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## "A Comparative Study on Behavioural Problems Among Children of Working and Non-Working Mothers."

**Prof Ashwini. K. Vaidya**

HOD Department of Mental Health Nursing, Godavari college of Nursing, Jalgaon.

**Ms.Hemangi Murkute**

Associate Professor, Department of Mental Health Nursing, Godavari college of Nursing, Jalgaon.

**Ms Samrddhi. A .Awasare**

Assistant Professor, Department of Mental Health Nursing, Godavari college of Nursing, Jalgaon.

**Ms.Priyanka .A.Jagtap**

Assistant Professor, Department of Mental Health Nursing, Godavari college of Nursing, Jalgaon

### ABSTRACT:

Childhood is a critical period for physical, emotional, social, and psychological development. During these formative years, children acquire behaviours, attitudes, and coping mechanisms that influence their future well-being and adjustment in society. The family serves as the primary socializing agent, and parents play a crucial role in shaping a child's behavior and personality. Among various family factors, the mother's role is particularly significant, as she is often the primary caregiver and is closely involved in the child's daily activities, emotional support, and behavioral guidance. In recent decades, socioeconomic changes, urbanization, increased educational opportunities, and financial demands have led to a substantial rise in the number of women joining the workforce. While maternal employment contributes positively to family income, economic security, and women's empowerment, it may also affect the amount of time available for direct interaction, supervision, and monitoring of children's activities. Consequently, concerns have been raised regarding the potential impact of maternal employment on children's behavioral development. Behavioral problems in children refer to persistent patterns of behavior that interfere with social, academic, or emotional functioning. These problems may be categorized as externalizing behaviors, such as aggression, hyperactivity, disobedience, and conduct problems, or internalizing behaviors, such as anxiety, withdrawal, fearfulness, and depression. If left unrecognized and untreated, behavioral problems can adversely affect a child's academic performance, interpersonal relationships, self-esteem, and overall quality of life.

Children of working mothers may experience reduced parental supervision and less time for direct interaction; however, they may also benefit from improved financial resources, educational opportunities, and enhanced independence. On the other hand, children of non-working mothers may receive greater parental attention and supervision, but other factors such as parenting style, family environment, and socioeconomic conditions can also influence behavioral outcomes. Therefore, maternal employment status alone may not determine children's behavior, and a comprehensive assessment is required to understand its relationship with behavioral problems. Several studies have reported mixed findings regarding the influence of maternal employment on child behavior. Some researchers have found higher levels of behavioural problems among children of working mothers, while others have reported no significant differences or even positive outcomes associated with maternal employment. These inconsistent findings highlight the need for further research, particularly in specific cultural and social

contexts. Therefore, the present study aims to compare the behavioural problems among children of working and non-working mothers. The findings of the study may help healthcare professionals, nurses, educators, and parents identify behavioral concerns at an early stage and develop appropriate interventions to promote healthy child development and family well-being.

The main objectives of the study were to assess the Behavioural problems of children among working and non-working mothers and compare the Behavioural problems of children between working and non-working mothers. Data was collected from 60 working and 60 non-working mothers with the help of non-probability purposive sampling techniques. A structured Child Behaviour Assessment Scale was developed to collect the data from the mothers of children aged 4-12 years. Reliability of the tool was found to be 0.7. The study results revealed that 60% of working mothers reported Borderline Behaviour in their children. Abnormal behaviour consisting of hyperactivity, bad habits and social problems etc. were reported by 15% of working mothers. Children among non-working mothers reported higher levels of anxiety, and conduct problems. Significant association was found between Behavioural problems of children among working mothers and type of family, number of children, age of the child, and gender of the child. Behavioural problems in childhood may lead to limited functional capabilities in children and more serious problems in adulthood. Nurses can play a major role in diminishing Behavioural problems by providing guidance and counselling for the children and their mothers. The focus should be on addressing the emotional needs of the children during the early stages of development.

