

# Physical and Psychological Well Being Among Full Time Research Scholars

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## Abstract

In today's globalized world, the role of research in an academic institution is critical for its long-term viability and development, and knowledge-driven growth based on innovation is essential. The core concept of research is the pursuit of knowledge. Research scholars play a crucial role in advancing knowledge and contributing to the academic community. However, the demanding nature of their work, including long hours of study, research, and academic responsibilities, can potentially impact their physical and psychological well-being. In Bharathiar University, at present 106 affiliated colleges including 93 Arts and science colleges, 1 Air Force administrative college, 12 Institutions of Information science and management and 30 Research Institutions. The researcher selected 10 Arts and science colleges for this study. The main aim of the study is to know about the perspectives of the research scholars from different disciplines or academic institutions regarding their physical and psychological well-being. Descriptive research design was used in the present study. 40 PhD research scholars were selected from the different disciplines of Arts and Sciences colleges in Coimbatore district. The tool which was developed for the collection of data was a self-structure questionnaire and has been constructed by the researcher based on the key objectives of the study.

**Keyword:** Well-Being, Physical, Psychological, Perception

## INTRODUCTION

### Research Scholars in India:

The PhD (Doctor of Philosophy), or the doctoral degree, is considered the highest educational degree in the world. India is ranked fourth globally, producing slightly over 24,000 doctoral graduates each year. But it still lacks quality research. As per the most recent Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report, less than 2 per cent of the world's population has a doctorate degree today. According to the US Census Bureau, only 1.2 per cent of the US population has a PhD, whereas Slovenia and Switzerland have the highest percentage of the population with a doctorate, at 5 per cent and 3 per cent, respectively. India stands tall in the number of doctoral graduates produced on a yearly basis, according to the recently released OECD report. Producing slightly over 24,000 doctoral graduates, India is ranked fourth against the USA, which produces 68,000 graduates and tops the list. An All-India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE) report from 2019 revealed that the number of PhD degrees awarded has increased by 60 per cent in the last five years. The total PhD admissions increased

manifold in the last few years from 1,26,451 in 2015-16 to 2,02,550 in 2019-20. A total of 38,986 students were awarded PhD degrees in 2019, which includes 21,577 male and 17,409 female candidates. 2,881 students enrolled in Integrated PhD programmes, in addition to 2.02 lakh students who enrolled in PhD degrees.

### **Research Scholars in Tamilnadu:**

As per AISHE report 2019-2020, Tamil Nadu produced 5,324 PhD students, out of which 2,768 were female and 2,556 were male students and had topped the category. In 2018-19, the state had produced 5,844 PhD holders. Tamil Nadu has produced the highest number of PhD holders in the country, according to the All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) report for 2020-21, which was released by the Union Human Resources Development Ministry recently. The state has produced 3,206 PhD doctorates in the academic year **2020-21**, of which 1,493 are female and 1,713 are male research scholars.

### **Well- Being**

The World Health Organization describes ‘**wellbeing**’ as a “resource for healthy living” and “positive state of health” that is “more than the absence of an illness” and enables us to function well: psychologically, physically, emotionally and socially. In other words, wellbeing’ is described as “enabling people to develop their potential, work productively and creatively, form positive relationships with others and meaningfully contribute to the community”. **Emotional well-being** is the ability to safely express or manage your emotions, as well as generate positive emotions. It begins with awareness of what you are feeling, **Physical well-being** relates to your physical health including your sleep hygiene, nutrition, and exercise. It is equally important to take care of your body and mind because they work together to determine your health and **Social well-being** is the ability to participate, feel valued as a member of, and feel connected to a wider social environment. As tribal populations find it difficult to navigate through the complexities of medical facilities, health workers from tribal communities may become the link between the healthcare facilities and tribal communities to guide patients, explain doctors’ prescriptions, help patients take advantage of **welfare schemes**, and **counsel** them on preventive and promotive health behaviours (World health organization).

