



RESEARCH ARTICLE

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SEPARATION ANXIETY AMONG MOTHERS OF INFANTS OF BIJNOR DISTRICT OF UTTAR PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

Background: Maternal separation anxiety is defined as an unpleasant emotional state tied to the separation experience, it may be evidenced by expression of worry, sadness or guilt. Extreme level of maternal separation anxiety can disturb the mother's psychological functioning that contributes to dysfunctional mother-child relationship. **Aims:** To find out the maternal separation anxiety among working and non-working mothers of infant. **Methods:** The study was divided into 2 phases. In the phase I, 200 mothers (100 working and 100 non-working) were purposively selected. After 6 months in phase II same mothers were approached and 185 mothers (85 working and 100 non-working) were studied. The maternal separation anxiety scale was developed on five-point ratings. **Results:** In phase I non-working mothers showed high level of separation anxiety whereas in phase II working mothers showed high level of separation anxiety. **Conclusion:** Both working and non-working mothers showed separation anxiety. The difference of level of separation anxiety can be affected by various factors such as father's participation in infant care and ending of maternity leaves. Local or state government should supervise the establishment of good and authentic child care centers to assist working and non-working mothers in taking care of their infants.

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INTRODUCTION

Developmental and clinical psychologists have viewed the processes of mother infant separation as central to the understanding of human development, yet given the undeniable importance to the topic, it is startling to find the focus of attention in the extinct literature is almost exclusively devoted to the infant. Typically investigator's allied to the importance of the mother's behavior, attitudes, and feelings, but observations of mothers have been incidental and findings briefly reported. However, Hinde and McGinns (1977) observed mother responses to separation from their babies in rhesus monkeys. They concluded that the animal's capacity for synchronized interaction broke down during the separation period; for a while after reunion the mothers were unable to continue the relationship as they had previously. Although it is unlikely that similar clear-cut effects can be found in human mothers, the data underlined the fact that "It is the couple that become separated and not just the child, and that both individuals rather than just one must subsequently readjust" (Schaffer, 1977, pp.97-98).

Separation anxiety is a developmentally appropriate reaction of distress to separation of the care giver during infancy and central to the child's psychological development. Object relations theory proposes that there is an optimal maternal distance, suited to the infant's changing developing needs. And also it has been observed that when mothers do not have a healthy sense of self, it is more difficult to see herself as separation bring about personal feelings of loss or rejection. A mother's basic personality structure, genetically determined biases, and role related dictates of her cultural background contribute to the way she feels about separation. Maternal separation anxiety is defined as an unpleasant emotional state tied to the separation experience: it may be evidenced by expression of worry, sadness or guilt. The degree to which mother experience anxiety about separation from her child has implications for both the child's emotional development and the mother's mental health. In the maternal context, a healthy sense of self leads to confident. Autonomous functioning that enables the mother to feel comfortable with closeness, yet handle separation issues in such a way as to allow the healthy autonomy of both herself and her child. Likewise, a firm sense of self implies a capacity for separation that permits the mother

to foster and value her child's developmental toward ever-increasing degrees of separateness (Edward et al., 1998). Conversely, the extent to which the mother has not achieved a firm sense of self corresponds in theory to the difficulty she has in experiencing herself as separate from her child with regard to personal needs and feelings. She may experience her child's age appropriate growth and increased separateness as rejection or loss, the experience of which may lead to anxiety and depressive effect. In this way, the lack of the relatively autonomous sense of self may lead to anxiety about separation and depression in the mothers.

Objective

To find out the maternal separation anxiety among working and non-working mothers of infants.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Methodology is logic of scientific investigation. Methodology means descriptions explanations and justifications of methods. Research methodology is way to systematically solve the research problem. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically.

The methodological aspects of the study have been discussed as under:

Locale: The present study was conducted in Bijnor district of Uttar Pradesh.

Sample selection: A sample of 200 mothers of infants (Below 1 year of age), 100 working mothers and 100 non-working mothers, was selected for the study purposively in the phase I. In phase II, 15 working mothers withdrawn in phase II, as most of them returned to their work places after completion of maternity leave and some of them went to their maternal homes. Total sample of the study was 85 working and 100 non-working mothers in phase II of the study.

Tool used for data collection: The Maternal Separation Anxiety Scale was developed on a five point ratings, to assess the mother's feelings of sadness, worry, discomfort and feeling of separation. The rating scale consisted of 27 items on; 5 points scale with options as strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat agree, agree, strongly agree, was prepared.

Collection and Analysis of data: The study was conducted in two phases:

Phase I- The Maternal Separation Anxiety Scale was administered on mothers of infants below 1 year of age, in the month of September 2018. The respondents were asked to tick the option which suited them most.

Phase II- Again after 6 months, in month of March 2019 the same mothers were approached while all 100 non-working mothers obliged but 15 working mothers could not be contacted because of their absence from the city (transfers, leave were the reasons cite). The same questionnaire was applied on remaining sample. The differences in the level of separation anxiety in the mothers were compared.

