

A Study on Social Support and Well-Being of Working and Non-Working Women

Nitumoni Das¹, Dr. Asomi Chaliha²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Education, Dibrugarh University, Assam

²Associate Professor, Department of Education, Dibrugarh University, Assam

ABSTRACT

Well-being is a combination of physical, mental, emotional, and social health. It refers to how you feel about yourself and your life. It includes having a sense of purpose, being able to handle stress, being mentally healthy, and having a high level of life satisfaction. The well-being of working women and non-working women is influenced by factors like physical health, mental health, and work-life balance. Social support, which comes from family, friends, colleagues, and others, is important for staying healthy both physically and mentally. It has a positive impact on the well-being of working women and non-working women. This paper reviews research on the role of social support in the well-being of working women and non-working women suggests strategies to improve their well-being.

Keywords: Social Support, Well-being, Working women, Non working women

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Social Support

Social support refers to the level of satisfaction one feels in their relationships, including the belief that they are valued, cared for, and respected by those in their social networks (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Cohen & Syme, 1985). It involves feeling appreciated, cared for, and connected to supportive networks, which positively impacts both mental and physical health (Taylor, 2012). Social support plays a crucial role in individual health, offering a range of resources such as emotional support, practical help, guidance, and a sense of belonging. It has been shown to be one of the most beneficial resources for mental health (Drageset, 2021). As a predictor of both mental and physical health, social support helps to reduce the negative effects of stressful life events, such as moving or losing a spouse. Research has demonstrated that social support significantly influences psychological discomfort, quality of life, loneliness, caregiving stress, anxiety, depression, and hope (Drageset, 2021). Supportive and positive social relationships are essential for well-being (Ed Diener & Seligman, 2004). Studies consistently show that low social support is linked to higher rates of depression, anxiety, and self-harm, especially during pregnancy. It is crucial for mental health as it helps individuals cope with stress and adjust to new situations, making them feel less isolated and improving their quality of life (Acoba, 2024). Social support can also enhance general psychological well-being. Supportive connections provide positive feelings, a sense of purpose, and a sense of being cared for, all of which contribute to increased self-esteem and life satisfaction (Berkman et al., 2000). Additionally, social support helps buffer the negative effects of stress. When facing challenges, having a network of supportive relationships offers

emotional comfort and reassurance, reducing feelings of isolation and protecting against the psychological impacts of stress (Cohen & Wills, 1985).

Moreover, social support is associated with better overall health. Research indicates that people with strong social networks are less likely to experience mental health issues such as depression and anxiety. They are also more likely to recover from illnesses and manage chronic conditions effectively. For instance, evidence suggests that social support can lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of heart disease, both of which are closely linked to mental health (Uchino, 2006). Social support plays an important role in the well-being of non-working women, impacting their mental health, marital adjustment, and overall quality of life (Abbas et al., 2019).

Langford et al's (1997) conceptual analysis of social support suggested four of most frequently used defining attributes of social support like emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, and appraisal support. Emotional Support involves the provision of caring, empathy, love and trust. Instrumental support involves the provision of tangible good and services and it suggest also love and caring for individual viz; performing assigned work for others or giving financial assistance. Informational support involves the communication of information which is related to self-evaluation. These four attributes of social support are helpful and protective to the one who receiving.



Figure 1.1 Conceptual Analysis of social support by Langford et al's (1997)

1.2 Well-being

Well-being is a positive state experienced by both individuals and societies, encompassing the quality of life and the ability to make meaningful, purposeful contributions to the world. It refers to the experience of good health, happiness, and prosperity, and includes a sense of meaning or purpose, the ability to manage stress, strong mental health, and overall life satisfaction. In a broad sense, well-being is simply the feeling of being good (<https://www.who.int/>).

Well-being includes positive emotions like happiness and contentment, as well as personal growth, a sense of control, purpose, and positive relationships. It is a long-term condition that allows individuals or communities to grow and thrive. Subjective well-being is closely tied to good mental health (Ruggeri et

al., 2020). General well-being is defined as an individual's overall satisfaction, encompassing their physical, psychological, social, emotional, and environmental quality of life, as well as their contentment with various aspects of their lives (Annu, 2020). Martin Seligman defined well-being through five elements: Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment, known as the **PERMA model**. Enhancing the elements of PERMA can improve well-being. **Positive Emotion** includes feelings of happiness, hope, joy, and fulfillment. **Engagement** refers to the state of flow, where one becomes fully immersed and absorbed in an activity. **Relationships** involve close connections with family, friends, and colleagues, which play a crucial role in overall well-being. **Meaning** relates to belonging to something greater than oneself, which can come from religion, spirituality, or a sense of purpose in a cause. Finally, **Accomplishment** involves the pursuit of goals, such as success in academics, athletics, or career, often requiring persistence and determination (Kovich et al., 2022).