### **The importance of Physical and Psychological Well-Being among Research Scholars:**

#### **Physical Well-Being**

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines physical well-being as being a key factor when it comes to our overall health. Physical well-being is the ability to maintain a healthy and balanced life without physical limitation, physical stress, and excessive fatigue. Our physical well-being refers to the physical state of our body, whether that’s maintaining a healthy weight, good posture, well-functioning organs, or the ability to carry out normal daily tasks without exhaustion or discomfort. Physical well-being can also refer to the absence of disease or infection but these are not the only things to consider.

- When it comes to our well-being, the physical aspect can play a huge part in our mental and social well-being.
- When we take care of our physical well-being, it helps to align our well-being overall.
- Having positive physical wellbeing can reduce our chances of disease and infection. The NHS shows that many health conditions can reduce by having positive physical wellbeing. For example, those

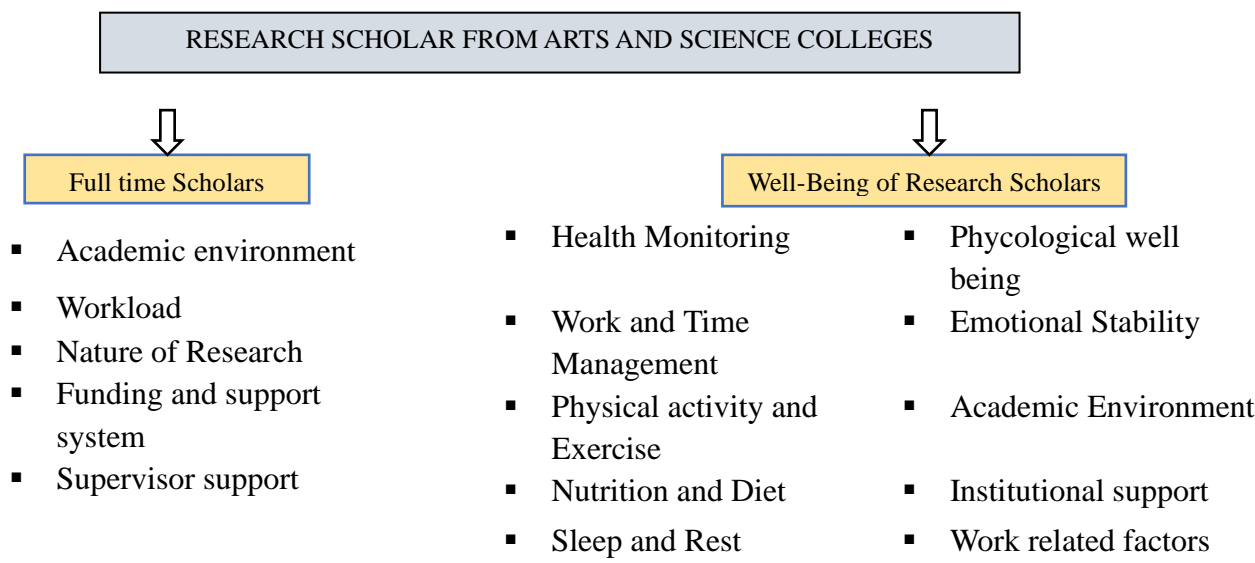
that exercise has a lower risk of type 2 diabetes, colon cancer, coronary heart disease, stroke, early death, and more!

- Those that exercise regularly can reduce their chances of early death by 30%.
- Physical wellbeing isn't just about exercising and doing things that impact your body positively. It's also about avoiding things that impact your body negatively.
- Those that smoke regularly are damaging their physical wellbeing and can increase their chances of health risks in lots of areas.

**Psychological well-being:**

Psychological well-being encompasses various aspects of an individual's mental state, including their emotional, cognitive, and social well-being. It relates to how individuals perceive and experience their lives, handle stress, and maintain a sense of purpose and fulfilment. Given the demanding nature of research work, it is essential to understand the psychological well-being of research scholars in order to address potential issues and provide necessary support. The academic environment for research scholars often entails long hours of focused work, intense pressure to produce high-quality research output, and the need to meet strict deadlines. Moreover, the competitive nature of academia and the constant drive for recognition and success can create additional stressors. Balancing personal life, maintaining relationships, and coping with the challenges inherent in the research process can further contribute to psychological strain. This study aims to delve into the psychological well-being of research scholars in the context of Coimbatore district. By identifying various factors that influence their mental health, such as workload, academic pressure, social support systems, and coping mechanisms, we can gain insights into the challenges they face and identify potential interventions to enhance their well-being.