Scoring and statistical analysis: For the purpose of deriving ranges to get scores on maternal separation anxiety scale, Quartile Division was used.

$$Q1 = L + ((N+1)/4 - Cf/f) * i$$

$$Q3 = L + 3((N+1)/4 - Cf/f) * i$$

Where $Q1=93$ $Q3=110$

Ranges divided were:

Low level of separation anxiety: Below 93

Moderate level of separation anxiety: 94-109

High level of separation of separation anxiety: Above 110

For the calculation of results frequency distribution, percentage and Bar-graph were used.

RESULTS

The present study was undertaken with the objective to study separation anxiety among working and non-working mothers of infants. Table 1 depicted the levels of separation anxiety among working and non-working mothers of infants in phase I and phase II of the study. In the phase I of the study, fig.1 showed 26.6% of working mothers & 21.4% of non-working mothers were having low level of separation anxiety, 33.4% of working mothers & 35.2% of non-working mothers were having high level of separation anxiety and remaining 40% of working mothers & 43.4% of non-working mothers had moderate level of separation anxiety. In phase II of the study, fig.2 showed 20% of working mothers & 48.5% of non-working mothers were found in category of low separation anxiety, while 20% of working mothers & 14.3% of non-working mothers had high separation anxiety and remaining 60% of working mothers & 37.2% of non-working mothers were found to have moderate level of separation anxiety. In phase I, fig.3 depicted 26.6% of working mothers were having low level of separation anxiety which reduced to 20% in the phase II. In the case of high separation anxiety 33.4% working mothers were there in phase I of the study which was reduced to 20% in the phase II. Results reflect an increase of 20% (40% in the phase I, 60% in the phase II) in the level of moderate separation anxiety after 6 months of I phase of study. In phase I, fig.4 concluded that only 20% of non-working mothers were having low level of separation anxiety, results indicate a rise in low separation anxiety category in the phase II (48.5%). In phase I, 35.2% non-working mothers were having high level of separation anxiety which was reduced to 14.3% in phase II. In phase I, 43.4% non-working mothers were falling in the moderate separation anxiety category but only 37.2% of them were there in the same category in phase II.

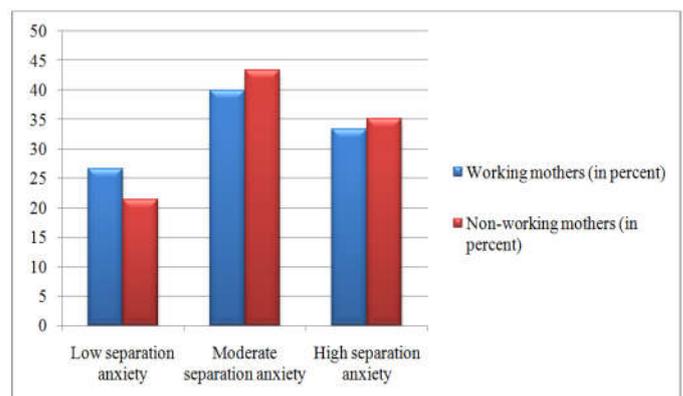


Figure 1. Level of separation anxiety among working and non-working mothers in phase I

Table 1. Level of separation anxiety among working and non- working mothers

Level of separation anxiety	Phase I		Phase II	
	Working mothers (in percent)	Non- working mothers (in percent)	Working mothers (in percent)	Non- working mothers (in percent)
Low separation anxiety	26.6	21.4	20	48.5
Moderate separation anxiety	40	43.4	60	37.2
High separation anxiety	33.4	35.2	20	14.3

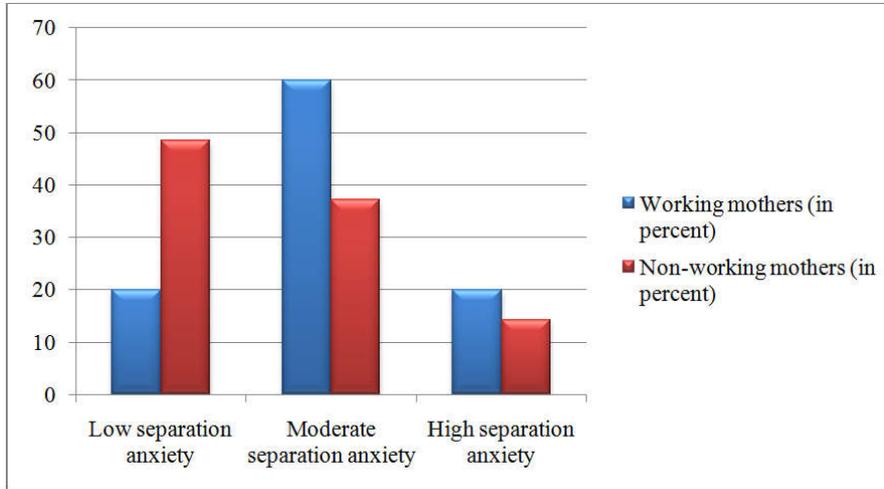


Figure 2. Level of separation anxiety among working and non-working mothers in phase II

