

## **A Descriptive Study to Assess the Relationship between Self-Esteem and Depression in the Wives of Alcohol Dependent Persons and Alcohol Non-Dependent Persons**

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**Abstract:** *Universally marriage is one of the most cherished and socially acclaimed interpersonal spheres of life. Historically, the Indian system portrays marriage as a holy commitment in which man and woman get into a long lasting relationship of integrity that include the physical, psychological and spiritual dimensions. The Journal of American Medical Association provides the elaborate definition on alcoholism, "Alcoholism is a primary, chronic disease with genetic, psychosocial, and environmental factors influencing its development and manifestations. The disease is often progressive and fatal. It is characterized by impaired control over drinking, preoccupation with alcohol, use of alcohol despite adverse consequences, and distortions in thinking, most notably denial." With alcoholism in the marriage, it becomes increasingly strenuous to be supportive in the family. Communication gets suspended, intimacy is lost, indignation builds, emotions are damaged, conflict escalates and goes unresolved, confidence and trust are broken and the quality of the relationship erodes over time as the problems of alcoholism advances with the time. Depression and low self-esteem are associated and contribute to negative effects in life. The present study is an attempt to find out the relationship between self-esteem and depression in wives of alcohol dependent and non-dependent persons. The study used descriptive research design. The universe of the study consisted of the wives of alcohol dependent persons and alcohol non-dependent persons, Trichy District. The researcher used simple random sampling method to select a sample. The sample size is 300 consisting of 150 wives of alcohol dependent persons and 150 wives of non-alcohol dependent persons matched on key socio demographic variables. Researcher used an interview schedule including scales on self –esteem and depression along with the socio-demographic factors to collect data. In comparison with the wives of non-alcohol dependent persons a vast majority of the wives of alcohol dependent persons suffer from low self-esteem and it has an impact in the level of depression.*

**Keywords:** *Wives of Alcohol Dependent Persons, wives of Alcohol Non-Dependent Persons, Alcoholism, Alcohol dependent Persons, Self-Esteem and Depression.*

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### **I. Introduction:**

Alcohol addictedness is seen today as the word's highly widespread public health problem and therefore alcoholism is a matter of alarming apprehension, not confined to any group, culture or country. Alcoholism is a complex disturbance and a progressively devastating disease. Gandhi, in an ascetic mode, envisioned a liquor free India. He championed legal prevention of alcohol. He also took into account the social cost of alcohol consumption. World Health Organization classifies drinkers into four categories: social, harmful, hazardous and dependent (Francis Jayapathy S.J.). The Journal of American Medical Association provides the elaborate definition on alcoholism, "Alcoholism is a primary, chronic disease with genetic, psychosocial, and environmental factors influencing its development and manifestations. The disease is often progressive and fatal. It is characterized by impaired control over drinking, preoccupation with alcohol, use of alcohol despite adverse consequences, and distortions in thinking, most notably denial."

Universally marriage is one of the most cherished and socially acclaimed interpersonal spheres of life. Historically, the Indian system portrays marriage as a holy commitment in which man and woman get into a long lasting relationship of integrity that include the physical, psychological and spiritual dimensions. With alcoholism in the marriage, it becomes increasingly strenuous to be supportive in the family. Communication gets suspended, intimacy is lost, indignation builds, emotions are damaged, conflict escalates and goes unresolved, confidence and trust are broken and the quality of the relationship erodes over time as the problems of alcoholism advances with the time. Depression and low self-esteem are associated and contribute to negative effects in life. These constant exposures results in low self-esteem leading to depression in the wives of alcohol

dependent persons. The low self – esteem and depression is expressed through narcissism, self-blame, temper, tension, shame, hopelessness, irritability, impatience etc.

The present study brought out that the wives of alcohol dependent persons face verbal and physical abuse and assaults. They are subjugated to public embarrassment by their husband. They are not respected by their relatives. These experiences result in low self-image. They are made responsible by their husband and his close relatives for their alcohol dependence. The husband does not support the family financially and he grabs the meagre earnings of the wife for his drink. The financial crisis makes their life all the more oppressive. They neither feel accepted nor integrated to their neighbors. The neighbors and relatives are not willing to support them financially because of the uncertainty of return. They suffer from severe depression. The present descriptive study is an attempt to bring out the correlation between the level of self -esteem and depression in the wives of alcohol dependent persons in comparison with the alcohol non-dependent persons. The researcher used standardized scales in interview schedule to collect the data from 300 respondents. SPSS was used for the statistical analysis.

### **Review Of Literature:**

Ranjan T.P,et.al., (2010) studied the presumptive stressful life events among spouses of alcohol dependence on sample 100 spouses of alcohol dependence (experimental group) and 100 spouses of non-alcohol dependence (Control group). They found various problems faced by spouses of alcohol dependence that 73.0% wives of alcohol dependence were facing physical abuse while spouses of non-alcohol dependence were facing only 17%. Different types of emotional problems present were 89% in spouses of alcohol dependence including problems of insecurity. This in turn leads them to experience low self-esteem.