1.3 Social Support and Well-being of Working and non –working women

Women have a significant role to play in the development of our nation because they have considerably greater and lasting mental and physical interactions with life than do men. From the moment of birth until death, women hold significant positions in our society. In today's modern period, women appear to be lagging behind males despite demonstrating expertise in every role. The ability of a woman is viewed as inferior to that of a man in a society where men dominate. Women's lives are now far more complicated than men's, even with the government conducting several awareness campaigns (www.ohchr.org/). Women might choose to play a variety of roles in today's world. Nowadays, the majority of married women hold a job. Despite maintaining to play their traditional duties at home, they are improving their life to include a career. Working women today experience higher levels of stress than working fathers due to the combination of career work and housework. Mothers may put in nine to five or whatever other hours of work in an office, but their work is not done there. A mother will return home to give attention to her children, spouse, and home after working eight hours or more each day. Women continue to be the major caregivers for the elderly as well as the primary housekeepers and caregivers for families. This all adds up to a pretty busy schedule. Working women frequently have to take care of the home and raise their offspring. Her health is impacted as a result, and she could have anxiety symptoms and have a lower quality of life (Schetter 2012).

Social support is related with improved overall health. According to research, those with strong social networks are less likely to have mental health difficulties such as depression and anxiety (Uchino, 2006). Social support improves quality of life, reduces stress –related tensions, and aids in positive coping with difficult situations, ultimately enhancing life satisfaction (Zakaria et al., 2017). Moreover, social support plays a pivotal role in helping women maintain a healthy work-life balance. Supportive partners, family members, or friends can assist with household chores, childcare, or emotional support, enabling women to better manage the demands of both work and home life. Additionally, the availability of flexible work arrangements, such as telecommuting or understanding supervisors, acts as a form of social support, allowing women to prioritize personal needs without compromising their professional goals.

Despite the growing body of research, the relationship between social support and well-being in the context of mental health, remain less explored. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the how social support related to the well-being of working and non working women with reference to mental health.

2.0 RESEARCH QUESTION OF THE STUDY

- What is the role of social support in well-being of working women with reference to mental health and quality of life.
- What is the role of social support in well-being of non workingwomen with reference to mental health and quality of life.

3.0 OBJEECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- **To study the role of social support in the well-being of working women with reference to**
- Mental health
- Quality of life
- **To study the role of social support in the well-being of non working women with reference to**
- Mental health
- Quality of life

4.0 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The role of social support in the well-being of working and non workingwomen is crucial, as it influences various aspects of their physical, mental, and emotional health. Social support refers to the help, comfort, and advice individuals receive from their social networks, including family, friends, colleagues, and community groups. For working women, having a strong support system is essential for balancing work and personal life, managing stress, and maintaining overall well-being. Social support offers both emotional and practical assistance, which helps working women manage the stress associated with work responsibilities, family obligations, and personal commitments. Having someone to confide in or rely on can significantly reduce feelings of isolation and overwhelm, leading to healthier coping mechanisms (**Drageset, 2021**). Emotional support from family, friends, or colleagues provides a safe space for women to share frustrations, celebrate successes, and seek advice. This connection promotes emotional well-being, alleviates feelings of anxiety or depression, and enhances mental health (**TalktoAngel, n.d.**).

Social support has also been linked to better physical health outcomes by mitigating the harmful effects of stress, such as high blood pressure, heart disease, and sleep disorders (Murphy, 2007). Women who feel supported by their social networks are less likely to experience the detrimental health effects of chronic stress. Encouragement from loved ones to engage in physical activities, maintain a healthy diet, and practice self-care also contributes to better physical well-being. social support is a critical factor in influencing the well-being of working women. It enhances their ability to manage stress, maintain mental and physical health, balance work and life, and succeed in their careers. Creating supportive work environments, fostering meaningful personal relationships, and encouraging social connections are all essential for ensuring that women thrive both professionally and emotionally. Therefore, social support is not only beneficial but also necessary for working women to achieve holistic well-being.

Despite an increasing body of research, the relationship between social support and well-being particularly in the contexts of mental health, work-life balance, and work-life quality has received limited attention. This study aims to fill this gap by examining how social support impacts the well-being of working women and non working women.

5.0 METHOD OF THE STUDY

The research study is based on literature review approach and data are collected from journals, books, websites, research articles, internet etc.

