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To study the existing levels of self management skills among farm women during covid-19 in Telangana state

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Abstract

In India, 85% of rural women are engaged in agriculture sector. The women in rural and agricultural livelihoods have been impacted more during covid-19. They have negative downstream effects on their livelihoods. Since Covid-19 causes several psychological problems like distress, irritability, tensions and anxieties that intern effect their work production, parenting and quality of life (WHO, 2020) [9]. Hence it is imperative to examine the status of Self management skills among farm women during covid-19. A sample of 60 farm women from four villages of Nalgonda district in Telangana state were selected by using purposive sampling method. Self developed interview schedule was used to assess the status of self-management skills among farm women. The components of Self management skills such as self-awareness, self-care, self-monitoring, self-motivation, self-control, self-confidence, positive thinking, problem solving, time management and stress management were included under the study. It was found that in all the ten components about sixty per cent of the farm women were low followed by medium. Very few farm women were good in all the components of self-management skills during covid -19. The results of the study also revealed that majority (65%) of the farm women were found to be low among overall Self management skills followed by medium (32%) and only meager per cent (3%) of farm women were found to be high. Hence, it can be suggested that Self -Management intervention programs are essential for farm women in order to lead healthy life and to enhance their physical and psychological wellbeing during pandemic.

Keywords: Covid -19 self management skills, covid-19. Farm women, self-awareness, self- monitoring, self-motivation, self-control

Introduction

Self management, which is also referred to as “self-control” or “self-regulation,” is the ability to regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. Self-management skills are the abilities that allow people to control their emotions, thoughts and actions. This includes managing stress, delaying gratification, motivating oneself and setting and working towards personal goals. Person who have strong self-management skills are able to cope up with stressful situations, regulate their own emotions, monitor, control and evaluate their self accurately and maintain better health status and perceived psychological wellbeing. Individual with strong self-management skills arrive to pay attention, follow directions and work independently with focus.

In India, agriculture is a back of Indian economy about 85% of rural women are engaged in agriculture. Since Covid -19 pandemic caused disruptions in psychological health, economic, social life of people at all stages, especially women. The women in rural and agricultural livelihoods have been impacted more during covid-19. They have negative downstream effects on their livelihoods. Studies also revealed that Farm women were facing many managerial problems in their daily life and most of the women in agriculture were penalized with extra burdens due to loss of income, disproportionate household responsibilities, home schooling and care of family, facing difficulties in making decisions in work arrangements and poor self-care due to inadequate management skills (Dewangan, R.L 2020) [3] and often experiencing psychological problems like distress, irritability, tensions and anxieties that intern effect their work production, parenting and quality of life. Hence enhancing psychological resilience is most essential to cope with the crisis situations and providing psychological support based on the population characteristics are essential (WHO, 2020) [9].

Major Self management components

The components of Self management skills like Self-awareness, Self-care, Self- monitoring, Self-motivation, Self-control, Self-confidence, Positive thinking, Problem solving, Time management and Stress management skills help in promoting physical and psychological wellbeing among farm women.

Review of literature

Ramiz *et al.* (2021) [6] study on impact of mental health of adults before and during covid- 19 pandemic found that the proportion of anxiety increased an average self rated level of mental health was decreased. It was associated with an increase in anxiety and depression symptoms and poor self rated level of physical health were increased more in women, then the elderly and youngest people.

Rawat *et al.* (2021) [7] stated that mental stress, eating and sleeping patterns and level of physical activity found to be affected among males and female participants at the age range of 18-70 years during pandemic.

Shahriarirad *et al.* (2021) [8] the study is used to evaluate the burden of psychological problems among Iran population during covid-19 outbreak. Based on the demographic variables, female gender 66.4% was associated with a higher risk for developing depression and anxiety symptoms. The researcher suggests that establishing a targeted mental health support program for public emergencies such as disease outbreak during the time of pandemic.

