

# Awareness Level of Health Habits among Working Women in Thanjavur District, Tamilnadu

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## Abstract

An apple a day keeps the doctor away. Prevention is better than cure. These quotes suggest that, a healthy diet and good habits keeps many diseases away from our day to day life. If a male is unhealthy, his family may be affected financially slightly. But, if a woman in a family gets ill, her whole family routine work as well as happiness of the family would be collapsed. In this era, woman is expected to play several roles in her home as well as in the organisation. So she should be hale and healthy. Her mind and body well being is important for both the home as well as nation. But, many of our women do not pay much attention to their health due to several factors. They prefer to sacrifice many good things for their family. They do not find and allot time for themselves which ultimately affects the health and wealth of their family. This paper tries to understand the present day working women changing attitudes towards the awareness level of their health and their habits to maintain health in Thanjavur district, Tamilnadu. It covers the habits of the women who occupy various positions in different fields.

**Key Words:** Women Attitudes, Food, Exercise, Life Style

## Introduction

In this modern era, life is busy and complicated. In olden days people led a simple life. Due to technological and civilization development, people's responsibilities and their needs are multiplied. They go after money, name, fame, etc., in a family. Women are also expected to shoulder the responsibilities of their spouses. They are educated, and they work and earn money for the sake of their family. They are very busy and tense. They may not find time to

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take care of their health which is very precious both for the women as well as for their family. They have a lot of stress, both physical and mental in work place, which may affect the soundness of their health. If a woman is ill, it will affect her family, in many ways. So it is a must for the women to maintain their health.

Generally speaking, there is a wrong concept prevailing among women. That is, after marriage they should never care about themselves and their health. They should sacrifice many things for the sake of their family. They are taught like that and they are expected in that way only. But that is meaningless. In cities like Chennai that trend is changing. Women are now regular visitors of gym and they care about their health. But, in Thanjavur, situation seems to be different. This paper tries to find out what is the position and perception of women and how do they maintain health and how many of them exercise and how many of them practice yoga. This paper reveals answers for the above questions.

The objectives of this paper is to

1. To find out the regular and occasional exercise doers and how many working women do not exercise on the basis of marital status, income, educational qualification.
2. To understand the types of exercises and the reasons behind the habit of exercise.
3. To list out the factors that prevent working women to do exercise.
4. To understand the awareness level of working women towards oily and junk food.
5. To know the habit of taking old food is still prevailing among working women.
6. To find out how many practices yoga.
7. To understand their consumption style of sugar and salt.
8. To know the awareness level towards medical insurance.
9. To measure the personal medical expenditure per month for working women.

## **Methodology**

Both primary and secondary data are used. Primary data is collected with the help of well designed questionnaire and secondary data collected from the Internet, books, etc.

## **Sampling**

Convenience sampling is used.

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## Area of the Study

Orathnadu, Thiruvaiyaru, Thanjavur, Kumbakonam, Poothalur were selected for the purpose of this study.

## Tables

### MARITAL STATUS VS EXERCISE HABITS

Marital status	Exercise doers		Total	%	Non-doers	%	Total
	Regular	Occasional					
Married	6	10	16	47.05	18	52.94	34
Unmarried	3	6	9	56.25	7	43.75	16
Total	9	16	25	50	25	50	50

Source: Primary data

### TYPES OF EXERCISE

Types of exercise	No. of respondents	%
Walking	16	64
Jagging	1	4
Cycle	3	12
Simple floor exercise	3	12
Jim	2	8
Others	-	-

Source: primary data

### REASONS FOR EXERCISE

Reasons for exercise	No. of respondents	%
To reduce obesity	9	36
Diabetics	2	8
Habitual	-	-
Doctor's Advice	1	4
My passion	4	16

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To maintain health	9	36
Others	--	-
Total	25	100

Source: primary data

### REASONS FOR NOT TO EXERCISE

Reasons for not to exercise	No. of respondents	%
Lack of time	9	36
Not interested	9	36
No need	1	4
Fear (chain snatching)	2	8
Not used to it	4	16
Others	--	-
Total	25	100

Source: primary data

### AWARENESS LEVEL ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF EXERCISE

Educational status	Fully aware	%	Partly aware	%	Fully unaware	%	Total
Illiterate	1	7.14	6	42.86	7	50	14
School	3	33.33	6	66.67	-	-	09
College	9	75	3	25	-	-	12
Professional course	9	75	2	16.67	1	8.33	12
Diploma	3	100	-	-	-	-	3
Others	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Total	25	50	17	34	08	16	50

Source: primary data

### YOGA PRACTICE

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Mode of yoga practice	No. of respondents	%
Regular	06	12
Occasional	10	20
Never	34	68
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: primary data

