

A Descriptive Approach: Assessing The Guilt Complex Of Working Mothers Towards Child Care

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ABSTRACT:

A descriptive study was conducted with an aim to assess the guilt complex of working mothers towards child care at Kanpur district, Uttar Pradesh India. Mothers employed in public and private sectors were selected based on the inclusion criteria. Data was collected from 60 mothers using researcher-developed, validated, self administered questionnaire for a period of 5 weeks. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study revealed a high mean guilt complex score among mothers employed in private sectors than who employed in public sectors and having children aged 1-3 years; though this was not statistically significant. A statistically significant association was found between guilt complex and socio demographic variables such as 'monthly income' ($p=0.001$), number of children ($p=0.004$), hours of work ($p=0.001$), nature of duty ($p=0.004$), resumed job after child birth ($F=0.493$, $p=0.004$). Increased job-demands and family role conflicts would seriously be considered while formulating mental health care services for the employed women.

KEYWORDS: Guilt complex, working mothers, child care.

INTRODUCTION:

Mother is the primary caretaker, first educator, and nurturer of the next generation. Motherhood confers upon a woman the responsibility of raising a

child. This process also changes the way she is perceived in society and at her workplace. A working mother requires significant social and personal adjustments to cope with these demands. Often, this may necessitate taking more leave than what is available, which can put her job security at risk.

Alongside motherhood, work contributes to the completeness of a woman's identity. A working mother, especially one who manages to balance home and work successfully, enjoys the stimulation and fulfillment that a job or career provides. She develops the ability to raise a responsible member of society while gaining financial independence.

Opinions about the impact of mothers' employment on children vary widely, encompassing positive, negative, and neutral viewpoints. Some believe that a mother's employment positively influences both the physical and emotional growth of children. Dual-earning families can often provide more resources for their children. Many working mothers feel they serve as good role models and highly value the quality time they spend with their children.

Despite these perspectives, there is ongoing debate about the guilt experienced by working mothers and its effects on both the mother and child. There is also a scarcity of research on this topic, particularly in the Indian context. Considering these factors, the researcher was motivated to assess the guilt complex

experienced by employed mothers toward child care.

Problem Statement:

A study to assess the guilt complex of working mothers towards child care in selected area of Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh.

Objectives:

1. To assess the guilt complex of employed mothers towards child care
2. To associate the guilt complex of employed mothers with their selected socio-demographic variables

Operational definitions:

- Guilt complex is an exaggerated, unnecessary and unreasonable feeling; the mother develops when she is not able to maintain a balance between the child care and work. It is measured by a four point rating scale.
- Employed mothers refers to mothers, of children aged 1-3 years, working in offices as clerks, schools as teachers and hospitals as nurse in private or public sector.
- Child care refers to the totality of care in terms of quality including the supervision and nurturing of the child by the mother when she is at home.
- Children aged 1-3 years, left under the care and supervision of family members / baby sitters or in day care centre in mother's absence.

MATERIALS AND METHOD:

Research approach:

A quantitative non-experimental research approach and Descriptive design was used in the present study.

Setting:

The present study was conducted in selected communities of Kanpur District.

Population:

Population of the study includes mothers having children 1-3 years working in offices, schools and hospitals in both public and private sector in selected rural and urban areas of Kanpur.

Sample and sampling technique:

60 working mothers from public sector and 60 from private sector having children aged 1-5 years were selected, using purposive sampling technique.

Inclusion Criteria:

Mothers who have been included in the study were:

- Working in public and private sector in offices as clerks, schools as teachers and hospitals as nurses.
- Having at least one child in the age group of 1-5 years.
- Staying along with the child.

Exclusion Criteria

- Mothers who didn't give consent for study
- Mothers who were not available at the time of data collection

Tools/instrument:

Tool was developed on the basis of objectives of the study. The tool consists of 2 sections;

Section A: Socio demographic data of the working mother and children and Section B: Guilt complex assessment Scale

Development /Selection of tool:

Based on wide reading of literature and discussion with guide self-administered structured questionnaires was prepared. The steps followed were:

Description of the tool:

Section A: Socio Demographic Proforma:

This section aims at collecting demographic data of working mothers. It includes; Mothers profile: seeking personal and social information like age, religion, education, marital status, age at marriage, number of children, place of residence, type of family, monthly income, working in public sector or private sector, occupation, hours of work, nature of duty, employment status of the husband, period at which resumed job after child birth and extra privileges from the job.

Section B: Guilt Complex Assessment Scale:

Guilt complex assessment scale was developed to assess the level of guilt complex of working mothers. The tool consists of a total of 24 items under 2 domains: Child care (12 items) and Work (12 items). A summated rating scale format was used with four choices per item ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree with a score range of 1-4 per item.

RESULTS:

The details of the socio-demographic characteristics of the study population are in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the study participants

n=60

Variables	Category	Mothers' Job Setting			
		Public sector (n=30)		Private sector (n=30)	
		f	%	f	%
Age in years	20-30	10	33.3	12	40.0
	30-40	20	66.7	18	60.0
Religion	Hindu	18	60.0	12	40.0
	Christian	12	40.0	18	60.0
	Muslim	0	0.0	0	0.0