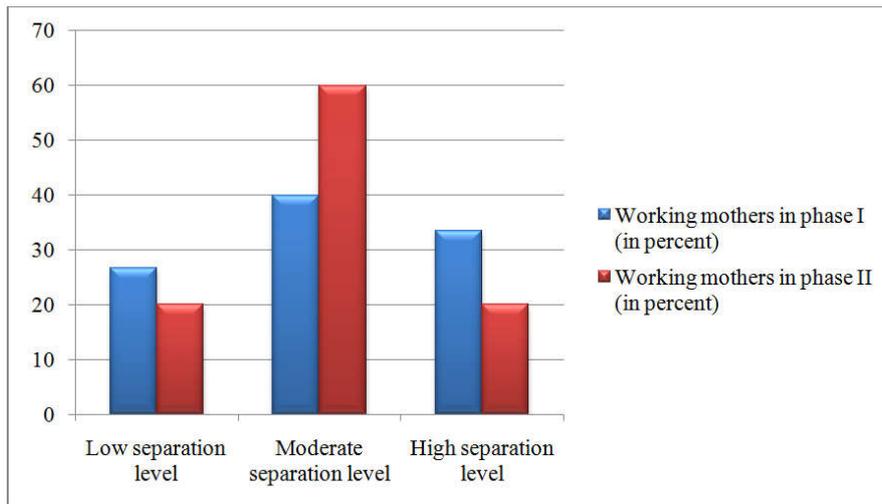


Figure 3. Comparison of level of separation anxiety in working mothers of infants in phase I and phase II

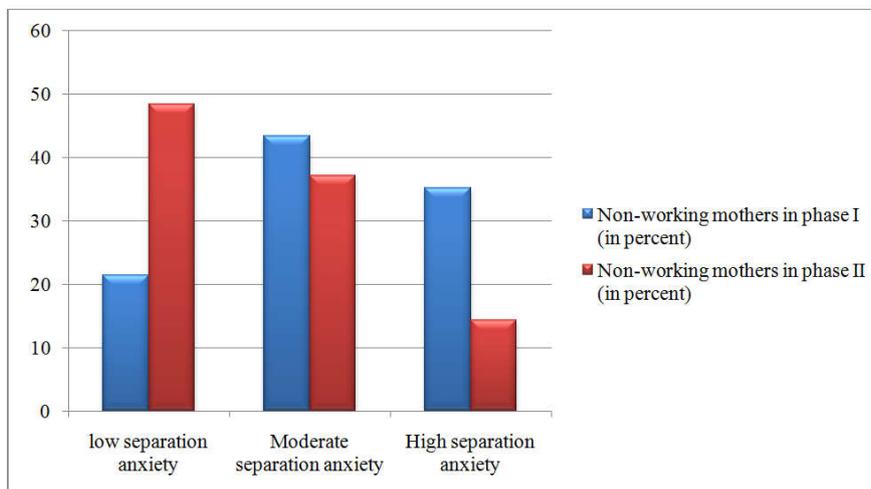


Figure 4. Comparison of level of separation anxiety of non-working mothers of infants in phase I and phase II

DISCUSSION

From the above results it could be interpreted that the level of separation anxiety among working mothers in both the phases was shifted in the moderate level as the duration of motherhood and the age of infants increased, but this was not the case with the non-working mothers, results showed that with the passage of time the level of separation anxiety reduced to the low level. Such a shift in the case of working mothers was quite different from the non-working mothers as the working mothers were on maternity leave till their infants were of 4-6 months of age and when they returned to their jobs they may have faced the heavy workloads at their respective working places, at the same time they were not there with infants after maternity leave gets over, this may be the cause of their moderate level of separation anxiety. For the non-working mothers the results interpret that as the motherhood increased with time these mothers may have become habitual to their duties as compared to 6 months before. Their affection, feelings and attitudes, towards infants and maternity became more positive with time. The results showed that these mothers shifted to low level of separation anxiety with the time.

Recommendations and suggestions for mothers

- Mothers must take this feeling as normal and try to spend more time with their infants.
- Working mothers must also increase their mother-infant time so as to reduce the anxiety.
- Mothers must encourage their husbands to participate in the child care activities.

Suggestions for fathers

- Fathers must feel their duty to take care of their infants.
- If both parents are working than both of them must fix their time schedule so as to give equal time to the infants.
- Father's participation in taking care of child is considered very important so as to reduce the separation anxiety among working mothers.

Suggestions for the community

- At the community level, there must be establishment of good and authentic day care centers.
- Government must make feasible programs and strictly implement them.

Suggestions for further studies

- A study can be conducted on working mothers, by dividing their working areas, into fields like education, civil, medical etc.
- A longitudinal study can be conducted between the two phases.
- A study can be conducted separately on the mothers of boys and the mothers of girls.
- A study can also be conducted on the basis of mother's childhood experiences and its correlation with their separation anxiety.

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