**Conceptual framework of Physical and Psychological Well Being among Research Scholars**



**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

J. Stubb ,K et (2011) conducted a study on '*Balancing between inspiration and exhaustion: PhD students' experienced socio-psychological well-being*'. This paper explores doctoral students'

experiences of their scholarly communities in terms of socio-psychological well-being. Further, this study examines how experiences were related to study engagement and to self-reported stress, exhaustion, and anxiety. This paper work has been carried out by using multiple methods (e.g., survey, observations and interviews). Altogether 669 doctoral students from the University of Helsinki, Finland, (from humanities, medicine and behavioural science). The survey consisted of both Likert-type statements and open-ended questions. From the study, findings suggested that the scholarly plays a role in socio-psychological well-being. The result of this study contradicts previous findings of gender differences in experienced well-being in doctoral studies. The study concluded that they did not find any differences in experienced socio-psychological well-being or self-reported stress and anxiety between men and women. The only difference in this study was that men reported being more exhausted than women. The results showed no relation between the discipline and experiences of the scholarly community in terms of socio-psychological well-being.

The work has been carried out by using multiple methods (e.g., surveys, observations, and interviews). The data were collected at three different levels of PhD education from students, supervisors, and scholarly communities (e.g., research groups or seminars).

Nicola C. Byrom, Larisa Dinu, Ann Kirkman & Gareth Hughes (2020) titled '*Predicting stress and mental wellbeing among doctoral researchers*'. The study is about the mental health in higher education is increasingly recognised as a public health issue, postgraduate research students are often overlooked. This study assessed the experience of doctoral researchers and identifies factors influencing mental wellbeing and perceived stress. The researcher adopted a cross-sectional study examined to know how key demographic, individual and contextual factors was related to stress and mental wellbeing in a sample of 431 doctoral researchers in the United Kingdom. The researcher suggested that focused attention on exploring career options and building confidence may help reduce stress among doctoral researchers. The study concluded that taking steps to tackle the imposter phenomenon could help further that may include in addressing fear of failure, improving confidence in research ability and clarifying the role of doctoral researchers within the wider academic community.

Gupta, Sonia. (2021) conducted a study on '*Study of attitude towards research of research scholars in relation to their research anxiety and self efficacy*' the paper investigate the relationship of attitude towards research with research anxiety and research self-efficacy among PhD research scholars. Descriptive survey method was used in this study. The total number of respondents was 302 PhD research scholars, randomly selected from the disciplines of social sciences including faculties of Education, History, Commerce, Physical Education, Political Science, Hindi and sociology. The survey consisted of Research attitude scale by Bhutia and Kharsati (2013), Research self-efficacy scale by Buyukozturk, Atalay, Sozgun and Kebapci (2011) and Research anxiety scale developed and standardized by the investigator were used for data collection. The validity index comes out to be 0.56. Results of this study revealed unfavourable attitude towards research among most of the PhD research scholars. Pearson's correlation coefficient reflected significant negative relationship between attitude towards research and research anxiety. Significant positive relationship was found between attitude towards research and research self-efficacy. The researcher conducted Regression analysis to estimate the prediction power of research anxiety and research self-efficacy on attitude towards research. The results of the study showed that both research anxiety and research self-efficacy significantly predict attitude towards research. The study concluded by making suggestions that more research work is

required to undertaken on the context of reduction of barriers like stress and anxiety and for enhancement of positive self-efficacy.

