

Original Research Article

A Study of Subjective Well - Being Among Housewives and Working Women of Khagaria District, North Bihar, India

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Abstract: These days, women are very much keen to be empowered socially, economically, educationally and politically that can help them take decision regarding mobility, economic independency, political participation public speaking and awareness to exercise rights. Therefore, the present study is planned to check the levels of subjective well-being among the housewives and working women of Khagaria district of North Bihar. For the present study total sample consisted of 120 women comprising housewives (n=60) and working women (n=60) from different organizations where women were engaged in performing their task and housewives selected from different houses where women are dependent on their husbands. Total subjects' age were ranged between 28 to 60 years. Data gathered through questionnaires using Psychological/ Subjective Well-being scale. Having analyzed the data, results indicated that housewives have higher degree of subjective well-being in comparison to working women, hence the significant difference has been found in all the dimensions of subjective well - being but it is interesting to mention here that both the group of women needs to have social and emotional support from their respective social and family institutions as reported by them. Finally results have been discussed in detail in the light of present changing scenario of human life.

Keywords: Subjective Well - Being, Housewives, Working Women, Khagaria, North Bihar.

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INTRODUCTION

Having surveyed the review of literature on the present piece of research work, it has been observed that a large number of researches in organizational/ industrial and social psychology, and in other social sciences that have witnessed that men are over represented as the subjects of studies and women are generally ignored. According to Government of India report women are to be empowered socially, economically, educationally and politically that can help them take decision regarding mobility, economic independency, political participation, public speaking and awareness to exercise rights. As a result of which the present study is planned to check the levels of psychological/ subjective well-being among the housewives and working women of Khagaria district – a well known district of North Bihar.

It is important to mention here that the housewife is a familiar figure to all of us. At the same time, housewives form an almost forgotten group. They

are rarely taken in to consideration as a subject of research. This may be the fact that housewife is not regarded as an occupation in our culture. Thus, it seems that organizational behaviorist, psychologist and other social scientist have almost neglected the housewives' job activity. Women who work outside the home is likely to experience stress which deteriorate the degree of psychological/ subjective well – being from demand and challenges associated with work and non-work responsibilities. On the other hand, housewives' job activity may or may not enhance the degree of psychological well - being, it may be due to household work overload. Although, it is general assumption that a good job can contribute to overall quality of life through increased income and more satisfying than available to a traditional housewife (*Hoffman & Nye, 1974; Holahan & Gilbert, 1979; Warr & Parry, 1982*). Women who work outside the home are required to make many social readjustments that can contribute to stress, anxiety and psychological well-being. *Lennon (1994)* viewed that full-time housework involves more

autonomy, more interruptions, greater physical effort, more routine, fewer time pressures and less responsibility for matters outside one's control than do paid work. In his study Lennon compared housewives from working wives appear to benefit from having less responsibility for things outside their control. Working wives appeared to benefit from having less routinized than housewives.

In one of the important studies working women reported higher scores on general health, life satisfaction and self-esteem and lower scores hopelessness, insecurity and anxiety (Nathawat & Mathur, 1993). Moreover, Engel (1988) viewed that Japanese and American housewives believe that they cannot be happy as full time housewives. Although, Japanese women believe very strongly that a wife/mother's employment has harmful effects on marriage and child development and that a wife/mother should not be employed when husband wants her home, or when there is a school aged or teenage child in the family. American women believe more strongly that women are capable of handling both household work and career responsibility. It seems that family stress is a significant predictor of well-being for working women and housewives/mothers (Schwartzberg & Dytell, 1998). It is often observed that working women and housewives are different and as a result they require different kinds of support to enable them to cope effectively with their chosen roles. Working women identify work, children and household duties as the most frequent stressors, whereas housewives identify children, finances and as stressors (Canam, 1986).

The above mentioned review of literatures clearly depicts the picture concerning the necessity of carrying out multiple roles to meet women's own needs and those of others is likely to increase health, which associated with poor health. The effects on health may be mediated through women's subjective well – being experiences with their multiple roles. Thus, the psychological/ subjective – well being play pivotal role in every life spheres of women personality development.

It is important to mention that before unfolding the psychological well-being, it is significant to get a quick sight on simple well-being. Well-being is one of the most important goals, for which individuals as well as society strive. The term explains that something in a good state. The word well-being is often used for specific variety of goodness, for example, living in a good environment, being of worth for the world, being able to cope with life, enjoying life, etc. So many terms have been used as synonymously and interchangeably for well-being such as happiness, satisfaction, positively affect, positive mental health and quality of life etc. Generally well-being defined as a dynamic state characterized by a reasonable amount of harmony between an individual's abilities, need and expectations

and environmental demands and opportunities. It involves subjective satisfaction and individual pleasure depending upon psychological status of the individual and his environmental conditions. Ryff and Keyes (1995) argued that self-acceptance, positive relations with other, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal worth, well-being and absence of ill being are the aspects of health.

