

Depression Among Domestic Workers in Kangeyanallur Village of Tamilnadu, India

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Abstract

Domestic workers are part of community who leave their primary living place or their families because of challenging life events that obligate them to search other alternatives to survive or for perceived better life. The specific tasks vary in each domestic worker's standard, family size and each employer's perception. Performing all those activities may lead them to stress and stress related problems. This study mainly focuses on causes and consequences of depression among domestic workers in selected village in Vellore District of Tamilnadu. Quantitative research approach was adopted to accomplish the objectives of the study. The population of the study comprises 85 domestic workers who met the inclusion criteria. The instruments used in this study were structured questionnaire and Four point Depression scale; It consists of 9 statements. The data collected were coded and entered in MS-Excel for further data analysis and interpretation. Out of 85 domestic workers, 40(47.06%) had moderately severe depression, 31(36.47%) had severe depression and 14(16.47%) had moderate depression. The demographic variables sex ($\chi^2=8.810$, $p=0.012$) and religion ($\chi^2=10.994$, $p=0.027$) had shown statistically significant association with level of depression among domestic workers at $p<0.05$ level and the other demographic variables had not shown statistically significant association with level of depression among domestic workers.

Keywords: Domestic workers, Depression, Health status, Demographic variables, Psychological condition, Economic condition.

Introduction

Globally, women and girls are primarily responsible for their household's unpaid labour. Importantly, most women and men combine this unpaid work with paid employment, creating a double burden effect that has implications for health. Housemaids are a relatively homogenous immigrant subgroup in terms of their gender, socio-cultural, educational and occupational background. Psychiatric morbidity among housemaids is two to five times higher than the native female population (Alem K. Ejigu, et al., 2020).

Domestic workers are part of community who leave their primary living place or their families because of challenging life events that obligate them to search other alternatives to survive or for perceived better life. The majority of housemaids are women, poor and immigrants with minimal education (Hsieh Y-CJ, Apostolopoulos Y, Sönmez S.2013). Unpaid domestic work has been found to be negatively associated with mental health, especially among women but the measures of domestic work vary (Molarius, A.; Metsini, A - 2023). The specific tasks vary in each domestic worker's

standard, family size and each employer's perception. Performing all those activities may lead them to stress and stress related problems. This study mainly focus on causes and consequences of depression among domestic workers in selected villages in Vellore District.

Review of literature

Lijuan Chen, Maitixirepu Jilili, Ruolin Wang, Linping Liu and Anuo Yang (2020) conducted a study to explore the association between person–job fit, health status, and depressive symptoms among Chinese domestic workers (N=1003) by identifying the employer–employee relationship as a mediator. The results show that demand–ability fit is indirectly related to health status and depressive symptoms. Need–supply fit is significantly associated with health status and depressive symptoms both directly (70% for health status and 72% for depressive symptoms, separately) and indirectly, via the mediating effect of the employer– employee relationship (30% for health and 28% for depressive symptoms, separately).

Ellys Juwita and Syed Mohamad Syed Abdullah (2019) conducted a study to assess the prevalence of and the associated elements of depression among Indonesian domestic workers in Malaysia. This study engaged mix method. Quantitative information was accepted from 380 respondents by using Beck depression inventory. Three from five Indonesian domestic workers in Malaysia are having a depression symptom (60 percent). This study found that occupation, financial hardship, social support, and level education are the associated factors of depression among Indonesian domestic workers in Malaysia.

Mireya Zamora-Macorra and Rosa Georgina Pérez-Castillo (2022) conducted a study to identify the effect of the depression of nurses in a public hospital in Mexico City. The research had a cross-sectional design with a random sample of 329 nurses from a third-level hospital in Mexico City. The work-family conflict, as well as lack of support, is associated with depressive symptoms in nurses. The study concluded that there is a need to implement strategic programs that provide nurses with tools to deal with work-family conflict reconciliation.

Research methodology

This article focuses on causes and consequences of depression among domestic workers in selected village in Vellore District of Tamilnadu. Quantitative research approach was adopted to accomplish the objectives of the study. The research design used for this study was descriptive research design. The variable of the study was causes and consequences of depression. Demographic variable consisted of age, sex, marital status, religion, number of family members, type of family, residence, education, income and current employment status. The study was conducted at selected community area at Kangeyanallur Village, Vellore. The population of the study comprises 85 domestic workers who met the inclusion criteria. The samples were selected by non-probability convenient sampling technique method.

The instruments used in this study were structured questionnaire and Four point Depression scale; It consists of 9 statements. Informed consent was obtained from the domestic workers in the selected area. Confidentiality of information collected was assured to the samples. The duration of intervention was 25 to 30 minutes and the data collected were coded and entered in MS-Excel for further data analysis and interpretation.

