

## ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION: COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN WORKING AND NON-WORKING MOTHERS

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### ABSTRACT

*Now a day the mothers are not only restricted their involvement on domestic chores, procreation of children and their nurturing with family care and attention. A significant number of mothers are working and they are maintaining their dual of as employee and household keeper with financial assistance to their families. The working mothers are mostly in anxiety and depression regarding their method of child care as they are absentees for a long time. The present study had been conducted to find out the differences in degree of felt depression and anxiety pattern of working & non-working mothers. A total of 60 mothers (30 working mothers , 30 non-working mothers) were studied. The result showed that that there were significant differences in degree of depression & both anxiety of working mothers' group. But no significant difference was noticed in case of anxiety & depression pattern of non-working mothers' group.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Mother, Anxiety, Depression, Child Care, Household Work.*

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### INTRODUCTION

The term woman is usually reserved for an adult, with the term girl being the usual term for a female child or adolescent. However, the term woman is also sometimes used to identify a female human, regardless of age. Womanhood is the period in a female's life after her transition from childhood to adolescence, generally after crossing the age of 18 years. But the motherhood determines as a manifestation of human form the cosmic wonder of creation. Mother is a woman who has conceived, given birth to, or raised a child in the role of a parent (Apter, T., 1985) [1]. Because of the complexity and differences of mothers' social, cultural, and religious definitions and roles, it is challenging to define a mother to suit a universally accepted definition. The masculine equivalent is a father.

The Role of women in the society is constantly questioned and for centuries women have struggled to find their place in a world that is predominantly male oriented. Literature provides a porthole into the lives, thoughts and actions of women during certain periods of time in a fictitious form, yet often truthful in many ways. Woman has a great part to play in the progress of our country, as the mental and physical contact of women with life is much more lasting and comprehensive than that of men (Bernard, J., 1971) [2]. In the apron string of women is hidden the revolutionary energy, which can establish paradise on this earth. Woman is the magnificent creation of god, a multi faceted personality with the power of benevolence, adjustability, integrity and tolerance (Ghadijally, Rehana, 1998) [3]. She is companion of man, gifted with

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equal mental faculty, a protector and provider, the embodiment of love and affection. The role specified to women in a society is a measuring bar and it is a true index of its civilization and cultural attainment. First of all it is clear that a woman's place, just like a man's is in the home. Women have started to reach the highest places and to occupy the scariest and most exciting positions of power within society. At the same time, they have continued to stay home and have children. It is really a matter of individual choice. Women's place should not be in the home because they have much more to offer society. Women got the reputation of being house-bound creatures through no fault of their own: they were repressed on every level. They were forced to wear certain dress codes, their education was severely curtailed and they were simply traded off in strategic marriages of convenience. Woman now believes a successful career is the key to financial and social life. Obviously the lives women live today are much different than they were before. Today, there are several roles women may choose to fulfill/carry out (Hoffman, L.W., 1986) [4].

Today most of mothers are working. They are expanding their lives to include a career; they must also maintain their traditional roles at home. This combination of housework and career-work is the reason why working mothers today have more stress than working fathers (Hoffman, L.W. 1986). [4].

Mothers may work in an office from nine to five or whatever may be, but their work does not end at the office. After working an eight-hour or more a day, a mother will come home to take care of her children, husband, and house. Women remain the primary caretaker and housekeeper of a family, and are also the primary caregiver for the elderly. All of this makes for a very demanding schedule. This is not only true for mothers of school-aged children, as it have been for two decades, but it is also true for mothers of infants less than one-year-old. The pace with which maternal employment rates have increased to this point, however, is so rapid that many people fail to realize its prevalence (Rapaport, R and Rapaport, R. N., 1972) [5].

Furthermore, attempts to understand its effects often ignore the fact that this change is part of a whole complex of social changes. Both employed mothers and homemakers today live in a very different environment than their counterparts forty or even twenty years ago.

Nearly three-quarters of all mothers are in the labor force. Even among mothers with very young children, more than sixty percent are in the labor force (Rachel Hamman. (2006) [6].