Bhat *et al.* (2020) [1] taken up a study with an aim to know the levels of psychological impact, anxiety, depression and stress along with the economic downfall disturbing the social life of people during the initial stage of the COVID-19 outbreak. The results showed that 67.5% have psychological problems, 48.5% have economic, 53.5% social problems and academic problems continuous during covid-19. The studies showed that fear causes stress and the effectiveness of the immune system. Further, it was suggested that to cope with COVID-19 lockdown stress, people should keep themselves busy in physical activities, religious activities and social work and also enhancing coping skills to reduce the stress during covid-19.

Boca *et al.* (2020) [2] study says working women with young children aged 0-5 are those particularly affected, specially work- family life balance cause excess burden to an higher extent. It is difficult to achieve for those with partners who

continue to work outside the home during the emergency. Specially working women have more difficult to manage work and family during COVID-19.

Dewangan (2020) [3] suggested that that pandemic can cause several psychological distresses like depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress and insomnia and also expression of negative emotions and social sensitivity increased sharply, whereas the expression of positive emotion decreased in Older individuals, females and health workers it have been identified as most prone to the mental health crisis during and after this pandemic.

Pandey *et al.* (2020) [4] stated that Covid-19 is a pandemic which has affected the world, infects a large number of people and causing a large number of deaths. The research paper says that covid-19 is leading to negative impact on people in the form of economic & health impacts. The effect is more in women than on men.

Material and Methods

The present study was conducted in rural areas of Telangana state by using an experimental research design. A total of 60 farm women were selected by purposive sampling technique. Data was collected by administering an interview schedule on Self management skills.

Based on the review of literature, ten statements were framed under each head of core set of management skills. Thus, a total of hundred statements were framed under schedule. For each statement there are three responses in terms of Mostly, Sometimes and Never. The ten components of scale include self-awareness, self-care, self-monitoring, self-motivation, self- control, self-confidence, positive thinking, problem solving, time management and stress management skills. The scale was subjected to scrutiny by a panel of experts from the field of human development and family studies to determine the relevancy and suitability for inclusion under each component. The data on self-management skills of farm women was calculated, tabulated and presented in detail.

Results and Discussion

The Status of Self management skills includes self-awareness, self-care, self-monitoring, self-motivation, Self-control, self-confidence, positive thinking, problem solving, time management and stress management skills were studied and presented below.

Table 1: Distribution of Farm women based on the scores obtained on components of Self Management skills

(n=60)

S. No	Components of Self Management	Levels of Self Management Skills					
		Low		Medium		High	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Self-awareness	36	60	14	23	10	17
2.	Self-care	36	60	16	27	8	13
3.	Self-monitoring	35	58	16	27	9	15
4.	Self-motivation	43	72	10	17	07	11
5.	Self-control	34	57	12	20	14	23
6.	Self-confidence	38	63	16	27	06	10
7.	Positive thinking	34	57	14	23	12	20
8.	Problem solving	38	63	12	20	10	17
9.	Time-management	34	57	16	26	10	17
10.	Stress-management	38	63	16	27	06	10

