

Working women and Mental Health: A social commentary

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This article provides my personal opinion on women's challenges juggling their responsibilities between paid workforce and household responsibilities. It is based on my observation at my workplace and social circle. Neoliberalisation has resulted in increased participation of women in the paid workforce around the world. This has resulted in significant social and economic benefits for women personally as well as for the economy (International Growth Centre, 2021). However, owing to these benefits we often do not pay attention to the negative effects of this on women's lives, for example, bad mental health because of increased work pressure and household responsibilities.

Working women have more mental health issues than working men. Data reveals women are 1.4 times more likely to suffer from stress, anxiety and depression (*The Guardian*, 2016).

The main reason for this is that women are still learning to juggle pressure between their domestic duties and the paid-workforce. The socio-cultural expectations of women to look after their families and to perform all household chores simultaneously with their paid jobs have put pressure on women; owing to this they often juggle to compartmentalise their workload (Kohli, 2016).

While working a counsellor, I have observed many of my female clients experience anxiety or depression as they are overwhelmed with their work pressure and family responsibilities. The ones with young kids have been on the higher end.

I have observed, if men had a stressful time at work, they often hang out with their friends after work tend to cope with their daily stresses. This is more common among Asian and Middle-Eastern communities. Whereas, women after finishing their jobs do not get any free time to relax instead they go home and cook for their families. Such routine, mounts up their stress and eventually takes the shape of anger, anxiety or depression and make it difficult to cope with their stress. The socio-cultural expectation of being a good mother put pressure on women to meet the expectation and affects their mental health.

I believe in order to improve women's situation it is important to gradually transform these socio-cultural discourses and practices that subordinate women's positioning. It is a long process and needs to be done in a way where women can challenge and transform the patriarchal ideology.

References

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