### **The aim of the study**

The aim of this study is to about the perspective of research scholars from different disciplines or academics institutions regarding their physical and psychological well-being. The objective is to find the specific challenges and to access the level of physical and psychological well-being among full time research scholars. The aims were approached by asking the following questions:

- How do research scholars cope with the nature of their work and academic responsibility?
- What support systems and resources are currently available to research scholars to address their physical and psychological well-being?
- What are the specific recommendations and interventions that can be implemented to better support their well-being?
- Are there any differences in the perspective of research scholars from different disciplines or academics institutions from Arts and Science colleges regarding their physical and psychological well-being?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Objectives of the Study:**

- To know about the perspective of research scholars from different disciplines regarding their physical and psychological well-being.
- To find the specific challenges faced by research scholars in maintaining physical and psychological well-being.
- To access the level of physical and psychological well-being among full time research scholars.

### **Statement of the Problem:**

Research scholars face numerous challenges and demands in their academic pursuits, which can potentially impact their physical and psychological well-being. However, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the specific perspectives, experiences, and potential consequences of these challenges on the well-being of research scholars. This knowledge gap hinders the development of effective strategies and interventions to support and enhance the physical and psychological well-being of research scholars. Therefore, there is a need for an in-depth investigation into the perspectives of physical and psychological well-being among research scholars, aiming to identify the specific factors and issues that influence their well-being and contribute to their overall academic experience. By addressing this problem, the study aims to provide valuable insights and recommendations for promoting a healthier and more sustainable research culture, ultimately benefiting the well-being and success of research scholars in academic settings.

### **Tools of Data Collection**

A survey questionnaire has been constructed by the researcher based on the key objectives of the study. The tool which was developed for the collection of data was a self-developed Questionnaire.

### Selection Of Sample

The research adopted the Non-probability sampling method in which the researcher used the Convincing sampling that help in identifying additional research scholars. The unit of the study is Coimbatore district, the size of the sample was taken to be 40 number in which all of the respondents are Male and Female full time research scholars.

### Research Design

The research adopted descriptive study. As it is invested to produce accurate description of various relevant to the decision faced without demonstrating that some relationship exist within variables. It is used to measure the Physical and Psychological well-being variables of Research scholars.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

**Table 1 : Distribution of the respondents by their personal profile**

S.No.	Items	Category	N	%	Total number of respondents
1.	Gender	Male	19	(52.5%)	40
		Female	21	(47.5%)	
2.	Age	22-32	36	(90%)	40
		33-43	3	(7.5 %)	
		44-55	1	(2.5 %)	
3.	Marital status	Married	17	(42.5%)	40
		Unmarried	23	(57.5%)	
4.	Academic Discipline/ Field of Study	English	6	(15%)	40
		Industrial Cooperative	2	(5%)	
		Social Work	12	30%)	
		Commerce	4	(10%)	
		Management	6	(15%)	
		Others	10	(25%)	
5.	Type of Institution	Public	11	(27.5%)	40
		Private	16	(40%)	
		Others	13	(32.5%)	
6.		Day Scholar	31	(77.5%)	40
		Hosteler	5	(12.5%)	
		Other	4	(10%)	
7.	Funding or Scholarship	Yes	18	(45%)	40
		No	22	(55%)	
8.	Teaching responsibilities along with research work	Yes	27	(67.5%)	40
		No	13	(32.5%)	
9.	Industry collaborations or internships related to	Yes	17	(42.5%)	40
		No	23	(57.5%)	

	research work				
10.	International research scholar	Yes	1	(2.5%)	40
		No	39	(97.5%)	
11.	Affiliated with research or academic associations or societies related to field of study or research	Yes	11	(27.5%)	40
		No	29	(72.5%)	
12.	Awards or recognitions for in research work	Yes	15	(37.5%)	40
		No	25	(62.5%)	

From the above table it identifies that most of the respondents were at the age group of 22-32. Most of the respondents were Unmarried and majority of the Married respondents were female. It is interesting to know that most of the respondents 27 were responded that they can able to manage research work long with teaching responsibilities. It is also found that most of the respondents 25 were responded that their Awards or recognitions for in research work is less.