Note: "F" represents frequency and "%" represents percentage

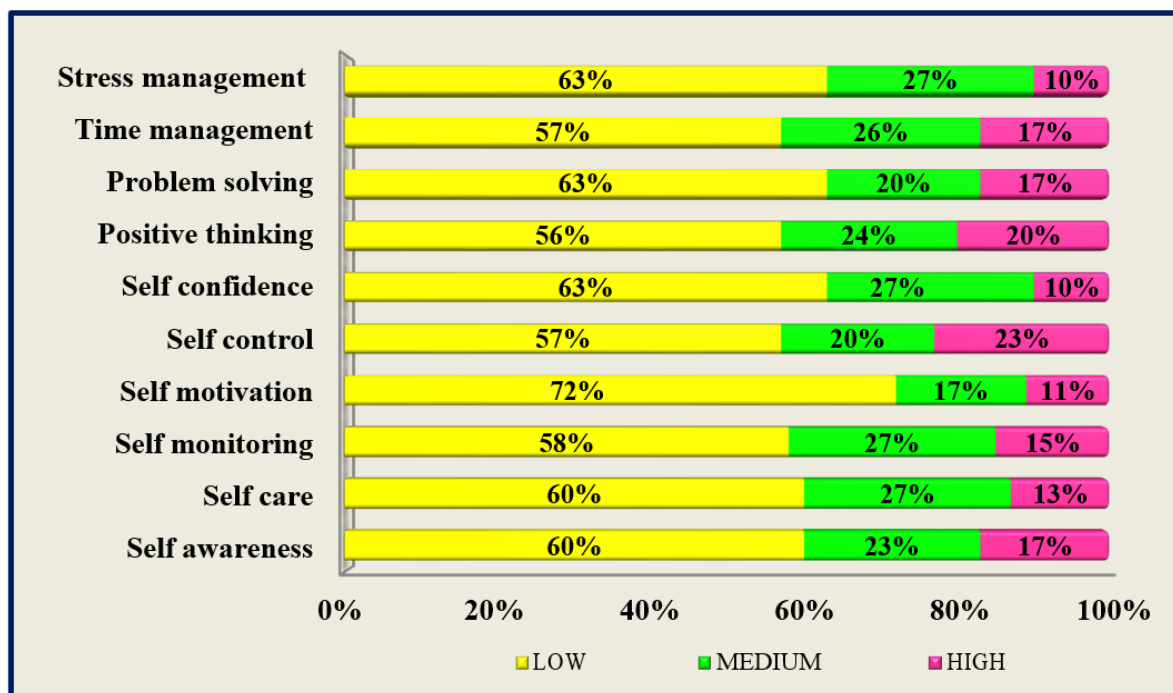


Fig 1: Distribution of Self management skills among rural farm women.

Existing levels of Self-awareness Skills

From the above table 1, it can be revealed that nearly two thirds (60%) of the respondents had low level of self-awareness followed by moderate self-awareness (23%) and very few (17%) had high awareness about their own self. It can be inferred that majority of the respondents had poor understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses like the areas where they can perform well and where they lack behind and needs improvement in managing things during pandemic and they were not able to focus on the things within their control like safeguarding their physical and mental health, managing children and resources available to them etc. and become more worried about the things beyond their control like why pandemic came, why government kept lock down and when schools will reopen etc. and often experiencing stress, tensions and frustrations. This might be due to the reason that majority of farm women were not much trained on self-reflection and self introspection.

Existing levels on self-care skills

From the above table 1, it can be revealed that majority (60%) of the respondents had low level of self-care followed by moderate level (27%) and very few (13%) had high level of self-care during pandemic. This indicates that majority of the respondents were not taking proper self-care in terms of both physical and mental health. They were not taking good physical care like maintaining personal hygiene, following safety measures like social distancing, wearing mask, taking balanced nutrition and adequate rest to body etc. They were not keeping good.

Efforts to modify their old habits to improve their health and not paying much attention to their eating habits like including protein diet, fruits and vegetables to boot up their immune system. Apart from these, they were also neglecting minor health alignments like cough, cold, fever and mild symptoms of covid -19. It was also important to notice that majority of farm women were poor interms of their mental health care like keeping themselves in a comfortable position by maintaining balance between the demands of others and self,

safeguarding their emotional and psychological health by taking adequate rest and sleep hours, keeping them free from stress, anxieties and frustrations by staying calm and engaging in activities like practicing yoga and meditation etc.

Existing levels on self-monitoring skills

It is interesting to note from the above table 1, that nearly sixty per cent (58%) of the respondents had low self-monitoring skills followed by moderate self-monitoring skills (27%) and very few (15%) had high self-monitoring skills during the pandemic. It indicates that over half of respondents were not much aware about how to keep record of their personal health habits like sleeping patterns, personal hygiene, diet patterns to boost up their physical strength and immunity during pandemic. They were also poor in paying close and immediate attention to mild symptoms of covid-19 like cough, cold and fever, diarrhea, body aches etc. They were also not much serious about isolating themselves from others, seeking medical attention and informing medical authority as soon as symptoms appear. This might be because majority of the farm women were not much trained and habituated to track and record their own behaviors. This also might be due to presence of unfavorable attitudes among respondents like all the symptoms were not related to covid-19 and need not be paid much attention. Hence they were more insensitive and carelessness towards checking their health habits, plan for betterment and reviewing their progress during pandemic.