**KEYWORDS:** Behavioural problems, Children, working mothers, non-working mothers.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Children are considered as the most potential unit of our future human resources in a developing country like India, which relies greatly on its human resource strength. A better tomorrow depends much on the well-being, safety and development of children today.<sup>1</sup>

The significant contributions made during the early ages of an individual's life determine the wholesome personality of that person. The surroundings at home and school make a great impact in the development of children's emotional and Behavioural characteristics.<sup>2</sup> Thus every member of the family occupies a vital position in the integrated growth and development of a child and among them the role of mother is very important and varied as the child spends most of the time with mother.<sup>3</sup> Another important factor is the mother's external employment which has both positive and negative impact on their both physical and emotional growth.<sup>2</sup>

Mother plays a major role in the development of personal characteristics, social behaviour, emotional adjustment and motivation of the child. The nurturing that a mother provides is unparalleled and a vital part of a child's care.<sup>3</sup> However, the present scenario is such that it is not feasible to make a living with just one person's earnings. Hence, women set out to support their family. This in turn leads to lack of time in working mothers for personnel needs and also for family needs.<sup>4</sup>

Increasing employment of the mothers had lead to the early institutionalization of the children, fewer children are raised by stay-at-home mothers and more are spending prolonged hours with a secondary caregiver. As a consequence of changing patterns of child care Behavioural problems have become very common in children. A majority of children suffer from mild to moderate behavioural problems nowadays.

According to an estimate provided by the World Health Organization, 20 Percent or one-fifth of the children world-wide suffer with mental and Behavioural problems.<sup>5</sup>

Behavioural problems in children have been the focus of research for a number of reasons. First, they affect a child's academic, social and personal functioning. Second, they have been on an alarming rise.

In our profession also we are facing these problems. Due to prolonged working hours and a vivid job responsibility working women would have less time at her disposal for child care as compared to non-working women, The children of working mothers may have a higher chance of feeling lonely, neglected and unmonitored, hence may affect their behaviour in early stages of growth and development.<sup>4</sup>

Hence the researcher felt a need to study the difference in Behavioural problems of children among working and non-working mothers. This will help the working mothers to improve the care given towards their children and concentrate on their emotional and Behavioural characteristics.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. To assess the Behavioural problems of children as expressed by Working and Non-Working mothers.
2. To compare the Behavioural problems of children among Working and Non-Working mothers.
3. To find the association between Behavioural problems of children among Working and Non-Working mothers with their selected demographic variables.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

Gupta AK, Mongia M, and Garg AK (20017) conducted a study in a government school in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh to assess the behavioral problems in school going children. Data was gathered from 500 randomly selected children aged 6-18 years by using a standardized tool. The result revealed that about 22.7% of children showed Behavioral, cognitive or emotional problems. Additional screening and evaluation tools pointed towards a higher prevalence of externalizing symptoms among boys than girls.<sup>6</sup>

Alexander A and Shetty AP (2014) conducted a comparative study in different schools of Mangalore to compare the behavioural problems of preschool children among 30 working and 30 non-working mothers. Demographic Performa and Behavioral problems assessment rating scales were administered to mothers to assess behavioural problems of preschool children. Mild levels of Behavioral problems were reported by 40% of working mothers and 83.3% of non-working mothers, whereas 16.7% of non-working mothers and 60% of working mothers reported moderate behavioral problems among their children. There was a significant difference in the level of Behavioral problems of preschool children. There was also a significant association between the Behavioral problems of the preschool children among working mothers and the age of the child.<sup>7</sup>

Sandip S Jogdand and JD Naik (2014) conducted a cross sectional study on family factors in association with Behavior problems amongst children of 6-18 years age group at an adopted urban slum area of GMC Hospital Miraj. Parents of children in the study group and in some context children themselves were interviewed with the help of predesigned, pretested Performa. A total 600 children in the age group of 6-18 years were enrolled for the study through a simple random sampling method. Their socio-demographic data and information regarding Behavior was recorded. The study revealed a significant association between loss of parents, alcoholism in parents, absence of parents and prevalence rate of Behavior problems.<sup>8</sup>

Masare MS, Bansode SS and Shinde RR (2017) conducted a cross-sectional study on Behavioral problems of secondary school children and related socio-demographic factors. The data was collected from 304 secondary school children studying in 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> standard using self-rated strength and difficulty questionnaire (SDQ). The study findings reveals that the prevalence of abnormal behaviour was 1.6%, while the prevalence of borderline abnormal behaviour was 11.2% and the majority 87.2% of the study subjects were normal having no Behavioral problems. Socio-demographic factors such as age and sex of the children, type of family and occupation of the father was found to be significantly associated with the Behavioral problems of study subjects.<sup>9</sup>

