

A study of Role Conflict and Occupational Stress in Relation to Quality of Life of Married Working Women

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Abstract

It was a practice that women would principally do the household tasks, bringing up families and men would work to impart financial support to the family in all class of society not only in India but also in most parts of world. No doubt, increasing number of women is taking up jobs in various fields, but it entails peculiar problems too. Men and women have become dysfunctional to some extent due to the rapid changes in traditional roles. Now-a-days many working women experience conflict and stress in their essential fulfillment of roles of wifehood, motherhood and earning hand of the family. Different expectations of others brings within it not only role conflicts but also work stress, effecting him physically and leads to inefficiency or disability in correct performance of her different duties. The present study is an attempt to investigate the effect of role conflict and occupational stress working women in the age range on twenty

five to forty five years was included in the study through purposive sampling technique from different government organizations of Hardwar district. Role conflict, Occupational Stress Index and WHO Quality of Life scales were used to measure the role conflict, occupational stress and quality of life of married working women. Critical analysis of the data reveal that married working women are high on role overload, role conflict, unreasonable group and political pressure, under participation and poor peer relations in occupational stress. Whereas inter-correlation of the all eighteen variables of role conflict, occupational stress and quality of life reveal that that married working women high on role conflict is low on responsibility for person, unprofitability in occupational stress and psychological functioning, social relations and general well being of married working women. Married working women high on role overload were low peer relationship. Negative significant correlation of role ambiguity with physical health also shows poor physical health of married

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working women. All these observations points out that woman in professional job positions with high job demand were more prone to experience role conflict and occupational stress which affects their quality of life.

Keywords: Married working women | occupational stress | role conflict | quality of life

Introduction

It was a practice that women would principally do the household tasks, bringing up families, whereas men would work to impart financial support to the family in India as well as in most part of world. The economic development of any country requires an integration of both the male and female labor forces. This means that beside men, women have to contribute to development process of the country, economic growth and poverty reduction. No doubt, increasing number of women is taking up jobs in various fields, but it entails peculiar problems too. As contemporary Indian society is at the transitional stage, the working women phenomena is yet to be fully integrated in the larger patterns of culture. It requires ample modifications and readjustment in various aspects of the culture.

Men and women have been becoming dysfunctional to some extent due to the rapid changes in traditional roles. There is fluidity of sex role definitions causing lots of problems. These days many working women experiences conflict and stresses in their essential fulfillment of roles of wifehood, motherhood and earning hand of the family. Young women of today are educated and

many are qualified for various professions. No doubt, the concept of working women has been widely accepted but even in this emancipated era, when we have entered the twenty first century, mothers continue to assume major responsibility for childcare. It is still thought that due to lack of time for her child, she is depriving the child emotionally. Women are experiencing several types of frustrations and pressure of trying to maintain a balance between family and career; and as a result women have been facing role conflict and occupational stress affecting their quality of life.

According to Kapur (1974) women who choose to combine marriage with career face almost a situation of formlessness and they hardly know how to apportion time and resource between these two major responsibilities. This makes the experience great conflict. Paterson(1978) confirmed that the job taken by women created more conflicting situation for them due to double role played and inability to tolerate the whole burden. Role conflicts among the roles corresponding to two or more statuses. In general, role conflict is a situation where an individual cannot properly enact two (or more) roles at the same time without facing problems. Role conflict between work and family is a situation where the roles that a woman has at work cannot be properly enacted because of the roles she has at home; - a situation where the roles that a woman has at home cannot be properly enacted because of the roles she has at work.

Occupational stress is known as stress at work. Asad and Khan (2003) interpreted that occupational stress is the effect of tension on an employee by the job pressures to fulfill

job assignment and to respond to deadline. According to Onder and Basim (2008) occupational stress is defined as a response to chronic job-related stress, characterized by physical and emotional exhaustion. It refers to the process through employees perceive, appraise and respond to adverse or challenging job demand at work (Frese and Zapf, 1988). Jex (1998) reported that the topic of occupational stress has generated a tremendous volume of research in a surprisingly short period of time.

