

**Psychological well- being of women workers in a garment factory of South India-A cross sectional study**

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**ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Working women are constantly facing the problems of role conflict or dual role. Due to role conflict, there are reports of psychological distress, mental tension, anxiety, etc, which affect the psychological well being of working women. Due to outside work, they have psychological problems such as anxiety, stress, burn out, fatigue, etc. This way, the mental health status of working women is neglected and hence, the present study **aims** to assess the psychological wellbeing of women in an industrial setup. **Methods:** A cross sectional study was done among women workers of 18 years and above. A standardized questionnaire was used to collect data. The data was analyzed using SPSS version 24. A total of 136 participants completed the study. **Results:** Present study showed that majority of the workers (67%) had low level of psychological well-being. **Conclusion:** Women workers have low level of psychological well-being and further studies are needed to understand factors influencing it.

**Key Words:** Psychological well-being, Women workers, Garment industry.

**INTRODUCTION**

“The mind is everything. What you think you become.” – Buddha

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health includes "subjective well-being, perceived self-efficacy, autonomy, competence, inter-generational dependence, and self-actualization of one's intellectual and emotional potential, among others". WHO further states that the well-being of an individual is encompassed in the realization of their abilities, coping with normal stresses of life, productive work and contribution to their community. [1]

Psychological well-being is a very subjective term meaning contentment, satisfaction with all elements of life, self-actualization (a feeling of having achieved something with one's life), peace and happiness.[2]Psychological well-being is defined as the presence of psychological and social skills and abilities that contribute to optimal functioning in daily life. [1]

The concept of mental health is inextricably linked to that of psychological well-being. A comprehensive model developed by C. Ryff provides an integration of different viewpoints. It encompasses six inter-related psychological dimensions: positive evaluation of one's self (Self-Acceptance), a sense of continued growth and development (Personal Growth), the belief that life is purposeful and meaningful (Purpose in Life), the possession of quality

relations with others (Positive Relations with Others), the capacity to manage effectively one's life (Environmental Mastery), and a sense of self-determination (Autonomy). Lack of psychological well-being has been found to be a risk factor for depression. [3]

Garment workers around the world, especially those involved in tailoring, are predominantly women. The Indian garment industry is dominated by women workers and 80% of them are young women between 21-25 years. [4]

The workplace is one of the key environments that affect our mental well-being and health. It is difficult to quantify the impact of work alone on personal identity, self-esteem and social recognition; most mental health professionals agree that the workplace environment can have a significant impact on an individual's mental well-being. [5]

Working women have many problems such as career related problems, social problems such as domestic violence, health problems such as psychological distress due to role conflict, mental stress, tension, anxiety, physical health problems such as Anemia, arthritis, etc.

As discussed above, due to outside work, they have psychological problems such as anxiety, stress, burn out, fatigue, etc. This could lead to neglect of mental health. Hence this study is proposed with the objectives of

assessing the psychological well-being of women workers in garment industries and to find out its association with socio demographic factors.

12.02, sd= 4.05) and least in environmental mastery (M=10.10, sd=4.05).

**MATERIALS & METHODS**

A cross sectional study was conducted in a selected garment industry in Tirupur district of Tamilnadu state. This factory is mainly involved in manufacture of garments for export. Majority of the workers are unmarried women.

**Sample size:** Based on 63.5% prevalence of moderate level of psychological well-being study done by K.S.Velmurugan, Dr.K.Maheswari, in Tiruchirappalli [6] sample size was calculated as 136.

**Inclusion criteria:** There were 200 women workers above 18 years in our study factory. Prestuctured and pre validated questionnaire was administered to 136 women workers who were selected by simple random sampling.

**Study tool:** Carl Ryff's 18 item psychological well-being questionnaire translated into local language was used capturing various dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations and self-acceptance, purpose in life. These items were measured using Likert scales of 1 to 6, with 1 indicating strong disagree and 6 indicating strong agree. The maximum score for psychological well-being that could be obtained under each dimension is 18.The maximum score that could be obtained for overall psychological well-being is 128.