Aghdam FB, Ahmadzadeh S, Hassanalizadeh Z, Ebrahmini F, Sabzmakan L, et al. (2013) conducted a descriptive and cross sectional study to assess the effect of maternal employment on the elementary and junior high school students. The study sample consisted of 583 students who were studying in the fifth, sixth and seventh grades in Maku. General health questionnaire was employed for gathering data, and the SPSS software was used for analyzing the data. The study findings indicated that there was a significant difference between the mental health problems, somatic problems, social functioning, anxiety, and depression of the students with employed and un-employed mothers.<sup>10</sup>

Anitha J, Jayasudha, and Kalaisalvi (2010) conducted a study to compare the Behavioral problems among preschool children of 100 employed and unemployed mothers in Bangalore. The result showed that among preschool children of employed mothers 33 (66%) of them had moderate Behavioral problems; 17(34%)

of them had mild Behavioral problems and none of them had severe Behavioral problems. Whereas among the preschool children of unemployed mothers maximum (78%) had mild behavioural problems, 11 (22%) had moderate behavioural problems and none had severe behavioural problems? The study concluded that there was a significant association between the levels of Behavioral problems among preschool children of employed and un-employed mother with their selected demographic variables.<sup>11</sup>

Moataz M, Abdel F, Abdel RAA, Saeed M. Al-Asmary, Nbil S. Al-Helali, Tawfiq M-. Al-Jabban, et al. (2004) conducted a cross sectional study in Saudi to determine the prevalence of emotional and Behavioral problems among male Saudi school children and identifying their risk factors. The sample consisted of 1313 students. The participants were selected using a random sampling technique. The study was conducted in two phases: a cross-sectional Approach (screening phase) to assess their emotional and Behavioral problems and a case control phase to study risk factors. Among the 1313 participants, 109(8.3%) were emotionally or behaviorally disturbed students. Among the studied socio-demographic variables, educational level, and the mother's occupation (working versus non-working) were associated with a higher risk of developing emotional and Behavioral disturbance.<sup>12</sup>

## MATERIAL AND METHODS:

### RESEARCH APPROACH:

Non experimental qualitative Research Approach.

### RESEARCH DESIGN

The investigator has employed the non-experimental comparative Research design to compare the Behavioral problems of children among Working and Non-Working mothers.

### RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

In the present study the researcher has used two tools to collect the data from Working and Non-Working mothers. These are as follows:

**Part A:** Demographic Performa to collect the baseline data.

**Part B:** Semi-structured tool named as Child Behavior Assessment Scale to assess the behavioural problems of children.

### RESULTS:

The data was tabulated, analysed and interpreted using inferential and descriptive statistics methods.

**Table 1: Frequency and percentage distribution of the working and non-working mothers depending upon their demographic variables N=120**

Sr. No	Demographic variables	Working mothers		Non-working mothers	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
<b>1</b>	<b>Occupation of the mother</b>				
	a) Daily wages	08	13.3%	00	00.00%
	b) House wife	00	0.00%	60	100.00%
	c) Private job	31	51.7%	00	00.00%
	d) Government job	06	10.00%	00	00.00%
	e) Others	15	25.00%	00	00.00%
<b>2</b>	<b>Type of family</b>				
	a) Nuclear	28	46.7%	34	56.7%
	b) Joint	30	50.00%	25	41.7%
	c) Extended	2	3.3%	01	01.7%
<b>3</b>	<b>Number of children</b>				
	a) One	13	21.7%	13	21.7%
	b) Two	28	46.7%	29	48.3%
	c) Three	10	16.7%	10	16.7%
	d) Four or more	9	15.00%	08	13.3%
<b>4</b>	<b>Age of the child</b>				

	a) 4-6 years	16	26.7%	27	45.00%
	b) 7-9 years	19	31.7%	19	31.7%
	c) 10-12 years	25	41.7%	14	23.3%
<b>5</b>	<b>Order/position of the child</b>				
	a) First child	25	41.7%	29	48.3%
	b) Middle child	12	20.0%	13	21.7%
	c) Last child	23	38.3%	18	30.00%
<b>6</b>	<b>Gender of the child</b>				
	a) Male	35	58.3%	36	60.00%
	b) Female	25	41.7%	24	40.00%

**Table 2: Behavioral problems of children among working and non-working mothers**  
N=120

Sl. No.	Grading and Scoring		Frequency	Percentage
1	Normal behavior	Working mothers	15	25.00%
		Non-working mothers	34	56.67%
2	Borderline behavior	Working mothers	36	60.00%
		Non-working mothers	20	33.33%
3	Abnormal behavior	Working mothers	09	15.00%
		Non-working mothers	06	10.00%

The calculated mean value of Behavioral problems of children among working and non-working mothers was  $16.05 \pm 6.279$ .