Anxiety & Stress symptoms affect over mostly in women especially in working mothers day by day. An increasing number of women are faced with the task of juggling the roles of mother-wife-employee. Working mother experienced high level of stress as compared to un-employed moms.'(Arieti, S., 1964) [7]. Work-family-spillover' may also occur due to having juggle multiple roles, & may result when the pressures from work have an effect on one's attitude & behavior within the family.

According to Postpartum support International, up to 10% women develop an anxiety disorder & stress. Anxiety & stress is just as detrimental to the health of the new mom, her baby, & their budding relationship. Anxiety is a natural response to a perceived or imagined threat. Stress is the emotional and physical strain caused as a result of our response to what happens around us. Stress can affect anyone—kids, teenagers, adults and the elderly. At one point or the other, everybody goes through stress—be it relationship demands, work, household chores, children's

school, education, financial situations, etc. It is an inborn instinct which helps you deal with everyday difficulties. But, if it goes on for too long, it can harm physical as well as psychological health making it difficult to handle day-to-day living. Secondly the cause of anxiety is the loss of job. It can be devastating, putting unemployed workers at risk for physical illness, depression, effecting heart etc. Until the transition is made to a new position, stress is chronic. The working mothers had better mental health and reported less depression than the non-working mothers. The most frequently reported source of stress for working mothers was not having enough time to do everything, whereas for non-working mothers lack of social life was a major stressor (Beck, A.T; Ward, C.H: Mendelson, M; Mock, J.E. & Erbaugh, J.K.(1961) [8].

On the other part depression is one of the most prevalent psychological disorders caused by several factors, including interpersonal relationships between individuals and the reactions and emotions of each individual expressed directly and discreetly to each other. An overwhelming 91% of working moms suffered some symptoms of depression. While many people are familiar with postpartum depression in the months after giving birth a lot of women are experiencing depressions (Maurice B. Mittelmark. (2009) [9].

There are so many benefits of working mothers that it seems to be a mistake to be a stay at home mom! But every woman must weigh her own pros and cons of getting a job outside the home. The factors such as financial situation, children's age, work availability, partner support, work passion and health all play a role in the decision to be working mom or stay-at-home moth (Kessler, R.C & MacRae, J.A. (1982) [10]. Many simply feel that being a homemaker fails to utilize the full range of their capabilities. Working moms feel like they're using all their gifts, talents, and abilities in a more useful capacity than stay at home moms. Intellectual stimulation, problem solving, and handling challenges increase feelings of self-esteem and self-confidence. Working moms have their own income, which offers independence, freedom, and security. Moms with careers can make their own decisions about money and purchases; they know how their money is spent. There's a sense of satisfaction in being a working mom, as well as the economic ability to take care of them if the marriage or husband's health fails. Furthermore the employment has positive or neutral effects on women's health. Comparing working mothers with non-working mothers on measures of mental health, self-esteem, and mother role satisfaction have positive effects (Field, S., 1964) [11]. The working mothers had better mental health and reported less depression than the non-working mothers. The most frequently reported source of stress for working mothers was not having enough time to do everything, whereas for non-working mothers lack of social life was a major stressor (Johan. H. Anderson., 2009) [12].

Mainstream moms tend to be more insular and value family in traditional ways. Unique moms have more liberal views, are more likely to give their children original names, and put more value on "giving back." (Field, S., 1964) [11].

Traditional moms are more apt to approve of alternative educational approaches (teacher merit pay, home schooling) to maintain student standards, but are less likely to care for contemporary content (such as Harry Potter). Progressive moms are more prolific readers and more likely to support affirmative action programs.