**Table – 2 : Distribution of the Physical well-being of research scholars**  
(N- Never, R- Rarely, S- Sometimes, O- Often and VO – Very often)

S.NO.	STATEMENT	N	R	S	O	VO	Total
1	I engage in physical exercise or physical activity.	4	15	9	12	0	40
2	I have regular health check-ups or consultations.	4	18	12	4	0	40
3	I prioritize taking breaks and resting during intense work periods.	2	7	16	15	0	40
4	I make conscious efforts to maintain a healthy lifestyle.	5	15	18	2	0	40
5	I experience fatigue or lack of energy.	11	10	12	7	0	40

The table shows that most 15 (37.5%) of the respondents were rarely engaged in physical exercise or physical activities and 12 (30%) of the respondents were often engaged in physical exercise or physical activities which also identifies that most 18 (45%) of the respondents were responded that research scholars were rarely conscious efforts to maintain their healthy lifestyle. This result indicates research scholars prioritize taking break and resting during intense work periods were responded as rarely 15 (37.5%) and sometimes 18 (45%) indicating that there is room for improvement in raising awareness and encouraging a healthier lifestyle for research scholars.

**Table – 3 : Distribution of the Physical well-being of research scholars - Exercises and Nutrition**  
(SDA- Strongly disagree, DA- Disagree, N- Neutral, SA – Strongly agree, A – Agree)

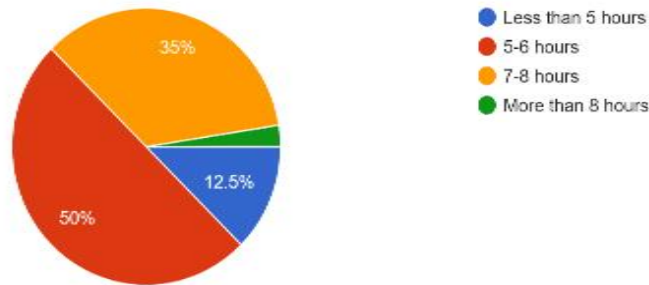
S.NO.	STATEMENT	SA	A	N	DA	S-DA	Total
1	My overall physical health is Good.	7	19	14	0	0	40
2	My eating habits are Healthy.	5	17	13	4	1	40
3	Lacking in Self – Management skills (Ability to set Personal goals, Monitor...)	2	10	13	9	6	40

4	I feel physically active and fit	7	12	17	3	1	40
5	I skip food due to my research work	15	8	11	6	0	40
6	I felt insufficient time to exercise	5	15	5	12	3	40
7	I don't have access to jogging trails, swimming pools, bike paths, etc...	13	12	8	6	1	40
8	I want to do get more exercises, but I just can't seem to make myself stick to anytime	7	13	10	9	1	40
9	I am not good enough at any physical activity to make it fun.	2	10	13	9	6	40
10	I didn't get healthy food in my institution.	4	9	15	10	2	40

From the above table most 19 (47.5%) of the respondents were agreed that their physical health is good, instant 14 (35%) responded neutral. This indicate that the respondents were not aware of their physical health. Most importantly during the research work research scholars skip food due to research work 15 (37.5%) of the respondents were strongly agreed for this statement. 13 (32.5%) of the respondents were responded Neutral lacking in self-management skills. 15 (37.5%) of the respondents were agreed that they felt insufficient time for exercise. 15 (37.5%) of the respondents were Neutral responded that didn't get healthy food in their institution.

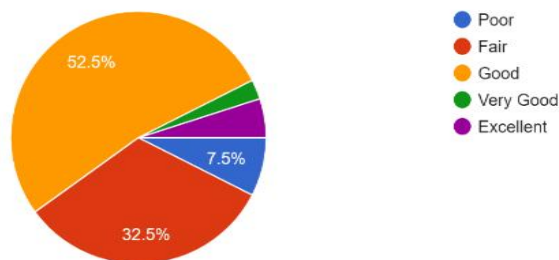
### FIGURE OF AMOUNT OF SLEEP

I get an adequate amount of sleep  
40 responses



### FIGURE OF QUALITY OF SLEEP

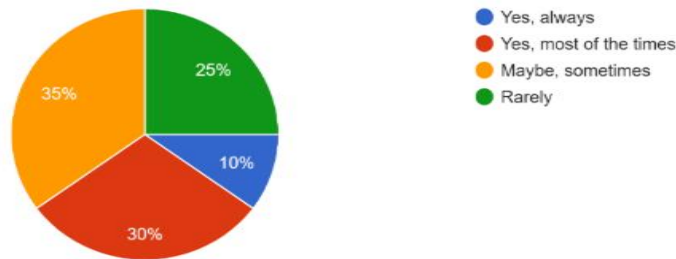
How would you rate the quality of your sleep?  
40 responses