**Table 3: Mean, standard deviation, mean difference, standard error and "t" value of Behavioral problems of children among working and non-working mothers**

Sr. No.	Group	Mean	Standard deviation (SD)	Mean difference	Standard error (SE)	df	t value
1	Working mothers (N=60)	17.58	5.670	3.067	1.187	118	2.748
2	Non-working mothers (N=60)	14.52	6.526				

$T_{118} = 1.980$   $t_{tab} < t_{cal}$  \*Significant at 0.05 level

**Table 4: Mean and standard deviations of Behavioral problem scores of children among working and non-working mothers on different dimensions of behaviour.**

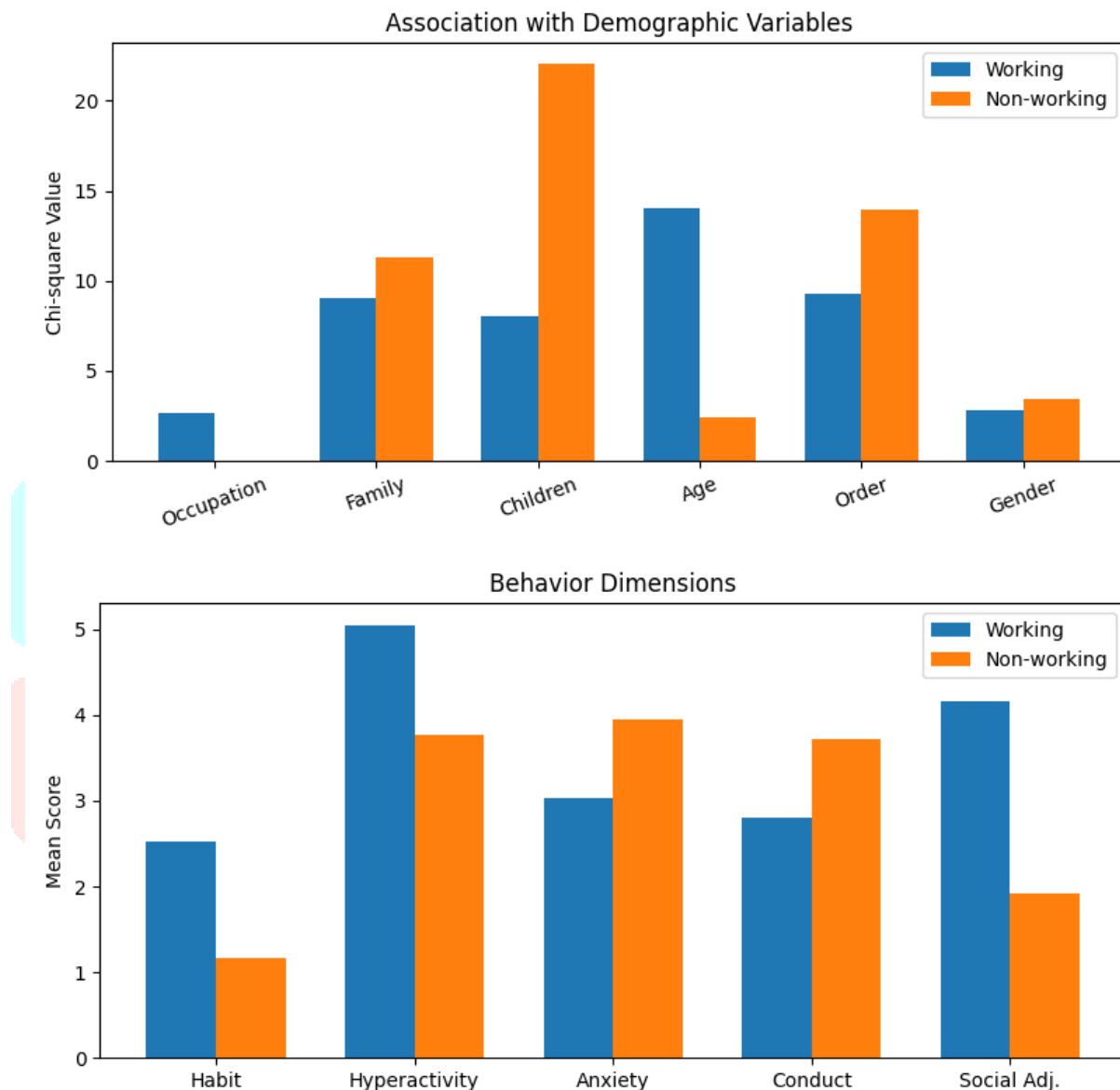
Groups	Habit problems		Hyperactivity		Anxiety		Conduct problems		Social adjustment	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Working mothers (N=60)	2.53	1.73	5.05	2.41	3.03	1.74	2.80	1.92	4.17	1.97
Non-working mothers (N=60)	1.17	1.62	3.77	2.04	3.95	2.12	3.72	1.99	1.92	2.14