Rule bending behavior in moms has little correlation to either childhood experience or parenting philosophy. In other words, just because a mom was a little on the wild side growing up doesn't mean she's more permissive or uninvolved as a parent (Field, S., 1964) [11]

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Working moms have been found to promote more independence in their children. A working mom is not able to solve every problem or issue due to their absence, so their children tend to become more autonomous and better problem solvers. Encouraging this independence has been found to have a more negative impact on boys than girls. For boys, this independence tends to increase the influence of their peer groups. In girls it has a more positive effect because traditionally girls are given less encouragement to be independent. It is also found that working moms spend less time with their preschoolers than non-working moms. Conversely, research has also found that the quality of time spent can sometimes be higher with working moms since they feel they need to compensate for the missed hours during the day, even though the activities chosen by working moms for their children were found to be less educational. Children attending daycare or alternate child care are found to be less compliant and more assertive with their playmates. Now, this is not always a negative aspect, although it can easily become one if not kept under watch. The daycare environment is also found to have a major effect on your child's outcome, but in the long term is not as important as the home environment. It is also proven that although daycare can have a large, positive impact on your child's cognitive and social development, one on one discipline and instruction at home is far more important. (.....)

The boredom and lack of satisfaction experienced by many stay-at-home mothers are troubling enough when their children are young, but the problem becomes acute as the kids get older. Wrapped up in their own lives, teenagers assert their independence; husbands are busy with their careers. At this stage in life, stay-at-home moms may find the empty nest traumatic indeed, whereas working mothers with rewarding careers have ample opportunities for positive reinforcement outside the home.

Sure, it's a logistical challenge to manage job responsibilities along with household tasks, especially while your children are young. But working women derive a wide range of intellectual, creative and social as well as monetary benefits from their jobs. You'd never know it from all the cultural propaganda that encourages women to sacrifice their careers, but the truth is that multiple roles in life are good for women's psychological health.

**Working Women Are Healthier** As a working mother, you never have enough time, you often feel as if you can't do your best at home or on the job, and you have so many other responsibilities that taking care of yourself often gets relegated to the bottom of the to-do list. It's hard not to envy those stay-at-home moms who seem to have time to work out and take a regular yoga class -- and it seems logical to assume that full-time homemakers, having unloaded the demands of the labor force, would be healthier than all of us frazzled working moms (Hoffman, L.W., 1986) [4].

Surprisingly, however, the opposite turns out to be the case. Studies show that working women have lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol levels, and lower weight -- health benefits that prove long-lasting. A longitudinal survey conducted over 28 years found that by age 54, women who combine multiple roles as employees, parents, and partners were significantly less likely to report ill health than women whose lives did not include all three roles. Homemakers were the most likely to say that their health was poor.

Most telling of all, the research was even designed to determine the role of cause and effect: Did women’s multi-tasking actually produce good health, or were healthy individuals simply able to accomplish more? The findings suggested that good health was the result, rather than the cause, of combining work with family life (Hoffman, L.W., 1986) [4].

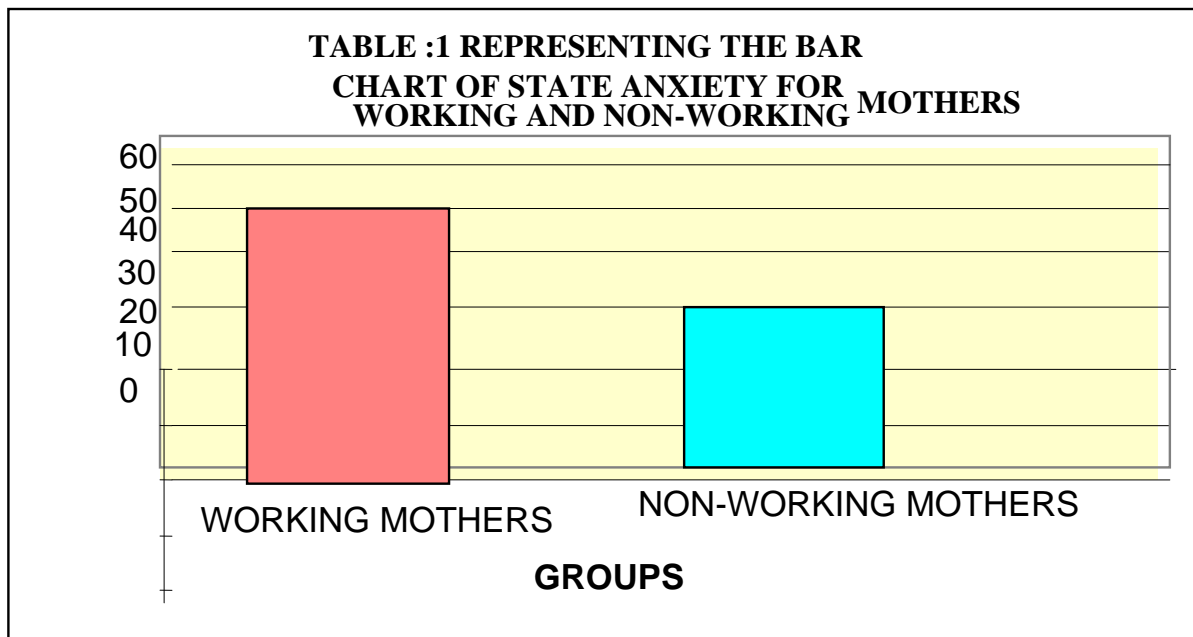
In the present context, there is an ample need to study particularly in conservative socio-cultural Bengali family context, the effect of working condition of women in comparison with non-working condition. The employment typically has positive psychological consequences for women either as a primary source of well-being or as a buffer against stress and thus it can be said that due to paid work it helps to reduce anxiety, depression in life whereas, working mothers experience greater work related stress than non-working mothers and thus stress helps to increase anxiety. At this juncture the present study aims to find out the differences in degree of felt depression and anxiety pattern of working & non-working mothers.