Existing levels on self-motivation skills

From the above table 1, it was revealed that majority (72%) of the respondents had low levels of self-motivation. Very few (17%) had moderate self-motivation levels followed by high levels of self-motivation (11%) before intervention. This indicates that majority of the respondents were not well motivated and encouraged by their inner self. They were not seeking internal rewards and were much dependent on external rewards and discouraged by external happenings. They were also not able to treat themselves with love and

respect, not much energized by themselves for taking care of their physical and psychological wellbeing, in setting and achieving goals for their own life and managing their own behaviour. They were less compassionate towards themselves and often blamed themselves for the things happening to them and were unable to accept them as they are.

Existing levels on self-control skills

From the above table and figure 1, it was revealed that nearly two thirds (57%) of the respondents had low level of self-control followed by high (23%) and moderate level (20%). This indicates that more than half of the respondents had difficulty in managing and regulating their distorted feelings, unwanted thoughts and emotions like their family members may get covid-19, things may never become normal, their future will be more uncertain etc. and often became fearful, anxious, depressed and stressed out during the pandemic. They were unable to stay calm and resisted their impulsive thoughts and behaviours. Most often they were negatively reacting to situations instead of thinking and responding to them objectively. They often felt helpless and hopeless about pandemic as they felt there was nothing they could do during this pandemic.

Existing levels on self confidence

From the above table 1, it can be revealed that majority (63%) of the respondents had low level of self-confidence and slightly more than one fourth (27%) of them had moderate level and only a meagre per cent (10%) had high level of self-confidence during pandemic prior to the intervention. It can be inferred that majority of the respondents had poor confidence in themselves, they were not able to trust their own abilities and strengths and not able appreciate and doubted on their capabilities during the pandemic. They were not much confident about themselves that they can deal and cope with the situations on their own and can make critical decisions independently. Instead of depending on themselves, they often relied on their spouse or in - laws and friends in making simple decisions about their life. They perceived that they were not much strong enough to do things better on their own and expressed fear of anticipated failures and negative outcomes to try new things during pandemic.

Existing levels on Positive thinking skills

From the above table 1, it was noticed that more than half (57%) of the respondents had low level of positive thinking and only few (23%) had moderate level followed by high level. It can be inferred that nearly sixty per cent of the farm women had pessimistic thinking towards pandemic situation and also had more negative perceptions about their own selves. It indicates that farm women were looking at only negative aspects of pandemic but were not able to see the positive side of the situation. They did not felt that pandemic created opportunities to learn many things in their life like becoming harder to face challenges, trying things differently, finding solutions to problems, realising value of health and relations etc. Instead of thinking optimistic, they often dwell excessively upon the negative thoughts like why this situation happened to them and things will never become normal to them and often felt helpless and panicky during pandemic. They also felt that they were not much capable in dealing with different issues raised in covid-19 and often blamed themselves as they were not good enough in managing difficult situations.

Existing levels on Problem solving skills

Table 1 shows that majority (63%) of the respondents had low level of problem solving skills and only few (20%) had medium level followed by high level (17%). It indicates that nearly two thirds of the respondents were not skillful in dealing with their own problems. They were only looking at the problem and become more passive or just left the problem instead of thinking about how to deal with it effectively and focusing on what were the ways to solve them and which alternative course of action to be taken etc. They were not much aware about how to define clearly and communicate and reflect on their problems, how to seek out ideas from a wide variety of sources and ways to work out on the best solutions. Some of them knew about what are the causes for their problems and were able to think about few solutions but many of the respondents had difficulty in strategic thinking, systematic planning and making a decision about a solution by analyzing the effectiveness of each alternative solution. They were not much considerate about all the things that were a part of the problem before deciding a solution.