Psychological well – being is a relatively complex notion with a variety of components that may contribute to it. Ryff (1989) extensively explored the meaning of psychological well – being and the definition closely paralleled with the well –being manifestation measure scale (Masse, Poulin, Dassa, Lambert, Belair & Battaglii, 1998) that was used in the present piece of research work. Psychological wellbeing is a multidimensional concept. After factor analysis it was revealed that cheerfulness, optimism, playfulness, self-control, a sense of detachment and freedom from frustration, anxiety and loneliness are indicators of psychological well-being (Tellegen et al., 1988). Sinha and Verma (1992). Mc Culloch (1991) has shown that satisfaction, morale, positive effect, social support etc, are the indicators of psychological well-being. A person high in psychological well-being not only carries higher level of life satisfaction, self-esteem, positive feelings, and attitudes, but also manages tensions, negative thoughts ideas and feeling more efficiently. The psychology of well-being aims to help people live more rewarding lives including close relationships, responsibilities to one's community and enjoyment of one's life. Psychological wellbeing is a subjective feeling of gratification, happiness, satisfaction with life's experiences and of one's role in the world of work, sense of achievement, utility, belongingness and no distress, dissatisfaction or worry etc. It emphasizes positive characteristics of growth and development. There are six distinct components of psychological well being:

- Self acceptance- having a positive attitudes towards oneself and one's past life,
- Purpose in life -having goals and objectives that give life meaning;
- Environmental mastery-being able to manage complex demands of daily life;
- Personal growth-having a sense of continued development and self realization;
- Positive relation with others- possessing caring and trusting ties with others ; and
- Autonomy- being able to follow one's own convections.

Psychological well-being is theoretically and empirically tied to multiple social conditions. In sociological literature, psychological well-being is linked with one's socioeconomic status as well as the kinds and quantities of identities one holds. Researchers find that psychological well-being is achieved more readily for individuals who accumulate more identities

(Thoits, 1983) and for individuals with higher levels of education, income and occupational prestige (Kessler 1982; Turner 1999). Krol et al., 1994; 1994; & 1993) posited that, as an element of the self-concept, self-esteem - usually described as self-acceptance or overall affective evaluation of one's worth - has been found to be associated with both physical and psychological health. Moreover, recently a similar investigation has also been conducted on psychological well-being with special reference to housewives and working women of Mithila region by Choudhary and Ahmad (2017) and they reported that elderly housewives have shown low levels of psychological well-being in comparison to elderly working women but both the group of women had shown positive inclination to psychological well-being.

Objective of the present study

Having scanned the review of literature concerning the present investigation none of the studies have been found with particular reference to Khagaria – a well known district of North Bihar where life styles of women is being changed by highly modernized network based on modernized and professionalized education. Thus, it seems that the available studies are insufficient to suggest definite mode of differences between working women and housewives regarding their psychological well-being. It is important to mention that the dimensions of psychological well-being those are focused in the present investigation are, autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance. All of these factors can be considered as key components that make up the definition of psychological well-being. Therefore, women who exhibit strength in each and every of these areas will be in a state of good psychological well-being, while women who struggle in these areas will be in state of low psychological well-being. Hence the present study was planned to see the significant differences between working women and housewives. Present investigators believe that the finding of the study will help to the people to understand their behavior in general and for researcher in particular. It will also fill the void of knowledge in the area concerned especially from where the present study has been carried out. Therefore, the present study is of utmost value in this changing scenario of women's life at glob.

Hypotheses

On the basis of the broad objectives of the present study, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. Housewives are likely to more prone to the degree of subjective well-being than working women in Khagaria district of North Bihar.
2. There would be significant difference between housewives and working women in terms of their perceived reactions of subjective well-being as a whole and on its different dimensions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample

Total sample of the present investigation consisted of one hundred twenty (N=120) women living in Khagaria district of North Bihar, comprising housewives (n=60) and working women (n=60) which were randomly selected from different area of locality of Khagaria district – a well known town of North Bihar. Women's ages were ranged between 28 – 60 years and all were married.

Tools used: The following measures were used in the present piece of research work.