**Data collection:** Data collection was done using the above tool as self administered questionnaire. Data entry and analysis was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. The data were analyzed by using mean, standard deviation and two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and p <0.05 was considered statistically significant.

**Ethical Issues:** Approval for the study was obtained from the Institutional Human Ethics Committee of PSG Institute of Medical Sciences and Research.

**RESULTS**

A total of 136 participants completed the survey. The study participants were in the age group of 18 to 25 years. The participants were representative of different sections of the factory with majority (45%) being tailors. The demographical details of the participants are shown in Table1.

Table 2 shows the mean scores of the participants under each dimension of psychological well-being. For all dimensions the mean score was 12 and below which indicates low psychological well-being. The findings indicated that workers scored high in personal growth (M=

**Table 1: Demographic details of the participants**

Demographic factors	Percentage
<b>Age</b>	
Below 20 years	58%
Above 20 years	42%
<b>Education Qualification</b>	
High school	48%
Hr.sec.school	40%
Diploma	4%
Graduate	8%
<b>Work experience</b>	
Below 1 year	57%
Above 1 year	43%
<b>Type of family</b>	
Nuclear family	73%
Joint family	27%
<b>Residence</b>	
Hostel	97%
Day scholar	3%

**Table 2: Overall level of workers Psychological well-being**

Indicators of Psychological well-being	Mean±SD
Autonomy	11.50±3.39
Positive relations	11.92±2.37
Self-acceptance	10.13±3.52
Environmental mastery	10.10±4.05
Purpose in life	11.66±2.24
Personal growth	12.02±4.05
Total score	67.36±13.20

**Table 3: Association of various factors with psychological well-being**

Socio economic Factors	Total score of Psychological well-being (Mean±SD)	p value
<b>Age</b>		
Below 20 years	67.69±12.74	0.728
Above 20 years	66.89±13.91	
<b>Education Qualification</b>		
High school	68.39±13.26	
Hr.sec.school	67.59±13.14	
Diploma	68.20±14.06	0.241
Graduate	59.63±11.84	
<b>Work experience</b>		
Below 1 year	67.02±12.26	0.733
Above 1 year	67.81±14.46	
<b>Type of family</b>		
Nuclear family	67.02±13.00	0.625
Joint family	68.27±13.84	

Table 3 shows the association of various demographic variables with psychological well-being. Age was categorized less than 20 and more than 20, also between various educational level and work experience of at least a

year and whether they belonged to nuclear or joint family. The findings indicated that there is no significant difference between demographic factors like age, education and years of education with psychological well-being.

## DISCUSSION

The present study showed that overall psychological well-being of women garment workers was low (mean value 67.36). In garment industry women workers work for longer hours (10 hours). Also due to high production pressure, hourly targets are set for workers. Staying away from family and having long working hours could be reasons which need to be explored.

Our study findings revealed relatively higher score for personal growth compared to other dimensions. It indicates that women workers had more positive feelings towards their continued development and ready to experience new challenges in life. Similarly, a study done on 2015 showed that a high score in personal growth and positive relations subscales. [7]

The result of present study concurs with a similar study done in Perambalur which showed that women in higher age have low psychological well-being. In our study there is no significant difference between workers age & their psychological well-being. But a woman with higher age shows low psychological well-being. In the same study it was found that women with more work experience had higher psychological wellbeing. In our study though not significant the mean score was comparatively higher among women with more work experience. [6]

In our study we couldn't find out any reasons for poor psychological well-being. Instead, we say above mentioned reasons could be the reason for poor psychological well-being. The present study concurs with a similar study, done in Mysore where the mean score for psychological well-being was 193. [8]

## Conclusion and way forward

From the study we conclude that psychological well-being is low among women workers. Management should develop policies for addressing mental health issues and creating access to counseling services.

Though quantitative analysis did not reveal statistical association between psychological well-being and demographic profile, further qualitative studies would help in better understanding the factors influencing psychological well-being.

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