



Original Research Article

Financial independence and maternal mental health- A right balance

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ABSTRACT

The role and position of women in today's time is changing rapidly. The idea of making career and becoming mother both goes hand in hand as at one side the biological clock is ticking and at the same time growth in career is also to be taken care. Because of financial independence women are capable of making their decisions more effectively and this leads to better Quality of life, Hardiness and Social Support. According to the survey done by Catalyst, Women in the Workforce – India (October 28, 2020), India's population is rising with 800 million people by 2050. And with this increasing rate economy is also growing with high GDP and working age population. In the total working population men counts to 76% of the labour force whereas women involvement is just 20.3% of the women aged 15 and above.

The study involves the analysis of relevant literature and available data to discuss the role of financial independence and Quality of life, Hardiness and Social Support. It focuses on the mentioned variables with regard to maternal mental health on working women.

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1. Introduction

The role of women is changing very rapidly. Being a home maker to moving out to work in the corporates, the life of women is becoming difficult. One way goes towards achievement of financial independence to contribute towards the economic conditions, the other way goes towards striking in the balance, as a mother. With the tickling of the biological clock of being a mother, the maternal mental health as a mother and rightly balancing the roles is much needed.

In a study (Carvel, 2001) sees that the negative in the family is offset by the improvement in living standards. (Essortment, 2002), mentioned that sometimes the conditions may be so that the family may have to live below the poverty line, if the mother is not earning. Working

women contributing towards the income of the household, they are in a position to make more choices for their families, especially with regard to nutrition and education. Quality of life (QOL) is an important aspect of leading a human life, it includes the well-being of individuals, their families, and societies, defining negative and positive aspects of life. Quality of life constitutes various aspects health of the family members, quality time, education, employment, financial consideration, mental peace etc. According to World Health Organization, the quality of life can be defined as a person's awareness of their position in life, in accordance with the cultural and value based systems in which they live. It is also defined with respect to their aim in life, belief systems and concerns. It is a wider notion, encompassing the complicated way, related to a person's physical health, mental state, level of freedom, personal belief system and their relationship in the society at large.

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Various studies conducted has shown that the kids of that of working mothers do not suffer any inversely from stress, antisocial behaviour, anxiety or other related difficulties than those of mothers who are not working.¹⁻³

Financial considerations are also an important aspect when it comes to fulfilling the needs of the family, so that a quality life can be maintained. (Debjani Sarkar Ghose, 2020), the article talked about the quality of working women, the study was conducted in Urban Bihar which revealed that quality of working women was better than that of the one who remained in the four walls of the house.

According to the study by (Gershaw, 1988), it was found that children of the women who are working have attitude which is less stereotyped in terms of the gender-role played in the society and they also believed that their working mothers are more proficient. Study also discussed that daughters generally set higher goals, whose mothers were working, they were believed in achieving higher goals for themselves.⁴

In the societal as well as organizational set-up, the working women's physiological and psychological health⁴ depends a lot on the social support given to them. When it comes to discussing about social support, it can be divided into family related support and support that is provided by the organizations (Brough and Pears, 2004). The societal support in the organization comes from the people working with the person concerned, such as peers and managers, bosses and their personal support was given by spouse, children, extended family members, parents and friends. Nevertheless, scholars discovered that in curbing out the conflict in women's roles, the support from the husband played a positive and very important role (Aryee, 1992; Barling, 1986). With the dual role being carried out by the working women,⁵ that of gaining financial independence and managing the family, for a healthy and stress free life of a women, social support extended to her plays a major role. But due to increase in nuclear family patterns in the family and at the organisational level due to automation systems, the social support is missing in the lives of working women, which otherwise is helpful in being healthy, reducing stress and increasing quality of life.

