



STUDY ON EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COUNSELLING ON THE LEVEL OF DEPRESSION OF THE COMPLAINANTS IN WOMEN HELPLINE COUNSELLING CENTRES

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Family is an ancient institution that has helped the humankind to survive all over these centuries. It is united by the ties of marriage, the members interacting and communicating with each other in their respective roles of husband and wife, mother and father, son and daughters, etc. It provides an environment of love, belongingness, security to its members, which guarantees them marital peace, fulfilment and growth. But today, the scenario is fast changing and the family, a very precious unit of the society, is being threatened by multifarious factors due to the uncontrolled invasion of Globalization.

Increasing family violence in modern times has compelled many social scientists to be apologists for the traditional joint family- as happy and harmonious, a high-voltage emotional setting, imbued with love, affection and tenderness. India's past has been so romanticized by certain scholars that they have regarded the joint family as the best form of family. There are data showing that in India 40 percent of women have experienced violence by an intimate partner. These stark figures underline the fact that, although the home and community are places where women provide care for others, there are also places where millions of women experience coercion and abuse.

In view of the rising crime against women, the State Home Department and the Women and Child Welfare Department have joined hands to set up counselling centres in police stations in every district. These centres will not only help women file complaints at police stations but also provide them legal aid and counselling. It is initiated to help women register complaints as many crimes go unreported for fear of going to police stations. Counselling centres will help bridge the gap and victims can first report their cases to the counselling centres and the members will help them register a complaint or even try to sort out the matter.

Counselling is a process designed to help clients understand and clarify personal views of their life space, and to learn to reach their self-determined goals through meaningful, well-informed choices and a resolution of problems of an emotional or interpersonal nature. It believes that every human individual has the potential for self-growth, self-development and self actualization.

The women helpline centres were set up for reuniting the families and helping the clients to resolve their disputes through a process of dialogue. It was over a quarter century ago the women helpline centres were established and are still being run across the country today. However, not many researches had been conducted to know as to how these institutions are contributing in family reintegration and meeting the expectations of aggrieved parties and settling down their disputes as envisaged in the Scheme. Precisely with this object in mind the present study was under taken on a limited scale covering women helpline centres located in Coimbatore district.

The helpline counselling centres were constituted in all women police stations to help women to discuss and find solution for their problems. Counsellors are associated with these centres for providing solution to women and other family related complaints through talks and counselling sessions so that family disputes / squabbles could reach a reasonable solution instead of indulging in any legal action against in-laws and spouse of the victim women. These centres play a vital role in helping women in dealing with their problems. These centres are gaining importance and scope day by day due to the increasing family quarrels / wrangles. But at the same time, the effectiveness of the counselling given in these centres are not been focused upon. This study thus focuses on the effectiveness of the counselling on depression among the complainants of women helpline counselling centres.

Objectives

1. To study the socio-demographic profile of the complainants in women helpline counselling centres.
2. To examine the effectiveness of the counselling on the level of depression of the complainants in women helpline counselling centres.
3. To appraise the effectiveness of the counselling on the level of depression of the complainants across their selected background factors in women helpline counselling centres.

Methodology

Descriptive research design is adopted for the present study. Of the 6 all women police stations in Coimbatore, a sample size of 334 registered complainants were taken for the study using purposive sampling technique. the prime objectives of the



present research work is to examine the effectiveness of counselling provided to the (respondents) complainants by the counsellors through counselling centres attached to the AWPSs. For this purpose, a Depression scale has been developed with 12 items and the responses have been elicited on point scale for before and after counselling. Based on the pooled scores on this Depression scale, all the respondents have been categorised into three categories viz., High (46-60), Moderate (36-45) and Low (12-35). Respondents based on these categories of depression scale and also their mean scores with standard deviation (S.D.) are provided. Statistical tools namely mean, standard deviation, t-test were used to analyze the data.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Socio-Demographic profile

Variables	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Below 20	36	10.8
	21 – 25	64	19.2
	26 – 30	126	37.7
	31 – 35	84	25.1
	36 and above	24	7.2
Marital status	Married	249	74.6
	Unmarried	42	12.6
	Separated	30	9.0
	Widow	13	3.9
Educational qualification	Primary School	42	12.6
	Secondary School	30	9.0
	Higher Secondary	70	21.0
	Graduation	126	37.7
	Post-Graduation	66	19.8
Family type	Joint Family	229	68.6
	Nuclear Family	105	31.4
Place of living	Urban	178	53.3
	Semi-Urban	108	32.3
	Rural	48	14.4
Monthly Family income	10000 and Less	77	23.1
	10001 – 15000	126	37.7
	15001 – 25000	71	21.3
	25001 and Above	60	18.0

The above table shows that majority of the respondents (37.7% belongs to the age group of 26-30 years followed by 31-35 years (25%), whereas 19.2 percent of them belongs to the age group of 21-25 years. it is evident that almost three-fifths of the sample respondents are married at the time of filing a complaint in the counselling centre (75%). While one-eighth of them (12.6%) are unmarried, 9 percent of them are separated and a few of them are of widowed status. Majority (37.7%) of the respondents completed graduation, whereas 21 percent of the respondents have completed their higher secondary school education and about 20 percent of them were able to complete their post-graduation. More than two-thirds of the respondents belong to joint families and the remaining 31 percent of them belong to nuclear families. More than fifty percent of them (53%) were residing in urban areas (city and major towns), whereas nearly one-third in semi-urban areas (small towns and urban panchayat areas) and the rest of them (14%) residing in rural areas (villages). A simple majority of the respondents' monthly family income is in the range of Rs. 10,001 – 15,000, which can be said as bare minimum to run the family in the present day conditions.