Method :

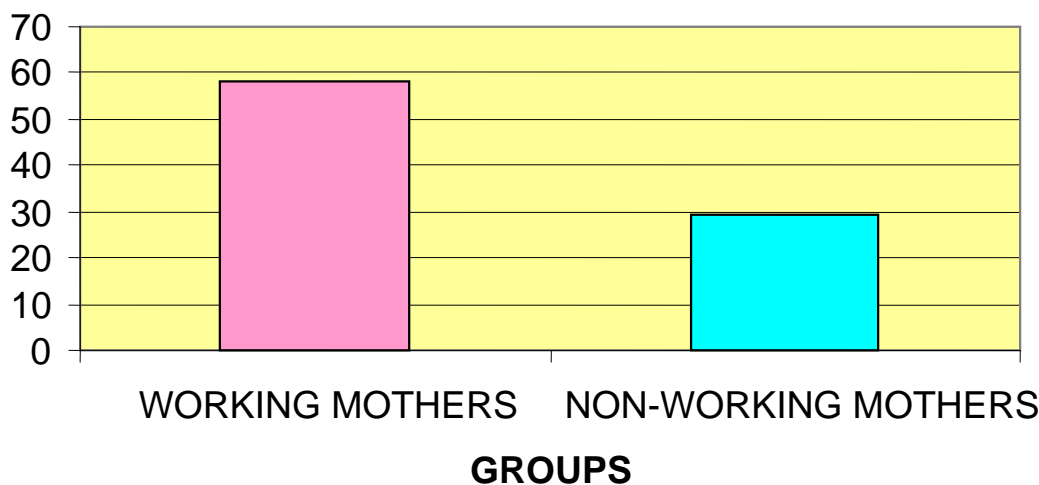
For the purpose of the study a total of 60 mothers (30 working mothers , 30 non-working mothers) were randomly selected from Southern part of Kolkata who were residents of new urban colonies(the housing complexes have been developed to provide shelter of the people with ownership or rental basis) of Kolkata considering age, marital status, educational level, family pattern and interestingly all of them was from Hindu- Bengali family. In the present study data was collected by administrating the questionnaires - Information blank, State-trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) by Speilberger et al 1970 and Beck Depression Inventory(BDI) by Beck, Word, Mendel son & Erbaugh 1961.

**Result:**

Result shows the difference label of anxiety between both mothers.



**TABLE: 2 REPRESENTING THE BAR CHART OF TRAIT ANXIETY FOR WORKING AND NON-WORKING MOTHERS**



**TABLE: 3- SHOWING THE MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND t-VALUES OF WORKING AND NON-WORKING MOTHERS WITH RESPECT TO THE VARIABLE - STATE ANXIETY**

	Working mothers	Non-working mothe
Mean	49.90	29.03
Standard deviation	8.00	5.93
t-value		11.48

\*significant at 0.05 level

\*\* significant at 0.01 level

Table 3 represents higher mean magnitude on the part of working mothers with reference to state anxiety. It indicates that there exists a significant difference among the two groups.