**Table 5: Chi square test to find the association between the Behavioral problems of children and demographic variables of working mothers**

Sr. No	Demographic variable	Working Mothers (N=60)		Non working Mothers (N=60)	
		Chi square value ( $\chi^2$ )	P Value	Chi square value ( $\chi^2$ )	P Value
1	Occupation	2.653	0.902	n/a	n/a
2	Type of family	9.056	0.032	11.293	0.009
3	Number of children	8.054	0.199	22.101	0.00
4	Age of the child	14.023	0.004	2.406	0.704
5	Order of the child	9.264	0.046	13.946	0.003
6	Gender of the child	2.789	0.283	3.474	0.223

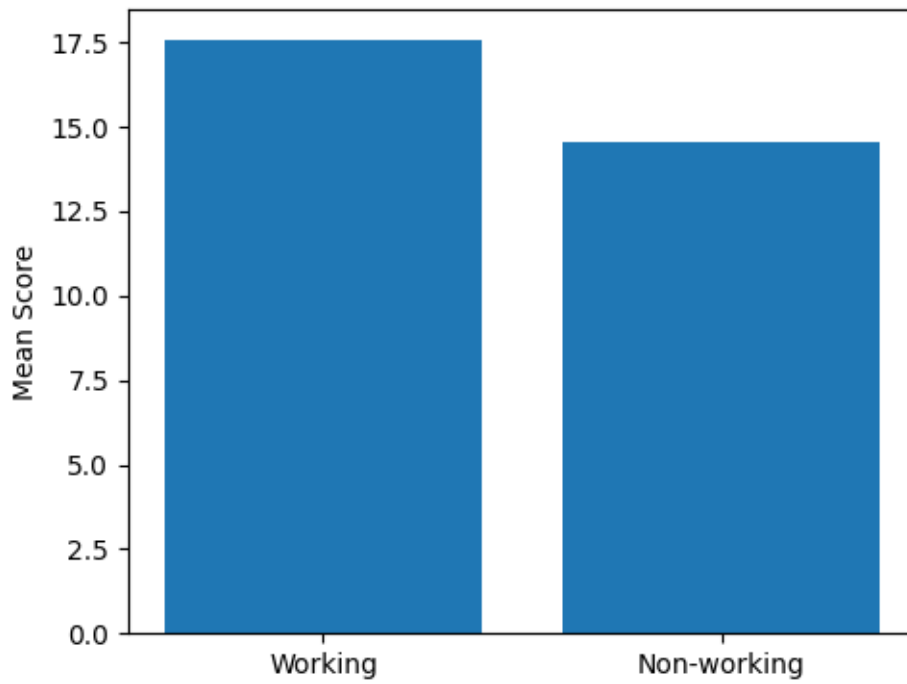
P<0.05 level of significance

Unpaired “t” value (t=2.748) at 0.05 level of significance revealed that there was a significant difference between the behavioral problems of children among working and non-working mothers. Comparing the mean score of working and non-working mothers it can be stated that working mothers had higher mean score as compared to those of non-working mothers (Table-3).

