

Perception of married working women towards quality life

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ABSTRACT

In present situation, all are running after better living and quality life. This philosophy involves more income in personal level and family side. To achieve quality life, the women to-day seeks employment outside home. But to manage both the fronts, she faces role conflict. Management of time, family and money is the primary variable to overcome role conflict. Time based conflict is concerned with leisure time use and family time availability. Family management includes day to day family functions, house keeping, care of old and others during their illness and observation of religious functions. Education of children, meeting social obligations, addition of income and assets under money management. So, as there is a correlation between quality life and role conflict, a balance should be maintained to minimize role conflict.

Key words : Quality life, Perception, Wage earners, Service holders.

Quality life is now the central focus of living. The nature of quality life being dynamic, its definition becomes changeable depending upon society and culture. The basic needs are considered important ingredients for quality life. An attempt was made to examine the reactions and perceptions of urban and rural married working women about the quality life and the role conflict they face with the objectives to find out the perceptions of married working women towards quality life and to identify the relation between quality life and level of role conflict among married working women.

METHODOLOGY

The study was undertaken in Orissa covering six rural districts and Bhubaneswar, the capital of the State for selecting rural and urban sample, respectively. Total 260 numbers of respondents (130 from each category) were purposefully randomly selected who fulfilled the criteria of (i) being married, (ii) being engaged in dual work and (iii) having experience of housewife at least for three years.

Keeping the objectives in view, a structured interview schedule was developed and used for data collection combined with observation method. The observation method was followed in case of tribal women to make them understanding of the objectives of the study. Each group consisted of 10-15 members and discussion for more than one hour for sitting. Then the data was analyzed by using statistical tools to reveal the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Quality life:

Through interactions with people of different walks of life, about 10 important parameters qualifying quality life have been selected. These are: food, residence, dress, education of children, health, leisure time use, balance between income and expenditure, materials achievement, compatibility between life partners and sharing responsibilities by both. The parameters were kept unchanged for both the urban and rural women having their perceptions with varied degrees as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 : Variables of quality life (Score analysis)

Variables	Urban		Rural		Difference
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	
1. Standard food	2.49	VI	2.03	V	18.47
2. Residence	2.40	VII	2.14	II	10.83
3. Dress	2.26	VIII	1.82	VII	8.61
4. Education of children	2.69	III	1.82	VII	28.25
5. Health status	2.67	IV	1.93	VI	28.46
6. Use of leisure time	2.07	IX	1.72	IX	16.90
7. Income and expenditure	2.55	V	2.11	III	6.76
8. Material achievement	2.02	X	1.81	IX	10.39
9. Compatibility	2.76	I	2.24	I	18.84
10. Sharing responsibility	2.75	II	2.10	IV	16.90

There is difference in perception between urban and rural sample in ranking variables of quality life in case of health status, education of children, compatibility between life partners, standard food, sharing responsibility and using leisure time. Side by side, there is no much difference in respect of income and expenditure, dress, material achievement and residence.

Job status and quality life:

The married working women were not from a particular job category rather from different categories like Class I, II, III and IV. The quality life can not serve same meaning to all of them. Their perception for quality life has been reflected in Table 2.

Variables	C-I	C-II	C-III	C-IV
	Score	Score	Score	Score
1. Standard food	2.48	2.48	2.60	2.22
2. Residence	2.27	2.45	2.41	2.18
3. Dress	2.17	2.18	2.36	2.09
4. Education of children	2.45	2.77	2.48	2.81
5. Health status	2.41	2.63	2.68	2.91
6. Use of leisure time	2.06	2.06	2.22	1.72
7. Income and expenditure	2.34	2.53	2.70	2.45
8. Material achievement	1.93	2.10	2.09	1.63
9. Compatibility	2.55	2.73	2.83	3.09
10. Sharing responsibility	2.58	2.69	2.80	3.00
n =	29	49	41	11
Average	2.09	2.46	2.51	2.41

C-Class

As there was difference in job status and in income, so also there was significant difference between four groups of samples in perception of quality life. The married working women from the category of C-I gave highest value to sharing of responsibility by husband and wife while it was ranked second by C-III and C-IV and also ranked third by C-II. Education of children was perceived as the primary item for quality life in case of C-II and on the other hand, compatibility between life partners was given rank I by the category of C-II, C-III and C-IV for quality life. Material achievement had less importance for C-I, C-III and C-IV categories of respondents while use of leisure time was perceived as last item in case of C-II to get quality life.