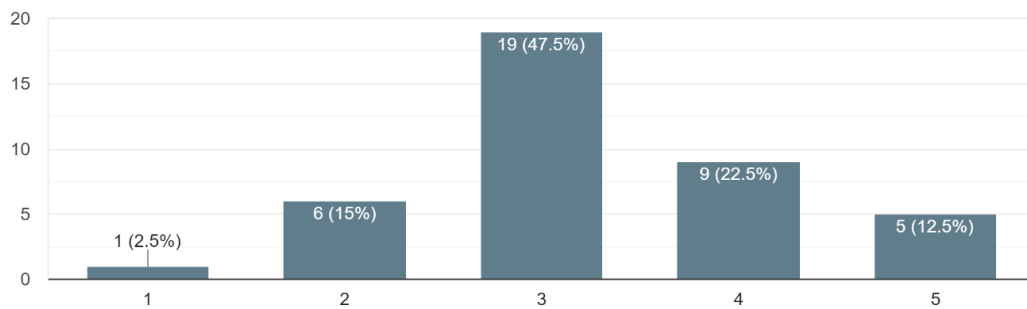
### FIGURE OF SLEEP SCHEDULE

Do you follow a consistent sleep schedule (going to bed and waking up at similar times)?  
40 responses

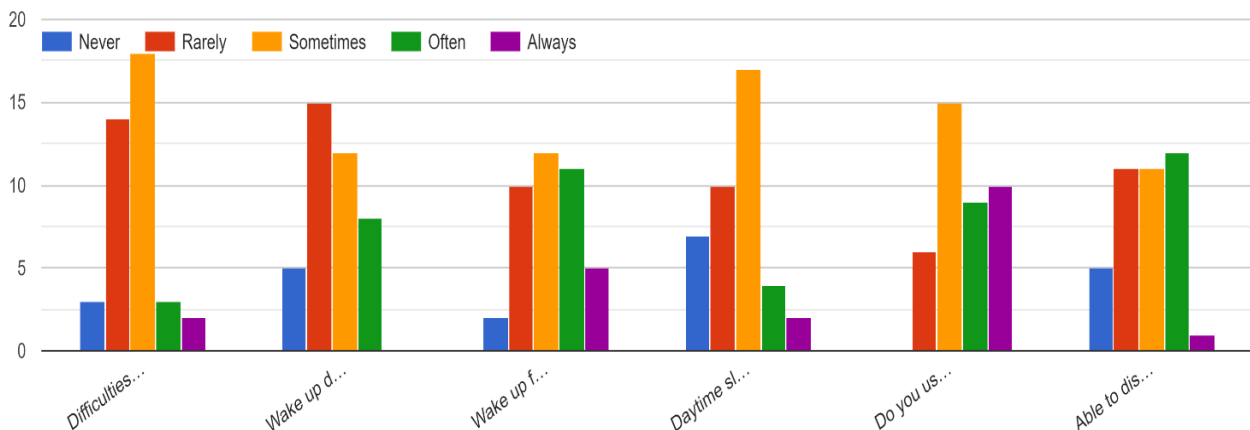


### FIGURE OF SATISFICATION IN SLEEP PATTERNS

How would you rate your overall satisfaction with your sleep patterns?  
40 responses



### FIGURE OF SLEEP PATTERNS



**Table – 4: Distribution of the Psychological well-being of research scholars**  
(SDA- Strongly disagree, DA- Disagree, N- Neutral, SA – Strongly agree, A – Agree)

S.NO	STATEMENT	SA	A	N	DA	S-DA	Total
1	I feel satisfied with my overall emotional well-being.	5	21	10	4	0	40
2	I tend to remain calm and composed during challenging situations in my research work.	8	16	11	4	1	40

