An Assessment of Status of Nutritional of Sedentary Working Women

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ABSTRACT

Present investigation was carried out to assess the nutritional status of working women in Akola district of Maharashtra State. A data of 120 working women of varying age group was collected and analyzed. The emphasis has also given to the socio-economic status of women in the society. It is observed that the working women face the problems centered on their children, household duties and the office work. Family status of the respondents showed that most of the families are the nuclear families. Study also reflected that working women has supported to the family income and have resulted in good lifestyle. In relation to the nutritional aspect working women possess medium knowledge but nutritional practices found are high. The intake of calories, carbohydrates and fats were found excess. The essential proteins, calcium and vitamins were found deficit in regular diet of working women. Most of the respondents were found normal in height, weight and BMI.

Keywords------- assessment; nutritional status, socio-economic, problem of women, intake of diet, BMI

I. INTRODUCTION

India is one of the first countries in the world to grant voting rights to women. Women began to come out of the “Lakshman Rekha” of their houses and work outside for wages or salary. This gave rise to the concept of “Working women”. Thus the women has now been unchained from her bondage and given legitimate freedom. The special provision for women in Indian constitution was the result of social reform and movements which began in 19\textsuperscript{th} century emphasizing improvement of women’s status. There should be reorganization of the dignity of women’s work and proper understanding of its dimensions. Women upliftment depends on two pre requisites that is self reliance and economic independence.

Women are the integral part in any development. Their contribution as wives, mothers, income earner’s, home managers and community members often go unrecognized and undervalued. Over work and the stress during work not only affect health of women but also families. Women employment supplement to the household income and paves for better purchasing power. Time management is the biggest problem. She has no time left for rest or hobbies. The health problems like headache, backache, hypertension and various other ailments are among working women.

Employment for women has become a need in 21\textsuperscript{st} century. Although the working and employment are accepted by the family members in urban area, however, they are not ready to accept the changing pattern of life. Women are participating in many skilled jobs, the advance science and technology areas are improving the quality of life. The women don’t want to leave the job as it is not only her economic but also psychological need leading to personality development. Because of this she faces physical as well as mental stress. The working woman who is not able to balance her office and home stress, brings personal stress to office and work stress of office to the home, becomes irritated and angry in nature.

The status of women is affected by the health level and the nutritional status. Women working outside the home for long duration have less leisure time because of work pressure, and hence they cannot take proper care of their health. Measures aimed at improving eating habits incultation of desirable nutritional practices, scientific utilization of available food material and the effective popularization of improved cooking practices have to be implemented as food is the basic requirement for survival. Present study is an attempt to know the nutritional profile and body requirement of women working in sedentary jobs. The findings will help in suggesting way and means for introducing changes and modifications in the nutritional profile of working women.

II. MATERIALS AND METHOD

Selection of the sample

A sample of 120 women working in sedentary jobs in the age group of 25 to 50 years was selected for the study.
The major occupational categories considered were:
- Educational institutes
- Women working in the different offices viz. government and non-government offices.
- Women working in different banks.
- The women working from each category were selected for the present study to formulate a sample 120 working women.

Tools and Technique used for Data collection
For achieving the object of the study appropriate data collecting technique were devised and used for data collection. The observations and interview were the techniques employed for collection of data. For this purpose intentional and observation schedules were developed for collection of data. The data of personal characteristics, nutritional status, awareness of the nutrition and the health index has been collected in the present investigation.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the present study the health and nutritional profile of sedentary working women were studied out to see the nutritional profile of working women. For this study survey method was used. Data were collected with the help of interview and observation schedule. The information about sedentary working women and their family, meal patterns, knowledge and use of nutritional practices, dietary intake, anthropometric measurements, clinical assessments health and social problems of sedentary working women were collected.

3.1 Personal characteristics:
Age: The distribution according to age indicated that about half of the selected working women (48.33%) were of 31 to 40 years age. As much as 24.16 per cent were in the age group of above 41to 50 years. Working women between 31 to 40 years of age group dominated the age wise distribution.

Education: Selected sedentary working women were classified according to their educational level. It is revealed from the table that women having low educational level were meagre in service, out of total selected working women having educational qualification up to under graduate + D.Ed were 12.57 percent while 87.53 percent working women engaged as teachers, lectures, clerks in banks were having qualification of graduate and above. The results thus indicate that working class of women was dominated by qualified and highly qualified women.

3.2 Food habits and diet pattern
Type of food (food habit): Food habit is mostly dominated by religion and the surroundings. Selected women were classified according to their food habits. It was noted that 88.67 per cent had their liking towards vegetarian food 18.33% prefer occasionally non-veg food and hence their liking was of mixed type. None of the respondents prefer non-veg food.

Diet pattern: In this view, selected sedentary working women were asked about dietary pattern and classified on the basis as per pattern observed. The finding shows that dietary pattern was dominated by lunch and dinner, as 40.83 per cent women were following the lunch and dinner pattern. As much as 27.50 per cent women had their dietary pattern as lunch, breakfast and dinner. Nearly one-forth (24.17 %) were following the diet pattern of breakfast, lunch, snacks and dinner. Only 7.5 percent had three time meal as lunch, snacks and dinner.