Wage earning and quality life:

The wage earners work both in home and out side home to earn their bread. As their employment is not regular and situation is different, the perception of that

category towards quality life also varies which is shown in Table3.

Variables	Regular wage earners	Irregular wage earners	Difference
	Score	Score	
1. Standard food	1.95	2.18	10.55
2. Residence	2.06	2.20	6.63
3. Dress	1.94	2.04	4.90
4. Education of children	1.86	2.09	11.00
5. Health status	1.83	2.02	9.40
6. Use of leisure time	1.67	1.81	7.73
7. Income and expenditure	2.05	2.23	8.07
8. Material achievement	1.72	2.00	7.00
9. Compatibility	2.16	2.42	10.74
10. Sharing responsibility	2.14	2.04	4.67
Average	2.11	2.10	0.47

No much difference was observed in perception of quality life between two categories of respondents like regular and casual wage earners except in case of education of children and compatibility between husband and wife as sample was drawn from homogenous social setting.

Quality life and role conflict:

The high conflict urban group indicated highest importance to education of children while the low conflict group valued for compatibility with spouse for a quality life. Both the group perceived sharing responsibility in equal rank for a better living and material achievement was less valued for getting quality life. The two groups significantly differed with respect to compatibility, material achievement, income and expenditure and use of leisure time in order in quality life (Table 4).

As per the realization of rural sample, residence plays very important role for high conflict group and compatibility for low conflict group. But both the categories need sharing of responsibility by husband and wife as it provides strength to working women to overcome the problems arising out of role conflict. As the rural women sample was drawn from a homogenous social system, their perceptions of parameters for quality life came within close proximity except a little difference in case of income and expenditure pattern.

Now, women empowerment being a burning global issue, our traditionally bound society has given freedom to women for working outside home. They face many problems at work place and at home for a quality life. Sen (1999) is of the opinion that women are not free from

Table 4 : Quality life and level of role conflict

Variables	Urban		Difference (%)	Rural		Difference (%)
	High conflict	Low conflict		High conflict	Low conflict	
	Score	Score		Score	Score	
1. Standard food	2.53	2.58	1.93	1.95	2.04	4.11
2. Residence	2.44	2.50	2.40	2.25	2.09	7.11
3. Dress	2.29	2.41	4.97	2.05	1.96	4.39
4. Education of children	2.83	2.87	1.39	1.75	1.97	5.66
5. Health status	2.69	2.79	1.40	1.97	1.90	3.55
6. Use of leisure time	2.10	2.12	21.18	1.84	1.79	2.71
7. Income and expenditure	2.59	2.70	22.22	1.85	2.16	14.35
8. Material achievement	2.06	1.95	24.71	1.81	1.80	0.55
9. Compatibility	2.80	2.95	30.16	2.07	2.28	9.21
10. Sharing responsibility	2.79	2.83	1.41	2.10	2.11	0.47
Average	2.51	2.67	5.99	1.96	2.01	2.48

social responsibility. They face role conflict with mental and physical tensions. The demands of family members are to be met by housewives irrespective of her status and positions. Shukla and Kapoor (1990) in an Indian study has shown that the majority of middle class working women experienced more stress and strain in their marital relationships because these women do not like to give up their jobs and at the same time they can not contemplate divorce which damages their family prestige. Therefore, they come across all the conflicts in their walks of life for quality living. The various situations of both the urban and rural working women shape their attitude and perception differently regarding quality life as reveals Table 4.

Conclusion:

Quality life hampers when the management for work place as well as for home is not properly rationalized. Both the components are very important for married working women. Observation of Mathur (1992) is a consolation for depressed women who believe that working women normally develop strategies to manage both the fronts. According to Voyadanoff (1987) the impact of family and work stressors on overall well being, impact of the job stressors on family life and impact of family stressors on work have emerged as new social

problems. Any how she has to manage the both. Role conflict is not independent of perceived quality life. Therefore, management as a central aspect need to be taken care in case of time, money and family so that role conflict will be minimum with maximum quality living. To achieve this quality life, both the husband and wife have to share their responsibility as well as emotion.

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