Hardiness can be understood as the mental ability of the person to cope up with adverse situations. It can be explained as an inner resource that can help a person to manage the effects of stress on physical and mental health. There are studies mentioning a negative relation between hardiness and negative health outcomes, and measures of stress and anxiety. Hardiness has also been indicated to be related with the choice of coping strategies for dealing with stressful situations. The possible reason for Hardiness and Quality of life have positive relationship is that hardiness leads to strength and is a health supporting factor which brings better Quality of life.⁶ As per the study by Bartone (2006), hardiness is a feature of mental state that develops

early in life and is somewhat stable over time, although willing to change and possibly trainable under certain conditions (Kobasa.1979; Maddi & Kobasa. 1984).

People with hardiness have a high sense of managing life and work responsibility, they have more control and can overcome the challenges in a better manner and are more open to the changes in and around them. They take the worrying and uncomfortable situations as a regular part of existence that is all together fascinating and meaningful (Bartone, 2006).

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Social Support

Marcinkus et al. (2006) found that in comparison to work based social support women received more personal social support.⁷ They also revealed that organisational commitment, career accomplishment and job satisfaction were positively associated with work-based social support. Similarly, personal social support was also found to be positively associated with job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Erdwins et al. (2001) also noted that husband and supervisor's positive supports (social support) are responsible for significant changes in the work-family conflict.

In a study by Clark (2001) revealed that flexible work hours are significantly correlated with increased work satisfaction⁸ and increased family well-being. Working variables such as flexible working hour, flexible work and work supervision were explored regarding dual career partnership, number of children and hours of work per week.

There are many factors which determine the level of social support an individual can receive at work and professional set up. The inadequate income by a partner becomes a financial compulsion for other to work to meet the daily requirements. A second income from mother brings better living conditions and eases the struggle of life. But the role of social support changes when the women is returning to work purely to maintain and advances a career that satisfies her and keep her independent, she comes under scrutiny and criticism (Heilman and Okimoto, 2008).⁹

2.2. Hardiness

In study by (Paula, 1986) found that multiple roles confer benefits to women's physical and mental health.¹⁰ It has been argued that women who performs multiple roles are better copers and are less prone to psychological distress, in comparison to women who hold fewer roles and are more vulnerable to psychological distress.

In another study (Kazemi Haghighi, 2002) revealed that working women effectively integrate the role of both career person as well as role of mother and wives. Hardiness orientation includes overtimes, the full expression of our

capabilities, learning from both negative and positive experiences.

The positive relationship between Quality of life and Hardiness can be supported by studies such as (Maddi SR, 2000) the plausible reasons for Hardiness and Quality of life having positive relationship is that hardiness leads to resilience and is general health promoting factors thus leading to better Quality of life. Hardiness is generalized mode of functioning that includes cognitive, emotional, and behavioural qualities in women.

2.3. *Quality of Life*

In a study by (Anand and Sharma, 2017) Quality of life involves general well-being of individual and societies, combining both positive and negative features of life. The study aimed at comparing the quality of life among working and non-working females,¹¹ with purposive sampling and total 100 females were taken for the study. In the study it was found that non-working women experiences the better quality of life at physical, psychological¹² and environmental domain in comparison to working women but the difference was not statistically significant.^{13,14}

In a study on Iranian population Irandokht Asadi Sadeghi Azar and Promila Vasudeva (2006) it has found that significant positive relationship between Quality of life Hardiness, Self-esteem, and Self-efficacy in case of both married employed and unemployed women. In research it was found that Hardiness is associated with greater well-being and is achieved using coping resources.

3. Conclusion

The review of literature gives us a direction that financial stability gives more power to young mothers to take their independent decisions, and this leads to better quality of life and well-being in working mothers. The sound economical position helps them to have higher social support both at professional and personal front, which also enhances their mental and physical well-being.¹⁵⁻¹⁸ Hardiness another instinctive quality of women helps them to survive and thrive in difficult situation also make them to have so many successive roles at same time. Therefore, time has come to start appreciating women's role¹⁹ both at home and professional front, plan policies and measures to make more work environment cohesive, so that women can bring best possible results for their organisation and have a sense of achievement to them.²⁰

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5. Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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