### STYLE OF CONSUMPTION OF BREAKFAST

Consumption style	No. of respondents	%
Regular	32	64
Sometimes	15	30
Never	03	06
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: primary data

### HOTEL FOOD CONSUMPTION

Particulars	No. of respondents	%
Never	16	32
Some times	30	60
Always	04	08
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: primary data

### ACTION OF THE RESPONDENTS WHEN THEY ARE ILL

Action of the respondents	No. of respondents	%
Consult a doctor	28	56
Using old prescription	--	--
Self medication	17	34
Local medicine	04	08

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Others	01	02
Total	50	100

Source: primary data

#### REASONS FOR THE PREFERENCE OF SELF-MEDICATION

Reasons for self-medication	No. Of respondents	%
Lack of time	04	18.18
Save money	10	45.45
Doctors heavy medicine and bill	06	27.27
Others	02	9.10
Total	22	100

Source: primary data

#### HABIT OF CONSUMING EXCESS OLD FOOD

Particulars	No. of respondents	%
Consumption	20	40
No consumption	30	60
Total	50	100

Source: Primary data

#### CONSUMPTION OF OILY AND CHANK FOOD

Particulars	No. of respondents	%
Never	10	20
Some times	35	70
Always	05	10
Total	50	100

Source: primary data

#### FOLLOWERS OF DIET CHART

Particulars	No. of respondents	%
Followers	20	40

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<b>Not-followers</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: primary data

### CONSUMPTION OF SUGAR AND SALT

<b>Particulars</b>	<b>No. Of respondents</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Consume in a low level</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Consume without any restriction</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: primary data

### TIME ALLOCATION EXCLUSIVELY FOR HEALTH

<b>Particulars</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Time allotted</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Time not allotted</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary data

### REASONS FOR NOT ALLOCATED TIME FOR HEALTH

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>No. of respondents</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Lack of time</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>Not necessary</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Others</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>

### FINDINGS

1. In Thanjavur, 50% of the working ladies are doing exercise and another 50% are not doing exercise.
2. Almost in all the age group, non doers of exercise is more in numbers.

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3. 56.25% of unmarried working ladies do exercise and majority of the Married women do not prefer exercise.
4. Majority of Both the illiterates and the professional people do not exercise. School and college educated women do exercise.
5. Teachers, Lecturers, Clerk, Manager category working ladies do exercise. But ladies belong to Agriculture, Construction and Servant Maid category do not exercise.
6. Exercise doers are more in number in the income level of 10000-200000. It is less in the income group of 1000-5000 groups.
7. out of 25, 16 (i.e.) 64% prefer walking, and 12% prefer cycle and simple floor exercise each and 8% prefer gym and only 4% prefer jogging. In Thanjavur, among the working women, jogging is not popular.
8. 36% of working women do exercise in order to reduce obesity and to maintain health and 16% prefer it due to their passion towards exercise and 8% do exercise due to diabetics.
9. Majority of the working women in Thanjavur, (i.e.) 36% do not prefer exercise since they do not find time and another 36% are not interest to do exercise. Only 1 respondent out of 25 felt that it is not necessary for her.
10. House hold work burden is the main reason for the working women to not to do exercise. Nearly 78% do not exercise due to this reason.
11. In Thanjavur, among the working women illiterates lack of awareness about the benefit of exercise is found. Majority of the illiterates (i.e.) 50% do not aware of it.
12. Yoga practice is not popular among working women .Only 12% practice Yoga and 68% never practice yoga.
13. Majority of the working ladies (i.e.) 64% do not skip breakfast. And only 6% skip breakfast.
14. In Thanjavur, among working women, hotel food is not very popular. Only 4 out of 50 prefer hotel regularly and 30 out of 50 prefer it occasionally and 16 never prefer hotel.
15. Nearly 67% of working women in Thanjavur, aware of the quality of hotel food and they feel that it is harmful to their health in the long run and no one in Thanjavur are unaware of the quality of hotel food.