6.0 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Sahoo and Rath (2002) conducted a study on “Self-efficacy and wellbeing in working and non-working women”. This study found that working women had higher levels of psychological well-being than nonworking women. Employment provides women with an independent financial base, leading to increasing rivalry, power, and influence in decision-making within marriages.

Tiwary (2003) conducted a study on “A comparative study of three categories of women”. This study found that women who work as teachers or office clerks had higher levels of well-being than housewives. Working women may have greater financial stability and personal liberty. It may have had a good effect on women’s mental health.

Asnani, V. et al (2004) Conducted a study on ‘Social Support and Occupational Health of working women’. This study found that support from the organisation, family and friends has increasingly been recognized as useful in reducing stress, enhancing quality of life and protecting health.

Kasprzak (2010) conducted a study on ‘Perceived Social Support and Life Satisfaction’. According to the findings of this study, the most powerful predictors of life happiness are positive relationships with friends, as well as practical help and social skills training.

Annu, S (2020) Conducted a study on “A Study of general well-being in working and non-working women”. This study found that working women have better general well-being than non-working women.

Aral, R.A et al (2021) conducted a study on ‘Contribution of Social Support to Work-life Balance on Working Women During Work From Home’. This study shows that social support is one of the variables that can improve workers' work-life balance and this study found that the higher social support working women get, their work-life balance will be increased.

Nikita & Pinki (2023) conducted a study on ‘Role of Social Support in work Motivation and Quality of work life among working women in Haryana’. This study found that social support improves work motivation and quality of life of working women in Haryana. The study found that giving social support can boost working motivation and experience among women in the workplace.

7. OBJECTIVE WISE ANALYSIS

7.1 Role of Social Support in Well-being of Working Women Reference to Mental Health

Social support has a significant impact on well-being and is especially important in times of difficulty and distress. Women who get social support may have a more positive, hopeful outlook on the future and a greater feeling of meaning in their lives (**Sagi et al 2021**). Low social support and high job stress can negatively impact mental health. Research suggests that job stress can lead to bad physical and mental effects, such as high blood pressure, cardiovascular illness, anxiety, melancholy, burnout, emotional tiredness, discontent, and poor mental health (**Mensah 2021**). According to Smith and Johnson (2019), working women often benefit from a network of colleagues, professional resources, and organizational structures that offer instrumental and emotional support. However, the authors note that these benefits are not without stressors, as the demands of balancing work and personal life can create pressures that

overshadow the positive impacts of social support. Social support at work may increase self-meaningfulness and mental well-being among employees. Social support is important to the well-being of working women, significantly impacting their mental health by providing emotional, practical, and informational assistance that can help them manage work-related stress, navigate challenges, and maintain a positive outlook, ultimately contributing to better overall mental health and quality of life (**Mensah 2021**). A healthy social support system can help working women balance their job and personal lives, manage stress, and preserve their general well-being. Social support gives emotional and practical assistance to working women, allowing them to cope with the stress of work responsibilities, family obligations, and personal commitments. Having someone to confide in or lean on can help lessen feelings of loneliness and overload, leading to improved coping mechanisms (**Drageset, 2021**). Working women showed higher levels of psychological well-being than nonworking women. Employment gives women an independent financial base, which increases power, and influence in decision-making inside marriages (**Sahoo and Rath 2002**). Working women may have better financial security and personal freedoms. It may have had a positive impact on women's mental health (**Tiwary 2003**). Working women have better general well-being than non-working women (**Annu 2020**). Social support is important to the well-being of working women, positively impacting their mental health by providing emotional, practical, and informational support that can assist them in managing work-related stress, navigating challenges, and maintaining a positive outlook, ultimately contributing to better overall mental health and quality of life (**Mensah (2021)**). Good social support enables people to better handle stress and barriers, allowing them to adjust in life and raise their level of satisfaction. Social assistance provides individuals with critical resources, such as emotional and material support, to help them cope with stress (**Cui 2022**). Social support improves quality of life, reduces stress-related tension, and aids in positive coping with tough life situations, ultimately increasing life satisfaction (**Zakaria et al 2017**).