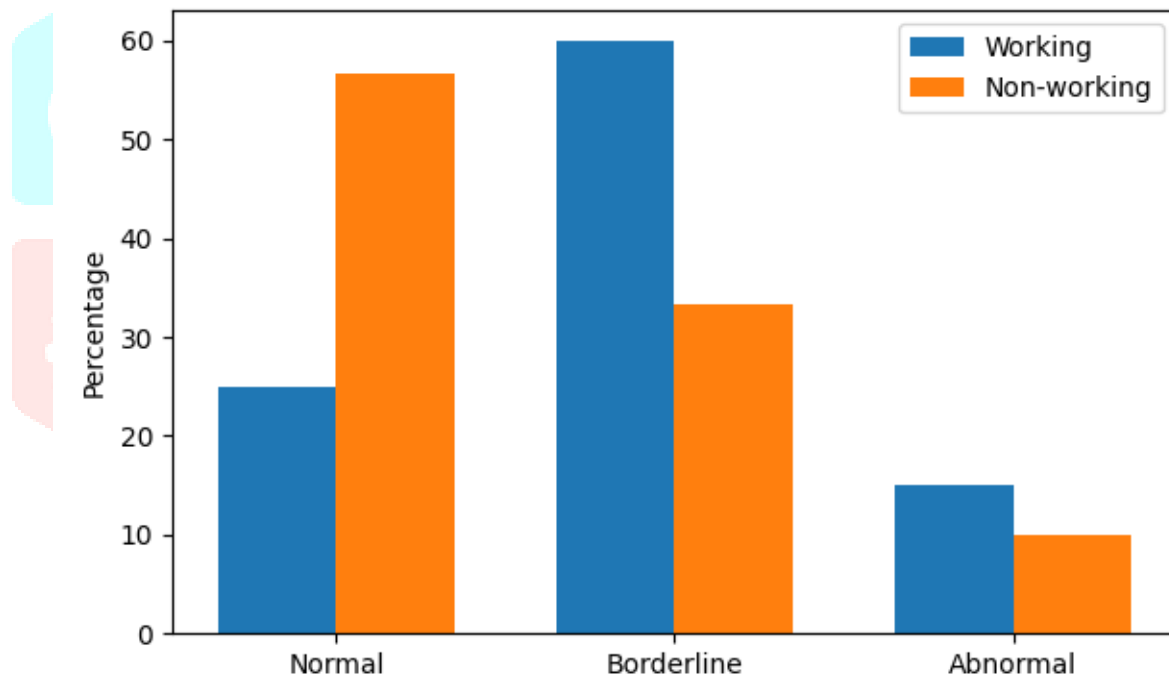


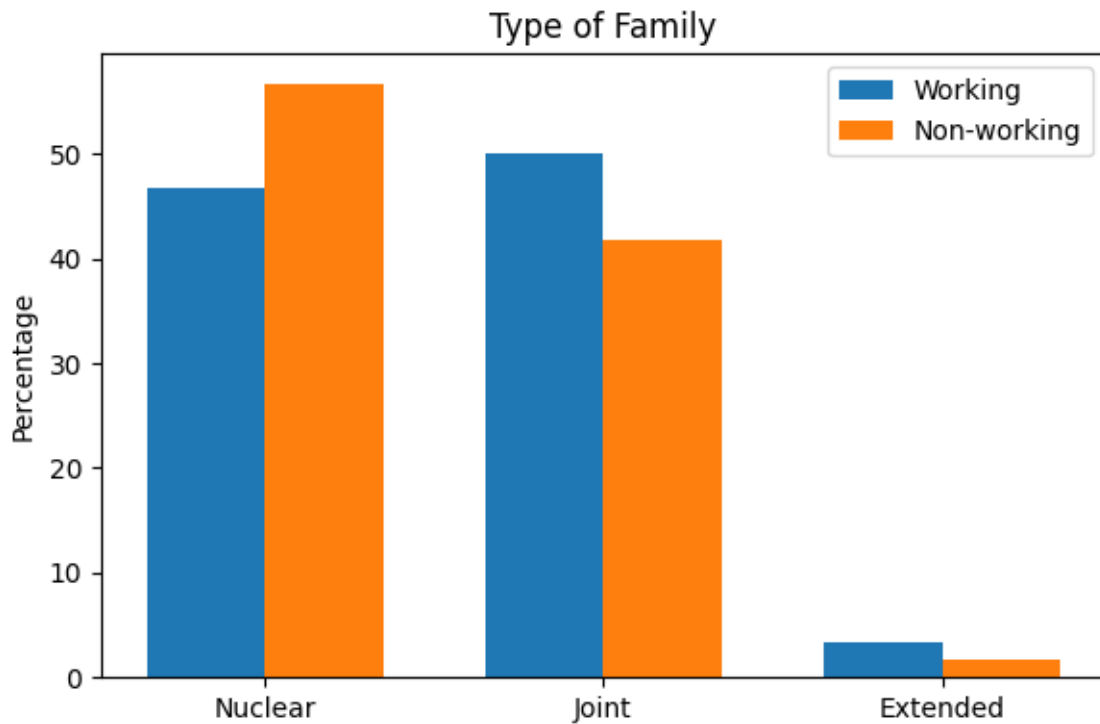
The calculated mean value of Behavioral problems of children among working and non-working mothers was 16.05±6.279.