Sumanpreet Kaur (2016) had undertaken a Descriptive Study to assess Depression and Co-dependency among Wives of Alcoholics in a selected Rural Community of Gurdaspur, Punjab. The aim of the study was to combat with co-dependency and depression among wives of alcoholics by preparing and distributing guidelines for prevention of co-dependency and depression. ANOVA was applied to assess association of co-dependency and depression with selected socio-demographic variables Age, occupation, monthly family income, number of year of marriage, number of children were found associated with level of co-dependency and depression whereas number of years of alcohol dependence of partner was found associated with co-dependency only at  $p < 0.05$ . Pearson's coefficient of correlation showed positive ( $r = +0.763$ ) correlation between co-dependency and depression.

### **Need Of The Study:**

Human beings are created to live a life with magnificence, dignity and respect. Human life becomes effective because of the love, happiness, acceptance, peace, harmony etc., that they experience in the company of their loved ones. In India marriage has been an important social institution. The Indian family is considered strong, stable, close resilient and enduring. Having a healthy and satisfying relationship is strongly related to the couple's ability to communicate effectively. Heavy alcohol use is associated with more negative and hostile communication, making the relationship more prone to tension and anger. With the chronic alcohol addiction the life of the couple becomes very chaotic. The wife gets traumatized with the unexpected reactions and experiences from the husband. She feels confused and mentally sick with the husband's alcohol addiction. These negative experiences for considerable period of life result in low self-esteem as the wives of alcohol dependent persons find themselves with low inner energy to face life. This sense of worthlessness creates depression from mild to severe level. The wife feels sick but do not know the reason for her ill-health. There is inter-relation between low self-esteem and depression. These issues remain dormant and the society is not aware of these consequences of the husband's alcohol addiction. It is highly relevant to undertake a study to find out the interrelatedness between low self-esteem and depression as a consequence of the alcohol addiction behavior of the husband.

### **Statement Of The Problem:**

Worldwide, 3.3 million deaths every year result from harmful use of alcohol, this represent 5.9 % of all deaths. The harmful use of alcohol is a causal factor in more than 60 types of disease and injury conditions (WHO, 2011). The alcoholic addiction of the husband can create significant mental trauma and physical health problems to the wife. She suffers physical, societal, emotional and economic problems. The relationship between the couples faces marital disruptions, poor cohesion, lack of expressiveness and recreational orientation. Alcoholism known as a family disease disrupts the normal life of the two billion families all over the globe. The wives of alcohol dependent persons exhibit the symptoms of depression like a lack of interest and pleasure in daily activities, significant weight loss or gain, insomnia or excessive sleeping, lack of energy, inability to concentrate, feelings of worthlessness or excessive guilt and recurrent thoughts of death or suicide. Their low self-esteem is characterized by relatively high levels of uncertainty, instability and inconsistency. She

tries to build up self-confidence in her to manage the households. But she fails to do so because of her weakened mental capacity. The alcoholic uses such derogatory comments about the wife's family and ridicule them. With repeated exposure to such abuses she suffers from depression and it reduces her self-esteem.

**Objectives:**

1. To describe the sociodemographic features of the respondents
2. To assess the relationship between self-esteem and depression in the respondents
3. To make suggestions towards the well-being of the respondents.

**Operational Definitions:**

**Wives of Alcohol Dependent Persons:** It refers to wives of alcohol dependent persons who are living with their alcoholic husband for more than two years and the age between 20-60 years.

**Wives of Alcohol Non- Dependent Persons:** It refers to wives of teetotalers (non- alcohol dependent persons) who are living with their husband for more than two years and the age between 20-60 years.

**Alcoholism:** It refers to continued excessive or compulsive use of alcoholic drinks and becomes unable to live a normal and healthy life. The person becomes physically dependent with the manifestation of withdrawal symptoms when the person stops alcohol. They also encounter personal, familial, legal and social problems arising from excess use of alcohol.

**Alcohol dependent Persons:** It refers to a person (married male) who indulges in drinking alcohol excessively on a daily basis. A good number of them begin their day with a drink and end the day with heavy consumption of alcohol. He suffers from alcoholism and becomes dependent on alcohol for his existence.

**Self-Esteem:** Self-esteem is commonly defined as the belief that a person is accepted, connected, unique, powerful, and capable.

**Depression:** Depression in the wives of alcoholic spouses causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest and can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems in the wives.

**II. Method Of Data Collection:**

**Population:** Wives of alcohol dependent persons and alcohol non-dependent persons, Trichy District.

**Sample Size:** A sample of 300 wives of alcoholic dependents and alcohol non-dependent persons constituted the size of the sample.

**Sampling Procedure:** The researcher used simple random sampling method to select a sample of 150 wives of alcohol dependent persons and 150 wives of alcohol non- dependent persons from the universe.