**TABLE : 4- SHOWING THE MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND t-VALUES OF WORKING AND NON-WORKING MOTHERS WITH RESPECT TO THE VARIABLE - TRAIT ANXIETY**

	Working mothers	Non-working mothers
Mean	58.10	29.27
Standard deviation	7.99	4.23
t-value		17.39

\*significant at 0.05 level

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level

The table 4 represents higher mean magnitude on the part of working mothers with reference to trait anxiety. It indicates that there exists a significant difference among the two groups.

## DISCUSSION

The study analyzed the depression levels of mothers. The majority of working mothers observed to mildly or seriously anxious & depress. The study had been brought out the significant features within its periphery. The overall obtained results showed that some significant differences were observed between the selected variable.

### Anxiety- State & Trait:

So far as state-trait anxiety is concerned working mothers showed higher level [statistically not significant in case of state anxiety t-value 11.48\*\* but statistically significant in case of trait anxiety t-value 17.39\*\*, table 3 & 4] than their counterpart. This may be due to the fact that working mothers had to deal with harder reality. Thus greater exposures to hardness of reality tend to increase the amount of situational anxiety in the working mothers.

On the other hand, non-working mothers are concerned with their domestic field only. So they had less scope to deal with external stressful situation. Their single role creates less pressure in their life and situation and hence state anxiety is less prominent in them than that in the case of employed mothers. This finding is also supported by the study of Hoffman 1986); Kessler & MacRae (1982).

It was also observed from our study that in general, state & trait both anxieties were more prominent in case of working mothers than in that of the mothers who stayed at home(non-working). That might be due to the facts that employed mothers expressed greater feeling of inadequacy & exhibit higher levels of guilt and anxiety about their roles (Feld, 1963). The working mothers have multiple responsibilities and job related stress, they were more anxious than non-working mothers. Work overload thus created stressful situation & anxiety.

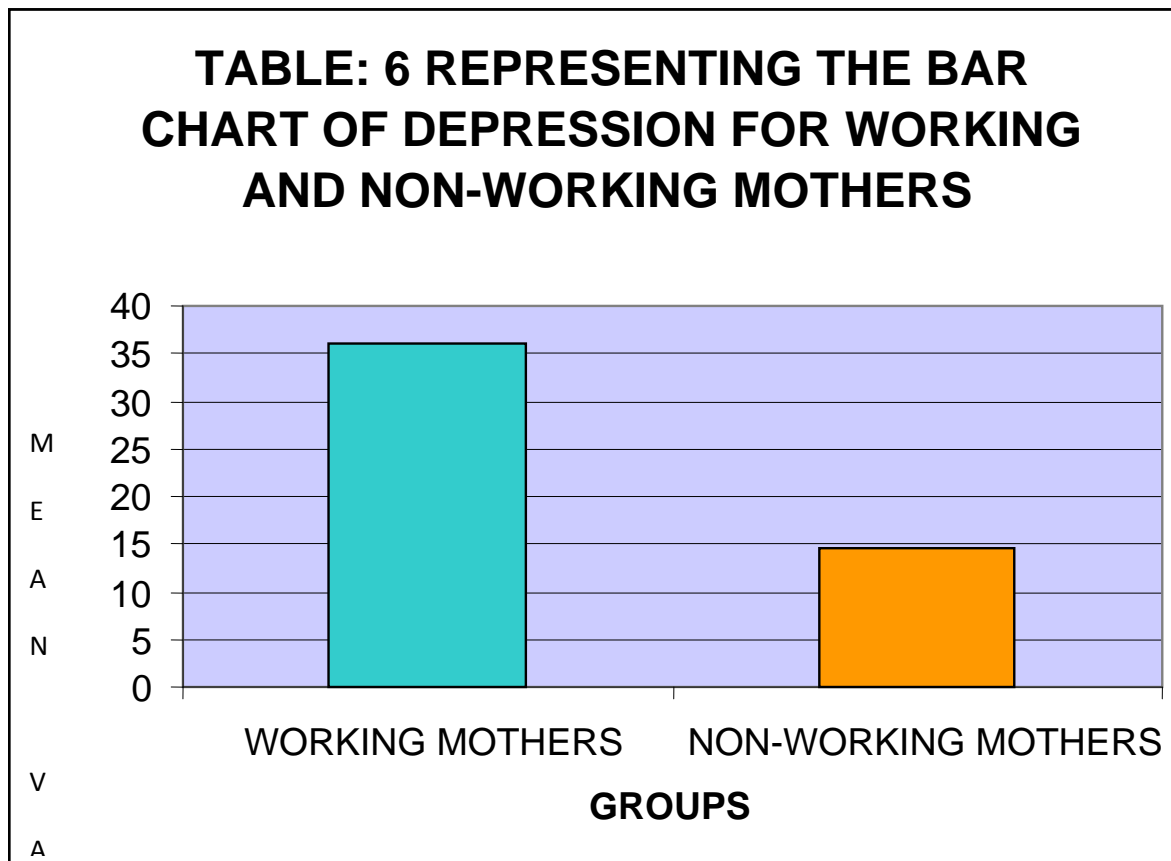
**TABLE : 5 - SHOWING THE MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND t-VALUES OF WORKING AND NON-WORKING MOTHERS WITH RESPECT TO THE VARIABLE – DEPRESSION**

