 20s and 30s and with fertility treatment now extending into their early 40s are more likely to consider

marriage and parent food's impact on career aspiration and timing. But those women who are children face the challenge of dealing with the continuing social at expectation the motherhood is essential normal and natural for all women.⁴

Women are more likely than men to interrupt resume, change the course, and alters the pace of their career to accommodate other concerns such as having / raising children caring for elders.⁵

In our study 12.15% of women left their jobs after marriage due to family factors and gave priority to their family over career.

There has been increased interest by corporations and govt. officers to find ways to retain women through more flexible, family friendly chances in the workplace environment and culture and provision of special paid leaves like maternity leaves and child care leaves for female employees.

The expectation is that the woman will be fully committed to work and also be required to give her highest priority to family⁶ this role conflict was experiment by many professional working women in our study.

Although some women experience combining career and family simultaneously as conflicts of roles and responsibilities many others find that multiple roles can be enriching and may reinforce each role.⁷ Shifting gears between works with family may provide psychological protection and alleviate stress satisfaction in one role may counteract disappointment in the other. Financial independence also contributes a significant role in better psychological health in working women than women who were not employed.

CONCLUSION

In our study we concluded that age at marriage & child bearing was significantly affected by the professional choices made by women. Approximately 12.15% of women left their jobs after marriage due to family factors and gave priority to their family over career. Psychological satisfaction regarding family life & career was highest in semiprofessional group. (81.98 % & 72.07 %). While cream of society i.e. high professional group was less satisfied Career and family wise. On the other hand unskilled workers were least satisfied family and career wise. Financially and socially they were amongst the least privileged group.

Education definitely gives independence, financial security, and social recognitions as employed citizen in society and home. But higher education with professional skill and achievement will not proportionally increasing the level of satisfaction, either career wise or family wise because professional excellence and insight to deliver every aspect of life with excellence always counteract with the of environment assistance which adversely affect the psychological aspect in many professional women.

TABLE - I
DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTIC (n=510)

Determinant		Professional (35.29%) (n=180)	Semi Professional (21.76%) (n=111)	Unskilled worker (23.13%) (n=67)	Housewife (29.80%) (n=152)	Total (n=510)
Age in yrs	20-30	51(28.3%)	22 (19.81%)	19 (28.35%)	51 (33.55%)	143 (28.03%)
	30-40	120 (66.6%)	31 (27.92%)	39 (58.20%)	71 (46.71%)	261 (51.17%)
	41-50	9 (5.0%)	58 (52.25%)	9 (31.43%)	30 (19.73%)	106 (20.78%)
$X^2=102.02d.f. = 6p<0.0001$						
Education	Professional	180 (100%)	-	-	2(1.31%)	182 (35.68%)
	P.G./Graduate	-	71 (63.96%)	-	119 (78.28%)	189 (37.05%)
	12 th Stand.	-	29 (26.13%)	-	31 (20.39%)	60 (11.76%)
	10 th Stand.	-	11 (9.90%)	-	-	11 (02.15%)
	5 th Stand.	-	-	38 (34.23%)	-	38 (7.45%)
	Illiterate	-	-	29 (26.12%)	-	29 (5.68%)
$X^2 = 1045.1d.f. = 15 p < 0.000$						
S.I. Status	Upper	171 (95%)	-	-	9 (5.9%)	180 (35.29%)
	Upper middle	09 (5%)	62 (58.85%)	-	112 (73.68%)	183 (35.88%)
	Lower middle	-	49 (44.14%)	-	31 (20.39%)	80 (15.68%)
	Upper Lower	-	-	-	-	-
	Lower	-	-	67 (100%)	-	67 (13.13%)

TABLE – II DISTRIBUTION OF SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO MARITAL STATUS, AGE AT MARRIAGE & AGE AT BIRTH OF FIRST CHILD

Determinant		Professional (n=180)	Semi Professional (n=111)	Unskilled worker (n=67)	Housewife (n=152)	Total (n=510)
Marital Status	Married	138 (76.66%)	101 (90.99%)	67 (100%)	152 (100%)	458 (89.80%)
	Unmarried	42 (23.33%)	10 (9.09%)	-	-	52 (10.19%)
$X^2=58.96d.f. = 3p<0.0001$						
Age at marriage		n=138	n=101	n=57	n=152	n=448
	< 30 yrs	89 (49.44%)	71 (63.96%)	67 (100%)	141 (92.76%)	368 (72.15%)
	> 30 yrs	49 (27.22%)	30 (27.02%)	-	11 (7.23%)	90 (17.64%)
$X^2 = 59.66 d.f. = 3 p < 0.0001$						
Age at first birth (only those who have conceived)		n=100	n=101	n=57	n=152	n=410
	< 30 yrs	58 (58 %)	62 (62.96%)	57 (100%)	131 (85.21%)	297(76.15%)
	>30 yrs	42 (42%)	39 (37.03%)	-	22 (13.81%)	93 (18.23%)
$X^2 = 53.30d.f. = 3 p < 0.0001$						

TABLE – III REASONS FOR DELAYING MARRIAGE OF REMAINING UNMARRIED

Reasons	Professional (n=91)	Semi Professional (n=40)	Unskilled worker (n=0)	Housewife (n=11)	Total (n=142)
Study + Career	82 (90.10%)	8 (20%)	-	-	90 (63.38%)
Social Factors	09 (09.89%)	32 (80%)	-	11 (100%)	52 (36.61%)

TABLE-IV REASONS FOR LEAVING JOB/ CONTINUATION AFTER MARRIAGE

Determinant		Professional (n=180)	Semi Professional (n=111)	Unskilled worker (n=67)	Housewife (n=152)	Total (n=510)
Reasons for leaving job	Family factors / Unwillingness of inlaws	-	-	-	62 (40.78%)	62 (12.15%)
Reasons for Continuation	Social	-	10 (9.09%)	-	-	10 (2.79%)
	Financial	59 (32.77%)	83 (74.77%)	67 (100%)	-	209 (4.98%)
	Career Satisfaction	121 (67.22%)	18 (16.21%)	-	-	139 (38.82%)

TABLE-V PERCEIVED LEVEL OF SATISFACTION (FAMILY & CAREER WISE)

Determinant		Professional (n=180)	Semi Professional (n=111)	Unskilled worker (n=67)	Housewife (n=152)	Total (n=510)	
Perceived level of satisfaction	Family	Yes	118(65.55%)	80 (72.07%)	37 (55.22%)	123 (80.92%)	358 (70.19%)
		No	62 (34.44%)	31 (27.92%)	30 (44.77%)	29(19.07%)	152 (29.80%)
	$X^2=17.57 d.f. = 3 p < 0.0005$						
	Career	Yes	78 (43.33%)	91 (81.98%)	10 (14.29%)	48 (31.57%)	227 (44.50%)
No		102(56.66%)	20(18.01%)	57 (85.07%)	104(68.42%)	283(55.40%)	
$X^2 = 97.250d.f. = 3 p < 0.0001$							

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