		0	0	2	0
Marital status	Married	29	96.7	30	100.0
	Separated	0	0.0	0	0.0
Type of family	Nuclear	11	36.7	13	43.3
	Joint	16	53.3	16	53.3
	Extended	0	0.0	0	0.0
Number of children	1	0	0.0	0	0.0
	2	17	56.7	21	70.0
	>3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Place of residence	Urban	26	86.6	23	76.6
	Rural	0	0.0	0	0.0
Education	Diploma	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Graduation	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Post-Graduation	20	66.7	12	40.0
	Others	0	0.0	0	0.0
Occupation	Clerks	10	33.3	10	33.3
	Teachers	10	33.3	10	33.3
	Staff nurses	10	33.3	10	33.3
Monthly income (Indian Rupees)	< 10000	0	0.0	0	0.0
	10000-15000	10	33.3	20	66.7
	16000-20000	0	0.0	0	0.0
	>.20000	10	33.3	0	0.0
Nature of duty	Day	20	66.7	20	66.7
	All of the	10	33.3	10	33.3

	above				
Hours of work	<6	0 4	13.3 0	1 0	33.3 0
	6-8	1 6	53.3 0	0 7	23.3 0
	> 8	1 0	33.3 0	1 3	43.3 0
Resume d job after child birth (Months)	<3	1 0	33.3 0	0 5	16.7 0
	3-6	0 9	30.0 0	1 8	60.0 0
	6-12	0 8	26.7 0	0 2	06.7 0
	>12	0 3	10.0 0	0 5	16.7 0

Statistically no significant difference was found between the guilt complex score of working mothers in the public and private sector having children aged 1-3 years ($p>0.05$). (Table 2). Though, mean guilt complex scores were high among private employed mothers than public-sector employed. Statistically significant association was found between guilt complex score and the variable education. Mean score analysis revealed that highest mean score (63.72 ± 05.39) was seen for mothers who were diploma holders. Significant association was also reported for the variable; place of residence with mothers from urban area reporting a high mean score (62.00 ± 06.35).

Table 2: Overall and dimension wise comparison of guilt complex score among mothers working in private and public sector having children aged 1-3 years. n=60

Dimension	Mothers' Job Setting		t value	p value
	Public sector (n=30)	Private sector (n=30)		
	Mean±SD	Mean±SD		
Childcare	29.30±2.83	30.70±4.64	1.375	0.174
Work	25.30±2	27.00±4	1.6	0.1

	.83	.49	67	01
Overall guilt score	54.60±3.88	57.60±7.96	1.875	0.066

A highly significant association was found between guilt complex and variables 'monthly income' ($F=7.529, p=0.001$), number of children ($F=6.672, p=0.004$), hours of work ($F=15.42, p=0.001$), nature of duty ($F=7.798, p=0.004$), resumed job after child birth ($F=0.493, p=0.004$).The projected mean score revealed that guilt complex was higher, among mothers with monthly income between Rs. 11,000-15,000 (60.50 ± 07.18), having 2 children (60.70 ± 06.10), working for more than 8 hours (63.08 ± 05.60), having 3 shifts of duty (62.45 ± 05.24) and resumed job within 3 months after child birth.

Table 3: Association between guilt complex score and selected socio demographic variables of Employed Mothers (n=60)

Variables	Category	Mean ±SD	F value	p value
Education	Diploma	63.72±05.39	4.740	0.005
	Graduation	54.86±10.60		
	Post-graduation	57.58±05.46		
Place of residence	Urban	62.00±06.35	5.003	0.010
	Suburban	55.38±08.29		
	Rural	58.83±06.873		
Monthly income	Less than 10000	38.00±18.38	7.529	0.001
	11000-15000	60.50±07.18		
	16000-20000	57.46±04.35		
	Above 20000	57.28±02.69		

Number of children	One	52.86±09 .84	6.6 72	0.0 04
	Two	60.70±06 .10		
	More than 2	56.00±00 .00		
Hours of work	less than 6 hours	52.76±07 .94	15. 42	0.0 01
	6-8 hours	59.87±04 .60		
	More than 8	63.08±05 .60		
Nature of duty	Day duty	56.85±08 .14	7.7 98	0.0 04
	All of the above	62.45±05 .24		
Resumed job after child birth	Within 3 month	62.40±05 .72	0.4 93	0.0 04
	3-6 months	59.41±05 .23		
	6 months -1 year	59.18±09 .33		
	After 1 year	58.17±07 .33		

DISCUSSION:

The present study findings revealed that mild guilt was reported by majority of mothers (approximately 90%) having children aged 1-5 years from both the sectors. However moderate guilt was higher (50%) in mothers of children aged 3-5 years working in public sector. On comparing the two groups overall guilt score was higher for mothers working in the private sector [57.60 ±7.963, 60.00%] but the difference was not statistically significant.

In a similar study conducted on “assessment of guilt complex of working women regarding child care and coping strategies” findings revealed that 12% of subjects had ‘no guilt’, 35% reported guilt and 53% were within the normal range of guilt complex.⁶

On associating level of guilt of mothers working in public and private sector having children aged 1-5 years, a significant association was found for variables like: education of the mother, monthly income, place of residence, number of children, occupation, hours of work, nature of duty, and resumed job after child birth.

More or less similar findings were in a study where level of guilt complex had no significant association with age, occupation of the mother, working hours per day, monthly income, number and age of the children. However, a significant association was found between guilt complex of working mothers regarding child care and education of the mothers, type of family, and care taker of the child when the mother is at work.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A similar study can be done in large scale sample
- An interventional study can be done to reduce guilt complex in mothers
- An explorative study can be done to assess the involvement of spouse in development of guilt complex

CONCLUSION:

The present study aimed to assess the perceived guilt of employed mothers regarding effective child care. Based on the findings, it was concluded that working mothers experience varying levels of guilt as they juggle multiple roles, such as wife, mother, and co worker. This role conflict can lead to significant distress, strained relationships, and even psychopathology if a proper balance is not maintained. Therefore, clinicians and nurses should pay special attention to employed mothers and develop preventive strategies, such as counseling and family support, to help them successfully manage their multiple roles without experiencing guilt.

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