16. Majority of the working women in Thanjavur consult a doctor when they are ill, and 34% prefer self medication and 8% prefer local medicine
17. Majority of the respondents in Thanjavur prefer self-medication in order to save money and the second reason is they feel doctors charge heavy fees and dosages also are heavy and 19% do not find time to consult a doctor.
18. In Thanjavur, majority working women (i.e.) 60% of their personal medical expenses falls between 100 and 500 and 26% spent between 500-1000 and only 2% spent above 1500.
19. Awareness level about the medical insurance is high in Thanjavur, 56% fully aware and 8% partly aware and 36% unaware of the medical insurance.
20. Though 32 respondents out of 50 aware medical insurance, only 22% are the holders of it and 78% do not take any medical insurance policy
21. Majority working women in Thanjavur do not take excess old food and only 40% take it.
22. The awareness level of the quality of old food is high (i.e) around 62% are fully aware and 24% partly aware and only 14% are unaware of old food features.
23. Consumption of oily food is not very popular among working women in Thanjavur. Majority of them take it occasionally and only 10% take it regularly.
24. Awareness level about the oily food is high, 50% are fully aware 40% are partly aware and only 10% are unaware of the harmful effect of oily food.
25. Majority of the working women in Thanjavur do not follow any diet chart. Only 40% follow diet chart
26. 50% of respondents take sugar and salt without any restriction and another 50% consume it in a low quantity.
27. Majority of the respondents take low sugar and salt due to their awareness of the ill-effects of salt and sugar, and 20% of the respondents take it due to doctor's advice and 16% take low sugar and salt due to elders' and friends' advice.
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29. More than 50% of the respondents feel that it is not necessary to take salt and sugar in a low quantity and 28% do not have awareness and 12% cannot take food without these two.
30. Exactly 70% of the respondents do not take pills for obesity and only 30% take pills for obesity.
31. : Exactly 60% of the respondents do not find time to allocate time exclusively for their health, and 40% feel that it is not necessary.
32. Majority of the respondents (i.e.) 60% spend 100 to 500 Rs. per month and 26% spend 500-1000 Rs. and no respondents spend more than 2000 Rs. per month.

### **Suggestions**

1. Women who have crossed the age of 40 should be very careful about their health. They face many physical problems which lead to psychological problems to them. So the family members (husband, son and daughter may educate them to do exercise.
2. Married women do not exercise properly may be due to their attitude or their household work burden. The burden of household work should be shouldered by their family members. Women organisation may take steps to educate them about the benefit of exercise and they try to change the well frog attitude of the women. Though they are educated and employed their attitude is not changed. That is the position which is prevailing in Thanjavur. After marriage they do not care about their health and individuality. It has to be changed.
3. Women who have crossed the age of 40 should be very careful about their health. They face many physical problems which lead to psychological problems to them. So the family members (husband, son and daughter may educate them to do exercise.
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which is prevailing in Thanjavur. After marriage they do not care about their health and individuality. It has to be changed.

5. Lack of time is the major reason for the working women to not to exercise. Family members only should solve this problem by way of sharing the household work. In Sundays also she is very busy with special meal preparation for her family. So, the major reason which prevents them to do exercise is insufficient time and the second reason is lack of interest. This can be changed only if their attitude is changed.
6. Government and NGO and women liberalisation movement may take steps by way of organising camp to create awareness about the benefit of yoga in Sundays. Since, 50% of population is women and if their health is a serious problem.
7. Self-medication is a dangerous one. But, in Thanjavur among the working women, in order to save money they are doing this wrong practice. Doctors may consider this point and they may charge reasonable fees and try to avoid unnecessary test and heavy dosages of medicine, or they try to convince them the dosages and tests are necessary and must.
8. Medical insurance awareness programmes should be taken by the respective company for the benefit of both.
9. Consumption of old and excess food invites many health problems. Due to practice and economy women may do this. During popular serials intervals ill effects of old food may be educated in local channel.
10. Only 40% of the working women follow diet chart. Like beauty tips programme Health programme also telecasted to create awareness among the working women.
11. The significance of Sugar and salt minimum consumption to be imparted among working women.
12. Time management should be taught to the working women. Then only they may find time to take care about their health.

## Conclusion

“A woman is the full circle. Within her is the power to create, nurture and transform.” ~Diane Mariechild. “Prevention is better than cure” a popular saying. Diseases kill not only the health but also the happiness of that particular person as well as family. So, health should be

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considered precious. Particularly woman should take care about herself in order to run the family in an efficient way. The whole family depends on her. Though she is working, she cannot forgo the family responsibilities. If her physical health is affected her mental health will also be affected.

Like ancient days she is not leading a simple life. She has to support financially her family just as her husband does due to heavy and rising cost of living. So, practising yoga, exercise, low sugar and salt consumption, following diet chart, avoidance of oily food and old food, self-medication, frequent consumption of hotel food, awareness of medical insurance, allotting time exclusively for her health are very very important. But, in Thanjavur , working women do not take care much care about their health it seems. Many of them feel that the above practices are not necessary and it has to be followed only when they are ill. Their perception is wrong. They have to be educated a lot. They are ignorant about the area of exercise and yoga. But, they do not consume much oily food, old food, hotel food etc. This shows that they are slowly coming out of their well. If they are given motivation and friendly suggestions they would improve themselves and they will be very healthy in future.

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