1. **Well-Being Manifestation Scale:** For measuring women's psychological/ subjective well-being, a scale developed by Masse, Poulin, Dassa, Lambert, Belair, & Battaglini (1998) was used. It is a 25-items scale, which measures the psychological well-being on 5-point scale. It covers six dimensions, namely, control meaning in life and psychological well-being of self and events, happiness, social involvement, self-esteem, mental balance, and sociability. Authors of the scale found an overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.93 for the questionnaire, and a range of 0.71 to 0.85 on the subscales which confirms the efficacy of the scale.
2. **Biographical Information Blank (BIB):** Biographical Information Blank (BIB) was also prepared and used for analyzing the obtained results. Information included in it was like age, income, job tenure, number of depends, total working experience, qualifications, etc.

Procedure

These two test materials were in printed form and were administered on each woman who was either engaged in doing job or living as housewives in Khagaria district. All subjects included in the present study were given assurance that information provided by them will be kept strictly confidential and will be used research purposes only.

The responses were scored according to the procedure and the individual scores were obtained. Having obtained the data, the data were tabulated for giving statistical treatment. Results obtained presented in tables. Finally, the results were discussed and the formulated hypotheses were tested.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

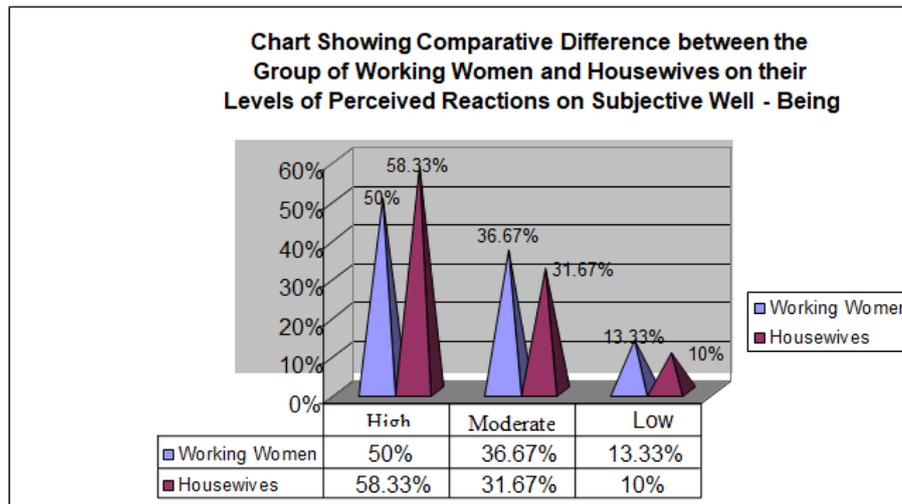
In order to test the formulated hypotheses based on broad objectives of the present study, the results were obtained by applying t-test to measure the significant difference. Q_1 and Q_3 were also calculated to assess the levels of both the group of women's perceived reactions on subjective well-being measure. Finally obtained results were presented in Table 1 & 2.

Table -1 of the results have shown clear cut picture regarding the comparative difference between the group of working women and housewives on their levels of perceived psychological well – being. From the Table–1, it could be observed that 58.33% housewives has reported to have higher degree of psychological well – being in comparison to their working women group i.e. 50 %, whereas, 36.67% of working women have shown moderate level of subjective well – being which is higher than the group of housewives i.e. only 31.67%. Moreover, it can also be observed from this table that only 13.33 % of

working women reported to have low level of psychological well- being in comparison to housewives i.e. 10.00% which is less than working women. Therefore, from the Table–1 it can be concluded that housewives of Khagaria district from where the present sample has been drawn are very much happy and sociable in comparison to their working women. Hence, the proposed hypothesis i.e. “housewives are likely to more prone to the degree of subjective well – being than working women in Khagaria district”, stands accepted. The results presented in Table–1 can also be illustrated by the following pie – charts.

Table-1: Showing Comparative Difference between the Group of Working Women and Housewives on their levels of Perceived Reactions on Subjective Well – Being

Levels	Working Women(N=60)		Housewives (N=60)	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
High	30	50.00 %	35	58.33 %
Moderate	22	36.67 %	19	31.67 %
Low	08	13.33 %	06	10.00 %



In continuation of the results presented in Table–1, Table–2 depicts the picture with regard to significant difference between the group of working women and housewives on different dimensions of psychological well – being and in total too. From the table – 2, it can be seen that working women and housewives differ significantly on different dimensions of psychological well – being, they are – control of self and events, happiness, social involvement, self-esteem, mental balance, and sociability as their t- values are 2.09 (at .05 level), 4.30 (at .01 level), 4.39 (at .01 level),

22.21 (at .01 level), 4.08 (at .01 level), 4.28 (at .01 level) has been found statistically significant. Moreover, it can also be observed that while measuring overall scores of subjective well – being significant difference have also been found between the group of working women and housewives. Hence, the proposed hypothesis i.e. “there would be significant difference between housewives and working women in terms of perceived reactions of subjective well – being” also stands accepted.