**Socio-Demographic Factors:**

The percentage analysis on the Socio-demographic factors has given the following major findings. A vast majority (91.7%) of the respondents are from the age group between 20 years to 50 years. 72% of the respondents belong to Hinduism, 2.3% are from Islam and 25.7% belong to Christianity. 74% of the respondents live in urban area, 15.7% live in rural villages and 10.3% live in semi-urban area. More than half of the respondents (55%) remain as house wives without any personal earnings. The remaining 44% are employed in both government and private sectors. These 44% earn between Rs.2000/- to Rs.10,000/- per month.

**Karl Pearson's Co-Efficient Of Correlation Analysis:**

Overall Self esteem	Wives of Alcohol Dependent Persons.		Wives of Non-Alcohol Dependent Persons.	
	Correlation value	Statistical inference	Correlation value	Statistical inference
Depression	.182*	p<0.05 Significant	-.180*	p<0.05 Significant

It is observed that with regard to the relationship between self-esteem and depression Karl Pearson's Co-Efficient of Correlation test shows a significant relationship. The correlation value of the wives of alcohol dependent persons is .182\* and it shows a positive correlation between self-esteem and depression. In case of the wives of non-alcohol dependent persons the test shows a negative correlation with the value -.180\*. This indicates that nearly half (43.3%) of the wives of alcohol dependent persons with low self- esteem have extremely severe depression in their life as against (3.3%) of the wives of non-alcohol dependent persons. This significant correlation has high statistical significance. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

**III. Results On Discussion:**

A vast majority of the respondents 93.4% of the wives of alcohol dependent persons are between the age group from 20 years to 50 years. These are the most productive years in human life and the wives of alcohol dependent persons in this age group face numerous negative experiences. This observation is further

confirmed by Jancy Raj(2000) in her doctoral research. She has stated that as the years roll by the problems and sufferings increase which certainly affect the wife's self-concept. She tries to build up self-confidence in her to manage the households. But she fails to do so because of her weakened mental capacity due to her alcohol dependent husband.

The problems of the wives of alcohol dependent persons are inter-connected. They face physical, emotional, social and economic problems both in their personal and family life. This gets reflected in their low self-esteem. Another study by Ranjan T.P,et.al.,(2010) highlights that the wives of alcohol dependent persons face different types of emotional problems and in his study 89% of them had such problems. This in turn leads them to experience low self-esteem. The results of the past researches also brought out similar inter-relations between self-esteem and depression. In case of wives of non-alcohol dependent persons, they have more warm and cordial home atmosphere and they considered for what they are to the family. They have the support of the family as well as the husband in times of difficulties and problems. The recognition and acceptance enable them to have high self-esteem. Their life is one of contentment and worth living. So they are not in a constant experience of depression. There may be certain occasional experience of depression due to certain negative experience but they are only momentary. Rev.Electronica Saude (2012) in her study showed that 90% of wives of alcohol dependent persons had signs of depression and qualified the marital relationship as stressful and confrontational. In the present study Karl Pearson's Co-Efficient of Correlation test shows a significant relationship between the level of self-esteem and levels of depression in both the groups.

The wives of alcohol dependent persons also expressed the symptoms of depression in their life as mentioned by Dr.Nilesh et.al.,(2003) in their research such as sad mood, poor sleep, depressive thoughts of worthlessness and low self-confidence; Anxiety and depressive symptoms are difficulty concentrating or mind going blank, sleep disturbances, fatigue or low energy, irritability, worry, being easily moved to tears, hyper vigilance, anticipating the worst, hopelessness and low self-esteem or feelings of worthlessness. The level of self-esteem contributes a maximum towards depression. There is a significant relationship between the level of self-esteem and depression.

#### **IV. Findings And Suggestions:**

Age is an important factor in this present study. A vast majority (91.7%) of the respondents are from the age group between 20 years to 50 years. The problems of the wives of alcohol dependent persons are inter-connected. The wives of alcohol dependent persons face physical, emotional, social and economic problems both in their personal and family life. This gets reflected in their low self-esteem. The level of self-esteem contributes a maximum towards depression. There is a significant relationship between the level of self-esteem and depression. The treatment cum rehabilitation centers need to make a constructive action plan in their treatment package to rebuild the level of self-esteem and to provide psychiatric treatment to overcome depression in the wives of alcohol dependent persons.

#### **V. Conclusion:**

A stable and satisfying marriage can provide a powerful source of emotional and instrumental support throughout human life, and is associated with increased economic well-being, mental health, and physical health. The present study describes that the wives of non-alcohol dependent persons have more satisfying marital relationship and family environment. This has resulted in their level of self-esteem and depression. The wives of alcohol dependent persons on the other hand were constantly exposed to negative situations and atmosphere. Their low self-esteem contributed in their level of depression. Their life gets jeopardized and the study emphasizes the need for their treatment cum rehabilitation.

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