Existing levels on time management skills

From the above table 1, it was found that time management skills were low among more than half (57%) of the respondents and only about one fourth (26%) of them had moderate level and only very few of them (17%) had high level of time management skills. It indicates that more than half of the respondents were poor in terms of managing time constructively and effectively. Though to some extent they believed that time management is essential for successful completion of their work and there are chances for better management of their time but still majority of the farm women were not good at planning their activities before starting them and were not scheduling different activities based on the priority and based on their energy periods. Despite working more time on the important tasks like maintaining personal hygiene, adequate sleep hours, preparing healthy foods, physical exercises, yoga and meditation, attending to the household chores and needs of the children and family etc. they were wasting lot of their time on unnecessary things like gossiping more about pandemic, worrying more about future and excessive viewing of T.V. etc which are not at all mattered but only add stress.

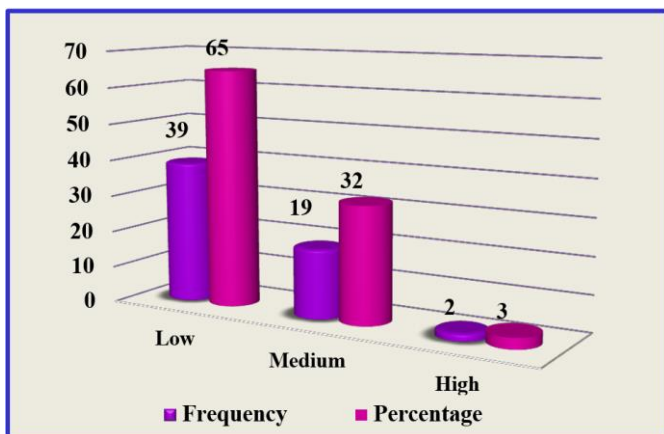
Existing levels on stress management skills

Table 1 reveals that nearly two thirds (63%) of farm women had low level of stress management skills and few (27%) had moderate level and meagre per cent (10%) had high level of stress management skills prior to the intervention. It can be inferred that majority of farm women had poor stress management skills prior to intervention. They were not able to identify and deal with different sources of stresses and often became frustrated in managing their works. They were not much able to tolerate and resist towards external pressures that put them under troubles and easily get disturbed by them during pandemic. They reported that even under the little stress they lost control over their behaviour, became emotionally unstable, impulsive, easily got frustrated and displaced their anger on their children. Some of them were adapting emotional regressive behaviour like feeling inferior and making arguments with others etc. They were not able to handle their stress, balance their emotions, cope with their anxieties and often experienced symptoms like insomnia, excessive mood swings and helplessness etc.

Table 2: Distribution of Farm women based on the overall scores obtained on components of Self management skills

(n=60)

S. No.	Level of Self Management skills (overall)	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
1.	LOW	39	65%
2.	MEDIUM	19	32%
3.	HIGH	2	3%

**Fig 2:** Level of Self management skills among farm women during covid-19

It can be depicted from the above Fig.2 that majority (65%) of the farm women were found to be low among overall Self management skills followed by medium (32%) and only meager per cent (3%) of farm women were found to be high level of self-management skills before intervention. It indicates that knowledge on different self-management skills was not adequate among most of the farm women during covid-19. This might be because most of the farm women were less educated and never exposed to training on self management skills.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that Self management plays crucial role in helping the farm women to cope with covid-19 pandemic. But it was found that the Self management skills like self-awareness, self-monitoring, self-motivation, self-control, self-care, self-confidence, positive thinking, problem solving, time management and stress management skills were found to be low among the majority of farm women during covid-19. Due to lack of different Self management skills farm women were unable to manage themselves in terms of constructive utilization of their time, solving their problems, coping with stressors, controlling their thoughts and emotions, taking care of their personal health and keep energized to perform their tasks etc. they were overwhelmed with pressures, anxieties and stress and unable to cope and deal with different challenges during pandemic. Hence, it is very essential to empower the psychological status of farm women by promoting various self-management skills to improve their inner strength to withstand external pressures, to deal with their own problems and setbacks, in balancing their work and family life, to protect their mental health and psychological wellbeing and to perform day to day activities effectively during the pandemic. The government should take steps to improve on the psychological aspects of farm women during pandemic. Personnel who are working for the empowerment of women should work on Self management intervention programmes as they give good support system and to lead a

productive and satisfied life for women in marginal communities.

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