

## **Mental Health of Working and Non-Working Mothers of District Kulgam**

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### **Abstract**

This study investigates the mental health status of working and non-working mothers in the District of Kulgam, focusing on differences between urban and rural contexts. Using the Mental Health Inventory developed by Jagdish and Srivastava (1983), the study assesses mental health across six dimensions among a sample of 60 graduate women, equally divided into working and non-working mothers from urban and rural areas. The findings indicate that working mothers exhibit significantly higher mental health levels compared to non-working mothers. Additionally, rural mothers tend to have slightly higher mental health levels than urban mothers, although the difference is not statistically significant. These insights highlight the need for targeted mental health support programs and further research to explore underlying factors affecting mothers' mental well-being in different socio-economic settings.

### **Keywords**

Mental health, working mothers, non-working mothers, urban-rural comparison, Kulgam, Mental Health Inventory, socio-economic factors.

### **Introduction**

Mental health is a critical aspect of overall well-being, especially for mothers who play pivotal roles in families and communities. This study aims to understand the mental health status of working and non-working mothers in the District of Kulgam, focusing on differences across urban and rural areas. Mental health refers to a person's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It encompasses various aspects of an individual's life, including their thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and interactions with others. Good mental health is essential for a person's overall well-being, allowing them to cope with life's challenges, build and maintain healthy relationships, work productively, and make informed decisions.

Key aspects of mental health include:

**Emotional Well-being:** This involves recognizing and managing a wide range of emotions, from happiness and contentment to sadness and anger. It's essential to have healthy ways of dealing with emotional ups and downs.

**Psychological Well-being:** This encompasses cognitive aspects of mental health, such as problem-solving, decision-making, and the ability to think rationally and clearly.

**Social Well-being:** Maintaining healthy relationships and social connections is vital for mental health. Loneliness and social isolation can have negative effects on mental well-being.

**Resilience:** Being mentally healthy means having the ability to bounce back from adversity, cope with stress, and adapt to life changes. Resilience is a crucial aspect of mental health.

**Self-esteem and Self-acceptance:** Having a positive self-image and self-worth is important for mental health. Self-acceptance allows individuals to feel comfortable with who they are.

**Balance:** Achieving a balance between work, family, social life, and personal time is essential for mental health. Overwork or neglecting self-care can lead to stress and mental health issues.

**Seeking Help:** It's important to know when to seek help if you are struggling with your mental health. Mental health professionals, such as therapists, psychologists, and psychiatrists, can provide support and treatment for various mental health conditions.

**World Health Organization (WHO):** "Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes their abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and can make a contribution to their community."

**American Psychological Association (APA):** "Mental health refers to cognitive, behavioral, and emotional well-being. It is all about how people think, feel, and behave."

**National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH):** "Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices."

**Mental Health America (MHA):** "Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes their abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and can make a contribution to their community."

### **Objectives**

1. To assess the overall mental health levels of working and non-working mothers in Kulgam.
2. To compare the mental health status between urban and rural mothers.
3. To determine the differences in mental health scores between working and non-working mothers.
4. To explore the implications of employment status and geographic location on mothers' mental health.

### **Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant difference in the mental health levels of working and non-working mothers.
2. There is no significant difference in the mental health levels between urban and rural mothers.

### **Research Methodology**

#### **Selection of Sample**

A total of 60 mothers (30 working and 30 Non-working) were randomly selected from urban and rural areas of Kulgam. The sample ensured a similar educational background, with all participants being graduates.

### **Study Area and Sample Distribution**

<b>Study Area</b>	<b>Working Women</b>	<b>Non-working Women</b>	<b>Total</b>
Urban Area	15	15	30
Rural Area	15	15	30
<b>Total</b>	30	30	60

### **Tool**

The Mental Health Inventory developed by Jagdish and Srivastava (1983) was utilized, which measures six dimensions of mental health through 56 statements. Responses are rated on a scale, with higher scores indicating better mental health.

### **Results and Interpretation**

#### **Overall Levels of Mental Health**

<b>Levels</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
High	8	13.33
Average	44	73.33
Low	8	13.33
<b>Total</b>	60	100

The majority (73.33%) of mothers had average mental health levels, while 13.33% had high and low levels each.

### **Urban vs. Rural Mothers**

<b>Levels</b>	<b>Urban Mothers</b>	<b>Rural Mothers</b>
High	4 (13.33%)	8 (26.66%)
Average	20 (66.66%)	18 (60%)
Low	6 (20%)	4 (13.33%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>30 (100%)</b>	<b>30 (100%)</b>

Rural mothers had a higher percentage of high mental health levels (26.66%) compared to urban mothers (13.33%).

### **Comparison of Mental Health Scores: Working vs. Non-Working Mothers**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Working Mothers	30	154.6	13.924	9.167	<0.01
Non-Working Mothers	30	124.78	11.155		

**Comparison of Mental Health Scores: Urban vs. Rural Mothers**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Urban Mothers	30	139.7	27.756	1.5927	0.1166
Rural Mothers	30	128.03	28.986		

No significant difference was found between urban and rural mothers' mental health scores.

**Summary, Major Findings, and Conclusion**

**Summary**

The study reveals significant differences in mental health levels based on employment status and slight differences based on geographic location.

**Major Findings**

Working mothers have significantly higher mental health levels compared to non-working mothers.

Rural mothers have a higher percentage of high mental health levels compared to urban mothers.

No significant difference in mental health scores between urban and rural mothers.

**Conclusion**

Employment status significantly influences the mental health of mothers. Working mothers display higher mental health levels, while rural mothers tend to have slightly better mental health than urban mothers, although the difference is not significant.

**Recommendations**

**Support Programs:** Tailored mental health support programs for both working and non-working mothers.

**Awareness Campaigns:** Reduce mental health stigma in rural areas through awareness campaigns.

**Workplace Initiatives:** Promote supportive work environments with flexible policies and on-site childcare.

**Healthcare Access:** Improve access to mental health services in rural areas.

Limitations and Implications

**Sample Size:** The small sample size limits the generalizability of the findings.

**Geographic Scope:** Focusing only on Kulgam may not reflect broader patterns.

**Longitudinal Studies:** Needed to track mental health over time for comprehensive understanding.

**Policy Implications:** Policymakers should invest in mental health resources, especially in rural areas.

**Cultural Considerations:** Consider cultural factors in mental health interventions.

Implications for Future Research

**Comparative Studies:** Explore regional disparities in mental health services.

**Qualitative Research:** Investigate in-depth experiences of mothers regarding mental health.

**Intervention Studies:** Design and evaluate mental health interventions.

**Family Dynamics:** Study the impact of family support systems on mothers' mental health.

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