Quality of life as defined by world health organization is individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards, and concerns (Orley *et al.*, 1997; The WHOQOL group, 1996). It is a broad ranging concept, incorporating in a complex way individual physical health, There has been considerable discussion of what constitutes quality of life and psychological state, level of independence, social relationships, personal beliefs, and their relationship to silent features of the environment. This definition highlights the view that quality of life is multidimensional."

Quality of life can be affected by a number of significant positive and negative life events. The factors contributing to the quality of life of an individual may be broadly classified under two groups: (i) satisfactory conditions: These include factors like group cohesiveness, sharing of each other's experiences, helping attitudes, understanding and sharing each other's problems, absence of conflicts among members, absence of mental or severe physical illness, *etc.*; (ii) satisfying conditions: these include factors

like sense of belongingness, subjective feelings of physical psychological, mental, social and spiritual well-being, absence of unhappy experiences within the family etc.

Although role conflict and occupational stress has been studied fairly and extensively among male managers, administrators, human resource professionals, IT-professionals to date but very little research focused on married working women in relation to their quality of life particularly in India. Many authorities in India have now recognized the crucial role of working women in the development of not only her family but also the progress of the nation. If the working women is misfits or are indifferent to their responsibilities the whole system of the caring of the family and development of the society is then likely to be ineffective and largely wasted. So, it is important to measure role conflict and occupational stress among married working women in relation to their quality of life. Thus, if role conflict and occupational stress and its effect on their quality of life do exist in married working women, there are implications for the design of intervention programs intended to alleviate the harmful aspects of role conflict and job stress. It is important for married working women to understand how role conflict and job stress can have negative effect on their quality of life so that with proper support from family and their work organization and guidance it can be minimized.

Methodology

For this a sample of 140 married working women in the age range on twenty five to forty five years were included in the study

through purposive sampling from different organizations of district Hardwar. Exclusion criteria: Those married working women were excluded from the study those have past history of a) chronic medical diseases such as asthma, heart diseases, pre-history of hypertension etc. b) having severe family or marital problems. Role conflict, Occupational Stress Index and WHO Quality of Life scales were used to measure the role conflict, occupational stress and quality of life of married working women.

Tools

Role conflict scale for working women (Verma and Vinayak, 1999): It is four point rating scale having 26 items with responses categories, viz. 'always', 'often', 'something' and 'never'. Split half reliability of the scale is 0.93. This scale can be used to measure role conflict in women irrespective of age, education, and years of married life.

Occupational Stress Index - Shrivastava and Singh (1984). The scale consists of 46 items, each to be rated on the five-point scale. The items relate to almost all relevant components of the job life which cause stress in some way or the other and measures 'role overload', 'role ambiguity', 'role conflict', 'unreasonable group and political pressure', 'responsibility for persons', 'under participation', 'powerlessness', 'poor peer relations', 'intrinsic impoverishment', 'low status', 'strenuous working conditions', 'unprofitability'.

World health organization Quality of life scale (WHO QOL) - BREF: The questionnaire has been developed by work health organization group in 1996 in order to provide a short form quality of life

assessment that looks at Domain level profiles. It is an abbreviated 26 item assessment and contains 2 items from the overall QOL and general health, and one item from each of the 24 facets included in WHO QOL - 100 for providing and comprehensive assessment. Each item is rated on a five point scale. The questionnaire assesses quality of life in 4 domain, namely physical health, psychological, social relationship, environment.

Procedure

Every married working woman was seated comfortably and informal consent was taken for participation in the study. All three tests were administered to each married working woman individually. Responses to the role conflict scale, Occupational Stress index, WHO-Quality of life scale were noted down. The tests were administered strictly according to their prescribed manual instructions. Participants were assured that their results and the information obtained would be kept confidential and used for research purpose only.

