

## **Assessment of Mindfulness in Married Women – An Indicator of Mental Health**

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### **Abstract**

Indian women have been known for their multi-tasking capabilities with which they are able to handle both their family and their career. Many a times this multi-tasking ability by itself leads women to stress and burn out. However, all these go unreported in the daily routine and majority of married women have accustomed themselves to their hectic schedules. This study aims at finding out their levels of real mental health. This study has been done on married women between the age group of 26-40 years. Moreover, their mindfulness has been assessed using Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS), wherein higher the score, higher is their dispositional mindfulness level, which in turn indicates a good mental health in the individual. Data has been collected from 75 married women who fall under the specified age category and out of them 40 were found to have low levels of trait mindfulness, which reveals the fact that their minds are always pre-occupied with some thought process. Another interesting finding of the study is there are no recorded difference in the trait mindfulness between the working women and home makers.

**Keywords:** Mindfulness, Married Women, Multi-Tasking, Stress, Burn Out.

### **Introduction**

Although marriage affects both men and women, it is the women who are found to be affected more. Along with being a daughter and sister that she was, she has to play the roles of a wife, daughter in law and a mother also in the near future. Especially in India, her entire living space changes with marriage and she has to accept and cope up with all this. Life after marriage becomes a whole game change in every woman's life. Lives of women have been constantly changing with time and they are now able to choose their career and earn for the welfare of the family and their own selves. Women are the ones, who contribute to the true development of their families and the society. The status of women in the society has been changing fast due to multiple factors such as urbanization, industrialization,

increased level of education, awareness of rights and media influence. They expect women to earn and be occupied only after completing all the household works. Hence, all this leads to burn out, stress and lowered mental health. (Panigrahi, Padhy & Panigrahi, 2014)

## **Review of Literature**

Mental health of working women can be affected significantly by some personal and some work-related factors. The study reported that the abnormal GHQ result was prevalent among the studied working women (Salem, Salama & Negm, 2017). Vajpayee and Makkar in 2014 conducted a study on working women and discovered that the various social factors affected the mental health of women that have to be sorted to help women lead a happy life. Garima and Kiran in 2014 conducted a study and proved that marital status had a tremendous impact on the mental health of working women and counselling could be of immense help them solve their personal issues. The study indicates that mental health in India is attached with strong social stigma against it. Most people are still unaware or ignorant about the importance of mental wellbeing.

The terms such as 'pagal', 'mental' and 'crazy' should not be thrown around casually. A research by Seyed and Zadeh in 2015 studied the relationship between mindfulness and marital satisfaction. The results of the study proved that there exists a direct positive relationship between mindfulness and marital satisfaction. The sample included all married men and women working in a particular organization. Thus, on the whole, there are sufficient proofs to explain how marriage and career may play a contributing factor in affecting the mental health of women.

## **Need & Relevance**

The mental health of women, especially married women is a topic to be researched because most of the women never report to mental health practitioners for help. They learn to cope-up or just live with poor mental health state and leading a life of lowered general wellbeing and poor mental health. Hence, this study aims at reaching out to the married women who may either be home makers or employed women and assess their trait mindfulness. Also, intends to throw light on the ever prevailing questions as to who are happier. This becomes a sheer necessity and may lead to further research on the ways of enhancing mental health of married women.

## **Objective**

To assess the level of mental health and wellbeing of married women by assessing the trait mindfulness using Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS)

# Methodology

## Sample

The sample included 75 married women who were selected using Snow Ball sampling method and described accordingly.

## Data Collection & Tools

The primary data collection has been carried out using Google forms and secondary through literature sources.

## Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS)

The MASS is developed by Brown and Ryan in 2003. This scale has 15 items with a scale ranging from 1 to 6. The scoring has been conducted by manually taking scores above 3 to have higher mindfulness and below 3 to have lower mindfulness levels. The internal consistency levels (Cronbach's Alphas) generally range from 0.80 to 0.90. The average score is obtained, wherein higher the score indicates higher the mindfulness in individual. The MAAS has demonstrated high test-retest reliability, discriminant and convergent validity, known-groups validity and criterion validity.

## Data Analysis & Interpretation

**Table 1: Distribution of Scores of MAAS among the Sample**

Sample Category (N=75)	MAAS Score	
	Below 3 (40)	Above 3 (35)
Working Women (39)	22	17
Home Makers (36)	18	18

The above table depicts that trait mindful attention awareness among married women is not much affected by employability factor. This shows that there may be other attributing factors to the poor mental health like personality characteristics, home environment, their compatibility in their new home, the stress of parenting, the level of understanding with their pairs, etc. When the data is minutely examined, we can find that there is slight higher level of mental health among home makers, but the difference is not very high. This difference may also be attributed to the culture from where the data has been collected.

## Discussion

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## **Suggestions**

1. The mental health of married women mindfulness practice can be enhanced and developed through suggested methods indicated below:

- Focusing on one particular thing at a time gives immense sense of satisfaction on completion, which in turn develops mindfulness.
- Practicing yoga or regular exercises.
- Me-time is a necessity for all married women that will help improve the mental health.
- Maintaining any hobby of their choice will also help.
- Good understanding with their partners will help improve the mental health of married women.

2. This study can be further elaborated on various personality traits to understand the impact of mindfulness.

## **Conclusion**

The study shows that mental health of a married woman is a complex component including a spectrum of factors ranging from self-esteem to the way they are being treated or whether they are employed or not. Hence, all the factors that might affect the mental health of married women are to be identified so that steps can be taken to minimize their impacts, wherein only then mental health of married women can be improved. Also, the attitude of women towards self and life should change. The women should be very optimistic and take life the way it comes. Furthermore, developing and practicing mindfulness is an effective way to attain good mental health and general wellbeing for fostering their activities in workplace.

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