Result and Discussion

The analysis revealed that most of the domestic workers, 38(44.7%) were aged between 31 – 40 years, 54(63.5%) were male, 68(80%) were married, 62(72.9%) were Hindus, 64(65.4%) had 4 people living in their house, 61(71.8%) were home owners, 63(74.1%) belonged to nuclear family, 65(76.5%) were residing in urban area, 59(69.4%) had higher secondary education, 59(69.4%) had an income of above 15,000 and 58(68.2%) were full-time employed. Unpaid workers also face the problem of dipression. Jennifer Ervin, Yamna Taouk, Belinda Hewitt, Tania King (2023) conducted a study to address key gaps in the extant literature, examining how unpaid labour is associated with mental health in working-age men and women, and whether gender differences exist. Increasing time in household work was negatively associated with mental health in both men (β coefficient = -0.026 [95% CI -0.04 to -0.01]) and women (β coefficient = -0.009 [-0.02 to 0.001]).

Table -1 Assessment of level of depression among domestic workers

Level of Depression	Frequency	Percentage
Minimal depression (1 – 4)	-	-
Mild depression (5 – 9)	-	-
Moderate depression (10 – 14)	14	16.47
Moderately severe depression (15 – 19)	40	47.06
Severe depression (20 – 27)	31	36.47

The above table (1) shows that among the domestic workers, 40(47.06%) had moderately severe depression, 31(36.47%) had severe depression and 14(16.47%) had moderate depression.

Table -2 Association of level of depression among domestic workers with selected Demographic variables

Demographic Variables		Frequency	Chi-Square Test
Age group	18 – 30	14	$\chi^2=2.470$ d.f=6 p=0.872 N.S
	31 – 40	38	
	41 – 50	21	
	>50	12	
Sex	Male	54	$\chi^2=8.810$ d.f=2 p=0.012 S*
	Female	31	
Marital status	Married	68	$\chi^2=7.048$ d.f=6 p=0.316 N.S
	Unmarried	8	
	Widow/Widower	8	
	Divorced	1	
Religion	Hindu	62	$\chi^2=10.994$ d.f=4 p=0.027 S*
	Christian	14	
	Muslim	9	
Number of	1 - 2	3	$\chi^2=7.771$

members in house	3 - 4	75	d.f=6 p=0.255 N.S
	5 - 6	7	
Type of house	Own house	61	$\chi^2=5.442$ d.f=6 p=0.489 N.S
	Rented house	24	
Type of family	Nuclear	63	$\chi^2=0.283$ d.f=2 p=0.868 N.S
	Joint	22	
Residence	Urban	65	$\chi^2=0.833$ d.f=2 p=0.659 N.S
	Rural	20	
Education	Illiterate	-	$\chi^2=2.922$ d.f=6 p=0.819 N.S
	Primary	1	
	Secondary	10	
	Higher secondary	59	
	Graduate and above	15	
Income (per month)	8,000 – 10,000	10	$\chi^2=6.900$ d.f=4 p=0.141 N.S
	10,000 – 13,000	16	
	Above 15,000	59	
Employment status	Full-time employment	58	$\chi^2=11.390$ d.f=10 p=0.328 N.S
	Part-time employment	5	
	Unemployed	1	
	Self-employed	10	
	Home-maker	10	
	Student	1	

Note: *p<0.05, **S** – Significant, **N.S** – Not Significant

The table 2 shows that the demographic variables sex ($\chi^2=8.810$, $p=0.012$) and religion ($\chi^2=10.994$, $p=0.027$) had shown statistically significant association with level of depression among domestic workers at $p<0.05$ level and the other demographic variables had not shown statistically significant association with level of depression among domestic workers. Hence the research hypothesis H1 that stated earlier “There will be a significant association of level of causes and consequences of depression among domestic workers with their selected demographic variables” was accepted for the demographic variables sex and religion and not accepted for all other demographic variables. Among the domestic workers, 40(47.06%) had moderately severe depression, 31(36.47%) had severe depression and 14(16.47%) had moderate depression. The mean score of depression among domestic workers was 17.95 ± 3.17 . The median was 19.0 with minimum score of 10.0 and maximum score of 23.0. The demographic variables sex and religion had shown statistically significant association with level of depression among domestic workers at $p<0.05$ level.

Conclusion

The present study assessed the causes and consequences of depression among domestic workers in selected village in Tamilnadu. The study concluded that majority of the domestic workers had moderate to severe depression. The study will serve as a valuable reference material for further investigation. A study found that occupation, financial hardship, social support, and level education are the associate factors of depression among Indonesian domestic workers in Malaysia (Ellys Juwita Purba

and Syed Mohamad Syed Abdullah, 2019). Further research studies can be conducted on the basis of this study. Based on the study findings, the recommendations were; the similar study can be conducted in large samples and can be undertaken by utilizing other domains like other psychological problems.

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