Statistical Techniques and Analysis of Data

The necessary data for each of the test that was used in the study was collected and scrutinized; scores were tabulated for finding out the nature of test scores all of the variables under consideration. Mean, median, standard division, skewness, kurtosis, and Pearson's product moment correlation at significance level of 0.01 and 0.05 levels were seen among all the variables.

Results and discussion

The present study has been undertaken to assess the role conflict, occupational stress,

and quality of life among married working women. The data was collected from 140 married working women of different government organizations of district Haridwar. The data has been organized and described to yield the statistics namely mean, median, mode and standard deviation to

study the general nature of the data sample for the variables of role conflict, occupational stress, and quality of life. To find out the significance relation between the different variables of role conflict, occupational stress, and quality of life the Pearson's product moment correlation was calculated.

		N	Percentage
Age	25 to 29	31	22.14
	30 to 34	43	30.71
	35 to 39	51	36.23
	40 to 45	15	10.71
Occupation	Clerical job	39	27.85
	Teaching	41	29.28
	Doctors	33	23.57
	Technicians	27	19.28
Qualification	Intermediate	49	35
	Graduates	62	44.28
	Post graduates	25	17.85
	Doctorates	4	2.85
Duration of Job	Upto 5 yrs	35	25
	Upto 10 Yrs	41	29.28
	Upto 15 yrs	48	34.28
	20 yrs or more	15	10.71
Married life in years	Upto 5 yrs	31	22.14
	Upto 10 Yrs	43	30.71
	Upto 15 yrs	51	36.42
	20 yrs or more	15	10.71
Number of Children	No child	8	5.71
	Single child	39	27.85
	Two children	75	53.57
	More than two	18	12.85
Joint family or nuclear family	Nuclear	94	67.14
	Joint family	46	32.85

Table I: Socio-demographic features of the sample

As per the socio-demographic features of the sample of 140 married working women 51(36.23%) were in the age group of 35 to 39 years. As per the occupational status 41(29.28%) were teachers, 39 (27.85%) were of clerical jobs, 33(23.57%) were doctors and 27 (19.28%) were of technical job. As per qualification 62 (44.28%) were graduates and 49 (35%) were intermediate. 48(34.28%) were married working women having up to

fifteen years of job and 41 (29.28%) have up to 10 years of job. As per the duration of married life 51 (36.42%) have up to 15 years of married life and 43(30.71) were having up to 10 years of married life. 75(53.57%) married working women have two children and 39 (27.85%) were having single child. 94(67.14%) married working women live in nuclear family and 46(32.85%) were of joint family.

Table-II exhibits the scores of minimum scores, maximum scores, mean, standard division, skewness, kurtosis for role conflict of married working women. The mean scores of married working women is 47.64

	Role Conflict
Min.	26
Max	93
Mean	47.64
SD	13.61
SK	1.08
Kt	1.35

Table II: Minimum, maximum, mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis of the scores of Role Conflict (N=140)

Table - III exhibits the scores of minimum scores, maximum scores. mean, standard Table - III exhibits the scores of minimum scores, maximum scores. mean, standard

division, skewness, kurtosis for twelve dimensions of occupational stress, i.e., "role overload", "role ambiguity", "role conflict", "unreasonable group and political pressure", "responsibility for persons", "under participation", "powerlessness", "poor peer relations", "intrinsic impoverishment", "low status", "strenuous working conditions", and "un-profitability". The mean scores of twelve dimensions of occupational stress are 17.42, 9.11, 12.75, 10.69, 8.63, 12.76, 9.74, 11.21, 9.71, 7.39, 9.51, and 5.79 respectively. After analysis of data reveal that married working women are high on role overload, role conflict, unreasonable group and political pressure, under participation and poor peer relations dimensions of occupational stress.