	Working mothers	Non-working mothe
<b>Mean</b>	36.13	14.57
<b>Standard deviation</b>	5.92	6.72
<b>t-value</b>		13.19

\*significant at 0.05 level

\*\* significant at 0.01 level

Table 5 represents higher mean magnitude on the part of working mothers with reference to depression. It indicates that there exists a significant difference among the two groups.



**Depression**

In the study it was observed that degree of depression was also higher in case of working mothers than their counterparts and this difference was significant (t value 13.19\*, table 5). The finding might be ascribed to the fact that working mothers generally involved in many works simultaneously & they had some time for making friends and enjoy leisure time (Rapaport and Rapaport,1972), yet the feeling of getting bored was less experienced by working mothers than non-working ones. Besides these working mothers could not give much time to their family and children, so they developed some guilt feeling. That was the main cause of the higher level of depression among the working mothers than non-working. Stressful life events were the prime cause of depression; For an urban working woman, balancing the job as well as the household could also result in depression. On the other hand, non-working mothers usually bore the major responsibilities for house-work & child-care. Their attentions were constantly engaged by their children and by household tasks (Apter, 1985). But the working mothers could not share this family bonding. This lack of sharing couldn't increase feeling of depression in working mothers.



Bernard (1971 a) found that family roles might reduce a women's involvement in the labour force, lower her career commitment, stress her into a traditional career & reduce attainment & thus working mothers encountered distinctly the feeling of depression in their lives.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:**

The study was conducted to know the effect of working conditions of mothers along with the dimensions of certain psychosocial variables like anxiety & depression in comparison with non-working conditions.

For this purpose at first two groups were selected – a group of working mothers and a group of non-working mothers. The total number of sample selected were 60 with age range of 35 to 45 years and this sample was divided equally on the basis of working group & non-working group (i.e., 30 working mothers and 30 non-working mothers). They were selected on the basis of information blank. A number of tools were administered to assess the above mentioned selected variables. For collecting necessary information about the respondents and their family a specially designed information schedule was used. Beside this, State-Trait Anxiety Inventory(STAI) by Speilberger et al 1970 & Beck Depression Inventory(BDI) by Beck, Word, Mendelson & Erbaugh 1961 were used for our research purpose.

The data were scored according to the scoring key supplied with each test and then the data were statistically analyzed. The selected mothers were basically from the nuclear families which were settled in the new urban housing at the southern part of Kolkata. The working mothers were various post holders in different government & non- government organizations. Non-working mothers were only housewives/homemakers.

Summarily, it can be said that there were significant differences in degree of depression & both anxiety of working mothers' group. But no significant difference was noticed in case of anxiety & depression pattern of non-working mothers' group.

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