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Nutritional status of urban women

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Participation of women in different fields has become a common feature now-a-days. However, changed social status of women resulted in additional workload and stress resulting in adverse effect on health and nutritional status of working women. In the present study a total of 180 urban women were selected by stratified random technique, equal distribution existed between working and non-working groups. A survey was carried out to evaluate the socio – economic status of the selected women. The nutritional status was assessed with the help of anthropometry, BMI. The hematological assessment was carried out to find out the prevalence of anaemia among the selected groups. Majority of non -working women were maintaining normal BMI 61.11 per cent while 55.55 per cent working women were underweight. Majority of non -working women were suffering from moderate anaemia followed by mild and severe.

Key Words : Anthropometry, Nutritional status, Working, Non-working women

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INTRODUCTION

Today's women changed their image of shy, illiterate, pessimistic and traditional. They did not restrict themselves to household activities.They are carrier oriented. However, with the development of the country the status of the women changed in the society and they are at the helm of the efforts in every industry from Government to hi-tech computer services and they are treated as equal footing to man in all aspects of industry. At the times women are performing multiple role as bread winner and as well as housekeeper. Thus, participation of women in different fields has become a common feature. However, the changed social status of women resulted in additional workload and stress for women resulting in several health problems. Anaemia is one of the health problems from which women suffer mostly. Nutritional anaemia is one of India's major public health problems and according to the new national health family survey more than 50 per cent of women are suffering from it (Micronutrient profile of India, 2005). Anaemia adversely affects health of an individual by causing decreased work performance, impaired defense mechanism, lowered physical stamina and attentiveness.

Anaemia is the most widely spread disease currently affecting women. Its clinical manifestations are not spectacular and for this reason the disease is often ignored (Gopalan, 1999). The working women, performing dual role at home as well as out side in the profession, often undergo the stress and strain and frequently neglect dietary intake and are compelled to neglect their own health due to pressure of work. Such situation gradually leads to the occurrence of anaemia, which is not often noticed.

Therefore, the present investigation was carried out with the objectives:

- –To assess the nutritional status of women by anthropometric measurements and diet survey.
- –To find out the socio-economic background of selected sample.
- –To identify prevalence of anaemia among the selected women.

METHODOLOGY

The present study was carried out in Parbhani town of Marathwada region of Maharashtra state. Total 180 women

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were selected by stratified random techniques for assessing the nutritional status of selected women belonging to the age group >35 to 50 years. The different procedures adopted for conducting the study included baseline survey, diet survey assessment of nutritional status with the help of anthropometric measurements and biochemical analysis.

The obtained data were compiled and analyzed statistically with the help of suitable statistical tests. The statistical analysis was carried out including ANOVA test.

OBSERVATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

The socio-economic background of selected working and non-working women is depicted in Table 1. As regards the education more than one third (35.55%) urban working women were found illiterate followed by college education (24.44 %) and high school education (21.11 %). Further, it was noticed that about 13.00 per cent urban working women were having primary education and only 5.55 per cent of them were educated up to elementary school level. In case of urban non -working women 41.11 per cent urban women were found illiterate, while 18.88 per cent of them were educated up to primary school level followed by high school level (17.77%). It was also seen that 13.33 per cent urban non- working women were having college education and 8.88 per cent of them were educated up to elementary school level.

As far as type of family was concerned, it was noted that 86.66 per cent working and 83.33 per cent non -working women were belonging to nuclear family where as 13.33 per cent working and 16.66 per cent non-working urban women were from joint family.

As regards the food habits, majority of working (71.11%) and non-working (82.22%) urban women were vegetarian whereas 28.88 per cent working and 17.77 per cent non-working urban women were non-vegetarian.

Most of the working (40.00%) and non -working (62.22 %) were having their family income above 10,000/- per month followed by 32.22 per cent working and 26.66 non -working urban women were having family income in between Rs.5,001-Rs.10,000 per month. Further, it was seen that more than one fourth of (27.77%) working and 11.11 per cent non- working urban women were found to have their family income less than Rs.5,000/- per month.

As regards working pattern of women it was illustrated that to be office goers were 45.55 per cent followed by laboures (34.44%), one fifth (20%) of them were having business.