	Role overload	Role ambiguity	Role conflict	Unreasonable group and political pressure	Responsibility for persons	Under participation	Powerlessness	Poor peer relations	Intrinsic impoverishment	Low status	Strenuous working conditions	Unprofitability
Min.	7	4	5	4	4	5	4	4	4	3	4	2
Max	27	18	23	18	20	20	16	18	17	15	20	10
Mean	17.42	9.11	12.75	10.69	8.63	12.76	9.74	11.21	9.71	7.39	9.51	5.79
SD	4.006	2.63	2.91	2.98	2.53	3.16	2.68	2.41	2.68	2.13	2.79	1.61
SK	.004	.493	.566	.315	.939	.061	-.054	.148	.469	1.05	.952	.323
Kt	-.297	.419	.801	-.265	2.648	-.309	-.681	.723	-.064	2.11	1.71	-.154

Table III: Minimum, maximum, mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis of the scores of occupational stress (N=140)

Table-IV exhibits the scores of minimum scores, maximum scores, mean, standard division, skewness, kurtosis of five dimensions, i.e., "physical health", "psychological functioning", "social relationships", "environment" and "general wellbeing" of quality of life of married working women. Mean scores are 25.31, 22.49, 11.96, 30.19, and 7.22 respectively high on physical health, psychological

functioning and environment dimensions of quality of life.

	Physical Health	Psychological Functioning	Social Relationships	Environment	General Well Being
Min.	14	13	3	8	4
Max	37	31	15	41	10
Mean	25.31	22.49	11.96	30.14	7.22
SD	3.84	3.79	2.39	5059	1.43
SK	.255	-.351	-.1136	-.559	-.008
Kt	.837	-.413	1.24	.667	-.445

Table IV: Minimum, maximum, mean, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis of the scores of occupational stress (N=140)

	Role Conflict	Role overload	Role ambiguity	Role conflict	Unreasonable gp&pol Pressure	Responsibility for persons	Under participation	powerlessness	Poor peer relations	Intrinsic Impoverishment	Low Status	Strenuous Working conditions	Unprofitability	Physical health	Psychological functioning	Social Relationships	Environment	General Wellbeing
Role Conflict	1	-.236	-.039	.175	.032	-.231*	.240*	.127	.366**	.014	.092	-.022	-.350**	.502**	-.490**	.422**	.393**	-.439**
Role overload		1	.236*	-.037	.275**	.506**	-.222*	-.196	-.383**	.041	-.132	.250*	.592**	.146	.246*	.184	.226*	.331**
Role ambiguity			1	.253*	.365**	.180	-.030	-.069	-.099	.041	.044	.377**	.132	-.224*	.049	.127	.171	.185
Role Conflict				1	.253*	.103	-.073	-.123	.000	.145	.048	.132	-.255*	.151	-.091	-.110	-.042	
Unreasonable gp & pol Pressure					1	.094	-.004	-.009	-.219*	-.062	-.066	.342**	.316**	-.027	.164	.074	.283**	.352**
Responsibility for persons						1	-.410**	-.547**	-.548**	-.022	-.184	.117	.490**	.155	.331**	.070	.251*	.352**
Under participation							1	.588**	.424**	.164	.250*	-.050	-.386**	-.012	.201	-.077	-.329**	.036
powerlessness								1	.473**	.108	.166	-.128	-.39**	.048	-.229*	-.054	-.211*	.153
Poor peer relations									1	.269*	.182	-.107	-.498**	-.29**	-.391**	-.162	-.307**	.226*
Intrinsic Impoverishment										1	.017	.203	-.098	.009	-.051	-.044	.048	.165
Low Status											1	-.142	-.136	-.060	-.093	-.088	-.282*	.072
Strenuous Working conditions												1	.173	-.187	-.065	.131	.269*	.223*
Unprofitability													1	.245*	.356**	.155	.293**	.745**
Physical health														1	.570**	.267*	.330**	.750**
Psychological functioning															1	.210*	.377**	.591**
Social Relationships																1	.454**	.783**
Environment																	1	.665*
General Wellbeing																		1

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table V: Inter correlation matrix between different variables of role conflict, occupational stress, and quality of life (N=140)