Table-2: Showing Significant Difference between the Group of Working Women and Housewives on Different Dimensions of Psychological Well-Being Scores in Khagaria district of North Bihar

VARIABLES	N	Group	Mean	SD	t- value	Sig. Level
Control of self and events	60	W. Women	14.46	3.05	2.09	Significant at 0.05 level
	60	Housewives	13.35	2.62		
Happiness	60	W. Women	16.76	2.42	4.30	Significant at .01 level
	60	Housewives	18.74	2.72		
Social Involvement	60	W. Women	16.65	2.43	4.39	Significant at .01 level

VARIABLES	N	Group	Mean	SD	t- value	Sig. Level
	60	Housewives	18.76	2.75		
Self - Esteem	60	W. Women	13.65	2.47	22.21	Significant at .01 level
	60	Housewives	18.76	2.78		
Mental Balance	60	W. Women	13.61	2.75	4.08	Significant at .01 level
	60	Housewives	15.73	2.91		
Sociability	60	W. Women	15.28	2.34	4.28	Significant at .01 level
	60	Housewives	17.25	2.64		
Overall Psychological Well - Being	60	W. Women	90.41	15.46	4.16	Significant at .01 level
	60	Housewives	102.59	16.42		

The aim of the present study was to have a look to see the significant difference in terms of different dimensions of psychological well – being between the group of working women and housewives with particular reference to Khagaria district – a well known town of North Bihar, India. The results mentioned above seem to be logical that the socio-cultural milieu of Khagaria district is still not modernized like other metro or Cosmo cities of India. Most of the householders do not want their wives to get involve in job because of their cultural values where women is honored and respect as the owner of households work. Hence, housewives scored higher degree on psychological well – being than working women. Housewives reported during investigation especially in North Bihar region from where the research was carried out that they are doing well with the cooperation of their husband and feel equal responsibility to maintain best livelihood. On the other hand, working women showed lower score in all the dimensions except control of self and events – a dimension of psychological well – being, it seems that working women are not very much happy in their life, it may be due to double roles work which creates stress and/ or strain. Thus, in all the six dimensions of subjective well –being have been emerged as the predictors between the group of working women and housewives in Khagaia district of North Bihar. Therefore, it can be said that there are various factors such as acculturation, family, gender differences and socio-cultural environment, etc that influences overall psychological well – being of women especially in Khagaria district from where the present sample has been drawn. Hence, overall subjective well – well being has been found as the significant difference between the group of housewives and working women.

Limitations of the present study

In view of the above contention, there has always been pit-falls in any research investigation; hence, the present study also bears several limitations if such aspects are properly taken care of his future then very significant piece of research work can be created. An important limitation of the present study is that it only studied relatively a small sample group drawn from Khagaria district of North Bihar, so, it is suggested that for more reliable and greater generality larger and varied sample group be studied. Moreover, it is also suggested here that women’s perceived reactions

on psychological/ subjective well-being must be studied undertaking numerous others socio-demographic variables like socio-economic background, rural/urban background and caste systems of different religions because these variables seems to be more relevant so far as women’s perception on psychological/ subjective well-being are concerned. Last but not the least, it is to be mentioned here that there may be some other aspects, which may be fruitful to be undertaken in such future investigations. However it must be kept in mind that researches have never any end where last line can be drawn and beyond that no further researches are required.

Conclusion and Suggestions

On the basis of the results obtained and its interpretations the following conclusions have been summed up:

1. Housewives have been found to have better psychological well-being in comparison to their working women in Khagaria district of North Bihar from where the present piece of research work have been carried out.
2. In all the six dimensions of psychological well-being viz., Control of self and events, Happiness, Social involvement, Self-Esteem, Mental Balance, and Sociability have been found significant predictors between the group of housewives and working women in Khagaria district of North Bihar,
3. It is important to be mentioned that significant difference have also been found on overall psychological/ subjective well-being scale between the group of working women and housewives.
4. On the basis of present findings it may be concluded that women who work outside the home are required to make many social readjustments, then thereafter job can contribute to overall quality of life through nature’s psycho-social make up and more satisfying experiences than those available to a traditional housewives leading to women empowerment. Hence, it is suggested that we should not resolve on the negative aspects of work for women, it is because of the fact that we learn a lot of things from a working women not only in the house but outside the world of work environment too, although both the group of women are responsible for maintaining household works. Hence, family counseling is needed for giving

positive direction to them by psychologist and other behavioral scientist for making congenial environment within the house and to be active outside the household works for the promotion of healthy and better standard of living.

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