Table 1 : Socio-economic background of selected working and non- working women (n=180)

Sr. No.	Socio-economic factor	Working women (n=90) (%)	Non-working women (n=90) (%)
I.	**Education**		
1.	Illiterate	35.55	41.11
2.	Primary	13.33	18.88
3.	Elementary	5.55	8.88
4.	High school	21.11	17.77
5.	College education	24.44	13.33
II.	**Type of family**		
1.	Joint family	13.33	16.66
2.	Nuclear family	86.66	83.33
III.	**Food habits**		
1.	Vegetarian	71.11	82.22
2.	Non vegetarian	28.88	17.77
IV.	**Family income (per month)**		
1.	Below 5000	27.77	11.11
2.	5001-10000	32.22	26.66
3.	Above10001	40.00	62.22
V.	**Work pattern**		
1.	House wife	---	100
2.	Office goers	45.55	---
3.	Business	20.00	---
4.	Labour	34.44	---

Anthropometric measurements and BMI of working and non-working women are presented in Table 2. The Anthropometric measurements of the selected women were varying for height, weight and mid arm circumference 152 (cm), 48.7 to 52.4 (kg), 21.35 to 22.5 (cm) and also for BMI 21.2 to 22.5, respectively. The non-working women exhibited significantly higher values for weight, whereas the significant difference was noted for weight among working and non-working women while all other parameters were not significant. Rao (1986) recorded body height and weight of Indian women of 30 to 45 years of age and reported the average values of body height to be 164.9±0.65 and 163.2 ± 0.94 and 60.4±1.09. When compared with mean height and weight of Indian women the present values of selected women were lower. This could be due to the type of food consumed by selected population because the food consumption influence to the greater extent on the nutritional status of population (Gupta, 1985).

The nutritional status of selected women based on BMI is presented in Table 3. It is evident from the table that majority of women were normal. The percentage of normal women was found high in non- working. When comparison between non -working women and working women was carried out, it was observed that non -working women were overweight (10-5.55%), while more percentage of working women was under weight (33.33%). The results of the present study also revealed that prevalence of underweight was more in working women as compared to non -working women. The high prevalence of underweight in working women could be due to the pressure of work at work place and as well as at home. On the other hand the non-working women enjoyed a more relaxed and tension free life style which resulted in their normal nutritional status. The results are inline with that of Ambore (2004) who conducted study on adolescent girls belonging to same socio geographical background.

Degree of anaemia among selected women based on haemoglobin level is presented in Table 4 and Fig. 1. The Table 1 and Fig. 1 revealed that 73.33 per cent of working women were suffering from moderate anaemia followed by mild and severe anaemia (13.33%). However, 53.33 per cent of non -

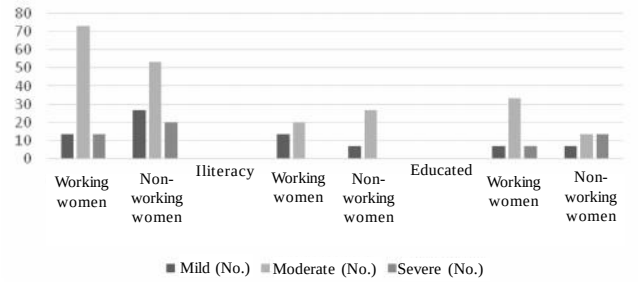

Fig. 1: Degree of anemia among urban working and non-workingwomen

Table 2 : Anthropometric measurement of urban working women and non -working women

Anthropometric measurements	Working women Mean± S.D.	Non working women Mean± S.D.	Z – value
Height (cm)	152±3.9	152±5.09	--
Weight (kg)	48.7±7.03	52.4±7.9	3.33*
Mac	21.35±3.52	22.5±0.70	3.02NS
BMI	21.2±2.98	22.5±3.22	2.82NS

NS=Non-significant

Table 3 : Nutritional status urban working women and non -working women

Groups	Under weight (%)	Normal (%)	Over weight (%)
Working women	33.33	55.55	5.55
Non-working women	18.18	61.11	10

Table 4 : Degree of anemia among urban working and non -working women

Degree of anemia	Mild(No.) 10-12g%	Moderate (No) 7-10g%	Severe (No.)<7g%
Working women	13.33	73.33	13.33
Non -working women	26.66	53.33	20
Iliteracy			
Working women	13.33	20	----
Non- working women	6.66	26.66	----
Educated			
Working women	6.66	33.33	6.66
Non- working women	6.66	13.33	13.33

working women had moderate anaemia while 26.66 per cent women were suffering from mild anaemia and 20 per cent women had severe anaemia. More educated working women were suffering with moderate anaemia (33.33%) followed by mild and severe anaemia (6.66%) while non- working women were suffering from moderate and severe anaemia (13.33 %) followed by mild anaemia (6.66%). Whereas in illiterate working women 20 per cent moderate, 13.33 per cent mild, non-working women were suffering from 26.66 per cent moderate, 6.66 per cent mild while severe anaemia was not observed. Hemlatha *et al.* (1999) when conducted a study on iron profile of working women comparison with housewives, they found the high value for housewives followed by office goers, weavers and stone cutter according to the increase in intensity of activity resulted in low haemoglobin level.

Conclusion:

In conclusion it can be stated that all the women selected from Parbhani area were suffering from anaemia and underweight. Hence, all these findings depict the need for nutritional education which will be further beneficial for better health and nutrition status.

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