Table-V shows the Pearson's product moment correlation matrix, calculated among all the eighteen variables. From the inter-correlation table, it can be seen that role conflict scores have negative significant correlation with responsibility for persons ($r = -.231$, $df=138$, $p<.05$), and positive significant correlations with under participation ($r=.240$, $df=138$, $p<.05$), poor peer relations ($r= .366$, $df= 138$, $p<.01$), negative significant correlation with unprofitability ($r= -.350$, $df=138$, $p<.01$), positive significant correlation with physical health ($r= .502$, $df=138$, $p<.01$) and negative correlations with psychological functioning ($r= -.490$, $df=138$, $p<.01$), social relations ($r= .422$, $df=138$, $p<.01$) and general wellbeing ($r=-.439$, $df=138$, $p<.01$).

The negative significant correlation of role conflict with responsibility for persons, unprofitability, psychological functioning, social relations and general wellbeing reveal that married working women high on role conflict is low on responsibility for person,

unprofitability in occupational stress and psychological functioning, social relations and general wellbeing which shows low quality of life of married working women. Role conflict has also positive correlation with under participation, poor peer relations physical health. This shows that married working women high on role conflict are also high on under participation, poor peer relations.

Role overload has significant positive correlation with role ambiguity ($r=.236$, $df=138$, $p<.05$), unreasonable group and political pressure ($r=.275$, $df=138$, $p<.01$), responsibility of others ($r=.506$, $df=138$, $p<.01$), negative significant correlation with under participation ($r=-.222$, $df=138$, $p<.05$), poor peer relations ($r=-.383$, $df=138$, $p<.01$), positive significant correlations with strenuous working conditions ($r=.250$, $df=138$, $p<.05$) unprofitability ($r= .592$, $df=138$, $p<.01$) and psychological functioning ($r = .246$, $df=138$, $p<.05$). Positive significant correlation of role overload with

role ambiguity, unreasonable group and political pressure, responsibility of others, strenuous working conditions, unprofitability and psychological functioning reveal overlapping of the data. Whereas negative significant correlation with under participation and poor peer relations shows that married working women high on role overload are low on under participation and peers relationship.

Role ambiguity has significant positive correlation with role conflict in occupational stress ($r = .253, df=138, p<.05$), and unreasonable group and politic pressure ($r = .365, df=138, p<.01$), strenuous working conditions ($r = .377, df=138, p<.01$), and negative significant correlation with physical health ($r = -.224, df=138, p<.05$). The negative significant correlation of role ambiguity with physical health show poor physical health of married working women. Role conflict has significant positive correlation with unreasonable group and political pressure ($r = .253^*, df=138, p<.05$), and negative significant correlation with physical health ($r = -.255, df=138, p<.05$). This reveal that married working women who are high on role conflict are also high on political pressure whereas negative significant correlation with physical health shows poor effect on health.

Unreasonable group and political pressure has negative significant correlation with poor peer relations ($r = -.219, df=138, p<.05$), strenuous working conditions ($r = -.342, df=138, p<.01$). This shows that married working women high on unreasonable group and political pressure are low on peer relations and on work. Whereas also shows positive significant correlations with

unprofitability ($r = .316, df=138, p<.01$), environment ($r = .283, df=138, p<.01$), and general wellbeing ($r = .352, df=138, p<.01$). Responsibility for persons has negative correlation with under participation ($r = -.410, df=138, p<.01$), powerlessness ($r = -.547, df=138, p<.01$), poor peer relations ($r = -.548, df=138, p<.01$), this shows that married working women who are high on responsibility for person are low on participation, peer relations and low in power. There are also significant positive correlation of responsibility of persons with unprofitability ($r = .547, df=138, p<.01$), psychological functioning ($r = .331, df=138, p<.01$), environment ($r = .251, df=138, p<.05$), general wellbeing ($r = .351, df=138, p<.01$) shows that married working women who are high on responsibility of person are also high on psychological functioning and general wellbeing.