Working women were generally following the lunch, snacks and dinner pattern and only 24.17 % working women were following the recommended dietary pattern i.e., Breakfast, lunch, snacks and dinner which is a matter of concern.

3.3 Nutrition knowledge
The information about the knowledge and nutrition practices shows that, majority of the women (49.17%) had medium knowledge. It was followed by 18.33 parent women with high knowledge. Remaining medium 49.16% and low 32.50 percent were poorly equipped with knowledge about nutritional practices and were observed in low category of knowledge. The hypothesis that the nutritional knowledge of working women is adequate therefore does not hold good.

3.4 Nutritional practices
The information about nutritional practices indicates that majority of working women (54.17) used to follow recommended nutritional practices to higher extent. Nearly 30 per cent were in medium category remaining 16.16 per cent had low adoption nutritional practices. In the above findings therefore lead to the acceptance of hypothesis formed earlier that there is adequate use of nutritional practices of working women.

3.5 Nutrition intake
It is found that the daily consumption of calorie by majority of working women (57.50%) was more than normal. As much as 25.83 per cent had normal intake and 16.67 per cent had below normal intake than RDA. The hypothesis that the nutritional intake of working women is adequate is hence accepted. The below normal intake was noted in 16.66 per cent, 40 per cent had their carbohydrates intake as normal and above normal consumption was noted in 41.16 percent respondents. The below normal intake was noted as 47.5 per cent. As much as 41.67 percent had their protein intake as normal. Above normal intake was 10.83% observed in 10.83 per cent working women. The above normal intake of fats was observed in case 58.33 per cent working women. Nearly about one fifth each had normal and below normal intake of fats than R.D.A. The calcium intake shows that majority of the working women (61.67%) had below normal calcium intake. As much as 25.83 per cent had normal intake of calcium. Only 12.50 per cent above normal calcium intake. Deficiency of calcium causes weakness of the bones. So awareness is essential for the normal intake of calcium in working women.

3.6 Anthropometric Measurement
The pattern of growth and the physical status of the body though genetically determined yet is profoundly influenced by diet and nutrition. The

anthropometric measurements with regard to height, weight and body mass index of the working women were taken. The majority of the respondents (75.83%) belong to about 166 to 175 cm height category. Only 7.5 per cent are between 156 cm to 165 cm and remaining 16.66 per cent were below 155 cm in height. It is seen that 35.83% working women were up to 35 kg of body weight and 11.66 per cent are above 70 kg. Remaining 52.50 per cent were in between 36 to 70 kg in body weight group. On the basis of height and weight the BMI was worked out and seen that 16.67 per cent working women had BMI up to 19. In one third (19.01 to 24) categories there were 50.00% and in remaining BMI category that is above 33.33% working women were observed.

3.7 Health problems

It is observed that about one fourth (25.83%) working women were suffering from hypertension. As much as 20.83 per cent reported that they feel exhausted. A small percentage of working women had the problem of diabetes, low B.P, Anaemia, back pain and overweight.

Physical, mental and social problems: It is observed that a small percentage of working women expressed the problem of loss of interest (2.50%), mental tension (3.33%). Quarrel with husband (8.33%) loss of sleep (4.16%) cannot take care of children (2.5%) harassment from family members in (10.83%), problem of sharing household work (13.33%), lack of co-operation from co-workers (9.16%). About one fourth women expressed that they had the problem of harassment at work place (25.83%). Another 20 per cent told that they felt depressed.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The working women in general were 31 to 40 years age, having more than graduate degree, belonged to small nuclear families with no child of up to 15 year. They possess medium knowledge but their nutritional practices use was high and had a remarkable inclination towards the nutritional practices. The intake of calories, carbohydrates and fats was in excess but that of proteins, calcium and vitamins was deficient. Most of the women were normal in height weight and BMI. Clinically they were normal. The majority problems they were facing were harassment and depression. The characteristic of the working women, namely, age, education and attitude towards nutritional practices were formed to be significantly associated and determining the nutritional intake of the working women. Based on the results obtained from the data analyzed following conclusions could be drawn;

1. The majority of working women 100.58% belonged to nuclear families.
2. The working women families in majority consist of up to 4 members (64.17%) with no child below the age of 15 years (66.67%)
3. In great majority of families of working women the husband (70.87%) occupies the position of family head.
4. In case of 50.83 per cent working women the family income was up to Rs 25000/- per month.
5. Selected group of respondents were vegetarian dominated(81.67%).
6. As much as 40.83 per cent working women preferred dietary pattern of lunch+dinner and 27.5 per cent working women preferred dietary pattern of B+L+D.
7. The knowledge about nutritional practices of 49.17 per cent working women was medium.
8. There is high adoption of nutritional practices (54.17%) by working women.
9. The attitude of working women towards nutritional practices was found to be adoptable.
10. The total calories, carbohydrates, and fats intake were noted be more than RDA but the intake of proteins, calcium and vitamins were less than RDA in maximum percentage of working women.
11. An higher percentage of working women had normal eyes (80.00%), normal vision (74.17%), black hair (83.33%), pale nails (54.17%), tight skin (51.67%), normal teeth (70.84%), fresh physical appearance and normal appetite.