### Mean Behavioral Problem Scores



### Behavioral Problems Classification





The above diagrams revealed that:

- Children among working mothers had higher habit problems and were more hyperactive as compared to those among non-working mothers.
- Children among non-working mothers had more anxiety, conduct and social problems as compared to the children among working mothers.

**Thus it can be interpreted from the obtained results that:**

- There was a significant association between type of family ( $p=0.032$ ), number of children ( $p=0.199$ ), age of the child ( $p=0.004$ ), gender of the child ( $p=0.283$ ) and behavioral problems of working mothers
- There was a significant association between the type of family ( $p=0.009$ ), number of children ( $p=0.00$ ), birth order of the child ( $p=0.003$ ), gender of the child ( $p=0.223$ ) and behavioral problems of non working mothers
- The demographic characteristics of working and non working mothers had a significant influence on the occurrence of Behavioral problems in their children.

## CONCLUSION:

The present study on **behavioral problems among children of working and non-working mothers** highlights the significant influence of the family environment and parental involvement on the behavioral development of children. The findings indicate that behavioral problems are observed among children of both working and non-working mothers, although the nature and extent of these problems may vary between the two groups. This suggests that maternal employment status alone is not the sole determinant of a child's behavior; rather, multiple factors such as parenting style, quality of parent-child interaction, family support, socioeconomic conditions, educational background, and the overall home environment contribute to children's behavioral outcomes. The study emphasizes that children require consistent emotional support, supervision, guidance, and positive communication irrespective of whether their mothers are employed or not. Children of working mothers may face challenges related to reduced parental availability due to work commitments, whereas children of non-working mothers may experience behavioral issues arising from other environmental or familial factors. Therefore, the quality of care and attention provided to children is more important than the employment status of the mother. The findings further suggest that early identification and management of behavioral problems are essential to prevent adverse effects on children's academic performance, social relationships, emotional well-being, and future development. Parents should be encouraged to maintain healthy communication with their children, spend quality time with them, monitor their activities, and provide emotional security. Schools, healthcare

professionals, and community organizations should also collaborate in promoting awareness regarding behavioral problems and providing counseling and support services for children and their families.

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that behavioral problems among children are multifactorial in nature and require a holistic approach for prevention and management. Maternal employment should not be viewed solely as a risk factor; instead, emphasis should be placed on fostering a nurturing, supportive, and stable environment that promotes the healthy behavioral and psychosocial development of children. The results of this study may serve as a valuable resource for nurses, educators, researchers, and policymakers in planning interventions and programs aimed at improving child mental health and family well-being.

The present study was conducted with the purpose of assessing the Behavioral problems of children among working and non-working mothers in Race Course area of Dehradun. On the basis of the results it can be concluded that there was a significant difference in the occurrence of behavioral problems in children among working and non-working mothers. Majority of the children, 36(60%) among working mothers were having

Borderline behaviour whereas among non-working mothers majority of children, 34(56.67%) were having normal Behavior. Furthermore it explores a higher level of hyperactivity, habit and social adjustment problems in children among working mothers. The research findings also reported a greater level of anxiety and conduct problems among children of non-working mothers. This study confirms that there was a significant association between Behavioral problems of children and their selected demographic variables such as type of family, birth order and gender of the child at 0.05 level of significance.

#### • **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- A similar study can be done on a larger group of samples and for a longer period.
- An exploratory study can be conducted to assess the prevalence and risk factors of Behavioral problems in children.
- An exploratory study can be done on knowledge and attitude of caregivers about behaviour disorders in children
- An experimental study can be carried out to evaluate the effectiveness of structured teaching programmes and prevention and management of Behavioral disorders in children.
- Similar studies may be conducted with a larger sample size to improve the generalizability of findings.
- Comparative studies can be undertaken in different geographical areas, cultural settings, and socioeconomic groups.
- Longitudinal studies may be conducted to assess the long-term effects of maternal employment on children's behavioral outcomes.
- Research can be carried out to evaluate the effectiveness of parenting interventions and counseling programs in reducing behavioral problems among children.
- Further studies may explore the influence of additional factors such as parenting style, family structure, parental education, and socioeconomic status on children's behavior.

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