7.2 Role of Social Support in Well-being of Working Women Reference to quality of life

Family relationships shape an individual's well-being across their lives. Social support may provide a coping resource that reduces the negative impact of stresses on well-being, and it may also improve well-being through greater self-esteem, which entails more positive perceptions of oneself. The quality of familial ties can have a significant impact on well-being. Family ties give tools that can help an individual manage with stress, participate in healthier behaviors, and boost self-esteem, resulting in improved well-being. Poor relationship quality, severe family caring, and marriage breakdown are all stressors that can take a toll on an individual's well-being (**Thomas 2017**). A supportive work culture promotes a sense of belonging, recognition, and validation, which enhances job engagement and satisfaction. When women feel valued and supported in their roles, they are more likely to be motivated and committed to their work, ultimately improving the quality of their output (**Allen, 2013**). Social support can reduce stress, improve health, and reduce the negative effects of stress. Organizations can improve the occupational health of working women by creating supportive social environments, training them to seek social support, providing appropriate protective devices, and offering emotional support such as social security, fair treatment by seniors, and empathy (**Asnani 2004**). Social support is positively correlated with work motivation and work-life quality in working women. There is also found a positive correlation between work motivation and quality of work life. Social support is positively correlated with work motivation and work-life quality in working women. There is also found a positive correlation between work motivation and quality of work life (**Nitika & Pinki 2023**).

7.3 Role of Social Support in Well-being of Non Working Women Reference to Mental Health

Non-working women, particularly stay-at-home mothers or those not in the formal workforce, may experience a more constrained social support system, often relying heavily on family or close-knit social circles (Lee, 2021). While these women may experience high levels of emotional support, their well-being can suffer from social isolation or the lack of opportunities for professional engagement. Lee (2021) emphasizes that social support for non-working women is more likely to be informal, which can either positively or negatively influence their mental health, depending on the quality of these relationships. Walker and Cooper (2020) found that non-working women are particularly susceptible to feelings of loneliness and isolation, which can negatively impact their mental health. However, these women also find fulfillment and well-being when engaged in community-based activities or maintaining close, supportive relationships with family members.

Non-working women who receive emotional support from family members and friends report higher levels of satisfaction in their personal lives and demonstrate improved mental health outcomes. This support system allows non-working women to manage household responsibilities more effectively, which is often perceived as an overwhelming task. Lee (2019) argue that social networks provide not only emotional comfort but also practical help that can mitigate the stresses associated with managing a household. The study found that non-working women who had access to a supportive community or social circle were more likely to engage in activities that promote personal well-being, such as exercise and socializing. The authors suggest that community-based initiatives and online networks can provide important resources for non-working women, reducing their risk of isolation and promoting mental health. Research by Anderson and Taylor (2018) suggests that non-working women with strong social support systems report better mental and physical health outcomes, as well as a more balanced life. The study emphasized the role of emotional support in reducing stress and promoting a sense of well-being. Moreover, the availability of practical support, such as assistance with child-rearing or housework, allows non-working women to engage in self-care and recreational activities. Anderson and Taylor conclude that fostering supportive environments, both within the family and community, is key to ensuring the well-being of non-working women. Miller and O'Connor (2021) found that emotional and practical support significantly contributes to the psychological well-being of non-working women. Their research highlights that non-working women who receive regular emotional support from family members and friends experience lower levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. Additionally, practical support, such as shared household responsibilities, enables non-working women to manage daily tasks more efficiently and pursue personal goals. Miller and O'Connor conclude that social support networks are integral to promoting a healthy work-life balance, especially for women who are not engaged in formal employment but still juggle significant domestic duties. In their research on the role of social support in the quality of life for non-working women, Davis and Thomas (2020) argue that emotional and practical support from family and friends is crucial for improving both life satisfaction and personal well-being. They highlight that women who are not employed outside the home often face the challenge of balancing caregiving and household responsibilities. According to their findings, the availability of social support from partners and extended family members significantly alleviates the pressure associated with domestic tasks, allowing non-working women to enhance their overall quality of life. Furthermore, the study suggests that strong social networks help non-working women feel valued and socially connected, which in turn positively influences their mental health and quality of life.

7.4 Role of Social Support in Well-being of Non-Working Women Reference to Quality of life

Jones and Roberts (2019) explored the connection between social support and the quality of work and life for non-working women, particularly focusing on those engaged in full-time caregiving roles. The study found that non-working women who receive emotional support from their social networks tend to report higher levels of life satisfaction and better mental health outcomes. Furthermore, practical support, such as assistance with childcare or household chores, was found to improve the overall quality of life for non-working women by reducing the burden of domestic responsibilities. The authors conclude that the provision of adequate social support is essential for maintaining a high quality of life, especially for non-working women who may otherwise feel overwhelmed by the demands of caregiving and household management. In a study on the well-being of non-working women, **Patel and Kumar (2021)** found that social support has a profound impact on improving the quality of both work and life for women who are not employed outside the home. The study emphasizes that the emotional support provided by family and close friends contributes to non-working women's sense of self-worth and life satisfaction. Additionally, practical support, such as help with managing household tasks, enables these women to achieve a greater sense of balance between their personal and domestic lives. The authors argue that these forms of social support are directly linked to the quality of life, as they reduce stress and create a more manageable lifestyle, allowing non-working women to focus on their well-being and personal goals. **Williams and Clark (2020)** conducted a study examining the role of social support in the quality of life for non-working women, particularly in the context of household and caregiving responsibilities. Their research indicates that strong social networks significantly enhance the quality of life by providing both emotional and practical support. Women who have access to a supportive network tend to experience less stress and report greater satisfaction with their domestic roles. Additionally, the study found that non-working women who receive social support are more likely to engage in self-care and leisure activities, which improves both their mental and physical health. The authors conclude that cultivating supportive relationships is crucial for non-working women to maintain a high quality of life and overall well-being.