Under participation has positive significant correlation with poor peer relations ($r = .424, df=138, p<.01$), low status ($r = .250, df=138, p<.05$), and negative significant correlation with Unprofitability ($r = -.386, df=138, p<.01$), environment ($r = -.329, df=138, p<.01$), powerlessness ($r = -.588, df=138, p<.01$). The negative significant correlation of under participation with unprofitability, environment and powerlessness show poor environment and low in power of married working women.

Powerlessness has positive significant correlation with poor peer relations ($r = .473, df=138, p<.01$), and negative significant correlations with unprofitability ($r = -.39, df=138, p<.01$), psychological functioning ($r = -.229, df=138, p<.05$), environment ($r = .211, df=138, p<.05$). Poor peer relations has

positive significant correlation with intrinsic improvement ($r = .269$, $df=138$, $p<.05$), and negative significant correlation with unprofitability ($r = -.498$, $df=138$, $p<.01$), physical health ($r = -.29$, $df=138$, $p<.01$), psychological functioning ($r = -.391$, $df=138$, $p<.01$), environment ($r = -.307$, $df=138$, $p<.01$), general wellbeing ($r = .226$, $df=138$, $p<.05$).

Psychological functioning has positive significant correlation with social relationship ($r = .210$, $df=138$, $p<.05$), environment ($r = .377$, $df=138$, $p<.01$), and negative significant correlation with general wellbeing ($r = -.591$, $df=138$, $p<.01$). Social relationship has positive significant correlation with environment ($r = .454$, $df=138$, $p<.01$), general wellbeing ($r = .783$, $df=138$, $p<.01$). And environment has significant correlation with general wellbeing ($r = .665$, $df=138$, $p<.01$).

On the basis of the obtained results it can be stated that married working women are high on role conflict and dimensions of occupational stress like role overload, role conflict, unreasonable group and political pressure, under participation and poor peer relations. Emmons (1990) also reported that disproportionate share of household and child care responsibilities in working mother resulted in home and work responsibilities being placed in opposition to one another and hence leading to role conflict. Kumar (2014) also support the present investigation. Occupational stress as being the harmful physical and emotional responses occurs when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or need or the workers (Humphrey, 1998). Married working women who are high on role

overload have negative significant correlation with general wellbeing, i.e., married working women who are high on role overload are low on their wellbeing. In occupational stress role ambiguity has also negative correlation with physical health means that married working women who are high on role ambiguity are low on physical health. Role conflict of married working women has negative significant correlation with physical health means married working women who are high on role conflict are low on physical health. Under participation has negative significant correlation with psychological functioning and environment. This shows that married working women who are high on under participation on their job work are also low on psychological and environmental health. Powerlessness has negative significant correlations with psychological functioning and environment. This shows that married working women who are high on powerlessness in occupational stress are low on psychological functioning and environment. Poor peer relations of married working women has negative significant correlation with environment in quality of life. Married working women of low status has negative significant correlation with environment which shows that married working women who have low status have not better quality of life.

Conclusion

The outcome of the present research in finding that there is a significant relationship between levels of occupational stress and role conflict in married working women. Mainly observed that married working women in professional job positions with high job demand were more prone to experience work

family conflict and work stress affect their quality of life. Married working women face stress and conflict in managing their family life and with work.

Recommendations

- Trained psychologists/ counselors should be appointed at work place; so that they may help working women settling issues of job related stress.
- Social and welfare clubs at work place should be encouraged to facilitate participation of work women in recreational activities.
- Women-friendly HRM policies should be framed to encourage women to participate effectively in the developmental process.
- Child care facilities and family friendly employment policies should be encouraged to accommodate the needs and demands of married working women.
- Rules should be framed that in-service husband and wife are posted in the same or nearby place.
- Special attention should be given to the need of women in the provision of safe drinking water, sewage disposal, toilet facilities and sanitation.

Limitations of the Study

Since a small population was interviewed and purposively selected sample of married working women from urban area was taken any generalization of our results should be made with caution.

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