Level of Depression and Before and After Counselling

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Level of Depression and Mean Score of Depression Before and After Counselling

Level of Depression	Before		After	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
High (46-60)	83	24.9	34	10.2



Moderate (36-45)	183	54.8	202	60.5	
Low (12-35)	68	20.4	98	29.3	
Total	334	100.0	334	100.0	
² – Value; Sig. Level	22.75;		p<0.001		
Mean	S.D.	40.76	5.41	35.34	5.39
t-value;	Sig. Level	18.839;		p<0.001	

From Table 2, it can be seen that more than fifty percent of the respondents (74%) appear to be suffering for a moderate level of depression before counselling, one-fourth of them with high depression (25%) and the rest one-fifth (29%) with a low level of depression. The corresponding percentages after counselling are: 60.5, 10 and 29, respectively. The point noted to be here is that the percentage of changes that have taken took place in the case of high and low depression levels before and after counselling (25% vs 10% and 20% vs 29%, respectively). This means that while the share of those with high level of depression before counselling has come down after attending the counselling sessions, such percentage has increased from 20 to 29 in the case of those who suffered with low level of depression. The chi-square results also support the contention that there is strong association between the counselling given to the respondents (before and after) and the level of depression.

From Table 2, it is also evident that the mean score of depression scale of the respondents before counselling was 40.76, whereas such score was reported to be reduced to a level of 35.34 after the respondents underwent counselling in the counselling centres. The paired t-test results (t=18.839) show that there is a significant (p<0.001) difference in the level of depression among the respondents before and after attending the counselling. By and large, these results support the fact that the level of depression is reduced as a result of counselling.

Effectiveness of Counselling across Age groups:

Table 3: Mean Scores of Respondents’ Depression Scores Before and After Counselling across their Age Group

Age	N	Before		After		t- value	Sig. Level
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
Below 20	36	41.50	3.30	37.33	3.78	7.174	p<0.001
21 - 25	64	37.17	2.87	30.52	3.67	9.922	p<0.001
26-30	126	43.11	5.92	37.39	6.21	10.321	p<0.001
31-35	84	40.67	5.48	35.92	3.40	9.795	p<0.001
35 and above	24	37.25	2.33	32.50	2.65	6.811	p<0.001
Total	334	40.76	5.41	35.34	5.39	18.839	p<0.001

The effectiveness is counselling may likely to vary across the age groups of respondents. Information provided in Table 3. Highlights that, on the whole, the mean scores of depression level (scale) were much lower after counselling than before counselling. However, the difference in mean scores before and after counselling appears to be comparatively large among those whose age group was 26 – 30 years closely followed by 21-25 years and 31-35 years than among those who belong to other two extreme age groups under consideration. The paired t-test results also support this finding and one may come to the conclusion that counselling was highly effective among those respondents who were in their middle adult age groups (21-35 years).



Effectiveness of Counselling across Marital Status:

Table 4: Mean Scores of Respondents' Depression Scores Before and After Counselling across their Marital Status

Marital Status	N	Before		After		t- value	Sig. Level
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
Married	249	40.98	5.89	35.40	5.70	15.405	p<0.001
Unmarried	42	39.43	2.75	34.29	4.92	7.860	p<0.001
Separated	30	39.40	4.30	35.40	3.62	5.929	p<0.001
Widowed	13	44.00	0.00	33.77	3.63	10.156	p<0.001
Total	334	40.76	5.41	35.34	5.39	18.839	p<0.001

Majority of the problems of the complainants are related to marriage, dowry and property related and thereby, marital status of the respondents is likely to play a crucial role in the effectiveness of counselling. Keeping this in mind, the effectiveness of counselling was analysed and presented in Table 4. From this, one can observe that the mean scores of depression level (scale) are lessened to lower levels after counselling as compared to before counselling. Nevertheless, it is noticed that the difference in mean depression scores (decrease) between before and after counselling is much higher among those who are widowed followed by married ones as compared to those who are unmarried and separated. The paired t-test results too supported this finding in a significant manner.

Findings

An analysis of the socio-demographic profile of the complainants revealed that a large majority of them (38% and 25%, respectively) belong to the middle age groups (26-30 and 31-36 years), three-fourths of the respondents (75%) were married at the time registering their complaints in the counselling centres. More than half of the respondents have completed their graduation and majority of the respondents' (38%) monthly family income falls in the range of Rs. 10,001–15,000 (can be said as just those who have bare minimum income) followed by the income range of Rs. 10000 or less (23% - comparatively poor) and as high as 69 percent of the respondents belong to joint family and more than half of them (53%) were residing in urban areas followed by semi-urban areas (32%). The paired t-test results (t=18.839) show that there is a significant (p<0.001) difference in the level of depression among the respondents before and after attending the counselling. The paired t-test results shows that there is a significant difference in the level of depression before and after counselling across the age and marital status of the respondents.

Conclusion

The establishment of specialized women's police stations or units in police stations, by and large, offered specialized services to women survivors of domestic and/or sexual violence. These centres not only helped women to file complaints at police stations but also provided them legal aid and counselling. Counselling was effective in dealing with the issues of the clients and solving their problems. Moreover, such effectiveness of counselling was more impressive in some sub-groups (based on background characteristics) of complainants. Furthermore, the satisfaction of the beneficiaries was found to be very good on counselling and counsellors.

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