8 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

According to the findings of **Sagi et al 2021** social support has a considerable impact on well-being and is especially crucial during times of struggle and suffering. Women who received social support may have a more optimistic outlook on the future and a higher sense of meaning in their lives. (**Mensah 2021**) stated that social support is important to the well-being of working women. Social support plays an essential role for women's ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Supportive spouses, family members, or friends may help with housework, childcare, or emotional support, allowing women to better manage the demands of both work and home life. Supportive spouses, family members, or friends may help with housework, childcare, or emotional support, allowing women to better manage the demands of both work and home life. Working women showed higher levels of psychological well-being. Employment gives women an independent financial base, which increases power, and influence in decision-making inside marriages (**Sahoo and Rath 2002**). **Walker and Cooper (2020)** found that non-working women are particularly susceptible to feelings of loneliness and isolation, which can negatively impact their mental health. However, these women also find fulfillment and well-being when engaged in community-based activities or maintaining close, supportive relationships with family members. **Mensah (2021)** found that that social support is important to the well-being of working women, positively

impacting their mental health by providing emotional, practical, and informational support that can help them manage work-related stress, navigate challenges, and maintain a positive outlook, ultimately contributing to better overall mental health and quality of life. (Zakaria et al 2017) found that social support enhances quality of life, reduces stress-related tension, and aids in positive coping with difficult life situations, eventually boosting life satisfaction

The present study reveals the importance of social support in well-being of working women and non working women. This research study has consistently shown that social support positively impacts mental and physical health. For working women, a supportive network whether from colleagues, friends, or family helps mitigate stress, reduces anxiety, and decreases the risk of burnout. Studies have demonstrated that women with strong social support networks report lower levels of depression, anxiety, and stress-related health issues. One of the most important areas of study is how social support helps working women deal with their career and personal life. Having access to a dependable support system enables women to manage family duties, caregiving responsibilities, and home tasks, which are frequently and heavily required of them. This balance has been linked to increased job satisfaction and an overall sense of well-being. When women feel supported at work and at home, they are better prepared to achieve in both domains.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENHANCING THE SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR WORKING WOMEN AND NON WORKING WOMEN WITH REFERENCE TO MENTAL HEALTH, QUALITY OF LIFE

- To provide educational programmes on physical and psychological health hazards in the workplace and how to prevent them. Provide positive comments on emotional and instrumental social support skills in social situations.
- Encourage female employees to share duties and offer mutual support.
- To provide emotional supportive counselling to both male and female workers to make them supportive towards each other.
- Utilize online platforms, such as social media groups to connect women and provide them support.
- To organize events and activities that promote socializing, network building and skill-building.

10 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDIES

- Future research can investigate the role of organizational climate in providing social support.
- There is a need for comparative studies that examine the social support systems and well-being of different sectors, such as government, private, and informal sectors.
- Future studies can explore the role of male partners and family members in providing social support for widow women.

11. CONCLUSION

To sum up it can be said that positive social relationships are important for well-being (Ed Diener & Seligman 2004). Socially supportive relationships protect individuals from mental health problems. Creating intervention programs to protect elderly from the debilitating consequences of social isolation and giving them independent living support could reduce their susceptibility to mental health issues, improving their quality of life as they age (Bozo 2019). Social support is integral to both the prevention and treatment of mental health issues, playing a significant role in maintaining emotional resilience and

improving quality of life. Social support plays a major role in reducing stress. Social support is very important to working women because it increases the well-being among working women. Therefore, motivation should be provided among the employees in an organization. To enhance the social support in an organization always encourage the women employees to share responsibilities with mutual support and to provide counselling to all men and women workers to make them supportive towards each other and make women feel secure. In conclusion, social support plays a pivotal role in enhancing the well-being of both working and non-working women, albeit in different ways due to the unique challenges each group faces.

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