3	I am able to handle criticism and feedback constructively without becoming overly defensive or discouraged.	10	15	13	1	1	40
4	I have effective strategies in place to manage stress and emotional well-being.	6	22	7	4	1	40
5	I have a support system (e.g., friends, family, colleagues) that helps me maintain emotional stability as a research scholar.	8	18	10	4	0	40
6	I experience a sense of fulfilment and purpose in my work as a research scholar	9	16	13	2	0	40
7	I am able to effectively manage and cope with stress related to my research work.	6	21	11	2	0	40
8	I feel supported and encouraged by my academic advisors and mentors	7	22	9	2	0	40
9	I have a healthy work-life balance as a research scholar.	5	21	9	5	0	40
10	I feel motivated and enthusiastic about my research work.	8	22	6	4	0	40
11	I have a strong sense of self-efficacy and belief in my abilities as a research scholar.	7	23	5	5	0	40
12	I have a supportive social network that I can rely on for emotional support.	5	17	11	6	1	40
13	I am able to effectively manage and balance my personal and professional commitments.	8	19	9	4	0	40
14	I feel optimistic about my future as a research scholar.	10	20	6	4	0	40
15	I am too tired during the week and I need the weekend to catch up on my rest.	12	13	12	1	2	40

From the above table 21(52.5%) of the respondents agreed that they felt satisfied with their overall emotional well-being. I tend to remain calm and composed during challenging situations in my research work. 16 (40%) of the respondents were agreed instant 11 (27.5%) of the responded they were able to handle criticism and feedback constructively without becoming overly defensive or discouraged. Mostly 22(55%) of the respondents agreed that they had effective strategies in place to manage stress and emotional well-being. 18 (45%) of the respondents were agreed that they had a support system (e.g., friends, family, colleagues) that helps them to maintain emotional stability as a research scholar also 4 (10%) of the responded Disagree for the statement. 16 (40%) of the respondents agreed to the statement that they experienced a sense of fulfilment and purpose in their work as a research scholar. 21 (52.5%) of the respondents agreed that they are effectively manage and cope with stress related to their research work. Interestingly 22 (55%) most of the respondents were agreed that they feel supported and encouraged by my academic advisors and mentor. Most 21 (52.5%) of the respondents agreed, healthy work-life balance as a research scholar. 22 (55%) of the respondents surprisingly agreed that they feel motivated and enthusiastic about their research work. 23 (57.5%) of the respondents agreed that they

have a strong sense of self-efficacy and belief in their abilities as a research scholar. 17 (42.5%) of the respondents agreed that they have a supportive social network that they can rely on for emotional support, meanwhile 11(27.5%) of the responded neutral. 19 (47.5%) of the respondents were agreed they able to effectively manage and balance their personal and professional commitments. 20 (50%) of the respondents agreed they feel optimistic about their future as a research scholar. 12 (20%) strongly agree, 13 (32.5%) Agree, and 12 (20%) Neutral they too tired during the week and they need the weekend to catch up on my rest.

## SUGRESSION

- The study suggest that married women scholars facing lot of challenges and factors that effecting their well being. For further studies by identifying the challenges and factors faced by the married women scholars would be helpful to identify the well being.
- By understanding the factors of their well-being, institutions can implement interventions and support mechanisms that promote a healthier and more conducive environment for research scholars, leading to improved academic outcomes.
- This study can highlight the importance of creating a sustainable research culture that prioritizes the well-being of scholars. By identifying areas where improvements can be made, institutions can foster an environment that values the physical and psychological health of research scholars.

## CONCLUSION

In today's globalized world, the role of research in an academic institution is critical for its long-term viability and development, and knowledge-driven growth based on innovation is essential. The study identified the perspective of research scholars from different disciplines, the physical and psychological well being among full time research scholars concluded that majority of the scholars were not able to manage their personal and professional life. Especially married women's scholars were facing lot of challenges like lack of professional time, self-motivation, mental health and Personal well being. The recommendation for implemented to better support for their well-being is focused attention on exploring career options and building confidence may help reduce stress among researcher scholars.

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